



CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA ANNOUNCES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

World premiere commissions from Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Dobrinka Tabakova & Huw Watkins

UK premiere of Donghoon Shin's 'My Shadow'

Revival of John Tavener's 'The Hidden Face'

Featuring guest artists: William Morgan, Geoffrey Paterson & Roderick Williams OBE

**Immersive installations & interactive soundscapes
in CLS' 'seriously informal' signature style**

Thursday 22 July 2021: To celebrate its 50th anniversary, City of London Sinfonia (CLS) is delighted to announce 'Origin', a four-part concert series across the 2021-22 season, featuring world premiere commissions from Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Dobrinka Tabakova and Huw Watkins; a UK premiere from Donghoon Shin; the revival of CLS' 1996 commission, 'The Hidden Face', by John Tavener; and performances from guest artists including William Morgan, Geoffrey Paterson and Roderick Williams OBE.

'Origin' reflects on City of London Sinfonia's remarkable history and celebrates what defines the orchestra today. Over the past five decades - and building on the legacy of its founder, Richard Hickox - CLS has championed outstanding British composers, commissioning more than 55 pieces from more than 35 composers, many as early career and emerging artists. They include Malcolm Arnold, Tansy Davies, Colin Matthews, Cecilia McDowall, John Rutter, Gwilym Simcock and John Tavener. 'Origin' continues this rich tradition with four commissions premiering in the 50th anniversary season.

More recently, CLS has grown its spirit of innovation across a raft of sector-leading research-driven programmes that engage people in interactive music-making and sharing across mental health, social prescribing, dementia care, and hospital settings. In 2020, the Orchestra won the Royal Philharmonic Society (RPS) Impact Award for this work, and though each programme is bespoke, all are driven by the Orchestra's musicians and delivered one-to-one or in small groups, to promote an open and relaxed environment where creative inspiration can flourish. Re-engaging people - including those most at risk of social isolation - in the joy of classical music sits proudly at the forefront of everything CLS does today. Each concert in the 'Origin' series is infused with this spirit of inclusivity and collaboration, and unexpected elements punctuate the season including immersive installations and interactive soundscapes, all presented in CLS' 'seriously informal' signature style.

Alexandra Wood, City of London Sinfonia's Creative Director & Orchestra Leader, said: *"The 50th anniversary 'Origin' season has been programmed to mirror the arc of our Orchestra's story, honouring tradition yet always looking firmly forward, spotlighting our unique approach through themes that are woven throughout the season. For example, themes of human wellbeing and mental health awareness - such as the Cheryl Frances-Hoad commission - speak to our work in health and social care contexts. This work is an anchor for our Orchestra, it sets us apart and informs everything we do. Each concert in the season features surprising and original interactive elements as we seek to deepen the connection with our*

audiences. ‘Origin’ marks a really special moment in our history and I hope that our concerts will entice and inspire, be thought provoking and nourishing, as well as helping people get to know us better”.

John Singer, Chairman of City of London Sinfonia, said: “‘Origin’ celebrates City of London Sinfonia’s continuing specialty of creating the present by combining elements of past and future. Musical masterworks alongside freshly commissioned contemporary work; our distinguished residence, Southwark Cathedral, reimagined with unexpected interactive soundscapes and installations; loyalty to long-standing friends and collaborators, such as Roderick Williams and Dobrinka Tabakova, while welcoming new friends, such as Donghoon Shin, Huw Watkins and Cheryl Frances-Hoad. Regarding our award-winning social impact work, ‘Origin’ demonstrates how we have built our pioneering research-driven platform from early participation work in the community to today’s creative, collaborative practice in health and social care contexts. It now drives the way the Orchestra performs everywhere, breaking down barriers and deepening our connection with audiences”.

Introducing the ‘Origin’ season:

An Authentic Voice

27 October 2021

Southwark Cathedral

An Authentic Voice explores how the rich tradition of British folksong has influenced composers both past and present. With the world premiere performance of a new folksong-inspired duet for Clarinet and Violin by Huw Watkins as its centrepiece, written specially for Katherine Spencer (Principal Clarinet) and Alexandra Wood (Leader and Creative Director), the programme includes Butterworth’s ‘Six Songs from a Shropshire Lad’, performed, in his own arrangement, by baritone and long-standing CLS collaborator, Roderick Williams OBE.

The concert will also feature an immersive listening experience, curated by Williams together with Alexandra Wood, with folksong-inspired solos and duets by composers including Sally Beamish, James MacMillan, Gerald Barry, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Peter Maxwell Davies performed throughout the cathedral. Audience members will be invited to experience these short chamber pieces in-promenade, to make a musical journey around the British Isles to uncover some of its many voices, whilst taking in the breathtaking architecture and distinct acoustics throughout the cathedral.

Shifting Sounds

4 November 2021

Southwark Cathedral

Shifting Sounds celebrates the power of music to confound and subvert our expectations, pointing us towards new and yet undiscovered destinations. The cornerstone of the concert is the UK premiere of Donghoon Shin’s *My Shadow* – ten contrapuntal miniatures for clarinet, two violins, cello and piano. Co-commissioned by City of London Sinfonia and the Heidelberger Frühling, *My Shadow* is a contemplation on the dark side of the human soul, where the distinctive timbral discrepancy of the piano takes on the character of the mysterious shadow-like figure in the eponymous poem by Robert Louis Stevenson.

The concert brings together the full CLS orchestra to perform Beethoven’s First Symphony, a masterwork that signalled the beginning of a new musical age, as well as movements from Jean-Féry Rebel’s *Les éléments* suite, which tells of the chaos that preceded the creation of the world, opening with what is thought to be the first notated tone cluster in the history of Western classical music.

Scenes from the Wild
25 & 27 November 2021
Southwark Cathedral

Scenes from the Wild is a dramatic song cycle for tenor and chamber orchestra, composed by Cheryl Frances-Hoad to lyrics by Amanda Holden, commissioned by CLS for its 50th anniversary. The song cycle is an evocative love letter to the natural world based on the teenage conservationist and activist Dara McAnulty's acclaimed debut book, *Diary of a Young Naturalist*. Diagnosed with Asperger's/autism aged five, McAnulty explains that "nature became so much more than an escape; it became a life-support system", and today, much like fellow activist Greta Thunberg, he sees his passion for climate justice as his mission.

Music and the mind is a recurrent theme in Frances-Hoad's work. In 2008 she was Composer in Residence in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Cambridge, premiering the solo piano work, *The Synchronisation and Tempo of the Mind*, at its Symposium; and more recently the chamber opera, *Scenes from Autistic Bedtimes*, was workshopped at Opera North in 2012/13.

For its world premiere performances, *Scenes from the Wild* will be performed by tenor William Morgan, in his CLS debut, and conducted by Geoffrey Paterson. Audience members will be invited to move around the space and help create interactive soundscapes inspired by the natural world using their mobile phones and tablets.

This is CLS
3 March 2022
Southwark Cathedral

This is CLS is the big birthday concert, a moment to celebrate 50 years of CLS, with the world premiere of a new commission by Dobrinka Tabakova and the revival of John Tavener's hypnotic and contemplative prayer, *The Hidden Face*, commissioned by CLS under Richard Hickox in 1996, for oboist Nicholas Daniel and countertenor Michael Chance.

CLS' collaboration with Dobrinka Tabakova began in 2019 with a UK-wide tour of *Centuries of Meditations*, and **This is CLS** will also include a performance of her 2005 meditation, *Frozen River Flows*. The expansive birthday concert will deploy the full Orchestra, performing throughout the Cathedral, in an uplifting and restorative programme featuring Elliott Carter's 'A Fantasy about Purcell's 'Fantasia on one note'', Edmund Finnis' 'The Centre is Everywhere', Pēteris Vasks' 'Music for the fleeting birds' and Vaughan Williams' 'Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis'.

50 years of City of London Sinfonia: City of London Sinfonia, as it would come to be named, was founded by conductor Richard Hickox (1948-2008) as the Richard Hickox Orchestra in March 1971. A renowned conductor of choral and operatic music and an exuberant champion of British composers, he premiered his first commission, 'Fancies' by John Rutter, in the same year. Performances and recordings followed apace with a Proms debut of Handel's 'Messiah' in 1973, and a first recording of Bach's 'Masses in G major and G minor' for Argo two years later. In 1979, the Orchestra was renamed City of London Sinfonia, reflecting closer links with the City of London, and its residency at the newly-opened Barbican Centre, where the Orchestra performed in its inaugural season. CLS launched its Education and Community programme in 1988, making it the first UK orchestra to deliver dedicated participation work year-round. This work, in which leading musicians from the orchestra are actively engaged, has become one of the unique signatures of CLS, and today underpins everything the Orchestra does. Following Richard Hickox's death in 2008, Stephen Layton was appointed

Artistic Director and Principal Conductor, succeeded by Alexandra Wood as Orchestra Leader in 2012, and then Creative Director in 2017. In recent years, CLS has established its 'seriously informal' signature style, with immersive and participatory performative elements, breaking down barriers between players and audiences and performing in unexpected and non-traditional venues such as clubs, university halls and cathedrals. More recently, as a leading authority in creative, collaborative practice in health and social care contexts, CLS has initiated and co-authored two publications on the impact of this work: *From Bingo to Bartok* (2019) and *Orchestras in Healthcare* (2021). Recognition of CLS includes a Grammy Award (1997) for its recording of Britten's 'Peter Grimes' conducted by Richard Hickox, and two RPS Awards (1997 and 2020) for Large Ensemble and Impact respectively.

Notes to Editors'

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PRESS IMAGES for City of London Sinfonia's 'Origin' Series are available to download [here](#).

'Origin' series booking information:

CLS Friends Priority Booking for City of London Sinfonia's 'Origin' series opens on Thursday 22 July at 11am; Public Booking opens on Wednesday 28 July at 11am.

To find out more, visit: www.cls.co.uk/whats-on/london-season

Origin: *An Authentic Voice*

Date & time: Wednesday 27 October, 7pm

Running time: 90 minutes

Venue: Southwark Cathedral, London SE1 9DA

Ticket pricing: £25-£20 (£1 for under 16s; £5 for 16-25s & students) – no booking fee

Tickets must be booked online in advance via: <https://cityoflondonsinfonia.co.uk/whats-on/2619/origin-authentic-voice-27-oct-2021/>

Origin: *Shifting Sounds*

Date & time: Thursday 4 November, 7pm

Running time: 90 minutes

Venue: Southwark Cathedral, London SE1 9DA

Ticket pricing: £25-£20 (£1 for under 16s; £5 for 16-25s & students) – no booking fee

Tickets must be booked online in advance via: <https://cityoflondonsinfonia.co.uk/whats-on/2620/origin-shifting-sounds-4-nov-2021/>

Origin: *Scenes from the Wild*

Dates & times: Thursday 25 November, 7pm; Saturday 27 November, 2.30pm; Saturday 27 November, 7pm

Running time: 90 minutes

Venue: Southwark Cathedral, London SE1 9DA

Ticket pricing: £25-£20 (£1 for under 16s; £5 for 16-25s & students) – no booking fee

Tickets must be booked online in advance via: <https://cityoflondonsinfonia.co.uk/whats-on/2621/origin-scenes-from-the-wild-25-27-nov-2021/>

Origin: *This is CLS*

Date & time: Thursday 3 March, 7pm

Running time: 90 minutes

Venue: Southwark Cathedral, London SE1 9DA

Ticket pricing: £25-£20 (£1 for under 16s; £5 for 16-25s & students) – no booking fee

Tickets must be booked online in advance via: <https://cityoflondonsinfonia.co.uk/whats-on/2622/origin-this-is-cls-3-mar-2021/>

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Scenes from the Wild is supported by Cockayne – Grants for the Arts and the London Community Foundation, The Leche Trust, PRS Foundation's The Open Fund for Organisations, and using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

ABOUT CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA

City of London Sinfonia (CLS) is rooted in the belief that music and creativity are for anyone and everyone. It puts responsive, in-the-moment music-making with individuals and groups and musician development at the forefront of all its activities, engaging audiences as co-creators in shared, meaningful music experiences.

CLS is leading the way in creative, collaborative practice in health and social care through its participation programme, which is the driver of everything the Orchestra does. In the 2020 Royal Philharmonic Society (RPS) Awards, City of London Sinfonia was awarded the Impact Award for its Sound Young Minds project, which provides opportunities to young people in psychiatric hospitals to work with each other and to express themselves. Other core projects include Room to Room Music with residents in care homes, Music for Children in London hospitals, and social prescribing with the new Tessa Jowell Health Centre. Its Comfortable Classical series of relaxed concerts, which was adapted for online during 2020, invites anyone and everyone to interact with CLS musicians and experience orchestral music.

The Orchestra's innovative artistic programmes – curated by Alexandra Wood (Leader and Creative Director) and guest artists – spark adventure, intrigue and enjoyment with concepts often relating to science, nature, history, or philosophy. Recent themes include Bach and the Cosmos (2018), exploring J.S. Bach and his love for mathematics; Absolute Bird (2019), featuring medieval to contemporary music influenced by birdsong; Storytelling (2019), a Faber & Faber collaboration of spoken word and music; and Worlds Colliding (2020), unblurring the lines between classical and popular culture. Its upcoming 50th Season will celebrate the natural environment with a new commission by Cheryl Frances-Hoad and a deep listening project with Roderick Williams OBE.

The last decade has seen CLS establish its 'seriously informal' performance style, reaching new and diverse audiences by presenting live music in modern, exciting, and thought-provoking ways in its concert series, often in open-spaced venues such as East London clubs, university halls and cathedrals. This approach led to the Orchestra being runner-up in the Ensemble category in the 2020 RPS Awards.

City of London Sinfonia gives over 75 performances each year, performing regularly at the Albany (Deptford), Canada Water Theatre, Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southwark Cathedral, and St Paul's Cathedral. It is also proud to be Resident Orchestra at Opera Holland Park, since 2004. Tours in recent years have included Japan, Ireland, and cathedrals around the UK. Recordings include *King of Ghosts* with sarodist Soumik Datta (Globe Music, 2017) and Stuart Hancock's *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (Sony Classical, 2017).

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