



Le grand Inconnu The Sixteen

Monday 14 October 2019 7.30pm, Hall

Arvo Pärt Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Britten Hymn to St Cecilia

Sir James MacMillan The Sun Danced
(UK premiere)

interval 20 minutes

Symphony No 5, 'Le grand Inconnu'
(Commissioned by the Genesis Foundation
for Harry Christophers and The Sixteen:
London premiere)

Mary Bevan soprano

The Sixteen

Genesis Sixteen

Britten Sinfonia

Harry Christophers conductor

6.15pm: Pre-concert talk

Sir James MacMillan in conversation
with Sara Mohr-Pietsch; free to ticket holders

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Programme produced by Harriet Smith;
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Welcome

A warm welcome to tonight's performance, which presents two major works by Sir James MacMillan, in a celebration of his 60th birthday. He is a composer known for the directness of his expression allied to a powerfully compelling musical language.

His Fifth Symphony, 'Le grand Inconnu', was commissioned by the Genesis Foundation and premiered at this year's Edinburgh International Festival by The Sixteen under Harry Christophers. The composer has described it as his 'choral symphony ... an attempt to explore the mystery ... of the Holy Spirit'. Alongside this new piece is *The Sun Danced*, which receives its UK premiere this evening. Again, the inspiration is religious, combining texts in English, Latin and Portuguese.

Benjamin Britten was just as inspired by the written word and his *Hymn to St Cecilia* revels in the beauty and playfulness of W H Auden's poetry. It's perhaps no wonder the composer was particularly drawn to St Cecilia, having been born on her feast day – 22 November.

Arvo Pärt is often described as a mystic minimalist and the purity of his music has proved immensely powerful. His *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten* is a heartfelt elegy, composed a year after the British composer's death in 1976.

It promises to be a remarkable evening. I hope you enjoy it.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

Arvo Pärt (born 1935)

Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten (1977)

Pärt's new musical language fuses an austere minimalistic diatonic tonal vocabulary with imitations and adaptations of the evocative tolling of bells – the quintessential sound of religious ritual, particularly in the Russian Orthodox Church, which Pärt joined in the 1970s. Striving to create a musically notated imitation of the rich composite of overtones produced by bells, Pärt worked out what he called his 'tintinnabular' style (from the Latin *tintinnabulum*, meaning 'bell'). One of the purest examples of this mode of writing, in the sense that its effect is achieved with a bare minimum of material, is *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*. The chiming of a *pianissimo* bell (*campana*) breaks the silence and opens up a sacred space rich in liturgical overtones. What follows is essentially a mensuration canon on a descending A minor scale (Aeolian rather than melodic or harmonic minor) and its attendant tintinnabular pitches – notes belonging to the A minor triad below and above the scalar movement. It has five layers of tempo, each entering in turn, and each one an octave lower and twice as slow as the one before. The double basses enter last, sixteen times slower than the first violins.

The tintinnabular style and the canonic technique question the temporal-spatial nature of music. The vast majority of music we listen to is tonal, and the triad is part of the complex hierarchy of chordal relations that form the musical language we know as tonality. In the context of these relationships the triad is employed to do this and that, to lead here

and there, and to resolve the resulting tensions. By contrast, triads in the tintinnabular style are divested of dynamic agency; more specifically, the dissonances that would usually be heard working against the chordal framework do not create friction. Liberated from the constraints of voice-leading and the need to guide us towards the stable tonic, the shifting chords eschew the potential energy of dissonance. Rather than straining to achieve resolution, they exist in and for themselves – statically, as it were – simply creating an envelope, or womb, of sound. As listeners we are persuaded not to hear the sonic present as a point to which and from which the music drives in fulfilment of a tonal teleology, but as the point at which all exists in the fullness of its sounding: there is no past and no future, just the eternal present. The temporally directed motion of tonal hierarchies becomes a spatial hypostatization of the sounding moment.

In a similar vein, Pärt sets in motion a scalar canon that could theoretically continue *ad infinitum*, once again ingeniously avoiding any teleological closure. It is only the limitations of the instruments' ranges that set a limit to the spatial voyaging and bring the work to a close. If we leave behind the emotional drive of time and allow our awareness of the reverberating space to be the primary mode of perception, the music becomes, as mentioned above, a vehicle of sustained presentness.

Programme note © Hugo Ticciati

Benjamin Britten (1913–76)

Hymn to St Cecilia, Op 27 (1942)

Julie Cooper & Kirsty Hopkins sopranos

Edward McMullan alto

Mark Dobell tenor

Rob Macdonald bass

From his earliest days, Benjamin Britten was always brilliantly, intelligently alert to the potential of texts. Whether it was William Blake or Wilfred Owen, Shakespeare, Donne or Tennyson, his choice of texts ranged widely. And 'Anonymous' racks up more credits than any other name in the extensive index of Britten's authorly accomplices.

The very first sign that Britten was destined for great things musically came when his mother, with due serendipity, gave birth to him on the feast day of the patron saint of music. A *Hymn to St Cecilia* was perhaps inevitable from someone born on such an auspicious day, and after a false start in 1935 (he couldn't find the right text at that time), his debt to Cecilia was paid when the BBC Singers premiered a new choral work in November 1942.

It turned out to be the last, and perhaps most accomplished collaboration with W H Auden, a figure who had loomed large in Britten's life, creatively, intellectually and psychologically, since the mid-1930s. Auden's richly layered triptych of linked poems, full of his characteristic verbal bravado, generated an extended three-part motet from the 28-year-old Britten that was no less inspired.

There is such clarity of texture and harmonic intent in the outer sections, with the tonal focus around C and E major in the opening section and 'Blessed Cecilia' refrain hinting at the first letters of the patron saint's name. The five-part choral writing is impressively nimble in the central, imitative scherzo, and resourcefully accommodating of successive solos in the final section – where Britten draws out Auden's instrumental allusions with cleverly vocalised violin, drum, flute and bugle call.

Auden bids Cecilia to 'appear and inspire... [to] come down and startle composing mortals with immortal fire'. Her startling, incendiary muse certainly visited Britten here, and in the other choral masterpiece from the same time, *A Ceremony of Carols*. The first was completed and the second composed afresh on board a Swedish cargo ship on a lengthy and hazardous homeward voyage from New York in early 1942. Given the fate of so many vessels in those transatlantic wartime convoys, we can only be thankful that the *Axel Johnson* dodged the U-boat torpedoes and made it to England with its precious composer cargo.

Programme note © Meurig Bowen

Benjamin Britten
Hymn to St Cecilia

In a garden shady this holy lady
 With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
 Like a black swan as death came on
 Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
 And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
 Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
 And notes tremendous from her great engine
 Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
 Moved to delight by the melody,
 White as an orchid she rode quite naked
 In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
 At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
 Came out of their trance into time again,
 And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
 The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
 To all musicians, appear and inspire:
 Translated Daughter, come down and startle
 Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

I cannot grow;
 I have no shadow
 To run away from,
 I only play.

I cannot err;
 There is no creature
 Whom I belong to,
 Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat
 When it knows it
 Can now do nothing
 By suffering.

All you lived through,
 Dancing because you
 No longer need it
 For any deed.

I shall never be
 Different. Love me.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
 To all musicians, appear and inspire:
 Translated Daughter, come down and startle
 Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
 O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
 Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all

The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
 Where Hope within the altogether strange
 From every outworn image is released,
 And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
 Into a world of truths that never change:
 Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

O dear white children casual as birds,
 Playing among the ruined languages,
 So small beside their large confusing words,
 So gay against the greater silences
 Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
 Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,
 O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
 Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,
 Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin
 Is drawn across our trembling violin.
 O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.
 O law drummed out by hearts against the still
 Long winter of our intellectual will.
 That what has been may never be again.
 O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
 Of convalescents on the shores of death.
 O bless the freedom that you never chose.
 O trumpets that unguarded children blow
 About the fortress of their inner foe.
 O wear your tribulation like a rose.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
 To all musicians, appear and inspire:
 Translated Daughter, come down and startle
 Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

W H Auden (1907–73)

Sir James MacMillan (born 1959)

The Sun Danced (2016) UK premiere

Mary Bevan soprano

The Sun Danced is a work for soprano soloist, chorus and orchestra commissioned by the Shrine of Fátima in Portugal to mark the Celebration of the Centennial of the Apparitions. The texts are taken from the Apparitions of the Angel and of Our Lady, and also from documented verbal expressions from members of the crowd present at the Miracle of the Sun on 13 October 1917.

The work is written in three languages – Latin, English and Portuguese – and also includes texts from hymns associated with Fátima, *Sanctissimae Trinitatis* and *Ave Theotokos*. The work is written in one continuous movement, starting with a mysterious orchestral introduction before we hear the words of the Angel (sung by the basses in the choir). The full choir then sing Latin verses of a Trinitarian text before we hear Our Lady's words sung by the soloist. These fragments are taken from various apparitions of Mary throughout the summer of 1917, culminating in her prediction of a miracle in October. These texts are woven

together as the basis of a soprano aria, pushing forward towards the central orchestral fantasy – an instrumental 'dance' inspired by stories of the Miracle of the Sun, witnessed by thousands of people in Fátima on 13 October 1917.

At points throughout this fast-moving central section we hear the choir interject some of the exclamations that were heard in the crowd that day.

The final section of the work is another *arioso* for the soprano soloist, based on liturgical fragments associated with the Fátima celebrations. This time the vocal style is more ecclesiastical, like Gregorian chant, accompanied by soft chords on strings and choir. The final coda has the choir exclaiming Greek and Latin words of praise to Mary and a final joyous orchestral dash to the close.

The work is dedicated to my daughter Catherine.

Programme note © Sir James MacMillan

Sir James MacMillan**The Sun Danced****Chorus**

Não temas! Sou o Anjo da Paz. Oraí comigo:
Meu Deus, eu creio, adoro, espero e amo-Vos.
Peço-Vos perdão para os que não creem, não
adoram, não esperam e não Vos amam.

First apparition of the Angel, spring 1916

Eu sou o Anjo da sua guarda, o Anjo de Portugal.

Second apparition of the Angel, summer 1916

Do not fear! I am the angel of peace. Pray with
me: My Lord, I believe, worship, wait and love You.
I ask You forgiveness for those who do not believe,
do not adore, do not wait and do not love You.

I am your guardian angel, the angel of Portugal.

Translation by Eduardo Ganilho

Chorus

Sanctissimae Trinitatis Pater, Fili et Spiritus
Sancte, intime te adoro et pretiosissimum corpus,
sanguinem, animam et divinitatem Jesu Christi
tibi offero, in omnibus sacralis terrae praesentis,
ad opprobria, sacrilegia et opera desidia
reparanda, quibus ipse ille valde offenditur. Et
per infinita merita Sanctissimi Cordis eius nec
non Immaculati Cordis Mariae pro conversione
miserorum peccatorum te precor.

O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of the most Holy
Trinity, I heartily worship you and I bring to you the
most precious body, blood, soul and divinity of
Jesus Christ, in all holy things of the present earth,
to repair the insults, acts of sacrilege and works
of apathy, by which he is greatly offended. And
through the infinite merits of his Most Holy Heart,
and also of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the
conversion of miserable offenders, I beseech you.

Translation by Edward Tambling

Soprano solo

Do not be afraid; I will not harm you.

I am of Heaven.

I have come to ask you to come here for six
months on the thirteenth day of the month, at this
same hour. Later I shall say who I am and what I
desire. And I shall return here yet a seventh time.

Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?

Words spoken by Mary at Fátima, 13 May 1917

Pray the Rosary every day to bring peace to the
world and an end to the war.

Words spoken by Mary at Fátima, 13 June 1917

Continue to pray the Rosary every day in honour
of Our Lady of the Rosary in order to obtain
peace for the world and an end of war.

You have seen hell ... If what I say to you is done,
many souls will be saved and there will be peace.
The war is going to end, but if people do not
cease offending God, a worse one will break

out ... When you see the night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given by God.

Continue to pray the Rosary in order to obtain the end of the war.

Words spoken by Mary at Fatima, 13 July 1917

Have two litters made. One is to be carried by you and Jacinta and two other girls dressed in white; the other one is to be carried by Francisco and three other boys.

Words spoken by Mary at Fatima, 19 August 1917

I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honour. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue ... The war is going to end and the soldiers will soon return to their homes.

Words spoken by Mary at Fátima, 13 October 1917

In the last month I will perform a miracle ...

Words spoken by Mary at Fátima, 19 August 1917

Chorus

Olhem!

Milagre!

Olhem para o sol!

Lindo sol! Que linda coisa!

Look!

Miracle!

Look at the sun!

Beautiful sun! What a beautiful thing!

Miracle of the Sun on 13 October 1917 – documented verbal expressions

Soprano solo

I received your Word in my Immaculate Heart. I conceived Him in my womb, and gave birth to the Creator of the world. At the foot of the Cross I received all men and women as my children, born to eternal life through the death of my Son. When the Apostles were awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, the promised one, I united my supplications to their prayers and became the model for a supplicant people. Finally elevated to the glory of heaven, I surround with my eternal love the pilgrim people, and lovingly direct their steps to the heavenly dwelling place, until the glorious coming of the Lord.

James MacMillan

Alternative Portuguese text

Recebi o teu Verbo no meu Imaculado Coração.
 Concebi-O no meu ventre, e dei à luz o Criador
 do mundo. Aos pés da Cruz recebi todos os
 homens e mulheres como meus filhos, nascidos
 para a vida eterna pela morte do meu Filho.
 Quando os Apóstolos esperavam a vinda do
 Espírito Santo, o prometido, eu uni as minhas
 súplicas às preces deles e tornei-me o modelo
 para um povo suplicante. Elevada por fim à glória
 do céu, eu envolvo com o meu amor eterno o
 povo peregrino, e em amor dirijo os passos dele
 para a morada celeste, até à gloriosa vinda do
 Senhor.

Translation by Eduardo Ganilho

Chorus

Ave, O Theotokos!

Ave, O Mater Dei!

Ave Maria!

Hail, O bearer of Jesus!

Hail, O Mother of God!

Hail Mary!

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Translation by Edward Tambling

interval 20 minutes

Sir James MacMillan

Symphony No 5, 'Le grand Inconnu' (2019)

Commissioned by the Genesis Foundation for Harry Christophers and The Sixteen

I Ruah

II Zao

III Igne vel igne

Julie Cooper soprano

Kim Porter alto

Mark Dobell tenor

Ben Davies bass

Fortext, see page 12

The symphonic tradition, and Beethoven's monumental impact on it, is an imposing legacy which looms like a giant ghost over the shoulder of any living composer foolhardy enough to consider adding to it. But some of us, perhaps not fully knowing what writing a symphony 'means' any more, are drawn towards it like moths flapping around a candle flame.

My Fifth Symphony turned out to be a choral symphony, if very different to Beethoven's. It came on the back of my *Stabat mater* and was commissioned from the same source and involved the same performers. The philanthropist John Studzinski has taken a great interest in The Sixteen and has a special concern for sacred music. It was he who, along with Harry Christophers, suggested I write my own *Stabat mater*. After that he began talking to me about how the concept of the Holy Spirit has been handled in music.

There are, of course, many great motets from the past which set texts devoted to the Third Person of the Trinity, and in the 20th century the one piece which sticks out is the setting of the *Veni Creator Spiritus* in the first movement of Mahler's Eighth Symphony. But it still feels like relatively

unexamined territory, so perhaps now is the time to explore this mysterious avenue, where concepts of creativity and spirituality overlap. There is a real burgeoning interest in spirituality in our contemporary post-religious and now post-secular society, especially in relation to the arts. Music is described as the most spiritual of the arts, even by non-religious music lovers, and there is today a genuinely universal understanding that music can reach deep into the human soul.

It surely makes sense that a Catholic artist such as myself might want to explore this in music, perhaps even beyond the usual hymnody and paeans of praise associated with liturgy. My Fifth Symphony is not a liturgical work. It is an attempt to explore the mystery discussed above in music for two choirs and orchestra. It began when John Studzinski gave me a copy of *The Holy Spirit, Fire of Divine Love* by the Belgian Carmelite Wilfred Stinissen. It was a good point of entry, theologically, but it also called to my attention to some visionary poetry by St John of the Cross. This line from the book in particular drew me in: 'Even his name reveals that the Holy Spirit is mysterious. The Hebrew "ruah", the Greek "pneuma" and the Latin "spiritus" mean both "wind" and "breath".' These words provided the very first sounds heard in my symphony.

The work, to begin with, is less a traditional setting of text and more an exploration of elemental and primal sounds and words associated with the Spirit. The first movement is called 'Ruah', the second 'Zao' (ancient Greek for 'living water') and the third is 'Igne vel Igne' (Latin for 'fire or fire'). So, each has associations with the physical elements connected to the Holy Spirit (wind, water, fire). These became vivid sources of visual and sonic inspiration. The Fifth Symphony has a subtitle – 'Le grand Inconnu', a French term used to describe the mystery of the Holy Spirit which I cannot find replicated in the English spiritual tradition.

Sound associations and impressions guided the choice of texts in each of the three movements and often dictated the overall structure: which bits of St John of the Cross to use, which corresponding moment in Scripture might amplify or reflect the general direction, which sounds to use in the orchestra, as well as extended vocal sounds in the choir which were not necessarily sung. In addition to breathing noises, there are whisperings and murmurings, devised to paint the required element from moment to moment.

The two choirs in the Fifth Symphony are a chamber choir and a large chorus. At the end of the second movement I divide these two ensembles into 20 parts, offering a parallel to the multi-voice writing of *Vidi aquam*, a 40-part companion piece to Tallis's *Spem in alium* that I was composing at the same time as the symphony, and providing a means to continue communing with the English Renaissance master.

Programme note © Sir James MacMillan

Sir James MacMillan
Symphony No 5, 'Le grand Inconnu'

I Ruah

Ruah
Pneuma
Spiritus

Hebrew for 'breath'
Greek for 'breath'
Latin for 'breath'

Breathe through my garden.
Ruah
Breathe through my garden.

St John of the Cross (1542–91)

Come, south wind, come, you that waken love.
And in your sweet breathing,
Filled with good and glory,
How tenderly you swell my heart with love!

St John of the Cross

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the
sound of it, but you do not know where it comes
from or where it goes.

John 3: 8

Pneuma

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as
of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house
where they were sitting.

Acts 2: 2

II Zao

Mayim Chayim
Zao
Aquam viventem

Hebrew for 'Living Water'
Greek for 'Living Water'
Latin for 'Living Water'

Soloists

The rivers are yours;
I am the riverbank.
The drink is yours;
I am the cup.
The joy is yours;
I am the song.
The light is yours;
I am the ray.
The life is yours;
I am the pulse.

St John of the Cross

Zao

Streams came up ...
Mayim Chayim.

Genesis 2: 6

In novissimo autem die magno festivitatis stabat
Jesus, et clamabat dicens: Si quis sitit veniat ad
me et bibat. Qui credit in me, sicut dixit Scriptura,
flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae!

On the last day of the festival, Jesus stood and
said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty
come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as
Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow
from within them.'

John 7: 37–8 (Vulgate)

III Igne vel igne

O living flame of love
That tenderly wounds my soul
In its deepest centre!
O sweet cautery,
O delightful wound!
O gentle hand!

Esh
Pyr

... living flame ... flame of love ... delightful wound
... gentle hand ... living flame ... O living flame of
love
That tenderly wounds my soul.

Qui diceris Paraclitus,
donum Dei altissimi
fons vivus, ignis caritas et spiritalis unctio.

Accende lumen sensibus,
Infunde amorem cordibus,
Infirma nostri corporis virtute firmans perpeti.

O living flame of love
That tenderly wounds my soul
In its deepest centre!
O sweet cautery,
O delightful wound!
O gentle hand!
O living flame of love,
You changed death to life.

Igne vel igne.
Spiritus nolite extinguere.

St John of the Cross

Hebrew for 'fire'
Greek for 'fire'

You who are called the Paraclete,
best gift of God above,
the living spring, the living fire, sweet unctio and
true love.
O guide our minds with your blest light,
with love our hearts inflame;
and with your strength, which never decays,
confirm our mortal frame.

*Veni Creator Spiritus, attrib Rabanus Maurus
(c780–856)*

Latin for 'fire or fire'
Quench not the Spirit (1 Thess 5: 19)

*'The Collected Works of St John of The Cross'
translated by Kieran Kavanaugh OCD and Otilio
Rodriguez OCD © 1979 by the Institute of Carmelite
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*Scripture quotations from 'The Catholic Edition of
the Revised Standard Version of the Bible' © 1965,
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About the composer



Hans van der Weerd

Sir James MacMillan

Sir James MacMillan

James MacMillan, who turned 60 on 16 July, is the leading Scottish composer of his generation and a significant figure in the public life of the nation.

Born in Ayrshire, he studied at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Durham, where his composition tutor was John Casken. He taught at the University of Manchester from 1986 to 1988 before returning to Scotland. He was Affiliate Composer of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra from 1990 to 2000 and Artistic Director of the Philharmonia Orchestra's 'Music of Today' series in London from 1992 to 2002.

Much in demand as a conductor, he was Composer/Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester from 2000 to 2009 and Principal Guest Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic from 2009 until 2013. He is the founder and Artistic Director of the Cumnock Tryst, a festival held each October in his Ayrshire home town. He was awarded a knighthood in 2015.

His output draws on many aspects of world culture and is eclectic in its musical language, but at its heart is a strong and direct expression of his identity as a Scot, a Socialist and a Catholic.

These allegiances are central to his breakthrough orchestral work of 1990, the powerful *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie*, suggested by the persecution of alleged witches in post-Reformation Scotland. Equally successful was the 1992 percussion concerto *Veni, veni Emmanuel*, based on the Advent plainchant, which has now received over 500 performances worldwide. The two works launched twin series of orchestral works and concertos, which are intertwined in the *Triduum* of 1995–7, a triptych suggested by the liturgy of Holy Week consisting of *The World's Ransoming* with obbligato cor anglais, the Cello Concerto (for Mstislav Rostropovich) and the First Symphony *Vigil*. These are among many of MacMillan's works to have appeared on CD.

What the writer and broadcaster Stephen Johnson has called 'MacMillan's deeply ingrained feeling for musical storytelling' has led him to tackle the medium of opera on several occasions. His two largest operas are *Inés de Castro*, given its premiere by Scottish Opera at the 1996 Edinburgh International Festival, and *The Sacrifice*, first staged by Welsh National Opera in 2007 – the latter with a libretto adapted from Welsh mythology by his regular collaborator Michael Symmons Roberts. His choral music embraces such large-scale works as the *St John Passion*, a London Symphony Orchestra commission first performed under Colin Davis in 2008, and *A European Requiem*, written for the 2016 Oregon Bach Festival; congregational music including the *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* for open-air services during Pope Benedict's visit to the UK in 2010; and such exquisitely wrought a *cappella* miniatures as the series of *Strathclyde Motets*.

James MacMillan's choral Fifth Symphony, 'Le grand Inconnu' received its world premiere at the 2019 Edinburgh International Festival.

Profile © Anthony Burton

About the performers

Marco Borggreve



Harry Christophers

Harry Christophers conductor

Harry Christophers stands among today's great champions of choral music. In partnership with The Sixteen, he has set benchmark standards for the performance of everything from late medieval polyphony to important new works by contemporary composers.

Under his leadership The Sixteen has established its hugely successful annual Choral Pilgrimage, created the *Sacred Music* series for BBC television, and developed an acclaimed period-instrument orchestra. Highlights of their recent work include an Artist Residency at the Wigmore Hall, a large-scale tour of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, the

world premiere of Sir James MacMillan's Fifth Symphony at the 2019 Edinburgh International Festival and a live-streamed performance of MacMillan's *Stabat mater* from the Sistine Chapel. Future projects, meanwhile, comprise a new series devoted to Purcell and an ongoing survey of Handel's dramatic oratorios.

Harry Christophers has served as Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society since 2008, is Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Granada Orchestra and has worked as guest conductor with, among others, the London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and the Deutsches Kammerphilharmonie.

His extensive commitment to opera has embraced productions for English National Opera and Lisbon Opera and work with the Granada, Buxton and Grange festivals.

Harry Christophers was awarded a CBE in the Queen's 2012 Birthday Honours list. He is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, and has honorary doctorates in music from the Universities of Leicester, Northumbria, Canterbury Christ Church and Kent.



Mary Bevan

Mary Bevan soprano

British soprano Mary Bevan is internationally renowned in Baroque, Classical and contemporary repertoire, and appears regularly with leading conductors, orchestras and ensembles around the world. She is a winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist award and UK Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent in music and was awarded a MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list earlier this year.

Highlights this season include her role debut as Eurydice in a new production of *Orpheus in the Underworld* for English National Opera; Sifare (*Mitridate*) for Garsington Opera; and Rose Murrant (*Street Scene*) for Opéra de Monte-Carlo; as well as a tour in the role of Diana (*Iphigenie en Tauride*) with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. On the concert platform she appears with the Hallé, Handel and Haydn Society, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla.

Recent operatic highlights include her Royal Danish Opera debut as Bellezza (*Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*), Rose Murrant at the Teatro Real, Madrid, the title-role in Turnage's new opera *Coraline* for the Royal Opera at the Barbican, Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) for English National Opera, and Merab (*Saul*) for the Adelaide Festival. At the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, she created the role of Lila (David Bruce's *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*), and sang Barbarina (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and the title-role in Rossi's *Orpheus* at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse.

On the concert platform, recent highlights include appearances with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra at the Proms, and with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and the CBSO in the world premiere of Roxanna Panufnik's *Faithful Journey*. She joined the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment as Mary in Sally Beamish's *The Judas Passion*; performed Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* on tour in Australia with the Choir of London and Australian Chamber Orchestra; and *Messiah* with the Academy of Ancient Music. She also toured Asia with The English Concert and Harry Bicket and made her Carnegie Hall debut with the ensemble as Dalinda (*Ariodante*). In 2020 she will make her debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mary Bevan's discography includes her art song album *Voyages* with pianist Joseph Middleton and *Handel's Queens* with London Early Opera, both on Signum Records, Mendelssohn songs for Champs Hill Records, Handel's *The Triumph of Time and Truth* and *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* with Ludus Baroque, and Vaughan Williams's Symphony No 3 and Schubert *Rosamunde* with the BBC Philharmonic. Her second disc with Middleton on Signum Records is released this autumn.

The Sixteen

The Sixteen, whether performing a simple medieval hymn or expressing the complex musical and emotional language of a contemporary choral composition, does so with qualities common to all great ensembles. Tonal warmth, rhythmic precision and immaculate intonation are clearly essential to the mix. But it is the courage and intensity with which The Sixteen makes music that speak above all to so many people.

The group is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, having given its first concert in 1979 under the direction of Founder and Conductor Harry Christophers CBE. Their pioneering work since has made a profound impact on the performance of choral music and attracted a large new audience, not least as 'The Voices of Classic FM' and through BBC television's *Sacred Music* series.

The voices and period-instrument players of The Sixteen are at home in over five centuries of music, a breadth reflected in their annual Choral Pilgrimage to Britain's great cathedrals and sacred spaces, regular appearances at the world's leading concert halls, and award-winning recordings for their own CORO and other labels.

Recent highlights include the world premieres of Sir James MacMillan's *Stabat mater* (at the Barbican in 2016), and his Fifth Symphony 'Le grand Inconnu' (2019 Edinburgh International Festival), both commissioned for The Sixteen by the Genesis Foundation, an ambitious ongoing series of Handel oratorios and a debut tour of China.

Genesis Sixteen

Now in its ninth year, Genesis Sixteen is The Sixteen's unique free training scheme that aims to nurture the next generation of talented young ensemble singers, helping them to bridge the gap between student and professional performer. During the year-long scheme singers receive group tutoring from conductor Harry Christophers and associate conductor Eamonn Dougan, individual and consort mentoring from members of The Sixteen and masterclasses run by some of the industry's top vocal experts.

In 2014 the scheme was expanded to include a Conducting Scholarship, supporting graduate conductors in the early stages of their careers. Thanks to a close partnership with the Genesis Foundation, participants not only receive free tuition but also a bursary to cover all additional costs. Alumni from Genesis Sixteen's first eight years have enjoyed significant success: many are now performing, recording and touring with professional groups, including The Sixteen, and several have set up their own choirs and are showing true entrepreneurialism in developing their reputation on the music circuit.

Britten Sinfonia

Just over 25 years ago, Britten Sinfonia was established as a bold reimagining of the conventional image of an orchestra. A flexible ensemble comprising the UK's leading soloists and chamber musicians came together with a unique vision: to collapse the boundaries between old and new music; to collaborate with composers, conductors and guest artists across the arts, focusing on the musicians rather than following the vision of a principal conductor; and to create involving, intelligent music events that both audiences and performers experience with an unusual intensity.

The orchestra is named after Benjamin Britten, in part a homage to its chosen home of the East of England, where Britten's roots were also strong. But Britten Sinfonia also embodies its namesake's ethos. Its projects are characterised by a rich diversity of influences and artistic collaborators, and always underpinned by a commitment to uncompromising quality, whether the orchestra is performing at New York's Lincoln Center or in Lincolnshire's Crowland Abbey. Britten Sinfonia musicians are deeply rooted in the communities with which they work, with an underlying philosophy of finding ways to reach even the most excluded individuals and groups.

Today Britten Sinfonia is heralded as one of the world's leading ensembles. It is an Associate Ensemble here at the Barbican, Resident Orchestra at Saffron Hall in Essex and has residencies in Norwich and Cambridge. It presents an annual chamber music series at the

Wigmore Hall and appears regularly at major UK festivals, including the Aldeburgh, Brighton and Norfolk and Norwich festivals and the BBC Proms. Over the past year the orchestra has broadcast live to more than a million people worldwide from the Sistine Chapel and toured to Amsterdam, Paris and Bilbao. This season it tours to the USA, Mexico, China and much of Europe. It is a BBC Radio 3 Broadcast Partner and has award-winning recordings on the Hyperion and Harmonia Mundi labels.

Recent and current collaborators include Keaton Henson, dancer/choreographer Pam Tanowitz and theatre director Ivo van Hove, with commissions from Thomas Adès, Gerald Barry, Shiva Feshareki, Emily Howard, Brad Mehldau and Mark-Anthony Turnage. The orchestra is also a commissioning partner in a ground-breaking partnership between Steve Reich and visual artist Gerhard Richter in a new work which will be premiered on 23 October.

Outside the concert hall, Britten Sinfonia musicians work on creative and therapeutic projects with pre-school children, teenagers, young carers, people suffering from dementia, life-time prisoners and older people at risk of isolation. The orchestra's annual OPUS competition offers unpublished composers the chance to receive a professional commission and unearth new, original and exciting UK compositional talent. Members of Britten Sinfonia Academy, the orchestra's youth chamber ensemble for talented young performers, have performed in museums, improvised with laptop artists, led family workshops and appeared at the Latitude Festival.

The Sixteen

Soprano

Elizabeth Adams*
Amy Carson
Julie Cooper
Hannah Cox*
Hannah Ely*
Camilla Harris*
Katy Hill
Kirsty Hopkins
Alexandra Kidgell
Sofia Kirwan-Baez*
Margaret Lingas*
Hannah Littleton*
Ellen Mawhinney*
Charlotte Mobbs
Danni O'Neill*
Kirsty O'Neill*
Ella Rainbird-Earley*
Ellie Sperling*

Alto

Ian Aitkenhead
Anya Chomacki*
Nancy Cole*
Daniel Collins
Tristram Cooke*
Lewis Cullen*
Jessica Haig*
Rebecca Leggett*
Edward McMullan
Elisabeth Paul*
Kim Porter
Elena Stamp*
Alex Turner*
Alice Webster*

Tenor

Simon Berridge
Harry Bradford*
Jeremy Budd
Tom Castle*
Joshua Cooter*
Mark Dobell
Phil Durrant*
Oscar Golden-Lee*
Alexander Hume*
Sam Jenkins*
Matthew McKinney*
George Pooley
Zahid Siddiqui*
Christopher Willoughby*

Bass

Robert Clark*
Freddie Crowley*
Ben Davies
Colum Donovan-Paterson*
Peter Edge*
Nathan Harrison*
Sebastian Johnson*
Tim Jones
John Lee*
Rob Macdonald
Johannes Moore*
Oliver Neale*
Stuart Young

* Genesis Sixteen

The Sixteen Management Team

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Marie-Sophie Willis

Development Director
Carol McCormack

Concerts & Artistic Planning Manager
Emily Walker

Marketing Manager
Jessica Tomkins

Development Co-ordinator
Amy Mitchell

Education & Outreach Manager
Amanda MacLeod

Genesis Sixteen Manager

Jessica Haig Box

Office & Marketing Co-ordinator
Oliver Doyle

Concerts & Tours Co-ordinator
Amy Donaldson

Office Co-ordinator
Isabel Crawley

PR
Rebecca Driver
Media Relations

Britten Sinfonia

Violin 1

Jacqueline Shave
leader

Marcus Barcham
Stevens

Ruth Ehrlich

Fiona McCapra

Beatrix Lovejoy

Deborah Preece

Eleanor Stanford

Tamara Elias

Ellie Consta

Ariel Lang

Violin 2

Miranda Dale

Nicola Goldscheider

Suzanne Loze

Anna Bradley

Judith Stowe

Bridget Davey

Jo Godden

Joanna Watts

Viola

Carmen Flores

Luba Tunnicliffe

Bridget Carey

Rachel Byrt

Ian Rathbone

Francis Kefford

Cello

Caroline Dearnley

Ben Chappell

Julia Vohralik

Juliet Welchman

Reinoud Ford

Double Bass

Ben Scott-Russell

Lucy Shaw

Melissa Favell-Wright

Sam Rice

Flute

Thomas Hancox

Sarah O'Flynn

Oboe

Peter Facer

Emma Feilding

Cor anglais

Emma Feilding

Clarinet

Joy Farrall

Stephen Williams

Bassoon

Sarah Burnett

Alanna Macfarlane

Contrabassoon

Alanna Macfarlane

Horn

Andrew Littlemore

David McQueen

Matthew Gunner

Joel Ashford

Trumpet

Paul Archibald

Shane Brennan

Trombone

Rory Cartmell

Barnaby Philpott

Bass Trombone

Barry Clements

Tuba

Edward Leech

Timpani

Matthew Turner

Percussion

Owen Gunnell

Tim Gunnell

Harp

Lucy Wakeford

Piano

Clíodna Shanahan

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