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PRESS RELEASE
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ALDEBURGH MUSIC
announces
Pierre-Laurent Aimard
as Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival

Aldeburgh Music today announced that Pierre-Laurent Aimard will succeed Thomas Adès as Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival for three years with effect from 2009. As the Independent commented following his BBC Prom earlier this year: *At 50, the French pianist-conductor still has the eager simplicity that induced Messiaen to make him his protégé at 12, and the luminous brilliance that persuaded Boulez to install him at 19 as resident pianist for his brand-new Ensemble InterContemporain. . . .*

Pierre-Laurent Aimard explained: *"It was a big surprise to receive Jonathan Reekie's proposal to become Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival. It was only after long reflection that I realised it was the right and possibly natural progression for me in terms of musical challenge and engagement. I love the exploration of musical confrontations and the encounter with various creators and performing partners - embracing the literature of different eras and cultures in such a way as to let the pieces enlighten each other. So what a joy to share with audiences and colleagues music as a living and growing art form in the context of an annual festival rather than a one off event in time. How we can continue to expand on the inspired concept and spirit of the original Aldeburgh Festival will be a fascinating journey in which I hope that we can do justice to the richness and diversity of music today."*

Pierre-Laurent Aimard has an international reputation not only as a great performer but also as a programmer of real invention. He will give three performances at the 2008 Aldeburgh Festival: as soloist/director with the Britten Sinfonia on Saturday June 14th, in recital on Friday June 20th, and performing chamber music with Tabea Zimmermann and Martin Fröst on Sunday June 22nd. All three concerts will feature works by György Kurtág, composer in residence for the 2008 Aldeburgh Festival. Other international curatorial projects led by Pierre-Laurent which form a backdrop to his new role in Aldeburgh include *artiste étoile* at the Lucerne Festival (2007); Pianist in Residence at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (2006-07); *Domaine Privé* at the Cité de la Musique (Spring 2008), *Carte Blanche* at the Vienna Konzerthaus (2006-07), his own Perspectives series for Carnegie Hall (2006-07); and Artistic Directorship of Southbank Centre's 2008 Messiaen festival.

Jonathan Reekie, Chief Executive of Aldeburgh Music said: *"After an inspirational ten years with Thomas Adès at the helm, in our search for a replacement we were looking for an outstanding, original musician and programmer, who would both respect the Aldeburgh traditions but also stamp their mark on the Festival. In Pierre-Laurent Aimard we have all those qualities, rare in one person - a brilliant performer with a flair for creating concerts and Festivals. His performances here have been the talk of recent Aldeburgh Festivals and we are very much looking forward to working with him."*

The 2008 Aldeburgh Festival, Thomas Adès' tenth festival as Artistic Director, opens on Friday 13th June with a new opera commissioned from Yannis Kyriakides. During the festival Adès will conduct BCMG (Sunday June 15th) and two days later, with Steven Isserlis, will give the premiere of work that he has written for Isserlis. Associate Director of the festival, composer John Woolrich, will remain in this role, working alongside Pierre-Laurent Aimard.

"Every distinguished artist who has been chosen to present a series of Perspectives concerts at Carnegie Hall has used the opportunity to make connections among music of different styles and eras. But no one has taken this kind of exploration to the exhilarating extremes of the brilliant French pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard. . . . By mixing and matching short pieces or excerpts from longer ones (46 in all), he created, in effect, an original, evening-length, five-section patchwork composition that audaciously leapt across centuries, defying stylistic categories."

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