

**Roderick Williams, Alexandra Wood and mathematician James Sparks launch *Bach and the Cosmos*, celebrating City of London Sinfonia's 30 years of participation work**



**Tuesday 9–Friday 12 October**

University Tour

Oxford University, Queen Mary University of London, Cambridge University and Bristol University  
***Goldberg Variations directed by Alexandra Wood***

**Tuesday 16 October, 7:30pm**

Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre  
***Bach Remixed directed by Roderick Williams***

**Saturday 20 October, 7:30pm**

Southwark Cathedral  
***B Minor Mass conducted by John Butt***

Mathematician **James Sparks** and guest director/baritone **Roderick Williams** present ***Bach and the Cosmos*** with **City of London Sinfonia (CLS)** in a series of three concerts, celebrating 30 years of CLS's groundbreaking participation work championed by Creative Director/Leader **Alexandra Wood**.

In two programmes (***Goldberg Variations*** and ***Bach Remixed***), Oxford academic James Sparks, who studied with Stephen Hawking and is a talented organist, explores the mathematical dimension – the language of the cosmos – behind Bach's musical genius. The series concludes with John Butt conducting a mindful, immersive performance of Bach's seminal **B Minor Mass** at Southwark Cathedral with a stunning cast including **Joanne Lunn, Rowan Pierce, Robin Blaze, Charles Daniels** and **Roderick Williams**.



The theme of *Bach and the Cosmos* is mirrored in CLS's participation work, particularly in their residency at Bethlem and Maudsley Hospital School, where young people with psychiatric illnesses are working with CLS musicians to compose music that responds to Bach's compositional structures and patterns.

As Chief Executive **Matthew Swann** explains,

***"City of London Sinfonia was a pioneer in developing a dual purpose for its musicians both on the platform and in the community. Our three-year residency at Bethlem and Maudsley enables us to witness the power of music outside of the concert hall. It has been enormously rewarding for the musicians."***

City of London Sinfonia's *Bach and the Cosmos* series is generously supported by Arts Council England, the Boris Karloff Charitable Foundation and John Ellerman Foundation.

## **Goldberg Variations, 9-12 October**

*Bach and the Cosmos* opens at four of the UK's best universities with a visual journey through JS Bach's most mathematical piece: the **Goldberg Variations**. Through visuals and musical examples, James Sparks explores how Bach uses mathematical methodologies to expand musical subjects and exhaust all permutations of every theme in his 30 Variations. In the Sitkovetsky arrangement of the *Goldberg Variations*, different sections of CLS will illuminate Bach's many beautiful mathematical structures and patterns. The Variations are coupled with Roderick Williams' orchestral arrangement of the Bourée from Bach's Cello Suite No.3 in C minor.

***"As someone who was drawn to mathematics and music from an early age, the connections between the two have always fascinated me. The elements of music – harmony, rhythm, and so on – are inherently mathematical, but the connection is much deeper than that: symmetry, structure and beauty all play a fundamental role. Bach's approach to composition takes this even further. Like a mathematician, he systematically works through different combinations and permutations of musical ideas, using symmetry to build complex musical works from only a small fragment of a theme. Writing music like this is technically difficult, requiring great analytical skill. Bach's genius meant that he was able to use this approach to create beautiful music that also has a more abstract mathematical beauty. For me, it's this combination that makes his music so special."***

- James Sparks, mathematician

Sparks will take as a starting point Bertrand Russell's description of mathematics:

***"It seems to me now that mathematics is capable of an artistic excellence as great as that of any music, perhaps greater; not because the pleasure it gives (although very pure) is comparable, either in intensity or in the number of people who feel it, to that of music, but because it gives in absolute perfection that combination, characteristic of great art, of godlike freedom, with the sense of inevitable destiny; because, in fact, it constructs an ideal world where everything is perfect but true."***

## **Bach Remixed, 16 October**

Featuring music by JS Bach reimagined by contemporary composers, including guest director Roderick Williams (*Enough*) and the architectural reworking of Bach in *Immortal Bach* by Norwegian composer **Knut Nystedt**, the second programme takes place at Southbank Centre's **Queen Elizabeth Hall**. Sparks will explore the composer's use of maths and numbers – the language of the cosmos – with a visual explanation of the relationships contained within. The programme includes two cantatas sung by Roderick

Williams, one motet performed with the Epiphoni Consort and the Brandenburg Concerto No.3, directed by Alexandra Wood.

*“As Douglas Adams memorably said, ‘Beethoven tells you what it’s like to be Beethoven and Mozart tells you what it’s like to be human. Bach tells you what it’s like to be the universe.’ It’s wonderfully fitting to be beginning my collaborative project with CLS with two Bach programmes, one of which contains the seismic B Minor Mass, and the other dwelling on the nature of mortality in the solo cantatas Komm, süßer Tod and Ich habe genug. My own compositional response to the latter masterpiece is a solo ‘sequenza’, Berio-style, for solo oboe; an attempt to imagine what goes through the mind and soul of someone ready to depart this life.”*

- Roderick Williams, Guest Director and Baritone

## **B Minor Mass, 20 October**

For the final performance of *Bach and the Cosmos* at **Southwark Cathedral**, audience members are invited to move around freely during an immersive performance, as City of London Sinfonia and **Epiphoni Consort** perform in different areas of the Cathedral, exploring the beautiful spaces and changing acoustics throughout. The informal setting will also have a small seated area in the central Nave and CLS’s signature cushions.



CLS welcomes the great scholar, conductor, organist and harpsichordist John Butt, who is renowned for his Bach interpretations, to conduct the B Minor Mass. There will also be a pre-concert mindful meditation.

## **Participation Programme**

### **Celebrating 30 years of transforming lives through music**

- City of London Sinfonia musicians have been transforming the lives of people across all areas of society for 30 years (1988-2018) and are recognised for their work in mainstream education and mental health and wellbeing.
- CLS works regularly in wellbeing settings and has 30 years’ continuous experience of working with young people with severe childhood conditions in hospitals.
- CLS has an integrated approach that places equal value on both its participation and performance programmes, and the Orchestra continues to value and invest in its musicians’ professional and creative development.
- CLS enjoys outstanding partnerships and has most recently been approached by Bethlem and Maudsley Hospital School to deliver three years’ worth of creative music-making.

**City of London Sinfonia** is home to over 40 outstanding professional musicians who come together in the shared belief that music has the power to transform people across all areas of society. 30 years ago, CLS championed the idea of a participation programme working in hospitals, care homes and schools. They now spend 150 days a year working in mainstream education, wellbeing and community settings in addition to their regular concert series in London and across the UK, reaching over 10,000 people per year who otherwise would not be able to experience outstanding, professional live music.

Each CLS musician is a catalyst and driver of the Orchestra's commitment to use music as a means of transforming people and communities. With their Creative Director and Leader Alexandra Wood, they conceive and deliver imaginative performances and projects with artists who come to CLS to achieve ambitions they could not realise elsewhere. New potential orchestral members are interviewed based on their enthusiasm for working in such communities, as well as their technical ability to perform in an orchestra. CLS has been revitalised by social engagement which is so crucial in communities, and it has given the players a renewed sense of music's worth beyond the platform.

In continuation of its programme of music and wellbeing, CLS has recently introduced a *Mindful Music* programme which is being adopted widely, most recently with a monthly series at Soho House from May to October in 2018.

## **Bethlem and Maudsley Hospital School Residency**

From 2017 to 2020, City of London Sinfonia has a three-year residency in the Bethlem and Maudsley Hospital School. Split over two sites in Beckenham and Camberwell, the school includes pupils aged 4-19 who are resident and day patients at the psychiatric hospital. The young people present a broad range of mental health illnesses and come from across London and other areas of the UK.

CLS's artists and musicians work alongside students and staff to deliver a range of creative projects using instruments and technology that respond to the Orchestra's artistic programmes. In these projects, the young people's musical skills are developed through composition, singing, listening and performance, and they are provided with opportunities to work together, express themselves and build confidence and self-esteem.

The current term's work is being led by sound artist Gawain Hewitt who is working alongside CLS musicians and pupils to create pieces that respond to Bach's compositional structures, as well as composing using numbers, sequences and patterns. These pieces are being recorded and sampled into an interactive soundboard which will form part of the 30th celebrations after the Orchestra's *Bach Remixed* concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Tuesday 16 October.

As well as finding opportunities to share this work as part of concert programming, CLS is developing a pedagogy and practice that will be carried forward into other projects in this field and other areas of the Orchestra's health and wellbeing work. The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), based at the Maudsley Hospital site and part of King's College London, and Dr Sally Marlow will supervise a team to evaluate the impact of the music programme in a PHD over three years.

## **Creative Primary School Projects**

Working with children aged 5-7 (Key Stage 1) in Tower Hamlets and Harrow, City of London Sinfonia's Creative Primary School Projects aim to enthuse and inspire young people's interest in classical music by introducing them to orchestral instruments and repertoire through creative music-making and performance.

This autumn's projects will be led by John Webb, an experienced amateur and composer, alongside a team of six CLS musicians. Responding to the Orchestra's *Bach and the Cosmos* programmes and with a cross-curricular link to music and maths, classes will compose their own pieces that will be performed as part of a new commission in a final concert alongside the professional ensemble in a local community venue to family and school friends. Teachers will also take part in Continued Professional Development training sessions where they will learn key musical skills that will enable them to teach a commissioned

song that their class will also perform in the concert alongside other schools. They will also hear Bach's repertoire arranged for the ensemble as part of the performance, which will feature guest director Roderick Williams.

Approximately 540 children, including some from some of London's most deprived areas, take part in the creative primaries projects each year and for many it is their first step towards musical learning and appreciation.

## **Dementia and 60+**

CLS's music-making aims to improve the experiences of older people, Holocaust survivors and those who are facing bereavement, along with the people who care for them. CLS musicians bring interactive chamber music performances, workshops and visits to older adults, many of whom came to the UK as Jewish refugees, or who live with dementia. Incorporating what CLS is learning about dementia and mental health from experts in the field, the Orchestra has scheduled relaxed performances and dementia-friendly concerts into their annual concert series.



*"In our special 30th year of participation work, we will aim to bring this theme of music and maths, architecture, form, structure and patterns in all our projects. For example, in our return to Suffolk and Essex with Orchestras Live and our concerts for children ages 2-7, we will investigate how music is made, what building blocks the composer has used to create the piece, linking in with various numeracy and educational areas for that age group."*

- Alexandra Wood, Creative Director and Leader

## **Concert Listings: 2018-19 Season**

### ***Bach and the Cosmos series***

**Tuesday 9 October, 7:30pm**

Oxford University Mathematical Institute  
**Goldberg Variations**

**JS BACH arr. RODERICK WILLIAMS** *Cello Suite*  
*No.3 in C minor: Bourrée*

**JS BACH arr. SITKOVETSKY** *Goldberg*  
*Variations*

**City of London Sinfonia**

**Alexandra Wood** Director/Violin

**James Sparks** Mathematician

**Wednesday 10 October, 7:30pm**

The Octagon, Queen Mary University of London  
**Goldberg Variations**

**Thursday 11 October**

West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge  
**Goldberg Variations**

**Friday 12 October**

Bristol University  
**Goldberg Variations**

**Tuesday 16 October, 7:30pm**

Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre  
***Bach Remixed***

**JS BACH** *Komm, süßer Tod*  
**NYSTEDT** *Immortal Bach*  
**JS BACH** *Musical Offering: Movement I*  
**JS BACH** *Musical Offering excerpts*  
(including *Ricercar a 6*)  
**JS BACH** *Brandenburg Concerto No.3*  
**JS BACH** *Singet Dem Herrn*  
**RODERICK WILLIAMS** *Enough*  
**JS BACH** *Ich habe genug*

**City of London Sinfonia**  
**Roderick Williams** Baritone/Director  
**Alexandra Wood** Violin/Director  
**Epiphoni Consort**  
**James Sparks** Mathematician

***Absolute Bird series***

**Friday 3 May**

Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre  
Featuring **Genevieve Lacey** and **Jessica Cottis**

**Wednesday 15 May**

Southwark Cathedral  
Featuring **Miranda Krestovnikoff**

**Saturday 20 October, 7:30pm**

Southwark Cathedral  
***B Minor Mass***

**JS BACH** *Mass in B minor*

**City of London Sinfonia**  
**John Butt** Conductor  
**Joanne Lunn** Soprano  
**Rowan Pierce** Soprano  
**Robin Blaze** Alto  
**Charles Daniels** Tenor  
**Roderick Williams** Baritone  
**Epiphoni Consort**

**Friday 24 May**

Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre  
Featuring **Sam Lee** and **Sian Edwards**

## About City of London Sinfonia

City of London Sinfonia (CLS) is the orchestral home to over 40 outstanding professional musicians, who come together in the shared belief that music has the power to transform people across all areas of society.



CLS places equal value and bring the same approach to everything they do: the highest quality; a distinctive, 'seriously informal' style of performance that removes the barriers between musicians and audiences so that people can experience the transformative power of music; and a warmth of music-making that is created through our musicians sharing a wider range of experiences together beyond the concert platform.

CLS gives over 75 performances every year anywhere from an East London club to international concert halls, cathedrals and opera houses, or communities who because of location or opportunity would not otherwise experience outstanding professional music-making. They spend over 150 days every year in schools where social background often creates a barrier to creativity and ambition, hospitals for young people with severe and challenging conditions, and with older people dealing with loss of loved ones and memory.

This approach involves inviting artists from across the arts to enhance and transform performances. Outstanding classical musicians collaborate with musicians in jazz, folk and contemporary music, artists in film, dance or visual art or with explorations of science, history or philosophy, giving an extra dimension to new music and shedding new light on the familiar. Artists with which City of London Sinfonia collaborates include Brett Dean, Sam Lee, Soumik Datta, Tony Adigun, Roderick Williams, Sian Edwards and Jessica Cottis. Audiences can immerse themselves in a world that brings together music with the visual, the adventurous and the thought provoking.

In schools and nurseries, CLS's music-making gives very young children the chance to experience the joy and fun of orchestras for the first time. It opens a path to performing, fires their creativity, and boosts their learning. Their family concerts create shared, interactive experiences across generations, often created with leading theatre and film companies. In hospitals, music activities with CLS aid the healing process and offer an invaluable creative outlet for young people with severe, life-limiting or psychiatric conditions. With older people, Holocaust survivors and those who are facing bereavement, CLS's music-making helps to keep memories alive and minds active.

As this approach grows, CLS will continue to ensure that they remain at the forefront of best practice – both in attracting audiences and in schools, hospitals and care homes. They will partner with leading research institutions to ask us challenging questions and provide the hard evidence of the benefits of our activity.

Each and every one of the CLS musicians is a catalyst and driver of their approach; they are unusually committed to using music as a means of transforming people and communities. With CLS's Creative Director and Leader Alexandra Wood, they conceive and deliver imaginative performances and projects with Associate Artists, who come to CLS to achieve ambitions they could not realise elsewhere.

The need for their approach is demonstrated by the growing numbers of people who are joining the wider CLS family – audiences, artists and not least those who support through financial investment – who share the vision for transforming people in all parts of society through their outstanding music-making.



## **Alexandra Wood, Creative Director and Orchestra Leader**

Alexandra Wood graduated with a starred double first from Selwyn College, Cambridge, before going on to the Royal College of Music, where she was President Emerita Scholar and studied with Itzhak Rashkovsky. She became a Junior Fellow. Alexandra has won major prizes at the Wieniawski, Tibor Varga, Lipizer and Yampolsky international violin competitions.

As a concerto soloist she has performed with City of London Sinfonia, the Philharmonia orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, BBC Philharmonic and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, and has given the premieres of concertos written specially for her by Hugh Wood (2009) and Charlotte Bray (2010).

Leader and Creative Director of City of London Sinfonia, and Leader of Aurora Orchestra, she regularly guest-leads other ensembles, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, London Sinfonietta and London Mozart Players. She has also collaborated with chamber groups such as The Schubert Ensemble, Endymion and Callino Quartet.

Alexandra Wood's discography includes *Chimera*, a disc of contemporary works with pianist Huw Watkins, as well as solo works by Oliver Knussen and Charlotte Bray for NMC.

Alexandra plays a violin made by Nicolò Gagliano in 1767, purchased with assistance from the Countess of Munster Trust, Abbado Young Musicians' Trust and Loan Fund for Musical Instruments.

**[www.cls.co.uk](http://www.cls.co.uk)**

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