

Press Release

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Britten Sinfonia Concerts - May 2016

- **The Dark Mirror – Hans Zender’s *Winterreise* at the Barbican, with Ian Bostridge**
Directed and designed by Netia Jones
Thursday 12 May – Saturday 14 May, Barbican Theatre
- **Alice Coote and Mahan Esfahani join Britten Sinfonia at Saffron Hall**
Sunday 15 May
- **Britten Sinfonia makes debut tour of China**
Friday 6 May – Thursday 12 May

This May, Britten Sinfonia takes a haunting ‘winter journey’ in the company of **Ian Bostridge** and director/designer **Netia Jones** at the Barbican Theatre, and serves up a tale of jealousy, spurned love, revenge, death and dramatic confession in the shape of Britten’s *Phaedra* at Saffron Hall, with **Alice Coote** and **Mahan Esfahani**. The music of Benjamin Britten is also on the menu for the orchestra’s first ever visit to China, with guest artists including **Esfahani, Nicholas Mulroy**, (tenor) **Allison Cook** (mezzo-soprano) and **Martin Owen** (horn) featuring in three different programmes of predominantly English music.

The Dark Mirror – Hans Zender’s *Winterreise* **Thursday 12 – Saturday 14 May, Barbican Theatre**

Netia Jones directs **Ian Bostridge** in *The Dark Mirror: Zender’s Winterreise*, a Barbican co-production with **Britten Sinfonia**, conducted by **Baldur Brönnimann**.

Schubert’s haunting song cycle, *Winterreise*, is reinterpreted in Hans Zender’s startling and iconoclastic orchestration to evoke a boldly expressionistic landscape and the tenebrous cabaret style of post-Weimar Germany. In this world premiere for the Barbican, Netia Jones’ multimedia approach integrates film, video projections and design into live performance, using multi-layered imagery to realise a monochrome world of shadow and light, mirroring the cycle’s melancholic themes.

Plunged into a stark wintry landscape, a disenchanted wanderer embarks on an intensely dramatic journey, his reflections on life alternating between young male angst and world-weary nostalgia; between sardonic humour and depressive longing. *The Dark Mirror* is a startling reflection on art and performance, love, death and the passage of time.

Britten Sinfonia is Associate Ensemble at the Barbican. *The Dark Mirror* reunites the creative team that created *Curlew River* at St. Giles Cripplegate in 2013 as part of **Barbican Britten**, and subsequently on tour in the US.

Tickets: £16 - £50
www.barbican.org.uk

Produced by the Barbican London. Co-produced by Britten Sinfonia, Cal Performances at the University of California, Berkeley and National Taichung Theater, Taiwan

Britten Sinfonia at Saffron Hall
Britten's *Phaedra*, with Alice Coote and Mahan Esfahani
Sunday 15 May

In October 2016, Britten Sinfonia becomes Resident Orchestra at Saffron Hall. As a prelude to a 2016/2017 season of outstanding concerts at Saffron Hall (details to be announced on 9 May), Britten Sinfonia is joined by mezzo-soprano Alice Coote and the award-winning Iranian-American harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani for a programme centred on Britten's final great masterpiece, *Phaedra*. Based on Greek legend, Britten offers a starkly dramatic retelling of the tale of the tragically flawed Queen of Athens. **Alice Coote** performed the work with Britten Sinfonia to great acclaim in 2012 and returns for this performance, in a programme that also features two arias from Handel's opera, *Alcina*, and Mahan Esfahani in Bach's popular Brandenburg Concerto No.3.

Tickets: £10-£25
www.saffronhall.com

Britten Sinfonia on tour in China
Beijing, Wutan, Shanghai

Friday 6 - Thursday 12 May

Britten Sinfonia makes its first visit to China with three concert programmes centred on three key works by Benjamin Britten: *Phaedra*, *Serenade for tenor, horn and strings*, and *Les Illuminations*. Guest artists including **Mahan Esfahani, Nicolas Mulroy, Alison Cook** and **Martin Owen** join the tour to Wuhan, Beijing and a three-concert residency in Shanghai as part of the Shanghai International Festival. Repertoire also includes evocative music by JS Bach and English composers including Purcell, Tippett, Walton, Vaughan Williams and Huw Watkins.

www.brittensinfonia.com

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