



**BISHOPSGATE  
INSTITUTE**

# Lunchtime Concerts **Orphy Robinson**

23 July 2021



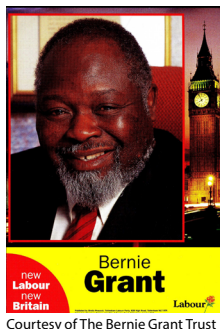
## Introduction



**Find out  
what inspired  
the artists**

Our free Friday lunchtime concerts at Bishopsgate Institute are back. Join us as we welcome legendary UK jazz luminary Orphy Robinson on vibraphone.

Follow us on a journey through nine concerts taking in a range of musical genres, from the traditional to the unexpected. Over the course of the series, you will hear three groups of instruments - strings, percussion and electronics - presented and combined in different ways. Every week we ask our performers to respond to a theme suggested by the collections in our world famous Library and curate their programme around it.



## Inspired by our archives

Today's concert is inspired by the lives of William Cuffay, the Chartist, Christian Frederick Cole, the first black Lawyer and Barrister in the UK, James McCune Smith, the first African American to hold a medical degree, Rudolph Dunbar, a Guyanese Composer, and Bernie Grant whose archive we hold at Bishopsgate Institute.

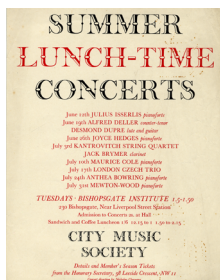
Bernie Grant was elected to Parliament in 1987, as one of the first Black MPs in modern times. Grant had previously been Leader of Haringey Council, making him the first ever-Black person to hold such a position in Europe. He also founded the Standing Conference on Racism in Europe in 1990, and established the Africa Reparations Movement in Britain. [The archive](#) is free for anyone to access.

## Meet the artist

Orphy Robinson is an award winning multi-instrumentalist, specialising on tuned percussion, and one of a select few UK musicians to have been signed to the legendary USA jazz record label Blue Note.

In a career spanning more than 40 years, he has played or been featured on over 100 recordings including numerous award-winning albums. He is a founder member of the iconic groundbreaking 1980s big band The Jazz Warriors and soloist with breakthrough saxophonist Courtney Pine. Orphy is regularly invited to perform and tour with internationally acclaimed artists from across the world, from many genres of music including such diverse artists as Ni-gel Kennedy, Carleen Anderson, Dr Robert, Wadada Leo Smith, Thurston Moore, Joss Stone, Robert Plant, Robert Wyatt, Hugh Masekela and numerous jazz headliners.

In 2018 Robinson was awarded an MBE for services to music in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Other career highlights include awards such as the 1987 Wire Magazine Best Newcomer, 1993 British Jazz Awards Miscellaneous Instrumentalist through to the 2017 Jazz FM Live Entertainment of the Year award for best UK jazz concert. In 2020 he was also the recipient of the prestigious Gold Award from Jazz FM. On the international music scene Orphy has regularly featured in the Top 12 of the Vibraphonist of the Year category in the historic USA jazz magazine Downbeat.



Bishopsgate Institute Archive

## History of the lunchtime concerts

Our concerts have been a tradition since the Second World War, when Dame Myra Hess instigated them at the National Gallery to bring people together at a time of hardship.

Lunchtime Concerts began at the Institute in 1948 and Dame Myra's Steinway piano now lives at the Institute and is often played at our concerts. This is our first summer season, building on the success of our regular autumn and spring programmes.

## Support our free concerts

Our lunchtime concerts have been a tradition since 1948, providing inspiration and respite from the world outside for an hour a week in a relaxed performance environment. We always pay our musicians for these performances, but the concerts are free to audiences.

Help support these concerts by donating [here](#).

# Programme

For this concert Orphy Robinson debuts *Don't see colour, then you still don't see us*, a solo concert of original works in a programme of music based on the lives of the following:

## **William Cuffay - The Chartist**

Cuffay, the son of a former slave, was a leading figure in the Chartist movement, the first mass popular political movement in Britain. He was transported to Tasmania for allegedly planning an uprising against the British government.

Cuffay was elected to the national executive of the National Charter Association in 1842 and later that year voted president of the London Chartists. Cuffay's significance is illustrated by a contemporary report in *The Times* which referred to 'the black man and his party'.

## **Christian Frederick Cole**

The first black Lawyer and Barrister in the UK.

Born in rural Sierra Leone in 1852, Christian Frederick Cole fought his way to Oxford University and qualified as England's first black barrister.

In September 1879, Cole became the first black African member of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, one of London's four prestigious Inns of Court. Then, after four more years of study, he achieved another significant landmark: he was called to the bar as the first African barrister to practise in the English courts.

## **James McCune Smith**

In 1837 Smith was the first African American to hold a medical degree and graduated at the top in his class at the University of Glasgow in Scotland.

Both Smith and his wife were of mixed-race African and European ancestry. As he became economically successful, Smith built a house in a

mostly white neighbourhood; in the 1860 census he and his family were classified as white, along with their neighbours. In 1850 they were classified as mulatto, when living in a predominately African-American neighbourhood.

He studied and graduated at the top of his class. He obtained a bachelor's degree in 1835, a master's degree in 1836, and a medical degree in 1837. He completed an internship in Paris.

## **Rudolph Dunbar**

(26 November 1907 - 10 June 1988) was a Guyanese Conductor, Clarinetist, and Composer, as well as being a jazz musician of note in the 1920s. Leaving British Guiana at the age of 20, he had settled in England by 1931, and subsequently worked in other parts of Europe but lived most of his later years in London. Among numerous "firsts", he was the first black man to conduct the London Philharmonic Orchestra (1942), the first black man to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic (1945) and the first black man to conduct orchestras in Poland (1959) and Russia (1964). Dunbar also worked as a journalist and a war correspondent.

## **Bernie Grant**

The late Haringey MP, Bernie Grant, was the first ever black leader of a local authority in Europe and he spent 35 years campaigning for racial equality in Britain.

The Bernie Grant Archive, held at Bishopsgate Institute, consists of his papers, books and magazines, memorabilia, correspondence, audio and video material and hundreds of photographs of meetings and demonstrations throughout this period. This world-renowned collection gives an amazing insight into the experience of a generation of black and minority ethnic citizens who arrived in Britain in the post-war period.

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The summer series of Lunchtime Concerts is supported by The City of London Corporation

