

**Grammy award-winning Anthony Parnter conducts the
London Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of
David Ōnaç's *Atlantic Requiem***

**Sunday, 11 October 2026 at 4pm and 5.45pm
LSO St Luke's**

London Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Singers

Anthony Parnter conductor

Brittany Renee soprano

J'Nai Bridges mezzo soprano

Orson Van Gay II tenor

**Commissioned by Culture&
Supported and sponsored by Lloyd's**



"Parnter ... could somehow be understated and exceptionally dramatic at the same time, [and] made humor and pathos two sides of a coin of indeterminate value"

Los Angeles Times

Grammy award-winner **Jamaican-Samoan conductor Anthony Parnter**, the dynamo behind numerous Hollywood soundtracks and hailed by the LA Times as "The quintessential L.A. musician of our day", directs the **London Symphony Orchestra** in the **world premiere of David Ōnaç's *Atlantic Requiem*** on Sunday 11 October at LSO St Luke's. Commissioned by arts and heritage charity **Culture&** with the support of **Lloyd's**, *Atlantic Requiem* is a 40-minute, five-movement work scored for large symphony orchestra and chorus with 3 soloists selected from the US. *Atlantic Requiem* will be recorded and released internationally on the LSO Live label, available on CD and streaming.

Lloyd's commissioned Professor Alexandre White of Black, Beyond Data from Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore to digitise its archive and explore its historic role insuring both the ships and the enslaved being trafficked during the transatlantic trade in 18th and 19th-Centuries, before the abolition of slavery. Funded independently by the Mellon Foundation, the findings were published online in a digital humanities archive, *Underwriting Souls*. Following the launch of the Underwriting Souls research, Lloyd's published its response, "[Inclusive Futures](#)", setting out a multifaceted programme to support Black & ethnically diverse groups from the classroom to the boardroom.

Culture& approached Lloyd's to commission a work that would memorialise the lost lives of enslaved Africans and acknowledge the extraordinarily significant contribution of their descendants to transatlantic culture both then and now. The libretto blends the Catholic Requiem Mass with word-setting of a 1791 Grand Jury testimony (from the Newport Historical Society, Connecticut) and legal documents from the Lloyd's archive, testament to the objectification, commodification and dehumanisation of the enslaved. The *Atlantic Requiem* will incorporate the sound of the Lutine Bell, as a symbol of both loss and survival, held to this day at the Lloyd's HQ offices (RLPO will provide a bell with the same pitch for the performances). Historically one toll of the Lutine Bell signified a loss of a boat at sea and two for a safe return.



Manchester-based composer David Önaç who spent his early childhood in the Bahamas and subsequently studied composition at Cambridge under Robin Holloway, uses a sound world that blends contemporary classical orchestral and choral conventions with the rich harmonies, irresistible grooves and memorable melodic fragments from jazz, gospel and rap. Both sound worlds interact, react and fuse in a way carefully constructed to display the horrors while yearning for a future where cultural disunity is superseded by exciting coexistence, simultaneous cohesion and joyful and fearless fusion.

As Önaç explains:

"I have been fortunate to have inherited an exceedingly diverse range of races from both sides of the Atlantic through my parents (well beyond the visibly obvious white and black). My hope is that the *Atlantic Requiem's* combination of text and music will provide a vehicle for others to express sorrow at this loss of life, this blindness to true value, this waste of potential – and to yearn for a future where all human beings appreciate the high dignity of others. The soloists at the end of the *Atlantic Requiem* sing the same material which in earlier movements expressed the woes of the current world but by the end are sung, gloriously transformed, as an allegory for the continuity of identity in a renewed world with the only discontinuity being the absence of strife."

The form of the Requiem Mass was chosen as a repose for lost souls and to reflect the uncomfortable position of Christianity in the history of enslavement – in religious conversions of indigenous people, the invocation of biblical texts to justify enslavement and then in the overthrow of enslavement, as in the example of the enslaved Baptist deacon Rev Samuel Sharpe who led the 1831 Christmas Rebellion in Jamaica.

As Dr. Errol Francis, CEO and Artistic Director of Culture&, explains:

"There were two main reasons for why we asked the composer to incorporate the Catholic liturgy of the Requiem Mass. First, we wanted to acknowledge the uncomfortable position of Christianity in the history of enslavement – in religious conversions of indigenous people by colonists, the invocation of biblical texts to justify enslavement and then the role of

faith in the overthrow of enslavement, as in the example of the enslaved Baptist deacon Rev Samuel Sharpe who led the 1831 Christmas Rebellion in Jamaica. The second reason for choosing the Requiem Mass was in response to the performative religious language contained in the historic Lloyd's underwriting documents. For over 200 years (1779-1982) the standard marine insurance underwriting contract covering both vessels and cargo began with the phrase: 'In the name of God, Amen.' The document then continued with the words: 'Whereof is Master, under God for this present voyage. These words are incorporated into the libretto by the composer.

The research by Johns Hopkins University revealed how integral the maritime insurance business was to the City of London and UK economies. The huge profits generated by slavery supported the growth of British industry and commodity markets for goods such as sugar, rum and cotton. This history shaped the lives of Britons of all identities and all those who live on either side of the Atlantic Ocean and remains central to our understanding of the modern world. It was thought a large-scale musical response to the research would acknowledge the ineffable horror of this trade of human beings. As Victor Hugo said, "Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent."

Further information:

[Our historical links to the transatlantic slave trade - Lloyd's](#)

About conductor Anthony Parnther

A master of multiple genres, Parnther has conducted many of the world's preeminent artists, from Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Jessye Norman, and Frederica von Stade to Imagine Dragons, Wu-Tang Clan, John Legend, Metro Boomin, Avenged Sevenfold, and Rihanna. The *L.A. Times* hailed Anthony as "The quintessential L.A. musician of our day." Parnther's recent conducting engagements include the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Houston Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Los Angeles Opera, Music Academy of the West, Sydney Symphony in Australia, and the Chineke! Orchestra, with whom he debuted at the BBC Proms.

Dedicated to amplifying traditionally underrepresented voices, Parnther has reconstructed and performed orchestral works by Margaret Bonds, Duke Ellington, Zenobia Powell Perry, Florence Price, William Grant Still, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. As well as leading LA Opera's world premiere of Tamar-kali Brown's oratorio *We Hold These Truths* and Long Beach Opera's revival of Anthony Davis's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Central Park Five*, Parnther has premiered and recorded works by Jon Batiste, Kris Bowers, Chanda Dancy, Philip Herbert, Daniel Kidane, George Lewis, James Newton, George Walker, and Errollyn Wallen. For his extensive championing of works by Black, Latino, and women composers, Parnther was profiled as a "Local Hero" by Los Angeles's KCET/TV.

As one of today's foremost film conductors, Parnther helms recording sessions for many of the world's top international feature films and television series, working in close collaboration with some of the most decorated media composers in the industry. On the scoring stages of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Nashville, Budapest, Glasgow, and London, he has led the scoring sessions for projects like the Oscar-winning score for *Oppenheimer*, Grammy-winning *Encanto*, Emmy-winning *The Mandalorian*, *Avatar: The Way of Water*, *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, *Transformers: Rise of the Beasts*, *Ghostbusters:*

Afterlife, Diaries of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules, Ice Age: Adventures of Buck Wild, Creed III, PAW Patrol: The Mighty Movie, and League of Legends.

www.anthonyparnter.com

About composer David Önaç

Dr David Önaç studied Music at the University of Cambridge, followed by two master's degrees in composition at Cambridge (with Robin Holloway) and the RNCM (with Adam Gorb), completing his PhD in Composition at the University of Manchester (with Camden Reeves) in 2013. He has lectured at the University of Birmingham, RNCM and University of Manchester.

As an accomplished pianist from a young age, David was immersed in jazz and gospel alongside classical repertoire during his childhood years in the Caribbean, and after moving to the UK was the soloist in various well-known piano concertos during his teenage years - meanwhile exploring jazz harmony and improvisation at every opportunity.

After being awarded the runner-up prize for BBC Young Composer of the Year (2000), his activities as a composer pianist have continued to centre on, or fuse, contemporary classical, jazz and gospel and he has frequently performed his own pieces for and featuring solo piano. This includes premiering his piano concerto *Newton's Cradle*, for which he won the 2012 Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize. His *Five Etudes for solo piano*, a virtuosic fusion of his favourite styles, were premiered by Simon Smith in Cambridge and Peter Donohoe in Brussels, were selected as the set work for the 2023 Scottish International Piano Competition, and have had numerous international performances including at the 2025 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

David's songs, arrangements and performances as a gospel choir MD have been broadcast on BBC radio and television, including *Songs of Praise Gospel Choir of the Year* (2016) and he places significant value on the development of young musicians, with many of his activities centring on this priority. He has been commissioned numerous times by the ABRSM, including to write the jazz-influenced *A Distant Star in the Stillness* for the 2023-24 Grade 5 piano syllabus. His 'Spirituals arranged for Piano' has recently been released by EVC Music and reviewed as "a gem of a collection that is sure to be treasured by pianists throughout the early years of their playing." He was musical director of the University of Manchester Harmony Gospel Choir for c.15 years, winning the *University Gospel Choir of the Year* competition multiple times during his tenure. David has also been a tutor in composition and jazz at the Junior RNCM since 2018, with his students going on to study at Cambridge, Birmingham, Guildhall, Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Royal Academy of Music.

A fuller selection of recordings of David Önaç's works are at:

www.composerdavidonac.com

Culture&

Culture& is an arts and heritage charity founded in London in 1988, now based at the University of Staffordshire, and supported by Arts Council England and various trusts and foundations to promote inclusivity and relevance in collaboration with UK arts and heritage organisations. Culture& delivers on its mission through education training, research and public programming. Culture& has previously commissioned new music from the BAFTA

award winning composer Jocelyn Pook and pianist, composer, and musical director, Peter Edwards. The charity's flagship education programmes include the New Museum School at the University of Leicester and the Cultural Leaders Programme at Sotheby's Institute of Art. Current displays include *The Keeper of all the Secrets* ceramic art by Jacqueline Bishop at the Queen's House, Royal Museums Greenwich and *In Perpetuum*, a sonic installation by Güler Ates at the Museum of the Home. Recent research reports include *It's all about handing over power* on curatorial diversity for the Art Fund and Culture& was recently awarded a major grant by the Wellcome Trust to conduct research on ethical challenges facing museums, in collaboration with the University of Oxford.

www.cultureand.org

About Lloyd's

Lloyd's is the only insurance marketplace of its kind in the world. It brings together more than a hundred syndicates and thousands of investors, enabling the market to shoulder more insurance risk for every unit of capital than any other financial institution in the world.

The role of the Corporation is to advance and protect the market – by maintaining underwriting discipline and our financial strength; and by attracting expertise, innovation and scale.

Our unique global licences and excellent financial strength ratings provide the infrastructure, oversight and confidence required to understand, price and manage complex and interconnected risks.

Risk transfer – properly executed – underpins economic growth, resilience and innovation around the world. This is the role Lloyd's has played for 337 years and it remains central to our purpose today.

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