

## Press Release

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## BRITTEN SINFONIA – OCTOBER 2016 CONCERTS

### THE SIXTEEN AND BRITTEN SINFONIA IN THE WORLD PREMIERE OF JAMES MACMILLAN'S *STABAT MATER*

Saturday October 15 at 7.30pm, Barbican Hall

Sunday October 16 at 7.30pm, Saffron Hall: launch of Britten Sinfonia's new residency

Tuesday October 18 at 7.30pm, St Andrew's Hall, Norwich

Friday October 28 at 7.30pm, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

**Harry Christophers** conducts **Britten Sinfonia** and **The Sixteen** in the world premiere of **James MacMillan's** *Stabat Mater*, in a programme that places the new work alongside music by Tallis and Vaughan Williams, in a musical celebration of tradition and renewal. For the composer, '*beauty is at the heart of our Christian faith*' and his new *Stabat Mater* is profoundly shaped by his beliefs. James MacMillan's *Stabat Mater* has been commissioned by the Genesis Foundation for The Sixteen.

James MacMillan has enjoyed a long and fruitful association with Britten Sinfonia, most recently on the BBC Music Magazine Award-winning recording of MacMillan's *Oboe Concerto* for Harmonia Mundi, (just one of a number of works by MacMillan premiered by and/or commissioned by Britten Sinfonia).

**The performance of *Stabat Mater* at Saffron Hall marks the start of Britten Sinfonia's new association with the venue, as Resident Orchestra.** Britten Sinfonia gave the inaugural professional concert at Saffron Hall in November 2014, and the residency has developed from this initial relationship. Alongside a series of concerts featuring outstanding guest artists, the focus is on developing with Saffron Hall a new model for community engagement over the coming seasons; from the outset, Britten Sinfonia is throwing open the doors to rehearsals to the pupils of Saffron Hall County High School (home to Saffron Hall) and the Saffron Walden Centre for Young Musicians, and providing opportunities for young musicians to work side-by-side with the orchestra, with further musical encounters planned throughout the season.

In a pre-concert event on 16 October, James MacMillan will be joined on stage at Saffron Hall by the talented teenage musicians of Britten Sinfonia Academy.

## BRITTEN DANCES – ALDEBURGH MUSIC'S BRITTEN WEEKEND

### **Britten Sinfonia and Richard Alston Dance Company**

Friday October 21 and Saturday 22 at 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall

**Britten Sinfonia and Richard Alston Dance Company** revive their Olivier Award nominated partnership as part of ***Britten Dances*** – Aldeburgh Music's ***Britten Weekend*** – alongside the world premiere of Alston's choreography to Britten's string orchestra arrangement of Purcell's Chacony.

Richard Alston is one of the most influential figures in dance, internationally recognised for his instinctive musicality. The programme features the world premiere of Alston's choreography to Britten's string orchestra arrangement of his beloved Henry Purcell's *Chacony* and the taut drama of *Phaedra*, a collaboration between Richard Alston Dance Company and Britten Sinfonia first seen at The Barbican Theatre as part of Britten 100 celebrations and nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production. Chorography to Britten's succinctly intimate *Holderlin Fragments*, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, with text taken from eighteenth century poet Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*, and Britten's inspired setting of *Les Illuminations*, which lifts the wild imagery from the life of French poet Arthur Rimbaud to new heights, complete the programme.

An outstanding on-stage line up of musicians and dancers includes **Britten Sinfonia, Pekka Kuusisto, Allison Cook, Richard Alston Dance Company, Mark Padmore, Aldeburgh Voices** and **Andrew West**.

**Britten Weekend: Pekka Kuusisto and Britten Sinfonia**  
**October 23 at 4pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall**

In the final performance of Britten Sinfonia's residency at Aldeburgh's *Britten Weekend* the brilliance and bravura of Britten's writing for string orchestra is illustrated in **Pekka Kuusisto's** programme of extremes.

Light and shade, wit and invention, rigour and reflection abound, from the Bachian vitality of the little-known *Prelude and Fugue* to the sparkling variants Britten conjures from his teacher, Frank Bridge's modest but curious melody: *Variations on a theme of Frank Bridge*, and Bridge's own *Three Idylls*. And there are variations of a different kind as Kuusisto himself takes the solo viola role for the John Dowland-inspired fantasy *Lachrymae*, a compelling 'slow-reveal' of a 17th-century lute song concealed by the mysterious, dark-hued transformations that precede it.

FULL DETAILS OF ALL CONCERTS AT [www.brittensinfonia.com](http://www.brittensinfonia.com)

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Visit the media centre at [brittensinfonia.com](http://brittensinfonia.com) for more press information/images.

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