

Back Live!

Proms at St Jude's 2021

RON FINLAY

Proms at St Jude's will be one of the first live festivals this summer to lift us out of lockdown gloom. Starting on Saturday 26 June, the nine-day line-up of concerts, literary events and walks, is as first-class as ever.

The music programme at St Jude's will offer something for all tastes, from operatic arias, piano, violin and song recitals to modern saxophone, music from the movies and events for children. Baritone Roderick Williams, saxophonist Jess Gillam, violinist Thomas Gould and siblings Braimah and Konya Kanneh-Mason are among the top performers. Concerts will last about one hour and there will be two performances each day – one at 5.30pm and one at 8pm.

Booker Prize and David Cohen Literary Prize winner Hilary Mantel is granting a precious interview this year to Proms LitFest



Jess Gillam

Photo: Robin Clewley



Roderick Williams

Photo: Benjamin Ealovega

audiences – and that will be online and free. Other top authors, who will grace the stage at The Henrietta Barnett School and have their interview streamed online, will include Marina Wheeler, Rory Cellan-Jones, Sathnam Sanghera, Philippe Sands and Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason. Special thanks to HGS Residents' Association, who are supporting LitFest this year, and to West End Lane Books.

There will be another set of fabulous, guided Heritage Walks around the Suburb, Hampstead and further afield, covering topics such as architecture, history and the environment.

Although, it is hoped, COVID-19 restrictions will be relaxed by the time the Festival starts, social distancing will be in place.

We're so delighted to be able to put on a live festival, despite all the difficulties. It's great not only to be able to lift people's spirits, but also to provide much-needed work for performers, whose

livelihoods have been on hold for the last year.

A special work commissioned by Proms will see its world première. The Innocents commemorates the sinking of the evacuee ship SS City of Benares in 1940 and those lost at sea, including 77 children. Michael Rennie, son of the then vicar at St Jude's, died trying to save the children. Composed by Patrick Hawes and with a libretto by his brother Andrew Hawes, the piece will be performed by world-class vocal ensemble VOCES8,

accompanied by Finchley Children's Music Group.

Continuing our commitment to education, Proms will offer a Schools Prom, a Roald Dahl concert for all the family and a Teeny Prom for children under five. We are also running a fanfare competition for budding composers from local schools, sponsored by Dorico.

The festival's principal sponsor this year is Brent Cross Town, and we are grateful to many other donors, including HGS Trust. All

funds raised after costs go to two charities: Toynbee Hall and the North London Hospice. Proms has raised £1 million for good causes since its foundation in 1993.

Festival tickets will go on sale towards the end of May and are likely to be in high demand. But you can become a Friend of Proms now to benefit from priority booking and to give extra support to the two charities, which were hit hard by the pandemic.

Go to promsatstjudes.org.uk for all information.

Youth Music Centre

weathers the storm

MARINA SOLAREK

The Youth Music Centre is reappearing with two magnificent concerts this summer on 26th June and 10th July. Both concerts will take place in the HGS Free Church, either inside or outside depending on distancing rules. Nothing could stand in the way the passion for music making that these 130 young musicians and their teachers share, despite all the lockdowns over the past year. Students have created many online performances, and on some occasions were able to meet for socially distanced rehearsals as well as performing filmed concerts to be enjoyed online

Now, with a busy term ahead, they are ready to play together again. Their first adventure is the annual Concerto Prize on 12th June when talented young musicians will give their best in front of distinguished adjudicators including the world-renowned violinist György Pauk. The highlight of the term will be the showcase on 10th July celebrating the successful bursary fund which enables YMC to offer assisted places to students who otherwise would be unable to benefit from YMC's classes.

You can come and hear them (entry free) on 26th June at 5pm (YMC Prize Winners concert) or on 10th July, 1-3 pm (YMC End of Term showcase) at Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church, Central Square NW11 7AG (www.youthmusiccentre.org.uk).



Screenshot: Marina Solarek

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