

2026  
**YORK**  
EARLY  
MUSIC  
FESTIVAL

**Imago Mundi**

*Tears Into Light*

**National Centre for Early Music**

**Monday 6 July 8.30pm**

# Imago Mundi

**Eugénie De Mey** voice  
**Vardan Hovanissian** duduk  
**Sofie Vanden Eynde** artistic direction & lute  
**Jo Thielemans** live electronics

texts: **Fleur Pierets**  
music: **John Dowland & Vladimir Gorlinsky**  
visuals: **Ria Verhaeghe**  
photography: **Dymphna Vandenabeele**

## *Tears Into Light*

*A musical meditation on melancholy, care and the slow emergence of hope*

### **1. We**

Lachrymae  
Improvisation  
Hum

**John Dowland** 1563-1626

**Vladimir Gorlinsky** b. 1984

### **2. Eli**

In Darkness let me dwell  
Mr Dowland's Midnight

**Dowland**  
**Dowland**

### **3. Carlos**

Hum (fragment) .  
Sorrow

**Gorlinsky**  
**Gorlinsky**

### **4. Eric**

Flow my tears  
Improvisation

**Dowland**

### **5. Danielle**

Go Crystal Tears  
Inner Spring

**Dowland**  
**Gorlinsky**

### **6. Frédéric**

Rumi's meditation

**Gorlinsky**

## 7. *Rose-Marie*

Hum (fragment)

**Gorlinski**

Improvisation

Go nightly cares

**Dowland**

**Tears into Light** is the result of an intense co-creative process in which music, text and visual art entered into dialogue not only with one another, but also with people in care settings. The performance grew out of encounters, conversations, and shared silences with the residents of Clos-Bizet care home in Anderlecht, Belgium and the guests of the TOPAZ palliative day centre. Their voices, experiences and insights do not form a peripheral narrative, but the beating heart of this project.

‘O morning breeze, bring me news of dawn.’ (Hafez)

Starting from John Dowland’s *Lachrymae or Seven Tears*, *Tears into Light* unfolds as a musical journey through melancholy, darkness, and the slow emergence of hope. Dowland’s Renaissance lament – where sorrow is not dismissed but carefully listened to – forms a historical ground in which new music, contemporary texts and ancient poetry take root. Compositions by Vladimir Gorlinsky, Sufi poetry, texts by Fleur Pierets and the ancient breath of the Armenian duduk are interwoven into a single, breathing dramaturgical line.

### **The human voice as point of departure**

What distinguishes *Tears into Light* is the way its artistic material emerged in close connection with the care context. During residencies at Clos-Bizet and TOPAZ, Sofie Vanden Eynde engaged in conversations with residents and guests on themes such as loss, regret, comfort, trust, darkness and the unexpected light that can appear precisely there. These were not interviews, but encounters – moments of attention, listening and reciprocity.

From this exchange, new textual material emerged, which Fleur Pierets wove together with broader reflections on melancholy and the human condition. The words carry the traces of lived lives and final questions. They resonate within the performance as whispers, echoes and points of anchorage, giving melancholy an embodied, human meaning.

## **Musical resonances**

The Armenian duduk, played by master musician Vardan Hovanissian, functions as a second breath within the performance. The sound of this instrument – long associated with mourning, memory and resilience – deeply resonates with the stories from the care context and with Dowland's falling fourth, the musical image of descending tears. In dialogue with lute, voice and live electronics (Jo Thielemans), a sonic world emerges in which old and new, East and West, individual and collective, meet.

## **Melancholy as a shared space**

In *Tears into Light*, melancholy does not appear as stagnation but as a necessary slowing down: a space in which listening becomes possible and where something can shift. This idea is nourished by diverse traditions – from Robert Burton and the School of Night to Sufism and contemporary thought – but finds its deepest meaning in encounters with people for whom time, farewell and attention have taken on a different intensity.

## **Image and memory**

Visual artist Ria Verhaeghe adds a visual layer through works that collect and recontextualize anonymous photographs. By reframing the ordinary, hidden meanings become visible – just as the performance itself brings new light to early music, personal stories and forgotten voices.

## **Music as care, art as light**

*Tears into Light* is not a single, fixed statement but an invitation to attention. In a world still grappling with war, exhaustion and polarization, this performance chooses proximity, listening and imagination. It shows how art – emerging in dialogue with people at the threshold of life – can open a space in which sorrow is held, and where, through the cracks, light becomes visible.

'Be patient, for in the deepest night, dawn is closest.' (Hafez)

© Sofie Vanden Eynde

## **I. The Distant Light (dark to horizon)**

I walk through cities made of memories,  
where echoes whisper, soft and low.  
Each breath is heavy with remembering,  
each step moves tides I cannot slow.

There is a sound the dark remembers  
a hum that aches beneath my bones.  
I move through hours made of tar,  
through remnants scattered over stones.

The road bends inward like a question,  
its answer buried under the rain.  
I follow sound, I follow silence,  
I follow loss until it sings my name.

My hands are maps of vanished places,  
their lines are thin and cold.  
Every shadow keeps a memory,  
every heartbeat feels untold.

The sky is wide and endless,  
the air a song I cannot keep.  
I learn that stillness is a motion,  
that falling also means to leap.

I gathered shadows, stitched them softly,  
into books I could not read.  
But every page became a memory,  
and every wound began to lead.

Somewhere far, a light is waiting  
small, uncertain, almost kind.  
It flickers like a secret language,  
just enough to keep me blind.

And in that distance, soft and hollow,  
I learn the dark is not the end  
but a motion, slow and sacred,  
that folds into the light it sends.

This light does not arrive in thunder,  
it comes in breaths, in quiet time.  
And when it finds me, I do not tremble  
the way was crooked, cruel, but mine.

## **II. The Light That Waited (from horizon to light)**

The air unfolds  
reflecting what I used to fear.  
Each step unwrites a quiet sadness,  
each sound grows warmer in my ear.

Light does not arrive in thunder,  
it drifts, it hums, it understands.  
It settles softly in the fractures,  
and reaches out with open hands.

I follow roads that have no language,  
yet every turn feels known to me.  
The world begins to show its colors,  
the sky begins its slow decree.

Now the air is open, trembling,  
every breath a fragile dawn.  
The road unfolds beneath my footsteps,  
the night behind me almost gone.

Light does not rush, it listens softly,  
fills the cracks the dark once kept.  
I feel it move beneath my skin,  
in every place my shadow slept.

I do not chase the light – I join it,  
slow, deliberate, and true.  
Its warmth remembers where I've been,  
but never asks what I've been through.

I do not chase the light – I meet it  
with eyes still wet, with heart still bare  
It does not ask what I have lived through  
it only asks that I be there.

## **III. Ending (final reflection)**

And when I step beyond the shadow's line  
I do not reach for perfect sign  
I reach for breath, for whispering sound  
for the faint shimmer the light has found

I let it fold around my skin  
it opens soft and guides my gaze  
a quiet rhythm / that draws me in  
Life itself that bends and sways

In that arrival, calm and wide  
The ways to the light are many, true  
and feel the dark still at my side  
the way was crooked, cruel, but mine to pursue.

© Fleur Pierets, October 2025

**Imago Mundi** is not an ensemble, nor a ‘collective,’ but a meeting place – where old and new music, Western and Eastern traditions, and different artistic disciplines converge. With a changing line-up of musicians gathered around artistic director Sofie Vanden Eynde, Imago Mundi serves as both a home and a breeding ground for encounters, musical ideas and a sincere approach to artistic expression.

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National Centre for Early Music  
St Margaret's Church  
Walmgate  
York YO1 9TL  
01904 632220  
[www.ncem.co.uk](http://www.ncem.co.uk)



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