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3-7 July
2024



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The Steinway concert piano chosen and hired for Classical Drag is supplied and maintained by Steinway & Sons, London.



Social media

To avoid distracting our performers, please do not take pictures or videos during the music itself, ensure that your flashes are switched off and your phones set to silent.

If you would like to share anything about the concert, please feel free to post with **#ClassicalPride** and tag **@ClassicalPrideUK** and **@londonsymphony** or **@londonsymphonyorchestra**

Charity partners

Proceeds from Classical Pride will be going to three important LGBTQ+ causes.

Funds collected will be evenly distributed between **Terrence Higgins Trust**, **Rainbow Railroad** and **Amplifund**.

TO DONATE



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www.tht.org.uk

Terrence Higgins Trust

Terrence Higgins Trust is the UK's leading HIV and sexual health charity, offering support, information and advice services for those living with HIV and affected by HIV or poor sexual health. The charity strives for a future where there are no new cases of HIV, where people living with HIV get the support they need and there is good sexual health for all.

Terrence Higgins Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (reg. no. 288527) Company reg. no. 1778149 and a registered charity in Scotland (reg. no. SC039986). Registered office: 437 & 439 Caledonian Road, London, N7 9BG.



www.rainbowrailroad.org

Rainbow Railroad

Rainbow Railroad is a global not-for-profit organisation that helps at-risk LGBTQ+ people facing persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics get to safety worldwide. Since its founding, they've helped over 10,000 LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing systemic, state-enabled homophobia and transphobia find safety through emergency relocation, crisis response, cash assistance, and other forms of assistance.

Rainbow Railroad is a registered charity in Canada (Canadian Charitable Registration No. 827142530RR0001) and in the US (No. 501(c) (3) EIN47-4896980).

AMPLIFUND

www.gaytimes.co.uk/category/amplifund
giveout.org

Amplifund

Amplifund is a partnership between GAY TIMES and GiveOut, supporting the global movement to advance LGBTQ+ rights, providing vital resources and support to advance equality. Through a partnership with LGBTQ+ Charity GiveOut, Amplifund supports 37 queer NGOs around the world. This is integral to GAY TIMES' mission to create a world where LGBTQ+ people thrive. An essential part of their work lies in amplifying the voices of journalists, artists, culture makers and activists, increasing the impact of their work and message.

All funds for Amplifund are directed and administered through their charity partner Give Out, a registered charity in England & Wales (Registered Charity No. 1176434).

Welcome notes

The arts have long played an important role in shining a light on the LGBTQ+ community. Many of our colleagues are proud members of this community and some are also talented musicians which is why, following a fantastic event in 2023, we are so thrilled to partner with Oliver Zeffman and GAY TIMES once again.

It's so important that companies such as ViiV Healthcare continue to play our part in visibly championing diversity, equity and inclusion and events like Classical Pride provide a fantastic platform to do so.

As a company with a clear mission to leave no person living with HIV behind, we know that the LGBTQ+ community is disproportionately impacted. While significant progress has been made in developing medicines, sadly the stigma surrounding HIV still exists today with an acute impact on the LGBTQ+ community. We recognise our role in addressing this, and we won't stop standing with, and speaking up for the community.

I'd like to thank Oliver Zeffman for inviting ViiV Healthcare to be part of this festival. The proceeds from Classical Pride will go a long way in aiding the charitable beneficiaries in their fight for equity for the LGBTQ+ community. I hope you enjoy what I am sure will be exciting and vibrant events.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Waterhouse', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Deborah Waterhouse, CEO, ViiV Healthcare
and President, Global Health GSK

I'm delighted to welcome back conductor Oliver Zeffman with this year's programme celebrating queerness in classical music, following the huge success of last year's concert with the CBSO, which was described as 'achieving so much more for inclusivity in classical music than the last ten years of strategic planning by the sector'.

It's wonderful that Classical Pride, which began life as a one-off concert at the Barbican, is now back in an expanded five-day form in 2024 with so many gems, and I look forward to seeing where it goes from here.

Of course, The Barbican programmes queer artists all year round, but our Pride Season is the jewel in the crown and a moment to shout about the contribution the community brings and has brought throughout history to all art forms.

*As well as Classical Pride, the Barbican will be exploring queer culture and history across cinema, music and the visual arts, in a truly holistic celebration that only the Barbican as a multi-arts centre can pull off. With events such as the Queer 80s film programme, Soufiane Ababri's evocative *Their mouths were full of bumblebees* but it was me who was pollinated exhibition in *The Curve*, and the much anticipated return of ANOHNI playing with the Johnsons in our Hall, we renew our commitment to LGBTQ+ artists and the wider community.*

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Barbican for this year's Classical Pride - enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Russell', written in a cursive style.

Sir William Russell, Chair of the Barbican Centre Board

I was really moved by the reaction of you - our audience - to the first Classical Pride concert last year, as well as by the enthusiastic reception we received in the press and from the music industry more broadly. Spurred on by this, I'm delighted that Classical Pride now returns in an expanded five-day festival, programming an even broader range of genres and styles from chamber music to opera, choral works to large-scale orchestral pieces, and showcasing the most exciting new talent to some of the biggest names in classical music. I'm particularly pleased that we have commissioned eight new works this year. Across all these concerts, I've tried to present the best that classical music has to offer, while celebrating the enormous diversity of the LGBTQ+ community within it.

If you're new to us this year, it's worth repeating that last year's event was the first time that any major orchestra or concert hall anywhere outside the US had put on a Pride concert. Classical music is - and has been for a very long time - part of queer culture and we're proud to celebrate this.

I'm very grateful to everyone who has helped make Classical Pride possible and in particular to our generous sponsors for their continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oliver Zeffman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'O'.

Oliver Zeffman, Conductor and Founder of Classical Pride

Venue partners

barbican

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. It showcases the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

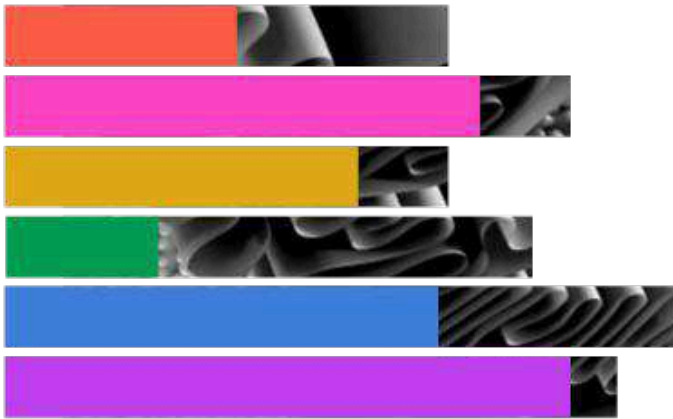
The Barbican is an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in its neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to its purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.



Outernet London is the most visited cultural attraction in the UK and home to the most advanced screens in the world.

Outernet is an immersive entertainment and culture district designed to provide experiences for audiences and brands the likes of which have never been seen before. Outernet features the world's first of its kind space - The Now Building - containing an immense digital canvas: a 4-storey high, floor to ceiling, 360 degree, 16k screen surface.





Proudly making *progress*

**WORKING TOWARDS A FUTURE
WHERE EVERYONE'S EQUAL**

A&O SHEARMAN



Classical Drag



Wednesday
3 July 2024
19:00
HERE at Outernet

HERE
AT OUTERNET

Centuries before shows like Ru Paul's Drag Race, conventional gender norms were being subverted all over Europe in iconic opera houses, with performers exuberating sassy, extroverted opulence, dripping in jewellery and working the stage with sky-high wigs. Before 'gay icons' like Madonna there were true divas like Maria Callas. Indeed 'queerness' and 'camp' have long had a home at the opera, and queer classical composers have been core to classical music for centuries, even if they were often unable to express their homosexuality and otherness outside of their music.

An orchestra of LGBTQ+ players and queer allies form the basis of this decadent dragstravaganza packed with a cast of classically-trained British queens, drag king casanovas, queer dancers, cabaret hostesses, trans opera singers and celebrity judges from the worlds of drag and classical music.

Created by conductor Oliver Zeffman and drag producer Jack Cullen, this promises a marvellous night of classical music and gender-bending mischief.

Cast

Barbs contestant
Beau Jangles contestant
Dinah Lux contestant
Freddie Love contestant
Snow White Trash contestant
Vinegar Strokes contestant

Stealia Jobs runway act
Le Fil runway act
Orlando runway act
Rhys's Pieces runway act
Oedipussi Rex runway act
Aaron Manhattan runway act

Harry Alexander dancer

Monét X Change judge
Thorgy Thor judge
Nicky Spence judge

Sadie Sinner host
Jonny Woo host

Classical Drag Orchestra
Oliver Zeffman conductor

Jack Cullen creative producer

Prelude

Dance by Harry Alexander

Intro

Georges Bizet *Prélude from Carmen*

Meet the Contestants

Georges Bizet *Chanson du Toreador from Carmen Suite No. 2* arr. Ernest Guiraud

Nicky Spence

Augustín Lara *Granada*

Meet the Judges

Thorgy Thor

Jacob Gade *Jalousie*

The Contest – Part 1

Freddie Love

Umberto Giordano *Amor ti vieta* from *Fedora*

Barbs

Ludwig van Beethoven *Adagio sostenuto* from Piano Sonata No. 14, "Moonlight Sonata" arr. Barbs

Beau Jangles
Georges Bizet *Habanera* from *Carmen*

Dinah Lux
Dmitri Shostakovich *Andante* from Piano Concerto No. 2

Snow White Trash
Claude Debussy *Rhapsodie for Saxophone & Orchestra*
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Adagio* from *Clarinet Concerto*
Cécile Chaminade *Concertino* for flute
Edvard Grieg Piano Concerto in A Minor
Edvard Grieg *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from *Peer Gynt*

Vinegar Strokes
Leonard Bernstein *Somewhere* from *West Side Story*

Interval

Runway: A Night at the Opera

Camille Saint-Saëns *Bacchanale* from *Samson et Dalila*

Jonny Woo
Kurt Weill *Mack the Knife* from *The Threepenny Opera*

The Contest – Part 2

Monét X Change
Gioachino Rossini *La calunnia* from *The Barber of Seville*

Beau Jangles vs Freddie Love
Giuseppe Verdi *La donna è mobile* from *Rigoletto*

Dinah Luxe vs Barbs
Antonín Dvořák *Slavonic Dance No. 8*

Vinegar Strokes vs Snow White Trash with Nicky Spence
Giacomo Puccini *Nessun dorma* from *Turandot*

Adjudication

For artist biographies and orchestra list please turn to the end of this booklet.





My Beloved Man

Friday
5 July 2024
19:30
Milton Court Concert Hall
Barbican

The Fourth Choir
Nicholas Chalmers conductor
Petroc Trelawny presenter
Samuel Barnett presenter
Séamus Rea creative producer

My Beloved Man – a celebration by The Fourth Choir, London's LGBTQ+ classical choir, of the love affair between Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears.

Using the letters they wrote to each other, Britten and Pears tell their story in their own words – living illegally as a same-sex couple, the hardships of the War, their success and the challenges of Britten's final years.

Their story is illuminated with music by Britten and his contemporaries as well as Britten's beloved Purcell and Monteverdi, plus the world premiere of a Classical Pride commission by Isobel Waller-Bridge, to a text written by a Dana Cholod, a refugee supported by one of Classical Pride's charity partners, Rainbow Railroad.

Programme

Henry Purcell *Thou Knowest Lord the Secrets of Our Hearts* from *Funeral Sentences*

Samuel Barber *The Coolin* from *Reincarnations*

Pérotin *Beata Viscera*

Imogen Holst *The Cobbler*

Imogen Holst *A Sweet Country Life*

Benjamin Britten *Green Broom* from *Five Flower Songs*

Aaron Copland *Help Us O Lord* from *Four Motets*

Michael Tippett *Deep River* from *A Child of Our Time*

Isobel Waller-Bridge *I Let Go** (world premiere)

Interval

Benjamin Britten *Time and Concord, Two Choral Dances* from *Gloriana*

Thomas Morley *Hard by a Crystal Fountain* from *The Triumphs of Gloriana*

Claudio Monteverdi *Che dar più vi poss'io?* from *The Fifth Book of Madrigals*

Claudio Monteverdi *Io mi son giovinetta* from *The Fourth Book of Madrigals*

Imogen Holst *Hymne to Christ*

Leonard Bernstein *Somewhere* from *West Side Story*

Benjamin Britten *Hymn to the Virgin*

Henry Purcell *When I am Laid in Earth* from *Dido and Aeneas*, arr. Nicholas Chalmers

This concert is dedicated to the memory of the distinguished psychiatrist, David Sturgeon (1947 – 2024), a loyal supporter and generous benefactor, with the love and thanks of The Fourth Choir.

Programme Notes

By Séamus Rea

The Fourth Choir first performed this celebration of Britten and Pears in August last year at Snape Maltings in Aldeburgh.

The Fourth Choir was founded in 2013 to represent the LGBTQ+ community on the classical music scene and it was a privilege for us to tell the story of one of the most famous same-sex relationships of the twentieth century in Snape, the concert hall they themselves built. Britten and Pears rarely threw anything away with the result that their home, the Red House, contains an extraordinarily extensive Archive of everything from household bills to the telegram of condolence the Queen sent to Pears on Britten's death.

One of the Archive's greatest treasures is the collection of 365 letters which Britten and Pears wrote to each other during their 39-year relationship: the earliest is dated August 1937, not long after they had first met, when they were friends and roommates but two years before their relationship deepened into love; the last letter is from Pears to Britten and is dated 11th November 1976, less than a month before Britten's death on 4th December that year. Tonight's script is comprised entirely of extracts from these letters, allowing their story to be told in their own words.

That story is extraordinary in many respects. Those letters written during WWII vividly convey the hardship of the war years and the constant fear they had for each other's safety when both London and Snape were being bombed. They also give a detailed account of how a same-sex couple coped with living outside the law. Their relationship was illegal until it was decriminalised in 1967, by which time they had been living together for almost thirty years.

It is chilling to think that these letters, in which they are both so frank about the physical and emotional nature of their relationship, would have been sufficient evidence to send them both to prison at a time when same-sex couples were forced, under threat of prosecution, to lead invisible lives.

Some of the letters were written in frustration immediately after telephone calls in which they had felt constrained to conceal their feelings. ('These telephone conversations are so damnably unsatisfactory, when there is someone in the room, & one cannot say what one feels.' Britten to Pears, April 1943.) As all calls at the time were connected by switchboard operators, a further danger was that the local exchange might be listening to their conversations and report them to the authorities.

The Fourth Choir's Guest Conductor for this project, Nicholas Chalmers, has selected choral pieces, not only by Britten and his friends and contemporaries such as Imogen Holst, Samuel Barber, Michael Tippett, Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland, but also by earlier composers that Britten loved and was influenced by, such as the 12th century Pérotin and the Renaissance composers Monteverdi, Morley and Purcell.

Perhaps the most poignant piece we will sing in the concert is Britten's Hymn to the Virgin, written when he was a 16-year-old schoolboy and apparently one of only two pieces of music performed at Britten's funeral.

If you would like to read more of these extraordinary letters, all 365 were published by the Boydell Press in 2016 in the collection 'My Beloved Man', edited by Vicki P. Stroher, Nicholas Clark and Jude Brimmer.

A Proud Future

Saturday
6 July 2024
11:30–16:30
St Giles' Cripplegate
Barbican



A Proud Future showcases the next generation of LGBTQ+ performers and composers from the UK conservatoires. Offering programmes that have a personal meaning for them, these talented musicians present a positive vision for the future of LGBTQ+ representation in classical music.

The LGBTQ+ performers and composers were selected through a competitive process by a jury comprising:

Oliver Zeffman Artistic Director, Classical Pride

Kirsty Harris Creative Producer, Barbican Centre

Anthony Friend Artistic Director, Spotlight Chamber Concerts and Producer, Classical Pride

Francis Williams Planning Director, Sinfonia of London and Artistic Consultant, Classical Pride

Freya Waley-Cohen composer

Taking place in the medieval parish church that sits at the heart of the Barbican, six 30-minute concerts will run from 11.30am until 4pm.

Audience members can attend any or all of the performances.

11:30–12:00

Astral Quartet

with new commission from **Tymon Zgorzelski**

Rosemary Ball soprano saxophone
Oliver Lee alto saxophone
Annabella Chenevix Trench tenor saxophone
Ethan Townsend baritone saxophone

Programme

Richard Rodney Bennett *Saxophone Quartet*

Tymon Zgorzelski *Inflorescence no. 5** (world premiere)

12:15–12:45

Abigail Sinclair, soprano & André Bertoncini, piano

with new commission from **Archie John**

Programme

Franz Schubert *Ungeduld* from *Die schöne Müllerin*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *An Chloë*

Hugo Wolf *Verschwiegene Liebe* from *Gedichte von Joseph von Eichendorff*

Lili Boulanger *Clairières dans le ciel*
I. *Elle était descendue au bas de la prairie*
IV. *Un poète disait*
XII. *Je garde une médaille d'elle*

Archie John *and I am greener than grass** (world premiere)

Richard Strauss *Presentation of the Rose* from *Der Rosenkavalier*

* *Classical Pride* commission

13:00–13:30

**Lizzie Knatt, recorder
& Declan Hickey, guitar**

with new commission from **Toby Anderson**

Programme

Kay Gardner *Touching Souls*

Benjamin Britten Selections from *Nocturnal after John Dowland*

Toby Anderson *Honey-Sweet** (world premiere)

13:45–14:15

standard issue

Tilly Coulton flute

Michelle Hromin clarinet, artistic director

Amalia Young violin

Kirke Gross cello

Lucy Havelock saxophone

Kieran Crowley piano

Programme

Yaz Lancaster *intangible landscapes*

inti figgis-vizueta *Placing Ceremony*

* *Classical Pride commission*

14:30–15:00

**Sehyogue Aulakh, marimba/vibraphone
& Kinna, composer/voice**

Programme

Caroline Shaw *in manus tuas*

Kinna *The Lily*

Bree Van Ryk *Slipstreams*

Kinna *The Love Triptych** (world premiere)

15:15–15:45

Komuna Collective
with new commission from **Adam Possener**

Adam Possener composer/viola

Violetta Suvini violin

Amalia Young violin

Angus McCall cello

Programme

Adam Possener *1LOV3Y0UL1G3T1** (world premiere)

Julius Eastman *Joy Boy*

Mahavishnu Orchestra *Songs* arr. Kevin Zheng

Meredith Monk *Phantom Strings* from *Stringsongs*

John Cage *Quodlibet* from *String Quartet in IV Parts*

* *Classical Pride* commission

Julius Eastman's Gay Guerrilla

Sunday
7 July 2024
17:30–18:00
Level G foyer
Barbican

Michael Jones violin
Blaize Henry violin
William Newell violin
Miles Brett viola
Stephen Upshaw viola
Stephanie Tress cello
Thea Sayer bass

Julius Eastman's Gay Guerilla, a free performance in the Level G foyer with an ensemble put together by violist Stephen Upshaw.

Gay Guerrilla is the last in a deliberately provocative *N***** Series* of pieces from the late 1970s by Julius Eastman (1940-1990). A prodigious pianist and singer who rose to prominence alongside radical New York composers like John Cage and Morton Feldman, Eastman became increasingly uncomfortable in his predominantly white milieu and frustrated at the way fellow gay composers like John Cage kept their sexuality hidden. From the late-70s onwards, Eastman began radically to embrace both his blackness and his queerness, immersing himself in an alternative, queer avant-garde scene centred in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Whilst his former collaborators gradually became accepted by the academic and musical establishment, Eastman found himself in the early 1980s evicted from his flat and increasingly struggling with addiction. He died homeless and alone in 1990.

Gay Guerrilla is an improvisatory, minimalist take on Martin Luther's 16th-century hymn *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, originally scored by Eastman for four pianos but heard here in an arrangement for string septet by US composer Jessie Montgomery. Eastman recasts the ancient hymn as a manifesto about being a gay, black man. As Eastman wrote, 'What I am trying to achieve is to be what I am to the fullest – Black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, and a homosexual to the fullest. It is important that I learn how to be, by that I mean accept everything about me.'



London Symphony Orchestra

with
Oliver Zeffman
Nick Grimshaw

Sunday
7 July 2024
19:00
Barbican Hall

London Symphony Orchestra
Oliver Zeffman conductor
Nick Grimshaw presenter
Pavel Kolesnikov piano
Pumeza Matshikiza soprano
Russell Thomas tenor
LGBTQ+ Community Choir

The culmination of 2024's Classical Pride, the London Symphony Orchestra and conductor Oliver Zeffman celebrate LGBTQ+ classical music in this diverse programme presented by Nick Grimshaw.



Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* precedes a world premiere by US composer Jake Heggie and librettist Taylor Mac featuring soprano Pumeza Matshikiza. Pavel Kolesnikov performs Saint-Saëns' virtuosic and charming *Piano Concerto No 2* and an encore of Tchaikovsky's *Valse Sentimentale*. This foreshadows Cassandra Miller's *Round*, which takes Tchaikovsky's theme as a starting point.

Szymanowski's *Symphony No. 3*, 'Song of the Night', with tenor soloist Russell Thomas and the Classical Pride LGBTQ+ Community Choir concludes the programme, a nocturnal vision of profound peace within the universe, yet charged with passion.

Programme

Aaron Copland *Fanfare for the Common Man*

Jake Heggie *Good Morning, Beauty** (world premiere)

Camille Saint-Saëns *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor*

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky *Valse Sentimentale*

Cassandra Miller *Round*

Karol Szymanowski *Symphony No. 3, 'Song of the Night'*

* *Classical Pride commission*

Programme Notes

by Anthony Friend

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) created a new musical language that brilliantly evokes the American pastoral – the version of America that is projected in so much storytelling about the country's identity, focusing on wide-open landscapes, farmers and cowherds rather than the bustling melting pots of its cities. Copland's background and political leanings stand in almost ironic contrast to all this, and to the prevailing establishment attitudes of the time. He was born in Brooklyn to Lithuanian-Jewish refugees and grew up above their neighbourhood department store. He was later accused of being a communist by the FBI, and though he never 'came out', he lived and travelled relatively openly with male romantic partners.

Copland studied composition with Rubin Goldmark, who had taught Gershwin, and learnt piano with Leopold Wolfsohn, but was largely self-directed in his musical education – even receiving some of his lessons through a correspondence course. He then signed up for a new programme for American musicians at the Fontainebleau School of Music in Paris, which he had read about in *Musical America*. His teacher there was the formidable Naida Boulanger, and his absorption of the latest European artistic trends is reflected in his early music's bracingly modernist, punchy and angular style.

The later, more populist style for which Copland is now better known – in Americana such as *Rodeo*, *Hoe Down* and *Appalachian Spring*, as well as his *Clarinet Concerto* and *Quiet City* – reflects both his leftwing politics, and paradoxically also the sense of national pride and optimism surrounding both the New Deal and American involvement in World War II.

This paradox is encapsulated in his *Fanfare for the Common Man*, commissioned by the Cincinnati Symphony as part of a series of fanfares to open their 1942-3 season concerts. Although it was intended as a wartime gesture of patriotism, Copland had a more subversive aim in mind, later writing that 'it was the common man, after all, who was doing all the dirty work in the war and the army. He deserved a fanfare.' His political sympathies for the underdog and his experience as a gay man gave him an instinctive preference for social equality. Copland suggests the openness of the American plains by creating space in the music. The fanfare is broad and majestic, almost in slow motion; a dialogue between thunderous percussion and unaccompanied brass seems to reverberate across a great distance.

American composer **Jake Heggie** (b. 1961) is regarded as 'arguably the world's most popular 21st-century opera and art song composer' (*Wall Street Journal*), but his career path has been far from conventional. Having studied composition at the American University in Paris and then UCLA, he started out as a song pianist. He developed focal dystonia and was forced to abandon his performing career, pivoting instead to working in Public Relations for the arts and eventually becoming PR Associate at San Francisco Opera. When calling in on star mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade during the interval at an opening night performance, he presented her with a gift of his *Three Folk Songs* for voice and piano. With her encouragement, they began performing together, and he won the Schirmer American Art Song.

Competition with his composition *If You Were Coming in the Fall* (an Emily Dickinson setting). Two years later, in 1997, his boss at SF Opera, Lofti Mansouri, surprised him by setting up an opportunity for him to compose his first full-length

opera. Heggie had thought the meeting was going to be about a new press release, but instead was appointed to the new role of Composer in Residence, and his debut opera *Dead Man Walking* was premiered by SF Opera in 2000. It since has gone on to receive numerous performances worldwide including at the Barbican in 2018 and in a new production by Ivo van Hove at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 2023, both with Joyce DiDonato.

Good Morning, Beauty was commissioned by Classical Pride for the 2024 festival, and this is its world premiere performance. A setting of a new text by the prodigiously multi-talented American actor and writer Taylor Mac, it is a depiction of a loving, queer relationship. The sheer delight, joy and wonder that this brings is met almost with disbelief from the protagonist, who asks 'How are you here? How has it happened? Year after year?'

Heggie's setting of this question is ecstatic, with large leaps in the voice and a bubbling bass line rising and falling in the orchestra. Even when the lover is sleeping or lost in thought, and Heggie's music takes on the tenderness of a lullaby, there is a sense of barely-contained passion and excitement in the rising scales of the accompaniment. Amidst all the closeted and fearful LGBTQ+ stories in classical music's history, this representation of bliss in a more accepting age is a necessary counterpoint.

Good Morning Beauty

Your breathing, when sleeping,
Steady, clear, undeterred.
Are you leaping over fallen trees
With the herd?

Are you on a Dante ring?
Or is it more the Buddhist rise?
Are you singing an inner quest
'Til the sun opens eyes?

Good morning, beauty.
How are you here?
How has it happened?
Year after year?

Sundown then sunrise,
Despite what was planned,
The proof is the way
A hand wakes in hand.

Your back, when washing dishes,
Blissful, strong, and taking care,
Are you wishing to be left alone
With me there?

Text by Taylor Mac*

Are you in a reverie?
Or is it more the many lists?
Is it e-ve-ry accomplishment
'Til the end opens fists?

Good morning, lover.
How are you here?
How has it happened?
Year after year?

Sundown then sunrise,
Despite what was writ,
The proof is the way
Our hands always fit.

All the schooling
From birth to leaving
Never mentioned you.
All the rearing
In cold believing
Never mentioned you.

Good morning, lover.
How are you here?
Year after year
After year.
After year

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) was one of the nineteenth century's most brilliant child prodigies as a pianist, making his concert debut at 10. As a composer in his early twenties, he received the admiration of such major figures as Gioachino Rossini (composer of *The Barber of Seville*), Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt. Later, as a professor of composition and piano at the Paris Conservatoire, he was revered by his students, who included Gabriel Fauré (composer of the song *Après un rêve*) and Georges Bizet (composer of *Carmen*). But Saint-Saëns also grew up to embody the classical establishment in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century France. He found himself at odds with the emerging early twentieth-century modernism of Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, but also with the rich late-Romantic music of Wagner, Strauss and Mahler. He claimed that 'expression and passion seduce the amateur,' and that 'an artist who is not fully satisfied by elegant lines, harmonious colours and beautiful harmonic progressions has no understanding of art.'

Saint-Saëns eventually married the much-younger Marie-Laure Truffot (1855-1950) but their relationship fell apart after the tragic death of both their infant children in quick succession. Saint-Saëns became the subject of speculation regarding his sexuality. There was no possibility of Saint-Saëns living as a gay man in France, but he allegedly took numerous gay lovers on his frequent trips to north Africa. In any case, he seemed immune to gossip: 'If it is said that I have a bad character, I assure you that it is all the same to me. Take me as I am.'

Saint-Saëns' *Piano Concerto No. 2* is a pianistic *tour de force* befitting a former child prodigy, though the virtuosity is balanced with elegance and humour. The opening is bombastic and serious, with an improvisatory piano introduction met with powerful, rhetorical chords in the orchestra. A mournful first theme emerges, followed by a dreamy second melody that gradually builds furious momentum. The second movement is light and airy, full of witty interplay between orchestra and soloist and scampering scales. The finale is a fearsome *tarantella* – an ancient southern Italian dance, crazy and frenetic, used to cure tarantula bites. The energy is unrelenting, though a rich chorale slowly emerges over the piano's trilling.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was one of the great nineteenth-century Russian composers, best known today for his ballet music (*Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*), his six symphonies and other orchestral pieces like *Romeo and Juliet*, his *Violin Concerto* and his *Piano Concerto No. 1*. He combined supreme gifts for drama and melody, balancing orchestral power and passion with clarity and logic to construct vast structures in his symphonies, and creating coherence and architecture through successions of ballet numbers.

Well known to have been gay by those closest to him, he nevertheless entered into a short-lived marriage in order to protect his reputation in homophobic nineteenth-century Russia (even today, Russia prefers not to acknowledge this aspect of the composer's life). His cause of death, in 1893 at the age of 53, is still debated; officially attributed to cholera, some have always insisted it was a suicide preempting a public 'outing'.

Tchaikovsky's 1882 piano work *Valse Sentimentale* is the last in the set of *Six Pieces*, Op. 51 that he wrote, according to a letter to his brother, mainly

because he needed the money. It demonstrates Tchaikovsky's extraordinary skill as a miniaturist, creating an immaculate standalone waltz to satisfy the market for piano sheet music suitable for amateurs; sentiment, beauty, and narrative stand in perfect proportion.

Cassandra Miller (b. 1976) takes Tchaikovsky's *Valse Sentimentale* as the starting point for her 2016 orchestral piece *Round*. Miller is a Canadian composer living in London. She frequently uses mimicry and transcription as starting points for her compositions, singing along to existing music in a kind of living, creative communion with it. She aspires towards deep listening, absorbing influences from free jazz to folk music and from countries as diverse as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Italy, northern Greece and Brazil and transforming what she has heard into sometimes unrecognisable new sounds. As she jokingly told *The Guardian*, 'I steal people's souls'. The effect can be deeply emotional, as in her recent viola concerto for Lawrence Power, *I cannot love without trembling*, about which *New Yorker* music critic Alex Ross wrote that it is 'music that reminds us how to cry.'

Round creates a vortex out of the melody from *Valse Sentimentale*, which layers and swirls around the orchestra. The inspiration came from Plato's writings on the raising of children, in which he says,

When mothers have children who suffer from insomnia and want to go to sleep, lull them to rest, they bring them not stillness, but this very movement, for they rock them ceaselessly in their arms, they bring them not silence, but melody.

Miller was working from a specific recording of the Tchaikovsky by Catalanian cellist Gaspar Cassadó. Miller writes, 'the transcription reproduces Cassadó's entrancingly idiosyncratic pushing-and-pulling of tempo and phrase.'

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) was the most celebrated Polish composer of the early twentieth century, and was the first to gain a significant international reputation after Fryderyk ('Frédéric') Chopin. Both Chopin and Szymanowski lived under the shadow of the Russian Empire (Chopin joined thousands of exiled Poles in Paris). Poland only gained independence in 1918, and Szymanowski's music only really became 'Polish' in flavour in the 1920s. His mature style developed during the First World War, a heady combination of the swooning harmonies of late-Romantic composers along with the decadence of Scriabin, the so-called Impressionism of Debussy and Ravel, and, crucially, influences from his extensive travels and reading.

He visited Italy, Sicily and North Africa, travelled around Eastern Europe, and read deeply about the history and culture of the ancient Greek and Arab worlds – even writing a novel about homosexual love in ancient Greece, entitled *Efebos*, whose manuscript was destroyed in the Warsaw fires of 1939. Szymanowski himself was gay (though, as with Tchaikovsky in Russia, in Poland today Szymanowski's sexuality is not discussed), and seemed drawn to the embrace of sensuality in the homoerotic relationships of the ancient world. Something of an aesthete, his sensuality was not confined to his romantic and artistic lives: he adored fragrances, changed suits twice a day and surrounded himself with flowers.

Szymanowski's *Symphony No. 3, 'Song of the Night'* was completed in 1916, setting a text by Persian poet Jalal'ad-Din Rumi (1207-73) – an important practitioner of Sufism, a mystical strand of Islam. Though stringently denied by Islamic scholars today, Rumi's mentor Shams of Tabriz is rumoured to have been Rumi's gay lover. Szymanowski initially read the poem in German translation, and had it translated again into Polish by Tadeusz Miciński (1873-1918). It is a mystical, shimmering mass of orchestral sonority, and a nocturnal vision of profound peace within the universe, mingled in orgiastic passion. Solo lines emerge from the orchestra, floating above this humming texture; the solo tenor gradually appears as narrator, with the chorus resonating his words back to him or singing in wordless affirmation, like the collective consciousness of the universe.

Photo from Classical Pride 2023 © Matthew Johnson



Original text

O, nie śpij, druhu, nocy tej.
Tyś jest Duch, a myśmy chorzy nocy tej.
Odpędź z oczu Twoich sen! Nocy tej!
Tajemnica się rozwidni. Nocy tej!
Tyś jest Jowisz na niebiosach,
wśród gwiazd krążysz firmamentu, nocy tej!
Nad otchłanie orła pedź!
Bohaterem jest Twój Duch nocy tej!
O, nie śpij, druhu, nocy tej!
Jak cicho. Inni śpia.
Ja i Bóg jesteśmy sami, nocy tej!
Jaki szum! Wschodzi szczęście,
prawda skrzydłem opromienia nocy tej!
Nie śpij, druhu, nocy tej,
Gdybym przespałaż do ranka,
już bym nigdy nie odzyskał nocy tej!
Targowiska już uclchły,
Patrz na rynek gwiazdnych dróg nocy tej!
Lew i Orion,
Andromeda i Merkury krwawo lśni nocy tej!
Wpływ złowieszczy miota Saturn,
Wenus płynie w złotym dżdżu nocy tej!
Zamilknęciem wiąże język,
lecz ja mówię bez języka nocy tej!

Oh, do not sleep, friend, through this night.
You a soul, while we are suffering through this night.
Banish slumber from your eyes!
The great secret is revealed in this night.
You are Jove in the high heavens,
Round heav'n's starry dome you circle in this night!
Like an eagle fly above!
Now a hero is your soul in this night.
Such a quiet, others sleep...
I and God alone together in this night!
What a roar! Joy arises,
Truth with gleaming wing is shining in this night!
Do not sleep, friend,
If I slumbered until sunrise,
I should never, never see this night again!
Thorough-fares on earth are silent, there behold the starry
roads of this night.
Leo, Orion,
Sagittarius and the Virgin blood-red gleam through this night.
Saturn binds with fateful powers,
Venus floats in golden rain through this night.
Silence binds my tongue with fetters, But I speak though
tongueless in this night!

**Jalal'ad-Din Rumi (1207-73),
translated into Polish by Tadeusz Miciński (1873-1918)**

Photo from Classical Pride 2023 © Matthew Johnson



Orchestras and Choirs

Classical Drag Orchestra

Flutes

Sarah Bennett
Henry Roberts

Oboes

Peter Facer
Philip Haworth

Clarinets

Fraser Langton
Emma Burgess

Bassoons

Jonathan Davies
Patrick Bolton

French Horns

Isaac Shieh
Paul Cott

Trumpets

Aaron Akugbo
Rebecca Toal

Bass Trombone

James Buckle

Percussion

Oliver Butterworth
Oliver Pooley

Harp

Llywelyn Ifan Jones

First Violins

Shlomy Dobrinsky
Ruth Rogers
David Lopez
Nemanja Ljubinkovic
Ellie Consta
William Newell

Second Violins

Michael Jones
Blaize Henry
Anna Brigham
Eloise MacDonald
Raye Harvey
Demver Blancio

Violas

Stephen Upshaw
Christine Anderson
Raquel López Bolivar
Inis Oírr Asano

Cellos

Thomas Isaac
George Hoult
Kieran Carter
Stephanie Tress

Double Basses

Benjamin Russell
Thea Sayer

The Fourth Choir

Soprano

Che Ramsden
Eleanor Wolfe
Esther Zuke
Eve Berdeen
Harriet Hall
Harriet Orbell
Philippa Peall
Rhiannon Bone
Sophia Allen
Theodora Ntoka

Alto

Adele Julier
Ellie Dragonetti
Jeremy Oliver
Jill Pett
Kathryn Thomson
Liz Simpson
Richard Tilbrook

Tenor

Alex Luck
Daniel Owers
Ed Long
George Chambers
Tyler Clarke

Bass

Ben Lumb
Daniel Ross
David Clasen
Foeke IJnterna
Kit Burton-Senior
Mark Alexander
Ross Hobson
Séamus Rea



The Fourth Choir

The Fourth Choir was formed in 2013 with the aim of representing the LGBTQ+ community on London's classical music scene. The Choir is as at home singing polyphony in Heaven nightclub or the Royal Vauxhall Tavern as at London's top cultural venues such as the British Museum, the V&A, the Royal Albert Hall, the Wigmore Hall, and the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace. It performs regularly at Shakespeare's Globe (both in productions and solo concerts) and was featured in the 2022 Festival of Remembrance on BBC1. Overseas, it has performed in Amsterdam, Antwerp and Rome. Recently it has recorded its first album, *Songs of Ourselves*, for release next year. The Choir is delighted to be returning to Milton Court for the third time, previously having performed *A Meeting Place*, a collaboration with professional D/deaf musicians in 2021, and *Shoulder to Shoulder*, a celebration of Dame Ethel Smyth in 2023.



The London Symphony Orchestra is built on the belief that extraordinary music should be available to everyone, everywhere.

The LSO was established in 1904 as one of the first orchestras shaped by its musicians. Today it is ranked among the world's top orchestras, with a family of artists that includes Chief Conductor Designate Sir Antonio Pappano, Conductor Emeritus Sir Simon Rattle, Principal Guest Conductors Gianandrea Noseda and François-Xavier Roth, Conductor Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas and Associate Artists Barbara Hannigan and André J Thomas.

The LSO is Resident Orchestra at the Barbican in the City of London, and reaches international audiences through touring and artistic residencies, and through digital partnerships and an extensive programme of live-streamed and on-demand online broadcasts.

Through a world-leading learning and community programme, LSO Discovery, the LSO connects people from all walks of life to the power of great music. LSO musicians are at the heart of this unique programme, leading workshops, mentoring bright young talent, performing at free concerts for the local community and using music to support neurodiverse adults. LSO musicians also visit children's hospitals and lead training programmes for teachers.

In 1999, the LSO formed its own recording label, LSO Live. It has become one of the world's most talked-about classical labels, and has over 200 recordings in the catalogue so far. The LSO is a leading orchestra for film, and uses streaming services to reach a worldwide online audience totalling millions every month. Through inspiring music, learning programmes and technological innovations, the LSO's reach extends far beyond the concert hall.

London Symphony Orchestra

First Violins

Natalia Lomeiko, *Guest Leader*
Clare Duckworth
Maxine Kwok
William Melvin
Stefano Mengoli
Harriet Rayfield
Sylvain Vasseur
Naoko Keatley
Sofia Gomez Alberto
Momoko Arima
Marciana Buta
Caroline Frenkel
Takane Funatsu
Bridget O'Donnell
Shoshanah Sievers

Second Violins

Anna Blackmur
Sarah Quinn
Miya Väisänen
Matthew Gardner
Alix Lagasse
Belinda McFarlane
Csilla Pogány
Paul Robson
Kate Cole
Phoebe Gardner
Dmitry Khakhamov
Gordon MacKay
Polina Makhina
José Nuno Matias

Violas

Malcolm Johnston
Anna Bastow
Germán Clavijo
Julia O'Riordan
Mizuho Ueyama
Ilona Bondar
Lukas Bowen
Michelle Bruil
Fiona Dalgliesh
Nancy Johnson
Annie-May Page
Jill Valentine

Cellos

David Cohen
Alastair Blayden
Ève-Marie Caravassilis
Daniel Gardner
Henry Hargreaves
Angela Monge Alvarez
Lavinnia Rae
Sue Sutherley
Helena Svigelj
Joanna Twaddle

Double Basses

Nicholas Bayley
Patrick Laurence
Joe Melvin
Ben Griffiths
Mark O'Leary
Simon Oliver
Evangeline Tang
James Trowbridge

Flutes

Gareth Davies
Patricia Moynihan
Clare Findlater

Piccolo

Sharon Williams

Oboes

Christopher Cowie
Rosie Jenkins
Adrian Rowlands

Cor anglais

Thomas Davey

Clarinets

Julian Bliss
Elliot Gresty
Méline Le Calvez

E♭ clarinet

Jennifer McLaren

Bass clarinet

Kenny Keppel

Bassoons

Daniel Jemison
Joost Bosdijk
Dominic Tyler

Contra Bassoon

Martin Field

Horns

Timothy Jones
Jonathan Maloney
James Pillai
Flora Bain
Brendan Thomas

Trumpets

Thomas Fountain
Adam Wright
Gwyn Owen
David Geoghegan

Trombones

Merin Rhyd
Andrew Cole

Bass Trombones

Paul Milner
Joshua Cirtina

Tuba

Daniel Trodden

Timpani

Nigel Thomas

Percussion

Sam Walton
Matthew Farthing
Laura Bradford
Markus Gruett
Bobby Ball

Harps

Bryn Lewis
Lucy Wakeford

Piano

Elizabeth Burley

Celeste

Catherine Edwards

Organ

Richard Pearce

LGBTQ+ Community Chorus

Soprano

Eva Allinder
Christine Buras
Sally Carr
Tina Chi
Phoebe Clapham
Olivia Hinman
Kathleen Holman
Olivia Hugh-Jones
Iris Korfker
Ilona Sofia Nastase
Theodora Ntoka
Ellii Olivia
Lia Pengei
Anne Rodger
Danielle Roman
Cressida Sharp
Gill Watson
Elżbieta Wyrwicka
Esther Zuke

Alto

Katarzyna Balejko
Francis Bamford
Theo Chan
Hannah Davis
Ellie Dragonetti
Ada Grzesiak
Hope Heaven
Finn Lacey
Alex Mankowitz
Jeremy Oliver
Tony Pisarski
Alex Pullinger
Raphael Richards
Amy Sedgwick
Anja Stumpf
Kathryn Thomson
Megan Tranter
Nina Vinther
Cilla Wright

Tenor

George Chambers
Ryan Collis
Richard Halstead
Jamie Jenner
Dimosthenis Kaldis
Robert Kozak
Ben Lee
Dominic Lee
Ed Long
Alex Luck
James Murphy
Frank Norman
Adam Proudfoot
Elizabeth Smith
Albert Soriano
LJ Thuringer
Harry Trevelyan
Pak Wan
Leonard Wong
Mar Zabron

Bass

Kit Burton-Senior
Sofia Correia
Eden Cridge
James Daghish
Stephen Davidson
Robert Garbonlinski
James Gribble
Michael Higgins
Foeke Jntema
Karol Józwick
Joe Kelly
Ben Knight
Harry Knights
Yoav Landau-Pope
James McEvoy-
Stevenson
Leander McLaughlin
Ken McLoone
Max Mitchell
Edward Mundy
Simon Pearson
Tim Peters
Phil Rayner
Séamus Rea
David Richmond
Jonathan Rippon
Michael Sanders
Henry Saywell
Finn Schulze-
Feldmann
Jack White
Dominik
Wojciechowski

Artist biographies

Harry Alexander, dancer *Classical Drag*

Harry trained at Italia Conti and Bird College, he has performed with Julie Cunningham and Company, worked on projects with Lea Anderson and appeared in *McQueen the Play* at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in 2015. In 2017 Harry was heralded as Best Emerging Artist at the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards.

Toby Anderson, composer *A Proud Future*

Composer Toby Anderson focuses on queering musical narratives through texture and colour. Based in Oxford, his compositions explore intimate and vulnerable musical relationships. He was Composer in Residence at the National Youth Orchestra and graduated from the University of Oxford with a first class degree and a Gibb's Prize for attaining the top marks in his year.

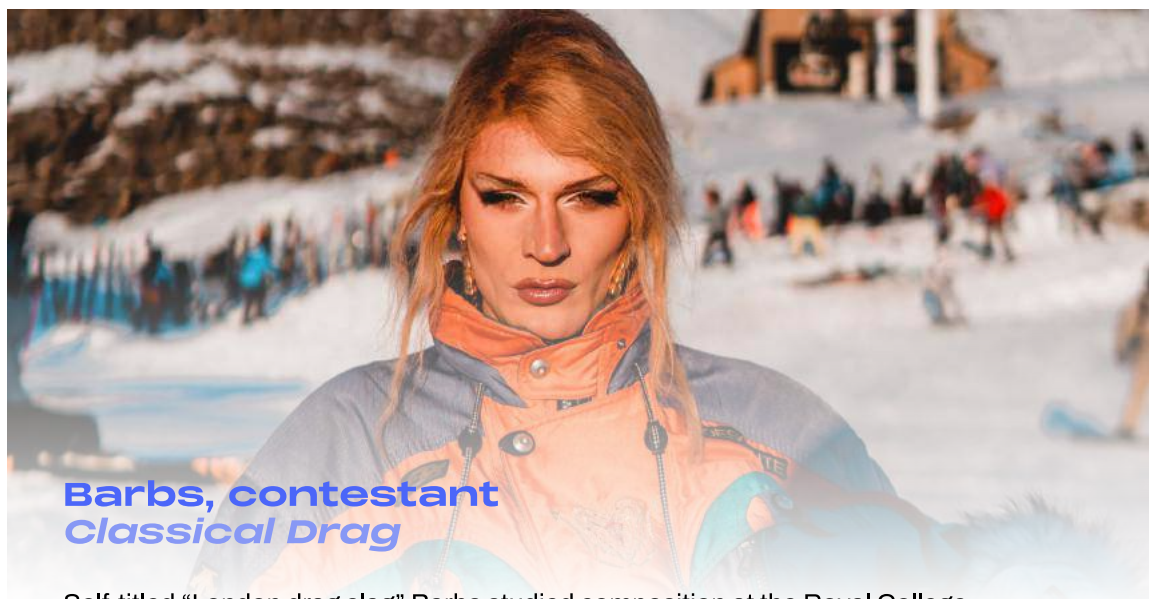
The Astral Quartet *A Proud Future*

Formed at the Royal College of Music in 2020, the Astral Quartet specialises in a diverse repertoire spanning classical, jazz and contemporary music. Winners of the RCM Woodwind Chamber Competition, they actively participate in educational outreach and have performed internationally. The members are Leopoldo Mugnai, Oliver Lee, Annabella Chenevix Trench and Ethan Townsend.



Sehyogue Aulakh, marimba & vibraphone *A Proud Future*

Sehyogue Aulakh is a versatile percussionist studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. She collaborates across multiple musical genres and media and has performed with major orchestras and ensembles including Chineke! and Engines Orchestra and is currently on the CBSO timpani scheme.



Barbs, contestant *Classical Drag*

Self-titled “London drag slag” Barbs studied composition at the Royal College of Music and has performed all over the world, shaking up the London drag scene by performing Philip Glass’s *Metamorphosis* solo works in Dalston basements, and appearing at major events such as The Stonewall Awards, Mighty Hoopla, Miss Sink The Pink and the National Theatre’s River Stage.

Samuel Barnett, presenter *My Beloved Man*

Samuel most recently played Benjamin Britten at the RSC in Mark Ravenhill’s *Ben and Imo*. He is a two-time Tony Award, Olivier and BIFA nominee, and has won a Drama Desk, Fringe First, Stage Edinburgh, Offie and two Whatsonstage awards. Born in Whitby, he went on to train at LAMDA. His career spans the last twenty-three years in the UK and America working across theatre, film, television, radio, video games, audiobooks and voiceovers. TV credits include BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Sky, Netflix and HBO, theatre credits include the National Theatre (*The History Boys*, *His Dark Materials*) and Shakespeare’s Globe (*Twelfth Night*, *Richard III*) and film credits include *The History Boys*, *Lee* and *Polite Society*.

André Bertoncini, piano *A Proud Future*

André Bertoncini is a Brazilian collaborative pianist specialising in vocal repertoire. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music, where he graduated with distinction. He has won several awards, including the accompanist prize at the Bampton Classical Opera Young Singers' Competition.

Miles Brett, viola *Julius Eastman's Gay Guerrilla*

Miles is busy freelance violinist and violist based in London. He is currently the resident violinist on *Moulin Rouge!* at the Piccadilly Theatre. Miles freelances in many of the London orchestras including English National Ballet, London Chamber Orchestra and London Contemporary Orchestra. As a session musician, Miles had recorded numerous soundtracks to blockbuster film. He has also performed with award winning artists such as Quincy Jones, Cold Play, Mary J Blige and Little Simz.

Nicholas Chalmers, conductor *My Beloved Man*

Nicholas Chalmers is Principal Conductor of the National Youth Choir and one of the leading conductors in the UK. His energy and vision have seen the establishment of highly successful artistic and education projects and his work impacts thousands of young people each year. Nicholas is driven by a passion to bring classical music to the next generation and to ensure that people in areas of under provision have better access to training and engagement in the performing arts. As founder Artistic Director of Nevill Holt Opera, his 10-year leadership of the company saw the creation of an exquisite new theatre in Leicestershire, which won plaudits for its acoustic design and reached the final of the RIBA Stirling prize in 2019. He is a Senior Associate Artist of the Royal Opera House, where he will make his conducting debut in autumn 2024. Nicholas was conductor of Northern Ireland Opera and works with all leading orchestras and opera companies.

Nicholas is the Associate Conductor, Learning of the BBC Singers and made his BBC Proms conducting debut in 2020 with the group. With the BBC Singers, he has programmed and conducted numerous broadcasts and concerts throughout the UK and helped establish the Singers' partnership with youth choral groups in Stratford East, the future home of the BBC performing groups. From September 2024, Nicholas takes up the role of Fernside Chair of Choral Conducting at The Royal Academy of Music.

Dana Cholod, poet
My Beloved Man

Dana started writing poetry when she was 10 years old as a way to express her feelings. She has been considered a ‘white crow’ in her Muslim conservative family since childhood, when she used to write poems and burn them. Initially, the poems were dedicated to her mother, the source of much coldness. From the age of 14, when she became aware of her romantic attraction to girls, the poems began to be dedicated to unrequited, impossible love, reflecting the impossibility of lesbian relationships in her society. Now 24, poetry provides solace from her hectic life, and she likes to write by the sea or in the forest.

Jack Cullen, creative producer
Classical Drag

Jack has worked at the helm of London’s drag scene for ten years, producing a variety of shows for The Clapham Grand, Latitude Festival, The Glory and Bethnal Green Working Men’s Club. He created Slav 4 U, the world’s biggest Polish drag show, and he runs his own agency Rent-a-Queen which works closely with many leading venues including The Ned, Hilton and the V&A.

Photo from Classical Pride 2023 © Matthew Johnson





Nick Grimshaw, presenter

LSO with Oliver Zeffman and Nick Grimshaw

Nick Grimshaw has worked in the UK broadcast industry for over 17 years and is firmly established as one of the country's most successful radio and TV personalities.

Nick can currently be seen on C4's award winning *Celebrity Gogglebox* alongside his niece Liv and he also co-hosts *Dish* podcast alongside Angela Hartnett and *Sidetracked* with Annie Mac. In addition, the paperback of his acclaimed debut book, *Softlad* was released last autumn.

Born in Oldham in 1984 Nick took his first steps into broadcasting on student radio while studying Communications & Business Studies at the University of Liverpool. During holidays he interned at a music PR agency, and on graduation threw himself into the music industry as a radio plugger and DJ promoter. He was spotted by Channel 4 in 2006, beginning his on-screen presenting career for E4 Music before being signed up to BBC2 and then Radio 1.

Starting in 2008, Nick has been the solo presenter on various BBC Radio 1 shows, including six years at the flagship *Breakfast Show* and three years on *Drive Time*. Alongside radio, Nick has presented numerous TV shows, live events and award ceremonies, and is also a supporter of the Royal Academy of Arts, sitting on the committee for their annual Summer Exhibition.



Jake Heggie, composer
LSO with Oliver Zeffman and Nick Grimshaw

Described as ‘arguably the world’s most popular 21st-century opera and art song composer’ by *The Wall Street Journal*, American composer Jake Heggie is best known for *Dead Man Walking* (2000), the most widely performed new opera of the last 20 years, with a libretto by Terrence McNally, which London audiences will remember from its “extraordinarily powerful” performance (*Financial Times*) at the Barbican in 2018. In addition to 10 full-length operas and numerous one-acts, Heggie has composed more than 300 art songs, as well as concerti, chamber music, choral, and orchestral works. His compositions have been performed on five continents, and he regularly collaborates with some of the world’s most beloved artists as both composer and pianist.

This season is a major moment for Heggie, opening with the world premiere of his new opera *Intelligence* at Houston Grand Opera and *Dead Man Walking’s* long-awaited debut at the Metropolitan Opera, where he returns next season for the Met premiere of his 2010 opera *Moby-Dick*, with a libretto by Gene Scheer. It also marked the world premiere of Heggie’s “Fire” (*Elements*), part of a co-commissioned project with violinist Joshua Bell and five major orchestras including the NDR Elbphilharmonie, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, and Seattle Symphony orchestras.

Declan Hickey, guitar
A Proud Future

London-based classical guitarist Declan Hickey specialises in British music of the past century and 19th-century guitar music. He performs at major UK venues such as Kings Place and the Purcell Room. Declan is involved in several chamber music partnerships, has performed with the London Sinfonietta and is dedicated to premiering new works. He studied at the University of Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music.

Beau Jangles, contestant *Classical Drag*

Beau Jangles is usually seen onstage as a vintage-style/period drag king who blends live vocals, comedy and old school charm. A finalist in *Man Up*, one of the world's biggest drag king battles, they command a cult following on the London drag circuit. They recently performed at Kew Gardens, the Southbank Centre, and they starred in *Dick Whittington* in the West End.



Archie John, composer *A Proud Future*

UK-based Archie John is a composer and conductor at the Royal Academy of Music. Known for integrating spiritual themes into his compositions, his works have been performed at major venues including the Wigmore Hall. He is a Leverhulme Arts Scholar and an LSO SoundHub Associate.

Kinna, composer & voice *A Proud Future*

Multi-talented British artist and musician Kinna composes and performs across various mediums, including concert music, songwriting and film. Her work has been showcased at prominent venues and her film *Lights* earned the Arts Club Under-35 Award at the 2023 Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition. Kinna is currently studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

Lizzie Knatt, recorder *A Proud Future*

Recorder player Lizzie Knatt's work spans the worlds of early music and contemporary performance, and she enjoys collaborating with composers to expand the instrument's repertoire. She recently showcased a recital in Amsterdam of works written for her.

Lizzie graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, where she was awarded the Rory Burcher prize for the highest recital mark in Historical Performance.



Pavel Kolesnikov, piano *LSO with Oliver Zeffman and Nick Grimshaw*

In 2012 pianist Pavel Kolesnikov became a sensation at the Honens International Piano Competition when he took home the world's largest piano prize. The London-based pianist was born in Siberia into a family of scientists. He studied both the piano and violin for ten years, before concentrating solely on the piano. Following his Wigmore Hall debut in 2014, *The Telegraph* gave his recital a rare five-star review and called it 'one of the most memorable of such occasions London has witnessed for a while'.

Last season, as well as a recital tour of North America and concerto appearances with major international orchestras, Pavel completed a seven-concert residency at the Aldeburgh Festival and made his sixth appearance at the BBC Proms. Pavel is also well known for his cross-genre collaboration and narrative programmes, and for his discography including Chopin, Reynaldo Hahn and Louis Couperin.

Komuna Collective *A Proud Future*

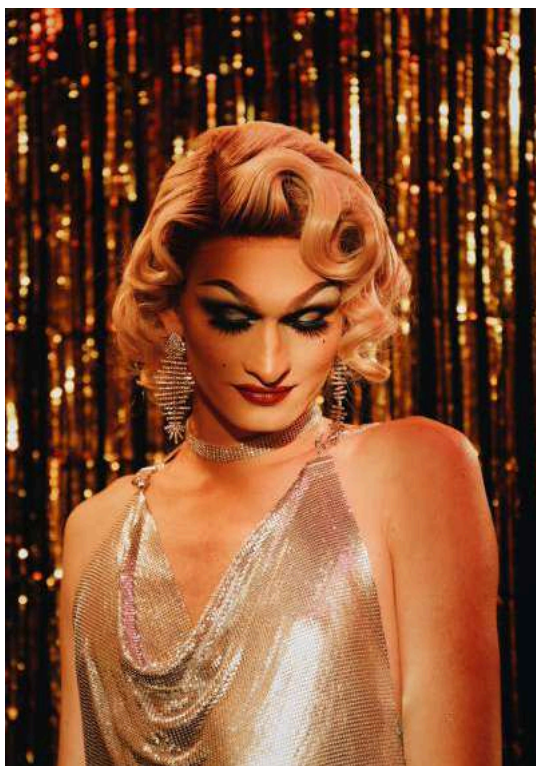
The Komuna Collective is a group of artists, DJs and musicians committed to experimentation. Formed in 2022, Komuna launched in an underground nightclub in Oxford. Since then, they have performed at London Fashion Week, Riposte Queer Raves, as well as in nightclubs and concert halls around Oxford and London. Their work has been supported by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust, Arts Council England and The Oxford Research Centre for Humanities. Their debut album *Views from the Real World* will be released in Autumn 2024.

Freddie Love, contestant *Classical Drag*

Star of *Just For One Day* at the Old Vic and *But I'm A Cheerleader*, Freddie Love (they/them) is a multifaceted artist who has captivated audiences worldwide. Their new show *Queer Cowboys* will be at the King's Head Theatre later this summer.

Dinah Lux, contestant *Classical Drag*

By day, Dinah Lux is Lecturer in Music at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities; by night, she transforms into a burlesque, cabaret star, found everywhere from London's queer underbelly to the Venice-Simplon Orient Express. Having been an interviewer for the BBC's Last Night of the Proms and with a TEDx talk under her belt, Dinah is excited to be making her orchestral debut at Classical Pride. Dinah has been featured in *Vogue*, *Dazed*, *i-D*, *AnotherMan*, *Love*, *GQ*, *L'Officiel*, *The Sunday Times Style*, and has graced the cover of *Attitude*. She has also walked fashion shows for Charles Jeffrey Loverboy, and worked with Jean-Paul Gaultier for an exclusive video shoot with *Dazed*. Her pianistic career includes performances at Wilton's Music Hall and the prestigious Festival d'Hyères held at Villa Noailles, and she will soon be starting a residency at The EDITION Hotel later this month.



Taylor Mac, poet *LSO with Oliver Zeffman and Nick Grimshaw*

Theatre artist Taylor Mac is a MacArthur 'genius' who uses the pronoun 'judy'. Judy is a Pulitzer Prize Finalist, a Tony nominee for Best Play, and the recipient of the International Ibsen Award, the Kennedy Prize, the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a Guggenheim, a Drama League Award, a NY Drama Critics Circle Award, two Obie's, and two Bessies.



Pumeza Matshikiza, soprano

LSO with Oliver Zeffman and Nick Grimshaw

South African soprano Pumeza Matshikiza, an exclusive Decca Artist since 2014, has performed at many of the leading opera houses across Europe and the United States. She has released two solo recordings with Decca: *Voice of Hope*, her debut album combining well-known arias with traditional and popular African songs, and *Arias*, for which *The Guardian* praised her 'versatility, range and huge personality'. In recent seasons Pumeza has won critical acclaim for performances at the Staatsoper Hannover, Garsington Opera and English National Opera. Throughout her career Pumeza has championed numerous contemporary operatic works, and she made her debut at Teatro alla Scala in the world premiere of Giorgio Battistelli's *CO₂*, staged by Robert Carsen.

Highlights from Pumeza's upcoming engagements include a concert in Paris's Olympia Hall under the auspices of Le Festival de Paris, a Christmas tour around the UK with Bryn Terfel and her role debut in the title role of *Tosca* at the Staatsoper Hannover.

Monét X Change, judge

Classical Drag

From New York City, Monét X Change is a multi-hyphenate performer most well known for her appearance on *RuPaul's Drag Race* Season 10, winning the fourth season of its *All-Stars* franchise and most recently showcasing her classical opera training on the all-winners season of *All-Stars* 7. In the past year, Monét has debuted with the Minnesota Opera in a production of *La fille du régiment*, premiered a one-woman comedy show headlining at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, performed with the San Francisco Symphony, the New Jersey Symphony, and the Cincinnati Symphony, co-wrote and performed in a show commissioned by New York City's Lincoln Center and released her R&B album *Grey Rainbow Vol. 1*.

William Newell, violin *Julius Eastman's Gay Guerrilla*

Violinist William Newell enjoys a wide-ranging career centred around chamber music. William is second violin of the Solem Quartet; their work has been recently recognised with awards from Jerwood Arts and the RPS, and their most recent disc *Painted Light* received 5 stars from BBC Music Magazine. Will is Principal Second Violin of Manchester Camerata where recent highlights include collaborations with Daniel Piro, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and legendary Artistic Director Gábor Takács-Nagy.

Will also works as an arranger; his arrangements have been performed by London Mozart Players, Jess Gillam Ensemble, Multi-Story Orchestra and others worldwide. In 2023/24 the Solem Quartet toured with vocalist Alice Zawadzki performing Kate Bush songs arranged by Will described as 'lush and evocative'.

Adam Possener, composer & viola *A Proud Future*

Adam Possener, a composer and violist, is pursuing an MRes in Anthropology and Music at UCL after earning his music degree from Oxford University. Winner of several awards including the Royal Philharmonic Society Duet Prize for Composition, Adam's works have been performed by prestigious ensembles such as the Castalian, Kreutzer and Consone quartets and the BBC Singers, and have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3. His research interests have taken him to New York and Tbilisi, exploring diverse cultural music scenes.

Séamus Rea, creative producer *My Beloved Man*

Séamus Rea started his professional life as a theatre director specialising in opera. After working as a staff director at Covent Garden, Opera North and Scottish Opera, he directed more than twenty-five opera productions with such companies as Opera Northern Ireland, the Wexford Opera Festival, Castleward Opera, Trinity College of Music and Oxford University Opera Club. He later worked as a lawyer in the City for 20 years whilst maintaining his interest in the arts by writing and directing three shorts and a feature film which were shown at gay film festivals throughout the world, one winning the "Best Short Film" award at both the BBC Short Film Festival and the Milan Gay Film Festival. Seamus is a founding member of The Fourth Choir.

Graham Ross, chorus master

LSO with Oliver Zeffman and Nick Grimshaw

Graham Ross has established an exceptional reputation as a sought-after conductor and composer of a very broad range of repertoire. He is Director of Music and Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, co-founder and Principal Conductor of The Dmitri Ensemble, and in demand as a regular guest conductor. Recent collaborations have included London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orchestra, Aurora Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Aalborg Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Vocal Ensemble, and Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra. At the age of 25 he made his BBC Proms and Glyndebourne debuts, and he has conducted and recorded many world premières including James MacMillan, Judith Bingham, Giles Swayne, Vaughan Williams, Imogen Holst, Nico Muhly, Brett Dean, Lydia Kakabadse and Matthew Martin. He studied music at Clare College, Cambridge and conducting at the Royal College of Music, London.

Thea Sayer, double bass

Julius Eastman's Gay Guerrilla

Since moving to London in 2017, Thea has performed with many major UK orchestras such as Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, English National Opera, London Symphony Orchestra and Royal Birmingham Ballet. She enjoys an incredibly varied freelance career, engaging in a range of projects from performances on West End, to working with artists like Stormzy and Celeste, as well as playing with various chamber ensembles. She has both a Master of Arts and a First Class Honours Bachelors degree from the Royal Academy of Music where she studied on a scholarship.

Abigail Sinclair, soprano

A Proud Future

Canadian soprano Abigail Sinclair is currently studying at the Royal Academy of Music, under the guidance of Kate Paterson. Notable performances include her American debut in Brooklyn and a recent concert at London's Southbank Centre with the London Sinfonietta. She is supported by the Sylva Gelber Music Foundation and other prestigious scholarships.

Sadie Sinner, host *Classical Drag*

Sadie Sinner is a spectacular cabaret artiste and creator who founded the Cocoa Butter Club in 2016 in response to the lack of black lesbians visible on London Pride stages. Since then she has performed around the world at festivals, starred in a critically-acclaimed Travis Alabanza show as The Royal Court and she regularly wows crowds at major venues with citywide appeal such as The Hippodrome in Leicester Square.

Snow White Trash, contestant *Classical Drag*

Snow White Trash is the UK's saxy drag queen. She performs up and down the country on the cabaret circuit with her unique blend of impressive vocals and singalong saxophone power ballads. She also tours the world playing sax for Scissor Sisters frontman Jake Shears. Snow White Trash has performed on the main stage at London Pride in Trafalgar Square and at multiple prides across the UK, including her hometown of Brighton where she's a firm favourite. She also went down a storm at European Gay Ski Week and has been a judge at Drag Idol UK.

Nicky Spence, judge *Classical Drag*

An artist of great integrity, Nicky Spence's unique skills as a singing actor and the rare honesty in his musicianship have earned him a place at the top of the music profession. He was made an OBE in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours, and is the winner of the RPS SInger Award 2024.

The 2023/24 season sees him return to the Opéra national de Paris as Edmundo, Marquès de Nobile in Adès' *The Exterminating Angel*, and to La Monnaie as Loge in *Das Rheingold*. In concert he sings Steva in *Jenůfa* with the London Symphony Orchestra/Sir Simon Rattle, and Britten's *Serenade for tenor, horn and strings* with Ben Goldscheider and the Britten Sinfonia. Recent highlights include Laca in Claus Guth's new production of *Jenůfa* for the Royal Opera, Siegmund in Richard Jones' new production of *The Valkyrie* for the English National Opera, Albert Gregor for the Deutsche Staatsoper, Tichon in Damiano Michieletto's new production of *Káťa Kabanová* at the Glyndebourne Festival and Erik *Der fliegende Holländer* for Grange Park Opera.

Nicky gives recitals internationally, and records prolifically. In 2020, he won the BBC Music Magazine Vocal Award and Gramophone's Solo Vocal Award for his critically acclaimed recording of Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*. The BBC Music Magazine awarded him "Personality of the Year" in 2022.



standard issue *A Proud Future*

standard issue is a London-based new music collective that challenges the archetypal boundaries within music and its culture. Bringing fresh perspective to works by eclectic living composers, the group focuses on enhancing accessibility through creating unique concert experiences. As a collaborative group, they have created projects and concerts with Her Ensemble, HONKUS, Ineffable Sounds, and Musarc Choir.

Russell Thomas, tenor

LSO with Oliver Zeffman and Nick Grimshaw

American tenor Russell Thomas is now one of the most sought-after tenors of his generation, performing major roles at international opera house such as the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opéra national de Paris, and Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where he is currently singing the role of Cavaradossi (*Tosca*) under Alexander Soddy. In 2021, Thomas became the first Artist in Residence at LA Opera, a new role which takes him to the heart of the company not only as a performer but as a curator of the new After Hours recital series and as a mentor to the Russell Thomas Young Artists. Thomas is in great demand on the concert platform; notably, he has performed with Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Tugan Sokhiev, the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert, and the Wiener Philharmoniker under Andris Nelsons.

Thorgy Thor, judge *Classical Drag*

One of the most famous drag queens in the world, Thorgy has starred in the American TV series *RuPaul's Drag Race* and *Dragnificent* on TLC. Before that, they studied music at the Hartt School of Music and Purchase Conservatory, playing viola, violin and cello. They have performed at Le Poisson Rouge, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Thorgy has also staged their own show *Thorgy and The Thorchestra* which debuted with Symphony Nova Scotia in 2018. Since then, Thorgy has been invited to perform with dozens of international orchestras including the San Francisco, Toronto and Seattle Symphony Orchestras, NAC Orchestra in Ottawa and the Boston Pops Orchestra.



Petroc Trelawny, presenter
My Beloved Man

Petroc Trelawny's book *Trelawny's Cornwall – a Journey Through Western Lands* will be published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson in August. Petroc is one of the best-known voices on BBC Radio Three - where he presents the daily Breakfast programme. He was part of the commentary team for BBC Television's coverage of the Coronation of King Charles III and the funeral of Her Majesty The Queen. He has presented BBC Proms on radio and television for more than two decades and introduces the annual live BBC broadcast of the Vienna Philharmonic New Year's Day Concert. Last June he hosted BBC Television's *Cardiff Singer of the World* for the thirteenth time. He has presented the international telecast of Eurovision Young Musician to more than two dozen countries from Edinburgh and hosted Eurovision Choir live from Gothenburg. He presents performances by the Royal Ballet shown in cinemas around the world, and anchors note-by-note coverage of the Leeds Piano Competition for Medici.tv. In 2015 he hosted the first ever BBC Proms Australia, a week of concerts and recitals in Melbourne broadcast live on ABC Radio; he has also twice hosted BBC Proms Dubai at the new Dubai Opera House.

Stephanie Tress, cello
Julius Eastman's Gay Guerrilla

Stephanie Tress is a founding member of the Solem Quartet, with whom she regularly performs around the UK and abroad. Highlights of the past year include concerts at the Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall and Amsterdam String Quartet Biennale. A proponent of experimental music, Stephanie often performs and improvises with the House of Bedlam. The ensemble have recently played at Kettle's Yard and Aldeburgh Festival. Stephanie also records for TV and film and teaches cello at the Royal College of Music Junior Department. In her spare time she enjoys drinking in the sun and completing the daily Xordle.

Stephen Upshaw, viola *Julius Eastman's Gay Guerrilla*

American violist Stephen Upshaw regularly appears in festivals around the world including the BBC Proms, IMS Prussia Cove, Aldeburgh, Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg Chamber Music Festival and Glastonbury, where he recently collaborated with composer Max Richter and actor Tilda Swinton. Much in demand as a chamber musician, he is a member of the award-winning Solem Quartet, praised for their 'immaculate precision and spirit' (*The Strad*) and recognised as one of the most innovative and adventurous quartets of its generation.

A noted interpreter of contemporary music, he is also a member of London's Riot Ensemble - winners of the inaugural Ernst von Siemens Foundation Ensemble Prize and cited by *The Guardian* as "the supergroup of top soloists playing new music." He has worked with many of today's leading composers and taken part in over 300 world premieres.

Stephen serves on the faculty at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Junior Department, Switzerland's Lucerne Festival Academy (where he also co-curates the annual 'Festival Forward') and has been invited to adjudicate past editions of the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards and the Royal Overseas League Competition.

Vinegar Strokes, contestant *Classical Drag*

Vinegar Strokes is a London-based Drag Queen created by actor Daniel Jacob. Vinegar appeared on Season 1 of RuPaul's Drag Race UK and has starred in the West End musicals *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* and *Deathdrop - A Dragatha Christie*. She has sailed around the world with Virgin Cruises starring in The Miss Behave Show and she performed in Copenhagen World Pride's Curated Opera *Begærets Mysterier*.





Isobel Waller–Bridge, composer
My Beloved Man

Isobel Waller-Bridge is an award-winning composer known for her work in film, television, theatre, and contemporary classical music.

Isobel has scored numerous feature films, including *Munich: The Edge of War*, *Emma*, *I Came By* and the BAFTA and Oscar-winning short *The Boy*, *The Mole*, *The Fox and the Horse*. Recent projects include *The Lesson*, *Embers*, *Magpie*, and *Wicked Little Letters*. Her television credits include *Fleabag*, *Black Mirror*, *Roar* and *The Way Down*.

Isobel's notable commissions include Manchester Collective, the Philharmonia Orchestra, fashion houses Alexander McQueen and Simone Rocha, and principal ballerina Francesca Hayward. Her theatre work includes *The Son* and *The Forest* with Florian Zeller, *Woyzeck* by Jack Thorne, and National Theatre's *The House of Bernarda Alba*. She composed the ballet *The Limit* at the Royal Opera House.

Her releases include the album *Music for Strings*, the single *Illuminations*, and multiple soundtracks. Her latest release, *VIII*, came out in November 2022, with performances at the Purcell Room and Blue Dot Festival in 2023. Isobel has received awards including Best Composer at Underwire Film Festival and Best Sound Designer at the Off West End Theatre Awards, and was nominated for the RTS Craft & Design Award and World Soundtrack Awards.

Jonny Woo, host
Classical Drag

The Godfather of East London, Jonny Woo, is one of the biggest names in drag and performance art globally, with a dazzling career spanning over twenty years. His *Un-Royal Variety* show has been a springboard for many TV stars, as has his drag competition *LIPSYNC1000*. He has written award-winning shows, critically-acclaimed plays, and he is the owner of Dalston's notorious queer bar The Divine.

Oliver Zeffman

LSO with Oliver Zeffman and Nick Grimshaw

A conductor of ‘tremendous ardour and shrewd dramatic timing’ (*The Telegraph*), Oliver is widely seen as one of today’s most intrepid young musicians.

Alongside recent concerts and recordings with the likes of the Philharmonia, CBSO, Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the Orchestre national d’Île-de-France, Oliver is recognised as ‘an entrepreneurial tour de force’ (*BBC Music Magazine*), ‘with a record for getting things done (*Gramophone*)’.

Recent highlights include Music x Museums – a series of concerts in partnership with London museums such as the V&A, Cutty Sark and Science Museum, all filmed for Apple Music; *Eight Songs from Isolation* - an opera-film comprising eight new works from several of today’s leading composers that was shot, at the height of the pandemic, right across Europe, Asia and America, and was nominated for five Opus Klassik Awards.



A firm advocate for contemporary music, Oliver has commissioned and premiered over 30 new pieces from some of the most exciting composers of today. In previous years, he gave the Russian premieres of several important 20th- and 21st-century works, including George Benjamin’s *Lessons in Love and Violence*, Birtwistle’s *The Triumph of Time*, Maxwell Davies’ *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, Walton’s *Façade* and Ligeti’s *Aventures and Nouvelles Aventures*.

Tymon Zgorzelski

A Proud Future

Polish composer Tymon Zgorzelski is a recent graduate of the Royal College of Music, incorporating electronics, live instrumental performance and opera in works that have been performed across Europe. His piece *Curiosity and the Cat* won an award from the UK’s Clarinet and Saxophone Society, becoming a set work in their clarinet competition. He recently completed a sound installation for Kew Gardens.



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Oliver Zeffman

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