

ALDEBURGH FESTIVAL 2017: 9 - 25 June

Snape Maltings

Highlights include:

- 50th anniversary of Snape Maltings Concert Hall
- A new production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Netia Jones
- First ever Snape Maltings performance of *Billy Budd*
- Featured composers in 2017 are Bill Fontana, Olga Neuwirth and Jörg Widmann
- 13 World premieres at the festival including a new work for soprano and ensemble by Oliver Knussen
- Residencies from Belgian ensemble Vox Luminis & sitarist Nishat Khan
- Pierre-Laurent Aimard piano recital of dance-inspired works from across the centuries
- Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* set in a local house near Snape Maltings
- City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla making her debut at the Festival

One of the earliest conversions of a former industrial building for arts use, Snape Maltings Concert Hall was opened in 1967. Aldeburgh Festival 2017 will be a celebration of the 50th anniversary of music's arrival at Snape, marked at a time when significant further development of the site is being planned.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

At the 1967 festival, seven years after its premiere, Britten chose his opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to celebrate the newly opened Snape Maltings Concert Hall. The 2017 festival opens on **Friday 9 June** with a new production, directed and designed by **Netia Jones**. Conducted by **Ryan Wigglesworth**, the production features a cast led by established British singers including **Iestyn Davies** (Oberon), **Sophie Bevan** (Tytania), **Matthew Rose** (Bottom), **Clive Bayley** (Theseus) and **Andrew Shore** (Quince). **Netia Jones** returns to Aldeburgh to bring to life this captivating tale of lovers, rustics and fairies with four performances on **9, 11, 12 and 14 June**.

The house that Britten built

Echoes of Snape Maltings Concert Hall's past are woven into the festival, with performances of five works by Britten which were premiered in the venue: String Quartet No.3 (performed by the Belcea Quartet on 10 June as part of the quartet's festival residency), *The Golden Vanity* (Jubilee Opera on 17 June), *The Building of the House* (CBSO on 17 June), Third Suite for Cello (Steven Isserlis on 19 June), and *Sacred and Profane* (Vox Luminis on 20 June).

Billy Budd

For the first ever Snape Maltings performance of *Billy Budd*, Garry Walker conducts Opera North's acclaimed 2016 production in a specially devised concert staging for two performances on **24** and **25 June**. Three outstanding British singers - **Roderick Williams, Brindley Sherratt** and **Alan Oke** - take the three central roles of Billy, Claggart and Captain Vere.

Featured Composers

Over the last 45 years pioneering sound artist **Bill Fontana** has installed site-specific public art works at iconic locations in many of the world's great cities and sites, including the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, and Big Ben, the Millennium Bridge and Somerset House in London. For Aldeburgh Festival 2017, Fontana creates significant new installations which open our ears to the hidden music of Snape Maltings' heritage - from echoes of its industrial past to the timeless rhythms of its natural environment. **Olga Neuwirth** and **Jörg Widmann** were born only five years apart, in 1968 in Austria and 1973 in Germany respectively, yet they have chosen contrasting compositional directions. Neuwirth's output remains influenced by the composer Luigi Nono's radical politics and includes film and stage work, as well as much music which requires electro-acoustic treatment. Widmann has chosen to work more regularly with standard classical ensembles and instruments, although they both share an extraordinary imagination which produces music of great colour and playfulness. Highlights at the festival include a number of Olga Neuwirth's works, many receiving their UK premieres. One of the first anti-war films in history, *Maudite soit la Guerre*, was made in 1914 shortly before the First World War. In 2013 Neuwirth wrote a score to the silent movie which will receive its UK premiere by the **London Sinfonietta** under the baton of **Gerry Cornelius** on **10 June**. Later the same day a second concert from the London Sinfonietta and Cornelius features Neuwirth's *Hommage à Klaus Nomi* by sung by **Andrew Watts**. Widmann's *Viola Concerto* receives its UK premiere by the work's dedicatee **Antoine Tamestit** with the **CBSO** and its new Music Director **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla**. Tamestit describes the work as 'a unique audience experience' including inventive playing techniques. Widmann's *Three Shadows Dance* for solo clarinet also receives its UK premiere given by the composer himself on **11 June**.

World Premieres

The inspiration for Oliver Knussen's new piece *O Hototogisu* was personal: a tribute to Stephen and Jackie Newbould, former directors of **Birmingham Contemporary Music Group**. It is scored for soprano and ensemble and the world premiere performance on **23 June** will be conducted by Knussen himself and performed by BCMG and soprano **Claire Booth** who have been long-standing collaborators with the composer. Knussen's Japanese texts are complemented by Stravinsky's oriental songs and music by Jo Kondo. The programme also includes a series of miniatures by Harrison Birtwistle. **Andrew Watts** presents 'A Countertenor Songbook' with pianist **Iain Burnside** on **12 June** in a programme of contemporary works including world premieres by **Michael Finnissy, Neville Bower, Joe Cutler and Tansy Davies** alongside pieces by **Colin Matthews** and **Raymond Yiu**. On **19 June** bass **Matthew Rose** and the **Albion Quartet** give a recital of chamber music and song with Barber's *Dover Beach* at its heart. Rose also performs new work, including **Kate Whitley's** settings of the folk-flavoured poetry of Charlotte Mew and the world premiere of a new work by Aldeburgh Young Musician **Dominic Willis**.

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Vox Luminis

Lionel Meunier and his award-winning Belgian early music vocal group **Vox Luminis** make their Aldeburgh Festival debut with a three-concert residency. On **18 June** in Blythburgh Church the programme includes a selection of Bach Cantatas set alongside Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien*. The second concert on **20 June** places Britten within and alongside the highpoints of English choral repertoire in a programme of resurrection and regeneration, darkness to light with works by Purcell, Tallis, Byrd, Morley and Robert White. It includes Britten's own Latin responses in *Hymn of the Virgin* and his celebration of decay and rebirth in *Sacred and Profane*. Vox Luminis gives a concert performance on **22 June** of Purcell's *King Arthur*, one of the composer's most colourful and vibrantly inventive music-dramas.

Nishat Khan

Sitarist **Nishat Khan** explores ancient plainchant and raags in his Aldeburgh residency. On **15 June**, he collaborates with one of Europe's finest male voice choirs - the **Saint Ephraim Choir**. Together they explore Khan's belief that modal Indian classical music holds a special affinity with the ancient plainchant tradition of the Western Christian Church. The grainy vocal textures are overlaid with Khan's intricate improvisation mirroring the choral ornamentation so crucial to the Gregorian and Byzantine tradition. On **17 June** in the beautiful setting of Orford Church, Khan explores the raag - the backbone and essence of Indian classical music. Raags respond to and express every aspect of their environment: the atmosphere, the light, the location and shifting patterns of day. Through the course of the day Nishat Khan will bring the raag tradition to life with a session for each season of the day: a Suffolk summer morning, the tilt towards evening and late into the night.

Poulenc's La Voix Humaine

The original concept for this production of Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* was created by **David Pountney** and is directed by **Mathilde Lopez** for the Aldeburgh Festival in six performances on **15, 16 & 17 June**. A party is taking place and the host Elle - soprano **Claire Booth** - is on the phone to her lover. It seems their relationship is over and the party and phone call continue simultaneously until her nerves crack. Staged in a house near Snape, the domestic setting intensifies Jean Cocteau's monodrama which promises to be an intense and vivid experience.

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla

The **CBSO's** newly appointed Music Director **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** makes her Aldeburgh debut with two concerts. On **17 June**, Gražinytė-Tyla and the CBSO raise an anniversary toast to Snape Maltings with the overture Britten wrote for the Concert Hall's opening night - *The Building of the House*. This is set alongside two Beethoven masterpieces: *Leonore Overture No.3* and *Symphony No. 5* and the UK premiere of Widmann's *Viola Concerto*. On **18 June** Gražinytė-Tyla and the CBSO perform Stravinsky's *Petrushka*.

Other highlights

Other highlights include a concert of chromatic music of the Renaissance by **Exaudi** including works by Vincentino, Lassus and Rore alongside pieces by Exaudi director James Weeks (10 June). Together with works by Mozart and Janáček, pianist **Piotr Anderszewski** performs Chopin, the composer who was featured in the very first recital in Snape Maltings (13 June). The duo partnership of violinist **Tamsin Waley-Cohen** and pianist/composer Huw Watkins perform a recital which includes two of Knussen's most recent instrumental works - *Reflections and Orphelia's Last Dance* (15 June). **Pierre-Laurent Aimard**, who was Festival Artistic Director from 2009 to 2016, gives a piano recital of dance-inspired works from across the centuries, including music by Sweelinck, Kurtág and Chopin (16 June). Cellist **Steven Isserlis** and pianist **Connie Shih** explore works that both exploit the cello's richness and variety of moods and have close links with the festival. These include Bridge's Cello Sonata, Britten's *Suite No. 3* and Thomas Adès' *Lieux retrouvés* (19 June). Meanwhile in **Music on the Meare** (23 June) Nicholas Daniel recreates a moment of Aldeburgh Festival history, performing Britten's *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid* on the water of Thorpeness Meare. The recital starts in Jubilee Hall with a new set of six companion pieces by Mark Simpson, Helen Grime, Huw Watkins, Joanna Lee, Huang Ro and Sean Shepherd all taking Ted Hughes' *Tales from Ovid* as inspiration and illuminated by readings by Dryden, Hughes and Kenneth Graham. Audiences will be transported from the Hall to the Meare by 1950s vintage buses. The inspirational **Multi-Story Orchestra** returns to the Festival to give two contrasting concerts in an unusual Ipswich location (24 June). In the first, *I am I say* (written by the orchestra's co-founder Kate Whitley for primary school children to sing with orchestra) is coupled with Handel. The second concert opens with The Living Programme Note, a unique and personal encounter in which the players disperse to all corners of the venue to introduce Mozart's Symphony No. 41 'Jupiter', followed by a complete performance.

Snape Maltings - its past, present and future

In 2015 Aldeburgh Music purchased the entire Snape Maltings site - including its shops, restaurants and galleries - giving the organisation an opportunity to protect and secure the future of the unique heritage site, give it room to grow and also to diversify its income through the Maltings's retail activities. Now ambitious plans are in place for further development of the site, including re-developing the derelict Maltings buildings in order to expand the creative campus and the organisation's artist development, learning and inclusion programmes, which run throughout the year. The concept masterplan for the remaining site development will be presented in June 2017 as the Concert Hall's 50th anniversary is celebrated. The unifying of the site has begun and it will now be known by the single name of **Snape Maltings** with a new logo and brand inspired by the reedbeds that extend from the site far into the Alde Estuary. There is also a new website (www.snapemaltings.co.uk) which showcases all aspects of the site - its music and arts programmes alongside its natural environment and shops.