

WIGMORE HALL

Beethoven 250 at Wigmore Hall

An ambitious celebration of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth throughout the 2019/20 season covering a wide array of Beethoven's chamber and instrumental works

Beethoven Festival Weekend, 14 & 15 September, launches Beethoven 250

Highlights include:

- **Beethoven Festival Weekend with ten concerts over two days by leading artists including Steven Isserlis and Robert Levin, Hugo Ticciati and O/Modernt, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Škampa Quartet, Benjamin Appl, Alina Ibragimova and Cédric Tiberghien (14 & 15 September)**
- **Complete cycles by artists including piano sonatas with Jonathan Biss, violin sonatas with James Ehnes, string quartets with the Belcea Quartet, and cello sonatas with Miklós Perényi & Dénes Várjon across the season**
- **Beethoven's final three piano sonatas discussed and played by Sir András Schiff**
- **Pianist and Beethoven scholar Jonathan Biss presents extra insight events for audiences in the Hall and online, drawing on his celebrated Beethoven Coursera lectures, and discussions with artists including Brett Dean and Sally Beamish**
- **Composer Freya Waley-Cohen creates news works inspired by Beethoven including a string trio commissioned by Wigmore Hall**
- **Wide range of Wigmore Hall's 2019/20 Beethoven programming to be made available worldwide for free through its streaming service**

Wigmore Hall builds towards the 250th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven's birth in December 2020 with **Beethoven 250**, an ambitious, season-long celebration, devised by Director John Gilhooly, covering almost all of Beethoven's instrumental and chamber works, and examining the composer's legacy. This major Beethoven strand is the most comprehensive of its type in the country during this anniversary year.

The cornerstones of Beethoven 250 are complete surveys of Beethoven's piano, violin, and cello sonatas; the complete string quartets; the complete piano trios; and the complete string trios. Beethoven 250 also sees the start of a two-season series of the composer's piano variations. As a comprehensive survey of Beethoven's instrumental and chamber works by an array of leading performers, Beethoven 250 will undoubtedly provide fresh insights into these pieces. This programming is complemented by explorations of such themes as music and disability, and the composer's legacy in the creative life of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Wigmore Hall's commitment to accessibility is exemplified by the fact that the majority of its 2019/20 Beethoven concerts will be live-streamed for free on its website, alongside broadcast of talks and insight events, bringing a global audience to this landmark celebration.

John Gilhooly, Wigmore Hall's Artistic & Executive Director says:

"As the world's leading venue for chamber music and song, the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth is the perfect opportunity for Wigmore Hall to celebrate the great composer's timeless art. This is a landmark season for the Hall, with an international array of artists, and it underlines our commitment to exceptional musical experiences enjoyed by as wide a range of people as possible."

The Beethoven 250 celebrations commence at the start of Wigmore Hall's 2019/20 season with a **Beethoven Festival Weekend on 14 & 15 September**. The weekend features leading artists offering a wide range of perspectives on Beethoven – his music, his health, and the composers who were influenced by him.

Steven Isserlis and Robert Levin (on fortepiano) open the Beethoven Festival Weekend on 14th September, performing Beethoven cello sonatas and variations. The innovative O/Modernt chamber ensemble, directed from the violin by Hugo Ticiati, give five themed recitals over the weekend exploring Beethoven's convalescence from illness (in his *Heiliger Dankgesang*), his immortal beloved, and also the influence Beethoven had on Brahms and composers stretching into the 20th century. Guest artists joining the ensemble include baritone Benjamin Appl, pianists Tim Horton, Kristian Bezuidenhout and Cédric Tiberghien, violinist Carolin Widmann, soprano Soraya Mafi, the Škampa Quartet, and baritone Mark Stone.

The Beethoven Festival Weekend also welcomes Alina Ibragimova and Cédric Tiberghien performing violin sonatas by Beethoven and Janáček, and the Škampa Quartet with Jakub Fišer performing two of Beethoven's string quartets.

A particular highlight of the Beethoven Festival Weekend promises to be a varied programme of Beethoven's works conceived for unusual combinations of instruments presented by a glittering line-up of prominent musicians including Michael Collins (clarinet), Janne Thomson (flute), Nicholas Daniel (oboe), Amy Harman (bassoon), Alec Frank-Gemmil (horn), Benjamin Baker (violin), Timothy Ridout (viola), Isang Enders (cello), Jordi Carrasco-Hjelm (double bass) and Aleksander Madžar (piano).

The Beethoven Festival Weekend draws to a close on 15th September with a late-evening performance by Elisabeth Leonskaja, widely-regarded as one of the finest Beethoven interpreters, playing the composer's final three piano sonatas.

Wigmore Hall's Beethoven 250 celebrations continue throughout the season with a comprehensive series of complete Beethoven cycles: Jonathan Biss in the piano sonatas, James Ehnes in the violin sonatas, Miklós Perényi and Dénes Várjon in the cello sonatas, the Belcea Quartet in the string quartets, Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch in the piano trios, and, in the string trios, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Daniel Sepec and Tabea Zimmermann. Cédric Tiberghien initiates a series devoted to Beethoven's piano variations that will continue into 2020/21 and Philippe Cassard and Cédric Pescia perform the Ninth Symphony in Liszt's arrangement for two pianos.

In addition to the recitals, online content will also include videos from pianist and Beethoven scholar Jonathan Biss in discussion with friends and colleagues such as Brett Dean and Sally Beamish. Audiences will also have the opportunity to meet with Biss at the Hall, in events drawing on his celebrated Beethoven Coursera lectures. Selected Beethoven 250 concerts will also have discounted tickets available for younger audience members through Wigmore Hall's Under 35s Scheme, in partnership with Classic FM.

Other highlights of the Wigmore Hall's Beethoven 250 celebration include the final three piano sonatas both discussed and played by Sir András Schiff, and Michael Collins, one of the Hall's resident artists for 2019/20, in chamber works. Wigmore Hall's Associate Composer for the 2019/20 season, Freya Waley-Cohen, brings works inspired by Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* in two concerts on 2 November, including two solo violin works performed by the composer's sister Tamsin Waley-Cohen, and a new string trio performed by the Albion Quartet and commissioned especially for the occasion by Wigmore Hall

Artist images can be downloaded [here](#)

Full information and booking information at wigmore-hall.org.uk

**For further press information, images or press tickets, please contact
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