

# WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 21 January 2024  
3.00pm

## European Chamber Music Academy Showcase 2024

Supported by a gift from the estates of the late Thomas and Betty Elton in memory of Sigmund Elton

### Tetra Brass

Aljoscha Zierow trumpet  
Luca Chiché trumpet  
Christian Traute trombone  
Jakob Grimm trombone

John Dowland (1563-1626)

Suite (pub. 1605) *arranged by Jakob Grimm*

*I. King of Denmark Galliard • II. Dr Case Pavane •  
III. Mr Thomas and His Galliard • IV. Flow, my tears •  
V. Earl of Essex Galliard*

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

From *On an Overgrown Path* (1900-11) *arranged by  
Christian Traute*

*Our Evenings • A Blown-Away Leaf •  
Come With Us! • The Madonna of Frýdek •  
They Chattered Like Swallows • Words Fail!*

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

3 Chansons de Charles d'Orleans (1898-1908) *arranged by  
Christian Traute*

*Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder! • Quand j'ai ouy le  
tabourin • Yver, vous n'estes qu'un villain*

Alex Vaughan (b.1987)

Ki Tov (2021)

Antoine Simon (1850-1916)

Quartet in sonatina form Op. 23 No. 1 (c.1880)

*I. Allegro grazioso • II. Andante tranquillo •  
III. Scherzando quasi presto • IV. Allegro moderato à la  
Russe*



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**John Dowland** is known best for his (predominantly melancholic) songs, though increasing attention has been paid to his instrumental music in recent times. We don't know for sure where he was born – both London and Dublin are possibilities – but he had appointments as a court lutenist in France, Denmark and England.

**Jakob Grimm** of Tetra Brass became interested in Dowland after hearing his famous song 'Flow, my tears'. He says: 'I started to research a little bit on Dowland's music and how people used it. At first I was fascinated by the adaptations by Sting, who treats the song as if they are jazz standards. I played a little bit around with 'Flow, my tears', which became the starting point for the suite. A short time afterwards I discovered the musical portraits of well-known and less-known people, which are now the frame for 'Flow, my tears'. For me, personally, Dr Case and Mr Thomas are the most interesting ones, because here your imagination can go really crazy in imagining who these people were.'

**Janáček's** piano suite *On an Overgrown Path* was assembled in stages between the years 1900 and 1911. These years were a turning point for the Bohemian composer, personally and professionally. His 1904 opera *Jenůfa* was rejected by Prague, causing bitterness intensified by his identification of the opera with the death of his beloved daughter Olga, aged 21, in 1903. He had already lost a son 13 years earlier. These blows contributed to the breakdown of his marriage.

The overall title of the suite is a Moravian equivalent of 'down memory lane'. The picturesque but gnomic titles of the individual pieces were added late in the day at the request of a friendly critic; perhaps only one demands further explanation. Frýdek was the home town of the composer's grandfather, where the Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary was a place of pilgrimage, hence the hymn tune in *The Madonna of Frýdek*.

**Claude Debussy's** only published work for unaccompanied choir (that is, in its original version) is a combination of two pieces from 1898 and one from 1908. The texts are by Charles d'Orléans (1394-1465), a French nobleman who spent time in England as a prisoner following the Battle of Agincourt. The three poems are on unrelated subjects. The first is ostensibly a love song from a poet to his mistress, but it turns out the beloved is France, so this is patriotic passion. The second (which is the setting newly

minted in 1908) features imitations of a tambourin, or tenor drum, as a May Day parade passes in the street; the poet prefers to remain in bed. The final song rails against the harshness of winter. Debussy pitches his music between the modal harmonies of the poet's era and the not-so-distant musical language of his later works.

Born in Sydney, Australia, **Alex Vaughan** is a composer, jazz trombonist and computer programmer who has lived in Germany since 2009. *Ki Tov* is an unusual conception for brass ensemble as it uses only what Vaughan calls the 'percussive elements of the instruments. Not a single pitch can be heard throughout the entire work.' The title comes from the Hebrew phrase 'hodu l'adonai ki tov ki l'olam chasdo', meaning 'Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures for ever', and *Ki Tov* is the second of two pieces derived from that text. The composer writes:

Many of my works are characterised by an integration of theological ideas and conceptual music... This work, however, is an exception to this. It is nothing other than a pure expression of praise. There is nothing intellectual about this piece of music, it is music that has arisen out of the heart, out of impulse and instinct as an expression of thankfulness to the one who made me. In a sense, it is extraordinarily selfish music, as it is music that was written for myself and for my God in a musical language that He knows is organic, emotional and heartfelt to me.

**Antoine** (or Anton) **Simon** was born in France but at the age of 21 moved to Russia. There he carved out a successful career as a music teacher, administrator and composer, writing mainly for chamber ensemble and the theatre, both opera and ballet. In his lifetime, Russia was one of the few countries to have nurtured music for brass ensemble, thanks in large part to the patronage of Tsars and Tsarinas.

Simon wrote this Quartet in the 1880s, probably for musicians from the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra, who would go on to form a professional brass quartet. All four movements are in triple time. The music skilfully blends the sort of motifs traditionally associated with brass instruments (fanfares, signals and hunting calls) with the textures and structures of mainstream concert music.

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