

London Sinfonietta

GEORG FRIEDRICH HAAS: IN VAIN



2016/17 SEASON

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CUE THE NEW: HOW TO LISTEN TO THE 21ST CENTURY

2016/17 SEASON



GEORG FRIEDRICH HAAS: IN VAIN

Thursday 27 April 2017
7.30pm, Royal Festival Hall

Georg Friedrich Haas in vain (2000)

Brad Lubman conductor
London Sinfonietta

Please note 20 minutes of the piece will be performed in complete darkness.

6.30pm The Clore Ballroom
Royal College of Music Trombone Ensemble

Daniel Schnyder Olympia
Georg Friedrich Haas Trombone Octet

Byron Fulcher director
Royal College of Music Trombone Ensemble:

Jonathan Hollick

Robert Moseley

Ross Johnson

David Pitts

Nicolas Kent

Alec Coles-Aldridge

James Bluff

James Maund

Andrew Crampton

Free pre-concert event

We hope you enjoy the concert this evening. Please do not hesitate to approach our Duty Manager and ushers with any questions you may have. If you wish to get in touch with us following your visit, please contact the Visitor Experience Team at Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX, phone 020 7960 4250 or email customer@southbankcentre.co.uk. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

The London Sinfonietta is grateful to Arts Council England for their generous support of the ensemble, as well as the many other individuals, trusts and businesses who enable us to realise our ambitions.



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WELCOME

Georg Freidrich Haas' *in vain* is recognised deservedly as one of the first masterpieces of the 21st century. We are proud to be performing it again, after we gave its UK premiere in 2013. We are also very pleased to invite back Brad Lubman to our ensemble, who has led us so successfully in past projects.

New music of such quality can still present a challenge to wider audiences – not least because of its lack of familiarity. Encouraging people to experience such works in concert has driven some of the choices of what we have performed this year, balanced with the drive to commission or give premieres. It's been a long-standing mission of the London Sinfonietta to introduce and embed new music with audiences who are curious – so thanks for coming tonight and continuing your journey with us.

Next season we reach our 50th anniversary, and we want to welcome more of you into the inner circle of our work. We are always grateful to the Arts Council, Southbank Centre and other supporters for their investment in our programme or projects. But with donations from individuals, we can achieve much more. Please help us make next year a true celebration - more details can be found in tonight's programme.

Enjoy tonight, and let us know what you think.

Andrew Burke
Chief Executive

Tell us what you think

We're eager to know your thoughts on tonight's concert and would be very grateful if you could fill in our short online survey. It's very simple and only takes about 5 minutes.

Take the survey by visiting:
<https://culturecounts.cc/s/2wYZPP>

REMEMBERING NONA LIDDELL

London Sinfonietta Principal First Violin 1970–1994

It is with great sadness that we have heard of the death of Nona Liddell. Nona led the London Sinfonietta from her violin chair for many years. For all players who worked with her, she was a hugely valued colleague. The great tradition of this ensemble was and continues to be defined to a large degree by the fiercely talented musicians who are passionate about new music and commit themselves to it. Nona Liddell is foremost amongst these.

Nona was a formidable violinist, an inspirational woman, and a vital part of the London Sinfonietta and will be greatly missed.

"I shall never forget her love of music, her joy in the music profession, her enjoyment of touring and her infectious sense of fun. She was an inspiration to everybody connected with the Sinfonietta and I shall miss her greatly."

John Constable, London Sinfonietta Emeritus Principal Piano



IN VAIN (2000)

The light intensity in the concert hall during *in vain* is annotated in the score and ranges from “concertlighting as for podium and lectern” to “complete darkness”. It is the music played in darkness that puts not only the audience and the performer in an unusual position, but above all the composer. The vocals must be easy to memorise, everything played must be controlled aurally by the performers, and it is futile to expect an invisible conductor to perform his usual tasks. When the light gradually fades, only minutes after *in vain* begins, quick, downward lines starting from the outset cease, while soft, lying tones remain, dodging each other by way of quarter-tone intervals. The music dips into the pitch-black darkness of the night, finds its bearings anew, and gropes its way forward.

Georg Friedrich has said of microtonality: “Microtonal music has no tradition. Until late in the 20th century, all composers writing microtonal music had to begin anew every time. Even today, using microtones is considered out of the ordinary. You need to justify the use of tones from outside the tempered system.”

This lack of familiarity is often the starting point for Haas’ compositions. Not that he claims to have reinvented microtonality – quite the contrary. He allows the experiences of varying harmonic concepts by Ivan Wyschnegradsky, Alois Hába, Giacinto Scelsi and Harry Partch to flow into his compositions. Similarly, Haas does not intend to ‘improve’ the tempered system by moving toward the obvious pleasurable qualities of pure intonation.

His music makes audible the differences between the ‘usual’ and the ‘possible’, bringing what is buried under our listening habits to our attention. The reduction noticeable in his music – the absence of ordinary melodies, the melting away of rhythm in acceleration and deceleration, the limitation to few pitch levels and modes of

articulation – unfailingly refers listeners to the sound and form, allowing in-between tones to become audible once again.

In the “normal” tempered intonation, the piece sets out with individual (high) tones that go almost unnoticed. The denser the sound becomes, the more the counter-world emerges with the natural series of partials and intervals, which increasingly contract as the pitch rises. Like his Violin Concerto, two harmonic starting points are contrasted. On one hand – extracts of pure overtone series. On the other hand – chords in the tempered piano mood made of thirds, fourths, and fifths. The difference between these two tone systems blur after the end of the second dark phase with a renewed acceleration in tempo and an increasing density in sound. Right at the transition to this second and final dark phase, a combination of overtones enter.

Large sections of *in vain* are characterised by descending pitch levels and near the end, an extended *accelerando* withdraws into itself. Extensive processes with gradual transformations, deceptive spiral formations – both in pitch and time structures – and the “return to situations deemed to be overcome” (Haas) are the principle form. The symbolism of numbers is also significant in the size of orchestration (24 instruments) and in the microtonal 24:25 interval. Over and beyond construction, Georg Friedrich Haas tends to cultivate Alois Hába’s ideal concept of form, described as “free rambling without thematic context”. Interestingly, Haas does not refer to contemporaries such as Tristan Murail as the source of instrumented overtone series, but rather to the repetitive sevenths of Franz Schubert.

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GEORG FRIEDRICH HAAS



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COMPOSER

“Two things were clear to me from an early age: the twelve tones that a piano can produce per octave are too few for me. I need smaller intervals, finer nuances. And I want to compose expressive, emotional music which moves and takes hold of people,” says Georg Friedrich Haas of his work.

Born in 1953, he grew up in a mountain village in the Vorarlberg region of western Austria and was already exposed to new music as a student through his music teacher, the composer Gerold Amann. MacDowell Professor of Music at Columbia University in New York since 2013, Georg Friedrich Haas now moves geographically between two poles. He sees himself as being integrated in the traditions of the Viennese School through his teachers Gösta Neuwirth, Ivan Eröd and in particular Friedrich Cerha, and at the same time takes the aesthetic freedom of American composers such as Charles Ives, John Cage and James Tenney as an important point of reference for musical expression that goes beyond ideologies.

However, according to the composer a specific technique can only be a means to an end and he refuses to be compositionally pigeonholed: “I don’t trust relationships that become apparent only

in the score rather than through immediate sensual perception. I hope that in my music, intuition and rational control are balanced”, he explains.

He first aroused interest with his 1996 chamber opera *Nacht*, which like his second chamber opera *Die schöne Wunde*, received its world premiere at the Bregenz Festival. Georg Friedrich Haas has composed numerous further operas since then; *Melancholia* – based on the eponymous novel by Jon Fosse – was premiered at the Opéra National de Paris in 2008 and subsequently at several other opera houses. He continued his collaboration with Jon Fosse for *Morgen und Abend* (2016), which was commissioned by the Royal Opera House in London and the Deutsche Oper Berlin. *Bluthaus* (2011), *Thomas* (2013) and *KOMA* (2016), with librettos by Händl Klaus, deal with existential topics and were each premiered at the Schwetzingen SWR Festspiele, sparking lively discussion among audiences and critics alike.

Highlights during recent years included the world premieres of *dark dreams* with the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle (US premiere at Carnegie Hall), the Concerto Grosso No. 1 for 4 alphorns and orchestra (hornroh modern alphorn quartet, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Susanna Mällki) and Concerto Grosso No. 2 for ensemble and orchestra (BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Ilan Volkov), as well as during the 2014/15 season the world premiere of his String Quartet No. 8 given by the JACK Quartet, and Wien Modern’s focus on Georg Friedrich Haas’ music. In 2016/17 Georg Friedrich Haas was composer in residence at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, and wrote the new ensemble work *Release* for the opening of the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, premiered in January by the Ensemble Resonanz. In summer 2017 Georg Friedrich Haas will be composer in residence at the Suntory Art Foundation’s Summer Festival where a new violin concerto composed for Miranda Cuckson will receive its world premiere.

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BRAD LUBMAN



© Stephanie Berger

CONDUCTOR

Brad Lubman, American conductor and composer, has gained widespread recognition for his versatility, commanding technique and insightful interpretations over the course of more than two decades.

He is much in demand with major orchestras in Europe and the USA and has been successful in building up regular partnerships with several well-known orchestras and ensembles such as the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, NDR Symphony Orchestra, WDR Symphony Orchestra and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto. Alongside his busy schedule in Germany, he is also frequently asked to conduct some of the world's leading orchestras, including the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

In addition, he has worked with some of the most important European and American ensembles for contemporary music, including the Ensemble Modern, London Sinfonietta, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble MusikFabrik, AskolSchönberg Ensemble Amsterdam, Ensemble Resonanz, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Chicago Symphony MusicNOW, and Steve Reich and Musicians.

Following his debut with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra at the start of the autumn, the 2016/17 season particularly focuses on projects celebrating Steve Reich's 80th birthday at prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Philharmonies in Cologne and Paris and Cal Performances. Brad Lubman continues his collaborations with the Symphony Orchestras of the WDR and Danish National, as well as the Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto, while the highlight of the season will be his residency at the Grafenegg Festival in Austria. Here he can be seen in his double role as conductor and composer in several concerts and will lead the Composer Conductor Workshop "Ink Still Wet".

Brad Lubman is founding Co-Artistic and Music Director of the NY-based Ensemble Signal. Since its debut in 2008 the ensemble has performed over 100 concerts and co-produced nine recordings. Their recording of Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* on harmonia mundi was awarded a Diapason d'or in June 2015 and appeared on the Billboard Classical Crossover charts. He is also Associate Professor of Conducting and Ensembles at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, as well as on the faculty at the Bang-on-a-Can Summer Institute.

His own music has been performed in the United States and Europe and can be heard on his first portrait CD, *insomniac*, on John Zorn's label Tzadik. He has also recorded for Harmonia Mundi, Nonesuch, AEON, BMG/RCA, Kairos, Mode, NEOS, and Cantaloupe.

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LONDON SINFONIETTA

Philippa Davies flute/piccolo
David Cuthbert flute/piccolo/bass
Melinda Maxwell oboe
Mark van de Wiel clarinet*
Jordan Black clarinet/bass
John Orford bassoon*
Simon Haram soprano/tenor saxophone*
Alex Wide horn
Elise Campbell horn
Byron Fulcher trombone*
Douglas Coleman trombone
Alexandra Wood violin
Joan Atherton violin*
Miranda Fulleylove violin
Steve Burnard viola
Richard Waters viola
Tiim Gill cello*
Sally Pendlebury cello
Enno Senft double bass*
Alex Neal percussion
Oliver Lowe percussion
Helen Tunstall harp*
Antoine Francoise piano
Ric Mountjoy lighting designer

*London Sinfonietta Principal Player

The London Sinfonietta is one of the world's leading contemporary music ensembles. Formed in 1968, the group's commitment to making new music has seen it commission over 350 works and premiere many hundreds more. Our ethos today is to constantly experiment with the art form, working with the best composers, conductors and players whilst collaborating with musicians from alternative genres and artists from different disciplines. We are also committed to challenging perceptions, provoking new possibilities and stretching our audiences' imaginations, often working closely with them as creators, performers and curators of the events we stage.

Resident at Southbank Centre and Artistic Associate at Kings Place, with a busy touring schedule across the UK and abroad, London Sinfonietta's core is 18 Principal Players, representing some of the best musicians in the world.

Holding a leading position in education work, the London Sinfonietta believes that arts participation is transformational to individuals and communities, and new music is relevant to people's lives. This belief is enacted through primary and secondary school concerts across the UK and interactive family events, as well as the annual London Sinfonietta Academy, an unparalleled opportunity for young performers and conductors to train with our Principal Players.

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 160,000 times worldwide. Most recently, a disc of Sir Harrison Birtwistle's music was released on NMC Recordings and topped the classical music chart, we produced eleven vinyl records in collaboration with artist Christian Marclay, and were thrilled to collaborate with Norwegian saxophonist, Marius Neset on his award-winning album *Snowmelt*.

Cue the New: How to Listen to the 21st Century

The 21st century is now 17 years old and has produced some astounding music: works of beauty, complexity and drama that deserve to be listened to, not just heard. In 2016/17, the London Sinfonietta presents a season of opportunities, performing commissions and premieres that speak for the best musical inventions of our time.



londonsinfonietta.org.uk

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We are forming an exclusive group of supporters for our 50th anniversary. Will you join?

From 1968 to 2018, Sinfonietta Circle members can choose a year of our history to support, and will receive a range of special benefits.

Join us in celebrating this milestone and invest in the ensemble's future, so that together we can continue to discover the greatest new music.

Find out more at
londonsinfonietta.org.uk/sinfonietta-circle

Become a Pioneer

Through a range of benefits, our Pioneers form a close association with the ensemble and become part of our creative journey.

Find out more at
londonsinfonietta.org.uk/support-us



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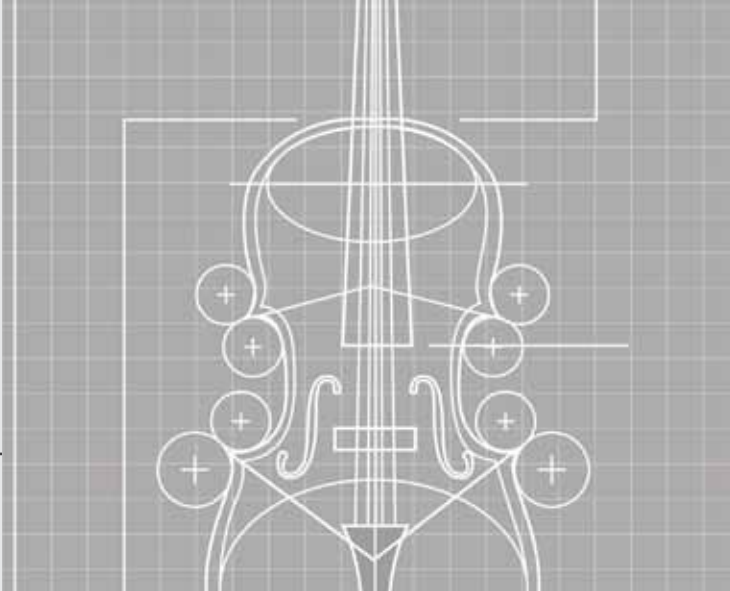
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Coming up ...

Fig. 2



AVANT CELLO

Contemporary cello unwrapped

Saturday 6 May, Kings Place

With its sonorous bass tones and piercing high register, the cello has fascinated composers for generations. As part of *Cello Unwrapped*, our Principal Cellist Tim Gill presents a survey of the styles and sounds of contemporary cello from the 20th and 21st centuries.

Part of Kings Place's *Cello Unwrapped* 2017

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