AT LUNCH TWO

SAMUEL COLES flute
NICHOLAS DANIEL oboe
JOY FARRALL clarinet
 MARTIN OWEN horn
 LUCY WAKEFORD harp
 JACQUELINE SHAVE, MIRANDA DALE violins
 CLARE FINNIMORE viola
 CAROLINE DEARNLEY cello

STRAVINSKY Three Pieces for String Quartet 8 mins
MARK-ANTHONY TURNAGE Prayer for a great man 4 mins
OLIVER KNUSSEN Cantata for oboe and string trio 10 mins
RAVEL Introduction & Allegro, Op.15 10 mins
MARK-ANTHONY TURNAGE Col (world premiere tour) 8 mins
STRAVINSKY Concertino for String Quartet 10 mins

LONDON WIGMORE HALL
Wednesday 8 February 2017, 1pm

NORWICH ST ANDREW’S HALL
Friday 10 February 2017, 1pm

CAMBRIDGE WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL
Tuesday 14 February 2017, 1pm

Would patrons please ensure that mobile phones, watch alarms, and any other electrical devices that may be audible are switched off.

No recording or photography is allowed in the auditorium.
INTRODUCTION

Few contemporary composers are as stylistically adaptable and culturally relevant as Mark-Anthony Turnage. His music glosses over the divide between ‘classical’ and ‘popular’ music, embracing with remarkably openness and curiosity the diverse strands of contemporary culture, from jazz and blues to Led Zeppelin and Beyoncé. Today’s programme, curated by Mark-Anthony Turnage, celebrates this diversity through the music he most admires, from Stravinsky and Ravel – both musical chameleons themselves – to Oliver Knussen, Turnage’s teacher and one of his greatest influences.

EXPLORE AT LUNCH

PRE-CONCERT TALK
London, 12.15pm

Dr Kate Kennedy talks to Mark-Anthony Turnage about his new work. This talk will be released as a podcast following the concert, available via www.brittensinfonia.com

POST-CONCERT EVENT
Cambridge, 2.15pm

A performance of a new work by 2016 Cambridge University Composer’s workshop winner, Jago Thornton. Jago will also talk about his new work in a discussion with Britten Sinfonia musicians.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

Three Pieces for String Quartet (1914)

I. Danse
II. Eccentrique
III. Cantique

The experimental side to Turnage’s music owes much to the influence of Stravinsky, whose own cultural absorption was just as bold and wide-ranging. In the hotbed of artistic cross-fertilisation that characterised early twentieth century Paris, ‘art music’ took on a completely new appearance: traditional ‘classical’ forms were combined with jazz, folksong, rag-time and musical hall, to name but a few. Stylistically, it was a musical free-for-all. Few composers were as experimental with style as Stravinsky, whose music encompassed all of the above and much more besides. His Three Pieces for String Quartet was inspired by the sights and sounds of the Spanish city of Madrid. Stravinsky described the work as follows: “Many of the musicians who had preceded me in visiting Spain had, on their return, put their impressions on record… first and foremost Glinka, with his incomparable Jota Aragonaise and A Night in Madrid – and on my side I was delighted to conform with this custom. This piece was inspired by the surprising results of the mixture of strains from the mechanical pianos and orchestrinas in the streets and little night taverns of Madrid.” Described by Paul Griffiths as “determinedly not a ‘string quartet’ but a set of pieces to be played by four strings”, the quartet is not so much a self-contained work as a set of studies on different moods.
MARK-ANTHONY TURNAGE (b.1960)
Prayer for a great man (2010)

The first of two works by Mark-Anthony Turnage performed today, Prayer for a great man is lifted from his Cello Concerto, composed in 2010 for Paul Watkins. In the fourth of five movements, the orchestra falls away as the concerto reaches its expressive climax with a remarkable, introspective dialogue between just horn and cello. As a standalone work the Prayer is no less powerful, its rather plaintive opening statements growing into an impassioned plea as the movement unfolds. The ‘great man’ of the title is Turnage’s father-in-law, at whose funeral the work was first performed.

OLIVER KNUSSEN (b.1952)
Cantata for oboe and string trio (1977)

For Turnage, music has been an ‘obsession’ for as long as he can remember – something that he soon found he had in common with Oliver Knussen, when the two met during Turnage’s teenage years. Knussen became Turnage’s teacher and helped Turnage match his sophisticated listening habits with a more contemporary way of writing. Both composers seem effortlessly to blend complexity with expression and Knussen is fascinated, he says, by the “fineness of detail and precision”. His Cantata for oboe and string trio is no exception. This single movement explores a huge array of moods and ideas, from the delicate, slow introduction, through the developmental episodes that follow, to a ‘wild climactic passage’ and extended coda that returns us to the opening material. “The title”, says Knussen, “was arrived at after noticing that the relationships between the various episodes reminded me of the interdependence of recitatives and more-or-less self-contained numbers in some 18th-century solo cantatas, an impression reinforced by the predominance of the oboe.”

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)
Introduction and Allegro (1905)

Knussen’s Cantata finds parallels both in its soloistic scoring and episodic structure with Maurice Ravel’s Introduction and Allegro. The work was commissioned by Maison Erard, the company that supplied the Paris Conservatoire with its harps and pianos, so it is little surprise that the piece is considered by many to be a small-scale concerto for harp (on the score, the harp is given top billing, with the string quartet, flute and clarinet designated as ‘accompaniment’). Yet while the harp takes centre stage across the work as a whole, the score glitters with Ravel’s characteristic colouration and attention to detail, with each instrument forming an integral part in the intricate texture. Ravel divides the septet into three contrasting sonorities – the sonorous woodwind, the percussive harp and the rich, resonant strings – signifying his intent at the opening with a haunting woodwind introduction that is answered in turn, first by the harp and then the quartet. Over the course of the work these groupings converse and intertwine, and although the harp remains prominent, Ravel’s use of diverse instrumental techniques (tremolos, pizzicato strings and harp harmonics, among others) forms an impressively varied textural backdrop. As the title suggests, the piece falls into two halves, with the brief, haunting Introduction soon giving way to an impassioned harp cadenza and a more playful Allegro.
The second work in today’s programme from Mark-Anthony Turnage is a world premiere, written to commemorate the 70th birthday of fellow composer, Colin Matthews. Affectionately referred to as ‘Col’ in the work’s title, Matthews has been at the heart of British contemporary music for more than four decades, first as an assistant to Benjamin Britten, then as a collaborator with Deryck Cooke on the performing edition of Mahler’s Tenth Symphony, and more recently as the founder of NMC Recordings, which champions contemporary music. As a composer, he is celebrated for his ability to contrast expressivity with dynamism with apparent effortless and originality. While Turnage has spoken of a “sinister … violent quality” that he hears lurking beneath the surface of Matthews’ music, Col is a more openly lyrical tribute, spun around a tender, fledgling melody that is first heard in the violins at the opening. While there is perhaps a hint of Matthews’ more menacing side in the increasingly urgent, pulsing central section, any turbulence is soon smoothed over with a return to the glimmering orchestral textures and soft expressivity of the elegant opening theme.

Col was co-commissioned by Britten Sinfonia and Wigmore Hall. The commission was made possible by the generosity of an anonymous principal commissioner and fifteen donors to Britten Sinfonia’s Musically Gifted campaign. Wigmore Hall acknowledges the support of André Hoffmann, president of the Fondation Hoffmann, a Swiss grant-making foundation.

The Concertino for string quartet was written when Stravinsky was invited to write a new work for the Flonzaley Quartet of any form or length of his choosing. The Concertino has no subject matter or story – it is simply, according to Stravinsky: “a piece in one single movement, treated in the form of a free sonata allegro with a definitely concertante part for the first violin.” As the name ‘Concertino’ suggests, the work is essentially a mini-concerto. Though it is in one movement, its ABA form, with an elaborate cadenza for the first violin at the end of the central Andante, mimics a three-movement concerto format – another throwback to Stravinsky’s neoclassicism. At barely ten minutes long, the Concertino is brief to say the least, but it is also sparing in its harmonic palette, playing out the bitonal tension introduced at the opening between a rising C major scale (for violin and cello) and B major scale (for viola) throughout the work.
**BRITTEN SINFONIA**

Britten Sinfonia is one of the world’s most celebrated and pioneering ensembles. The orchestra is acclaimed for its virtuoso musicianship, an inspired approach to concert programming, which makes bold, intelligent connections across 400 years of repertoire, and a versatility that is second to none. Britten Sinfonia breaks the mould by not having a principal conductor or director, instead choosing to collaborate with a range of the finest international guest artists from across the musical spectrum, resulting in performances of rare insight and energy.

Britten Sinfonia is an Associate Ensemble at the Barbican in London, and has residencies across the east of England in Norwich, Saffron Walden and Cambridge (where it is an ensemble-in-residence at the University). The orchestra also performs a chamber music series at Wigmore Hall and appears regularly at major UK festivals including Aldeburgh and the BBC Proms. The orchestra’s growing international profile includes regular touring to North and South America, Europe and made its Indian debut in August 2014 with a tour of six major cities. In May 2016 Britten Sinfonia made its debut in China.

Founded in 1992, the orchestra is inspired by the ethos of Benjamin Britten through world-class performances, illuminating and distinctive programmes where old meets new, and a deep commitment to bringing outstanding music to both the world’s finest concert halls and the local community. Britten Sinfonia is a BBC Radio 3 broadcast partner and regularly records for Harmonia Mundi and Hyperion.

www.brittensinfonia.com

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**MARK-ANTHONY TURNAGE**

Mark-Anthony Turnage is one of the most admired and widely-performed composers of his generation whose works skillfully blend classical and jazz idioms, modernism and tradition. He studied with Oliver Knussen and John Lambert in London and Gunther Schuller in Tanglewood.

He has composed under residencies and associations with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, English National Opera, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Conductors of Turnage’s works include Simon Rattle, Andrew Davis, Vladimir Jurowski, Daniel Harding, Antonio Pappano, Andris Nelsons, Vassily Petrenko, Oliver Knussen and Leonard Slatkin. Turnage’s collaborations with jazz musicians have included John Scofield, Peter Erskine and Joe Lovano.

Turnage’s stage works include opera Anna Nicole for The Royal Opera and dance collaborations Trespass with Christopher Wheeldon and UNDANCE with Wayne McGregor. His music is recorded on the Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Warner Classics, Chandos, LPO, Black Box and Onyx labels. In 2015 he was awarded a CBE in the Queen’s Birthday honours.
CAMBRIDGE

Britten Sinfonia is ensemble-in-association at Cambridge University and regularly leads workshops and masterclasses for the faculty of music. The orchestra also regularly performs in venues in and around Cambridge - see www.brittensinfonia.com for more details.

NORWICH

Alongside the At Lunch concerts at St Andrew’s Hall Britten Sinfonia also performs a series of full-length evening concerts in Norwich – pick up a brochure in the foyer for more details.

LONDON

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 Hall Management. Wigmore Hall is equipped with a ‘Loop’ system to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use the facility by switching their hearing aids over to ‘T’. 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 numbers indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.

Disabled Access and Facilities

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Director: John Gilhooly
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