

WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 9 April 2025
7.30pm

Héloïse Werner soprano
Max Baillie violin, viola
Colin Alexander cello

Misha Mullov-Abbado double bass
Bruno Heinen piano
Angela Wai Nok Hui percussion

Colin Alexander (b.1986)

moonrise / Alva's riff (2025) world première

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

O vis eternitatis arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner

Max Baillie (b.1981)

Make sweet floods to run (2025) world première

Bruno Heinen (b.1982)

What Happens Now? (2019)

Interval

Héloïse Werner (b.1991)

Mixed Phrases (2021)

arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner

Errollyn Wallen (b.1958)

Rain (1994)

Angela Wai Nok Hui (b.1991)

Just let me die a lil (2025) arranged by Angela Wai Nok Hui

Misha Mullov-Abbado (b.1991)

A Darting Fear (2023)

Please note that this concert includes reference to suicide.



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We begin tonight's concert with an evocation of the moon rising slowly above a rippling sea to reflect the sun's light onto a shimmering mass of endlessly dancing waves; the scene is at once forebodingly black, luminously white and yet full of colourful refractions, the perpetual sound and movement of the water beneath the silent stillness of the sky. Out of this seascape emerges a simple ostinato, *Alva's riff*, written to celebrate the birth of two dear friends' first child. The lilting pizzicato pattern gradually develops while a gentle melody is heard above. The piece was composed using the name Alva in a variety of different ways and is dedicated to Ruth, Abel and Alva.

In the blink of an eye, we move from these playful rhythms into a deeper, more meditative mood through the static drone that forms the basis of **Hildegard of Bingen's** *O vis eternitatis*. Especially arranged for this concert, the single note that we start with is allowed to waver and bloom to reflect the shape of the vocal part. This timelessly beautiful line begins with largely stepwise movements before increasingly large intervals are employed to create pockets of highly expressive harmony and motifs which become progressively more significant and powerful as the piece flourishes.

A brightness breaks through the nostalgic mist as we are introduced to the Malian-inspired plucking of **Max Baillie's** new work *Make sweet floods to run*. Pizzicato techniques reminiscent of the ancient lutes of the ngoni tradition gather with a swirling energy in cyclical patterns that bring together sparkly timbres from the whole ensemble in music of ecstatic and mesmeric reverence. Guiding the mood and shape of the piece, that leads us into the interval, is this text from TS Eliot's 'Little Gidding' and its quote from the medieval mystic Julian of Norwich:

And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flames are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

As we seem to be left gazing into the depths of time and space by this music written around 900 years ago, a simple but familiar melody rings out to stoke our memories at the beginning of **Bruno Heinen's** work and we are asked: *What Happens Now?* Inspired by a Hungarian folk tune used in Béla Bartók's *8 Improvisations*, 'the piece explores a triadic polytonal musical world for the child within.'

We enter into a dichotomy of two parallel worlds at the start of the second half with a new arrangement of *Mixed Phrases* by **Héloïse Werner**. In one instance it is a familiar world, right here on Earth, featuring the rich sound of the viola and words by Arthur Rimbaud - a section of 'Phrases' from *Les Illuminations*. In the next, we are in a more unfamiliar place, somewhere higher in the sky, the ethereal violin lines becoming entangled in a new reconstructed language; Rimbaud's words again but this time fragmented, internalised and reformed.

And now, just as we have totally lost our bearings, it begins to rain. In **Errollyn Wallen's** song, we find ourselves in another strange and dreamlike environment; drenched, drizzling and veiled, the sun no longer appears here. Yet the narrator is at ease in this shrouded environment and, unlike others around them, is unperturbed by the incessant gloom to find their own, quietly inward sense of joy.

Gradually our attention wanders away from the constantly irregular patter of dripping drops and is instead now focused on the intimate repetition of the human heart. **Angela Wai Nok Hui** writes of her work *Just let me die a lil*:

'Feeding back with my own heartbeat. The vibration goes through my body, using my own body as the resonance box for the loud sounds. As loud as a church bell, as loud as your world could bear.

...
It's like falling in love but we are stuck in the falling part.'

A suspended hush awaits us as we arrive at our final chapter in this evening's programme. A setting of Emily Dickinson's brief and beautiful yet haunting and heartbreaking poem, *A darting fear* by **Misha Mullov-Abbado** is all about the sudden realisation of profound loss. Quietly pulsating piano patterns move through a cycle of harmony at an irregular pace to resemble the rhythm of waking and sleeping. A melody floats in spacious solitude, islands of weighty words spread across extended periods of time; a reflection of the frozen stillness that accompanies a moment of huge realisation. The music extends beyond the end of the poem, a sequence of new harmony that is brighter than the main body of music yet continuously descends. 'This represents the afterlife (the different dawn) and all the mysteries beyond, far from grieving loved ones.'

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Colin Alexander (b.1986)

moonrise / Alva’s riff (2025)

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

O vis eternitatisO power of eternity

arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner

Liturgical text

O vis eternitatisO power of eternity

Que omnia ordinasti inwho has ordered all

corde tuo,things in your heart,

Per Verbum tuum omniathrough your Word all

creata suntthings were created,

Sicut voluisti,according to your will,

Et ipsum Verbum tuumand your very Word

Induit carnemhas taken on flesh

In formatione illain that form

Que educta est dewhich was brought forth

Adam.from Adam.

Et sic indumenta ipsiusAnd so his garments

A maximo dolorefrom greatest suffering

Abstersa sunt.were washed clean.

O quam magna estO how great is the

benignitas Salvatoris,Saviour's kindness,

Qui omnia liberavitwho has freed all things

Per incarnationem suam,through his incarnation,

Quam divinitas exspiravitbreathed forth by divinity

Sine vinculo peccati.without the chains of sin.

Et sic indumenta ipsiusAnd so his garments

A maximo dolorefrom greatest suffering

Abstersa sunt.were washed clean.

Gloria Patri etGlory be to the Father

Filioand to the Son

Et Spiritui sancto.and to the Holy Spirit.

Et sic indumenta ipsiusAnd so his garments

A maximo dolorefrom greatest suffering

Abstersa sunt.were washed clean.

Max Baillie (b.1981)

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Bruno Heinen (b.1982)

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Arthur Rimbaud

Le haut étang fumeThe highland pond

continuellement.steams continually.

Quelle sorcière va se dresserWhat witch will rise

sur le couchant blanc?against the white

Quelles violettesWhat violet foliage will

frondaisons vontfall?

descendre?What violet foliage will

Pendant que les fondsWhile public funds are

publics s’écoulent en fêtespoured out in feasts of

de fraternité,brotherhood,

Il sonne une cloche de feua bell of roseate fire tolls

rose dans les nuages.in the clouds.

Errollyn Wallen (b.1958)

Rain (1994)

Errollyn Wallen

And another day
As I rise up
To greet the rain.

And another year
Since we first heard
There would be
No sun at all.

But how wonderful is the rain.

You should find yourself
Something that’s big and bright
And orange.

Maybe I should
Paint myself a large square
Of
Blue.

But how wonderful is the rain.

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

Angela Wai Nok Hui (b.1991)

Just let me die a lil (2025)

arranged by Angela Wai Nok Hui

This text has not been included at the request of the composer.

Please note that this song includes reference to suicide.

Misha Mullov-Abbado (b.1991)

A Darting Fear (2023)

Emily Dickinson

A darting fear — a pomp — a tear —
A waking on a morn
To find that what one waked for,
Inhales the different dawn.

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