



# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

## MULTITUDES ECHOES OF HILL AND HORIZON

Wednesday 22 April 2026, 7.30pm | Queen Elizabeth Hall

Welcome to *Multitudes*, our multi-arts festival powered by orchestral music. We're bringing together some of the world's finest classical music ensembles – including our six Resident Orchestras – for collaborations with an incredible range of artists from different art forms. Together, we're creating a new way for you to encounter the enduring power of classical music, with unique, adventurous, boundary-breaking concerts. It's a musical experience like no other!

Mark Ball, Artistic Director, Southbank Centre

Commissioned by the Southbank Centre and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Welcome to *Echoes of Hill and Horizon*, an immersive soundscape which explores the eternal and evocative musical landscape we associate with Vaughan Williams in a highly contemporary setting. An evening created by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and brought vividly to life with specially commissioned visuals by light art pioneers Squidsoup.

The performance is a rendering of a suite of haunting pastoral works that is both immediate and timeless. Under the creative direction of Katherine Spencer, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment play period instruments with references to the original inspirations and sources for tonight's programme, which date back to the Renaissance. The music is played in juxtaposition with the cutting-edge light creations of Squidsoup, whose innovative and intuitive use of design provides the audience with a contemporary sensory experience.

The Queen Elizabeth Hall is a similarly unique component in tonight's performance. The Southbank Centre's Concrete Voids is a custom-built system of loudspeakers conceived and designed by the in-house Sound Technician Tony Birch. The Voids comprise over 80 speakers, hidden among the air vents, concrete chambers and passages surrounding the auditorium, which turn the auditorium itself into a three-dimensional instrument. This highly dynamic system allows for the creation of bespoke soundscapes and specific spatial audio environments.

All three of these elements: the music, light and sound design, ensure that during *Echoes of Hill and Horizon* the audience is transported through time by a uniquely immersive and enriching experience.

### MUSIC

Vaughan Williams <i>The Lark Ascending</i>	15 mins
Warlock <i>Capriol Suite</i>	10 mins
Vaughan Williams <i>Fantasia on Greensleeves</i>	4 mins
Elgar <i>Serenade for strings</i>	12 mins
Vaughan Williams <i>Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis</i>	16 mins

### CREATIVE TEAM

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment  
Evan Rogister *conductor*  
Kati Debretzeni *violin*  
Dan Pearson, Rory Thomas-Lawton and Josh Sterckx *live visuals*  
Katherine Spencer *creative director*  
Leo Duarte *artistic consultant*  
Squidsoup (*Anthony Rowe – creative director*)

Co-produced and commissioned by Southbank Centre

*Run time (approx.): 1 hour and 10 minutes, with no interval*

## RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

(1872–1958)

### The Lark Ascending

*The Lark Ascending* remains one of the country's most beloved pieces of music, a work that is both intensely personal and universal. We all share a sense of the lark and the landscape over which it flies, even if that landscape exists mainly in our collective memories and imagination. In this deeply engaging production,

these memories and the rich sense of history associated with Vaughan Williams' famous work are rendered in an experiential and sensory environment that allows the listener to commune with its fragile and ethereal beauty.

Vaughan Williams was inspired by the poem 'The Lark Ascending' by George Meredith, which describes the bird's 'silver chain of sound'. In this production, the lark is visually rendered with a red heart and silver tail, whose habitat is the auditorium. The orchestra is initially lit in the sepia of past memories, before becoming brightly illuminated into the present day by the flight of the lark.

As the piece ends in the trail of its journey, we are left in its red glow that turns into a field of poppies, a reminder that Vaughan Williams wrote this most poignant piece of music at the start of the First World War.

## PETER WARLOCK (1894–1930)

### Capriol Suite

Peter Warlock's *Capriol Suite* was composed in 1926 and explores six different dances from the Renaissance period. Tonight, the suite is presented as a 16th-century rave, with the dance of each movement (or 'segment') brought to life in its own colour amid a visual and audio sensory overload and performed with references to the original 500-year-old dance instructions, placed in a new technological context.

**Movement I – Basse-Danse:** inspired by the 'low-dance' of the Renaissance court, this is a couple's dance procession.

**Movement II – Pavane:** originally performed in elaborate clothing, the movement references the colours of a peacock.

**Movement III:** a tordion dance, often heard in 15th century French courts.

**Movement IV:** a brisk dynamic movement.

**Movement V – Pieds-en-l'air:** the most lyrical movement of the suite, this floating dance is visually rendered with clouds and echoes the English pastoral style that constitutes tonight's programme,

**Movement VI – Mattachins:** a silver and gold sword dance, that veers to and fro, as if a duel is taking place, but with a sense of forward momentum.

## RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

### Fantasia on Greensleeves

The celebrated English folk song 'Greensleeves' dates from 1580, during an age when green was the colour signifying of the weightlessness of love. Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Greensleeves* evokes a sense of the eternal deep haziness of the countryside and includes the folk song 'Lovely Joan', one of several the composer discovered while visiting Suffolk, a county he visited regularly for such a purpose.

The four-minute long *Fantasia* appeared originally in Vaughan Williams' 1928 opera *Sir John in Love*. Tonight's performance presents the work in the style of a scene

from the opera, with songs of the varieties of love in the air. Fittingly, the bird from *The Lark Ascending* makes a reappearance.

## EDWARD ELGAR (1857–1934)

### Serenade for Strings

*Serenade for Strings* is one of the earliest works by Sir Edward Elgar, the lilting 6/8 meter (a 'pulse' or time signature often used to create a swaying or gallpoing rhythm) of its first movement suggests a country folk dance before changing into an understated melancholy. The second and third movements also invite the listener to reflect in their intimate and languorous tones, before a brief change of pace once more picks up a dance. The production presents a synesthetic response to the harmony structure of the music, with each key represented with its own colour.

For this section the orchestra is presented at its most sensory, with separate instruments isolated in different areas of the hall. This allows the audience to be surrounded by the music above, below and beside them, effectively immersing them in the experience.

## RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

### Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis

The theme in question is a Tudor tune by Thomas Tallis that Vaughan Williams discovered while editing *The English Hymnal* in 1906 and adapted for a work he was commissioned to write for the world-renowned Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester Cathedral in 1910.

The piece is introduced by a soundscape of Leith Hill Place, Vaughan Williams' Surrey home, where he composed many of his works, including *The Lark Ascending*. We start in this rural location and are then led into the perfect acoustics of Gloucester Cathedral, which are recreated in the auditorium by using the bespoke Concrete Voids 3D sound system created especially for the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall.

The production also explores the visual theme of the cathedral's stained-glass windows and the four points of the cross, from where the piece starts with a whispered rendition of the original hymn, an echo of the cathedral's 15th-century Whispering Gallery.

The main work then begins with its haunting chords and Vaughan Williams' unique sense of time, place and memory and the ethereal and physical blend together again in this final, magnificent evocation of our inner lives.

Programme notes © Richard King, 2026



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THE EVENTS IN MULTITUDES

# ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Wednesday 22 April 2026, 7.30pm | Queen Elizabeth Hall

## VIOLIN I

Margaret Faultless *leader*\*  
Kinga Ujszaszi  
Dominika Fehér  
Alice Evans  
Richard Blayden  
Anna Curzon\*  
Felix Pascoe  
Simon Kodurand

## VIOLIN II

Kati Debretzeni  
Claire Holden  
Nia Lewis  
Rebecca Livermore  
Jayne Spencer  
Ellen Bundy  
Anna Brown

## VIOLA

Max Mandel\*  
Kate Heller  
Clara Biss  
Lisa Cochrane  
Oscar Holch  
Martin Lissola

## CELLO

Sarah McMahan\*  
Ruth Alford  
Richard Tunnicliffe  
Penny Driver  
Carina Drury

## DOUBLE BASS

Cecelia Bruggemeyer  
Carina Cosgrave  
John-Henry Baker

## FLUTE

Lisa Beznosiuk

## OBOE

Leo Duarte

## CLARINET

Sarah Thurlow

## BASSOON

Chris Rawley

## HORN

Peter Moutoussis

## PERCUSSION

Donna-Maria Landowski

## HARP

Alison Martin

\* Solo string quartet (Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis*)

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## FIND OUT MORE

- ▶ Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
  - ▶ Evan Rogister
  - ▶ Squidsoup
- ▶ [southbankcentre.co.uk](https://southbankcentre.co.uk)