

## Cheltenham Music Festival celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2019

Inaugural Festival programmed by  
Artistic Director Alison Balsom

**Ambitious programme features 20 world premieres, a community opera, focus on women composers & performers, performances from top international artists and the best in new talent**

**5 – 14 July 2019**

Highlights from the 2019 Cheltenham Music Festival

**Making a difference through year-round outreach:**

- Major new Community Opera *Across the Sky*, the culmination of a four-year project with the community in West Cheltenham sharing a stage with Sarah Connolly
- *Side by Side* initiative presents cross-cultural performances and education programme sees a residency by players, teachers, and mentors from charity **Brass for Africa**

**Providing unique experiences:**

- Opening Weekend in partnership with Classic FM introduces free concerts and family activities, heralded by a prize-winning new fanfare
- Immersive tour of Cheltenham's historic Regency Square as part of *Schumann Square*
- *Classical mixtape*
- *Live Human Experiments: The Musical Brain of Guy Barker* taking part in a live neurological experiment whilst performing

**Bringing the best to Cheltenham:**

- World-leading ensembles include **Academy of Ancient Music, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra** and **Nash Ensemble**
- **Alison Balsom** and the **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** perform world premiere of Thea Musgrave's *Trumpet Concerto*, conducted by **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla**
- **London Symphony Orchestra** under **Elim Chan** perform new work by **Dani Howard**, commissioned by Classic FM, the Festival's new major partner
- Top international artists include **Nicola Benedetti, Lucy Crowe, Sarah Connolly, Angela Hewitt, Wynton Marsalis, Gabriela Montero, Viktoria Mullova** and **Danielle de Niese**
- **Sam Mendes** in conversation with **Clemency Burton-Hill**
- **Simon Russell Beale** and cast members from the National Theatre's production of *The Lehman Trilogy* perform poetry and drama around Shostakovich's *Eighth String Quartet*

- *Composium*: A major new day-long event for the classical music industry and audiences, celebrating the Festival's foundation as a place for composers and new music.

**Supporting talent development:**

- Residencies from young Ugandan musicians from **Brass for Africa** and **Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective**
- 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **BBC Radio 3's prestigious New Generation Artists** scheme celebrated with three concerts featuring a selection of musicians from the current cohort
- At *Composium* early-career composers from the Festival's **Composer Academy** will have their compositions performed and recorded
- The Festival's collaboration with **PRS for Music** and **Wild Plum Arts** on a set of new compositions comes to fruition at *Composium* with the winning piece receiving its world premiere.

**Cheltenham Music Festival** celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, **5 to 14 July**, and its first under the direction of new Artistic Director **Alison Balsom**. Celebrated from its inception for championing new music, the 2019 Festival features more than 20 world premieres.

**Alison Balsom**, Cheltenham Music Festival Artistic Director comments:

"Putting together the programme for the 75th anniversary of the Cheltenham Music Festival has been a total privilege. From our Opening Free Weekend of music to our Community Opera Finale, I hope that everyone is inspired to come and enjoy a whole host of unique events which can only be seen and heard in Cheltenham this summer. Some of my favourite artists, from international stars to bright new talent will perform in stunning venues, and I'm especially excited about the many world premieres we'll hear throughout the entire Festival."

The Festival's commitment to ensuring access to the best music and artists entails it working in the community year-round, inclusive of diverse socio-economic areas of the town. A four-year project in West Cheltenham culminates at the 2019 Festival with two performances on **14 July** on the main stage of Cheltenham Town Hall of the Community Opera *Across the Sky*.

Cheltenham Music Festival's 2019 'Side by Side' cross cultural performance and education programme sees a residency by players, teachers, and mentors from charity **Brass for Africa**. In addition to performing at workshops and schools' concerts, ten young Ugandan brass players will perform together with young Gloucestershire jazz musicians in free pop-up concerts at Imperial Gardens in Cheltenham town centre on **6 and 7 July** and perform on the stage at Cheltenham Town Hall as part of jazz legend Wynton Marsalis's concert on **13 July**.

Cheltenham Music Festival is delighted to announce Classic FM – the UK's most popular classical music station - as major partner, featuring a live broadcast of the opening night concert presented by John Suchet and free concerts showcasing jazz, folk, indie, gospel and world music and family activities in Imperial Square over the opening weekend. A Fanfare for Three Trumpets will launch the Opening Weekend in style and the Festival has announced a cash prize of £250 for the winning composition. The fanfare competition is open to all ages and the winner will hear their fanfare performed all over town on 5 July.

The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Clara Schumann is celebrated on **6 July** with *Schumann Square*, a unique event taking place across four stunning Regency houses in Cheltenham's historic Imperial Square and Royal Parade. The event features a series of recitals which audiences can 'visit', performed by pianist **Isata**

**Kanneh-Mason**, guitarist **Xuefei Yang**, pianist **Tom Poster**, violinist **Elena Urioste** and cellist **Camille Thomas**.

The stunning medieval surroundings of Tewkesbury Abbey provide the setting for *Classical Mixtape* on **8 July**, a popular Festival highlight. This informal evening features performances by Festival guest artists in every corner of the Abbey, with pieces by Handel, Chopin, Mozart and Bach being performed alongside a world premiere by composer **Betsy Jolas** and a UK premiere from **Einojuhani Rautavaara**.

The mysteries on what happens to the brain of a musician whilst improvising is the subject of *Live Human Experiments: The Musical Brain of Guy Barker*, at Trinity Church on **13 July**. In a fascinating hour that blends science and music, jazz trumpeter Guy Barker will be in conversation with Professor Vincent Walsh from University College London, with Barker taking part in a live neurological experiment whilst performing.

*Strictly Come Dancing* star, dancer **AJ Pritchard**, joins forces with jazz bassist **Mischa Mullov-Abbado** and his band and cellist **Camille Thomas** in *Midsummer Dance And Music* on **7 July** at Cheltenham Town Hall. This eclectic programme combines dance and music, with pieces composed especially for this performance along with works by JS Bach and an interpretation of traditional Catalan folksong.

At Cheltenham Town Hall on **5 July**, **London Symphony Orchestra** perform the first evening concert of the Festival under **Elim Chan**, in a programme created especially for the Festival's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They perform the world premiere of a new work by **Dani Howard**, commissioned by Classic FM, alongside Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto* (with soloist **Emmanuel Tjeknavorian**) and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade Op.35*.

The **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** and Music Director **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** return on **6 July**, where they are joined by **Alison Balsom** to perform the world premiere of **Thea Musgrave's Trumpet Concerto**, co-commissioned for the Festival by the CBSO in celebration of its centenary, and the LA Philharmonic for Alison Balsom. Musgrave was the first female composer to be commissioned by the Festival in 1956, and this all-British programme also features Ruth Gipps' *Symphony No.2* along with works by Vaughan Williams and Walton.

The pioneering **Manchester Camerata** makes its Festival debut on **11 July** at Tewkesbury Abbey, with saxophonist **Jess Gillam**, returning to the Festival following her enormously popular debut in 2017. Together they will perform two world premieres in the Abbey's magnificent acoustics; a new work for saxophone and electronics by **Anna Clyne** and a new work for saxophone and strings by **Gavin Bryars**. The programme also includes Arvo Pärt's *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*, followed by three Baroque works providing contrast with these modern pieces: Rameau's *Castor et Pollux, Acte I, Scène III: Prélude - Air accompagné "Tristes apprêts"* arranged for saxophone and trumpet, Albinoni's *Concerto* arranged for saxophone and strings and Purcell's *Fantasia*.

Virtuoso violinist and much-loved Festival favourite **Nicola Benedetti** returns on **12 July** at Cheltenham Town Hall, with the **Academy of Ancient Music** and **Richard Egarr**, directing from the harpsichord, in a programme featuring masterpieces of the Baroque.

Welsh soprano **Elin Manahan Thomas** celebrates the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of inspirational musician Barbara Strozzi at Cheltenham's Pittville Pump Room on **9 July**, where she is joined by harpsichordist **Alastair Ross** to perform an exploration of Strozzi's life and work, with pieces by Strozzi and her contemporaries Monteverdi and Carissimi.

Principal cast members of the National Theatre's sell-out production of The Lehman Trilogy, **Simon Russell Beale, Adam Godley and Ben Miles**, joint nominees for Best Actor at the upcoming Olivier Awards - join a quartet from the Festival's Ensemble-in-Residence, **Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective** on **7 July** at Cheltenham Town Hall. Together they perform music and readings set around Shostakovich's *String Quartet No 8 in C minor Op.110*. Famously composed in three days, this piece was deeply personal to the composer, and the artists explore the true story behind it using extracts from Julian Barnes's novel *The Noise of Time*.

Legendary US trumpeter and composer **Wynton Marsalis** makes a rare UK appearance with his quartet on **13 July** at Cheltenham Town Hall. The evening opens with ten young Ugandan musicians from **Brass for Africa** joining forces with local young brass players, as part of Cheltenham Music Festival's 'side by side' cross-cultural performance and education programme, providing the grand finale of Brass for Africa's Festival residency.

Oscar-winning film and stage director **Sam Mendes** joins **Clemency Burton-Hill**, Creative Director of New York's WQXR, in conversation at the Festival's close on **14 July** at Cheltenham Town Hall. *Music and the Moving Image* sees the duo explore the central role that music has played in Mendes's work on both screen and stage, along with the wider relationship music plays when juxtaposed with the moving image.

Opera star **Danielle de Niese** performs a wide-ranging programme at Cheltenham Town Hall on **10 July**, with the soprano exploring singing styles from Baroque arias to Swing, by composers from Handel to Gershwin.

Soprano **Lucy Crowe** and pianist **Anna Tilbrook** join forces on **12 July** at Pittville Pump Room for *Female Portraits*, a programme centred around the subjects of betrayed women, eroticism and chastity over the ages. Composer **Jonathan Dove** has written the recital opener *Youth Gone* especially for this evening, to mark the Festival's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The programme includes works by Purcell, Schumann, Debussy and Britten, and poetry settings including works by Goethe, Shakespeare and Novalis.

The atmospheric Pittville Pump Room – the last and largest of Cheltenham's eighteenth-century spa buildings – provides the perfect acoustic setting for the Festival's chamber music concerts. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary Festival opens there on the morning of **5 July** with the **Nash Ensemble** performing the world premiere of a new work for flute and string trio composed by Master of the Queen's Music, **Judith Weir**. The piece is bookended by Haydn's *Sunrise* quartet and Oliver Knussen's *Masks* for solo flute, performed in memory of the late composer / conductor's long and fruitful relationship with the Festival, and the programme concludes with **Dvořák's Piano Quintet in A Op.81**.

**ORA Singers** make their Festival debut with a candlelit concert in Cheltenham College Chapel on **10 July** performing a programme inspired by Rome's Renaissance composers, including a world premiere by **Freya Waley Cohen**. The following morning sees them at Pittville Pump Room, performing works from the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, alongside texts from the Elizabethan age set to pieces by contemporary composers. Also at the Pump Room, pianist **Angela Hewitt** performs Bach's *Toccatas* in recital on **12 July**.

Ensemble-in-Residence, **Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective**, the newly-formed 'supergroup' of classical soloists formed by pianist and composer Tom Poster, bring the Festival's chamber music to a close on **14 July**, performing an all-female programme with works by Maria Szymanowska, Lili Boulanger, Fanny Mendelssohn, Germaine Tailleferre and Amy Beach.

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists** scheme is celebrated with concerts on **7, 8 and 11 July** featuring a selection of musicians from the current and past cohort; cellist **Anastasia**

**Kobenkina**, pianists **Lilit Grigorayan** and **Elisabeth Brauss**, quartet **Quatuor Arod**, violinist **Aleksey Semenenko**, tenor **Alessandro Fisher** and guitarist **Thibaut Garcia**. All of these concerts will be recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

New to 2019, Cheltenham Music Festival presents **Composium**, a day-long event celebrating the Festival's foundation as a place for composers and new music. Audiences, students, and industry movers and shakers alike will be given the opportunity to gather and explore classical music as a creative art form in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The day includes talks, panel sessions, and the chance for industry leaders and practitioners to engage with audiences. The day will include a number of performances of contemporary music, including eight brand-new works by the participants from Cheltenham Music Festival's **Composer Academy**. The inaugural *Composium* takes place at Pittville Pump Rooms on **10 July**.

The 2019 Festival sees a strengthened commitment to championing young composers. At *Composium* early-career composers from the Festival's **Composer Academy** will have their compositions performed and recorded, having previously work-shopped them with Composer Academy Director, composer John Woolrich. *Composium* also provides participants with the opportunity to have access to industry professionals in a series of panel talks discussing craft and contemporary aesthetics along with career development. The Festival's collaboration with **PRS for Music** and **Wild Plum Arts** on a set of new compositions comes to fruition at *Composium* with the winning piece receiving its world premiere.

Cheltenham Music Festival continues to give a platform on the world stage to talented young artists. In addition to the three concerts by BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists at Pittville Pump Rooms, the Festival also features recitals at St Gregory's Church showcasing exceptional young talent. On **13 July**, the winner of Gloucestershire Young Musician 2019 will perform in recital with the 2018 Keith Nutland Award winner, violinist **Louis Morford**. Three early evening *Rush Hour* recitals from **8 July** start with violinist **Christian Li**, who at 10 years old became the youngest ever recipient of the first prize in 2018's Junior Yehudi Menuhin Violin Competition. On **9 July** BBC Young Musician 2018 finalist **Jeneba Kanneh-Mason** performs, and the series concludes on **10 July** with Scottish flautist **Mark Taylor**, a current member of the Countess of Munster Musical Trust's Young Artist scheme.

Full festival details can be found at [www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/music](http://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/music)

Members Priority Booking opens Wednesday 27 March

General public sale opens on Wednesday 3 April

High res photos available [here](#)

Link to online brochure [here](#)

For further press information contact Nasarene Asghar at Premier

[nasarene.asghar@premiercomms.com](mailto:nasarene.asghar@premiercomms.com) 020 7292 7350

### **Cheltenham Music Festival**

Established in 1945, Cheltenham Music Festival boasts an outstanding reputation for high calibre performances, inventive programming and a growing schools and family strand. It takes place in a range of first-class venues in the beautiful Regency town of Cheltenham and across the Cotswolds.

Cheltenham Music Festival is part of Cheltenham Festivals – a charity which brings the arts and sciences to audiences, supports emerging talent, and delivers a pioneering year-round educational programme, culminating at the town's internationally-acclaimed Jazz, Science, Music and Literature Festivals.

### **Classic FM**

Classic FM is the UK's most popular classical music brand, reaching 5.3 million listeners every week. Classic FM's programmes are hosted by a mix of classical music experts and household names including John Suchet, Alexander Armstrong, Myleene Klass, Bill Turnbull, Alan Titchmarsh, Moira Stuart, Charlotte Hawkins, Aled Jones, Margherita Taylor and Nicholas Owen. Since its launch in 1992, Classic FM has aimed to make classical music accessible and relevant to everyone and in doing so, introduce an entirely new audience to the genre. ClassicFM.com is the UK's biggest classical music website and has 2.6 million unique monthly web and app users. Classic FM is owned by Global. It is available across the UK on 100-102 FM, DAB digital radio and TV, the Classic FM app, at ClassicFM.com and on the Global Player. Source: *RAJAR / Ipsos-MORI / RSMB, period ending 16<sup>th</sup> December 2018.*

### **BBC Radio 3**

Since its launch in 1946, BBC Radio 3 – formerly the Third Programme, has been a bold pioneer in the cultural world. It is one of the world's foremost presenters, creators, commissioners and curators across classical, folk, world, jazz and contemporary music as well as drama, philosophy and ideas. The station is also the most significant commissioner of new and contemporary music in the UK, with 35 new works commissioned annually and broadcasts over 600 concerts a year, including live broadcasts from the greatest classical music festival in the world (BBC Proms). Radio 3's In Concert programme alone reaches the equivalent of 250 packed concert halls a week, and the BBC Orchestras and Choirs give around 400 concerts a year in over 60 UK locations. The station has always nurtured extraordinary artistic talents, provided a platform for important scientific and political debates/announcements, and broadcast groundbreaking experimental drama – always while delivering its core aim of connecting audiences with pioneering music and culture.