

## PRESS RELEASE

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# Aldeburgh Festival 2020 (12 – 28 June): Full Programme Announced

- The 73rd Aldeburgh Festival features four Artists in Residence: soprano Julia Bullock, tenor Allan Clayton and composers Cassandra Miller and Mark-Anthony Turnage
- Aldeburgh Festival opens in Bury St Edmunds, celebrating the 1,000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its abbey, 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 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
- Threads exploring the poetry of TS Eliot and the music of John Tavener
- Further residencies from Ryan Wigglesworth, Doric Quartet and Bozzini Quartet
- New music features throughout the Festival with 18 world premieres and 5 UK premieres
- Joyce DiDonato and Dame Janet Baker in conversation

The programme for the 73rd Aldeburgh Festival has been announced. For full information, see [www.aldeburghfestival.co.uk](http://www.aldeburghfestival.co.uk). The festival takes place 12 – 28 June and presents four Artists in Residence. American soprano Julia Bullock's three concerts feature Josephine Baker, American experimentalism and Britten. Tenor Allan Clayton focuses on Britten and his contemporary, Priaulx Rainier. The music of Cassandra Miller and Mark-Anthony Turnage runs through many programmes and illustrates the range of composition today. The premiere of his first opera, *Violet*, is one of three significant works in the festival by rising star Tom Coult. Other highlights include a focus on the poetry of TS Eliot and the music of John Tavener as well as further residencies from Ryan Wigglesworth, the Doric Quartet and the Bozzini Quartet.

### **Festival Opening (12 June)**

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: performers include Britten Sinfonia, Allan Clayton, Ian Bostridge, Clare Hammond and Ryan Wigglesworth, while the programme features 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, *La Noche Oscura*.

### **Artist in Residence: Julia Bullock**

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 Baker's life and work, culminating in *Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine* which receives its UK premiere (25 June). Her three-performance residency also explores the music of American experimenters John Cage and Lukas Foss (25 June), and she sings Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra (28 June).

**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 and a focus on Britten songs (15 June), and the work of the now rarely performed composer Priaulx Rainier who was championed by Peter Pears during her life (27 June).

**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. 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 and conductor Ilan Volkov give the UK premiere of her orchestral work *A Large House* (20 June).

**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, just before the festival opens. 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. *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. The festival also features Coult's work for string orchestra *My Curves are Not Mad* (12 June) and his Violin Concerto *Pleasure Garden*, written for Daniel Pioro, receives its second performance (19 June).

**Tavener and TS Eliot**

John Tavener's music is featured across four events: the posthumous world premiere of one of his last pieces is performed in the opening concert (12 June); the festival returns to Ely Cathedral for Tenebrae's exploration of Catholic splendour and Russian Orthodox fervour centred on the music and influences of Tavener (17 June) and the film *Sir John Tavener Remembered* charts the composer's life (18 June). His theatrical *Kaleidoscopes* for four string quartets positioned around solo oboist Nicholas Daniel will be performed on 18 June.

TS Eliot's words permeate a day of programming in the first week of the festival (15 June). In *Four Quartets*, actors speak Eliot's text as recurring voices, interwoven with the five movements of Beethoven's String Quartet Op.132, performed by the Doric Quartet, in a re-imagining of these two works conceived and directed by Robin Brooks. Allan Clayton also performs two settings of his poetry. Composer Elliott Carter was a great admirer of Eliot's writing and his *Three Explorations* continues the festival's celebration of his work (25 June).

### **Further residencies: Ryan Wigglesworth, Doric Quartet and Bozzini Quartet**

Composer, conductor and pianist Ryan Wigglesworth features in four concerts across the Festival including conducting the opening night (12 June) and leading his own symphonic arrangement of *Götterdämmerung – A Symphonic Journey* (18 June). Julia Bullock and Evan Hughes share the stage with the Knussen Chamber Orchestra under Wigglesworth's baton (25 June) and he accompanies soprano Sophie Bevan in a recital (19 June).

The Doric Quartet returns to Snape Maltings following its acclaimed performances at Britten Weekend in October. Beethoven and TS Eliot are the focus of two concerts (14 and 15 June) and the quartet joins forces with musical friends Alina Ibragimova and Cédric Tiberghien to perform Chausson's Concerto for string quartet, piano and violin (22 June). Ibragimova also returns for an all-Bach solo recital (28 June).

The Bozzini Quartet is one of the world's leading contemporary music ensembles. With soprano Juliet Fraser they perform the world premiere of Cassandra Miller's *Thanksong* (16 June), while they also perform American experimental music by John Cage, Elliott Carter and Lukas Foss (25 June). They are one of four string quartets which share the stage to perform Tavener's oboe concerto *Kaleidoscopes* (18 June).

### **Other leading artists and ensembles**

The Hallé and Mark Elder make a welcome return to Snape in the opening weekend to perform Britten and Mahler (14 June). The BBC Symphony Orchestra performs the closing concert conducted by Martyn Brabbins with a programme including Turnage, Britten and Ravel (28 June). Sir John Eliot Gardiner and his Monteverdi Choir are renowned for their virtuosity and versatility. In a programme unique to Aldeburgh, they perform three choral sacred masterpieces from Monteverdi, Carissimi and Scarlatti (16 June). The American mezzo-soprano, Joyce DiDonato makes her Aldeburgh Festival debut and brings together world-class musicians from the varied worlds of opera, jazz and tango to perform a selection of renaissance madrigals and jazz standards from the Great American Songbook (24 June). Janet Baker and DiDonato discuss their careers in conversation with award-winning filmmaker and writer John Bridcut (25 June). There is also a chance to see Bridcut's film *Janet Baker In Her Own Words* in which she talks about her career and life (22 June). Pianist Imogen Cooper's recital on the penultimate day of the festival features music by Beethoven, Britten, Schubert and Thomas Adès (27 June). The Hagen Quartet performs two late Beethoven quartets (27 June).

### **New Music**

The Aldeburgh Festival presents 18 world premieres in 2020 including major new works from Artists in Residence Mark-Anthony Turnage and Cassandra Miller and Tom Coult's new opera *Violet* (see above). Colin Matthews' *Seascapes* is an Aldeburgh Festival commission performed by the Nash Ensemble which sets words by Sidney Keyes, the English poet who died in action during the Second World War (13 June). The Piatti Quartet gives the world premiere of Gavin Higgins' *Ekstasis* (20 June). Jessica Cottis conducts the Britten-Pears Contemporary Ensemble in a concert featuring six world premieres from Blair Boyd, Laura Shipsey, Theo Chandler, Alex Woolf, Alex Paxton and Euchar Gravina (19 June). The BBC Singers give the first performance of Julian Anderson's *Sing* (13 June).

UK premieres include Cassandra Miller's *A Large House* (20 June) and *Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine*, Julia Bullock's tribute to Joséphine Baker (25 June). Ana Sokolovic's *Commedia dell'arte* uses characters from the 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian theatre artform as inspiration for a piece which is by turns sarcastic, touching and hilariously funny (20 June). Tenebrae performs Unsuk Chin's *Nulla est finis* – a prelude to *Spem in alium* in Ely Cathedral (17 June).

### **BBC Radio 3 broadcasts**

BBC Radio 3 will broadcast eight concerts from Aldeburgh Festival 2020:

New Music Show: *Violet*

Radio 3 in Concert: BBC Singers, The Hallé, Allan Clayton & Friends I, BBC Philharmonic I and II, The War Requiem, and BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Full programme information:

[snapemaltings.co.uk/aldeburgh-festival](http://snapemaltings.co.uk/aldeburgh-festival)

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

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### **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 and festivals throughout the year, from the flagship Aldeburgh Festival – one of the world's most significant classical events – to the broad range of music including folk, world music and jazz of the Snape Proms. Set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the Suffolk coast, it is the realisation of its founder Benjamin Britten's vision for a creative campus where musicians of all ages, backgrounds and career stages are given the time, space and support to develop new work and ideas amid the breath-taking expanse of reeds, water and sky. In addition to the music programme, the site features distinctive independent shops, cafes, galleries and walks.

[snapemaltings.co.uk](http://snapemaltings.co.uk)