

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 4 June 2022 1.00pm

Phrases album launch

Héloïse Werner soprano

Emily Hultmark bassoon

Colin Alexander cello

Laura Snowden guitar

Daniel Shao flute

Calum Huggan percussion

CLASSIC *fm* Wigmore Hall £5 tickets for Under 35s supported by Media Partner Classic FM



This concert is part of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust ticket scheme, offering free tickets to those aged 8-25

Héloïse Werner (b.1991)

& Zoë Martlew (b.1968)

Nico Muhly (b.1981)

Josephine Stephenson (b.1990)

Georges Aperghis (b.1945)

Héloïse Werner

Georges Aperghis

Elaine Mitchener (b.1970)

Héloïse Werner

Oliver Leith (b.1990)

Zoë Martlew

Syncopate (2018)

Benedicite Recitation (2021) *world première*

Comme l'espoir/you might all disappear (2021) *world première*

Récitation No. 9 (1978)

Unspecified Intentions (2021)

Confessional (2018)

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whetdreem (2022) *world première*

Like Words (2022) *world première*

yhyhyhyh (2021)

The Plot (2022) *world première*

Co-commissioned by Wigmore Hall, the RVW Trust and PRS Foundation's Women Make Music.

Zoë Martlew is supported by PRS Foundation's Women Make Music.



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Héloïse Werner – *Syncopate*

Written in partnership with **Zoë Martlew**, *Syncopate* is a short, vivacious extract from *The Other Side of the Sea*. Werner's solo show for which Martlew was her mentor. This lively and humorous work employs a single percussive timbre, provided by the cello, to frame micro-phrases that are pieced together to form longer, more elaborate lines. Linguistic and rhythmic games gain tempo and dramatic weight before the music is abruptly and playfully cut-off to end this theatrical miniature.

Nico Muhly – *Benedicite Recitation*

Emerging from simple yet unpredictable musical cells, Muhly's duo for voice and flute expands in a cumulative motion through a glowing, undulating flute part. The voice recites ecstatically in a more varied manner that at times soars in sustained lines over the flute texture before joining the rippling lines in rhythmic and timbral tandem. Muhly references Werner's own lockdown creativity through the use of *sofège* note names before the piece settles into a closing passage of peaceful reverence accompanied by a single crotale.

Josephine Stephenson – *Comme l'espoir/you might all disappear*

Using text from a short French poem by Antoine Thiollier, Stephenson uses an Oulipian process to amalgamate the words with similar sounding English words to gradually abstract the meaning behind them; the words seemingly melt into musical sounds. The hypnotic nature of the guitar writing allows this to happen almost imperceptibly with long phrases of sustained emotional atmosphere rising and falling quite naturally before the music appears to gently evaporate at the close. The way in which the two languages merge is a touching reflection of the fact that Stephenson and Werner, friends since childhood in Paris, both moved to the UK to study and there continued their long friendship.

Georges Aperghis – *Récitation No. 8*

Of the 14 *Récitations*, number eight is perhaps the most pulse-based and coolly lilting of these a capella vocal works. Here, a simple, cellular growth becomes the means to highlight both the joy of delicate linguistic manipulations and also the exuberance of a hearing a voice repeatedly replicating highly specific timbres.

Héloïse Werner – *Unspecified Intentions*

Abstract and unusual, spellbinding but joyously light-hearted, the languid opening of this little gem of a solo vocal work belies the strange beauty and fierce virtuosity that gradually infiltrates this bright collage of sounds, rhythms and textures.

Héloïse Werner – *Confessional*

Another extract from Werner's highly-acclaimed solo show *The Other Side of the Sea*, this work begins by introducing the notion that speaking in a second language adds a layer of detachment and a challenge to the presentation of one's personality. As a listener, we are then effectively taught a new language through the replacement of certain words with specific sounds. These motifs are in turn coalesced with ideas inherent to the art of performing and the layers of complexity build and engulf us. Sudden moments of stasis provided by the use of a single crotale allow us brief seconds of reflection before

we are returned into the tapestry of phrases until a final snapshot of 'performance' closes this wonderfully idiosyncratic work.

Georges Aperghis – *Récitation No. 9*

Dark, mysterious, brutal and haunting, the ninth of the *Récitations* has a theatrical intensity and dramatic tension that builds from the first note to the last. Written in two short sections, this solo work again uses cellular develop but to a much more psychological and disturbing effect.

Elaine Mitchener – *whetdream*

During this new piece by another outstanding vocalist and composer, we enter a truly unusual and surreal state; somewhere between being asleep and being awake. Written using a graphic score, a photo of a late-night taxi journey in the rain and an extensive list of instructions, it is created as both a theatrical performance piece but also a multi-dimensional listening experience. The rustling of bed sheets, a number of timers independently counting down, that familiar sound of water in a jug, the slight mumbles that accompany our nights' sleep and the disturbing interruptions of exterior noises all coalesce to form a strange, city-infused nocturne.

Héloïse Werner – *Like Words*

This duo clearly demonstrates both Werner's natural talent for writing melodically and her love of the bassoon as a melodic instrument. *Like Words* is a plaintive and simple work that hears the bassoon and voice act as one, moving apart only slightly on a few occasions. Yet the tessitura of the mellifluous counterpoint creates a warm and resonant tone in both the bassoon and the voice that together sing soulfully and with great care, gentle lilts in the line carrying the listener ever forwards.

Oliver Leith – *yhyhyhyhyh*

Leith's work for voice and cello does not so much as abstract language but somehow instils a depth and variety of meaning into one syllable and one pitch. Beginning with a gamba-like cello ostinato that employs a heavily detuned A-string, *yhyhyhyhyh* is at once raw and grungy yet subtle and mesmerising. The voice quickly enters with a repetitive single note whilst the use of quartertones in the cello effortlessly distorts our sense of pitch centre. As double-stops are introduced, the piece takes on a deeper and more melancholic tone before the voice rises and is allowed to expand upon that single pitch and rhythm, but just a little. The central section hears the cello play more melodically but in a quite unique, quasi-unison fashion that sounds almost electronic. As the music returns to the simplicity of the opening, that single vocal note seems to have gained mass and meaning in a way that subtly defies logic.

Zoë Martlew – *The Plot*

'Written at a time of increasingly dramatic planetary turbulence, I felt the need to turn to core ancient myths as source for subject matter, exploring the archetype of the lone struggle of the individual transmuting profound personal crisis via a courageous journey to the underworld, emerging with new wisdom and understanding of the transformative power of love, combined with a sprinkling of the cabaret glitter that is never too far away from my heart.' - Zoë Martlew

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Héloïse Werner (b.1991) & **Zoë Martlew** (b.1968)

Syncopate (2018)

Octavia Bright

Syncopate!

My soul with my mouth

My mouth with my meaning

My meaning myself

Myself with your sense

My sense with your nonsense

My soul with my mouth

My mouth with my meaning

My meaning myself

Myself with your sense

My sense with your nonsense

Nonsense nonsense nonsense NON NON NON!

Nico Muhly (b.1981)

Benedicite Recitation (2021) *world première*

Sunne and moone

blesse

Sterris of heuene

reyn and deew reyn

ech sp'rit of God

fier and heete

coold and somer

blesse ye

blac forst blesse ye

and coold yces and snowis

niytis and daies

liyt and derknesse

blesse ye

leitit

blesse ye the Lord

and derknesse

Leitit and cloudis,

The erthe blesse the Lord

Herie it and aboue enhaunse it hym into worldis.

Mounteyns and little hillis

Blesse ye the Lord

All burrowing thingis in erthe,

Blesse ye the Lord

Whallis, and alle thingis that ben mouyd in watris.

Bless ye the Lord and above enhaunse ye him into worldis.

Alle briddis of the eyr, blesse ye the Lord

Alle wielde beestis and tame beestis

Sones of men, blesse ye the Lord

Israel blesse the Lord Alle the vertues of the Lord,

blesse ye the Lord.

O all ye Works of the Lord

O ye Angels of the Lord

O ye Heavens

O ye Waters that be above the Firmament

O all ye Powers of the Lord

O ye Sun and Moon

O ye Stars of Heaven

O ye Showers and Dew,

O ye Winds of God

O ye Fire and Heat

O ye winter and summer

Praise him and magnify him for ever.

Josephine Stephenson (b.1990)

Comme l'espoir/you might all disappear (2021)

world première

Antoine Thiollier/Josephine Stephenson

Comme l'espoir

you might all disappear

balançant parmi les étoiles solitaires

like a comet

qui va renaître

in more distant skies

calm less Pooh are

y où maille te hall dit ça pire

bowl answer par me lesser too wall solid tear

laïc euh comète

key foreign air true

hymne mort dix tentes esse cailles eux

calme moins ourson sont

there where stitch thee lobby says this worse

bol réponse même moi moindre aussi mur solide déchirure

lay them comet

clé étranger air vrai

anthem dead ten tents linchpin quails them

cull murmur wah source on sore

d'aire ou herse t'y jeudi l'aube y cède d'hisse ou heurt ceux

ball rep aunts maim mwah mow wind rah horsey mure so lead desh

error

laid idem comme êtes

clay het ranch heir erf ray

en sème d'aide t'haine t'ai noeud te ce linge épine cou elle se

d'aime

abbat murmure whoah source sur plaie

of area or harrow to you Thursday the dawn there yields of hoist or

clash those

balle représentant ante mutile bisou tond tourne aristo chevalin

séquestre tant avance patrie erreur

ugly idem like are

argile hétéro ranch héritier terrain rayon

in sow of help to you hate to have you knot to you this linen pricker

neck she herself of love

Georges Aperghis (b.1945)

Récitation No. 9 (1978)

Héloïse Werner

Unspecified Intentions (2021)

Confessional (2018)

Emily Burns/Héloïse Werner

It is hard to be myself in English.
When I perform, I express feeling through
sound. And you understand the feeling.
But when I speak in English, the sound is
unfamiliar. I feel unfamiliar.
So, I perform sounds I've learnt,
And I know it's a performance.

In my mother tongue, I am me. A performer!
But familiar.
I feel like me.

Georges Aperghis

Récitation No. 8 (1978)

Elaine Mitchener (b.1970)

whetdreem (2022) *world première*

Héloïse Werner

Like Words (2022) *world première*

Ali Lewis

When I was taught that each droplet
is flattened underneath by the air's resistance
to its falling, as if what looked like nothing
cared, I began to picture the rain, wrongly,
it transpires, as bullets in reverse, retracing
their paths, impossibly, to the muzzle,
like words, but imagine if it did all come back
to you like that, and you got soaked. How
much you'd rejoice. How much it would hurt.

Oliver Leith (b.1990)

yhyhyhyhy (2021)

Zoë Martlew

The Plot (2022) *world première*

Zoë Martlew/Victor Hugo

Drat, bother, shh, oh, ow! (etc.)

I've lost the plot
J'ai perdu les pedales.
(etc.)

Well, the old plot was busy.

I am very busy, I am very busy, I must do lots of stuff now. Je suis
très occupé, très très très busy
Working, pushing, forcing, I must.
Je suis très busy all the time. Occupé!
(etc.)

I hate this plot! This plot sucks! I want to find a new one. But how?

Ça alors! It's the Fabulous Fairy of Narrative Continuation!
C'est La Feé Fabuleuse de la Narration!

They tell me that to find a new plot I must go deep into the Forest
of Forgetting. But to enter the forest and find a new plot, there
are three rules.

One, no haircuts.

Two, no makeup.

Three: and absolutely no phone, no laptop, and no digital devices of
any kind. (Impossible! How will she do it?!)

It's very cold, no people, just trees.

Invisible eyes are following me. Strange music. My hair is tangled
like weeds with eyes.

I don't know where I am. I don't know who.

I don't know why I am. I've no name.

So still. So quiet.

A voice? My love...

Tomorrow at dawn,

in the hour when the countryside turns white, I leave.

For I know that you're waiting for me.

I will go by the forest, I will go by the mountain, I can no longer
stay far from you.

Demain, dès l'aube, à l'heure où blanchit la campagne,

Je partirai. Vois-tu, je sais que tu m'attends.

J'irai par la forêt, j'irai par la montagne.

Je ne puis demeurer loin de toi plus longtemps.

Oh no! I was really enjoying that plot! (Me too!)

What have I learned?

I am free! The plot is love! I am the plot!

And when in doubt, wear sequins (etc.)

En cas de doute, portez les paillettes

Time to stop, let it drop and make a brand-new plot of love.

And now it's over to you.

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*'The Plot' co-commissioned by Wigmore Hall, the RVW Trust and PRS Foundation's
Women Make Music. Zoë Martlew is supported by PRS Foundation's Women Make
Music.*