FRIDAY 16 AUGUST

THE HOUSE OF MUSIC

THE KANNEH-MASONS

BOLDTENDENCIES

BOLD
TENDENCIES

FRIDAY 16 AUGUST at 7.30PM

THE KANNEH-MASONS
THE HOUSE OF MUSIC

"This was not a house of lonely soloists. The children often burst into each other's spaces, giving advice, remonstrating or simply singing and celebrating another's efforts.

There are regular spontaneous moments where a duo or a trio would spring up. What began as a solo on the violin would be joined by an improvised accompaniment or a cello harmony. A classical string quartet would flow into a reggae or jazz beat and everyone's voice was loud."

—Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason

BOLD
TENDENCIES

PROGRAMME

JOHANNES SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)
Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007, I. Prelude, ca. 1717–23

Sheku – cello

WELSH TRAD
***Ar Lan Y Môr* ("On the Seashore")**

Isata – piano
Jeneba – piano
Braimah – violin
Aminata – violin
Konya – violin
Mariatu – cello
Sheku – cello

JOHN HUGHES (1872–1914)
***Calon Lân* ("A Pure Heart"), ca. 1890s**

Braimah – violin
Aminata – violin

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875–1912)
***Deep River*, 1905**

Isata – piano
Jeneba – piano
Braimah – violin
Aminata – violin
Konya – violin
Mariatu – cello
Sheku – cello

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

FRANZ LISZT (1811–1886)
Consolations, S.172, III. *Lento Placido*
in D ♭ major, ca. 1850

Isata – piano

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)
***Fantasie-Impromptu* in C♯ minor, Op. 66, 1834**

Jeneba – piano

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)
Étude Op. 10, No. 4 in C♯ minor, 'Torrent', 1830

Jeneba – piano

EDWARD ELGAR
***Sospiri*, Op. 870, 1914**

Braimah – violin
Konya – piano

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)
Trio Sonata in G minor, Op. 2, No. 8,
III. *Largo*, ca. 1720

Isata – piano
Sheku – cello
Mariatu – cello

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)
Piano Trio No. 29 in G Major, "Gypsy Rondo", Hob. XV/25, 1795

Jeneba – piano
Aminata – violin
Sheku – cello

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Isata Kanneh-Mason (b. 1996)
***Hiraeth*, 2023**

Isata – piano
Jeneba – piano
Braimah – violin
Aminata – violin
Konya – violin
Mariatu – cello
Sheku – cello

Interval

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)
Piano Quartet in A Major, D. 667,
"Trout Quintet", 1819

Isata – piano
Braimah – violin
Edgar Francis – viola
Sheku – cello
Toby Hughes – double bass

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

"We've been kept sane by playing music together."
– Isata Kanneh-Mason

Almost four years ago today on 8 August 2020, deep in the COVID-19 lockdown, Isata Kanneh-Mason and Sheku Kanneh-Mason took to this concrete concert hall to open our series of live events that year. We were determined to offer a live programme that summer, and these were some of the only performances to take place with an audience in the UK. The duo dazzled that evening playing Sonatas for cello and piano by Beethoven, Frank Bridge, Samuel Barber and Rachmaninoff. A few weeks later Isata returned with a spectacular performance traversing Beethoven, Barber, Gershwin and Chopin.

We welcomed both siblings back in 2021: Sheku with his collaborator Harry Baker, for a special programme of folk melodies, jazz standards, classical and improvised pieces. Isata reiterated her virtuosic keyboard skills, on the precipice of the 2021–22 season that would see her serve as one of the European Concert Hall Organisation's Rising Stars.

Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Baker returned the following year for a night with friends Zak Abel, Hadewych van Gent, Ashok Klouda, Hannah Roberts and Max Ruisi, moving effortlessly from the 16th century – Bach: *Come Sweet Death* – to the 1970s – CHIC *Good Times* – and including 5 preludes for solo cello written for Sheku by British composer Edmund Finnis. Jeneba Kanneh-Mason made her Bold Tendencies debut playing Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Roderick Cox. This towering epic burned and sparkled with yearning, bittersweet intensity, the perfect completion of our LOVE programme for 2022.

The following year in our 2023 season of Crisis Jeneba returned, presenting her programme *The Gathering Storm*. Ending with Florence Price's *Fantasie Négre* in E Minor, a piece of searing lyricism and beauty, Jeneba's programme paved the way for Isata's the following day – under the aegis of *Through the Ages*, in profound proof of the diversity and mastery inherent to Isata's repertoire and practice.

We are thrilled to welcome tonight all seven Kanneh-Mason siblings to the Concrete Concert Hall for the first time – Isata, Braimah, Sheku, Konya, Jeneba, Aminata and Mariatu. Spanning classical and contemporary repertoire in various configurations and combinations, their specially selected programme frames a uniquely inspiring evening in celebration of music and family.

Sheku opens *The House of Music* with one of the most profound of all classical works – "Monophonic music wherein a man has created a dance of God" (Wilfred Mellers) – the Prelude from Bach Suite No. 1 in G major. Bach's suites for cello are now considered some of the composer's greatest musical achievements; they were seldom performed and little known prior to their recording in the 1930s (due to technical demand, and difficulty in interpretation, with the surviving copies of the manuscript lacking annotation).

Ar Lan y Môr ("Beside the Sea"), played by all seven siblings, is a traditional Welsh folk love song that evokes undulating waves and shingle shores; abundant waters that flow into *Calon Lân* ("A Pure Heart) – originally written as a hymn in the 1890s featuring words by Daniel James, and sung to a tune by John Hughes; and now firmly established as an anthem associated with the Welsh rugby union. Performed by Braimah and Aminata, the tune is marked amongst popular Welsh traditional songs insofar as the English-language version is virtually never sung; with the lilting lyrics conveying that "The riches of a virtuous, pure heart/Will bear eternal profit."

The siblings amass again for a rendition of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Deep River* (1905). Originally scored for solo piano, the Kanneh-Masons' own arrangement augments the work's melancholic beatitude. Paying heed to the African American spiritual of the same name, Coleridge-Taylor's work crosses literal and metaphorical boundaries; the physical breadth and depth of a great river suggested in rich musical textures and movement in feeling – from equanimity to agitation. The emotional power of the music sets the scene for Liszt's Consolation No. 3, *Lento Placido* in D♭ major played by Isata. Taking on the musicality of a nocturne, likely inspiration for the piece comes from Charles Sainte-Beuve's collection of romantic era poetry, *Consolations*: a series of

meditations-in-verse, that extol friendship as solace for the loss of religious faith.

Isata's solo piano is followed by Jeneba's presentation of two works by Chopin. Often compared to Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, the *Fantasie-Impromptu* in C♯ minor (1834) is one of Chopin's most popular and frequently performed compositions. The piece deploys a ceaselessly moving note figuration, and uses many cross-rhythms. *Étude Op. 10, No. 4* in C♯ minor (1830) is too defined by perpetual motion – so nicknamed *Torrent*, with reference to its marking *Presto con fuoco* (Fast, with passion). Performance of the piece requires extreme dexterity, with particular demand made on the left hand. With a zigzag configuration of the semiquaver line, pianists are invited to use their thumb on black keys, as if they were white ones; with the principal difficulty being the necessary quick alteration of narrow and wide hand positions. The manner of the motif's development has been likened to certain Bach Preludes, looping the work back to this evening's opening piece.

The intensity of Chopin's fourth étude – a bubbling, fiery work that constitutes a "bravura study for velocity and lightness in both hands" – is continued as Braimah and Konya join forces for Elgar's *Sospiri*, Op. 70 (1914). Written just before and performed just after the beginning of the First World War, Elgar's adagio for string orchestra, harp and organ was originally intended for violin and piano – as delivered here by brother and sister. Short, expressive and dramatic, *Sospiri* can be viewed as a microcosm of Elgar's compositional style and voice: bearing emotional power and imaginative orchestration that speaks to the composer's symphonic works. Overarching the piece is a feeling of yearning that resolves in the final bars to a brighter, more hopeful sonority.

Mariatu, Sheku and Isata come together in a performance of the Largo from Handel *Trio Sonata in G minor* (ca. 1720). Possessed of a torturous history Handel's sonatas are likely his earliest surviving compositions, written during his time as a university student. Following the Italian *sonata da chiese* pattern of alternating slow and fast movements, the measured *Largo* is possessed of a noble dignity and elegant pathos. By contrast, Jeneba, Aminata and Sheku's iteration of the third movement from Haydn's *Piano Trio No.*

29 in G Major, often nicknamed “Gypsy Rondo”, is an exercise in bohemian revelry. Before the interval, the siblings gather in delivery of a composition by Isata: *Hiraeth* (2023). The Welsh-language title indirectly translates to homesickness — yearning for a person or thing which is absent, or lost – and rounds off the triplet of works that pay heed to the Kanneh-Mason’s quarter Welsh heritage.

The programme concludes with Schubert *Piano Quartet in A Major,* (1819) – more commonly known as the “Trout Quintet”. Isata, Braimah and Sheku are joined by friends Toby Hughes and Edgar Francis, in an assemblage that subverts the traditional quintet orchestration of piano and four strings. The work’s nickname is derived from the fourth movement’s constitution of a set of variations on Schubert’s earlier song “De Fourelle” (The Trout). The piece as a whole possesses a coherent dramatic design. Richly chromatic and singularly sonoric, the unconventional yet perfectly balanced work echoes the structure of a family: a coalescence of characteristics that come together in a unique blend.

What is remarkable about the siblings as they perform as individuals, in various configurations, or all together, is their immense care and empowerment of one another. Emanating from the family is a sense of determination, dedication and camaraderie; a down-to-earthness and lack of competition remarkable for their prolific skill and global renown.

For our season of COMMUNION, and in a year so plagued by global division and heartbreak, this standout example of the importance of mutual support and use of creativity as a lifeline stands as an especially powerful metaphor.



The seven **Kanneh-Mason** siblings – **Isata** (28), **Braimah** (26), **Sheku** (25), **Konya** (24), **Jeneba** (21), **Aminata** (18) and **Mariatu** (15) – all play either piano, violin or cello or a combination. Equally at home playing Bob Marley, Mozart, or medleys from musicals, the family grew up listening to all varieties of music – reggae, rap, rock, country and western, as well as classical.

The eldest six reached the semi-final of Britain's got Talent in 2015, playing a medley of Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Clean Bandit that led Simon Cowell to call them 'probably the most talented family in the world'. Since then the siblings have made their mark both individually and as a family. In 2016 cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason was the first-ever black musician to win the coveted BBC Young Musician, a competition that has been running since 1978; with pianist sisters Isata and Jeneba reaching the keyboard finals in 2014 and 2018 respectively. The five eldest siblings performed at the BAFTAs in 2018, the same year that Sheku reached an audience of two billion worldwide when he played at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. All seven siblings appeared in the December 2019 Royal Variety Show.

Sheku and Isata have both made best-selling recordings, and in October 2020 the family released their first album, Carnival, on Decca Classics. The album – built around Saint-Saëns's Carnival of

the Animals, and featuring new poems by best-selling author, poet, playwright and librettist Michael Morpurgo, read by Morpurgo and Oscar-winning actor Olivia Colman, together with illustrations by Emma Chichester Clark – afforded the family the Global Award for Best Classical Artist in May 2021. All the children attend or have attended London's Royal Academy of Music and its Primary and Junior Academies, except pianist Jeneba who has progressed to London's Royal College of Music for her undergraduate studies.

The siblings were raised in Nottingham by parents Stuart Mason, a business executive and Dr Kadiatu Kanneh, a former university lecturer. Both parents played musical instruments to a high standard but never pursued professional careers. Born in Sierra Leone but moving to Wales as a young girl, Kadiatu lectured in English at the University of Birmingham, while Stuart, both of whose parents were born in Antigua, was born in London and works for a luxury experiential travel company. Oneworld published Dr Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason's inspiring memoir entitled: *House of Music – Raising the Kanneh-Masons* in September 2020, which received the 2021 Storytelling Award from the Royal Philharmonic Society.

The family have been the subject of a number of documentaries, including CBS Sunday Morning and BBC FOUR's *Young, Gifted and Classical*. In 2020 they opened Alan Yentob's BBC One Imagine series, with a uniquely produced lockdown film entitled *This House is Full of Music*. In July 2024 Sheku featured in the Melvyn Bragg-presented Sky Arts documentary *Art Matters*.

Toby Hughes (b. 1992) is one of the UK's leading double bass soloists. Known for his dynamic and engaging performances, Toby has collaborated with renowned musicians and ensembles throughout his career. He has recorded and performed with cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason and holds the position of bassist with London's 12 Ensemble. Toby also regularly performs with both Manchester Camerata and is principal bass for the Northern Ballet. Toby's presence in the classical music scene is further highlighted by his appearances on BBC Radio 3's 'In Tune' and his affiliation with the City Music Foundation since 2018. His impressive list of recital engagements includes performances at esteemed venues such as Wigmore Hall, St-Martin-in-the-Fields, and the Queen

Elizabeth Hall as well as venues across Europe. Toby's debut CD, released on the Champs Hill Record label in 2020 is a testament to his artistry. In addition to his performance career, Toby Hughes has contributed significantly to the repertoire for double bass, with commissions by composers including Leo Geyer and Ian Stevenson.

Edgar Francis is a Welsh violist with a passion for exploring all types of music. As 1st Prize Winner at the 2021 Cecil Aronowitz International Viola Competition, his debut album will be released on Champs Hill Records. He has performed in leading venues such as The Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall and The Royal Festival Hall, as well as playing regularly with groups such as Sinfonia of London and Kaleidoscope Collective. Edgar started his musical journey with Sheila Nelson, before studying with Matthew Souter at Wells Cathedral School. He completed his studies at RAM with Helene Clement. While at RAM he has won 1st Prize in the Wilfrid Parry Prize, as well as receiving a Regency Award, the Sir John Barbirolli Memorial Prize and the Olwen Doreen Leyshon Prize. He is a recipient of a 2023 Hattori Foundation Senior Award. Edgar has attended festivals such as IMS Prussia Cove Open Chamber Music, Yellowbarn, Mendelssohn on Mull, North Norfolk Music Festival, Southwell Music Festival and Lewes Chamber Music Festival, sharing the stage with the Doric String Quartet, Anthony Marwood, Gilbert Kalish, Sitovetsky Trio and many more wonderful musicians. Edgar has also led orchestras under the baton of some of the world's leading conductors such as John Wilson, Edward Gardener, François-Xavier Roth and Jac Van Steen, including multiple performances at the BBC Proms.

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Upcoming Live Events Programme Spotlights

Saturday 24 August at 7.30pm
Julia Bullock and Bretton Brown: Climb Ev'ry Mountain

We are thrilled to welcome **Julia Bullock** – one of the outstanding American singers of her generation – for her first performance at Bold Tendencies, alongside renowned Japanese American pianist and champion of the music of our time, **Bretton Brown**. A prominent voice of social consciousness and activism, Bullock combines exceptional singing with a probling intellect and commanding stage presence, injecting 'every note she sings with a sense of grace and urgency' (*Vanity Fair*). Specially considered for our COMMUNION theme, frequent collaborators Bullock and Brown present music by Kurt Weill, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Connie Converse, Allan Berg, Bob Dylan, Elizabeth Cotten, Marian Anderson, Nina Simone, Odetta, and John Cage. Not to be missed!

Saturday 7 September at 7.30pm
Oliver Leith: Written in Swamp and Gold
Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Naomi Woo

Oliver Leith is the young master of boundary-challenging grand orchestral music for our time. In the first programme dedicated to this visionary British composer of the new generation, Leith finds communion with the works of Charles Ives ('The Housatonic at Stockbridge', 1914) and Franz Schubert (sections from Symphony No. 4 in C minor 'Tragische', 1849). This curated programme is performed at Bold Tendencies by the **Philharmonia Orchestra**, conducted by widely sought-after conductor, educator and Music Director of NYO Canada, **Naomi Woo**. The programme includes the London Premiere of *Cartoon Sun* – a "golden thickness or heaviness" of tolling, pealing and chiming bells for which Leith's musical evocation of collective beatitude and euphoria will be augmented by bells from local churches St Giles', Camberwell, and All Saints, Peckham; and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic 'Forever Bells' –the largest collection of church bells in any UK orchestra. For the finale, Leith's *Pearly, goldy, woody, bloody, or, Abundance* gouges conventional orchestration from the inside out: "a visceral thing, like fireworks, guns, being happily sad, huffing something, saturated fat, slugs of strong booze". Within the vast orchestra, a fountain, fireworks, and gunfire are employed as sonic forces.

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Bold Tendencies 2024 is generously supported by

Selfridges & Co
Henry Moore Foundation
Bloomberg Philanthropies
Art Fund
The Ashley Family Foundation
Southwark Council
The Mila Charitable Trust
London Review of Books
British Council
Steinway & Sons
Vaughan Williams Foundation

In partnership with

CASS Art
Southby Productions
Penguin

With thanks to the COMMUNION Founding Friends

Juliet Barclay
Edmund Barry
Kevin Barry
Lena & Nathalie Baume
Brian Boylan
May Calil & Tom Dingle
Janine Catalano
John Cavanagh
Sadie Coles
Carolyn Dailey
Ronojoy Dam
Isabella de Sabata
John & Emma Donnelly
Maryam Eisler
Sue Grayson-Ford
Caroline Issa
Marcelle Joseph
Caroline Karim-Kassar
James Lingwood & Jane Hamlyn
Fatima Maleki
Penny Mason
Naomi Milgrom
The Naomi Milgrom Foundation
Theo & Fiona Nzegwu
Anne Pitcher
Susan Spindler & Peter Brown
Sara Stewart
Christoph & Marion Trestler
Felicity Waley-Cohen
Don Weniz
Viv Guinness

& those who wish to remain anonymous

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG

BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Bold Tendencies is a not-for-profit arts organisation established in the rooftop spaces of Peckham's Multi-Storey Car Park in 2007. It has transformed a disused building in the heart of South London into an iconic, much-loved place of culture and assembly with spectacular views out over the city and pioneering architecture project Frank's Cafe. Supporting a new generation of creative voices alongside acclaimed international artists, it delivers an ambitious annual programme of experimental Visual Arts, Creative Learning and Live Events open to the public, offering access, participation and enjoyment of the arts for everyone.

Bold Tendencies Team

Hannah Barry
Artistic Director & Chief Executive

Diana Córdoba Barrios
Creative Director & Deputy Chief Executive

Tom Kelly
Head of Operations & Production

Charlie Mills
Senior Curator & Producer: Visual Arts

Misty Ingham
Senior Curator & Producer: Creative Learning

Toby Taylor
Audience Development & Engagement Lead

Katrina Nzegwu
Programme Research Lead

Riccardo Pillon
Associate Curator: Live Events

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Delina Melaku
Creative Learning Coordinator

Esme Wedderburn
Creative Learning Facilitator

Alfiah Brown
Creative Learning Facilitator

Maya King-Dabbs
Engagement Assistant

Jonny Keen
Engagement Assistant

Amelia Azura Mielniczek
Engagement Assistant

Majo Sandoval Alfonso
Engagement Assistant

Mitzi Clarke
Back of House Assistant

Simon Whybray
Graphic Design

Oscar Maguire
Visualisation

Bold Tendencies Board

Ronojoy Dam
Linda Hewson
Helen Newman
Zia Zareem-Slade

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

More and Better!
Your generosity allows us to bring a world-class Visual Arts, Creative Learning and Live Events programme to Peckham. We cannot do the work we do without our supporters.

Join our COMMUNION Friends
or pledge early support for our 2025 programme Déjà vu.
If you'd like to get involved please ask for information at the Kiosk or email us info@boldtendencies.com.

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM