



RESPIRE

To uplift and energise.

### **BRYCE DESSNER – AHEYM (2009)**

Bryce Dessner is an American guitarist and composer based in Paris, most widely known as a member of Grammy award winning band the National.

*Aheyim means 'homeward' in Yiddish, and this piece is written as musical evocation of the idea of flight and passage. As little boys, my brother and I used to spend hours with my grandmother, asking her about the details of how she came to America. (My father's family were Jewish immigrants from Poland and Russia). She could only give us a smattering of details, but they all found their way into our collective imagination, eventually becoming a part of our own cultural identity and connection to the past. In her poem "Di rayze aheyim," the American-Yiddish poet Irena Klepfisz, a professor at Barnard in New York and one of the few child survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto, writes: "Among strangers is her home. Here right here she must live. Her memories will become monuments."*

*Aheyim is dedicated to my grandmother, Sarah Dessner.*

(c) Bryce Dessner

### **JÖRG WIDMANN – STRING QUARTET NO. 4 (2004/5)**

Jörg Widmann is a German clarinetist, conductor and composer based in Berlin.

This piece is one of five quartets composed as a sort of meta work, where each piece compliments or contradicts the others. In the fourth, a gossamer-like texture is created with breaths and sounds, intermingling with a passacaglia which paces forward through the mist. Techniques such as brushing the bow on the rib of the instrument, hammering down fingers on the string to create pitch, tossing the bow through the air and audible breathing from the musicians are used throughout this very special work.

### **BENJAMIN BRITTEN – STRING QUARTET NO. 1 (1941)**

- i. Andante sostenuto – Allegro vivo
- ii. Allegro con slancio
- iii. Andante calmo
- iv. Molto vivace

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) was an English pianist, conductor and composer.

Britten's first quartet was commissioned while he was living in America, and was described by Britten as being composed on "short notice & a bit of a sweat, but I'll do it as the cash will be useful!" It is even said he had to write with a fan in a tool shed to drown out the piano practice of his American host.

The first of three quartets, this first work is experimental, restless and filled with incredible tension and release. The use of gentle "diatonic dissonance" has come to be a trademark of Britten's music – pushing something beautiful right to the edge, compromising comfort if only for a second.