

## Rebecca Saunders awarded Roche Commission to write new piano concerto for Nicolas Hodges



**30 October, Wigmore Hall**  
Lutyens, Clarke, Thomalla **WORLD PREMIERES**

**12 January, Glasgow City Halls**  
Steen-Andersen *Piano Concerto* **UK PREMIERE**

**24 November, Lucerne Festival**  
Tsukamoto, Ciurlo, Hilli **WORLD PREMIERES**

**2 March, Barbican**  
Ligeti *Piano Concerto*

**29 August 2020, Lucerne Festival**  
Rebecca Saunders *Piano Concerto* **WORLD PREMIERE**

On **29 August 2020**, the prolific contemporary pianist **Nicolas Hodges** will inaugurate the world premiere performance of **Rebecca Saunders' Piano Concerto** at the **Lucerne Festival**. Roche, in collaboration with the Lucerne Festival and the Lucerne Festival Academy, has awarded **Rebecca Saunders** their prestigious **Roche Commission** to enable her to compose a piano concerto for Hodges, who breaks new ground in 2018-19 with a series of world and UK premieres, including three premieres at the **Wigmore Hall** on **30 October** and the UK premiere of **Simon Steen-Andersen's Piano Concerto** on **12 January**.

The biannual **Roche Commissions** have previously been awarded to several high-profile composers, including Sir Harrison Birtwistle and Sir George Benjamin. Rather than commissioning works that will cater to mainstream fashions, Roche Commissions enables musical works to venture beyond the conventional and provide intellectual stimulation. Saunders will interact with leading scientists over the following two years and in 2020 the newly-developed commission will be premiered at the Lucerne Summer Festival. With piano soloist Hodges, the work will be performed by the **Orchestra of the Lucerne Festival Academy** conducted by previous Roche Commissions award-winner **Matthias Pintscher**.



**Nicolas Hodges** is an ideal collaborator for Saunders' commission. Never shying away from challenging new writing, Hodges continues to push the boundaries of modern piano music with bold and incisive performances.

"He plays the classics as if they were written yesterday, and what was written yesterday as if it were already a classic." – *Tempo magazine*

Hodges has long encouraged the creation of new contemporary repertoire for the piano. He has premiered works by **Sir Harrison Birtwistle**, **Thomas Adès**, and **Elliott Carter**, lately premiering **Gerard Barry's 2014 Piano Concerto** in Birmingham. With an inexhaustible energy to communicate new music, Hodges has commissioned over **25 piano concertos** to date. By choosing to maintain close collaborative relationships with contemporary composers, Hodges presents an extraordinary first-hand insight into the music of today.



Berlin-based composer **Rebecca Saunders** is one of the UK's most radical and distinguished composers, noted for her distinctive and intensely striking sonic language. Saunders' compositions have been performed from Darmstadt to the Proms, and she adds the Roche Commission to an ever-growing number of accomplishments: she is a three-time recipient of the RPS Composers Award and has received the BASCA British Composers Award

twice. Saunders has already written four works for Hodges, from the solo **Choler** and the piano duo **Crimson** to **Miniata**, a double concerto with piano and accordion soloists, all recorded with Hodges on a 2008 CD. Saunders' piano solo **Shadow**, also written for Hodges, has been picked up by many pianists and is now one of her most performed works.

With 2020 still in the distant future, Hodges is determined not to rest and has a busy schedule of dates both at home and abroad in advance of the big premiere. On **24 November**, Hodges will give a series of contemporary piano works in recital at the **Lucerne Piano Festival**, including three world premieres as part of the **Christoph Delz Foundation Composition Competition**. The prize winner will be chosen by judges from these three entries – by Francesco Ciurlo, Sebastian Hilli, and Eiko Tsukamoto – only after hearing Hodges perform the works in concert. Hodges is a frequent visitor to Lucerne, having first performed at the festival in 2002.



Hodges is also performing works by those who have taught and inspired Saunders, including German composer **Wolfgang Rihm**, the artistic director of the Lucerne Festival Academy today. By performing Rihm's works, Hodges renews a link between student and teacher, bringing his interpretation of Saunders' work as close to the composer's intentions as possible. **Rihm's Zwei Linien** will be performed by Hodges on **14 February** in a live concert broadcast on Radio France which also includes **Saunders' crimson**.

Hodges' upcoming season begins with a recital at the **Wigmore Hall** on **30 October**. He will give three premieres: the world premiere of **Elisabeth Lutyens' Five Impromptus**, and the UK premieres of two works written for and premiered by the pianist in Germany four years ago, **James Clarke's Untitled No. 7** and **Hans Thomalla's Ballade.Rauschen**.

His season is completed with performances of piano concertos by **Simon Steen-Andersen**, **Beat Furrer**, and **György Ligeti**. On **12 January**, Hodges will deliver the UK premiere of Steen-Andersen's **Piano Concerto** with the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra** at **Glasgow City Halls**, conducted by **Thomas Dausgaard**. Premiered by Hodges in 2014, the concerto is a multimedia

spectacle in which Hodges performs live on a shiny new Steinway, while a video doppelgänger plays a severely damaged piano which has been dropped onto a concrete floor from a height of eight metres. The juxtaposition of perfect and damaged means the listener sees both instruments in a new light.



On **2 March**, Hodges returns to the **Barbican** to present **Ligeti's Piano Concerto** alongside the **BBC Symphony Orchestra** and conductor **Sakari Oramo**. On **8 March**, Hodges presents **Beat Furrer's Piano Concerto** in **Munich** as part of an all-Furrer programme, with the **Bavarian Radio Symphony Choir and Orchestra**.

### UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS 2018

**Sunday 21 October, 4:00pm**  
**Radio France**

**Edward Elgar** *Piano Quintet*

**Nicolas Hodges** piano  
**Members of the Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Tuesday 30 October, 7:30pm**  
**Wigmore Hall**

**Elisabeth Lutyens** *Five Impromptus, Op. 116* **WORLD PREMIERE**  
**Franz Liszt** *Nuages Gris; Unstern! Sinistre, disastro; La Lugubre Gondola I*  
**James Clarke** *Untitled No. 7 (2014)* **UK PREMIERE**

**Johannes Brahms** *Ballade No. 2 in D major, Op. 10 No. 2*  
**Hans Thomalla** *Ballade.Rauschen (2014)* **UK PREMIERE**

**Saturday 24 November, 11:00am**  
**Lucerne Festival**

**Harrison Birtwistle** *Gigue Machine*  
**Francesco Ciurlo** *Four Strips* **WORLD PREMIERE**

**Wolfgang Rihm** *Klavierstück 7*  
**Eiko Tsukamoto** *"Zickenzone"* **WORLD PREMIERE**

**Christoph Delz** *Sils op. 1*  
**Sebastian Hilli** *Rack and Pinion* **WORLD PREMIERE**

**Monday 3 December, 8:00pm**  
**Reid Hall, Paris**

**Betsy Jolas** *Quatre pièces en marge; Postlude; Episode Cinquième; B for*

*Sonate; Mon Ami; Scion; Pièce pour; and Femme le soir* **WORLD PREMIERE**

**Saturday 15 December, 5:00pm**  
**Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, Paris**

**Wolfgang Rihm** *Zwei Linien*  
**Pascal Dusapin** *7 Etudes*

**Saturday 12 January, 8:00pm**  
**Glasgow City Halls**

**Simon Steen-Andersen** *Piano Concerto* **UK PREMIERE**

**Nicolas Hodges** piano  
**Thomas Dausgaard** conductor  
**BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra**

**Saturday 27 January**  
**Basel**

Programme to include:  
**Simon Steen-Andersen** *Piano Concerto*

**Nicolas Hodges** piano  
**Baldur Bronnimann** conductor  
**Basel Sinfonietta**

**Thursday 14 February, 6:00pm**  
**Radio France**

**Rebecca Saunders** *Crimson*  
**Luciano Berio** *Sequenza IV*  
**Yves Chauris** *New work* **WORLD PREMIERE**  
**Wolfgang Rihm** *Zwei Linien*

**Saturday 2 March, 7:30pm**  
**Barbican, London**

**György Ligeti** *Piano Concerto*

**Augustin Hadelich** violin  
**Nicolas Hodges** piano  
**Sakari Oramo** conductor  
**BBC Singers ensemble**  
**BBC Symphony Orchestra**

**Friday 8 March**  
**Hercules Hall, Munich**

**Beat Furrer** *Piano Concerto*

**Nicolas Hodges** piano  
**Peter Rundel** conductor  
**Bavarian Radio Symphony**  
**Orchestra**

### **Nicolas Hodges**

An active and ever-growing repertoire that encompasses such composers as Beethoven, Berg, Brahms, Debussy, Schubert and Stravinsky reinforces pianist Nicolas Hodges' superior prowess in contemporary music.



Born in London and now based in Germany, where he is a professor at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart, Hodges approaches the works of Classical, Romantic, 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary composers with the same questing spirit.

Nicolas Hodges' virtuosity and innate musicianship give him an assured command over the most strenuous technical complexities, making him a firm favourite among many of today's most prestigious contemporary composers. Collaborating closely with figures such as John Adams and Helmut Lachenmann has become central to his career, and more than 25 of the world's most revered composers have dedicated works to him, including Thomas Adès, Gerald Barry, Elliott Carter, James Clarke, Francisco Coll, Hugues Dufourt, Pascal Dusapin, Beat Furrer, Isabel Mundry, Brice Pauset, Wolfgang Rihm and Miroslav Srnka. Hodges enjoys a particularly close relationship with Sir Harrison Birtwistle, who recently described him as "becoming like my Peter Pears".

Recent highlights for Nicolas Hodges have included the premiere of Simon Steen-Andersen's award-winning Piano Concerto, performed with Francois-Xavier Roth and the SWR Symphony Orchestra Freiburg Baden-Baden as part of the Donaueschingen Festival in 2014, as well as the world premiere of Variations from the Golden Mountains by Sir Harrison Birtwistle at London's Wigmore Hall. Hodges also recently performed the US premiere of Elliott Carter's Dialogues, for piano and orchestra, with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the German premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, which was conducted by Daniel Barenboim. Further highlights have included the world premiere of Gerald Barry's Piano Concerto, with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Thomas Adès as part of the Aldeburgh Festival, as well as the world premiere of Thomas Adès' own piano concerto In Seven Days with the London Sinfonietta, followed by further performances of the work with the London Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras.

Hugely in demand as a concerto soloist, Nicolas Hodges' engagements include regular performances with orchestras such as the BBC Symphony, Boston

**Saturday 29 August 2020**  
**Lucerne Festival**

Programme to include:  
**Rebecca Saunders** *Piano Concerto*  
**WORLD PREMIERE**

**Nicolas Hodges** piano  
**Matthias Pintscher** conductor  
**Orchestra of the Lucerne Festival**  
**Academy**

Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, London Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony, MET Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg, Philharmonia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, St Louis Symphony, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, WDR Sinfonieorchester Cologne and ensembles such as ASKO/Schoenberg, Amsterdam, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Contrechamps Geneva, International Contemporary Ensemble Chicago and the Remix Ensemble, Porto.

Among the distinguished conductors with whom Nicolas Hodges regularly collaborates are Thomas Adès, Daniel Barenboim, George Benjamin, Martyn Brabbins, Sylvain Cambreling, James Levine, Susanna Mälkki, Cornelius Meister, Jonathan Nott, Emilio Pomarico, David Robertson, Pascal Rophé, François-Xavier Roth, Peter Rundel, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Pierre-André Valade, Ilan Volkov and Ryan Wigglesworth.

Also an avid chamber musician, Hodges has performed in Berlin (Musikfest), Brussels (Ars Musica), Hamburg (Ostertoene), Helsinki (Musica Nova), London (Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre and the BBC Proms), Lucerne (Festival), Madrid (INAEM), Melbourne International Arts Festival, New York (Carnegie Hall and Mostly Mozart), Paris (IRCAM and Festival d' Automne), Rome (IUC), Salzburg (Festival and Biennale), Strasbourg (Musica), Stuttgart (Eclat), Tanglewood (Festival), Tokyo, Vienna (Wien Modern) and Zurich (Tage für Neue Musik). Nicolas Hodges also collaborates regularly with the Arditti Quartet, Adrian Brendel, Colin Currie, Ilya Gringolts, Anssi Karttunen, Michael Wendeborg, Carolin Widmann and is a member of Trio Accanto.

Nicolas Hodges' varied discography includes Thomas Adès' piano concerto In Seven Days, with the London Sinfonietta and Thomas Adès (Signum Classic); a disc of works by Harrison Birtwistle; a live recording of Luca Francesconi's piano concerto, with the Orquestra Sinfónica Casa da Musica and the Remix Ensemble, Porto; "Voces Abandonadas", comprising works by Walter Zimmermann (Wergo); a disc of works by Brice Pauset, entitled "Canons for solo piano"; and "Songs and Poems", which includes repertoire by Hans Thomalla, Walter Zimmermann and Wolfgang Rihm with Trio Accanto (Wergo).

### **Rebecca Saunders**

With her distinctive and intensely striking sonic language, Berlin-based British composer Rebecca Saunders (b.1967) is a leading international representative of her generation. Born in London, she studied composition with Nigel Osborne in Edinburgh and Wolfgang Rihm in Karlsruhe.



Saunders pursues an intense interest in the sculptural and spatial properties of organised sound. *Insideout*, a 90-minute collage for a choreographed installation, created in collaboration with Sasha Waltz, was her first work for the stage and received over 100 international performances. Most recently in 2017, *Yes*, an expansive 80-minute spatial installation composition, was written for Musikfabrik, Donatienne Michel-Dansac and Enno Poppe for the extraordinary architectural spaces of the Berlin Philharmonie and the St. Eustache Cathedral in Paris.

Since 2013, Saunders has written a series of solos and duos for performers with whom she has collaborated closely over many years, including *O* (2017) for

soprano, *hauch* (2018) for violin, and *Flesh* (2017/18) for accordion. She has simultaneously pursued her keen interest in works in the concertante form, writing a double percussion concerto *Void* (2014), a trumpet concerto *Alba* (2015), and both *Skin* (2016) and *Yes* (2017) for soprano and large ensemble. In 2018 her double bass concerto *Fury II* will be choreographed by Emanuel Gat in collaboration with Ensemble Modern.

Saunders' music has been performed and premiered by many prestigious ensembles, soloists and orchestras including Ensemble Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, amongst many others. Her compositions have been recognised with numerous international prestigious awards, including the Ernst von Siemens Prize and the ARD und BMW musicaviva Prize. In 2017, Saunders received both a BASCA Composer Award and an RPS Award for *Skin* in 2017. Accordionist Teo Anzellotti's CD, *...of waters making moan*, which included Saunders' eponymous work, won the German Record Critics' Award of the Year for 2016.

Saunders is in great demand as a composition tutor and teaches regularly at, amongst others, the Darmstadt Summer Courses and at the Impuls Academy in Graz. She has been professor of composition at the Hannover University of Music, Theatre and Media since 2011.

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