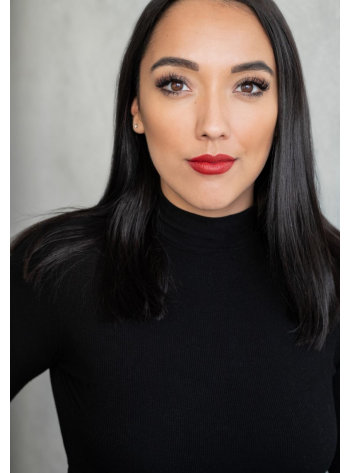


## **Lunchtime Concert: Li-Smith, Ferguson, McLean, and Mouat**

27 November 2020



For today's lunchtime concert we're celebrating our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and its link to Dame Myra Hess' famous lunchtime concerts.

Musical directors Ben Ferguson and Jordan Li-Smith will present a programme of numbers highlighting Bishopsgate Institute's recent musical theatre productions. They'll be joined by performers Nicholas McLean and Grace Mouat.

## An introduction from Jordan Li-Smith

Ben and I are thrilled to be hosting this Bishopsgate Institute Lunchtime Concert. In the formal sense, we are celebrating the Institute's 125th anniversary, as well as commemorating the 55th anniversary of Myra Hess' death, whose revered Steinway Model D continues to maintain her place as *piano-in-residence* at the Institute, and upon whom we'll be playing for this concert. But we are also celebrating a world returning, a world of hope and joy where slowly, but surely, musicians and artists are able to get together in the same (non-virtual) room again and create art.

In many ways, Myra the Steinway is what links both Ben and I to the Institute. Our experiences at the Institute and with Myra have inspired this very "Bishopsgate" programme we're presenting today. Ben has conducted beautiful productions of *Ragtime* and *West Side Story*, both involving Myra to some extent. I've had the pleasure of playing Myra for several London Musical Theatre Orchestra (LMTO) Play-throughs, as well as giving a cabaret last year entitled *My Myra*. Of course, I've had words with Ben, and we've agreed that for this lunchtime hour, she is as much his Myra as she is mine.

Ben and I would like to thank; our special guests, Grace Mouat and Nicholas McLean, for being so brilliant and wonderful; the team at Bishopsgate Institute for organising this concert during these testing times; the technical team for enabling this concert to still go ahead online; and finally Francesca Canty, for having us yet again at the Institute and allowing us to continue to make music.

## Programme

Today's programme is celebrating some musical fan-favourites, including work from composers Sondheim, Bernstein, and Menken. As part of the performance, you'll get to hear a world premiere: a Piano Duet version of the Ragtime Symphonic Suite, by Stephen Flaherty in an arrangement by Ben Ferguson.

Throughout the concert, there will be two different musicians playing the piano. The piano keyboard is sanitised in accordance with Steinway & Sons guidelines. Each musician will be sanitising their hands before they play, and when playing the duet, both will be masked. Both musicians playing the duet will have tested negative for Covid on the day of the concert.

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## Meet our performers

Jordan Li-Smith is a composer/playwright, as well as award-winning musical director and orchestrator. He was most recently Assistant Musical Director for the West End revival of *City of Angels* (Garrick). Read his full bio: [jordanli-smith.com/](http://jordanli-smith.com/)

Ben Ferguson trained at the Royal Academy of Music and University of Manchester. He is currently the musical director for the International Tour of *Les Misérables*. He has also been the Musical Director for *West Side Story*, *Ragtime*, and *Bishopsgate Christmas Cracker* (Bishopsgate Institute). Read his full bio: [bishopsgate.org.uk/profile/ben-ferguson](http://bishopsgate.org.uk/profile/ben-ferguson)

Nicholas McLean trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, and has performed as Man 1 in *First Date* (Crazy Coqs), Boq in *Wicked* (Apollo Victoria Theatre), Gary Coleman in *Avenue Q* (UK & Ireland tour), Benny in *Pied Piper* (Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot); Henri and ensemble in *South Pacific* (St James Concert and Assembly Hall, Guernsey); The Doctor in *The Book of Mormon* (Prince of Wales); TJ in *Sister Act* (Gordon Craig Theatre), and Baxter in *The Tale of Mr Tumble* (Manchester International Festival). He also played Baxter in the television version of *The Tale of Mr Tumble* (CBeebies).

Grace Mouat trained at the Guildford School of Acting. Recent credits include: 1st Cover Juliet in *& Juliet* (Shaftesbury Theatre), Alternate/ Dance Captain in *Six: The Musical* (UK tour/ West End), and Ensemble in *Spring Awakening* (Curve, Leicester).

## Discover the history of our lunchtime concerts



Music brings people together and offers comfort in difficult times, and our lunchtime concerts were first created as a way of raising morale during the Second World War.

Learn more about the history of our lunchtime concerts and the legacy of Dame Myra Hess through our online gallery:

[bishopsgate.org.uk/news/the-history-of-the-lunchtime-concerts](http://bishopsgate.org.uk/news/the-history-of-the-lunchtime-concerts)

*Bishopsgate Institute Archive*

## 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: [bishopsgate.org.uk/give](http://bishopsgate.org.uk/give)