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Magnetic Rose | Oneohtrix Point Never

Saturday 22 August, 9.30pm

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Alexi Murdoch

Thursday 27 August, 9.30pm

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Wave Movements

Friday 28 August 9.15pm

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HUB SESSIONS



ANNA CALVI AND HERITAGE ORCHESTRA

Tuesday 18 – Thursday 20 August
10.30pm | The Hub

The performance lasts approximately
1 hour and 40 minutes with no interval

ANNA CALVI AND HERITAGE ORCHESTRA

Anna Calvi makes music that surges like a stormy sea, tackling the turbulence of love, lust, loneliness and death in atmospheric songs of joy and desire, her powerful voice soaring above vivid, cinematic soundscapes. Her two albums – *Anna Calvi* (2011) and *One Breath* (2013) – were both nominated for the Mercury Prize, and Calvi's unforgettable vocals have been compared with such luminaries as PJ Harvey, Siouxsie Sioux and Chrissie Hynde.

She's spoken of attempting to convey whole worlds of meaning and emotion in her songs, and of imagining the sounds of musical instruments intertwining like the interplay of colours in a painting – something more than borne out by her evocative sonic creations. Inspired early on by her music-obsessed Italian father's extensive record collection – which ranged from Maria Callas and Rossini to Captain Beefheart and the Rolling Stones – she has pointed to influences from an eclectic collection of artists – Nina Simone, Jimi Hendrix, Nick Cave, David Bowie, Scott Walker, Robert Johnson, Django Reinhardt, Gesualdo, Messiaen, Debussy and Ravel – as well as from opera, West African music and flamenco.

London-born Calvi began as a violinist – she took lessons from the age of six after falling in love with the instrument and begging her parents to buy her one – before picking up a guitar at the age of eight, and attempting to recreate the kaleidoscopic sounds she'd heard on record. She studied music at the University of Southampton, but only began singing at the age of 23: used

to expressing herself through her guitar, she reputedly hated the sound of her own singing voice, and eventually locked herself away for days with records by Edith Piaf, Elvis, Nina Simone and Maria Callas to get herself used to singing and hearing herself sing. Which makes the voice that emerged – ranging from a delicate whisper to a spine-tingling operatic roar – all the more astonishing.

She later met multi-instrumentalist Mally Harpaz and drummer Daniel Maiden-Wood, who went on to form her regular, bass-less band with its distinctively raw, sparse sound. Brian Eno was an early supporter (and unofficial mentor) after being introduced to Calvi's music by a friend: he described her as 'the biggest thing since Patti Smith', saying that her music is 'full of intelligence, romance and passion', and going on to sing backing vocals on 'Desire' and 'Suzanne & I' for her debut album.

That album, *Anna Calvi*, was released on Domino in 2011, following a series of covers put out on YouTube and her debut single, 'Jezebel' (2010). The album took Calvi three years to write and record, and her initial hopes were that it might sell 5,000 copies. It went on to sell almost 200,000 worldwide. NME's description of it as 'sumptuous, seductive and a bit scary' hits the nail squarely on the head: from the sultry blues guitar of opener 'Rider to the Sea' to the smouldering Lynchian stomper 'I'll Be Your Man' and the darkly captivating 'Love Won't Be Leaving', it's at once provocative and sophisticated.

Calvi recorded her second album, *One Breath*, in just six weeks, and it's a wildly different beast, a collection of songs of savagely swinging moods using broader orchestral textures (including much tuned percussion and choral writing) and honing Calvi's voice as a dramatic device. The crunching, heavy 'Love of my Life', Calvi says, is about the feeling of wanting someone so much that you feel fevered, and the song swings appropriately from wild distortion to moments of unnerving stillness. 'Piece By Piece' mirrors its theme of memories evaporating in music that crumbles and disintegrates as the song reaches its end; and 'Eliza' strikes a fragile balance between optimism and despair, as Calvi sings of seeing a strong, attractive woman who somehow reminds her of something she's lost. She followed *One Breath up* in 2014 with *Strange Weather*, an EP of covers of songs by FKA Twigs, Suicide, David Bowie and others.

Reserved and softly spoken in everyday life, Calvi erupts in her dramatic, dynamic live performances: she feels powerful and fearless on stage, she's said, and she matches her theatrical, almost operatic vocal delivery with a fierce but poised stage persona, using provocative, arresting costumes and a distinctive circular-motion guitar style that generates huge washes of sound.

Calvi first performed with the Heritage Orchestra in December 2014, at a one-off gig at St John's Church in Hackney, London, bringing together new orchestral reimaginings of songs from *Anna Calvi*, *One Breath* and *Strange Weather*. Established in 2004 by producer/manager Christopher Wheeler and composer/conductor Jules Buckley (who directs the Orchestra in tonight's performance) while they were both in their final year at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Heritage Orchestra set out to discover new orchestral experiences for artists and audiences alike, rather than being defined by historical stereotypes of what an orchestra should be. The Orchestra has worked with leading contemporary artists including Gilles Peterson, John Cale, Jamie Cullum, Tim Minchin, the Streets, Dizzee Rascal and Spiritualized. It performed a live orchestral soundtrack to *Blade Runner* at Massive Attack's 2008 Meltdown festival at London's Southbank Centre, and was last heard in Edinburgh performing *Live_Transmission: Joy Division Reworked* with Scanner in 2013.

Providing radical reworkings and rich orchestral textures to Calvi's powerful songs, the Heritage Orchestra are the ideal partners for the singer-songwriter's opulent, captivating creations.

© **David Kettle** is a freelance writer and editor