



Wigmore Hall builds on sustained success to deliver exceptional artistic programme for 2018/19 season

- Wigmore Hall's 2018/19 Season announced today by John Gilhooly, with nearly 500 concerts across a vibrant programme of chamber music, song, piano, early music, contemporary music and jazz
- The past season was Wigmore Hall's most financially successful ever
- New and younger audiences to flow from 20,000 subsidised £5 tickets, live streamed concerts, thrilling **Late Night Series** and **Learning Festival**
- **Schumann Song Series** offers landmark celebration of intimate romantic masterworks brought to life by today's finest interpreters, complemented by **Elias String Quartet** in Schumann's complete quartets
- Return visits from **Elina Garanča**, **René Pape**, **Thomas Adès**, **Ekaterina Semenchuk** and **Evgeny Kissin**
- **Igor Levit** explores variations by J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Frederic Rzewski and Stevenson
- A **Russian Song Series** (with **Iain Burnside**) and a **Ravel Song Series** (with **Joseph Middleton**) continue Wigmore Hall's unrivalled commitment to the art of song
- Artist residencies create season-long musical journeys in company with **Dame Sarah Connolly**, **Pekka Kuusisto**, **Marlis Petersen** and **Alexander Melnikov**
- **American Exploration: Visits to the New World** series delivers compelling programme from **Escher String Quartet** and context for **JACK Quartet's** performance of complete string quartets of Elliott Carter
- Focus on **Sir George Benjamin**, including a performance of his chamber opera *Into the Little Hill*, and Benjamin conducting **Ensemble Modern** in his *Palimpsest*, presented at London's Roundhouse

- **Vox Luminis** and **Ensemble Correspondances** offer fresh insights into German and French Baroque repertoire with residencies as part of rich *Early Music and Baroque Series*
- **Emanuel Ax**, **Christian Blackshaw** and **Dame Emma Kirkby**, **Steven Isserlis** and **Piotr Anderszewski** celebrate birthday milestones at Wigmore Hall

Great artists and exceptional emerging talents are set to shape Wigmore Hall's 2018/19 season. Their work can be heard as part of a compelling programme of special projects, artist residencies, composer-led series and individual concerts, devised to delight existing audiences and draw newcomers to the life-enhancing experience of chamber music and song. The striking variety of artists and repertoire reflects the Hall's status as an international standard-bearer for the best in classical music.

The new season flows naturally from sustained investment in programme development and 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, launched following the creation of its new digital studio in 2015, will carry 10 online concerts, while the number of live BBC Radio 3 broadcasts is set to pass 100 by season's end. Wigmore Hall's *Late Night Series*, seven concerts held from May to July at 10pm on Fridays, includes performances by **Susan Bullock**, **Anne Sofie von Otter**, **Viktoria Mullova**, **Chineke! Orchestra** and rising-star guitarist **Sean Shibe**. **Wigmore Hall Learning** follows its first festival this season with a *Learning Festival* week inspired by the theme of 'Home', backed by related sessions and other events reaching out to audiences at the Hall and beyond.

In recent years Wigmore Hall has enhanced its reputation as a global leader in the promotion of song. Having explored the complete songs of Schubert over two seasons, the venue turns in 2018/19 to the songs of Robert Schumann. **Florian Boesch**, a regular at Wigmore Hall since the early days of his career, opens the new season and launches the *Schumann Song Series* in recital with **Malcolm Martineau**. **Christiane Karg**, **Anne Schwanewilms**, **Robin Tritschler** and **Paula Murrihy** are among the roster of singers scheduled to celebrate Schumann. The series, which sets Schumann in context his contemporaries, will run until the end of the 2019/20 season.

Schumann's chamber music can be heard from fresh perspectives when **Steven Isserlis**, in company with **Isabelle Faust**, **Janine Jansen** and friends, leads a four-concert *Fauré/Schumann Project*. **Steven Isserlis** will also mark his 60th birthday in December in recital with **Joshua Bell**, **Radu Lupu** and **Sir Andrés Schiff**, an evening emblematic of Wigmore Hall's world-class programme.

The power of song pervades the new season. **Ian Bostridge** turns his experience and insights to *Schubert's Song Cycles*, performed in partnership with pianists **Thomas Adès**, **Sir Antonio Pappano** and **Lars Vogt**. The tenor also appears in recital with American jazz pianist and composer **Brad Mehldau**, who has written a new song cycle specially for him. **Miah Persson**, **Henk Neven**, **James Newby**, **Dame Sarah Connolly**, **Clara Mouriz** and **Roderick Williams** are among the participants in the Hall's *Ravel Song Series*, a major retrospective of the French composer's charismatic contributions to the song repertoire.

Wigmore Hall's *Russian Song Series* offers a showcase for the finest Russian and Russian-speaking singers in songs by everyone from Musorgsky and Tchaikovsky to Shostakovich and Shchedrin. The season also trains the spotlight on today's finest singers, including **Dorothea Röschmann**, **Roberta Invernizzi**, **Véronique Gens**, **René Pape**, **Mark Padmore**, **Christian Gerhaher**, **Ekaterina Semenchuk**, **Andreas Scholl** and **Michaela Schuster**. The list of emerging vocal talent spans an equally fascinating

range of artists, each steeped in the traditions of the song recital yet highly original and imaginative in their approaches to the repertoire. The season offers a snapshot of the next generation of star recitalists with performances from **Catriona Morison, Louise Alder, Milan Siljanov, Christina Landshamer, Nicky Spence, Julia Kleiter, Ilker Arcayürek, Manuel Walser, André Schuen, Maximilian Schmitt** and **Benjamin Appl**.

Igor Levit, a firm favourite with Wigmore Hall audiences, delivers a three-concert series devoted to the art of the variation. He opens with Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, pairs Beethoven's monumental *Diabelli Variations* with Frederic Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* and concludes with a programme featuring Ronald Stevenson's *Passacaglia on DSCH*, a towering landmark of modern British piano music.

Other key themes and red-letter events in Wigmore Hall's *London Pianoforte Series* include a concert by **Elisabeth Leonskaja**, comprising Viennese works by Mozart, Berg, Schoenberg and Webern, and recitals by **Sir Andrés Schiff, Richard Goode** and **Marc-André Hamelin**. **Emanuel Ax** marks his 70th birthday in company with **Simon Keenlyside** and the **Dover Quartet**, while **Piotr Anderszewski** celebrates his 50th birthday with a solo recital. **Christian Blackshaw** launches a three-concert residency in partnership with members of the **Berliner Philharmoniker**, returns for a song recital with **Alice Coote**, and honours Mozart's anniversary and his own 70th birthday on 27 January 2019 with a typically imaginative combination of works by Mozart, Schubert, Franck and Schumann.

Chamber music highlights include *American Explorations: Visits to the New World*, a series featuring works by, among others, Barber, Copland, Korngold, Gershwin, Bernard Hermann, Britten, Dvořák, Ives, Ravel and Andrew Norman, performed by the **Escher String Quartet**. The **JACK Quartet** continue the transatlantic theme with an evening comprising the complete string quartets of Elliott Carter, while the **Pavel Haas Quartet** and **Thomas Adès** survey the string quartets and piano works of Leoš Janáček. The **Elias String Quartet** complements Wigmore Hall's *Schumann Song Series* with performances of the composer's string quartets, three remarkable works created at lightning speed in the summer of 1842.

Artist residencies stand proud in the 2018/19 season. Mezzo-soprano **Dame Sarah Connolly**'s all-round artistry takes centre stage in four concerts, including solo song recitals with **Julius Drake** and **Malcolm Martineau**, and an evening with award-winning chamber choir **Tenebrae**. Finnish violinist **Pekka Kuusisto**, renowned for inspired programming and adventurous creative partnerships, brings his visionary music-making to Wigmore Hall for a three-concert series comprising works by Bach and Bartók and a new composition by Perttu Haapanen.

There are major residencies, too, for soprano **Marlis Petersen** and pianist **Alexander Melnikov**. The former is set to perform Telemann with the **Kölner Akademie**, a Schubert recital with tenor **Werner Güra**, and Brahms's *Liebeslieder* waltzes in partnership with **Anke Vondung, Werner Güra, Paul-Armin Edelmann** and the pianists **Christoph Berner** and **Camillo Radicke**. **Alexander Melnikov** will give a solo recital, perform Brahms's impassioned Piano Quintet with **Cuarteto Casals**, and explore chamber works together with, among others, violinist **Isabelle Faust** and cellist **Jean-Guihen Queyras**.

As the world's premiere platform for new chamber music and song, Wigmore Hall plays host to works by many of today's leading composers. The 2018/19 *Contemporary Music Series* includes a special focus on the music of **Sir George Benjamin** and a performance of his chamber opera *Into the Little Hill*. Benjamin will conduct **Ensemble Modern** in his *Palimpsest*, presented at London's Roundhouse in company with modern masterworks by Boulez, Ligeti, Messiaen and Galina Ustvolskaya. International stars **Jason Moran, Joshua Redman, Brad Mehldau** and **Django Bates** add to the venue's diversity of contemporary music with standout dates in the *Jazz Series*.

Wigmore Hall's **Early Music and Baroque Series** continues to grow thanks to significant financial investment and high audience demand. New season highlights include residencies for Gramophone Award-winning vocal ensemble **Vox Luminis**, comprising works by Schütz, Charpentier and J.S. Bach, and **Ensemble Correspondances** in programmes of music by Charpentier, Delalande and 17th-century French composers inspired by the haunting moods of night. Harpsichordist **Mahan Esfahani** and pianist **Angela Hewitt** continue their multi-season explorations of Bach's keyboard works, while **Dame Emma Kirkby**, a pioneer of the Early Music Movement, celebrates her 70th birthday with a concert in February 2019. The gamut of repertoire, from late medieval to early classical, will be spanned in performances by **Trio Mediaeval**, **Stile Antico**, the **Orlando Consort**, **L'Arpeggiata**, **The Sixteen**, the **Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin**, **La Nuova Musica**, **Tenebrae**, **Freiburg Baroque Orchestra** and the **Early Opera Company**.

John Gilhooly, Chief Executive and Artistic Director of Wigmore Hall, notes: *'It has been a great joy to put this programme together. I am particularly thrilled by the scope of our focus on Schumann's songs and string quartets, and by the high number of outstanding singers and string quartets that we will hear throughout the season. There is a new generation of singers, dedicated to Lieder and art song, stepping forward now. We want our audience to discover their work and follow their careers as they develop.'*

Wigmore Hall has become a venue that is no longer for hire. The vast majority of concerts in our 2018/19 season have been built by us and are promoted by the Hall. That gives strength to our artistic identity and means that we can set the highest standards of quality and creativity across the season. Our audience appreciates the opportunity to hear world-class artists every day and to immerse themselves in artist residencies, themes and special projects that extend over one or more seasons. The last year has been financially the most successful ever for Wigmore Hall. We look forward to continuing that upward trend and sharing exceptional performances with the widest possible audience.'

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