



# KINGS PLACE LONDON UNWRAPPED

Mon 21 Jun | 7.30pm  
Live from Kings Place Hall One

**London Serenade**  
Aurora Orchestra with  
Allan Clayton & Pip Eastop

## Programme

**Kate Whitley**  
*Autumn Songs*

**Edward Elgar**

Introduction & Allegro for strings, Op. 47  
I. Introduction  
II. Allegro

**Benjamin Britten**

Serenade for Tenor, Horn & Strings, Op. 31  
I. Prologue  
II. Pastoral (Cotton)  
III. Nocturne (Tennyson)  
IV. Elegy (Blake)  
V. Dirge (Anon., 15th century)  
VI. Hymn (Ben Jonson)  
VII. Sonnet (Keats)  
VIII. Epilogue

**William Walton**

Sonata for String Orchestra  
I. Allegro  
II. Presto  
III. Lento  
IV. Allegro molto

**This performance will last approx. 90 mins with no interval.**



VIOLIN I

**Alexandra Wood\***  
**Marcus Barcham-Stevens\***  
**Tristan Gurney\***  
**Marciana Buta\***  
**Ian Watson\***

VIOLIN II

**Jamie Campbell\***  
**Maria Spengler\***  
**Cassandra Hamilton**  
**Tamara Elias**

VIOLA

**Hélène Clément\***  
**Ruth Gibson\***  
**Nicholas Bootiman**

CELLO

**Sébastien van Kuijk\***

**Reinoud Ford\***

DOUBLE BASS

**Ben Griffiths\***

\*Whitley strings

**Allan Clayton MBE** tenor

**Pip Eastop** horn

**Nicholas Collon** conductor



**A very warm welcome to this evening's concert. Although seating capacities remain restricted at present, it's a terrific pleasure to be sharing music again with a live audience, as well as with those watching online and listening on BBC Radio 3. After many months of being restricted to smaller chamber repertoire on the stage here at Kings Place, it's particularly exciting to be welcoming back Nicholas Collon and a full string section for our largest-scale orchestral performance here in Hall One since January 2020.**

**Tonight's programme forms part of Kings Place's year-long *London Unwrapped* season, celebrating 400 years of diverse music produced in, for and about this migrant city. That the series has continued throughout 2021 in spite of the unprecedented challenges facing live performances this year is testament to the ingenuity and perseverance of our friends here at Kings Place, as well as Aurora's small production team. I want to take this opportunity to extend special gratitude to all those colleagues who have worked so hard behind the scenes in both organisations to deliver events safely throughout the pandemic.**

**Tonight we're thrilled to welcome Allan Clayton and Pip Eastop as our soloists for Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, composed at the height of World War II and premiered in London at Wigmore Hall in 1943. The rest of our programme charts a course through a hundred year's worth of string repertoire written in or premiered in London, from Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro* (commissioned originally by the LSO) to the music of composer Kate Whitley, whose *Multi-Story Orchestra* has in recent years brilliantly reinvented a south London car park as a classical music venue.**

**Do visit the Aurora website for details of further Aurora concerts in the London Unwrapped series, including collaborations with Cassie Kinoshi, Iestyn Davies, and a New Year's Eve concert with Javier Perianes.**

*John Harte | Chief Executive, Aurora Orchestra*

## Programme Notes

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A work of mesmeric beauty, ***Autumn Songs*** was written in 2014 by Kate Whitley for the 12 Ensemble. The composer writes:

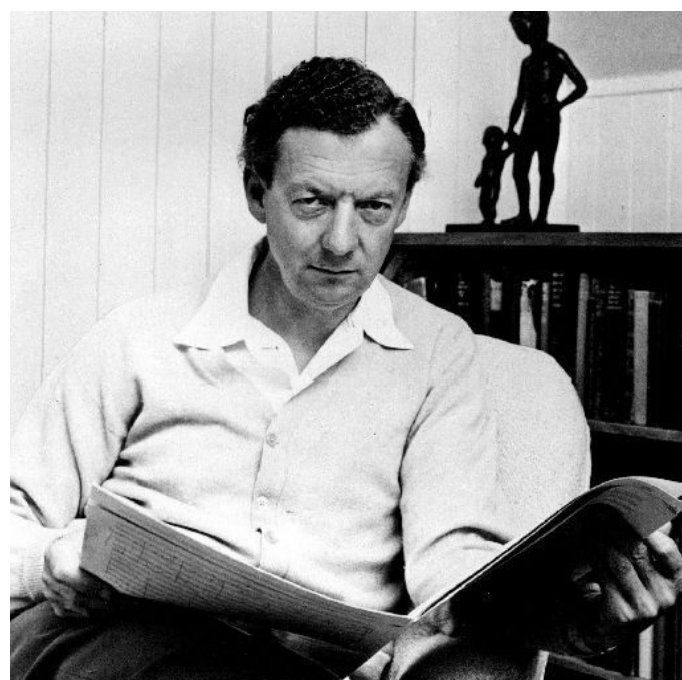
'I was finishing the pieces when staying in Italy in a house surrounded by huge trees at the beginning of Autumn, so had the idea of calling them *Autumn Songs*. The fast falling notes are like leaves and all the songs have a sad, nostalgic character, which is similar to the 'Chanson d'automne' (*Autumn Song*) by Paul Verlaine.'

Elgar's ***Introduction and Allegro*** for string quartet and string orchestra (1905) was written at the urging of music publisher August Jaeger (aka Nimrod of the

*Enigma Variations*). Jaeger suggested Elgar produce 'a brilliant, quick String Scherzo... a real bring-down-the-house torrent of a thing' for the newly-formed London Symphony Orchestra and the composer duly agreed, completing the work around six months later. The resulting piece remains one of the high-points of the string repertoire, yet its initial reception was unexpectedly cool: 'Nothing better for strings has ever been done,' Elgar lamented, 'and they don't like it.'

The Introduction swiftly states the three themes that thread through the work. There comes first a great tugging breadth of sound, created by forceful double-stopping across the ensemble, which sweeps into a series of triplets. This is followed by a rising theme played by the quartet (which came with the annotation 'smiling with a sigh' in Elgar's original score). The third theme, announced by solo viola, is a lyrical melody often referred to as the composer's 'Welsh tune' and said to have been inspired by the distant singing of a folksong heard by Elgar while holidaying in the Wye Valley in 1901. The *Allegro* opens with a return to the 'smiling with a sigh' motif, followed by what Elgar termed 'a devil of a fugue' and, in due course, the return of the 'Welsh tune'.

In 1943, the acclaimed French hornist Dennis Brain asked Britten to write him a horn concerto. Britten was already deep at work on a new vocal piece and so a solo French horn was swiftly added into the score and the result is the richly expressive ***Serenade for Tenor, Horn & Strings***. The piece unfolds across eight movements, with six songs at its heart framed by two short movements for solo horn. The six varied poems selected by Britten are indicative of the composer's eclectic tastes but each explores the theme of sleep and night, from scenes of mellow soothing to the sinister shadows of nightfall.





After a haunting 'Prologue' from the horn, 'Pastoral' sets a text by the 17th-century poet Charles Cotton and offers a graceful hymn to the setting sun. Attention then moves more squarely from horn to voice in 'Nocturne', where the 'starry glitter' of Tennyson's poem drives a vibrant depiction of the night. Blake's deceptively simple 'The Sick Rose' is heard in 'Elegy' where the score's piercing dissonances capture the horror of the 'invisible worm' of corrupted innocence. There follows a 'dirge' where the voice, near-impassive in its steady melody, is surrounded by a swirl of instrumental lines, before a spritely setting of Ben Jonson's 'Hymn to Diana' injects fresh merriment. In the penultimate movement, Keats' glorious 'To Sleep' guides the listener to a radiant sense of rest, with the horn here marked *tacit* to allow the performer to head off-stage for the work's Epilogue.

Walton's **Sonata for Strings** (1971) was prompted by a request from Neville Marriner for a work the Academy of Saint Martin in the Fields could take on tour. Walton was at first hesitant but eventually agreed to arrange his 1947 String Quartet No. 2 for string orchestra, on the condition his friend Malcolm Arnold would make the arrangement under his supervision.

The arrangement differs from the original quartet in a number of substantive ways, including highly effective use of solo sonorities amid the ensemble. Moving between these textures, the opening movement feels even more angular and severe than the earlier quartet, and is followed by a brisk and biting 'Presto'. The third movement 'Lento' draws sumptuous melancholy from its jazz-inflected harmonies and makes expressive use of solo violin and viola across pizzicato accompaniment, before the work draws to a close with an ebullient 'Rondo'. *Kate Wakeling*

## Biographies

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### Allan Clayton MBE

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**Allan Clayton** is established as one of the most exciting and sought after singers of his generation. He studied at St John's College, Cambridge and at the Royal Academy of Music in London. An Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and former BBC New Generation Artist from 2007–09, his awards include 'The Queen's Commendation for Excellence', a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, the 2018 Watsonstage Award for Excellence in Opera, and the 2018 Royal Philharmonic Society Singer Award.

Allan garnered huge praise as the lead role in Brett Dean's *Hamlet*, which had its world premiere at Glyndebourne in June 2017. In 2019 he made his role debut as Faust in Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* at Glyndebourne.



Allan gave the world premiere of Gerald Barry's new work, *Canada*, at the 2017 BBC Proms, with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. He also sang the *War Requiem* at the 2018 BBC Proms, and then with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in Cardiff to commemorate the centenary of the end of World War I. During the 2019/20 season, he joined the London Philharmonic for Elgar's *The Apostles* under Sir Mark Elder, sang Britten's *Spring Symphony* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Richard Farnes, Britten's *Serenade* with the Philharmonia under Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo. Allan also took part in a recreation of the 1808 Akademie Concert with the Vienna Symphony under Phillippe Jordan as part of the Beethoven250 celebrations. Allan made his debut at the Teatro alla Scala singing in Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ* under Sir John Eliot Gardiner. A regular performer at Wigmore Hall, Allan was a major part of a Britten Series for some of the 2019/20 season, celebrating the composer's works with artists such as James Baillieu, Ailish Tynan, Sean Shibe, and Timothy Ridout.

In May 2021, Allan assumed the title role in *Peter Grimes* in a new Deborah Warner production at Teatro Real Madrid. He curated a major residency at the 2021 Aldeburgh Festival centred around the works of Britten, and will also perform *Oedipus Rex* at the Spoleto Festival and Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* at the First Night of the 2021 BBC Proms.

### Pip Eastop

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**Pip Eastop** is regarded as one of Britain's finest horn players. His career encompasses the widest possible range of genres and styles of music. At the age of 18, after four years of study at the Royal Academy of Music, he joined the Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra



and became the youngest ever principal solo horn in a European symphony orchestra. At 19 he was invited back to London to become principal horn in the London Sinfonietta, with whom he performed all over the world and gave many solo performances including Britten's *Serenade* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

Pip is currently principal horn in the London Chamber Orchestra and appears as guest principal with The Hanover Band, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and all of the major London symphony orchestras. He is also much in demand as a chamber musician and is very active in the contemporary music scene, both as performer and composer. In 2007, Pip returned to the Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra to play 10 consecutive performances of Schumann's *Konzertstück* in 10 of the major German concert halls, then later performed the same work at the Aldeburgh Festival with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Oliver Knussen. More recently his album of the four Horn Concerti and the Horn Quintet by Mozart, on the Hyperion label, was met with great international acclaim. Pip writes and lectures on teaching and learning horn and on the physiology of breathing technique for wind players. He is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music.

## Nicholas Collon

British conductor **Nicholas Collon** is Founder and Principal Conductor of Aurora Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Guerzenich Orchester in Cologne, and Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Residentie Orkest in The Hague until 2021, when he starts as Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He is recognised as a born communicator, innovative programmer, and high-calibre interpreter of a wide repertoire. Under

his direction Aurora Orchestra have become known for their eclectic programming and for performing complete symphonies from memory. They are Associate Orchestra at the Southbank Centre and appear every year at the BBC Proms. Collon's elegant conducting style, searching musical intellect and inspirational music-making have ensured that he is already a regular guest with orchestras such as the Philharmonia, Halle Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony and Danish National Symphony. He recently debuted with the Deutsche Sinfonie Orchester Berlin and Orchestre National de France, among others. Collon has released ground-breaking recordings with Aurora for Warner Classics, and critically acclaimed discs with the Halle Orchestra and Danish Radio Symphony. He has conducted over 200 new works, and has conducted opera at ENO, WNO, Oper Koeln and Glyndebourne on Tour. Collon is a violist by training, and studied as Organ Scholar at Clare College, Cambridge.

## Aurora Orchestra

With its signature creative ethos, Aurora Orchestra combines world-class performance with adventurous programming and presentation. Founded in 2005 under Principal Conductor Nicholas Collon, it has quickly established a reputation as one of Europe's leading chamber orchestras, garnering several major awards including three Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards, a German ECHO Klassik Award and a Classical:NEXT Innovation Award.

Collaborating widely across art forms and musical genres, Aurora has worked with an exceptional breadth of artists, ranging from Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Sarah Connolly and Pierre-Laurent Aimard to Wayne McGregor, Edmund de Waal and Björk. A champion of new music, it has premiered works by composers

including Julian Anderson, Benedict Mason, Anna Meredith, Nico Muhly and Judith Weir. In recent years, it has pioneered memorised performance (without the use of printed sheet music), and is thought to be the first orchestra worldwide to perform whole symphonies in this way. Since 2016, Aurora has been creating *Orchestral Theatre* productions spanning diverse musical genres and art forms. These orchestral adventures rethink the concert format and offer bold new ways to engage with orchestral music for both old and new concert-goers alike. In 2020, Aurora launched 'Aurora Play', a free digital series showcasing the very best of Aurora's orchestral adventures online, with creative ways for listeners of all ages to join in at home.

Based in London, Aurora is Resident Orchestra at Kings Place and Associate Orchestra at Southbank Centre. Its busy UK calendar includes ongoing regional residencies at St George's Bristol, The Apex (Bury St Edmunds) and Colyer-Fergusson Hall (Canterbury). International highlights include appearances at The Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Kölner Philharmonie, Victoria Concert Hall Singapore, Melbourne Festival and Shanghai Concert Hall.

By challenging expectations of what an orchestra can and should do on the concert platform, Aurora inspires audiences of all ages and backgrounds to develop a passion for orchestral music. Through an award-winning Creative Learning programme, Aurora regularly offers workshops and storytelling concerts for families, schools and young people.

including children with special educational needs and disabilities. In 2022, Aurora plans to launch an extensive learning resources programme for primary schools, including its first feature film for young children and a wide range of resources to help teachers deliver music activities in the classroom.

## Support Aurora Orchestra

These are challenging times for our musical community, but we are determined to continue to deliver a vibrant and inspiring programme both during and after the current crisis. If you are in a position to help us safeguard Aurora's future with a donation we would be hugely grateful for your support.

To make a donation please visit [auroraorchestra.com/donate-to-aurora](https://auroraorchestra.com/donate-to-aurora). From all of us, thank you.

## Acknowledgements

Aurora Orchestra is generously supported by **Arts Council England**, **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**, and **Sir John Fisher Foundation**.



Supported using public funding by  
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ENGLAND**



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# KINGS PLACE LONDON UNWRAPPED

## Aurora Orchestra with Iestyn Davies The New Elizabethans

Dowland | Purcell | Handel  
Tippett | Bennett | Knussen | Birtwistle

Sat 25 Sep | 7.30pm

[kingsplace.co.uk/london](https://kingsplace.co.uk/london)

