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110
reviews by the
world's finest
critics
See p68

VIVALDI The Four Seasons

We explore the composer's
colourful life through his
thrilling masterpiece

**Carmen
geddit!**

15 novel ways to
fill a concert hall

Ada Lovelace

Maths and music's
unique visionary

Nina Simone

How Bach inspired
a jazz phenomenon

Richard Morrison

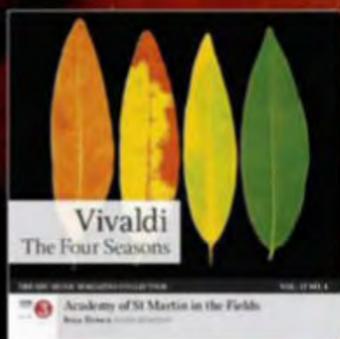
The highs and lows of 2018

George Benjamin

The composer on the art of opera

Tom Service

It's OK to be mediocre





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Welcome



So, musically, how was 2018 for you? This issue, Richard Morrison (p27) takes a look at his own standout moments and performance highlights from the past 12 months. On p38, however, we've invited a clutch of renowned artists to share their hopes – and fears – for the year ahead, from personal

ambitions to general concerns for the music world. It makes for fascinating reading.

My 2018 highlight was back in June when I had the opportunity to give recitals on the organs of Arnstadt's Neue Kirche and Mühlhausen's Divi Blasii – Thuringian churches where the young JS Bach cut his teeth. Both modern instruments are close in build and sound to the organs Bach would have played (the Arnstadt organ still contains around 20 per cent of its original pipes) and, of course, both buildings still resonate with the same centuries-old acoustic. I'm not sure what made me more nervous: performing in front of my knowledgeable audience or facing up to the extraordinary history of the instruments I was playing.

We'd love to hear what you've been up to in 2018 – whether it be venues you've visited for the first time, pieces you've fallen in love with, musicians that have had you on the edge of your seat or, like me, instruments that have left you open-mouthed. Write to us at music@classical-music.com and we'll print the best next issue.

Oliver Condy *Editor*

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Kate Bolton-Porciatti
Writer and critic

'Vivaldi melds the transient and the eternal in *The Four Seasons*: in microcosm, with fleeting violin solos punctuated by *ritornelli*; in macrocosm, with an evergreen musical journey through the year's cycle.' **Page 28**



David De Roure
Professor, University of Oxford

'Ada Lovelace was a gifted mathematician and computer programmer, but the more I studied her, the more I discovered how very important music and creativity were to her too.' **Page 42**



Roger Thomas
Writer and critic

'Nina Simone's career tends to be reduced to bullet points: jazz-performer-by-default, civil rights activist, classically trained, temperamental. The reality was more subtle and complex, and her catalyst was Bach.' **Page 48**

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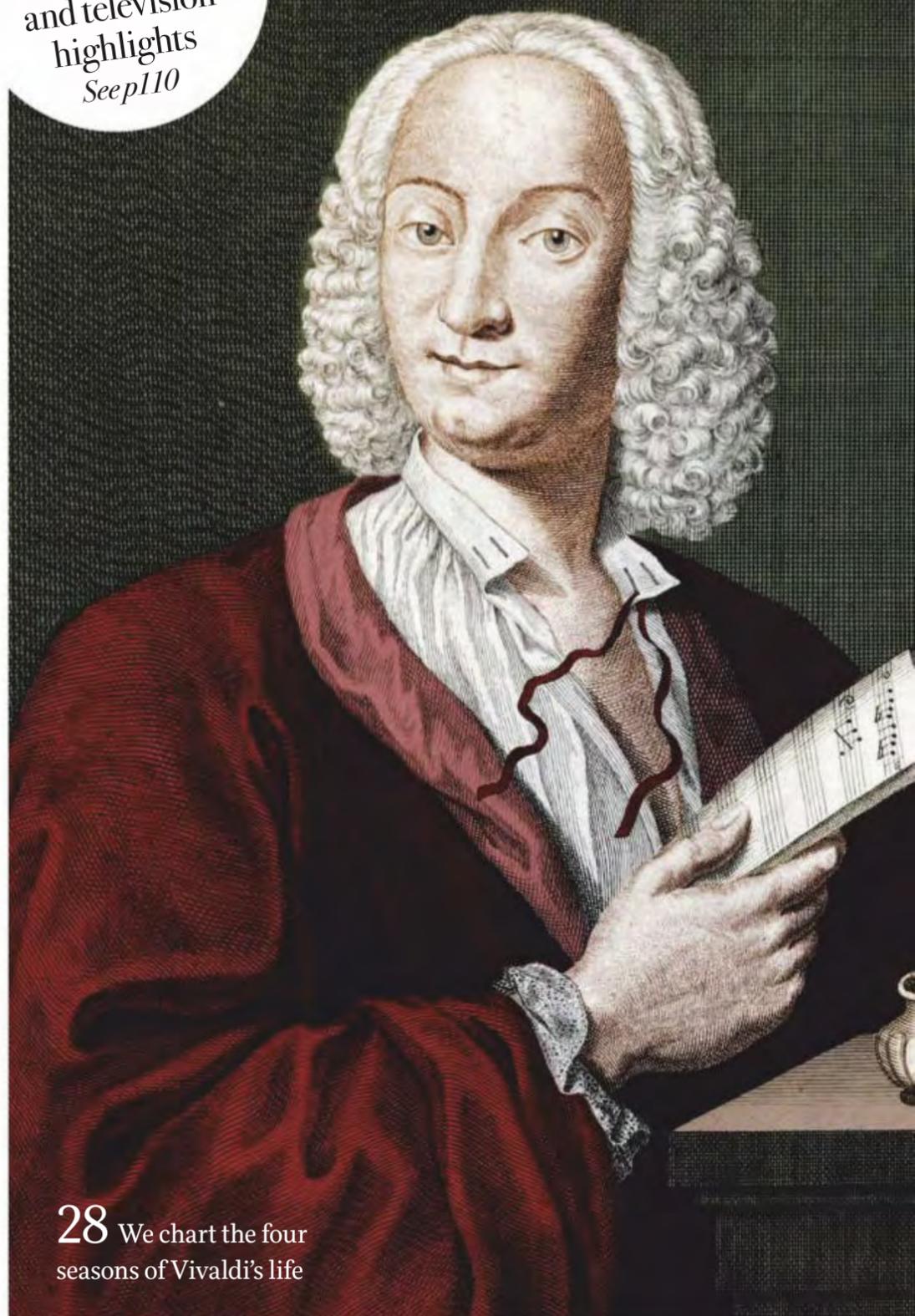
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EDITORIAL

Plus our musical ambitions for 2019

Editor Oliver Condy

Practise the organ more regularly

Deputy editor Jeremy Pound

Get my chaotic CD collection in order

Managing editor Rebecca Franks

*Crack the final movements of Beethoven's
'Moonlight' Sonata*

Reviews editor Michael Beek

Take a trip to see an opera at Covent Garden

Editorial assistant Freya Parr

Join a local sea shanty group

Cover CD editor Alice Pearson

To learn the violin again

Listings editor Paul Riley

Stop avoiding the harder numbers in the '48'

Art editor Dav Ludford

Learn the Jew's harp

Designer Liam McAuley

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Thanks to Daniel Jaffé; Hannah Clewes

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Monteverdi
Vespro della Beata Vergine

'In scope, scoring, invention and technical command, Monteverdi's work dwarfs any earlier music of its kind'

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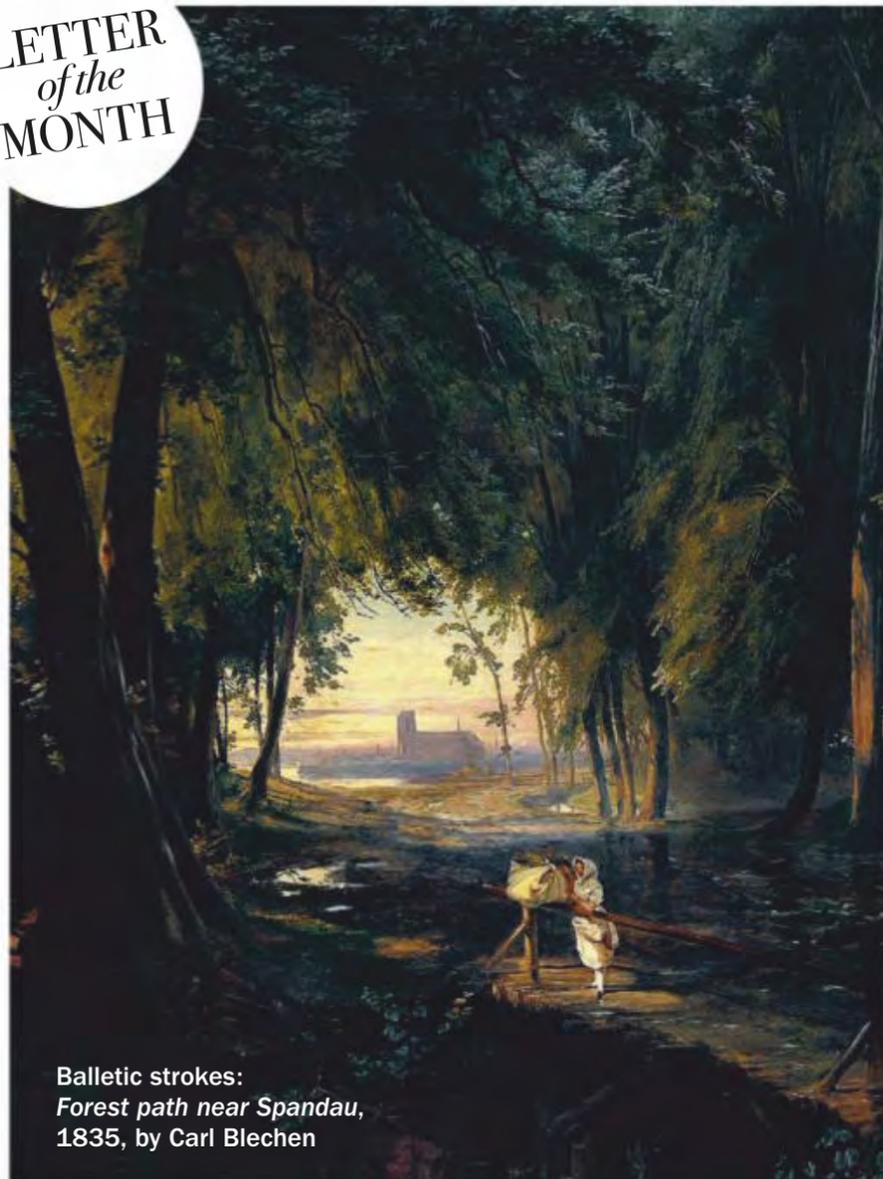
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LETTER
of the
MONTH



Balletic strokes:
Forest path near Spandau,
1835, by Carl Blechen

Woodland wonders

In *Into the woods* (Dec issue) Malcolm Hayes writes that '[music about] forests did not always need to suggest metaphysics'. This applies even in the Romantic 19th century, when symphonies were composed simply about forests themselves. Many say Bruckner's 'Romantic' Fourth Symphony (1874-88) is a painting of the German Romantic forest and before this, in 1870, Raff premiered his Symphony No. 3, 'Im Walde' (In the Forest), in which he describes a 24-hour woodland stay. Even in countries



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not known for their extended woodland, compositions about forests were written. In Zweers's Third Symphony, 'To my Fatherland' (1890) the first movement is titled 'In Dutch forests and woodlands'. No metaphysics involved. Nor, in the 20th century, is there anything metaphysical about Shostakovich's cantata *The Song of the Forests*, in which (re)forestation is lauded. The work has not yet been discovered by environmentalists, as far as I know.

Jacob Buis, Betws-y-Coed

Tasty cheese

Richard Morrison, in deriding amateur choirs' performances of pop numbers (Christmas issue), misses the point. We have all seen 'the whining schoolboy... creeping like a snail unwillingly' to his instrumental lesson where an ageing and inflexible tutor insists upon him practising yet again a classical piece with which he is thoroughly bored, until he gives up playing altogether, and the

difference engendered when another tutor encourages the same schoolboy to play some John Williams film themes which he and his family know well. The analogy with the amateur choir is apposite: the objective in each case is to encourage participation, performance and enjoyment by the player/singer. If that involves a choir accepting an occasional piece of 'musical cheese' in its repertoire, so be it. If the performers find it

embarrassing they will soon make the necessary changes.
Nigel Watkins, Harpenden

Sibelian speeds

Can music be 'fast' or 'slow'? This was the fascinating question posed by Tom Service and Anna Meredith in your Christmas issue. The huge first movement of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony was given as an example. Sibelius was a master of movement and in his Fifth, the music moves gradually,

almost imperceptibly, from a great Wagnerian drifting into a pace that recalls a Beethoven scherzo. The distinguished composer Robert Simpson remarked back in 1965 that 'Sibelius's masterly transformation of a colossally slow tempo into a Beethovenishly fast one cannot be over-praised; it is a basic, original achievement, and must be accounted one of the crucial discoveries in music'. Again, in the finale

we have another tempo-transformation, this time from quick to slow. In *Tapiola* Sibelius moves simultaneously at two levels of tempo. Quite an achievement!

Peter Frankland, Bury

Lieder and the Wolf

Isn't it strange how attitudes to composers differ from person to person? Two or three years ago I was shocked at a pre-performance talk at a recital during the Leeds Lieder Festival to be told that Wolf was not a popular composer, as ever since I became a Lieder fanatic I have rated him second only to Schubert – if I was forced into a corner and asked to name my favourite Lied I would almost certainly say Wolf's *Anakreons Grab*. Now here is *BBC Music Magazine* finding it necessary to do one of its *Background To...* notes about him (Christmas reviews) when there are songs by Zemlinsky on the same disc! I haven't had many opportunities to hear Wolf in live recital but some years ago I was lucky enough to be at a performance in Ripon Cathedral of the *Italienische Liederbuch* given by Joan Rodgers, Gerald Finley and Julius Drake. A few weeks later Radio 3 broadcast a studio performance by the same artists. If the tape still exists in the BBC archives it would make a wonderful cover disc and convert quite a few to Wolf.

John Rogers, Leeds

Defining Górecki

I expect the *BBC Music Magazine* inbox has been bombarded in the last few weeks by irate messages bemoaning the absence of various works and composers from the selection of *20 Works That Defined a Century* (December issue). Please be

assured that I am not about to do the same, well not exactly. In fact, I would like to congratulate you on such a thought-provoking (and somewhat bold!) list. The decade-by-decade format, identifying works composed closely in time to the wider events they reflect, does indeed create an accurate classical soundtrack of the century. Perhaps this is why the glaring omission that I noticed occurred. Górecki's Third Symphony was composed some 30 years after World War Two, with which it is, among other periods, associated. However, I would argue that this piece is timeless in its subject and would warrant a place on that basis alone.

John Reilly-Stewart, Northern Ireland

Silence is golden

Following the inclusion of *4'33"* by John Cage in *Sounds of a Century*, how about a *Building a Library* article recommending the best performances? And, perhaps

more importantly, which one to avoid?

Alistair Millar, Edinburgh

The editor replies: You might be surprised by just how many recordings there are of this work in the catalogue!

The wrong crowd

It was a wonderful treat to have Messiaen's *Quartet for the end of Time* as the cover disc of your December issue. However, while the performance is great, it was a shame that your information on the work was out of date. Both Julian Haylock and your *Sounds of a Century* article repeat Messiaen's claims that 5,000, or even 30,000, prisoners attended the first performance. That was shown to be an exaggeration about 15 years ago, as has been documented in several books, not least *The Life of Messiaen* by your critic, Christopher Dingle.

Cecilia Philips, Lostwithiel

Picture this

The beautiful picture that accompanies your *Composer of the Month* feature always

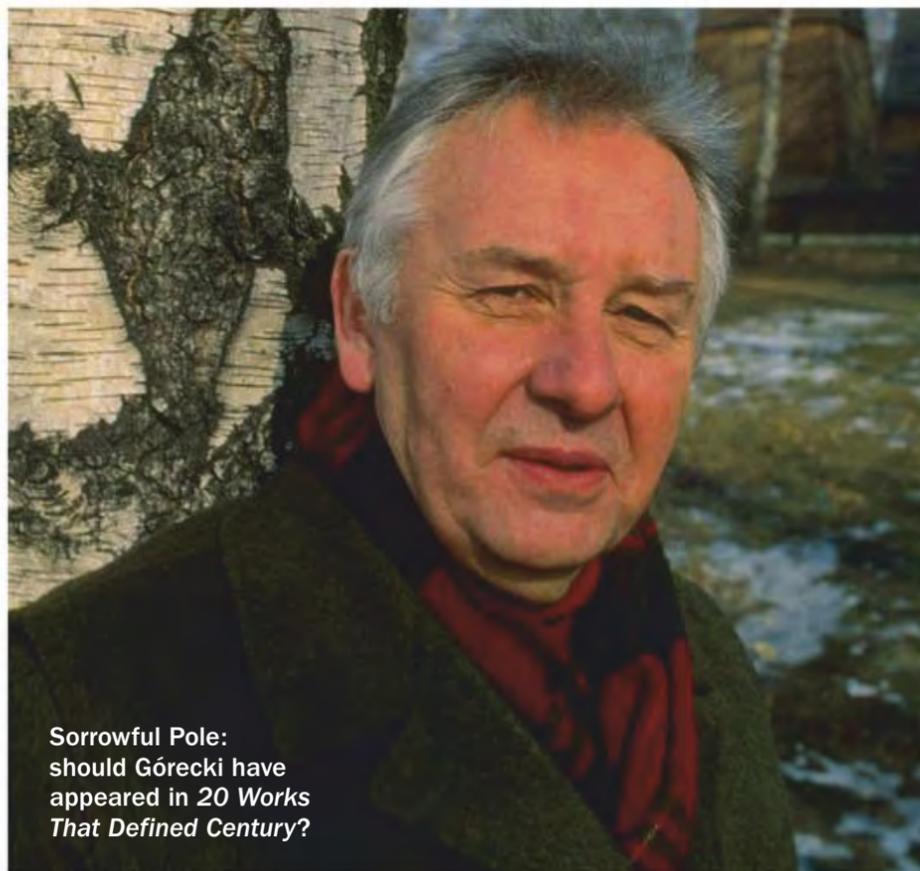
intrigues me. In the December issue, for example, the portrait of Saariaho is surrounded by pictures whose significance is lost on me, owing to my ignorance, no doubt. What is the relevance of the veiled figure in the centre? The string instruments? The bare-chested men in skirts? The Chinese pagodas? Could someone explain this for the benefit of ignorant admirers like me?

Minoo Mody, Mumbai, India

The editor replies: The veiled figure is from Saariaho's major opera *L'Amour de loin*, as are the two men. The pagodas are from Japan, and are a reference to the fact that Saariaho was inspired by Japan for her 1994 percussion piece *Six Japanese Gardens*, while her 2015 opera *Only the Sound Remains* took its cue from Japanese Noh drama. The violins are a reference to her 1994 Violin Concerto, which is a prime example of a piece that she wrote with a particular performer in mind (Gidon Kremer) – something she loves to do. And in general we wanted the illustration to sum up her 'cosmic, complex and mysterious' music. We're glad you like the illustrations!

Repeat after me...

BBC Two's *Holst and Vaughan Williams: Making Music English* was a splendid programme, but may I make a plea, to be applied across the whole of the BBC, for the musical expression 'Fantasia' to be correctly pronounced? The presenters kept using the Americanism 'Fantazia', as do well-known BBC Proms presenters, and others on Radio 3 – that's the name of an American film made by Walt Disney. The correct pronunciation in classical music is 'Fantasea'.
Peter Smith, Malvern



Sorrowful Pole: should Górecki have appeared in *20 Works That Defined Century*?



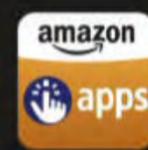
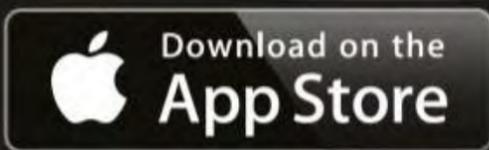
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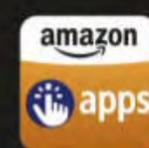
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The full score

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

Composers celebrate a year of inventive excellence

Big bells and funeral urns provide variety at annual British Composer Awards



Well-urned reward:
Emily Peasgood
used funeral jars
for her music

A colourful and gloriously varied clutch of works has been recognised at the latest British Composer Awards. These included music for a purpose-made large bell, singing funeral urns, dances for disabled amateur musicians to play on iPads and laptops, and a piece for jazz band with poetry slam-style recitation.

The shortlists of 36 works featured several well-established composers, including Harrison Birtwistle, winner of this year's Orchestral category – his eighth British Composer Award in all – with *Deep Time*; and the late Oliver Knussen, whose *O Hototogisu!* was pipped in the Chamber Ensemble category by James Weeks's beautiful, if technically challenging, *Libro di fiammello e ombre* for six solo voices.

Among the less familiar composers to come away from the ceremony at the British Museum clutching a coveted trophy was Dominic Murcott, whose Solo or Duo Award-winning *The Harmonic Canon* is scored for metallic percussion and a large double-ended bell. This unique instrument, which was made by sculptor and musician Marcus Vergette, has each end of the bell tuned a semitone apart with rich implications for the harmonic overtones, further complicated by ridges which each produce a slightly different set of overtones.

Also striking, though in a different way, was Emily Peasgood's *Halfway to Heaven*, winner of the Sonic Art award. Peasgood rigged several funeral urns in the

Folkestone Baptist Church burial ground that – on having a sensor triggered by a passing visitor – play a unique part-song about those interred there; each urn's song sounds well on its own, yet harmonises perfectly with all the other songs. 'It's rather like creating a mixing console,' Peasgood tells *BBC Music*; 'visitors may choose to collaborate with other visitors and stand at some or all the other urns.' See also 'Meet the composer', p19

British Composer Awards The major winners



First-time success: winner Dominic Murcott

Chamber Ensemble *Libro di fiammello e ombre* by James Weeks

Choral *In the Land of Uz* by Judith Weir

Orchestral *Deep Time* by Harrison Birtwistle

Small Chamber

Unbreathed by Rebecca Saunders

Solo or Duo *The Harmonic Canon* by Dominic Murcott (above)

Sonic Art

Halfway to Heaven by Emily Peasgood

Stage Works *Shorelines* by Oliver Coates

Wind Band or Brass Band

The Turing Test by Simon Dobson

Rising Stars

Three to look out for...

James Newby *Baritone*



Born: Leicester, UK
Career highlight: Performing in the world premiere of Brett Dean's *Hamlet*, and getting to spend two months in the same rehearsal room as the likes of Vladimir Jurowski, John Tomlinson, Sarah Connolly and Allan Clayton. I'm not sure there's any better education for a young singer.
Musical hero: The way baritones Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Benjamin Luxon colour phrases and bring such honesty to their singing is such a huge inspiration and something I try hard to emulate.
Dream concert: Performing in Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* at the BBC Proms.

Nicolas Namoradze *Pianist*



Born: Tbilisi, Georgia
Career highlight: Playing Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 with conductor Karina Canellakis and the Calgary Philharmonic, because it was a performance in which we all shared a vision, making it a really special, joyful collaboration. That night, I also won the Honens International Piano Competition, which has changed my life.
Musical hero: Ligeti's entire life's work was one of constant search, discovery and invention, eschewing trends and fashions to find a unique voice in everything he wrote.
Dream concert: Performing Bach's *Goldberg Variations* at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. I'm not sure how good the acoustics are for solo piano there, but it would still be an incredible experience!

Erika Gundersen *Conductor and pianist*



Born: Calgary, Canada
Career highlight: There have been a few, including conducting a full orchestra for the first time in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* at London's Bridewell Theatre this year, and playing as répétiteur for Scottish Opera's *Rigoletto*, which was my first professional production.
Musical hero: I have always been inspired by passionate and intelligent women, so I would have to say pianist Martha Argerich and soprano and conductor Barbara Hannigan.
Dream concert: As a conductor it would definitely be Puccini's *Tosca*; as a pianist, Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2.

GETTY, FELVEGI ANDREA, JAMES GLOSSOP



House music:
The Royal Northern Sinfonia
pop round for a play date

Sunderland welcomes the sitting-room string quartet

If the most you've ever won in a raffle is a bottle of alcohol-free wine or a box of chocolates well past their sell-by date, look away now. David and Elaine Hannington recently struck extra-lucky when their tickets for a prize draw earned them a performance by four players from the Royal Northern Sinfonia in their own home. With dining table and sofas presumably stashed elsewhere, the Hanningtons, regular Royal

Northern Sinfonia concert-goers who had been entered for the draw by contributing to the orchestra's 60th Anniversary Appeal, found room in their Sunderland house not just for their quartet of performing guests but also a handful of admiring friends as well. 'It was a wonderful, magical experience to hear such beautiful music close up in our own home,' says David. 'I can honestly say it will be a life-long memory.'

THE MONTH IN NUMBERS



1,930,000

...pounds for Mstislav Rostropovich's cello. The Guaragnini sold for nearly double its estimate at Sotheby's.

4

...female composers – Anna Appleby, Cecilia Livingston, Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade and Ailie Robertson – to be supported by a Glyndebourne scheme.

55 ...concerts a year. This, pianist Mitsuko Uchida has revealed in an interview in *The Guardian*, is the maximum she will allow herself.

19

...years of Osmo Vänskä at the Minnesota Orchestra. The Finnish conductor has announced that in 2022 he will be moving to pastures new.

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As the last chimes of Big Ben ring out, it's time to look ahead and make your new year's resolutions. Instead of the usual ones like joining a gym or taking up a new hobby, why not get 2019 off to a great start by choosing a musical one: always thought streaming classical music doesn't really work? With IDAGIO, it's easier and so much more rewarding than you might think. Let's take a look at a few things that can help you get started.

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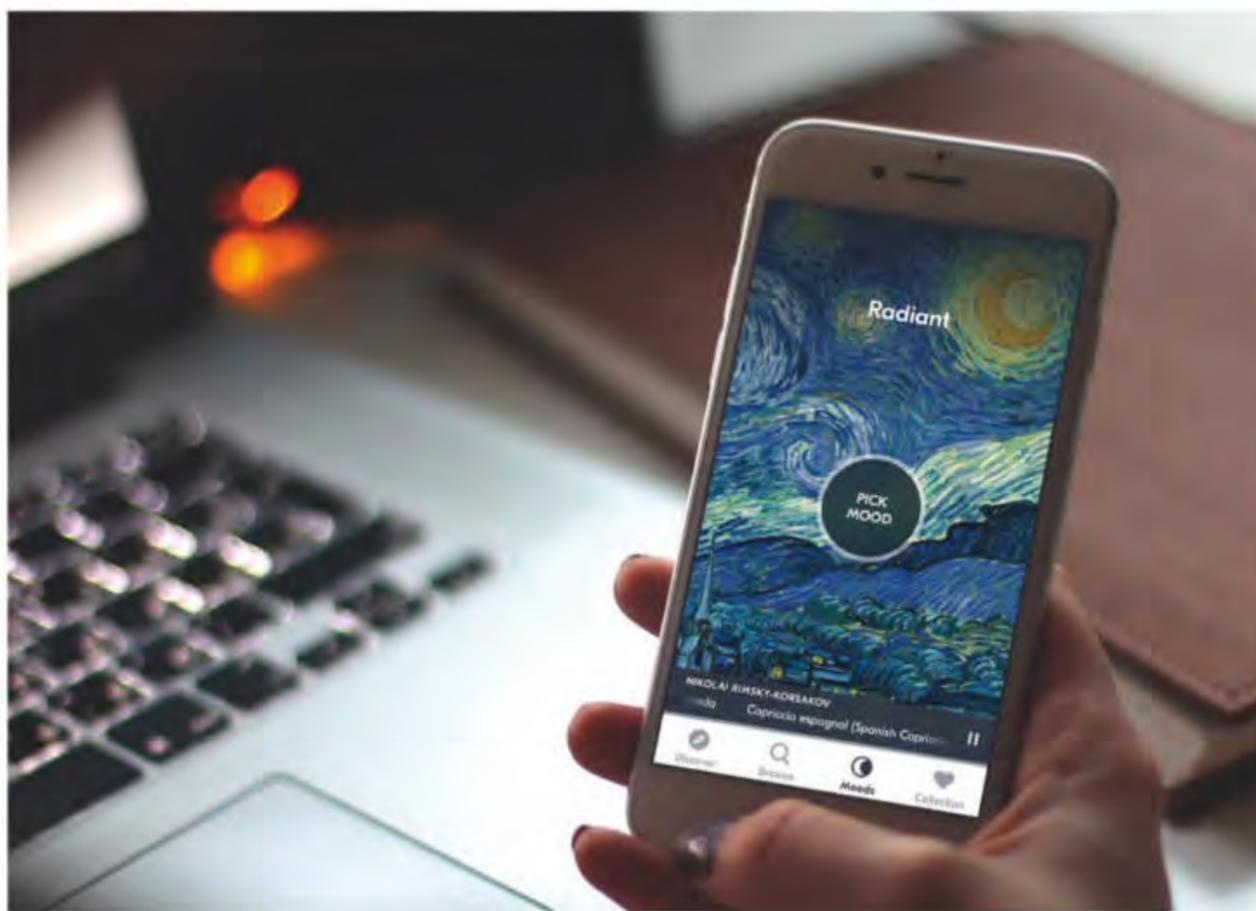
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SoundBites

Winning beat:
German conductor
Felix Mildenberger



Pick of the Flicks

Felix Mildenberger has won the 15th Donatella Flick Conducting Competition. At the final at the Barbican in London, the 28-year-old German impressed the judges with his command of works by Wagner, Prokofiev and Kodály, winning himself £15,000 and the year-long post of assistant conductor at the London Symphony Orchestra. His fellow finalists were Harry Ogg, of the UK and Alexander Colding Smith from Denmark.

Philharmonia farewell

Maybe one day Mildenberger will take the helm of the Philharmonia Orchestra? The London-based ensemble is currently on the look-out for a new maestro after its current principal conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen announced that the 2020/21 season will be his last in post. The Finn will be heading across the pond where, in another recently announced move, he is to take over from Michael Tilson-Thomas as music director of the San Francisco Symphony in 2020.

Lewis no more

The pianist Paul Lewis, meanwhile, has announced that he is to step down as co-artistic director of the Leeds International Piano Competition so that he can concentrate on performing. Lewis and former Radio 3 editor and producer Adam Gatehouse took over the running of the prestigious event for the first time this year, making major changes to its format. Gatehouse will now be in sole charge.

Baltic blast

Martin T:son Engstroem, founder of the ultra-plush Verbier Festival, is to launch a new annual event, this time in Latvia. Artists announced for this year's inaugural Riga Jurmala Music Festival, staged at two venues in the Baltic country, include conductor Mariss Jansons and cellist Misha Maisky, both born in Riga, plus pianists Yuja Wang and Murray Perahia.

TIMEPIECE This month in history



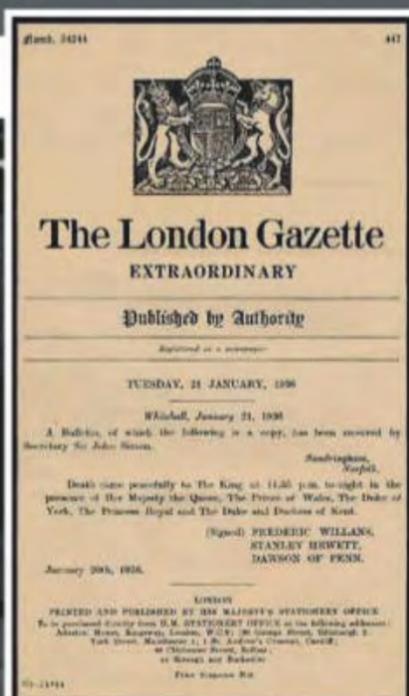
JANUARY 1936

Hindemith mourns the death of a British king

With George V lying gravely ill and slipping in and out of consciousness, his physician reached for his bag. 'I decided to determine the end,' recalled Lord Bertrand Dawson's diary entry for 20 January 1936, 'and injected morphia gr. 3/4 and shortly afterwards cocaine gr. 1 into the distended jugular vein.' Delaying the inevitable would only cause further suffering, he reasoned. And by bringing about the King's death before midnight, he could ensure that it would be reported in the morning papers rather than the evening editions.

GETTY, S. YAMAMOTO

It was a decision that would play havoc with Paul Hindemith's agenda. The German composer and violist had recently arrived in London where, on 22 January, he and the BBC Orchestra were due to perform the UK premiere of his *Der Schwanendreher*, a work based on a folksong about a cook's assistant turning a swan on a spit. Clearly, in such circumstances, such a frivolous subject would now be highly inappropriate. Or, as Hindemith put it in a letter to his friend and publisher Willy Strecker, 'you will have noticed that the swan could not be roasted due to a dead king'.



Royal tributes: workers in Richmond create wreaths for George V's funeral; (top) the king's death is announced in *The London Gazette* by Lord Dawson (above) and others



Swan might be off the menu, but Edward Clark, music director of the BBC, and conductor Adrian Boult were adamant that the BBC Orchestra's concert should still go ahead, and that they wanted Hindemith to be part of it. No amount of rifling through the library, however, could unearth a work for viola and orchestra suitable for the occasion. With time pressing, only one option remained: setting aside an office at the BBC, and providing him with all the music copyists he needed, Clark and Boult set the composer to work at what he did best. 'From 11 to 5 [on 21 January], I did some fairly hefty mourning,' Hindemith told Strecker. 'I turned out

Fast mover: Hindemith (right) wrote *Trauermusik* in six hours



a nice piece, in the style of *Mathis [der Maler]* and *Schwanendreher* with a Bach chorale at the end.'

The piece in question was an eight-minute gem called *Trauermusik* ('Music for mourning'), in which, over four short movements, the wistful viola solo weaves sinuously above an aptly restrained string orchestra accompaniment. That concluding chorale – 'Vor deinen Thron tret' ich hiermit' – would, Hindemith later discovered, have sounded fairly familiar to British ears due to its similarity to the popular hymn tune 'The Old Hundredth'. Following a day of rehearsal on 22 January, it was performed for the first time that evening in a radio broadcast.

Mournfulness was a mindset that probably came all-too-naturally to Hindemith at the time, as the political

'You will have noticed that the swan could not be roasted due to a dead king'

scene in his home country was growing increasingly hostile. Though not a Jew himself, he had strong connections to Jewish musicians and so rapidly found himself at odds with the Nazi hierarchy – his *Mathis der Maler Symphony* was banned soon after its premiere and he himself was described (inaccurately) by Goebbels as 'an atonal noisemaker'.

Nonetheless, Hindemith's trademark dry humour remained intact. What's more, he reckoned that the story of his *Trauermusik* commission might

regain him some standing if circulated back in Germany, pointing to Strecker that 'it is after all no everyday occurrence when the BBC gets a foreigner to write a piece on the death of their king and sends it out over the complete network. I'm now going to specialise in corpses – maybe there will be some more opportunities.'



Fearless flyer: US aviator Howard Hughes makes history

Also in January 1936

6th: At a packed Twickenham, **England** beats New Zealand at rugby union for the first time ever. The home side's 13-0 win over the All Blacks includes two tries by winger Prince Alexander Obolovsky, the second of which – a darting cross-field run from right to left – goes on to become regarded as one of the finest ever scored in an England shirt.

11th: **Benjamin Britten** heads to the studio to conduct the recording of *Night Mail*, a documentary about the railway postal service in which his music is combined with poetry by WH Auden. The words are narrated in the same recording by the filmmaker Stuart Legg. On hearing the results, Britten declares his and Auden's collaboration as 'not at all bad'.

14th: Aviator **Howard Hughes** breaks the record for the fastest flight across the US. Piloting a single-engine Northrop Gamma plane, Hughes completes the journey from Burbank, California to Newark, New Jersey in nine hours, 27 minutes and ten seconds, beating the previous best time, held by Roscoe Turner, by 36 minutes.

18th: Less than a week after undergoing surgery for a haemorrhage in his small intestine, the poet and author **Rudyard Kipling** dies of a perforated duodenal ulcer. Pallbearers at his funeral include his cousin, the British prime minister Stanley Baldwin. His ashes are buried at Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, alongside the graves of Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens.

28th: An editorial in the Soviet newspaper **Pravda** describes Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* as 'a muddle instead of music'. The paper's view is believed to have come from Stalin, who attended the opera two days earlier but left before the end. Shostakovich responds by withdrawing his similarly discordant Fourth Symphony.

LSO

SIR SIMON

RATTLE

Exploring music's roots
and origins in 2019

**Sibelius, Hans Abrahamsen,
Nielsen, Bartók & Bruckner**
9-20 January

**Rameau, Ravel,
Betsy Jolas & Poulenc**
17 February

**Berlioz, John Adams, Harrison Birtwistle,
Britten & Mahler**
1-8 May

**Vaughan Williams, Grainger,
Bruckner & Janáček**
20-29 June

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Resident
Orchestra

London Symphony Orchestra



Orchestral musicians champion a lost cause

To highlight the ongoing issue of passengers being careless with their possessions, East Midlands Trains has launched a campaign called 'Cello, is it me you're looking for?', fronted by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Items to have made their way into the company's lost property office over the last year

include a veritable array of mobile phones, wallets and umbrellas, plus a lifesize cut-out of Donald Trump, a six-foot inflatable cactus, Star Trek outfits and – hence the RPO's involvement – enough instruments to equip half a symphony orchestra. We understand that the majority of abandoned violas go unclaimed.

DÉJÀ VU

History just keeps on repeating itself...



Hot on the heels of accepting the post of music director of the *Orchestre national de Lyon*, Nikolaj Znaider has written an open letter to explain another decision that he has recently taken: namely, reverting to his original surname, Szeps-Znaider. Though using just 'Znaider' once seemed a sensible move, the violinist and conductor says that he now wants his name to reflect both sides of his family. He is, of course, by no means

the first classical musician to have changed their names...

Many performers over the years have adopted a memorable name to make themselves more marketable. These include the sopranos Helen Porter Mitchell, who used an abbreviation of the Australian city of her birth to become **Nellie Melba**, and Belle Silverman, whose adopted name of **Beverly Sills** brought a touch of Hollywood. Among composers, Philip Heseltine used the name **Peter Warlock** when writing music, while Rebecca Clarke, sceptical over how women composers might be perceived, wrote her *Morpheus* for violin and piano under the pseudonym of **Anthony Trent** – as if to prove her point, it was reviewed more favourably than music bearing her real name. In recent years, violinists have shown a particular propensity to re-title. **Midori**, for instance, has previously performed as both Midori Goto and Mi Dori, **Nigel Kennedy** temporarily decided to drop the 'Nigel', and, in 2012, Hahn-Bin announced that, from now on, he was to be known as the grander-sounding **Amadeus Leopold** – it made little difference to his disc sales, alas.

MEET THE COMPOSER

Sally Beamish



Born in London and until recently based in Scotland, Sally Beamish made her name for the music she wrote for the Chamber Group of Scotland, and is now one of the UK's most respected composers. Last month, Beamish was presented with the British Composer Award for Inspiration for her work as a composer, violist and pianist.

It means a lot to get this award. I didn't have much confidence early on because I didn't study composing. But I was inspired by the composers I worked with when I was starting out. I was an orchestral viola player in my 20s and worked with people like Oliver Knussen, Berio and Xenakis who were often conducting their own work. I was not only influenced by being inside the music as a player, but so many of these composers listened to my scores and gave me advice. **My only real composition lessons were with Oliver Knussen.** I was on a London Sinfonietta tour playing a programme of Maxwell Davies and Schoenberg, with Knussen conducting. We were travelling by train between the concerts and every journey he would look at one of my scores. I still go back to the advice he gave me – he was good at grasping what I trying to do and why I wasn't achieving it. **I've always been fascinated by the concerto form.** Around the age of nine, I was learning

the violin with my mum who was a professional violinist, and was beginning to lose interest. She gave me a Vivaldi concerto to learn and explained what a concerto was. She made it sounds so exciting. There was this protagonist standing at the front communicating with the audience and with the orchestra. Like a kind of narrator. I was taken with that more than an orchestral piece where the audience doesn't have a particular personality to relate to. **I normally write concertos for people whose playing I know really intimately.** My commissions still tend to come through people I met when I was a player – Douglas Boyd, who was a fantastic oboist, for instance, and violinist Anthony Marwood. The collaboration and the discussion with them was so important. **Now that I'm playing again, I've realised that my viola parts are really tricky!** So now that there's a danger I might have to play them myself, they are, of course, getting much simpler!

StudioSecrets



Coming up for Ayre: soprano Miriam Khalil

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

Toronto's innovative opera theatre, *Against the Grain*, has launched its own label in order to capture what it cites as its 'fresh and daring' performances. The first release will be a live recording, made in December, of Osvaldo Golijov's song cycle *Ayre*. Performed by soprano **Miriam Khalil**, the work takes in many influences, including Sephardic lullabies and Byzantine chant.

Soprano **Mary Bevan** joins forces with organist **Joseph Nolan** in January to record a disc of German Lieder at All Saints Church, East Finchley. The album, called *Divinity, Mythology and Love*, will explore the work of iconic Lieder composers Schubert, Haydn and Wolf and Signum Classics will release it later in the year.

Soloists **Jack Liebeck** (violin) and **John Parricelli** (mandolin) joined members of the National Symphony Orchestra (UK) at Abbey Road recently to record new music by **Debbie Wiseman** based on Stephen Fry's book *Mythos*. A selection of his takes on Greek myths have been set to music by the composer for a new album being produced by Audio Nation.

Ahead of Oxford's Keble Early Music Festival in February, **Keble College Choir** and the **Academy of Ancient Music** have teamed up to record Francisco Valls's *Missa Regalis*. It is the first time that the Catalan composer's work – written in 1740 – has been recorded. The recording marks a new partnership between the festival and the Academy of Ancient Music.

British guitarist **Sam Cave** has just put the finishing touches on his debut album, which marks his recent signing by Métier Records. The Royal College of Music alumnus, who is also a chamber performer and composer, performs world premiere recordings by a variety of composers on the disc, which is due out in March.



In safe hands: Arabella Steinbacher with a photograph of Hindemith during rehearsals in Berlin



REWIND

Great artists talk about their past recordings

This month: **Arabella Steinbacher** violinist

MY FINEST MOMENT

Britten • Hindemith
Violin Concertos

Arabella Steinbacher (violin); Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra/Vladimir Jurowski
Pentatone PTC 5186625 (2017)

I wanted to record the Hindemith concerto because it's not played that often. Then I found out that Britten and Hindemith composed their violin concertos in the same year and they

had very similar stories. They both left Europe to spend time in America, and you can hear a lot of loneliness in the music. The composers are so different from each other, but they bring it out in their way; so it's really interesting to play both concertos, and record them, at the same time. It was a challenge, not only musically but also physically, because we had to record both concertos in a very short time – we had three

days – and, of course, not whole days. I remember it felt like a marathon, because you have to repeat things so often. Sometimes when I was very happy with my performance, something



with the orchestra was not so good. I'd have to give everything again, not only the energy but all the emotion – the Britten is

especially emotional. I felt entranced, like I was almost not there. This is one recording I would say I'm glad to have done; not only that, it turned out quite well. I'm never really proud, but on the other hand every recording is a bit like a baby.

MY FONDEST MEMORY

Aber der Richtige...

Works by Richard Strauss

Arabella Steinbacher (violin); WDR Symphony Orchestra/Lawrence Foster
Pentatone PTC 5186653 (2018)

Almost every recording has a special memory for me; this one actually has two special stories... I grew up in a family with a lot of singers – my mum and dad were singers together at the opera house in Munich. So, when I was a child I always heard these songs, and the opera *Arabella* – that's why my parents gave me that name. I thought it would be nice to record it, even though I'm not a singer – I played the singer's part and some variations on it. I studied the Violin Concerto especially for the recording because it is never played; it's a very early work by Richard Strauss – he was only 16 or 17 years old when he



composed it. It's not his strongest work so I never actually thought to study it, but since I was doing the recording I had to get the

music score to learn it. That's how I met my husband – he works for the company where Richard Strauss's music is published. After I did the recording, we got married; so even though I didn't really enjoy playing the concerto so much, I did at least meet my husband. That's probably not the best promotion for the recording, but I think it's a beautiful moment!

I'D LIKE ANOTHER GO AT...

Brahms Violin Sonatas Nos 1-3

Arabella Steinbacher (violin),
Robert Kulek (piano)
Pentatone PTC 5186367 (2011)

I must say, almost every piece I've recorded I would play again differently. Not completely differently, but this is the thing about recordings, it's just a recording of that moment. I don't regret any of them, but maybe I'd return to one of the older ones, like the Brahms Sonatas; I've played them so many times with Robert Kulek since then.

In concert, you will always play it in a different way because you only have that moment and you play it for the audience. Now when Robert and I listen back to the recording we realise we played it so much slower than we do in concert. It's interesting, because you know you can repeat it as much as you want when you're recording it, but this special moment and the adrenaline that



you have on stage is missing. I need the public, I need the adrenaline and the excitement; you never know what's going to happen in

that moment. When you make music together you're not completely alone on stage, especially with the Brahms Sonatas of course, because there's a pianist. Then with an orchestra there are so many other people involved; there can be something new every time – new inspiration, which brings new ideas. I would actually prefer to record live concerts; this makes much more sense to me. I think it would give the recording a different energy.

Arabella Steinbacher's album of Richard Strauss works is out now on Pentatone and is reviewed on p79



Energetic duo: performing with Robert Kulek

Buried Treasure



Soprano **Sophie Karthäuser** introduces us to three rarities from her record collection

Vivaldi Di due rai languir costante

Cecilia Bartoli (mezzo-soprano);
Il Giardino Armonico/Giovanni Antonini *Decca 478 3388*

They don't actually know which opera this aria was composed for, so there's



a kind of mystery around it. I like this one particularly because there are two flageolets – these old wind instruments – and the way it is written

for them, and the voice, is absolutely magical. I'm a big fan of Cecilia Bartoli and this was actually the first time I heard her. I think she's an absolutely amazing artist and I like the way she approaches her recordings. She always searches for unknown pieces.

Jean de Cambefort, Cavalli et al

Le Concert Royal de la Nuit
Ensemble Correspondances/
Sébastien Daucé

Harmonia Mundi HMC952223/24

I love this disc and the project. I know Sébastien Daucé the conductor and I think he's absolutely fantastic for this



repertoire; he's actually been working for three years to rewrite this piece because it was incomplete. There are pieces from ballet one

minute, then arias from some of the very first Italian operas the next. I couldn't pick a particular aria, it's all fantastic.

François-Joseph Gossec Thésée

Les Agrémens; Namur Chamber Choir/Guy van Waas *Ricercar RIC337*

I came across this piece because I know the conductor and his ensemble. Guy is also someone who's on the lookout for unknown pieces. I love the *Thésée* story, and it has this tragic lyric. François Gossec was a violinist and teacher, and he's considered the father of the French



symphony. So in his time he was quite an important person, but his name has been completely lost.

Sophie Karthäuser's new album on

Harmonia Mundi is out now and will be reviewed next month

It's OK to be average



Mediocrity is a valuable attribute, says **Tom Service**. It lies at the heart of popular music throughout the ages, and helps us identify the truly great works of art.

ILLUSTRATION: **MARIA CORTE MAIDAGAN**

It's one of the most memorable moments in Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*, when Antonio Salieri defines himself 'the patron saint of mediocrity'. We know he's right: Salieri has just enough talent to know how untalented he is next to the towering yet infantile genius of Wolfie Mozart.

The irony is that in his lifetime Salieri was more successful than Mozart, in terms of how often his operas were performed and in the position he held at the Austrian court. Not that you'd know it from orchestras' and opera houses' programming around the world today. Salieri has been roundly defeated by Wolfie. And so too have all of those patron saints of the mediocre throughout historical epochs, so that we hear Beethoven instead of Spohr, Mahler not Reinecke and The Beatles rather than Bay City Rollers.

That's because our taste has been developed over historical time. We know that mediocrity has been weeded out so that we can now swim in a musical sea of the eternally exceptional, classical and excellent. O lucky we!

Except, that's not the case, and it's an undesirable situation, were it to be true. In fact, the majority of our musical culture is as mediocre today as it's always been, and we should be thankful.

The demands of the mediocre – which are different, by the way, from the 'bad', which suggests an exceptional quality lying outside the middle of the road of mediocrity – are precise and exacting. Mediocre music must be generic, conventional, mundane and ordinary,



designed for instant gratification and immediate consumption in a way that the exceptional and the epicurean can never be. That's why Salieri's music – or Sammartini's or Stamitz's – was more popular and successful than Mozart's, because Mozart's symphonies and

The majority of our musical culture is as mediocre today as it's always been

operas were regarded as too complex for their time. It's why Beethoven's tub-thumping hack-work in *Wellington's Victory* was more popular in his lifetime than his quartets or symphonies (leading to Beethoven's immortal response to his critics: 'What I s**t is better than anything you could ever think up!').

And the mediocre is all around us right now, in the music that's most

popular in our charts and on our screens and, if we're brave enough to admit it, in our concert halls. That's just as well: if there were no fundamental current of mediocrity in our lives, we wouldn't know what it was to be exceptional, different, astonishing. Mediocrity storms the popular and classical charts because we want to hear our ordinariness reflected back to us.

It's another irony of history that to hear Salieri or Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf performed today is as rare as seeing an Austin Maestro or Allegro on our roads, so that yesterday's mediocrity can be rare and exceptional. The great tide of mediocrity goes on, always changing, but always the same. And thank goodness for that. ☺

BBC
RADIO



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

90-93FM

FAREWELL TO...



The voice of music:
broadcaster Richard
Baker in 1964

Richard Baker Born 1925 *Broadcaster*

The first of a new breed of television personalities in the 1950s, Richard Baker became a household name in the UK, reading the BBC news for 28 years from 1954. Originally hired by the BBC in 1950 to host *The Third Programme*, later Radio 3, Baker's passion for classical music was to be a mainstay throughout his career. His voice became familiar to classical audiences through the Last Night of the Proms radio broadcasts and his regular appearances on TV's *Face the Music*. His father, himself an amateur singer, encouraged piano lessons; however, it was to acting that Baker would be drawn while in his third year at Cambridge. His time there was interrupted by the War and he found himself serving in the Arctic aboard a minesweeper with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. His service, supporting the Russians, was recognised in 2015 with the Ushakov Medal. The time at sea also proffered a book, a biography of Vice Admiral Sir Gilbert Stephenson. Music was never far away, though, and in 1971 he narrated what remains one of the most popular recordings of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, with the New Philharmonia Orchestra under Raymond Leppard.

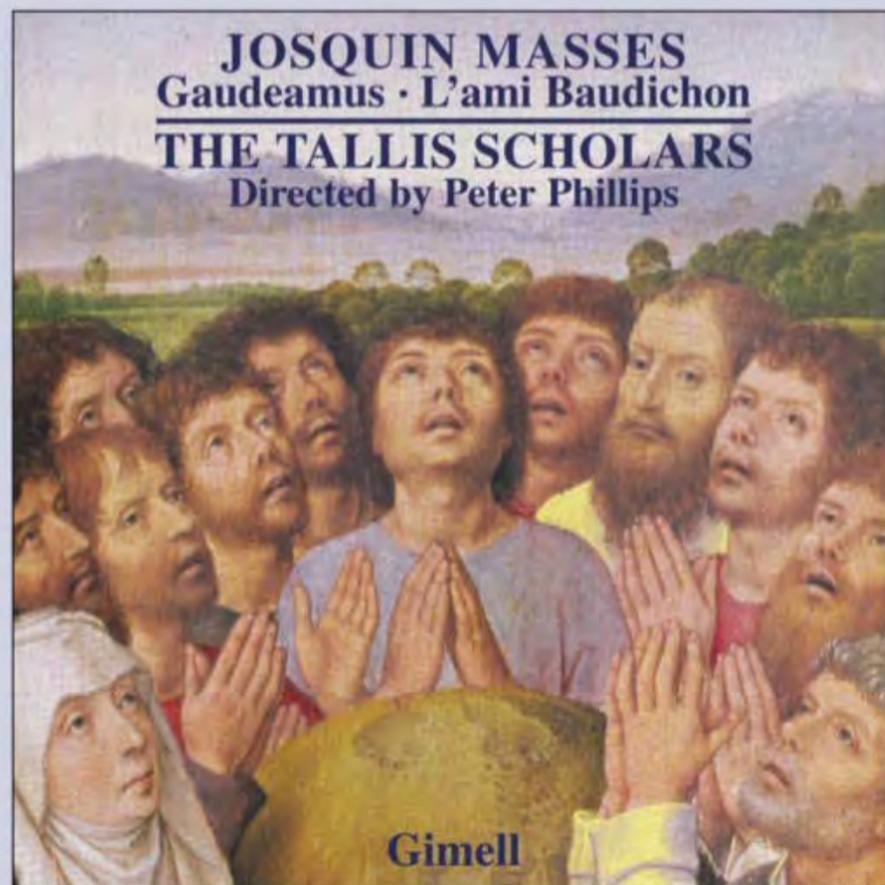
Levine Andrade Born 1954 *Violinist, violist, conductor*

As one of the founding members of the acclaimed Arditti Quartet, Levine Andrade played an influential role promoting and performing contemporary music. Born in Bombay, Levine moved aged nine to England where he was awarded a scholarship to the newly founded Yehudi Menuhin School. While there he found himself the subject of a BBC documentary, *Life of a Child*. Moving on to the Royal College of Music, he found time to work as a freelance musician and performed with both the LSO and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. It was his shared interest in 20th-century music that led, in 1974, to his co-founding the Arditti Quartet, with whom he played until 1990. After that, he established himself as one of the most respected performers and conductors working in London's busy recording industry.

Also remembered...

The Russian bass **Maxim Mikhailov** (b1962) will be best remembered for the title role in Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, which he performed in major opera houses across the globe. A familiar face at the Bolshoi Theatre from 1987, he also appeared in many recordings, including Rachmaninov's *The Miserly Knight*, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski.

Sally Silver (b1967) excelled in *bel canto* repertoire, both on stage and in a series of fine recordings accompanied by Richard Bonyngé on the piano. However, the South African soprano's repertoire also extended to contemporary music, and she appeared in operas such as Thomas Adès's *Powder her Face* and Jonathan Dove's *The Palace in the Sky*.



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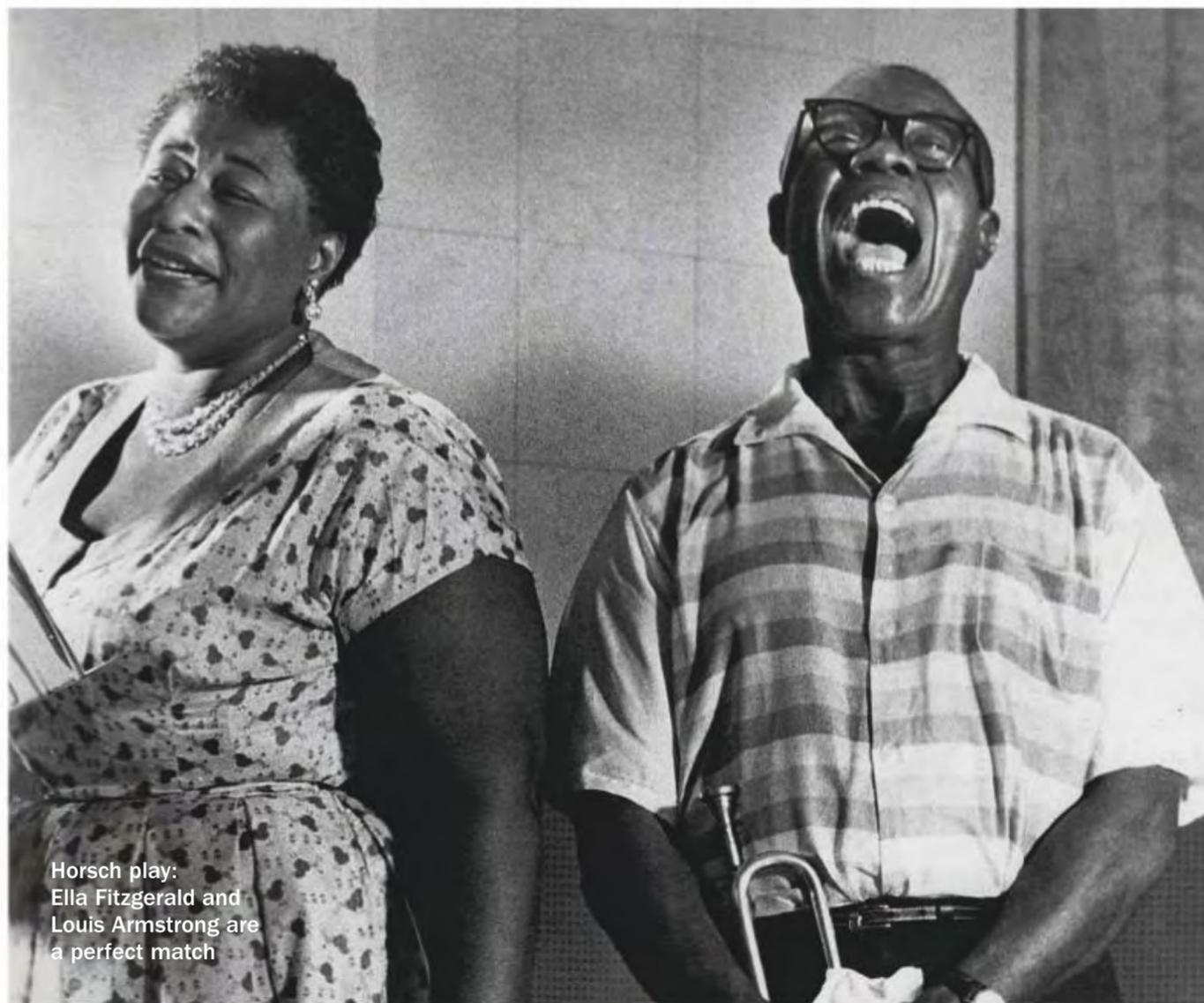
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1: Andrew McGregor, *Record Review*, BBC Radio 3; 2: Kate Bolton-Porciatti, *BBC Music Magazine*; 3: Fiona Maddocks, *The Observer*; 4: Stephen Pettitt, *The Sunday Times*; 5: Graham Rickson, *theartsdesk.com*; 6: John Quinn, *Musicweb*; 7: Edward Breen, *Gramophone Magazine*; 8: Adrian Horsewood, *Early Music Today*

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Horsch play:
Ella Fitzgerald and
Louis Armstrong are
a perfect match

to **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Louis Armstrong**'s album *Can't we be friends?* which for some reason also puts me in the mood – the title seems quite applicable to today, too. Fitzgerald has such a flexible voice, which she uses in lots of different ways from whispering and speaking to singing. Her collaboration with Armstrong works so well because you can clearly hear the joy they both have simply in making music.

And also... I'm trying to catch up on some literary classics and am enjoying *Emma* by **Jane Austen**. It takes a while to get into Austen's style of humour but when you do, you really feel as though she is speaking to you in a very personal way. *Emma* is a character who, on an objective level, one might not find very sympathetic, but thanks to the way Austen describes her, you understand how she thinks. *Lucie Horsch's new disc of Baroque recorder works (Decca) will be reviewed in a future issue*

Charles Owen Pianist



I've been listening to lots of wintry recordings lately. The recording by Brigitte Fassbaender and Aribert

Reimann of **Schubert's** *Winterreise* is one of my all-time favourites. Having a woman in the soloist's role gives a vulnerability to the narrator, and Fassbaender has that shimmering sexuality between male and female. Reimann is a composer-pianist and I love hearing a composer's voice on the piano playing Schubert – he makes it sound so modern.

Every few years I return to **Wagner's** *Ring* cycle. It's something I wouldn't find time to listen to in the summer, and is perfect for a rainy Sunday afternoon. My favourite recordings are Herbert von Karajan's – the depth of sonority of the orchestra is phenomenal, and he captures the intimacy so well. There are performances of Wagner that sag, but Karajan's never do.



Music to my ears

What the classical world has been listening to this month

Lucie Horsch Recorder player



I listen to a lot of piano music, as I am studying the instrument at my conservatoire. I absolutely love

Bertrand Chamayou's recording of **Saint-Saëns's** Piano Concertos Nos 2 & 5. I particularly like the Egyptian influences in the Fifth, which really spark my imagination. Saint-Saëns's piano writing is great because it has both the late-Romantic seriousness of, say, Rachmaninov, but also has the light-hearted liveliness of a Mendelssohn piano concerto.

Bach's *St Matthew Passion* may be a very familiar piece but no matter how often I listen to it, it never gets boring as there's so

READER CHOICE

Connor Gallagher, London

Recently I've been hooked on **Shostakovich's** Preludes and Fugues, in particular his Fugue No. 7 in A. Innocently nestled in the bunch, this gem sticks out for its distinct lack of dissonance – a huge contrast to Shostakovich's usual compositional style of ambivalent harmony and disjunct melody. Pleasant or disquieting? It's hard to decide.

much going on, and the way that Bach applies the music to the text and uses various rhetorical devices is always fascinating. Plus there's that wonderful aria that features two recorders! When I

No matter how often I listen to Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, it never gets boring

went to a performance of it by the English Baroque Soloists and conductor John Eliot Gardiner at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, I thought it was amazing.

In the run-up to Christmas, I listen to festive songs by Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby, but also

Two years ago in the depths of winter, I went to King's College Chapel to hear organist Richard Gowers perform **Messiaen's** *La Nativité du Seigneur*. I've known Richard since he was a baby and he's now one of the best organists in the UK. His playing is so masterly, and he gets so under the skin of the piece. He's recently released the piece on disc, also recorded at King's College Chapel, and it's so moving. I listen back to the recording thinking of that initial concert.

And also... I've recently been in Copenhagen performing. I love Scandinavian people and their approach to life, the light, nature, food, architecture – everything. I'm a big fan of Scandinavian design, so I went to the **Designmuseum**. All the chairs and furniture had such beautiful, clean lines.

Simon Höfele Trumpeter



An extraordinary musical experience for me was the recent world premiere of the new Cello Concerto by

Mark Simpson played by Leonard Elschenbroich with the BBC

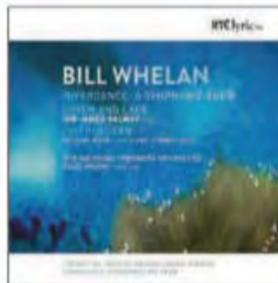


Stormy performer: Kate Tempest stirs trumpeter Simon Höfele

Philharmonic under Clemens Schuldt. I recently played with this fantastic orchestra and, though I wasn't able to be at this premiere itself, when I listened to the live broadcast I was completely taken to another dimension. Simpson's concerto took me away immediately to a timeless world and really reminded me what music is all about.

Similarly mind-blowing is Maximilian Hornung's new *Cello Concertos of 1966* recording, which couples Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 2 with the completely unknown Concerto

READER CHOICE



Emilia Parr, Glasgow

My latest joyous musical discovery is **Bill Whelan's** *Riverdance: A Symphonic Suite*. As a lifelong fan of Michael Flatley's fast little feet, this piece combines my fascination with *Riverdance* and love of orchestral music. It's the perfect antidote to the miserable Glasgow weather and has been the accompaniment to all my showers and walks to university this month. The last movement, 'Cloudsong', is a real party starter.

No. 2 by the Georgian composer **Sulkhan Tsintsadze**. The latter is such an interesting piece that works perfectly with the Shostakovich. It's a lighter work, split up in five movements; each movement is clear in its musicality and full of diverse ideas. Listening to Hornung's playing is a pure joy, with such power and musicality.

I'm a big fan of the poet and performer **Kate Tempest** and her music in general. More specifically, however, her *Let them eat chaos* album is a really dark, authentic and yet poetic way of seeing our world today. The album is meant to be heard altogether from the first track to the last, with clear storytelling, a lot of heart and intelligent criticism of today's society.

And also... I'm not normally a big reader but last week I read three books by **Benedict Wells**, including his recent *Die Wahrheit über das Lügen* (The truth about lies). His way of writing is addictive. He has this deft way of carrying you along with the narrative, and then suddenly you realise that the hours have passed by like seconds. It's remarkable. *Simon Höfele performs at Wigmore Hall, 28 January*

Our Choices The *BBC Music Magazine* team's current favourites

Oliver Condy Editor

Part of the perks of being the editor of this magazine are the industry's festive bashes. And at the BBC Sounds do earlier in December down in the crypt of London's Glaziers Hall, the select gathering was treated to a splendid performance by saxophonist **Jess Gillam** of the final movement of Milhaud's *Scaramouche*. A terrific way to kick off a party. Gillam ended her mini-set with a gorgeous rendition of *The Christmas Song*.

Jeremy Pound Deputy editor

Rather pleasingly, driving my son to a Saturday morning football match in Gloucestershire took us past the birthplaces of **Holst**, **Parry** and then **Howells**. A perfect excuse, then, to dig out Tenebrae's exceptional *Songs of Farewell* album from 2011, which happens to feature works by all three composers. All are beautifully performed by this superbly drilled choir, combining passion

where required with an exquisite sense of restraint elsewhere.

Rebecca Franks Managing editor

I recently hopped over to Bath for the annual Mozartfest, where it was a treat to catch the Belcea Quartet. I was particularly struck by their performances of **Janáček's** *Intimate Letters* and **Beethoven's** B flat String Quartet, Op. 130. It reminded me just how strikingly individual these two composers sound, and how they seem to say things in a way that no one else did or could.

Michael Beek Reviews editor

I made my first trip to Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall in late November to hear a concert by the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra**. I was



impressed by the venue and loved the performance – a 40th-anniversary celebration of US film music label Varèse Sarabande, with whom the RSNO have a long history. What a great city, too, and lucky to have such a terrific orchestra playing so regularly.

Freya Parr Editorial assistant

A quiet Saturday night in Cornwall took an unusual turn when we happened across a sea shanty festival in St Ives. It turned out to be one of the jolliest strokes of luck we could have wished for. Five hours and as many Cornish ales later, we had heard pretty much every shanty ever written and I am now delighted to announce that I'm an honorary member of the **Old Gaffers Shanty Crew**.

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Disc of the Month

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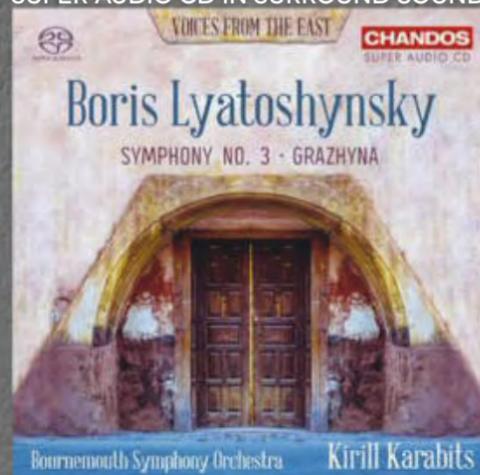
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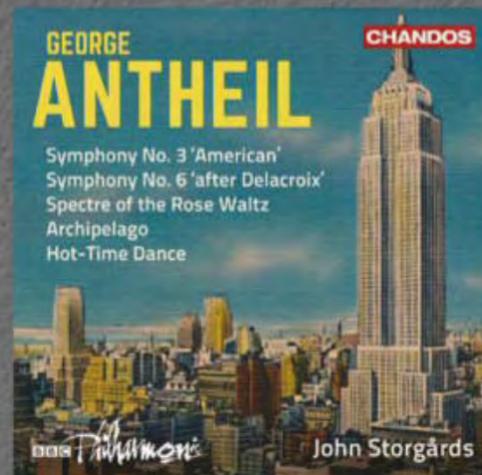


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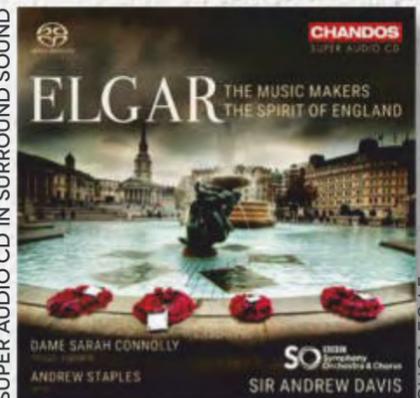
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PRESTO
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STAY IN THE KNOW





Richard Morrison

What did 2018 bring the world of classical music? Here's my take

It's that time of year when pundits crank their befuddled old brains into reverse and pick out the 'highs and lows' of the previous 12 months. But that requires research, hard work and, worst of all, the capacity to recall dates and names. Eminently unsuited on all counts, I propose something a bit different: a concise musing on two themes that emerged during 2018 and will, I predict, change musical life significantly in years to come.

The first is, to put it bluntly, intolerance. Intolerance is not always wrong, especially if it targets sexual misconduct or the abuse of power. And 2018 saw that net tighten around the careers of three eminent conductors. Whatever the rights or wrongs of their individual cases, all lost their jobs on the back of accusations about past conduct.

Some called the campaigns against them vindictive, and pointed out that past 'greats' such as Klemperer, Bernstein and Solti erred far more spectacularly and were never punished. But that's not the point. We live in a more enlightened era, and the 'duty of care' implications for orchestras, operas houses and conservatoires are now immense.

Not unrelated to that is an increasing intolerance of the historic but still prevalent gender imbalance in musical life. Suddenly in 2018 there were far more women conductors getting prominent engagements. Also this year, a large number of European festivals, including the BBC Proms, committed to commissioning equal numbers of male and female composers by 2022. That will have huge knock-on effects, too. I'm afraid the signs aren't encouraging for middle-aged male composers and conductors of less than arresting talent.

Then there's a third kind of intolerance. Black and minority-ethnic singers are becoming increasingly militant about claiming that they, and they alone, can depict people of colour on the stage. Heaven knows, there are few enough of those roles, so I have some sympathy. In 2018 that anger boiled over when the BBC cast a white singer as Maria (a Puerto Rican girl) in its Proms production of *West Side Story*. The singer received such vitriolic social-media posts that she withdrew, even apologising for taking the role in the first place.

People are making more of an effort to present repertoire in unexpected ways and places

Then an otherwise excellent modern opera, *The Golden Dragon* by Peter Eötvös, was banned by the Hackney Empire because its cast (workers in a Chinese restaurant) were played by white singers. It will be a brave opera company that now casts white singers as Otello or Madam Butterfly, and in America even *The Mikado* is under scrutiny.

My second theme is less contentious. More and more I am noticing people making an effort to present repertoire in unexpected ways and places. In 2018 three such events particularly impressed me. The first was a Wigmore Hall event in which maverick Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto joined forces with a leading cancer researcher to present something that was half-concert, half-lecture, and somehow linked the growth

of musical organisms with the growth (or combat) of cancer cells. The place was packed not just with Kuusisto fans but medics too. As evidence increasingly emerges about music's therapeutic powers, expect more initiatives like this, spanning the disciplines of medicine, science and the arts.

I also saw a remarkable BBC Prom performance of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* by the viola virtuoso Antoine Tamestit and John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. The piece reflects Berlioz's own melancholic travels through Italy, and that was underlined by having the soloist stroll round the stage like a wandering exile – sometimes bewildered or frightened by what he heard, elsewhere duetting lyrically with another player. Suddenly a work I hadn't much appreciated before came alive, because the performers used their visual imaginations as well as their musical abilities.

After a year of mostly rather indifferent musical commemorations of the 1918 Armistice, English National Opera's staging of Britten's *War Requiem* was genuinely evocative of the horror and pity of war. It was also a much-needed triumph for ENO after another difficult year. But most important of all, taking this complex work out of the concert hall and into the theatre introduced it to a different audience. And as fewer young people learn about the great musical masterpieces at school, presenting those classics in fresh, inviting ways that grip newcomers without any prior knowledge will increasingly become the biggest challenge facing the profession. 🗨️
Richard Morrison is a columnist of *The Times* and its chief music critic



GETTY



Carnival time:
1750s Venice, as depicted by
Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, a
contemporary of Vivaldi (right)

VIVALDI

A life in four seasons

Kate Bolton-Porciatti heads to 18th-century Venice to explore the genius behind *The Four Seasons* – works whose virtuosity, originality and blazing colour continue to thrill us today

‘E verything is about show, about pleasure, about entertainment.’ So the French writer Ange Goudar encapsulated the spirit of Antonio Vivaldi’s Venice. By the late 17th century, the once great Republic had become the theatre of Europe – a scenographic setting for carnival parades, masquerades and *commedia dell’arte* spectacles, as well as six active opera houses and a clutch of private and public theatres.

Such a backdrop left an indelible mark on Vivaldi (right), who spent much of his career in Venice’s footlights or in its churches and convents, with their equally theatrical rituals. He claimed to have composed nearly 100 operas (we know of 49), and he certainly breathed all the drama and lyricism of the theatre into his instrumental music. His collection *L'estro armonico* set the trend in Europe for a new style of concerto: daring, vigorous, virtuosic. It was as popular and

revolutionary in the 18th century as The Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper* was in the 20th.

Today, Vivaldi’s best-loved works are the boldly experimental *Four Seasons* – ground-breaking examples of programme music. These four violin concertos paint the turning of the year in a series of scenes and monologues, creating metaphors for the passing of time. Vivaldi recognised their dramatic potential when he recast music from Spring and Winter in two of his operas. Since then, composers and performers have recycled all four works in the theatre, in films, as video games, adverts, tango, jazz and backing-music to figure skating and synchronised swimming.

Here, we explore the Venetian master’s eventful life and career over four stages, each of which is introduced by a concerto from his most famous set of works. ▶



SPRING

*'Spring has come and full of cheer;
The birds greet her with joyous song'*

THE MUSIC Vivaldi prefaced each of *The Four Seasons* with an 'illustrative sonnet' (perhaps his own work), full of perfumed imagery and evocations of a pastoral idyll. The full ensemble sets the scene in the *ritornelli* ('returning passages') which punctuate the solo violin's narrations. In a breezy E major, the opening of *La primavera* (Spring) quivers with imitations of birdsong, 'the breath of zephyrs and murmuring springs'. When a brief storm drenches the landscape, Vivaldi writes a shower of violin scales over tremulous lower strings.

The *Largo* second movement depicts 'The goatherd dozing, his faithful dog by his side.' Vivaldi interjects the violin's indolent melody with a barking viola motif, to be played 'very loud and sharply accented'. In the closing



The Violinist's View Daniel Hope on Spring



Whether or not Vivaldi himself wrote them, I'm fascinated by the sonnets that precede each of *The Four Seasons*. Spring is this announcement that the new season is upon us, as the birds and all kinds of nature join in this huge celebration. For me, performing it is all about correlating all the images that you have in your mind with the technical challenges that Vivaldi gives you. There's so much going on – from the sleeping goatherd with the dog barking to the bagpipes and dancing nymphs – and it's all a bit of a raucous romp. The danger is that you come crashing too fast out of the starting gate. It's all about pacing yourself and trying to keep a level head. Spring is the Season that had the biggest effect on me as a child, because of those trills that are so suggestive of birdsong. I remember hearing Yehudi Menuhin playing it, and it really stayed with me.

Allegro, nymphs and shepherds dance, accompanied by the *zampogna* – the goatherd's bagpipe still played in parts of rural Italy, its drone pipes here imitated with sustained fifths and octaves in the low strings.

THE LIFE In the spring of his career, the red-haired priest-cum-violinist known as 'Il Prete Rosso' was appointed violin master at one of Venice's most renowned musical establishments: the Ospedale della Pietà. On the Riva, a short walk from St Mark's Square, it was one of four charitable 'hospitals' in Venice: the Ospedale di San Lazzaro took in beggars and lepers; the Incurabili cared for syphilitics; the homeless found shelter at Santa Maria dei Derelitti; orphaned, abandoned or illegitimate foundlings were taken to the Pietà.

Giving its female wards a rigorous musical education, the Pietà became, in all but name, a music conservatory for girls and women, moulding some of the most outstanding *virtuose* of the time. Tourists and other visitors flocked to hear these 'angels', 'sirens', and 'longed-for beauties'.

The French scholar-politician Charles de Brosses was one: 'I swear there is nothing more charming than to see a young and pretty nun... leading the orchestra and beating time with all the grace and precision imaginable.'

The Pietà owned some unusual instruments, too, and Vivaldi's works are coloured with the exotic sounds of the chalumeau, the mandolin, the psaltery, the 'English-style viol', the viola d'amore (so-named because of its sympathetic strings) and the mysterious 'marine-trumpet violin'. His lavishly scored oratorio *Juditha triumphans* includes two clarinets – most unusual for an early 18th-century orchestra.

Striking, too, was the all-female choir in which the older girls and women would sing the tenor and bass parts (the latter probably an octave higher than written, instruments providing the bass lines at notated pitch). Many of Vivaldi's sacred works were conceived with specific singers in mind, just as if he were writing for the divas of the opera. The final version of the Magnificat (RV 611) calls for Apollonia,



Vivaldi's world: (right) Venice's Ospedale della Pietà; (top) the title page of the 12 Trio Sonatas, 1705; (above) German flautist Johann Quantz, impressed by *L'estro armonico*; (left) a psaltery, one of the exotic instruments played at the Pietà

Maria Fortunata and Chiaretta in its second movement; the *Esurientes* was scored for the deep-voiced Ambrosina (her parts were notated in the tenor clef), and the *Sicut locutus* for the contralto Albetta. One anonymous witness was won over by 'sweetest Apollonia': 'Devilishly she outsings all her sisters, Melting hearts like mine *ad infinita*.'

SUMMER

*'In the oppressive season
inflamed by the sun,
Man and his flock languish,
and the pine-tree burns'*

THE MUSIC Written in G minor, a key associated in the 18th century with 'uneasiness' and 'gnashing of teeth',



working for affluent noble patrons. He set out to dazzle with his first publication in 1705: 12 Trio Sonatas dedicated to the Brescian count Annibale Gambara. Overtly inspired by Corelli's much-celebrated trios, the Venetian's are far more theatrical, with their virtuosic violin writing, yearning operatic melodies and throbbing rhythms. The Red Priest's fiery character finds its outlet in the frenzied outbursts of the *Follia* Sonata that ends the collection.

Over the following years, Vivaldi gathered together some of his most flamboyant *concerti* for the no less flamboyant Ferdinando de' Medici, the music-loving, pleasure-seeking Grand Prince of Tuscany – a habitué of the Venice carnival. Published in 1711, Vivaldi's

The Red Priest's role at the Pietà was as volatile as summer weather

Vivaldi's *L'Estate* (Summer) is a *tour de force* of programme music, fluctuating between steamy languor and feverish drama. The opening gasps in the Veneto's stifling heat; then dissonant bird calls – the cuckoo followed by the rapid trillings of the turtle-dove and goldfinch – presage a 'wild squall'.

The 'insect music' that, two centuries later, would make an appearance in works by Bartók is anticipated by Vivaldi in the *Adagio*, suggesting 'gnats and flies in furious swarms' with dotted repeated notes under a shrill violin melody. In the ominous G minor *Presto*, flaring and dissonant violin scales rip through the tremulous orchestra like 'thunder and lightning in the Heavens'. Perhaps Vivaldi was inspired by Baroque stage machinery which created similar storm effects in opera.

THE LIFE The Red Priest's role at the Pietà was as volatile as summer weather, so it's no surprise that he moonlighted,

The Violinist's View Rachel Podger on Summer



This piece is the closest a violinist gets to being an actor. You have to embody all the characters you're playing and scenes you're setting, which is very demanding. In Summer, particularly, I

find it crucial to think intensely of a hot, smelly Venice. None of the movements in Summer feel separate – they all meld into one another in this lethargic way. The first movement has a kind of limp to it, with the missing first beat of the bar, and this moves into a second movement full of heat and mosquitos. It all ends in this eruption with the storm, which is the most physically exhausting movement to play – you have to hold onto the steering wheel and not let go. It's hard to move straight onto another concerto with a completely different mood, so I often have the accompanying sonnets read in between. They punctuate the concertos, and you can put your bow down for a breather!

Op. 3, *L'estro armonico*, was the most lavish collection of its type, showcasing 12 virtuoso concertos for one, two or four violins. It took Europe by storm, setting the mould for the three-movement concerto – 'an entirely novel type of musical composition' with 'magnificent *ritornelli*' claimed the flautist Johann Quantz. Bach made keyboard versions of six of the Op. 3 works, and other composers followed suit with colourful versions for sundry instruments, from clavichord to Celtic harp, glockenspiel to glass harmonica. The A major concerto No. 5 – dubbed 'Vivaldi's Fifth' – was particularly popular. As the writer Charles Burney quipped, 'It was the making of every player on the violin, who could mount into the clouds, and imitate not only the flight, but the whistling notes of birds'.

With success ringing in his ears, it was only natural that Vivaldi would turn his sights to the Serenissima's main attraction: opera. The lagoon city boasted half a dozen active opera houses and a long season, from the autumn to the end

of Carnival, when one could hear the warblings of singers every day. Vivaldi cut his operatic teeth in 1713 at the Teatro Sant'Angelo (affectionately known as 'Vivaldi's theatre'), where he multi-tasked as impresario, composer, arranger, music director and violinist. His first major drama (based on an earlier work by Ristori) was *Orlando furioso*, which he re-cycled again in 1727, creating one of his finest stage dramas. Inspired by Ariosto's epic, it tells 'of loves and ladies, knights and arms... and many a daring feat'.



AUTUMN

'The country-folk celebrate, with dances and songs, The sweet pleasure of a rich harvest'

THE MUSIC The rustic peasant dance that opens Autumn soon dissolves into gushing violin scales representing the free-flowing 'liquor of Bacchus'. In

The Violinist's View Ray Chen on Autumn



The festive feeling of the harvest is right there from the start. Somehow, though, this concerto catches me off-guard technically. Perhaps it's because I grew up in Australia and we

don't really have seasons – only hot and less hot. I learned Spring and Summer first and came to Autumn later. But the first movement especially is really difficult. It's more awkwardly written than the others and there's a lot more jumping around to do. The *Adagio molto* is extremely peaceful. Everyone has eaten their share after the bountiful harvest – food coma time! It's quite an uncomfortable movement to play. You're trying not to wake the sleeping people, so you don't want a sudden bump in the line or phrasing. In the third movement, there's the challenge for the soloist of imitating the hunt. A violin imitating a bird comes more naturally than a violin imitating huntsmen.

the revelry which follows, the solo violin careens and the ensemble staggers and hiccoughs before eventually falling into a drunken haze.

The hauntingly impressionistic *Adagio molto* that follows is inspired by the 'sleep scenes' often heard in Baroque opera. Muted strings, dissonant and vaporous harmonies create an eerie mist around the peasants' slumber.

The final *Allegro* depicts a dawn hunt complete with loping rhythms, 'horns and dogs and cries'. The 'pastoral key' of F major is also the natural key of hunting horns, which the solo violin imitates with strident double-stoppings.

THE LIFE Vivaldi may have grown to like the distinctive sound of hunting horns when he heard the Bohemian horn players at the Court of Mantua, where he was appointed director of secular music in 1718. As well as staging revivals of his operas at the ducal theatre, he wrote many

of his cantatas here – lyrical, intimate works, suitable for the courtly environs.

His return to Venice in 1720 was blighted by the appearance of a waspish satire, *Il teatro alla moda* (The Fashionable Theatre) by the composer Benedetto Marcello. Purporting to be a handbook for theatre professionals, it caricatures *Il Prete* as an angel-violinist in a priest's hat, and nicknames him 'Aldiviva' (an anagram of 'A Vivaldi'). Marcello attacks many of Aldiviva's gimmicks: unusual instruments, colouristic effects using mutes and *pizzicati*, flashy cadenzas, and unison accompaniments. The satire may have dampened Vivaldi's reception in Venice's opera houses, but at around the same time the composer renewed his association with the Pietà and busied

The *Largo* evokes a fireside reverie to the sound of *pizzicato* raindrops

himself with his next publication – one that would give 'Aldiviva' the last laugh.

In December 1725, the Amsterdam publisher Le Cène issued Vivaldi's Op. 8: 12 solo violin concertos with the title *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione* ('The context between harmony and invention'). The first four works journeyed through the four seasons: *Le quattro stagioni*. Each season was prefaced with a sonnet inspired by the ideals of the Arcadian Academy – a society of literati and musicians who sought to revive the natural simplicity of Greek and Roman pastoral poetry. Fundamental to their beliefs was the neo-Platonic idea that the natural world is a projection of a higher world; so, Vivaldi's vibrant, pulsating depictions of nature were, for the Arcadians, a reflection of the divine.

The composer probably intended to spotlight his

Bitter wit: composer Benedetto Marcello (right) satirised Vivaldi in his *Il teatro alla moda*

own virtuosity in the solo violin parts, which span the gamut of techniques and effects: blazing passagework, athletic leaps, intricate figurations, *cantabile* melodies and multiple stoppings. We can glean some impression of Vivaldi's playing from this account by his German contemporary Johann Uffenbach: 'No one has ever played – or ever will play – in such a fashion. He brought his fingers up to a hair's breadth from the bridge, leaving no room for the bow – and he did so on all four strings, with fugues and with incredible speed.' The Red Priest's music may have been divine, but his playing was seemingly fired by the devil...



WINTER

*'To shiver, frozen in the icy snows,
To the harsh blow of a cruel wind'*

THE MUSIC If Bruegel the Elder created the winter landscape in painting, Vivaldi surely creates it here in music. He scores a monochrome backdrop, etching one line at a time, then adds dissonant colours, impetuous violin figurations, shivering trills and chattering double stops.

The *Largo* evokes a fireside reverie to the sound of *pizzicato* raindrops (an effect



Knight of passion:
mezzo Marilyn Horne in
the title role of *Orlando
Furioso*, 1989



The Violinist's View Tasmin Little on Winter



The first movement of Winter has fast virtuosic writing and downward scales that don't always fit the fingers you've got to play them with. It's intended to be exciting and challenging as

well. You've got that fantastic bit where the teeth are chattering; it's very high up and we're playing demi-semi-quavers – it's not complicated as such, but it does require a lot of coordination because you've got to change your double-stopping in a nanosecond. The last movement is a bit of a finger-twister too. One of the biggest challenges in this movement is ensemble with the lead violinist and the orchestra – you've got some of the fastest writing that there is in the entire piece, and you've been playing for 45 minutes already. It's quite a challenge to keep your concentration, keep it virtuosic, and keep it exciting, energetic and creative all the way through.

Vivaldi also used in opera to represent 'a rain of tears'). The concluding *Allegro* paints a Bruegelesque scene of walking on ice: the solo violin slithers and slides; then 'the ice breaks and dissolves' and the wrathful winds blow. 'This is Winter, which nonetheless brings joy', concludes the sonnet and – with it – Vivaldi's evergreen reminder that 'To every thing there is a season'.

THE LIFE In the later 1720s, Vivaldi's winter months were taken up with opera. The pastoral-themed *Dorilla in Tempe* was staged in November 1726 with extravagant sets, special effects and choreography, not to mention the canny recycling of Spring from *The Four Seasons*. *Dorilla* was also the first of Vivaldi's operas to feature the 'bella e graziosa' mezzo-soprano Anna Girò, who went on to become his star diva: 'a comparable *prima donna* is not to be found', Vivaldi avowed. For the next 14 years, until his death, the composer travelled, and

possibly shared a house, with Anna and her older half-sister Paolina. Allegations of an amorous intimacy arose, though the Red Priest firmly denied them.

Romantic scandals apart, Vivaldi was a fast worker: he once boasted that he composed music 'more swiftly than a copyist could copy it', and for the 1727 season he turned out six operas, including *Orlando* and *Farnace*. (The latter echoes the opening of 'Winter' in the chillingly beautiful aria 'Gelido in ogni vena'.)

They all followed the conventions of *opera seria*, with action-stopping *da capo* arias that serve as emotional 'stills'. But opera in the 1720s – like its eventual successor, film, two centuries later – was a fast-changing medium, and Venetian audiences were beginning to see the 50-year-old Vivaldi as passé. A decade later, the influential French writer Charles de Brosse painted this sorry picture: 'He is not as well regarded as he deserves in these parts... where his works have been heard

for too long, and where last year's music no longer brings in revenue.'

So in 1740 Vivaldi, now 62, decided to test his fortunes abroad, leaving Italy for Vienna – possibly at the invitation of Charles VI. The emperor's untimely death in October that year must have felt like 'the harsh blow of a cruel wind', not least because opera performances were banned during the year-long period of mourning which followed, thereby severely limiting Vivaldi's potential to work. Indeed, the last traces we have of the composer show him in straitened circumstances, lodging in a saddler's house on Vienna's Kärntner Strasse, where he died on 28 July 1741 of an 'internal inflammation'. His pauper's burial was a pitiful end, marked only by this moralistic report back in Venice: 'Don Antonio Vivaldi... an excellent performer on the violin and a much-admired composer of concertos, once earned over 50,000 ducats, but through excessive prodigality died a pauper in Vienna.' 🎻

“ Something I learned from my teacher Messiaen: never tell a soul what you’re working on! ”

THE BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

George Benjamin



The British composer’s late turn to opera has seen him find his true voice, and in the process reinvigorate the form for the 21st century. BBC Radio 3’s **Kate Molleson** meets him

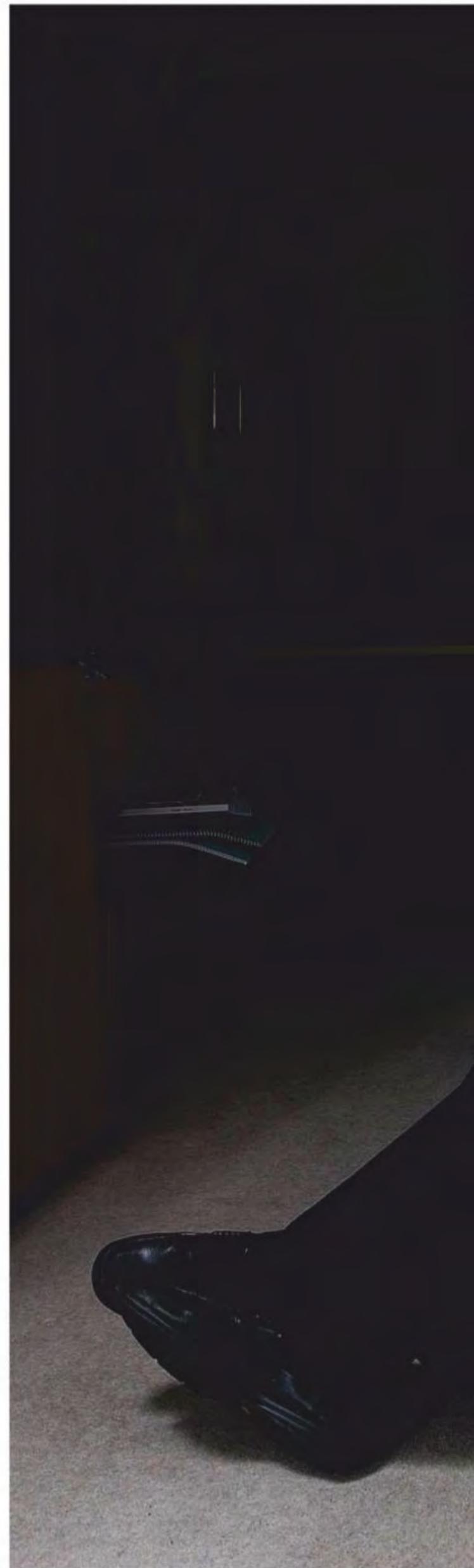
PHOTOGRAPHY: **RICHARD CANNON**

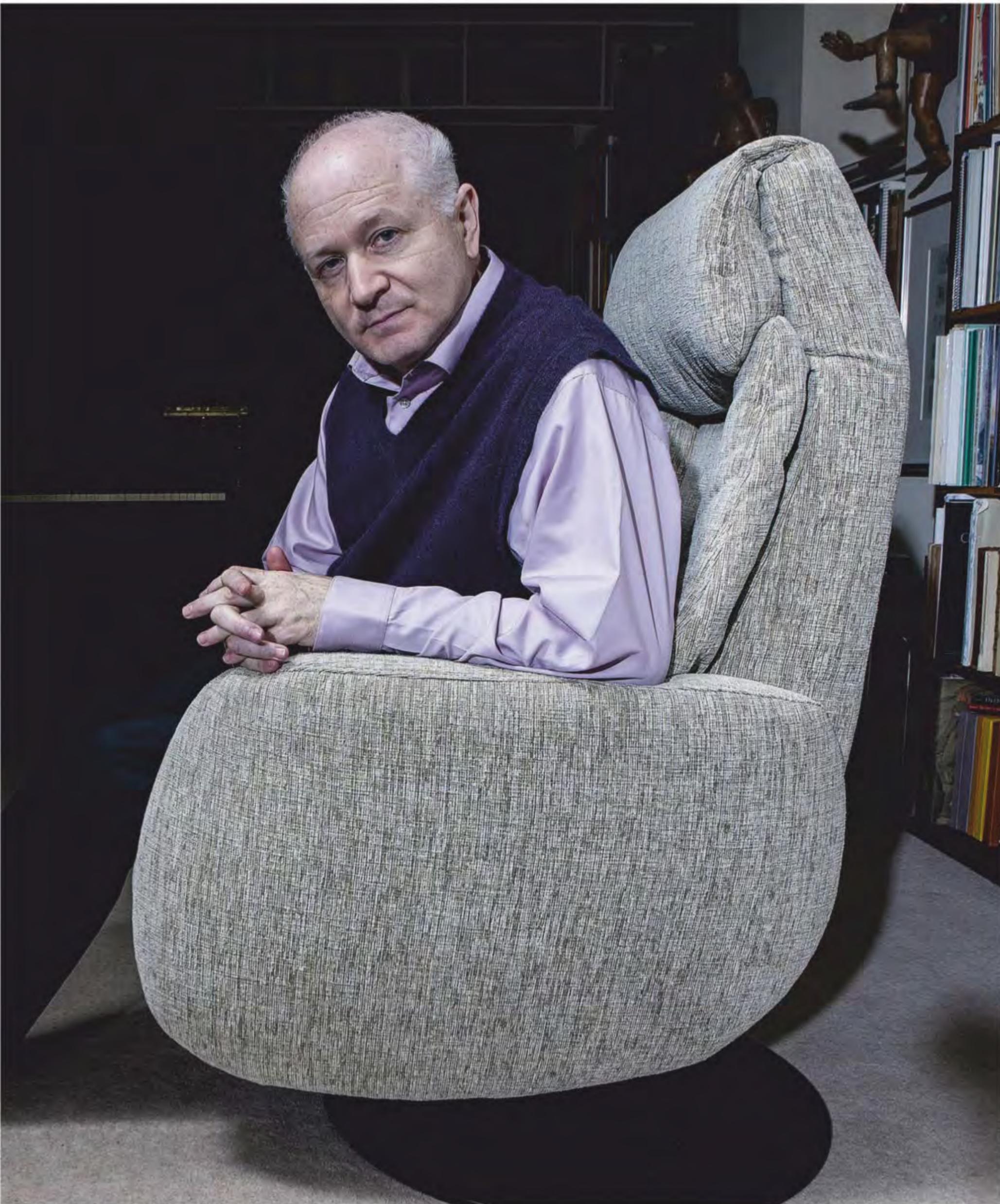
George Benjamin began writing his first opera at the age of 12. ‘Setting the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin,’ he winces. ‘And it was naive and terrible and thankfully came to an end halfway down page 34. Terrible! Unspeakably terrible!’ Who can corroborate? The world never heard those precocious pages, but the operas Benjamin went on to write – *Into the Little Hill*, *Written on Skin* and *Lessons in Love and Violence* – have changed the sound, scope, brutality and sensuality of 21st-century opera. All three were premiered in the last decade but were somehow a lifetime in the making.

Benjamin laughs as he tells me about his early endeavours – a neat, precise giggle. He laughs with clarity and conviction, like every aspect of his conversation. Thoughts

are held until they are fully formed. Words are only ever the exact ones. If he can’t find the right word, he’ll wait, hand suspended in the air, eyes screwed tight as he searches his mind. He won’t make do with sloppiness and, brilliant teacher that he is, the effect rubs off so that in his company I become acutely aware of my own language. None of this meticulousness seems to get in the way of his enthusiasm, which is boyish, eager, clever, a wide-eyed marvelling. At 58, Benjamin says that above all he is ‘so, so enamoured with the nuts and bolts of music. Utterly passionate. Completely enthralled.’

In his music, too, only the right notes will do. It’s what makes his soundworlds so spotless and so total, but also what has caused him absolute agony at various points of his life when the right notes wouldn’t come easily. ‘I wrote tons of music for plays when I was a kid,’ he says, ‘so it was a matter of sadness that I didn’t return to the theatre for 25 years.’ He couldn’t, blocked by his own creative impasse. Things wouldn’t fall into place for the kind of operas he wanted to write. ‘I gave it a quarter of a century of thought. I





thought about the problems I wanted to solve. How to tell a story. How to produce the right music. How to clinch the vocal writing. I wanted to get rid of the zigzag' – he means the cliché of contemporary operatic vocal lines, darting high and low in jagged zigzag – 'but I didn't want to go back to tonal language, either. The fusion of voice and orchestra, them being audibly embedded in each other. I wanted to find my own way of doing all of that.'

Our interview becomes a kind of lesson, Benjamin explaining in lucid detail how he went about solving each of these problems of contemporary opera. Lessons in process and ritual; lessons in matchmaking. His teaching is thorough and gently self-mocking. There are only a couple of secrets he keeps fiercely guarded: he won't say what piece he's writing at the moment ('No! Never tell a soul! Something I learned from my teacher Messiaen: never tell a soul what you're working on!') and he's contractually bound not to say whether there's another opera in the pipeline, though his long hesitation is an answer in itself. 'What I will say,' he smiles, 'is that I've become so enthused by the medium that I want to keep writing operas until I'm no longer able.'

Lesson one. Make space. In the past, Benjamin has described the period around writing an opera – two-and-a-half years or so – as a kind of *purdah*. He stops teaching, stops conducting. 'I can't compose all the time, but I never know when the moment will come. I've learned to be patient. It might take three weeks to start a scene, to find the right technique, the attitude, the momentum, the pacing of it. I've accepted that in my brain, confusion is the normal state of affairs. Clarifying, that's the main process. I might make a step forward one day, two steps back the next.'

The important thing, he says, is what to do with the in-between times. 'I read. I devour novels. They allow me to put them down, go to my desk, scribble something, pick the book up again. They feed my imagination and keep me quiet. And they stimulate my inner life. If I find a novelist who interests me, I'll devour their complete work within a few weeks.' Recent such devourees include Marilynne Robinson, Penelope Fitzgerald, Cormac McCarthy and Vladimir Nabokov.



Lesson two. Choose the right tools. I'm talking to Benjamin at his kitchen table: an open-plan townhouse backing onto a garden in North-West London. This is the house where the *purdah* retreats happen. There's a grand piano on the ground floor but Benjamin writes upstairs on a humble upright. If the piano is too good, he says, 'you'd listen to the sound it makes instead

'If I find a novelist who interests me, I'll devour their complete works within weeks'

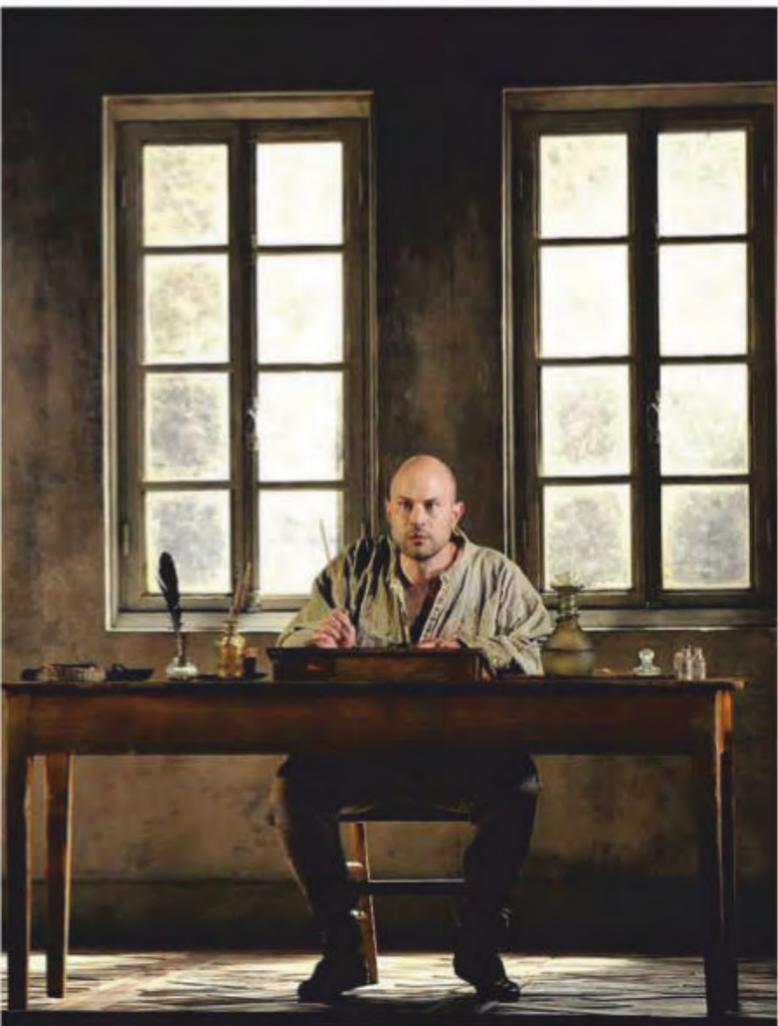
of the sounds in your head. It's just a tool.' When he's writing, he is mainly thinking a lot. 'I'm thinking a huge number of things at the same time. Always of the form. I can't write a single note unless I weigh the effect of that note on the whole structure.' It sounds potentially paralysing and in the past it has been so. 'And that's why I invent frameworks. It's a part of the process that needs deep concentration, because if you get the framework right it's a liberation. If you get it wrong, you're frozen.'

'When I was a kid, I used to think that everything should be free. That your

sensibility and imagination should be enough. And then I learned that was wrong and immature. Ravel said composing is one thing: choice. But the capacity to choose isn't easy. If you're totally free, and you're working in a multiphonic framework like opera, it becomes impossible to choose. An ideal framework gives you the capacity to choose the notes you like at any given moment.'

The framework sounds like a scaffold that disappears when the music is finished. Benjamin has a more poetic image: a kind of 'ghost behind the music, with its own form. You've got to find a good ghost. A ghost that gives you surprises en route. And it's important you've got the illusion of it being an independent entity. Although' – his eyes are twinkling now – 'by creating an independent entity there's always a danger of some kind of existential chasm. Which can be a real pain!'

Benjamin never suggests his frameworks to his students. ('Oh god, no!') Any technique used by a composer should be a response to his or her own limitations, he stresses. Many others have made their own frameworks: Berg, Ligeti, Benjamin's teacher Messiaen, Benjamin's dear friend Oliver Knussen. 'But I think the way I've done it is really unlike anyone else,' he says. 'It is rather weird. But what justifies it is what comes out at the other end.'



All-star casts: (far left) George Benjamin with fellow composers Pierre Boulez and Olivier Messiaen, 1988; (left) Barbara Hannigan and Bejun Mehta star in *Written On Skin* in Aix-en-Provence, 2012; (right) Benjamin conducts his opera *Lessons in Love and Violence* at Covent Garden, 2018

Lesson three. Find the right collaborator. Benjamin looked for a librettist for 25 years. Playwrights, poets, novelists, screenwriters – umpteen wordsmiths were sent his way by well-meaning friends and colleagues and publishers, but nobody was quite right. ‘Sometimes it would get to six or seven meetings before I admitted it just wasn’t going to work. I’d almost given up before I met Martin.’ Martin Crimp: playwright with a gift for cruel, tender, unflinching dramas; librettist for all three Benjamin operas (and counting). The pair were introduced by the viola da gamba player Laurence Dreyfus, and they clicked.

‘I find enormous stimulation in the way Martin writes: the concision, the clarity, the ferocity, the subtlety of emotion. The amount of colour and feeling he gives me. The crystalline structures that are so economical they almost demand music. It’s what I always wanted. Once I’d found my ingredient X, to my surprise and joy it was a form of liberation. It opened me up.’

And so it has, because Benjamin is on a roll. He’s conducting and teaching profusely, he’s writing more than ever, and above all he’s besotted with opera. He says he and Crimp are ‘on a joint project to do drama that involves singing and music’: simple words to describe a mission that’s nothing short of reshaping the genre for our age. Yet for all the ambition, the

works themselves are notably delicate. There’s a dark quietness that underscores *Lessons in Love and Violence*. Benjamin says he loves the effect of silence when there are a lot of people in a room. He loves ‘the rhythm of silence across a piece, meaning the occasions when the orchestra is allowed off its leash can be really shocking.’

The ultimate aim, he says, is intimacy. ‘Emotions don’t have to be shouted. I can’t force-feed people. They’ll switch off. The idea is to open up a space within them. They need their individuality to be respected.’ Benjamin pauses. ‘Maybe the only way is to write what I would want to hear, and to just trust the rest.’

Which brings me to a closing tangent. We spend a good while talking about national schools – initially in relation to Pierre Boulez, whom Benjamin knew well and about whom he’s remarked that ‘only when he accepted he was fundamentally a French composer did he find his true voice.’ When I ask whether Benjamin considers himself part of any national school, I get one of his laughs.

‘No idea! I studied in France. It made a huge impact on me. I’ve worked more in Germany as a conductor. This is my home,’ he pats the table, ‘and this,’ he gestures the air, ‘is my language. When I was young I was glad to be a British composer. Dogma, hyper-rationality – those are very foreign to the empirical British way of looking at things. Individuality, eccentricity, lack of dogma. Those are things that are more natural to us. Respect for the individual, delight in individual fantasy without having to be part of a school. A degree of artistic freedom. Those are our strengths.’

‘In the end – and this might be a British thing as well – I’m really not interested in things like identity politics in music. For me to get the best out of me, the less I think about me the better. I’m not trying to express myself. I’m not even interested in myself! What matters is authentic, coherent and hopefully beautiful statements. However the work was made, whatever the process and the backstory, that’s the only thing that matters.’

Lessons in Love and Violence is released on *Opus Arte* at the beginning of 2019



A life in brief

Quick guide to George Benjamin

1960 Born in London, Benjamin goes to Westminster School.

1976 Benjamin goes to study in Paris with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod, before returning to study at King’s College, Cambridge with Alexander Goehr.

1980 His orchestral piece *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*, written for the Cambridge University Musical Society, is performed at the BBC Proms, conducted by Mark Elder.

1987 After working with Pierre Boulez at IRCAM in Paris, Benjamin writes *Antara* for chamber orchestra and electronics, but composes little else until 1992. His conducting career begins to blossom.

2001 He becomes professor of composition at King’s College, University of London, taking over from Harrison Birtwistle.

2006 His chamber opera *Into the Little Hill*, with a libretto by Martin Crimp, is premiered in Paris. At the UK premiere three years later, a power cut in the Royal Opera House’s Linbury Studio leads to the piece being staged in the theatre bar.

2012 *Written on Skin*, his second large-scale opera, is staged in Aix-en-Provence. It has since been given nearly 100 performances.

2017 Awarded a CBE in 2010, seven years later George Benjamin is given a knighthood.

2018 *Lessons in Love and Violence* premieres at Covent Garden, with a cast including singers Barbara Hannigan and Stéphan Degout.

Hopes & fears

We ask ten leading musicians to gaze into a crystal ball and let us know what they're looking forward to – and dreading – in 2019

ILLUSTRATION: JONTY CLARK

Stephen Hough *pianist*



HOPE My hope is for us all to listen better. There's so much wasted background noise in taxis, lifts and restaurants. It's a constant undercurrent of life, and I'd love to reduce it. I don't think there's anything wrong with silence, particularly as a musician. Silence is very important. It's the soil from which everything we grow comes from. Unless we have that silence in good shape, then what comes out of that won't be healthy. It's always a musical consideration, but it's also important in life in general. It's something we find very difficult to do.

FEAR I fear how volatile the world is – everything has become so explosive, particularly thanks to the dramatisation of politics. Again, a little bit of silence would be incredibly useful!

Nadine Benjamin *soprano*



HOPE My hope is to solidify my skills and raise them up to the next level. I won't be on the main stages doing opera, but I will be involved in concerts and applying my time differently in order to get where I want to be. It's really important to me that I'm always analysing what could make my characters clearer, cleaner, more enjoyable and readable. I need to keep learning

more about this craft. Because I came to the profession quite late and I didn't go to conservatoire, my journey has been quite different to a lot of other singers.

FEAR My challenge will be supporting myself throughout 2019. When I have that amount of learning to do, it means that I'm not able to be working as much in the way I'd like to, so I'll have to look for sponsorship. From 2020 I'm fully employed, but 2019 is all about learning, and unfortunately you only get to see the fruits of those labours a year down the line.

Vasily Petrenko *conductor*



HOPE 2019 will be a very special year for me with the orchestras I conduct. It's the centenary year of the Oslo Philharmonic, and there are tours with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and European Union Youth Orchestras, and I'm looking forward to further development of all the youth education programmes. And at the end of the year I'm making my debut at the Met Opera in New York conducting Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame*. It's an opera I love, and I have done several productions of it in Russia and Hamburg. It means a lot to be on such a legendary stage, with some of the best singers and crew in the world, ready to make opera at its best.

FEAR My human wish is that people will not escalate any more tensions



between countries. For me, being Russian, and English by citizenship, I wish that both countries will become more friendly again, and that all the tensions of recent years will be overcome. There's no reason to hate each other. It's more productive to work together in peace.

Mahan Esfahani *harpsichordist*



HOPE My hope is for less tribalism. By tribalism, I mean the assumption that one will like or not like something, or an assumed tendency to have an interest in something. It's all based on preconceived allegiances and ignorance. It could be something as simple as people saying they're disinclined to like the harpsichord or not wanting to hear a



certain composer based on hearing their previous work. We need to take each composer, each piece of music and each instrument on their own terms otherwise we're going to lose out, and art will suffer.

FEAR I had a harpsichord built with a carbon-fibre soundboard in the hope that it would be an instrument of the future and have tuning stability. And I've started worrying that the soundboard's going to crack and that my whole experiment will turn out to be a complete mess.

Sarah Willis *horn player, presenter*



HOPE As a horn player, my hope is quite simple. I still have to hit the right notes every day. There are no short cuts. I have to practise and prepare. Stay healthy and

inspired. That's a never-ending journey as a musician. Presenting is a personal passion. I've been lucky to present over 90 programmes of *Sarah's Music* from all over the world for the broadcaster Deutsche Welle, and I really hope to do more of this in 2019. I have an inner need to communicate my love of our music world. I think it's something musicians need to do: we have to get out there and do something proactive. For me, it's not enough just to play my instrument these days.

FEAR I worry about not hitting the right notes! Conductor Simon Rattle called us stuntmen because we have to do things that could mean falling to our possible death. Splitting a note in a horn solo is very similar. My other fear is that classical music is being pushed a little bit to the side by news. *Sarah's Music* has just been

replaced after four years. The channel wants more current affairs and news, so we're looking to rehome it somewhere.

Héloïse Werner *composer, soprano*



HOPE This year, I'd like to write more of my own music – for myself, but also for others to perform. I studied composition at university, but my singing and

performing career has rather taken over since. I'd also like somehow to see my work being made available on a digital platform so that it can reach people who don't necessarily go to operas and concerts. It's so important to make contemporary music more accessible online in general, in fact.

FEAR Though I'm not British, I studied in the UK and then, because I liked it so



much, I moved to London and started my career there – that’s where all my musical collaborators are. I have no idea how exactly Brexit will affect the future, but I suspect it will have a massive impact on the music world. I do hope that there may be a way that I can remain in the UK and continue working here, but while there’s no guarantee, it’s quite unsettling.

Chi-chi Nwanoku *double bass player*



HOPE I would like music to be able to work harder for society and the community. Specifically, I want the government to look properly at the benefits of music

education and learning an instrument and have them reinstated into the general curriculum of our state schools. Of course, not every child that learns an instrument is going to become a professional musician, but learning an instrument and being allowed to have creative freedom in general can make you better at whatever you choose to go into.

FEAR Over eight years on the board of the National Youth Orchestra, I started to see a positive adjustment in its ratio of state-educated versus privately educated players – 93 per cent came from private schools when I started. My worry is that that improvement will stop or, worse still, reverse, and the divide between the two

‘We really need to find more political leaders who have a strong cultural base’

will widen again. The way to avoid that is, among other things, to get instrumental teaching brought back into all schools.

Jeremy Filsell *organist, conductor*



HOPE One of my great hopes would be that we could find a way of taking the formula that makes the BBC Proms so successful and somehow spreading it

elsewhere. By formula, I mean the way that the highways and byways of the repertoire are explored and then performed to such a high standard. In the United States, for instance, there are a lot of orchestras that are really well supported, but then I take a look at the programming, and a lot of it is so conservative.

FEAR I worry about the way the arts are increasingly seen as a luxury rather than a necessity. We really need to find more political leaders who have a strong cultural base. It’s wonderful to have the likes of France’s Emmanuel Macron, who

had artistic aspirations as a child and understands them in others. But how long has it been since we had the likes of Sir Edward Heath in UK politics or, in the US, a president like Harry Truman, who was an accomplished pianist?

Nicholas Daniel *oboist*



HOPE The most important aspect of my work is playing contemporary music and helping to create new pieces. So I hope to continue to play new music as well as I can

to convince people that it’s worth hearing and worth playing.

FEAR The most important thing is that we find a way to make the politicians understand that the ‘Every Child a Musician’ scheme (ECAM, happening in the London Borough of Newham) is possible to work across the whole country. The scheme gives every single child in the primary sector four years of musical instrument lessons; they’re given the lessons for free, they get exams for the London College of Music for free and they get to keep the instrument. I think that the vast majority of the public are behind us on this, it’s just the politicians who need to understand that it is a vote winner and not a vote loser. It’s a fear and a hope...

Cheryl Frances-Hoad *composer*



HOPE The ABRSM selected a little piano piece of mine, *Commuterland*, to go in the syllabus and I have a real hope that lots of people doing piano exams come

across it, like it and start thinking about contemporary music.

FEAR We’re already quite isolated as composers and I can count the performances I’ve had in Europe on two hands; I don’t know whether Brexit will make any difference. In the last 18 months I’ve been to Germany and Italy to have pieces done and it just seems that Europe is becoming aware of my work, so I am worried about that opportunity being shut off. I’m not saying that it will, but it’s obviously a concern. It’s nowhere near as bad a problem as it is for my performing friends who are going to have real practical difficulties because of this. 🎧

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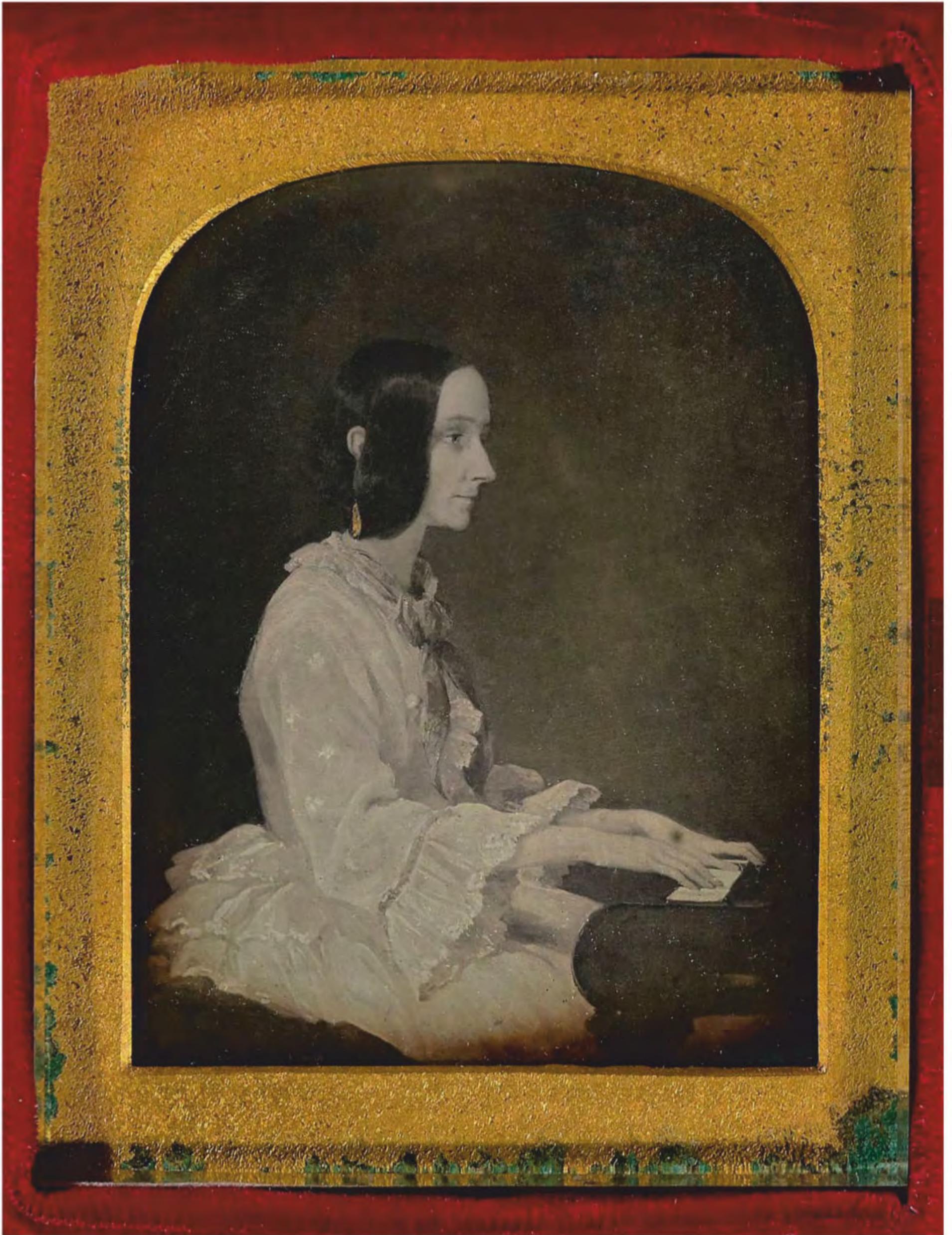
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Music by numbers

The 19th-century mathematician and musician Ada Lovelace was the first to spot computers' creative potential. David De Roure tells her intriguing story and explores the impact of her legacy

A computer that composes music? Even in our era of advanced technology, the possibility that a machine might be able to create original works of art is one that's stretching the world's brightest scientists, artists and programmers. Yet it's arguably an idea as old as computing itself. Ever since the first incarnation of the computer, back in the 19th century, its power beyond the realm of numbers has been recognised. The person who first identified its potential was Ada Lovelace, a pioneer of computer programming, and today an important role model for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Lovelace's programming credentials are unique and remarkable but the extent of her accomplishment is even more exciting and significant. While she studied maths and understood computation with perceptions well ahead of her time, she grasped that computers could do more than process numbers. She saw that they could also reach into our social and creative lives – and might even one day generate music. But how did she come to draw this groundbreaking conclusion?

Perhaps it was in part down to her two very different parents, one artistic, the other scientific in inclination. Augusta Ada was born in December 1815, the only child of an unhappy and short-lived marriage between the infamous Romantic poet Byron and the strictly moral and mathematically educated Anne Isabella Milbanke. Ada never knew her father

and was brought up by her mother, following her educational path which focused on music, French and mathematics. Ada's impressive array of teachers and mentors included the renowned polymath and writer Mary Somerville, who was the first person to be described in print as a 'scientist' – because 'man of science' was thought inappropriate – and along with astronomer Caroline Herschel was one of the first female members of the Royal Astronomical Society. Another famous tutor, Augustus De Morgan, is a name familiar today to any student of logic.

Lovelace's intellect was formidable. 'That Enchantress who has thrown her magic spell around the most abstract of Sciences has grasped it with a force which few masculine intellects (in our country at least) could have exerted,' reported the mathematician Charles Babbage, one of a circle of intellectuals with whom she was friends. Ada Lovelace – as she became when her husband William King, whom she married at the age of 20, became the first Earl of Lovelace – knew the scientists Michael Faraday, Charles Wheatstone, nurse and social reformer Florence Nightingale and novelist Charles Dickens.

But it was Lovelace's friendship with Babbage that is pivotal to this story. They met through Somerville in 1833, when Lovelace was 17 and Babbage was 42. In the 1820s, Babbage had invented his first mechanical computer, the Difference Engine, which he took delight in making the centrepiece of his soirées. De Morgan's wife, Sophia, later wrote: 'While other visitors gazed at the working of this beautiful



“Ada Lovelace grasped that computers might reach into our creative lives and one day generate music”

First Ada: (opposite) a daguerreotype of Lovelace at the piano in 1843; (above) a portrait of her as a child

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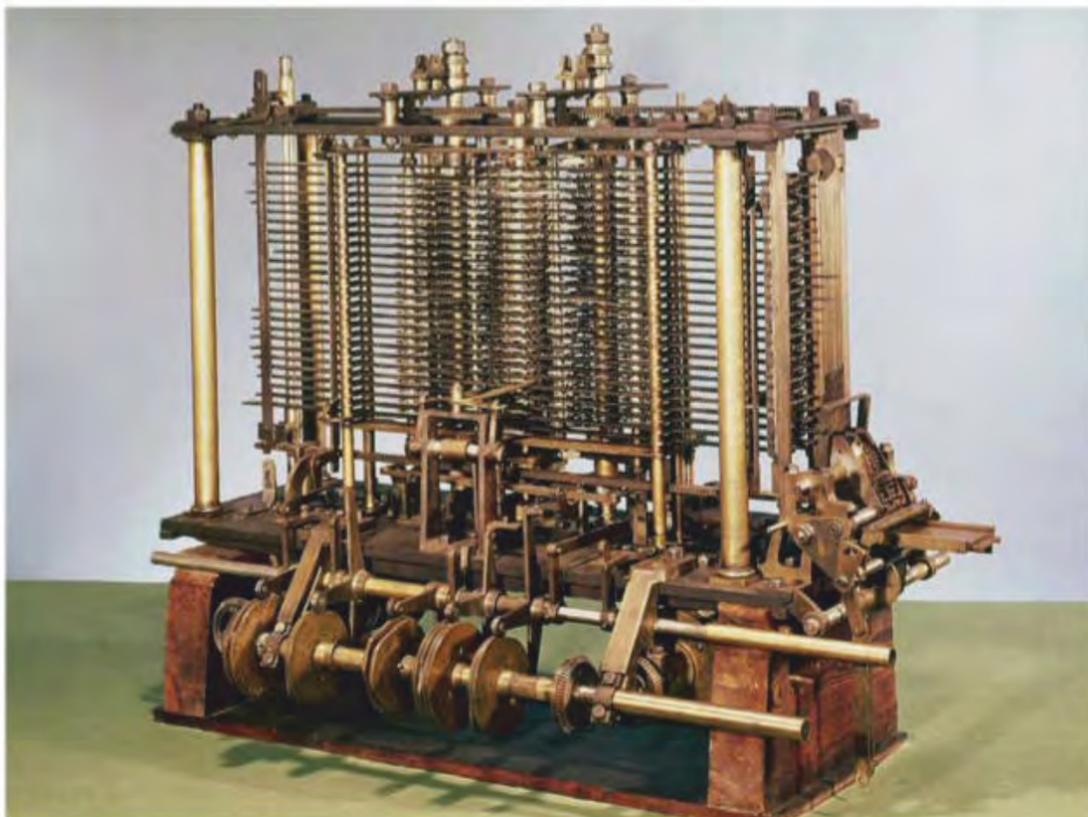
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Excerpt from concert review of piano recital by Peter Donohoe, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, April 2018
Christopher Morley, *The Birmingham Post*

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Dream machine: (above) a model of the pioneering Analytical Engine; (above right) Charles Babbage, pictured around the time that he worked with Lovelace; (below) Lovelace's teacher, the polymath Mary Somerville

instrument with the sort of expression, and I dare say the sort of feeling, that some savages are said to have shown on first seeing a looking-glass or hearing a gun... Miss Byron, young as she was, understood its working, and saw the great beauty of the invention.'

Babbage was an exceptional polymath and engineer, and the next computer he designed, the steam-powered Analytical Engine, remarkably anticipated the design of computers that would come a century later. It was never built but Lovelace engaged closely with Babbage and this hypothetical machine and the fruits of their collaboration appeared in print in 1843. Babbage had presented the design in a talk in Turin, transcribed into French by Luigi Menabrea, an Italian general and mathematician who was later to serve as the prime minister of Italy. Lovelace was already an expert on the design and back in London she was invited to translate *Notions sur la machine analytique de Charles Babbage* (*Elements of Charles Babbage's Analytical Machine*) into English. In the process she tripled the length by adding her 'Translator's Notes' – and these have become her enduring contribution to computing.

In those notes is the first published computer program, for which Lovelace is most famous today. But while her contemporaries were focused on the computer for calculation, Lovelace transcended this immediate ambition and offered other extraordinary insights.

In 'Note A' Lovelace suggests the Analytical Engine 'might act upon other things besides number... Supposing, for instance, that the

fundamental relations of pitched sounds in the science of harmony and of musical composition were susceptible of such expression and adaptations, the engine might compose elaborate and scientific pieces of music of any degree of complexity or extent'.

What did Lovelace mean by 'scientific pieces of music'? Did she mean that the music would be systematic, given the established rules of harmony and counterpoint? Or perhaps it would be lacking in expression, being generated by a machine and not by a human? Of course, science and music had long been entwined – the notion of scientific music predates Lovelace, and humans can compose 'scientific' music too. Christian Huygens, the 17th-century Dutch scientist, railed against it, wishing that composers 'would not seek what is the most artificial or most difficult to invent, but what affects the ear most'.

A possible interpretation is the use of the systems exercised in canons and fugues, where the music repeats patterns which are transposed, inverted and reversed. For example, in a 'crab canon' the same line is played backwards and forwards simultaneously, and in JS Bach's *The Musical Offering* one player turns the music upside down. Lovelace was also interested in 'magic squares', the ancient puzzle of assembling numbers in a square so that adding up rows, columns or diagonals gives the same number. These have since been used in music by composers such as Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.

It is no surprise that Lovelace was thinking about the relationship between maths, machines and music. She was a pianist, singer and dedicated harpist, and her letters show that she put music on a par with maths. In 1837

“ Lovelace was a pianist, singer and dedicated harpist, and her letters show that she put music on a par with maths ”





Bang on a can: the premiere of Howard's *Ada Sketches* in London

The sounds of science

How Ada Lovelace has inspired composer Emily Howard

Composer Emily Howard, a mathematics and computer science graduate, is known for using mathematical ideas in her compositional process. In 2011, Howard wrote *The Lovelace Trilogy* including the mini-opera *Ada Sketches*, a dramatic scena for mezzo-soprano, flute, clarinet and percussion, with a libretto by Laura Tunbridge. The short work explores a musical solution to a computation as solved in the hypothetical Analytical Engine. The trilogy is completed by *Calculus of the Nervous System* and *Mesmerism*.

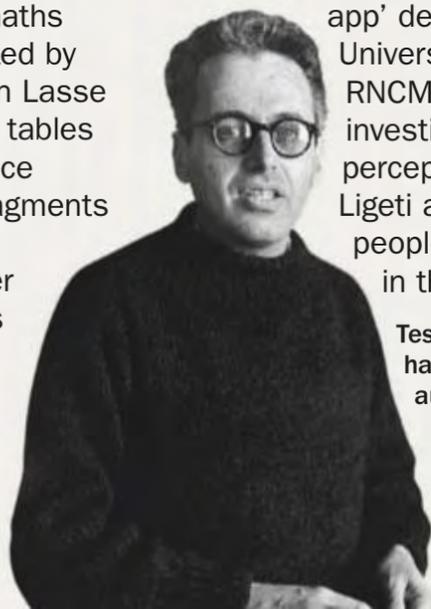
Howard brought an innovative format to three *Ada Sketches* performances, which took place at an inaugural Science Museum event followed by outings in Oxford and at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM). First an explanation of the maths was eloquently articulated by Liverpool mathematician Lasse Rempe-Gillen. Then the tables were turned and audience members composed fragments of music for the RNCM musicians to play. Under the banner of 'Numbers into Notes', Howard directly engaged

audiences in the relationship between mathematics and music.

The exploration of creative collaborations between the sciences and music continues through the RNCM Centre for Practice & Research in Science & Music (PRiSM), directed by Howard and Oxford mathematician Marcus du Sautoy. This creative collaboration led to Howard's string quartet *Four Musical Proofs and a Conjecture*, premiered at New Scientist Live in 2017.

And four new works by RNCM student composers Stephen Bradshaw, Lucy Hale, Athanasia Kontou and Robert Smith, inspired by Du Sautoy's book *The Music of the Primes*, were premiered this year at the Manchester Science Festival. Again, listeners were involved: the 'PRiSM perception app' developed at the University of Oxford and RNCM was used to investigate audiences' perception of structure in Ligeti and to understand if people hear palindromes in the music of Haydn.

Test case: Ligeti's music has been used to gauge audience reactions



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she told Somerville, 'I play four or five hours generally, and never less than three'. Lovelace also sponsored the young John Thomas, who was to become a major virtuoso-composer harpist in the 19th century, appointed to Queen Victoria and whose works, such as *The Minstrel's Adieu to his Native Land*, are popular pieces today. Lovelace was proud of her voice and we know she sang arias from Bellini's *Norma*, fashionable in the 1830s, to an audience in her library.

Also in 'Note A', Lovelace writes that 'we may say most aptly that the Analytical Engine weaves algebraical patterns just as the Jacquard-loom weaves flowers and leaves', reminding us that she had seen the Jacquard looms in operation. Their use of punched cards for programming was destined to be adopted in the Analytical Engine, well ahead of their mid 20th-century manifestation in mainframe computers.

But it is Lovelace's comments in 'Note G' that have provoked most debate. She states that 'the Analytical Engine has no pretensions to originate anything. It can do whatever we know how to order it to perform'. In other words, even if their capabilities can be applied to the arts, computers can't come up with anything fundamentally new. Alan Turing disputed what he called 'Lady Lovelace's Objection' in his seminal 1950 paper *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*, while Margaret Boden, one of today's polymaths, defined 'the Lovelace Questions' in her 1990 book *The Creative Mind*. She teased apart the differences between computers helping human creativity, appearing creative, recognising creativity, and creating. With the rising adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques in computing today, these questions are more salient than ever.

Lovelace's life was cut short by cancer at the age of 36. We don't know what she would have done next, but we can enjoy speculation in Sydney Padua's graphic novel *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage* (2015), and Gibson and Sterling's *The Difference Engine* (1990), the founding novel of the steampunk genre. The recent *Ada Lovelace: The Making of a Computer Scientist* by Hollings, Martin and Rice provides compelling evidence for Lovelace's iconic status in science, technology, engineering and maths. But music and the arts were far more important to Lovelace than many accounts mention. She is a role model for interdisciplinarity (see box, left), embodying both the arts and the sciences without distinction between them, in order to transform our understanding. 🌀

In a Strange Land

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stile antico

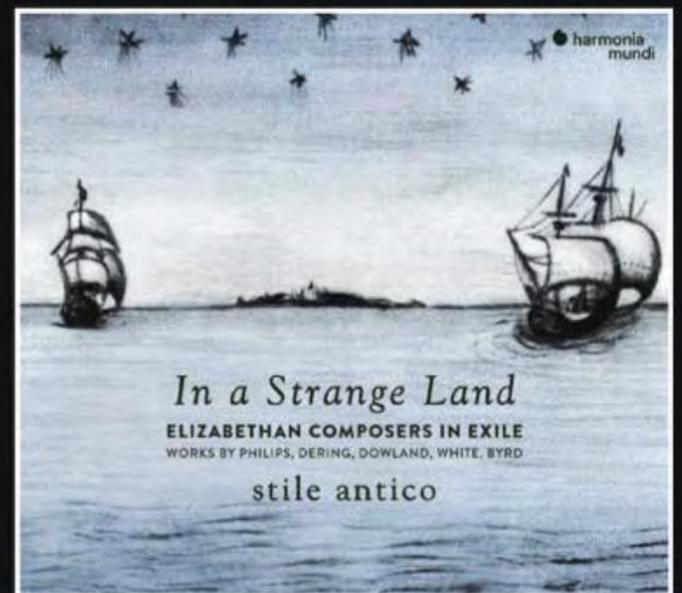


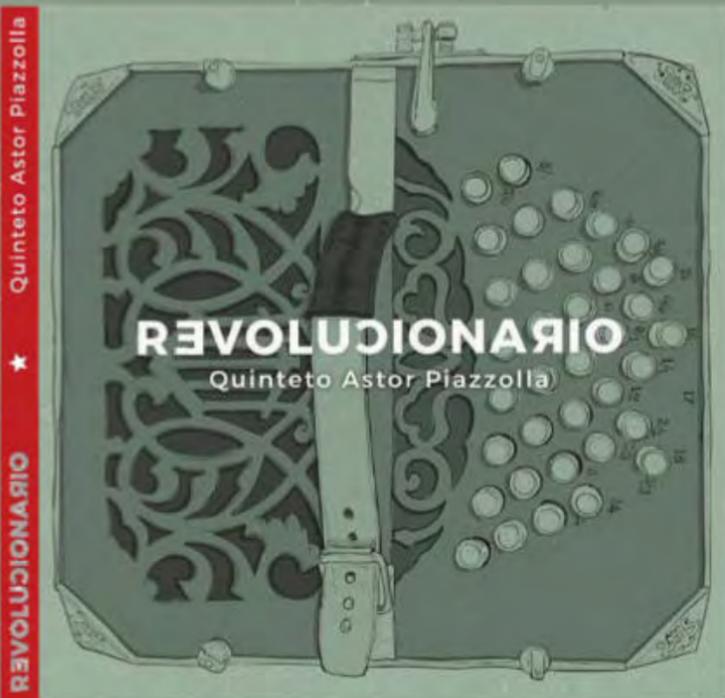
Photo: D.R.

HMM 902266

The regime of Queen Elizabeth I dealt harshly with supporters of the old Catholic religion. Torn between obedience and conscience, some of England's most talented musicians – Philips, Dering and Dowland – chose a life of exile abroad. Others chose to remain in spiritual isolation in England, comparing themselves to the exiled Israelites in Babylon. Amongst them were Robert White, whose five-part *Lamentations* is one of the glories of English music of any age, and William Byrd, whose anguished Catholic music is referenced in Shakespeare's enigmatic poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, vividly set by Huw Watkins especially for Stile Antico.



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Bach to the Blues

Classical music was jazz legend Nina Simone's first love, but she faced racism in her bid to become a leading African-American pianist, writes Roger Thomas

‘You have the same name as Bach – my first love!’ Thus was journalist Tim Sebastian disarmed by the legendary pianist, singer and occasional songwriter Nina Simone at the beginning of her interview for the BBC television show *Hardtalk* in 1999. Though tagged as a jazz performer, a label she regarded as both disparaging and inaccurate, the classical repertoire had been her original source of musical inspiration; she would remark that to play it was to be ‘as close to God as I know’. Her earliest experience of performing it, however, had been less positive.

Born Eunice Kathleen Waymon in Tryon, North Carolina in 1933, her childhood piano lessons were with a diminutive Englishwoman named Muriel Mazzanovich, the wife of the landscape painter Lawrence Mazzanovich who had settled in the area in the early 1920s. The couple had no children and Eunice became something of a surrogate daughter to ‘Miss Mazzy’ as she was known. She recognised and cultivated Eunice’s prodigious ability and co-founded a fund to enable her to continue her



“ At just ten years old, she was steeped in the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Czerny and JS Bach ”

Baroque ‘n’ soul:
Nina Simone performs
on stage at Newport Jazz
Festival on 4 July 1968;
(below) the young
Simone, circa 1955





studies. Local supporters responded, and in the spring of 1943 Mazzanovich organised a debut recital for her pupil as a gesture of thanks to the fund's donors. Just ten years old, yet steeped in the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Czerny and particularly Bach, Eunice waited nervously as 200 people filed into the building to become her first audience.

Sadly Tryon, though able to muster support for a young black girl versed in classical music, would still display the knee-jerk conventions of racial segregation in more banal ways. Eunice had been aware of this with a degree of detachment, but on this occasion the affront was personal: her parents were told to give up their front-row seats to white audience members. With a fearlessness that would become her trademark in adult life, Eunice simply refused to play until they were allowed to return to their original seats. Once that had been rectified, the recital went well, concluding with an improvisation based on notes suggested by members of the audience. Reading her own accounts of these events in her autobiography *I Put a Spell on You* and in Alan Light's biography *What Happened, Miss Simone?*, her reaction was one of outrage mixed with bafflement: why would any parent be denied this simple courtesy, whatever their status?

Eunice's ultimate ambition, encouraged by her parents and teacher, was to become the first successful African-American classical pianist. In reality there had been and would be other contenders for this position, but her intentions were clear. On leaving school she was awarded a year's scholarship to the Juilliard School of Music in New York. The plan was that she should then apply for a full scholarship to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, prompting her family to relocate there. When the expected scholarship failed to materialise she was dismayed. Word reached her that the decision was racially motivated, although the Institute's defenders pointed out that the number of applicants greatly exceeded the available places. She continued with music, working as an accompanist for a singing teacher. She soon taught her own lessons, adding singing to piano playing for the first time, but the uncertainty about her failure was to remain with her.

Eunice had little experience of singing other than in church and was conscious of her limited vocal technique. However, her classical background in combination with a natural talent for improvisation gave her an ideal mix of skills for such a position and soon led to her



Sixties stars: with the cast of *Hair*

The best of Simone

Where to start on record

Much of Nina Simone's recorded legacy is derived from live performances and is unfortunately awash with releases of questionable provenance and endlessly reshuffled compilations of varying quality. However, in terms of both legitimacy and programming ***The Very Best of Nina Simone*** (Sony) is a good starting point, scooping up most of her best-known work and demonstrating the variety of songwriters that inspired her, ranging from George and Ira Gershwin to Randy Newman. This compilation includes her extraordinary take on 'Ain't Got No/I Got Life' from the musical *Hair*, often omitted from others, which sees her transforming the hippie anthem into a glorious celebration of identity and self-esteem.

Should you prefer to trace her recording career in more detail, several bargain box-sets of original album reissues are available on labels such as Warner Jazz and Real Gone, which are utilitarian but such good value as to be worth owning. The seven disc ***The Complete Philips Albums*** (Verve) chronicles her recordings on that label from 1964-67 and is one of several Nina Simone items that are also available on vinyl.

setting up her own teaching practice. She herself continued lessons by way of an arrangement that was not uncommon for unsuccessful applicants by studying privately with Vladimir Sokoloff, who would have been her tutor at Curtis.

Looking to make some more money, she noted that several of her students worked in bars and clubs, so via an agent she secured a season at the Midtown Bar and Grill in Atlantic City, where she was required to sing as well as play the piano. She obliged, but from the off found her own distinctive way to be a singer-pianist, mixing classical fragments with gospel songs, hymns and popular tunes, often in continuous interpolated and segued sets. Her relatively untrained voice had a range that barely exceeded an octave – she would later allude to her singing as adding another line to the piano part rather than being accompanied by it – and a delivery that sat somewhere between a croon and a blues holler. The latter evoked the music she played at home for her father, watching through a window for the return of her disapproving Evangelist mother. Mary Kate Waymon would certainly never have countenanced her daughter playing the blues, let alone working in a bar. Deciding that a stage name would aid necessary discretion, Eunice combined a nickname given to her by a boyfriend with the first name of her favourite film star, Simone Signoret, and became Nina Simone. Her chosen course led to work in more prestigious venues and to her first recording contract and debut album *Little Girl Blue* (pictured right) on Bethlehem Records in 1958.



Swansong: Nina Simone plays Carnegie Hall in 2002

It's tempting to say that the rest is history, but Simone's professional life was complicated. Bethlehem bought the rights to her album outright, which subsequently cost her vast sums in royalties, then added insult to injury by releasing a spoiler album of unused tracks when she moved to Colpix records to record a series of albums beginning with *The Amazing Nina Simone* in 1959. She had exceptional stage presence and a volatile temper (she was eventually diagnosed as bipolar) but many of her outbursts were rooted in her awareness of the respect routinely afforded classical musicians, such as having audiences who didn't disrupt performances. Her approach to her material was that of the classical recitalist, choosing items from a repertoire and making them her own. In this she was highly eclectic, covering jazz standards, folk tunes, religious songs and selections from the popular music of the day in her own intense style, inserting slivers of glittering counterpoint and expansive chordal statements derived from her love of Bach and Beethoven, whose music she had played after returning from recording sessions as an antidote to the confinement of the Bethlehem studio.

Her own songs, when she wrote them, were grounded in her own personal experience and her long association with the civil rights movement. *Mississippi Goddam* is perhaps the most famous example – featuring a prodding, insistent piano part reminiscent of Kurt Weill, another notable influence, the song is both a rallying call and a plea for sanity. Her subsequent international career had wound down by the time her legendary track *My Baby Just Cares for Me*, featuring a piano solo that draws effortlessly on both her classical training and her improvising skills, was used in a television commercial in 1987, but this was enough to return her to the spotlight.

So, was Nina Simone classical music's loss and popular music's gain? Perhaps, but if the world has learned anything during her lifetime, it's that the worst kind of racism is insidious rather than overt. Maybe her exclusion from Curtis was due to her race or maybe she did indeed fail to make the grade, but the question that remains is this: would a white, middle-class male candidate receiving the same rejection have faced the same lifetime of gnawing uncertainty as to the reasoning behind it? On 19 April 2003 Simone learned that Curtis planned to award her an honorary degree. She died two days later. 🎧

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15 ways to flog tickets

John Evans takes a look at the ingenious ideas and questionable gimmicks that concert promoters have used to get bums on seats

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID LYTTLETON

Concerts so dark the audience can barely read the programme, so cold they can't hear the music for their chattering teeth and so high up they get vertigo: just three of the many deprivations promoters have subjected the paying public to in the name of classical music with a difference.

Blame the premiere of Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, with its canons and pyrotechnics. Never mind that a concertgoer's dress was set alight, that one soldier lost a hand and another was blinded. The fact was, the promoter persuaded thousands of Londoners to turn up. Over 250 years later, they're still using all the tricks of the trade to encourage listeners to come. At the same time, new approaches intended to attract fresh audiences to classical music have evolved. You name it, promoters will try it. Without further ado here are 15 of the more unusual ploys they have used to fill concert halls...

1 A match made in heaven

With apologies to Shakespeare, if music be the food of love, let's shift some tickets. This was clearly the intention of folk in the marketing department at New York's Metropolitan Opera when, back in 2007, they dreamed up Connect at the Met, a series of concerts for love-hungry singles. Twenty to 30 year-olds got Mozart's *Magic Flute*, gay and lesbian concertgoers *The Marriage of Figaro* and the over 40s – maybe back for a second try – Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

2 Insomniac inspiration

In a new twist on bed shopping, Spring Studios, a New York concert venue, drafted in 160 Beautyrest mattresses and beds to use at a concert of *Sleep*. Designed to help people nod off, this eight-hour lullaby was composed by Max Richter with the assistance of neuroscientist David Eagleman. 'People aren't getting nearly enough sleep,' explained Richter. 'When we perform it, some people lie down right away and fall asleep.' Others dash around trying all the mattresses before, perhaps, plumping for the medium-firm Beautyrest Platinum Harbour Reach (\$1,999).

3 The promotional godfather

As long ago as 1856, businessman Henry Lee Higginson of Boston, Massachusetts, had a vision for an orchestra to bring the classics to the masses. By 1881 his dream had become reality in the form of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, for which a ticket cost as little as 25 cents. Four years later he launched the Boston Pops Orchestra, whose most famous conductor was Arthur Fiedler. His sell-out Holiday Pops and Fourth of July Pops concerts were the template for today's slickly marketed classical extravaganzas.

4 Candlelight atmosphere

All those flickering candles, that eye strain... what Mozart would have given for a light switch. So imagine his surprise on finding that today's promoters, blessed with all manner of electrical lighting,

are doing a tidy business selling concerts performed by – wait for it – candlelight. In a new twist, a bottle of champagne is thrown in. Alcohol and fire: not a good mix, as any sozzled 18th-century composer surveying the smouldering wreckage of his wooden lodgings will tell you.

5 Mozart time-machine

We know the classics performed on period instruments sound different, but what about when performed in period dress? Does a wig-wearing violinist sound more authentic? That's the idea behind Salzburg's Mozart Dinner Concerts. This more expensive variation on the candlelight concept finds the performers in fancy dress, while their audience enjoys the kind of nosh, including St Peter's bread, lemon chicken soup and a honey dessert, that Mozart himself enjoyed, before writing another masterpiece to pay for it.

6 Midnight feast

When explaining the thinking behind its midnight concert series, the Budapest Festival Orchestra didn't mince its words: 'Symphonic performances are usually formal events full of senior citizens in old-fashioned music halls – but the Midnight Music classical-concert series was created for young people who live by the moon and sleep by the sun.' Just so the city's classical dudes were in no doubt this was cool, bean bags replaced chairs and 'lucky listeners' could sit next to 'casually dressed' musicians. Hey, they could even turn their pages. Gimme five, Ludwig. ▶

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7 Beach party

If you think sand between your toes is a pain, pity the 70 members of the Barcelona Symphony and Catalonia National Symphony Orchestra as they hobbled across the beach, instruments in hand, to take up their positions. Actually, the pictures of the concert, held on Barceloneta Beach in 2015, show the players on a stage clear of the sandy stuff. Not so the poor punters who were relegated to the beach, forced to sit on towels instead of chairs, with one eye on the rising tide.

8 Lang Lang – you rock!

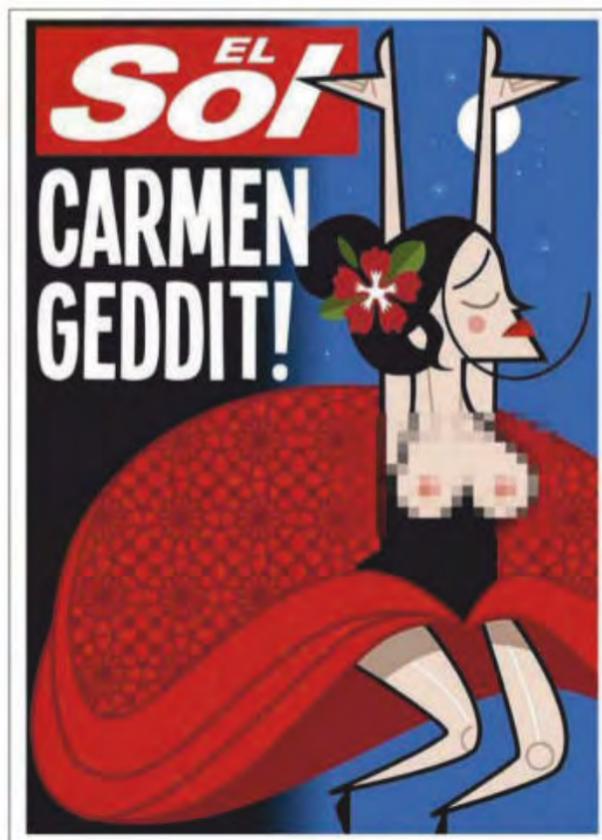
Ever since Liszt, the piano can claim more than its fair share of performers guaranteed to put derrières on seats. They include Lang Lang who, at the 2014 Grammy Awards, duetted with rock group Metallica on their song, *One*. ‘He’s interjected himself into the song like no one else has ever done,’ promised Metallica’s Kirk Hammett. On studying a repeat outing in Beijing, his claim looks to be over the top. Lang Lang is relegated to sideman until a cadenza halfway through.

9 André Rieu’s palace

Violinist and conductor André Rieu was already the boss of his own 60-piece private orchestra when in 2008 he went for broke, splashing out £34m on not one but two almost full-scale touring palaces that would form the backdrop to his spectacular concerts around the world. Ice rinks, fountains, a state carriage covered in real gold... you name it, Rieu’s replicas of Vienna’s Schönbrunn Palace had it. It nearly bankrupted him but the concerts were a sell-out.

10 Mountain retreat

At over 5,000 feet above sea level, on top of a mountain, the Moscow Symphony Orchestra tunes up for a rock vs classical showdown with stars from bands including Chicago and Toto. It’s a key event in the tourist board’s bid to grow Ras Al Khaimah’s visitor numbers to one million by the end of 2018. Trouble is, as the United Arab Emirates’ tallest mountain, Jebel Jais gets chilly, and the audience is advised to wear something warm. At £165 a ticket, that’s one thing the promoter is definitely feeling.



Covent Garden made all 2,200 seats available exclusively to readers of *The Sun*

11 Starlight expression

It sounds magical: an evening of live classical music under the stars, in the grounds of the Johannesburg Country Club. Over the past 20 years it has attracted a cult following. ‘When you see 4,000 people lighting candles and “sharing brightness”, you can’t help feeling positive about the potential for South Africa,’ says Richard Cock, the festival’s conductor. Unfortunately it’s a sentiment undermined by the programme’s small print, where the organisers ask that patrons refrain from bringing firearms, drugs and weapons.

12 Frosty reception

‘We’re in the middle of nowhere and the festival takes place in the depths of winter,’ says Martin Fröst, clarinetist and for ten years director of Vinterfest, held in the Swedish town of Mora and now overseen by Icelandic pianist Vikingur Ólafsson. So you can be sure there will be a fair amount of snow. It’s why concertgoers wear thermal underwear, tramp around

in thick boots and speed between venues on sledges. With promoters keen to attract audiences to their particular corner of the globe, Vinterfest looks to be one festival that’s made of the white stuff.

13 Pooch-ini performances

‘Has your dog ever heard Chopin performed live?’ asks pianist Lisa Spector. Probably not, which is why Spector – she hails from San Francisco, where else? – created Canine Classical Concerts. ‘Dogs are always on alert, wondering if any new sound is safe or not,’ she says. ‘We provide dogs with beautiful, psychoacoustically designed music, and concerts that offer a bonding experience between two- and four-leggeds.’ Unconvinced? Spector also provides a photo of Sanchez, her late Labrador, practising to be the page turner.

14 Tabloid opera

‘Carmen geddit!’ was among the headlines that greeted the news, in 2008, of *The Sun* newspaper’s promotional tie-up with the Royal Opera House (ROH) to offer discounted tickets to its readers. For the first night of *Don Giovanni*, Covent Garden made all 2,200 seats available exclusively to *Sun* readers, with tickets priced from £7.50 to £30, compared with the usual £195 for the best seats. ‘[This offer is] for people who perhaps may not have thought that the ROH was for them,’ said chief executive Tony Hall. The ROH still offers bargain tickets including, last year, to people prepared to stand in the stalls. Not the same, though, is it?

15 The one that got away...

Opera has never been the easiest sell which was why, in 2004, impresario Raymond Gubbay decided something had to be done. He launched an opera company at London’s Savoy Theatre to attract new opera audiences raised on West End musicals or the theatre and put off going to Covent Garden or the Coliseum by high ticket prices and their aura of exclusivity. However, despite the most expensive seats at his Savoy Opera costing a reasonable £49.50, sales failed to take off. After just one month, Gubbay pulled the plug, unable to explain why sales had tanked. It was probably the first time in history that a concert promoter was lost for words.

AFTER 10 SUCCESSFUL YEARS, MARY MILLER, CURRENT GENERAL AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, WILL LEAVE AT THE END OF THE 2020/2021 SEASON AND NOW BERGEN NATIONAL OPERA SEEKS A NEW

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BERGEN NATIONAL OPERA

Bergen National Opera (BNO), founded in 2005, has established a reputation within the international opera community for producing and presenting performances at the highest level, in collaboration with Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and the professional vocal ensemble Edvard Grieg Kor. Based in Bergen on the west coast of Norway, the company presents full-scale opera productions with broad appeal to a wide audience challenging established conventions with regard to new audiences, performance spaces and artistic expression. The number of performances in 2018 is 75, divided amongst 6 productions, with an expected total audience of 19 000. The company receives public funding totalling 30.25 MNOK and has an annual turnover in 2019, including significant private contributions and other income, of 32.1 MNOK.



Edinburgh Scotland

The Scottish capital is home to one of the world's best-known arts festivals, but what goes on the rest of the year? *Kate Molleson* tells all



Fling wide the gates!: Greyfriars Kirk, where the Dunedin Consort plays; (below) RSN0's conductor Thomas Søndergård

City rivalries can produce some sublime slanging matches, especially where Glasgow is involved. 'Aw fur coat and nae knickers' is just one of the poetic slurs levelled at Edinburgh by its garrulous neighbour – the assertion being that, underneath the grand architecture and the auld wealth, under the proud contours and the stately institutions attached to capital status, Edinburgh is no more sophisticated than anywhere else. Not where it counts.

Glasgow has a point and doesn't. Edinburgh is a city of layers, literally. Streets built upon staircases built upon streets. Postcard elegance and pee-stained medieval closes. Home of Jekyll and of Hyde, home of the biggest arts festival in the world and the dreichest February nights. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Centre with a current city council that gives the go-ahead to spectacularly soulless commercial developments.

There's a common phenomenon in Edinburgh. Visitors flock to the city in August and decide to stay. They fall in love – with each other, with themselves, with the ghost stories and the heady month of round-the-clock theatre, comedy, concerts and dramas. Even the drizzle looks artsy in

August. Who wouldn't want to stay? Things get interesting when these lingering visitors discover what's left once the circus has quit town. Because Edinburgh in the other eleven months is a very different place to be – and it would be wrong to call one more 'real' than the other. Edinburgh is both. It's the intersection, it's the incongruence. It's fur coat and nae knickers.





It's your round:
folk music at the
Sandy Bell's pub

First myth to dispel is that Edinburgh outwith August is a cultural doldrums. It's become such a running joke that one promoter launched a series under the name 'Nothing ever happens here' – the calibre of the gigs and the enthusiasm of the audience disproving the stereotype. That series happens at Summerhall, a former vet college in the Southside that now distills its own gin. It's also an arts multiplex, and the last show I saw there was an opera called *Navigate the Blood* that fused murder mystery with a history of gin distilling, set to music by Scottish indie darlings Admiral Fallow and Edinburgh-based composer Gareth Williams. There's your incongruence in one.

The outfit behind *Navigate the Blood* was NOISE (New Opera in Scotland Events), established in the past decade to fill the gap left by Scottish Opera, once hugely ambitious, now more hit and miss. Let's face it, if opera is your thing, Edinburgh is probably not the place to be. On the flip side, Edinburgh is excellently served in terms of orchestral music. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra both belong to Glasgow but perform regularly at Edinburgh's Usher Hall, and both are currently in fine fettle: the RSNO at the start of an exciting new chapter with Thomas Søndergård as music director, and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra the most daring orchestra in the UK as far as contemporary music is concerned.

Edinburgh's home band is the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO): lithe, refined, an ensemble of wonderful heritage and a

robust sense of its own class. Its current base is the dear old Queen's Hall, with its unforgiving pews and delicate acoustics. But the SCO has long had ambitions for a hall of its own and it's finally set to get one. A swanky structure designed by David Chipperfield Architects is to be built among the banks and designer shops of the New Town. It's to be called The IMPACT Centre, with public funding granted on the promise that it'll serve not just the SCO but

First myth to dispel is that Edinburgh outwith August is a cultural doldrums

many kinds of music and audiences. If it's to live up to its self-conscious name, it'll need to open its doors wide.

As anywhere, some of the most interesting music-making happens outside the formal concert halls. Scotland's foremost contemporary music ensemble Red Note hosts experimental 'noisy nights' in the bar of the legendary Traverse Theatre. The Dunedin Consort – a world-class period instrument ensemble – brings illuminating performances to the historic Greyfriars Kirk or the graceful St Cecilia's Hall. The Scottish Ensemble forges imaginative collaborations with dancers and instrumentalists at venues around the city. St Mary's Cathedral hosts one of the UK's top cathedral choirs. Down



Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci Auld Reekie castrato

A superstar fugitive who became an honorary Scot, Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci (above) was born poor in Siena in the 1730s, castrated as a child and became world-famous for his fabulous soprano voice. But a sex scandal made him infamous. In 1766 he married his 15-year-old student in Ireland, and because he was a castrato the marriage was technically illegal. He escaped imprisonment by fleeing to Edinburgh. A flamboyant, high-spending, law-dodging Italian eunuch in the sombre streets of Enlightenment Scotland? Turns out Tenducci was a hit. He sang regularly at the Edinburgh Musical Society, whose members were mostly freemasons. Catholic superstar fugitive seduces the masons: just another Edinburgh anomaly.

in the port of Leith, a proud Victorian civic theatre has reopened its doors after decades of dereliction and is shifting Edinburgh's cultural gravity to the north.

Speaking of which, if you want to catch musicians off-duty, they're probably at the beach. Portobello is Edinburgh-on-sea; in summer the esplanade is a jamboree of brass bands and buskers. When it gets cold? Try the pubs. Tourists frequent the famous folk sessions at Sandy Bell's or the Royal Oak. For gentler traditional tunes, try Sunday afternoons at the Waverley Bar, where you might find one of Scotland's finest pipers silencing the room with a Gaelic slow air. An unforgettable musical moment – and not even in August. 🎵

Further information:

BBC SSO www.bbc.co.uk/bbcso

RSNO www.rsno.org.uk



3

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

Friday. Programmes in January are:

31 December – 4 January **Gershwin**

7-11 January **Tippett**

14-18 January **Mendelssohn**

21-25 January **Rameau**

28 January – 1 February **Liszt**

Modest Musorgsky

The Russian composer drew on the gritty reality and colourful myths of his country to create incomparable music, says *Daniel Jaffé*

ILLUSTRATION: MATT HERRING

Musorgsky's style

Audacious harmonies Musorgsky composed at the piano, and often discovered striking and unorthodox harmonies through extemporising. In this way, he hit upon the remarkable bell harmonies which open the coronation scene of his opera *Boris Godunov*.

Language of the heart Musorgsky's expressiveness derives to a degree from Schumann's harmonic language. Yet one of his greatest achievements was the way his music reflects the fractured, multi-dimensional nature of the individual human soul or identity – whether the mighty yet tormented Tsar Boris (below, played by Theodor Scheidl in 1936) or a humble peasant woman.

Compare and contrast Particularly when Musorgsky's music is without the thread of a vocal line, an idea is often not so much answered as complemented or contrasted with another idea. 'Dawn on the Moscow River' which opens *Khovanshchina* offers a brilliant depiction through a mosaic of musical ideas – a technique Stravinsky, for instance, was to push further in his music from *Petrushka* onwards.

That martial sound An exception to the above technique, perhaps not surprisingly for a former guards officer, is when Musorgsky composes a march. For these, he structures the thematic material more conventionally: excellent examples include the festive march from *Mlada*, and the hair-raising march of the Streltsy in his incomplete opera *Khovanshchina*.

One can often tell a great deal about a composer by who their fans are among their peers. For Musorgsky – whose main period of creativity was, it should be remembered, during the 1860s and '70s – they included virtually every leading French composer of the late-19th and early-20th century. When Saint-Saëns brought a score of Musorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* from Russia back to Paris, Debussy and Ravel among others were enthralled by the music's innovative and audacious use of harmony, and its new expressive horizons. Under Musorgsky's influence, Debussy composed his evocative and atmospheric orchestral

To claim that Musorgsky achieved all he did simply from innate genius would, of course, be an exaggeration. He himself knew how much he owed to Berlioz's pioneering work, above all the richly descriptive *Symphonie fantastique* including its witches' sabbath which, together with Liszt's tone poem *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, laid the foundations of *A night on Bare Mountain*. But Musorgsky took his sources and transformed them through his powerful creative personality into his own distinctive soundworld – one that encompassed a pioneering realism in song and opera, and yet equally conjured some

Debussy and Ravel were enthralled by Musorgsky's audacious use of harmony

Nocturnes – indeed its opening theme is practically stolen from Musorgsky's song 'Thou didst not know me' (from the cycle *Sunless*). Ravel famously reworked Musorgsky's piano cycle *Pictures at an Exhibition* into a vibrantly colourful and hugely popular orchestral showpiece. Closer to the Russian composer still is Ravel's opera *L'enfant et les sortilèges* – and not simply because it follows the example of Musorgsky's transformation of speech into expressive vocal writing (as did the Czech composer Janáček).

Ravel's remarkable empathy with the child facing the consequences of his own fury, and the poignancy of his recognising how easy it is to destroy what one loves, are just as much legacy from Musorgsky's mixture of harsh realism and apparent yet touching sentiment.

of the most nightmarish visions from Russia's mythology.

For all Musorgsky's much-admired ability as a pianist, he wrote little of significance for his instrument apart from *Pictures*. His reputation as one of the greatest and most seminal composers Russia produced in the 19th century rests above all on his songs and operas, which are quite unlike any others previously composed. In his songs particularly, Musorgsky wrested the form well out of the genteel salon. While contemporaries such as Tchaikovsky, and even Musorgsky's colleagues among the Mighty Handful (the neo-nationalist group led by Balakirev, whose members included Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov) continued to write songs about hopeless love, nightingales and fragrant flowers, Musorgsky presented street urchins, ▶







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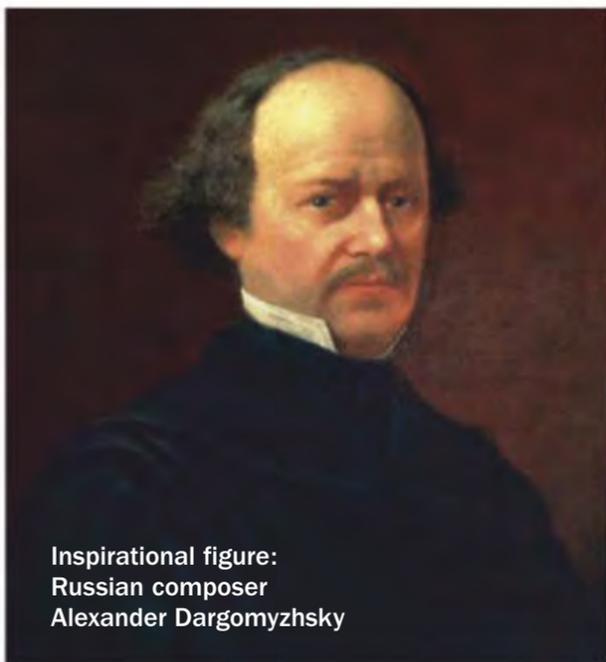
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Inspirational figure:
Russian composer
Alexander Dargomyzhsky

or a peasant wife brutally scolding her drunken husband, or a pathetic simpleton courting a girl with whom he is besotted. All of these are vividly, almost visually, depicted by his expressive vocal lines and descriptive piano accompaniments.

Musorgsky's aim, as he declared in 1870, was to free Russian music from the 'high-heel inserts and tight shoes' of Western European music, and to give unaffected expression and depiction of Russia in its 'bast sandals'. To a large degree this accorded with the anti-academicism of his principal composition teacher, Balakirev, and the neo-nationalist scholar Vladimir Stasov, who acted as mentor of the Mighty Handful. More fundamentally, though, Musorgsky wished to depict individuals and more generally the human experience as honestly as he could. This was a natural consequence of his first and inspirational encounter with a composer. In 1857 he met Alexander Dargomyzhsky – at that time Russia's leading living composer – whose avowed aim was to reflect in his operas the actual intonation of Russian as spoken by flesh-and-blood individuals.

Today, Dargomyzhsky's music, especially the supposed acme of his ambition, the opera *The Stone Guest*, appears harmonically unadventurous and dull. Yet his high-minded seriousness impressed Musorgsky, only in his late teens at the time of their first encounter and conscientiously though fruitlessly pursuing a career as a junior army officer. The second surviving son of a wealthy family of landowners, Musorgsky had quickly shown his talent as a pianist, and his main musical



Rich canvas:
Ravel working on
the orchestration
of Musorgsky's
*Pictures at an
Exhibition* in 1922

activity prior to meeting Dargomyzhsky had been charming the ladies by brilliantly playing the latest hits from Italian opera. Dargomyzhsky inspired him to abandon such apparently frivolous Western fare and take up the cause of creating Russian music that would truly reflect its people.

By 1861, when Tsar Alexander II emancipated Russia's serfs, Musorgsky had committed himself to the pursuit of music – which is not to say he had found a means of making a living. In 1863, now in financial need, he had to take a minor post in St Petersburg's civil service. Late that year, he moved into a communal apartment with five other young men, where they lived according to the socialist ideals espoused by the recently published and hugely influential novel *What is to be done?* (below left) by Nikolai Chernyshevsky. The author's statements about art – particularly, that it should aspire to match or at least reflect reality – reinforced Musorgsky's pursuit of 'truth' in his music.

So how was it that such a dedicated realist ended up composing such colourfully fantastical works as *Pictures at an Exhibition's* 'Gnomus' or 'Baba Yaga', or *A night on Bare Mountain?* Musorgsky's

interest was not only in the quotidian existence of humankind, but also in how their mind and their imagination worked. Significantly, he explored this principally through his observation of children, whose spontaneity, lack of social graces and ingenuousness endeared them to him, just as those qualities in him endeared Musorgsky to them. A niece of Stasov's, Vavara, remembers how Musorgsky, unlike most adults, did not condescend to her and her siblings, but was quite prepared to talk to her about 'serious matters', introducing her to the names of constellations and of individual stars. At the same time, he unashamedly – and to the great amusement of his child friends – often performed at the piano songs typically sung by their nannies.

Through this empathy with childhood quite unusual for that time, Musorgsky was able to enter – as no composer before him had done before – a child's sensibility with an extraordinary level of perception and lack of sentiment. The first fruit of this was *Children's Song* (Detskaya pesenka): its extraordinary use of attractive dissonant harmonies was later emulated by Debussy (not least in *Children's Corner*). The song itself has the artlessness of a genuine child's song, though the piano deftly suggests its context: the way it

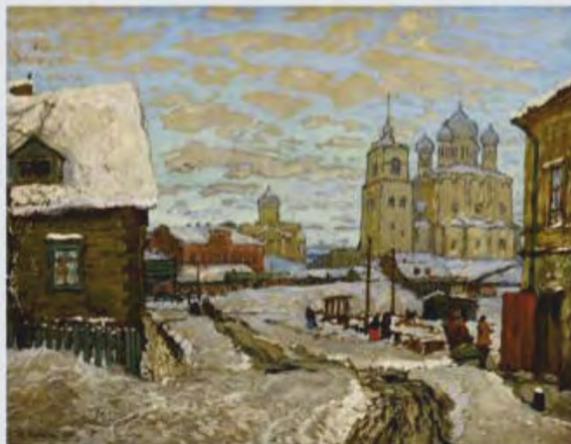


MUSORGSKY *Life & Times*

1839

LIFE: Modest Musorgsky is born into a wealthy land-owning family in the **Pskov** region of Russia. He begins music lessons from the age of six.

TIMES: Five thousand Russian troops set out to conquer the Khanate of Khiva (in modern-day Uzbekistan). Hindered by an exceptionally harsh winter, the expedition proves a disaster.



1857

LIFE: Now an officer in the **Russian Imperial Guard**, he meets the composer Dargomyzhsky, through whom he meets composers Cui and Balakirev and the critic Vladimir Stasov.

TIMES: The Russian composer Mikhail Glinka dies, aged 52, in Berlin. After a few months, his body is disinterred and transported to St Petersburg for re-burial.



1861

LIFE: Tsar Alexander II's liberal reforms, including the emancipation of the serfs, lead to the collapse of Musorgsky's family estate, requiring him to take on low-paid jobs,

TIMES: Nikolai Kasatkin, a Russian priest, lands in Hokkaido, Japan, where he works as an Orthodox missionary. He is later canonised as St Nicholas of Japan.

1867

LIFE: He completes his orchestral work *St John's Night on Bald Mountain*, but has his enthusiasm dampened when **Balakirev** suggests that changes need to be made to it.

TIMES: Believing Alaska to be lacking in natural resources and largely uninhabitable, Russia sells the territory to the United States of America for \$7.2m.



1874

LIFE: Inspired by the drawings, watercolours and stage designs of Viktor Hartmann, a friend who died the previous year, he composes his *Pictures at an Exhibition* for solo piano.

TIMES: The Moscow-born mathematician **Sofia Kovalevskaya** obtains a doctorate from the University of Göttingen, becoming the first woman ever to hold such a degree.



1881

LIFE: Shortly after having his portrait painted by Ilya Repin, he dies as a result of alcoholism. He is buried in St Petersburg's Alexander Nevsky Cemetery.

TIMES: Alexander II is assassinated by members of the People's Will revolutionary organisation, who throw explosives at the tsar's carriage.

ends, breaking off in the middle with an unresolved chord, suggests how a child's game is often abruptly dropped after an interruption or distraction.

Musorgsky's real breakthrough, though, was the song *With Nanny*, composed in 1868. The text, which he wrote, is of a child demanding their nanny tells a story, one moment wanting one about a monster, the next asking instead to hear about a comical royal couple. Both text and music paint a compelling portrait, the child's thoughts flitting and discursive yet each of them intense and clear; while the vocal line captures the inflections of a child's prattle, the piano deftly depicts the stumbling king and sneezing queen as readily as the child's fear of the monster (and, by implication, nanny's temper). Musorgsky dedicated this song to Dargomyzhsky, though the older composer's reaction when Musorgsky first

Musorgsky's real breakthrough was the song *With Nanny*, composed in 1868

played it to him at a private gathering of friends in April 1868 was 'Well, that outdid me.' Musorgsky's compelling vignette would have presented a striking contrast with Dargomyzhsky's worthy yet boring *Stone Guest*, so it's possible there was a tinge of jealousy in that laconic comment.

Following that modest yet consummate achievement, Musorgsky attempted to surpass Dargomyzhsky at his own game by setting unamended Gogol's comic play *The Marriage* as an opera. This was abandoned when Musorgsky recognised the limitations of Dargomyzhsky's (and indeed Chernyshevsky's) aesthetic; yet it was not a wasted exercise, as the lessons Musorgsky learnt paved the way to his two great operatic masterpieces – *Boris Godunov* and (though incomplete, substantially composed) *Khovanshchina*. Meanwhile, *With Nanny* opened a portal to what became a treasure trove of songs which have influenced virtually every leading song composer since from Debussy through to Poulenc and Britten. 🎵

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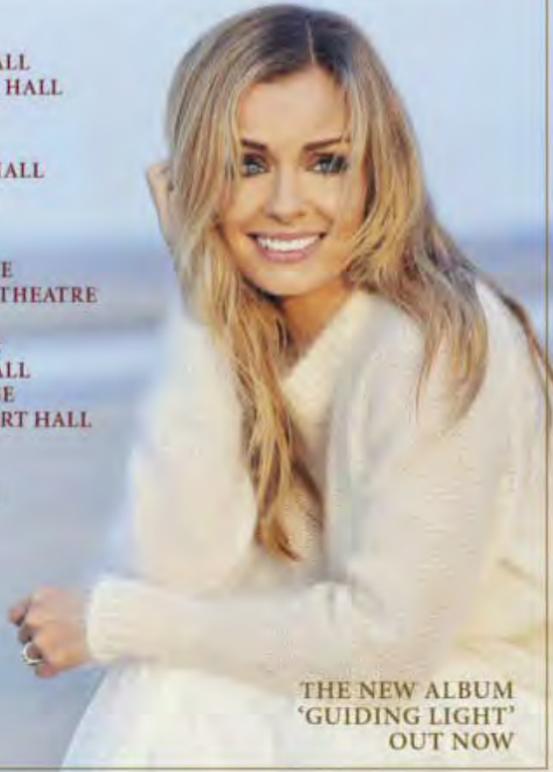
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- 29 MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL
- 30 GATESHEAD SAGE

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18 CARDIFF ST DAVID'S HALL	03 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL
20 LLANDUDNO VENUE CYMRU THEATRE	05 MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL
22 GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL	06 HARROGATE INT. CENTRE
23 BLACKPOOL OPERA HOUSE	08 MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL
25 GATESHEAD SAGE	10 NOTTINGHAM ROYAL CONCERT HALL
26 GATESHEAD SAGE	11 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
28 EDINBURGH USHER HALL	13 BOURNEMOUTH INT. CENTRE
30 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL	14 SOUTHAMPTON MAYFLOWER
31 LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC	16 BRIGHTON DOME
	17 LONDON ROYAL ALBERT HALL

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MATINEE SHOW

- 16 LEEDS CITY VARIETIES

- 18 SCUNTHORPE BATHS HALL
- 19 HULL CITY HALL
- 21 YORK GRAND OPERA HOUSE
- 22 CREWE LYCEUM THEATRE
- 23 BLACKPOOL OPERA HOUSE
- 25 GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL
- 26 ABERDEEN MUSIC HALL
- 28 PERTH CONCERT HALL

MARCH 2019

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- 04 GATESHEAD SAGE
- 05 MIDDLESBROUGH TOWN HALL
- 07 HARROGATE ROYAL HALL
- 08 HALIFAX VICTORIA THEATRE
- 09 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL
- 11 KINGS LYNN CORN EXCHANGE
- 12 CHELTENHAM TOWN HALL
- 14 BARNSTAPLE QUEENS THEATRE

- 15 WESTON-SUPER-MARE PLAYHOUSE
- 16 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION
- 18 SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION
- 19 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
- 21 STEVENAGE GORDON CRAIG THEATRE
- 22 GUILDFORD G LIVE
- 23 PETERBOROUGH THE CRESSET
- 25 ISLE OF WIGHT SHANKLIN THEATRE
- 26 SWINDON WYVERN THEATRE
- 28 TORQUAY THE PRINCESS THEATRE
- 29 NOTTINGHAM ROYAL CONCERT HALL
- 30 LOWESTOFT MARINA THEATRE

APRIL 2019

- 01 TUNBRIDGE WELLS ASSEMBLY HALL
- 02 IPSWICH REGENT THEATRE
- 04 READING HEXAGON
- 05 CARDIFF ST DAVIDS HALL
- 06 BOURNEMOUTH PAVILION THEATRE
- 08 BATH FORUM
- 09 WORTHING PAVILION THEATRE
- 11 SALISBURY CITY HALL
- 12 SWANSEA GRAND THEATRE
- 13 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
- 15 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL
- 16 WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND THEATRE
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- 19 MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER

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Death and the Maiden

Franz Schubert

Erik Levi picks out the finest recordings of the D minor string quartet in which the Austrian composer plumbs the very depths of despair



The composer

Schubert was in fairly good spirits at the start of 1824, which he welcomed in by breaking a window at a New Year's party – an omen, perhaps, for 12 months that would leave his spirit similarly shattered. The previous year had him diagnosed with syphilis, whose effects now began to take their toll, while his state of mind was probably not helped by a passion for his pupil Caroline Esterházy that evidently went unrequited. Aside from the *Death and the Maiden* quartet, other major works from this year include his F major Octet and the 'Rosamunde' String Quartet.

The work

'Just imagine a man whose health will never be re-established, and who from sheer despondency makes matters worse rather than better,' wrote Schubert to his friend Leopold Kupelwieser in March 1824; 'just imagine a man whose brightest hopes have come to nothing, to whom happiness of proffered love and friendship offers nothing but anguish, for whom enthusiasm for what is beautiful threatens to vanish altogether, and then ask yourself if such a condition does not represent a miserable and unhappy man?'

from the song of the same name which he had composed back in 1817.

Alongside the 'Rosamunde' Quartet, *Death and the Maiden* marks a radical break with Schubert's previous works in this genre. Whereas his earlier quartets more or less followed in the footsteps of Haydn and Mozart, *Death and the Maiden* reflects a determination to stamp his own individuality on the medium. What is new is the symphonic scale and heightened emotional temperature of Schubert's musical argument which throughout is haunted by the spectre of death.

The music is dark and sombre, the few shifts into a brighter major key offering little relief

This confessional letter reveals the composer's desperate state of mind as he grappled with the harsh realisation that there was no hope of him recovering from syphilis. He had spent part of the previous year in hospital fighting the disease, but with little success. Confronting the prospect that his life would be cut short, coupled with continuing anxiety as to his prospects of securing any semblance of financial stability, cast a dark shadow over many of the works written during this period. None, however, projects such an uncompromising message of despair as the String Quartet in D minor. It was the second of two quartets written in 1824, and came to be known as *Der Tod und das Mädchen* ('Death and the Maiden') because in the second movement, Schubert composed a set of variations based on a fragment of the piano accompaniment

The long and intense first movement, lasting well over a quarter of hour when observing the exposition repeat, presents a veritable battle-ground between forceful and declamatory material that has a quasi-orchestral richness and quieter more lyrical episodes. For the most part, the music is dark and sombre, the few shifts into a supposedly brighter major key offering little relief. Perhaps the most disturbing passage comes at the end of the movement where instead of the expected emphatic final chords, the music collapses from sheer exhaustion into a ghostly echo of the opening dramatic flourish.

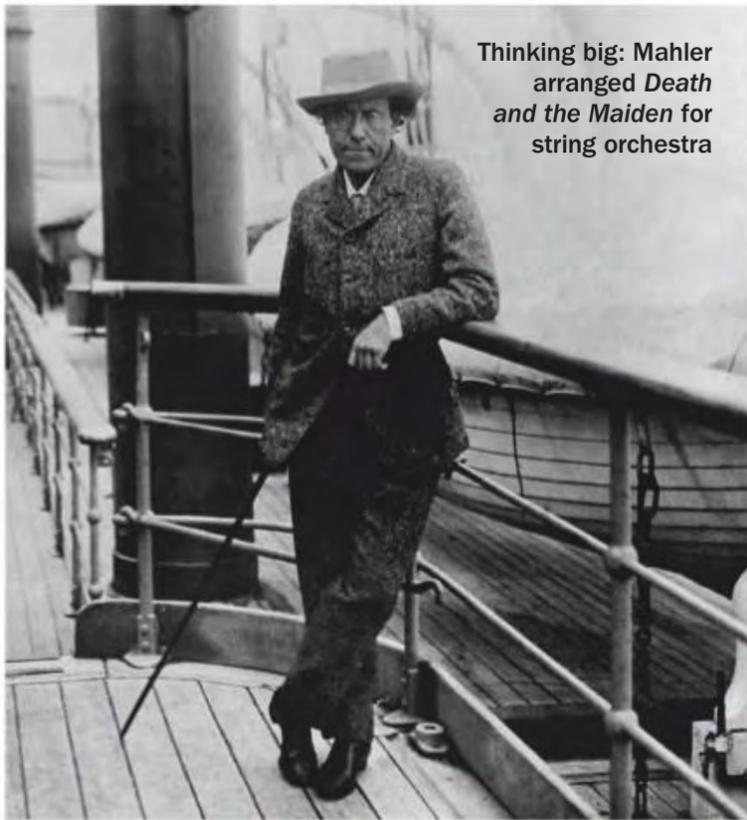
The suppressed dynamics here in effect offer an inspired segue into the calm opening of the second movement where the quartet hauntingly intones the piano part of the *Death and the Maiden* song in four-part harmony, sounding to

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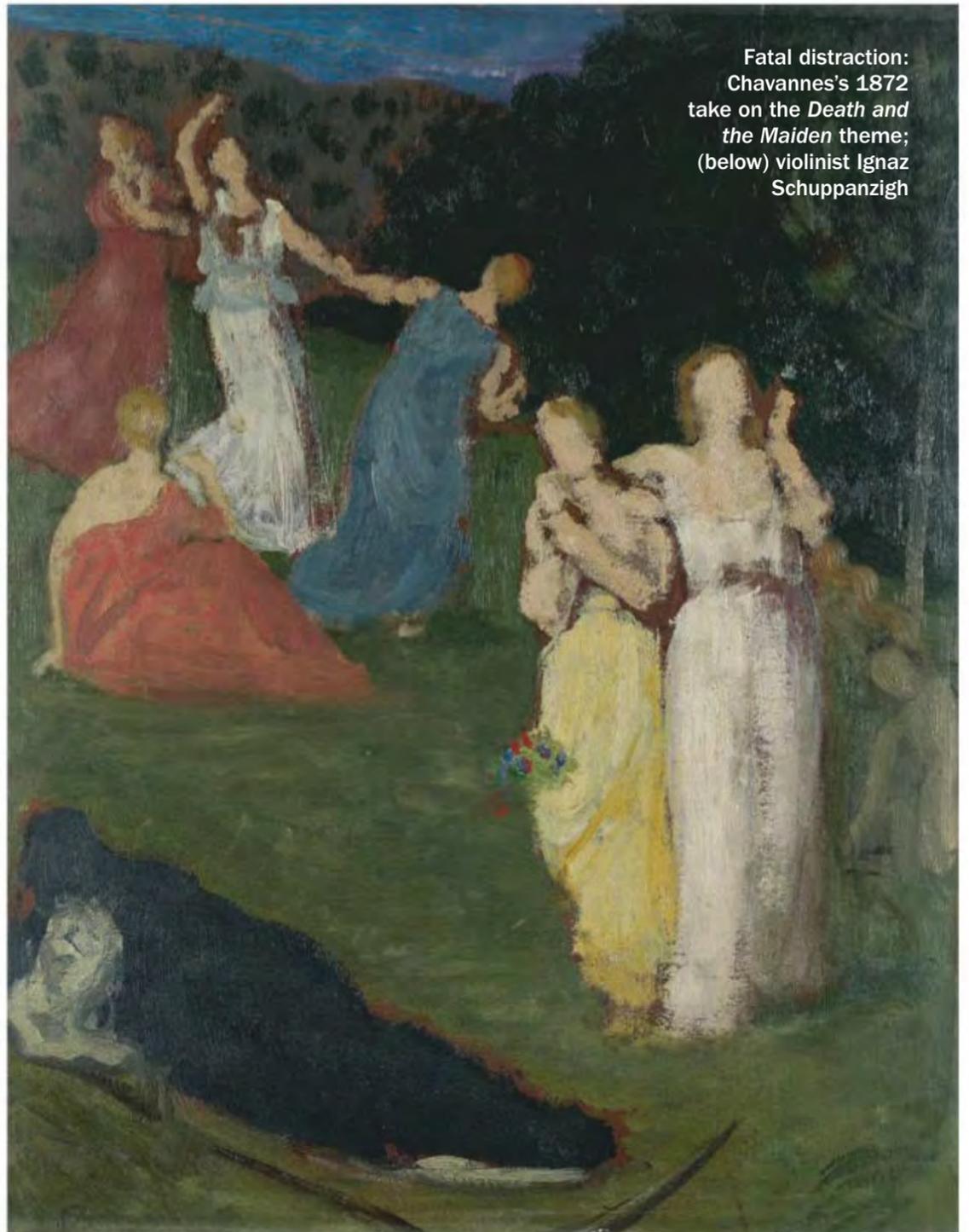
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Thinking big: Mahler arranged *Death and the Maiden* for string orchestra



Closing address: the Vienna house in which Schubert died



Fatal distraction: Chavannes's 1872 take on the *Death and the Maiden* theme; (below) violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh

all intents and purposes like a liturgical chant. Schubert subjects this material to ingenious transformations, from the lyrical introversion of the first two variations to the hard-edged intensity of the third. Most poignant of all is his trademark shift into the major key for the fourth variation. In the context of a work that doggedly returns to and reinforces the minor key throughout its four movements, this change of mood sounds all the more poignant.

A similarly brief oasis of tranquillity is recreated later in the work in the gentle major-key Trio that frames the driving Scherzo, some of whose thematic material is culled from a set of Ländler for piano that Schubert had composed the previous year. After this comes



the extraordinary and terrifying *Presto* finale, a whirlwind roller-coaster dance of death cast in the form of a tarantella. The obsessive rhythmic energy of the opening idea, which returns several times throughout the movement, creates an almost claustrophobic atmosphere and the only way Schubert seems able to resolve matters is by introducing an *accelerando* at the end which drives the music even further into the abyss.

Schubert dedicated both the 'Rosamunde' and *Death and the Maiden* quartets to Ignaz Schuppanzigh (left), the first violinist of a professional quartet that had been closely associated with performing the works of Beethoven. Although Schuppanzigh graciously accepted the 'Rosamunde', he was far

more dismissive of *Death and the Maiden*, advising Schubert that his time would be better spent writing songs. The net result of this rejection, which proved a bitter blow to Schubert, was that the work was never published during his lifetime and received very few performances until the late 1840s.

Thereafter, however, *Death and the Maiden* entered the repertoire, securing the esteem of many Romantic composers including Schumann, Brahms and Dvořák. Gustav Mahler was also a strong admirer of the work, but felt that its impact in the concert hall would be greatly enhanced by his decision, in 1896, to rearrange his fellow Austrian's piece for string orchestra.

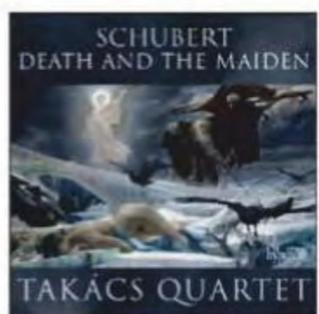
*Turn the page to discover the best recordings of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* quartet*



A consummate account: the Takács Quartet leave no corner unexplored

Passion and power in equal measure

The best recording



Takács Quartet

Hyperion CDA67585

Few quartets have enjoyed such a long and distinguished recording history as *Death and the Maiden*. Indeed, one of the earliest recorded versions, given by the Busch Quartet in the late 1930s (Warner Classics), still very much holds its own, particularly for the wonderfully moving way in which the players unfold the sequence of variations in the second movement, and for the sustained energy and tension of the Finale which is capped by a daring almost unhinged accelerando near the end. Later performances from 1970s and '80s by the Amadeus (DG), the Alban Berg

(Warner Classics) and Quartetto Italiano (Universal) also command enormous respect for the warmth and fluidity of their performances although they don't take as many risks as the Busch Quartet.

Since then, almost every major quartet worth its salt has committed its interpretation of *Death and the Maiden* to

The Takács Quartet never resort to sentimentality or exaggerated mannerisms

disc, making the field not only extremely crowded but highly competitive. Of course, absolute technical mastery of Schubert's ferociously difficult writing, especially in the fast and furious unison passages of the finale, has to be taken for granted, and almost all the currently available versions fulfil this requirement more than admirably. So the choice of the finest recording rests far more on

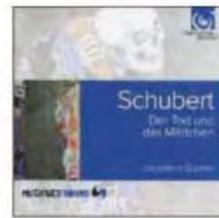
Three other great recordings



Pavel Haas Quartet

An arresting and powerful opening statement sets the scene for a thoroughly engrossing 2013

recording which achieves a similar level of urgency to that of the Takács. The Pavel Haas Quartet are particularly insightful in the way they conjure up the ghostly chill in the closing passage of the first movement, and there is a magical poignancy to the first violin's melodic decoration of the *Death and the Maiden* theme in the first variation of the second movement. At the opposite end of the dynamic spectrum, there's much to admire in the strongly punctuated, almost Brucknerian, rhythms of the Scherzo and the visceral power and wildness of the Finale. (Supraphon SU4110-2)



Jerusalem Quartet

A resonant recording helps to bolster the full-blooded nature of this 2008 interpretation. The

Jerusalem Quartets are more expansive than the Takács and Pavel Haas, giving the music greater space, a good example being their deliberately hesitant response to the febrile opening flourish in the first movement. It's a more obviously romantic view of the score, bringing calm, tenderness and warmth

the ways in which the players get to grips with sustaining the emotional anguish of Schubert's message without being overbearing too much of the time. Equally vital is the extent to which interpreters resist the temptation to contrive sudden artificial shifts in gear to enable there to be sufficient contrasts in mood in such a long and expansive work.

To my mind, the Takács Quartet's 2006 recording trumps all rivals in delivering a performance that maintains an almost demonic forward momentum throughout the first, third and fourth movements. They have all the necessary power and

to the few lyrical moments, but by no means understating the music's dark and unsettling character. (*Harmonia Mundi HMA1901990*)



Chiaroscuro Quartet

This recently released recording is a revelation. Performing on gut strings and employing very sparing use of vibrato, the Chiaroscuros enhance the originality, urgency and desperation of Schubert's message, nowhere more compellingly than in their no-holds-barred account of the Finale which builds up to a devastating and emotionally exhausting climax. In the few moments of repose, first violinist Alina Ibragimova mesmerises the listener with her subtly inflected and poetic phrasing. (*BIS 2268*)

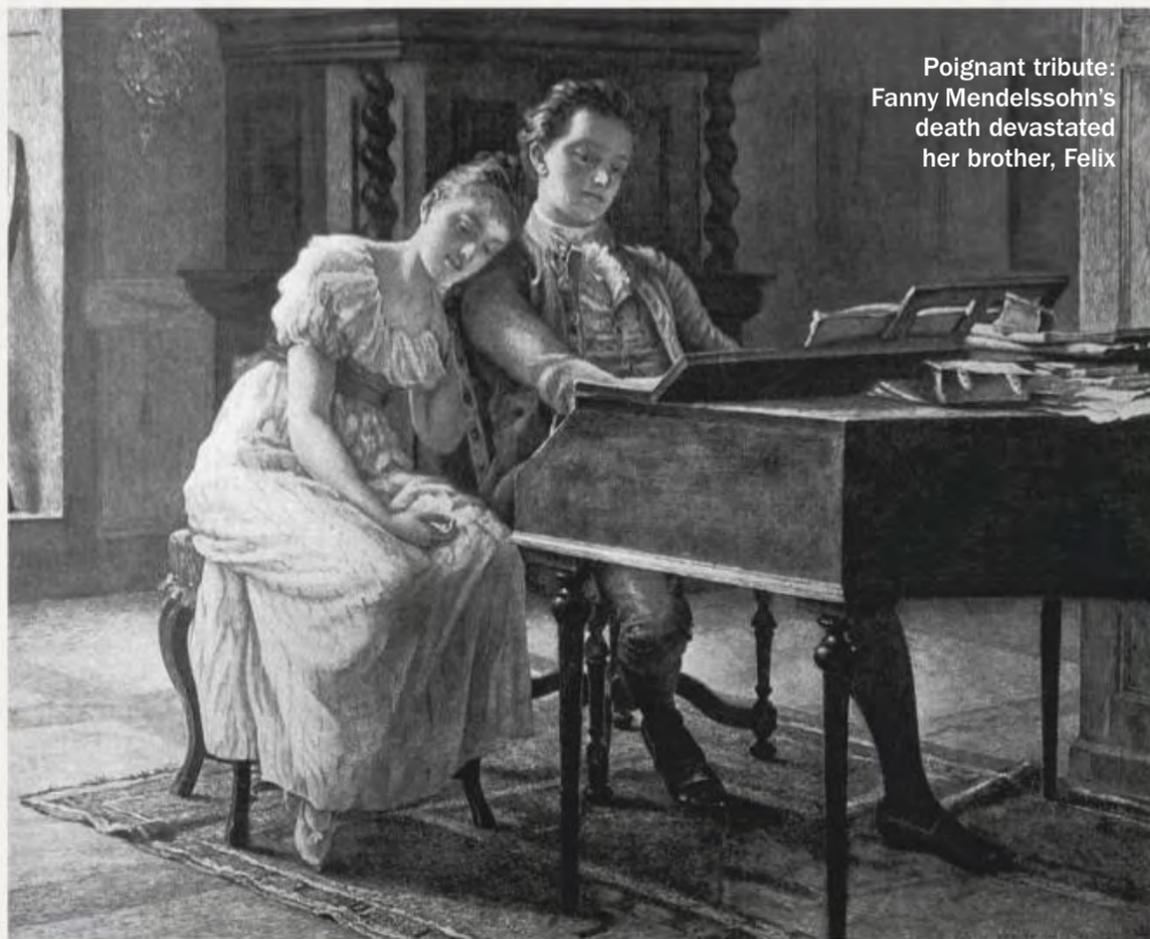
And one to avoid...



The German Mandelring Quartett enjoy the benefits of a superbly vivid SACD recording and the playing, particularly in the more lyrical sections of the score, has a great deal of finesse and sophistication. Nevertheless, the performance lacks a real cutting edge in the dramatic explosions of the first movement and the somewhat stolid tempo adopted for the Finale fails to communicate the sense of desperation that lies at the heart of the music.

variety of timbre to encapsulate every aspect of the music, from wildness and anger to tenderness, poignancy and even numbness of expression. But this is achieved without resorting to sentimentality or exaggerated mannerisms. As a result of their incredibly subtle mastery of Schubert's textures, they perfectly convey the emotional ambiguity that lies behind the music's more lyrical episodes, a good example being the gentler second idea in the first movement where the menacing viola ostinato pattern casts a distinctly uneasy light on the sweet-toned melody in thirds in the violins.

GETTY, ELLEN APPEL



Poignant tribute: Fanny Mendelssohn's death devastated her brother, Felix

Continue the journey...

We suggest works to explore after Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*

Like *Death and the Maiden*, **Schubert's** other quartet from 1824, the 'Rosamunde' in A minor, is suffused with melancholy. References to earlier works such as the *Die Götter Griechenlands* and – in terms of texture if not direct quotation – the song *Gretchen am Spinnrade* serve to remind us poignantly of the composer's younger, comparatively less careworn existence. (*Belcea Quartet Warner Classics 5574192*)

Also in the key of A minor is **Mendelssohn's** Second String Quartet, composed in 1827 at the age of only 18 and remarkable not just for its craftsmanship but also its emotional depth. While influenced by the late quartets of Beethoven, who had died months earlier, it also shares a resemblance with *Death and the Maiden* in being based on a song – in this instance 'Ist es Wahr' ('Is it True?'), which Mendelssohn had composed earlier that year. (*Quatuor Ebène Erato 464 5462*)

Mendelssohn's String Quartet No. 6 in F minor, meanwhile, was written six months after the death of his beloved sister Fanny in May 1847, and depicts the intense grief he was experiencing

– bearing the title 'Requiem for Fanny', its mood is one of almost unrelenting anxiety, despair and rage. Poignantly, it was also his last ever major work, as just two months after its completion, he himself was dead. (*Escher String Quartet BIS 2160*)

Dedicated to Brahms, **Dvorák's** String Quartet No. 9 was composed shortly after the deaths of two of his children, Růžena and Otakar. Sharing a key signature with *Death and the*

Maiden, the Czech's 1877 work is characterised by a similarly hard-driven Finale, while really sharp-eared

listeners may also spot the reference to *Gretchen am Spinnrade* in the opening movement. The desolation depicted in the *Adagio* third movement is, on the other hand, impossible to miss. (*Wihan Quartet Nimbus NI6115*)

Hugo Wolf is remembered today as a great master of song, arguably second only to Schubert. His only string quartet, in D minor, was composed from 1879-84, and is both powerful and highly dramatic. The first movement, in particular, is marked by a sense of desperation that reflects Wolf's own mental struggles. (*Auryn Quartet CPO 999 5292*)

Mendelssohn's Sixth Quartet depicts the grief he was suffering

Reviews

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Welcome



Out with the old and in with the new? Perhaps not, but as we begin 2019 it's as good an opportunity as any to make a resolution to mix your listening up

a bit. I'm certainly guilty of returning to favourite albums and composers over trying something different.

This month we've operas by Saint-Saëns, Korngold and Arthur Rubinstein that are worthy of attention, plus a fantastic disc of orchestral works by British composer Kenneth Hesketh. If an unfamiliar take on a classic is a safer start, then how about our Recording of the Month – a reduced Monteverdi *Vespers* that still packs a punch. Then there's the debut album from Leeds winner Eric Lu, and the first solo disc from violinist Elicia Silverstein. Both ought to be on your playlists... Happy New Year! Michael Beek *Reviews editor*

This month's critics

John Allison, Nicholas Anderson, Michael Beek, Terry Blain, Kate Bolton-Porciatti, Geoff Brown, Anthony Burton, Michael Church, Christopher Cook, Christopher Dingle, Misha Donat, Jessica Duchon, Rebecca Franks, George Hall, Malcolm Hayes, Julian Haylock, Claire Jackson, Daniel Jaffé, Berta Joncus, Erik Levi, Natasha Loges, Andrew McGregor, David Nice, Roger Nichols, Bayan Northcott, Jeremy Pound, Steph Power, Anthony Pryer, Paul Riley, Jan Smaczny, Michael Tanner, Roger Thomas, Kate Wakeling

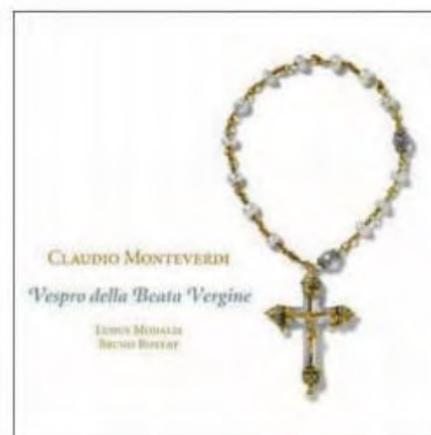
KEY TO STAR RATINGS

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

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

A vivacious *Vespers* with plenty of flavour

Berta Joncus delights in Ludus Modalis's scaled-down and deliciously multi-layered version of Monteverdi's choral classic



Monteverdi *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (1610)

Ludus Modalis/Bruno Boterf
Ramée RAM1702 90.37 mins
(2 discs)

Bruno Boterf brings us a *Vespers* of unique beauty, in a version Claudio Monteverdi had printed but which until now has never been recorded. Published in 1610, the *Vespers* won the composer the coveted directorship of St Mark's, Venice. It's easy to see why: in scope, scoring, invention and technical command, the work dwarfs any earlier music of its kind. But in his one edition Monteverdi actually gave the means to create two

productions, one sumptuous and another smaller-scale. Until Boterf, all directors took up the former, with its 15-instrument *ritornelli* 'Sonata sopra Santa Maria' and its seven-voice Magnificat. The smaller *Vespers* that Boterf performs has no *ritornelli*, no 'Santa Maria' sonata, and a six-voice Magnificat. The brash introduction from *Orfeo* is gone, as are the super-sized vocal forces often deployed for this work, reduced here to just 12 singers occasionally doubled by one instrument. But Boterf's stripped-back *Vespers* offers a more sumptuous array of colours and vocal artistry than many standard recordings.

The *Vespers*, large or small, is everything early 17th-century Marian worship could be: plainsong, polyphony, *ad libitum* embellishment and concerted voicing with continuo. The melodic boldness that binds this material is the focus of Ludus Modalis, Boterf's vocal ensemble. Their plainsong is as urgent as if it were recitative, and when extemporising, each soloist stretches material to its



A la mode: Ludus Modalis with their visionary director Bruno Boterf

limits; tenor Vincent Bouchot's fireworks in 'Nigra sum' in particular have no equal. The ensemble also brings out passages that the six-voice Magnificat shares with the seven-voice version, showing a firm grasp of both.

Boterf gilds Monteverdi's polyphony by using two trebles in an otherwise one-to-a-part ensemble. This delicate imbalance yields an astonishing range of affect: how could the same ensemble be so coldly imperious (as in 'Nisi Dominus') and then so warmly tender (as in 'Ave Maris stella')? Boterf heightens these contrasts by adding chant and instruments. As printed, the *Vespers* is not a service, but Boterf has us imagine one, framing Monteverdi's psalm

settings with antiphons of his choosing. With polyphony thus bookended by chant, the splendour of multi-voice singing strikes us anew. Boterf juxtaposes timbres as well as textures, deploying

Boterf's stripped-back *Vespers* offers a more sumptuous array of colours and artistry

wonderfully weird instruments such as a bass cornett, a bass sackbut and a brass-strung harpsichord alongside a gut-strung harpsichord. He matches these instruments to voices unpredictably, sometimes blending similar timbres (bass to sackbut) to fatten sections, sometimes pitting unlikely

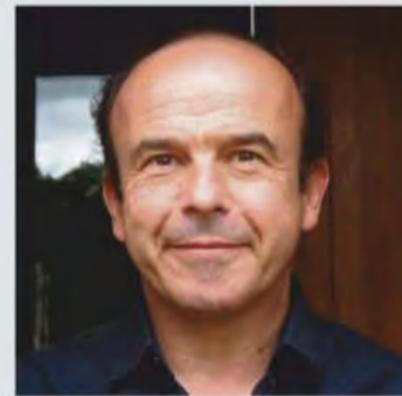
timbres against each other to isolate a part. The result transforms Monteverdi's *falsobordone*, continuo and single lines.

The organ, constructed after a Costanzo Antegnati original, reigns over this collective: its mean-tone temperament prevails, and two movements from Frescobaldi's *Fiori Musicali* (1735), brilliantly executed by Anne Marie Blondel, replace the absent 'Sonata sopra Sancta Maria'. This addition is the icing on a gorgeous sonic cake.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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

An interview with Bruno Boterf



Why is a recording of this version such a rarity?

I think the *Vespers* are so magnificent, big and impressive that people are afraid of doing a small version. When you read the score, you can see Monteverdi wrote that some of the bass parts and *ritornelli* may be omitted. There are also two versions of the 'Magnificat' – one with instruments and another with only organ. My decision was to do something like that, without disrespecting Monteverdi's directions. There was another recording before this by Rinaldo Alessandrini – though not of the whole piece.

What effect does reducing the ensemble have?

It's no less powerful; the energy is always there and the sound – 12 voices – is really impressive, I think. The 12 singers correspond to the number that Monteverdi usually had in Mantua. The 'traditional' versions of the work usually use many more, but it is not necessary. Our version is more polyphonic and maybe more in the antique *prima pratica* style. There are actually a lot of different styles in the traditional version.

What other creative choices did you make?

I decided to use the organ and instruments like the bass cornett – which was used in Italy, unlike the serpent. A lot of instruments were played in church, though, even in Mantua. One problem I encountered was replacing the 'Sonata sopra Sancta Maria'. I decided to choose a *ricercar* with five voices by Frescobaldi. This piece, slightly instrumented and coloured by the soprano voices, finds all its meaning in our version.

Orchestral

ORCHESTRAL CHOICE



A triumphant trio of philosophical musings

Steph Power eyes up a powerful disc of compelling works by British composer Kenneth Hesketh



Skilful hands: Christoph-Mathias Mueller conducts with panache

Hesketh

Knotted Tongues; Of Time and Disillusionment; In Ictu Oculi

BBC National Orchestra of Wales/
Christoph-Mathias Mueller
Paladino Music PMR 0092 54:42 mins

Kenneth Hesketh is a composer at the height of his considerable powers. Born in Liverpool in 1968, his music is saturated with an Anglo-French modernism informed by figures from Dutilleux to Knussen, and interests from classical architecture to medieval iconography. These three recent orchestral works showcase to brilliant effect his deepening fascination with scientific and other philosophies of existence.

Entropy and mutation, Memento Mori, and Cartesian theories of humans as unreliable machines – such humanist preoccupations give rise to a purely musical, abstract approach to sound and structure. The result is an exhilarating and beautiful, sometimes disturbing, synergy of form and expression, couched in music that's as richly detailed as it is macroscopic.

Key to *Knotted Tongues* (2012-14) and *In Ictu Oculi* (2017) is the propulsive rupture and rebuilding of musical blocks. Part of a latent cycle of works, the former explores how new states arise from decay, here pitching foreground material against enveloping, billowing clouds of notes. The latter explores labyrinths and mazes in three compelling meditations

An exhilarating and beautiful synergy of form and expression

upon time and transience. Radiant with colour yet darkly tense, the certainty of death is accepted rather than mourned as part of a greater process.

Of Time and Disillusionment (2016) is scored for a smaller orchestra than is typical for Hesketh. Within its five-section symmetry, a leanness and clarity of line allows the magnificent BBC National Orchestra of Wales to enjoy individual as well as collective virtuosity under expert conductor Christoph-Mathias Mueller.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



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

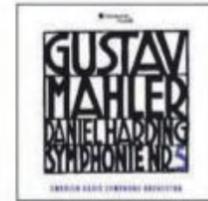
Mahler

Symphony No. 5

Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra/
Daniel Harding

Harmonia Mundi HMM 902366

73:23 mins



Not everyone will take to Daniel Harding's mostly leisurely, studied approach to Mahler's

Fifth – I don't, entirely – but what spectacular playing throughout! Who knew the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, of which he is principal conductor, could be quite as electrifying as this? Horns and trumpets are paramount, as they have to be in this symphony, and though the funeral march proper of the first movement doesn't flow naturally as it should, the welters in between are stunning, the ultimate climax overwhelming, a demonstration-quality moment like the one at the culmination of the last fugal meltdown in the finale.

The strings are world-class, too, nuanced and capable of powerful accents; the *Adagietto* starts with little fuss compared to Harding's gambits elsewhere, though the return to base slows down substantially. It's impossible, too, to hear the *Scherzo* as Mahler's intended 'world without gravity' – the pull is distinctly earthward, though the slower waltz works well, with some nice, Viennese-y string portamentos and characterful pizzicato. The horn *obbligato* resonates across a chasm as the dance comes to a standstill, the twilight zones are beautifully etched and the final stampede thrilling.

David Nice

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Mahler

Symphony No. 6 (Tragic)

MusicAeterna/Teodor Currentzis
Sony 19075822952 83:51 mins



Following the undeniable originality of his Mozart-Da Ponte operas and Stravinsky *Rite*,

a Mahler symphony was always going to be the ultimate test of whether Teodor Currentzis and his MusicAeterna players can attain the 'living legend' status some already grant them. Certainly there are

passages here as phenomenal and white-hot as any I've heard in the Sixth Symphony: try the whiplash return to the hurly-burly after the high-pastures idyll at the centre of the first movement, or the build-ups to the first two hammer blows as well as the welter of their aftermaths.

Was Currentzis, for me almost unwatchable in his flapping conductor's style, going to go for the same exaggeration in sound alone at the first hurdle, the supposed portrait of Mahler's wife Alma in the big second subject? Unfortunately yes: the momentum lost certainly isn't what Mahler imagined, beautiful though it sounds, and the comparable billowing in the finale is also a shade too exaggerated for my taste. But it's good to hear how a *Scherzo* of driving energy can work on the heels of the first movement, and the *Andante*, though it treads dark earth rather than the ideal water of a more fluent performance, is authoritatively sustained and built towards a climax that's never rushed. The real drawback is the glassy patina over the sound: is this a true representation of Moscow's House of Audio Recording acoustics, or has post-production gloss been added? At any rate it robs the interpretation of the last degree of feral intensity. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Pärt

Darf ich...; Fratres; Passacaglia; Tabula Rasa; Spiegel im Spiegel Viktoria Mullova, Florian Donderer (violin), Liam Dunachie (piano); Estonian National Symphony Orchestra/Paavo Järvi
Onyx ONYX 4201 59:02 mins



It was largely thanks to violinist Gidon Kremer that Arvo Pärt became known in the West, having been encouraged by his Baltic fellow in adopting his now celebrated 'tintinnabulation' style, inspired by the bells and chants of his Orthodox faith.

Three works in particular, dating from 1977-8 – two years before Pärt left Soviet-oppressed Estonia for Germany – shook listeners to the core: *Tabula Rasa*, effectively a concerto for two violins, prepared piano and strings; *Fratres*, heard here in Pärt's 1991 arrangement for solo violin, strings and percussion;

and *Spiegel im Spiegel* for violin and piano. Performed with yearning, bitter-sweet passion, the intensity of the works glow anew and are far from austere in the hands of Viktoria Mullova – herself a USSR defector – alongside Florian Donderer (violin), Liam Dunachie (piano) and the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paavo Järvi.

Underpinning lovely playing, it's the performers' sensitivity to Pärt's mathematically-inspired structures that lends real eloquence to his soundworld. The sense of proportion in tempo, phrase arc and inner voices is striking. With the addition of *Darfich...* (1995/99) and *Passacaglia* (2003), this recording is testament to the enduring strength of a vision which altered the landscape of contemporary music everywhere. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Schubert

Symphonies Nos 1 & 6 B'Rock Orchestra/René Jacobs
Pentatone PTC 5186 707 (hybrid CD/SACD) 57:39 mins



René Jacobs is a conductor of strong and often controversial views, and these performances of

youthful Schubert symphonies are nothing if not thought-provoking. Certainly, there are imaginative touches – the reduced body of strings at the delicate start of the Sixth Symphony's finale is one – but many of Jacobs's tempos are so hard-driven that the music's essential charm, to say nothing of its clarity, is lost. The last movement of the Symphony No. 1 is actually so fast that an intermittent 'dotted' rhythm becomes literally unplayable.

When it comes to the scherzo of No. 6 Jacobs seems to be at a loss. His detailed booklet notes suggest that Schubert must have been bored when writing the trio section, and that its complete lack of sophistication was simply intended to be provocative. Jacobs also regards the trio's tempo marking of *più lento* as meaning just a little slower than the scherzo's *presto* indication. But Schubert was obviously influenced by the slow trio sections in the scherzo of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, and if his trio is played at a much slower pace everything falls into

Reissues Reviewed by Malcolm Hayes



Beethoven Symphonies Nos 5 & 7

Alto ALC 1375 (1962) 64:35 mins

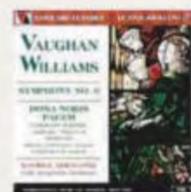
Magnificent, no-nonsense Beethoven from the first and best of **Herbert von Karajan's** three recorded sets with the **Berlin Philharmonic**, with a masterful Fifth Symphony, at once thrilling and unrushed. ★★★★★



Beethoven Creatures of Prometheus

Brahms Haydn Variations Haydn Symphony No. 100 (Military) *Eloquence 482 5505 (1949-52) 136:43 mins (2 discs)*

In this **Van Beinum** compilation, decent-ish early Decca sound conveys classy **LPO** playing in Beethoven's *Prometheus*, plus the **Concertgebouw's** quality in Brahms's *Haydn Variations*. ★★★★★



Vaughan Williams Symphony No. 6; Dona nobis pacem

Vanguard Classics SVC-7 (1966) 72:30 mins

Maurice Abravanel and the **Utah Symphony** offer solid quality in VW's Sixth, just missing the intensity of the best versions. *Dona nobis pacem* has two fine soloists but pallid choral singing. ★★★



Vaughan Williams Job; The Lark Ascending; Greensleeves

Alto ALC 1384 (1990/91) 66:38 mins

The much underrated **Barry Wordsworth** delivers a powerful and sensitive *Job* with the **Philharmonia**; **David Juritz** excels with the **Consort of London** in *The Lark Ascending*. ★★★★★

place. Jacobs observes all the repeats, and offers that as his excuse for taking the *da capo* of the scherzo at an even faster speed than the first time. All quite baffling.

Jacobs is much more successful in the slow movements, and the alert playing of the aptly titled B'Rock Orchestra ensures that one is never bored. But in the end it's hard not to feel that the relentlessly high-voltage approach is self-defeating.

Misha Donat

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Shostakovich

Symphony No. 8 London Symphony Orchestra/
Gianandrea Noseda

LSO Live LSO0822 (hybrid CD/SACD) 65:08 mins



Shostakovich's music is never 'tasteful'. Bleak, sarcastic, alarming, often wickedly playful,

yes. All these qualities are certainly to be found in the Eighth Symphony – though scarcely, it seems, by Gianandrea Noseda. An often fine conductor, here he achieves a near

miracle and makes this, one of Shostakovich's most ferocious works, written not long after the victory of Stalingrad, sound deadly dull.

The LSO's playing is technically faultless and polished, but absolutely poker-faced: the second movement has scarcely a hint of biting sarcasm, nor is there edgy menace in much of the rest – least of all the third movement which appears to degenerate into a tedious high-kick dance. Perhaps Noseda's intention was to demonstrate that, notwithstanding its notoriously histrionic qualities, the Eighth can be regarded purely as music with total disregard for any of its 'extra musical associations'. Perhaps he is trying to avoid the 'rhetoric and coercion' Robin Holloway infamously accused Shostakovich's music of. In any case, Noseda's account has utterly purged the work of all expression, let alone feeling, until the brief, incongruous appearance in the finale of the woozy bass clarinet and folk-style fiddler brings an unexpected splash of colour – far too late to save the performance. *Daniel Jaffé*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Stravinsky

Petrushka; Jeu de cartes

Mariinsky Orchestra/Valery Gergiev
Mariinsky MAR 0594 (hybrid CD/SACD)
57:51 mins



Although Gergiev conducting the Mariinsky Orchestra in one of Stravinsky's Russian ballets

should be the main draw here, *Jeu de cartes* steals the show. The choreographed 'Card Game in three deals' was written for George Balanchine to show off his recently-formed American Ballet in 1937. One of Stravinsky's most playful and attractive scores, it curiously after initial success has become a relative rarity. This vivacious performance projects the music's neoclassical lines cleanly, while avoiding sterility. Gergiev's lightness of touch enables the wit to sparkle, especially in the contrasting variations of the 'Second Deal', all captured in superb surround sound.

A pity, then, that *Petrushka* is periodically scrappy and does not match its protagonist in springing to life. There is spirit to the final scene's fight, but walking around

BACKGROUND TO... Zubin Mehta (b1936)

Born in Bombay (today Mumbai), Zubin Mehta enjoyed an early musical education from his violinist father, Mehli Mehta, founder of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra. Starting young proved fruitful for the aspiring conductor, who went on to study formally in Vienna; in 1962 he would become the youngest-ever music director of a US orchestra, taking on the role at the LA Philharmonic, aged 26. In 1961 he had already begun working with the Montreal Symphony, and so presided over two North American orchestras at the same time. As well as a remarkable tenure with the New York Philharmonic from 1978-91 (he was its longest-serving music director), Mehta has enjoyed several decades associated with the Israel Philharmonic.



GETTY, HEIKE FISCHER

the Shrovetide fair is decidedly pedestrian. Not does it help that the competing textures of the opening, and various later passages, are mired in a boomy, ill-focused recording. In all, it's a decent if unspectacular account of a work where the bar is set very high. Yet it is certainly adequate as a substantial filler for a splendid *Jeu de cartes*. Christopher Dingle

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Tchaikovsky

Swan Lake

State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia 'Evgeny Svetlanov'/ Vladimir Jurowski
Pentatone PTC 5186 640 (hybrid CD/SACD) 79:52 mins



It wasn't until the 1970s (on disc, at least) that there was a resurgence of interest in the original

version of *Swan Lake*, as opposed to the hugely popular yet utterly inauthentic 1895 edition prepared two years after Tchaikovsky's death by Riccardo Drigo. André Previn's opulent LSO account (EMI/Warner, 1976) has won admirers, but it was Richard Bonyngé and the National Philharmonic (Decca, 1975) who came closest to capturing the intensity of a live performance, as well as finding a convincing interpretative path between the music's choreographic spectacle and near-symphonic gravitas.

Like Bonyngé, Vladimir Jurowski includes the Act III Russian Dance Tchaikovsky wrote for Pelagia Karpakova, and in addition the wonderful Pas de deux written (apparently under duress) for Anna Sobeshchanskaya. Jurowski leans more towards the concert hall than the ballet theatre, relishing the *legato-cantabile* of Tchaikovsky's melodic writing, where Bonyngé tends to point the rhythms and keep the music on its collective toes. Bonyngé's trumpet fanfares possess a bracing, open-air, festive quality, whereas Jurowski is more inclined to symphonic sweep rather than relishing the moment. That said, Jurowski lacks nothing in terms of passionate commitment – the impact of his recording, especially when the SACD surround-track is activated, is all-engulfing – and conjures up a



Glowing Part:
Viktoriya Mullova
plays with eloquence

compelling emotional narrative. Yet it is Bonyngé who, in arguably the finest of his many ballet recordings, makes even the most resistant of armchair listeners feel drawn to get up and dance to this dazzlingly inspired masterpiece. Julian Haylock

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

The Mumbai Concerts

Beethoven: Violin Concerto;

Brahms: Double Concerto;

Dvořák: Carnival Overture;

Ravel: La Valse; Daphnis et Chloé

– Suite No. 2; **J Strauss II:** Die

Fledermaus Overture; **Tchaikovsky:**

Piano Concerto No. 1 (DVD)

Pinchas Zukerman (violin), Amanda

Forsyth (cello), Denis Matsuev

(piano); Israel Philharmonic

Orchestra/Zubin Mehta

Accentus Music ACC20383

199:23 mins (2 discs)



Zubin Mehta returned to his birthplace for these two 80th-birthday concerts in Mumbai's National Centre

for the Performing Arts – a super-sumptuous modern auditorium, with an acoustic that's comfortably warm while allowing an amazing amount of detail to come across. Mehta is ageing in fine style: the control and precision of his conducting remain phenomenal, yet there is none of the sports car gear-changing which, in earlier vintages, he often seemed unable to resist.

Each concert has a short opener: Dvořák's *Carnival* and Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* overture. The first concert continues with Beethoven's Violin Concerto, played by Zukerman with a gloss-free mastery as immense as it is unfussy, graced with a principal bassoonist (so important in this work) of near-fabulous musicianship. Mehta allows himself a moment of showboating when, in the finale, he does a kind of reverse turn from the first violins on his left to the seconds on his right by way of facing the audience; it takes a while for Zukerman to stop grinning irrepressibly. In an all-Ravel second half, the orchestra's stellar delivery of *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite No. 2 has Mehta conjuring a beautifully sensitive accompaniment to the flute's big solo. The encore, the *Swan Lake* waltz, is so excitingly played that if you were dancing to this, you'd surely end up getting airborne.

The second concert doesn't hit such heights. Zukerman is joined by Amanda Forsyth in Brahms's Double Concerto, which comes across as rather too hectoring and turbocharged. Denis Matsuev's vast virtuosity scintillates in Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto, but his improvised encore, an amazing feat in itself, reduces proceedings to something of a circus. His and the orchestra's rendition of 'Happy Birthday' to Mehta would have done nicely by itself. Malcolm Hayes

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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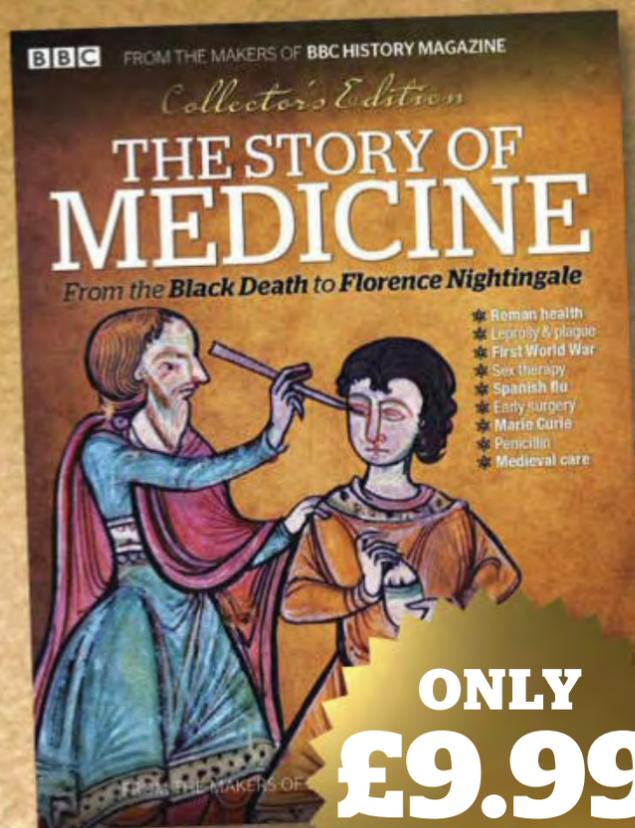
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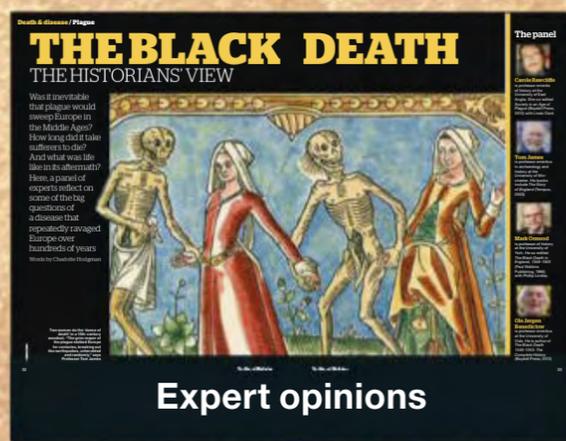
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CONCERTO CHOICE



Energetic Mozart up there with the very best

Erik Levi is enthralled by the elegant pairing of Manchester Camerata and Jean-Efflam Bavouzet



Winning team: Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and Manchester Camerata

Mozart

Piano Concertos Nos 15 and 16; Quintet for Piano and Winds

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (piano); Manchester Camerata/
Gábor Takács-Nagy

Chandos CHAN20035 71:03 mins

1784 proved to be a vintage year for Mozart, prompting a steady stream of masterpieces, three of which are featured in this enthralling release. First, we have the exuberant Concerto in D major, K451. The opening tutti of the first movement sets the scene for the rest of the performance, the Manchester Camerata under Gábor Takács-Nagy delivering blisteringly energetic articulation in the powerful full orchestral passages, as well as ensuring that there is a vibrant sense of dialogue between strings and wind in the gentler second idea. These contrasts in mood, coupled with the ability to engage in consistently stimulating creative interaction with conductor and orchestra, mark out Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's brilliant account of the solo part. Nowhere is this more effectively realised than in the Finale

where both Bavouzet and Takács-Nagy relish Mozart's wicked touches of humour, particularly where the opening material is transformed into something almost akin to a Viennese waltz. For me, however, the highlight in this performance comes in the central *Andante* where soloist, conductor and orchestra conjure up a magical soundworld, reinforcing admiration for the ingenuity with which Mozart decorates the simple opening theme.

It's a bonus to supplement these two Concertos with the Quintet for Piano and Wind, K452 which the composer justifiably regarded

as one of his greatest accomplishments. Once again, Bavouzet, working in a stimulating partnership with the orchestra principals, produces an elegant account that more than holds its own with many of the formidable recordings in the current catalogue.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Soloist, conductor and orchestra conjure a magical soundworld



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

Beethoven

Piano Concertos Nos 4 & 5

Nicholas Angelich (piano); Insula Orchestra/Laurence Equilbey

Warner Classics 9029563417 74:16 mins



Given the competition, you need good reason to issue yet another recording of Beethoven's

last two piano concertos – and this group has one. This is a period-instrument performance, but with a difference: the piano, a fastidiously restored 1892 Pleyel, not the usual underpowered fortepiano, was chosen for its ability to project across a modern concert hall, while possessing a sonority evoking what might have been the character of its original performance. Its sound melds satisfyingly with a small orchestra playing on gut strings and with period wind instruments.

The opening chords of the Fourth Concerto usher in what feels almost like chamber music, so intimate is the sound; Nicholas Angelich's articulation is refined, and the upper register of the piano has a crystalline quality. Thanks in part to Laurence Equilbey's light and flexible touch, piano and orchestra sometimes seem like a single entity; the heaven-versus-hell *Andante* is gracefully restrained, and the Concerto as a whole exudes charm.

Yet the opening of No. 5, the *Emperor*, is as heroic as one could wish, with the Pleyel providing bags of power, and with Angelich making something dramatic out of even his scalar sweeps up and down the keyboard, thanks to its gradations in tone-colour. Angelich's pianism is always a pleasure, and here it casts a lovely spell. *Michael Church*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Brahms

Piano Concerto No. 1

Ekaterina Litvintseva (piano);
Klassische Philharmonie Bonn/
Heribert Beissel

Profil PH18065 48:52 mins



Brahms's First Piano Concerto is one of musical history's miracles: a work of sweeping

tragedy and epic grandeur written by a composer still in his early

SENSATIONAL CONCERTS SPRING 19



Hallé Orchestra

Fri 1 February 7.30pm

Wagner	Lohengrin <i>Prelude to Act III</i>
Saint-Saëns	Piano Concerto No.5 (<i>Egyptian</i>)
Berlioz	<i>Symphonie fantastique</i>
Conductor	Sir Mark Elder
Piano	Stephen Hough

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Wed 13 February 7.30pm

Rautavaara	<i>Cantus Arcticus – Concerto for Birds and Orchestra</i>
Sibelius	<i>Rakastava (The Lover)</i>
Sibelius	<i>En Saga</i>
Grieg	Incidental Music to <i>Peer Gynt*</i>
Conductor	Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla *with Soloist Klara Ek & CBSO Chorus

Carducci Quartet with Emma Johnson

Thu 28 February 7.30pm

Brahms	Clarinet Quintet in B minor Op.15
Stephen Johnson	Clarinet Quintet
Mozart	Clarinet Quintet in A K.581
Clarinet	Emma Johnson

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Thu 14 March 7.30pm

Sibelius	<i>Karelia Suite</i>
Mozart	Piano Concerto No.22 K.482
Tchaikovsky	<i>Swan Lake Suite</i>
Conductor	Barry Wordsworth
Piano	Leon McCawley

European Union Chamber Orchestra

Fri 26 April 7.30pm

Haydn	Symphony No.44 in E minor <i>Trauer</i>
Mozart	Violin Concerto No.4 in D K.218
Fauré	<i>Nocturne</i>
Tchaikovsky	Serenade for Strings in C Op.48
Director	Hans-Peter Hofmann
Violin	Tasmin Little

Russian Philharmonic (of Novosibirsk)

Tue 14 May 7.30pm

Rimsky-Korsakov	<i>Capriccio Espagnol</i>
Tchaikovsky	Violin Concerto
Rachmaninov	Symphonic Dances
Conductor	Thomas Sanderling
Violin	Alexander Sitkovetsky

TICKETS: £18.50 - £41.50

20s. Much of it was influenced by the events he witnessed in the Schumann household: Schumann's suicide attempt, followed by his departure for an asylum where he spent the last two years of his life. Brahms initially conceived the Concerto's first movement as the start of a symphony, and it's a piece in which the symbiosis between orchestra and piano is of utmost importance. While it's possible to imagine glossier orchestral playing than that of the Klassische Philharmonie of Bonn, there's a real sense of rapport between its conductor, Heribert Beissel, and the young Russian pianist Ekaterina Litvintseva. Only at the piano's very first entry is there a small miscalculation. Brahms creates a 'dissolve' between orchestra and piano by having the soloist take over the three-note figure the cellos have been repeating over and over again during the introduction's closing bars. The effect depends on the pianist maintaining the exact tempo of the cellos, but Litvintseva comes in at a notably slower pace. It's a small blemish on an altogether impressive performance.

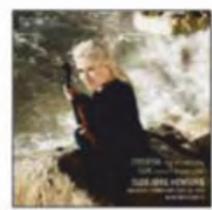
Litvintseva ascribes the intensity of her playing to the harsh conditions in which she grew up, on the edge of the Arctic Circle. She also expresses a preference for 'live' recordings such as this. Certainly, her playing has an expressive depth which makes you forget the music's prodigious technical difficulties. In all, she's a pianist to watch.

Misha Donat

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Dvořák • Suk

Dvořák: Violin Concerto;
Suk: Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra; Liebeslied (arr S Koncz)
Eldbjørg Hemsing (violin);
Antwerp Symphony Orchestra/
Alan Buribayev
BIS BIS-2246 (hybrid CD/SACD)
63:02 mins



Bringing together works for violin and orchestra by Anton Dvořák and his beloved son-in-law

and composition pupil Josef Suk has long been a popular pairing. Recordings range from Karel Ančerl and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra's landmark performance with Josef Suk the younger (the



Stylish introspection:
Thomas Albertus
Irnberger plays Martinů

composer's grandson) as soloist, to Christian Tetzlaff and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra's more recent disc, also featuring Suk's Romance for violin and orchestra. This solid release from the excellent BIS label explores this same winning composer duo and features some fine playing but is perhaps not world-class.

Twenty-eight year old violinist Eldbjørg Hemsing has been something of a household name in Norway for a number of years, having given her concerto debut with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra at the tender age of 11. Her reading of the Dvořák is agile and characterful, although perhaps lacks the soaring sweetness that the Concerto's central movement calls for, and the finale from both soloist and orchestra at times feels a touch heavy-handed. Both Hemsing and ensemble shine much more convincingly in Suk's Fantasy in G minor (1902) a rip-roaring concerto-length work packed with virtuosic violin writing and sumptuous orchestral textures. The recording's real highpoint is, however, the all-too-brief final track of the disc, Suk's delightful 'Liebeslied' (the opening movement of his *Six Piano Pieces* of 1891-93) heard here in a clever arrangement for violin and orchestra by Stephan Koncz. Hemsing plays this endlessly tender 'love song' with a perfect blend of heart and restraint, closing the disc with a small but perfectly formed musical jewel.

Kate Wakeling

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Martinů

Violin Concertos Nos 1 & 2

Thomas Albertus Irnberger (violin);
Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava/
Heiko Mathias Förster
Gramola 99178 (hybrid CD/SACD)
51:10 mins



When Martinů died in 1959 he left – like Bartók a decade-and-a-half before him – only one official violin concerto. These are the works now known in each composer's case as their Second Violin Concerto, both having had earlier essays in the genre posthumously restored. And just as Bartók's two concertos are very different, Martinů's make a strongly contrasting pair, the First (1931) fizzing with the confidence of his early Parisian period, the Second (1943) showing the more substantial mastery he had acquired by the time of his American exile. The personal voice of both concertos also reminds us that the violin was Martinů's own instrument.

Here the Austrian violinist Thomas Albertus Irnberger is equally convincing in both works, playing with silvery brilliance and dusky introspection. Ostrava has a great tradition of performing Martinů, and the orchestra sounds fully inside the idiom under its German music director, Heiko Mathias Förster. Irnberger may show less classical restraint in these works than the great Josef Suk, who recorded both (the First shortly after giving its premiere in 1973), but he finds his own way to their emotional

messages, especially in the Second. With its 'Julietta chords' tugging away, there is a bittersweetness in this music, yet the polka-inflected finale also displays the high spirits that Martinů often mustered in his American works. At a duration of 51 minutes, the disc could be more generous; most recordings of these concertos add another of Martinů's concertante works, but the programme is fully satisfying as it stands. *John Allison*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Prokofiev • Vaughan Williams • Walton

Prokofiev: Violin Concerto No. 1;
Walton: Viola Concerto; **Vaughan Williams:** The Lark Ascending
Isabelle van Keulen (violin, viola);
NDR Radiophilharmonie/
Andrew Manze, Keri-Lynn Wilson,
Andrew Litton
Challenge Classics CC 72793 62:49 mins



Full marks for this well-conceived programme, which brings together two

works closely related but rarely coupled – Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto and Walton's Viola Concerto, the latter following Prokofiev's innovative formula of making the central movement a lively scherzo, followed by a finale whose opening theme is ultimately combined to poignant effect with the concerto's very first theme. The Vaughan Williams – dreamy like the Prokofiev yet quintessentially English – proves a perfect companion to these works.

Curiously, this album compiles recordings from three different sessions – albeit, all recorded at the Hanover NDR with the Radio Philharmonic Orchestra – each with a different conductor. Andrew Manze is assigned the opening Prokofiev. Isabelle van Keulen plays this with a shiny, rather glassy (rather than glossy) tone – somewhat lacking the more velvety and warm qualities associated with the repertoire played by Paul Kochanski, for whom Prokofiev originally composed his concerto. Manze's accompaniment is a touch diffident and precise rather than characterful. The Concerto still 'comes across', but may have better suited to Andrew Litton, who instead conducts the Vaughan

Williams, which conversely could do with a little less of the American's rhetorical and extrovert style (whereas Manze has already proven an idiomatic conductor of Vaughan Williams).

No reservations are needed for the Walton, whose introverted yet deep running emotion well suits van Keulen's way with the husky-toned viola she plays. Conductor Keri-Lynn Wilson finds an ideal balance of restraint and (in the scherzo) extroversion, confirming it as one of the very greatest works in the 20th century concerto repertoire.

Daniel Jaffé

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Scriabin • Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky: Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 3; **Scriabin:** Piano Concerto Xiayin Wang (piano); Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Peter Oundjian *Chandos CHSA 5216 (hybrid CD/SACD) 75:08 mins*



Despite penning at least three indisputable concerto masterpieces, it was a genre

that Tchaikovsky was notoriously unlucky with – at least initially. His Second Piano Concerto (played complete by Xiayin Wang on CHSA 5167) was until comparatively recently invariably heard in a highly condensed edition by Alexander Siloti; his Violin Concerto was notoriously dismissed as 'music that stinks in the ear', while his *Variations on a Rococo Theme* for cello and orchestra is still performed mainly using Wilhelm Fitzenhagen's re-ordering and excisions.

Xiayin Wang here performs the original version of the First Concerto. Thankfully, following Nikolay Rubinstein's infamous decimation of that work, Tchaikovsky stuck to his guns and changed very little, so that only the keenest of listeners will notice any substantial differences here – interestingly, Wang elects to play those famous opening chords straight rather than arpeggiated, as in Kirill Gerstein's recording of the 1869 edition (Myrios, 2015). More importantly, she encompasses Tchaikovsky's virtuoso writing with an arresting poetic impulse and thrilling depth of tone, captured imposingly by Chandos's exemplary engineering and matched by deeply committed playing from the

SAMMY HEART

The singing violin:
Arabella Steinbacher
shines with Strauss



Royal Scottish National Orchestra under its former music director Peter Oundjian.

Competition is almost impossibly formidable in the First Concerto, but thins out considerably for the one-movement Third, in which Wang's impassioned eloquence and the RSNO's high-octane support prove every bit as vital as established recordings from Peter Donohoe, Stephen Hough and Mikhail Pletnev. Arguably finest of all is the account of the Scriabin Concerto that captures the music's youthful ingenuousness and spontaneity with a captivating ardour matched only by Stanislav Neuhaus's incandescent 1970 recording for Melodiya. *Julian Haylock*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

R Strauss

Violin Concerto; Romanze in F; Allegro molto, Op. 3 (arr P von Wienhardt); Arabella – 'Aber der Richtige, wenn's einen gibt' (arr P von Wienhardt); Lieder – 'Zueignung', 'Traum durch die Dämmerung', 'Cäcilie', 'Wiegenlied'

Arabella Steinbacher (violin); WDR Symphony Orchestra/Lawrence Foster *Pentatone PTC 5186 653 (hybrid CD/SACD) 60:35 mins*



Richard Strauss's Violin Concerto was written in 1882 when the precociously talented

composer was just 18 years old. Like much of Strauss's early work,

it is rather conservative in style with Max Bruch a strong musical influence, especially in the lyrical slow movement. Mendelssohn is also recalled in the written-out cadenzas in the middle of the first movement and the fast-moving tarantella *Finale*. Although there are precious few hints of the mature Strauss that would take the musical world by storm seven years later with *Don Juan*, the Concerto is beautifully put together and already demonstrates the composer's complete mastery of the orchestra.

Arabella Steinbacher plays it with great conviction and receives powerful support from Lawrence Foster and the WDR Symphony Orchestra. Steinbacher negotiates all the technical hurdles of the first movement and fleet-footed passage work in the *Finale* with tremendous aplomb, and is particularly beguiling in the slow movement, projecting great warmth of tone that is also very much to the fore in the attractive *Romanze*, originally conceived for solo cello and orchestra.

The rest of this luxuriantly recorded disc is filled out with idiomatic transcriptions. First, we have the witty *Little Scherzino*, originally for piano solo. Then there is a sequence of well-known songs including the noble and dramatic 'Zueignung' and the hauntingly beautiful 'Wiegenlied', the melodic lines of which Steinbacher shapes with the sensitivity of a true Lieder singer. A similarly haunting quality pervades the final item, a duet extracted from the opera *Arabella* performed here with the requisite

mixture of poetic lyricism and romantic ardour. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Telemann • M Fiedler

Telemann: Suite in F; Concerto in F; Concerto in D; Air de trompette in C; March in F; **Anonymous:** Rostocker Suite in E flat; **M Fiedler:** Concerto à 3 in E flat

Philippe Canguilhem (oboe), Jean Chamboux (drum); Ensemble Eolus *Ricercar RIC 397 57:48 mins*



Ensemble Eolus is a wind band consisting of trumpet, two horns, two oboes, bassoon and

harpsichord. Its debut disc consists of music by Telemann, Maximilian Fiedler – a German contemporary of his – and an anonymous suite of the same period. The programme is attractive and, by and large, off the beaten track. While it is not, however, of even merit, the strongest items provide a robust framework for slender pieces which might stand less convincingly on their own.

Telemann's Overture-Suite in F major for two horns, two oboes and bassoon is one of nine such pieces for various configurations of wind instruments. A Concerto in F for two oboes and bassoon, attributed to Telemann, is of greater musical interest. Its close melodic similarity to a concerto for two oboes d'amore and strings, TWV2:A1, indisputably by the composer argues persuasively for Telemann's authorship. It is the Concerto in D major for trumpet, two oboes and continuo, though, which crowns the programme. Here, Telemann demonstrates his innate skill in writing idiomatically and sensitively for wind instruments and especially, perhaps, oboes. Its four movements, the third of which – a siciliano – excludes the trumpet, are an unflagging delight, full of subtle and rewarding resonances.

Ensemble Eolus, with their period instruments and historically-informed approach to the music, provide a lively and affectionate account throughout. There are occasional tonal insecurities of the kind we expect from natural horns and trumpets but there is much to enjoy on this sympathetically recorded and well documented release. *Nicholas Anderson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

OPERA CHOICE



An operatic rarity just as the composer intended

Christopher Cook finds much to enjoy in the first recording of this grand 'lost' work by Saint-Saëns



Heartfelt turn: Clémence Tilquin sings the role of Colombe d'Estrouville

Saint-Saëns

Ascanio

Jean-François Lapointe, Eve-Maud Hubeaux, Karina Gauvin, Clémence Tilquin; Choeur et Orchestre de la Haute Ecole de Musique de Genève; Choeur du Grand Théâtre de Genève/Guillaume Tourniaire

B Records LBM 013 190:00 mins (3 discs)

This is a magnificent curiosity – a late five-act French Grand Opera heard as its composer intended for the very first time in this recording. Saint-Saëns wrote his version of *Benvenuto Cellini* in less than 12 months and the ballet was completed in 1889 the following year. *Ascanio* was tailored for the Paris Opéra, but overwhelmed by the death of his mother the composer left before rehearsals were completed and the work was cut down to the management's preferred size.

It would be good to report that this is a lost masterpiece. It's not, but it is a carefully crafted late version of the form that Meyerbeer had invented for Paris. So there's a central role for the chorus, every opportunity for theatrical spectacle and a ballet. All of which adorns a historical story with the Italian Renaissance sculptor in Paris at the court of Francis I

with his assistant Ascanio, both of whom are in love with the same woman. There's a villainous Duchess, the King's mistress and Cellini's self-sacrificing lover Scozzzone.

Competent to a fault, Saint-Saëns gives his principal singers every opportunity to shine, and they rise to his challenge in this concert performance conducted by Guillaume Tourniaire. Jean-François

Lapointe is a muscular Cellini with the sweeter-toned Ascanio (Bernard Richter) a perfect vocal foil to his master. As the wicked Duchesse d'Étampes, Karina Gauvin is more Disney villain,

but Clémence Tilquin's Colombe, the woman loved by Cellini and Ascanio, sings her heart out, investing some of the composer's most lyrical music with genuine feeling. Here and throughout is that French vocal style all too rarely heard in opera houses today.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Saint-Saëns gives his principal singers every opportunity to shine



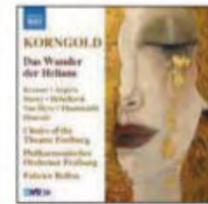
Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the BBC Music Magazine website at www.classical-music.com

Korngold

Das Wunder der Heliane

Annemarie Kremer, Ian Storey, Katerina Hebelková; Freiburg Theatre Choir; Freiburg Philharmonic Orchestra/Fabrice Bollon

Naxos 8.660410-12 161:37 mins (3 discs)



This is Korngold's most ambitious opera and pulling it off successfully is quite a tall order. Premiered

in 1927, the same year as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, it feels closer to that dystopian drama than to *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, the film score for which Korngold later won an Oscar. It's a hefty, mystical tale: 'Blessed are those that love...they who love shall not die,' declares the chorus. Not that you'd know, since Naxos hasn't included a libretto, a frightful omission for such an obscure work.

Long, loud and densely scored, this opera cannot be easy for its singers. Heliane, the queen who loves the condemned Stranger, receives a touching, vulnerable and beautifully sung portrayal from Annemarie Kremer, notably in her big aria 'Ich ging zu Ihm'. Ian Storey is strong and warm as the Stranger. The Ruler is splendidly villainous in the capacious baritone of Aris Argiris, and Katerina Hebelková brings suitable bitterness and angst to the Messenger. Fabrice Bollon and his outsize team draw out the opera's strengths, even if occasionally they fall prey to its weaknesses. Despite various ragged edges in diction and in the orchestral ensemble, and audio quality that could be more sharply defined, this recording from two live concert performances has flair and lots of heart. *Jessica Duchon*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Lorenzani

Nicandro e Fileno

Suzie LeBlanc, Pascale Beaudin; Le Nouvel Opéra; Les Boréades de Montréal/Francis Colpron

ATMA Classique ACD 22770 65:02 mins



The Italian composer Paolo Lorenzani (1640-1713) remains little known outside

musicological circles, largely due to his fall from favour among

the French nobility, the local commissioning glitterati of the time. *Nicandro e Fileno*, premiered in 1681 at the Palace of Fontainebleau under the patronage of Louis XIV, was one of the first Italian-language operas to be performed in France, and was unusual for its subject matter: the plot focuses on the lives of everyday villagers, rather than the action-packed adventures of knights or Roman heroes that were popular with contemporaries.

Nicandro e Fileno is of short duration, and the score – revived in the early 20th century – lacks an overture (whether lost or simply unwritten is unknown). In this, the work's first recording, Le Nouvel Opéra and Les Boréades de Montréal opt to add some instrumental pieces from Lully's *Amadis*; this padding-out works surprisingly well.

Tenor Nils Brown and baritone Jean-Marc Salzmänn convince as the opera's eponymous old friends who decide that each should marry the other's daughter; the women – sopranos Suzie LeBlanc and Pascale Beaudin – sensibly have other ideas, but both are in love with the village playboy. After some textbook partner-swapping, the older men realise their error and the women settle their differences. *Nicandro e Fileno* is not a masterpiece – there are no heart-stopping arias or particularly exquisite orchestration – but Le Nouvel Opéra's performance is enjoyable.

Claire Jackson

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Monteverdi

Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria

Furio Zanasi, Lucile Richardot, Krystian Adam, Hana Blažíková; Monteverdi Choir; English Baroque Soloists/John Eliot Gardiner
Soli Deo Gloria SDG 730
184:30 mins (3 discs)



John Eliot Gardiner's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* is a career climax, and a defining production. In 2017, for the 450th anniversary of Monteverdi's birth, Gardiner organised and toured a 'staged-concert' trilogy of Monteverdi operas: *L'Orfeo*, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Gardiner had yet to record *Il ritorno d'Ulisse*; so engineers forged this single



Labourer of love:
Michail Jurowski
champions Rubinstein

disc from his three-night run at Wrocław's concert hall.

In incandescent performances, the artists turn the opera's challenges into strengths. Early librettos show that much of Monteverdi's original score is lost; these holes Gardiner plugs with earlier Monteverdi choruses and dances, accompanied by a band twice the size of the 1639-40 original, to gorgeous effect.

Faced with lots of recitative and practically no arias, singers and players abandon themselves to intense arioso, jazzy cross-rhythms between poetry and continuo, and take-no-prisoners dissonances. Furio Zanasi (Ulisse), Lucile Richardot (Penelope) and Hana Blažíková (Minerva) bring a depth of acting almost without rival. As Penelope rejects her horrid suitors, Richardot's dark hues and jagged delivery sound her grief – her longing for Ulisse, her doubt he'll return, her desperation at being forced to remarry. Zanasi equals her in vocal expressiveness: savage as he vanquishes foes, tenderly sensual as he reveals his identity to Penelope. Embodying the goddess who resolves dilemmas, Blažíková is all warmth, strength and radiant beauty. Although the acoustic of Wrocław's concert hall is world-class, this is a live performance: the broadness of comic delivery in particular makes for tough listening, and the super-percussive consonants sometimes disrupt lyricism. Too bad this CD isn't a DVD. *Berta Joncus*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Pergolesi • Tarabella

Pergolesi: *La serva padrona*;

Tarabella: *Il servo padrone*

Erika Liuzzi, Donato di Gioia, Paolo Pecchioli; Chiara Tiboni (harpsichord), Francesco Tomasi (archlute), Andrea Lattarulo (viola da gamba), Marco Santità (piano); Vincenzo Galilei Orchestra/Flavio Emilio Scogna

Brilliant Classics 95360

80:27 mins (2 discs)



In 1733 *La serva padrona*, Pergolesi's three-person buffa intermezzo, revolutionised opera. In 2017 *Il servo padrone*, a sequel, was composed by Aldo Tarabella when directing Pergolesi's work at the Fiesole Music School in Florence. Rather than honouring Pergolesi's legacy, Tarabella ignores and thereby insults it.

La serva padrona is about a clever woman getting ahead: the chambermaid Serpina, helped by a mute fellow-servant, leverages her master's affection to engineer marriage to him. She gets the best tunes and most toe-tapping rhythms. By contrast, her master Uberto apes *opera seria* conceits – arioso, affective lurches, rage-like arias – deftly parodied by Pergolesi to demonstrate upper-class idiocy. Tarabella misses Pergolesi's message and his wit. In his modernist-cum-cabaret score, singers talk as much as sing, hiding behind *Sprechstimme* the work's paucity of melodic invention. Uberto dominates the ensemble through percussive, obsessively-repeated syllables; Serpina gets

a mocking accompaniment, hissing sibilants and tuneless expostulations. The story, by Valerio Valoriani, is frankly misogynist: Uberto denies Serpina sex, so that, never having consummated their union, he can divorce her; disguised as a first wife who has unexpectedly resurfaced, Uberto dupes Serpina into marrying the no-longer-mute servant.

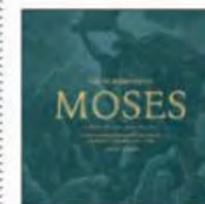
The performers are at best competent, at worst unprofessional. Paolo Pecchioli, a seasoned bass, commands smouldering lower notes, but his strained upper register undermines the confidence he oozes as Uberto. Erika Liuzzi is simply miscast: instead of sprightly, she's a dramatic soprano who lards her notes with vibrato and drags the beat. This production is tone-deaf to musical and dramatic taste as well as to Pergolesi. *Berta Joncus*

PERFORMANCE ★
RECORDING ★

Anton Rubinstein

Moses

Stanisław Kuflyuk, Torsten Kerl, Evelina Dobračeva, Małgorzata Walewska; Artos Children's Choir; Warsaw Philharmonic Choir; Polish Sinfonia Iuventus Orchestra/Michail Jurowski
Warner 9029558343 198:11 mins (3 discs)



Celebrated for founding the St Petersburg Conservatory and teaching Tchaikovsky composition, Anton Rubinstein's own work has rather slipped through the cracks of music history. Yet this is a man who wrote symphonies, piano concertos and no fewer than 20 operas.

Moses was composed between 1884 and 1891 to a German libretto by Salomon Hermann Mosenthal; and it seems unlikely that it was ever performed in its entirety until October 2017 in Warsaw. The present recording is taken from that performance and in every respect it is a labour of great love by the Russian conductor Michail Jurowski, who rescued the work from the archives.

Yet commitment isn't always enough. *Moses*, which begins with the patriarch's birth in Egypt and ends with his death as the Jewish people are about to enter the Promised Land can't quite decide whether it's an opera or

Reissues Reviewed by George Hall



Borodin Prince Igor

Eloquence 482 6935 (1955) 205:33 mins (3 discs)
Belgrade Opera presents Borodin's sole opera without cuts and some sense of style; but **Dušan Popović's** Igor is surrounded by undistinguished performances, and more recent recordings supersede this. ★★



Rossini Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Sony 19075811272 (1982) 155:18 mins (3 discs)
A suave account of Rossini's classic comedy, with **Riccardo Chailly** and his La Scala forces clearly enjoying the piece and a top-quality cast fulfilling the requirements of all the principal roles. ★★★★★



Rossini La Cenerentola

Sony 18075811282 (1983) 147:46 mins (2 discs)
With an almost contralto quality to her mezzo, **Lucia Valentini Terrani** brings dignity as well as accomplishment to Rossini's Cinderella, supported by a choice cast and conductor plus period-instrument forces. ★★★★★



Tchaikovsky Eugene Onegin

Eloquence 482 6944 (1955) 149:14 mins (2 discs)
This is from the same location and vintage as the Borodin, and suffers in comparison to others in terms of cast, orchestra and especially sound, though **Valerija Heybal's** thin-toned Tatyana is offset by **Dušan Popović's** sturdy Onegin. ★★

an oratorio. Rubinstein greatly admired Mendelssohn's oratorios and those of Handel too: you can hear both composers throughout the score, and Brahms, particularly in the choral writing. Sometimes you feel the plot is lost for another opportunity to show a mastery of fugue! The musical inspiration sometimes flags and by the end the libretto seems to have abandoned any pretence at drama with too much telling and not enough showing. The music undoubtedly drives the action forward but it reveals little about the characters.

However, the Warsaw Philharmonic Choir are magnificent and the baritone Stanisław Kuflyuk is a tireless Moses. One can only regret that his mother Johebet, sung by a ripe mezzo-soprano Małgorzata Walewska, disappears from the story so early. Pharaoh's daughter – the soprano Evelina Dobračeva – also makes a regrettably early exit. And who would have thought that the Almighty was a tenor? For all its imperfections this is an important recording. **Christopher Cook**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Giulio Cesare:

A Baroque Hero

Arias by Handel, Bianchi, Piccinni, Giacomelli and Pollarolo

Raffaele Pe (countertenor),
Raffaella Lupinacci (mezzo-soprano);
La Lira di Orfeo/Luca Giardino
Glossa GCD 923516 70:47 mins



Raffaele Pe studied in Lodi, London and Bologna, and as a countertenor he has gained a strong reputation in the last few years in concert and opera performances given by the likes of John Eliot Gardiner, Claudio Cavina and Paul McCreesh. This is his latest disc and, assisted by the research of the musicologist Valentina Anzani, it explores the character of Julius Caesar through selected arias from stage works by several Baroque composers. Additionally the collection includes one piece for Ariodante and one duet for Sextus and Cornelia (in which Pe is ably complemented by the mezzo Raffaella Lupinacci).

Pe's voice is strong and clear-toned. He shows agility in the

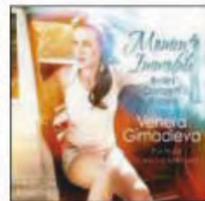
long runs of Pollarolo's 'Sdegnoso turbine' and Handel's 'Al lampo' (notwithstanding a slightly unsteady beat in the latter), and his decorations of the vocal line are bravely inventive. He projects the tender aspects of Caesar's character well (Piccinni's 'Spargi omai'), though the imperious elements (Giacomelli's 'Il cor') require a little more 'edge' and fire. The orchestra is spirited but sometimes untidy (Piccinni's 'Spargi omai'). Even so, this is a fascinating collection, and Pe engages commendably with such a range of music originally written for so many different voices. **Anthony Pryer**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Momento Immobile

Arias by Bellini, Donizetti and Rossini

Venera Gimadieva (soprano),
Natalia Brzezińska (mezzo-soprano),
Alberto Sousa (tenor); The Hallé/
Gianluca Marcianò
Rubicon RCD1021 77:44 mins



From a character perspective, female protagonists in bel canto opera – a style that was popularised in the 19th century – had a rotten time of it. They were generally portrayed as passionate to the point of instability, desirable (to men) and unobtainable. There was no doubt in Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti et al's minds: Eve was a soprano. The bel canto heroines, therefore, have some of the most expressive, acrobatic lines in the repertory – and it is those that Venera Gimadieva has selected for this 'best of' collection, recorded with The Hallé.

Gimadieva tackles the coloratura with dexterity, presenting characterful interpretations throughout. In 'Regnava nel silenzio' from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the Russian soprano captures the precariousness of the eponymous heroine's position, and foreshadows her upcoming break from reality. Mezzo-soprano Natalia Brzezińska features as the maid; returning later for 'Assia a pièd'un salice' (*Otello*, Rossini), along with tenor Alberto Sousa. Both serve to highlight Gimadieva's vocal pyrotechnics, which are at their most exuberant in 'Ah! Non credea ... Ah! non giunge' (*La sonnambula*, Bellini),

where we imagine Gimadieva lost in a hallucinatory slumber.

The Hallé, conducted by Gianluca Marcianò, are sympathetic collaborators throughout, upping the ante during an enjoyable 'Willow Song'. **Claire Jackson**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Puccini in Love

Duets from Tosca, La bohème, La rondine, Il tabarro, Madama Butterfly, Manon Lescaut, La fanciulla del West

Aleksandra Kurzak (soprano),
Roberto Alagna (tenor); Sinfonia
Varsovia/Riccardo Frizza
Sony 19075859832 62:52 mins



This album, which contains much beautiful singing, is based on a false premise, introduced by Alagna in a prefatory note: that all Puccini heroes are essentially the same, while it seems to me the amazing thing is that within a limited idiom Puccini manages so brilliantly to differentiate the heroic, the supplicatory, the purely seductive, and so on. To increase the plausibility of Alagna's claim – he doesn't say whether all Puccini's heroines, sung here by his wife Aleksandra Kurzak, are the same too – the ten excerpts here are performed without a break, as if belonging to a single opera. The texts, laudably given in four languages by Sony, are connected by a narrative thread which is entirely specious.

All that apart, there is a lot of pleasure to be had from this disc, which finds Alagna, now approaching his late fifties, in mainly excellent voice, though he tends to sing loudly throughout. He is, however, an intelligent artist making the most of his words. The same can be said of Kurzak, though she tends to be the nymph/seducer, both in her vocalising and in the accompanying pictures. Whether this is a good disc to introduce someone to Puccini with I'm not sure: it does tend to homogenise his art, whereas actually he is a master of the telling nuance. But so long as you don't expect all Puccini's operas to sound like these excerpts, this is a charming recital. **Michael Tanner**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

ALESSANDRIA	"Michele Pittaluga" International Guitar and Composition Competitions "Premio Città di Alessandria"	LYON	Concours international de musique de chambre de Lyon
AUCKLAND	Michael Hill International Violin Competition	MANCHESTER	RNCM James Mottram International Piano Competition
AUGSBURG	International Violin Competition Leopold Mozart	MARKNEUKIRCHEN	Markneukirchen International Instrumental Competition
BAMBERG	The Mahler Competition	MELBOURNE	Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition
BANFF	Banff International String Quartet Competition	MIAMI	Dranoff International 2 Piano Competition
BARCELONA	Maria Canals International Music Competition	MONTREAL	Canadian International Organ Competition
BEIJING	Beijing International Music Competition	MONTREAL	Concours musical international de Montréal
BELGRADE	International Jeunesses Musicales Competition	MONZA	Rina Sala Gallo International Piano Competition
BERGEN	International Edvard Grieg Piano Competition	MOSCOW	International Tchaikovsky Competition
BERLIN	International Max Rostal Competition for Violin and Viola	MUNICH //	ARD International Music Competition
BESANÇON	Concours international de jeunes chefs d'orchestre	NINGBO	China International Vocal Competition
BOLZANO //	Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition	NORRKÖPING	Wilhelm Stenhammar International Music Competition
BONN	International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn	ODENSE	Carl Nielsen International Competition
BRATISLAVA	International Johann Nepomuk Hummel Piano Competition	ORLÉANS	Concours international de piano d'Orléans
BRESCIA	Città di Brescia International Violin Competition	OSAKA	Osaka International Chamber Music Competition
BRUSSELS //	Queen Elisabeth Competition	OSLO	Queen Sonja International Music Competition
BUCHAREST	George Enescu International Competition	PARIS //	Concours Long-Thibaud-Crespin
BUCHAREST	International Grand Prix of Romania	PARMA	Arturo Toscanini International Conducting Competition
BUDAPEST //	Budapest International Music Competitions	PINEROLO/TORINO	International Chamber Music Competition "Pinerolo e Torino-Città metropolitana"
BYDGOSZCZ	Paderewski International Piano Competition	PORCIA	International Competition "Città di Porcia"
CALGARY	Honens Piano Competition	POZNAŃ //	International Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition
CHARTRES	Concours international d'orgue «Grand Prix de Chartres»	PRAGUE //	Prague Spring International Music Competition
CLEVELAND	Cleveland International Piano Competition	PRETORIA	Unisa International Music Competition
COLOGNE	International Music Competition Cologne	REGGIO EMILIA	International String Quartet Competition "Premio Paolo Borciani"
DORTMUND	International Schubert Competition Dortmund	RIO DE JANEIRO	BNDES International Piano Competition of Rio de Janeiro
DUBLIN	Dublin International Piano Competition	ST.-MAURICE	Concours International pour Orgue Saint-Maurice d'Agaune
DÜSSELDORF	Aeolus International Competition for Wind Instruments	ST.-PETERSBURG	Elena Obraztsova International Competition of Opera Singers
EINDHOVEN	TROMP International Percussion Competition	SALZBURG	International Mozart Competition Salzburg
ÉPINAL	Concours International de Piano d'Épinal	SAN ANTONIO	The Gurwitz
FORT WORTH	Van Cliburn International Piano Competition	SANTANDER	Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competition
GENEVA //	Concours de Genève	SENDAI	Sendai International Music Competition
GENOVA //	International Violin Competition "Premio Paganini"	SEOUL	Seoul International Music Competition
GLASGOW	Scottish International Piano Competition	SHENZHEN	China Shenzhen International Piano Concerto Competition
GRAZ	International Competition "Franz Schubert and Modern Music"	SION	Concours International de Violon Tibor Varga
HACHIOJI	Gaspar Cassado International Violoncello Competition	SYDNEY	Sydney International Piano Competition
HAMAMATSU	Hamamatsu International Piano Competition	TAKAMATSU	Takamatsu International Piano Competition
HAMAMATSU	Mt. Fuji International Opera Competition of Shizuoka	TBILISI	Tbilisi International Piano Competition
HANNOVER	Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition	TEL AVIV	The Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition
HARBIN	Schoenfeld International String Competition	THESSALONIKI	"Giorgos Thymis" International Piano Competition
HELSINKI	International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition	TOKYO	International Oboe Competition of Japan
HELSINKI	International Maj Lind Piano Competition	TOKYO	International Organ Competition Musashino-Tokyo
HELSINKI	Mirjam Helin International Singing Competition	TOKYO	Tokyo International Music Competition for Conducting
'S-HERTOGENBOSCH	International Vocal Competition 's-Hertogenbosch	TONGYEONG	ISANGYUN Competition
HONG KONG	Hong Kong International Piano Competition	TOULOUSE	Concours international de chant de Toulouse
INDIANAPOLIS	International Violin Competition of Indianapolis	TROMSØ	Top of the World International Piano Competition
ISTANBUL	International Piano Competition Istanbul Orchestra' Sion	TRONDHEIM	Princess Astrid International Music Competition
JAÉN	International Piano Competition Prize Jaén	TRONDHEIM	Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition
JEJU	Jeju International Brass & Percussion Competition	UTRECHT	International Franz Liszt Piano Competition
KATOWICE	Grzegorz Fitelberg International Competition for Conductors	VALÈNCIA	International Piano Competition "Iturbi Prize"
KATRINEHOLM	Swedish International Duo Competition	VERCELLI //	Gian Battista Viotti International Music Competition
KENNETT SQUARE	Longwood Gardens International Organ Competition	VEVEY	Concours International de Piano Clara Haskil
KIEV	International Competition for Young Pianists in Memory of Vladimir Horowitz	VIENNA	International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna
KOBE	Kobe International Flute Competition	VIENNA	International Fritz Kreisler Competition for Violin
LEEDS	Leeds International Piano Competition	VILNIUS	International M.K. Čiurlionis Piano and Organ Competition
LEIPZIG	International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition	VIÑA DEL MAR	International Musical Competition "Dr. Luis Sigall"
LICHTENBERG/HOF	International Violin Competition Henri Marteau	WARSAW //	International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition
LOS ANGELES	Primrose International Viola Competition	WARSAW	Witold Lutoslawski International Cello Competition
LUDWIGSLUST	International J. M. Sperger Competition for Double Bass	WEIMAR	Weimar International Music Competitions
LUXEMBOURG	International Percussion Competition Luxembourg	YEREVAN	Aram Khachaturian International Competition
		ZAGREB	International "Vaclav Huml" Violin Competition
		ZHUHAI	International Mozart Competition for Young Musicians
		ZÜRICH	Géza Anda International Piano Competition
		ZWICKAU	International Robert Schumann Contest for Pianists and Singers

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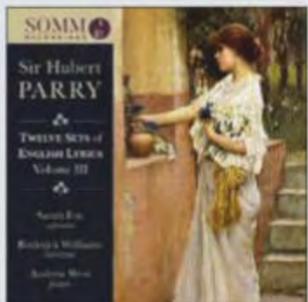
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Choral & Song

CHORAL & SONG CHOICE



Perceptive performances make this Parry stand out

Daniel Jaffé finds this third and final volume of the English composer's songs essential listening



Masterful narrator: Roderick Williams captures the attention

Parry

Twelve Sets of English Lyrics, Vol. 3

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

Somm Recordings SOMMCD272 58:46 mins

Parry is widely loved for several choral pieces and the mass song *Jerusalem*. Something of their noble quality – innate to the man himself – can be heard in these songs, although ‘My heart is like a singing bird’ with which this album opens does little to dispel the impression of Parry as a worthy but rather conventional late-Victorian gentleman. The ones that follow, however, are of increasing interest. With track five we reach a genuine masterpiece: ‘The sound of hidden music’, sung with winsome ingenuousness by soprano Sarah Fox, was apparently Parry’s very last song, and could easily pass for one of Elgar’s more confiding, open-hearted flights of inspired lyricism.

In fine contrast, there is ‘Nightfall in Winter’, in which Parry deftly suggests through his piano accompaniment, sensitively played by Andrew West, the lengthening shadows and encroaching chill of eventide at that season. Such is the song’s

well-modulated narrative, conveyed with sentient understatement by baritone Roderick Williams, that one is simply engrossed through its nearly five-minute duration.

These perceptive performances by both singers and their pianist recover even the sense and sensibility of those songs which seem distant from our time.

‘The Faithful Lover’ could easily sound staid and conventional to modern ears; but Parry – as Williams clearly understands – saw Alfred Perceval Graves’s poem as the eloquent expression of an honourable lover, rather than an opportunity for an

emotional outpouring à la Tchaikovsky. Hearing this brings us closer to understanding the essential decency of the man beloved by his pupils, including Holst and Vaughan Williams, and whose influence extended well beyond the mere issue of musical style.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★

Parry deftly suggests the encroaching chill of eventide



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

Berlioz

Grande Messe des Morts

Bror Magnus Tødenes (tenor); Bergen Philharmonic Chorus & Orchestra/Edward Gardner
Chandos CHSA 5219 (hybrid CD/SACD)
80:54 mins



One of my happiest musical memories of the last few years is of a performance of Berlioz’s Requiem

under Edward Gardner at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester. He has the measure of this work – of its pacing, its contrasts and, not least, of its idiosyncrasies. Among my favourite moments here is the momentous hush before the first ‘mors stupebit’, with lower strings barely audible, stupefied by the extraordinary idea of death itself in awe; and the moment is all the more terrifying after the full blaze of brass and drums to which the engineers do full justice, as they do to the overall impression of space that’s vital to this work.

Achieving homogeneity from four separate choirs for any performance can be a problem, but here they blend perfectly and not only does their massed sound balance well with the orchestra but, for the most part anyway, words are audible. But why does the solo tenor, who sings strongly and accurately, sound as if in a practice room some distance away from the Bergen Grieghallen? If we’re being historical about this, the tenor at the 1837 Paris premiere was Gilbert Duprez who six years earlier had wowed the city with his chest voice top Cs in *William Tell*, and would surely have been centre stage for this work. A puzzle. *Roger Nichols*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

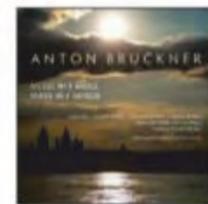
RECORDING

★★★★

Bruckner

Mass No. 3 in F minor

Jutta Hörl (soprano), Thorston Büttner (tenor), Chöre am Hohen Dom zu Mainz; Mainzer Domorchestra/Karsten Storck
Rondeau ROP6161 61:26 mins



Anton Bruckner wrote a great deal of choral music, and most of it before he

launched on his immense symphonic output. Prior to embarking on the latter,

he devoted much of the first 40 years of his life to the study of counterpoint and musical theory in general, and the climax of this period is in this F minor Mass, a work which is largely more celebrated than actually performed or recorded.

On this disc one hears why: it is a most peculiar work, contrapuntal throughout, yet not in long sweeps, as in the fugal passages in his symphonies, but in a strange stop-go mode. Where his greatest symphonic achievements are cumulative, the pleasures here are oddly piecemeal, though the enormous reverberation time of Mainz Cathedral does what it can to mitigate that effect.

The sound is somewhat recessed, too, so that the volume level tends to be uniform, and though one may expect shocks of sound during the Resurrection and other major dramatic points, they don't come. The odd placing of the quartet of soloists adds to the uniform effect, and they are in any case not a very distinguished bunch.

Michael Tanner

PERFORMANCE ★★

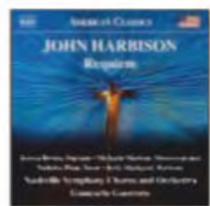
RECORDING ★★★

John Harbison

Requiem

Jessica Rivera (soprano), Michaela Martens (mezzo-soprano), Nicholas Phan (tenor), Kelly Markgraf (baritone); Nashville Symphony Chorus and Orchestra/ Giancarlo Guerrero

Naxos 8.559841 54:34 mins



American composer John Harbison wrote his Requiem in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, but much of its musical material dates from earlier, starting in 1985 with a draft of the Introit. That opening has a bleached, hollowed-out quality in this recording, with short-breathed, jabbing choral entries and a fugue whose downward trajectory suggests the sickened, traumatic aftermath of a catastrophe.

Slithering brass and rattling percussion underpin the chromatic exclamations of the Dies irae, and the muting of fanfare instruments in the 'Tuba mirum' creates a sickly, jaundiced impression. Key tutti points are punchily delivered by the choir and orchestra, although elsewhere ensemble can be a

touch slippery.

Some of the most interesting music is in sections featuring the soloists. The spidery woodwind writing accompanying 'Quid sum miser,' the combination of bells and slithery violins in 'Recordare', the plinking combination of harp and piano at 'Qui mariam absolvisti' – these telling instrumental touches enhance the music's often strange, half-lit soundworld. Moments of qualified optimism emerge in the Requiem's second half, especially in the bullish, insistent Sanctus. But the concluding In paradisum is equivocal in tone, the vision of peace compromised by a questioning violin solo and unsettled harmonies.

The vocal soloists make a mainly positive impression, as does conductor Giancarlo Guerrero. All told, this is a solidly reliable account of a worthwhile work. *Terry Blain*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

RECORDING ★★★★★

Liszt

Songs, Vol. 5: Victor Hugo songs; Die Lorelei; Ich liebe dich, etc.

Allan Clayton (tenor),

Julius Drake (piano)

Hyperion CDA 68179 63:09 mins



The quieter moments of these songs show Allan Clayton's voice at its best: smooth, tender and

altogether alluring; the performance of 'Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh' is worthy both of the music and of Goethe's famous poem. Under pressure, his tone can be rather less attractive, with an edge to it that may be necessary in an opera house, but less so given Julius Drake's generally well balanced accompaniments. Only at one point, in 'Enfant, si j'étais roi', does the piano drown the voice, and even here some justification might be claimed (if not by me) in the phrase 'le profond chaos' where Liszt unhelpfully gives the singer low notes against heavy piano chords. By and large Clayton's diction is good, although I would have liked more attention paid to final consonants, especially in the German songs.

The four settings of Victor Hugo come off well, and it is hardly the performers' fault that Liszt's rearrangement of Hugo's text in 'Comment disaient-ils' makes nonsense of the poem. My only other quibbles are over occasional infidelity to the texts. At the end of

Reissues Reviewed by Natasha Loges



Chansons Françaises Berlioz, Ravel, et al

Eloquence 481 7502 (2012) 70:32 mins

Polished, if somewhat prosaic, performance by **Wolfgang Holzmair** and **Maria Beloousova** of an extremely attractive selection of mainly well-known French songs. ★★★



France Works by Poulenc, Jolivet, et al

SWR SWR19065CD (2005-09) 70:09 mins

Mesmerising performances of a range of French choral works from the familiar (Poulenc) to the undeservedly unfamiliar (Jolivet, Aperghis). Director **Marcus Creed** brings out every detail. ★★★★★



Schubert Schwanengesang

Harmonia Mundi HMM 932139-40 (2012)

110:40 mins (2 discs)

With **Christoph Eschenbach's** imaginatively conceived accompaniments, **Matthew Goerne's** burnished legato evoke a darkly Romantic world, despite some very slow tempos and fugitive consonants. ★★★★★



Fritz Wunderlich Lieder by Beethoven, Brahms, et al

SWR Music SWR19064CD (1965)

158:05 mins (3 discs)

We can all learn from tenor **Fritz Wunderlich**, with his superb technical control, immaculate diction and deep musicality. The three accompanists include the wonderful **Hubert Giesen**. ★★★★★

the first song we don't really get the *piano perdendosi* Liszt asks for, and in the last one Clayton sings the line 'O tu ihm was du kannst' at a full *forte* instead of the marked *piano*. But overall the performers are alive to the drama in many of these songs, suggesting what the quality might have been of the mature opera Liszt never wrote. *Roger Nichols*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

RECORDING ★★★★★

Purcell

Strike the Viol; Hornpipe; Pavan in G minor; Fairest Isle; Air, etc

Tim Mead (countertenor);

Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien/

François Lazarevitch

Alpha Classics ALPHA 419 66:10 mins



Tim Mead and François Lazarevitch are very experienced performers of Baroque music,

though they came to the repertory via rather different routes. Mead began as a choral scholar in England and is known for his clear diction and vocal poise, while Lazarevitch studied in Paris and Brussels, and has an eclectic approach to

instrumental performance, drawing on popular and 'folk' styles.

At one level the combination works well. Vocal pieces such as 'May her blest example chase' are given a halo of imaginative instrumental colour, and the freestanding instrumental dances and fantasias are vividly painted. In some works, however (eg the Pavane in G minor), the added embellishments overwhelm the delicate, chromatic false relations of Purcell's original textures. Encrustation seems to be mistaken for adornment, even if we wish to take the music not as a text but a pretext for free improvisation. Tim Mead is more restrained in his use of ornamentation, though what he adds is tastefully done (as in 'Strike the Viol'), and he captures well the popular tone of 'Twas Within a Furlong of Edinboro' Town' (incidentally, probably not by Purcell). He might have been a little freer with the beat in the recitative-like 'Tis Nature's Voice', and in 'O Solitude', although he negotiates the angular lines with poise, he does not quite match the personalised meaning given to it by Andreas Scholl on Decca. In short, this is an enjoyable disc but one

that sometimes raises unsettling questions regarding interpretation.

Anthony Pryer

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

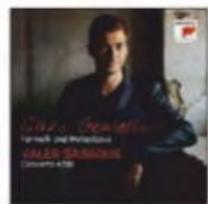
Caro Gemello: *Farinelli and Metastasio*

Works by C Broschi, Caldara, Conforto, Giacomelli, Hasse and Porpora

Valer Sabadus (countertenor);

Concerto Köln

Sony 88985305382 71:50 mins



This album of Baroque musical snapshots recalls the friendship between celebrated

librettist Pietro Metastasio and the superstar castrato Farinelli, whom he affectionately called his 'dear twin' ('caro gemello'). Extracts from oratorios and stage works by Caldara, Hasse and Porpora, and all-but-forgotten arias by shadowy names like Nicola Conforto and Geminiano Giacomelli trace their professional rapport. We even hear Farinelli's own valedictory canzona 'La Partenza'.

Concerto Köln – the silver-toned Rolls-Royce of period ensembles – handles this journey with suave style and flawless control. From the curtain-raising *sinfonia* to the final 'pathos aria', rhythms pulse and dance while the ever-changing musical scenes are shaded and lit with all the drama of the opera house. Romanian countertenor Valer Sabadus makes for a refined Farinelli, and where his smoky voice lacks in power, it gains in agility. He breezes through the coloratura arias, with their virtuoso roulades and vertiginous leaps (though his tendency to surge on the higher notes

is tiresome; and Hasse's 'Di quello ch'io provo' pushes his lower register a whisker beyond comfort). Sabadus really shines, though, in the more intimate arias: Caldara's 'Questi al cor', to which he lends delicate grace, and the achingly beautiful 'Quel buon pastor son io', sung with a tender yearning. Perhaps the highlight of the disc is an aria which gave Handel a run for his money: Porpora's 'Alto Giove', whose liquid melody and soft-ebbing strings let this vaporous voice float effortlessly.

Kate Bolton-Porciatti

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Star of Heaven: *The Eton Choirbook Legacy*

Works by Cornysh, Cooke, Lambe, Phibbs, et al

The Sixteen/Harry Christophers

Coro COR 16166 66:57 mins



In the 1990s The Sixteen's series devoted to the Eton Choirbook was required listening for

lovers of Tudor polyphony. As Harry Christophers's choir embarks on its 40th anniversary year it's no surprise that it should revisit such a landmark project – but this time there's a twist. Works by Cornysh and Lambe are paired with specially-commissioned companion pieces setting the same texts; and to complement Robert Wylkynson's imposing nine-part *Salve Regina*, there's a James MacMillan setting of *O Virgo prudentissima* based on a Wylkynson fragment. To end, Christophers goes off-piste with Stephen Hough's *Hallowed*, a lushly-conceived sequence straddling *Genesis*, an eighth-century Chinese poem, a Navajo Indian text and a



High-flying:
Valer Sabadus pays
homage to Farinelli

harmonisation of the Pater Noster plainsong cut with a blessing heard at the outset.

Given its scale, Wylkynson's *Salve Regina* establishes a potent centre of gravity. But the MacMillan offers an enrapt kaleidoscope of adroitly manipulated textures and mesmeric wordless carolling, while Phillip Cooke's contrasting response to Cornysh's sonorously all-male *Ave Maria, mater Dei* is enticingly ethereal thanks to a pair of off-stage trebles intensifying its incantatory allure. Across the disc, complex polyphonic edifices are negotiated with Christophers's intuitive suavity, and stretches of prayerful serenity are enlivened with a gear-changing dramatic lift here, a rhythmic nicety there. Forty years on, The Sixteen's supple, fastidiously nuanced soundworld continues to serve 'ancient' and 'modern' with aplomb. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

The Unknown Traveller

Works by Byrd, Faignient, Ferrabosco, Ferretti, Laasso, Palestrina, Rowarth, et al

Fieri Consort

Fieri Records FIER002TUT 71:46 mins



The debut disc of the young Fieri Consort, last April's Choral and Song Choice, combined Italian

madrigals with a new work by Ben Rowarth. This follow-up sticks to the

same formula: but the madrigals, by Italian and Flemish composers, are sung in translations from Nicholas Yonge's 1588 anthology *Musica Transalpina*, designed to introduce the genre to English singers. The performances are precise in attack and pitching, and sensitively balanced; the overall sound is lovely, except that the sweetness of the high soprano line soon becomes cloying. Diction is not bad, but in a church acoustic not quite clear enough to compensate for the lack of printed texts. Given that the essence of the madrigal is its response to the meaning of the words, this reduces the listening experience to a simple enjoyment of their sonic beauty.

Ben Rowarth's eight-voice *Short Walk of a Madman* builds on the ideas of journeying and translation with its progression from confusion to unanimity, madness to clarity. I confess I can't follow the composer's explanation of how this is related to the refugee experience, or to a spiral structure derived from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or to the four notably obscure poems by e.e. cummings which are set with increasing audibility in the four movements. But the work's extreme difficulties are negotiated by the Consort with supreme confidence; and in the light of Rowarth's insistence on its essentially abstract nature, perhaps it's best approached as another sonic experience.

Anthony Burton

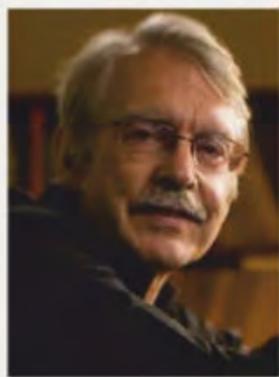
PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

BACKGROUND TO...

John Harbison (b1938)

A prolific American composer, John Harbison earned plaudits as young as 16. He studied at both Harvard and Princeton, and counted Walter Piston among his tutors. Following his 1987 Pulitzer Prize, his standing as one of the leading composers of the US was confirmed by commissions from Metropolitan Opera and the Vatican, his many chamber, symphonic,

choral and solo works being recorded and regularly performed. He is principal guest conductor of Boston's ensemble Emmanuel Music, and a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).





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Passion and intensity for the Elias's big finish

Christopher Dingle is left breathless by the quartet's sixth and final helping of Beethoven masterpieces



Fine conclusion: the Elias String Quartet's Beethoven rounds off in style

Beethoven

String Quartet No. 6 in B flat, Op.18;
String Quartet No. 8 in E minor, Op. 59 No. 2
(Rasumovsky No. 2); String Quartet No. 16
in F, Op. 135

Elias String Quartet

Wigmore Hall Live WHLive0093/2 102:04 mins (2 discs)

There's no danger here of familiarity breeding contempt. Recorded in 2015, this sixth and final volume of the Elias String Quartet's admirable Beethoven cycle comfortably matches the exulted qualities of earlier releases. As before, the two-disc set features one of the Op. 18 quartets, a mid-period work and one of the late masterpieces to create an exquisitely balanced programme in itself. Inevitably, perhaps, the set concludes with Beethoven's last statement in the genre, Op. 135, as well as the concluding quartet of Op. 18, while the second *Rasumovsky* Quartet forms the centrepiece.

There is painstaking attention to detail, yet these live performances burst with spontaneity. Passages of transcendent lyricism abound, the *Adagio* of Op. 18 No. 6 and the great slow movement of the

second *Rasumovsky* Quartet being imbued with a sublime fluidity rare in modern performances. The pacing of key moments, such as the existential musing that starts the final movement of Op. 135, manages to produce delightfully fresh nuance while remaining natural and avoiding mannerism.

Most striking, though, is the visceral excitement the Elias bring page after page, with passion and intensity of expression to the fore. There is nothing prim, polite or insipidly nice in these performances, whether pushing forward breathlessly at the end of Op. 59 No. 2 or sustaining the heartfelt emotion of the final quartet's *Lento assai* in a barely moving hush.

The Elias enable Beethoven's radical modernity to be heard afresh, this disc capping a cycle that takes a deserved place among the finest on disc.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



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

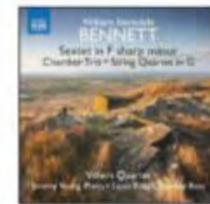
These live performances burst with spontaneity

WS Bennett

Chamber Trio; String Quartet in G; Sextet in F sharp minor

Jeremy Young (piano), Leon Bosch (double bass); Villiers Quartet

Naxos 8.571379 77:30 mins



Best known for his piano concertos, William Sterndale Bennett also wrote a notable body of

chamber music. This new release, if a little uneven in places, still shines a welcome light on three little-heard works. Most substantial is the Sextet in F sharp minor, a colourful and tightly-structured work for string quintet (including double bass) plus piano. Written in Bennett's final year of study at the Royal Academy of Music, the Sextet is closely modelled on Mendelssohn, with whom he warmly corresponded for several years. The Villiers Quartet are a touch low on energy at the work's opening, and intonation is not always secure; however, Jeremy Young brings sparkle and a real sense of narrative to the virtuosic piano part. The finale happily draws a compelling performance from the whole ensemble who provide all the drama and exuberance that Bennett's score demands.

Bennett viewed his Haydn-esque String Quartet in G major as something of a technical exercise, and the Villiers Quartet offer a commendably committed if slightly rough-edged account in this premiere recording. More appealing is the Chamber Trio. The most mature of the three pieces featured, the work abounds in warmth and humour, especially in the playful pizzicato 'Serenade'. *Kate Wakeling*

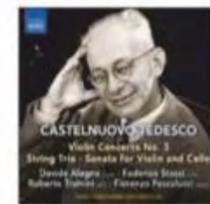
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Castelnuovo-Tedesco

Violin Concerto No. 3; String Trio; Sonata for Violin and Cello

Daide Alogna (violin), Federico Stassi (viola), Roberto Trainini (cello), Fiorenzo Pascalucci (piano)

Naxos 8.574003 78:21 mins



Cut off from his Italian/Jewish roots and culture, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco once

referred to his experience of emigration to America as like 'a

Chamber Reviews

dress rehearsal for death'. The music presented here, composed in the decade following his flight from Fascist Italy in 1939, tells an exactly opposite story. Conservative in style, these pieces are written with such lyricism and enjoyment for the task that their dimensions can get a little out of hand: the Sonata for Violin and Cello, one of numerous chamber works sparked into life by congenial musical gatherings in Los Angeles, bubbles away for nearly 35 minutes. Since the composer's day job, aside from teaching, was writing brief cues for Hollywood films, you can understand his itch to luxuriate.

Even when material is stretched thinly, the lyrical flow in these works – all unpublished, and previously unrecorded – remains irresistible, especially in these passionate Italian performances, captured in resonant acoustics. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's command of instrumental resources is always impressive. The varied string registers are imaginatively exploited; while the unusual 'concerto' written for Jascha Heifetz, who never played it, easily conjures a grandiloquent orchestral tapestry, cadenza and all, just from the gestures of violin and piano.

The work's finale, spiced with a few jazz rhythms, marks the only point where the American scene enters; the entire piece was designed as a musical recreation of the composer's experiences as an emigrant sailing into New York in 1939. Otherwise, traditions of the old world rule. Deep in his heart, his musical heart, Castelnuovo-Tedesco never left Italy at all.

Geoff Brown

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Dvořák

Piano Trios Nos 3 & 4 (Dumky)

Christian Tetzlaff (violin), Tanja Tetzlaff (cello), Lars Vogt (piano)

Ondine ODE 1316-2 72:56 mins



Do we take Dvořák seriously enough? The long-established artistic partnership

behind this recording offers us a composer whose chamber music transcends the superficial charms of a good folk-dance. No Brahms-lite here. The opening of the vast third trio is grand and tumultuous,

the tempos generous and elastic, the rhythms never rigid, but yielding. This is thrilling, virtuosic playing. The range of string colour is huge, from throaty full-bloodedness to unearthly, silvery translucence. The fearsome keyboard parts sound effortless under Lars Vogt's fingers.

My one quibble is that this seriousness should not preclude all crispness and lightness. The *grazioso* Dvořák marks in the third movement of the Trio No. 3 here leans more towards *furioso*. The fourth movement could be a touch less polished. Also, the full textures occasionally overshadow the cello line; when it penetrates, as in the opening of the third movement, it has all the glorious warmth one could desire.

The much-loved, hugely ambitious six-movement *Dumky* Trio benefits more from this glowing, grand treatment. The second movement is particularly memorable, its richly sonorous opening leading to a magical, music-box presentation of the famous rustic dance theme. The final movement had moments which were darkly, unnervingly dramatic.

Call me old-fashioned, but I'm unconvinced by the increasingly popular conversation-format liner note; I was none the wiser after reading the musicians' cryptic observations. But they are evidently determined to remove any taint of triviality or shallowness or sentimentality from this fine composer's music – and they succeed magnificently.

Natasha Loges

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

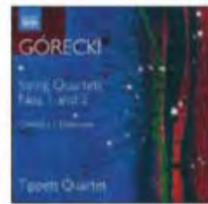
Górecki

String Quartets Nos 1 & 2;

Genesis I: Elementi

Tippett Quartet

Naxos 8.573919 60:54 mins



Górecki's three string quartets were composed for the Kronos Quartet in 1988, 1991 and 1995

respectively. The uncompromising modernism of the first two is a long way from the lyrical expanses of his more familiar *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* of 1976. The first, entitled *Already it is Dusk*, a title taken from a 16th-century setting of a prayer for sleeping children,



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begins with a striking chord introducing sinuous counterpoint. An uncompromisingly dissonant climax is reached leading to a wildly exhilarating central section before the return of the opening material. The second quartet, *Quasi una fantasia*, is more expansive than the first with broadly developed outer movements. Given its title, inevitably there are references to Beethoven which seem at their most pungent in the middle movements. Separating the two quartets is *Genesis 1* for string trio. Although written some 25 years earlier than the quartets it has a more avant-garde aspect, stretching the individual players with some electrifying textures.

Throughout, the Tippett Quartet are sympathetic and expert interpreters negotiating Górecki's soundworld with a strong sense of ensemble and making the most of the abundant contrasts of material and intensity. Perhaps not every detail is in place, but they are unquestionably impressive in externalising the coherence and formal integrity of these works. The recorded sound might have been a little more resonant, but it captures the full range of Górecki's carefully calculated textures and the astonishingly virtuoso demands of *Genesis*. Overall, not an easy listen, but one that brings rich rewards.

Jan Smaczny

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Matthew Locke

For Lovers of Consort Music: Suites and Canons

Elizabeth Kenny (theorbo); Phantasm
Linn CKD 594 73:10 mins



When Matthew Locke died in 1677, his friend and disciple Henry Purcell paid tribute to a man 'whose skilful harmony had charms for all the ills that we endure'. Indeed, the fecund imagination of this eccentric and irascible composer certainly comes across in his viol consorts which offset what he himself describes as 'art and contrivance' with 'light and airy musick'.

Here, Locke disturbs with jagged, angular lines, wayward chromatic harmonies, and murky colours plumbing the consort's depths; there, he delights with fleet,



Plucky numbers:
Elizabeth Kenny
and her theorbo

balletic rhythms, filmy textures, and lyrical melodies that soar to the treble viol's sweetest heights. A man of the stage (he composed for plays, masques, and musico-dramatic entertainments), Locke splashes his scores with theatrical effects: fanfares and flourishes, declamatory passages, rhetorical pauses, bathos and pathos, light and shade.

One of Phantasm's most distinctive qualities is its airy (phantasmal?) sound. With weightless bowing and wispy articulation, Locke's dance music floats and contrapuntal threads are woven into a fabric sheer as gossamer. Compare this gauzy voile with the thick velvet of Hesperion XX's 1993 recording of the Four-Part Consorts. The two ensembles' approach to tempo is also very different: Phantasm trips the light fantastic, with Elizabeth Kenny's thrumming theorbo adding pizzazz. By contrast, Hesperion XX's lugubrious approach dwells on the music's dark and strange harmonies – Locke's contemporaries might have described these readings as 'poderose' (weighty).

Perhaps the newer, more luminous recording best captures Purcell's elegiac words on his friend's power to assuage: 'From pointed griefs, he'd take the pain away'.

Kate Bolton-Porciatti

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Mozart

Violin Sonatas: No. 21 in E minor, K304; No. 23 in D, K306; No. 35 in A, K526

Isabelle Faust (violin),
Alexander Melnikov (fortepiano)
Harmonia Mundi HMM 902360
65:50 mins



Three remarkably different works make up the first volume in this survey of Mozart's Sonatas

for fortepiano and violin. The D major K306 could be described as a kind of hybrid Sonata Concerto with many virtuosic flourishes in the opening movement, an operatically conceived slow movement, and an *Allegretto* finale which features a dazzling extended cadenza for both instruments. In sharp contrast, the two movements of the E minor Sonata, K304, are introverted and tinged with melancholy. After this comes the A major K526, Mozart's final work in this genre, composed the same year as *Don Giovanni* and infused with passages of intricate contrapuntal argument that reflect the composer's growing fascination for the music of Bach and Handel.

Both players on this warmly recorded release respond to the distinctive soundworlds of these three works with performances of great subtlety and flexibility. As in her recordings of the Mozart Violin Concertos, Isabelle Faust uses vibrato extremely sparingly, but still

manages to create an astonishing variety of timbres. Whereas many violinists opt for a warmer sound in the E minor Sonata, Faust follows Mozart's marking of *sotto voce* to the letter in the quieter passages, thereby making the unexpected *forte* eruptions in the first movement sound all the more powerful.

Alexander Melnikov, performing on a modern reproduction of an Anton Walter fortepiano, also maximises the textural variety in Mozart's writing, sometimes opting for brilliance in articulation in virtuoso passages and in the slow movements projecting a wonderfully sustained cantabile tone. Almost all repeats are observed enabling both performers to ornament their melodic lines in a creative and spontaneous manner.

Erik Levi

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

A Panufnik

Hommage à Chopin; String Quartets Nos 1-3

Dóry Ombódi (flute), Sławomir Rozlach (double bass);
Apollon Musagète Quartett
Fryderyk Chopin Institute NIFCCD 059
71:10 mins



From Szymanowski to Górecki, Polish composers have made some of the richest

contributions to the string quartet repertoire of the 20th century. Among the most distinctive quartets of all are the three by Andrzej Panufnik who, though perhaps more often thought of as a symphonist, was clearly very much at home in the medium. Indeed, it's tempting to think of the Quartet No. 2 as his most perfect masterpiece.

All three sound deeply Polish, yet all were written (between 1976 and 1990) in Panufnik's English exile. The second, entitled *Messages*, harks back to his childhood pastime of putting an ear to wooden telegraph poles, and the quartet medium seems ideally suited to evoking the sounds produced by wires vibrating in the wind. The effect of this single-span work is hypnotic, especially in the hands of Poland's young Apollon Musagète Quartett, who convey all its originality.

One of his last works, the Quartet No. 3 was written following

Panufnik's visit to the newly free Poland; its title, *Paper-cuts*, invokes a traditional Polish craft while also reflecting the composer's geometrical preoccupation. The dynamism of this performance is captured in superb sound.

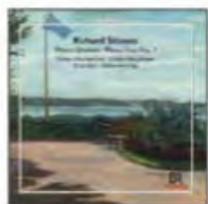
The disc opens in inspired fashion with a new version of Panufnik's *Hommage à Chopin*, originally composed for voice and piano for the 1949 centenary of Chopin's death. Panufnik's later arrangement for flute and string orchestra gets a new lease of life here in chamber form and in a performance – with Dóry Ombódi's flute contributing an otherworldly voice – of bittersweet beauty.

John Allison

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

R Strauss

Piano Quartet; Piano Trio No. 2
Doren Dinglinger (violin),
Tony Nys (viola), Alexandre Vay
(cello), Daniel Blumenthal (piano)
CPO 555 116-2 67:39 mins



Should chamber players keep on recording works from what the liner note calls the young

Richard Strauss's 'whirlwind tour through the standard genres'? Frankly I'd rather spend time with Brahms's great piano quartets than re-engage with Strauss's only specimen, a 20 year-old's homage to the master finished at the start of 1885. Still, if revisited it must be, it had best be done like this.

Pianist Daniel Blumenthal is adept at switching from Brahmsian sweep to the pre-*Till Eulenspiegel* sparkle (to be fair, the wit also to be found in the next major work, the *Burleske* for piano and orchestra, is already there in the finale of Brahms's Second Piano Concerto). There's sufficient unpredictability in the second-movement *Presto*, and the extra spring of the finale's development to keep this performance very companionable, and the sound is rich as well as perfectly balanced.

Robust good humour seems to have been a hallmark of young Strauss, and it's there throughout the D major Piano Trio of a well-behaved 13-year-old. The closer Strauss sticks to cheerful simplicity the better; the violin melody in the *Andante cantabile* and the

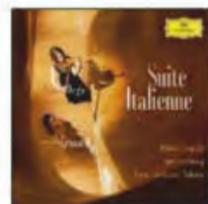
cello's singing in the trio of a very Mendelssohnian fairy scherzo, worth considering as a concert-hall encore, are beautifully done here.

David Nice

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Suite Italienne

Respighi: Violin Sonata in B minor;
Stravinsky: Suite Italienne; **Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco:** Ballade for Violin and Piano, Op. 107; Fantasias for Violin and Piano – Rosina; Figaro; Violetta
Francesca Dego (violin),
Francesca Leonardi (piano)
DG 481 7297 73:05 mins



Whiffs of Debussy and Scriabin, with a drizzling of decadence – the opening

movement of Respighi's 1917 Violin Sonata is quintessentially late-Romantic in sensibility. It can easily overheat, but the Italian violinist Francesca Dego keeps the temperature finely poised between an interesting simmer and boil-over. Her supple, sappy tone suits the music, and she bows in lengthy, lissome phrases with exceptionally sure intonation. The *Andante* sings with a sweet poignancy, and the concluding Passacaglia's 20 variations are knitted cohesively together, with enough expressive flexibility to keep the results from seeming sternly academic.

Charm and elegance infuse Dego's reading of Stravinsky's *Suite Italienne*, based on his neo-classical ballet *Pulcinella*. The 'Tarantella' is spikily energetic without turning frantic, and the 'Gavotta' is pointed with grace and humour, with neatly scaled contributions from pianist Francesca Leonardi.

Three of the four works by Castelnuovo-Tedesco are premiere recordings. The *Ballade* huffs and puffs rhetorically. But the Fantasias – two on Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and one on Verdi's *La traviata* – are delightful pieces, played with a winning blend of panache and technical assurance.

All told, this is a richly enjoyable recital, confirming the strong impression Dego made last year in her recording of concertos by Paganini and Wolf-Ferrari.

Terry Blain

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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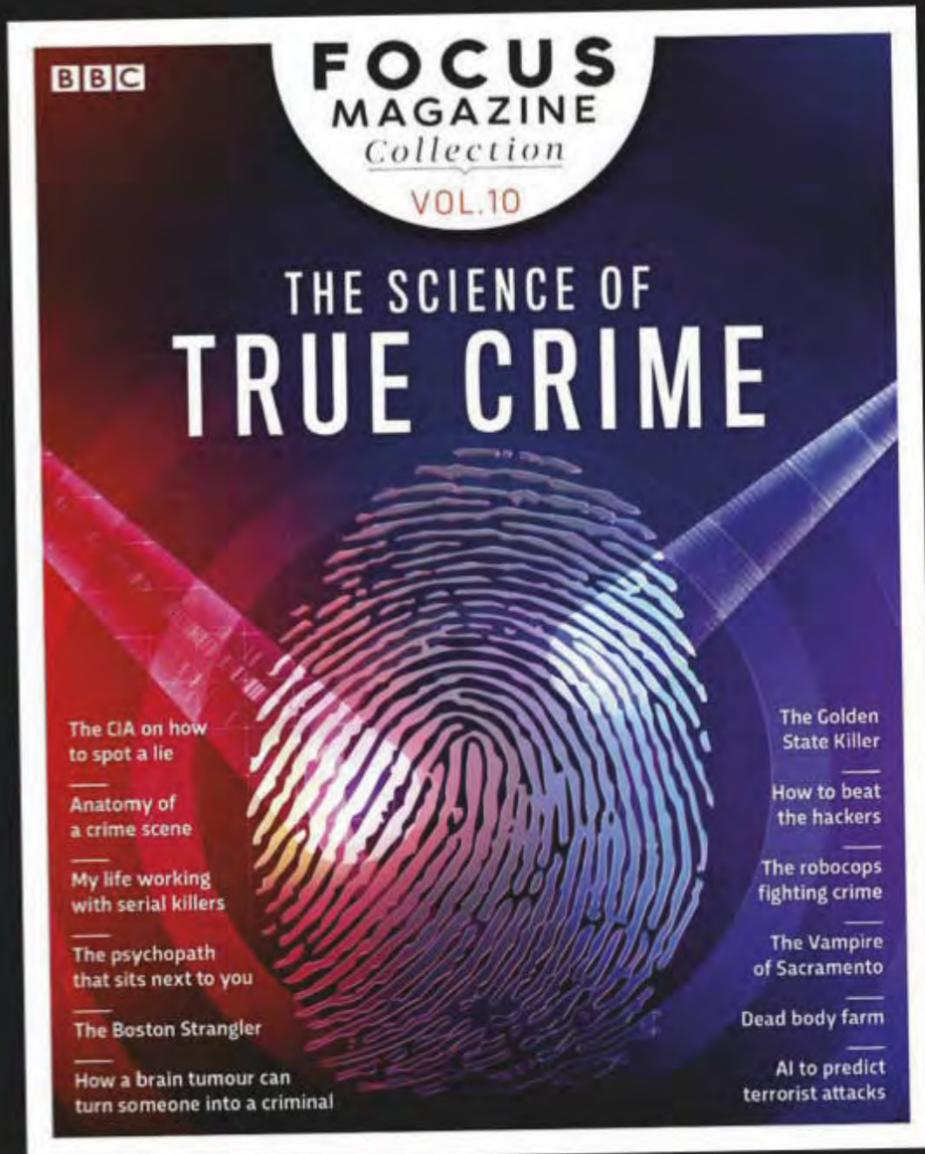
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INSTRUMENTAL CHOICE



Centuries collide in this remarkable debut disc

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Golden girl: Elicia Silverstein is impressive

The Dreams & Fables I Fashion

Biber: Mystery Sonatas – The Crucifixion; Passacaglia; **Sciarrino:** 6 Capricci; **Pandolfi:** 6 Sonatas for Violin and Continuo; **Berio:** Sequenza VIII for Violin; **JS Bach:** Partita No. 2 in D minor – Chaconne
Elicia Silverstein (violin), Mauro Valli (cello), Michele Pasotti (theorbo)
Rubicon RCD1031 56:27 mins

Taking the first line of a Metastasio sonnet for the title of her debut album, Elicia Silverstein has woven an aural pattern in which she links the 17th-century *stylus phantasticus* with the Italian *avanguardia* of the second half of the 20th century. In so doing, Silverstein demonstrates a connective element in the two periods which could so easily have been pretentious but which, aided by her own lucidly explanatory essay, is not.

Silverstein begins her recital with two pieces drawn from Biber's *Mystery Sonatas*, 'The Crucifixion' (No. 10), and the post-scriptive and profoundly contemplative 'Passacaglia' for unaccompanied violin. From these she leads the listener, almost seamlessly, into Salvatore Sciarrino's Caprice No. 2 from his *Sei Capricci*. Its abstract invocation of natural

sounds takes us, in turn, to the strikingly imaginative world of mid-17th century Pandolfi Mealli. The bold and sometimes surprising intervals of the opening *adagio* of his sonata *La Cesta* sit comfortably alongside the Sciarrino. Silverstein has opted for a simple cello continuo without keyboard which works well. As she herself remarks, the fiery A which concludes the sonata is taken up by Berio's *Sequenza VIII*. The

The performances are technically secure with faultless intonation

piece is built around two notes, A and B, the composer describing it as a tribute to the Ciacona of Bach's Partita in D minor. It is the poetry and structural complexity of Bach's piece which, in a sense, provides the *raison d'être* of Silverstein's conceptually original programme. Her playing is warm and technically secure, with faultless intonation and, above all in the Biber and the Bach, she engages and touches us with eloquent articulation.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



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

JS Bach • A Dębicz

JS Bach: Inventions Nos 1-15, Sinfonias Nos 1-15;

A Dębicz: Toccatas 1-4
Aleksander Dębicz (piano)

Warner Classics 9029560146 60:33 mins



A YouTube film shows Aleksander Dębicz walking around Warsaw ahead of recording his

album *Cinematic Piano*. Influenced by film music as well as hip-hop, Dębicz's own toccatas recorded here are very conservative in idiom, yet their rhythmic verve is hard to resist.

If only one could say the same about his playing of Bach's Inventions, but a general lack of a sense of line and shading results in some lacklustre accounts, not helped by an almost complete absence of even the most basic ornamentation. True, Dębicz plays Bach's own ornamented alternative version of the E flat Two-Part Invention, but elsewhere the music all too often sounds conspicuously plain when wholly unadorned. The expressive high-point of all these pieces is the tragic F minor Three-Part Invention, yet even here Dębicz's account plods unremittingly. The E major Two-Part Invention is actually so slow that he deems it wise to omit the second repeat; and his performance of the lyrical B flat piece from the same collection is lacking in warmth and affection. On the plus side, his admirable finger-staccato stands him in good stead in such pieces as the D minor Two-Part Invention as well as the E minor, but it's not enough to lift these performances to a higher plane. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

JS Bach • Pärt

JS Bach: Two-part Inventions; Three-part Inventions (Sinfonias); Preambulum in C; **Pärt:** Für Anna Maria; Für Alina; Variations for the Recovery of Arinushka
Cordelia Williams (piano)

SOMMSOMMCD 0186 63:00 mins



At surface level, the music of JS Bach and Arvo Pärt has little synergy: separated by

250-odd years, the two composers worked in different worlds – can



Side by side in Lugano:
Martha Argerich and
Stephen Kovacevich

◀ From the archives

Andrew McGregor revels in a new box of live recordings by pianist Martha Argerich and friends



Martha Argerich has a complicated relationship with recording, but found a perfect solution to her issues with microphones in her 15-year project at the Lugano Festival, surrounding herself on stage with family, friends and protégées, and allowing her record labels to eavesdrop. **The**

Lugano Recordings (Warner 9029594897; 22 CDs) has an enviable back catalogue to plunder, and excludes any that don't include Argerich herself. Mozart first, an Argerich favourite: the D minor Concerto K466, then Grieg's two piano version of the Sonata K545 with Piotr Anderszewski – a treasurable partnership, as is Mozart K381 with Maria João Pires. The Beethoven collaborations bring more frequent Lugano partners: Renaud and Gautier Capuçon, and cellist Mischa Maisky, whose sometimes extreme Romanticism is intelligently tempered by Argerich in Beethoven's Triple Concerto. Chopin's E minor Piano Concerto is breathtaking, and the *Introduction & Polonaise brillante* with Gautier Capuçon is stunning, as is their account of Schumann's *Adagio & Allegro*. Argerich's Schumann, never routine, is in some ways the heart of the set, but don't overlook two piano versions of Liszt's *Les Préludes* with Daniel Rivera, or Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances* with Nelson Goerner, so richly coloured and broadly expressive you won't miss the orchestra. Not everything is perfectly recorded: the Bartók Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion with Stephen Kovacevich has distant sound, but their Debussy *En blanc et noir* is a highlight, and the *Carnival of the Animals* from 2013 is irrepressibly witty.

There are gems from when Argerich and friends convened for the last time in 2016. Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* for the first time in 40 years, as mercurial as ever; those 75-year-old fingers reunited with Kovacevich for Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faun*, seductively persuasive; and best of all Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*, new to Argerich's discography and with an uninhibited improvisatory solo. This is Argerich at her elemental best.

we really compare Baroque masterpieces with modern minimalism? In this intriguing new recording, released as part of Somm's excellent Céleste series, Cordelia Williams proves that the comparison – at least in terms of Bach and Pärt's keyboard music – holds water.

The opening *Für Anna Maria* (Pärt, 2006) is beauty constrained; its stark texture and use of the middle range of the keyboard leads neatly into Bach's two-part Inventions (BWV 772-786). These and the subsequent three-part Inventions (BWV 787-801) were originally written for Bach's then 12-year-old son to improve his technique – and to distract him from the recent loss of his mother. Pärt's *Für Anna Maria* and *Für Alina* were – as the titles imply – also dedicated to young people during times of need.

Although Pärt incorporates significantly more space within his works than Bach, repeated listening reveals layers of similarity between the two compositional styles. Each work was created around set parameters and a mathematical, intricate design. While Bach's counterpoint moves with precision through the key signatures, Pärt's tintinnabuli method is firmly rooted around a central pitch. Both rely on taut melodies, an economy of expression and a highly tonal approach.

The concluding *Variations for the Recovery of Arinushka* (Pärt) and Preambulum in C (Bach) – both immaculately presented – consolidate the underlying theme of comfort and reflection.

Claire Jackson

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Beethoven • Chopin

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4;

Chopin: Sonata No. 2;

Ballade No. 4

Eric Lu (piano); The Hallé/

Edward Gardner

Warner Classics 9029555215 62:31 mins



The Leeds International Piano Competition recently held its first contest

under a team of new directors who have extensively revised the proceedings. The winner, happily, is the Chinese-American pianist Eric

Lu, fresh from the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia – and he is certainly worth writing home about.

This rapid release from Warner Classics presents three live performances from the competition and, listening to his Chopin playing in particular, it is really difficult to believe Lu is only 20. With a truly beautiful tone, an innate understanding of the music's structure, flow and emotional drives and a warm, genuine, unaffected way of shaping the phrases, it sounds as if he has a wise head on young shoulders; his playing combines that with the best of a youthful, fresh response to these perennially-loved masterpieces.

His account of the Fourth Ballade is mellifluous, sensitive, powerful; and the heartache of deep identification with the music is ever present in the 'Funeral March' Sonata, illuminating its feverish darkness from within. The Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4 is perhaps less entirely satisfying. Again, there's refinement of tone, elegance, lovely control and, impressively, the ready transformation of that Chopinesque touch into a deep, dark, Beethovenian one. The Hallé, though, sounds a bit scrappy and one suspects that lack of rehearsal time possibly didn't do the general ensemble any favours. Sound quality captures something of the competition final's excitement, though, and is both intimate and resonant for the Chopin. Lu swept to a well-deserved victory; let's hope this will be his first recording of many. *Jessica Duchen*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Haydn

Piano Sonatas Nos 29, 32, 36, 47 and 52; Divertimento in E flat

Roman Rabinovich (piano)

First Hand Records FHR71

100:39 mins (2 discs)



How many piano sonatas did Haydn write? In the liner-note to this disc Jonathan Summers writes

that although more than 80 have been attributed to him, a likelier figure is 62, and that the composer himself deleted some early ones from the catalogue as being 'not worth preserving'. Moreover, he

Instrumental Reviews

didn't actually use the term sonata until 1771, using instead *partita* and *divertimento* before that date. And there's an interesting divergence of view on the *Divertimento* which Roman Rabinovich includes in this set. Summers dismisses its first movement as suffering from a 'lack of musical invention', with the remainder possessing charm but being 'inconsequential'; but in an interview Rabinovich has said he loves its unpretentiousness. Clearly the two men did not talk.

At all events, this first volume in what will be a complete set of the Haydn piano sonata oeuvre is both fascinating and hugely impressive. Before moving with his family to Israel when he was eight, Rabinovich grew up in Tashkent, where he got an excellent grounding in the Uspensky School for Gifted Children whose other distinguished luminaries have included Yefim Bronfman, Stanislav Ioudenitch, Alexei Sultanov, and Behzod Abduraimov. Rabinovich is definitely of comparable calibre.

His sound is bright, muscular, and clean, and he brings out all the wit and delicacy of Haydn's invention; his articulation is immaculate no matter how fast he goes; and he responds imaginatively to those moments when Haydn's experiments seem designed to puzzle his interpreters. Where *ad lib* ornamentation is called for, he applies it sparingly, with exquisite shading. And what a pleasure to encounter works which are seldom heard in recital. This 'complete' Haydn may outstrip Rudolf Buchbinder's magisterial set as the benchmark recording.

Michael Church

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Scheidemann • Scheidt

Scheidemann: Pavana Lachrymae; Fuga, etc; **Scheidt:** Cantilena Anglica Fortunae; Courante, etc

Yoann Moulin (harpsichord)
Ricercar RIC 394 55:35 mins



Heinrich Scheidemann and Samuel Scheidt were composers who worked in Amsterdam in

the early years of the 17th century, and what united them was that they both studied there with the organist Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck. As

Jerome Lejeune's liner note explains, Sweelinck's organ improvisations in the Oude Kerk drew admirers from far and wide; the attraction of his music lay in the fact that it combined influences from the liturgies of the Catholic, Calvinist and Lutheran traditions, and dance styles from all over Europe.

The musics of Scheidemann and Scheidt sit so cosily together on this CD that they might have emanated from the same brain. For harpsichordist Yoann Moulin, their music is both fascinating and mysterious. 'Emotion is formal and sentiment is architectural,' he writes gnomically, adding that its 'disarming all-inclusiveness can echo within me with a deep mysticism'. That may be over-egging the pudding, given the routine quality of the dances here, but other pieces possess a singular gravity and grace.

Scheidt's particular thing was sets of variations, in which he shows a Houdini-like ability to pursue his line through a labyrinth of passagework; his variations on the theme of a Palestrina madrigal attain real splendour at their close. Scheidemann is a master of expressive simplicity, best demonstrated by his treatment of Dowland's famous 'Pavana Lachrymae'. Meanwhile Scheidt's inventive imagination is fired by the English lute song 'Fortune my foe', another melody beautified by Dowland. Yoann Moulin's instrument is a replica of an early 17th-century Rückers which has a warm and noble sound – words which could equally well describe Moulin's playing. *Michael Church*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Schubert

Drei Klavierstücke, D946; Songs (arr. Liszt) – 'Sei mir gegrüsst', 'Die junge Nonne', 'Du bist die Ruh', 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen', 'Der Wanderer'; **Fantasy in C (Wanderer)**

Leon McCawley (piano)

Somm Recordings SOMMCD 0188

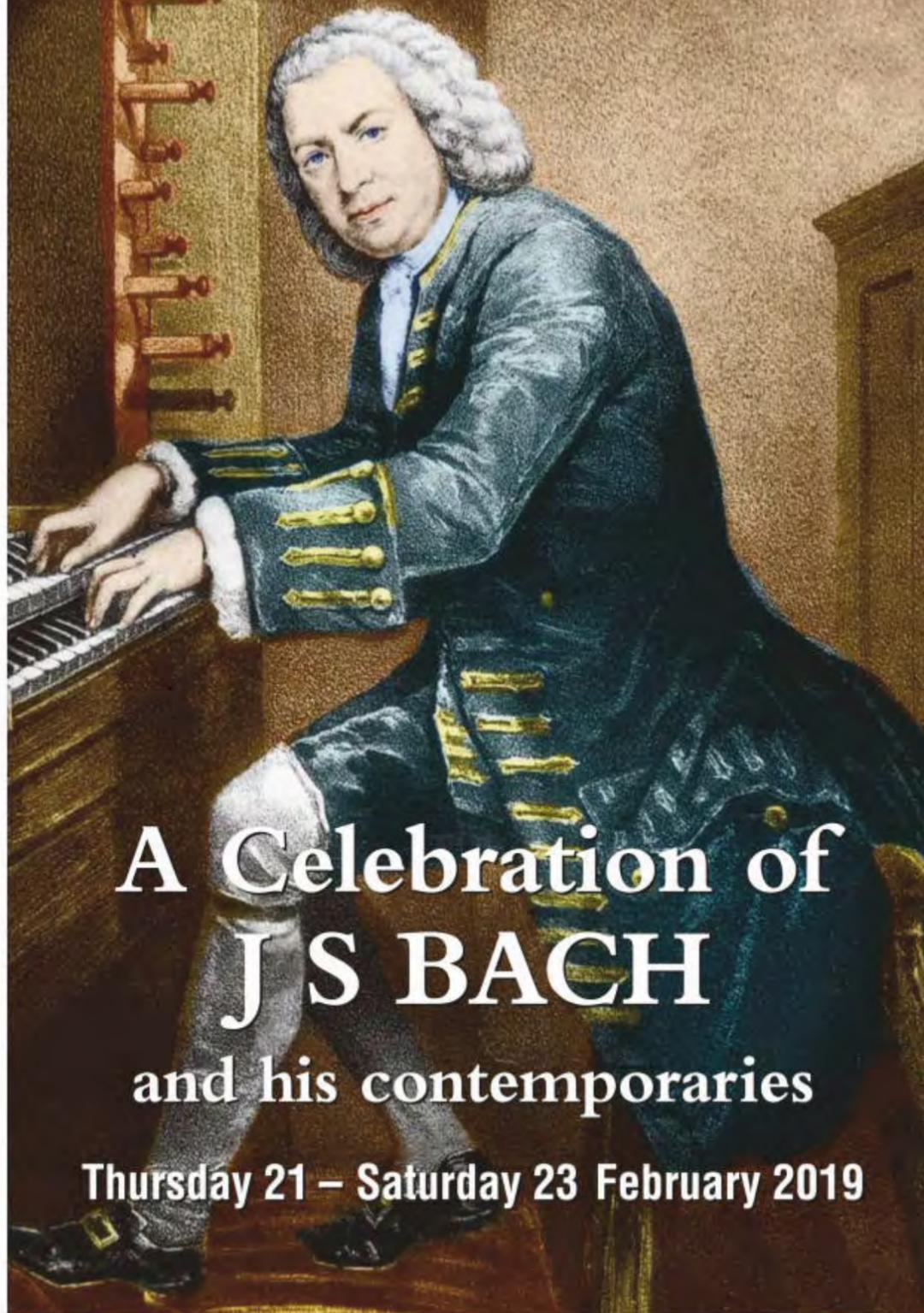
67:54 mins



Leon McCawley's ingeniously-planned Schubert programme sees the *Wanderer* Fantasy

preceded by a group of Liszt's song transcriptions culminating in 'Der

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Wanderer'. Schubert's Fantasy, with its process of thematic metamorphosis allowing the four movements of a symphonic form to be telescoped into a continuous whole, exerted a palpable influence on Liszt, whose own Sonata in B minor is designed along similar lines, and who made a highly imaginative arrangement for piano and orchestra of Schubert's piece.

McCawley gives a fine account of the *Wanderer* Fantasy, with an atmospheric account of its brooding slow movement, and a scherzo that's as light on its toes as it ought to be. Perhaps he could have lent the opening movement greater weight by reigning in on the tempo a little (Schubert's 'fiery' *Allegro* marking carries a characteristically paradoxical *ma non troppo* caution), and the same goes for the fugal finale. But there's no denying that McCawley's is a virtuoso performance, and carried off with admirable aplomb.

He's very good in the Liszt arrangements, too, handling the final apotheosis of 'Die junge Nonne' superbly, and not holding back on the sometimes overblown climaxes in the remaining songs. If he doesn't quite capture the sense of barely suppressed breathless excitement in the first of the group of three late pieces D946, he handles the tricky tempo relationships between the various sections of the remaining two numbers very successfully.

This pianist's intelligent and sensitive playing affords a good deal of listening pleasure.

Misha Donat

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Schumann

**Humoreske;
Davidsbündlertänze;
Geistervariationen**

Gabriele Carcano (piano)
Rubicon RCD1022 77:44 mins



Every Schumann admirer makes their own picture of this complex figure, be it literary,

lovestruck, learned or downright loopy. Carcano offers a strong vision of a thoughtful, deliberate Schumann: his rendition of the opening *Humoreske* is multi-layered, weighty; it's perhaps not quite as eccentric as one might hope because of Carcano's tendency to favour the sustaining pedal.

The 23 numbers of Schumann's *Davidsbündlertänze* are notoriously difficult to hold together, especially when they are paced as deliberately as this. Carcano's rendition has moments of great tenderness and impressive virtuosity, but he frequently disregards Schumann's staccato and slur markings. This is not necessarily a problem, especially since those markings can be maddeningly inconsistent and illogical. But it decisively tips the balance of mood away from the mercurial, and makes it harder to bring variety to the numerous repetitions of material and textures (all of which Carcano observes).

The dignified pathos of the closing *Geister-Variationen* suits Carcano better. The foursquare, choral theme dissolves into drifting, dreamy swirls of piano texture, shot through with moments of exquisite harmony. But the old-fashioned sound of this recording

does not make much of the quieter range. Carcano's slightly baffling liner notes unfortunately needed proofreading (*Davidsbündlertänze* is misspelled throughout) and didn't really illuminate his perspective.

Altogether, this recording reveals the unique challenges Schumann's solo keyboard music poses (no wonder Clara Schumann sometimes hesitated to programme it). Carcano's performance left me deeply interested, if not wholly convinced. *Natasha Loges*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

American Landscapes

Farwell: From Mesa and Plain; Sourwood Mountain, Op. 78, No. 3; **Edward MacDowell:** Woodland Sketches; **William Grant Still:** A Deserted Plantation; plus pieces by **Cadman, Copland, Grainger, Roy Harris, AP Heinrich, W Mason, and Ornstein**

Cecile Licad (piano)

Digital Classics DACOCD 800 76:03 mins



A Danish record label, a Filipina pianist, and an ongoing 'Anthology of American Piano

Music': it's a heartening global combination in these divisive times. Cecile Licad's third instalment brings us to landscapes, something America has in dramatic variety and abundance. Viewed strictly as music, though, much of her selection appears historically interesting but stunted. There's little jaw-dropping splendour or artistic breadth in Arthur Farwell's 'Navajo War Dance' and its companions in *From Mesa and Plain*, or William Grant Still's thinly stretched set *A Deserted Plantation*. Licad herself shrivels some of the music's appeal by being overly fierce in attack (American resident Grainger's *Spoon River*) or unduly dour – a distinct tendency in MacDowell's *Woodland Sketches*, though the collection admittedly is less cosy than its title suggests.

Surprises and delights do exist: there's the disarming naivety of Anthony Philip Heinrich's *Minstrel's March*; the florid European decorations flowing through William Mason's *Silver Spring*; and Leo Ornstein's *A Morning in the Woods*, benign very late impressionism from a composer most famous for granite dissonances. And though Licad

might be blunt with MacDowell's 'To a Water Lily,' she's gentle elsewhere, and is sympathetically recorded.

Geoff Brown

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Transfixing Metamorphosis

JS Bach: Violin Sonata No. 3 in C; **Hindemith:** Sonata for Solo Viola; **Ligeti:** Sonata for Solo Viola

Jesus Rodolfo (viola)
Odradek ODRCD 367 63:21 mins



This recital, entitled *Transfixing Metamorphosis*, sets out to show how the

technique and spirit of Bach's solo string writing has been transmuted in the work of two 20th-century masters. It makes for a fairly tough listen. Though formidable in technique, the young Spanish virtuoso Jesus Rodolfo inclines more towards intensity of delivery than beauty of sound, and his grainy, slightly dry tone is barely mitigated by a resonant recording acoustic. Then, too, the transposing of the Bach sonata down a fifth to F major, to take in the viola's lower range, seems to muddy its sound and compound its formidable technical difficulties. And in the vast and taxing fugal second movement there are moments of dodgy intonation, though Rodolfo finds a more convincing flow for the fast finale.

Hindemith, whose side-career as a professional violist included premiering Walton's Viola Concerto, was evidently a pretty downright, no nonsense player himself, and his neo-baroque Sonata for Solo Viola Op. 11, No. 5 (1919) comes from his most feisty youthful period of acrid chromaticism – though Rodolfo floats its slow second movement with plaintive eloquence. Ligeti's late six-movement Sonata for Solo Viola (1991-94) ranges from a post-Bartók folklorism – in which the 'off' intonation that we hear is, in this instance, exactly what he asks for – to an imposing 'Chaconne chromatique'. But here, for all his energy, Rodolfo is both less rhythmically accurate and less characterful than the recording made under Ligeti's supervision by the work's original performer Tabea Zimmermann. *Bayan Northcott*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★



BACKGROUND TO...

Edward MacDowell (1860-1908)

Born in New York, Edward MacDowell was accepted on an international scholarship to the Paris Conservatoire. From there he studied in Frankfurt, where he met and performed for Schumann and Liszt. Eventually relocating to Boston, he found work as a pianist and teacher before becoming Columbia University's first music professor in 1896. Depression, ill health

and eventually dementia took its toll, but he left notable piano works, not to mention an artistic fellowship programme that benefitted composers such as Copland, Beach, Barber and Bernstein.

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Brief notes

Our collection of 25 further reviews includes songs, symphonies and sonatas

Brahms Symphony No. 3, etc
Swedish Chamber Orchestra/Thomas Dausgaard et al

BIS-2319 (hybrid CD/SACD) mins



If some of the rubato and tempos in the Third Symphony don't always feel natural, the sound and phrasing is always stylish. There's beauty in Anna Larsson's Alto Rhapsody, although she sounds off-colour in the songs. (RF) ★★★

Handel Nine Suites

Scipione Sangiovanni (piano)

Piano Classics PCL10143



Handel's masterful suites shine in this well-articulated, controlled performance. I could have done with a little more crispness, and a greater distance between piano and mic. (OC) ★★★

John Ireland Orchestral Works

Royal Scottish National Orchestra/
Martin Yates *Dutton CDLX7353*



Ireland's gorgeous *Downland Suite* is coupled here with his lesser-known incidental music to *Julius Caesar* and his soundtrack for the film *The Overlanders*. Stirring performances (OC) ★★★★★

Ives Sonatas

Liana Gourdjia (violin) et al

Printemps des Arts de Monte Carlo PRI024



Ives's characterful chamber works delivered with flair here. The Sonata No. 3 is a standout thanks to its joyous referencing of ragtime modes. (MB) ★★★

Alfred Janson Choral works

Norwegian Soloists' Choir/
Grete Pedersen *BIS-2341*



Whether spikily satirical or mournfully melodic, the Norwegian composer Alfred Janson is a superb word-setter, though his quirkier elements may irritate some. The performances are terrific. (JP) ★★★★★

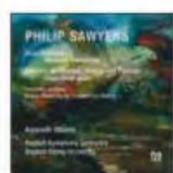
E Mayer Symphony No. 4, etc
Neubrandenburg Philharmonic/Stefan Malzew et al *Capriccio C5339*



A welcome disc of works by the German Romantic composer Emilie Mayer (1812-83). The performances are robust; the symphony a discovery. (RF) ★★★

Philip Sawyers Concertos

English Symphony Orchestra/Kenneth Woods et al *Nimbus Alliance NI 6374*

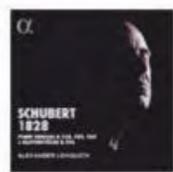


Sawyers's thrilling orchestral music truly captivates, aided and abetted by pitch-perfect soloists Alexander Sitkovetsky (violin) and Simon Desbruslais (trumpet) and the ESO. (MB) ★★★★★

Schubert Piano Sonatas Nos 19-21

Alexander Lonquich (piano)

Alpha Classics ALPHA 433



Lonquich's hearty serving of late Schubert is one to return to. The German pianist approaches these expansive sonatas with great perceptiveness and feeling. (RF) ★★★★★

Schubert Winterreise

Tomasz Konieczny (bass-baritone) et al

National Institute Frederic Chopin

NIFCCD 058



This is Schubert, but not as you know it. For one thing, it's in Polish. Poet-translator Stanisław Barańczak has done the honours with updated texts. Then, there's the unexpected raw drama of bass-baritone Tomasz Konieczny's performance. (RF) ★★★

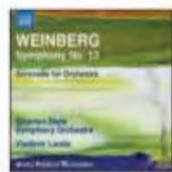
Stenhammar Symphony No. 2

Antwerp Symphony Orchestra/
Christian Lindberg *BIS 2329*



Pure post-Romantic Scandi loveliness – great tunes, lush orchestrations and a fun fugue. What more could you want of a dull January day? The Antwerps are on form. (OC) ★★★★★

Weinberg Symphony No. 13, etc
Siberian State Symphony Orchestra/
Vladimir Lande *Naxos 8.573879*



Symphony No. 13, memorialising Weinberg's mother, is so bleak that it's quite the shock when the perky Serenade begins. Fervent performances add to the composer's growing posthumous reputation. (RF) ★★★★★

A Hundred Years of Piano Miniatures Piano Works

Duncan Honeybourne (piano)

Grand Piano GP789



A lovely idea, and there are some gems here, but I'm not sure that most of these miniatures are 'keepers'. Honeybourne gives each his best shot but with sometimes quite percussive results. (OC) ★★

Anima Sacra Baroque Arias

Jakub Józef Orliński *Erato 90295633745*



The Polish countertenor gives a lithe and affecting performance on this debut album, a collection of largely unrecorded sacred Baroque arias. Il Pomo Doro flutter and fizz. (MB) ★★★★★

Confidence Arias by Gounod, Bizet, Delibes, Duparc et al

Julien Behr (tenor) et al

Alpha ALPHA 401



Lesser-known French Romantic repertoire is brought to shimmering light thanks to Behr's honeyed vocals and the luxuriant accompaniment (MB) ★★★★★

Dreams of Freedom Works by Stravinsky, Part, Mozart et al

Carion Wind Quintet

Odradek ODRCD373



A typical set of classic wind quintet repertoire here, with precise playing throughout. It occasionally feels a little too buttoned-up, and could do with a touch more gusto. (FP) ★★★

Gershwin Reimagined Rhapsody in Blue, I Got Rhythm, etc

Shelly Berg (piano); RPO/José Serebrier

Decca Gold 4817407



Gershwin, but with arrangements and jazz noodlings thrown in for good measure. *Rhapsody in Blue* is a plodder, but the disc picks up thereafter. (JP) ★★★

The Kapustin Project Works by Kapustin, Rzewski et al

Roman Rofalski (piano)

Sony 19075875102



A dynamic tribute to composer Nicolai Kapustin, combining virtuoso playing with jazz improv. It's more jazz than classical, but an exciting disc nonetheless. (FP) ★★★

Made in Poland Works by Szymanowski et al

NFM Leopoldinum Chamber

Orchestra et al *DUX 1298*



A superb selection of 20th- and 21st-century works by Polish composers, performed with vigour. The improvised works are particularly impressive. (FP) ★★★★★

Piano Odyssey Songs by Wakeman, Bowie, et al

Rick Wakeman (piano), et al

Sony 190758678924



Pop classics are presented in a piano-and-string-orchestra guise, with Rick Wakeman in quintessentially twiddly-widdly form as soloist. (JP) ★★★

Revive Baroque Arrangements for Saxophone Quartet

Ferio Saxophone Quartet

Chandos CHAN10999



Iain Farrington's excellently crafted arrangements of largely familiar works by the likes of Purcell and Handel are performed here with panache by this super-versatile group. (JP) ★★★★★

The month in box-sets

Romantic Music for Oboe, Bassoon and Organ Works by Verdi, Molbe, Lalliet et al

Trio Andrea Palladio
Brilliant Classics 95788



Don't expect blood and thunder here. For all the 'Romantic' of the title, the emotional range runs from sprightly to charmingly lyrical. The organ occasionally sounds a little recessed. (JP) ★★★

Sacrum Convivium Works by Duruflé, Machaut et al

Vox Clamantis/Jaan-Eik Tulve
Mirare MIR 366



A pleasant selection of French music from over 2000 years, ranging from Gregorian chant to 20th-century motets. A tidy interpretation from Vox Clamantis, with a delicate top line. (FP) ★★★★★

Timeless Works by Debussy, Martinů, Boyle et al

Bridget Bolliger (flute) et al
Austrian Gramophone AG0013



A beautiful selection of flute works by early 20th-century composers and a well-matched world premiere. Bolliger's tone is sensitive and shimmering. (FP) ★★★★★

Virtuoso Organ Duets Works by Ravel, Paulus, Stravinsky et al

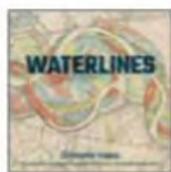
The Oxbridge Organ Duo
Regent REGCD500



The *Firebird* may be the mainstay here (and terrifically played), but *Bolero* wins with its use of just about every solo stop of the Blackburn Cathedral organ. Intriguing and fun. (OC) ★★★★★

Waterlines

Works by Christopher Trapani
Talea Ensemble, et al New Focus FCR 200



Delta blues meets avant-garde in works inspired by ideas of home in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. *Cognitive Consonance* offers the most vivid sonorities. (MB) ★★★

Reviewers: Michael Beek (MB), Oliver Condy (OC), Rebecca Franks (RF), Freya Parr (FP), Jeremy Pound (JP)



Munich-bound: conductor Sergiu Celibidache in 1979

Fine selection celebrates Celibidache

This month's round-up also features a ring, a café and an odyssey

Naxos has now gathered together all four of conductor Jaap van Zweden's recordings of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Naxos 8.501403) in an attractive box. Performed by the Hong Kong Philharmonic and a cast that includes Matthias Goerne, Michelle DeYoung and Stuart Skelton, the performances were captured live over a four-year period. As well as the discs and booklet, the box includes a nifty plastic card with an unfolding USB stick; it includes full librettos, a set of performance photographs and 19 minutes of video interviews.

Named after an 18th-century Leipzig coffee house and weekly concert venue, *Café Zimmerman* (Alpha ALPHA 434) marks the ensemble's 20th anniversary with an appealing 16-disc collection. In the gold-edged box you'll find a veritable banquet of JS Bach (eight discs), CPE Bach (two discs) and a further peppering of Vivaldi, Charles Avison and Jean-Henry d'Anglebert. From keyboard works and symphonies to concertos and cantatas, it's a gilded selection.

Sergiu Celibidache - The Munich Years (Warner Classics 9029558154) is a collection that takes in



the Romanian conductor's 17 years with the Munich Philharmonic, from 1979 to his death in 1996. In that time he breathed new fire into the orchestra and reignited its status on the international stage. The 48-disc set, cloaked in striking red and black, features works by an abundance of composers, with the emphasis on Bruckner (12 discs), Beethoven (6 discs), Tchaikovsky (4 discs) and Brahms (3 discs). His 1948 recording of Prokofiev's

Symphony No. 1 with the Berlin Phil is a bonus.

Another legacy is celebrated in *Berlioz Odyssey - The Complete Sir Colin Davis Recordings* (LSO Live LS00827), which draws in all of the late British conductor's Berlioz recordings with the London Symphony Orchestra, just ahead of the 150th anniversary of the composer's death. Comprised of 16 discs – six of which are SACDs – it's a comprehensive account of Davis's feted interpretations and includes the double Grammy-winning recording of *Les Troyens*, all in smart clamshell packaging. LSO Live's artwork is typically arresting, and the booklet notes are pleasingly comprehensive.

The box includes a nifty USB stick with full librettos and photos

Roger Thomas explores the very best of this month's newest jazz releases

JAZZ CHOICE

Smoking hot!

The Captain Black Big Band delivers a stylish and energetic album that's full of invention



Different direction: Pianist Orrin Evans is rarely predictable



Orrin Evans and the Captain Black Big Band

Presence

Orrin Evans (piano), Caleb Curtis (alto sax), John Raymond (trumpet), et al
Smoke Sessions SSR-1805

Who'd run a big band? It has demands all the way down, whether in terms of

repertoire, personnel, financial viability or, indeed, the thankless task of trying to capture such a unit on record. Step forward Orrin Evans, the excellent pianist whose name should be ringing more than a few ship's bells in his current capacity as pianist for the laterally-thinking trio The Bad Plus. Graham Collier once remarked that there are two kinds of big bands: the predictable and the unpredictable, citing Duke Ellington's as the epitome of the latter; this is also where the Captain Black Big Band (named after the brand of pipe tobacco favoured by the leader's father) belongs, sitting exactly halfway between Ellingtonian mellifluousness and the spiky puckishness of the Sun Ra Arkestra. The band's third outing on CD features a set almost entirely written by band members and is crammed with energetic yet elegant arrangements, inventive melodies, rhythmic drive and bonkers solos and cadenzas in both likely and unlikely places, all corralled on a cleanly balanced recording that nonetheless captures all the atmosphere of its live origins. ★★★★★

January round-up

Let's hear it for the Rhodes electric piano, which is all over this month's selection. Derived from a keyboard used in providing music therapy for



injured American servicemen (the origins of jazz instrumentation are rarely obvious), the

Rhodes has had both electro-mechanical and digital incarnations and has moved in and out of jazz fashion since its early advocacy by Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea. Piano prodigy **Connie Han** uses the instrument on a couple of tracks on her debut *Crime Zone*, a slice of slick, up-tempo LA modernism that's perhaps a tad overstretched in terms of material but is still very listenable. All her instincts are in the right place; her technique is absolutely flawless, her cool rhythm section and empathetic horns are firmly on the case, the compositions are all her own and she's still in her early twenties, so she's clearly one to watch closely. (*Mack Avenue MAC1140* ★★★★★)

The Piano Trio Police are as lax as ever in allowing this overworked form to proliferate, but some adherents deserve their liberty, such as the **Milosz Bazarnik Trio**. The



Rhodes features heavily on *Trip of a Lifetime*, lively in feel and contemporary in outlook and

again comprising originals by the eponymous leader and pianist, although he does borrow the distinctive riff from Frank Zappa's 'City of Tiny Lights' at one point. Overall, much to commend and enjoy. (*Dux 1493* ★★★★★)

Ground Midnight is a Rhodes-free zone, but similarly buys the freedom of **The James Gelfand Trio**. Gelfand works primarily as a composer of film music, but his jazz



compositions and arrangements are lively and inviting. The set opens with an imaginative take

on Duke Ellington's 'Caravan' that cannily sets us up for Gelfand's style while providing the security of familiar territory. (*Analekta AN28835* ★★★★★)

Singer/songwriter **Andrea Superstein** shares Gelfand's Canadian home turf and also returns us to this month's instrumental theme, with the Rhodes adding a distinctive element to the varied accompaniments on *Worlds Apart*. Han, Bazarnik, Gelfand and Superstein share the fate of many jazz musicians who don't



feature on the current international touring circuit, their recordings having to act as both agent and avatar.

Superstein's CD does this well, which is fortunate as she's a genuine original in what often feels like an overcrowded waiting room full of aspiring singers. Her voice easily ticks all the necessary jazz boxes but also reveals a gently sardonic, knowing quality that turns every song into a mischievous conspiracy in which the listener is happily complicit. This is reflected in the did-she-just-say-what-I-think-she-said nature of her lyrics, which I won't spoil by exemplifying here. Do seek this one out. (*Membran 270136* ★★★★★)

We'll close this month with a tip of the hat to guitarist **Lionel Loueke**, whose



personal history is in many ways the antithesis of the above, having taken

him from his native Benin to Paris, Berklee, UCLA and thence to an international career. His latest album *The Journey* is a gently introspective mix of short pieces, featuring his distinctive classical guitar, voice and percussion plus contributions from some very respectable sidepersons. The results are agreeable rather than arresting, but Loueke is as assured a performer as ever and fans will love it. (*Aperté AP184* ★★★★★)



A good reed:
tenor saxophonist
Lester Young in 1956

From the archives

Geoffrey Smith on a set of vinyl reissues, perfect for those wanting to explore the greats in superb sound



What do we want from the archives? Come to that, who are 'we'? The last few columns in this series have flagged recently discovered sessions by Errol Garner, Thelonious Monk, Brad Mehldau/Charlie Haden – additional bounty for connoisseurs and dyed-in-the-wool fans. But

I'm always aware of the vast, untapped potential audience of listeners largely ignorant of jazz except as a rather arcane, even insular musical style and cultural tradition, the province of a hip coterie who already know all the approved stars and brands.

Which is why I'm happy to welcome a superb new collection of classics, *The Jazz Reference Collection* (Dreyfus Jazz/BMG). A 14-album compilation of historic works by some of the music's most famous names, there's nothing here that will surprise a committed devotee, except perhaps in being reminded of the astonishing profusion of musical quality produced by the pantheon of jazz masters.

Beginning in 2000, the French record producer Francis Dreyfus began to issue his Jazz Reference series, albums showcasing the achievements of his jazz idols, remastered in pristine sound. The original sequence of 70 CDs has now been filleted to a set of 14 and issued for the first time on vinyl. Stylishly presented, with cool colours and pen-and-ink drawings of the individual artists, the albums exude the kind of fashionable allure likely to attract younger listeners already enticed by vinyl's special cachet.

I know: statistics indicate that some vinyl-fanciers are just retro hipsters who don't even play the albums they buy. But it's not the whole truth. Many do listen, and are bowled over by the difference in the sound pouring from their speakers compared to their tinny phones. And what sounds they'll get from the Jazz Reference discs: the best of the best, with Ellington, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and John Coltrane, Lester Young, Louis Armstrong, on and on. The shock of the old, a timeless pleasure perhaps never experienced before. Repackaged, resplendent, bright as new.

BBC
RADIO



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The life of violin virtuoso Paganini; we meet the New York Phil's new maestro Jaap van Zweden; violin music on CD.



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We name the 20 works that have defined the century since the end of the First World War. Plus Messiaen on your cover disc.



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Our critics turn the pages of this month's selection of books on classical music

The Classical Music Lover's Companion to Orchestral Music

Robert Philip

Yale Books 978-0-300-12069-1, 024pp (hb) £35

Not for Robert Philip's compendious survey the full Albeniz-to-Zemlinsky 'A-Z' – but only just! Bookended by Bach and Webern, his Companion straddles more than 400 works by nearly



70 composers, dispensing useful sketches of the latter before addressing the music in obligingly non-specialist

terminology – pretty much only 'Scotch snap' slips under the radar to be left unexplained. Some composers are generously accommodated. Over 80 works by Haydn and Mozart are discussed, and if Philip evidently has a soft spot for Sibelius he's equally keen to champion Nielsen. Others are less fortunate. Presumably down to constraints of space, Martinů and Messiaen get one-work walk-on parts, and some of the choices are interesting too. Glinka's only mention falls to *Kamarinskaya* rather than the better-known *Ruslan and Ludmilla* Overture; Walton's Violin Concerto is cold-shouldered in favour of its viola sibling; and, alongside *Night on the Bare Mountain*, Musorgsky makes the final cut abetted by Ravel's orchestration of *Pictures at an Exhibition*. A preface on the evolution of the orchestra might have provided a useful addition, but Philip's guide is a cut and come again cornucopia, brimming with companionable wisdom.

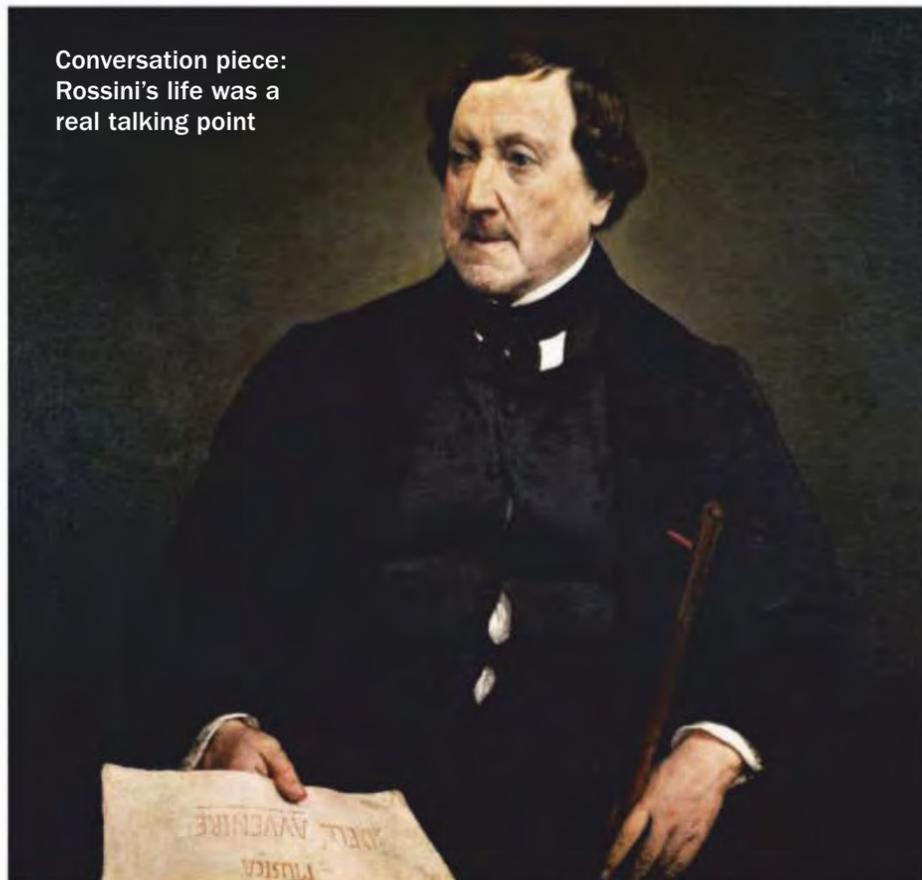
Paul Riley ★★★★★

Conversations with Rossini Ferdinand Hiller

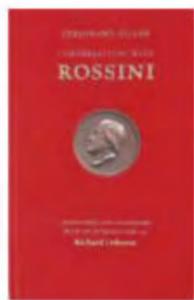
Pallas Athene 978-1-843-68169-4 78pp (hb) £16.99

This fascinating little book transports the reader back to Trouville, France in 1855 and a series of conversations between

Conversation piece: Rossini's life was a real talking point



Rossini and his old friend Ferdinand Hiller. How Hiller recorded the conversations in order to write it up I don't know, but here it is translated into English and published in full for the very first



time. Rossini had just returned to France after years living in Italy, where he cared for his ailing father and became so unwell himself that he stopped

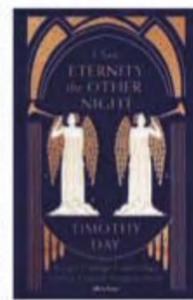
composing altogether.

The short scene settings by Hiller allow us to picture the two men sitting with a drink, or cigar, before dinner – their wives usually waiting for them to finish talking. The subsequent conversations are laid out a bit like a script, so it's very easy to follow; the footnotes, too, offer a wealth of additional detail. A real character comes to life; Rossini the elder statesman of music, with anecdotes about everyone from Mendelssohn and Berlioz, to Paganini and Beethoven. Hiller himself knew or met all of them, and more, and you're left wanting just that. A tantalising insight, but all too short. Michael Beek ★★★★★

I Saw Eternity the Other Night – King's College, Cambridge, and an English Singing Style

Timothy Day
Allen Lane 978-0-241-35218-2 376pp (hb) £25

Don't be misled by the title. This is not an anthology of Henry Vaughan poetry. It is, in fact, a potted history of the English cathedral and Oxbridge choral tradition, centred on how the Choir of King's College, Cambridge acquired its distinctive sound. The author has evidently spent a vast number of hours hunting around the archives, and there are some fascinating contemporary accounts of choral standards, from ropey to refined,



over the decades. If only it weren't all narrated in such a tweedy manner. Levity is kept to a minimum, while opportunities to appeal to a non-core audience are strictly shunned – Lowell Mason, for instance, is referred to not as the composer of *Joy to the World*, but rather sniffily as a 'Boston choir-trainer'. We do, however, get lengthy lists of which public

schools Victorian choristers went on to attend – worthy, but very dull. There are errors, too, not least in the wayward descriptions of New College, Oxford in the 1980s or the early days of the King's Singers. The author sparks into a little bit more life when describing legendary King's choirmasters Boris Ord and David Willcocks, but it's largely disappointing stuff.

Jeremy Pound ★★

The Spirit of This Place – How Music Illuminates the Human Spirit

Patrick Summers

University of Chicago Press 978-0-226-09510-3 176pp (hb) £19



This intriguing book considers the parallels between music-making and spiritual practice, exploring how music 'gives meaning to life'.

It's not concerned with liturgical music, though, but is rather a study of how music in its many forms can be a 'device for unlocking the spirit, as surely as our shins are designed for finding furniture in the dark.'

Patrick Summers is music director of the venerable Houston Grand Opera and his writing is unapologetically polemic in tone. Written in bitesize chapters, the book darts across numerous topics including the state of music education, the 'elusive art' of conducting and the experience of visiting Houston's Rothko Chapel – a non-denominational space created for private prayer and filled with Rothko's paintings. Summers's colourful prose often feels rather ungrounded and the book's loose structure somewhat muddles the flow of the argument. However, there are lovely details along the way (including Mahler's purported response to Niagara Falls: 'At last...*fortissimo!*') and Summers is certainly a passionate defender of music's ability to elevate the human experience and inspire 'solemnity, comedy, gravity, and purpose.'

Kate Wakeling ★★

**SEASON
HIGHLIGHTS**

Jess Gillam

**The Ronnie Scott's
All Stars**

Sir Bryn Terfel

**BBC Big Band:
Nat King Cole 100**

The Hallé

Nicola Benedetti

Talvin Singh

Iestyn Davies



Spring
2018/19

Audio choice

Each issue our audio expert *Chris Haslam* tests the best products on the market

THIS MONTH: CD SYSTEMS

MID-RANGE CHOICE

Roberts Radio Stream 67 £599

This is an all-in-one CD system that's the ideal size for your home office. It's quite an investment compared to a Roberts radio, but the wooden cabinet, large easy-read display and streaming options make it good value, especially as Spotify Connect, Deezer, Amazon Prime Music and TIDAL all come built in, not forgetting Wi-Fi connectivity, Bluetooth and DAB/DAB+/FM. Performance is sprightly and enjoyable, and while it doesn't match the exquisite-sounding Ruark R4 MK3 (£559) it does offer considerably more connectivity. robertsradio.com



BUDGET PRICE CHOICE

Denon D-T1 £269

Here's proof that you don't have to spend big to enjoy great sound and a multitude of features. Denon's traditionally styled micro hi-fi might look a little '90s compared to the latest launches, but the combination of well-balanced FM/AM radio, Bluetooth streaming and CD player make for a terrific listen with a sound quality that defies the budget, especially considering speakers – 120mm woofer with 25mm soft dome tweeters – are included in the price. denon.co.uk

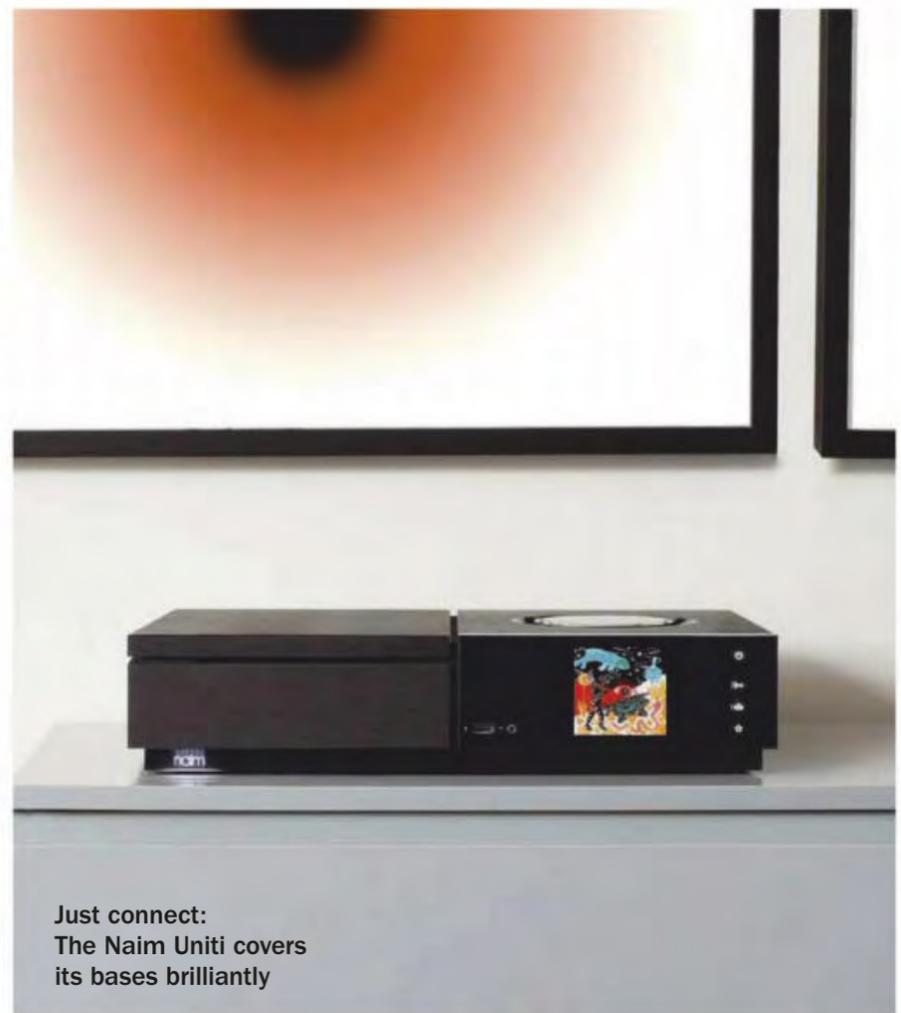


CD SYSTEMS: BUYING GUIDE

All-in-one or speakers? If you have the space in your home, I'd always go for a hi-fi system with separate speakers. Stereo just sounds better, helping to create a wider soundstage and a fuller performance, especially with orchestral recordings.

Features Choose at least CD, DAB/FM radio and Bluetooth to cover your main musical bases, but look for RCA inputs if you want to plug in a turntable. Optical can be used to enhance the sound from your TV while Wi-Fi connected systems can often be used in multi-room and hi-res streaming.

Which speakers? Make sure your speakers' recommended power (in watts) is greater than the amplifier's output. This will ensure you won't damage the speakers at high volume, and there's little point, either, spending thousands on a CD system and playing it through £50 speakers.



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HIGH-END CHOICE

Naim Uniti Star £3,499

I'm a huge fan of Naim – the Muso and Uniti ranges blend audiophile sound quality, connectivity and beautiful design – and it was a sad day for me when my Naim Uniti review sample was returned to the company.

If you still have a large CD collection but also love streaming, the Uniti Star is virtually perfect. You just need to add speakers. The CD player sounds terrific – the Class A/B amplifier offers 70W per channel – and if you plug in a USB drive or dongle you can rip any CD. *BBC Music Magazine's* December cover CD of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* sounded precise, detailed and dynamic, balanced beautifully between all four instruments. A rare treat.

As for streaming, you've got the lot, and I'd expect nothing less for the price: Apple AirPlay, Chromecast, Bluetooth aptX, Spotify Connect and Tidal, plus it's UPnP compliant so you can play from a network storage drive. It doesn't have a DAB/FM radio, but you can stream those channels, so that isn't a disaster. naimaudio.com

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Lehár Zigeunerliebe: Czardás

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Lili Boulanger, Amy Beach
& Rebecca Clarke

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play Anna Meredith

FRI 15 FEB
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Tamsin Waley-Cohen © Patrick Allen

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Venue of the month

The UK's best concert halls

17. Victoria Hall

Where: Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent
 Opened: 1888
 Seats: 1,467

Amid the celebrations for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, the Stoke Town Hall Committee commissioned 'a room capable of holding a larger number of people than any existing building in the district'. The following year the Victoria Hall was officially opened with a two-day festival of speeches and recitals on the spectacular organ. Originally, the room seated 2,800 people, but when wooden benches were replaced with seating, the number was reduced to the 1,467 seats of today. Thanks to the timber-framed elliptical ceiling, the hall has superb acoustics, often described as one of the best in the country for a venue of its size.

In 1999 the hall was involved in a major Cultural Quarter renovation project which saw a glass extension added, housing a new entrance with information desk and a café. The Victoria Hall enjoys regular visits from the Hallé and BBC Philharmonic orchestras, and also hosts organ proms once a month. Beyond the classical music world it is also used for one-off events such as the Yamato Drummers of Japan, pop and comedy shows, and regularly for local school concerts and youth orchestras.

Live choice

Paul Riley picks the month's best concert and opera highlights in the UK

LONDON

Baroque at the Edge

LSO St Luke's, 4-6 January

Tel: +44 (0)20 7638 8891

Web: www.baroqueattheedge.co.uk

This open-minded festival of Baroque music returns for a second edition, mixing gamba and electronics, a concert-drama that re-imagines Purcell's last hours and a violin recital from Elicia Silverstein bringing together Bach and Berio. Up first is pianist Gabriela Montero.

Soundstate

Southbank Centre,

16-20 January

Tel: +44 (0)20 3879 9555

Web: www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Rebecca Saunders, Claire Chase and Du Yun are featured as composers and performers in a celebration of the new that brings together Ensemble Modern, London Sinfonietta and the Southbank Centre's resident orchestras. James Dillon's *Tanz/haus: triptych 2017* receives its London premiere; and the Aurora Orchestra's 'Songs from the Road' sees Mahler, Muhly and Du Yun walk with a steady pace.

Venus Unwrapped

Kings Place, 19 January

Tel: +44 (0)20 7520 1490

Web: www.kingsplace.co.uk

It's the turn of women composers to come under Kings Place's 'Unwrapped' spotlight. The themed season opens with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's portrait of Barbara Strozzi, before Musica Secreta samples musical life in medieval and Renaissance convents. Fast forward to the present and New York's Bang on a Can All-Stars and the BBC Singers combine for the UK premiere of Julia Wolfe's *Anthracite Fields* (See *Backstage with...*, right).

Songmakers' Almanac

Wigmore Hall, 24 January

Tel: +44 (0)20 7935 2141

Web: www.wigmore-hall.org.uk

January's notable birthdays and anniversaries provide the theme

for pianist Graham Johnson's reconstituted 'Almanac', which numbers soprano Ailish Tynan and baritone Benjamin Appl among its songsters. Salutations come courtesy of Mozart, Tippett and Ivor Novello, among others; readings are interspersed.

Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra

Barbican, 26 January

Tel: +44 (0)20 7638 8891

Web: www.barbican.org.uk

Richard Strauss and soprano Diana Damrau are set to become quite an item at the Barbican. Between a Lieder recital on 16 January and March's excerpt from the opera *Capriccio* alongside the LSO, Damrau navigates the *Four Last Songs* in the company of conductor Mariss Jansons and his Bavarian

band – who also inject a dash of autobiographical bravura with the tone poem *Ein Heldenleben*.

SOUTH

Oxford Philharmonic

Town Hall, Oxford, 14 January

Tel: +44 (0)1865 980980

Web: www.oxfordphil.com

Hot on the heels of its 20th-anniversary concert in London's Barbican, the Oxford Philharmonic returns home with a rare pianistic prize, as Martha Argerich joins it for Schumann's Piano Concerto. Either side of that, Anna-Liisa Bezrodny and Charlotte Scott join forces for JS Bach's wonderful Double Violin Concerto and, conducted by Marios Papadopoulos, Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony rounds off the celebrations in style.



Bach and beyond:
 Gabriela Montero
 improvises on Baroque
 themes (4 January)

Alessandro Taverna
Turner Sims, Southampton,
19 January
Tel: +44 (0)23 8059 5151
Web: www.turnersims.co.uk

The Venice-born pianist salutes the transcriber's art with Liszt's takes on Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Verdi's *Rigoletto* and a clutch of Schubert songs. Rachmaninov applies a little spin to Bach's E major Violin Partita, and to end there's Gershwin's own solo piano version of his classical-meets-jazz *Rhapsody in Blue*.

EAST

Britten Sinfonia
Theatre Royal, Norwich,
19 January
Tel: +44 (0)1603 630000

Web: www.brittensinfonia.com
With Symphony No. 2, Sir Mark Elder and Britten Sinfonia reach the halfway stage in their four-year Brahms cycle. It's preceded by Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (sung by mezzo Anna Stéphanie), and Britten's orchestral swansong: the *Suite on English Folk Tunes*.

Ivana Gavrić
Kettle's Yard, Cambridge,
31 January
Tel: +44 (0)1223 748100

Web: www.kettlesyard.co.uk
Cheryl Frances-Hoad's *Four Lyric Pieces* pays homage to Haydn, Schubert, Janáček and Ravel, so pianist Ivana Gavrić, a former BBC Music Magazine Newcomer of the Year, serendipitously prefaces them with sonatas by the first three as well as 'Une barque sur l'océan' and 'Alborada del gracioso' from Ravel's *Miroirs*.

MIDLANDS, NORTH AND WALES

**National Youth Orchestra
of Great Britain**
Warwick Arts, Coventry,
4 January
Tel: +44 (0)24 7652 4524

Web: www.nyo.org.uk
Science Fiction – a multi-media work for percussion and electronics by Rick Dior – meets science fact in the form of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic Symphony* for the National Youth Orchestra's first concert of 2019. At the helm is the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's music director Kirill Karabits, who wraps things up with Sibelius's Symphony No. 2. Further performances follow in London and Nottingham.

Big Song Weekend
Royal Welsh College of Music
and Drama, Cardiff,
11-13 January
Tel: +44 (0)29 2039 1391
Web: www.rwcmd.ac.uk

Anchored by pianist Joseph Middleton, BBC Radio 3's Big Song Weekend pursues Richard Strauss across four recitals starting with baritone James Newby, who includes a carol written by the composer when he was six. Soprano Carolyn Sampson explores the final years in an afternoon crowned by the *Four Last Songs*. Fellow soprano Katharina Konradi tackles middle-period Strauss before mezzo Sophie Rennert adds Hans Pfitzner to the mix.

In Focus: George Benjamin
Royal Northern College of Music,
Manchester, 22-23 January
Tel: +44 (0)161 907 5555

Web: www.rncm.ac.uk
Clark Rundell masterminds a mini-festival devoted to the music of George Benjamin (see p34) and conducts the BBC Philharmonic in landmarks such as *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*. Elsewhere solo and chamber works are spliced with new works by Bofan Ma and Julia Han.

Exaudi
Elvet Methodist Church,
Durham, 29 January
Tel: +44(0)191 334 3140

Web: www.musicdurham.org/music
Exaudi's 'Italian Madrigal Book' extends from the usual suspects such as Monteverdi and Gesualdo to Sciarrino, and, turning its pages for Durham Vocal Festival, they also include the premiere of a specially commissioned work from Eric Egan.

SCOTLAND AND N IRELAND

Dunedin Consort
Hunterian Museum, Glasgow,
7 January
Tel: +44 (0)141 353 8000

Web: www.dunedin-consort.org.uk
John Butt directs an intriguing reconstruction of a concert given in 1896 by period instrument pioneer Arnold Dolmetsch. An eclectic affair it was too – as well as music for viols by Henry Lawes and John Jenkins, solo keyboard works bring Purcell, Kuhnau and JS Bach into the fold, while Rameau's *Cinquième Concert* adds Gallic charm.



Art of history:
'Visuals are crucial
to this choral work'

BACKSTAGE WITH... Composer Julia Wolfe

Your Pulitzer Prize-winning oratorio *Anthracite Fields* is receiving its UK premiere at Kings Place this month. What was the inspiration behind the work?

I wanted to explore the geography of my home state Pennsylvania, particularly the Anthracite coal-mining region. It became one of my biggest, most heavily researched projects. I explored the history of the mines and how the coal fuelled the nation, but also how the process brought up so many difficult social issues with such young boys working in the mines.

It's quite a visual piece. How would you explain it to someone who hasn't seen it before?

Visuals are crucial to this choral work. I won't let it be performed without the visuals because they illuminate my writing. There are projections throughout, with the names of those involved appearing on the back wall. It's very immersive. They will of course be accompanied by the ensemble I co-founded, the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

How closely do you work with the All-Stars in your composition process?

We have had a really close collaboration since the ensemble began in the late 1980s, and two of the current members have been there since the beginning. I do my experimentations with this group, and then am able to transfer what works to other projects. I also write for string quartets and orchestras, and even odd things like a piece for nine bagpipes!

MacRae's *Anthropocene*
Theatre Royal, Glasgow,
24, 26 January
Tel: +44 (0)844 871 7647

Web: www.scottishopera.org.uk
The latest collaboration between composer Stuart MacRae and librettist Louise Welsh is, in her words, 'a story of over-wielding ambition, murder, human sacrifice and thwarted love'. This Scottish Opera premiere, reunites director Matthew Richardson and designer Samal Blak – the team behind MacRae's 2016 *The Devil Inside*.

Ulster Orchestra
Waterfront Hall, Belfast,
24 January
Tel: +44 (0)28 9033 4455

Web: www.ulsterorchestra.org.uk
Richard Strauss's elegiac *Four Last Songs* are evidently flavour of the month (see also London and Midlands, North and Wales). Here, German soprano Dorothea Röschmann is the soloist in this serene upbeat to something rather more angular and acerbic: Shostakovich's Symphony No. 4, completed in 1936. The conductor is Rafael Payare.

TV&Radio

Your complete guide to what's on Radio 3 this month, plus TV highlights

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JANUARY'S RADIO 3 LISTINGS

Schedules may be subject to alteration. For up-to-date listings see Radio Times

Three to look out for



Alan Davey, the controller of BBC Radio 3, picks out three great moments to listen out for in January

New Year's Day Concert

We return to Vienna's Musikverein for the 79th edition of the annual New Year's Day Concert. As ever, waltzes and polkas by the Strauss family will be played with gusto by the Vienna Philharmonic, this year performing under the baton of Christian Thielemann.

New Year's Day Concert: 1 Jan, 10.15am

Bach's Christmas Oratorio

The BBC Singers are joined by the Academy of Ancient Music in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* at St Luke's Church, Chelsea this month. The mastery of Bach's retelling of the nativity story is the perfect way to reflect on Christmas in the new year.

Radio 3 in Concert: 9 & 11 Jan, 7.30pm

Behind the Scenes: Alison Balsom

Radio 4 goes behind the scenes with trumpeter Alison Balsom as she takes the reins as artistic director of the Cheltenham Music Festival. We'll be invited to listen in as Balsom rehearses a new concerto alongside the work's composer Guy Barker, before joining her at home to visit her 'room of inspiration'.

BBC Radio 4: 15 Jan, 11.30am

1 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast

9am-10.15am

Essential Classics

CHOICE 10.15am-1pm
New Year's Day

Concert live from the Musikverein, Vienna. Ziehrer *Schönfeld-Marsch*, Josef Strauss *Transactionen: Walzer, Die Tänzerin: Polka française, Sphärenklänge: Walzer*, Hellmesberger Jr *Elfenreigen, Entr'acte valse*, Johann Strauss Jr *Express: Polka schnell, Nordseebilder: Walzer, Overture to 'Der Zigeunerbaron'*,

Künstlerleben: Walzer, Die Bajadere: Polka schnell, Csárdás aus 'Ritter Pásmán', Egyptian March, Lob der Frauen: Polka mazur, Eduard Strauss *Mit Extrapost: Galopp, Opern-Soiree: Polka française*. Vienna Philharmonic/Christian Thielemann

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert

2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert

4.30-5.45pm Words and Music

5.45-7pm New

Generation Artists

7-9.30pm Proms 2018

Prom 57 (rpt) Bernstein *On the Town*. Barnaby Rea

(Judge Pitkin), Nadim Naaman (Ozzie), Fra Fee (Chip), Nathaniel Hackmann (Gabey), LSO/John Wilson

9.30-11pm Proms 2018

Prom 73 (rpt) Hildegard von Bingen *Ordo virtutum - In principio omnes*, Padilla *Deus in adiutorium*, Gallus *Pater noster*, Allegri *Miserere*, Tallis *Te lucis ante terminum (I)*, Pärt *Nunc dimittis*, John Browne *O Maria salvatoris*. Tallis Scholars/Peter Phillips

11pm-12.30am Late Junction

2 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast

9am-12noon Essential Classics

12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week

Gershwin

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert

2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert

3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong

A recording from the archives

4.30-5.45pm Words and Music

5.45-7pm New

Generation Artists

7-9.30pm Proms 2018

Prom 66 (rpt) Paul Dukas *La Péri - Fanfare*, Prokofiev *Piano Concerto No. 3*, Schmidt *Symphony No. 4*. Yuja Wang (piano), Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra/Kirill Petrenko

9.30-11pm Proms 2018

Prom 13 (rpt) Delia Derbyshire

The Delian Mode, Laurie Spiegel *Only Night Thoughts*, Suzanne Ciani *Improvisation on Four Sequences*, Daphne Oram *Still Point*. Suzanne Ciani (piano), Shiva Feshareki (turntables), James Bulley (electronics), London Contemporary Orchestra/Robert Ames

11pm-12.30am Late Junction

3 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast

9am-12noon Essential Classics

12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week

Gershwin

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert

2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert

4.30-5.45pm Words and Music

5.45-7pm New

Generation Artists

7-9pm Proms 2018

Proms at Alexandra Palace

(rpt) Coleridge-Taylor *Hiawatha's Wedding feast*, Cellier *The Mountebanks - All Alone to my Eerie... Whispering Breeze*, Smyth *Overture to The Boatswains Mate*, Sullivan *'When I went to the Bar' from Iolanthe*, Stanford *So it's kisses you're craving*, Parry *Excerpts from The Birds and The Tempest*, Sullivan *Trial by Jury*. Neal Davies (The Learned Judge), Mary Bevan (The Plaintiff), Sam Furness (The Defendant), BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orchestra/Jane Glover

9-11pm Proms 2018

Prom 7 (rpt) Jacob Collier (singer), Becca Stevens (singer), Sam Amidon (folk artist), Hamid El Kasri (guembri), Take 6 (ensemble), Metropole Orkest/Jules Buckley

11pm-12.30am Late Junction

4 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast

9am-12noon Essential Classics

12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week

Gershwin

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert

2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert

4.30-5.45pm Words and Music

5.45-7pm New

Generation Artists

7-9pm Proms 2018

Prom 67 (rpt) Mahler *Symphony No. 3*. Susan Graham (mezzo), CBSO Chorus & Youth Chorus, Boston SO/Andris Nelsons

9-11pm Proms 2018 Prom 23

(rpt) Mista Savona (keyboard), Randy Valentine, Solís Brenda Navarette (vocals), Julito Padrón (trumpet), Matthieu Bost (saxophone), Rolando Luna (piano), Manuel Garcia (drums)

11pm-1am Music Planet

5 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast

9am-12.15pm Record Review -

Building a Library

12.15-1pm Music Matters

1-3pm Inside Music

3-4pm Sound of Cinema

4-5pm Jazz Record Requests

5-6.30pm J to Z

6.30-10pm Opera on 3

from the Metropolitan Opera.

Verdi *Otello*. Sonya Yoncheva

(Desdemona), Jennifer Johnson

Cano (Emilia), Stuart Skelton

(Otello), Alexey Dolgov (Cassio),

Željko Lučić (Iago), Orchestra

of the Metropolitan Opera/
Gustavo Dudamel

10pm-12 midnight

Hear and Now

12 midnight-1am

Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

6 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast

9am-12 noon Sunday Morning

12 noon-1pm Private Passions

Clarke Peters, actor

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)

2-3pm The Early Music Show

3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)

4-5pm Choir and Organ



Festive fancies:
The Academy of Ancient
Music performs Bach's
Christmas Oratorio



5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature
 Keats goes North
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
 The Victim
9-10.30pm Proms 2018
Prom 74 (rpt) Handel *Theodora*. Louise Alder (Theodora), Iestyn Davies (Didymus), Benjamin Hulett (Septimus), Ann Hallenberg (Irene), Tareq Nazmi (Valens), Arcangelo/Jonathan Cohen
10.30-12 midnight Early Music Late
12 midnight-12.30am Classical Fix

7 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
 live from Wigmore Hall, London.

Mozart *Piano Sonata in C*, Rachmaninov *Preludes in G flat, G minor & G sharp minor*, Prokofiev *Piano Sonata No. 7*. Alexander Gavrylyuk (piano)
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Proms 2018
Prom 63 (rpt) Bach *The Well-Tempered Clavier Book 2*. András Schiff (piano)
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 An Ode to John Keats
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

8 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Proms 2018

Prom 69 (rpt) Bernstein *Serenade after Plato's 'Symposium'*, Shostakovich *Symphony No. 4*. Baiba Skride (violin), Boston Symphony Orchestra/Andris Nelsons
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 An Ode to John Keats
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

9 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 Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
 from the Chapel of Selwyn College, Cambridge
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm CHOICE 7.30-10pm
Radio 3 in Concert

from St Luke's Church, Chelsea. Bach *Christmas Oratorio Parts 1-3*. BBC Singers, Academy of Ancient Music/Sofi Jeannin
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 An Ode to John Keats
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

10 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
 live from the Barbican Hall, London. Sibelius *Symphony No. 7*, Hans Abrahamsen *Let me tell you*, Nielsen *Symphony No. 4*. Barbara Hannigan (soprano), LSO/Simon Rattle
10-10.45pm Free Thinking

10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

11 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Mendelssohn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm CHOICE 7.30-10pm
Radio 3 in Concert
 live from St Luke's Church, Chelsea. Bach *Christmas Oratorio Parts 4-6*. BBC Singers, Academy of Ancient Music/Sofi Jeannin
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
 An Ode to John Keats

12 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review – Building a Library

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12.15-1pm Music Matters
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-10pm Opera on 3
 from the Metropolitan Opera. Cilea *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Anna Nebtrenko (Adriana), Anita Rachvelishvili (The Principessa), Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera/Gianandrea Noseda
10pm-12 midnight
Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am
 Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

13 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
 Sigrid Rausing, philanthropist
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm Choir and Organ
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature
 Afterwords: Martha Gellhorn
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
 Ropewalk House
9-10.30pm Radio 3 in Concert
10.30-11.30pm
 Early Music Late

14 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon
Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Rameau
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
 live from Wigmore Hall, London. Lembit Beecher *new work*, Dvořák *String Quartet in F*. Juilliard String Quartet
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
 from Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry. Rick Dior *Science Fiction*, John Adams *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, Sibelius *Symphony No. 2*. National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain/Kirill Karabits
10-11pm The Verb Special
 TS Eliot Prize
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

15 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon
Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Rameau
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
 live from Queen Elizabeth

Hall, London. Brahms *Three Intermezzi Op. 117*, Beethoven *Sonata in E flat Op. 7*, Tchaikovsky *Natha-valse Op. 51 No. 4*, Polka *peu dansante Op. 51 No. 2*, *Passé lointain Op. 72 No. 17*, Couperin *Suite in A*, *Pavanne in F sharp minor*. Pavel Kolesnikov (piano)
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

16 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon
Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Rameau
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
 live from Chelmsford Cathedral
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
 live from the Lighthouse, Poole. Beethoven *Violin Concerto*, Strauss *Symphonia Domestica*. Augustin Hadelich (violin), Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra/Kirill Karabits
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

17 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Rameau
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
 live from Glasgow City Halls, Glasgow. Dvořák *Slavonic Dances (selection)*, MacMillan *Trombone Concerto*, Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 1*. Jörgen Van Rijen (trombone), BBC Scottish SO/Martyn Brabbins
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

18 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Rameau
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
 live from Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden. Britten *Suite on English Folk Tunes*, Mahler *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Brahms *Symphony No. 2*. Anna Stéphany (mezzo-soprano), Britten Sinfonia/Mark Elder

10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-1am Music Planet

19 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review – Building a Library
12.15-1pm Music Matters
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-10.15pm Opera on 3
 from the Metropolitan Opera. Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Paul Appleby (Pelléas), Isabel Leonard (Mélisande), Marie-Nicole Lemieux (Geneviève), Kyle Ketelsen (Golaud), Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera/Yannick Nézet-Séguin
10.15pm-12 midnight
Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am
 Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

20 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
 Tim Firth, dramatist
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm Choir and Organ
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature
 Afterwords: Susan Sontag
7.30-9.15pm Drama on 3
Arden of Faversham by Thomas Kyd
9.15-10.30pm
Radio 3 in Concert
10.30-11.30pm
 Early Music Late

21 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Liszt
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
 live from Wigmore Hall, London. Sibelius *Valse Triste arr. Friedrich Hermann*, Prokofiev *Violin Sonata No. 1 in F minor II. Allegro brusco*, Oliver Knussen *Reflection for violin and piano*, Mahler *Symphony No. 5 IV. Adagietto*, Bernd Alois Zimmermann *Sonata for violin and piano*. Leila Josefowicz (violin), John Novacek (piano)
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
 from the Royal Festival Hall, London. Gieshoff *Burr*, Hillborg



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PODCASTS IN JANUARY

Classical Fix

As well as listening to Radio 3 programmes live, you can now listen back to many of them in podcast form, as well as other exclusive BBC podcasts via the BBC Sounds app and website, which were launched at the end of November.

Classical Fix is now in its second series of podcasts, with Clemency Burton-Hill curating playlists for guests who are wanting to learn more about classical music. These include author, journalist and podcaster Elizabeth Day, who is introduced to the music of composers such as John Tavener, Clara Schumann, Vivaldi and David Lang. Burton-Hill always chooses music from a wide range of styles and composers, appealing both to classical music newcomers and to more seasoned listeners.

Other episodes this series feature guests including songwriter and folk artist Marika Hackman, author and journalist Dolly Alderton and Noisettes frontwoman Shingai Shoniwa. *Listen to Classical Fix on bbc.co.uk/sounds and on the BBC Sounds app*

Sound Atlas, Grime *Percussion Concerto* (world premieres), Andriessen *Agamemnon* (European premiere), Tuur *Solastalgia for piccolo and orchestra* (UK premiere). Stewart McIlwham (piccolo), Colin Currie (percussion), London PO/Marin Alsop
10.45-11pm
The Essay Yorkshire
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

22 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of

the Week Liszt
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
 from St David's Hall, Cardiff. Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 4*, Mahler *Rückert Lieder*, *Symphony No. 10*. Stephen Hough (piano), Catriona Morison (mezzo-soprano), BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Thomas Søndergård



Bold Beethoven:
pianist Beatrice
Rana (23 January)

10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm
The Essay Yorkshire
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

23 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Liszt
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong live from Winchester Cathedral
4.30-5pm New
Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool. Grieg *Suite: Peer Gynt*, Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 3*, Sibelius *Symphony No. 4*. Beatrice Rana (piano), Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra/Vasily Petrenko
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm
The Essay Yorkshire
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

24 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Liszt
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert

live from Belfast Waterfront, Belfast. Strauss *Four Last Songs*, Shostakovich *Symphony No. 4*. Dorothea Röschmann (soprano), Ulster Orchestra/Rafael Payare
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm
The Essay Yorkshire
11pm-12 midnight Exposure
12 midnight-12.30am
Late Junction

25 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Liszt
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Berlioz *Overture to Benvenuto Cellini*, Saint-Saëns *Piano Concerto No. 5*, Vaughan Williams *Sinfonia Antartica*. Stephen Hough (piano), Sophie Bevan (soprano), Ladies of the Hallé Choir/Mark Elder
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm
The Essay Yorkshire
11pm-1am Music Planet

26 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12.15pm Record Review - Building a Library
12.15-1pm Music Matters

1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-9.30pm Opera on 3 from the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. *Simon Boccanegra*. Carlos Álvarez (Simon Boccanegra), Ferruccio Furlanetto (Jacopo Fiesco), Orchestra of the Royal Opera House/Henrik Nánási
9.30-10pm Between the Ears Singing not Drowning
10pm-12 midnight
Hear and Now
12 midnight-1am
Geoffrey Smith's Jazz

27 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions Lisa Appignanesi, author
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm Choir and Organ
5-5.30pm The
Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature Afterwords: Ursula LeGuin
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
9-10.30pm Radio 3 in Concert
10.30-11.30pm Early
Music Late

28 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon

Essential Classics

12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Tippett
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert live from Wigmore Hall, London. Enescu *Légende for trumpet and piano*, Takemitsu *Paths (In Memoriam Witold Lutoslawski)*, Hindemith *Trumpet Sonata*, Savard *Morceau de Concours*, Gaubert *Cantabile et scherzetto*, Charlier *Solo de Concours*. Simon Höfele (trumpet), Frank Dupree (piano)
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10.45-11pm The Essay Weird England
11pm-12.30am Jazz Now

29 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Tippett
1-2pm Sean Rafferty at home with Bryn Terfel
2-2.30pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
2.30-5pm Afternoon Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Sibelius *The Swan of Tuonela*, Violin Concerto, Brahms *Symphony No. 4*. Christian Tetzlaff (violin), City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra/Karl-Heinz Steffens
10.45-11pm The Essay Weird England
11pm-12.30am Late Junction

30 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon
Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Tippett
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong live from Ely Cathedral
4.30-5pm New
Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from the Royal Festival Hall, London. Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*, Handel *Water Music Suite*. Marie-Claude Chappuis (Dido), Lucy Crowe (Belinda), Benjamin Appl (Aeneas), London Philharmonic Orchestra/Roger Norrington
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay



Weekly TV & radio highlights

On our website each week we pick the best of the classical music programmes on radio, TV and iPlayer. To plan your weekly listening and viewing, go to classical-music.com or sign up to our weekly newsletter to be sent information about the week's classical programmes directly to your inbox.

Weird England

11pm-12.30am Late Junction

31 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm
Composer of the Week Tippett
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm
Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12 midnight Exposure
12 midnight-12.30am
Late Junction

QUIZ ANSWERS FROM P120
1. Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*
2. *The Shepherd on the Rock*
3. Pan
4. a) Genoa, Italy; b) Dundee, Scotland; c) Kiev, Ukraine
5. Victoria de los Angeles
6. 'Tea for two'
7. Welsh National Opera
8. Ezra Pound
9. 'Happy Birthday to you'
10. Cake. (Butterfly cake; Rock cake; Pancake; Genoa cake; Dundee cake and Kiev cake; Victoria sponge cake; Teacake; Welsh cake (or Opera cake); Pound cake; Birthday cake)

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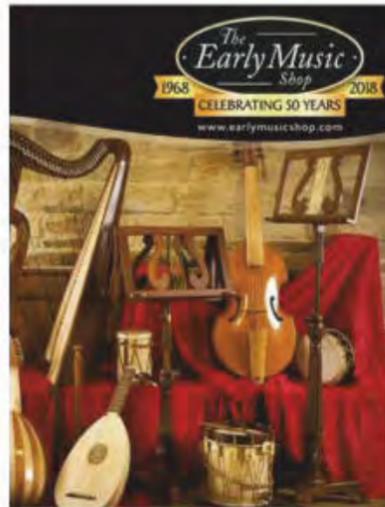
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THE QUIZ

This month's quiz is a particularly tasty one...

1. In which opera, premiered in 1904, does Cio-Cio-San, a 15-year-old Japanese girl, marry and then get deserted by Pinkerton, a caddish US naval officer?
2. Scored for soprano, clarinet and piano, in which 1828 song by Schubert does the title character sing of the loneliness of his existence as he longs for spring?
3. In Greek mythology, the nymph Syrinx is turned into reeds to help her escape the amorous intentions of which Greek god, who then turns her into a set of musical pipes?
4. Name the cities in which you will find these venues: a) Teatro Carlo Felice; b) Caird Hall; c) The Taras Shevchenko National Opera House
5. Who is the Spanish soprano (1923-2005) pictured above?
6. *Tahiti Trot* is a much-loved orchestral arrangement by Shostakovich of which song from the musical *No, No, Nanette*?
7. Of which opera company was the Russian conductor Tugan Sokhiev appointed music director at the age of just 26 in 2003, but lasted in post less than a year?
8. Which US poet's musical dabbings included an opera, *The Testament of François Villon*, which was broadcast by the BBC in 1931?
9. Following a multi-million dollar lawsuit, which popular song, whose origins date back to the 19th century, was declared by a US court in 2016 to be in the public domain?
10. Taking one word from each of the above nine questions (and all three from Question 4), name the theme that runs through this month's quiz.

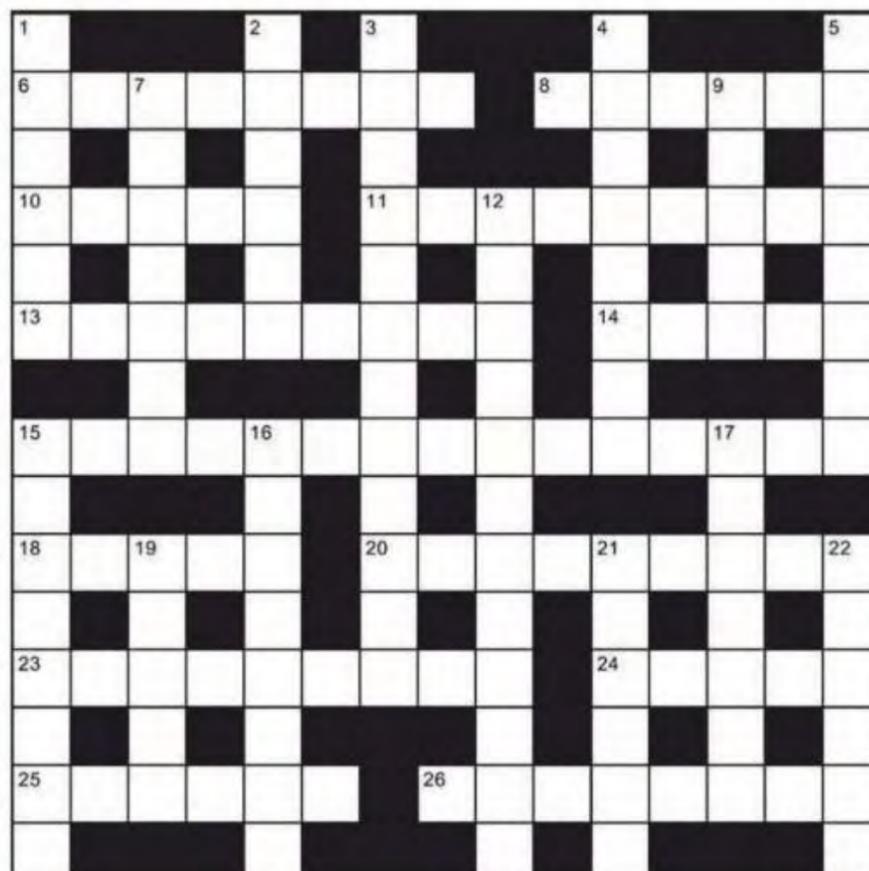
See p114 for answers

The *BBC Music Magazine* PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 329

Crossword set by Paul Henderson



The first correct solution of our crossword picked at random will win a copy of **The Oxford Companion to Music**. A runner-up will win **Who Knew? Answers to Questions about Classical Music** (both available at www.oup.co.uk). Send answers to: *BBC Music Magazine*, Crossword 329/Jan, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA to arrive by 24 Jan 2019 (solution in April 2019 issue).



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NOVEMBER SOLUTION No. 326



NOVEMBER WINNER

June Thomas, Northampton

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ACROSS

- 6 Note aria, broadcast, is supplying air (8)
- 8 Change soprano, getting a magical woman? (6)
- 10 Host offering first and last of music? (5)
- 11 Listen in on Verdi operas, possibly? I run from that (9)
- 13 Success with arrangement of 19, musical work back at the right speed (2,2,5)
- 14 Start of piece in the Royal Opera, initially (5)
- 15 Sing air for Cilla, possibly: Beach Boys hit (10,5)
- 18 Swedish composer in French novel (5)
- 20 Segregate unusual item on DVD? (6,3)
- 23 Jazz trumpeter broadcast on telly, clutching both ends of trumpet (9)
- 24 'Bis!' – tenor beginning to withhold reserve (5)
- 25 Publishing house perhaps rejected the French – the end for Bizet? (6)
- 26 Awkward sharp note avoided by a G&S character (8)

DOWN

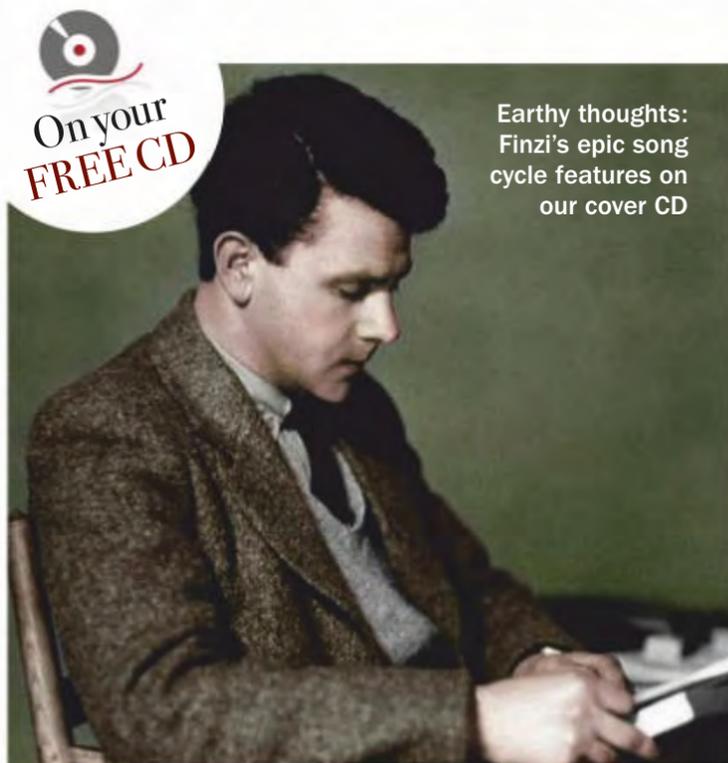
- 1 French composer hit hard, needing water in Paris (6)
- 2 Location of Weill's scene showing plant set in stone (6)
- 3 Curtailed tremolo – wonder about grace note (5,7)
- 4 Dancing to rock'n'roll, sibling almost encountered British pop singer (8)
- 5 Expert amongst those people beginning to support music festival (3,5)
- 7 Performance subsequently picked up, involving contralto and I (7)
- 9 What may predict a rise in some concerto rating (5)
- 12 Atonal vision conjured up in piece of chamber music (6,6)
- 15 Vehicle with badly working bells (8)
- 16 Fellow hung around, not having left annotated score (8)
- 17 Schumann symphony having right woman overlooking his working (7)
- 19 Repeated theme endlessly used around English choral piece (5)
- 21 What occupies basses?
The ravishing Handel oratorio (6)
- 22 English composer showing envy over Spain (6)



NEXT MONTH on sale from 24 January (UK)

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Jan-Dec 2017 – 32,885

Carole Boyd

Actress

Carole Boyd is known to millions of BBC Radio 4 listeners as *The Archers'* Lynda Snell, Ambridge's arch-cajoler, do-gooder and Christmas panto director. This Christmas, Snell is staging her own adaptation of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* which you can hear in full on 29 Dec and 5 Jan on Radio 4, and afterwards on BBC Sounds. Away from *The Archers*, Boyd has recorded more than 300 audiobooks from George Eliot's *Middlemarch* to Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, has played every female character in CBeebies' *Postman Pat* and performs concerts of words and music with the Bibby Piano Duo.

There was a lot of music in the house when I was young – my mother played the piano in a sort of thumpy way because she never had many lessons. And I remember listening to *Children's Hour* on the Home Service. It featured some wonderful dramatised classics with incidental music that was always very pertinently chosen for its atmosphere. There was a serial called the *Eagle of the Ninth* about the Romans in Britain. The music they used was so incredible – so right for the series, and it captured the mood brilliantly. I got my mother to phone the BBC and ask what it was, and it was **WALTON's** Symphony No. 1. You can imagine how that spare, strange sound must have seemed to a ten year old! That was the first time I'd heard Walton – it took me into another realm and opened my ears to the fact that music can take you to places in your head.

When I was in my mid-teens, a school friend and I would get on the No. 29 bus from Wood Green every Saturday and travel an hour to Leicester Square to spend an afternoon at a matinee. One day we saw *West Side Story* which had just come out. I was totally struck by the opening sequence where the camera pans over the Manhattan rooftops and, of course, by



The choices

Walton Symphony No. 1
LPO/Adrian Boult *Somm SOMM094*

Bernstein West Side Story
Original Soundtrack Recording
Sony COLSK48211

Puccini La bohème
Mirella Freni (Mimi), Luciano Pavarotti (Rodolfo) et al; Berlin Phil/Von Karajan
Decca 421 0492

Schubert Du bist die Ruh
Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) *Deutsche Grammophon E4741732*

Lauridsen O Magnum Mysterium
Nordic Chamber Choir/Nicol Matt
YouTube/Apple Music/Spotify

BERNSTEIN's amazing music. It started me on a path to discovering Samuel Barber and Aaron Copland along with the whole canon of 20th-century American music.

I had the opportunity to go to **PUCCINI's** house in 2006 – it was very turn-of-the-century and slightly dilapidated. I remember his music salon. *La bohème* was playing on the tannoy and

the room was full of everything Puccini – the walls were covered in paintings, playbills and opera programmes and every surface was littered with scores and other memorabilia. The piano lid was open and the score to *La bohème* was on the stand. At the right-hand end of the piano was an ashtray full of cigarette butts, and it was as though Puccini had decided simply to pop up the road to get more cigarettes and return any minute. I felt like I'd stepped into 1896 – I could just smell it. It was like time travel. Now, if Puccini's on offer, I'm there – whether it's *Tosca*, *La bohème* or *Madam Butterfly*. I go to Covent Garden a lot but I always go on my own; I don't want anyone with me as the experience is just so personal.

In the early 2000s, when we used to record *The Archers* at Birmingham's Pebble Mill, Humphrey Carpenter was at one point presenting Radio 3's *Listeners' Choice* in the next studio. He recognised me as I'd recorded his *Shakespeare Without the Boring Bits* as audiobooks, and he invited me onto his programme. A few weeks previously he'd played a listener's request – **SCHUBERT's** 'Du bist die Ruh' performed by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Gerald Moore. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. It was exquisite perfection honed down to just a few chords and notes. So that was my choice. The song introduced me to Lieder and I started exploring – it was the link to so many other things.

Not long ago I was introduced to **MORTEN LAURIDSEN's** *O Magnum Mysterium* by our church choir's former director Johnny Kilhams. There's a performance of it on YouTube by the Nordic Chamber Choir which is mind-blowingly beautiful. I often turn to Bach for comfort, but go to Morten Lauridsen for spiritualisation. *O Magnum Mysterium* fills me with emotions that I don't know how to express and allows me identify feelings that so often in life we have to hold in.  *Interview by Oliver Condy*

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