

WIGMORE HALL 125

Tuesday 21 October 2025
7.30pm

Flowers of Emptiness

Apartment House

Anton Lukoszevieve cello, director	Reiad Chibah viola
Gordon Mackay violin	Colin Alexander cello
Mira Benjamin violin	Kerry Yong piano
Bridget Carey viola	Simon Limbrick percussion

Linda Catlin Smith (b.1957)

Flowers of Emptiness (1986) *UK première*

Ramūnas Motiekaitis (b.1976)

My Fragile Moments (2025) *world première*

Paul Paccione (b.1952)

After Ventadorn (2025) *world première*

Eden Lonsdale (b.1996)

A Thousand Autumns (2025) *world première*

Interval

Daniël Belinfante (1893-1945)

Quartet (1927) *UK première*

Adrian Knight (b.1987)

Charm for the Protection of a Child (2025) *world première*

Linda Catlin Smith (b.1957)

Waterlilly (2008) *UK première*



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This programme is draped in the feeling of autumn, of time passing and the delicate entropy of a seasonal change, or as the French poet Jean Cocteau pertinently commented, 'Life is a horizontal fall.'

The music of Canadian composer **Linda Catlin-Smith** bookends this concert, her music etches poetic, melodic lines which are infused with a melancholic air and an abundant sense of timelessness uttered with minimal means, as she writes 'I don't know if it's particularly conscious, but I do have an aversion to high drama in music – I like intimacy and focus, and the sheer sensuousness of sound. I like to try to create a state of being, a state of thought, or non-thought, where the piece suspends us for a time. And even in the short pieces, I wanted to create this sense of time that is larger than the few minutes they actually hold.' *Flowers of Emptiness* is an early string trio from 1986 and *Waterlily* (her 5th string quartet), a brief, eloquent string quartet from 2008.

Lithuanian composer **Ramūnas Motiekaitis's** musical world also inhabits quieter and less dramatic realms of music. His new work *My Fragile Moments* for piano quintet has the string instruments creating sounds with small wooden sticks, creating an intimate and delicate timbral landscape. This is framed by the piano, with static harmonic chords, creating and releasing musical tension. When asked about his new work the composer just sent me the poem that prefaces the score:

A poem should be palpable and cute
As a globed fruit

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where moss has grown

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

Ars Poetica - Archibald MacLeish

Paul Paccione is an American composer whom Apartment House discovered a few years ago. *After Ventadorn* is a new work for string sextet. The musical material for *After Ventadorn* is derived entirely from the 12th-century Occitan lyric love poem and song ('canço') *Can vei la lauzeta mover* ('When I see the lark beating its wings') by the poet-composer troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn (c. 1147-1180). Paccione 'found', or first became aware of, Bernart's *Can vei la lauzeta mover* a number of years ago. 'What attracted me immediately was its lyrical sensibility (both poetic and musical). The vocal melody of this striking troubadour song forms the basis for the work, consisting of six independent lines of interweaving melodic fragments that are cut out of the original melody. Closely-knit imitative melodic motives are stretched and strung

together, juxtaposed against each other, and piled up one on top of another, creating a pervasive six-voice mosaic-like texture. The individual instrumental parts are both interdependent and interchangeable. The interplay of instrumental combinations is varied throughout, creating dramatic arcs. This results in a kaleidoscopic relationship between the voices that is modelled on the fluidity of Renaissance choral music. *After Ventadorn* is written for and dedicated to Apartment House.'

Eden Lonsdale's new work *A Thousand Autumns* for piano quintet also entertains the number six, with the musical material growing out of a single six-note chord. By rotating its internal intervals, a sequence of five chords is generated; this sequence is then inverted in three different ways, producing subtle variations that underpin the entire piece. The options for different voicings of these chords using a piano quintet, grows into the thousands, an unlimited harmonic potential born from the tiniest cell. The kaleidoscopic implications of this process creates a sense the piece is always closing in on itself, a continuous ending, a thousand autumns.

Composer **Daniel Belinfante** was born in Amsterdam in 1893, where he led a significant music career, teaching and developing a music school there, his life was tragically cut short during World War Two when he was sent to Auschwitz and died there in 1945. He left a considerable body of work, which is today being gradually recognised and published. His music bears a resemblance to that of Darius Milhaud in its use of polytonality and also Bohuslav Martinů, but it has its own unique and singular voice. *Quartet* (1927) is a one-movement work scored for the unusual ensemble of two violins, cello and piano. Dramatic tension is built up from different overlapping ostinati and minimal melodic writing, with five short melodic themes that appear and disappear, passed between the different instruments. The work has a mysterious processional feel, as if the music is ushered in and solemnly departs.

Adrian Knight is a composer based in New York City, his new work *Charm for the Protection of a Child* is scored for piano, string quartet and percussion. He describes the work as a kind of functional magic ritual, divided into six parts, played without pause and arranged symmetrically like figurines on a display shelf. Each part focuses on unison strings or piano and percussion. The two central sections, III and IV, may be seen as a metaphor for the dichotomy of the tomb (III) and the nursery (IV), both resting places for decay and growth. *Charm for the Protection of a Child* was commissioned by Apartment House with assistance from Wigmore Hall.

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