

SATURDAY 10 AUGUST

GBSR

MUSIC FOR A
SUMMER EVENING

GEORGE CRUMB
STEVE MARTLAND
STEVE REICH

DUO

SATURDAY 10 AUGUST at 7.30PM

**GBSR DUO: GEORGE BARTON &
SIWAN RHYS**

Music for a Summer Evening

George Crumb, Steve Martland, Steve Reich

“Perhaps of all the most basic elements of music, rhythm most directly affects our central nervous system.”

– George Crumb

“I cannot conceive of music that expresses absolutely nothing.”

– Béla Bartók

“I don’t care how much people understand what it is that I’m doing, except if they’re players in my ensemble or other ensembles. I just want people to be moved by the music.”

– Steve Reich

“Music is about the transcendent. This sense of the transcendent is what people get into at rock concerts, and in a way all music is connected to that. Ultimately, it’s a substitute for lost religious states.”

– Steve Martland

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**FLOORS 7-10
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LONDON SE15 4TG
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PROGRAMME

STEVE REICH (b. 1936)

Quartet, 2013

George Barton – percussion

Siwan Rhys – piano

Sam Wilson – percussion

Joseph Havlat – piano

STEVE MARTLAND (1954–2013)

Drill, 1987

Siwan Rhys – piano

Joseph Havlat – piano

Interval

GEORGE CRUMB (1929–2022)

Music for a Summer Evening

(Makrokosmos III), 1974

- I. Nocturnal Sounds (The Awakening)
- II. Wanderer-Fantasy
- III. The Advent
- IV. Myth
- V. Music of the Starry Night

George Barton – percussion

Siwan Rhys – piano

Sam Wilson – percussion

Joseph Havlat – piano

We are thrilled to welcome George Barton and Siwan Rhys (GBSR Duo) back to the Concrete Concert Hall for a third consecutive year. In 2023 George (percussion) and Siwan (piano) brought together two distinct sonic worlds – the mercilessness and cruelty of Galina Ustvolskaya’s, with the conciliatory nature of Oliver Leith’s. The duo first graced the car park in 2022 with a performance of Stockhausen KONTAKTE alongside Aphex Twin Computer Controlled Acoustic Instruments Pt. 2. Exploring the division between human and machine, George and Siwan were joined in their questioning of compositional control by frequent collaborators Joseph Havlat and Sam Wilson – with whom they join forces again for this evening’s programme.

Renowned for repertoire-building in collaboration with, and complemented by the respect and trust of contemporary composers, in 2024 the pair commune with three prominent figures in the development of avant-garde contemporary classical music: Steve Reich, Steve Martland and George Crumb. The evening opens with Reich’s *Quartet* (2013) – “a lightly jazzy essay in key-confounding hypnosis” (Damien Morris, *The Guardian*). Divided into three parts, the pulse is the main character of *Quartet*: a joyful and sprightly piece of restless activity. With new ideas and frequent key changes proliferating throughout the work, *Quartet* is one of Reich’s most complex compositions, demanding dexterity and virtuosity. Dedicated to groundbreaking percussionist Colin Currie, *Quartet* is a chamber work in essence. Written with the inter-musician egalitarianism typical to string quartets, the relaxed, intimate and bittersweet percussive textures are played by two pianos and two vibraphones. Though the piece reflects the centrality of the use of two pianos and two percussion players across Reich’s oeuvre, it is the first work written by the composer for those two instruments alone.

Quartet’s construction is indicative of Reich’s pioneering musical language, in its simultaneous disruption and furtherance of

Western Classical modes. Steve Martland's *Drill* (1987) similarly synthesises Western and non-Western vernacular musical structures, harmonies and rhythms. The work is exemplary of Martland's open engagement across genres – his proclivity for a unique fusion of pop and classical modes – that often led to his being disregarded by conservative classicists. Though arguably one of his greatest works, it was only with Martland's premature death in 2013 that *Drill* came to be reaccepted by the classical music establishment. Falling within his most productive and flourishing creative period in the 1980s/1990s, central to *Drill* is the notion of synchronicity between the musicians – their connection to the music and the stage they share. Played by two pianos, each keyboardist is required to be instinctively aware of the other player's intent. With distinctly split movements, *Drill* is one of Martland's most stern and aggressive offerings: hard-hitting, jagged, and assertive; requiring extreme stamina and rhythmic precision.

Just as *Drill* is exemplary of Martland's compositional eclecticism, so too is George Crumb's *Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III)* (1974) emblematic of his intuitive, organic and highly idiosyncratic writing style – at once unsystematic, pastoral, personal and celestial; “more or less atonal, or more or less tonal” (George Crumb). *Makrokosmos III* expands upon the solo piano works *Makrokosmos I* and *II* (1972 and 1973 respectively). Partly inspired by Béla Bartók's set of piano pieces *Mikrokosmos* – with particular reference to 1937 “Sonata for two pianos and percussion” – the three works come together to constitute the ‘Cosmic Drama’. Concerning the Babylonian zodiac and other elements of Crumb's world view, disparate elements are drawn together across the work's five sections in exploration of the relationship between the innermost human soul, and the vastness of the universe. An earmark work within a legacy of music concerned with cosmology, *Makrokosmos III* is one of the most frequently performed chamber works from the second half of the 20th century.

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Contained of the most evocative cultural polyphony perhaps of all Crumb's works, the use of Tibetan prayer stones and the African thumb piano within *Makrokosmos III* embeds a sympathetic, humanist mood. Taken together, these chosen works of Reich, Martland and Crumb all speak to the inextricability of benevolent spirituality from world history, different cultures and the musical canon. The three pieces each comprise complicated and intertwining elements, and reverberate with additional interconnections and extra-musical associations. For our season of COMMUNION, the distinct humanism of GBSR Duo's programme is perfectly suited: successful and openhearted music that speaks to spiritual unification.

George Barton and Siwan Rhys (GBSR Duo) are two of the UK's finest young contemporary chamber instrumentalists. The duo has built its reputation on a combination of exceptional interpretations of the existing piano-percussion repertoire, committed performances of ambitious new commissions, and inventive collaborations. Known for their fearless, intense and boundary-crossing performances, GBSR's work ranges from the twentieth-century modernism of Stockhausen and Ustvolskaya to music by Brian Eno and Aphex Twin; from the exquisite delicacy of composers like Morton Feldman, Eva-Maria Houben and Barbara Monk Feldman to the experimental and cross-genre work of Oliver Leith, CHAINES and Angharad Davies. With a keen emphasis on commissioning and repertoire-building complemented by the respect and trust of composers, GBSR's recent world premieres include works from Eva-Maria Houben, Oliver Leith, Laurence Osborn and many others; and European and UK premieres of works by Nicole Lizée, Barbara Monk Feldman, Eric Wubbels and others. Their interest in cross-disciplinary work has led to ongoing collaborations with artists including Angharad Davies, Dejan Mrdja, Cameron Graham. Recordings include “a landmark performance” (Tom Service, BBC Radio 3) of Stockhausen's *KONTAKTE* (October 2019, *all that dust*); a Guardian Pick of the Week, Oliver Leith's *good day good day bad day bad day*; and the critically acclaimed portrait discs *Verses* (Barbara Monk Feldman) and *together on the way* (Eva Maria Houben), released on Another Timbre in 2021 and 2022 respectively. Most recently the duo features on Lisa Illean's portrait disc *arcing, stilling, bending, gathering* (NMC), and the recording of Oliver Leith's opera *Last Days* (Platoon). Individually George and Siwan perform as soloists and chamber musicians, and work with ensembles including the Colin Currie Group, Riot Ensemble, Explore Ensemble, London Sinfonietta, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Apartment House, Britten Sinfonia, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, CBSO, Nash Ensemble, OAE, London Contemporary Orchestra, Aurora Orchestra, 12 Ensemble and many others.

George Crumb (1929–2022) was an American composer whose compositions were heavily influential to generations of musicians. Crumb received a Pulitzer Prize in 1968 for his piece *Echoes of Time and the River*, an orchestral suite first performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. After *Echoes*, Crumb's next landmark piece was *Black Angels (Thirteen Images from the Darkland)* (1970), a

piece written in protest of the Vietnam War that featured unconventional instrumentation like bowed water glasses and electronics (a concept that would become a theme in Dr. Crumb's work). A 1971 recording of Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children* (which premiered in 1970 at a Library of Congress chamber festival) became one of the best-selling albums of classical music released in the 20th century. His four-volume work for piano and percussion *Makrokosmos* – requiring its musicians to shout, whistle, and play pianos in non-traditional ways was penned between 1972-1979; during that period Crumb also wrote *Star-Child* (1977), a choral and orchestral work still widely performed today. In the early 1980s, Dr. Crumb became one of very few living composers to have all of the “big six” philharmonic orchestras (New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Boston and Los Angeles) perform his music, and his music remained popular enough with audiences that nearly all of it remained in print during his lifetime. In 2004, he arranged several Civil War-era songs for a piece called *The Winds of Destiny*, which was adapted for a theatre production in 2011. He returned to American hymns and spirituals throughout the 2000s for his *American Songbook* series, observing in the process that the divisiveness of the U.S. in the period when these songs were written is still alive and well. Dr. Crumb was well-known for producing elaborate, artistic musical scores, and many of the pieces of sheet music he designed are on display at museums today.

Steve Martland (1954–2013) was a Liverpool-born composer, preoccupied with the function of the composer in society. Rejecting academic dogma in favour of a plurality of musical influences, Martland worked frequently with artists outside classical institutions. Often amplified, muscular and powerfully rhythmic, Martland's music has been adapted frequently for film and TV use, and has been extensively choreographed – for instance *Drill* for the Sydney Opera House. Martland's large orchestral work *Babi Yar* (1983) was premiered almost simultaneously in the USA by the St. Louis Symphony under Leonard Slatkin; and in the UK by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Nicolas Cleobury, under the auspices of spnm (Society for the Promotion of New Music). His widely performed choral music includes *Street Songs*, originally written for the King's Singers and Evelyn Glennie and later presented by the Monteverdi Choir and Colin Currie under John Eliot Gardiner

with a film by the Quay brothers; and Tyger Tyger, for Youth Music's nationwide Sing Up campaign. Martland was composer in residence at the ETNA Music Festival in Sicily in 2006 and 2007. His recent commissions included the test piece for the TROMP International Music Festival and Competition, *Starry Night* for percussion and string quartet, and *Sea Songs* for Ars Nova Copenhagen conducted by Paul Hillier.

Steve Reich has been called “the most original musical thinker of our time” (*The New Yorker*) and “among the great composers of the century” (*The New York Times*). Starting in the 1960s, his pieces *It's Gonna Rain*, *Drumming*, *Music for 18 Musicians*, *Tehillim*, *Different Trains*, and many others helped shift the aesthetic centre of musical composition worldwide, away from extreme complexity and towards rethinking pulsation and tonal attraction in new ways. He continues to influence younger generations of composers and mainstream musicians and artists all over the world. Alongside more “traditional” studies in Philosophy (Cornell University), Composition (Juilliard School of Music and Mills College), Reich's education also included Balinese gamelan, African drumming (at the University of Ghana), and traditional forms of chanting of the Hebrew scriptures. His ensemble Steve Reich and Musicians toured the world many times, and his music is performed internationally by major ensembles and orchestras. Reich has been widely recording since the 1960s, with award winning albums including the *Double Sextet* (2009 Pulitzer Prize), *Different Trains* (1989 GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition), and *Music for 18 Musicians* (1999 GRAMMY Award for Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance). Other accolades include the Praemium Imperiale in Tokyo, the Polar Music Prize in Stockholm, the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale, and the Gold Medal in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has been named Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France, and awarded honorary doctorates by the Royal College of Music in London, the Juilliard School in New York, and the Liszt Academy in Budapest, among others. One of the most frequently choreographed composers, several noted choreographers have created dances to his music, including Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Jerome Robbins, Wayne McGregor, and Benjamin Millepied. In 2022, Reich published a new book *Conversations* (Hanover Square Press / HarperCollins), which reflects on the

composer's career and music through a series of conversations with some of the world's greatest artists, including Stephen Sondheim, Michael Tilson Thomas, Brian Eno, Richard Serra, Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker, and Jonny Greenwood.

Joseph Havlat is an Australian pianist and composer from Hobart, who is based in London. He works frequently as a soloist, having given recitals at Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and King's Place, and also chamber musician, having performed with artists such as James Ehnes and Steven Isserlis. He has released CDs on the LSO Live label (the premiere recording of John Adams' two-piano work 'Roll Over Beethoven'), Metier (music by Michael Finnissy) and Delphian Records (Schubert violin and piano works) amongst others. Passionate about modern and contemporary music, he has collaborated with such composers as Thomas Ades, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Gerald Barry and Hans Abrahamsen. As a composer, his music often explores the sounds of the natural world, imbued with the harsher shapes of human modernity. He has written music spanning from solo voice to large ensemble, including for his own Ensemble x.y, of which he was a founding member. He grows ferns.

Sam Wilson is a percussionist and composer based in London. Recent projects include the world premiere of G F Haas' *Solstices* with Riot Ensemble (a 70 minute work performed in total darkness), numerous sessions for film and television (including *All Quiet On The Western Front*, *Deadpool and Wolverine*, *Spencer* and the Oscar and Grammy-award-winning soundtrack to *Black Panther*), recreating Clint Mansell's score to Duncan Jones' cult classic *Moon* at the Barbican, and performing in London's production of *Hamilton*. Since 2010 Sam has worked with composer and producer Anna Meredith. Anna's albums have garnered critical acclaim (including the coveted 'Best New Music' on *Pitchfork*), and their NPR *Tiny Desk* performance was described by the show's creator Bob Boilen as "simply the most exhilarating one I've experienced". Their second album *FIBS* was nominated for the Mercury Prize in 2020.

Upcoming Live Events Programme

Friday 16 August at 7.30pm

The Kanneh Masons: The House of Music

Thursday 22 & Friday 23 August at 7pm

The Multi-Story Orchestra: Bottled Up

Saturday 24 August at 7.30pm

Julia Bullock and Bretton Brown present music by Kurt Weill, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Connie Converse, Allan Berg, Bob Dylan, Elizabeth Cotten, Marian Anderson, Nina Simone, Odetta and John Cage

Thursday 5 September at 7.30pm

Paul B. Preciado: Dysphoria Mundi moderated by Juliet Jacques

Saturday 7 September at 7.30pm

Oliver Leith: Written in Swamp and Gold

Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Naomi Woo

Saturday 14 September at 7.30pm

Gustav Mahler: Symphony No 2 'Resurrection'

Philharmonia Orchestra and Philharmonia Chorus with soloists Ella Taylor and Natalie Lewis, conducted by Nefeli Chadouli

Upcoming Creative Learning Activity

Friday 16 August at 1.30pm

Backstage Pass: Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason and Konya Kanneh-Mason

Saturday 24 August at 2.30pm

Public Rehearsal: Julia Bullock and Bretton Brown

Saturday 7 September at 3pm

Public Rehearsal: Oliver Leith

Saturday 14 September at 3pm

Public Rehearsal: Gustav Mahler No. 2 'Resurrection'

To get involved please contact

Misty Ingham, Senior Curator & Producer: Creative Learning

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Bold Tendencies 2024 is generously supported by

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& those who wish to remain
anonymous

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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.

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