



JAMES BAILLIEU, Pianist

Described by *The Daily Telegraph* as “in a class of his own”, James Baillieu is one of the leading song and chamber music pianists of his generation. Collaboration lies at the heart of his work, bringing together musical storytelling, shared interpretation and the unique intimacy of words and music.

Born in South Africa, James came to the piano in an unusual way. Lessons were initially suggested as a form of childhood therapy for difficulties with physical coordination, but what began as an exercise quickly became an obsession. He studied at the University of Cape Town before continuing his training at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Having initially pursued the life of a solo pianist, he soon recognized that its solitary nature did not suit him and found his natural musical home in song and chamber music. Early experiences improvising at the piano to silent films also developed his instinctive response to music as a form of storytelling.

James performs throughout the world with a close circle of singers and instrumentalists. While he enjoys the spontaneity of new encounters, many of his most important musical partnerships have developed over many years. His collaborators include Benjamin Appl, Jamie Barton, Ian Bostridge, Allan Clayton, Louise Alder, Tara Erraught, Lise Davidsen, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Timothy Ridout, Adam Walker, Julian Bliss and Pretty Yende, as well as the Elias and Heath Quartets. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Ulster Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra and Wiener Kammerphonie.

Highlights of the 2026–27 season include tours with Lise Davidsen across Europe and the United States, with recitals in Paris, Vienna, Zurich, Geneva, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Minnesota, as well as a US tour with Benjamin Appl. James makes his Taiwanese debut at the Kaohsiung Festival with Timothy Ridout and returns to Wigmore Hall for its Britten series with Allan Clayton, alongside further recitals there with Benjamin Appl, Roderick Williams, a Viola day with Timothy Ridout and friends and Erika Baikoff.

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Recent seasons have taken James throughout Europe, North America and Asia. He is a frequent guest at many of the world's leading music centers, including Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, Park Avenue Armory, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, Berlin Konzerthaus, Pierre Boulez Saal, Kölner Philharmonie, the Barbican Centre, Bozar Brussels, Wiener Staatsoper, La Monnaie, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Konzerthaus Dortmund, Fundación Juan March, Laeiszhalle Hamburg, Snape Maltings, Vancouver Playhouse and Hamarikyu Asahi Hall in Tokyo. Festival appearances include Aix-en-Provence, Verbier, Schleswig-Holstein, Bergen, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Spitalfields, Cheltenham, Bath, Two Moors and Brighton.

An imaginative programmer, James has a particular interest in creating programs that place song and chamber music within a wider artistic and emotional context. He has curated festivals and series for Wigmore Hall, BBC Radio 3, the Verbier Festival, Brighton Festival, Bath International Festival and Perth Concert Hall.

At the invitation of John Gilhooly, James devised and presented his own series at Wigmore Hall, bringing together leading singers and instrumentalists. The series was shortlisted for the Royal Philharmonic Society's Chamber Music and Song Award.

Alongside performing, James is deeply committed to helping young musicians discover their own artistic identities. He sees teaching as a way of encouraging curiosity, independence and authentic expression. Central to his work is a belief in song as a space for close listening, emotional openness and genuine human connection. He is Associate Director of the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme, Senior Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, a coach for the Jette Parker Artists at the Royal Ballet and Opera, a patron of the Samling Institute, Head of the Song Programme at the Atelier Lyrique of the Verbier Festival Academy and a trustee of the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

James gives masterclasses throughout the world, with recent work at Cleveland Institute of Music, the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Friends of Chamber Music in Portland, Vancouver Academy of Music, the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon and the University of Waikato in New Zealand.

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His award-winning discography includes *Forbidden Fruit*, *Winterreise* and *Heimat* with Benjamin Appl; the complete original works for violin and keyboard by C. P. E. Bach with Tamsin Waley-Cohen; and A Lionel Tertis Celebration with Timothy Ridout. His recordings have been released by Accord, Alpha Classics, Champs Hill, Chandos, Decca, Delphian, Harmonia Mundi, Opus Arte, Resonus Classics, Rubicon Classics, Signum Classics and Sony Classical.

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