

WIGMORE HALL 125

Saturday 4 October 2025
1.00pm

Wigmore Hall Voices of Today 125th Anniversary Commission Thomas Gibbs

Apartment House

Nancy Ruffer flute
Robyn Blair french horn
Simon Limbrick percussion
Anton Lukoszevieve percussion
Kerry Yong piano

Mitchell Keely electronics

Thomas Gibbs (b.1995)

Sun Book for speaker, bass flute and horn, with live electronics and resonant objects (2025) *world première*

Commissioned by Wigmore Hall (with the generous support of the Marchus Trust and the Wigmore Hall Endowment Fund)

Julius Aglinskas (b.1988)

Three Photographs for piano (2022) *UK première*

1. *Bicycle without handlebars* • 2. *Lonely Tree* •
3. *Girl on a bench*

Luc Ferrari (1929-2005)

Cellule 75 for piano, percussion and playback (1975)



UNDER 35S

Supported by the AKO Foundation
Media partner Classic FM



Help us raise £125,000
for 125 years of music

To find out more visit wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate



Join & Support
Donations

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management. In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions. Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141. Wigmore Hall is equipped with a loop to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • [Wigmore-hall.org.uk](https://wigmore-hall.org.uk) • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan

The three works in this concert bring together three highly individual composers, each following their own path in contemporary composition. What unites them perhaps is their own sincere sense of exploration and joy in creating music. Luc Ferrari (1929-2005), whom Apartment House memorably worked with in 2003, was an early explorer of *musique concrète* and electro-acoustic music and also what are known today as 'field recordings' with his seminal work *Presque rien No. 1 'Le Lever du jour au bord de la mer'* (1970), consisting of edited environmental sounds recorded on a Yugoslavian beach. He also studied the piano with Alfred Cortot and composition with Olivier Messiaen. There is a keen sense in this programme of composers devoted to music, devotional even, in the case of the new work from Thomas Gibbs. Julius Aglinskas's luminous three interludes for piano carry this feeling into the epic and delirious final work by Luc Ferrari.

Thomas Gibbs *Sun Book* for speaker, bass flute and horn, with live electronics and resonant objects (2025) *world première*

The text heard in this work is taken from the *Fusus al-Hikam*, the final major work of the medieval Andalusian mystic Muhyiddin ibn Arabi, in which the sheikh presents prophets of the Abrahamic tradition as spiritual paragons of specific 'wisdoms' (from the 'quintessence of divine wisdom in the Adamic logos' to the 'quintessence of singular wisdom in the Muhammadan logos').

Sun Book is a direct encounter with the spiritual reality of the prophet Idris, the mysterious transhistorical figure who is at once Enoch and Hermes Trismegistus, and whose multidimensional ascension provides his students with a key to 'sacred wisdom'.

This ascension is the essential matter of the piece, and its constituent parts – pitches, sounds, actions – are stopping places on the various planes of the 'ascent' – 'from the alone to the alone': from God, to God, in God, and by means of God. The 'above' of the heavenly journey is mirrored in the microcosm of the speaking voice: the letters of the Arabic text are produced at points of articulation stretching from the depths of the chest to the front of the lips, a 28-consonant scale whose degrees are tied to the mansions of the moon.

The image of the horn is ontologically significant for ibn Arabi. He interprets the angelically-blown horn of light found in hadith literature as being a reference to the intermediary threshold of imagination, which, by virtue of its encompassing of every thing and non-thing, is as wide as wide can be.

© Thomas Gibbs 2025

Julius Aglinskas *Three Photographs* for piano (2022)

Lithuanian composer Julius Aglinskas's music is notable for its often stark simplicity and a resolutely consonant harmonic world. His compositions often explore antiphonal oscillations between instrumental groupings, over extended periods of time. As a contrast, these three miniatures for piano are eloquently compressed aphorisms, each one a single frame, a single image, suspending time. The emotional weight and feeling of the music on the one hand sounds almost nostalgic, but this is also underpinned with a compositional clarity and strength.

The American photographer Stephen Shore wrote that 'a photograph has edges, the world does not.'

Luc Ferrari *Cellule 75* for piano, percussion and tape (1975)

Strength of rhythm and forced cadence (May-November, 1975)

American 'minimalist' music has long held a hegemonic position in the musical world, with the obvious three saints being Steve Reich, Philip Glass and Terry Riley. Not to dampen their notable esteem, it is fair to say that certain minimalist tendencies in other countries have often been pushed aside or ignored. Luc Ferrari, a unique French composer with an Italian surname and a pretty chic body of music to match, produced several works that are notable for an incessant and almost hallucinatory use of minimalist repetition.

Ferrari ironically comments that 75 is the year of the composition, i.e. a social context suitable for the year 1975. Does that mean that it is different in 76? Perhaps simply a creation is dependent on the moment when it was conceived. 'Cell' is of course the idea of a musical cell, but also the cell of a prison; political prisons, refugee camps, ghettos and apartheid, as well as cultural and intellectual problems.

For all its intellectual basis, the work has at times a decidedly funky feeling, with a decisive interplay between piano and percussion, in tandem with the gradually cataclysmic-sounding tape part. This strongly rhythmic music (an instrumental *tour de force*) and the sense of 'forced cadences', is at once in opposition and united, something which the composer describes paradoxically as imprisoning the meaning of the composition.

Except 'Sun Book', notes © Anton Lukoszevieve 2025