Classical Music

Concert programme

Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir & Tallinn Chamber Orchestra Arvo Pärt at 90

Tue 7 Oct 7.30pm Hall

Important information



When does the concert start and finish?

The concert begins at 7.30pm and finishes at about 9.30pm, with a 20-minute interval.



I'm running late!

Latecomers will be admitted if there is a suitable break in the performance.



Please...

Switch any watch alarms and mobile phones to silent during the performance.



Please don't ...

Take photos or recordings during the performance – save it for the curtain call.



Use a hearing aid?

Please use our induction loop – just switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall.



Need a break?

You can leave at any time and be readmitted if there is a suitable break in the performance.



Looking for refreshments?

Bars are located on Levels -1, G and 1.



Looking for the toilets?

The nearest toilets, including accessible toilets, are located on Levels -1. G and 2.



Carrying bags and coats?

Drop them off at our free cloak room on Level -1.

o Pärt at 90

Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir & Tallinn Chamber Orchestra Arvo Pärt at 90

Tue 7 Oct 7.30pm, Hall

Estonian Philharmonic
Chamber Choir
Tallinn Chamber Orchestra
Maria Listra soprano
Harry Traksmann violin
Tõnu Kaljuste conductor

Arvo Pärt Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten L'abbé Agathon Adam's Lament

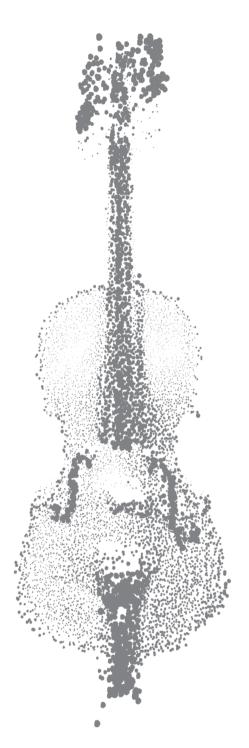
Interval 20 minutes

Ester Mägi Vesper Arvo Pärt Fratres Te Deum

Produced by the Barbican

Programme produced by Harriet Smith
All information correct at time of printing





Tonight, as part of our celebrations marking the 90th birthday of Arvo Pärt, we're delighted to welcome one of his greatest interpreters, Tõnu Kaljuste, who conducts his ensembles, the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, in a programme that ranges from inward contemplation to extrovert joy.

Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten is an intensely personal homage to a fellow artist whom Pärt admired but had never met. It was written in March 1977 and revised in January 1980, when Pärt moved to the West. Its single-movement form uses a type of canon in five layers - a technique used by Renaissance composers such as Ockeghem (in his Missa prolationum) and Josquin (in his L'homme armé Mass settings), both of whom Part studied during his research into early music. Each layer presents the same melody but in such a way that the deeper the line the slower it moves. The melodic content of the Cantus is derived entirely from a descending modal A minor scale which accumulates an additional pitch with each new phrase. Rather like Erik Satie's Three Gymnopédies, which express a single idea from three different angles, the musical surface of Cantus seems to change perspective around a central core that remains essentially motionless. The piece demonstrates how Pärt's deep understanding of early music

Arvo Pärt at 90

techniques could generate profoundly moving contemporary expression.

Pärt has remarked that it is the nature of the language being set that predetermines to a remarkable degree the specific character of each vocal piece. This is borne out by the English language setting of Litany (1994) with its stylised psalmodic invocations and responses, the use of Church Slavonic in the imposing Kanon Pokajanen (1997) and the French language setting of L'abbé Agathon (2005), which is performed this evening in the version for soprano, female choir and string orchestra. Originally written for soprano and eight cellos, the piece centres on a haunting legend from The Desert Fathers: the hermit Agathon's meeting with a leper who tests his compassion numerous times. Only after Agathon willingly passes each one does the leper reveal himself as God's angel, bestowing divine blessing. A typically Pärtian coup de théâtre arrives in a transcendent coda, in which the soprano voice ascends into celestial heights, capturing the moment earthly suffering transforms into divine grace.

Adam's Lament (2009) numbers among Pärt's most heartfelt and powerful scores. Written for choir and string orchestra, the work sets a Russian prose text by the monk Silouan the Athonite, drawn from his book Staretz Silouan. Pärt dedicates the piece to Archimandrite Sophrony, Silouan's disciple who compiled the book. The writings of St Silouan have served

as a crucial aesthetic touchstone for Pärt throughout his career, and this particular text has captured the composer's attention since the late 1980s. The work gives voice to Adam's profound sorrow for betraying his Creator and his subsequent loss of divine love and Paradise. Musically, it centres on Adam's anguished monologue, performed by male voices, framed by the mixed choir narrating Silouan's text. True to Pärt's compositional approach, every musical detail springs directly from the text's structure. As Part himself notes: While I was composing the piece, I wanted to remain as close as possible to Silouan's words and, as far as I could, to entrust myself with them, to internalise them.'

Ester Mägi (1922–2021) earned her place as the first lady of Estonian music through decades of creating works that speak directly to the soul. Her clear, restrained compositions possess an intimacy that has captivated audiences and fellow musicians alike - including her former student at the Tallinn Conservatoire, Arvo Pärt. He studied score reading under Mägi's guidance and speaks of her with deep reverence: 'I treasure Ester Mägi's works; her musical sensibility is very close to me.' Originally conceived for violin and piano or organ, then later reimagined for string orchestra, Mägi's serenely contemplative and gloriously melodic Vesper (1990, revised 1998) offers listeners an ideal entry point into her distinctive and deeply moving musical world.



Pärt's Fratres (1977/1992) is constructed from just three elements - an everpresent A-E drone, a repeating two-bar percussive motif, and a six-bar modal melody moving in parallel 10ths with a single triadic or 'tintinnabuli' voice moving between the two. The piece follows an elegantly simple structure built around eight statements of the main theme. Each one is transposed down a third from the previous one, creating a harmonic journey that moves progressively away from the home key. This journey reaches its point of maximum dissonance at the midpoint before inevitably returning home. The dynamics mirror this harmonic arc in palindromic fashion – the music fades in gradually, builds to a climax at the centre. then dissolves back to silence. The version of Fratres heard this evening, for violin, string orchestra and percussion, opens with an elaborate cadenza that decorates the theme in Baroque variation style. Despite its apparent stasis, Fratres achieves a mesmerising intensity, proving that in Pärt's hands, constraint becomes liberation.

Scored for three choirs, string orchestra, prepared piano and wind harp, Pärt prefaces the Te Deum (1985/2007) with a verse from St John's Gospel: The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth' (John, 3:8). The wind harp serves a dual purpose: structurally, it provides pedal points on D and A to mark key points in the text; symbolically, its hidden source reflects the Gospel quotation's mystery - listeners cannot discern 'whence it cometh, and whither it goeth'. What is most striking about the text setting is the surprising degree of variation in the treatment of choirs 1 (sopranos and altos) and 2 (tenors and basses). Choir 3 (all four voice types) is set at a distance, creating an antiphonal effect, with all three choirs uniting at four pivotal moments. After the final 'Amen,' the piece concludes with a spine-tingling return to verse 5 ('Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus') which is repeated six times – the number of creation and perfection in Christian symbolism.

© Peter Quinn

Arvo Pärt L'abbé Agathon

L'abbé Agathon, se rendant un jour dans la ville pour vendre de menus objets, trouva le long de la route un lépreux qui lui demanda: 'Où vas-tu ?'

L'abbé Agathon lui dit: 'A la ville vendre des objets.'

Le lépreux lui dit: 'Par charité, porte-moi là-bas.' L'ayant pris, le vieillard le porta à la ville.

L'autre lui dit alors: 'Dépose-moi à l'endroit où tu vends tes objets.' Et l'abbé Agathon fit ainsi. Quand il eut vendu un objet, le lépreux lui demanda: 'Combien l'as-tu vendu ?'

'Tant.'

'Achète-moi un gâteau.' Il l'acheta. Quand il eut vendu un autre objet, l'autre lui dit: 'Et celui-ci, combien l'as-tu vendu ?' 'Tant.'

'Achète-moi telle chose.' Le vieillard l'acheta encore. Quand il eut vendu tous ses objets et qu'il voulut partir, le lépreux lui dit: 'Tu t'en vas ?'

'Oui.'

'Je t'en prie, par charité, reporte-moi à l'endroit où tu m'as trouvé.' L'abbé Agathon prit le lépreux et le reporta à cet endroit. Celui-ci lui dit alors: 'Béni es-tu, Agathon, par le Seigneur du ciel et de la terre.'

Agathon leva les yeux mais il ne vit plus personne, car le lépreux était un ange du Seigneur venu le mettre à l'épreuve.

from the Sayings of the Desert Fathers

Adam's Lament

Adam, father of all mankind, in Paradise knew the sweetness of the love of God; and so when for his sin he was driven forth from the garden of Eden, and was deprived of the love of God, he suffered grievously and lamented with a mighty moan. And the whole desert rang with his lamentations. His soul was racked as he thought: 'I have grieved my beloved Lord.'

He sorrowed less after Paradise and the beauty thereof – he sorrowed that he was bereft of the God, which insatiably, at every instant, draws the soul to Him. The abbot Agathon, returning one day to the city to sell objects, came across on the road a leper who asked him: 'Where are you going?'
The abbot Agathon told him: 'To the city to sell objects.'
The leper says: 'By charity, carry me there.' Having lifted him, the old man carried him to the city.
The other then tells him: 'Put me down in the place where you sell your objects.' And the abbot Agathon did. When he had sold an object, the leper asked him: 'How much did you make?' 'So much.'

'Buy me a cake.' And the abbot did so. When he had sold another object, the leper asks: 'And this one, how much did you make?' 'So much.' 'Buy me such a thing.' The old man again bought it. When he had sold all his objects and he wanted to leave, the leper asked him: 'Are you leaving?' 'Yes.'

'I do pray of you, by charity, to take me back to the place where you found me.' The abbot Agathon took the leper to this place and the leper said: 'Blessed are you, Agathon, by the Lord of the sky and the earth.' Agathon looked up, but he saw no one, for the leper was an angel of the Lord who had come to test him.

Translation © Cori Ellison

In the same way the soul which has known God through the Holy Spirit but has afterwards lost grace experiences the torment that Adam suffered. There is an aching and a deep regret in the soul that has grieved the beloved Lord.

Adam pined on earth, and wept bitterly, and the earth was not pleasing to him. He was heartsick for God, and this was his cry: 'My soul wearies for the Lord, and I seek Him in tears. How should I not seek Him? When I was with him my soul was glad and at rest, and the enemy could not come nigh me. But now the spirit of evil has gained power over me, harassing and oppressing my soul, so that I weary for the Lord even unto death, and my spirit strains to God, and there is nought on earth can make me glad. Nor can my soul take comfort in any thing, but longs once more to see the Lord, that her hunger may be appeared. I cannot forget Him for a single moment, and my soul languishes after Him, and from the multitude of my afflictions I lift up my voice and cry: 'Have mercy upon me, O God. Have mercy on Thy fallen creature.'

Thus did Adam lament, and tears streamed down his face onto his beard, onto the ground beneath his feet, and the whole desert heard the sound of his moaning. The beasts and the birds were united in grief; while Adam wept because peace and love were lost to all men on account of his sin. Adam knew great grief when he was banished from Paradise, but when he saw his son Abel slain by Cain his brother, Adam's grief was even heavier. His soul was heavy, and he lamented and thought: 'Peoples and nations will descend from me, and multiply, and suffering will be their lot, and they will live in enmity and seek to slay one another.'

And his sorrow stretched wide as the sea, and only the soul that has come to know the Lord and the magnitude of His love for us can understand.

I, too, have lost grace and call with Adam: 'Be merciful unto me, O Lord! Bestow on me the spirit of humility and love.'

Te Deum

Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur.
Te aeternum Patrem omnis terra veneratur.
Tibi omnes Angeli, tibi Caeli et universae Potestates:
Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim incessabili voce proclamant:
Sanctus: Sanctus: Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra majestatis gloriae tuae.

Te gloriosus
Apostolorum chorus:
Te Prophetarum
laudabilis numerus:
Te Martyrum candidatus
laudat exercitus.
Te per orbem terrarum
sancta confitetur Ecclesia:
Patrem immensae majestatis:
Venerandum tuum verum
et unicum Filium:
Sanctum quoque
Paraclitum Spiritum.

Tu Rex gloriae, Christe.
Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.
Tu, ad liberandum suscepturus
hominem, non horruisti
Virginis uterum.

Tu, devicto mortis aculeo, aperuisti credentibus regna caelorum. Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes, in gloria Patris. Judex crederis esse venturus.

Te ergo qaesumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.

Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari.

Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic haereditati tuae. Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in aeternum. We praise thee, o God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting. To thee all Angels cry aloud, the Heavens, and all the Powers therein. To thee Cherubin, and Seraphin, continually do cry: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee;
The Father of an infinite Majesty;
Thine honourable, true, and only Son; also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.
We believe thou shalt come to be our Judge.

We therefore pray to thee, help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with thy Saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage.

Govern them, and lift them up for ever.

Per singulos dies, benedicimus te.
Et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum, et in saeculum saeculi. Dignare Domine die isto sine peccato nos custodire. Miserere nostri, Domine, miserere nostri. Fiat misericordia tua Domine super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te. In te Domine speravi: non confundar in aeternum. Amen. Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.

Ambrosian hymn

Day by day
we magnify thee;
And we praise thy Name
for ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord,
to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us,
have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten
upon us, as our trust is in thee
trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted:
let me never be confounded.
Amen. Holy, Holy, Holy.

Translation from the Book of Common Prayer (1662)



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Tõnu Kaljuste

Tõnu Kaljuste has gained international recognition with his diverse repertoire, which ranges from operas and classical symphonic works to contemporary music. He has worked with major modernist composers of Northern and Eastern Europe, such as Alfred Schnittke, György Kurtág, Krzysztof Penderecki, Giya Kancheli and Einojuhani Rautavaara, and is recognised as an expert interpreter and advocate of Estonian composers, including Arvo Pärt, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Tõnu Kõrvits, Veljo Tormis and Heino Eller.

His Pärt album Adam's Lament won a Grammy for Best Choral Performance in 2014. He has also received Grammy nominations for albums ranging from opera to symphonic music. In 2019 he won the International Classical Music Award for his recording of Pärt's symphonies with the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic Orchestra. Other prizes include a Cannes Classical Award (1999), Diapason d'Or (2000), Edison Musical Award (2000), Classic BRIT Award (2003) and Prix Caecilia (2023). He has recorded for ECM Records, Virgin Classics, BIS and Caprice Records.

In 1981 Tõnu Kaljuste founded the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, and, after a 20year break, returned as its artistic director in August 2021. He founded the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra in 1993 and returned as its artistic director between 2019 and 2024. He is the founder and artistic director of the project theatre Nargen Opera (established in 2004) and has led the Nargen Festival since 2006.

Tõnu Kaljuste has conducted operas by Haydn, including *L'isola disabitata*, *Il mondo della luna* and *Armida*, and Beethoven's *Fidelio*. He received the Estonian theatre award for the best musical production in 2024 for Philip Glass's *Hydrogen Jukebox*.



© Rasmus Kull

Maria Listra

Soprano Maria Listra is a versatile soloist with a wide repertoire that ranges from chamber music to opera and from early music to contemporary works.

She studied at Royal Holloway College, University of London, graduating in 2011.

In her native Estonia she has sung in concert series at leading venues, as well as participating in opera projects, oratorios and chamber music.

Since 2013 she has appeared frequently at the Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu. Her roles have included Zerlina (Don Giovanni), Franziska Cagliari (Wiener Blut), Mademoiselle Silberklang (Der Schauspieldirektor), Christine (The Phantom of the Opera), Johanna (Sweeney Todd),

Cosette (Les Misérables), Woman (Into the Fire) and First Woman (The Magic Flute).

In 2022 she created the role of Sinikka in the premiere of Tormis's opera Lalli, or The Man in the Middle of the Sea at the Birgitta Festival. In 2023 she took part in the premiere of Timo Steiner's opera Crisis. Both premieres were conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste, with whom she also collaborated on Nargen Opera's production of Philip Glass's Hydrogen Jukebox in 2024.

Maria Listra features on the ECM recording of Pärt's *L'abbé Agathon*, conducted by Kaljuste and released in 2023.

She has also given masterclasses, lectures and seminars.

Harry Traksmann

Violinist Harry Traksmann studied at Tallinn Music High School with Tiiu Peäske (1981–92) and subsequently at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre with Jüri Gerretz.

He has been playing with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra since 1993, becoming leader in 1996, a position that was recognised in 2008 when he won Estonia's Annual Award for Cultural Endowment.

As a soloist he has performed with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, Turku Symphony Orchestra and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra. He has played in chamber ensembles including the NYYD Ensemble, New Tallinn Trio and YXUS Ensemble.

Since 2014 he has been a teacher at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre.

Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir

The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir is one of the best-known Estonian music ensembles, performing all around the world. The choir was founded in 1981 by Tõnu Kaljuste, who was its artistic director for 20 years. He was succeeded by Paul Hillier, Daniel Reuss and Kaspars Putniņš. In August 2021 Kaljuste returned to the role.

The choir's repertoire ranges from the Baroque to music of the current century, with a special focus on Estonian composers such as Arvo Pärt, Veljo Tormis and others. The choir has received

two Grammy Awards, 16 Grammy nominations, a Gramophone Award, Diapason d'Or and a Prix Caecilia, among others. It has also been named as one of the top 10 choirs in the world by BBC Music Magazine and Classic FM.

Each season the choir gives about 70 concerts in Estonia and internationally. It has collaborated with many eminent conductors and orchestras, including Claudio Abbado, Sir Simon Rattle, Gustavo Dudamel, Marc Minkowski, the London Symphony Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Philip Glass Ensemble, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Concerto Copenhagen.

It has appeared at prestigious festivals, including the BBC Proms, Aix-en-Provence Festival and Mozartwoche. The choir has performed at venues such as the Sydney Opera House; Wiener Konzerthaus; Philharmonie de Paris; Prague Rudolfinum; Hamburg Elbphilharmonie; Hong Kong City Hall; Kennedy Center in Washington DC; Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Museum and the Lincoln Center in New York; and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, among many others.

The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir has recorded more than 80 albums for labels including ECM, Virgin Classics, Carus, Harmonia Mundi, Ondine and BIS Records.

The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir is grateful for the generous support from public funders and individual donors, who have made the choir's performance at the Barbican Hall possible. The choir would particularly like to thank Anna Gustafson, the British Council, Mr Erki Kilu and LHV Bank Limited, Ambassador H.E. Mr Sven Sakkov, Marika Goldman and the Ministry of Culture of Estonia, Michael Holley, the Exmet Group, and Nordnet for their contribution to the realisation of the choir's concerts in the United Kingdom this season. The Barbican Hall concert is honoured by the attendance of H E Mr Alar Karis, President of Estonia.

Tallinn Chamber Orchestra

The Tallinn Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1993 by Tõnu Kaljuste. Over three decades it has become one of Estonia's leading ensembles and a welcome guest on stages across Europe and worldwide. The orchestra is known for its well-balanced

programmes, stylistic sensitivity and high-level interpretation. Its repertoire includes music from the Baroque to the Romantic era, as well as placing a strong emphasis on 20thand 21st-century works, including premieres and resurrecting lesser-known pieces.

Its musicians are highly regarded string players who also perform as soloists and chamber musicians. The orchestra enjoys a longstanding collaboration with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, with which many recordings have gained international acclaim. Their 1993 release of Arvo Pärt's Te Deum (ECM) was a best-seller and was followed by recordings of works by Pärt, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Heino Eller and Tõnu Kõrvits. TCO has also recorded for Ondine, BIS. Warner Music and Alba Records.

In 2017 Ondine released Tonu Korvits's Moorland Elegies, featuring the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and TCO, which was awarded Classical Album of the Year at the Estonian Music Awards 2018.

The orchestra has appeared at major international festivals and at numerous festivals dedicated to Arvo Pärt both in Europe and around the world. Concert tours have taken the TCO to the USA, Canada, Japan, China, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, as well as to most European countries. Notable venues include Carnegie Hall and the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing.

Tõnu Kaljuste has served as chief conductor (1993-5, 1996-2001 and 2019-24). Other artistic leaders have included Juha Kanaas. and Risto Joost. It has also worked with distinguished guest conductors, including John Storgårds, Pietari Inkinen, Okko Kamu, Richard Tognetti, Sir James MacMillan, Paavo Järvi, Neeme Järvi and Kristjan Järvi, Olari Elts and Kristiina Poska.

In 2013, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra received the Estonian Music Council's Prize for Interpretation. TCO also appeared on Pärt's Adam's Lament, for which Tonu Kaljuste received a Grammy Award in 2014.

Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir

artistic leader/chief

conductor Tõnu Kaljuste

chorus master

Mai Simson

soprano Yena Choi

Annika Lõhmus * Laura Štoma Marie Roos

Mirell Jakobson Eleri-Kristel Kuimet Birke Elisabeth Jakobson

alto

Ave Hännikäinen Marianne Pärna Anni Marie Rea Annely Leinberg Kristel Marand Cätly Talvik

tenor

Danila Frantou Kaido Janke Raul Mikson * Miguel Goncalves Silva Toomas Tohert Kaarel Telgmaa Zhizhong Xie

bass

Henry Tiisma Kim Sargsyan Geir Luht Rainer Vilu Kristjan-Jaanek Mölder Aarne Talvik

* soloist in the Te Deum

Tallinn Chamber Orchestra

violin I

Harry Traksmann leader Olga Voronova Helen Västrik Yana Mägila Robert Traksmann Fred Heinoja

violin II

Elo Tepp Mari Targo Anete Ainsaar Eva-Maarja Forslund Eva-Maria Sumera

viola

Laur Eensalu Merike Heidelberg Mart Kuusma Helen Ling

cello

Leho Karin Siluan Hirvoja Maria Mutso

double bass

Andres Kunala Michele Bonfante

piano

Marrit Gerretz-Traksmann

percussion Vambola Krigul

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Zulum Elumogo
Robert Glick OBE
Jaspreet Hodgson
Nicholas Lyons
Mark Page
Anett Rideg
Jens Riegelsberger

Barbican Centre Trust

thousands who made a donation when purchasing tickets.

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Events coming up we think you might like



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Julius Eastman: A Power Great Than Tue 28 Oct. Hall





