

WIGMORE HALL

Wigmore Hall's two-week Learning Festival returns to celebrate a *Sense of Home*, marking 25 years of the Hall's Learning programme

The Festival celebrates the diverse and multicultural melting pot that is London and the borough of Westminster, reflects on Wigmore Hall as a place many call home and invites audiences to explore what 'home' means to them

12 – 26 February 2019



Highlights include:

- Interactive family concert with violinist Nicola Benedetti (16 February)
- Learning Gala Concert with soprano Ailish Tynan, baritone Benjamin Appl and pianist Iain Burnside (18 February)
- Multi-sensory sound and art installation (18 February)

- **A range of public events for all ages, including a ‘Big Sing!’ workshop day, ‘Chamber Tots’ interactive music-making session and a relaxed concert with soprano Soraya Mafi**

Wigmore Hall places its award-winning Learning programme centre-stage with the second annual Learning Festival, *Sense of Home* (12 – 26 February 2019). For 25 years, the Learning programme has focused on creating innovative creative projects which ensure that every voice is heard and equally valued, transforming the Hall into a place where many people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities feel a sense of home. The *Sense of Home* Festival unites all the Learning programme’s groups, workshops, partner schools and events in a major two-week celebration based in the Hall.

With leading classical musicians taking to the Wigmore Hall stage to perform recitals and run creative music-making events, *Sense of Home* also celebrates London, home to a diverse and multicultural population and invites everyone to explore exactly what ‘home’ means to them.

John Gilhooly, Wigmore Hall’s Director, comments:

‘We are so proud of the breadth of work that we lead with diverse audiences across the community and after 25 years of Wigmore Hall Learning, it seems fitting to celebrate with the Sense of Home Festival, embodying this concept of Wigmore Hall as a hall for everybody. This Festival is an opportunity to draw together all of our creative workshops, concerts and projects, forming a part of our much wider vision to open the Hall to the widest possible audience.’

The central celebration of *Sense of Home* is its Learning Gala Concert, ‘Home Sweet Home’ on Monday 18 February. Soprano **Ailish Tynan**, baritone **Benjamin Appl** and pianist **Iain Burnside** perform a selection of British, German and American songs divided into four themes surrounding home: ‘Where the Heart is’, ‘On the Road Again’, ‘Family Values’ and ‘Bricks and Mortar’. The collection of songs include works by Elgar, Brahms, Ives and Bernstein, as well as contemporary composers John White and Seóirse Bodley.

Earlier in the day, the Hall’s Bechstein Room will be transformed into ‘Home from Home’, an immersive sound and art installation. Music Technologist **Gawain Hewitt** uses objects and sounds to create a multisensory experience that reflects and celebrates all the people that Wigmore Hall works with across London.

Learning Director, Daisy Swift, notes:

‘We are thrilled to be celebrating 25 years of Wigmore Hall Learning with a Festival which embodies an aim at the heart of our programme: to create a musical space in which everyone feels safe, valued and empowered; a space to call home. We’re excited to hear from our diverse audiences and participants what home means to them, and to come together to create our collective ‘Home from Home’ at Wigmore Hall, a place many have considered a kind of home for the past 25 years, and indeed since it first opened its doors in 1901.’

Opening the Festival on Tuesday 12 February, the ‘Big Sing!’ encapsulates the true meaning of *Sense of Home*, welcoming everyone in the community to sing together, regardless of ability or singing experience. Featuring *Singing with Friends*, the Hall’s community choir for families living with dementia, and special guest soloist baritone **Julien Van Mellaerts**, the session is a special

opportunity for people to explore a range of repertoire with vocal leader **Charles MacDougall**, before having a big sing in the Wigmore Hall auditorium. As part of the day, there will also be a 'Dementia Friends' session, providing information on the UK's biggest ever initiative to change people's perceptions of dementia.

Violinist **Nicola Benedetti** and presenter **Lucy Drever** present a special interactive family concert on Saturday 16 February, inspired by landscapes, stories and people from across the UK. The pair will explore works by composers who were so inspired by their home that they wrote music to tell the story of their favourite places.

Other highlights in *Sense of Home* are Wigmore Hall's regular projects and events for children, families, schools, young people and adults. These include 'For Crying Out Loud!', a performance by outstanding musicians from the **Royal Academy of Music**, especially for parents or carers and babies under 1, a 'Chamber Tots' music workshop for children ages 1 to 5 and their parents or carers and a relaxed concert with soprano **Soraya Mafi** that provides everyone with an opportunity to explore music in an informal environment.

For further press information, picture or ticket requests, please contact Roberta Philip at Premier
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The 2019 Learning brochure can be downloaded [here](#).

A selection of Wigmore Hall Learning images can be downloaded [here](#).

Notes to Editors

About Wigmore Hall

Wigmore Hall's 2018/19 season includes nearly 500 concerts across a vibrant programme of chamber music, song, piano, early music, contemporary music and jazz. The striking variety of artists and repertoire reflects the Hall's status as an international standard-bearer for the best in classical music.

A sustained investment in Wigmore Hall's programme development has seen a corresponding increase in the size of its annual audience, which has grown to more than 200,000 people over the past decade. Wigmore Hall's drive to reach new and younger audiences continues in 2018/19, propelled by its popular £5 ticket offer to under-35s and preservation of affordable ticket prices. The venue's Live Stream initiative, following the creation of its new digital studio in 2015, will carry 10 online concerts and the number of live BBC Radio 3 broadcasts is set to pass 100 by the season's end.

For 25 years Wigmore Hall's renowned Learning programme has been giving people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities opportunities to take part in creative music making, engaging a broad and diverse audience through innovative creative projects, concerts, events and online resources. Through collaboration with a range of community, education, arts, health and social care organisations, Wigmore Hall aims to engage people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to take part.

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