

# WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 1 March 2023  
7.30pm

## Home

### Trish Clowes - My Iris

Trish Clowes saxophone  
Ross Stanley piano  
Chris Montague guitar  
Joel Barford drums

### Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian voice, harp

Louise McMonagle cello  
Mandhira de Saram violin

John Dowland (1563-1626)

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

John Lennon (1940-1980)

& Paul McCartney (b.1942)

Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian (b.1986)

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Jimi Hendrix (1942-1970)

Joe Harriott (1928-1973)

Ross Stanley (b.1982)

Trish Clowes (b.1984)

Come, heavy sleep (1597)

When I am laid in earth from *Dido and Aeneas* Z626  
(by 1688)

Blackbird (1968)

Muted Lines (2016)

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis from the *Gloucester Service* (1946) *arranged by Trish Clowes*

Up from the Skies (1967)

Tonal (1961)

Ashford Days (2021)

Sarah (2020)

Dance with Me (2014)

Symphony in Yellow (2013)

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The effect a venue has on an artist is not to be taken for granted. Anything from the design of the building to the sightlines of the stage and the attitude of the staff play a part in a performance. Saxophonist-composer Trish Clowes calls her programme tonight *Home* as precisely a nod to her relationship with Wigmore Hall, where she first appeared in 2015.

'The space is incredibly inspiring... the acoustic on stage is absolutely out of this world,' she says excitedly. 'It's like exploring sound and timbre in a whole other dimension. And knowing that I have multiple opportunities to explore this in different ways, it feels like I've got a home.'

Which is all the more reason to investigate historical and contemporary British music in as imaginative a way as possible. The repertoire Clowes has chosen spans genres and eras, drawing a line from the late 16th to the early 21st Century, bridging the gap between classical, jazz and pop, showing that an original melody can be timeless. Great songs invite new arrangements. Clowes re-imagines and re-contextualizes several anthems.

Indeed the beauty of **Jimi Hendrix's** *Up from the Skies* sits well with that of **John Dowland's** *Come, heavy sleep*, despite the fact that the former is by the guitarist who unleashed an electric storm in the 1960s and the latter the lute player who conveyed the acoustic calm of the 1500s. **Henry Purcell's** 'When I am laid in earth' captures the solemn finesse of Baroque composition while **Joe Harriott's** *Tonalis* is a highpoint in post-war experimental, 'abstract' music that still informs jazz artists today. **Herbert Howells's** *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* is a landmark in Anglican church songs. As for **John Lennon & Paul McCartney's** *Blackbird* it deserves its status as one of the great laments in pop, a plea for strength and solace amid adversity.

A former BBC Radio 3 New Generation artist, Clowes has won great acclaim for albums such as her 2010 debut *Tangent*, 2012's *And In The Night-Time She Is There* and 2014's *Pocket Compass*, which all chart her impressive development as a composer and improviser. In the past few years releases such as *Ninety Degrees Gravity* and *A View With A Room* have chronicled the advanced chemistry and cohesion of her ensemble, My Iris, which consists of drummer Joel Barford, guitarist Chris Montague and pianist Ross Stanley. They form the core of the group but it is often augmented, as is the case for this performance. Cellist Louise McMonagle, violinist Mandhira de Saram and vocalist-harpist **Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian** make the band a septet.

The latter's piece *Muted Lines*, as well as **Stanley's** *Ashford Days* and **Clowes's** *Sarah*, are on this evening's programme, which means that the music

has a powerful resonance for Clowes. *Home* is both something of a personal and national songbook. 'I was thinking about all the influences on me, and My Iris's repertoire, and also some of the duo repertoire I play with Ross Stanley; I realised that a lot of the music had been written in the UK', she clarifies. 'So I expanded the theme some more. It feels very natural to be honest – it's about enjoying great material, no matter where or when it comes from. And loads of things I that have written in the past (and I expect, to be written in the future too) have come out of analysing and improvising around older music of all kinds of traditions and cultures. And as is so often the way, a fellow musician puts you onto something you don't know and you fall in love with it yourself.'

This kind of emotional investment can make the process of interpretation all the more meaningful. Saxophone legend Lester Young stated that to be able to play a song with conviction he had to know and understand the lyric even though his performance was instrumental, and Clowes, whose sound on tenor and soprano blends understatement and emphasis, delicacy and drive, pays great attention to the subjects broached by other composers. For example, *Muted Lines* is a poignant reflection on conflict and displacement while 'When I am laid in earth' contemplates mortality, an inescapable part of the human condition. These are both important universal themes that may elicit a wide a range of responses. 'I like to give people the opportunity to ponder on things sometimes,' says Clowes with regard to subject matter. 'Or more, share what I'm thinking about, and what is affecting me, when I am writing, or choosing what to play. That's part of sharing my musicianship and artistry too.'

Also interesting is the fact that tonight's concert will not exclusively feature instrumental music. Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian is singer as well as harpist, and brings to My Iris a range of textures and colours that are grist to Clowes's mill. 'I've just come back from going through some things with her,' she says 'I'm particularly excited about what we've got planned for the Hendrix... the lyrics are really incredible.'

Being a jazz artist Clowes has left room for spontaneity in her performances, and while she relishes the idea of playing a set of great songs that mean different things to different people, the audience should also expect the unexpected from My Iris. 'There'll also be a snatch of free improv,' Clowes says. 'And then an extra piece by me called *Dance with Me* for myself and Louise. About 6 or 7 of the pieces are the larger line-up, and there's a handful of duo and trio pieces too, probably smaller things in the first half and larger in the second half.'

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**John Dowland** (1563-1626)

**Come, heavy sleep** (1597)

*Anonymous*

Come, heavy Sleep, the image of true death,  
And close up these my weary weeping eyes,  
Whose spring of tears doth stop my vital breath,  
And tears my heart with Sorrow's sigh-swoll'n cries.  
Come and possess my tired through-worn soul,  
That living dies till thou on me be stole.

Come, shadow of my end, and shape of rest,  
Allied to Death, child to his black-fac'd Night,  
Come thou and charm these rebels in my breast,  
Whose waking fancies do my mind affright.  
O come, sweet Sleep, come or I die for ever;  
Come ere my last sleep comes, or come never.

**Henry Purcell** (1659-1695)

**When I am laid in earth from *Dido and Aeneas***

**Z626** (by 1688)

*Nahum Tate*

Thy hand Belinda, darkness shades me,  
On thy bosom let me rest.  
More I would but death invades me.  
Death is now a welcome guest.

When I am laid in earth may my wrongs create  
No trouble in thy breast,  
Remember me, but ah! forget my fate.

**John Lennon** (1940-1980)

**Blackbird** (1968)

*Due to copyright we are unable to reproduce the text for this song.*

**Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian** (b.1986)

**Muted Lines** (2016)

*Nahabed Kouchag*

Sing although the exile's heart fills with such unsingable songs  
Sing [redacted] the exile's heart fills with such unsingable songs  
Sing [redacted] the exile's heart [redacted] with [redacted] unsingable songs  
Sing [redacted] the exile's [redacted] songs  
Sing [redacted] unsingable songs  
Sing [redacted] songs  
Sing [redacted] songs

**Herbert Howells** (1892-1983)

**Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis from the**

**Gloucester Service** (1946)

arranged by Trish Clowes

**Jimi Hendrix** (1942-1970)

**Up from the Skies** (1967)

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**Joe Harriott** (1928-1973)

**Tonal** (1961)

**Ross Stanley** (b.1982)

**Ashford Days** (2021)

**Trish Clowes** (b.1984)

**Sarah** (2020)

**Dance with Me** (2014)

**Symphony in Yellow** (2013)

*Oscar Wilde*

An omnibus across the bridge  
Crawls like a yellow butterfly,  
And, here and there, a passer-by  
Shows like a little restless midge.

Big barges full of yellow hay  
Are moored against the shadowy wharf,  
And, like a yellow silken scarf,  
The thick fog hangs along the quay.

The yellow leaves begin to fade  
And flutter from the Temple elms,  
And at my feet the pale green Thames  
Lies like a rod of rippled jade.