Programme Notes
With many thanks to the composers and creatives who have written their own programme notes for the works featured in this evening's concert

Steve Reich (b.1936) | Duet
Duet was composed in 1993 and is dedicated to Yehudi Menuhin and to those ideals of international understanding which Sir Yehudi has practiced throughout his life. The piece is approximately five minutes in length. It is scored for two solo violins and a small group of violas, celli, and bass. Beginning and ending in F the music is built around simple unison canons between the two violins who, from time to time, slightly vary the rhythmic distance between their two voices.

Laura Snowden (b. 1989) | Into the Light
The piece was originally commissioned as part of Kings Place's Nature Unwrapped series so was inspired by bird migrations. The first section has a sense of trepidation and danger as the birds embark on their journey. The middle section is a moment of rest - a bird is injured - and the end of the piece drives towards the light as the birds fly off high into the sky. The story of the piece can equally be taken more metaphorically!

Julia Wolfe (b. 1958) | Reeling
For my field recording I've used a fantastic clip of a French Canadian singer. He's an older man and he sings a very beautiful kind of music that's basically the music that you make when you don't have a fiddler and you don't have a banjo. You just use your voice. You sing syllables in a sing-song twirly way. I started this project from a very pure place, just using his voice. And little by little I go from his world to my world, which is much more cacophonous and has a more urban sensibility. There is a very personal connection for me. I love folk music and I've played a lot of folk music. So in a way I'm connecting my history by going to his singing and revving it up.

Pamela Z (b. 1956) | Ethel Dreams of Temporal Disturbances
Ethel would like to settle down and relax after a long day's work and watch something she has recorded, but she's so tired, that she drifts off before she's even made it through the opening credits. She sleeps fitfully as mixed messages from her program, along with countless advertising breaks and news bulletins, infomercials and cultural programs scan forward and backwards across her closed eyelids and seep in through her vulnerable open ears. Ethel is puzzled as her dreams are re-written and edited to please the corporate sponsors and their themes are influenced by the whims of the underwriters. She becomes disoriented as time stretches, condenses, pauses, races forward and backwards, and she finally wakes up with her head on the [TV] remote.

Judd Greenstein (b.1979) | Change / Joshua Frankel (b.1980) |Plan of the City
Plan of the City is a mixed-media film that I conceived and directed. The work creates exhilarating fantasy by inverting what we know about New York City: skyscrapers rooted in bedrock liftoff into the stratosphere and immigration becomes exodus. Through joyful fantasy the City's ultimate fears are explored: it is destroyed, re-created, and finally revealed to be less unique than we thought. The film's visuals are an animated collage combining live action footage, animated elements, illustrations and treated photographs, including photos taken by the Mars rovers Spirit and Opportunity made available to the public domain by the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Plan of the City was created in collaboration with composer Judd Greenstein and NOW Ensemble, an acclaimed new music chamber ensemble; the ensemble, including Greenstein, feature prominently in the film as live actors set inside the animated framework. The audio of the film consists solely of Greenstein's Change, performed by NOW Ensemble; Change and Plan of the City were created in parallel, each expressing its own artistic intention while simultaneously serving its "sibling".

Freya Waley-Cohen (b.1989) | Amulet for guitar
Commissioned by Nightmusic, for Sean Shibe who premeired it at Nightmusic, St David's Hall, Cardiff in September 2021

An amulet is a small object bestowed with magical charms that protect its owner from harm. Writing this piece I imagined feeling an object in my hand, a little like a how you'd hold a smooth pebble in your palm, and gradually turning it and seeing how the light hit it from different angles. The guitar seems to me a very tactile instrument, so I was thinking about how it might feel on your fingertips. I don't have a specific object or amulet in mind, so you can think of it as any small and slightly mysterious object.

Philip Glass (b.1937) arr. David John Roche (b.1990) | Truman Suite
Truman Suite is a short suite of arrangements, all taken from Philip Glass' music for the motion picture The Truman Show. Sections of these beautiful pieces can be found in other seminal works by Glass, including his 'Mishima' string quartet. In arranging these pieces for chamber orchestra, I've tried to put a different slant on them – highlighting the tactile motion and playing with the rich repetition present throughout.

Jonny Greenwood (b.1971) | Themes from "There Will Be Blood"
[When writing the score for "There will be Blood"], I tried to write to the scenery, and the story rather than specific "themes" for characters. It's not really the kind of narrative that would suit that. It was all about the underlying menace in the film, the greed, and that against the ****ed up, oppressive religious mood—and this kid in the middle of it all. Only a couple of the parts were written for specific scenes. I was happier writing lots of music for the film/story, and having [Director Paul Thomas Anderson] fit some of it to the film. ~Jonny Greenwood (from interview with Nonesuch Journal)

David John Roche (b.1990) | Chorus in Alto
Chorus in Alto is riffy, expressive, and intense. The whole piece is inspired by the widest range of rock, metal, pop, and classical music. It is everything I love about the electric guitar; it is everything I want the electric guitar to be.

The first movement is built from an alto-register riff on electric guitar. It is plectrum-heavy, overdriven, and laced with a nostalgic-sounding effect called chorus (I wrote it using my favourite guitar effects pedal, gifted to me as a teenager). The second movement begins a whisker above silence with a soft, finger-picked melodic idea emerging and gradually growing in intensity. The third movement is based around the classical guitar technique of tremolo, with the fast and precise movement of the performer's right hand creating a constant-sounding, expressive stream of notes. The final movement brings everything to a close with a significant solo directly inspired by 1980s shred guitar – very intense - and the use of an electric guitar effect called tremolo (not to be confused with the classical guitar technique!). The pulsations of the tremolo gradually fade into the final, soft bars of the composition – the softest of landings.

This work was written for Sean Shibe, Sinfonia Cymru, and Britten Sinfonia. Cadenza I and Cadenza II are both dedicated to Michael Gandolfi.

Nodiadau Rhaglen

Gyda diolch i'r cyfansoddwyr a'r bobl greadigol sydd wedi ysgrifennu eu nodiadau rhaglen eu hunain ar y gweithiau a berfformir yn y cyngerdd heno.

Steve Reich (ganed 1936) | Duet

Cyfansoddwyd Duet yn 1993, a'i gyflwyno i Yehudi Menuhin ac i'r delfrydau hynny o ddealltwriaeth rhyngwladol y mae Syr Yehudi wedi eu hymarfer drwy gydol ei fywyd. Mae'r darn yn para am tua pum munud, ac wedi ei sgorio ar gyfer dwy ffidil unawdol a grŵp bach o fiolas, soddgrythau a bas dwbl. Gan ddechrau a gorffen yn y cywair F fwyaf, caiff y gerddoriaeth ei hadeiladu o amgylch canonau unigol syml rhwng y ddwy ffidil sydd, o bryd i'w gilydd, yn amrywio ychydig ar y pellter rhythmig rhwng eu dau lais.

Laura Snowden (ganed 1989) | Into the Light

Comisiynwyd y darn yn wreiddiol fel rhan o'r gyfres Kings Place's Nature Unwrapped a ysbrydolwyd gan adar yn mudo. Mae naws yr adran gyntaf yn llawn anesmwythyd a pherygl wrth i'r adar gychwyn ar eu taith. Ceir saib i orffwys yn yr adran ganol – caiff aderyn ei anafu – ac mae diweddglo'r darn yn anelu am y goleuni wrth i'r adar hedfan i ffwrdd yn uchel yn yr awyr. Gellir hefyd ddehongli stori'r darn mewn modd mwy trosiadol!

Julia Wolfe (ganed 1958) | Reeling

Ar gyfer fy recordiad maes rwyf wedi defnyddio clip gwych o ganwr o gefndir Ffrengig-Canadaidd. Mae e'n ddyn mewn gwth o oedran, ac yn canu math hyfryd o gerddoriaeth – y math rydych chi'n ei chreu pan nad oes ffidil na banjo wrth law. Dim ond eich llais sydd gennych chi. Rydych yn canu sillafau mewn goslef arbennig, mwy addurniedig. Cychwynnais y prosiect hwn o le pur iawn, gan ddefnyddio dim byd ond ei lais. Ac o dipyn i beth rydw i'n symud o'i fyd e i mewn i 'myd i, sy'n llawer mwy aflafar ac iddo naws fwy trefol. Mae yma gysylltiad personol iawn i mi. Rydw i wrth fy modd gyda cherddoriaeth werin, ac wedi chwarae llawer ohoni. Felly, mewn ffordd, rydw cysylltu â'm hanes trwy droi at ei ganu e a bywiogi tipyn arno.

Pamela Z (ganed 1956) | Ethel Dreams of Temporal Disturbances

Byddai Ethel yn hoffi setlo i lawr ac ymlacio ar ôl diwrnod hir yn y gwaith, a gwylio rhywbeth mae hi wedi'i recordio; ond mae hi mor flinedig nes cwympo i gysgu cyn i'r rhaglen ddechrau, hyd yn oed. Mae hi'n cysgu'n anesmwyth wrth i gymysgedd o negeseuon o'i rhaglen, ynghyd â chyfres ddiddidwedd o hysbysebion, bwletinau newyddion, a rhaglenni celfyddydol, sganio'n ôl ac ymlaen ar draws ei hamrannau caeedig a threiddio i mewn i'w chlustiau agored. Mae Ethel mewn penbleth wrth i'w breuddwydion gael eu hailysgrifennu a'u golygu i blesio'r noddwyr corfforaethol, a dylanwadir ar eu themâu gan fympwyon y gwarantwyr. Mae hi'n ffwndro'n lân wrth i amser ymestyn, crebachu, a rasio'n ôl a 'mlaen, ac mae hi'n deffro yn y diwedd gyda'i phen yn gorffwys ar declyn rimôt y teledu.

Judd Greenstein (ganed 1979) | Change / Josha Frankel (ganed 1980) | Plan of the City

Ffilm cyfrwng-cymysg wedi ei dyfeisio a'i chyfarwyddo gen i yw Plan of the City. Mae'r gwaith yn creu ffantasi wefreiddiol trwy droi'r hyn a wyddom am Ddinas Efrog Newydd wyneb i waered: mae nendyrau wedi eu gwreiddio'n ddwfn yn y graig yn codi i'r entrychion, a mewnfudo'n troi'n ecsodus. Drwy gyfrwng ffantasi lawen, mae ofnau mwyaf y Ddinas yn cael eu harchwilio: caiff ei dinistrio a'i hail-greu, ac yn y diwedd gwelwn ei bod yn llai unigryw nag yr oeddem yn ei ddisgwyl. Collage bywiog yw elfennau gweledol y ffilm, yn cyfuno gweithredu byw ar ffilm, darnau animeiddiedig, darluniau, a ffotograffau wedi eu trin, yn cynnwys rhai a dynnwyd gan y cerbydau Spirit ac Opportunity ar y blaned Mawrth, ac a ryddhawyd i'r cyhoedd gan y NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Crëwyd Plan of the City mewn cydweithrediad â'r cyfansoddwr Judd Greenstein a'r NOW Ensemble, sef ensemble siambr newydd, glodwiw; mae'r ensemble, yn cynnwys Greenstein, yn chwarae rhan amlwg yn y ffilm fel actorion byw a osodwyd y tu mewn i'r fframwaith animeiddiedig. Mae sain y ffilm wedi'i llunio'n gyfangwbl o Change gan Greenstein, yn cael ei berfformio gan y NOW Ensemble; crëwyd Change a Plan of the City yn gyfochrog â'i gilydd, y ddau'n mynegi ei fwriad artistig ei hun tra ar yr un pryd yn gwasanaethu ei "frawd".

Freya Waley-Cohen (ganed 1989) | Amulet for guitar

Comisiynwyd y darn gan Nightmusic, ar gyfer Sean Shibe a roddodd y perfformiad cyntaf yn Nightmusic, Neuadd Dewi Sant, Caerdydd ym mis Medi 2021.

Gwrthrych bychan yw'r amwled ac iddo swyn arbennig sy'n amddiffyn ei berchennog rhag niwed. Wrth gyfansoddi'r darn hwn, ro'n i'n dychmygu teimlo gwrthrych yn fy llaw – yn debyg i'r ffordd y byddech yn gafael mewn carreg fechan yng nghledr eich llaw – ac yn ei droi'n araf i weld sut mae'r golau'n ei daro o wahanol onglau. I mi, mae'r gitâr yn offeryn hynod gyffyrddadwy, felly ro'n i'n meddwl am sut y byddai'n teimlo ar flaenau eich bysedd. Does gen i'r un gwrthrych nac amwled penodol mewn golwg, felly gallwch feddwl amdano fel unrhyw wrthrych bychan, ac iddo ryw swyn arbennig.

Philip Glass (ganed 1937) tr. David John Roche (ganed 1990) | Truman Suite

Casgliad byr o drefniannau yw'r Truman Suite, a'r cyfan wedi eu cymryd o gerddoriaeth Philip Glass ar gyfer y ffilm The Truman Show. Mae rhannau o'r darnau hyfryd hyn i'w cael mewn gweithiau arloesol eraill gan Glass, yn cynnwys 'Mishima', ei ddarn i bedwarawd llinynnol. Wrth drefnu'r darnau hyn ar gyfer cerddorfa siambr, rwyf wedi ceisio cynnwys elfen wahanol ynddyn nhw – tanlinellu'r symudiad cyffyrddadwy a chwarae gyda'r ailadrodd cyfoethog sy'n rhan annatod o'r darn.

Jonny Greenwood (born 1971) | Themes from "There Will Be Blood"

[Wrth gyfansoddi'r sgôr ar gyfer "There will be Blood"], ceisiais ei ysgrifennu ar gyfer yr olygfa a'r stori, yn hytrach nag fel "themâu" penodol ar gyfer cymeriadau. Mewn gwirionedd, dyw'r math yna o naratif ddim yn gweddu i hynny. Roedd y cyfan yn ymwneud â'r bygythiad gwaelodol yn y ffilm, y trachwant, a hynny yn erbyn y teimlad o ormes crefyddol – a'r plentyn hwn yng nghanol y cyfan. Dim ond rhyw un neu ddau o'r darnau a gyfansoddwyd ar gyfer golygfeydd penodol. Ro'n i'n hapusach yn cyfansoddi llwythi o gerddoriaeth ar gyfer y ffilm/stori, a chael [y Cyfarwyddwr Paul Thomas Anderson] i ffitio peth ohono i mewn i'r ffilm. ~Jonny Greenwood (o gyfweliad gyda'r Nonesuch Journal)

David John Roche (ganed 1990) | Chorus in Alto

Mae Chorus in Alto yn llawn riffs a mynegiant, ac yn angerddol. Ysbrydolwyd y darn cyfan gan ystod eang o gerddoriaeth roc, metel, pop, a chlasurol. Mae'n bopeth rwy'n ei garu am y gitâr drydan; mae'n bopeth yr hoffwn i'r gitâr drydan fod.

Caiff y symudiad cyntaf ei adeiladu ar riff yn y cwmpas alto ar gitâr drydan. Mae'n gwneud defnydd trwm o'r plectrwm, wedi ei oryrru, ac yn treiddio drwyddo mae effaith sain hiraethus o'r enw corws (cyfansoddais e gan ddefnyddio fy hoff bedal effeithiau-arbennig, a gefais yn anrheg pan o'n i yn fy arddegau). Mae'r ail symudiad yn cychwyn rhyw fymryn uwchben tawelwch, gyda syniad melodig tawel sy'n codi o'r bysedd ac yn raddol yn datblygu'n fwy cryf. Seilir y trydydd symudiad ar dechneg y gitâr glasurol, sef tremolo, gyda symudiad cyflym, manwl llaw dde'r perfformiwr yn creu llif cyson, mynegiannol o nodau. Daw'r symudiad olaf â phopeth i fwcwl gydag unawd ystyrlon a ysbrydolwyd yn uniongyrchol gan gitâr rwygo o'r 1980au – hynod angerddol – a'r defnydd o effaith gitâr drydan o'r enw tremolo (ni ddylid drysu rhwng hyn a thechneg y gitâr glasurol!). Yn raddol, mae curiadau'r tremolo yn ymdoddi i mewn i fariau olaf, tawel y cyfansoddiad – y diweddglo meddalaf posib.

Cyfansoddwyd y gwaith hwn ar gyfer Sean Shibe, Sinfonia Cymru, a'r Britten Sinfonia. Cyflwynir Cadenza I a Cadenza II i Michael Gandolfi.