

## PRESS RELEASE

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# Aldeburgh Festival 2020 (12 – 28 June): Highlights

- The 73rd Aldeburgh Festival features four Artists in Residence: American soprano Julia Bullock, tenor Allan Clayton and composers Cassandra Miller and Mark-Anthony Turnage
- Aldeburgh Festival opens in Bury St Edmund's Abbey celebrating the 1,000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of medieval England's great monasteries
- Soprano Julia Bullock presents the UK premiere of *Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine*
- Tenor Allan Clayton explores the music of Britten and Priaulx Rainier
- Focus on Canadian-British composer Cassandra Miller including a new installation, *Tracery*
- Mark-Anthony Turnage at 60: world premiere of a new song cycle for Allan Clayton
- First performance of Britten's *War Requiem* at Snape Maltings as part of Aldeburgh Festival
- World premiere of *Violet*, a new opera by composer Tom Coult and playwright Alice Birch

### Festival Opening

For the first time in more than 50 years the Aldeburgh Festival will open away from the Suffolk coast, celebrating the 1,000th anniversary of one of medieval England's great monasteries, Bury St Edmund's Abbey. The concert is a microcosm of the festival, featuring the music of Britten, artists-in-residence Cassandra Miller and Mark-Anthony Turnage, an orchestral work by Tom Coult – whose first opera is premiered the following evening – and the posthumous world premiere of one of John Tavener's last works.

### Artist in Residence: Julia Bullock

American soprano Julia Bullock is known for her outstanding technique, commanding stage presence, breadth of repertoire and social activism. Bullock first programmed Josephine Baker's songs in a 2014 recital. Since then she has continued to explore her life and work culminating in *Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine* which receives its UK premiere at Aldeburgh Festival (25 June). Her three-performance residency also explores the music of Cage and Foss (25 June), and she sings Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra (28 June). Bullock comments: 'I so look forward to being an Artist in Residence at the Aldeburgh Festival. It will be a joy to bring my project *Perle Noire* for its UK premiere, and a special thrill to perform *Les Illuminations* – a work which ignites my mind and heart – for the closing concert in Britten's own festival.'

### Artist in Residence: Allan Clayton

Tenor Allan Clayton is one of the world's most exciting singers. His residency at Aldeburgh Festival includes the world premiere of a new song cycle by Mark-Anthony Turnage; a focus on Britten celebrating English song (15 June) and the work of the now rarely performed composer Priaulx Rainier who was championed by Peter Pears (27 June). Clayton comments: 'I can't believe that it's been fifteen years since I first visited Aldeburgh to perform *Albert Herring* at Snape Maltings! I feel incredibly fortunate to have visited many times and luckier still to be an Artist in Residence at the 2020 Festival. I hope that audiences will enjoy the programmes we've put together, which showcase music by Britten and his contemporaries alongside newly-commissioned works.'

### Artist in Residence: Cassandra Miller

Known for her 'bold, kind-hearted', 'profoundly haunting' and 'miraculously beautiful' music, Cassandra Miller is one of the most distinctive living composers. The Guardian listed her work in 'The best classical music works of the 21st century', hailing Miller as a 'master of planting a seed and setting in motion an entrancing process, then following through with the most sumptuous conviction'. Her new piece *Tracery* (from 13 June) is a multi-

speaker, split-screen 60-minute installation made with soprano Juliet Fraser as a way to create an intimate space for deep listening. The festival also features a new work for Juliet Fraser and the Bozzini Quartet (16 June), and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Ilan Volkov will give the UK premiere of *A Large House* (20 June). Miller comments: 'I'm interested in song and in singerliness – in how the innermost essence of a person can be heard in the voice. I'm also interested in the trajectory of a concert – I want the music to go forever downward into dream realms, forever upward in soaring hope, or forever inward into a trance-like state.'

### **Artist in Residence: Mark-Anthony Turnage**

Mark-Anthony Turnage is one of the most widely performed living composers and on 10 June celebrates his 60th birthday. Turnage comments: 'My first encounter with Aldeburgh was in my 20s when I won the Britten Prize in 1983, and I've been visiting ever since, both as a composer and as a member of the festival audience. The ethos from Britten and Pears is still strongly felt and will last long into the future. Teaching on the composition course at Snape was a brilliant experience last summer and I'm looking forward to returning as Artist in Residence in 2020 and teaching on the composition course again in 2021.' Allan Clayton gives the world premiere of *Silenced*, a new song cycle commissioned by the Aldeburgh Festival (15 June). Other featured works include *Frieze* (BBC Symphony Orchestra, 28 June), *Owl Songs* and *Slide Stride* (Nash Ensemble, 13 June) and Quartet No.4 'Winter's Edge' (Piatti Quartet, 21 June).

### **Britten's *War Requiem***

For the first time Britten's passionate plea for peace, *War Requiem*, is performed at Snape Maltings as part of the Aldeburgh Festival. The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, which premiered the piece in 1962, returns to the festival with Music Director Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla to perform Britten's masterpiece with a cast of international soloists including Artist-in-Residence Allan Clayton (21 June).

### ***Violet* by Tom Coult and Alice Birch (world premiere, 13 June)**

Playwright Alice Birch and composer Tom Coult are amongst the most compelling voices in their respective fields and their first opera, developed at Snape Maltings as part of its Jerwood Opera Writing Programme, is an exciting prospect. Directed by Rebecca Frecknall and with design by Tom Scutt, *Violet* is set in an isolated community controlled by the regularity of the town clock. Suddenly the clock begins to skip time and an hour is lost – every day. As the hours disappear, long-held hierarchies evaporate and ordered society falls into disarray. While the men in charge lose control, *Violet* begins to imagine a different future. Trapped and stifled in an unhappy marriage, she senses there's a new life to be discovered and sets out to find it. *Violet* is co-commissioned and co-produced by Music Theatre Wales, Aldeburgh Festival and Theater Magdeburg.

**Full programme announcement:** The full programme for Aldeburgh Festival 2020 will be announced on Wednesday 18 December. [snapemaltings.co.uk/aldeburgh-festival](https://snapemaltings.co.uk/aldeburgh-festival)

Priority booking will open from 14 January. General booking will open on 18 February.

### **For further press information please contact:**

Rebecca Driver Media Relations

Email: [rebecca@rdmr.co.uk](mailto:rebecca@rdmr.co.uk)

Tel: 020 3691 7034 | Mob: 07989 355446 | web: [www.rdmr.co.uk](http://www.rdmr.co.uk)

### **Notes to Editors**

**Snape Maltings** is a unique place of energy and inspiration and one of the world's leading centres of music, hosting outstanding concerts throughout the year. Set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the Suffolk coast, it is the realisation of Suffolk-born composer Benjamin Britten's vision of a creative campus where musicians of all ages, backgrounds and career stages are given the time, space and support to develop their work and create new work surrounded by the natural environment. [snapemaltings.co.uk](https://snapemaltings.co.uk)