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PAULINE VIARDOT

The dazzling singer who beguiled Europe



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We name the finest recordings of the Finn's final masterpiece

music

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Who was the real Mozart?

Why we need to dispel the myths surrounding the great composer

Richard Morrison

London's new orchestral dawn

Sturm und Drang

Music to stir the emotions

Nigel Hess

The composer's musical loves



Also in this issue

Anatoly Lyadov

Russia's laziest composer?

The lure of London

The history of a musical city

Pekka Kuusisto

The folk-loving virtuoso

100 reviews by the world's finest critics

CDs, DVDs & books – see p68



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Welcome



Just a few weeks after we announced the nominations last year for the BBC Music Magazine Awards 2020, we found ourselves working from home. The past 12 months have been almost impossibly difficult for the music world, but through it all, recordings have still been made and released, a

testament to the record industry's resourcefulness and determination to keep going.

So it's with absolute delight that we present the nominations for this year's awards – imaginative releases of unknown operas, song recitals, chamber discoveries and revelatory performances of well-known repertoire, each album a lifetime of listening pleasure. On p36, you will see details of all the short-listed recordings in all seven categories. We now need you to decide who wins. Go to classical-music.com/awards, listen to excerpts from each recording and vote for your favourites. Plans are ongoing for how we'll announce the winners later in the spring – but do keep your eyes open for details of how you can watch our ceremony online.

In the meantime, revel in our wonderful features this month – Mozart in a new light; singer and composer Pauline Viardot's incredible story; a delightful interview with violinist Pekka Kuusisto; a musical history of London; *Sturm und Drang* explained; a defence of the 'idle' Anatoly Lyadov... and much more!

Oliver Condy *Editor*

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Jan Swafford
Composer biographer

'My piece endeavours to correct the myths and misperceptions of those things in the popular imagination – call it the 'Amadeus effect' – which have left us with a highly fanciful version of Mozart and his art.' **Page 26**



Fiona Maddocks
Writer, editor and critic

'I admit my knowledge of Nordic traditional music was scant, but when the highly engaging Pekka Kuusisto shared the secrets of Finnish folk fiddling and the oblique connections with Sibelius, a new world opened up.' **Page 32**



Richard Wigmore
Writer and critic

'It's been exhilarating to delve into the heady period in the German arts labelled *Sturm und Drang*, whose cultivation of emotional extremes paved the way for Romanticism a generation later.' **Page 52**

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very latest from the music world

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26 The real Mozart

COVER: GETTY THIS PAGE: GETTY, LUKE KOCH DE GOOREYND/ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC, FELIX BROEDE

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EDITORIAL

*Plus we each name our favourite
lesser-known work by Mozart*

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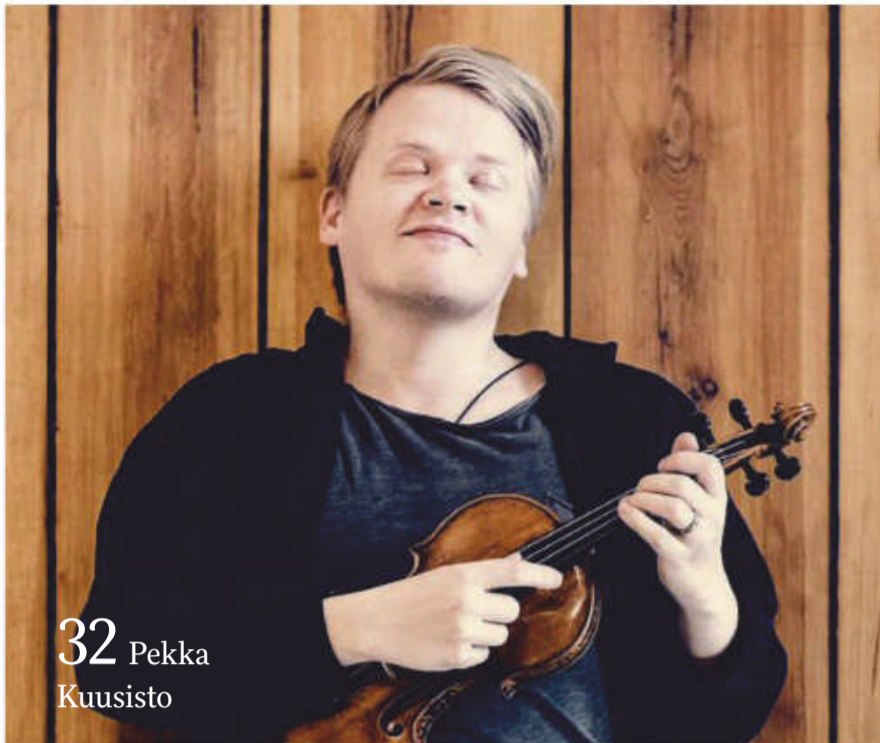
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44 Pauline Viardot

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March reviews

Your guide to the best new recordings, DVDs and books



Semele sessions:
Eccles's opera enjoys a fine debut recording

68 Recording of the Month



John Eccles
Semele

'This was worth waiting for: cast, band, director and sound are all top notch, restoring Eccles's score to its full glory'

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Serious business:
Sullivan was admired
by fellow composers

LETTER
of the
MONTH

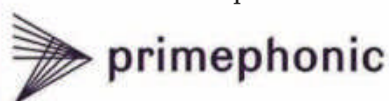
Sullivan le Grand

Following your excellent article on Gilbert and Sullivan (Christmas issue) it was gratifying to note that such a great composer as Stravinsky was a fan. What is perhaps less well known is that Sullivan and Debussy were friends and the latter believed 'there was no phase in the history of music to compare with the enormous success of the comic operas'. Debussy went further to consider the merits of Sullivan's more serious music such as his cantata *The Golden Legend*

('being pleasing and melodious') and deemed Sullivan's opera *Ivanhoe* as 'equal in merit to the majority of Massenet's operas produced at the Paris Grand Opera though more vigorous and manly'. It's a shame we don't seem to hold Sullivan's more serious music in high regard today as neither work has received performances in major UK venues for decades.
David Green, Fakenham

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Every month we will award the best letter with a year's **Platinum subscription** to classical music streaming site **Primephonic**, giving you lossless 24-bit FLAC access to hundreds of thousands of recordings – worth £149. The editor reserves the right to shorten letters for publication.



Rutter delight

Last Thursday I took with me your February edition to keep me company during my first Covid vaccination experience – I am 91. All went well, and during our last 15 minutes' rest I called out to a passing nurse when I saw the mention of John Rutter's commission to write in praise of the Oxford scientists (*Déjà Vu*). I am happy to say that she did know of him. Long ago, I had him as a TV tutor, long curls and all, at the Open University. The only missing link was that on Thursday ours was the Pfizer, not the Oxford, vaccine!

Anne Mills, Tonbridge

The editor replies:

You may be interested in our news story on p17 this month!

Not the first

With apologies to readers, in my *Building a Library* article on Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* in the February issue, I stated that the cycle's premiere took place in 1862. In fact, it was in 1849 in Leipzig – Dr Thomas Synofzik, director of the Schumann-Haus in Zwickau, is publishing more research on this later this year. However, this 1862 performance was a historically important one, featuring Clara Schumann and the pioneering baritone Julius Stockhausen.

Natasha Loges, London

The editor replies:

We look forward to hearing more about Dr Synofzik's

research. In the same feature, the picture on p67 captioned as Clara Schumann was, in fact, Fanny Mendelssohn. We apologise for this error.

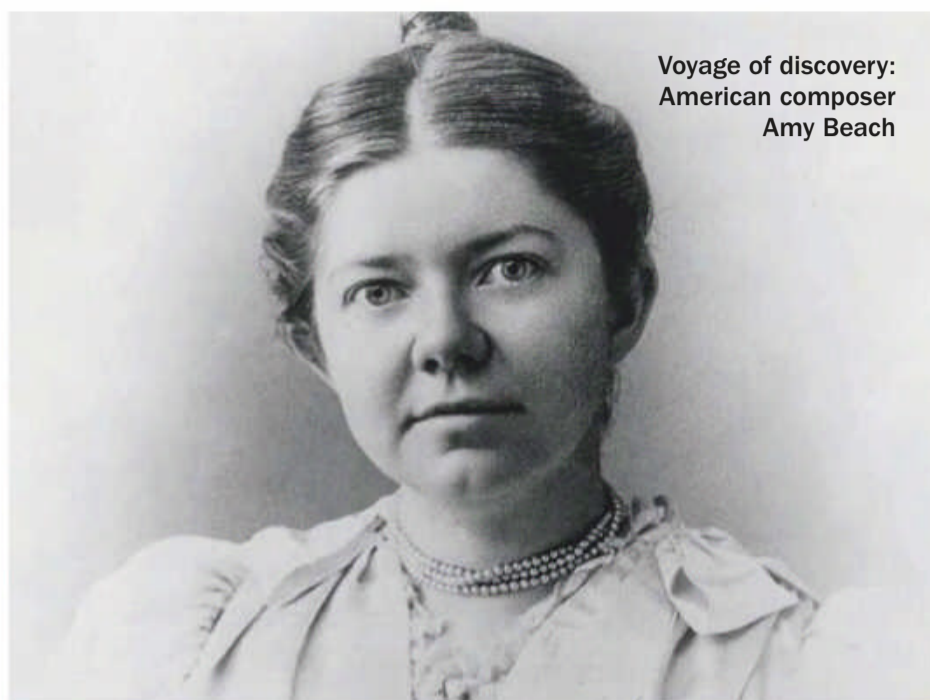
Beer and quavers

Richard Morrison wrote of his introduction to Stravinsky's music (February issue), when his enthusiastic music teacher invited him and a few of his classmates round to his house to listen to a collection of LPs sustained by crisps and Watney's Red Barrel. A wonderful memory of a special occasion which obviously fuelled his love of music and possibly put him off beer for life, but do today's 16 year-olds have the opportunity to enjoy a similar, memorable experience? I think not.

Rod Chisholm, Wormit

The glories of G&S

Daniel Jaffé triggered my 'unmodified rapture' with his delightful essay on Gilbert and Sullivan (see also *Letter of the Month*, left). I was six years old when my parents, grandfather and aunt hauled me off to rehearsals, set constructions and performances of G&S operettas at the Rose Valley Chorus in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. Every May there was a new operetta for me to absorb and I was thrilled with every one of them. G&S creates an intense devotion to those of us who are bitten by the magic. As a result, I love live theatre in



Voyage of discovery:
American composer
Amy Beach

all its forms and am captured by classical music. Gilbert and Sullivan is everywhere in the US. Once on a trip to London, I stood outside the Savoy Theatre and momentarily felt that I was on hallowed ground!
Ted Spickler, Delaware, US

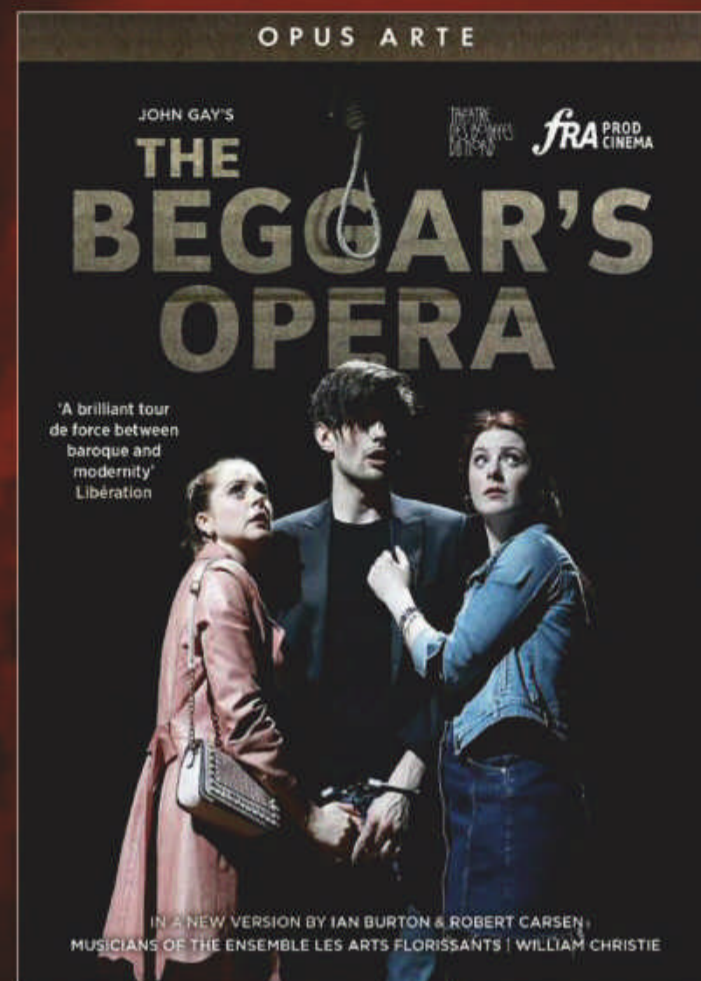
The Price is right

What a pleasant way to while away a few enforced lockdown hours by listening to Donald Macleod's erudite programmes on American composers Florence Price and Amy Beach on Radio 3's *Composer of the Week*. Although I knew of the names, I can't say that I was familiar with the music of either composer – until Symphony No. 3 (Florence Price) arrived with the November issue of *BBC Music Magazine*. With Donald Macleod we progressed through both these composers' domestic and musical lives and established the influences on their styles and output. As with most new pieces, repeated listening is the key to further understanding. I have subsequently added Price's Symphonies Nos 1 and 4 to my collection, and Beach's 'Gaelic' Symphony and her Piano Concerto are on their way.

I'm always happy to pass on my musical discoveries.
Alan Caunce, Fishguard
The editor replies:
If you don't manage to hear *Composer of the Week* at the time of broadcast, you can catch up on this valuable resource at bbc.co.uk/sounds

Artfully done

As an ageing contralto, for many years I have really enjoyed the breadth of coverage and frankness of *BBC Music Magazine*. For some time, I've wanted to write and say that I so appreciate the illustrations of Maria Corte Maidagan within Tom Service's monthly *Listening Service* article. I've searched her website, but the music-based artwork is not there. Please consider producing a book of her musical artwork – many of my music friends and colleagues appreciate her work and yet it seems to go unsung!
Diana Hoy, via email
The editor replies:
We are very proud of our team of regular illustrators on *BBC Music Magazine* – not just Maria Corte Maidagan, but Jonty Clark (*The Full Score*) and Matt Herring (*Composer of the Month*) too.



OA1328D (DVD)/OABD7283D (Blu-ray)

"... a scabrous, virulent, gleefully profane production that teeters between grotesque humour and genuine shocks"

★★★★ The Telegraph



OA1330D (DVD)/OABD7285D (Blu-ray)

"... Schrott's swaggering Mephistopheles had a tone of whip-cracking authority which blended perfectly with Michael Fabiano's ringingly full tenor as Faust."

★★★★★ The Independent

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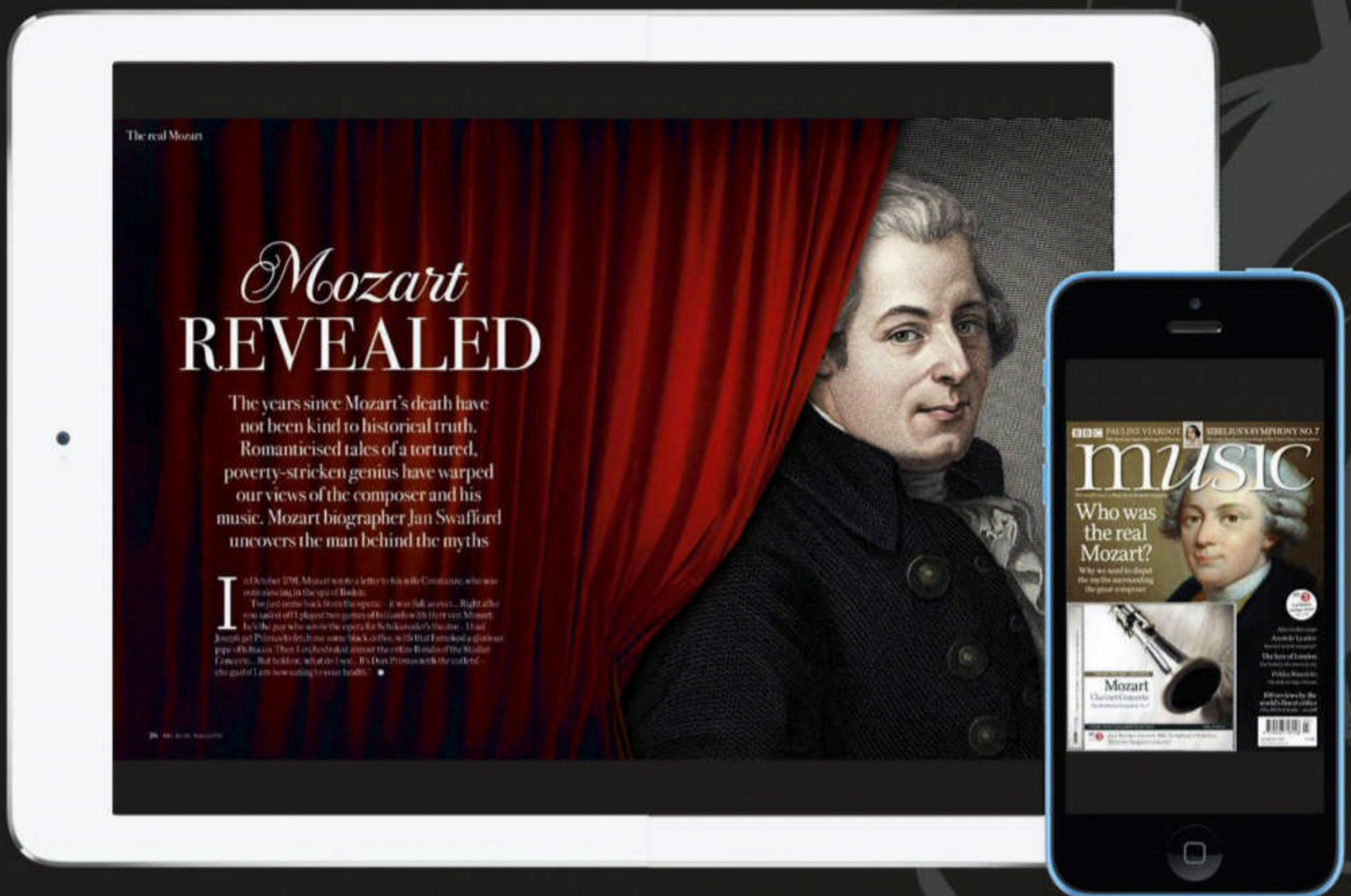


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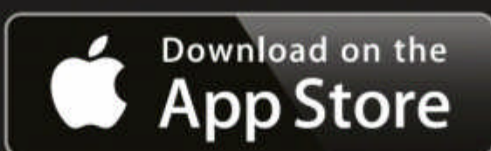
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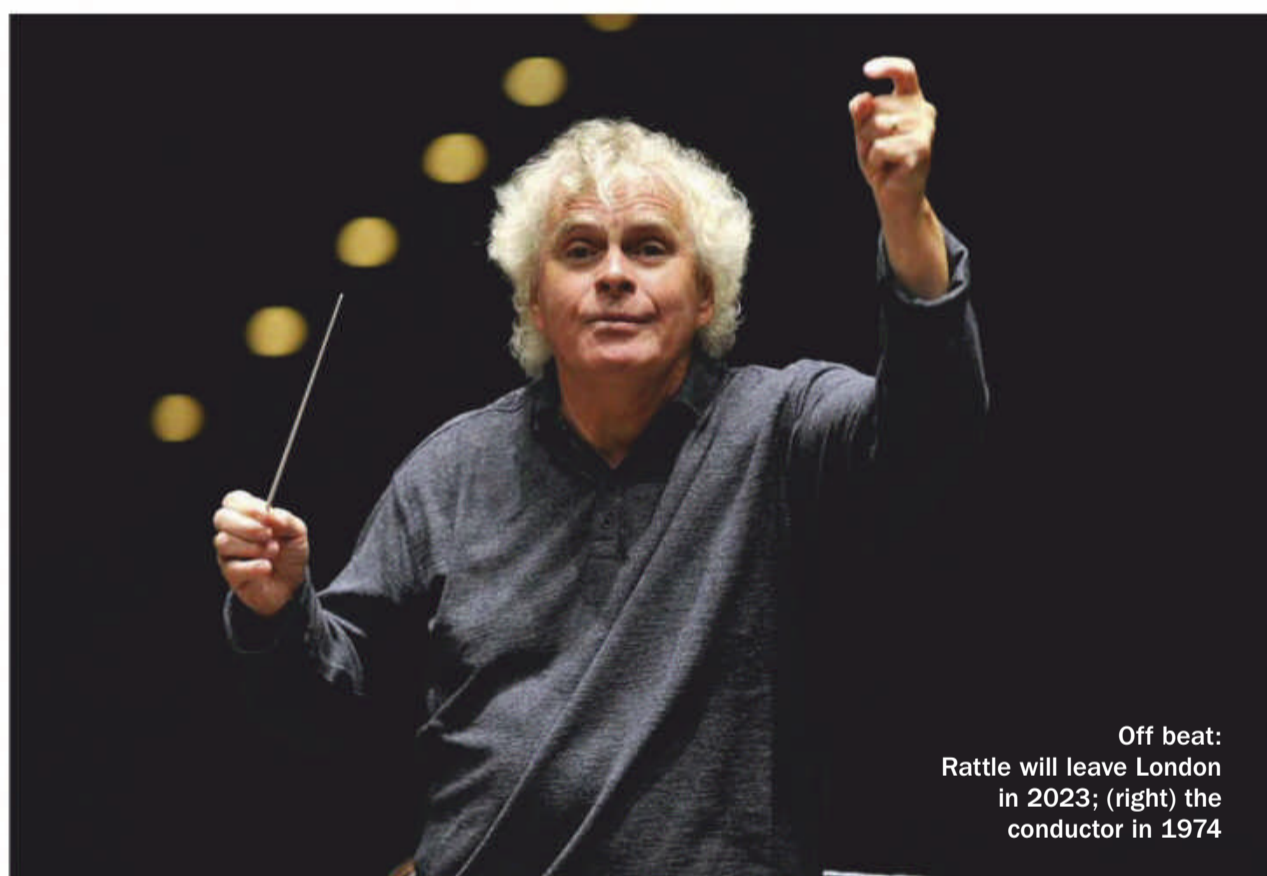
BBC *music*
MAGAZINE

The *full* score

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

Simon Rattle announces departure from London

Conductor to take up new position with Bavarian Radio Symphony in 2023



Sir Simon Rattle

Key conducting posts



1974-77 Assistant conductor, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
1977-80 Assistant conductor, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
1980-98 Principal conductor/Music director, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
2002-18 Principal conductor, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
2017-23 Music director, London Symphony Orchestra

Simon Rattle has revealed that he is to step down as music director of the London Symphony Orchestra in 2023 to take up the post of chief conductor of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (BRSO) in Munich. He will continue working with the LSO as lifetime conductor emeritus, a position previously held by André Previn.

Rattle is leaving a good deal sooner than was hoped, but the conductor says that his reasons for the latest move in his distinguished career are 'entirely personal, enabling me to better manage the balance of my work and be close enough to home to be present for my children in a meaningful way'. Home for Rattle means Berlin where, following his 16-year spell as chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, he still lives with his wife,

the Czech mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, and three children. His departure from London will bring an end to just six years with the LSO, having taken over from Valery Gergiev in 2017.

Simon Rattle led the way in calling for a new concert hall in London

For its part, the LSO has said in a statement that Rattle's final couple of years in post will see him continue a variety of projects including 'a cycle of Janáček operas, a number of ambitious new commissions and his continued work with young people on our east London music education problems'.

The conductor has also led the way in calling for the construction of a new concert hall in London, a project that he hoped to see to its fruition and which is presumably now on ice. A new venue, coincidentally, is also something that he will presumably want to address in Munich, which is similarly lacking a world-class venue. In taking on the role with the BRSO, he follows in the footsteps of Colin Davis, Lorin Maazel and Rafael Kubelík, as well as the orchestra's most recent chief conductor Mariss Jansons, who died in December 2019.

Rattle has signed an initial five-year contract with the German orchestra, effective from the 2023/24 concert season. In the meantime, the LSO will begin its search to find a successor to greats such as Pierre Monteux, André Previn, Claudio Abbado and, of course, Rattle himself, in what remains one of the most prestigious conducting jobs in the world.

See Richard Morrison, p25

SoundBites



Farewell, Brum: conductor Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla

Mirga moves on

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla is to step down as music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at the end of the 2021/22 season. She will, however, retain her links with the ensemble as its principal guest conductor. The Lithuanian, who has proved a major hit at Symphony Hall since taking over from Andris Nelsons in 2016, wishes to focus her energies on purely musical, rather than administrative, activities.

New beats

Another maestro on the move is Vasily Petrenko, who in September is to become the artistic director of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia 'Evgeny Svetlanov', taking over from Vladimir Jurowski. At the beginning of the 2022/23 season, meanwhile, Rafael Payare, former chief conductor of the Ulster Orcehstra, will be beginning his new job as music director of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.

Songful tribute

Composers and song-writers are being invited to contribute to A Song for Us, a project that recognises the role that community music-making has played across the UK during the pandemic. Among those taking part is Gavin Bryars, whose song will be performed by the Armthorpe Elmfield Brass Band and Read's Warblers choir, both of which are based near the composer's home town of Goole. The first commissions will be aired on asongforus.org on 23 March, the anniversary of the first lockdown.

Cabin pressure

Musicians' organisations have expressed their disappointment at EasyJet's decision no longer to allow small instruments to be taken on board planes as hand-luggage from mid-February. The airline, whose regulations had previously been more relaxed than most, now insists that violins, violas and guitars must be stored in the hold or have an additional seat purchased for them.

INSTAGRAM/NATHANEVANS.IG



Short and sweet:
(left-right) Villazón, Cho and
researcher Ulrich Leisinger

Mozart returns home for premiere performance

As if to tie in neatly with the title of our cover feature (see p26), Seong-Jin Cho did his own bit of Mozart revealing on 27 January, when he gave the first known performance of the composer's Allegro in D K626b/16. The pianist played the short work at the virtual Mozartwoche festival in Salzburg on Wolfgang Amadeus's 265th birthday, and followed it a couple of days later with the release of a recording, called *Ninety-*

Four Seconds of New Mozart, on Deutsche Grammophon. The Allegro, which was probably written when Mozart was 17, came to light in 2018 when the score was offered for sale to the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation after spending the majority of its existence in private hands. 'The world premiere is the icing on the birthday cake for our beloved Mozart,' says tenor Rolando Villazón, artistic director of the Mozartwoche.

THE MONTH IN NUMBERS



0

...more letters to be delivered by the sea shanty-singing sensation Nathan Evans (pictured above), who has given up his job as a postman after being signed up by Polydor.

1,500

...pounds in prize money for the winner of Opera Festival Scotland's recently announced Young Artists Singing Competition.

9.71

...per cent average increase in IQ shown by those who have taken up an instrument as a hobby, reveal tests.

76

...per cent of British musicians in a survey believe Brexit regulations will prevent them performing in Europe.

Rising Stars

Three to look out for...

Jessica Cale *Soprano*



Born: Penarth, Wales
Career highlight: My solo debut at the Berlin Philharmonie in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with a German orchestra and a Welsh choir – a wonderful European collaboration!

Another highlight would be winning first prize at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards competition last year.

Musical hero: Maria Callas's performances were always so honest, raw and truthful. She always spoke about singers needing to be at the service of the composer and the music, which is advice I always try to follow.

Dream concert: Singing Handel's *Messiah* at the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam or the Welsh national anthem at the opening of a Six Nations rugby game.

Arsha Kaviani *Pianist*



Born: Dubai, UAE
Career highlight: I love playing unjustly neglected piano works, and when I performed a Samuil Feinberg sonata in Moscow, the composer's nephew was so moved

that he gave me first editions of Feinberg's complete piano sonatas.

Musical hero: Composer Nikolai Medtner was an uncompromising master of the highest order. His music takes a refined ear and repeated listens to begin to try and understand the true genius behind it.

Dream concert: Seeing Scriabin perform. He wanted to combine all the senses in his concerts, and the technology available today would allow him to do it to a very high level.

Deschanel Gordon *Jazz pianist*



Born: London, UK
Career highlight: Touring Europe with Moses Boyd and experiencing playing at high-profile jazz festivals and clubs. Boyd's music has so much space for spontaneity, so it was

really interesting to see how the music took on different forms each night.

Musical hero: Jazz pianist Ahmad Jamal's unique approach to group improvisation has made a huge impact on my playing. His ability to create captivating narratives using extreme dynamics always keeps me on the edge of my seat.

Dream concert: My trio playing my own compositions at the Barbican to a home London audience.

TIMEPIECE This month in history



Faust impressions:
the set design for *Mefistofele*'s 1868 La Scala premiere; (left) Arrigo Boito and (below) a poster for his bedevilled opera



MARCH 1868

Mephistopheles endures a truly diabolical reception

Born in February 1842, by the time Arrigo Boito turned 26, he was already a man on a mission. Impatient with the entrenched conservatism of Italian opera – his disparaging comments had irritated the great Verdi – he had looked to Germany for inspiration, specifically Wagner, whose operas had cast their futuristic spell upon the young Italian composer.

On 5 March 1868, Boito was ready to make his own personal statement. Brimming with ambition, he had taken the German writer Goethe's epic drama

Faust and written a libretto based on it. The opera that resulted, *Mefistofele* – about a man who sells his soul to the devil for a life of selfish indulgence on earth – was set to premiere at Milan's La Scala theatre, the epicentre of operatic activity in Italy. Would Boito's new work find favour with the notoriously judgemental Milanese audience?

Before the performance had even reached its conclusion, Boito knew that it would not. Unease had gradually accumulated during the first half of the opera, and by Act IV the audience



was openly hostile and noisy, drowning out the music. 'I couldn't hear a note of it,' one friend of Boito's reported, as *Mefistofele* degenerated into what one commentator wrote 'may have been the most memorable fiasco' in the Teatro alla Scala's history.

Why? What had caused Boito's opera to fail so badly? The fact that Boito himself conducted probably didn't help; a more experienced conductor would have lent more impact and cohesion to the performance. It's also possible that the bunch of friends Boito organised to cheer on *Mefistofele* on the evening helped to rile those less well-disposed towards the opera.

But undoubtedly the major factor in the tanking of *Mefistofele* was the work itself. It was, for one thing, Wagnerian in length – five hours-plus, with a finishing time past midnight. Boito's idiom was

also new, laced with the advanced chromatic harmonies of Wagner. And the opera's unconventional structure – the Prologue alone is a half-hour long, and symphonic in conception – wilfully cocked a snook at the more strait-laced, aria-led style of the Italian tradition.

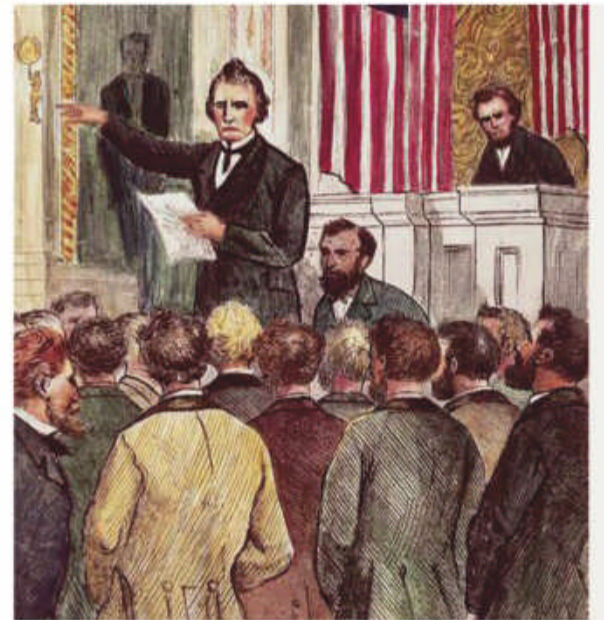
The result was general shock, incomprehension and outrage among *Mefistofele*'s first-night audience. The theatre's management panicked, splitting the second performance of the opera over two evenings. But it made no difference: the La Scala cognoscenti had already decided that *Mefistofele* was dead on arrival. Speculating on Boito's future, the publisher Ricordi pulled no punches. 'You will be a poet, a distinguished scholar,' he wrote, 'but never a composer of operas!'

The La Scala audience was openly hostile and noisy, drowning out the music

Ricordi was in some ways right. For the next half-century Boito struggled with a second opera, *Nerone*, which was never completed. Redemption of a sort came as he turned his literary skills to libretto writing, collaborating with Verdi on the Shakespearian masterpieces *Otello* and *Falstaff*.

Boito was not finished with *Mefistofele*, however. He drastically shortened the opera, cutting the more avant-garde sections and adding some new music. This slimmed-down version gradually gained acceptance, and by 1880 had been successfully performed in Italy, England and America.

It is still performed today, though less often than it might be for a work described by one writer as 'stylistically the most original Italian opera of the 19th century'. The need for an outstanding bass in the title role and a classy tenor as Faust are impediments, perhaps. But *Mefistofele*, if not equal to the best of Verdi, is rich in drama and has much beautiful music in it – 'a remarkable work whose flaws are worth the successes of most other operas', as one *New York Times* critic put it. 🎵



Impeached president: Andrew Johnson's trial

Also in March 1868

2nd: The composer and violinist **Carl Eberwein** dies aged 81. Born in Weimar, Eberwein held several positions in the German city, where he was championed by and worked closely with Goethe. He set many of Goethe's texts as songs and, in 1829, composed music for an 80th-birthday performance of *Faust*.

5th: In England, CH Gould is awarded a patent for the **stapler**. Though his design is the first to receive official recognition, staplers of some description are known to have been existence since the reign of Louis XV in 18th-century France. Two years prior to Gould's patent, George McGill has received a US patent for a small bendable brass paper fastener.

9th: **Ambroise Thomas**'s opera *Hamlet* premieres at the Paris Opéra with a cast including baritone Jean-Baptiste Faure in the title role and Swedish soprano Christina Nilsson as Ophélie. Though the five-act work is based loosely on Shakespeare's play, the libretto by Michel Carré and Jules Barbier contains significant changes to the plot.

12th: During the first ever visit by a member of the British royal family to Australia, **Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh**, is shot and wounded while picnicking on a beach in Sydney. His would-be assassin is John O'Farrell, an Irish-born fruit and vegetable seller. Despite a plea for clemency from Alfred himself, O'Farrell is hanged the following month.

13th: The impeachment trial of president **Andrew Johnson** begins in the US Senate. Johnson's presidency, occasioned by the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, has often seen him at odds with radical Republicans in Congress and things reach a head when he violates a restriction by sacking the secretary of war, Edwin M Stanton. The Senate acquits him by one vote, however.



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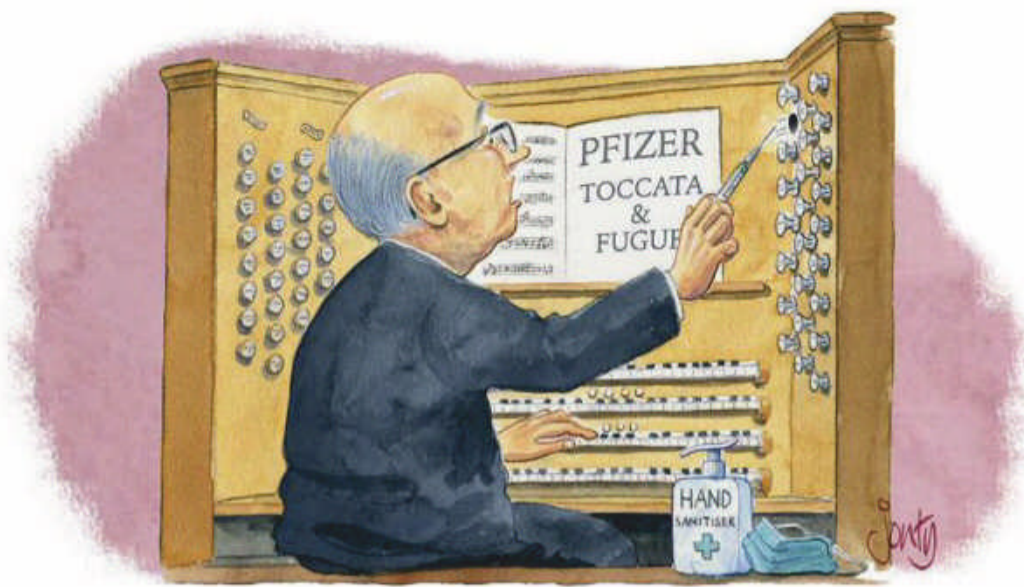
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Organists inject a little joy into vaccine roll-out

As the great British coronavirus vaccination roll-out moves ahead, all manner of venues have been repurposed to help the cause. These include Salisbury Cathedral, surely the most elegant vaccination station of all. Not only do those waiting to receive their jab there get to admire some of England's best Gothic architecture – the 13th-century building was so admired

by John Constable that he painted it no fewer than 300 times – but they get to enjoy fine music too, as the cathedral's organists have been playing recitals throughout the day. So enjoyable has been the experience, it's said, that some vaccinees, having been ticked off the Liszt and gone out Widor, have said they are forward to coming Bach for their second injection.

DÉJÀ VU

History just keeps on repeating itself...



Sitting at home in front of the TV during lockdown has brought an unexpected boom in old-style hobbies, it seems. Thanks in particular to the Netflix series *Bridgerton*, based on Julia Quinn's novel *The Duke and I* (set in the early 1800s), Brits have been taking up needlework, reading novels and – hurrah – learning the piano in their droves. It's not the first time that period drama has had an impact on classical music's fortunes...

Though **Michael Nyman** was already an established name in classical music circles by the 1980s, it was his score for Peter Greenaway's 1690s-set film *The Draughtsman's Contract* that really made the wider public aware of his talents. The neo-Baroque bassoon chuntering of Nyman's 'Chasing sheep is best left to shepherds' proved particularly popular, and has regularly appeared in period drama soundtracks ever since. Another composer to have been propelled into the limelight by costume drama was **Rachel Portman**. In 1997, the British composer's music for the film of Jane Austen's *Emma*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow, won her an Academy Award – in doing so, she became the first ever woman to take the Oscar for Best Original Score. Of course, **Mozart** was pretty well known before the multi-Oscar-winning *Amadeus* arrived on our cinema screens in 1984, but for music-lovers, the film's big plus was that the world briefly went Mozart mad. On the downside, it also meant that, as we see on p26, millions now had a strangely distorted impression of the composer's character and, in fact, life story.

MEET THE COMPOSER

Anna Clyne



Sights and sounds:
'Visual art is
important in my work'

After completing her degree in Edinburgh, Anna Clyne continued her studies at the Manhattan School of Music and is today based in the US. From experimental electro-acoustic music to broad orchestral strokes, she has developed a distinctive musical voice, which can be heard on her new album, *Mythologies*, on Avie.

There was never really an 'I want to be a composer' moment. I have just always loved it. I remember getting a pencil and drawing staves on some paper when I was little. I wrote a piece about the sea for piano; that's the first time I remember writing music down.

I didn't grow up in a classical music family. We listened to Pink Floyd, Bob Dylan, Fleetwood Mac, Simply Red and Dire Straits and I think that has led me to love melody; I don't shy away from it.

Studying with the composer Julia Wolfe was fantastic.

I think the most important thing she taught me was to really trust my intuition. She helped me find my voice and taught me how to develop a single idea. I think that's one of the harder things of composing – the hardest thing is finding an idea, but then what do you do with it?

Collaboration has been a great source of inspiration. I've just done a couple of pieces with UK-based artist Jyll Bradley;

one was commissioned by the Scottish Ensemble. I wrote a piece for solo viola, and Jyll created these beautiful light sculptures. We also did a film piece called *Pardes*, which was released online a couple of months ago.

Visual art is important in my work. I wrote *Night Ferry* when I was composer-in-residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and conductor Riccardo Muti asked that I look to Schubert for inspiration. I read about Schubert and I discovered he suffered from cyclothymia, which is a form of manic depression with rapid mood-swings. So I started by painting a dark, turbulent wave. Sometimes I make the art but, more often, I'll find inspiration in other artists.

I particularly love writing for orchestra. You have such a rich palette of sounds and there are infinite possibilities. I think of orchestration very much as painting; you can have a melody on just an oboe, but it is transformed if you double it with a viola and a vibraphone.

StudioSecrets



Rare work: Daniel Rowland records Chausson

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

Krystian Zimerman has returned to Beethoven's complete piano concertos 30 years after his first recorded run at them under Leonard Bernstein. This time Simon Rattle and the LSO joined the pianist for the challenging sessions, which were carried out under strict COVID-19 safety measures in Jerwood Hall at LSO St Luke's. Deutsche Grammophon releases the full set in April.

The pandemic itself has inspired violist **Hiyoli Togawa** to commission pieces on a theme of isolation from 11 composers. The result, called *Songs of Solitude*, features works by the likes of Kalevi Aho and Rhian Samuel and is released on BIS Records this month.

Orchid Classics recently launched a new digital-only imprint called **Orchid Creative**. It gives artists the opportunity freely to create recordings, video material and playlists for streaming and download only. Pianist George Lepauw kicked things off with a recording of Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* in December and the label has a full slate of releases lined up to follow throughout the year.

Also focusing on digital releases is **Linn Records**, which has announced a new partnership with the Edinburgh International Festival. Inspired by the festival's Summer 2020 streamed concerts, the label has made a number of those performances available digitally – including the world premiere of Klaus Simon's chamber arrangement of Mahler's Seventh and highlights from Edinburgh's popular Chamber Music Series.

Violinist **Daniel Rowland** and his duo partner Natacha Kudritskaya visited the Music Room at Champs Hill in West Sussex last year to record a selection of French works. Out this month on the Champs Hill label, the recording includes Chausson's rarely heard Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Quartet, among other works.



First-hand advice: Maki Namekawa rehearses Philip Glass's Sonata with the composer



REWIND

Great artists talk about their past recordings

This month: **MAKI NAMEKAWA** *Pianist*

MY FINEST MOMENT

Philip Glass *Piano Sonata*

Maki Namekawa (piano)

Orange Mountain Music OMM0149 (2021)



I know this piano sonata very well, more than anyone else – except Philip Glass. He composed this for me in 2019 and it's his first

ever piano sonata. We were waiting to release it until after the Philharmonie de Paris could present the work – it had already been premiered in Germany and Austria – but the French concert had to be postponed until May 2022, and they kindly agreed to let me record and release it in advance of that.

So last May at the height of the first wave of COVID-19, I began to organise

the production of a CD and vinyl recording for the very first time! My jobs included booking the studio and recording engineer, plus arranging the packaging. It was so hard, but I knew that in the end there would be a recording that everyone would listen to, so that gave me hope. Of course, when you organise everything for yourself you know every detail and you can control it all. So in the end I loved doing it.

My earlier Orange Mountain recordings have always been produced by Michael Riesman, but international travel restrictions between the US and Austria made it impossible for this recording. Luckily for me, Erich Pintar, with whom I had worked in the past, was available to produce it and the recording sessions with him proved to be wonderfully rewarding.

Buried Treasure



Violinist **Esther Yoo** introduces some favourite recordings from her own collection

Ysaÿe Posthumous Solo Violin Sonata, Op. 27

Philippe Graffin (violin) *Avie AV2399*



I grew up in Belgium, so I've always been very familiar with Ysaÿe's violin sonatas. This year, I remembered that Philippe Graffin had

rediscovered another sonata at the Brussels Conservatoire; it was a great experience to explore this new piece. The second movement is very special; the way it grows and builds is beautiful.

Red Sun SamulNori Amadeo 841 222-2



I've never lived in Korea but I am familiar with traditional Korean music. I recently became curious to learn more about the

collaborations that exist between western music and traditional Asian music. I stumbled across this album which, I learned, was the first ever to combine jazz and what we call *Gugak* music. It's very dynamic, interesting and it feels very foreign to hear the two styles combined; it also kind of transports you into another dimension.

Esa-Pekka Salonen Cello Concerto Yo-Yo Ma (cello); LA Philharmonic/ Esa-Pekka Salonen

Sony Classical 19075928482



I toured with Salonen in 2018, with the Philharmonia Orchestra, and I was fascinated by working with him both as a conductor and

musician-to-musician. But we also had discussions about his compositions – I was more familiar with his Violin Concerto, but I didn't know so much about his Cello Concerto. The two of them are very different; the Cello Concerto plays with texture and rhythm. For me, it feels like you strap yourself into a spaceship and you're launched into a cosmic atmosphere. It's an escapist work; you have to let the music take you where it wants to take you.

Esther Yoo appears with the Z.E.N. Trio on 'Burning Through the Cold', out now on DG



Piano partners:
Maki Namekawa with
Dennis Russell Davies

MY FONDEST MEMORY

Shostakovich *Symphony No. 4* (trans. piano four hands)

Maki Namekawa and Dennis Russell Davies (piano)

Supertrain Records STR003 (2019)

I recorded this with my husband, the conductor and pianist Dennis Russell Davies. Rehearsing can be very tricky as he has no time to practise the piano; so whenever we have a recording or a concert, he sometimes has to get up much earlier – he can be playing the piano at 4am.



On the recording day for this, we flew back from the US to Austria and went almost directly to the Brucknerhaus, in our hometown of Linz, to record. It's so difficult to coordinate our schedules; it was the only time that worked.

It's a huge, very thick piece which in German we'd call a *dicker Schinken*, or 'big ham', so it was quite a challenge. We were so concentrated on the music that we worked straight through until 5am.

The first movement starts out very dynamically – it's very exciting – and the third movement is long and calm. We had to keep our concentration and energy, but we were so excited to start with the first movement. We also had to keep an eye on the time – I remember we looked at our watches; it was the middle of the night and we were still only on the second movement! After 15 hours of recording we felt like we were on another planet, but I think the recording turned out beautifully.

I'D LIKE ANOTHER GO AT...

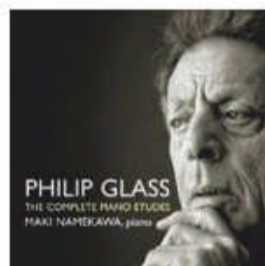
Philip Glass *Complete Piano Etudes*

Maki Namekawa (piano)

Orange Mountain Music OMM0098 (2014)

These pieces have been part of an ongoing dialogue I have been privileged to enjoy with Philip Glass, and I have noticed as a result that my approach to them is evolving. Since 2012 I have performed the Glass Etudes on five continents, either as a complete solo programme or in combination with other pianists. I was still very young with these pieces when Philip suggested I record them, and I've performed them many times since. They sound different now that I'm older.

There is always a lot of anticipation from an audience when we get to Etude No. 20; it's the final piece, but it isn't at all showy, it's actually very calm and magical. When I play for the



audience now, I feel like we have a correspondence. I'm not afraid or nervous, and I really enjoy the piece.

I was always struck by Glenn Gould's Bach; every time the tempos are a little bit different. I'm starting to do the same; some pieces I play a little bit quicker, but some I now play a little slower. Philip is always very kind and he will accept every pianist's tempo. I think tempo is so important for the Etudes and this is why I would try to record them again.

Maki Namekawa's recording of Philip Glass's Piano Sonata is out now on Orange Mountain Music

Breath of life



Our breaths are the fundamental building blocks of music, whether creating its sounds or helping to shape symphonic works, says **Tom Service**

ILLUSTRATION: MARIA CORTE MAIDAGAN

It's something we do 17,000 times a day, without giving it enough thought: breathing. It's the physical necessity without which speaking, singing and whole families of instruments couldn't be quickened into life, from didgeridoos to French horns, and saxophones to ophicleides.

But some composers have paid proper attention to this continuous miracle of inspiration and exhalation, in pieces that use the arc of the human breath as structural and expressive necessity, like the framing sections of Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*, or Richard Reed Parry's album *Music for Heart and Breath*. Yet few musicians have delved as deeply as the flautist Kathryn Williams. Williams's *Coming Up For Air* project is a series of commissions – around 100 of them so far, with 40 pieces released on a 2019 CD – of complete pieces of music designed to last for the duration of a single arc of her breath. The range of sounds and expressions the composers have found is, well, breath-taking, from Cee Haines's post-modern hip-hop miniature *DOOO* to Lucy Hale's aching, halting *When We Breathe*.

Other woodwind instruments can give the illusion that the player is capable of breathing – continuously, superhumanly, uncannily – for minutes on end. That's thanks to the tighter embouchures of the oboe, bassoon or saxophone, and the virtuosic technique of circular breathing, in which you fill your cheeks with air, expelling it through the instrument at the same time as breathing in through your nose.



It requires the brilliance of musicians such as Heinz Holliger or Pascal Gallois to make it work in pieces by the Italian composer Luciano Berio that seem to pass in a single breath. The saxophonist Kenny Gee uses the technique in his easy-listening rhapsodies: he once

Orchestras need symphonies to have the ebb and flow of breathing on an epic scale

played a single record-breaking note for more than 45 minutes.

Yet breathing is vital for instruments and ensembles that don't require air pressure to bring their sounds into the world. Orchestras need symphonies to have the ebb and flow of breathing on an epic scale. Conductor Claudio Abbado conceived his performances as arcs of breath so that music like the vast

25-minute final movement of Mahler's Third Symphony rode on a single, elemental span of tension and release.

The American composer Pauline Oliveros worked with this expanded idea of breath in a sonic meditation called *Teach Yourself to Fly*. How? 'Begin by simply observing your own breathing... introduce your voice... Continue as long as possible naturally, and until all others are quiet, always observing your own breath cycle.'

Our breathing is our most essential connection to the natural rhythms we're all part of, from the heave of the tides to the lunar cycle, from the ellipses of the solar system to the breath of the universe. As Pauline Oliveros said: breathe, and fly, and breathe, and fly.

BBC
RADIO
90-93FM



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

FAREWELL TO...



Hero of the harp:
Osian Ellis championed
his beloved instrument

Osian Ellis Born 1928 *Harpist*

With a harp in the house, it was fairly natural that Osian Ellis would take to the instrument as a child. His mother was an amateur player, and he claimed he was largely self-taught. A win in 1943 at Bangor's National Eisteddfod led to a Royal Academy scholarship, and he never looked back. The Academy became a firm fixture in Ellis's life, as he served as professor of harp for some 30 years from 1959. As principal harp of the London Symphony Orchestra, he worked with many composers and inspired new works; a friendly collaboration with Benjamin Britten lasted until the composer's death. Before the LSO, Ellis performed in various ensembles, including the Wally Stott Orchestra and the London Palladium pit orchestra. A proud Welshman, he was honorary president of the Wales International Harp Festival and was also a talented composer in his own right.

Elijah Moshinsky Born 1946 *Opera Director*

It was a philosophy scholarship that brought Elijah Moshinsky from his native Melbourne, Australia to Oxford, and it was at the university that he cut his teeth as a director. Talent-spotted there by Covent Garden's general director John Tooley, Moshinsky landed himself a job at the Royal Opera House. His philosophical background would inspire the very distinct theatrical vision for which he would become known and admired around the world, in productions of everything from Verdi to Britten.

Eva Coutaz Born 1943 *Harmonia Mundi*

Her working life might have begun at a university bookshop in the south of France, but it ended as the beating heart of one of classical music's most respected record labels. Eva Coutaz joined Harmonia Mundi, which was started by her husband Bernard, as a press officer in the early 1970s. She found her passion in working directly with musicians and before long she was organising recordings and concerts, which she went on to do for three decades. She took over as CEO when Bernard died in 2010 and retired in 2016. Eva was warmly regarded by the classical music industry and popular with all who worked with her.

Also remembered...

British violinist and conductor **John Georgiadis** (born 1939) was a familiar presence as leader of the LSO in the 1960s and '70s. He went on to conduct the Bangkok Symphony and Essex Youth orchestras, among other ensembles.

Claude Bolling (born 1930), the French composer, pianist and bandleader, was one of France's leading jazz musicians. He studied with Duruflé and his natural talent crossed over into classical and film music, scoring over 100 films during his career.

New on CORO



COR16183

Mozart: Violin Concertos

Aisslinn Nosky *violin*

Max Mandel *viola* | Handel and Haydn Society

Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major, K216

Violin Concerto No. 4 in D major, K218

Sinfonia Concertante in E flat major for violin & viola, K364

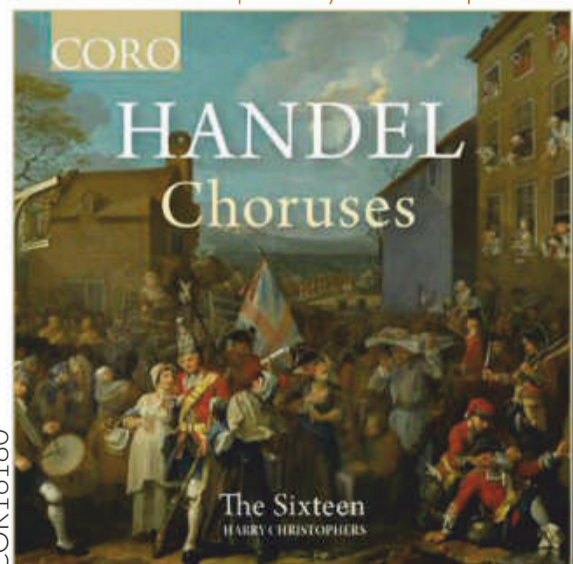
Hailed as "superb" by The New York Times, Canadian violinist Aisslinn Nosky leads the Handel and Haydn Society in this sparkling live recording from Boston's glorious Symphony Hall.

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Also Available

Handel Choruses

The Sixteen | Harry Christophers

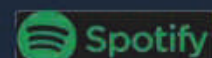


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BBC Music Magazine (on *Jephtha*)

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Dutch mastery:
Bernard Haitink beguiles
with Bruckner; (below)
violinist Ivry Gitlis

and Bach. His music is a marriage of all these things. The legato and lyricism of the more operatic side of Chopin is rendered beautifully in Lipatti's recording.

And also...

I've been watching lots of operas from The Met on TV and have been trying to go on **long walks**, which has been really important in trying to get a sense of space and calm. I also have a two-year-old daughter who I've been gradually trying to move from the music from *Frozen* onto Beethoven!

Emmanuel Despax's 'Spira, Spera' is out now on Signum Records

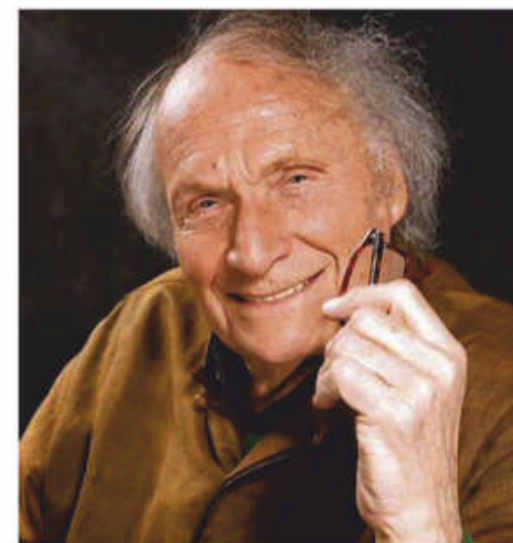
Sophie Rosa Violinist



The late **Ivry Gitlis** was simply one of the greatest violinists who ever lived. For me, what was so inspirational

about his playing was that it was always both meaningful but also free, which is something you can hear on *Violin Melodies*, his two-volume recording of short encore pieces with pianist Shigeo Neriki. These types of pieces are some of the most personal you can play, but also some of the hardest in terms of getting the expression – the knowledge of phrasing and vibrato – just right.

I keep a CD of Jascha Heifetz playing **Bruch's** *Scottish Fantasy* in my car, and I listen to it with my husband, who is also a violinist, whenever we venture out on a road trip. It's a work that goes very well with any rugged scenery! The music particularly



Music to my ears

What the classical world has been listening to this month

Emmanuel Despax Pianist



My grandfather died recently and my grandmother has given me his amazing vinyl collection which I've

been organising while remembering the times we listened together. I've discovered lots of gems: one is a 1928 recording of **Beethoven's** *Archduke* Trio by pianist Alfred Cortot, violinist Jacques Thibaud and cellist Pablo Casals. They blend so well as a trio and yet their individual personalities really shine through. It's played with such nobility. It's so contagious – it never lets you go.

I'm a big fan of conductor Bernard Haitink and, also among my grandfather's collection, I discovered his recording of **Bruckner's** Symphony No. 4 with the Concertgebouw

Orchestra from 1965. Right from the start you hear the classic Concertgebouw sound with those shimmering strings and a distant horn call. You immediately escape into it, which is something we all need at the moment.

Cortot, Thibaud and Casals blend so well in Beethoven's *Archduke* Trio

Pianist Dinu Lipatti's 1950 recording of **Chopin's** 14 Waltzes is pure elegance and poetry. Chopin is a hybrid composer with colliding cultures and backgrounds, something that's very hard to get right as a pianist – on the one hand you have his Polish origins, but there's also the fact that he loved Italian opera

READER'S CHOICE

Richard Howard Banstead

I've recently listened to all 14 of the recorded symphonies by **Kalevi Aho** plus some of his concertos, most notably the recent release of his stunning Fifth Symphony coupled with the Percussion Concerto, *Sieidi*. This Finnish composer is a major voice in symphonic music and has created concertos for many diverse instruments. His inventiveness in work after work, both thematically and textually, is extraordinary, and the concertos for theremin and contrabassoon are other fine examples.

suits Heifetz and his style of playing – not only is it thrilling and electrifying, but it also has moments of incredible tenderness; while it's virtuosic, with Heifetz it always sounds very classy and cultivated.

I love **Puccini** and, being half-Italian myself, I have an affinity with his music and love its expressiveness. You can't beat the recording of Luciano Pavarotti and Mirella Freni in *La bohème*, conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Pavarotti warm, direct sound is instantly recognisable and, when you see videos of him performing on stage, it's clear that he was a bit of an all-rounder in terms of being both a musician and actor – he could do everything.

And also...

Japanese writer **Haruki Murakami's** *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is a novel taking its main character through all sorts of strange coincidences and perplexing events. Murakami submerges you in a bizarre world where reality and fantasy seem to blur, shifting from the conscious



to the sub-conscious. It's very different to anything else I've read, but I'd highly recommend it. *Sophie Rosa and pianist Ian Buckle's new recording of sonatas by Montgeroult, Viotti, Mendelssohn and Weber is on Rubicon Classics*

Ilan Eshkeri Composer



I've really enjoyed going for long walks and listening to music that I haven't heard for years. I was 13 when hip-hop group **N.W.A's** *Straight Outta Compton* came out; it's such a great album and it still sounds really modern. Hearing it again brought back all the emotions I had as a teenager, but at the same time I am able to appreciate it as a professional musician.

Thanks to a friend, I recently stumbled across a great synth band called **Harmonia**, and haven't stopped listening to them. They're really weird and a bit niche; there's something about them that's like Kraftwerk, but more contemporary. They produce

READER'S CHOICE



Chris Vine Loughborough

I wonder if *BBC Music Magazine* has any plans to mark the centenary of the death of French composer **Déodat de Séverac** (above) at any point this year? OK, probably not, so let me do it here. Séverac was best known for vocal music, but his solo piano music is also well worth exploring. I'd recommended taking a listen to his *Le chant de la terre*, whose seven short movements have a simple, rustic charm. If you can get hold of the sheet music, they're fun to play, too.

great tunes, too – real earworms that you can't get out of your head. I discovered they'd actually been around for a long time – they formed in the 1970s – but they reformed fairly recently.

There are a couple of new things I've liked in the last few months. One is by the lead singer from Muse, **Matt Bellamy**, who released a solo song last summer called 'Tomorrow's World'. It starts off very piano-based, so it's kind of a departure from what you might associate with Muse. I also really loved the new album by Smith and Burrows; it's called *Only Smith and Burrows is Good Enough*. I love their voices together.

And also...

When I'm writing, I sometimes find it hard to listen to music. If I need a break I'll often take myself to an art gallery; I also collect art and have quite a lot of art books. I love **Tracey Emin's** work and I'm very inspired by her. Having a chance to go and have a look around an exhibition takes me out of my music; it gives me creative input without displacing whatever music's going on in my head. *Ilan Eshkeri's music for the BBC series Perfect Planet is out now on Sony Classical*

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

Oliver Condy Editor

Moving house in a pandemic was always going to be stressful. So this month, to calm the nerves, I've been revisiting an old favourite – those marvellous recordings of **Mozart** piano concertos made by Daniel Barenboim and the English Chamber Orchestra in the late 1960s and early '70s. Fifty years later, they sound as fresh as any performance today, and they make perfect accompaniments to wallpaper-stripping.

Jeremy Pound Deputy editor

Putting together a pub quiz music round based on a theme of 'hammers' gets me listening to The Beatles and Peter Gabriel, Mahler symphonies and Wagner operas. But once I'm onto Igor Levit's recording of **Beethoven's** *Hammerklavier* my research gets derailed – from the exuberant opening fanfare, I'm thrilled and delighted by Levit's command of this greatest of piano sonatas. The rest of the quiz can wait.

Alice Pearson Cover CD editor

I've been listening with great pleasure to works by the 'Spanish Mozart', **Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga**, who died at the age of 19 but still managed to produce a significant number of great pieces. I highly recommend his Symphony in D, an interesting mix of styles but with an individual stamp. His gift for melody, dramatic sense and warm harmonic style make this a very attractive work – what a shame he didn't live long enough to reach his full potential.

Michael Beek Reviews editor

It's 80 years since the original release of Walt Disney's *Fantasia*, but the film remains a thing of beauty. I was delighted to get to know it again recently on the Disney+ streaming service. Mickey Mouse's *Sorcerer's*



Apprentice segment was always my favourite as a child, but this time I was more engaged by the rest, and rather less scared by **Musorgsky's** *Night On Bare Mountain*.

Freya Parr Editorial assistant

TikTok has always intimidated me, what with its youthful aesthetic, cult-like dance challenges and pop culture references I never understand. This month, though, I finally found my TikTok home, thanks to **Nathan Evans**, the Scottish postman who went viral with his rendition of the 19th-century sea shanty 'Wellerman'. Before long, other singers had joined in and added harmony. Then there were fiddles, and even a club remix. Sea shanties are finally getting their deserved moment in the spotlight.

MARCH RELEASES



RECORDING OF THE MONTH

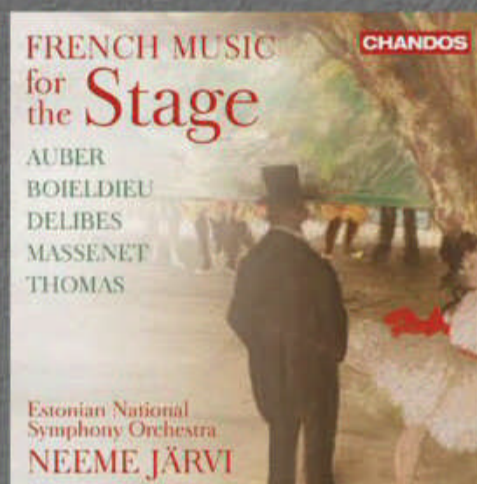
IL CANNONE

FRANCESCA DEGO PLAYS
PAGANINI'S VIOLIN

Francesca DeGo | Francesca Leonardi

Francesca DeGo makes her Chandos debut with a new recording of works inspired by the Niccolò Paganini. DeGo plays Paganini's violin, the legendary 'il Cannone' made by Guarneri del Gesù in 1743, one of the most important musical instruments in the history of western music. Francesca records exclusively for Chandos Records.

CHAN 20223

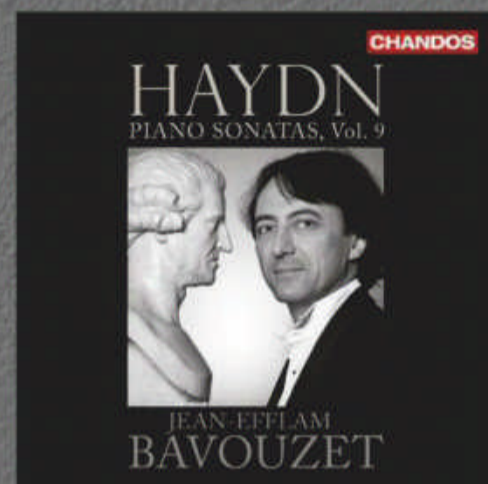


FRENCH MUSIC FOR THE STAGE

Estonian National Symphony Orchestra | Neeme Järvi

Neeme Järvi leads his Estonian forces in a programme of overtures and ballet music by Thomas, Boieldieu, Delibes, Massenet, and Auber.

CHAN 20151

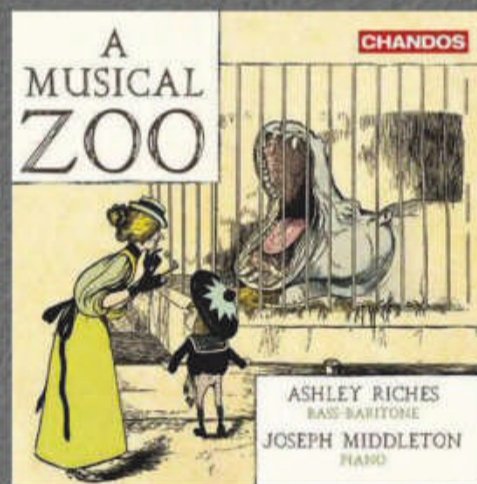


HAYDN PIANO SONATAS, VOL. 9

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet

The next eagerly awaited instalment in Bavouzet's acclaimed Haydn cycle features six sonatas from Haydn's early, middle, and later periods.

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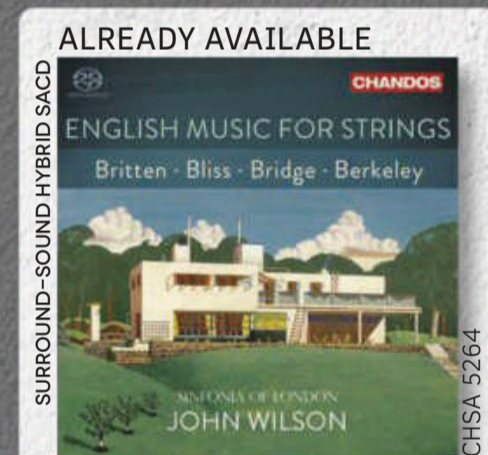


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Richard Morrison

London's conductor exodus will bring fresh opportunities for the city

Is it coincidence or something more ominous that six top UK orchestras are losing their music directors in quick succession? There was much press speculation when Simon Rattle announced he was quitting the London Symphony Orchestra after six years (barely a third of the time he served in Birmingham or Berlin), acquiring a German passport and moving to the excellent Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. Clearly things haven't worked out as the LSO would have wished.

But his departure is just the most newsworthy of many. A week later, the highly rated Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla announced she was relinquishing the music director job at the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Like Rattle, she cited 'personal reasons'. That can mean anything.

Add to that the imminent departures of Vladimir Jurowski and Esa-Pekka Salonen from the London Philharmonic and Philharmonia respectively, and the expected departures in the next couple of years of Antonio Pappano from the Royal Opera House and Mark Elder from the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester. It doesn't add up to a crisis. But coming on top of COVID, and all the European touring problems British musicians are facing after Brexit, this mass exit of famous conductors certainly adds to a general impression of insecurity and drift in the British orchestral world.

My feeling is that, now more than ever, we need to accentuate the positive. Losing these big names not only gives our orchestras the chance to bring in a younger generation, but also to redefine what role they want their music directors to take. For environmental as well as medical reasons I don't think we are

ever going to return to a world in which famous conductors and orchestras spent a large proportion of their time roaming the globe. Nor do I think that global touring will be replaced by internet streaming – at least, not to the extent that would bring in the same sort of income.

No, we are moving into a 'think local' era. If they are to survive, our orchestras and opera companies will be required to embed themselves more in their own communities, engage more with local schools and universities, and expand their 'offer' to include therapeutic

Pomposity is out; approachability and flexibility are much more highly prized


activity in the mental-health and social-services fields. That means having a music director who is prepared to lead vigorously and with intellectual vision in all those areas, and for many months a year. Not someone who flies in from Europe on a huge salary for a few weeks here and there, always assuming the planes haven't been cancelled.

A good time to appoint a rising British conductor, then? There are plenty of them around, and the London Philharmonic has already gone down that route, admirably in my view, by picking Edward Gardner as Jurowski's successor. Who else should be considered? Mark Wigglesworth is suddenly prominent again on the British scene, and conducting brilliantly; he would make a superb music director if

he didn't flounce out after 15 minutes. John Wilson is snobbishly underrated, but his repertoire extends far beyond Broadway musicals, and orchestras play with huge passion for him.

Jessica Cottis is an Aussie but embedded in the British scene where she's done fantastic work, particularly in contemporary music. Nicholas Collon deserves a bigger British job than conducting Aurora, inspiring though that partnership has been. And Birmingham-born Alpesh Chauhan is making waves in Europe and deserves more prominence here.

This isn't chauvinism talking. It's making the most of the huge reservoirs of talent we have nurtured in this country. And it's also acknowledging that even if the LSO, say, felt that it needed another big international name to replace Rattle, such figures are scarcer and scarcer. Far better to do what the Berlin Philharmonic did with Kirill Petrenko: select a conductor whom you feel will produce marvellous music-making, even if he or she has little public image outside your own country.

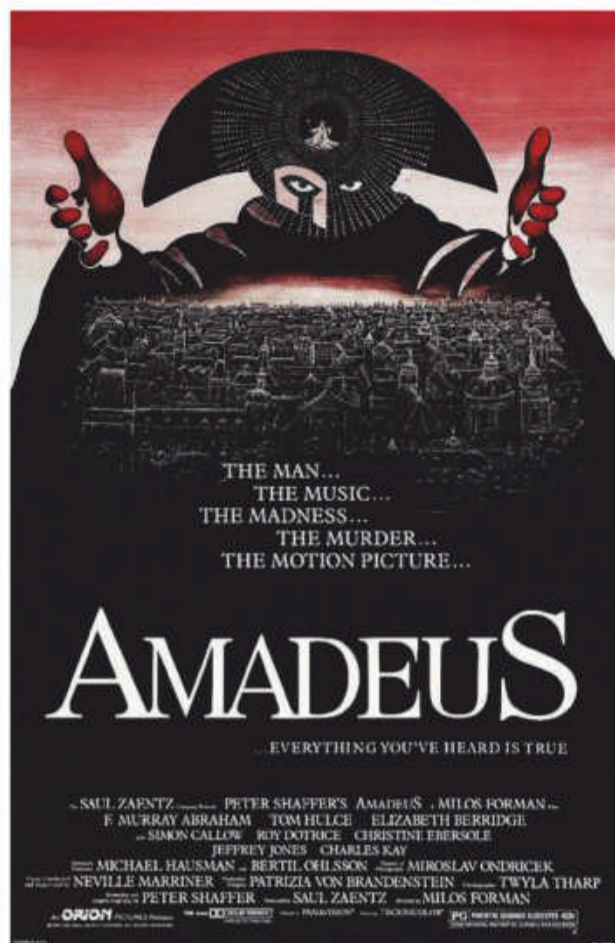
Conductors still matter, but the job specification has changed. Pomposity is out; approachability and flexibility much more highly prized. Britain's musicians have been through an awful year and aren't in the mood to tolerate the inflated egos and lecherous bullies who used to stalk the podiums. They want to be inspired, not intimidated. There are plenty of young conductors who can do that. We shouldn't panic about the exodus of older ones. It's an opportunity, not a disaster. In five years' time we may be saying 'Simon who?'.  *Richard Morrison is chief music critic and a columnist of The Times*

Mozart REVEALED

The years since Mozart's death have not been kind to historical truth. Romanticised tales of a tortured, poverty-stricken genius have warped our views of the composer and his music. Mozart biographer Jan Swafford uncovers the man behind the myths

In October 1791, Mozart wrote a letter to his wife Constanze, who was convalescing in the spa of Baden:
'I've just come back from the opera; – it was full as ever... Right after you sailed off I played two games of billiards with Herr von Mozart; he's the guy who wrote the opera for Schikaneder's theatre... I had Joseph get Primus to fetch me some black coffee, with that I smoked a glorious pipe of tobacco. Then I orchestrated almost the entire Rondo of the Stadler Concerto... But hold on, what do I see... It's Don Primus with the cutlets! – che gusto! I am now eating to your health.' ●

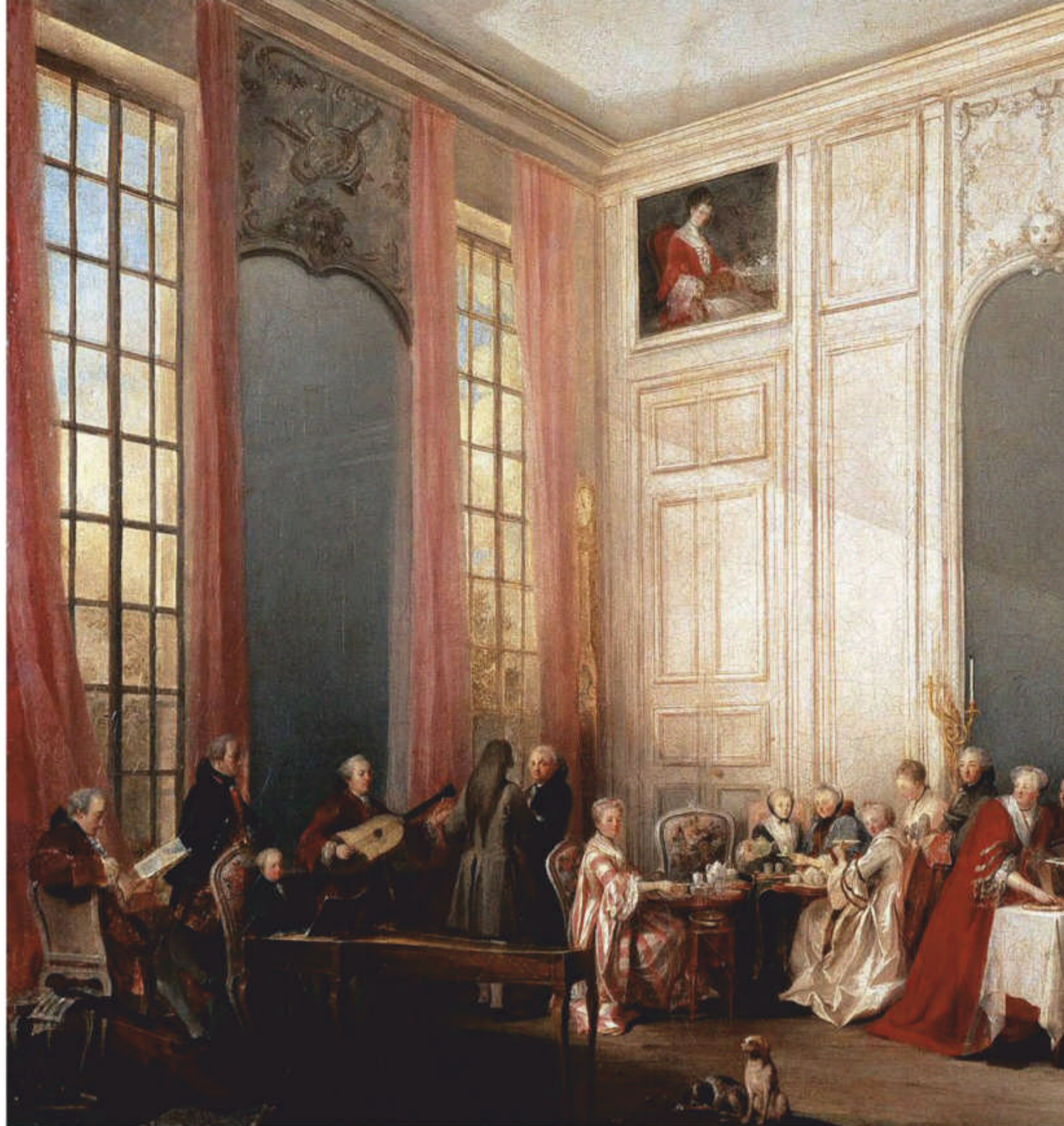




CONSTANZE, SAPPED by almost constant pregnancies during the ten years of their marriage, had been ailing for months, often away at Baden. Mozart missed her terribly and regularly went out to stay with her. But her health was improving and her husband was in a fine mood. He was enjoying the reaction to one of the greatest hits of his life, *Die Zauberflöte*, basking particularly in the praise of a supposed rival, Antonio Salieri, who had just attended the opera with Mozart and cheered it all the way through.

The *joie de vivre* in that letter is utterly Mozartian, an echo of much of his music and much of his life. That he had been feeling poorly for a while, mainly the result of massive overwork – two big operas, a clarinet concerto and other works completed in the last months – did not entirely crack that *joie de vivre*. It was just as in his celebrated childhood when, after a bout of smallpox that nearly killed him, as soon as he could sit up in bed he was practising card tricks and was quickly on his feet learning to fence and turning out symphonies.

When he wrote the letter to Constanze, Mozart had only weeks to live. That page full of life and love is his last surviving letter. But he wasn't planning to die, and he had much to be hopeful about. He was about to take over as Kapellmeister of St Stephen's Cathedral, the best-paying and most respected musical job in Vienna. Soon would come word that noblemen in



By the age of seven, Wolfgang was one of the more famous people in the world

Holland and Hungary were offering him a lavish yearly stipend for life. That news came when Mozart was in bed, in bad shape but working away as best he could on a new commission, for a Requiem, that he had been delighted to get. Among other things it would be useful for his impending job at the cathedral. He had been seriously ill before, starting in childhood, so it took a while for him to realise that this time was different: he was lying on his deathbed and was never going to finish the Requiem.

All this is to say that the Mozart of legend, embodied in Peter Shaffer's play and movie *Amadeus* – childish,

misunderstood, impoverished, destined for a pauper's grave – has little to do with the reality of his life. He had his problems like the rest of us, his dad could be a pain in the neck like a lot of dads, Wolfgang could be silly sometimes, but he had an ironclad sense of self-worth and self-protection, and if his money troubles towards the end oppressed him, he never lost his conviction that the trouble was temporary and would get better – which it did, though he didn't live to enjoy it. He was buried in the same manner as most Viennese. By the end, he and Salieri were more friends than rivals.

We tend to expect our geniuses to be tragic and suffering figures. Mozart was no such thing. In the end there was only one real tragedy in his life: his death in mid-stride at 35, dozens of works unfinished in his drawer, the Requiem having to be completed by one of his students.

There is one element of the Mozart legend that is indeed true: he was the definition of a prodigy. He occupied that position from more-or-less aged six. What



Tour story: (left) *Tea Party with the Prince of Conti at the Temple* by Michel Barthelemy Ollivier – a young Mozart is at the piano; (far left) poster for the 1984 film *Amadeus*; (below) Leopold Mozart

Leopold was no less a master schemer and planner. His ambitions for his children were two-fold: first, to convince sceptics in the Age of Reason that God indeed worked miracles, his son a case in point; second, and in the end more importantly, to make a fortune for himself and the family to install his son as head of music, Kapellmeister, in some leading court.

So began the legendary years of travel that took the family around Europe and to England. They played in parlours of the middle class and the aristocracy, for kings and queens in Vienna and Versailles and Holland and London. The children were brilliant – they never resisted or failed to shine, and everybody was dazzled. Leopold crowed, perhaps without exaggeration, that as a player his daughter at age 14 was equal to the best in Europe. His son was likewise, but at the same time he was composing and before long publishing pieces of polished skill and manifest charm. He could also improvise fugues and sonatas, or pick up a tune and reel off variations on it.

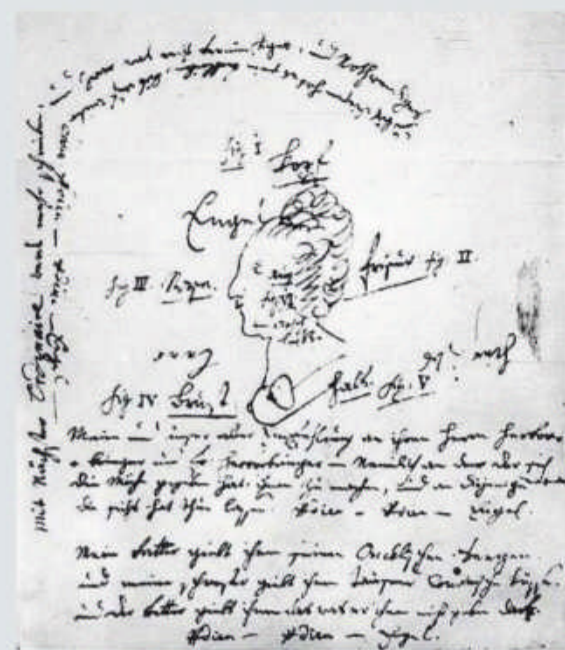


his father Leopold Mozart called ‘the miracle, which God allowed to be born in Salzburg’ revealed itself on 24 January, 1761, in the family living room. Wolfgang, three days from his fifth birthday, having never played a piece at the keyboard, sat down at the harpsichord and in a half hour mastered and memorised a minuet his sister Nannerl had been practising. If his sister was a budding prodigy, he was some kind of force of nature. Soon he began to compose pieces that quickly expanded in length and ambition. By age eight he was writing symphonies for full orchestra. All this unfolded with much help and correction from Papa, but the music still rose from the tiny child.

By that point Leopold had conceived an extraordinary plan: he would take both his children on the road to play in palaces and courts across the map. A violinist, teacher, composer and author of the most celebrated violin method of the day,

Reports of the marvel flew around Europe. By age seven, Wolfgang was one of the more famous people in the world. When a few years later a teacher in Bonn discovered a ten-year-old prodigy named Beethoven, in a magazine article he introduced him as the next Mozart. If Leopold considered his son a miracle of God, however, thinkers of the Enlightenment tended to see him as a marvel of nature, to be examined in scientific terms. Wrote one observer in a report to London’s Royal Society, ‘If I was to send you a well attested account of a boy who measured seven feet in height, when he was not more than eight years of age, it might be considered as not undeserving the notice of the Royal Society. The instance which I now desire you will communicate to that learned body, of as early an exertion of most extraordinary musical talents, seems perhaps equally to claim their attention.’

The stories of Wolfgang’s early triumphs entered the realm of myth. Like all myths they were rarely accurate, though the reality is astonishing enough. At age six he sat on the lap of the Empress



Face the music: Mozart’s letter to Maria Anna

The write stuff

One of Mozart’s mischievous letters



Mozart’s proto-surreal sense of humour is revealed in a letter he wrote to his cousin Maria Anna Thekla Mozart (left), with whom he was doing some sort of fooling around.

This is not one of his notorious rabidly obscene letters, but he could be hilarious even in his less rowdy moments, though there are various innuendos here for the careful reader:

‘Now, where was I? – oh yes, will come, – yes, yes, they will come – well, who? – who will come? – oh yes, now I remember: letters, letters will come... Now Numero 2: I’m asking you, why not? – I’m asking you dearest numbskull, why not? – if you are writing anyway to Madame Tavernier in Munich, please include regards from me to the two Mad.elles Freysinger, why not? – Strange! why not? – and to the Younger, I mean Fräulein Josepha, tell her I’ll send my sincere apologies, why not? – why should I not apologise? – Strange! – I don’t know why not? – I want to apologise that I haven’t yet sent her the sonata I promised... why not? – what – why not? – why shouldn’t I send it?... Strange! I wouldn’t know why not? – Well, then you’ll do me this favour... why not, it’s so strange! After all I’ll do it to you too, if you want me to, why not? – why shouldn’t I do it to you? – strange! Why not?’



Total recall: a portrait of the young Mozart

Mozart and the Miserere

A spurious tale of genius memory?



In April 1770, the 14-year-old Mozart and his father Leopold arrived in Italy on the latest leg of their European tour. Visiting St Peter's in the Vatican, father and son

sat down to enjoy Allegri's (above) Miserere. Back then, performances were limited to the Vatican – the Pope forbade the music to be performed anywhere else. So the story goes, the young Mozart heard it once, and returned to his lodgings to transcribe it from memory, note perfect. But as Jan Swafford writes in his Mozart biography, the truth is a little different. Yes, Leopold reported the feat in a letter home, but what isn't true is that there were no copies outside St Peter's. In



fact, three copies of Allegri's work existed outside the Vatican including one in Bologna, owned by the young Mozart's new mentor, Padre Martini (left).

Could Martini have shown it to his young pupil? Whatever the case, Mozart returned to St Peter's at least once to hear the piece again, smuggling in his transcription in order to note corrections. Plus, the version we know today of the Miserere is different to the one sung in 1770 – simpler, unornamented and easier to memorise.



Unwanted advances: (above) Simon Keenlyside as Don Giovanni and Joyce DiDonato as Donna Elvira in a Royal Opera House production of Mozart's opera, 2008; (right) Marie Antoinette as a young girl



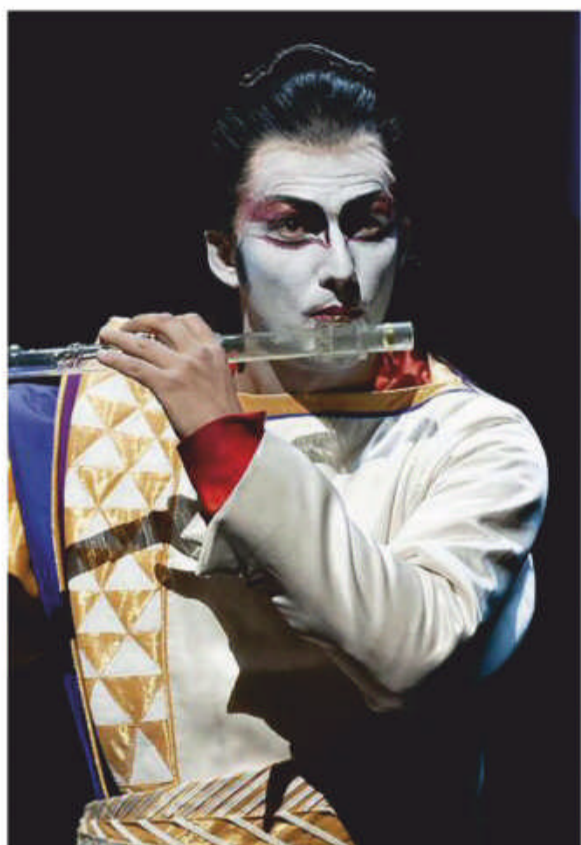
in Vienna and kissed her, and vowed to marry her daughter Marie Antoinette (yes, *that* Marie Antoinette, later the doomed queen of France). After an exam in writing academic counterpoint he was admitted to an Italian musical society usually only open to adults who had studied for years (but his exercise was tidied up on the sly by a mentor). He listened once to a famous choral piece the Vatican had forbidden to be disseminated and wrote it down (actually he sketched it out and returned to listen again and make corrections – see box, left). He was indeed writing symphonies from age eight and produced his first opera at 12, and from around that age amounted to a mature professional composer, but his manuscripts show revisions in his father's hand through his teens and beyond.

It is the business of fashioners of myth and legend, even when they do not make up things whole cloth, to gin up the astonishment, to make the fabulous more fabulous. In regard to Mozart this process took wing in the Romantic 19th century – much of that due to ETA

Hoffmann, who besides being a writer of fantastical stories was a composer and critic. In his writings, Hoffmann shaped the Romantic ideal of music, as seen in his description of his prime musical hero: 'Beethoven's instrumental music open up for us the realm of the monstrous and the immeasurable... We become aware of giant shadows that wave up and down, close us in more and more narrowly, and annihilate everything in us except for the pain of infinite yearning... and only in this pain, which, consuming within itself, but not destroying, love, hope, and joy, wants to burst open our breast with a full-voiced harmony of all passions.' In those sorts of terms Hoffmann claimed Mozart as the first true Romantic composer, above all in how he portrayed Don Giovanni, the sexual force of nature and demonic hero who defies God to the gate of hell.

To take up Mozart into the delirium that was the Romantic ideal of art, and its myth of the artist as suffering demi-god whose work was addressed to the future, was a process maybe inevitable, but it wasn't Mozart. It suited Beethoven, who was the main model for the Romantic cult of genius. And so Mozart was seen through a Beethovenian prism: revolutionary, suffering, misunderstood, addressing his greatest works such as the final three

Noted member: (right) a Masonic lodge meeting in 1784, Mozart possibly seated far left; (below) Jonas Kaufmann as Tamino in a New York Met *Die Zauberflöte* from 2006



symphonies to a posterity that would finally understand him.

But to view Mozart and his art through the prism of Beethoven is not to understand him in his own terms. For centuries composers wrote only for their time, and it was assumed that they would be forgotten after their deaths. Most music heard was new music. The first composer whose work stayed at full value in the repertoire was Handel, who died when Mozart was three. Beethoven was probably the first composer to understand that his music was going to be part of a permanent repertoire. He used the word 'immortal' in regard to his ambitions. Mozart did not. There is no record of his ever talking about the reputation of his music after his death. He wrote for the audiences at his soirées and concerts, for the theatre, the church, for those who bought his work in publication.

In that sense he and Beethoven were different kinds of artists. In both their times, most music was heard in private: quartets, sonatas and other chamber music were virtually never played in public halls, and even symphonies were often heard in private music rooms. Beethoven was the inspiration for a growing trend towards public performance in larger halls; he was involved, among other things, with the first string quartet to mount a public subscription series. To put it in a nutshell: Beethoven wrote for Humanity;

Mozart wrote for people. Those people were the sort he knew in his wide circle of friends, from tradesmen and their wives and daughters and sons passionate about music, through to the high nobility.

Even if Mozart, as his father had counselled, hoped for a good Kapellmeister

Composers wrote only for their time, and assumed they would be forgotten

job and was about to get one at the cathedral when he died, in practice he was too independent and proud to be a functionary, and it is a good question whether he would have thrived in that sort of position. He was, meanwhile, a committed Freemason, that order part of the progressive political vanguard of that time, so he was clearly liberal in some degree. *Die Zauberflöte* is partly a Masonic allegory and a shining testament to the ideals of the Enlightenment. But we don't know the details of Mozart's political convictions, and there is no record of him seriously questioning the position of the nobility in political life. He was a sociable

man, and a number of his friends, though by no means all, were aristocrats.

To end with a larger though not easily answerable question: if we put away the myths that the 19th century attached to Mozart and which lingered into our time, how does that apply to his music? One suggestion is to return to a point above: Mozart wrote for people, a lot of his work played in parlours and music rooms. So it was written for friends and music lovers, and in that sort of intimate and sociable atmosphere his art was intended to touch and delight his players and listeners, often with an incomparable display of beauty. The Romantics wanted art to shake the heavens and change the world. Mozart on the whole was a happy man, and in his art he wanted to make people happy. Surely for an artist that's as noble a goal as any. As a document written during his lifetime declared, the great goals of humanity are 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'

Finally, in regard to one more myth, Mozart is only on record twice as using Amadeus (meaning 'beloved of God') for his middle name, and both times that Latinate form was deliberately pretentious – in other words, one of his jokes. He usually used the French 'Amadé', though like many of us he was a little hazy on which way the accent went. 🎵

Mozart: The Reign of Love by Jan Swafford is out now and is published by Faber

“My encounter with a Finnish fiddlers band made me rethink everything about the violin”

THE BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

Pekka Kuusisto



A deep love and knowledge of his country's folk traditions has bestowed magical qualities on the Finnish violinist's classical performances, as he tells **Fiona Maddocks**

PHOTOGRAPHY: **KAAPO KAMU**

Spring is short in Finland, winter long. The snow outside Pekka Kuusisto's window at the turn of the year may have melted by the time you read this, turning this 'land of a thousand lakes' green. On the day we speak via Zoom, however, he has been out early with the snow-plough, clearing his daughter's path to nursery school. The violinist loves this white, muted world, calling it 'a landscape *con sordino* (with mute)' but he regrets that 'proper snow' is no longer automatic in the south of Finland where he lives.

Climate change is one of Kuusisto's myriad preoccupations, as anyone who has seen his film with Greenpeace, concerning the destruction of the Great North Forest, will know. Many would think being a world-class soloist, with a reputation for a

playing style that is technically brilliant, edgy and poetic, might be challenge enough. Kuusisto admits to having a butterfly mentality, always in search of the new, the spontaneous. He conducts, composes and devises his own, singular concerts, working as artistic partner with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

Not enough? He is also artistic director of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra from the 2021/22 season, scheduled to lead them at the Barbican's Milton Court, where he is due to be in residence in May (the event is still going ahead at the time of writing). Repertoire, typically unclassifiable, ranges from Bach to Missy Mazzoli and includes the UK premiere of *Shrink* by his friend and collaborator Nico Muhly. Will it happen? Kuusisto waves his hands and body in an expressive, eccentric shrug. There's a strong streak of the comedian in him, with which he often beguiles his audiences. He doesn't know yet. The pandemic, like the snow, has obliterated the outlook.

He attributes his restless, panoptic view of life to his background. 'I blame





Musical dynasty:
Jaakko and (below)
Ilkka Kuusisto

Keeping it in the family

The multi-faceted Kuusistos



Why feature just one Kuusisto on a disc when you can have three? In 2011, the BIS label released a disc of Symphony No. 1 and *Concertino Improvisando* by Ilkka

Kuusisto (above), a leading Finnish composer who is perhaps best known for his many operas – not least 1974's *Moomin Opera*, written in collaboration with author Tove Jansson and featuring the much-loved illustrated book characters. Ilkka Kuusisto, now 87, has also written a large number of vocal works, one of which, *Kun talo alkaa soida* ('When the House Begins to Resound') can also be heard on that same BIS release, performed by baritone Jorma Hynninen and the Lahti Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra's leader at the time was Ilkka's older son Jaakko, who has also recorded as both a violin soloist and orchestral conductor and, as a composer himself, has had his suite for orchestra, *Between Seasons*, recorded by Helsinki Strings. And, of course, appearing as soloist in the *Concertino Improvisando* (and, apparently, also acting as artistic adviser) was Ilkka's other son, Pekka.



genetics,' he chuckles. 'My father loves to dabble. It's his fault! But he has so much fun with music too.' Born in Espo on the southern coast of Finland, Pekka Kuusisto was brought up in a prodigiously musical family, with a music teacher mother, a composer father, two older half-sisters who are dancers, and an older brother who is the violinist/conductor/composer Jaakko Kuusisto (see left). Pekka began the violin aged three, having watched Jaakko, three years his senior. Their mother guided their studies, making sure they adhered to a practice regime until their early teens. 'It worked for us. Every kid has a different way of doing things. We'd probably never have worked so hard otherwise.'

Did the brothers tussle over their various talents and achievements? 'No, we're quite different. We know each other's playing inside out, but we fit together quite well. We always play tunes when we meet up. Jaakko's interested in the folk side of things too but I don't think he's been to as many jam sessions as me!' Through their father's eclectic jazz interests, Pekka picked up the habit of improvisation and a taste for an expansive range of non-classical. Yet after his studies in Indiana, US, he found himself as a successful international soloist. 'I was living the dream, travelling the world, but not really knowing why. Then, in the late 1990s, a friend saw the emptiness inside me and took me to a traditional music festival. The first thing I heard was a fiddle band from Finland called JPP. That was it. Something clicked.'

This 'click' proved revelatory, and changed the way Kuusisto thought about

music and performance. Nordic folk styles now feed into his playing, whether by instinct or by specific inclusion, as demonstrated by his charismatic, and very funny, encore at his BBC Proms debut in 1917. He charmed the Royal Albert Hall audience into singing a saucy Finnish folk song while he duetted along with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra's game leader, Laura Samuel. The surprise, given the naturalness with which he incorporates folk into everything he does, is that he wasn't born to it.

'That encounter with the Finnish fiddlers band made me rethink everything about the violin in a manner I now consider healthier and more multi-faceted, in ways the classical soloist lifestyle doesn't easily allow. For all the diversity of my childhood music-making, traditional music wasn't part of the diet. So, whether it's a blessing or a curse, I don't know, we haven't got our own fiddling dialect.'

The full name of the band that converted him, JPP, is Järvelän Pikkupelimannit [the small fiddlers of Järvelä]. 'Their name relates both to a family and place name. Their bow strokes and left hand decorations – like Baroque ornamentation – are their own. You'll hear it if you listen. I've been told that the various families from that part of Finland do recognise each other, who they grew up with, through these dialects. I'm sure you find the same thing in Irish or Scottish folk fiddling.'

It's no different, he argues, from how classical playing was in the past, when we could recognise a violinist's provenance from their sound. Listen to



Orbiting worlds: (far left) Järvelän Pikkupelimannit (JPP) at the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival in 2015; (left) Pekka Kuusisto in 2012 with the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne

the old recordings of the French player Ginette Neveu, the Pole Joseph Hassid, the Spaniard Pablo de Sarasate. 'Even with all the hiss, they sound like no one else. There's a completely individual voice. But now that we have all travelled the world so much, that quality has largely disappeared. Things have become more standardised. The differences are smaller. There's more of a consensus on how things "should" sound and a disquiet if you don't fit into that. In trad music those distinctions are still valued. If an accordionist had to learn on an old instrument with some of the buttons missing, that absence would have been built into their sound – even when they eventually get a brand new, shiny, fully-functioning instrument.'

The Sibelius Academy in Helsinki has, Kuusisto says, a 'very advanced department for global traditional music. It's not that common to have this specialism, but there are similar departments in Sweden and Norway and in the University of Limerick, too. I think they provide a wider musical education than a classical course. They teach you to improvise, to arrange, to design your own concerts and write your own repertoire, rather than only playing what exists.' Interest is growing. Other ensembles such as the band Dreamers' Circus or the Danish String Quartet move

freely, like Kuusisto, between mainstream repertoire and Nordic folk.

'Of course, playing the Paganini Caprices or the great concertos are a vital part of a classical violinist's education, but I sometimes wish there was more overlap, more sharing of these ideas – to help people learn to become more

'I was living the dream, travelling the world, but not really knowing why'


themselves, rather than join the assembly line, so to speak.' He enjoys the lack of ego he perceives in folk fiddling, compared to the 'not-so-flattering' tendency in some classical soloists to consider every note of equal importance, even when accompanying the orchestra as in, say, the Beethoven or Brahms concertos.

'When you focus on projecting your sound rather than understanding your place in the picture of the whole piece – that's something playing folk music has taught me. Finnish fiddle music is very rarely about displaying your instrumental

skills. It's about making the music function as a whole. A lot of early music and Baroque specialists get this; their playing is based on the harmony, the movement of the bass line, the groove of the music, rather than sounding victorious or heroic. In a lot of the big concertos there are times to sound heroic, but when it's about dancing, or how the harmony moves, then no...'

In 1995, when he was 19 years old, Kuusisto was the first Finn to win the International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition. He was also awarded a special prize for the best performance of the Sibelius Violin Concerto. Where does Finland's most celebrated composer fit into the folk tradition Kuusisto so champions? 'I'd hesitate so say that any way to play Sibelius is right or wrong. But think how violinists talk freely about the Brahms Concerto, and the influence of Hungarian or Romanian folk music – and I sometimes wish that aspect was more audible in its performances! It's surprising the Sibelius isn't thought about in the same way. It would be fantastic if it were.'

He holds 'a slightly radical view' of the work, believing it to be an evolved form of a couple of different styles of Finnish folk music: 'Not so much the Finnish fiddling from the west of the country but the Karelian tradition from the east, and what they call "rune singing". We know Sibelius was interested in this, though he never admitted to borrowing from these musicians. Their habit of using repetitive melodies while gradually changing the beat, the rhythm, is audible in the Concerto. One of the most fundamental Karelian tunes is in there as a direct quote. You hear it in the third theme of the first movement, just before the cadenza. And in the last movement, all the dance rhythms, the two-against-threes, the bow strokes it requires... Yes, the Romantic hero idea was what Sibelius was about. But when you think about the Concerto as part of Finnish tradition, it becomes something else.'

Pekka Kuusisto draws breath, almost for the first time, as we reach the final minutes of our conversation. 'It's like an ancient song, hidden in the earth itself. We give it voice, bring it alive, through playing it.'  *Kuusisto is artistic director of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra from the 21/22 season; their new album is out 4 June on Pentatone*



BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE
AWARDS 2021

VOTE NOW and help award the best classical recordings of the past 12 months

It's a testament to the brilliance of the record industry and the resilience of its artists that so many wonderful recordings have emerged during one of the toughest years in living memory. So it's an understatement to say that we're thrilled to present the nominations for the BBC Music Magazine Awards 2021.

Over the following three pages you will see details of the shortlisted recordings in each of the seven categories – who wins each one is now up to you! All you have to do is head to classical-music.com/awards, listen to excerpts of each nomination and cast your vote. The winners will be announced in the May issue.

THE AWARDS JURY: MICHAEL BEEK, ANDREW MCGREGOR, ERIK LEVI, JESSICA DUCHEN, MARTIN COTTON

VOTE NOW AT [CLASSICAL-MUSIC.COM/AWARDS](https://classical-music.com/awards)

Orchestral nominations

Respighi *Fountains of Rome; Pines of Rome; Roman Festivals*
Sinfonia of London/John Wilson
Chandos CHSA5261

Reviewed October 2020



Wilson and his hand-picked band of musicians continue to strike gold with almost anything they turn their hands to. In taking on

this oft-recorded set of orchestral favourites, they set a new benchmark. Wilson's handling is full of nuance, resulting in performances of light and shade, but mostly joyful exuberance.

Schmidt *Complete Symphonies*
HR Symphony Orchestra/Paavo Järvi
Deutsche Grammophon 483 8336

Reviewed Christmas 2020



Schmidt's symphonies are in good hands here, with Paavo Järvi and his Frankfurt musicians giving them the recordings they truly

deserve. Captured live between 2013 and 2018, these luminous performances easily win over uninitiated listeners and fly the flag for Schmidt – arguably Austria's last great late-Romantic symphonist.

CPE Bach • Beethoven

CPE Bach: Symphonies Wq175 & 183/4; Beethoven: Symphonies Nos 1 & 2
Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin/
Bernhard Forck

Harmonia Mundi HMM902420

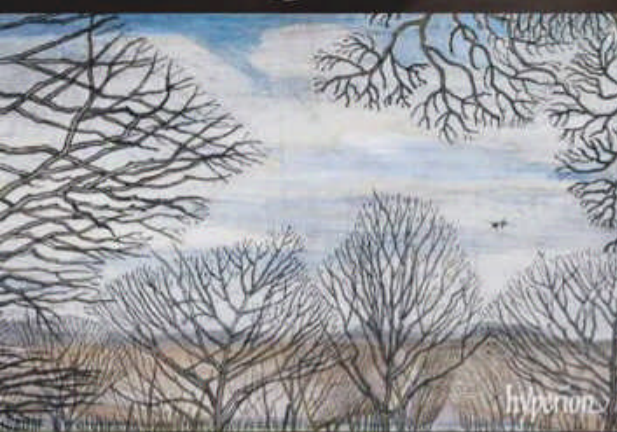
Reviewed October 2020



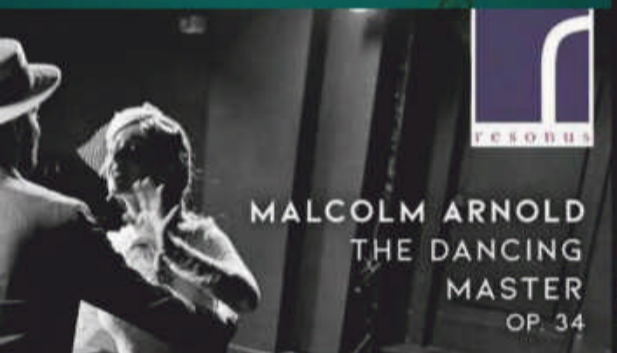
In a year filled with Beethoven releases, this recording stands out from the crowd. Placed beside his first two symphonies are earlier examples by CPE Bach; it's a pairing that makes a strong case for Bach's influence on Beethoven. Fascinating insights and pristine musicianship.



ELGAR & BEACH
PIANO QUINTETS

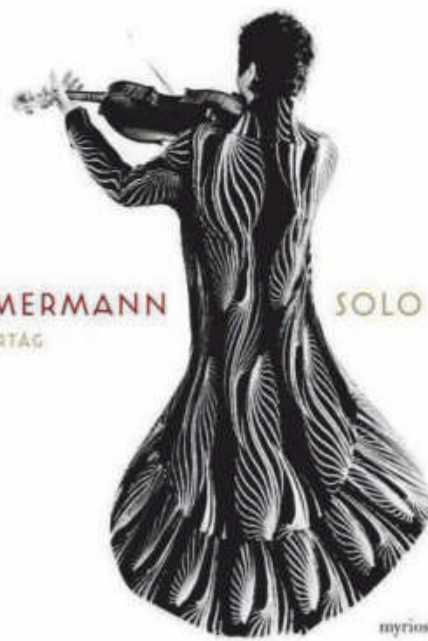


TAKÁCS QUARTET
GARRICK OHLSSON



TABEA ZIMMERMANN
PLAYS BACH & KURTAG

SOLO II



myrios classics

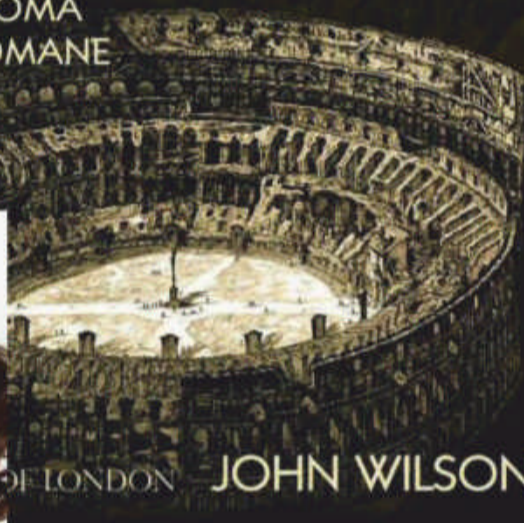
D'ung aultre amer • Faysant regretz
THE TALLIS SCHOLARS
Directed by Peter Phillips



RESPIGHI

CHANDOS

FONTANE DI ROMA
PINI DI ROMA
FESTE ROMANE



OF LONDON JOHN WILSON

epo

ann Violin Concerto
ns Double Concerto
as • Maximilian Hornung
NDR RADIOPHILHARMONIE
Andrew Manze





Concerto nominations

Shostakovich *Violin Concertos 1 & 2*

Alina Ibragimova (violin); State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia 'Evgeny Svetlanov'/Vladimir Jurowski

Hyperion CDA68313

Reviewed July 2020



Alina Ibragimova shines striking new light on Shostakovich's violin concertos, delivering a daring and intelligent performance. Soloist, orchestra and conductor make the most of their intense connection, taking on the emotional and technical challenges of these works with dazzling zeal.

Chopin *Piano Concertos (arr. chamber)*

Kevin Kenner (piano);

Apollon Musagète Quartett

Fryderyk Chopin Institute NIFCCD0220

Reviewed Christmas 2020



US pianist and previous Chopin Competition winner Kevin Kenner produced his own edition of these concertos for piano and string quintet. This elegant, spontaneous performance is revelatory, begging the question of whether, in fact, these concertos are better suited to a more intimate setting.

Brahms • R Schumann

*Brahms: Double Concerto**;

R Schumann: Violin Concerto

Antje Weithaas (violin), *Max Hornung (cello); NDR Radio Phil/Andrew Manze

CPO 555 172-2

Reviewed January 2020



Guiding the listener through the emotional rollercoaster that is Schumann's last major work is the crowning achievement of this recording. Conductor Andrew Manze and violinist Antje Weithaas navigate both it and the Brahms Double with sensitivity and insight, creating a compelling dialogue.

Opera nominations

Handel *Agrippina*

Joyce DiDonato (mezzo-soprano) et al;

Il Pomo d'Oro/Maxim Emelyanychev

Erato 9029533658

Reviewed April 2020



DiDonato proves a force to be reckoned with in a show-stealing turn. The rest of the players, including Franco Fagioli and Jakub Józef Orliński, provide top-notch performances atop a score brought to ravishing life by Emelyanychev. The vocal pyrotechnics alone make this a matchless complete edition of Handel's opera.

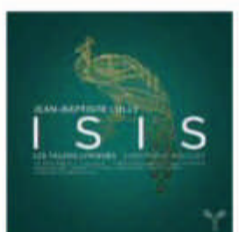
Lully *Isis*

Ève-Maud Hubeaux (mezzo-soprano) et al;

Les Talens Lyriques/Christophe Rousset

Aparté AP216

Reviewed February 2020



Christophe Rousset breathes new and vivid life into Jean-Baptiste Lully's 1677 opera, thus giving listeners the only complete recording currently available. The radiant all-French cast is pushed to its dramatic limits, tasked with making every single syllable of Philippe Quinault's libretto count during what is an epic live recording.

Arnold *The Dancing Master*

Ed Lyon (tenor), Eleanor Dennis (soprano)

et al; BBC Concert Orchestra/John Andrews

Resonus RES10269

Reviewed Christmas 2020



Originally commissioned for television in the 1950s, Malcolm Arnold's colourful opera was rejected and never revived professionally until this premiere recording. Conductor John Andrews and a sparkling cast dig deep into the work, finding that beneath a veneer of comedic farce and caricature lies a mini gem.

Vocal nominations

Chanson d'Amour

Sabine Devieille (soprano),

Alexandre Tharaud (piano)

Erato 9029522427

Reviewed November 2020



More than mere love songs, this beautifully performed selection explores love's many facets, from passion to pain via pathos and poignancy. Devieille and Tharaud are an ideal pairing, bringing with them the right amount of sensitivity and power to songs by Ravel, Debussy, Poulenc and Fauré.

El Nour

Fatma Said (soprano) et al

Warner Classics 9029523360

Reviewed Christmas 2020



The Egyptian soprano dazzles with this debut, not just as a performer but as an innovator. Her enrapturing programme crosses borders, taking the listener from Ravel and Berlioz to Abdel-Rahim and Sayed Darwish. The arrangements are inventive, too, all performed by a stellar supporting cast of musicians including pianist Malcolm Martineau.

Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde*

Sarah Connolly (mezzo-soprano) et al;

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin/

Vladimir Jurowski

Pentatone PTC 5186 760

Reviewed November 2020



Conductor Vladimir Jurowski elicits typically masterful attention to orchestral detail here, but it's Sarah Connolly who stands tall in this recording of one the 20th century's greatest works. Deftly supported by the Berlin Radio Symphony musicians, her unbeatable performance of the 'Song of the Earth' alone sets this apart.

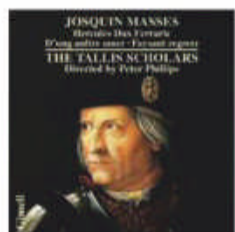


Choral nominations

Josquin *Masses – Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie; Missa D'ung aultre amer; Missa Faysant regretz*

The Tallis Scholars/Peter Phillips
Gimell CDGIM051

Reviewed Christmas 2020



This recording marks the monumental closing statement in Peter Phillips and The Tallis Scholars' sumptuous nine-part journey

through Josquin's mass settings. Each instalment has warranted high praise, and this gift of a finale is no exception, topping off the set with the choir's meticulous musicality and finely sculpted performances.

Handel *Samson*

Various Artists; Dunedin Consort/John Butt
Linn Records CKD 599

Reviewed January 2020



Handel secured his status as a master of oratorio with this biblical epic, and John Butt sees to it that it's given no less than a

stellar performance. In fact, he gives us two – one with massed chorus, the other with single voices. Featuring top-drawer performers, this is a veritable feast.

Tchaikovsky

All Night Vigil; Sacred Choral Works

Latvian Radio Choir/Sigvards Klava
Ondine ODE 1352-2

Reviewed August 2020



This recording offered beguiling insights into the sacred choral music of Tchaikovsky, overshadowed by his more familiar orchestral

works. The Latvian Radio Choir brings radiant sophistication to the expressive *All Night Vigil* and a set of four even lesser-known pieces, inviting listeners to rethink what they know of Tchaikovsky's music.

Chamber nominations

Amy Beach • Elgar

Beach: Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 67;

Elgar: Piano Quintet in A minor, Op. 84

Garrick Ohlsson (piano); Takács Quartet

Hyperion CDA68295

Reviewed July 2020



This outstanding release pairs Elgar's chamber masterpiece with Amy Beach's captivating 1907 quintet. The emotional range and sonic depths

of both works are expertly navigated by Garrick Ohlsson and the Takács Quartet, who bring warmth, delicacy, effervescence and great joy to this fine recording.

British Violin Sonatas, Vol. 3

Tasmin Little (violin), Piers Lane (piano)

Chandos CHAN 20133

Reviewed August 2020



This is a recording of musical contrasts, bringing into the light sonatas by British composers York Bowen, John Ireland and

William Alwyn among others. Little and Lane's winning rapport is well documented and here makes for a virtuosic and affecting performance.

R Strauss

Cello Sonata in F major, Op. 6;

Zueignung, Op. 10 No. 1; Die Nacht, Op.

10 No. 3; Du meines Herzens Kronelein,

Op. 21 No. 2; Morgen, Op. 27 No. 4 etc

Raphaella Gromes (cello), Julien Riem (piano)

Sony Classical 19439718832

Reviewed June 2020



It's the Op. 6 Cello Sonata which is the star attraction on this appealing recording; indeed, this is a very rare

outing for Strauss's first version – penned when he was just 17. Gromes and Riem make a convincing case for the youthful work, offering up beautifully detailed performances.

Instrumental nominations

Solo II

Tabea Zimmermann (viola)

Myrios MYR026

Reviewed Christmas 2020



This wonderful sequel to her 2009 album, *Solo*, sees violist Tabea Zimmermann once again interweaving a pair of JS Bach cello

suites with a modern work. In this case her Bach sandwich is filled with György Kurtág's six-part *Games, Signs & Messages* and the result is distinctive, unusual and totally compelling.

Prokofiev

Piano Sonatas Nos 6-8

Steven Osborne (piano)

Hyperion CDA68298

Reviewed March 2020



There's a tremendous physicality to this performance by Steven Osborne. Many pianists have performed and recorded this sequence

of sonatas by Prokofiev, but it would be difficult to better this electrifying tour de force. It's not all great balls of fire, though; there's plenty of light and shade, poetry and poignancy.

R Schumann

Variations and Sonatas

Elisabeth Leonskaja (piano)

eaSonus EAS 29407

Reviewed June 2020



Elisabeth Leonskaja brings characteristic poise and perfection to this selection of piano works by Robert Schumann. Presentation

is everything here, not just in the performance itself, but in the programming; every moment is carefully considered and exquisitely wrought. A superb recital, expertly delivered by one of the great pianists of her generation.



International Rescue

Unable to hold its General Assembly last May, the Secretary General of the World Federation of International Music Competitions, Florian Riem, recalls how the digital world provided the safest space for a global meeting

Hamamatsu Castle ©HIPIC

Grounded flights and closed borders, the consequence of Covid, forced the World Federation of International Music Competitions to postpone its 2020 General Assembly. The organisation's 64th annual meeting, due to take place last May in the Japanese city of Hamamatsu, was among the pandemic's countless business casualties. Yet it was destined to find new life online in December.

Florian Riem's appointment as the WFIMC's Secretary General was announced weeks before the Hamamatsu conference was due to start. He knew it would be impossible for the General Assembly to proceed as planned; it was less clear, however, when it would be safe to resume large public gatherings. "I was really looking forward to welcoming people to Hamamatsu," Riem recalls. "But it was not to be."

A fallback date in August proved untenable as did the prospect of holding a regional assembly with online guests. Federation members, eager to share their experiences of running competitions in the time of Covid, welcomed the idea of taking the General Assembly fully online.

"We want to meet again in person this year, but for now, we must wait and see"

In November Riem and his colleagues tested the practicalities of hosting large meetings online with the launch of WFIMC Lounge. The federation opened its new online forum with a session devoted to Asia and held a second virtual meeting to address the situation in North America and Europe. Further WFIMC Lounge sessions are planned for 2021 and beyond.

"People want to be in touch, to learn from others," observes Riem. WFIMC Lounge meetings, he adds, served as dress rehearsals for December's online General Assembly. "It was very satisfying to have everyone on board. Everybody made the effort to take part and it worked really well."

General Assembly delegates were offered a choice of webinars, presentations by host city Hamamatsu and piano manufacturers Yamaha and Kawai among them, and

a session exploring the increased importance of social media. The event also included a panel discussion entitled 'Changing Realities – the road ahead for Classical Music' and a plenary meeting to discuss pressing concerns of the present.

The subject of competition streaming generated lively discussion. Questions arose about whether the phenomenon is



temporary or here to stay. “We can learn a lot from companies like IDAGIO, the WFIMC’s partner organisation, which is selling tickets for its online Global Concert Hall,” comments Riem.

Other discussion points included dealing with the uncertainty of travel restrictions and of contestants being subject to lengthy quarantine periods. “Everyone wants to see competitions go ahead as usual, especially those that only happen every three or four years,” says Florian Riem. “But I think some restrictions are here to stay and quarantine is something we might have to live with for a while.”

In addressing classical music’s future, Matias Tarnopolsky, CEO of the Philadelphia Orchestra, offered a gloomy assessment of the present crisis facing orchestras in the United States before outlining reasons for cautious optimism. The panel discussion also heard

from Stefana Atlas, Senior Vice President with Columbia Artists (CAMI) until the mighty US agency was knocked out of business by Covid last September, about her plans to launch a small, flexible artist management company. Cellist Camille Thomas gave a moving account of her rooftop concerts in locked-down Paris, while Arthur van der Drift outlined the challenges and rewards of taking November’s TROMP Percussion Competition online. “This was a very informative session,” Florian Riem reports. “We wanted to explore what people have done and what they think we’ll be doing after the pandemic is over.”

The WFIMC Secretary General’s immediate hopes are for public health restrictions to ease sufficiently for the next General Assembly to take place in Italy in June. “We really want to meet again in person this year,” he concludes. “But for now we must wait and see.”

To find out more about the WFIMC and all of its upcoming events, please visit wfimc-fmcim.org

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**WORLD FEDERATION
OF INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC COMPETITIONS**

Here are details of WFIMC competitions taking place over the next 12 months

MARCH 2021

19-28
EPINAL FRANCE
Concours International de Piano d'Epinal
• Piano

21-30
BELGRADE SERBIA
International Jeunesses Musicales Competition
• Cello

26 MARCH-1 APRIL
ANDORRA
VII Andorra International Saxophone Competition
• Saxophone

APRIL 2021

1 APRIL-3 MAY
TEL AVIV ISRAEL
Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition
• Piano

8-17
JAÉN SPAIN
International Piano Competition Prize Jaén
• Piano

16 APRIL-5 MAY
(preselections)
13-18 SEPT (Final rounds)
BESANÇON FRANCE
Concours International de Jeunes Chefs d'Orchestre de Besançon
• Conducting

19-25
LYON FRANCE
Lyon International Chamber Music Competition
• Violin and piano duo

19-28 (First round: online)
18-21 OCTOBER
(Final rounds)
VIENNA AUSTRIA
International Beethoven Piano Competition
• Piano

26 APRIL- 14 MAY
MONTREAL CANADA
Concours musical international de Montreal (online)
• Piano

MAY 2021

3 MAY-9 JUNE
BRUSSELS BELGIUM
Queen Elisabeth Competition
• Piano

6-15
MARKNEUKIRCHEN GERMANY
Markneukirchen International Instrumental Competition
• Violin, double bass

6-15
PRAGUE CZECH REPUBLIC
Prague Spring International Music Competition
• Piano, string quartet

13-23
BUCHAREST ROMANIA
George Enescu International Competition
• Piano

22-24 (Eliminatory round)
19-20 SEPT (Semi-finals)
23 OCTOBER (Final)
PARMA ITALY
Arturo Toscanini International Conducting Competition
• Conducting

27 MAY-5 JUNE
ZURICH SWITZERLAND
Geza Anda International Piano Competition
• Piano

JUNE 2021

5-13
REGGIO EMILIA ITALY
Premio Paolo Borciani International String Quartet Competition
• String quartet

6-14
YEREVAN ARMENIA
Khachaturian International
Competition
• *Conducting*

10-18
NORRKÖPING
SWEDEN
Wilhelm Stenhammar
International Music
Competition
• *Voice*

23 JUNE-2 JULY
VALENCIA SPAIN
Iturbi International
Piano Competition
Valencia
• *Piano*

JULY 2021

2-18
SYDNEY
AUSTRALIA
Sydney International
Piano Competition
(online)
• *Piano*

3-15
BARCELONA SPAIN
Maria Canals
International Music
Competition
• *Piano*

15-30
HARBIN CHINA
Schoenfeld International
String Competition
• *Cello, chamber music, violin*

18-28
LEIPZIG GERMANY
International Johann
Sebastian Bach
Competition
• *organ, voice, cello/Baroque cello*

25 JULY-8 AUGUST
CLEVELAND OHIO
Cleveland International
Piano Competition
• *Piano*

AUGUST 2021

7-13
VINA DEL MAR CHILE
Dr Luis Sigall International
Music Competition
• *Violin*

8-16
JEJU
SOUTH KOREA
Jeju International
Brass Competition
• *Trumpet, horn, tenor trombone, brass quintet*

10-15
SAINT-MAURICE
SWITZERLAND
Concours International
pour Orgue de Saint-
Maurice d'Agaune
• *Organ*

10-29
SHANGHAI CHINA
Shanghai Isaac Stern
International Violin
Competition
• *Violin*

24-29
S-HERTOGENBOSCH
NETHERLANDS
International Vocal
Competition
s'Hertogenbosch
• *Lied duo*

25 AUGUST-4 SEPT
BOLZANO ITALY
Ferruccio Busoni
International Piano
Competition
• *Piano*

26 AUGUST-5 SEPT
KOBE JAPAN
Kobe International Flute
Competition
• *Flute*

28 AUGUST-4 SEPT
SION
SWITZERLAND
Tibor Varga International
Violin Competition
• *Violin*

30 AUGUST-17 SEPT
MUNICH
GERMANY
ARD International
Music Competition
• *Piano duo, voice, horn, violin*

SEPT 2021

6-12
BRATISLAVA
SLOVAKIA
Johann Nepomuk
Hummel International
Piano Competition
• *Piano*

8-18
LEEDS UK
Leeds International
Piano Competition
• *Piano*

12-19
BUDAPEST
HUNGARY
Liszt Ferenc International
Piano Competition
• *Piano*

13-18
COLOGNE
GERMANY
International Music
Competition Cologne
• *Voice*

13-19
DÜSSELDORF
GERMANY
Aeolus International
Competition for Wind
instruments
• *Bassoon, flute, oboe*

14-26
ZHUHAI CHINA
Zhuhai International
Mozart Competition
for Young Musicians
• *Violin, piano*

17-25
BERGEN NORWAY
The International Edvard
Grieg Piano Competition
• *Piano*

20-25
ALESSANDRIA ITALY
Michele Pittaluga
International Competitions
for Guitar and Composition
• *Guitar*

21-25
TRONDHEIM
NORWAY
Trondheim International
Chamber Music Competition
• *String quartet*

24 SEPT-3 OCTOBER
DORTMUND
GERMANY
International Schubert-
Competition Dortmund
• *Piano*

26 SEPT-10 OCTOBER
HANNOVER
GERMANY
Joseph Joachim
International Violin
Competition Hannover
• *Violin*

27 SEPT-3 OCTOBER
TOKYO JAPAN
Tokyo International Music
Competition for Conducting
• *Conducting*

OCTOBER 2021

2-23
WARSAW POLAND
Fryderyk Chopin International
Piano Competition
• *Piano*

7-16
VERCELLI ITALY
Gian Battista Viotti
International Music
Competition
• *Opera*

11-25
MONTREAL CANADA
Canadian International
Organ Competition
• *Organ*

14-22
CALGARY CANADA
Honens International
Piano Competition
• *Piano*

16-29
GENEVA
SWITZERLAND
Geneva International
Music Competition
• *Oboe, cello*

27 OCTOBER-7 NOV
WEIMAR GERMANY
International Franz Liszt
Piano Competition
• *Piano*

30 OCTOBER-7 NOV
TONGYEONG
SOUTH KOREA
Isangyun Competition
• *Violin*

NOV 2021

DATES TBC
PARIS FRANCE
Concours International
Long-Thibaud-Crespin
• *Violin*

12-29
HAMAMATSU JAPAN
Hamamatsu International
Piano Competition
• *Piano*

15-18
TRONDHEIM
NORWAY
Princess Astrid
International Music
Competition
• *Violin*

29 NOV-4 DECEMBER
MANCHESTER UK
RNCM James Mottram
International Piano
Competition
• *Piano*

DECEMBER 2021

2-11
BONN GERMANY
International
Telekom Beethoven
Competition Bonn
• *Piano*

12-18
LOS ANGELES USA
Primrose International
Viola Competition
• *Viola*

Due to the continued uncertainty of COVID-19, it is likely some of the dates listed will change. Please refer to the website for regular updates.

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French music

The many facets of the harpsichord

Musical theatre

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An irresistible talent

As fine a composer as she was a singer, Pauline Viardot was respected and adored by Europe's greatest musicians, discovers Jessica Duchen



“ Her life was a golden thread connecting the disparate worlds within musical Romanticism ”



‘If you want to be an artist,’ Pauline Viardot wrote, ‘you must try to be indifferent to everything except your art. I had order in my affairs, despite my nature, because of my willpower. Oh, how many bad things I should have done but for that willpower – the almost inseparable sister of my conscience.’

Viardot was born Pauline Garcia in Paris on 18 July 1821. Before she was 20, she was already becoming one of the great opera singers of her day. In her youth she sang to Chopin's accompaniment; in her final years she knew Debussy. Her long life became a golden thread connecting the disparate worlds within musical Romanticism; and now, 200 years after her birth, some of her compositions are finally receiving the recognition they deserve.

Pauline was the youngest daughter of Manuel Garcia, a celebrated Spanish singer and teacher. She was four when Manuel took his family across the Atlantic, where they participated in the New York premiere of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, directed by its librettist Lorenzo da Ponte. Pauline's sister, 13 years her senior, sang Zerlina. Upon her marriage she became Maria Malibran.

Maria soon had a cult following among the young Romantics, who flocked to hear her sing Rossini, Donizetti (she premiered *Maria Stuarda*) and more. Pauline watched her sister rise to the heights, then abscond with the violinist Charles de Bériot. Manuel, enraged by this scandal, never forgave her. Pauline was deeply affected.

Then tragedy struck. Riding in London in 1836, Maria fell from her horse and was fatally injured. Her death at the age of 28 left the musical world shocked and in mourning. The family had no doubt who must take her place.

When Pauline was 17, the poet Alfred de Musset heard her sing. ‘It is impossible for anyone who loved her sister not to be moved,’ he wrote. ‘It is the same timbre, clear, resonant, audacious, that Spanish *coup de gosier* at the same time so harsh and so sweet, which produces an impression similar to the taste of a wild fruit. Pauline possesses the secret of great artists: before expressing something, she feels it.’

Pauline's voice type defies today's predilection for categorisation. Like Maria, she had a huge range. She is often described as a mezzo-soprano, sometimes a contralto. Among her most celebrated roles were Fidès in Meyerbeer's *Le prophète*, written for her, and Gluck's *Orphée* as revised by Berlioz, assisted by Pauline. Yet she also excelled as Bellini's Norma, both Isabelle and Alice in Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* and Rachel in Halévy's *La Juive*, in all of which we would expect a soprano. She sang the second act of *Tristan und Isolde* in a private run-through – its first hearing – with Wagner himself as tenor; she also premiered Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody*.

This versatility was entirely deliberate. Her pupil Anna Eugénie Schoen-René later wrote: ‘Madam Viardot strongly opposed the theory of vocal limitations which characterise the present generation of singers. She held that every singer must have an absolute equalised compass of two octaves, and that the voice must be flexible, and at the same time so broad as to be capable of singing roles widely differing in character.’

The young Pauline was quickly drawn into the French capital's cultural life. In particular, the novelist George Sand, then in her mid-thirties, took Pauline under her wing. Sand's passionate fondness for the singer inspired her to base a novel, *Consuelo*, on her; moreover, she decided ▶

Love triangle:
an 1840 portrait of Viardot by
Ary Scheffer; (opposite from top)
Russian writer Ivan Turgenev and
Pauline's husband, Louis Viardot



Long view:
an elderly
Viardot in Paris

Exploring Viardot

Five of her best works

Le dernier sorcier

The third of Viardot and Turgenev's operettas, this is a delightful fairy-tale showcasing Viardot's melodic flair at its finest.

Die Sterne

In one of her most beautiful songs, Viardot evokes rapt stargazing, the music yearning upwards towards the heavens. Cello obbligato adds a layer of dusky gorgeousness.

6 Mélodies

Published only in 1880, this collection includes a few of Viardot's best loved songs. Among them, 'Hai luli' shows a girl longing for her absent lover.

Sonatine in A minor for violin and piano

Pauline's son Paul (dedicatee of Fauré's Violin

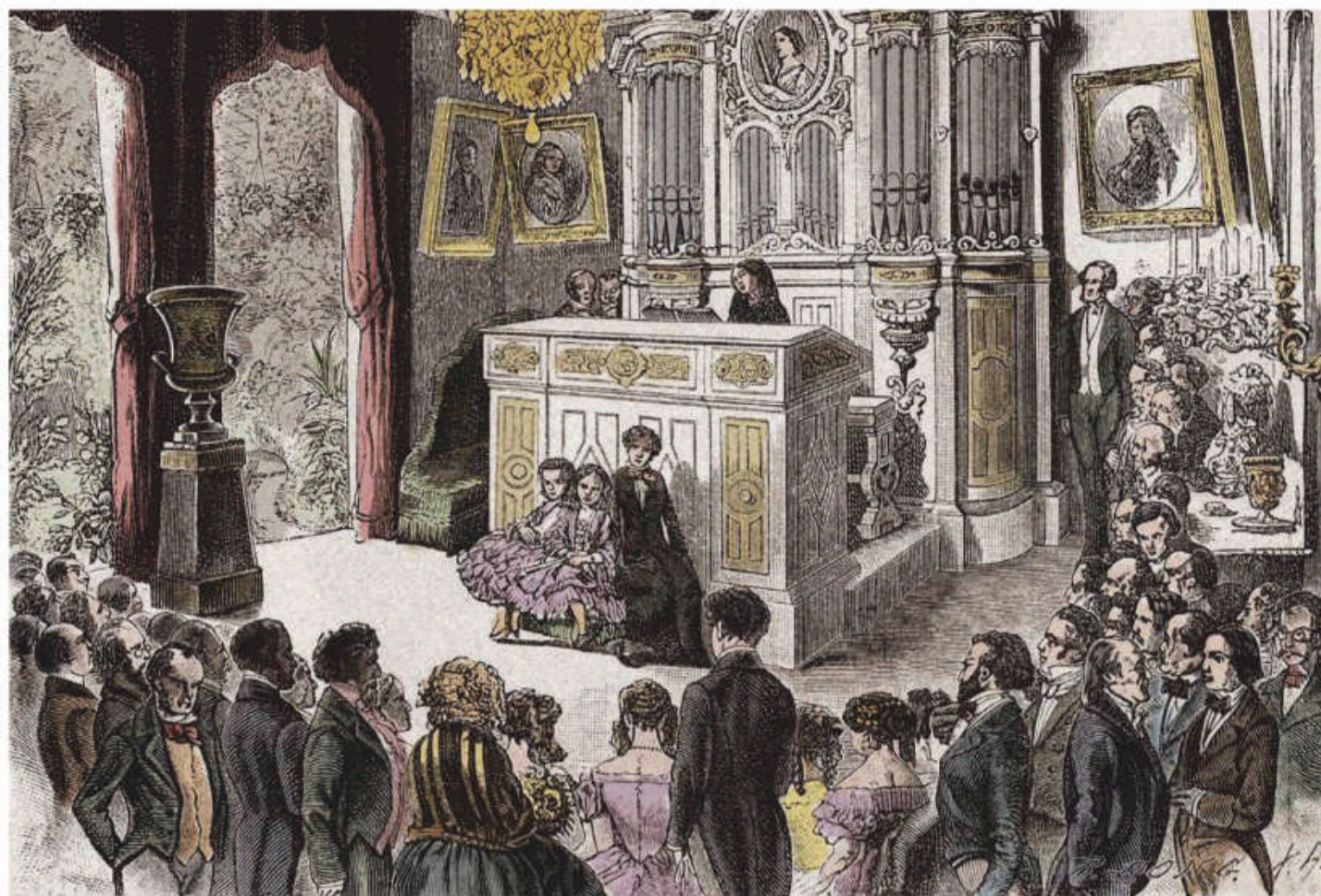


Sonata No. 1, pictured left) became a fine violinist and composer. She wrote several pieces

for him including this Schubertian Sonatine.

Cendrillon

The exact date of Viardot's last operetta isn't known, but it was probably after Turgenev's death, as he did not write the libretto. It was premiered in Viardot's salon in 1904, when she was 83.



to find her a suitable husband. She lighted upon Louis Viardot, a well-known writer and theatre director 21 years Pauline's senior. The couple married in 1840 and soon had a daughter, Louise.

At Sand's country estate, Nohant, the Viardots were often guests; here Pauline sang, accompanied by Sand's partner, Chopin, some of whose mazurkas she transformed into songs. Sand envisaged the marriage to Viardot as one of convenience; she advised Pauline that 'people of genius have no time for love'. Pauline soon proved this only partly true by having an affair with Sand's son, Maurice. But she regarded Louis as her dearest friend; leaving him was out of the question. After her sister's bitter experience, she had no intention of breaking the social mould.

Aged 22, Pauline set off to tour Russia with Louis. She became the toast of St Petersburg, surrounded by admirers. Louis went hunting with a new friend: a young writer from the Oryol region. A gentle giant in his mid-twenties, he was introduced to Pauline as 'a landowner, a good shot, an agreeable conversationalist and a bad poet'. His name was Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev.

This seminal Russian author's passion for Pauline lasted the rest of his life. Her powerful personality enveloped his introspective nature, while her behaviour towards him is reflected with brilliance and anguish in his literary masterpieces, from the novella *First Love* to the play *A Month in the Country*, in which the heroine's admirer Rakitin watches his married beloved succumb to a younger man.

Indeed, Pauline was temporarily distracted by the composer Gounod, and Turgenev retreated to

his Russian estate, Spasskoye, to lick his wounds. It all ended in tears, however, Pauline lamenting to Sand that Gounod was 'nothing but a bag of selfishness, vanity and calculation'.

Early writers seemed puzzled that Pauline, whom they did not consider conventionally beautiful, could prove so attractive to so many men; but there was no doubting her sheer animal magnetism. Others who fell at her feet included Musset and later Berlioz, at the time of *Orphée*. Still, the offstage portrait that Orlando Figes paints of her in his book *The Europeans* shows a woman down to earth, intelligent, well read, fluent in six languages and financially astute. Indeed, Pauline's fees were stratospheric. Some took offence that Pauline charged to perform in the Mozart Requiem at Chopin's funeral; but she expected to be treated as the professional she was.

There is an elephant in Pauline's room, however: her compositions. Although her catalogue extends to five operettas, choral works, piano duets and more, she lacked confidence as a composer – not surprising in an era which presumed that women didn't, shouldn't and couldn't compose. There were few peers to support her efforts. Her friend Clara Schumann gave up writing music after her husband's death in 1856; Pauline even discouraged her from continuing, given the lack of financial return. According to Figes, Pauline concealed her own compositions, often telling listeners that they were, for instance, unknown pieces by Mozart.

Prime in her output is a substantial quantity of art songs, ranging from typically Spanish pieces to settings of Russian poets. Her style has

Swell gathering: (left) a Parisian musical soirée featuring Viardot on her Cavallé-Coll house organ; (below) a bust of Viardot is near the City Museum in Baden-Baden

a natural melodic flow and engaging ambience akin to Gounod and Offenbach, with a flavour her own. Even her songs to Chopin's mazurkas are more than curios, for she knew the composer well and her words cast intriguing light on the phrasing. Later she wrote a Sonatine and *Six Morceaux* for violin and piano for her violinist son, Paul. Both he and her eldest daughter, Louise Hérítte-Viardot, wrote fine music as well.

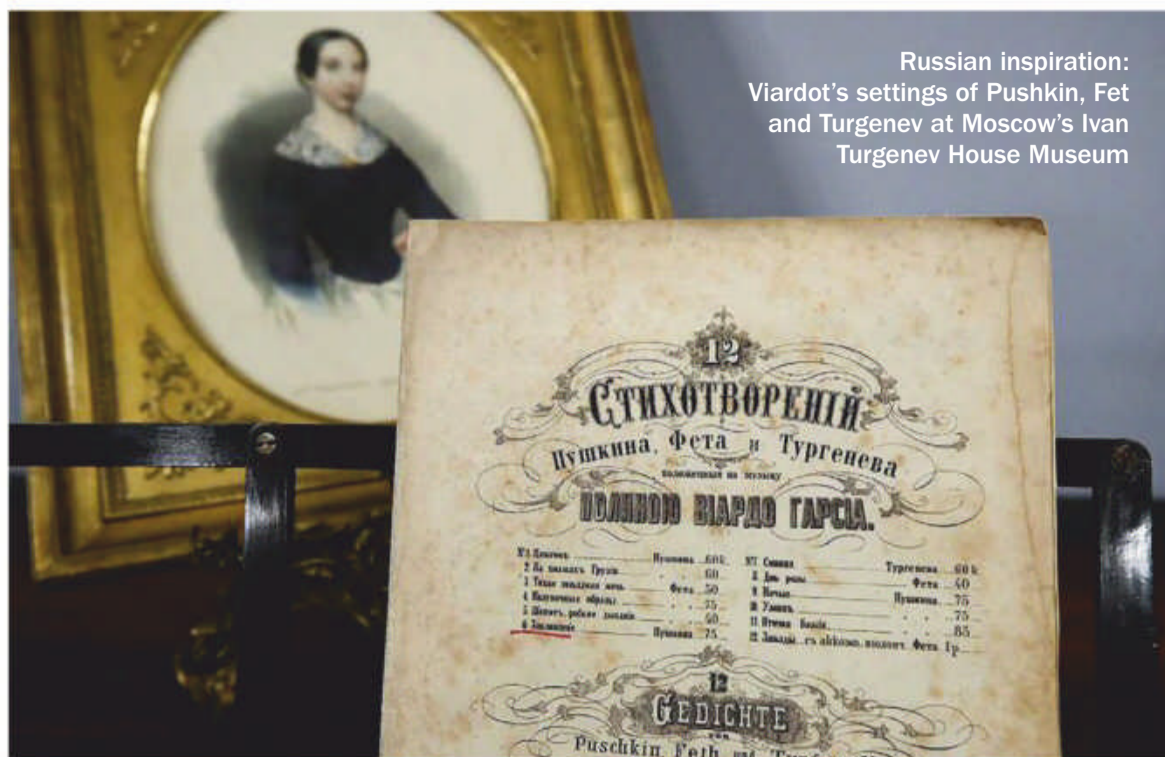
In 1863 the Viardots moved to Baden-Baden, partly because Louis despised the Empire in France and partly because Pauline was retreating from the stage by then and adored the lifestyle in this spa town. Turgenev bought land next door to build a villa of his own. Their friends included the holidaying Brahms, along with Clara Schumann; regrettably, Brahms never set the opera libretto that Turgenev wrote for him there. Pauline, fond though she was of Brahms, was enchanted by Wagner's operas (unlike Clara) and declared herself a 'Wagnerian'.

The Viardots constructed a little theatre behind their house; here, Pauline and Turgenev began to write operettas together. *Trop de femmes* (1867) and *L'ogre* (1868) are much in the spirit of Offenbach (if 'cleaner'). Yet with Turgenev's quirky lightness of touch blending into Pauline's mellifluous style, plus a mystical undercurrent rooted in the wonders of nature, *Le dernier sorcier* (The Last Sorcerer, 1869) has a rare magic worthy of the high-profile recording it has recently received, starring Eric Owens and Jamie Barton.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 exiled the Viardots from Germany, with Turgenev in tow. After a miserable spell in London – where Pauline found plenty of pupils thanks to her brother Manuel Garcia, like their father an influential singing teacher – they returned to Paris. Turgenev lodged upstairs in the Viardots' city-centre house; beside their country villa in Bougival he built himself a Russian-style *dacha*. Something of a *ménage à trois*.

Now Pauline welcomed a new generation to her weekly salon, including Saint-Saëns and his pupil Fauré, seminal composers of the Société Nationale de Musique, which aimed to create characteristically French music to shake off German influence. Saint-Saëns dedicated his opera *Samson et Dalila* to Pauline, though she demurred from performing it, pleading age. Fauré spent four years courting Pauline's third daughter, Marianne; they were briefly engaged, but she broke it off, alarmed by Fauré's intensity. The heartbroken young composer then wrote the ultimate song of disillusionment, *Après un rêve*.

In the 1870s, too, all things Spanish came into cultural vogue, culminating, somewhat



Russian inspiration: Viardot's settings of Pushkin, Fet and Turgenev at Moscow's Ivan Turgenev House Museum



“ Saint-Saëns dedicated his opera *Samson et Dalila* to Pauline, though she demurred from performing it ”

disastrously, in Bizet's opera *Carmen*. No prizes for guessing who was at the heart of this trend. According to Figs, it was Turgenev – whose authoritarian mother once referred to Pauline as 'that damned Gypsy' – who first steered Bizet's librettists towards Prosper Mérimée's story.

Whether any of Pauline's four children were Turgenev's is unknown, but speculation has inevitably been rife. He, meanwhile, had had a daughter by a serf girl from Spasskoye and sent her to Paris for Pauline to raise. He wrote to the latter: 'She has reason to call you Maman – why, by that you will make her into my real daughter.'

A fantasy of transferrable parenting seems reflected in his magical story *The Song of Triumphant Love* (1881), a triangle between a fragile young woman, an artist and a musician. Finally there's a mysterious conception. Whose child? We never find out. Tchaikovsky, who met Pauline when she was 'a little old woman of 70, so full of energy... literally sparkling with life', considered setting Turgenev's tale to music, but did not follow it up. Fauré's friend Ernest Chausson based a piece for violin and orchestra on it, entitled simply *Poème*. Would he have noticed that Turgenev's girl and musician in certain ways resembled Marianne and Fauré?

Tragically, Pauline's two men died within months of each other in 1883, Louis after a stroke, Turgenev of cancer. Pauline spent her final decades as a living icon, students and artists flocking to her studio. 'When I am quite alone, I give myself up to the bittersweetness of my memories,' she wrote, 'but when I become myself, then I feel how strongly those I love bind me still to life.' She died in Paris on 18 May 1910, aged 88.

She composed one last operetta, *Cendrillon*. But *Le dernier sorcier* had been something apart, the melding of the two souls who created it: an artistic child that belonged to them both. 🎵

Major capital

As both a magnet for the great performers and a creative melting pot, London has been one of the great cities of music for several centuries, explains **Michael White**



“ London has done best when it has embraced the wider world, welcoming musicians from abroad ”

It's obvious enough that London has a place in music history. Vaughan Williams wrote a 'London' Symphony. Haydn composed 12 of them (not that they tell you much about the city). Elgar celebrated London's earthy vigour in his *Cockaigne* Overture (a word that for Victorians referred to a general kind of 'Cockney' naughtiness). And Holst commemorated Hammersmith in an exquisite minor masterpiece for wind band.

But how London ranks against the other leading music cities of the world is more equivocal. One school of thought is that London has done best when it has embraced the wider world, welcoming musicians from abroad to come and be part of the party – sometimes taking the party over, in fact. Musicians from abroad have always poured in, establishing a more mixed demographic of creativity and performance than we've sometimes been happy to admit.

That they came to London rather than any other English city with a claim to cultural significance is because, rightly or wrongly, the capital has always dominated the economic and artistic life of the country – to a degree that didn't happen elsewhere in Europe, and especially not in Germany where, for centuries, power was apportioned among rival princeling states, each with its own court and ambitions.

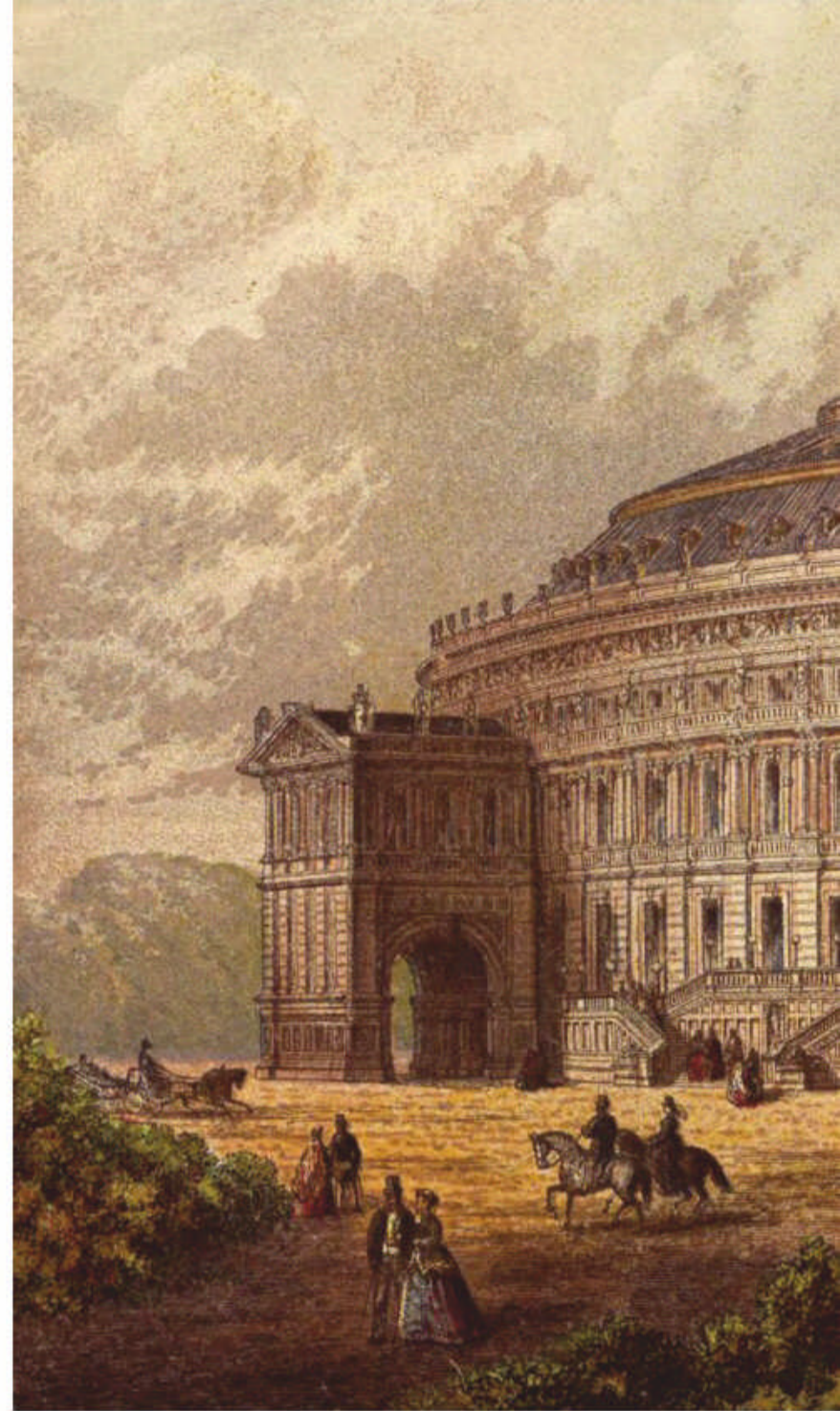
Looking back, the English cathedrals were, of course, important centres of religious



music-making that cultivated special relationships with major composers.

But from early times, the Chapel Royal in London was still the ultimate prize. And while English aristocrats may have had secular musical establishments on their country estates, they were rarely if ever on the scale of the German Electors or prince-bishops. Royal patronage counted for more. So it's no surprise that the first great period of English music is that of the London-based Tudor court from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I: a span of nearly 100 years that produced work of lasting stature in times of turmoil as the country swung back and forth between Catholicism and Protestantism.

No one could deny that the Tudor composers did, ultimately, produce a kind of music that was identifiably 'ours'. But there was still plenty of cultural traffic passing back and forth across the channel, carrying inevitable influences. The (probably) London-born and (certainly) London-buried lutenist John Dowland worked in Paris and Copenhagen as well as here. The madrigalist





John Ward went to Rome. And, moving forward into the Stuart era, the young prodigy Pelham Humfrey was packed off to study in France as part of Charles II's efforts to re-establish music at his court after the cultural disaster that was Cromwell and the Commonwealth.

That said, the chief adornment of the Restoration court was Henry Purcell, who combined a Chapel Royal position with being organist of Westminster Abbey. And as the entirety of his short life was spent within a few streets of the Abbey, it's fair to say that few composers of such great distinction have led lives so London-centric. But it was very different for the next figure of stature to dominate the city's music, George Frideric Handel. German-born, he was a traveller who learned his craft in Italy before arriving here in 1710. And though he settled into the life of a devoted Londoner, he never lost his German accent or the creative DNA that his apparently so English music actually acquired elsewhere.

But Handel was a gift of magnitude to London; and if anything, the magnitude was overwhelming – with a shadow that fell heavily across the decades

A glimpse of London life: (far left) Henry Purcell spent his whole career in the city; (above) the Albert Hall in 1871; (below) Handel was a naturalised Londoner; as was conductor Sir Michael Costa (left)



following his death in 1759. Throughout the late-18th Century, as musical life flourished in central Europe, London didn't do so well. Its wealth, combined with the emergence of a cultivated middle-class, continued to attract overseas musicians like Johann Christian (the so-called 'English') Bach who premiered symphonies at Mayfair's fashionable Hanover Square Rooms and songs in the Vauxhall Gardens. But there was no native Mozart or Haydn, who only came as visitors. And as the 19th century took hold, no native Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann... the list goes on.

Among the many problems was the sporadic nature of concert life in a city that still had no fixed, permanent orchestras. And it was in an attempt to create more regular structures (along European lines) that the Philharmonic Society, later to acquire the prefix Royal, was formed in 1813. It did much to raise the game for London music, but there remained one major issue: the lack of an outstanding concert venue – an Amsterdam Concertgebouw, say, or a Vienna Musikverein. The Philharmonic Society joined forces with the architect John Nash to build the new Argyll Rooms, which played host to the unending flow of foreign stars who rolled in: luminaries like Weber, Spohr and Liszt. But the Argyll burned down in 1830 and it wasn't until 1871 that Queen Victoria opened the Albert Hall – a place whose vast scale served limited uses.

No one, though, should underestimate the cultural legacy that Prince Albert (yet another German) brought to London. It was as huge as the hall that bears his name, as was the degree to which the capital's musical life in the 19th century was effectively ruled by European immigrants. Today, their names aren't always household, but they're still around and visible. In Ecclestone Square, Pimlico, for example, there's a plaque to the conductor Sir Michael Costa: a towering figure whose knighthood disguises the fact that he came from Italy and made his mark by founding the New Italian Opera that flourished at Covent Garden in the 1840s and '50s. He also ran the Philharmonic Society concerts, directed the gargantuan Handel Festivals at Crystal Palace, was music director at Her Majesty's Theatre and held the same post at Her Majesty's Opera. In short, he more or less mopped up the top jobs.

Another who made an impact was the French conductor Louis Jullien.

His time in London ended badly, with a bankruptcy and other problems, but until then he was celebrated as the showman



Seasonal style: Cassie Kinoshi

Home thoughts *London Unwrapped*

Since 2010, London's Kings Place concert venue has made all manner of musical explorations with series called 'Unwrapped', from the initial 'Beethoven Unwrapped' to last year's 'Nature Unwrapped'. In 2021, it is staying firmly at home with 'London Unwrapped'. At the time of going to press, performers and dates are all subject to change, but the plans are to celebrate the capital's music scene and its famous visitors from the 1500s onwards. At the earlier end of the timescale are the likes of The Sixteen and Phantasm, who relive the Tudor and Stuart eras in the company of Tallis, Byrd, Lawes and co, while the glories of the late-17th and 18th centuries are in the able hands of ensembles such as The English Concert and Instruments and Choir of Time and Truth. London's vibrant present, meanwhile, is represented by, among others, the Iranian Pouya Ehsaei and violinist Rakhi Singh with electronic musician Vessel. Providing a thread throughout the season are two resident artists: countertenor Iestyn Davies (right) and composer and saxophonist Cassie Kinoshi. See kingsplace.co.uk for more details.



ALAMY, GETTY, JOHN MILLAR



Local landmarks:
the BBC's Broadcasting
House at Portland Place;
(below) Elgar's West
Kensington residence

at the heart of what effectively became the prototype for London's Proms. Shamelessly flamboyant, he came with an array of absurd platform rituals, but the public adored it. Just as they also adored the 40-year reign over London's chamber music of the Italian cellist Alfredo Piatti, who all but abandoned his international career to take up residence in St John's Wood and run the 'Popular Concerts' that were a bedrock of high-level performance. And talking of adoration, if there was one composer that mid-19th-century London was in thrall to (from the royal family down), it was the German Felix Mendelssohn.

Needless to say, the home-grown composers, conductors and performing musicians on the London scene felt oppressed by this kind of competition and obliged to try and match it by learning their craft abroad – in Dresden, Paris or the other leading European music centres. It wasn't until the arrival of the 20th century that they began to find confidence in their own native powers. But it's interesting that whatever this new, nationally conscious generation brought to London's musical life – and it was considerable – the major players weren't necessarily Londoners by inclination or loyalty. Elgar and Vaughan Williams had houses in the city, and in the case of Vaughan Williams there were a fair number, with smart postcodes in Westminster, Chelsea and Regent's Park; but the hearts of both men belonged elsewhere – in Gloucestershire, the Malvern Hills, or rural Surrey. Of the next generation down, William Walton only lodged in



London, courtesy of wealthy friends, and soon escaped to Italy. Britten had assorted boltholes around Hampstead, Islington and St John's Wood but remained 'rooted' (as his own Peter Grimes sings) on the Suffolk coast.

For a variety of reasons, though, in the middle of the 20th century

London overtook Vienna, Paris, Berlin, New York – anywhere you'd care to name – as *the* great music city of the world, at least in terms of performance. It was partly down to the policies of an enlightened Arts Council, which supplied the means for orchestras, opera companies and concert life to function on unprecedented scales; partly down to the BBC, whose presence in Portland Place has been perhaps the single most decisive factor in the city's musicality through the past 100 years; but equally attributable to London being the geographical gateway between America and Europe, which made it a natural stopping-off point for all the world's great musicians as they travelled back and forth.

So yet again, the city's musical fortunes depended largely on visitors. And for that reason, its survival at the top of the pile is far from certain – a combination of COVID and Brexit suggests there may no longer be so much back and forth, at least in the short term. But if history offers any meaningful advice, it's that London is a world city with a world outlook too big for self-sufficiency. Like ancient Rome, it thrives by offering its 'citizenship' to all-comers – the capital has to carry on reaching out as it always has, absorbing genius from whatever origins. Going it alone is simply not an option. 🎵

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Irrepressible urge:
*Prometheus Brings Fire to
Mankind* by Heinrich von
Füger; (opposite) Johann
Wolfgang von Goethe

A spot of turbulence

Richard Wigmore delves into the world of *Sturm und Drang*, in which 18th-century literary and musical emotions turned tempestuous

Sturm und Drang – ‘Storm and Stress’. For many music-lovers the label evokes the tempestuous minor-keyed symphonies Haydn composed around 1770: the ‘Lamentatione’ (No. 26), incorporating Gregorian plainchant; the ‘Mourning’ (No. 44); ‘La passione’ (No. 49); and the ‘Farewell’ (No. 45), whose charming associated story belies its violent intensity. Other composers of the day mined a similar vein amid reams of the brighter, more amenable works in the major.

Yet *Sturm und Drang* is not a term Haydn or his contemporaries would have recognised. For one thing, the chronology is wrong. The *Sturm und Drang* literary movement took its name from a 1776 play by Maximilian Klinger set against the background of the American Revolution (see p56). By then Haydn’s turbulent *Sturm und Drang* phase was already over. And whereas in music *Sturm und Drang* was a largely Austrian phenomenon, the writers were mainly North Germans: a group of angry young men who rejected rococo decorum and Frenchified aristocratic culture in favour of unbridled emotion and the promptings of what Goethe, the movement’s unofficial leader, called the ‘heilig, glühend Herz’ – the ‘sacred, glowing heart’. The familiar English rendering of *Sturm und Drang*, while neatly alliterative, is misleading. No problem with ‘Sturm’. But ‘Drang’ means ‘urge’, ‘drive’ or ‘inner compulsion’ rather than ‘stress’. It can even have sexual connotations.

‘Drang’ summed up the young Goethe. Ever eager to seize and intensify the moment, he was seen by contemporaries as ‘a man possessed’, ‘carried away by a torrent’. He set out his theatrical stall, aged 24, in 1773 with *Götz von*

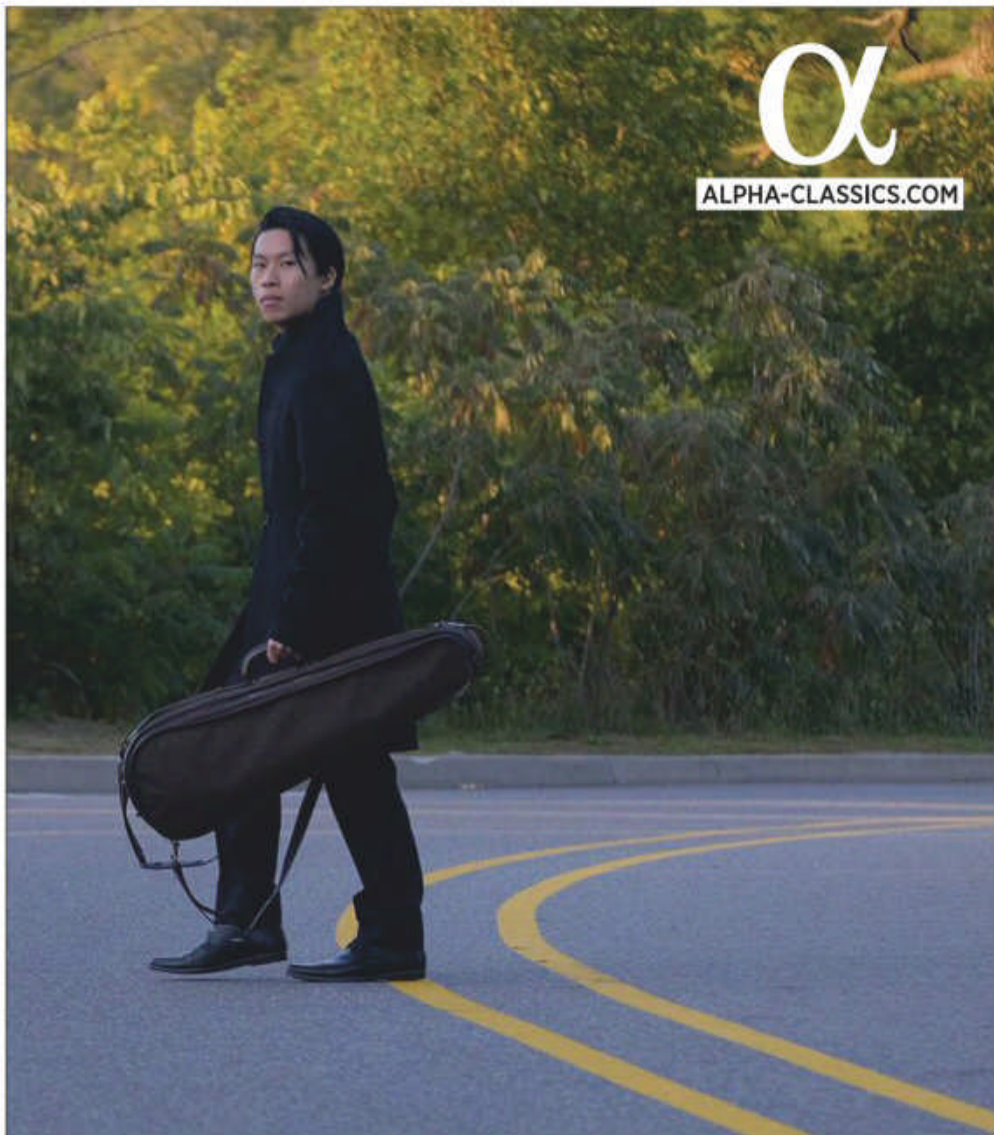


“ ‘Drang’ summed up the young Goethe, seen by his contemporaries as ‘a man possessed’ ”

Berlichingen, in which he elevates the marauding 16th-century Franconian warrior to a chivalrous maverick whose idealism is finally broken by implacable social forces.

Inspired by the teeming historical dramas of Shakespeare, *Götz von Berlichingen* was the opening salvo in a series of *Sturm und Drang* dramas that set spontaneous feeling against rigid social convention and political injustice. Some, like Goethe’s own *Egmont* (for which Beethoven wrote his incidental music in 1809/10) pitting an idealistic hero against Realpolitik in the Spanish-ruled Netherlands, and Schiller’s *Die Räuber* (‘The Robbers’, the source of Verdi’s *I masnadieri*), where the robber-baron hero Karl Moor becomes a Bohemian Robin Hood, have a historical setting. Others are bitter critiques of corrupt contemporary society: Jakob Lenz’s *Der Hofmeister* (‘The Tutor’) and *Die Soldaten*, on the ruin of a jeweller’s daughter, and Schiller’s *Kabale und Liebe* (‘Intrigue and Love’, the source of another Verdi opera, *Luisa Miller*), where the love between the bourgeois Luise and the aristocratic Ferdinand falls foul of the vicious ducal court.

In 1774, a year after *Götz von Berlichingen*, Goethe completed the quintessential *Sturm und Drang* poem *Prometheus* (whose words were later set by composers including Schubert, Wolf and others) in which the fire-stealing Titan becomes a heroic embodiment of individualism and defiance of theocratic tyranny. That same year he created an international sensation with the epistolary novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (‘The Sorrows of Young Werther’), in which the morbidly introspective hero, in love with a married woman, follows the impulses of his ‘sacred, glowing heart’. Suicide, as those



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Raw emotions: (right) tenor Vittorio Grigolo plays the title role in Massenet's Goethe-inspired *Werther* at the New York Met in 2017; (below right) the English author Horace Walpole's Gothic fantasy *The Castle of Otranto*

familiar with Massenet's 1887 opera will know well, is his only way out.

On his last meeting with his beloved Charlotte, Werther soulfully recites verses from Ossian. Ostensibly an ancient Gaelic minstrel, 'Ossian' was in fact the creation of James MacPherson, in a literary fraud that initially fooled half of Europe, Napoleon included. No matter: these doleful poems set amid the mists and mountains of Scotland – the epitome of 'natural', unadorned art – were cherished by *Sturm und Drang* writers, as was Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *La nouvelle Héloïse*, where the hero finds solace for his aching heart in the wild beauties of nature.

In the 1760s, a decade before the literary *Sturm und Drang*, the Ossian phenomenon and the 'back-to-nature' philosophy of Rousseau were part of a wider European reaction to rococo refinement and the stifling etiquette of contemporary class-ridden culture. In Britain this fashion for the primitive and the anti-rational was embodied in Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* and Horace Walpole's Gothic fantasy *The Castle of Otranto*: manifestations of what Edmund Burke termed 'the sublime', inspired by natural phenomena such as graveyards, oceans and wild mountains calculated 'to excite the ideas of pain and danger' – the antithesis of 'the beautiful', which Burke associated with clarity, reason and classical proportion.

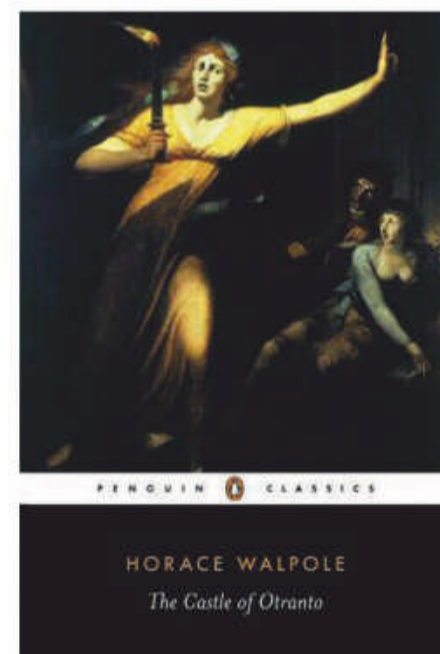
In painting, the German *Sturm und Drang* is paralleled in the Gothic dungeons of Piranesi (1720–78) and the phantasmagoric visions of Henry Fuseli (1741–1825). And music? The inconvenient truth is that the wave of impassioned minor-keyed works from c1766–1773 by Haydn and his Austrian contemporaries, including the teenaged Mozart, had all but subsided by the time Goethe premiered *Götz von Berlichingen*. No 18th-century writer drew a connection between the musical and literary *Sturm und Drang*. Indeed, it was not until 1909, the centenary of Haydn's death, that the French musicologist Théodore de Wyzewa used the term to describe the outbreak of minor-keyed angst in his music.

While the searing opening *Allegro assai* of the 'Farewell' Symphony and the remorseless finales of Nos 44 and 52 may parallel the fevered emotions of *Götz* and *Die Räuber*, the influences on Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* works were not literary but musical. A key figure was JS Bach's second son Carl Philipp Emanuel, whose symphonies and concertos – say the D minor Harpsichord Concerto, Wq 23, or the



E minor Symphony, Wq 177 – already have the nervous instability characteristic of *Sturm und Drang*. Crucial, too, was the so-called *Empfindsamkeit* ('heightened sensibility') of CPE's keyboard sonatas and fantasias, eagerly devoured by Haydn in the 1760s. CPE at his most broodingly introspective would make the perfect soundtrack to a *Werther* movie. *Sturm und Drang* turbulence and soulful *Empfindsamkeit* mingle in Haydn's C minor Sonata of 1771, the first in a series of Classical C minor masterpieces that culminated in Beethoven's Op. 111 Piano Sonata.

Anticipating the *Sturm und Drang* writers, from around 1760 opera composers such as Jommelli, Traetta and Gluck rejected rococo fripperies and vocal virtuosity for unflinching emotional truth. Gluck's *Orfeo*, produced by Haydn at the Eszterháza opera theatre, was the most famous example of this new aesthetic. Hugely influential, too, was Gluck's revolutionary 1761 ballet *Don Juan*, where the Don is dragged to hell in a torrential D minor dance later recycled as the 'Air de Furies' in the French *Orphée*. Setting out to evoke fear and terror, this music epitomises Edmund Burke's 'sublime'. As in CPE Bach's symphonies and concertos, many of the typical *Sturm und Drang* ingredients are already in full spate: precipitately tumbling scales, syncopations, pounding bass lines, harmonic shocks and, not least, violent dynamic contrasts.



“ From 1760, opera composers rejected rococo fripperies and vocal virtuosity for emotional truth ”



Main man: Friedrich Klinger

Creating a storm

Klinger's eponymous play

Had Friedrich Maximilian Klinger stuck by the original title of his 1776 *Sturm und Drang*, one suspects the play would never have found its name applied to a literary movement and, later, musical term – Haydn's 'Wirrwarr Symphonies' ('Muddle Symphonies') doesn't exactly hit the mark. Klinger, who hailed from Frankfurt am Main and was a childhood friend of Goethe, changed the name of the play at the suggestion of author Christoph Kaufmann shortly before its premiere in Leipzig on 1 April 1777. Set against the background of the American Revolutionary War, *Sturm und Drang* tells a *Romeo and Juliet*-style tale of love amid the feuding Bushy and Berkly families. Unlike Shakespeare, however, Klinger brings things to a happy conclusion, though things did not turn out so rosy for the playwright himself. With critics expressing their confusion at the plot – maybe the *Wirrwarr* title was appropriate, after all – *Sturm und Drang* did not find favour with audiences.

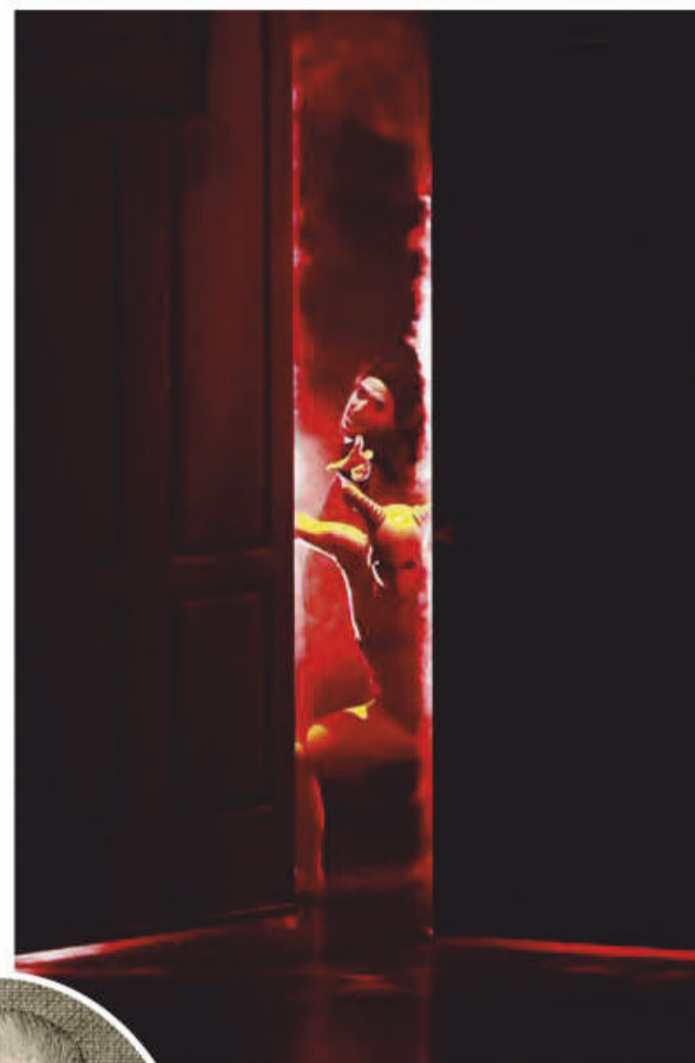
Fiery finale: (right) Gluck's Don Juan is dragged down to hell, in a production by Szeged Contemporary Dance Company, Budapest, 2017; fellow *Sturm und Drang* composers CPE Bach (below) and Joseph Haydn (bottom)

The opening *Allegro assai* of Haydn's 'Farewell', in the outré key of F sharp minor, has all these destabilising features, and more. It constantly defies expectations, right down to the out-of-the-blue appearance of a wispy, floating theme in the central development – a dream interlude whose significance is only revealed at the symphony's 'farewell' close. In No. 44, passionate agitation is both disciplined and heightened by Haydn's use of Baroque contrapuntal techniques. In the fretful, fanatically concentrated first movement of his earliest out-and-out *Sturm und Drang* symphony, No. 39 in G minor, the listener is further disorientated by bizarre silences, *à la* CPE Bach.

Where Haydn led, the teenaged Mozart followed. His first *Sturm und Drang* essay was the fiery D minor overture to his 1771 oratorio *La Betulia liberata*. Two years later, with a nod to Haydn's No. 39, his G minor Symphony, K183 combines dramatic urgency with an echt-Mozartian pathos. Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* symphonies of the later 1760s almost certainly influenced the dozen-or-so impassioned minor-keyed symphonies by the underrated Bohemian composer Johann Baptist Vanhal. In London, even the urbane Johann Christian Bach tapped into the Zeitgeist with a vehement G minor Symphony that contrasts starkly with his usual suave galanterie.

In 1782 the French philosopher Diderot pronounced music 'le plus violent de tous les beaux-arts'. A decade and more earlier, Gluck and Haydn had made his point. Although Haydn wrote only half-a-dozen *Sturm und Drang* symphonies in the minor key, their fierce intensity colours several of his contemporary symphonies in the major, above all the troubled and eccentric No. 46, in the 'extreme' key of B major. Common to all Haydn's symphonies, sonatas and string quartets of the period, major and minor, is a formidable musical logic and power of development unmatched by any of his contemporaries.

Mozart's K183 and Haydn's C minor, No. 52, were probably the last out-and-out *Sturm und Drang* symphonies. After 1773 Mozart and Haydn intermittently evoked the *Sturm und Drang* style: say, in Mozart's superb incidental music to *König Thamos* or, with an added breadth and chromatic subtlety,



the storm choruses in *Idomeneo* and Haydn's oratorio *Il ritorno di Tobia*. In Mozart's late G minor Symphony, No. 40, *Sturm und Drang* turbulence is tempered by yearning, even luxuriant, lyricism.

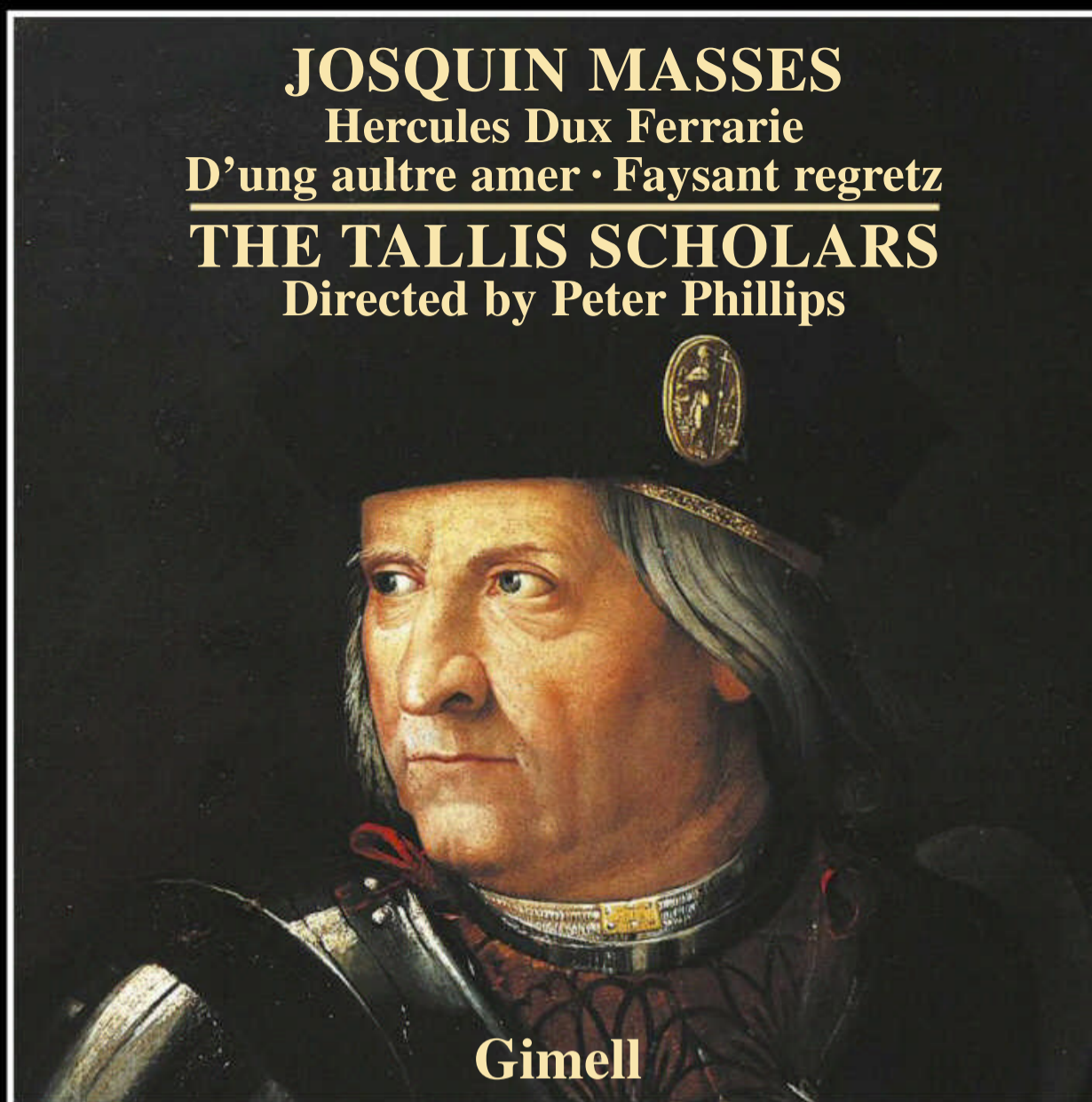
After the emotional extremes of the early 1770s, Haydn tended to present an amiable, sometimes jocular, face to the world, refining and deepening the language of the comedy of manners. In his rare post-1773 symphonies in the minor key – No. 80, or 'La poule', No. 83 – minor invariably resolves into major: less a question of Haydn's legendary 'cheerfulness' than an acknowledgement of the Classical ideal of reconciliation.

As to the literary *Stürmer und Dränger*, in 1779 Goethe, now a courtier and administrator in Weimar, put the turmoils of *Götz* and *Werther* behind him with the serene Classicism of *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. Schiller wrote his last true *Sturm und Drang* play, *Kabale und Liebe*, in 1784. By then Lenz was suffering from mental illness, while Klinger, whose drama had coined the term, had ironically forged a successful career as an officer in the Russian army. The anger and the passion of youth had faded. But in the next century, the unabashed emotionalism of *Sturm und Drang* would leave its mark on the German Romantic imagination, both in music and in literature. ☺



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Worcester and Hereford England

With fine musical offerings at either end, a cycle ride between these two cathedral cities makes a great way to explore the area, says **Rob Ainsley**



A tale of two cathedral cities: Elgar's statue admires Hereford Cathedral, a choral stronghold (above right); (far right) Elgar again, this time casting his gaze over Worcester Cathedral (bottom right)

MAMIL? Strava? Such cycling concepts are nothing new. Perhaps Elgar was more of a Middle Aged Man In Tweed, rather than Lycra, when he enthusiastically took up biking in 1900, but he explored the lanes round Worcester and Malvern so comprehensively that his Ordnance Survey maps, showing his routes logged in red, look every inch like the modern online cyclist's 'Strava heat map'.

So, we'll ride from Worcester to Hereford, cities he knew and worked in, through the countryside that inspired him – starting outside the Cathedral, by his statue, near his father's music shop. (It's now a branch of H&M, so you may not find the Bolero you expected.)

Worcester boasts more orchestras than its size would suggest. Worcester Symphony Orchestra – set up by Elgar in 1905 – mixes amateurs and professionals, performing to a 'strong and loyal audience in the West Midlands', says its chairman Vincent Kirk. Worcester Philharmonic, meanwhile, is a 'very friendly community orchestra', according to its head of PR (and cellos) Janet Geerling. 'This area is bursting with music, and of a very high standard, as well as nurturing less accomplished players,' she says. The semi-pro Chandos Orchestra, and the fully pro English String Orchestra are also based in the city.

Let's cycle. We follow the Severn, amid one of England's loveliest city centres, and head on quiet lanes to the Elgar museum at Broadheath. It's full of memorabilia, music (staging occasional recitals), and even his model of bicycle, resembling an upright modern 'Dutch town bike'.

We can picnic by the River Teme at Knightwick, Elgar's 'secret spot', then enjoy more high-hedged lanes without white



lines to Malvern and its spectacular ridge. If you hear someone eerily whistling the Cello Concerto up on the many mountain- and gravel-bike trails, Elgar said, it could be him. We ride past his house from the early 1900s, Craeg Lea (his base for many a ride) and his grave nearby at St Wulstan's.

Then it's more back-roads – the sort Elgar plied while mentally composing his First Symphony, or orchestrating *Dream of Gerontius* – through beautiful half-timbered Ledbury and across to Hereford. If Worcester is grand, civic and somewhat industrial, Hereford is more intimate, rural and artisan. Musically, things are just as lively, though. Hereford Symphony Orchestra began in 1958 and has a busy programme of orchestral core repertoire, as well as new commissions and children's concerts. The HSO's Helen Hammond – breaking off from baking a lemon drizzle cake – enthusiastically lists to me some of the city's other musical goodies: the Courtyard Centre, chamber groups, choral societies... 'There's always something going on, and ours is a very happy orchestra – lots of us have been there many decades!'

The choral tradition here is 'amazing, for such a sparsely populated area,' says Geraint Bowen, director of music at Hereford Cathedral. Evensong there is a daily, free marvel. 'The acoustic at Hereford is wonderful for unaccompanied choral music,' says Bowen. 'On a cold dry winter's evening there's something very special about its crystalline quality at an unaccompanied Friday Evensong.'

Part of that choral tradition is the annual Three Choirs Festival: it's been going for more than 300 years, rotating between the

mighty cathedrals of Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford (after 2020's write-off, 2021 is Worcester's turn). Alexis Paterson, chief executive of the festival, says it's the sheer scale of the event that makes it special:

'It's a wonderful melting pot of volunteer and professional musicians, making huge, life-affirming music, with a real sense of family and community.'

'Hereford's choral tradition is amazing for such a sparsely populated area'

But there's relaxed intimacy too. One image Paterson cherishes is that of concert-goers in Worcester crossing the Severn by ferry to get to the Cathedral, right there on the riverbank, and perhaps enjoying a local brew afterwards in one of the city's waterside pubs. (Elgar himself would undoubtedly have approved.)



Local hero

Edward Elgar, cyclist (and composer)

Elgar was a Worcester boy who learned his composing craft practically, in the regional music scene. He was never a college or conservatoire student, and despite eventually being knighted, never felt comfortable in 'the establishment' (partly because of his Catholicism). Arguably England's first great international composer, he wrote works of great spirit and sweep that reflect his local landscapes round the Malverns, which he roamed thoroughly by bicycle in 1900-08. Though his later years were spent in London and Sussex, he was buried back home in Malvern.

The festival works hard to bring in new audiences: they hold open rehearsals and give free tickets to first-timers. The approach helps maintain the balance between tradition and progress: new commissions are a regular feature of the area's orchestras, pro and am.

We finish our 47-mile day ride at Hereford Cathedral. (Like Mrs Elgar, you might prefer to drive our route; like Edward, we like to cycle it.) In this city, things are laid-back – literally. There's another Elgar statue here, but he's more relaxed: leaning back against his trusty Sunbeam bike after another life-enhancing, music-inspiring ride. And, like us, ready for some sustainable, locally sourced refreshment... 🍷

Further information:

Three Choirs Festival: www.3choirs.org

To see our cycle route: bit.ly/3ikFRTe

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3

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

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1-5 March **Richard Strauss**

8-12 March **Ruth Gipps**

15-19 March **Handel**

22-26 March **Ravel**

29 March – 02 April **Brahms**

Lyadov's style



Concision

Lyadov quipped that he got bored of music lasting more than five minutes, and he rarely wrote a movement lasting that long.

Yet such is the

concentration of his inspiration and his fulfilment of it that usually each piece seems far more substantial.

Atmospheric orchestration

As a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov and an admirer of Tchaikovsky, Lyadov combined their relish of instrumental colour with an appreciation of Glinka's (above) translucent scoring – he knew how to orchestrate sparingly yet effectively. This is evident in the vivid colours of his three late fairy-tale tone poems, or in the charismatic glamour of his *Polonaise* (1899).

Contrapuntal craft Lyadov had a remarkable facility for counterpoint. As well as writing some beautiful Bach-style fugues (Op. 41 presents a particularly fine pair), he enlivened a number of other works with his deft use of weaving countermelodies, as in his *Eight Russian Folksongs* for orchestra.

Fine detail Severely self-critical, Lyadov could spend decades – as he did with *Baba Yaga* – worrying at details of a work that lasted less than four minutes. The result, whether Fabergé egg-like (*A Musical Snuffbox*) or an exquisite vignette (any of *Biryulki*), was often striking and certainly flawlessly executed.

Anatoly Lyadov

History may regard him as a wasted talent, but the small amount that Lyadov did achieve had a significant impact, as *Daniel Jaffé* explains

ILLUSTRATION: MATT HERRING

Anatoly Lyadov is widely known as the indolent Russian composer who unwittingly gave the young Igor Stravinsky his big break by failing to write *The Firebird*. His low compositional output, partly owing to the amount of time he took to complete each work, has only reinforced this reputation. Then there is the oft-repeated charge, originating from his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov, that Lyadov was 'incredibly lazy'.

Yet contemporary accounts and memoirs by Lyadov's colleagues and pupils, including Stravinsky himself, reveal a composer not only held in the highest esteem but also widely loved.

After a catastrophic fire destroyed its former St Petersburg base, the Russian Company moved into the magnificent, purpose-built Mariinsky Theatre in 1860. There, Konstantin conducted several major premieres – in particular, Alexander Serov's operas *Judith* (1863) and *Rogneda* (1865) set new standards in Russian opera, inspiring more enduring masterpieces by Musorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and even Stravinsky. Konstantin was also responsible for the first staging in Russia of a Wagner opera, despite considerable obstruction from tsarist censors who regarded the composer a political revolutionary. After two years'

Contemporary accounts reveal that Lyadov was a composer held in the highest esteem

Indeed, Lyadov excited the enthusiasm of some of Russia's greatest creative minds, including all five members of the 'Mighty Handful' group of composers while he was still a teenager. So how come he appeared to achieve so little despite his widely recognised talent?

Rimsky-Korsakov laid much of Lyadov's supposed failings at the door of his 'loose living' father, the conductor Konstantin Lyadov. Born in 1820, Konstantin was son of a soldier-turned-musician, Nikolai Lyadov, who had risen to second conductor of the Russian Opera Company. In 1850, Konstantin became the company's chief conductor, and ultimately raised it from a second-rank organisation overshadowed by the Italian Opera Company – long preferred by the royal family and so by St Petersburg high society – to Russia's foremost opera company.

delay, *Lohengrin* finally opened in 1868 – but the stress of this episode was too much for Konstantin's health. Suffering a debilitating stomach ailment, he petitioned for early retirement, but was almost denied a pension commensurate with his work for the company because of his 'humble' origin (as son of a former soldier) and his rash self-description in the petition as a 'kapellmeister' rather than merely a conductor: finally, he was permitted to be the first Russian conductor to be honoured with such a title. Konstantin died aged 51.

Through all this, Anatoly Lyadov and his older sister Valentina saw little of their father. Their mother died when Anatoly was a month short of his seventh birthday, and Konstantin regularly came home late from the Mariinsky. Occasionally he took them to the theatre to watch and





Esteemed teacher: Lyadov with Rimsky-Korsakov, who regretted his pupil's expulsion from the St Petersburg Conservatoire; (below) Lyadov's father, Konstantin, was notable by his absence

far more extensive: the charming waltz of No. 3, for instance, might have been elaborated by another composer into a full-length and hauntingly memorable dance. In this respect, *Biryulki* is typical of Lyadov: he writes no more or less than what he has to say, leaving inspired shards of music to resonate well beyond their brief existence in the listener's mind.

With *Six Pieces for piano*, Op. 3 (1876–77), including charming examples of his fondness of fugue, and the harmonically spicy *Four Arabesques*, Op. 4 (1878), Lyadov effectively set out his compositional stall. He also spent time with the Mighty Handful's founder, Balakirev, who

invited him, alongside Rimsky-Korsakov, to help edit Glinka's music for publication. Reconciled with his teacher, who was impressed by his meticulous eye for detail, Lyadov resumed his Conservatoire studies, and graduated with distinction.

Perhaps feeling obliged to make amends, Lyadov then accepted the unglamorous job of teaching elementary theory to

Conservatoire students, a task he carried out with unorthodox yet undoubted ability into the following century. In 1901, his remarkable gift for canon and fugue finally recognised, he was promoted to teaching advanced counterpoint. In the meantime his textbook, *Canons*, became a mandatory supplement to Rimsky-Korsakov's own *Practical Course in Harmony*. It was also, significantly, the first textbook the young Stravinsky read to start teaching himself composition before he began his formal lessons in music theory.

From 1884 Lyadov also taught theory at the Imperial Court Chapel, invited by its then director Balakirev. So began his involvement with the Orthodox liturgy, eventually resulting in his *Ten Settings from the Obikhod*, Op. 61. Balakirev also sparked Lyadov's interest in Russian folksong, as the elder composer's artfully simple arrangements of several melodies for voice and piano inspired Lyadov's *Children's Songs*. (Stravinsky, in turn, used Lyadov's songs as a model for his own *Tri pesenki* composed under Rimsky-Korsakov's supervision.) Then followed Lyadov's many choral arrangements which



sometimes get involved in productions, either as 'extras' or even – both children being good singers – in the chorus. Otherwise, Anatoly and Valentina were left in the care of domestic servants, from whom they sometimes had to ask for ready cash. Possibly this explains Anatoly's peculiar sensitivity about money matters; as an adult, he loathed negotiating fees, and even refused the publisher Belyayev's generous offer of an income to enable him to devote himself to composition. Furthermore, growing awareness of his father's struggles with officialdom and their detrimental effect on his health and family life made Anatoly wary of professional toil, and indeed of the world beyond the confines of his home.

His wariness was reinforced when in 1867, aged 11, he was sent away to study violin at the St Petersburg Conservatoire. But after their father's death in 1871, Valentina set up a home of her own and Anatoly – by then studying under Rimsky-Korsakov – began spending more time with her than at the Conservatoire. At Valentina's he could take leisure reading Pushkin (above all, though, as Stravinsky recalled, Lyadov 'liked tender, fantastical things', and also relished ETA Hoffmann, Hans Christian Andersen and, later, Oscar Wilde and Maeterlinck), writing poetry and enjoying discussions with relatives and friends from the Mariinsky.

One regular visitor was Lyadov's closest friend, Georgy Dyutsh, son of a late

colleague of Konstantin's and now a fellow Conservatoire student; through their time together, they missed so many of Rimsky-Korsakov's classes that in January 1876 they were expelled for absenteeism. Anatoly and Georgy both came to their teacher's home and promised to work; Rimsky refused to relent, an

Rimsky-Korsakov admitted years later that Lyadov was 'talented past telling'

act he ruefully described years later as a 'bureaucratic fit', admitting that Lyadov, 'talented past telling', and Dyutsh should have been readmitted 'like the prodigal sons they were'.

Yet in the very year of his expulsion, Lyadov composed a set of short piano pieces, *Biryulki* (in English, 'Spillikins'). Apart from its effervescent Borodin-like opening piece – which finally returns to round off the suite – *Biryulki* is generally Schumannesque in style, and presents a series of contrasting vignettes. Some are concise and simple, while others are pregnant with the potential of something

LYADOV *Life & Times*

deserve to be far better known, such as the haunting 'Bayu-Bayu'. Meanwhile, his piano compositions continued to evolve under the influence of Scriabin – a composer he did much to promote both through his conducting and as an advisor to the Belyayev publishing firm.

Though Lyadov wrote relatively little for orchestra, all he published has an attractive, gem-like finish, the best being instantly effective with a peerless sense of atmosphere. His Polonaise, Op. 49, written in 1899 for the centenary of Pushkin's birth, is a fine example – appropriately ceremonial yet also conjuring the warmth and excitement of a festive occasion. An even more spectacular demonstration of his orchestral skill is *Baba Yaga*: composed over 13 years before being unveiled in 1904, this lasts scarcely three-and-a-half minutes, yet its impact is quite disproportionate, depicting the witch's ride – Valkyrie-like on horseback rather than the traditional mortar and pestle – in a manner which surely startled those who thought Lyadov a mere salon composer.

What his colleagues most hoped for, though, was his long-awaited fairy-tale opera, *Zoryushka*, contemplated since 1879. Two orchestral extracts appeared in 1909, the first of which, *The Enchanted Lake*, he conducted in February at the Conservatoire's Great Hall. Its limpid, haunting quality, and the prospect of the second extract, *Kikimora*, being performed in December at the Siloti Concerts, persuaded impresario Serge Diaghilev that Lyadov was the man to write his 'first truly Russian ballet': *The Firebird*.

Alas, for whatever reason – we do not know why – Lyadov did not deliver. Nor did he make further progress on *Zoryushka* before his death in 1914. It was a loss keenly felt by his colleagues and students: Myaskovsky confessed he would have preferred Tchernepnin, Steinberg 'or even Stravinsky' to have died instead. We may, perhaps, forgive Myaskovsky for not knowing Lyadov had effectively passed the torch to Stravinsky – and not simply with *The Firebird*. Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, particularly the second movement's beautiful double fugue, is just one eloquent instance of Lyadov's legacy continuing through even the mature masterpieces of that great composer. 🎵



1855

LIFE: Anatoly Lyadov is born in **St Petersburg**, the second child of the chief conductor of the Russian Opera. Showing talent from an early age, he receives piano lessons from his aunt.

TIMES: Alexander II begins his reign as Tsar of Russia. Over his 26-year rule, he will carry out major reforms including emancipating the serfs.



1873

LIFE: He is introduced by Rimsky-Korsakov, his teacher at St Petersburg Conservatoire, to Borodin, Cui and

Musorgsky, who hails him as 'a new, unmistakable, original and Russian young talent'.

TIMES: Russia and Austria-Hungary are persuaded by German chancellor Otto von Bismarck to form the League of Three Emperors, intended primarily to prevent any alliance with France.



1894

LIFE: He meets Alexander Scriabin and becomes a loyal champion of his music, later conducting the world premieres of Scriabin's First and Second Symphonies.

TIMES: **Alexander III**, Russia's ultra-reactionary Tsar who succeeded the throne after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 and reversed many of his reforms, dies aged 49.



1884

LIFE: In near secrecy, he marries Nadezhda Ivanovna Tolkacheva, allowing just two relatives to be present as witnesses, and otherwise only telling his sister whom he instructs not to attend.

TIMES: The Russian painter Marie Bashkirtseff's *The Meeting* receives great acclaim when it is displayed at the Paris Salon. She, though, is outraged that it does not win a medal.

1914

LIFE: On 28 August, he dies at his country estate in Polynovka, where he has spent every summer since 1894. He is buried in Novodevichy Cemetery.

TIMES: Russia enters the First World War when, in response to Austria-Hungary's invasion of Serbia in July, it mobilises a large army. Germany subsequently declares war on Russia itself.

Symphony No. 7

Jean Sibelius

Sibelius's final surviving symphony is a single-movement work of organic, seamless beauty. **Stephen Johnson** chooses the best recordings



The composer

Sibelius was 58 years old when he conducted the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra in the premiere of his Seventh Symphony in March 1924, just short of 25 years since the premiere of his First Symphony. The intervening years had seen him battle with alcoholism and successfully emerge from an operation for throat cancer and, while feted both in Finland and abroad, his financial situation was rarely stable. Only two major orchestral works – *The Tempest* and *Tapiola* – would follow the Seventh Symphony, though he lived for a further three decades.

The work

Two years before he made the first sketches for his Seventh Symphony, Sibelius compared symphonic thinking to a river: 'It is born from various rivulets that seek each other and in this way the river proceeds wide and powerful toward the sea.' It's a marvellous image, not least because it works on so many levels. There's a powerful current that carries the music forward, fed by musical motifs that, like those rivulets, 'seek each other' and create ever new forms. A river doesn't move at a uniform rate, nor does a Sibelius

two significant stretches (a much better word here than 'sections') the tempo becomes much faster – and it really is *becomes*. At no point is the listener likely to say, 'Aha, now we're in the *scherzo*'; it's more like gliding slowly but steadily forward in a boat, mesmerised by the beauty of the passing scenery, then suddenly realising that you're actually ripping along at a terrific rate – and isn't that a whirlpool ahead?

The basic musical ideas that power all this organic dynamism could hardly

There's a powerful current that carries the music forward, fed by musical motifs

symphony: tempo is truly fluid – not only does it speed up and slow down, it eddies, creates crosscurrents and undercurrents, giving the impression of something complex but also elementally alive.

The Seventh is the most river-like of all Sibelius's symphonies. When a river enters a lake or the sea, when it passes from meandering calm to white-water rapids, there's no clear line separating one mood or identity from another, nor is there anywhere in the Seventh Symphony. Sibelius's finest achievement in this manner before No. 7 had been in the Fifth Symphony, in which a moderately paced first movement eventually morphs into a thrilling accelerating *scherzo*. But in Symphony No. 7 the whole work unfolds in one seamless utterance.

The basic tempo is slow, *Adagio* – 'wide and powerful', in Sibelius's words. But in

be much simpler. The symphony starts with rising scale, initially staggered so that it seems to be pushing a heavy weight – imagine someone rolling a massive, steadily growing snowball towards the edge of a long incline and then pushing it. At first it hardly moves, but then gradually the momentum increases as motif number two emerges: a stepwise falling, then falling-rising two-note pattern.

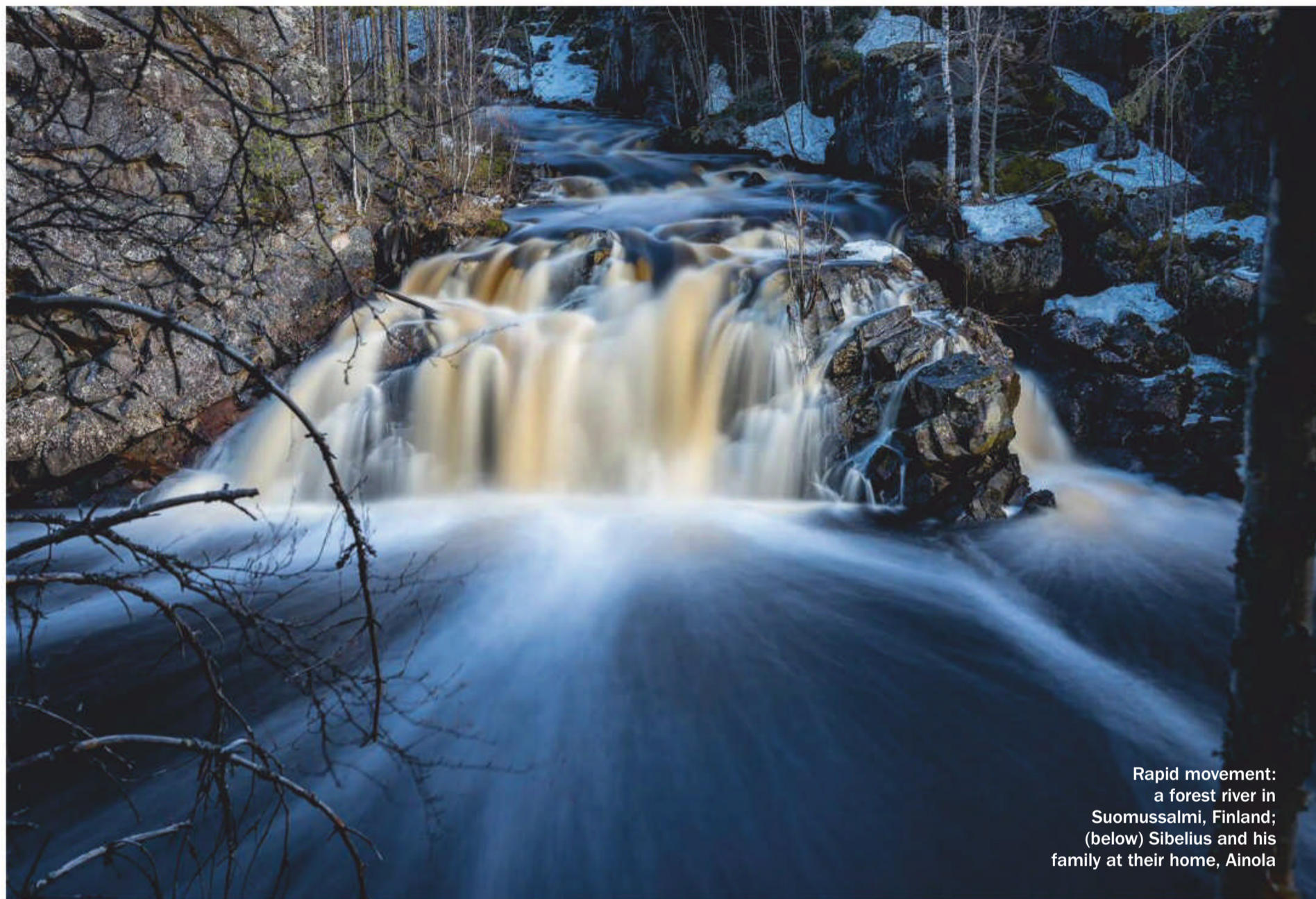
Everything seems to grow from these ideas: to borrow another image from nature, it's like watching a speeded-up film of a plant growing from a tiny seed, through stem and branches, to full blossom. A glorious hymn-like passage for strings builds in a long, steady crescendo; and then, at its height, the first full flower unfurls: a noble, almost god-like theme for – of all instruments – the trombone. This magnificent theme is heard three

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Rapid movement:
a forest river in
Suomussalmi, Finland;
(below) Sibelius and his
family at their home, Ainola

times in full during the course of the symphony. Its second appearance follows, or rather emerges from, the rapid dancing *vivacissimo* music in which the first long *accelerando* has culminated. Now we hear it in the dark minor key, through swirling, menacing string figures: 'The moon glimpsed through storm clouds,' was how Sibelius described it in his sketchbooks.

Then, after the air has cleared and the dancing has resumed – more waltz-like this time – the acceleration begins again. Finally, as the symphony's opening scale rises slowly on horns and scudding strings, the trombone theme sounds for the third time, singing proudly and serenely through the earthquake, wind and fire of the surrounding orchestral textures. An intense stillness follows, then the trombone theme dissolves back into its basic constituent elements, and with one last granite-like crescendo cadence the symphony is over.

Arriving at this radically organic three-movements-in-one structure was a huge struggle for Sibelius, requiring



the consumption of alarming quantities of nerve-steadying alcohol. And when Sibelius had finished the symphony, he was suddenly overcome with doubt: had he gone too far this time – was this really a 'symphony' at all? When it was

first performed, in 1924, he called it *Fantasia Sinfonica* – the term he'd used to describe his tone poem *Pohjola's Daughter* (1906). But success gave him courage, and he was soon referring to it as 'the Seventh Symphony'.

Under this title it has been enormously influential. At the time Sibelius can't have known that this would be the last symphony he would offer to the world. In the next decade he worked on, and almost certainly finished, an Eighth; but if so, it ended up – along with a fair number of other disowned manuscripts – in the enormous green log-burner that warmed his home, Ainola. But even if only by default, the Seventh makes a superb conclusion to Sibelius's great cycle of symphonies. He might have equalled its triumph, but it's difficult to see how he could possibly have improved upon it.

Turn the page to discover the recommended recordings of Sibelius's Symphony No. 7

Final word:
Finnish conductor
Osmo Vänskä

Three other great recordings



Colin Davis

Davis's approach in his third recording of this symphony is more Brucknerian in its grand inevitability,

but there's still room for plenty of Sibelian drama and volatile passion. In fact this is overall a very warm performance, in keeping with the expressive generosity of the 'late' Davis style. It brings extra charm to the waltz-like second dance episode, and extra poignancy to the coda. Davis makes the ending more affirmative, less ambiguous than the scrupulously literal Vänskä, but it's very moving. (LSO Live LS00074)



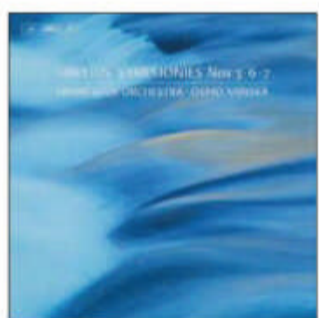
Herbert von Karajan

The sense of personal investment in Karajan's Sibelius comes across powerfully. And as

in the best Karajan performances, the structural engineering is superb – how anyone could listen to this and deny that Sibelius was a top-class symphonic thinker is beyond me. It's a very Wagnerian approach: ripe, sumptuous orchestral sound from the Berlin Phil, gloomy atmospheric density, swirling mists and swollen opaque floodwaters, and many listeners will miss the Nordic fresh air of Vänskä. But it's so compelling and

A detailed, dramatic performance

The best
recording



Osmo Vänskä

Minnesota Orchestra
BIS BIS2006

Osmo Vänskä's first recorded Sibelius cycle, with Finland's Lahti Symphony Orchestra, was hailed as a major achievement when it appeared over 20 years ago. But this more recent Seventh, recorded in 2016, takes the insights to a new level of perfection. Vänskä's approach can seem dauntingly literal: he's a great believer in following Sibelius's written instructions down to the last detail. But in this case the letter really is the gateway to the spirit. So many conductors seem to struggle with the Seventh Symphony's

finely engineered transitions of tempo and texture. Listening to Vänskä, you might conclude that all you have to do is take Sibelius at his word and the rest will follow.

But of course there's a good deal more to it than that. Listening to the opening bars, I find myself asking, how does he

In this recording, Vänskä takes his insights to a new level of perfection

make something as simple as a rising crescendo scale sound so eloquent, so full of potential dramatic energy? In the rapt hymn for strings that follows there's a sense of a controlled, steady rise in background intensity, and yet the foreground is full of finely featured expressive detail – each tiny phrase (I almost said 'word') counts. The trombone theme is thrilling in each

one of its appearances: through the swirling storm clouds at the heart of the symphony, but best of all at the stunning apotheosis, the singing building majestically, despite the feeling that earth and sky are convulsing around it, and culminating in a spine-chilling whoop from the horns. But there's also freshness and lightness of touch when needed. Stravinsky praised the 'Northern Mediterranean' quality of Sibelius's melodic writing; the Seventh Symphony's second dance episode could likewise be described as Nordic Viennese in this finely engineered recording.

emotionally stirring that, in the end, the best policy is to surrender. (DG 4395272)



John Barbirolli

For impassioned eloquence, and for a compelling sense of personal crisis that may well underlie

this music, John Barbirolli, in his 1966 Hallé version, is unequalled, and the recording still sounds remarkably good despite a slight edge to the treble. The last echo of the trombone theme sounds more like an anguished leave-taking than a grateful farewell in this performance. And at no point does any of this feel like specious manipulation: everything sounds as though it is being discovered from within the notes. (Warner 2564647967)

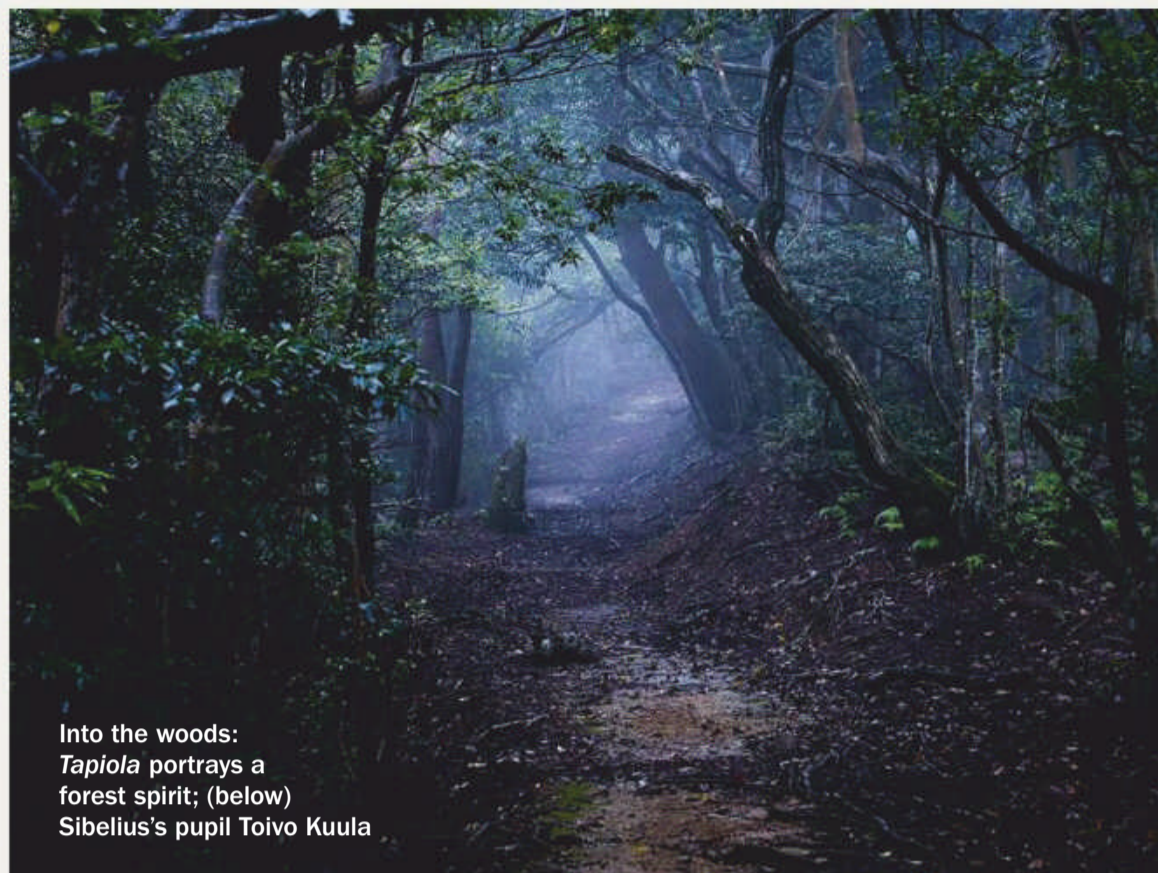
And one to avoid...



Neeme Järvi has always had a wonderful poetic feeling for the colours and textures of Sibelius's music.

But he's not always the most reliable of conductors when it comes to engineering large-scale structures. Järvi's Seventh is more impressive in its parts than as a whole, and there are moments, like the sudden jerk forwards at the beginning of the *vivacissimo*, where he loses the thread. Once that's broken, so too is that 'wide and powerful current'. It's too great a loss.

Best of all, though, are the final few moments. After the final climax the world holds its breath, then doubt and anguish are dispelled by one last warm echo of the trombone theme. Then comes the final crescendo, in which the two-note falling motif is stretched out in a kaleidoscope of changing orchestral colours: low woodwind, horns, low strings, then violins. No need to worry that the American players might not be able to match the Finns when it comes to colours: no one today understands Sibelius's paradoxical sound palette – austere yet also rich and complex – better than Osmo Vänskä.



Into the woods:
Tapiola portrays a
forest spirit; (below)
Sibelius's pupil Toivo Kuula

Continue the journey...

We suggest further works to explore after Sibelius's Symphony No. 7

The Seventh was not the end of **Sibelius's** symphonic journey. However, as he condemned the score of his Eighth to the fire in a fit of despair, his *Tapiola* of 1926 was effectively his orchestral swansong. Lasting around 20 minutes, this tone poem is a portrayal of Tapio, the Finnish forest spirit – a feel of uneasiness and mystery is punctuated by flurries of activity in what is, even by Sibelian standards,

a masterpiece of atmospheric writing. (Lahti SO/Okko Kamu BIS BISSACD1945).

Sibelius's junior by 20 years or so, the Finn **Leevi Madetoja** could perhaps consider himself unlucky not to be better known today. Of his three extant symphonies (the Fourth was apparently lost at a railway station), head for the big-boned Second, premiered in 1918 with Sibelius in the audience. It was described soon after by one critic as 'the most remarkable achievement in our music since the monumental series of Sibelius'. (Helsinki Philharmonic/John Storgårds Ondine ODE12122).

Sadly, Sibelius's composition pupil **Toivo Kuula** did not live long enough to hear his teacher's later symphonies,



Kuula's two suites give tantalising glimpses of what might have been

as he died of a bullet wound sustained in an argument in May 1918. While Kuula is best known for his vocal music, his two *South Ostrobothnian Suites* for orchestra give hints of Sibelius's influence and tantalising glimpses of what might have been. (Turku Philharmonic/Leif Segerstam Ondine ODE12702).

Though **Aarre Merikanto** later took himself in a more atonal direction, his youthful First Symphony of 1916

is Romantic through and through – not least in the broadly sweeping melody in the strings that opens the gorgeous third movement, complete with its dreamy violin solo. (Turku Philharmonic Orchestra/Petri Sakari Alba ABCD336).

One last Finn: Merikanto's student **Einojuhani Rautavaara**, who was recommended for a scholarship at the Juilliard School by an ageing Sibelius in 1954. Two years later, he produced the first of his eight (wildly differing) symphonies, a work in which two darkly brooding movements are followed by an anxious, fidgety finale. Rautavaara revised the First twice, in 1988 and 2003. (Orchestre National de Belgique/Mikko Franck Ondine ODE10645).

Reviews

110 CDs, Books & DVDs rated by expert critics

Welcome



With lockdowns still very much in place, recent months have presented a good opportunity to listen to more music. But if you've already

exhausted your go-to composers and works, perhaps now's the time to tread some newer paths. If you're in need of a guide, then this issue features plenty of music, composers and performers that are well worth discovering. We have concertos by Fesch, Romberg and Rosetti, works for percussion, operas by Stephen Dodgson and Salieri, new music from Caroline Shaw and David Matthews and thrilling debuts from soprano Hera Hyesang Park and pianist Mehani Teave. All that, plus the usual selection of Brief Notes, a World Music round-up and some great books, too.

Enjoy exploring!

Michael Beek *Reviews editor*

This month's critics

John Allison, Nicholas Anderson, Terry Blain, Kate Bolton-Porciatti, Geoff Brown, Michael Church, Christopher Cook, Martin Cotton, Christopher Dingle, Misha Donat, Jessica Duchén, George Hall, Malcolm Hayes, Julian Haylock, Claire Jackson, Daniel Jaffé, Erica Jeal, Stephen Johnson, Berta Joncus, Erik Levi, Andrew McGregor, David Nice, Roger Nichols, Bayan Northcott, Steph Power, Anthony Pryer, Paul Riley, Michael Tanner, Roger Thomas, Sarah Urwin Jones, Kate Wakeling, Helen Wallace, Alexandra Wilson,

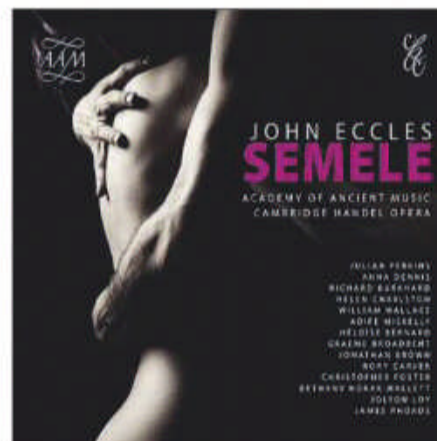
KEY TO STAR RATINGS

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

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

A lost masterpiece of English opera revived

Julian Perkins and Cambridge Early Opera dust off John Eccles's 1706 *Semele* – and it's a scintillating triumph, says **Berta Joncus**



Eccles *Semele*

Anna Dennis (soprano),
Richard Burkhard (baritone),
Helen Charlston (mezzo-soprano), Héloïse Bernard (soprano), Graeme Broadbent (bass) et al; Cambridge Early Opera; Academy of Ancient Music/Julian Perkins
AAMAAM012 121:27 mins
(2 discs)

John Eccles's sexy, sparkling opera bursts to life – finally! Shelved in 1706, *Semele* has never been professionally recorded, so this production was worth waiting for. Cast, band, director and sound are all top-notch, restoring Eccles's score to its full glory.

The project grew out of Julian Perkins's November 2019 Cambridge Handel Opera Company concert performance, with rising-star soloists singing alongside the more seasoned professional names.

It's astonishing that Eccles's *Semele* is obscure: the libretto, by William Congreve, is as yummy as Eccles's music. Adapting Ovid, Congreve has Semele joyously join Jupiter in illicit love, escaping thereby an unwanted earthly match. Jupiter's enraged wife Juno, in the guise of Semele's sister, goads Semele to trap Jupiter into granting her wish that he show himself to her as a god, which kills her.

Thanks to Perkins's deft casting, each principal's vocalism and *dramatis persona* are wonderfully matched. As Semele, Anna Dennis is at first seductive in her delicacy, then frightening in her steely-toned ambition. Dark-timbred mezzo soprano Helen Charlston's Juno flares magnificently, unafraid to sound ugly when furious. Baritone Richard Burkhard captures Congreve's sensual yet

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Magic out of myth:
Richard Burkhard (left)
and Anna Dennis (right)
are Jupiter and Semele

An interview with Julian Perkins



Why has Eccles's version of this story been so neglected?

When people think of *Semele*, they inevitably think of Handel's version. When Handel came to England he conquered everything before him. With this opera by Eccles, it's an intriguing 'what if?' in musical history; what would have happened had Handel not come to England?

How different are Handel and Eccles's versions?

This is a very different work to Handel's. In Handel's version the character of Semele comes across as a sort of voluptuous sex-kitten; it's so exuberant, with its wonderfully florid, excessive vocal runs. Eccles captures a much darker, more brooding Semele; and it's probably worth remembering William Congreve worked with Eccles on this libretto, so there was a synergy between composer and librettist. Handel's is based on Congreve, but the composer adapted it, plus there's text by Pope and others in there.

Also, Eccles's recitatives are so detailed, which comes from a more Monteverdi style of recitative writing. Handel's was more of a broad brush.

Were you surprised by what you discovered in Eccles's work?

I was struck by Eccles's uncanny ability to differentiate his writing for all the different singers – there are 15 different roles. So it made casting a wonderful challenge. It's always going to be compared to Handel's masterpiece, but I think what also surprised me was the fact that it's such a direct but concise work, but very nuanced at the same time. For an opera, a lot of drama is packed into a relatively short amount of time.

thoughtful Jupiter, texturing every word. The show-stealer is soprano Héloïse Bernard who, as Juno's servant Iris, forges riveting moments from modest material, such as 'Thither Flora the Fair'. In this brief chaconne, Bernard drapes each stanza in increasingly gorgeous embellishments, dropping dramatically into chest register for her last verse.

The Academy of Ancient Music's playing is just as fascinating. Perkins directs from the harpsichord with a demonic intensity. When individual band members take over the storytelling, their solos gild Eccles's invention with their own. Lost instrumental numbers – symphonies, dances, ritornellos – known on the page only from stage directions, are

here taken from other Eccles compositions. They give the AAM further opportunity to strut, from the regal Overture (from his *Rinaldo and Armida*), to the sparkling 'Dance of the Zephyrs' (from his *Aires*).

Helen Charlston's Juno flares magnificently, unafraid to sound ugly when furious

Eccles's solo and instrumental writing are both exquisite, but he experiments most boldly in his vocal ensembles. In these, catchy tunes and rhythms belie the sophistication of counterpoint and motivic networking as entwined solo voices typically yield to regal choruses or symphonies.

Perkins commands a gamut of responses to the ensembles' charms, from crystal-clear voicing to big, fat homophonic swells. The Act I quartet 'Why dost thou thus untimely grieve?', in which four characters each express a different foreboding, captures both Eccles's originality and the performers' brilliance: after introducing the common theme, the soloists, taking their cue from Perkins's keyboard playing, gently decelerate their points of imitation to bring the quartet to a brooding close.

With early career vocalists among the cast, there are minor imperfections, but this is a superb reconstruction of a lost Eccles masterpiece.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

ORCHESTRAL CHOICE



Haydn

**Symphony No. 15 in D;
Symphony No. 35 in B flat;
Symphony No. 45 in F sharp
minor 'Farewell'; Scena di
Berenice, Hob.XXIVA:10***

*Sandrine Piau (soprano); Il Giardino Armonico/Giovanni Antonini
Alpha Classics ALPHA684 77:34 mins

This is the latest release in Giovanni Antonini's project to record all of Haydn's symphonies by the tercentenary of his birth in 2032. It centres on two great 'farewell' works: the fiercely concentrated Symphony No. 45, from which the players gradually depart at the end, and the emotionally charged *Scena di Berenice*, premiered together with the Symphony No. 104 towards the end of Haydn's last London visit in 1795.

The booklet notes strain somewhat to link the other two symphonies: No. 35 is construed as a 'welcome' symphony for the return from abroad of Haydn's princely

A most impressive symphonic journey

Bayan Northcott finds power and nuance in the latest 'Haydn 2032' recording

employer, and No. 15 as the *Farewell* Symphony's 'cheerful little sister'. To add contemporary relevance to the feelings behind the symphonies, there is also a portfolio of modern 'farewell' photographs from the Magnum agency. It all makes for a rather 'arty' presentation.

But there is nothing 'arty' about the performances. Antonini's standing among the most vital of current Haydn conductors is as

evident here in the hushed intensity he brings to the remote *Adagio* of the *Farewell* Symphony as it is in the driving

impetus with which he dispatches its turbulent opening movement, and he draws a remarkable range of expressive nuances and powerful shocks from the modest period forces of Il Giardino Armonico.

Add to this the full-toned Sandrine Piau in the mounting passion of *Berenice* as she bids farewell to her suicidal lover in a part ranging over more than two octaves, and one has a fine release indeed.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

A remarkable range of expression is drawn from the period forces



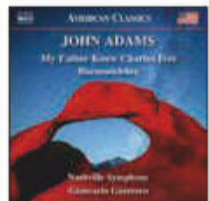
Man on a mission: Giovanni Antonini is a real Haydn hero

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John Adams

**My Father Knew Charles Ives;
Harmonielehre**

Nashville Symphony/
Giancarlo Guerrero
Naxos 8.559854 69:03 mins



The title of John Adams's 2003 symphonic triptych *My Father Knew Charles Ives* intrigues and misleads. Adams's dad did not know the celebrated American composer – at least, not literally. Instead, the work refers to shared familial connections with New England, where both Ives and Adams once lived. The first movement, 'Concord', evokes the sounds of

Adams's hometown (rather than the Massachusetts location from which Ives's Second Piano Sonata takes its name). Here and in 'The Lake', Adams plays with pastiche, invoking Ives's signature off-stage trumpets and layered, cross-purpose melodies. A short clarinet solo provides an autobiographical note to recall the instrument Adams learned as a child, while a solo piano represents his father's own musicianship. 'The Mountain' is more recognisably Adams, discarding disparate polyphony in favour of a more homogenous swirl. Throughout, Giancarlo Guerrero and the Nashville Symphony have a steady handle on this deeply personal homage.

Like *My Father Knew Charles Ives*, *Harmonielehre* has a similarly evocative title that recalls Schoenberg's textbook. But its style and structure owes little to the Second Viennese School; instead, the 1985 work reflects Adams's early alignment to minimalism and tonality. The first movement – pleasingly entitled with a single em dash – is an epic display of repeated patterns and a pulsing energy that is referred to again in the ethereal third movement ('Meister Eckhardt and Quackie' – named after a 13th-century mystic and Adams's then four-month-old daughter, naturally). These sandwich 'The Anfortas Wound', which rumbles on listlessly. Despite this blip, there is

much to enjoy among these Adams rarities. *Claire Jackson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Beethoven

**Egmont Overture; Romances
Nos 1 & 2; Symphony No. 5**

Mathilde Milwidsky (violin);
National Symphony Orchestra/
Rimma Sushanskaya
Guild GMCD7826 60:10 mins



Recorded in October last year, this Beethoven disc from the National Symphony Orchestra is another marker of the composer's 250th anniversary,

offering repertoire standards – the *Egmont Overture*, the Symphony No. 5 and the Romances in G and F for Violin and Orchestra – under conductor Rimma Sushanskaya and young violinist Mathilde Milwidsky.

The rich-toned National Symphony Orchestra approaches the *Egmont* with some force, but the slow pace tends towards the ponderous and never quite convinces. Sushanskaya contains the orchestra, but there is little pent-up energy to colour it.

There are issues, too, with the sound, which includes somewhat intrusive breathing while the recording balance occasionally throws disparate sections of the orchestra into the fore- or background, particularly the brass, and sometimes quite harshly. It certainly doesn't help Milwidsky's fine and sweet-toned violin to emerge above the orchestra, which sounds curiously flat here, given the fundamental interweaving of orchestral and violin sound in the two Romances.

The Symphony No. 5 fares better, and has some engaging moments, but tends a little towards sound and fury rather than substance, despite building tension in the final movement, and again, there are some jarring discrepancies in the recording balance. *Sarah Urwin Jones*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★

Beethoven • Mozart

Beethoven: Variations on 'La ci darem la mano' from Mozart's 'Don Giovanni'; **Mozart:** Serenade No. 10 in B flat, K.361 'Gran Partita' Members of the Concertgebouw Orchestra/Alexei Ogrintchouk (oboe) *BIS BIS-2463 (CD/SACD) 57:37 mins*



Is there a more appropriate piece of music to lighten up the dreary winter months? Mozart's

Gran Partita teems with vibrancy and optimism, though in fact it encapsulates a surprisingly wide range of moods, from rustic humour in the *Finale* to the sublimity and tenderness of the glorious *Adagio*. Notwithstanding the considerable technical challenges of the woodwind writing, any worthy ensemble requires sufficient flexibility and variety of timbre to fully characterise each movement. Alexei Ogrintchouk, directing members of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra from the oboe, delivers a compelling performance that almost rivals the benchmark recording from the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Ensemble on Warner Classics. If the Berliners bring even greater verve to the fast outer movements, Ogrintchouk's lyrical oboe playing and wonderful fluidity of line is magical in the *Adagio*, and the outer sections of the 'Romance' have a beautifully veiled tonal quality.

BIS's recording is so spectacularly vivid that you can hear the collective intake of breath that precedes the opening chord. Neither this nor the sound of clattering keys disturbed me unduly, though some might prefer a more concert hall-like perspective. Beethoven's entertaining *Don Giovanni Variations* is an unexpected bonus, though the Berliners' offering of Mozart's Serenade, K375 is much more musically substantial. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



BACKGROUND TO...

John Adams's *Harmonielehre*

Having gained profile with such works as *Shaker Loops* for string septet (1978) and *Harmonium*, his large-scale choir and orchestra setting of poems by John Donne and Emily Dickinson (1980), Adams suffered an 18-month creative block. He then had a dream in which, while driving across the San Francisco Bay Bridge, he saw an oil tanker on the water below abruptly

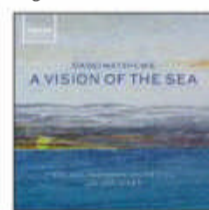
turn upright and take off like a Saturn V rocket. This inspired the opening of *Harmonielehre* (1984-5), described by Adams as 'a statement of belief in the power of tonality at a time when I was uncertain about its future'.



A very grand partita:
Alexei Ogrintchouk
compels in Mozart

David Matthews

A Vision of the Sea; Symphony No. 8; Toward Sunrise; Sinfonia BBC Philharmonic/Jac van Steen *Signum Classics SIGCD 647 67:47 mins*



Born in 1943, David Matthews started composing aged 16 upon discovering a

particular love of orchestral music. Nine symphonies and many other works later, he remains committed to what he's described as 'rich traditional forms' filtered through early 20th-century modernism, Britten, Tippett and a tonality 'grounded in song and dance'.

The two pieces at the heart of this release date from 2013, Matthews's 60th year. They and the two shorter works reveal him at the height of his powers in both abstract and programmatic writing. Each is played with a winning combination of broad melodic sweep and finely observed detail by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra under conductor Jac van Steen.

That sense of complementary opposites arises naturally in both the Symphony No. 8 and the symphonic poem *A Vision of the Sea*, where Matthews eschews emotional extremes for a discursiveness that never threatens conflict or darkness – nor even disquiet – yet avoids flatness through sheer invention. The bouncy frolic of the symphony's third movement initially surprises after the poignancy of the second, memorialising composer Norman

Worrall. But the work's overall cohesion – from deep Sibelian rumbles to lush, dissonant chords and bubbling polyphony – ensures the listener is never far from home.

Likewise the symphonic poem explores a sea salty with incipient storm, viewed from the shelter of the Kent coast. While its dawn is a re-evocation of *Toward Sunrise* – shimmering with a slow-burning, eventually radiant fire – *Sinfonia* summons the spirit of an overture in bright textures and driving timpani. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Rachmaninov

Symphony No. 1; Symphonic Dances Philadelphia Orchestra/Yannick Nézet-Séguin *DG 483 9839 79:32 mins*



The two deepest, most soul-searching of Rachmaninov's purely orchestral works, and

an orchestra nurtured in the 'Rachmaninov sound' by Stokowski and Ormandy during the composer's lifetime: what a gift for a great interpreter of our times. You need not only a sensitivity to the special string warmth but also an ideal flexibility for the tempo rubato implied when not explicitly requested in so much of Rachmaninov's music. Charles Dutoit, who recorded the major orchestral works with the

Philadelphia in the early 1990s, didn't have it; Nézet-Séguin does, in spades, and he's allowed an occasional largesse which slightly holds up the pell-mell progress of the First Symphony's fateful finale cavalcade. But it proves irresistible at the heart of the midnight reckoning in the last of the *Symphonic Dances*, crisp and buoyant in its outer panels until we get to the earthy quotation from the composer's Vespers.

Nor is this conductor prone to indulgence; he knows Philadelphia strings can apply swoony portamento, but proves sparing with it, and I've never heard a more inward, poignant handling of the first dance's central reverie than we get from gently meshing woodwind and later unison first violins with cellos. It's a pity to see the CD note regurgitating the exaggerated history of the First Symphony's premiere; it would be preferable to have more on the music itself. But every possible light, from tender to savage, is thrown on it by the interpretation, and any lack of warmth in the acoustic is amended in the glow of the playing. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

R Schumann

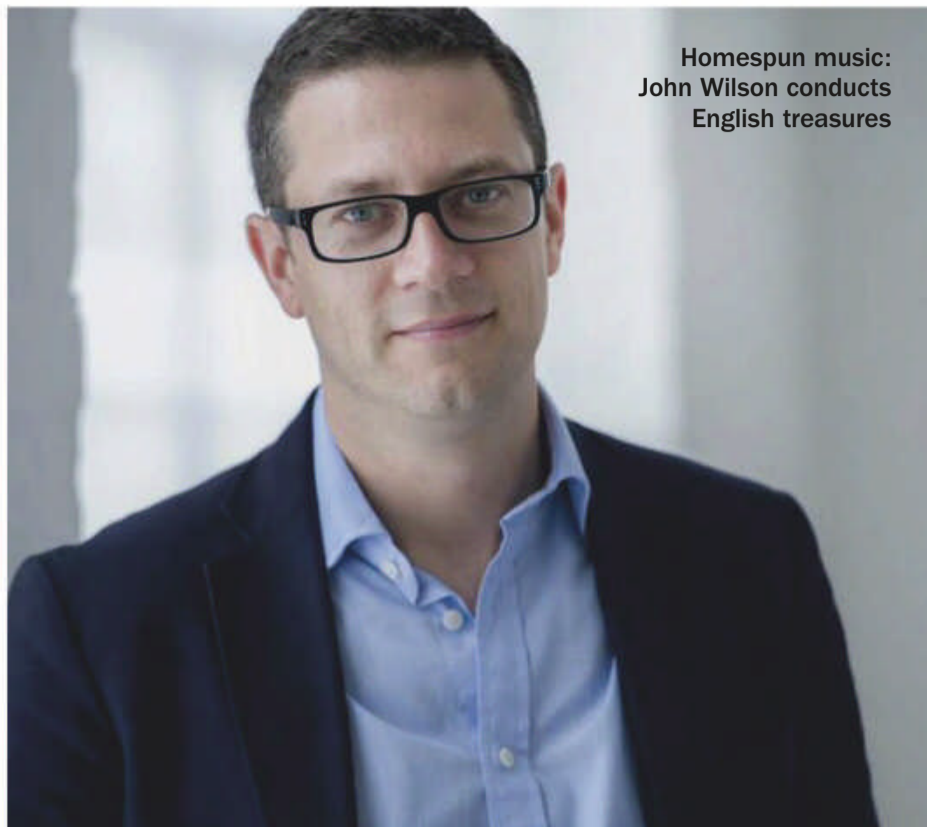
**Symphony No. 1 'Spring';
Symphony No. 3 'Rhenish'**
Cappella Aquileia/Marcus Bosch
Coviello COV 92015 (CD/SACD) 58:11 mins



It should no longer be a surprise when a 'historically informed' performance of

one of Schumann's symphonies reveals that his orchestral sense was a lot more focused than received opinion would have us believe. It isn't just the clarity and freshness that stand out, particularly in the *Rhenish* (the more maligned of the two symphonies recorded here). It's the fact that the sound has so many layers of light and texture – at times like looking into moving water or through the shifting foliage of a forest. It's good, too, that the recording is so sympathetic to this aspect of these performances. Yes, there were moments when I wished for a little more of the kind of expressive rubato we now associate inescapably with Schumann's solo piano works. But would Schumann have expected anything like that in orchestral music?

SIM CANETTY-CLARKE



Homespun music:
John Wilson conducts
English treasures

More to the point, the playing of Cappella Aquileia under Marcus Bosch is so finely featured, and radiates such warm conviction on its own terms, that more expansive, later-Romantic indulgence might deprive it of some of its outstanding virtues. The outer movements of the *Rhenish* are very exciting, but it's actually the middle movements – the energetic rowing song of II, the watery pastoral of III and the romantic-gothic polyphony of IV – that left the strongest impression.

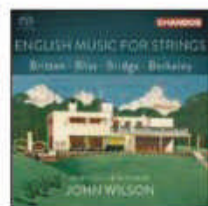
The *Spring* has a wonderful youthful upbeat quality. It's here in particular that Schumann's quirky, lateral game-playing (another grievously misunderstood aspect of his symphonic thinking) comes across with delightful directness.

Stephen Johnson

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

English Music for Strings

L Berkeley: Serenade for Strings;
Bliss: Music for Strings; **Bridge:** Lament; **Britten:** Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge
Sinfonia of London/John Wilson
Chandos CHSA 5264 (CD/SACD) 64:46 mins



The cover painting on this delectable album is very striking. A 1930s English modernist house; geometric blocks; an optimistic sun deck. No pastoral softenings

or Cotswold charm here. Nor do they feature in the music itself, all deriving from the same decade except Bridge's little *Lament*, inspired by a child's death in the Lusitania sinking of 1915. Here in this track is a prime example of the heartfelt precision and beauty of tone that typifies John Wilson's Sinfonia of London. There's plenty of heart, too, in their superlative treatment of Britten's marvellous Bridge variations, warmly delivered even during the parody character pieces clustered together in the first half. Listen to the silky third variation ('Romance') or any of the soulful outpourings featuring Bridge's own instrument, the viola: gorgeous.

Wilson's team prove equally adroit in Berkeley's Serenade, whose neo-classical sprightliness is gradually punctured by sorrow and anguish understandable in a work written under the shadow of an approaching war. Oddly enough, the piece that least suits the cover's modernist house, a building designed for Arthur Bliss in the mid 1930s, is Bliss's own *Music for Strings*, created at the same time. Despite his early reputation as one of Britain's advanced guard, Bliss was really a muscular romantic; and that's the element stressed in Wilson's committed account of the one work here that is easy to admire but rather less so to love. Nothing, however, stops us adoring the Sinfonia's warmth and finesse. *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Timelapse

Works by Adès, Bowie/Eno, Couperin, Górecki, Grieg, Marr, Radiohead, Rameau, Reich, Satie, Schubert and Wallen

Victoria Brawn (oboe), Trish Clowes (saxophone), Graham Instrall (drums), Catherine Leech (violin), David Le Page (violin, viola), Bruce O'Neill, David Gordon (piano);
Orchestra of the Swan

Signum Classics SIGCD 662 63:42 mins



Orchestra of the Swan has built up an impressive reputation for its imaginative programming and

roster of new commissions across its 25-year history. This well-executed concept album is something of a history-bending mixtape that hops between the present day and the 17th century (with plenty of stops along the way). Works by Rameau, Grieg, Satie and Errollyn Wallen sit alongside creative new arrangements of everything from Couperin to Radiohead. The disc's overarching theme is one of mood: the album is pervaded throughout by a searching melancholy and a dream-like quality. Divided into 14 short tracks, the disc's contents might on first glance suggest something of a hotchpotch, yet as the tracks flow on, *Timelapse* comes to work a certain magic on the spirit and conjures a real sense of mystery and beauty.

Highlights include questing improvisations from Trish Clowes (saxophone) and David Gordon (piano) which unspool across two slow movements from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, while the ensemble delivers particularly affecting performances of Thomas Adès's *O Albion* and Wallen's *Chorale*. The disc also features several arrangements by artistic director/leader David Le Page, including a beautifully contemplative reworking of Bowie and Eno's 'We Could be Heroes', and a version of 'There is a Light That Never Goes Out' by Johnny Marr of The Smiths which proves less successful due to its overt sentimentality, despite beautiful playing from oboist Victoria Brawn. All the same, this is a commendable disc performed with flair which offers a fitting soundtrack to these disorienting times. *Kate Wakeling*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



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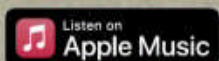
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Shostakovich
Symphonies Nos 9 & 10

Gianandrea Noseda

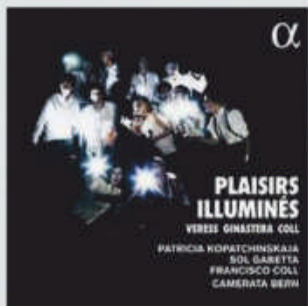
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CONCERTO CHOICE



These musical pleasures are strikingly illuminated

John Allison finds magic in this collection of spirited performances led by Patricia Kopatchinskaja



An arresting presence: Kopatchinskaja has power and personality

Plaisirs illuminés

F Coll: Les plaisirs illuminés; **Ginastera:** Concerto for Strings; **Veress:** Musica concertante; plus works by **Bartók**, **Kurtág** and **Ligeti**
Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin), Sol Gabetta (cello); Camerata Bern/Francisco Coll
Alpha Classics ALPHA580 75:26 mins

Two threads run through this adventurous disc – the spirit of Béla Bartók and the Camerata Bern's prowess – but the force of personality at the centre of it all comes from the violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, who since 2018 has been 'artistic partner' of the ensemble. It opens with Sándor Veress's *Musica concertante per 12 archi*, written in 1965–6 for the then newly formed Camerata Bern, and which in this performance comes across with fiery, searing spirit.

Veress had been a pupil of Bartók, and in turn taught both Ligeti and Kurtág, so miniatures by these three composers (played by Kopatchinskaja with different members of the ensemble) fit beautifully here: the ultra-concise 'Jelek VI' from Kurtág's *Games, Signs and Messages*, the quirky Pizzicato from Bartók's *44 Duos for Two Violins*, and the haunting *Baladă şî joc* by Ligeti.

Camerata Bern's performances come across with fiery spirit

Bartók's folk-music spirit extends even to Francisco Coll's *Les plaisirs illuminés*, a double concerto (in which Kopatchinskaja is joined by the equally compelling Sol Gabetta) inspired by the Dalí painting of the same name and written in 2018 for these Bern forces. Though the Camerata usually plays without a conductor, this challenging score really needs one and Coll (making his conducting debut) obtains an impressive performance. Folk roots are audible in the 'flamenco on speed' third movement, and the work concludes with an intricately interwoven 'Lamento'. The third substantial work is Ginastera's

Concerto per corde, which through its use of folk-inspired quartertones evokes a musical sort of magic realism, culminating in a virtuosic finale. Far from being anti-climactic, an improvised postscript clears the air at the end of this extraordinary disc.

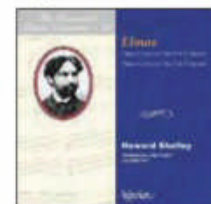
PERFORMANCE
RECORDING

★★★★★
★★★★★

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at www.classical-music.com

Elmas

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 2
Tasmania Symphony Orchestra/
Howard Shelley (piano)
Hyperion CDA68319 73:12 mins



Here's one of the most obscure discoveries in Hyperion's long-running Romantic Piano

Concerto series. According to the informative booklet note, Stéphan Elmas (1862–1937) was a widely admired child prodigy pianist, and enjoyed the distinction of being the first composer of Armenian descent to write piano concertos. He dedicated a set of *Études* to Liszt in 1884 and befriended influential musicians such as Jules Massenet. After a severe hearing loss in 1897, his career took a nosedive. Settling in Geneva, aged 50, Elmas withdrew from public life, becoming increasingly bitter at his isolation.

Judging from these two works, Elmas's musical idiom was hardly original, owing a great deal to Chopin. His piano writing is highly idiomatic, and he has an uncanny knack of writing memorable lyrical melodies for the slow movements in both these works. On the debit side, his opening movements are far too long-winded and discursive for their own good, and there is too much reliance on bombastic passage work. Nonetheless, it would be hard to find a more highly committed advocate for this music than Howard Shelley who masters all the considerable technical challenges of these works with consummate ease, and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra offers sturdy and reliable support throughout. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE
RECORDING

★★★★
★★★★

Fesch

Violin Concerto in C minor, Op. 5/5; Concerti grossi – Op. 3 Nos 1 & 5; Op. 10 Nos 3–5
Lidewij van der Voort (violin);
La Sfera Armoniosa/Mike Fentross
Challenge CC72829 60:09 mins



Contemporary with Bach and Handel, Willem de Fesch was a native of Holland where he was a celebrated violinist. In 1731 he moved to London where he lived

until his death 30 years later. Though better known nowadays for his sonatas and concertos Fesch was an early pioneer of English oratorio, the lone survivor of which, *Joseph*, was discovered in 1980.

Fesch's music is unfailingly attractive, notwithstanding Dr Burney's withering assessment of it as 'in general dry and uninteresting'. The present disc features concertos from three sets issued between around 1717 and 1741. Corelli, on the one hand, and Vivaldi on the other were clearly strong influences. Indeed, in the opening movement of Op. 5 No. 5 we might be forgiven for believing, if only momentarily, that it had been penned by the Venetian. The concerto features a solo violin whose expressive and sometimes technically challenging role perhaps affords us a glimpse of Fesch's own skill as a player. This fine work is the high point of a well-chosen programme.

Several of the concertos featured here have been recorded in the past, but performances of this calibre make a valuable gesture towards redressing undeserved neglect. Just occasionally, as in the A minor Concerto Grosso, there are rough edges in the upper strings, but they hardly detracted from my enjoyment. This is, after all, a live recording, with applause at the end. In short, here is a pleasing overview of Fesch's concerto writing, some favouring four movements, others three. Unhelpfully, no movement details are provided in the accompanying documentation.

Nicholas Anderson

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Christian Lindberg

Liverpool Lullabies; Waves of Wollongong; 2017
Evelyn Glennie (percussion);
New Trombone Collective;
Antwerp Symphony Orchestra/
Christian Lindberg (trombone)
BIS BIS-2418 (CD/SACD) 72:00 mins



In 1997, long fêted for his prodigious artistry as a trombonist, Christian Lindberg discovered an equal flair for composing. More recently, he has won accolades as a conductor. This ebullient album reveals him a force of nature in all three roles



A dash of dynamism:
Evelyn Glennie strikes
gold in Lindberg

alongside superb collaborators including an ever-agile Antwerp Symphony Orchestra.

As soloist and new music commissioner, Lindberg has always revelled in the trombone's possibilities. In *The Waves of Wollongong* (2006-9), a piece he considers 'a milestone for me as a composer for large orchestra', he puts a whopping nine trombones up front in a kind of choir electrically performed by the New Trombone Collective. Memories of the Australian ocean inspired Lindberg to envision the trombones as different-sized waves. From surging ascending scales and splashing dissonances to rugged, briny melodies – and rich fanfares recalling Gabrieli's Venice – the fecundity and juxtaposition of the material dazzles while weaving into a satisfying whole.

Again in *Liverpool Lullabies* (2015-16), a double concerto for trombone and percussion based on memories of the city and childhood lullabies, the apparently incongruous is rendered fantastically akin. Vividly played by Lindberg and Evelyn Glennie, flashes of savagery add spice to a dynamic mix that sweeps into jazzy tenderness with ease.

Lindberg's theatrical instinct takes a darker turn in *2017*, a response to the year which saw Trump take office amidst deepening environmental crisis. With Shostakovian irony, the orchestra

skitters and bludgeons through seven sections with titles like 'Fake News' and 'The Bragger' that say it all. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Piazzolla

Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*
(arr. Albonetti); **Romance del Diablo** (arr. Albonetti); **Oblivion** (arr. P Ziegler); **Años de Soledad** (arr. Albonetti); **Libertango** (arr. Albonetti); **plus P Ziegler: Improvisation on 'Oblivion'**

Marco Albonetti (saxophone),
*Cesare Carretta (violin), *Virgilio Monti (double bass), *Alessandra Gelfini (piano); Orchestra Filarmonica Italiana
Chandos CHAN20220 54:19 mins



Distinctive artistry is all too often only fully appreciated after a musician has died. While this is not broadly the case for Astor Piazzolla, it was commemorations of the composer's death in 1992 that brought him to the attention of the saxophonist Marco Albonetti. It was love at first listen: since then, the Italian has become a leading Piazzolla expert, undertaking research in Buenos Aires for his doctoral studies. Albonetti's scholarly understanding of the *nuevo tango* informs his latest orchestrations of Piazzolla's music,

performed here alongside the Orchestra Filarmonica Italiana.

A colourful rendition of *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* – also known as *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* – forms the cornerstone of the collection. The four pieces were originally scored for quintet – the bandoneón parts (the Argentinian concertina played by Piazzolla) work surprisingly well transcribed for soprano saxophone.

The Four Seasons are interspersed with the wistful *Romance del Diablo*, *Años de Soledad* (featuring baritone saxophone), the famous *Libertango* and *Oblivion* (arranged by Piazzolla's former pianist, composer Pablo Ziegler). The sentimentality of the latter is leavened with a haunting improvisatory prelude, accompanied by a repetitive single bass note. Altogether, a stand-out success among recent arrangements for saxophone (Jess Gillam's *Rise* and *Time*, Ferio Quartet's *Revive*; Marci Saxs's *Origin*). *Claire Jackson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Romberg

Violin Concertos Nos 4, 9 & 12
Chouchane Siranossian (violin);
Capriccio Barockorchester
Alpha Classics ALPHA452 76:50 mins



A slightly older contemporary of Beethoven, Romberg has suffered the inevitable fate of being sidelined by musical history. The violin was his instrument, and at least 20 concertos are extant, with the musical language moving from the classical world of Mozart and Haydn to something more Beethovenian. Idiomatically conceived for the soloist, they go beyond mere display, but don't always manage to escape from formula, nor come up with striking ideas.

Capriccio Barockorchester means business right from the tightly rhythmic opening of the Fourth Concerto, with the bright sound emphasising the gutsy attack of the strings and tang of the winds. After that, Chouchane Siranossian's first entry is less convincing, both in tonal consistency and intonation, and this is particularly exposed in leaps and at speed: she sounds more comfortable in lyrical music at the lower end of the range. The pacing of the music is convincingly flexible,



◀ From the archives

Andrew McGregor delves into a treasure trove of rare recordings of a great pianist, Hephzibah Menuhin



'A distinguished spirit, a gracious, generous woman... deserving of a place among the great pianists of the 20th century', says film-maker Bruno Monsaingeon, who curated this centenary **Hephzibah Menuhin – Homage** (Warner Classics 9029527031; 9 CDs/2 DVDs). He knew Hephzibah

and her dazzlingly famous older brother Yehudi Menuhin well, but they were treated quite differently. According to their mother in a newspaper interview: 'I tell her that the only immortality to which a woman should aspire is that of a home and children.' Yet the siblings formed a duo in private, then in public. Their recorded legacy begins with a Mozart Sonata in Paris 1933, with 13-year-old Hephzibah showing a delightfully sensitive touch. 'I've often wondered if anyone has ever felt as much pure happiness when performing as I did on the best occasions with Hephzibah,' wrote Yehudi, and you can feel it for yourself in the conversational intimacy of Bach and Beethoven from 1938, and Brahms recorded during Yehudi's tour of Australia in 1940, where Hephzibah was now living with her sheep-farmer husband.

Some of Hephzibah's classics are there: Schubert's *Trout* Quintet with the Amadeus Quartet, and effortlessly stylish Mozart concertos with Yehudi conducting. But Monsaingeon also includes unreleased, live recordings: there's a Mozart Concerto for Two Pianos with her nephew Jeremy Menuhin, scrappily accompanied; better is Beethoven's Op. 110 from mid-1970s Paris, a 1960 Bath Festival appearance with Louis Kentner playing a Mozart duo sonata, and Brahms *Liebeslieder-Walzer* with a quartet of singers including Janet Baker.

My favourite finds are brother and sister together in a blistering Bartók First Sonata live in Moscow, and previously unreleased Debussy and Enescu. The two DVDs present a remarkable range of occasions, from a family reunion in Mozart at Yehudi's 50th-birthday concert to the Franck Sonata at the UN. A touching tribute to a fine musician who forged her own path.



Andrew McGregor is the presenter of Radio 3's *Record Review*, broadcast each Saturday morning from 9am until 11.45am

and the orchestra stays with her all the time – it's not clear from the booklet whether she or the orchestra leader is in charge, incidentally.

The most interesting movement in the earlier concertos is the Rondo finale in the Fourth, where the episodes explore different moods, keys and time signatures. But standing out is the Twelfth Concerto, with its opening very much in the *Sturm und Drang* tradition, and reaching forward towards something more Romantic. It also draws the best playing from Siranossian, especially the first movement cadenza – unusually accompanied by wind and timpani – and in the finale, a buoyant polonaise. *Martin Cotton*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

A Rosetti

Violin Concertos in C, D and F
Lena Neudauer (violin); Southwest German Chamber Orchestra
CPO 555 381-2 58:54 mins



Received wisdom tends to suggest that in the age of Haydn and Mozart, no other music apart from theirs is really worth bothering about, because if it were, we'd be hearing it more often. This may be broadly true, but only up to a point. While the Bohemian-born Antonio Rosetti's violin concertos are not in Mozart's league, on this evidence their quality deserves more than just specialist interest. These three were written (in the reverse order of their catalogue numbering) in the late 1770s for successive leaders of the Oettingen-Wallerstein court orchestra where Rosetti was then director.

As it happens, the first two movements of the C major Concerto feature the stiffest and dullest music, which turns out to be untypical: the finale has genuine sparkle, as do the quick outer movements of the other two works (the intercut slower and quicker sections of the F major Concerto's closing Rondo throw up some likeable surprises), while the D major Concerto's slow central movement has much lyrical poise and charm.

The performances respond in classy style: Lena Neudauer is a warmly expressive soloist with a firm, rounded tone and super-precise articulation, and

the accompanying support is crisp without being over-dry.

Malcolm Hayes

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Shostakovich

Cello Concertos Nos 1 & 2

Marc Coppey (cello); Polish National Radio Symphony/Lawrence Foster
Audite AUDITE97777 60:07 mins



Pairing Shostakovich's cello concertos, both dedicated to Mstislav Rostropovich

and premiered by him in 1959 and 1966 respectively, has become commonplace on recordings. To feature them in the same concert may be unique, but it makes sense, being a more varied journey than the one to be found in the two violin concertos. The greater part of the live intensity and atmosphere is to be found in the magnificent ensembles and (more often) solos of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra players under the ever-reliable Lawrence Foster. Wind and horn especially sound wonderful in Katowice's much-praised orchestra, with plenty of air around the instruments but also much immediacy. A bit too much, perhaps, as Coppey launches *mezzo forte* rather than *piano* into the quest of the First Concerto. At the opposite extreme, too, the best interpreters tend to find more tearing intensity.

Coppey's intonation and timbre at both extremes of the register, though, are always of the highest order. The interweaving of soloist and orchestra constantly holds the attention, and you find more genuine *pianissimos* in the Second Concerto, its final *Allegretto* one of the most compelling in the entire orchestral repertoire with its percussion-accompanied fanfares, cadenzas, ritornellos and marionette dances. Here you really do sense the depths of Shostakovich's later style, always rethought in each work's approach to the question of imminent death, always original. The many quotations, speculative or actual, and what Shostakovich would have called 'pseudo-quotations', are admirably covered in Michael Stuck-Schloen's impressively detailed notes. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Concertos for Mallet Instruments

Alexis Alrich: Marimba Concerto;
Karl Jenkins: La Folia;
Ned Rorem: Mallet Concerto
Evelyn Glennie (percussion); City
Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong/
Jean Thorel
Naxos 8.574218 71:01 mins



Another engaging disc from the ever-compelling Evelyn Glennie with three attractive

concertos that should win many friends. From its shimmering opening, Alexis Alrich's substantial three-movement Marimba Concerto creates a distinctive lyrical world. The insistent rhythmic patterns of minimalism sit naturally alongside calmer, more impressionistic textures allied to hints of Glennie's fascination with Asian music. Under Jean Thorel, the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong are evocatively hazy when needed, yet also fresh and beautifully balanced with the marimba, an instrument all-too-easily overwhelmed.

With *La Folia*, the only previously recorded piece, Karl Jenkins joins the litany of composers inspired by this centuries-old theme, some of his figurations taking off from Corelli's celebrated variations. The orchestra strings play with an appositely grainy, almost archaic, texture to underpin the simultaneously modern, yet ancient marimba. Full of delicious nuances, Glennie's ever-musical virtuosity is to the fore, not just in the sustained streams of notes in the showier variations, but also in the numerous subtle flourishes that unobtrusively decorate more sedate passages.

Ned Rorem's Mallet Concerto features pairs of movements each for vibraphone, glockenspiel and marimba arranged palindromically around a centrepiece for xylophone. Like Jenkins's *La Folia*, it was written for Glennie and, while there is plenty of dizzying pizzazz, Rorem has the confidence also to write the simplest of lines for her. Ever-true to his inventive brand of neoclassicism, it is by turns wistful, quirky, exuberant and reflective, the final 'An ending' a profound conclusion to an engrossing disc. *Christopher Dingle*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Occurrence

Works by Bjarnason, MB Johannsson, Jónsdóttir, Tómasson and Vaka

Mario Caroli (flute), Pekka Kuusisto (violin); Iceland Symphony Orchestra/Daníel Bjarnason
Sono Luminus DSL-92243 70:42 mins



This third – and, for now, final – instalment of Iceland Symphony Orchestra's

Project series continues with aplomb their survey of homegrown contemporary composers. In all, nine have been featured; each in their way reflecting the richly creative ethos that has flourished post-war in that land of ice and volcanic fire.

Three composers return from previous volumes – including the brilliant series conductor, Daníel Bjarnason. His 2017 Violin Concerto opens the album with a spectacular performance by soloist Pekka Kuusisto. Intensely virtuosic, the violin is nonetheless always part of a greater whole: from folky, whistled tunes to roaring and growling on the detuned bottom string, storms of colour are unleashed for the orchestra to absorb and rework in surging textures.

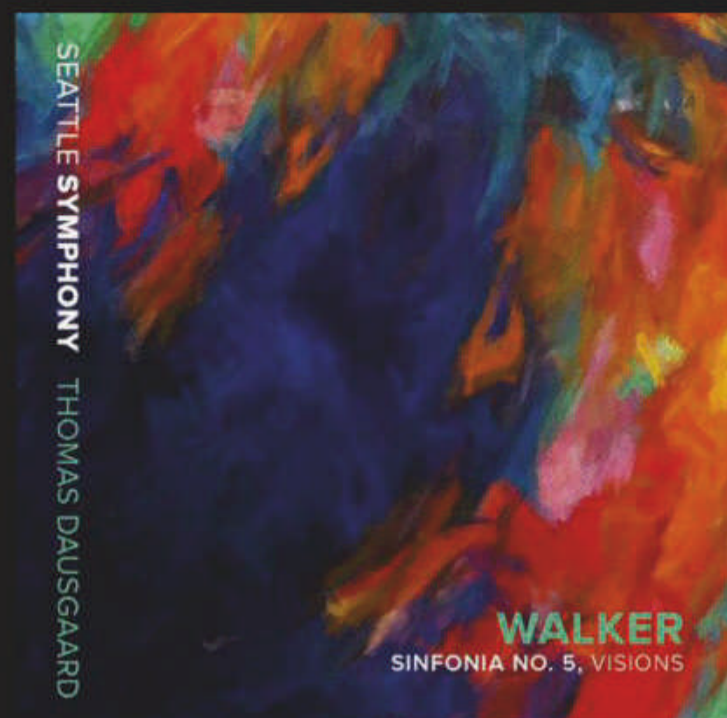
By contrast, Thurídur Jónsdóttir's *Flutter* suffuses a slow-moving orchestral backdrop with recordings of grasshoppers, against which flute soloist Mario Caroli explores bird-like extended techniques in honour of Messiaen's 2008 birth centenary.

While a more human drama pervades Haukur Tómasson's quirkily imaginative *In Seventh Heaven* (2011), Iceland's landscape takes centre stage in *Lendh* (2019) by Canadian-born newcomer, Veronique Vaka. Transcribing into sound the topography of a geothermal region near Reykjavik, the orchestra feels embedded in the environment: solid yet lithe, dark yet light and peppered with eruptions that subside as quickly as they appear.

Also new to the series is Magnús Blöndal Jóhannsson (1925-2005). The former avant-gardist brings this engaging release to a rapt close with his lyrically tonal *Adagio*, which emerged in 1980 following a lengthy silence. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

NEW RELEASE



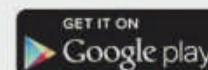
GEORGE WALKER SINFONIA NO. 5, "VISIONS" WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Thomas Dausgaard conductor
Clayton Brainerd vocals
Ed Morris vocals
Stephen Newby vocals
Shaina Shepherd vocals
Seattle Symphony

The Seattle Symphony's world premiere performance of American composer George Walker's Sinfonia No. 5, "Visions," is now available as a digital download. Walker wrote this powerful work in response to the horrific events of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church massacre in 2015. This restless composition — recorded in the stunning acoustics of Benaroya Hall — combines spoken text and orchestral music in a bold and impactful score from this Pulitzer Prize-winning composer.

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OPERA CHOICE



Familiar treasures heard anew in a dazzling debut

Korean soprano Hera Hyesang Park is an artist with a sparkling career ahead, says **Christopher Cook**



Daring and graceful:
Hera Hyesang Park
rises to every challenge

I Am Hera

Bellini: Arias from *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*; **Gluck:** Arias from *Orfeo ed Euridice*; **Handel:** Aria from *Giulio Cesare*; **Mozart:** Arias from *Idomeneo*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*; **Puccini:** Arias from *La bohème* and *Gianni Schicchi*; **Rossini:** Arias from *The Barber of Seville* and *Il Turco in Italia*; **plus works by Joowon Kim, Pergolesi and Un-Yung La**

Hera Hyesang Park (soprano), Johannes Maria Bogner (harpsichord); Vienna Symphony Orchestra/Bertrand de Billy
DG 483 9456 66:35 mins

Hera today, but hopefully not gone tomorrow. The young Korean soprano Hera Hyesang Park has recorded one of the most satisfying debuts for many a day.

This is a voice that rises to every challenge. Listen to the silvery tone and graceful ascent to the upper register in Gluck's 'Che fiero momento' from *Orfeo ed Euridice*, or the seemingly effortless legato of Cleopatra's aria 'Se pietadi me non senti' from *Giulio Cesare*. Park 'lives' her characters too, with coloratura decoration and cadenzas always at the service of the drama. She's a distraught Ilia in *Idomeneo*, a flighty

Fiorilla in *Il turco in Italia*, and a Rosina who knows her own mind in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

There is intelligence too. Park knows that the aria 'Un voce poco fa' should be sung as a miniature three-act drama; and that if that first stamp of her foot on the word 'ma' is a tad ladylike, the second reveals exactly how determined this Rosina is to have her own way and to win Lindoro. Then when you hear the

almost elegiac tone she brings to Juliet in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* you cross your fingers and toes that Park will graduate to Bellini's other soprano roles.

Bertrand de Billy is her

perfect partner, conducting the matchless Vienna Symphony Orchestra. Who else would dare to stretch out the tempos in Puccini's 'O mio babbino caro' and Musetta's Waltz song? But it makes you hear these old familiar arias as if for the very first time.

PERFORMANCE
RECORDING

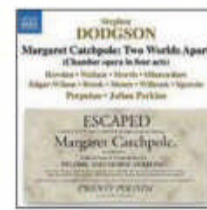
★★★★★
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Dodgson

Margaret Catchpole: Two Worlds Apart

Kate Howden, William Wallace, Nicholas Morris, Richard Edgar-Wilson; Perpetuo/Julian Perkins
Naxos 8.660459-61 165:36 mins (3 discs)



Stephen Dodgson (1924-2013) – a distant relative of Charles, aka Lewis Carroll – left a notable

body of work that, under the auspices of The Stephen Dodgson Charitable Trust, is edging towards the recognition it deserves. *Margaret Catchpole: Two Worlds Apart* (1979) is one of Dodgson's three operas – this is its first recording.

Ronald Fletcher's unfussy libretto is based on Richard Cobbold's novel, a fictionalised retelling of the true story of a Suffolk woman who was sent to the newly established penal colony in Australia for stealing a horse, after becoming entwined in a love triangle with a smuggler and a childhood friend. It would be a lazy cliché to seek comparisons with Suffolk's more famous operatic counterpart, *Peter Grimes*, except that there are genuine flashes of Britten throughout the score. Dodgson's use of timbre, particularly woodwind (such as the gorgeous clarinet solos in Acts III and IV), recalls the *Sea Interludes*, and his landscapes (the mists over the River Orwell; sunny Sydney) have an evocative, representational quality also present in *Grimes*.

The recording is of a concert performance, given at Snape Maltings in 2019 to mark the bicentenary of Catchpole's death, with a largely Suffolk-born cast. Australian mezzo-soprano Kate Howden provides Antipodean representation – and much more besides – as Catchpole. William Wallace beguiles as bad boy Will Laud and Alistair Ollerenshaw is strong as the reliable, eventual 'public benefactor' John Barry. Unusually for an opera with an eponymous heroine, there's even a happy ending.

The sound benefits from the clean acoustic of the venue. The libretto is not included with the three-disc set, but is available to download. *Claire Jackson*

PERFORMANCE
RECORDING

★★★★★
★★★★★

Donizetti

Il paria

Albina Shagimuratova, Misha Kiria, René Barbera, Marco Mimica; Opera Rara Chorus; Britten Sinfonia/Mark Elder

Opera Rara 9293800602

111:22 mins (2 discs)



Il paria was virtually wiped off the map: even otherwise comprehensive opera guides

ignore it. Donizetti was commissioned to write it for a royal gala in Naples in 1829; such occasions were more about pomp than music, and shrouded in such formal etiquette that they could just as easily break as make a work. And so it was in this case: the opera was performed just six times.

Opera Rara reveals *Il paria* as an opera that is melodically rich, if somewhat challenging to cast. The role of Idamore is surely one of the most difficult in the entire tenor repertoire, but René Barbera proves up to the task, effortlessly pinging out top C sharps with abandon. With his generous, pure tone, he is well matched as the love interest of Albina Shagimuratova (Neala), a soprano with a velvety, often consoling voice and an impeccable sense of line, while Misha Kiria is imposing as Zarete, the eponymous 'pariah'. The Britten Sinfonia under Mark Elder are on superb form, the recording carefully balanced so individual instrumental lines blaze through the texture.

The plot, an angst-ridden story of forbidden love in 16th-century India, is rather 'of its time'; yet the theme of religious fanaticism has

never gone away. One thing is for sure: the painstaking work Opera Rara puts into these ventures, bringing together musicians and musicologists to resurrect long-forgotten historic gems, is admirable, and this latest recording most worthwhile. *Alexandra Wilson*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

RECORDING

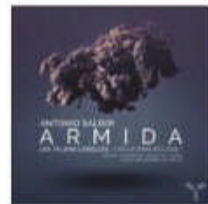
★★★★

Salieri

Armida

Lenneke Ruiten, Teresa Iervolino, Florie Valiquette, Ashley Riches; Choeur de Chambre de Namur; Les Talens Lyriques/Christoph Rousset

Aparté AP244 115:17 mins (2 discs)



Thanks to Peter Shaffer's play (and subsequently acclaimed film) *Amadeus*, Antonio Salieri is

often viewed as a malign individual of limited talent who did his best to destroy Mozart. It's fiction, of course. During his lifetime Salieri was admired all over Europe, with important commissions from Italy and Paris as well as Vienna. Those of his scores revived and recorded over recent decades frequently prove to be of superior quality – among them the present work. Composed for Vienna in 1771 and widely performed for 30 years, *Armida* was his first serious Italian opera. This is its first recording.

Salieri is often imaginative. The opera's overture, for instance, is a programmatic piece describing the Christian knight Ubaldo's arrival on Armida's island, surrounded by dense fog, the guardian monsters who hurl themselves upon him and their confusion as they are put to flight, his ascent of the cliffs and his



A powerful pariah:
Misha Kiria is imposing
in Donizetti's title role

serenity on reaching the top. Under the motivating baton of Christophe Rousset, Les Talens Lyriques find the exact colours for this thrilling piece of tone-painting.

Thereafter Salieri's numerous arias, ensembles, choruses and dance movements are of a very high order, with many distinctive echoes of Gluck's reform works.

The cast is solid. The title-role has strong possibilities which soprano Lenneke Ruiten regularly seizes, among them the opera's close, when Armida's destructive fury reaches its apogee. Teresa Iervolino deploys her vividly dramatic mezzo as her confidante, Ismene. Florie Valiquette's sweet soprano is well cast in the (originally castrato) role of the errant knight Rinaldo, while Ashley Riches is thoroughly engaged as his friend Ubaldo. *George Hall*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★

Contralto

Arias by Bononcini, Caldara, Gasparini, Handel, Porpora and Vivaldi

Nathalie Stutzmann (contralto); Orfeo 55

Erato 9029520955 75:38 mins



Nathalie Stutzmann is an acclaimed singer and also conductor of the Kristiansand

Orchestra in Norway and a guest conductor of the Philadelphia

Orchestra. Here she simultaneously sings and conducts, which adds a mutually beneficial vocal and orchestral immediacy to the performances – even in the technically risky 'E morto', from Vivaldi's *Bajazet*, an emotionally erratic recitative accompanied by full orchestra. This selection of arias for both men and women – including five world-premiere recordings – offers a fascinating homage to women in the 18th century who performed both types of role.

Stutzmann's voice is impressively flexible in timbre and her instincts are thoroughly musical if sometimes adventurous rather than stylistically fastidious. Her ornamentations can be almost flamboyantly rhapsodic (Porpora, 'Torbida intorno'), but that is part of her talent for acting with the voice (as in Porpora, 'Tradita, sprezzata'). In some fast items (Handel, 'Mio cor') she becomes a little snatched and abrasive, but elsewhere her capacity for liquid fluency (Bononcini, 'Cara addio') and purity of tone (Gasparini, 'Empia Mano') are entrancing. The instrumental contributions are often admirable, though the bass line can be heavy and slightly flat (Handel, *Berenice* Act III Sinfonia). Most impressive is the cello obbligato (performed by Alice Coquart) in Vivaldi's 'Di verde' which ends with a touching duet cadenza with the voice. *Anthony Pryer*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★



BACKGROUND TO...

Salieri's *Armida*

Salieri (left) was just 20 when he first attempted the challenging genre of *opera seria*. He chose a story already made famous by Tasso's 16th-century epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata*, concerning the love affair between the Christian Crusader Rinaldo and the Saracen sorceress Armida; Lully and Handel had both written operas on that subject. Inspired by Gluck's

renovations of opera, Salieri's drama involves just four characters. First performed on 2 June 1771 in Vienna, the three-act opera's originality and dramatic effectiveness secured Salieri's reputation throughout Europe.

Choral & Song

CHORAL & SONG CHOICE



Caroline Shaw

Narrow Sea; Taxidermy

Dawn Upshaw (soprano), Gilbert Kalish (piano); Sō Percussion
Nonesuch 7559791789 28:22 mins

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw continues to make waves with her imaginative and expressive works that glide effortlessly between genres.

This short but exquisite disc showcases Shaw's 2017 *Narrow Sea*,

recorded by its outstanding original performers: Sō Percussion, soprano Dawn Upshaw and pianist Gilbert Kalish. Exploring the importance of refuge and the idea of water as a passage between this world and the next, *Narrow Sea* draws on texts from *The Sacred Harp*, a collection of American hymns first published in 1844. Shaw reworks these powerful texts with new melodies, adding fresh colour but retaining the emotional directness of the original hymns themselves. The

The five-movement work is at once joyful and mesmeric

gentle, tonal piano line (played with subtlety and grace by Kalish) is cast as a 'grounding force or a familiar memory' set amid an intriguing and exploratory battery of musical timbres, including 'ceramic bowls, humming, a piano played like a dulcimer by five people at once and flowerpots'. The resulting five-movement work is at once joyful and mesmeric. Its instrumental harmonies and textures are often

spare, but Shaw is unafraid to spin a tune and the paired songs that open and close the work have a wonderful

lilt which Upshaw carries off with gorgeous lyricism.

The album is completed with the one-movement work *Taxidermy* (2012), which again makes creative use of the muted, bell-like timbre of flowerpots, combined here with hypnotic overlapping speech patterns. Performed with assurance and poise by Sō Percussion, *Taxidermy* offers an aptly delicate and thoughtful close to this beautiful disc.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

A fleeting and powerful voyage in song

Kate Wakeling is swept along by Caroline Shaw's journey between worlds



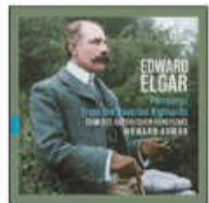
Lilting soprano:
Dawn Upshaw is
a lyrical soloist

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Elgar

From the Bavarian Highlands; Five Part-songs from the Greek Anthology, Op. 45; The Reveille, Op. 54; Spanish Serenade; Go, song of mine, etc.

Radoslaw Szulc, Julita Smoleń (violin); Bavarian Radio Choir/Howard Arman; Max Hanft (piano)
BR Klassik 900522 65:37 mins



A German choir performing Elgar's partsongs in English? Doubts dissolve mere seconds

into *From the Bavarian Highlands*, where the infectious pointing of dance rhythms in the opening song of the cycle, and the lilting playing of

pianist Max Hanft, draw the listener effortlessly in.

At 50 voices, the Bavarian Radio Choir is fairly large, but shows a chamber-like delicacy of nuance in 'False Love', with open, airy vowels and intelligently contoured phrasing. The choir's English conductor Howard Arman – currently in his fifth season as artistic director – clearly has much to do with this. 'Lullaby' is delightfully light-spirited, 'The Marksman' lusty without sacrificing the ensemble's trademark warmth of tone and equitable balancing of voice parts.

In addition to the six Bavarian Highlands songs, there are 14 further settings. Of these, the a cappella *Five Partsongs from the*

Greek Anthology are particularly successful, eliciting incisive, sharply insightful interpretations from the choir's male voices. Three songs have parts for two violins – they add a playful, almost slinky counterpoint to 'Spanish Serenade' – and a further four are unaccompanied. These include the poignant 'They Are at Rest' and 'The Prince of Sleep', both given movingly restrained performances.

The choir's English is immaculate and the booklet notes are informative, with full texts printed. Do not hesitate if you want to push your knowledge of Elgar into largely unfamiliar territory. *Terry Blain*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Josquin

Motets and Mass Movements: O bone et dulcissime Jesu a 6; Domine, ne in furore tuo, etc.

The Brabant Ensemble/Stephen Rice
Hyperion CDA68321 77:08 mins



The Brabant Ensemble's recordings have tended to focus on less familiar Franco-Flemish

composers associated with the duchy of Brabant, but here they turn to the celebrated 'fons et origo' of Renaissance polyphony, Josquin des Prez. The selection of works chosen to mark the 500th anniversary of the composer's death does, however, unveil some rarities: we hear the

Corpus Christi motet *Homo quidam fecit coenam magnam* in a version not previously recorded; a lush setting of the Stabat Mater fleshed out in the late 16th century, long after Josquin's death; and a mellifluous version of the motet *O bone et dulcissime Jesu*, again with additional voices enriching the stark original. The disc also includes several works of uncertain authenticity, including *Usquequo, Domine*, whose dolorous text unfolds at an aptly measured tread here, and the poignant psalm setting *Domine, ne in furore tuo*, its penitential words uttered with a sense of quiet resignation.

The ensemble's sound is clean and ingenuous throughout: boyish sopranos and altos are balanced by fresh-voiced tenors and basses, intonation is nigh flawless, the recording limpid. Stephen Rice and his singers subtly capture the emotional and spiritual gamut of these works – from the joyful serenity of the Annunciation sequence *Mittit ad virginem* to the dark anguish of *Huc me sydereo* – Maffeo Vegio's poetic meditation on the Passion of Christ, which the ensemble delivers with haunting intensity. Rice's detailed liner notes, which include a summary of the scholarly debates surrounding the spurious works, wrap up this treasurable anniversary disc.

Kate Bolton-Porciatti

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Medtner

**Six Poems by Pushkin, Op. 36;
Five Poems, Op. 37, etc.**

Sofia Fomina (soprano),

Alexander Karpeyev (piano)

Chandos CHAN 20171 57:11 mins



Though Russian soprano Sofia Fomina has created a stir in the opera house, this all-Medtner

disc would appear to be her first commercial Lieder recording. Rather than cherry-pick across the opus numbers (as did the survey curated by pianist Iain Burnside for Delphian a couple of years ago), she opts for four complete sets of songs: two composed before Medtner fled the aftermath of the Russian Revolution; and two composed in Brittany before London beckoned in 1936. And while Russian poets fuel Opp. 36, 37 and 45, Op. 46's Goethe, Eichendorff and Chamisso

settings reflect Medtner's German sympathies – nurtured through family links stretching back to Goethe himself.

The pianist's role is crucial. Medtner was a fine performer, and the piano is so often in the driving seat as words blossom into song. Alexander Karpeyev provides the ideal grounding for Fomina's famously silvery tone (which can assume a hard-edged glint as required). How weightlessly it hovers over his sumptuously rippling accompaniment at the start of 'The Angel' (Op. 36/1), and how hollowed out is the desolation of 'The Flower' which follows. Karpeyev takes the ever-changing emotional temperature of the Pushkin-setting 'Elegy' (Op. 45/1) with an unfailing sensitivity to its rise and fall; and he seizes the reins of 'The Wagon of Life' (Op. 45/2) with robust determination, egging on the scornful disdain of Fomina's 'easy now, you fool'. Her colouristic range can be a little circumscribed, but this is a rewarding addition to a still unaccountably under-populated discography. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Stanford

Songs of Faith, Op. 97;

Three Songs of Robert Bridges;

Nonsense Rhymes; Songs from

Shamus O'Brien, Op. 61;

The Triumph of Love, Op. 82

Roderick Williams (baritone), James Way (tenor), Andrew West (piano)

SOMMSOMMCD 0627 78:50 mins



There are quite a few rarities here, including the 1891 *Three Songs of Robert Bridges* and

the 1903 *The Triumph of Love*. The former include some of the simpler and more appealing settings, with Roderick Williams's lucid tone, straightforward manner and ability to match words and notes helping him realise effortlessly sincere and sympathetic performances.

Partly due to overwrought texts by Stanford's cousin, the minor poet Edmond Gore Alexander Holmes, as a whole *The Triumph of Love* forms a less successful collection; in them Stanford's Brahmsian heritage is at its most thick-textured and at times overbearing – though the simplicity and unaffectedness of 'I think that we were children' make it a real



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gem. Despite the mixed quality of individual songs, tenor James Way gives *The Triumph of Love* eloquence and sweep, while Williams does equally well by *Songs of Faith* (1906), settings – again uneven – of Tennyson and Walt Whitman.

The two singers share the more attractive *Four Songs from Shamus O'Brien* (1896) – Stanford's most successful opera – embodying its various male characters with dramatic vitality and conviction. They also divide between them the *Nonsense Songs*, settings of limericks by Edward Lear (or in one case, Anon) whose humour – mainly involving quotations from other composers – can be heavy handed. Several of them start promisingly enough, though just go on that little bit too long; but a couple at a time would go down well enough, or even just one as an encore.

Fine playing throughout from pianist Andrew West, and impressive sound. *George Hall*
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Villa-Lobos

Choral Transcriptions of works by JS Bach, Massenet, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schumann, etc

São Paulo Symphony Choir/
 Valentina Peleggi
Naxos 8.574286 58:32 mins



While much of Villa-Lobos's music deserves to be far better known, it is yet remarkable to

have a disc where the overwhelming majority of pieces are new to the catalogue. The explanation is that the newcomers are transcriptions for a cappella choir of famous pieces by Beethoven, Chopin, Massenet, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninov, Schubert, Schumann and, especially, Bach. Given Villa-Lobos's close affinity with the last of these it's no surprise that the various Bach Preludes and Fugues are generally the most convincing transcriptions. If the D major fugue brings The Swingle Singers to mind, the D sharp minor fugue is redolent of polyphony and the B flat minor prelude is especially poignant.

Also effective are Mendelssohn's E major *Song Without Words* and the only two pieces with texts, Massenet's *Élégie* and, in Portuguese, Schubert's 'Ständchen', the latter



Sympathetic singer:
 Roderick Williams
 is lucid in Stanford

having a deliciously swaggering insouciance. More problematic are the transcriptions of various Romantic piano works. The faster sections of Chopin's C sharp minor Waltz, rather than an outpouring of free-flowing lyricism, evoke intemperate gabbling. Similarly, the imperious drama of Rachmaninov's C sharp minor Prelude is replaced by farce, opening with absurdly pompous basses followed by what sounds like a flock of ducks. Whether the São Paulo Symphony Choir and their director Valentina Peleggi exacerbate such misfires is a moot point, even if various rough moments of intonation undermine this challenging labour of love. Individual transcriptions are intriguingly impressive, but collectively they are distinctly indigestible. *Christopher Dingle*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★

I Wonder As I Wander

Beethoven: An die ferne Geliebte; plus songs by Britten, Mahler and Schubert

James Newby (baritone),
 Joseph Middleton (piano)
BIS BIS-2475 (CD/SACD) 75:26 mins



It would be fair to say that things are not looking up for the fictional protagonists of baritone James

Newby's debut recording. From the restless, bleak voice of Schubert's

Wanderer (D489) to Mahler's doomed soldier ('Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz'), wonderfully evoked here, deserting to answer the longed-for call of his homeland's Alpine horn, redemption seems beyond reach. These are songs for the still grey skies of winter, filled with yearning for the other – whether a love unrequited or lost, a life that falls bitterly short, a homeland viewed from exile – coloured with Newby's elastic vocal tone, sense of drama and attentive articulation.

This is a fine debut disc, its repertoire giving Newby ample chance to demonstrate his expressive and dramatic range, whether in the cold of the Britten song which gives the album its name – superbly accompanied throughout by Joseph Middleton, who brings understated life to Britten's still, pinched piano fragments – or the half-deranged Mahler 'Reveille', in which singer and piano drum relentlessly over the bloodied battlefield towards death.

If this series of brooding, bitter and desperate voices is ever in danger of evoking a sense of melancholic navel-gazing – although largely beautifully done, not least Schubert's 'Abendstern' – there are moments that bring a lighter cast to the theme, such as an exquisitely sung 'Im Freien' (Schubert), or Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*. But it's short-lived, as Mahler's 'Urlicht' aches emotively from singer and pianist, delivering Newby to the

quiet ecstasy of Britten's 'At the mid hour of night'. *Sarah Urwin Jones*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Violins of Hope

Heggie: Intonations – Songs from Violins of Hope*; **Mendelssohn: String Quartet No. 6 in F minor, Op. 80**; **Schubert: Quartettsatz**
 *Sasha Cooke (mezzo-soprano), Daniel Hope, Kay Stern, Dawn Harms (violin), Patricia Hellier (viola), Emil Miland (cello)

Pentatone PTC 5186 879 75:14 mins



The *Violins of Hope* project brings together instruments played by Jewish musicians

before and during the Holocaust – painstakingly restored by Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein as a living reminder of those dark days and an expression of faith in the future. The instruments have subsequently travelled the world, but the concert enshrined on this disc marks a landmark premiere: an artfully-conceived song cycle by Jake Heggie to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Scored for mezzo, solo violin and string quartet, plus a young violinist, *Intonations* tells the stories of some of the instruments, including one which was found to contain human ash. The third song describes a concert taking place in a gas chamber under 'shower heads that have never shed a drop of water'.

Heggie, celebrated for his opera *Dead Man Walking*, accomplishes the task with incontestable fluency, opting for a musical language that marries the contours of Jewish melody with popular idioms; and, in 'Motele', he isn't afraid to quote Mendelssohn who is name-checked in the text. Whether the music penetrates fully the horror is for each listener to decide; but there's no gainsaying the power and sincerity of the performance headed up by the probing mezzo of Sasha Cooke and impassioned eloquence of the aptly-named solo violinist Daniel Hope. The quartet, drawn from members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, also volunteers visceral accounts of Schubert's fevered *Quartettsatz* and Mendelssohn's quartet 'Requiem' for his beloved sister Fanny. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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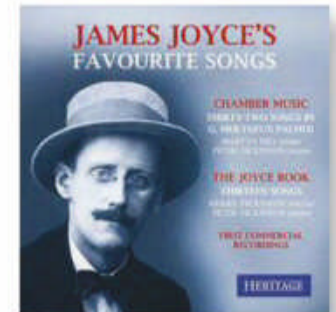


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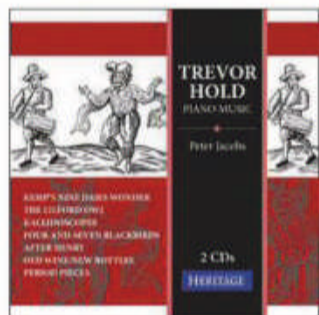
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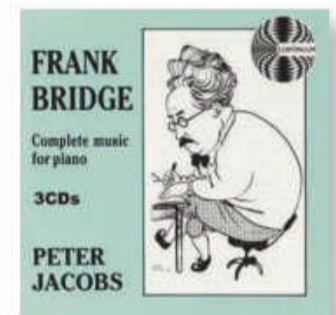
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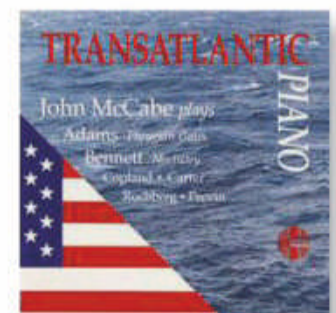


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John McCabe explores twentieth century piano repertoire from North America: Adams, Copland, Carter, Rochberg and Previn.

'This is a typically enterprising programme...' *Gramophone*

CHAMBER CHOICE



Meticulous Mozart in a programme to cherish

This engaging collection from the Armida Quartett is a technical and musical triumph, says *Julian Haylock*



Next-level Mozart:
Fresh insights are
offered by the Armida

Mozart

String Quartets Vol. 3: K155, 168, 172, 387, 575 & 590

Armida Quartett

CAvi-music AVI8553032 116:19 mins (2 discs)

The latest instalment in the Armida's ongoing Mozart quartet series in conjunction with Urtext publishers

Henle (due to be completed this year) is a triumph, both musically and technically. Encapsulating the best of all worlds, the Armida play with the exquisite nuancing of the finest old-school outfits,

yet with a take-nothing-for-granted interpretative inquisitiveness that takes historically informed practice to a whole new level.

They open with the well-loved K387 in G (No. 14) – the first of the 'Haydn' Quartets – and one is immediately struck by the lucidity of both the playing and recording. Gently articulating the music with exquisitely subtle vibrato shadings and exemplary bow control, every line speaks with a clarity of thought that caresses the ear. Most striking of all is the

ensemble's meticulous tonal matching, so that one is beguiled anew by Mozart's infinite variety of scoring – not merely as ideas are passed around the quartet, but by dazzling changes in duet, trio and quartet texturing within the score's structural fabric. The quartet's microfine intonation and cross-matching further enhance the work's expressive potency.

The Armida play with exquisite nuance and much inquisitiveness

music for the first time. Yet turn to K575 in D (No. 21), first of the 'Prussian' set of three, and Mozart's divine 'late' inspiration appears to float free of musical gravity through the Armida's exquisitely insightful playing.

PERFORMANCE

RECORDING

★★★★★

★★★★★

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Beethoven

Sonata No. 8 in G, Op. 30/3 (arr. Pahud)*; Serenade in D, Op. 25†; Allegro and Minuet in G, WoO 26††; Trio Concertante in G, WoO 37*^

Emmanuel Pahud, ††Silvia Careddu (flute), ^Sophie Dervaux (bassoon)

†Daishin Kashimoto (violin),

†Amihai Grosz (viola),

*Daniel Barenboim (piano)

Warner Classics 9029513974 77:34 mins



Beethoven didn't write much chamber music for flute, but Emmanuel Pahud and an

impressive team of colleagues here make lovely, lively work of what the great composer did produce for the instrument, not to mention something he didn't: the G major Sonata Op. 30 No. 3, originally for violin but periodically co-opted by flautists almost ever since.

Pahud starts the disc with this, in his own arrangement, with Daniel Barenboim picking out clear, focused detail in the piano part. If you are familiar with the violin version you might miss the bite of bow on string in the outer movements, but otherwise Pahud's range of tone colour ensures that nothing else registers as being lost, and the slow movement gains new atmosphere from the way the dark flute tone sets up a delicate play of light and shade with the piano.

The Serenade in D, Op. 25, is scored for a pragmatic trio of flute, violin and viola – all players who could stand up for an informal performance, perhaps taking place outdoors. Again, this is beautifully played, with Pahud joined by two Berlin Philharmonic colleagues, the violinist Daishin Kashimoto and violist Amihai Grosz, whose phrasing matches Pahud's as if they, too, are producing the notes with their breath.

The Allegro and Minuet in G for flute duet is slender but delightful as played by Pahud and Silvia Careddu. And the teenage composer's Trio Concertante in G, for which Pahud and Barenboim are joined by bassoonist Sophie Dervaux, emerges full of character and colour. *Erica Jeal*

PERFORMANCE

RECORDING

★★★★★

★★★★★

Beethoven

Violin Sonatas Nos 7 & 10

James Ehnes (violin),
Andrew Armstrong (piano)
Onyx ONYX 4209 51:37 mins



Beethoven composed his Violin Sonata No. 7 in C minor in 1802, the year of his Second

Symphony and his 'Heiligenstadt Testament' lamenting his encroaching deafness. It is a large-scale, emotionally wide-ranging work that surely challenged all but the most accomplished amateur performers; its flowing, increasingly ornate slow movement and pert scherzo are enclosed by a fiercely driven opening movement and an abrupt, explosive finale.

Written ten years later, around the time of the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, and revised for publication in 1816, Sonata No. 10 seems to come from another world, of gentle, introspective lyricism in its opening movement and decorative, aria-like *Adagio*, and serene cheerfulness in its variation finale. Such music seems especially apt to the contained luminosity of James Ehnes's violin playing, the pristine pianism of Andrew Armstrong and their remarkable rapport, playing as if one.

Yet they are no less impressive in the C minor Sonata, with a cogent grip on the motivic structures of its outer movements and a perfect balance between the passages of repose, volatility and sudden surprise in the *Adagio*. Recorded in a roomy yet intimate acoustic, this disc rounds off what is surely one of the most satisfying cycles of the Beethoven violin sonatas of the last decade. *Bayan Northcott*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Haydn

String Quartets, Op. 74 Nos 1-3; Folk Music from Scotland

Maxwell Quartet
Linn Records CKD 641 81:52 mins



Haydn quartets interspersed with Scottish folk song arrangements – the idea

sounds wildly incongruous, and yet how well it works in these fine performances. The first of Haydn's Op. 74 quartets



ends with a folk-like tune which has the violins stomping away in octaves above a bagpipe-like drone from the two lower instruments, so *Coilsfield House – Drunk at Night, Dry in the Morning* seems to follow on quite naturally, especially given the Maxwell Quartet's own idiomatic transcription. Haydn would surely have approved – after all, around the time he composed these quartets he began making Scottish folk song arrangements for the Edinburgh-based enthusiast and philanthropist George Thomson.

The three Op. 74 quartets, written for Haydn's triumphant second visit to London in 1794-5, are wonderfully inventive and original, and the Maxwell Quartet plays them with infectious enthusiasm throughout. The hectic pace of the finale in Op. 74 No. 1, the riot of trills in the opening movement of the second quartet, the 'bouncing' rhythms of the G minor 'Rider' Quartet's finale – all these are dispatched with admirable energy and rhythmic vitality. But the Maxwell players are alive to the music's tender qualities, too: the breathtaking moment in the minuet movement of the first quartet when the trio comes floating in as if from a different world altogether; the Rossinian lightness and transparency of the same quartet's second movement; or the profound calm of the 'Rider' Quartet's slow

movement, and the huskier sound of its dark middle section in the minor.

Altogether irresistible. *Misha Donat*
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Saint-Saëns

Violin Sonata No. 1; Cello Sonata No. 1; Piano Trio No. 2

Renaud Capuçon (violin),
Edgar Moreau (cello),
Bertrand Chamayou (piano)
Erato 9029516710 75:51 mins



My only serious complaint over this disc is with the pianist Bertrand Chamayou's claim that the three works on it are 'rarely performed and recorded': as to performances, I cannot say, but of these works altogether, available recordings already number 84. That said, in my view there is always room for more Saint-Saëns, especially in this centenary year of his death, and more especially when it's played with such technical skill and intelligence.

One of the crucial features of all three works is a contrast between light and heavy, neither of them ever given their head for too long. Obviously in this respect the piano possesses a wider range than the two string instruments, and Chamayou takes splendid advantage of this with pearly, unpedalled fingerwork at one extreme and powerful oratory

at the other. Praise be, there are no curious distortions of rhythm: we are given what the composer wrote and, if there are occasional touches of rubato, they unerringly take their *raison d'être* from the discourse, allowing the music to breathe.

Among many delights, I noted the return to the opening in the third movement of the Violin Sonata which beautifully manages the link that teeters between the obvious and the bizarre, and a similarly happy way with the strange modulations in the third movement of the Trio – such surprises in all three works being more striking for the music's generally good melodic and harmonic behaviour. To end the disc, there's stunning counterpoint in the Trio's finale, masterially delivered. *Roger Nichols*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Schubert

Music for Violin, Vol. 2: Rondo brillant, D895; Sonata in D, D384; Sonata in A minor, D385; Grand Duo in A, D574

Ariadne Daskalakis (violin),
Paolo Giacometti (fortepiano)
BIS BIS-2373 (CD/SACD) 70:32 mins



Most of Schubert's music for piano and violin dates from his earlier years, and it was probably

intended for him to play with his violinist elder brother, Ferdinand. But towards the end of his short life Schubert composed two pieces – a *Rondo brillant* in B minor and a large-scale Fantasy in C major – which were aimed at professional virtuosos. They were written, in fact, for the Bohemian violinist Josef Slavík, once described by Chopin as 'a second Paganini', and the pianist Karl Maria von Bocklet, for whom Schubert composed a big piano sonata in D major in the same year of 1826. The B minor Rondo is a fine piece, with a dramatic slow introduction whose music comes back in a transfigured form during the course of the exuberant gipsy-style rondo itself.

The first of the early sonatas is a relatively modest piece which reflects Schubert's love of Mozart. More characteristic and ambitious are the melancholy Second Sonata in A minor, and the warmly lyrical Duo in A major D574, which has one of the most beautiful beginnings

among all Schubert's youthful compositions. Ariadne Daskalakis and Paolo Giacometti, playing on original instruments, give attractive performances of all three sonatas, and they negotiate the considerable difficulties of the late Rondo with admirable skill.

The recording places the violin just a shade too close, so the piano is occasionally in danger of being overshadowed, but it's not a serious reservation in a disc that gives a good deal of pleasure. *Misha Donat*

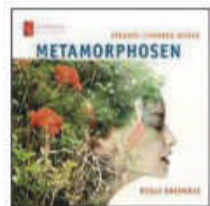
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

R Strauss

Metamorphosen (arr. Leopold); **Capriccio Prelude**; **Quartettsatz in E flat**; **String Quartet in A, Op. 2**; **Ständchen**; **Festmarsch for Piano Quartet**; **Two Pieces for Piano Quartet, Op. 13**

Oculi Ensemble

Champs Hill CHRCD 155 85:14 mins



There are quite a few chamber music recordings featuring Strauss's opening Sextet to his last opera,

Capriccio, and the septet version of his lament for the ruin of war, *Metamorphosen*. What comes in between is often of varying interest – the ransacking of the composer's juvenilia usually isn't thrilling. This wonderful interpretation of the 16-year-old's String Quartet of 1880 absolutely is. Ask friends to guess the composer – the opening must be Haydn, surely? The finale Mozart-plus? The middle movements Mendelssohn, with an element of his fairy-scherzos coming second? Young Richard, then still under the sway of his conservative, horn-playing father, hadn't discovered Brahms, Wagner or his own true voice. But vitality abounds, and it's interesting how each movement begins *piano* or *pianissimo*. The first-movement development is shadowy, the parallel in the finale robust, almost blustering. The Oculi players' fastidiousness with dynamics and tonal range held me throughout.

What follows, with the addition of pianist James Baillieu, makes a pleasant but foursquare intermezzo, until we come to the short but gritty 'Arabian Dance' based on original melodies, presumably derived from his Egyptian journey in the early 1890s, and its attractive companion piece. Singing tonal nuance and

dynamic variety distinguish the two 1940s masterpieces, and it's amazing how many more than seven strings seem to be playing in the *Metamorphosen* climaxes. The final retreat into introspection is properly moving. More bloom on the sound wouldn't have gone amiss, especially piano-wise. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Telemann

Polish Dances, TWV45; **Partie Polonois, TWV39**; **Concerto Polonoise in B flat, TWV43:B3**; **Overture-Suite in D, TWV55:D13 (La gaillarde)**, etc
Holland Baroque

Pentatone PTC 5186 878 (CD/SACD)

67:40 mins



Telemann himself acknowledged his fascination with Polish folk music: first encountered early in his life, it

left an indelible mark on his music, and contributed, along with French, Italian and indigenous German music, to the mixed style of which Telemann was a fluent master.

Much music on this disc has been recorded in the past. New, though, are several arrangements by the artistic leaders of the ensemble, Judith and Tineke Steenbrink. Most of the arrangements are of short dances from a manuscript discovered in 1987 bearing the title *Danse Polonie de Tellemann*. These take their place alongside two of Telemann's most interesting works in the Polish vein, the *Concerto Polonoise* in B flat and the *Concerto alla Polonese* in G major. As with the manuscript dances, a suite for two lutes has been arranged for string ensemble – Telemann lovers with long memories may recall a similar arrangement played by Eduard Melkus and his Capella Academica Wien in a late 1960s recording. A handful of dances drawn from the composer's orchestral overture-suites and a group of Hanakian dances belonging to the Hana region of Bohemia make up the remainder of the programme.

Holland Baroque, imaginatively directed by Aisslinn Nosky, consists of three violins, viola, cello, lute and harpsichord. The playing is vivacious and full of character. The musical highlights are the two concertos, already mentioned. The artists revel in the drones, unisons

and chromaticisms which lend them such distinctive colour. Two movements of particular charm are the *Dolce* and *Largo*, a haunting mazurka, of the G major Concerto.

Nicholas Anderson

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Entente Musicale

Debussy: Violin Sonata; **Delius**: Violin Sonata; **Ireland**: Violin Sonata No. 1; **Bax**: Mediterranean (arr. Heifetz); **Scott**: Cherry Ripe, etc; **Ravel**: Vocalise-étude en forme de habanera, M.51 (arr. Heifetz)
Clare Howick (violin),
Simon Callaghan (piano)
SOMM Recordings SOMMCD 0625
80:35 mins



Following their well-received album of British violin sonatas, Clare Howick and Simon Callaghan

return with a curious but effective mix of French and British violin works. Delius, for all his time in France, actually sounds the least French. His Romantically ardent yet relatively lean and purposeful Violin Sonata, written in Paris 1892-93, could almost pass as a work by his friend Grieg. Howick and Callaghan give a warm, ebullient account of its joyous first movement, and in its yearning second movement – including a pentatonic theme recalling Delius's sojourn in Florida – Howick provides a lovely singing yet luscious tone. Most impressive, though, is the finale, in which they effectively contrast its uncharacteristically reflective central episode with the following outpouring of passion.

After Cyril Scott's somewhat bibulous 'Cherry Ripe' and salon-style 'Valse Caprice', both affectionately played, follows the Debussy Sonata, music more deeply felt yet much pared down in style. Here for once Howick's tone is perhaps a little too rich: this is music needing lithe and quicksilver qualities, most particularly in the second movement, whose tumbling violin demisemiquavers here sound a touch effortful.

Howick and Callaghan, however, are absolutely attuned and on form for the sultry Ravel, and John Ireland's vigorous yet passionate First Violin Sonata, a work which emerges here as a great and grievously overlooked masterpiece

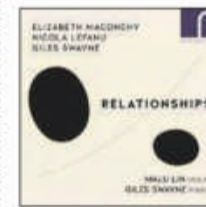
which deserves far more hearings. Heifetz's Bax arrangement makes an attractive encore to this most enjoyable recital. *Daniel Jaffé*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Relationships

Nicola LeFanu: Abstracts and a Frame; **Maconchy**: Violin Sonatas Nos 1 & 2; **Giles Swayne**: Duo; Echo; Farewell
Malu Lin (violin),
Giles Swayne (piano)

Resonus RES10271 74:24 mins



This intriguing programme is all in the family: Elizabeth Maconchy was Nicola LeFanu's

mother and Giles Swayne's cousin. Swayne is at the piano; the violinist, Malu Lin, is his wife. It's an attractive way to begin exploring some under-performed British music for violin and piano extending across 90 years.

These composers have little in common stylistically, but each offers a fertile vein of unfailing sonic imagination. Swayne's *Duo* (1975), inspired by the diminishing loops in the curves of the Loch Ness Monster (yes, really), is a substantial, demanding work rich in contrast and originality. LeFanu's *Abstracts and a Frame* (1971) is a set of miniatures, in concept pictures at an exhibition, but closer to Webern or Kurtág than Musorgsky: precise and concise etchings of ideas that never go quite where you expect them to. Maconchy's sonatas are overdue for rehabilitation, their world both harking back to Vaughan Williams and looking forward towards edgy modernism. No. 2, written during World War Two, opens in an atmosphere of extreme darkness and unfolds in four vivid, emotionally ambiguous movements; No. 1, from 1927, includes a fine slow movement, with long, keening melodic lines, and concludes with a Toccata that glances over its shoulder at pastoralism.

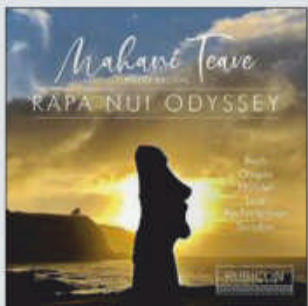
The immediacy and sympathy between the performers and the music does shine through; a few little moments fall prey to the complexity of the task at hand, but the whole, concluding with Swayne's eerie *Farewell* (2017), makes a meaty and rewarding listen.

Jessica Duchen

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Instrumental

INSTRUMENTAL CHOICE



Rapa Nui Odyssey

JS Bach: Chromatic Fantasia & Fugue in D minor, BWV 903; **Chopin:** Nocturnes Nos 1 & 19, etc; **Handel:** Keyboard Suite, HWV 430 in E; **Liszt:** Ballade No. 2 in B minor; Vallée d'Obermann; **plus works by Rachmaninov and Scriabin**
Mehani Teave (piano)

Rubicon RCD1066 102:32 mins (2 discs)

It's not often that a recording with a 'backstory' turns out as impressive as this. The stringed instrument collector David Fulton, on a cruise

in the South Pacific, found himself at a concert by pupils of the Easter Island Music School, concluded by its founder, Mehani Teave. Her artistry bowled him over; this, her first recording, is the happy result. Teave studied at the Cleveland Institute in the US and the Hanns Eisler Academy in Berlin before returning to Easter Island to found her school.

She is in her late 30s, but sounds more like an artist of the 1950s/'60s,

This Odyssey reveals a rare piano talent

Easter Island's Mehani Teave performs a poetic debut, says *Jessica Duchen*

following in the footsteps of an Arrau or Nikolayeva: someone with an entirely natural feel for what the piano is all about and a personality that can meld ideally with the composers' worlds. She has a rich, luminous tone – and just try the deep, growling opening of the Liszt Ballade No. 2 – which complements a splendid instinct for rubato, expert voicing and colouring. Her wide expressive range can embrace the contrapuntal vigour of Handel, the flair and proud rhetoric of Liszt

(*Vallée d'Obermann* is a special highlight), the dusky outpourings of Scriabin and Chopin that is

exquisitely controlled and intensely poetic. There's genuine virtuosity, without one note of bluff, bluster or vulgarity. The piece based on the Easter Island song *Ihē a Hotumatu'a* is dazzling and heartfelt; and the disc ends with Chopin's E minor Nocturne rapt and tender, drifting away into the waves. This is sincere, pure and magnificent artistry.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★

There's genuine virtuosity without a note of bluff or bluster



Natural pianism: Mehani Teave's tone is luminous

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Beethoven

Bagatelles

Vladimir Feltsman (piano)

Nimbus NI6399 67:15 mins



Vladimir Feltsman has courted a good deal of controversy, to the extent

that I thought he was no longer recording the masterworks of whose idiosyncratic accounts he made a name for himself. This new recording is ideal for him, for it consists of Beethoven's whimsical ideas, where problems of large-scale forms don't arise, because they are an average of three minutes long. In Beethoven's large-scale

works there are passages of strange, seemingly irrelevant music before an evidently organic element recurs. These bagatelles are like fragments taken out of grave contexts, and conveniently they come from his first, second and last periods, the final ones as mischievously sublime as certain passages in the late piano sonatas and the last quartets. Fortunately Feltsman doesn't try to make idiosyncratic music into something more or different, and concludes with a straightfaced account of that curse of the beginner, *Für Elise*.

It may not be a good idea to play this disc straight through, but you could keep it on hand to play in between more demanding

pieces, and it may even reveal to you lovely gems that don't often get programmed because of their brevity. *Michael Tanner*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★

Beethoven

Piano Sonatas, Vol. 8: Opp 57, 81a, 101

Martin Roscoe (piano)

Deux-Elles DXL1168 59:46 mins



Beethoven jokingly suggested that Op. 101 be called the 'difficult-to-play' sonata.

No one seems to have warned Martin Roscoe who sails through

its technical challenges with nonchalant ease. Its musical ones too. Pellucid pianism casts the opening movement as a lambent prelude to the crisply-etched March that follows. And having exactly weighed and projected every nuance in the bridging slow movement, Roscoe untangles the finale's contrapuntal complexity with suave lucidity. It's a fine conclusion to this penultimate disc in Roscoe's nine-volume set of the Beethoven sonatas – more complete than most since it's based on Barry Cooper's scholarly edition which includes the three youthful sonatas WoO 47.

To begin there's the work Beethoven considered his greatest sonata achievement (until the

Hammerklavier necessitated a reappraisal a decade or so later). The opening of the *Appassionata* might be a touch devoid of mystery, but Roscoe scrupulously registers every dynamic and expressive detail, drills incisively into the fidgety triplet repetitions and imbues the contrasting idea with a sonorous nobility. That same keen intelligence, structural certainty and sophisticated palette also enlivens *Les Adieux* where, again, just occasionally, the letter of Beethoven's instructions wins out over their spirit – not that there's any lack of spirit as Roscoe nails the tremulous excitement unleashed by the finale. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Chopin • Debussy • Musorgsky

Chopin: 24 Preludes; **Debussy:** Children's Corner; **Musorgsky:** Pictures at an Exhibition

Behzod Abduraimov (piano)
Alpha Classics ALPHA653 83:51 mins



Behzod Abduraimov's unmistakable talent is exhibited through long stretches of

this disc. Sadly, though, it is counterbalanced by errors of taste and judgment that range from the merely irritating to the downright shocking. He's at his best in the Musorgsky *Pictures*, where his full-blooded technique and sonority make for a powerful and generally persuasive performance. But even here, he loses the plot in 'Bydlo' by making the rhythm 'interesting': no, it has to be metronomic and soulless, like the wheels of the oxcart. His Debussy suffers from time to time from the current malaise of treating the length of rests as a negotiable item: in 'The Little Shepherd', he inserts an unwanted gap between bars 26 and 27 and then ignores Debussy's instruction 'en conservant le rythme'.

But his worst errors occur in the Chopin Preludes. At the end of the F minor one, the extended gap before the two final chords makes one wonder whether he has popped out for a drink, while in the even-numbered bars of the A major the 3/4 time signature becomes 4/4. In the central section of the 'Raindrop' he plays discredited and melodically



Showstopper:
Ning Feng has a
flair for Paganini

awkward C sharps in the left hand instead of the now accepted Es from Chopin's autograph in the Polish National Library in Warsaw. But his worst assault on Chopin's music comes in the E flat minor Prelude, where his overpedalling produces nothing less than a travesty. And yet, in the F major, his delicacy and phrasing are delightful.

Roger Nichols

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Cecilia McDowall

Organ Works

William Fox (organ)
Naxos 8.579077 65:04 mins



Cecilia McDowall may be best known for her choral compositions, but this British

composer obviously knows her way round the organ console as well. That much is clear from the opening stretch of *Celebration*, this collection's first track, with its energising mix of brilliant treble fireworks and forceful bass underpinnings – perfect for the piece's function as accompaniment to a graduate ceremony procession. A little later, momentum is briefly halted as if a graduate had tripped on a gown; a misstep echoed on a larger canvas in the weak conclusion to the *O Antiphon Sequence* and her awkward arrangement of the choral Three Antiphons for the far different forces of organ and trumpet. Still, passing misjudgments are regularly

outweighed by McDowall's melodic fluency, rhythmic vitality and eagerness to please.

On his solo recording debut, the young and gifted William Fox offers his own panache, drawing out the many colours of the lively 1963 Walker organ at the Church of St John the Evangelist in Islington, London. *First Flight*, inspired by Leonardo da Vinci and the 1969 moon landing, is a particularly convincing showpiece, flying high on airborne textures while steadily gathering blazing force. The *George Herbert Trilogy*, its movements scattered throughout the album, convincingly pursues a knottier vein, especially in the almost frightening 'Sacred and Hallowed Fire'; while, before its last dip, the *O Antiphon Sequence* of 2018 speeds through seven miniature Advent meditations with concise skill and captivating aplomb. In every area (music, performer, instrument, recording) this album offers plenty to enjoy. *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Paganini

24 Caprices

Ning Feng (violin)

Channel Classics CCS 43221 75:29 mins



There have been many and varied bravura recordings of Paganini's Caprices these last years – they are, after all, the go-to for virtuosic display, written

by the legendary 19th-century violinist as a way of showcasing his phenomenal technique. Here Ning Feng adds his own deeply expressive yet understated interpretation.

From the fabulously virtuosic first, the trademark rapid string skittering is exhilaratingly done, countered by Feng's breath-like touch and expression in the lovely No. 4. Feng plays with exquisite lightness in places, but there is humour, too, notably the hill road ups and downs of No. 5, which rise and fall as if on cartoon wheels, teetering at the top and sliding down joyfully into the valley below to gain momentum for the next hill.

There is superb touch and expression, whether in the pastoral call and response of No. 9 or the tentative, wistful trilling of No. 6. Feng's sound has great warmth in the lower register and lightness up top – there is nothing grandstandingly showy here, but a virtuosic truth to the music, which might sound contradictory given that we are talking about Paganini, but brings remarkable clarity.

The coda is a 25th Caprice 'd'Adieu', dedicated to the German violinist Eduard Eliaison, a light, technically challenging powder-puff finish, as if a final wink.

Sarah Urwin Jones

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Prokofiev

Piano Sonata No. 8; Visions fugitives; Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet

Nicholas Angelich (piano)
Erato 9029526768 75:20 mins



Poulenc, quoted in the booklet, described Prokofiev's own piano playing as having 'a steel-like sinewy strength'. Nicholas Angelich's playing here certainly matches this description, and as with his earlier Brahms albums he brings a clear focus to layers of counterpoint and thematic transformations in the Eighth Sonata. But though the notes themselves are scrupulously presented, Angelich is often cavalier with dynamics. The *Allegro moderato* section which bubbles up from the opening *Andante dolce*'s piano ending begins distinctly louder, rather than Prokofiev's required *pianissimo* start.

Furthermore, Angelich's semi-quavers are not so much fleet-fingered as despatched with a steely efficiency: the toccata passages of the Sonata's finale never glitter as they should. And there is nothing of Prokofiev's insouciant quality to be found either in the Sonata's second movement (rather lugubrious in Angelich's hands), or in so many of the *Visions fugitives*. In the latter, Angelich is sometimes perversely heavy handed, with *forte* hammering (as in so many of the deep bass notes of 'Arpa', or the ending of *Allegretto tranquillo*) where the music is marked *pianissimo*.

Angelich's unrelenting gravitas in the Eighth is more appropriate in the last of the *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, given probably his strongest performance here. Also striking is the unusual but not inappropriate parallel Angelich draws between the 'Juliet as a Young Girl' and the Sonata. If only he had made the start of that piece rather less hard and efficient, and transferred some of its more tender and playful qualities to the Eighth. *Daniel Jaffé*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Bach & Beyond, Part 3

JS Bach: Solo Violin Sonatas Nos 2 & 3, BWV 1003 & 1005; **Berio:** Sequenza VIII for Solo Violin;

John Harbison: For Violin Alone
Jennifer Koh (violin)

Cédille CDR 90000 199

86:23 mins (2 discs)



Bach's Sonatas and Partitas are the prime progenitors of later works for solo violin,

and there's a growing tradition for performers to programme them with contemporary pieces. For the final part of her series, Jennifer Koh opens with Bach's Second Sonata, and the musing character of the opening *Grave* is effective and affecting from the first notes, with beautiful, varied tone and fluid vibrato. By contrast, the ensuing Fuga presses forward with unerring momentum, and the contrapuntal lines are inflected with individuality in dynamics and phrasing. The *Andante* has a relentless tread in its repeated quavers, and the moto perpetuo of the final *Allegro* dances at a fine lick.

Its a similar story of the marriage between technical certainty and musical imagination in the Third



Monumental music:
Stephen Hough explores
a theme of life and death

Sonata, where the long Fuga is even more impressive in its control, and the two slow movements – the first with its gently rocking dotted rhythm, and the second with its long cantabile line – are played with an impeccable sense of style.

Berio's *Sequenza VIII* is a single span which exploits an even greater range of techniques than Bach, where Koh isn't afraid to produce some ugly sounds: the opening grinding dissonances, and some double stops later on, punctuating a wild whirling of notes, before the gently contemplative ending. Harbison's *For Violin Alone*, a suite of six short movements and an epilogue, is a more approachable work, written for Koh, who gives it an involved performance: not as memorable as Bach, or even Berio though. *Martin Cotton*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Cello 360

Works by Casals, Chaplin, Dowland, Dutilleux, Grieg, Ligeti, M Marais, Purcell, Rameau, Saddier, Sainte Colombe the elder, Telemann, et al.

Christian-Pierre La Marca (cello)

Naïve V7260 73:40 mins



Here's a project for the pandemic era of solitude and separation, recorded in the summer of 2020.

What can a cellist achieve alone? A polyphonic, technicolour panorama in Christian-Pierre La Marca's

idiosyncratic tour through the distant and immediate musical past. His sequence swerves Bach, Abel and Britten in favour of Marais, Telemann, Grieg, Dutilleux, Escaich and Chaplin.

Stand-out among the performances are those works which revel in the full potential of the solo instrument. One such is Ligeti's powerful 1953 solo sonata (a work that now seems oddly prescient of Britten's Third Suite, though it wasn't premiered until after his death). La Marca's is a consummate reading, expressing the deep melancholy of its 'Dialogue', and delivering a dazzling 'Capriccio'. Dutilleux's brilliantly articulate *Trois Strophes sur le nom SACHER* give us a choir of diverse cellistic voices, from ghostly breath, percussive chatter to pure incandescence: La Marca achieves them all with stylish fluency. He describes himself as an ambassador for Thierry Escaich's fiery *Cantus* (2005), and he inhabits its teetering architecture with compelling imagination. This piece deserves to become as popular as Sollima's crowd-pleasing *Lamentatio*.

Less successful are his forays into the gamba repertoire. While he dashes off a delightful *Allegro vivace* from Telemann's Suite TWV401, and recreates a pleasing consort for Dowland's *Lachrimae antiquae*, the pieces by Marais, Rameau and St Colombe don't quite take flight, despite his use of a baroque bow. Song arrangements like Grieg's 'Solveig's Song' and Chaplin's 'Smile' have a curiously drifting quality:

perhaps a singer does need an accompanist after all. *Helen Wallace*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

RECORDING ★★★★★

Vida breve

Chopin: Piano Sonata No. 2; **plus works by Bach, Busoni, Gounod, Hough and Liszt**

Stephen Hough (piano)

Hyperion CDA68260 74:19 mins



'Vida breve' (life is short), the subtitle of Stephen Hough's Piano Sonata No. 4, is the theme

explored throughout this album. The central statements are Chopin's Second Sonata, with its 'funeral march' slow movement, and Liszt's *Funérailles* – contemporaneous with Chopin's death, but more likely commemorating the dead in the Hungarian uprising against the Habsburg Empire in the same year. There are also two Busoni transcriptions, of Bach's D minor Violin Chaconne (maybe written in memory of the composer's first wife) and themes from Bizet's *Carmen* (another short-lived individual).

The sequence works well as a recital-like experience, and also as a vehicle for Hough's comprehensive mastery of his art. His booklet introduction describes Busoni's Bach transcription as 'a towering cathedral of sound', which indeed it is, and his playing impressively mirrors the immensity both of Bach's conception and of Busoni's tumultuous pianistic response. He brings the same monumental approach to the huge column-like pillars of sonority of *Funérailles*, following this with a super-virtuoso delivery of Liszt's *Bagatelle sans tonalité* in which, says Hough, 'we face the Devil himself'. The idiom of his own 'Vida breve' Sonata, with its cogent sweep and flawlessly written fugato sections, is intriguingly difficult to pin down – somewhere between Busoni and Albéniz, perhaps? Hough's relatively severe way with Chopin's Sonata, though appropriate to the programme's overall conception, maybe restrains the music's element of dreamy poetry a little too much, but any such reservation has to be marginal. And the two concluding encore-like numbers add a note of quiet consolation. *Malcolm Hayes*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

RECORDING ★★★★★

Michael Church presents our occasional look at the best world music releases

March round-up

Armenia: *The Art of the Duduk* reflects a venerable instrumental tradition in its purest form. This apricot-wood oboe has ten finger holes and the span of a mere octave plus a third, and its unique double-reed mouthpiece requires much skill to master. Performers come in twos, one providing the melodic line and the other a drone, but the palette of colour is remarkable: it can be hard as iron or caressingly sweet, with a gamut of emotion in between. Haig Sarikouyoumdjian is the soloist here, and gives us a taste of traditional Armenian improvisation as well as examples of regional styles. His sound seems infinitely malleable, and his improvisations roam thrillingly. (Ocora C 560287 ★★★★★)

Cape Verde: *An Archipelago of Music* is the result of a recording trip through all the inhabited islands of Cape Verde in 1998, impelled by the desire to preserve sounds which even then were on their way to extinction. The incomparable Cesária Évora is not present – presumably because in 1998 she was at the height of her fame, and would have cost too much – but the talent and variety is nonetheless dazzling. As the microphones hop from island to rocky island, the meld of Portuguese and African influences comes over with sunburnt infectiousness. Some tracks have a let-it-all-hang-out village charm, others testify to the refined sophistication of the solo singers, with the lazy, regretful sweetness of the *morna* style being all-pervasive. (Ocora C 561146/47 ★★★★★)

Meanwhile Ocora have re-released their excellent Persian classical CD **Iran: *Talai, Musavi, Kiani – The masters of music***. As the celebrated musicologist Jean During points out in his liner-note, some of the earliest song collectors were the 19th-century master-

musicians of what is now called Iran. Realising that their ancient oral tradition was evaporating, they collected modes and melodies from all corners of the country, and wove them together in a seamless web which they called the *radif*. With Dariush Talai on the tar and setar lutes, Mohammad Musavi and



Jamshid Mohebbi on percussion and Majid Kiani on the santur zither. During

called together a top-notch ensemble who on this CD traverse the *radif*, exploring its many forms. This is austere music, but its distilled passion makes it gripping. (Ocora C 561024 ★★★★★)

Glitterbeat is continuing to put out arresting stuff, with its intrepid globe-trotting recordist **Ian Brennan**. *Hidden Musics* is the title of a series of field-recording albums with which Brennan is illuminating some little-known musical by-ways, two of which I have already praised in these columns. ***Fra-Fra Funeral Songs*** come from northern Ghana and are led by Small, a man who trades on his diminutive size rather



than apologising for it, and whose riffs seem to go on for ever. He is supported by other players on

tiny bone flutes which they call 'horns', because that is what they are made of. There is nothing funereal here in the Western sense of the word: this strikingly unadorned music is irrepressibly cheerful. (Glitterbeat GBCD 089 ★★★★★)

Last year I hailed the Pakistani singer **Ustad Saami**'s CD *God is not a terrorist*. Here he comes again,



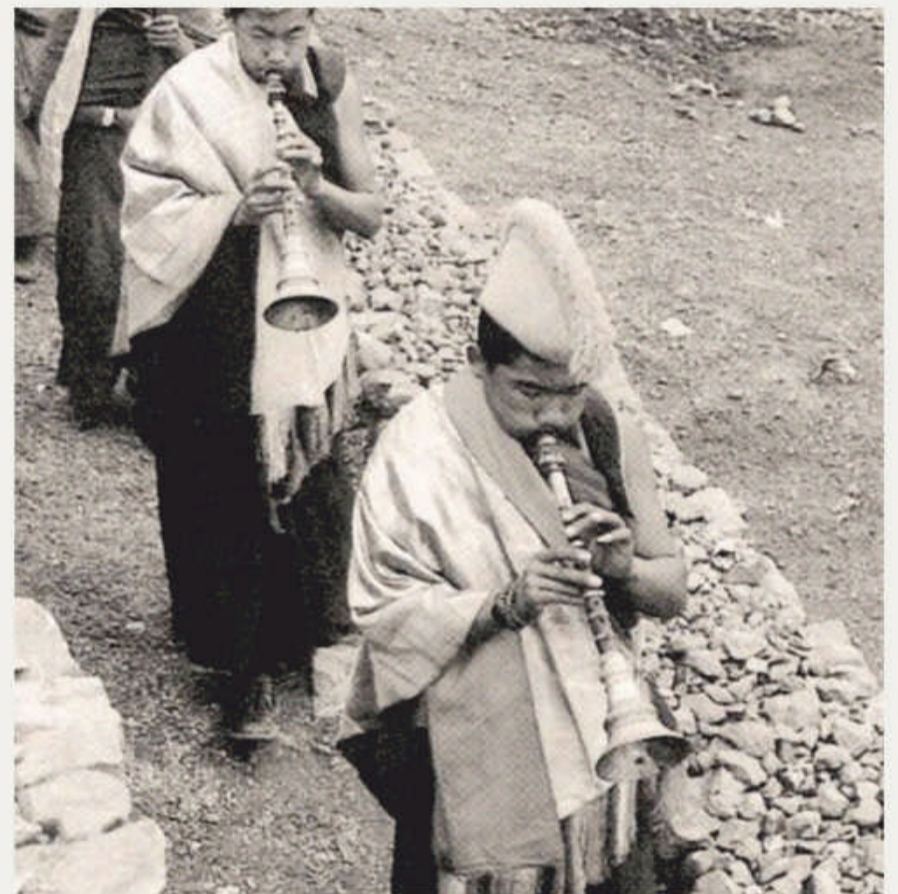
thanks to Ian Brennan, with a new album entitled ***Pakistan is for the Peaceful***, and the

message is the same. Accompanied by his four sons, he offers three extended improvisations in which his microtonal world expands with luxurious grace. (Glitterbeat GBCD097 ★★★★★)

WORLD CHOICE

Tibetan ritual riches

Meditative archive recordings that shine a light on the ancient music of the Bonpo sect



Enlightened path: the Bonpos play some of the oldest religious music



Tibet

Ritual Traditions of the Bonpos

Ocora C 583016 63:27 mins

Even before the pandemic, the flow of ethnographic recordings had declined to a trickle, and it's now almost drying up. That is why this page focuses on the products of just two labels, and

why some of the contents were recorded 40 years ago: Ocora is having to ransack its archives, as field recordings have become a public-health no-no. Moreover, present-day China wouldn't have allowed the recordings in Tibet to have been made: the Bonpos were a Tibetan minority sect who have now dispersed to the West, where they are attracting devoted adherents. Bon is a religion which predates Buddhism, and its rituals included exorcism and divination, but as in Buddhism its adherents believe that meditation and rituals are the path to enlightenment. The rituals here are based in chants whose repetitive simplicity makes a perfect background for meditation. You will go – as I did – into a trance, out of which the final track will wake you with its exultant cymbals, pipes slowly ascending in unison, a grainy bass horn, and the regular thud of a drum, all combining to create a wonderful feeling of release. ★★★★★

Brief notes

This month's selection includes trios, piano solos and arrangements for guitar

Babadzhanian • Chebotaryan • Piazzolla Piano Trios

Trio de L'Île *Divine Art dda25211*



Rich Romanticism combined with touches of folk, hints of orientalism and, in Piazzolla's

Estaciones Porteñas, the sharp heels and smokiness of tango. This is terrific stuff, excellently played. (JP) ★★★★★

David Five String Trios

David-Trio *CPO 555 4122*



From light-footed and sprightly to hauntingly elegiac, the 20th-century Austrian Johann

Nepomuk David's string trios have a touch of Bartók about them. Well worth investigating. (JP) ★★★★★

Elgar • Gareth Farr

Cello Concertos

Sebastien Hurtaud (cello) et al

Rubicon RCD1047



Hurtaud gives really potent performances, his deep connection to both works

undeniable. Farr's remarkable *Chemin des Dames*, honours the role of women during the First World War. (MB) ★★★★★

Philip Glass Works arr. for guitar

Gerard Cousins (guitar)

Orange Mountain OMM0148



This short album of guitar arrangements proves the versatility of Glass's music.

Cousins plays fast and loose with rubato, but the crystal sound quality brings the music to life. (FP) ★★

Handel Suites for Harpsichord

Pierre Hantaï (harpsichord)

Mirare MIR480



At last – a masterful account of Handel's harpsichord suites on the instrument

for which they were written. Pierre Hantaï allows the music to breathe, with unfussy, clean playing. (OC) ★★★★★

Josquin Stabat Mater etc

Cantica Symphonia/Giuseppe Maletto

Glossa GCDP31909



Combining secular and sacred, instrumental and vocal works – sung one-to-a-part –

there's a pleasing simplicity to these performances. A fine introduction to the composer in his anniversary year. (JP) ★★★★★

Louis Karchin Five Compositions

Washington Square Ensemble et al

Bridge 9543

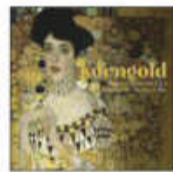


I enjoyed this more with each listen; Karchin's wide-ranging style takes us from the

cartoonish to the dreamlike. Solid performances from the ensemble, too. (MB) ★★★

Korngold Piano Sonatas Nos 2 & 3

Kathleen Solose (piano) *Ariel Arts AR104*



A fascinating insight into a lesser-known side of Korngold. Fine, poetic

performances but the recorded sound is very close and lacks intimacy. (OC) ★★★

Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn Works for cello and piano

Joël Marosi (cello), Esther Walker

(piano) *First Hand FHR081*



Enjoyable performances, not least of the two less familiar Fanny Mendelssohn

works. The recorded balance isn't always ideal, though, with the piano occasionally drowning out the cello part's finer detail. (JP) ★★★

Mosolov Symphony No. 5, etc

Moscow Symphony Orchestra et al

Naxos 8.574102



A world away from his earlier avant-gardism, Mosolov's Fifth combines late-Romanticism with

touches of Shostakovich-style angst, while the Harp Concerto is, at times, enigmatic and evocative. (JP) ★★★★★

Musorgsky • R Schumann Piano Works

Andrei Gavrilov (piano)

Da Vinci Classics COO330



This is playing to get lost in. Gavrilov's captivating artistry is to the fore in these

three works; the pair by Schumann, especially the *Études Symphoniques*, a treat. (MB) ★★★★★

Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen

Der Wind blasen wo er will etc

Johannes Moser (cello), et al

Dacapo 8.226586



These contemporary orchestral works are superbly dynamic and wide-ranging in

approach. The title work is vibrant and percussive, the cello concerto spiky and exciting. (FP) ★★★★★

Rott Orchestral Works, Vol. 2

Gurzenich Orchestra Köln

Capriccio C5414



Hard to believe that Mahler didn't pilfer most of the ideas from the *Scherzo* of

Rott's beautifully orchestrated Symphony No. 1. This second volume continues a great introduction to an overlooked talent. (OC) ★★★★★

Thomas Simaku Chamber Works

Quatuor Diotima, et al *BIS BIS-2449*



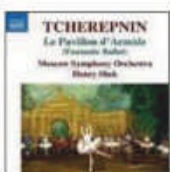
I wasn't at all familiar with Simaku, but I've come to appreciate greatly his ability to

create unflinching visceral soundscapes. The pieces featuring string quartet are especially compelling here. (MB) ★★★★★

Tcherepnin Le Pavillon d'Armide

Moscow Symphony Orchestra

Naxos 8.573657



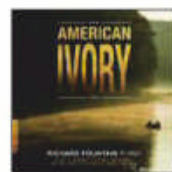
Tcherepnin's rarely recorded 1906 ballet *La Pavillon d'Armide* is heard here in a

1994 recording with surprisingly clear, vivid sound quality. A strong case for this ballet to be better known. (FP) ★★★

American Ivory Piano Works by Barber, Copland, Belshaw et al

Richard Fountain (piano)

Navona NV6328



Edward Macdowell's robustly Classical suite dominates, but it's Gary D Belshaw's smaller slices of Americana that I find most

charming. (MB) ★★★

Between the Clouds Works by Wieniawski, Godowsky et al

Charlie Siem (violin), Itamar Golan

(piano) *Signum Classics SIGCD652*



A whistle-stop tour of violin virtuoso showpieces, many composed by the

great masters of the instrument. Siem faces up to the challenges set by Kreisler and co with gusto. (JP) ★★★★★

English Songs à la française

Works by Hahn, Milhaud et al

Tyler Duncan (baritone), Erika Switzer

(piano) *Bridge 9537*



A charming album of English-language songs by French composers – I could

listen to Duncan's honey-toned voice all day. Switzer proves a fine partner. (OC) ★★★★★

In the Age of Debussy

Works by L Boulanger, Dukas, et al

Ransom Wilson (flute), Francois

Dumont (piano) *Nimbus NI 6407*



The phrasing is thoughtful in all these arrangements of early 20th-century

French works. Odd slips in timing and precision give it a live performance feel – something we're all craving anyway. (FP) ★★★

Italian Postcards

Works by Mozart, Wolf et al

Quartetto di Cremona *Avie AV2436*



Nimrod Borenstein's coruscating *Cieli d'Italia* and Tchaikovsky's intense *Souvenir*

de Florence head up an absorbing programme. The quartet perform with terrific élan. (OC) ★★★★★

Le poète du piano Works by Rameau, Mahler, Debussy et al
Alexandre Tharaud (piano)
Erato 9029518087



The title says it all and this three-disc set of some of Tharaud's great performances is a treasure trove. From concertos to solo pieces and rarities, this is super high quality. (MB) ★★★★★

Romantic
Works by Chopin, Schubert et al
Anders Miolin (guitar)
Prima Classic PRIMA006



Miolin's own arrangements for his one-of-a-kind 12-string instrument offer moments of nuance and some radiance. A beguiling selection. (MB) ★★★

The Soul of Russia Works by Musorgsky, Arensky et al
Piano Trio Then-Berg, et al
Genuin GEN 21727



Alexander Klein's beautifully crafted trio arrangements of Russian orchestral masterpieces and rarer gems maintain the drama and harmonic richness of their originals. Terrific playing. (OC) ★★★★★

Transatlantic
Works by Elgar, Beach et al
Callum Smart (violin) et al
Orchid Classics ORC100149



Smart pays tribute to American and English music, from Coleridge-Taylor to Kate Whitley. The quieter moments are sometimes a little wispy, but this is a well-considered programme, performed with a lyrical touch. (FP) ★★★

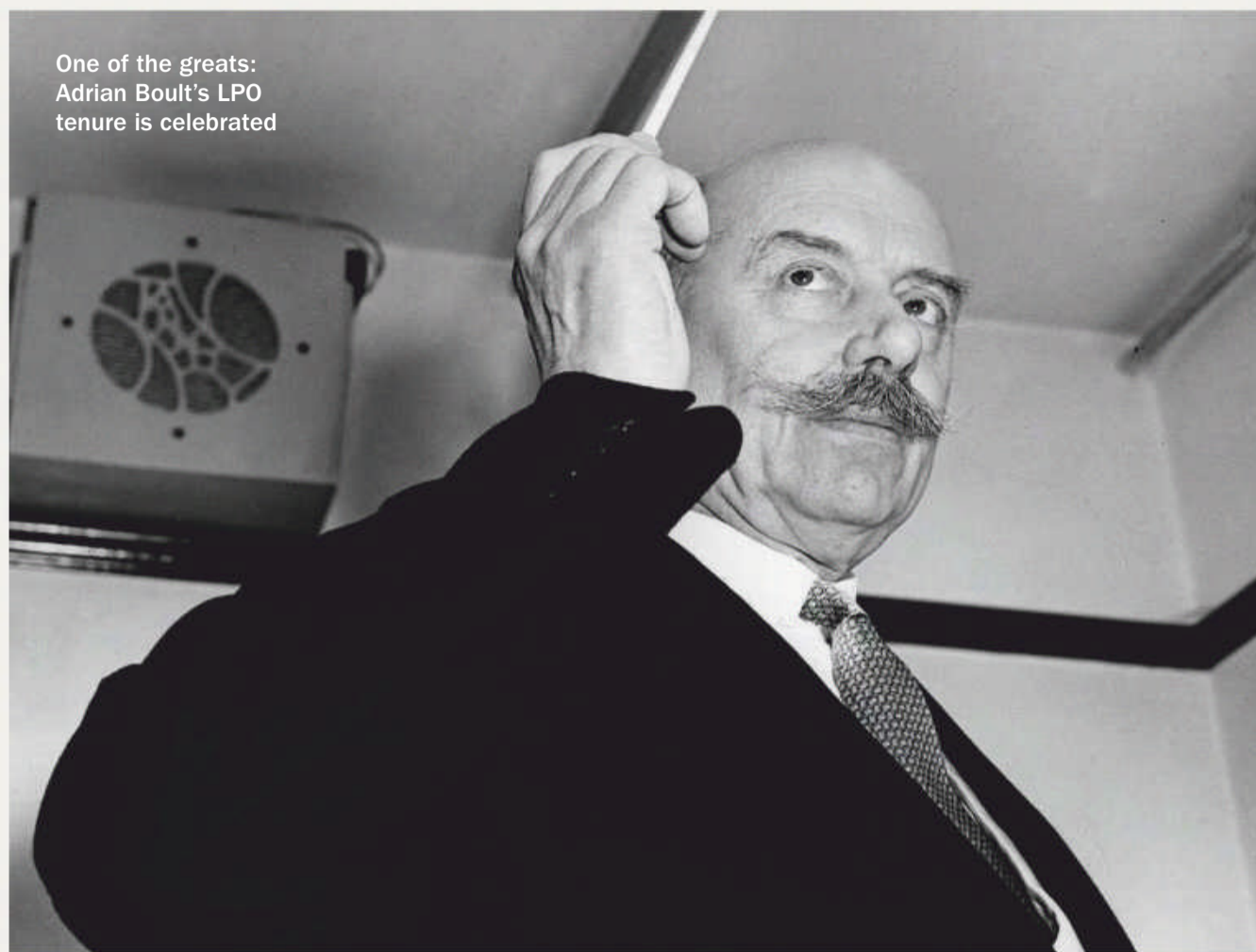
La Vanità del Mondo
Works by A Scarlatti, Handel et al
Philippe Jaroussky (countertenor) et al
Erato 9029517929



Jaroussky produces an array of colours in these Baroque oratorios, with a clutch of premiere recordings. The balance is spot on, the phrasing clear and the melodic lines full of expression. (FP) ★★★★★

Reviewers: Michael Beek (MB),
Oliver Condy (OC), Freya Parr (FP),
Jeremy Pound (JP)

The month in box-sets



Keyboard stars and a great conductor

This month's round-up features Mozart and must-hear musical legacies

If ever the organ had a queen, it must be Gillian Weir. The organist, who celebrated her 80th birthday in January, enjoyed a five-decade reign, which is given much fanfare in **Gillian Weir – A Celebration** (Eloquence 4841435). Through 22 discs, listeners can explore Weir's recording career which began the day after she won the St Albans International Organ Competition in 1964. That particular recording is one of several BBC Radio performances released for the very first time in this set, which also takes in Franck's complete organ works and pieces written for specially for her.

Another British music titan is marked in **Sir Adrian Boult – A Musical Legacy** (LPO LP0119), a five-disc selection of recordings the conductor made with the London Philharmonic Orchestra between 1949 and 1969. The programme is testament to Boult's wide-ranging musical vision, with a colourful collection ranging from Bartók to Butterworth. His great love for, and championship of, then-contemporary British music is well documented in this mix of studio, concert and broadcast recordings.



Bezuidenhout's seven-year project remains something to treasure

Mozart – Complete Keyboard Sonatas (Harmonia Mundi HMX2904007.15) gathers together the nine discs originally released from 2010-16 of Kristian Bezuidenhout's thrilling survey of the composer's keyboard works. Despite its title this is by no means a complete set, but a thoughtfully curated

collection of mature sonatas, variations and other pieces, all performed on fortepiano. It took Bezuidenhout seven years to undertake the project and the result

remains something to treasure.

In **The Art of Anatoly Vedernikov** (Scribendum SC821) we're introduced to another prodigious keyboard talent. This generous 17-disc set charts the recordings of the Russian pianist and teacher (1920-93) whose star perhaps shone brightest in his home country. With friendly ties to both Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Sviatoslav Richter, Vedernikov's is a name that deserves to be better known, and this budget box serves him well. While best known in his day for his appetite for 20th-century music, he recorded a wide repertoire, as this sprawling set attests.

Roger Thomas enjoys the intimacy and daring of this month's jazz offerings

JAZZ CHOICE

Energy and adrenaline

QOW Trio's pared back sound of sax, bass and drums makes for an exhilarating listen

Triumvirate:
(left to right) Wells,
Lonergan and Myer



QOW Trio

QOW

Riley Stone Lonergan (tenor saxophone),
Eddie Myer (double bass), Spike Wells (drums)
Ubuntu UBU0068

The double bassist associated with
respected indie strum-rockers Turin
Brakes convenes a superb band

featuring a veteran Britjazz drummer who doubles as a priest and an award-winning young tenor sax player. Hands up if you saw that coming.

Ornette Coleman's mid-1960s trio with David Izenzon and Charles Moffett inspired a whole sub-movement in which the absence of a traditional chordal instrument freed jazz from constraints that it was ready to outgrow, and created a rich and varied legacy that ranged from the prog-jazz of Back Door to the searing ferocity of Charles Gayle. Naming these names is to praise rather than to bury this animated unit that surely belongs in such company if this adrenaline-fuelled yet perfectly articulated one-take set is anything to go by. Ideally the bass could have been slightly further forward in the mix, but that's forgiven; this music is wonderful stuff and failing to buy this album would be a terrible mistake. ★★★★★

March round-up

This isn't the first time that a selection of recordings featuring instrumentally subtracted line-ups (see Jazz Choice) has reached this column in a cluster, almost as if they were huddling together for mutual protection. Happily, everyone can relax: there's more than enough skill on display here to make creative use of the attendant breathing space. Drummer **Will Glaser** puts his name to *Climbing in Circles*, a fine undertaking that sees him merging two pre-existing duos with saxophonist Matthew



Herd and pianist Liam Noble, having already made individual recordings with each of them

with confusingly similar titles. Trying to keep up with all this brings us to a likeable third album, shot through with the kind of thrown-together spontaneity that can easily collapse in less capable hands but that happily manages to be forthright, gently knowing and sonically detailed. (*Ubuntu* UBU0075) ★★★★★

The convening of *Trio Tapestry* by Joe Lovano sees the reeds doyen exploring his current preference for the abstract and occasionally enigmatic on *Garden of Expression*. The formidable pianist Marilyn Crispell and drummer Carmen Castaldi are both very much at home in this territory,



providing a delicate yet ingeniously detailed canvas for his statements without being

hampered by what would be, in this case, the leaden anchor of a bass instrument. Crispell's style we know and love, but Castaldi's understanding that the drum kit can actually be subtle is quietly revelatory. (*ECM* 2685) ★★★★★

On the same label, *Human*, from a quartet led by pianist **Shai Maestro** and fronted by trumpeter Philip Dizack, also tends toward subtlety, alongside a sense of quiet celebration which is set by the

opening track and never quite disappears. Maestro has an all-encompassing style, both in his approach to the instrument and in the way he balances innovation and tradition, that allows the



single Ellington standard to be bracketed by originals with no sense of gear-changing. Highly commendable, all in all, and, as with Lovano's album, imbued with the usual impeccable ECM production values. (*ECM* 2688) ★★★★★

Returning to the reeds/bass/drums idea that brought about this peregrination, **Fergus McCreadie** demonstrates that such a trio can express sophisticated compositional ideas as readily as a chamber ensemble with *Cairn*, an elegant yet spirited programme of original pieces inspired by the folk music and rural environment of the



saxophonist's native Scotland. It's a very workable fusion that's existed at least since the

heyday of Ken Hyder's Talisker in the '70s and '80s, but McCreadie's take on the concept has a freshly-minted presentation that pivots around the finely-developed interaction between the leader and his rhythm section (bassist David Bowden and drummer Stephen Henderson). Sprightly and compelling. (*Edition* 1165) ★★★★★

Finally, the American composer and pianist **Chris Pattishall** deserves a special citation for *Zodiac*, his improbable but brilliant



reworking of the 1945 *Zodiac Suite* by the criminally underrated Mary Lou Williams, artfully updating

its classical elements with a contemporary feel and realising the whole as a plangent, attention-holding tour de force with the augmentation of two horns, bass and drums. Remarkable. (*Pirates Press*, no catalogue number) ★★★★★

TAKE FIVE

An interview with today's finest jazz musicians



One-man band:
multi-instrumentalist
Chris Potter

This month: Chris Potter

Multiple award-winning American composer and woodwind wrangler Chris Potter learned a variety of instruments during his formative years before deciding on the saxophone. His remarkable new album *There Is A Tide* (reviewed last issue) finds him revisiting these skills, playing all the instrumental parts himself. It's certainly one way to sidestep the restrictions of lockdown, but as he says, 'This is something I'd always wanted to do. I did it as a teenager, actually, so I thought now would be a good time to try it properly. Obviously, I now have a lot more experience, but also the technology has evolved to a point where you really can record at home and get high quality results.'

So how did he structure the music? 'I laid out certain parameters, deciding that everything was going to be in either

'With everything that was happening, I felt the need to express myself creatively'

3/4 or 4/4 because I wanted the grooves to be simple; I came up with those first, rather than melodies, then worked from there.'

Was the process an enjoyable challenge or one to be doggedly overcome? 'Somewhere in between! I wasn't necessarily going to release the results. But with everything that was happening I felt the need to express myself creatively, so I just dived into it without having a goal in mind except for making the music.'

The absence of the interaction that's usually central to jazz was also relevant: 'I had no one to bounce ideas off except myself,' he says, 'which was what I did. I'd also go back and make changes so, for example, a woodwind part might make me want to change a guitar part. It's only because I had the time that I was able to do this, after which the compositions took on a life of their own.'

Was this an artistic stop-gap or a new source of inspiration? 'I miss working with other musicians, particularly bass players and drummers who can really play! That said, I could do something like this again, but I'd like some time to pass. It did affect how I might think about composing in future, maybe using this method but not so that I'd end up playing everything in performance. Every project is about growth, so you move on having learned from what's gone before.' **Roger Thomas**

BJØRN ERIK PEDERSEN

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Books

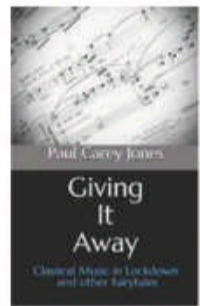
Our critics cast their eyes over this month's selection of books on classical music

Giving It Away – Classical Music in Lockdown and Other Fairytales

Paul Carey Jones

Self-published 216pp (pb) £7.99

Back in March 2020 – which feels centuries ago now – bass-baritone Paul Carey Jones visited London with his girlfriend for a birthday trip to the theatre. He was preparing to return to Cardiff when new quarantine guidelines



and lockdown rules prevented him from doing so. Shortly afterwards, he lost every single one of his singing contracts, which were either

cancelled or indefinitely postponed.

He began to record his thoughts on the developing pandemic crisis and its impact on the world of classical music from the perspective of a UK opera singer in a blog called *CoronaClassical*, which attracted wide attention. Sections of the blog are reproduced here in book form.

His view is alert and complex, evaluating developments with a searching but sceptical eye. There's no shortage of good ideas in his approach to a problem that has found operatic managements the world over wrong-footed, literally giving away the valuable assets of their recorded performances.

A steadily rising Wotan, he explores Wagner's most complex character in further essays which also cover Tosca's death and other matters largely vocal and all worth encountering. *George Hall* ★★★★★

The Joy of Playing, the Joy of Thinking – Conversations About Art and Performance

Charles Rosen

& Catherine Temerson

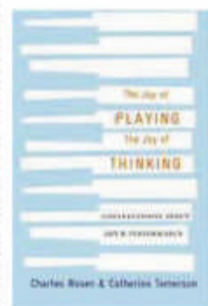
Harvard University Press 160pp (hb) £20

'A multiplicity of points of view has become central to the artistic imagination of the 20th century,' writes Israel Rosenfield in the foreword to *The Joy of Playing, the Joy of Thinking*, a collection of historic conversations between pianist Charles Rosen and his friend



Unlikely influences:
did Monsigny's operas
inspire Beethoven?

Catherine Temerson. Rosenfield's observation is at odds with today's 'no platforming' cancel culture: it is risky to republish decades-



old transcriptions (the book first appeared in French in 1993 and is translated here by Catherine Zerner). Although some of Rosen's (1927-2012) opinions are likely to engender debate, his insistence that performance should integrate artistic context, aesthetics and score analysis now seems perfectly sensible. Rosen shares absorbing anecdotes relating to his studies with Moriz Rosenthal, who had been a student of Liszt, and the time that he inadvertently offended Stravinsky by asking about an assumed printer's error in a score. As 'a conversation between two good friends intended for an audience of interested non-professionals' it is just the thing for those missing the camaraderie of post-concert chat. *Claire Jackson* ★★★★★

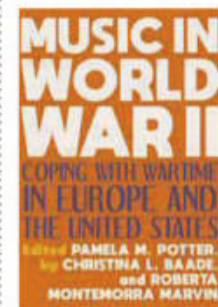
Music in World War II – Coping with Wartime in Europe and the United States

Ed. Pamela M. Potter et al

University of Indiana 318pp (pb) £24.99

This fascinating collection of essays charts musical activity during World War Two through a surprisingly varied range of topics and mediums. Activities in the concert hall and on the operatic stage focus on the remarkable seasons of darkened concerts (*Dunkelkonzerte*) given by the Vienna Symphony between 1939 and 1944 and the intractable issues that faced the programme planners in mounting German and Italian repertoire at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York during the same period. Just as interesting, however, are chapters that deal with contrasting notions of musical diplomacy in the soundtracks to American and Soviet films of the 1940s, the wartime propaganda that percolated into Broadway shows and the extraordinary buoyancy of Czech swing and popular music during the Nazi occupation. Inevitably some of the

featured material, which includes the exploration of music-making in America's German POW camps



or the popular programmes devised by organist Sandy Macpherson at the BBC, is targeted to a more specialist audience. But

the quality of writing and the strong engagement of all the contributing authors shines through almost every page. *Erik Levi* ★★★★★

The New Beethoven

Ed. Jeremy Yudkin

Boydell Press 572pp (hb) £95

One of the problems with iconic status is that critical acumen can easily transmute into intellectualised reverence. The stoic features of Thomas Crawford's 1856 statue, which adorn this mighty tome, captures the Beethovenian myth at its apex: the square-jawed features, the lion's mane of hair, the impregnable stare of heroism. One could even argue that the publication of a formidable collection of essays as part of the 250th-birthday year celebrations perpetuates (unintentionally) the Romantic archetype.

Yet far from offering a platitudinous overview, fresh insights abound, ranging from the previously under-acknowledged impact of Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny's *opéras-comiques* on Beethoven's burgeoning style and the musical instruments he owned,



to a set of parts of the Op. 135 String Quartet, copied in the composer's own hand, that reveal several fundamental rethinks when compared with

the original autograph. One might easily have imagined that there was little left to say about Beethoven that had not been said a hundred times before – this bracingly wide-ranging compendium proves otherwise.

Julian Haylock ★★★★★

Our expert *Chris Haslam* gives valuable advice on buying and using your hi-fi

Choosing the right headphones for you

We recommend...

Final E500:
quality earphones
at a budget price



Final E500 £20

This Japanese brand make some of the best – and pricey – headphones, but they also use their audiophile experience to create designs like this, boasting impressively clear and balanced sound for just £20. hifiheadphones.co.uk

Focal Celestee £999

Made in France using sumptuous materials, these closed-back headphones ooze sophistication and have sound quality to match, with electrifying detail and timing. One listen and you'll understand where the money was spent. focal.com



Sony WH-1000XM4 £335

My current favourite wireless headphones, these are light and comfortable, have brilliant Active Noise Cancelling, a 30-hour battery and sound wonderful. If your budget is smaller, last year's WH-1000XM3 (£218) are almost as good. sony.co.uk



Listen carefully:
Grado's brilliant open-
backed GS3000e model
(£1,795, gradolabs.com)

Looking around my office I can see headphones from Philips, Grado (above), JBL, AKG and Sennheiser, ranging in price from £69 to £1,800. They're all great headphones, but I can appreciate how difficult it can be to choose a new pair from the hundreds now available.

Of course, some headphones sound better than others, which is where considered reviews help, but with in-ear, on-ear, over-ear, true-wireless, Active Noise Cancelling, sports and open-backed options to consider, how do you make the most of your money?

Regardless of budget, think about what you need your headphones to do. Are they for home listening, commuting, sitting at your desk, working out, walking the dog or all the above? Which is more important – sound quality or wireless convenience?

Even at under £50 you'll be pleasantly surprised by the features available, but at this price the best-sounding headphones remain wired. SoundMagic's E11C in-ear buds cost under £40 but are sensational, while Sony's WI-C300 (£43) not only sound good but are wireless, too – handy if your smartphone no longer has a headphone jack. For sound quality reasons, however, I'd avoid noise-cancelling and true-wireless designs at this price.

At the £50-£250 level the choice is baffling, but it's worth seeking out a brand's eBay store for reconditioned pairs or look for last year's 'top' model, as many brands get rid of old stock to make room for new products. The same can be said for in-store demonstration units and bright colours, which are often discounted early.

Wireless Active Noise Cancelling is tempting, especially if you travel regularly, but for home listening the added electronics will impact on sound quality. That said, spend over £250 and you can now find some phenomenally good designs from Bowers & Wilkins, Bose and Sony.

If the time has come to invest in a serious pair of headphones for home listening (from £350 to £3,000-plus) – and no, you won't regret it – I recommend Focal, Audeze, Grado and Beyerdynamic that use their own driver technology, have handmade components and detachable cables, and use robust materials.

To enjoy music to the full, headphones need high-quality recordings – MP3 tracks will sound awful and will benefit from a hi-res digital audio player, headphone amp or DAC. But the most important thing is how they sound to you, and I'd recommend trying a selection at a specialist hi-fi retailer or, if you're unable to travel, take advantage of at-home trial services.

**Regardless of budget,
consider what you need
your headphones to do**

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BACK ISSUES



CHRISTMAS 2020

Hollywood legend John Williams discusses his stellar career, and there are recordings by some great cathedral choirs on our festive cover CD.



JANUARY 2021

Tom Poster and Elena Urioste share the story behind their lockdown performances, and we celebrate Albinoni's 350th on our cover CD.



FEBRUARY 2021

Percussionist Evelyn Glennie shares the greatest moments of her career, and we meet the French conductor Emmanuelle Haïm.

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KINGS PLACE LONDON UNWRAPPED

Sounds of a migrant city

14 Apr
Ligeti Quartet: Varmints
The Music of Anna Meredith
and Christian Mason

6 May
**Iestyn Davies and
The English Concert**
Handel's London Altos

20 Jun
**Aurora Orchestra with
Allan Clayton**
A London Serenade

21 Oct
**Instruments and Choir
of Time & Truth**
Coronation Anthems from
Purcell to Handel

7 Nov
Chineke! Chamber Ensemble
Works by Sancho, Boulogne,
Bridgetower & Coleridge-Taylor

17 Nov
The Sixteen
Court and Chapel:
Treasures of Tudor England

27 Nov
**Aurora Orchestra with
Cassie Kinoshi**
and members of SEED Ensemble

+ many more to be announced

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TV&Radio

Your complete guide to what's on Radio 3 this month, plus TV highlights

BBC
RADIO



90-93FM

MARCH'S RADIO 3 LISTINGS

Schedules may be subject to alteration. For up-to-date listings see Radio Times

Trio of talents:
Composer, conductor
and oboist Ruth Gipps
(8-12 March)

Three to look out for



Alan Davey, the controller of BBC Radio 3, picks out three great moments to tune into this March

Cardiff Week

We're going live to Cardiff for a week of lunchtime and evening concerts featuring the city's finest ensembles: Sinfonia Cymru, the Welsh National Opera Orchestra and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.
Lunchtime and Evening Concerts: 16-19 March

International Women's Day

For 24 hours, Radio 3 will feature music exclusively written by female composers, including two new commissions by Natalia Klouda and Ella Jarman-Pinto. Conductor Jessica Horsley will make her debut with the BBC Concert Orchestra, with music by the multi-talented composer Ruth Gipps.
Radio 3: 8 March

Soundscapes for Wellbeing

Do virtual nature experiences boost well-being? Take part in our 'Virtual Nature Experiment', exploring audiences' responses to digital nature soundscapes. Plus, create your own by visiting BBC Sound Effects, our archive of tens of thousands of nature sounds.
BBC Sounds

1 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Richard Strauss
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 De Doelen, Rotterdam, Netherlands. Sibelius *Violin Concerto*, *Symphony No. 2*, Westhoff *Violin Sonata No. 3*. Baiba Skride (violin), Rotterdam Philharmonic

Orchestra/Jukka-Pekka Saraste
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

2 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Richard Strauss
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-12.30am Night Tracks

3 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Richard Strauss
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from the Barbican, London. Joan Tower *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman: Part 1*, Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 4*, Barber *Symphony in One Movement*. Eric Lu (piano), London Symphony Orchestra/Marin Alsop
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

4 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Richard Strauss
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from City Halls, Glasow. Dvořák *Cello Concerto*. Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Thomas Dausgaard
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified

5 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Richard Strauss
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm The Verb

10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-1am Late Junction

6 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9-11.45am Record Review
11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters
12.30-1pm This Classical Life
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Music Planet
5-10pm Opera on 3
10pm-12 midnight New Music Show
12 midnight-1am Freeness

7 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions Helen Macdonald (writer and naturalist) (rpt)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature
The Tidal Sense
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
The Mabinogion (Series 2)
9-11pm Record Review Extra
11pm-12am Sunday Series

8 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm CHOICE **12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week** Ruth Gipps: a centenary celebration
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Watford Coliseum. Gipps *Chanticleer Overture*, *Symphony No. 2*, *Variations on a theme by Byrd*, *Tragic Celebration*, *Sinfonia Pacifica*, Cécile Marti *Wave Trip*. BBC Concert Orchestra/Jessica Horsley
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay

Shakespeare's Sisters
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

9 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ruth Gipps
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
Shakespeare's Sisters
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

10 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ruth Gipps
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists



5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 Shakespeare's Sisters
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

11 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ruth Gipps
1-5pm See Wed 10 March
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 Shakespeare's Sisters
11-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified

12 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ruth Gipps

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
 Shakespeare's Sisters
11pm-1am Late Junction

13 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9-11.45am Record Review
11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters
12.30-1pm This Classical Life
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Music Planet
5-10pm Opera on 3
10pm-12 midnight New Music Show
12 midnight-1am Freeness

14 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions

Sean Scully (artist)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.15pm Between the Ears Listen to the Deep
7.15-7.30pm New Generation Thinkers
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
 The Mabinogion (Series 3)
9-11pm Record Review Extra
11pm-12am Sunday Series

15 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Handel
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 Slovak Radio, Bratislava, Slovakia. Recorded on the centenary of the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic. Smetana *Vyšehrad* from *Má vlast*, Suchoň *Metamorphoses*, Dvořák *Symphony No. 9 'From the New World'*. Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra/Onrej Lenárd
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
 New Generation Thinkers
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

16 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Handel
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff. Sinfonia Cymru

10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 New Generation Thinkers
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

17 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Handel
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3.30pm Afternoon Concert
3.30-4.30pm Choral Evensong
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 New Generation Thinkers
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

18 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Handel
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff. Orchestra of the Welsh National Opera
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
 New Generation Thinkers
11-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified

19 FRIDAY

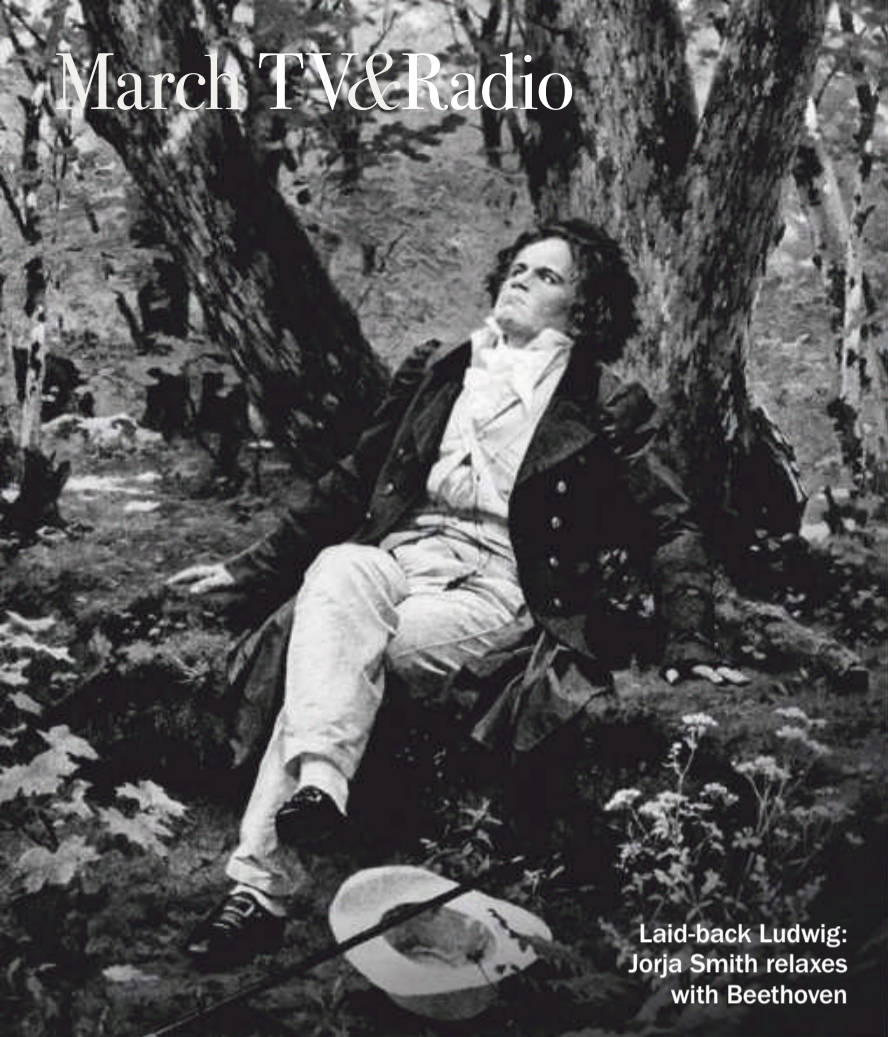
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Handel
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff. BBC National Orchestra of Wales
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
 New Generation Thinkers
11pm-1am Late Junction

20 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9-11.45am Record Review
11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters
12.30-1pm This Classical Life
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Music Planet
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-9.50pm Opera on 3
10pm-12 midnight New Music Show
12 midnight-1am Freeness

21 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning



Laid-back Ludwig:
Jorja Smith relaxes
with Beethoven

BBC SOUNDS Mood music

Two new programmes from Radio 3 are now available on BBC Sounds, hosted by Brit Award-winning singers Celeste and Jorja Smith.

Downtime Symphony with Celeste features escapist, down-tempo tracks from various fusion styles ranging from classically infused house to hip-hop and jazz mixes. The series was inspired by the popularity of the stress-busting Mindful Mix on BBC Sounds during lockdown.

Tearjerker with Jorja Smith, meanwhile, aims to create a safe space for audiences to listen to melancholic music and shed a tear. In each episode, Smith explores the healing powers of melancholy music from all genres, including film scores by Alexandre Desplat, music for prepared piano by Aphex Twin and Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. Both programmes are now available to stream or download from bbc.co.uk/sounds.

12 noon-1pm Private
Passions Margaret Heffernan (entrepreneur)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.15pm Between the Ears Telling the Bees
7.15-7.30pm New Generation Thinkers
7.30-9pm Drama on 3

The Meaning of Zong
9-11pm Record Review Extra
11pm-12am Sunday Series

22 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ravel
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 Royal Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 1*, Bruckner *Symphony No. 9*, Brahms *Waltz in A*. Lars Vogt (piano), Royal Concertgebouw/Mariss Jansons
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
The Renaissance Man
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

23 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ravel
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 Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden. Piazzolla Centenary Programme. Thomas Gould (violin), Marcelo Nisinman (bandoneon), Britten Sinfonia
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
The Renaissance Man
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

24 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ravel
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 the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool. Shostakovich *Cello Concerto No. 1*, Beethoven *Symphony No. 2*. Anastasia Kobekina (cello), Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra/Vasily Petrenko
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
The Renaissance Man
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

25 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ravel
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 City Halls, Glasgow. Berg *Violin Concerto*. Antje Weithaas (violin), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra
10-10.45pm Free Thinking

10.45-11pm The Essay
The Renaissance Man
11-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified with Elizabeth Alker

26 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Ravel
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 Barbican, London. Echoes of Scotland. Felix Mendelssohn *Symphony No. 3 'Scottish'*, Sally Beamish *Viola Concerto No. 3 'Under the Wing of the Rock'*, Maxwell Davies *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise*. Timothy Ridout (viola), BBC Symphony Orchestra/Sakari Oramo
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
The Renaissance Man
11pm-1am Late Junction

27 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9-11.45am Record Review
11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters
12.30-1pm This Classical Life
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Music Planet
5-10pm Opera on 3
10pm-12 midnight New Music Show
12 midnight-1am Freeness

28 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions Kieran Hodgson (actor and comedian)
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert (rpt)
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong (rpt)
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature Feminists Should Read Baudelaire
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
Constellations
9-11pm Record Review Extra

29 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Brahms
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 Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg. Nordheim *Canzona for Orchestra*, Grieg *Piano Concerto*, Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2*, Grieg *Lyric Pieces: Gangar*. Leif Ove Andsnes (piano), Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra/Vasily Petrenko
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
The Renaissance Man
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

30 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Brahms
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-9.30pm Radio 3 in Concert from Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff. Carlijn Metselaar *Time for your Walk*, Tailleferre *Harp Concerto*, Poulenc *Sinfonietta*. Catrin Finch (harp), BBC National Orchestra of Wales
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
The Renaissance Man
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

31 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Brahms
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
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
The Renaissance Man
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

QUIZ ANSWERS from p104
1. They are all funeral marches
2. Sergei Prokofiev
3. He commissioned Mozart to write his *Requiem*
4. The Bayreuth Festspielhaus
5. a) Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*; b) Glinka's *Russian and Ludmilla*; c) Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals*; d) Nielsen's *Aladdin Suite*
6. Johannes Brahms
7. The Royal Concertgebouw
8. 47
9. James A Garfield
10. George Martin

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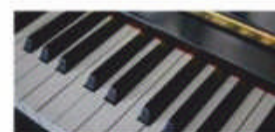
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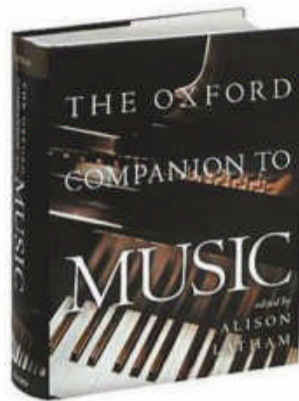
THE QUIZ

It's time to put your classical music knowledge to the test...

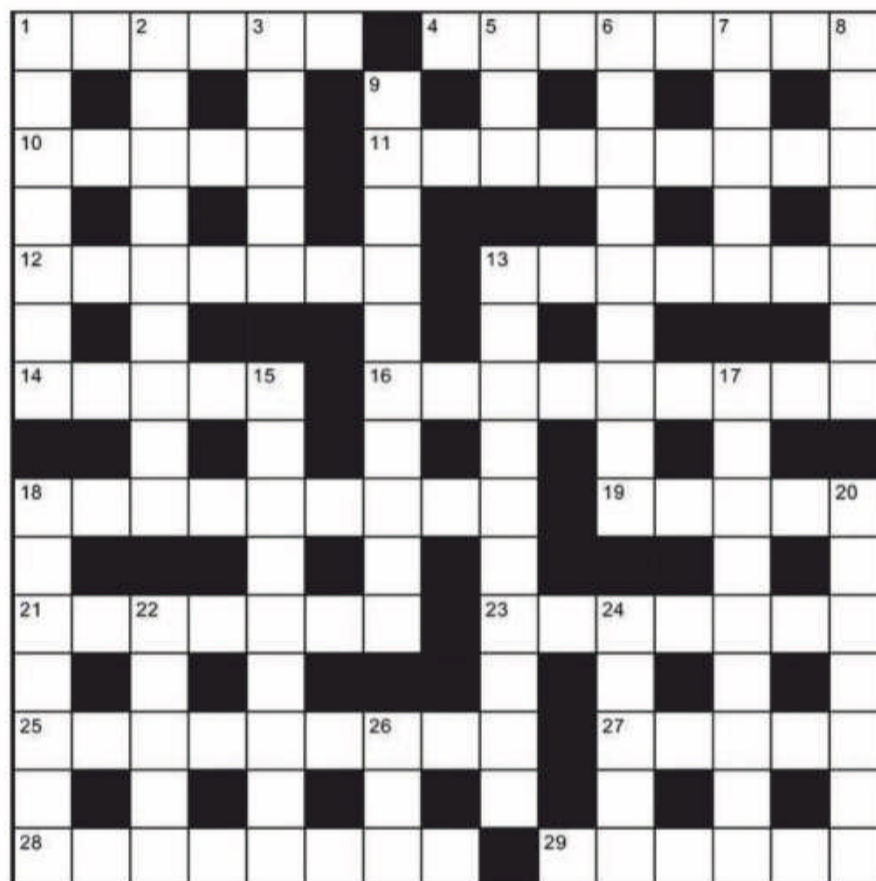
1. What links the second movement of Beethoven's Third, the third movement of Mahler's First and the second movement of Elgar's Second symphonies?
 2. Which Russian composer died on 5 March 1953, the same day as Soviet leader Josef Stalin?
 3. How did Count Franz von Walsegg make his mark on classical music history in July 1791?
 4. Which famous opera venue opened on 13 August 1872 with performances of Wagner's complete *Ring* cycle?
 5. In which works do the following marches appear:
a) March to the Scaffold (1830);
b) Chernomor's March (1842);
c) Royal March of the Lion (1886);
d) Oriental Festival March (1919)?
 6. Who, in 1853, is alleged to have hugely irritated Liszt by falling asleep while the Hungarian composer performed his own B minor Sonata?
 7. The famous concert venue pictured above is beloved by musicians and audiences alike for its exceptionally rich acoustics. Where is it?
 8. How many strings does a concert (pedal) harp usually have?
 9. For which American president did John Philip Sousa compose both an Inauguration March and a Funeral March in the same year (1881)?
 10. Who composed 'March of the Meanies' for the soundtrack of The Beatles' *Yellow Submarine* animated film in 1968?
- See p102 for answers*

The *BBC Music Magazine* PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 357

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** (see www.oup.co.uk). Send answers to: *BBC Music Magazine*, Crossword 357/March, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA to arrive by 18 March 2021 (solution in June issue).



Your name & address

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CHRISTMAS SOLUTION No. 354



CHRISTMAS WINNER *Mrs J Hughes, Staffordshire*

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ACROSS

- 1/23 English composer rips trombones to shreds (6,7)
- 4 Cashiers dancing with Hollywood dancing star (8)
- 10 Play guitar in the midst of various trumpets (5)
- 11 Rock group, American, with more hits possibly (9)
- 12 Unpleasant sound from dance venue beside road (7)
- 13 Fool brought in gift - a wind instrument (7)
- 14 Second piano receiving support at a cost? (5)
- 16 Story recalled musical getting performed after intervention by Queen (9)
- 18 Someone from King's College, say, that is holding line in singing style (9)
- 19 Silent one appears in tense part of opera (5)
- 21 I zip about in stage of journey to see Wagner's birthplace (7)
- 23 See 1 across
- 25 Country dance adding nothing to description of Vespers? (9)
- 27 Stop reducing part of auditorium (5)
- 28 Broadcast was mostly varied for radio channels (8)
- 29 Optimistic about sources of old traditions, as seen in folk music (6)

DOWN

- 1 Stops regarding groups of players (7)
- 2 Composer surprisingly best in concealing hesitation over note (9)
- 3 Gounod hero more upset about start of opera (5)
- 5 That woman appearing in Iolanthe repeatedly (3)
- 6 Opposed various artists touring East then North (9)
- 7 Soprano starts to lambast Irish government over Irish venue (5)
- 8 Improve piano, avoiding change? A lot of assistance needed in that (7)
- 9 Recording captures Daniel Craig initially taking to the floor? (3-7)
- 13 Dance for Figaro, say, requiring a quartet? (6-4)
- 15 Tango specialist beginning to organise lines in town square (9)
- 17 Dreadful scena isn't endless (9)
- 18 Keyboard instrument in arrangement of *Alceste* (7)
- 20 Score involves working with keys (7)
- 22 Like music while driving? It's popular with caution, mostly (2-3)
- 24 A selection of some Stockhausen played sadly (5)
- 26 Current ensemble's leader is a star player (3)

Please note: Because of *BBC Music Magazine's* limited office access during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a delay in receiving your prize. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.



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Jan-Dec 2019 – 27,394

Nigel Hess

Composer

Born and brought up in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, Nigel Hess's career as a composer has spanned nearly 50 years. His work includes well-known music for television (*Wycliffe*, *Vanity Fair*), theatre (the Royal Shakespeare Company), film (*Ladies in Lavender*) and the concert hall. His latest recording, *The Way of Light*, on Orchid Classics, features a selection of stirring concert works for voices, brass bands and orchestras.

I'm told I started early as a pianist – at two-and-a-half, I heard Eric Coates's *The Dam Busters March* on the radio, picked out the tune and added some harmonies! Musical talent must have skipped a generation: my great-aunt was Myra Hess, the pianist who, from 1939 onwards, entertained war-weary Londoners with her one-shilling concerts in the National Gallery. She died when I was 12, but I remember visiting her St John's Wood home (the lawn was shaped like a piano lid) and playing for her. Years later I was asked to write a show about the concerts, which became *Admission: One Shilling*, performed by Patricia Routledge and Piers Lane. Myra will always be associated with her arrangement of **BACH's** *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* which she recorded three times, and I include a tribute on my new recording.

I'm a Somerset lad and went to Weston-super-Mare Grammar School. A young music teacher called John Brock had just joined the staff, and I owe him a lot. He took us to the Proms to hear **WALTON's** *Belshazzar's Feast*, which knocked me sideways, and I've been a Walton devotee ever since. My wife and I recently visited Walton's home on Ischia where he wrote so much unmistakably 'English' music while looking out over the Mediterranean. I'm told my music has an 'Englishness' to it too, however that can be defined.

Encouraged by John Brock, I went to St Catharine's College, Cambridge to read



The choices

Bach arr. Hess *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*
Myra Hess (piano) *Appian* APR7504

Walton *Belshazzar's Feast*
Donald Bell (bass-baritone); Philharmonia Chorus & Orchestra/Walton *Warner* 968 9442

Korngold *The Sea Hawk* etc
National Philharmonic Orchestra/
Charles Gerhardt *RCA Victor* GD87890

Fauré *Requiem*
Choir of King's College, Cambridge; New Philharmonia/Willcocks *Warner* 379 9942

Mahler *Symphony No. 2, 'Resurrection'*
Schwarzkopf (soprano); Philharmonia Chorus & Orchestra/Otto Klemperer
Warner 9992668355

music. I joined the Footlights at the same time as performers like Griff Rhys Jones, Douglas Adams and Clive Anderson and found myself writing music to impossible deadlines – a taste of things to come. In my final year, I travelled to London to play keyboards on a little-known show called *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Palace Theatre and was soon offered

the job of conducting, followed by other West End musicals. An accidental foray into the world of television introduced me to professional composing – those impossible deadlines again – and I've been a composer-for-hire ever since.

Another great discovery for me was the music of **KORNGOLD**. While I was a student in the early 1970s I visited the old Decca studios in West Hampstead and watched Charles Gerhardt and the National Philharmonic record Korngold's film scores, including *The Sea Hawk*. This was just at the beginning of the Korngold 'renaissance', and those scores are part of a direct line to composers like John Williams and Hans Zimmer – music that can stand on its own, even when separated from its original inspiration.

I've always wanted my music to communicate – almost every commission I get now asks for 'good tunes'! The Prince of Wales apparently enjoyed my music for the film *Ladies in Lavender* and asked me to write a piano concerto in honour of his grandmother. Lang Lang gave the première in a beautiful church near Sandringham, and the occasion reminded me of an unforgettable performance of **FAURÉ's** *Requiem* in the chapel of King's College, Cambridge conducted by David Willcocks. I remember Fauré's music floating up from beyond the choir screen with the sun shining through those glorious stained glass windows. It was simply perfection.

I first heard **MAHLER's** *Resurrection* Symphony via conductor Otto Klemperer's recording with the soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. For me, it's always been a go-to piece for solace and rejuvenation. The final movement seems to transcend what an artist is capable of creating and, at that level, composing becomes a mystery. And when Myra Hess played those wartime concerts, she understood the power of music to heal us. It's happening again in these deeply troubled times. 🎧

Interview by Amanda Holloway



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