

## Press Release

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### THOMAS ADÈS AND BRITTEN SINFONIA BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY CYCLE REACHES MIDWAY POINT WITH SYMPHONIES 4, 5 & 6

19 – 27 May 2018

Barbican, London; Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden; Norwich Theatre Royal; Concertgebouw, Amsterdam

### BEETHOVEN'S MASTERWORKS PERFORMED ALONGSIDE GERALD BARRY'S *THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND* AND THE LONDON PREMIERE OF BARRY'S *PIANO CONCERTO*

*"Beethoven's symphonies are thrown together with an intensity in every element and there's a nakedness to every element that is new. Beethoven tore the wrapping off everything and threw everything together. It's combustible.*

*Beethoven's music appears differently to every generation. You might say that 50 years ago the aim was to homogenise and bring across the great arcs in Beethoven; now we tend to hear the ruptures and the violent contrasts that are very much there, whether oppositional or volcanic energy. It's all there, cued in the scores. Gerald is a composer who also shakes you by the collar – there's a similar volcanic energy in the music".*  
Thomas Adès

Thomas Adès and Britten Sinfonia's three-year journey through Beethoven's symphonies reaches the midway point in May 2018, with symphony 4 and two of Beethoven's most famous works, Symphonies 5 and 6. Pairing these familiar masterpieces with the audacious works of composer – and Beethoven devotee - **Gerald Barry**, the concerts set out to shed new light on Beethoven's monuments of the orchestral repertoire, with the cycle's "*emphatically modern*"\* opening concerts in 2017 widely praised for their originality. Adès himself describes the "*thrilling*" experience of conducting the Eroica Symphony in the opening concerts of the cycle in 2017, as "*like seeing a landscape in a 2-D map, and suddenly being in it and on top and inside it; the peaks are much higher and the chasms and abysses are much deeper.*"

Beethoven's nature-inspired '*Pastoral*' 6<sup>th</sup> *Symphony* is performed alongside Barry's passionate *The Conquest of Ireland*, a setting of words from the account of Welsh cleric Giraldus Cambrensis, who accompanied the invading armies in 12<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, with Australian/American bass **Joshua Bloom** as soloist. Beethoven's engaging 4<sup>th</sup> *Symphony*, and the monumental 5<sup>th</sup> (with the most famous opening notes in music) are accompanied by the London premiere of Barry's *Piano Concerto*, written for, and performed by soloist **Nicolas Hodges**.

Beethoven Symphony Cycle concerts are performed at the Barbican, where Britten Sinfonia is an Associate Ensemble, Saffron Hall, where Britten Sinfonia is Resident Orchestra, and in Norwich as part of the Norfolk & Norwich Festival. BBC Radio 3 will record and broadcast the Barbican performances, live on 22 May, with 24 May concert recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 14 June.

Thomas Adès also leads a concert from the keyboard of more intimate chamber works by Beethoven and Barry at Milton Court Concert Hall, featuring tenor **Allan Clayton** in Beethoven's song cycle *An die ferne Gelebte (To the distant beloved)*, Gerald Barry's *Jabberwocky* (co-commissioned by Britten Sinfonia and Wigmore Hall in 2013), and Beethoven's *Piano Quintet for piano and strings*. At Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Adès and Britten Sinfonia are joined by **Nicolas Hodges** for Barry's *Piano Concerto*, and by **Steven Isserlis** for Adès cello concerto, *Lieux retrouvés*, reuniting the creative team that gave the work's UK premiere at the BBC Proms in 2016.

**Further press information from: Sophie Cohen on 020 7482 3466 07711 551 787**  
[sophie@sophiecohenartspr.com](mailto:sophie@sophiecohenartspr.com)

\* Andrew Clements, The Guardian

#### **DATES AND BOOKING DETAILS**

##### **Thomas Adès Beethoven Symphony Cycle Symphonies 4 & 5 and Gerald Barry's Piano Concerto**

Saturday 19 May – Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

Tuesday 22 May – Barbican Hall, London (Broadcast live on BBC Radio 3)

Sunday 27 May – Theatre Royal, Norwich

##### **Thomas Adès chamber concert**

Wednesday 23 May – Milton Court Concert Hall

##### **Thomas Adès Beethoven Symphony Cycle Symphony 6, and Gerald Barry's The Conquest of Ireland**

Sunday 20 May, Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

Thursday 24 May – Barbican Hall (Broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 14 June)

Saturday 26 May - Concertgebouw, Amsterdam- Thomas Adès, Steven Isserlis and Nicolas Hodges

#### **STOP PRESS: BRITTEN SINFONIA AT NEVILL HOLT OPERA IN JUNE**

##### **Wednesday 28 and Friday 30 June 2018**

Britten Sinfonia continues its association with the music of Thomas Adès in June, joining Nevill Holt Opera for the first time for performances of Adès's opera, *Powder Her Face*.

[www.nevillholtopera.co.uk](http://www.nevillholtopera.co.uk)