

# Quarternotes

February 2010

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## Adams City Noir

*Orchestral celebration of  
Los Angeles travels to Europe*

John Adams's new orchestral score, *City Noir*, is heard for the first time in Europe this spring with performances by the London Symphony Orchestra. The composer conducts the work as part of an Adams Focus at the Barbican Centre in London (February-March) and within the first Parisian festival devoted to his music, presented by Cité de la Musique (20-27 March). *City Noir* can also be experienced on a recently released DVD of Gustavo Dudamel's inaugural concert at the helm of the Los Angeles Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon 0440 073 4531 3), which launched Adams's relationship with the orchestra as Creative Chair.

**"...a jazzy, gritty, sultry, and wonderfully inventive 35-minute symphony..."** *Boston Globe*

*City Noir* follows *El Dorado* and *The Dharma at Big Sur*, as the third panel in a triptych of Adams works celebrating what the composer describes as "the California experience, its landscape and its culture". Los Angeles is the city of movies, and the new work conjures up the late 1940s and '50s and "the dark, eerie *chiaroscuro* of the Hollywood films that have come to define the period sensibility for us", summed up for the composer in Kevin Starr's book *Embattled Dreams*. Adams also relates how he was "stimulated by the notion that there indeed exists a *bona fide* genre of jazz-inflected symphonic music, a fundamentally American orchestral style and tradition that goes back as far as the early 1920s."

"Making a telling artistic statement, Mr. Dudamel began his tenure conducting the premiere of the new Adams piece, *City Noir*, a bustling, complex 35-minute work in three movements. It is not easy to evoke the milieu of an era in music. But this score was also inspired by jazz-inflected American symphonic music of the 1920s through the '50s, from Gershwin to Copland to Bernstein, something that is a lot easier to evoke. Mr. Adams does so brilliantly in this searching, experimental *de facto* symphony... He has become a master at piling up materials in thick yet lucid layers. Moment to moment the music is riveting." *New York Times*

"The first movement, titled *The City and Its Double*, is a swirling panoply of scurrying strings and winds, ominous brass chords, syncopated jazz



John Adams with Gustavo Dudamel in Los Angeles

drumming, along with, typically in Adams, syncopated everything. Melodies appear as inexplicably as a dirty blond in Philip Marlowe's office. The second movement is softer and, on the surface, sweeter than the first, and jazzy... The third movement, *Boulevard Night*, begins with a CinemaScope sunrise, which is followed by a dazzling trumpet solo. Stravinsky pops up here as well in a knockout finale." *Los Angeles Times*

*City Noir* is toured by Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic to San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia and New York in May. The work receives its Dutch premiere by the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by the composer in the ZaterdagMatinee series on 20 November, and a Toronto Symphony performance is planned in a future season.

### Adams French & UK premieres

#### *City Noir*

11 March, Barbican, London  
16 March, Salle Pleyel, Paris  
London Symphony Orchestra/Adams

#### *A Flowering Tree*

20 March, Cité de la Musique, Paris  
Gulbenkian Orchestra/Joana Carneiro

#### *String Quartet*

23 March, Cité de la Musique, Paris  
25 March, St Luke's, Barbican, London  
St Lawrence String Quartet

#### *Son of Chamber Symphony*

27 March, Cité de la Musique, Paris  
AskoSchoenberg Ensemble/Adams

## Andriessen in the USA



Photo: Francesca Patella

The USA salutes Dutch composer Louis Andriessen from coast to coast this spring, with major performances in New York and Los Angeles, and his naming as Musical America's 2010 *Composer of the Year*. As Mark Swed wrote in the announcement: "It is simply that his time has come".

"Andriessen may have mellowed slightly with age. But he remains a rebel with a very large cause. His rhythms are as hard-driving as ever. The dissonances still sting. He has neither lost his taste for producing pin pricks of jazz-tinged brass and wind, nor has he stopped asking singers to brightly and brilliantly bark out declamatory text without vibrato... He has been mentor to revolutionary young composers (including the

Bang on a Can collective). His music is in demand by boisterous alternative new-music groups everywhere."

Andriessen's Dante-inspired opera *La Commedia* receives its first US performances in the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Green Umbrella Series on 13 April and at Carnegie Hall on 15 April. The concert performances feature the original cast from the Amsterdam premiere, Claron McFadden, Cristina Zavalloni and Jeroen Willems, with the Asko Schoenberg Ensemble conducted by Reinbert de Leeuw. The New York performance is the highlight of a composer residency at Carnegie Hall with events running between 9 April and 10 May, ranging from chamber events to a performance of *De Staat* conducted by John Adams.

Andriessen's most recent work, *Life*, is written for Bang on a Can and co-commissioned by them with the Barbican and Stanford Lively Arts. The four movements are played alongside video *tableaux vivants* by Marijke van Warmerdam, offering metaphysical reflections on human life: a couple sitting, leaves blowing, window

## MacMillan violin concerto

James MacMillan's new *Violin Concerto* is premiered on 12 May by Russian virtuoso Vadim Repin with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev. This is the culmination of the orchestra's 'portrait' of the composer this season, including the trumpet concerto *Epiclesis* last autumn and a repeat performance of the *St John Passion* on 28 February.

MacMillan's new three movement concerto is imbued with the influence of Scottish traditional music as described by the composer: "Fiddle music has long been under my skin, and in writing a *Violin Concerto* it is inevitable that it would rise up to the surface. Its roots are in song and dance, and these most ancient modes of expression and storytelling are at the heart of my new work."

MacMillan has built towards his first full violin concerto through a series of string-based works, including *A Deep But Dazzling Darkness* with its prominent concertante violin role, and his recent *From Ayrshire* recorded by Nicola Benedetti, which includes the influence of Scottish reels. In the *Violin Concerto*, characteristics of fiddle music such as double stopping with open strings are evident in the fast opening *Dance*, while the lamenting music of Scottish or Irish airs can be heard in the central slow *Song*. The final movement is a scherzo-like combination of the two genres, in which the composer alludes to 'making a song and dance' with high energy verging towards the edge of chaos.



### The Sacrifice on CD

MacMillan's award-winning opera *The Sacrifice* has recently been released in a live recording by Chandos, featuring the original cast including Lisa Milne and Christopher Purves, with Welsh National Opera conducted by Anthony Negus (Chandos 10572). Based on a story from the *Mabinogion*, this collaboration with poet Michael Symmons Roberts is a powerful drama describing the search for peace in a modern world torn apart by sectarian violence.

Also planned for release in coming months is a new BIS recording with MacMillan's Easter liturgical drama *Visitatio Sepulchri* for choir and chamber orchestra coupled with *Sun-Dogs*, a choral setting of texts by Symmons Roberts.

views masked by condensation or blinds... The mood is largely melancholic, with 'crying' saxophone heading the distinctive Bang on a Can line-up. The group tours *Life* to Milan (22 March), Rome (23 March), Amsterdam (25 March) and New York (17 April), with future performances planned in Stanford and London.

A new 10-minute web documentary produced by Boosey & Hawkes offers an introduction to Louis Andriessen and his music. The video combines an interview filmed at Andriessen's apartment in Amsterdam with extracts from key works including *De Staat*, *M is for Man*, *Music*, *Mozart*, and *Writing to Vermeer*. View the video at [www.boosey.com/andriessen](http://www.boosey.com/andriessen)

## Neuwirth viola amphigory



Photo: Priska Kettner

Following its first performances in Graz and Vienna last Autumn, Olga Neuwirth's new viola concerto is currently travelling through Germany from Berlin to Wiesbaden with

young French violist Antoine Tamestit, before heading to Japan in May. The concerto's title, *Remnants of Songs ... an Amphigory* refers to a book by Ulrich Baer which investigates the traumatic influence of historical events on creativity and cultural memory, and contrasts it with the term 'amphigory', a designation for nonsense poems or illogical verse. These two poles of seriousness and playful lightness provide the arena for the acting out of the character pieces that make up the concerto.

*Musical America* viewed the new concerto, dedicated to the late patroness of the arts Betty Freeman, as a high point of the Wien Modern festival: "*Remnants* is essentially a 20-minute, five-movement concerto for viola and orchestra with a fiendishly difficult solo part, breathtaking in its virtuosic range... The work is entirely original, astoundingly complex and, ultimately, gloriously rewarding and uplifting."

Neuwirth's new ensemble work *Un posto nell'acqua*, was commissioned by Klangforum Wien for its 25th anniversary and by record company Kairos, and was first performed in Amsterdam and Vienna in December. The score is a sea-borne study for the composer's forthcoming Melville-based stagework and the *Wiener Zeitung* described how "Olga Neuwirth plays with auditory expectations... Distorted scraps of memory shimmer through sound."

The composer's third string quartet, *in the realms of the unreal*, was premiered by the Arditti Quartet at Cité de la Musique in Paris last month, with further performances planned by co-commissioners the Berlin Festival/MaerzMusik, Musikprotokoll in Graz and Casa da música in Porto.

## Clyne to Chicago



Photo: Denise Anderson

Riccardo Muti has appointed Anna Clyne to a composer residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for two seasons starting in September 2010, describing how she is one of those artists "who defy categorization and

who reach across all barriers and boundaries". British-born and American-resident, Clyne has been nurtured through the Emerging Composers scheme launched by Boosey & Hawkes in New York in 2008. Her Chicago appointment offers new commissions, curatorial involvement with the CSO's contemporary music series MusicNOW, and outreach projects linking music to film, dance, and the visual arts.

Clyne's string orchestra work *Within Her Arms*, commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group and premiered last April under the direction of Esa-Pekka Salonen, will receive its first New York performance by the Metropolis Ensemble on 20 May. A collection of Clyne instrumental works was introduced to UK audiences by the Psappha ensemble last autumn. Plans in Chicago include an orchestral commission, and a chamber orchestra work with dancers.

# Dean Bliss

Brett Dean discusses his new opera, opening in Sydney in March with a further production in Hamburg in September.

**How did you first discover Peter Carey's Bliss?**  
I first read *Bliss* as a student when it was still quite new, in the early eighties. It was a book that I remember struck a chord with not only myself, but also many of my contemporaries, especially fellow music students. The novel heralded a bold, new direction in Australian literature. It woke us out of a period-drama type slumber and threw us into a hellish world that drew from the challenges of our own time.

**What made you think it could provide the basis for an opera?**

The initial stimulus for an operatic realisation of *Bliss* came through its combination of personal journey/discovery/redemption, its abundance of colourful, and in some cases, extreme characters, and the book's fascination with social issues of significance. As the project evolved, however, I realised that its greatest operatic potential lay even more in the strong emotional landscape that lies at the heart of Carey's tale (in essence, it's a love story!), and in the book's structure, with its strong sense of dramatic shape, including scenes of extreme tension, energy, resolution, etc., much like in a piece of music.

**Do you view it as a distinctively Australian tale?**

Part of the impact the book had on my generation was certainly its local flavour, humour and relevance. But in many ways the central character Harry Joy is an Everyman figure, an innocent in extraordinary circumstances. He stands as symbol for a modern, and not infrequent Western dilemma: at what point does one sell out one's integrity, health and relationships in favour of commercial expectation, desire and success? Or, in Harry's case, how do you find your way back...?

**How did you collaborate with librettist Amanda Holden on adapting the book into three operatic acts.**

From the outset, Amanda and I were very much of the same opinion that, both structurally and emotionally, the pivotal scene of the story occurs in a hotel room, when Harry Joy meets the "pantheist, healer and whore", Honey Barbara. It followed logically that this would be at the centre of our telling of the story as well, as a stand-alone second act. Hence, the first act concentrates on Harry's journey from his initial, dramatic heart attack, towards that particular point of spiritual and emotional awakening. The third act, whilst still handling points along Harry's continuing path towards bliss, also confronts the contrasting downwards spiral experienced by his estranged wife, Betty. These opposing trajectories pull the third act ever more outwards, resulting in an explosive climax.

**How does your music set about capturing the nightmarish, surrealist aspects?**

I arrived at an important first station five years ago when I wrote the orchestral suite, *Moments of Bliss* (for Markus Stenz and the Melbourne Symphony). Whilst not straight orchestral interludes in the manner of, say, the *Peter Grimes Sea Interludes*, the *Moments* were an attempt to capture four aspects of the story in purely instrumental sound, using a fairly large orchestra including MIDI sounds, electric guitar and extensive percussion section. This provided vital

source material for the opera, though I had to reduce the orchestration for the size-challenged pit of the Sydney Opera House!

Being the story of an advertising agent in a highly commercial world in the eighties, *Bliss* provides plenty of opportunity for sonic colour and reference. So an important part of this earlier project was the opportunity to establish the electronic soundworld I was wanting to create for the final work. Throw in Carey's further discourses on the nature of heaven and hell, madness, love and death, and all sorts of possibilities await, from an off-stage *Dies Irae* chorus to a bizarre on-stage restaurant band, complete with a bunch of mad circus artistes getting in on the act. What more could a composer wish for?!

**How do you bring Harry's dysfunctional family and business colleagues to the lyric stage?**

As my first opera, it's been a steep learning curve but I received a lot of guidance and advice on the world of singers and voice types from the late, and much-missed Richard Hickox, who was to conduct the premiere. Getting to know the wonderful singers of Opera Australia over his last few seasons was a joy, and it taught me much. For example, the three main female roles are all sopranos, yet they couldn't be more different as characters, from the neurotic, dramatic and ultimately tragic Betty Joy, to the reckless naivety yet idealistic concern of her daughter, Lucy, to the ethereal, suggestive beauty of Honey Barbara. Whilst being aware of the extremes of the many colourful characters, it's been crucial to never lose sight of their humanity and potential, to get to the heart of each of them as much as possible.

**What have you discovered about the challenge of achieving comedy in opera?**

I'd have to say that if the libretto is strong, the rest follows. Amanda's libretto terrifically captures Carey's dark, at times black, humour. And it was great for both of us to consult on local aspects of language with that great man of Australian theatre, Neil Armfield, who will direct the premiere production. In *Bliss*, the orchestra plays a significant role in the telling



Photo: Steve Brinster/Ceity Images

of the tale; at times it takes even comic turns. But I guess it's knowing when to musically take the upper hand, and when to sit back and let it unfold: that is the key to realising both comedy and drama in the opera theatre.

**How do you interpret the final line of the opera, that "a life in Hell can still aspire to Bliss"?**

There was something intensely autobiographic and deeply personal in the conception of Peter Carey's novel all those years ago. Having already spent much of his own life in advertising, Carey joined an alternative community called Starlight in a beautiful rainforest area of the Sunshine Coast hinterland, north of Brisbane, in the late '70s. He had a divorce behind him, was struggling to find his way as a writer, and I think it's just possible that he was exorcising his own demons in searching for another way to live his life, to find a bliss of his own.

## Dean Bliss

(2004-09)

Opera in three acts  
Libretto by Amanda Holden,  
after the novel by Peter Carey

**Australian Opera** (world premiere)

Elgar Howarth Conductor  
Neil Armfield Director

Sydney Opera House  
12/17/20/25/27/30 March

Melbourne Arts Centre  
20/23/27 April / 1 May

**Hamburg Staatsoper** (new production)

Simone Young Conductor  
Ramin Gray Director

12/15/19/21/25 September / 2 October



Photo: Mark Coulson

# Vivier revival grows

Renewed interest in the music of Claude Vivier (1943-1983) continues apace, moving from specialist circles to mainstream programming, as witnessed by the increasing popularity of *Orion*. This cosmic orchestral work was written for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and premiered thirty years ago under Charles Dutoit, who returned to the work again last year at the BBC Proms in his new guise as Principal Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. *Orion* was also programmed by the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin in December, and Ingo Metzmacher conducts performances by the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester in Berlin in May and June.

**"... cosmic soundscapes, turbulent at first but increasingly meditative..."**

Sunday Telegraph

The Times reviewing the Proms performance described how "the Canadian Vivier wrote music that's still winning friends with its colourful, complex textures and abundant melodic life... [*Orion* is] an impressive score of interruptions and luminous twinklings." In its compact 13-minute span *Orion* provides an ideal introduction to the composer's soundworld and is a piece which can fit readily into standard orchestral programmes and rehearsal schedules. It surveys a wide range of expressive territory and traces a journey paralleling the composer's own to the East, or perhaps to the universe beyond the constellation - Vivier's programme note ends with a call to exploration: "Go and find out for yourself!"

Last year's Ruhrtriennale included a new theatre production built from Vivier's works entitled *Sing für mich, Tod* (*Sing for me, Death*). Dramatist Albert Ostermaier created a monologue based on Vivier's creative journey, and director David Hermann



Sing für mich, Tod

combined this text with Vivier's own music to explore the composer's life, work and tragic death. Performances in the abandoned machine hall of the former Zweckel colliery in Gladbeck, near Essen featured musikFabrik conducted by Christoph Poppen.

"Vivier is a stranger in the vast dimensions of this world, only finding home, shelter, tenure, identity in his music... The most lasting impression was left by two vocal compositions, dramatically integrated into the programme in convincing fashion by Hermann: *Lonely Child* (with the 'voix humaine' of a despairing telephoning woman) and the Hölderlin setting *Wo bist du Licht!*... Yet Vivier always controls through an extremely heterophonic, at the same time 'dirty' music, its language using stimuli from the western avant-garde via Far Eastern influences to electro-acoustic methods and — moving between aleatoric composition and 'new simplicity' — still finds its own, individual sound." *Opernwelt*

"Vivier's musical building blocks constantly move between tonality and atonality, sensual pathos and compressed concentrations of chords in the four chosen works dating from 1980 to 1983... The output, created in just a decade, was an extraordinary balancing act between different worlds. Nevertheless he mastered it with an individuality which allows the future to resonate with the past." *Frankfurter Rundschau*

# Schwertsik Kafka Amerika



Photo: Landestheater Linz

Kurt Schwertsik's new ballet *Kafka Amerika* at the Landestheater Linz, with choreography by Jochen Ulrich.

"The audience at the premiere had every reason for loud cheers." So wrote the Wiener Zeitung of the successful world premiere in October of the full-evening ballet *Kafka Amerika* in which "Schwertsik's version of Franz Kafka's text surpasses many opera performances in dramatic terms." With choreography by Jochen Ulrich, the ballet enacts Kafka's fragmentary first novel in which a young European immigrant searches for work and identity amidst an idiosyncratic vision of America. The premiere at the Landestheater Linz featured the Bruckner Orchestra conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, who has done much to champion Schwertsik's music.

"Jochen Ulrich didn't rummage around for suitable music, but — and this was absolutely right for such an important project — looked for a composer, and certainly found the right one in Kurt Schwertsik. His music is just as fantastic as Kafka's text: he plays with quotations, flirts with modernisms and yet remains wedded to traditional harmonies. A score of outstanding ballet music which not only manages to line up 'danceable' rhythms next to each other, but over and above that, characterises the individual personalities musically with unbelievable precision... a particular, passionately flourishing music." *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten*

"A triumphant evening with wondrous music by Kurt Schwertsik... The out and out sense of insecurity, the

circling threat of disaster, the jet-black poetry of Kafka's world is plumbed by this score of almost two hours, with unbelievably great sensitivity, with minimalist obduracy, but always leading into vigorous drama at the right moment. With this are contrasted the striking songs of Karl's alter ego, many dance rhythms between waltz and swing, and a virtuoso bar piano interlude... In the finale, the composer arrives at a tableau full of captivating melodic power, an irresistible dream music." *DrehPunktKultur Salzburg*

"Schwertsik's often powerfully rhythmical, always melodically moving music seems to come from the heart, and also has a distinctive sound. His sound. *Amerika* sounds unmistakably like Schwertsik." *Die Presse*

Schwertsik's music is much in evidence in Manchester currently with the world premiere of his orchestral work *Nachtmusiken* by the BBC Philharmonic last month and a two-day focus on the composer hosted by the Royal Northern College of Music on 23 and 24 February. Events culminate in a concert by the BBC Philharmonic conducted by HK Gruber which includes Schwertsik's recent *Divertimento Macchiato* with trumpeter Håkan Hardenberger as soloist, and the environmentally conscious *Irdische Klänge* (*Earthy Sounds*) cycle of orchestral works.

# Kats-Chernin Rage of Life



Photo: Bridget Elliot

Elena Kats-Chernin's new music theatre work, *The Rage of Life*, receives its premiere at Flemish Opera on 24 April, opening in Antwerp and travelling on to Ghent in May. The librettist is the much-performed Swiss playwright Igor Bauersima, best known for his play *Norway Today*. *The*

*Rage of Life* examines the contemporary theme of how young people become alienated by a corrupt world, fleeing into a land of shadows that has long lost all connection with reality, seeking an alternative life in an unknown environment.

Kats-Chernin's recent orchestral highlights include performances of *Ornamental Air* by clarinettist Michael Collins with the West Australian and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, following performances in the USA, UK and Sweden. Last autumn also brought the world premiere by the Melbourne Symphony and Paul Daniel of *Re-collecting ASTORoids*, an orchestral suite inspired by the music of Tango Nuevo master Astor Piazzolla. Kats-Chernin's music continues to be heard on TV and at the cinema with the long-running Lloyds TSB advertising campaign *For the journey...* employing the *Eliza Aria* from her ballet *Wild Swans*.

# HITS of the N

Reviewing a decade of Boosey & Hawkes works composed between 2000 and 2009, the most popular — in terms of number of performances — illustrate the range of the catalogue, from orchestral and opera, to choral and band.

Leading the Top 10 count is *Requiem* by Karl Jenkins, which also heads the choral field together with his more recent *Stabat Mater* and MacMillan works including *O Bone Jesu* toured extensively by The Sixteen. The most performed new B&H orchestral work of the decade is Rouse's *Rapture* which has proved attractive to orchestral programmers in the concert-opener slot. Opera is headed by Glanert with his Biedermeyer comedy *Jest, Satire, Irony and Deeper Meaning* and his

youth opera *The Three Riddles* performed in Germany and abroad. Most popular concertos are Adams' *The Dharma at Big Sur* and Carter's *Dialogues* performed internationally, the composer's centenary year. Works for wind and brass complete the top ten are Lindberg's *Gran* in the orchestral sphere, and Daugherty's *Raise the Roof* in the symphonic band category.

Snapping at the heels of the Top 10 with over 40 performances, are a number of additional Adams works including *On the Transmigration of Souls* and the opera *Doctor Atomic* two concertos by Lindberg for clarinet and violin, Reich's *Cello Counterpoint*, Glanert's orchestration of Brahms's *Four Serious Songs* a collection of works by Brett D

# Lindberg EXPO & GRAFFITI



Magnus Lindberg's concert-opener *EXPO* launched a new era at the New York Philharmonic in October, when Alan Gilbert lifted his baton for his first concert as the orchestra's new Music Director. The score is the first commission under Lindberg's two year residency and he intended it to be "Alan Gilbert's 'expo' or introduction – a tribute to him and the orchestra at an historic moment", with the title punning on ideas of exposition and exhibition as in Mussorgsky's *Pictures*.

Alan Gilbert toured *EXPO* to the Far East last autumn with performances in Tokyo and Seoul, and has been introducing the work to European audiences over the past month with concerts in Frankfurt, Cologne, Paris and London. Other Lindberg performances by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra this season include the US premiere of the *Clarinet Concerto* with soloist Kari Kriikku on 13 February and a new 25-minute work scheduled for premiere in New York in June 2010, co-commissioned by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Casa da Música in Porto.

"The extrovert score emphasizes the possibilities of sheer orchestral sound - fleet-fingered strings, massive waves of brass and woodwind, patter for tubas and double basses." *Wall Street Journal*

"...what a charmer it is. Fast, perpetual motion segments alternate with slow sonorous odes. It flits from light-hearted to tense and back again, never lingering for long. Before it was over in about 12 minutes, all sections of the orchestra were handsomely revealed." *Bloomberg.com*

Magnus Lindberg and Alan Gilbert at the premiere of *EXPO* by the New York Philharmonic.

Lindberg's first work for choir and orchestra, *GRAFFITI*, has shown the composer breaking new ground in terms of vocal writing and text-setting. It was premiered in Helsinki last May, received its UK premiere in London in October with Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra, and is released on a new disc by Ondine in March with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sakari Oramo (ODE 1157-2). The success of the 33-minute work led to it winning the 2009 Teosto Prize, with the jury citation describing how "the Latin 'graffiti' fragments that date back to the time of the classical city of Pompeii form a fresco of that society."

"All Roman life seems to be contained within these brief Latin texts, and Lindberg's selection of around 60 of them – official proclamations and announcements, adverts and slogans of every kind – creates a kind of verbal patchwork quilt that builds into a rather touching snapshot of the doomed city... What is going on behind the voices is often just as fascinating as the vocal writing itself, and the orchestral writing comes to the fore in the dark, uneasy introduction and an interlude of woodwind two-thirds of the way through. It is such a beautiful, satisfyingly shaped choral work that you wonder why Lindberg took so long to get around to writing it." *The Guardian*

"From the growling bassoons rumbling up from the depths at the start this is a new departure. The music is grand, opulent, and alongside the expected modernisms come flashes of the Russian Romantics." *Financial Times*

# Weinberger Wallenstein returns

Jaromír Weinberger may be best known for the Bohemian *Polka* from his opera *Schwanda the Bagpiper*, but recent revivals of the complete folk opera in Wexford, Dresden and Augsburg have prompted exploration of his other stageworks. With the happy conjunction of the 250th birthday of Friedrich Schiller, the Altenburg-Gera Theater presented a new staging of Weinberger's opera *Wallenstein* last October, the first production since its premiere in Vienna in 1937 as the storm clouds gathered in Europe. Based on Schiller's trilogy of plays set in the Thirty Years'



The first modern staging of Weinberger's tragic opera *Wallenstein*, at the Altenburg-Gera Theater.

War, the drama charts the decline of the military commander Albrecht von Wallenstein, carrying a special significance for a Jewish composer whose career was being destroyed by National Socialism:

"What might have persuaded Weinberger to make such a complex figure as Wallenstein the eponymous hero of an opera? A sidelong glance at his contemporary Adolf Hitler suggests itself – the keyword: the hubris of power... Both pursued the interests of their power-political visions, which in Hitler's case especially had something of the irrational, with the most extreme brutality." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

"The potential in Schiller's trilogy for large-scale scenes, rich in contrasts, with varied ensembles and choruses may have attracted the composer to the work. His Czech librettist Milos Kares managed the feat of condensing the most essential events of the extensive and rich drama into an evening-length opera. For the German version created with Weinberger, Max Brod was able to use important passages from Schiller's text. From the prelude *Wallenstein's Camp* the librettists fashioned a large chorus scene, depicting the chaotic bustle following a decade and half of war, with solo interjections from leading characters. At the centre of the six scenes stand the complicated pros and cons around the negotiations with the Swedes, which Wallenstein, against the emperor's wishes, hoped would yield a peace settlement.

"Jaromír Weinberger wrote music full of strong emotions to reflect these events. In particular, the colourful orchestral score, with its richly differentiated harmony, makes a lasting impression. The *Pappenheim March*, bawled by the dishevelled mercenaries in Wallenstein's camp, is subjected to imaginative, evocative transformations during the course of the piece." *Neues Deutschland*

"Weinberger proves himself as a composer who, by quietly holding on to the tonality, can turn his hand to anything. He is at his most impressive in the chorus scenes, where his rhythmic treatment is brilliant and he skilfully introduces folkloric elements, indeed, weaving in almost operetta-like sparkle. A little Wagner, a little impressionism, powerful expression – but everything imbued with gifted, imaginative skill. This revival in Gera is by no means merely a historical reparation, but the enrichment of the repertoire with an opera which will captivate the public." *Der Neue Merker*

In addition to the complete opera, an orchestral suite from *Wallenstein* is now available for performance, as heard in a Kaiserslautern concert last November.

# Chen Lang Lang premiere

Qigang Chen's first work under his recent publishing agreement with Boosey & Hawkes was premiered by Lang Lang at Carnegie Hall on 28 October. *Er Huang*, for piano and orchestra, was commissioned as part of the *Ancient Paths, Modern Voices* series celebrating Chinese culture, and was performed with the Juilliard Orchestra conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. The work was inspired by Chen's childhood memories of Peking opera, and its title is taken from the well known opera melody *Er Huang yuan ban*. *Er Huang* is one of the principal aria types characterized by a strong and stable melody associated with thoughtful moods, whereas *Yuan Ban* indicates a medium tempo for active storytelling.

The New York series also saw the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra performing Chen's *Iris dévoilée*, an iconic orchestral suite featuring three traditional Chinese instruments - the erhu, pipa, and sheng - as well as three female voices (published by Billaudot). The orchestra presented the work under the baton of Long Yu across the USA and in Toronto.

Lang Lang gives the Chinese premiere of *Er Huang* in Shanghai in May in the Festival Présences en Chine series featuring the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Myung-Whun Chung. Chen's commissions include new works for the Macau Orchestra, and for the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Radio France and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.



Lang Lang and Chen

# Gruber at the BBC Philharmonic



HK Gruber launches his new Composer-Conductor role at the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester on the UK premiere of *Busking* on 27 February. Håkan Hardenberger is star soloist in this jazzy work for concertante trumpet, accordion and banjo with string orchestra. The solo line-up draws parallels with Picasso's painting *Three Musicians*, depicting bohemian music-making with carnivalesque overtones. In musical terms Gruber's soloists function as modern equivalents of a baroque trumpet coupled with organ or harpsichord continuo, perhaps as heard on the streets of New Orleans.

Gruber and Hardenberger have worked closely together over the past decade, with the trumpeter giving over 45 performances of Gruber's concerto *Aerial*, plus numerous programmes featuring the *3 MOB Pieces* and *Exposed Throat*. Hardenberger has already given performances of *Busking* in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Finland and the USA, with future performances planned in Norway and France. Gruber and Hardenberger join forces three days before the *Busking* premiere for a Manchester performance of Kurt Schwertsik's *Divertimento Macchiato*.

Gruber's future plans with the BBC Philharmonic include the UK premiere of his new symphony for percussion and orchestra, *into the open...*, written for young Austrian soloist Martin Grubinger and scheduled for premiere at the Konzerthaus in Vienna on 11 June.

# Currier Traces in Berlin

Sebastian Currier's new harp concerto, *Traces*, was premiered on 18 December by the Berliner Philharmoniker and soloist Marie-Pierre Langlamet conducted by Donald Runnicles, who also co-commissioned the score for his Grand Teton Music Festival. *Traces* is the latest in a series of harp works written for Langlamet, following *Night Time* for solo harp, *Crossfade* for two harps and *Broken Minuets* for harp and string orchestra. Sensitive to balance issues, Currier employs a reduced orchestra with delicate and dappled coloration.

The middle three of the five movements point in an elusive way to a traditional concerto format where, as the composer describes it, "ruined fragments of past structures make ephemeral appearances." The material is foreshadowed in the opening movement, and traces linger and resonate in the finale. *Der Neue Merker* perceived the "impression of a pastorale, a search for clues in a peaceful rural landscape." The *Berliner Zeitung* described the work as "a beguiling concerto for harp and small orchestra, which devotes itself in five movements to sketchy, fragmentary mood painting... charming enigmatic sound expanses and pensive melody."

# Chin Šu & Gougalōn

Unsu Chin's two most recent pieces explore different perspectives on oriental folk colour: *Šu* pits a Chinese sheng against orchestra in virtuoso fashion, while *Gougalōn* provides a colourful sequence of musical snapshots alluding to Korean street theatre.



Wu Wei on sheng

*Šu* was written for sheng-player Wu Wei, who has done much to transform the ancient mouth organ into a modern performance instrument. He premiered the work at the Suntory Summer Festival in Tokyo last August and the US premiere followed in October in one of Gustavo Dudamel's opening concerts at the helm of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

The Dutch premiere takes place on 13 March at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam within the ZaterdagMatinée series, and the German premiere is in Essen on 4 June as part of Chin's composer residency at the Philharmonie.

"The title of *Šu* comes from an ancient Egyptian symbol for air, and the 18-minute score opens with the 37-pipe sheng playing a high A so quietly that the pitch seems like it had always been in the air... Last weekend, Dudamel had told the Bowl audience his America knows no North, no South, no Central. In the second half of *Šu*, Chin and Wu Wei extended that to a world with no East and no West. This was an adoration of rhythm tapping into a universal collective unconscious." *Los Angeles Times*

## "...a very vivid, brilliantly witty entertaining piece."

*Neue Musik Zeitung* on *Gougalōn*

Chin describes how the title of her new ensemble work *Gougalōn* has multiple meanings: "to hoodwink; to make ridiculous movements; to fool someone by means of feigned magic; to practice fortune-telling." All these come together in her 'Scenes from a Street Theater', given its first performances by Ensemble Modern in Berlin and Frankfurt last October, conducted by Johannes Kalitzke, and travelling on to Essen on 10 April.

It was a Chin residency in the Pearl River Delta funded by the Siemens programme that unexpectedly triggered her childhood memories of street theatres in South Korea before the modernisation. A travelling



Video for Currier's *Next Atlantis* by Pawel Wojtasik

Last month brought the first performance of *Next Atlantis*, Currier's new 12-minute work for string orchestra and pre-recorded sounds. The American Composers Orchestra presented the premiere at Carnegie Hall together with a video component by Pawel Wojtasik. The work was prompted by reflections on the water that is both the life-blood and threatening nemesis of the city of New Orleans. Currier writes that "*Next Atlantis* is not about the ravages of Katrina per se, but about the more far reaching interaction between human culture and the natural world... It is a new Atlantis, not of the mythic past, but one of the too possible future."

*Time Machines*, Currier's new violin concerto for Anne-Sophie Mutter, is scheduled for premiere in New York in the 2010/11 season.

troupe would stage a play with singing, dancing and stunts as a play to attract villagers to buy fake medicines. The composer describes how "this was all extremely amateurish and kitschy, yet it aroused incredible emotions among the spectators: this is hardly surprising, considering that it was practically the only entertainment in an everyday life marked by poverty and repressive structures... These memories merely provide a framework and my piece is more about an 'imaginary folk music' that is stylized, broken within itself, and only apparently primitive."

"One couldn't help but hear the *Lament of the bald singer* in the cheap pathos of the solo violin and stopped trombone, or the teeth of the 'grinning fortune teller' in the xylophone and metallophone clappers. Most marvellous of all is the lightly swaying *Dance around the shacks*, a virtuoso intertwined dovetailed tangle, tonally dominated by glissandi imitating the sound of Asian stringed instruments." *Neue Musik Zeitung*

# Toughties

Performances

- 311** Karl Jenkins *Requiem* (2004) for chorus and orchestra
- 97** Christopher Rouse *Rapture* (2000) for orchestra
- 83** Detlev Glanert *Jest, Satire, Irony and Deeper Meaning* (2000) comic opera
- 80** Detlev Glanert *The Three Riddles* (2003) opera in two acts
- 72** John Adams *The Dharma at Big Sur* (2003) for electric violin and orchestra
- 70** Elliott Carter *Dialogues* (2003) for piano and large ensemble
- 67** Magnus Lindberg *Gran Duo* (2000) for woodwind and brass
- 62** Michael Daugherty *Raise the Roof* (2003) for timpani and symphonic band (or orchestra)
- 59** James MacMillan *O Bone Jesu* (2002) for chorus a cappella
- 57** Karl Jenkins *Stabat Mater* (2007) for contralto, chorus and orchestra

If you are yet to discover any of these chart-topping works or composers please email [composers.uk@boosey.com](mailto:composers.uk@boosey.com).



Photo: Angus McBean

In the run up to the Britten Centenary in 2013 there is growing interest in the composer's concertos, with many top soloists adding the works to their repertoire.

Two acclaimed new recordings of Britten's *Violin Concerto* by Frank Peter Zimmermann (Sony Classical 88697 43999) and Janine Jansen (Decca 478 1530) have entered the catalogue over the past year, joining the classic Ida Haendel interpretation and those by Vengerov and Mordkovich, with Midori and Hilary Hahn among violinists performing the concerto regularly in concert. Gramophone described how "Zimmermann's involving treatment of the cadenza leads to a deeply eloquent account of the concluding *Passacaglia*, which contains some of Britten's most plangent inspiration... an absorbing and thoroughly commendable release."

Janine Jansen's recording (coupled with the Beethoven concerto) will have introduced many new audiences to Britten's *Violin Concerto*, as it reached No.3 in the Top 100 album chart in The Netherlands, ahead of Tina Turner, the Backstreet Boys and Madonna. *BBC Music Magazine* noted how "Jansen has championed the concerto, performing it whenever and wherever she can. The searing passion of the work written in the early days of World War II, its emotional depth and its virtuosic violin writing make it the perfect vehicle for Jansen's intensely expressive playing."

Steven Osborne's stunning disc of the complete Britten piano concertos has been garnering prizes, including the Gramophone Award for 2009's best concerto recording and a German Record Critics' Award (Hyperion CDA67625). The Daily Telegraph thought the performance of the *Piano Concerto* "a match for the composer-conducted classic recording by Sviatoslav Richter" and The Times described how Osborne "dazzles in the long, unrelentingly fast first movement... He plays the sour second movement

with breezy nonchalance, the third with a heavy improvisatory tread and the Prokofiev-like March with mock-heroic fanfares and percussive virtuosity".

Osborne was delighted also to highlight Britten's neglected *Diversions*, written for the one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein and premiered in Philadelphia in 1942. In a Gramophone interview he described this left-hand concerto as "an absolute jewel, there's so much quality and such an array of characters in that amazing piece". The disc is completed by *Young Apollo*, Britten's glittering 'fanfare' for piano, string quartet and string orchestra (published by Faber Music), and one hopes Osborne will soon find a fellow pianist for the *Scottish Ballad* for two pianos and orchestra to complete his Britten concerto odyssey.

Younger generations of cellists have provided new interpretations of the *Cello Symphony*, alongside that by the work's dedicatee Mstislav Rostropovich. Recordings include those by Truls Mork, Steven Isserlis, Raphael Wallfisch, Julian Lloyd-Webber and Tim Hugh, with Alban Gerhardt acclaimed for his recent performances in concert.

- Piano Concerto** op.13 (1938) 33'
- Violin Concerto** op.15 (1938-39) 31'
- Diversions** op.21 (1940) 30'
- for piano (left hand) and orchestra
- Scottish Ballad** op.26 (1941) 13'
- for two pianos and orchestra
- Cello Symphony** op.68 (1963) 34'

## Daugherty Jackie O



The music of Michael Daugherty is travelling widely, with awareness boosted by a growing discography, including the premiere recording of his opera *Jackie O* on a new DVD from Dynamic (33605), based on the 2008 staging at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna. The two-act opera, which vividly explores Daugherty's

fascination with American icons, was premiered at Houston Grand Opera in 1997 and has since proved popular both in opera house productions and as an ideal work for young singers at conservatoires.

"Daugherty's 1997 *Jackie O* (nassis), with a smart, intentionally self-conscious libretto by poet/essayist Wayne Koestenbaum, takes its subject from the 1960s. It also moves the 'real persons' genre more into the realm of Offenbach's takes on Second Empire France... The action climaxes on a fact-based fictional meeting in Act 2 between Jackie and Maria Callas, Onassis's two famous lovers, who find a freedom from their men in art, patriotism and confession... Bold and brilliant, *Jackie O* is as colourful as the people it depicts... this ain't grand opera - this piece is music theatre first and foremost." *Gramophone*

Recent recordings of orchestral music by Daugherty include a pair of Naxos discs. His violin concerto *Fire and Blood* and timpani concerto *Raise the Roof* are coupled with *MotorCity Triptych* performed by the Detroit Symphony under Neeme Järvi (8.559372), and the piano concerto *Deus ex Machina* is coupled with the *Metropolis Symphony* in a disc by the Nashville Symphony (8.559635). An earlier Naxos release included the percussion concerto *UFO* with soloist Evelyn Glennie and *Philadelphia Stories* with Marin Alsop conducting the Colorado Symphony Orchestra (8.559165).

## Holloway Haydn framed



Photo: Pipa Pattinson

Robin Holloway's current occupation with Haydn is exerting itself on a number of fronts. His new musical 'framework' for Haydn's last unfinished quartet was premiered by the Endellion Quartet in January, summed up by The Independent as "a discreetly triumphant experiment". As Haydn's inspiration wavered, and he found it impossible to complete his quartet commission, he sent a card to his publisher with a song setting of the words "Gone is all my strength, old and weak as I am". The Independent described how "Holloway decided to frame the work with a prelude - formed from two phrases in the quartet's minuet - and with a postlude which opened with that song."

A major strand of Holloway's output over the past decade has focussed on chamber music, including string quartets written for the Endellion and Sacconi Quartets, a sequence of six short quartetini premiered by the Endellion, *Spring Music* for the Nash Ensemble and *Four Temperaments* for a wind quintet

## New Publications

### Dominick Argento

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### Elliott Carter

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### Aaron Copland

*The Copland Violin Collection*  
979-0-051-10578-6 £19.99

### Michael Daugherty

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for violin, viola and percussion  
Playing score 979-0-051-80197-8 £17.50

### David Del Tredici

*'Cello Acroscopic*  
Cello score 979-0-051-10558-8 £7.50  
*Piano Album II*  
Piano score 979-0-051-24640-3 £18.99

### York Höller

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### James MacMillan

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by Nigel Simeone  
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Hardback 192 pp £35.00

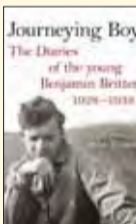
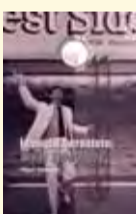
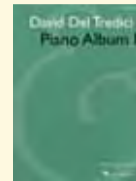
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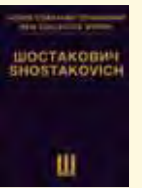
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*La Passione/Passeggiata in tram in America e ritorno/Bells for Haarlem/Letter from Cathy*  
Cristina Zavalloni/  
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BMOP 1011



### Brett Dean

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### Magnus Lindberg

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