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# **The British Art Music Series**

Friday, 11th November 2011 Holy Trinity, Sloane Square, London

# In the Midst of Life

Introduction | Major-General Sir Sebastian Roberts ксvo ове

DirectorBen Fleetwood SmythAssistant DirectorBenedict MorrisonConductorHugh Brunt

PatronsDr James MacMillan CBELibby Purves OBEJohn WilsonTrusteesJohn EidinowAlex HallWilliam Parry

Front cover image by Dom Agius www.domagius.com

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# Welcome

Welcome to the very first British Art Music Series. It has been a long time in the making. I know I'm not the only one who is relieved we've finally got here. And where is here? Well, for the first Series, Benedict and I have combined British music with literature and poetry and we've set out to build a story of the life and experiences of a soldier during a time of war. The story is twofold: how a particular love between Albert and Agatha, found during but cut short by war, is able to transcend its participants to be felt differently, but no less acutely, in all its tortuous fragmentation and confusion, by any man and woman caught up in humanity's love and loss.

For the past two years I've talked endlessly with friends of what The British Art Music Series will be about. The conclusion is that it will not be a redefinition or a revolution in the arts, but the best it could be is a reconsideration. It will strive for rediscovery: find the new in the old and the old in the new; avoid mockery and alienation; allow music to provide a reflection of where and when we find ourselves – a link to our past, a vision of our future, an image of the timeless.

The music in this series covers over 500 years of British history. From Sheppard's elegant polyphony, through Walton's exuberance, via the lyrical genius of Finzi, the profound resonance of Howells, the taut energy of Matthews, and the excitement of our own commissions and arrangements, we hope that each piece you hear will add to and build up the bigger story being played out around it.

Some music is rendered complete but, as we are all capable of sometimes playing up to different parts of our personality for effect, we hope that when we have extracted a movement from its larger musical form it might too behave slightly differently, but no less vibrantly.

You might even be encouraged to discover more about the larger work whence a piece came, which would be brilliant.

\*\* Unless we can think peace into existence we - not this one body in this one bed but millions of bodies yet to be born - will lie in the same darkness and hear the same death rattle overhead."

These words, written by Virginia Woolf during an air raid in 1940, just one year before she herself would die, begin an impassioned plea for peace. And, as she goes on to explore, literature and music have played a truly extraordinary role in the history of human conflict and in the creation of peace.

The programme tonight begins with a series of letters between a young man called up to fight and his sweetheart, a young English teacher. The letters, along with the readings afterwards, explore some of literature's many responses to war: the jingoistic rallying cries of Jessie Pope and the unflinching realism of Sebastian Faulks; Hector's glory as told by Homer and Virgil's women's action born of despair; Thomas Mallory's allegorical battles and the terrifying emptiness that haunts the room of Virginia Woolf's fallen soldier.

Each piece explores the terrible human compulsion to engage in war. And yet, as Thomas Hardy celebrates, ultimate redemption may be found in simple acts of goodness; it is, perhaps, through the beauty of kindness and poetry that peace may be thought into existence.

BFS

## Elinor Rolfe Johnson | SOPRANO

studies with Wilma Macdougall and Audrey Hyland. She has taken part in sessions and masterclasses with Dame Felicity Lott, Barbara Bonney and Joan Rodgers. She performed at the Wigmore Hall as a finalist in the 2009 Great Elm competition and was a finalist in the 2010 London Handel Festival singing competition. Having graduated from Cambridge University she is now studying for a Masters in Opera at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

## Augusta Hebbert | SOPRANO

is a student at the Guildhall where she is supported by the Stanley Picker Scholarship. She is an alumnae of the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme, where she appeared in Handel's Saul with Richard Egarr and Bach's St Matthew Passion with Masaaki Suzuki. Forthcoming engagements include her Barbican Hall debut and Handel's Dixit Dominus with La Nuova Musica on Harmonia Mundi label.

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# Raffaele Pé | countertenor

studied singing and organ as a chorister in Lodi Cathedral, Milan, later with Romanian male soprano Cezar Florin Ouatu, and currently with Colin Baldy. At the moment he is working with Sir John Eliot Gardiner on the Monteverdi Choir Apprenticeship Scheme. In September he appeared as a soloist in the Monteverdi Vespers for the BBC Proms. Future engagements will include the role of alto soloist in a tour of Handel's Israel in Egypt for Cappella Savaria directed by Nicholas McGegan.

# Oliver Gerrish | COUNTERTENOR

Oliver Gerrish (Countertenor) studied with David Pollard and Andrew Watts at the Guildhall. His first operatic lead role was in Hasse's Artaserse for Opera Serse in 2010. He runs the Chelsea Concerts series with Soprano Alexandra Kennedy and Ravishyn with Soprano Meeta Raval. Chelsea Concerts' Christmas concert will be in this church on Friday 16th December. Oliver sings regularly as a deputy lay vicar choral at Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral, and is a lay clerk in the London Oratory Schola. He also runs his own musicians' www.oliversagency.com

## Matthew Sandy | TENOR

has recently commenced postgraduate studies in singing at the Guildhall after graduating from King's College, Cambridge, where he held a choral scholarship. In 2010, Matthew won the Sir Anthony Lewis Memorial Prize Singing Competition, and was particularly honoured in September of that year to sing for the beatification of John Henry Newman, presided over by Pope Benedict XVI. Matthew has studied singing with Steven Russell and currently studies with Susan Waters.

## Ben Fleetwood Smyth | TENOR

trained at the Royal Academy of Music after graduating from Oxford University. While at Oxford, he was a choral scholar at Christ Church and also sang with the University's Schola Cantorum. He is now a lay clerk with the London Oratory Schola, a clerk in the choir of this church, and is a member of Metro Voices, a session choir booked to work with major record labels and to record film and TV soundtracks. He is the founder and Director of the British Art Music Series.

## Tom Oldham | BASS

trained at the Royal Northern College of Music and on the opera course at the Guildhall. In opera, he has performed with Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Grange Park Opera, among many others. He sings regularly with the BBC Singers, Polyphony, Exaudi, Philharmonia Voices and London Voices. Tom also works as a set and costume designer for theatre and opera. Recent designs include: *Rinaldo* for Trinity College of Music and *Eugene Onegin* for Blackheath Community Opera.

## Tom Bennett | BASS

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began his musical education as a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral before going on to Abingdon School as a music scholar. He has recently graduated from Christ Church, Oxford, where he was also a choral scholar. He is now a stipendiary clerk in Magdalen College Choir. He has sung for numerous other ensembles including: the Armonico Consort, the Oxford Clerks, Sonory and Ensemble 45.

## Daniel Pioro | FIRST VIOLIN

is a pupil of Maurice Hasson with whom he studied at the Royal Academy of Music. He leads the London Contemporary Orchestra and collaborates regularly with the London Sinfonietta. He performs as part of a classical duo, with tonight's other violinist, Charlotte Bonneton, as a soloist with the LCO, and most recently with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

## Charlotte Bonneton | SECOND VIOLIN

is a violinist, violist and pupil of Gyorgy Pauk and Jean Lenert. She studied viola with Matthew Souter at the Royal Academy of Music from where she recently graduated with distinction. She plays with the Castalian String Quartet (Leverhulme Chamber Music Fellows at the RAM) which will give its Wigmore Hall debut in January 2012. She was selected by the International Holland Music Sessions for New Masters on Tour 2010–2011 and gave her debut at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, in March this year. Charlotte is a member of the London Contemporary Orchestra and is generously supported by the Accenture Foundation – being part of its young musician scheme.

## Jennifer Ames | VIOLA

was a scholar at the Junior Academy where she studied under Robert Turrell, and was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. She gained a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music and studies with Martin Outram. In recent years, she has performed in masterclasses with Hartmut Rohde, Jerzy Kosmala and Tatiana Mazurenko. Jenny also has a keen interest in contemporary classical music and plays with the London Contemporary Orchestra and various ensembles at the RAM.

## Rebecca Herman | 'CELLO

studied at the Eastman School of Music (Rochester, NY) with Steven Doane. She is currently studying with Josephine Knight at the Royal Academy of Music, where she is pursuing a Masters Degree, generously supported by the Musicians Benevolent Fund, the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and the Royal Academy's Ian Alexander Award. She is a member of the London Contemporary Orchestra, and is currently on trial with the BBC Concert Orchestra.

## Marissa Pueschel | OBOE

read Music at St Peter's College, Oxford, and has just graduated from the Royal College of Music, studying under distinguished oboist David Theodore. She is a former member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, as well as principal oboist of the Oxford University Orchestra, and during her time at music college was involved in many of the RCM ensembles – particularly New Perspectives and the Symphony Orchestra, with which she was principal oboist on a number of occasions.

## Timothy End | PIANO

won the Pianist Prize and Jean Meikle Duo Prize, with the baritone Jonathan McGovern, at this year's Wigmore Hall Song Competition; he also won the MBF Accompanist Prize at the finals of the Kathleen Ferrier Vocal Competition. Timothy was awarded the Gerald Moore Award for Piano Accompaniment and, earlier last year, he was awarded the Parnell Award for an Accompanist at the ROSL Annual Music Competition. Timothy and Jonathan McGovern will be making their Wigmore Hall debut in January 2012.

## Richard Hills | PIANO

was the Organ Scholar of Exeter College, Oxford, where he studied the classical organ with David Sanger. He then spent a year as the Organ Scholar of Portsmouth Cathedral, before being appointed to the organ scholarship of London's Westminster Abbey. He now pursues a career as a freelance musician and musical arranger. In addition to his theatre and classical organ performances, he is currently Assistant Organist at St Mary's, Bourne Street. Richard is a fellow of the Royal College of Organists.



## Hugh Brunt | CONDUCTOR

studied at New College, Oxford, and is Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the London Contemporary Orchestra. He has conducted at the Aldeburgh Festival (Britten–Pears Composers Ensemble), Spitalfields Music Summer Festival, the

Sage Gateshead, Latitude Festival and the Southbank Centre. Recent engagements include: Tom Stoppard/André Previn's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* at the National Theatre (Southbank Sinfonia); Ron Arad's *Curtain Call* at the Roundhouse; and conducting the closing performance of Mike Figgis's *Just Tell the Truth* (Deloitte Ignite 2011) at the Royal Opera House. Collaborative projects include: Imogen Heap with the Holst Singers, Belle and Sebastian, Biosphere and Foals. Future engagements include: returning to Spitalfields with the LCO to perform a new violin concerto by Martin Suckling for Agata Szymczewska, alongside works by Grisey and Vivier.



## Harry Lloyd READER

has appeared frequently in television and onstage since leaving Oxford University in 2005. This year, he was seen in *Jane Eyre* and HBO's *Game of Thrones*, and plays Herbert Pocket in the BBC's Christmas adaptation of *Great Expectations*. Upcoming films include:

*The Iron Lady*, with Meryl Streep, and *Closer to the Moon*, with Mark Strong and Vera Farmiga.



### Ella Smith READER

was recently awarded the Critics' Circle and Evening Standard Best Newcomer Awards for her role in Fat Pig at Trafalgar Studios. Her other theatre credits include: Frankenstein at the National Theatre; Bedlam at the Globe; Love's Labour's Lost at the Rose Theatre; and

The Pocket Orchestra. Her film credits include: Womb, The Wedding Video, Jimmy's End, St Trinian's: the Legend of Fritton's Gold and Birds Like Us. Her television credits include: Mistresses, Sold, Extra Peeps, Cape Wrath/ Meadowlands and Strictly Confidential. Her radio credits include: Hold My Breath, The Man Who Built Tunnels, Jane's Story, Scandinavian Dreams, 84 Charing Cross Road, Man of the Moment, Incident at Boulonvilliers.

## **Richard Wilberforce**

#### BAM COMMISSIONED COMPOSER

read Music at Cambridge, where he studied under Robin Holloway. Here he wrote his ballet, Ashypet, as well as a number of works for The Choir of St John's College, where he was a choral scholar: an anthem commissioned for the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, He hath shewed thee; a christmas carol, Telling God's Story, broadcast on BBC Radio 3; Noel Nouvelet, recorded for CD; as well as settings of O Nata Lux and the Preces and Responses. Recent work includes an orchestral commission to commemorate the 500th anniversary of St John's College, Cambridge, and settings of translated nonsense poetry by Christian Morgenstern for tenor and piano. Longer term projects include his first opera, Oxana Malaya, based on the childhood years of Oxana, a Ukrainian feral girl brought up by dogs.

## Benedict Morrison | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

studied English at Oxford before defecting to the University of London and discovering a new, postgraduate identity as a student of film. He has written and directed his own short films, including a documentary commissioned by Herefordshire Council, and starred in and acted as script consultant for the Italian film Histoire d'H. In his current position as English teacher at Dulwich College, he edited The Alleynian, working with students to introduce more serious journalistic content into the magazine.

# Programme

**Eric Coates:** First Meeting: a Souvenir for Violin and Pianoforte **(f**)

#### First letter **(**)

**Noël Coward:** I'll See You Again (BAM arrangement by Richard Hills) ①

"I'll see you again whenever spring breaks through again. Time may lie heavy between, but what has been is past forgetting. This sweet memory across the years will come to me; tho' my world may go awry, in my heart will ever lie just the echo of a sigh, good-bye."

#### Second letter **B**

#### **Gerald Finzi:**

Clear and Gentle Stream 🕥

"Clear and gentle stream! Known and loved so long, that hast heard the song and the idle dream of my boyish day; while I once again down thy margin stray, in the selfsame strain still my voice is spent, with my old lament and my idle dream, clear and gentle stream!

"Where my old seat was here again I sit, where the long boughs knit over stream and grass a translucent eaves: where back eddies play shipwreck with the leaves, and the proud swans stray, sailing one by one out of stream and sun, and the fish lie cool in their chosen pool.

"Many an afternoon of the summer day dreaming here I lay; and I know how soon, idly at its hour, first the deep bell hums from the minster tower, and then evening comes, creeping up the glade, with her lengthening shade, and the tardy boon, of her brightening moon. "Clear and gentle stream! Ere again I go where thou dost not flow, well does it beseem thee to hear again once my youthful song, that familiar strain silent now so long: be as I content with my old lament and my idle dream, clear and gentle stream."

Robert Seymour Bridges 1844-1930

Arthur Bliss: Oboe Quintet: Vivace Ø

#### Third letter 🚯

Ralph Vaughan Williams: Silent Noon (Sung by Raffaele Pé) ①

"Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass, the finger-points look through like rosy blooms: your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms 'neath billowing skies that scatter and amass. All round our nest, far as the eye can pass, are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge, where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge. 'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

"Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly hangs like a blue thread loosen'd from the sky: so this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above. Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower, this close-companion'd inarticulate hour, when twofold silence was the song of love."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti | 1828–1882

Frank Bridge: Romance T

#### Fourth letter **B**

#### Haydn Wood:

A Brown Bird Singing (Sung by Elinor Rolfe Johnson) 🕧

"All through the night there's a little brown bird singing, singing in the hush of the darkness and the dew. Would that his song through the stillness could go winging, could go winging to you, to you.

All through the night-time my lonely heart is singing sweeter songs of love than the brown bird ever knew. Would that the song of my heart could go a-winging, could go a-winging to you, to you."

Royden Barrie 1890–1948

Thomas Malory, The Morte d'Arthur **(B**)

#### Jessie Pope, The Call **(B)**

**William Walton:** Piano Quartet, Allegro molto ①

Homer, The Illiad: Book VI 🚯

**Benjamin Britten:** Three Divertimenti: March (f)

Emily Dickinson, My Life Had Stood – a Loaded Gun 🚯

Elizabeth Maconchy: Oboe Quintet, Poco sostenuto (f)

### Philip Larkin, MCMXIV (

**Robert Pearsall:** Lay a Garland **(f)** 

"Lay a garland on her hearse of dismal yew. Maidens, willow branches wear, say she died true. Her love was false, but she was firm upon her buried body lie lightly, thou gentle earth."

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher THE MAID'S TRAGEDY, 1619

#### Virgil, The Aeneid 🚯

**Roxanna Panufnik:** Let Me B **(f)** 

#### Sebastian Faulks, Birdsong

Colin Matthews: String Quartet No 2: Intermezzo 1, Prestissimo, and Scherzo and Trio **(f**)

#### Virginia Woolf, Jacob's Room 🚯

#### **Richard Rodney Bennett:** 'A Good Night' ①

"Close now thine eyes and rest secure; thy soul is safe enough, thy body sure; He that loves thee, He that keeps and guards thee, never slumbers, never sleeps. The smiling conscience in a sleeping breast has only peace, has only rest; the music and the mirth of kings are all but very discords, when she sings. Then close thine eyes and rest secure; no sleep so sweet as thine, no rest so sure."

Francis Quarles 1592–1644

#### Siegfried Sassoon, July 31st 1914

John Sheppard: In pace, in idipsum (f)

"In peace and into the same I shall sleep and rest. If I give slumber to my eyes and to my eyelids drowsiness, I shall sleep and rest. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit."

PSALMS 4.9 AND 132.4

#### Laurence Binyon, For the Fallen (B)

**Richard Wilberforce:** A Night's Litany (BAM commission) ①

"Come heavy sleep, the image of true death; and close up these my weary weeping eies: whose spring of tears doth stop my vitall breath, and tears my hart with sorrows sign swoln cries: com and possess my tired thoughts, worne soule, that living dies, till thou on me be stoule.

"Come shadow of my end, and shape of rest, allied to death, child to blakefact night: come thou and charm these rebels in my breast, whose waking fancies doe my mind affright. O come sweet sleepe; come, or I die ever: come ere my last sleep comes, or come never."

#### (Anonymous)

Thomas Hardy, In Time of the 'Breaking of Nations' **B** 

Key Music:

#### Herbert Howells: Requiem **(f)**

"Eternal rest grant unto them. And let light perpetual shine upon them. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heav'n and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: and he that keepeth thee will not sleep. Behold, he that keepeth Israel: shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord himself is thy keeper: he is thy defence upon thy right hand; so that the sun shall not burn thee by day: neither the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in: from this time forth and for evermore.

Reading:

#### Book of Common Prayer,

The Book of Common Prayer, 1662, the Order for the Burial of the Dead **(B**)

#### Herbert Howells:

Requiem 🕥

"Eternal rest grant unto them. And let light perpetual shine upon them. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. I heard a voice from heav'n, saying unto me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours."

# Thanks

Without the help, advice and kindness of the following people, this concert would have been a great deal more difficult to organise:

"" I can no other answer make but thanks, And thanks."" (Twelfth Night, ACT III, SCENE III)

| Our startlingly talented singers and instrumentalists.                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hugh, for conducting with such confidence and ease,<br>for taking rehearsals, and for his honest and gracious<br>advice around every idea I've run past him.                                                        |
| Benedict, for much and not least his artistic brilliance,<br>especially his advice on all the extracts you've heard read,<br>for his writing of this evening's four letters, and for his<br>directorial assistance. |
| Ella and Harry, for brilliantly bringing the texts alive.                                                                                                                                                           |
| Richard Wilberforce, for A Night's Litany – our first wonderful commission.                                                                                                                                         |
| Richard Hills, for breezily and brilliantly taking on<br>everything I asked of him for the greater cause of<br>supporting British music. And also for tonight's superb<br>arrangement of Coward.                    |
| John, our Patron, for allowing us to use Eric Coates'<br>original copy of First Meeting.                                                                                                                            |
| Sebastian, for giving so generously of his time.                                                                                                                                                                    |

Fr Rob and Fr Graham of Holy Trinity, for being so accommodating. Tim Coles, Regional Director Fundraising London, ABF - The Soldiers' Charity, for his advice. Jon and Simon at Cantate Ltd, for their skill and generosity. Stuart, and his team at www.sav.co.uk, for being superb friends, for putting up with my endless emails, and for bringing BAM alive on the World Wide Web. Alex and William, for spending endless hours encouraging and helping BAM to its feet. Alison, Bella, Cas, Danae, Dom, Gavin, Gulliver, Hanh, Louise, Melissa, and Miranda, for their advice, generosity, and unfailing support. Tiff, for spending much of the past two years listening to me talk endlessly about BAM, for giving so much so thoughtfully in the run up to tonight, and for making me question all my ideas and plans and, when discarded, for helping me build new ones.

BFS

# NIKKI TIBBLES

wild at heart

*Nikki Tibbles Wild at Heart* is proud to be supporting this British Art Music Series concert for ABF – the Soldiers' Charity.

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