

Thursday 14th March
Bristol Ensemble: Mishima

Bristol Ensemble

Roger Huckle – Violin
Marian Givens – Violin
Carl Hill – Viola
Harriet Wiltshire – Cello

Programme

Spectra for String Trio (2017) **Anna Thorvaldsdottir**

Reflections for String Trio (2016) **Anna Thorvaldsdottir**

Stringsongs for String Quartet **Meredith Monk**

1. *Obsidian Choral*

2. *Phantom Strings*

String Quartet No.3 ‘*Mishima*’ **Philip Glass**

1. 1957: Award Montage

2. November 25 – Ichigaya

3. Grandmother and Kimitake

4. 1962: Body Building

5. Blood Oath

6. *Mishima / Closing*

Anna Thorvaldsdottir’s (b. 1977) “seemingly boundless textural imagination” (NY Times) and striking sound world has made her “one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary music” (NPR). Her music is composed as much by sounds and nuances as by harmonies and lyrical material – it is written as an ecosystem of sounds, where materials continuously grow in and out of each other, often inspired in an important way by nature and its many qualities, in particular structural ones, like proportion and flow.

Anna is currently based in the London area. She regularly teaches and gives presentations on composition, in academic settings, as part of residencies, and in private lessons. Invited lectures and presentations include Stanford, Columbia, Cornell, NYU, North Western, University of Chicago, Sibelius Academy, and the Royal Academy of Music in London. Composer-in-Residence with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra 2018-

2023, Anna was in 2023 also in residence at the Aldeburgh Festival and the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music. She holds a PhD (2011) from the University of California in San Diego.

Meredith Monk (b. November 20, 1942, New York City) is a composer, singer, director/choreographer and creator of new opera, music-theatre works, films and installations. Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of our time, she is a pioneer in what is now called “extended vocal technique” and “interdisciplinary performance.” Monk creates works that thrive at the intersection of music and movement, image and object, light and sound, discovering and weaving together new modes of perception. Her ground breaking exploration of the voice as an instrument, as an eloquent language in and of itself, expands the boundaries of musical composition, creating landscapes of sound that unearth feelings, energies, and memories for which there are no words.

Celebrated internationally, Ms. Monk’s work has been presented at major venues throughout the world. Over the last six decades, she has been hailed as “a magician of the voice” and “one of America’s coolest composers.” In conjunction with her 50th Season of creating and performing, she was appointed the 2014-15 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer’s Chair at Carnegie Hall. Recently Monk received three of the highest honours bestowed to a living artist in the United States: induction into the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2019), the 2017 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize and a 2015 National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama.

Philip Glass was born in 1937 and grew up in Baltimore. He studied at the University of Chicago, the Juilliard School and in Aspen with Darius Milhaud. Finding himself dissatisfied with much of what then passed for modern music, he moved to Europe, where he studied with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger (who also taught Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson and Quincy Jones) and worked closely with the sitar virtuoso and composer Ravi Shankar. He returned to New York in 1967 and formed the Philip Glass Ensemble – seven musicians playing keyboards and a variety of woodwinds, amplified and fed through a mixer.

The new musical style that Glass was evolving was eventually dubbed “minimalism.” Glass himself never liked the term and preferred to speak of himself as a composer of “music with repetitive structures.” Much of his early work was based on the extended reiteration of brief, elegant melodic fragments that wove in and out of an aural tapestry. Or, to put it another way, it immersed a listener in a sort of sonic weather that twists, turns, surrounds, develops.

There has been nothing “minimalist” about his output. Glass has composed more than thirty operas, large and small; fourteen symphonies, thirteen concertos; soundtracks to films ranging from new scores for the stylized classics of Jean Cocteau to Errol Morris’s documentary about former defence secretary Robert McNamara; nine string quartets; a growing body of work for solo piano and organ. He has collaborated with Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, Yo-Yo Ma, and Doris Lessing, among many others.