

FIFTH DOOR

ENSEMBLE

Mahler 'Das Lied von der Erde' (arr. Schönberg/Riehn)

Date: 19th August 2021

Pre-show Talk: 19.00 Concert: 19.30

Location: Opera Holland Park

## THE FIFTH DOOR ENSEMBLE - PRESS RELEASE

### WHO ARE WE?

The Fifth Door Ensemble is a new, innovative collective, performing epic masterpieces transformed into a chamber (concert or semi-staged) format. Audiences will be rewarded with large-scale repertoire reimagined in exciting, intimate and thought provoking ways, offering an opportunity to get up-close and personal to the musical textures, and a chance to reappraise great works afresh from a different perspective. Our name derives from Bartok's stunning one-act opera 'Bluebeard's Castle': upon opening the Fifth Door, the composer presents a glorious, elementary C major chord, in contrast to what has come before, like a shaft of light illuminating the darkness.

### DEBUT CONCERT: 'LIVE MUSICIANS, LIVE MUSIC'

Our debut concert will be Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde, on 17th August at 7.30pm, arranged by Schönberg/Riehn for 14 instruments, two soloists and conductor, in the stunning setting of Opera Holland Park's outdoor auditorium, under their iconic canopy roof. This masterpiece has huge relevance to our current societal condition; life, separation and the ephemeral. Our soloists are the celebrated mezzo-soprano Jennifer Johnston, and tenor Charne Rochford, with the fantastic Thomas Blunt conducting. The orchestra will comprise top-class performers who are all freelancers, forming a world-class ensemble.

We are delighted to present a pre-concert talk, at 7pm, by Stephen Johnston in conversation with Anna Picard, discussing Stephen's recent book 'The Eight' about Mahler (Faber & Faber). We have commissioned a brand new translation for this concert by Stephen, which will be both subtitled and in the printed programme.

### BACKGROUND:

During the Covid-19 crisis, we witnessed the catastrophic collapse of the classical music industry. Despite a 'cri du coeur' from performers and creatives, who were financially on their knees, the UK government gave no sector-specific support to freelancers beyond the SEISS scheme, which 40% of musicians did not qualify for, and Universal Credit, which gives out a monthly sum that is impossible to live on. Many freelance performers have been forced to make extremely difficult decisions about taking an alternative vocational pathway, potentially turning their backs on performing long-term, which has had a profound knock-on impact on the industry as a whole. In response to this situation, The Fifth Door Ensemble was born, created by the British tenor Charne Rochford, who states that: *"The Fifth Door Ensemble is an organisation that will stimulate live performances of major works on a small scale, offering the public opportunities to watch outstanding freelancers at work, whilst giving performance opportunities to freelancers, hardest hit by the pandemic."*

### NOTES TO EDITORS:

For more information, or to arrange interviews or other press, please contact Charne Rochford:

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Hashtags for social media use: #Mahler #DasLiedvonderErde #FifthDoorEnsemble #OHP2021#livemusic #classicalmusic#savethearts #letthemusicplay

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/fifthdoorensemble> / Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FifthDoorEnsemble> / Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FifthDoorEns>

**MAHLER**  
**DAS LIED VON DER ERDE**  
(arr. Schönberg/Riehn)



JENNIFER JOHNSTON  
MEZZO-SOPRANO



THOMAS BLUNT  
CONDUCTOR



CHARNE ROCHFORD  
TENOR