

EMBARGOED UNTIL 25 MAY 2021

CHELTENHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL RETURNS WITH 10 DAYS OF GREAT PERFORMERS, 21 WORLD PREMIERES & 'FREE STAGE' CONCERTS

BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Chineke!

Sarah Connolly, Imogen Cooper, Jess Gillam, Steven Osborne among this year's line-up

Cheltenham Music Festival continues to be one of Europe's main commissioners of new music with 21 world premieres and 1 UK premiere including composers being given a major platform for their work for the first time

2-11 July 2021

Cheltenham Music Festival today [25 May] announces a packed 10-day Festival taking place between 2-11 July. After having to cancel last year's Festival due to the pandemic, the Festival is back with a full programme featuring symphony orchestras, world-class ensembles, star soloists, world premieres and up-and-coming talent, and includes films, a musical ramble and a whole weekend of free music and entertainment for all the family. The Festival is presenting all performances and events with socially distanced audiences in venues in and around Cheltenham, including the Classic FM Stage in Cheltenham Town Hall, Cheltenham Playhouse, Parabola Arts Centre, Gloucester Cathedral, St Gregory's Church and Pittville Pump Room. As well as its long-awaited offering of ticketed concerts and events, accessibility continues to be central to Cheltenham Music Festival through its Free Stage concerts in Imperial Square [9-11 July], showcasing a wide range of artists from the worlds of classical, jazz, indie, folk, Americana and beyond.

Camilla King, Head of Programming at Cheltenham Music Festival, commented:

"I am tremendously proud that our team will bring world-class performances to Cheltenham this summer. For those who love classical music, whether professional or amateur performers, creators or audiences, it has felt that the industry is standing on a precipice. I have no doubt that, as the first note sounds in our beautiful Cheltenham Town Hall for the first time in nearly 18 months, it will be an unforgettable experience."

Highlights include:

- Top international artists including **Albion Quartet, Matthew Barley, Martyn Brabbins and BBC NOW, Dame Sarah Connolly, Imogen Cooper, Jess Gillam, Kirill Karabits and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Steven Osborne**
- **World premieres** of works by **Lillie Harris, Luke Styles, Matthew Whittall, Ayanna Witter-Johnson and Jonathan Woolgar, Sarah Nicolls and Maja Bugge**, and a **UK premiere** from **Alex Freeman**
- **The Carice Singers** and a chamber ensemble from **Chineke!** give **world premiere performances** of 12 pieces written by this year's **Composer Academy students**
- Focus on **talent development** through the **BBC New Generation Artists** recital series [6-9 July], the annual **Concert for Schools** presented by **YolanDa Brown** [9 July] and a recital by **The Maxwell Quartet** [2 July]
- **Outdoor Free Stage** in Imperial Square showcasing up-and-coming artists from a wide range of

genres, with headliners including **LATIMO** [9 July], **Elles Bailey** [10 July] and **The ShowHawk Duo** [11 July]

Bringing the Best

The **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra** and their Chief Conductor **Kirill Karabits**, will perform the first orchestral concert in Cheltenham Town Hall since before the pandemic [2 July] and **BBC National Orchestra of Wales** with **Martyn Brabbins** bring a programme of all-English composers including **Malcolm Arnold** to mark the centenary of his birth [3 July].

Morning recitals at Cheltenham Town Hall include **Steven Osborne** [3 July] who performs an all-Debussy programme, and **Dame Sarah Connolly** and **Imogen Cooper** performing works by Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, Holst, Gurney and Howells [4 July]. Cellist **Matthew Barley** joins forces with pianist **Ivana Gavrić** at Gloucester Cathedral to perform Barley's innovative *Ludwig* programme. Originally due to be performed at last year's Festival to mark the Beethoven 250 anniversary, *Ludwig* is an interactive exploration of Beethoven's cello sonatas and brings performance together with storytelling and improvisation to give the audience a unique perspective into Beethoven and his music [5 July].

Jess Gillam performs music from her latest album, *TIME*, with a small ensemble made up of an incredible group of musicians from a wide range of musical backgrounds but with roots in classical music. As part of their UK tour, the Ensemble will play some classic favourites as well as brand new works written especially for the ensemble including music by Will Gregory (Goldfrapp), Piazzolla, Meredith Monk, Kurt Weill, Bjork, Luke Howard, Joby Talbot and more [8 July]. The highlight of the concert will be the world premiere of a work written specially for Jess and the Festival by singer, songwriter and cellist **Ayanna Witter-Johnson**. **La Serenissima** make their Festival debut with Founder and Director **Adrian Chandler** and recorder player **Tabea Debus** with a programme of concertos by Vivaldi and his contemporaries [7 July] and the **Albion Quartet** perform works by Shostakovich, Haydn and Freya Waley-Cohen [9 July].

Championing New Music

Commissioning and performing new music has always been a defining feature of the Cheltenham Music Festival, and this year there will be **10 premieres** in the core Festival programme, in addition to a further **12 world premieres** by this year's Composer Academy students. **The Carice Singers**, who return to the Festival to celebrate their 10th anniversary, perform the world premiere of '*Songs of Travel*' by Canadian-Finnish composer **Matthew Whittall** inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson's 1896 book of poetry of the same name [3 July]. The concert will also include the UK premiere of **Alex Freeman's** '*Calle sin nombre*', a work giving voice to the asylum seekers who were affected by the US government's controversial family separation policy in 2018.

Audiences worldwide will have the opportunity to watch a live digital performance of *Ballad of a Changing World*, an immersive new work by pianist **Sarah Nicolls** and cellist **Maja Bugge**, which focuses on the urgency of climate change, bringing scientific data and spoken word – including audio of activist Greta Thunberg – together with music to inspire change [7 July]. This world premiere performance will be streamed online followed by an online audience discussion with Nicolls and Bugge who will be joined by **Helen Wilson**, the first female Head of Mathematics at University College London, and **Tone Reiertsen**, a climate change researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research. Nicolls and Bugge hope that the work will be an engaging wake-up call to the

urgency of the climate crisis.

Nova Music performs the world premiere of *'Awakening Shadow'*, a chamber opera which combines original scenes by **Luke Styles** alongside Benjamin Britten's *Canticles*. Themes of light and darkness are explored through highly dramatic subject matter of religion, death, sacrifice and humanity itself [4 July]. Nova Music are joined by an outstanding young cast featuring soprano Donna Lennard, countertenor Ralph Thomas Williams, tenors Christopher Bowen and Bradley Smith, and baritone Felix Kemp.

Other world premieres include two works by **Lillie Harris** featured in **Classical Mixtape** [5 July], a work for soprano saxophone by **Ayanna Witter-Johnson** performed by **Jess Gillam** [8 July], and a new piece by RPS Composer Jonathan Woolgar for **The 12 Ensemble** [9 July]. The Festival also continues its support of new music through its **RePlay** scheme, which shines a light on contemporary works beyond their premieres by programming repeat performances. Several pieces in this year's programme fall into this strand, with works by **John Pickard**, **Joey Roukens**, **Caroline Shaw** and **Freya Waley-Cohen**, all of which have been premiered in the last 10 years.

The **Cheltenham Composer Academy**, part of the Festival's Spotlight Talent Development Programme, returns this year from 5-9 July. The scheme supports early-career composers (aged 18+), offering them professional advice and mentoring. This year will see 12 composers work with Composer Academy Director **Daniel Kidane** to workshop, perform and record their works with **The Carice Singers** and a chamber ensemble from **Chineke!**.

Talent Development

Cheltenham Music Festival continues to showcase the talents of both well-established young artists and rising stars, providing a platform for the next generation of world-class musicians. The Festival continues its partnership with the **BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists** with four lunchtime recitals at Cheltenham Town Hall, all broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. This year's artists include **The Consone Quartet** [6 July], mezzo-soprano **Ema Nikolovska** with tenor **Alessandro Fisher** and pianist **Sholto Kynoch** [7 July], jazz guitarist **Rob Luft** with his Quintet [8 July] and the **Mithras Trio** [9 July].

Other highlights by up-and-coming talent include **The Maxwell Quartet**, a young Scottish quartet who will perform their own arrangements of Scottish folk music alongside other works including *Visions at Sea*, a work by Dutch composer Joey Roukens [2 July].

YolanDa Brown presents this year's **Concert for Schools**, which will be a free streamed event available for schoolchildren around the UK and further afield to enjoy [9 July]. Musicians include **Gloucestershire Youth Chamber Orchestra**, drummer **Jas Kayser**, trombonist **Richard Foote**, percussionist **Miriam Kitchener** and vocalist **Gina Baker**, in addition to musicians from the Festival's *Musicate* education programme. The concert will be a mixture of classical and jazz and is aimed at primary and early secondary school children.

Unique Experiences

The Festival always seeks to offer audiences unusual and enlightening musical experiences, and this year the Festival's popular **Classical Mixtape** event returns at Gloucester Cathedral, encouraging audiences to enjoy sets by artists in an informal setting for a 'pay-what-you-can' fee (minimum £3) [5 July]. Audiences are invited to stand, sit or lie down in the atmospheric surroundings of the Cathedral and can film, take photos and post on social media throughout the performance. This

year's set includes a performance by the Chapel Choir of Merton College, Oxford, who will be performing two world premieres by RPS Composer **Lillie Harris**, alongside performances from trumpeter **Aaron Diaz**, cellist **Clare O'Connell** and fiddle player **Charlie Wilde**. As part of Classical Mixtape the Festival is paying tribute to the Gloucestershire Regiment's 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Imjin River and those lost to the pandemic over the past 18 months.

12-piece cross-genre collective **Propellor** will perform *Loom*, a work which carries the imprint and identity of wherever it is performed, mixing field recordings, shared stories, free improvisation, folk, experimental electronica, baroque and contemporary classical music [6 July]. This unique sonic experience will be inspired by Gloucestershire's lakes and rivers and their impact on the lives of those who reside near them, featuring tales from local residents and adventurer and author **Anna McNuff**, with specially crafted audio, visuals and new music.

Alongside its rich musical offerings, the Festival will be presenting talks, film screenings and guided tours to complement the concerts. Musicologist and broadcaster **Katy Hamilton** leads Composium, a day for composers, industry professionals and the wider public, exploring the role of 'failure' in the creative process featuring performances, talks and panel sessions with industry leaders, as well as a showcase from the Festival's 12 Composer Academy participants [9 July].

Celebrating the centenary of the birth of Oscar-award-winning film composer **Sir Malcolm Arnold**, the Festival presents two screenings of his most famous films: *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* [2 July] and *Whistle Down the Wind* [3 July].

There will be two Music and Mindfulness sessions, led by composer and guitarist **Will Crawford**. The sessions will guide audiences through the use of music in meditation and mindfulness practices to help manage stress and aid relaxation in everyday life [3 & 4 July].

For those wishing to enjoy the local surroundings, a guided tour takes audiences in the footsteps of **Hubert Parry** around the countryside of Highnam, where he grew up. Led by **George Parris**, Director of The Carice Singers and Parry scholar, the walk sheds light on the composer's life, listening to his music in the very setting which inspired much of his writing [4 July].

Free Stage

Incorporating Cheltenham Music Festival with Cheltenham Jazz Festival, the Free Stage hosts some of the best up-and-coming performers from the worlds of classical, jazz, indie, folk, Americana and beyond. Highlights include Festival favourites **LATIMO**, a powerhouse eight-piece pop-funk band from London performing their signature feel-good fusion of soaring vocals, blistering horn riffs and heavy groove [9 July]. The Saturday features the likes of multi-award-winning Spanish guitar duo **De Fuego**, Bristol-based folk rock quartet **Anna Colette and the Average Men**, and Congolese Cuban fusion band **Grupo Lokito** [10 July]. The weekend is then rounded off with a final day of non-stop music, including nine-piece, high energy pop ensemble **Argle Bargle**, Moroccan oud-player **Soufian Saihi**, and brasshouse-soul from **Year of the Dog**, who recently performed on Netflix's *Sex Education* [11 July]. Bringing the Festival atmosphere to the streets of Cheltenham, three bands: Unswung Heroes, 3D Brass and Year of the Dog will perform roaming sets courtesy of Cheltenham BID.

Full festival details can be found at www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/music

Members Priority Booking opens on 4 June 2021

General public sale opens on 14 June 2021

Images are available [here](#)

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Notes To Editor

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 Festival 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.

Programme of events

2 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 11:15 – 12:30

Maxwell Quartet

J.P Sweelinck: Fantasia Chromatica

Trad. Fear a Bhata

Joey Roukens: Visions at Sea

Trad. Da Full Rigged Ship

Herbert Howells: Fantasy Quartet Op. 25

Trad. Griogal Cridhe

Josef Haydn String Quartet No. 66 in G Major Op. 77 No. 1

2 July | Playhouse | 14:00 – 16:45

Sir Malcolm Arnold & The Silver Screen: The Inn of the Sixth Happiness

Screening of The Inn of the Sixth Happiness

2 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 19:30 – 20:45

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Kirill Karabits

Mozart: Serenade No. 10 for Winds K.361 'Gran Partita'

Stravinsky: Concerto in D for String Orchestra

Tchaikovsky: Serenade for Strings

3 July | The Drawing Room | 09:00 – 10:30

Music and Mindfulness

Session run by Will Crawford

3 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 11:15 – 12:30

Steven Osbourne

Debussy: Danse Bohémienne, Mazurka, Deux Arabesques, Rêverie, Valse romantique, Ballade, Danse (tarentelle syrienne), Suite Bergamasques, Nocturne, Morceau de concours, Hommage à Haydn, La

plus que lente, Berceuse héroïque, Pièce pour le vêtement du blessé, Élégie & Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon

3 July | Playhouse | 14:30 – 16:30

Sir Malcolm Arnold & The Silver Screen: Whistle Down The Wind

Screening of Whistle Down The Wind

3 July | Nave, St Gregory's Church | 15:30 – 16:30

The Carice Singers and George Parris: Songs of Travel

Two poems by Ernst Viktor Knape:

Sibelius: Män från slätten och havet (Men from plain and sea)

Einojuhani Rautavaara: Sommarnatten (The summer night)

Arnold Bax: Five Greek Folksongs

Alex Freeman: Calle sin nombre (Street with no name) **UK premiere**

Undine Smith Moore: We shall walk through the valley in peace

Matthew Whittall: Songs of Travel **World premiere**

3 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 19:30 – 20:45

BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Martyn Brabbins

Delius: On hearing the first cuckoo in Spring

Arnold: Concerto for 2 violins and Strings Op. 77

Finzi: Prelude for String Orchestra in F minor Op. 25

John Pickard: Concertante Variations for Wind Quintet, Timpani & Strings

Walton: Siesta

Elgar: Serenade for Strings

4 July | The Drawing Room | 09:00 – 10:30

Music and Mindfulness

Session run by Will Crawford

4 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 11:15 – 12:30

Imogen Cooper and Dame Sarah Connolly

Schumann: Frauenliebe und Leben

Brahms: Ständchen; Da unten im Tale; Feldeinsamkeit; Die Mainacht & Von ewiger Liebe

Wolf: Auch kleine Dinge; Gesang Weylas; Nachtzauber; Kennst du das Land & Die Zigeunerin

Holst: Journey's End

Gurney: By a Bierside

Howells Come sing and dance

4 July | Highnam | 14:30 – 16:30

In the footsteps of Hubert Parry

Musical ramble led by George Parris, Director of The Carice Singers

4 July | Parabola Arts Centre | 19:00 – 20:30

Nova Music present *Awakening Shadow*

Donna Lennard *soprano*

Ralph Thomas Williams *countertenor*

Christopher Bowen, Bradley Smith *tenor*

Felix Kemp *baritone*

Nova Music

Luke Styles and Benjamin Britten *Awakening Shadow* (world premiere)

5 July | Gloucester Cathedral | 11:15 – 12:30

Matthew Barley

Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 1 in F Op. 5 (1st movement)

Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 3 in A Op. 69 (2nd, 3rd & 4th movements)

Matthew Barley Improvisation

Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 4 in C Op. 102

5 July | Gloucester Cathedral | 20:30 – 21:45

Classical Mixtape

6 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 13:00 – 14:00

BBC New Generation Artist Recital: The Consone Quartet

6 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 19:30 – 20:45

Propellor Ensemble presents Loom

Loom – a sonic experience

7 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 13:00 – 14:00

BBC New Generation Artist Recital: Ema Nikolovska & Alessandro Fisher

7 July | Online broadcast | 18:00 – 19:00

Maja Bugge and Sarah Nicolls

Bugge and Nicolls *Ballad of a changing world* (World premiere)

7 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 19:30 – 20:45

La Serenissima

Zavateri: Introduzione in G major for strings & continuo

Sammartini: Concerto for recorder, strings & continuo in F major

Dall'Abaco: Concerto XII for strings & continuo in D major Op. 6

Vivaldi: Concerto for violin, strings & continuo in A major RV 353, Concerto for soprano recorder, strings & continuo in C major RV 443 & Concerto for violin, strings & continuo in E minor RV 281

Brescianello: Overture-Suite for strings & continuo in D

8 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 13:00 – 14:00

BBC New Generation Artist Recital: Rob Luft Quintet

8 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 19:30 – 20:45

Jess Gillam Ensemble

Full programme TBA, to include:

Ayanna Witter-Johnson **World premiere**

9 July | Online broadcast | 09:00 – 10:00

Free Concert for Schools

YolanDa Brown *presenter*

Gloucestershire Youth Chamber Orchestra

CMF Musicate musicians

Jas Kayser *drums*

Richard Foote *trombone*

Miriam Kitchener *percussion*

9 July | Gloucester Cathedral | 10:30 – 11:45

Albion Quartet

Haydn: String Quartet in D major Op.20 No.4

Freya Waley-Cohen: Snap Dragon

Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 3 in F major Op. 73

9 July | Pittville Pump Room | 10:30 – 17:00

Composium Day

Following its launch in 2019, this annual day for the classical music industry explores the concept of failure and its role in the creative process. Led by musicologist and broadcaster Katy Hamilton, the day features performances, talks, panel sessions and opportunities to meet and engage with industry leaders. World premiere performances of 12 works by this year's Composer Academy participants, performed by members of Chineke! and The Carice Singers with Course Director Daniel Kidane

9 July | Cheltenham Town Hall | 13:00 – 14:00

BBC New Generation Artist Recital: The Mithras Trio

Chausson: Piano Trio in G minor Op. 3

Mozart: Piano Trio in B flat major K502

9 July | Gloucester Cathedral | 19:30 – 20:45

The 12 Ensemble

Dowland: Lachrymae Antiquae

Caroline Shaw Entr'acte

Arvo Pärt: Fratres (for solo violin, percussion and string orchestra)

Jonathan Woolgar: *new commission **World Premiere**

Pēteris Vasks: Viatore

Biber: Battalia à 10

FREE STAGE LISTINGS

9 July | 17:15 - 18:00

Jaywalkers

9 July | 18:15 – 18:45

Leo Popplewell and Meera Maharaj

9 July | 19:00 – 19:45

Quiet Man

9 July | 20:00 - 20:45

UnSwung Heroes

9 July | 21:00 – 21:55

LATIMO

10 July | 11:00 – 11:30

GMizz

10 July | 11:45 – 12:05

Rise Up

10 July | 12:20 – 13:05

Yeti's Breakfast

10 July | 13:25 – 13:55

Maisie Gaffney

10 July | 14:15 – 14:55

Chris Roberts Band

10 July | 15:10 – 15:55

De Fuego

10 July | 16:15 – 17:05

Anna Colette

10 July | 17:20 – 18:20

The Roaring Trowmen

10 July | 18:40 – 19:30

3D Brass

10 July | 19:50 – 20:40

Grupo Lokito

10 July | 21:00 – 21:50

Elles Bailey

11 July | 10:30 – 11:15

Lilliputs

11 July | 12:15 – 12:45

Natalie Oaks (Music Works)

11 July | 13:00 - 13:30

Russ Poole

11 July | 13:50 – 14:40

Argle Bargle

11 July | 15:00 – 16:00

Bassists with Boobs

11 July | 16:20 – 17:10

Soufian Saihi & Ricardo de Noronha

11 July | 17:30 – 18:15

Sultan Stevenson

11 July | 18:35 – 19:25

Year of the Dog

11 July | 19:45 – 20:30

The ShowHawk Duo