



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

PRESS RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

St John's Smith Square announces its 2016/17 Young Artists

On **4 May 2016** St John's Smith Square announced the six newest members of its **Young Artists' Scheme**.

The 2016/17 Young Artists are:

- Pianist **Christina McMaster**
- Ensemble **Mirage**
- **Ferio** Saxophone Quartet
- **Minerva** Piano Trio
- Harpist **Oliver Wass**
- Recorder Quartet **Palisander**

Ever since its reinvention as a concert hall, St John's Smith Square has played a pivotal role in supporting the most promising young musicians. Simon Rattle, Steven Isserlis, Nigel Kennedy and Jacqueline du Pré are just a few of the musicians who performed at St John's Smith Square before going on to begin internationally renowned careers.

The St John's Smith Square Young Artists' Scheme aims to develop the career of emerging artists by awarding them the skills, experience and support needed to help them succeed, as well as giving them the opportunity to perform in one of London's finest concert halls.

"The Young Artists' Scheme at St John's Smith Square is a vital part of our mission as one of the UK's leading concert halls. By investing in the development and nurturing of exceptional talent we are helping to ensure that music making and creative opportunity is refreshed and renewed for future generations. It is also, of course, incredibly exciting simply to observe the young performers as they develop across the course of their involvement with the scheme and a real reward for our audiences to be able to share this process of development." – Richard Heason: Director, St John's Smith Square

"Thanks to the St John's Smith Square Young Artists' Scheme I am able to design and deliver my ambitious vision of an exciting 'mini-festival' across 2016/17 season with an array of concerts from solo piano music by Bartók, Scarlatti, Ligeti, Debussy, to a concert where 120 school children take over the galleries of SJSS! Responding to the building's rich history I'll perform music by Dowland, Shostakovich, Britten and Birtwistle with the Ligeti Quartet; and the brilliant sisters Kristine and Margarita Balanas will join me for piano trios by Schumann and Arvo Pärt. The scheme has also provided the wonderful opportunity to commission new music by Richard Bullen and Ayanna Witter-Johnson; Ayanna will pay homage to one of her heroines in celebration of International Women's Day alongside some of my musical heroes including Ruth Crawford-Seeger, Charles Ives and Meredith Monk." – Christina McMaster



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

"We are absolutely delighted to be selected for the SJSS Young Artists' Scheme. It means a great deal to us to have this platform to showcase our combined passion for chamber music. Our flexi-ensemble structure enables the exploration and programming of the whole range of Clarinet-Strings-Piano chamber music. We look forward to presenting an exciting and emotive series of concerts bringing together the various flexes in one programme; combining both core works with lesser known gems. From Beethoven to Bartók, Enescu, Stravinsky, Rawsthorne, Shostakovich, Messiaen, Rota, Françaix and Penderecki; we welcome you to come, listen and be challenged." – Ensemble Mirage

"We're so thrilled to be accepted as St John's Smith Square Young Artists for the 2016/17 season. Having the opportunity to unleash and demonstrate the full capabilities of the saxophone quartet in such a beautiful venue is very exciting for us. Ferio are very passionate about expanding the saxophone quartet repertoire, and with the added support of the Young Artists' Scheme, we are able to work with new composers and premiere these works in this great concert hall!" – Ferio Saxophone Quartet

"We are thrilled to be selected as Young Artists at St John's Smith Square. We are delighted to have been given the platform to launch a series of concerts that highlight the three key artistic components of the Minerva Piano Trio: collaborations with the exciting new generation of composers; cross-cultural partnerships with the worlds of dance and art; and innovation through historical research. Being part of the Young Artists' Scheme will take our artistic endeavours to the next level." – Minerva Piano Trio

"I am delighted to be the first harpist selected for the Young Artists' Scheme. One of my first big public concerts was in St John's Smith Square, when I played the harp with the Junior Guildhall Symphony Orchestra at the tender age of 11. I am very excited to return as a soloist to the beautiful acoustic of St John's Smith Square, which complements the sound of the harp very well. I will be playing some well-known repertoire as well as some of my own arrangements of piano works never before heard on the harp." – Oliver Wass

"We are delighted to have been selected for the prestigious St John's Smith Square Young Artists' Scheme 2016-2017. We are looking forward to receiving the support and guidance of the staff at St John's Smith Square and to continuing to develop as an ensemble in this inspiring environment. As recorder players, with a repertoire spanning over 900 years, it is very exciting to be given the opportunity to commission a new work and to be part of a legacy that has inspired composers such as Claudio Monteverdi, Johann Sebastian Bach, Antonio Vivaldi and Benjamin Britten to write for our instrument. Palisander has chosen to feature a concert for schools as one of our three performances at St John's Smith Square. We believe children will be captivated by music of a high standard, performed in a world class venue and we are looking forward to welcoming them with some 'recorder surprises'." – Palisander

St John's Smith Square Young Artists' Scheme 2016/17

The St John's Smith Square Young Artists are each awarded **three performance dates in St John's Smith Square over the course of the concert season**. The artists are invited to select their repertoire, as well as market the concerts to their own following, and produce programme notes, giving them the independence they need to progress in their professional careers. Each artist or ensemble will perform one Thursday Lunchtime Concert, one Sunday at St John's afternoon chamber music concert, and one full length evening recital.

Alongside this, and working with guidance and support from the staff at St John's Smith Square, the Young Artists also undertake a number of other projects during their year on the scheme. This falls under three main categories: **marketing; commissioning; and outreach**.



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

Each group or soloist on the scheme is **awarded a grant which they can put towards a marketing initiative**, which is then developed with the support of the St John's Smith Square marketing team. Examples for this project include website design, photo or video shoots, design and mailing of flyers, organising competitions or targeted advertising in newspapers and magazines.

For the **commissioning project**, St John's Smith Square provides a fund for each group or soloist to either commission a composer to write a new work or to work on a new edition of a piece of early music, which will subsequently be performed at one of the three performances over the course of their year on the scheme.

The project completing the Young Artists' Scheme surrounds **outreach and education**; a skill that is becoming increasingly important for professional musicians to have in their portfolio. As part of this project, the Young Artists are given training in outreach work and are then supported as they engage with communities of varying backgrounds, designing and implementing their own educational workshops, using music as the medium.

Application Process for 2016/17

All applicants, of which there were over 120, were asked to accompany their application with a recording, an artist biography, and a reference from a musician of standing. 17 of those applicants were invited to audition at St John's Smith Square before the 6 successful Young Artists were selected.

For more information, images and interviews please contact:

Jo Carpenter Music PR Consultancy. Tel: 07771 538868 E: jo@jocarpenter.com

Notes to Editors

Images of the Young Artists can be found through this Dropbox link (credits provided in file names):
www.dropbox.com/sh/3mel8c8u9abj0im/AACpRmpKsuScGc_aSijYaI9Va?dl=0

SJSS Young Artists 2016/2017 Biographies

Christina McMaster - PIANO

Christina McMaster is a highly innovative pianist and curator with a continually growing reputation for bold and vivacious performances. Christina has performed extensively in major venues including at the Southbank Centre, Kings Place, Aldeburgh Festival, St John's Smith Square, a European tour with EUYO and on BBC Radio. She has won numerous prizes including the Jacob Barnes Award, The Royal Academy Christian Carpenter Prize, The CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust Prize, and the audience prize in the Jacques Samuels Intercollegiate Competition.

Christina attended the specialist music school Purcell School; Trinity Laban where she studied with Douglas Finch; and the Royal Academy of Music with Joanna MacGregor graduating with a First in 2013. Christina has continued her education and exploration, in particular an avid interest in 20th-century French Pianism and Music, taking masterclasses with Pierre Laurent-Aimard and Maestro Bernard Flavigny (Student of Cortot and Gieseking)

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ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

She has collaborated with a diverse mix of genres and arts, recently working with the Brodowski Quartet, violinist Lizzie Ball, rapper Tor Cesay, Director Richard Williams, actors from Central Saint Martin's and a number of designers for London Fashion week.

Christina is a dedicated performer, commissioner and discoverer of new music, working with established composers including Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Tansy Davies and Stephen Montague as well as emerging composers – collaborating most recently with Freya Waley-Cohen and Richard Bullen.

Christina launched her debut album Pinks & Blues in October 2015 on her own label to a sell-out audience at St James' Theatre, the album is a fusion of jazz and blues influenced classical and contemporary music with two new commissions.

Christina teaches Post-Graduates at the Royal Academy of Music and curates the Multimedia and Piano part of its annual Piano Festival. She recently gave masterclasses at Churchill College, Cambridge, with future masterclasses and lectures at Denison University in Ohio, Middlesex University and a week-long piano course in Umbria.

As a Young Artist at St John's Smith Square, Christina will commission new works by Ayanna Witter-Johnson and Richard Bullen as well as develop some very exciting education projects.

Look out for future performances at Cheltenham Festival, Dartington International Summer School and Symphony Space in New York.

SJSS Concert Dates: Sun 25 September 2016 3.00pm | Thu 2 March 2016 7.30pm | Thu 4 May 2017 1.05pm

christinamcmaster.com

Facebook: facebook.com/christinapiano

Twitter: [@PianoChristina](https://twitter.com/PianoChristina)

Ensemble Mirage

Matthew Scott CLARINET

Júlia Pusker VIOLIN

Ugnė Tiškutė VIOLA

Tatiana Chernyshova CELLO

Alexandra Vaduva PIANO

Ensemble Mirage is a dynamic flexi-ensemble led and directed by British clarinettist Matthew Scott. The flexi-ensemble structure enables exploration and programming of the whole range of Clarinet-Strings-Piano chamber music.

Ensemble Mirage evolved from the award winning ensemble Trio Mirage which formed in early 2014; with British clarinettist Matthew Scott, Hungarian violinist Júlia Pusker and Romanian pianist Alexandra Vaduva. Having met earlier in their studies at the Royal Academy of Music, they began exploring the diverse range of repertoire their trio setting offered. They soon won the Academy's Harold Craxton Prize and were

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ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

awarded a 2015/16 Chamber Music Fellowship; during which they have worked with Academy composers to produce new works for the ensemble alongside chamber recitals.

To explore larger repertoire Trio Mirage began collaborating with other musicians, including Lithuanian violist Ugnė Tiškutė and Russian cellist Tatiana Chernyshova. Individually all members are award winning artists in their own right, active across all areas of the profession including solo, chamber, orchestral and outreach work. Through recital scheme awards (Matthew and Ugnė, Countess of Munster Musical Trust Recital Scheme; Matthew and Júlia, Making Music AYCA), the ensemble has performed in various flexes for Music Societies and Festivals throughout the UK. Recent highlights include performances at The Lantern Colston Hall, The Two Moors Festival, China Exchange and the Norfolk and Norwich Festival.

They are excited to be a part of St John's Smith Square Young Artists' Scheme and look forward to presenting a rich variety of music and ensemble flexes in their programmes.

SJSS Concert Dates: Thu 24 November 2016 1.05pm | Thu 19 January 2017 7.30pm | Sun 11 June 2017 3pm

ensemblemirage.co.uk (currently being developed)

matthewscottclarinettist.co.uk/ensemble-mirage

Ferio Saxophone Quartet

Huw Wiggin SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

Ellie McMurray ALTO SAXOPHONE

Jose Bañuls TENOR SAXOPHONE

Shevaughan Beere BARITONE SAXOPHONE

The award-winning Ferio Saxophone Quartet is emerging as one of the leading British saxophone quartets among the new generation, receiving enthusiastic reactions from audiences and critics. Winners of the 2015 Royal Over-Seas League's Ensemble Competition, the Quartet has been awarded several other awards, including the Philharmonia Orchestra/Martin Musical Scholarship Ensemble Award 2015, the Tunnell Trust 2014 and they are Park Lane Group Artists for the 2016 season.

In 2015 the quartet made their debut at the Purcell Room, Southbank Centre as winners of the Martins Musical Ensemble Award 2015. Highlights of the Quartet's performances in the UK have included London's Southbank Centre and Conway Hall, Cambridge Summer Festival and Three Choirs Festival. Recent and forthcoming seasons include tours of Scotland, the Channel Islands, the premiere of a commission by Laura Bowler and recitals at Wigmore Hall and St John's Smith Square. In 2016 Ferio will be making appearances at Edinburgh Fringe, Brighton, Newbury and Petworth Festivals, St John's Smith Square, plus their debut at Wigmore Hall.

The quartet have been working closely with composer Guillermo Lago on his collection of 'Ciudades' pieces and are the first quartet to record his new compositions *Köln* and *Tokyo*. Ferio released their debut album in January 2016 entitled '*olychroma*' featuring the music of Lago, Bach, Elgar, Françaix, Grieg and



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

Tchaikovsky. This first recording from Ferio brings together original works for saxophone quartet and transcriptions of familiar works by prominent classical composers.

SJSS Concert Dates: Thu 8 December 2016 1.05pm | Sun 23 April 2017 3.00pm | Thu 11 May 2017 7.30pm

feriosax.co.uk

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Minerva Piano Trio

Michal Ćwizewicz VIOLIN

Richard Birchall CELLO

Annie Yim PIANO

Selected by St John's Smith Square as Young Artists 2016/17, the Minerva Piano Trio will present an innovative series of concerts, joining forces with a new generation of composers and collaborating with different art forms, including dance. As part of their ongoing project, the Trio will perform their revival of Brahms' radically different original version of his first trio. Each concert explores the Trio's passions for new music, historical research, and creative collaborations.

Following their London debut at the Southbank Centre's Purcell Room in 2014 as Park Lane Group Young Artists, the Minerva Piano Trio have established themselves as one of the UK's most exciting young trios. Their performances have been described as 'the most beautiful sounds' (The Times) and 'splendid renditions' (Classical Source). They have worked closely with leading British composers including Mark-Anthony Turnage and Roxanna Panufnik. Recent highlights include the premiere of a work written by the Minerva Piano Trio's cellist and composer Richard Birchall. The Trio have received coaching from Gordon Back, members of the former Florestan Trio, and Gábor Takács-Nagy. They are grateful for the support of ChamberStudio, Richard Carne Trust, and Concordia Foundation.

Violinist Michal Ćwizewicz directs the Ognisko Chamber Ensemble and is the concertmaster of the Górecki Chamber Orchestra. He studied with Itzhak Rashkovsky, Krzysztof Smietana and members of the Ysaÿe and Alban Berg Quartets. He has been teaching at the Royal College of Music since 2012. Cellist Richard Birchall read Music at Cambridge University before studying at the Guildhall School of Music under Louise Hopkins. He has been a member of the Philharmonia Orchestra since 2011. He also directs Cellophony cello octet and works as a composer and arranger. Pianist Annie Yim completed her doctorate in performance and musicology at the Guildhall School of Music with Joan Havill and City University London with Christopher Wiley. She is founder of MusicArt London, a performing arts initiative established in the UK.

SJSS Concert Dates: Sun 23 October 2016 3.00pm | Thu 9 March 2017 7.30pm | Thu 1 June 2017 1.05pm

annieyim.com/minerva-trio

minervapianotrio.com (currently being developed)

Facebook: facebook.com/minervapianotrio

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ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

Twitter: [@MinervaPnoTrio](https://twitter.com/MinervaPnoTrio)

Oliver Wass - HARP

Oliver Wass is in his first year of a Masters Degree at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, for which he was awarded a full scholarship to study with Imogen Barford. He graduated from the University of York with a First Class Honours degree, achieving the highest mark ever awarded for his final recital, and winning the Blake Music Prize.

He has performed numerous concertos, including directing the Handel Harp Concerto in the Barbican Hall in 2011. He is a finalist in the Guildhall School's most prestigious competition: the Gold Medal. The final is to be held on 6 May 2016 in the Barbican Hall, in front of a live audience and a panel of internationally renowned musicians.

He has also performed concertos at the London Handel Festival, the City of London Festival, with the Oxford Sinfonia, and with the World Chamber Orchestra (where critics called his performance 'divine').

In 2014 he won 1st prize in three concerto competitions. He will make his Wigmore Hall debut in November 2016.

Oliver recently won both the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize at the St Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Music Competition with his flute-violin-harp trio; Pelléas Ensemble. They have also won 1st prize in the British Harp Chamber Music Competition, and have been selected for representation by the Tillett Trust. They have upcoming concerts at St John's Smith Square, the Two Moors Festival, and for the United Kingdom Harp Association.

An experienced soloist, Oliver competed in and won music festivals throughout his childhood. He studied with Charlotte Seale at the Junior Department of the GSMD, where he became the only harpist to have been a prizewinner in the prestigious Lutine Competition, and he was Principal Harp in the National Youth Orchestra.

Oliver is very grateful for support from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, and Help Musicians UK, where he holds a Fleming Award.

SJSS Concert Dates: Thu 12 January 2017 1.05pm | Sun 21 May 2017 3.00pm | Thu 15 June 2017 7.30pm

oliverwass.co.uk (currently being developed)

Palisander - RECORDER QUARTET

Hannah St Clair Fisher

Lydia Gosnell

Miriam Nerval

Caoimhe de Paor

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ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

Palisander was described as 'outstanding' and 'thrilling' in reviews of the quartet's performance at Brighton Early Music Festival last autumn. The quartet was selected for the Festival's 2015-2016 'Early Music Live!' scheme; 'the leading training and apprenticeship scheme for young early music ensembles'. Winners of the June Emerson Launchpad Prize for chamber groups, Palisander has performed at the Royal Greenwich International Early Music Festival, the International St Cecilia Festival and the Tel Aviv International Early Music Seminar. The group has performed at contemporary music venues, on occasions with dancers and actors and at the Wallace Collection, for London Fashion Week.

The quartet prides itself on presenting imaginative, historical programmes with a wide range of repertoire; often performing on recorders up to 6 feet tall. Graduates of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Palisander has quickly established itself as a vibrant young ensemble. 'Palisander's imaginative performance really helped them to stand out from the crowd; they carefully thought through their... seamless entertaining programme, which they delivered with great panache and which resulted in tremendous enthusiasm and cheers from the crowd.' – Clare Norburn, Brighton Early Music Festival.

Palisander enjoys giving regular family concerts and workshops. This includes working for the prestigious Live Music Now scheme, founded by Yehudi Menuhin and, previously, being featured artists in the Wigmore Hall's Chamber Tots series.

Palisander's planned performances for 2016 include Newbury Spring Festival, the Handel Hendrix Museum, the Royal Greenwich International Early Music Festival and Cambridge Summer Music's Music in Quiet Places series. The quartet is developing an exciting new show for families, with puppet company Rust and Stardust Productions. *Dr Dee's Daughter and the Philosopher's Stone* is set in Elizabethan England, with themes of magic and science. The show will tour in 2016-2017, subject to funding. Palisander will release its debut CD this autumn.

SJSS Concert Dates: Thu 16 February 2017 7.30pm | Sun 2 April 2017 3.00pm | Thu 15 June 2017 1.05pm

palisanderrecorders.com

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