

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY CYCLE

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONIES NOS. 4 & 5

SAFFRON WALDEN SAFFRON HALL

Saturday 19 May 2018 – 7.30pm

PRE-CONCERT TALK

Nicolas Hodges discusses Gerald Barry's Piano Concerto.

LONDON BARBICAN HALL

Tuesday 22 May 2018 – 7.30pm

This performance will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 3.

**BBC
RADIO**



90 – 93FM

NORWICH THEATRE ROYAL

Sunday 27 May 2018 – 7.30pm

Programme notes for *this concert* start on page 5.

ADÈS, BARRY, BEETHOVEN: CHAMBER MUSIC

LONDON MILTON COURT CONCERT HALL

Wednesday 23 May 2018 – 7.30pm

Programme notes for *this concert* start on page 11.

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 6

SAFFRON WALDEN SAFFRON HALL

Sunday 20 May 2018 – 3.00pm

LONDON BARBICAN HALL

Thursday 24 May 2018 – 7.30pm

This performance will be recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Programme notes for *this concert* start on page 21.

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If you have a mobile phone, please ensure that it is turned off during the performance.

In accordance with the requirements of the licensing authority, persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways.

No camera, tape recorder, other types of recording apparatus, food or drink may be brought into the auditorium. It is illegal to record any performance unless prior arrangements have been made with Britten Sinfonia.

Large print versions of our programmes are available upon prior request by calling 01223 300795.

WELCOME

Photo © Elizabeth Hunt



Our Beethoven Symphony Cycle with Thomas Adès is probably the most ambitious project we have ever undertaken here at Britten Sinfonia. It has been the pillar of our artistic planning over three seasons, plus many years of drafts on paper before that! We are now -

how time flies - in the second year of the Cycle, presenting Symphonies 4, 5 & 6 in the Barbican Hall and at Saffron Hall, along with a chamber concert in London's Milton Court. Being such a special project, it's fantastic that we are able to bring these concerts to our residencies in Saffron Hall and Norwich, and not least to the Barbican Centre as Associate Ensemble. We are thrilled that our regular loyal audiences will all be able to share in this unique opportunity with us.

It's very important to us that we are not merely presenting a Beethoven cycle, but that, in typical Britten Sinfonia style, we are bringing something else to the party. This something else is the music of Gerald Barry, that self-proclaimed devotee of Beethoven and long-standing friend of Thomas Adès. Gerald's music brings such raw, exuberant energy to these programmes, which fits, of course, so well alongside Beethoven's works, via the unique lens of Thomas Adès. We are delighted to be

featuring the finest interpreters of Gerald Barry's music in these programmes – Thomas Adès of course; Nicholas Hodges performing the Piano Concerto, for whom the piece was written; tenor Allan Clayton singing *Jabberwocky*, following on from his performances of Barry's music at last year's BBC Proms; and Joshua Bloom, with whom we most recently collaborated with on Gerald's unforgettable opera *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*. A rich tapestry of connections and artists bringing so much to these performances. We are delighted to have them all with us.

Our broadcast partner, BBC Radio 3, is broadcasting the full Cycle from the Barbican, and the icing on the cake will be a shiny new Beethoven Symphony Cycle Box Set, which we will be releasing at the end of the Cycle in time for the 350th anniversary of Beethoven's birth in 2020. We're thrilled that, owing to the generosity of Robin Boyle and his admiration for Thomas Adès and this venture, these performances will be preserved for future generations.

David Butcher

David Butcher
Chief Executive & Artistic Director

Britten Sinfonia and Thomas Adès are extremely grateful to Robin Boyle for his generous support of the Beethoven Symphony Cycle recording, in honour of his friendship with and admiration for Thomas Adès.

THOMAS ADÈS

Thomas Adès was born in London in 1971. His compositions include three operas, the most recent of which – *The Exterminating Angel* – premiered at the 2016 Salzburg Festival, *Powder Her Face* (Cheltenham Festival and the Almeida Theatre, London, 1995), and *The Tempest* (Royal Opera, Covent Garden, 2004). His orchestral works include *Asyla* (CBSO, 1997), *Tevot* (Berlin Philharmonic and Carnegie Hall, 2007), *Polaris* (New World Symphony, Miami 2011), Violin Concerto *Concentric Paths* (Berliner Festspiele and the BBC Proms, 2005), *In Seven Days* (Piano concerto with moving image – LA Philharmonic and RFH London 2008), and *Totentanz* for mezzo-soprano, baritone and orchestra (BBC Proms, 2013).

His chamber works include the string quartets *Arcadiana* (1993) and *The Four Quarters* (2011), Piano Quintet (2001), and *Lieux retrouvés* for cello and piano (2010). Solo piano works include *Darknesse Visible* (1992), *Traced Overhead* (1996), and *Three Mazurkas* (2010). Choral works include *The Fayrfax Carol* (King's College, Cambridge 1997), *America: a Prophecy* (New York Philharmonic, 1999) and *January Writ* (Temple Church, London 2000).

Thomas Adès was recently appointed Artistic Partner by the Boston Symphony Orchestra throughout 2019; he will conduct the orchestra in Boston and at Tanglewood, perform chamber music with the orchestra players, and lead the summer Festival of Contemporary Music. From 1999 to 2008 he was Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival.

As a conductor, Thomas appears regularly with, among others, the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics, Boston Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw, Melbourne and Sydney Symphonies, BBC Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and Britten Sinfonia. In opera, he has conducted *The Rake's Progress* at the Royal Opera House, London and the Zürich Opera and the Metropolitan Opera New York conducting *The Tempest*, he made his debut at the Vienna State Opera 2015 with the Vienna Philharmonic conducting *The Tempest*. Last season he performed *Totentanz* with the Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the RTE National Symphony Orchestras; Barry's new opera *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* in Los Angeles (world premiere) and in London (European premiere); as well as performances of Adès' most recent opera *The Exterminating Angel* at the Royal Opera House (a co-



Photo © Brian Voce

production with the Salzburg Festival, The Metropolitan Opera, New York, and The Royal Danish Opera). This season engagements include *The Exterminating Angel* at The Metropolitan Opera in New York; concerts with City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and his debut with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra.

His recent piano engagements include solo recitals at Carnegie Hall (Stern Auditorium), New York and the Wigmore Hall in London, and concerto appearances with the New York Philharmonic. In recital, he has appeared throughout Europe and the United States with Ian Bostridge in a tour of Schubert's *Winterreise*.

His many awards include the Grawemeyer Award for *Asyla* (1999); Royal Philharmonic Society large-scale composition awards for *Asyla*, *The Tempest* and *Tevot*; and Ernst von Siemens Composers' prize for *Arcadiana*; British Composer Award for *The Four Quarters*. His CD recording of *The Tempest* from the Royal Opera House (EMI) won the Contemporary category of the 2010 Gramophone Awards; his DVD of the production from the Metropolitan Opera was awarded the Diapason d'Or de l'année (2013), Best Opera recording (2014 Grammy Awards) and Music DVD Recording of the Year (2014 ECHO Klassik Awards); and *The Exterminating Angel* won the World Premiere of the Year at the International Opera Awards (2017). In 2015 he was awarded the prestigious Léonie Sonning Music Prize. He coaches Piano and Chamber Music annually at the International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove.

GERALD BARRY

Gerald Barry was born in Ireland in 1952. His first opera, *The Intelligence Park* was premiered at the 1990 London Almeida Festival. A second opera, *The Triumph of Beauty and Deceit* opened the 2002 Aldeburgh Festival, followed by performances in London and the Berliner Festwochen conducted by Thomas Adès. A new staging took place in 2013 at the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe. *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* was at English National Opera and the Basle Opera. *La Plus Forte (The Stronger)* a one-act opera on the Strindberg play, was commissioned by Radio France for the 2007 Festival Presences. Sung by Barbara Hannigan, it toured to Amsterdam, London, Miami and Toronto.

A recording of *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* has been rereleased on the Discovery label. Recent works include *The Destruction of Sodom* for 8 horns and 2 wind machines and an organ concerto for the CBSO, LPO and RTENSO. His most recent opera, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, was jointly commissioned by the LA Philharmonic and the Barbican in London, and received its world premiere staging at Opera national de Lorraine – Nancy in 2013. Two further productions were staged the same year at the Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre and on tour with NI Opera. In 2016 the ROH staging of *Earnest* was revived in London with Britten Sinfonia and in New York with the New York Philharmonic. *Earnest* received a 2013 Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Large-Scale Composition and a recording was released on NMC and nominated for a Grammy. His opera, *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, was premiered in Los Angeles by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and in London and Dublin with Britten Sinfonia.

Canada for voice and orchestra was premiered at the 2017 BBC Proms with Allan Clayton and the CBSO conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. A new staging of *The Importance of Being Earnest* will take place in Fribourg and Paris in 2019.

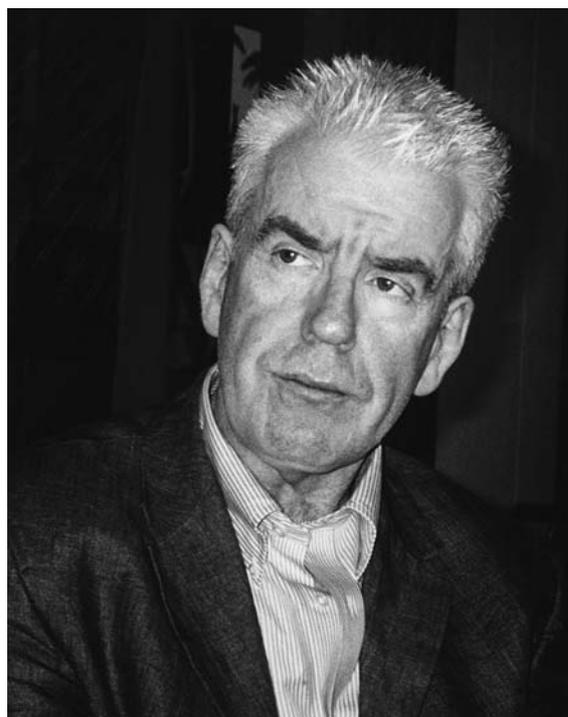


Photo © Betty Freeman

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONIES NOS. 4 & 5

THOMAS ADÈS conductor

NICOLAS HODGES piano

GERALD BARRY <i>Piano Concerto (London premiere)</i>	22 mins
BEETHOVEN <i>Symphony No. 4 in B flat major, Op. 60</i>	32 mins
INTERVAL	20 mins
BEETHOVEN <i>Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67</i>	36 mins

ON STAGE TONIGHT

VIOLIN 1

Thomas Gould
Clare Thompson
Martin Gwilym-Jones
Katherine Shave
Fiona McCapra
Ruth Ehrlich
Beatrix Lovejoy
Michael Jones
Elizabeth Wexler
Cecily Ward

VIOLIN 2

Miranda Dale
Nicola Goldscheider
Marcus Broome
Judith Kelly
Suzanne Loze
Bridget Davey
Kirsty Lovie
Joanna Watts

VIOLAS

Nicholas Bootiman
Luba Tunnicliffe
Bridget Carey
Rachel Byrt
Lisanne Melchior
Meghan Cassidy

CELLOS

Caroline Dearnley
Juliet Welchman
Julia Vohralik
Reinoud Ford
Chris Allan

DOUBLE BASSES

Ben Russell
Elena Hull
Melissa Favell-Wright

FLUTES

Harry Winstanley
Sarah O'Flynn
Lindsey Ellis

PICCOLOS

Sarah O'Flynn
Lindsey Ellis

ALTO FLUTES

Harry Winstanley
Lindsey Ellis

BASS FLUTE

Sarah O'Flynn

OBOES

Melanie Rothman
Ruth Berresford

COR ANGLAIS

Ilid Jones

CLARINETS

Joy Farrall
Stephen Williams

BASS CLARINET

Oliver Pashley

BASSOONS

Sarah Burnett
Lawrence O'Donnell
Gordon Laing

CONTRABASSOON

Gordon Laing

HORNS

Alex Wide
David McQueen
Marcus Bates
Kirsty Howe

TRUMPETS

Paul Archibald
Shane Brennan
Bruce Nockles

ALTO TROMBONE

Michael Buchanan

TROMBONES

Michael Buchanan
Matthew Lewis

BASS TROMBONE

Barry Clements

TUBA

Sam Elliott

TIMPANI

William Lockhart

PERCUSSION

Toby Kearney
Sam Walton
Tim Gunnell

PIANO & CELESTE

Catherine Edwards

GERALD BARRY (b.1952)

Piano Concerto (2012)

When it was co-commissioned by the Bayerischer Rundfunk and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in 2012, Barry's *Piano Concerto* was his first work to bear the title 'concerto'. In anyone else's hands the genre might have led to certain expectations: virtuosity, showmanship and lyrical splendour, perhaps. But Barry is not known for following convention and, true to form, his *Piano Concerto* is not a conventional concerto. There are the wind machines, for a start. Two giant wind machines – the kind you might find on a film set – that make up two thirds of the percussion section and which, apparently, require amplification to reach the deafening clamour that Barry's music demands. Then there is the work's form which, defying tradition once more, rejects the idea of a multi-movement work in favour of one giant, sprawling movement: no gaps, no delineations, no cadenzas. Neither is it even really a concerto in Barry's mind; for him, the work is more akin to a 'play or opera'.

If it is a piece of theatre, rather than a concerto, then there are only really two characters here: soloist and orchestra. In that sense, at least, the work has its roots in tradition. But this is not a concerto cast in black and white. Rather, Barry offers up a recourse to the

antiphonal exchanges of the Baroque concerto, refracted and reinterpreted through his own unforgiving and rather brutalist lens. There is plenty of colour here but instead of the sweeping brushstrokes of romanticism, the lines blurred and muddled, Barry gives us an unforgiving cubist landscape, clean-cut and unwavering. And rather than establishing itself as a three-dimensional web of support around the soloist, the orchestra posits itself as the opposition. Throughout the whole concerto, the two barely play together at all. Instead, as in so much of Barry's music, the score is carved into blocks, the soloist and orchestra butting up against one another in bold vertical lines. It is a conversation, but an abrasive one, the piano interjecting dense chromatic clusters in each of the orchestra's rests, the orchestra responding with terse, unrelenting insistence. As all arguments must, this one reaches a crisis point too, with orchestra and soloist (and an orchestral piano, too, just for good measure) coming together for a cacophonous 'Storm' episode towards the concerto's end. It is a blistering moment, over almost as quickly as it began, the full force of the orchestra unleashed and then spent, the conflict seemingly still unresolved.

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 4 in B flat major, Op. 60 (1806)

I: *Adagio – Allegro vivace*

II: *Adagio*

III: *Allegro vivace*

IV: *Allegro ma non troppo*

When Beethoven began work on his Fourth Symphony in the summer of 1806, he might well have wondered, as the Viennese public did, what next? After the astonishing dynamism of the ‘Eroica’, with its unprecedented length and heroic ‘new manner’, he appeared to have set in train a new era in the symphonic tradition. Balance, poise and grace had all been superseded by grandeur, surprise and defiance, the last vestiges of classicism apparently now buried along with any traces of the 18th century. His next symphony, his Fourth, would surely continue this line of expansion and development.

Had Beethoven not decided to spend that summer in the company of Prince Carl von Lichnowsky, things might well have been different. Beethoven had already begun work on a new symphony – the work which we now know as his Fifth – when he accepted the Prince’s invitation but he broke off work on that score to compose a new symphony for Count Franz von Oppersdorff, a relative of the Prince and a long-time admirer of Beethoven’s music. When Beethoven and Oppersdorff were treated to a performance of his Second Symphony at the Prince’s country estate, Beethoven appears to have taken his cue for Oppersdorff’s new commission: this would not be a symphony of vehemence and heroism, but a return to more modest, even classical, proportions. As Robert Schumann would later call it, the Fourth is ‘a slender Greek maiden between two Norse Gods’.

When it gets going, there is little doubt that the Fourth has more in common with the effervescence of the Second than it does with the bombast of the Third, its lightness shared with the other works he completed that same summer – the Violin Concerto and Fourth Piano Concerto. But in symphonic terms the Fourth is still far from straightforward. Most surprising of all is its mysterious, almost torturous introduction, which opens in the ‘wrong key’ of B flat minor. It takes almost three minutes before Beethoven finds his feet and, emerging from gloom with a start, announces the opening of the *Allegro* proper with an earth-shattering timpani roll and series of sforzando chords. This is to be a work of dynamic extremes. Even the tender *Adagio* that follows is not immune to the sense of unrest, the persistent accompaniment always threatening to throw the delicate

lyricism of the central theme off course – at the movement’s centre, as the key darkens and the trumpets and drums re-enter, it almost does. A spirited *Scherzo* follows, its bucolic theme again almost overshadowed by a lurking sense of unease, but Beethoven’s real surprise here is to double the traditional tripartite design to bring the opening theme back not once but twice – and, at the last moment, to shatter the recapitulation with a surprise blast from the horns. Beethoven, it seems, cannot resist the element of surprise. Even in the light-hearted finale, one of the most joyful in his symphonic output, Beethoven repeatedly wrong-foots the listener with a stormy interjection that temporarily stops this *perpetuum mobile* movement in its tracks, as though a theatrical villain were waiting in the wings, ready at any moment to sabotage the drama.



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Mozart | *Horn Concerto No. 4*
Beethoven | *Symphony No. 2*

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 (1808)

- I: *Allegro con brio*
II: *Andante con moto*
III: *Scherzo: Allegro*
IV: *Allegro*

To hear the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony afresh now, more than 200 years after it was composed, takes some doing. The four 'hammer blows' that announce its arrival are among the most famous notes in all western music, so familiar to our ears that they have almost become a caricature of themselves. But imagine, for a moment, you are transported back to 1808, to one of the most memorable concerts of Beethoven's life. Not only was it Beethoven's last appearance as a soloist in public, the last time before his deafness eclipsed his performance, this epic, four-hour long concert also saw the premieres of his Fantasia in C minor for piano, orchestra and chorus, the aria *Ah! Perfido*, the Fantasia in G minor for solo piano, two sections of the Mass in C minor, and – to finish – both his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies. Imagine the shock as he unleashed this torrent of new music upon the public, and the sense of surprise they must have felt at the bombardment of the Fifth Symphony, with its relentless repetition, sudden silences and urgent, fateful thematicism.

Sadly, despite the promising programme, it was not a particularly happy occasion. The music was greatly under-rehearsed, the hall itself cold and uncomfortable, and Beethoven's own performance was, according to reports, close to a shambles. Beethoven's symphonic masterpiece was not well received. But just over a year later the Fifth Symphony was performed again, this time to rapturous praise. Writing in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, E.T.A. Hoffmann, one of the most revered critics of his generation, described the symphony's extraordinary, intangible power:

'It sets in motion the machinery of awe, of fear, of terror, of pain, and awakens that infinite yearning which is the essence of romanticism... Radiant beams shoot through the deep night of this region, and we become aware of gigantic shadows which, rocking back and forth, close in on us and destroy all within us except the pain of endless longing – a longing in which every pleasure that rose up amid jubilant tones sinks and succumbs. Only through this pain, which, while consuming but not destroying love, hope, and joy, tries to burst our breasts with a full-voiced general cry from all the passions, do we live on and are captivated beholders of the spirits.'

While the Third had been celebrated for its searing sense of grandeur, the Fifth became an icon – for the first time – of something ineffable. This was to be the beginning of 'absolute music', of music that could glimpse, in Hoffman's words, *'the realm of the infinite'*. The wonderful reality is that Beethoven achieves this through the most small-scale of means, through the manipulation of a tiny thematic fragment, executed here with such finesse and exactness that there is nothing extraneous, nothing left in isolation. The glittering precision of the opening Allegro is just the start of this process, a movement in which Beethoven shatters the theme into tiny splinters and then gathers them, painstakingly, to form something that appears greater even than the whole itself. The elaborate double variations that follow in the Andante offer detail of a different kind, its two contrasting themes breathed out in sumptuous counterpoint. After the respite of the slow movement, fate returns to knock on the door with full force in the scherzo, a movement aptly characterised in *Howard's End* as *'first of all the goblins, and then a trio of elephants dancing'*. Beethoven's 'goblins' are a manipulated form of Mozart's theme from the finale of his Symphony in G minor, brought screaming into the future here as it meets Beethoven's hammer blows in a clash of classical ideals. But this is all a precursor to one of the most sublime transitions in western music, a miraculous transformation of darkness into light that climaxes as the scherzo topples head first into the finale. Beethoven's fate motif has won out over Mozart, just as major wins over minor and the hammer blows are recast in glorious C major to see out the symphony in an exultant finale.

Programme notes © Jo Kirkbride

NICOLAS HODGES

An active repertoire that encompasses such composers as Beethoven, Berg, Brahms, Debussy, Schubert and Stravinsky reinforces pianist Nicolas Hodges' special prowess in contemporary music. As *Tempo* magazine has written: '*Hodges is a refreshing artist; he plays the classics as if they were written yesterday, and what was written yesterday as if it were already a classic.*' Born in London and now based in Germany, where he is a professor at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart, Hodges approaches the works of Classical, Romantic, 20th century and contemporary composers with the same questing spirit, leading the *Guardian* to comment that: '*Hodges' recitals always boldly go where few other pianists dare ... with an energy that sometimes defies belief.*'

Cooperating closely with major and very different contemporary composers such as John Adams and Helmut Lachenmann is an important part of Nicolas Hodges' work. Many of them have dedicated their works to him, including Thomas Adès, George Aperghis, Gerald Barry, Harrison Birtwistle, Elliott Carter, James Clarke, Francisco Coll, Hugues Dufourt, Pascal Dusapin, Luca Francesconi, Beat Furrer, Isabel Mundry, Brice Pauset, Rolf Riehm, Wolfgang Rihm, Rebecca Saunders, Salvatore Sciarrino and Miroslav Srnka.

Highlights of the past seasons were the premiere of the award-winning piano concerto by Simon Steen-Andersen as part of the Donaueschingen Festival in 2014 with Francois-Xavier Roth and the SWR Symphony Orchestra Freiburg Baden-Baden, as well as the world premiere of *Variations from the Golden Mountains* (Birtwistle) in London's Wigmore Hall. Hodges played the Berlin premiere of Elliott Carter's *Dialogues* for piano and orchestra with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the German premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Daniel Barenboim. He also performed the world premiere of Thomas Adès' Piano Concerto *In Seven Days* with the London Sinfonietta followed by further performances with the London Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras.

In chamber music Nicolas collaborates regularly with the Arditti Quartet, Adrian Brendel, Colin Currie, Ilya Gringolts, Anssi Karttunen, Michael Wendeborg, Carolin Widmann and as a member of the Trio Accanto.

In the 2017/18 season he performs as a soloist at the Donaueschinger Musiktage, at the Fundación Juan March in Madrid, at Wigmore Hall, the Queen Elizabeth



Photo © Philippe Gontier

Hall and as part of the Ultraschall Festival Berlin. Furthermore he is invited to perform with Staatsorchester Stuttgart under the baton of Sylvain Camberling, as well as with the Philharmonia Orchestra London at Royal Festival Hall together with Beat Furrer. At the Festival AFEKT he plays chamber music at the final concert in Tallinn with his Trio Accanto.

Nicolas Hodges' discography includes Adès piano concerto *In Seven Days* with the London Sinfonietta and Thomas Adès (*Signum Classic*). In 2015, a CD with works by Harrison Birtwistle as well as a live recording of Luca Francesconi's piano concerto with the Orquestra Sinfónica Casa da Musica and the Remix Ensemble Porto were released.

In 2016 the CD *Voces Abandonadas* was released with works by Walter Zimmermann (*Wergo*). In autumn 2017 the latest CD *Brice Pauset – Canons* was released (*Wergo*).

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ADÈS, BARRY, BEETHOVEN: CHAMBER MUSIC

THOMAS ADÈS *piano*

ALLAN CLAYTON *tenor*

ALEX WIDE *horn*

TIMOTHY RUNDLE *oboe*

JOY FARRALL *clarinet*

SARAH BURNETT *bassoon*

BEETHOVEN <i>An die ferne Geliebte</i>	15 mins
GERALD BARRY <i>Jabberwocky</i>	8 mins
INTERVAL	20 mins
BEETHOVEN <i>Quintet for Piano and Winds in E flat, Op. 16</i>	25 mins

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

An die ferne Geliebte (1816)

I: *Auf dem Hügel sitz ich spähend*

II: *Wo die Berge so blau*

III: *Leichte Segler in den Höhen*

IV: *Diese Wolken in den Höhen*

V: *Es kehret der Maien, es blühet die Au*

VI: *Nimm sie hin denn diese Lieder*

Beethoven was, by his own admission, not a natural songwriter. When he submitted his setting of Goethe's poem *Sehnsucht* for publication in the journal *Prometheus* in 1808, he scribbled on the score: 'I did not have enough time to produce a good one, so here are several attempts'. Later, he lamented to the playwright Johann Friedrich Rochlitz, 'I do not like composing songs.' Unlike Schubert, from whom song seemed to spring forth as easily and spontaneously as if it were second nature, Beethoven struggled to find the same ease of expression with song that he enjoyed with instrumental music. But despite his protests to the contrary, Beethoven's modest collection of songs pushed the Lied (still a relatively new genre) into uncharted territory and laid the foundations for it to become a centrepiece in the growing age of Romanticism.

Beethoven, like Gerald Barry an instinctive rule-breaker, was hampered by the largely strophic nature of 18th-century poetry. With its regular stanzas, repetitive rhythms and recurring rhyme schemes, much of the poetry of Beethoven's era was not well suited to his rather deviant approach to composing. The songs that are most successful in his output are typically those which blur these formal boundaries – among them the early aria, *Ah! Perfido* (1796), which freely repeats sections of the original poem and transforms the poem into a through-composed text, and the song *Der Kuss* (1822), in which Beethoven finds humour and again asserts his freedom to mould and repeat the poetry at will.

An die ferne Geliebte, however, succeeds for different reasons. Above all, it is the first important example of a song cycle by a major composer, predating Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* by almost a decade. For the first time, Beethoven links together the six songs as a cohesive entity, progressing through a cycle of keys from E flat major to G major and A flat major and thence back through C major to E flat. Like the interlinked key scheme of a symphony it allows each song to set the last in relief. Since there are no divisions between the songs either, each flowing directly into the next, this effectively allows Beethoven to circumvent the stanza-based nature



of the poetry and convert his setting into a single, through-composed work. And to cement the cycle, or *Liederkreis* as Beethoven called it, the music of the first is recalled once more during the closing bars of the last, its text one of summation and return: 'Take, then, these songs, that I to you, beloved, sang. Sing them again in the evenings to the sweet sounds of the lute!' Each is a song of love and longing, as translated through nature, all written by the same young poet, Alois Jeitteles. Revealing an expressive, more introspective side to his music that would colour Beethoven's later years, *An die ferne Geliebte* would become one of Beethoven's most powerful gifts to vocal music of the 19th century – a remarkable feat for someone who did not like composing songs.

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TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Auf dem Hügel sitz ich spähend

Auf dem Hügel sitz ich spähend
In das blaue Nebelland,
Nach den fernen Triften sehend,
Wo ich dich, Geliebte, fand.

Weit bin ich von dir geschieden,
Trennend liegen Berg und Tal
Zwischen uns und unserm Frieden,
Unserm Glück und unsrer Qual.

Ach, den Blick kannst du nicht sehen,
Der zu dir so glühend eilt,
Und die Seufzer, sie verwehen
In dem Raume, der uns theilt

Will denn nichts mehr zu dir dringen,
Nichts der Liebe Bote sein?
Singen will ich, Lieder singen,
Die dir klagen meine Pein!

Denn vor Liebesklang entweicht
Jeder Raum und jede Zeit,
Und ein liebend Herz erreicht
Was ein liebend Herz geweiht!

Wo die Berge so blau

Wo die Berge so blau
Aus dem nebligen Grau
Schauen herein,
Wo die Sonne verglüht,
Wo die Wolke umzieht,
Möchte ich sein!

Dort im ruhigen Tal
Schweigen Schmerzen und Qual
Wo im Gestein
Still die Primel dort sinnt,
Weht so leise der Wind,
Möchte ich sein!

Hin zum sinnigen Wald
Drängt mich Liebesgewalt,
Innere Pein
Ach, mich zög's nicht von hier,
Könnt ich, Traute, bei dir
Ewiglich sein!

On the hill sit I, peering

On the hill sit I, peering
Into the blue, hazy land,
Toward the far away pastures
Where I you, beloved, found.

Far am I, from you, parted,
Separating us are hill and valley
Between us and our peace,
Our happiness and our sorrow.

Ah! The look can you not see,
That to you so ardently rushes,
And the sighs, they blow away
In the space that separates us.

Will then nothing more be able to reach you,
Nothing be messenger of love?
I will sing, sing songs,
That to you speak of my pain!

For before the sound of love escapes
every space and every time,
And a loving heart reaches,
What a loving heart has consecrated!

Where the mountains so blue

Where the mountains so blue
Out of the foggy gray
Look down,
Where the sun dies,
Where the cloud encircles,
I wish I were there!

There is the restful valley
Stilled are suffering and sorrow
Where in the rock
Quietly the primrose meditates,
Blows so lightly the wind,
I wish I were there!

There to the thoughtful wood
The power of love pushes me,
Inward sorrow,
Ah! This moves me not from here,
Could I, dear, by you
Eternally be!

Leichte Segler in den Höhen

Leichte Segler in den Höhen,
Und du, Bächlein klein und schmal,
Könnt mein Liebchen ihr erspähen,
Grüßt sie mir viel tausendmal.

Seht ihr, Wolken, sie dann gehen
Sinnend in dem stillen Tal,
Laßt mein Bild vor ihr entstehen
In dem luft'gen Himmelssaal.

Wird sie an den Büschen stehen
Die nun herbstlich falb und kahl.
Klagt ihr, wie mir ist geschehen,
Klagt ihr, Vöglein, meine Qual.

Stille Weste, bringt im Wehen
Hin zu meiner Herzenswahl
Meine Seufzer, die vergehen
Wie der Sonne letzter Strahl.

Flüstr' ihr zu mein Liebesflehen,
Laß sie, Bächlein klein und schmal,
Treu in deinen Wogen sehen
Meine Tränen ohne Zahl!

Diese Wolken in den Höhen

Diese Wolken in den Höhen,
Dieser Vöglein muntre Zug,
Werden dich, o Huldin, sehen.
Nehmt mich mit im leichten Flug!

Diese Weste werden spielen
Scherzend dir um Wang' und Brust,
In den seidnen Locken wühlen.
Teilt ich mit euch diese Lust!

Hin zu dir von jenen Hügeln
Emsig dieses Bächlein eilt.
Wird ihr Bild sich in dir spiegeln,
Fließ zurück dann unverweilt!

Light veils in the heights

Light veils in the heights,
And you, little brook, small and narrow,
Should my love spot you,
Greet her, from me, many thousand times.

See you, clouds, her go then,
Meditating in the quiet valley,
Let my image stand before her
In the airy heavenly hall.

If she near the bushes stands,
Now that autumn is faded and leafless,
Lament to her, what has happened to me,
Lament to her, little birds, my suffering!

Quiet west, bring in the wind
To my heart's chosen one
My sighs, that pass
As the last ray of the sun.

Whisper to her of my love's imploring,
Let her, little brook, small and narrow,
Truly, in your waves see
My tears without number!

These clouds in the heights

These clouds in the heights,
These birds gaily passing,
Will see you, my beloved.
Take me with you on your light flight!

These west winds will play
Joking with you about your cheek and breast,
In the silky curls will dig.
I share with you this pleasure!

There to you from this hill
Busily, the little brook hurries.
If your image is reflected in it,
Flow back without delay!

Es kehret der Maien, es blühet die Au

Es kehret der Maien, es blühet die Au,
Die Lüfte, sie wehen so milde, so lau,
Geschwätzig die Bäche nun rinnen.

Die Schwalbe, die kehret zum wirtlichen Dach,
Sie baut sich so emsig ihr bräutlich Gemach,
Die Liebe soll wohnen da drinnen.

Sie bringt sich geschäftig von kreuz und von quer
Manch weicheres Stück zu dem Brautbett hierher,
Manch wärmendes Stück für die Kleinen

Nun wohnen die Gatten beisammen so treu,
Was Winter geschieden, verband nun der Mai,
Was liebet, das weiß er zu einen.

Es kehret der Maien, es blühet die Au.
Die Lüfte, sie wehen so milde, so lau.
Nur ich kann nicht ziehen von hinnen.

Wenn alles, was liebet, der Frühling vereint,
Nur unserer Liebe kein Frühling erscheint,
Und Tränen sind all ihr Gewinnen.

Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder

Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder,
Die ich dir, Geliebte, sang,
Singe sie dann abends wieder
Zu der Laute süßem Klang.

Wenn das Dämmerungsrot dann zieht
Nach dem stillen blauen See,
Und sein letzter Strahl verglüheth
Hinter jener Bergeshöh;

Und du singst, was ich gesungen,
Was mir aus der vollen Brust
Ohne Kunstgepräg erklingen,
Nur der Sehnsucht sich bewußt:

Dann vor diesen Liedern weichet
Was geschieden uns so weit,
Und ein liebend Herz erreicht
Was ein liebend Herz geweiht.

May returns, the meadow blooms

May returns, the meadow blooms,
The breezes they blow so softly, so mildly,
Chattering, the brooks now run.

The swallow, that returns to her hospitable roof,
She builds, so busily, her bridal chamber,
Love must dwell there.

She brings, so busily, from all directions,
Many soft pieces for the bridal bed,
Many warm pieces for the little ones.

Now live the couple together so faithfully,
What winter has separated is united by May,
What loves, that he knows how to unite.

May returns, the meadow blooms,
The breezes they blow so softly, so mildly,
Only I cannot go away from here.

When all that loves, the spring unites,
Only to our love no spring appears,
And tears are our only consolation.

Take, then, these songs

Take, then, these songs,
That I to you, beloved, sang,
Sing them again in the evenings
To the sweet sounds of the lute!

When the red twilight then moves
toward the calm, blue lake,
And the last ray dies
behind that hilltop;

And you sing, what I have sung,
What I, from my full heart,
Artlessly have sounded,
Only aware of its longings.

For before these songs yields,
What separates us so far,
And a loving heart reaches
For what a loving heart has consecrated.

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GERALD BARRY (b. 1952)

Jabberwocky (2012)

Once asked if he ever interpreted a text directly, Barry answered bluntly: *'No, I don't like illustration... I hate musical settings where there is a literal, illustrative quality.'* Barry is as contrary as they come, particularly where words are involved. He seeks out the mundane in the ridiculous, and the ridiculous in the mundane. So what could be more fitting for a perverse composer like Barry than a nonsense poem like Lewis Carroll's *The Jabberwocky*? A precursor to his 2016 opera *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, Barry's 'song' *Jabberwocky* was commissioned and premiered by Britten Sinfonia in 2012, his first setting of Carroll's poetry. That in itself is startling: that it took 60 years for one of the 20th century's zaniest composers to pair his music with Carroll's own madcap writing.

The truth is that Carroll is almost too zany even for Barry, whose esoteric style is typically a result of trivialising serious subjects. How to find something ridiculous, then, in a poem that already borders on madness? Barry, of course, confounds our expectations. *'Declaim as at a public meeting'*, he instructs above the opening stanza. *'Be commanding. Speak strictly in time.'* Where Carroll gives us nonsense, Barry responds with solemnity. And, in order to disguise the true nature of the poem still further,

Barry adopts a French translation, allowing the text to become somehow grander, more weighty, the made-up English words exchanged for made-up French ones that sound – to the uninitiated – entirely plausible. As though reporting the heroic events of a battle, or directing the troops, the tenor soloist declaims with conviction and sincerity – but there is a giveaway. The horn, 'roaring', repeatedly blusters its way in to undermine the singer's grave pronouncements.

The truth is that the poem does have a serious undercurrent, its tale one of the heroic slaughter of a fearsome creature named the Jabberwock, with *'jaws that bite, the claws that catch!'* Carroll's words are – at times – nonsensical, but they also stray just close enough to reality for us to grasp their meaning, to imagine their dreamlike world. The same is true of Barry's setting, which flirts with the ridiculous even as it calls us back to the present. When the text shifts part way through to German, the gravity of the situation appears to intensify, the caustic nature of the German language adding a new layer of intent and severity. As the singer becomes increasingly shrill, repetitive and wild, we too become whipped up in the frenzy of it all, deftly drawn into Barry's bizarre and utterly compelling world.



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TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two!
And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Lewis Carroll

Le Jaseroque

Il brilgue: les tôves lubricilleux
Se gyrent en vrillant dans le guave.
Enmîmés sont les gougebosqueux
Et le mômerade horsgrave.

Garde-toi du Jaseroque, mon fils!
La gueule qui mord; la griffe qui prend!
Garde-toi de l'oiseau Jube, évite
Le frumieux Band-à-prend!

Son glaive vorpal en main il va-
T-à la recherche du fauve manscant;
Puis arrivé à l'arbre Té-Té,
Il y reste, réfléchissant.

Pendant qu'il pense, tout uffusé,
Le Jaseroque, à l'oeil flambant,
Vient siblant par le bois tullegeais,
Et burbule en venant.

Un deux, un deux,
par le milieu,
Le glaive vorpal fait pat-à-pan!
La bête défaite, avec sa tête,
Il rentre gallomphant.

As-tu tué le Jaseroque?
Viens à mon coeur, fils rayonnais!
Ô Jour frabbejeais! Calleau! Callai!
Il cortule dans sa joie.

Il brilgue: les tôves lubricilleux
Se gyrent en vrillant dans le guave.
Enmîmés sont les gougebosqueux
Et le mômerade horsgrave.

Translation: Frank L. Warrin

Der Jammerwock

Es brillig war. Die schlichte Toven
Wirrten und wimmelten in Waben;
Und aller-mümsige Burggoven
Die mohmen Râth' ausgraben.

Bewahre doch vor Jammerwock!
Die Zähne knirschen, Krallen kratzen!
Bewahr' vor Jubjub-Vogel, vor
Frumiösen Banderschtzchen!

Er griff sein vorpals Schwertchen zu,
Er suchte lang das manchsan' Ding;
Dann, stehend unterm Tumtum Baum,
Er an-zu-denken-fing.

Als stand er tief in Andacht auf,
Des Jammerwochen's Augen-feuer
Durch tulgen Wald mit Wiffek kam
Ein burbelnd Ungeheuer!

Eins, Zwei! Eins, Zwei!
Und durch und durch
Sein vorpals Schwert zerschnifer-schnück,
Da blieb es todt! Er, Kopf in Hand,
Geläumfig zog zurück.

Und schlugst Du ja den Jammerwock?
Umarme mich, mien Böhm'sches Kind!
O Freuden-Tag! O Halloo-Schlag!
Er schortelt froh-gesinnt.

Es brillig war. Die schlichte Toven
Wirrten und wimmelten in Waben;
Und aller-mümsige Burggoven
Die mohmen Râth' ausgraben.

Translation: Robert Scott

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Quintet for Piano and Winds in E flat major, Op. 16 (1796)

I: Grave – Allegro ma non troppo

II: Andante cantabile

III: Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

Music for wind instruments does not feature prominently in Beethoven's catalogue of mature works. But in his early days as a young and aspiring composer in Bonn, he composed a variety of pieces for different – and sometimes unusual – instrumental combinations at the behest of his patron, Elector Maximilian Franz. Like many noblemen of the time, Elector Maximilian had a penchant for wind music, or *Harmoniemusik* as it was known. This trend had begun in Vienna where Maximilian's brother, Emperor Joseph II, had created his own *Harmonie* ensemble, comprising two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons and two horns. When Maximilian left Vienna for Bonn, as well as taking with him some of his brother's musicians, he also left with the intention of creating his own *Harmonie* to provide background music (or *Tafelmusik*) in his new court.

When Maximilian arrived in Bonn in 1784 he soon heard a performance of Beethoven's music and, impressed with his talent at such a young age, he employed Beethoven as one of his court composers. Much of what Beethoven wrote during this time is incidental *Tafelmusik*, which was unpublished during his lifetime and has since been given the classification WoO or 'Werk ohne Opuszahl' ('work without opus number'). But Beethoven was so pleased with his Quintet for Piano and Winds in E flat major, that he published it as his Op. 16, and later arranged the work as a quartet for piano and string trio to give it further performance opportunities. It is not difficult to understand why Beethoven was so delighted with his creation: the symphonic ambition of this three-movement work far exceeds the expectations of the genre, elevating the quintet from mere entertainment music to a more profound performance piece.

Beethoven was almost certainly inspired in his endeavours by Mozart, who had written his own Quintet for Piano and Winds in the same key (K. 452) just ten years earlier – a work which he believed 'to be the best work I have ever composed.' Certainly, there are close structural parallels between Mozart and Beethoven's quintets, from the majestic slow introduction and closing horn calls in the opening movement, to the lively 6/8 'hunting' finale, which both composers seem to treat as though it were a concerto for the five instruments. But it would be unfair to compare them like for like: the

strident thematicism is Beethoven's own, reminding us of the empowering E flat tonality he would use later in his 'Eroica' Symphony and 'Emperor' Concerto. The brief and surprising eruption of E flat minor in the central *Andante* is also a Beethovenian trait, learned not from Mozart but from the witticisms of his composition teacher, Joseph Haydn. Reports from the Quintet's premiere in 1797, at which Beethoven played the piano part, reveal that Beethoven's penchant for surprise did not end there, as his biographer Ferdinand Ries later recalled: 'Beethoven suddenly began to improvise, took the Rondo for a theme and entertained himself and the others for a considerable time, but not the other players. They were displeased and Ramm even very angry. It was really very comical to see them, momentarily expecting the performance to be resumed, put their instruments to their mouths, only to put them down again. At length Beethoven was satisfied and dropped into the rondo. The whole company was transported with delight.'

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ALLAN CLAYTON

Allan Clayton is established as one of the most exciting and sought after singers of his generation. He studied at St John's College, Cambridge and at the Royal Academy of Music in London. An Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and former BBC New Generation Artist from 2007–09, his awards include the 2018 Royal Philharmonic Society Singer Award, the 2018 Whatsonstage Achievement in Opera Award, 'The Queen's Commendation for Excellence', and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship.

Allan garnered huge praise as the lead role in Brett Dean's *Hamlet*, which had its world premiere at Glyndebourne in June 2017. He reprises the role in March 2018 at the Adelaide Festival. During 2017, Allan also sang the role of David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. At the beginning of the 17/18 season, Allan sang the role of Ferdinand in *Miranda* for Opera Comique. He returned to Komische Opera Berlin in 2018 for Handel's *Semele*, and also returned to Glyndebourne for Handel's *Saul*.

Allan's concert appearances include *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Barbican Centre in London with the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Mark Elder, Britten's *War Requiem* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Semyon Bychkov, and Handel's *Messiah* for the Handel & Haydn Society in Boston. He appears regularly at the BBC Proms, where he has sung the title role in *Oedipus Rex* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sakari Oramo and also performed in Vaughan Williams' *Pastoral Symphony* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. He gave the world premiere of Gerald Barry's new work, *Canada*, at the 2017 BBC Proms, with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. In January 2018, Allan sang in a concert performance of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Jurowski. He will join the London Symphony Orchestra for Britten's *Spring Symphony* conducted by Sir Simon Rattle

A consummate recitalist, Allan has given lieder recitals at the Cheltenham, Perth and Aldeburgh Festivals. Allan returned to the Wigmore Hall in July 2017 for a recital of Shakespeare Songs with Sophie Bevan, accompanied by Chris Glynn, which they also performed at the Ryedale Festival. Allan returned to the Wigmore Hall in January 2018 for a recital with pianist James Bailleau.



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BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 6

THOMAS ADÈS conductor

JOSHUA BLOOM bass

GERALD BARRY <i>The Conquest of Ireland</i>	21 mins
INTERVAL	20 mins
BEETHOVEN <i>Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68, 'Pastoral'</i>	40 mins

ON STAGE TONIGHT

VIOLIN 1

Jacqueline Shave
Clare Thompson
Martin Gwilym-Jones
Katherine Shave
Fiona McCapra
Ruth Ehrlich
Beatrix Lovejoy
Michael Jones
Elizabeth Wexler
Cecily Ward

VIOLIN 2

Miranda Dale
Nicola Goldscheider
Marcus Broome
Judith Kelly
Suzanne Loze
Bridget Davey
Kirsty Lovie
Joanna Watts

VIOLAS

Nicholas Bootiman
Luba Tunnicliffe
Bridget Carey
Rachel Byrt
Lisanne Melchior
Meghan Cassidy

CELLOS

Caroline Dearnley
Juliet Welchman
Julia Vohralik
Reinoud Ford
Chris Allan

DOUBLE BASSES

Ben Russell
Elena Hull
Melissa Favell-Wright

FLUTES

Harry Winstanley
Sarah O'Flynn
Lindsey Ellis

PICCOLOS

Sarah O'Flynn
Lindsey Ellis

ALTO FLUTES

Harry Winstanley
Lindsey Ellis

BASS FLUTE

Sarah O'Flynn

OBOES

Melanie Rothman
Ruth Berresford

COR ANGLAIS

Ilid Jones

CLARINETS

Joy Farrall
Stephen Williams

BASS CLARINET

Oliver Pashley

BASSOONS

Sarah Burnett
Lawrence O'Donnell
Gordon Laing

CONTRABASSOON

Gordon Laing

HORNS

Alex Wide
David McQueen
Marcus Bates
Kirsty Howe

TRUMPETS

Paul Archibald
Shane Brennan
Bruce Nockles

ALTO TROMBONE

Michael Buchanan

TROMBONES

Michael Buchanan
Matthew Lewis

BASS TROMBONE

Barry Clements

TUBA

Sam Elliott

TIMPANI

William Lockhart

PERCUSSION

Toby Kearney
Sam Walton
Tim Gunnell

PIANO & CELESTE

Catherine Edwards

GERALD BARRY (b. 1952)

The Conquest of Ireland (1995)

As much as listening to Barry's music can sometimes feel an onslaught, there is an irrepressible thrill to it too. It is a thrill that Barry clearly feels himself, injecting a sense of danger into every score, tinkering with tradition and flirting with the very fringes of possibility. His vocal settings in particular, as he has acknowledged himself, are often enormously virtuosic. 'There is a sense of the extreme in the music', he admitted in an interview in 2000, 'there is a danger there... the possibility of collapse almost.' So it is with *The Conquest of Ireland* where, under the already rather absurd tempo marking (quaver = 192), to which he adds the direction 'frenetic', Barry writes in bold capital letters, underlined: *NOT SLOWER*. Barry means to test us: to test the limits of the performers even as he tries the patience of the listeners, challenging us to remain fixed to our seats, willing the performers to stay afloat.

Formed around a text by the 12th Century Welsh writer and cleric, Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Conquest of Ireland* is – as with so much of Barry's music – a clash between the solemn and the ridiculous. Cambrensis was part of the army that invaded Ireland in the 12th century and his book recounts the events of the invasion with a dry and surprisingly keen focus on the soldiers themselves. For Barry, the text has a 'strange detached quality', something that he was keen to counter in his setting, which blisters with passion and conviction even as it recounts the mundane. The score is riddled with directions to play 'exuberantly!' while the text is anything but. 'Richard had reddish hair and freckles, grey eyes and a feminine face, a weak voice and a short neck, though in almost all other respects he was of a tall build', Cambrensis writes meagrely, while Barry keeps the music alert and rhythmically charged.

Typically, we are introduced to the bass soloist without ceremony. The voice enters, as though in a blast of rapid gunfire, in strict unison with the bass clarinet, the words barely audible as the two jostle to ride the seemingly endless succession of semiquavers. Eventually, this softens into a section of long, chromatic lines for wind and marimba, but any tenderness is not part of the text: here the writer imagines the reader 'despising' the book and 'wrinkling his nose in disgust' at the page.

Having excerpted his text from a source that includes plenty of action, Barry deliberately targets the trivial. We are treated to an account that flits between the banal details of the soldiers' appearances and Cambrensis' attempts to justify his own writing. Coupled with the

visceral and at times shocking nature of Barry's score, it presents a rather compelling form of contrast. 'I like the tension, or almost contradiction between that matter-of-factness and the rather violent, passionate interpretation that I applied to it', Barry has said. This is not a grand, overblown depiction of a life lived and lost in glory on the battlefield, but instead a more human account of a group of soldiers who are just people after all, weak voiced and short of neck.



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TEXT: THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND

I seem to see how the reader, despising my book, wrinkles his nose to show his disgust, pouts and, viewing it with disdain, puts it from him since he finds everything in it clear, straightforward and easily understood by all. But he must understand first of all that this has been written for the benefit of laymen who are but little skilled in reading. It is therefore written in a plain and easy style and needs to be made simple, with the sole purpose of being understood. For it will always be permissible to use words from the common idiom when the deeds of the people and of the leading men among the people are being set down in writing. Besides, in every literary endeavour my Muse has deliberately chosen a popular style of writing, and one which is readily clear to all, but which is nevertheless decked out with ornaments that are peculiarly mine.

Richard had reddish hair and freckles, grey eyes, a feminine face, a weak voice and a short neck, though in almost all other respects he was of a tall build. In adversity no feelings of despair caused him to waver, while lack of self-restraint did not make him run amok when successful.

Maurice was a man with a high complexion and distinguished features, in stature moderately short, for he was taller than short men usually are but shorter than those of medium height. He was a man whose body and spirit alike were of modest dimensions, for the one was not gross nor the other arrogant.

Raymond was a man of ample proportions, a little taller than average, with flaxen, slightly curly hair, great round grey eyes, a rather prominent nose a high complexion and a cheerful and composed expression. Although he was corpulent, because he carried too much weight, he made up for this natural weightiness by an innate vivacity, and alleviated this physical defect by the rare quality of his spirit. In solicitude for his army he used to pass sleepless nights, restless calling out.

Meiler on the other hand was swarthy with dark, fierce eyes and a very fierce expression. In stature he was not much more than tiny, but he possessed great strength considering his size. He had a broad chest and a small belly and his arms and other limbs were bony, presenting a sinewy rather than a fleshy appearance.

FitzAldelin was stout. His height and built conformed to that of a man only a little larger than the average. To the enemy he was most agreeable. He was full of guile, a flatterer and a coward, addicted to wine and lust.

When our people arrived there first, the Irish were paralysed and panic-stricken by the sheer novelty of the event; and the sudden wounds inflicted by our arrows greatly alarmed them.

I have thought it not superfluous to say a few things about the nature of this people. They are a barbarous people, literally barbarous. All their habits are the habits of barbarians.

If you wish to know what Hugh's complexion and features were like: he was dark with dark, sunken eyes and flattened nostrils. His face was grossly disfigured down the right side as far as his chin by a burn, the result of an accident. His neck was short, his body hairy and sinewy. If you further enquire as to his height, he was a short man: if you want a description of his build, he was misshapen.

Hervey was tall and handsome with prominent grey eyes, an agreeable presence, charming features, an elegant way of speaking. His neck was smooth, long and straight, forming a sturdy pillar on which his head rested. He was round-shouldered, his arms and hands were long and elegant, and his chest moderately broad. But his waist which in most people tends to swell out immoderately, was by nature of modest proportions, and lower down towards his abdomen attained a size in keeping with that of his chest. His hips, legs and feet were in all respects those of a soldier and in size corresponded quite gracefully with the upper part of his anatomy. He was of a stature not remarkably in excess of middle height. He was addicted to venery from his youth, and considered lawful any act which others wished to perform upon him or he wished to perform on others involving lust in all its forms.

Text from *Expugnatio Hibernica* by Giraldus Cambrensis, *dicitur* Giraldus de Barri (1146–1223). Translation by A. Scott and F.X. Martin (1978) © Royal Irish Academy.
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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 6 in F major, 'Pastoral', Op. 68 (1808)

I: *Allegro ma non troppo* (Awakening of happy feelings on arriving in the country)

II: *Andante molto moto* (Scene by the Brook)

III: *Allegro* (Peasant's merrymaking)

IV: *Allegro* (The storm)

V: *Allegretto* (Shepherds' song. Joyous thanksgiving after the storm)

If Beethoven's audiences were shocked by the vehemence of his Fifth Symphony at its 1808 premiere, then they must have been confounded by the softness of the Sixth Symphony, which premiered alongside it in the same four-hour concert. For those who herald Beethoven as the swarthy figure presented in so many of his portraits, all doom, gloom and pessimism, the Sixth Symphony is difficult to reconcile. It is, in so many ways, just as radical as anything he composed either before or after, but its unmistakably gentle nature has seen it singled out in Beethoven's oeuvre, an anomaly in a symphonic output that is thought to be characterised by its heroic, teleological drive. The long-fêted, catchy categorisation of his symphonies – odd-numbered versus even, forward-facing versus nostalgic – has done the Sixth a disservice. Beethoven not only presented the Fifth and Sixth to the public alongside one another, he composed them together too. As a pair, they carried the symphony further into the future than anything other work in history, drilling down into the very essence of symphonic composition.

While the Fifth is built upon meticulous thematicism, examining in infinite detail the building blocks of form, the Sixth explores the symphony as a piece of narrative art. Where the Fifth is fuelled by transformation, the Sixth dares to stand still. To our twenty-first century ears, well accustomed now to the idea of programmatic music and even to musical impressionism, the idea of rendering the outside world onto a symphonic canvas is hardly radical. But to early 18th-century audiences it was groundbreaking. While Beethoven was far from the first to experiment with programmatic ideas in music – think of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* or the Pastoral in Handel's *Messiah* – he did so in a way that had never before been explored in the symphony. The Sixth is not just a walk through the countryside in musical form, it is – in Beethoven's own words – 'more an expression of feeling than painting'.

What separates the Sixth from mere musical storytelling is its reversal of symphonic priorities. In an age where thematic development and harmonic transformation were understood as the key tenets of symphonic structure, Beethoven composed a symphony that thrives on repetition. In the opening *Sonata Allegro*, usually the site of the work's drive and ambition, Beethoven spends some 50 bars idling away on the same harmony, repeating the same motif we heard in the first two bars of the symphony over and over. Donald Tovey went so far as to call it 'lazy'. At any rate, it becomes almost hypnotic, as though Beethoven were actively willing us to slow down and take in the symphonic world around us in all its splendour, just as he does nature. 'No one can love the country as much as I do', he wrote to a friend in 1810. 'For surely woods, trees, and rocks produce the echo which man desires to hear.' This, then, is Beethoven's echo, a work that ricochets and resonates in a single, perfect sphere. From the babbling brook and birdsong of the second movement to the merry peasant dancing of the third, Beethoven offers us the perfect idyll, if only we will tarry long enough to enjoy it. The dancing, however, is cut short by a powerful storm. 'It is no longer merely a wind and rainstorm', Berlioz wrote, 'it is a frightful cataclysm, the universal deluge, the end of the world.' But this sudden deluge abates almost as quickly as it began, the relief palpable as the sun bursts through and illuminates the world anew. As the shepherds yodel their thanks, and the Shepherd's Song returns us to a state of carefree repetition, it is as though Beethoven were prefiguring the Elysium of his Ninth Symphony – and what could be more forward-facing than that?

JOSHUA BLOOM

Australian/American bass Joshua Bloom has sung principal roles numerous companies worldwide, including Opera Australia, San Francisco Opera, LA Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, New York's Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, English National Opera, Badisches Staatstheater, Opera Northern Ireland and Garsington Opera.

Bloom's 2017/18 season includes house debuts with Oper Köln, Opera Colorado and Israeli Opera, and role debuts as Bottom *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (English National Opera and Israeli Opera), Faraone in Rossini's virtuosic *Mosè in Egitto* and Kaspar *Der Freischütz*. Bloom will work with renowned conductors including Thomas Adès, Daniel Cohen, David Parry, Ari Pelto and Alexander Soddy and directors including Lotte de Beer, Robert Carsen and Matthew Ozawa.

Recent highlights include a world premiere of Gerald Barry's *Alice's Adventures Underground* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Britten Sinfonia, conducted by Thomas Adès; his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic, under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle, revisiting Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*, directed by Peter Sellars; his role debut as Blansac *La Scala di Seta* with the Orchestra of Scottish Opera, conducted by David Parry and a return to the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Garsington Opera and at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées).

Bloom appears on NMC's Grammy nominated recording of Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest* as Algernon Moncrieff, conducted by Thomas Adès; the New York Philharmonic's live recording of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* as Harašta, conducted by Alan Gilbert; The Metropolitan Opera's HD Broadcast of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* as Masetto, conducted by Fabio Luisi; the Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concert Hall broadcast of Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*, as The Black Minister, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle and the LSO Live recording of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* as The Shepherd/Doctor conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

Bloom has also appeared on the concert stage with the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, the LA Philharmonic, Britten Sinfonia, the Auckland Philharmonia and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group as well as the Melbourne, Queensland, Adelaide and Western Australian Symphonies.



Photo © Kim Hardy

Bloom was born in Australia to musician parents and studied cello and double-bass as well as being a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. He went on to study History at the University of Melbourne and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1996.

His professional debut in opera was in an OzOpera touring production of *The Barber of Seville*, after which he joined the Young Artist Programme of Opera Australia in Sydney, and later the Merola and Adler Fellowship Programmes at the San Francisco Opera.

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 became Resident Orchestra at Saffron Hall in 2016. The orchestra also has residencies across the east of England in Norwich and Cambridge (where it is an Ensemble-in-Residence at the University) and performs a chamber music series at Wigmore Hall. Britten Sinfonia appears regularly at major UK festivals including the Aldeburgh Festival, Brighton Festival and the BBC Proms.

A growing international profile includes regular touring to North and South America and performances in many of Europe's finest concert halls. The orchestra made its debut in China in May 2016 with a three-concert residency in Shanghai, as well as performances in Beijing and Wuhan. In 2018 Britten Sinfonia made its debut at the Sistine Chapel, with The Sixteen.

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.

In 2018–19, Britten Sinfonia collaborates with artists including Thomas Adès, Sir Mark Elder, Brad Mehldau, Sophie Bevan, Allan Clayton and Roderick Williams with premieres from composers including Joby Talbot, Nico Muhly, Luke Styles and Edmund Finnis.

Central to Britten Sinfonia's artistic programmes is a wide range of Creative Learning projects within both schools and the community including the talented youth ensemble, Britten Sinfonia Academy and annual composition competition, OPUS, offering unpublished composers of all ages and backgrounds the chance to receive a professional commission.

In 2013 Britten Sinfonia was awarded its second Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award for Ensemble, also having won the Chamber Music Award in 2009. Britten Sinfonia recordings have been Grammy-nominated, and have received a Gramophone Award, an ECHO/Klassik Recording Award, a BBC Music Magazine Award and most recently in 2017 the prestigious Diapason d'Or de l'Année for James MacMillan's *Stabat Mater*, with The Sixteen. In 2014 Britten Sinfonia was nominated for an Olivier Award for its collaboration with the Richard Alston Dance Company.

“ Britten Sinfonia keep reinventing the chamber orchestra. ”

The Telegraph 2016



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