

**Budapest Festival Orchestra: A Model for the Future**

**Audio Introduction: Transcription**

**Tom Service:** Welcome to the Edinburgh International Festival's *All You Need to Know* podcast with me, Tom Service. The Budapest Festival Orchestra in residence at this year's Edinburgh International Festival; I'll be telling you just a wee bit more about their first concert, *A Model for the Future*. But first, here's Festival Director, Nicola Benedetti.

**Nicola Benedetti:** Well, this is born out of some very long, intense conversations with Iván who [crosstalk]--

**Tom Service:** Iván Fischer, the conductor or the founder of the orchestra.

**Nicola Benedetti:** Founder of the orchestra. Exactly, and, uh, someone who is relentless and restless. He never does the same thing for too long, you know, and the reinvention, but analysis over what the orchestra's purpose is. Not just Budapest Festival Orchestra, but an orchestra's purposes. He says that the philosophy of his orchestra is to serve the community and to share the joy of music in all forms.

You know, a byproduct of their general rehearsing philosophy and communication philosophy, and the fact that their orchestra is split into so many different components where they all have completely different skill sets. Um, they have a bunch of musicians that are trained in specific autism-friendly performances. They have musicians trained for really young kid performances. They have musicians that do different styles from really contemporary, to baroque, to folk traditional music. They're such a diverse group. They can all sing really well and do, regularly.

**Tom Service:** [chuckles] [crosstalk]

**Nicola Benedetti:** They have an amazing choir.

**Tom Service:** I've been to their rehearsals and their rehearsals often start with them singing. They sing a Bach chorale together, you know, instead of just, you know, tuning, sit down, off we go. It's a --there's a completely different atmosphere, and even in the rehearsals.

**Nicola Benedetti:** Exactly. But our conversations kind of went a step further in terms of choosing Bartok, Kodály, even Mendelssohn, because it was important that we were also looking at figures, historic figures, and composers that had, um, either drawn distinct inspiration from, what I would say is-- I mean, it's not just a folklore or a folk sound or voice, but it's the sound of a collective. Um, so that generally has a certain kind of tone and tenor to it. Or in the case of Kodály, someone who wrote for and dedicated, you know, vast amounts of his time and focus and energy to systems of education that impacted the entire country.

**Tom Service:** Yeah, right. Yeah, yeah. And he gave Hungary a whole system of music education and really then by proxy, the world.

**Nicola Benedetti:** Absolutely. And it's obviously had huge kind of longevity and impact.

**Tom Service:** And the thing, Nicky, you said right at the start of this, which is the sense that, the purpose of this orchestra is to serve its community. I mean, what I can't kind of believe is that, you know, 40 years on from the founding of this orchestra, that's still a radical idea. And I mean, and maybe, you know, this residency and of course the others throughout your program here, I mean, they've all got to ask that question, haven't they, about what community they're serving and why, right?

**Nicola Benedetti:** Yeah. I think it's such a fascinating point because, um, a lot of the foundations of these orchestras - Budapest Festival Orchestra is not a case in point - but a lot of the orchestras that we- that we hear, they've been around a long time, and they're set up with certain financial models and structural models that you're trying to almost change from within. That could be a more torturous process.

So, I think for me, it's been really fascinating to actually look at- and I think it's the preserve and place of the festival to look at, okay, we present a lot of different orchestras. They're all coming here. What actually are you here to do? And why have we chosen you to come here? Like—and what's the future of this whole thing of an orchestra playing this music?

**Tom Service:** Nicola Benedetti and I talking about this residency of Iván Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra, their first concert, the 8th of August at 8pm at the Usher Hall. Just an hour, but they're gonna traverse a huge range of music from Monteverdi to Transylvanian folk music and-and klezmer. It's gonna be a presented experience with Nicola and Iván talking to you about what's happening and showing the range of this orchestra. So, that's all you need to know about this first concert in the Budapest Festival Orchestra residency at the Edinburgh International Festival, eight o'clock on the 8th of August at the Usher Hall. Our thanks to Sir Ewan and Lady Brown for sponsoring this concert.