



**MEDIA INFORMATION: For Immediate release**

**Psappha: Boulez – *Le Marteau sans maître* – A twentieth century classic**

**Thursday 22 March 2018 at 7.30pm, Hallé St Peter's, 40 Blossom St, Manchester M4 6BF**

Psappha, Manchester's professional contemporary classical music ensemble, presents Pierre Boulez' iconic *Le Marteau sans maître* (*The Hammer without a master*) – a classic of the twentieth century whose sonority and sense of time and direction were profoundly influenced by music from Asia and Africa. Psappha will also present the world première of rising star Tom Harrold's new work, *Dark Dance*, which the ensemble commissioned to complement the Boulez.

Tim Williams, Psappha's Artistic Director says: "*Tom has more than risen to the challenge of writing a work to complement Boulez's Le Marteau sans maître. His piece is exhilarating and full of rhythmic energy across its eight-minute span. Psappha's musicians relish the challenge of performing music that is difficult yet rewarding. Le Marteau is a perfect example of this with its complex writing requiring virtuosity from the ensemble both individually and collectively. We're very much looking forward to this performance and we are grateful for the support that The Fidelio Charitable Trust has given towards the commissioning of Tom Harrold's work.*"

Composer Tom Harrold says: "*This is perhaps one of the most unusual pieces I have ever written. I've really taken the opportunity to experiment. It's been a cleansing and enlightening experience for me and I'm enormously grateful to Psappha for commissioning me to write the piece.*"

Boulez' *Le Marteau sans maître*, after a text by surrealist poet René Char, features the young British mezzo soprano Jessica Gillingwater with six instrumentalists in the unusual combination of alto flute, viola, guitar, vibraphone, xyloimba, and percussion. The programme also includes Luciano Berio's *Naturale*, which pairs live musicians with recordings of Sicilian street vendors. Toru Takemitsu's *Towards the Sea* completes the programme. The work recalls the ebb and flow of the

ocean and was commissioned by the Greenpeace Foundation for their Save the Whale campaign. The concert is conducted by the dynamic young British conductor, Jamie Phillips.

### **Psappa: Demystifying New Music**

Pre-concert film at 6.00pm – free to ticket holders: Barrie Gavin’s 2005 film: *Pierre Boulez: Living in the Present* – an intimate portrait of a remarkable artist and his inspiration. Psappa’s Demystifying New Music pre-concert events give the audience the chance to learn more before they hear the works played.

### **Programme for Boulez – *Le Marteau sans maître* – A twentieth century classic Thursday 22 March 2018 Hallé St Peter’s**

Takemitsu	<i>Towards the Sea</i>
Tom Harrold	<i>Dark Dances (World première, Psappa commission)</i>
Berio	<i>Naturale</i>
Boulez	<i>Le Marteau sans maître</i>

Jamie Phillips	Conductor
Jessica Gillingwater	Mezzo soprano
Psappa Ensemble	

**Tickets:** £6.50 to £17.50 (including concessions). Tickets are available through [www.skiddle.com](http://www.skiddle.com) (search on Psappa)

Psappa is an Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation and a PRS Foundation Talent Development Partner.

**ENDS**

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**Notes to editors:**

### **Jamie Phillips (Conductor)**

Jamie Phillips first came to international attention through his success in the Nestle Salzburg Conducting Award in 2012 and subsequently as Associate Conductor of the Hallé Orchestra. He has been praised for having the "ability to pick up a familiar piece by the scruff of its neck and shake invigorating new life into it" (Bachtrack) and demonstrates a natural authority on the rostrum, which he combines with a clear, assured and expressive technique and an innate musicality. Phillips was invited as a Dudamel Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the 2015/16 season, which included making his debut with the orchestra at the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Jamie Phillips has developed a strong guest conducting profile across Europe, and in the 2017/18 season returns to orchestras including the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra (Royal Flemish Philharmonic), Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, the Orchestra of the Opéra de Rouen, and Philharmonie Zuidnederland. Phillips will also return to the Hallé, where he previously held the titles of Assistant Conductor and the specially created title of Associate Conductor. Phillips will make his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre d'Auvergne and the Essen Philharmonic.

In recent seasons, Phillips has conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Nash Ensemble, Camerata Salzburg, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra, and the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. He also made return visits to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, RTE Symphony Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic and BBC Philharmonic.

Jamie Phillips is committed to new and 20th century music and has recorded two CDs featuring the music of Tarik O'Regan and Helen Grime, both with the Hallé for the NMC label: "Performances are spot-on, not least from the orchestra's assistant conductor, Jamie Phillips, making an auspicious debut on disc." Classical Music Magazine

### **Jessica Gillingwater (mezzo soprano)**

London born mezzo soprano Jessica Gillingwater studies with David Pollard and is a permanent member of the BBC Singers. Jessica also performs with ensembles including Exaudi, Solomon's Knot, The Choir of the Enlightenment and Renaissance. Jessica recently completed ENO's Opera Works Programme and previously studied with Louise Winter at the Royal Northern College of Music where she was supported by the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust. Whilst at the RNCM she was a finalist in the Elizabeth Harwood and Frederic Cox competitions and was awarded the Dame Eva

Turner Prize. She was the vocal faculty winner of the concerto competition and performed the Wesendonck Lieder in the RNCM Concerto Competition Final. She has participated in masterclasses with Christine Brewer, Mark Shanahan and Catherine Wyn-Rogers. Jessica has performed the roles of Mrs Herring, *Albert Herring* (Hampstead Garden Opera/ Britten), Countess, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Hampstead Garden Opera / Mozart), Erste Dame, *Die Zauberflöte* (Weimar Lyric Opera Studio / Mozart) Giunone, *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse in Patria* (RNCM/Monteverdi); Miranda, *The Dancing Master* (Malcolm Arnold Festival / Arnold); Mother and Witch, *Hansel and Gretel* (Didsbury Arts Festival/ Humperdinck); Helena, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Co-Opera/Britten); and Pamina, *The Magic Flute* (London Youth Opera/Mozart). Future plans include the role of Yelenea Ivanova Popova, *The Bear* (Grimeborn/Walton).

Jessica's oratorio repertoire includes Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and *Requiem*; Bach's *Passions* and *B Minor Mass*; Handel's *Messiah*, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* and Verdi's *Requiem*. Jessica worked extensively with student composers at the RNCM and has premiered and recorded many of their works and continues to have a keen interest in contemporary music.

### **Psappha**

Formed in 1991 by Artistic Director Tim Williams, Psappha specialises in the performance of work by living composers and music of the 20th and 21st centuries. Psappha has an extensive and varied repertoire of hundreds of works and a reputation for technical assurance and interpretive flair.

Psappha is unique in its artistic offering as the North of England's only stand-alone, professional contemporary classical music ensemble. A National Portfolio Organisation for Arts Council England and a Talent Development Partner for PRS for Music Foundation, Psappha is based at St Michael's, the former Italian Chapel in Ancoats, an inner-city area of Manchester that was once the cradle of the Industrial Revolution.

Sir Peter Maxell Davies was Psappha's Patron for 20 years until his death in March 2016 and the ensemble's inspiration. Psappha gave a special 80th birthday concert for Max in Manchester in 2014 and have performed much of his chamber repertoire including the award-winning music-theatre work *Mr Emmet Takes a Walk* which he wrote for Psappha in 2000.

Psappha has appeared throughout the UK, featuring regularly at most of the country's major music festivals and has made highly successful tours to North and South America, Australia, and throughout Europe, also appearing in the United States and Hong Kong through residencies at Princeton University and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Most recently Psappha toured to the Jerusalem Festival in June 2017.

Psappha launched its own CD label in 2004 and has released seven recordings, most recently a unique, limited edition vinyl recording supervised by Peter Maxwell Davies of his iconic *Eight Songs for a Mad King*.

Psappha supports composers at all stages of their careers, offering a range of opportunities to work with its expert musicians as well as a number of online film-based resources; Composition Lab supports GCSE and A-level music and Psappha Kids supports the music curriculum for 7 to 11 year-olds.

Psappha continually seeks to develop new audiences and break fresh ground. Through its websites Psappha provides more than 100 free-to-view films of live performances. The ensemble's YouTube Channel had over 44,000 views in the last 12 months making Psappha one of Europe's leading providers of new music online.

[www.psappha.com](http://www.psappha.com)