

# WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 29 March 2025  
11.30am

Gautier Capuçon cello  
Capucelli

Anouchka Hack cello  
Léo Ispir cello  
Caroline Sypniewski cello  
Jeein You cello  
Charles Hervet cello  
Aurélien Pascal cello

Ástor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

La Muerte del Angel (1962)

Léo Delibes (1836-1891)

Flower Duet from *Lakmé* (1883) arranged by Jérôme Ducros

Bryce Dessner (b.1978)

The Forest. Sederunt principes – Pérotin (2019)

Richard Dubugnon (b.1968)

Heptasyllabes (2020)

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

In the Hall of the Mountain King from *Peer Gynt* Op. 23 (1874-5)  
arranged by Jérôme Ducros

Guillaume Connesson (b.1970)

Trois Jardins (2018)  
*I. Jardin anglais • II. Jardin japonais • III. Jardin français*

Javier Martínez Campos (b.1989)

Fantaisie pour la Classe d'Excellence (2015)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Boléro (1928)

Gautier Capuçon and Capucelli are supported by Aline Foriel-Destezet



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As a teenager, **Ástor Piazzolla** (1921-1992) made a living playing the 'bandoneon' (a square-built button accordion) in tango ensembles in Buenos Aires. He later studied composition with Alberto Ginastera and Nadia Boulanger in Paris. The combination of his experience as a performer and his classical training enabled him to reinvent the Argentine tango, but it wasn't until he garnered acclaim abroad that his compositions, which wove in elements of Jazz, dissonance and fugue, were accepted at home.

In this seven-cello arrangement of Piazzolla's *La Muerte del Angel* (the third in a quartet of 'angel' tangos composed in the 1960s), a percussion section of cello-slaps anchors a scurrying, fugal theme, before every cellist is embroiled in the turmoil of a restless melody, its syncopations offset by a walking bass line. A sultry, central section offers a glimpse of calm, before the same, tumultuous theme launches off again.

White jasmine, roses, birdsong and lotus flowers. The sights, sounds and scents of an Indian waterside idyll are conjured by the music of **Léo Delibes** in this popular duet from his 1883 opera, *Lakmé*. In this scene, Lakmé, the daughter of a Brahmin Priest, and her servant, Mallika, go down to the water to bathe, revelling in the beauty of their surroundings – blemished only by a fleeting concern as to her father's wellbeing. The opera was performed in 1883 at Paris's Opéra-Comique, to great success, with its far-flung location and its tale of forbidden, cross-cultural love satisfying 19th-century Parisian tastes for all things 'exotic'.

A single note, harsh and desolate, transports us back in time, as a haze of harmonies evokes an echo of music, ancient and pure. *The Forest* is a haunting musical portrait of a lost world: specifically that of the Cathédrale de Notre-Dame, which burned in 2019. Composer and rock guitarist **Bryce Dessner** was in Paris when the disaster happened, and this piece for seven cellos was his response to that event. He was moved to contemplate the centuries of music that would have been absorbed by the wood of the forest-like roof structure, and this atmospheric work evokes both these memories, and their destruction in flames, arcing back as far as Pérotin's 12th-century motet, *Seredunt principes*.

**Richard Dubugnon** draws on medieval tradition in his *Heptasyllabes* (2020), albeit somewhat more obliquely. The title refers to the seven-syllabic metre favoured in early French poetry, although as Dubugnon explains, 'there are no real poems behind [this piece], just sheer imagination'. The work was commissioned for today's ringleader, Gautier Capuçon, and six accompanying members of his 'Classe d'excellence de violoncelle'. Fittingly, a solo cello takes a prominent role throughout, in the manner of a 'Concertante', backed by two trios of *celli*.

This 15-minute work is a showcase for seven virtuoso cellists, including *ponticello* passages (bowed near the bridge), to create a scratchy, somewhat distant texture.

**Edvard Grieg** was delighted to accept a commission to write incidental music for a staging of Henrik Ibsen's dramatic poem, *Peer Gynt*. Unfortunately, he found the subject matter decidedly uninspiring, and he stayed away from the première in February 1876. Despite the composer's lack of enthusiasm, it went on to become his most famous work, with Grieg subsequently crafting two four-movement orchestral suites from the score. The music evokes the eerie, echoing darkness of the Troll King's subterranean lair, and as the pace intensifies, the music reaches a primal, terrifying climax.

**Connesson's** original composition for seven cellos begins in an English garden, with a tender and poignant contrapuntal *Adagio* reflecting, in the composer's words, 'the charm of gardens seen in paintings'. The second movement, 'short like an enigmatic Haiku' makes use of silences, harmonic *glissandi* and a sonorous solo cello. The final movement, an *Allegro con brio*, evokes a French garden of 'regal symmetry, [with] perspectives that vanish to infinity and [with] topiary parterres', as well as fountains bathed in light and joy.

A member of Gautier Capuçon's 'Classe d'excellence de violoncelle', Valencia-born cellist **Javier Martínez Campos**, composed this work for the group in 2015. An intrepid melody sets out its bold course over a syncopated accompaniment, before the music dissolves into rasps of tremolo and wisps of discordant harmony. A dreamlike rhapsody of cello concerto excerpts follows, with notable guests including Shostakovich, refractions of Haydn and Dvořák, solo voices emerging through the texture. A furious flurry of scale passages heralds the return.

'Don't you think there's something insistent about [it]?' **Ravel** said to a friend in 1928, trying out a cyclical melody on the piano. 'I'm going to try and repeat it a good number of times without any development, while gradually building it up with my best orchestration.' Ravel stayed true to his word. In its original version, his two-part tune winds its way through the entirety of the orchestra. In this shortened arrangement, we hear the Bolero dance's traditional, military-style triplet rhythm in the percussion, and that distinctive, repeating pizzicato bass line. Over this, the melody begins its meandering journey, gradually ascending to the upper echelons of the instrument, enveloped in a shimmering halo of harmonies. Listen out for the raucous *glissandi* towards the end, evoking the din of Ravel's blaring trombones.

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