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Classical Music

Concert programme

**Britten's Canticles
with James Way, Lotte
Betts-Dean and Ross
Ramgobin**

Wed 16 Apr 7.30pm

Milton Court Concert Hall

Important information



When does the concert start and finish?

The concert begins at 7.30pm and finishes at about 9.15pm, with a 20-minute interval.



I'm running late!

Latecomers will be admitted if there is a suitable break in the performance.



Please ...

Switch any watch alarms and mobile phones to silent during the performance.



Please don't ...

Take photos or recordings during the performance – save it for the curtain call.



Use a hearing aid?

Please use our induction loop – just switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall.



Need a break?

You can leave at any time and be readmitted if there is a suitable break in the performance, or during the interval.



Looking for refreshments?

Bars are located on Levels -1, G and 1.



Looking for the toilets?

The nearest toilets, including accessible toilets, are located on Levels G, 1 and 2.



Carrying bags and coats?

Drop them off at our free cloak room on Level -1.

Britten's Canticles with **James Way, Lotte Betts-Dean and Ross Ramgobin**

Wed 16 Apr 7.30pm, Milton Court Concert Hall

James Way tenor
Natalie Burch piano
Lotte Betts-Dean mezzo-soprano
Ross Ramgobin baritone
Alis Huws harp
Annemarie Federle horn

Benjamin Britten *Canticle I*
Errollyn Wallen *My Lazy Goodheart*
Franz Schubert *Auf dem Strom*
Benjamin Britten *Canticle III*

Interval 20 minutes

Benjamin Britten *Canticle V*
Franz Schubert *Des Fischers Liebesglück*
Benjamin Britten *Canticle IV*
Canticle II

Produced by the Barbican

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Tonight's programme brings together a group of outstanding young singers and instrumentalists for a programme exploring love, loss and remembrance. It interweaves Britten's haunting *canticles* with vocal works by Schubert and Errolly Wallen.

'My *canticle* goes nicely, and I'm in love with the form ...' Britten's love affair would endure right through the composer's career. Spanning nearly 30 years from 1947 to 1974, these five works measure out a life – touchstones of Britten's shifting preoccupations and convictions on love, war, sexuality and faith.

Little unites the set either stylistically or musically. Forces vary – tenor and piano a constant, joined by alto (*Canticle II*), horn (*Canticle III*), countertenor and baritone (*Canticle IV*), with the piano substituted for a harp in *Canticle V*. Tonight it's a mezzo who takes on the role of countertenor and alto. Britten himself described the unusual, flexible form as 'a new invention in a sense ... although modelled on Purcell's *Divine Hymns*'. What connects these dramatic miniatures – operatic worlds in a grain of musical sand – is what Peter Evans has called 'a mood of spiritual elevation', present even in secular texts.

Another curious thread running through the *Canticles* is their relationship to Britten's operas, following close on the heels of the larger-scale works and serving as a sort of epilogue: distilling their processes, themes or style down into purest form. *Canticle I* continues *Albert Herring's* exploration of human relationships, desire and perhaps even homosexuality (Quarles's verse may speak of a relationship with God, but the optics of Britten's lover Peter Pears singing to a male object of desire suggest an alternative interpretation). *Canticle II's* Abraham

and Isaac refract Vere and Billy Budd in a meditation on sacrifice, while *Canticle V's* St Narcissus shares a destructive obsession with beauty with Aschenbach (*Death in Venice*). In *Canticle III* it's *The Turn of the Screw's* 12-tone theme-and-variations structure that returns.

My beloved is mine (1947) opens in the cycle with lyrical ease: a concise cantata whose intricate internal structures takes Quarles's strophic verse and draws out distinct episodes – from the drifting opening Barcarolle to an expansive recitative. *Abraham and Isaac* (1952) is a mystery play in music, in which God speaks – miraculously – in an otherworldly, androgynous voice created by alto and tenor voices united. At the centre of the cycle is Edith Sitwell's *Still falls the Rain* (1954): a Passion scene built around a series of interludes for horn and piano – sets of variations interleaved with vocal recitatives and a refrain, 'Still falls the rain'.

Two TS Eliot settings complete the sequence. *The Journey of the Magi* (1971) unites baritone, tenor and alto in a chilly memory-play – a recitation in which they recall the 'hard time' of their journey to the manger, sometimes united as one, sometimes diverging and adding independent detail. *The Death of Saint Narcissus* (1974) trades the stability of piano accompaniment for the rippling waters of the harp, cutting the musical anchor and allowing the Saint – transfigured – to rise, weightless.

Subtitled 'a parlour ballad', Errollyn Wallen's *My Lazy Goodheart* is one of eight songs originally commissioned by vocalist Kate Westbrook from eight different composers to create a 'Music-Hall for the 21st-century'. Wallen's contribution (setting Westbrook's own text) is a woozy, drop-too-much-taken ballad for piano and voice that lurches from strutting jazz to sentimental balladry.

The speaker looks back over a relationship: from first promises, through lies and conflict, to death's final parting. At first nostalgic, looking back on romance in a drifting melody over rolling, if queasily unstable, piano arpeggios (the singer glosses over, but the piano reveals the cracks from

the start), the music then plunges into a brief, brassy snatch of dance music ('they vowed to make love easy'). But in the third verse the façade crumbles completely; savagery briefly overwhelms and derails the song. We finish where we began, swaying once again to those arpeggios, contemplating 'What might have been ... could have been ... should have been'.

Schubert had recently completed *Winterreise* in 1827 when he headed to Graz to stay with friends. During that stay verses by young poet Karl Gottfried von Leitner were proffered: could Schubert not set them to music? Six songs resulted, *Des Fischers Liebesglück* among them.

A masterclass in concision – one verse of music supplies 11 verses of poetry – this immaculate strophic miniature takes a fisherman from his beloved's first summons (a bedroom light glimpsed like a will-o'-the-wisp on the water) to their night-time reunion and assignation. The waters lap and swell in lulling 6/8, while the voice tells his mysterious A minor tale – warming, to ecstatic effect, into A major for the close of each verse, as the voice soars suddenly up an octave. A sustained final note, decorated – just as we think the verse is over – with a delicate little turn, helps bend and warp time as the lovers imagine themselves beyond the earth itself, already raised up to 'another shore'.

But if *Des Fischers Liebesglück* celebrates the power of musical repetition, *Auf dem Strom* (1828) exploits the impact of subtle variation. An extended aria for voice and piano with obbligato horn, the song's instrumentation – unique in Schubert's output – pays homage to Beethoven. The even-numbered verses of the song quote directly from the funeral march from the *Eroica* Symphony, while the solo horn nods to a texture familiar from so many his arias. Here its presence sets a heroic, elegiac tone – a herald into a better world for a composer setting out not, as in Ludwig Rellstab's poem, on a river voyage, but a journey beyond life itself. A noble introduction floats the horn on rippling triplet waters in the piano, supplying interludes between the tenor's verses – brothers, rather than twins, in each instance.

© Alexandra Coghlan

Benjamin Britten**Canticle I: My beloved is mine**

Ev'n like two little bank-divided brooks,
That wash the pebbles with
their wanton streams,
And having rang'd and search'd
a thousand nooks,
Meet both at length at silver-
breasted Thames,
Where in a greater current they conjoin:
So I my best-beloved's am; so he is mine.

Ev'n so we met; and after long pursuit,
Ev'n so we joynd; we both became entire;
No need for either to renew a suit,
For I was flax and he was flames of fire:
Our firm-united souls did more than twine;
So I my best-beloved's am; so he is mine.

If all those glitt'ring Monarchs
that command
The servile quarters of this earthly ball,
Should tender, in exchange,
their shares of land,
I would not change my fortunes for them all:
Their wealth is but a counter to my coin:
The world's but theirs; but
my beloved's mine.

Nor Time, nor Place, nor Chance,
nor Death can bow
My least desires unto the least remove;
He's firmly mine by oath; I his by vow;
He's mine by faith; and I am his by love;
He's mine by water; I am his by wine,
Thus I my best-beloved's am; thus he is mine.

He is my Altar; I, his Holy Place;
I am his guest; and he, my living food;
I'm his by penitence; he mine by grace;
I'm his by purchase; he is mine, by blood;
He's my supporting elm; and I his vine;
Thus I my best beloved's am; thus he is mine.

He gives me wealth; I give him all my vows:
I give him songs; he gives
me length of days;
With wreaths of grace he
crowns my longing brows,

And I his temples with a crown of Praise,
Which he accepts: an everlasting sign,
That I my best-beloved's am; that he is mine.

Francis Quarles (1592-1644)
A Divine Rapture, quoting from
The Song of Songs

Errollyn Wallen
My Lazy Goodheart

Up by my Lazy Goodheart
He and his love did lie.
They choked my Lazy Goodheart
With a selfish aching sigh.
They vowed to make love easy
And followed you and me.
But love became too greedy
And devoured what might have been.

Up the house of Follow-me
He and his love did cry.
Inside the house of Follow-me
They learnt to cheat and lie.
She called him to go easy And
vanquish you and me.
But love became too greedy
And it soured what could have been.

I go by my Lazy Goodheart
Where the two of them have died.
But in the land of my Lazy Goodheart
No comfort can I find.
Follow-me can't make it easy
Now you have gone from me.
And death became too greedy
So killed what should have been.

Kate Westbrook

Franz Schubert
Auf dem Strom

Nimm die letzten Abschiedsküsse,
Und die wehenden, die Grüsse,
Die ich noch ans Ufer sende,
Eh' Dein Fuss sich scheidend wende!
Schon wird von des Stromes Wogen
Rasch der Nachen fortgezogen,
Doch den tränendunklen Blick
Zieht die Sehnsucht stets zurück!

Und so trägt mich denn die Welle
Fort mit unerflehter Schnelle.
Ach, schon ist die Flur verschwunden,
Wo ich selig Sie gefunden!
Ewig hin, ihr Wonnitage!
Hoffnungsleer verhallt die Klage
Um das schöne Heimatland,
Wo ich ihre Liebe fand.

Sieh, wie flieht der Strand vorüber,
Und wie drängt es mich hinüber,
Zieht mit unnennbaren Banden,
An der Hütte dort zu landen,
In der Laube dort zu weilen;
Doch des Stromes Wellen eilen
Weiter ohne Rast und Ruh,

Führen mich dem Weltmeer zu!

Ach, vor jener dunklen Wüste,
Fern von jeder heitern Küste,
Wo kein Eiland zu erschauen,
O, wie fasst mich zitternd Grauen!
Wehmutstränen sanft zu bringen,
Kann kein Lied vom Ufer dringen;
Nur der Sturm weht kalt daher
Durch das grau gehobne Meer!

Kann des Auges sehrend Schweifen
Keine Ufer mehr ergreifen,
Nun so schau' ich zu den Sternen
Auf in jenen heil'gen Fernen!
Ach, bei ihrem milden Scheine
Nannt' ich sie zuerst die Meine;
Dort vielleicht, o tröstend Glück!
Dort begegn' ich ihrem Blick.

Ludwig Rellstab (1799–1860)

Take these last farewell kisses,
and the wafted greetings
that I send to the shore,
before your foot turns to leave.
Already the boat is pulled away
by the waves' rapid current;
but longing forever draws back
my gaze, clouded with tears.

And so the waves bear me away
with relentless speed.
Ah, already the meadows
where, overjoyed, I found
her have disappeared.
Days of bliss, you are gone for ever!
Hopelessly my lament echoes
round the fair homeland
where I found her love.

See how the shore flies past,
and how mysterious ties
draw me across
to a land by yonder cottage,
to linger in yonder harbour.
But the river's waves rush onwards,
without respite,
bearing me on towards the ocean.

Ah, how I tremble with dread
at that dark wilderness,
far from every cheerful shore,
where no island can be seen!
No song can reach me from the shore
to bring forth tears of gentle sadness;
only the tempest blows cold
across the grey, angry sea.

If my wistful, roaming eyes
can no longer descry the shore,
I shall look up to the stars
there in the sacred distance.
Ah! By their gentle radiance
I first called her mine;
there, perhaps, O consoling fate,
there I shall meet her gaze.

Translation © Richard Wigmore

Benjamin Britten**Canticle III: Still falls the Rain**

Still falls the Rain –

Dark as the world of man, black as our loss –
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails
Upon the Cross.

Still falls the Rain

With a sound like the pulse of the heart
that is changed to the hammer-beat
In the Potter's Field, and the
sound of the impious feet

On the Tomb:

Still falls the Rain
In the Field of Blood where the small
hopes breed and the human brain
Nurtures its greed, that worm
with the brow of Cain.

Still falls the Rain

At the feet of the Starved Man
hung upon the Cross.

Christ that each day, each night,
nails there, have mercy on us –
On Dives and on Lazarus:
Under the Rain the sore and
the gold are as one.

Still falls the Rain –

Still falls the Blood from the
Starved Man's wounded Side:
He bears in His Heart all wounds –
those of the light that died,
The last faint spark
In the self-murdered heart, the wounds
of the sad uncomprehending dark,
The wounds of the baited bear –
The blind and weeping bear
whom the keepers beat
On his helpless flesh ... the
tears of the hunted hare.

Still falls the Rain –

Then – O Ile leap up to my God:
who pulles me doune –
See, see where Christ's blood
streames in the firmament:
It flows from the Brow we
nailed upon the tree
Deep to the dying, to the thirsting heart
That holds the fires of the world –
dark-smirched with pain
As Caesar's laurel crown.

Then sounds the voice of One
who like the heart of man
Was once a child who among
beasts has lain –
'Still do I love, still shed my innocent
light, my Blood, for thee.'

Edith Sitwell (1887–1964)

Benjamin Britten**Canticle V: The Death of Saint Narcissus**

Come under the shadow of this gray rock –
Come in under the shadow of this gray rock,
And I will show you something
different from either
Your shadow sprawling over
the sand at daybreak, or
Your shadow leaping behind the
fire against the red rock:
I will show you his bloody cloth and limbs
And the gray shadow on his lips.

He walked once between the
sea and the high cliffs
When the wind made him aware of his
limbs smoothly passing each other
And of his arms crossed over his breast.
When he walked over the meadows
He was stifled and soothed
by his own rhythm.
By the river
His eyes were aware of the
pointed corners of his eyes
And his hands aware of the
pointed tips of his fingers.

Struck down by such knowledge
He could not live men's ways, but
became a dancer before God.
If he walked in city streets
He seemed to tread on faces,
convulsive thighs and knees.
So he came out under the rock.

First he was sure that he had been a tree,
Twisting its branches among each other
And tangling its roots among each other.

Then he knew that he had been a fish
With slippery white belly held
tight in his own fingers,
Writhing in his own clutch,
his ancient beauty

Caught fast in the pink tips
of his new beauty.

Then he had been a young girl
Caught in the woods by a drunken old man
Knowing at the end the taste
of his own whiteness,
The horror of his own smoothness,
And he felt drunken and old.

So he became a dancer to God.
Because his flesh was in love
with the burning arrows
He danced on the hot sand
Until the arrows came.
As he embraced them his white skin
surrendered itself to the redness
of blood, and satisfied him.
Now he is green, dry and stained
With the shadow in his mouth.

TS Eliot (1888–1965)

Franz Schubert
Des Fischers Liebesglück

Dort blinket
Durch Weiden,
Und winket
Ein Schimmer
Blasstrahlig
Vom Zimmer
Der Holden mir zu.

Es gaukelt
Wie Irrlicht,
Und schaukelt
Sich leise
Sein Abglanz
Im Kreise
Des schwankenden Sees.

Ich schaue
Mit Sehnen
In's Blaue
Der Wellen,
Und grüsse
Den hellen,
Gespiegelten Strahl.

Und springe
Zum Ruder,
Und schwinge
Den Nachen
Dahin auf

Yonder light gleams
through the willows,
and a pale
glimmer
beckons to me
from the bedroom
of my sweetheart.

It flickers
like a will-o'-the-wisp,
and its reflection
sways
gently
in the circle
of the undulating lake.

I gaze
longingly
into the blue
of the waves,
and greet
the bright
reflected beam.

And spring
to the oar,
and swing
the boat
away on

Den flachen,
Krystallinen Weg.

its smooth,
crystal course.

Fein-Liebchen
Schleicht traulich
Vom Stübchen
Herunter,
Und sputet
Sich munter
Zu mir in das Boot.

My sweetheart
slips lovingly
down
from her little room,
and joyfully
hastens to me
in the boat.

Gelinde
Dann treiben
Die Winde
Uns wieder
See-einwärts
Vom Flieder
Des Ufers hindann.

Then the breezes
gently
blow us
again
out into the lake
from the elder tree
on the shore.

Die blassen
Nachtnebel
Umfassen
Mit Hüllen
Vor Spähern
Den stillen,
Unschuldigen Scherz.

The pale
evening mists
envelop
and veil
our silent,
innocent dallying
from prying onlookers.

Und tauschen
Wir Küsse,
So rauschen
Die Wellen
Im Sinken
Und Schwellen,
Den Horchern zum Trotz.

And as we exchange
kisses,
the waves
lap,
rising
and falling,
to foil eavesdroppers.

Nur Sterne
Belauschen
Uns ferne,
Und baden
Tief unter
Den Pfaden
Des gleitenden Kahns.

Only stars
in the far distance
overhear us,
and bathe
deep down
below the course
of the gliding boat.

So schweben
Wir selig,
Umgeben
Vom Dunkel,
Hoch überm
Gefunkel
Der Sterne einher.

So we drift on
blissfully,
in the midst
of darkness,
high above
the twinkling
stars.

Und weinen
Und lächeln,
Und meinen,
Enthoben

Weeping,
smiling,
we think
we have soared free

Der Erde,
Schon oben,
Schon d'rüben zu sein.

Karl Gottfried von Leitner (1800–90)

of the earth,
and are already up above,
on another shore.

© Richard Wigmore

Benjamin Britten

Canticle IV: The Journey of the Magi

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.
And the camels galled, sore-
footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.

Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting
their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out,
and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and
the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and
charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down
to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line,
smelling of vegetation,
With a running stream and a water-
mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky.
And an old white horse galloped
away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with
vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door
dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information,
and so we continued

And arrived at evening, not
a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you
may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt.
I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were
different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us,
like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in
the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

TS Eliot

Benjamin Britten

Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac

God speaks: Abraham, my
servant, Abraham,
Take Isaac, thy son by name,
That thou lovest the best of all,
And in sacrifice offer him to me
Upon that hill there besides thee.
Abraham, I will that so it be,
For aught that may befall.

Abraham: My Lord, to Thee is mine intent
Ever to be obedient.
That son that Thou to me hast sent
Offer I will to Thee.
Thy bidding done shall be.

*Here Abraham, turning him
to his son Isaac, saith:*

Make thee ready, my dear darling,
For we must do a little thing.
This woode do on thy back it bring,
We may no longer abide.
A sword and fire that I will take,
For sacrifice behoves me to make;
God's bidding will I not forsake,
But ever obedient be.

*Here Isaac speaketh to his father,
and taketh a bundle of sticks and
beareth after his father, and saith:*

Isaac: Father, I am all ready
To do your bidding most meekely,
And to bear this wood full bayn am I,
As you commanded me.

*Here they both go to the
place to do sacrifice:*

Abraham: Now, Isaac son, go we our way
To yonder mount if that we may.

Isaac: My dear father, I will essay
To follow you full fain.
Abraham being minded to slay
his son Isaac, lifts up his hands,
and saith the following:

Abraham: O! My heart will break in three,
To hear thy words I have pitye;
As Thou wilt, Lord, so must it be,
To Thee I will be bayn.
Lay down thy faggot, my own son dear.

Isaac: All ready father, lo, it is here.
But why make you such heavy cheer?
Are you anything adread?

Abraham: Ah! Dear God! That me is woe!

Isaac: Father, if it be your will,
Where is the beast that we shall kill?

Abraham: Thereof, son, is
none upon this hill.

Isaac: Father, I am full sore affeared
To see you bear that drawne sword.

Abraham: Isaac, son, peace, I pray thee,
Thou breakest my heart even in three.

Isaac: I pray you, father,
laynt nothing from me,
But tell me what you think.

Abraham: Ah! Isaac, Isaac, I must thee kill!

Isaac: Alas! Father, is that your will,
Your owne child for to spill
Upon this hilles brink?
If I have trespassed in any degree
With a yard you may beat me;
Put up your sword, if your will be,
For I am but a child.
Would God my mother were here with me!
She would kneel down upon her knee,
Praying you, father, if it may be,
For to save my life.

Abraham: O Isaac, son, to thee I say
God hath commanded me today
Sacrifice, this is no nay,
To make of thy bodye.

Isaac: Is it God's will I shall be slain?

Abraham: Yea, son, it is not for to layn.

*Here Isaac asketh his father's
blessing on his knees, and saith:*

Isaac: Father, seeing you muste needs do so,
Let it pass lightly and over go;
Kneeling on my knees two,
Your blessing on me spread.

Abraham: My blessing, dear son, give I thee
And thy mother's with heart free.
The blessing of the Trinity,
My dear Son, on thee light.

*Here Isaac riseth and cometh to
his father, and he taketh him,
and bindeth and layeth him upon the
altar to sacrifice him, and saith:*

Abraham: Come hither, my
child, thou art so sweet,
Thou must be bound both hands and feet.

Isaac: Father, do with me as you will,
I must obey, and that is skill,
God's commandment to fulfil,
For needs so it must be.

Abraham: Isaac, Isaac,
blessed must thou be.

Isaac: Father, greet well my brethren ying,
And pray my mother of her blessing,
I come no more under her wing,
Farewell for ever and aye.

Abraham: Farewell, my sweete son of grace!

*Here Abraham doth kiss his son Isaac,
and binds a kerchief about his head.*

Isaac: I pray you, father, turn down my face,
For I am sore adread.

Abraham: Lord, full loth were I him to kill!

Isaac: Ah, mercy, father, why tarry you so?

Abraham: Jesu! On me have pity,
That I have most in mind.

Isaac: Now, father, I see that I shall die:
Almighty God in majesty!
My soul I offer unto Thee!

Abraham: To do this deed I am sorrye.

*Here let Abraham make a sign as
tho' he would cut off his son Isaac's
head with his sword; then ...*

God speaks: Abraham, my
servant dear, Abraham,
Lay not thy sword in no manner
On Isaac, thy dear darling.
For thou darest me, well wot I,
That of thy son had no mercy,
To fulfil my bidding.

Abraham: Ah, Lord of heaven
and King of bliss,
Thy bidding shall be done, i-wiss!
A horned wether here I see,
Among the briars tied is he,
To Thee offered shall he be
Anon right in this place.

*Then let Abraham take the
lamb and kill him.*

Abraham: Sacrifice here sent me is,
And all, Lord, through Thy grace.

envoi Such obedience grant us, O Lord!
Ever to Thy most holy word.
That in the same we may accord
As this Abraham was bayn;
And then altogether shall we
That worthy King in heaven see,
And dwell with Him in great glorye
For ever and ever. Amen



© Raphael Neal

James Way

Tenor James Way is fast gaining international recognition for the versatility of his voice and commanding stage presence. He is passionate about a career taking in a variety of music as both performer and artistic director. Having followed his initial interest in Baroque music through the young artist programmes of Les Arts Florissants and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, he rapidly became in demand as a soloist for conductors including William Christie, René Jacobs, Harry Bicket and Trevor Pinnock.

He is equally comfortable in later repertoire and has a particular affinity for the music of Britten and Stravinsky. His performances include Flute (Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Dalia Stasevska at Glyndebourne and for Garsington Opera under Douglas Boyd; the Son in Laurent Pelly's production of Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (winner of Best New Opera Production at the 2022 *Opera Awards*) with Robin Ticciati, also at Glyndebourne; Young King (Sir George Benjamin's *Lessons in Love and Violence*) with the Orchestre de Paris; Sellem (Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*) with the Munich Philharmonic and Barbara Hannigan; and Holy Fool (*Boris Godunov*) with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Jakub Hrůša.

Performances of various Handel roles continue to take him around the world with appearances at New York's Carnegie Hall, Tokyo Opera City, here at the Barbican and the Paris Philharmonie, among others.

This coming season's highlights include Mozart's Requiem with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra under Barbara Hannigan; Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* under Kazuki Yamada with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra; Handel's *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* with the Irish Baroque Orchestra under Peter Whelan and on tour with Les Arts Florissants under William Christie; and Handel's *Solomon* at the Göttingen Handel Festival with Georg Petrou, with the Gabrieli Consort and on tour with The English Concert and Harry Bicket.

This year saw the release of a recording of the complete Britten *Canticles* for Delphian Records alongside pianist Natalie Burch.



© Raphael Neal

Natalie Burch

Natalie Burch is an alumnus of Chetham's School of Music and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and is a dedicated song pianist and curator. She regularly presents recitals at festivals across the country, is an advocate for increasing female

representation in the song-piano world and is co-founder of the Devon Song Festival.

She regularly collaborates with a number of award-winning artists. Recent and future projects include her debut at the Aldeburgh Festival alongside Lotte Betts-Dean and James Way, a performance of *Schwanengesang* with Roderick Williams at the Oxford International Song Festival and the release of the complete Britten *Canticles* on Delphian Records.

She is an experienced programmer, researcher and producer, recently producing a recital disc with Fleur Barron and Francesca Chiejina (Delphian Records) and contributing a chapter on the songs of Elizabeth Maconchy to an forthcoming compendium on the composer's life (CUP).

Past performance highlights include Brahms's *Liebeslieder Waltzes* and Sir Stephen Hough's *Other Love Songs* at Wigmore Hall, a new commission by Daniel Kidane for St John's Smith Square, performances at the Sage Gateshead, Blackheath Halls, the Little Venice Festival and International Lied Festival Zeist, as well as a recording with tenor Robert Murray for BBC Radio 3's *Private Passions* and a concert tour with RPS-nominated soprano/composer Héloïse Werner.

She won the accompaniment prize at the 2015 Maureen Lehane Awards at Wigmore Hall, was a finalist at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards and is an alumnus of the Britten-Pears, Leeds Lieder and International Lied Festival Zeist Young Artist Programme and is a Samling Artist.

As resident pianist and trustee for Opera Prelude, she regularly plays for masterclasses given by eminent singers and teachers, including Sir John Tomlinson, Roderick Williams, Neil Shicoff and Dame Anne Evans. She has worked as a répétiteur and orchestral pianist under conductors such as Alice Farnham and Jessica Cottis as well as performing in uncondacted orchestras and directing small ensembles from the piano.

Natalie Burch gained her Masters with distinction at the Guildhall under Eugene Asti and Andrew West. After studying at Chetham's she graduated with first class honours in musicology

from King's College London with piano at the Royal Academy of Music. She continues her studies with Susan Manoff.



Lotte Betts-Dean

Australian mezzo-soprano Lotte Betts-Dean has been praised for her combination of musicality and drama. She has a particular interest in curation and programming that involves a broad repertoire encompassing contemporary, chamber and early music, as well as art song, opera, oratorio and non-classical collaborations. As a specialist in contemporary repertoire, she has premiered many works and recorded several composer portrait albums, including those devoted to Michael Finnissy, Stuart MacRae, Catherine Lamb and Arthur Keegan.

Recent highlights include debuts at the Bavarian State Opera, singing Vlasta in Weinberg's *The Passenger*, and at the Grand Théâtre de Genève in Shlomowitz's *Electric Dreams*. She has also recently returned to the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, West Cork Chamber Music Festival and London's Kings Place.

She works regularly with various chamber groups in the UK and Australia, including EXAUDI Vocal Ensemble, Explore Ensemble,

Ensemble xy, Armida and Ligeti Quartets, Marsyas Trio, La Vaghezza Baroque, Rubiks Collective, The Song Company and Van Diemen's Band; she was also an Associate Artist with Southbank Sinfonia. She has performed as soloist with the Australian and English Chamber orchestras, Bath Bach Choir and Manchester Collective.

She is an alumnus of the Young Artist programmes at Britten Pears Arts, City Music Foundation and Oxford Lieder, having won the 2019 Oxford Lieder Platform with frequent collaborator Joseph Havlat. She has returned to the festival every year since, curating a series of programmes ranging from Renaissance lute song and German lied to 20th-century art song, cabaret and experimental art rock, including her acclaimed solo voice and electronics show *Voice Electric*, which made its debut at the 2022 Aldeburgh Festival.

In 2024 Lotte Betts-Dean won the Young Artist Award at the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards.



Ross Ramgobin

Ross Ramgobin is an alumnus of the Royal Academy of Music and National Opera Studio and has sung for companies including the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Glyndebourne, Opera Holland Park, Welsh National Opera, Angers-Nantes Opéra, Israeli Opera and Dutch Touring Opera, as well as at the Aldeburgh, Brisbane Baroque, Göttingen, Verbier and White Nights of St Petersburg festivals.

Concert engagements have included projects with the Bach Choir, BBC Concert Orchestra, the BBC, BBC Scottish, City of Birmingham and London Symphony orchestras, Britten Sinfonia and London and Royal Philharmonic orchestras.

He has developed an outstanding reputation in contemporary music, highlights including *Gaveston* (Sir George Benjamin's *Lessons in Love and Violence*) at the Stars of the

White Nights Festival in St Petersburg; the Protector (Benjamin's *Written on Skin*) for the Festival Présences Radio France at the Philharmonie de Paris and the Wiener Konzerthaus conducted by the composer; Mamoud (John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*) conducted by the composer at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw; Rambashi (David Bruce's *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*) at Covent Garden; Donny (Tippett's *New Year*) with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Yuri (Tippett's *The Ice Break*) for Birmingham Opera Company.

His recordings include Britten's *Canticles* (Delphian Records), Handel's *Agrippina* from the Göttingen Festival (Accent); Stanford's *Requiem* with City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (Hyperion); *New Year* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (NMC); and Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* (LSO Live). He also sings the title-role and Ramiro in Grange Park Opera's films of *Owen Wingrave* and *L'heure espagnole* and appeared as Papageno (*The Magic Flute*) for the Royal Opera Christmas Concert in 2020.

Engagements this season include *Moralès* (*Carmen*) at Covent Garden. For Glyndebourne he sings Clive in the premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Uprising* and Prosdócimo (*Il turco in Italia*), and for Grange Park Opera he takes the roles of Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*) and Aurengazeb (Nishat Khan's *Taj Mahal*).



© Cat Arwel

Alis Huws

Former Official Royal Harpist, Alis Huws is a freelance soloist, orchestral and chamber musician.

She regularly gives recitals across the UK and internationally, having toured to Japan, Europe, the US, Hong Kong and the Middle East.

Recent highlights include appearing as a soloist with the Philharmonia Orchestra at Classic FM Live at the Royal Albert Hall, and releasing her debut EP, *Long Nights and Starry Skies* (Decca).

She performed at His Majesty King Charles III's Coronation at Westminster Abbey, both as a soloist in Sir Karl Jenkins's arrangement of *Tros y Garreg* ('Crossing the Stone') and as part of the specially formed Coronation Orchestra. Other high-profile engagements include the Welsh National Service of Prayer and Reflection

for HM Queen Elizabeth II and the Royal Opening of the Senedd 2016 and 2021.

Her work has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio Wales, BBC Radio Cymru and all the major UK television channels.

She is passionate about outreach and bringing music into communities, giving regular interactive concerts for people living with dementia, as well as working with children with additional needs.

She recently embarked on a tour of 30 primary schools across rural Powys to celebrate 30 years of Live Music Now's work in Wales.

Named on Classic FM's 30 under 30 Rising Stars list for 2024, Alis Huws completed both her Bachelor and Master's degrees at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, where she was awarded the Midori Matsui Prize for Music, the Royal Welch Fusiliers Harp Prize, the McGrennery Chamber Music Prize, and the Rev Paul Bigmore Music in the Community Award. She was made an honorary associate of the institution in 2022.

Orchestra in 2023, at the age of 20, while still a student at the Royal Academy of Music. She is also Principal Horn of Aurora Orchestra, and is frequently in demand as a guest principal. Her freelance work includes performances with many of the major UK orchestras, as well as the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich.

She was a finalist in the BBC Young Musician competition in 2020, a semi-finalist in the ARD International Music Competition in 2021, and the winner of the Gianni Bergamo Classic Music Award in 2021.

She has performed concertos with ensembles such as the LPO, Aurora Orchestra, London Mozart Players, English and Munich Chamber orchestras and BBC Philharmonic.

Recent solo highlights include recitals and chamber music performances at leading venues and festivals such as Wigmore Hall, KKL Lucerne and the Rheingau, Lucerne, Ryedale, Lichfield and Lewes Chamber Music festivals.

Chamber music forms an important strand of her activities and she has collaborated with ensembles such as the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective. She has also recorded chamber music for Delphian Records and Three Worlds Records. She is a founding member of Trio Arisonto, alongside pianist Harry Rylance and violinist Ezo Sarici. This season, the trio is set to tour Scotland, as part of the Tunnell Trust award.

Annemarie Federle recently graduated with First Class Honours from the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she was awarded the King's Commendation for Excellence'



© Will Thomas

Annemarie Federle

Annemarie Federle was appointed Principal Horn of the London Philharmonic

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