AT LUNCH THREE

NICHOLAS DANIEL oboe
JACQUELINE SHAVE, MIRANDA DALE violins
CLARE FINNIMORE, DOROTHEA VOGEL violas
CAROLINE DEARNLEY cello

FINZI Interlude for oboe and string quartet 8 mins
BRIAN ELIAS Oboe Quintet (world premiere tour) 19 mins
MOZART String Quintet in C minor, K406/516b 23 mins

LONDON WIGMORE HALL
Wednesday 19 April 2017, 1pm

NORWICH ST ANDREW’S HALL
Friday 21 April 2017, 1pm

CAMBRIDGE WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL
Tuesday 25 April 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

Some musical marriages are built to last. At a time when ensembles seem to be growing increasingly eclectic and the juxtaposition of instruments ever more unusual, it is comforting to see that composers still find rich sources of inspiration in the tried-and-tested combinations of old. The pairing of oboe and strings dates back centuries, the deep, mellow tone of the oboe finding a remarkable kinship with the warmth of string instruments, a pairing unlike anything within the woodwind family itself. In the Baroque, composers such as Bach and Vivaldi apparently heard such a harmonious blend between the two soundworlds that parts written for oboe or violin were often seen as interchangeable.

GERALD FINZI (1901–1956)
Interlude for oboe and string quartet (1933–1956)

Gerald Finzi seemed to understand the pairing of oboe and strings well. He wrote just one work for oboe, the Interlude for oboe and string quartet, but it proved so successful that it has since become established as one of the major pieces of the oboe repertoire. First sketched in 1933 after Finzi was encouraged by friends to compose an oboe concerto or suite, the Interlude became a free-form stand-alone work in its own right, of which Finzi was justly proud. 'There’s some decent music in the Oboe Interlude', he wrote to his friend Howard Ferguson, 'and a certain amount of rant, which I had to stick in to fill things up when I got rather rushed towards the end'. In spite of Finzi’s rather disparaging remarks, it is hard to pinpoint anything ‘rant-like’ in this elegant, cinematic soundscape. A hushed opening for strings alone eventually leads to the oboe’s understated entrance – a hypnotic, sustained melody that quickly grows increasingly impassioned. Coursing between folk-like simplicity and heartfelt improvisatory material, the Interlude expands into a work of startling breadth and variety, as rich in detail as anything he composed for full orchestra. The dialogue between oboe and strings, too, is deeply personal, as though each were uncovering a series of memories and reflecting on them in turn.

EXPLORE AT LUNCH

PRE-CONCERT TALK
London, 12.15pm

Dr Kate Kennedy talks to Brian Elias 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

Brian Elias discusses his new work with Nicholas Daniel and Cambridge University’s Tim Watts.
When Nicholas Daniel asked me to write an oboe quintet for him, I replied immediately that I would rather write an oboe quartet; the clarity and lightness of the Mozart oboe quartet was very much in my mind and I was concerned about the added density a second violin might bring to the piece. Nicholas was adamant, and so I accepted the challenge of writing for a combination for which there is hardly any other repertoire. I did not want to treat the string quartet as a quasi-orchestral accompaniment (that would have been too easy!); although the oboe predominates and leads the musical development to a large extent, the strings, including the second violin, play more than just a supporting role. The main ideas for the work, both melodic and harmonic, are stated in the first few bars and the rest of the work develops organically from this material. Motifs, melodies and harmonies are 'recollected' throughout the piece, often in new contexts, to provide a sense of unity.

There are five movements played without a break (fast, slow, fast, slow, fast), the last being an extended coda. The first movement is moderately fast and is in a concertante style. It is followed by a slow and lyrical movement, and then a scherzo. The fourth movement is also slow, and the final section, the coda, returns to the music of the scherzo, gradually slowing down to a quiet and reflective conclusion.

The Oboe Quintet was commissioned by Wigmore Hall with the support of André Hoffmann, President of the Fondation Hoffmann, a Swiss grant-making foundation.

© Brian Elias
Adès conducts Beethoven

THOMAS ADÈS conductor
MARK STONE baritone

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 1
GERALD BARRY Beethoven
BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 2

FRI 26 May 19:30
ST ANDREW’S HALL
NORWICH
Norwich Festival

SAT 27 May 19:30
SAFFRON HALL
Saffron Walden

FRI 2 June 19:30
BARBICAN
LONDON

www.brittensinfonia.com

barbican
Associate Ensemble
Saffron Hall Resident Orchestra
NORFOLK & NORWICH FESTIVAL

Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
BRIAN ELIAS

Brian Elias studied at the Royal College of Music in London with Humphrey Searle and Bernard Stevens and privately with Elisabeth Lutyens. After five years working at a finance company in New York he returned to London to re-establish a musical career. The development of his musical language can be traced through his major orchestral works. The Webernesque La Chevelure (1967) was followed twelve years later by Somnia; the intensity of L'Eylah (1983) is built upon in the exquisite Five Songs to Poems by Irina Ratushinskaya (1989) and the powerfully expressionist ballet The Judas Tree (1991) leads to the playful but dark The House that Jack Built (2001). Two recent orchestral pieces, Doubles and Electra Mourns, have both won British Composer Awards (in 2010 and 2013 respectively). A CD of his music will be released by NMC Recordings in 2017.

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 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
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

Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore Street, London, W1U 2BP
Director: John Gilhooly
The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838
www.wigmore-hall.org.uk
Please contact House Management for full details.

All programme notes © Jo Kirkbride

Commissioning Partner

Broadcast Partner

Principal Funder

Supported using public funding by

Other Partners

Commissioning Partner

Broadcast Partner

Principal Funder

Supported using public funding by

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND