

# WIGMORE HALL

Friday 11 April 2025  
7.30pm

Augustin Hadelich violin

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Partita No. 3 in E for solo violin BWV1006 (1720)

*I. Preludio • II. Loure • III. Gavotte en Rondeau •  
IV. Menuett I • V. Menuett II • VI. Bourrée • VII. Gigue*

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson  
(1932-2004)

Blue/s Forms for solo violin (1972)

*I. Plain Blue/s • II. Just Blue/s • III. Jettin' Blue/s*

Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931)

Violin Sonata in D minor 'Ballade' (dedicated to George Enescu)  
Op. 27 No. 3 (1923)

*Lento molto sostenuto – Allegro in tempo giusto  
e con bravura*

*Interval*

Johann Sebastian Bach

Partita No. 2 in D minor for solo violin BWV1004 (1720)

*I. Allemande • II. Courante • III. Sarabande •  
IV. Gigue • V. Chaconne*



## UNDER 35S

Supported by the AKO Foundation  
Media partner Classic FM



### Membership at Wigmore Hall

Join from just £25 a month and enjoy early access to tickets for the 2025/26 Anniversary Season.

Priority Booking for Autumn 2025 is now open ahead of General Sale on Wednesday 23 April.

[wigmore-hall.org.uk/membership](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk/membership) | 020 7258 8230



Join & Support  
Membership

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management. In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions. Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141. Wigmore Hall is equipped with a loop to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838  
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • [Wigmore-hall.org.uk](http://Wigmore-hall.org.uk) • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG  
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



For almost a century after his death, the music of **Bach** was treated with academic curiosity rather than love, in total contrast to the veneration he receives today as the apogee of Western music. The story of his Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin parallels that of his reputation, being little known until they were published in the early 19th Century. They are now a north star for violinists, a technical proving ground and a trusted barometer for the depths of artistic temperament.

The autograph manuscript, penned in Bach's flowing, curving musical handwriting, is dated 1720, towards the end of his time as Kapellmeister at the court of Leopold, Prince of the central-German principality of Anhalt-Köthen. Bach's Köthen days allowed him relative artistic latitude, and the Cello Suites and Brandenburg Concerti also date from the period.

Where the Sonatas have a common four-movement structure and variation of key between their movements, the Partitas are suites of dances, all in a common key. The third and last of the Partitas begins with a breathless *Preludio* which glides with perpetual motion. Each of the dance movements which follow (including a pair of minuetts which repeats the first after the second is given) is based on rhythmic patterns which would have been well known to 18th-century audiences, but which are artefacts of history to us now. What is readily apparent is the work's satisfying sense of circularity, returning in the last two dances to the lively spirit of the *Preludio*, after a sequence of gentler, slower movements.

Named after the black British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, the American **Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson** was born in 1932 to a music-loving family from New York, where he received a thorough education in piano, composition and conducting. His musical style was alert to the modernist currents of contemporary classical music, as well as to jazz and blues, and many of the pieces he wrote up to his death in 2004 blend the two in a wholly convincing way. His *Blue/s Forms* for solo violin, from 1972, melds the violin tradition of the composers such as Paganini, Ysaÿe and Bartók with blues progressions and inflections across three short movements, requiring the soloist to think beyond conventional classical technique, as Augustin Hadelich explains: 'I have to "switch off" certain left-hand habits I trained so hard for so many years: in every other style I try to slide cleanly between two pitches, with the goal of precisely reaching the note I'm sliding towards, so it's in tune. That's not always what you want in the blues style!'

Returning one evening from a concert of Bach's music given by the great Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti, **Ysaÿe** lamented to dearth of such music in his own time for the unaccompanied violin. So, in 1923, he set about composing his own answer, Six Sonatas for violin solo, each dedicated to a significant violinist of the day. He tipped his hat towards Bach in the first two sonatas, most famously by quoting the opening of the third Partita in his own second Sonata. The third – the blistering, one-movement 'Ballade' – was composed for George Enescu, and pays homage to the Romanian violinist's distinctive playing from its opening notes. In his manuscript, Ysaÿe made unusually specific demands about which fingers were to be used for each note, giving the opening passages a liquid, molten quality as the music searches the instrument's range for direction. Its ultimate trajectory is coiled fury, as intense and virtuosic a display as any ever written for the instrument.

Finally, a return to Bach. The contrast between the air and light of the third Partita and the gravity of the second is total. The second Partita is comprised of five dances, each in the key of D minor, starting with an *Allemanda* (German dance). A combative pair of fast movements – the *Corrente* and *Giga* – frame a *Sarabanda* of crystalized sorrow, but one massive movement dominates the rest, the *Ciaccona*. And it really is the *Chaconne*, (though Bach uses the Italian in the manuscript, it is by the French term that is universally known) – many other composers have used the form, which presents variations over a short repeated bass-line, but only Bach could transform it into inarguably the greatest work in the repertoire of the violin.

Mere description of such music seems redundant; Brahms expressed the miracle of it, describing it as 'in my opinion, one of the most wonderful and most incomprehensible pieces of music. Using the technique adapted to a small instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings.'

Quite what prompted this outpouring from Bach is and, in all likelihood, will always be unknown. One theory holds that it was his musical response to the death of his first wife, Maria Barbara, in 1720, but it is just a theory. All we really have is the manuscript in Bach's hand, and the river of sound the violin makes in the room when it is played.

© Andrew Morris 2025

*Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.*