

WIGMORE HALL 125

Friday 17 July 2026
7.30pm

This concert is supported by The Polonsky Foundation

Héloïse Werner soprano
Ema Nikolovska mezzo-soprano
Adèle Charvet mezzo-soprano
Karim Sulayman tenor
James Newby baritone

Early Chorus Cello Ensemble
Colin Alexander cello
Peteris Sokolovskis cello
Stephanie Tress cello

Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016)
Lara Agar (b.1995)

Sounds from Childhood from *Sonic Meditation* (pub. 1974)
slow two (2023) *arranged by Colin Alexander for cello trio and voices*

Jean de Ockeghem (c.1410-1497)

D'ung aultre amer *arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner for cello trio and voices*

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

A che tormi il ben mio (1587) *arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner for cello trio and voices*

William Byrd (c.1540-1623)

Come woeful Orpheus (pub. 1611)

Claudio Monteverdi

Non m'è grave il morire (1590)

Josquin des Prez (c.1450/55-1521)

Entré je suis en grant pensée transcribed for cello trio

Interval

John Dunstaple (c.1390-1453)

O rosa bella transcribed for cello trio

Josquin des Prez (c.1450/55-1521)

En l'ombre d'un buissonnet

Claudio Monteverdi

Amor, per tua mercè vatten'a quella (1587)

John Dunstaple

Puisque m'amour *arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner for cello trio and voices*

Claudio Monteverdi

Ecco mormorar l'onde SV51 (pub. 1590) *arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner for cello trio and voices*

Colin Alexander (b.1986)

Intro (2018) *arranged by Colin Alexander for cello trio and voices*

Héloïse Werner (b.1991)

Light, persists for vocal quintet and cello trio (2026) *world première*

I. introduction • II. quidquid • III. luce • IV. fuit • V. tenebris • VI. agit • VII. chorale

Commissioned by Wigmore Hall with support from The Fidelio Charitable Trust and The Polonsky Foundation. Supported by the PRS Foundation's Composers' Fund.



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For a concert featuring a large amount of Early Music, it seems appropriate to start with 'Sounds from Childhood' – universally and unavoidably our own earliest compositions, unfiltered and unreserved. This concise text piece asks that we remember the sounds we used to love creating as a child, especially the ones that adults disapproved of, to relax with those thoughts and, after a few breaths, find a space for those sounds 'before, after, or with someone else's sound'. Personally speaking, I began playing the viola upside down (the viola, not me) when I was about three so feel confident in the amount of material I have for this piece.

The mistiness that accompanies our memories becomes a thicker, more luminous fog as we move seamlessly into **Lara Agar's** *slow two*. Warm, radiant and fuzzy, the piece is originally an electro-acoustic work from her EP *Solstice* and has been especially arranged for this evening's ensemble of voices and cellos. This haze of wavering, drifting chords gives way to the shining resonance of **Ockeghem's** *D'ung aultre amer*, its elegantly crafted melody carrying with an air of yearning passion the poem's theme of love and fidelity. Passion turns to heartache and despair in **Monteverdi's** *A che tormi il ben mio*, the pained words reflected in striking and surprising harmonic shifts that allow the music to morph between hope and tragedy.

An even more chromatic series of harmonies arrives in **Byrd's** *Come woeful Orpheus* as a rare use of literal word-painting hears sharps and flats accompany those very words to give this emotionally-charged work a playful twist. But now any lightness or sense of humour is lost when we become fully immersed in despondent bitterness and sink into the resentful darkness of **Monteverdi's** *Non m'è grave il morire*. With those final words: 'tears of pity for my death', we have reached a still and sombre plateau. And as we bathe in the morbid reverberation of those last suspensions, we are offered a chance to float pensively in highly reflective and deeply meditative melancholy as a wordless transcription of **Josquin's** *Entré je suis en grant pensée* takes us into the interval.

We begin the second half as we ended the first, with an arrangement for cello trio of a three-part vocal work; this time the bittersweet chanson *O rosa bella*, attributed to **John Dunstaple** but argued (Fallows, 1994) that it may have been written by the lesser known John Bedyngham. We do know that it was likely

a composer called John and that the work was very popular in the 15th Century, no doubt enjoyed for its mercurial lyricism and pleasing counterpoint. This evening's vocalists respond with a more spritely charm in **Josquin's** *En l'ombre d'un buissonnet*, a short tale of a failed seduction as Robin clumsily courts Marie. The work is likely full of archaic euphemisms lost to time but nevertheless is certainly appreciable to us for Josquin's skilful ability to weave harmonically nuanced passages using directly imitated phrases in canon.

The fiery pleadings of a rejected lover (is that you Robin?) are heard in **Monteverdi's** *Amor, per tua mercè* with a breathlessness that becomes more questioning and demanding as we hear the words 'Say to her: "Lady, how can you possibly let die one who loves you so much?"' Well, perhaps Cupid's arrow hit its mark for we are now treated to a lightly joyous and sweetly harmonised love song in the form of *Puisque m'amour*. This rondeau, assuredly by **John Dunstaple** but arranged by us for the occasion, hears the two components of our ensemble gradually reconvene. Separated sonically during the first half of the concert, the cello trio and vocal quintet exchange verses in a variety of combinations before fully merging once more.

Now that romantic disputes have been settled and the line-up is lined up again, we can look outward, listen carefully and revel in nature's miraculous beauty. A fresh, dewy scent permeates the reverential portrayal of dawn in **Monteverdi's** *Ecco mormorar l'onde*; precious and glowing, resplendent and invigorating. In the afterglow of this awe-inspiring madrigal, a fleeting, chattering interlude titled *Intro* busily fills the air with darting colours gently mellowing in their brightness before a final reflection on illumination and shadow begins in **Héloïse Werner's** new work *Light, persists*. Using Nietzsche's phrase 'Quidquid luce fuit, tenebris agit' (That which happens in the light, persists in the dark), the piece zooms in on one word at a time and uses them to trigger musical games within the ensemble. Different voices and instrumentalists lead particular sections with the freedom to be spontaneous and creative in their approach and we begin to now at last see the individual characters of the group stand out and come into the... light!

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Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016)

Sounds from Childhood from *Sonic Meditation*
(pub. 1974)

Lara Agar (b.1995)

slow two (2023)
arranged by Colin Alexander for cello trio and voices

Jean de Ockeghem (c.1410-1497)

D’ung aultre amer If I loved another
arranged by Colin
Alexander & Héloïse
Werner for cello trio and
voices

D’ung aultre amer mon cœur s’abesseroit, Il ne fault pas penser que je l’estrange, Ne que pour rien de ce propos me change, Car mon honneur en appetisseroit.	If I loved another, my heart would demean itself, no one should ever think that I shall leave him or shall for any reason forget my vow, for my honour would thus be harmed.
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Je l’aime tant que jamais ne seroit Possible a moy d’en consentir l’eschange.	I love him so much that I could never consent to exchange him.
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D’ung aultre amer...	If I loved another...
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La mort, par Dieu, avant me desferoit, Qu’en mon vivant j’aointasse ung estrange, Ne cuide nul qu’a cela je me range, Ma loyaulté trop fort se mesferoit...	Death, by God, would dispatch me before I, in my lifetime, be acquainted with another man. Nobody should think that I could agree to this, my loyalty would be far too compromised...
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D’ung aultre amer...	If I loved another...
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Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

A che tormi il ben mio (1587) <i>Anonymous</i> arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner for cello trio and voices	Why deprive me of my love
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A che tòrmi il ben mio S’io dico di morire? Questo, madonna, è troppo gran martire. Ahi vita, ahi mio tesoro! E perderò il ben mio con dir ch’io moro?	Why deprive me of my love if I speak of death? This pain is too great, my lady. Alas, life, alas, my treasure, shall I lose my love by saying I am dying?
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William Byrd (c.1540-1623)

Come woeful Orpheus (pub. 1611)
Anonymous

Come woeful Orpheus with thy charming Lyre,
And tune my voice unto thy skilful wire,
Some strange Chromatic Notes do you devise,
That best with mournful accents do sympathise,
Of sourest Sharps and uncouth Flats make choice,
And I'll thereto compassionate my voice.

Claudio Monteverdi

Non m’è grave il morire (1590)	It does not pain me to die
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Non m’è grave ’l morire, Donna, per acquetar vostro desire, Anzi il viver m’annoia, Sapend’esser voler vostro ch’io moia. Ben morrei più contento, S’io fossi inanzi a voi di vita spento, E vi vedess’a sorte Lagrimar per pietà de la mia morte.	It does not pain me to die, lady, to sate your desire, rather it is living that pains me knowing that your wish is that I die. I’d die far more content if my life were extinguished before you and I were perchance to see you cry tears of pity for my death.
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Josquin des Prez (c.1450/55-1521)

Entré je suis en grant pensée transcribed for
cello trio

Interval

John Dunstaple (c.1390-1453)

O rosa bella transcribed for cello trio

Josquin des Prez (c.1450/55-1521)

En l'ombre d'un buissonnet	In the shade of a bush
En l'ombre d'ung buissonnet Au matinet, Je trouvai Bellon m'ameye Qui faisoit Ung chapalet De lavande et de muguet.	In the shade of a bush in the morning I found Beauty my beloved who was making a chaplet of lavender and lily-of- the-valley.
En l'ombre d'ung buissonnet Au matinet, De si bon het, Je luy dis: «Dieu te begnye. Je te prie Bellon m'ameye, Ayme moi, je suis Robin.» «Robin, par sainte Marie, Je ne t'aymeray ja grain.» «Je te donray de mon pain Ung grand pain poing, De la croute et de la mye, Si tu veulx a estre m'ameye.»	In the shade of a bush in the morning, in such good spirits I said to her: 'God bless you. I beg you, Beauty my love, love me, I am Robin.' 'Robin, by St Mary, I shall never love you one tiny grain.' 'I will give you from my loaf a great big fistful of bread, some crust and some of the soft inside, if you will be my love.'

Claudio Monteverdi

Amor, per tua mercè vatten'a quella (1587)	Cupid, take pity on me and go straight to her
Amor, per tua mercè vatten'a quella Che m'è così rubella, E con una saetta Passale il cor e fa' di me vendetta. Dilli: 'Come potete unqua patire Chi tanto v'ama far, donna, morire?'	Cupid, take pity on me and go straight to her who resists me so, pierce with an arrow her heart, and so avenge me. Say to her: 'Lady, how can you possibly let die one who loves you so much?'

John Dunstaple

Puisque m'amour arranged by Colin Alexander & Héloïse Werner for cello trio and voices	Since love
Onques talent je n'eux d'autre servir, Ne plus n'auray de certain le puis dire;	I shall never wish to serve another, I shall never find one more pleasing;
Quant me souvient de son doux maintenir J'ay le cuer tel qu'a peu qu'il ne fent dire,	Each time I think on her sweet demeanour, my heart has nothing more to say;
Se bon espoir ne fust de mon mal mire, Je fusse mort, mais je vivray martir.	If good hope could not, like a doctor, cure my pain, I would die – but I live as a martyr.
Puisque m'amour m'a pris en desplaisir, Et a volu aultre de moy eslire,	Since I now displease my love, who would fain choose another,
Esbatement, chanter, danser, et rire, Tous mon vivant je n'auray a plaisir.	Never more shall I find pleasure in playing, singing, dancing or laughing.

Claudio Monteverdi

Ecco mormorar l'onde Here the waves
SV51 (pub. 1590) murmur

Torquato Tasso
arranged by Colin
Alexander & Héloïse
Werner for cello trio and
voices

Ecco mormorar l'onde	Here the waves murmur,
E tremolar le fronde	the leaves and bushes rustle
A l'aura mattutina e gli	in the morning
arborscelli	breeze,
E sovra i verdi rami i vaghi	and on green branches
augelli	the charming birds
Cantar soavemente	sing sweetly,
E rider l'oriente	and the east smiles.
Ecco già l'alba	Here, the dawn already
appare	breaks
E si specchia nel mare	and mirrors itself in the sea,
E rasserena il cielo	and heaven calms itself,
E imperla il dolce	turning the mild frost to
gielo	pearls
E gli alti monti	and the high mountains
indora	are gilt.
O bella e vaga aurora	O lovely and laughing dawn,
L'aura e tua	the breeze is your
messagiera	messenger
E tu de l'aura	and you are of the breeze,
Ch'ogni arso co ristaura.	which restores every
	burnt-out heart!

Colin Alexander (b.1986)

Intro (2018)
arranged by Colin Alexander for cello trio and
voices

Héloïse Werner (b.1991)

Light, persists for vocal quintet and cello
trio (2026)
Friedrich Nietzsche

Quidquid luce fuit, tenebris agit.	That which happens in the light, persists in the dark
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- I. introduction
- II. quidquid
- III. luce
- IV. fuit
- V. tenebris
- VI. agit
- VII. chorale

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