



## Aldeburgh Festival 2025: Friday 13 – Sunday 29 June

- Britten Pears Arts presents the 76th Aldeburgh Festival in June 2025
- Featured Artists are tenor Allan Clayton, composers Helen Grime and Daniel Kidane and violinist Leila Josefowicz
- World Premiere of Colin Matthews' new opera *A Visit to Friends* with libretto by William Boyd
- Continued commitment to new music with 20 world premieres, of which 14 are Britten Pears Arts commissions, and 3 UK premieres
- Orchestras include the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oramo, BBC Concert Orchestra and Anna-Marie Helsing, London Symphony Orchestra and Antonio Pappano, Knussen Chamber Orchestra and Ryan Wigglesworth, Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra and Edward Gardner, Royal College of Music Symphony Orchestra and Kirill Karabits
- Ensembles include the BBC Singers and Sofi Jeannin, The Dunedin Consort and John Butt, EXAUDI, Ensemble Renard, and Gabrieli Consort and Paul McCreesh
- Artists include Nathan Amaral, Benjamin Appl, James Baillieu, Lotte Betts-Dean, Sophie Bevan, Claire Booth, George Fu, Christopher Glynn, Ben Goldscheider, Juliet Fraser, Anu Komsu, Sam Lee, Nick Pritchard, Mishka Rushdie Momen, Sean Shibe, Ian Tindale, Tamsin Waley-Cohen and Alisa Weilerstein
- Chamber music from the Carducci, Doric, Fibonacci, Gildas and Heath Quartets plus Onyx Brass
- Open every day during the Festival: The new annual exhibition at The Red House, Aldeburgh - *Spiritual Britten* - explores the spiritual aspects of Britten's life and music; plus pop-up music by Hesse Students, a behind-the-scenes day focusing on the Archive and garden; and *Out of the Dark*, a specially curated exhibition in the Archive
- Aldeburgh Festival Extra! offers a host of unexpected, intriguing, enjoyable events and happenings that take place alongside the Aldeburgh Festival including the Big Day Out on the final Saturday of the Festival
- Visual Art at Snape Maltings includes The Singh Twins exhibition on India's historic textile trade; works by Francis Newton Souza who was friends with Britten and Pears; and Julian Perry: *The Foliate Bosses* – the artist's ongoing study of coastal erosion
- BBC Radio 3 brings live music to listeners around the world with a series of broadcast Festival concerts

The programme for the 76th Aldeburgh Festival in 2025 takes place from Friday 13 to Sunday 29 June.

*And, hark! their sweet sad voices! 't is despair  
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.*

These lines from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* don't appear in the anthology from which Britten drew several texts for his Nocturne; he chose the section immediately prior ("Since on a poet's lips I slept...") to open that great orchestral song cycle. But the inspiration for the connective tissue of so much of this year's Festival programme is Shelley's suggestion that music can express what words alone cannot: that it can hold complex, contrasting ideas and emotions, and can make them comprehensible, bearable, and beautiful.

Four featured artists – tenor **Allan Clayton**, violinist **Leila Josefowicz**, and composers **Helen Grime** and **Daniel Kidane** – are at the heart of this year's programme, helping to shape the many interweaving strands of its rich and varied offerings. And the extended family of artists who will gather in Suffolk includes: **London Symphony Orchestra** and **Sir Antonio Pappano**, **BBC Symphony Orchestra** and **Sakari Oramo**, **Knussen Chamber Orchestra** with **Ryan Wigglesworth**, ensembles and choirs **Gabrieli Consort & Players**, **Onyx Brass**, **EXAUDI** and the **BBC Singers**, quartets **Doric**, **Fibonacci**, **Gildas** and **Heath**, and artists **Claire Booth**, **Anu Koms**, **Sophie Bevan**, **Lotte Betts-Dean**, **Sam Lee**, **Benjamin Appl**, **James Baillieu**, **Sean Shibe**, **Ben Goldscheider**, **Nathan Amaral**, **Alisa Weilerstein** and others, and is testament to the Festival's continuing vitality and energy.

The Festival opens with the world premiere of **Colin Matthews'** new opera *A Visit to Friends*, with a libretto by **William Boyd** that takes the Chekhov short story as its inspiration. Continuing its commitment to celebrating contemporary voices, the Festival features 20 world premieres, of which 14 are Britten Pears Arts commissions, in its 17 days including **Daniel Kidane's** new String Quartet and new works by **Brian Elias**, **Sasha Scott**, **Gavin Higgins**, **Cheryl Frances-Hoad** and **Tyshawn Sorey**.

**Aldeburgh Festival Extra!** embraces a range of venues in Aldeburgh, including the return of the much-loved Pumphouse venue, as well as the occasional surprise further afield. The Festival Extra! programme features late-night hair-down music, pop-up bars, unexpected treats for foodies, artists in unfamiliar places, and more.

**Andrew Comben**, Chief Executive, **Britten Pears Arts** commented, 'The 76th Aldeburgh Festival offers the opportunity to experience anew music's transformative power to move, inspire, and connect. Joy, grief, love, loss and so much more, 'dissolved in sound' by composers and the artists who bring their work to life. Four featured artists - tenor Allan Clayton, violinist Leila Josefowicz, and composers Helen Grime and Daniel Kidane – are at the heart of this year's programme, alongside a thrilling mix of opera, orchestras, choirs, singers, chamber music, recitals, films and a fascinating visual arts programme. We are also very excited to present Aldeburgh Festival Extra! in a range of venues across Aldeburgh, including the Pumphouse. The Festival continues to be distinctive and is recognised nationally and internationally for its unique combination of music and place, with events presented in the wonderful surroundings of Snape, Aldeburgh and other Suffolk settings. We look forward to welcoming everyone in June to this special part of the world for an unforgettable celebration of music and the arts.'

## **Detailed Programme information**

### **Opera**

#### **Colin Matthews *A Visit to Friends* with libretto by William Boyd**

- Aldeburgh Festival 2025 opens with the world premiere of **Colin Matthews'** first opera *A Visit to Friends* with libretto by **William Boyd**.
- *A Visit to Friends* is an opera about love. Or, more accurately, about love's frustrations. Drawing on Anton Chekhov's short story and William Boyd's Chekhovian play *LONGING*, *A Visit to Friends* is, beguilingly, an opera within an opera, with music strongly influenced by Scriabin.
- Four characters are rehearsing for the first performance of a recently discovered opera with a libretto by Chekhov. Two women are both in love with a man who cannot commit himself, and during rehearsals their relationships begin to mirror the characters they are playing... (13 June, 7.30pm & 14 June, 4pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

- Award-winning actor [Emily Watson](#) will do a reading of Chekhov's *A Visit to Friends*, the short story that inspired this year's Aldeburgh Festival Opera in the enchanting woodland setting of Thorington Theatre (13 June, 3.30pm, Thorington Open Air Theatre).

## Featured Artists

### Allan Clayton

Allan Clayton is one of the world's finest tenors: the flexibility and consistency of his vocal range, combined with his magnetic stage presence, have led to international acclaim in music from Baroque to contemporary. A former Britten Pears Young Artist, Clayton's Festival residency showcases the breadth of his artistry.

- Clayton joins the [Knussen Chamber Orchestra](#) and conductor **Ryan Wigglesworth** to perform Clayton's favourite Britten song cycle - *Nocturne* - the beating heart of this year's Festival (15 June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Edward Gardner and the Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra](#) join forces with Clayton for Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Refugee* - written for the tenor - with texts by Emily Dickinson, Benjamin Zephaniah, W.H. Auden and Brian Bilston (19 June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- The [Dunedin Consort](#) and Allan Clayton combine new and old in a programme including the first performance of a Britten Pears Arts commission by **Tom Coult** based on the text of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, set alongside a Lamentation by Zelenka. Clayton also sings **Caroline Shaw's** *Punctum* (21 June, 3pm, Blythburgh Church).
- The [BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oramo](#) with Allan Clayton continue the thread of heart-stopping musical settings of gripping poetry that speaks of conflict and darkness with Britten's *Our Hunting Fathers* (22 June, 5pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Antonio Pappano](#) at the piano partners **Allan Clayton** in an evening of song and chamber music including Britten's *Seven Sonnets of Michaelangelo*. They are joined by the principal string players of the LSO for the original chamber version of Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge* (28 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- Clayton will also be popping up in a range of other contexts including the **Festival Extra!** in unexpected locations in Aldeburgh and further afield.

### Helen Grime

Helen Grime's music frequently draws inspiration from related artforms such as painting, sculpture and literature and has won praise in equal measure for the craftsmanship of its construction and the urgency of its telling. A former Britten Pears Young Artist, Grime's Festival residency offers a chance to hear a wide range of work including her String Quartets, Violin Concerto and new song cycle for soprano and orchestra.

- This year's [Festival Service](#) puts new music at its heart with Helen Grime's *Missa Brevis* performed by the **Britten Pears Chamber Choir** (15 June, 10.30am, Aldeburgh Church).
- [Folk](#) is a Britten Pears Arts co-commission from Helen Grime, with a libretto by **Zoe Gilbert** based on her award-winning novel of the same title. A 25-minute work for soprano and orchestra, it draws on the folklore of the Isle of Man and is full of mysterious texts and a kaleidoscope of musical colours. The work was written for soprano **Claire Booth** - who had the idea for the piece - and performs it with the **Knussen Chamber Orchestra** and conductor **Ryan Wigglesworth** (15 June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- Featured Artist [Leila Josefowicz](#) performs Helen Grime's Violin Concerto with the **BBC Symphony Orchestra** and its Chief Conductor **Sakari Oramo**. Grime says of the piece, 'Violent, virtuosic music covering the whole range of the violin is contrasted with more delicate and reflective filigree material that features oscillating natural harmonic passages and searching melodies' (21 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- In their second concert at the Festival, the [BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oramo](#) perform Grime's *Night Songs* written for Knussen's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2012. Grime says, 'It will be nice within the weekend to have two pieces from different stages of my development. It will be interesting to trace that journey' (22 June, 5pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- The [Heath and Fibonacci Quartets](#) perform Helen Grime's two String Quartets in the same recital; the first time that both have been heard side by side in the same programme (24 June, 2pm, Aldeburgh Church).
- Grime's [Harp of the North](#) is inspired by lines from Walter Scott's folk-inflected poem *The Lady of the Lake*, played in this concert by cellist **Paul Watkins**. (25 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

- Grime is one of the composition tutors working with [Britten Pears Arts Young Artist composers](#) and *Prayer* is heard alongside six exciting new works from these young artists (20 June, 3pm, Britten Studio).

### Daniel Kidane

Daniel Kidane's music has been described by The Times as 'tautly constructed' and 'vibrantly imagined' and is widely performed in the UK and beyond. Kidane is a passionate champion for equality and diversity in classical music and many of his works draw inspiration from contemporary life and politics. His music features in nine concerts at this year's Aldeburgh Festival and includes a wide range of works from solo cello, tenor and piano, and string quartet – to chamber choir, violin and orchestra, and symphony orchestra.

- This year's [Festival Service](#) puts new music at its heart with Daniel Kidane's *Christus factus est* performed by the **Britten Pears Chamber Choir** conducted by **James Davy** (15 June, 10.30am, Aldeburgh Church).
- Pianist [Mishka Rushdie Momen](#) performs Kidane's *Three Etudes* inspired by a Kandinsky painting in her solo recital (16 June, 2pm, Britten Studio).
- [Edward Gardner and the Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra](#) perform Daniel Kidane's orchestral work *Sirens*. The piece resulted from a collaboration with Zimbabwean writer and poet **Zodwa Nyoni**, working on a BBC radio play centred on a contemporary reinterpretation of one of Shakespeare's sonnets. The drama was set in Manchester and the accompanying music that is played in this concert focuses on the cacophony of sounds that one might hear on a busy university term-time night out (19 June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Awake](#) is described by Kidane as 'a message saying: be awake, focus on the positives, be open-minded. Really listen. I wanted to create a piece that was hopeful.' It was premiered at the Last Night of the Proms in 2019 by the **BBC Symphony Orchestra** and **Sakari Oramo** who revisit the work at Aldeburgh Festival (21 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Tenor Nick Pritchard and pianist Ian Tindale](#) perform a recital of their new album including Daniel Kidane's *Songs of Illumination* alongside music by Britten and Imogen Holst. Kidane says, 'I admire Britten and Holst's music a lot and it is an honour to have my work performed at their Festival. Like them, my songs have lush harmonies, and all three of us composers are interested in how the voice works – so it is a good combination' (27 June, 11am, Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh).
- The [Carducci Quartet](#) gives the first performance of Daniel Kidane's new String Quartet – a Britten Pears Arts Commission, written for this occasion and these performers (25 June, 3pm, Britten Studio).
- [BBC Singers and Sofi Jeannin](#) perform Daniel Kidane's lockdown piece *The Song Thrush and the Mountain Ash*, with text set by Simon Armitage (26 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Royal College of Music Symphony Orchestra and Kirill Karabits](#) are joined by YCAT artist, Sphinx Prize winner and Classic FM Rising Star **Nathan Amaral** to perform Daniel Kidane's violin concerto *Aloud*, an exploration of the momentum and energy between violin and orchestra (27 June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Alisa Weilerstein](#)'s solo cello recital includes Daniel Kidane's *Sarabande Parts 1 – 3*, part of her Fragments project which presents music in a seamless flow and without explanation (27 June, 3.30pm, Britten Studio).

### Leila Josefowicz

**Leila Josefowicz** makes her Aldeburgh Festival and Snape Maltings debut. She is a passionate advocate of new music for the violin and has had many concertos written specially for her from leading composers including the late Oliver Knussen, Colin Matthews, Luca Francesconi, John Adams and Esa-Pekka Salonen. She says, 'I am blessed that I get to work with the greatest living composers regularly. It shows how rich the contemporary music scene is right now and how many great pieces are being written.' Josefowicz's Festival residency focuses on new music and features the world premiere of a new piece by Colin Matthews, as well as Helen Grime's Violin Concerto.

- [Leila Josefowicz](#) performs Helen Grime's Violin Concerto with the **BBC Symphony Orchestra** and **Sakari Oramo**. Josefowicz says, 'Helen's piece is a romantic twist on British contemporary music, with a driving rhythm. It goes to places which other pieces haven't, energetically speaking' (21 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall). Josefowicz and Grime dissect the score in their pre-concert talk offering an insight into how the violinist approaches learning a new work (21 June, 6.30pm, Peter Pears Recital Room).
- [Leila Josefowicz](#) is joined by brothers **Huw** and **Paul Watkins**, for a chamber concert that includes the world premiere of Colin Matthews' new piece, *Paraphrases*, written especially for her (25 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).



- [The Psychology of Performance](#): Leila Josefowicz leads a fascinating study of topics such as stage anxiety, interpretation from a non-musical point of view, and other matters to do with performance (26 June, 10.30am, Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh).

### Further works by Colin Matthews

Further works by **Colin Matthews** performed at the Festival include three first performances:

- [String Quartet No. 6](#) by the **Gildas Quartet**, written specially for them (14 June, 11am, Orford Church).
- [Paraphrases](#) written for featured artist **Leila Josefowicz** alongside brothers **Paul** and **Huw Watkins** (25 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- A new orchestration of [Debussy's Images](#) (Book 2) performed in the final concert of the 2025 Aldeburgh Festival by the **London Symphony Orchestra** and **Sir Antonio Pappano** (29 June, 5pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

### Words and Music

- [EXAUDI: Book of Flames and Shadows](#): Blythburgh Church at sunset plays host to this first live performance of this programme from EXAUDI in which spoken word transforms into song (14 June, 8.30pm, Blythburgh Church).
- [The Idea of North](#) combines words and music that evoke the North, curated by soprano **Claire Booth**, violinist **Tamsin Waley-Cohen** and pianist **Christopher Glynn**. The programme includes a major new song cycle – *Speak of the North* – from award-winning composer **Gavin Higgins** which sets a wealth of poetry ranging from Charlotte and Emily Brontë to Sean O'Brien, Michael Symmons Roberts, Katrina Porteous and Tony Williams (17 June, 3pm, Britten Studio).
- [Sophie Bevan, Ryan Wigglesworth](#) and members of the **Knussen Chamber Orchestra** give an intimate recital featuring settings of Mallarmé poetry and also spotlights the works of Betsy Jolas (18 June, 11am, Britten Studio).
- [The Dunedin Concert: Bach's Markus Passion](#) – the UK premiere of 'a new Bach masterpiece', produced by **Bill Barclay's Concert Theatre Works** and brought to life by the **Dunedin Consort** with **John Butt** and actor **Joseph Marcell**. This new edition by **Malcolm Bruno** is for chamber forces with four singers, actor, and single strings (18 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- Soprano [Juliet Fraser](#) explores the timeless vocalisation that is the lament, a 'ritual of letting go', combining ancient and new music and words (21 June, 10pm, Britten Studio).
- **To Dieter: A Tribute to Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau**: baritone **Benjamin Appl** with pianist **James Baillieu** celebrates his hero, mentor and teacher with three events at this year's Festival.
  - [To Dieter](#), a distinctive programme of Fischer-Dieskau's life and career through music that he loved and is known for performing, alongside memories and anecdotes about the iconic baritone through his own personal diaries (22 June, 2pm, Britten Studio).
  - [Festival Masterclass](#): Britten Pears Young Artists work with Appl and Baillieu on French and German song (23 June, 10.30am, Peter Pears Recital Room) culminating in a Young Artists recital featuring those songs and duos (24 June, 11am, Aldeburgh Church).
  - [Appl and Baillieu](#) are joined by specialists from the Britten Pears Archive to present an **illustrated discussion** about Fischer-Dieskau and his close association with the Aldeburgh Festival (24 June, 4.30pm, Peter Pears Recital Room).

### The North & Summer Solstice

- [The Idea of North](#) combines words and music that evoke the North, curated by soprano **Claire Booth**, violinist **Tamsin Waley-Cohen** and pianist **Christopher Glynn**. Alongside Gavin Higgins' new song cycle, the programme includes folksongs by Grieg and Grainger all full of Nordic influences and colours (17 June, 3pm, Britten Studio).
- The [BBC Concert Orchestra](#) and Finnish Chief Conductor, **Anna-Maria Helsing** are joined by the **Iceland Philharmonic Choir** for a BBC Radio 3 *Friday Night Is Music Night* programme that showcases midnight sun, verdant landscapes and folksong celebrating midsummer Nordic-style. Classics by Mendelssohn, Grieg and Nielsen as well as Hugo Alfvén's Swedish Rhapsody (17 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall; broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 20 June).

- [Summer Solstice](#): the new Festival tradition of gathering on the east coast to greet the rising sun of the summer solstice continues. Musical and culinary surprises await (21 June, 4.20am, Maggi Hambling's Scallop, Aldeburgh beach).

## New Music

- 21 world premieres (of which 14 are Britten Pears Arts commissions) and 3 UK premieres.
- A continued commitment to new music at the Aldeburgh Festival is a recognition of the high quality of current compositional talent, particularly in the UK.
- The Festival opens with **Colin Matthews' *A Visit to Friends***, and there are world premieres from **Helen Grime**, **Daniel Kidane**, **Gavin Higgins**, **Cheryl Frances-Hoad**, **Sasha Scott** and **Brian Elias** among others.
- See full list of new music in the notes to editors below.

## Orchestras & Ensembles

- The [Knussen Chamber Orchestra](#) was founded by **Ryan Wigglesworth** who conducts and features current and recent students of the **Royal Academy of Music** sitting alongside established professional musicians. The programme includes **Allan Clayton** singing Britten's *Nocturne*, Helen Grime's *Folk* with soprano **Claire Booth**, Britten's *Suite on English Folk Tunes* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 (15, June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- **BBC Symphony Orchestra** and **Sakari Oramo** present two concerts at this year's Festival. In the first [Leila Josefowicz](#) performs Helen Grime's Violin Concerto and **Anu Komi** sings Strauss' Four Last Songs (21 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall). [Brian Elias](#)' new Horn Concerto (a BPA Commission) receives its first performance by **Ben Goldscheider**, for whom the piece was written. The second programme also includes Britten's *Our Hunting Fathers* with Allan Clayton and Sibelius' Fifth Symphony (22 June, 5pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Edward Gardner and the Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra](#) join forces with **Allan Clayton** for Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Refugee*. This is set alongside Daniel Kidane's *Sirens* and Nielsen's Symphony No. 4 (19 June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Royal College of Music Symphony Orchestra](#) makes its Aldeburgh Festival debut under the baton of **Kirill Karabits**. The programme includes Shostakovich's Symphony No. 9, Britten's *Sea Interludes*, Glière's *Zaporozhy Cossack* and Daniel Kidane's *Aloud* performed by Brazilian violinist **Nathan Amaral** (27 June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Antonio Pappano](#) close the 2025 Aldeburgh Festival with the first performance of Colin Matthews' orchestration of Book 2 of Debussy's *Images* for piano, Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and Boulez's *Mémoriale* (29 June, 5pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Ensemble Renard](#) celebrates the centenary of Boulez and Berio with an inventive programme including a new commission by Cheryl Frances-Hoad and Esa-Pekka Salonen's memorial to Berio (20 June, 11am, Jubilee Hall).
- [Gabrieli Consort & Players under Paul McCreesh](#) present their acclaimed interpretation of Purcell's *King Arthur* – his dramatic masterpiece about the conflict between King Arthur's Britons and the heathen Saxon invaders (20 June, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- The [BBC Singers and Chief Conductor Sofi Jeannin](#) perform sumptuous music that speaks of lockdown and liberation including works by Britten, Schoenberg, Poulenc, Thea Musgrave and Daniel Kidane's lockdown piece *The Song Thrush and the Mountain Ash* (26 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

## Chamber and Solo Recitals

- The [Gildas Quartet](#) plays Beethoven's 'Eroica' Quartet, *Three Idylls* by Bridge and the world premiere of Colin Matthews' String Quartet No. 6 (14 June, 11am, Orford Church).
- Composer, violinist and sound artist [Ruby Colley](#) shares her new vocal work *Hello Halo* performed with **EXAUDI**. This composition was developed on a Snape Residency alongside Ruby's brother, **Paul Colley**, who is neurodivergent and has high support needs (15 June, 12 & 5pm, Peter Pears Recital Room).
- An all-Schubert recital from pianist [George Fu and mezzo-soprano Lotte Betts-Dean](#) – both alumni of the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme - includes the B-flat Piano Sonata and selections from *Schwanengesang* (15 June, 2pm, Britten Studio).

- [Mishka Rushdie Momen](#)'s solo piano recital explores darkness and glimpses of light through music old and new, including Renaissance gems by Byrd and Gibbons and new music by Héloïse Werner and Featured Artist Daniel Kidane (16 June, 2pm, Britten Studio).
- A chamber concert celebrates [YCAT](#)'s 40th anniversary, featuring current and former artists, showcasing the impact of long-term commitment to the nurturing of young artists by schemes such as YCAT and BPYAP. Artists include **James Baillieu**, **Ben Goldscheider** and **Amy Harman**. The programme features Schubert's Octet, Coleridge Taylor's Nonet and new pieces by James B. Wilson and BPYAP alumna Sasha Scott – the latter a Britten Pears Arts commission written specially for the occasion (16 June, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- The [Doric Quartet](#) has a 'luminous beauty of sound' and returns to the Aldeburgh Festival for a combination of early and late Beethoven, the Fantasias of Purcell and Andrea Tarrodi's Third Quartet (19 June, 3pm, Aldeburgh Church).
- Mercury-nominated folksong artist [Sam Lee](#) brings a special set to the magical setting of the forested amphitheatre at Thorington (22 June, 8.30pm, Thorington Open Air Theatre).
- At the heart of guitarist [Sean Shibe](#)'s programme is Boulez's famous and influential work, *Le Marteau sans maître* which sets René Char's 1955 surrealist poetry. The concert also includes the first performance of a Britten Pears Arts co-commission from Pulitzer Prize-winning **Tyshawn Sorey**, celebrated for his extraordinary ability to blend composition and improvisation, and Cassandra Miller's *Bel Canto* inspired by Maria Callas' live recording of Puccini's *Vissi d'arte* (23 June, 3pm, Britten Studio).
- The [Heath and Fibonacci Quartets](#) present a programme of Britten and Beethoven quartets alongside Helen Grime's two distinctive string quartets (24 June, 2pm, Aldeburgh Church).
- [Anu Komsa and Sakari Oramo](#) join forces to perform Kurtág's seminal work *Kafka-Fragments* which explores the universal topic of wandering. The Finnish soprano is known for her 'technical daring' (The Times) while Sakari Oramo is known worldwide as a conductor who swaps his baton for the violin (24 June, 7.30pm, Britten Studio).
- [Remembering Jennifer Vyvyan](#): past, present and future intertwine in folksong, opera and oratorio as **Sophie Bevan**, and **Ryan Wigglesworth** mark the centenary of Jennifer Vyvyan, a soprano indelibly etched in Aldeburgh Festival history. As part of the same event, **Michael White** – broadcaster, critic and editor of [jennifervyvyan.org](#) – gives a talk on her career and artistry (26 June, 2pm, Britten Studio).
- [Alisa Weilerstein](#)'s Festival recital includes 'For Alisa' by Joan Tower alongside Bach's Third Cello Suite and Daniel Kidane's *Sarabande* (27 June, 3.30pm, Britten Studio).
- [Onyx Brass](#) launches its new album and presents the world premiere of Britten's *Funeral Music*, newly completed by Bernard Hughes from sketches in the Britten Pears Arts archive. The programme also includes the first modern performance of Britten's *Fanfare for David Webster* and two pieces by Imogen Holst (29 June, 11am, Britten Studio).

## New Music Now

- [Young Artist Composers](#): Established in 1992 by Oliver Knussen and Colin Matthews, the Composition & Performance course has been supporting the development of composers and performers specialising in contemporary music for decades. Six Young Artist composers from the September 2024 Composition & Performance course return to the Aldeburgh Festival for the first performances of music created during their residency at Snape Maltings, overseen by Colin Matthews, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Claire Booth and Jonathan Berman (20 June, 3pm, Britten Studio).

## Hesse Lecture

- Leading author, playwright, academic, and journalist [Ali Smith](#) delivers this year's Hesse Lecture, taking as her topic the Festival theme: dissolved in sound.
- One of the great philosopher-novelists of our time, Smith grapples courageously with the big themes of life and draws connections between the great and the small, the universal and the local. Like great music, her work goes deep into the questions of who we are and why we're here - and perhaps points towards the answers.
- Ali Smith is widely celebrated for her innovative storytelling, insightful social commentary, and ability to play with language and form. Her fans include literary critics, fellow authors, and readers who appreciate the depth and originality in her work (29 June, 2.30pm, Britten Studio).

## The Red House

The Red House is open every day during the Aldeburgh Festival with pop-up music by Hesse students, a behind-the-scenes day focusing on the archive and garden, and a specially curated exhibition in the archive.

- [Spiritual Britten](#) is curated by **Paul Edmondson** and explores the spiritual aspects of Britten's life and music, looking at the defining moments and works that illustrate his motivations as a composer: his passions and the beliefs that shaped him and the works he created. Sacred music was a constant thread throughout Britten's career. Though not devout, the Christian values and routines of his childhood shaped his approach to God and the music he composed. One of the earliest works he composed was *Hymn to the Virgin*, written at the age of 17, while among his most significant was the *War Requiem* (3 April – 2 November 2025, The Red House).
- [Darkness](#) brings together items never before displayed, some very recent additions to the collection, and some that have only rarely seen the light of day (3 April – 2 November, The Red House).
- Go [Behind the Scenes](#) at The Red House and get an inside view of the spaces not usually open to the public, plus a range of activities throughout the day including the opportunity to visit the Archive strongrooms (15 June, The Red House).
- [Summer Solstice Yoga](#) takes place on the lawn at The Red House soon after sunrise (21 June, 6am, The Red House).
- [Ensemble Renard](#) showcase the brilliance of each wind instrument in pop-ups of Berio's *Sequenzas* indoors and outdoors at The Red House (21 June, from 11am, The Red House).

## Aldeburgh Festival Extra! including the Big Day Out

- A host of unexpected, intriguing, enjoyable events and happenings that take place alongside the Aldeburgh Festival.
- Bringing back the Pumphouse venue loved by audiences as well embracing a range of venues in Aldeburgh - plus the occasional surprise further afield - the Festival Extra! programme will feature late-night hair-down music, pop-up bars, unexpected treats for foodies, artists in unfamiliar places, and more.
- Britten Pears Arts invites the whole community - locals and visitors alike - to enjoy a different take on the Aldeburgh Festival, staged by the artists and creatives who make up the Festival in partnership with the whole town.
- Festival Extra! will include the Big Day Out - a whole day in Aldeburgh of music and words, pop-ups, a mass play, new work, discoveries, fine food and drink, and unexpected surprises (28 June, locations across Aldeburgh). All the details will be launched in the spring.

## Visual Art

- [The Singh Sisters'](#) highly decorative, narrative and symbolic work explores hidden narratives of empire, colonialism, conflict, slavery and luxury lifestyle through the lens of India's historical textile trade (12 May – 20 July, Snape Maltings).
- [Francis Newton Souza](#) was born in India and started to achieve some acclaim there as an artist but moved to London in 1949 hoping to gain greater recognition. He first met Peter Pears in 1958 and Souza's friendship with Britten and Pears, and his famous portrait of the latter, inspire this Festival exhibition (13 – 29 June, Snape Maltings).
- [Julian Perry: The Foliate Bosses](#) will be installed in several places at Snape Maltings and is a continuation of the artist's ongoing study of coastal erosion that sees our crumbling coasts as emblems of an environment in crisis (24 May – 29 June, Snape Maltings).

## BBC Radio 3

- BBC Radio 3 once again broadcasts from Aldeburgh Festival, bringing the magic to listeners at home.
- The **BBC Concert Orchestra's Friday Night is Music Night** with Finnish Chief Conductor, **Anna-Maria Helsing** opens the BBC Radio 3 coverage from the Festival. They are joined by the **Iceland Philharmonic Choir** for a programme that includes Mendelssohn, Grieg and Nielsen as well as Hugo Alfvén's Swedish Rhapsody (broadcast on 20 June).
- Two **BBC Symphony Orchestra** concerts with Chief Conductor **Sakari Oramo**: **Leila Josefowicz** performs Helen Grime's Violin Concerto and **Anu Koms** sings Strauss' Four Last Songs (broadcast on 21 June). **Brian**



Elias' new Horn Concerto (a BPA Commission) receives its first performance by **Ben Goldscheider**; plus Britten's *Our Hunting Fathers* with Allan Clayton and Sibelius' Fifth Symphony (broadcast on 22 June).

- **Leila Josefowicz** is joined by brothers **Huw** and **Paul Watkins**, for a chamber concert that includes the world premiere of Colin Matthews' new piece, *Paraphrases*, plus Barber's Cello Sonata, Helen Grime's *Harp of the North* and Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2, Op. 67 (broadcast on 25 June).
- The **BBC Singers** and Chief Conductor **Sofi Jeannin** perform music that speaks of lockdown and liberation including works by Britten, Schoenberg, Poulenc, Thea Musgrave and Daniel Kidane's lockdown piece *The Song Thrush and the Mountain Ash* (broadcast live on 26 June).

Images can be downloaded [here](#).

Aldeburgh Festival brochure can be viewed [here](#).

**For further press information please contact:**

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About Britten Pears Arts**

Britten Pears Arts is a pioneering music, arts and heritage charity based on the Suffolk coast at two popular, historic visitor destinations: The Red House and Snape Maltings. Britten Pears Arts emerged from the creative partnership of Benjamin Britten, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, and his professional and personal partner, singer Peter Pears. Britten and Pears shared a progressive vision for music and the arts to be useful, helping people enhance and bring joy into their lives. Britten and Pears' vision inspires all our activity, from work with the local communities to our national leadership roles in the fields of talent development and music, health and wellbeing.

[www.brittenpearsarts.org](http://www.brittenpearsarts.org)

#### **Aldeburgh Festival 2025 New music**

##### **World Premieres**

Colin Matthews: A Visit to Friends (13 June)

Colin Matthews: String Quartet No. 6 (14 June)

EXAUDI: Book of Flames and Shadows (first live performance; 14 June)

Film: Solitude with Schubert (15 June)

Sasha Scott: New Commission (BPA co-commission; 16 June)

Gavin Higgins: Speak of the North (BPA co-commission; 17 June)

Cheryl Frances-Hoad: New Commission for Ensemble Renard (BPA commission; 20 June)

New Music Now: 6 world premieres from Britten Pears Young Composers (20 June)

Tom Coult: New work for Allan Clayton and Dunedin Consort (BPA commission; 21 June)

Juliet Fraser: Lament (BPA co-commission; 21 June)

Brian Elias: Horn Concerto (BPA commission; 22 June)

Tyshawn Sorey: New work (23 June)

Daniel Kidane: New String Quartet (BPA commission; 24 June)

Colin Matthews: Paraphrases (25 June)

Britten, completed Hughes: Funeral March (29 June)

Debussy, arr. Colin Matthews: Images Book 2 (29 June)

##### **UK premieres**

Betsy Jolas: Quartet No. 7 (18 June)

Malcolm Bruno new edition: Markus Passion (18 June)

Helen Grime: Violin Concerto (21 June)

#### **BPA Co-Commissions not premiering at Aldeburgh Festival**

Helen Grime: Folk (15 June)

Tyshawn Sorey: New work (23 June)