

PHILIP GLASS

SATURDAY 17 JUNE

MUSIC FOR ORGAN

© BOLDTENDENCIES

JAMES MCVINNIE

SATURDAY 17 JUNE at 7.30PM

**Philip Glass: Music for Organ
James McVinnie**

Lighting of the Torch (1984)

Dance No.4 (1979)

Etude No.2 (c.1990)

Music in Fifths (1969)

Passacaglia in C Minor

BWV 582 (1706-1713)

by Johann Sebastian Bach

Mad Rush (1989)

“The impulse that brings us to music is one of rejoicing. I think that is the great, profound pleasure of a life in music and is something that we can cherish for all our life. Something not to be forgotten.”

— Philip Glass

“There’s nothing remarkable about it. All one has to do is hit the right keys at the right time and the instrument plays itself.”

— Johann Sebastian Bach

BOLD TENDENCIES

Iconic American composer Philip Glass has written many works centred around the organ. Vast and powerful in sound, it is well suited to the long, wide spatial conditions at Bold Tendencies. With this special programme performed by virtuoso keyboardist James McVinnie we inaugurate our 'Slope Stage' - formerly the car park's Level 7 - with a celebration of Glass' music for this great instrument of diabolical and sacred appeal.

The organ has existed in its current form since the Middle Ages with earlier precursors dating as far back as the 1st century BC. Along with the clock, the instrument is considered one of the most complex human-made mechanical creations developed prior to the Industrial Revolution. From single short keyboards to huge instruments with over 10,000 pipes, the organ is distinguished by its ability to range from intimate sound to impressive sonic discharge - decibels can exceed levels recorded at performances in the nineteen seventies by Led Zeppelin and The Who.

The organ is beloved across music history, in religious and romantic music as much as in pop and rock and roll. Perhaps most associated with the cathedral or concert hall, as musical styles have evolved, so too have the locations in which the organ is found. The instrument has been incorporated into symphonic works for dramatic effect and/or apocalyptic gesture by modern composers including Scriabin, Holst and Mahler (the former two experienced by audiences at Bold Tendencies) and since deployed by the worlds of jazz, soul and Ska, and by artists from Bob Dylan to Frank Zappa, Pink Floyd, Sheryl Crow, Arcade Fire and Kendrick Lamar.

BOLD TENDENCIES

Philip Glass is no stranger to the popular music of the late 20th century. Alongside collaborations with Brian Eno, David Bowie, Aphex Twin and Arthur Russell, Glass has written 15 operas, 14 symphonies, 12 concertos and numerous chamber music pieces, as well as music for dance and experimental theatre, and award-winning film scores including *The Truman Show* and *The Hours*.

Glass has had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact on the musical and intellectual life of his times. Celebrated for his ability to transcend preconceived limitations of genre, audience and space, he brought classicism into the contemporary, electing from the get-go to play in non-traditional concert venues, lofts and galleries. His work is experimental and stark, often requiring immense physical stamina to weave its aural tapestries of brief, elegant, melodic fragments.

James McVinnie is one of the composer's preferred interpreters of his work and this programme draws us into Glass' seminal musical language. Opening with a fanfare provided by Philip Glass to mark the arrival of the organ on-site at Bold Tendencies, the programme surveys the composer's musical language across key works originally conceived for his own ensemble of synthesisers and winds playing in New York's experimental SoHo loft scene of the 1960s.

The programme deviates from as advertised with the inclusion of Bach's *Passacaglia* — a total, monumental work for the organ. McVinnie wrote to us: "I've always felt that Bach's music makes an ideal foil to the austere, mesmeric works of Philip Glass's early period. This juxtaposition produces a unique alchemy for the listener

that exceeds the sum of its parts.” We are excited to include this work as the penultimate piece in this evening’s event, a special precursor to *Mad Rush*, Glass’ masterpiece of meditation on mind/life.

Bold Tendencies is a place of polyphony and as we live and think through crises past and present there seems no better moment to welcome this instrument - one of humanity’s grander creations and more durable technologies (eluding changing tastes and escaping fire, disrepair and war) - to our programme and space.

Here’s to making the organ sexy again.

Philip Glass (b.1937) is an American composer who emerged in the 1960s New York downtown art scene where he played his early compositions in non-traditional concert venues, lofts and galleries. Unparalleled in his ability to enthrall a wide multi-generational audience across opera houses, concert halls, the dance world, film and popular music, his many collaborators include Brian Eno, David Bowie, Angélique Kidjo, Arthur Russell, Nico Muhly, and Laurie Anderson.

James McVinnie (b.1983) is a virtuoso keyboardist working at the intersection of contemporary, classical and electronic music. Renowned for his boundless approach to music making and performance, McVinnie is founder of the James McVinnie Ensemble, a collective of keyboardists specialising in new music, inaugurated at Bold Tendencies. In 2022 McVinnie gave the first performances of *Infinity Gradient*, an hour-long work for solo organ and 100

speakers in 1-bit electronics written for him by Tristan Perich, and a new concerto written for him by Gabriella Smith with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Esa-Pekka Salonen. He has released two double portrait albums of music by Bach and Glass on Bedroom Community and was Assistant Organist of Westminster Abbey 2008 - 2011.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750) was born into a great musical dynasty in central Germany of over 50 musicians and composers. Johann Sebastian was by far its most gifted member and, for many, remains the greatest composer to have ever lived. His groundbreaking compositions for the organ still form the core of the instrument's repertoire. In 1723 he moved to Leipzig to be Kapellmeister (one responsible for music-making) at St. Thomas Church until his death in 1750.

Abinger Organ Hire (founded. 1983) provided the organ this evening. Celebrating its 40th year of trading, this family-run company was set up by Peter & Susan Flatau and we visited them in their showroom in High Wycombe to choose the instrument, which is made by Allen Organs and specially installed here by their son Simon. Abinger works with major orchestras including the Philharmonia, London Symphony Orchestra & Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as well as providing organs for BBC Songs of Praise, and at the great summer Music Festival in Aix-en-Provence.

Bold Tendencies 2023 Live Events Programme

Thursday 29 June at 7.30pm

Fitzcarraldo Editions Summer Celebration

Kate Briggs, Jacqueline Rose, Dorothy Tse, Polly Barton

Thursday 6 & Friday 7 July at 7pm

The Multi-Story Orchestra: Routes

Saturday 8 July at 7.30pm

Davóne Tines

Thursday 13 July at 7.30pm

The White Review Summer Party

Sophie Mackintosh, A K Blackmore, Momtaza Mehri

Saturday 15 July at 7.30pm

Richard Strauss: Four Last Songs & Metamorphosen

Manchester Collective with Soprano Ruby Hughes

Saturday 22 July at 7.30pm

Oona Doherty

Saturday 28 July at 7.30pm

Caleb Femi

Saturday 29 July at 7.30pm

Johan Dalene & Nicola Eimer

Music by Arvo Pärt, Francis Poulenc, Sam Wu, Edvard Grieg

Saturday 19 August at 7.30pm

Galina Ustvol'skaya: Dies irae (Day of Wrath)

Oliver Leith: good day good day bad day bad day

GBSR Duo

Thursday 24 & Friday 25 August at 7pm

The Multi-Story Orchestra: Into the Deep

BOLD TENDENCIES

Friday 1 September at 7.30pm

Jay Bernard: The Last Seven Years

Saturday 2 September at 7.30pm

Philip Glass: The Complete Piano Etudes

Maki Namekawa & James McVinnie

Thursday 7 September at 7.30pm

Jeneba Kanneh-Mason

Music by Shostakovich, Beethoven, Franz Liszt, Florence Price

Friday 8 September at 7.30pm

Isata Kanneh-Mason

Music by Haydn, Fanny Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin

Saturday 16 September at 7.30pm

Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 1 "Titan"

Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Elena Schwarz

BOLD TENDENCIES

We need your help!

Every year we fundraise to keep our programme thriving and to keep tickets affordable. This means ticket sales only cover about 5% of our costs. Every donation, however big or small, has a major impact and helps us to do more and better. Donations can be made on-site and on-line on our website.

Huge thanks to our 2023 Supporters

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