

# WIGMORE HALL

Monday 22 July 2024  
7.30pm

## Exotic Dreamscapes

Hugo Ticciati violin  
Sascha Bota viola  
Julian Arp cello  
Alasdair Beatson piano  
Fleur Barron mezzo-soprano

### O/Modernt Chamber Orchestra

Jure Smirnov Oštir violin	Anna Troxler violin	Edward King cello
Caroline Pether violin	Annette Walther violin	Brian O'Kane cello
Emma Purslow violin	Daniel Eklund viola	Jordi Carrasco-Hjelm double bass
Victoria Sayles violin	Francis Kefford viola	Alexander Jones double bass
Linda Suolahti violin	Frauke Steichert viola	

Maurice Delage (1879-1961)  
Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)  
Tōru Takemitsu (1930-1996)  
Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Ragamalika (1912-4)  
Montagnes from *Harawi* (1945)  
La neige (1963)  
Piano Trio in A minor (1914)  
*I. Modéré • II. Pantoum. Assez vite • III.  
Passacaille. Très large • IV. Final. Animé*

### Interval

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)  
Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

Cruelle mère des amours from *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733)  
A Chloris (1916)  
Quand je fus pris au pavillon from *Rondels* (1898-9)  
Les feuilles mortes (pub. 1947)  
Danse macabre (1872)  
Prélude from Act 5 from *Les Boréades* (1763)  
Erlkönig for viola and string orchestra (2015)  
Entrée de Polymnie from *Les Boréades*  
L'heure exquise from *Chansons grises* (1892)  
Padam Padam (1951)  
Boum (1938)

Joseph Kosma (1905-1969)  
Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)  
Jean-Philippe Rameau  
Sergey Akhunov (b.1967)  
Jean-Philippe Rameau  
Reynaldo Hahn  
Norbert Glanzberg (1910-2001)  
Charles Trenet (1913-2001)

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The dream of faraway places, a quest for altered perspectives and self-discovery, is introduced in this concert of French music by three short works that take different approaches to the exotic. Having visited India and Japan in 1911-2, **Maurice Delage** cultivated a deep respect for non-European musical traditions. 'Ragamalika' (subtitled 'Tamil chant') means a 'garland of ragas'; the piece, which innovatively uses a prepared piano to imitate the sound of an Indian drum, is a transcription of a recording of Coimbatore Thayi (1872-1917), the celebrated singer from South India. **Olivier Messiaen's** 1945 song cycle *Harawi* instils Peruvian tragedy into the legend of Tristan and Iseult. 'Montagnes', the third of the work's 12 movements, takes the untamed heights of the Andes as both backdrop and metaphor for the vertiginous power of ill-fated love. Reciprocally turning from East to West, **Toru Takemitsu's** 'La neige' relocates Shin'ichi Segi's snow imagery in the context of French art song.

The melancholy frenzy of **Ravel's** Trio in A minor is animated by a dual dynamic: the desire for exotic or euphoric release versus the inexorable weight of the here and now. Conceived as Europe tumbled headlong into World War I, it was begun in spring 1914, while Ravel was staying in Saint-Jean-de-Luz in the French Basque country, his regular retreat from Paris, close to the village where he was born. Before putting pen to paper, he sketched out the entire structure in his head, commenting (presumably not without irony) that it was 'finished' except for the 'themes'. The trio progressed slowly until the summer, when he attacked it 'with the sureness and lucidity of a madman', feverishly aiming to complete it before joining the army (he eventually drove a lorry for the 13th Artillery). It was finished in September, when Ravel described the frenetic pace of his output to Stravinsky: 'The idea that I should be leaving at once made me get through five months' work in five weeks!'

The lilting, sometimes plaintive melody of the opening movement, *Modéré*, repeatedly gives way to a disruptive tumult that is ultimately held in suspense, not least by the movement's use of sonata form, which aids a partial return to serenity. Described by Ravel as being 'Basque in colour', its themes derive from the Basque folk and dance music that Ravel planned to celebrate in an abandoned piano concerto. Transposed into the soundscapes of the trio, the hypnotic pull of the Basque rhythms foregrounds a nostalgic allure that struggles against darker forces. The second movement, *Pantoum*, is inspired by Malay poetic quatrains in which the second and fourth lines of each stanza serve as the first and fourth lines of the next. Popularised in France by Victor Hugo, the French variant reached its apogee in Baudelaire's *Harmonie du soir* (set by Debussy in the late 1880s), where the artifice of the repeating lines counterpoint a gruesome poetic climax. Ravel responded meticulously to the technicalities of the verse form, interpreted as a classical scherzo, though the music's terpsichorean whirl repeatedly ascends to pitches of near-hysteria.

The wildest of dances is followed by a walk, presented as a *Passacaille* (from the Spanish *pasar*, 'to walk', and *calles*, 'street'), which originated in Spain as street music. Mining the genre's etymology, Ravel's slow lament, with the tolling of bells in the piano part, evokes a funeral march that relentlessly advances into obscurity, accompanied by repeated *cris de cœur*. The trio concludes with a *Final* that begins with a shimmering reawakening. Again couched in sonata form, the fresh start soon takes on a more troubled aspect, building to a series of dramatic peaks, with trilling fanfares that have been likened to war trumpets. The closing crescendo is abruptly curtailed, begging the question of whether the melancholy undercurrent that extends through the whole work unavoidably engenders a Dionysian frenzy – the flip side of Ravel's commitment to classical clarity and control.

After the interval the dream of strangeness encompasses some Baroque exotica from **Rameau**, beginning with an aria from Act II of *Hippolyte et Aricie* that depicts Phaedra's transgressive passion for her stepson, Theseus. Also heard are two instrumentals from Rameau's last opera, *Les Boréades*, in which Queen Alphise of Bactria, who is required to marry a descendant of Boreas (god of the north wind), illicitly falls for a glamorous foreigner: the *Prélude* from Act V and the captivating *Entrée de Polymnie* from Act IV.

A sideways shift to the bestiary of the unconscious takes place in **Sergey Akhunov's** *Erlkönig* for viola and string orchestra – instrumental reflections on Schubert's seminal *Lied* that unflinchingly engage with the monsters of the night. Picking up on Schubert's obsessive rhythms and creating a fragmentary mosaic of melody, Akhunov's work builds to an alarming conclusion.

Born in Caracas in 1874, **Reynaldo Hahn** moved to Paris when he was four and by the age of 16 was already writing incidental music for the theatre. Hahn's 'A Chloris' adds a lover's rapture to the bass line from Bach's 'Air on a G string'; 'Quand je fus pris au pavillon' playfully interprets a medieval love lyric by Charles, duc d'Orléans; while 'L'heure exquise', a setting of a poem by Verlaine, captures the breathless elation of two lovers watching the moon rise over a forest. The mood is varied with some perennial favourites: **Saint-Saëns's** paradoxically upbeat 'Danse macabre'; 'Les feuilles mortes' by **Joseph Kosma**, better known in English as 'Autumn Leaves'; **Norbert Glanzberg's** 'Padam Padam' (the sound of a pounding heart, as recently explained by Kylie Minogue), written for Edith Piaf; and the iconic 'Boum!' by **Charles Trenet**, which explosively celebrates the transformative power of love.

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## Maurice Delage (1879-1961)

### Ragamalika (1912-4)

The text for this song consists of sounds transcribed by Delage while listening to recordings of ragas, and has no translation.

## Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

### Montagnes from

### Mountains

*Harawi* (1945)

Olivier Messiaen

Rouge violet, noir sur noir.	Purple red, black on black.
L'antique inutile rayon noir.	The ancient, useless black beam.
Montagne, écoute le chaos solaire du vertige.	Mountain, listen to the solar chaos of vertigo.
La pierre agenouillée porte ses maîtres noirs.	The kneeling star bears its black masters.
En capuchons serrés les sapins se hâtent vers le noir.	The tightly cowed fir-trees hasten towards blackness.
Gouffre lancé partout dans le vertige.	Abyss hurled everywhere towards vertigo.
Noir sur noir.	Black on black.

## Tōru Takemitsu (1930-1996)

### La neige (1963)

### Snow

*Shin'ichi Segi*

Il neigeait, Quand il se fut éloigné ...	Snow was falling when he went away, she is weeping again after a sleepless night, another sleepless night.
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Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce the French text of this song

## Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

### Piano Trio in A minor (1914)

#### I. Modéré

#### II. Pantoum. Assez vite

#### III. Passacaille. Très large

## IV. Final. Animé

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### Interval

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## Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

### Cruelle mère des amours from *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733)

*Simon-Joseph Pellegrin,  
after Jean Racine*

### Cruel mother of love

Cruelle mère des amours, Ta vengeance a perdu ma trop coupable race, N'en suspendras-tu point le cours? Ah! du moins, à tes yeux que Phèdre trouve grâce.	Cruel mother of love, your vengeance has been the downfall of my shameful line; will you not check its course? Ah! at least let Phaedra find grace in your eyes.
Je ne te reproche plus rien, Si tu rends à mes vœux Hippolyte sensible; Mes feux me font horreur, mais mon crime et le tien; Tu dois cesser d'être inflexible.	I will no longer reproach you, if you make Hippolytus sympathetic to my wishes; my desires horrify me, but my crime is yours; you must cease to be unyielding.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

## Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

### A Chloris (1916)

*Théophile de Viau*

S'il est vrai, Chloris,  
que tu  
m'aimes,  
Mais j'entends, que tu  
m'aimes bien,  
Je ne crois pas que les rois  
mêmes  
Aient un bonheur pareil au  
mien.  
Que la mort serait  
importune  
A venir changer ma fortune  
Pour la félicité des  
cieux!  
Tout ce qu'on dit de  
l'ambrosie  
Ne touche point ma  
fantaisie  
Au prix des grâces de tes  
yeux.

### To Chloris

If it be true, Chloris,  
that you  
love me,  
(and I'm told you love me  
dearly),  
I do not believe that even  
kings  
can match the happiness  
I know.  
Even death would be  
powerless  
to alter my fortune  
with the promise of  
heavenly bliss!  
All that they say of  
ambrosia  
does not stir my  
imagination  
like the favour of your  
eyes!

### Quand je fus pris au pavillon from *Rondels* (1898-9)

*Charles d'Orléans*

Quand je fus pris au  
pavillon  
De ma dame, très gente et  
belle,  
Je me brûlay à la  
chandelle,  
Ainsi que fait le papillon.

Je rougis comme vermillon,  
A la clarté d'une  
étincelle,  
Quand je fus pris au  
pavillon  
De ma dame, très gente  
et belle.

Si j'eusse été esmerillon  
Ou que j'eusse eu aussi  
bonne aile,  
Je me fusse gardé de  
celle  
Qui me bailla de  
l'aiguillon,  
Quand je fus pris au  
pavillon.

### When I was caught in the pavilion

When I was caught in the  
pavilion  
of my most beautiful and  
noble lady,  
I burnt myself in the  
candle's flame,  
as the moth does.

I flushed crimson  
in the brightness of a  
spark,  
when I was caught in the  
pavilion  
of my most beautiful and  
noble lady.

If I had been a merlin  
or had wings as  
strong,  
I should have shielded  
myself  
from her who pierced me  
with her arrows,  
when I was caught in the  
pavilion.

Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce  
the French text of the following song

## Joseph Kosma (1905-1969)

### Les feuilles mortes

(pub. 1947)

*Jacques Prévert*

Oh! je voudrais tant que tu te  
souviennes  
Des jours heureux où nous  
étions amis.

### Autumn leaves

Oh! how I would like you  
to remember  
the happy days when we  
were friends.  
Back then, life was more  
beautiful,  
and the sun blazed hotter  
than today.  
Autumn leaves collect by  
the handful,  
see, I haven't forgotten...  
Autumn leaves collect by  
the handful,  
memories and regrets,  
too.  
And the north wind  
carries them away  
into the cold night of  
oblivion.  
See, I haven't forgotten  
the song you sang  
to me.

It's a song that resembles  
us,  
you, you loved me and I  
loved you.  
And we lived  
together,  
you who loved me, I who  
loved you.  
But life separates those  
who love one another  
softly, without making a  
sound.  
And the sea erases on the  
sand  
the footprints of parted  
lovers.

Autumn leaves collect by  
the handful,  
memories and regrets,  
too.  
But my love, silent and  
faithful,  
is always smiling and  
gives thanks to life.  
I loved you so much, you  
were so lovely,  
how do you expect me to  
forget you?

Back then, life was more  
beautiful,  
and the sun blazed hotter  
than today.  
You were my sweetest  
friend  
but I have no interest in  
regrets.  
And the song you  
sang  
always, always I shall  
hear!

## Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

### Danse macabre (1872)

*Henri Cazalis*

Zig et zig et zig, la mort en  
cadence  
Frappant une tombe avec  
son talon,  
La mort à minuit joue un air  
de danse,  
Zig et zig et zag, sur son  
violon.

Le vent d'hiver souffle, et la  
nuit est sombre,  
Des gémissements sortent  
des tilleuls;  
Les squelettes blancs vont à  
travers l'ombre  
Courant et sautant sous leurs  
grands  
linceuls,

Zig et zig et zig, chacun se  
trémousse,  
On entend claquer les os des  
danseurs,  
Un couple lascif s'assoit sur  
la mousse  
Comme pour goûter  
d'anciennes douceurs.

Zig et zig et zag, la mort  
continue  
De racler sans fin son aigre  
instrument.  
Un voile est tombé! La  
danseuse est nue!  
Son danseur la serre  
amoureusement.

La dame est, dit-on,  
marquise ou  
baronne.  
Et le vert galant un pauvre  
charron -

### Danse macabre

Zig-a-zig-a-zig, death, in  
strict time  
beating on a tomb with  
his heel;  
death plays a dance tune  
at midnight,  
zig-a-zig-a-zig, on his  
violin.

The winter wind blows,  
and the night is dark;  
moans rise from the  
linden trees;  
pale skeletons come  
through the shadows  
running and leaping  
beneath their great  
shrouds,

Zig-a-zig-a-zig, each  
judders and twitches,  
you hear the dancers'  
bones rattling;  
a wanton couple sits  
down on the moss  
as if to taste bygone  
pleasures.

Zig-a-zig-a-zig, death  
carries on  
endlessly scraping at his  
shrill instrument.  
A veil has fallen! The  
dancer is naked!  
Her dance partner  
embraces her ardently.

They say the woman is a  
marquise or a  
baroness.  
And the dashing suitor a  
poor wheelwright -

Horreur! Et voilà  
qu'elle s'abandonne  
Comme si le rustre était un  
baron!

Zig et zig et zig, quelle  
sarabande!  
Quels cercles de morts se  
donnant la main!  
Zig et zig et zag, on  
voit dans la bande  
Le roi gambader auprès  
du vilain!

Mais psit! tout à coup on  
quitte la ronde,  
On se pousse, on fuit, le coq  
a chanté  
Oh! La belle nuit pour le  
pauvre monde!  
Et vive la mort et  
l'égalité!

unthinkable! And now she  
gives herself away  
as though the swain were  
a baron!

Zig-a-zig-a-zig, what a  
song and dance!  
What circles of the dead  
holding hands!  
Zig-a-zig-a-zig, you can  
see among the pack  
the king capering along  
beside the peasant!

But hush! all at once they  
all cease the dance,  
they fly, they flee, the  
cock has crowed -  
oh! A fine night for  
the poor!  
And long live death and  
equality!

## Jean-Philippe Rameau

### Prélude from Act 5 from *Les Boréades*

(1763)

## Sergey Akhunov (b.1967)

### Erlkönig for viola and string orchestra

(2015)

## Jean-Philippe Rameau

### Entrée de Polymnie from *Les Boréades*

## Reynaldo Hahn

### L'heure exquise from *Chansons grises* (1892)

*Paul Verlaine*

La lune blanche  
Luit dans les bois;  
De chaque branche  
Part une voix  
Sous la ramée...

Ô bien aimée.

### The exquisite hour

The white moon  
gleams in the woods;  
from every branch  
there comes a voice  
beneath the boughs...

O my beloved.

*Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.*

L'étang reflète, Profond miroir, La silhouette Du saule noir Où le vent pleure...	The pool reflects, deep mirror, the silhouette of the black willow where the wind is weeping...
Rêvons, c'est l'heure.	Let us dream, it is the hour.
Un vaste et tendre Apaisement Semble descendre Du firmament Que l'astre irise...	A vast and tender consolation seems to fall from the sky the moon illumines...
C'est l'heure exquise.	Exquisite hour.

Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce the French texts of the following two songs

## Norbert Glanzberg (1910-2001)

### Padam Padam (1951)

*Henri Contet*

Cet air qui m'obsède jour et nuit Cet air n'est pas né d'aujourd'hui ...	This tune which haunts me day and night, this tune didn't spring up today ...
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## Charles Trenet (1913-2001)

### Boum (1938)

*Charles Trenet*

La pendule fait tic-tac tic-tic Les oiseaux du lac pic-pac pic-pic ...	The clock goes tick-tock, tick-tock, the birds on the lake go peep-peep-peep ...
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*Translations of Messiaen and Takemitsu by Richard Stokes. Hahn by Richard Stokes from A French Song Companion (Johnson/Stokes) published by OUP. Kosma by Jean du Monde.*