

Guy Johnston reveals his new Stradivarius cello the 'Segelman' on loan through J & A Beare and the Beare's International Violin Society at Hatfield House on 12 May and Wigmore Hall on 29 May



Guy Johnston reveals his new Stradivarius cello the 'Segelman', loaned to him by a generous anonymous donor through J & A Beare and the Beare's International Violin Society at forthcoming showcase at Beare's on Monday 9 May, followed by a launch of Hatfield House Chamber Music Festival on Thursday 12 May. On Sunday 29 May, Guy will give a full cello recital with Melvyn Tan at Wigmore Hall showing off the new instrument in a programme of Chopin and Mendelssohn alongside two works by Sterndale Bennett and Joseph Phibbs.

The Beare's International Violin Society was founded in 2011 by Steven Smith, Managing Director of J&A Beare Ltd., with the aim of supporting young talented musicians through the loan of the finest stringed instruments. The Society brings together patrons who own instruments with the rising stars who play them. In the last 11 years the Society has successfully concluded just under 200 short- and long-term schemes. The partnership with Guy Johnston represents a fitting coronation of the society's efforts, particularly as the music world comes out of a long period of challenges and uncertainties.

This is one of Antonio Stradivari's famous violoncellos, of which there are only around 65 still in existence. It is believed that he made this cello during his golden age of violin making from 1644 -1737 in Cremona, Italy. The cello was previously owned by Gerston Segelman, a businessman who collected 37 fine Stradivari string instruments. Segelman sold this cello before he died in 1992. The cello was a part of David Josefowicz's instrument collection at The Royal Academy of Music.

Guy's mentor and now colleague Professor Steven Doane at Eastman School of Music, described hearing Guy trying out the Strad in a broadcast on Radio 3:

"Listening to his broadcast of the Walton Cello Concerto with the BBC Philharmonic was simply the most memorable and completely satisfying performance of this very difficult piece I've ever heard. The unique symbiosis of Guy's beautifully vocal playing with the extraordinary tonal qualities of the Strad is simply breath-taking. He makes the instrument's tone soar sublimely in the upper registers of the work, and it resonates beautifully throughout the middle and lower registers into the most profound tones in the bass. Working with this cello in this work also seems to give free rein to Guy's wonderfully imaginative powers of musical colouring and communication, and showcases his seemingly effortless mastery not only of the instrument, but of the piece's epic form."

The 'Segelman' has been reduced in size, as the case with most of Stradivari's early cellos. The length of the back was perhaps almost 792mm (like the 1690 *Medici*) or 773mm (like the 1697 *Castelbarco*) when it was made. Now it is 740mm. When cellos are shortened in this manner, the outline sometimes becomes excessively square-shouldered, but here the widths have been reduced as well. Nothing much has been done about the centre bouts, however, which is why they seem so long in proportion. Stradivari's instruments have been in great demand since the day they left the master's workbench, sought after by musicians and royalty throughout Europe.

Here is a personal statement from Guy on the 'Segelman':

"Meeting the Segelman Strad reminded me of when I met my wife. I wasn't looking at the time! It's quite a story. I went to Beare's in London to try some bows having said to a sponsor, who has invested in quite a number of instruments, that bows are cheaper than instruments. They said I should go and have a look for one, and so I tried 10. I fell head over heels for one bow in particular made by François Xavier Tourte.

I had concerts ahead at the Wigmore Hall and at the BBC Proms, and my daughter had been born just 2 weeks earlier in the States. I had said to my wife that I should stay and cancel all the concerts because of the timing, but she insisted that I should go. By the end of the summer, the sponsor wished to invest in the bow for me and I couldn't believe my luck. We went back to the shop to sign some papers, and it was then that I was asked if I'd like to try the Strad they recently took on to sell for the owner.

My initial reaction was, No! I didn't want to go down that path knowing how incredibly valuable these instruments are and how unlikely it would

be to make it happen. We left Beare's, and I received another call suggesting that I take the cello back to the States with me and see what happens. Well, I can hardly believe how things developed from there, and just a few weeks ago an investor bought the cello for me to play on during the next chapter of my musical life. It has been such a special time and I'm still wondering when I'm going to wake up from this dream..."

Upcoming concerts

* New cello concerto commission by
Joseph Phibbs with the BBC
Symphony Orchestra date tbd

Thursday 12 May, 7:30pm

**Launch of Hatfield House
Chamber Music Festival**
The Marble Hall, Hertfordshire

Stravinsky, Three pieces for
string quartet
Florence B. Price, String Quartet
in G major
Brahms, String Sextet in G major

**Magnus Johnston, Mio
Takahashi, Kynan Walker** violin
James Boyd, Dorota Kolinek
viola
**Guy Johnson, Gerard
Flotats** cello

Sunday 29 May, 7:30pm
Wigmore Hall

Mendelssohn, Variations
Concertantes
Sterndale Bennett, Duo Sonata
Joseph Phibbs, Cello Sonata
Chopin, Cello Sonata Op. 65

Guy Johnston cello
Melvyn Tan piano

**Saturday 11 June, Concert 1:
3pm-4pm & Concert 2: 6pm-
7pm**
St Nicholas Church, Harpenden

Hertfordshire Festival of Music
Beethoven – Complete Cello
Sonatas

Guy Johnston cello
Melvyn Tan piano

Thursday 21 July

**Cambridge Summer Music
Festival**

Beethoven: 12 Variations in G
Major on 'See the conqu'ring
hero' comes
from Handel's 'Judas
Maccabaeus', WoO45
Poulenc, Cello Sonata
Joseph Phibbs, Cello Sonata
Brahms, Sonata No 2 for Cello
and Piano in F major, Op. 99

Saturday 23 July

MusicFest Aberystwyth

Elgar, Cello Concerto in E minor,
Op. 85

Sunday 24 July

MusicFest Aberystwyth

Weber, Trio in G minor, Op. 63
Martinu, Trio H 300

Wednesday 27 July

MusicFest Aberystwyth

Schubert, String Quartet in C
major D 956

**Thursday 4 August- Sunday 21
August**

Mortizburg Festival

**Sunday 18 September- 25
September**

Halle Orchestra Tour
Bridgewater Hall Manchester

Guy Johnston



Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony, Britten Sinfonia, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, Moscow Philharmonic and St Petersburg Symphony under conductors such as Illan Volkov, Sakari Oramo, Vassily

**Thursday 29 September –
Sunday 2 October 2022**

**Hatfield House Chamber Music
Festival**

Thursday 6 October

Cheltenham Music Society
Pitville Pump Room, Cheltenham

Beethoven: 12 Variations in G
Major on 'See the conqu'ring
hero' comes from Handel's 'Judas
Maccabaeus', WoO45
Poulenc, Cello Sonata
Joseph Phibbs, Cello Sonata
Brahms, Sonata No 2 for Cello
and Piano in F major, op. 99

Guy Johnston cello
Melvyn Tan piano

Saturday 17 December

Northern Chamber Orchestra

Sinaisky, Yuri Simonov, Alexander Dmitriev, Sir Roger Norrington, Robin Ticciati, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Sir Andrew Davis, Leonard Slatkin, Daniele Gatti.

Recent and forthcoming seasons have included BBC Proms with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, concertos with Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestra of Opera North, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Aurora Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and Staatsorchester Rheinische Philharmonie.

Guy continues to play chamber music and recitals at prestigious venues and festivals across Europe including Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Louvre Museum, the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Moritzburg Festival, Three Choirs Festival and MusicFest Aberystwyth, collaborating with instrumentalists such as Melvyn Tan, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Janine Jansen, Lawrence Power, Anthony Marwood and Brett Dean. Guy was privileged to perform as part of the Wigmore Hall and BBC Radio 3 special series of concerts, livestreamed during the COVID-19 pandemic. He gave weekly outdoor impromptu recitals in his home village in Dorset, which was featured by the BBC during the UK lockdown.

A prolific recording artist, Guy's recent recordings include Howells' Cello Concerto with Britten Sinfonia (a piece he also gave the premiere of) and a celebration disc of the tricentenary of his David Tecchler cello, collaborating with the acclaimed Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, where the cello was made.

The 2019 season saw the release of his recording Themes and Variations with Tom Poster, comprising works by Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Rachmaninov, MacMillan, Fauré and Martinu. Guy is a passionate advocate for contemporary composers regular commissioning, performing and recording new works. He gave the premiere of Charlotte Bray's 'Falling in the Fire' at the BBC Proms in 2015 and Emma Ruth Richards 'Until a Reservoir no longer remains' (with Sheku Kanneh-Mason). He has recently commissioned works by composers such as David Matthews, Mark Simpson, Joseph Phibbs and Matthew Kaner.

In addition to a busy and versatile career as an international soloist, chamber musician and guest principal, Guy is an inspiring leader of young musicians as a patron of several charities which promote music education for school children and young people including Music First and Future Talent. He is also a board member of the Pierre Fournier Award for young cellists. Guy is Artistic Director of the Hatfield House Chamber Music Festival and a founder member of the award-winning Aronowitz Ensemble. He is Associate Professor of Cello at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York and a guest Professor of Cello at the Royal Academy of Music, where he was awarded an Honorary Associateship of the Royal Academy of Music in 2015. Guy now plays on 'The Segelman' Cremona 1692 by Antonio Stradivari on loan from J & A Beare International Violin Society.

<https://guy-johnston.com/>

For more information on any of the above, please contact:

Nicky Thomas Media

2-6 Baches St, London N1 6DN

+44 (0)20 3714 7594 | +44 (0)7768 566 530

info@nickythomasmedia.com

www.nickythomasmedia.com