

# Anthony McGill & Britten Sinfonia

**Start time:** 7.30pm

**Approximate end time:** 9.20pm, including a 20-minute interval

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change.

## Programme

**Jessie Montgomery** *Starburst* (chamber orchestra version)

**Samuel Coleridge-Taylor** Nos 3 and 4 from *Four Novelletten*

3. Andante con moto

4. Allegro molto

**Panel discussion with Anthony McGill, Leroy Logan and Anthony Davis**

**Anthony Davis** *You Have the Right to Remain Silent* (European premiere)

1. Interrogation

2. Loss

3. Incarceration

4. Dance of the Other

**George Walker** *Lyric for Strings*

**Trailblazing clarinettist Anthony McGill embarks on his residency at Milton Court with an evening of conversation and performance; at its heart is the European premiere of Anthony Davis's powerful *You Have the Right to Remain Silent*.**

Milton Court Artist-in-Residence Anthony McGill and Britten Sinfonia's programme includes the European premiere of Anthony Davis's concerto *You Have the Right to Remain Silent* and three pieces for string orchestra – by Jessie Montgomery, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and George Walker.

*You Have the Right to Remain Silent* was written by American composer, pianist and Pulitzer Prize-winner Anthony Davis (born 1951). It was commissioned for Miller Theatre at Columbia University in New York City and was premiered in 2007 with J D Parran as solo clarinet and the Perspectives Ensemble. The piece was inspired by Davis's experience with law enforcement in the 1970s in which a police officer wrongfully pulled him over.

He recalled:

*He had put his siren on when he stopped me, and I was going to say, what the hell is going on? I'm going to be late for my concert. [My wife] said, 'Don't get out of the car, because he has a gun.' He had his gun pointed at me.*

It was later discovered that this was a case of mistaken identity. The concerto is written for solo B flat clarinet and contra-alto E flat clarinet and small orchestra. Throughout the work, Davis interweaves strong musical idioms featuring the solo clarinet as the protagonist with the 'Miranda warning' (i.e. the notification customarily given by police to criminal suspects in custody advising them of their right to be silent) in rhythmic spoken word.

In the first movement, 'Integration', an intense dialogue takes place between solo clarinet and the orchestra. The second movement, called 'Loss', uses the contra-alto E flat clarinet and takes the listener on a journey of what it is like to lose someone. Next is 'Incarceration', which has a jagged edginess. The last movement, 'Dance of the Other', transports the listener to what it feels like to walk – or dance – in another person's shoes and how people from different communities can come together.

The pieces by Jessie Montgomery, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and George Walker are all written or arranged for string orchestra. Montgomery was born in 1981 in Manhattan's Lower East Side. She is the recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award from the ASCAP Foundation and the Sphinx Medal of Excellence. She is the composer-in-residence for the Sphinx Organization, which supports young Black and Latinx musicians.

barbican

*Starburst* (2012) was commissioned for the Sphinx Organization's flagship chamber ensemble the Sphinx Virtuosi. It has energetic motifs and depicts the creation of new stars in a galaxy, while also seeking to represent musically the members of the dynamic ensemble for which the piece was written.

The second piece for string orchestra is by Black-British composer, conductor and political activist Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912), who was born in Holborn to an English mother and a Sierra Leonean father. His grandfather taught him to play the violin. He excelled very quickly and, aged just 15, began studying at the Royal College of Music. While there he studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford and his contemporaries were Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. Coleridge-Taylor's music, however, retained the influence of his African heritage.

*Four Novelletten* was written between 1901 and 1903 and may have been inspired by Robert Schumann's four piano miniatures *Novelletten*, Op 21. Coleridge-Taylor's four-movement piece exploits the lush, Romantic soundscape of a modern string orchestra. It was dedicated to violin virtuoso and composer Miss Ethel Barns, who performed and premiered much of Coleridge-Taylor's music. The third *Novelletten* (Andante con moto), features a solo violin, showcasing the virtuosity of the instrument in its higher register – perhaps revealing the composer's affection for the instrument. The fourth (Allegro molto) is an energetic and grand movement, ending exuberantly.

*Lyric for Strings* was written by composer, pianist and organist George Walker (1922–2018) who was born in Washington DC. Walker was exposed to music at an early age and studied the piano at Oberlin Conservatory and the Curtis Institute of Music, later receiving a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester. He then taught at Rutgers University in New Jersey until his retirement in 1992. Walker was the first African-American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music – for his work *Lilacs* (1996).

*Lyric for Strings* was originally called *Lament* and formed the second movement of his First String Quartet (1946), which he wrote while a student at Curtis. It was premiered the same year by the student orchestra. In 1990 Walker reworked the piece for string orchestra and gave it its current name. This new arrangement is one of his most performed works and is dedicated to Walker's grandmother Melvina King, who was a slave and died shortly before its completion.

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## Performers

**Pablo Urbina** conductor  
**Anthony McGill** clarinet  
**Anthony Davis** speaker  
**Leroy Logan** speaker  
**Earl Howard** synthesizer

### Britten Sinfonia

violin I

**Hannah Perowne**  
**Katherine Shave**  
**Fiona McCapra**

violin II

**Miranda Dale**  
**Marcus Broome**  
**Judith Stowe**

viola

**Clare Finimore**  
**Dorothea Vogel**  
**Bridget Carey**

cello

**Caroline Dearnley**  
**Ben Chappell**

double bass

**Ben Russell**

flute

**Sarah O'Flynn**

oboe

**Nicholas Daniel**

clarinet

**Joy Farrall**

bassoon

**Sarah Burnett**

horn

**Benjamin Garalnick**

trumpet

**Imogen Whitehead**

trombone

**Becky Smith**

percussion/timpani

**Owen Gunnell**  
**Jeremy Cornes**

drum kit

**Matt Skelton**

harp

**Lucy Wakeford**

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