



# NEW FRONTIERS

It's always exciting to see what ensembles have in store for audiences when their new season begins after the Summer. RPS Corporate Member **City of London Sinfonia** is seizing this moment as a launchpad for visionary new adventures they hope will brighten music-lovers' horizons. CLS Chief Executive **Rowan Rutter** previews what's in store.

This Autumn, CLS is embarking towards *New Frontiers*: a season of extraordinary work, reimagined, culminating in *THE EXOPLANETS* – a devised theatre and orchestral production with award-winning theatre-makers, curious directive. The entire season, all in association with Hackney Empire, is a love letter to curiosity, collaboration and composition.

*THE EXOPLANETS* (opening with co-producers Norwich Theatre this September, then heading to London in March 2026) is part concert, part cosmic immersion, created with support from the American Museum of Natural History and NASA data technologists. At its heart is Audrey, rebuilding her life post-bereavement, filling it with foster children, seven in total. Over three decades each child, like a distant planet, shapes her life in unexpected ways. As they grow, so too does a symphonic suite, one she composes as a musical tribute to the worlds they build together.

Our musicians will bring a new universe of sound to audiences here on earth, in a story devised and directed by curious directive's Jack Lowe. Seven visionary composers, each a bold and collaborative voice in contemporary composition, have been commissioned to explore one newly-discovered exoplanet. Using atmospheric data and lightwave patterns, they're interpreting what's never been heard before, turning the secrets of the universe into sound.

Among the cohort is Blasio Kavuma, who was part of the 2023 RPS Composers programme, whose work already traverses the boundary between music and hidden histories. In our production, his voice becomes planetary, resonating across the void with insight, imagination, and joy. His participation reflects both the RPS's own enduring commitment to nurturing creative pioneers, and the fresh, diverse, expansive thinking CLS is championing through our five-year strategy entitled '*Music And...*'. Here, music is not the end, it's the beginning.

Other RPS Composers involved are Robin Haigh, bringing a playful yet deeply distinctive compositional voice, and Samantha Fernando whose genre-blending operatic work bridges music and theatre. Joining them, Anibal Vidal draws on his South American heritage



Above: City of London Sinfonia, right: Rowan and Blasio

and multimedia practice, while Theo Whitworth draws on experience in theatre and social engagement, crafting music with emotional and spatial sensitivity. Interdisciplinary artist Pauchi Sasaki brings a global perspective and a background in site-specific and visual performance. Zhenyan Li introduces the delicacy and drama of East Asian theatrical traditions, merging her background as a flautist and composer into bold new sonic worlds.

Our season features further visionary composers including Hannah Kendall, Rebel, Vivaldi and Dobrinka Tabakova, with sounds from the Baroque to contemporary cinema. Players embedded in creative processes, and composers working with scientists, exemplifies the evolution of CLS as an orchestra of makers, storytellers, and collaborators. Landing this work at Hackney Empire, a venue with extraordinary performance and community history, is tantalising in this time when relevance and collaboration



is vital to the growth of our artform. Helping us fulfil our ambitious plans are the Cockayne Foundation, Vaughan Williams Foundation, PRS Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, and the Foyle Foundation.

I see this season, and *THE EXOPLANETS* at its heart, as emblematic of a sector seeking renewal, with new ideas and new projects being produced by forward-thinking UK orchestras. *New Frontiers* is a call to wonder. A reminder of the fragile beauty of our own planet and a celebration of the extraordinary connections we can forge when science, music and humanity align. Please join us.