

Fantasia Orchestra with Jasdeep Singh Degun

Pittville Pump Room

Tues 7 July

Jasdeep Singh Degun *sitar*

Tom Fetherstonhaugh *conductor*

Fantasia Orchestra

Jasdeep Singh Degun	In Search of Redemption (Cheltenham co-commission)	11'
Terry Riley	In C	30'
Interval		
Jean-Philippe Rameau	Thunderstorm <i>from</i> <i>Platée</i>	3'
Jasdeep Singh Degun	Rageshri	6'
Jean-Philippe Rameau	Tristes Apprêts <i>from</i> <i>Castor et Pollux</i>	7'
Philip Glass	Echorus	7'
Jasdeep Singh Degun	Arya (Sitar Concerto) movement II	7'

Arrangements by Harry Baker

About the Programme

This programme blends Indian classical music with American minimalism and Western orchestral sounds in new and unexpected ways, exploring the interrelationship between two different but connected musical cultures. At the centre of the programme is *In C* by Terry Riley, a revolutionary piece that forever changed the course of music. It is built from a simple idea: short repeating musical cells layered by musicians in real time, creating something hypnotic, unpredictable and full of life. Riley's work was deeply influenced by Indian classical traditions, and it is brought into even closer conversation with those roots here featuring sitar, tabla and a full orchestra. Interspersed are compositions penned by one of the most creative composers and performers working in the Indian classical tradition, Jasdeep Singh Degun.

The programme includes something that might have never been done before: the sitar taking the lead in Rameau's *Tristes Apprêts*, a French Baroque aria of longing and delicacy, here reimagined through a different lens.

Artist Biographies

Jasdeep Singh Degun *sitar*

Jasdeep Singh Degun is a multi-award-winning sitarist, composer, arranger and improviser and is renowned for his extraordinary skill and creativity. A consummate soloist and collaborative artist, the Leeds-born virtuoso is reshaping the musical landscape with his unique ability to blend Indian classical music with contemporary influences.

Conducting Orpheus, which combined the scale of orchestral music with the spontaneity of Indian classical improvisation, earned Degun critical acclaim and multiple accolades, including the Critics' Circle Outstanding Achievement in Opera Award and Best Stage Production at the Asian Media Awards. In 2023, he was recognised with the Asian Achievers' Art and Culture Award and with Best Newcomer at the Songlines Awards. Most notably, he made history by becoming the first sitar player and British Asian musician to win the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist Award in 2024. On stage, Degun is a frequent soloist, having performed at esteemed venues such as Kings Place, Westminster Abbey, WOMAD Festival, Nottingham's Royal Hall and the Southbank Centre as well as a standout headline performance at the prestigious Darbar Festival at the Barbican, which was broadcast on Sky Arts.

Degun recently completed two BBC commissions: a work for the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra as part of their '25 for 25' series (which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3) and a new composition for the BBC Concert Orchestra as part of PRS's New Music Biennial, with live performances at St George's Hall, Bradford and Queen Elizabeth Hall at the Southbank Centre. Additionally, Degun embarked on a collaborative commission and concert tour with Ensemble 360 in May 2025, followed by a four-date tour of his *Arya: Concerto for sitar and orchestra* with the Schleswig-Holstein Opera Company in Germany in October 2025. These projects further solidified Degun's place at the forefront of Indian classical music and beyond.

Whether performing on the operatic stage, in the studio or on concert platforms worldwide, Degun's work continues to push the boundaries of musical form, showcasing a continued commitment to groundbreaking work across a range of musical landscapes.

Tom Fetherstonhaugh *conductor*

Tom Fetherstonhaugh is Artistic Director of Fantasia Orchestra, with whom he made his BBC Proms debut in 2024 conducting two performances at the Royal Albert Hall. Fetherstonhaugh and Fantasia return to the BBC Proms for two more performances in 2026, joined by the BBC Singers and Dame Evelyn Glennie.

In the 2025/26 season, Fetherstonhaugh makes debuts with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Philharmonia Orchestra and Welsh National Opera, and returns to the BBC Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and the Ulster Orchestra. Recent collaborations include with the Brandenburger Symphoniker, Orchestra of Opera North, Royal Northern Sinfonia, a joint concert with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra and a concert for peace in the Korean Demilitarised Zone. As the Assistant Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra between 2022-2024, Fetherstonhaugh conducted 70 performances including five weeks in the BSO's main season series.

He has performed with soloists including Alena Baeva, Alim Beisembayev, Julian Bliss, Lucy Crowe, Barry Douglas, Jess Gillam, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Isata Kanneh-Mason, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Vadym Kholodenko, Tasmin Little, Jennifer Pike, Steven Osborne and Maria Włoszczowska. The 25/26 season sees Fetherstonhaugh's debut with Welsh National Opera with *Play Opera LIVE!*, which performs in Cardiff and on tour. He has been assistant conductor for Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Opera North), Bernstein's *Candide* (Welsh National Opera), Verdi's *Macbeth*, David Matthews' *Anna* (The Grange Festival) and worked on productions of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* (The Grange Festival).

Gurdain Rayatt *tabla*

Gurdain Rayatt is one of Europe's finest young tabla players. Though UK-based, his style incorporates a vast expanse of ideas from the Punjab, Benares and Farukhabad gharanas. He trained under his father Harkirat, and grandfather Bhai Gurmeet Singh Virdee, in whose memory Rayatt's Darbar Academy was founded. He went on to take further instruction from Pandit Shankar Ghosh and his son Bickram, moving to Kolkata for a year to refine his style.

Today, Rayatt has a busy and varied schedule, accompanying UK-visiting artists, including Ustad Shahid Parvez, and playing with fusion groups such as Kefaya and Michael Messer's Mitra. Other projects include frequent BBC appearances and working with the UK Philharmonia Orchestra. Rayatt also has two bachelor's degrees, in English with Film and in Music with Composition. Still young, his career continues to move from strength to strength.

