



WIGMORE  
HALL

# The Score

2023 SUMMER ISSUE

ASMIK GRIGORIAN'S HALL DEBUT IN RACHMANINOV SONGS  
2023/24 RESIDENCY ARTISTS JEREMY DENK,  
EMA NIKOLOVSKA, SOLOMON'S KNOT, BRETT DEAN  
CORONATION ANTHEMS AT ST JAMES'S, SPANISH PLACE

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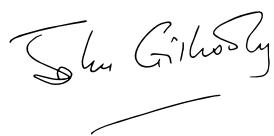
# Welcome

This summer marks the close of the 30th anniversary celebrations for the Friends of Wigmore Hall. It is very heartening to have so many sold-out and well-attended concerts, a sign of musical life finally settling down after the pandemic.

On 6 June, we were honoured, in conjunction with the Royal Philharmonic Society, to welcome His Majesty The King to a concert of Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum* and Coronation Anthems performed by Le Concert Spirituel and conductor Hervé Niquet. This inaugurated a new series at the magnificent neo-Gothic church of St James's, Spanish Place. We will present at least one concert a year there for the foreseeable future. As well as 6 June, we had a magnificent *St Matthew Passion* there on 19 June, to a capacity audience. Of course, nothing can replace the intimacy and golden acoustic of Wigmore Hall, but it's good to occasionally promote concerts locally for larger forces than the Hall can take.

Equally, our outreach work in various communities goes from strength to strength, with a new project planned in Barking and Dagenham. Our Music for Life programme has had a noticeable impact on people living with dementia and their carers.

I hope that you enjoy all the articles in this edition of *The Score*, which give an excellent overview of highlights in the Season ahead.



John Gilhooly, Director



HM King Charles III and John Gilhooly © Matt Crossick/PA Wire





INTERVIEW

# Asmik Grigorian: from Salome to song

BY MARK PULLINGER

A ‘star is born’ moment in the operatic world is usually anything but. Years of training and hard slog precede these breakthroughs. It’s better to describe it as the moment when the critics finally sat up and took notice. And the critics did just that at the 2018 Salzburg Festival when Lithuanian soprano Asmik Grigorian played the title role in Romeo Castellucci’s controversial production of *Salome*: ‘a Salome to end all Salomes’ according to the *Financial Times*. I described her soprano in *Bachtrack* as ‘bright, rippled with steel’.

Grigorian has continued to blaze across the operatic firmament – Lady Macbeth and Turandot role debuts beckon – but she has recently turned towards art song. *Dissonance*, her Alpha Classics debut disc of Rachmaninov songs with Lukas Geniušas, won a Gramophone Award in 2022 and it’s with Rachmaninov – and Geniušas – that she makes her Wigmore Hall debut in September.

‘I heard my parents [soprano Irena Milkevičiūtė and tenor Gegam Grigorian] sing many of these songs,’ she explains, ‘but a lot of them were completely new to me. It was a true collaboration with Lukas. He sent me a bunch of songs and we selected the programme together.’

How do Rachmaninov’s songs differ from Tchaikovsky’s, which also feature in her September recital? ‘I would say that Tchaikovsky songs are more like “songs”,

technically and vocally, more of a Lied, whereas most of the Rachmaninov songs I chose are really like two-minute operas.’

Her approach to these ‘mini operas’ is the same as to her operatic roles. ‘I don’t create characters. Even when I sing opera, the only character is myself in different types of situations. With these songs, each time I perform them they mean a completely different personal story. Every day is different, so each song, every time I sing it, brings a completely new colour and a new personal story that’s connected with it.’

Among the songs in her September programme is ‘Dissonance’, the title track of her album and an incredible work, ‘one of his most effective songs’ according to Grigorian, an operatic *scena* dealing with the aftermath of a broken relationship, a remembrance of the past, trembling desires



and coldness. ‘But it is a very difficult one to sing,’ the technical reason behind the decision to place it last on the bill. She also includes ‘Let us rest’ (Op. 26 No. 3) which is set to Sonya’s moving final speech from Anton Chekhov’s play *Uncle Vanya*. ‘For me,’ Grigorian explains, ‘this song is always about death, but the peace that comes *after* death.’ It’s a beautiful work and a tantalising glimpse of what a Chekhov-inspired Rachmaninov opera could have sounded like.

Grigorian clearly enjoys working with Geniušas. Their Rachmaninov disc was their first collaboration. ‘It was our first baby! We had never worked with each other before and I am so grateful and so happy that I mentioned his name to my label. He’s one of the best stage partners I’ve ever had. It’s just pure joy and sharing. Also, for me, it was so important that this Rachmaninov album was not seen as a solo album. It’s a duet.’ I saw Grigorian and Geniušas perform this programme in Vienna in March, and it travels to the Aix-en-Provence and Salzburg Festivals before reaching Wigmore Hall.

As a chance to see one of today’s leading operatic stars up close and personal in an intimate recital, it’s an opportunity not to be missed.

SAT 09 SEP 2023, 7.30PM

**Asmik Grigorian** SOPRANO  
**Lukas Geniušas** PIANO

**Tchaikovsky** Amid the din of the ball;  
Again, as before, alone; None but the lonely  
heart; A tear trembles; Romance in F minor  
Op. 5; Scherzo humoristique Op. 19 No. 2;  
I bless you, forests; Do not ask  
**Rachmaninov** In the silence of the secret  
night; Sing not to me, beautiful maiden;  
Child, thou art as beautiful as a flower; The  
Dream; Spring waters; Oh, do not grieve;  
I wait for thee  
**Tchaikovsky** Dumka Op. 59  
**Rachmaninov** Twilight; How fair this spot;  
Let us rest; Dissonance

£40 £36 £32 £26 £18





# A celebration in song for Rachmaninov's 150th anniversary

Many of the composer's 73 songs will be presented at Wigmore Hall

BY MARK PULLINGER

Rachmaninov is known principally for his piano writing – four outstanding piano concertos, the dazzling, demonic *Paganini Rhapsody*, the *Préludes*, the *Etudes-tableaux* – all written for him to perform himself but swiftly adopted as staple works. His orchestral compositions, particularly the luscious Second Symphony, *The Isle of the Dead* and the *Symphonic Dances*, fill concert seasons across the globe. Yet Rachmaninov was also a considerable, but underrated, composer for the voice. He wrote three one-act operas (*Aleko*, *The Miserly Knight* and *Francesca da Rimini*) that are rarely staged, an Edgar Allan Poe-inspired choral symphony (*The Bells*) and an a cappella masterpiece, the *All-Night Vigil*.

In addition, Rachmaninov composed 73 songs, of which only a handful are truly well known. They were mostly published in seven sets, plus a few odds and ends, including the wordless 'Vocalise', which was later slotted into the Op. 34 set, one of his few songs to achieve widespread popularity. This season, Wigmore Hall offers the opportunity to hear many of these songs, a surefire magnet for

Russophiles but also a chance to perhaps discover this deeply rewarding repertoire for the first time.

Star soprano Asmik Grigorian marks her Wigmore Hall debut with a generous selection, Rachmaninov sharing the bill with Tchaikovsky, an important influence and mentor. Then, across the season, there is the Rachmaninov Song Series, masterminded by the pianist Iain Burnside, who recorded the complete songs a decade ago for the Delphian label: the first time the entire cycle had been recorded in the original keys, shared between seven singers. Likewise here, where Burnside collaborates with nine singers, programming many of the songs alongside even lesser known ones by Rachmaninov's contemporaries.

As conductor at the Mamontov Private Opera and the Bolshoi Theatre, Rachmaninov had access to some of Russia's finest singers. The great bass Fyodor Chaliapin, who sang the title role in *Aleko* in 1899 with Rachmaninov conducting, became a close friend and was the dedicatee of songs such as 'Fate'

(Op. 21 No. 2, with its repeated Beethoven Fifth Symphony motif), 'The Raising of Lazarus' and 'The Prophet' (both from the Op. 34 set). 'A passing breeze' (Op. 34 No. 4) was written for leading tenor Leonid Sobinov, 'Vocalise' for soprano Antonina Nezhdanova and 'Dissonance' (Op. 34 No. 13) for dramatic soprano Félia Litvinne.

It was for Litvinne's pupil, Nina Koshetz, that Rachmaninov composed the six songs of his Op. 38 set, the only collection written entirely for the same voice; it was inspired by the poet Marietta Shaginyan, who, in correspondence with the composer, suggested the texts for this final collection. Rachmaninov's preferred texts were, naturally, Russian, although his





# All of Rachmaninov's songs were composed before his self-imposed exile from Russia in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution

Op. 8 are six songs to texts translated from Ukrainian and German, including three Heinrich Heine settings.

Like most Russian romances, Rachmaninov's are not entirely happy affairs, with their fair share of brooding, break-ups, bitter torments and loneliness. Moments of ecstasy, such as the sudden change in seasons in 'Spring waters', are few and far between. Another exception is the serene 'How fair this spot' (Op. 21 No. 7), which was composed for his wife, Natalya Satina, in 1902 on their honeymoon.

It's fascinating to listen to the progression in Rachmaninov's songs. The early Op. 4 set is very much in the style of Tchaikovsky's romances, but his style developed, his pianistic writing becoming more florid and dramatic. In the later songs, the piano parts can seem more lyrically inspired than the vocal writing.

Apart from the 'Vocalise', Rachmaninov's most popular song is probably the Op. 4 song 'Ne poj, krasavitsa, pri mne', based on a poem by Alexander Pushkin. Rachmaninov treats it like a folksong, the melismatic lines reminiscent of that great Russian melodist, Alexander Borodin: 'Do not sing, my beauty, your songs of sad Georgia; they remind me of another life and a distant shore.'



Rachmaninov on board a Great Northern Railway car  
© Leonard Frank

The sobering thing to contemplate here is that all of Rachmaninov's songs were composed before his self-imposed exile from Russia in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. In the United States, Rachmaninov focused on establishing himself as a virtuoso concert pianist, a lucrative move, but one that left little time for composition. Perhaps penning further songs would have been too painful a reminder of the Russia he had left behind, like the poet reminded of those sad Georgian songs. As Burnside suggested in a 2014 interview in *The Herald*, 'Once the cherry orchard was cut down, he couldn't go back.'

## Rachmaninov Song Series

THU 28 SEP 2023, 6.00PM

### Pre-Concert Talk

Songs by Sergey Rachmaninov, his colleagues and followers form the basis for a new series at Wigmore Hall curated by leading collaborative pianist Iain Burnside, whose encyclopaedic knowledge of the song repertoire is the result of working for decades at the highest level of performance in the genre, and whose complete traversal of Rachmaninov's songs on disc is a touchstone recording. Join Philip Ross Bullock for an introduction to the series.

FREE (TICKET REQUIRED)



Iain Burnside © Tall Wall Media

THU 28 SEP 2023, 7.30PM

Anush Hovhannisyan SOPRANO  
Mikhail Petrenko BASS  
Iain Burnside PIANO

**Myaskovsky** From *On the Threshold*  
Op. 4: Moon and mist, Serenade & Spiders;  
Contradictions from *Unseen* Op. 5; Pain  
from *Premonitions* Op. 16; Dust from *On  
the Threshold* Op. 4 **Alexandrov** From *From  
the Alexandrian Songs of Mikhail Kuzmin*:  
Evening twilight, When I met you for the first  
time, In the spring, the poplar changes its  
leaves & When they say to me 'Alexandria'  
**Gnesin** *Insomnia* **Rachmaninov** *Arion*;  
Night is mournful; No prophet, I **Veysberg**  
Song **Rachmaninov** The dream; Sorrow  
in springtime **Steinberg** Woodland grass  
**Rachmaninov** Fate; In my garden at night;  
To her; The ratcatcher; I came to her **Steinberg**  
A golden star **Rachmaninov** Christ is risen;  
Discord; Letter to K.S. Stanislavsky

£40 £36 £32 £26 £18

**Forthcoming Concerts in this Series:**  
**Wednesday 17 January 2024, 7.30pm**  
Kristina Mkhitarian soprano; Andrey  
Zhilikhovsky baritone; Michael Foyle violin; Iain  
Burnside piano

**Wednesday 17 April 2024, 7.30pm**  
Maria Motolygina soprano; Dmytro Popov  
tenor; Dmitri Cheblykov bass-baritone;  
Iain Burnside piano

**Friday 7 June 2024, 7.00pm NB time**  
Natalia Kutateladze mezzo-soprano; Rodion  
Pogossov baritone; Iain Burnside piano



Meet our 2023/24 residency artists

# Jeremy Denk on why he learned to become a Beethoven sonata

The American pianist, whose 2022 memoir traces the roots of his music making, answers some of the questions he raises in his book

**Classical music needs to recruit more fans at an early age. Can we make it more ‘relevant’ — or should we not try?**

Funny you should ask, since I helped create an opera, *The Classical Style*, which asks this same question. It begins with Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven in heaven, staged to resemble the lounge of a retirement home. They’re revisiting old grievances, but mostly whining that they’ve lost their relevance. So they embark on a quest into the present day, to recapture their mojo. By the final scene, sadly, I hadn’t quite sorted out their existential problem. At times, the opera mocks this question of relevance as a desperate hanging-on, but at others it becomes the most important question of all. Maybe it is both.

When I see a young musician — or any listener — set on fire by a surge in Beethoven or a modulation in Schubert, the question of relevance seems to retreat. Music, in that moment, renovates. It makes older people feel younger, young people feel older or wiser; it provides armour against disillusionment;

it allows the mind to enter a more abstract field, engaging hidden parts of the brain and self, returning refreshed — as Bach put on the title page of his Partitas, ‘to refresh their spirits’.

Like literature, it enables empathy with other voices, voices of the past or of distant cultures, rhythms, ways of thinking. So while we want music to engage with the world (and it does), part of music’s joy and deep purpose is that it removes us from our world.

So some of music’s relevance is self evident, and some of it (paradoxically) is that it is irrelevant; but none of this happens without effort. Of course we have to try to be relevant — is there any other choice? Every generation has to find a way for music to speak in the present. I’ve never been a fan of the expression ‘imagine how revolutionary this music was back then.’ For me, the ‘Eroica’ Symphony had better be revolutionary this very second. Every part of the classical music community has a role to play in this — avoiding stuffiness, stripping away varnish.



Jeremy Denk © Josh Goleman

**Do you think humour colours your playing?**

Sure, and I can remember when I first understood why. I was wandering Manhattan with a dear friend, a bit tipsy, complaining about a Beethoven Piano Sonata, the E-flat Op. 31 No. 3, the first movement. This movement is full of leaps, awkward ribbits, and sudden whorls: not just technically challenging but also musically confounding.

When I got home, I spread that score out on my tiny kitchen table, and took that Beethoven apart. It seemed clear that the piece was not laughing here and there, but that every part of it laughed, down to its bones: it was built on the structure of the joke, the implausible turn, the ridiculous change-up. I started writing an essay lamenting that laughter was relegated to preordained moments in concerts.





Jeremy Denk © Josh Goleman

It wasn't right just to tolerate laughter, to treat it as a condiment, but we had to understand what Beethoven came to understand bit by bit in his middle period, and even more in his later years: that the ridiculous belonged in company with the sublime, as part of a truthful reflection of life.

**What were the most important lessons your teachers left you with over the years?**

I met a cello professor when I was 17, named Norman Fischer. He offered, as a paradigm, a kind of musical method acting. You 'became' a Beethoven sonata, like Olivier became

Lear. He forced me to inhabit the score, and humanise every event, to find motivations and decisions behind musical changes and processes. This required endless effort and aspiration. My other great guru, the astounding Hungarian pianist György Sebők, had quite different precepts. He saw each composer living in a style, a world, a language, a grammar. Only when you understood these boundaries could you be free within them. His teaching was about mapping these worlds. He linked truth and simplicity. He sought (from a technique point of view) the perfect motion to express the essence of the idea, and to abandon the focus on effort, an

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act of abnegation which would let the notes live on their own terms. These two musical philosophies are both part of me, and don't have to be contradictory. I do hope that my playing finds a creative tension between them — the theatrical desire to project the story as story, and an attempt to divine the truth of the story, deep down.

**Why did you write that thumbs are so important?**

It would be quite a job to play the piano without them. My teacher when I was ten went on a three-year campaign of misery to help my thumb be more of a springboard, and it more or less worked (whew!) But the thumb is the finger that often forgets it's a finger.

**You say in your book (ducking as you say it) that it's so much better being a pianist than a player in an orchestra: why?**

Rhythmic freedom is such an important part of musical expression. I always loved that Furtwängler quote about the art of interpretation consisting of the almost imperceptible variability of the tempo, so that you live on the edge of improvisation. Or just listen to how Nina Simone sings around and about the beat, in fierce battle with it. In an orchestra it's much harder (but not impossible) to access that aspect of music making.

**Is it lonely being a pianist?**

Being a pianist can be a neurotic, hermetic existence, if you let it be. Composers become your most constant companions and best friends — you have to remind yourself that they're dead (for the most part) and you really need to get out more.

**Why do you say harmony is like sex...?**

I hate to sully Wigmore audiences with such concerns. But where would Mozart be without sex, for instance? All of his great operas are about sex — not parenthetically, but fundamentally. As a listener, one response I have to music is the irrepressible urge: my fingers curl, or my leg moves, and it's hard to sit still, since I'm responding to the fact that the music is looking for something and (beautifully) prevented from finding it, and sent off into another area of desire. In the tradition of Western classical music, harmonic tension is a chief agent of desire. It's wilful blindness not to mention it. If you made me, I'd choose music over sex — advancing years favour that choice more and more. But I'd rather not have to choose.

—

Jeremy Denk's *Every Good Boy Does Fine: A Love Story, in Music Lessons* is available in paperback from Picador

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**Friday 15 September 2023, 7.30pm**  
**Jeremy Denk PIANO**  
**Danish String Quartet**

**Mozart Piano Quartet No. 2 in E flat K493**  
**Ligeti Etudes Book 1**  
**Britten 3 Divertimenti for string quartet**  
**Schumann Piano Quintet in E flat Op. 44**

£40 £36 £32 £26 £18

**Forthcoming Concerts in this Residency:**  
**Saturday 24 February 2024, 7.30pm**  
**Monday 6 May 2024, 7.30pm**



# Ema Nikolovska, 'the Lieder firebrand'

BY JESSICA DUCHEN

Ema Nikolovska is speaking to me from a special place: an emotional high. She has just made her role debut as Octavian in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Berlin Staatsoper. 'The energy has been overwhelming,' enthuses the rising star mezzo-soprano. 'It's my first major role debut and I've started with the hardest one, but it's been such an adventure.'

Nikolovska has nevertheless been best known until now for her superlative Lieder performances and her devotion to finding and promoting new song repertoire. In Britain, she has charted a course through some prestigious young artist schemes, most recently the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award. She sang at Wigmore Hall in the BBT's 20th anniversary weekend in June, followed by a recital with pianist Jonathan Ware soon after. Next, in the upcoming 2023/24 Season she is to be a Wigmore Hall Artist in Residence.

'I'm very excited because Wigmore Hall means so much to me,' Nikolovska says excitedly. 'When I moved to London in September 2016, one of the first things I did was go to a recital there by Soile Isokoski. After that I would go as often as I could. Then in 2017, I qualified for the finals of the Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards and got to sing in the Hall for 20 minutes. That was such a treat! To be an Artist in Residence is very significant for me because of the role that the Hall has played in my life. To have this more active role is a full-circle moment.'

Nikolovska has been captivating audiences with the persuasive beauty and flexibility of her voice, the vivid, intelligent characterisations she brings to repertoire ranging from the Baroque to the present day, and the passion for discovery that powers her ingenious programming. For instance, at the Proms at Cadogan Hall in 2021, she created a recital based on Pauline Viardot's Parisian salon of the mid-19th Century, including some of the legendary diva's own irresistible songs; it proved unforgettable.

She was born in North Macedonia, but her family moved to Toronto when she was a year old. Her musical talent showed early and at first she gravitated towards the violin. It was only after a friend started voice lessons as a teenager that Nikolovska's father suggested she might try that.

Initially she studied violin at the Glenn Gould School in Toronto, but as an undergraduate she experienced a moment of revelation while playing in an orchestra for *Don Giovanni*: it was the sounds coming from the stage that truly



Ema Nikolovska © Kaupo Kikkas





Ema Nikolovska © Kaupo Kikkas

enthralled her. She spent a year exploring the idea that she might be happier as a singer, and soon came to the UK as a postgraduate at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where she then took the Opera course.

Her progress has been meteoric. In 2019 alone, she joined the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists scheme, won first prize at the International Vocal Competition in 's-Hertogenbosch, the Ferrier Loveday Song Prize at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards, and was a prize-winner at the Young Classical Artists Trust International Auditions. Then, several years ago, she had to choose whether to take part in the Jette Parker Young Artists programme at the Royal Opera House or the Berlin Staatsoper's Opera Studio. Berlin won, thanks to her love of German song. 'I realised

that what made the most sense, in my heart, was to go to a country where the native language is the language of Lieder. I needed to have that first-hand regular contact with German, being forced to learn it and have a life in it.'

Her Wigmore residency's first recital in November is with the pianist Kunal Lahiry, a fellow BBC New Generation Artist: 'It's a combination of contemporary and older music,' says Nikolovska, 'featuring a song cycle I commissioned from Nahre Sol [the young Korean-American composer, pianist and Youtuber] last year and premièred at the Aldeburgh Festival. It also features the 12 *Poems of Emily Dickinson* by Copland, songs by Schubert, and music by Messiaen, Crumb, Emily Doolittle and Héroïse Werner.

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'Kunal and I made our own *Gesamtkunstwerk* collage, creating different sets in which everything revolves around how we relate to nature and how artists have responded to this over the centuries. What were the challenges for Schubert or Emily Dickinson, for example, who were making their art in the early days of the Industrial Revolution? How did their era influence them and their relationship to nature and to people in their communities? And what is it like for us right now, at the start of the digital revolution? It's still very abstract; we programmed it to be quite open-ended. I've always been interested in juxtaposing different composers and different poetry, creating a third entity by playing around with context, so this is particularly close to my heart.'

A sub-set in the concert involves 'vocalises', wordless songs calling to mind Nikolovska's former instrumental training. 'I've always wanted to sing vocalises in a recital! One is by Prokofiev, from *Melodies* Op. 35, which I played as a violinist, and there is also a vocalise within the commissioned song cycle.

'I've been playing around with a *cappella* songs as well. The recital begins with one, from the *Cycle for Declamation* by Priaulx Rainier, the South African composer, who wrote it for Peter Pears. It has a John Donne text, and to have something that early at the start, then end with poetry and music written by some of my friends on similar topics, is quite special.'

Next, Nikolovska has asked the guitarist Sean Shibe to collaborate on a recital; then in June 2024 she is back again, this time with the great Wigmore Hall favourite Sir Andrés Schiff partnering her at the piano. 'This will be our first full length recital together and I'm

absolutely delighted,' says Nikolovska. 'It's like being in another dimension, making music with him. I know also how much of an icon he is at Wigmore Hall! I'm learning so much from working with such a master of music. Our recital will probably involve standard repertoire, which is also a joy; this music has so much to teach us about our craft.'

Watch out, world: for Nikolovska the Lieder firebrand, this is just the beginning.

—

**Sunday 26 November, 7.30pm**  
**Ema Nikolovska** MEZZO-SOPRANO  
**Kunal Lahiry** PIANO

**Rainier** We cannot bid the fruits **Copland**  
 There came a wind like a bugle **Schubert**  
 Herbst **Prokofiev** Lento ma non troppo  
 Op. 35 No. 2 **Copland** Dear March, Come In!  
**Schubert** Auflösung **Copland** The world feels  
 dusty **Prokofiev** Andante non troppo Op. 35  
 No. 5 **Schubert** Verklärung **Copland** Why do  
 they shut me out of heaven? **Schubert** Der  
 Unglückliche; Nacht und Träume **Copland**  
 Nature, the Gentlest Mother **Emily Doolittle**  
 Vocalise (for Bees) **Messiaen** Vocalise-étude  
**Crumb** The Fly **Héroïse Werner** Le cœur  
 crucifié **Schubert** Die Rose **Copland** When  
 they come back **Schubert** Die Mutter Erde  
**Nahre Sol** Apperceptive Algorithms

£40 £36 £32 £26 £18

**Forthcoming Concerts in this Residency:**  
**Tuesday 14 May 2024, 7.30pm**  
 with Sean Shibe guitar  
**Saturday 8 Jun 2024, 7.30pm**  
 with Sir Andrés Schiff piano



# The Songs of Solomon

BY HUGH CANNING

Amid a cornucopia of delights of Wigmore Hall's 2023/24 programme, the announcement of a new residency by the Baroque vocal and instrumental ensemble Solomon's Knot begged for attention. This 'innovative collective' is a flexible group specialising in conductorless performance of the highways and byways of the High Baroque, with the music of JS Bach and Handel as twin peaks of the group's repertoire. Its recent concerts have focused on the fascinating music of the talented wider Bach family, including his first cousins once removed, Johann Michael and Johann Christoph – and that of his predecessor at St Thomas's and St Nicholas's churches, Johann Kuhnau.

Solomon's Knot temporarily abandoned the Hall in June for St James's, Spanish Place, 10 minutes from Wigmore Street behind the Wallace Collection, for a performance of Bach's Great (St Matthew) Passion, serving as upbeat to the Wigmore residency. Next season, back at the Hall, a programme around Bach's celebrated *Magnificat* launches the Bach300 thread of their

future concerts, marking the tercentenary of his appointment as Cantor of St Thomas's and St Nicholas's in Leipzig, a seminal date in the history of Western classical music. There's also an evening devoted to the madrigals of Barbara Strozzi and an oratorio by Handel.

I spoke to Jonathan Sells, Solomon's Knot's director and bass-baritone, about what the Wigmore residency means to the ensemble.

**HC: First, the name: I assume it derives indirectly from Handel's oratorio.**

JS: We were originally called the Solomon Choir and Orchestra, named after my favourite Handel oratorio. It's one of the many Handel blockbusters that don't get enough of an outing. As we evolved into an

unconducted group, we took the name of the emblem that had been part of our logo from the start: the Solomon's Knot. It's an ancient symbol that in my current home of Jordan I see in Roman mosaics. Its two interweaving loops represent the unbreakable interconnection between singers and players, performers and audience.

**HC: In your early career you sang with both John Eliot Gardiner's Monteverdi forces and William Christie's pioneering ensemble, Les Arts Florissants – you were an alumnus of his Jardin des Voix programme, I believe?**

JS: Les Arts Florissants has been a huge inspiration in France and around the world for decades, and Le Jardin des Voix is a fantastic opportunity for young singers. Apart from the fact that many of my colleagues and SK





members (Michal Czerniawski, Hugh Cutting, Rory Carver) have been cultivated in the Jardin des Voix, my experience working closely with Bill Christie had a big impact on me as an artist and artistic director. He was also a member of our founding Advisory Council.

The number one thing I took away from his approach to music making and performance was his very low boredom threshold: never be satisfied with the ‘good enough’, be allergic to the ‘that’ll be fine’. Push yourself and your colleagues further than you thought you could go; leave the comfort zone.

This was also something my colleagues and I learned from working with John Eliot Gardiner, who was also very generous in opening up opportunities to us in the early days.

**HC: Your most recent Wigmore concerts have programmed music with clear lines to Bach – members of his wider family and his older contemporaries. The Handel oratorio will be the first version of *Esther*, companion piece to the glorious *Acis and Galatea*, but much more of a rarity. Will the residency continue to explore such interesting byways of the Baroque repertoire?**

JS: I’d like to say what a fantastic opportunity this residency is and how grateful we are to John and his team for welcoming us so warmly to the Hall. It really feels like home now: we will make our tenth appearance there already in 2024, and it will soon be the venue we’ve been to most often. Also, the residency isn’t just for this season: it’s a really long-term partnership, with dates in the diary for the next five years.

We’ve yet to tackle Monteverdi properly, and I’m really keen to do so. We’ve done some big madrigal programmes in the past, not least

*The Discovery of Bomarzo* at the Aldeburgh Festival. Our next project will actually focus on the first book of madrigals by Barbara Strozzi, a fascinating thing.

There’s a great opportunity at the moment to trace what Bach was doing exactly 300 years ago, as this year marks the beginning of his post as Thomaskantor. So there’ll be a seam of Bach running through the years of our residency, Bach300, beginning with the birth of the *Magnificat*, in December.

And *Esther*, which Handel performed in Cannons, is perfect for small forces. It’s compact, exploratory, but full of the seeds that we see burst into flower in his big works in later decades.

**HC: What lies behind the decision to perform Bach’s ‘Great’ Passion, the St Matthew, hors des murs, as it were?**

JS: It’s not just about size, although that is obviously a limiting factor. If we were to do the *Matthew Passion* at Wigmore Hall, I would be tempted to explore something different — watch this space! The collaboration with St James’s Spanish Place is a real opportunity to blend the authentic atmosphere of a sacred setting with Wigmore Hall’s renowned curation, professionalism and dedication to excellence. Big Bach is very intense in the crucible of the Hall, but for this project, not least with the aspects of dramatisation we have developed with the director John La Bouchardière, the opportunity to use the space more freely, as well as gain access to the big organ, will allow for something different and special.

**HC: I detect a growing enthusiasm at Wigmore Hall for chamber performance of**

**Baroque music using smaller forces. The response to the Bach family and Kuhnau concerts I attended suggested there’s definitely an audience for Baroque ‘choral’ music at the Hall.**

JS: After the St John and our ‘Not the Christmas Oratorio’ programme in 2021, John was sufficiently convinced to invite us back for more and the audience followed his lead! Apart from being a great space to play in, the framework that the residency gives us allows a certain security when planning tours that is a real asset to an independent, non-subsidised group like ours. It’s great to see audience demand for Baroque music at the Hall, which suits it so well. And it looks like people are prepared to walk around the corner to St James’s!

**HC: Bach cantatas, I assume, will lie at the heart of your Bach300 project. Could you say something about your conception of these works, about your decision to perform without scores or a conductor as liturgical chamber music?**

JS: As with everything we do, the approach to this repertoire requires a large amount of preparation and internalisation. Cantatas can be a bit tricky: they are relatively short and often contain wildly different emotions or musical elements that are packaged together and have to make sense as part of some kind of trajectory. Being deeply embedded in the text and texture of these works helps us to know exactly what’s going on and why.

The Passions, which are built from a similar structure to the cantatas, are easier in this respect, as they have a narrative binding everything together, though at times the solo arias or commenting choruses burst out in

astonishing directions. But I was extremely moved during the rehearsals for the *Matthew Passion* when I stepped back and realised the astonishing commitment, musical talent and soul each member of that very large group was bringing to the project, creating something quite overwhelming.

Music is a vocation, but it’s surprisingly rare for the majority of a performing group to bring so much intrinsic motivation, to ‘care’ so much. That was my founding intention, and I’m so glad it continues to define Solomon’s Knot’s ethos.

—

**Thursday 7 December, 7.30pm**  
**Solomon’s Knot**

Bach Wachet! betet! betet! wachet! BWV70;  
O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort BWV60;  
Magnificat in E flat BWV243a with Christmas interpolations

£50 £42 £32 £26 £18

**Forthcoming Concerts in this Residency:**  
Sunday 4 February 2024, 7.30pm  
Monday 27 May 2024, 7.30pm





RESIDENCY

# In search of new sonic worlds

BY ALEXANDRA COGHLAN

It's 10,000 miles from Brisbane to Berlin. Musically, it's even further, or so it seemed in 1984, when 23-year-old violist Brett Dean packed his bags for a new adventure. Studies at the West Berlin Hochschule soon led to an audition for the Berlin Philharmonic and 15 years in its viola section, before Dean did the unthinkable and headed back with his wife and young family to Australia's Sunshine Coast. Far from a retreat, he was taking a run-up to a whole new career.

Today, Dean is one of contemporary music's most respected composers, commissioned by everyone from the Berlin Philharmonic to Glyndebourne, with Grawemeyer, South Bank Sky Arts and International Opera awards under his belt. While opera is a major focus since the premiere of *Bliss* (2010) and the subsequent success of *Hamlet* (2017), chamber music remains an important strand for a composer whose formative musical experiences were not just in orchestras but in small ensembles.

'I started out as a violinist,' Dean explains, 'but my teacher made the very wise call that the viola might suit me better. There's something about my temperament that was much happier playing the inner voices in a string quartet.' Music really caught fire for Dean in the Queensland Youth Orchestra (where his now-wife, artist Heather Betts, was also a viola player), an experience that gave him 'a sense of purpose and belonging' he hadn't found anywhere else. 'The music excited me in ways most of my schoolmates

got from listening to pop music. It touched the parts Pink Floyd didn't!'

He credits the QYO and the 'pioneering' music scene in Brisbane for setting him on a course that would lead to years playing under musical giants in Berlin. 'I was there for the final years of the Karajan era, which was fascinating, though he was a man of waning powers at that stage. Then there was Abbado, who brought in a totally different repertoire – not all of which met with approval. I could see then what a conservative bastion it was in many ways. Later, when I came back to play Berio's *Sinfonia* under Sir Simon Rattle, I was like a kid in a sweetshop.'

Drawn to like-minded young players in the orchestra, Dean joined the Scharoun Ensemble. 'We were the weirdos who played all the new stuff! The budding composer in me was very taken by these chamber-oriented new music experiences. I think I realised even then that I wanted to dig deeper. That was when the composition bug bit me.'





Brett Dean © Pawel Kopczynski

Informal improvisation sessions with a friend in a rock band helped Dean to ‘cross the threshold’, as he started to write music down and think about sound in a new way. ‘I learnt to realise the musical and expressive possibilities of everything,’ he says, ‘even the sound of a Berlin U-Bahn on a particular stretch of rails, the squeaking of metal on metal.’ Unusual textures, whether it’s sandpaper or metal foil, extended playing techniques or electronics, form an important element of Dean’s music – music that always seems in search not just of new sounds, but of whole new sonic worlds.

Audiences will hear a striking example in the Doric String Quartet’s concert next April, part of the Brett Dean Focus Day, at the heart of the composer’s 2023-24 residency at Wigmore Hall. Dean’s String Quartet No. 3 ‘Hidden Agendas’ was composed in 2019 for musicians who are close friends and regular collaborators. ‘They get my music in a very intrinsic way; there’s a real chemistry there.’ It’s a subtle exercise in musical protest. ‘I’m as aware as the next person that you’re

not necessarily going to change the world by writing a string quartet, but I do think it’s important to express some of those feelings, even in a hidden way.’

In the movement titled *Self-Censorship* (others include *Hubris* and *On Message*) the players swap their normal bows for those with no rosin on them, a sonic metaphor ‘for people being muzzled or cancelled’. The effect, Dean says, is a ‘fascinating sound’ that he first discovered by accident, when his own bow came back from being re-haired.

Anyone impatient for a new operatic project from Dean, whose *Hamlet* enjoyed a revival at New York’s Metropolitan Opera last year, will want to attend January’s concert by the Armida Quartet and Dean’s daughter, the mezzo-soprano Lotte Betts-Dean. Premiered in 2021, the song cycle *Madame ma bonne sœur* is the first musical fruit of a new potential collaboration with *Hamlet* librettist Matthew Jocelyn. ‘It’s the early stages of exploring a possible operatic theme, but not quite at a point to start talking about properly.’

## THE SCORE, 2023 SUMMER ISSUE

# ‘I learnt to realise the musical and expressive possibilities of everything, even the sound of a Berlin U-Bahn on a particular stretch of rails’

The theme in question is Mary Stuart and her relationship with her cousin Elizabeth I. Measured out in a sequence of letters exchanged by the two (many in French) over a nearly 30-year period, the cycle ends with extracts from Mary’s will, written hours before her execution. Inspired by Betts-Dean herself – ‘I know her voice and the extraordinary things she can do with it’ – the work sits at the junction of song and dramatic *scena*, a fusion familiar to anyone who has heard Dean’s String Quartet No. 2 ‘And once I played Ophelia’, a similar, early-stages sketch for *Hamlet*. It’s a marked contrast to his residency opener *Winter Songs*, an earlier work for the unusual forces of tenor and wind quintet (performed here by Robin Tritschler and Apartment House), in which the voice is treated more texturally, ‘the glue that somehow holds it all together, like a sixth wind instrument’.

It’s the final concert of the residency that, Dean says, speaks loudest as to who he is as a musician. ‘It’s the one in which I do the most playing, and that’s very much where the composing comes from.’ Dean joins fellow violist Lawrence Power (‘just extraordinary!’), the Nash Ensemble and harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani for an eclectic programme ranging from Byrd and Biber to George Benjamin and Dean’s own music. ‘It’s kind of bananas, but I realised gradually that it was a concert exploring contemporary views of earlier music.’

But for all the ideas that collide in the concert, the intellectual challenge of music chosen, written and conducted by a composer who admits he is ‘fascinated by all manner of things’, the thread running through the whole residency is that of emotion. ‘My music is always intended in an expressive way. It’s about feelings, above all.’

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**Monday 6 November 2023, 7.30pm**  
**Apartment House**  
**Robin Tritschler** TENOR  
**Brett Dean** CONDUCTOR

**Benjamin** Hedgerow **Carter** Dust of Snow from *3 Poems of Robert Frost* **Finzi** Song of Hiems from *4 Songs from Love’s Labour’s Lost* Op. 28a **Britten** Winter Words Op. 52 **Maxwell Davies** Seven Skies of Winter Op. 238 **Schubert** Fahrt zum Hades; Die Krähe from *Winterreise* D911; Nachtstück; Der Tod und das Mädchen; Nachthymne **Hans Abrahamsen** Canon 1a. Ruhig aber beweglich from *Schnee* **Brett Dean** Winter Songs for tenor and wind quintet

£40 £36 £32 £26 £18

**Forthcoming Concerts in this Residency:**  
 Thursday 11 January 2024, 7.30pm  
 Monday 22 January 2024, 7.30pm  
 Saturday 20 April 2024, 11.30am, 3.00pm & 7.30pm



# Coronation Anthems at St James's, Spanish Place



Hervé Niquet conducting Le Concert Spirituel  
© Matt Crossick/PA Wire

On the evening of Tuesday 6 June, Wigmore Hall welcomed His Majesty The King to the first in a new series of concerts at nearby St James's Roman Catholic Church, Spanish Place. During the concert, the King presented Judith Weir CBE, Master of the King's Music, with Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society (RPS), in recognition of her services to music.



HM King Charles III presents Judith Weir with RPS  
Honorary Membership © Matt Crossick/PA Wire

Celebrating the King's own coronation exactly one month ago, the concert featured all four coronation anthems by George Frideric Handel, including *Zadok the Priest*, performed by leading French Baroque ensemble Le Concert Spirituel, and conducted by Hervé Niquet. It was recorded for subsequent broadcast by BBC Radio 3 on Thursday 8 June, and presented by Ian Skelly.

‘It has been a huge honour to welcome His Majesty The King to this very special concert. Our Head of State is celebrated by French musicians performing German music at a Catholic church with historic links to Spain, in a concert organised by an Irishman.’ - John Gilhooly CBE, Director of Wigmore Hall and RPS Chairman



HM King Charles III and John Gilhooly © Matt Crossick/PA Wire





Music for Life Monday Afternoons © James Berry

# The beat goes on

BY LYDIA NICKALLS

In February 2023, Music for Life, our internationally renowned creative music programme for people living with dementia and those who look after them, celebrated its 30th anniversary with an event at Wigmore Hall. It featured improvisation-based Music for Life workshops, a panel discussion and a performance by our Singing with Friends choir.

Linda Rose founded Music for Life in 1993, and since 2009 Wigmore Hall has been proud to lead the programme, which now encompasses a wide range of projects in care homes, community settings, online and at Wigmore Hall. This work has been made

possible by the invaluable contributions of so many individuals and partner organisations.

Although much has changed in the world over the last 30 years, including health and social care policy, technological developments and a global pandemic, Music for Life has continued to adapt and thrive. The strong shared vision and values at the heart of the work and the incredible commitment of all involved have helped sustain the programme throughout this shifting landscape. We are motivated by a desire to improve people's lives and change perceptions of what it is like to live with dementia. The media often offers narratives of

THE SCORE, 2023 SUMMER ISSUE

## Lucy, a Music for Life musician, on an inspiring encounter with a new participant

‘We met a new gentleman today (I have changed his name to Robert), who had arrived the night before. He had been incredibly unsettled, up all night.

I noticed him sitting on a sofa with a staff member. He had our wood blocks tuned to four pitches and was exploring them with a beater. I just began improvising with him. He started off with very fast repeated notes, which I mirrored, but when I moved to a single slower pulse he came with me and began to play in time with me. His pulse completely interlocked with mine, and I felt him slowing down and almost expanding in a broader sense! His face softened and he began to conduct with one hand and play with the other and made the most beautiful piece. I could feel him connecting to the music and me and slowing down within himself.

Patrizia (harpist) had picked up from half a dozen metres away what was happening and began to play with us, helping the group to change their playing so that there was a real sense of the music filling the corridor. Robert was completely immersed in the music. The staff had told me he didn't seem to have much language and was speaking very incoherently, but amazingly at the end of the piece, as I thanked him, he held my hand and said, ‘Thank you, that was wonderful.’

I just sensed that somehow, he had landed; it was deeply moving and I felt very connected to him in that moment.’



fear, loss, and suffering, whereas we have the privilege of seeing how much people living with dementia still have to give, alongside witnessing incredible moments of joy and connection. We want to play our part in creating a world in which the human rights of people living with dementia are respected and upheld, where they are treated with dignity and fully included in society.

**What effect does Music for Life have on the people involved?**

We often see a hugely positive effect on the wellbeing of those involved (including people living with dementia, family members, carers, and musicians). Wellbeing looks different for everyone, but we see participants experiencing agency and expressing themselves through creativity. They may regain a sense of purpose; make meaningful connections with others, or simply find respite and time to reflect. Music for Life also creates space for everyone to improve their

understanding of the experiences of people with dementia, which is so important in quality of care.

**What is distinctive about Music for Life and what values and approaches are central to the work?**

Collaboration is key, and forging strong connections between all involved is at the heart of the work. Within sessions, the intention is to include everyone equally, though 'participation' can look different for everyone involved. Musical creativity is central to the work and in particular improvisation, flexibility and the ability to co-create with participants and respond in the moment.

Music for Life is different from other projects that focus on reminiscence: although music can be powerful in evoking memories, our focus is on being present and connecting with individuals in the moment, without any

‘It is good to leave everything in the everyday world aside for a short while. The project has helped us to see life through a more positive captivating lens’ – Out of the Ordinary participant (partner of person living with a rare dementia)



Singing with Friends perform at Music for Life: Sharing our Stories (30th anniversary celebration) © James Berry



‘There is a remedy – love, kindness, and patience and you have all shown us this. You have come towards us when others hesitate or go away, and we have hope, we always have hope.’ – Monday Afternoons participant (partner of person living with young onset dementia)

Singing with Friends members participate in the panel discussion at Music for Life: Sharing our Stories (30th anniversary celebration) © James Berry



pressure or expectation of remembering the past. The Music for Life team approaches the work as being alongside people rather than ‘doing to’ – it’s about an honest exchange and involves authenticity, openness, and curiosity. Empathy and showing ‘unconditional positive regard’ to all we encounter creates space where we can show complete support and acceptance of a person, no matter what that person says or does.

Every musician brings unique musical abilities to the projects, enabling powerful, beautiful and musically satisfying experiences to emerge. When working in care settings, we prioritise including individuals who are at the more advanced stages of dementia and may be socially isolated, disengaged or facing significant communication difficulties.

#### Why is Music for Life needed?

Some 944,000 people are estimated to be living with a form of dementia in the UK, a figure projected to increase to 1.6 million by 2040. There are a significant number with the condition undiagnosed. Our society’s understanding and perception of dementia is gloomy: 49% of adults say dementia is the health condition they fear most about getting, including 60% of over-65s. 42% of people believe that once a person living with dementia stops recognising loved ones, they don’t benefit from spending time with them.

We know that even if a person doesn’t remember who visited them, time spent together can stimulate feelings of happiness and comfort, and the emotional memory of that moment can continue long afterwards. There is a widespread lack of understanding and shortage of dedicated resources

specifically for people living with a rare dementia (30% of whom initially receive an incorrect diagnosis), as well as huge pressures in the health and care system.

#### What next?

We want to share our experience and help equip others to develop their own work in this field. We have supported many national and international organisations across the years by offering training and mentoring in the development of their own work inspired by Music for Life; we are currently working in partnership with Music Circles in Switzerland. We also offer training opportunities for individual musicians, including for early-career musicians.

The newest strand of our work is ‘Out of the Ordinary’ (an online project led in partnership with Rare Dementia Support and the Royal Academy of Music), and through this we are expanding our understanding of how best to support those living with a rare dementia – who often experience symptoms that are not only memory-related but include difficulties with vision, language, movement and behavioural changes.

We are excited to see what the next 30 years have in store for Music for Life and to continue this meaningful and rewarding work. We are incredibly thankful for everyone who has generously supported Music for Life over the years. If you would like to support the work, we would love to hear from you.

For further information on Music for Life and ways in which you can support this programme, please email Tara Fry at [tara@wigmore-hall.org.uk](mailto:tara@wigmore-hall.org.uk) or call 020 7258 8222





Marie-Hélène Osterweil © Elizaveta Melkumov

# Legacy: Your stories

What inspires members of our audience to give a donation to Wigmore Hall?  
Over the last few weeks, Marie-Hélène Osterweil has had the privilege of talking to some of them about their concert-going experiences to find out.

Every day I learn something new; the stories being shared with me are so special. I love the way faces light up when thinking about a particular concert or artist or the memory of a visit with a friend. Some never grew up with music and were inspired later in life – maybe they were invited to a concert by someone close to them, or listened to a radio broadcast and wanted to hear more. At the heart of all the conversations was a great love for this Hall, a strong connection to artists and repertoire, the anticipation of a performance and listening to something either familiar or new.

There are many considerations when leaving a gift to a charity – including making provision for family, carers and friends, as well as deciding which charities

could be beneficiaries. It is a very personal decision. We appreciate beyond measure every thoughtful gift made to the Hall in this way. Legacies realised in the last few years have seen the Hall through a really challenging time and are slowly increasing our Endowment Fund, a solid foundation for investment in the Hall's long-term future.

A gift costs nothing in the donor's lifetime, and a pledge isn't a cast-iron commitment, but if you would like to talk about your concert experiences at the Hall and discuss leaving a gift to Wigmore Hall in your Will, do contact me.

Please email Marie-Hélène at [mhosterweil@wigmore-hall.org.uk](mailto:mhosterweil@wigmore-hall.org.uk) or call 020 7258 8229

## WIGMORE HALL NEWS

# Wigmore Hall News

## CAVATINA Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition '23

On Friday 19 May, six emerging string quartets from leading UK Conservatoires competed in the annual CAVATINA Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition at Wigmore Hall, adjudicated by cellist of the Barbican Trio, Robert Max. Each quartet was required to perform Beethoven's challenging String Quartet No. 6 in B flat Op. 18 to determine who should be awarded the grand prize of £2,000. This year's winner was the Fibonacci Quartet representing the Guildhall School of Music & Drama who also, after a week of voting, won the Audience prize of £600. Second prize of £800 went to the Treske Quartet of the Royal Northern College of Music. The 2024 competition will be for piano trios.



Fibonacci Quartet, Robert Max  
© Anna Lumbroso

## Leonkoro Quartet Tour

The Leonkoro Quartet has made exciting progress since winning the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition in April 2022. The young musicians will embark on their UK Winner's Tour in October, including their Winner's Recital at Wigmore Hall on Sunday 8 October 2023 at 11.30am. For details of the tour go to: [www.leonkoroquartet.com/en/concerts/](http://www.leonkoroquartet.com/en/concerts/)



Leonkoro Quartet © Nikolaj Lund

## 2023/24 Season Launch – watch online

The 2023/24 Season Launch in March was one-of-a-kind, with special performances from the O/Modernt Chamber Orchestra, led by Hugo Ticciati, paired with the vocalists of Siglo de Oro, directed by Patrick Allies. Audiences expecting a typical concert were surprised with the tranquil sound of voices singing John Tavener's 'Mother of God, here I stand' from *5 Anthems from The Veil of the Temple* as singers processed down the aisles from the back of the auditorium. Music of Britten, Arvo Pärt and Handel followed, concluding with John Gilhooly introducing the 2023/24 Season.



O/Modernt Chamber Orchestra  
© Christopher Jonas

Search '2023/24 Season Launch' on our Youtube channel to watch the event online.



# Events for Friends

WED 12 JUL 2023, 1.00PM

## Friends of Wigmore Hall 30th Anniversary Celebration Concert

Join us for a special performance for Friends of Wigmore Hall from Russian-born German pianist Igor Levit in celebration of the 30th Anniversary of Friends of Wigmore Hall.

This virtuosic programme consists of **Schumann** Fantasia in C Op. 17 and **Brahms** 7 Fantasien Op. 116.

The performance will be followed by a celebratory drinks reception for all guests and we would love you to join us.

£20  
(Final few tickets remaining)



Igor Levit © Felix Broede

FRI 13 OCT 2023, 11.30AM

## Wigmore Hall and its pianos

In anticipation of the many wonderful pianists to perform throughout the 2023/24 Season at Wigmore Hall, we are delighted to welcome guest speaker Ulrich Gerhartz, Director of Concert and Artists services at Steinway & Sons, for an expert's insight into one of the nation's favourite instruments, the piano.

Join us for a morning of discovery as Ulrich presents the intricacies of the Hall's two concert grand pianos and the finer details that influence the artists' relationships with these instruments.

£15



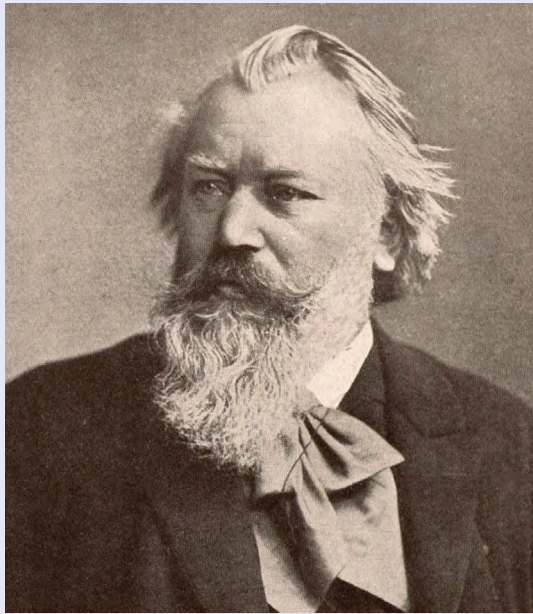
Ulrich Gerhartz

WED 15 NOV 2023, 11.00AM

## The Brahms Legacy

Though he didn't live to see it built, Brahms's connections with Wigmore Hall are nevertheless personal – and surprisingly far-reaching. Together with our Archivist, discover the stories of the composer's friends and colleagues who performed on our stage, and the legacy of those they taught and inspired, which can still be felt today.

£10



Johannes Brahms

THU 7 DEC 2023, 3.00PM

## Friends Open Rehearsal Solomon's Knot – Bach 300

Benefactor and Patron Friends are invited to attend two open rehearsals each season, as selected by the Office of the Director. The first open rehearsal of Wigmore Hall's 2023/24 Season allows a small audience to see Solomon's Knot live in action as the group prepares for its concert performance later that evening.

Please note that numbers are limited and tickets will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

FREE (TICKET REQUIRED)

### How to book

**By phone:**  
Call the Friends Office on 020 7258 8230 (Monday-Friday 10.00AM-5.30PM)

**Online:**  
Visit [wigmore-hall.org.uk/friends](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk/friends).  
You will need to sign in to your online account or set up an account to book.



Friends of  
Wigmore Hall





# Wigmore Hall Audience Fund

Wigmore Hall is a registered charity (No. 1024838), and your regular gifts to our Audience Fund continue to be indispensable. Help us uphold our commitment to:

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## Fresh, Innovative Programming

Emerging talent, new artists and important artistic projects, in over 500 concerts, the largest classical music programme in the UK.

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## Learning and Participation

Engaging a large cross-section of society through the Hall's pioneering Learning programme.

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## Sharing Great Performances

Providing opportunities to share great music making with our audiences, both in the Hall and online via our broadcasts, with the world's leading artists.

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All your donations help ensure that the Hall has the resources it needs to sustain its ambitious concert and Learning programmes.

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We are very grateful for all of your donations, which are put to very good use.

Avi Avital at Wigmore Hall 2021 © Richard Cannon

VISIT: [WIGMORE-HALL.ORG.UK/AUDIENCEFUND](https://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/audiencefund)  
CALL: 020 7258 8220





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