

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1pm**

## **Eleanor Turner, harp and Mendi Singh, table**

### Nirvana: Harp and Tabla

**Eleanor Turner** is a passionate ambassador for the harp. Eleanor has been performing professionally for over eighteen years, making her London concerto debut aged just fifteen, with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields conducted by Daniel Harding and broadcast live on Classic Fm. Eleanor has performed solo at the Berlin Philharmonie, Musiekgeouw Aant Ij in Amsterdam and the Wigmore Hall in London, with concerto appearances in London, New Orleans and Sydney.

Eleanor won Second Prize in the 2011 Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition and has numerous other awards including First Prize at the European Harp Competition 2007, which kickstarted her international career. Eleanor's principal tutors were Daphne Boden and Alison Nicholls and another key influence in Eleanor's life is the American jazz harpist, composer and conductor Deborah Henson-Conant, whose music forms a centrepiece for Eleanor's 'Wild Bird' show about artistic freedom, and with whom she is greatly looking forward to working with in 2018.

As a composer, Eleanor wrote the score for Ballet Wales' 2007 production 'The Bride of Flowers' and has since written pop songs, a stage show 'Elusive Symmetry' with hip-hop dancer Lizzie Gough and guitarist-composer Alan Thomas and she regularly combines spoken word with the harp. Recent collaborations include Indian-western improvised music with tabla player Mendi Mohinder Singh and guest appearances with the band Ranagrí and pop legend Tony Christie. Eleanor is Head of Harp at Birmingham Conservatoire, where she has been working with Music Interaction Designer Balandino Di Donato on 'HarpCI', gesture-controlled electronic music.

[www.eleanorturner.com](http://www.eleanorturner.com)

**Mendi Singh** is a classically trained table player-composer and a musical visionary with an amazing international reputation. Mendi was born and brought up in Birmingham, UK and has made unprecedented strides in bringing his instrument to a global audience. From a very young age, Mendi started performing with westernised Asian bands. By the age of eighteen, he had completed many international tours. Being brought up in the multi-cultural city of Birmingham, his music has inevitably been inspired by the rich and diverse musical styles he has been exposed to and reflects his Birmingham upbringing in his music. Mendi has collaborated with artists as diverse as Pandit Shalil Shankar, Peter Gabriel, Darius Brubeck, Anand Shankar, Dave O'Higgins, Courtney Piy, Akram Khan, Kepa Junkera, Dan Crary, Luis Salin, Ustad Fateh Ali, MBE Malkit Singh.

Mendi has been touring for several years extensively with Pandit Shalil Shankar, a senior disciple of the legendary Pandit Ravi Shankar, and together they have performed in prestigious venues around the globe.

In 2003, the duo, Mohinder and Shalil were invited by the President of Chile to play at a tribute concert for the former President Allende and the much loved folk singer, Victor Jara; they were watched and applauded by over 70,000 people. In 2004, the duo completed a very successful tour of South America; eighteen concerts in Uruguay and Argentina. They were invited by Argentina's most loved tango guitarist, Luis Salinas to perform a concert in the capital, Buenos Aires. In May 2006 they completed a very successful tour of Mexico, playing in the very prestigious venue of Balas Art in Mexico City. His collaboration of table and tango guitar playing was loved by all, and they received a standing ovation and great reviews from the press; what is more, a beautiful relationship has been built winning the hearts of the music lovers of Argentina. Mendi has travelled the World enriching the flavours of his Tabla skills. Mendi has been giving masterclasses in tabla playing with native musicians in Brazil, Switzerland and Spain. With this inspiration, Mendi's artistic vision was to create the world's first East-West percussion orchestra featuring Tabla Trang. Mendi wrote and performed his

table concerto for orchestra, percussion and tabla trang. The premier of the work was performed on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2014 in Birmingham. Mendi named the concert, 'United Rhythms'. United Rhythm's Tabla Concerto unites the music of both hemispheres in an entertaining, uplifting and rhythmical spectacle that communicates the elements of Indian spirituality, uniting people with the power of music, sound and vision through a UNIVERSAL language. Producing three original compositions for orchestral percussion, Mendi performed the works with Birmingham Conservatoire's Percussion Ensemble, drawing on African, South American and Arabic styles, written in a Western classical context.