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How the composer overcame his devastating hearing loss

GIACOMO PUCCINI

The Italian who ripped up the opera rulebook



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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Jess Gillam

Meet the saxophone sensation set to storm the Last Night of the Proms

Michael Tilson Thomas

The maestro making waves in Miami

Roxanna Panufnik

We interview the brilliant composer

Tom Service

The art of the conductor

Brahms in the Congo

The all-female ensemble making history in Africa



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Welcome



This issue features two contrasting tales of community music-making – one funded by colossal sums of money, the other born from the considerably poorer, dustier streets of Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Kinshasa, a group of women, with the help

of a dynamic Japanese flautist, has formed a chamber ensemble, and is touring and inspiring local townships with performances on instruments they maintain and repair themselves, often using sundry bits of plastic and wood. Jessica Jane Hart's uplifting photo story on p36 shows what can be done with a combination of determination, passion and necessity – and, if the photographs are to go by, a great deal of joy.

Meanwhile, 6,500 miles away in the US, where money is no object, equally staggering things are being done. The New World Center, perched on the Miami coast, is wired up with technology that only a years ago would have seemed outlandishly futuristic. Impressively, the Center's ultra high-speed internet enables it to conduct – with no time-lag – masterclasses with anyone, anywhere in the world. With the right investment (and without the headaches that international video-conferencing currently gives us), world-class tuition is just a click away. Is it possible that our ensemble in Kinshasa might benefit one day soon?

Oliver Condy *Editor*

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Jeremy Pound
Deputy editor

'Driving up to meet the brilliant saxophonist Jess Gillam in Ulverston was a day to remember: a lovely setting, a warm welcome and an interviewee who talks as eloquently as she plays.' **Page 24**



Robin Wallace
Musicologist

'I've studied Beethoven all my life, but gained new insights into his creative process when my late wife Barbara became deaf. I share some of those insights this month and in my upcoming book, *Hearing Beethoven*.' **Page 40**



Alexandra Wilson
Academic and writer

'During the course of writing a book about Puccini, I encountered a huge amount of snobbery about him. Here I consider the ways in which his operas are more innovative than we might at first think.' **Page 50**

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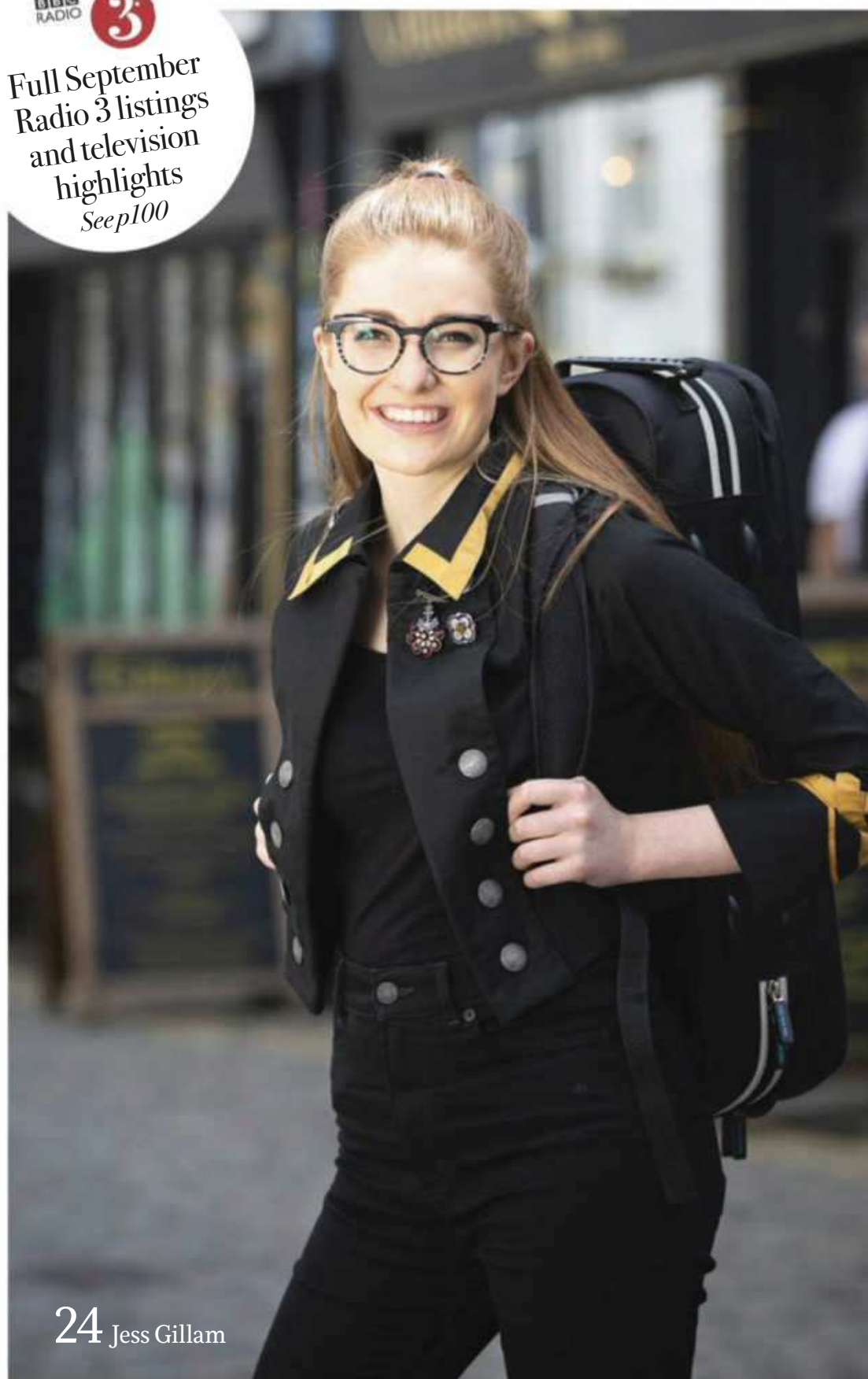
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EDITORIAL

*Plus our dream choice of performer (past
or present) at the Last Night of the Proms*

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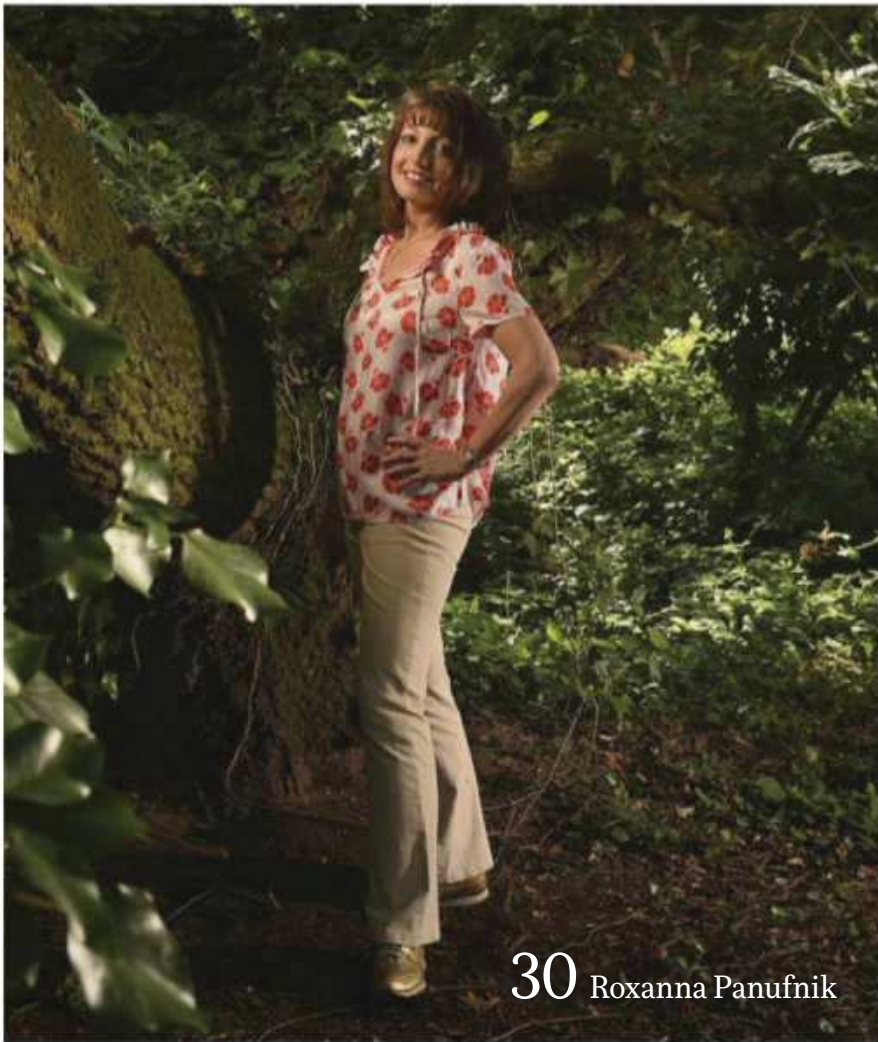
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September reviews

Your guide to the best new recordings, DVDs and books

Trombonist
Peter Moore



64 Recording of the Month



Life Force
Peter Moore

'Moore displays an eloquence and nobility that one might have thought impossible except by the human voice'

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LETTER of the MONTH



Recorder star:
Charlotte Barbour-Condini
has a talent to be admired

The art of the recorder

I agree with your correspondent John Rogers (Letters, August) that it is a fine thing to get young children started in music by giving them recorders when they enter infant school. But he perpetuates a misconception by saying: 'if they showed any ability whatsoever they were then encouraged to take up a more demanding instrument...'. The recorder is indeed good for beginners, but it does not follow that it is somehow a lesser instrument than others. My son also began playing the recorder at an early age. He showed some ability, so he

stuck with it. Now, some years on, he has passed Grade 8 and is enjoying exploring its rich and varied repertoire. Anyone who has heard virtuosos like Piers Adams (to name but one) will know that the recorder is at least as demanding as other woodwind, and it is encouraging to see talented young artists like Charlotte Barbour-Condini and Sophie Westbrooke (BBC Young Musician category winners in 2012 and 2014) taking centre stage as ambassadors for this wonderful and versatile instrument.

Andrew Hadley, London

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The colour of music

It was good to read Tom Service's *Symphony of colours* (August) in which he talks of the widespread automatic reflex of seeing colours when we hear music. As a visual artist/musician myself, the palette of tone colours certainly helps me to memorise a score. The Lithuanian artist/composer MK Čiurlionis made hundreds of paintings that reflex his synaesthesia. Had he not tragically died

young, he would probably have become one of the early film composers. In February, with conductor Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and the CBSO, I hope to show the audience how natural it is for us to marry colours with music, by painting my own fluid kinetic images live to his symphonic poem *The Sea* (1907). It starts in E major, which always sounds to me like green – in this case sea green, of course.

Norman Perryman, via email

Birmingham scores

Richard Morrison makes admirable points in his article about the proposed removal of the Elgar Archive from the attractive focus of the Elgar Birthplace to the sprawling anonymity of the British Library (August). If the material really does need to be moved from The Firs, the obvious solution would be to house it at the University of Birmingham (virtually in Worcestershire), which would

perhaps never have had a music department had Elgar not succumbed to Richard Peyton's emotional blackmail that he would not endow the Professorial Chair unless Elgar accepted it.

*Christopher Morley,
Halesowen*

Gurney home

May I make the observation that Ivor Gurney did not spend his last days at Barnwood House Asylum in Gloucester

(Sarah Connolly interview, August)? He spent the last 15 years of his life in Dartford Asylum, because it was felt that he had to be moved away from Gloucester.

Ian Morgan, Malvern Link

African organ

Congratulations to Rebeca Omordia (interview, August) for *Ekele*, her recording of music by African composers. Fela Sowande (1905-87) was arguably the first and (remains) the most prominent of these. In which case, why is it so hard to get hold of his music? Organists would no doubt enjoy his exuberant Festival March. It was published by Chappell & Co., but because of several takeovers and restructuring of various subsequent publishers, no one seems to know who owns the rights. Despite several attempts, it has so far not been possible to obtain a score.

Perhaps your readers may have better luck!

Jeremy Nicholas, Essex

Schumann shocker

Jessica Duchon came up with some sound recommendations for recordings of *Dichterliebe* in her Building a Library survey (August), but her revelation that 'I have eliminated those singers who cop out of those top notes towards the end of the song' ('Ich grolle nicht') means that wonderful performances by the likes of Gerard Souzay and Bernard Kruysen are ignored. I was also appalled by her reference to 'countertenors, especially English ones' as 'cloying, hooty horrors.' No one in the heritage of British altos from Alfred Deller to Iestyn Davies (including Paul Eastwood to whom she takes such exception) fits that description.

Paul Wilson, Croydon

Best of English

Following our feature in August, we asked you to tell us your favourite English songs. Here are a few of your answers...



My favourite English song is John Ireland's (left) setting of the John Masefield poem *Sea Fever*.

Although I live in landlocked Hertfordshire, I'm happiest when strolling along the Dorset coastline and when I do, I always find this song rippling through my mind.

Ryan Hill, Hertfordshire

My favourite English song was a result of a good review I read in *BBC Music Magazine*: mezzo Patricia Bardon and pianist Andrew Matthews-Owen in the title track of Jonathan Dove's

cabaret cycle *All You Who Sleep Tonight*. It's a song that pulses gently with confident hope.

John Williams, via email

Choosing a favourite English song is difficult because there are so many that I could not do without, mainly thanks to hearing Dame Janet Baker sing them. Perhaps I'll settle for *Youth and Love* by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Ruth Heredia, India

English Songs are at least as brilliant as the ones we have here in Belgium and the surrounding countries such as Germany. My all-time favourite remains *Come again, sweet love* by John Dowland.

Juliaan Leroy, Gent, Belgium

NEW RELEASES



IL TROVATORE VERDI

Royal Opera House

German director David Bösch, celebrated for his theatrical productions for Munich and Frankfurt among others, makes his UK debut with this new production for The Royal Opera. The opera's themes of jealousy, revenge and love play out against a hauntingly beautiful, wintry landscape that has been riven by war.

DVD | BLU-RAY



HAMLET DEAN

Glyndebourne

Brett Dean's colourful, energetic, witty and richly lyrical music expertly captures the modernity of Shakespeare's timeless tale, while also exploiting the traditional operatic elements of arias, ensembles and choruses. The artists include Allan Clayton, Sarah Connolly and Barbara Hannigan, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski.

DVD | BLU-RAY



THE DA PONTE OPERAS MOZART

Royal Opera House

Così fan tutte stars a cast of young rising stars, Kasper Holten's production of *Don Giovanni* stars Mariusz Kwiecien, Erwin Schrott, Miah Persson and Gerald Finley, while David McVicar's production of *Le nozze di Figaro* is one of the world's most beloved operas.

3 DVD SET | 3 BLU-RAY SET



FREDERICK ASHTON THE DREAM

SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS
MARGUERITE AND ARMAND
Royal Opera House

Three contrasting ballets by The Royal Ballet's Founder Choreographer Frederick Ashton. Includes *Marguerite and Armand*, danced by former Royal Ballet Principal Zaida Yanowsky and guest artist Roberto Bolle. Conducted by Emmanuel Plasson.

DVD | BLU-RAY



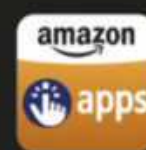
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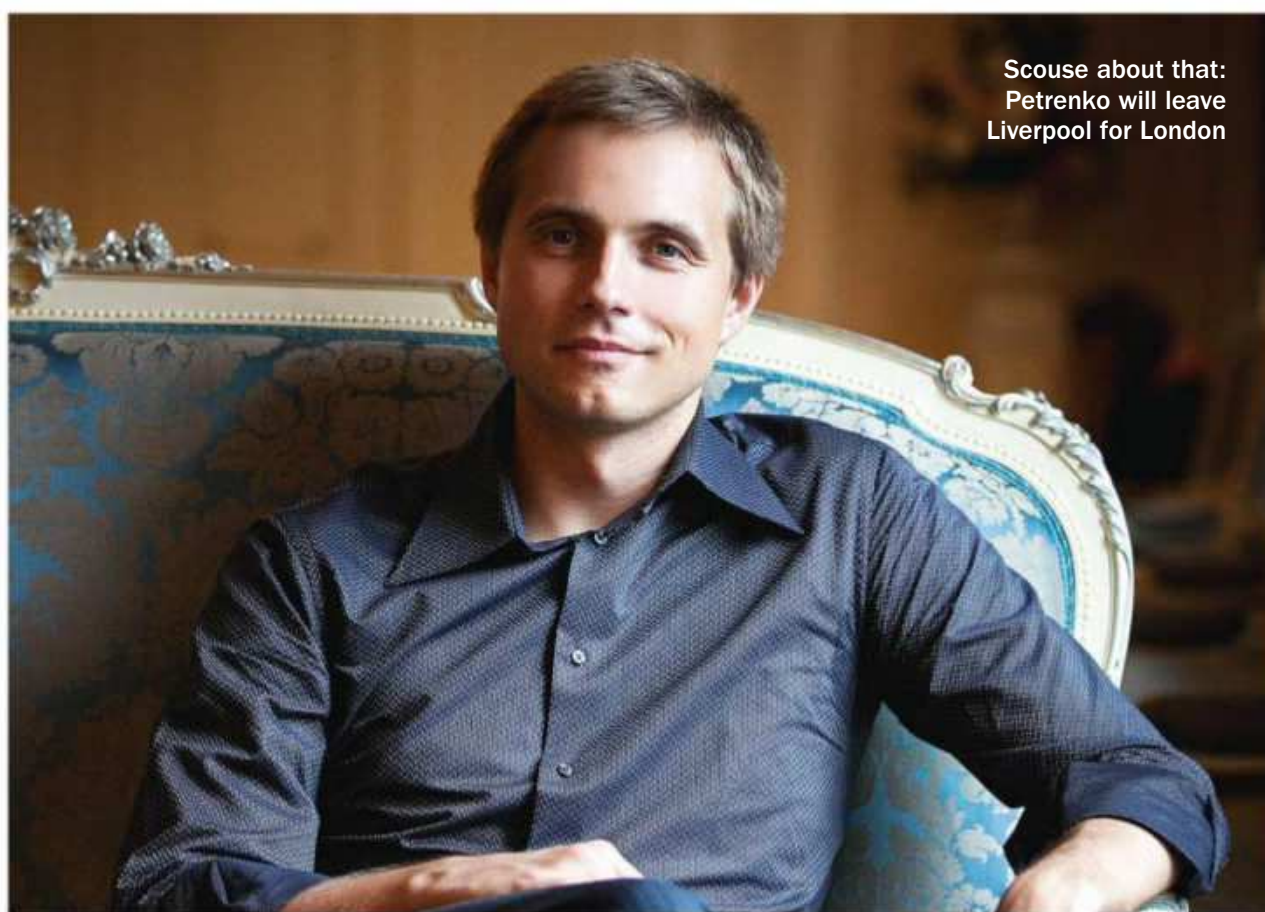
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The *full* score

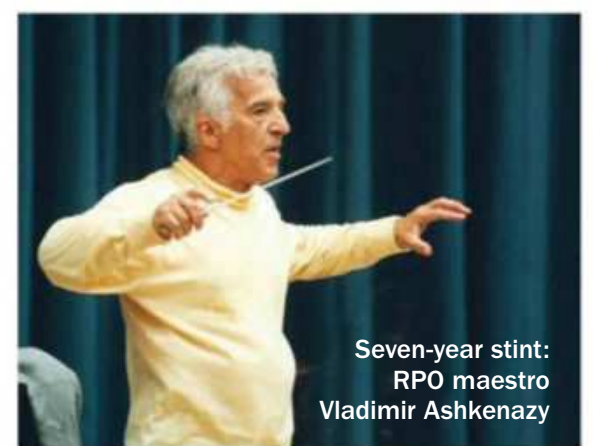
Our pick of the month's news, views and interviews

Vasily Petrenko gets Royal Philharmonic call up

Russian conductor to begin as the orchestra's music director in 2021



Scouse about that:
Petrenko will leave
Liverpool for London



Seven-year stint:
RPO maestro
Vladimir Ashkenazy

Royal beats The RPO's chief conductors

Thomas Beecham (1946-61)

Rudolf Kempe (1961-75)

Antal Doráti (1975-78)

Walter Weller (1980-85)

André Previn (1985-92)

Vladimir Ashkenazy (1987-94)

Yuri Temirkanov (1992-98)

Daniele Gatti (1996-2009)

Charles Dutoit (2009-18)

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra has announced Vasily Petrenko as its new music director. The Russian conductor will begin his initial five-year contract in August 2021, coinciding with the RPO's 75th-anniversary season. He takes over from Charles Dutoit, who left the London-based ensemble earlier this year following accusations of sexual assault.

Petrenko, 42, will leave the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, where he has enjoyed huge success, first as principal conductor and then chief conductor. An unknown when he was appointed in 2006, he has won numerous awards with the RLPO – not least the 2017 BBC Music Magazine Recording of the Year for their disc of Tchaikovsky's

Symphonies Nos 1, 2 & 5 – and become very popular on Merseyside, with Liverpool City Council appointing him 'Honorary Scouser' for his contribution to local culture. On taking up his new post at the RPO, he will become conductor laureate of the RLPO, who he says 'will always have a special place in my heart'. He is also chief conductor of the Oslo Phil.

As for his new job, Petrenko, who studied at St Petersburg Conservatoire, says he welcomes the 'enormous potential' of the Royal Philharmonic, and hopes to realise a 'new chapter for an orchestra with a glorious past and high ambitions for the future'. His arrival will not be the first time they have met: in 2016, he conducted Mahler's Symphony No. 2 at the

Royal Albert Hall, where Adam Wright, chairman and sub-principal trumpet of the orchestra, says he recognised a 'unique musical synergy between Vasily and the RPO's musicians'. Petrenko returned the following year to conduct the orchestra in Verdi's Requiem at the Royal Festival Hall.

Petrenko will be the tenth chief conductor or music director of the RPO, founded by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1946. Arguably London's most commercially savvy orchestra, it has always prided itself on combining core classical performances with ventures such as spectacles at the Royal Albert Hall and recordings like the ultra-popular 1980s series *Hooked on Classics*. Since 2004, Cadogan Hall has served as its home. *See Opinion, p23*

Sandbach, Scotland, welcomes visitors in style

Yes, OK, we know that Sandbach is, in fact, a town in Cheshire. This particular sand Bach, however, recently made his appearance on the beach in Fife, Scotland, as part of the East Neuk Festival. Since it was founded in 2004, the five-day festival has regularly taken advantage of its coastal position with some aptly commissioned pieces of visual art. In the past, these have

included a sand sculpture of Beethoven (2011) and a beach portrait of Schubert (2014). With this year's programme having a Bach theme to it, it was, of course, JSB who got the nod. Though the great man's music is here to stay, this particular portrait enjoyed, alas, only the most fleeting of existences. Time and tide, they say, wait for no man, not even the world's finest composers.



THE MONTH IN NUMBERS



54

...violins smashed to smithereens. Qin Yue, the former wife of a violin maker, broke into his house in Nagoya and destroyed his collection of instruments and bows. She has been jailed for two years.

100,000

...pounds for Riccardo Muti. The conductor has won the Praemium Imperiale Award, worth 15m yen. He can now buy himself a lot of crotchets.

2

...new King's Singers. Baritone Nick Ashby and countertenor Edward Button are to join the famous sextet. They replace Tim Wayne-Wright and Chris Gabbitas.

6

...more years in Munich. Conductor Mariss Jansons has signed a contract to stay with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra until 2024.

Rising Stars

Three to look out for...

Kiandra Howarth *soprano*



Born: Queensland, Australia

Career highlight: Joining the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House then making my debut as Adina in Donizetti's

L'Elisir d'amore with less than 24 hours' notice. It was incredible to be performing a lead role at one of the most prominent opera houses in the world, and sharing the stage with a musical idol of mine, Bryn Terfel.

Musical hero: The conductor Antonio Pappano stands out. His generous support both in rehearsals and in one-on-one coaching sessions during these early stages of my career have been a source of inspiration.

Dream concert: That's very easy – making my debut at the BBC Proms!

Elicia Silverstein *violinist*



Born: New York, US

Career highlight: Recording my debut solo album this year. It was magical to see this project realised, centred on some of my favourite music by Biber, Scarrino, Pandolfi-

Mealli, Berio and Bach, and the culmination of years of research and exploration.

Musical hero: If I had to pick, it would be Clara Schumann and Ginette Neveu.

Dream concert: A programme of Bach and Mendelssohn with Andrew Manze conducting and me as soloist in the Leipzig Gewandhaus. It would include the Mendelssohn Concerto for Violin and Piano.

Drew Petersen *pianist*



Born: Oradell, NJ, US

Career highlight: Winning an Avery Fisher Career Grant and releasing my debut album on the Steinway & Sons record label this year are certainly highlights. But

every time I get on stage feels like a highlight.

Musical hero: Pianist Benno Moiseiwitsch. I was introduced to his recordings by one of his great-nieces. I was immediately entranced by his vast tonal colour palette, effortless virtuosity and a sensibility that was at once direct and elegant while also leaving room for so much spontaneity.

Dream concert: One would be where every component of the concert goes as I planned it. The other would be where nothing goes as planned, and yet everything manages to work in ways I didn't realise were possible!

SoundBites



Angel of the north: comedian Victoria Wood

Comedic gift

The fundraising for an extension to the Hallé orchestra's rehearsal space, Hallé St Peter's, has been completed thanks to an undisclosed gift from the Victoria Wood Foundation, a charity set up with a bequest from the late comedian, actress and writer. The annex will house new facilities including a new rehearsal space that will be named Victoria Wood Hall. Wood, who died of cancer in 2016, worked a couple of times with the orchestra and in 2014 became the first Patron of the Hallé Children's Choir.

Future Generations

BBC Radio 3 has announced the latest additions to its prestigious New Generation Artists scheme. Tenor Alessandro Fisher, cellist Anastasia Kobekina, the Aris Quartet, pianist Elisabeth Brauss, baritone James Newby and soprano Katharina Konradi will be joining the scheme which, since its launch in 1999, has helped develop and promote the careers of over 120 young musicians.

Talkative types

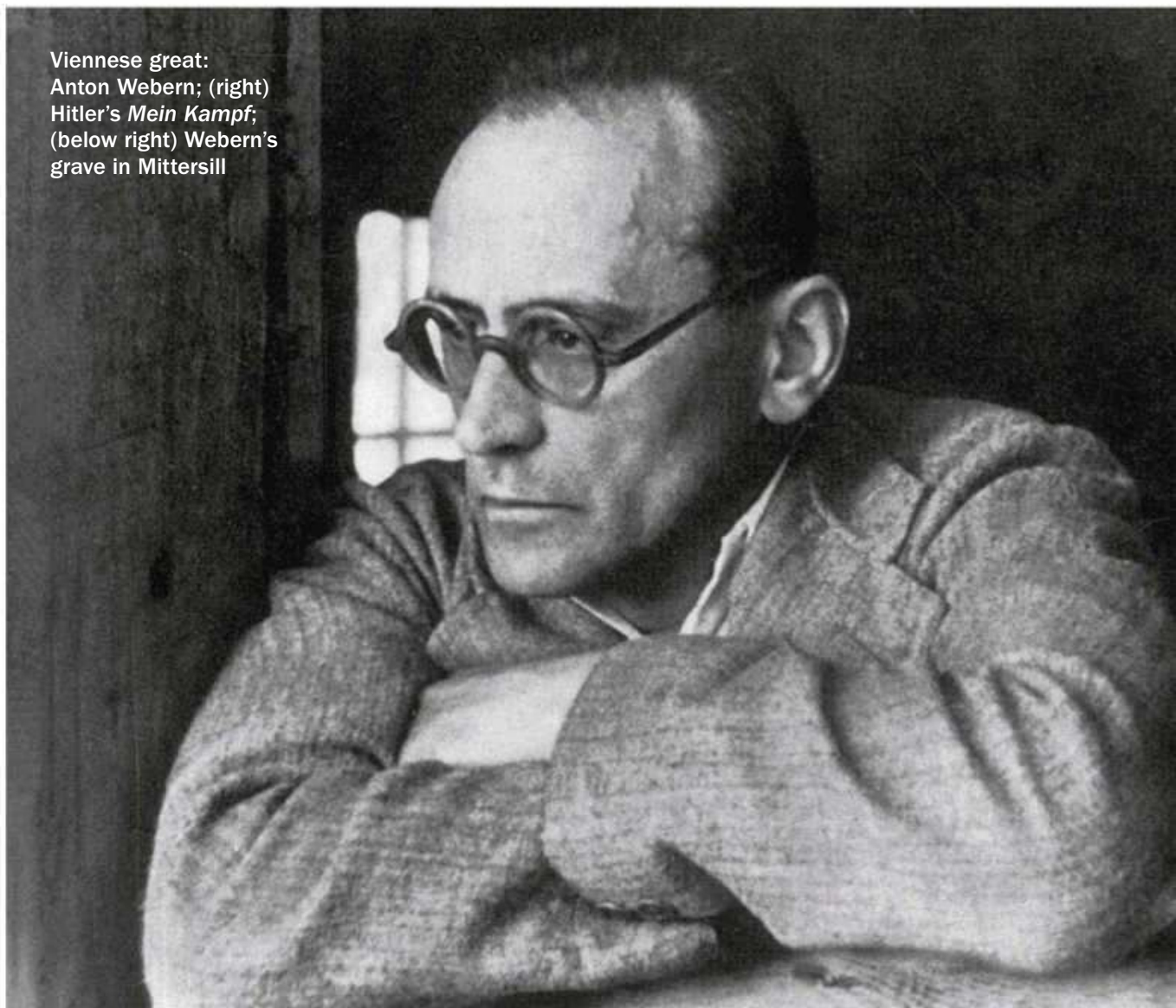
Concert pianists aren't just brilliant at playing the piano – they may well be gifted linguists too. Research by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS) has revealed that children who play the piano for six months or more tend to show a greater ability to detect the sounds of consonants, vowels and pitch than their non-playing peers. No improvement on IQ, attention span or memory was shown, though.

A notable debut

The French horn player Felix Klier is to make his UK debut with a performance of Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 4 at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire on 7 September. No great deal, you might think, except that Klier, who was born without arms, plays the instrument with his feet. The concert is being staged to celebrate the virtuosity of disabled musicians and showcase the equipment that enables them to play.

GETTY, BRIDGEMAN

TIMEPIECE This month in history



Viennese great:
Anton Webern; (right)
Hitler's *Mein Kampf*;
(below right) Webern's
grave in Mittersill

SEPTEMBER 1945

Composer Anton Webern goes out for a fatal cigar

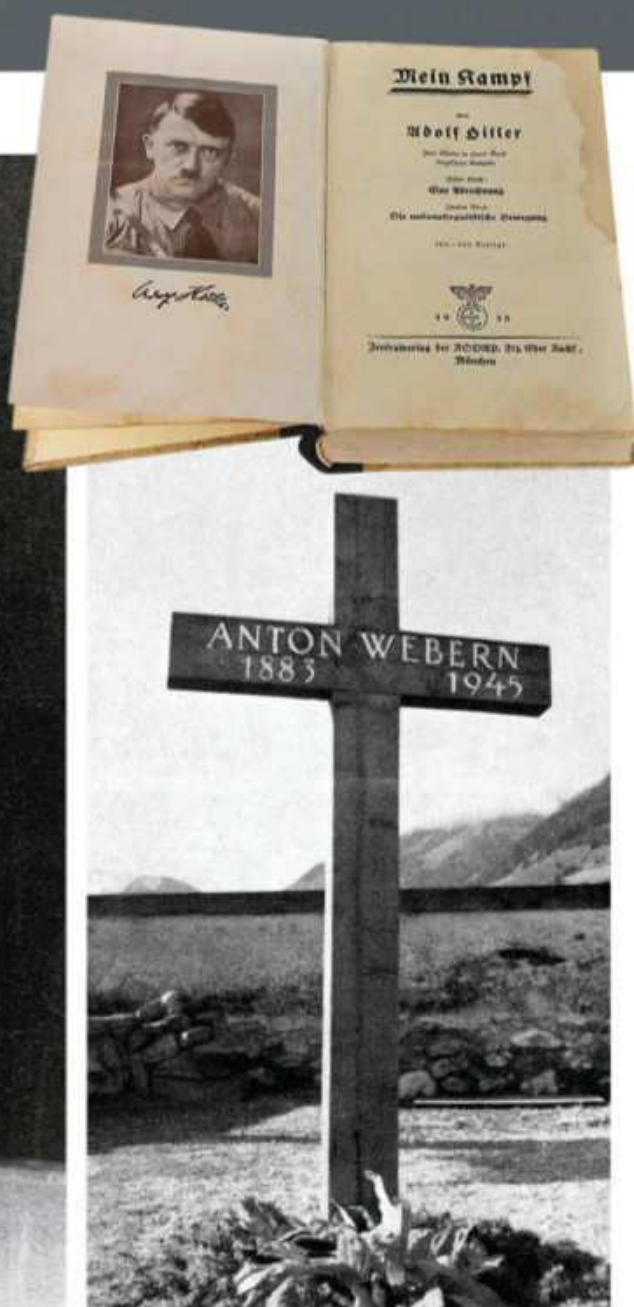
After a cheerful family dinner on the evening of 15 September 1945, Anton Webern was enjoying a cigar in the cool air on the steps of his refuge in the peaceful town of Mittersill: a rare treat for the Austrian composer, who had spent the past years in Nazi-led, war-torn Vienna.

The cigar was a gift from his son-in-law Benno Mattel, who led a thriving black market operation. As Webern stepped outside to avoid cigar smoke disturbing his grandchildren, Mattel received two Americans inside to complete some pre-arranged business. Three drinks later, the visitors drew revolvers. They were not black-market

business colleagues but US soldiers, on a mission to expose Mattel's illegal endeavours. Mattel was immediately placed under arrest. At this point, one of the Americans, a company cook from North Carolina named Raymond Bell, rushed out of the house. He passed Webern on the steps. Inexplicably, he fired three shots, hitting the composer.

Webern stumbled inside shouting for help and was laid down on a mattress by his wife, Wilhelmine, and daughter, Christine. He quietly murmured 'Es ist aus' ('It is over'). By the time medical help arrived, he was dead, aged 61.

It is unclear why Bell shot an innocent man, peacefully smoking. Was it self-



defence or an accident? The incident remained a mystery, and haunted Bell throughout his life. He returned to the US and died an alcoholic in September 1955. Mattel was arrested and spent one year in prison.

The shooting was a brisk end for a remarkable composer, who had reason to believe that peacetime could bring him the professorship and major conducting position which the Nazi regime had denied. Stravinsky had praised Webern's compositions as 'dazzling diamonds'; for Schoenberg they were 'a joy in a breath'. His serialism, 12-note theory and atonality would enjoy success after 1950, when he was considered a father of 'new music'.

Webern spent the War years surrounded by conflicting forces. His youngest daughter Christine was a member of the League of German Girls and married Benno Mattel, an SS member who wore Nazi uniform at their

wedding. His other daughter, Maria, fell in love with a Jewish man who was forced to flee abroad.

Webern initially supported the Nazi party and the stability and order that National Socialism offered, believing their aggressive tactics and anti-Semitism would mellow when in power. However, Nazi aggression didn't seem to suppress his developing enthusiasm for militaristic optimism, and he wrote eagerly of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, 'The book has brought me much enlightenment'. Yet his support remained passive and private. Webern kept his head down, remaining at home in Vienna, composing and doting on his small garden and three grandchildren.

Webern's Nazi sympathies, however, angered many of his closest friends who considered his views as hypocritical simple-mindedness. It was also surprising, given that his music

It is unclear why Raymond Bell shot an innocent man, peacefully smoking

had been branded by the regime as 'cultural Bolshevism' and 'degenerate art'. Public performances of his work were banned and he disappeared into cultural obscurity. His Viennese publishers Universal Edition reduced his employment to proof-reading and making piano reductions of other composers' scores.

His Nazi enthusiasm was eventually quelled by a fear for his family during constant air raids on Vienna. 'To have such *horrible* things happen with *small children* holding your hand!', he wrote. The death of his son Peter – hit by a bullet as the train he was on was machine-gunned by an Allied plane – was another blow.

As the Soviet Red Army closed in on Vienna, Webern and his wife seized what they could carry and fled along the railway line to Salzburg. As the Russians attacked Vienna, Webern found serenity in the Austrian mountains. It was, alas, during the first few days of peacetime that he was fatally shot.



End of days:
Field Marshal
Hajime Sugiyama

Also in September 1945

7th: The Allied forces of Russia, America, the UK and France take part in the **Berlin Victory Parade**, nearby the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate. It is the first public exhibition of the Red Army's IS-3 heavy tank, with 52 on display. Russian sources soon refer to this as the 'forgotten parade', marking the start of Cold War tensions.

12th: Japan's Field Marshal **Hajime Sugiyama** commits suicide, ten days after his country's official surrender ceremony to the Allied powers at Tokyo Bay. He shoots himself in the chest four times with a revolver as he sits at his office desk. His wife also kills herself.

19th: Prime Minister Clement Attlee makes a worldwide broadcast regarding **Indian independence**. Although the Labour party election manifesto pledged the 'advancement of India to responsible self-government', a landslide victory gave Attlee the confidence to promise independence 'at the earliest possible date'. Churchill and other Conservatives are opposed.

26th: Hungarian composer **Béla Bartók** dies in New York aged 64, leaving a widow and two sons. An ongoing battle with leukaemia makes him vulnerable to other illnesses. Blood transfusions and oxygen respiration fail to fight off a bout of pneumonia, from which he never recovers.

30th: The **Bourne End rail crash** claims 43 lives. The overnight Perth-to-Euston express, hauled by The Royal Artilleryman locomotive, derailed as the driver fails to react to signals. Travelling almost 60mph in a 15mph zone, the engine and first six carriages overturn and tumble down an embankment. Just three coaches remain on the track.

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Cantata for soprano, choir and three lions

As England went into football hysteria during the World Cup, a wave of homespun performances of 'Football's Coming Home' broke out across the country – from the classical music world alone, Norwich Cathedral Choir and composer Andrew Lloyd Webber were among those to have put their own arrangements online. Surely,

though, the moment demands the bigger treatment? A *Three Lions* cantata, perhaps? With Gareth Southgate having demonstrated his musical talent by conducting the fans in a post-match sing-a-long in Russia, the England manager is a shoo-in for one of the parts. So, come on, composers. Someone needs to make this happen.

DÉJÀ VU

History just keeps on repeating itself...



A manuscript of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* that went missing from Worcestershire's Elgar Birthplace Museum in 1994 has unexpectedly turned up on *Antiques Roadshow*. The draft score was signed by the composer and dated 1899, the year the piece was premiered. During the TV programme, the score was valued at around £100,000, and a row has now broken out about who is the rightful owner of

the item, which was bequeathed to the Elgar Foundation by his daughter Carice. It's not, however, the first time that a lost manuscript has turned up in unusual circumstances...

Dusty cupboards are a favourite hiding place for lost scores. Take the case of **Beethoven's** *Grosse Fuge*. An 80-page piano version was found when someone cleaned out a cabinet in a US seminary – the score sold in 2002 for £1.1m. Champagne was opened when a forgotten **Bach** aria was found in shoebox in 2005. Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Saxe-Weimar had stuffed this birthday gift there over 300 years before. Strangest of all must be the rediscovery of **Schumann's** unpublished violin concerto. Violinist Jelly d'Aranyi tracked down the manuscript after claiming to receive a message from Schumann's ghost, via an Ouija board. And the prize for furthest-travelled surely goes to the two **Holst** manuscripts found in New Zealand. For over a century, the whereabouts of the 1906 *Folk Songs from Somerset* and *Two Songs Without Words* were unknown, until the scores popped up in the Bay of Plenty Symphonica's library.

MEET THE COMPOSER

Eleanor Alberga

Familiar name:
'Since the Proms,
more people have
heard about me'



Eleanor Alberga was born in Jamaica, and moved to England after winning a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music. Her 2015 Last Night of the Proms commission *Arise Athena!* set the seal on her reputation as a composer. She is performing and teaching at the Dartington Summer School & Festival from 28 July to 25 August.

My first piece was a portrait of my Labrador dog. I was ten years old when I wrote it. It just sort of happened. I didn't have any role models for composers, especially as a black woman or, I should say, as a black child, so I wanted to become a pianist. I started learning the piano at five. I fell in love with composing in my 30s. **I've decided to come out of the closet about my style.** It's quite varied. I write very light, tonal and rhythmic pieces, which draw on my Caribbean heritage and my time with an African dance company. The other extreme goes more towards the avant garde. At the moment I'm working on a Violin Concerto for my husband, Thomas Bowes. It's more to the avant garde side of my writing. **I had to really take the scissors out when I did a piece for the Proms.** It was supposed to be three minutes long, but it wanted to be a ten-minute piece, I think. That was one of the hardest things. I had to cut down the idea and still let it make sense. Since the Proms, a lot more people have

heard about me. It took a little while, but there has been much more interest in commissioning. **Now there are so many young composers.** For Dartington I went through 43 applications, and there were so many really talented people. There are a lot more composers, and there's a lot less money. That's the biggest challenge today. Also, if one compares oneself with the day of someone like Bach, there weren't so many styles around. Today the gamut is from A to Z and beyond for what is considered contemporary, classical concert music. **The first composer I fell in love with was Bartók.** I used to wear out a recording of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* when I was a teenager. I went through a phase of really liking minimalist music, and then there are people like Messiaen and Birtwistle. Western classical music is a very strong part of my heritage, as is being a West Indian and Jamaican. There's a mix of influences that's constantly there.

StudioSecrets



London calling: cellist Hee-Young Lim

We reveal who's recording what, and where...

All eyes are on Leeds in September as the **International Piano Competition** crowns a new champion. Even more people will be able to hear the winner now, thanks to a major new partnership with Warner Classics. The label will release an album of the winner's final concerto performance – and recital repertoire from other rounds – shortly after the competition. The recording is a key part of the winner's prize alongside live engagements and mentoring opportunities.

Leeds isn't the only new deal for Warner, with the recent announcement of its deal with Opera Rara. The label will begin distributing the company's new releases in September as well as select titles from its back catalogue. The first new release will be Rossini's *Semiramide*, recorded by the **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** under Mark Elder with soprano Albina Shagimuratova and mezzo Daniela Barcellona in the lead roles. Next up will be the world premiere recording of Donizetti's *L'Ange de Nisida* and Puccini's first stage work, *Le Villi*.

Sony Classical is very highly strung thanks to its latest exclusive signing, **Leonidas Kavakos**. The Greek violinist has already recorded Brahms Trios with cellist Yo-Yo Ma and pianist Emanuel Ax, and moves onto solo repertoire almost immediately with a recording of Beethoven's Violin Concerto and the complete Bach sonatas and partitas.

South Korean cellist **Hee-Young Lim** is much in demand of late, and we're told she is fresh out of the studio with the LSO, having recorded Lalo, Offenbach, Saint-Saëns, Massenet and Milhaud in London.

Meanwhile, in Antwerp, composer **Christian Lindberg** is preparing to record with the city's Symphony Orchestra at Queen Elisabeth Hall. He'll conduct a selection of his own works, including a new piece featuring percussionist Evelyn Glennie.

GETTY, ALEX VON KOETTLITZ



REWIND

Great artists talk about their past recordings

This month: **ANTONIO PAPPANO** *Conductor*

MY FINEST MOMENT

Puccini *Il trittico*

Angela Gheorghiu (soprano), Roberto Alagna (tenor), Cristina Gallardo-Domàs (soprano); Tiffin Boys' Choir, LSO and Philharmonia/Antonio Pappano
Warner Classics 5565872 (1999)

The Philharmonia and the London Symphony Orchestra were both involved as this was a very long project three weeks – so we split it. An opera studio recording, of course, is missing the production. You have to have somebody in charge who is the stage director – and that was me. It was an opportunity to visualise and create in

everybody's performance something that was tangibly theatrical, that when you're listening you could somehow see the production. I had wonderful singers but I would single out Cristina Gallardo-



Domàs, who not many people knew at the time, and who captivated at the sessions. The orchestra was left gobsmacked at her intensity, commitment and heart. They were weeping; it was quite something. One scene I'm very fond of is the final scene of *Tabarro*, between Michele and

Harp of the matter:
Antonio Pappano during
Il trittico recording
sessions at Abbey Road



Giorgetta. There's the heartbreaking loss of a child that has destroyed their marriage; she becomes an adulteress, he murders the lover and the two of them just sort of go at each other. The sadness and the tragedy of it all is very special as a piece of writing and theatre. You have to capture the fire and the electricity of the performance, otherwise it sounds like a laboratory, and you're done for.

MY FONDEST MEMORY

Puccini *La rondine*

Angela Gheorghiu (soprano), Roberto Alagna (tenor); LSO/Antonio Pappano
Warner Classics 5563382 (1997)

I'll never forget my very first recording with the LSO. They had just finished a long stint of contemporary music, and when they got their teeth into this Puccini score, which is one of the most alluring, perfumed and rambunctious scores, it was like they'd died and gone to heaven! From my side it was like all of a sudden I was driving a Ferrari. I couldn't believe it. I started reading a

little bit of the opening, which has this incredible orchestral flourish, and it was as if I hit the pedal and the car just took off. To see and hear them fall in love with this music was amazing. I've talked to several players over the years, and it remains one of their favourite recordings too. That makes me feel really good. It was also my first project



with Gheorghiu and Alagna together. We went on to make several recordings and it was a real partnership; her vocal allure and

knowing way with the music, plus his ardour. Then, in the smaller roles, there was this wonderful who's who of young singers of the time, all whom went on to have really terrific careers. It was a labour of love.

I'D LIKE ANOTHER GO AT...

Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2*

Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia/Antonio Pappano
Warner Classics 9494622 (2011)

The list of pieces I'd like to do again is quite long, but one is the recording of Rachmaninov's Second Symphony. It has many beautiful things in it, but because I've performed it so often since I recorded it, my view of it has grown. I've done it with many different orchestras now, just recently in Dresden, and I had the chance to go on tour with Santa Cecilia long after we made our recording. So I think there's another recording there, to bring new shafts of light on certain things, a new-found confidence



and ability to read the piece's secrets, of which there are many. I love it to death; for the conductor, it's a piece about shaping, but it's also very long. You have to smell the roses along the way, but there has to be a rigour – you have to know how to take it home. Also in its fabulous slow movement you must savour everything that's in it, and yet have an idea of the whole. I just have a deeper knowledge and understanding of the piece now, so I'd love to have another go at it.

Pappano's recording of Bernstein symphonies is out on Warner Classics

Buried Treasure



Violinist **Chloë Hanslip** shares three musical rarities from her record collection

Sibelius *Symphony No. 4*

Lahti Symphony Orchestra/
Osmo Vänskä
BIS BISCD861



I was familiar with the Second and Fifth Symphonies, which I think are the ones most people tend to know. When I listened to the Fourth for the first

time, I remember it taking my breath away. It's dark, brooding, almost depressing in a way – it had been a difficult time for Sibelius just before he wrote it. There's something very particular about the third movement; a glimmer of light somehow comes through, and I think that's what I found so beautiful.

Weill *Concerto for Violin and Wind Orchestra, Op. 12*

Frank Peter Zimmermann (violin);
Berlin Philharmonic/Mariss Jansons
Warner Classics 678 4342

I came to Weill through his songs and I wanted to delve a little more. I love the unusual instrumentation here: violin, wind orchestra, percussion and four double



basses. It's not something you get very often, and I enjoy the fact that there's so much interplay and dialogue between the instruments. As soon as

I heard it I was like 'I want to play this!', and happily I got the chance. It's such a fabulous piece with so much wit and charm.

Walton *Violin Concerto*

Ida Haendel (violin), Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra/Paavo Berglund
Warner Classics 764 2022

Ida Haendel is one of my idols; the intensity and commitment to every single piece is just



phenomenal. I always remember she told me 'we're vessels through which the composer speaks', and I think that comes through in her playing. I love the

energy that she brings to this recording, and I think it's such an incredible piece. The first movement has this longing and searching opening, and the second and third movements are really quite virtuosic. There's so much passion throughout – it's a recording I treasure.

Vol. 3 of Chloë Hanslip's Beethoven sonata cycle is out on Rubicon in September

The conductor conundrum



Although there was little need for maestros before the 19th century, someone eventually had to keep tabs on the ever-expanding orchestra, says **Tom Service**

ILLUSTRATION: MARIA CORTE MAIDAGAN

What are they doing up there? It is a combination of arcane musical wizardry and hubristic chicanery: I'm talking about those men and women who stand on little boxes and conjure sounds from thin air through the medium of digital tremulation and baton-based choreography – conductors! It's a question that has long perplexed audiences and quite a lot of orchestral musicians, which is why orchestras from the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in the US to Persimfans in Soviet Russia have made do without these much-vaunted 'maestros', who apparently wield power over musical life and death.

But let's rewind a bit: the origins of leading people to make music with a big stick go back to eighth-century BC Greece, when Pherekydes of Patrae, 'giver of Rhythm', waved a golden staff so that a group of 800 musicians 'began in one and the same time ... [beating] his stave up and down in equal in movements so that all might keep together'. And the art of creating shapes in the air to indicate relative pitch and rhythm is a tradition that begins with the incantation of the Torah and continues in the way priests lead chant in churches. All of which seems to grant the art of the conductor a quasi-mystical combination of power and glory.

Yet as a profession, conducting didn't exist before the end of the 19th century because they weren't needed very often. In the late 18th century, symphonies and concertos by Haydn and Mozart could be led by the first violinist or

the keyboardist, and operas could be 'conducted' from the harpsichord. It was only when orchestral forces grew in the 19th century that one point of authority became necessary to coordinate the huge ensembles that Beethoven, Berlioz and Wagner demanded.

Conductors today shout less at their musicians, but they have more responsibility

And it's with Wagner that the recognisable role of conducting as we know it today emerges. Wagner insisted that his interpretations were the true route to the essence of Mozart, Beethoven – and himself. And by granting the interpreter these powers of divination, he set the template for every conductor who has come since, so that figures as wildly different as the tyrant

of clarity and energy Arturo Toscanini and the high-priest of mysticism Wilhelm Furtwängler both claimed that they had the one true path to Beethoven or Bruckner or Brahms, despite how different their performances sound.

Today, conductors are both dictators and democrats, they shout less at their musicians but they have more responsibility, and there is still a decades-long journey ahead until there is a better balance of gender, ethnicity and economic privilege represented up there on the world's podiums. But at their best, conductors are lightning rods who can inspire their musicians to collective heights of musicianship that create those life-changing concerts. Love them or hate them, we need them!



BBC
RADIO



Tom Service explores how music works in *The Listening Service* on Sundays at 5pm

FAREWELL TO...

Focus and finesse:
conductor-composer
Oliver Knussen



Oliver Knussen Born 1952 *Composer, conductor*

One of the central figures in contemporary music in the UK, Oliver Knussen was as well known for championing the music of his peers as for his own remarkable works. Although he wasn't a prolific composer – he believed that creating a piece would take as long as it needed to take – he left an important legacy. His manuscripts were recently bought by the Paul Sacher Foundation in Switzerland, which also owns the Stravinsky estate. Knussen's music was renowned for its clarity and concision, as well as its meticulous and colourful orchestration. His *Flourish with Fireworks* (1988) is an established favourite, although he is perhaps best known for his operas based on Maurice Sendak's children's books *Where the Wild Things Are* and *Higglety Pigglety Pop!*. Born in Glasgow, Knussen was immersed in music from an early age. He wrote his first symphony as a teenager and conducted its premiere with the London Symphony Orchestra when he was just 15. He studied with composers John Lambert and Gunther Schuller, and in turn became a mentor for many younger composers. To mark his 60th birthday in 2012, Knussen conducted the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the Third Symphony at the BBC Proms – one of more than 30 appearances he made at that festival. He was appointed CBE in 1994, and in 2015 was presented with the Queen's Medal for Music.

Claudio Desderi Born 1943 *Baritone, conductor*

Mozart and Rossini were the big loves of Italian baritone Claudio Desderi, son of the Italian composer Ettore Desderi. He made his debut at the Edinburgh Festival in 1969, and went on to work with many of the great conductors of recent years, including Claudio Abbado and Riccardo Muti. He sang on Bernard Haitink's recordings of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Così fan tutte*. Desderi later turned to conducting, and held posts as artistic director of Pisa's Teatro Verdi (1991-98) and Turin's Teatro Regio (1999 to 2001).

Also remembered...

The Polish soprano **Isabella Nawe** (b1943) was born in Częstochowa, southern Poland. She made her debut in Lodz in 1967 as Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Three years later she became a member of the Berlin State Opera where she worked until the 1990s. Her coloratura roles include the Queen of the Night (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*) and Zerbinetta (Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*).

Tenor **Antonio Barasorda** (b1946) made his Met Opera debut as Cavaradossi in Puccini's *Tosca* in 1995, sang with Plácido Domingo in Mozart's *Idomeneo* and once stepped in to replace Domingo in Franco Alfano's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Born in Puerto Rico, Barasorda sang roles in opera houses around the world. He also became a professor at the Conservatoire of Music of Puerto Rico.

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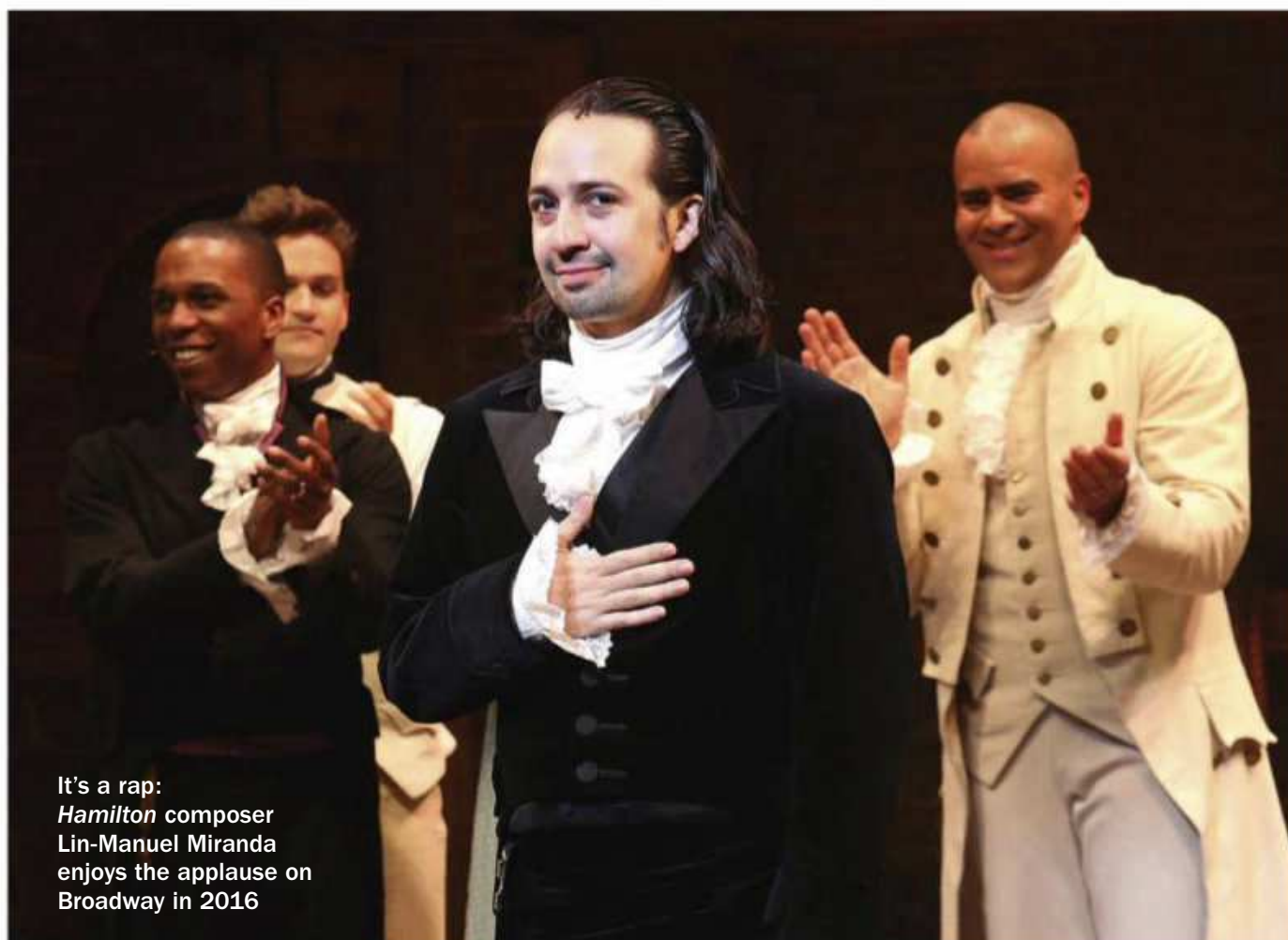
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It's a rap:
Hamilton composer
Lin-Manuel Miranda
enjoys the applause on
Broadway in 2016

Music to my ears

What the classical world has been listening to this month

Howard Goodall Composer



One recording that has a particular resonance for me is **Stravinsky's** *Symphony of Psalms*, with Simon Preston

conducting the Choir of Christ Church, Oxford, and the Philip Jones Ensemble in 1975 – it had a huge impact on me as a teenager, shortly before I joined the choir as a student. There's a muscularity to the singing which in those days was very unusual. Simon developed this much tougher, edgier sound at Christ Church, which, for me, works incredibly well in Stravinsky.

The genius of **Richard Strauss** is something I've come to appreciate more and more as I've got older. Normally as a composer, when you hear someone else's music, you find yourself deconstructing it and scoring it in

your head. With Strauss, though, I switch that part of me off and just let the interwoven waves of beauty wash over me. *Der Rosenkavalier* – particularly the last 15 minutes is sublime, and conductor Edo de Waart's recording is the one that does it for me.

Hamilton is a huge throwing down of the gauntlet to all of us to reassess how we write

I've been listening a lot to the Broadway cast's album of *Hamilton*, the musical by **Lin-Manuel Miranda**. It's a unique masterpiece, and I've seen it live in the theatre twice. It is so exhilarating and moving to be around at a time when something which is as brilliant as this first arrives on the scene. It totally

READER CHOICE



Rolf den Otter, Delft, Holland

Ivan Il'ic's exploration of **Reicha** piano works fascinates me. This is flamboyant music that Il'ic plays with style. He doesn't overplay the harmonic shifts and sudden outbursts, and the chromatic triplets in first movement of the C major Sonata are timed just right. It's the first time I've really listened to this music, instead of letting it pass by with just a nod. After all, in the holidays you can take time to listen...

redefines the musical, and is a huge throwing down of the gauntlet to all of us to reassess how we write pieces and how we perceive our audiences.

And also... Recently I had a free day to spend in **Houston**, so we went to the city's Museum of Fine Arts. It is a fantastic gallery with a huge mix of art – I love museums where you can turn a corner and be surprised by what you see next. There's a huge amount of space there, too, so you really to get a picture to yourself in a way that is rarely possible in smaller galleries. *Howard Goodall's Invictus: A Passion* is released on *The Sixteen's CORO Connections* label on 31 Aug

Karl-Heinz Steffens Conductor



At the beginning of my career I listened to lots of different recordings, but now I don't listen to any at all unless I want

to get inspired again, in which case I'll put my favourite recording of a piece on. Wilhelm Furtwängler's interpretation of **Schumann's** Fourth Symphony is one of the best recordings he ever did. It's a great example for conductors like me to see how he takes a piece and reinvents the whole thing. He actually makes the piece better than Schumann wrote it!

I'm currently rehearsing **Dvořák's** New World Symphony with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, so I've inevitably ended up listening to Václav Talich's recordings with the Czech Philharmonic. He was one of Dvořák's near-contemporaries, and has made many fantastic recordings of this symphony that are so fresh and disciplined. He shows off the quality of the orchestra in the years before the Second World War, which was very high. They formed the perfect union together.

I used to play a lot of jazz, and recently discovered a new compilation of **John Coltrane's** music. There's always something new to discover in the world of

music, and I just heard some reviews of this and decided to listen online. Coltrane was so different to Miles Davis and Cannonball Adderly – he was a universe in himself. He was selfish – his solos could be up to 20 minutes long – but such an impressive musical character. **And also...** I've been reading Harvey Sachs's biography of **Arturo Toscanini**, which I think all artists should read. It shows Toscanini as not only a fantastic conductor and musician, but also as a very courageous man who stood up against fascism. He was an absolute master – a dictator of the stage who also spoke out against injustice. I didn't know how strong he really was until I read this book.

Karl-Heinz Steffens conducts the Hallé at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall on 20, 23 & 26 September

Rebecca Dale Composer



I've been really enjoying a lot of **Dobrinka Tabakova** recently. I love her *String Paths* album with

the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra. The second movement

of her Cello Concerto in particular is absolutely stunning, and the cello playing is beautiful. I love Tabakova's choral music as well, like her *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. She hits the mark in terms of writing music that moves me. Her language is tonal but she's still creating unusual and new things.

I recently spent some time at the MacDowell Colony in America. It was an incredible, rejuvenating place to work. You're basically staying in the middle of a forest, and there's lots of space, beauty and tranquillity. You feel the ghosts of Copland and Bernstein wandering round in a benign, helpful way. I enjoyed walking the woods listening to **Adam Schoenberg's** debut orchestral album, played by the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra. It's full of colour. You can hear that he is an heir of Copland.

I've had Requiems on the mind recently. **John Powell's** first choral album *Hubris* came out recently, and it includes his *Prussian* Requiem. I was actually at the premiere at the Royal Festival Hall. There's a moment in the final movement that really got me. It's basically about the misguided pomposity

READER CHOICE

Richard Conway, Liverpool

De-de-de-derrr... De-de-de-derrr... Perhaps the most recognisable opening bars in classical music. After a tiring day at work, I was immediately swept along by the magnificent Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's performance of as **Beethoven's** Fifth. I marvelled at one of the country's finest orchestras playing in the beautiful Philharmonic Hall (pictured below), making one of music's most played pieces sound as fresh as the day it was composed.



of the generals marching into war, and they are represented by two soloists. When they finally realise the consequences of this hubris, they begin what can only be described as musical wailing.

And also... I've been watching ITV's **Love Island**. I have no shame about this. When people talk about this dating reality show being downmarket, they're missing the point. In the end when we watch and listen to things, we're trying to connect with it and be moved. There's nothing that moves more than affairs of the heart. People go through these extreme emotions, and struggle with these fundamental issues every day. Of course, it's entertainment as well. *Rebecca Dale's Requiem For My Mother will be reviewed next issue*

Our Choices The BBC Music Magazine team's current favourites

Oliver Condy Editor

Just before going to press, a new Warner recording of **Bernstein's** symphonies performed by the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Antonio Pappano landed on my desk. It's been on my player for a few days now as I marvel at superbly crafted and orchestrated, not to mention utterly thrilling, works that to my mind place Bernstein at the forefront of 20th-century orchestral composers.

Jeremy Pound Deputy editor

Given the lengthy period of warm weather we've had over summer, it was uncannily prescient of July's Buxton International Festival to programme **Iain Farrington's** wonderful *Heatwave* for flute, oboe and piano, played by Juliette Bausor, Daniel Bates and Simon Lepper. Over three movements, Farrington explores the various moods created by a hot, sticky day in a city, from feisty tempers to sleepy sultriness. It's great fun.

Rebecca Franks Managing editor

I was hooked by **Handel's** *Agrippina* at The Grange Festival this summer. While the whole cast was strong, Anna Bonitatibus was particularly compelling in the title role, as chief plotter of Claudius's downfall. Director Walter Sutcliffe brought out all the dark comedy of this political satire – there are, of course, profound moments but mainly this was great entertainment.

Michael Beek Reviews editor

Requiem masses are not typical holiday listening, perhaps, but that's exactly what I loaded onto my phone for six days in Majorca. There I was, reclining by the pool in the company of **Mozart**, Haydn, Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Britten, Berlioz, Verdi and Andrew Lloyd Webber. Sobering, yes, but the final journeys into paradise seemed fitting as I lay beneath the palms.

Freya Parr Editorial assistant

Having recently moved house and upgraded from a shoebox-sized bedroom to one that feels palatial in comparison, I now have room for a record player. Rostropovich (below) playing **Shostakovich's** Cello Concerto No. 2 sounds more gritty on vinyl than I'd have imagined, and my new flatmates are already cursing my penchant for high-octane early-morning orchestral music.

Alice Pearson Disc editor

Little-known and, in my opinion, much underrated Breton composer **Paul Le Flem's** *Sept pièces enfantines* are charming and evocative miniatures, originally written for piano but later brilliantly orchestrated. Le Flem acknowledged his influences as 'my native Brittany, Debussy and D'Indy', all of which are apparent in these miniatures.



SEPTEMBER RELEASES



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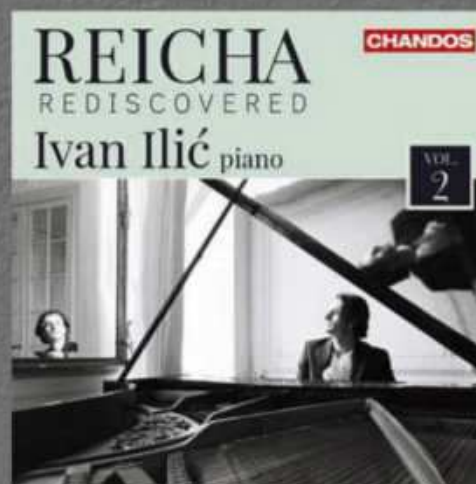
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Richard Morrison

Conductor Vasily Petrenko's move to the RPO could be a game changer

I wouldn't say all classical music critics are snobs. Perish the thought! But I have been startled by the disdain some colleagues have shown following the appointment, from 2021, of Vasily Petrenko as music director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO). 'Appropriate: a conductor going nowhere leading an orchestra going nowhere,' one sneered on Twitter.

Let's unpick the dark subtext to that remark later. For the moment, the facts. Petrenko, still only 42, has had a terrific time on Merseyside. He has lifted the quality of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, left a string of highly-praised recordings and – perhaps most important of all – reconnected the people of the city with classical music, not least by immersing himself in the Merseyside football scene.

People genuinely love him there. But 15 years is enough for any conductor with any orchestra. Familiarity breeds, if not contempt, certainly routine. Petrenko's appointment to the Oslo Philharmonic in 2013 was supposed to be his stepping-stone from Liverpool to the stars, but in Norway he hasn't made anything like the impact that illustrious predecessors such as Mariss Jansons did. Perhaps this conductor and orchestra come from different musical planets. Petrenko once made a revealing remark to me about the different procedures for getting rid of orchestral players who didn't cut the mustard. 'In Russia you can do it in six hours; in Britain six weeks; in Scandinavia anything from six months to six years.'

Anyway, for whatever reason, he's leaving Oslo in 2020 – even earlier than Liverpool, which he departs in 2021. In that sense his career has flattened

out. And it doesn't help that the 'other Petrenko' – the unrelated Kirill – is the one succeeding Simon Rattle in Berlin.

However, to write him off as my colleague did is harsh. Petrenko has shown that he can forge a rapport with audiences and youngsters. That quality will be crucial in his new role, because the RPO has repositioned itself as a London orchestra doing its most important work outside the capital serving many communities in southern England with concert series backed by valuable educational projects.

Vasily Petrenko has shown he can forge a rapport with audiences and youngsters

Let's not be naïve. That role has been forced upon the RPO. London's other symphony orchestras have solid, contractual homes: the LSO and the BBC at the Barbican, the Philharmonia and LPO at the Festival Hall. With a hugely reduced Arts Council grant, the RPO was compelled to become nomadic and, to some extent, sporadic. Yet I have nothing but admiration for the resourceful way that its management has sustained and broadened its work over the past 20 years and kept 70-odd excellent musicians in work.

The problem is that the RPO's choice of music directors has not reflected its new reality. The last was Charles Dutoit, who was a 'yesterday's maestro' even before his career imploded in a spate of post-Weinstein allegations. And when

the RPO did pick someone young and upwardly-mobile – the 33-year-old Daniele Gatti in 1994 – he rarely proved willing to repeat his London concerts in, for instance, Ipswich or Reading.

Petrenko will be ideal in this missionary role. It's really a geographical extension of everything he's been doing in Liverpool, and it's good news that his appointment will coincide with an increased presence for the RPO at the Festival Hall – one of the orchestra's main image problems has been playing in the joyless Cadogan Hall.

What, though, of the 'dark subtext' I mentioned earlier? Well, for as long as I can remember there have been music journalists and bureaucrats who believe London has too many orchestras, and would dearly love to banish one or two permanently to the regions or, better still, abolish them altogether. I have lost count of the number of schemes aimed at making this happen – and the RPO has always been first in the firing-line.

I rejoice that the British musician's innate genius for survival – which means being flexible and inventive – has thus far proved stronger than this desire to 'tidy up' accidents of history. Today, London's music lovers enjoy not only its quintet of long-established symphony orchestras, but also a host of upstarts

Aurora, the Southbank Sinfonia, the London Contemporary Orchestra et al who are finding fresh venues, fresh ways of presenting music and fresh audiences. Now the RPO has a conductor young and clued-up enough to respond to the new opportunities of the digital age and, I hope, give this resilient band a profile it hasn't enjoyed for decades. ●

Richard Morrison is chief music critic and a columnist of The Times



When Jess Gillam plays at the Last Night of the Proms, it will cap a whirlwind start to the brilliant saxophonist's career. Jeremy Pound heads to her Lake District home to meet her

A breath of fresh air

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB WHITROW



Life at the top: Jess Gillam is photographed for *BBC Music Magazine* on Hoad Hill, overlooking Morecambe Bay

Back in January 2015, an email from one of *BBC Music Magazine*'s younger readers landed in our inbox. The sender was a certain Jess Gillam. 'Dear *BBC Music Magazine*,' it began. 'I am a 16-year-old saxophonist from Ulverston in Cumbria, where I have been promoting a concert series since the age of 12. I am writing to ask if it would be possible for you to include a concert I have organised in your listings, please.'

Organising professional classical music concerts at 12? Impressive, was the general agreement around the office – do make a note of the name. Little did we appreciate at the time, however, that the owner of this remarkable youthful drive and efficiency was also a seriously talented saxophonist. We do now. In the three-and-a-half years since sending the email, Jess Gillam has been a finalist in the BBC Young Musician competition (in 2016), made her first two appearances at the BBC Proms (2017) and started to lay the foundations of an international touring career as a soloist.

And there's more. This summer has seen her win a Classic Brit, perform in another Prom (to celebrate 40 years of the BBC Young Musician competition), and also sign a contract with Decca, which saw her heading straight into the studio to record a couple of tracks. One of those tracks, the 'Brazileira' movement from Milhaud's *Scaramouche*, is scheduled for digital release when she returns once again to the Proms in September, this time to play at the Last Night, no less. 'There's nothing like the atmosphere at the Proms,' she tells me. 'I've never experienced anything like it – it was so special. I expect that the Last Night will be up another level again. It might be quite rowdy, which would suit me!'

The Royal Albert Hall and the BBC Proms feel a long, long way away from where we've met up to chat. Two hundred-and-twenty-eight miles away, to be precise. Though Jess is currently based in Manchester, she's popped back for the day to Ulverston, a town that sits quietly just at the south of the Lake District, somehow keeping that region's great touristic mishmash at arm's length. We're sitting at a table in Gillam's tearoom. And no, the name is not a coincidence. 'My great, great, great grandparents first owned a



'The Last Night of the Proms might be quite rowdy, which would suit me!'

shop – a grocer's – on the corner across the road,' she explains. 'And then my mum and dad bought this place about 12 years ago. Just above where we are sitting used to be my bedroom! Can I get you a drink of something, by the way, or anything to eat?'

An order for a hot chocolate is quickly dispatched down to the café kitchen, where Jess's mum, Shirley, and dad, Doug, are busily manning the fort. Doug took time off to see his daughter's Proms debut last year, but Shirley stayed at home to keep an eye on the business. She will, however, be at the Albert Hall for the Last

Night. I, in the meantime, want to know more about how a 12-year-old saxophonist goes about running her own concert series.

'It started with just one concert,' comes the reply. 'I'd been to see the saxophonist Snake Davis, who's a soul player, perform in Whitehaven and afterwards asked him if he could come and play in Ulverston. Jokingly, he said he would if I organised it. And so I said I would! He came, we got a great audience at Jubilee Hall, and it's built up from there. We have two or three concerts a year, and previous performers have included the saxophonists Courtney



Jess another day: outside Ulverston's Jubilee Hall; (top) at the 2016 Young Musician final with Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Ben Goldscheider; (above) winning a Classic Brit in June

Pine and Tommy Smith, plus various BBC Young Musician competitors. This year, we've got Sheku Kanneh-Mason coming which, as it's Sheku, is already sold out.'

It was, of course, Sheku Kanneh-Mason who won BBC Young Musician in the year Gillam reached the final, and I'm pleased to hear that, far from holding a grudge against the formidably talented cellist, she has remained regularly in touch with him. Like Gillam, he has signed to Decca, and both are currently continuing their studies – he at the Royal Academy of Music in London, she at the Royal Northern College of Music. So what did she make of his big moment of the summer, when he played at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markel? 'I didn't watch it, I'm afraid, as I'm not really a royalist!' Something tells me he won't take offence...

When Gillam and Kanneh-Mason reached the Young Musician final two years ago, she was the first ever person in the competition's history to do so playing the saxophone. With a fairly limited repertoire and role models that are few and far between, the classical saxophone is not an immediately obvious choice for a youngster to plump for. So how did Gillam begin? 'At the local Carnival Band, there was a choice of percussion, dance, stilts, costume making and saxophone,' she says. 'The saxophone was what I came to last, after I'd tried everything else. I found I could make a sound on it, and completely fell in love with it.'

That love was fostered in the Carnival Band and at school in Ulverston, and then at Saturday morning courses at the Junior Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Today, her studies at the RNCM proper are supplemented by lessons with one of the modern-day greats of the saxophone, John Harle, an undertaking that involves a day-long pilgrimage to the far reaches of Kent. And for all the major concert engagements, accolades and record deals now coming Gillam's way, mastering the very basics of the instrument still requires regular hard work. Being able to make a sound on a saxophone is one thing; being able to make a really good sound as a classical saxophonist is quite another. 'Playing the saxophone is all about sound production, and we learn so many bad habits when we start,' Jess explains. 'I spent a long time



Round sound: the German Sigurd Raschèr

Good reeds

Five great classical saxophonists

Marcel Mule (1901-2001)

The second professor of saxophone at the Paris Conservatoire, a post that was re-established 74 years after Sax himself had left it in 1870, Mule's teaching involved emphasis on sound quality. As a performer he premiered much new repertoire.

Sigurd Raschèr (1907-2001)

In an age when the saxophone was trending towards a sharper, more penetrating tone, the German-born Raschèr insisted the classical instrument should revert to mouthpieces that produced a round, warm sound. The many works he premiered included Glazunov's Saxophone Concerto.

John Harle (b1956)

The classical saxophone superstar of his generation, Harle (see p7) has done as much as anyone to popularise it. Highly regarded as an authority on the instrument, he is also an acclaimed composer.

Claude Delangle (b1957)

A regular player with the Ensemble Intercontemporain, Delangle has played an important part in commissioning and performing new works for the saxophone, collaborating with composers such as Berio, Boulez and Stockhausen.

Amy Dickson (b1982)

One of the current stars of the saxophone world, the Australian has commissioned works from the likes of Steve Martland and Timothy Salter, while her recordings include *Island Songs*, a highly acclaimed disc of music by her fellow countrymen.



Pioneers: Adolphe Sax; (below) Hector Berlioz

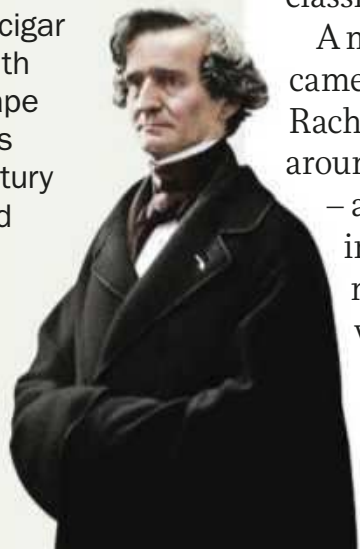
The winds of change

A brief history of the saxophone

The saxophone was invented by Adolphe Sax, a Belgian luthier and musician. He spent his childhood experimenting in the workshop of his father's musical instrument shop, before studying the flute and clarinet at the Brussels Conservatory. Examining the balance between brass and woodwind in musical arrangement, he identified a range that no instrument covered.

Although it wasn't patented until 1846, the early saxophone sprung to prominence in the 1840s. When Berlioz was shown the new instrument, he showered Sax in praise, featuring it prominently in his *Chant sacré*. Sax publicised his creation at the 1844 Paris Industrial Exhibition, and the following year French military bands replaced their horns and bassoons with E flat and B flat saxes. Once the original patent expired in 1866, other instrument makers began to alter and advance the design. The main alteration was simplifying the key work, as Sax's was seen as too awkward.

At Sax's death in 1894, his son took the reins of a renewed patent and saw the pre-war rumble of saxophone interest precede huge popularity during the 1920s jazz age. After the Henri Selmer Company purchased Sax's factory, the 1930s 'cigar cutter' model emerged, with the bent-in-the-middle shape familiar in alto saxophones today. Throughout the century experimentation continued to improve intonation, streamline fingering and increase range.



Albert Hall occasion:
with clarinettist Emma
Johnson at this year's BBC
Young Musician Prom

unlearning everything that I'd done for three years and simply re-learning how to play basic single notes. So that's what I do for two hours every day, usually first thing in the morning – just play long notes, one at a time, to improve my sound. It can get boring, though can also be quite zen-like.'

For an example of an admirable sax sound, she points to her own teacher. 'I instantly connected with John's sound

be counted on the fingers of one hand – Glazunov's Saxophone Concerto, Debussy's *Rapsodie* and *Scaramouche* spring to mind – so a lot of the fun lies in playing transcriptions of pieces written for other instruments or commissioning new works entirely. With regard to the latter, Jess tells me, she has just returned from Gothenburg where she premiered a new work written for her by Harle himself,

'I play the soprano sax most often at the moment, as it's the sound I love most'

when I heard it. It is so genuine and distinct, and so vocal. There's a real intensity to it, and yet a really sweet lyricism to it at the same time. Every single note has a different quality to it, and every single note matters. It was when I heard his performance of Nyman's *Where The Bee Dances* that I remember thinking "I've got to do that!" and really wanting to get into classical music.'

A more general love of classical music came from Gillam's parents – as we chat, Rachmaninov piano preludes tinkle around us on the café's sound system – and, while Jess does occasionally indulge in a little jazz or soul, it's rarely more than just a dabble. But familiar works for classical saxophone can

which paid a nod to her roots through references to Cumbrian folk music. She has also previously commissioned a piece from the jazz saxophonist-cum-composer Barbara Thompson... and has plenty of other plans up her sleeve.

And talking of fun, there is, of course, the number of different saxophones she gets to play on. Who wants to stick with just the one instrument, when you can master two, three or even four? 'At the moment, I play the soprano sax most often, as there's a lot of classical repertoire written for it and it's the sound I love most. I also play the alto saxophone, which is the most popular one, quite a bit and, if I'm playing soul music for a bit of fun, there's the tenor and baritone instruments too.



Tea for two:
Jess and Doug
Gillam outside the
family business

‘I’d say that the soprano saxophone is technically more difficult than the alto, as everything is so much smaller and more precision is required. A big technical leap for me, though, was understanding what is going on when I play. It’s not like, say, playing a violin or piano where you can see everything that you’re doing. For saxophonists, so much of it – breathing, the shape of the mouth and so on – is happening internally. A teacher can try and show you what’s happening and describe the sensation, but unless you have an x-ray machine in every lesson you never really know what’s going on.’

Familiarising audiences with the various types of saxophone brings its own challenges too. Not all saxes look like saxes. ‘Because it’s small and straight, people sometimes think the soprano is, say, a clarinet, so I’ve started explaining about the saxophone family in concerts. The other day, I was playing a transcription of Marcello’s Oboe Concerto and someone came up to me and said “You’re so versatile! Last week I saw you playing the saxophone; this week, you’re playing the oboe!”’.

The importance of informing and enthusing people about classical music crops up regularly in our conversation.

And, more specifically, music education – or, rather, the lack of it – is a subject guaranteed to light the Gillam blue touchpaper. ‘When I was in primary school, the local secondary school ran this brilliant initiative called the Primary Tuition Scheme,’ she says. ‘Through it, primary school children could pay two pounds a week to have a lesson from a sixth-former. I took saxophone lessons, and also got to hear some of the bands at the school. It was brilliant because it was so easy to relate to the people teaching you, and they got so many people involved. That scheme has, I believe, now been cut or at least made more expensive – because of lack of funding. That is such a crime.’

‘We have to make people understand that music is a core subject, not an additional extra. It’s always been an integral and essential part of humanity. I want to do as much as I can with regards to this, and as soon as possible. And it’s all about live music as well – the more concerts young people can get to, and so experience and interact with live music, will make a huge difference.’

That mission will, I suspect, be carried out with gusto in years to come. In the shorter term, with upcoming concert engagements in countries such as Spain, Switzerland, Finland and the US in the diary, Jess will have the pleasure of becoming better acquainted with her world atlas – remarkably, her recent concert in Gothenburg saw her take her first ever flight abroad.

And then there’s the Last Night of the Proms to think about. The last time a saxophonist played a major part in the Last Night was in 1995, when John Harle performed Harrison Birtwistle’s *Panic* – a deliciously subversive moment of programming by Proms controller John Drummond, the uncompromising piece brought howls of protest from the TV audience. Jess Gillam’s Last Night performance will, one imagines, prove a jollier affair. ‘I’m looking forward to it with a huge amount of joy. There’s quite a lot of pressure and I’m putting as much work as I can into preparing for it, but I will try to see it as just another concert. Whether I’m playing in a village hall or the Last Night of the Proms, my intention is always the same: to play the best I can.’

“If you can help it,
you should avoid
spending years doing
something that you
don't want to do”

THE BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

Roxanna Panufnik



The composer tells Radio 3's **Kate Molleson** how having the confidence to believe in her own instinct rather than follow the advice of others has brought both fulfilment and success

PHOTOGRAPHY: **JOHN MILLAR**

Roxanna Panufnik's house is piled high with birthday cards. She offers me a slice of a once-enormous cake, the remnants of '130' still visible in the icing: a joint celebration for her 50th and her mother's 80th. Through an airy kitchen and into the leafy West London garden, she directs me to a wooden love seat which we share for the next couple of hours, undoubtedly the most romantic setting in which I've ever done an interview. The whole scene radiates domestic snugness. The seat was her gift to her husband for their tenth wedding anniversary. Panufnik's eldest daughter is at the kitchen table studying for a maths exam. The middle child arrives halfway through our interview and announces her latest results (dazzlingly good) while the youngest child

is a boy chorister at Westminster Abbey. The afternoon is hot and breezy. We drink elderflower cordial and Panufnik kicks off her silver trainers to tan her feet.

At 50, Panufnik declares herself content. In the past she has experienced painful self-consciousness about the weight of the surname she inherited from her celebrated composer father (see p33), about her style of lush, heart-on-sleeve post-Romanticism whose perceived guilelessness enraged her composition teachers at music college. Now she says she's found a way of embracing what she is, and this year marks a concerted consolidation. She has a new album coming out – a choral retrospective sung by Ex Cathedra under Jeffrey Skidmore. There's also a new oratorio premiering in November, co-commissioned by the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra to celebrate 100 years of Poland regaining independence.

And there's a big BBC Proms commission. A new work for the Last Night, no less, called *Songs of Darkness, Dreams of Light* scored for double choir





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and orchestra. 'I had a really detailed brief for that commission,' Panufnik enthuses, nestling herself into the love seat. 'The two choirs will be the BBC Singers and the BBC Symphony Chorus. They should act independently of each other but they should also sing together. They wanted something that commemorated the centenary of the end of the First World War, but at the same time looked positively to the future.'

She chose two texts. One is Isaac Rosenberg's 1913 work *In The Underworld*: 'It's actually about having a broken heart, but in quite a spooky way it anticipates what it would be like to be in the trenches. It talks about terrible darkness, breathing breath impure. I've set it using a really lovely Ashkenazy prayer mode.' For the more positive part of the piece, she quotes lines from Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*: 'He was a Maronite Catholic in Lebanon. I've got an amazing Syrian *Mater Dolorosa* for that. It sounds Middle Eastern, quite highly ornamented.'

Panufnik describes the work in detail: how it 'starts out slow and quiet and dark, then gets brighter, happier, lighter'; how 'at the beginning the choirs sing in conversation then at the end they join together'; how the instrumentation includes multiple harps ('I'm an ex-harpist; I try to get a harp in everything!') and a celeste ('providing the light at the end') and 'textured winds, slightly anxious' as well as warm strings and Sufi rhythms on the drums. 'I'm really hoping that bit doesn't come over as soft rock...'

Her account of the piece sounds epic, but it all takes place within a nine-minute span, and that concision suits her well. 'I don't like writing long pieces,' she says, 'I like writing that is intense and instantly gets its message across.' She's also grateful for the specificity of the Proms brief. 'There's nothing more terrifying than a blank sheet of paper. I once spent three weeks with a blank piece of paper trying to write a harp concerto and it wasn't funny.' Her solution? 'There's a wonderful nun at Stanbrook Abbey where I used to go on retreats before I got married and had children. She unlocks me. She's amazing. I just have to start talking to her and my ideas get flowing. She's over 80 now – she's been my muse for about 20 years.'

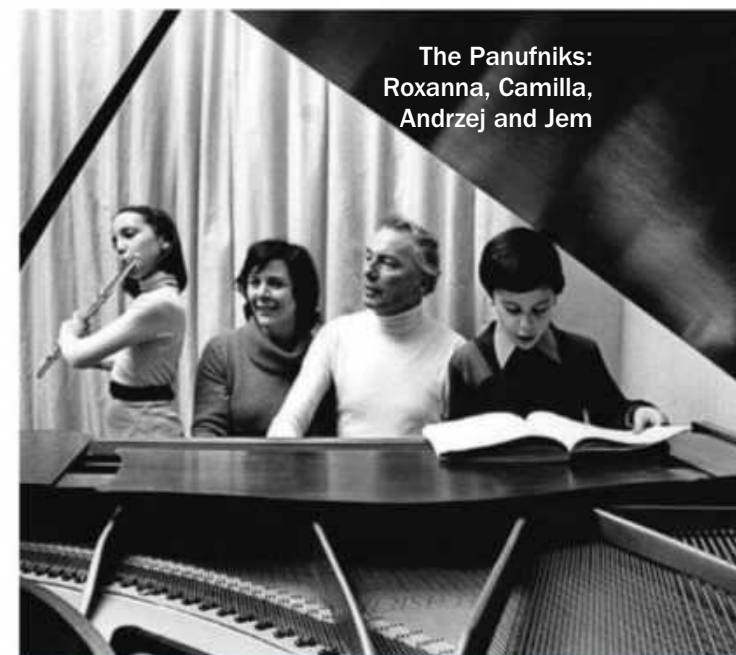


Family ties: in 1995 with a picture of father Andrzej

Panufnik first went to Stanbrook – a Benedictine abbey of enclosed nuns – in the late 1990s when she was writing her *Westminster Mass*. 'I wanted to clear my head of the outside world,' she recalls. 'I was living in Shepherd's Bush at the time. The abbey was at the foot of Malvern Hills, cut off from the noise, the traffic,

'I spent three weeks with a blank piece of paper, trying to write a harp concerto'

the television. It got me into an amazing mental space. Every time I make a start on a new piece I have to go back to that place in my head – I just can't go geographically anymore.' She points behind us to a spacious wooden hut at the bottom of the garden. Inside is a happy jumble of scores, portraits, framed magazine cover features, reference books, instruments, memorabilia. The space is her surrogate Stanbrook. 'I've got three children,' she shrugs. 'There's no time to go wafting around on retreats. Having kids really helped me to focus. I can't work at weekends because I'm with my family, but on Monday mornings I write my best music. It's as though I can fast-



Poles together

The Panufnik family

It was in 1954, the year of his 40th birthday, that Andrzej Panufnik finally lost his patience with the Polish authorities and decided to defect, giving his country's secret police the slip while abroad in Zurich and flying to London. Given asylum, he initially struggled to establish himself in his new homeland – especially compared to the celebrity he had enjoyed in Poland – but eventually the tide turned, not least when he won the Prince Rainier Competition in 1963. In England, too, he met the photographer Camilla Jessel (pictured with Panufnik in London, 1954, below), who would become his second wife. Roxanna Panufnik was born in 1968, and Jeremy ('Jem') Panufnik the following year. While Roxanna today forges her own career as a composer, Jem has enjoyed similar success as an artist and producer and, under the alter ego Jem Stone, DJ and founder of the Finger Lickin' Records label. Andrzej Panufnik enjoyed his first BBC Proms appearance as a composer in 1955, when the BBC

Symphony Orchestra performed his *Sinfonia rustica*; Roxanna's Proms debut, meanwhile, came in 2014, when Valery Gergiev conducted the World Orchestra for Peace in her *Three Paths to Peace*.





track a retreat mentality. It sounds a bit brutal and not very artistic, but there's a composing muscle in my brain, and by this point it's very well toned.'

In her late teens, Panufnik's father, Andrzej, gave her a book of folk music from the Tatra mountains. The gift kickstarted in Roxanna a lifelong curiosity for traditional music from around the world, which in turn has provided the basis for many of her works. She acknowledges that her love of 'every faith music' is ideological as well as purely musical; she says she wishes 'we as a people would look more at the things that we have in common than obsessing over our differences. We all started from the same place. We diverged like a beautiful tree. The messages we get about faith from the media are always negative ones, but I want people to hear the beauty of the culture these faiths can inspire.'

There is a determined egalitarianism to Panufnik's faith-based sourcing she doesn't even differentiate when she's writing music of her own religion. 'I'm a practising Catholic, but I'm quite universal,' she stresses. 'My son goes to an Anglican school. And remember, I wasn't always a Catholic.' Panufnik became religious at the age of 21. She was attending Polish evening classes and had befriended a fellow student who was marrying a Polish woman. 'He asked me to find him some Polish hymns for his wedding, so I

went along to a Polish Catholic mass out of curiosity. I didn't understand a thing, I didn't find any hymns, but when I came out I felt amazing. Happy, calm, at peace with everything. So I kept going to mass.' A couple of months later her father was diagnosed with cancer. 'The bottom fell out of my world. When I went to mass, I

'The Proms, the oratorio, the CD – it's a cracker of a year and I feel so blessed'

felt like I could cope. It's almost as though it had been put there like a safety net.'

Andrzej Panufnik never spoke Polish at home 'he'd had such a traumatic time when he left Poland' but in her twenties Roxanna began taking Polish classes in secret. She wanted to surprise her father by speaking to him in his own language. He died before she had learned enough for a conversation, but it was a turning point. She says the bereavement of her father's death expanded her emotional boundaries. 'Having felt sadness so deeply, I suddenly felt as though I could feel happiness more deeply, too. It pushed me further with harmonies and dynamics. I wear my heart on my sleeve — I'm very Polish in that way!'

She also felt a new kind of urgency to pursue her own convictions. She had stopped playing the harp because of tendon troubles, and as a composition student at the Royal Academy of Music she had been led to believe she was useless. 'I frustrated my professors terribly because I didn't want to be as experimental as they thought I should be,' she rolls her eyes. 'My end of college report said I had a gift for melody but that my music was naive. I thought I was never going to make it. That was in the 1980s, when there was only one "good" type of new music. I knew that I didn't want to write like that, but my confidence went downhill. I got engaged to a chicken farmer.'

She laughs as she looks back on how her life could have gone 'in a very different direction'. After college she got a job in television, but her musician friends kept asking her to write pieces for them. And then came her father's death: 'It made me appreciate the briefness of life. That if you can help it, you should avoid spending years doing something you don't want to do.' She called off the engagement and launched her career as a composer.

Twenty-five years later, she says turning 50 feels like an energiser. 'The Proms, the oratorio, the new CD — it's a cracker of a year and I feel so blessed. It feels like a diving board. I worry less about what people are going to think. I used to spend a lot of time thinking, "you can't do that!" Parallel fifths, that kind of thing. Now I realise it's all completely possible.'

Was she really so worried about parallel fifths — a compositional rule invented in the 18th century? 'Of course, it matters to me what people think of my music. It would be incredibly arrogant if it didn't. I'm writing this music for people to listen to. When I was writing the Proms piece, I was aware that it's going to be under huge scrutiny. Everyone is going to have something to say about it. But in the end, I've got ways of dealing with that pressure. And I think I've written something very true and quite powerful.' She stretches her bare feet in the grass. 'Turning 50? I'll eat that cake. I'll write those parallel fifths.'

Roxanna Panufnik's Celestial Bird is released on Signum in September; Songs of Darkness, Dreams of Light premieres at the Last Night of the Proms on 8 September

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The award-winning **Carion Wind Quintet** returns with *Dreams of Freedom*, featuring the world-premiere recording of *Borderless* by Syrian refugee Moutaz Arian, alongside Mozart, Zemlinsky, Hindemith, Stravinsky and Pärt



The rich variety of music on this album is unified by each composer's 'dream of freedom'. All of these composers experienced exile of one kind or another, travelling far from home in order to pursue their vocation. Mozart left the stifling confines of Salzburg for the cultural riches of Vienna. Stravinsky, Hindemith, Zemlinsky and Pärt all left unsympathetic or even hostile regimes, and Kurdish composer Moutaz Arian escaped Syria and now lives in China; he dedicated his piece, *Borderless*, to Carion. Yet despite the profound, sometimes painful origins of this music, this is an album full of joie de vivre: music full of hope, intellect and even humour. A fascinating and unmissable release.

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Jesus Rodolfo offers a sublime interpretation of a transcription of J.S. Bach's *Sonata No. 3*, BWV 1005 (originally for solo violin), a work of great power which includes the longest fugue ever written by Bach, a breathtaking tour de force. In Hindemith's *Viola Sonata*, Op. 11, No. 5, Rodolfo finds parallels with J. S. Bach via the work's neoclassical musical language, leavened by a purity, even a romanticism, of spirit. Ligeti's *Viola Sonata* is considered perhaps the most challenging solo viola work yet written, a challenge audibly relished by Jesus Rodolfo in this thrilling performance.



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Courage in the Congo

In central Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, an orchestra and women's chamber ensemble have flourished against all the odds. Jessica Jane Hart tells their inspiring story

On a Monday morning at a church in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angel Tsimika struggles to project her breath into her flute mouthpiece. Standing in front of her, her teacher speaks with a firm voice in a language that Angel doesn't understand. It's hot, and both of the women are exhausted. Angel wipes the sweat from her brow and rests her head on her flute as a young man translates the words of the teacher from English to Lingala. She makes another attempt as her teacher watches pensively. Words seem to be failing them; English is not the native tongue of anyone in the room, so the lesson stops and starts. Suddenly, her teacher drops to the floor and has Angel join her in a yoga style pose, sitting with legs raised in front of them and their flutes to their lips. The muscles in Angel's diaphragm are forced to contract, and suddenly the concept is clear. She chuckles, and shakes her head at the silly position it took to get there. Her teacher laughs and they return to the music that they've been working on for weeks.

JESSICA JANE HART

“ Kinshasa is a place filled with action and intensity, bombarding the senses of sight, sound and smell ”

Streets ahead: (this page, clockwise from main) cellist Josephine Nsimba plays in a Kinshasa road; Nsimba and members of the women's ensemble share a mid-rehearsal meal; Japanese flautist Kaori Fujii leads an ensemble rehearsal



Angel is part of the Kimbanguist Symphony Orchestra, a community of self-taught musicians who gather in a church to rehearse Beethoven, Brahms and more, and her teacher is Kaori Fujii, a renowned Japanese flautist.

The Democratic Republic of Congo and Beethoven's Fifth might seem the most unlikely bedfellows, but musicians like Angel have been working hard to change that. The Kimbanguist Symphony Orchestra is a dedicated group that has been gathering in their church for the past 20 years to develop their skills and realise their dreams of performing music to a wide audience.

Outside the church, Kinshasa can be overwhelming. Much of its housing is low-level with nearly 12 million people living and sleeping at ground level. Scrambling and hustling under the hot sun, people walk with heavy loads



Kinshasa Women's Chamber Ensemble



balanced on their heads; some are pushing carts or hanging on the backs of cars. At night, the vibrancy of the city is masked by an intense darkness that blankets the streets. Electricity and running water are not always guaranteed, so while the streets remain busy, pedestrians in the darkness seem to come out of nowhere, like deer on a country road. Drifts of plastic rubbish fill the drainage canals that line the streets while other waste is piled up and burned where it lies. It's a place filled with action and intensity, bombarding senses of sight, sound and smell.

Many of the Kimbanguist Symphony Orchestra's musicians travel long distances on foot or by bus to attend rehearsals or to have practice time on an instrument. When rains flood the city's dirt roads, it can be difficult to travel, but the group has attracted attention with their accomplishments, performing abroad and capturing the attention of international media.

And in fact, it was a German documentary that first drew Kaori Fujii's attention to the orchestra back in 2011. 'I always thought that in order to be a classical musician you have to have really good training, you have to have family support, a good instrument, a humidity-controlled room and all of those things I thought were normal,' recalls Fujii. 'These people didn't seem to have any of that, yet they were still doing it.'

After meeting the orchestra's musicians, Fujii refocused her career to spend time helping them develop, and now travels to Kinshasa several times a year to work with the musicians, giving masterclasses and facilitating concerts and outreach programmes. In 2014 she founded Music Beyond, a non-profit organisation dedicated to music education in developing



“ No matter how many jobs they have to have to survive, these women would never give up on music ”

countries, focusing on DR Congo and in 2016 she worked with the women of the orchestra to form DR Congo's first all-female chamber ensemble (as yet unnamed), providing a platform for the women to act as role models in communities throughout the country.

That the ensemble exists at all is something of a miracle. Twenty years ago, the main orchestra had very few instruments, which they had to share. And with no access to basic accessories like strings or hardware for repairs, they were forced to use mechanical wire in place of strings and random wood or plastic pieces for missing or broken parts. Fujii remembers her first rehearsals with the woodwind players. 'They were using some crazy fingerings to get the notes.' Many of them had been improvised by mimicking an old Casio keyboard. 'So they would just play a note dum-dum-dum-dum-dum and then they would try different combinations with their fingers to find something that resembled it and write it down. They'd do that for every single note. That piece



of paper was passed down to their students, because nobody had books.'

Today is a different picture – more instruments and kit have been donated, though they continue to rely on creative problem-solving for repairs and parts replacements. And music has helped with their confidence, too. 'The women of the orchestra were really lethargic, which is to say in a deep sleep before Kaori came and woke us up,' says Dauphine, a violinist in the ensemble. 'She is showing us the potential that is within us, but that we were not nurturing.'

Now the women's ensemble is starting to perform more – at schools and skill centres for struggling communities throughout DR Congo. After concerts they spend time with the audience, listening to stories about the struggles that each community faces. Speaking the local language, Lingala, the musicians share personal stories of hope. 'We struggled to find basic supplies, but we persisted because we had a vision,' says violinist Pauleth Masamba. 'We started with nothing – no musicians, no instruments – and we built it up,

Work and play: (clockwise from bottom far left) double bassist Edgar Mbidimambu teaches a young Kimbanguist Symphony Orchestra player; members of the women's ensemble outside the church where they practise; flautist Angel Tsimika rests during a lesson; violinist Dauphine Mata takes a break between rehearsals; violinist Pauleth Masamba says goodbye to Fujii after a long day of music-making



step by step, like a kid building a house.' Fellow violinist Nicole Tuzolana chips in: 'If you don't put love into whatever you are doing, it's not going to go anywhere; you must suffer to make something good.'

Fujii talks about the first outreach programme at a centre outside of Kinshasa where young mothers, (some as young as 12 years) and homeless girls live together. 'I asked some of the ladies of the ensemble to share personal stories of how they overcame their hardships, and I was amazed by the fact that these women really stepped up and were open about their own lives. They talked about how important it was to keep on going and to have something to love. No matter how many jobs they have to have to survive, they would never give up on music.'

The outreach projects have given new direction to Music Beyond, and Fujii says that her work in the Congo is far from finished. She has ambitions to bring instrument technicians to train up repairers and would also like to bring in more high-level teachers to give masterclasses for other instruments in the orchestra.

In turn, the ensemble has dreams of being recognised on a global stage alongside other international ensembles, and Fujii is helping them reach their goal. Recognising that much of her success is owed to the skilled teachers who pushed and challenged her, she is happy to return the favour. Asked why she makes the long and expensive journey several times a year to work in such a difficult environment, Fujii has a simple answer: 'Because they deserve it.' 🎵

Good vibrations

How did Beethoven cope with going deaf? Robin Wallace suggests that the great composer relied on physically feeling the music thanks to a unique hearing machine he had fitted to his Broadwood piano

ILLUSTRATION: STEVE RAWLINGS



“Beethoven’s deafness is often spoken of as a struggle from which he emerged triumphant”

Ludwig van Beethoven’s deafness is probably the best-known physical ailment of any composer in history. Because it caused him untold suffering and affected his work, it has become an unshakeable part of the legend surrounding the man and his music. It’s often presented as an obstacle he had to overcome, while his reaction to hearing loss is spoken of as a struggle or battle from which he emerged heroically, having triumphed over a threatening enemy. It has even been said that after Beethoven could no longer hear, he retreated into the privacy of his imagination, heard music in his head, then wrote it down. Yet as our understanding of disability has been reshaped over the years, it is becoming evident that much has been misunderstood.

Even though more than a hundred diagnoses have been offered, there is still no clear understanding of what caused Beethoven’s hearing loss or even when it began. He claimed to have started noticing it in 1796, when he was 25, but if his experience is like that of other people who gradually lose their hearing, it probably began several years earlier, perhaps even before he moved to Vienna from Bonn in 1792. Although it has been claimed that he was ‘stone deaf’ by the time he wrote the Fifth Symphony in his mid-thirties, there is a report of him listening with an ear trumpet while his nephew Karl played the piano and correcting his mistakes as late as 1820, when he was nearing the age of 50.

Perhaps our image of the composer isolated in his deafness, working out music in his mind, is

outdated. Beethoven always spent a great deal of time improvising at the piano – not just in public performance but as part of the way he composed. The keyboard was a lifeline for Beethoven in his deafness. In early 1818, he received a Broadwood piano (pictured left) as a gift from the English piano builder. He treasured the instrument for the rest of his life. Two years later, the composer took the unusual step of having an amplifier – the so-called ‘hearing machine’ – built for his piano. This was a concave metallic resonator, possibly made from zinc, that was placed on top of the instrument. Beethoven used this device or later versions of it until his death, suggesting that even in his final years he could hear well enough to obtain some benefit from it.

A recent recreation, for the first time, of both the Broadwood piano and Beethoven’s hearing machine (see p42) suggests a fascinating new possibility: that the tactile contact Beethoven experienced with the new English pianos became more important to him as his hearing grew worse. As Belgian pianist Tom Beghin discovered when he recorded the late Beethoven sonatas on this piano, the action of the Broadwood was heavier than that of Viennese pianos. The keys were ‘spongy’: they sank deep into the instrument and required that each note be separately articulated. Yet the result was a sound that was somewhat murky compared to the clear, bell-like tones of the Viennese instruments. It is unlikely that Beethoven was able to hear this instrument better, so why was he so devoted to it?

ALAMY





Surround sound:
Beethoven's
hearing machine

The secret, it appears, was in the touch. The Broadwood was constructed so the sounding board connected directly to the instrument's outer frame, conveying powerful vibrations where Beethoven needed them most: at the keyboard and through the floor at his feet.

With the hearing machine in place to amplify the sound and vibrations even further, the instrument became a physical extension of his body. He could feel its resonance to his core. Given this, it seems unlikely that the loud dynamics in Beethoven's music were a response to deafness, as is often suggested. It seems even less likely when you also consider that in his thirties Beethoven suffered from loudness recruitment. This condition, in which some sounds register as much louder than they actually are, is familiar to people with hearing loss. As a result, Beethoven plugged his ears with cotton to make playing the piano bearable. So if anything, loudness recruitment would have made loud music painful for him to listen to.

And it was the instruments at his disposal, rather than the frequencies he could or couldn't hear, which affected the pitch range of Beethoven's music. The mighty *Hammerklavier* Sonata (1818) provides a striking example of this. The first three movements were written for a six-octave Viennese piano, extending from the F two and a half octaves below middle C to the F three and half octaves above. Beethoven used this full range in the *Hammerklavier*. But just before he began the final movement, he received the Broadwood. The range of the music shifted to fit the new instrument's lower six-octave range, which instead extended to the Cs three octaves either side of middle C. So the entire sonata could not be played on either of the instruments Beethoven had available while he was writing it. A more modern piano would be needed for that.

PIETER PEETERS



Behind the scenes

A few years ago piano-maker Chris Maene came up with the idea of recreating Beethoven's 1818 Broadwood and also attempting to copy the resonator built for it by the Viennese maker Matthäus Andreas (André) Stein.


Musicologist Tilman Skowronek's study of the conversation books Beethoven's peers used to communicate with him revealed more information about the device than was previously known. Acoustician Thomas Wolfrank designed a series of working models that approximated the sound environment in which Beethoven composed his late works.

Pianist Tom Beghin then recorded the last three Beethoven piano sonatas on the instrument, with a carefully calibrated recording set-up (*Inside the Hearing Machine*, Evil Penguin EPRC0025).

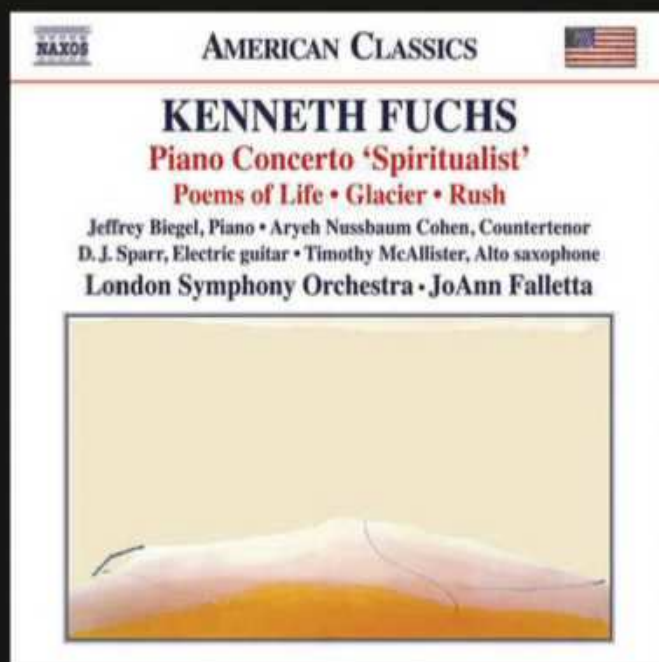
Despite the remarkable lengths Beethoven went to in order to feel the music, there was a period during which he composed in near total deafness. It is probably safe to say that it includes only the relatively small number of late works from about 1815. That includes public works like Symphony No. 9 and the *Missa Solemnis*, but is dominated by the intimate last five string quartets and last five piano sonatas. These have long been considered among his most challenging and rewarding works.

From the outset they provoked extraordinary responses. In the five years after its premiere in 1824, more was written about the Ninth Symphony than had been written about any of his previous compositions. Unprecedented effort was put into trying to understand his music. Many of the quartets and sonatas received unusually extensive reviews that helped readers come to terms with compositions many of them found baffling.

Those reviews have helped to establish some of the very beliefs now in question. In particular, Joseph Fröhlich's long review of the Ninth, published in 1828, the year after Beethoven died, suggested for the first time that the tragedy-joy narrative of the symphony was Beethoven's musical autobiography. It showed that Beethoven had triumphed over deafness. Works that follow a similar outline (like the Fifth Symphony), or that glorify heroism (the *Eroica*), were understood in the same way, even though Beethoven wrote those two pieces when he could still hear music quite well. It's even suggested that the works in which Beethoven does not present this titanic battle are less important.

The most significant thing to be learned from studying the history of Beethoven's deafness, however, may be that his music has a much broader emotional range than he is often given credit for. His oeuvre includes the *Pastoral* Symphony with its relaxed evocations of the countryside; beautiful and lyrical songs from the cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, and delightful and impish small piano pieces like the late Bagatelles, most of which Beethoven wrote when he was using the Broadwood and the hearing machine. These works, written in successive decades as his deafness grew more advanced, show a composer whose technique and emotional range continually broadened even as his hearing failed. Beethoven did not triumph over deafness. He learned to work with it and around it. 

Robin Wallace's book 'Hearing Beethoven: A Story of Musical Loss and Discovery' is published by the University of Chicago Press in October 2018



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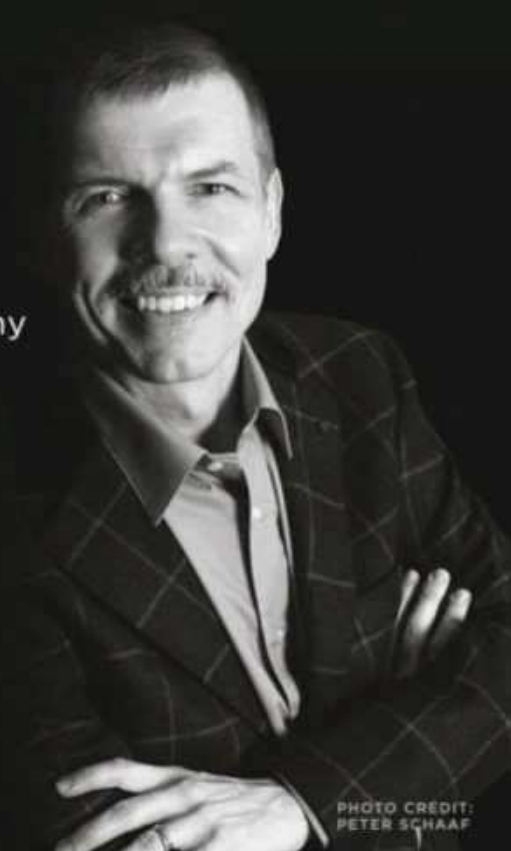


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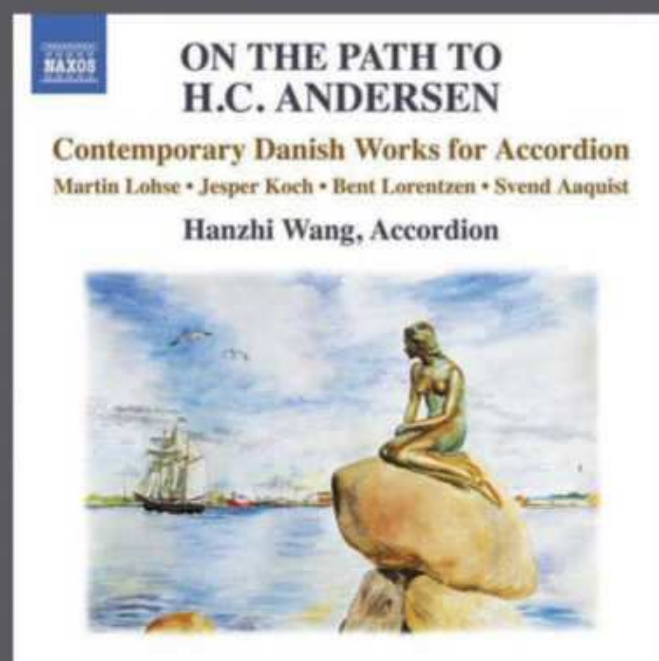


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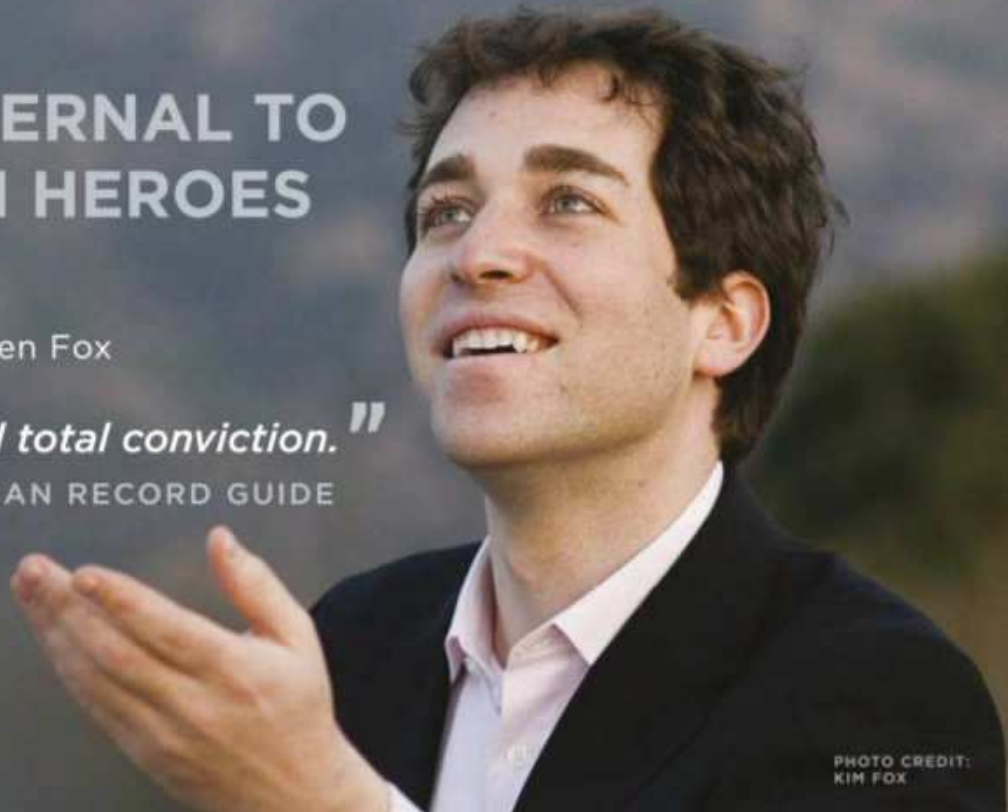


PHOTO CREDIT:
KIM FOX

Florida keys

America's most high-tech concert hall isn't in New York or San Francisco, but by the beaches of Miami. Brian Wise meets conductor Michael Tilson Thomas, co-founder of the New World Symphony

The Miami Beach that most visitors know – the one flush with swank art deco hotels, sceney nightclubs and skimpy swimwear – appears to be alive and well. Evenings on Collins Avenue bring out a parade of bronzed women and muscle-bound men slipping out of exotic cars and into velvet-roped lounges. By day, the party atmosphere moves to the beach, where adjacent hotels pump out hip-hop beats and serve pricey cocktails to guests. Seemingly parachuted into this frolic is the New World Symphony (NWS), a training orchestra with a 35-week concert series, co-founded by artistic director Michael Tilson Thomas. The orchestra comprises 87 musicians, primarily recent conservatory and music school graduates. Each year, some 1,200 to 1,500 applicants vie for 20 to 30 open slots; most stay on for two to three years. To the casual observer, they are here for one reason: to prepare for careers as orchestral musicians.

But as the NWS turns 30 years old this year, it has evolved into something larger: a hybrid of a technology institute, think tank and laboratory for music education. Most of this activity takes place within the New World Center, a bright and airy facility designed by architect Frank Gehry, which opened in 2011 to the tune of \$160m (£96m). It features a concert hall with vineyard-style seating for 756 patrons, multimedia technology and multiple stage setups.



The centre's façade includes a 7,000-square-foot projection wall that displays Wallcasts – live concert simulcasts – to an adjoining 2.5 acre public park ringed by 167 speakers. Though solidly traditional by Gehry standards, the hall design is moulded to the NWS's mission, with sleek rehearsal rooms and a rooftop garden.

The technical, and perhaps philosophical, nerve centre is a computer-lined production booth high above the auditorium, where a seven-person team includes four videographers who shoot and edit video and create animations that are beamed onto five, curvilinear acoustic 'sails' that line the hall.



Making waves in Miami: (clockwise from main) a Wallcast concert in full swing; conductor Michael Tilson Thomas; the New World Symphony performs Britten with a new film by video designer Tal Rosner



Technology pervades numerous other areas as well, including online video projects and distance learning activities. 'I am increasingly becoming a kind of executive producer here with a lot of the fellows who are working on presentations,' Tilson Thomas tells a small group of journalists who gather in a top-floor patrons' lounge adjacent to his studio. Concert lighting design is a particular interest to Tilson Thomas, who may ask for different shades of blue to highlight distinct timbres in the strings, or draw attention to otherwise overlooked solo parts.

At a Saturday night concert of Dvořák, Ginastera and Tchaikovsky, the audience is greeted with stylised palm leaves beamed onto the acoustic panels, later replaced by succinct programme notes. Backlighting morphs between shades of green and beige. This is the NWS's annual 'Side-by-Side' concert, in which 46 teenage musicians from underrepresented backgrounds in Brazil, Colombia and South Florida are invited to play with the orchestra, cost-free. It is a big and boisterous performance.

“New World Symphony fellows learn how to perform not just for the patrons in the hall but also for the cameras”

There are no bow ties in the NWS, and fellows learn how to perform not just for patrons in the hall's steeply-raked seats but for the cameras. There are 14 robotic and fixed-position cameras in the hall, from which some 700 shots are assembled for a typical Wallcast production, up from 400 when the hall opened. 'It's a constantly developing vocabulary,' notes director of video production Clyde Scott.

Howard Herring, the New World Symphony's president and CEO, says the projection wall was the lynchpin in convincing city officials to turn over two car parks for development a decade ago. 'I said, "This is the deal: We're going to make a drive-in movie theatre for classical music",' Herring says of one early conversation. 'This is about the architecture of engagement and facing out to the community. At that point they begin to get it.' (The city retains partial control of the park, and shows films and video art on the wall when the NWS isn't performing.)

My visit in late April coincides with the National Performing Arts Production



Sonic spectacular: (clockwise from main) crowds enjoy a Wallcast concert; Frank Gehry's hall; Michael Tilson Thomas conducts Cage's *The Seasons*



Workshop. In a 'Town Hall' masterclass, Tilson Thomas coaches musicians from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's youth ensemble, and from the Nashville Symphony's 'Accelerando' programme. The three venues are linked via Internet2, and using the New World Center's technology known as LoLa (Low Latency Audio visual streaming system) that enables sound and images to be transported in a few milliseconds.

Even more striking is a performance by NWS fellows of Ives's *An Unanswered Question*. While a dozen string players assemble in the roof garden, a woodwind quartet sits in a lobby mezzanine two floors below, and a trumpet player is stationed in the auditorium. All three groups are linked by fibre-optic cameras and microphones and the resulting performance is stitched together in a surrealistic live video. Ives's enigmatic work seems flown in from the future.

NWS officials hope that fellows will carry this technological knowhow into their professional lives. 'If you think about the artistic life for a musician within an orchestra, there's not a lot of opportunity for them to stretch themselves,' says John Keiser, the NWS's executive vice president and provost. 'A lot of them do it outside of the orchestra. But it would be great if the benefit of all of their ingenuity and innovation and creativity accrued to the orchestra.'

Tilson Thomas echoes this point. 'More and more of the fellows – and alumni – are coming up with all kinds of original ideas of their own,' he says. 'Increasingly they are finding their own ways of carrying ideas forward and shaping them according to where they are living and what their situations are.'

Besides giving some 70 to 80 concerts a year, each NWS fellow is required to participate in community projects and take an entrepreneurship training course, developed



“The strong-willed 73-year-old Michael Tilson Thomas is very much at the heart of this sprawling institution”

by Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. 'The Independent Musician' aims to build leadership skills that can be applied towards business partnerships. As a final project, fellows organised 20 performances this past spring in venues including an animal shelter, a senior centre and even Everglades National Park.

The latter programme, dubbed 'Bach in the Wild', was the brainchild of Roman Yearian, a violinist from Washington State. Yearian had spent the previous year working as a volunteer ranger at Big Bend National Park in Texas. 'From visiting parks across the country, I noticed how it's a very visual experience,' he explains. 'I was interested creating in an aural experience that would allow people to use other senses to appreciate the natural resources.'

Technology also played a role in Yearian's path to New World. Feeling burnt out, he had taken a year off the violin, and lacked a teacher. When he eventually decided to audition for the NWS, he prepared by watching online instructional videos that the organisation provides to potential applicants. 'They went through all of the things that they listen out for,' he says. 'I basically used that exclusively to prepare for my audition here.' Yearian has since left the NWS to take a position in the Florida Orchestra, starting this autumn.



Bright future:
Pérez Art Museum

Cultural shift

An arty tour of Miami

The gallery and museum landscape is especially vibrant, spurred on by Art Basel Miami Beach and the emergence of the Design District and the Wynwood Art District in the early 2000s. In North Miami, the Museum of Contemporary Art draws serious art lovers with mixed-media pieces, video art and sculpture, plus a Friday night jazz series.

Miami Beach is home to the Bass, a newly-renovated contemporary art museum with a terrific café. Across Biscayne Bay is the Pérez Art Museum, which opened in 2013 and houses rotating exhibits in a striking, 120,000-square-foot building. Next door is the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, a sprawling, three-theatre complex whose resident companies include the Miami City Ballet and the Florida Grand Opera.

The Arsht Center also hosts the Cleveland Orchestra for a two-weekend winter residency. Though the dissolution of the Florida Philharmonic in 2003 left Miami without a full-time professional orchestra, the city is home to some creative upstarts including the Nu Deco Ensemble, whose recent season comprised modern classical repertoire and pop arrangements.

Much anecdotal evidence suggests that NWS alumni are spread throughout North American orchestras. Douglas Rosenthal, a trombonist in the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, says he is one of nine musicians in his 62-member orchestra who are NWS alumni. He credits the leadership training at New World in preparing him for his current role. 'They offer so much along the lines of how to be a good citizen in the community and among your colleagues, how to nurture relationships with big supporters and board members,' he says. 'And, of course, that's in addition to all of the artistic stuff.'

The Chicago-bred Rosenthal adds that while his fellowship, from 2009-12, enabled him to 'buckle down and gear up for auditions,' Miami Beach seemed 'strange' at times. 'To suddenly be among palm trees and people who spend five hours a day at the gym and have seven cars in their garage, that was... different,' he says, with a laugh. 'But it was fun.'

Today, each NWS fellow receives a \$500 (£381) weekly stipend, optional student loan deferments and a furnished apartment. The orchestra is not unionised, though several fellows maintain that this isn't the source of any friction. Indeed, Tilson Thomas says that the expansive rehearsal schedules are a draw for some soloists, including pianist Yuja Wang and

violinist Gil Shaham, who come to try out new repertoire without feeling rushed.

Strong-willed and detail-focused, the 73-year-old Tilson Thomas is very much at the heart of this sprawling institution. As he prepares to step down as the San Francisco Symphony's music director in 2020, questions inevitably emerge about his future at the NWS. 'That's not something I can really control,' Tilson Thomas says. 'But the fact that there are as many musicians who come here as coaches, and some wonderful young conductors, in that sense, the continuity is there.' He cites two regular guests as potential candidates: Louisville Orchestra music director Teddy Abrams and New York Philharmonic assistant Joshua Gersen.

Tilson Thomas is then reminded of a colourful episode from the NWS's early days, before the New World Center, and even before its home in the art deco Lincoln Theater. For a brief time, it was based in a multi-purpose community centre. Leonard Bernstein had come to lead masterclasses and a rehearsal of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. During a soft passage in the third movement, a worker suddenly barged in and yelled, 'Everybody out, we have a bingo game to set up for!'

'That,' says Tilson Thomas, 'was a unique experience for Bernstein.'

MUSICAL DESTINATIONS

Beijing China

The Beijing Music Festival, a beacon for classical music in China for 20 years, is now entering a new phase, as *Cristina Schreil* discovers



Enter the dragon:
the Forbidden City at
the heart of Beijing;
(below) conductor Long Yu

For nearly 500 years, the Chinese called it 'Zijin Cheng'. Translating roughly to 'Forbidden City', the name refers to a harrowing and severe rule: that anyone caught trespassing Beijing's imperial complex, reserved strictly for the emperor and his court, was killed on the spot. These days the massive landmark – spanning hundreds of buildings and over 180 acres in Beijing's centre – welcomes 16 million visitors a year. A place once barred to most of society is now a bustling public space. Throngs of tourists snap pictures, roam about once-hidden courtyards

and crowd the palace's museum and gift shops. Still, there's a sense of peace. The neighbourhoods beyond the Forbidden City are hives of careering bicycles and cars, where pedestrian right-of-way is a distant concept; stepping inside the towering complex walls is a glimpse back in time. Present-day Beijingers simply call it 'Gùgōng' – 'Old Palace' – reflecting the City's wealth of artefacts and ornate Ming Dynasty architecture.

The complex indeed feels ancient, especially as Beijing has transformed into a modern hub of global commerce. Across the capital, similar juxtapositions abound. Skyscrapers abut ancient buildings. Street signs are in both Mandarin and English. Beijing's many paper lamp-lined *hutongs* – narrow, charming alleyways – sport internet cafés, chic boutiques, and craft breweries.

There's also the Beijing Music Festival, which has its own contrasts. The Forbidden City



Concert Hall, just southwest in Zhongshan Park, is one of several venues hosting the 22-day festival. Events include 29 concerts, educational seminars, masterclasses, open rehearsals and social gatherings. Over its two decades, it has become a lodestone for classical music in China, drawing in performers from around the globe and spring-boarding several new commissioned pieces. Like the Forbidden City, it supports and celebrates Chinese culture while opening doors to the world.

2017 was a landmark year, given that it was the 20th festival. The programming was notably diverse, with the concerts including those for children, comprising opera, symphonic and folk music performances from 17 groups, including a Welsh traditional group and London's Silent Opera. Violinists Frank Peter Zimmermann, with son Serge Zimmermann, and Maxim Vengerov lent star power to the opening and closing concerts respectively. Over four nights, conductor Paavo Järvi and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen brought to Beijing their Beethoven Project – the city's first Beethoven symphony cycle. There was also a co-production of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, a collaboration between the Beijing Music Festival and the Salzburg Easter Festival and a revival of a landmark 1967 production featuring the Hong Kong Philharmonic under Jaap van Zweden.

With the 21st season this autumn, one chapter ends and another begins. Festival founder and conductor Long Yu has recently announced he is passing over the role of artistic director to the assistant programming director Shuang Zou. It's a good moment to reflect on how China's classical scene has evolved since the inaugural 1998 performances. 'You can see the development of the Chinese provincial orchestra,' explains Long Yu. Twenty years is paltry in the grand scheme, he concedes, but in that time China has seen massive changes. At the festival's inception, there were ten provincial orchestras in China. Now, there are 73. 'I look back and the proudest thing we've established is Chinese classical platforms,' says Yu, who celebrated this flourishing scene with an ambitious idea: a day-long 'Orchestral Marathon', where nine of China's top orchestras and the nation's most acclaimed



Chinese premiere:
Maxim Vengerov performs
music by Qigang Chen

conductors performed in succession. For the finale, the principals of each orchestra united for an all-star performance, with Long Yu at the helm. He asserts there is a healthy public interest – a claim backed up by huge audiences, including children – and that China's professionalisation 'all started from the Beijing festival'.

'I look back and the proudest thing we've established is Chinese classical platforms'

Yet perhaps most important to Yu is how the festival sparks cross-cultural conversations. The closing gala mirrored that. In it, Vengerov performed the world premiere of a new violin concerto that married elements of East and West. Beijing Music Festival commissioned Shanghai-born composer Qigang Chen, who studied with Messiaen and now lives in France. Chen was also the festival's artist of the year in 2017. The piece, Chen explains, ruminates on the relationship between joy and suffering. The gala also featured 12-year-old wunderkind pianist Serena Wang, although most fascinating was a group from rural China: the Christian Xioshuijing Farmers' Choir, who hail from a mountainous corner of Yunnan Province. Dressed in traditional costume,



Great Anxiety:
pianist Krystian
Zimerman

Beijing Music Festival 2018 A guide to this year's programme

With the theme 'Entering the 21st – Dawn of a New Era', the festival will host 21 performances across three weeks (12-26 Oct). It opens in style, with a reimagining of a Peking Opera classic titled *Farewell my Concubine*. Bernstein's centenary is celebrated over two nights. His Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety*, will feature pianist Krystian Zimerman and the Philharmonia Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen (16 October), while the China Philharmonic will give a concert performance of *West Side Story* on 25 October.

Other highlights include the premiere of *Orfeo*, an opera by Fay Kueen Wang (19-21 Oct), Mozart and Mendelssohn performed by clarinettist Andreas Ottensamer and the Shanghai and HK Phil Quartets (13 Oct), and a programme of Chinese composers played by the Beijing Symphony (15 Oct).

they lent plangent vocals to Yu and the China Philharmonic. It's an enthralling glimpse of how Western influences trickle down to China's far-flung corners.

Yu says he was most excited about the orchestral marathon and the closing gala for a key reason: they reveal what the future may hold. 'Musicians should be ambassadors. Music is a universal language. The stage is not only for a great Wagner opera or a great Beethoven cycle – of course, they're fantastic! But there's another story. We can see also these Chinese young people. They're coming to the stage, too.'

Further information:
Beijing Music Festival www.bmf.org.cn



Composer of the Week
is broadcast on Radio 3
at 12pm, Monday to

Friday. Programmes in September are:

3-7 September **Chausson**

10-14 September **Tchaikovsky**

17-21 September **Francesca Caccini**

24-28 September **Rachmaninov**

Giacomo Puccini

The Italian opera composer was a thoroughly modern and international artist, despite what his critics said, argues *Alexandra Wilson*

ILLUSTRATION: **MATT HERRING**



Under the bonnet: Mimì in Puccini's *La bohème*

Puccini's style

Drama: Puccini saw himself above all as a 'man of the theatre'.

He researched the locations and background for his works scrupulously, created believable characters and situations, and supplied copious stage directions.

Politics: Unlike Verdi, Puccini was not interested in public duty, but his operas deal with political issues. *Tosca* takes place against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars; *Madam Butterfly* deals with questions about imperialism.

Contrasts: Puccini employed them brilliantly: think of *La bohème*'s alternating comic and sentimental episodes. In late works like *Gianni Schicchi* and *Turandot*, the 'big tunes' stand out from the more dissonant music, intensifying their impact.

Nostalgia: The tragic moments in Puccini's operas are suffused with nostalgia for happier times, with memories often prompted by seemingly insignificant objects like Mimì's bonnet. The composer intensifies the impact of such moments with a skilful use of recurring themes.

How hard the history books have been on Puccini. 'Moderately interesting in the history of opera; a mere footnote in the development of western music' is essentially how the story goes. Countless writers have argued that Puccini was a composer who knew his limits: capable of pleasing a crowd but with nothing more interesting to say. And there has even been considerable reluctance to accept him as a 20th-century composer, despite the fact that he was compositionally active for almost the full first quarter of that century.

In actual fact, Puccini was a composer who was both forward-looking and

archaic Italian compositional methods. As he emerged as a fledgling opera composer, huge pressure was placed upon him by his publishing house, Ricordi, to step into the shoes of the ageing Verdi. The musical establishment expected Puccini both to uphold a glorious tradition and to fly the flag for his nation. One doesn't really get the impression he wanted to do either.

Like other members of the so-called *giovane scuola* the generation of Italian composers born in the 1850s and '60s the young Puccini (born in 1858) was attracted to the foreign musical innovations of the later 19th century. He attended the Bayreuth Festival in 1888 and '89, and

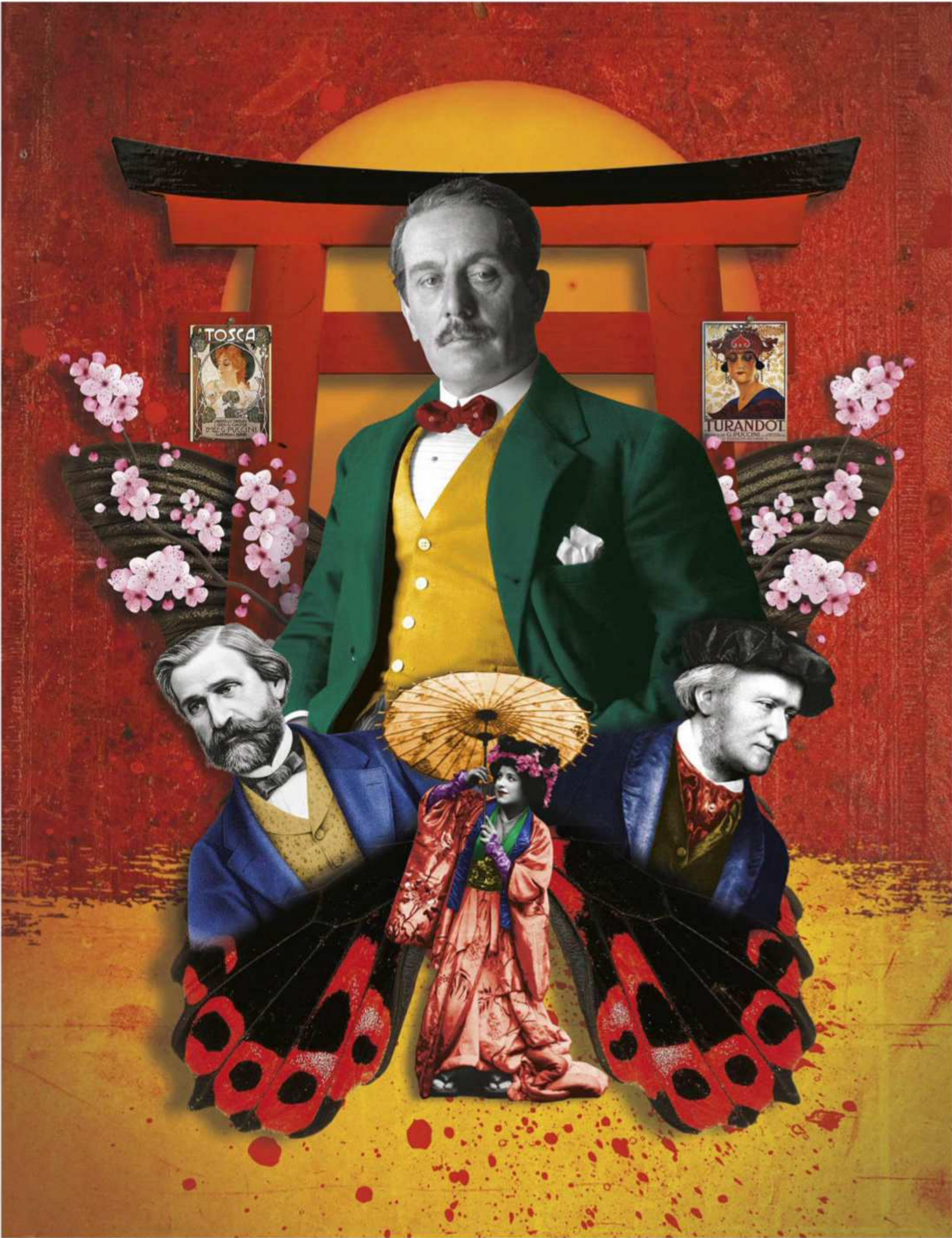
Huge pressure was placed upon Puccini to step into the shoes of the ageing Verdi

outward-looking. Having developed a successful formula for writing a box-office hit by the 1890s, he might have been tempted to rest on his laurels. Instead, he constantly sought to reinvent himself, taking on board new musical influences that were emerging both in Italy and abroad at a time of great artistic change. This was a composer who wanted to be up to date in his music just as much as to style himself as the dapper gent and indulge his penchant for fast cars and speedboats.

This appetite for modernity was perhaps in part a reaction against a weighty burden of tradition. There had been seven generations of musical Puccinis, a Tuscan dynasty that was often compared locally to the Bachs. Our Puccini ultimately broke free of the family tradition of church music but, nevertheless, received a training at the Milan Conservatoire that was steeped in

Wagner's influence is unmistakable in *Manon Lescaut* (1893), with its rich orchestral writing, use of motifs and chromatic harmony. The British press noted the nod to Wagner, and also to the contemporary French school, but back at home in Italy, critics were less keen to draw attention to such features, lest there be any suggestion that the Italian operatic 'brand' was being diluted.

Puccini built on the success of *Manon Lescaut* with an even more popular work that consolidated his international reputation. The much-loved *La bohème* (1896) might seem at first sight to be one of the least challenging operas in the canon, but it contained many significant innovations for its day. Puccini cultivated a restless, energetic musical language for the Bohemians and juxtaposed it with moments of exquisite lyricism



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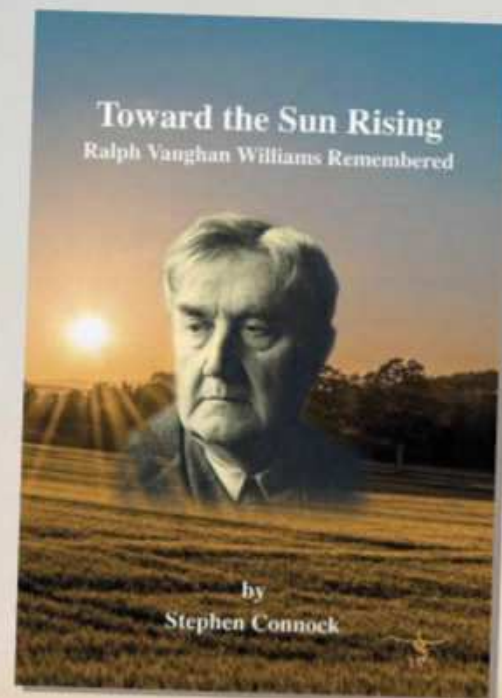
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Toward the Sun Rising – Ralph Vaughan Williams Remembered

shows how RVW and his music appeared to his friends and contemporaries. In doing so, it provides fresh insights into an early 20th century English musical world.



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Mistress and Muse: Ursula – the second Mrs Vaughan Williams
by Janet Tennant

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for the lovers. The combination of these two styles was perfect for an opera that is simultaneously trivial and profound. Puccini's organisation of scenes as a sequence of snapshots was imaginative for its time and the ways in which the music underpins the action was something from which early film music composers would learn a great deal. Even the treatment of death was groundbreaking: how many operatic leading ladies expire silently, unnoticed by the rest of the cast?

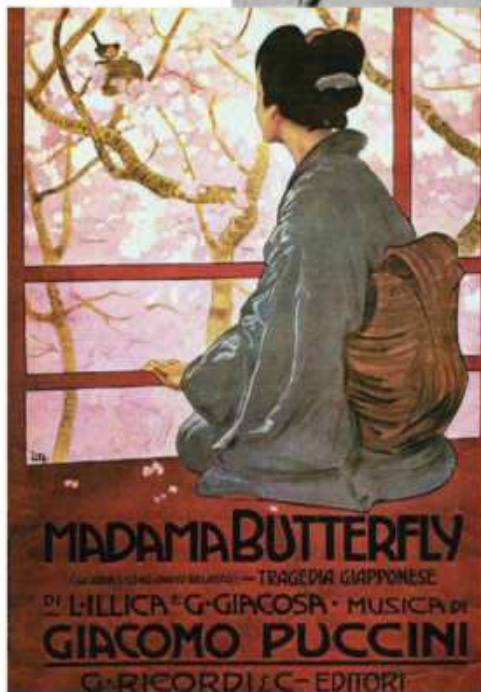
Many turn-of-the-century critics thought Puccini was getting rather too experimental by the time he wrote his next opera, *Tosca* (1900). Indebted to the Italian *verismo* aesthetic but also to the French dramatic school of *Grand Guignol*, the opera was a violent, sexually charged thriller, which many felt to be pushing the boundaries of taste. (That squeamishness hasn't entirely gone away: Joseph Kerman's dismissive comment from the 1950s about the opera being a 'shabby little shocker' lives on in a still much-read textbook.) Early critics heard the opera as 'mere noise', constructed out of fragmented phrases, exclamations, shouts and cries. Where oh where, they asked, was that hallmark of the 19th-century operatic tradition, the beautiful voice?

It is hard to imagine people hearing an opera such as *Tosca* as 'tuneless'

just listen to 'Vissi d'arte'. But it was the same story with the first version of *Madam Butterfly*, whose premiere in 1904 was described by one contemporary commentator as 'not just a failure ... what one might frankly call a disaster, a catastrophe'. It's probable that the performance was deliberately sabotaged by a claque hired by Puccini's rivals, but there was no disguising the press's muted reception. In a classic case of the shock of the new, they heard the work as disconnected, too long, and lacking in Italianate melody. A devastated Puccini set to work on a revised version and the opera would, of course, go on to become central to the popular operatic repertoire.



Golden touch: Puccini checking the score of *La fanciulla del West* in 1910



Tales of empire: a poster for the world premiere of *Madam Butterfly*

There then followed a lengthy period of lying low, as Puccini licked his wounds, trying out and abandoning ideas as he worked out which way to go next. When his next opera, *La fanciulla del West*, finally

reached the stage in 1910, it signalled a decisive change of direction. Here we see Puccini's forward-looking and outward-looking impulses working hand-in-hand. American gold-rush miners made for unusually modern-seeming operatic protagonists, no less 'exotic' to Italian audiences than those of *Madam Butterfly*. Musically speaking, the opera was unapologetically adventurous in its harmonic language, its orchestration and its Debussyisms. And the fact that the opera was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York seemed itself to make a statement about Puccini's symbolic border-crossing. (The composer had already become an enthusiastic globe-

trotter, travelling as far afield as Buenos Aires and Alexandria to supervise productions of his operas.)

The rest of the 1910s were rather difficult years for Puccini. He would long feel the ramifications of a 1909 scandal in which a family servant committed suicide after being falsely accused by Puccini's wife of having an affair with her husband. A young critic called Fausto Torrefranca published a vitriolic book attacking Puccini's music in 1912. And during World War I, the composer's refusal to commit himself politically guided by a reluctance to alienate his German and Austrian fans led to charges that he was lacking in patriotism. There were personal sorrows too: the death of his sister; concerns about his son at the Front; enforced separation from his long-term German mistress, Baroness Josephine von Stengel.

Musically, meanwhile, Puccini continued to keep up with the latest trends. He was a member of the audience at the riotous first performance of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* in Paris in 1913. In his own works, he continued with a course of stylistic eclecticism, producing a frothy operetta (*La rondine*, 1917) and experimenting with contrasting approaches to the one-act opera genre

PUCCINI *Life & Times*

1858

LIFE: Giacomo Puccini is born on 22 December in **Lucca**, Italy. The previous four generations of his family have all been notable musicians in the city.

TIMES: Named after Giovanni Battista Donati, the Florentine astronomer who discovered it, Donati's Comet is the first of its type ever to be photographed.



1909

LIFE: Puccini's wife, **Elvira**, accuses him of having an affair with Doria Manfredi, who then commits suicide. Manfredi's autopsy proves the accusations to be false.

TIMES: Guglielmo Marconi, widely credited with the invention of the radio, shares the Nobel Prize in Physics with the German Karl Ferdinand Braun.

1878

LIFE: He is educated in Lucca, where the first performance of his motet *Plaudite populi* draws attention to his talent. He is sent to Milan to study.

TIMES: Within months of acceding to the throne of Italy, **Umberto I** survives an assassination attempt while inspecting a parade in Naples.



1884

LIFE: Though rejected by the judges in a competition the previous year, his first opera, *Le villi*, proves a major success at Milan's Teatro Dal Verme.

TIMES: Inventor Angelo Moriondo presents the first ever espresso machine at the General Expo in Turin, winning the bronze medal.

1900

LIFE: Four years after *La bohème* has its lukewarm reception in Turin, the premiere of **Tosca** is met with similar indifference in Rome.

TIMES: Italian horse rider Count Giovanni Giorgio Trissino wins high jump at the Olympics, and takes silver in the long jump.



1924

LIFE: He dies of a heart attack in Brussels. *Turandot*, his final opera, is unfinished, but is completed by composer Franco Alfano.

TIMES: The Italian socialist politician Giacomo Matteotti accuses the Fascists of having won the general election by fraud. Days later, he is kidnapped and killed.

in the three works that collectively form *Il trittico* (1918). Reviewers found *Il tabarro* too modern in its music, 'aggressively realistic' in its subject matter, too reminiscent of Debussy and Stravinsky. The all-female *Suor Angelica* was a bit of an oddity that was, as time went on, comparatively rarely performed. *Gianni Schicchi*, by contrast, cheered everyone up and was roundly praised for reviving the great Rossinian tradition of comic opera. But more interesting were the work's novelties: its deployment of a diverse array of musical styles (including the foxtrot) and the way in which Puccini gently poked fun at his own earlier sentimental works.

Cut short as it was by his death from a heart attack after an operation for throat cancer, Puccini's career concluded with

Gianni Schicchi was praised for reviving the great Rossinian comic opera tradition

Turandot (1924). It's his most harmonically advanced work, and one that can take the listener who knows only 'Nessun dorma' by surprise. It was also very much an opera for its times, its choreographed crowd scenes and public, ritualised violence seeming to speak to the idea of violence as national regeneration that the Italian Fascists were beginning to promote by the mid-1920s. Puccini's musical curiosity endured to the end of his life: it is intriguing to imagine the friendly encounter between him and Schoenberg at a performance of *Pierrot lunaire* in Florence in April 1924.

Puccini was determined to forge his own path. In the context of his era, with the Italian operatic tradition entering its final stages, the composer's 'internationalism' seemed like a problem. Viewed from our perspective, his cosmopolitan attitudes seem intriguing, refreshing, part of what make his oeuvre enduringly relevant. Puccini's operas deserve to be seen as more than conservative, sentimental remnants of an extended 19th century. Being 'modern' in operatic terms is surely about more things than the rejection of tonality. 🎧

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THE MIRJAM HELIN COMPETITION



- **Location**
The Helsinki Music Centre,
Mannerheimintie 13A,
Helsinki, Finland
- **Application Deadline**
30 November 2018
- **Semi Finals**
25-26 May 2019
- **Finals**
29 May 2019



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Location

Dallas, Texas – SMU & Meyerson Symphony Center

Application Deadline

10 January 2019

Semi Finals

5-6 June 2019

Finals

8 June 2019

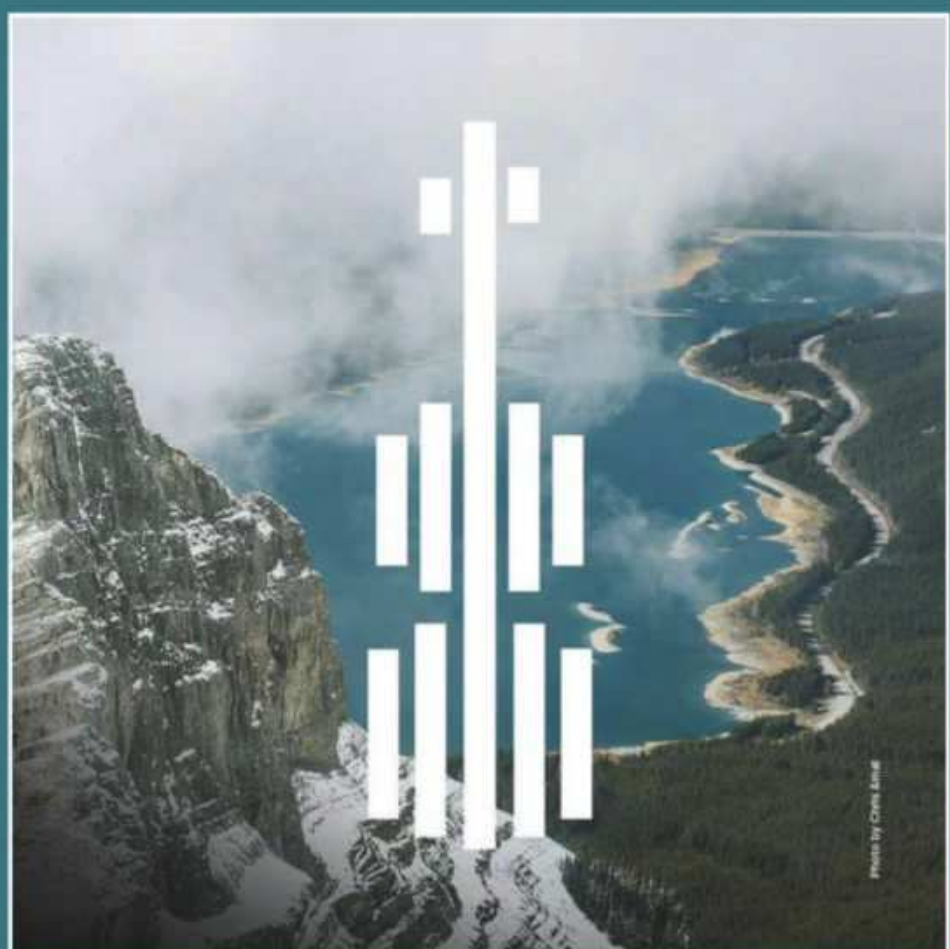


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Finals

1 Sept 2019



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2nd Round

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Semi Finals

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Finals

14-15 Sept 2018



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Location

TivoliVredenburg,
Utrecht, Netherlands

Application

Deadline
1 May 2019

Competition Dates

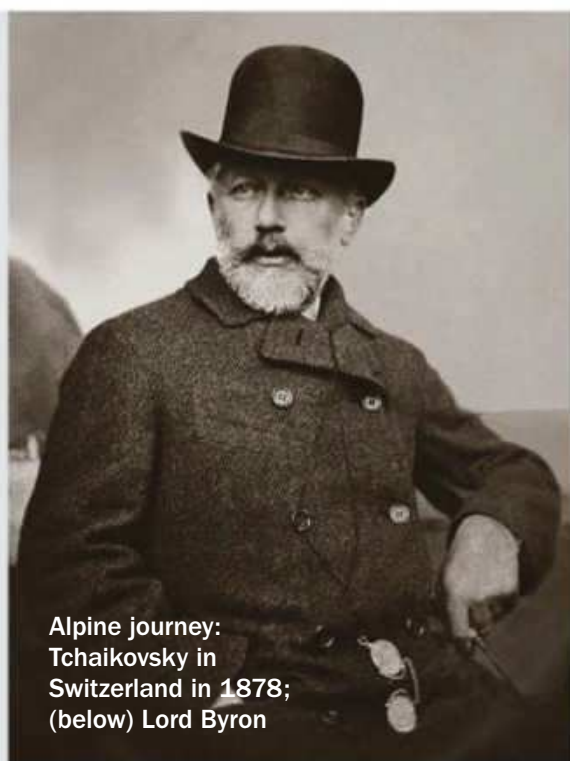
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Alpine journey:
Tchaikovsky in
Switzerland in 1878;
(below) Lord Byron

The composer

The years leading up to the premiere of the *Manfred* Symphony in 1886 saw Tchaikovsky enjoying a nomadic existence. Freed from the shackles of his disastrous marriage and, in October 1878, from the post of professor at the Moscow Conservatory, he divided his life between Russia and western Europe, funded by the deep pockets of his long-term patron Nadezhda von Meck. Compositions from this era include his *Orchestral Suites* Nos 1-3, the *Serenade for Strings*, the *Piano Trio* and his famous *1812 Overture*.

The work

Souls in torment were food and drink to the Romantic poets. And no soul was more tormented than Lord Byron's outcast necromancer Manfred, the eponymous anti-hero of his dramatic poem written from 1816-17 – a semi-autobiographical figure, Manfred is doomed by his incestuous relationship with his sister Astarte to wander in search of redemption following her death. That Byron's Gothic, ghostly invention should have sparked Tchaikovsky's creative fuse is no great surprise – his own existence was, after all,

However, Manfred's search for atonement must have struck a personal chord with Tchaikovsky, himself consumed with guilt over his homosexuality. A trip to Switzerland to visit his dying violinist friend and erstwhile lover, Josef Kotek, was pivotal. His melancholic mood, the lure of the Alpine scenery and his first thorough reading of Byron's epic poem finally decided him. While not strictly adhering to Stasov's instructions, he was driven by what became the *Manfred* Symphony; it took him just six months to complete.

Tchaikovsky wrote to his benefactor declaring *Manfred* his finest orchestral work

hardly free of demons – though the fire took some while to start burning.

A Moscow performance in 1867 of Berlioz's Byron-inspired *Harold in Italy*, conducted by the composer, so impressed Vladimir Stasov, critic and mentor to the 'Mighty Handful' of Russian composers – Balakirev, Cui, Musorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin – that he devised his own programme for a four-movement symphonic piece based on *Manfred*. Balakirev was approached but wasn't interested. Nor was the ailing Berlioz. Fifteen years passed before it was offered to Balakirev's student, Tchaikovsky, who hesitated hadn't Schumann already said enough on the subject in his 1852 incidental music based on the same text?

Following its well-received 1886 Moscow premiere, he wrote to his benefactor Nadezhda von Meck, declaring it to be his finest orchestral work to date. Four years later he changed his tune, calling it an abomination, at one point almost consigning it to the flames.

But he didn't destroy it. Did he see some value in it, after all? And is it a symphony, an extended symphonic poem – or what? It requires a large orchestra, including percussion and organ, but flanked by his Fourth and Fifth symphonies and not given a number of its own, it remains something of an anomaly. Tchaikovsky did, however, provide a brief written commentary to each of its four movements. For a musical parallel, then, we must look again to Berlioz, but this time to his semi-autobiographical



The witching hour:
*Manfred and the Witch
 of the Alps*, an 1837
 painting by John Martin



Symphonie fantastique, whose device of the *idée fixe* – a repeated musical phrase which is heard in all four movements – is adopted by Tchaikovsky in the *Manfred*.

Tchaikovsky's work begins *lento lugubre*, the Manfred theme announced on bass clarinet and bassoon. Alone in his Alpine castle, Manfred conjures up the spirits of darkness in a desperate attempt to find inner peace. In this opening movement Tchaikovsky paints a psychological portrait almost unparalleled in Romantic music. Orchestral fire and brimstone are tempered with lyrical passages describing Manfred's feelings of guilt towards his sister, before the coda brings a grim cacophony of brass and timpani. Despite damning self-criticism, Tchaikovsky appeared to retain some regard for this movement and even considered that it might stand alone as a symphonic poem.

Next he reverses Stasov's order of events, placing second the scene in which the Alpine Fairy – or the 'Witch of the Alps' – appears to Manfred within the rainbow of a waterfall. Tchaikovsky is now in Mendelssohnian scherzo territory.

Scurrying strings and woodwind create a miniature ballet, albeit one with a sting in its tail as the sudden interruption by the *idée fixe* reminds us. The pastoral third movement depicts the simple life of Alpine folk, and Tchaikovsky even gives a hint of rustic bagpipe drone. However, the idyll fades when the Manfred theme and tolling bell cast an ominous shadow.



Manfred fan: critic and mentor Vladimir Stasov

In the Finale, Manfred literally faces his demons. Deviating completely from Byron, Stasov dispatches him to the subterranean lair of Ariman, Prince of the Underworld, where a hellish bacchanalian orgy is in full swing. The spirit of Astarte appears and pardons her brother for his past sins, leaving him free to die. A tam-tam stroke marks his earthly departure.

Some critics and musicians considered this Finale over-long and fugue-dependent. Therefore it was customary to make cuts, which solved nothing. Is the organ-led coda a stroke of genius or a sudden descent into kitsch? Since no performance can quite dispel its funeral-parlour atmosphere, it's hard to say. Even so, I shall continue to love this kaleidoscopic masterpiece and forgive any shortcomings. Mahler, no less, conducted it in both Vienna (1901) and St Petersburg (1902), so I'm in good company.

*Turn the page to discover
 the best recordings of
 Tchaikovsky's Manfred Symphony*



Power, yet restraint:
Vasily Petrenko
thrills with the Royal
Liverpool Philharmonic

An emotional rollercoaster

The best
recording



Vasily Petrenko (conductor)

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Naxos 8.570568 (2008)

Though live performances are relatively rare, many fine recordings of the *Manfred* Symphony are available. Arturo Toscanini's trail-blazing 1949 recording (RCA), for instance, demands to be heard, despite the savage cuts to the score and lo-fi sound. Gennady Rozhdestvensky, meanwhile, wears his Russian heart on his sleeve in a white-hot reading (Melodyia), and Vladimir Ashkenazy's debut recording as a conductor with the New Philharmonia (Decca) is another strong candidate. I have a fondness for Constantin

Silvestri's idiosyncratic view with the Bournemouth Symphony (BBC Legends) despite the wheezy organ, and Lorin Maazel's heady performance with the Vienna Philharmonic (Decca) is easily the best of his Tchaikovsky Symphony cycle.

And then we have Vasily Petrenko's 2008 recording, a release that first alerted

Petrenko never fails to remind us that this is no comfortable work

music-lovers to what the young Russian conductor was achieving in Liverpool, turning a fine provincial orchestra into a world-class one. Here, the symphony's doom-laden opening bars are as *lento lugubre* as Tchaikovsky demands, and the shifts in tension are superbly gauged throughout the movement. Petrenko resists going for broke in the coda without compromising on excitement.

Three other great recordings



Semyon Bychkov (conductor)

The most beautiful orchestral playing imaginable can be heard on Semyon

Bychkov's 2017 recording with the Czech Philharmonic, in which Decca's state-of-the-art recording captures every detail. It beggars belief that the orchestra's musicians had not previously encountered the *Manfred* until Bychkov introduced them to it, but initial scepticism from them clearly became a labour of love. Choosing between Bychkov and Petrenko proved a headache: a model of restraint, Bychkov's is the more measured and has the finest sound of all recordings; Petrenko's is the more volatile and viscerally exciting. (Decca 483 2320)



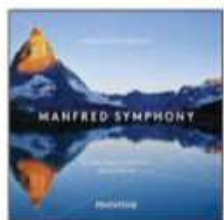
Vladimir Jurowski (conductor)

By 2006, when this recording was made, Vladimir Jurowski had established a great

rapport with the London Philharmonic Orchestra – it shows in a live recording that is magnificent in all respects, and is particularly successful in the Finale. As with Petrenko's recording, we aren't drowned out in a welter of organ sound, and the enthusiastic response from the Royal Festival Hall audience reflects the excitement of the occasion. For similar thrills from a

He then takes the *Vivace con spirito* at a dangerous, break-neck speed, leaving the listener – though not his dazzling wind players – breathless. Admittedly, I find the initial tempo for the *Andante con moto* too slow – the first oboe's lovingly phrased solo sounds just a little too languorous, whereas other conductors allow the music to flow more naturally. Petrenko, though, sets a cracking pace for the Finale, building and maintaining a fine head of steam through to the full-throttle re-emergence of the *Manfred* theme. There is an appropriate abrasive edge to the playing and recorded sound which is altogether exhilarating, and

close contemporary of Jurowski, Andris Nelsons's 2013 CBSO account (Orfeo) would run this one close were it not for the conductor's heavy, and distracting, intakes of breath. (LPO Live LPO-0009)



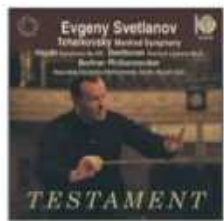
Mikhail Pletnev

(conductor)

Originally hand-picked by Mikhail Pletnev during the Glasnost era, the Russian

National Orchestra has remained arguably Russia's most outstanding symphony orchestra. As in his earlier 1992 recording for DG, Pletnev manages to maul the repeated string passage following the Finale's opening flourish, but even so, this 2013 version for Pentatone is very impressive – he is quite a cool customer here, and takes a more classical approach than most. The recorded sound is also good, despite the remoteness of the horns. (Pentatone PTC 5186 387)

And one to avoid...



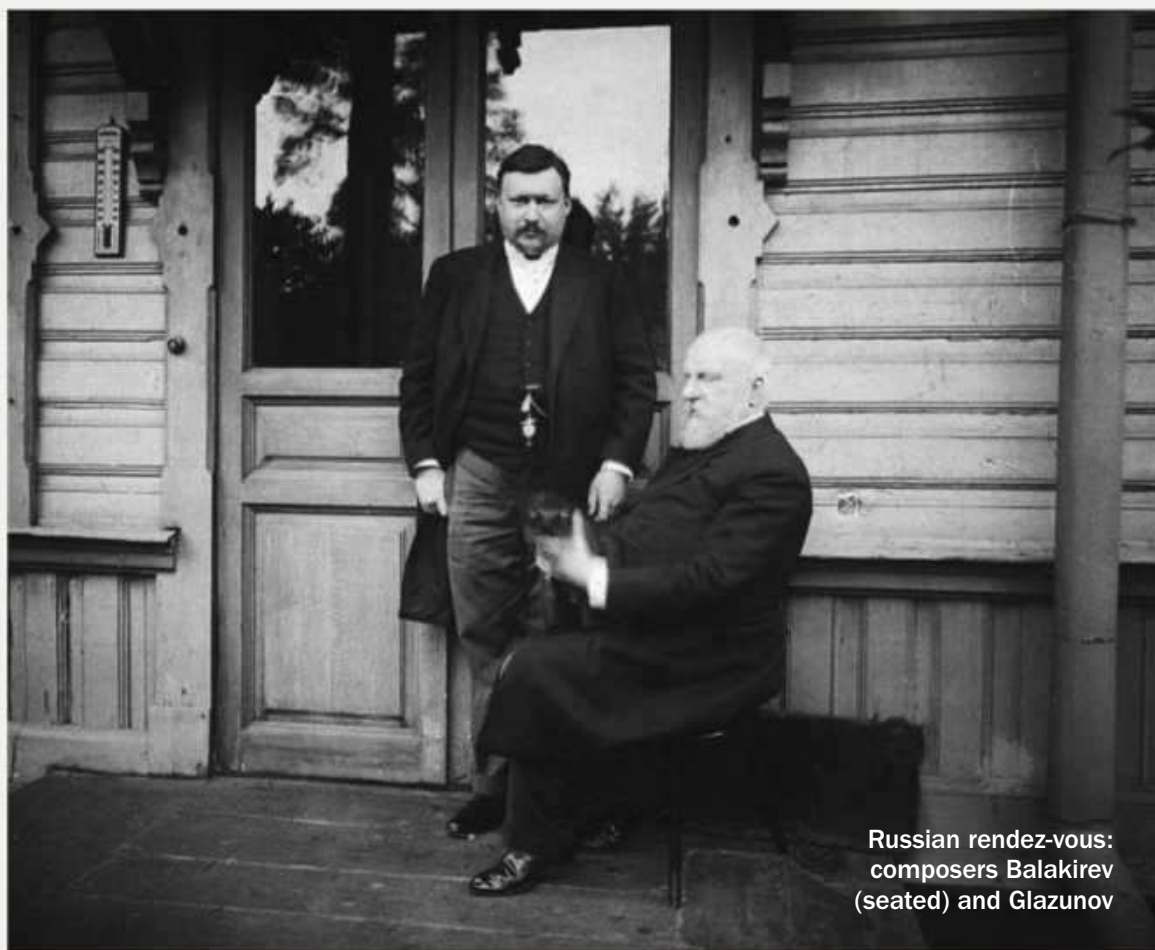
Evgeny Svetlanov

(conductor)

There are two *Manfred* recordings by Evgeny Svetlanov available. In his live 1989 account with the Berlin Phil (on the Testament label), he ditches the organ-led final pages, substituting them with a barn-storming reprise of the *Manfred* theme. This 'alternative' ending is undoubtedly exciting and is greeted with audience approval, but it is not what Tchaikovsky wrote.

Petrenko never fails to remind us that this is no comfortable work. The controversial organ part in the coda is heard better in this recording than any other – clear and to-the-fore but without being allowed to simply blast us out of our seats.

No single recording of this unique masterpiece sweeps the board in all four movements, and various approaches all bring their own rewards (see 'Three other great recordings', above). After repeated hearings, however – and irrespective of its bargain price – it is Petrenko's sharply etched interpretation in vivid upfront sound that has 'winner' written all over it.



Russian rendez-vous: composers Balakirev (seated) and Glazunov

Continue the journey...

Further works to explore after Tchaikovsky's Manfred Symphony

It's often been said that **Franz Liszt** was the inventor of the tone poem. *From the Cradle to the Grave* is possibly the best of the 13 he composed. Like the *Manfred* Symphony, it is decked out in sombre colours and describes a troubled psychological journey. Originally intended as a piano work, this dark and brooding piece comes beautifully into focus in its full orchestral garb (BBC Scottish Orchestra/Ilan Volkov Hyperion CDA67856).

Josef Suk's equally troubled but more autobiographical *Asrael* Symphony

faces up to the Angel of Death, which dealt Suk a crippling double blow. Originally intended as a tribute to the life of Dvořák, Suk's father-in-law, the *Asrael* Symphony also became an 'in memoriam' for Suk's wife who died a year later. Mahlerian in scale and over an hour long, the work casts a searching psychological spotlight. It is serious music about deeply personal matters, dealing with grief in a moving and dignified fashion, something Tchaikovsky would have understood (Czech Philharmonic/Charles Mackerras Supraphon SU40432).

Mily Balakirev's Gothic tone poem *Tamara* is probably Balakirev's finest

orchestral work. Unsuspecting travellers are lured to the castle of the she-devil Tamara, who seduces and murders them, throwing their bodies into the river below. After the success of the Dante-inspired *Francesca da Rimini*, Tchaikovsky's mentor knew what he was doing when he offered him the scenario for the *Manfred* Symphony (USSR State Academy Symphony/Evgeny Svetlanov Alto ALC 1331).

Suk's *Asrael* Symphony casts a searching psychological spotlight

Sergei Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 is a work of great contrasts, and it's easy to go along with the composer's

claim that the work aimed 'to glorify man as free and happy' and portray 'his mighty strength, his noble spirit'. All very Tchaikovskian – and the music, especially in the bitter-sweet *Adagio*, often appears to be a mirror onto the human spirit. But the composer's words should be taken with a pinch of salt. World War II was in its last throes and such patriotic-sounding sentiments may well have pleased the Soviet propaganda machine. In effect, what Prokofiev had done was 'merely' compose a great classical symphony, which stands entirely on its own as pure music (Bergen Philharmonic/Andrew Litton BIS BIS2124).

Reviews

110 CDs, Books & DVDs rated by expert critics

Welcome



Judging a book, or indeed a disc, by its cover is not a great way forward. I'm not talking about actual CD covers, although I've seen some stinkers in my time; I'm talking about presumptions. Take our Recording of the Month, for example; who would have thought an album of trombone music would be quite so beautiful? But it is, and I'm now a convert. Further surprises await in this month's reviews pages... There's Gilbert *without* Sullivan, Bach partitas on the captivating clavichord and a Brahms quartet arranged for symphony orchestra. It's somehow reassuring that you can be caught off-guard by music, or instruments you think you know. It goes to show there is still so much more for composers, musicians and arrangers to say, and that's a thrilling prospect.

Michael Beek *Reviews Editor*

This month's critics

John Allison, Nicholas Anderson, Michael Beek, Terry Blain, Anthony Burton, Kate Bolton-Porciatti, Garry Booth, Geoff Brown, Michael Church, Christopher Cook, Martin Cotton, Christopher Dingle, Misha Donat, Jessica Duchén, Rebecca Franks, George Hall, Malcolm Hayes, Julian Haylock, Claire Jackson, Daniel Jaffé, Berta Joncus, Erik Levi, Natasha Loges, Max Loppert, Andrew McGregor, David Nice, Roger Nichols, Bayan Northcott, Jeremy Pound, Steph Power, Anthony Pryer, Paul Riley, Mike Scott Rohan, Jan Smaczny, Geoffrey Smith, Michael Tanner, Kate Wakeling, Helen Wallace

KEY TO STAR RATINGS

★★★★★ Outstanding
★★★★ Excellent
★★★ Good
★★ Disappointing
★ Poor

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

A noble instrument's eloquence rediscovered

Julian Haylock applauds Peter Moore's all-too-rare artistry with which he displays the trombone's subtlety and expressiveness



Life Force Music by Fauré, Schumann, Rachmaninov, Gräfe, Bruch, Brahms, Mahler and Pryor

Peter Moore (trombone),
James Baillieu (piano)
Rubicon RCD 1028 66:31 mins

Those who have yet to encounter the captivating playing of 2008 BBC Young Musician of the Year Peter Moore may initially blanch at the sight of some of the repertoire featured here – Fauré's *Après une rêve*, Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* and Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge* performed on the trombone? Really? Well emphatically yes, when played with such intuitive phrasal sensitivity, intonational security and tonal lustrousness. Indeed,

the Fauré is one of the star items here, coloured gently with a distinctly French-style vibrato that appears to carry with it the aroma of Gauloises and Absinthe in the manner of Marcel Galiègue. This music cries out for a heavenly legato and seamless transitions between pitch registers, something that Moore negotiates effortlessly, whilst timing and shaping the music's beguiling contours with vocal rapture – one can readily sense the meaning of Romain Bussine's sensuous flow of rhyming couplets without hearing the actual words.

Kol Nidrei benefits from the trombone's enhanced projection and clarity by comparison with the cello's lower register, allowing the music's declamatory essence to emerge in the full brightness of day. As Bruch's heartfelt invention gently unfolds, it is Moore's mellow cushioning of the beginnings of phrases that proves especially seductive, creating the curious impression of the sound having been generated before you actually



Eloquent versatility:
Peter Moore proves anything
is possible with fine artistry

An interview with Peter Moore



A debut album ten years after winning BBC Young Musician; why the wait?

It's something I always wanted to do, but I got caught up in other things. I think at 12 I was a little bit green; you've so much more to learn and pick up. A couple of years after the competition I had a lot of opportunities, I was travelling about all over the place and did it without thinking about it. Then all of a sudden I was 14/15 and I retreated for about a year and a half, got my head down and started working quite hard again, and that was good for me I think.

Tell us about your programme.

I couldn't come up with a list of works that really slotted in a certain bracket, and I thought why doesn't the bracket just be pieces I've always wanted to record? It's things I get a real buzz playing, and sentimental ones like the Gräfe, which was one of the first pieces I ever did with my first teacher. I'd also been exploring the vocal lieder and that's something I wanted to do. I could have put on the old trombone favourites, but I wanted to open it up and show that there are sounds you possibly didn't know could happen on the instrument.

Does the trombone sometimes get a bit of a raw deal?

Of course, and I crack all the jokes about trombonists being first in the pub, and having no musical refinement, but it works on the flip side as well because you get people that open their minds, listen to it, and say 'oh wow, that's amazing!' Then hopefully they go home and listen to recordings or come back to the next concert – and you've done your job.

hear it. No less striking is his pin-point tuning and unblemished tonal purity, reminiscent of Christhard Gössling, principal trombone of the Berlin Philharmonic since 1984. Another cello favourite – the slow movement of Rachmaninov's Op. 19 Sonata, complemented by accompanist James Baillieu's melting phrasing – is a triumph of breath control, with the composer's gently ecstatic invention seemingly gliding on warm air currents.

Perhaps the greatest revelation comes with Brahms's late songs, which here benefit from a keener tonal and interpretative focus than many singers have brought to these elusive distillations of the composer's creative essence over the years. Based on Biblical

texts and composed in the wake of his beloved Clara Schumann suffering a debilitating stroke, the occasional vocal awkwardnesses of Brahms's uncompromising soundworld are encompassed by Moore


Brahms's late songs are played with a nobility one might think only possible when sung

with an eloquence and nobility that one might have thought almost impossible except by the human voice. Even Mahler's iconic 'Urlicht' sounds utterly convincing, enhanced by Baillieu's radiant pianism and first-rate engineering.

Moore's dazzling performance of Friedebald Gräfe's Trombone

Concerto is guaranteed to blow away any remaining musical cobwebs, yet arguably the stand-out item is Schumann's three Op. 73 *Fantasiestücke*, which emerge sounding as freshly minted as the two days in which they were (miraculously) composed. To finish, one of band supremo Arthur Pryor's delightful miniatures, the waltz-like *Thoughts of Love*, thrown off by Moore and Baillieu with an infectious bonhomie that brings the curtain down with a deliciously virtuoso flourish.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

 Hear excerpts and a discussion of this recording on the monthly **BBC Music Magazine Podcast** available free on iTunes or classical-music.com

Orchestral

ORCHESTRAL CHOICE



Jansons triumphs in Bruckner's Eighth

Michael Tanner hails a performance which does justice to a great masterpiece

Bruckner

Symphony No. 8 (1890 version)
Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra/
Mariss Jansons
BR Klassik 900165 80:07 mins

Bruckner's Eighth Symphony is for me the greatest of all orchestral works, symphonic or otherwise; one of the pinnacles of artistic expression, perpetually astonishing in its perfection and its completeness. Claims of this sort are usually taken to be ridiculous, but I challenge anyone, listening to a performance/recording of the Eighth as fine as this new one, to deny that such an immense synthesis of mood, structure, depth and splendour has one marvelling at what one person, however impressive the tradition in which he is working, can achieve.

Reading the excellent notes to this recording is to be reminded that this symphony, almost as much as any of Bruckner's symphonies, was a child of anxiety and hesitation, and that

what we hear is only one of several versions of the work. It is clear, surely, that this one, the so-called 1890 version, radically revised by the composer from the first version, but without interferences from well-meaning friends and editors, is the best.

There are many wonderful recordings of the Eighth, surprising given its difficulties. This one, with the rich-toned Bavarian

Radio Symphony Orchestra, deserves a place with all but the very greatest. Mariss Jansons's eye for

Mariss Jansons's eye for balance and detail is prodigious

balance and detail is prodigious: even in the grandest, loudest passages the clarity he achieves is extraordinary, perhaps above all in the last movement, where for once Bruckner's need to crown the work with something worthy of the first three movements is satisfied. No lover of this symphony will be content with less than half a dozen recordings, and this should undoubtedly be among them.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



Depth and splendour: Mariss Jansons's joins the greatest accounts



Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the *BBC Music Magazine* website at www.classical-music.com

Beethoven

Symphony No. 9 (Choral)
Rebecca Evans (soprano), Patricia Bardon (mezzo soprano), Robert Murray (tenor), Derek Welton (bass baritone); Philharmonia Chorus & Orchestra/ Benjamin Zander
Brattle Media 610877733781 218 mins (3 discs)



Aside from conducting, there's nothing Benjamin Zander likes better than talking.

On disc 2 and 3 of this set he holds forth compellingly about the more controversial aspects of his performance of Beethoven's Ninth. The main thrust of his argument is

that the Symphony's often contested metronome markings must be scrupulously observed. Those markings were written in a notebook by Karl van Beethoven, while his deaf uncle either wrestled with the metronome or pounded away on the piano. The potential for mishaps was considerable, and for the scherzo's trio Karl jotted down a figure for each half-bar that is impossibly slow. Benjamin Zander suggests that it was supposed to refer not to a half-bar, but to a whole bar. That, however, produces a reading that sounds terribly garbled – as it does in this performance. More likely is that Karl simply got the figure wrong.

Given that he's such a stickler for textual fidelity, it's curious to

find Zander filling out Beethoven's timpani part in the slow movement's climactic fanfares, arguing that the fixed pitches of the instruments of the time didn't allow him to use them throughout the passages in question. But Beethoven actually turned their limitations to his advantage, and when they do enter they add emphasis to the end of the fanfares. In any case, if you're going to start 'modernising' Beethoven's writing, where are you going to stop? For all its controversial nature, Zander's performance ends up being rather pedestrian, and generally lacking in mystery, warmth and exultation. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Brahms

Piano Quartet No. 2 in A (arr. Woods)
English Symphony Orchestra/
Kenneth Woods
Nimbus Alliance NI 6364 49:17 mins



Schumann famously described Brahms's early piano sonatas as 'veiled

symphonies'. But this epithet could equally well be applied to some of his chamber music. Schoenberg's fascinating orchestration of the G minor Piano Quartet certainly exemplifies the proto-symphonic dimensions of Brahms's musical argument. Yet there are grounds

for arguing that the expansively conceived A major Piano Quartet, written around the same period, is even more worthy of being clothed in orchestral fabric.

Kenneth Woods has grasped this nettle and produced an absolutely imaginative arrangement. Unlike Schoenberg, who couldn't resist inserting instrumental eccentricities such as a tinkling xylophone into the melting pot, Woods is much more respectful of Brahmsian orchestral conventions, justifiably drawing upon instrumental combinations that you would find in the symphonies. One of the most inspired moments comes in the middle of the slow movement, where solo violin and horn soar above the rest of the orchestral accompaniment in a passage that points forward to the equivalent movement in the First Symphony. No less exciting is the enunciation of the opening motif for a quartet of horns in their highest register (a passage you'd definitely want to hear played by the Wiener Philharmoniker!), the delicate almost Mendelssohnian string and woodwind interchanges in the *Scherzo* and the exhilarating *Finale*. Inevitably, Woods has had to make some compromises along the way. The mysterious piano arpeggios that punctuate the slow movement do not easily transfer to the orchestra. But Woods's solution of sustained woodwind and string chords over a crescendo timpani roll brilliantly conveys the music's menacing character.

Despite occasional moments of imprecise ensemble, the English Symphony Orchestra does a pretty decent job of tackling this technically challenging score. Hopefully this new addition to the Brahms symphonic canon will get the widespread dissemination it certainly deserves. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Brahms

Symphonies Nos 1-4

Tapiola Sinfonietta/Mario Venzago
Sony 19075853112 221:25 mins (3 discs)



Yet another set of chamber orchestra interpretations of Brahms's symphonies that aims for lightness of articulation and the greatest transparency of



Hurling Beethoven:
Benjamin Zander
drives a speedy Ninth

texture. As also demonstrated in his thought-provoking Bruckner recordings for CPO, Mario Venzago manages to strip late 19th-century orchestral repertoire of any middle-aged spread by focusing instead on the music's intimate and reflective characteristics, something that is much more difficult to achieve with a larger orchestra.

The obvious entry points into this approach are the two early serenades that Brahms composed before the symphonies. Thanks to the Tapiola Sinfonietta's superbly responsive playing, these works really sparkle, Venzago making great play of the outer movements' rustic charm while at the same time allowing the respective *Adagios* to flow without sacrificing their natural Schubertian lyricism. This serenade-like quality successfully infuses the dance movements of the symphonies, especially the third movements of Nos 1 and 2. But perhaps the most subtle chamber-music intimacy is achieved in the delicately played and spell-bindingly beautiful account of the slow movement of the Third.

The big stumbling block for me comes in the more overtly dramatic passages, where Venzago's lean-textured and dynamically subdued conception seems at odds with Brahms's evident intensity of expression: the stormy and anguished music of the First, the heroic sweep of the Third's outer movements and the passion of the Fourth, all lack the level of urgency and variety of colours achieved

by Robin Ticciati and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra for Linn. One other minor editing problem should be noted in the Finale of the Fourth where bar 60 (1:34) seems to have been excised, thus unexpectedly foreshortening the clearly defined harmonic pattern underpinning the Passacaglia. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Bruckner • Wagner

Bruckner: Symphony No. 7
Wagner: *Götterdämmerung* –
Siegfried's Funeral March;
Gewandhausorchester Leipzig/
Andris Nelsons
DG 479 8494 76:48 mins



The series of Bruckner symphonies which Andris Nelsons is performing and recording with the Gewandhausorchester continues to emerge at a brisk rate. As before, each disc begins with a short orchestral excerpt from a Wagner opera, and then the Bruckner follows. In this case I would prefer it the other way round, since Siegfried's Funeral March isn't really appropriately followed by any symphony, not even one which celebrates and mourns its creator, as Bruckner's Seventh so wonderfully does. The performance of the Funeral March is heavy-handed and bombastic, just what needs to be avoided.

The Seventh which follows is

one of three recordings of the work I have had to review this month, and considerably the grandest. Nelsons is a somewhat variable conductor, though always an interesting one. He seems to take his cue for this symphony from the Funeral March which precedes it, and on the whole his tempos are broad though flexible, and the sound of the magnificent Gewandhausorchester is rich and built from the bottom upwards. That works well in the second movement, Bruckner's noble paean to Wagner, with the heartrending lament of its coda. The last two movements of the Symphony, always a bit problematic thanks to the grandeur of the first two, maintain a heftiness which it would have been better for them to avoid, and the last movement in particular, where Bruckner seems to be looking for an adequately imposing ending, sounds almost bombastic. *Michael Tanner*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Prokofiev

Symphonies Nos 2 & 4

Netherlands Radio Philharmonic
Orchestra/James Gaffigan
*Challenge Classics CC 72779 (hybrid CD/
SACD) 73:36 mins*



This is not déjà vu. The first release of James Gaffigan's Prokofiev Symphony

cycle with the Netherlands Radio-Philharmonic Orchestra included the original 1930 version of the Fourth Symphony. Now he gives the revised 1947 version, which, at nearly half as long again, is such a different work that Prokofiev gave it a new opus number, declaring it essentially a distinct symphony in its own right. Throw in the close musical relationship with the ballet *The Prodigal Son*, as well as the complicated biases on both sides for a work that straddled the iron curtain, and it is easy to see why this symphony struggled for acceptance. Except that, heard without any aesthetic and political baggage, the music is simply marvellous.

Though not as hard-driven as Gergiev or Karabits, Gaffigan is relatively brisk, avoiding slackness, but at the expense of some nuance and opportunities for characterisation, notably in the third movement. This is exacerbated

Reissues *Reviewed by Malcolm Hayes*



Bax *Symphony No. 2, Winter Legends*

Lyrita REAM 1137 (1956/78) 79:41 mins

Bax's sophisticated scoring needs modern recording to do it justice. Still, **Eugene Goossens's** powerful 1950s reading of the Second Symphony impresses, and **John McCabe** is a fine soloist in *Winter Legends*. ★★★★★



Handel *Concerti Grossi, Op. 6*

Harmonia Mundi HMG 507228.29 (1998) 156:27 mins

Widely considered state-of-the-art on their first release, these recordings by the **Academy of Ancient Music** combine hyper-vivid articulation with wonderful poise and panache, plus a lovely soulfulness in the slow movements. ★★★★★



Daniel Jones *Symphonies Nos 1 & 10*

Lyrita SRCD 358 (1990) 69:44 mins

The clear and personable musical voice of Wales's outstanding symphonist recalls another neglected master, New Zealand's Douglas Lilburn. Pleasing performances by the **BBC Welsh Symphony**. ★★★★★



Elgar • Mozart • Purcell • Haydn • Rosse

Barbirolli Society SJB 1089 (1928-29) 71:14 mins

Decently cleaned-up 1920s recorded sound reveals the young **John Barbirolli's** unmistakable conducting talent – less fervent than in later years, but focused and purposeful, conjuring classy playing in Elgar's *Introduction* and *Allegro* especially. ★★★★★

by occasionally muddy textures, a trait that is a mild frustration here, but which in the Second Symphony makes the thicker passages of orchestration seem turgid, even with the benefit of surround sound.

There are some striking moments in that Symphony, such as the shiver of strings early in the second movement's second variation, or the fourth variation's dispassionate intertwining duet between trumpet and oboe. Nonetheless, while this earlier work may be an especially brash exemplar of the relatively young Prokofiev flashing his modernist credentials, it is hard to warm to this hard-bitten, yet too-frequently mushy performance.

Christopher Dingle

PERFORMANCE

★★

RECORDING

★★★

R Martinsson

Open Mind; Orchestral Songs on Poems by Emily Dickinson; A.S. in Memoriam; Concerto for Orchestra*

Lisa Larsson (soprano); Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra/Andrew Manze, *Sakari Oramo
BIS BIS-2133 (hybrid CD/SACD)
73:17 mins



Rolf Martinsson, graduate-turned-professor of composition at the Malmö Academy of

Music, creates colourful orchestral works which reside in the hinterland between tonality and abstract sound, frequently crossing the border within the same work. This collection of his output over the last two decades is a carefully crafted CV of recent achievements, aptly recorded by the Swedish label BIS.

A third of the disc is taken up with Martinsson's evocative *Orchestral Songs on Poems by Emily Dickinson* (2009/11), a cycle of ten songs divided into three themes; love, nature and life. Don't be fooled by the twee façade: the harp, celesta and vibraphone details mask darker insight into the human condition and our place within the natural world. Swedish soprano Lisa Larsson sparkles as she delivers Dickinson's detailed descriptions of summer slipping into autumn and the shadows on the lawn.

Open Mind (2005) and *Concerto for Orchestra* (2008) swing from almost Disney-esque expansive

melodies to complex textures and hidden ideas; both works contain cryptograms to their dedicatees. The latter work was premiered at the Stockholm International Composer Festival, which included 23 of Martinsson's pieces; the composer uses the opportunity to explore thematic associations with those works 'as a perambulation between the various quotations'. On paper this sounds disastrous, but the freeform approach is surprisingly effective.

More formally structured is *A.S. In Memoriam* (1999/2001), which was written in memory of Arnold Schoenberg and *Verklärte Nacht* (1899), its tighter rein on orchestration adds interesting variety. *Claire Jackson*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

RECORDING

★★★

R Strauss

Eine Alpensinfonie; Salome – Dance of the Seven Veils; Die Frau ohne Schatten – excerpts
London Philharmonic Orchestra/
Vladimir Jurowski

LPO LPO-0106 101:33 mins (2 discs)



An entire programme of giant symphonic-operatic Richard Strauss might be too much

of a good thing, but these three works from three different LPO concerts make a compelling whole. The hyper-perceptive Vladimir Jurowski will surely have noticed that the eeriness before the storm in his *Alpine Symphony* has much in common with the Empress's Nightmare in Act II of the opera *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, composed around the same time.

A second hearing of his extensive and unusual selection, a semi trial-run for performances of the whole at the Met, proves what wisdom and magic there are in it. Unlike Strauss's own mostly noisy potpourri, this includes some music minus several sequences from all three acts as well as interludes, excepting the rather lovely Schubertian music for Barak the Dyer's goodness of heart in Act I (the final scene from there with the watchmen makes up for that absence). Excellent solos from cellist Kristine Blaumane and leader Peter Schoeman frame some of the most original music in the opera. And possibly the ever more atonal orchestral outbursts around the Empress's climactic spoken melodrama were cut from the Met production, as they usually are, so good to have them here, too.

Jurowski's *Alpine Symphony* is ideally paced and beautifully balanced, possibly more so on CD than in the dryish Royal Festival Hall, with especially clear ends of the register. There are so many good recordings of it, but this is up there among the best. And I know no more bewitching or exciting performance of *Salome's Dance*, either. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★★

R Strauss

Macbeth; Don Juan; Tod und Verklärung; Festmarsch

Staatskapelle Weimar/Kirill Karabits
Audite 97.755 70:35 mins



In theory, it was a good idea to show the current shape of Weimar's former Court, now State



BACKGROUND TO...

Rolf Martinsson (b1956)

The Swedish composer's international breakthrough came with the 1999 premiere of his trumpet concerto *Bridge*, composed for Håkan Hardenberger. Martinsson has written for leading solo performers including Martin Fröst, Anne Sofie von Otter and Christian Lindberg. Since 2011 he has enjoyed a particularly close association with the soprano Lisa Larsson,

for whom he devised a soprano version of *Orchestral Songs on Poems by Emily Dickinson* (originally written for mezzo-soprano): Larsson has performed Martinsson's music at more than a hundred concerts to date.

Orchestral Reviews

Orchestra, a fertile training ground for the young Richard Strauss as conductor and composer, in scores premiered either in its home town or neighbouring Eisenach (the exception is the *Festmarsch* from the same time, dubiously born in his home city of Munich). The problem is bothering with what is chronologically the first of the tone-poem sequence, *Macbeth* – brass-heavy (albeit with the introduction of a bass trumpet), incoherent and very tangential to its subject-matter. The sophistication of the Weimar players under Kirill Karabits tones down the worst excesses, and textures are admirably clear, in fine sound, throughout the recording. But does it deserve yet another recording? I'd say not. The *Festmarsch* is similarly banal, a good deal shorter and more of a rarity – very odd to hear its C major coming out of what here is quite a spiritual transfiguration in *Tod und Verklärung*.

Karabits and his orchestra take a long time to flame, namely through three-quarters of a far from fiery *Don Juan*, where the crucial oboe solo is outshone by the clarinet towards the end of that exquisite love-scene. But when the sparks fly, which they do, fully, for the first time in the sick-bed agonies of the dying man, there's one performance here to set up there with the best. The memories of youth are beautifully gauzy, too. Otherwise not in the same league as the Staatskapelle Weimar's other Strauss recordings with Antoni Wit. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Sir Thomas Beecham

Beethoven: Symphony No. 2;
Brahms: Symphony No. 2;
Haydn: Symphonies Nos 99 & 101; **Liszt:** A Faust Symphony;
Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture; **Mozart:** Symphonies Nos 36 (Linz) & 39, etc
Alexander Young (tenor); Beecham Choral Society; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Thomas Beecham
ICA ICAC 5148 274:37 mins (4 discs)



Recorded expertly by the BBC, mostly at the Royal Festival Hall between 1954 and 1959, these mono live recordings with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

capture the essence of Beecham's final years with an infectious vitality not always encountered in the studio equivalents (fine though they are). Although Beecham was always keen to imbue his studio recordings with an urgent sense of spontaneity, his mercurial personality was almost invariably at its most beguiling live in concert.

One senses an extra degree of imperativeness in gripping performances of Haydn's symphonies Nos 99 and 101, which by comparison with Beecham's studio accounts for EMI (now Warner) dating from the same period, lean more towards vibrant authority and majestic sweep than twinkle-in-the-eye breeziness and charm. Beecham does tend, however, to make rather a meal of Boccherini's delightful G521 Sinfonia, which lacks the iridescent sparkle of Carlo Maria Giulini's contemporaneous studio account with the Philharmonia for EMI/Warner Classics.

Beecham is very much back on form with 1954 performances of Mozart's *Linz* and K543 (No. 39) symphonies, lithely played and recorded, which erupt in joyous finales whose captivating effervescence makes questions of authenticity a glorious irrelevance. Of the two overtures included here, Mendelssohn's magical *A Midsummer Night's Dream* sounds surprisingly a shade earthbound, whereas Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* sails the high seas with imperious swagger and charisma.

The three remaining symphonies in this fine four-disc collection, are also well worth hearing. Beethoven's Second and Liszt's *Faust* were recorded at the same concert on 14 November 1956, the former playfully youthful and refreshingly unmannered, the latter more emotionally immediate and imposing than the studio account of three years later.

Brahms is not a composer automatically associated with Beecham, but on the evidence of this radiantly affectionate 1959 performance of the Second Symphony, he had – notwithstanding his oft-repeated waspish comments about that composer – a profound instinct for the German's autumnal reflectiveness. *Julian Haylock*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



New Releases

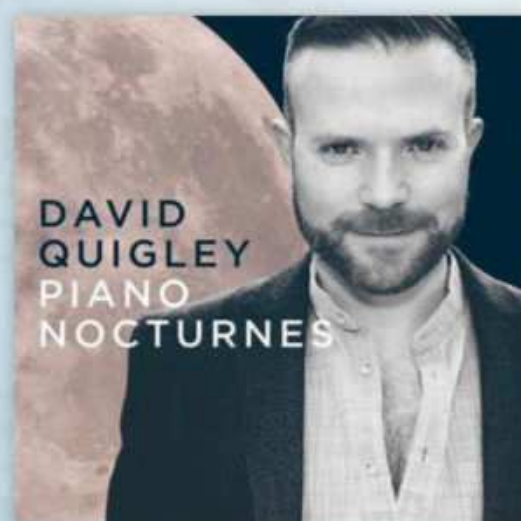


Hans Gál
Piano Trio in E, Op. 18,
Variations on a Popular
Viennese Tune, Op. 9
Dmitri Shostakovich
Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor,
Op. 67

Briggs Piano Trio
Sarah Beth Briggs piano
David Juritz violin
Kenneth Woods cello

AVIE continues its acclaimed series of recordings of the music of Hans Gál with the newly formed Briggs Piano Trio, with Gál's lyrical *Piano Trio in E* and his witty *Variations on a Popular Viennese Tune*, alongside Shostakovich's harrowing *Piano Trio in E minor*.

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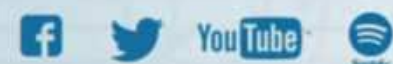
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CONCERTO CHOICE



Korngold and Nielsen – a very persuasive pairing

Jessica Duchen relishes two great yet contrasting 20th century concertos in winning performances



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Jiyeon Lee plays both
concertos with relish

Korngold • Nielsen

Korngold: Violin Concerto in D;

Nielsen: Violin Concerto

Jiyeon Lee (violin); Odense Symphony Orchestra/
Kristiina Poska

Orchid Classics ORC100079 64:40 mins

There seems to be an explosion taking place over in the Korngold Violin Concerto department at present. Honestly, you wait for decades and then suddenly the floodgates open... The fact that violinists are finally taking in their droves to this heartfelt, colourful, melodic piece of 20th-century music speaks volumes in itself and this latest recording from Jiyeon Lee with the Odense Symphony Orchestra under Kristiina Poska is a fine addition to the growing roster.

Lee's playing is full-toned, consistent and energetic, besides technically spot-on, and she brings out to excellent effect the first movement's yearning character, and the mysterious byways of the second. The finale's high-jinx are perhaps a little heavy-footed from the orchestra, but the soloist sounds as if she's having the time of her life.

Jiyeon Lee's playing is full-toned, consistent and energetic

The team pairs the Korngold with what could be described as Denmark's own national violin concerto: that by Nielsen – a wholesome muesli bar beside Korngold's chocolate sundae. It's a pairing that emerges as both suitable and interesting; each composer has a powerful language of his own and is experimenting with special effects in tonal language despite his era (Nielsen's Concerto dates from 1912 and Korngold's was premiered just after World War II, though some of its themes were jotted down considerably earlier and had been waiting for a good home).

In the Nielsen, the orchestral sound feels more at home: solid, open-hearted and earthy, it suits the composer's unique admixture ideally. Lee again produces playing that rises to the Concerto's many challenges, secure and persuasive throughout. Recorded sound is excellent.

PERFORMANCE
RECORDING

★★★★
★★★★★



Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the BBC Music Magazine website at www.classical-music.com

Bartók • Kodály

Concertos for Orchestra

Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra/
Jakub Hrůša

*Pentatone PTC 5186 626 (hybrid CD/
SACD) 55:30 mins*



To pair Kodály and Bartók's Concertos for Orchestra seems such an obvious idea that you may

wonder why it is so seldom done. The reason isn't far to seek: Kodály's neoclassical single-movement piece is vastly inferior to his compatriot's large-scale masterpiece. It consists of quick and slow sections arranged in a rondo-like pattern; while the lively sections include some neat jazzy writing, the slow music is rather flat and uninspired.

Hrůša takes a decidedly serious view of the Bartók, giving a finely judged account of its slow introduction, and in the 'Elegy' third movement eliciting some superbly atmospheric playing from the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. One may wish, though, that he would let his hair down a bit more elsewhere: the Shostakovich parody in the 'Intermezzo interrotto' sounds rather straight-laced, and the witty 'Giuoco delle coppie' movement is on the slow side – more of an *Allegretto* than an *Allegro scherzando*. Again, the *Presto* finale could scamper just that little bit more. But these are relatively small points, and the performance as a whole is impressive. The recording is lifelike and well balanced, though in the brass chorale passages of the 'Giuoco delle coppie' the all-important side-drum part is all but inaudible. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★★

Berlioz • Turnage

Turnage: Concerto for Two Violins & Orchestra (Shadow Walker);

Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique
Vadim Repin, Daniel Hope (violin);
Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic
Orchestra/Sascha Goetzel

Onyx ONYX 4188 79:23 mins



Mark-Anthony Turnage's new double concerto *Shadow Walker* was premiered by this immensely

popular Istanbul orchestra, and features some Turkish percussion

instruments – though not, as far as I can tell, in any especially Turkish idiom. This isn't the jazzy, satirical Turnage of *From the Wreckage* or *Anna Nicole*, but dark, edgy, with nervy, shifting rhythms and restive sonorities, inspired by a dance video in which a shadow, detached from its creator, walks through the streets on its own. As this suggests, the prevailing atmosphere is distinctly MR James: eerie, sometimes lyrical but with menacing flashes, punctuated by the dialogue of the solo violins – shadow and self?

In this live concert Vadim Repin and Daniel Hope are, not surprisingly, ideally fluent, and the excellent Turkish players recreate Turnage's enigmatic soundworld with aplomb. This is an uncompromising score, but it's a compelling concept that repays concentrated listening.

Putting it alongside Berlioz at his most romantically rumbustious might seem a little unfair, but in fact the pairing underlines some unexpected similarities – supernatural visions, rhythmic interplay, ambiguities of personality and identity. Here again the orchestra and Viennese conductor Sacha Goetzel leap to the occasion with characteristic vitality and freshness that's exactly right for this youthful storm of passions. There are so many *Symphonie fantastique* recordings that it'd be invidious to select any single best, but this is certainly among the most vivid modern-instrument versions, although Robin Ticciati offers greater finesse (on Linn), Davis (on Philips or LSO Live) and Rattle (on Warner) expansiveness and scale. If you want this pairing, it won't disappoint. *Mike Scott Rohan*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Brahms

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat
Nelson Goerner (piano); NHK Symphony Orchestra/Tadaaki Otaka
Alpha ALPHA 395 49:46 mins



Brahms seems to have taken a sadistic delight in making his instrumental writing as awkward to play as possible, and the soloist's part in Piano Concerto No. 2 is notoriously among the most difficult of all – far more difficult than it sounds. This is



Fleet and pure-toned:
Ana de la Vega plays
Mozart and Mysliveček

not only because of the work's vast length – though its four-movement, 50-minute span outruns any previous concerto – but because the awkwardness has to be concealed. Apart from the feisty scherzo second movement and a few agitated episodes elsewhere, the music is meant to flow forth with the genial ease and seasoned wisdom of chamber music – in total contrast to the tragic heroics of the Concerto No. 1 of 22 years before.

And flow it certainly does in this beguiling live recording by Nelson Goerner and the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo under Tadaaki Otaka. Setting unhurried tempos and completely at one in matters of rubato and tempo-modification, conductor and soloist unfold the work as if gently impelled by an immensely slow rhythmic pendulum swing.

Goerner's beauty of touch is manifest on the first page and, though he has the heft for the chunkier passages, the piano is never allowed to clang. Otaka's shaping care for phrasing, dynamics and texture is already evident in the gentler middle section of the first movement's opening tutti, and there are many poetic moments of hushed playing from the orchestra. There are, among listeners, otherwise dedicated Brahmsians who find the wayward sprawl of this particular work a bit questionable. Here is a recording to restore their faith.

Bayan Northcott

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Mozart

Piano Concertos (cadenzas by B Sørensen): No. 11 in F, K413; No. 12 in A, K414; No. 13 in C, K415
Katrine Gislinge (piano); Stenhammar Quartet
Alba ABCD 418 (hybrid CD/SACD) 72:35 mins



These three concertos belong marvellously well together. Completed towards the end

of 1782 and advertised together the following January, all three add up to a naturally balanced programme, as attested by the numerous single-CD recordings in the catalogue onto which they have been comfortably fitted. Mozart was aiming to attract the broadest range of performers: describing all three keyboard concertos as being 'something between too difficult and too easy', he designed them to allow accompaniments by either full orchestra or 'a quattro' – that is, by string quartet.

Recently there have been rewarding examples of both Mozart's full orchestral scores (by Kristian Bezuidenhout and the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra on Harmonia Mundi) and his 'chamber' ones (by the Kuijken family, on Challenge Classics) – in each case with fortepiano as solo instrument and period-style instrumental support. Here, instead, the Danish pianist Katrine Gislinge and the Swedish Stenhammar Quartet revive the five-person versions,

employing a modern piano and modern strings. All three of their readings immediately announce the collaboration of five strong-minded executants uninhibited by the 'a quattro' format and alive to Mozart's inimitable imbuing of concert-hall compositions with theatrical suggestiveness – Gislinge's nuanced phrasing shows herself particularly responsive to this sort of 'operatic' characterisation.

A less happy feature of the enterprise, to my ears at least, is that each concerto comes decked with solo cadenzas by Gislinge's husband, the distinguished composer Bent Sørensen, that wander speedily into a stylistic no man's land. Even this, however, marks the recording out as entirely free from predictable routine. And while my first choice for these works remains the dazzling Bezuidenhout-Freiburg disc, I'm very glad to have encountered this one. *Max Loppert*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Mozart • Mysliveček

Mozart: Flute Concerto No. 1 in G, K313; Flute Concerto No. 2 in D, K314; **Mysliveček:** Flute Concerto No. 1 in G
Ana de la Vega (flute); English Chamber Orchestra/Stephanie Gonley
Pentatone PTC 5186 723 (hybrid CD/SACD) 62:58 mins



This imaginatively programmed recording places a relative rarity alongside

Mozart's two flute concertos. Instead of his flute-harp concerto as (a more familiar) companion offering, the Australian flautist Ana de la Vega here revives the single extant concerto by Josef Mysliveček, Mozart's slightly older contemporary and friend. Some misleading claims have been made in her championing of the work, which was by no means as 'lost' as Pentatone's publicity appears to suggest, having been given at least two previous recordings (the first by the German flautist Bruno Meier and the Prague Chamber Orchestra, still available on Koch Schwann).

Putting these aside, one may still warm to both de la Vega's advocacy and her execution, full of fleetness of phrase and appealing purity of tone; the more so since by the

highest standards of the period, including Mysliveček's own, the Concerto comes across as slightly lacking in originality. The outer movements go through elegant *concertante* motions; it's only in the middle *Andante mezza voce*, a cloudless G major rumination which de la Vega and the English Chamber Orchestra take daringly – but convincingly – slowly, that Mysliveček's distinctness of creative 'voice' can be appreciated.

In the two Mozart concertos the solo playing possesses the same charm and freshness, which I feel would have been considerably enhanced by a conductor's controlling presence. Lacking that, the orchestral parts, albeit delivered with perfect ECO competence, also lack sufficient rhythmic definition and differentiation of dynamics. It's not a weakness serious enough to spoil pleasure in the works themselves – Mozart's oft-reported dislike of the flute was clearly a momentary expression of pique – but it does prevent these performances from standing out in an already-crowded field.

Max Loppert

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Sibelius • Stravinsky

Sibelius: Violin Concerto in D minor;
Stravinsky: Violin Concerto in D;
Pei Lu: 4 Fantasies on Chinese Folk Tunes – 'Drama. Beijing Opera'
Zhi Jong Wang (violin);
Philharmonia Orchestra/
Thomas Sanderling

Accentus Music ACC30430 62:57 mins



Except for their tonality, no two violin concertos could seem more different: the Sibelius darkly

Romantic, full of violinistic effects and sweeping melodic paragraphs; the Stravinsky drily neo-Baroque, much of it written in an almost comedic style of busker's Bach. Yet something Russian lurks behind both. Few Sibelius scores reveal his early affinity with Tchaikovsky and Borodin more openly, while Stravinsky's third movement culminates, movingly, in what sounds like a nostalgic lullaby for his lost Russian patrimony.

Still, it takes a versatile violinist to encompass such contrasting styles of writing with equal conviction, and this, the Chinese Menuhin-protégé



Inspired by London:
Dejan Lazić finds
unusual connections

Zhi-Jong Wang certainly evinces. Thomas Sanderling's commodious tempos in the Sibelius allow full scope for her vibrant-toned lower register, though there is no lack of brilliance in the showier touches of virtuosity with which Sibelius liked to spice his solo writing. Yet for the angular lines and pirouetting figures of the Stravinsky, she finds just the right gutsy crispness. The Abbey Road recording enhances the spaciousness of the Sibelius, yet also brings out with exceptional clarity the chattering background detail of the Stravinsky, wittily delivered by the Philharmonia wind players.

There are more emotively wrought accounts of the Sibelius in the catalogue, and comparably good versions of the Stravinsky, but for those who want this coupling, the new release is recommendable, even if the fill-up – a kind of dramatic monologue for solo violin by the contemporary Chinese composer Lu Pei – proves a rather disparate sequence of glissandos and conventional figurations.

Bayan Northcott

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

The Golden Age

Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26; **plus works by Kreisler, Debussy, Ponce, Koncz and Gershwin**

Ray Chen (violin);
London Philharmonic Orchestra/
Robert Trevino

Decca 483 3852 53:26 mins



Don't be put off by the glitz surrounding this new release from superstar violinist Ray Chen. Yes, the

album is accompanied by a custom-built computer game and much is made of Chen's online popularity (with numerous viral YouTube hits to his name), but there's no false glitter to his playing. Having won the 2008 Yehudi Menuhin Violin Competition, Chen is the real deal and this well-produced album, though a hotchpotch in terms of repertoire, makes for highly enjoyable listening.

A celebration of the violin's 'golden age', the album features Bruch's much-loved Violin Concerto, performed with splendid warmth and character by Chen and the LPO. Otherwise there's a blend of popular classics and inventive new arrangements, including 'A New Satisfaction' (sic), an unexpectedly fizzing and uplifting arrangement of Satie's *Gymnopédie No. 1* performed by Chen's excellent Made in Berlin quartet (comprised of players from the Berlin Philharmonic). Other highlights are a gossamer-light quartet arrangement of *Clair de lune*, and Kreisler's *Schön Rosmarin* for violin and piano, which Chen plays with his signature vivacity and a wonderfully full-bodied sound.

Kate Wakeling

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

The London Connection

Beethoven: Piano Concerto in D, Op. 61a (arr Violin Concerto);
Clementi: Piano Sonata in B minor, Op. 40/2; **JP Cramer:** Piano Sonata in E, Op. 62

(Le retour à Londres)

Dejan Lazić (piano); Netherlands Chamber Orchestra/Gordon Nikolić
Onyx Classics ONYX 4187 78:29 mins



In the spring of 1807 the London-based composer and publisher Clementi travelled to

Vienna to negotiate a contract with Beethoven. One of the new pieces he commissioned from the great composer was a piano version of his famous violin concerto. It's a fairly routine transcription, but Beethoven's new cadenzas (he wrote none for the original concerto) are fascinating. The first-movement cadenza is the wackiest Beethoven ever wrote, with a middle section in the style of a march, complete with a timpani part; and there's also a surprisingly dramatic new link between the slow movement and finale.

Clementi's own B minor Sonata is a fine piece, with a sombre introduction heralding an agitated *Allegro*, and a deeply-felt slow movement which anticipates the finale's main theme. Like Clementi, Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858) settled in London. He had known Beethoven, who had admired him as a pianist. The sonata Dejan Lazić plays in his enterprising programme is in dazzling virtuoso style, with a first movement that's attractive enough, though the remainder is less characterful. Lazić is a fine musician, and plays both solo pieces thoughtfully and imaginatively.

Less of an unqualified success is the very relaxed account of the concerto, where Lazić's first entry is so free that the music almost grinds to a halt. The presence of a conductor (the performance is directed by the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra's leader, Gordan Nikolić) might have produced a more integrated and compelling account; but this is nevertheless an intriguing project, shedding valuable light on early 19th-century musical life in London. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



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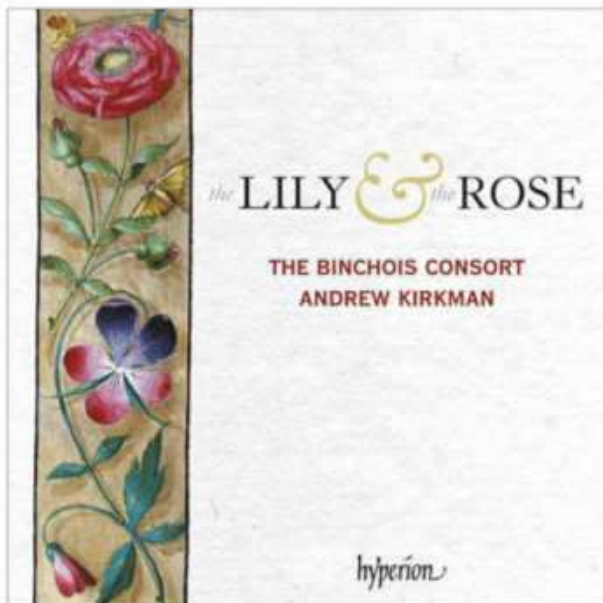
Steven Osborne, whose Rachmaninov has already been praised for its synthesis of 'modesty, inner fire and virtuosity' (The Observer) here turns his attention to the wonderful Études-tableaux.

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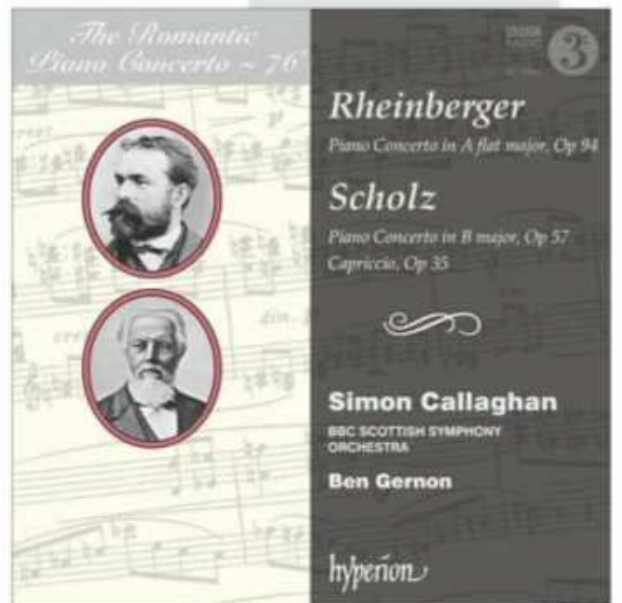
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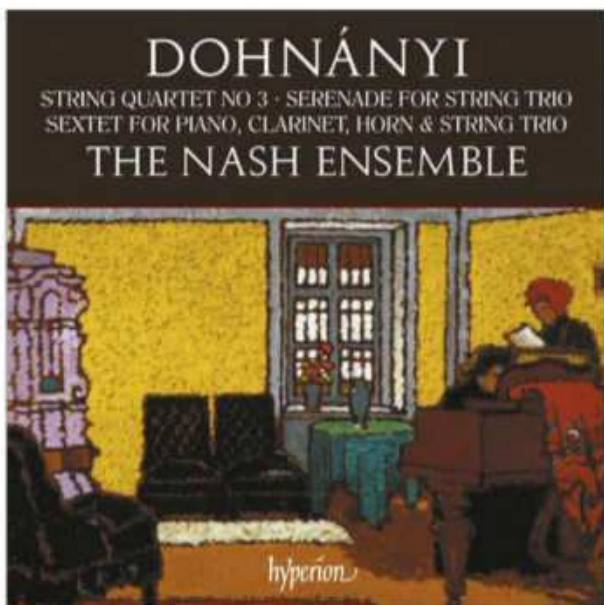
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OPERA CHOICE



Christopher Purves – the master of Handel's heroes

Berta Joncus thrills to the visceral power of England's great baritone as he conjures some strange characters



Dramatic imagination: Christopher Purves draws us into Handel's world

Handel

Nell'Africane Selve, HWV 136a; Concerto Grosso in F, HWV 315; plus arias from Athalia; Belshazzar; Catone; Esther; Joshua; Rinaldo; Siroe, Re Di Persia; Tolomeo, Re Di Egitto

Christopher Purves (baritone);
Arcangelo/Jonathan Cohen
Hyperion CDA 68152 77:11 mins

Which singer, active today, has blazed forth in Baroque, Romantic, and contemporary repertoires, including experimental rock? It's hard to think of anyone but baritone Christopher Purves, who scores another triumph in this recital of solo Handel arias. It's the second of a two-volume set and follows the first volume's format. Numbers come from lesser-known works – cantatas, oratorios and *opera seria* – and are artfully arranged for contrast. Some of Handel's greatest music was written for bass-baritones, and in Purves finds its ideal interpreter.

Few singers can match the colours, plush timbres, and rugged muscle of Purves's instrument, and no singer surpasses his dramatic imagination. The situations of Handel's characters are often difficult

for a modern audience to identify with: King Siroe, who has sentenced his son to die; the prophet Caleb, who sees the future; the poet who thinks of his lover as a shepherdess... Yet Purves, through his sensual vocalism, makes them credible. Siroe's narcissism reveals itself in overegged, 'sobbing' notes that smack of self-delusion. Caleb spits out sharp-pointed melismas to paint hell's flames. Moving from one aria

into the next, the poet in love twists from despair into seduction, as Purves urgently whispers: 'I ask for love, I desire nothing else'.

Since Purves's first solo Handel recording with director Jonathan

Cohen and Arcangelo in 2012, director and band have established their top rank. Reunited with Purves for the second volume, they enrich the recording with a fiery rendition of Handel's Concerto Grosso in F major, HWV 315.

**PERFORMANCE
RECORDING**

★★★★★
★★★★★



Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the BBC Music Magazine website at www.classical-music.com

Alfred Cellier

**The Mountebanks;
Suite Symphonique**

Soraya Mafi, Thomas Elwin, James Cleverton, Sharon Carty, John Colyn Gyeantey, Catherine Carby, John Savournin, Geoffrey Dolton;
BBC Singers; BBC Concert Orchestra/
John Andrews

*Dutton 2CDLX 7349 (hybrid CD/SACD)
138:07 mins (2 discs)*



Gilbert and... Cellier? But *The Mountebanks* is as much a Savoy operetta as any of Sullivan's.

Alfred Cellier (1844–91), English-born but half-French, was D'Oyly Carte's music director, so it's no surprise that he maintains the same general style. Nevertheless he has his own distinctive voice, flowingly melodic, orchestral writing more elegant and modern-sounding, looking forward to Edwardian operetta. What he rather lacks is Sullivan's comic quirkiness; when two characters turn into clockwork figurines, Cellier raises a smile – no more.

Gilbert's libretto is partly to blame. Aficionados will recognise his infamous 'lozenge' plot – here an alchemist's potion, transforming people into what they're pretending to be, even monks and figurines. It's a pleasantly Gilbertian romp through second-rate Italian opera conventions – secret societies, peasant lovers, *banditti* and so on – with some typically 'innocent' innuendos, as when one clockwork character's caught oiling the other. Its actual plot development, though, is perfunctory, without strong anchoring characters like Ko-Ko or the Grand Inquisitor.

Rounded off by Ivan Caryll after Cellier's death, *Mountebanks* was only a modest success in Britain, less so in America, soon relegated to amateur productions and gradually forgotten. Two incomplete semi-amateur recordings have long vanished. This one, painstakingly edited from surviving parts, does the work more than justice, with John Andrews's sprightly conducting and SACD sound; the young but well-seasoned cast is so uniformly excellent it's almost invidious to single out Soraya Mafi's Teresa and Thomas Elwin's Alfredo. Annoyingly, it doesn't include

Opera Reviews

the synopsis, though, making the online libretto absolutely essential.

Mike Scott Rohan

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Halévy

La Reine de Chypre

Véronique Gens, Cyrille Dubois, Étienne Dupuy, Eric Huchet, Christophorus Stamboglis, Artavazd Sargsyan, Tomislav Lavoie; Flemish Radio Choir; Chamber Orchestra of Paris/Hervé Niquet
Ediciones Singulares ES 1032
154:46 mins (2 discs)



As usual from this source, no trouble or expense has been spared on this project emanating from the Palazetto Bru Zane in Venice. The substantial booklet in hard covers contains everything one might want to know about the opera, including an excellent English translation of the libretto by Sue Rose. The performance, likewise, does its utmost to rehabilitate this work, premiered at the Paris Opéra in 1841 but receiving its last performance there in 1878. Véronique Gens's warm voice and intelligent pacing lend lustre to the only female role and the male singers, too, are generally easy on the ear: only Cyrille Dubois in the part of Gérard becomes reedy when singing loud above the stave, but his soft singing is exquisite.

All that said, we then have to come to the work itself. Despite puffs from Berlioz and Wagner (with what motives, I know not), it really is no more than mediocre – and I suspect that the broken-backed libretto has much to do with it. I forgive the setting of the last three acts in 'the port of Nicosia' (shades of Shakespeare's 'sea coast of Bohemia'), but am less indulgent over a plot that matches the implausible with the entirely unexplained. The music in general is not ugly but not persuasive either, despite Mme Gens. The love duet in Act IV does touch briefly on true feeling, but otherwise this is a composer going through the motions, many of them confined to banal tonic/dominant harmonies, duly seasoned with excitable diminished sevenths. *Roger Nichols*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Meyerbeer

Le Prophète

John Osborn, Lynette Tapia, Albrecht Kludzuweit, Marianne Cornetti, Pierre Doyen, Tijn Faveyts, Karel Martin Ludvik; Aalto Theatre Opera Chorus; Essener Philharmoniker/Giuliano Carella
Oehms Classics OC 971
214:09 mins (3 discs)



Premiered after many years of work and many months of rehearsal at the Paris Opéra

in 1849, Meyerbeer's substantial score was one of the most admired works of the mid-19th-century and arguably represents the peak of his achievement; though, as with the rest of his once hugely successful output, it fell from favour following racially motivated attacks by Wagner, on whose bandwagon others joined as the Jewish composer's vast historical epics simply started to look dated.

It has taken until recent decades for Meyerbeer's music once again to be looked at regularly and dispassionately. This live performance from Essen (2017) is based on a scholarly edition that attempts to present the score in its very first version, with some sections included that were cut before the first night for reasons of length and have never previously been performed.

Meyerbeer is an uneven composer who tends to think sectionally rather than in larger structures; but the best of *Le Prophète* is imaginative and powerful, and its subject – the quasi-religious (but effectively political) early 16th-century rising of the Anabaptists against their spiritual and temporal overlords in Germany and the Lowlands – is a fascinating one. Two roles dominate the piece, that of the delusional prophet Jean of Leyden, who comes to believe he is a new Messiah, and that of his intensely loving mother, Fidès; both are delivered with conviction by John Osborn and Marianne Cornetti respectively, while Lynette Tapia offers a decent account of Jean's discarded fiancée, Berthe. The conductor Giuliano Carella draws spirited music-making from his Essen forces. *George Hall*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



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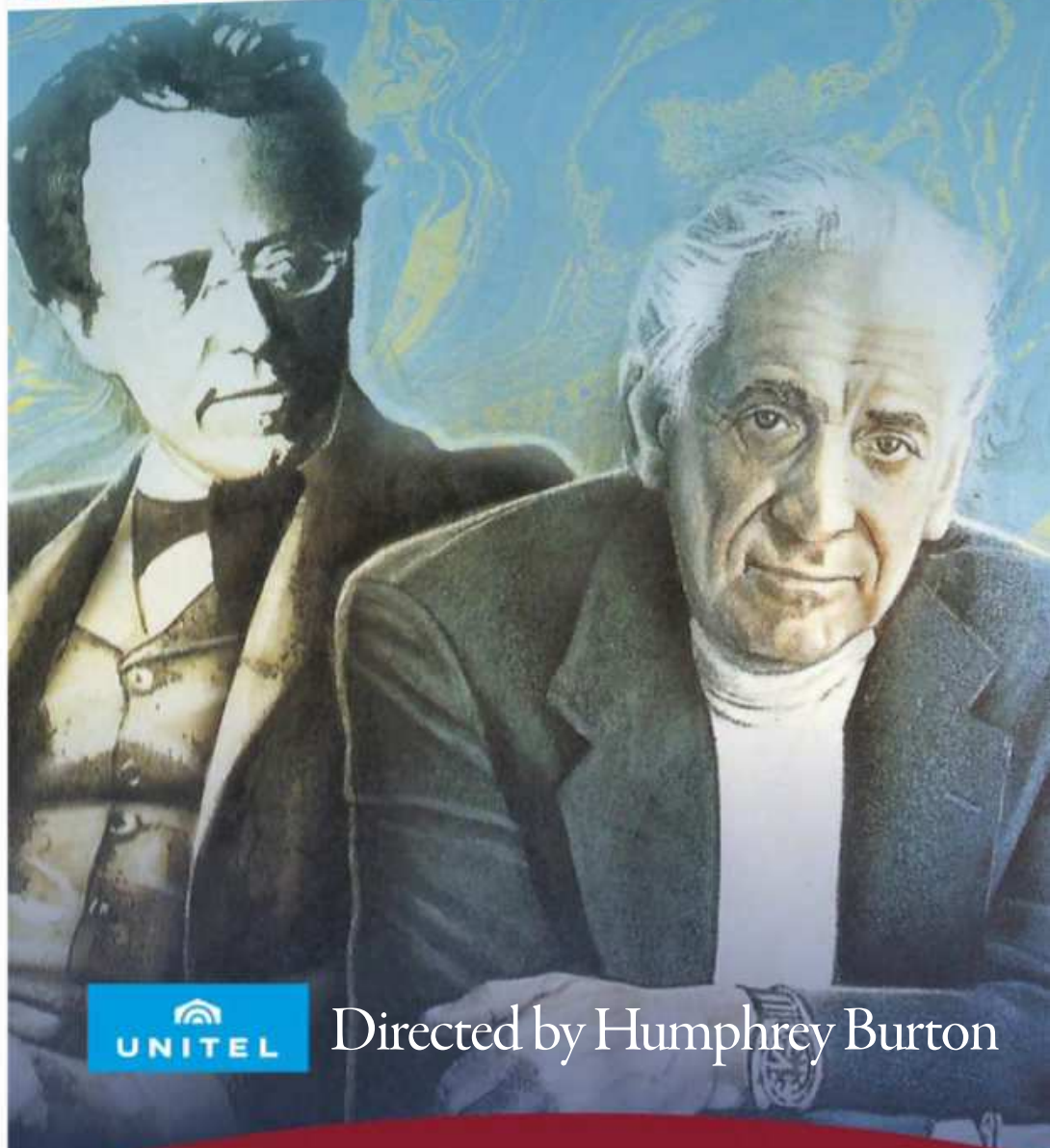
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Reissues *Reviewed by Christopher Cook*



Delibes *Lakmé*

Erato 9029573486 (1971) 149:44 mins (2 discs)
Alain Lombard conducts a properly Gallic *Lakmé* with **Mady Mesplé** as a winningly lyric heroine and for once the Bell Song is more than a showstopper. Then there's **Charles Burles**'s Gerald – truly a tenor worth dying for. ★★★★★



Lalo *Le Roi d'Ys*

Erato 9029573485 (1957) 105:36 mins (2 discs)
 Lalo could only have dreamed of this cast. The sound may be boxy and the chorus muffled but **Janine Micheau** is sweet toned as the nice girl and **Rita Gorr** supreme as the wicked Margared. ★★★★★



Marais *Sémélé*

Glossa GCD 921631 (2007) 137:26 mins (2 discs)
 This may not be Marais's masterpiece but it's lovingly coaxed back to life by **Hervé Niquet**. And if there's more drama in the music than the libretto, singers and players give it their all. ★★★★★



Massenet *Thaïs*

Sony 88985397882 (1974) 141:35 mins (2 discs)
 Lushly upholstered at every turn this should have been a perfect *Thaïs*, but **Anna Moffo** in the title role has problems with pitch which mar a vintage recording. However **José Carreras** and **Gabriel Bacquier** are at the top of their game. ★★★

Mozart

Le nozze di Figaro

Irmgard Seefried, Sena Jurinac, Erich Kunz, Paul Schöffler, Lisa Della Casa, Rosette Anday, Oskar Czerwenka, Murray Dickie, Anny Felbermayer, Walter Berry; Vienna State Opera Choir; Vienna Philharmonic/
 Karl Böhm

ICA Classics ICAC5147

155:02 mins (2 discs)



This live recording was made in London's Royal Festival Hall in 1954 – a period

when the search was on by Karl Böhm and others (Fritz Busch, Vittorio Gui, Hans Rosbaud, etc.) for a new approach to Mozartian performance. The singers here are vocally pre-eminent and the performance is alert, theatrically motivated and (at times) moving. Moreover, this event shares some key performers with Böhm's 1956 recording (available on the Guild Historical label) for the 200th anniversary of Mozart's birth.

The sound quality here is of its time and clearly more care was taken to capture the voices than

the orchestra. Despite Böhm's efforts there is sometimes a struggle between the old portentous style of singing and the new comedic, 'acting-with-the-voice' approach. Lisa Della Casa (Countess), for example, has superb vocal quality, but begins the reflective aria 'Dove sono' like an announcement from a deity. Sena Jurinac (Cherubino – she sings the Countess in Böhm's 1956 recording), is sparkling, but renders the little canzonetta 'Voi che sapete' almost as if it were a Schubert song, with over-rich fluidity and narrative import. Irmgard Seefried's Susanna is agile (hers must be the fastest 'Aprite, presto' duet ever recorded) and Eric Kunz's Figaro has humour but perhaps misses his darker side ('Se vuol ballare'). Only Paul Schöffler (the Count) seems past his best.

Böhm's greatest recording of *Figaro* was probably his 1968 Berlin version on Deutsche Grammophon (with Hermann Prey and Edith Mathis). For recent revelatory performances try Teodor Currentzis on Sony Classical or René Jacobs on Harmonia Mundi. **Anthony Pryer**

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★

Ricordi

La secchia rapita

Elcin Huseynov, Giorgio Valerio, Hyuksoo Kim, Alessandro Rivasio, Laure Kieffer; Chorus of the Claudio Abbado Civic Music School; Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano/
 Aldo Salvagno

Dynamic CDS7798 77:31 mins



Better known as the man in charge of the famous Italian publishing firm between 1888

and his death in 1912, Giulio Ricordi composed three operettas under the *nom de plume* Jules Burgmein, of which the second is recorded live here. Its not-very-catchy title – in English 'The Stolen Bucket' – refers to a minor event in Italian history when the citizens of Modena defeated those of Bologna in an early 14th-century battle. A purloined wooden bucket was held onto as a trophy and can be inspected in the town hall of Modena to this day.

Premiered in Milan in 1910, Ricordi's operetta can boast a libretto by Renato Simoni (who also worked on Puccini's *Turandot*) and enjoyed a smattering of productions over the next few years. There are some attractive moments, but as a whole the piece is pretty slight and not very imaginative, and this solid but workmanlike performance is unlikely to persuade many listeners otherwise. Non-professional elements do not help, nor do all the principal voices register positively, but Hyuksoo Kim offers a pleasant tenor as Titta, though conductor Aldo Salvagno needs to move things on a bit. **George Hall**

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Rossini

Mosè in Egitto (DVD)

Andrew Foster Williams, Mandy Fredrich, Sunnyboy Dladla; Vienna Symphony/Enrique Mazzola;
 dir. Lotte de Beer (Bregenz, 2017)

C major DVD: 744808;

Blu-ray: 744904 150 mins



Puppets are big in opera now. Once the little wooden tops were banished to toy-sized theatres in implausible productions of

Mozart; now they're stepping out onto the big stage. In *Mosè in Egitto*

from the 2017 Bregenz Festival, the Dutch director Lotte de Beer has members of the theatre group Hotel Modern, also from Holland, on stage with their video cameras, filming their stick-like puppets and 'making' theatre magic before our very eyes. The idea, she says, is to tell the story of all refugees in the Middle East: and the history of mankind from then, now, and in the future.

Alas, this updating and indeed future dating of Rossini's great *opera seria* is neither magical nor very theatrical. The video projections onto a large geodesic dome are murky, even on Blu-ray, and we keep cutting away to Hotel Modern's team at work at their model table, preparing to film, when it's the cast we want to see and hear. And if this wasn't distracting enough, the puppet masters begin to 'position' the principal characters as if they were, well, puppets.

Perhaps that's the point, that Pharaoh and Moses and the lovers, the Egyptian Prince Osiride who has fallen for the enemy and the Israelite Elcia, are puppets in the face of Fate; and perhaps it all looked a great deal better on stage, though booing at the final curtain suggests that not everyone at Bregenz was in tune with de Beer's approach to Rossini.

As Osiride, Sunnyboy Dladla is a useful bel canto tenor when he's not hopping up and down like a hormonally charged schoolboy, and Andrew Foster-Williams is a stern voiced Pharaoh. Best of all is the young Italian soprano, Clarissa Costanzo, who rightly stops the show in Act II with 'Porgi la destra amata'. That's where the magic and theatre is. **Christopher Cook**

PERFORMANCE ★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★★

Verdi

Otello (DVD)

Jonas Kaufmann, Marco Vratogna, Maria Agresta (voices); Royal Opera Chorus & Orchestra/Antonio Pappano; dir. Keith Warner (2017)

Sony DVD: 88985491959;

Blu-ray: 88985491969 160 mins (2 discs)



This disc is a record of perhaps the most eagerly awaited of operatic appearances for many years: Jonas Kaufmann making his role debut as Verdi's Otello. Expectations were high and also anxious, since

Opera Reviews

Kaufmann had been suffering from acute vocal problems. In the event he sang all the scheduled performances, but the reception wasn't quite as positive as hoped. Partly I think that is the result of his having become, in the last few years, such a superstar that one sees and hears Kaufmann rather than Otello or Don Carlo. Though he is in fine voice, he does not come across as the wounded animal that the greatest Otellos – Jon Vickers, Mario del Monaco – so impressively were. Kaufmann is happiest in the more lyrical passages, which become increasingly rare as the opera proceeds.

It would have helped if Keith Warner's production had been more alert to the lights and shades in the drama and the marvellous score – excitingly conducted by Antonio Pappano. Mainly the stage is dark and more or less bare, the winged lion of Venice dragged briefly across it to irrelevant effect.

I found that Marco Vratogna as Iago, though his voice is not

beautiful, was the most powerful presence, while Maria Agresta as Desdemona tended to simper, with arch smiles and poor enunciation, though she rose to the challenge of the enormous 'Willow Song' well. Otello's suicide leads to a Niagara of dark blood, almost to absurd effect. There are some strong performances from the minor characters, and I can imagine Frederic Antoun, here singing Cassio, becoming an Otello himself in due course.

Michael Tanner

PERFORMANCE ★★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★★

Verdi

Un Giorno di Regno

Gocha Abuladze, Davide Fersini, Valda Wilson, Elisabeth Jansson, Giuseppe Talamo; Cappella Aquileia; Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno/Marcus Bosch

Coviello Classics COV 91802 (hybrid CD/SACD) 100:59 mins (2 discs)



This was Verdi's second opera, and the only comic opera he wrote until his last, *Falstaff*. He was

reluctant to do it, partly because he had a gloomy temperament, which was exacerbated by his losing his son, daughter and wife in quick succession, and partly because he thought, rightly, that the libretto by the inescapable Romani was no good. What he produced, under those circumstances, was a work that could easily be mistaken for very minor Donizetti, certainly not in the same league as *L'elisir d'amore*. It has the vigour that characterises all Verdi's work, but not much else.

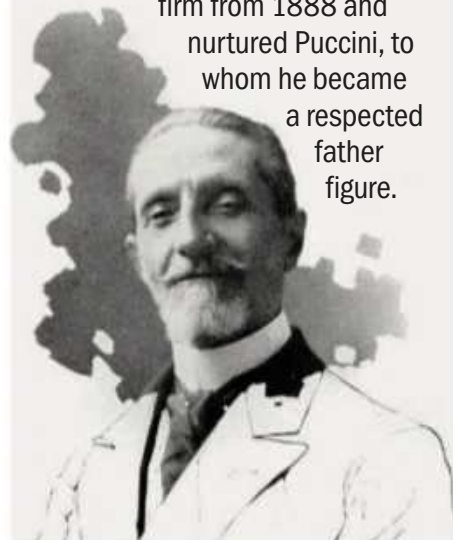
This live performance – there are stage noises, but no audience applause – has the required vigour, is clearly recorded, and the conductor Marcus Bosch, better known for his Bruckner, knows his way round the score. One hundred minutes pass without pain, though also without any particular pleasure. The cast is youthful and almost without exception adequate, with a notably fine tenor in Giuseppe Talamo. And the booklet includes a full libretto in three languages, though a cast list would have been helpful. However, Lamberto Gardelli's recording on Philips with an almost unbelievably starry cast is still available and is the one to go for. *Michael Tanner*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

BACKGROUND TO... Giulio Ricordi (1840-1912)

Grandson of the founder of Italy's renowned music publishing house, Giulio Ricordi was musically the most gifted of his family. Under the pseudonym Jules Burgmein (and occasionally Grubmeni) he composed piano pieces and songs as well as orchestral and stage works. He worked for the firm under his father for a short time in 1856, then permanently from 1863. From the mid-1870s he was Verdi's main contact at Ricordi, and inspired him to compose *Otello*. Giulio ran the firm from 1888 and

nurtured Puccini, to whom he became a respected father figure.



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Choral & Song

CHORAL & SONG CHOICE



Sandrine Piau finds love in English song

The great French soprano brings youth and ardour to a richly varied programme, says **Mike Scott Rohan**

Not just a dream:
Sandrine Piau triumphs
in a wide-ranging recital



Chimère

Debussy: Fêtes galantes (Book I); **Poulenc:** Banalités; Métamorphoses – 'C'est ainsi que tu es'; **Previn:** Three Dickinson Songs; **R Schumann:** 'Mignon'; 'Dein Angesicht'; 'Die Lotosblume'; **Wolf:** Eichendorff-Lieder – 'Verschwiegene Liebe'; Mörike-Lieder – 'Das verlassene Mägdlein'; 'Lied vom Winde'; 'Nixe Binsefuss'; plus songs by **Baksa** ('Heart! We will forget him'), **Barber** ('Despite and Still'), **Gurney** ('Sleep'), and **Loewe** ('Ach neige, du Schmerzenreiche')
Sandrine Piau (soprano),
Susan Manoff (piano)

Alpha Classics ALPHA 397 58:27 mins

The persistent 'Baroque specialist' label hardly sums up this distinguished French soprano. With her distinctively radiant, secure tone and cut-crystal upper range, her repertoire has always been much wider, not least in her Lieder recordings. This latest is somewhat over-packaged, a miniature coffee-table book padded out with medieval images, poems, Joni Mitchell quotes and so on to justify the chimerical title; but it conceals a decidedly special recital.

Piau credits Susan Manoff, a strong supporting presence throughout, with introducing her to the

Anglo-Saxon repertoire (although she has always loved Britten) and the programme includes, as well as Debussy, Poulenc and Wolf, Samuel Barber's enigmatic Joyce setting, and Emily Dickinson poems set by Robert Baksa and André Previn, as well as Ivor Gurney's beautifully Jacobean 'Sleep'. Piau delivers them with elegant, unforced expressiveness and, as in German, barely subliminal French

**Piau sings these songs
with elegant, unforced
expressiveness**

intonation. In the opening Loewe and Schumann, both young girls' songs, she evidently aims for youthful simplicity rather than sophistication, but captures Wolf's more mercurial ardour beautifully, even the mini-Valkyrie turbulence of 'Lied vom Winde'. Nevertheless, the French songs, the Debussy especially, take on that extra degree of nuance and colour. Altogether a fine, fascinating recital which leaves one wanting more.

PERFORMANCE
RECORDING

★★★★★
★★★★



Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the BBC Music Magazine website at www.classical-music.com

JS Bach • Telemann

JS Bach: Cantata, BWV 56;
JF Fasch: Overture in G minor, FWVK:g2; **Handel:** Concerto grosso in A minor, Op. 6 No. 4, HWV322 – Larghetto affettuoso; **Telemann:** Was gibst du den, o meine Seele; Jesus liegt in letzten Zuegen; Overture in D minor
Christoph Prégardien (baritone);
Vox Orchestra/Lorenzo Ghirlanda
Deutsches Harmonia Mundi 19075834122
63:05 mins



Recorded live in a Swiss church last year, this CD opens with a slightly humdrum

overture by Bach's contemporary Johann Friedrich Fasch, enlivened considerably by Lorenzo Ghirlanda's dance-inspired approach. The substance of the recording is two cantatas by Telemann, Bach's much-loved cantata *Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen*, plus two further orchestral movements by Telemann and Handel. The Vox Orchestra, a recently formed international group of Baroque musicians, delivers with terrific energy. The recorded sound is appropriately otherworldly, but the plaintive, honking woodwinds occasionally overwhelm the slightly whiny vibrato-free upper strings, and the bass needed more warmth. Flaws in intonation are hard to overlook. But the solo playing is characterful and visceral, and inner lines in the texture emerge with clarity.

The Telemann cantatas have moments of great beauty, such as the aria 'Mein Liebster Heiland': spacious, supported by a barely-there accompaniment which beautifully frames Christoph Prégardien's dignified rendition. However, the opening theme of the Bach cantata, presented as five separate notes, suggested a resigned 'I-will-carry-the-cross', emphatic rather than empathetic. Prégardien, who has enjoyed a long career as a lyric tenor, brings his considerable intelligence and poise to this music, together with immaculately crisp enunciation (although there is a translation if you want it). He sometimes sounds unconvinced by the orchestra's motoric chugging, and weaves his lines separately to great effect. I'm not completely persuaded by this baritone

incarnation; the lower range makes his normally elegant delivery sound a touch strained. *Natasha Loges*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Byrd

Motets

Choir of King's College Cambridge/
Stephen Cleobury

King's College KGS 0024 56:12 mins



The choir of King's College, Cambridge had been singing divine service for well over

a century when William Byrd assumed his first major post at Lincoln Cathedral around 1563, and his music is woven through the choir's lengthy discography including recordings of the Masses under Sir David Willcocks. Those landmarks already spoken for, Stephen Cleobury stakes his claim on a clutch of Latin motets artfully arranged to chart the onward march of the liturgical year.

It's a neat idea, though not without some musical drawbacks. By the time four feisty motets have signalled Advent and Candlemas, a little Lenten soul-searching is long overdue; and Easter through Ascension to Whitsun slaloms through a similarly bracing trajectory. Perhaps some of it is exacerbated by Cleobury's often driven direction – as if to distance himself from the Willcocks tradition. *Rorate caeli* unleashes not so much a wave of sound as a tsunami. The textures sound congested though, and the beseeching text metamorphoses into an urgent command. (*Laudibus in sanctis*, it must be said, musters a more cogent immediacy.)

Rather too often the application of a broad brush blunts Byrd's expressive intentions, so that the latter stages of *Ave verum* never quite elicit the plaintiveness wrapped around the repeating 'misereres'; and when the choral scholars alone tackle *Ne irascaris, Domine/Civitas sancti tui*, while the burnished bottom-heavy opening trembles with penitence, the heartrending lament for Jerusalem doesn't get past the notes to nail Byrd's subtext bemoaning the plight of Catholicism in a Protestant land. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Haydn

The Creation

Nicole Heaston (soprano), Toby Spence (tenor), Peter Rose (bass); Houston Symphony Chorus & Orchestra/Andrés Orozco Estrada
Pentatone PTC 5186 614 (hybrid CD/SACD) 99:27 mins (2 discs)



Given the parlous state of the environment today, the pre-industrial Enlightenment

optimism which irradiates Haydn's vast three-part oratorio celebrating the creation of the natural world is unutterably moving. The result of 15 months of work, the oratorio was an enduring success of which he was justifiably proud. This grand account pulls the work firmly into the 21st century, offering large-scale choral-orchestral bombast as well as delicate recitative accompaniments which owe much to historically-informed techniques.

Conductor Andrés Orozco-Estrada savours every moment of harmonic and textural drama. The pace is well-judged, generous at sweetly tender or particularly knotty harmonic moments, but with plenty of pace and dynamism carrying the action forward. The large forces are expertly marshalled, weighty but never leaden, with plenty of textural interest. The vast Houston Symphony Chorus sounds surprisingly agile thanks to the diligent, percussive enunciation of every consonant.

The soloists are similarly operatic in scale. Peter Rose is by turns ferociously dramatic and magnificently dignified, and evidently savours the meaty German. Toby Spence and Nicole Heaston are less easy with the language, but are otherwise appropriately heroic; in particular, Heaston's steely, brilliant soprano cuts effortlessly and thrillingly through the texture.

This fine recording moves effortlessly between pastoral intimacy and titanic grandeur, with everything in between. Some might quibble at the ultra-bright sound (and the poorly proofread liner note), but the recording is well balanced across the range, and individual instrumental timbres shine through. A hugely enjoyable account. *Natasha Loges*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Reissues Reviewed by Natasha Loges



JS Bach Cantatas

Eloquence 482 7642 (1951/52)
226:03 mins (3 discs)

Fritz Lehmann's tempos range from dignified to plodding. Coupled with nonstop string and vocal vibrato, this makes for a laborious listen. ★★



Keiser Markus-Passion

Christophorus CHR 77421 (1994) 62:57 mins

A somewhat laconic rendition of this little-known but fascinating Mark-Passion by JS Bach's 18th-century Hamburg-based contemporary. Variable soloists from *Parthenia*, no English translations, but some sparkling and lyrical orchestral playing. ★★



Elisabeth Grümmer Arias and songs by Brahms, Mozart, Schubert and Wolf

SWR Music SWR19415CD (1956/58) 67:58 mins

Moments of great tenderness and beauty from soprano *Elisabeth Grümmer* (1911–86) are marred by the unreliable intonation, uneven sound and poor ensemble in this recital. ★★



Fritz Wunderlich Music Before Bach

SWR SWR19051CD (1954-57) 135:13 mins (2 discs)

Fritz Wunderlich brings his ageless honeyed voice and phenomenal musical intelligence to this survey of German pre-Baroque rarities. Nowhere near historically informed, but truly worthwhile. ★★★★★

Parry

Twelve Sets of English Lyrics, Vol. 2

Sarah Fox (soprano), James Gilchrist (tenor), Roderick Williams (baritone), Andrew West (piano)

Somm SOMMCD 270 61:05 mins



The hundredth anniversary of Sir Hubert Parry's death falls in October, and this second

album surveying the 74 songs of his 'English Lyrics' is a timely tribute.

Those who know Parry mainly from the robustly self-assured 'Jerusalem' and 'I Was Glad' may find the more sophisticated nuances of these songs surprising. 'O world! O life! O time!', to a poem by Shelley, finds Parry probing the mysteries of mortality in tentative harmonic side-steps, with a brief swell of existential anxiety on the climactic 'No more – Oh, never more!'. Soprano Sarah Fox judges the song's temperature astutely, and is equally impressive in the death-draped 'Gone were but the winter cold'. Baritone Roderick Williams is verbally deft and engaging in the tetchily humorous 'Love is a bable',

and he too gets a deeper moment in 'Dirge in Woods', especially in the drained stoicism of the coda.

Tenor James Gilchrist shows a sharp interpretive sensitivity in 'Bright Star!', a setting of Keats's final sonnet, although his fast vibrato can suggest febrility. Pianist Andrew West supports the singers empathetically, adding much to a recital which nudges a regard for Parry the songwriter even higher than did volume one of this excellent series. *Terry Blain*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Martin • Martinů

Martin: Mass for Double Choir; Songs of Ariel from Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'; **Martinů:** 4 Marian Songs; Romance of the Dandelions Danish National Vocal Ensemble/Marcus Creed

OUR Recordings 6.220671 (hybrid CD/SACD) 64:13 mins



Frank Martin turned reticence about the public exposure of his music into a fine art. His Mass for two choirs was composed in 1922,

but did not see the light of day until 1963 and then only because of the forceful intervention of the German conductor Franz Brunnert. Why so coy? The Kyrie with its sinuous modal choral lines has immediate appeal. The Gloria shows a certain affinity with the double choir motets of Bach, but the result is individual and always engaging.

Composed nearly 30 years later, Martin's atmospheric settings of familiar verse from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* shares the post-Impressionist world of the Mass, but with a rather sharper edge. In both works, the Danish National Vocal Ensemble, directed by Marcus Creed, produces an excellently-integrated sound, although they might have been bolder in defining climactic phrases in the longer movements.

Both of the Martin's works recorded here have strong folk roots. While outwardly simple, the *Four Songs for Mary*, composed in 1934, go well beyond their initial, folk-song inspiration with rich harmonies and a clear blend of depth and humour. The *Romance of the Dandelions* belongs to a group of cantatas composed toward the end of his life and rich in nostalgia for his youth in the Bohemian-Moravian highlands. The textures are more experimental, with choral humming and an extensive solo for soprano, beautifully sung here. The choir's Czech declamation could be more pointed, but overall the singers deliver performances that capture the restrained radiance of these lovely works. *Jan Smaczny*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Sibelius • Rachmaninov

Sibelius: Five Christmas Songs; Five Songs, Op. 37; Norden; Svarta rosor, etc. **Rachmaninov:** Christ is risen; To my children; How fair this spot; Lilacs; Spring Torrents; In the silence of the secret night; Sing not, O lovely one; Letter to KS Stanislavsky, etc. Jacques Imbrailo (baritone), Alisdair Hogarth (piano) *Linn CKD 482 59:19 mins*



The young South African baritone Jacques Imbrailo launched an international operatic career as Glyndebourne's Billy Budd, adding lyric roles like Pelléas and Don Giovanni, at Scottish Opera and



The Russian connection:
Jacques Imbrailo sings
Sibelius and Rachmaninov

worldwide. For his first solo recital he chooses an appropriately bold programme, more subtly linked than it might seem. Sibelius, for all his nationalism, drew on the Russian tradition, feeling a particular sympathy with Tchaikovsky, who was also Rachmaninov's early idol. Their moody, dark-hued songs have much in common.

Imbrailo opens with the less usual *Christmas Songs*, deceptively simple melodies recalling Lutheran hymns. The more famous ones that follow, like 'Svarta rosor' and 'Den första kyssen' (one of the Op. 47 songs), are often associated with female voices like Anne-Sophie von Otter and Soile Isokoski, but the composer often wrote for the baritone Abraham Ojanperä, and they respond well to Imbrailo's warm tone and smooth legato, and his unforced expression, with Alistair Hogarth's equally fine accompaniment. He sings Swedish naturally enough, with clear diction – in Russian perhaps too clear to sound entirely natural, but that's a nitpick in such attractive performances. His voice is lighter and more translucent than, say, Hvorostovsky's, but no less charismatic, and equal to the dark anguish of 'Khristos voskres' and the Georgian exoticism of 'Ne poi, krasavitsa', despite odd moments of slightly thinning tone. Altogether this is a distinguished recital debut, and one looks forward to more. *Mike Scott Rohan*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Cantata: yet can I hear...

JS Bach: Ich habe genug; **Handel:** Mi palpita il cor; Siete rose rugiadosa; 'I will magnify thee'; The Choice of Hercules – 'Yet, can I hear that dulcet lay'; **Vivaldi:** Pianti, sospiri e dimandar mercede, RV676; plus works by **Johann Christoph Bach** and **GM Hoffmann** Bejun Mehta (countertenor); Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin *Pentatone PTC 5186 669 (hybrid CD/SACD) 71:51 mins*



Bejun Mehta's CD focuses on the 18th-century cantata, with some excursions. The title track, an aria Mehta admits he 'fell madly in love with' when he encountered it in 2015, comes from *The Choice of Hercules*, a short, secular oratorio by Handel, who is also represented by another aria from an anthem, as well as two true Italian cantatas – *Mi palpita il cor* and *Siete rose rugiadosa*.

In addition, there's a 'lamento' by JS Bach's uncle, Johann Christoph, and a single-movement funeral cantata formerly believed to be by Bach but now attributed to one Melchior Hoffmann. The remaining items are genuine cantatas by Bach and Vivaldi. Something of a mixed bag, then, but all quality items, with the pieces by the two members of the Bach family outstanding.

As he demonstrates in *Mi palpita il cor*, Mehta's voice remains light and graceful, and his general ability to move around the small notes is

only occasionally compromised by untidiness. The period-instrument orchestra's flautist, Christoph Huntgeburth, shines here. So too does his oboist colleague Xenia Löffler in *Ich habe genug*; she also tackles the small but distinctive bell part in the beautiful Hoffmann piece (if it is his).

Mehta's consciousness of text and sense of drama make vivid the Vivaldi work, while he is deeply moving in Johann Christoph Bach's fine lament and noble in the Handel anthem aria ('I will magnify thee') as well as the title track. *George Hall*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Come To Me In My Dreams

Works by Bridge, Britten, Holst, Howells, Ireland, Turnage, et al Sarah Connolly (soprano), Joseph Middleton (piano) *Chandos CHAN 10944 77:18 mins*



This charming compendium of largely English songs celebrates 120 years of the art form at the

Royal College of Music (RCM), each of the featured composers having a particular connection to that conservatoire. Pianist Joseph Middleton and mezzo-soprano – and RCM fellow – Dame Sarah Connolly deliver a varied collection that offers more than just vocal bonbons. *Come to Me in My Dreams* sweeps across the last century, picking out often overlooked composers such as John Ireland ('Earth's Call' and 'The Three Ravens') and the wafting title track by Frank Bridge, which is featured alongside 'Journey's End' and 'Where she lies asleep'.

Slumber is also the theme of two world premiere recordings of works by Britten, no less. 'A Sweet Lullaby' and 'Somnus, the humble god' were initially composed for, but later excluded from, *A Charm of Lullabies*, which is sensitively included separately in the programme. Connolly and Middleton execute the complex phrasing with a sense of ensemble for which they are revered.

An additional premiere recording comes in the form of Mark-Anthony Turnage's 'Farewell' (2016), written specially for Connolly, a gorgeously rich goodbye. *Claire Jackson*

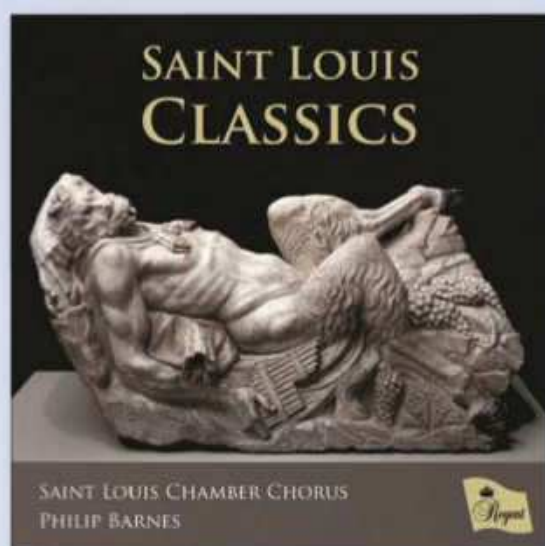
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



THE SAINT LOUIS CHAMBER CHORUS

'The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus, led by Philip Barnes, performs everything with consummate attention to blend, clarity and expressive nuance.' (REGCD414) Gramophone

The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus has long enjoyed an unrivalled reputation through its concerts and recordings as one of the foremost choirs in the US. The 2018–19 season marks the Choir's 30th year under the direction of Philip Barnes, and their new CD release is a collection of works inspired by classical mythology, alongside choral 'classics' including Schoenberg's masterpiece, *Friede auf Erden*. It also features one of the Chorus's recent commissions, Bob Chilcott's *Silver Swan*.



SAINT LOUIS CLASSICS

Saint Louis Chamber Chorus
directed by Philip Barnes

REGCD505

*O praise the Lord Lord of Heaven** Ralph Vaughan Williams

Invocation to Pan⁺ Granville Bantock

Jézus és a Kufárok Zoltán Kodály

The silver swan⁺ Orlando Gibbons

Silver swan Bob Chilcott

Voskreseniye hristovo videvshe Alexander Gretchaninov

Rakastava Jean Sibelius

Romanzen und Balladen, op. 67 Robert Schumann

Three Songs of Democracy Roy Harris

Friede auf Erden Arnold Schoenberg

* First recording on CD, ⁺ World premiere recording

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REGCD255

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'the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus, the excellent soloists, and the conductor deserve the highest accolades.'
American Choral Journal



REGCD373

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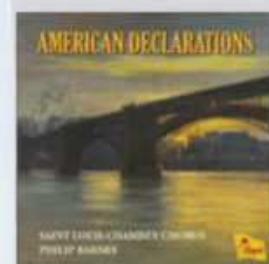
A PAGEANT OF
HUMAN LIFE
Granville Bantock



REGCD310

AMERICAN
DECLARATIONS

'...the performances are consistently outstanding.'
BBC Music Magazine



REGCD414

CHAMBER CHOICE



Debussy • Ravel

Debussy: String Quartet in G minor;
Ravel: String Quartet in F
Jerusalem Quartet
Harmonia Mundi HMM 902304
53:38 mins

In advance, I wondered whether there was anything new to be said about these two incessantly recorded works. Happily the answer is 'yes'. Nor is it due to anything imposed – the novelty comes quite simply from doing what it says on the tin.

From the point of view of colour, the ensemble is notable for its warmth and richness, but also for a willingness to drop to the most intimate levels of *pianissimo*. As a result we are given a dramatic reading of both works: not wayward or hysterical, but one that casts serious doubt on their character as 'impressionist' in the usual understanding of that term.

Towards the end of his life, Ravel made a distinction between

Their performance emphasises Debussy's individuality

the harmonic underpinning of Debussy's Quartet and the contrapuntal one of his own, and the very opening of the Debussy here makes this point in spades. This Quartet 'in G minor' knocks bourgeois expectations flying by leaving that key as early as the second chord, and this performance continues to emphasise the work's strength and individuality. In the Ravel they relish the sudden

crescendo bursts that the composer used to complain were routinely ignored, but at the same time

honour the compensating passages of calm reflection – not least the very opening of the work where they steal in magically from silence, *très doux* as marked, as if underlining the extraordinary effect Ravel achieves in his harmonies over the cello playing just an F major scale.

Altogether this disc is a superb combination of intelligence, honesty, taste and technique – one of my top two of the year so far.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Debussy et Ravel – vive la différence!

Roger Nichols welcomes a quartet which honours the composers' intentions



Intelligence and know-how: the Jerusalem Quartet respect Ravel and Debussy



Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the *BBC Music Magazine* website at www.classical-music.com

Beethoven

Sonatas for Fortepiano and Violin, Op. 12, Nos 1-3

Susanna Ogata (violin),
Ian Watson (fortepiano)
Coro COR16161 56:32 mins



Few of Beethoven's early works were more defiantly original and provocative than his first three violin sonatas, Op. 12, with their sudden switches of key and their bold gestures sweeping across the keyboard. In a famous piece of invective, the leading music journal of the day was duly provoked: 'Undeniably, Herr Beethoven goes his own way, but what a bizarre,

arduous way it is! Learned, learned and constantly learned, and nothing natural, no melody!'

As always when publishing three works together, Beethoven made sure they were as different as possible in character. Thus, the first sonata, with its jagged fanfares, is swaggering and self-confident, the middle work witty and gracious, and the third grand and imperious.

Using a copy of an early 19th century piano by Anton Walter (whose instruments Beethoven is known to have admired) and a slightly earlier violin by the Bavarian maker Joseph Klotz, Ian Watson and Susanna Ogata offer stylish and invigorating performances. Watson negotiates

the cascades of notes in the virtuoso opening movement of the E flat major last sonata with admirable fluency, and both he and Ogata have just the right amount of expressive flexibility in the rondo from the A-major second work. At the start of the middle movement of the latter sonata, Watson arpeggiates the richly-scored chords in a manner that Beethoven may have expected. Perhaps the players could have plumbed greater depths in the *Adagio* of the E-flat work – the expressive high-point of the series, and its only genuine slow movement – but their performances give much enjoyment. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Biber

The Mystery Sonatas

Christina Day Martinson (violin);
Boston Baroque/Martin Pearlman
Linn CKD 501 120:21 mins (2 discs)



Alongside Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin the Biber *Mystery Sonatas* are

the ultimate rite of passage for any Baroque violinist possessing ambition and technique to spare. A formidable virtuoso, Biber spared his performer nothing in sonatas so-named since each is a meditation on or accompaniment to one of the 15 designated 'mysteries' (Joyful, Sorrowful, or Glorious) that

constitute the Catholic devotion known as the Rosary. Their demands are legion not least because the strings are tuned differently for each sonata, excepting the first and concluding *Passacaglia* which conform to the familiar cycle of fifths. (The booklet for Christina Day Martinson's new recording, incidentally, is particularly illuminating in explaining the whys and wherefores; and photographs save a thousand words trying to explain how the reconfiguration for The Resurrection Sonata creates the pattern of a cross both beyond the bridge and within the peg box.)

Martinson even prefaces each sonata by sounding the open strings – well intentioned no doubt, though perhaps ultimately a little intrusive as if inviting us to respond to each as an exotic novelty. A pity because didacticism couldn't be further from her gutsy, committed playing, spurred on by the richly varied continuo of Boston Baroque which includes thrumming guitar to speed the Virgin's Assumption into heaven. The Sorrowful Mysteries invite and receive a concentration of lacerating pathos, but Martinson is even more persuasive in the effervescence of their Glorious counterparts, a little Zigeuner fire perhaps remembering Biber's Bohemian roots. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Biber • Piazzolla

Biber: The Mystery Sonatas Nos 1-3, 9, 10 and 14; **Piazzolla:** Fuga y Misterio; La Muerte del Angel; Oblivion; Histoire du Tango, etc. Julia Schröder (violin); Lautten Compagny/Wolfgang Katschner *Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 88985344082 68:05 mins*



It takes two to tango they say. But who'd have laid money on those two being Heinrich Biber and Astor Piazzolla! Music festivals in the German-speaking world have a penchant for encouraging 'conversations' between the unlikelyst of bedfellows, so it's no surprise that the intriguing face-off presented on this album, titled *Misterio*, first saw the light of day during Boswil Summer Festival. For violinist Julia Schröder, however, the conversation was up close and personal since it was through tango



Stylish and invigorating: violinist Susanna Ogata plays early Beethoven

she regained her love of the Baroque after a crisis of musical identity.

A generous pinch of salt will help some of the booklet notes' more contentious claims slip down, but if the pairing puzzles, it's worth remembering that Piazzolla not only studied with Ginastera but was a pupil of that arch advocate for the neglected Baroque: Nadia Boulanger. And the ultimate proof of *Misterio*'s decidedly rich pudding is in the eating – or listening.

Even the opening continuo note recalls the exuberant opulence of Christina Pluhar's group L'Arpeggiata, and Biber is treated to a well-upholstered, fiery virtuosity that draws on the experience of improvising around Piazzolla; Schröder and Lautten Compagny lay on quite a party for the last Sonata's meditation on the Assumption of Mary into Heaven – and Piazzolla is invited. As for the tangos, 'Oblivi3n' coils itself around the ear like a languorous snake, and the bandoneon-replacing harpsichord adds a neo-classical bite to Piazzolla's snappy counterpoint, though sometimes the re-imagining is a touch calculating and squeaky-clean. Purists (in both camps) will huff and puff, but there's an intoxicating *jeux d'esprit* that more than carries the day. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

MacMillan

String Quartet No. 1 (Visions of a November Spring); **No. 2** (Why is this night different?); **No. 3** Royal String Quartet *Hyperion CDA 68196 71:00 mins*



The string quartet has long been a powerfully personal medium for MacMillan, yielding some of his most intimate and affecting music. This fine recording features his three full-length quartets, the excellent Royal Quartet bringing all the insight, colour and precision that these rich works demand.

MacMillan once described his first quartet, *Visions of a November Spring* (1988, revised 1991), as 'sheer frenzy, craziness'. Indeed it unleashes a wild energy, but, in keeping with the duality of its enigmatic title, this is balanced by exquisite lyricism. The Royal deliver both raw power and luscious, song-like sweetness, notably in the second movement's delicate bird-like swoops.

MacMillan's second quartet, *Why is This Night Different?* (1998),

explores the role of the child in the Jewish Seder (the title quotes the question each household's youngest member traditionally asks to prompt a retelling of the escape of the Israelites); MacMillan's score wheels between jubilation and melancholy, with shimmering chorale-like passages, fierce dissonance and blackly-comic waltzes. In contrast, *String Quartet No. 3* (2007) marks a return to absolute music. An extraordinary piece, technical yet deeply expressive, this finds the Royal Quartet on top form, playing with flair and utter conviction. Paul Conway's perceptive liner notes highlight how the score explores the delicate line between sound and its absence. Fittingly enough, this recording allows the work's final whispered tones to leak into some 30 seconds of spellbinding 'silence', offering a mesmerising close to this excellent disc. *Kate Wakeling*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Mendelssohn

String Quartet No. 1 in E flat, Op. 12; No. 2 in A minor, Op. 13; No. 6 in F minor, Op. 80 Tippett Quartet

Somm SOMMCD 0182 79:36 mins



This CD encompasses, in reverse order of composition, the three most striking of Mendelssohn's six published string quartets: the stormy, distraught F minor, composed in the wake of his beloved sister Fanny's sudden death and completed just two months before his own; the elegantly exuberant and formally innovative E flat major, written at 20; and the



BACKGROUND TO... Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644-1704)

In the summer of 1670 Biber was sent by his employer, Karl II of Liechtenstein-Kastelkorn, to Absam to obtain instruments from a renowned luthier. Biber never returned but instead gained employment under the Archbishop of Salzburg; he remained in that city, where he composed and published virtually all his music.

A virtuosic violinist, much of Biber's music involves scordatura (non-standard tuning); he also composed one of the earliest masterpieces for unaccompanied violin in the final passacaglia of his *Mystery Sonatas*.

urgently inventive and passionate A minor, composed at just 18. Yet the Tippett Quartet tends to approach these three hugely contrasting scores in much the same way.

These are essentially 'old fashioned' interpretations: moderate in choice of tempos and range of dynamics, full-toned, warm and blended in textures and inflected with a generous degree of vibrato throughout. This works best in the slow movements: that of the A minor Quartet with its chromatic central fugato is especially convincing in its expression and pacing, suggesting a maturity far beyond Mendelssohn's tender years. Yet that very 'maturity' tends to neutralise the more incisively youthful details of the early quartets, or indeed, the febrile intensity of the F minor – qualities that require a greater exactitude and variety of attack, tone and vibrato, including non-vibrato. And, though quite close-miked, the recording has a reverberant background so that details of Mendelssohn's ever-resourceful inner part-writing are occasionally blurred.

It is possible that the Tippett Quartet approach will better suit – if they are planning to record them – Mendelssohn's three middle period quartets Op. 44: works no less masterly, but perhaps more equable in style. *Bayan Northcott*

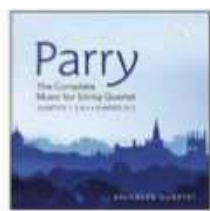
PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Parry

String Quartets Nos 1-3; Scherzo in C

Archaeus Quartet

MPR MPR 102 81:38 mins (2 discs)



Excessive claims on behalf of semi-obscure English repertory should be avoided. Yet the unanswerable

quality of the very young Hubert Parry's First String Quartet will raise an eyebrow or two among those who have tended too often (and I'm not excusing myself) to regard him as a Victorian choral composer above all else. Parry was an Oxford undergraduate still in his late teens when he penned this remarkable creation – technically the work of a genuine prodigy, and radiating a lucid and engaging personality that combines the music's obvious models (Beethoven particularly, Mendelssohn also) with a voice that's very much Parry's own. A



In Dushkin's footsteps:
Ilya Gringolts tackles
virtuosic Stravinsky

connection with Dvořák's freshness of manner seems to be present – except that at this date (1867) Dvořák was a young and unknown Bohemian composer whose music Parry cannot possibly have heard.

The Second Quartet, completed a year later, has an element of self-conscious earnestness that doesn't always convince; the naturalness of the slow movement's pastoral style is much more appealing. While the undated and equally fine *Scherzo in C* sounds as if it belongs to the same period, the more ambitious Third Quartet, first performed in 1880, shows Parry now engaging with Wagner's chromatic idiom.

The Archaeus Quartet favours a quite lean collective sound, very different from the turbocharged sumptuousness of much of today's quartet-playing, and is likeable and convincing in the earlier works. Unfortunately the Third Quartet's technical demands have the players sounding more stretched, particularly regarding tuning, than one would expect at this level.

Malcolm Hayes

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Stravinsky

Pastorale; Ballad; Suite Italienne; Divertimento; Variation d'Apollon; Violin Concerto in D; Elégie; Tango

Ilya Gringolts (violin), Peter Laul (piano); Galicia Symphony Orchestra/Dima Slobodeniouk
BIS BIS-2275 (hybrid CD/SACD) 76:24 mins



It's true to say that, earlier in his career, Stravinsky didn't care much for the violin.

Indeed it played

second fiddle (quite literally) in his works until the 1920s when he encountered Polish-American violinist Samuel Dushkin. The composer also had a dislike of virtuoso performances, citing their need for 'seeking immediate triumphs' in the music; it's a wonder, then, he got quite so pally with Dushkin, a virtuoso of a very high order. With his guidance, Stravinsky made friends with strings and set about arranging works for chamber forces, not to mention composing a few new ones.

This second volume of *Music for Violin* sees violinist Ilya Gringolts and pianist Peter Laul return to what I think is some of Stravinsky's most vivacious work. Comprised of arrangements and re-arrangements of music written as far apart as 1907 and 1944, it certainly takes a widescreen view. At the centre sits the 1931 Violin Concerto, a work which features trademark fluctuations of meter but surprises with lyrical beauty in the third movement. That lyricism and tonal colour abounds in the surrounding programme, especially the 1933 rearrangements of the familiar *Suite Italienne* and *Pastorale*. The latter, for violin and four winds, skips along delightfully and is an early highlight, while the final

Tango (1944) feels distinctly out of place somehow. The performances are perfectly poised, the recording faultless. *Michael Beek*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Ustvol'skaya

Violin Sonata; Piano Sonata No. 5; Duet for violin and piano

Andreas Seidel (violin),

Steffen Schleiermacher (piano)

MDG MDG 613 2055 67:07 mins



Galina Ustvol'skaya's music is like the aural equivalent of granite. Harsh, austere, relentless,

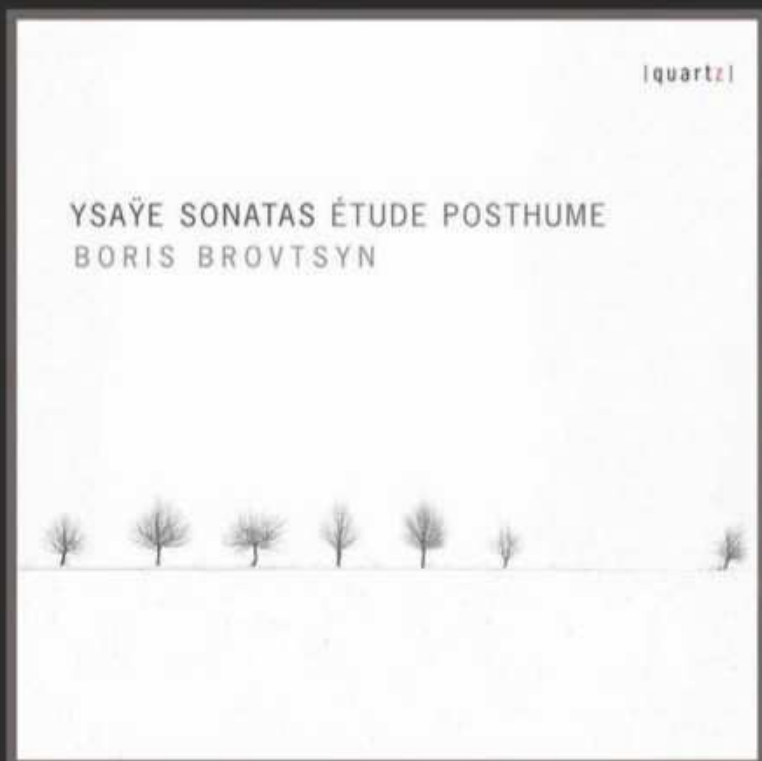
her work browbeats the listener into submission with its fierce strength of purpose. It's not for nothing that she has often been referred to as 'a hammer composer.' And yet such an epithet doesn't really do justice to her remarkable achievement. For despite the obsessive and fragmentary material from which she fashions her music, all three works on this warmly recorded disc really draw you in.

This is particularly the case with the *Duet for Violin and Piano* of 1964. It opens with a sequence of unrelentingly harsh sonorities that builds up in intensity to a kind of *danse macabre* climax, before collapsing into a coda of strikingly calm and haunting beauty. In contrast, the earlier Violin Sonata, composed in 1952, one year before Stalin's death, sounds numb and lifeless. A bleak obsessive dialogue between violin and piano which keeps on returning to a simple motif repeated eighty times by the violin is eerily projected by both performers. It eventually disintegrates into nothingness in the final bars where the violinist taps sporadic notes with the wooden part of the bow.

In his engaging and not entirely uncritical booklet notes, pianist Steffen Schleiermacher aptly describes the most percussive sections of the compellingly performed Fifth Piano Sonata (1986) as 'a bloodbath on the keys.' There are also some moments of repose, but in Schleiermacher's hands they sound fragile and without hope, the pianist convincingly linking them to the stultifying atmosphere that characterised the final years of the Soviet Union. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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JS Bach

Partitas Nos. 1-6, BWV825-830

Menno van Delft (clavichord)

Resonus RES 10212 133:32 mins (2 discs)

Here are performances of Bach's six keyboard Partitas with a difference, for Menno van Delft plays neither harpsichord nor any manifestation of piano but the softly spoken clavichord. Bach's earliest biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel asserted that the clavichord was the composer's favourite keyboard instrument. Be that as it may, the composer has left us with no music specifically composed for it. Nevertheless, this percussive instrument is well-suited to some of Bach's pieces as well as enabling a performer to communicate with greater expressive intimacy and individuality than on a harpsichord.

For the most part, I find Menno van Delft's case for the clavichord convincing, though the uppermost register too often comes over as tonally restrictive. This is not a reflection on the recorded sound which is excellent, but simply a small limitation imposed by the instrument on some of Bach's most technically challenging and expressively

wide-ranging keyboard palette. Van Delft favours moderate tempos which allow the music to breathe comfortably. The 'Allemande' of the B flat Partita provides a particularly happy instance of his expressive understanding of the piece, in which here as throughout this recording he eschews anything in the nature of rhythmic rigidity.

In short there is nothing routine or matter of fact in van Delft's inflective dialogue with Bach. Readers may not wish to part company with their harpsichord or piano versions, but they are unlikely to be other than captivated by playing of this

order. As Bach himself charmingly remarked on the title page of the collection, published in 1731, he had written these wonderfully varied pieces to refresh the spirits of music lovers. Van Delft has provided his own booklet essay which is thoughtful and well-informed.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★★



Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the *BBC Music Magazine* website at www.classical-music.com

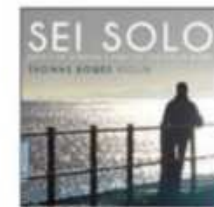
JS Bach

Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas, BWV 1001-1006

Thomas Bowes (violin)

Navona Records NV 6159

157:43 mins (3 discs)



Bach's music for solo violin occupies both technically and expressively the most elevated

position on the Parnassian slopes. According to CPE Bach, his father understood to perfection the possibilities of all stringed instruments and this understanding illuminates each and every bar of these exalted pieces. Every violinist brings his or her own personal stamp to the music and the range of possibilities is unlimited. This recording is a spin-off from Thomas Bowes's 2012-13 'Bach Pilgrimage' concert tour of UK churches.

Bowes pursues a mainly convincing path between historically-minded practice and more traditionally anchored performance. As he himself attests, his approach to playing style is to acknowledge historical context but to move away from it when it felt too limiting or too fixed. Ornamentation is lean and vibrato restrained. What distinguishes his playing above all, though, are an unusually wide dynamic range and a predilection for slower tempos than any competing version that readily comes to mind. A striking example of the former presents itself in the *Allegro* of the A minor Sonata, while the time Bowes allows himself for the great *Chaconne* of the D minor Partita is a generous 18 and a half minutes as opposed to, for instance, Gil Shahan's 11 minutes or Nathan Milstein's 14 minutes. For the most part I enjoyed his unfashionably slow tempos, especially since he discovers features in Bach's writing which can easily be overlooked by speed-merchants. I part company with him, though, where dynamics are concerned. They felt too often exaggerated to my ears. Otherwise, there is much to enjoy in Bowes's refined and elegantly poised playing, and recorded sound is first-rate. *Nicholas Anderson*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★★

Mozart

Piano Sonata No. 15; Rondo in A minor; 10 Variations on Unser dummer Pöbel meint; Piano Sonata No. 4; Adagio in B minor; Gigue in G

Christian Chamorel (piano)
Calliope CAL 1851 69:23 mins



According to the booklet note, Christian Chamorel, in his late 30s, is 'one of the very few

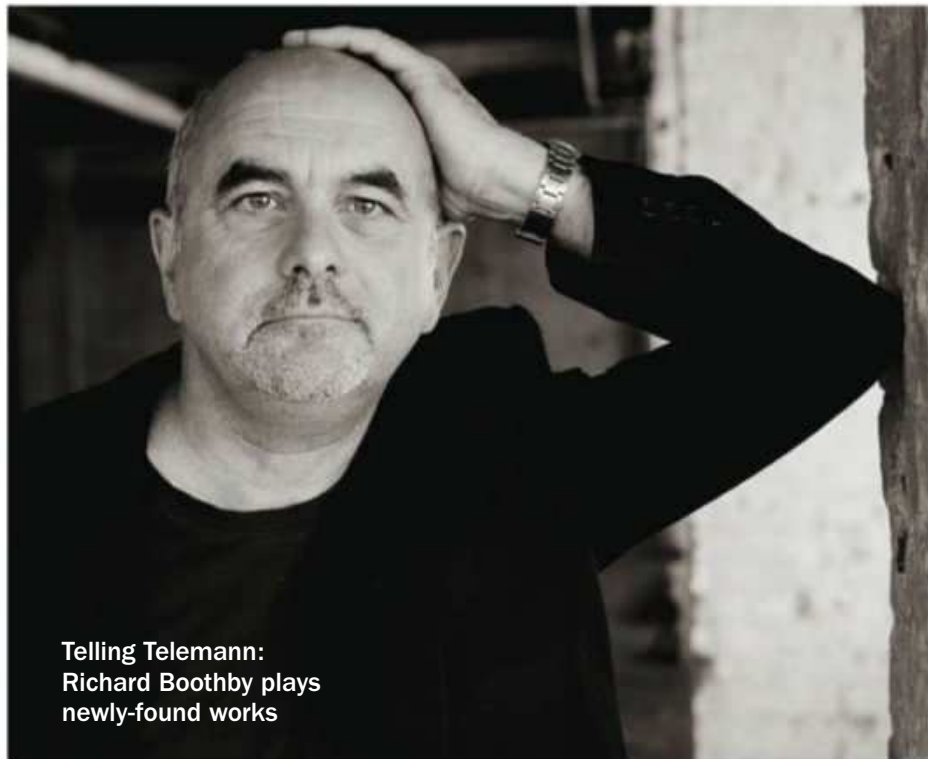
French-speaking Swiss pianists whose influence goes beyond the country's borders'. It's an influence likely to stretch further with this delectable album of Mozart piano works. Half of its appeal firmly lies in his crisp, 'modern' playing, unclogged with excess emotion, perfect for spotless textures and dazzlingly articulated fast fingerwork on his warmly recorded Steinway D-274, undisputed king of the concert grands.

The other obvious attraction is Chamorel's choice of music, cannily selected to showcase the adventurous streak in Mozart's (mostly later) piano output. Attractions range from the aching tragedy and dramatic silences of the K540 *Adagio*, through the F major Sonata's baroque games and sudden snarls, to the galloping, tumbling final track, the outlandish G major *Gigue*.

Every work, in different ways, is built to surprise, and Chamorel's alert responses never disappoint. His touch can be amazingly light, as in the magically whispered end to the F major Sonata's first movement. But it's his kaleidoscopic displays that most impress. Take the K455 Variations on a silly theme by Gluck, steadily twisted into meatier life by cleverly highlighting the harmonic escapades, the abrupt forceful chords, or the penultimate variation's deeper feelings, beautifully captured here. Or better yet, there's the B minor *Adagio*, treated to the disc's most rhetorical performance, with the most quizzical phrasings and gestures, the widest range of colour and attack.

This is a wonderfully ear-cleansing album, equally perfect as a diversion and as food for thought. *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



Telling Telemann:
Richard Boothby plays
newly-found works

Paganini

Caprices for Solo Violin

Roman Simovic (violin)
LSO Live LSO 5083 94:52 mins (2 discs)



It's unusual for the Paganini Caprices to spread over two CDs, but my fear that this might

imply over-cautious speeds was quickly dispelled. There's no lack of energy in the opening arpeggio study, although there could be a wider dynamic range, and a more consistent pulse. As Roman Simovic moves through the micro-worlds of Paganini's imagination, he has a nice line in rubato, and already in the second caprice, there's a good sense of his intimate relationship with the music, intensified in the portamento octaves in the third, and the contrasts of tempo in the fourth.

The playing is almost always full-on, and I sometimes found myself wanting greater variety of tone, especially in the more delicate passages. Against that there's the precision of the double stops, and that sense of rhythmic shape and momentum. Whether it's a good idea to listen to all 24 in a sitting is questionable, but I'd like to have more of a gap between each, so that their impact can be better savoured. The sound is close and warm – despite appearing on the LSO Live label, this is a studio recording by the orchestra's leader.

There are delights here: the teasing 'Devil's Laughter' of the 13th caprice ushers in the second half of the set, where both Paganini and Simovic

seem to up their game, in terms of imagination and variety, through the Bach-like figurations of the 16th, the affectionate hurdy-gurdy drone of the 20th, to the famous variations of the 24th, dispatched with elegance.

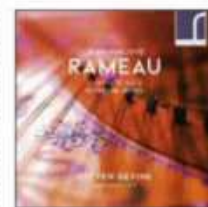
Martin Cotton

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Rameau

Complete Solo Keyboard Works

Steven Devine (harpsichord)
Resonus Classics RES 10214
219:39 mins (3 discs)



Four years in the making, Steven Devine's survey of Rameau's complete solo harpsichord

music reaches journey's end with previous download-only releases available for the first time on CD obligingly bundled together with a disc corralling Rameau's transcriptions from *Les Indes Galantes*, and the *Cinq Pièces* of 1741. Throughout the set Devine has kept faith with his trusty copy of a 1636 harpsichord by Andreas Ruckers, and why ring the changes? Gorgeously full-toned it's given a superlative recording at once rich and immediate. Indeed Christophe Rousset deployed a copy of the same instrument for his own extensive (though not 'complete') Rameau recordings getting on for three decades ago.

The designation 'complete' invariably offers a hostage to fortune, and in omitting the admittedly trifling *Les petits*

marreaux it may be that Devine is siding with those who question its parentage. Whatever the case, conceived as a project to honour the 250th anniversary of Rameau's death in 2014, Devine does the composer proud, his razor-sharp articulation at the service of supremely considered readings that impart an ear-gripping clarity. In his account of the Suite in A minor, 'Les Trois Mains' packs an incisive punch, while the imperious hauteur of 'La Triomphale' is carried over into the ensuing 'Gavotte' whose generous 'Doubles' are presented with cumulative magisterial lucidity.

Sometimes Devine's very scrupulousness works against a sense of spontaneity, (the hen clucks a little stiffly in 'La Poule'), and with his instinctive native grasp of the French Baroque, ultimately Christophe Rousset arguably has more fun with Rameau's frequent recourse to wit and theatricality. Nevertheless, Devine's is a set executed with abundant virtuosity and crammed with delights.

Explore! *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Telemann

Fantasias for Viola da Gamba

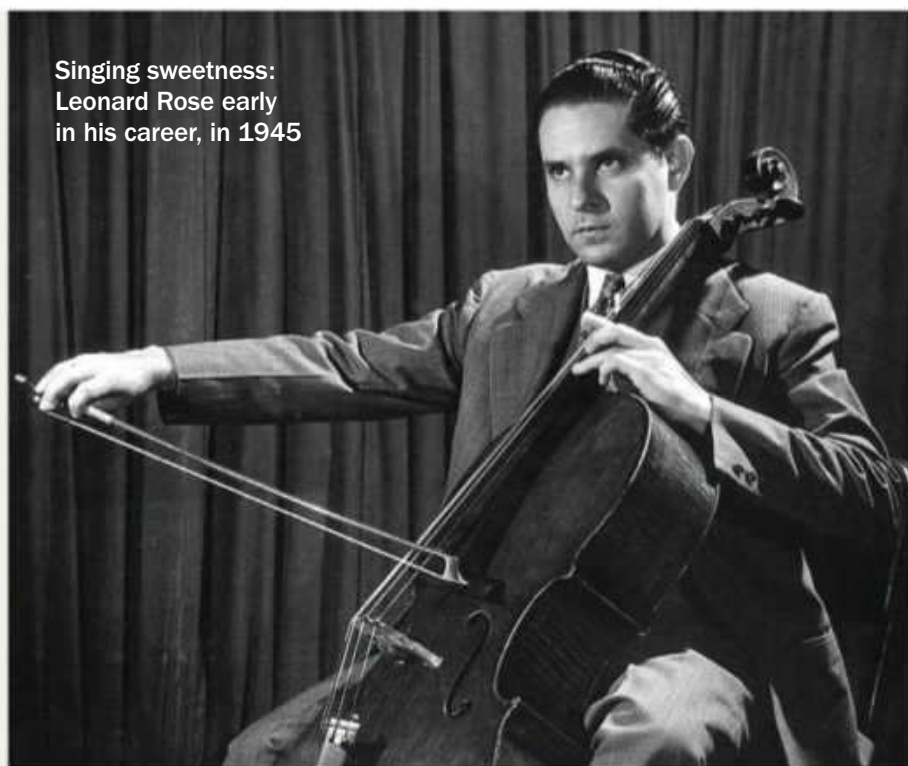
Richard Boothby (viola da gamba)
Signum Classics SIGCD544 79:09 mins



Almost exactly 200 years after the first solo gamba music was published in Venice, Telemann

brought out a set of 12 Fantasias for the instrument, companion pieces to previous collections for flute, then violin. And while the latter have delighted flautists and violinists down the centuries, their sibling was lost, only to resurface as recently as 2015 in a stash of manuscripts originally forming part of a castle library near Osnabrück. As you'd expect, the music is pre-eminently personable, eclectic, adroitly crafted, and gambists have rallied to the cause – 'premiered' in 2016, there have already been three complete recordings to which Richard Boothby now adds a supremely eloquent fourth.

Telemann's Fantasias – a few fleeting gestures aside – are worlds away from the elaborate *phantasticus* imaginings of his



Singing sweetness:
Leonard Rose early
in his career, in 1945

◀ From the archives

Andrew McGregor relishes a chance to hear the solo artistry of a still-overlooked cellist, Leonard Rose



The cellist Leonard Rose is perhaps best known for his recordings with violinist Isaac Stern and pianist Eugene Istomin – the famous Istomin-Stern-Rose Trio. But for Rose's centenary, Sony steers us towards his solo career, ***The Complete Concerto and Sonata Recordings*** (Sony 88985490172; 14 CDs).

An unexpected beginning – Rose accompanying tenor Christopher Lynch in arrangements of Irish songs in 1948 – emphasises right away the sweet, lyrical, song-like sound of his cello playing. Rose found Bruno Walter an inspirational conductor, and their 1954 recording of Brahms's Double Concerto with Isaac Stern has wonderful grace and fluidity – better than the later recording with Ormandy (also included). There are also two recordings of Bloch's *Schelomo*, played with searing immediacy – this time the later Ormandy recording seems preferable for its heartfelt passion. The partnership with Ormandy in Philadelphia yielded a wonderful account of the Beethoven Triple Concerto, the Istomin-Stern-Rose Trio demonstrating that it works so much better when the soloists think like chamber musicians. Don't miss the powerful Schumann Concerto with Leonard Bernstein in New York. Another absolute highlight is American composer William Schuman's *A Song of Orpheus*: written for Rose, it highlights the singing sweetness of his sound high on the cello – this lovely piece ought to be a concert hall staple. They've kept the original coupling, too, though Rose doesn't feature: a beautiful performance of Barber's Piano Concerto from its first interpreter John Browning, with the Cleveland Orchestra and George Szell. Most of the great cello sonatas are here, in the duo with pianist Leonid Hambro – classy, stylish playing, but sometimes a little stilted and formal. The second recording of Schubert's Arpeggione Sonata is preferable, with pianist Samuel Sanders, when Rose feels more relaxed in a recital of Romantic music. The last recording from 1974 is a real find: the Bach gamba sonatas with Glenn Gould: stylish for the time, and with a combination of clarity, flair and rhythmic delight.



Andrew McGregor is the presenter of Radio 3's *Record Review*, broadcast each Saturday morning from 9am until 12.15pm

friend JS Bach. Not for him the complexities of the Chromatic Fantasia for harpsichord or the monumental G minor BWV 542 for organ. Rather, most inhabit three short movements, few weighing in at more than a couple of minutes, and on Boothby's watch the F major's *Grave* clocks up a mere 34 seconds. But they're not as slight as might be imagined, and Boothby is alive to their confiding intimacy and made-in-the-moment fluidity. He imbues the C major's bold stab at fugato with an effortlessly breezy joie de vivre, nails the E flat *Andante*'s affable charm, and conjures a resonant earthiness for the D minor's opening *Allegro*. Just occasionally a pinched note jars, and it's easy to be wrong-footed by the phrasing at the start of the D major, but they're small quibbles in a disc instinct with affectionate insights. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Ekele

Piano Music by Ayo Bankole, Fred Onovwerosuoke and Christian Onyeji

Rebeca Omordia (piano)
Heritage HTGCD 188 63:26 mins



Skilfully compiled and beautifully performed by Rebeca Omordia, *Ekele* places a

welcome spotlight on contemporary piano works by African composers, introducing new audiences to a neglected but vibrant strand of classical music.

At the heart of the disc is a selection of Fred Onovwerosuoke's *24 Studies in African Rhythms*, composed between 1988 and 2009. Cast as a series of dazzling miniatures, the work explores a broad range of African dances, including the irresistible dance rhythms of Edo (Nigeria) and Buganda (Uganda) heard here in an exuberant *moto perpetuo* titled 'Okoye'. Omordia brings all the warmth and drive of Onovwerosuoke's score to life, matching his complex textures with marvellously crisp articulation.

Several key works by the acclaimed Nigerian composer Ayo Bankole also feature, including his Piano Sonata No. 2 in C (*The Passion*) of 1959. This substantial piece darts between thunderous drama, delicately-crafted melodies

and the imaginative recasting of hymn tunes which resound splendidly in Omordia's assured performance. The disc closes with a cluster of works and arrangements by Christian Onyeji, including an exultant and virtuosic arrangement of the traditional gospel song *Chineke Diri Ekele* ('Thanks be to God') that brings this appealing album to an uplifting close.

Kate Wakeling

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Sixteen Contemporary Love Songs

Works by Frances-Hoad, Zev Gordon, Hellowell, B Hughes, Kats-Chernin, Knotts, Muhly, Skempton, Talbot, et al
William Howard (piano)

Orchid Classics ORC100083 63:00 mins



William Howard has been thinking a lot about love. Back in 2016, the British pianist released an album

exploring the rich seam of late-Romantic era songs without words. Now, he's given us the modern-day response. *Sixteen Contemporary Love Songs* is a gorgeous collection, and it's beautifully played here. Fourteen brief new pieces, none longer than six minutes, are the result of Howard's thoughtful commissioning project, while two came from a competition that attracted 526 entrants. Taiwanese Chia-Ying Lin's glinting *Chanson Perpétuelle* won the over-25 category, while Frederick Viner's love duet *Herz an Herz* took the honours in the under-25s.

There's something for all tastes, from Howard Skempton's spare *Solitary Highland Song* to the expansive gestures of Cheryl Frances-Hoad's *Love Song for Dusty* (Springfield). David Matthews's *A Love Song* basks in a post-Romantic glow, while Nico Muhly toys with neighbouring notes in *Falling Pairs*. Inspirations range from Elena Kats-Chernin's roses in a box – the flowers, I assume, not the chocolates – to Joby Talbot's baby daughter in the sparkling *Camille*.

Last year I heard Howard play ten of these pieces, equally sensitively, interspersed with pieces from the original album. They work as well in concert as on disc. *Rebecca Franks*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



NEW RELEASES

FROM A LEADING FINNISH RECORD COMPANY

Mozart: Piano Concertos No. 11-13, Cadenzas by **Bent Sørensen**



Katrine Gislunge, piano
Stenhammar Quartet

This recording presents three of Mozart's piano concertos in his own versions for piano and string quartet. Cadenzas written by Danish contemporary composer Bent Sørensen.



Chamber music by **Pehr Henrik Nordgren**



EVOCAATION
Kokkola-Quartet
Marko Ylönen, cello
Eija Kankaanranta, kantele

"A fine presentation of another set from Finland's Nordgren."

- John Miller, HRAudio.net



Piazzolla - Regondi - Company - D'Angelo - Ramirez



RETRATOS
Otto Tolonen, guitar

Disc features five sound portraits (in Spanish retratos) of a guitar. Though produced by the same instrument, they are all very different.

"Molto bene."

- Francesco Biraghi, Il Fronimo



Gabrielli-Scarlatti Complete Cello Works



Guadalupe López Iñiguez,
Baroque Cello

"What an exquisite release this is."
- Will Yeoman, Limelight

"Not only is the music on the disc excellent, but the SACD package is one of the most attractive from Alba that I have seen."

- John Miller, HRAudio.net



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harmonia mundi



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HMM 902258

DANIEL HARDING
SWEDISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

GUSTAV MAHLER
SYMPHONY NO. 9

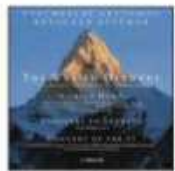
Although a valedictory mood underpins it, Mahler's Ninth Symphony offers above all a profound meditation on the fate of humanity and seems to exude an immense love of life. Sustained by the commitment and excellence of the artists, this recording reveals the formal, technical and orchestral modernity of a work that was to exert a genuine fascination on the Viennese composers of the following generation.

harmoniamundi.com

Brief notes

Our collection of 25 further reviews has old favourites and dazzling debuts

Artyomov *The Way to Olympus*
USSR State Academic Symphony
Orchestra/Timur Mynbayev, et al
Divine Art dda 25171



Vyacheslav Artyomov's one-movement symphony is the atmospheric centrepiece of this disc – the layering of sounds is hypnotic and the effect is powerful. (FP) ★★★★★

JS Bach • Adès • Chopin
Piano Works

Ashley Fripp (piano)

Willowhayne Records WHR053



The young pianist's Bach sparkles with finely-wrought phrasing and articulation while the Adès paraphrase is an exciting revelation. His Chopin breathes and dances, but the recorded sound lets him down a little. (OC) ★★★

JS Bach *Organ Works*

David Goode (organ)

Signum SIGCD808



Goode powers ahead with his Bach series on the organ of Trinity College, Cambridge. Vol. 8 contains a thrilling performance of the great 'Wedge' Prelude and Fugue, BWV 548. (OC) ★★★★★

JS Bach *Violin Concertos, etc*

Daniel Lozakovich (violin), et al

DG 479 9372



The 17-year-old violinist delivers a performance way beyond his years in what is an uncompromising debut album, and a radiant recording. (MB) ★★★★★

Bartók *Violin Concertos*

Benjamin Schmid (violin), et al

Gramola 99138



Schmid plays with an intensity and sweetness that illuminates both the darker textures and lyrical beauty of Bartók's two violin concertos. Rich orchestral accompaniment, too. (RF) ★★★★★

Beethoven *Piano Sonatas, etc*

Rodolfo Leone (piano)

Gramola 99160



If you win the Int'l Beethoven Competition, it's pretty much inevitable that the great composer will feature on your debut disc. 2017 winner Leone plays with style here. (RF) ★★★★★

Fauré *Barcarolles, Nocturnes, Impromptus*

Jean-Claude Pennetier (piano)

Mirare MIR 356



The latest instalment of the French pianist's Fauré series is enjoyable. If Pennetier's playing is sometimes too matter-of-fact for this beautiful music, that straightforward approach can also prove illuminating. (RF) ★★★

Carlotta Ferrari *Organ Works*

Carson Cooman (organ)

Divine Art dda 25178



The concept behind this set of organ works is its best feature: a set of compositions inspired by five women from history. Cinematic soundscapes and clever interpretations. (FP) ★★★

Robin Holloway *Trios*

Rest Ensemble

Sheva Contemporary SH 208



Holloway paints an engaging picture with this pair of trios and a sonata; the storybook-like trio for clarinet, viola and piano, is the charming highlight. (MB) ★★★

Ives *Piano Sonata No.2*

Daniel Brylewski (piano)

DUX DUX 1313



Ives's pianistic tribute to the philosophy of transcendentalism sees him at his most sparkingly inventive. The sonata's various moods and colours are vividly realised by Daniel Brylewski. (JP) ★★★★★

Mahler *Symphony No. 4*

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra/

Daniele Gatti

RCORCO 18004



Recorded live in Nov 2017, this is a beautifully detailed, sweeping performance. Soprano Julia Kleiter is superb in the final movement. (OC) ★★★★★

John McLeod *Piano Works*

Murray McLachlan (piano)

Metier MSV 77207



A comprehensive live record of five decades of McLeod piano works which McLachlan takes in his stride. Not without its challenges, for both listener and performer. (MB) ★★★

John Powell *Choral Works*

Philharmonia Orchestra and Voices/

José Serebrier, et al

5 Cat Studios FCS001



A notable composer of film scores, this recording proves Powell could make himself very at home in the concert hall. *A Prussian Requiem* is an accomplished centrepiece. (MB) ★★★★★

Takemitsu *Piano Works*

Lukas Huisman (piano)

Piano Classics PCL10147



This disc takes us from the Japanese composer's 1948 *Romance to the Rain* *Tree Sketch II* of 1992. Lukas Huisman is a fine Takemitsu pianist, playing with admirable clarity. (RF) ★★★★★

Wenchen Qin *Orchestral Works*

ORF Vienna Radio Symphony

Orchestra/Gottfried Rabl

Kairos KAI0015032



Featuring taped sounds of nature from across the world, *The Nature's Dialogue* is the highlight of this atmospheric, if quite demanding, disc. (JP) ★★★★★

Paul and Pauline Viardot

Six Pieces; Six Morceaux, etc

Wolfgang Manz (piano), et al

Naxos 8.573749



Music by mother and son Viardots is programmed to lovely effect here. There's virtuosity in Paul's *Introduction et Caprice*, and lyricism in Pauline's *Six Morceaux*. (RF) ★★★★★

Tengyue Zhang *Works by JS Bach, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, et al*

Tengyue Zhang (guitar)

Naxos 8.573905



This debut recital disc features works spread over four centuries, some written for the guitar, others heard in transcription. Zhang is one to watch. (JP) ★★★★★

At the Heart of the 20th Century
Works by Martin, Dutilleux, et al

Fabrice Ferez (oboe), et al

Claves 50-1810



French and Swiss works from 1930-56 imbued with the angst and despair that defined the period. Passionate solo and duo performances. (MB) ★★★

Bye-Bye Berlin

Marion Rampal (vocals), et al

Harmonia Mundi HMM 902295



The seductive voice of Marion Rampal and an ensemble of superb musicians present a thrilling programme of subversive Brecht-inspired songs and music from 1920s Germany. (OC) ★★★★★

Diversity *Works by Walton, et al*

European Brass Ensemble

Genuin GEN 18608



A dynamic disc, featuring works for brass ensemble from 1688 to 2017. From familiar regal, traditional tunes to wild jazz-inspired world premieres, the segues are seamless and ingenious. (FP) ★★★★★

**Elégie Rachmaninov,
a Heart in Exile**

Lucy Parham (piano);
Henry Goodman (narrator)
Deux-Elles DXL 1178



Narrated snapshots of Rachmaninov's life based on letters, diaries and contemporary accounts are interspersed with Parham's soulful playing. Henry Goodman captivates. (OC) ★★★★★

**Even Such Is Time
Choral Works by Finzi,
Walton and Howells, et al**

Choir of Christ's College, Cambridge
Regent REGCD511



A lot of thought has gone into this programme of English choral works. Occasionally the singers, especially the tenors, sound a little stretched. (JP) ★★★

**Hipster Zombies from Mars
Piano Works by Nicholas Vines**

Ryan MacEvoy McCullough (piano)
Navona Records NV6173



With a title like this, it's hard to ignore. Inspired by a science fiction novel about humans colonising a red planet, the concept is wacky but well-delivered. (FP) ★★★

**Saint Louis Classics
Choral works by Vaughan
Williams, et al**

Saint Louis Chamber Chorus
Regent REGCD505



Vibrato-heavy, full-frontal choral assaults on composers from Gibbons to the present won't suit all tastes. Premiere recording of Chilcott's *Silver Swan* is welcome. (JP) ★★

**With Love From Russia Works by
Borodin, Glinka, et al**

Hans Eijsackers, Henk Neven, et al
Onyx ONYX4193



A set of 19th-century Russian works arranged for baritone, cello and piano. Sensitive cello playing throughout. The recording could be a little cleaner. (FP) ★★★
Michael Beek (MB), Oliver Condy (OC), Rebecca Franks (RF), Freya Parr (FP), Jeremy Pound (JP)

GETTY

The month in box-sets



Alicia de Larrocha:
Channelling Mozart
from the keyboard?

Studio fears and concert rarities

This month's round up includes two fine orchestra-conductor pairings

'She seems to have a direct line to Mozart,' writes conductor André Previn in his affectionate foreword to a smart new box-set celebrating Alicia de Larrocha. Her lucid playing made her one of the leading pianists of her day, yet in many ways it's remarkable that there are 41 CDs to include in the **Alicia de Larrocha: Complete Decca Recordings** (Decca 483 4120). She hated recording, but Larrocha was eventually persuaded to go into the studio, and her superb recordings are united here to celebrate the 95th anniversary of her birth. The set includes solo recitals of Granados and Albéniz, as well as discs of Bach, Beethoven and, of course, Mozart.

Liszt's reputation as a pianist often overshadows his own music, but **The Sound of Weimar** (Gramola 99150) puts his orchestral works in the spotlight. There's a twist: this claims to be the first recording of these pieces on original 19th-century instruments. Over nine discs, Martin Hasselböck conducts the Wiener Akademie orchestra in the repertoire from Liszt's

Weimar and Rome years (1849 to 1875), from the *Dante* and *Faust* Symphonies to the six *Hungarian Dances*.

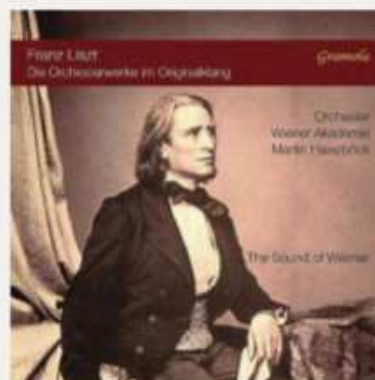
This year Yannick Nézet-Séguin hangs up his baton as music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, although he stays on the roster as honorary conductor. It's a nice moment for a retrospective of the

past decade. Cue **The Rotterdam Philharmonic Collection** (Deutsche Grammophon 483 5345), a six-disc set of previously unreleased live recordings.

The Canadian conductor has hand-picked the performances, which include the first recording of Mark-Anthony Turnage's Piano Concerto.

Another fine conductor-orchestra partnership is explored in **Essence of an Era** (EuroArts 2064798), featuring the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle. Seven DVDs take us from a concert of Rameau and Berlioz at the Berlin Philharmonie back in 1993, right through to the New Year's Eve Concert in 2017. Stop-offs along the way include Moscow in 2008 and Baden-Baden in 2014.

Liszt's reputation as a pianist can overshadow his own music



Garry Booth casts his ears over this month's finest new modern jazz releases

JAZZ CHOICE

That Parisien touch

Saxophonist Emile Parisien delivers a sensational concert with top musicians



Live at Marciac: Emile Parisien (left) with bass clarinetist Michel Portal



Emile Parisien Quintet Sfumato Live In Marciac

Emile Parisien (soprano sax), Joachim Kühn (piano), Manu Codjji (guitar), Simon Tailleu (double bass), Mario Costa (drums); with Wynton Marsalis (trumpet), Vincent Peirani (accordion), and Michel Portal (clarinet)

ACT Music 6021-2 56:19mins (CD + DVD format)

Marciac, a village in southwest France, is the unlikely venue for a festival that's grown into a European jazz Mecca – and its college is where the 35-year-old soprano saxophonist Emile Parisien spent his formative years. He returned with his quintet in 2017 as artist in residence to deliver a sensational concert, caught here in all its glory on this superbly produced CD and DVD pack.

An impassioned expressionist in his writing and sound, Parisien makes music of great intensity and clarity. It's also unmistakably French, and the darkly dramatic opening suite, *Le clown tueur de la fête foraine*, is washed through with swirling accordion from Vincent Peirani and the querulous bass clarinet of Michel Portal. It's a measure of Parisien's growing global stature that guest star Wynton Marsalis joins to fire up Henry Lodge's *Temptation Rag* in imperious style, and stays on for Kühn's hard edged neo-bop number *Transmitting*. This is live jazz at its life-enhancing best. ★★★★★

September round-up

Open Land – Meeting John

Abercrombie is a biopic on DVD of one of modern jazz music's understated heroes. Made shortly before the electric guitarist died in 2017, it captures the man and his music beautifully. With straight to camera narrative from **John Abercrombie** and fellow musicians,



we follow his rise from a Chuck Berry-loving kid to a musician revered around the world for his impressionistic composing and playing style. Open minded by even jazz standards, Abercrombie appeared in all kinds of settings. But it was with ECM that he found his spiritual home, being by nature 'a little sad and also mysterious' as the music featured in the film reveals. Directed by Arno Oehri with atmospheric cinematography. (ECM DVD 675 1136 ★★★★★)

Compared to the rather rarefied sound aesthetic of Manfred Eicher's Edition of Contemporary Music (ECM) – the next best thing to silence he once said – it's near namesake, the UK's Edition, ten years old in 2018, is now known for its rich cornucopia of European jazz styles. **Slowly Rolling Camera** is Edition boss Dave Stapleton's own project, and **Juniper** is its third release. While still rooted in electronica and making much use of jungly break beats overlaid with



repeated minor chord motifs, it's the jazziest work yet. The strong melodic lines and rhythmic hooks are all there, but the sound is taken to a more dynamic level by the entrance of soloists such as saxophonist Mark Lockheart and trumpeter Neil Yates. (Edition EDN 1115 ★★★★★)

The delicious opening notes from **Julian Argüelles'** soprano sax on his quartet **Tetra's** new album **Tonadas** tell you something good is going to happen. No surprise – since his beginnings with London's Loose Tubes big band in the mid-'80s, Argüelles has grown into one of

Europe's finest, most in demand, jazz men. Born and bred in the Midlands, Argüelles's surname betrays his



Spanish roots and this programme of sparkling original tunes explores that Latin heritage. In numbers like

Bulerias and **Alegrias** one may hear Argüelles stretch out against dancing drum accompaniment from James Maddren. But characteristically deft arrangements, a craft honed with copious commissions from around Europe, create gorgeous settings for others, and Ivo Neame's cascading piano lines especially are a joy. (Edition EDN 1116 ★★★★★)

Cuban music has long been a key ingredient of jazz (at least since the 1940s) – as Jelly Roll Morton said, 'You've got to have that Spanish tinge'. Classically trained pianist **Harold López-Nussa** belongs to a new generation of Cuban players and marries technical brilliance with an insistent rootsy drive. On his new trio album, **Un Dia**



Cualquiera, the Havana resident rips through the Cuban style book without a misstep. (Mack Avenue

MAC 1135 ★★★★★)

Now and then, a jazz musician opens the door to a wider audience without alienating the purists. The late Joe Zawinul did it with Weather Report's free ranging jazz rock. Another keys player, Robert Glasper, is doing a similar job today, his group **R+R=Now** blurring the boundaries between jazz funk, rap and electronic avant garde. **Collagically Speaking** is essentially a live studio jam, albeit with a glittering cast of West Coast instrumentalists, MCs and even actors. The core group is so hip it hurts, Christian Scott



aTunde Adjuah on trumpet and Derrick Hodge on bass working with a strong synth element to create

a kaleidoscopic collage of groove-based sound. Zawinul would have loved it. (Blue Note 6755431 ★★★★★)



From the archives

Geoffrey Smith on the headline-grabbing release of a 'lost' album by the iconic saxophonist John Coltrane



The announcement, in June this year, of a long-lost album by saxophonist John Coltrane made headlines in unlikely places, even attracting a feature on Radio 4's flagship *Today* programme. But then Coltrane is a true icon – not just a jazz genius, but a spiritual force trailing the mystic aura of the 1960s. Any new addition to his legacy is bound to excite hopes and expectations.

And, after all the speculation, ***Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album*** (Impulse!/Decca 674 9299) is a worthy addition to the Coltrane canon. Though not so much 'lost' as overlooked amid the saxophonist's teeming output for the Impulse! label, the March 1963 session catches him at a particularly rich phase of his creative career, between the melismatic wail of 'My Favorite Things' and the heaven-storming ecstasy of 'A Love Supreme'. In fact, he isn't just looking in both directions, but all directions, exploring the different possibilities of repertoire, instrumentation, format and, above all, his own expressive language – what he has to say, and how to say it.

The impetus and variety of his quest, the sense of being present at works in progress, gives the album a special fascination. Two of the most interesting tracks are untitled, as if the important thing was just to get them down. The first, a quirky blues with Coltrane on soprano, feels more modal than bluesy at first, while the second, with Coltrane also on soprano, combines a kind of soul riff with a middle-eastern tang.

Throughout, Coltrane and his men – whether in quartet or trio mode – are completely at one. The whole band is on top form, with pianist McCoy Tyner at his prodding, probing best, underpinned by bassist Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones in particularly fiery form on drums. Ranging from the standard 'Nature Boy', to the lyrical 'Vilia' from *The Merry Widow*, to Coltrane's 'Impressions', 'One Up, One Down', and a smoking 'Slow Blues', the album is a boon to all Trane-lovers, conjuring the full flow of his epoch-making gifts.



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SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

WED 19 SEP

Carducci Quartet

Bartók String Quartets Nos. 1 & 3

György Kurtág Six moments musicaux

FRI 21 SEP

Hugo Ticciati

& O/Modernt

'Looping Time': **Erkki-sven Tüür**

Violin Concerto No. 2 (UK Premiere)

THU 27 SEP

Fidelio Trio

Philip Glass Pendulum

Kevin Volans Le Tombeau des Regrets

SUN 30 SEP

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Our critics cast their eyes over this month's selection of books on classical music

Beethoven's Conversation Books, Vol. 1

Ed. and trans. Theodore Albrecht
 Boydell ISBN 978-1-783-27150-4;
 384pp (hb) £45.00



'Paper. Barber's razor. Archduke's receipt. Watch. Suspenders. Blotting paper. Shoe-horn for Karl. Chamber pot.' This to-do list from an

1818 conversation book reflects Beethoven's preoccupations on one particular day: while his friends and visitors wrote their questions to him, he mostly replied verbally, so his own entries tended to be memos-to-self. When all 12 of these volumes are published, they will provide an extraordinary in-depth portrait of the composer's last years. Although dense with footnotes, they wear their learning lightly: by presenting state-of-the-art scholarship in an enjoyably accessible manner, Albrecht and his publishers have pulled off a brilliant feat.

Beethoven was a creature of habit, and we get a vivid sense of his daily routine: getting up at 5am and working till midday, when he stopped to eat with friends; going to a coffee house at five to chat and read newspapers, and getting to bed by ten; he walked everywhere. We get frequent glimpses of his nephew Karl – 'I am very hungry today,' says the young man as they tuck in at a gourmet restaurant. Quack cures for deafness come up, but no more frequently than the search for the ideal stove. This volume is dominated by quotidian concerns; musical concerns will surface later. It would be nice if the next volume could give us an illustration of one typical page. *Michael Church* ★★★★★

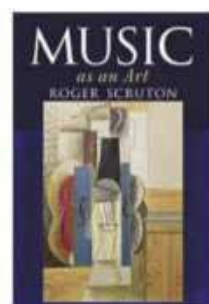
Music as an Art

Roger Scruton
 Bloomsbury ISBN 978-1-4729-5571-5;
 272pp (hb) £25.00

Principally a philosopher, Roger Scruton first demonstrated his



love and profound perception of mainstream classical music in *The Aesthetics of Music* (1997). Here now is his third book on that topic,



a collection of essays divided into two parts: 'Philosophical Investigations' and 'Critical Explorations'. Some are very fine, including his insights about 'Nietzsche on Wagner', and a vivid exegesis on Britten's 'Lyke-Wake Dirge' which may inspire readers to revisit or discover that piece of music. Unfortunately, beside some questionable claims (he insists that birds are not musical), Scruton's attacks on several bêtes noires – including Boulez, opera producers and contemporary popular music – are so obviously blinkered that they risk doing more damage to his own cause than to his intended targets. His habit, too, of making off-hand references to Chomsky, Schenker and even an obscure composer (Nathan Davies, anyone?) makes one wish there had been some editorial intervention or at least feedback

from colleagues (as had been the case with *The Aesthetics of Music*) to save Scruton from his solipsistic assumptions. *Daniel Jaffé* ★★★★★

To Play Again

Carol Rosenberg
 She Writes Press ISBN 978-1-63152-326-7; 352pp (pb) £12.99

Like fellow pianists Leon Fleisher and Nicholas McCarthy, Carol Rosenberg has countered physical adversity to live a musical life. Whereas Fleisher faced focal dystonia and McCarthy was born without a right hand, Rosenberg (b1933) was stricken aged 21 with paralytic polio. *To Play Again* reveals her subsequent path back to the keyboard, even when doctors warned she should simply try to live a 'normal' life. To Rosenberg, life without the piano is unthinkable, and how she managed to not only play again, but also succeed as a recording and concert pianist, is a harrowing and inspiring story. The prose contains emotive descriptions of the physical



and mental strain of the illness: for example, when Rosenberg is out with her mother and must suddenly 'get horizontal', even if that means lying on a busy pavement. Although the foreshadowing is a little overcooked, the descriptions of cultural life in Paris and Vienna are fascinating, particularly the anecdotes about Rosenberg's work with Nadia Boulanger. Throughout, the underlying theme is one of friendship – the book is dedicated to Rosenberg's friend Amelia Da Costa Stone Haygood, with whom she went on to launch the record label Delos – and the reader is struck by the impact of these positive relationships on Rosenberg's pianism. *Claire Jackson* ★★★★★

Twentieth-Century Classical Music

A Ladybird Expert Book

Fiona Maddocks

Michael Joseph ISBN 978-0-718-18786-6;
 56pp (hb) £7.99

The stated aim of the Ladybird Expert series is to provide 'clear, accessible and authoritative introductions' to an adult readership. From that point of view, Fiona Maddocks doesn't do a bad job. Snappily written, the book gives a good grounding in the artform and its development over this complex and changing period, and Maddocks packs in an impressive number of names and works in 24



short pages of text. There are, though, some surprising omissions – John Williams, in particular, whose film scores are arguably the most widely

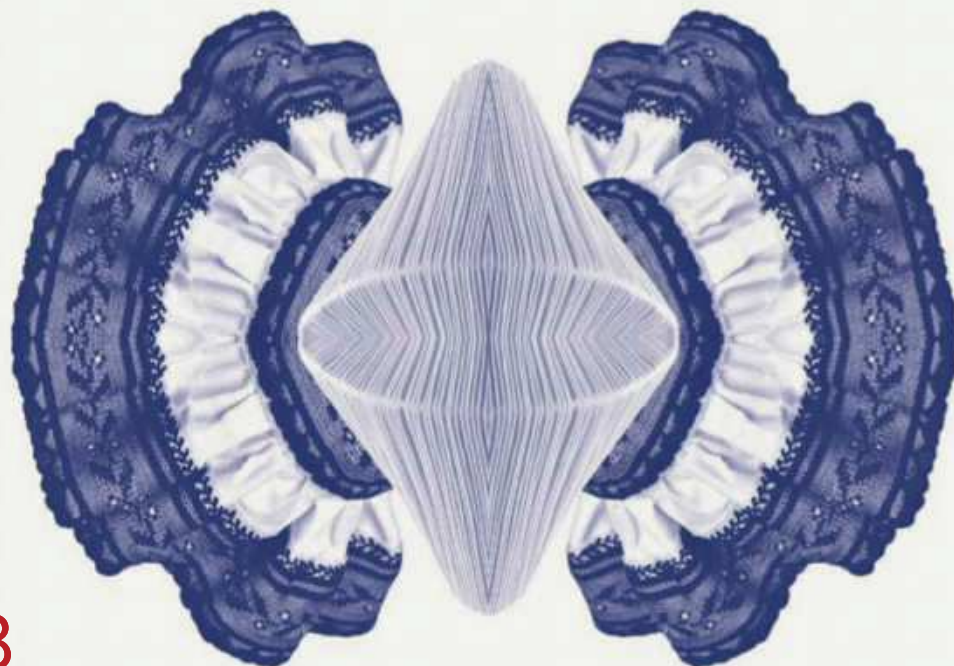
recognised orchestral music of the entire century. Plus, lack of clarity in the narrative could easily have one thinking that composer George Benjamin was a contemporary of Stravinsky or that Brahms was still kicking around in the 1910s – such knowledge can't be just presumed in an introductory guide. Some readers may love the quirky accompanying illustrations; others may find them irritating. *Jeremy Pound* ★★★★★

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Audio choice

Each issue our audio expert *Chris Haslam* tests the best products on the market

THIS MONTH: AUDIO ACCESSORIES



SPEAKER CABLE CHOICE

QED Performance XT25 £6 per metre

The most overlooked, and debated, hi-fi component, speaker cables can cost anything from 20p to £14,000 per metre. While I wouldn't suggest either extreme, it's worth investing a little more to give your amp and speakers a fighting chance. I've been hugely impressed with the QED XT25, which wraps 2.5mm oxygen-free copper wire around a hollow tube ensuring a more consistent signal, and therefore better performance. The build-quality is superb and the cold-welded, gold-plated banana plugs should last a lifetime. qed.co.uk

SPEAKER STANDS CHOICE

Atacama Moseco 6 (H615MM; base plate W130 X D170MM) £119.99

Even the cheapest bookshelf speakers will sound better mounted on stands – or even a breezeblock – but if you're not into the industrial look, these bamboo and carbon steel stands will give your hi-fi an instant upgrade. The combination of non-resonating materials, floor spikes and elevated positioning enhances virtually everything, with more drive and detail and a better bass response. atacama-audio.co.uk



BBC music BEST BUY

TURNTABLE STYLUS CHOICE

Audio Technica VM540ML £235

While researching this review, I discovered a staggering 10,000-word document revelling in sampling rates, harmonics and frequency responses, and it reminded me just how complex a piece of audiophile engineering a cartridge can be. But back in the real world, where many plug-and-play turntables cost less than this cartridge, will a '2.2 x 0.12 mil MicroLine stylus' really improve your turntable?

Using the Pro-Ject Jukebox E turntable, I swapped the existing Ortofon OM5e cartridge (£50) with Audio-Technica's VM540ML, adjusted the weight (2.0 grams) and indulged in a fresh pressing of Elgar's Cello Concerto and *Sea Pictures*, with cellist Jacqueline du Pré, mezzo Janet Baker and the LSO (Warner Classics). The improvement was instant and undeniable, with more depth, vibrancy and atmosphere – strings sounded smoother without losing their fragility, and the extra energy was remarkable. audiotechnicashop.com

Stylus and substance:
a good cartridge will
enhance your vinyl



A GUIDE TO BETTER ACCESSORIES

Cables: Use thick wire (1.6-2.6mm) if you have to run a long cable or are using high-powered kit, as it minimises resistance. For shorter lengths you can save money with thinner cables (1.3mm or less) but speaker positioning is important, so don't compromise.

Cartridges: You can spend thousands on a cartridge, but you won't hear the benefit if it isn't set up correctly. Adjusting the tonearm weight and alignment is essential – I'd recommend a tracking gauge and alignment protractor (try ortofon.co.uk) that will ensure the stylus is picking up the most detail.

Stands: A stand needs to be rigid and non-resonant and the speaker has to be held as still as possible to minimise vibrations. Hollow tubes are far from ideal, so do fill them with sand (or rice) to stop them ringing. Spikes are another essential as they help to separate the speakers from the floor vibrations.



Venue of the month

The UK's best concert halls

12. West Road Concert Hall

Where: Cambridge
Opened: 1978
Seats: 499

Cambridge isn't short of venues for choral music, thanks to the University's many college chapels. But when it comes to purpose-built concert halls, West Road is the place to go. Built in 1978 by Sir Leslie Martin, the streamline auditorium is at the heart of the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Music. It's as much a home for student musicians as professionals. During termtime, you can enjoy a variety of groups, from the superb, small-scale Chamber Orchestra right up to fully-staged productions by the Opera Society.

West Road also boasts four resident ensembles. For early-music lovers, there's the Academy of Ancient Music, while if your tastes tend to the contemporary, there's the Britten Sinfonia. The Endellion String Quartet has worked with West Road since 1991, and the Ligeti Quartet recently became the first holder of the Cambridge Chamber Music Residency.

Over the autumn, highlights include a visit from musicians from IMS Prussia Cove, and a recital in which baritone Roderick Williams and the Britten Sinfonia perform Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge* and premiere a song-cycle by composer Luke Styles.

Live choice

Paul Riley picks the month's best concert and opera highlights in the UK

LONDON

BBC Proms

Royal Albert Hall, 2 September
Tel: +44 (0)20 7070 4441

Web: www.bbc.co.uk/proms

As the BBC Proms tilt into their final week, it's a tale of two cities with the Boston Symphony and Berlin Philharmonic going head-to-head on a single day. Conductor Andris Nelsons leads his Bostonians in an afternoon devoted to Mahler's Third Symphony, while in the evening incoming music director Kirill Petrenko is at the helm for the Berliners' Beethoven Seventh Symphony, coupled with tone poems by Richard Strauss.

London Symphony Orchestra Barbican, 16 September

Tel: +44 (0)20 7638 8891

Web: www.barbican.org.uk

Britten's *Spring Symphony* sets the LSO off with a bounce as it launches a new season built around new and British music. Premieres of works by Harrison Birtwistle and Mark-Anthony Turnage take care of the 'new'; bolstering the 'British', meanwhile, conductor Sir Simon Rattle also includes Holst's brooding *Egdon Heath*.

O/Modernt

Kings Place, 21 September

Tel: +44 (0)20 7520 1490

Web: www.kingsplace.co.uk

Works by John Adams and Philip Glass bookend a visit by the Swedish O/Modernt Orchestra under violinist Hugo Tucciati (who gives the UK premiere of Erkki-Sven Tüür's Violin Concerto No. 2). Turning back the clock with a vengeance is an arrangement of Pérotin's joyous *Viderunt omnes*.

Wagner's Ring

Royal Opera House, 24, 26, 29 September, 1 October

Tel: +44 (0)20 7304 4000

Web: www.roh.org.uk

Sir Antonio Pappano conducts the first of four *Ring* cycles reviving Keith Warner's acclaimed production forged from 2004-06. Baritone John

Lundgren sings the role of Wotan with soprano Nina Stemme as his daughter Brünnhilde.

Philharmonia

Royal Festival Hall, 27 September

Tel: +44 (0)20 3879 9555

Web: www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Wagner isn't confined to the Royal Opera House. Music from the *Ring* cycle's final installment *Götterdämmerung* initiates conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen's two-pronged exploration of connections linking the composer to Bruckner and Schoenberg. Soprano Camilla Nylund is the soloist in the latter's monodrama *Erwartung*, which prefaces Bruckner's Symphony No. 6.

SOUTH

Plush Festival

St John's Plush, 14-16 September

Tel: +44 (0)20 3286 1885

Web: www.plushfestival.com

Plush Festival's September Weekend navigates the complete

Beethoven cello sonatas shared between Adrian Brendel and Björg Lewis, both accompanied by guest curator pianist Tim Horton (see box, right). With Haydn, Schoenberg and Berg also on the bill, the context is determinedly Viennese, though music by Pierre Boulez gatecrashes the finale in modernist Gallic style.

Hatfield House Chamber Music Festival

Hatfield House, 20-23 September

Tel: +44 (0)1707 287000

Web: hatfieldhousemusicfestival.org.uk

This year's festival, deep in the heart of Hertfordshire, expands its chamber horizons to include the Brahms Double Concerto played by the Johnston brothers, Magnus (violin) and Guy (cello) alongside Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* overture. There's more sibling stagecraft on the last night, too, as Mary and Benjamin Bevan are the soloists in the Brahms's solemn *Ein deutsches Requiem*.



Serial soprano: Camilla Nylund stars in Schoenberg's opera *Erwartung*

Ex Cathedra

Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, 22 September
Tel: +44 (0)1892 530613
Web: www.excathedra.co.uk
Musical life begins at 40! The Ex Cathedra choir gathers together five works scored for 40 parts, setting familiar Tallis and Striggio beside a motet by Gabriel Jackson and Alex Roth's *Earthrise*, inspired by a photograph taken from Apollo 8.

EAST

Carducci String Quartet
St Mary's Cratfield, 9 September
Tel: +44 (0)1728 603077
Web: concertsatcratfield.org.uk
Guitarist Craig Ogden joins the Carduccis for the final concert of Cratfield's summer series, where Boccherini's *Fandango Quintet* and Piazzolla's *Tango Sensations* dispel the shadows of Mendelssohn's F minor Quartet Op. 80 and Dowland's down-hearted *Lachrimae*.

Roman River Festival

All Saints' Church, Fordham, 26 September
Tel: +44 (0)7759 934860
Web: www.romanrivermusic.org.uk
Essex's Roman River Festival cuts Wagner's *Gotterdammerung* down to size, and The Marian Consort pairs *Miserere* settings by Allegri and James MacMillan. Elsewhere, the Trio Isimsiz sets its sights firmly on Shostakovich and Schubert, whose debut piano trios are framed by works by Henze and Kaner.

Midlands and North Wales

Leeds International Piano Competition

University and Town Hall, Leeds, 6-15 September
Tel: +44 (0)113 3760318
Web: www.leedspiano.com
Eight days, 24 pianists, and a nail-biting finale accompanied by the Hallé orchestra: in the new-look Leeds International Piano Competition, there's everything to play for.

Prokofiev's War and Peace

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, from 15 September and on tour

Tel: +44 (0)29 2063 6464
Web: www.wno.org.uk
It may be David Pountney's last season as artistic director at Welsh National Opera, but he's not going quietly. First up is his new production of Prokofiev's epic work in a new edition

conducted by Tomáš Hanus. Jonathan McGovern and Lauren Michelle are the young lovers Natasha and Andrei caught up in the maelstrom, with Mark Le Brocq as the idealistic Pierre.

Leicester International Music Festival

New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester, 20-22 September

Tel: +44 (0)116 225 4920
Web: leicesterinternationalmusicfestival.org.uk

Spotlighting her 90th birthday, Scottish-born, US-based Thea Musgrave is invited to be the featured composer in a festival exploring composers who moved to America. Her music is woven into all five concerts alongside works by Bartók, Martinů, Rachmaninov and Dvořák.

Ian Bostridge and Julius Drake

Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, 21 September

Tel: +44 (0)161 907 9000
Web: www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk
Tenor Ian Bostridge won the 2016 Pol Roger Duff Cooper non-fiction prize for his book on Schubert's *Winterreise*, and now returns to his 'anatomy of an obsession' for a performance of the song-cycle in partnership with Julius Drake at the piano.

Beverley Chamber Music Festival

St Mary's, Beverley, 26-29 September

Tel: +44 (0)1482 391672
Web: www.newpathsmusic.com
Falling deep and crisp and even during the Festival, St Wenceslas Day on 28 September prompts a Bohemian programme, plus Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder* sung by mezzo Marta Fontanals-Simmons, and Bartók from the Doric String Quartet.

SCOTLAND AND N IRELAND

Scottish Opera

St Mary's Church, Haddington, 21 September
Tel: +44 (0)131 473 2000
Web: lammermuirfestival.co.uk
Scottish Opera makes its Lammermuir Festival debut with a new semi-staging by Jenny Ogilvie of Britten's 1966 church parable *The Burning Fiery Furnace*. Ben Johnson heads the cast as the defiant Nebuchadnezzar; conductor Derek Clark is at the helm.

BACKSTAGE WITH... Pianist Tim Horton



Rethinking Beethoven:
'There is nothing more modern-sounding'

The Plush Festival, which you are guest curating this year, is renowned for its diverse programme. How do you pair the traditional and the contemporary?

I've made Beethoven's cello sonatas the centrepiece of this year's festival, because there is nothing more modern-sounding than late Beethoven, particularly when placed side-by-side with contemporary music. It opens up one's ears and makes challenging contemporary music more accessible. Equally, we're trying to make audiences not think of older music as comfortable – they all influenced one another and we're exploring those influenced by Beethoven throughout the festival.

You have been involved with the festival as a performer since 2000. Are you performing again this year?

I am performing in just as many concerts as I ever have been, but fortunately it's music I know well so hopefully it shouldn't be too taxing. I'm playing with people I know, but have only ever played with individually, so it'll be great to bring new ideas to these pieces with a group of such exceptional musicians.

Which concerts are you particularly looking forward to?

András Schiff returning to the festival to do the second half of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* is very exciting. He's always been a huge influence on me, both pianistically and musically. It's a real privilege to have him here, and is one of the rare concerts I'm not playing in! All the programmes are close to my heart, and there's a great balance of music throughout the festival.

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

Glasgow Cathedral, 27 September

Tel: +44 (0)141 353 8000
Web: www.bbc.co.uk/bbcso
Nearly a century after its composition, and a decade after he introduced Langgaard's cosmic surround-sound starscape *Music of the Spheres* to the Proms, Thomas Dausgaard conducts its Scottish premiere alongside Richard Strauss from soprano Rowan Pierce and Haydn's Symphony No. 99.

Verdi's Rigoletto

Grand Opera House, Belfast, from 30th September

Tel: +44 (0)28 9024 1919
Web: www.niopera.com
With its Festival of Voice (31 August-2 September) safely stowed, Northern Ireland Opera raises the curtain on its first production of the season: Verdi's heartrending tale of jealousy and self-sacrifice. Conducted by Gareth Hancock, and staged by Walter Sutcliffe, Sebastian Catana takes the title role with Nadine Koutcher as Gilda.

TV&Radio

Your complete guide to what's on Radio 3 this month, plus TV highlights

BBC
RADIO



90-93FM

SEPTEMBER'S RADIO 3 LISTINGS

Schedules may be subject to alteration. For up-to-date listings see Radio Times

Three to look out for



Alan Davey, the controller of BBC Radio 3, picks out three great moments to listen out for in September

Centenary of *The Planets*

To celebrate 100 years since Holst completed his legendary orchestral suite, the BBC Symphony Orchestra is joining forces with Brian Cox to perform an updated version influenced by new scientific research. Venus, described by Holst as the 'Bringer of Peace', will acknowledge the recent discovery that it is actually an icy, hostile planet. *Radio 3 in Concert; 29 Sep, 7.30pm*

Leeds International Piano Competition

Now in its 55th year, 'The Leeds' returns, with highlights from the semi finals featured throughout the week, and concerto finals broadcast live at the weekend. The pianists will perform with the Hallé. *Lunchtime Concerts; 11-14 Sep, 1pm*
Radio 3 in Concert; 14-15 Sep, 7pm

Last Night of the Proms

Andrew Davis returns to the Last Night, his 12th time as its conductor. He is joined by saxophonist Jess Gillam (see p24) and baritone Gerald Finley. Before moving into the usual British classics, the evening will kick off with the world premiere of a new work by Roxanna Panufnik (see p30). *Proms 2018; 8 Sep, 7.15pm*

1 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast

9am-12.15pm Record Review – Building a Library

12.15-1pm New Generation Artists

1-3pm Inside Music

3-5.30pm Proms 2018:

Proms at... Alexandra Palace.

Arthur Sullivan *Trial by Jury*, works by Parry, Coleridge-Taylor and Stanford. Neal Davies (The Learned Judge), Mary Bevan (The Plaintiff), BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orchestra/Jane Glover

5.30-6.30pm Jazz

Record Requests

6.30-7.30pm J to Z

7.30-10.15pm Proms 2018:

Prom 66 Dukas *La Péri* – Fanfare, Prokofiev *Piano Concerto No. 3*, Schmidt *Symphony No. 4*. Yuja Wang (piano), Berlin Philharmonic/Kirill Petrenko

10.15pm-12 midnight

Hear and Now

12 midnight-1am

Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

2 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast

9am-12 noon Sunday Morning

12 noon-1pm Private Passions

Eugenia Cheng, mathematician

1-2pm Proms 2018: Proms

Chamber Music 7 (rpt) Chopin *Waltzes in A flat and C sharp minor*, *Impromptu in A flat*, *Fantasy-Impromptu in C sharp minor*, *Fantasies in F minor and A flat*, *Mazurkas*, *Scherzo in E*. Pavel Kolesnikov (piano)

2-4pm Proms 2018: Prom 67

Mahler *Symphony No. 3*. Susan Graham (mezzo), CBSO Chorus & Youth Chorus, Boston SO/Andris Nelsons

4-5pm Choral Evensong (a recording from the archives)

5-6.45pm Proms 2018:

Prom 51 (rpt) Wagner *Parsifal* – *Prelude to Act 1*, Richard Strauss *Four Last Songs*, Per Nørgård *Symphony No. 3*. Malin Byström (soprano), London Voices, National Youth Chamber Choir, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Thomas Dausgaard

6.45-8pm Words and Music

8-10.15pm Proms 2018:

Prom 68 Richard Strauss *Don Juan*, *Death and Transfiguration*, Beethoven *Symphony No. 7*. Berlin Philharmonic/Kirill Petrenko

10.15pm-12 midnight

Early Music Late

12 midnight-12.30am

Classical Fix

3 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast

9am-12 noon

Essential Classics

12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Chausson

1-2pm Proms 2018: Proms Chamber Music 8

Lili Boulanger *Nocturne*, *Trois morceaux pour piano*, Debussy *Sonata for flute, viola and harp*, Nina Šenk *Baca*, Ravel *Introduction and Allegro*. Soloists of the Berlin Philharmonic

2-5pm Proms 2018: Prom

52 (rpt) Wagner *The Flying Dutchman* – *Overture*, Rolf Wallin *Violin Concerto*, Sibelius *Symphony No. 2*.

Alina Ibragimova (violin), Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra/Edward Gardner

5-7pm In Tune

7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape

7.30-10pm Proms 2018:

Prom 69 Bernstein *Serenade after Plato's 'Symposium'*, Shostakovich *Symphony No. 4*. Baiba Skride (violin), Boston SO/Andris Nelsons

10-11pm Proms

Poetry Competition

11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

4 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast

9am-12 noon

Essential Classics

12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Chausson

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert

2-5pm Proms 2018:

Prom 54 (rpt) Enescu *Suite No. 1* – *Prélude à l'unisson*, Bartók *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, Mahler *Symphony No. 4*. Anna Lucia Richter (soprano), Budapest Festival Orchestra/Iván Fischer

5-7pm In Tune

7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape

7.30-10pm Proms 2018:

Prom 70 Tango Prom. Pablo Ziegler (piano), Héctor Del Curto (bandoneon), Claudio Ragazzi (guitar), Pedro Giraudo (double bass), Franco Pinna (drums), Britten *Sinfonia*/Clark Rundell

10-10.45pm Literary Pursuits:

Maurice (rpt)

10.45-11pm The Essay

Hanging On (rpt)

11pm-12.30am Late Junction

5 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast

9am-12 noon

Essential Classics

12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Chausson

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert

2-3.30pm Proms 2018:

Prom 64 (rpt) Verdi *Requiem*. Lise Davidsen (soprano), Karen Cargill (mezzo-soprano), Dmytro Popov (tenor), Tomasz

On another planet:
this year marks the
centenary of the completion
of Holst's orchestral suite

Konieczny (bass), London Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir/Andrés Orozco-Estrada

3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong from Armagh Cathedral

4.30-5pm New

Generation Artists

5-7pm In Tune

7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape

7.30-10pm Proms 2018:

Prom 71 Berlioz *Harold in Italy*, *Le Corsaire* – *Overture*, *La Mort de Cléopâtre*, *The Trojans* – 'Royal Hunt and Storm', 'Dido's death scene'. Antoine Tamestit (viola), Joyce DiDonato (mezzo), Orchestra Révolutionnaire et Romantique/John Eliot Gardiner

10-10.45pm Feature 'Whatcha doin', Marshall McCuhan? (rpt)

10.45-11pm The Essay

Hanging On (rpt)

11pm-12.30am Late Junction

6 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast

9am-12noon Essential Classics



12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Chausson
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Proms 2018:
Prom 55 (rpt) Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos 1 & 3*, Brahms *Hungarian Dances Nos 1 & 11*, *Symphony No. 1*, Pablo de Sarasate *Zigeunerweisen*. József Lendvay Sr, József Lendvay Jr (violin), Jeno Lisztes (cimbalom), Budapest Festival Orchestra/Iván Fischer
5-7pm In Tune
7-8.45pm Proms 2018:
Prom 72 Britten *War Requiem*. Erin Wall (soprano), Allan Clayton (tenor), Russell Braun (baritone), Huddersfield Choral Society, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Chorus & Junior Chorus/Peter Oundjian
8.45-9.15pm New Generation Artists
9.15-10pm Feature John Ruskin's *Eurhythmic Girls* (rpt)
10-10.15pm The Essay

Hanging On (rpt)
10.15-11.30pm Proms 2018:
Prom 73 Hildegard von Bingen *Ordo virtutum – In principio omnes*, Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla *Deus in adjutorium*, Jacobus Gallus *Pater noster*, Allegri *Miserere*, Tallis *Te Lucia ante terminum (I)*, Arvo Pärt *Nunc dimittis*, John Browne *O Maria salvatoris*. Tallis Scholars/Peter Phillips
11.30pm-12.30am Late Junction

7 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Chausson
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Proms 2018: Prom 56 (rpt) Mozart *Piano Concerto No. 21*, Bruckner *Symphony No. 5*. Benjamin Grosvenor (piano), BBC SO/Sakari Oramo
5-7pm In Tune

7-10.15pm Proms 2018:
Prom 74 Handel *Theodora*. Louise Alder (Theodora), Iestyn Davies (Didymus), Benjamin Hulett (Septimius), Ann Hallenberg (Irene), Arcangelo/Jonathan Cohen
10.15-11pm Feature
 Apocalypse Hour (rpt)
11pm-1am Music Planet

8 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review – Building a Library
12.15-1pm New Generation Artists
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-7.15pm New Generation Artists
CHOICE 7.15-11pm
Proms 2018:
Last Night of the Proms
 Roxanna Panufnik *Songs of*

Darkness, Dreams of Light, Stanford *Songs of the Sea*, Parry *Blest Pair of Sirens*, Jerusalem, Darius Milhaud *Scaramouche*, Richard Rodgers *Carousel – ‘Soliloquy’*, Henry Wood *Fantasia on British Sea-Songs*, Thomas Arne *Rule, Britannia!*, Elgar *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1 ‘Land of Hope and Glory’*, *The National Anthem* (arr. Britten), Auld Lang Syne
11pm-12 midnight Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

9 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
 Steve Punt, comedian
1-2pm Proms 2018: Proms Chamber Music 8 (rpt)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong from Armagh Cathedral (rpt)

4-5.30pm Proms 2018: Prom 61 (rpt) Liszt *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Bruckner *Symphony No. 4*. Yefim Bronfman (piano), Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra/Yannick Nézet-Séguin
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature Ken Campbell as Never Heard Before
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
9-10.30pm Radio 3 in Concert
10.30-11.30pm Early Music Late
11.30pm-12.30am The Glory of Polyphony

10 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Tchaikovsky
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert live from Wigmore Hall, London. Schubert *Fischerweise*, *An Silvia*, *Der Wanderer an der Mond*, *Atys*, *Sei mir gegrüsst*, *Wehmut*, *Der Wanderer*, *Litanei auf das Fest aller Seelen*, *Einsamkeit*. Ilker Arcayürek (tenor), Ammiel Bushakevitz (piano)
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Usher Hall, Edinburgh. Haydn *The Creation*. Sarah Fox (soprano), Allan Clayton (tenor), Neal Davies (bass-baritone), National Youth Choir of Scotland, Scottish Chamber Orchestra/Edward Gardner
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
 Italy Outdoors
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

11 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Tchaikovsky
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
 Leeds International Piano Competition
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Usher Hall, Edinburgh. Chavez *Sinfonia No. 2 ‘Sinfonia India’*, Copland *Symphony No. 3*. Gabriela Montero (piano), Orchestra of the Americas/Carlos Miguel Prieto
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 Italy Outdoors
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

12 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics



Proms soprano:
Sophie Bevan sings
Vaughan Williams

SEPTEMBER TV CHOICE

Elgar's Cello Concerto

Jean-Guihen Queyras takes to the Proms stage in Elgar's sublime Cello Concerto, accompanied by the BBC Symphony Orchestra and led by Edward Gardner. Elgar wrote this piece in the wake of World War One, the conflict that inspired the other pieces in this programme: Lili Boulanger's choral miniature, 'Pour les funérailles d'un soldat', and Vaughan Williams's cantata, *Dona nobis pacem*. Soprano Sophie Bevan and bass-baritone Neal Davies feature as soloists.

BBC Four; 2 September

Tango Prom

The Britten Sinfonia join forces with pianist Pablo Zieger, as well as singers, dancers and other instrumentalists from Europe, the USA and Argentina for a celebration of Latin American tango. The programme also explores the 20th-century Finnish tango tradition, with melancholic bandoneon melodies and vibrant full-scale orchestral hits.

BBC Four; 7 September

12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Tchaikovsky
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert Leeds International Piano Competition
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong live from the Chapel of Merton College, Oxford
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Usher Hall, Edinburgh. Debussy *Iberia*, *La mer*, Boulanger *D'un matin de*

printemps, Coles *Behind the Lines*, Copland *Appalachian Spring*, Vaughan Williams *Symphony No. 3*. National Youth Orchestra of Scotland/Paul Daniel, National Youth Orchestra of Canada/Jonathan Darlington
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay Italy Outdoors
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

13 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Tchaikovsky

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert Leeds International Piano Competition
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Usher Hall, Edinburgh. Musgrave *Turbulent Landscapes*, Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony*. Elizabeth Watts (soprano), Christopher Maltman (baritone), Edinburgh Festival Chorus, BBC Scottish SO/Martyn Brabbins
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay Italy Outdoors
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

14 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Tchaikovsky
CHOICE 1-3pm Lunchtime Concert Leeds International Piano Competition
3-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Leeds Town Hall. Leeds International Piano Competition Final. Hallé Orchestra/Edward Gardner
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay Italy Outdoors
11pm-1am Music Planet

15 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review – Building a Library
12.15-1pm Music Matters
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm J to Z
CHOICE 6.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Leeds Town Hall. Leeds International Piano Competition Final. Hallé Orchestra/Edward Gardner
10pm-12 midnight Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

16 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions Bella Hardy, folk musician
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt) from Wigmore Hall, London. Schubert *Fischerweise*, *An Silvia*, *Der Wanderer an der Mond*, *Atys*, *Sei mir gegrüsst*, *Wehmut*, *Der Wanderer*, *Litanei auf das Fest aller Seelen*, *Einsamkeit*. Ilker Arcayürek (tenor), Ammiel Bushakevitz (piano)
2-3pm The Early Music Show

3-4pm Choral Evensong from the Chapel of Merton College, Oxford (rpt)
4-5pm Choir and Organ
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature The Nature of Creativity
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
9-10.30pm Radio 3 in Concert
10.30-11.30pm Early Music Late
11.30pm-12.30am The Glory of Polyphony

17 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Francesca Caccini (rpt)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert live from Wigmore Hall, London. Anon *Salve Mater Misericordiae*, *Anda þinn guð mér gef þú víst*, *Benedicta es caelorum regina*, *Rís upp, drottnei dýrð*, *O Jesu dulcissime*, Trad/Norwegian *Solbønn*, *Lova Line*, *Sven Svane*, *So ro liten tull*, *Sulla lulla*, *Fryd dig du Kristi brud*, Traditonal/Swedish *Limu Limu Lima*, *Om ödet skulle skicka mig*, *Jag haver ingen kärare*, *St Örjan och Draken*. Trio Mediæval
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Barbican Hall, London. Birtwistle *Fanfare*, Holst *Egdon Heath*, Turnage *Dispelling the Fears*, Britten *Spring Symphony*. Philip Cobb, Gabor Tarkovi (trumpet), Elizabeth Watts (soprano), Alice Coote (mezzo), Allan Clayton (tenor), Tiffin Choirs, LSO & Chorus/Simon Rattle
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay A Bard's Eye View of Wales
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

18 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Francesca Caccini (rpt)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. Schubert *Der Wanderer*, HK Gruber *Frankenstein!*, Beethoven *Symphony No. 5*, Marcus Farnsworth (baritone), Aurora Orchestra/Nicholas Collon
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay A Bard's Eye View of Wales
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

19 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Francesca Caccini (rpt)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong live from Tewkesbury Abbey
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Wigmore Hall, London. Mozart *Piano Sonata in C*, *B flat*, *F & A*, Schoenberg *Six Little Piano Pieces*, Webern *Variations Op. 27*. Elisabeth Leonskaja (piano)
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay A Bard's Eye View of Wales
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

20 THURSDAY

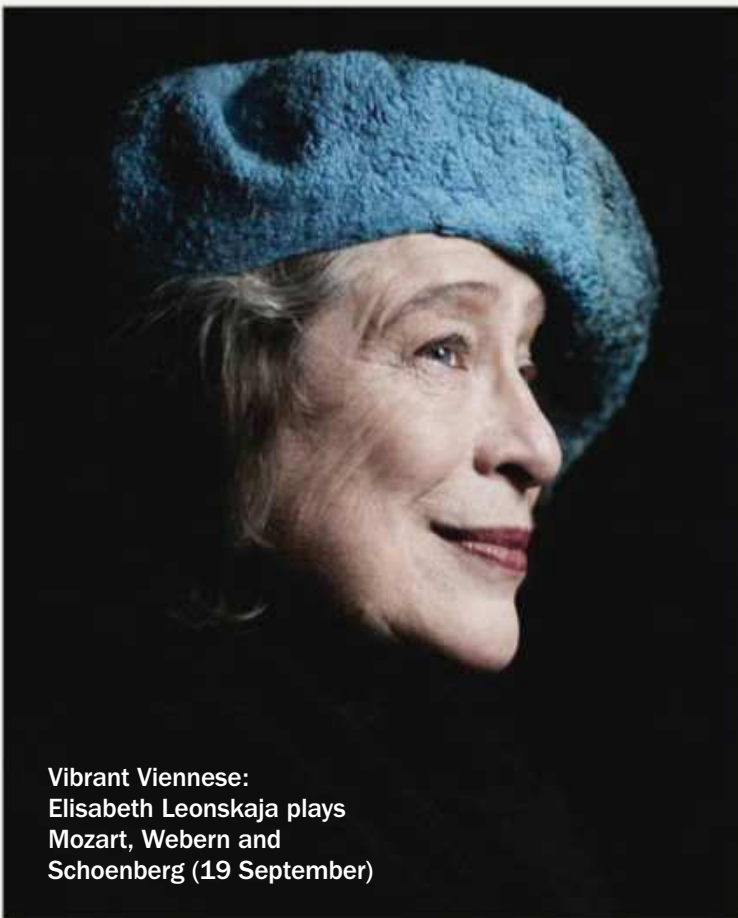
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Francesca Caccini (rpt)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Glasgow City Halls. Copland *Fanfare for the Common Man*, Augusta Read Thomas *Brio*, Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue*, Bernstein *Songfest*. Marc-André Hamelin (piano), BBC Scottish SO/Thomas Dausgaard
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay A Bard's Eye View of Wales
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

21 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Francesca Caccini (rpt)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Brahms *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Dvořák *Symphony No. 7*. Simon Trpčeski (piano), Hallé Orchestra/Karl-Heinz Steffens
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay A Bard's Eye View of Wales
11pm-1am Music Planet

22 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review – Building a Library
12.15-1pm Music Matters
1-3pm Inside Music



Vibrant Viennese:
Elisabeth Leonskaja plays
Mozart, Webern and
Schoenberg (19 September)

3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-10pm Opera on 3
from the Royal Opera House,
London. Verdi *Falstaff*. Bryn
Terfel (Sir John Falstaff), Ana
María Martínez (Alice Ford),
Simon Keenlyside (Ford), Anna
Prohaska (Nannetta), Orchestra
of the Royal Opera House/
Nicola Luisotti
10pm-12 midnight
Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am
Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

23 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
Michael Craig-Martin, artist (rpt)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
from Wigmore Hall, London.
Anon *Salve Mater Misericordiae*,
Anda þinn guð mér gef þú vist,
Benedicta es caelorum regina,
Rís upp, drottinn dýrð, O Jesu
dulcissime, Trad/Norwegian
Solbønn, Lova Line, Sven Svane,
So ro liten tull, Sulla lulla, Fryd
dig du Kristi brud, Trad/Swedish
Limu Limu Lima, Om ödet skulle
skicka mig, Jag haver ingen
kärare, St Örjan och Draken.
Trio Mediæval
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong from
Tewkesbury Abbey (rpt)
4-5pm Choir and Organ
5-5.30pm
The Listening Service

5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature
John Ashbery: Portrait
in a Convex Mirror
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
An Evening with Angela Carter
9-10.30pm Radio 3 in Concert
10.30-11.30pm
Early Music Late
11.30pm-12.30am
The Glory of Polyphony

24 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon
Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Rachmaninov
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert live
from Wigmore Hall, London.
Purcell *Lord, what is man?*
(*A Divine Hymn*), *O solitude*,
my sweetest choice, Weldon
Alleluia, Head Over the rim of the
moon, Ireland *The trellis*,
My true love hath my heart,
When I am dead, my dearest,
If there were dreams to sell,
Earth's call, Walton *Daphne*,
Through gilded trellises, Old Sir
Faulk. Lucy Crowe (soprano),
Joseph Middleton (piano)
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in
Concert from Sage Gateshead.
Beethoven *Calm Sea &*
Prosperous Voyage, Fauré
Pavane, Mozart *Laudate*
Dominum, Exsultate, Jubilate,
Poulenc *Concert champêtre*,

Prokofiev *Classical Symphony*,
Haydn *Symphony No. 6*
'Le matin', Brahms *Haydn*
Variations. Mahan Esfahani
(harpsichord), Sarah Tynan
(soprano), Royal Northern
Sinfonia & Chorus/Lars Vogt
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
My Life in Food
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

25 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Rachmaninov
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in
Concert from Bridgewater Hall,
Manchester. Respighi *Fountains*
of Rome, Walton *Cello Concerto*,
Sibelius *Symphony No. 2*. Truls
Mørk (cello), BBC Philharmonic
Orchestra/John Storgårds
10.45-11pm The Essay
My Life in Food
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

26 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Rachmaninov
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
live from Chester Cathedral
4.30-5pm New
Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
live from the Royal Festival Hall,
London. Stravinsky *Symphony*
in Three Movements, Adès
In Seven Days, Lutosławski
Symphony No. 3. Kirill Gerstein
(piano), London Philharmonic
Orchestra/Thomas Adès
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
My Life in Food
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

27 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon
Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Rachmaninov
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in
Concert live from the Royal
Festival Hall, London. Wagner
Götterdämmerung: Siegfried's

Death & Funeral Music,
Schoenberg *Erwartung*,
Bruckner *Symphony*
No. 6. Camilla Nylund
(soprano), Philharmonia/
Esa-Pekka Salonen
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
My Life in Food
11pm-12 midnight Exposure
12 midnight-12.30am
Late Junction

28 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon
Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Rachmaninov
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in
Concert from Symphony Hall,
Birmingham. Tchaikovsky *Romeo*
and Juliet Fantasy Overture,
Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on*
a Theme by Paganini, Puccini
Intermezzi from Madam
Butterfly and Manon Lescaut,
Respighi *Feste romane*. Pavel
Kolesnikov (piano), City
of Birmingham Symphony
Orchestra/Alpesh Chauhan
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
My Life in Food
11pm-1am Music Planet

29 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review –
Building a Library
12.15-1pm Music Matters
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm J to Z
CHOICE 6.30-10pm
Radio 3 in Concert
live from Barbican Hall, London.
Holst *The Planets*. Brian Cox
(presenter), BBC Symphony
Orchestra/Ben Gernon
10pm-12 midnight
Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am
Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

30 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
Bel Mooney, journalist
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
from Wigmore Hall, London.
Purcell *Lord, what is man?*
(*A Divine Hymn*), *O solitude*,
my sweetest choice, Weldon
Alleluia, Head Over the rim
of the moon, Ireland *The trellis*,



Weekly TV & radio highlights

On our website each week we pick the best of the classical music programmes on radio, TV and iPlayer. To plan your weekly listening and viewing, go to classical-music.com or sign up to our weekly newsletter to be sent information about the week's classical programmes directly to your inbox.

My true love hath my heart,
When I am dead, my dearest,
If there were dreams to sell,
Earth's call, Walton *Daphne*,
Through gilded trellises, Old Sir
Faulk. Lucy Crowe (soprano),
Joseph Middleton (piano)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong from
Chester Cathedral (rpt)
4-5pm Choir and Organ
5-5.30pm
The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature
Harmony of the Spheres
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
9-10.30pm Radio 3 in Concert
10.30-11.30pm
Early Music Late
11.30pm-12.30am
The Glory of Polyphony

QUIZ ANSWERS from p108
1. Joseph Haydn
2. September
3. Ludwig van Beethoven
4. a) *Parsifal*; b) *Falstaff*; c) *Death in Venice*
5. Puccini's *Città di Schicchi*
6. Malcolm Sargent
7. Castrato
8. The Queen's Hall, London
9. The viola (two violins remain on stage until the end)
10. Peter Maxwell Davies

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THE *Sounds* OF AUTUMN

Make sure you don your coats and scarves with the cooler months soon approaching, and head out to see some of the finest performances around this Autumn listed below. They are not to be missed!

English Chamber Orchestra

London Series 2018/2019



ECO opens its London Season at QEH on 29 October with pianist/conductor Christian Zacharias in a programme including Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto and Schoenberg's *Verklarte Nacht*. On 2 December ECO is at Cadogan Hall with a festive feast of Vivaldi concertos featuring ECO soloists and Michael Collins conducting Vivaldi's *Gloria*.

020 3879 9555 (box office for QEH)
www.englishchamberorchestra.co.uk

City of London Sinfonia: Bach and the Cosmos

9-12th, 16th & 20th October, multiple venues



Bach and the Cosmos is an innovative three-part series exploring Bach's extraordinary use of maths – the language of the cosmos – in music such as the monumental B Minor Mass and his most mathematical piece, the Goldberg Variations, which will tour to four of the UK's best universities with insight from Oxford mathematician James Sparks.

020 7621 2800
www.cls.co.uk

Leeds International Orchestral Season

2018/19 Season at Leeds Town Hall



Leeds International Concert Season, one of the finest orchestral programmes in the country, continues to bring remarkable orchestras and astounding soloists to Leeds. Highlights of the 2018/19 season include the BBC Philharmonic, Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra, Japan Philharmonic Orchestra plus many more talented musicians.

0113 376 0318
www.leedsconcertseason.co.uk

Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*

Various dates from 8th September to 6th October



Tudor National Trust properties open their doors for the premiere of award-winning OperaUpClose's new English version of Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* (Mary, Queen of Scots). Mary meets Elizabeth I in Donizetti's thrilling opera, performed in concert by six singers accompanied by piano, violin and woodwind, at unique locations with direct links to the two queens.

020 3176 7823
www.operaupclose.yapsody.com

Academy of Ancient Music

2018-2019 London and Cambridge season



From the heartbreak of Dido's Lament to the sublime melodies of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, joyous dances by Rameau and Lully and dramatic choruses of Handel's *Messiah*, AAM brings glorious Baroque and Classical music to London and Cambridge this Autumn with Music Director Richard Egarr and guest artists including the BBC Singers, Michael Collins and VOCES8.

www.aam.co.uk

Music@Malling

16th-29th September



Music@Malling runs from 16th-29th September with 27 events featuring an eclectic mix of fabulous music. Outstanding musicians perform in historic venues in and around West Malling, Kent and our outreach programme engages hundreds of young people in creative activities and performances. Full details and tickets on the website.

03453 191 043
www.musicatmallling.com

Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival

Friday 16th – Sunday 25th November 2018



The UK's largest festival of new and experimental music presents a stunning 10 day programme of over 50 world class events – including concerts, installations, workshops and talks – providing an international platform for new and cutting edge music across various venues in Huddersfield. Full programme available soon on the website.

www.hcmf.co.uk

Philharmonia Orchestra

Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade



Experience two undisputed masterpieces: Beethoven's mighty Emperor concerto and Scheherazade's tales from the Arabian Nights, told in glittering music by Rimsky-Korsakov. To open the concert, take your pick from ten works for orchestra and vote for the music you'd like to hear on the night.

0800 652 6717
www.philharmonia.co.uk

Blackburn Classics

at King George's Hall



The Hallé continue their residency at King George's Hall with programmes including Dvořák's masterful Cello Concerto and Beethoven's exhilarating Seventh Symphony. Further season highlights will also include Debussy's *La Mer* performed by Royal Northern Sinfonia and BBC Philharmonic will conclude the series with Dvořák's 'New World' Symphony.

01254 582 579 (box office)
www.kinggeorgeshall.com

Nottingham Philharmonic Orchestra

'Escape to Italy!' Sunday 14th October 2018, 3.00pm



Tchaikovsky – Capriccio Italien
Puccini – Act 4 of La Bohème
Elgar – In the South (Alassio)
Respighi – Pines of Rome
The opening concert of the NPO's 2018/19 season brings you the sounds of Italy.
At Albert Hall, Nottingham.
Conductor Mark Heron.

www.ticketsource.co.uk
www.priorbooking.com

Sir Karl Jenkins

with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Kathryn Rudge & Abel Salaocoe



A highlight of Swansea International Festival 2018, don't miss Sir Karl Jenkins' homecoming concert at the Brangwyn Hall on 6 October. Conducting a spectacular programme of his own work, including the world premiere of new festival commission, Lamentation, inspired by the poetry of 13-year-old Syrian refugee, Amineh Abou Kerech.

01792 475 715
www.swanseafestival.org

Nottingham Philharmonic Orchestra

'Bohemian Adventures' Sunday 18th November 2018, 3.00pm



Dvorak – Wind Serenade
Dvorak – String Serenade
Mozart – Symphony No 38 (Prague)
In November, a chamber sized version of the NPO then brings you the sounds of Bohemia.
At The Space, Squire Performing Arts Centre, Nottingham.

www.ticketsource.co.uk
www.priorbooking.com

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THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC WIND ENSEMBLE
RICHARD SIMPSON (OBOE) • RACHEL SPEIRS (SOPRANO)
KATHRYN THOMAS (FLUTE) • TIPPETT STRING QUARTET
SARA TRICKEY (VIOLIN) • JOHN TURNER (RECORDER)
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CHARLES WATT (CELLO) • NATHAN WILLIAMSON (PIANO)

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For further details please visit www.williamalwyn.co.uk
E-mail: williamalwynfestival@gmail.com
Box Office: www.snapemaltings.co.uk



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SAT 29th SEP 6.00pm

DAY TWO
SAT 2nd NOV 8.00pm

2 days of networking events and workshops, whereby selected composers meet the London Moonlight Symphony Orchestra and the composition HUB to discuss about contemporary music making, techniques and innovations.

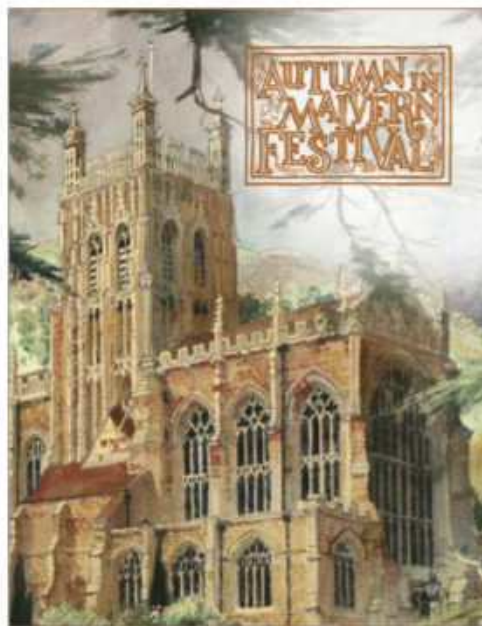
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// DAY ONE: Work in progress of the selected new compositions // DAY TWO: Performance of the three complete works // COMPOSITION HUB: Professor Phillip Cashian - Royal Academy (British Composer and Workshop Leader) + Isolda Da Costa Soares - Moonlight Symphony Orchestra (Artistic Music Director) + Gareth Moorcraft - Royal Academy Music (British Composer) + David Wordsworth (Conductor)

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www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/london-moonlight-symphony-orchestra-tickets-46428408620?aff_ebdssbdestsearch
www.moonlightsymphonyorchestra.com



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THE QUIZ

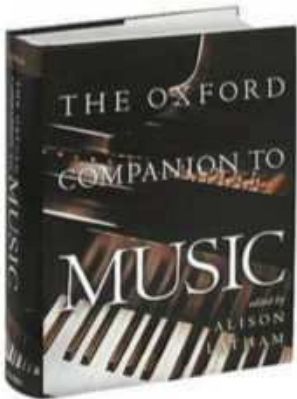
Can you last the course in this month's quiz?

- 1. Later adapted for string quartet and then as an oratorio, *The Seven Last Words of Christ* is a 1786 orchestral work by whom?
- 2. Which month is described in the second of Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, setting words by Hermann Hesse?
- 3. 'Friends, applaud, the comedy is over', 'I shall hear in Heaven' and 'Pity, pity, too late' are among the quotes said to be the last ever words spoken by which composer?
- 4. Which operas by these composers were the last to be premiered in their lifetimes: a) Wagner; b) Verdi; c) Britten?
- 5. The plot of which 1918 opera centres on the contents of the last will and testament of the very wealthy, and recently deceased, Buoso Donati?
- 6. Which conductor made a brief valedictory appearance at the end of the Last Night of the Proms in 1967, two weeks before dying of pancreatic cancer?
- 7. A member of the Sistine Chapel choir from 1883-1913, Alessandro Moreschi (above) is the last known example of which type of singer?
- 8. Which venue staged its last ever concert, of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and *Dream of Gerontius*, on the afternoon of 10 May 1941?
- 9. Which is the last instrument of the orchestra to leave the stage during the last movement of Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony?
- 10. Depicting a scene near his home, *The Last Island* is a 2009 work for string sextet by which British composer?

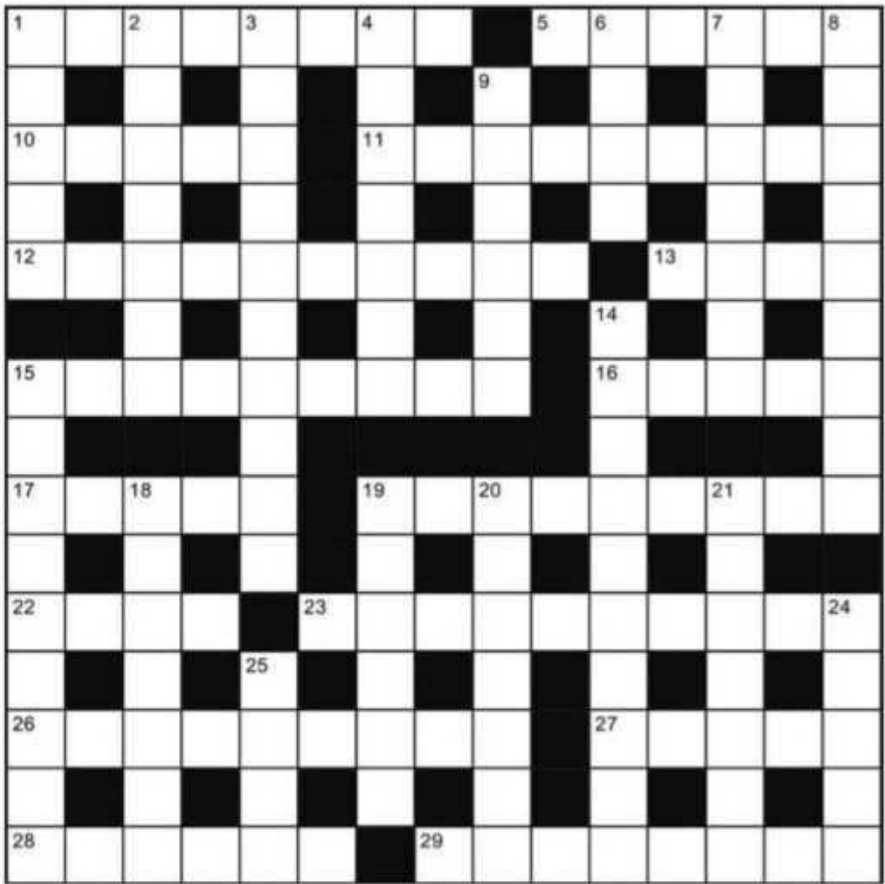
See p103 for answers

The BBC Music Magazine PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 324

Crossword set by Paul Henderson



The first correct solution of our crossword to be picked at random will win a copy of **The Oxford Companion to Music** and a runner-up will win **Who Knew? Answers to Questions about Classical Music** (both available at oup.co.uk). Send answers to: *BBC Music Magazine*, Crossword 324/Sept, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA to arrive by 6 Sept 2018 (solution in Dec 2018 issue).



- ACROSS**
- 1 Jazz fans backing another over detached playing style (8)
 - 5 School provided fellow cellist (6)
 - 10 Violin carried by dramatist (5)
 - 11 Established Church accepting Greek composer mostly promoting the Gospel (9)
 - 12 Appreciation of music etc. is alien in this case, possibly (10)
 - 13 Early opera composer I associated with heart of opera (4)
 - 15 US composer unexpectedly sent in after Austrian composer failed to finish (9)
 - 16 Some allegrettos tickle Anglo-Italian composer (5)
 - 17 In short, it leaves a way to identify piece (5)
 - 19 Various clans around three islands start to enjoy island dances (9)
 - 22 British pianist heads for East Lincolnshire Musical Society (4)
 - 23 Reverse everything, dismissing the players of records? (10)
 - 26 Italian composer: a pretty boy in Italy (9)
 - 27 Passion in a note provided by German (5)
 - 28 See 3 down
 - 29 One prophesying bad things for symphony by 15 (8)

- DOWN**
- 1 Overture by 15 is ultimately hot stuff! (5)
 - 2 One who accrues a work by 15 with hesitation (7)
 - 3/28 Arrangement of classic harp themes, excluding a piece by 15 (10,6)
 - 4 Soothing comment around a tense venue for opera? (7)
 - 6 Contemporary of 15 to get on with contralto (4)
 - 7 Complaint is about lines given to new English soprano (7)
 - 8 Ballet by 15 mostly to be challenged by comparison (9)
 - 9 Is able to preserve dance (6)
 - 14 One with a talent I exploited – that covers one such as 21 (10)
 - 15 G&S character caught coming in to employ flattery (9)
 - 18 Musical time, mostly a time that's material for artists (7)
 - 19 Recording venue is not entirely Tudor in construction (6)
 - 20 4 work by 15, performed with staff around (7)
 - 21 Everybody, say, beginning to relish one Italian composer (7)
 - 24 Mezzo Connolly has turned up about a role initially (5)
 - 25 Verdi villain was, unusually, role model at first (4)

Your name & address

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JUNE SOLUTION
No. 321

1	D	E	L	I	B	E	S	9	H	A	R	R	O	W	S	15
2	A	A	A	A	H	A	E	P	P							
3	R	O	Y	A	L	A	L	L	A	B	R	E	V	E		
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8	M	A	N	U	A	L	D	I	A	P	A	S	O	N		
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10	R	E	G	I	S	T	R	A	T	I	O	N				
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JUNE WINNER
A Parsons, Norfolk

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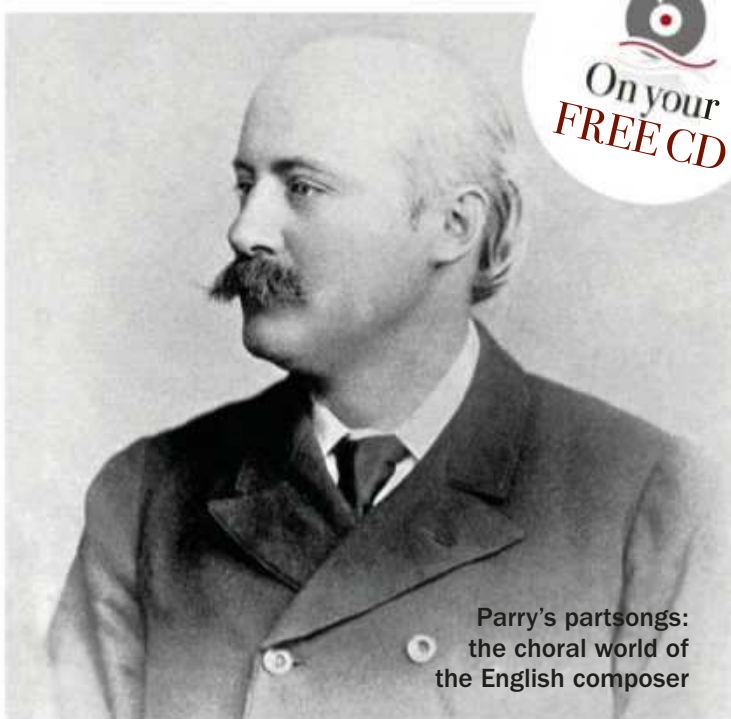
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NEXT MONTH on sale from 6 September (UK)

STEVEN ISSERLIS

As the British cellist celebrates his 60th birthday, he looks back at his life's achievements, and shares his future plans with *Helen Wallace*



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the choral world of
the English composer

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PLUS! A report on how *music students* are being prepared for international careers; to tie in with a new BBC Radio 3 series, we look at the explosion of the 'post-classical' scene; a visit to the graves of the great composers; plus, we nominate the best recordings of *Mozart's* violin concertos; and *Fauré* is our *Composer of the Month*

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Jan-Dec 2017 – 32,885

Rick Wakeman

Rock musician

Keyboardist Rick Wakeman studied at the Royal College of Music before embarking on his hugely successful career as a rock musician. He played with the bands Strawbs and Yes before launching his solo career in 1973, writing and performing his own music. His first solo studio album was *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, and he has since released dozens of solo projects, many accompanied by spectacular live shows. This September Sony Classical releases *Piano Odyssey* featuring Wakeman playing solo works by Liszt and Handel plus his own arrangements of music by Queen and David Bowie.

My first musical memories are of my father playing the piano. He played with my mother, Aunt Esther and Aunt Olive, who all sang. My Uncle Stan played the banjo, and Uncle Laurie was the comedian. Somehow they all crowded into the tiny front room on a Sunday evening to play. When I was no older than three, I used to climb out of bed to sit at the bottom of the stairs, and just listen in raptures. All I wanted to do was play. I was really lucky as up the road was one of the finest piano teachers in north London, Mrs Symes. My dad put me on her long waiting list and when I was five, I went toddling off for my first lesson. I stayed with her right the way through to when I went to the Royal College of Music.

One of the first things my dad took me to see, at one of the Ealing Town Hall free concerts, was **PROKOFIEV's** *Peter and the Wolf*. I sat there with my jaw dropping. I had never heard music like it before. It wasn't a song, it was telling a story to music. That was something that stayed with me. I thought, one day I'm going to write a story to music. Prokofiev was my big hero as a youngster. I love David Bowie's narration of *Peter and the Wolf*, not just because he was a friend but because I think that it is so good.



The choices

Prokofiev *Peter and the Wolf*

David Bowie (narrator); Philadelphia Orch/Eugene Ormandy *Sony 88883765802*

Schubert *The Trout*

Borodin Quartet, Sviatoslav Richter (piano) *Warner Classics 631 8102*

Prokofiev *Dance of the Knights*

St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra/Yuri Temirkanov *RCA Red Seal G0100003449450*

Mozart *Horn Concerto No. 4*

Dennis Brain (horn); Philharmonia/Herbert von Karajan *Warner Classics 965 9362*

Saint-Saëns *Danse macabre*

Philadelphia Orchestra/Eugene Ormandy *Sony G010003026683W*

When I was in junior school, we had a wonderful lady called Miss Dennis who took us for music. I believe she is still alive in her late eighties and runs a choir somewhere. She decided that all of her class should enter a music festival and sing. The piece she chose was **SCHUBERT's** *The Trout*. I didn't finish bottom, but I sang it pretty badly. But it's such a great piece

of music. I liked the way that in the piano accompaniment, you can visualise the trout flying out of the water and diving back down again. The instrumental version puts a smile on your face.

I was doing a few sessions when I was 13, and playing in dance bands, churches, anywhere I could play. I would spend the money on Saturday morning in the local record shop. I remember someone had an album of **PROKOFIEV's** *Romeo and Juliet*. The music that precedes the 'Dance of the Knights' is a wonderful cacophony. Just at the moment when you think, 'is it going to go anywhere?', Prokofiev suddenly goes into the wonderful pulsating theme. That's genius. Later, one of my teachers at the Royal College of Music, Philip Cannon, introduced me to the *Principles of Orchestration* by Rimsky-Korsakov, which became my bible in orchestrating. If you put Rimsky-Korsakov together with Prokofiev, then you're pretty close to understanding some of the weird stuff I do.

I can still recall the first time I heard all of these pieces. You're not cluttered when you're younger. As you get more cluttered by music, certain pieces still always rise to the surface. That shows their calibre. One day, my dad introduced me to an LP of Dennis Brain playing the **MOZART** Horn Concertos. My dad told me that this young man would have been unbelievably famous, but he was killed in a car accident. I remember looking at his picture and then hearing the Fourth Concerto. What genius Mozart had to write those melodies.

To me, music is melody. Occasionally a melody comes along and hits you, and you think, by God, I would give my eyetooth to have written that, it's just so perfect.

SAINT-SAËNS's *Danse Macabre* is to me one of the most perfect short pieces ever written. Saint-Saëns said that the piece didn't take him long to write. I would like to think that it flowed naturally and in his own way, at the end, he said, 'Nailed it!'.

Interview by Rebecca Franks



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- PC Magazine



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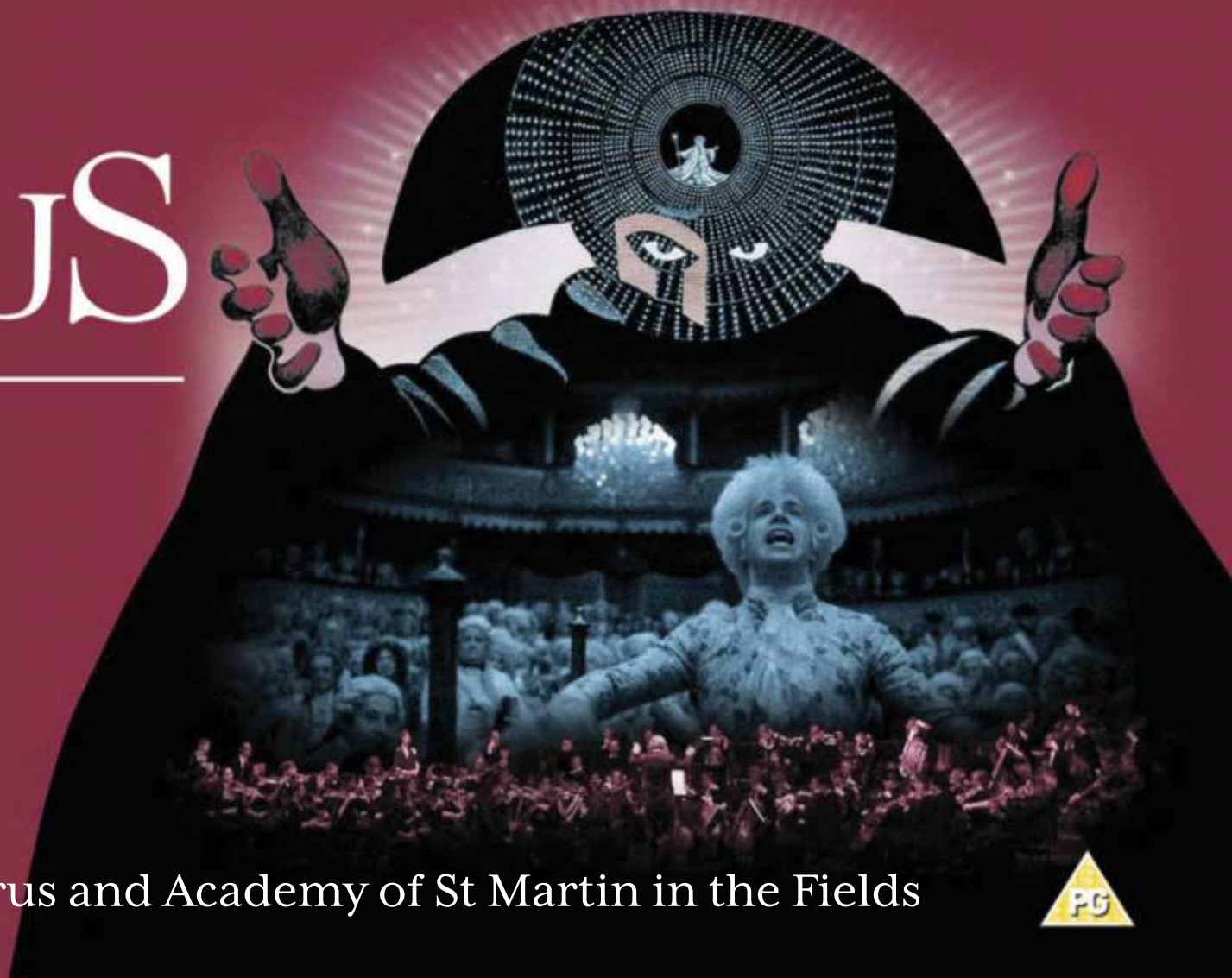
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