

Classical Music
Concert programme

barbican

**Les Arts Florissants
& Amala Dianor
Company
Gesualdo Passione**

**Thu 16 Oct 7.30pm
Hall**

Important information



When does the concert start and finish?

The concert begins at 7.30pm and finishes at about 8.45pm, with no 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.

Les Arts Florissants & Amala Dianor Company Gesualdo Passione presented with Dance Umbrella

Thu 16 Oct 7.30pm, Hall

Les Arts Florissants
Paul Agnew director & tenor
Dancers of Amala Dianor
Company

Carlo Gesualdo *Tenebrae Responsoria*
(*Tenebrae Responsories*)

There is no interval

Les Arts Florissants appears
with the generous support of
Aline Foriel-Destezet

Part of Dance Umbrella Festival 2025



Produced by the Barbican

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



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Tonight the esteemed early-music ensemble Les Arts Florissants, under its co-director Paul Agnew, combines forces with the groundbreaking Amala Dianor Company in *Gesualdo Passione*, a work that explores one of music history's most compelling and original figures, setting him in a context that is entirely fresh.

Interview with Paul Agnew and Amala Dianor

Interviewed in turn, Paul Agnew, musical co-director of Les Arts Florissants, and choreographer Amala Dianor share their thoughts about their work on the *Tenebrae Responsoria* by Carlo Gesualdo.

You have extensive experience of the music of Gesualdo. What do the 'Tenebrae Responsoria' mean for you?

Paul Agnew: Gesualdo published this work at the end of his life, although he had composed it some years earlier. This isn't the case of a musical testament but rather the expression of a sincere and devout faith, bound up with the composer's family origins. We must not forget that his uncle, Carlo Borromeo, was an eminent cardinal, in whose honour the same first name was given to Gesualdo, who was the second son in his family. This meant that Gesualdo was destined for a religious career, in accordance with the custom of

the times. It was only upon the death of his older brother that, against his wishes, he was obliged to take responsibility for the family line and to marry – with some haste. As we know, his choice of wife ended tragically: caught in *flagrante delicto*, she was killed by Gesualdo alongside her lover. Something we need to bear in mind about Gesualdo's music is that, unlike the other composers of his time, his aristocratic status and personal fortune meant that he did not have to publish his works in order to earn a living but was able to bring them to the light of day through a conviction of their worth. The *Tenebrae Responsoria* are very much bound up with the feelings of guilt that haunted Gesualdo after the murder of his wife. Indeed, several years before his death, the composer commissioned a large-scale altarpiece painting entitled *Il Perdono* ('The Pardon').

For you, in this very dark-seeming score, is there also light to be found?

Paul Agnew: Absolutely – the light of a pure and unforced act of faith that does not stem from any sense of obligation. Thanks to his status, being dependent neither on a patron nor on commissions, Gesualdo is one of the first modern composers. He is entirely free. In the *Tenebrae Responsoria*, he is able to allow himself to develop a complex chromatic idiom that was utterly unthinkable for his peers. And his decision to publish the work before his death lends it

great significance. It is a testimonial: extremely powerful as well as luminous.

A singer's instrument is their body. How do you see the physical involvement of the singers in this show?

Paul Agnew: The body is essential for any singer intimately engaged in the expression of music. In *Gesualdo Passione*, the fact that the singers know the score by heart allows them to be physically involved in the movement in the same way as the dancers are. In this way, the text is expressed on several levels – not solely through the music but also through the body. It's a real challenge: our mission being to reach the deepest level of expression possible.

How does this music resonate for you?

Amala Dianor: This is the very first time that I've worked with a piece of music from the Renaissance. It's a magnificent score and all the more poignant for its lack of instrumental accompaniment. The pure *a cappella* singing is a source of fascination for me. I've not previously choreographed to this style of music, but this is definitely something that corresponds to my eagerness to take on challenges outside my comfort zone. I love them! Here, with Gesualdo, my particular focus is a kind of tension that emanates from the music and transposes itself to the dancers' bodies. The work concerns the Passion of Christ, a central theme for which our interpretation is very much



connected to society today. The dancers I've invited to take part in this project all hail from different backgrounds – from as far afield as Burkina Faso, Rome and Senegal. They come from the worlds of classical ballet and krump (an African American street style), and this diversity allows us to pose the question of faith and its representation in a distinctive way, based on the personal and professional backgrounds of everyone involved.

The last days of Christ and his Passion evoke very powerful ideas of the body and of bodily suffering leading to the soul's liberation. Will such ideas be expressed by the dancers in your production?

Amala Dianor: That's our objective. The whole focus of our work lies in how we can express and allude to Christ's suffering through our bodies. And the meaning this has for today's world is what we're seeking to find. As we move towards the crucifixion, the music seems very dark, but there is always light perceptible – divine light, a source of light that we strive towards.

Will the dancers and singers be interacting on stage?

Amala Dianor: Yes, absolutely, and that's the hallmark of the show. The singers are physically involved in the same way the dancers are. They're an integral part of the choreography, singing while in movement. At the end of our first week of working together, I was incredibly surprised by the physical involvement of the singers, who are performing the music by heart. Not having to look at their music frees them totally in their movement. The result is breathtaking.

Interviews by Olivier Lexa;
Translation © Robert Sargant

Carlo Gesualdo (1566–1613): Tenebrae Responsoria (Tenebrae Responsories)

Responsories for Maundy Thursday

Responsory 1: In monte oliveti

Responsory 4: Amicus meus

Responsory 5: Judas mercator pessimus

Responsory 8: Una hora

Responsories for Good Friday

Responsory 4: Tamquam ad latronem

Responsory 5: Tenebrae factae sunt

Responsories for Holy Saturday

Responsory 1: Sicut ovis

Responsory 5: O vos omnes

Responsory 9: Sepulto Domino

Christus factus est

Miserere

In 1611, Don Carlo Gesualdo had his last compositions – the Fifth and Sixth Books of Madrigals and the *Tenebrae Responsories* – published by the Neapolitan publisher Carlino, whose presses he had installed in his *castello*. The collection of *Tenebrae Responsories* comprises 27 responsories and a *Miserere* for six voices, composed for Matins of Holy Week. These lengthy penitential offices graced a spectacular ceremony which had been reformatted by the Counter-Reformation. The liturgy of each vigil is organised into three nocturns, each comprising three readings, or lessons, drawn from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Each reading, generally chanted, is preceded by a responsory, a sort of musical illumination which, since the Renaissance, has taken a mainly polyphonic form. During the lessons, the candles are gradually extinguished, plunging the congregation into darkness (*tenebrae*), hence the striking and evocative name of this particular office.

Such a liturgy, full of graphic and dramatic texts expressing contrition, could not but have inspired a composer ravaged by remorse. Gesualdo had become notorious for having had his first wife and her lover murdered, and then for his abusive behaviour towards his second wife. Until his death he was tormented by his inner demons and plagued by masochistic impulses, as several accounts

(often posthumous) describe. One of them, by Don Ferrante della Marra, from 1632, relates that Gesualdo was 'assailed and afflicted by a vast horde of demons that would rob him of all peace for days on end unless 10 or 12 young men, whom he kept close to him for this express purpose, beat him violently three times a day'.

The versicles of the *Responsories* paraphrase the Passion and agony of Christ, inviting a veritable meditation on death, guilt, repentance and redemption. To accompany these words heavy with meaning – which could only have elicited a singular resonance in the depths of his soul – the Prince of Venosa created music of elaborate and erudite polyphony. This was emblematic of the highly idiosyncratic style that he cultivated throughout his tormented existence: compositions at once visionary and conservative, eccentric in idiom and conventional in form. Within these rigorous contrapuntal structures, chromaticisms abound, employed to signify Christ's sacrifice (*Tristis est anima mea*), the betrayal of Judas (*Judas mercator pessimus*) or the inescapable fate of humankind (*O vos omnes*). In conformity with the canonical rules of counterpoint, the dissonances are carefully prepared for but always startling, called upon to evoke the agony of the crucified Christ (*Vinea mea electa*) or the cry of the abandoned Son (*Tenebrae factae sunt*). The words and ideas are vividly illustrated in Gesualdo's music: the rending of the veil in the Temple (*Velum templis scissum*) and the deposition of the body into the tomb (*Aestimatus sum cum descendentibus in lacum*) are represented by descending ornamental spirals. Nonetheless, these rhetorical effects are devoid of all bombast but are realised with a true sense of inner meaning. The criss-crossing of voices gives rise to a musical discourse as erudite as it is eccentric, imbued with a mysticism darkened by anguish and unconfessed doubts. Illuminating this masterpiece is a soft and meditative twilit glow shot through by flashes of pain and disquiet, a *chiaroscuro* realm whose inner depths are as poignant as they are unfathomable.

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Translation © Robert Sargant





© Oscar Ortega

Paul Agnew director & tenor

An artist of international renown and an accomplished teacher, British tenor and conductor Paul Agnew has made his mark on all the main international stages as a specialist in the music of the 17th and 18th centuries and as the performer of choice for the high-tenor roles of the French Baroque.

After studying at Magdalen College, Oxford, he met William Christie in 1992 and subsequently became a close collaborator of the conductor and his ensemble Les Arts Florissants, while continuing to perform with other conductors such as Marc Minkowski, Ton Koopman, Paul McCreesh, Jean-Claude Malgoire, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Philippe Herreweghe and Emmanuelle Haïm.

In 2007 he began conducting certain projects for Les Arts Florissants, including

a Monteverdi madrigal cycle, which saw performances throughout Europe, as well as an award-winning set of recordings. He has been artistic director of the Festival de Printemps – Les Arts Florissants, which takes place in churches throughout the region of the Vendée, since its creation in 2017, and is co-director of Le Jardin des Voix, Les Arts Florissants' academy for young singers. This interest in the training of new generations of musicians has led him to conduct the Orchestre Français des Jeunes Baroque, European Union Baroque Orchestra and the European Baroque Academy in Ambronay. As a guest conductor, he regularly works with orchestras such as the Staatsphilharmonie Nürnberg, Staatskapelle Dresden, Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin.

Recent projects with Les Arts Florissants include a concert cycle of Gesualdo (also recorded for Harmonia Mundi), Bach's *St John Passion*, the concert series 'Bach, A Life in Music', Handel's *Messiah*, Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* and *Gesualdo Passione*, created with choreographer Amala Dianor. He also conducted new productions of Rameau's *Platée* at the Semperoper Dresden, Göteborg Opera and Garsington Opera.

Highlights of this season include presenting 'Bach, A Life in Music' at Wigmore Hall and the Philharmonie de Paris, Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* in Spain, *Gesualdo Passione* on a French tour and here at the Barbican, Handel's *Rinaldo* at the Philharmonie de Paris and a new production of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* at Monteverdi Festival Cremona.



Miriam Allan soprano

Soprano Miriam Allan has performed throughout the world, from her native Australia to Japan by way of Singapore and festivals in Europe and North America. On the operatic stage, she has had regular solo engagements with Pinchgut Opera, including the roles of Isifile (Cavalli's *Il Giasone*) and Costanza (Vivaldi's *Griselda*). She sang Galatea (Handel's *Acis and Galatea*) at the Innsbruck Festival, also performing roles in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris and Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York. Other roles include Queen of the Night (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*), Musica and Proserpina (Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*) and roles in Rameau's *Dardanus*. Miriam Allan has sung with conductors including William Christie, Stephen Layton and Laurence Cummings, as well as with Philippe Herreweghe and the Collegium Vocale Gent, Paul Agnew and Les Arts Florissants, Jonathan Cohen and Les Arts Florissants, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists, Masaaki Suzuki and Bach Collegium Japan, Nicholas Collon and Aurora Orchestra, and Lars Ulrik Mortensen and Concerto Copenhagen.

Other orchestras she has appeared with include the BBC Philharmonic, Melbourne

Symphony Orchestra, Les Violons du Roy, Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Academy of Ancient Music. She has also appeared at Lincoln Center in New York, the Musikverein in Vienna, Sydney Opera House, here at the Barbican Centre, Chapelle Royale de Versailles and in Mozart opera galas at the Royal Ballet and Opera, Covent Garden, and the Salle Pleyel in Paris. Her recordings include the complete books of madrigals by Monteverdi with Les Arts Florissants under Paul Agnew, and Mozart's Requiem with the Leipzig Chamber Orchestra. Broadcasts have included a recital of Handel and Purcell for ABC Classic (Australia) as well as live relays from Pinchgut Opera.



© Oxana Guryanova

Hannah Morrison soprano

Icelandic-Scottish soprano Hannah Morrison is an experienced specialist in historical performance practice. Her concert engagements have taken her across Europe, North America and Japan. She has appeared with conductors including Paul Agnew, Hansjörg Albrecht, Frieder Bernius, Herbert Blomstedt, Peter Dijkstra, Ádám Fischer, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Philippe Herreweghe, Václav Luks, Christophe Rousset, Masaaki Suzuki and Duncan Ward. She has performed at venues such as the Philharmonie de

Paris, Royal Albert Hall and Wigmore Hall, Musikverein in Vienna, NHK Hall in Tokyo, as well as at leading festivals including Tanglewood and the Bachfest in Leipzig, with ensembles and choirs such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, English Baroque Soloists, PhilZuid, Gli Angeli Genève, Echo du Danube, Holland Baroque, Ricercar Consort, B'Rock Orchestra, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Tafelmusik and Hathor Consort. Hannah Morrison's extensive repertoire ranges from the Renaissance and Baroque (Monteverdi, Gesualdo, Bach, Buxtehude, Purcell and Handel) to the Classical and Romantic periods with works such as Haydn's *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, Mozart's Mass in C minor, Mendelssohn's *St Paul* and Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri*.

Highlights this season include a recording of music by Zelenka with Musikpodium Stuttgart under Frieder Bernius, concerts of madrigals in Canada and the USA with Paul Agnew, and projects with the Hathor Consort. Aside from her concert activities, Hannah Morrison is a dedicated choral teacher and conductor.



© Petrus

Mélodie Ruvio contralto

After 13 years with the Sotto Voce children's choir, Mélodie Ruvio entered the

Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris where she was a member of the Jeune Choeur de Paris established by Laurence Equilbey, and where she obtained her Diploma in Singing. She made a notable debut in *Le Carnaval et la Folie* by Destouches at the Académie d'Ambronay under Hervé Niquet, a success that led to a number of further roles, including Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* and *Disinganno* in *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* by Handel, Third Lady (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*), Fedra and Venere in Cavalli's *L'Egisto*, Venere in Monteverdi's *Il ballo delle ingrate*, Mastrilla and Ninetta in Offenbach's *La Périchole*, under conductors such as Marc Minkowski, David Reiland, Roberto Forés Veses, Vincent Dumestre, Joël Suhubiette and Facundo Agudin.

In sacred repertoire, Mélodie Ruvio is regularly invited to perform in works by Bach, Vivaldi, Scarlatti, Charpentier, Mozart and Mendelssohn, with conductors including William Christie, Paul Agnew, Françoise Lasserre, Rinaldo Alessandrini, Nathalie Stutzmann, Damien Guillon and Andreas Spering, and at festivals such as Ambronay, La Chaise-Dieu, Sablé, Musikfest Bremen, Misteria Paschalia, and Actus Humanus.

Her recent engagements have included Mozart's Requiem and *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *The Seven Last Words of Christ* under William Christie with Les Arts Florissants, a programme of arias and ensembles by Monteverdi, Cavalli and Sartorio with Les Épopées in Cremona, and Monteverdi at the Crete Senesi Festival in Italy with Philippe Herreweghe.



Sean Clayton tenor

Tenor Sean Clayton studied at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with Julian Pike, furthering his studies at the Royal College of Music with Neil Mackie. In 2009 he was invited to participate in Le Jardin des Voix, Les Arts Florissants' programme for young artists directed by William Christie. Since then he has performed in works by Scarlatti and Charpentier, the eight books of madrigals by Monteverdi, as well as madrigals by Gesualdo, at numerous venues internationally, including the Opéra-Comique (Paris), Aix-en-Provence Festival, Bolshoi Theatre (Moscow), Brooklyn Academy of Music and Lincoln Center (New York), Royal Albert Hall, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Auditorio Nacional de Música (Madrid), Palau de la Música (Barcelona) and Seoul Arts Centre.

He has sung with numerous Baroque ensembles, notably Le Poème Harmonique with Vincent Dumestre, Pygmalion with Raphaël Pichon, Correspondances with Sébastien Daucé, La Grande Chapelle with Albert Recasens and BachPlus with Bart Naessens. Sean Clayton is also a member of Ensemble Perspectives, a vocal group comprising five singers who explore the diversity of the *cappella* repertoire, from Thomas Tallis to the Beatles by way of

György Ligeti and Duke Ellington. In recent years Sean Clayton's opera engagements have included Neptune (Rameau's *Naïs*) and Don Carlos and Tacmas (Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*) with Il Giardino d'Amore and Stefan Plewniak, Shepherd (Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*) with Les Arts Florissants and Paul Agnew, Blindman (in a staged production of Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle*) with Nico and the Navigators, Sailor (Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*) with English Touring Opera, and Aurelius (Purcell's *King Arthur*) with Lautten Compagnie. He has also sung in *Theodora* (Handel), *Les Fêtes vénitiennes* (Campra), *La naissance d'Osiris* (Rameau), *Actéon* (Charpentier), *The Fairy Queen* (Purcell), *Susannah* (Carlisle Floyd), *The Lighthouse* (Peter Maxwell Davies) and *The Thieving Magpie* (Rossini).



Edward Grint bass-baritone

British bass-baritone Edward Grint studied at King's College, Cambridge, and at the Royal College of Music. He has won prizes at the Innsbruck Cesti Competition and the Handel Competition in London. A sought-after concert artist in Baroque repertoire, he has worked with numerous orchestras and ensembles such as The King's Consort, London Mozart Players, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London Philharmonic,

BBC Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia and Choir, Royal Choral Society, Gabrieli Consort & Players and Dunedin Consort. Notable engagements have included at the Salzburg Festival, Cadogan Hall, the Handel Festival in Halle, Buxton Festival and Three Choirs Festival. He has performed on tour with Les Arts Florissants, also singing in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and Charpentier's *Actéon* with the Early Opera Company, Handel's *Messiah* with Irish Baroque Orchestra and The Hanover Band, a programme of Baroque music at Wigmore Hall with La Nuova Musica, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* with Oxford Bach Choir, and Bach's *St John Passion* with Les Musiciens du Louvre in Gdańsk and Aix-en-Provence.

Edward Grint's recent and forthcoming engagements include Bach cantatas with René Jacobs, Britten's *Billy Budd* at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* with Cappella Mediterranea, Purcell's *King Arthur* with Early Opera Company, Purcell odes with Le Banquet Céleste and his debut with The English Concert. As well as Gesualdo *Passione*, he also tours with Les Arts Florissants in Bach cantatas and Carissimi's *Jephthe*, also giving concerts with Collegium Vocale Gent and Irish Baroque Orchestra.



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Amala Dianor choreographer

An acclaimed self-taught hip-hop dancer, Amala Dianor trained at the Centre National de Danse Contemporaine in Angers, where he graduated in 2002. In 2011 he won two prizes at the (Re)connaissance Competition for his first choreographed work, *Crossroad*. In the following year he founded his own company, with which he has developed a fusion of different dance styles offering a poetic exploration of otherness. He has collaborated with a range of musicians, visual artists, actors, writers and calligraphers. Since 2014 he has worked closely with electro-soul composer Awir Leon who provides music for his shows.

In 2021, in collaboration with visual artist Grégoire Korganow, he developed a series of dance films entitled *CinéDanse*. In the following year he presented the collaborative project *Siguifin* in Europe, highlighting the creativity of artists from West Africa, also devising a new work for the South African urban dance company Via Katlehong, which received its French premiere at the Avignon Festival. Amala Dianor created two new projects with Awir Leon and Grégoire Korganow in 2023: *Love You Drink Water*, a hybrid of concert, video installation and dance piece, and *DUB*, a large-scale work for 11 dancers from around the world.

Last year he directed a new piece for two dancers, entitled *M&M*, bringing together the worlds of dancehall and contemporary dance. He also accepted a commission from the LOOP youth network, creating a piece called *Coquilles* specially intended for nursery and kindergarten children.

He is an enthusiastic participant in promotional activities of his works with the public: meetings, talks, DJ sets, relaxed evenings, workshops with amateur dancers and masterclasses with professional dancers. He also leads a number of collaborative projects with pre-professional dancers in France and West Africa.



Alicia Seybiya Gomis

assistant choreographer

Born in Dakar, Alicia Seybiya Gomis began her career in urban dance, participating in the Festa2H Festival in 2009 organised by the Africulturban association in her home town. In the following year she took part in the opening event of the World Festival of Black Arts (FESMAN) as an interpretative dancer under the artistic direction of choreographer Georges Momboye. From 2011 to 2015 she pursued her studies in Senegal and internationally, including a course in digital dance organised by Trias Culture

(Dakar), a three-month study of traditional and contemporary dance at Germaine Acogny's École des Sables (in Toubab Dialaw, Senegal) and a course in mask dance at Kër Thioissane (Dakar). In 2013 she completed two further courses in contemporary dance: at the École des Sables, with choreographers Helge Letonja and Gilles Jobin, and with the Compagnie Gnagamix in Mali. In 2014 she took part in 'The March', a course held at the École des Sables, also studying with Salia Sanou at the La Termitière dance development centre in Burkina Faso. In the following year she attended a course held at the Centre National de Danse in Paris.

Alicia Seybiya Gomis has also taken part in the 'Rendez-vous chez nous' Festival in Burkina Faso with the JUMP collective (United Youth for Positive Movement), as well as in four editions of the Battle National hip-hop festival in Senegal where she has twice been a prize-winner. She has also participated in the *Afrique en trois temps* project launched by choreographer Amala Dianor. In 2019 she was a participant in the Fari Foni Waati Festival in Bamako (Mali) with the Ciel K Company.



Elena Thomas dancer

Originally from Nancy, Elena Thomas trained at the École Nationale Supérieure de Danse de Marseille and at the Conservatoire National de Lyon where she began to perform with Jeune Ballet. In 2007 she joined the Europa Danse company, then the Ballet National du Rhin in Mulhouse where she appeared in works choreographed by Mathieu Guilhaumon, Jo Strømgren, Alexander Ekman and Maurice Béjart, among others. In 2009 she settled in Spain to work with the LaMov company in Zaragoza where, as part of a choreographic collaboration, she encountered the Manchester-based Company Chameleon, which she then joined in 2012. In the following year she became a member of National Dance Company Wales in Cardiff.

She has worked with numerous choreographers, including Roy Assaf, Johan Inger and Marcos Morau. Since returning to France in 2018, Elena Thomas has worked as an independent performer, collaborating with a range of companies and artists, including Amala Dianor (in *The Falling Stardust*), Jérémy Tran, David Llari and Philippe Lefeuvre. She has also taken part in a number of operatic productions, at

the opera houses of Versailles and Marseille as well as at the Opéra Garnier, also working as assistant on various projects.



Damiano Bigi dancer

Born in Rome in 1991, Damiano Ottavio Bigi has performed across a broad spectrum of companies and venues, from the Opera di Roma to the Dimitris Papaioannou Company, as well as a number of companies in France, including the Centre Chorégraphique National de Nantes directed by Claude Brumachon.

From 2005 to 2017 he was a member of Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal, with which he continues to collaborate to this day. In 2010 he took part in the film *Pina*, directed by Wim Wenders. With director Alessandra Paoletti, he founded the Fritz Company Bigi Paoletti in 2020, staging their shows at leading festivals in Europe and further afield. He was awarded the Premio Capri Danza International in 2016 and the Premio Sfera d'Oro per la Danza in 2020.



Julien Derouault with the Théâtre du Corps, and *Blind* (2023) with Compagnie Konzi. Today, he represents the African continent in various competitions at the international level (including in Belgium, the Netherlands, Russia and Côte d'Ivoire) and is a member of La Mer Noire company in Senegal.

Dexter Bravo dancer

Originally from Liberia, Dexter Bravo (born Pierre-Claver Belleka) went into exile at a very young age in various African countries as a result of the political conflicts affecting the continent. In 2006 his discovery of krump allowed him to develop an individual gestural style, taking his inspiration from the concepts of animality, spirituality and a range of experimental dance forms.

After receiving professional dance training from the Sunu Street hip-hop project in Senegal, his progressive involvement in performance and choreography opened up new artistic disciplines and horizons for him.

He has since participated in a range of notable international projects in France, Denmark and South Africa, including for well-known brands (such as Guinness and H&M), and he reached the semi-final of the *Africa Has Incredible Talent* competition in 2016 and then the Lille selection for *Battle Opéra*, held at the Palais Garnier and adjudicated by choreographer Marie-Claude Pietragalla.

Pierre-Claver Belleka has also performed in dance works such as *Birth* (2019) by Grichka Caruge with Compagnie Art-Track, *Dans la solitude d'un champ de coton* (2022) by Marie-Claude Pietragalla and



Clément Nikiema dancer

Born in Dabou in Côte d'Ivoire, interpretative dancer Clément Nikiema started out as a practitioner of urban hip-hop dance before attending the Irène Tassembédo Dance School in 2016. While still a student he presented a short dance piece as part of the new talent platform at the International Festival of Dance in Ouagadougou (FIDO), Burkina Faso, in 2017 and 2018, also spending six weeks taking part in the international 'Danses Noires' course at the École des Sables in Toubab Dialaw in Senegal. In 2019 Irène Tassembédo choreographed the duet *Des maux de nous* for him and Évariste Tassembédo. That year he also took part in the international 'Syta Danse' course in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso.

He graduated in 2020 and joined the Irène Tassembédo Company, with which

he performed in the dance piece *Yiki Boléro*. In 2021 he presented his solo choreographic project *Bii Yénd* at FIDO, also attending a course at the Pavillon Noir in Aix-en-Provence with Ballet Preljocaj, and joining Émilie Lalande's *Hors Cadre* project. In 2023 he took part in the premiere of Bernard Brown's dance work *What Would an Unbroken Lineage Look Like?* in Burkina Faso and the USA. He has also held a research residency for the dance piece *Vauriens*, a collaborative production between Burkina Faso, Belgium and France.



Xavier Lazarini lighting designer

Lighting designer Xavier Lazarini has worked across a broad range of genres. In theatre he has collaborated with Dieudonné Niangouna in productions including *Les Inepties volantes* (2009, Avignon Festival), *Shéda* (2013, Avignon Festival) and *Trust Shakespeare Alléluia* (2019, MC93 Bobigny). He has also been involved in projects at the intersection of theatre, dance and circus with Mélissa Von Vépy and Compagnie Happés in *Miroir, miroir* (2009), *VielLeicht* (2013), *J'ai horreur du printemps* (2014) and *Noir M1* (2018).

Xavier Lazarini's key area of activity is contemporary dance, particularly with the Fattoumi-Lamoureux Company, but

also with Franck Il Louise, Radhouane El Meddeb, Xavier Lot, Hafiz Dhaou & Aïcha M'Barek, Amala Dianor, and Frédéric Deslias. From 1998 to 2005 he worked as assistant and stage manager with the Josef Nadj Company at the National Choreographic Centre in Orléans.

Eager to develop his work in the urban environment, his interests broadened to encompass architectural and museum lighting, and he has worked as lighting designer for the Futuroscope in Poitiers in 2007, the General Electric building at the 2008 Peking Olympic Games, the Luxembourg and USA pavilions at Expo 2010 Shanghai, and the Museum of Resistance in Limoges, also in 2010. His other work has encompassed the Gnaoua d'Essaouira and Casablanca festivals in Morocco as well as designing the lighting for fashion shows and concerts. Additionally, he pursues a career in the technical domain, including working as Technical Director for Caroline Guiela Nguyen and the Les Hommes Approximatifs Company since 2017, also taking part in training courses in lighting for young choreographers and educators.

Amala Dianor Company

Founded in 2012, Kaplan | Amala Dianor Company today has 21 dance works and six short *CinéDanse* videos in its repertoire. The company gives on average some 90 performances annually, in France and elsewhere in the world, with the support of a number of prestigious institutions. Kaplan | Amala Dianor Company is subsidised by the French Government and the Regional Office of Cultural Affairs of the Pays de la Loire as well as the City of Angers. Since 2020 it has benefited from the support of the BNP Paribas Foundation and is regularly assisted in its projects by the Institut Français and the Office National de Diffusion Artistique (ONDA).

Les Arts Florissants

Les Arts Florissants is an ensemble of singers and instrumentalists specialising in the performance of Baroque music on period instruments which is renowned the world over. It was founded in 1979 by the Franco-American harpsichordist and conductor William

Christie, and it has played a pioneering role in the revival of a Baroque repertoire that had long been neglected (including countless rediscoveries). Since 2007, the ensemble has also been conducted by Paul Agnew, who became co-director in 2019.

Since the 1987 production of Lully's *Atys* at the Opéra Comique in Paris, it has been on the opera stage that Les Arts Florissants has enjoyed some of its greatest successes, presenting works by both well-known and lesser-known composers and working with leading stage directors.

Les Arts Florissants enjoys an equally high profile in the concert hall, as illustrated by its many acclaimed concert or semi-staged performances of operas and oratorios, its secular and sacred chamber-music programmes and larger-scale works, including *grands motets* and oratorios.

The ensemble has an award-winning discography of nearly 100 recordings (CD and DVD) directed by William Christie and Paul Agnew, many on Harmonia Mundi.

In recent years, Les Arts Florissants has launched several education programmes for young musicians. The Academy of Le Jardin des Voix was created in 2002, and is held every two years and has already brought a substantial number of new singers into the limelight. The Arts Flo Juniors programme, launched in 2007, enables conservatory students to join the orchestra and chorus for the length of a production, from the first day of rehearsals up to the final performance. In addition, there is a partnership between William Christie, Les Arts Florissants and New York's Juilliard School of Music, which since 2007 has allowed a fruitful artistic exchange between the US and France. Launched in 2021, a yearly programme of masterclasses is led by William Christie and Paul Agnew in Thiré (in the Vendée, Pays de la Loire) offers young professionals short working sessions to help them improve their skills.

In 2012 William Christie and Les Arts Florissants created the annual festival *Dans les Jardins de William Christie*, in partnership with the Conseil départemental de la Vendée. In addition, Les Arts Florissants is working with the endowment fund *Les Jardins de Musique de William Christie* towards the creation of a permanent cultural venue in Thiré. In 2017,

following a decision by the French Ministry of Culture, Les Arts Florissants and the endowment fund *Les Jardins de Musique de William Christie* were awarded the national label 'Centre culturel de Rencontre', which distinguishes projects associating creation, patrimony and transmission. In 2018, Les Arts Florissants became the Foundation *Les Arts Florissants – William Christie*.

Les Arts Florissants receives financial support from the State, the Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs (DRAC), the Département de la Vendée and the Région Pays de la Loire. The Selz Foundation is their Principal Sponsor. The American Friends of Les Arts Florissants are Major Sponsors. Les Arts Florissants has been artist in residence at the Philharmonie de Paris since 2015.

Dance Umbrella

Dance Umbrella is a London festival 47 years in the making and moving with the times.

Every year its festival ignites London and online with the next generation of trailblazing artists. Since 1978 it has been an international home for dance across a global city, presenting more than 1,000 artists from 45 countries to over one million people. It has brought outstanding dance to more than 145 venues throughout London; from the high-profile stages of Sadler's Wells, Southbank Centre and Barbican to local arts centres – and taking in the more unexpected locations of canal boats, ice rinks and carpark rooftops in between.

Since 2020 it has also given online audiences the chance to experience the festival through a curated programme including dance films and artist encounters.

Dance Umbrella is a commissioner of new work, co-producing with partners based in the UK and abroad, to invest in the next wave of international choreographic talent.

Appointed in 2021, Dance Umbrella's Artistic Director/CEO Freddie Opoku-Addaie's vision for the festival builds on its 46-year track record of commissioning and producing excellent work. This new chapter introduces a programme that puts emerging and diverse talent at its heart, reflecting the global identity of its London home.

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Julius Eastman: A Power Great Than

Tue 28 Oct, Hall



Hermes Experiment: Let us be a Mighty River

Sun 7 Dec, Conservatory



Book now at **barbican.org.uk**