

MEDIA RELEASE

14th April 2009

Lionel Friend, conductor

6 May 2009

Nash Ensemble, Kennedy Center
Washington DC, USA

Programme of Contemporary Music Elliott
Carter, Harrison Birtwistle, Nicholas Maw and Colin Matthews



Distinguished British conductor, Lionel Friend, has worked with many of Europe's prominent symphony orchestras and choruses, from concert halls to recording studio, he brings passion and precision to each project. Next month, he will lead renowned English chamber group, **The Nash Ensemble**, as part of the Kennedy Center's exciting **Contemporary Music Week**. Three of the works are Nash commissions: Elliott Carter's *Mosaic*, written for harp and seven other instruments, Colin Matthews's *The Island* is set to texts by Rainer Maria Rilke and Nicholas Maw's *Ghost Dances*, subtitled *An Imaginary Ballet for Five Players*, rhythmically and melodically distorts 10 dances.

"To hear modern music played live to a high standard can be revealing: in this situation, listeners may feel a genuine contact with the composers' art." - Lionel Friend

Lionel began his career working with Welsh National Opera and Glyndebourne Festival Opera in the UK. For three years he was a Kapellmeister at the Staatstheater in Kassel, Germany, before spending thirteen years as Staff Conductor at English National Opera, conducting a wide range of composers including Mozart, Rossini, Berlioz, Wagner, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Puccini, Debussy, Richard Strauss, Berg, Weill and Britten. In 1992 he worked at the Bayreuth Festival, where he assisted Daniel Barenboim, making Wagner his speciality.

"In its majestic but lyrical sweep, its text-responsive handling of texture, not to mention its exemplary pacing and structural grasp, this is one of the best-conducted performances of Götterdämmerung to come my way for a long time." - Barry Millington: Opera

He has been working with The Nash Ensemble for over thirty years. Since 2003 Lionel has been Conductor in Residence at the Birmingham Conservatoire and in addition to the UK, he has conducted orchestras in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Australia and the USA; making his debut in 1994 at the Met in New York conducting for The Royal Ballet and in 2006 he conducted the Los Angeles Opera.



"Two concerts I am undertaking this year, which I am particularly passionate about are one of classic 20th century masterpieces and one of music by America's greatest living composer, Elliott Carter, the first being in some ways a preparation for the second. Working contact with living composers has been an important, stimulating feature of my professional life." - Lionel Friend

16-17 May 09: Guest Speaker, Aldeburgh, London

Guest speaker on post-war productions in London of Wagner's *Ring*

13 Oct 09: Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, London

75th birthday programme for Peter Maxwell Davies

24 March 10: Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, London

75th birthday concert for Harrison Birtwistle

'Lionel Friend and his players made the music utterly natural and, as a result, powerfully meaningful. I have never before heard a performance which brought out so much of the density of cross-reference within Boulez's score.' - The Times, *Boulez: Le marteau sans maître*, Sarah Walker, Nash Ensemble

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