

Quarternotes

June 2011

2011/2

Included in this issue:

Birtwistle
New violin concerto travels
to BBC Proms



Reich
Kronos Quartet tours 9/11
memorial to Europe



Holloway
Interview about *Fifth Concerto*
premiered at BBC Proms



van der Aa
Up-close blends cello
concerto and film



Turnage Anna Nicole

Mark-Anthony Turnage's new opera enjoyed a sell-out premiere run at The Royal Opera, followed by BBC television and radio broadcasts and a forthcoming DVD release.



Photo: Bill Cooper

Party time for Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Anna Nicole* (Eva-Maria Westbroek) in Richard Jones's production at The Royal Opera in London

"When people say that a celebrity's rollercoaster life would 'make a good opera', they aren't usually being literal" wrote *The Times* of the premiere of *Anna Nicole* at The Royal Opera in London on 17 February. "But an opera, or at least an unusually discordant musical, is exactly what the British composer Mark-Anthony Turnage and writer Richard Thomas have made of the tacky and tragically short life of Anna Nicole Smith, the Playboy centrefold known for her massive fake boobs, marriage to a billionaire 62 years her senior, and death at 39 from an accidental drug overdose..."

"I'll eat my six-gallon hat if it's not a stonking great hit... It's often very funny, but it's not just a crude farce with a downbeat ending: I think it is underpinned by genuine compassion for Anna Nicole and genuine scorn for the forces that mould, and then destroy her. What makes this

opera so exciting, however, is that Turnage seems to have found precisely the right musical idiom for such a drama – an Americana, brashly orchestrated and violently propulsive which embraces jazz, blues, musical comedy, and lounge smooch so ingeniously and responsively as to transcend mere pastiche. It doesn't set out to be a complex or a subtle score, but it packs an irresistibly visceral punch." *Daily Telegraph*

"...jazzy, bitter-sweet, fizzing, moody and often touchingly tender" *The Times*

"Mr. Turnage's music is the primary reason that so much seemed so right in *Anna Nicole*. There are flashes of Weill in the clattering, cabaret-like scenes when the reporters, wielding microphones, mutter like a Greek chorus; and jazzy sneering brass writing in the scene with the dancers at the

'gentleman's club' in Houston... The more reflective passages often take the surprising form of beguiling, varied waltzes. Mr. Turnage and Mr. Thomas have come up with a slew of operatic characters that singers are going to relish, as this cast did. The London audience ate it up. But so did I, because in the end this is a musically rich, audacious and inexplicably poignant work. The ovations were tumultuous." *New York Times*

"Turnage's score is both immediately attractive and dramatically purposeful, while Thomas's pithy text is integral to the success of an opera that hits all the G-spots." *Sunday Times*

The Royal Opera's production of *Anna Nicole*, with cast including Eva-Maria Westbroek, Gerald Finley and Alan Oke conducted by Antonio Pappano, is released on DVD and Blu-ray by Opus Arte in August.

Turnage's *Blood on the Floor* is choreographed by Wayne Macgregor in a new Francis Bacon-inspired ballet at the Opéra Bastille in Paris on 29 June. Macgregor is also choreographing Turnage's new 30-minute ballet score, to be premiered at Sadler's Wells in December in a double bill with his monodrama *Twice Through the Heart*.

Shepherd signs with B&H

Young American composer Sean Shepherd (b.1979) has signed a publishing agreement with Boosey & Hawkes covering his existing output and future works. His colourful orchestral and ensemble works have been attracting attention on both sides of the Atlantic: Shepherd's *Wanderlust* received its European premiere from the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Oliver Knussen last November and future performances are scheduled by the National Symphony (Washington) under Knussen and the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Franz Welser-Möst.



Photo: Jamie Kingham

Shepherd's ensemble work *These Particular Circumstances* was premiered in the New York Philharmonic's *CONTACT!* series conducted by Alan Gilbert, and the work travelled to Amsterdam in April for a performance by the Asko/Schoenberg Ensemble. New works are premiered this summer by the Talea Ensemble at Lincoln Center and by oboist Liang Wang with the Orion String Quartet at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. Shepherd has future commissions from the Cleveland Orchestra where he is a Composer Fellow next season, and from the Ensemble Intercontemporain, to be performed in January 2012 in Paris and Cologne under the baton of Susanna Malkki.

Sean Shepherd has said that "my life as a composer is tied into my life as a listener and observer". He sees himself combining roles as a musical novelist, describing places and times past and present and their relationship

Jenkins Peacemakers

The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace is established as the most successful new large-scale choral work of recent decades and Karl Jenkins has further developed its theme in his latest project *The Peacemakers*, due to be released on disc by EMI in October. The hour-long work for choir, string orchestra and optional brass sets texts by Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Albert Schweitzer and Shelley, as well as drawing upon the Bible, Quran and Hinduism. One line from Rumi, the 13th century Persian mystic poet, sums up the ethos of the score: "All religions, all singing one song; Peace be with you".

The EMI recording will feature an assembly of choirs including the Rundfunkchor Berlin, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Youth Choir and the Really Big Chorus, together with violinist Chloë Hanslip, soprano Lucy Crowe and the London Symphony



Photo: courtesy Virgin Records, Ltd

Orchestra conducted by the composer. Premiere performances of *The Peacemakers* are planned in London and New York.

This month brings the world premiere of a further choral work, *The Bards of Wales*, which forges an unexpected link between Hungary and Jenkins's homeland. The Hungarian poet János Arany (1817-82) was asked to write a poem in praise of the Emperor Franz Joseph but, as the Austrian overlords had just suppressed the 1848 Revolution, the poet did the opposite. To satisfy the censor, the poem was written in terms of Welsh history, telling how Edward I of England executed Welsh bards for failing to sing his praises at a 13th century banquet.

Jenkins has set *The Bards of Wales* text in Hungarian, Welsh and English, and it is intended that the work can be sung throughout in a single language or a combination. The 40-minute work, scored for tenor, chorus and full orchestra, is premiered at the National Concert Hall in Budapest on 21 June.

Jenkins travels to Lincoln Center in New York in September to conduct a commemorative performance of *The Armed Man* on the 10th anniversary of 9/11. The concert also includes the first US performance of his remembrance work *For the Fallen*, with the Really Big Chorus from the UK joining the singers of Distinguished Concerts International.

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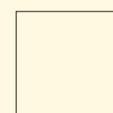
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to his personal journey, with that of the composer as craftsman. Shepherd grew up in Reno, Nevada, and his observations of the natural world – its geography and landscapes – play a significant part in many of his compositions.

For further information on Sean Shepherd visit www.boosey.com/shepherd

Holloway Fifth Concerto

Robin Holloway discusses how his Fifth Concerto for Orchestra, premiered at the BBC Proms on 4 August, seeks to combine constructivism with virtuosity.

You've exhaustively studied orchestral music across the centuries. Who are your heroes?

There are great orchestrators across a bewildering range of styles. To take two polar examples, Stravinsky is unambiguously hard-edged whereas Debussy is veiled and full of suggestion. And Richard Strauss is an orchestral master totally unlike either, who finds a technique to perfectly suit his style, just as Bruckner does for his own world. The absolutely infallible orchestrators are Mahler and Ravel, and I greatly admire Britten for his exceptional clarity. Just as interesting are those composers who are examples of how not to orchestrate, yet achieve a totally personal idiom: any other sound would be inappropriate. And there are many byways — lovely or exciting orchestral discoveries in countless composers that give pleasure, instruction, example.

When does an orchestral piece become a concerto for orchestra?

It is the emphasis on display and prowess that defines a concerto for orchestra and makes it unlike a symphony in form and content. There are no givens, so it appeals to me as a very 'open' genre. Despite their very different starting points and aims, all five of my concertos relish the multiple opportunities for virtuosity: showpiece sections for the orchestra as a whole, passages that focus on family sections, and solos where the individuals can emerge and shine.

Can orchestral showmanship and compositional argument sit comfortably together?

Yes, absolutely. You just have to think of pieces like *Daphnis and Chloë*, *Jeux* or *The Rite of Spring*. Virtuosity is an intrinsic part of the music but this does not demean the greatness of the work. Even a score like *Bolero* can be viewed as a concerto for orchestra. When Ravel notoriously said it was an orchestral work without music he was uttering a provocation, but we can view it now in a chain of works defining new orchestral forms culminating in Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*.

Your Fourth Concerto was described by the San Francisco Chronicle as "huge and splendid". Yet the Fifth is compact in scale.

Yes. After the epic *Fourth* I wanted to do something different, so was pleased when the BBC Radio 3 commission for the *Fifth* was humorously firm that it "should not be long". I was also writing a series of miniatures, the *Five Temperaments* for wind quintet and *Six Quartettini* for string quartet, so was exploring compact forms which might be thought to be 'against type'. One model for the *Fifth Concerto* was Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*, a large work in a short duration that had the intensity I was seeking.

The Fifth returns to the density of your earlier concertos. Why is this?

Its composition followed a revisiting of my *First*

Concerto, to renotate the earlier movements and revise the later movements. I was rediscovering my young self of nearly half a century ago when I was a total constructivist and raving expressionist; something of both is recaptured in the concentration of the *Fifth Concerto*, though obviously the experience and range of expression are much wider. The scale demanded there should be no sprawl, so rather like Manhattan the only solution was to build upwards.

Inspiration for your concertos has ranged from memories of travel to medieval epic poetry. Is this concerto as abstract as it appears?

Yes, it is. It neither tells stories nor depicts places or events. The only pre-compositional triggers I remember were a couple of intense colour experiences. One was walking across one of those Cambridge lawns that have been so lovingly tended down the ages. The grass was sumptuous and velvety and the light was skimming; the sensation was of swimming through green. The other was sitting on a bus in a traffic jam and fixing my eyes onto a newly-painted pillar post box in the sunlight, astounded at the visual thrill of the brilliant red. This prompted the idea of coloristic ideas for each of the five movements, not in the literal heraldic manner of Bliss's *Colour Symphony* but in a more sensory way.

How did the Fifth Concerto evolve?

It grew organically from nuclei, which initially had no thematic basis. They were ideas of texture, sound and character before any pitches were defined. The first movement starts from a total blackness of mood and spirit, moving through a dense chord sequence whose elaborate decoration fills the total chromatic and entire orchestral space. The second movement, with its springing momentum and buoyant airiness, provides the complete antithesis. The remaining three movements occupy the space between the extremes, the last attempting a synthesis of all these elements through a flowing lyricism akin to the last of Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*. My aim was to achieve from the polyphonic density a totally expressive dissonant luminosity.

Holloway
Fifth Concerto for Orchestra (2009-10) 25'

4 August 2011 (world premiere)

BBC Proms, Royal Albert Hall, London
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/
Donald Runnicles



Photo: Pippa Patterson

Chin total immersion

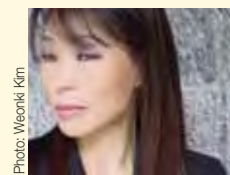


Photo: Wieckel Kim

This Spring was an exceptionally busy period for Unsuk Chin, with a Total Immersion day presented by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London, the premiere of *Fanfare chimérique* by the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris, and a sequence of major performances in Europe, Asia and the USA. In its review of the Total Immersion day at the Barbican in April, featuring 10 of the composer's works, *The Guardian* praised "the extraordinary range of Chin's sensationally accomplished writing".

Among the works new to London, a highlight for many was *Gougallon* as performed by the London Sinfonietta conducted by Stefan Asbury.

"...a 15-minute, four-movement suite illustrating Chin's childhood memories of down-at-heel street entertainers in suburban Seoul. Like all of Chin's music, *Gougallon* is most notable for its use of colour: vivid, extravagant and technically assured to the point of virtuosity... the brilliance of its external is matched by a strength of idea that makes the result genuinely fascinating." *The Guardian*

Chin's latest work, *Fanfare chimérique*, was commissioned by IRCAM and the Ensemble Intercontemporain and premiered at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in April conducted by Patrick Davin. The 18-minute work for winds, brass and electronics explores the composer's continuing fascination with reflected and refracted sound, with an octet at front of stage mirrored by an octet at the back, plus the additional blending of recorded samples.

"The instruments in each pair confront each other in the soundscape, then are replayed and treated by the electronics through writing where the first object and its mirror double mingle, and where the games of contrast and chiaroscuro unfold with generosity. Conjuring up every expressivity, this seductive work bears witness to a firm craftsmanship and a playful interplay between abstraction and decoration." *Resmusica.com*

Chin's *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, premiered to great acclaim at the BBC Proms in 2009, continues to travel with Alban Gerhardt as soloist. The Boston Symphony Orchestra presented the US premiere conducted by Susanna Mälkki in February, the Asian premiere followed in April with the Seoul Philharmonic and Stefan Asbury, and Cologne played host to the German premiere in May with the Gürzenich-Orchester and Markus Stenz.

"...a fiercely inventive work in which Chin manages that rare balancing act of honouring the genre's history while creating something bracingly new. This is music of primal expressive force yet also pinpoint timbral precision... Chin's cello writing is hugely virtuosic while avoiding cliché, and her orchestral writing is even more inventive, with a harmonic palette widened through microtonal inflections, and an overall sound world subtly shaded through extended techniques. Gerhardt's playing was superb..." *Boston Globe*

MacMillan in the USA



Photo: Philip Gattward

James MacMillan's music has been prominent in the USA in recent months with the world premiere of his new *Piano Concerto No.3* in Minneapolis, the first North American performance of his *Violin Concerto* in Philadelphia, and a feature at Carnegie Hall in New York. Next season brings

orchestral performances in Baltimore and Saint Paul, and plans are underway for the US premiere of his one-act opera *Clemency* in Boston.

The *New York Times*, observing this renewed surge of American activity, summed up MacMillan as "a creator who replaced modernist aridity with communicative directness. His initial promise has been borne out since in a diverse body of substantial works — including multiple symphonies, concertos and operas — through which he has grappled fruitfully with the contrasting tugs of modernity and history, Celtic folk traditions and Roman Catholic convictions."

"...a wild ride, overflowing with colour and incident..."

Star Tribune on Piano Concerto No.3

MacMillan's *Piano Concerto No.3* was commissioned by Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra and premiered on 14 April by Jean-Yves Thibaudet. The work travels to the Cabrillo Music Festival on 5 August and plans are underway for further performances by Thibaudet in the USA and Europe. The 25-minute concerto bears the subtitle *The Mysteries of Light* but, as ever with MacMillan, the meditative roots of inspiration are transformed into a vibrant, dramatic landscape, described by the *Star Tribune*'s reviewer as "turbulent, incantatory and, at moments, luminous".

"...there's no doubt that MacMillan knows his way around an orchestra. His score is a cascade of instrumental coloration. There were times, for instance, when the performance shimmered in a tingling shower of ethereal voices... the piano's voice is often eerily doubled by chimes, vibraphone or other instruments, creating a sonority that is at times tingling. In all, it's a masterfully challenging piece for performers and listeners." *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*

Charles Dutoit conducted the first American performances of the *Violin Concerto* in Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall in New York in March, with Vadim Repin as the virtuosic soloist. The *New York Times* described how the concerto combines archetypal song and dance sources with the traditional three-movement format: "A crackling opening movement is followed with a more lyrical section and a finale filled with exuberant display. The solo part's torrential flurries and sweetly spun melodies are custom fitted to a virtuoso like Mr. Repin... Mr. MacMillan's estimable mastery of orchestral timbre and effect is evident throughout."

Xenakis 10th anniversary

While many composers go into eclipse following their death, interest in Iannis Xenakis has grown strongly in the past decade, as witnessed by the number of special features in this 10th anniversary year. Geneva's Archipel festival included a selection of his works in March and Xenakis concerts by the London Sinfonietta and Ensemble Exposé were hosted by the Ether Festival at the Southbank Centre in April, together with an international conference organised by Goldsmiths, University of London.



Photo: Falk Krudermann

Oresteia in the Muziektheater Transparant production

Xenakis's powerful 50-minute setting of Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, scored for solo baritone, chorus and a percussion-rich ensemble, was staged in February on a Belgian and Dutch tour by Muziektheater Transparant and the AskolSchönberg Ensemble and Choir. The production by Caroline Petrick travelled to Bruges, Antwerp, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. A further production of *Oresteia* opened in Vienna last month, a co-production between the Wiener Festwochen, Wiener Taschenoper, Remix Ensemble Porto and the Anton Webern Kammerchor. The staging by Carlus Padrissa, a member of La Fura dels Baus, provided a pyrotechnic realisation in the open air on the Karlsplatz.

Kraanerg, Xenakis's major 75-minute ballet score for ensemble and electronics, forms the culmination of a Xenakis weekend (4-5 June) at the Holland Festival, performed by AskolSchönberg directed by Arturo Tamayo, with visuals from the Brussels collective Visual Kitchen. Both *Oresteia* and *Kraanerg* feature in the five days of Xenakis concerts at the Flâneries Musicales de Reims between 13 and 18 July, with many leading interpreters of his music including pianist Roger Woodward, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, cellist Rohan de Saram, the Jack Quartet and the Asko Ensemble conducted by Diego Masson. Other highlights include Xenakis's groundbreaking early stochastic score *Metastaseis A* in a programme by the Orchestre de Lille and Tamayo.

Valtioni Snow Queen

The Komische Oper in Berlin premiered *The Snow Queen*, a new children's opera by Pierangelo Valtinoni, with a Christmas run of 12 performances. Based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy-tale, the new commission followed the company's successful staging of Valtinoni's *Pinocchio* and, like the earlier work, *The Snow Queen* effectively combines adult and children's roles with children's chorus and chamber orchestra. An alternative simplified version for an all-children cast was unveiled at the Kampnagel in Hamburg in February, presented by the Staatsoper and a second staging opened at the Teatro Comunale in Vicenza in April.

"The new fairy-tale opera has the makings of a crowd-puller. The Italian composer's music is tonally sensual and catchy... Rhythmically-accented numbers match the children's urge to keep moving. Counting rhymes and nursery rhymes find their place in the score just as much as the shimmering sound atmosphere which accompanies the gleaming violet castle of ice." *Berliner Morgenpost*

"...an exemplary children's opera from Andersen's fairy-tale."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

"The first performance was given a tumultuous welcome with cries of bravo and long applause. Italian composer Pierangelo Valtinoni has created a work which is melodic almost throughout. Some of the catchy arias even verge on musicals-style songs. But the musical harmony is also necessary, for the story of Gerda and her friend Kay is sometimes melancholy and sometimes even downright creepy..." *Der Tagesspiegel*

Other operas in the Boosey & Hawkes catalogue featuring young performers and children's chorus include *The Arabian Princess*, a pasticcio of music by Arriaga with new text by Paula Fünfeck. This made history in 2009 as the first opera presented in the

Palestinian territories and received a new staging at Leipzig Opera last month. *The Three Riddles* by Detlev Glanert, which combines child and adult singers on stage, has received over 90 performances since its premiere in 2003 and a new production opens this month in Koblenz. Karl Jenkins's children's opera *Eloise* is enjoying a growing number of international performances, including stagings at the Leipzig Gewandhaus last season and at the Bonn Theater this July; the work is suitable for both school productions and opera house educational programmes.

Pierangelo Valtinoni's The Snow Queen in Anisha Bondy's production for the Komische Oper in Berlin.



Photo: Iko Freese/DPRAMA

van der Aa Up-close travels

Michel van der Aa's new concerto for Argentinian-French cellist Sol Gabetta fuses music and film to create "a richly intriguing affair" (*The Observer*). *Up-close* enjoyed an extensive premiere tour to six countries in March, resulting from its commission by the European Concert Hall Organisation, visiting Stockholm, Luxembourg, Brussels, Amsterdam, London and Hamburg. The 25-minute work, scored for solo cello, strings, soundtrack and film, has also been recorded for future release on van der Aa's Disquiet Media label.

"A work that captivates from beginning to end."

Dagens Nyheter

"This hauntingly beautiful work is among van der Aa's finest. Gabetta, in a print frock, sits among the black-clad orchestra, spinning out a rapturous song without words, while on screen a similarly dressed older woman creeps furtively to a disused house to use an old, unspecified piece of electronic equipment. Black-out screens cover the windows and the machine communicates in code. The woman may be reliving wartime memories, possibly as a member of the Dutch resistance. But we will never know for certain. Being 'up-close' can never give us the bigger picture, and we are left with a mystery that continues to resonate after the music has faded." *The Guardian*

"Film and live images intermingle poetically, and van der Aa's wonderful music does the rest. Van der Aa retains all the elements of concerto form, but has the piece begin with the solo cadenza, in a magnificent performance by the lithe-limbed Gabetta. When music, electronics and string orchestra then suddenly converge, the magic that you so often hear in Van der Aa's music is there once again. A fine addition." *De Trouw*



Sol Gabetta (cello) and Vakil Eelman (on film) in *Up-close*

"What you see and hear interlocks secretly and with success because ultimately it is all put together with an imagination that is purely musical. It works because van der Aa is an unequalled master at creating a high-tech whole from barely profiled gestures, which gets its meaning from the interconnection of all these elements. It makes for a very contemporary form of intelligent but nevertheless accessible music theatre." *Het Parool*

Van der Aa's *The Book of Disquet*, based on fragmentary texts by Fernando Pessoa, received its German stage premiere in Saarbrücken with Klaus Maria Brandauer last month, and his orchestral song-cycle *Spaces of Blank* is heard in the UK for the first time on 18 June at the Spitalfields Festival with mezzo Stephanie Marshall and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lawrence Renes. A DVD of the monodrama *One* has just been released on the Disquiet label featuring the extraordinary performance by Barbara Hannigan (DQM 03).

Birtwistle violin concerto



Photo: Michael J. Lurch

Harrison Birtwistle takes his bow with Christian Tetzlaff and Marcelo Lehninger at the Boston premiere of Concerto for Violin and Orchestra

Christian Tetzlaff gave the world premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's new *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* in March, with the Boston Globe describing the solo part as "highly athletic, compacted and gestural...played with fierce commitment and technical brilliance." The work was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the premiere was conducted by Marcelo Lehninger, standing in impressively for an indisposed James Levine. The orchestra toured the concerto to Carnegie Hall in New York and the European premiere is scheduled at the BBC Proms on 7 September with Tetzlaff joining the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Robertson.

"A work of true originality... a continuous 25-minute span that evokes traditional form while always keeping at a subtle remove from it. It is as though Birtwistle has to rediscover the concerto paradigm from scratch... Ideas flow forth, are

'discussed' by the soloists, the concertino-chorus, the tutti, but are not 'argued' over... Clear to begin with — Birtwistle really has ensured that the soloist's every note is audible — the concerto seemed increasingly inevitable and substantial." *Sunday Times*

"Mr. Birtwistle, 76, is a towering figure in British music. His language, though complex and modernistic, is distinctive and exhilarating... Throughout the piece the violin plays a stream of jagged chords, gnarly intervals and twisted thematic flights. Then something will happen in the orchestra — a pungent harmony, a twitch of sombre counterpoint — and the violin responds with a waiting melodic line in its shimmering high range." *New York Times*

In addition to presenting the European premiere of the violin concerto, the Proms also features the UK premiere on 20 August of *Angel Fighter*, Birtwistle's dramatic cantata retelling the Genesis story of Jacob wrestling with the Angel. Scored for chamber chorus, tenor, countertenor and ensemble, the performance at Cadogan Hall combines soloists Andrew Watts and Jeffrey Lloyd-Roberts, the BBC Singers and the London Sinfonietta conducted by David Atherton. At its Leipzig Bach Festival premiere it was described as a score of "enchanting beauty and monumental power... a major work which points to a new direction for sacred music." (*Leipziger Volkszeitung*)

Three Birtwistle orchestral works have just been released on a new NMC disc with the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth (D156). *The Shadow of Night* and *Night's Black Bird* are a diptych exploring the theme of Elizabethan melancholy as exemplified by Dowland, while *The Cry of Anubis* is a tuba concerto for the jackal god of Egyptian mythology. The Arditti Quartet is recording Birtwistle's *Tree of Strings* and *Nine Movements for String Quartet* for the Aeon label for release in Spring 2012.

Clyne Chicago residency



Photo: Todd Rosenberg

Anna Clyne's first Chicago Symphony Orchestra commission since her appointment by Riccardo Muti as Mead Composer-in-Residence was inspired by the orchestra's legendary brass section. *Spangled Unicorn* was premiered in the orchestra's

MusicNOW series in March conducted by Pablo Heras-Casado and takes its name from a collection of poems by Noël Coward, with Clyne making up for the surprising absence of the fabled beast from the poetry itself. *Chicago Classical Review* described how "typical of Clyne's music, it packs a lot into just 11 minutes... Well-crafted, virtuosic and written with great flair and a quirky off-centre humour, *Spangled Unicorn* is fully characteristic of Clyne's engaging and distinctive style."

"...full of amiable fanfares, faintly queasy dances and some growling complaints. The blend of mellow horns, sharper-edged trumpets and sinewy low brass is sumptuous, and the players handed off Clyne's shifting melodies and decisive rhythms amongst themselves in a seamless flow." *Musical America*

Anna Clyne's next Chicago commission is a 20-minute orchestral work, *Night Ferry*, to be premiered under the baton of Riccardo Muti in February 2012, then toured to San Francisco. Other plans include a chamber orchestra score with dancers, programmes curated for the MusicNOW series, and ongoing outreach projects linking music to film, dance and the visual arts.

Clyne orchestral works are increasingly programmed, including *rewind*, performed last year at the Cabrillo Music Festival under Marin Alsop, by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the recent *Reich Reverberations* weekend in London, and scheduled by the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington under Leonard Slatkin in November. The seven-minute work is an ideal concert opener, inspired by the image of an analogue video tape rapidly scrolling backwards with fleeting moments of skipping, freezing and warping. Following its premiere in the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Green Umbrella series, *Within Her Arms* for string orchestra was toured by the Australian Chamber Orchestra in March, travels to Cabrillo in August and is performed by the St Paul Chamber Orchestra in September and in Chicago's MusicNOW series in December.

Reich Kronos on tour

The Kronos Quartet toured Steve Reich's *WTC 9/11*, a powerful memorial to the victims of the September 2001 attacks, to Europe in May with performances in London at the Barbican's *Reich Reverberations* weekend, in Essen, Glasgow and Norwich. Scored for string quartet playing live against two pre-recorded quartets and voices on tape, the new 15-minute work is Reich's third for the Kronos Quartet following *Different Trains* and *Triple Quartet*, and was commissioned by the Barbican, Carnegie Hall, Duke Performances/Duke University, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts/University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County, the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Photo: Jay Blakesberg

"...a dark, raw, haunting piece, its detached fury indicative of the undiminished powers of a great American artist who will celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday in October. The beginning is singularly eerie: a sharp, gnawing dissonance in the strings, the sound of a telephone off the hook, and recorded voices of NORAD air-traffic controllers on the morning of 9/11. The ending is even eerier: after the consoling sound of a cantor singing the *Wayfarer's Prayer* — 'Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you

Rouse Symphony No.3



Photo: Christian Steiner

Christopher Rouse's new *Symphony No.3* was welcomed with a standing ovation at its premiere conducted by David Robertson in St Louis in May. Co-commissioned by the St Louis Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony, Baltimore Symphony and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, the new symphony takes as its

stepping-off point the two movement form of Prokofiev's *Symphony No.2*, itself influenced by Beethoven's final piano sonata op.111. As the *St Louis Post Dispatch* observed, "all three works have two main parts: an aggressive, declarative opening movement followed by a second consisting of theme and several variations."

The reviewer went on to note how *Symphony No.3* fused thrilling orchestral writing with a musical language that can readily appeal to a general audience: "Combining the classical clarity of Paul Hindemith, at some points echoing the gentle minimalism of John Adams, as well as the primal energy of, yes, Prokofiev and Beethoven... this could easily become a programming staple of orchestras worldwide..."

"Commentators on Rouse's work frequently use words like 'exciting' or 'energetic', and from the opening trumpet fanfare of the first movement, you can see what they mean... All of this is supported by lively, active percussion — a constant rhythmic pulse that takes hold of you and won't let go.

"The five variations that follow vary in mood and style, beginning with a gentle, romantic statement of the theme floating over a soft cushion of strings. Then a couple of snappy variations are separated by one for strings alone, which sounds a bit like the blues with low, slow bass lines merging with overlapping melodies higher up. The final variation is full of little flashes of sound punctuating the orchestral fabric; it comes full circle, mirroring the wild abandon of the first movement..." *St Louis Post Dispatch*

Rouse's *Symphony No.2* forms the grand finale of Manchester's *American Raptures* series devoted to his music (14-15 June), with the BBC Philharmonic conducted by Clark Rundell. Other highlights include *String Quartet No.2* played by the Kreutzer Quartet and performances by the RNCM New Ensemble. Rouse is featured at many of the US's leading festivals this summer including Aspen, Santa Fe, Cabrillo, and Tanglewood. His recent orchestral work *Odná Zhizn (A Life)* is conducted by Marin Alsop in Cabrillo and Hans Graf in Houston in coming months.

to the place that I have prepared' — the dissonance of the opening returns, and we hear a voice saying, "And there's the world right here." In no uncertain tones, Reich suggests that history is circular, that horror will recur." *The New Yorker*

"...taut and unflinchingly eloquent..." *Musical America* on *WTC 9/11*

"...[*WTC 9/11*] combined [Reich's] signature juxtaposition of taped and live instruments to the manipulation of the spoken word, in a sober memorial, as sad and brief as the catastrophe of Sept. 11 itself and as compact as a gravestone... a portrayal of the act of remembering." *Washington Post*

"...a restrained, taut piece in three continuous movements, almost ritualised in its plainness, and tremendously powerful in effect." *The Guardian*

The Kronos Quartet's performance of *WTC 9/11* will be included on a new Nonesuch disc in September, one of a number of recordings issued in the composer's 75th birthday year. Chandos has released a disc of orchestral music conducted by Kristjan Järvi (CHSA 5091) in anticipation of his appearance with the London Symphony Orchestra on 15 October in an all-Reich programme including *The Desert Music*. Linn has recorded Kuniko in a new selection of Reich arrangements for solo percussion (CKD 385).

Reich 75th concert highlights through the summer include the opening concert of the Sónar festival in Barcelona (16 June), *Drumming* at the Cheltenham Festival (3 July), and an all-Reich late-night Prom including *Music for Eighteen Musicians* (10 August). The Sacrum Profanum festival in Kraków presents a week of Reich events including *Three Tales* (11-18 September), and the birthday month brings a *Steve Reich Pulsations* feature at Cité de la Musique in Paris (11-18 October).

Daugherty Triple Grammy

Michael Daugherty's piano concerto *Deus Ex Machina* scooped up three GRAMMY Awards in February, for Best Contemporary Classical Composition, Best Orchestral Performance and Best Classical Engineered Album. The concerto, written in 2007, is a musical ode to the power and legacy of trains, both as a futurist vision of travel and as part of American history.



April brought the UK premiere of Daugherty's violin concerto *Fire and Blood*, described by *The Guardian* as "expertly put together" and an "undeniable audience-pleaser", with the London Symphony Orchestra and violinist Vadim Gluzman whose solo part was "dispatched with great panache". The conductor was Kristjan Järvi, son of the work's first conductor Neeme Järvi at the helm of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in 2003.

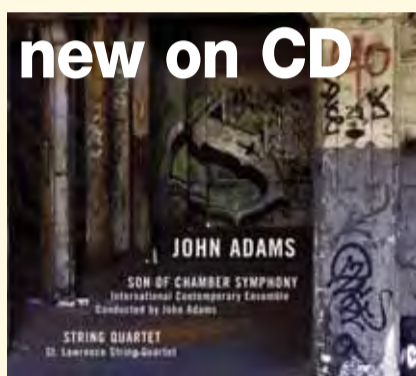
The concerto was inspired by Mexican artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, who spent two years in Detroit in the 1930s when Rivera was commissioned to paint four large murals representing the city's automobile industry. Daugherty notes how Rivera himself "predicted the possibility of turning his murals into music, after returning from a tour of the Ford factories". The first of *Fire and Blood's* three movements, *Volcano*, relates to the fiery factory furnaces in Rivera's murals, while the central movement *River Rouge* is linked to the blood colour in Frida Kahlo's paintings with Mexican mariachi music resonating in the background. The *Assembly Line* finale is a machine-like *perpetuo*, with the soloist as the worker surrounded by orchestral punctuations and metallic factory sounds.

The Naxos recording, featuring pianist Terrence Wilson and the Nashville Symphony conducted by Giancarlo Guerrero, is part of a growing collection of Daugherty discs on the label.

The most recent Naxos release, with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by Marin Alsop, includes *Route 66*, *Time Machine*, and *Ghost Ranch* inspired by the desert art of Georgia O'Keeffe (Naxos 8.559613). *Gramophone's* reviewer described how "Daugherty's synthesis of melodic directness, rhythmic energy and mellifluous orchestration is absorbing and exhilarating", while the *Washington Post* commented that "Daugherty writes music that is propulsive, accessible yet well constructed and deeply imbued with the spirits of both romanticism and postmodernism."

Adams new on CD

Two of John Adams's most recent works, *Son of Chamber Symphony* and *String Quartet*, have just been released on a new Nonesuch disc featuring the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) conducted by the composer and the St Lawrence String Quartet (7559 798 008).



Son of Chamber Symphony has received 70 performances since its premiere in 2007, following in the footsteps of the first *Chamber Symphony* as one of Adams's most programmed works. Set in three movements, the first pays tribute to the dancing energy of Beethoven's scherzos, while the second pits elegiac hypermelodies against strumming accompaniments. The finale was described by the *Los Angeles Times* as its premiere as "one of those Adams bucking-bronco blastoffs, riveting and full of surprises".

The *String Quartet* has toured Adams's *String Quartet* extensively since its premiere two years ago, with over 40 performances on three continents. This is the composer's second full-length work for string quartet, but whereas *John's Book of Alleged Dances* also employed recorded samples, the newer quartet is for the classic acoustic line-up. *The Guardian* described how "it is the constant trade between the machine-like aspect and the fragile sparks of something more human that elevate the music and its players".

As well as further tours of the *String Quartet*, the St Lawrence players feature in the world premiere next season of *Absolute Jest*, a new Adams work for quartet and orchestra commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony for its Centennial Season and by Carnegie Hall. The first performance in San Francisco is conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas on 15 March as part of the American Mavericks festival. The new work then tours with the San Francisco Symphony to Chicago, Ann Arbor and New York and performances are planned by European orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican in the 2012/13 season.

Carter summer premieres



Now into his 103rd year, Elliott Carter has completed a double concerto for premiere at the Aldeburgh Festival on 26 June. The new work, entitled *Conversations*, combines the talents of pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard and percussionist

Colin Currie, and the premiere at Snape Maltings features the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and conductor Oliver Knussen. Other commissioners are Radio France and the New York Philharmonic with performances to follow in future seasons.

Lasting ten minutes, *Conversations* is more compact in scale and intent than Carter's pioneering *Double Concerto* (1961) and takes an alternative view of the relationship between soloists and orchestra. Whereas the earlier work emphasized the differences between piano and harpsichord, each with its own supporting orchestra, the composer has described how *Conversations* treats the piano as part of a percussion group combining both solo instruments. Pianist and percussionist are in amiable conversation and exchange lively repartee with the lightly-scored orchestra, in stark contrast to the dialectic conflict and density of the *Double Concerto*.

This summer also brings the UK premiere of Carter's *Flute Concerto* written for Emanuel Pahud. Following its premiere in Jerusalem in 2008 and performances in Berlin, Boston, Toronto and Hyogo, the BBC Proms performance on 28 July features Pahud with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Thierry Fischer. The *Berlin Morgenpost* described how the solo part and the orchestra interact "sometimes quarrelling, sometimes affectionately pulling together."

"The witty variations in instrumentation, in particular the sonic combination of percussion, harp and piano, and the echo-streets between the soloist and the orchestral flute, paved the way for concertante conversations at the highest level. A wonderfully colourful flute concerto." *Berliner Zeitung*

Carter's *Concertino for Bass Clarinet and Orchestra* receives its US premiere at the Miller Theater in New York on 18 June with Virgil Blackwell as soloist. Its first European performance is in Ljubljana on 18 November within a major Carter feature at the Slowind Festival also featuring Slovenian premieres of *Triple Duo*, *Mosaic* and *Tempo e Tempi* with soloists including Robert Aitken, Ursula Oppens and Erica Goodman.

Britten Connections



The Britten-Pears Foundation has released a new guide with CD for performers and programmers, exploring the less familiar works in Britten's output through a series of themes and connections, in preparation for his centenary on 22 November 2013.

Written by Paul Kildea, who is currently completing a new Britten biography, the guide examines themes of pacifism, love, popular music, dance and the composer's travels to America and the Far East, as well as suggested pairings of repertoire with linked figures such as Mahler, Stravinsky and Shostakovich. A timeline places the composer's life and works alongside contemporary events and the accompanying CD with 44 excerpts provides an aural

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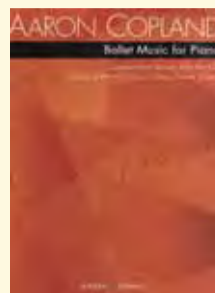
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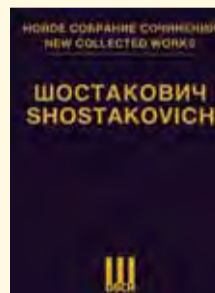
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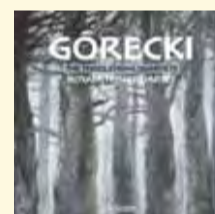


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