

Sir Mark Elder – Q&A

What aspects of the role of Chancellor of The University of Manchester particularly appeal to you?

Firstly, the opportunity to represent such a flourishing but determined institution in a global forum would be very exciting. Particularly at this time, the University has a great sense of aspiration; I would love to share that and help champion it. Secondly, to have regular contact with both students and staff would mean a great deal to me. Helping young people to give of their best has always played a big part in my life - my Professorship at the RNCM is the most current example - and I would welcome the chance to learn about the different Faculties and courses.

How do you think your experiences will help you in the role of Chancellor?

My work as a conductor brings me into contact with many different people. As I travel internationally, there would be frequent chances to meet the thousands of alumni of the University. In communicating with audiences from the platform, on radio and television and through social media, I am constantly trying to reach out and champion music in as unstuffy a way as possible. Manchester already has an enviable reputation in the sciences, which I will be delighted to shout about wherever I can; my interest and experience in Humanities would give that equally crucial part of the University a new champion.

What do the University and the city of Manchester mean to you?

I first came to Manchester to conduct in the 70's, when I was very young. It was a very different place. To have seen it change and reinvent itself over these forty years has been fascinating. My fifteen years with the Hallé have brought me ever closer to the city in so many different ways - getting to know some of the people who lead the business community, for example, or spending time with the two men who have led the city Council for so many fruitful years, Sir Richard Leese and Sir Howard Bernstein. I well recall, at the ceremony when I received my Honorary Doctorate, the total lack of pomposity and a feeling of generous enjoyment.

If you were Chancellor, how would you use your ambassadorial role to promote the University?

Presiding over Foundation Day and other Degree Days would be a pleasure and a great honour. Being an ambassador for the University would be a challenging, demanding and stimulating role. I would relish deepening the vital connection of the University to the City, hosting events overseas to bring together alumni and potential supporters, consistently espousing the aims of the University's 2020 manifesto. I am also especially motivated by the University's Social Responsibility agenda and its support for students from less advantaged backgrounds. I have championed this in my work with young people throughout my career, and now as President of the 'Future Talent' Charity I am especially concerned with opening up the world of music to schoolchildren across Greater Manchester and nationally.

What do you think will be the main opportunities and challenges facing The University of Manchester in the coming years?

It is clear that the future financial support for Higher Education is far from secure; all the more need to make this University's aspirations manifest on the widest stage. Its achievements thus far make me confident that it will realise the aims of the 2020 Vision, and continue to take its place as one of the most important research universities of the world. I write this as I begin another contractual commitment to Manchester's great orchestra that will take us to 2020. The University and the Hallé are two of the city's most senior institutions. I would be thrilled and proud to play a role in both of them.