



Soul Singer

RPS Award winner Allan Clayton's 2019-20 season includes Britten Series at Wigmore Hall, La Scala debut with John Eliot Gardiner and Brett Dean's *Hamlet* in concert at the Concertgebouw

"Clayton's voice wrapped around all of them [Mark Anthony Turnage's *Refugee* songs] like a glove, with perfect weight and range of colour and dynamics, and he returned to end the evening with an equally masterly account of Britten's *Nocturne*" *The Guardian*, September 2019



Any attempt to survey the major landmarks of 21st century classical music must surely include Brett Dean's *Hamlet*. The opera's premiere production in 2017 not only proved a triumph for its composer but also for Allan Clayton, whose title-role performance was hailed by the *Guardian* for its 'slow-burning intensity' and eulogised by *The Times*: 'Forget Cumberbatch. Forget even Gielgud,' wrote the paper's senior critic, Richard Morrison. 'I haven't seen a more physically vivid, emotionally affecting or psychologically astute portrayal of the Prince of Denmark than Allan Clayton gives in this sensational production.' The 38-year-old tenor returns to the role later this season for *Hamlet's* Dutch premiere, presented in concert by the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and Markus Stenz at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw (20 June 2020). He can also be seen in Opus Arte's DVD of the work's original production, winner of *Gramophone's* 2019 Contemporary Award.

"Everyone involved in staging *Hamlet* for the first time had to do something extraordinary, to work above and beyond," Allan Clayton recalls of the experience, which also earned him the 2017 Royal Philharmonic Society's Singer Award. "It's the most creative project I've been involved with. That's why I am so proud of it and so pleased for Brett. And I'm thrilled that the piece lives on beyond its premiere, with revivals of the original production planned for future seasons. It's great to have the chance to revisit the piece again this season and see how the role has changed since I performed it in Adelaide last year. Actors usually have just one go at Hamlet, but the Concertgebouw performance means I can re-examine the character and dig deeper into the music and drama."

Before turning to *Hamlet*, Allan Clayton is set to continue his season-long Britten Series at Wigmore Hall with concerts on 4 December 2019, 4 January, 22 April & 21 May 2020. He will be joined in December by soprano Sophie Bevan and Aurora Orchestra conducted by Brett Dean. Their programme includes the world premiere of Josephine Stephenson's *Une Saison en Enfer*, together with Britten's *Les illuminations* and Serenade for tenor, horn and strings and Arvo Pärt's *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*. Clayton hatched the idea for the concert's new work, commissioned for him by Wigmore Hall, after reading Arthur Rimbaud's drug-fuelled poem *A Season in Hell*. "What has excited me most about this series is that I was given free rein to choose pieces to stand with Britten's song-cycles," the tenor observes. "John Gilhooly, Wigmore Hall's Director, liked the Rimbaud proposal, so I suggested Josephine Stephenson, who's half English, half French, for the commission. She's a young composer with a strong voice. It will be great to bring her piece to the Wigmore, with Brett conducting and players I've known since we were students together at Cambridge University."

Allan Clayton starts the new year at Wigmore Hall with a compelling programme of works by Dowland and Britten (4 January), sharing the stage with guitarist Sean Shibe, violist Timothy Ridout and pianist James Baillieu. Their concert includes a set of Dowland lute songs and *Preludium* together with Britten's *Winter Words* Op.52, *Nocturnal after John Dowland* Op.70 and little-known *This way to the Tomb*. Clayton's Britten Series outing on 22 April, given in company with James Baillieu, opens with Priaux Rainier's *Cycle for Declamation*. His recital presents a quartet of Purcell songs in Britten's realisations before turning to Goethe settings by, among others, Schubert and Wolf. Its second half places music by William Croft and Pelham Humfrey alongside Britten's *Holy Sonnets of John Donne*, which received its world premiere at Wigmore Hall in 1945.

"It was a joy to discover Priaux Rainier's music while building this programme," he comments. "A slightly older contemporary of Britten and close friend of Tippett's, she wrote *Cycle for Declamation*, three settings of words by John Donne, for Peter Pears in the mid-1950s. I also thought of the Goethe Oak, the remains of which survive in the Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar, where Britten and Yehudi Menuhin played soon after its

liberation in 1945. Britten, suffering from what he saw on his tour of the camps and the effects of high fever, wrote his Donne *Sonnets* when he returned from Germany, so the programme is integrated in so many ways.”

For his last concert in the Britten Series Allan Clayton will perform the composer’s five *Canticles*, joining forces with artists including countertenor Iestyn Davies, baritone James Newby and horn player Alec Frank-Gemmill (21 May).

In addition to Britten and Brett Dean, Allan Clayton’s 2019-20 season contains his debut at La Scala, Milan, in Berlioz’s *L’enfance du Christ* (20 & 21 December) with Sir John Eliot Gardiner, as well as his first venture into Janáček, in Claus Guth’s new staging of *Jenůfa* for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski (24 March – 9 April). Other highlights include Britten’s Serenade for tenor, horn and strings at London’s Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen (16 January); Vaughan Williams’ *On Wenlock Edge* with the Elias String Quartet and pianist Christian Ihle Hadland as part of the BBC New Generation Artists’ 20th anniversary celebrations at Wigmore Hall (1 February); Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oramo (7 February) at the Barbican Centre; Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and Mark Wigglesworth at Bridgewater Hall in Manchester (13 June); and Britten’s *War Requiem* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla at Birmingham’s Symphony Hall (20 June) and the Salzburg Festival (20 July). Having performed the work for the first time at Glyndebourne in 2019, Clayton also continues exploring Berlioz’s *La damnation de Faust* with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Robin Ticciati (22-23 November), and in Madrid with the Orquesta Sinfónica y Coro de RTVE conducted by Pablo González (7-8 May).

Clayton comes to *L’enfance du Christ* fresh from performing Berlioz’s oratorio at this summer’s BBC Proms and armed with the experience of singing the work in the past with Sir Mark Elder and in a semi-staged production at Berlin’s Philharmonie. “I’m looking forward to working with John Eliot Gardiner for the first time in my La Scala debut,” he comments. “It will be fascinating to do a piece I know well with one of the great Berlioz interpreters. I’m also delighted to be part of the New Generation Artists anniversary celebration at Wigmore Hall. The two years I spent with the NGA scheme, from 2007 to 2009, were invaluable and came just at the right time. And I can’t wait to do my first Czech opera with Vladimir Jurowski, who was such an inspiration when we did *Hamlet* at Glyndebourne.”

This season, says Allan Clayton, feels like the start of a new chapter. “It’s an important time for me,” he reflects. “I feel that, after a dozen years, I now know how to approach this job. I love the fact that there’s something to learn with every performance. It’s the range of work over the next eight months that really excites, and it leads on to some big things to come next season and beyond.”

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Wednesday 4 December 2019

Wigmore Hall, London, 7.30pm

BRITTEN SERIES

Allan Clayton tenor | **Sophie Bevan** soprano | **Christopher Parkes** horn | **Brett Dean** conductor | **Aurora Orchestra**

Britten *Les illuminations* Op.18

Josephine Stephenson *Une Saison en Enfer* (world premiere)

Arvo Pärt *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*

Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings

Friday 20, Saturday 21 December 2019
Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 8pm

Allan Clayton Récitant/Un Centurion | **Anne Hallenberg** Marie | **Lionel Lhote** Joseph | **Nicolas Courjal** Hérode | **Thomas Dolié** Père de famille/Polydorus | **John Eliot Gardiner** conductor | **Filarmonica della Scala** | **Coro del Teatro alla Scala**

Berlioz *L'enfance du Christ*

Saturday 4 January
Wigmore Hall, London, 7.30pm
BRITTEN SERIES

Allan Clayton tenor | **James Baillieu** piano | **Sean Shibe** guitar | **Timothy Ridout** viola

Dowland *Preludium*

Dowland 'Come again, sweet love doth now invite'

Dowland 'Away with these self-loving lads'

Dowland 'Sleep, wayward thoughts'

Dowland 'Come, heavy sleep'

Britten The Second Lute Song of the Earl of Essex, from *Gloriana* Op.53

Britten *Songs from the Chinese* Op.58

Britten *Lachrymae*: Reflections on a Song of John Dowland Op.48

Britten *Nocturnal after John Dowland* Op.70

Britten *This Way to the Tomb*

Britten *Winter Words* Op.52

Thursday 16 January 2020
Royal Festival Hall, London, 7.30pm

Allan Clayton tenor | **Esa-Pekka Salonen** conductor | **Philharmonia Orchestra**

Programme to include: **Britten** Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings

Saturday 1 February 2020
Wigmore Hall, London, 7.30pm
BBC New Generation Artists 20th anniversary

Allan Clayton tenor | **Christian Ihle Hadland** piano | **Elias String Quartet** | **Martin Fröst** clarinet | **Lawrence Power** viola

Vaughan Williams *On Wenlock Edge*

Britten String Quartet No.3 Op.94

Mozart Clarinet Trio in E flat K498 'Kegelstatt'

Mendelssohn String Quintet No.2 in B flat Op.87

Friday 7 February 2020
Barbican Centre, London, 7.30pm

Allan Clayton tenor | **Elizabeth Watts** soprano | **Claudia Huckle** mezzo-soprano | **Johan Reuter** bass-baritone | **Sakari Oramo** conductor | **BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus**

Mendelssohn *Elijah*

Tuesday 24, Friday 27, Monday 30 March, Friday 3, Monday 6, Thursday 9 April 2020
Royal Opera House, London, 7.30pm

Allan Clayton Laca | **Asmik Grigorian** Jenufa | **Karita Mattila** Kostelinčka | **Pavel Cernoch** Steva | **Vladimir Jurowski** conductor | **Claus Guth** director | **Orchestra of the Royal Opera House** | **Royal Opera Chorus**

Janacek *Jenůfa* (new production)

Wednesday 22 April 2020
Wigmore Hall, London, 7.30pm
BRITTEN SERIES

Allan Clayton tenor | **James Baillieu** piano

Rainier *Cycle for Declamation*

Purcell (Britten realizations):

'Take not a woman's anger ill'

'I take no pleasure'

'If music be the food'

'Sweeter than roses'

Various Goethe settings (inc. Wolf/Schubert) TBA

Croft (Britten realization) 'A Hymn on Divine Musick'

Humfrey (Britten realization) 'Lord! I have sinned'

Humfrey (Britten realization) Hymn to God the Father

Britten *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne*

Thursday 21 May 2020
Wigmore Hall, London 7pm
BRITTEN SERIES

Allan Clayton tenor | **Iestyn Davies** countertenor | **James Newby** baritone | **Alec Frank-Gemmill** horn | piano TBC | harp TBC

Britten *Canticles*:

'My beloved is mine and I am his' Op.40

'Abraham and Isaac' Op.51

'Still falls the rain' Op.55

'The Journey of the Magi' Op.86

'The Death of Saint Narcissus' Op.89

Saturday 6 June 2020
Concertgebouw Amsterdam, 1.30pm

Allan Clayton Hamlet | **Kathryn Lewek** Ophelia | **Jeffrey Lloyd-Roberts** Polonius | **Jacques Imbrailo** Horatio | **Rosie Aldridge** Gertrude | **Rupert Enticknap** Rosencrantz | **Christopher Lowrey** Guildenstern | **Henk Neven** Marcellus | **John Tomlinson** Ghost of Old Hamlet/Gravedigger/First player | **Rod Gilfry** Claudius | **Rupert Charlesworth** Laertes | **Markus Stenz** conductor | **Radio Filharmonisch Orkest** | **Groot Omroepkoor**

Brett Dean *Hamlet* (Dutch premiere, concert performance)

Saturday 13 June 2020
The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, 7.30pm

Allan Clayton tenor | **Lucy Crowe** soprano | **Roderick Williams** baritone | **Mark Wigglesworth** conductor | **BBC Philharmonic Orchestra** | **Hallé Choir**

Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*

Saturday 20 June 2020
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, 7pm

Allan Clayton tenor | **Tatiana Pavlovskaya** soprano | baritone TBC | **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** conductor | **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** | **CBSO Chorus** | **CBSO Youth Chorus**

Britten *War Requiem*