



**Alessio Bax announces  
Joshua Bell, Sarah Connolly and a European premiere  
As part of his first season as Artistic Director of  
*Incontri in Terra di Siena***



**Line-up includes:**

Alessio Bax piano  
Joshua Bell violin  
Lise Berthaud viola  
Lucille Chung piano  
Sarah Connolly mezzo-soprano  
Julius Drake piano  
Henning Kraggerud - violin  
Antonio Lysy cello  
Dan Tepfer jazz pianist  
Radovan Vlatkovic horn  
Paul Watkins cello  
Escher String Quartet

**29 July – 5 August 2016  
La Foce, Val d'Orcia, Tuscany**

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**#ITSLaFoce17**

**"Go to live concerts, that's where the magic happens"**

Alessio Bax, interviewed by ClassicFM

Celebrated pianist and new Artistic Director of the ***Incontri in Terra di Siena***, Alessio Bax is inviting musical friends and colleagues **Joshua Bell, Radovan Vlatkovic, Henning Kraggerud, Lise Berthaud** and **Paul Watkins** to the Festival's 2017 edition. Located in the Val d'Orcia, the Tuscan chamber music festival runs from **29 July to 5 August**. A festival highlight is **Sarah Connolly**, who is making her first and much-anticipated appearance for a recital with **Julius Drake**. Set in the buildings and gardens of one of Tuscany's most beautiful estates, villas and churches of the Val d'Orcia, the summer festivities begin with Incontri's founding Director and cellist **Antonio Lysy** together with new artistic Director Alessio Bax and pianist **Lucille Chung**. Also making their debut at the festival, the **Escher String Quartet** joining jazz pianist **Dan Tepfer** to perform the European premiere of Tepfer's Piano Quintet *Solar Spiral*.

**Antonio Lysy** founded the chamber music festival 29 years ago in memory of his grandparents, **Antonio and Iris Origo**. Iris was the Anglo-American author of **War in the Val d'Orcia**, a book describing the events during the Second World War in Tuscany. Following in the footsteps of previous guest music directors Pascal Rogé and Kathryn Stott, **Alessio Bax** will curate Incontri in Terra di Siena for the next three summers. Originally from Puglia in Italy and a graduate of the Chigiana Academy in Siena, Bax now resides in New York with his wife, Canadian pianist Lucille Chung and daughter Mila. He won the Leeds

International Piano Competition in 2000 and is the current award holder of the Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award.

Antonio Lysy comments:

*"We are incredibly privileged to have Alessio Bax for the next three years as part of the Incontri team, and we are looking forward to much more of his playing and artistic input."*

Admired for his thought-provoking projects as well as educational work, **Joshua Bell** is one of the most celebrated violinists of his era with a career spanning more than 30 years as a soloist, chamber musician, recording artist and conductor. Alessio Bax is thrilled to be able to invite the star-violinist, his regular recital partner, to his home country. The famous duo will be hosted by the esteemed luxury resort Monteverdi Tuscany, located in the medieval hilltop village of Castiglioncello del Trinoro, for an all-Brahms Gala Concert.

A passionate gastronomist in his spare time, Alessio Bax is delighted to give further fellow musicians a taste of the Val d'Orcia. These include the acclaimed horn player and prime advocate of his instrument, **Radovan Vlatković**, French viola player and former BBC Young Musician **Lise Berthaud**, Norwegian violinist and prolific composer **Henning Kraggerud**, and cellist **Paul Watkins**, who is the English Chamber Orchestra's first Music Director. All of these musicians perform throughout the festival on several occasions and will join up with Antonio Lysy for a concert led by Joshua Bell at the courtyard of the La Foce estate.

**Lucille Chung** teams up with her husband for the opening concert with Castelluccio at the backdrop; two years ago the pianist-couple gave a recital here, which was hailed by Musica as "*a fascinating recital for four hands [...] a brilliant reading, eloquent, stylized and always elegant, the interaction between the players was oiled to perfection.*"

Jazz pianist **Dan Tepfer**, who performs regularly with jazz icon Lee Konitz and saxophonist Ben Wendel, will also appear at the Castelluccio to improvise on Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. He will team up with the Escher String Quartet for the European premiere of his piano quintet *Solar Spiral*. Working with algorithms, Tepfer will be improvising on the piano to a rising spiral in the strings culminating in a rigid logical phrasing.

The **Escher String Quartet** (Adam Barnett-Hart and Aaron Boyd on violin, Pierre Lapointe on viola and Brook Speltz on cello) are best known for their Naxos recordings of Zemlinsky's complete string quartets. The quartet performs a programme of Mozart, Barber and Dvorak at one of the festival's regular venues, the 10<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque Pieve di Corsignano church in Pienza.

Much in demand on both the world's major opera stages and concert platforms, **Sarah Connolly** has built up a steady career as one of Britain's leading mezzo-sopranos. Together with her regular recital partner **Julius Drake**, Connolly will perform music by Mahler, Berlioz, Poulenc and Debussy. This recital at the Teatro degli Avvaloranti in Città della Pieve, birthplace of the famous renaissance painter Pietro Vannucci (also known as Perugino), will be one of Connolly's rare appearances in Italy and an exciting way to end the 2017 Incontri in Terra di Siena festival.

*Click below to watch a video of Alessio Bax performing at the Incontri in Terra di Siena last summer, together with the Southbank Sinfonia:*

<http://www.classicfm.com/artists/alessio-bax/alessio-bax/#UEmaAPE7SlsfjRDI.97>

# The 2017 Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival

Preliminary programme (subject to change)

Saturday 29 July – 9pm

## **Opening Concert**

**Castelluccio**

**Alessio Bax** piano

**Lucille Chung** piano

**Antonio Lysy** cello

Music by Mozart, Witold Lutoslawski,  
Sergei Rachmaninov, Astor Piazzolla

Sunday 30 July – 8pm

## **Pieve di Corsignano, Pienza**

**Escher String Quartet**

Mozart *String Quartet in B minor,*  
*K458 'The Hunt'*

Barber *String Quartet in B minor,*  
*op.11*

Dvorak *String Quartet n. 13 in G, op.*  
*106*

Monday 31 July – 8pm

## **Chiesa del Triano, Montefollonico**

**Escher String Quartet**

**Alessio Bax** piano

**Henning Kraggerud** violin

**Lise Berthaud** viola

**Paul Watkins** cello

Rachmaninov *String Quartet n.1*  
Grieg *Sonata for violin and piano n.3,*  
*op.45*

Glazunov *'Chant du Ménestrel' for*  
*cello and piano, op.71*

Tchaikovsky's *String Sextet in D*  
*minor op.70 'Souvenir de Florence'*

Wednesday 2 August – 8pm

**Castelluccio**

**Dan Tepfer** jazz piano

**Radovan Vlatkovic** horn

**Escher String Quartet**

Bach/Dan Tepfer *'Goldberg*  
*Variations/Variations'*

Messiaen *Appel Interstellaire* (from  
*'Des Canyons aux Étoiles')*

Dan Tepfer *Solar Spiral for piano*  
*quintet (2016) – EUROPEAN*  
*PREMIERE*

Thursday 3 August – 8pm

**Chiesa di Sant'Andrea,**

**Castiglioncello del Trinoro**

**Gala Concert**

**Joshua Bell** violin

**Alessio Bax** piano

**Radovan Vlatković** horn

Brahms *Sonatensatz in C minor*

Brahms *Sonata for violin and piano*  
*in D minor, op.108*

Brahms *Trio for horn, violin and*  
*piano, op.40*

Friday 4 August – 9pm

**La Foce**

**Joshua Bell, Henning Kraggerud**  
*violin*

**Lise Berthaud** viola

**Antonio Lysy, Paul Watkins** cello

**Radovan Vlatković** horn

**Escher String Quartet**

Mozart *Quintet for horn and strings*  
*in E minor, K407*

Henning Kraggerud *Duets for violin*  
*and viola and for two violas*

Mendelssohn *String Octet, op.20*

Saturday 5 August – 8pm

**Teatro degli Avvaloranti, Città**

**della Pieve**

**Closing concert**

**Sarah Connolly** mezzo soprano

**Julius Drake** piano

Mahler *Rückert Lieder*

Berlioz *Les Nuits d'Eté*

Poulenc *Banalités*

Debussy *Trois Chansons de Bilitis, La*  
*flûte de Pan, La Chevelure, Le*  
*Tombeau des naïades*

Selection of English songs - tbc



## Alessio Bax



Pianist Alessio Bax – a First Prize winner at the Leeds and Hamamatsu International Piano Competitions and a 2009 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient – has appeared as soloist with more than 100 orchestras worldwide, including the London Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, Japan's NHK Symphony, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic under Yuri Temirkanov, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle. Recent highlights include a Minnesota Orchestra debut under

Andrew Litton; a return to Bravo! Vail with the Dallas Symphony and Jaap van Zweden; performances with London's Southbank Sinfonia and Vladimir Ashkenazy; a recital tour of South America including three concerts at the famed Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires; tours of Asia with both Joshua Bell and Daishin Kashimoto; concerts with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York and on tour; and a solo recital at the Cliburn Concerts series in Fort Worth. Among festival appearances are England's International Piano Series and the Aldeburgh and Bath festivals, Switzerland's Verbier Festival, the Risør Festival in Norway, Germany's Ruhr Klavier-Festival and Beethovenfest, and the U.S.'s Music@Menlo and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. Bax's acclaimed discography includes a Mussorgsky and Scriabin solo disc; *Lullabies for Mila*, a collection dedicated to his baby daughter; Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" and "Moonlight" Sonatas (Gramophone "Editor's Choice"); *Bax & Chung*, featuring Stravinsky's four-hand *Pétrouchka*; Mozart's Piano Concertos K. 491 and K. 595; *Alessio Bax plays Brahms* (Gramophone "Critics' Choice"); *Rachmaninov: Preludes & Melodies* (American Record Guide "Critics' Choice"); *Bach Transcribed*; and *Baroque Reflections* (Gramophone "Editor's Choice"). At age 14, he graduated with top honors from the conservatory of Bari, his hometown in Italy, and after further studies in Europe he moved to the U.S. in 1994. A Steinway artist, he resides in New York City with his wife, pianist Lucille Chung, and their daughter.

## Antonio Lysy



Antonio Lysy is an internationally renowned cellist, appearing as a soloist in major concert halls around the world. He has performed with orchestras including the Philharmonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Camerata Salzburg, the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, the Orchestra di Padova e il Veneto, the Israel Sinfonietta, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Lysy has also performed under the baton of such distinguished conductors such as Yehudi Menuhin, Charles Dutoit, Yuri Temirkanov and Sandor Vegh. In 2010, Lysy released an album dedicated to cello works from Argentina, called *Antonio Lysy at The Broad: Music from Argentina* (released on the Yarlung Records label). He earned a Latin Grammy Award for the track *Pampas*, written for him by Lalo Schifrin.

In addition to his solo career, Lysy is also an experienced pedagogue. He spent a number of years as a professor at McGill University in Montreal. Lysy now holds the post of Professor of Cello and Head of Strings at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) where he now resides.

## History of La Foce



**Antonio Origo** (an Italian nobleman from Florence) and **Iris**, his young wife, bought La Foce in 1924 and dedicated their lives to bringing progress and social change to the poverty-ridden valley. During the Second World War and in its aftermath, the Origos remained at La Foce and sheltered evacuated children and escaped prisoners of war. Iris gives a vivid description of the events that engulfed La Foce during these tough years in her book *War in Val d'Orcia*.

The gardens of La Foce are cherished in Italy and abroad and were featured in the BBC 2 programme **Monty Don's Italian Gardens**. Designed by the English architect **Cecil Pinsent**, who also created Bernard Berenson's garden at Villa I Tatti, they were gradually built from 1924 to 1939. The gardens were conceived to enhance the Villa and expand the spectacular view over the valley of the Orcia river to Monte Amiata beyond. The terraces gently blend with the landscape, following the humanistic Renaissance ideal of geometrical order close to the house, gradually becoming wilder as they approach the woods. Lemon pots, roses, Mediterranean plants, wisteria, box parterres, laurel and cypress hedges, and paths and benches of travertine punctuate the natural curves of the hills.

Antonio and Iris Origo's daughter Benedetta and grandson Antonio Lysy established the music festival in their memory in 1989. Lysy, a Los Angeles-based cellist, is the Artistic Director of the festival, which enjoys patronage from honorary board members including **Charles Dutoit, Maxim Vengerov, Maurizio Pollini, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Colin Firth**.



## Iris Origo



Iris Origo vividly describes the wonderful though sometimes difficult years at La Foce in her two autobiographical books, *Images and Shadows* and *War in Val d'Orcia*. Pushkin Press has now reissued both books. Iris (1902-1988) was brought up between Florence, Ireland and America, until she married Antonio Origo and settled at La Foce.

## Images and Shadows

(London 1970; reissued by John Murray, London 1998 and David Godine, Boston 1999 and by Pushkin Press, 2017)

An autobiography, in which Iris Origo describes her childhood spent between Europe and America, and her subsequent move to La Foce, a large farm in Tuscany. There she shared with her husband Antonio the responsibility of bringing back prosperity to the barren land and impoverished people.





### **War in Val d'Orcia, An Italian War Diary 1943-1944**

(London 1947; reissued by David Godine, 1984 and by Pushkin Press, 2017)

A classic of the Second World War, this diary is an elegantly simple chronicle of daily life at La Foce, a Tuscan no-man's land bracketed by foreign invasion and civil war. "The Marchesa Origo's faithful record is one of those precious and rare accounts that give the truth of history with the art of a gifted writer, that bears witness nobly to ignoble times" (Helen Wolff)

#### **Other books by Iris Origo include:**

*Leopardi, A Study in Solitude*

*The Last Attachment*

*The Merchant of Prato. Francesco di Marco Datini 1335-1410*

*A Need to Testify*

**"the brilliance of the Incontri continue to draw visitors and musicians to La Foce."**

- Concerti -

**"Incontri is a festival embedded not just in the landscape and towns of Tuscany but also its history."**

- The Arts Desk -

**"One of the most enjoyable musical enterprises of the Tuscan summer"**

- Financial Times -

**"A Tuscan musical fairytale"**

- Luister -

For further information please visit:

[www.lafoce.com](http://www.lafoce.com)

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