

Quarternotes

June 2012

2012/2

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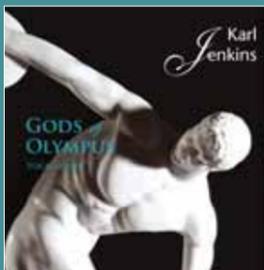
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Lindberg Piano Concerto No.2

Magnus Lindberg's new concerto was premiered in May by pianist Yefim Bronfman and the New York Philharmonic conducted by Alan Gilbert.



Magnus Lindberg, Alan Gilbert and Yefim Bronfman take their bows after Piano Concerto No.2's premiere.

After a 20-year interval, Magnus Lindberg has returned to the genre of the piano concerto with his new work for Yefim Bronfman, premiered in New York in May. The concerto was the last major commission under Lindberg's three-year residency with the New York Philharmonic and, following the premiere conducted by Alan Gilbert, the orchestra toured the work to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The *Financial Times* described how "the celebrated Finnish composer shared his kudos with the virtuoso pianist Yefim Bronfman" whose "knuckle-busting solos [were] played with boundless energy... the audience responded with instant cheers". The *New York Times* likewise hailed Bronfman's "brilliant and triumphant performance. He mastered every challenge: thick chords that leap across the keyboard;

spiralling bursts of runs and sputtering arpeggios; cascades of double thirds; finger-twisting counterpoint..."

With a full symphony orchestra at Lindberg's disposal, *Piano Concerto No.2* is a larger-boned work than the composer's first concerto, and though French models are still apparent, the new score also embraces the more muscular worlds of Bartók, Prokofiev, and even Rachmaninoff, to suit Bronfman's wide-ranging repertoire skills. Lindberg has commented that "if the first concerto looks to Ravel's G major concerto, the second is closer to his left hand concerto. I also wanted it to survey my own pianistic experience, from *Kraft* in the mid-'80s through *Related Rocks* to the present."

"It took all of [Bronfman's] technique and stamina to dispatch this monster concerto, a surging, mercurial 32-minute work in three contrasting sections that unfold continuously. The concerto opens with slowly emerging lines and chords in the low register of the piano and deep, quietly ominous stirrings in the orchestra. Inexorably the strands coalesce into tense, swelling sustained orchestra harmonies and restless bursts of chords and quasi-crazed figures in the piano... for all the shifts in language and style, the concerto comes across as organic and inevitable." *New York Times*

Next season brings the first performances of Lindberg's new commission for the Royal Concertgebouw, celebrating the 125th anniversary both of orchestra and hall. The world premiere in Amsterdam is scheduled for 17 January conducted by David Robertson, followed by the UK premiere by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under John Storgårds at the Barbican on 9 March.

van der Aa 3D opera



Photo: Marco Burggreve

Dutch composer Michel van der Aa's latest operatic project has been announced - a collaboration with the celebrated novelist David Mitchell, author of *Cloud Atlas*. The new film opera, *Sunken Garden*, will be a co-production by English National Opera, the

Barbican Theatre, Toronto Festival of Arts, Culture and Creativity, Opéra de Lyon and the Holland Festival.

Like its predecessors *One*, *The Book of Disquiet* and *After Life*, van der Aa's new stagework will employ a distinctive combination of live action and video projections to tell its story, and for the first time includes 3D film. Mitchell's libretto tells an 'occult mystery' story involving a software engineer, a glamorous young socialite, a neurotic film-maker and a gullible patroness of the arts. Each shares a dream of a 'walled garden' between life and death in which there is no guilt or grief.

The world premiere of *Sunken Garden* will be given by ENO at the Barbican Theatre on 12 April 2013, with further performances at the Holland Festival in Amsterdam in June 2013. The production will be staged by Michel van der Aa, conducted by André de Ridder and the cast includes Roderick Williams and Claron McFadden. Further performances will follow in Toronto and Lyon in future seasons. This October brings the Australian premiere of *After Life* at the Melbourne Festival and the French premiere of van der Aa's concerto for cello and film, *Up-Close*, within the Nuit Blanche celebrations in Paris.

Rouse New York residency



Photo: Jeffrey Herman

Christopher Rouse has been named as the New York Philharmonic's new Composer-in-Residence, for a term of two seasons beginning in 2012/13.

During his first year the orchestra will perform three works by Rouse: a world premiere of a concert opener entitled *Prospero's Rooms* in April 2013, which will also be toured to Europe; *Phantasmata* for orchestra in February; and an earlier Philharmonic commission, *Seeing* featuring pianist Emanuel Ax, in June next year.

Over the past 30 years the New York Philharmonic has presented twelve of Rouse's works, three of them commissioned by the orchestra. The orchestra's Music Director Alan Gilbert has described how Rouse "is one of the most important composers working today. I've recorded a lot of his music, and it has been a very meaningful and a large part of my musical life for a long time. He has a unique voice and is one of the composers who truly hears what he writes. He doesn't leave anything to chance: he actually shapes the sound and the emotional flow of his music in a way that only great composers can."

In addition to these performances, Rouse will advise on the orchestra's new-music series, CONTACT! The 2012/13 season features premieres of works by eight composers, including the North American premiere of *Gougalón* by Unsuk Chin, and a performance of *Counterpoise* by Jacob Druckman.

Rouse's new trumpet concerto, *Heimdall's Trumpet*, is premiered on 20 December by Christopher Martin and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jaap van Zweden.

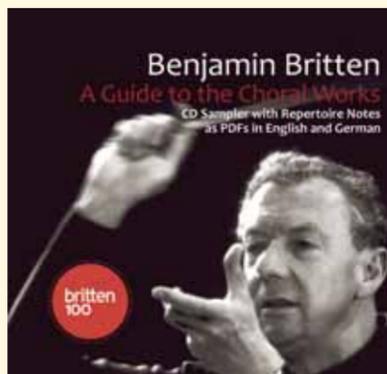


Photo: Wiesława Kim

A new guide to the choral music of Benjamin Britten has been released in anticipation of the composer's centenary in 2013. The guide consists of a CD sampler with 36 tracks and over an hour of music, together with PDFs in English and German containing a detailed survey of Britten's choral works, written by Paul Spicer - the first to cover the composer's complete output.

Paul Spicer's repertoire notes cover all choral genres explored by Britten: music for concert halls, church and school, for chamber and symphony choruses, and for young voices and church choirs. For each work there is a practical commentary, including level of difficulty and rehearsal tips for choral directors. Links are provided to all sales items.

The new guide is a collaboration between the Britten-Pears Foundation and the three publishers of Britten's music: Boosey & Hawkes, Chester Music and Faber Music. If you are a choral director, festival programmer or broadcaster and have yet to receive a copy, or would like to inform us of your Britten Centenary plans, please email us on composers.uk@boosey.com.

A new Britten 100 website is due to be soft-launched by the BPF in mid-June, including an overview of centenary performances which can be added to by performing organisations. The full site will go live to the public on Britten's 99th birthday on 22 November. Visit www.britten100.org.

Chin premiere



Photo: Wiesława Kim

Unsuk Chin's most recent work is *cosmigimmicks*, a musical pantomime for seven instrumentalists, premiered in Amsterdam on 26 April by the Nieuw Ensemble conducted by Celso

Antunes. The 24-minute score extends further the imaginary theatre explored in her recent work *Gougalón*, here deployed for a smaller ensemble centred around the distinctive combination of guitar, mandolin and harp. The work was co-commissioned by the Nieuw Ensemble, Southwest Chamber Music and Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik.

Unsuk Chin describes how the "plucked instruments play the main roles, while the other instruments (prepared piano, violin, trumpet and percussion) disguise themselves in order to join in a play of masques and mimicry... At best, pantomime is able to embrace both the sublime and the low in an often baffling mixture of ritual and nonsense, of street and high art, of madness and contemplation, of the tragic and the roughly comical."

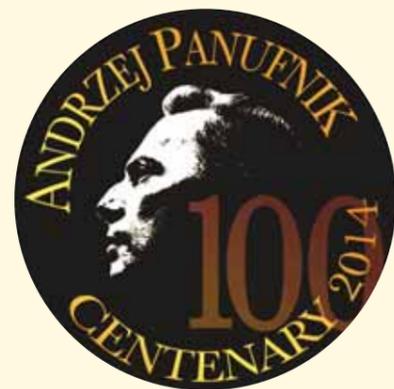
Other Chin highlights in the coming months include the US premiere of her opera *Alice in Wonderland* in a new reduced orchestration, opening at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis on 13 June. Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts her *Violin Concerto* with soloist Viviane Hagner and the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Edinburgh Festival on 30 August and at the Beethovenhalle in Bonn on 3 October. Chin was recently awarded the Ho-Am Prize, the most prestigious within the arts sector in Korea, recognising "those who have made outstanding contributions to the promotion of Culture and The Arts through their creative efforts and accomplishments".

Panufnik new website

A new website exploring Andrzej Panufnik (1914-91), the music and the man, has been launched at www.panufnik.com. 2014 is the Polish-born composer's centenary and the website provides a welcome overview for those researching repertoire for the celebrations.

As well as details of Panufnik's music and soundclips of his works, the website offers a gallery of photographs, many never seen before, and detailed biographical information. Social history and musical life intertwine in Panufnik's personal story: survival in wartime Warsaw and the Nazi occupation, political pressures under the Soviet-led regime, escape to the UK, challenges in exile, and the composer's momentous return visit to Warsaw in 1990.

If you would like assistance with centenary repertoire suggestions and details of recommended Panufnik interpreters please contact us on composers.uk@boosey.com.



Glanert SOLARIS

How did you first discover *Solaris*? Was it the original novel by Stanislaw Lem or the film by Andrei Tarkovsky?

First I saw the Tarkovsky movie, if I remember correctly, in 1979. I was completely fascinated by it and this prompted me to read the novel. The book itself seemed to be a completely other *Solaris* story by Lem, even stronger than the film! So the novel started to overlay the impressions from the movie, which I progressively forgot, except for three or four key scenes.

Solaris is a many-layered book, embracing science fiction, mystery, broken romance, philosophy... What is the centre of the novel for you and your librettist Reinhard Palm?

For me and Reinhard the central point of focus for our opera is that the non-communication between the human characters is counterpointed with the non-communication with the planet *Solaris*, which obviously betrays a certain intelligence. At the very end of the story the scientist Kelvin speaks about the senselessness of searching for other intelligences, because the main reason is always that we look for our 'older brother' who will protect us from evil, or put another way that we look for God who will protect us from being so alone in space.

As the scientists probe the planet's 'thinking ocean', it retaliates by recreating a figure from each of their anguished memories. How do you view these doubles?

The planet always chooses apparitions from the past, connected to a guilty action by the characters on the spaceship: Kelvin's ex-wife committed suicide because they could no longer communicate with each other; Sartorius has a little dwarf behind him - an anti-intellectual idiot; Snaut always sees his mother in a very humiliating and complicated relationship; Gibarian, who killed himself before Kelvin's arrival, had been shadowed by a large African woman and we are led to understand that he carried out chemical experiments upon her.



Detlev Glanert discusses his opera *Solaris*, premiered at the Bregenz Festival in July and travelling to the Komische Oper in Berlin next season.

Much of the novel is philosophical in tone. How have you transformed this for the dramatic stage?

We condensed the novel to the key scenes first to establish a pure dramatic line, and then added the philosophical and historical reflections at certain suitable points - but of course not at such length as in the novel. Opera enjoys the wonderful invention of the

'aria', where time stands still and we can look into the thoughts and reflections of a character, so we naturally utilised this model. And then there is the remarkable ending, when Kelvin is flying to the planet and reality is vanishing - here we used a lot from the last two pages of the novel to create a dreamlike finale.

Many of your operas trap humans in a sealed world to explore their psychology - the court of *Caligula*, *The Wooden Ship*, and here an orbiting spaceship. Is this close to the expressionist tradition?

I grew up with certain German traditions, one of which is expressionism, but I don't think that I'm a complete product of this. Musically I embrace different influences, for example impressionism and the 1980s idea of 'new velocity', which give me a much wider palette of colours. The only thing which interests me on stage is the human being, and to learn more about the person's character, often in extreme moments, so as to inform our view of the world. Maybe this is seen as something typically German but I find the same fascination in creative artists from many other nations, ever since the first development of psychology 120 years ago.

The sound of *Solaris* is described by Lem as a "low-pitched murmuring, which seemed to me the very voice of the planet itself". How have you created this in music?

I decided that *Solaris* will be represented by the opera chorus - hidden or only vaguely seen during the main drama, but perhaps glimpsed at the very end, when Kelvin takes his flight to the planet. And I decided to

add something to Lem's description: the planet slowly learns to speak, starting with unimportant vocalising, like a baby, then more sounds, names, syllables, little phrases. Nobody on stage reacts to these sounds, it is something only perceived by the audience. At the very end the qualities of Kelvin's text and the planet's text become equal - but they don't recognize each other.

Lem writes of how "man has gone out to explore other worlds without having explored his own labyrinth of dark passages and secret chambers." Do you see parallels with modern opera in general?

Opera and music should never stop their experimentation to discover new forms, new gestures, new inventions to present the singers, musicians and dancers in fresh stories and situations. But here is the critical point: where, how and for whom are we making these experiments? We must be aware that it is for us - the people, and first we have to know ourselves. Lem is pointing out one of the central issues of our time: that the human being is no longer the centre of the universe. Instead, strange dreams, the past, and vague theories about our surroundings are ruling our existence, and we have to understand ourselves so as to protect our very survival. Only then can we try to comprehend endless space and eternity.

Glanert *Solaris* (2010-12) 135'

Opera in two parts after the novel by Stanislaw Lem
Libretto by Reinhard Palm
Markus Stenz *Conductor*
Moshe Leiser *Directors*
Patrice Caugier

18/22/25 July 2012 (world premiere)
Bregenz Festival
Vienna Symphony Orchestra/
Prague Philharmonic Choir

19/25 May, 11/22/29 June 2013 (German premiere)
Komische Oper, Berlin



Photo: Ko Freese/DRAMA

Argento at 85



Photo: Tom Berthelme

Dominick Argento's 85th birthday year has been celebrated with a major focus at the University of Maryland, including welcome stagings of two of his operas, the surrealist *Postcard from Morocco* and his Dickens-based *Miss Havisham's Fire*. The 10-day festival entitled *The Art of Argento* also

included performances of his most acclaimed vocal works including the orchestral songs *Casa Guidi*, the monodrama *A Water Bird Talk*, the song-cycle *Miss Manners on Music* and *A Few Words about Chekhov* with a guest appearance by mezzo Frederica von Stade - a singer long associated with Argento's music. A new set of *Cabaret Songs* received its premiere and is now published for sale.

"*Postcard From Morocco* is an absurdist vignette of a group of travelers in a railway station, circa 1920: imagine the characters from an Agatha Christie novel entangled in an lonesome play... the result is an often engaging chamber opera, bristling with allusion and musical jokes, about the way that people hide behind the shreds of identity they use to define themselves to others." *Washington Post*

"*Miss Havisham's Fire* is one opera everyone should see... it explores her story on two levels: the first, an inquiry into the causes of her death and the second, a series of flashbacks describing the circumstances of her life. As the flashbacks come, the past and present seem to merge and allow us to look past the odd trappings and come to know the woman." *DCMetroTheatreArts*

Argento's operas have always attracted leading singers because of the composer's innate lyricism and his powerful projection of operatic characters through music on the stage. A case in point is Dallas Opera's new production of *The Aspern Papers*, scheduled for April 2013 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the premiere, with a starry cast including Susan Graham, Carol Vaness and Nathan Gunn. Argento's skilful operatic version of the Henry James novel will be directed by Tim Albery and conducted by Graeme Jenkins.

Bernstein Wonderful Town

"Fifties musicals are back in vogue." So noted *The Guardian* hailing a new production of Bernstein's *Wonderful Town* that is currently touring the UK. Braham Murray's staging emanated from an imaginative collaboration among three of Manchester's leading arts organisations, the Hallé Orchestra, the Royal Exchange Theatre and The Lowry arts centre, with Connie Fisher in the central role of Ruth and choreography by Andrew Wright. The reviewer wrote how "...the great joy of the evening is hearing a 60-strong band, under Sir Mark Elder's baton, devoting itself to Leonard Bernstein's exhilarating, jazzy score. I don't think I've ever heard a musical comedy rendered quite so richly."

"...still speaking with freshness, directness and wit..." *Daily Telegraph*

"The operative word is 'comedy', since this show belongs to an age when Broadway musicals were sharp, literate and funny... Wit infuses every aspect of the book, music and lyrics. Bernstein responds brilliantly to each dramatic situation so that in *Conversation Piece* the music slowly infiltrates stumbling dinner-party chat, and in *Swing!* the

rhythm develops from staccato utterances in a style that anticipates *West Side Story*." *The Guardian*

"The music is irresistible, a Bernstein burn-up of jazz, jig, ballad, rag and tap. One triumphant number follows another in snappy succession... Comden and Green's lyrics are smart as paint, even when plaintive - "Why O why O did we leave Ohio" - and I especially enjoyed Ruth's attempt to interview conga-crazed Brazilian sailors about their view of America while being thrown over their heads..." *The Times*

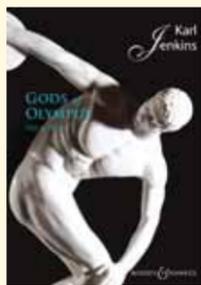
Bernstein's multi-genre *Mass* is enjoying its 40th anniversary this year, with a series of festival presentations embracing the wider community. Following his acclaimed Chandos recording, Kristjan Järvi conducted a new staging at the Adelaide Festival in March featuring Jubilant Sykes repeating his role of the Celebrant. *Mass* promises to be a highlight of the BBC Proms's focus on youth on 6 August, with massed Welsh choirs and orchestras from primary school to professional, again directed by Järvi. With recent performances conducted by Marin Alsop in New York and at the Southbank Centre in London, and in Salzburg, Munich and Vienna, this unclassifiable work finally appears to be achieving modern classic status.

New production of *Wonderful Town* touring the UK, with choreography by Andrew Wright.



Photo: Abstar/Muir

Jenkins Gods of Olympus



Karl Jenkins's new work for choir and orchestra, *Gods of Olympus*, is premiered at the Royal Albert Hall in London

on 8 July, providing a major highlight of the Cultural Olympiad's London 2012 Inspire programme. This is the second commission from The Really Big Chorus following their successful performances of Jenkins's *The Armed Man* and his *Gloria*, commissioned and premiered in 2010. The Really Big Chorus has invited choral singers from its 30,000 membership to perform the premiere of the 20-minute work, conducted by Brian Kay, making it one of the largest music participation events linked to the Olympics.

Karl Jenkins describes his exploration of Greek mythology in *Gods of Olympus*: "I have based this piece on ancient Greece, birthplace of the Olympic games. The movements are inspired by four of the twelve Olympians, the mythical Gods that dwell on Mount Olympus: Zeus, Ruler of Olympus; Hermes, the Winged Messenger; Aphrodite, Goddess of Love; and Hephaestus, Blacksmith and Fire-God." The work follows Jenkins's *Songs of the Earth*, also exploring Greek mythological themes, which was premiered by Welsh choral forces and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in the Music Nation weekend in March, providing an upbeat to this summer's Cultural Olympiad events.

Boosey & Hawkes and the Cultural Olympiad



The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad is the largest cultural celebration in the history of the modern Olympic and Paralympic Movements. Performances of new works published by Boosey & Hawkes include the premiere of James MacMillan's *Gloria*

(23 June) as part of Coventry Cathedral's 50th anniversary celebrations, featuring Ian Bostridge as tenor soloist.

Music by Mark-Anthony Turnage in the London 2012 Festival ranges from a new Titian-inspired ballet *Trespass*, staged by the Royal Ballet with choreography by Alastair Marriott and Christopher Wheeldon (14 July), to *Beyond This* composed for the Music in Prisons project (5 July).

Scottish Ballet tours a new ballet by Martin Lawrence with John Adams's *Son of Chamber Symphony* (19 June), the Barbican hosts the UK premieres of Wynton Marsalis's *Abyssinian Mass* (13 July) and *Swing Symphony* (25 July), and Northern Ireland Opera stages Britten's *Noye's Fludde* in the imaginative setting of Belfast Zoo (10 August).

Neuwirth at the Proms



Photo: Priska Kettner

Olga Neuwirth travels to the BBC Proms on 13 August for the UK premiere of her viola concerto *Remnants of songs... an Amphigory* plus a preceding Portrait event introducing her music. Her concerto has been hailed as a major contribution to the limited repertoire for the

instrument and is performed at the Royal Albert Hall by Lawrence Power with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Susanna Mälkki. The work was premiered in Graz in 2009 by violist Antoine Tamestit, and has since travelled to Berlin, Tokyo, Melbourne and Paris, with performances next season in Vienna and Frankfurt with Mälkki.

The concerto's title, *Remnants of Songs... an Amphigory*, juxtaposes serious and light sides, pitting a book by Ulrich Baer investigating how historic traumas affect creativity against a descriptive term for nonsense poetry. *Musical America* wrote of the 20-minute score's "fiendishly difficult solo part, breathtaking in its virtuosic range... The work is entirely original, astoundingly complex and, ultimately, gloriously rewarding and uplifting." The concerto is vintage Neuwirth in the way it pits the individual against the collective, forging connections with musical memories and diverse genres.

Neuwirth's trumpet concerto, *...miramondo multiplo...*, written for Håkan Hardenberger, has been travelling widely this year in the recent version with ensemble, including its UK premiere with the London Sinfonietta and performances in Vienna, Hamburg and Madrid by Klangforum Wien.

Clyne Night Ferry



Photo: Todd Rosenberg

Anna Clyne's new 20-minute orchestral work for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, *Night Ferry* – her most ambitious composition to date – was premiered under the baton of Riccardo Muti in February, before being toured by the orchestra to California including San Francisco. Taking the work's context in a Schubert programme as a starting point, Clyne engrossed herself with poetry exploring the manic-depressive states that affected the 19th century composer. The title was drawn from an elegy by Seamus Heaney for Robert Lowell and the composer describes the completed *Night Ferry* as a voyage through "turbulent darkness with moments of light".

"Clyne writes expertly and seriously for big, virtuoso orchestra. Her ear for sonority is acute, her ideas clear-cut and expertly developed over a wide palette whose large percussion battery includes Tibetan singing bowls lending delicate touches of Asian colour." *Chicago Tribune*

"...a swirling evocation of dark physical and mental seas..."

Chicago Sun-Times

"Clyne opens the work with a tremendous outburst of energy – tailor-made for this orchestra – and then, instead of pulling back, the force of sound is sustained, even increased. There are some beautiful, gorgeously dissonant, Straussian passages, but not the result of the transparent calculation, the customary loud-soft variation. Rather, everything in its logical, appealing place, carrying the listener along irresistibly... And, most importantly in case of any new music, I want to hear it again, and soon."

San Francisco Classical Voice

Next January Anna Clyne returns to her birth city of London for the UK premiere of *Night Ferry*, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Andrew Litton. Other recent orchestral works include a new score for Houston Ballet, *See(k)*, premiered last month in choreography by Nicolo Fonte. The first album of Clyne's music, entitled *Blue Moth*, was released on John Zorn's Tzadik label in February, featuring a selection of chamber works including *Roulette* for string quartet performed by ETHEL.

Shepherd Blur premiere



Photo: Jamie Kingham

Sean Shepherd's new work for the Ensemble Intercontemporain, *Blur*, was premiered under the baton of Susanna Malkki in Paris in January, with a repeat performance at the Philharmonie in Cologne. The Ensemble will present the work's Swiss premiere at the Lucerne Festival on 18 August conducted by

Pablo Heras-Casado. The music in *Blur* moves very fast much of the time and the young composer has described the new work as "a kind of romp: ebullient, frenetic, insistent and joyful" in which "close to the surface, things fly by. Layers emerge, with objects appearing, moving and evolving at differing intervals and rates of change."

"*Blur* by the American composer Sean Shepherd works its magic with a great cor Anglais solo and gossamer-fine full-moon Romanticism, which the ensemble either countered with expressionist twitching shadows in the style of the Schoenberg school, or surrounded with a Boulezian luminous glitter of celesta, harp, xylophone and tubular bells." *Kölnischer Stadtanzeiger*

Shepherd, who signed with Boosey & Hawkes last year, is enjoying an increasing international profile, with his latest works programmed by leading orchestras, ensembles and festivals. *Blur* was Shepherd's second large ensemble work, and the first, *These Particular Circumstances*, has been travelling widely since its premiere by members of the New York Philharmonic. Oliver Knussen included its UK premiere in his 60th birthday concert with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in May, and he will conduct it again at the Tanglewood Festival in August. The work's French premiere is scheduled for the Musica festival in Strasbourg on 27 September, performed by Ensemble Linea conducted by Jean-Philippe Wurtz.

Following the success of his 2009 score *Wanderlust*, Shepherd is also engaged with new orchestral works. His eight-minute concert-opener *Blue Blazes* was premiered by the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington under Christoph Eschenbach last month and will tour with the orchestra to São Paulo. The work reveals a concise progression from an intrada, through a noble fanfare to a wild close, all tinged with the sensual blue of Mediterranean seas. His next major project is a new 20-minute work for the Cleveland Orchestra and Franz Welser-Möst, fruit of his two-year Young Composer Fellowship with the orchestra.

Britten Gloriana in Prague



Photo: Hana Smejkalová/Prague National Theatre

New production of Britten's opera Gloriana at the Prague National Theatre

Benjamin Britten's opera *Gloriana*, which received its Czech premiere in April in Jiří Heřman's new production at the Prague National Theatre, is one of Britten's operas most ripe for exploration during the forthcoming centenary. Its not fully flattering portrayal of Elizabeth I prompted official disfavour at its premiere at Covent Garden as part of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation pageant. But after decades of neglect the work has enjoyed notable revivals in the UK and USA since the 1990s, as directors and audiences have warmed to its complex treatment of the monarch. As the *Prague Post* noted of the recent staging, "the queen is portrayed as a flawed character struggling under the weight of her responsibility, and *Gloriana* is ultimately a tragedy that reveals the psychology hidden beneath the crown".

"Britten's orchestration is brilliant, with fluttering woodwinds, ominous brass and sharp percussion supplying the drama and tension... Individual instruments or sections of the orchestra are used to create mood, atmosphere and emotion, often in clever, unexpected turns or phrases. And the fluency the composer shows across genres is remarkable, ranging from charming Renaissance dances to sacred choral music to great, glowing Wagnerian fanfares."

Prague Culture

The centenary brings what promises to be a significant new production of *Gloriana* by Richard Jones. Shared between The Royal Opera in London and the Hamburg Staatsoper, the staging is unveiled in Hamburg on 24 March 2013 conducted by Simone

Young and the opera returns to its birthplace in Covent Garden on 20 June under the baton of Paul Daniel. Heading the cast in London are Susan Bullock as Elizabeth I and Toby Spence as the Earl of Essex. Concert programmes for Britten's 2013 celebrations will feature the popular extracts drawn from the opera: the *Symphonic Suite*, the *Courtly Dances* and the *Choral Dances*.

Adams Absolute Jest

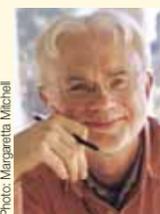


Photo: Margareta Mitchell

"One of John Adams' rarest and most valuable gifts as a composer is his sense of humour, an ability, shared with Haydn and few others, to be truly comical." So wrote the *San Francisco Chronicle* reviewing the premiere in March of Adams's new work for string quartet and orchestra, *Absolute*

Jest, with the San Francisco Symphony conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. The 'Jest' of the title relates to the late scherzos of Beethoven, which for Adams blended ecstatic energy, humour and profundity, unique in history, providing him with the motivic source material for his new work.

"The wedding between string quartet and orchestra was masterly." *Wall Street Journal*

The St Lawrence String Quartet and the San Francisco Symphony toured *Absolute Jest* around the USA, as part of its American Mavericks series, visiting Chicago, Ann Arbor and Carnegie Hall in New York, attracting enthusiastic audience reactions throughout. The UK premiere is scheduled for January 2013 with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican under the baton of the composer, again with the St Lawrence String Quartet who have exclusivity until March 2013.

"Adams' single-movement opus for string quartet and orchestra is an audacious and affectionate riff on Beethoven's scherzos. Dense, rolling and furiously inventive, it emerges as a gripping 25-minute sonic joy ride... You can hear the echoes of Beethoven throughout the piece – chopped, remixed, inside out and upside down, redistributed to the string quartet and throughout the orchestra – and you can almost see the composer smiling at the results.

"Of particular interest is the way Adams writes for the 'solo' string quartet – in this case, the phenomenally skilled, and marvellously incisive St Lawrence String Quartet, for whom it was composed. As soloists, they are often subsumed in the orchestral sound. When they emerge, it's bracing, magical, with new vistas suddenly glimpsed in Adams' fervent sound world. *Absolute Jest* may be best described as a memory piece; in its final measures, it recedes in a slow fade, a backward glance to Beethoven's majesty. Yet, for most of its length, it is quintessential Adams: restless, propulsive and, like most of this composer's music, arrestingly beautiful." *Musical America*

Adams's newest work is his full-evening oratorio, *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, premiered in Los Angeles last month conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. A staged version by Peter Sellars will be presented by the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Spring 2013 followed by an international tour. 2012 has seen the 40th anniversary of Richard Nixon's diplomatic trip to Beijing and the 25th anniversary of Adams's opera *Nixon in China*. Productions have been staged at the Châtelet in Paris and San Francisco Opera, and Adams conducts concert performances this summer at the BBC Proms in London and the Musikfest in Berlin with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Floyd Wuthering Heights

Carlisle Floyd's 1958 opera *Wuthering Heights* received a long awaited European premiere in February in a new production by Judica Semler at the Freiberg Theater. Based on the Emily Brontë novel, the opera focuses on the tormented love between Heathcliff and Cathy, set against the bleak landscape of the Yorkshire moors. In addition to *Susannah's* continuing status as a repertoire evergreen, notable Floyd stagings in recent years have included *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* at the Salzburg Landestheater and *Of Mice and Men* at Australian Opera directed by Bruce Beresford.

"*Wuthering Heights* has audience appeal. Floyd, who compiled the libretto himself, doesn't forego the narrative,

but condenses everything into the drama of the two protagonists' great unfulfilled love... The music illustrates the events which take place around the classic scenes between the two lovers. The couple has everything which makes for great opera: a wealth of emotions, passion, poetry. And set in a continual vocal-dramatic high tension... The applause was strong and long for this worthwhile discovery of an American opera." *Freie Presse*

"With his music, the composer opens up emotional depths which cannot be experienced just by reading or watching... With the rich possibilities of extended tonality, Floyd finds an astringent, strongly expressive melodic style, subtly differentiated harmony, ingenious rhythms and a richly coloured soundworld." *Neues Deutschland*

Carlisle Floyd's Wuthering Heights in its European premiere production at the Freiberg Theater



Photo: Detlev Müller/Freiberg Theater

Auber bronze horse



Photo: Thomas M. Jauk/Komische Oper Berlin

Auber's Le Cheval de Bronze at the Komische Oper in Berlin

Continuing its work of publishing new performing editions of important 19th century operas, Boosey & Hawkes's Bote & Bock edition has turned to Auber's *Le Cheval de Bronze*. Returning to the original opéra comique version of 1835, the new edition was created for the recent production at the Komische Oper in Berlin, directed by Frank Hilbrich. Evaluating the primary sources, including the autograph score, historic performance material, and the first printed edition, has enabled a return to Auber's original intentions when the stagework was premiered in Paris to instant acclaim. Plans are also underway for a new edition of the later 1857 version.

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber (1782-1871) was without doubt the most frequently-performed French opera composer of his generation. His enormous success was also thanks to an enduring collaboration with his ideally-matched librettist Eugène Scribe. *Le Cheval de Bronze* was among the most successful of Auber's output of over 40 stageworks. It received over 80 performances in the first year alone and in 1857 he reworked it into a through-composed ballet-opera to appeal to changing tastes. Only in the mid-1880s did Gilbert & Sullivan's *Mikado* overtake *Le Cheval de Bronze* as the most popular Far East-themed opera.

Delius at 150

The festival season brings high profile Delius performances to celebrate the composer's 150th anniversary of birth. The BBC Proms features Delius in both the First Night and Last Night with two Whitman settings: *Sea Drift* with Bryn Terfel (13 July) and *Songs of Farewell* (8 September), with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and conductors Mark Elder and Jiří Bělohlávek respectively. The Edinburgh Festival is launched in epic style with a sold-out performance of Delius's pantheistic Nietzsche oratorio *A Mass of Life*, with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra conducted by Andrew Davis (10 August).



Recognitions of Delius's anniversary range in scale from a UK postage stamp adorned with his portrait, to a full staging of his greatest opera, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, at the Wexford Festival in October. The opera was also revived in a new production at the Karlsruhe Staatstheater in January, described by *DPA Focus* as "a triumph for both Delius and the theatre". The Shakespearean story is transplanted to a Swiss rural community where young lovers are separated by farming families feuding over a strip of land. The Dark Fiddler, the rightful owner, is an ambiguous threatening presence as fate unfolds to its tragic conclusion. Set pieces include a dream wedding that can never be, and the famous final interlude *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*.

"A late Romantic sound, a hint of impressionism, exquisite colourings, chromatically seasoned, softly swaying, swelling



A Village Romeo and Juliet at the Karlsruhe Staatstheater

once, twice, near to rapture. It gives the impression of emphasizing the melody, without the melody being truly tangible – a sonic post-Wagnerian stream: engaging and often heart-warming." *Opernwelt*

A concert performance of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* takes place at the Southbank Centre in London on 25 September conducted by Ronald Corp. Other Delius events in the UK include features at the Cheltenham and Three Choirs Festivals, a British Library study weekend in September, and *A Delius Celebration* in October presented by Chetham's School of Music with concerts in Manchester and the composer's birth city of Bradford.

Offenbach Grande-Duchesse

The latest publication in the acclaimed Offenbach Edition Keck is a new vocal score of *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, the composer's entertaining satire on politics and militarism. The edition is the result of many years of research by Jean-Christophe Keck, including on-stage trials in numerous productions over the past decade. The staging by Laurent Pelly in Grenoble and Paris, conducted by Marc Minkowski with Felicity Lott in the title role, was also recorded on an award-winning CD and DVD by Virgin Classics. Most recently, *Grande-Duchesse* has been staged in the OEK edition at the Staatsoperette in Dresden, with further performances running through the 2012/13 season.



The new edition combines the four possible versions of the opéra-bouffe, respecting both detailed scholarship and practical performance issues. It draws upon the complete autograph score manuscript, sketches, printed copies, copyists' manuscripts and the original orchestral material. Many Offenbach treasures are restored, including the original finale of Act I with the *Carillon de ma grandmère* – described in *Opera International* as "an incredible madcap and galloping fireworks" – the Grand Duchess's *Méditation* and the original Conspiracy Scene.

Grande-Duchesse has long been a favourite for audiences with a subversive streak. Librettists Meilhac and Halévy didn't fight shy of poking fun at contemporary politicians and generals, even when the censor threatened to moderate their attacks. Statesmen flocked to attend performances in Paris, wary that they might themselves become the next victims of ridicule. The ongoing topicality of the rise and fall story has helped the piece retain its dramatic relevance, aided by Offenbach's sparkling and characterful music.

Bettison Livre des Sauvages



Photo: Denise Anderson

Reviewing the premiere of Oscar Bettison's *Livre des Sauvages*, the Los Angeles Times described him as a "spirited composer with a sense of fun... who delights in crazy percussion instruments with minds of their own". Programmed with Cage's *Concerto for Prepared Piano*, Bettison's work demonstrates distinct links with Cage's love of

sound created from everyday objects. Its primitivist and ritualistic world was inspired by an anonymous 19th century book with simple pictographs supposedly depicting Native American culture.

Livre des Sauvages is cast in three movements in fast-slow-fast form, based on three specific graphics from the book, and the composer views the 30-minute work as a "kind of chamber concerto or sinfonia concertante". The ensemble is divided into two groups, with a large percussion battery in the middle (consisting of conch shells, tuning forks, hotel desk bells and a wrenchophone – a xylophone assembled from mechanical wrenches likened by the composer to a "hillbilly glockenspiel"). The score was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, musikFabrik and Kunststiftung NRW and premiered in the Green Umbrella series in Los Angeles in April.

"...an outrageously zany opus that fused the sounds of previous modernists into his own voice. And a unique voice it is: think Carl Stalling meets Edgard Varèse meets John Zorn, while bouncing off a caffeine high. Starting with a thumping rhythm that came crashing out of the gate, *Livre des Sauvages* pulsated with an irrepressible energy and vitality, as well as brilliant craftsmanship." *backtrack*

Oscar Bettison, born in the UK in 1975 and now US-resident, joined Boosey & Hawkes's Emerging Composers programme in 2008. He studied in London and with Louis Andriessen at the Hague Royal Conservatory, and now teaches composition at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore. His largescale works include *O Death*, performed and recorded by Ensemble Klang. His new commission for So Percussion, entitled *Apart* and scored for chromatic tuning forks, was premiered in April.

The first complete critical edition of Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, one of the composer's greatest stageworks, but one that suffered cuts and unwarranted revisions right from its premiere, is close to completion. The new edition, a collaboration between Michael Kaye and Jean-Christophe Keck, and between Schott Music and Boosey & Hawkes, will restore the work to the composer's original intentions, while providing full documentation detailing performing options.

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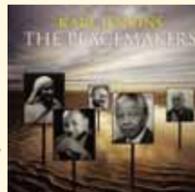
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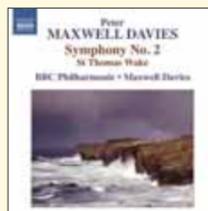
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Steve Reich

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Maxwell Davies on Naxos



Naxos has embarked on an ambitious plan to make newly available the series of recordings originally released on Collins Classics in the 1990s. This follows the association between composer and label built through the

commissioning and recording of the ten Naxos String Quartets and the release of an educational 2CD box on the composer Peter Maxwell Davies – a *Portrait* (8.558191-92).

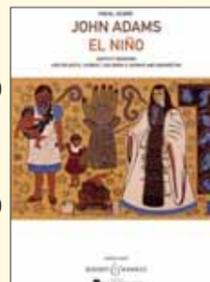
First releases in the new series focus on Maxwell Davies's symphonies with the BBC Philharmonic conducted by the composer. *Symphony No. 1* (8.572348) was premiered under the baton of the young Simon Rattle in 1978, when it was as startling for the composer's unexpected adoption of Sibelius as a symphonic model as for the score's vivid percussion colours depicting the harsh Orkney landscape of his adopted home. *Symphony No. 2*, due for release this month (8.572349), is a virtuoso translation of the ocean's wave motion into musical form. It is coupled on the disc with *St Thomas Wake* which evokes the composer's memories of wartime Manchester, transforming a John Bull pavan into a foxtrot for orchestra.

Future releases of *Symphonies Nos. 3-6* are planned over the next 12 months, and in 2013/14 the schedule turns to the concertos, including the *Trumpet Concerto* and the *Strathclyde Concertos* written for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Other works included in the Naxos plans range from the complex musical permutations of *Worldes Bliss* to the tipsy festivities with bagpiper in *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise*. Maxwell Davies's 80th birthday is celebrated in 2014.

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