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100 reviews of CDs, DVDs & books by the world's finest critics

The BBC's
Spectacular Opera
Season revealed! See p114

MUSIC

THE 20 GREATEST OPERAS

of all time!
As voted for by 172
of the world's finest
opera singers

Including
José Carreras
Renée Fleming
Plácido Domingo
Kiri Te Kanawa
Bryn Terfel
See p32 for how
they voted

IN YOUR OPERA SPECIAL

Jonas Kaufmann

The superstar tenor interviewed

Nights at the Opera

Lucy Worsley's new TV series

Pietro Mascagni

Italian opera's gritty realist

Also in this issue

Music and memories

How sound stimulates the brain

Vaughan Williams

The best *Sea Symphony* on disc

Opera classics

Beautiful arias by Mozart,
Haydn, Handel and Rossini



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LANG LANG

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STEINWAY & SONS

THE MONTH IN MUSIC

The recordings, concerts, broadcasts and websites exciting us in October

ON STAGE

Romantic Oxford

Could one imagine a mistier, more mellow example of autumnal music-making than the 'The Last Romantics' in the city of dreaming spires (pictured)? This year's Oxford Lieder Festival has Mahler and his contemporaries at the heart of a programme that features singers such as soprano Sylvia Schwartz, tenors Ian Bostridge and Mark Padmore, and mezzo Dame Sarah Connolly. *See p107*

GETTY

ONLINE

Access all arias

As we're talking all things operatic, here's where you can see a free performance or two. The Opera Platform live-streams productions from opera houses all over Europe, and documentaries about the art form. Current highlights include a history of opera across 400 years, and Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* with soprano Ermonela Jaho in the title role. *See www.theoperaplatform.eu*

ON DISC

Intimate Vespers

If you're searching for a landmark recording to celebrate the 450th anniversary of Monteverdi's birth this year, look no further than the Dunedin Consort and John Butt's *Vespers of 1610*. With just ten voices involved, they offer an intimate performance of this rich collection of music. The result is, says our critic, an 'outstanding contribution' to the celebrations. *See p93*

ON AIR

Dramatic Britten

As part of BBC Radio 3's visit to Aldeburgh's Britten Weekend, *Drama on 3* broadcasts the restaging of a 1946 radio play for which the composer wrote the accompanying music. Irish playwright Louis MacNeice's *The Dark Tower*, originally performed on the Home Service, will return to the airwaves on Sunday 29 October with Robert Ziegler conducting the BBC Concert Orchestra. *See p110*





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Rolando Villazón and
Anna Netrebko await
the results of our 20
Greatest Operas poll



PAGE 36:
tenor Jonas Kaufmann
talks to James Naughtie



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Pietro Mascagni is
our *Composer of
the Month*

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How can music aid the recall of otherwise long-lost memories? Catherine Loveday explains all

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

George Hall

Writer and editor



'Because of its meshing together of music and drama, and its concentration on character, action and ideas expressed through music, opera is endlessly fascinating for those of us who have the joy of writing about it.' Page 22

Catherine Loveday

Lecturer, Westminster University



'As a musician and memory researcher, I have long been intrigued by the very powerful and intimate way that

music attaches itself to significant people, places and periods across the course of our life.' Page 44

Terry Blain

Writer and reviewer

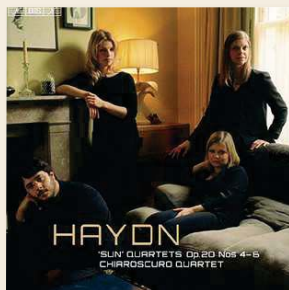


'Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* does much more than simply describe the sea. Walt Whitman's poetry hymns the spiritual

power of the natural world, and VW matches it with music of visionary insight and intensity.' Page 74

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Welcome



Opera is the art form to unite all art forms, created out of drama, music, poetry, literature and art... In its relatively short 400-year history, opera has come to dominate classical music in its ambition, scope and expense – the grandest of operas will employ thousands.

It creates heroes out of its artists, attracts unwelcome – and often unfair – accusations of elitism, and is the ultimate symbol of a progressive society, evidenced by the number of brand new opera houses springing up from China to Oman. But opera is also intensely intimate, individual members of a 2,000-strong audience undergoing a personal experience, the composer communicating directly and uniquely with each of us. It wouldn't be

In its short 400-year history, opera has come to dominate classical music

too far-fetched to compare the power of an operatic performance with a religious ceremony. After all, the origins of opera lie in religious festivals in Ancient Greece.

But which are the greatest operatic masterpieces of them all? We wanted to ask the people at the heart of this most magnificent of musical genres – opera singers themselves. Over 170 voted in our poll, with some fascinating results. And whether or not you agree with our Top 20, we'd love to hear from you, so do email us at music@classical-music.com and share your delight and/or frustrations!

Lastly, do look out in future issues (and on p14) for details of small changes to the Radio 3 schedules, including an exciting monthly programme on the pipe organ. As an organist myself, I'm rather delighted.

Oliver Condy

Oliver Condy *Editor*

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Rattle on the cover
Ahead of his return to the UK, we delve into the...



George Gershwin: He had rhythm, he had music...



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COVER: MATT HERRING. THIS PAGE: GETTY

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LETTERS

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LETTER OF THE MONTH



CONFIDENCE BOOST:
high-quality music tuition
benefits other subjects

YOUNG PEOPLE DESERVE BETTER

Richard Morrison is right that for classical music to survive, we need to shout about its benefits (September). As an amateur musician, I know that my life is enriched by music. As a science teacher, I know the damage that downgrading music and arts in schools in England as a direct result of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) will do to the young people I teach. There is clear evidence that high-quality musical tuition has benefits to numeracy, literacy, self-confidence, resilience, motor skills, empathy, information processing and attention span.

These are benefits I want for the pupils in my science class, because I know they will help them become better scientists; these are benefits I want for every child regardless of their ambitions or home circumstances, because I know they will have happier, more fulfilled lives. The EBacc is an ill-conceived and unwelcome reform that will do a great deal of harm to music and to much, much more.

Tony King, Newcastle upon Tyne



Every month the editor will award a **SolarDAB 2 Roberts radio** (retail value £80 – see www.robertsradio.co.uk) to the writer of the best letter received. The editor reserves the right to shorten letters for publication.

GREAT LIBERTIES

Readers of Erik Levi's *Building a Library* (September) may be interested in an aside on a version of Schubert's 'Great' C major Symphony in the 'great recordings'. Nikolaus Harnoncourt, with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, interprets Schubert's marking on the symphony's last note as a *diminuendo*, not an accent. To make this work he has to extend that last note to twice its written length – and he disguises that (in advance) by slowing the tempo to lengthen the rests between the two previous chords. Schubert wrote no *ritardando* here, any more than he asked for an *accelerando* at the end of the first movement's introduction into the *Allegro*, thus surely confirming uniformity of pulse with the foregoing *Andante*. He was also punctilious in indicating the precise length of his last notes – to the extent of adding three empty bars' rest after the last note of his Sixth Symphony.

Harnoncourt is not the first conductor to treat the last note of the 'Great' as he does. But the fact that he has to take a double liberty with the notated score calls into question what is in any event a weak outcome that fails to justify itself as an applied effect. Otherwise, it's a good recording!
Brian Newbould, East Yorkshire

DOUBLE COPLAND

Why has Leonard Slatkin's new recording of Copland's Third Symphony been reviewed twice in your magazine? (August and September issues). After all, your reviewers Geoff Brown and Terry Blain seem broadly in agreement with the quality of

the performance, though Blain seems to think more highly of the symphony. I must say I'm with Blain on this; I can't agree with Brown's claim that the symphony has not aged too well. For me it is the great American symphony, music's equivalent to another great fanfare to the common man that appeared in 1946: Frank Capra's cinematic masterpiece *It's a Wonderful Life*. They are life-affirming works coming out of an age of darkness; and goodness knows, such eloquent artistic optimism that lifts the spirit could not be more welcome these days.
Neil Sinyard, Saxby All Saints
THE REVIEWS EDITOR REPLIES
Whoops! I clearly hadn't had my morning coffee that day.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Listening to your September CD of Sibelius's *Kullervo* took me back to my first orchestral concert in 1958 when, aged 13, I heard Charles Groves conduct the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in the composer's *En Saga*. I was hypnotised by the cross-rhythms of the strings, and soon afterwards I persuaded my parents to buy the Anthony Collins *Early Masterpieces of Sibelius* (HMV) with the Royal Philharmonic. I still have the LP and it has been a great pleasure to listen again to that fine performance. Although it's 60 years old the sound remains superb, even though it is a pre-stereo monaural recording.

Tom Halliwell, St Davids

THE EDITOR REPLIES

We always enjoy reading readers' accounts of excellent recordings and concerts. Keep them coming!

ACROSS THE BOARDS

I read the letter by Pauline Carter (September) regarding the theory examinations of the ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) with interest.

As I work for a fellow exam board with responsibility for exam content I was struck by the reference to ABRSM as the body who are responsible for excellence in music education. The ABRSM does not hold official office but there is an assumption that is does because there is a lack of knowledge of other boards who do exactly the same job.

Trinity College, London College, ourselves at Victoria College and Rockschoo, to name a few, are all well-established organisations who have histories going back to the late 1800s in this field. We all aim for the highest standards in mutual respect and competition.

Regarding the change to exam content, I can understand part of the reasoning. For students who don't have an interest in composition, it's an appropriate move, but for those who do it is a great loss. This is where choice of exam board is key. The candidate may be better suited to one board's approach. Even within the confines of the traditional music grade system, options exist – you simply have to look.

Stewart Thompson, London

SCOTTISH TRIUMPH

Peter Haydn Pike is mistaken (Letters, September) in stating that the USSR State Symphony Orchestra failed to appear at the Edinburgh Festival after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. In fact, after their Proms appearance, the orchestra gave a memorable concert in Usher Hall. It was not just memorable for the superb performances, but also for the request that we should refrain from applause. This request my friends and I felt unable to accede to, as evidenced by a photograph that appeared in the following day's *Scotsman* newspaper!

Alec Macdonald, Whitehead



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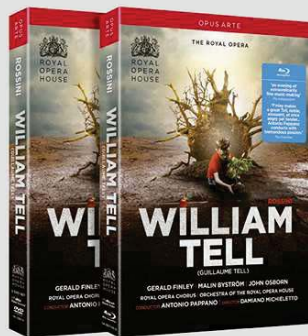
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OPUS ARTE



WILLIAM TELL ROSSINI Royal Opera House

Antonio Pappano, Music Director of The Royal Opera, conducts Rossini's epic final masterpiece of French grand opera with an all-star cast that includes Gerald Finley in the title role, alongside John Osborn, Malin Byström and Sofia Fomina.

DVD | BLU-RAY



THE TEMPEST SHAKESPEARE Royal Shakespeare Company

On a distant island, a man waits. Robbed of his position, power and wealth, his enemies have left him in isolation. But this is no ordinary man or ordinary island. Simon Russell Beale returns to the RSC after 20 years to play Prospero, directed by Artistic Director Gregory Doran.

DVD | BLU-RAY



CYMBELINE SHAKESPEARE Royal Shakespeare Company

Britain is in crisis. Alienated, insular and on the brink of disaster. Can it be saved? Melly Still directs Shakespeare's rarely performed romance of power, jealousy and a journey of love and reconciliation. This production cast the role of Cymbeline as a woman, played by Gillian Bevan.

DVD | BLU-RAY



ANASTASIA TCHAIKOVSKY Royal Opera House

Royal Ballet Principal Natalia Osipova dances the title role in Kenneth MacMillan's haunting ballet, to atmospheric music by Tchaikovsky and Martinů. *Anastasia* tells the story of Anna Anderson who, following the Russian Revolution and the murder of the royal family, claimed she was the surviving Grand Duchess Anastasia.

DVD | BLU-RAY

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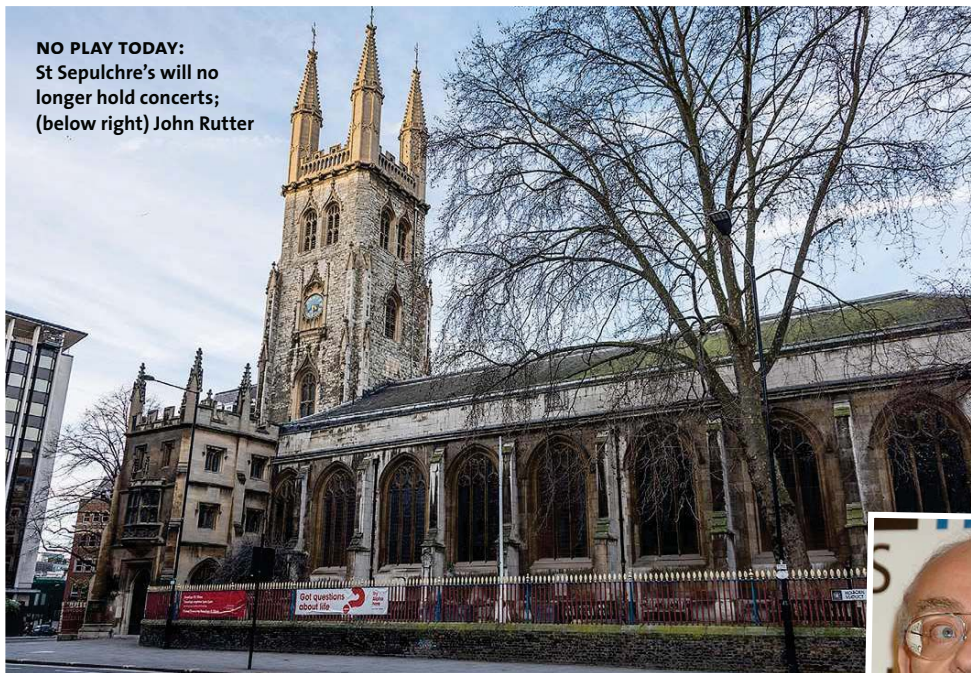
BBC *MUSIC*
MAGAZINE

The Full Score

OUR PICK OF THE MONTH'S NEWS, VIEWS AND INTERVIEWS

Anger as Musicians' Church falls silent

Composer John Rutter leads the protests as St Sepulchre's imposes rehearsal and concert ban



The London church in which the ashes of BBC Proms founder Sir Henry Wood are buried is to shut its doors as a concert and a rehearsal venue, a move that has caused fury and sadness among music-lovers. Popularly known as 'The National Musicians' Church', St Sepulchre-without-Newgate in Holborn has long been an important hub of musical activity in the area and, as well as being Sir Henry's last resting place, also has windows commemorating composer John Ireland and soprano Dame Nellie Melba. However, the current vicar, David Ingall, has taken the decision that, from now on, the only music to be heard within its walls must be of a

religious nature, saying in a letter to would-be hirers of the church that he had become 'conscious of the challenges of using a space dedicated to worship for non-religious hiring'.

'Churches should be places where all can walk through the door and all are welcome'

Leading the chorus of dismay is composer John Rutter, who has accused Mr Ingall of 'betraying the community'. 'He didn't have to take the job at a musicians' church if he didn't like musicians,' Rutter told the *Daily Telegraph*. 'Churches are, and should be,

The Musicians' Church



Situated opposite the Old Bailey, St Sepulchre's is one of the churches whose bells are celebrated in the song 'Oranges and Lemons'. It is where a young Henry Wood learned to play the organ and, when he died in 1944, his ashes were interred here. Sir Henry also features in a window dedicated to St Cecilia, patron saint of music. The north side of the church features further music-related windows, and is known as 'The Musicians' Chapel'.



busy places where all can walk through the door and all are welcome.'

In return, a spokesman has insisted that St Sepulchre's 'remains committed to our ministry as the National Musicians' Church'. The church's website, meanwhile, states that 'our vision is for St Sepulchre's to be a place where music and musicians

are valued and appreciated, a space for musicians to use, and a place where they can encounter God.'

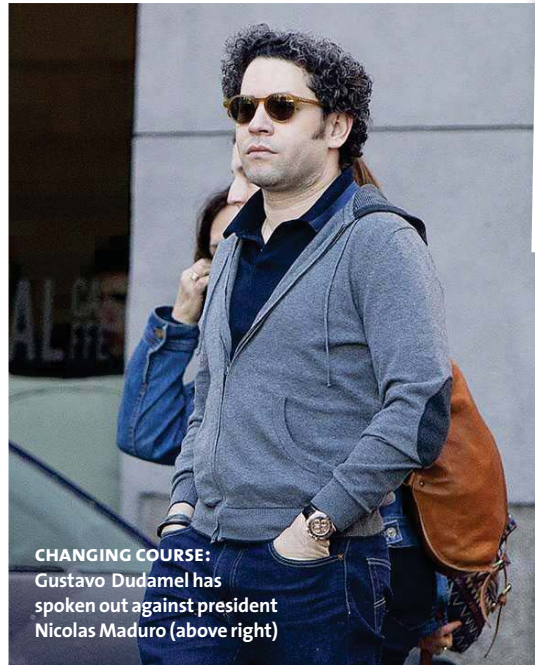
Not everyone within St Sepulchre's would appear to be in agreement with the vicar's standpoint. A petition to oppose the ban has been set up by one of the church's own choristers, Richard Robbins. At the time of going to press, it had over 5,000 signatures. See Richard Morrison, p21

Gustavo Dudamel attacked for political U-turn

Conductor criticised on television by Venezuelan president Maduro

Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel has come under fire from his country's president for turning his back on the regime that he used to champion. Nicolas Maduro, whose four years in charge of the South American country have been marked by increasing levels of lawlessness, corruption and violence, has criticised the maestro for spending time in the US and Europe rather than in his homeland – Dudamel is the music director of both the Los Angeles Philharmonic and, in Venezuela itself, the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra (SBSO). 'I hope God forgives you,' said Maduro on TV. 'Welcome to politics, Gustavo Dudamel. But act with ethics, and don't let yourself be deceived into attacking the architects of this beautiful movement of young boys and girls.'

The president was referring to the government-funded El Sistema youth orchestra project that, set up during the rule of his predecessor Hugo Chavez,



CHANGING COURSE: Gustavo Dudamel has spoken out against president Nicolas Maduro (above right)



has provided millions of children with a free musical education, often with spectacular results. Dudamel himself forged his career via the system and, until recently, continued to support Maduro in the face of rising opposition. In May, however, he publicly criticised the leader online, urging him to rethink his policies and, more recently, was involved in talks to secure the release from prison of Wuilly Artega, a violinist who publicly played in protest at the unrest. Dudamel's continued involvement with the SBSO is now believed to be in doubt.

RISING STAR Great artists of tomorrow

Natalya Romaniw
soprano

'My first ever role was Anna Trulove in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* with Welsh National Youth Opera (WNYO),' remembers soprano Natalya Romaniw. 'And gosh, I loved it so much. I thought to myself – if I'm lucky enough to do something I love this much as my job, I'll be luckier than most people.'

Soon after that stunning debut performance with WNYO, Romaniw won

the 2008 Welsh Singers Competition, and was automatically entered into the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World as the Welsh representative. 'Other singers in that competition had already sung at La Scala in Milan, or the Metropolitan Opera in New York, while I was only 22. I shot up a bit more than I should have, for one so young.'

It didn't do too much harm. In 2012 she won the Kathleen Ferrier award at Wigmore Hall, and was offered places on young artist programmes

at Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera and Houston Grand Opera. 'I was in a place where I could say, "Right, I'm going to leave now, and really learn my craft", so I decided to go to Houston. I'm so glad I did.'

Between seasons in America, where Romaniw sang leading roles in Houston and New York, she returned for summer seasons at Opera Holland Park and Glyndebourne. Her busy schedule

certainly paid off as, since her full-time return, she has been in high demand across the UK. But she's learnt some important lessons along the way. 'You've got

'You've got to think about your career in terms of longevity'

to think about building your career in terms of longevity, so if people do get excited and offer you things which are beyond where you are, it's hard but you've got to say no. You have to stick to what fits you like a glove – right now.'

One such role, which Romaniw first performed last summer at Garsington Opera and will sing twice more in the upcoming season, is that of Tatyana in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. 'I absolutely love singing in Russian,' she says. 'My



SLAV TO THE RHYTHM: 'I grew up singing little Ukrainian songs'

grandfather was Ukrainian, so I grew up singing little Ukrainian songs with him. I think – because the language is fairly similar – somehow I recognise and have a flair for singing it.' *Interview by Elinor Cooper; Natalya Romaniw sings in Eugene Onegin with Welsh National Opera from 29 September to 30 November*

STUDIOSECRETS

We reveal who's recording what, and where



REFLECTIONS: Julien Brocal records Ravel

French pianist **Julien Brocal** is to follow his five-star Chopin debut CD with a disc of Mompou and Ravel. Recorded for Rubicon Classics at Tippet Rise, Montana, *Reflections* features Mompou's *Paisajes* and *Charmes*, and Ravel's *Miroirs* and *Sonatine*.

Chandos continues to record **Richard Rodney Bennett's** music, with a new disc featuring the late British composer's Marimba Concerto, Third Symphony and Sinfonietta. Colin Currie is the soloist, joining the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and conductor John Wilson.

The London Symphony Orchestra and **JoAnn Falletta** headed to Abbey Road this August for an album showcasing the American composer Kenneth Fuchs. This Naxos recording features three new concertos: *Spiritualist* (with pianist Jeffrey Biegel); *Rush* (with alto saxophonist Timothy McAllister); and *Glacier* (with electric guitarist DJ Sparr).

Violinist **Arabella Steinbacher** recently headed to the German capital for her latest recording with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski. Her upcoming Pentatone album will pair Britten and Hindemith Violin Concertos.

Arvo Pärt's works for violin and orchestra have taken pride of place on **Viktoria Mullova's** music stand recently as she has recorded them for Onyx, with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra and Paavo Järvi, in the presence of the composer.

JAY BLAKESBERG, GETTY

REWIND Artists talk about their past recordings



THIS MONTH Kronos Quartet

Violinist David Harrington founded the Kronos Quartet in 1973. Eclectic and creative, the American group thrives on collaborations with composers and performers from around the world. The Kronos Quartet's latest CD *Ladilikan* with Trio Da Kali is out on 15 September.

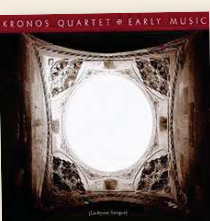
My finest moment

Early Music Works by Machaut, Tye, Partch, Dowland, Pärt, Body, Cage, Kassia, Perotin, Purcell, Bingen, Schnittke

With Marja Mutru (harmonium), David Lamb (bagpipe), Wu Man (zhong ruan, da ruan), Olov Johansson (nyckelharpa), Huun-Huur Tu (vocals etc)

Nonesuch 7559794572 (1997)

The idea for *Early Music* came from a thought about how music can perfectly describe the web of time that surrounds us: the past, the present and what you imagine of the future. Some contemporary composers sound like they could have come out of the 12th century and then with the next piece they could be in the 21st century. It was very hard to organise this CD in a way that would take the listener through the experience. Bob Hurwitz at Nonesuch suggested the Machaut



pieces should be used like pillars, and I instantly knew that was it. Also, I knew the sound felt right. Kronos's sound goes back to a rehearsal in the 1980s of Terry Riley's ballad, *The Wheel*.

Terry was encouraging us to use no vibrato and to use the bows in a different expressive way. We were having trouble and then all of a sudden everyone in Kronos found the sound and believed it. *Early Music* took that moment of group realisation and expanded and explored it.

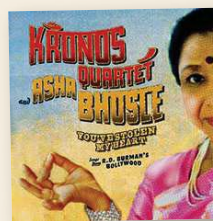
My fondest memory

You've Stolen My Heart

Songs from RD Burman's Bollywood

With Asha Bhosle (vocals), Zakir Hussain (tabla etc), Wu Man (pipa etc) et al
Nonesuch 7559798562 (2005)

One of the most fun times we've had in the studio is when we spent about ten days in California recording *You've Stolen My Heart* with the Bollywood singer Asha Bhosle. We all took



on different instrumental roles – keyboards, percussion and all kinds of things, joining the amazing Zakir Hussain. It was like the studio became this amazing tool for us. We've felt that before with other

albums, and recently with the '50 for the future' recording we're doing for our website, but just in terms of sheer fun this album has it. I feel a smile inside every time I think about this album and working with Asha. She is a great musician. That also came from the music and all the different things we needed to do to make the sounds.

I'd like another go at...

Black Angels Works by Crumb, Tallis, Marta, Ives and Shostakovich

Kronos Quartet Nonesuch – download (1990)

I first heard George Crumb's *Black Angels* in 1973, which inspired me to start Kronos. All of a sudden I felt I had a song I had to play. But we didn't record it until 1988, as our interpretation kept evolving – as it still is. I knew that it had to begin the album, but it took me 16 years to figure out that it should be followed by an arrangement of Tallis's *Spem in alium*. We started playing the



Star-Spangled Banner during the Iraq War, inspired by Jimi Hendrix's performance during the Vietnam War. If we were to release *Black Angels* now it would definitely have our performance

of that on it. The first time we ever played *Star-Spangled Banner* was with *Black Angels* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC during the Iraq War. I told our sound guy to turn it up so loud that George W Bush could hear it. I guess I would also wish *Black Angels* could be louder!



END OF AN ERA:
Martha Argerich
leaves Lugano

Project Argerich ends

Warner Classics is to release the last ever 'Martha Argerich & Friends' recording from the Lugano Festival. Progetto Martha Argerich came to a close in 2016, after funding was withdrawn from the 15-year-old festival. As on previous albums in the series, this triple-disc set features a wide variety of composers and performers, including pianists Steven Kovacevich, Sergio Tiempo and Karin Lechner, violinist Renaud Capuçon and viola player Lyda Chen. 'Lugano is about the idea of having fun playing music,' Tiempo once told *BBC Music Magazine*. 'Martha is the glue that holds the whole thing together.' The release also includes a rare new solo recording by Argerich herself, of Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*.

Sounds like Satie

He's best known for his impressions of today's powerful and famous, but Alistair McGowan has recently turned his attention from Tony Blair and David Beckham to Chopin and Beethoven. The British comedian first learned the piano as a child, but gave it up for tennis and football. However, after chatting to a piano teacher he met on a cruise, McGowan, now in his fifties, decided to return to the keyboard. A few years on, he's releasing a disc of short piano pieces by Grieg, Chopin, Satie and, aptly, Mompou's *Impresiones intimas*. 'This album contains a wealth of beautiful music that I think anyone can tackle given time, passion and determination,' explains McGowan. 'I hope this encourages everyone who harbours a secret ambition to take up music – it really is never too late!'

Callas as never seen before

A 42-CD set of live Maria Callas recordings, featuring 12 roles she never recorded in the studio, has been released by Warner Classics. Verdi's *Nabucco*, *I vespri siciliani* and *Macbeth*, Wagner's *Parsifal*, Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* and *Poliuto*, Rossini's *Armida*, Bellini's *Il pirata*, Gluck's *Alceste* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Spontini's *La vestale* and Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* are all new additions to the Callas discography. The set features eight other operas, and on Blu-ray five complete filmed recitals. All of the recordings have been newly remastered, and a companion 200-page book includes in-depth coverage of each of the roles featured in this set. See *'The month in box sets'*, p101.

New Releases From signumCLASSICS



SIGCD484

Philharmonia Orchestra and **Vladimir Ashkenazy** launch a new series of **Rachmaninov** Symphonies recorded Live in Concert.

The series starts with Rachmaninov's volcanic *Symphony No.1 in D Minor*.

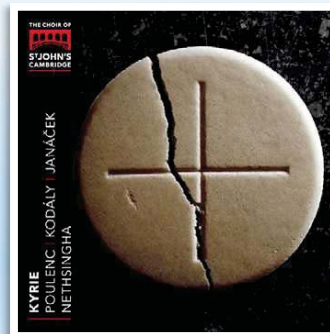
Vols. 2 & 3 due out in Spring / Autumn 2018



SIGCD513

SIMON DESBRUSLAIS trumpet
Clare Hammond piano
English String Orchestra
Kenneth Woods conductor

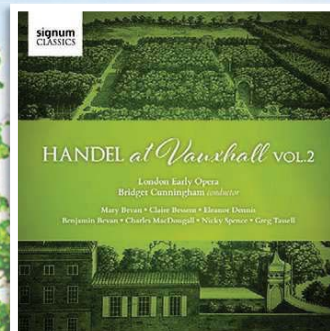
Four new concerto commissions by **Nimrod Borenstein**, **Geoffrey Gordon**, **Deborah Pritchard** and **Toby Young**



SIGCD489

KYRIE
POULENC | KODÁLY | JANÁČEK
The Choir of St John's College, Cambridge
Andrew Nethsingha director

Three 20th Century European Choral Masterpieces.



SIGCD479

HANDEL AT VAUXHALL VOL.2
London Early Opera
Bridget Cunningham conductor

The second volume of works by George Frideric Handel and contemporary composers of the day, themed around a typical evening's entertainment at the 17th & 18th century Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens.



#89 ENCORE

THE FIRST SURVIVING record of someone shouting 'encore' at a concert is in the English magazine *The Spectator* in 1711. So the phenomenon of English music lovers shouting 'again' in French is at least three centuries old.

Naturally, one assumes that the practice must have originated on the other side of the Channel. Images of Louis XIV drift into mind, waving an exquisitely manicured hand and demanding that some luckless court musician repeat the virtuosic feat he has just about managed to bring off. The problem with this is that French audiences don't shout 'encore': they shout 'bis', from the Latin for 'twice'. If anyone ever did shout 'encore' at a Parisian musical *soirée* or *concert spirituel* they were no doubt quickly made to feel *outré*. For some unaccountable reason, the badge of connoisseurship seems to be that one knows how to shout 'again' in a foreign language.

So, whatever the language, why do audiences demand encores, and why do some performers clearly prepare whole armouries of

DISCOVERING MUSIC

Stephen Johnson gets to grips with classical music's technical terms



them well in advance? Hands up, I find them often more irritating than enthralling. If I've really enjoyed a performance, I want to take it away with me, like the aftertaste of a delicious meal. To have the star player rush back onto the stage and plunge straight into some piece of flashy exhibitionism is rather like having

the chef charge out of the kitchen, force open your jaws and thrust in a tongue-numbing sherbet dab.

I wonder too about the audience's motivation: whether they aren't sometimes guilty of casting themselves in the Louis XIV role, demonstrating their quasi-regal power by compelling the musician to exert him- or herself again, and again... and again? Granted, a well-chosen encore can be the perfect complement to an outstanding performance. It can bring one gently back down to earth after a sublime experience, or dispel unresolved tension. It can also be a sign that a new work has really succeeded, but the last time I saw that happen was when the finale of Lutoslawski's *Double Concerto* was encored at the BBC Proms – which, depressingly, was back in the 1980s.

There's a fine balance here. At best, encores are a confirmation that a very special kind of communication has taken place; at worst they look rather like a refusal to accept that everything is transient, and beauty especially so. As the saying goes, if you really love something, let it go.

Radio 3's *The Organ*



A new programme devoted to organ music is to begin on Radio 3. Presented by Sara Mohr-Pietsch, *The Organ* will be broadcast one Sunday in every four, exploring the world of pedals and pipes in the company of some of the greatest players and instruments. On the other three Sundays, the 4pm slot will be filled by *The Choir*. Both programmes will be supported by extensive online material. Other changes announced for the autumn see a slight rescheduling of the afternoon programming and, at 7pm each evening, the introduction of the *In Tune Mixtape*, half an hour consisting of an unbroken sequence of music, with no speech. See p110 for full Radio 3 listings.

GETTY ILLUSTRATION: ADAM HOWLING

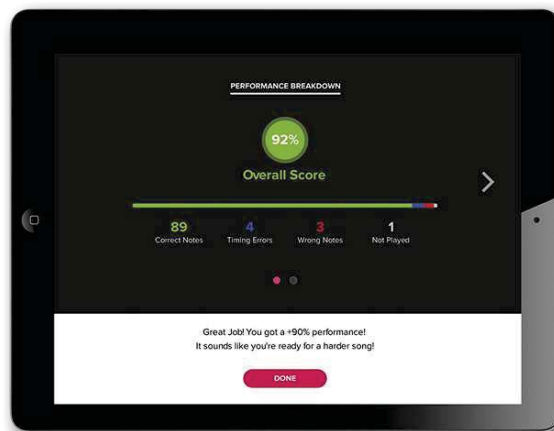
APP REVIEW

Every issue we explore a recent digital product

Take7 Free, with in-app purchases

Using your device's microphone to listen to you play, Take7 gives you a score based on how many notes you've played right (or not) when you practise your instrument. The app then selects 'loops' of the music for you to practise in isolation at a slower tempo, before gradually speeding you back up. Setting a daily goal of 10 minutes practice – what most teachers would suggest as a minimum – the app also keeps track of how many days in a row you keep up an unbroken streak, and what your longest streak is. Though some sheet music is available for free, additional scores can be

bought from an online store, including graded collections (though they don't match any exam board curriculum). While no app can replace a teacher, Take7 is an enjoyable, useful and well-designed tool. If you're looking for something to help you structure your practice, this could be it. *Elinor Cooper* ★★★★★



Generation names revealed



FAMILIAR FACE?: Misha Mullov-Abbado joins the 'New Gens'

Radio 3 has named its latest batch of New Generation Artists. The scheme, which since 1999 has recruited six or seven people a year, gives brilliant young musicians the opportunity to perform and broadcast on high-profile stages over a two-year period. This year's recruits are violinist Aleksey Semenenko, mezzo Catriona Morison, pianist Mariam Batsashvili, jazz bassist Misha Mullov-Abbado, Quatuor Arod, trumpeter Simon Hofele and guitarist Thibaut Garcia. A couple of the names may be familiar: Morison won this year's BBC Cardiff Singer of the World and Mullov-Abbado is the son of violinist Viktoria Mullova and conductor Claudio Abbado.

TWITTER ROOM

Who's saying what on the micro-blogging site



@jamesmacm I've found the perfect antidote to all this talk of nuclear war, neo-nazism, neo-Marxism etc. I'm composing a jig.

Escapism, as perfected by composer Sir James MacMillan (left)...

@fatboyclayton At this point of the house move, rum seems like the wrong decision.

...while tenor Allan Clayton clearly rejects a more conventional approach

@ifagiolini Fear of long words: hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliaphobia

That's easy for you to say, conductor Robert Hollingworth

@LizWattsSoprano Listening to Mahler 2 whilst peeling onions is a bit heavy on the ole tear ducts. Can't wait for next week! @bbcproms

The floodgates in the kitchen open as soprano Elizabeth Watts multi-tasks

@houghhough The Stinking Bishop has been banished to a secure tupperware container in our house.

Domestic discord

Pianist Stephen Hough (right) avoids a diplomatic cheese crisis



Notes from the piano stool

David Owen Norris



Premieres possess a strange cachet. The extent to which they outnumber second performances is perhaps magnified by the fact that second and even subsequent performances can be described as 'modern premiere' or 'British premiere'. That's the sort of premiere I've been giving lately, as part of Chawton House Library's conference on Reputations.

1817 saw the deaths of two novelists, one world-famous, the other parochial and obscure. The latter was Jane Austen, the former, Madame de Stael. We decided to adorn the conference with a musical tribute to another woman who died in 1817: Nancy Storace, a London-born singer of Italian origin. She went to Vienna with her brother Stephen, a composer, and there she had the good fortune to become Mozart's first Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Later, during the premiere of an opera by Stephen, she suddenly lost her voice completely. Her return to the Viennese stage some anxious months later was marked by a collaborative composition by three composers who were very fond of her. One, the otherwise unknown

Nancy Storace went to Vienna and had the good fortune to become Mozart's first Susanna

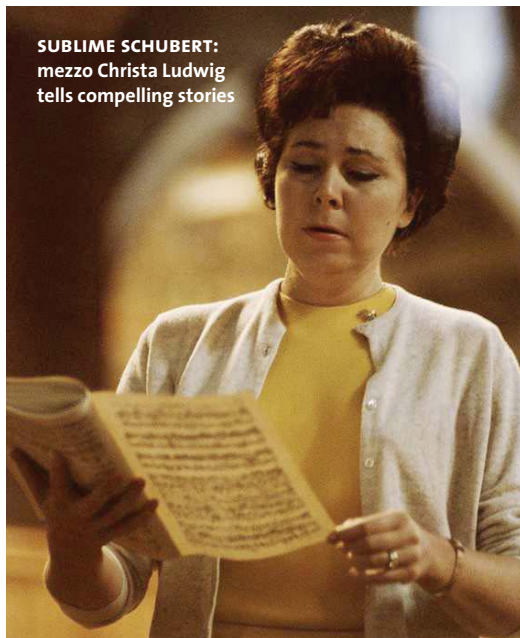
Cornetti, was perhaps her brother in disguise. The others were Mozart and... Salieri! (No, he didn't poison Mozart.) Da Ponte, the librettist of Mozart's three greatest operas, obliged with a poem. The piece was performed, printed and lost. Last year a copy turned up in a library. Salieri's contribution is delightful, but it must be admitted that Mozart did Nancy prouder in the piece he wrote to say Farewell when she returned to London, the concert aria 'Ch'io mi scordi di te?' (Me? Forget you?) It's a concerto for piano and voice, and a moving tribute to an enduring musical affection.

To round out Nancy's portrait, we added songs by her faithless lover, John Braham, and by her Irish colleague from Vienna, Michael Kelly, along with a beautiful setting by brother Stephen of the opening lines of Gray's *Elegy*: 'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day'. And that gave us the chance to give the modern premiere of Thomas Billington's setting of the entire poem, which was published in 1786. Gray's masterpiece is usually associated with Stoke Poges and the Heathrow flightpath. But Gray used to visit his Uncle William, who was the Rector of Everdon in Northamptonshire, and behind the churchyard in Everdon there's a lea that a herd could wind over in a way I've never been able to imagine in Buckinghamshire.

Ironically, a column that began with premieres happens to be my final one for *BBC Music Magazine*. I've enjoyed sharing my thoughts over the last four years, and I send my best wishes to all our readers. ■
David Owen Norris is a pianist, composer and Radio 3 presenter

MUSIC TO MY EARS

What the classical world has been listening to this month



SUBLIME SCHUBERT:
mezzo Christa Ludwig
tells compelling stories

MARINA REBEKA *soprano*



Massenet's *Thaïs* is one of my favourite operas and I particularly enjoy the recording conducted by Yves Abel, with Renée Fleming as *Thaïs* and Thomas Hampson as *Athanael*. *Thaïs*

suits Fleming's voice perfectly and this recording really gets you into the atmosphere without you seeing anything – through her voice, through the sounds of the wind and the desert, you can kind of imagine it all. Abel definitely gets the right approach, and the performance is so touching and sensual.

■ The mezzo-soprano Christa Ludwig is an amazing artist, and I like the way that she interprets **Schubert** Lieder on her disc with pianist Irwin Gage. Ludwig expresses her personality through the songs. This is not opera, this is not a story – she actually brings herself into those songs. The pianist and the singer also have to be completely together and to bring the same ideas to this music, and I think Gage and Ludwig combine brilliantly, especially in songs such as *Gretchen am Spinnrade* and *An die Nachtigall*.

■ **Puccini's** *Manon Lescaut*, conducted by Riccardo Chailly with Kiri Te Kanawa in the title role is perhaps an unusual choice. Why so? Because Kanawa's voice is not how we would normally think of *Manon Lescaut* – mostly we think of *Manon* as a dramatic, full soprano,

OUR CHOICES

The BBC Music team's current favourites



Oliver Condy
Editor

In August, I saw a ravishing performance

of **Messiaen's** all-too-relevant *Quartet for the End of Time* in the 13th-century Kvinnerad Church as part of Norway's Rosendal Chamber Music Festival. Francesco Piemontesi, Martin Fröst, Christian Tetzlaff and Tanya Tetzlaff displayed astonishing dynamic colour and impeccable ensemble – the audience held its silence for over a minute after the final chord had died away.



Jeremy Pound
Deputy editor

When recently interviewing the **King's Singers** ahead of the group's 50th-anniversary year, I was put on the spot by being asked by one of the group to name my favourite of their many discs. A tough question. *The Beatles Connection*, from 1986, has always enjoyed regular airtime in the Pound household, but 2006's *Landscape and Time*, a meticulously crafted album of contemporary works, remains my desert island choice.



Rebecca Franks
Reviews editor

Every time I hear the **National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain**, I'm blown away by its brilliance. And the 164 musicians on stage at the ensemble's BBC Proms performance were no exception. They played a challenging programme of Francisco Coll, Adès and Stravinsky with no visible qualms but plenty of passion, making it one of the most exhilarating concerts I've been to in a while.

but Kiri here is instead very feminine. You can feel the lightness in her voice, and somehow it works. I also like José Carreras as *Des Grieux*. He's in his best shape and his diction is amazing.

■ I listen to mezzo **Olga Borodina's** *Portrait* CD to get into the right mood before singing. I love the capacity and colour of her voice, which has amazing shape, and the way she never pushes it. Her voice is like velvet – soft, mild and warm. In the first disc of this double set, she goes for arias where you can admire her coloratura, such as in 'Nei giardin del bello' from Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

'Amore fatale', Marina Rebeke's new recording of Rossini arias, will be reviewed in a future issue

ROMAN RABINOVICH *pianist*



Due to my work recording **Haydn's** sonatas, I've been listening to a lot of his symphonies, string quartets and vocal works to delve into his style and figure out how I want to perform it.

Haydn's music is full of surprise, spiritual depth and humour and yet completely unpretentious. I've been inspired by Sir Roger Norrington's approach to the symphonies. He brings a wonderful sense of gesture, shape and transparency that brings the music to life.

■ I'm a big Radiohead fan and I've enjoyed **Jonny Greenwood's** music in PT Anderson films. So when I heard that Greenwood collaborated with an Israeli



composer living in India, Shye Ben Tzur, and a band of musicians called The Rajasthan Express, I had to get my hands on the disc! The album, *Junun*, is fascinating. It's a mix of Indian devotional music with electronic sounds and Hebrew lyrics.

■ I've been studying **Schoenberg's** *Pierrot Lunaire* in the last few weeks and have been listening to Christine Schäfer's recording with Pierre Boulez conducting the Ensemble InterContemporain. *Pierrot* is an incredible musical experience and is one of the most complicated pieces of that time. It is a challenge to communicate the extreme theatrical gestures in a comprehensive way, but this recording is so convincing. Boulez creates perfect balance, nuance and colour, and a clarity of expression.

■ Just a few days ago I came across a recording of a live concert from Verbier of Sergei Babayan playing **Mozart's** Piano Concerto No. 25, with Joshua Weilerstein conducting the Verbier Festival Orchestra.



It's an inspiring performance. Babayan plays with such elegance, spontaneity and rhythmic crispness. There was so much imagination and colour. Though Mozart concertos are notoriously difficult – the pianist is so exposed and every note matters – for me, there is nothing in the world like this music. *Roman Rabinovich gives six UK concerts in October, including dates at the Wigmore, Usher and Glasgow Royal concert halls*

ELENA LANGER *composer*



I thought Simon Rattle's 'Haydn: An Imaginary Orchestral Journey' with the LSO might just be a pot pourri, but it was fantastic. Rattle had selected innovative and interesting excerpts from **Haydn's** symphonies, *The Creation*, *The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross* and other works. He also included some of the musical clock tunes that Haydn composed when he was at the Esterházy court, which were played before going to bed to create a sunset atmosphere. Haydn needs a renaissance, and Rattle is the person to do that.

■ I'm growing to love **Handel** more. I think after you hear a three-hour Handel opera, you might be a better person. I saw a production of *Ariodante* on YouTube, conducted by Harry Bicket, and with wonderful singers – Vesselina Kasarova, Sara Mingardo and others. But what blew me away was the staging: the singers were made to look like puppets. You saw the torso of the singer and then there was a little seat attached with puppet legs.

■ I'm writing a cabaret/vaudeville/music hall show for Welsh National Opera at the moment, called *Rhonda*

OUR CHOICES

The BBC Music team's current favourites



Neil McKim
Production editor
Stravinsky's
Ebony

Concerto, was written for jazz clarinetist Woody Herman in 1945. It's an intriguing work, requiring Herman to take a detour from the swing-era sound for which he was well known in order to embrace the composer's spiky rhythmic textures. The melancholy second movement is wonderful, with its woozy blues-like quality and the ethereal chords at the close.



Elinor Cooper
Editorial assistant

I first encountered the music of **Eriks Ēšēnvalds** in a concert by the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, and since then have been entranced by his atmospheric soundworld. The Portland State University Chamber Choir recently released a disc of narrative works, including the sublime *Rivers of Light* – a sound-portrait of the northern lights – and *The First Tears*, based on an Inuit legend.



'RHYTHMIC CRISPNESS': Sergei Babayan's Mozart impresses Roman Rabinovich

Rips It Up, so I've been paying attention to operetta, **Gilbert and Sullivan** and more popular music. I was invited to an open dress rehearsal of *The Mikado* put on by Charles Court Opera. The production was by singer-director John Savournin. It was done with such wit and imagination, with very good performers.

■ **Kurt Weill** is a composer who writes popular things but we immediately know that it's him. If you're a well-educated composer you can do pastiche; it's not that hard. But to find your own voice while doing something popular is hard. I'm trying to achieve that when I'm writing my cabaret show. I was listening to the *One Touch of Venus* CD with the wonderful singer Mary Martin. It's just fun, something you listen to in the evening for pleasure.

Elena Langer's RedMare is premiered by Charles Owen and Katya Apekisheva at the London Piano Festival at Kings Place, 7 October

AND MUSIC TO YOUR EARS...

You tell us what you've been enjoying on disc and in the concert hall



Leighton Jones
Dundonald, N Ireland
The Ulster Orchestra recently gave its annual short summer series of concerts, recorded for Radio 3, with a focus this year on tone poems. As well as perennial favourites such as Dvořák's rousing *Carnival Overture* and Smetana's lyrical *Vltava*, rarities included a beautiful performance by Leon McCawley of Ireland's Piano Concerto, with its echoes of Ravel, and Tasmin Little's astounding performance of Syzmanowski's demanding Second Violin Concerto.



Stephen Llewellyn
Ipswich, Suffolk
I am not usually a fan of semi-staged opera performances, feeling that they are neither fish nor

fowl. Opera North's production of **Britten's** *Billy Budd* at Snape Maltings, however, was of a different order – red meat from beginning to end! A dream cast, including tenor Alan Oke, baritone Roderick Williams and Brindley Sherratt as de Vere, Budd and Claggart respectively, combined with the orchestra and chorus in top form and the Maltings' acoustical brilliance shivering the staunchest of timbers. Not just a performance, this production was a musical event!



Dorothy Smith
Pennsylvania, US
In 1995, I attended the International Chopin Piano

Competition in Warsaw and soon became an enthusiastic supporter of **Rem Urasin**. He was only 19 at the time but impressed me as a mature



IRELAND RARITIES: pianist Leon McCawley

artist – a transformation made only more striking by his (I thought) amazing resemblance to Chopin! Ultimately, he was placed fourth in a list of winners that was famously lacking a first prize. Now, his recording of the mazurkas from Brilliant's complete Chopin edition has refreshed

my memory of just why his playing delighted me so much.



Victoria Longdon
London
Voces 8 bade a fond farewell to soprano Emily Dickens, who

leaves the group after eight years, in a packed out concert in London's Gresham Centre in August. The group was on excellent form and their quick-witted and nimble ensemble shone through, particularly in their performance of Byrd's madrigalian five-part motet, *Laudibus in Sanctis*. In true Voces8 style, the programme finished with the roof-raising jazz number 'Sway' and a moving rendition of Emily's favourite, 'Dancing Queen'. New soprano Eleonore Cockerham also gave her first public performance with the group.

Tell us what concerts or recordings you've been enjoying by emailing us at musictomyears@classical-music.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



UPBEAT: conductor Charles Dutoit

DUTOIT STRIKES GOLD

Charles Dutoit has been awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal. The Swiss conductor, who is currently artistic director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (no relation), is the 103rd musician to receive the award, following in the footsteps of maestros such as Bruno Walter, Arturo Toscanini and Adrian Boult.

FUTURE STARS

Romanian soprano Adela Zaharia and South African tenor Levy Sekgapane have won Plácido Domingo's high-profile Operalia competition, held this year in Astana, Kazakhstan. Each of them receives a \$30,000 prize and, more importantly, a significant boost to their respective careers.

WE ALL RING TOGETHER

They may have found themselves on opposite sides of the Brexit debate, but Michael Gove and George Osborne appear to have been reunited by their love of Wagner. The two – one now back in the Cabinet, the other the editor of the *Evening Standard* – were seen in each other's company at this year's Bayreuth Festival *Ring* cycle. Nibelungen fiscal policy undoubtedly featured somewhere in their conversation.

THE YO-YO EFFECT

Talking of reunifications, a heart-warming story emerges from the Tanglewood Festival, where cellist Yo-Yo Ma addressed the audience after his performance of Schumann's Cello Concerto... to ask them to keep an eye out for conductor David Zinman's missing puppy Carlito. It clearly did the trick, as Carlito was later found and returned to the grateful maestro.

Elton's Baroque-it man

Research gives modern music an ancient twist

How might Beethoven have played, say, 'Stairway to Heaven'? What would 'Hey Jude' have sounded like in the hands of Mozart? Researchers at Birmingham City University say that they may have the solution to such seemingly unanswerable questions thanks to a new system that can analyse the playing style of one

musician and apply it to a song written by another – even if the two lived decades apart. The system has been developed by analysing hours of recordings of musicians for their quality of tone, note lengths, stylistic quirks etc, then developing an algorithm that calculates how those players might have performed other pieces. 'It could be used to



demonstrate how classical musicians like Mozart and Beethoven may have played contemporary pieces,' promises the university, prompting images of Prog Baroque and Jungle Byrd but, crucially, stopping short of revealing how the playing of musicians who lived before the era of recorded sound can be analysed. Unless the researchers have a remarkable secret up their sleeves? Then we really will have a story...

AFTER HOURS

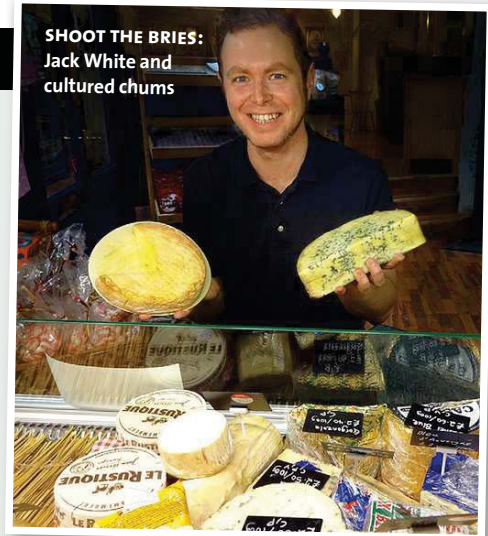
Musicians and their hobbies

JACK WHITE
Composer

CHEESE

Around seven or eight years ago, I started working in a cheese shop in Cardiff while doing my PhD. Before that, I only knew run-of-the-mill supermarket cheeses, but when I started tasting cheeses from across Europe, I started to get enthusiastic about them. I still work in the shop today, and have learnt over the years about the sheer variety of cheeses and the lengths to which producers go to achieve quality. Encouraged by fellow composer Hannah Kendall, I recently used my love of cheese as inspiration for *Three After-Dinner Pieces* for trombonist Peter Moore. In it, the way I have tried to capture the essence of each of three cheeses has depended on visual and structural cues inherent in them – for instance, in 'Stilton' I saw the blue veins as fanfares spreading out across the surface.

SHOOT THE BRIES:
Jack White and cultured chums



If I had to name a favourite cheese it would be Epoisses from Burgundy. I avoided it for many years because, being rind-washed, it is quite strong and pungent. However, my palate has developed over the years for denser, closer textured and smellier cheeses.

Peter Moore and Richard Uttley premiere 'Three After-Dinner Pieces' in Bristol on 27 Sept

Farewell to...

BARBARA COOK *Born 1927 soprano*



Barbara Cook (pictured left in 2003) came to prominence in the 1950s with lead roles in the premieres of several Broadway shows. These included *Candide* (1956) in which, as Cunégonde, Cook sang the showpiece aria 'Glitter and be Gay', tailor-made for her voice by Bernstein. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, daughter of a travelling hat salesman and a telephone operator, Cook fell in love with opera from listening to the radio. 'We were so poor we didn't have a

record player of any kind,' she recalled; 'The radio was my lifeline. I didn't even know anybody who liked opera or classical music.' Determined to make a career as a singer, she moved to New York in 1948, eventually making her Broadway debut in *Flahooley* (1951). After *Candide* came *The Music Man* (1957) and Cook's most celebrated role – the librarian Marian. When her stage career dried up in the 1970s, she re-established herself as a concert performer of Broadway songs, making her Carnegie Hall debut in 1975.

WALTER LEVIN *Born 1924 violinist*

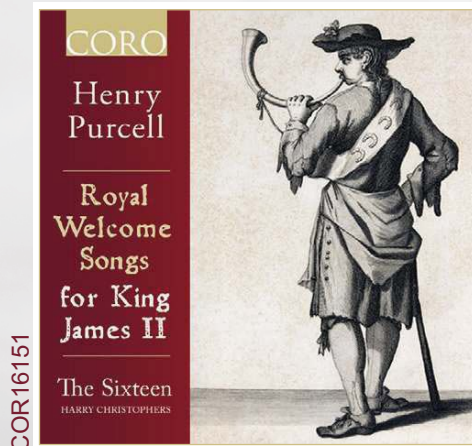
The founder and original first violinist of the LaSalle Quartet, Walter Levin was also a notable teacher in Cincinnati where his pupils included Christian Tetzlaff. Born in Berlin to a German-Jewish family of amateur musicians, Levin began violin and piano lessons aged five. Fleeing Nazi persecution, his family moved to Tel Aviv in 1938. After World War II, he studied at New York's Juilliard School where, encouraged by the School's president, William Schuman, he formed the LaSalle Quartet. By Levin's graduation in 1949, the LaSalle included Henry Meyer on second violin, violist Peter Kamnitzer and cellist Jack Kirstein. Praised in Romantic repertoire, the LaSalle revived Zemlinsky's almost forgotten work, and built a reputation for championing the Second Viennese School, recording the complete quartets of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern for Deutsche Grammophon in the 1970s. They also gave the premieres of Lutosławski's String Quartet in Stockholm in 1965, and Ligeti's Second Quartet, a work dedicated to the LaSalle, in Baden-Baden in 1969.

Also remembered...

Latvian composer *Peteris Plakidis* (born 1947) enjoyed official success under Soviet rule, being named the People's Artist in 1990. His work has been widely recorded including an all-Plakidis CD released by Toccata Classics, and was, like fellow Latvian Peteris Vasks, inspired by nature and folk music.

In a long and distinguished career, Argentine cellist and composer *José Bragato* (born 1915) was best known as a member of Astor Piazzolla's Nuevo Tango ensembles. Also the principal cellist of a number of orchestras, his own compositions included the popular *Graciela y Buenos Aires* for cello and string orchestra.

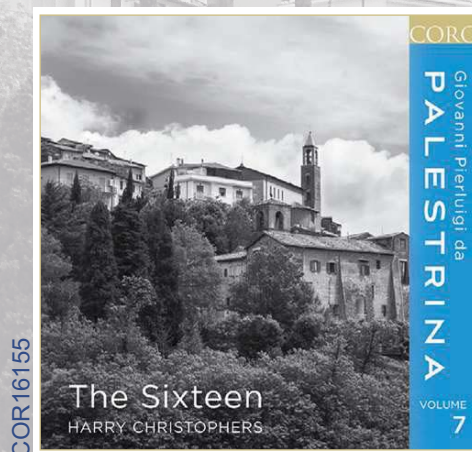
NEW ON CORO



Purcell: Royal Welcome Songs for King James II The Sixteen | Harry Christophers

The first release in a new series showcasing the variety and diversity of Purcell's writing; includes the *Chacony in G minor*, *When on my sick bed I languish* and two Welcome Songs written for King James II ...quintessential Purcell!

'It's a delicious 72 minutes of Restoration wit and lyrical charm, performed gracefully by Harry Christophers' The Sixteen.' The Times



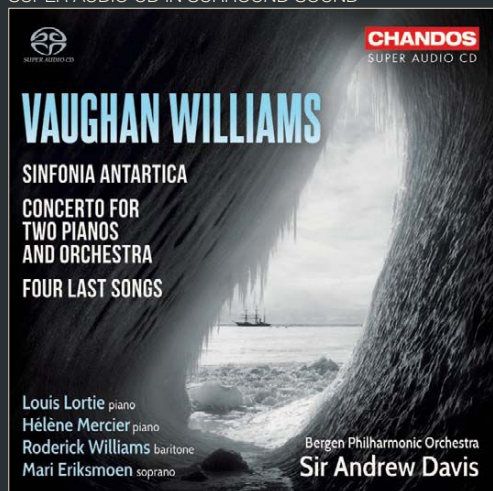
Palestrina Volume 7

The Sixteen | Harry Christophers

The seventh recording in The Sixteen's celebrated series focuses on some of the pivotal women in Christian history - Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, St Barbara and Susannah. It includes *Missa Ave Regina caelorum*, *Song of Songs* Nos. 19-21 and *Beata Barbara*.

'The energy that The Sixteen bring to their Palestrina is admirable.' Gramophone

SUPER AUDIO CD IN SURROUND SOUND



Disc of the Month

Vaughan Williams: Sinfonia Antartica, etc.

Soloists | Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra | Sir Andrew Davis

This eagerly awaited final volume in our historic series of Vaughan Williams's Symphonies features an exceptional cast and a rare combination of repertoire. While the indefatigable piano duo Louis Lortie and Hélène Mercier tackle the virtuosic Double Piano Concerto, the baritone Roderick Williams OBE offers breathtaking interpretations of the rarely heard, yet passionate *Four Last Songs*. The disc's centrepiece is the majestic *Sinfonia Antartica*, stunningly evoking the implacable, frozen landscape of the Antarctic.

CHSA 5186

SUPER AUDIO CD IN SURROUND SOUND



Karayev

Orchestral Works

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra | Kirill Karabits

This set of lyrical, rhythmically exciting, and colourfully orchestrated pieces with the Bournemouth SO and its Chief Conductor, Kirill Karabits, who appears on Chandos for the first time, marks the start of a new series devoted to lesser-known composers from former Soviet Union countries.

CHSA 5203

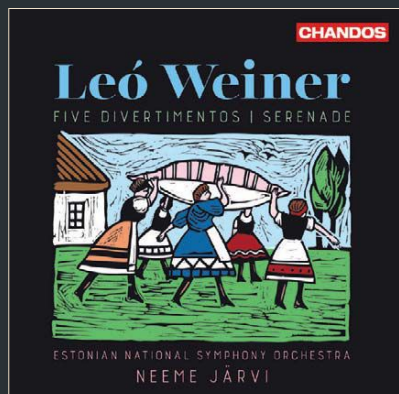


Louis Lortie plays

Chopin, Vol. 5

Louis Lortie's Chopin series is achieving landmark status, as confirmed by the increasingly enthusiastic reviews of progressive volumes. This fifth one sumptuously highlights the Polish influences in Chopin's music, offering gems among the fascinating mazurkas and vigorous polonaises.

CHAN 10943



Weiner

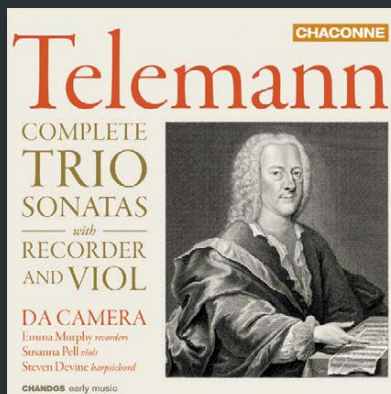
Serenade

Five Divertimentos

Estonian National Symphony Orchestra | Neeme Järvi

Neeme Järvi and his Estonian National Symphony Orchestra here reveal the delightful, witty Hungarian style of Leó Weiner, encapsulated in the freshness and fluidity of the engaging, yet too rarely performed Serenade and five Divertimentos.

CHAN 10959



Telemann

Complete Trio Sonatas with Recorder and Viol

Emma Murphy | Susanna Pell | Steven Devine

The specialist early-music ensemble Da Camera marks the 250th anniversary of Telemann's death with this unique recording of original trio sonatas, among the greatest pieces Telemann ever composed.

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The Richard Morrison column

Secular concerts should never be excluded from our churches



In a move that evokes the Puritan repressions of the 1650s, a group of evangelical Christians is attempting to banish concerts from one of the biggest and most historic churches in the City of London. To add irony to injury, the building is widely known – or has been known until now – as the National Musicians' Church. It is the place where the ashes of Sir Henry Wood are buried (the founder of the Proms learnt the organ there as a boy), and where stained glass windows commemorate the Australian opera singer Dame Nellie Melba and the composers John Ireland and Walter Carroll (who wrote the charming little pieces you play when you are first learning the piano).

The church is St Sepulchre-without-Newgate, Holborn. Until this month its only claim to notoriety was that its bells were tolled to summon crowds to watch convicts led to their execution at Tyburn. That was a bit before my time, you'll be surprised to learn, but now it is infamous for another reason. Though its spacious nave and fine acoustics make it an excellent venue for classical music, the many choirs and orchestras that hire it for rehearsals and performances have been informed that, after next year, the church will not be available for 'secular' music-making.

The ban hasn't come entirely out of the blue. Music groups wanting to hire the church say they have been made to feel unwelcome

for the past year. Even so, it's a depressing development that a church with so many musical associations has become so hostile to music-making.

What lies behind it? The short answer appears to be God. Well, his more assiduous cheerleaders on earth, anyway. Like several other London churches, St Sepulchre has been taken over – 'seeded', I believe, is the preferred ecclesiastical verb – by a group of evangelical Christians stemming from Holy Trinity Brompton ('HTB' to its friends and

until now, is organising painfully trendy supper parties.

It must be admitted, however, that there's a streak of intolerance running through the HTB brand of evangelical Christianity. It requires adherence to a certain worldview, and a tendency to look down on less fervent branches of Anglicanism as being somehow inferior in their expression of Christian faith. I can quite see how the HTB-trained people now leading St Sepulchre would find it difficult to accept 'their' church being constantly

The Church of England stands for the benign acceptance of many different levels of faith

foes alike). That is another London church, this time in affluent South Kensington, which has become famous as the home of the 'Alpha' course [a series of interactive sessions to introduce the basics of Christianity], and thus a Mecca (if I may be allowed to mix up major world religions) for well-heeled West London yuppies who have discovered God.

Absolutely nothing wrong with that, nor with this form of intense, Bible-based worship. The words 'Christian evangelicals' have acquired a bad odour because of the lamentable attitudes of some Christian fundamentalists in the United States. But in Britain the biggest crime laid at the door of HTB and the Alpha course, at least

used by amateur and professional musicians who – God forbid! – might have little or no Christian faith at all. True, a ban on concerts also deprives a church of valuable income, but that wouldn't really be a worry to the HTB faction, because the Alpha courses are highly profitable in their own right.

Apart from the music ensembles affected, however, why should anyone else care about this squabble? Well, as someone who has played the organ in a very different sort of London church for the past 40 years, I hope I don't sound equally biased in the other direction, but to me the HTB attitude seems in some respects contrary to what the Church of England has always stood for –

which is inclusivity and the benign acceptance of many different levels and varieties of faith, including those who are near-agnostic or who value the Church for its good deeds in society as much as its theological teaching.

And the one thing this 'broad church' doesn't do is ban people from using its buildings because those people are more interested in making music than in praying. Quite the opposite, and with very good reason. For many people, music is a much more powerful conduit for spiritual emotions than words are. Bach's *St Matthew Passion* is the finest sermon ever preached, and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* the greatest expression of holy communion, even though it doesn't involve breaking bread and the sharing of wine. The evangelicals should embrace music's power – and the unbelievers it attracts into churches – not ban it unless it is watered down into happy-clappy sing-alongs.

Of course, this is just one more chapter in the eternal power-struggle between clerics and musicians, which was as fierce in the days of Palestrina, Purcell and Bach as it is today. It's pointlessly stressful for all concerned, so I hope those running St Sepulchre-without-Newgate soon change their mind about the value of musical activities in the church. Who knows? The evangelicals might win some new converts. ■

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



RIGHT SPEAR, RIGHT NOW:
Brünnhilde, as sung by the
great 1920s Swedish soprano
Göta Ljungberg, in Wagner's
Die Walküre

As voted
for by 172
of the world's top
opera singers
See p32 for the works each singer chose

Operas

THE 20 GREATEST OF ALL TIME

In its 400 years of existence, opera has produced thousands of masterpieces for the world's stages. But which are the greatest of them all? We reveal how 172 leading opera singers voted in our poll

WORDS BY JOHN ALLISON, OLIVER CONDY, CHRISTOPHER COOK, ELINOR COOPER, REBECCA FRANKS, GEORGE HALL, DANIEL JAFFÉ, DAVID NICE, ANNA PICARD, JEREMY POUND & STEPH POWER

Opera is a musical and a dramatic form combining visual, aural and intellectual elements together into one experience greater than the sum of its parts.

After four centuries, it continues to fascinate some of the greatest creative minds – not only composers and librettists, but also visual artists, singers, musicians and film and stage directors – and audience members as well as practitioners have found in it the most complete and involving aesthetic experience the performing arts has to offer. This is partly because opera works on several levels simultaneously. The narrative alone, even at its simplest, carries an emotional and intellectual charge. Many notable writers have created words through which the protagonists express themselves: apart from obvious opera specialists like Lorenzo da Ponte, Arrigo Boito or Hugo von Hofmannsthal, such figures as William Congreve, John Dryden, Carlo Goldoni, Voltaire, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Jean Cocteau, Colette, Bertolt Brecht, EM Forster, WH Auden, Christopher Fry, Doris Lessing and Italo Calvino have all conceived and created librettos.

Operas come in all shapes and sizes, from small works for a single performer – such as Judith Weir's ten-minutes-long *King Harald's Saga*, written for unaccompanied solo soprano – to Wagner's four-part epic *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, one of

the grandest dramatic schemes ever devised. For big operas there will be big forces, challenging composers to create vast structures for substantial numbers of performers sufficiently coherent to excite and maintain the audience's attention.

Then there is the fascination of performance, most obviously in terms of singers but also with conductors, directors and designers adding their individual interpretations to works that are often centuries old, and which have been performed countless times and in almost as many different ways. Because of this constant element of re-interpretation, opera is particularly susceptible to changes of meaning in different locations over periods of time: contemporary audiences experience *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Don Giovanni*, *Carmen* or *Peter Grimes* in ways quite different from how the very first audiences received these works.

Above all, and despite being the most collaborative art, it is the power of music that makes us return repeatedly to opera's masterpieces as our thoughts and feelings are stimulated at the very deepest level by its extraordinary ability to help us explore not only ourselves but the entirety of human experience.

So which are the greatest operas ever to have been written? We invited 172 of today's finest singers to nominate their all-time masterpieces. You can read the results on the following eight pages, and on p32 you can see who chose which operas. ▶

Opera stimulates our thoughts and feelings at the very deepest level



TANGLED RELATIONS:
Roberta Alexander
(centre left) as Jenůfa at
Glyndebourne in 1992

20 Wagner *Die Walküre* (1870)

The second instalment of the colossal Ring tetralogy is packed full of musical wonders
With the *Ring*, Wagner redefined the scope and scale of music drama. Composed over 26 years, the cycle embodies his ideal of the 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (total art work) in which poetry, drama, music and staging unite with a common purpose. Wagner's achievement is overwhelming, his ambition unsurpassed. Yet only one of the four *Ring* operas has made it into our top 20. So, why *Die Walküre*? For a start, it contains perhaps Wagner's best-known music: the exhilarating 'Ride of the Valkyries', which opens Act III. And there are many other highlights – the visceral opening storm; Siegmund's hymn to the spring; Wotan's Farewell; the Magic Fire Music. *Die Walküre* also stands alone as a coherent, compelling opera, an emotional rollercoaster of love, incest, grief, sacrifice and betrayal.

19 Handel *Giulio Cesare* (1724)

A vast, rich score that displays the composer's sharply honed instinct for dramatic pace
At almost three-and-a-half hours, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* is one of Handel's longest

and most elaborate creations (longer than Wagner's *Parsifal*), and yet this seemingly unwieldy opera is actually delicately balanced, beautifully proportioned and always engaging. Da capo arias are exquisitely paced, with Handel's understanding of the expressive power of the human voice unrivalled in Baroque music. The intricate plot, placing the relationship between Caesar and Cleopatra at its centre, never loses its focus, thanks partly to Nicola Francesco Haym's brilliant libretto, but also to Handel's dazzlingly original recitative work whose striking modulations constantly surprise and delight. In terms of orchestration, Handel is at the very height of his considerable powers.

18 Verdi *Falstaff* (1893)

Verdi at his most inventive, proving himself a genius of comedic characterisation
Everything about Verdi's late comic opera about a plump, arrogant, cowardly knight leaps from the stage: its ingenious libretto by the composer's long-term collaborator, Arrigo Boito, combining elements of three Shakespeare plays, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and both parts of *Henry IV*; the detail of the orchestrations over which Verdi

laboured, changing and revising right up to the day of the premiere; and its sheer wit, often displayed through Verdi's sudden and rapid changes of musical pace and direction. But it's the craftsmanship of the music that most impresses – Verdi rarely uses instruments simply to double his singers, instead employing them for an extraordinarily wide colour palette. The demands on singers and players are considerable, but the result is a glorious work of unbridled joy.

17 Monteverdi *L'Orfeo* (1607)

An extraordinary creation that sets its glittering music at the service of the text
Orfeo was not the first opera to have been written (see 'What is opera?' box opposite) but it was the first great opera. Here, in this vivid retelling of the classical myth of Orpheus, is the first example of a drama throughout which music consistently heightens the text and fully expresses its emotions. Monteverdi draws on his rich compositional palette to superb effect: instruments group around bright strings to depict pastoral Thrace, while sombre brass, particularly trombones, colour the Underworld. In his vocal writing, Monteverdi



HIGH ART: Bryn Terfel in his acclaimed role of Falstaff for the Met in 2002; a French poster for Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*

gave his singers a new freedom. And if music is the servant of the text, it's also its subject. For at its heart, this is an opera about music's power to uplift our souls and heal our sorrows.

16 Wagner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1868)

Wagner's consummately beautiful comic opera explores the heart of the human soul
Wagner's description of his only comic opera as 'something lighter' belies the brilliance of the composer's insights into the complications of life, love and tradition within the context of a singing competition in a medieval German town. At just over four hours, Wagner's score was his longest yet, but unlike *Tristan und Isolde's* musical and dramatic stases (see No. 10), the dynamic *Meistersinger* score constantly shifts with melodies in plentiful supply, the charming plot at once comic, romantic and philosophical. The



glorious music, arresting from the start, mirrors the opera's conceit of tradition's renewal through innovation and acceptance of outside influence – Wagner's use of Baroque counterpoint and Lutheran chorales are perfumed by judicious use of daring chromatic harmony.

15 Verdi *Don Carlos* (1867)

Verdi's grandest opera combines spectacle with moments of exquisite intimacy

Never let the facts get in the way of a good opera. In Verdi's *Don Carlos*, based on a Schiller poem, the eponymous hero is an admirable, steadfast prince who champions the oppressed people of Flanders; in reality, the son of Philip II of Spain was an odious, unbalanced character with infamously sadistic tendencies. Nonetheless, this is Verdi's grand opera *par excellence*, whether enjoyed in its original five-act French version or as *Don Carlo*, the later four-act Italian incarnation. Set against the sinister backdrop of the Spanish Inquisition, it is unmatched for spectacle and drama – not least in the *auto da fe* of Act III – while Verdi lets his musical imagination run riot with moments such as the monks' haunting prayer early in Act II.

14 Janáček *Jenůfa* (1904)

A harrowing slice of realism told with impressive musical and dramatic imagination

A rapidly repeated rhythm on the xylophone, representing a water wheel, sets Janáček's masterpiece into motion, and so begins a devastatingly poignant tale of love, jealousy and misguided morality in rural Moravia. The stream that feeds the mill can be felt throughout

a fast-flowing, chromatic score that sweeps the action along at pace – at just two hours, *Jenůfa* is a masterpiece of concision. And then there is the brilliantly drawn cast of complex characters. The stoic, self-effacing Jenůfa is as easy to admire as her dissolute lover, Steva, is to revile. But how do we judge her desperate would-be partner Laca and, above all, Jenůfa's stepmother, the Kostelnicka? Both carry out appalling acts, but out of loyalty and love...

13 Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin* (1879)

A Russian masterpiece that probes its tale's characters with musical insight and nuance
Eschewing a conventional through-narrative, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* is a series of

WHAT IS OPERA?

George Hall explains the origins of this grandest of art forms

WHEN IT WAS invented in Florence in the 1590s, opera – which means 'works' in Italian – involved an attempt by a group of leading artists and intellectuals to revive the theatre of ancient Greece, which they understood to be sung rather than spoken.

This inspired leap of the imagination was the final great artistic creation of the Renaissance, yet at the same time opera was able to benefit from the novel gestures of what we now refer to as the Baroque period, especially what came to be known as 'recitar cantando' – the art of speaking and acting in song.

What distinguished opera from such closely related predecessors as the Italian intermezzo, the French ballet de cour or the English masque – all of which brought the arts together in a unified theatrical spectacle – was that the text was through-composed utilising this newly invented recitative, giving music an expressive primacy

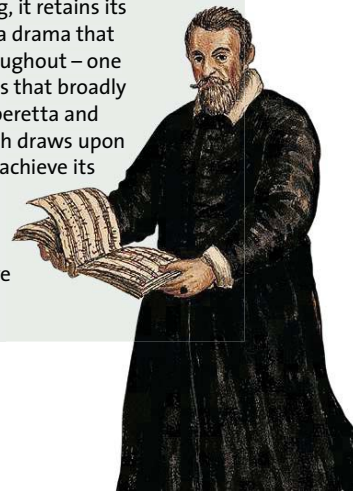
Opera was the Renaissance's final great artistic creation

over all the other arts involved in what, centuries later, one of the genre's greatest practitioners would label a 'total art work', or to use Wagner's term: 'Gesamtkunstwerk'.

Within a decade of the first example, Jacopo Peri's *Dafne* (1597), opera had found its first creative genius in Claudio Monteverdi (below), who gave the form its first masterpiece with *Orfeo* (1607). Monteverdi would be the first to popularise opera when he moved to Venice, producing his final works for the city's public opera houses, the first of which opened in 1637.

From Venice, opera would expand, within a few decades, all over Italy and subsequently all over Europe: its later travels would eventually see it flourish across the continents in a wide variety of national traditions. Today, opera is continuing to win new fans through recordings, films and videos, as well as in the cinema and online.

Yet through more than 400 years of history and counting, it retains its essential quality of a drama that is sung, usually throughout – one of the characteristics that broadly separates it from operetta and musicals – and which draws upon all the other arts to achieve its unique synthesis, held together by the communicative range and expressive power of music.





ALL-CONSUMING: Cesare Valletti as Alfredo and Maria Callas as Violetta in Verdi's *La traviata* in 1958

'lyrical scenes' from Pushkin's iconic novel. At the heart of the story is the definitive arrogant aristocrat, Onegin, who rejects the un-bound adoration of country-girl Tatyana. His thoughtless behaviour leads to the death of Lensky, his greatest friend, though not before Lensky delivers the dark and despondent 'Faint echo of my heart'. An opera of opposites, Tchaikovsky pits Tatyana's rustic and open-hearted musical language against Onegin's starkly cynical one. Later, when the tables are turned, Onegin's change of heart is made plain in his sudden harmonic shift to the romantic figure he should always have been, while Tatyana is now stuck in a removed minor key. His realisation has come too late, and the damage he caused cannot be undone.

12 Verdi *La traviata* (1853)

Verdi reserves his greatest melodies and richest harmonies for this tale of love and duty Now the most-performed opera in the world, it's hard to believe that during Verdi's lifetime *La traviata* was seen as a bit of a disappointment after the epic historic operas of *Il trovatore* and *Rigoletto*. The secret of its longevity popularity is surely Verdi's intricate,

three-dimensional characters, whom he brings to life with soaring melodies and heart-rending swells of harmony. Most compelling of all is the 'fallen woman' of the title, Violetta, who is forced to choose between love and honour. Ultimately, she proves her goodness by sacrificing her own happiness for that of a woman she does not know. Succumbing to consumption, she bids life, her lover Alfredo and a usually weepy audience farewell with the achingly beautiful aria 'Addio del passato', 'Farewell past happy dreams'.

11 Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902)

Debussy's five-act masterpiece steers clear of Wagner's dominant world Like many *fin de siècle* French composers, Debussy was at one point a fervent Wagnerian. But in his only complete opera he sought to realise his own rather different ideal of opera. Here, as in Monteverdi's operas of 300 years before, music would serve the

text. *Pelléas et Mélisande* was the remarkable result: a subdued, mysterious exploration of a fated love triangle, the antithesis of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Debussy conjures a half-lit, atmospheric dream-world, in which the dynamics rarely go above *mezzo-forte* and silence is as powerful as music. Maurice Maeterlinck's eponymous symbolist play of 1892 is set almost verbatim; and, like Musorgsky in his own opera *Boris Godunov*, Debussy eschews melody and mimics speech patterns in the vocal lines. It's one of the opera world's strangest, most spellbinding and profound achievements.

10 Wagner *Tristan und Isolde* (1865)

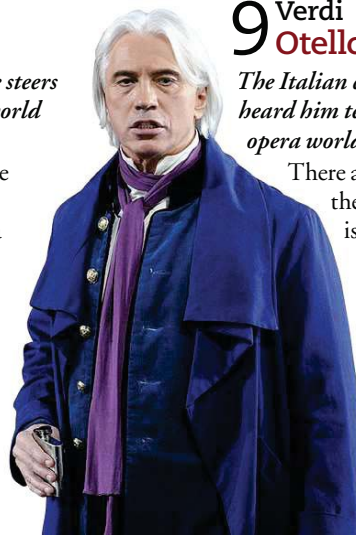
A revolutionary chord heralds the start of modern opera and a new way of thinking Around 1857 Wagner, reaching a creative block with the *Ring*, decided meanwhile to compose a popular, easily performable opera on the *Tristan* legend. Being Wagner, what he came up with was a vastly profound psychodrama whose very opening chord challenged traditional harmony, inspiring and liberating a subsequent generation of composers. So much so, that *Tristan* has been called 'the first modern opera', a unique watershed beyond which music changed for good.

Very little actually happens onstage, in the manner of Wagner's beloved Greek tragedies. But the score is vibrantly alive both with the lovers' passion and a more transcendent yearning, for surcease, rest, escape from a cruel existence. Its score intertwines motives in darkly sensuous chromatic harmonies which find resolution only in death. It undoubtedly reflects Wagner's personal unhappiness, and his affair (probably more idealised than real) with Mathilde Wesendonck, but also his interests in Buddhism and Schopenhauer's philosophy. It's never been his most popular work, but its power is enormous, even overwhelming – which for some devotees is the point – and its greatness undeniable.

9 Verdi *Otello* (1887)

The Italian composer as you've never heard him teams up with one of the opera world's sharpest librettists

There are storms in opera and there are storms. But there is no musical storm quite



FOOLISH HEART: Eugene Onegin as played by Dmitri Hvorostovsky at the Royal Opera House in 2015

so shattering as the tidal wave of sound that Verdi unleashes at the start of *Otello*. Is this the end of the world, with those trumpets summoning the dead from their graves?

Otello was written by a composer who was already into his seventies and who thought that he had retired. But, given the opportunity, he was also a composer who embraced the idea of renewing his musical style as confidently as a man half his age. And nowhere more so than in the Act I love duet for *Otello* and Desdemona.

Verdi had a master librettist working with him who was also more than half in love with William Shakespeare. Arrigo Boito shaves off Act I of Shakespeare's tragedy and concentrates the action in Cyprus, so that in a good production of *Otello* you never look at your watch. You're on the edge of your seat as evil, in the shape of Iago, confronts flawed goodness, the Moor of Venice, and innocence is murdered. The death of Desdemona would make stones – and us – weep.

8 Mozart *Don Giovanni* (1787)

An opera of perfect proportions, both thematically and musically balanced

It was ETA Hoffmann, whose own stories were to inspire many great musical masterworks, who called *Don Giovanni* 'the opera of all operas'. Mozart's art has often been compared with Shakespeare's, above all perhaps for the composer's complete and lifelike blend of the comic and tragic: their

co-existence is actually the essence of all Mozart's operatic masterpieces, and *Don Giovanni* – aptly labelled a *dramma giocoso* – is the work in which they are most intimately woven together.

People's long fascination with the Don Juan legend, first made into a play by a Spanish poet-monk in the early 17th century, meant that by Mozart's time there were countless Don Juan shows around. But Mozart – whose music would have been impossible without alchemy of Da Ponte's words – gave life, as it were, to the supernatural, in the form of the Commendatore's statue. In Leporello's Catalogue Aria he created a piece unlike anything else in all opera. The work that Rossini claimed he would most liked to have composed himself is driven from start to finish with timeless power and brilliance.

7 Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1643)

Monteverdi gets to the hearts of his characters with music of spellbinding beauty and verve

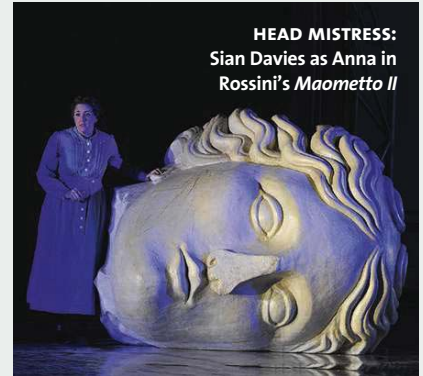
Much as Verdi's *Falstaff* is a compendium of a lifetime's musical interests, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* is a work in which a lifetime's soundworlds contrast and collide. Musicologists have debated its authenticity: the overture has been attributed to Francesco Cavalli, and the final duet, 'Pur ti miro', has been claimed as the work of Benedetto Ferrari or Francesco Saccati before being returned, as it were, to Claudio Monteverdi. ▶



BED TIMES: Barbara Hannigan and Laurent Naouri in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Aix-en-Provence, 2016

RARE APPEARANCES

Five of the more unusual operas voted for by our panel (see p32)



HEAD MISTRESS:
Sian Davies as Anna in
Rossini's *Maometto II*

Zandonai *Francesca da Rimini*

The music styles of Richard Strauss, Debussy and Puccini and the odd bit of medieval pastiche unite in this Italian composer's 1914 melodrama of arranged marriage, doomed love and cold-blooded murder. Zandonai's skill for orchestration and *verismo* vocal writing is abundantly clear – his teacher Mascagni (see p78) clearly made his mark.

Alagna *Le dernier jour d'un condamné*

With music composed by David Alagna to a libretto by his brothers Frédéric and tenor Roberto, *Le Dernier jour*, setting Victor Hugo's novella, keeps it in the family. Written in 2007, the music bears the hallmarks of traditional Italian *verismo* opera, with dramatic orchestrations, speech-like vocal lines and a post-Romantic tonal style.

Rossini *Maometto II*

Set at the fall of the Byzantine Empire, this invasion-turned-love-story has the usual plot elements you'd expect of a Rossini opera – mistaken identity, crossed lovers and a nostalgic nationalist theme – while providing plenty of virtuosic coloratura opportunities for its star soprano.

Picker *Emmeline*

In his two-act opera, American composer Tobias Picker's *Emmeline* imagines the Oedipus myth in the context of 19th-century industrial Maine. Vivid orchestration brings the scene of a working mill to life, emulating busily clicking gears, while elsewhere the musical scenery is interwoven with songs and Protestant anthems of the time.

Knussen *Higglety Pigglety Pop!*

Higglety Pigglety Pop! is one of two operas on which Oliver Knussen collaborated with author Maurice Sendak in the 1980s (the other is *Where the Wild Things Are*). A sparkling one-act children's opera, it tells the tale of Jennie the Sealyham terrier who heads off for adventure, and ends up starring in the World Mother Goose Theatre.

Premiered in 1643, Monteverdi's last opera is Venetian to the core: a morally ambiguous, multi-layered drama of court intrigues, contract killings and broken promises among the high- and low-born subjects of a psychotic emperor. When modern listeners shudder at the triumph of Cupid as Poppea is crowned, they should remember that in the wake of this apparent happy ending comes yet more violence. From Poppea and Nero's first smouldering, post-coital duet, 'Signor, deh non partire', to the astringent chromatrics of 'Non morir Seneca', the hypnotic beauty of Arnalta's ground bass lullaby, 'Oblivion soave', and the shattered desolation of Ottavia's 'Addio Roma', the writing is unfailingly psychologically acute.

6 Puccini *Tosca* (1900)

A rollercoaster opera of high emotions that features some of Puccini's finest orchestrations

First performed in Rome in 1900, *Tosca* was Giacomo Puccini's fifth opera, composed at the beginning of his forties. He drew the subject from the play *La Tosca* by the admired French dramatist Victorien Sardou, who had written it as a vehicle for the great actress Sarah Bernhardt that quickly turned into a major theatrical success; the copious detail of the libretto's real historical setting, meanwhile, pushed it in the direction of the prevailing verismo aesthetic.

Musically, in *Tosca* Puccini broke new ground in representing the violent actions – torture, attempted rape, murder and execution – that pervade the drama, as well as in the darker emotions that these acts both

engender and feed on. In portraying these dark situations and characters – notably the unforgettable evil police chief Scarpia – in his score, Puccini opened up novel areas of harmonic and orchestral expression.

To its first audiences *Tosca* represented a new kind of opera – one that was fast moving, realistic and violent, as well as deliberately shocking. Long before the term was coined, Puccini here created an operatic genre: the political thriller.

5 Britten *Peter Grimes* (1945)

In this evocative, bleak work, Britten ratchets up the tension within a small coastal village

Britten's first full-scale opera premiered less than a month after Nazi Germany's defeat. By the decade's end it was a worldwide hit, and today remains one of the few English operas in the international repertory. Peter Grimes himself – an impractical dreamer with anger issues, whose bruised young apprentices have the unfortunate tendency of dying – is hardly the most sympathetic role. Yet Britten's sympathetic skill in writing for voices, honed over 15 years of songwriting, brings a gallery of very English characters vividly to life. What haunts the listener above all, though, is his evocation of the ever-present sea, evident from the very opening inquest: staccato woodwind, brisk and business-like, dominate the scene at first; yet when Grimes steps into the dock, soft, long-breathed string cadences suggest not only his introspective nature but also the rise and fall of waves on the beach outside. Then, with the first Sea Interlude, we are outdoors and we hear the bright, keening

CENTRAL ROLES

Jessica Duchen charts her experience as the librettist of a brand new opera



PRIME PAIR: Strauss (right) and Hofmannsthal

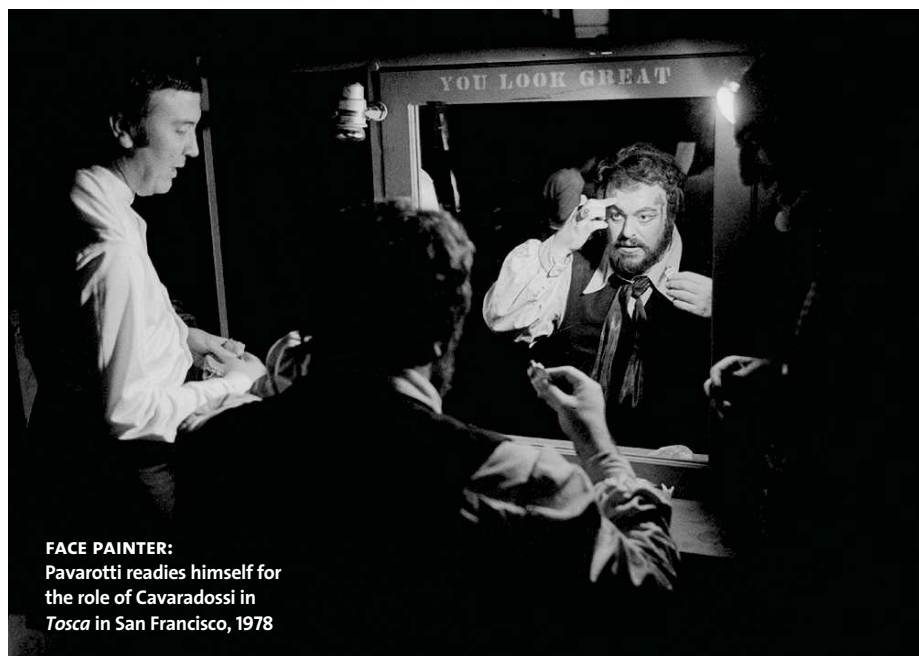
MOZART AND DA PONTE. Strauss and Hoffmannsthal. And now Panufnik and muggins? Creating an opera is like driving a lorry across a continent – as I discovered recently, working with Roxanna Panufnik on *Silver Birch* for Garsington Opera – and the composer-librettist team is its engine.

For *Silver Birch*, a 'People's Opera', we had just two-and-a-half years from initial team meeting to premiere. Everyone had a say: Garsington wanted Siegfried Sassoon to be central; and our director, Karen Gillingham, who is experienced in working with community and youth companies, was our guiding light. The process involved continual emails, consultations, try-outs, modifications and cuts, cuts and more cuts.

If you're wondering which comes first, words or music, it's words. More or less. Give and take is everything. I suggested writing a chorus akin to a folk song (the 'Silver Birch Song'). Roxanna wanted to base a whole scene on 'O Soldier, Soldier, Won't You Marry Me', which I then worked into the text. She would ask me to provide a solo focal point for each character; I might ask her if she could combine the 'Silver Birch Song' with Sassoon's 'Everyone Sang', and she would then ask me to put some bird imagery into the 'Silver Birch Song' poem. Moreover, the give and take is not only between composer and librettist, but also involves director, singers, conductor, designer – and one might tweak details right up to opening night.

The better the teamwork, the smoother the ride, and like any team, a good librettist-composer mix needs trust, mutual respect, humility, reliability, a sense of shared purpose and a lot of slog. The whole has to work, and it has to work for everybody.

A libretto is skeleton to the music's muscle, clothes hanger to its designer dress, or pitchfork to prod the composer up to the heights. Get it right and the opera becomes more than the sum of its parts and acquires a life of its own. It no longer belongs to you, but, rightly, to its performers and audience.



FACE PAINTER:
Pavarotti readies himself for
the role of Cavaradossi in
Tosca in San Francisco, 1978

ALAMY, GETTY

SERIAL SITUATION:
John Tomlinson as the
Doctor and Simon Keenlyside
as Wozzeck at the Royal
Opera House in 2013



sound of high strings, with the swell of low brass suggesting the power of the sea itself. This, and the chorus, forged from individuals at the village dance into an alarming, blood-lusting beast, are the ever-present 'elemental forces' which seal Grimes's fate.

4 Berg **Wozzeck** (1925)

Serialism at its most expressive – a brutal tale told with mocking wit and extreme tenderness

Alban Berg's expressionist first opera is as viscerally wrenching today as the audience found the premiere in Berlin in 1925 – and it remains as socio-politically radical; one of most powerfully incisive, influential works in the entire repertoire, relating the tragedy of an ordinary soldier who is driven to madness and brutal murder by the grotesque cruelty of his supposed superiors.

It was the erosion of humanity that Berg witnessed during and after World War I that drove him to adapt Georg Büchner's seminal, unfinished 1837 play, *Woyzeck*, first staged in 1913. The resulting *Wozzeck* would prove to be one of the most searing portraits anywhere of a mind, a relationship and a society in harrowing collapse.

Wozzeck's hallucinations of apocalypse become more than just metaphors, propelled by a lush, atonal score that is at once exquisitely orchestrated and rigorously structured in a kind of homage to classical forms; all the better to give heartrending voice, through *Wozzeck* and his equally doomed Marie, to a nightmare reality in which the poor and vulnerable are tormented and abandoned.

MASTERLY MARSCHALLIN:
Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in
Der Rosenkavalier in 1960



3 Richard Strauss **Der Rosenkavalier** (1911)

Strauss's opera may be stylistically old-school, but its music and vocal scoring are sublime

Why do so many people regard *Der Rosenkavalier* as a guilty pleasure? Is it because the highlights, like the title character Octavian's Presentation of the Rose to young Sophie and the famous Trio, are too beautiful to be true? Strauss intended them that way, with the characters stepping out of time, but his first wholly original collaboration with

the Viennese poet and playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal is also shrewd and pointed. Its often acidic wit contrasts with meditations on transience using as mouthpiece the central character of the Marschallin, the 32-year-old woman with whom the public identifies, and lending this 'comedy for music' a depth to match its most obvious model, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The plot, featuring a ridiculous older suitor and the teenage girl to be married off to him, a stylish young buck with an older woman as lover who comes along to save the girl, is drawn from Molière and other French sources. But Hofmannsthal in 1911 was creating a mythical Vienna that stretched from the nominal setting of the opera, the 1740s, up to the brink of the First World War; and Strauss, incorporating waltzes as well as some of the dissonances familiar from the opera's contrasting predecessor, *Elektra*, composed his most encyclopedic masterpiece of a score.

2 Puccini **La bohème** (1896)

Close, but no cigar, though Puccini's romantic opera is still a masterclass in story-telling

La bohème is about as perfect as an opera can be. It's concise, it's packed with delicious melody and it's about being young and in love. And even better, young love undone by death. Like Romeo and Juliet, James Dean, Jimi Hendrix and Kurt Cobain, the best die young, thus robbing age of its wrinkled victory. We weep for ourselves in the closing bars of the opera when Rodolfo suddenly realises that Mimi has gone. And woe betide the theatre that brings up the houselights too soon.

If the drama is taut then the score is as expansive as anything Puccini composed. The duet for the young lovers that closes Act I is a masterclass in creating character through music and in manipulating an audience's feelings. Musetta's waltz at the Café Momus is as teasing as the woman herself. But almost better is the sequence of numbers in Act III at the Barrière d'Enfer, the farewell duet for Mimi and Rodolfo, then Musetta and Marcello quarrelling that effortlessly slips into the quartet, 'Addio dolce svegliare alla mattina'.

How does Puccini do it? With short musical themes that define each of his characters and their worlds and which – master orchestrator that he was – are conjured back into the score in a way that makes them sound the same but always different.

Now turn the page to discover which opera has been voted the greatest by our roster of singers, and see p32 for a list of who voted for what...

AND THE GREATEST OPERA OF ALL TIME IS...



A Marriage made in heaven

Our singers have declared Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* the greatest opera ever written. *George Hall* delves into the brilliance of the Mozart-Da Ponte partnership

1 Mozart *Marriage of Figaro* (1786)

Brilliantly conceived characters and ensemble writing grab Mozart's comedy the top slot
Coming in at No. 1 is one of the supreme masterpieces of operatic comedy, whose rich sense of humanity shines out of Mozart's miraculous score.

The Marriage of Figaro's intricate plot follows four of the principal characters from *The Barber of Seville* a few years down the line. Both operas are based on plays by the French dramatist Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais which quickly became classics despite their incendiary political content: these problems were particularly acute in *Le Mariage de Figaro*, which was widely banned due to its criticism of the nobility.

Having relocated to Vienna from his native Salzburg in 1782 to further his career, Mozart was determined to show the Emperor Joseph II, his court and the entire Imperial capital what he could do with a comic Italian libretto, teaming up with the poet attached to the city's opera house, Lorenzo da Ponte.

According to Da Ponte, it was the composer's idea to make an opera of *Figaro*, the most controversial play of its time. After the Emperor had given it the go-ahead, the work was premiered in Vienna on 1 May 1786 and has been entertaining audiences since.

As usual, Mozart introduces his opera with an overture, and while it uses none of the opera's subsequent material, it perfectly defines the general mood of the piece with its *Presto* tempo marking and busy, bustling orchestral writing suggesting the constant whispering and intrigue during the course of what Beaumarchais's full title – *La folle journée, ou le Mariage de Figaro* – calls a 'crazy day'.

Mozart's miraculous score shines with a rich sense of humanity

All of the main characters are given memorable arias, including Bartolo's furious 'La vendetta', in which he swears vengeance on Figaro in Gilbert & Sullivan-like comic patter; Cherubino's 'Non so più', in which the rapid fluttering of his vocal line indicates his constant emotional and sexual excitement; the Countess's sorrow-laden 'Porgi amor', whose shapely melodic line traces the depths of her feeling of abandonment; and the Count's 'Vedrò mentre io sospiro', in which his aristocratic fury at Figaro's challenge to



his entitlement is banged out in firm rhythms and grand triplet roulades.

Figaro is unusually rich in ensembles, where the test for the composer is to maintain individual vocal character and specific individual emotions while the other characters are singing something entirely different – a trick Mozart pulls off with flying colours, notably in the sextet in the trial scene in Act III that was Mozart's own favourite piece in his score.

But it is in the two big finales that end the second and fourth acts that Mozart brings his skills in ensemble writing to an apogee rarely equalled – even by him. Here his music reflects each tiny twist and turn of the plot, reaching extraordinary heights of complexity as the audience experiences every fleeting emotion that the individual characters are feeling; few operatic comedies can match *Figaro's* combination of wit with emotional truth.

WINNING SMILES:
a scene from Glyndebourne's
2013 production of
The Marriage of Figaro



THE SINGERS' VIEW

Felicity Lott *Soprano*



Figaro has got such sublime and such well-drawn characters. The whole opera veers from one dramatic situation to another, but it's absolutely perfectly constructed. I sang the Countess a lot, but I never got tired of the role – there's so much in it. She's a fascinating character, and she goes through this big change from the rather dreary and hopeless character who sings 'Porgi amor' at the start of the second act into becoming someone who, galvanised, takes action, rather than having things done, or not, to her. She plays a dangerous game, but it's worth it because at the end she's regained her power.

Gerald Finley *Bass-baritone*



The Marriage of Figaro is a rite of passage for most singers – there's a role in it for everybody. I had the privilege to sing Figaro himself first, and from doing that you get to know what you need to play the Count. And when you do play the Count, the essential thing to remember is that the opera is essentially about him. If you have a good Count, the whole thing comes together. The Count is a man who is used to being in power, but doesn't understand that things are changing; one thing I love about him is the way that he sees something is happening, but still has this resistance to accepting it. He's losing control – and is aware that he's losing control – and takes it out on those that he loves. But when, at the end, he asks the Countess to forgive him, I do believe it is genuine.

Elizabeth Watts *Soprano*



All the characters in *Figaro* are wonderfully three-dimensional and so well crafted, so you can really understand the motivation behind everything they do. It's very much an ensemble opera, so there's lots of fun to be had from playing off your colleagues! Susanna's a very strong character but she's got her own vulnerabilities. You can't play the comedy side of her role without honestly showing the deep peril she faces if it all goes wrong. It's one of the biggest roles in opera, and Mozart writes some of the most beautiful music for her to sing – 'Dei vieni non tardar' in the final act and some of the ensemble lines throughout the opera are just stunning. Her character is infectiously fun. She loves life and people who have life in them, like Figaro and Cherubino.

DO YOU AGREE? Have the singers made the right choice, in your view? Let us know what you think by emailing music@classical-music.com and casting your votes in our Twitter poll @MusicMagazine

How they voted

So who were the 172 singers, from Renaissance specialists to champions of new opera, who took part in our poll? Below are all the names, and the three operas each of them nominated

Christopher Ainslie Countertenor
Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*
Handel *Partenope*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*

Roberto Alagna Tenor
David Alagna *Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné*
Alfano *Cyrano de Bergerac*
Zandonai *Francesca da Rimini*

Louise Alder Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *La traviata*
Wagner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

Thomas Allen Baritone
Mozart *Idomeneo*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Wagner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

Anna Caterina Antonacci Soprano
Berlioz *Les Troyens*
Cherubini *Médée*
Poulenc *La voix humaine*

Benjamin Appl Baritone
Mozart *The Magic Flute*
Verdi *Otello*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*

Elizabeth Atherton Soprano
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*

Peter Auty Tenor
Mascagni *Cavalleria rusticana*
Puccini *La bohème*
Stravinsky *The Rake's Progress*

Barry Banks Tenor
Mozart *Mitridate*
Rossini *Guillaume Tell*
Stravinsky *Rake's Progress*

Jamie Barton Mezzo
Handel *Giulio Cesare*
Jake Heggie *Dead Man Walking*
Wagner *Das Rheingold*



HANSEL AND GRETEL: Humperdinck's family opera, nominated by Benjamin Bevan

Kim Begley Tenor
Britten *Peter Grimes*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Verdi *Otello*

Daniel Behle Tenor
Mozart *Così fan tutte*
Verdi *Otello*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*

Matthew Best Bass
Musorgsky *Boris Godunov*
Verdi *Don Carlos*
Wagner *Parsifal*

Benjamin Bevan Baritone
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Humperdinck *Hansel and Gretel*
Wagner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

Mary Bevan Soprano
Handel *Acis and Galatea*
Puccini *La bohème*
Stravinsky *Rake's Progress*

Susan Bickley Mezzo
Handel *Theodora*
Janáček *Jenůfa*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*

Lee Bisset Soprano
Janáček *Jenůfa*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *Rigoletto*

Hana Blažiková Soprano
Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*
R Strauss *Salome*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*

Angel Blue Soprano
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Puccini *Manon Lescaut*
Verdi *La traviata*

Andrea Bocelli Tenor
Giordano *Andrea Chénier*
Mascagni *Cavalleria rusticana*
Puccini *Tosca*

Alfie Boe Tenor
Puccini *La bohème*
R Strauss *Elektra*
Verdi *La traviata*

Ian Bostridge Tenor
Berg *Wozzeck*
Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*

Rebecca Bottone Soprano
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Janáček *Cunning Little Vixen*
Mozart *Idomeneo*

Katie Bray Mezzo
Britten *Albert Herring*
Massenet *Werther*
Rossini *The Barber of Seville*

Katherine Broderick Soprano
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Wagner *Die Walküre*

Peter Bronder Tenor
R Strauss *Salome*
Verdi *Falstaff*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*

Janai Brugger Soprano
Puccini *Tosca*
Puccini *Turandot*
Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*

Susan Bullock Soprano
Janáček *Jenůfa*
Puccini *La fanciulla del West*
Wagner *Götterdämmerung*

Grace Bumbry Mezzo
Bellini *Norma*
Verdi *Don Carlos*
Wagner *Tannhäuser*

Robert Burt Tenor
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Janáček *Jenůfa*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*

Nicole Cabell Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *La bohème*
Puccini *Tosca*

Joseph Calleja Tenor
Offenbach *The Tales of Hoffmann*
Puccini *La bohème*
Puccini *Tosca*

Karen Cargill Mezzo
Britten *Albert Herring*
Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites*
Wagner *Die Walküre*

José Carreras Tenor
Bizet *Carmen*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Verdi *Don Carlos*

Max Emanuel Cencic Countertenor
Cavalli *La Calisto*
Mascagni *Cavalleria rusticana*
Puccini *Tosca*

Lucia Cervoni Mezzo
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *Madam Butterfly*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*

Michael Chance Countertenor
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Monteverdi *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*
Verdi *Otello*

Marie-Claude Chappuis Mezzo
Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
R Strauss *Ariadne auf Naxos*

Allan Clayton Tenor
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Verdi *Otello*

Ronan Collett Baritone
Berg *Wozzeck*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Verdi *Falstaff*

Sarah Connolly Mezzo
Bartók *Bluebeard's Castle*
Handel *Ariodante*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*

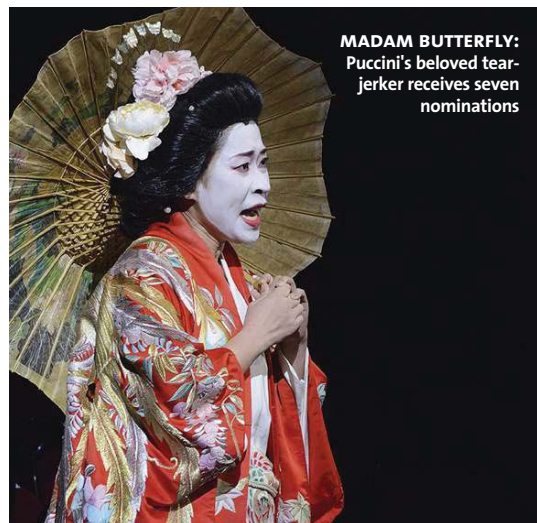
Lucy Crowe Soprano
Janáček *Cunning Little Vixen*
Mozart *The Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *Rigoletto*
Eric Cutler Tenor
Berlioz *Les Troyens*
Verdi *Otello*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*
Diana Damrau Soprano
Gounod *Roméo et Juliette*
Massenet *Manon*
Verdi *La traviata*
Sophie Daneman Soprano
Charpentier *Medée*
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Lise Davidsen Soprano
Puccini *Tosca*
R Strauss *Arabella*
R Strauss *Rosenkavalier*
Jeanine De Bique Soprano
Jake Heggie *Dead Man Walking*
Verdi *Otello*
Wagner *Flying Dutchman*
Stéphane Degout Baritone
Berg *Wozzeck*
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Anna Dennis Soprano
Berg *Wozzeck*
Mozart *Idomeneo*
Wagner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*
Natalie Dessay Soprano
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*
Anna Devin Soprano
Massenet *Werther*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *Falstaff*
Joyce DiDonato Mezzo
Berlioz *Les Troyens*
Jake Heggie *Dead Man Walking*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Plácido Domingo Tenor
Puccini *Manon Lescaut*
Verdi *Otello*
Wagner *Die Walküre*
Adrian Dwyer Tenor
Beethoven *Fidelio*
Berg *Wozzeck*

Verdi *Otello*
Joyce El Khoury Soprano
Donizetti *Maria Stuarda*
Tobias Picker *Emmeline*
Wagner *Die Walküre*
Mojca Erdmann Soprano
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *Falstaff*
Tara Erraught Mezzo
Bellini *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *La bohème*
Anthony Clark Evans Baritone
Donizetti *Lucia di Lammermoor*
Leoncavallo *Pagliacci*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Rebecca Evans Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *Madam Butterfly*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Franco Fagioli Countertenor
Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*
Mozart *La clemenza di Tito*
Verdi *La traviata*
Gerald Finley Bass-baritone
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *La traviata*
Wagner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*
Renée Fleming Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Tchaikovsky *The Queen of Spades*
Mirella Freni Soprano
Puccini *La bohème*
Puccini *Turandot*
Verdi *La traviata*
Mihoko Fujimura Mezzo
Mozart *Idomeneo*
Verdi *Don Carlos*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*
Ariunbaatar Ganbaatar Baritone
Verdi *Il Trovatore*
Verdi *Un Ballo in Maschera*
Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*
Elina Garanca Mezzo
Puccini *Tosca*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Verdi *Aida*
Aida Garifullina Soprano
Prokofiev *War and Peace*
Puccini *La bohème*

Puccini *Madam Butterfly*
Lesley Garrett Soprano
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Véronique Gens Soprano
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites*
Christian Gerhaher Baritone
Berg *Wozzeck*
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*
Angela Gheorghiu Soprano
Gounod *Faust*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Puccini *Tosca*
Wojtek Gierlach Bass
Puccini *Turandot*
Rossini *Guillaume Tell*
Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*
Christopher Gillett Tenor
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Janáček *Katya Kabanova*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Susan Graham Mezzo
Berlioz *Les Troyens*
Jake Heggie *Dead Man Walking*
Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Ryan Speedo Green Bass-baritone
Rossini *Il Viaggio a Reims*
Verdi *Don Carlos*
Verdi *Il Trovatore*

Gary Griffiths Baritone
Puccini *La bohème*
Verdi *Falstaff*
Verdi *Simon Boccanegra*
Susan Gritton Soprano
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Janáček *Cunning Little Vixen*
Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites*
Ann Hallenberg Mezzo
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Mozart *La clemenza di Tito*
Puccini *Tosca*
Thomas Hampson Baritone
Puccini *Tosca*
Verdi *Otello*
Wagner *Tannhäuser*
Rowan Hellier Mezzo
Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*
Handel *Giulio Cesare*
Stravinsky *Rake's Progress*
Judith Howarth Soprano
Puccini *La bohème*
Puccini *Madam Butterfly*
Puccini *Tosca*
Julian Hubbard Tenor
Berg *Wozzeck*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Wagner *Die Walküre*
Ruby Hughes Soprano
Britten *The Turn of the Screw*
Handel *Ariodante*
Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*
Gwyn Hughes Jones Tenor
Puccini *La fanciulla del West*
Puccini *Manon Lescaut*
Puccini *Tosca*

Caitlin Hulcup Mezzo
Gluck *Iphigénie en Tauride*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Ben Hulett Tenor
Britten *The Turn of the Screw*
Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Sunhae Im Soprano
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *La bohème*
Roberta Invernizzi Soprano
Puccini *Tosca*
Handel *Giulio Cesare*
Mozart *Così fan tutte*
Mozart *The Magic Flute*
Ermonela Jaho Soprano
Donizetti *Maria Stuarda*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *Suor Angelica*
Sumi Jo Soprano
Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites*
Puccini *La bohème*
R Strauss *Die Frau ohne Schatten*
Ben Johnson Tenor
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Verdi *Otello*
Jennifer Johnston Mezzo
Britten *Peter Grimes*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*
Kiri Te Kanawa Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
R Strauss *Arabella*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Christiane Karg Soprano
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Puccini *La bohème*
Janáček *Jenůfa*
Katarina Karnéus Mezzo
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
R Strauss *Elektra*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*
Sophie Karthäuser Soprano
Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Simon Keenlyside Baritone
Berg *Wozzeck*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *Otello*



MADAM BUTTERFLY:
 Puccini's beloved tear-
 jerker receives seven
 nominations

Rachel Kelly Mezzo
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *Don Carlos*
Justin Kangmin Kim Countertenor
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Mozart *Idomeneo*
R Strauss *Salome*
Hanna-Liisa Kirchin Soprano
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Janáček *Jenůfa*
Puccini *Madam Butterfly*
Angelika Kirchschrager Mezzo
Mozart *Così fan tutte*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Magdalena Kožená Mezzo
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Janáček *Katya Kabanova*
Jennifer Larmore Mezzo
Berg *Wozzeck*
Handel *Giulio Cesare*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Anna Larsson Mezzo
Britten *Peter Grimes*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Wagner *Parsifal*
Mhairi Lawson Soprano
Britten *The Turn of the Screw*
Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*
Sullivan *Iolanthe*
Kate Lindsey Mezzo
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *La bohème*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Elizabeth Llewellyn Soprano
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Puccini *La bohème*
Verdi *Simon Boccanegra*
Felicity Lott Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
R Strauss *Capriccio*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Ed Lyon Tenor
Britten *The Turn of the Screw*
Janáček *Jenůfa*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*



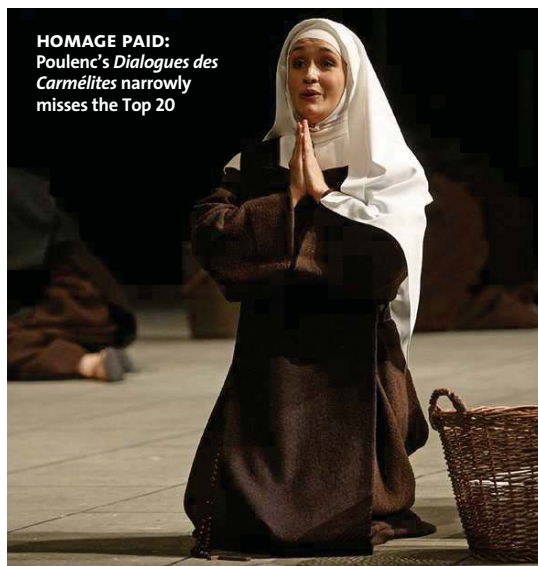
CARMEN: Bizet's most popular opera gained just four nominations

Soraya Mafi Soprano
Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites*
Rossini *The Barber of Seville*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Pumeza Matshikiza Soprano
Mozart *Così fan tutte*
Verdi *Don Carlos*
Wagner *Götterdämmerung*
Sam McElroy Baritone
Britten *Billy Budd*
Mark-Anthony Turnage *The Silver Tassie*
Wagner *Parsifal*
Tim Mead Countertenor
George Benjamin *Written on Skin*
Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*
Handel *Theodora*
Beate Mordal Soprano
Britten *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
Ligeti *Le grand macabre*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Catriona Morison Mezzo
Britten *The Rape of Lucretia*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Ann Murray Mezzo
Britten *Death in Venice*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Robert Murray Tenor
Berg *Wozzeck*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *Falstaff*
Henk Neven Baritone
Debussy *Pelléas*

et Mélisande
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*
Danielle de Niese Soprano
Handel *Giulio Cesare*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *Manon Lescaut*
Kristine Opolais Soprano
Dvořák *Rusalka*
Puccini *Manon Lescaut*
Verdi *Aida*
Anne Sofie von Otter Mezzo
Adès *Exterminating Angel*
Bizet *Carmen*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*
Felicity Palmer Mezzo
Janáček *Jenůfa*

R Strauss *Elektra*
Tchaikovsky *Queen of Spades*
Alexandrina
Pendatchanska Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
R Strauss *Salome*
Verdi *Otello*
Ailyn Pérez Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Verdi *La forza del destino*
Verdi *Il trovatore*
Miah Persson Soprano
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*
Sandrine Piau Soprano
Britten *The Turn of the Screw*
Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites*
R Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier*
Rowan Pierce Soprano
Handel *Giulio Cesare*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Mozart *The Marriage of Figaro*
Saimir Pirgu Tenor
Puccini *La bohème*
Puccini *Manon Lescaut*
Verdi *Rigoletto*
Luca Pisaroni Bass-baritone
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Rossini *Maometto II*
Verdi *Don Carlos*
Brett Polegato Baritone
Berg *Wozzeck*

Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*
Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*
Julian Prégardien Tenor
Britten *Billy Budd*
Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Sonia Prina Contralto
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Handel *Orlando*
Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*
Christopher Purves Baritone
Berg *Wozzeck*
Verdi *Falstaff*
Wagner *Das Rheingold*
Marina Rebeka Soprano
Bellini *Norma*
Bizet *Carmen*
Gounod *Roméo et Juliette*
Bryan Register Tenor
Berlioz *Les Troyens*
Wagner *Die Walküre*
Wagner *Tristan und Isolde*
Chen Reiss Soprano
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
R Strauss *Arabella*
Verdi *Rigoletto*
Lucile Richardot Mezzo
Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites*
Puccini *Tosca*
Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*
Natalya Romaniw Soprano
Mascagni *Cavalleria rusticana*
Puccini *La bohème*
Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*
Matthew Rose Bass
Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Verdi *Don Carlos*
Wagner *Die Walküre*
Kate Royal Soprano
Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Puccini *Turandot*
Kathryn Rudge Mezzo
Handel *Giulio Cesare*
Mozart *Marriage of Figaro*
Rossini *Barber of Seville*
Xavier Sabata Countertenor
Britten *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
Handel *Orlando*
Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea*



HOMAGE PAID: Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* narrowly misses the Top 20

GETTY

Carolyn Sampson Soprano
Debussy Pelléas et Mélisande
Mozart Marriage of Figaro
Puccini La bohème
Anna Samuil Soprano
Bizet Carmen
Puccini Madam Butterfly
Tchaikovsky Eugene Onegin
Peter Savidge Baritone
Britten Peter Grimes
Handel Rodelina
Wagner Götterdämmerung
Lucy Schauer Mezzo
Berg Wozzeck
Knussen Higglety
Pigglety Pop!
Mozart Marriage of Figaro
Ekaterina Scherbachenko Soprano
Purcell Dido and Aeneas
Mozart Don Giovanni
Tchaikovsky Eugene Onegin
Erwin Schrott Tenor
Mozart Don Giovanni
Puccini Tosca
Wagner Tannhäuser
Brindley Sherratt Bass

Berg Wozzeck
Verdi Otello
Verdi Rigoletto
Peter Sidhom Baritone
Mozart Marriage of Figaro
Puccini Tosca
Wagner Das Rheingold
Stuart Skelton Tenor
Britten Peter Grimes
Wagner Götterdämmerung
Wagner Parsifal
Nicky Spence Tenor
Britten Peter Grimes
Janáček Jenůfa
Wagner Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg
Toby Spence Tenor
Mozart Marriage of Figaro
Verdi La traviata
Wagner Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg
Michael Spyres Tenor
Berlioz Les Troyens
Monteverdi's L'Orfeo
Rossini Guillaume Tell
Frederica von Stade Mezzo
Heggie Dead Man Walking

Massenet Cendrillon
Mozart Marriage of Figaro
Andrew Staples Tenor
Britten Peter Grimes
Mozart Marriage of Figaro
R Strauss Salome
Noah Stewart Tenor
Puccini La bohème
Verdi Otello
Wagner Die Walküre
Bryn Terfel Bass-baritone
Puccini Gianni Schicci
Verdi Falstaff
Wagner Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg
Ailish Tynan Soprano
Puccini Madam Butterfly
Shostakovich Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk
R Strauss Der Rosenkavalier
Sarah Tynan Soprano
Berg Wozzeck
Britten The Turn of the Screw
Handel Giulio Cesare
Dominique Visse Countertenor

Monteverdi L'incoronazione di Poppea
Puccini Tosca
Schoenberg Pierrot Lunaire
Deborah Voigt Soprano
Puccini La fanciulla del West
R Strauss Salome
Wagner Tristan und Isolde
Michael Volle Baritone
Berg Wozzeck
Mozart Marriage of Figaro
Wagner Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg
Kang Wang Tenor
Leoncavallo Pagliacci
Rossini Guillaume Tell
Verdi Otello
Elizabeth Watts Soprano
Mozart The Marriage of Figaro
Ligeti Le grand macabre
Verdi La traviata
Peter Wedd Tenor
Bartok Bluebeard's Castle
Janáček Jenůfa
Wagner Tristan und Isolde
Héloïse Werner Soprano
Benjamin Written on Skin

Janáček The Cunning Little Vixen
Mozart Marriage of Figaro
Eva-Maria Westbroek Soprano
Janáček Katya Kabanova
R Strauss Salome
Shostakovich Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk
Roderick Williams Baritone
Britten Peter Grimes
Puccini La bohème
Tchaikovsky Eugene Onegin
Fflur Wyn Soprano
Berg Wozzeck
Puccini Tosca
R Strauss Der Rosenkavalier
Pretty Yende Soprano
Donizetti Lucia di Lammermoor
Gounod Roméo et Juliette
Verdi La traviata
Sonya Yoncheva Soprano
Bellini Norma
Verdi La traviata
Wagner Parsifal



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THE JAMES NAUGHTIE INTERVIEW

JONAS KAUFMANN



The universally acclaimed German tenor discusses his most testing role to date – that of Verdi's tragic Otello – and laments the challenges that musicians and opera houses face in our modern times

PHOTOGRAPHY GREGOR HOHENBERG

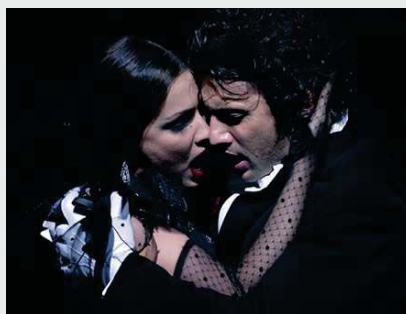
Danger is a word that keeps popping up in conversation with Jonas Kaufmann. Danger on the stage, and danger for opera companies. He talks about the thrill of performance. 'Anything can happen. Everyone feels it – the thrill, the adrenalin, the presence of the unexpected.'

But also the plight of many opera companies far away from London, Vienna, Munich, Milan. 'Many of the people in our art form struggle, I'm sorry to say. And in some places it is about to die. It's a tragedy.'

Yet this is not a singer who is moping, and not one who seems prone to introspection. Before we turn to his worries about where the next generation of singers will learn their craft, we discuss at length his preparations for a new role, and it's an insight into the high seriousness of an artist who manages, at the same time, to maintain a cheery calm in the midst of the circus of admirers who follow him everywhere and flock to theatres around the world to hear him.

We meet during his preparations in the summer for his first Otello, a role he's held back from performing as if waiting for his voice to darken a little more. He's now 48, at the peak of a career which, since around 2006, has propelled him to dizzying heights. Yet in the hurly-burly of Covent Garden preparations for opening night, he finds it

A LIFE IN BRIEF



FROZEN: with Anna Netrebko in *La bohème*

Early life: Born in Munich in July 1969, Kaufmann began piano lessons aged eight.

Education: He began his vocal training at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich in 1989, graduating in 1994 with distinction. Whilst studying he sang some small roles with Bavarian State Opera.

Early fame: In 1994, Kaufmann began his professional career at the Staatstheatre in Saarbrücken. His debut with the New York Met in 2006 opened doors to leading international companies including Vienna State Opera and Paris Opéra.

Roles: Kaufmann tends to specialise in powerful and dramatic 'spinto' tenor roles, including Don José in Bizet's *Carmen*, Cavaradossi in Puccini's *Tosca*, and the title role in Verdi's *Otello*.

easy to step back from the demands for quick sound-bites and, stepping straight from rehearsals, is happy to talk about character in opera, Verdi's grip on the imagination and the possibilities of musical theatre.

This is the character who will emerge in a major documentary for the BBC, called *Jonas Kaufmann, Tenor for the Ages*, due to be shown on 15 October at 7.30pm on BBC Four, by the renowned director John Bridcut, whose films on musicians – Britten, Rostropovich, Elgar, Parry and Colin Davis among others – are some of the most insightful cultural documentaries of recent years. He tells a good story about the cool Kaufmann.

In September 2015 he appeared at the last night of the Proms, singing three Puccini arias in the first half. There was a brief pause after the first two, from *Tosca* and *Manon Lescaut*, so that he could have a short break, covered by the humming chorus from *Madam Butterfly*. Bridcut and his team were filming backstage.

Off he came, and was quite happy to launch straight into a conversation for the camera, apparently untroubled and happy to talk. An experienced BBC staffer who was there said, 'I just don't believe this.' No demand for peace and quiet, a scarf to tie round his throat, lemon juice or anything else. He was simply happy to converse, and after three minutes or so, head straight back to the stage to sing 'Nessun Dorma'.



MOOR FEELING:
Kaufmann as Otello with
Marco Vratogna as Iago,
Covent Garden, 2017



As Bridcut puts it, 'He has a huge resilience, born of a remarkable self-confidence.' And maybe the unusual aspect of that self-confidence, which is obvious when you meet him, is that it seems to stop short of the arrogance common in stars who are past caring what anyone else thinks.

Bridcut has been filming him for nigh-on two years for the documentary. 'He doesn't want to be a star in an ivory tower. He can't help being a star, but he wants to relate to people and certainly doesn't want to be distant. At that level, it's pretty rare.'

You get a good sense of that character in listening to him talk about Otello, and explaining the nature of the challenge.

'It's a very big one,' says Kaufmann. 'That was the reason I avoided the part for a long time. From the moment my voice was starting to get darker and darker I was being asked to sing Otello, and I was struggling to accept it, because I knew I needed a lot of experience to master this part. It just forces you to do more than is actually healthy. The lows and the highs demand so much. There's a lot of very strong stuff, important parts of the opera, happening in the lower part of the voice. So you need to have that power to push through the orchestra. And then Verdi gives you the only high C written for the tenor. Everywhere else they are optional. Even the *Trovatore* high Cs are only optional, but here you have the real thing.'

'The purists, like [conductor] Riccardo Muti, always try to persuade us not to sing the optional high notes because he's convinced that they were put in on demand from the tenors of the time. But it matters here. You can see that it is really Otello as the character who has been pulled apart by the dark side of Iago and the bright side of Desdemona.'

There are other burdens that any Otello must carry. It's a role with a bit of a history.

'If you are a successful tenor, Otello is the part to do'

'Many singers have struggled, even some great names. So it is not an obvious thing – that if you are a successful tenor, this is a part to do. Think about Pavarotti. He sang it, yes, for a recording but never really mastered it. Jon Vickers was a great example and del Monaco was probably the wildest of them all. But Ramon Vinay [the Chilean tenor who died in 1996] for ten years became a tenor, sang Otello frequently, and then went back to be a baritone. He's probably the role model we all refer to, even Plácido [Domingo] himself, because this is the the real dark sound you can imagine if you think of Otello.'

And then, with stage calls echoing through his dressing room, and still with his general's boots on, he speaks about Otello as the exemplar of what opera could achieve.

'I can tell you that even the greatest actors have told me that they envy us a lot because we have the music underneath, taking us through, because they have to create everything from zero and we have the luxurious position of leaning back and letting the audience be prepared by the orchestra.'

Luxurious in one sense, but you still have to sing it. 'And it is certainly challenging, that's true,' Kaufmann continues. 'Remember this. There are not many murderers for a tenor to play. A choice of four that I know of, so we don't get a regular chance. I've sung one, Don José in Bizet's *Carmen*, many times – but she's provoking him so much and he's using everything he has to tell her to stop. Otello is very different, and for me this is the first time I'm committing a murder that is planned, and becomes inevitable in this way.'

'When you dive into this adventure of being Otello on stage, it's so much easier because you have the orchestra to help. We all know Verdi is one of the most brilliant composers of opera, and he waited 15 years after his last great success to do this masterpiece. And you really feel the difference. How he had developed. A little bit of Wagner, a little bit of the upcoming *verismo* style – you have all

SPONTANEOUS SPINTO:
'Every night it's going to
be fresh. That's the truth'



of those elements and they are combined in a way that is really fascinating.

'The phrases are so beautiful. I always say that Verdi gives everything – sometimes more than is really healthy for each and every phrase – and it all fits. It's just brilliant.'

In talking about this one opera, aware that his performances were bound to be subjected to intense scrutiny as a first-time Otello – and in a production, by Keith Warner, which everyone at Covent Garden knew was going to attract some criticism because of the sharp break from the lush, colourful sets of Elijah Moshinsky – Kaufmann revealed his intense feeling for characterisation. It's a performance that will be broadcast, from the Covent Garden run, on 21 October on BBC Radio 3 and on BBC Four the following day.

'You are forced to show all the human sides – the tenderness, the softness of this character, alongside his obsessions with power. In Shakespeare of course you can do a lot, but it's much darker. He's really like an animal. Here we have the two elements... beauty and the madness. Think of the beauty of the love duet, which is the only place where you can talk about love.

'Because it's very difficult for him to talk about private stuff – he's always talking about his great successes – and this shows me that it is someone who has no experience in love and relationship to women. It's an enemy that he never came across.'

Listening to this singer in the midst of rehearsals – in costume, having just conferred with his conductor, Antonio Pappano, about some details in Act III – is to get a glimpse of his own developing understanding of the opera, its structure and its possibilities.

'We have a *Parsifal* moment – there's a longing for some Holy Grail. And I'm reminded also of *Tales of Hoffman* – Act III and the seduction of Julietta. Otello's very innocent on this battlefield, and so therefore he is also very vulnerable. He has no reference, no comparison. It makes it difficult for him to cope with the fact that she might betray him.

'It's similar to the relationship to Iago. Why would he trust this man so much? The reason

'A lot of musicians and singers in opera are struggling'

is you need allies out there who you can trust, because your life depends on it. In love he finds it so difficult, so it is very dark and he is completely destroyed. It feels so depressive but he's found a language that is so strong.'

The demeanour of the singer who is firmly established at the apex of his career is untroubled. In a schedule of almost Domingo-like proportions, he somehow manages to carve out reasonable time at home in Munich with his partner Christiane, and his three children. Bridcut's team, following him through performances across Europe, have found him taking a striking amount of trouble to do the things that can become such a bore for a celebrity – the endless autograph requests, the throng at the stage door, the regulars who become so familiar in theatres that they're almost like (generally benign) stalkers.

Bridcut, standing behind the camera, found him surprisingly patient when a crew arrived, yet again in a dressing room. 'Here you are again. You're like a member of the family – one that you can't quite get rid of,' he says at one point.

But back to danger. It's easy to talk about the thrill of the unexpected in performance: 'Beware, because you're going to be moved by it, a lot!'. Less so the condition of opera, which troubles him, perhaps surprisingly given his success and his conviction that the five or six leading opera theatres (including the Royal Opera House – 'in super shape right now') are delivering at the top level.

But, despite pockets of excitement stirred up, as in the UK, by small companies with a sense of adventure, he looks across Europe, even in Germany, and sees decline.

'The great houses are doing well because they attract a lot of people and a lot of attention. All the others – and this is where the supply of new singers comes from – are struggling, because they have financial difficulties, and also reputation-wise. Let me ask you this. If you want to go on a Christmas shopping tour, you'd go to New York because it's cool; so why wouldn't you fly an hour or two to see the best opera you could get? And not take what you have in front of your door? It's very difficult for these houses to compete.

'I am in a privileged position because I am successful and I can choose. But a lot of other musicians and singers, a lot of people in our art form are struggling. A lot of houses have closed – in Germany even. You have Italy, where the thing was born, and you have financial and artistic crisis. And you have many beautiful opera houses that aren't open! They are closed for ever; or maybe they open for a week or two in a year just to raise enough money to keep the place going. This is a tragedy.

'We're fighting against all the other entertainment businesses and when you look at a musical show that runs eight times a week and is rehearsed for half a year, financed with an enormous amount of money, or you look at movies, of course you realise we don't have the money they have.

'But you don't have the thrill there. You can watch it 20 times and it will be the same. In opera, 20 times but never the same. Every night it's going to be fresh. That's the truth.'

It's time to get his armour on again. ■
Jonas Kaufmann, Tenor for the Ages' is broadcast on BBC Four on 15 Oct; Otello from the Royal Opera House will be broadcast on Radio 3 on 21 Oct and shown on BBC Four on 22 Oct. Jonas Kaufmann's new disc, 'L'Opéra', a tribute to 19th-century French opera, is out on Sony Classical on 15 Sept.

THE ART OF OPERA

We take a tour of the V&A's exhibition *Opera: Passion, Power and Politics*, which brings the story of the most ambitious art form to life

The history of opera is colourful and complex, a tale that began in Italy over 400 years ago and which is still being told today. This autumn, a major new exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum brings together more than 300 objects illustrating how the art form has developed over the centuries. Seven premieres in seven cities, from Monteverdi's Venice to Shostakovich's St Petersburg, are at the heart of this in-depth look at how opera has been influenced by society, culture and politics across the ages. Here are a few of the highlights...

Opera: Passion, Power and Politics runs at the V&A in collaboration with the Royal Opera House from 30 September 2017 to 25 February 2018



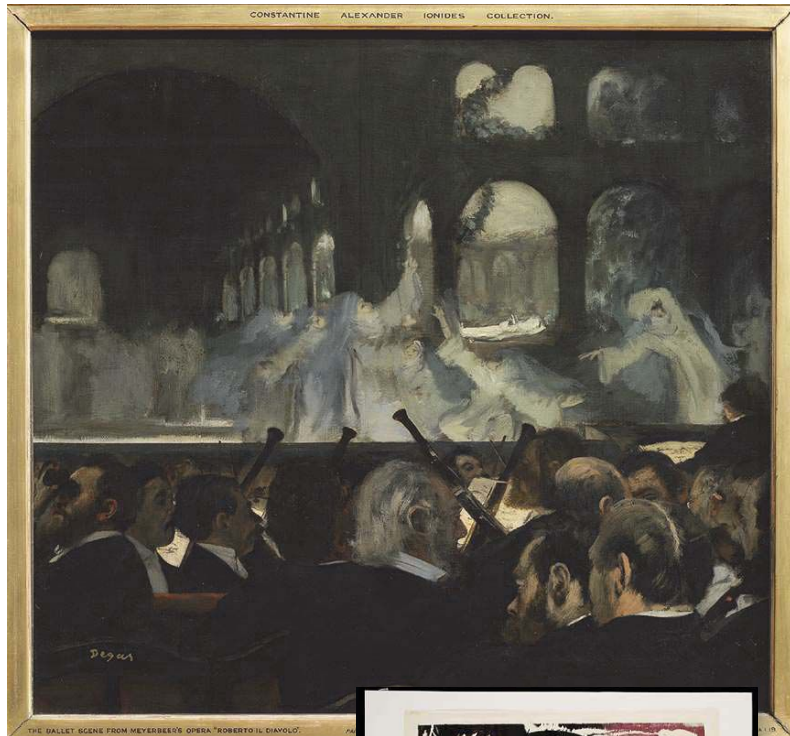
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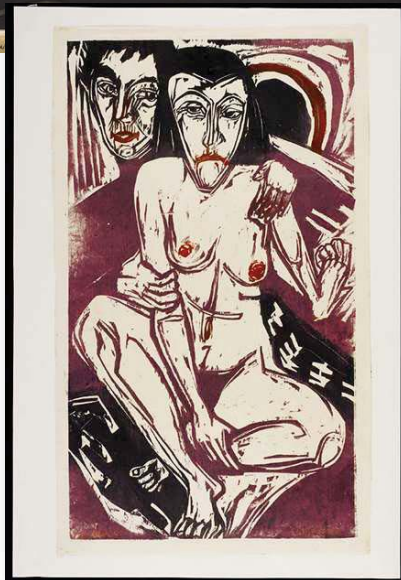


GRAND DESIGNS: (left) the Opéra Garnier in Paris snapped mid-construction in 1867; (above) the celebrated castrato Farinelli; (below) a bust of Wagner; (below left) Grisone's 1724 *A Masquerade at the King's Theatre Haymarket*; (centre) an Aubrey Beardsley illustration for Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*; (far left) Andrej Majewski's 1970 costume for Strauss's *Salome* at Covent Garden; (facing page) Sir James Thornhill's set design for Clayton's 1705 *Arsinoe*





INTERNATIONAL GALLERY: (above) grand opera was all the rage in 19th-century Paris, and this 1876 painting by Edgar Degas depicts a ballet scene from Meyerbeer's popular *Robert le diable*; (right) the 1928 woodcut *Melancholic Girl* was made by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, a member of the Expressionist Die Brücke group, which formed in Dresden in 1905, the same year the city saw the premiere of Strauss's *Salome*; (below) harpsichords were often heard in early opera, and this beautiful 1754 Giovanni Baffo Venetian instrument was commissioned by the Strozzi



THE ART OF DYING: Angel Blue as Puccini's doomed heroine Mimì

Lucy Worsley

Presenter Lucy Worsley talks to *Claire Jackson* about her new BBC Two opera series to tie in with the landmark exhibition at the V&A

Your series focuses on particular cities at particular moments and how they inspired specific operas. How important is historical context in understanding opera?

Looking at opera through the lens of time and place is what fascinates me as a historian. Opera is a valuable record of what was happening in a given period, as well as being a wonderful creative art form. I like to bring a historical tinge to musical territory such as when I presented *Mozart's London Odyssey* for BBC Four back in 2016.

Are you an opera fan?

I like opera, although I don't know that much about it. In the documentary, I talk



VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON, GETTY, REEF TELEVISION LTD



READY FOR THE CLOSE-UP: Lucy Worsley takes a look at the history of opera; (top left) Richard Strauss at the premiere of his scandalous *Salome* in Dresden in 1905

's Nights at the Opera

about the historical context, and Antonio Pappano, the music director at the Royal Opera House, explains the various arias that have been selected to represent each place. We start in Venice in the 17th century with Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and we end up in Dresden in the 20th century, exploring Strauss's *Salome*.

What was it like working with conductor Antonio Pappano?

Tony is a genius at making people like me who don't have a strong knowledge of music aware of what's happening, and explaining the nuts and bolts of the work. It was a pleasure to work with him. I've had a glimpse at what it must be like to be one of his singers in a coaching session; I've met singers who say 'he's changed my life' – they become his disciples.

Did you learn anything new while making the programme?

I had a lesson with American soprano Angel Blue and she taught me how to die.

Er...?

Specifically, how to die on stage as Mimì

in Puccini's 1896 *La bohème*, which Angel has done in 36 productions. Firstly, you ask the director not to position you on a couch, because that's how it's always done. (Angel told me that she once got to die on a piano, which was the most exciting time.) Then,

‘I am not a very good singer but I have a loud voice’

you lie back, shiver, and you roll your eyes to try to see your boyfriend Rodolfo, who is standing just out of sight. He's a mod type and you're in Paris in the late 1840s – people are being creative and starving, sort-of like modern-day hipsters. Mimì's lifestyle has led to tuberculosis, this terrible disease that was the scourge of artists living in the garrets. Towards the very end, Angel suggests a tremor

in the hand. I think it's amazing that she's able to sing and do all this, but Angel explained that anybody who is performing an opera at the Met [New York's Metropolitan Opera] can sing and act in whatever position they are asked! Finally, the dying Mimì takes a great big breath, lets it all out and flutters her eyelashes. It's very important that you go on being dead until the applause has finished.

Invaluable advice! Did you get to explore some interesting musical locations?

We visited some wonderful opera houses across Europe: Milan's La Scala, the Palais Garnier in Paris, the Semperoper in Dresden and Venice's La Fenice.

How did you decide which places to feature in your series?

The locations link to the Royal Opera House and V&A exhibition 'Opera: Passion, Power & Politics' (see p40), which is curated by Kate Bailey, who also appears in the programme. Kate took me into the conservation studio at the V&A where she was preparing several outfits to demonstrate how Mozart dressed; he would have actually worn more aristocratic clothes than we might expect for a freelance jobbing musician. He was moving through high society trying to get commissions off people. His opera *The Marriage of Figaro* features characters who consort with their master and mistress, the count and countess, which was quite revolutionary at the time. Revolutionary with a small 'r' – the French Revolution has not yet happened – but Mozart is introducing characters that were like himself: aspirational.

Who else did you meet?

I also had a singing lesson with soprano Danielle de Niese, who has worked on the role of Monteverdi's *Poppea*, from *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, set in bustling mercantile Venice where the protagonists depict real people. Danielle showed me how to create a living person – we performed a sexy duet.

I didn't know you were a singer.

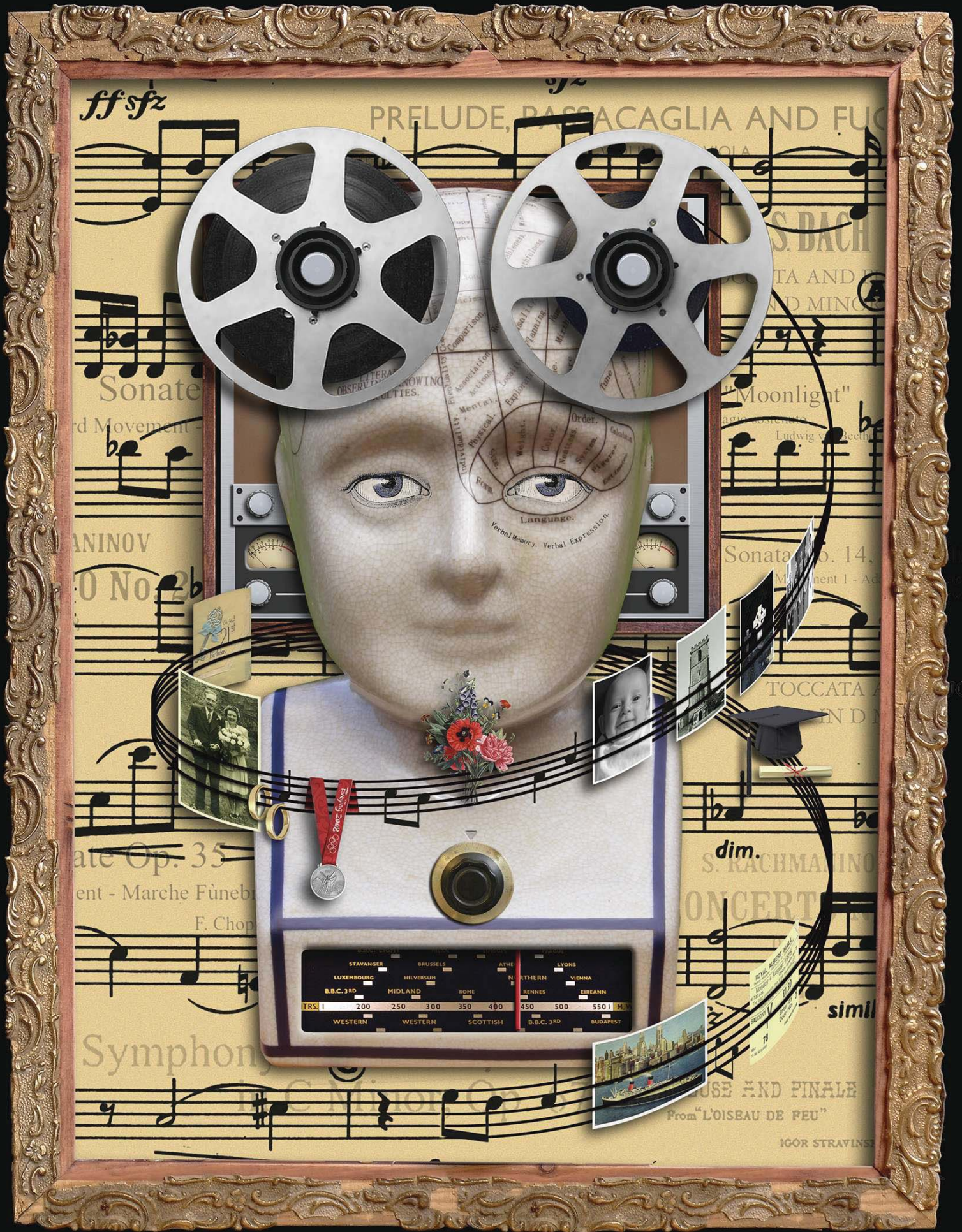
I am not a very good singer but I have a loud voice.

Who is this programme aimed at?

When making this documentary we wanted viewers to know that it's OK if you're not an opera buff. It's for anyone who has an interest in opera and/or history. There are some lighthearted moments – we recreated Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*, and I got to play Wagner's piano. We also researched the scissors that were used in castration of castrati – unfortunately that part wasn't included in the final edit. You show the instrument to men and they immediately cross their legs... ■



Lucy Worsley's *Nights at the Opera* will be broadcast on BBC Two on 14 & 21 October



ff sfz

PRELUDE, PASSACAGLIA AND FUGUE



Sonata

"Moonlight"

ANINOV

Sonata No. 14,

0 No. 2b

TOCCATA

ate Op. 35

dim.

ent - Marche Funebr
F. Chop

ONCERT

Symphony

ROUSE AND FINALE
From "L'OISEAU DE FEU"

IGOR STRAVINSKI



	STAVANGER	BRUSSELS	ATHENS	LYONS
	LUXEMBOURG	HILVERSUM	NORTHERN	VIENNA
	B.B.C. 3RD	MIDLAND	ROME	REFINES
TRS.	200	250	300	350
	400	450	500	550
	WESTERN	WESTERN	SCOTTISH	B.B.C. 3RD
				BUDAPEST

Notes to remember

Music is a trigger for our cherished memories, and can even help those with dementia to reconnect with their past, says *Dr Catherine Loveday*

ILLUSTRATION CHRIS WADDEN/DEBUT ART

Many years ago, I heard a very touching story at the memorial service for my PhD supervisor, Professor Alan Parkin. Towards the end of her tribute, his wife recounted the moment that their baby had been born. Long before the due date, the couple had decided that they wanted Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* to be playing during the birth, but in their rush to leave the house they'd left the CD behind. A kind nurse dashed around to find an alternative soundtrack but in the end, the doctor suggested they go with whatever BBC Radio 3 had to offer. Fate must have been smiling on them that afternoon because just as the baby emerged, the first gentle violin notes of *The Lark Ascending* drifted over the airways. Now, whenever I hear that piece, I can still feel the atmosphere that fell across the room as the eulogy concluded and the same melody began to play. The sounds that had once welcomed a new life were now marking goodbye to another. What struck me at the time was how perfectly it seemed to fit both occasions.

It is extraordinary how music attaches itself to our life story – easily, rapidly, and often unconsciously. *The Lark Ascending* is many things to me but this emotive link with my PhD supervisor inherently links it with my identity as a memory researcher. Just the opening notes are enough to trigger that moment in 2000, which in turn cues a flood of many other memories – my first meeting with him, the ease with which he explained a complex theory, the times when he offered

support, his repeated pleas for me to publish my research, and even his love of cricket. My ability to recall these times plays a part in who I am now and the decisions I make. We are all a product of our memories – they define our identity, they provide a social glue, and they enable us to plan the future. And music seems to offer a particularly effortless access to this narrative. Even when the memories don't fully emerge into consciousness, a familiar piece of

Musical memories are stored in a 'safe' area of the brain

music can still evoke an underlying sense of past experiences.

Coincidentally, Parkin introduced me to a man called Clive Wearing, who had suffered a severe bout of encephalitis. This infection ruthlessly destroyed large parts of his brain and led to one of the most profound cases of amnesia ever recorded. Clive had been a professional musician working for the BBC, and despite losing all his lifetime memories, retained an astonishing ability to conduct, perform and play the piano. The robust way in which musical memories seem to survive is demonstrated time and time again in individuals with brain damage and dementia. Even those who have become entirely divorced from their former life – desperately lost and

confused – can be dramatically reawakened when they hear the right music. Familiar melodies seem to provide a conduit to their past and a means to reconnect with friends and family. Recent research has shed light on why this might be, showing that musical memories are stored in a particularly 'safe' area of the brain and so remain generally accessible even after many other memories have faded.

As broadcaster Roy Plomley recognised back in 1941 when he dreamt up *Desert Island Discs*, music provides a superb gateway into our personal autobiographies. For those unfamiliar with the radio programme, guests select eight records to take with them to a desert island. As soon as people talk about a piece of music that is important to them, they begin to share stories of significant moments in their life – family holidays, first years away from home, weddings, funerals, personal triumphs, challenges, critical turning points. Over the years, *The Lark Ascending* has been chosen by 20 people, each with their own personal take on its place in their lives. The screenwriter Phil Redmond described how it always takes him back to great memories of messing around in the country during the long, hot summers, while actor Peter Sallis recounted meeting Vaughan Williams himself, outside the Sadler's Wells Theatre. 'I just stared at him,' he said, 'and thought, this oak tree has written the most beautiful piece of English symphonic writing.'

Our own research of the *Desert Island Discs* archive has confirmed something that psychologists have recognised for a while – guests tend to gravitate towards music they

WHY MUSIC?

Radio 3 at the Wellcome Collection

ROMANTIC RECALL:
Igor Levit plays Beethoven's
Diabelli Variations

FROM 13-15 OCTOBER, Radio 3 and the Wellcome Collection are teaming up for 'Why Music?', a weekend of lectures, discussions and performances broadcast from the Wellcome Collection in London. This year, music's dramatic impact on memory and the mind will be the focus during the weekend, with programmes on how performers memorise scores, Tom Service's exploration of 'earworms' in his Sunday programme, *The Listening Service* and, in *The Early Music Show*, a look at how music helped monks remember huge swathes of prayer. Lesley Garrett will choose a selection of music recalling people and places and there will be a performance by Singing with Friends, a community choir for families living with dementia. Igor Levit will play Beethoven's *Diabellis* and the Aurora Orchestra will perform Mozart's Symphony No. 40 – and much more... See p110

first heard in their late childhood and teens. This established phenomenon is known as the 'remembrance bump', and it also occurs when people are asked to choose their favourite films, books, and even footballers. Why might things we first discover during this period be preferred and better remembered? A popular theory suggests that memories from this time are important in defining our identity – who we are, what we like and where we come from. We naturally return to and rehearse these memories more than others because they support our sense of self. Favourite music can often be associated with a 'self-defining memory', such as a moment of personal discovery or an important transition. These memories tend to be particularly emotive and to have an enduring theme. A participant from one of our experiments, a professional singer,

said of *The Sound of Music*, 'I remember watching this at the age of eight and knowing that I just wanted to be Julie Andrews – I can still relate to those feelings now.'

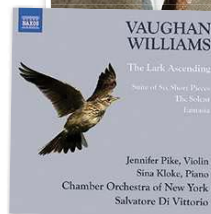
While our music choices are of course based on the aesthetic and emotional pleasure they bring, our research suggests that preferences are partly driven by the autobiographical memories we attach to them. But why does music become so intimately entangled with our personal narrative? One clue may come from our finding that a large percentage of musical memories are bound up with our relationships. People often refer to songs

that their mother, father or grandparent used to sing around the house when they were very young, or a cassette that was played on every family holiday, as well as hymns played at weddings and funerals. Sometimes it will be the performer themselves – soprano Josephine Barstow told Roy Plomley, 'I love the trio from *Così fan tutte* and I would like to hear Kiri Te Kanawa singing *Fiordiligi*, because in my view hers is the most beautiful soprano voice of our generation, and I would love to have it with me on the desert island. We were in fact students together at the Opera Centre.'

So maybe the capacity of music to connect us to people and even to aspects of ourselves explains why it is so powerfully linked with our memories. Melody, pitch, rhythm and



SIGHT AND SOUNDS:
actor Peter Sallis (left) associated
The Lark Ascending with meeting
its composer Vaughan Williams



timbre are fundamental to our communication of emotions – they signal joy, sadness, grief, surprise, excitement; they add crucial meaning to our words, and are the substance of universal pre-linguistic expressions such as laughter and crying. In one form

or another it is music that enables us to connect, empathise, build friendships and regulate our own feelings. Fascinating work from Carol Krumhansl, a professor of psychology at New York's Cornell University, has suggested that we may even have a 'cascading reminiscence

bump' – not only do people prefer music they first experienced in their youth, but they are also inclined towards music that belongs to their parents' and even grandparents' teenage years. In other words, because our parents play their favourite music while we are growing up, this same music later becomes important to us because it connects us to them. I like to think that my son's love of Rachmaninov stems from my Russian grandmother's stories of sitting on the piano stool of the great man himself.

From an evolutionary point of view, relationships are essential to human survival. We need families to support us into adulthood, and it is through communities that we find food, build shelter and protect ourselves from danger. Attachment is critically dependent on being able to remember our previous interactions and how they have made us feel. For many of us, music offers one of the most powerful ways to cement and extend relationships, simply through its ability to stimulate recollections of past encounters. Our theories suggest that the intimate association between music and memories derives from the remarkable way that it connects us to people, both in the present and through association with the past. If you are going to be on your own on a desert island then how better to defeat the solitude than to take your friends and family in the form of a Rachmaninov piano concerto, a set of old folk songs, or *The White Album* by The Beatles. Music regulates our emotions, it stimulates our mind, but it also connects us to people, the periods, and the moments that make us who we are. ■

BBC
RADIO



Dr Catherine Loveday takes
part in 'Beyond Memory: Music
in the Moment' on 14 Oct at

6.30pm, part of Radio 3 and the Wellcome
Collection's 'Why Music? The Key To Memory'



PIECES OF EIGHT: Roy Plomley on *Desert Island Discs*

2017/18 NEW SEASON GUIDE

A look ahead to the very best in live performance for the upcoming season



City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Music is big in Birmingham: under the baton of music director Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, the CBSO introduces its new season at Symphony Hall

AS IT APPROACHES its 100th anniversary in 2020, the CBSO is proud of its global reputation while remaining rooted in the UK's second largest city. The 2017-18 season includes music from Bernstein to Bollywood, Beethoven to Bowie, and concerts for families. It's celebration of Debussy, 100 years after his death, includes a concert performance of his fairy-tale opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* in June and, in March, a two-weekend Debussy Festival in which Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and the CBSO plunge into this extraordinary musical mind. No matter what your musical taste, you'll find the perfect concert.

CONTACT DETAILS/BUY TICKETS

TEL: +44 (0)121 780 3333

WEB: cbsoco.uk

EMAIL: information@cbsoco.uk



Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla,
the CBSO's vibrant
music director

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

21-23 Sep 2017

Haydn: *The Creation*

Haydn's great oratorio finds room for both angels and earthworms, and with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla conducting the CBSO Chorus and a world-class team of soloists, there's no more life-affirming way to open their new season.

17-25 Mar 2018 Debussy Festival

'What rules do you follow?' asked Claude Debussy's music teacher. 'Pleasure,' he replied. 100 years after his death, join the CBSO as they set out to explore the wonder, power and sheer beauty of music's quietest revolutionary.

31 May 2018 Fauré's Requiem

Still waters run deep. Gabriel Fauré was a quiet man, and there's no anger or fury in his haunting Requiem – just some of the loveliest choral music ever written. But it can't conceal a world of heartfelt emotion.



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

Philharmonia Orchestra

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

28 Sep 2017 – 28 Jun 2018

The Salonen Series

Principal conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen opens the season with two Sibelius symphonies and new works by Daniel Bjarnason and Anna Thorvaldsdóttir. He also conducts three Mahler symphonies, a major new work by Unsuk Chin and Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*.

12 Oct 2017 – 20 May 2018

Voices of Revolution

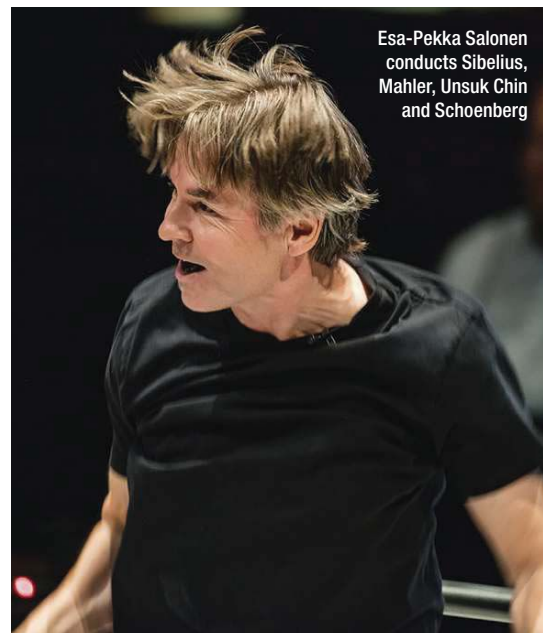
Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts five concerts exploring the impact of the Russian Revolution, with music by Prokofiev, Mosolov, Shostakovich and Glière. A screening of *Battleship Potemkin*, talks, chamber music and an Insights Day complete the series.

5, 8 Oct 2017

Rouvali and Hrůša

Meet the Philharmonia's new principal guest conductors. Santtu-Matias Rouvali brings his irrepressible energy to Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and Jakub Hrůša conducts Smetana's *Má Vlast* and Dvořák's Violin Concerto, with Hilary Hahn as soloist.

Renowned for its illustrious recording heritage, the Philharmonia forges a pioneering path through 21st-century musical life



Esa-Pekka Salonen
conducts Sibelius,
Mahler, Unsuk Chin
and Schoenberg

THE PHILHARMONIA performs with some of today's most exciting conductors and soloists, at London's Southbank Centre and in Leicester, Canterbury, Bedford and Basingstoke. Led by Esa-Pekka Salonen, a conductor known for his insightful programming and championing of new music, this season opens with an evening of Nordic music old and new and closes with Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, described by *BBC Music Magazine* as 'an exhilarating journey' when Salonen recorded it in 2009. In between comes music from over five centuries, including Vladimir Ashkenazy's *Voices of Revolution* series.

CONTACT DETAILS/BUY TICKETS

TEL: 0800 652 6717 (UK only)

WEB: philharmonia.co.uk

EMAIL: orchestra@philharmonia.co.uk

Bridgewater Hall International Concert Series

The International Concert Series offers music-lovers the chance to hear the best international artists in one of the world's finest concert venues

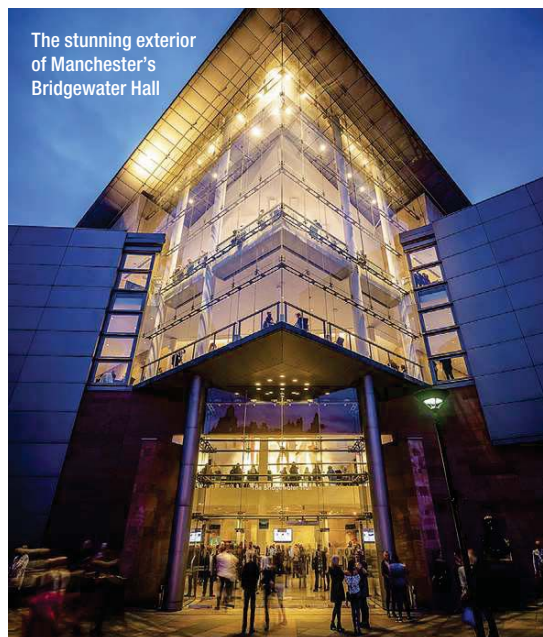
Notable guests in this year's Series include the Basel Symphony Orchestra with cellist Sol Gabetta, the Dresden Philharmonic with violinist Arabella Steinbacher, and Joshua Bell playing *The Four Seasons* with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Recitals include pianists Stephen Hough and Murray Perahia, whilst choral highlights include The Tallis Scholars, The Sixteen, a popular Bach programme and Bristol Old Vic's remarkable semi-staged production of Handel's *Messiah* with The English Concert. Plus, John Rutter leads a Christmas celebration with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and The King's Singers.

CONTACT DETAILS/BUY TICKETS

TEL: +44 (0)161 907 9000

WEB: www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk

ADDRESS: Lower Mosley St, M2 3WS



SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

13 Nov 2017

Sir András Schiff

Experience the intensity of Sir András Schiff playing Bach's mightiest keyboard work, the *Goldberg Variations*, in a rare performance.

12 Feb 2018

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra

Tomáš Netopil, one of Jiří Bělohlávek's former pupils and assistants, directs the orchestra in this programme of Mozart's Overture from *Don Giovanni* and Dvořák's 'New World' Symphony, and Alisa Weilerstein plays Dvořák's Cello Concerto.

13 Apr 2018

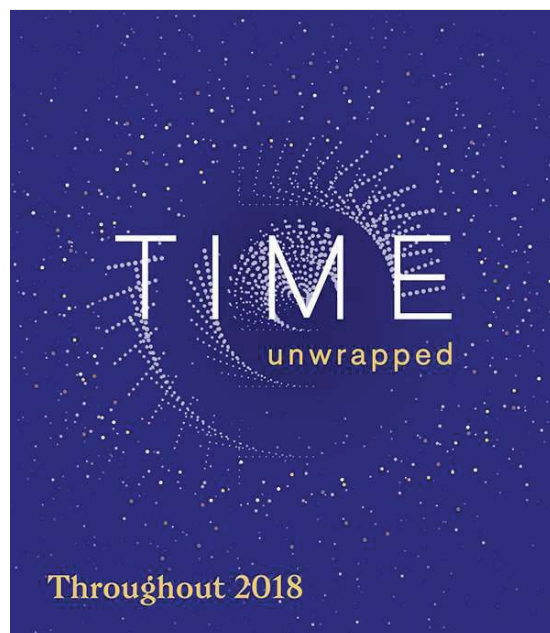
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Sir Roger Norrington, the OAE's conductor emeritus, joins forces with the orchestra's principal horn, Roger Montgomery, to explore an instrument which Mozart loved. Programme includes Mozart's Horn Concertos Nos 1 & 4 and his 'Linz' Symphony.



Time Unwrapped at Kings Place

Kings Place explores how music can stretch time, condense it, reverse it, organise it, atomise it, tangle with it and suspend it altogether



WHAT DOES MUSIC have to tell us about time? *Time Unwrapped* gives you more than 50 different experiences of time, whether you're immersed in Manu Delago's *Human Clock*, or swept up in Adams's spiralling loops, the superhuman complexity of Nancarrow's canons, the suspensions of Feldman and Mozart, Satie and Pärt, the heavenly lengths of late Schubert or the eternal time of the Downside Abbey monks' divine offices. From Haydn's *Creation* to Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* and a New Year's countdown from Aurora Orchestra, it's time to dive into the vortex...

CONTACT DETAILS/BUY TICKETS

TEL: +44 (0)20 7520 1490

WEB: kingsplace.co.uk/time

ADDRESS: 90 York Way, London N1 9AG

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

20 Jan 2018

Colin Currie Group: Time Phase

The early percussive classics of Steve Reich, including *New York Counterpoint*, *Drumming Part 1* and *Mallet Quartet*.

5 May 2018

Icebreaker: Velocity

High-octane Minimalist works on the theme of speed, including Louis Andriessen's 1983 classic *De snelheid*.

11 May 2018

Hugo Ticciati and Friends: Time Stands Still

Hugo Ticciati and pianist Víkingur Ólafsson are joined by Miyoko Shida who, during Pärt's mesmerising *Spiegel im Spiegel*, performs the renowned 'Sanddorn Balance' act.

20 Oct 2018

London Sinfonietta: On the Hour

Allow music to alter your concept of time in this concert of three parts, each starting strictly on the hour. Composers include Nancarrow, Feldman and Stockhausen.

kings place
music+art+restaurants

Dunedin Consort

Dunedin Consort is Scotland's leading Baroque ensemble, performing throughout the world. It is acclaimed for its energised and vivid performances, directed by leading Bach authority John Butt

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN one of many exciting firsts for Dunedin Consort, including its debut performance at the BBC Proms and a residency at London's Wigmore Hall. The works of JS Bach form the backbone of Dunedin Consort's 2017/18 Season, including performances of his *St John* and *St Matthew* Passions, the B Minor Mass and the Christmas Oratorio with regular Dunedin partners tenor Nicholas Mulroy, bass-baritone Matthew Brook, countertenor Iestyn Davies and soprano Sophie Bevan. The new season takes the ensemble to the Handel-Festspiele Halle in Germany and a residency at Krakow's Holy Week Festival in Poland. The leader of Dunedin Consort, Cecilia Bernardini, will tour a selection of Vivaldi's

virtuosic violin concertos and John Butt directs two ambitious Handel oratorios.

Founded in 1995 and taking its name from 'Din Eidyn', the ancient Celtic name of Edinburgh Castle, Dunedin Consort has established itself as one of the world's leading Baroque ensembles. Famous for its vibrant performances, it has won several awards for its acclaimed discs, of works such as Handel's *Messiah* the JS Bach Passions. 'The music we make at Dunedin Consort not only must reflect the time and style in which it was written,' says John Butt, 'but also the energy, atmosphere and excitement of the performances where these works, many of which have proved to be remarkable durable masterpieces, were heard for the first time.'



John Butt, founder and director of Dunedin Consort (right)



SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

29 Oct – 1 Nov 2017

Bach Masses

John Butt directs some of Bach's favourite Masses with tenor Nicholas Mulroy, bass Matthew Brook and others in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Hamburg.

15-16 Dec 2017

Bach's Christmas Oratorio

Following its award-winning recording, Dunedin Consort performs Bach's exuberant festive masterpiece in Perth and Wigmore Hall, London.

19-20 December 2017

Handel's Messiah

On the 275th anniversary of its Dublin premiere, John Butt directs Handel's popular work in concerts in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

23, 25 Mar 2018

Bach's St Matthew Passion

John Butt directs this epic Passion with his trademark small forces, as Bach himself would have had at its premiere, in Edinburgh and Wigmore Hall.

4, 6 Apr 2018

Vivaldi's La Favorita

Acclaimed violinist and Dunedin Consort leader Cecilia Bernardini presents a selection of Vivaldi's virtuosic violin concertos in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

20-21 Jun 2018

Bach's B Minor Mass

John Butt and Dunedin Consort head to Edinburgh and Wigmore Hall to perform one of Bach's best-loved masterworks.

DUNEDIN CONSORT

CONTACT DETAILS/BUY TICKETS

TEL: +44 (0)131 516 3718

WEB: www.dunedin-consort.org.uk

EMAIL: info@dunedin-consort.org.uk

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

As conductor Peter Oundjian embarks on his final season as music director, 2017/18 promises another alluring mix of thrilling live music, enthralling education and brilliant innovation



SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

19 Sep 2017

Opening Night: *Life of Pi*

Canadian composer Mychael Danna's Academy Award-winning film score to *Life of Pi* makes its world première on the TSO stage as a new orchestral suite.

28 Oct 2017

Israel Philharmonic Orchestra

Following the TSO's historic 2017 tour of Israel, the illustrious Israel Philharmonic Orchestra makes its return to Toronto for an unforgettable performance.

10-21 Jan 2018

Mozart@262

The TSO's Mozart@262 Festival presents nine sublime concerts co-curated by Bernard Labadie and the orchestra's music director Peter Oundjian.

1 March 2018

Lang Lang

Superstar pianist Lang Lang brings his drive and poetry to Beethoven's tempestuous Third Piano Concerto. One night only.

3-10 March 2018

New Creations Festival

Bold. Experimental. Unmissable. The TSO's hallmark new-music festival kicks off its 14th year of innovative programming and electrifying premières.

28-30 June 2018

Bravo, Peter!

Peter Oundjian concludes his 14-year term as music director with one of the enduring icons of music: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. A must-see symphonic event.



Toronto
Symphony
Orchestra

CONTACT DETAILS/BUY TICKETS

TEL: +1 416 598 3375

WEB: TSO.CA

EMAIL: contactus@TSO.CA



Peter Oundjian, TSO's music director; (left) Measha Brueggergosman sings in *Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation*



Lang Lang plays Beethoven, 1 Mar

LOK PHOTOGRAPHY, DALE WILCOX, ROBERT ASCROFT

FROM BREATHTAKING masterworks to blockbuster films live in concert and bold and experimental new music, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra has more than 100 events to offer in its must-see 2017/18 season. Countless world-famous stars grace the TSO stage as part of conductor Peter Oundjian's 14th and final season as music director. From Canada itself, violinist James Ehnes and

pianists Jan Lisiecki and Angela Hewitt will be delighting with Brahms, Bach and Mozart, while, to mark Remembrance Day, soprano Measha Brueggergosman leads a stunning cast in *Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation*, a soul-searching work by Canadian composer Jeffrey Ryan and war poet Suzanne Steele. Leading musicians visiting Roy Thomson Hall from abroad will include pianists Leon Fleisher, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Daniil Trifonov and violinist Christian Tetzlaff, to name a few. Major festivals in January and March celebrate, respectively, the genius of Mozart and the many wonders of the world of new music. March also sees a one-off appearance by Lang Lang, who will be bringing his sublime touch to Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3. And, on a celebratory note, Canadian Brass will be welcoming the Christmas period with three festive concerts. The season draws to a close in June, when legendary actor Christopher Plummer will be taking to the spotlight in a not-to-be-missed celebration of Peter Oundjian's influential Toronto Symphony Orchestra career.

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

6-7 Oct 2017 Music Hall Grand Opening

The season opener includes Scriabin's epic *Le Poème de l'Extase*, John Adams's *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, and a commission by Jonathan Bailey Holland. Kit Armstrong performs Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1.

20-21 Oct 2017

Debussy: *Pelléas et Mélisande*

The culmination of a three-year exploration, Louis Langrée conducts his Grand Prix award-winning interpretation of Debussy's lyric and haunting masterpiece, *Pelléas et Mélisande*. These special performances feature staging by James Darrah.

4-5 Nov 2017

The Storm that Built Music Hall

In 1875, a thunderstorm pounded the tin roof of Cincinnati's temporary performance venue, drowning out the sound of the music and inspiring Music Hall's creation. Experience music from that stormy season, plus a commission by Julia Adolphe.



Music is coming home in Ohio, as Louis Langrée and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra return to a newly renovated Music Hall



Louis Langrée and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra return to Music Hall, 6 Oct

THE SEASON OPENER showcases the sonic splendour of the orchestra in the newly renovated Music Hall, from John Adams's *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* to Scriabin's *Le poème de l'extase*. Season highlights include five world premieres by diverse composers, Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* with staging by James Darrah, a Bernstein centenary celebration and the beginning of a three-year Beethoven symphony cycle, paired with works that are a modern mirror to Beethoven's influence. Guest conductors include Sir Andrew Davis, Paavo Järvi, Marek Janowski and Juanjo Mena.

CONTACT DETAILS/BUY TICKETS

TEL: +1 513.381.3300

WEB: cincinnati-symphony.org

EMAIL: information@cincinnati-symphony.org

cincinnati-symphony.org

Bristol International Classical Season

Bristol's Colston Hall presents a season bursting with verve, passion and quality, as great as any in the famous venue's illustrious 150-year history

COLSTON HALL's season begins with an all-German programme from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra who, over coming months, are joined by soloists including cellist David Fray and pianist Sunwook Kim. We also welcome the St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra in a feast of Russian Romanticism, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the Czech Philharmonic, while the London Symphony Orchestra mixes a cocktail of Brahms and Ravel, the Dresden Philharmonic brings Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich and the Würth Philharmonic closes the season with violinist Maxim Vengerov.

CONTACT DETAILS/BUY TICKETS

TEL: +44 (0)117 203 4040

WEB: www.colstonhall.org

EMAIL: boxoffice@colstonhall.org

Alisa Weilerstein plays Shostakovich with Czech Philharmonic, 11 Feb



SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

25 Jan 2018

Academy of St Martin in the Fields

Spring comes early when the ASMF and conductor/violinist Joshua Bell sprinkle some iconic Vivaldian seasoning before a new work by bassist Edgar Meyer and Beethoven's optimistic Second Symphony.

11 Feb 2018 Czech Philharmonic

The mighty Czech Philharmonic returns to Bristol, serving up a double helping of Dvořák – including his homesick postcard home 'From the New World' – before cellist Alisa Weilerstein performs her much-lauded take on Shostakovich's First Cello Concerto.

29 May 2018 City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

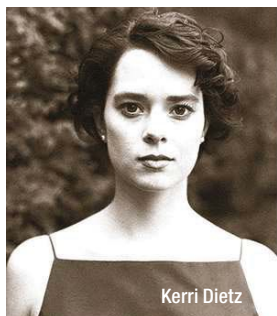
CBSO's acclaimed principal conductor Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla brings a gust of fresh air to Bristol, presenting Nadia Boulanger's *D'un matin de printemps*, sea-sprayed Debussy and a Mahlerian maelstrom in the shape of the composer's First Symphony.



colston hall
Bristol's home of music

New Sussex Opera

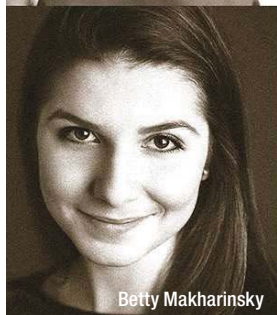
Some people will go to hell and back for love. New Sussex Opera's 40th season opens with a new production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*



Kerri Dietz



Eleanor Janes



Betty Makharinsky



Eva Rustige

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14 Feb 2018

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SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

6 Oct 2017

Basel Symphony Orchestra

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9 Oct 2017

Mariinsky Orchestra

Joined by violinist Kristóf Baráti, Valery Gergiev conducts Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tale of Tsar Saltan*, and Stravinsky's Violin Concerto and *The Firebird*.

16 Oct 2017

St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra

Peter Donohoe performs Rachmaninov's Fourth Piano Concerto, before Alexander Dmitriev conducts Tchaikovsky's 'Pathétique' Symphony No. 6.

8 Nov 2017

Brussels Philharmonic

In a programme that also includes works by Ravel, Prokofiev and Turnage, Nicolaj Znaider is the soloist in the Bruch Violin Concerto. Stéphane Denève conducts.

20 Nov 2017

Basel Chamber Orchestra

Heinz Holliger conducts, as Stephen Hough performs Mendelssohn's First Piano Concerto. Schubert's Symphony No. 9, the 'Great C major', rounds off the evening.

24 Nov 2017

NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover

Under the baton of Andrew Manze, two works by Beethoven – the *Egmont Overture* and, played by Lars Vogt, Piano Concerto No. 2 – are followed by Brahms's Symphony No. 2.



Valery Gergiev conducts an all-Russian programme; (left) Basel Chamber Orchestra

THIS SEASON'S CONDUCTORS include Valery Gergiev, Stéphane Denève, Michael Sanderling, Andrew Manze and Sir Roger Norrington as well as a host of critically acclaimed soloists, including four of the most popular and highly regarded British pianists: John Lill, Barry Douglas, Stephen Hough and Peter Donohoe. Across the season, the orchestras, conductors and soloists perform music from Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven – including the complete cycle of the German composer's piano concertos – to works of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Among the season's many highlights, the Mariinsky Orchestra returns to the series in October with Valery Gergiev and Hungarian violinist Kristóf Baráti for two concerts of

music by Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky, and, in March, Sir Roger Norrington conducts the SWR Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart as conductor emeritus with a programme of all Beethoven works, rounded off by Symphony No. 3, the 'Eroica'.

Rising-star Pavel Kolesnikov makes two appearances this year, playing Beethoven piano concertos alongside internationally renowned orchestras on each occasion: No. 4 with the Czech National Symphony in April, and No. 1 with the Flanders Symphony Orchestra the following month. Also in May, the brilliant Arabella Steinbacher performs Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with the Dresden Philharmonic under its chief conductor Michael Sanderling.



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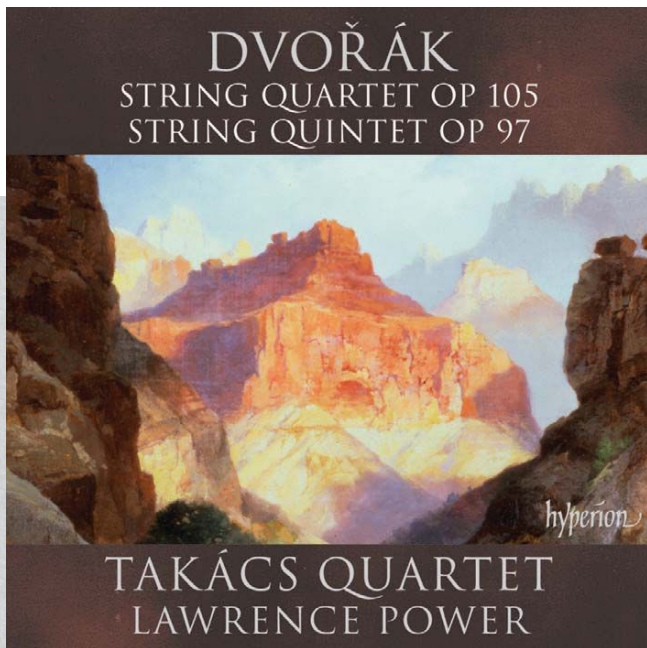
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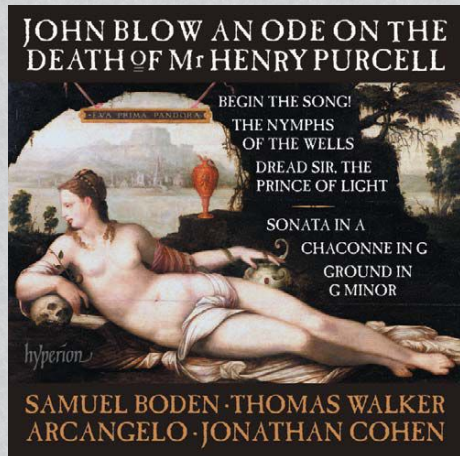
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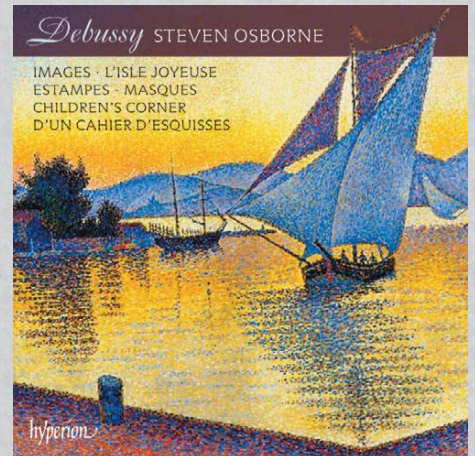
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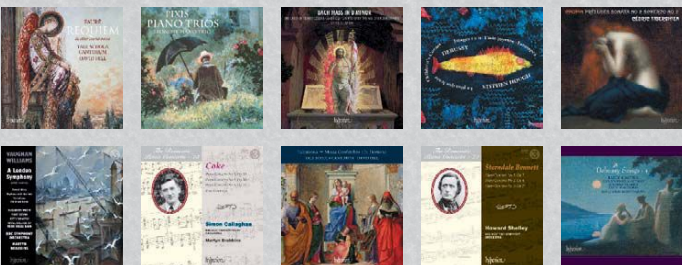
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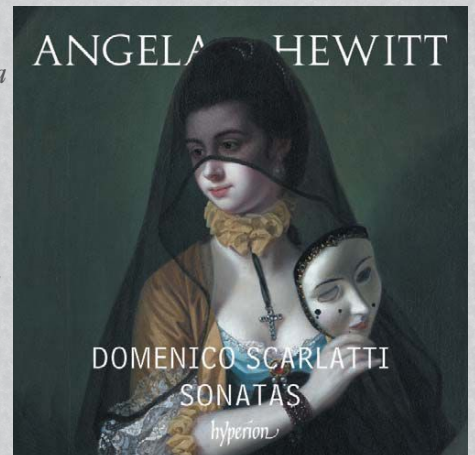
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SEAT OF LEARNING

Away from its daily programme of chamber concerts, Wigmore Hall spreads its wings far and wide in a bid to bring music education to people of all ages, reports *Andrew Stewart*

Frontline reports from classroom music teachers and their peripatetic colleagues, laced with dispiriting details of funding cuts and contract revisions, contain reasons for gloom about the future supply of classical music's performers and audience. Yet the story is more complex and certainly less bleak than it appears – less bleak, that is, if your school or community is served by one of the many education outreach projects delivered by the nation's orchestras, opera companies and concert venues. Over the past two decades, Wigmore Hall has raised music education from sideshow to showpiece, delivered under the banner of Learning to everyone from babes in arms to centenarians.

Mental health, physical well-being, dementia care and lifelong learning fall within the Wigmore Hall Learning tent, as do programmes to introduce toddlers to chamber music or young people to Wigmore concerts. The central London venue also offers training to the next generation of music animateurs and operates an apprentice composer scheme. Its education work scores high on ambition, higher still on quality.

Wigmore Hall Learning is set to celebrate its 20th anniversary this season with Seven Stages of Life. The Hall's inaugural Learning

festival includes concerts in the main evening programme devoted to the journey from cradle to grave. Helen Grime, Wigmore Hall's composer in residence, has written a song cycle on themes of parenthood, the pain and grief of miscarriage among them, while pianist Graham Johnson has concocted a recital of songs inspired by the 'strange, eventful history' of Jacques's famous 'All the world's a stage' monologue from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

Learning, observes Wigmore Hall's director John Gilhooly, pervades the venue's planning and influences its audience development. 'We present 500 concerts here every season, often two and sometimes three a day,' he notes. 'It's quite something to produce 700 Learning events over the same period, around a third of them at the Hall. That shows where we are with education work and is a tribute to the partnerships we've built with schools and so many external agencies.'



Wigmore Hall has created education projects with, among others, Alzheimer's UK and the Royal National Institute of Blind People, worked with Turtle Key Arts to reach young people with autism spectrum disorder, and forged close relations with the Westminster-based Cardinal Hume

Centre. The latter, which supports people affected by poverty and homelessness, recently hosted a group composition project for members of its ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) class and took part in Learning's Young Producers, a scheme that enables 14 to 18 year-olds to produce their own Wigmore Hall concert. Other collaborations have delivered Learning events with refugees, domestic violence victims, and mothers with HIV and their children.

HELP AT HAND: the Wigmore Hall Learning scheme includes Singing with Friends, a choir for people affected by dementia; and (below) its musical outreach helps victims of poverty





REACHING OUT

John Gilhooly on the importance of Wigmore Hall's Learning schemes



'OUR LEARNING PROJECTS are inspired by the intimate, shared experience of chamber music, where every voice is equally valued,' says John Gilhooly.

'Everyone is welcome to take part. That's the ethos of Wigmore Hall and of our education work. People say we appeal to an old audience. But that's a myth. Our concert audience is changing. We're reaching out to younger people and connecting with the under-35s. Learning is a vital part of that. Most of our education work culminates in a performance at the Hall, but we're taking chamber music and song to all parts of the community. Although some may sniff about it, we make no apology for placing Learning at the heart of Wigmore Hall.'

'We also work with Chelsea Community Hospital School to provide creative and social opportunities to young people while they're in hospital,' says Daisy Swift, Wigmore Hall's Head of Learning. 'It's about helping people, including those in isolation units, who face barriers to music-making by improving their well-being and sense of community through collaborative composition. We use music technology as a powerful way of bringing participants together.'

Overcoming isolation is among the concerns of Music for Life, Wigmore Hall's programme of work with professional musicians, carers and people living with dementia. While many of the scheme's interactive sessions take place in residential care settings, Music for Life now works with those who are living with dementia in their home. It also hosts weekly rehearsals for Singing with Friends, a new community choir for individuals and families living with dementia. 'Music for Life is a huge part of what we do,' comments Swift. 'We believe

that dementia need not stop people from doing the things they love.'

In addition to its schools and community work, Learning feeds minds hungry for knowledge about chamber music and song. Its Behind the Music programme includes masterclasses led by artists such as mezzo

'Learning is just as important as our concert programme'

Brigitte Fassbaender and pianist Sir Andrés Schiff, pre-concert talks, study days and courses, lecture-recitals and artist interviews. 'It's all part of the process of integrating Learning into every area of Wigmore Hall's activity,' says Gilhooly. 'That must come from the top of the organisation.' Education work, he adds, is often seen as remote from concert

life, like a satellite transmitting virtuous signals rarely received by the community of musicians and their audiences. 'As director, I see it as my job to promote our education programme. Learning is just as important as our concert programme and reflects it too.'

Readers based far from London may sigh at yet another tale of the capital's conspicuous wealth, expressed here by an arts organisation flourishing in favourable conditions. Wigmore Hall Learning, heavily dependent on private donors and charitable trusts for its funding, is determined, however, to share what it does with the widest possible audience. The venue has invested over £2m in digital technology in recent years, opening its doors to a potentially enormous online audience. Education events can now be streamed live to students worldwide, archived masterclasses viewed at the click of a mouse.

Daisy Swift says that Wigmore Learning owns a vast store of collective education experience and expertise. The aim is to overcome the geographical limits to its work with schools by developing an online learning resource hub. 'We are also pushing our education work into outer London boroughs, establishing partner schools in Haringey and Havering, where there's far less music provision than you see in the inner London boroughs. The idea is to replicate that across all of our work, by thinking about who our partners are and where and how we can really make the greatest impact.' ■

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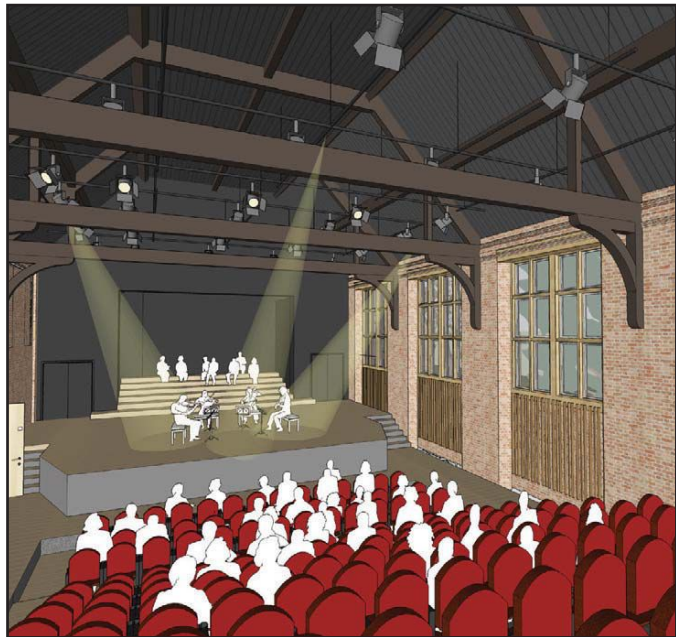
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Cincinnati: US

Jeremy Pound heads to the lively city on the banks of the Ohio, where the re-opening of one of America's most illustrious concert halls is being met with great anticipation

Cincinnati. The Queen City. Porkopolis. Three names, all applying to the same place, and each with a little tale behind it. 'Cincinnati' is derived from Cincinnatus, a Roman statesman of virtuous repute – I find a statue of him near the Purple People Bridge that stretches over the River Ohio. 'The Queen City' originates from an 1819 newspaper article. And 'Porkopolis' salutes the fact that Cincinnati was once the US capital of pig farming – today, the flying pig is the city's unofficial, but undisputed, symbol.

Along the river bank from Cincinnatus, I'm greeted by a pink sign inviting visitors to 'Sing the Queen City'. And that is exactly

what people have been doing here since the 1840s when, spearheaded by a large German immigrant population, singing events were held on a regular basis. In 1873, the first May Festival took place, and it remains a fixture in the calendar. Large-scale choral works are its thing, and previous participants include Elgar and Bernstein, no less.

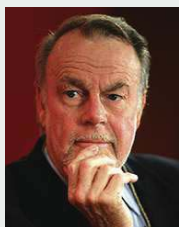
Music Hall, Cincinnati's magnificent concert hall, and opera house, came about through the wish of one Reuben Singer, a local entrepreneur, for the May Festival to have a decent home. He didn't hold back.

'The people here have a real affection for their hall and orchestra'

Situated in the now-fashionable Over-the-Rhine district, the colossal 1878 building boasts, among other things, an impressive chandelier, one of the finest concert-hall acoustics in the US and, I am told during my hard-hat tour, an array of friendly ghosts. In 2015, a major refurbishment began (hence the hard hat) that will see the Springer Auditorium's 3,417 seats reduced to a more intimate 2,524 and the orchestral stage and pit enlarged. The front-of-house area is also enjoying a revamp and, on the outside, the red-brick facade and its distinctive 'piano key' ornamentation are being restored to their former glory. When the hall re-opens with two performances by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) on 6 and 7 October, it should be quite some occasion.

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Erich Kunzel



As you head towards Music Hall, you will find yourself walking along Erich Kunzel Way, named after the much-loved conductor. Born in New York, Kunzel was appointed in 1965 as an associate

conductor by the Cincinnati SO, where he set up a series of '8 o'clock Pops' concerts. When, in 1977, the CSO launched the new Cincinnati Pops orchestra, Kunzel was the obvious man to conduct it. Over the next 30 years, the Pops and Kunzel became globally famous, recording many best-selling discs. Presented with the National Medal of Arts by George W Bush in 2006, he died in 2009.

GO WITH THE FLOW: Cincinnati hugs the Ohio River; (right) Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* on a house near Music Hall; (below) artist Frida Kahlo celebrated at Cincinnati Opera

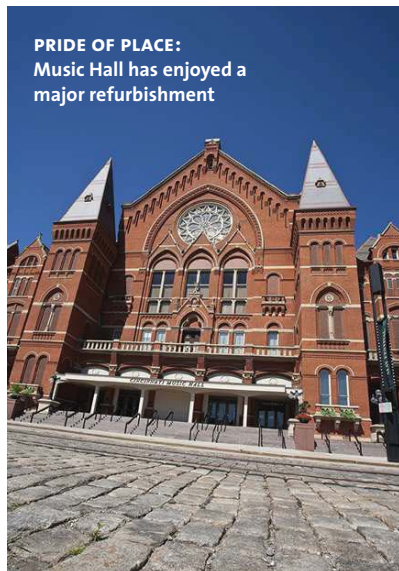


The CSO has been plying its trade at Music Hall since 1895, premiering works including Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *Lincoln Portrait* and employing the likes of Leopold Stokowski and Fritz Reiner as music director along the way. Currently wielding the baton is Frenchman Louis Langrée, who recently conducted the CSO in its first ever BBC Prom. 'The cultural appreciation in Cincinnati is amazing,' he tells me. 'In many cities, the big building at its heart is, say, a cathedral or the city hall, but here it is this temple of music, the Music Hall. There is a real affection from the people for their hall and their orchestra.'

The CSO players are an adaptable lot and, when not negotiating the subtleties of a Sibelius symphony, like to swing and swagger as the red-jacketed members of the Cincinnati Pops orchestra, the hugely successful sister ensemble launched by



PRIDE OF PLACE:
Music Hall has enjoyed a
major refurbishment



Erich Kunzel (see left) in 1977. A favourite Pops venue in summer is the out-of-town Riverbend Music Center, where audiences of up to 20,000, sitting on seats or grass banks, enjoy events such as the Independence Day spectacular. Also in summer, those same players head into the Music Hall pit for the Cincinnati Opera season. 2017's productions, staged at the temporary home of the Aronoff Center for the Arts, included *La bohème*, *The Magic Flute* and, during my visit, Robert Xavier Rodriguez's operatic biopic *Frida*.

There is, though, a lot more to explore in this large, vibrant city than music alone. Don't miss, for instance, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, which explores the history of the US slave trade and race relations, nor the exploits of the Reds baseball and Bengals football teams. And the beer here is simply excellent. You can thank the Germans for that, too. ■

GETTY, NEDA NAVAAE, PHILIP GROSHONG

CINCINNATI 4 MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS



Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

The big date in the CSO's calendar is 6 & 7 October, when the new season at the refurbished Music Hall opens with works by Adams, Beethoven, Jonathan Bailey Holland and Scriabin. Pianist Kit Armstrong (above) is the soloist and Louis Langrée conducts. cincinnati-symphony.org

Cincinnati Pops

Conducted by John Morris Russell, the Pops joins the Music Hall party on 13-15 October, beginning its season with three 'Music of John Williams – Star Wars and beyond' concerts. cincinnati-symphony.org/pops

May Festival

Though the May Festival's title gives a very obvious clue as to roughly when it will take place, exact dates and performers of the 2018 event have yet to be announced. Watch this space. mayfestival.com

Cincinnati Opera

Cincinnati Opera will return to Music Hall on 14 June with Verdi's *La traviata*. Other productions scheduled for the season include Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* and *Another Brick in the Wall – The Opera*, based on the 1979 Pink Floyd album. cincinnatiopera.org

PIETRO MASCAGNI

The creator of verismo opera

Famous for *Cavalleria rusticana*, Mascagni would probably be well known for his other operas too had the tide of political history not turned against him, says **George Hall**

The Teatro Costanzi in Rome was no more than half full on the evening of Saturday 17 May 1890 for the first performance of a new opera by an unknown 26-year-old composer. Pietro Mascagni – who was currently working as a local musician in the small town of Cerignola in south-eastern Italy – was one of three obscure figures who had made it through to the final round of a competition for a one-act opera organised by the publishing firm of Sonzogno. Word from the jury-room was positive, but the important verdict would be that of the public.

In the event, the reaction of the Roman audience to Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* exceeded anyone's wildest dreams – Mascagni's included. 'You cannot even have the barest idea of what happened in the hall of the Costanzi on that unforgettable evening', Gemma Bellincioni – the opera's first Santuzza – wrote afterwards. 'After the Siciliana the public applauded; after the prayer they cried out enthusiastically; after the duet between Santuzza and Turiddu they exploded in delirious joy. At the end of the opera the spectators seemed literally to go crazy. They screamed, they waved their handkerchiefs; in the corridors strangers embraced. "We have a maestro! Hurrah for the new Italian maestro!" Together with the composer, who had turned white as a sheet, the performers were called back 60 times. The result was less an ovation than a coronation, with Mascagni crowned the new king of Italian opera. To understand why, we have to look at the broader situation.

The Italians had invented opera around 1600, and from the middle of the 17th century had begun to export it all over Europe and subsequently further afield. During the 19th century, composers such as Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi were international celebrities; but in their

MASCAGNI'S STYLE

Structure

Though his breakthrough opera, *Cavalleria rusticana* (pictured below) maintained the by-then old-fashioned tradition of separate numbers – arias, ensembles, choruses – linked by recitative, in his subsequent works Mascagni increasingly joined these up in an ongoing dramatic continuum in a manner familiar from Wagner and Verdi's later works.

Melody

Parallel to the disappearance of set-piece arias in his later works came an approach to individual vocal lines that united elements of aria and recitative in a kind of constantly developing *arioso*, producing a more declamatory approach to vocal writing that is reminiscent of Monteverdi – though underpinned by a radically different harmonic and accompanimental apparatus.

Harmony

Even in *Cavalleria* (notably Alfio's entrance aria), Mascagni shows a fondness for harmonies that move in unusual directions. This adds character to *L'amico Fritz* and *Iris*, while the growing tendency gives some of his later works a free-flowing, almost disorienting quality.

Orchestra and Chorus

His imaginative writing for orchestra and vital use of the chorus often come together to impressive effect, producing showpieces such as the 'Hymn to the Sun' that begins and ends *Iris*, as well as alternating subtlety with overwhelming power in *Il piccolo Marat* and *Isabeau*.

homeland they were beloved creative figures who succeeded in producing high art that maintained a popular following; even those who did not attend the numerous operatic performances given throughout the peninsula would have become familiar with their music as heard on barrel organs and street pianos.

But by 1890, Verdi was 77 years old, and had produced just one entirely new opera – *Otello* – over the previous 19 years; his talented colleague Ponchielli, meanwhile, had died in 1886. The public was looking to a younger generation to carry on their 300-year-old tradition, taking up the mantle that Verdi would inevitably himself soon leave behind.

Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* answered that need. Following its extraordinary success in Rome, it soon swept Italy and then Europe as a whole. A work that launched a new aesthetic movement in Italian opera – *verismo*, or 'realism' – it spawned distinguished imitators such as Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (1892), with which it regularly shares a double bill to this day, while its influence on non-Italian composers was equally profound. The challenge for Mascagni would be to follow up this virtually unparalleled success with works that would show development rather than repetition; and it is a mark of his talent as well as his seriousness of purpose that in an active career lasting 45 years he did so to an extent for which he is rarely given full credit.

Mascagni was born in 1863 in the industrial port city of Livorno, the son of a baker. The brightest of four children, he was given a better education than his siblings by his father, who hoped that he would become a lawyer. Instead, from an early age he was fascinated by music, and with the help of a dedicated local teacher gained fluency as a pianist and a budding composer. His talent was brought to the attention of Ponchielli, who encouraged him to study at the Milan Conservatory where he





himself taught composition. There he became friends with an older fellow student called Giacomo Puccini, even sharing a flat with him.

But he also chafed at the bit, finding aspects of the academic course too limiting. Following a row about a forbidden extra-curricular performance of an orchestral piece, he made the impulsive decision to leave without receiving his final diploma. Instead, and in a step that must have seemed disastrous to his fellows, he took the first in a series of jobs conducting peripatetic and often short-lived operetta companies as they travelled around the peninsula. After a year or so on the road he washed up in the backwater of Cerignola, where the local mayor saw in him the man to revitalise the town's musical life, so he stayed.

That could have been the end of his grander ambitions, but Sonzogno's competition for new operas came to his rescue. Turning aside from a much bigger and more ambitious work based on Heine's tragedy *William Ratcliff* (Italianised as *Guglielmo Ratcliff*) and begun in 1882, he put pen to paper and quickly produced *Cavalleria*, drawn from Giovanni Verga's play based on one of his own short stories of Sicilian peasant life. The rest, as they say, is history.

Following *Cavalleria*, the canny Sonzogno – a determined and go-ahead rival to the older established house of Ricordi – signed up Mascagni, who produced a sequence of works that could never match the once-in-a-lifetime popular success of his first opera but in which he set himself different challenges, often successfully met. *Lamico Fritz* (1891) was a romantic comedy, lightweight but with a tinge of melancholy, in which Mascagni demonstrated a far subtler use of harmony and orchestration than in *Cavalleria*; from the same literary source – a work by the French writing duo who linked their names as Erckmann-Chatrian – the rural drama *I Ranzau* made less impression the following year.

Guglielmo Ratcliff, a long Gothic melodrama that is demanding on its performers, especially the tenor anti-hero, reached the stage in 1895. Acclaimed in its time, but later falling into obscurity, its reputation was vindicated when Wexford Festival Opera revived it in 2015. Not much, though, has been heard of *Silvano* (also 1895), the sole piece in which, at his publisher's instigation, Mascagni tried the impossible task of repeating *Cavalleria*'s successful formula.

In 1898 Mascagni tried something entirely new with *Iris*, a symbolist drama set in Japan and dealing with the abusive treatment of an innocent heroine who achieves her posthumous apotheosis in union with nature: its mysticism drew from the composer one of his most consistent and original scores, replete with references to Japanese music (six years before *Madam Butterfly*) and even using Japanese

LIFE & TIMES

A quick guide to the main events in the life of Pietro Mascagni

THE LIFE 1863 THE TIMES



1863

Pietro Mascagni is born on 7 December in **LIVORNO**, Italy, the son of a baker. Against his father's wishes, he pursues a musical career from an early age.

1881

He achieves recognition as a composer with the cantata *In filanda*. It wins him financial support to attend the Milan Conservatory where he shares a room with Puccini.

1888

His *Cavalleria rusticana* wins the Sonzogno one-act opera competition, its contemporary subject matter spearheading a new style of opera known as *verismo*.



1901

At the height of his popularity, Mascagni is surprised by the failure of **LE MASCHERE**. Only the performances that he himself conducts receive a decent reception.

1915

With his music for Nini Oxilia's *Rapsodia Santanica*, he makes his first and only step into film music.

1935

His opera *Nerone*, in which he seeks a new way to portray reality through historical metaphors, is a success. **BENITO MUSSOLINI**, though, is unimpressed.

1945

After several years of ill health, he dies peacefully on 2 August 1945.



1945

1863

Situated close to La Scala opera house, The Grand Hotel et de Milan, a future favourite of the famous and fashionable, opens for the first time.



1881

The Italian explorer **GIUSEPPE MARIA GIULIETTI** and 13 of his companions are killed by Afar

tribesmen while on an expedition in the Assab region of Ethiopia.

1888

The historic walls of the **GHETTO OF ROME**, a desperately poor area of Jewish segregation created in 1555 under the order of Pope Paul IV, are torn down.



1901

Conducted by senator Giuseppe Saredo, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Naples investigates and then reports years of bad governance and

widespread corruption in the southern Italian city.

1915

After weighing up whether or not to remain neutral, Italy enters World War One by opening hostilities against Austria-Hungary, followed by the Ottoman Empire and then Germany.

1935

The Italian author **CESARE PAVESE**, a staunch anti-fascist, is arrested and imprisoned for having letters from a political prisoner in his possession.



1945

Attempting to flee from Milan to safety in Switzerland after the collapse of his government, Benito Mussolini is captured and executed by Italian partisans in the village of Giulino di Mezzegra.



REACHING THE MASSES:
(from left) Mascagni
alongside composers
Franchetti and Puccini

instruments. Modern revivals, including at London's Opera Holland Park, have shown it to be a fascinating if necessarily shocking piece.

In another change of mood, Mascagni and his then regular librettist Illica turned towards the ancient Italian *commedia dell'arte* figures for the ensemble comedy *Le maschere*, whose hubristic multiple simultaneous premieres in seven Italian cities in January 1901 mostly flopped, and which took decades to recover from that very public disaster.

By this point Mascagni had commenced an initially successful stint as head of the Pesaro Conservatory (1895-1902), where his reforms to the curriculum, which enthused his students, proved expensive and eventually led to his dismissal. From 1898 a second career as a conductor took off, and for the rest of his active life he would be much in demand in the concert hall and opera house. Repeated public disagreements, however – his impulsive nature often led him into career-damaging conflicts – represented the negative side of a flamboyant, intensely committed personality.

As an operatic composer, he reached the heights of his ambition with *Isabeau* (1911), a semi-mystical 'leggenda drammatica' based on the Lady Godiva story, and the very long *Parisina* (1913), on which he collaborated with Italy's leading literary figure, Gabriele D'Annunzio. Like many of Mascagni's works, *Isabeau* enjoyed success during his lifetime though disappeared following his death in 1945. Part of the reason for this was undoubtedly his association with Mussolini and Fascism. Initially regarded by the regime as a left-wing enemy, Mascagni was gradually

seduced by the honours and income offered to those Italian artists and intellectuals who were prepared to toe the line – at least in public.

Mussolini was scarcely pleased, however, when the composer's final opera, *Nerone* (1935), seemed to represent a conscious attack on the Duce himself. 'I am not at all pleased with you,' Mussolini is supposed to have told Mascagni; 'did you have to pick Nero in particular for a subject?' Another insider quotes Mascagni as having commented more pithily that he had 'stuck *Nerone* up Mussolini's arse'.

Cavalleria rusticana swept Italy and then Europe as a whole

By the time of the opera's premiere, the composer was nearly 72 years old, and had not produced a major work since his fierce French revolutionary drama *Il piccolo Marat* 14 years earlier. A good deal of *Nerone* had started life several decades earlier in the never-to-be-completed *Vistilia*. Following its well-received premiere at La Scala the opera soon disappeared, and with it Mascagni abandoned composition. He would live another ten years, dying on August 2 1945 in a suite in a Roman hotel that had been his home since 1927.

At the time the city was occupied by Allied forces. Because of his now embarrassing political associations, the new Italian government distanced itself from his funeral, whose attendant procession nevertheless saw the streets of the capital lined with 200,000

people who wanted to pay their respects to the composer of *Cavalleria* and much else.

Official cold-shouldering of his works – other than his first, unstoppable hit, which was too firmly embedded in the repertoire to be ignored – continued for decades, with works that had been regularly staged up to the 1930s absent from post-war Italian opera houses; though as time has gone on there has been a definite revival of interest both in Mascagni's homeland as well as further afield.

Mascagni deserves our attention as the most significant of Puccini's contemporaries and also for the originality and ambition of his music itself. In a life with more than its share of controversy and confrontation, he fought for the artistic principles embodied in his individual vision for Italian opera. ■

BBC RADIO 3 Presented by Donald Macleod, *Composer of the Week* is broadcast on Radio 3 at 12pm, Monday to Friday. Upcoming programmes are: 2-6 Oct *Mendelssohn* 9-13 Oct *Puccini* 16-20 Oct *Vivaldi* 23-27 Oct *tba* 30 Oct – 3 Nov *Musorgsky*

PIETRO MASCAGNI

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Cavalleria rusticana
Montserrat Caballé et al;
Philharmonia Orchestra/Muti
Warner 763 6502 (download)
A scrupulously performed and idiomatic account, paired with Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*.

L'amico Fritz
Luciano Pavarotti et al;
ROH Orchestra/Gavazzeni
Warner 948 2582 (download)
Arguably Mascagni's most charming score in a classic account, wonderfully sung and superbly conducted.

Guglielmo Ratcliff
Angelo Villari et al; Wexford Festival Opera/Cilluffo
RTÉ Lyric CD 152
The ambitious melodrama is vindicated in this live account from the Wexford Festival.

Lodoletta
Maria Spacagna et al;
Hungarian SO/Rosekrans
Hungaroton HCD 31307-08 (download)
This 1917 setting of a sentimental subject is Mascagni's nearest approach to his rival Puccini's manner.

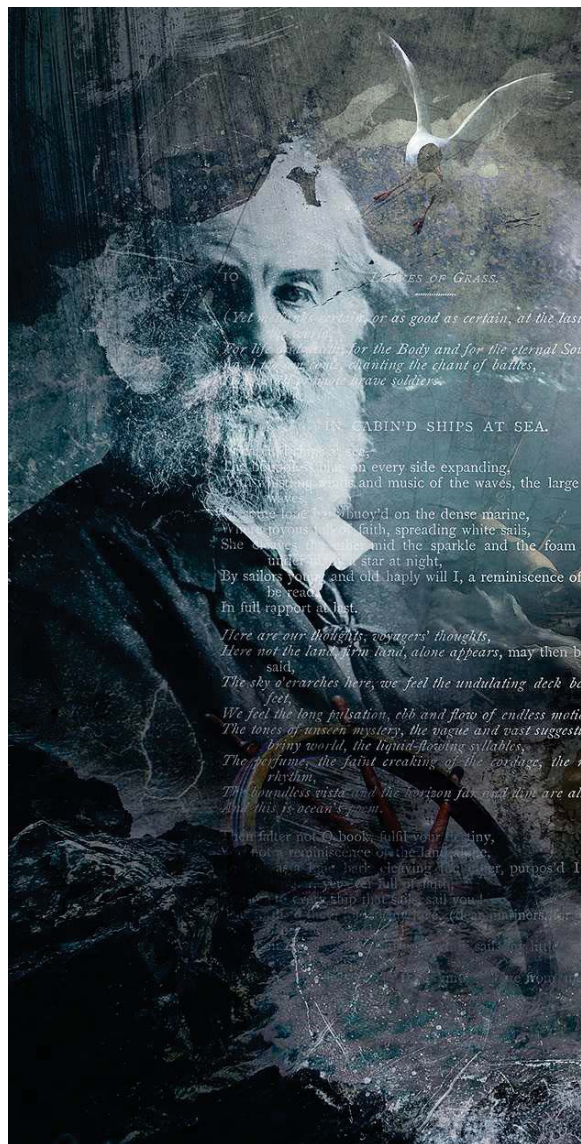
BUILDING A LIBRARY

A SEA SYMPHONY

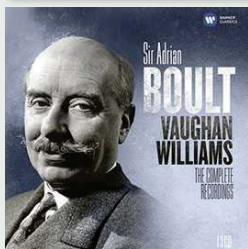
Ralph Vaughan Williams

One of the most vivid musical portrayals of the ocean captivates our reviewer **Terry Blain**, who explores the finest recordings of Vaughan Williams's maritime symphony

Much the finest piece of sea music that we, a seafaring folk above everything, possess'. *The Manchester Guardian* wrote that in 1910, when Vaughan Williams conducted the premiere of *A Sea Symphony* at the Leeds Festival, on his 38th birthday. The paper's verdict arguably still holds true, although Britten's *Peter Grimes* is an obvious rival. Fittingly, perhaps, the inspiration for *A Sea Symphony* came from across the broad Atlantic. The poetry of the American Walt Whitman was vogueishly popular when Vaughan Williams was an undergraduate at Cambridge University. The composer, a 'cheerful agnostic', immediately fastened on the powerful pantheism of Whitman's poetic vision, and the poet's intense physical engagement with the world around him. The music that Whitman's sea texts elicited has both thrilling viscerality and a strong philosophical undertow, in its climactic vision of the individual soul sailing forth 'for the deep waters only, where mariner has not yet dared to go'.



music CHOICE



Adrian Boult (conductor)
Sheila Armstrong, John Carol Case; London Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra (1968)
EMI 903 5672 (13 discs)

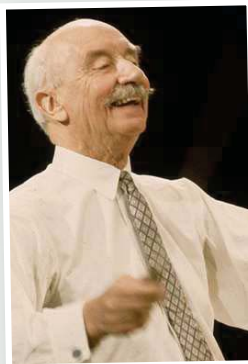
THE BEST RECORDING **ADRIAN BOULT**

ADRIAN BOULT GAVE *A Sea Symphony* its first recording in 1953, and many collectors continue to swear by the crackling urgency of that pioneering interpretation. The stereo remake is, however, a great performance in its own right, and is tough to topple as the best available version.

It is, to begin with, much better recorded than its mono predecessor, with excellent balances between choir, soloists and orchestra, and a satisfyingly meaty impact from brass instruments in particular. No conductor catches better than Boult (right) the elation of the work's mighty opening paragraph, with a full-throated, confidently prepared London Philharmonic Choir making

a stirring contribution. The soloists are also highly effective. Baritone John Carol Case's 'On The Beach At Night, Alone' is an object lesson in clear diction and poised singing at low dynamic levels; the young soprano Sheila Armstrong (then just 26) is creamy-textured and wonderfully committed.

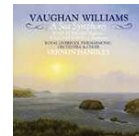
It is, though, Boult's inimitable nobility of utterance which really marks out this performance as special. He was approaching 80 when the recording was made, but his grip is undiminished, as is his ability to inject fire into an orchestra's belly – nobody matches the bacchanalian swirl he summons at 'Away O Soul!', as the final voyage to 'the seas of God' beckons. This is a classic performance, by one of the great Vaughan Williams interpreters.





BBC RADIO 3 *Building a Library* is broadcast on BBC Radio 3 at 9.30am each Saturday as part of *Record Review*. A highlights podcast is available at www.bbc.co.uk/radio3

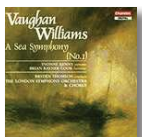
and when Roderick Williams introduces his ‘rude brief recitative’ it’s obvious that Elder has one of the oakiest, most characterful baritone soloists on record. The Hallé Choir is on its toes throughout, but its impact is hampered by the relatively dry, boxed-in acoustic of the Bridgewater Hall. Elder’s broad tempos – he takes five minutes longer for the work than most rivals – also occasionally sap a sense of forward momentum, particularly in the outer movements. But this is still a strongly stated interpretation of VW’s sea vision, and sounds at its best in 24-bit download format.



Vernon Handley (conductor)
Joan Rodgers, William Shimell; Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra (1988)

Warner Classics 777698675 (download)
Vernon Handley was a pupil of Adrian Boult, and shared his mentor’s ability to articulate the architectural outlines of a piece of music, without stinting on local detail or diluting moments of raw excitement. Handley’s is a very satisfying *Sea Symphony*, broadly similar in profile to Boult’s, and boasting a confident, incisive choral contribution. The soloists are excellent too, baritone William Shimell dark-hued and authoritative, soprano Joan Rodgers ardently involving. Like Boult, Handley binds the finale together in masterly fashion, and benefits from a rangy recording, as pleasingly layered as any on record. Download is the only way to buy this absorbing performance at present, and it’s to be hoped that Warner Classics has a CD reissue of Handley’s entire VW symphony series in the pipeline.

THREE MORE GREAT RECORDINGS



Bryden Thomson (conductor)
Yvonne Kenny, Brian Rayner Cook; London Symphony Chorus & Orchestra (1988)

Chandos CHAN8764
Bryden Thomson was an underrated conductor, and his complete Vaughan Williams (VW) symphony cycle has long been prized by aficionados. Thomson’s is a richly atmospheric *Sea Symphony*, with a turbulent opening movement in which the lash of breakers is thrillingly registered, and the London Symphony Chorus makes a specially full-blooded contribution. No choir is more moving at ‘Token of all brave captains’,

a section built to a heart-touching peroration by the sturdy hand of Thomson on the tiller. The burnished, resonant Chandos engineering lends a bracing *al fresco* quality, and there is a genuine sense of new vistas opening in the epic ‘Explorers’ finale, a movement shaped with sensitivity by Thomson. For a single-CD copy of *A Sea Symphony*, you need look no further.



Mark Elder (conductor)
Katherine Broderick, Roderick Williams; Hallé Choir & Orchestra (2014)
Hallé CDHLL7542

The opening of Mark Elder’s live recording of *A Sea Symphony* rivals Boult’s in its grandeur,

AND ONE TO AVOID...



Should curiosity tempt you to add The State Symphony Orchestra of the USSR Ministry of Culture’s recording to your collection, resist it. Gennady

Rozhdestvensky’s astute, sympathetic conducting isn’t the difficulty. The problem is the soloists (and to some extent the chorus), whose sketchy command of English is distracting, to the point where words are undecipherable. This is one instance where something irreplaceable is lost in translation.

If you enjoy Vaughan Williams’s *A Sea Symphony* and would like to try out similar works, see overleaf...

SO, WHERE NEXT...?

We suggest works to explore after Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony*

Vaughan Williams Toward the Unknown Region

A Sea Symphony was not the only work in which Vaughan Williams set Walt Whitman, a poet whom, he said towards at the end of his life, 'I've never got over, I'm glad to say'. Three years before the symphony's premiere at the Leeds Festival, VW had scored a major success at that same festival with *Toward the Unknown Region*, a setting for choir and orchestra of Whitman's 'Darest thou now O soul'. The poem shares much of its imagery and atmosphere with the text of 'The Explorers', *A Sea Symphony*'s visionary concluding movement. Beginning with a cautious tread, VW's 12-minute work ends in a blaze of excitement.

Recommended recording: Corydon Singers and Orchestra/Matthew Best Hyperion CDA 66655

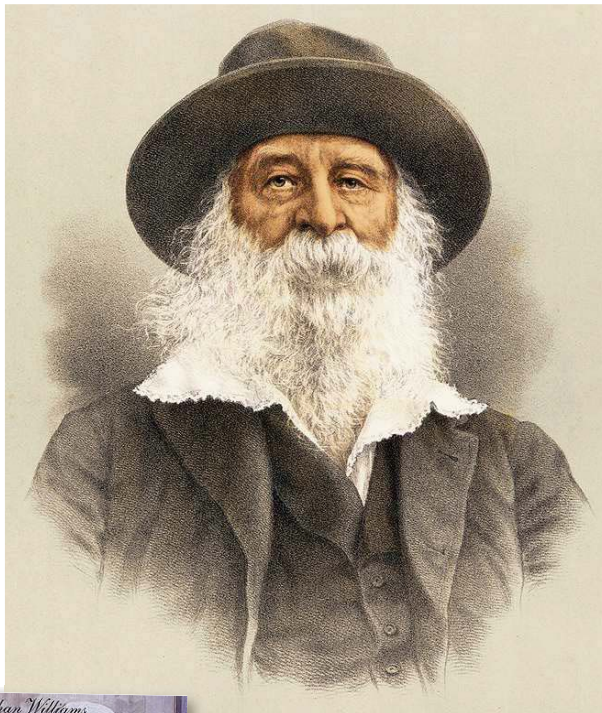
Delius Sea Drift

Vaughan Williams was not alone among British composers in responding to the heady attractions of Whitman's poetry. In 1904, when VW had already started work on *A Sea Symphony*, Delius completed *Sea Drift*, a 25-minute piece for chorus and baritone soloist, using texts from Whitman's seminal 'Leaves of Grass' collection. Although Vaughan Williams was generally unenthusiastic about Delius's music, there is a palpable overlap between the brooding, rhapsodic atmosphere of Delius's setting and the lonely soloist of 'On The Beach At Night, Alone', the second movement of *A Sea Symphony*. Delius's idiom is more obviously seeped in Wagner than VW's, making for intriguing comparisons.

Recommended recording: Bryn Terfel (baritone); Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Orchestra/Richard Hickox Chandos CHAN 10868X

Stanford Songs of the Sea

Charles Villiers Stanford was at one point Vaughan Williams's composition teacher, and as conductor of the Leeds Festival was instrumental in getting *A Sea Symphony* performed there. Stanford's own *Songs of the Sea* were premiered at Leeds in 1904, and Vaughan Williams knew them well. The influence of Stanford's swashbuckling



AMERICAN VOICE: Walt Whitman inspired several British choral works, such as *Toward the Unknown Region*

orchestration can be vividly felt in the 'rude brief recitative' episode of *A Sea Symphony*'s

opening movement, and in its swirling *Scherzo*. 'Homeward bound', the fourth of five songs in Stanford's cycle, is more reflective in tone, adumbrating the expansive, valedictory panorama of *A Sea Symphony*'s finale.

Recommended recording: Gerald Finley (baritone); BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Richard Hickox Chandos CHSA 5043

Holst The Cloud Messenger

While Vaughan Williams was composing *A Sea Symphony*, his close friend Gustav Holst was writing several choral settings of ancient Vedic Sanskrit Hymns in which he explored unusual scales and metres. It is curious, then, that in his last Indian-inspired work, *The Cloud Messenger*, completed in 1912, Holst returned to the rousing style of VW's *Sea Symphony*. It's a similarly ambitious work for large chorus and orchestra, but starts quite differently, its forlorn instrumental opening portraying the protagonist's exile from his homeland and his beloved wife; yet its stirring first choral entry evokes the aspiring quality of *A Sea Symphony*. VW's work is again evoked

in Holst's hushed choral ending when the Cloud safely delivers the message to the distant beloved, the orchestra's gently alternating chords recalling *Sea Symphony*'s tranquil end.

Recommended recording: Della Jones (mezzo-soprano); London Symphony Chorus & Orchestra/Richard Hickox Chandos CHAN 8901

Elgar The Dream of Gerontius

Vaughan Williams attended the premiere of Elgar's choral masterpiece *The Dream of Gerontius* in 1900, and studied its orchestration avidly in the years after. There are many moments in *A Sea Symphony* where the influence of Elgar's score is evident, especially in the more introspective moments of the opening movement, and in the numinous finale. But there are fascinating points of difference too: while both works share a sense of spiritual questing, Elgar's hero conceives his destiny primarily in

terms of Catholic theology, while Vaughan Williams inclines towards the doctrinally non-specific pantheism and nature mysticism espoused in Whitman's stirring poetry.

Recommended recording: Andrew Staples (tenor), Catherine Wyn-Rogers (mezzo-soprano), Thomas Hampson (baritone); Staatsopernchor & RIAS Kammerchor; Staatskapelle Berlin/Daniel Barenboim Decca 483 1585

Bridge The Sea

By the time *A Sea Symphony* was premiered in October 1910, Vaughan Williams's English contemporary Frank Bridge was also writing a four-movement work on a similar theme, the orchestral suite *The Sea*. Bridge's take on the ocean admits darker hues into its orchestral palette, and was harmonically advanced enough for its period to cause the young Benjamin Britten to be 'knocked sideways' when he first heard it as a boy. Britten later became Bridge's first and only pupil, and his *Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes* (another *locus classicus* of British maritime music) make a fitting companion to Bridge's *The Sea*.

Recommended recording: Ulster Orchestra/Vernon Handley Chandos CHAN 10426X

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Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto

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A wonderful celebration of Dutilleux and Ravel by Simon Rattle and the LSO



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Pierre-Laurent Aimard joins a superb team of colleagues to find delicacy in Elliott Carter



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Luxurious time travel to the Florentine extravaganzas of 1600 and the birth of opera



90 Choral & Song

Nicky Spence reveals the greatness of Strauss Lieder in his sensitive performances



96 Chamber

Jonathan Cohen and colleagues do justice to Buxtehude's quick-fire drama

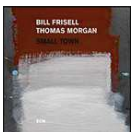


98 Instrumental

Guitarist Sean Shibe revitalises the legacy of his great forebear Julian Bream

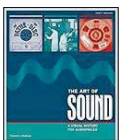
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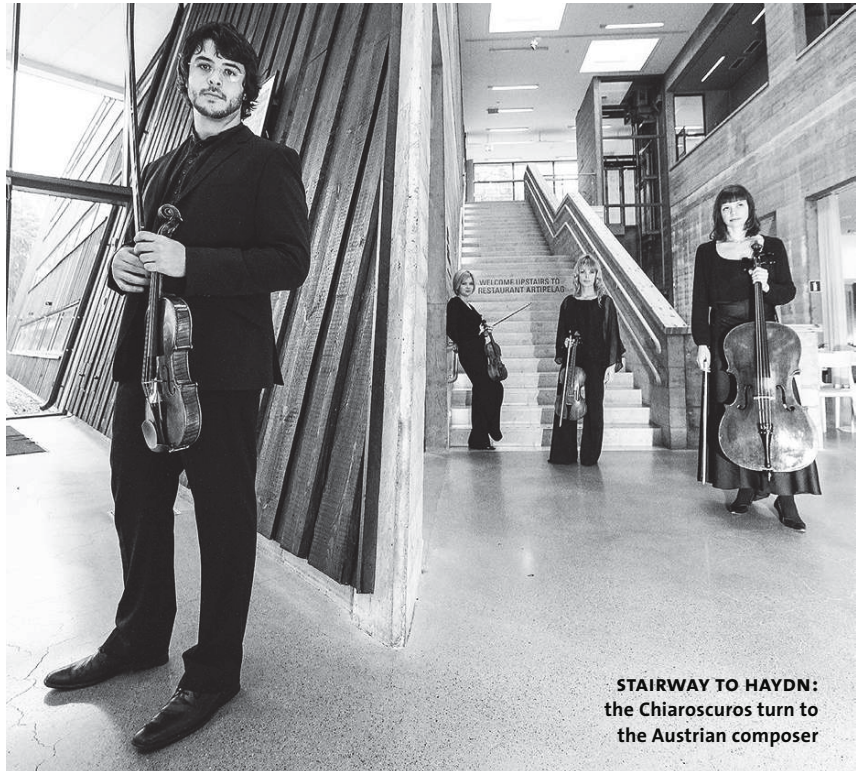
BBC music REVIEWS

100 CDs, Books & DVDs rated by expert critics



Recording of the Month

Led by violinist Alina Ibragimova, the brilliant Chiaroscuro Quartet find refreshing light and painful tragedy in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth of Haydn's 'Sun' Quartets, Op. 20, p78



STAIRWAY TO HAYDN: the Chiaroscuros turn to the Austrian composer

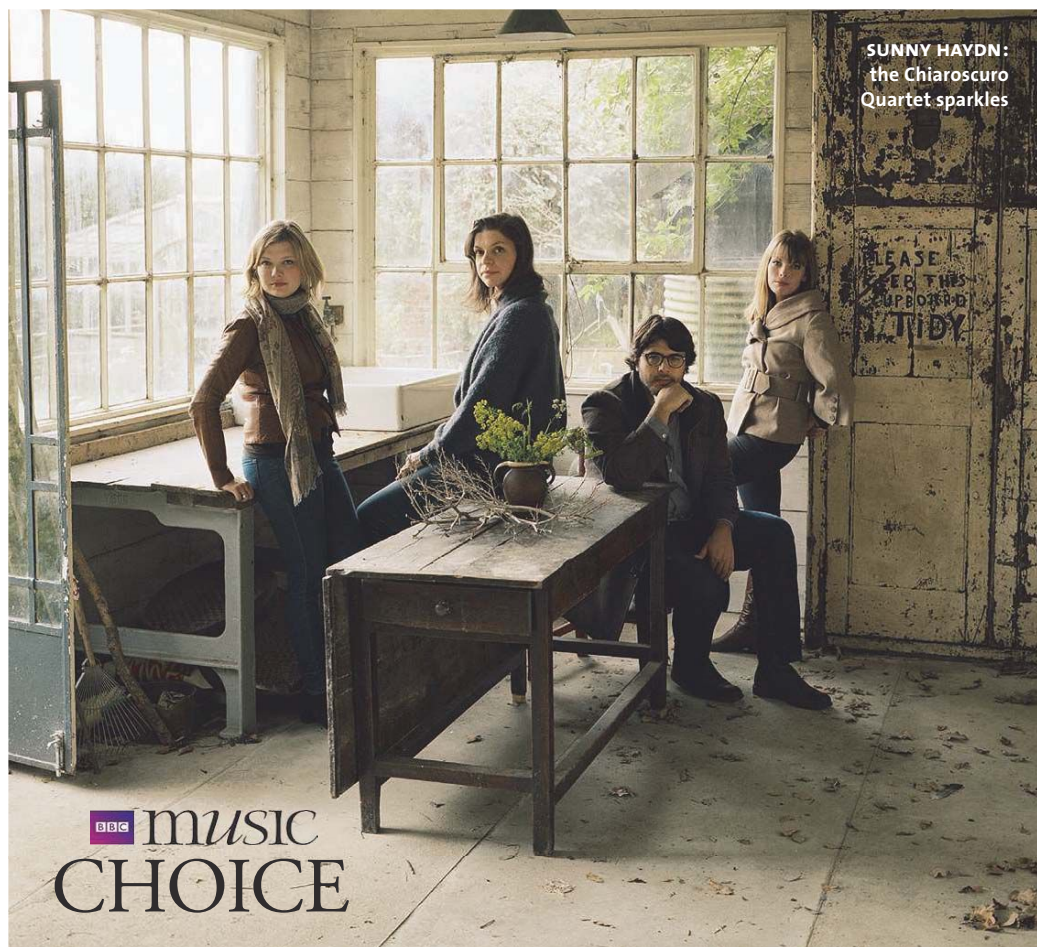
The birth of opera



After a trip to Florence in 1817, the French writer Stendhal had gorged so thoroughly on Renaissance art that he became ill. Giotto's frescoes were the trigger: 'Everything spoke so vividly to my soul... I had palpitations of the heart.' His response was later dubbed Stendhal Syndrome, a nervous malady that afflicts tourists who become overwhelmed by art, particularly in Florence. Well, our Opera Choice might need to come with a health warning this month. It's a lavish and heady exploration of the birth of opera in that Italian city, then dominated by the powerful Medici family, who helped foster the art form. Like the Uffizi Gallery, this set is stuffed with treasures. Enjoy, with care! **Rebecca Franks** *Reviews Editor*

Our Recording of the Month features in one of our **BBC Music Magazine** podcasts downloadable free from iTunes or from our website www.classical-music.com

RECORDING OF THE MONTH



Haydn's wisdom and wit

Helen Wallace admires the Chiaroscuro Quartet's Op. 20 Nos 5-6



HAYDN

'Sun' Quartets, Op. 20 Nos 4-6
Chiaroscuro Quartet
BIS BIS-2168 (hybrid CD/SACD) 75.08 mins

Haydn's Op. 20 'Sun' string quartets form a trove of ingenuity, a laboratory where Baroque and Classical tropes are subject to radical experiment, almost bar by bar. Delight is the key to successful performance, and in this recording the Chiaroscuro Quartet revel in the composer's play

of ideas. This, their second recording for BIS (Vol. 1 was reviewed in November 2016), features Nos 5 & 6 from the Op. 20 set, actually written before Nos 1-3. They show Haydn's adoption of older forms – both have enriched fugal finales, the sixth an ingenious three-part example which turns the theme on its head.

First violinist Alina Ibragimova leads this merry *scherzando* work with dazzling delicacy, but it was the interpretation of No. 5 that blind-sided me on a first listening. Convention dictates a certain

Violinist Alina Ibragimova improvises with a sense of bold discovery

agitation in the opening *Moderato Allegro* before sunshine breaks through. Here we are plunged into tragedy, a sense of devastation so profound that when the major key arrives, it acquires Beethovenian

seriousness. This is a deeply absorbing reading, and can make other interpretations seem almost

trite. It's partly the sheer timbral and dynamic range on offer: each note is given its resonance, keening dissonances fully realised, high lines lent a fine-spun, fragile beauty while echoing phrases are reduced

FURTHER LISTENING

Chiaroscuro Quartet

MOZART

String Quartet No. 19

SCHUBERT

String Quartet No. 13

Chiaroscuro Quartet

Aparté APO22 67:06 mins



'This is an impressive debut recording, and the light and shade of the playing fully justifies the name the group has chosen for itself.' *December 2011*

MOZART

String Quartet No. 15

MENDELSSOHN

String Quartet No. 2

Chiaroscuro Quartet

Aparté AP092 58:06 mins



'This Mozart Quartet No. 15 doesn't attempt to sound gratuitously beautiful, but digs into the tragic substance of the music, and the players aren't afraid to bring flexibility to the pulse.' *June 2015*

HAYDN

String Quartets, Op. 20 Nos 1-3

Chiaroscuro Quartet

BIS BIS-2158 (hybrid CD/SACD)
74:34 mins



'The Chiaroscuro Quartet play on gut strings with little vibrato and incline to fastish tempos. Where they surpass those earlier "period" performances is in the radiant refinement of their sound and their suave sensitivity of phrasing.' *November 2016*

to mere breaths. While even the *scherzo* is tear-streaked, the Sicilienne offers consolation, and a moment for Ibragimova to improvise with wild fantasy, musing sweetness and sense of bold discovery: rarely has her Bellosio violin sounded so lavishly, complemented by the flame-like timbre of second violinist Pablo Hernán Benedí's Amati.

In the fugal finale, we're transported to the intimate world of the viol consort. The pushy, vibrated notes of other quartets (the Quatuor

Mosaïques, on *Astrée*, excepted) feel self-important and over-emphatic in comparison: this fugue barely touches the ground.

They breathe new life into graceful No. 4, a nest of traps and ambiguities: the antique variations are confidingly quiet, cellist Claire Thirion spinning silken poetry, while there's rustic abandon in the *Presto* and gypsy minuet, with its cheerful collision of accents.

I've always enjoyed the Hagen Quartet's robustly cheerful recording (on DG) of No. 6; here, the latter's briskness is replaced by a wily gentleness. In the ever-so-slightly ridiculous *Adagio*, Ibragimova unleashes arabesques of filigree

tracery with breathtaking artistry but a sly charm which suggests she might just be joking. In fact, you can sense a smile in the playing of all the performers in this quartet, particularly in the gawky trio, with its coarse, squeeze-box melody, apparently tuned by the damp air of the swamp on which the Esterházy palace, where Haydn worked, was built. Highly recommended.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



ON THE PODCAST

Hear excerpts and a discussion of this recording on the **BBC Music Magazine podcast**, available free on iTunes or at www.classical-music.com

Q&A

ALINA IBRAGIMOVA

REBECCA FRANKS talks to the *Chiaroscuro Quartet's* lead violinist about Haydn's seminal Op. 20 set



How important are these quartets in the history of the genre?

Incredibly important. Haydn's Op. 20 is the real basis of quartet repertoire. In these six pieces there are so many different ways to use a string quartet. Haydn was the real master of that. You can hear in Op. 20 how to bring out the solos, how to make the voices talk to each other and laugh with each other. They were called the 'Sun' quartets, but that was so they would sell better at the time. There really is everything here. The second movement of No. 4 is really devastating, probably one of my favourite movements in the set. It's a real spectrum of emotion in Op. 20. It's not only sunshine.

Listening to this CD, it really sounds like you relished playing these three quartets. Was that the case?

We had so much fun. There were so many jokes we could make, so many clever nuances that came to us when we were playing it. So while I think it was a little bit difficult for the recording engineer as he never had the same take twice, we always had lots of fun. Actually, when we first started to play Haydn it was really difficult. We felt on the spot, a little bit naked. As we got to know the language, we learned to be quite free with it. Haydn's unique style is totally recognisable

And what difference does playing this music on gut strings make?

They have a very different sound. We play with a lot of resonance, and we also like the earthiness of the sound. Sometimes we make a sound that isn't always pretty or birdlike. There are lots of those colours to bring out in this music. In terms of the sound on disc, the choice of hall is important. We love the Sendessal Bremen in Germany. It's wooden and so warm, and we love the sound we can get there. Our producer Ingo Petry is a vital part of it. We have to totally give ourselves to his musicality and how he puts it together in the end.

THIS MONTH'S CRITICS

Our critics number many of the top music specialists whose knowledge and enthusiasm are second to none



Jan Smaczny Musicologist, critic
Jan Smaczny is emeritus professor of music at Queen's University, Belfast. He writes, reviews and lectures avidly on a wide range of musical subjects, in particular the Czech musical tradition.

No longer in full-time academia, he has ample opportunity for culinary and horticultural experiment.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Nicholas Anderson
Baroque specialist | Rebecca Franks
critic, writer | Andrew McGregor
presenter, Radio 3's Record Review |
| Terry Blain
writer, critic | Hannah French
musicologist, broadcaster | David Nice
writer, biographer |
| Kate Bolton-Porciatti lecturer, The British Institute; L'Istituto Lorenzo de'Medici | George Hall
writer, editor | Roger Nichols
French music specialist |
| Garry Booth jazz writer & critic | Malcolm Hayes
composer, critic | Bayan Northcott
writer, composer |
| Geoff Brown
critic, The Times | Julian Haylock
writer, editor | Anna Picard
writer, critic |
| Anthony Burton
writer, editor | Claire Jackson
writer, journalist | Steph Power critic, The Independent, The i; editor, Wales Art Review |
| Michael Church , critic, Independent and The i | Daniel Jaffé
writer, critic | Anthony Pryer
lecturer, Goldsmiths, University of London |
| Christopher Cook
broadcaster, critic | Erica Jeal critic, The Guardian; deputy editor, Opera | Mike Scott Rohan
author, editor |
| Elinor Cooper
journalist | Stephen Johnson
writer, broadcaster | Geoffrey Smith
presenter, Radio 3 |
| Martin Cotton
radio & recording producer | Berta Joncus senior lecturer, Goldsmiths, University of London | Michael Tanner
critic, The Spectator |
| Christopher Dingle
professor of music, Birmingham Conservatoire | Erik Levi
visiting Professor of Music, Royal Holloway, University of London | Roger Thomas
jazz critic |
| Misha Donat
producer, writer | Natasha Loges
Head of postgrad programmes, RCM | Kate Wakeling
writer, researcher |
| Jessica Duchon
critic, novelist | Max Loppert
critic, Opera | Helen Wallace
writer, critic |
| | | Barry Witherden
writer, critic |

Key to symbols Star ratings are provided for both the performance itself and either the recording's sound quality or a DVD's presentation

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

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ORCHESTRAL

Robin Ticciati makes his first Berlin outing with a beguiling album of Debussy and Fauré; *Mario Venzago* attempts to complete Schubert's great *Unfinished* Symphony; and *Harrison Birtwistle*, *Oliver Knussen* and *George Benjamin* join forces for Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*

BBC MUSIC ORCHESTRAL CHOICE

The French connection

Roger Nichols is impressed by superb Rattle and LSO performances



RAVEL • DELAGE • DUTILLEUX

DVD Ravel: *Le tombeau de Couperin*; *Daphnis et Chloé – Suite No. 2*; Dutilleux: *L'arbre des songes*; *Métaboles*; Delage: *Quatre poèmes hindous* Julia Bullock (soprano), Leonidas Kavakos (violin); London Symphony Orchestra/Simon Rattle LSO Live LSO3038 96 mins (2 discs)

How good to know that Rattle will be conducting concerts like this for the foreseeable future, and if the audience's final acclamation didn't actually raise the roof, it was surely not for want of trying.

Rattle explores the mysterious corners of *Le tombeau de Couperin*

My only cavil is that the box bears the name Ravel in large capitals, whereas the concert in January 2016 formed part of the international celebrations of Henri Dutilleux's centenary – not that he would have supported or even condoned my complaint: as Simon Rattle says in a most moving interview, it's Ravel rather than Debussy that lies behind Dutilleux's richly glittering orchestral sound. Not the least factor in the obvious rapport between Rattle and the LSO is that a number of the players were with him years ago in the National Youth Orchestra, go to the pub with him and have children who also play for



MESMERISING ACCOUNTS: the LSO reflects Simon Rattle's love for French music

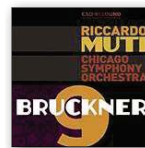
him. In seeing as well as hearing this concert, what comes over is Rattle's love for the music and the orchestra's wholehearted response: it all looks so terribly easy, though of course it's anything but.

Which is not to say that drama and tension are downplayed. Even in *Le tombeau de Couperin*, which can in unfeeling hands be thrown off as merely a piece of neo-classical bric-à-brac, Rattle explores its mysterious corners with the softest, most ethereal sounds from the string section. The French first oboist succeeds completely in his aim, as stated in his own interview, to forget

that his part is a regular component of oboe competitions: his tone and eloquent phrasing will stay with me for a long time. Add mesmerising performances of the two Dutilleux works and the *Daphnis* Second Suite and a sensitive one of the Delage songs, and this recording is an outright winner.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★★

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



BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 9
Chicago Symphony Orchestra/
Riccardo Muti
CSO Resound CSOR 9011701 62:20 mins

There are many valid ways of performing Bruckner's last, unfinished symphony. At the very least there should be powerful apocalyptic and devastating passages, with others of uneasy calm and possibly of consolation. Of the innumerable accounts now available disc, I would say that Michael Gielen's most recent recording (SWR Music), Carlo Maria Giulini's with the Vienna Philharmonic and Wilhelm Furtwängler's with the Berlin Philharmonic (both on Deutsche Grammophon), provide the most complete and indeed overwhelming accounts, though there are many other very fine ones, if you aren't in the strongest frame of mind.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has recorded the symphony several times, from Daniel Barenboim's first account onwards, and its familiar virtues, above all perhaps its incredibly gorgeous brass and woodwind sections, can be heard here to stunning effect. Yet nothing happens beneath the surface. If you can imagine Bruckner rewritten by Richard Strauss, this is it.

Riccardo Muti is famous for the polish of his performances, and he has shown an interest in Bruckner from time to time, recording Symphonies Nos 4 and 6 with some success. Here, however, there is little suspense in the Beethoven Nine-like opening, no savagery in the great unison theme, no struggle in the first movement's development. I thought that the stampede of the *Scherzo* might ignite the performance, but it is just heavy. And the third movement, with its *Parsifal*-like opening, its hesitations

and its dreadful march to the abyss, quite lacks all the disparate qualities which make it one of music's most gruelling and profound experiences.

Michael Tanner

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



DEBUSSY • FAURÉ

Debussy: *Ariettes oubliées* (arr. Dean); *La mer*; Fauré: *Pénélope – Prelude*; *Pelléas et Mélisande suite* (arr. Koehlin)

Magdalena Kožená (mezzo-soprano); Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin/Robin Ticciati

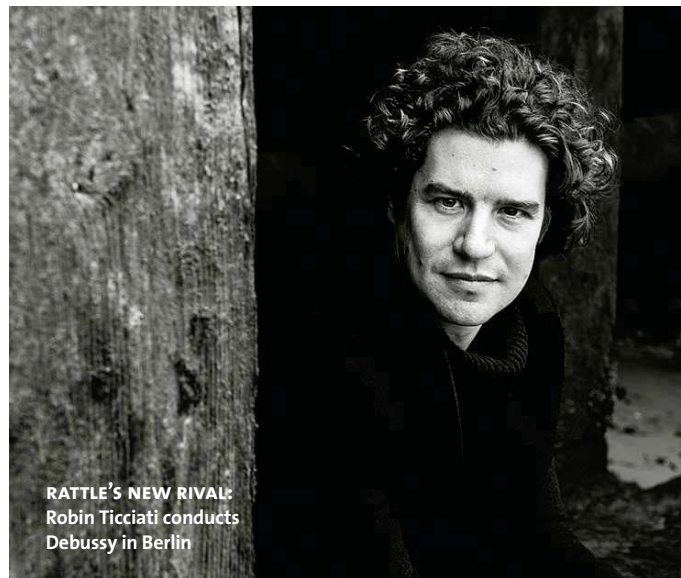
Linn CKD 550 68:02 mins

It wouldn't be hard to mistake the Prelude to Gabriel Fauré's opera *Pénélope* for a small chunk of *Parsifal* that got away. Though Fauré was never an ardent Wagnerian, its inward yet questing idiom seems to have returned with him to Paris from Bayreuth. Yet his earlier incidental music for *Pelléas et Mélisande* also possesses an ineffable mystery quite characteristic of his own work.

Robin Ticciati, who becomes music director of the DSO Berlin this autumn, pairs Fauré with Debussy: the *Ariettes Oubliées*, which include some valuable early Verlaine settings, and *La mer*, the masterpiece written around the time Debussy eloped with Emma Bardac, Fauré's former lover. The Debussy songs have been orchestrated by Brett Dean, whose technicolor sonic imagination brings these elusive settings into vivid focus. Magdalena Kožená's voice is far from conventional in Debussy, and one might sometimes wish for more defined French diction, but her tone has a glowing inner radiance and access to a seemingly limitless wealth of colours. The result is beguiling interpretations, performed with controlled intensity.

Ticciati draws from his new orchestra playing of yearning Romanticism that almost bursts at the seams. While *La mer* is beautifully shaped and builds to a suitably elemental climax in the 'Dialogue du vent et de la mer', the Fauré is also unusually full-blooded in expressive terms and firmly marked rhythmically, casting the composer's alleged 'pudeur' in a rich, rather different light.

The orchestral sound does not entirely match the opulence of the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle, but if Ticciati is aiming for a



RATTLE'S NEW RIVAL: Robin Ticciati conducts Debussy in Berlin

similar quality, there could be worse role models. Jessica Duchen

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



IVES

Orchestral Set No. 1 (*Three Places in New England*); Orchestral Set No. 2; *A Symphony: New England Holidays*

Seattle Symphony Chorale and Orchestra/Ludovic Morlot
Seattle Symphony Media SSM 1015
78:08 mins

Charles Ives's collages, composed at the turn of the last century, present cut 'n' paste tales of celebration, tradition and ideals. This is the third disc of his works released by the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and their music director Ludovic Morlot. It comprises concert performances recorded at the orchestra's Washington home, Benaroya Hall, and is distributed by the ensemble's enterprising in-house label, Seattle Symphony Media.

Three Places in New England is a meditation on the American Civil War, racial inequality and tragic loss. It is typically Ivesian in that it combines multiple story arcs, motifs and musical realism – such as the opening to the second movement, which features a marching band to signify a Fourth of July picnic. The Seattle Symphony Orchestra captures the dreamlike state, taking on the different characters as the narratives weave in and out of the overarching story of revolution.

Orchestral Set No. 2 (*Three Places in New England* is sometimes referred to as Orchestral Set No. 1) explores similar themes, but in a more abstract way; Morlot handles the complex polyphony well. The final movement – an ode to British ocean liner *RMS Lusitania*, which was sunk during the First World War, killing more than 1,000 passengers – includes a ghostly offstage chorus, sung here by the Seattle Symphony Chorale, who emphasise the hymn-like style to great effect. The singers also appear in the subsequent *New England Holidays*, a four-movement work that depicts annual festivities. Claire Jackson

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



MAHLER

DVD *Symphony No. 8*

Ricarda Merbeth, Juliane Banse, Anna Lucia Richter (soprano), Mihoko Fujimura (mezzo-soprano), Sara Mingardo (contralto), Andreas Schager (tenor), Peter Mattei (baritone), Samuel Youn (bass-baritone); Bavarian Radio Choir; Latvian Radio Choir; Orféon Donostiarrá; Tölz Boys' Choir; Lucerne Festival Orchestra/Riccardo Chailly
Accentus Music ACC 20390 92:56 mins

This should have been worthy DVD closure both for Claudio Abbado's peerless Lucerne Mahler cycle – he never conducted the Eighth Symphony there – and for Riccardo Chailly's series, otherwise seen in Leipzig and a fine second-best. That

it fails, for me, is due mostly to the soloists. As in a Wagner opera, you can take one or two less-than-bests in a line-up, but not five out of eight singers.

Ensemble blend in the opening 'Veni creator spiritus' is poor, with heldentenor Andreas Schager belting it out and soprano Ricarda Merbeth's wide vibrato hit and miss at the top. Relief comes in the orchestral introduction to the cosmic closing scene from Goethe's *Faust*. Chailly paces it more swiftly and less atmospherically than usual, but in close succession we see and hear many of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra's bedrocks: flautist Jacques Zoon, horn-player Alessio Allegrini, trumpeter Reinhold Friedrich. Then it's off the rails with the voices again: the baritone part lies too high for Peter Mattei, while Samuel Youn makes a word-insensitive bluster of the sequel. Mezzos Sara Mingardo and Mihoko Fujimura shine, and Juliane Banse carries the Gretchen stretch through sheer determination, but the brief appearance of Anna Lucia Richter from aloft doesn't sound good.

The four choirs are magnificent, especially in the fugal writing at the heart of Part I, and the end is resplendent, but Chailly's less than easy rubato means too many bumps along the way. What a disappointment. It's also a pity that the DVD lacks his enlightenment in interview, always a boon in his Leipzig series. David Nice

PERFORMANCE ★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★★



SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 8 (completed by Maria Venzago)

Kammerorchester Basel/Mario Venzago
Sony 88985431382 43:07 mins

Most attempts that have been made to complete the *Unfinished* Symphony, including this new one by Mario Venzago, have based the finale on the first entr'acte from Schubert's music for the play *Rosamunde*, which is in the appropriate key of B minor. For the symphony's *Scherzo*, Schubert left a complete draft, though there's no more than a trace of what he intended for the trio section. Venzago speculates that the Symphony was actually complete when Schubert sent it to his friend Anselm Hüttenbrenner in Graz, and that he subsequently asked to have the finale

REISSUES

Reviewed by Christopher Dingle

POULENC • SAINT-SAËNS

Saint-Saëns: Carnival of the Animals; **Poulenc: Les animaux modèles;** **Les biches;** **Milhaud: La création du monde** Aldo Ciccolini, Alexis Weissenberg (piano); Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire/Prêtre Erato 9029589513 (1962/67) 79:52 mins

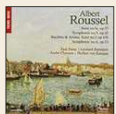


The highlight is Poulenc's *Les animaux modèles*. There's *joie de vivre* in *Les biches* suite and *La création*

du monde, but *Carnival of the Animals* has heavy-handed passages. **PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★ **RECORDING** ★★★

ROUSSEL

Suite in F*; **Symphony No. 3**;** **Bacchus et Ariane†;** **Symphony No. 4** *Detroit Symp Orch/Paray; **New York Phil/Bernstein; †Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire/Cluytens; Philharmonia/Karajan Praga Digitals PRD 350 138 (hybrid CD/SACD) (1949-63) 79:59 mins



Karajan's early account of Symphony No. 4 exudes finesse, Bernstein has compelling swagger allied to poetry in the Third, while Paray and Cluytens capture Rousset's effervescent side.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ **RECORDING** ★★★★★

RAVEL

Boléro; **Ma mère l'Oye;** **Pavane pour une infante défunte;** **La valse** Berliner Sinfonie-Orchester/Herbig Berlin Classics 0300880 BC (1978) 52:16 mins



This orchestra sounds wonderfully translucent under Gunther Herbig. Yet the playing is rather laboured in *La valse* and periodically brash in *Ma mère l'Oye*.

PERFORMANCE ★★★ **RECORDING** ★★★

PARIS

Debussy, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Satie, Chausson, Hahn, Bonnay, Gershwin Planès, Tharaud, Faust, Fink et al Harmonia Mundi HMX 2908560.61 (1997-2013) 176 mins (2 discs)



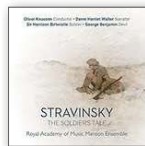
A lavish, eclectic exploration of Paris. Debussy and Ravel appear in unexpected guises; plus, rarities such as Saint-Saëns's film score for *L'Assassinat du duc de Guise*.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ **RECORDING** ★★★★★

back, as he wanted to use it for his *Rosamunde* music, which had to be composed in a hurry. Hüttenbrenner, suggests Venzago, simply tore the manuscript in half, and the last two movements have been lost ever since. It's all a bit far-fetched, really, and Venzago's completion of the *Scherzo*, with two trios (again adapted from *Rosamunde*) following one after the other, is uncharacteristic of any 19th-century symphony. A nicer touch is the way he brings back the first movement's opening bars near the end of the finale.

Venzago's no-nonsense approach to the Symphony's two completed movements includes swifter than usual tempos. The first movement, in particular, is rather hard-driven, and the heavy *ritardando* at end of the famous second subject is ill-judged. In the end it's hard not to feel that any attempt to round out Schubert's uniquely great symphonic torso is doomed to failure. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★ **RECORDING** ★★★★★



STRAVINSKY

The Soldier's Tale; **Fanfare for a New Theatre;** **plus Maxwell Davies: Canon ad honorem Igor Stravinsky (arr. Knussen);** **Birtwistle: Chorale from a Toy Shop – for Igor Stravinsky (versions for winds and strings)** Harriet Walter, Harrison Birtwistle, George Benjamin (speaking roles); Royal Academy of Music Manson Ensemble/Oliver Knussen Linn CKD 552 69:53 mins

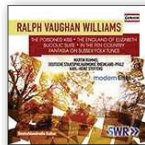
The latest fruit of Linn Records's collaboration with London's Royal Academy of Music (RAM) is an exceptionally rewarding assembly of 20th-century chamber-music gems by the Manson Ensemble, the RAM's splendidly accomplished student band devoted to contemporary music. Under Oliver Knussen, current RAM Richard Rodney Bennett Professor of Music, a Stravinsky memorial has been designed to set *The Soldier's Tale*, its largest work, amid a selection of tiny late-Stravinsky pieces interspersed with no less tiny Stravinsky tributes from Harrison Birtwistle and Peter Maxwell Davies.

The original plan was that Birtwistle, as the Soldier, and Harriet Walter's Narrator should be joined in the recording studio by Maxwell Davies as the Devil; but the latter's death resulted in another leading British composer, George Benjamin,

taking over as the Devil. (The pairing of notable composers in this work is a hallowed US tradition.)

For anyone wanting an English-language account of this key Stravinsky masterpiece – almost a century old and bulking ever larger among his greatest achievements for its mighty scale and subject matter drawn out of minimal means – this set has much to offer. It's recorded in a way to convey to the maximum both the poetic detail and the expert pacing of Knussen's finely-pointed reading, and to give full rein to Dame Harriet's wonderfully free-spirited yet exact Narrator. Others may enjoy Birtwistle's flat-toned Soldier and Benjamin's slightly schoolboyish Devil more than I do (memories being hard to efface of Peter Ustinov's irresistibly funny Devil in the classic Igor Markevitch recording, and of Depardieu son and father as Soldier and Devil in Shlomo Mintz's). As a whole, however, the disc merits a strong recommendation. *Max Loppert*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ **RECORDING** ★★★★★



VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

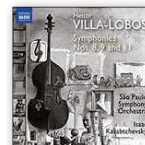
The Poisoned Kiss – overture; **In the Fen Country;** **Three Portraits from The England of Elizabeth;** **Fantasia on Sussex Folk Tunes;** **Bucolic Suite** Martin Rummel (cello); Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz/Karl-Heinz Steffens SWR C5314 70:38 mins

The Vaughan Williams catalogue is so filled with recordings by English orchestras and conductors that it's refreshing to hear the music approached from the angle of a related but still different culture. Based in Ludwigshafen and Mainz, this orchestra with its line-up of quality players (among them a superb principal horn and oboe) surely cannot be overfamiliar with any of these works, and it's intriguing to wonder quite what they make of RVW in roistering English-folksong mode. They respond excellently in any case, and their music director (a former principal clarinetist of the Berlin Philharmonic) conducts with an unobtrusive strength of purpose that mirrors a similar quality in the music itself.

The finest playing is generated by the finest material: *In the Fen Country* confirms its standing as the first of Vaughan Williams's quiet masterworks, here graced with

beautifully sure solo and ensemble playing to match. Rarities include the *Fantasia of Sussex Folk Tunes* for cello and orchestra of 1925, likeably performed by soloist Martin Rummel, whose un-heckoring tone and manner unmistakably recall the example of his former teacher, William Pleeth. Not too much can be done with the triteness of the overture to the (notionally) comic opera *The Poisoned Kiss*, but at least everyone here tries. And the set of Elizabethan documentary-film 'portraits' (Drake, Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth herself) emerges as a minor creation of genuine substance. *Malcolm Hayes*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ **RECORDING** ★★★★★



VILLA-LOBOS

Symphonies Nos 8, 9 & 11 São Paulo Symphony Orchestra/Isaac Karabtschevsky Naxos 8.573777 73:43 mins

'What is the matter with this music? Why are we not satisfied?' So wrote one critic in 1940 when Villa-Lobos's output, as tangled as a Brazilian forest, became actively promoted in North America in the spirit of wartime fellowship. The same questions linger even when he threw classical precedents into the mix, as in these symphonies from the 1950s, premired by the Philadelphia and Boston orchestras. So many notes, seemingly hurtling nowhere; so many structural cul-de-sacs. For these reasons alone, it's unwise to listen to this CD in one go.

At the same time, you must be particularly hard-hearted not to warm to at least some of Villa-Lobos's rhythmic, harmonic and instrumental exuberance, especially in the Ninth Symphony from 1952, the shortest and tautest here. As before in his symphony cycle for Naxos, Isaac Karabtschevsky and his São Paulo forces drive through the thick and teeming turmoil with panache. But they also cherish the tender and thinner moments when Villa-Lobos's pulse slackens and lyricism peeks through, as in the quiet corners of the 11th Symphony's *Adagio*. A deeper, more flamboyant acoustic might have given these performances extra drama. On the other hand it could equally have made this music even more bewildering. *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ **RECORDING** ★★★★★



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FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS

CONCERTO

Simon Trpčeski and *Vasily Petrenko* once again prove a first-rate team in superb performances of Prokofiev piano concertos; cellist *Antonio Meneses* receives vivid support from the *Royal Northern Sinfonia* in Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky; Gubaidulina's Violin Concerto receives its third recording

MUSIC CONCERTO CHOICE

A celebration of Carter

Pierre-Laurent Aimard joins a superlative team, says *Steph Power*



CARTER

Interventions; Dialogues; Dialogues II; Soundings; Two Controversies and a Conversation; Instances; Epigrams

Pierre-Laurent Aimard (piano); Colin Currie (percussion), Isabelle Faust (violin), Jean-Guihen Queyras (cello); Birmingham Contemporary Music Group; BBC Symphony Orchestra/Oliver Knussen

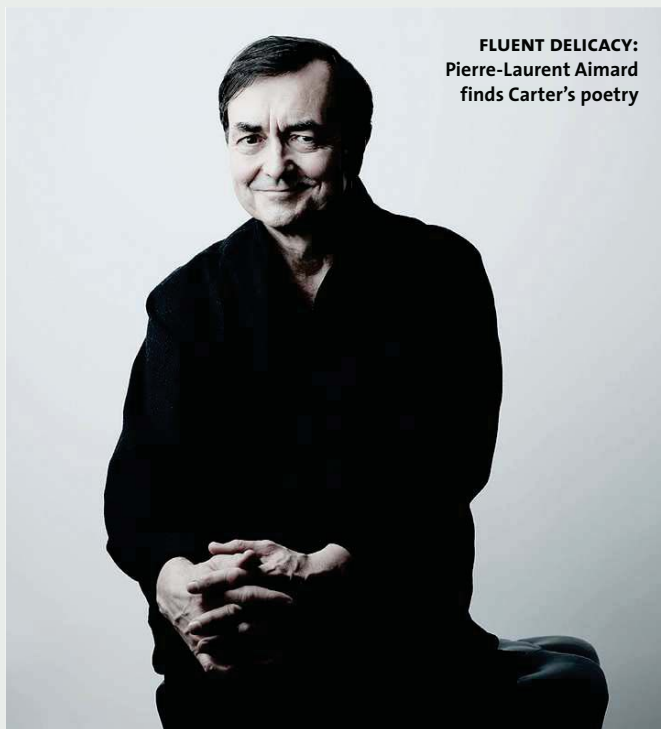
Online ODE1296-2 74:42 mins

A composer's late works can become imbued after their death with a poignancy not always reflected by the music itself. In the case of Elliott Carter (1908-2012), while his loss remains keen, the late works seem more an occasion for celebration than sorrow. Indeed, astonishment

The late works seem more an occasion for celebration than sorrow

seems the most natural response to the seven pieces in this retrospective; five recorded for the first time, and each not merely composed between the ages of 90 and 100-plus, but brimming with youthful energy and Haydnesque, impish wit.

Carter makes no concession to post-1960s trends away from complex dissonance, and maintains a fiercely idiosyncratic rigour of form and language. Yet his polyphony of rhythms, pitches and pulses is less dense than hitherto, and an emphasis on long, arching string lines lends surprising lyricism



FLUENT DELICACY: Pierre-Laurent Aimard finds Carter's poetry

to his trademark antiphonal instrumental groupings. The title *Dialogues* – a piano concerto, echoed by the later *Dialogues II* – could serve as collective descriptor, since each work features a dialectical tussle between its various players, and between its contrasting kinds of material.

Pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard brings fluent delicacy to the concertos (including *Interventions*) and the orchestral *Soundings*. He is matched in filigree precision by co-protagonists, percussionist Colin Currie (*Two Controversies and a Conversation*), and the BBC Symphony Orchestra and

Birmingham Contemporary Music Group under conductor, Oliver Knussen. Carter's very last, centenary works – *Instances* and the piano trio, *Epigrams*, the latter marvellously played by Aimard with violinist Isabelle Faust and cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras – prove concise, poetic and delightfully mischievous as ever.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

ON THE WEBSITE
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GUBAIDULINA

In tempus praesens*

SHOSTAKOVICH

Violin Concerto No. 1

Simone Lamsma (violin); Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra/James Gaffigan, *Reinbert de Leeuw
Challenge Classics CC72681
(hybrid CD/SACD) 73:21 mins

Dutch violinist Simone Lamsma, whose few recordings have been of Romantic or late-Romantic works, now ventures into contemporary repertoire with Gubaidulina's extraordinarily evocative concerto, *In tempus praesens*. This makes richly imaginative use of a large orchestra (including Wagner tuba and amplified harpsichord), and in this live performance casts its spell under the baton of Reinbert de Leeuw. There are two previous recordings of this work, both better recorded although there is little to choose between Lamsma's performance and Vadim Gluzman's equally fine account (on BIS). Yet neither match the wild strangeness of the premiere recording by its dedicatee, Anne-Sophie Mutter, partnered by Valery Gergiev conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in wonderfully resonant yet clear sound (on Deutsche Grammophon). Lamsma, despite her intense and rather eerie vibrato at the start, sounds positively conventional in comparison.

Lamsma faces even stiffer competition for the Shostakovich. Her studio recording, conducted by James Gaffigan, follows the opening movement's published metronome mark, making it flow more swiftly than usual. This does make the task of creating the usual foreboding atmosphere harder to achieve – but Lamsma appears not to be aiming for that effect. For all her virtuosic ability, Lamsma's performance is never more than conventionally 'expressive'. There is no sense of

candid communication as one hears, for instance, in Maxim Vengerov's acclaimed recording with the LSO and Rostropovich (on Warner Apex). Tellingly, where Vengerov breathes meaning into the rising arpeggios that open the cadenza after the Passacaglia, Lamsma plays these as if they were no more than a dull technical exercise. *Daniel Jaffé*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★



MOZART

Piano Concertos Nos 25 & 26
Francesco Piemontesi (piano); Scottish Chamber Orchestra/Andrew Manze
Linn CKD 544 61:11 mins

On paper this recording seems an exciting prospect, yet oddly the reality sounds like less than the sum of its parts. For starters, the pairing is possibly not ideal: Mozart's big C major Piano Concerto No. 25, K503 is one of the best of them all, while No. 26, K537, though adjacent to it in numbering terms, is scarcely its equal in terms of inspiration. Francesco Piemontesi's playing is mostly magnificent, though, with crystalline clarity, radiant tone and eloquent phrasing. In the fine and intriguing cadenzas – K537 by Paul Badura-Skoda and K503 by Friedrich Gulda – he shines with surety of purpose.

Nevertheless, there's a certain rigidity and heavy-handedness in the orchestra with the result that even Mozart at his most sublime remains resolutely earthbound. Often Andrew Manze seems to emphasise the first beat in a way that makes the barlines almost visible; and rather than flowing naturally through Mozart's inventive chromaticisms, there's a tendency to ram them home – notably in K503's slow movement, in which even Piemontesi lunges at a particularly juicy bass-line with the musical equivalent of an upraised rolling pin.

This exaggeration of detail at the expense of flow can sometimes become problematic. The Scottish Chamber Orchestra sounds cogent and well unified, but the slow movements' crucial wind section contributions come across as efficient rather than operatic. The piano seems rather closely miked, although the recorded sound quality (from the Usher Hall) is otherwise pleasing and warm. The totality of course is not

bad, but certain elements can seem bothersome. Your response may be different. *Jessica Duchon*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



PROKOFIEV

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 3; Overture on Hebrew Themes
Simon Trpčeski (piano); Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra/Vasily Petrenko
Onyx ONYX 4140 52:23 mins

We already know from their impressive Rachmaninov cycle that Simon Trpčeski and Vasily Petrenko work exceptionally well together in delivering musically insightful and rhythmically dynamic performances. The same virtues are present in this compelling Prokofiev programme, in particular the vivid sense of interaction between soloist and orchestra which is so essential in these effervescent works. Even in the First Piano Concerto, the orchestra is by no means relegated to a subservient role. A clear recording and a fine balance between piano and orchestra certainly helps to ensure that the maximum amount of inner detail comes to the fore. But Trpčeski also plays an important role in determining exactly when to be dominant and when to appear comparatively restrained. I also like the overall trajectory of this performance, in particular how after their lyrically subdued account of the central *Andante assai*, Trpčeski and Petrenko ratchet up the tension in the final movement and thereby make the return of the memorable opening theme near the end sound all the more triumphant.

If Trpčeski's performance of the Third Concerto doesn't project quite the same degree of insouciance as in Argerich's classic recording, there is still much to marvel at. In particular, the unanimity of ensemble between piano and strings in the rushing scalic passages of the first movement and the helter-skelter acrobatics of the final bars come off brilliantly. But Trpčeski and Petrenko are no less effective in sculpting the deep-freeze chill of the fourth variation in the central movement. With a characterful performance of the *Overture on Hebrew Themes* as a welcome bonus, this is a promising first disc in what presumably will be a complete Prokofiev Piano Concerto series. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



SAINT-SAËNS

Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor

SCHUMANN

Cello Concerto in A minor

TCHAIKOVSKY

Variations on a Rococo Theme

Antonio Meneses (cello); Royal Northern Sinfonia/Claudio Cruz
Avie AV 2373 60:29 mins

Antonio Meneses delivers technically immaculate and warmly expressive playing throughout these three well-established 19th-century repertoire works. In the first movement of the Schumann Concerto he adopts an almost ideal tempo, allowing sufficient time for the long lyrical melodic lines to breathe but never disrupting the natural flow of the musical argument. There's a beautiful lyrical poise to the slow movement which contrasts most effectively with the lively and capricious articulation in the Finale.

Meneses's account of Saint-Saëns's First Concerto, like the Schumann in A minor, is no less enjoyable, particularly the central *Allegretto con moto* which has wonderful elegance and repose. He also brings all the necessary dramatic urgency to the outer sections of the work, where the bravura of his running semiquaver passages and octaves is particularly impressive.

Predictably, the even more demanding technical hurdles of Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations* are dispatched with brilliance. Although Meneses could perhaps afford to be a bit more unbuttoned in the playful humour of Variation 7, there's much charm in the arabesques of Variation 1, and the quiet introspection of Variations 3 and 6 is poetically projected.

All in all, these are beautifully recorded and very fine performances, perhaps at times lacking a certain spark of individuality, but benefiting enormously from the excellent playing of the Royal Northern Sinfonia conducted by Claudio Cruz. In so many other concerto recordings, the orchestral parts can sound routine, but Cruz brings welcome transparency to Schumann's rich textures, and the solo woodwind playing in both the Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky is delightful and strongly characterised. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

REISSUES

Reviewed by Erik Levi

BEETHOVEN

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 5
Andor Földes (piano); Bamberg Symphony Orchestra; Berlin Phil/Leitner
Eloquence 482 7048 (1959-60) 76:09 mins



Földes brings considerable Beethovenian heft to the First Concerto. His interpretation

of the *Emperor* is solid, but not especially riveting. Both orchestras offer sturdy and committed support.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

BEETHOVEN

Violin Concerto; Violin Sonata No. 9
Bronislaw Huberman (violin); Vienna Phil/Szell; Ignaz Friedman (piano)
Warner 0190295895167 (1930/34) 69:60 mins



Huberman's charismatic playing mitigates Szell and the Vienna Philharmonic's

rather four-square accompaniment. Sparks fly in the propulsive account of the *Kreutzer* Sonata.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

MOZART

Concerto No. 10 for two pianos; Concerto for flute and harp in C; Horn Concerto No. 3
Theuns (flute), De Haer (harp), Hübner (horn), Kaneko (piano); Anima Eterna/Jos Van Immerseel (piano)
Alpha ALPHA 339 (2005) 66:33 mins



Superb soloists and Van Immerseel's imaginative and dexterous handling of Mozart's orchestral textures make the best possible case for period instrument performances.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

MOZART

Piano Concertos Nos 21 & 24
Camerata Salzburg/Stefan Vladar (piano)
Harmonia Mundi HMA 1901942 (2006) 66:10 mins



Vladar's fast flowing tempo and fluid ornamentation in the magical *Andante* of No. 21, K467 is refreshing. Perhaps the drama in No. 24, K491 is understated, but the Salzburg Camerata's wind players are outstanding.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



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OPERA

Covent Garden revives *John Schlesinger's* sumptuous *Tales of Hoffmann*; *Valery Gergiev* conducts a lively new production of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel*; and *Daniel Behle* shines in rare Schubert



GRAUN

Opera Arias: L'Orfeo – 'Sento una pena', 'Il mar s'alza e freme', 'D'ogni aura al mormorar'; Silla – 'Parmi...ah no!'; 'No, no, di Libia fra l'arene'; Iphigenia in Aulis – 'Sforzero'; Coriolano – 'Senza di te, mio Bene'; Armida – 'La gloria t'invita', 'A tanti pianti miei'; Il Mithridate – 'Piangete'; Britannico – 'Mi paventi il figlio indegno'; plus Rodelinda, regina de'Longobardi – Sinfonia
Julia Lezhneva (soprano);
Concerto Köln/Mikhail Antonenko
Decca 483 1518 65:12 mins

If you want to hear coloratura faster than you've ever heard it, buy this recording. And if you want to discover the opera output of Carl Heinrich Graun (1704-59), himself a tenor and one of the leading German composers of Italian opera in his time, this is the only album fully dedicated to his work. But the Russian soprano Julia Lezhneva is not at her best here, either technically or expressively.

One constraint is the programme: Graun was an expert, but not masterful, composer. The sleeve notes imply that Lezhneva, having first stumbled across one of these arias ('Mi paventi' from *Britannico*), then chose the others. If this is true, her selection wasn't perhaps the best, because the orchestral writing is pretty shallow. To maintain interest director Mikhail Antonenko sets frantic tempos which, besides getting tedious, starve Graun's vocal gestures of oxygen. Antonenko's tempos also corner Lezhneva into singing with a precision bordering on the machine-like.

Despite all this, Lezhneva often scintillates, using her instrument and extemporisations to breathe life into her characters. Sometimes, however, she slips into weird mannerisms, apparently to heighten dramatic impact. In the first track ('Sento una pena'), when she leans into longer notes, they go flat – and when she swoops up to the final top note, she misses its centre. These uncharacteristic missteps cast a pall over a well-intentioned project.

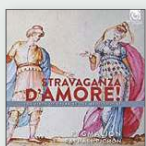
Graun's arias may well merit performance, but this first serious foray into his operatic output might leave you wondering why.

Berta Joncus
PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★

MUSIC OPERA CHOICE

The spectacular birth of opera

Kate Bolton-Porciatti enjoys a sumptuous evocation of Medici glory



STRAVAGANZA D'AMORE: *The Birth of Opera at the Medici Court*

Music by **Allegrì, Brunelli, G Caccini, Buonamente, Cavalieri, Fantini, Gagliano, Malvezzi, Marenzio, Orologio, Peri and Striggio**
Pygmalion/Raphaël Pichon
Harmonia Mundi 902286-87
202:38 mins (2 discs)

This lavish new release celebrates the gestation and birth of opera in Florence around the year 1600. Director Raphaël Pichon has cherry-picked some of the highpoints from the musico-dramatic extravaganzas associated with sundry Medici weddings and celebrations. There are extracts from the first operas by Jacopo Peri, Giulio Caccini and

The production has all the sumptuousness of a Medici spectacle

Marco da Gagliano, along with highlights from the 1589 *intermedi* (multi-media 'interludes' performed between the acts of a play during one of the many knees-ups for the nuptials of Ferdinando I de' Medici and Christine of Lorraine). This smorgasbord of madrigals and monodies, sinfonias and dances has been arranged into four imaginary *intermedi* which evoke the spirit, if not the letter, of these splendid courtly revelries. Running through each is a unifying narrative thread taken from the Greek myths of

'CREATIVE APPROACH':
Raphaël Pichon brings flair to early opera



Daphne, Apollo and Orpheus – the love-struck protagonists of the first operas.

Harmonia Mundi's production has all the sumptuousness of the original Medici spectacles, complete with large-scale chorus and colourful instrumental ensemble. The performances are highly polished, chorus and ensemble producing a glossy and liberally embellished sound while the dozen soloists give fine and well-balanced contributions. Pichon's approach is certainly creative and, though ultimately it's something of a hodge-

podge of genres and periods, it's all very stylishly done. The two CDs are handsomely packaged within a hard-back book, filled with detailed liner notes and beautifully illustrated with reproductions of the original costumes and sets from a range of primary sources.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

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REISSUES SPECIAL



STAR APPEAL:
Gundula Janowitz
meets a fan, 1968

An enchanting opera icon

Record Review's **Andrew McGregor** enjoys a celebration of the great Austrian lyric soprano Gundula Janowitz



A Voice of Silver and Gold is the title of the essay in *The Gundula Janowitz Edition* (Deutsche

Grammophon 479 7348; 14CDs), and if you listen to the earliest and last recordings in the set, that's exactly what you hear. Pure silver as a Flower Maiden in Hans Knappertsbusch's live *Parsifal* at Bayreuth in 1962, burnished gold in Mendelssohn's *Paulus* with Kurt Masur in Leipzig in 1986. Janowitz made her Bayreuth debut as a Flower Maiden in 1960, the year she first appeared at the Vienna State Opera in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*

for Herbert von Karajan. Janowitz was Karajan's favoured lyric soprano for some 20 years, and their recordings are testament to a remarkable instrument at the peak of its power, in the solo from Brahms's *German Requiem* and excerpts from Haydn's *Creation*.

The set opens with Janowitz's 1966 Vienna recital of Mozart concert arias conducted by Wilfried Boettcher, showcasing her purity of tone and line, and a dramatic intensity for which she's not always given credit. I suspect we're sometimes too enchanted by the voice itself to notice.

Then come the Baroque recordings: Telemann's cantata *Ino*, highlights from Handel's *Messiah*, JS Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, showing their age stylistically, even though it's easy to admire the singing.

The 1967 recital of arias from Weber and Wagner arias with Ferdinand Leitner is outstanding, with the most exquisite Agathe in *Der Freischütz*. And with Karl Böhm are some of my favourite highlights: the radiant final scene of Strauss's *Capriccio*, Haydn's *Seasons* and essential Mozart:

This shows a remarkable voice at the peak of its power

the 1968 *Figaro* as the most believable Countess, and the Salzburg *Così fan tutte*. From

Karajan's *Ring Cycle*, we have Act I of *Die Walküre*, with Janowitz's cool Sieglinde a wonderful foil for Jon Vickers as Siegmund.

Four CDs of Schubert Songs with pianist Irwin Gage from the 1970s allow us to admire Janowitz's artistry up close. The last disc celebrates the partnership with Karajan, with the Bach Mass and *St Matthew Passion* and Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. And it ends with one of the greatest recordings of Strauss's *Four Last Songs* – heart-stoppingly beautiful, impossible to follow.



OFFENBACH

DVD Les contes d'Hoffmann

Vittorio Grigolo, Kate Lindsey, Sofia Fomina, Christine Rice, Sonya Yoncheva, Thomas Hampson; Royal Opera House Chorus & Orchestra/Evelino Pidò; dir. John Schlesinger (London, 2016)

Sony DVD: 88985376619;

Blu-ray: 88985376629 177:86 mins (2 discs)

This is a spectacular *Tales of Hoffmann* to look at, but not perhaps as serious as it should be. So there's nothing too taxing about art rescuing life from the gutter. Or how Offenbach and his librettists skewer 19th-century images of women as domestic doll, courtesan and doomed angel of the hearth.

Still, there's much to enjoy. John Schlesinger's production for the Royal Opera House appeared sumptuous when it opened in 1980, and it's still a handsome show. William Dudley's vast sets offer landings and staircases, places to hide and corners from which to overhear, and in the Venetian act a canal with gondolas, while the attention to detail in the late 19th-century costumes is everything that you would expect from Maria Björnson. Schlesinger directs with the wide lens vision of an international filmmaker, though this revival by Daniel Dooner knows how to use close up too.

It's good to hear as much if not more of Offenbach's reconstructed score than is often the case. But you still need six great singing actors to make Hoffmann serenade your heart. Sofia Fomina trills like a canary as the mechanical doll, Christine Rice is darkly beguiling as Giulietta and Sonya Yoncheva's Antonia would melt a heart of stone. Kate Lindsey's Nicklausse is irresistible too, her tone dark chocolate and cream.

It's the men who are the problem. Tenor Vittorio Grigolo is a dry-toned Hoffmann, and throws himself about the stage as if possessed instead of finding the character in the voice. Baritone Thomas Hampson takes three acts to discover the devil in Dr Miracle. Before that in Paris and Venice he seems to have lost the way to hell. In the pit conductor Evelino Pidò lacks a certain Gallic touch in music that should beguile and surprise. That it does so often in this recording is a tribute to Offenbach.

Christopher Cook

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

PICTURE & SOUND

★★★★



RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

DVD The Golden Cockerel

Vladimir Feliauer, Andrei Popov, Aida Garifullina, Kira Loginova, Andrei Serov; Mariinsky Chorus & Orchestra/Valery Gergiev; dir. Anna Matison (St Petersburg, 2014)

Mariinsky MAR0596 (DVD & Blu-ray) 119 mins

Rimsky-Korsakov's last opera, based on Pushkin's 1834 satirical fantasy, is still best known in the UK through David Pountney's long-running, hilariously colourful production, with its trapeze-artist Cockerel. Young producer Anna Matison's staging, filmed in the new Mariinsky house, creates something of the same panto feeling, with vast sets and impressive computer graphics. Musically it's superior, though perhaps not to the degree one might expect. Valery Gergiev's characteristically expansive conducting brings out Rimsky's glowing Oriental languor, but at occasional cost to snappy pace and surreal wit. Likewise Matison, for all her liveliness, too often lets musical opportunities slacken into random business – the daft hippity-hoppity marches, for instance – but, despite some pointless hand camerawork, this vastly improves on the company's humourless 2002 kabuki staging.

Her Cockerel becomes a modern, selfie-addicted young girl enticed by the serpentine Astrologer into the ridiculous realm of dim but tyrannical Tsar Dodon. Supposed to warn him against enemies, the Cockerel instead delivers him to the outrageously seductive Queen of Shemakhan, and a bad end. Which is all right, announces the Astrologer, because only he and the Queen were real...

That doesn't prevent a fine cast bringing them to life, notably Vladimir Feliauer's gruffly vigorous Dodon, less fatuous than most, and Aida Garifullina's Queen, not the usual creamy-voiced shintiyanc-lad houri but a crystal-toned, leggy modern sex goddess. Andrei Popov achieves the Astrologer's fiendishly high range but rather misses his eerie quality. Bass Andrei Serov makes a resonant, put-upon General Polkan and Kira Loginova a sympathetic, baffled Cockerel, with the Mariinsky's usual hard-working cast, chorus and dancers completing a highly enjoyable spectacle. Only later do you start wondering if the

Astrologer really looked a little like Putin... *Michael Scott Rohan*
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★★



SCHUBERT

Arias & Overtures from The Magic Harp, Claudine von Villa Bella, Die Freunde von Salamanka, Adrast, Lazarus, Alfonso und Estrella, Fierrabras, Das Zaubererglökchen
 Daniel Behle (tenor); L'Orfeo Barockorchester/Michi Gaigg
 Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 88985407212
 60:10 mins

Schubert's operas – and there are plenty of them – enjoyed little success during his lifetime, many not even reaching the stage; and for that matter they haven't received much attention since. The general complaint is that they lack drama – though this collection of overtures and tenor arias from eight works (some of them fragments) certainly testifies to their musical beauty.

The opening item, the overture to *Die Zauberharfe*, is at least well known since it was posthumously published as the overture to *Rosamunde*. Its performance instantly announces the superior period-instrument playing of L'Orfeo Barockorchester under Michi Gaigg, with characterful string tone and a wide range of dynamics and colour all finely captured in this recording; wind, brass and timpani, too, are interpretatively and sonically vivid.

Daniel Behle's singing combines passion with control. In all he sings 12 items, including arias written for two different characters in both *Die Freunde von Salamanka* and *Fierrabras* – neither score performed in Schubert's lifetime. Throughout the disc his vocalism is notable for its musicianship and expressivity, its vitality borne of a complete commitment to the text.

There are several highlights, including the powerful overture to the third act of *Die Zauberharfe*, the first of the arias from the fragment *Adrast*, the genuinely dramatic overture to *Alfonso und Estrella*, and an aria inserted into a Viennese performance of Ferdinand Hérol's *La Clochette*. Only Schubert specialists are likely to know more than one piece on the disc, which turns out to be full of worthwhile discoveries, marvellously performed. *George Hall*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★★



VERDI

DVD Otello

José Cura, Dorothea Röschmann, Carlos Alvarez, Benjamin Bernheim, Christa Mayer, Georg Zeppenfeld, Csaba Szegedi, Gordon Bintner; Staatskapelle Dresden/Christian Thielemann; dir. Vincent Boussard (Salzburg, 2016)
C Major DVD: 740008;
Blu-ray: 740104 147 mins

This is director's opera with a vengeance. Though the synopsis in the booklet narrates the action as Verdi and Boito intended, the action doesn't follow that at all. It is set nowhere, no-time, and Otello isn't a Moor. There are no sets, and the only prop is the fatal handkerchief, in this production a small diaphanous sheet. When Otello, in the opera's most terrifying moment, near the end of Act III, hurls Desdemona to the ground, he merely shouts at her and she sinks gracefully to her knees. No bed, of course, and Desdemona dies standing up. Are there compensating insights from the director Vincent Boussard, working with the fashion designer Christian Lacroix? Not that I could see; one wonders what the 'creative team' did to earn their fee.

What of the musical performance? Otello is played by José Cura, a highly seasoned veteran whose first appearance, the celebrated 'Esultate!' is disastrous, so wobbly that I dreaded the rest of the performance.

Fortunately his subsequent singing, though hardly secure, is at least tolerable, and his acting lends to the work what dignity it has in this version. Dorothea Röschmann makes many beautiful sounds, as one expects, but also some too-mature and blowsy ones, and with no dramatic context she is not harrowing. The star is the Carlos Alvarez as Iago, creating his own world of evil intrigue. He is potent enough a presence for the ridiculous Angel of Death, a woman with huge black wings, which burst into flame at one point, to be superfluous.

Christian Thielemann conducts his marvellous orchestra with refinement and with just, traditional tempos. But for me that and the Iago aren't sufficient compensation for the many infuriating features of this strange affair. *Michael Tanner*

PERFORMANCE ★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★★



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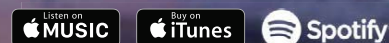
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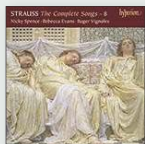
CHORAL & SONG

Mark Padmore makes a striking impression in Jonathan Dove's song cycle *In Damascus*; *John Butt* and *Dunedin Consort* give a glowing account of Monteverdi's *Vespers*; and Cardiff prize-winning soprano *Louise Alder* makes her radiant recording debut singing Strauss *Lieder*

BBC MUSIC CHORAL & SONG CHOICE

Revelatory Strauss

David Nice applauds tenor Nicky Spence's sensitive interpretations



R STRAUSS

Cäcilie; *Wenn...*; *Bruder Liederlich*, *An Sie*; *Die Ulme zu Hirsau*; *Fünf Gedichte*; *Junggesellenschwur*; *Wer wird von der Welt verlangen*; *Hab'ich euch den je geraten*; *Wanderers Gemutsruhe*; *Der Pokal*; *Sie wissen's nicht*; *Vier letzte Lieder* etc

Rebecca Evans (soprano), Nicky Spence (tenor), Roger Vignoles (piano)
Hyperion CDA 68185 64:23 mins

Only the first song, 'Cäcilie', and the *Four Last Songs* will be familiar to most listeners here. Hyperion goes beyond the strict bounds of voice-and-piano songs only in this eighth and final instalment of a

Nicky Spence sings 'Cäcilie' with an ardour verging on the heroic

magnificent and never predictable Strauss series. But when you have as classy a soprano as Rebecca Evans to hand, it's well worth recording the *Vier Letzte Lieder* in a piano version (not by Strauss) which sheds a more intimate light on these masterpieces. Evans weaves a special magic in the dying falls, with magnificent breath control at the end of 'September'.

Gold, though, goes to Nicky Spence and Roger Vignoles, making a remarkable statement of intent in the rapturous 'Cäcilie', with a special care with text and phrase and an ardour verging on



GOLD STANDARD:
Nicky Spence is sensitive and fearless in Strauss

the heroic. The next two songs deal perfectly with the quirks of a hard-worked style; but Nos 1 and 3 of Op. 43 from 1899 come out, contrary to previously-held opinion, as near-masterpieces. 'An sie', Klopstock's ode to Time, is bewitching, one of the great love songs in Spence's handling, and 'Die Ulme zu Hirsau' seems to cry out for orchestration, with its rustling anticipation of the 'beloved tree' which Daphne becomes in the much later opera. Strauss's range is further enhanced

by the personal Ruckert settings of Op. 46, and the bad-tempered poet from Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan* is concisely characterised. There's both sensitivity and fearlessness in Spence's upper register; three cheers to Hyperion.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



ON THE WEBSITE

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



BEETHOVEN

Missa solemnis

Carolyn Sampson (soprano), Marianne Beate Kielland (alto), Thomas Walker (tenor), David Wilson-Johnson (bass); Cappella Amsterdam; Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century/Daniel Reuss
Glossa GCD 921124 75:03 mins

The *Missa solemnis* is Beethoven's most demanding work, both for its performers and for its listeners. Partly that is because it defies all the expectations we have of a Mass; it struggles to believe, and it's hard to say whether it succeeds. All settings of the Mass end with a cry for peace, but Beethoven's is a terrified whimper, after a graphic portrayal of turmoil, with the soloists virtually screaming in supplication. Yet it begins in a monumental, assertive vein – one might say that it is a sacred work which ends as an opera, while *Fidelio* is an opera that ends as a sacred work. The *Missa* should sound like a struggle, for the most part, and this one succeeds in that. The Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century plays with passionate commitment, and the Capella Amsterdam is fervent, but as always one's throat begins to ache in sympathy.

The soloists are not big stars, though there are places where they need to be – especially in the Sanctus, which is an endless sensuous feast, all the more luscious because of the strange mixture of the archaic and the modern that Beethoven produces either side of it. This performance is more homogeneous than many, and therefore makes for less exhausting listening than, say, Otto Klemperer's or Carlo Maria Giulini's. But should it? My feeling is that Beethoven himself remained, in this work, in a state of something between unease and anguish, and the performances which impress most are those that convey that. *Michael Tanner*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



DOVE

In Damascus; Out of Time; Piano Quintet

Mark Padmore (tenor), Charles Owen (piano); Sacconi Quartet
Signum SIGCD 487 73:20 mins

The Sacconi Quartet commissioned Jonathan Dove's song-cycle *In Damascus* to 'reflect aspects of the conflict in Syria'. To that end it sets texts by the contemporary Syrian poet Ali Safar. Tenor Mark Padmore brings to the cycle's opening two songs, and to its pained conclusion 'My country', exquisitely poised legato singing, sweetly tuned and with immaculate articulation. Both Padmore and the Sacconi Quartet, who have a major expressive role as accompanists, are at their finest in 'Soon, we will be free', the serene, lyrical heart of a cycle whose subject-matter dictates that Dove's music is for the most part wracked and torn emotionally.

Out of Time is quite different, an often bustling, upbeat piece in six movements for string quartet, described by Dove as 'a serenade for someone I never met'. Pianist Charles Owen joins the Sacconis for the Piano Quintet, his crisp, incisive playing making a particular impression in the rhythmically buoyant outer movements. All three pieces on this excellently performed disc are first recordings. *Terry Blain*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



DVOŘÁK

Mass in D; Te Deum

Ewa Biegas (soprano), Marina Rodríguez-Cusí (mezzo-soprano), Javier Tomé (tenor), José Antonio López (baritone); Orfeón Pamplonés; Orquesta Sinfónica Navarra/Antoni Wit
Naxos 8.573558 62:31 mins

Dvořák's small-scale Mass, written for the consecration of a wealthy friend's chapel, was originally scored for organ, chorus and soloists. He later orchestrated it, including trombones, but even this version does not respond well to an over-inflated approach. Antoni Wit's expansive view makes for some very patchy results. It's possible to admire aspects of the performance, in particular the



GRACE AND POWER:
 Alexander Liebreich
 conducts Mansurian

mezzo soloist. Yet there is some lumpy orchestral playing, and far too often the choir, its sopranos especially, fails to sustain a consistent sense of pitch, making for too many uncomfortable moments, notably in the 'Gratias' of the Gloria, the 'Crucifixus' of the Credo and the Benedictus.

The *Te Deum*, written for the Columbus celebrations of 1892, was premiered shortly after he arrived in New York. The opening has enormous ebullience, underpinned by solid Baroque-inspired rhythmic figures, but its intoxicating razzmatazz is contrasted with ravishing pastoral interludes. This brief work – a short choral symphony in four movements – has enormous energy. Sadly, owing to a poor recorded balance or perhaps fragility, the violins are almost obliterated by the timpani and the brass in the opening. The two soloists sing attractively, but the underpowered choral singing lacks the verve this overwhelmingly positive work demands. Far more inspiring in both the Mass and *Te Deum* is Václav Smetáček's vintage performance on Supraphon. *Jan Smaczny*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★



KLEIBERG

Mass for Modern Man

Mari Eriksmoen (soprano), Johannes Weisser (baritone); Trondheim Choir & Symphony/Eivind Gullberg Jensen 2L 2L-136-SABD (hybrid CD/SACD and Blu-ray) 66:36 mins

'Is belief possible for modern man?' That is the question posed

by Norwegian composer Ståle Kleiberg (b1958) in his *Mass for Modern Man*, premiered two years ago in Trondheim. As with his earlier *Requiem – for victims of Nazi persecution* (2002), the traditional Latin text of the Mass is intercut with three new poems. In this new work, these are by British writer Jessica Gordon, and are 'about individuals who have lost existential meaning in their lives'.

The opening Kyrie is more anxious than anguished, the upper strings delineating a restless, wave-like pattern beneath the choir's insistent textual repetitions. Kleiberg's idiom is fundamentally tonal – the writing in places recalls Duruflé's Requiem, buttressed by ripper romantic textures. Restlessness also defines 'Loss of a Homeland: The Refugee', where the constantly shifting harmonic contours mirror the uprooted meanderings of the heartfelt vocal soloist, baritone Johannes Weisser. The Gloria which follows is understandably tentative in feeling – an 'unambiguous affirmation', as Kleiberg puts it, is impossible after a movement describing exile from a homeland.

There is poised, dignified work from soprano soloist Mari Eriksmoen in 'Loss of Faith and Hope for the Future', the third Gordon setting. By this stage, however, the listener may well be craving a degree of respite from the predominantly mid-tempo drift of Kleiberg's music, and its pervasively ruminative, soul-searching demeanour.

Both choir and orchestra give unflaggingly devoted accounts, and 2L's sound is typically rich and communicative. Whether the Mass itself should need as large a space to reach the 'hesitant', 'in spite of all' sense of affirmation Kleiberg intends

to ultimately communicate is a different question. *Terry Blain*
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



MANSURIAN

Requiem

RIAS Kammerchor; Munich Chamber Orchestra/Alexander Liebreich
ECM New Series 4814101 43:99 mins

All Armenian musicians – indeed, all Armenians – are haunted by the 1915 Genocide which Turkey still denies, and Tigran Mansurian's oeuvre has gone at it from many different angles. This time it's with a Requiem which deserves to take its place among the most distinguished examples of that genre. Mansurian says he's made three failed shots at a Requiem over the last ten years, each foundering on the mismatch between Roman Catholic and Armenian readings of the text: the psychology of a believer who is part of a powerful religious community with a history of independent statehood is very different, he says, from that of an Armenian.

Mansurian has asked his singers to recreate the mood of ancient Armenian sacred manuscripts. And as Paul Griffiths explains in his illuminating liner-note, the churches' respective conceptions of death are also different: Catholics believe the soul transmigrates at the moment of death, but Armenians believe departed souls are still present, and this work's austere tenderness testifies to that belief.

The work opens with dark string harmonies followed by softly-percussive pizzicatos, and when the unison vocal line breaks in it is with a suggestion of Armenian modality. In the Kyrie there are inflections of both Armenian folksong and of what Komitas – Armenia's greatest composer – did with that folksong in his three-part vocal arrangements. Mansurian's sound-world is notably clean: time and again he juxtaposes orchestral unisons and stark instrumental effects with plainchant, yet burnished splendour is the result. Throughout the work there is a sense of musical worlds colliding and – in the Agnus Dei, where all emotion is washed pure – finally coalescing, in a symbolic meeting between heaven and earth. The performance has singular grace and power. *Michael Church*

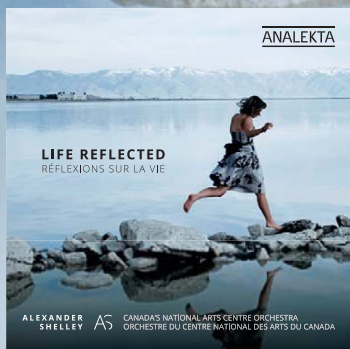
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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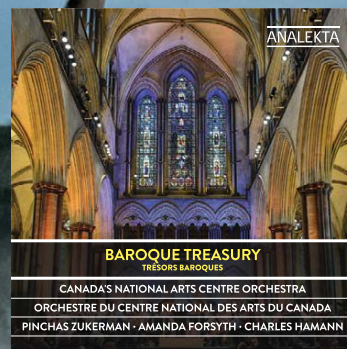
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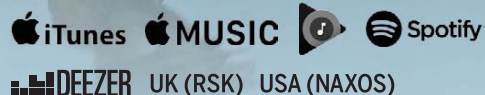
"...trenchancy and power..."
Gramophone, June 2016



"...buoyancy, point and poetry..."
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MONTEVERDI

Vespers 1610
Dunedin Consort/John Butt
Linn CKD 569 93:38 mins (2 discs)

This compelling and insightful album is an outstanding contribution to Monteverdi's 450th anniversary. John Butt makes no attempt to place the 'work' in the framework of a single church service, as the evidence now seems clear that the individual items of the published collection were composed over a number of years for varied liturgical contexts. He follows convention in transposing down the *Laudate Jerusalem* and seven-voiced Magnificat settings (the six-voiced Magnificat in the collection is not recorded), and uses high Baroque pitch which brightens the sound. His flexible approach to the vexed question of the proportional speeds between duple and triple sections produces some surprisingly languid effects (in the *Audi coelom*), but a dance-like vitality elsewhere (as in the 'Sonata sopra Sancta Maria').

Using just ten singers creates a great transparency of texture – though some listeners may miss the grand, bombastic sounds found in traditional performances (there is only one voice per part in *Nisi Dominus*). Particularly effective is the coloristic sonority of the organ which, by employing the Hauptwerk system, reproduces the sound of an early Venetian instrument. The accompanying booklet makes no mention of the vocal soloists, though performances of both *Nigra sum* and the duet *Pulchra es*, with their consummate theatrical sensuality and use of ornamentation, almost suggest Monteverdi's *Poppea* of 30 years later. *Anthony Pryer*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



MOZART

Coronation Mass; Vesperae solennes de confessore
Sandrine Piau (soprano), Renata Pokupić (alto), Benjamin Bruns (tenor), Andreas Wolf (bass); Accentus; Insula Orchestra/Laurence Equilbey
Erato 9029587253 51:47 mins

Both these works feature a famous aria for solo soprano: the 'Agnus

Dei' in the *Coronation Mass*, its melody – a precursor of the Countess's 'Dove son' from *The Marriage of Figaro* – delicately accompanied by muted violins and pizzicato basses; and in the *Vespers*, K339, the gently lilting 'Laudate Dominum'. Both were probably composed for Maria Magdalena Lipp, a court singer in Salzburg who was the wife of Haydn's younger brother, Michael. The arias are attractively sung on this new recording by Sandrine Piau.

Mozart once complained that although his employer, the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, liked to keep his Masses on the short side, they still had to be composed for full orchestra, including 'war-like' trumpets and drums. Alas, the music's dramatic quality is lacking in these performances. That may partly be due to the chorus being rather distantly balanced, but Laurence Equilbey hardly seems to respond to the essential character of these pieces. When Mozart begins his *Vespers* by having the chorus come in on the very first beat with the words 'Dixit Dominus', we expect something much more imposing than the feeble sound we're offered here. Even less satisfactory is the same work's 'Laudate pueri' – an austere fugue in the solemn key of D minor which looks forward to the 'Kyrie' from Mozart's *Requiem*. You'd never guess from this performance that the marking is *forte*, and that the chorus is supported by a trio of trombones.

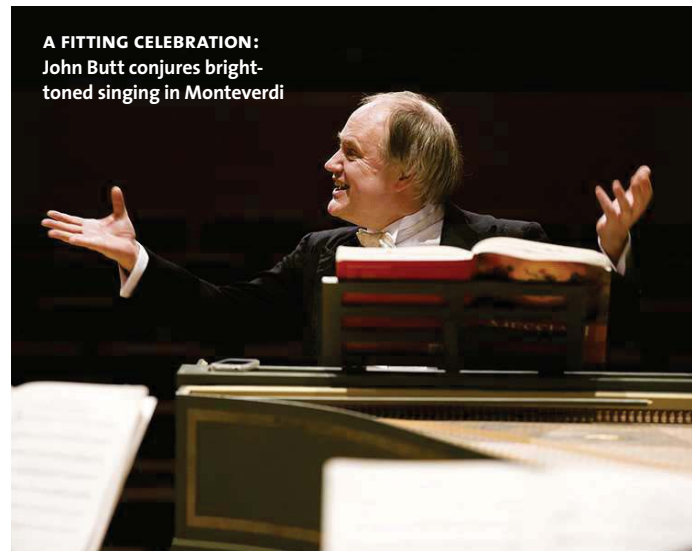
Misha Donat
PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★



POULENC

Salve regina; Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence; Litanies à la Vierge Noire; Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël; Un soir de neige; Ave verum corpus; Mass in G
The Sixteen/Harry Christophers
Coro COR16149 64:39 mins

In an age when the angel voices of my youth (Isobel Baillie and the two Elsie, Morison and Suddaby) no longer seem to be around, somehow Harry Christophers still manages to find them. We do not necessarily have to agree with the claim in Ned Rorem's 1963 obituary of Poulenc – that 'he has taken with him the best of what remained in musical France' – to know that beauty, that oh-so-suspect quality in the modern world, was a central feature of his music; and



A FITTING CELEBRATION:
John Butt conjures bright-toned singing in Monteverdi

The Sixteen provide us with beauty in generous quantities, together with elegant phrasing, clear words and immaculate tuning.

But beauty is not the whole story. Poulenc described the *Kyrie* of the Mass as having 'its almost savage side' and the whole work as harking back to a time when unbaptised, and presumably untrained members of the church would sing the office with the priests. The rather bass-light balance of *The Sixteen* makes such savagery problematic, and certainly the second basses are not 'bien en dehors' (clearly distinct) in the *Benedictus*, at the point where Poulenc unhelpfully has them singing three octaves below the *fortissimo* sopranos. Also there's one curious misreading in the fourth bar of the opening solo of the *Agnus Dei*, where the soprano sings the two crotchets before the minim as quavers (a reading also present in *The Sixteen*'s 1993 recording). I know of no source for this, and Poulenc's favourite recording, conducted by Robert Shaw in 1950, obeys the written crotchets.

Roger Nichols
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



SCHUBERT

Liebesbotschaft; Erbkönig; Rastlose Liebe; Geheimis; Ganymed; Du bist die Ruh; Im Frühling; Die Götter Griechenlands; Gretchen am Spinnrade; Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt; Suleika I; Nachtviolen, etc
Natalie Dessay (soprano), Thomas Savy (clarinet), Philippe Cassard (piano)
Sony 88985419882 62:66 mins

Lots of the numbers on this recital will be familiar to Schubert lovers – the teenager's masterpieces *Gretchen am Spinnrade* and *Erlkönig*, miniature jewels like *Nachtviolen*, and the late, great *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* with clarinet *obligato*, from the final months of his life. Confusingly, Franz Liszt's piano transcription of Schubert's *Auf dem Wasser zu singen* is also included, an impressive but oddly alien concert warhorse within the recital.

This inspired collection of songs could serve as a useful introduction to newcomers to this repertoire, and Philippe Cassard's tender, balanced touch is a delight. But I often struggled to decipher Natalie Dessay's German, and her voice leaned towards the fragile rather than the intimate.

In the liner notes, musings by Dessay, Cassard, and Wolfgang Holzmair (who coached the artists) are translated into three languages. However, the German poetry is not translated, a strange decision which will put off many non-native speakers. *Natasha Loges*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



R STRAUSS

Through Life and Love: Lieder including Nichts, Leises Lied, Das Rosenband, Ich Schwebte, Nachtgang, Einerlei, Die Nacht, etc
Louise Alder (soprano), Joseph Middleton (piano)
Orchid Classics ORC100072 64:34 mins
Personal pride first: I was part of the Glyndebourne Study Day when

REISSUES

Reviewed by Kate Bolton-Porciatti

DOWLAND

Lute songs

Damien Guillon (countertenor), Eric Bellocq (lute)
Alpha ALPHA 334 (2009) 60:17 mins



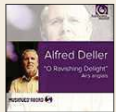
Guillon's honeyed countertenor has many echoes of Deller, notably his ethereal floating of the voice in the upper register. These are intimate, internalised readings, sensitively accompanied.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

ALFRED DELLER

'O Ravishing Delight' – English Songs

David Munrow, Richard Lee (recorder); Desmond Dupré (lute and viola da gamba); Robert Elliot (harpichord)
Harmonia Mundi HMA 190215 (1969) 66:10 mins



This selection box of English songs showcases one of the most memorable countertenors of the century – Alfred Deller, here joined by gifted early music pioneers David Munrow and Desmond Dupré.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

THE TUDORS

I Love, Alas: Elizabethan Life in Music, Song and Poetry

Robert Spencer (lute), Jeremy Brett (reader), Purcell Consort of Voices; Grayston Burgess
Eloquence 482 2570 (1970) 48:42 mins



The Purcell Consort's quaint performances of lovelorn Tudor madrigals interweave with Robert Spencer's stylish lute playing and poems by Philip Sidney, eloquently read by Jeremy Brett (aka Sherlock Holmes).

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

THE TUDORS

Lo, Country Sports: Elizabethan Life in Music, Song and Poetry

James Tyler (lute), John Neville (reader); Elizabethan Consort of Viols; Purcell Consort of Voices/Grayston Burgess
Eloquence 482 2562 (1971) 44:58 mins



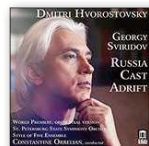
Nearly 50 years on, these performances of Tudor madrigals reveling in all things pastoral seem a little dated, with their precious, faux rustic accents and self-conscious 'early music sound'.

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Louise Alder made her professional Strauss debut, singing in the Presentation of the Rose and the Trio along with two other covers for Richard Jones's production of *Der Rosenkavalier*. We're lucky that Orchid Classics in conjunction with Benjamin Herbert Viols Ltd caught a lyric soprano so close to the beginning of her career. And they're lucky, too, that this coincided with her Audience Prize Award at the 2017 Cardiff Singer of the World Competition.

Alder can do it all, and there are already plenty of colours in the voice. Try one of the later Strauss songs, 'Einerlei', for bloom, range and soaring. And for long phrasing born of perfect breath control as well as secret rapture, 'Waldeseligkeit' is the one to sample. Joseph Middleton's most delicate of *pianissimos* are a wonder, though he doesn't always have to be so discreet – 'Befreit' could be bigger, and Alder makes it the climax of the disc. But these, and the slight wish that there were more of the Straussian strange here, like the *Three Ophelia Songs*, are small niggles given such a radiant debut. Black mark to Orchid, though, for providing neither texts nor opus numbers. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



SVIRIDOV

Russia Cast Adrift (arr. Stetsyuk)

Dmitri Hvorostvosky (baritone); St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra; Style of Five Ensemble/Constantine Orbelian
Delos DE 1631 36:34 mins

Georgy Sviridov is one of Russia's most popular composers and was Shostakovich's favoured pupil, but he still requires some introduction to Western audiences. This is because he was heavily identified with the corrupt Soviet musical machine, churning out bloated oratorios such as *The Decembrists* (1955). But he was no mere political thug like the vile Tikhon Khrennikov, and his outward sycophancy freed him to indulge in more personal works, notably his exceptionally beautiful songs – often setting major Russian poets like Pushkin and Blok, and including blacklisted figures like the charismatic, tragic Sergei Yesenin.

The title sounds political, but the songs are far more personal – the anguish of a young man at odds

with the revolutionary-era world, and finding expression in nature. Yesenin's deceptively plain language and imagery are sensitively echoed in Sviridov's austere, intensely lyrical vocal lines, with constant echoes of religious chant. The composer's friend Dmitri Hvorostvosky, with his darkly brooding, anguished tones and exceptionally clear diction, is an ideal interpreter, who recorded the piano original in 1997. Evgeny Stetsyuk's orchestration, including folk instruments, is perhaps more melodramatic than Sviridov's intended version would have been, sometimes betraying its keyboard origins, but Constantine Orbelian delivers it with considerable power. An interesting insight into the man behind the apparatus.

Michael Scott Rohan

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



KATHLEEN FERRIER REMEMBERED

Songs by Brahms, Jacobson, Mahler, Parry, Rubbra, Schubert, Stanford and Wolf

Kathleen Ferrier (contralto), Gerald Moore, Bruno Walter, Frederick Stone (piano)
Somm SOMMCD 264 79:30 mins

Over 60 years after Kathleen Ferrier's tragically early death, is she now more than a name to some listeners? She was the greatest British singer of her day, internationally famous, an outwardly straightforward Lancashire girl with a rich contralto voice of such singular, plangent beauty and sensitivity that it apparently moved Herbert von Karajan to tears. Small wonder that every recorded snippet is teased out and restored, as with this grab-bag of BBC broadcasts, some from their archives, others preserved on metal discs by composer and engineer Kenneth Leech. Consequently the sound, although sensibly restored, isn't up to her mainstream recordings, though enthusiasts needn't worry. That said, there are some fascinating performances here, from Ferrier's favourite Brahms, accompanied by Bruno Walter, to Wolf songs she less often performed, and a piano-accompanied fragment of 'Urlicht' from Mahler's Second Symphony.

Just as enjoyable are rarities like Stanford's ballad-like 'La Belle Dame sans Merci', considered

whiskery at the time, but taken with characteristic sincerity; it finds Ferrier in unusually heroic vein. She makes even more of Rubbra's sombre *Three Psalms* and Jacobson's ecstatic 'Song of Songs', with her frequent accompanist Frederick Stone, and, with Gerald Moore, the cheerful Parry 'Love is a Babe', live from the 1948 Edinburgh Festival.

Some of the Schubert doesn't perhaps bring out the best in her; the opening 'Musensohn' lacks the sprightliness that Janet Baker (an inevitable comparison) achieves. But these are all still exceptionally beautiful, valuable reminders of an extraordinary artist. *Michael Scott Rohan*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



SET UPON THE ROAD

New Music for Choir & Ancient Instruments: MacMillan: Noli Pater; J Kenny: The Deer's Cry; MacRae: Cantata; Bill Taylor: Crux Fidelis; F Grier: Cantemus; S Wishart: Iste Confessor; Bick: Set upon the Road

Barnaby Brown (triplepipes, aulos), Bill Taylor (lyre), John & Patrick Kenny (chimes); Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge/Geoffrey Webber
Delphian DCD34154 68:20 mins

Triplepipe, aulos, carnyx and Loughnashade horn: the odds are firmly against you ever having heard these dinosaurs of musical instrument history in action. This intriguing CD resurrects their sounds, in works by seven contemporary composers. The best known of these is James MacMillan, and his *Noli Pater*, though it sets a medieval Christian text, has a distinctly pagan shriek to it in places, especially where the triplepipe (sonically a kind of kazoo-bagpipe hybrid) buzzes into operation.

The pagan influence is even more explicit in John Kenny's *The Deer's Cry*. Here the whoop and holler of the Loughnashade horn and carnyx (both made of Celtic bronze) impart a mysterious primal aura to Kenny's setting of *Saint Patrick's Breastplate*, an effect heightened by the vocal effects employed alongside straight singing. Simplicity, by contrast, is the touchstone of Bill Taylor's *Crux fidelis*, accompanied on gut-strung lyre and affectingly sung by soprano Clover Willis and baritone Humphrey Thompson.

The Gonville and Caius Choir responds with élan and versatility to the constantly shifting demands, both technical and stylistic, being made of them. Their effort is worth it: genuinely new sounds and combinations are created in this shape-shifting project, and they invite repeated listening. *Terry Blain*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



THOUGHTS OBSERVED

Songs by Schumann, Duparc, Debussy, Hahn and Poulenc

Yaniv d'Or (countertenor), Dan Deutsch (piano)
Naxos 8.573780 53:02 mins
The British-Israeli Yaniv d'Or moves into a different repertoire for his recital disc, and one that countertenors rarely explore: the music of 19th- and 20th-century French and German composers, some of whom will probably never have encountered a voice of his type. In theory, there's no reason

for the voice and the music to be held apart, though in practice the result frequently proves less than ideal. In the great Schumann cycle *Dichterliebe*, d'Or's musicianship is apparent but so is a limited range of dynamics and colour. Consonants need clearer articulation and vowels are occasionally unsteady, while one or two phrases feel short on breath.

Even so, he can be an intelligent interpreter. 'Hör' ich das Liedchen klingen' goes well from every point of view, and he injects colour into 'Ich hab' im Traum geweinet'; but there's a worrying falling-off in tone quality at either end of his range (he sings the cycle, apparently, in bass keys, one octave up).

He's better suited to the more sensuous tone of Duparc's *L'invitation au voyage* and the four Debussy settings, though text sometimes needs more attention both as sound and as meaning. Most successful are the Poulenc items, especially the early cycle *Le Bestiaire* – heard in the composer's own arrangement of the original for voice and ensemble – to which d'Or brings the appropriate element of boulevardier wit, and the simple eloquence of his interpretation of the

Charles d'Orléans text, 'Priez pour paix'. Throughout, Dan Deutsch's considered accompaniments are finely judged. *George Hall*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



THOUSANDS OF MILES

Songs by Weill, Korngold, A Mahler and Zemlinsky
Kate Lindsey (mezzo-soprano), Baptiste Trotignon (piano)

Alpha ALPHA272 62:59 mins
Free play with Weill, jazz-piano improvisations included, and fidelity to late-Romantic German Lieder offset by charm and atmosphere are the unusual components of an experimental recital programme. Billed as 'Kate Lindsey with Baptiste Trotignon', it reveals the jazz pianist, who shows luminous classical credentials here too, as equal to the mezzo's multi-hued originality. Weill's 'Trouble Man' and 'Je ne t'aime pas' reach suitably impassioned heights. Lindsey's

full upper register – so impressive when she sang Strauss's *Composer* at Glyndebourne – burns in Alma Mahler's interesting if not quite text-friendly 'Hymne', to a text by Novalis mixing love with the Last Supper. Yet subtlety is mostly the keynote; the microphone loves the voice at its most confidential. Trotignon's short improvisations are bliss, though in one of the four Weill doubles, it's frustrating only to get the first verse of 'Pirate Jenny' – Lindsey's delivery of the Blitzstein text promises to come close to the inimitable Nina Simone – before it morphs into the marginally less compelling *Barbara Song*.

'Lonely House' from *Street Scene* is cool rather than heartache, but I love the twinkling lights of the *Buddy on the Nighthift/Berlin in Licht* duo, light to the dark of a powerful chest voice in an unorthodox 'Denn wie Mann sich better' from *Mahagonny*. And light bulbs give way to star candles in the finest of the late Romantic settings, Zemlinsky's 'Und hat der Tag all seine Qual'. I'd like to hear more of Lindsey and Trotignon together in this repertoire. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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CHAMBER

Susanna Ogata and Ian Watson make a compelling case for Beethoven on period instruments; Guy Johnston celebrates the Wigmore Hall's championship of new music; and Nicholas Daniel and the *Britten Oboe Quartet* pay tribute to the great British oboist, Janet Craxton

BBC MUSIC CHAMBER CHOICE

Buxtehude's battle of wits

A quartet of fine musicians leaves *Hannah French* hungry for more



BUXTEHUDE

Trio Sonatas, Op. 1

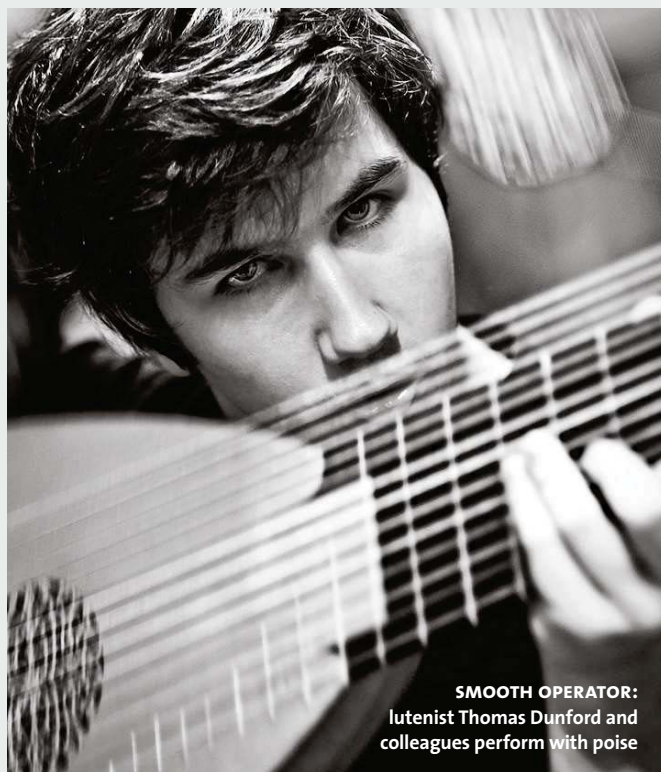
Arcangelo: Sophie Gent (violin), Jonathan Manson (viola da gamba), Thomas Dunford (lute), Jonathan Cohen (harpichord, direction)
Alpha 367 56:13 mins

'The most free and unrestrained manner of composing... that one can imagine,' wrote theorist Johann Mattheson of Dietrich Buxtehude's 1692 Op. 1 Trio Sonatas. The Hamburgian combination of violin, *obbligato* viola da gamba, and harpsichord certainly gave the seasoned Marienkirche organist an opportunity to push the conventions of sonata writing for his Lübeck Abendmusiken

The rapid-fire twists and turns are deftly handled by these musicians

audiences. The multi-sectional trios ingeniously pit strict counterpoint against the theatrical *stylus fantasticus*, a battle of wits brilliantly engaged by Arcangelo.

This exquisitely balanced recording instantly captures the sense of conversation between the instrumental parts, highlighting the egalitarian approach of Buxtehude's melodic writing. What's more, the content of these conversations allows us to glimpse the composer's esteemed artistic stature in miniature. The rapid-fire twists and turns, from Corellian-style



SMOOTH OPERATOR:
lutenist Thomas Dunford and colleagues perform with poise

vivaces and extended Germanic fugal subjects to luscious French harmonies and dramatic Handelian quasi-recitatives are handled deftly and without a hint of freneticism by these four musicians. Amid jesting, dancing, meditating and philosophising they turn a whimsical phrase with spacious poise, ornament a melody liberally but with elegance, bite at the depth of a dissonance, and captivate with an enviable dynamic range.

Mattheson concluded that Op. 1 had the 'intent to please, to overtake and to astonish', and that's the

lasting impression of Arcangelo's performance – not only leaving you wanting more but lamenting the loss of so many of Buxtehude's works. The key structure of a second surviving set (Op. 2, 1696) suggests the two collections were conceived as a whole – let's hope a sequel is due.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

ON THE WEBSITE

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



BEETHOVEN

Violin Sonatas Nos 6-8, Op. 30/1-3

Susanna Ogata (violin), Ian Watson (fortepiano)
Coro COR 16154 69:38 mins

There are by now countless recordings of Beethoven's sonatas for piano and violin. Indeed it is hard to think of an important or famous violinist who hasn't recorded them, usually with an equally distinguished pianist. Some of those recordings are classics and will remain so as long as anyone listens to these great works, Clara Haskil's and Arthur Grumiaux's, to name just one. What makes this new series interesting is the combined sound of the fortepiano and a violin of the same period, different from any other recording or performance I've heard.

The sound is far brighter, which means, among other things, that the violin tone is less songful, and that the total effect is much more forward, and at first strikes you as almost strident. Drama seems to come to the fore, lyricism to recede. By the time I got to the second of the set, the great C minor Sonata No. 7, the second time round, I was adapting to the comparative lack of contrast in the playing. Normally in the last movement of that work one has the intrepid piano play its lonely and heroic main theme, and the more lyrical violin taking it up as more anxious or supplicating. Here the only contrast is one of timbre, not of expressiveness. Once you adjust to that, *passim*, the results are refreshing and invigorating, with the early-middle period of Beethoven's career emerging in a way that brings these works closer to the all-too-famous *Kreutzer* Sonata. I shan't get rid of my older sets, but I shall certainly keep this disc close to hand.

Michael Tanner
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



PAUL VIARDOT

Violin Sonatas Nos 1-3

PAULINE VIARDOT

Violin Sonatina in A minor
Reto Kuppel (violin),
Wolfgang Manz (piano)
Naxos 8.573607 68:34 mins

One of the 19th century's greatest singers, fêted by Berlioz, Liszt, Saint-Saëns and Brahms, Pauline Viardot's compositions are now gaining deserved recognition. Her gracefully probing Violin Sonatina should really be a repertoire piece. This is not, as claimed, its first recording, for it featured in Diana Ambache's recent *Liberté. Egalité. Sororité* collection (reviewed April 2016).

Here the Sonatina acts as a prelude to three sonatas by Pauline's son, Paul, himself a prominent violinist. The similarity of name may be a touch confusing, compounded by the disc's back cover switching their dates. There should be no misattribution regarding the music, though. Paul bemoaned living in the shadows of his famous mother and her sister (the soprano Maria Malibran), but, on the evidence of these pieces, he really is the diminutive of Pauline. The sonatas have attractive, lyrical motifs, but their development is dully predictable. Even the Third Sonata's quintuple-time movement feels foursquare. For all Reto Kuppel and Wolfgang Manz's committed advocacy, it is no mystery why these pieces are rarely heard. *Christopher Dingle*

PERFORMANCE ★★ ★★
RECORDING ★★ ★★ ★★



BRACING CHANGE

Holt: 3rd Quartet; Dennehy: The weather of it; Gilbert: Haven of Mysteries

JACK Quartet; Doric Quartet; Carducci Quartet; Guy Johnston (cello)
NMC NMC D216 68:25 mins

While the Wigmore Hall may more often resound with Haydn quartets than contemporary compositions, this excellent disc celebrates the venue's firm commitment to new music. Featuring three recent commissions for strings, *Bracing Change* rekindles the string quartet (and quintet) as a site of risk and innovation.

Simon Holt's *3rd Quartet* (2013) presents six movements that fizz with colour and imagination, performed with tremendous panache by the JACK Quartet. One highlight is 'Wing Pu's nail house', a movement driven by the story of a Chinese citizen who refused to allow her home to be torn down to make way for a shopping mall. Holt's vivid score here oscillates between furious counterpoint and passages of defiant poise, conjured in gentle suspended chords.

Donnacha Dennehy's post-minimalist *The weather of it* is at once dynamic and tender, the sweetness of his harmony piqued with microtonal scoring, rendered with shimmering precision by the Doric Quartet. Anthony Gilbert's *Haven of Mysteries* (2014) is the composer's first quintet. Sparked by his longstanding fascination with the architecture of medieval French Cathedrals, the work is graceful, tightly-structured and monumental in scope, well-matched by the luscious, vital timbre conjured by the Carducci Quartet and cellist Guy Johnston. *Kate Wakeling*

PERFORMANCE ★★ ★★ ★★
RECORDING ★★ ★★ ★★



FLUX

Works by Singelée, Pierné, Bozza, Lago, Reinhart and Gregory
Ferio Saxophone Quartet
Chandos CHAN 10987 77:05 mins

The Ferio Saxophone Quartet made their debut in Britain in 2015 and have quickly risen to the top. The reasons are obvious from this vividly recorded disc: rhythmic precision; wide-ranging colours; and balanced textures that allows individuality for each thread in a contrapuntal web. Their repertoire – half abstract, half descriptive – spans the years from 1862 to music premiered this April. Yet dates can be deceptive: Hugo Reinhart's F minor Quartet appears to come from the early 19th century, but was actually written in 2008, with a perfectly straight face.

It didn't charm me much; unlike Gabriel Pierné's *Introduction et variations sur une ronde populaire*, a brilliant colour kaleidoscope from 1936, and a marvellous tribute to French finesse. Among the recent descriptive items, the *Ciudades* of Guillermo Lago (pen name for Dutch saxophonist Willem van Merwijk) pile on the exotic but limp a little: a flaw triumphantly avoided

in his pungent *Wordsworth Poems*. Sustaining a strong repertoire for a non-standard instrumental group will always be a challenge; but the Ferios certainly have skill on their side, and every emotional hue you could want – smoky, honeyed, shrieking or sad. *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★ ★★
RECORDING ★★ ★★ ★★



A TRIBUTE TO JANET

Mozart: Oboe Quartet; Adagio; Britten: Phantasy Quartet; Françaix: Cor anglais Quartet; Knussen: Cantata

Nicholas Daniel (oboe, cor anglais),
Britten Oboe Quartet
Harmonia Mundi HMM 907672
61:09 mins

Janet Craxton, who died in 1981, was the preeminent British oboist and oboe teacher of her time. Those of us lucky enough to have worked with her remember her supreme musicianship and her generous, humorous personality. Happily, her playing is preserved for later generations on an Oboe Classics disc of broadcasts by her London Oboe Quartet.

It's in works for that group's combination of oboe and string trio that Craxton's pupil Nicholas Daniel pays this tribute to her, with his colleagues in the Britten Oboe Quartet. Daniel negotiates the Mozart Quartet with bright tone and nimble fingers and tongue, well coordinated in the challenging finale; the strings support him with neat phrasing and clear balance, and effectively establish the tragic tone of the D minor slow movement. Mozart's incomplete *Adagio*, now thought to have been intended for clarinet and three basset horns but previously believed to be for cor anglais and strings, is played, in Daniel's own tactful reconstruction, with unforced expressivity.

In the single-movement *Phantasy* by the 18-year-old Britten, Daniel successfully reconciles the work's purposeful forward movement with its reflective hints of English pastoral. And there are exemplary accounts of two pieces written for the London Oboe Quartet in the 1970s: Oliver Knussen's intricately worked, poetic *Cantata*; and the Quartet in which Jean Françaix engagingly attempted 'to make the cor anglais, above all a melancholy instrument, laugh from time to time'. *Anthony Burton*

PERFORMANCE ★★ ★★ ★★
RECORDING ★★ ★★ ★★

REISSUES

Reviewed by Julian Haylock

BEETHOVEN

String Quintet in C; Piano Quartet in E flat; Grosse Fuge
Budapest Quartet; Walter Trampler (viola), Mieczysław Horszowski (piano)
Praga Digitals PRD 250 381 (1961-65)
74:17 mins



By the 1960s when these recordings were made, the Budapest Quartet was no longer the high-precision outfit of yore, yet their soaring musical intensity still grips the imagination.

PERFORMANCE ★★ ★★ ★★
RECORDING ★★ ★★ ★★

BEETHOVEN

Complete works for cello and piano
Pablo Casals (cello),
Rudolf Serkin (piano)
Praga Digitals PRD 250 372 (1952-53)
160:37 mins (2 discs)



When these Prades studio recordings were captured in mono in the early 1950s, Serkin was in his prime and Casals was a youthful 75, playing with an elfin lightness of touch that rejuvenates the mind.

PERFORMANCE ★★ ★★ ★★
RECORDING ★★ ★★ ★★

MOZART

Piano duets, K 358 & 381; German Dances, K509; Fantasia & Fugue in C, K394; 6 Variations in F; Fragment, K624
Andreas Staier,
Christine Schornsheim (Stein vis-à-vis)
Harmonia Mundi HMC 501941 (2007)
63:20 mins



Played on an original 1777 Stein vis-à-vis (a type of hybrid piano-harpsichord) with tremendous sparkle and verve, these Dresden china-shattering, mid-noughties performances fire on all cylinders.

PERFORMANCE ★★ ★★ ★★
RECORDING ★★ ★★ ★★

SCHUBERT

String Quartets Nos 12 & 14
Jerusalem Quartet
Harmonia Mundi HMA 1901990 (2007)
51:55 mins



Deeply compelling, tonally beguiling, technically immaculate accounts that exalt in Schubert's insatiable melodic genius and explore the dark recesses of his creative psyche to devastating effect.

PERFORMANCE ★★ ★★ ★★
RECORDING ★★ ★★ ★★

INSTRUMENTAL

Steven Osborne brings Debussy's pianistic evocations to vivid life; plus Stephen Cleobury gives a dazzling demonstration of the versatility of the newly restored organ of King's College, Cambridge

BBC MUSIC INSTRUMENTAL CHOICE

Remembering Bream

Steph Power relishes Sean Shibe's programme of British music for guitar



DREAMS & FANCIES

Walton: Five Bagatelles; L Berkeley: Sonatina for Guitar; Arnold: Fantasy for Guitar; Dowland: Praeludium; Forlorn Hope Fancy; Fantasia; Britten: Nocturnal after John Dowland Sean Shibe (guitar)

Delphian DCD34193 66:30 mins

A key touchstone for classical guitarists in Britain and beyond is the extraordinary legacy of Julian Bream who, through determined commissioning, transformed a repertory otherwise 'stuffed with unnourishing bon-bons,' as Wilfred Mellors tartly – but accurately – observed in 1968. The results not

Shibe takes the listener into an unsettling, fantastical soundworld

only engaged a wider audience for the guitar, but established the instrument as an exciting resource for contemporary composers.

In his debut solo album, following an enticing compilation of his recordings for the cover disc of this magazine in February 2016, Sean Shibe performs with superb artistry some of the now classics that Bream inspired, tracing an English heritage back to Dowland and the Elizabethan lute. Prime in any such catalogue is Britten's 1963 *Nocturnal after John Dowland*, and Shibe gathers the listener into its unsettling, fantastical soundworld



MELANCHOLIC WHIMSY: Sean Shibe captures the character of English music

with an intensity that combines gracefulness and threat with rapier skill.

It's the culmination of a programme in which Shibe – born in Scotland in 1992 of Anglo-Japanese descent – movingly navigates that peculiarly English fine line between whimsy and melancholic vision. Arnold's underrated 1957 Fantasy and Lennox Berkeley's Sonatina (1971) might bear in places the Spanish-y hallmarks of their composers' uncertainty about this strange 'new' instrument, but Shibe brings them lovingly to life, while Walton's Five Bagatelles (1971) are

alternately attacked and stroked; echoing in restive spirit Britten's expressive power.

One slight caveat concerns the recording, which captures Shibe at a seeming distance inside a halo of natural resonance. This enhances his mellow tone but sometimes clouds subtler details.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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



JS BACH

Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1 – Prelude No. 1; Cello Suites Nos 1 & 3; Solo Violin Sonatas Nos 1-3

Kuniko (marimba) Linn CKD 585 157:04 mins (2 discs)

More often than not, Bach will prevail on practically any instrument you care to throw at him. The message, so often, transcends the medium; and if the sound of the harpsichord reminded Sir Thomas Beecham of two skeletons copulating on a tin roof, Kuniko's voluptuous marimba evokes the happy couple sharing a post-coital cigarette. Warm, enveloping, it cloaks the music in an all-consuming glow that isn't itself problematic, save that it lures her into a fantasy world where, as her liner notes tell us, the G major Cello Suite suggests 'jumping up and down like fish in the womb of Mother Nature'. The C major Violin Sonata's *Adagio* – played with ethereally elevated poise – is the 'stairway to a pure, white heaven'. And although she identifies the primacy of dance in the cello suites, it's rarely carried through thanks to a riot of micro-management underlining the diminishing returns of expressive over-egging.

The Baroque suite embodies unity in diversity, but Kuniko nurtures a surfeit of the former with precious little of the latter. BWV 1007's Allemande and Courante are cut from the same measured cloth; lost in reverie the Sarabande strays far from its dance model; while the minuets are scarcely on nodding terms with three beats in a bar. The sheer technical élan she brings to the violin fugues, however, is jaw-dropping, and BWV 1003's concluding *Allegro* is despatched with a much-needed crystalline purposefulness. After 'suite' indulgence, it's a breath of fresh air! Paul Riley

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



JS BACH

Lute Suites Nos 1-4
András Csáki (guitar)

Hungaroton HCD 32772 72:37 mins

We talk of 'Four Lute Suites', but two were written for other instruments (BWV 995 is the Cello Suite No. 5 in C, BWV1011, and BWV1006a is the Violin Partita No. 3) and two for some unknown lute-imitating keyboard. Though Bach owned a lute, some unplayable passages in his 'lute' music suggest he didn't exactly know it inside out. So any recording is necessarily a compromise arrangement, and Hungarian guitarist András Csáki succeeds

Csáki's playing is impeccable, his crisp, silvery lute-like tone recorded in a brooding, resonant acoustic. There's subtle elasticity and variety of colour, with the walking-bass aspect of the contrapuntal lines often prominent (eg BWV 996's Bourrée, BWV 997's Prelude). Ornamentation is colourful and well-planned, judiciously mixing 'guitaristic' slurs and 'harpsichordistic' cross-string trills. Sprightly dance feel is never far away: it's human, not abstract, Bach.

I'll probably still reach first for Göran Söllscher's 1980s Deutsche Grammophon recording (on 11-string guitar) when I want to hear this wonderful music, with its mood range from profound meditation to fugal ecstasy. But – despite a dodgy edit at track 17/18 – Csáki's is a fine guitar option for these suites. *Rob Ainsley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



DEBUSSY

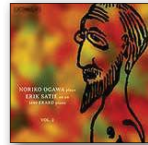
Masques; D'un cahier d'esquisses; L'isle joyeuse; Images I & II; Estampes; Children's Corner
Steven Osborne (piano)

Hyperion CDA68161 73:21 mins

In this substantial album of Debussy's piano music, Steven Osborne has produced a recording that at its finest is truly mesmerising. His selection of music ranges through the heartlands of the composer's overtly pictorial works, brought to life with some extremely classy playing, aided by excellent recorded sound.

Osborne has a marvellous control of texture and touch: in *Images II* you could almost stroke the rustling leaves in 'Cloches à travers les feuilles' as the distant bells sound through the foliage, and the 'Poissons d'or' flip their glittering way through eddies and whirlpools evoked with gorgeous lightness and a deft rhythmic ebb and flow. Osborne's rigorous and no-nonsense approach gives the music a good, solid backbone. Occasionally in the loudest and fastest episodes, the tone can become slightly overpressed; and moments that could use a little more flexibility don't always get it – 'La Soirée dans Grenade' of *Estampes* is somewhat brusque, and his *L'isle joyeuse*, though edge-of-seat thrilling, make the lovers in the Watteau painting that inspired the piece appear to be dashing for the last boat. Some of the disc's finest moments, though, occur in the spare perfectionism of *Children's Corner*: here Osborne's phrasing and pacing is pure and poetic, as well as raptly atmospheric in 'The snow is dancing'. And it finishes with a deliciously louche cake-walk. *Jessica Duchén*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



SATIE

Piano works, Vol. 2: Sports et Divertissements; Trois Sarabandes; Véritables préludes flasques (pour un chien); Sonneries de la Rose et Croix; Menus propos enfantins, etc
Noriko Ogawa (piano)

BIS BIS-2225 (hybrid CD/SACD) 75:22 mins

The conductor Paul Sacher used to tell the story of when Honegger, rehearsing one of his symphonies, was asked by the first oboist, 'Maitre, in bar 27, should it be a B natural or a B flat?' To which Honegger replied, 'Which would you prefer?' I suspect something of the same egalitarian spirit may have moved Satie to leave many of his piano pieces without dynamic markings. What should a pianist do? Noriko Ogawa chooses what might seem an honest path of adding very little of her own on this front. But for me, the results are less than persuasive, especially given that the pieces in this volume are generally less melodically interesting than those in her first one (see September 2016).

Fond though Satie was of repeating phrases, the repetition doesn't always embody the same rhetorical structure; and even if he admitted being fascinated by the concept of

boredom, there are, to my ears, any number of places where crescendos and diminuendos seem called for. Mostly Ogawa plays the rhythms straight, but not in the *Sarabandes*, the only dances on the disc. Also there are two irritating wrong notes: in the first chord of *Sarabande I*, the top note is G natural, not G flat; and she plays another wrong note in 'Les courses' from *Sports et divertissements*, rendering Satie's brief final quotation of the Marseillaise unrecognisable.

Roger Nichols

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



THE KING OF INSTRUMENTS: A Voice Reborn

Works by Preston, JS Bach, Franck, Mendelssohn, Grace and Baker
Stephen Cleobury (organ)

King's College KGS 0020 (hybrid CD/SACD) 63:37 mins

Over nine months during 2016, the Hill/Harrison & Harrison organ of King's College Chapel, Cambridge underwent restoration – each of the 4,300 pipes cleaned inside and out, new soundboards and action installed and the four-manual console overhauled, incorporating its old key coverings. And to ensure a long life free from dust and grime, the chapel was also deep-cleaned.

Stephen Cleobury's programme demonstrates the organ's all-round capabilities, the surround-sound recording giving a richer flavour of the chapel's resonant acoustics. Chorales from the *Clavierübung III* sit cheek-by-jowl with Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 1, Franck's *Pièce héroïque* and, to open, Simon Preston's Langlaisesque 1965 *Alleluys*. On the whole, the organ is a pretty flexible beast, best in the Mendelssohn and Franck where heavy diapasons and rounded reeds make all the difference, but less spectacular in Bach, its mixtures, pedals reeds and mutations a little 'English' and understated for this repertoire. US composer George Baker's stately 2015 *Procession Royale*, dedicated to Cleobury and given its first recording here, gives the organ's ceremonial side an airing. The booklet includes the full revised specification, an account of the restoration and some rather nice before, during and after photos. *Oliver Condy*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

REISSUES

Reviewed by Jessica Duchén

JS BACH

French Suites
Blandine Rannou (harpsichord)
Alpha Classics ALPHA 328 (2001)
101:13 mins (2 discs)



Serious and spirited playing, with plenty of characterisation in the various dance idioms, performed on a bright-toned harpsichord, a copy after an instrument roughly of Bach's time, with resonant and sustaining sound.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

JS BACH

Partitas Nos 2-4
Cédric Tiberghien (piano)
Harmonia Mundi HMA 1901869 (2005)
77:40 mins



Tiberghien shines in strong-minded performances of the C minor and A minor partitas, with attentive voicing and poetry in plenty. The grand-scale No. 4 fares less well, its meditative Allemande losing some crucial energy.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonatas Nos 8, 15, 17, 21, 23, 26, 28 & 30
Andor Földes (piano)
Eloquence ELQ 482 7053 (1959-63)
153:35 mins (2 discs)



For the first time on CD, these rather special recordings by Földes, who studied with Dohnányi and Bartók, offer vivid performances with enormous integrity, tapping straight into Beethoven's stormy, forthright nature yet never neglecting wit or lyricism.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

MOZART

Piano Sonatas Nos 10, 11 & 13
Georges Pludermacher (piano)
Harmonia Mundi HMA 1901374 (1991)
67:50 mins



Rather dutiful-sounding Mozart here: Pludermacher offers strict, measured tempo and seems to allow himself little leeway for lyricism, let alone emotional involvement. Very dry sound.

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★

BRIEF NOTES

A collection of 24 further reviews, including Latvian choral classics, characterful American violin sonatas and Bizet's colourful piano music



PIECES FOR EIGHT:
Cellophony premieres charming new music

Abrahamsen
Six Pieces; 10 Preludes (String Quartet No. 1); Satie: *Trois Gymnopédies* (arr. Abrahamsen); Nielsen: *Fantasy Pieces* (arr. Abrahamsen)
Ensemble MidtVest
Dacapo 8.226091



A disc of two halves: Abrahamsen's own String Quartet No. 1 is atmospherically performed, but his arrangements of Satie *Gymnopédies* and Nielsen *Fantasy Pieces* don't quite hit the spot. (RF) ★★★

JS Bach Organ works, Vol. 2: Preludes & Fugues, BWV 541 & 547; Organ Concertos, BWV 594 & 596; Chorale Partita, BWV 768
Masaaki Suzuki (organ)
BIS BIS-2241



Spirited playing on a meantone temperament organ – just one or two issues with the speed at which one of the solo reeds speaks. An interesting and unexpected programme, too. (OC) ★★★★★

JS Bach Bach Reimagines Bach: Sonata in G minor, BWV 1001; Suite in E major, BWV 1006a; Suite in G minor, BWV 995
William Carter (lute)
Linn CKD 445



Lutenist William Carter shows off his dexterity and subtlety of expression with Bach's music, suites and sonatas genially arranged for the instrument by Carter and the composer himself. The imaginative booklet notes are engagingly written, too. (OC) ★★★

Birchall The Wind in the Willows; Alice in Wonderland
Cellophony; Simon Callow (narrator)
Cellophony records CR101



These two wonderfully whimsical 'musical stories' for eight cellos and narrator are characterfully performed by Cellophony. Richard Birchall's exquisitely on-point musical portraits are helped along by delightful narration by actor Simon Callow. (EC) ★★★★★

Bizet Grande Valse de Concert; Chasse fantastique; Chants du Rhin; Nocturne in D; Variations chromatiques; L'Arlésienne Suite No. 1; Nocturne No. 1
Johann Blanchard (piano)
MDG MDG 904 2018



A rare chance to explore Bizet beyond his operas. There's a lot to enjoy in this vividly played recital, not least the solo piano arrangement of *L'Arlésienne* and the youthfully bubbly *Grande Valse de Concert*, Op. 1. (JP) ★★★★★

Cimarosa
Complete piano sonatas, Vol. 2: Nos 45-88
Dario Candela (piano)
Dynamic CDS7790.02



Late-18th-century Domenico Cimarosa's brief Scarlatti-esque piano sonatas are mostly cheerful fare, inventive and colourful, and are here played with lightness and fluidity. A whole two discs of them is asking quite a lot, however... (OC) ★★★★★

Dvořák Symphony No. 1
Nuremberg State Phil/Marcus Bosch
Coviello Classics COV 91718



Dvořák's Beethovenian symphony written at just 23, promises great things to come – and the Nuremberg State Phil seems to agree with a committed performance of drama and tenderness. (OC) ★★★★★

Hakim Phèdre; Caprice en Rondeau; Diptyque etc
Soloists; Quatuor de la Chapelle Royale
Signum SIGCD498



This showcase of Hakim's active, bold harmonic style is at its best in the works for flute and piano. Elsewhere, as in the cantata *Phèdre*, it can become brash. (EC) ★★★

Hertel Harp Concertos etc
Silke Aichhorn (harp); Kurpfälzisches Kammerorchester/Kevin Griffiths
CPO 777 8412



A German contemporary of JC Bach, Johann Wilhelm Hertel was, on the evidence of these breezy, affable concertos, a man at ease with life. A very pleasurable, if unexacting, listen. (JP) ★★★★★

Lentz River of 1,000 Streams
Vikki Ray (piano)
Cold Blue CBO050 28:23



This hypnotic half-hour contemporary piece was written after a trip to the Yellowstone River in Montana. The music rumbles, flows and sparkles as 11 layers of echoing piano tremolos pile up. (RF) ★★★★★

Mansurian Canti paralleli; Postludia*; Agnus Dei
Soloists; Musica Viva Moscow Chamber Orchestra/Rudin; Kazakov*
Brilliant Classics 95489



Mansurian's impressionistic orchestral song-cycle *Canti paralleli* is the highlight of this introspective disc, thanks to the beautiful velvety tones of mezzo Mariam Sarkissian. (EC) ★★★★★

Mendelssohn • Penderecki
Sextets
Spannungen Festival 2016 soloists
Avi-Music 8553384



This disc was recorded live in a hydroelectric power plant, of all places. It's an interesting programme, but booming sound mars the lively playing. (RF) ★★★

Močnik Choral worksS:t Jacobs Kammarkör/Gary Graden
Carus 83.487

Though not hugely distinctive, the Slovenian Močnik's tonal, tuneful style does have its beguiling moments. His case is done no harm by S:t Jacobs Kammarkör's immaculate blend. (JP) ★★★★★

FX Mozart Polonaises mélancoliques; plus Chopin
Yaara Tal (piano)*Sony 88985446942*

FX Mozart was barely four months old when his famous father Wolfgang died. Yaara Tal brings charming lightness to his pretty, if perfunctory polonaises. (EC) ★★★★★

Vivaldi The Folk Seasons
Kreeta-Maria Kentala, Siiri Virkkala (violin); Barocco Boreale*Alba ABCD 402*

If 'folk seasons' suggests diluted crossover, the result is more substantial – this is a joyful and stylish take on Vivaldi's classic. Bird whistles, psaltery, kantele, regal and viuhela adorn the continuo. (RF) ★★★★★

American Sonatas Violin sonatas by Ives, Bolcom and Corigliano
Ching-Yi Lin (violin), Lopes (piano)*MSR Classics MS 1553*

Three sonatas of differing characters – folksy Ives, bluesy Bolcom and playful Corigliano – are all well worth exploring. Lin and Lopes are a well-balanced team in all three. (JP) ★★★★★

American Voices Bernstein, Thompson, Copland, Muhly et al
Saint Thomas Choir of Men & Boys, Fifth Avenue, New York/Scott*Resonus RES10187*

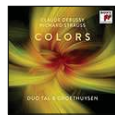
Muhly's *Bright Mass with Canons* shines in this collection of seven decades of choral music, though more energy and detail would have benefitted the major works. (EC) ★★

Boyd meets girl Zenamon, Fauré, Bach, Pärt et al
Rupert Boyd (guitar), Laura Metcalf (cello)*Sono Luminis DSL-92217*

Despite the groan-worthy title, this disc is a splendid collection of original works and arrangements for guitar and cello, all played with wit and abandon. (OC) ★★★★★

Colors Debussy and R Strauss

Duo Tal and Groethuysen

Sony Classical 88985446952

Familiar orchestral works, heard in two-piano guise. Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* is an exuberant riot, but the two Debussy works fail to enchant or excite. (JP) ★★

Garden Party Nielsen, Hannibal, Lalo, Christiansen and Grieg
Petri (recorder), Hannibal (guitar)*OUR Recordings 6.220619*

Adaptations and original pieces for this superb recorder-guitar duo – the disc's jazzy title suite, evoking the calls of three birds, is especially charming. (OC) ★★★★★

Nature and the Soul Dārziņš, Melngailis, Zālītis, Graubiņš et al
Latvian Radio Choir/Putniņš*Skani LMIC/SKANIO54*

This Latvian programme whisks us away to landscapes of enchanted forests and never-ending sunsets, thanks to a stunning performance by the Latvian Radio Choir. (EC) ★★★★★

Songs Without Words Works by Bach, Dvořák, Fauré et al

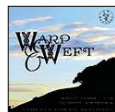
Slava & Leonard Grigoryan (guitars)

ABC Classics 481 5101

These two-guitar arrangements written for the Grigoryans by their father are a mixed bag. The Falla fizzes with life but the Bach and Elgar lumbers and slumbers in equal measure. (JP) ★★

Warp and Weft Clarke, Patterson, Jacob, Moeran and Rawsthorne

Midori Komachi, Sophie Rosa (violins); Simon Callaghan (piano)

EM Records EMR CDO43

An atmospheric disc, with two interesting premieres – Patterson's *Allusions* Trio and Jacob's *Four Bagatelles*. Clarke's rapturous *Nocturne* also stands out. (RF) ★★★★★

12th Banff International String Quartet Competition Beethoven, Ravel, Di Castri et al
Rolston, Castalian & Tesla Quartets*BISQC*

A well-recorded memento of the impressive string quartets that took bronze, silver and gold at last year's Banff competition. It's a rewarding listen. (RF) ★★★★★
Reviewers: *Oliver Condy* (OC), *Elinor Cooper* (EC), *Rebecca Franks* (RF), *Jeremy Pound* (JP)

The month in box-sets

LET'S WIN PRIZES:
Solti with his haul of Grammy awards in 1983

Exceptional artists*Three 20th-century icons are saluted in style*

As we head into autumn, three major musicians of the 20th century are celebrated with suitably sizeable box sets. Largest of the three is Decca's **Solti Chicago – The Complete Recordings** (483 1375), celebrating the Hungarian maestro's 22 years as music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. There are 108 discs in total in this lavish collection, plus an accompanying

Lest we get entirely lost in Solti wonderland, next up is Warner Classics' 45-disc **Maria Callas – Live** (9029584470), released to mark 40 years since the Greek soprano's death. Three of those 45 discs are Blu-ray, containing filmed footage of Callas as *Tosca* and in concert. The other 42 are CDs of 20 complete operas, 12 of which the great diva never recorded in the studio. Dating

Solti is celebrated with a lavish 108-disc collection

from 1949–64, the live performances here include *Tosca* and *Norma* at

Covent Garden and a famous *Aida* in Mexico City, 1951. Some of the recording quality is, yes, a little patchy but, given the nature of live recordings at the time, that is only to be expected. And then there are the 75 discs that make up Sony Classical's **Rudolf Serkin – The Complete Columbia Album Collection** (88985404062), introduced by a very touching booklet note by the great Czech pianist's son Peter (himself also a pianist, of course). Though Beethoven was famously Serkin's calling card – and there is plenty of it here, in solo, chamber and concerto form – recordings of composers ranging from JS Bach to Reger, Chopin to Prokofiev affirm that he was no one-trick pony.



JAZZ

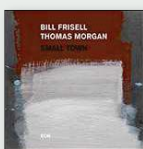
A thrilling 1982 concert of bassist *Jaco Pastorius*; drummer *Tony Allen* creates a blend of styles; and *Charnett Moffett* assembles a starry band

BBC MUSIC JAZZ CHOICE

A sense of calm

Garry Booth admires an intimate live duo recording by guitarist Bill Frisell

TWO'S COMPANY:
bassist Thomas Morgan (left) joins guitarist Bill Frisell



BILL FRISELL • THOMAS MORGAN

Small Town

Bill Frisell (electric guitar), Thomas Morgan (double bass)
ECM 572 9057 68 mins

Over 30 years on from his ECM debut as leader, guitarist Bill Frisell is back with another masterclass in intimate extemporisation, accompanied by the reserved but responsive bass of Thomas Morgan. The set was recorded live at the Village Vanguard, a familiar haunt for Frisell, adding another layer of concentrated calm to the disc.

The music itself, with the guitarist's resonating notes and old-time Americana references, has an eerie quality. The western folk tune 'Wildwood Flower' reflects Frisell's debt to guitarist Maybelle Carter, who played melody and rhythm simultaneously, while 'What A Party' is an impressionistic take on Fats Domino's 1961 rock 'n' roll hit. On 'Goldfinger', Frisell delights in carefully peeling back its layers to reveal the James Bond theme song's many moving parts.

Other pieces are sensitive paeans to old sparring partners. Hearing that 89-year-old Lee Konitz is in the audience, Frisell stretches out on the altoist's 1949 bop number 'Subconscious Lee'. It's exquisite.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Hear an excerpt of this recording at www.classical-music.com



JACO PASTORIUS

Truth, Liberty and Soul

Jaco Pastorius (bass, vocals), Bob Mintzer (sax etc), Randy Brecker (trumpet) et al, Musicians from the Word of Mouth Big Band
Resonance HCD 2027 132 mins

The doyen of the fretless bass guitar has been poorly served by shoddy posthumous releases since his passing in 1987, so it's nice to have this 1982 New York concert issued for the first time with good, clean (if slightly flat-sounding) audio quality. The set itself certainly captures the atmosphere of a star-studded occasion, but as ever the music is something of a curate's egg.

Pastorius could deploy his remarkable technique in ways that took his instrument to entirely new places, but he could just as easily play too many notes too fast and at tone-destroying volume. We get a mixture of both here, manifest as a pad of big band charts which vary from the pro-forma to the adventurous. The bassist's contributions are far more sensitive and genuinely musical within the looser, less cluttered arrangements, so hold out for those. The rambling 98-page booklet is a similarly mixed blessing. *Roger Thomas*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



TONY ALLEN

The Source

Tony Allen (drums), Matthias Allamane (bass), Indy Dibongue (guitar), Jean-Phi Dary (piano & organ), Yann Jankiewicz (soprano sax) et al
Blue Note 576 8329 65 mins

Nigerian-born drummer Tony Allen is already an established fixture in world-music circles and at jazz

festivals but his recent Blue Note disc *A Tribute to Art Blakey* indicated a further move into the jazz realm with his own take on the hard-bop drumming master. In *The Source* he brings together elements of jazz, blues and his own almost mechanical-sounding African rhythms. While opener 'Moody Boy' contains wailing big-band brass, 'On Fire' features tight bop-style unison horns and deft piano work from Jean-Phi Dary. Allen keeps a tight rhythmic rein throughout, whether locking down with Allamane's resonant bass on 'Wolf Eats Wolf', whipping up a brooding free jazz-style storm for 'Ewajo', or with blasts of catchy horns over stuttering beats for 'Cool Cats'. All together, it's an intriguing genre-expanding release, with an impressive mix of jazz and African influences.

Neil McKim

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



CHARNETT MOFFETT

Music from our Soul

Charnett Moffett (bass), Pharoah Sanders (sax), Stanley Jordan (guitar & piano), Cyrus Chestnut (piano), Jeff 'Tain' Watts, Victor Lewis, Mike Clark (drums)
Motéma MTM-0227 61 mins

Bass-player Charnett Moffett continues his collaboration with some major figures here. Sanders, once considered a free-jazz *enfant terrible*, has long been absorbed into the mainstream. On his three tracks he combines sinewy lyricism with gravitas and echoes of the old days, especially on 'Freedom Swing', where everybody cuts loose, Sanders subtly referencing and Moffett openly quoting Coltrane's seminal 'A Love Supreme'. Stanley Jordan, celebrated in the 1980s for his 'hammering-on' guitar technique, is now properly appreciated for the fluency of his style. Pianist Chestnut's contributions are exemplary. The line-up permutes for different tracks, most recorded at gigs, and each blends beautifully.

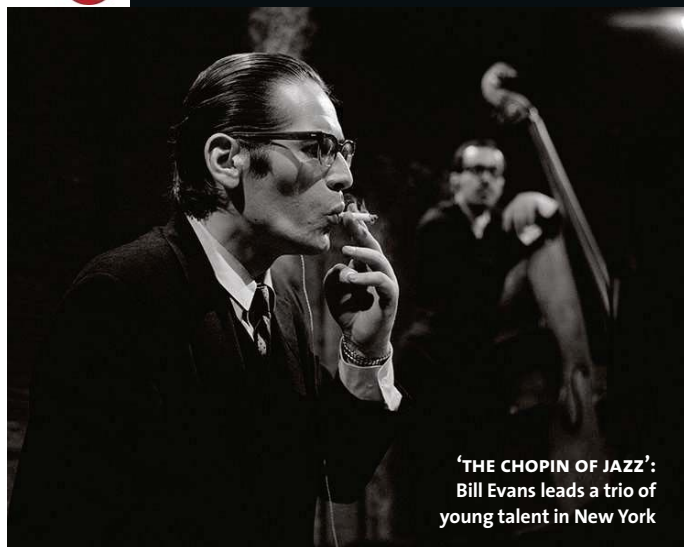
All but two of the compositions are Moffett's. They evince considerable range and skill in form and feel, embracing a variety of elements from funk to hints of country. Alternating acoustic and electric basses as the mood of a piece requires, Moffett is a remarkable virtuoso on both but never stoops to hollow grandstanding. *Barry Witherden*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

BBC RADIO

3

JAZZ STARTER COLLECTION



'THE CHOPIN OF JAZZ': Bill Evans leads a trio of young talent in New York

No. 210 Bill Evans II

Geoffrey Smith, presenter of *Geoffrey Smith's Jazz*, on the legendary pianist's revamped trio from 1968



Over his 25-year career, Bill Evans attracted a worshipful legion of global fans and made scores of records, but the collection that probably still defines his special eminence in the pantheon of jazz piano is his classic session *Live at the Village Vanguard*, from 1961. It was also his first *Jazz Starter* No. 25 (May 2003), acknowledging his role as the godfather of a new poetic conception of the piano trio. Evans's subtle, quicksilver interplay with bass genius Scott LaFaro, enhanced by Paul Motian's sensitive drums, invested the trio format with a lyrical impressionism which was the ideal medium for the pianist's unique gifts, the singing touch and iridescent, fluid harmonies that made him 'the Chopin of jazz'.

Evans thought the Vanguard group was his best, so it was a personal and musical tragedy when bassist LaFaro died in a car crash after their last recording. But the pianist continued to refine and deepen his influential style with new trio partners. One of the most interesting, albeit short-lived trios was the group Evans led in the summer of 1968, comprising the young bassist Eddie Gomez, and

drummer Jack DeJohnette. Gomez would be his right-hand man for 11 years, but DeJohnette soon departed, poached by Miles Davis.

The group only made one commercial album, a Grammy-winning live concert at the Montreux Festival, but a privately-recorded session was released in 2016, and a new recording, made in Holland, has just appeared. *Another Time: The Hilversum Concert* is a treat for Evans fans, showing him inspired by his young sidemen. Bassist Eddie Gomez matches Scott LaFaro in virtuosity, but with a stronger attack, adept not just at spontaneous dialogue, but hard-driving swing. DeJohnette is much more interactive than the self-effacing Paul Motian, but without intruding, the percussive equivalent of the 'quiet fire' which Miles Davis said was Evans's distinctive quality. And the pianist conjures his special radiance on Evans standards such as 'Nardis'. Next month *Geoffrey Smith* begins a new column, 'From the Archives'

CD CHOICE



Bill Evans *Another Time: The Hilversum Concert* Resonance HCD-2031

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BOOKS

A handsomely illustrated history of recording and the huge changes in listening habits it caused; plus a refreshingly candid account of the Three Choirs Festival and how its evolution secured its survival



THE THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL: A History

Anthony Boden, Paul Hedley
Boydell & Brewer ISBN 978-1-78327-209-9
475pp (hb) £25.00 rrp

Newly revised and updated in collaboration with Paul Hedley, Anthony Boden's scrupulously detailed history of The Three Choirs Festival is part chronicle of concert life over 300 years, part social record, and, given the cathedral backdrop in triplicate (step forward Hereford, Worcester and Gloucester), a real-life story of ecclesiastical manoeuvring to rival Trollope's *Barchester Chronicles*. It's a festival whose content inevitably attracted fierce doctrinal scrutiny. Even Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, that latter-day iconic staple, could only initially be admitted to the fold with references to the saints and the Virgin Mary discretely airbrushed. And as recently as the late 1990s, Delius's *Mass of Life* was frozen out on account of its indebtedness to Nietzsche – only to be scheduled for 2001 thanks to a new arrival at the deanery. What a difference a Dean makes!

Intent on history rather than hagiography, Bowden and Hedley commendably don't suppress the inconvenient. It's easy to reproduce a 19th-century critic's dismissal of music by Hereford's John Clarke-Whitfield as 'sapless twaddle'. Braver not to duck *Times* critic William Mann's 1967 article wondering what the Festival was for – a question now largely resolved thanks to a reinvigoration stretching back two decades and more.

For West Country regulars the book provides a fulsome souvenir of concerts past. But it does more. Noting such developments as the coming of the railways or the 2008 financial crash, it injects context – as well as a fund of tasty anecdotal titbits. Who knew that Vaughan Williams and ping-pong weren't exactly a match made in heaven? Or that, desperate to 'play in' a replacement string before performing the Elgar Violin Concerto, Fritz Kreisler slipped into the back desk of fiddles and sight-read his way through the premiere of Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs* in 1911? Priceless!
Paul Riley ★★★★★

BBC MUSIC BOOKS CHOICE

From phonograph to iPhone

Julian Haylock enjoys a vivid and richly illustrated history of recording



THE ART OF SOUND

A Visual History for Audiophiles

Terry Burrows

Thames & Hudson
ISBN 978-0-500-51928-8
343pp (hb) £35.00 rrp

This fascinating exposé on the history of recorded sound is worth the price of admission for the rarity of the illustrations alone. Immaculately reproduced on high quality paper, there is truly something here for everyone, including for the technically-minded several sets of blueprints that trace the development of

This is musical, technological and social history in the making

sound-reproducing equipment from the phonograph to the iPod. The hardware that was used to record sound and the domestic equipment manufactured to reproduce it naturally takes pride of place, ranging from early cylinder mechanisms, through the acoustic and electric eras to the digital devices of today.

It is a salutary reminder that, for over half-a-century, the needle-and-groove remained paramount until in the 1960s affordable reel-to-reel tape recorders meant that for the first time it was possible to make high quality recordings from disc and the radio. The next major revolution was the compact cassette,



TOP DOG: HMV's favourite icon, Nipper, and the artist Francis Barraud

which although hardly cutting-edge as an audiophile product, brought home-recording to the masses and (perhaps even more importantly) portability, making it possible for the first time to control exactly what you listened to in the car and even when out jogging, without having to worry about the dreaded jumping stylus.

This is musical, technological and social history in the making. The changes in artistic tastes, styles and technologies are marked not just by the devices themselves, but also by numerous advertisements

that bring the feel of each period vibrantly alive, alongside record covers, sleeves and labels, and classic icons ranging from EMI's 'Nipper and the Gramophone' (Nipper was originally artist Francis Barraud's own dog) to the various streaming services of today. Some might have preferred a more exclusively 'classical' viewpoint, others even greater detail from the captions and linking narrative woven skilfully throughout by Terry Burrows, but as a predominantly pictorial history, meticulously researched, this comes highly recommended. ★★★★★

AUDIO

Our resident audio expert *Chris Haslam* reviews four new hi-fi products to help you get the most from your classical music listening



MUSIC CHOICE



BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS Q Acoustics 3010 £159

If you're in the market for a pair of compact bookshelf speakers, and your budget doesn't stretch beyond 'limited', then look no further than the Q Acoustic 3010. They're not new, but a recent price drop means you'll be pushed to find a better sounding speaker for the price.

They might be small (23.5cm x 20cm), but the scale of the performance punches well above their weight.



THE PRICE IS RIGHT: the Q Acoustics 3010 is unmatched for value

They're precise, balanced and punchy, serving up a clear mid-range, and while nothing this small will make the room shake, there's a satisfying kick to the bass.

How do they achieve such good results? Firstly, despite the dimensions, the cabinet is well built and weighty, helping to keep the resonance to a minimum, while the small tweeter speaker is decoupled from the rest of the cabinet to help reduce vibrations from the bass unit.

Finally, they look great, and again, the finish is flawless for £159. My review sample was in classy walnut, but they look equally good in the range of other finishes, including a white lacquer, matt graphite, a black leather effect and a classic black lacquer. qacoustics.co.uk ★★★★★

drummer friend (who claims he hasn't damaged his hearing...), the response was tepid, with 'extra bass and volume' the main difference noticed.

Given the large 50mm Beryllium speakers and 20-20,000Hz frequency response, the H1's sound – even without the 'earprint' function – was polished and enjoyable, and while I love new concepts I'd wait until the technology improves before investing. weareeven.com ★★★

PORTABLE DAC ATC AUDIO HDA-1 £199.99

To some they're a solution looking for a problem, while others – and I include myself in their ranks – consider the portable DAC (digital audio converter) a must-have accessory, greatly enhancing the sound from a smartphone or laptop. An exceptional DAC is the Chord Mojo (£399) but what about something more affordable?

ATC Audio's HDA-1 (below) is a no-nonsense DAC and headphone amplifier and while the design is a bit aggressive the all-metal construction is impossible to fault. Inputs are generous with USB, optical and a 3.5mm jack, and it will play most high-resolution audio formats up to 384Khz/32bit.

What does that mean in practice? The ATC is one of the loudest portable amplifiers I've ever used, transforming the woolly output from my MacBook, giving it some serious welly. As a DAC, the step-up in quality from my smartphone and laptop was big. Although the bass felt a little too full at times, the HDA-1 remains an impressive listen at this price. atc-hifi.com ★★★★★



HIGH-RESOLUTION AUDIO PLAYER Pioneer XDP-30R £349

Although smartphones are wonderful for connected convenience, when it comes to audio quality they're adequate at best. Great headphones and a portable DAC (digital audio converter) can do wonders, but a dedicated player like the Pioneer XDP-30R (right) are the best option for portable high-resolution music.

Thanks to the twin Sabre DACs, which can play file formats up to 192kHz/32bit, the step up in quality from a smartphone is remarkable. A 24-bit FLAC (lossless) high-resolution version of Bruckner's Ninth – with Ricardo Muti conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra – remains an intensely powerful recording, with the full might of the orchestra given the



space it deserves... even on a busy bus journey. A standard MP3 of the same recording felt weedy in comparison.

The Pioneer is nicely designed, palm sized and impressively finished, but the paltry resolution of the 2.4-inch touch screen is poor compared to a smartphone. Running on Android, the interface is simple to navigate and intuitive enough; it comes with 15-hours of battery life and while the 16GB internal memory won't last

long, the two MicroSD card slots can boost it by another 400GB.

If you've yet to invest in decent headphones, you should spend your budget on those first, but if you have a large digital library that's trapped at home, the Pioneer is a convenient and good-value introduction to hi-res listening on the go. pioneer.eu ★★★★★

CUSTOM-BUILT HEADPHONES Even H1 £199

While I've tried injection-moulded headphones that promise a 'custom' fit, this is the first time the sound of the headphones has been customised based on my hearing. The manufacturer of the Even H1 (top, right) calls it an 'earprint,' a simple test that involves listening to eight short pieces of music in each ear. All you do is push the button on the in-line remote as soon as you hear the music. It then builds a sound profile for your hearing and adjusts the output accordingly.

It's a fantastic idea, especially if you're hard of hearing, as the volume can be levelled out between left and right, without just turning up the master volume. I'm not deaf (yet) but in practice – aside from creating a fuller, louder sound – the effect was pleasant but minimal.

I asked four other people to try the 'earprint' test and, except for a

LIVE CHOICE

20 UNMISSABLE EVENTS FOR OCTOBER 2017

BBC Music Magazine's choice of the best October concerts and operas, plus a guide to Rameau's *Pigmalion*

 For detailed concert listings visit www.classical-music.com/whats-on

1 IMS PRUSSIA COVE

Hall for Cornwall, Truro, 1 Oct
Tel: +44 (0)1872 262466
Web: www.i-m-s.org.uk

The International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove has been sharing its deliberations nationwide for 40 years, and to celebrate, Mark-Anthony Turnage (below) has been commissioned to write a quintet for piano and strings. Premiered in the company of Mozart's G minor Quintet, K516 and Schubert's *Trout* Quintet, Turnage's *Prussian Blue* journeys from Truro to Wigmore Hall via Wells, Stowe and Cambridge.

CORNISH CALLING:

Mark-Anthony Turnage helps Prussia Cove mark 40 years of music-making



PHILIP GATWARD, RICHARD HUBERT SMITH

2 BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Lighthouse, Poole, 4 Oct
Tel: +44 (0)1202 280000
Web: www.bsolive.com

Embarking on its 125th anniversary season, the Bournemouth Symphony is thinking big. Enlisting the seasoned expertise of ondes-martenot doyenne Cynthia Miller and pianist Steven Osborne, Kirill Karabits conducts Messiaen's love song writ large: the *Turangalila Symphony*. It's paired with another French symphony, small yet perfectly formed – Bizet's scintillating *Symphony in C*.

3 ENGLISH TOURING OPERA

Hackney Empire, London, 4-7 Oct
Tel: +44 (0)20 8985 2424
Web: www.englishtouringopera.org.uk

Director James Conway takes the bold step of dividing Handel's *opera seria* masterpiece *Giulio Cesare* into two parts spread over two evenings – Part One encompassing 'The Death of Pompey'; Part Two wittily dubbed 'Cleopatra's Needle'. And completing an all-Baroque autumn tour is Rameau's *Dardanus* given in its 1744 respray with tenor Anthony Gregory in the title role.

4 ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA

Caird Hall, Dundee, 5 Oct
Tel: +44 (0)1382 434940
Web: www.rsno.org.uk

Fresh from an Edinburgh Festival collaboration with the Mariinsky Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra expands once more for a season-opening account of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. The programme opens with the Scottish premiere of Gavin Higgins's *Velocity* and Elgar's Violin Concerto. Nicola Benedetti is the soloist and Peter Oundjian conducts.



ALAS, POOR YORICK!
Brett Dean's *Hamlet* spearheads Glyndebourne's autumn tour (Choice 7)

5 LONDON PIANO FESTIVAL

Kings Place, London, 5-8 Oct
Tel: +44 (0)20 7520 1490
Web: www.kingsplace.co.uk

Following last year's debut instalment, the London Piano Festival is back with a Russian flavour permeating a line-up that musters – among solo and duo recitals – a two-piano marathon for six pianists. New works by Elena Langer and Kevin Volans rub shoulders with Ravel and Shostakovich as Ilya Itin, Nelson Goerner and Melvyn Tan are among pianists joining artistic directors Katya Apekisheva and Charles Owen.

6 BBC PHILHARMONIC

Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, 6 Oct
Tel: +44 (0)161 907 9000
Web: www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk

The BBC Philharmonic's chief conductor designate certainly earns his keep in a pairing of two major 20th-century works. Leading from the front, John Storgårds plays the violin in Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, before taking up the baton for Shostakovich's haunting meditation on death, the *Symphony No. 14*. The soloists are soprano Soile Isokoski and bass-baritone Stephen Richardson.



7 GLYNDEBOURNE ON TOUR

Glyndebourne, Lewes and various locations, 7-28 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)1273 815000

Web: www.glyndebourne.com

Unveiled at Glyndebourne this summer, Brett Dean's *Hamlet* (above) takes pride of place in the company's six-venue autumn tour that also revisits Nicholas Hytner's production of Mozart's bittersweet comedy *Così fan tutte*, and Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (directed by Annabel Arden for the 2016 Glyndebourne festival). Duncan Ward conducts *Hamlet* with tenor David Butt Philip as the tormented Prince and soprano Jennifer France as Ophelia

8 ENSEMBLE 360

Crucible Studio Theatre, Sheffield, 9 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)114 249 6000

Web: www.musicintheround.co.uk

Oxford Lieder Festival isn't alone in pondering Vienna (see Choice 12). Music in the Round's flagship chamber group, Ensemble 360, launches the new Sheffield season with Korngold's opulent Piano Quintet in E, Mahler's Piano Quartet fragment and the early String Quartet, D353 by Schubert. The mainly Viennese programme also features Berio's experimental *Sequenza IV*.

9 AURORA ORCHESTRA

St George's Bristol, 11 Oct

Tel: 0845 402 4001 (UK only)

Web: www.stgeorgesbristol.co.uk

When it's not living dangerously playing symphonies from memory, conductor Nicholas Collon's Aurora Orchestra revels in tackling ear-opening orchestral reductions such as Iain Farrington's ingenious distillation for 16 players of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Sung by mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly and tenor Andrew Staples, it follows Mahler's youthful Piano Quartet movement and Mozart's Piano Concerto, K413.

10 LONDON SINFONIETTA

St John's Smith Square, 11 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)20 7222 1061

Web: www.sjss.org.uk

The London Sinfonietta notches up its half-century with a series defiantly entitled 'Unfinished Business'. First up is one of the ensemble's earliest commissions: Hans Werner Henze's *Voices*. Fifteen musicians range over some 70 instruments in an exuberant folk-song tapestry spiked with electronics, sports commentary and Ho Chi Minh's 'Prison Song!'. Sinfonietta co-founder David Atherton conducts.

11 ULSTER ORCHESTRA

Ulster Hall, Belfast, 13 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)28 9033 4455

Web: www.ulsterorchestra.org.uk

Conducted by Gergely Madaras, the Ulster Orchestra flaunts some of its most exotic plumage in a programme bookended by Kodály's *Peacock Variations* and the suite from Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. Between them Britten's Piano Concerto takes flight under the fingers of ardent champion Steven Osborne.

12 OXFORD LIEDER FESTIVAL

Oxford, 13-28 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)1865 591276

Web: www.oxfordlieder.co.uk

From a silent movie screening of Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* accompanied by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment to Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* in New College Chapel, 'Mahler and fin-de-siècle Vienna' is engrossing this year's Oxford Lieder Festival. Helping to contextualise the composer's complete songs with piano is a tempting roster of singers, including mezzo-sopranos Katarina Karnéus and Angelika Kirchschrager, plus tenors Ian Bostridge and Mark Padmore.

13 BARRY DOUGLAS

All Saints' Church, Dulverton,

14 & 15 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)1392 665885

Web: www.thetwomoorsfestival.co.uk

A Schubert song cycle day, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and violinist Tasmin Little are among the temptations proposed by 2017's Two Moors Festival. Pianist Barry Douglas joins the Endellion Quartet for Brahms's protean Piano Quintet following a solo recital the night before in which Tchaikovsky's Grand Sonata, Op. 37 crowns Schubert's Sonata, D958 and Britten's *Nocturne*.

14 ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC

Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, 19 & 22 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)151 709 3789

Web: www.liverpoolphil.com

The UK premiere of Aaron Jay Kernis's *Legacy* for solo horn, harp, percussion and strings, and Leonard Bernstein's *On the Waterfront* Suite ensure a transatlantic slant when James Feddeck conducts Holst's *The Planets*. The matinee repeat stays Stateside, but swaps the Kernis and Bernstein for John Adams and Gershwin's Piano Concerto. Julian Joseph is the soloist.

15 TOTAL IMMERSION

Barbican, London, 21 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)20 7638 8891

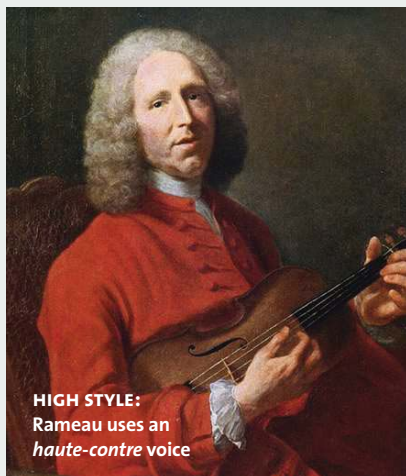
Web: www.barbican.org.uk

Julian Anderson, this year's winner of the BBC Music Magazine Premiere Award, is the latest ▶

QUICK GUIDE TO...

PIGMALION

Jean-Philippe Rameau



HIGH STYLE:
Rameau uses an
haute-contre voice

Five key facts about a work being performed this month (Choice 20)

- Composed by Rameau in just eight days, *Pigmalion* is a one-act opera in a form known as *acte de ballet* which includes songs, duets, choruses and pageant-style dance episodes. Becoming popular in the later part of the Louis XV's reign, these brief operas were ideal for summer performances. *Pigmalion* received its first performance in August 1748 in Paris, becoming one of Rameau's best-loved works. Although many of these small operas were incorporated into larger works, *Pigmalion* remained a one-act masterpiece.

- The opera has a libretto by Sylvain Ballot de Sauvot and is based on the myth of Pygmalion from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The opera's libretto revolves around the sculptor Pigmalion who creates a beautiful statue and falls in love with it. Despite his girlfriend Céphise's pleas for attention, he asks the goddess Venus to make his statue into a real person. After a touch of divine intervention, the statue springs to life and Cupid drops in to join the celebrations.

- The title character is written for the *haute-contre* voice, a type of high tenor that featured in French opera until the later part of the 18th century. Lully wrote for this voice type too, as did the composer Charpentier who was himself a *haute-contre*.

- The statue's transformation into human form is a wonderful opportunity for a ballet sequence, as she tries out her first steps before mastering a range of dance moves.

- Pigmalion* has undergone a resurgence in recordings in recent years, with a notable release by Les Arts Florissants under William Christie in 1992 on Harmonia Mundi. Soprano Carolyn Sampson sings *Pigmalion's* aria 'Du pouvoir de l'Amour' on her Hyperion collection of love songs from Rameau's operas (*Hyperion CDA68035*).

composer to be fêted in the BBC's day-long Total Immersion series. A *cappella* sacred music from the BBC Singers, chamber works and a 'Meet the Composer' session pave the way for an orchestral portrait including Anderson's *Fantasias* and his *Symphony* (2003). Edward Gardner conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

16 CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & CHORUS

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, 25 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)121 780 3333

Web: www.thsh.co.uk

Scarcely a month after launching the CBSO's season with Haydn's *The Creation*, the orchestra's chorus is pressed into service once more for Verdi's unapologetically operatic setting of the Requiem texts. Conductor Edward Gardner oversees a distinguished solo quartet of soprano Natalya Romaniv, mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill, tenor Gwyn Hughes Jones and bass Brindley Sherratt.

17 BRECON BAROQUE FESTIVAL

Brecon, Powys, 26-30 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)1874 611622

Web: www.breconbaroquefestival.com

It's 'Viva Vivaldi' as violinist Rachel Podger's 12th Brecon-based early music festival homes in on the 'Red Priest' and his Venetian milieu. Ensemble Diderot (below) delves into the 17th-century hinterland with Marini and Castello, while Podger herself plays Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in a programme marrying Legrenzi and JS Bach. To set the ball rolling, I Fagiolini salutes Monteverdi at 450 with choral works by the composer and his contemporaries.

18 BRITTEN WEEKEND

Snape Maltings, 27 & 28 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)1728 687110

Web: www.snapemaltings.co.uk

As Snape Maltings embarks on its 'Britten Weekend', the composer's radio output is explored. An excursion to Orford Church recreates Louis MacNeice's 1946 radio play *The Dark Tower* complete with Britten's score performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra under Robert Ziegler. And the same forces (but with Andrew Gourlay conducting) dust down Britten's music for *King Arthur*.

19 WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ORCHESTRA

Southbank Centre, London, 28 & 29 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)20 3879 9555

Web: www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Daniel Barenboim and his West-Eastern Divan Orchestra might have been absent from this year's BBC Proms but they return to London to mark the 30th anniversary of the death of cellist Jacqueline du Pré with two fundraising concerts in aid of multiple sclerosis research. The programme includes Strauss's solo cello enriched tone poem *Don Quixote*.

20 RAMEAU'S PIGMALION

Sallis Benney Theatre,

Brighton, 28 & 29 Oct

Tel: +44 (0)1273 709709

Web: www.bremf.org.uk

Two new opera productions enliven a Brighton Early Music Festival circling the theme of 'Roots'. Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* samples the genre's first masterpiece, while Rameau's *Pigmalion* (see box) embodies the high French Baroque. Staged by Karolina Sofulak, period instrument Ensemble Molière gives the latter a 21st-century twist with digital animation.



BAROQUE STRIDES:
Ensemble Diderot explores the music of 17th-century Venice (Choice 17)

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RADIO & TV LISTINGS

Each issue we provide full listings for BBC Radio 3 introduced by the station's controller Alan Davey, plus highlights of classical music programmes on television



THE POWER OF LOVE:
Peter Seiffert takes
the lead in Wagner's
Tannhäuser (28 Oct)



CONTROLLER'S CHOICE



Alan Davey, the controller of Radio 3, picks out three great moments to tune into in October

RADIO 3 OPERA SEASON

In partnership with the Royal Opera House and an opera exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum (see p46), the BBC is embarking on a wonderful season of opera-related programmes that takes a journey through 400 years of history, looking at the major operas and the cities where they were created. Alongside TV coverage (see pp44 & 114), Radio 3 is broadcasting a selection of operatic milestones. This begins on *Opera on 3*

(30 Sept) with Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, one of the earliest examples, given by La Venexiana. It's followed later in the month (28 Oct) by the Royal Opera House production of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (above) with tenor Peter Seiffert in the title role. While *Afternoon on 3* features recordings of Handel's *Rinaldo* (5 Oct) and Verdi's *Nabucco* (19 Oct), conductor Sir Antonio Pappano joins *Composer of the Week* (from 19 Oct) to discuss Puccini's works. *Radio 3 Opera Season; from 30 Sept*

MUSIC AND MEMORY

This year, Radio 3's Why Music? partnership with London's Wellcome Collection sees the station spending three days in residence, exploring the relationship between music and memory. There will be an analysis of 'earworms' – those catchy tunes that get stuck in your head – and a look at how music

can help people suffering from dementia (see p44). A Why Music? weekend highlight will be a special *Live in Concert* (on 13 Oct) performance of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 by Nicholas Collon's Aurora Orchestra. *Why Music? The Key to Memory; 13-15 Oct*

BRECON BAROQUE

This month, the 12th Brecon Baroque Festival is celebrating the music of Vivaldi and his lesser-known contemporaries. Radio 3 is dropping into Brecon's Theatr Brycheiniog for *In Concert*, as the violinist and director Rachel Podger performs the composer's most famous work, *The Four Seasons*. The programme also includes a selection of violin sonatas from *La Cetra* (The Lyre) by Giovanni Legrenzi, a prominent composer working in 17th-century Venice. *Radio 3 in Concert; 31 Oct, 7.30pm*

OCTOBER'S RADIO 3 LISTINGS

BBC
RADIO

90 – 93FM

Schedules may be
subject to alteration;
for up-to-date listings
see Radio Times30 SATURDAY
SEPTEMBERBBC Radio 3's Opera Season begins
7-9am Breakfast9am-12.15pm Record Review
– Building A Library Wagner's
Wesendonck Lieder, reviewed
by Natasha Loges12.15-1pm Music Matters
1-3pm Saturday Classics
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm Jazz Line-upCHOICE 6.30-
9.30pm Opera on 3from the European Broadcasting
Union. The first broadcast in
Radio 3's opera season. Monteverdi
L'incoronazione di Poppea.
Guiseppeina Bridelli (Merone),
Emanuela Galli (Poppea) et al,
La Venexiana/Davide Pozzi
9.30-10pm Between the Ears
10pm-12midnight
Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am
Geoffrey Smith's Jazz1 SUNDAY
OCTOBER7-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
Maurice Riordan, Irish poet
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm The Organ
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature
Every County in the State of California
7.30-9pm Radio 3 in Concert
European Broadcasting Union (tbc)
9-11pm Drama on 3 Anthony
Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*
11pm-12midnight
Early Music Late

2 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert from
Wigmore Hall, London. Byrd *La Volta*,
Pavana Bray, *Galliarda*, *The woods
so wild*, *Lord Willoughby's Welcome
Home*, Johnson *Ornino galliard*,
Delight pavan and galliard, *Carman's
Whistle*, Dowland *Farewell (on In
Nomine)*, *Farewell*, Daniel Bachelet
Daniells Jigge, *Monsieurs
Almaine*. Paul O'Dette (lute)
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
from the Royal Festival Hall, London.Mozart *Piano Concerto No. 20 in
D minor, K466*, Bruckner *Symphony
No. 5 in B flat (1878 version)*.
Richard Goode (piano), London
Philharmonic Orchestra/Jurowski
10-10.45pm Music Matters (rpt)
10.45-11pm
The Essay Stuff Happens
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

3 TUESDAY

6.30-12noon Breakfast
12 noon-1pm Composer
of the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
from Bridgewater Hall, Manchester.
Mahler *Symphony No. 3*. Karen
Cargill (mezzo), BBC National Chorus
of Wales, Boy & Girl Choristers
of Gloucester Cathedral, BBC
Philharmonic/Juanjo Mena
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

4 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon on 3
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
a recording from 2006 of Choral
Vespers for the Feast of St Francis,
sung by the Pilgrim Consort in Santa
Maria de Montserrat Abbey, Catalonia
4.30-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
live from the Lighthouse, Poole.
Bizet *Symphony in C*, Messiaen
Turangallila-Symphonie. Steven
Osborne (piano), Cynthia Millar
(ondes martenot), Bournemouth
Symphony Orchestra/Kirill Karabits
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

5 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
CHOICE 2-5pm
Afternoon on 3
featuring Handel's *Rinaldo*. David
Daniels (Rinaldo), Cecilia Bartoli
(Almirena), Gerald Finley (Argante)
et al. Academy of Ancient Music/
Christopher Hogwood
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert

BACH AND BEYOND: with pianist Lise de la Salle (9 Oct)

live from Symphony Hall, Birmingham.
Weber *Der Freischütz* – overture,
Mozart *Clarinet Concerto, K622*,
Widmann *Babylon suite*, Brahms
Symphony No. 1. Jörg Widmann
(clarinet), CBSO/Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

6 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in
Concert from Sage Gateshead.
Britten *Sinfonietta Op. 1*, Vaughan
Williams *Violin Concerto in D minor*
'Accademico', *Concerto for Two
Violins*, WF Bach *Sinfonia in D minor*,
Mendelssohn *Symphony No. 1*.
Kyra Humphreys (violin), Royal
Northern Sinfonia/Bradley Creswick
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay

7 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review
– Building a Library Handel's
Concerti Grossi, Op. 3 reviewed
by Richard Wigmore
12.15-1pm Music Matters
1-3pm Saturday Classics
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm Jazz Line-Up
CHOICE 6.30-
9.30pm Opera on 3
from the Royal Opera House,
London. Puccini *La bohème*.
Nicole Car (Mimi), Michael
Fabiano (Rodolfo) et al, Orchestra
of the ROH/Antonio Pappano
9.30-10pmBetween the Ears Solitary
10pm-12midnight
Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am
Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

8 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
Hildegard Bechtler, set designer
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt,
from Wigmore Hall)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt) an
archive recording of Choral Vespers
for the Feast of St Francis, sung by
the Pilgrim Consort in Santa Maria
de Montserrat Abbey, Catalonia
4-5pm The Choir
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
CHOICE 6.45-
7.30pm Sunday
Feature John Tusa recalls his
experience of discovering opera
from his army days in the 1950s
7.30-9pm Radio 3 in Concert
European Broadcasting Union (tba)
9-10.20pm Drama on 3
Artist Descending a Staircase (rpt)
10.20pm-11.20pm
Early Music Late

9 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
CHOICE 12noon-
1pm Composer of the
Week Puccini. Conductor Sir Antonio
Pappano joins Donald Macleod to
discuss a different opera each day
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert from
Wigmore Hall. Bach *Italian Concerto
in F, BWV 971*, Liszt *Fantasia and
Fugue on the name B-A-C-H, S529*,
Brahms *Variations and Fugue on a
Theme by GF Handel in B flat, Op. 24*.
Lise de la Salle (piano)2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
from the Royal Concert Hall,
Glasgow. Gavin Higgins *Velocity*,
Elgar *Violin Concerto in B minor*,
Op. 61, Stravinsky *The Rite of
Spring*. Nicola Benedetti
(violin), RSN0/Peter Oundjian
10-10.45pm Music Matters (rpt)
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

10 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12noon-1pm Composer
of the Week Puccini
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm
Radio 3 in Concert (tba)
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

11 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Puccini.
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon on 3
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
live from Southwark Cathedral
4.30-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
6.30-7.30pm Composer of
the Week Puccini (rpt)
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in
Concert from the Radio Theatre,
Broadcasting House, London. A
re-telling of Peter Ballamy's folk
ballad *The Transports*, performed by
The Young'uns, Faustus, Nancy Kerr
and members of Bellowhead
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

12 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Puccini.
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
live from St David's Hall, Cardiff.
Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 5*,
Op. 73 'Emperor', Shostakovich
Symphony No. 12 ('The Year 1917').
Igor Levit (piano), BBC National
Orchestra of Wales/Søndergård
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

13 FRIDAY

CHOICE
Why Music? The Key
To Memory. Radio 3's residency
at London's Wellcome Collection
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of
the Week Puccini
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert

2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune live from the Wellcome Auditorium
7-7.45pm Music and Memory
7.45-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Maida Vale, London.
 The Musical Memory Palace – a programme that ties in with the Why Music? weekend. Boulez *Memoriale*, Ives *3 Places in New England*, Mozart *Symphony No. 40*. Aurora Orchestra/Nicholas Collon
10-10.45pm The Verb a look at memorising poetry and the art of storytelling
10.45-11pm The Essay

14 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast from the Wellcome Collection's Reading Room
9am-11pm Record Review from the Wellcome Auditorium – **Building A Library** with Jeremy Summery

11-12.15pm Memory Varied from the Wellcome Collection's Reading Room. Beethoven *Diabelli Variations*. Igor Levit (piano)
12.15-1pm Music Matters from the Henry Wellcome Auditorium
1-3pm Saturday Classics from the Wellcome Collection's Reading Room, with a look at how music can help listeners remember other people, places and music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm Jazz Line-Up live from the Wellcome Collection
6.30-8pm Beyond Memory: Music in the Moment A focus on Created out of Mind, an organisation that explores how the creative arts and science can help people's understanding of dementia
8-10pm In Search of Proust's Music from Wellcome Collection's Reading Room. A programme of

chamber music and Proust readings. Alish Tynan (soprano), James Baillieu (piano), Jack Liebeck (violin), Katya Apekisheva (piano), Simon Russell Beale (actor)
10pm-12 midnight Hear and Now live at Wellcome Collection
12 midnight-1am Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

15 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast from the Wellcome Collection's Reading Room
9-10am Music in Memoriam in the Wellcome Collection's Reading Room, presented by Sarah Walker
10am-12 noon Radio 3 link-up with 6 Music Radio broadcast from the Wellcome Auditorium, presented by Tom Service and Cerys Matthews
12noon-1pm Private Passions Sir Simon Wessely, UK psychiatrist
1-2.30pm Lunchtime Concert from the Wellcome Collection's Reading Room. Martin Suckling *new work*, Schubert *String Quintet*. Aurora Orchestra/Nicholas Collon
2.30-3pm Animal Memory
2-3pm The Early Music Show from the Henry Wellcome Auditorium
3-4pm Choral programme from the Wellcome Collection, with three commissions from the Proms Inspire scheme (for young artists) and one from composer Kerry Andrew
4-5pm The Choir
5-5.30pm The Listening Service from the Wellcome Collection's Reading Room, with a look at 'earworms'
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Round-Up from the Henry Wellcome Auditorium
7.30-9pm Radio 3 in Concert European Broadcasting Union (tbc)
9-10.30pm Drama on 3
All of the videos in the World by Jonathan Holloway
10.30pm-11.30pm Early Music Late

16 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12noon-1pm Composer of the Week Vivaldi
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert from Wigmore Hall, London. Bach *Chorale Prelude 'Nun komm der Heiden Heiland'*, *BWV 659* (arr. Ferruccio Busoni), Marcello *Adagio* (arr. JS Bach) from *Oboe Concerto in D minor*, Handel *Minuet in G minor* (arr. Wilhelm Kempff), *Chaconne in G*, *HWV 435*, Scarlatti *Sonata in D minor, Kk32*, *Sonata in B minor, Kk27*, Bach *Partita No. 2 in C minor, BWV 826*. Anne Queffelec (piano)
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from the Barbican, London. Birtwistle *Earth Dances*, Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony*. Elizabeth Watts (soprano), Marcus Farnsworth (baritone), BBC SO & Chorus/ Martyn Brabbins
10-10.45pm Music Matters (rpt)
10.45-11pm The Essay



SEASCAPE: Marcus Farnsworth sings Vaughan Williams (16 Oct)

Stories that Sing. Different figures tell the story of how they fell in love with opera for the first time
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

17 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12noon-1pm Composer of the Week Vivaldi
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from the Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham. Ravel *Rapsodie espagnole*, Debussy *Première rapsodie*, Ravel *Bolero*, Musorgsky *Pictures at an Exhibition* (orch. Ravel). Sergio Castelló López (clarinet), Hallé/Sir Mark Elder
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

18 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12noon-1pm Composer of the Week Vivaldi
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon on 3
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong live from Gloucester Cathedral
4.30-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Ulster Hall, Belfast. Kodály *Variations on a Hungarian folk-song 'The Peacock'*, Britten *Piano Concerto, Op. 13*, Stravinsky *The Firebird (1945 version)*, Steven Osborne (piano), Ulster Orchestra/ Gergely Madarasz
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

19 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12noon-1pm Composer of the Week Vivaldi
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
CHOICE 2-4.30pm
Afternoon on 3 with a recording of Verdi's *Nabucco* from the Royal Opera House. Plácido Domingo (Nabucco), Liudmyla Monastyka (soprano) et al. Orchestra of the ROH/Nicola Luisotti.
CHOICE 4.30-6.45pm
6.45pm In Tune with an outside broadcast from the Victoria & Albert Museum's opera exhibition
6.45-7.45pm Composer of the Week Vivaldi (rpt)
7.45-10pm Opera on 3 (tbc)
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

20 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12noon-1pm Composer of the Week Vivaldi
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from City Halls, Glasgow. Brahms *Variations on a theme by Haydn, Op. 56a*, Bruch *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26*, Strauss *Aus Italien, Op. 16*. Kristóf Baráti (violin), BBC Scottish SO/Christoph König
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay

21 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review – **Building a Library** Puccini's *Il tabarro*, reviewed by Anna Picard
12.15-1pm Music Matters



PRIVATE PASSIONS



Each week **Michael Berkeley** talks to a guest about their favourite music, one of whose choices are below



DAME VIVIEN DUFFIELD philanthropist
RAVEL 'Kaddish' from *Two Hebrew Melodies* Dalton Baldwin (piano), Jessye Norman (soprano)

'My father loved Jewish cantor singing, and when he died there was an enormous pile of records of liturgical singing. This is Ravel's 1914 setting of the 'Kaddish' from the Jewish prayer book, an Aramaic text that glorifies God, with soprano Jessye Norman singing. The first time I heard it I was absolutely blown away.'

CHARLES DUMONT 'Je ne regrette rien' Edith Piaf (singer)
 'My mother loved Edif Piaf and I was brought up with these songs. I remember going to see Piaf perform in the late 1950s. She was minute and had a wonderful, deep husky and powerful voice. It was unforgettable.'

PUCCHINI 'Visi d'arte' from *Tosca* Maria Callas (soprano), Orchestra of the Royal Opera House/Carlo Felice Cillario
 'I went to first-night opera galas at Covent Garden with my father. The Maria Callas evening was one that stood out because of the glamour. Ladies in those days had furs and jewellery, with satin and long gloves. When Callas came on the audience screamed. She had this wonderful red velvet dress which we've always associated with Tosca.'

R STRAUSS An Alpine Symphony
 Saito Kinen Orchestra/Daniel Harding

'I was blown away the first time I went to the Salzburg Festival. I had to sit right at the back and I had a view of the enormous orchestra. I was fascinated by all the unusual instruments in the *Alpine Symphony*, such as alphorns and cowbells.'

WAGNER 'Hochsten heiles Wunder' from *Parsifal* Bayreuth Festival Orchestra/Pierre Boulez
 'I was, like most people, very frightened of Wagner. But I fell in love with him quite late and I had three or four wonderful visits to Bayreuth. These days I'd rather be at home in comfort with a record.'

Private Passions is on Radio 3 every Sunday at 12 noon and is also available to download as a podcast.

GETTY, ANDY STAPLES

1-3pm Saturday Classics
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm Jazz Line-Up
6.30-10pm Opera on 3 from the Royal Opera House, London. Verdi *Otello*. Jonas Kaufmann (Otello), Maria Agresta (Desdemona), Marco Vratogna (Iago), Kai Rüütel (Emilia) et al. Orchestra of the Royal Opera House/Sir Antonio Pappano
10pm-12 midnight
Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am
 Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

22 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt, from Wigmore Hall)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm The Choir
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music

CHOICE 6.45-7.30pm Sunday
 Feature A Flapper's Guide to Opera. The operatic scene in 1920s London
7.30-9pm Radio 3 Live in Concert from the European Broadcasting Union (tbc)
9-10.30pm Drama on 3
 All of the Violence in the World
10.30pm-11.30pm Early Music Late

23 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert from Wigmore Hall. Haydn *Piano Trio in F sharp minor, HXV:26*, Brahms *String Sextet in G, Op. 36* (arr. Theodor Fürchtgott Kirchner). Trio Jean Paul
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert

from Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool. Bernstein *On the Waterfront Suite*, Aaron Jay Kernis *Legacy for solo horn, harp, percussion & strings*, Holst *The Planets*. Timothy Jackson (horn), Ladies of the RLPO Choir, RLPO/James Feddeck
10-10.45pm Music Matters (rpt)
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

24 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Usher Hall, Edinburgh. Berlioz *Overture - Les Francs-Juges*, Mozart *Piano Concerto No. 27, K595*, Dvořák *Symphony No. 8*. Mitsuko Uchida (piano, below), Scottish Chamber Orchestra/Robin Ticciati
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

25 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon on 3
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong Oscar Romero Memorial Evensong (recorded in Westminster Abbey on 23 Sept, including a commissioned anthem from James MacMillan)
4.30-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Milton Court, London. Mozart *Divertimento in D, K136*, 'Al Destin' from *Mitridate*, 'Ruhe sanft' from *Zaide*, 'Ah, se il crudel' from *Lucio Silla*, *Et incarnatus est*, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, K219*, *Exsultate*,

Jubilate, K165. Lucy Crowe (soprano), Nadja Zwiener (violin), The English Concert/Harry Bicket
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

26 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from City Halls, Glasgow. Britten *Four Sea Interludes* from Peter Grimes, Brahms *Violin Concerto in D, Op. 77*, Mendelssohn *Symphony No. 3 'Scottish'*. Alexandra Soumm (violin), BBC Scottish SO/Dausgaard
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Exposure

27 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from The Barbican. Schmitt *Symphony No. 2*, Franck *Symphonic Variations*, Ravel *Piano Concerto in D for the left hand*, Sibelius *Symphony No. 3*. Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (piano), BBC SO/Oramo
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay

28 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review - Building a Library Dowland's *Lachrymae*, reviewed by Kirsten Gibson
12.15-1pm Music Matters

WEEKLY TV AND RADIO HIGHLIGHTS

On our website each week we pick the best of the classical music programmes on radio, TV and iPlayer. So to plan your weekly listening and viewing, head 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.



1-3pm Saturday Classics
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6pm Jazz Line-Up
CHOICE 6-10pm Opera on 3 from the Royal Opera House, London (rpt). Wagner *Tannhäuser*. Peter Seiffert (Tannhäuser), Emma Bell (Elisabeth), Sophie Koch (Venus), Christian Gerhaher (Wolfram von Eschibach) et al. Orchestra of the Royal Opera House/Hartmut Haenchen
10pm-12 midnight Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

29 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions Frances Barber, actress
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt, from Wigmore Hall)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt, from 25 Oct) Oscar Romero Memorial Evensong (recorded in Westminster Abbey)
4-5pm The Choir
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature New Generation Thinkers
7.30-9pm Radio 3 in Concert European Broadcasting Union (tbc)
CHOICE 9-10.30pm Drama on 3 *The Dark Tower* by Louis MacNeice
10.30pm-11.30pm Early Music Late

30 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12noon-1pm Composer of the Week Bellini
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert from Wigmore Hall, London. Telemann *Quartet in B minor, TWV 43:h2 'Paris'*, Bach *Trio Sonata in G, BWV 1038*, Jean-Philippe Rameau *Suite in D minor, No. 5* from

Pièces de clavecin en concerts, Jean-Féry Rebel *Les caractères de la danse*. Florilegium
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from the Royal Festival Hall. Jacqueline du Pré tribute. Strauss *Don Quixote Op. 35*, Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 5*. Kian Soltani (cello), West-Eastern Divan Orchestra/ Daniel Barenboim
10-10.45pm Music Matters (rpt)
10.45-11pm The Essay Nothing is Real
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

31 TUESDAY

6.30am-1pm Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Bellini
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon on 3
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
CHOICE 7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon. Brecon Baroque Festival. Legrenzi *Sonata a quattro* from 'La Cetra', Op. 10 No. 6, *Sonata a quattro* from 'La Cetra', Op. 10 No. 5, Vivaldi *Concerto for lute, strings and harpsichord in D, RV.93*, JS Bach *Keyboard Concerto, BWV 972*, Vivaldi *The Four Seasons*. Brecon Baroque/Rachel Podger
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay

Highlights on Radio 4 this month include:
A Choral History of Britain (4 & 11 Oct at 9am) baritone and composer Roderick Williams explores our nation's rich heritage of choral music.

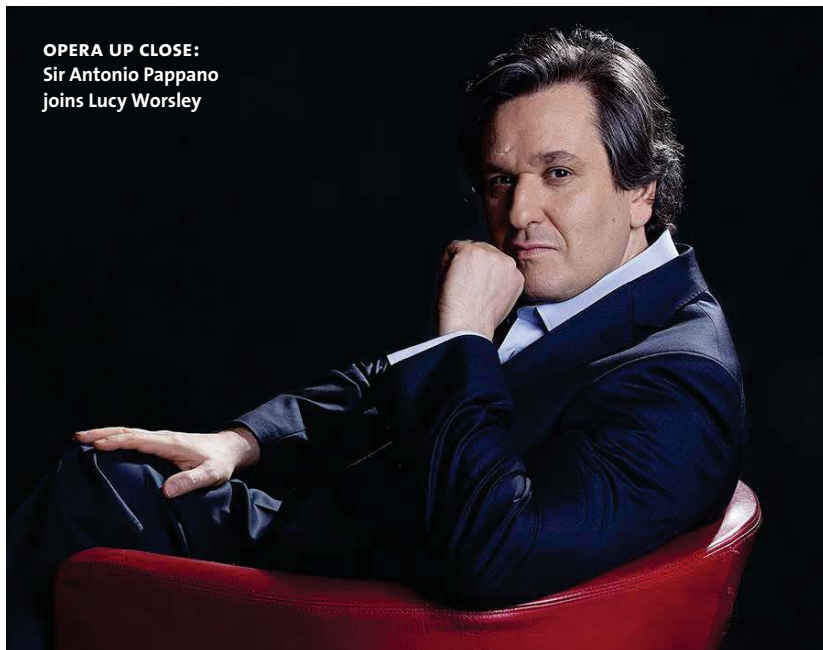
Please turn over for your complete guide to the BBC Opera Season



USHER APPEARANCE: Mitsuko Uchida performs Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27 on 24 October

- QUIZ ANSWERS from p116**
1. a) The Dream of Gerontius,
 - b) Cardinal Newman
 2. Jubilee Hall
 3. a) Schumann, b) Liszt, c) Smetana, d) Debussy
 4. Schubert
 5. Harriet Smithson
 6. Winter Daydreams
 7. Tartini
 8. It turns stones into bread
 9. Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel
 10. Jonathan Harvey

OPERA UP CLOSE:
Sir Antonio Pappano
joins Lucy Worsley



OPERA ON THE BBC

Your complete guide to the Opera Season on BBC TV and Radio 3

This autumn, the BBC is broadcasting a season of programmes that celebrate the wonderful world of opera – including new films, documentaries and performances – with the aims of bringing opera to a wider audience and to enthuse a new generation. The Opera Season is being broadcast across BBC Two, BBC Four and BBC Radio 3, giving audiences an opportunity to go behind the scenes at great opera houses and hear insights from top artists. As well as tracing the musical developments from opera's early days in Renaissance Italy to the modern era, the BBC programmes explore the social, political and historical context of major works.

OPERA SEASON HIGHLIGHTS ON RADIO

Over the course of the autumn, Radio 3's Opera Season includes seven operas that are being featured in the Victoria & Albert Museum's exhibition dedicated to key moments in the history of opera (see p40). These include:

Monteverdi
L'incoronazione di Poppea
A landmark 1642 work from the Renaissance era in Venice when opera was taking form on the public stage. Davide Pozzi conducts La Venexiana, with soprano Emanuela Galli as Poppea and mezzo-soprano Giuseppina Bridelli as Nerone.
Opera on 3; 30 Sept, 6.30pm

Handel Rinaldo
A recording of Handel's 1711 masterpiece, one of the first Italian language operas to be performed in London, with countertenor David Daniels in the lead role and esteemed support from baritone Gerald Finley (Argante) with mezzo-sopranos Cecilia Bartoli (Almirena) and Bernarda Fink (Goffredo). Christopher Hogwood conducts the Academy of Ancient Music.
Afternoon on 3; 5 Oct, 2pm

Verdi Nabucco
A Royal Opera House production of Verdi's biblical-based opera – which reflected the growing importance of the chorus when it premiered in Milan in 1842 – stars tenor Plácido Domingo as Nabucco and soprano Liudmyla Monastriyka as the high priestess Zaccaria.
Afternoon on 3; 19 Oct, 2pm

Wagner Tannhäuser
This recently acclaimed Royal Opera House production of Wagner's three-act opera – about the struggles between sacred and profane love – features tenor Peter Seiffert, bass-baritone Christian Gerhaher and soprano Emma Bell. Hartmut Haenchen conducts.
Opera on 3; 28 Oct, 6pm

Strauss Salome
Richard Strauss's modernist classic was premiered in 1905 in Dresden. Angela Denoke plays the intoxicating and bloodthirsty lead in a Royal Opera House production with mezzo-soprano Irina Mishura as Herodias and tenor Gerhard Siegel as Herod.
Afternoon on 3; 2 Nov, 2pm

Shostakovich Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk
Shostakovich's 1934 masterpiece was initially embraced by audiences before falling foul of the Soviet authorities. In this European Broadcasting Union recording, Mariss Jansons conducts the Vienna Philharmonic and the cast includes soprano Nina Stemme and tenor Maxim Paster.
Opera on 3; 11 Nov, time tbc

Mozart The Marriage of Figaro
Mozart's comic 1786 masterpiece was premiered in Vienna, a centre for the Enlightenment. Broadcast live from Met Opera with Harry Bicket conducting, the New York production features bass-baritone Adam Plachetka as Figaro and soprano Nadine Sierra as his fiancée Susanna.
Opera on 3; 23 Dec, time tbc

Other highlights on Radio 3:
Composer of the Week: Puccini
In a special edition of *Composer of the Week*, conductor Sir Antonio Pappano (above), the conductor and director of the Royal Opera House,

OPERA SEASON HIGHLIGHTS ON TV

Jonas Kaufmann, Tenor for the Ages

BBC Four is showing a fly-on-the-wall documentary by John Bridcut, a film-maker who has made a name for his profiles of composers including Elgar, Britten and Vaughan Williams. In his latest project he follows the tenor Jonas Kaufmann over two years in his career, including his triumphant return to the stage following a five-month break to allow his vocal cords to recover. The film combines concert footage with candid interviews and a rare chance to see the tenor off-stage as he prepares for his roles.

BBC Four; 15 October, time tbc

Lucy Worsley's Nights at the Opera

The BBC TV opera season also features a two-part series in which historian Dr Lucy Worsley travels to different cities across Europe to discover the locations – from Vienna to Dresden – where landmark opera productions were premiered (see p40). She is joined by Antonio Pappano (left), music director of the Royal Opera House, to explore the music of each work.

BBC Two; 14 & 21 October, time tbc

Verdi's Otello

Make sure you don't miss the opportunity to see this summer's Royal Opera House production of Verdi's *Otello*, with tenor Jonas Kaufmann taking the lead as the Moor who is consumed by jealous passion. Soprano Maria Agresta plays the ill-fated Desdemona.

BBC Four; 22 October, time tbc

Brett Dean's Hamlet

One of the finest examples of contemporary opera, Brett Dean's *Hamlet* was a highlight of the Glyndebourne season and is going on tour. Noted for its mischievous take on Shakespeare's play, the production features a superb cast with tenor Allan Clayton as Hamlet, soprano Barbara Hannigan as Ophelia and mezzo Sarah Connolly as Gertrude.

BBC Four; November, date and time tbc

joins Donald Macleod to discuss a different Puccini opera each day.

Composer of the Week;
from 9 Oct, 12 noon

The Essay: Stories that Sing

This week's five-part series of *The Essay* sees a group of writers and an actor each tell the story of how they fell in love with opera for the first time. While author Julian Barnes examines how he came to opera via his experiences of bereavement, writer Patricia Duncker looks at the relationship between opera and the novel. Actor David Threlfall recalls how a Franco Zeffirelli production at the Met made a lasting impression.
The Essay; from 16 Oct, 10.45pm

Sunday Feature: John Tusa's Opera Journey

Sir John Tusa's interest in opera began when he was stationed in post-war Germany on National Service. Returning to the three of the country's opera houses – Kiel, Essen

and Hannover – he discovers why these venues thrive so well.

Sunday Feature; 8 Oct, 6.45pm

Sunday Feature: A Flapper's Guide to the Opera

Musicologist Dr Alexandra Wilson lifts the lid on the lively operatic scene of London in the 1920s. Listeners will be guided around the diverse locations where opera was performed, from Covent Garden to cafés and restaurants.

Sunday Feature; 22 Oct, 6.45pm

Online season highlights:

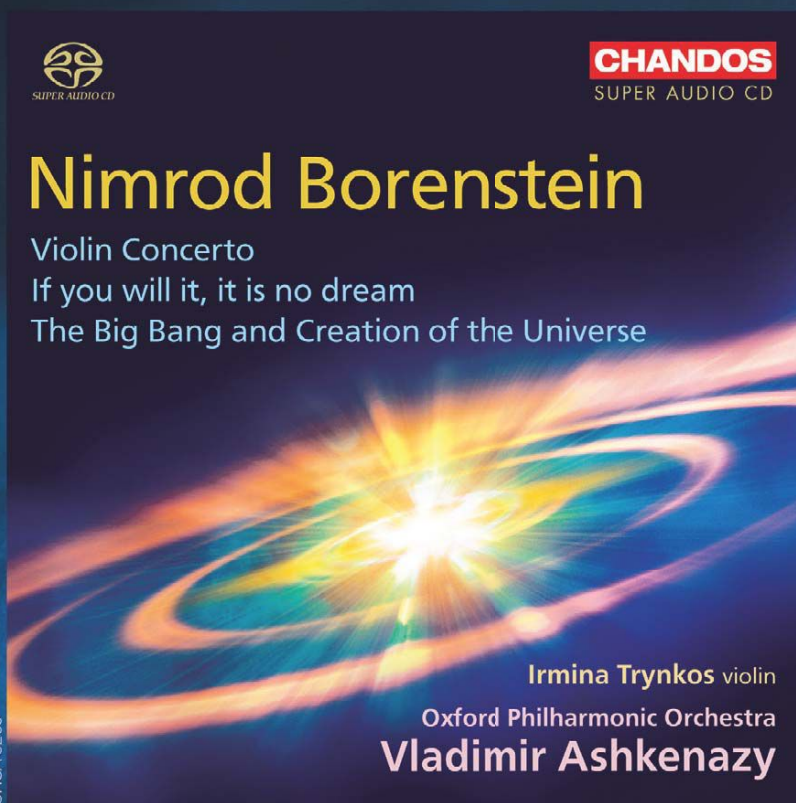
#OperaPassion

Make sure you put 19 October in the diary. Opera companies across the UK are joining forces with BBC Digital Arts for #OperaPassion, a day of interactive celebration of the world of opera. Live streams will allow audiences access to opera houses and tours across the country, with interviews and archive performances.
#OperaPassion; 19 Oct

CHANDOS
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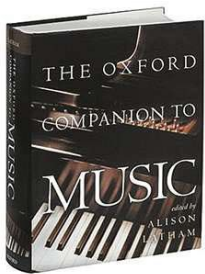
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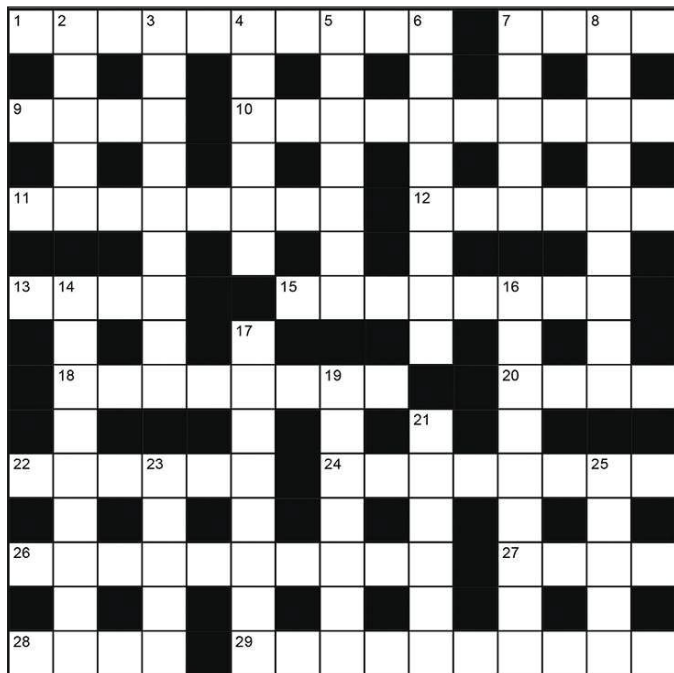
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October prize crossword No. 312

The first correct solution of our monthly crossword to be picked at random will win a copy of *The Oxford Companion to Music* worth £40 (available at bookstores or www.oup.co.uk). Send your answers to: *BBC Music Magazine*, Crossword 312, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA to arrive by 5 October 2017 (solution in our Christmas 2017 issue). *Crossword set by Paul Henderson*



ACROSS

- 1 Contrapuntal works, art I scarce reviewed (10)
- 7 Part of violin displaying audacity (4)
- 9 Two pianos available around middle of week – look (4)
- 10 Horrible great moans from fairground instrument (5,5)
- 11 Where you read music for viola or fat cello, possibly (4,4)
- 12 Listens to end of piece – it'll transport you at the end! (6)
- 13 Opera pioneer also inspiration for *Iolanthe*? (4)
- 15 Describing vocal sound as something ringing (a habitual response) (8)
- 18 French friend about to back German impresario and Italian composer (8)
- 20 Debuts of ukulele groups leave you aggravated (4)
- 22 Is blazing forte underpowered by start of scherzo? (6)
- 24 Ready to accept version deep organ sound? (4,4)
- 26 Music drama? Hard to better participating in vibrant heart of *Seraglio* (5,5)
- 27 Bugle call or dances? (4)
- 28 Belgian singer's tour finally going through almost half Belgium (4)
- 29 Jazz great audibly goes well with bandleader? Not entirely (10)

- 8 Girl meeting one contralto in California: 'Like the music here?' (9)
- 14 Stenhammar piece to outdo one penned by Sor (9)
- 16 Satisfied about piano interrupting more accurate supplier of fanfare... (9)
- 17 ...and how to annoy him or her! (5,3)
- 19 Conductor, timeless maestro, a really nice guy (7)
- 21 Writer with an opening for guitarist in Eastern city (6)
- 23 The writer initially has used letters from French composer (5)
- 25 Student at University I engaged in piano lessons at first (5)

Your name & address

.....

DOWN

- 2 Perfect suggestion: finale of *Pastoral* (5)
- 3 Large brass instrument, one I hump around, going round University (9)
- 4 Remarkable class including a cellist (6)
- 5/6 Why M Python left with piece of Sousa, having failed to get timely Shostakovich piece (7,8)
- 7 No artist will receive millions for an opera (5)

JULY SOLUTION NO. 309



JULY WINNER
C Fitchett, London

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THE MUSIC QUIZ

Enter a world of dreams with this month's quiz...

1. An oratorio Elgar composed in 1900 was, he suggested, 'the best of me'. Can you name a) the piece; and b) the author of the poem it sets?
2. Benjamin Britten wrote his Shakespearean opera *A Midsummer's Night Dream* for the reopening of which concert venue in Aldeburgh in 1960?
3. These four solo piano pieces or sets of pieces are all on the theme of dreams. But who wrote a) *Träumerei* (1838); b) *Liebesträume* (1850); c) *Rêves* (1875); d) *Reverie* (1890)?
4. The playwright Samuel Beckett loved classical music, and in 1982 he wrote a television play called *Nacht und Träume* inspired by an eponymous song. Who was the composer?

PICTURE THIS

5. Who is this Irish actress, who inspired the romantic obsessions and opium-fuelled dreams of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*?



6. What is the subtitle of Tchaikovsky's First Symphony, composed in 1866?
7. '[In a dream] I heard the devil play a sonata of such exquisite beauty as surpassed the boldest flight of my imagination,' said the composer of the *Devil's Trill* Sonata. Who was he?
8. The devil is also at work in Stravinsky's opera *The Rake's Progress*, revealing a 'fantastic Baroque machine' with an unusual purpose to a slumbering Tom Rakewell. What does this invention do?
9. In which opera, premiered in 1893, do we see the two eponymous characters singing their 'Evening Prayer' before falling asleep, a moment marked by an orchestral 'Dream Pantomime'?
10. Which British composer wrote *Wagner Dream*, a 2007 opera about the last moments of Wagner's life?

See p113 for answers

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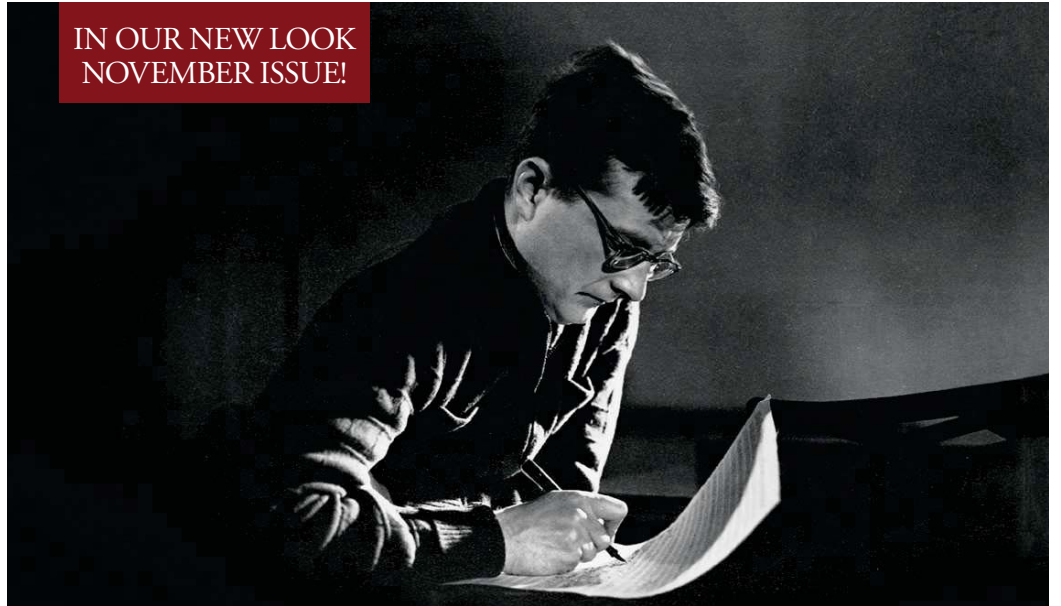


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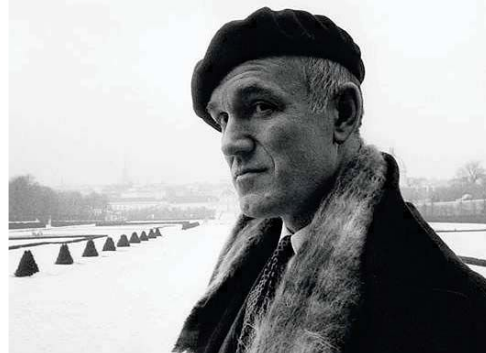


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Grand designs

Julian Lloyd Webber, the principal of Birmingham Conservatoire, tells *Richard Bratby* about its impressive redevelopment plans

Mikhail Glinka

Erik Levi profiles the trail-blazing Russian composer, famous for *Ruslan and Lyudmila*

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MUSIC THAT CHANGED ME

Felicity Palmer *Mezzo-soprano*

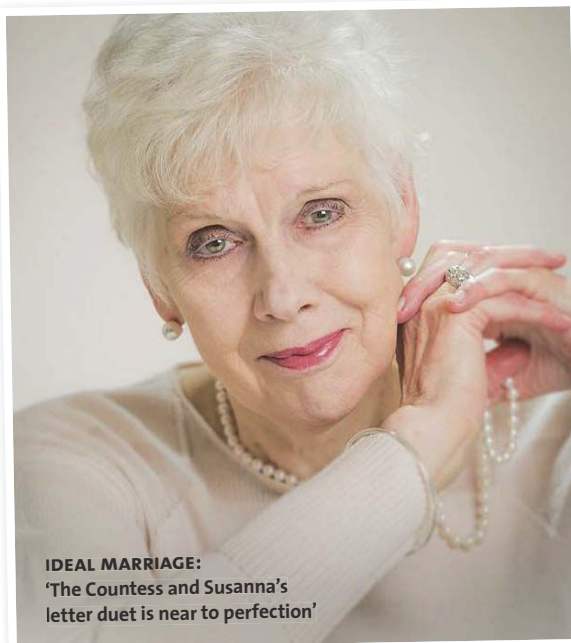
My father was an organist who also composed. He left quite a lot of music including songs, two of which I recently sang. Sadly, he went into music teaching as his only option to earn money – I feel he should really have gone to the Royal College of Organists and become, say, a cathedral organist. My mother was into drama, and would love to have been an actress – in a way, my career as an opera singer fulfilled an ambition that she never realised, which I think she found quite frustrating.

When I was young, I sang in church choirs and choral societies, but the die was really cast when, as a teenager, I took part in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury*. At 16, I went part-time to the Guildhall for singing lessons, and then full-time two years later. I was very green, and wouldn't say I learnt much until I got a scholarship to go to study in Munich towards the end of my time there.

I'd actually studied A-level music with my father. One of the subjects was **MOZART's** *Marriage of Figaro*, and the recording that we used was the one conducted by Erich Kleiber – the fantastic cast included Hilde Gueden, Lisa della Casa and all. I fell in love with it then, and still think the letter duet between the Countess and Susanna in that recording is as near to perfection as you are ever going to get.

While at college, I joined the chamber choir, which was run by John Alldis, and then later joined his professional choir, which was pretty terrifying. I remember singing **PALESTRINA's** *Missa assumpta est Maria*, my first encounter with Latin church music. That, along with works such as Lotti's *Crucifixus*, touched a spiritual chord that I wasn't able to identify at the time, but I went on to join the Schütz Choir and the Monteverdi Choir and, in 1992, became a Catholic and spent many years going to Westminster Cathedral. It's still very special music to me.

Possibly the most useful thing I did at the Guildhall was French music classes with the brilliant Winifred Radford, who brought baritone Pierre Bernac over to do masterclasses. With him I worked on **POULENC's** *La courte paille*, which gave me a grounding in and love of French music.



IDEAL MARRIAGE:
'The Countess and Susanna's letter duet is near to perfection'

DAME FELICITY PALMER has enjoyed a long a varied career, firstly as a soprano and then as a mezzo, in repertoire ranging from Baroque to contemporary works. After studies at the Guildhall, she sang with leading choirs before developing a career in opera that has seen her perform in major venues across the globe. Particularly acclaimed in French repertoire, she was knighted for services to music in 2011. Her new recital album, *Two Little Words*, is released on Resonus Classics this month.

I would go on to sing Poulenc's Gloria as a soprano and, much later, his opera *Dialogues des Carmélites* which has become something of a calling card – there are so many moments in it that are special, not least Blanche's encounter with her brother in Act II when she tells him 'Je suis une fille de Carmel'. Poulenc has been such an important part of my life, as have the likes of Messiaen and Fauré.

In 1968, I went as an extra with the Monteverdi Choir to sing works by **MONTEVERDI** at the V&A museum. I had never encountered his music before, but it was a bit of a *coup de foudre*, as the French would say – I was on a high for about a week. Having

sung and recorded much of his music, among my favourite moments of his are the Ave Maris Stella, the Gloria and the final Amen – which is the Amen to crown all Amens – in the *Vespers*.

I'd say I'm a bit of a square, and my father was a total square – anything resembling pop music was immediately decried. I remember, though, working in Glasgow at one point, and the TV was turned on late at night. There was a singer on it who I was riveted by. It was the beginning of my acknowledging that there are people in other parts of music who have that unmistakable asset of being able to make you sit up and listen. That singer was **GLORIA ESTEFAN**, who is a wonderful performer. I replay her *Éxitos de Gloria Estefan* CD on regular occasions! ■

Interview by Jeremy Pound

FELICITY PALMER MUSIC CHOICE



Mozart
The Marriage of Figaro
Hilde Gueden, Cesare Siepi et al; Vienna Philharmonic/
Erich Kleiber
Decca 466 3692



Palestrina
Missa assumpta est Maria
The Tallis Scholars/
Peter Phillips
Gimell CDGIM204



Poulenc **Les dialogues des Carmélites**
Patricia Petibon, Véronique Gens et al; Philharmonia/
Jérémie Rhorer
Erato 2564622069 (DVD)



Monteverdi
Vespers
Margaret Marshall, Felicity Palmer et al; Concentus Musicus Wien/Harnoncourt
Warner 2564694648



Gloria Estefan
Éxitos de Gloria Estefan
Epic 467 5202