SEPTURA BRASS SEPTET

Celebrating 10 years

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BRASS SEPTET

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THE BRASS SEPTET

The brass septet is a brand new invention, with no canon of repertoire, no grand history of great compositions. So why not invent a new one? Like musical Robin Hoods, Septura thieve from the richest ensembles to create a counterfactual history — a parallel universe in which, in the world of chamber music, the brass septet rules.

BETTER ON BRASS

SEPTURA

Septura was born out of a passion for the **awe-inspiring sound of brass instruments**. The ensemble's creation – the brass septet – is **uniquely vibrant and versatile**, and Septura aims to harness its **intense emotional power** to produce transformative musical experiences for audiences. In short, it is pioneering a simple message: **music sounds better on brass**.

To fulfil its mission Septura has brought together the very best brass players in the UK – holding principal positions in the **Royal Philharmonic, London Symphony, BBC Symphony** and **Philharmonia orchestras** – and with their unparalleled skill and virtuosity the ensemble has forged a chamber group described as "**dazzlingly polished**" (BBC Music Magazine), and now firmly established as one of the best in the world.

Artistic Directors, **Simon Cox** and **Matthew Knight**, are two of the most preeminent and prolific arrangers for brass, and together they have created a diverse counterfactual canon: re-imagining great music of the past for brass, and addressing historical imbalances by putting a spotlight on under-represented composers. Looking to the future, Septura is commissioning leading composers such as **Roxanna Panufnik** to create a rich repertoire of original music for brass septet.

Weaving its ever-increasing repertoire into vivid and captivating live events, Septura continues to break down barriers with musical and cross-arts collaborations, recently working with artists ranging from **Cathy Tyson** and **Derek Jacobi** to **John Rutter** and **The Sixteen**. The ensemble takes its inimitable innovative programming around the world, touring in Europe, Japan and the USA, as well as performing at the UK's most prestigious festivals and venues, including regular appearances at London's **Wigmore Hall**.

Septura records regular releases for **Naxos Records**, and the first nine discs have received widespread critical acclaim, described variously as **"irresistible"** (The Observer), **"exceptional"** (The Arts Desk) and **"brass playing at its most exalted"** (Fanfare). Its next recording will highlight the music of female composers, past and present.

Currently Ensemble in Residence at the **Royal Academy of Music**, London, in 2023 Septura will launch its first residential Summer Brass Academy in collaboration with the **Rudolfus Foundation** to inspire future generations of brass players. The group's outreach work also includes close collaboration with the **Amber Trust**, through which they introduce the power of brass instruments to blind and partially-sighted children.

NAXOS RECORDING SERIES

Septura is recording an unprecedented series of discs for Naxos.

Through transcriptions, arrangements and original works, each disc explores a different period, genre and set of composers, asking the question 'what if these works of art had been written for brass?'.

The series aims to redefine the brass ensemble as a serious artistic medium by creating a canon of classical art-music for brass septet – a 'counter-factual history' of brass chamber music.

The first nine discs in the series are available now, described variously as "brilliantly done" (Fiona Maddocks, The Observer), "dazzlingly polished" (Anna Picard, BBC Music Magazine) and "brass playing at its most exalted" (Robert Markow, Fanfare).

10th ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMME

In 2024-25 Septura celebrates its 10th Anniversary. The ensemble is delighted to be performing a new septet written for them by internationally renowned composer Roxanna Panufnik, presented in two new programme options:

SEVEN HEAVENS opt. 1

Join Septura as it marks its 10th Anniversary with an interfaith programme inspired by the Abrahamic religions, culminating in a new brass septet by Roxanna Panufnik.

Septura features two of the most ground-breaking arrangements from its first decade. Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8, dedicated "to the victims of fascism and war" references the Holocaust with the Jewish theme in its violent second movement. The seven-part Lagrime di San Pietro was the final piece that Lassus composed, and through a series of sacred madrigals tells of Peter's despair after his denial of Christ. And in a brand new commission, Roxanna Panufnik explores the Seven Heavens of Islam, with the unique mood and atmosphere of each heaven featuring a different soloist from within the group, showcasing all of the skill and musical virtuosity that has firmly established Septura as the UK's leading brass ensemble.

Shostakovich String Quartet No. 8
interval
Lassus Lagrime di San Pietro
Panufnik Seven Heavens

SEVEN HEAVENS opt. 2

Join Septura as it celebrates its 10th Anniversary with a diverse programme of music by Joplin, Panufnik and Gershwin – three composers whose music fearlessly crosses cultural boundaries.

Scott Joplin's Treemonisha – the first African-American opera – is a fascinating blend of western classical styles and ragtime. In a brand new commission, Roxanna Panufnik explores the Seven Heavens of Islam, with the unique mood and atmosphere of each heaven featuring a different soloist from within the group, showcasing all of the skill and musical virtuosity that has firmly established Septura as the UK's leading brass ensemble. And the programmatic An American in Paris – written during a visit to France in 1928 – is a perfect example of the synergy of classical forms with the harmonic and rhythmic hallmarks of jazz that creates Gershwin's unique musical voice.

Joplin Overture from Treemonisha
Panufnik Seven Heavens
interval
Gershwin An American in Paris

SAMPLE PROGRAMMES

FORGOTTEN OPERA

Septura shake up the operatic canon, placing two intriguing but largely neglected works alongside two mainstays. Handel's crusader opera Rinaldo and Humperdinck's fairytale Hänsel und Gretel may be familiar. But Ethel Smyth's feminist comedy The Boatswain's Mate and Scott Joplin's Treemonisha – the first African-American opera – are lesser known. All four are vividly brought to life by the uniquely expressive sound of the brass septet.

Smyth Overture from The Boatswain's Mate OR
Holst Perfect Fool Ballet Music
Joseph Bologne Suite from L'amant anonyme
Jonty Watt Stage; left
interval
Humperdinck Overture from Hänsel und Gretel
Joplin Suite from Treemonisha

ONE EQUAL MUSIC

Marginalised, neglected, ignored for centuries, and only now coming to the fore. The fate of brass chamber music mirrors that of the female composers of the past. Our counterfactual history redresses both balances: placing the music of two female composers, Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre and Clara Schumann, alongside that of their historically more celebrated male contemporaries. In Baroque music inspired by Ovid's Metamorphoses and Romantic music for the keyboard we imagine a world in which these men and women had written for brass.

Rameau Suite from Dardanus
Bach Suite from *Geschwinde, geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde*
de la Guerre Suite from Céphale et Procris
interval
Mendelssohn Organ Sonata in C minor
Clara Schumann Piano Sonata in G minor

LAND OF THE FREE

Septura embark on a road trip of musical Americana, exploring four composers who came to define the sound of their homeland. Gershwin and Joplin blend jazz and ragtime idioms with classical forms to create their unique musical styles; Price and Copland's works are infused with folk elements to produce a singularly American sound. None of them have every been heard quite like this: illuminated anew by the inimitable colours of the brass septet.

Gershwin Three Piano Preludes
Joplin Suite from Treemonisha
Rob Keeley Septurissima
interval
Florence Price Suite of Three Dances
Copland Appalachian Sprin

CHRISTMAS WITH SEPTURA

The seasonal celebration of Christmas has been the inspiration for so many great musical masterpieces, and brass instruments are a vital part of this festive musical fabric. In this concert Septura focus on some of the highlights of the rich Christmas canon – including Bach's Christmas Oratorio, and Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. Where years of repetition have dulled the impact of these wonderful works Septura — described by BBC Music Magazine as "dazzlingly polished" — illuminate them afresh, casting them in a brand new light through the unique and uplifting sound of the brass septet.

Schütz Das Word ward Fleisch
JS Bach Christmas Suite
Reena Esmail A Winter Breviary
Humperdinck Overture from Hänsel und Gretel
interval
Tchaikovsky Nutcracker Suite *(poss. with narrator)*

Encores to Include
In the bleak midwinter, Silent Night, Three Kings

"British brass playing is the envy of the world, and when you hear Septura you can hear exactly why."
Jonathan Freeman-Attwood Principal, Royal Academy of Music

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Septura believe that chamber music should be at the very heart of any student's musical development. Whether your ultimate ambition is to be a soloist, chamber, or orchestral musician, the development of good ensemble skills is essential. Septura is committed to providing educational opportunities alongside their concerts.

MASTERCLASSES AND CHAMBER COACHING

Septura's members are some of the leading British brass players.
They are all experienced teachers, teaching at the London music colleges, and regularly giving masterclasses internationally and throughout the UK. Visiting musical institutions around the world they are able to offer both individual masterclasses, ensemble coaching, and side-by-side ensemble playing as part of their concert package.

SUMMER BRASS ACADEMY

In 2023 Septura launched its first residential Summer Brass Academy in collaboration with the Rudolfus Foundation to inspire future generations of brass players.

More information **here**.

FAMILY CONCERTS

Septura work with the wonderful animateur Ruth Rosales to produce engaging programmes for family concerts.

TOUCH TOURS

Septura's 'Touch Tours' are short (30-45-minute) presentations for blind and visually-impaired people.

Aided by a facilitator the members of the group introduce their instruments and explain how they are played; they demonstrate the wide range of different techniques, mutes and effects that will be used in the programme, and how all the instruments come together in different pieces to create a variety of sounds and musical textures.

Throughout this the participants are able to touch instruments (a trumpet, trombone and tuba) and the different mutes that radically change the sound of each instrument.

Septura's outreach work includes close collaboration with the Amber Trust.

SEPTURA

IN THE PRESS

"An uplifiting debut from a magnificent seven." [5 stars]

Fiona Maddocks
The Observer

"A recital of pure gold."

Ritmo

"This is brass playing at its most exalted."

Robert Markow
Fanfare

"I heartily recommend Septura to anyone who likes chamber music."

Bachtrack

"The standard is absolutely higher than brass playing has ever been before."

Alison Balsom
BBC Radio 2

"Beautiful from beginning to end."

Barry Fitzpatrick
American Record Guide

"If you like English pastoral music, and the sound of brass, this album is irresistible."

The Guardian

"Beautifully intoned."

Robert Markow
Fanfare

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"Virtuoso playing: glossy, brilliantly articulated, audaciously coloured, technically flawless."
[5 stars]

BBC Music Magazine

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