



## Tadaaki Otaka • Prom 28

BBC National Orchestra of Wales

‘My favourite music festival!’ Tadaaki Otaka has plenty of experience to draw on in his huge enthusiasm for the BBC Proms – he’s been appearing at the festival since the 1980s. ‘I find the Proms audiences help the musicians give their best performances – they encourage us very much.’ This year he directs the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, of which he became Principal Conductor in 1987 and Conductor Laureate in 1996. ‘We have worked together for over 30 years,’ he explains. ‘We’re like very good old friends. When I started working with them, it was a small orchestra, but the great thing is that the players really love music.’

Rachmaninov has long been a particular passion for Otaka and the composer’s grand, Poe-inspired choral symphony *The Bells* forms the centrepiece of his concert. ‘I always very much enjoy Rachmaninov’s romantic, rhythmical side,’ he observes. There’s also the world premiere of Welsh composer Huw Watkins’s *The Moon* and music from Otaka’s own country: Takemitsu’s delicate *Twill by Twilight*. ‘For every musician, the most important music comes from his or her own country,’ says Otaka. ‘For the orchestra, that means Wales. For me, Japan. Takemitsu was a fantastic composer and a wonderful person. I liked him and I love his beautiful music. He is the pride of the Japanese.’