

## Concert

Stephen Upshaw, Viola

2 to 3 pm, Saturday 25th September

Watchtower Gallery, Tweedmouth

American violist Stephen Upshaw appears regularly in festivals around the world including the BBC Proms, Cheltenham, and the Salzburg Chamber Music Festival. He is a member of the Solem Quartet and, as a noted interpreter of contemporary music, is also a member of London's Riot Ensemble. He has worked closely with many of today's leading composers, including John Adams, Thomas Adès and George Benjamin. He has been the artistic director of "Sounding Motion" – a company exploring the relationship between live contemporary chamber music and dance. Stephen has also toured regularly in the USA, Europe and Asia with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. He was recently a featured guest on BBC Radio 3's 'This Classical Life'. A native of Atlanta, Stephen studied at the New England Conservatory in Boston and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Stephen plays a 1715 Daniel Parker school viola currently made available to him by Nigel Brown and the Stradivari Trust.

## Programme

### **Errollyn Wallen    LAVINIA**

Errollyn Wallen's 'LAVINIA' was commissioned for Stephen by the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation and Riot Ensemble. Errollyn writes of her piece: "Based on the Ancient Greek character Lavinia, this piece seeks to convey the overwhelming and consuming nature of jealousy which most often grows out of pain at the prospect of loss. Towards the end of the piece, we hear some notes from Lavinia's aria from my opera, Dido's Ghost."

### **Michael Worboys    Allanton Air**

Michael writes of his work: "Allanton Air began life at a workshop for viola led by Stephen at Trinity Laban Conservatoire in 2017. At the same time, I was working on recording the working processes of Allanton artists Charles Paulsen and Pauline Burbidge, as well as sounds from the environment surrounding their studios. As Pauline said, "the spaces we created here are very important to us", and Allanton Air blends the sounds made in the course of creating the art with more lyrical, pastoral elements evoking the spaces in which the artists live and work."

## Programme (cont.)

### J.S. Bach Cello Suite No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1009, transcribed for viola

Prelude

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Bourée I and II

Gigue

The six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello by Johann Sebastian Bach were probably composed during the period 1717–23, when he served as Kapellmeister in Köthen in the employment of Prince Leopold. They follow the traditional form of the German instrumental suite - an elaborate prelude followed by a fixed series of dances. At the time, and indeed for all time, they provide one of the most outstanding examples of polyphonic composition for a solo string instrument. The transcription for viola opens up a new sound world from that which we are used to, with the viola providing more brightness and agility.

### John Casken From One Thread

Fantasia

Sarabande

Courante

The title of this work is a phrase from the English contemporary textile artist Alice Kettle: "A piece can develop from one thread". 'From One Thread' was composed by John Casken for the London Royal Academy of Music in recognition of its 200th Anniversary in 2022. It was given its first performance there in 2020 by Miguel Sobrinho, a postgraduate student at the Academy. Its structure comprises an elaborate Fantasia followed by a pair of dances (slow and faster) and looks back in reduced form to the baroque German instrumental suite. It is therefore a fitting companion to the aforementioned Bach Cello Suite.

### György Kurtág Selections from 'Signs, Games and Messages'

Hungarian composer György Kurtág's 'Signs, Games and Messages' is a collection of compositions of varying length written for different types of occasion: musical 'letters', tributes and playful experiments in instrumental technique. Music journalist Tom Service writes that Kurtág's music "... involves reducing music to the level of the fragment, the moment, with individual pieces or movements lasting mere seconds, or a minute, perhaps two.

You can find the full programme for the Berwick Music Series 2021 at [berwickmusic.org](http://berwickmusic.org)

