

Violinist Aisha Syed Castro returns to the Wigmore Hall in the African Concert Series on **15 March**



Saturday 15 March, 15:00

Wigmore Hall, African Concert Series

William Grant Still Suite for violin and piano

Florence Price Adoration

Wynton Marsalis Fiddle Dance Suite

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Petite suite de concert

Aisha Syed Castro violin

Adam Heron piano

"She came out with such a vibrance, energy and commanded the stage. Her playing was impeccable." WKCR

"Her playing was full of passion and virtuosity earning the hearts of the Frankfurtians." Frankfurter Neue Presse

As part of the Wigmore Hall's African series, violinist Aisha Syed Castro returns to the Wigmore Hall bringing Latino flair to a programme of music of African descent. Born in the Dominican Republic to a father from Pakistan and an Irish/Dominican mother, Aisha straddles many cultures which enables her to connect with audiences

from townships in Johannesburg to concert halls in the Gulf with her natural charismatic powers of communication.

As an 11-year-old, she came to the UK on a cold January day with no English and became the first Latina musician to be educated at the Menuhin School where she studied with the same teacher as Nicola Benedetti and Alina Ibragimova and then remained on a full scholarship at the Royal College of Music. Since then, she has performed across the globe, from Carnegie Hall to Qatar. As an Honorary Cultural Goodwill Ambassador of the Dominican Republic and a mother of 2 children, she is guided by her Christian faith to bring the joy of music to children in hospitals, orphanages and concert halls. While in London, she looks forward to returning to the Royal Hospital of Neuro-disability. It is these opportunities which she finds most rewarding as a musician, enriching her performances on the international stage.

Rebeca Omordia, curator of the Wigmore's African Series, approached Aisha for an afternoon recital with **Adam Heron** on Saturday 15 March, a day bookended by Ethiopian music in the morning from pianist **Girma Yiflashewa** and cellist and kora virtuoso **Tunde Jegede** and the African Classical Music Ensemble in the evening.

Aisha commented on her programme,

"I am delighted to perform at the Wigmore in the context of the African Concert Series with a programme that includes three suites and encapsulates some of the most beautiful violin music written by composers descended from the African diaspora. As a woman, it is a privilege to include *Adoration* by Florence Price, and as a graduate of the Royal College of Music to perform the *Petite Suite de Concert* by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, with whom I share a common alma mater. The suite by William Grant-Still is one I have performed all over but it will be a first for me in London. The Fiddle Dance Suite by Wynton Marsalis is enormous fun, especially with the foot stamping in the last movement."

Aisha Syed



Aisha Syed is an Honorary Cultural Goodwill Ambassador of her motherland, the Dominican Republic. After making her debut at the age of eleven with the Dominican National Symphony Orchestra performing Max Bruch's Concerto in G minor for violin and orchestra, Syed became the first Latin American to be accepted to the Yehudi Menuhin School at the age of thirteen.

As a soloist, Aisha has performed in concert halls including the Berlin Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, Palau de les Arts Valencia, Concertgebouw, Kennedy Center, Teatro Mayor Bogotá, Royal Opera House India, Cairo Opera House Egypt, Clairmont Hall Tel-Aviv, Xinghai Concert Hall China, Palace of the Grand Dukes Vilnius, Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi, Luxembourg Palace Paris,

Kirchner Center Buenos Aires, Chateau de Fontainebleau, Broward Center for the Performing Arts Florida, Wigmore Hall, National Philharmonic Hall in Vilnius, OAS headquarters in Washington DC, Palace of Fine Arts Mexico, Yehudi Menuhin Forum Bern, National Theater Nicaragua, National Theater Dominican Republic, and Reales Alcázares in Seville among others. Performances at notable festivals include the Abu Dhabi Music Festival, Yehudi Menuhin International Music Festival Gstaad and Gaida Contemporary Music Festival in Vilnius.

Aisha graduated from the Royal College of Music in London where she was awarded the Soirée d'Or Full Scholarship. Further accolades include receiving the Henry Wood Trust Award, Sphinx MPower Award, and Latin Pride National Award in the United States, and eight statuettes in the Dominican awards Premio Soberano. BBC Radio 3 featured Aisha's live performance of Paganini La Campanella from In Tune on their Performing Miracles page. In addition, her career has been celebrated by Forbes and Vogue magazines.

Syed was made the youngest Honorary Professor of the Faculty of Arts at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo and chairs the "Music for Life" foundation, which seeks to bring classical music to those who due to social, economic and health situations cannot access it.

The violins Aisha plays are an Antonius Pelizon and an Antonio Stradivarius kindly loaned by Florian Leonhard Fine Violins London. As a Christian, Aisha's career is guided by her faith.

<https://aishasyedcastro.com/>

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