

Press Release

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Britten Sinfonia 'At Lunch'

Nicholas Daniel and Britten Sinfonia give the world premiere of Brian Elias's *Oboe Quintet*

Wednesday 19 April at 1pm, Wigmore Hall, London

Friday 21 April at 1pm, St Andrews Hall, Norwich

Tuesday 25 April at 1pm, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Britten Sinfonia Principal oboe, **Nicholas Daniel** and **Britten Sinfonia** give the world premiere of Brian Elias's *Oboe Quintet* in the orchestra's 'At Lunch' concert series in Norwich, Cambridge and Wigmore Hall. The concert features Elias's new 19 minute work alongside Gerald Finzi's *Interlude* for oboe and string quartet, Op.21 and Mozart's *String Quintet in C minor 406/516b*. It coincides with the launch of an NMC recording of Brian Elias's music featuring Britten Sinfonia and Susan Bickley in a BBC Proms performance of Elias's *Electra Mourns* (winner of a 2013 British Composer Award), as well as *Geranos* performed by Psappa, and songs performed by Susan Bickley and Roderick Williams, with Iain Burnside.

Serving up lunchtime music with real bite, Britten Sinfonia's award-winning At Lunch concerts set new pieces from leading and emerging composers alongside some of the greatest chamber works. Concerts, which begin at 1pm, last an hour and won't break the bank, offer the chance to hear some of the country's finest chamber musicians in more intimate repertoire. This concert features an outstanding line up: Britten Sinfonia Principals **Jacqueline Shave** (leader), **Nicholas Daniel** (oboe), **Caroline Dearnley** (cello), **Clare Finimore** (viola) and **Miranda Dale** (violin), and **Dorothea Vogel** (viola).

About the Programme

The pairing of oboe and strings dates back centuries, the deep, mellow tone of the oboe finding a remarkable kinship with the warmth of string instruments, a pairing unlike anything within the woodwind family itself.

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) seemed to understand this relationship well. He wrote just one work for oboe, *Interlude* for oboe and string quartet (1933-36), but it proved so successful that it has since become established as one of the major pieces of the oboe repertoire.

Brian Elias's *Oboe Quintet*, commissioned by Wigmore Hall with the support of André Hoffman, president of the Fondation Hoffmann, a Swiss grant-making foundation, is in five movements, played without a break. He comments: "*When Nicholas Daniel asked me to write an oboe quintet for him, I replied immediately that I would rather write an oboe quartet; the clarity and lightness of the Mozart oboe quartet was very much in my mind. Nicholas, however, was adamant, and so I accepted the challenge of writing for a combination for which there is hardly any other repertoire. I did not want to treat the string quartet as a quasi-orchestral accompaniment (that would have been too easy!); although the oboe predominates and leads the musical development, the strings play more than just a supporting role. Motifs, melodies and harmonies, stated in the first few bars, are 'recollected' throughout the piece, often in new contexts, to provide a sense of unity.*"

Mozart's *String Quintet in C minor 406/516b* reworks his earlier *Wind Serenade in C minor, K.388* for strings, revealing the harmonious, sometimes interchangeable nature of both, with the oboe taking the role of the first violin.

About Brian Elias

Brian Elias studied at the Royal College of Music in London with Humphrey Searle and Bernard Stevens and privately with Elisabeth Lutyens. After five years working at a finance company in New York he returned to London to re-establish a musical career. The development of his musical language can be traced through his major orchestral works. The Webernesque *Le Chevelure* (1967) was followed twelve years later by *Somnia*; the intensity of *L'Eylah* (1983) is built upon in the exquisite *Five Songs to Poems by Irina Ratushinskaya* (1989) and the powerfully expressionist ballet *The Judas Tree* (1991) leads to the playful but dark *The House that Jack Built* (2001). Two recent orchestral pieces, *Doubles* and *Electra Mourns*, have both won British Composer Awards (in 2010 and 2013 respectively). Forthcoming works include a Cello Concerto for Natalie Clein.

Programme and Booking details

Nicholas Daniel	oboe
Jacqueline Shave	violin
Miranda Dale	violin
Clare Finnimore	viola
Dorothea Vogel	viola
Caroline Dearnley	cello
Finzi	Interlude for oboe and string quartet
Brian Elias	Oboe Quintet
Mozart	String Quintet in C minor K406/516b

London, Wigmore Hall, Wednesday 19 April at 1pm

(Free pre-concert talk at 12.15pm: Dr Kate Kennedy talks to Brian Elias about his new work)

Concert tickets - £13 (£11 concessions)

www.wigmore-hall.org.uk

Norwich, St Andrews Hall, Friday 21 April at 1pm

Tickets - £9, £3 under 18s and students

www.brittensinfonia.com

01603 630 0000

Cambridge, West Road Concert Hall, Tuesday 25 April at 1pm

(post-concert talk at 2.15pm)

Tickets - £9, £3 under 18s and students

www.cambridgelivetrust.co.uk/tickets

01223 357851

Diary Date: 13 & 14 July, Norwich and Cambridge

The final 'At Lunch' concert of the season, features **Britten Sinfonia Academy**, the ensemble's orchestra for outstanding teenage musical talent from the East of England, in the world premiere of a specially commissioned new work by **Elena Langer**.