



Press release

TANSY DAVIES & NICK DRAKE

CAVE

World premiere

The Printworks, Canada Water, London, SE16 7PJ

Wednesday 20 June to Saturday 23 June, 7.30pm

Saturday 23 June, 2.30pm

Tickets on sale 31 January 2018

londonsinfonietta.org.uk

The London Sinfonietta, in association with The Royal Opera, presents a landmark new commission by one of the UK's most exciting composers **Tansy Davies** and award-winning writer **Nick Drake**. A bold site-specific opera, *Cave* is about one man's quest for survival and courage in a future ruined by climate change. Set in a cave and inspired by their significance across history, the vast space at Printworks provides the perfect venue for this world premiere production. The score, a tapestry of dark, luminous and visceral sounds, conjuring strange spaces full of imagined ancestral spirits, will be expertly performed by tenor **Mark Padmore**, mezzo-soprano **Elaine Mitchener** and the **London Sinfonietta**. *Cave* is directed by **Lucy Bailey** and conducted by **Geoffrey Paterson**.

The London Sinfonietta approached Tansy Davies to commission this work as the finale to its 50th Anniversary Season, signifying the ensemble's commitment to creating innovative, forward-looking new music projects that carry important messages about life in the 21st century. *Cave* reunites the successful partnership of Davies and Drake following *Between Worlds*, their operatic response to the events of 9/11 which won the 2016 British Composer Award for Stage Work.

Like their first collaboration, *Cave* tells a story of human suffering balanced by the healing force of the natural world. The central character is a man fleeing from the devastating effects of climate change, who is also on a quest for his lost child. Desperate to connect one last time with his daughter, he enters a dark cave, triggering a journey into an underworld of spirits.

“We both want to try and achieve a better world, a balanced world where respect for nature is important. We both feel that there’s power there – not only dreams and visions but real wisdom that we can reclaim and respect... It’s an outer journey about the world and situation we’re in but it’s also an inner journey. It has to do with finding stillness within.” **Tansy Davies**

The idea came from Davies’ and Drake’s shared interest in the human significance of caves and a trip together to the Cave of Niaux in Southern France. This visit inspired a work with a deep, dark space at its heart where humans could gather and share stories, music and wisdom. The dry river bed on Niaux cave’s floor informed aspects of the score and its harmonic field of floating, dark material heard as a backdrop of electronics.

The vocal qualities of both soloists offer powerful dramatic contrast. Mark Padmore’s purity of sound is directly spiritual; an evangelist. Elaine Mitchener is an extreme vocalist and improviser, creating fierce and varied sounds as she moves between abstract effect and song.

Cave will be performed in the Printworks, once the home to the Evening Standard, and now an exciting new event venue in Canada Water. The production, directed by Lucy Bailey and designed by Mike Britton will invite the audience to take a journey deep into its dark industrial chasm.

“The London Sinfonietta’s 50th birthday season culminates in this ambitious project. It’s great to commission Tansy Davies to make her second staged work with Nick Drake – Tansy is a composer who has been working with the ensemble for years, and yet this will be our most significant collaboration with her to date. With the world-class talents of Mark Padmore, Elaine Mitchener and Lucy Bailey, we hope to create a project for today – one that inspires and moves every individual who sees it while also commenting on the times we live in. We are hugely grateful to the Royal Opera House for going on this journey with us.”

Andrew Burke, London Sinfonietta Chief Executive & Artistic Director

Artist biographies:

Tansy Davies’s *neon* (2004) – a gritty collage of twisted funk written for the Composers Ensemble – quickly became her calling card and since then her music has been championed internationally by the likes of the New York Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, AskolSchönberg, the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and the London Symphony Orchestra, and at festivals including Ultima, Présences, and the Warsaw Autumn. Her work has been inspired by sources as diverse as Zaha Hadid (*Spiral House*) and Anselm Kiefer (*Falling Angel*). Her fascination with the Troubadours finds expression in *Troubairitz*, the 2010 song cycle that gave its name to a portrait disc on Nonclassical.

Between Worlds – a bold response to the events of 9/11 to a libretto by Nick Drake – was premiered by English National Opera in 2015 in a production by Deborah Warner, and was later awarded the 2016 British Composer Award for Stage Work. Recent projects include *Re-greening* for large singing orchestra – premiered by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain – and *Forest*, a concerto for four horns and orchestra.

Nick Drake is a poet, playwright and screenwriter. *The Man in the White Suit* (Bloodaxe Books, 1999), won the Waterstones/Forward Prize for Best First Collection. *The Farewell Glacier* (Bloodaxe Books, 2012) grew out of a voyage in the Arctic to study climate change. The poems were recorded for *High Arctic*, an award-winning installation by United Visual Artists at the National Maritime Museum. Theatre works include: *To Reach the Clouds* (Nottingham Playhouse), *All the Angels* (Globe Theatre, London, 2017), published by Faber, and the libretto for *Between Worlds*, composer Tansy Davies, directed by Deborah Warner (ENO/Barbican, 2015). His screenplay for *Romulus My Father* was shortlisted at the Australian Film Awards, where the film won Best

Film. *Message from the Unseen World*, his poem in memory of Alan Turing, is on display in UVA's permanent light installation of the same name in Paddington Basin. His new poetry collection *Out of Range* (Bloodaxe) will be published in November.

Lucy Bailey is a theatre and opera director. She trained as an assistant director with Glyndebourne Festival, National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, before co-founding the music theatre company the gogmagogs in 1995, and The Print Room theatre in 2010 where she directed award winning productions including *Uncle Vanya* with Iain Glen. Early work as an opera director includes collaborations with Harrison Birtwistle, Alexander Goehr, David Sawer, John Tavener and Giorgio Battistelli. Her many theatre credits include *Baby Doll*, *Night Season*, National Theatre; *As You Like It*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Macbeth*, *Comus*, Shakespeare's Globe; *Julius Caesar*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *The Winters' Tale*, for the RSC. She has recently directed a site specific production of *Witness for the Prosecution* which is currently playing in London's County Hall.

Mark Padmore has established an international career in opera, concert and recital. Recent work includes the leading roles in Harrison Birtwistle's *The Corridor* and *The Cure* at the Aldeburgh Festival and Linbury Theatre, Covent Garden. His appearances in Bach Passions have gained particular notice especially his acclaimed performances as Evangelist in the St Matthew and St John Passions with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Simon Rattle, staged by Peter Sellars.

Elaine Mitchener is an experimental vocalist and movement artist whose work encompasses improvisation, contemporary composition, sound art, music theatre, physical theatre and performance art. She has performed at Venice Biennale, White Cube, London Contemporary Music Festival, Café Oto and ICA, London. Her production company Elaine Mitchener Projects has produced a number of projects including most recently *SWEET TOOTH* an experimental music theatre piece, which deals with the historical links between sugar and slavery.

Listings information:

TANSY DAVIES/NICK DRAKE: CAVE (world premiere)

Wed 20 June – Sat 23 June 2018, 7.30pm

Sat 23 June, matinee 2.30pm

Printworks, Surrey Quays Road,

Canada Water, SE16 7PJ

There will be a performance for schools and community groups on Friday 22 June at 2.30pm (not on general sale – please contact the London Sinfonietta for tickets)

Mark Padmore tenor

Elaine Mitchener mezzo-soprano

Geoffrey Paterson conductor

London Sinfonietta

Creative team

Tansy Davies composer

Nick Drake libretto

Lucy Bailey director

Mike Britton designer

Jack Knowles lighting designer

Produced by the London Sinfonietta in association with The Royal Opera.

Commission supported by the Britten-Pears Foundation and Cockayne – Grants for the Arts and The London Community Foundation

Tickets will go on sale on 31 January, available on both the London Sinfonietta and Royal Opera House websites: www.londonsinfonietta.org.uk | <http://www.roh.org.uk/productions/cave-by-lucy-bailey>

FOR FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION AND IMAGES: Maija Handover / Sound UK, majja@sounduk.net

NOTES TO EDITORS

London Sinfonietta 1968–2018

The London Sinfonietta's mission is to place the best contemporary classical music at the heart of today's culture; engaging and challenging the public through inspiring performances of the highest standard, and taking risks to develop new work and talent. Founded in 1968, the ensemble's commitment to new music has seen it commission over 350 works, and premiere many hundreds more. Resident at Southbank Centre and Artistic Associates at Kings Place, with a busy touring schedule across the UK and abroad, its core 18 Principal Players represent some of the best solo and ensemble musicians in the world.

Having held a world-leading position in education and participation work for many years, the London Sinfonietta continues this with a belief that arts participation is transformational to individuals and communities, and new music is relevant to people's lives.

The ensemble has an extensive back catalogue of recordings made over 50 years, which have been released on numerous prestigious labels as well as its own London Sinfonietta Label. Recent recordings include a limited edition run of LPs in collaboration with artist Christian Marclay (2015), saxophonist Marius Neset's *Snowmelt* (2016; ACT) which won an ECHO Jazz award for best large ensemble album, and George Benjamin's opera, *Into the Little Hill* (2017; Nimbus). The London Sinfonietta has also broken new ground by creating Steve Reich's Clapping Music app for iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch, a participatory rhythm game that has been downloaded over 200,000 times worldwide since its launch in late 2015.

londonsinfonietta.org.uk

About The Royal Opera

The Royal Opera, under the artistic direction of Antonio Pappano, Music Director, and Oliver Mears, Director of Opera, is one of the world's leading opera companies. The Royal Opera presents a wide-ranging programme, which includes the regular commissioning of new operas, both in the iconic Covent Garden theatre in London and also streamed and relayed live around the world as part of the ROH Live Cinema Season. The Royal Opera and the Royal Opera House play a leading role in education, community engagement, skills development, professional training and cultural regeneration in the UK.

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