

# Quarternotes

## Simpson Pleasure on tour

2016 sees the premiere of Mark Simpson's first opera, a new CD on NMC and his ongoing residency with the BBC Philharmonic

The double career of young composer and clarinettist Mark Simpson continues on an upward trajectory, with the world premiere of his opera, *Pleasure*, promising to be a season highlight. Scored for four singers and 10 instrumentalists, the stagework is unveiled by Opera North in Leeds on 28 April, travelling on to Simpson's native city of Liverpool, then south to Aldeburgh and the Lyric Hammersmith in London presented by The Royal Opera. The eight performances are staged by Tim Albery with the Psappha Ensemble conducted by Nicholas Kok.

For this first opera Mark Simpson has worked with writer Melanie Challenger, following the close collaboration on their 'afterlife' oratorio, *The Immortal*, premiered to great acclaim at the Manchester International Festival last year. The central character of *Pleasure* is Val, a toilet attendant at a gay nightclub – played by soprano Lesley Garrett – who is trapped in a hedonistic underworld by her memories. In true mythic fashion the net closes, as the drama is propelled to a dark conclusion.

The music for *Pleasure* sits between opera and musical theatre, moving from the pleasure-seeking exuberance of the club, via outrageous cabaret to

personal tragedy. The work has grown through a ten-year gestation, from Simpson's first ideas as a teenager experiencing Liverpool's club scene, through discussions with Melanie Challenger, to commissioning and composition of the opera, whose premiere will mark a personal milestone for the 27-year-old composer.

Due for release in May is the first all-Simpson recording, collecting together ensemble and chamber works on the NMC label. Performers include Nicholas Daniel, Leonard Elschenbroich, Guy Johnston, Richard Uttley, Ensemble 10:10 under Clark Rundell, the Mercury Quartet and Simpson himself on clarinet. Last year saw Simpson perform Nielsen's *Clarinet Concerto* at the BBC Proms and join solo artists Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Isabelle Faust and Jean-Guihen Queyras for Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* at the Aldeburgh Festival. He will form a trio with Aimard and Antoine Tamestit for his new *Hommage à Kurtág* commissioned by the Salzburg Festival for premiere this summer.

Simpson's Composer in Association role with the BBC Philharmonic continues this month with the orchestral fanfare *sparks* conducted by Nicholas Collon and a solo role in Lindberg's



Image: © Opera North

Mark Simpson's new chamber opera *Pleasure* tours England in April and May

*Clarinet Concerto* under the baton of HK Gruber. Orchestral works to date by the young composer also include *A mirror-fragment...*, *Threads* and the dramatic concert-opener *Israfel*, premiered last year by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and

Andrew Litton. Commission plans within Simpson's BBC Philharmonic residency include a new *Cello Concerto* for Leonard Elschenbroich scheduled for premiere in 2017. For further information on the composer visit [www.boosey.com/simpson](http://www.boosey.com/simpson).

## Holloway sung by Fleming



Photo: Decca/Andrew Eccles

Celebrated soprano Renée Fleming performs Robin Holloway's orchestrated collection of Debussy songs in London and Stockholm this month and records them for Decca. The Barbican performance on 5 February features the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Fleming joins the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic at the Konserthus on 10 February, with both concerts conducted by Sakari Oramo.

The ten Debussy songs orchestrated by Holloway under the title *C'est l'extase* are all settings of poetry by Paul Verlaine, commissioned for Fleming by the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas. The *San Francisco Chronicle* described how "a beautiful and often imaginative treatment of familiar material offered a revelatory exploration of Debussy's musical style". *C'est l'extase* and Holloway's acclaimed orchestration of Debussy's piano duet *En blanc et noir* are both available for performance in honour of the composer's centenary of death in 2018.

Holloway's *Europa and the Bull*, for tuba and orchestra, was premiered in October by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Andrew Manze, with its North American premiere planned next season in San Francisco. The concertante work takes the form of a mythological scene, based upon Ovid's description in his *Metamorphoses* of Jupiter, in the guise of a bull, lustfully pursuing the nymph Europa and the creation of a new continent from their coupling.

"...though Holloway's writing is fairly rampant in parts, he makes expansive room for exploration of the lyrical, even seductive qualities that give the instrument a certain nobility. The RLPO's heroic principal tuba Robin Haggart fully conveyed the profound, singing quality achievable from this very large yet surprisingly expressive horn." *The Guardian*

A further Holloway work for solo instrument and orchestra, a new organ concerto entitled *For Ever Singing as they Shine*, is premiered in April in Gelsenkirchen with soloist Bernhard Buttman.

## Kats-Chernin Snow White in Berlin

Few composers can outdo the sheer versatility of Elena Kats-Chernin. Recent premieres have encompassed a children's opera offering a new take on *Snow White in Berlin*, a 'soap opera' for Australian TV, two new ballet scores in the UK and a flute concerto premiered in Darwin. Her energy is matched by her cosmopolitan outlook: born in Uzbekistan in 1957, she trained at the Gnesin Musical College in Moscow and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, studied with Lachenmann in Hanover, worked for 13 years in Germany's theatre and dance worlds, and in 1994 returned to Sydney as her composing base.

Following her realisations of the three Monteverdi operas for the Komische Oper in Barrie Kosky's stagings, Kats-Chernin returned to Berlin in November with a new children's opera *Snow White and the 77 Dwarves*. Created with playwright Susanne Felicitas Wolf, this fast-paced new version of the Brothers Grimm classic was enthusiastically received by adults and children alike. Combining adult singers in the lead roles with the Komische Oper's children's chorus as the 77 dwarves, the production's fantasy-filled imagery was mirrored in the pit as noted by the *Berliner Morgenpost*: "Kats-Chernin's music sounds just as magical. The composer succeeds in creating an entertaining, enchanting mixture of classical, musicals and pop, animated cartoon music and hit numbers."

"...a dwarf-world with  
Swing and ding-a-ling..."

*Neue Musikzeitung*

Shobana Jeyasingh's new ballet *Material Men*, employing a commissioned score by Kats-Chernin for the Smith Quartet, is a dynamic duet between dancers performing in the Indian classical tradition and in hip-hop. Following its premiere at the Southbank Centre in September, where the music was described by *The Guardian* as "vibrant and seductive", the ballet toured England and Wales. The autumn also introduced Rambert's *The 3 Dancers* with a Kats-Chernin score for seven instruments, choreographed by Didy Veldman, with 19 performances around the UK.

In Australia, Kats-Chernin was in the news with her 'soap opera' *The Divorce*, airing in four half-hour

episodes on ABC TV. This new comedic opera with text by Joanna Murray-Smith was presented by Opera Australia specifically for TV with a cast mixing actors and singers. This season includes two concerto premieres for Kats-Chernin, with her flute concerto *Night and Now* performed in Darwin and Melbourne, and the saxophone concerto *Macquarie's Castle* scheduled for premiere at the Sydney Conservatorium in April.

Boosey & Hawkes is soon to release a new Kats-Chernin *Piano Album*, with a selection of her keyboard music, from waltzes to tangos and rags.

Elena Kats-Chernin's *Snow White and the 77 Dwarves* at the *Komische Oper in Berlin*



Photo: Komische Oper/Menika Bitteshaus

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# Andriessen Theatre of the World

*Louis Andriessen's stagework, exploring the arcane knowledge of a 17th century polymath, is unveiled in Los Angeles and Amsterdam.*



Image: Dutch National Opera

*When did you first discover the last 'Renaissance man' Athanasius Kircher?*

A very long time ago, because my father had an original Dutch edition of Kircher's book on China with wonderful illustrations – in amazing condition considering it was from 1667. I loved this book and made sure when my father died it travelled with me to Amsterdam. My father was particularly fascinated that this German scholar

was both a Jesuit and a scientist – a good enough contradiction to stimulate my own interest.

*What triggered the idea that Kircher's world could be the centre of a musical work?*

The more I learnt about him the more questions came up. He was a pioneering microbiologist and a respected authority on Egyptian hieroglyphs for two hundred years until the French research in the 19th century, yet some of his scholarly techniques were highly suspect. My real trigger came with Joscelyn Godwin's book *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World*. When I contacted the author he turned out to be a composer as well as an expert on ancient music and the occult, and he encouraged me to write the Kircher stagework.

*How did you work with Helmut Krausser on the development of the libretto?*

I greatly admired Helmut Krausser's book *Melodien*, a novel about 15th century composers, myth and magic, and when we first met in Berlin it was clear he had a profound engagement with music and the skills necessary to assemble a libretto. Beyond information on Kircher and his world, I supplied Helmut with a few clear images, such as that of a little boy knocking on the doors of the Vatican saying "I want to know everything". We came to a deal that Helmut would create the libretto independently and that I should cut his supplied text down to a length that could be set to music.

*Why is it you've always favoured an assembly of tableaux rather than a straight narrative?*

This goes back to my work composing for the theatre in the 1970s. I was interested in writers like

Beckett and we staged many plays by Brecht so I learnt a lot about poly-interpretability – that is drama left open for the audience without the imposition of a simple narrative arc. Straight story-telling is the domain of the film-maker who only wants to be rich and famous – it has nothing to do with art.

*Why did you decide on a multilingual text?*

This may seem an odd approach for audiences in the UK, America or even Germany where dubbed translations are common, but the Dutch are used to a polyglot world. I love moving away from surface engagement to a drama where the sound of language becomes more important – a certain phrase in a particular tongue can have a distinct flavour which throws up a whole series of allusions – I've used it to add to the nightmarish atmosphere of the work.

*How do you view the relationship between the elderly Kircher and the boy?*

The boy starts as representing the quest for knowledge that drove Kircher throughout his life, but increasingly takes on a diabolic purpose. He claims there is a contract on Kircher's soul and we find ourselves travelling into Faustian territory. I realised the boy was too major a role to be sung by a kid with a small fragile voice, so we're using a soprano which throws up many interesting gender issues.

*How did you first 'hear' music to set against the drama?*

Certain characters or scenes suggested a particular type of music, for instance the aggression of the witches, the sinister humour of the hangman, or the journeys along the River Lethe to Egypt, the Tower of Babel and China. As a complete contrast we have the music for Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the Mexican nun, poetess and savante who provided a profound,

mystical solace to Kircher. Her song cuts across the drama, as if his gazing at her portrait in his room in Rome opened a window to New Spain.

*Does your musical style reference history or is it modern in sensibility?*

There are some specific historical references, such as needing to create a fixed moment in time when Kircher plays an organ in the Vatican, but my music generally travels freely through history suggesting allusions to drive the drama. Many references are ironic and serve a particular point, but generally the overall sweep of the music – like the film being created by the Quay Brothers – is intended to provide a jostling, surreal, Bosch-like world summed up in the work's description as "a Grottesque".

**Andriessen highlights  
M is for Man, Music  
& Mystery**

9/12/13 February 2016  
including BBC Symphony  
Orchestra in UK premieres of  
*La Commedia*, *Mysterien* and  
*Rosa's Horses* and Britten Sinfonia  
in *La Passione*.

**De Materie**

22/24-26/28-30 March 2016  
(US stage premiere)  
Park Avenue Armory, New York  
Heiner Goebbels, dir/ICE/Peter Rundel

**Theatre of the World**

6/8 May 2016 (world premiere)  
Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles  
Pierre Audi, dir/Quay Brothers, film/  
Los Angeles Philharmonic /Reinbert de Leeuw  
11/13/14/16/17/19 June 2016  
(European premiere)  
Theater Carré, Amsterdam / Holland Festival  
Dutch National Opera/Reinbert de Leeuw



Photo: Francesca Patella

## Little JFK opera in Texas



Photos: Merrit Orr, ALT/Richard Avedon

*JFK explores the Kennedys' last night in Fort Worth before the president's assassination*

David T. Little's new opera *JFK* is unveiled at the Fort Worth Opera Festival on 23 April, the largest-scale work in the career of a composer increasingly defined by his stage output.

Co-commissioned by Fort Worth Opera, Opéra de Montréal, and American Lyric Theater, *JFK* sees Little collaborating again with Royce Vavrek, following the international success of their chamber opera *Dog Days*. The title role is taken by baritone Matthew Worth, who recently starred

in Little's *Soldier Songs* at Atlanta Opera, and Thaddeus Strassberger's production is conducted by Steven Osgood.

*JFK* offers an operatic yet intimate portrait of President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy on the eve of the president's fateful trip to Dallas. Set in downtown Fort Worth's historic Hotel Texas, the opera recounts moments from the couple's personal and political lives, as described by Little and Vavrek:

"Drawing on real details of the Kennedys' final night, the opera uses dreams to create an imaginary time and space, allowing the couple to revisit those who helped to shape their personal and political lives. Jack travels to the moon with his sister Rosemary, where he spars with political rivals, and relives his courtship of the demure Jacqueline. Jackie sings a duet with her future self, Jacqueline Onassis, who dresses her in her iconic pink Chanel suit, assuring her that she has a part to play in the day's proceedings.

"Time is flexible in this drama; fate is not. *JFK* is a portrait of a precipice. The fleeting moments of hope before a cosmic page turned, optimism faltered, and America was forced into a new and uncertain era. The opera is a portrayal of the man as we project our hopes, dreams and fears upon him. It explores the sense of profound loss we still feel. It presents the innermost struggles of a fragile human, fated to an early demise, as time presses ever forward."

In addition to *JFK* in Fort Worth and *Soldier Songs* in Atlanta, this season has brought the New York premiere of *Dog Days* at the NYU Skirball Center and its first European stagings in Bielefeld and Schwerin. Eighth Blackbird performs Little's new ritualistic ensemble work *Ghostlight* in Washington and Chicago in March.



Photo: Hanyu Chialia/ArenaPAL

## Lindberg violin concertos

Magnus Lindberg's two violin concertos feature prominently this season, with ten performances of the new second concerto for Frank Peter Zimmermann and eleven of the first concerto played by soloists including Christian Tetzlaff and a growing collection of Finnish violinists. *Violin Concerto No.2*, commissioned by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Berliner Philharmoniker, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Radio France and New York Philharmonic, was premiered by Zimmermann in London in December, travelling on to New York, Berlin, Stockholm and Paris in the New Year.

"...it proved to be a bigger-boned, more expansive utterance than his first... it reminded us why Lindberg is the go-to composer for many orchestras in search of a user-friendly premiere. It gave an agreeable sense that modernist abstraction doesn't have to be penitentially austere, in fact it can be made to sound positively gorgeous. The very opening made the point. Zimmerman launched things by flinging out three chords which opened outwards like a fan. The orchestra continued this idea, a dense chord radiating outwards from the centre. It was a pure abstract gesture, of the kind Bartók would have appreciated. But in terms of sound it was closer to the ripe romanticism of Berg's famous violin concerto..." *Daily Telegraph*

**"...a new spin on this old form."** *Daily Telegraph*

"...there is no lack of technical discipline. The atmosphere, though, is brooding... a panoramic vista opens up of dark clouds over forests and lakes, of repressed passions and baleful desires." *Financial Times*

This season also brought the premiere of Lindberg's *Vivo*, a six-minute concert opener commissioned for Carnegie Hall's 125th season gala by the New York Philharmonic. The *New York Times* described how "as an overture *Vivo* is an exhilarating tease" beginning "with a brassy yet quizzical flourish of riffs" that "then takes off in swirling stretches that swell, crest and overlap".

Spring highlights include the *Clarinet Concerto* with Martin Fröst at the Philharmonie in Berlin on 24 April, and the French premiere of *GRAFFITI* with Radio France forces conducted by Mikko Franck at the Paris Philharmonie on 17 June.

## van der Aa 3D film meets music in Blank Out

Michel van der Aa's chamber opera *Blank Out* is premiered in Amsterdam on 20 March, presented by Dutch National Opera as part of the Opera Forward festival. The new stagework sees van der Aa combining the intimacy of *One* and *Up Close* with the cutting-edge 3D and interactive film techniques seen in *Sunken Garden* and *Book of Sand*. *Blank Out* calls for compact forces making it ideal for practical staging and touring: soprano Miah Persson is the solo live performer on stage, while baritone Roderick Williams appears on film, with accompaniment provided by a soundtrack combining voices of the Netherlands Chamber Choir with electronics.

The composer describes how the inner drama is revealed as the opera progresses: "At the start of *Blank Out* we see a woman alone on the stage, her disjointed utterances accumulating as she struggles to remember the traumatic turning point in her life. We are drawn into her grief and the abstract setting takes on physical form, as she moves the audience through the rooms of a house near the sea.

"In the second part of the piece we see a man on screen who is closely linked to the drama. The perspective shifts towards him and we realise he inhabits the same house. Interaction between man and woman gathers momentum until their singing and movements become fused. As we move closer to the truth we are left with questions about who to believe. In musical terms I have woven three strands into the score: abstract moments centred on the electronic backcloth, more direct dramatic writing closer to operatic style, and pulsing material which provides rhythmic emphasis.

"More than half of the text of *Blank Out* sets poetry by the remarkable South African writer Ingrid Jonker, who I first read over 20 years ago and have long wanted to feature in a stagework. The more I researched about her life and poetry, the more I realised she offered deep insights into many of my main creative themes such as psychological trauma, memory, mirrors, alter-egos."

Following its Amsterdam run at the Muziekgebouw, *Blank Out's* touring plans include



Photo: Joost Peeldijk

*Roderick Williams on film within Blank Out*

the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome in May 2016 and the Lucerne Festival in Summer 2017. Van der Aa's theatrical exploration of the poetry of Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet*, receives its UK premiere on 24 February at the Coronet Theatre with the London Sinfonietta. This new English version starring actor Samuel West was also staged last month by Peak Performances at Montclair State University in the USA.

## Offenbach King Carrot returns in Lyon



Photo: © Stoffleth

*King Carrot* seizes power in Laurent Pelly's Lyon production employing the Offenbach Edition Keck

The latest major revival thanks to the Offenbach Edition Keck is an uproarious staging of *Le Roi Carotte* (*King Carrot*) at Lyon Opera in December. The production by Laurent Pelly uses the new critical edition by Jean-Christophe Keck including the first-ever full score of the work, recreating

Offenbach's three act version of 1872 in which he reduced the original extravagant six hour spectacle to three and a half hours.

Offenbach and his librettist Victorie Sardou (the author of *Tosca*) transformed a story by ETA

Hoffmann into a grand satirical spectacle around the time of the Franco-Prussian war. Following France's defeat *King Carrot* succeeded in bringing laughter back to Paris to lift spirits: this tale of a vegetable usurper overthrowing the crown prince enjoyed an extraordinary run of 195 performances. The expense of staging the original blockbuster led Offenbach to create a shorter 'opéra-bouffe-féerie' version, which forms the basis of the Lyon revival with text adapted by Agathe Mélinand.

The readily performable new OEK edition of *Roi Carotte*, like those of the Romantic operas *Les Fées du Rhin* and *Fantasio*, helps widen appreciation of Offenbach as a 19th century master. As the *Deutsche Bühne* commented, "*Roi Carotte* is a clear step in the direction of *Tales of Hoffmann*... a valuable Offenbach work has been reclaimed for the theatre in Lyon. It was greeted by thunderous applause and huge enthusiasm."

"A masterpiece – the word is no exaggeration – as Offenbach's imagination here reaches for the summit, constantly renewing itself through eleven tableaux to suit the numerous choruses and ensembles swept up in the epic spirit, from the apocalyptic eruption of Vesuvius, a hilarious ode to the railway, or a shiny parade of ants, to the scene at the barricades that may recall the horrors of the Commune... The production is a celebration always supported by humour, perfectly timed, leading up to the appearance of a giant food mill. You can imagine how *King Carrot* ends up – as purée – what a triumph." *Diapason*

## Birtwistle third quartet



Photo: Haryana Chhalla/ArenaPAL

Harrison Birtwistle's third work for the Arditti Quartet, *The Silk House Sequences*, was premiered at the Wigmore Hall in London in November, travelling on to Milano Musica and the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. The French premiere at the Paris Philharmonie followed in January and the German premiere is at the Witten Days for New Chamber Music in April. Immersing themselves in Birtwistle, the Ardittis last autumn performed the *9 Pieces for String Quartet* and *The Tree of Strings* on a tour of Colombia and on an all-Birtwistle programme in Cardiff.

### "...a perpetual motion of reinvented patterns..."

*The Observer*

The new quartet is named after Birtwistle's Wiltshire home, *The Silk House*, which was a silk factory in an earlier incarnation. As *The Times* noted, "if the title suggests smooth elegance, opulence and languor, forget it. At 81, Birtwistle is writing music that's as bristling, rhythmically abrasive, dissonant, tightly knit and mysteriously dramatic as ever."

"Birtwistle's 25-minute single movement returns to one of his long-established principles, that of meshing and layered musical clockworks (the sequences of the title) that generate a large-scale form of tremendous energy." *The Guardian*

"...a tessellation of mechanised, ostinato-based small sections, spikily gestural but with nudgings of polyphony, and a stark challenge to performers in the matter of rhythm and unorthodox ensemble. Thanks to the Ardittis' calm aptitude for the most savage modernist idioms, it emerged rather wonderfully as a unified span, the sequences flowing confidently together, right down to the final, unexpected unison A." *Sunday Times*

The Holland Festival has announced the Dutch premiere of Birtwistle's *The Cure* in a music theatre double bill with *The Corridor* in June, featuring Mark Padmore and Elizabeth Atherton and the London Sinfonietta conducted by Geoffrey Paterson. The composer has recently completed *Five Lessons in a Frame*, to be premiered by the London Sinfonietta on 9 June, and is embarking on a new orchestral work.

## Deutsch Okeanos

Bernd Richard Deutsch's new organ concerto, *Okeanos*, was premiered in Vienna in November with soloist Wolfgang Kogert and the RSO Wien conducted by Stefan Asbury. *Die Presse* ranked it as a totally characteristic work of the composer, in which "an almost inexhaustible wealth of vivid musical characters, situations and gestures hurriedly intermingle, this time converging the four movements with the four elements of classical antiquity".



Photo: Boosey & Hawkes

"When the waves build up, an airy repartee of high notes between organ and orchestra grows into shimmering shapes and humorous registration effects... Everything is of course woven into a gripping dramaturgy, in which melodic particles and complex rhythms, virtuoso passages, thundering chords and chamber music-like transparent dialogues grasp each other – logically, despite all the individual surprises – as in a well-oiled machine." *Die Presse*

Other recent scores by the prize-winning Austrian composer include a *Triple Concerto* with trumpet, trombone and tuba soloists and *ictus II*, a 'twin' for Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*. A new disc on the Kairos label includes Deutsch's ensemble works *Mad Dog* and *Dr Futurity* performed by Klangforum Wien.

## Glanert Megaris siren



Photo: Bettina Stross

Detlev Glanert launched his composer focus in Stuttgart with the world premiere in December of *Megaris* for orchestra and wordless chorus. Commissioned by SWR to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Stuttgart Radio

Symphony Orchestra, the new score was conducted by Stéphane Denève with the SWR Vokalensemble joining the orchestra.

The 20-minute work bears the subtitle *Seascape with Siren's Last Lament* and Glanert's writing for the chorus follows a tradition from Debussy and Ravel, reaching beyond words to summon an other-worldly song. Myths relate how Odysseus betrayed Parthenope so she cast herself into the sea and drowned. Currents carried her body away from the siren's rock Anthemoessa to be washed ashore on the island of Megaris, off the coast of what we know today as Naples, previously named Parthenope in her honour.

"The colourful seascape was received by the audience with enthusiasm. Once again, Glanert revealed his skills as a composer in deathly-subtle sounds which congenially portray the fate of the sirens, who are outwitted by Odysseus and must therefore perish... with yearningly descriptive shades of nuance the performers demonstrated with audible virtuosity how dying can be beautifully illustrated in music." *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*

Further Glanert performances in Stuttgart conducted by Denève this season include *Shoreless River* last month, *Four Preludes and Serious Songs* in April and *Frenesia* in June, which also receives its UK premiere this month with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Markus Stenz.

Following his intriguing extrapolation of Brahms in the *Serious Songs*, Glanert has demonstrated his fascination with the composer further in his *Brahms-Fantasie*, which has been travelling widely with performances conducted by Semyon Bychkov, Donald Runnicles and Edward Gardner.

"Subtitled 'heliogravure for orchestra', the fantasy is a tightly packed 12-minute tribute, which is fuelled more by allusions to Brahms than by direct quotations... the integration of what is borrowed from Brahms with what is Glanert's own creative property seems natural and seamless." *The Guardian*

Glanert continues his ten-year residency with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and is currently composing a *Bosch Requiem* for soloists, choir and orchestra. The commission celebrates the 500th anniversary of Hieronymus Bosch and the premiere is appropriately in the artist's native city of 's-Hertogenbosch on All Souls' Day, 4 November, with the RCO, Netherlands Radio Choir and Markus Stenz.

## Vivier Enlightened Child in Germany

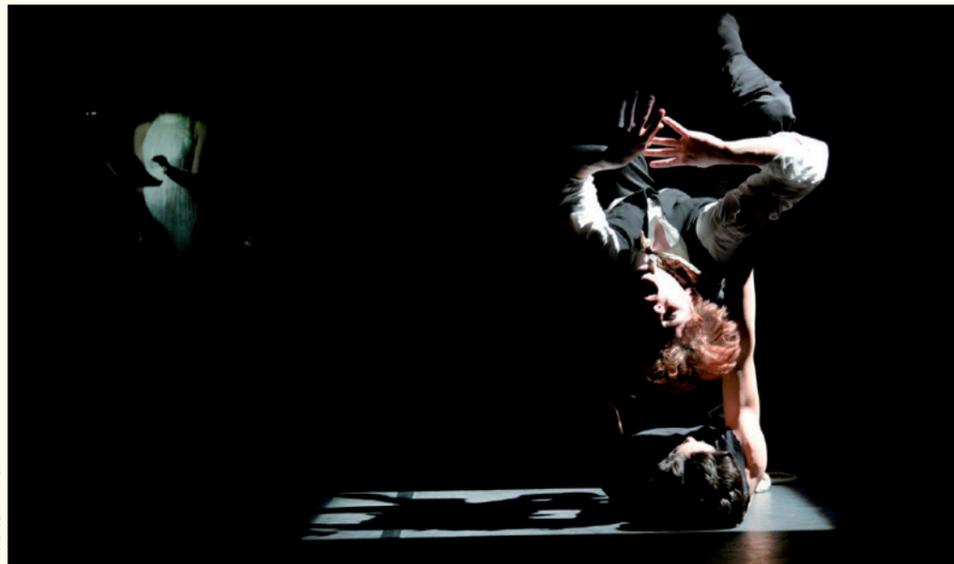


Photo: Jann Wilken

Natalia Horecna's Vivier ballet Enlightened Child in Hamburg with the German National Youth Ballet

German interest in the music of Claude Vivier (1948-83) gathered momentum in November with a major composer focus in Hamburg's *Greatest Hits* festival, curated in collaboration by Kampnagel, the Elbphilharmonie and NDR. Taking centre-stage was Natalia Horecna's new ballet *Enlightened Child*, choreographing Vivier's *Wo bist du Licht!*, *Bouchara* and *Zipangu*. The dance theatre work explores the Canadian-born composer's founding roots and search for spiritual growth amidst dark shadows.

"Dance isn't often as intimate, intense and finely chiselled, yet also as powerful... the eight dancers of the German National Youth Ballet slip into the composer's shoes – they embody him, they become his alter ego, each in his or her own way... Ensemble Resonanz plays the three challenging works by Vivier with tremendous transparency and delicacy... what is created, increasingly interwoven piece by piece, is a complete work of art which does justice to Claude Vivier the person as well as to the artist." *Tanznet*

In addition to chamber performances of *Paramirabo* and *Shiraz*, and a series of talks about

Vivier, the Hamburg series included the composer's rarely heard *Siddhartha* for eight orchestral groups, with the North German Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Matthias Pintscher:

"Inspiration, as experienced by the Brahmin's son Siddhartha on the verge of suicide in Hermann Hesse's tale, is what Vivier longed for. And this led to the magnificent symphonic poem *Siddhartha* in 1976... Harsh blocks contrast with romantically-sparked melody. Towards the end Goethe's last request seems to be fulfilled: "Mehr Licht!" – "More Light!"." *Die Welt*

A further German spotlight on Vivier is provided by Peter Sellars with his new staging in Berlin in April of the chamber opera *Kopernikus*, as part of his artistic residency at the Philharmonie. Members of the Berlin Philharmonic are joined by the Neue Vocalsoloisten Stuttgart under the baton of Reinbert de Leeuw for two performances of this dreamlike 'opéra-rituel de mort'. Sellars has also programmed the US premiere of *Kopernikus* at the Ojai Festival in June, featuring ICE and Roomful of Teeth.

## Borowski orchestral Sérac



Photo: Priska Kellner

The dangerous instability of mountain ice inspired *Sérac*, the new orchestral work by Johannes Boris Borowski, premiered at the Donaueschingen Music Days in October under the baton of Peter Eötvös. The 25-minute score was the latest in a series of prestigious commissions for the Berlin-based composer who signed with Boosey & Hawkes in 2013.

"Sérac's are tremendous columns of ice which can unpredictably collapse, bringing death in their wake.

Borowski adopts a similarly daring approach to composing in which, like Richard Strauss, he impressively engineers large formats and orchestral grandeur, setting powerful structures of sound in motion. This is all organised impressively and effectively, surprise following surprise, offering scherzando motor-rhythms to alleviate the monumental." *Neue Musikzeitung*

Borowski's new work for the Zafraan Ensemble was premiered last month at the Ultraschall Festival in Berlin, and his new string quartet for the Quatuor Diotima is unveiled in Witten in April. Commissions for 2017 include two works celebrating the 75th birthday of Daniel Barenboim with the maestro on the rostrum and at the keyboard.



Photo: Houston Grand Opera

## Floyd Prince of Players in Houston

Celebrations for the 90th birthday of Carlisle Floyd, rightly regarded as the Dean of American Opera, are headed by the world premiere of his new opera. Commissioned by Houston Grand Opera, *Prince of Players* opens on 5 March, conducted by Patrick Summers and directed by Michael Gielela. Verdi was 80 when he completed *Falstaff*, and this example inspired Floyd to complete one last stagework as an octogenarian, a chamber opera in two acts to be premiered ten years after his *Cold Sassy Tree* of 2006.

More than any other American opera company, Houston has built a special relationship with Floyd, staging six of his operas and premiering four of them. Floyd co-founded the Houston Grand Opera Studio with David Gockley in 1976, as a training programme for young singers bridging the gap between college and professional life, with alumni including mezzos Denyce Graves and Joyce DiDonato. 40 years on, the cast of *Prince of Players* is led by Studio artists Ben Edquist and Mane Galoyan.

Though Floyd's operas have often explored American themes, *Prince of Players* is set in Restoration England, dealing with a leading actor's crisis of personal and professional identity. The androgynous Edward Kynaston (c.1640–1712), one of the last men to perform women's roles, was described by Samuel Pepys as "the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life". His successful career as an idolised celebrity was abruptly ended with

Charles II's 1661 edict declaring "No he shall play she" again on the British stage, which prompted the introduction of female actors into the theatre. The opera charts Kynaston's fall from stardom back to the rough London streets of his childhood and his battle to adapt to a future playing male characters in a new realistic style, winning acclaim in a series of Shakespeare roles.

Floyd first rose to prominence in the 1950s with his opera *Susannah*, relocating the Apocryphal tale to the American Bible belt. Across the 60 years since its premiere the opera has become the most performed American opera by a living composer, winning singers and audiences to its soaring lyricism and Appalachian folk melodies. Themes of McCarthy-style persecution, feminist resistance and religious fundamentalism have assured *Susannah's* ongoing topicality, as witnessed by the 2014 San Francisco Opera production with Patricia Racette in the title role.

After *Susannah*, Floyd's most familiar opera is *Of Mice and Men*, with current stagings by Austin Opera and Manitoba Opera in Winnipeg. This powerful adaptation of John Steinbeck's novella, following a pair of itinerant agricultural workers, has attracted leading dramatic tenors to the role of gentle giant Lennie, including Anthony Dean Griffey in Bruce Beresford's production for Opera Australia in 2011.

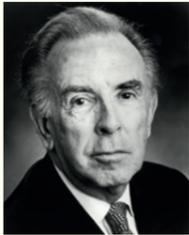


Photo: Jim Caldwell

## Ginastera Centenary discs



The Ginastera centenary year was launched with the release of the first disc in a new series of recordings on the Chandos label. This major survey of Ginastera's ballets, piano concertos and orchestral music features the BBC Philharmonic conducted by its Spanish-born Chief Conductor Juanjo Mena.

The first CD features a complete recording of *Estancia*, the ballet in which the young Argentinian composer portrayed the life of the *gauchos* at work on the vast grassland plains, familiar from the suite of orchestral dances which can be heard in concert halls around the globe this year. He also explored his native Argentinian landscape in *Pampeana No.3*, a three-movement pastorale built on symphonic principles. The disc is completed with the symphonic triptych *Ollantay*, in which Ginastera looks back to Incan mythology.

Future discs in the Chandos series will feature the three piano concertos with Xiayin Wang

as soloist, the familiar Nos.1 and 2 and the rediscovered *Concierto Argentino*. This early score was composed when Ginastera was a 19-year-old student and was revived by pianist Barbara Nissman in 2011. The work shares some of its folk melodies with the contemporary ballet *Panambi*, with which the young composer burst onto the Buenos Aires music scene in the mid-1930s, and which is also to appear in the BBC Philharmonic's recording series.

A recent Ginastera release by the Deutsches Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz under Karl-Heinz Steffens includes the first recording of *Music from Bomarzo*. This vivid 25-minute score from his modernist middle years combines lyricism with expressionist drama, drawing upon the composer's operatic tale of lust and revenge set in 16th-century Italy (Capriccio C5224). Plans are underway for the first release of Ginastera's powerful oratorio *Turbæ ad passionem gregorianam*, recorded by Trinity Wall Street in New York.

### Centenary Highlights

- Argentina celebrates with a new production of Ginastera's opera *Beatrix Cenci* at the Teatro Colón in March and a ten concert series by the Buenos Aires Philharmonic conducted by Enrique Diemecke.
- New York highlights include the return of Christopher Wheeldon's *Estancia* to New York City Ballet in February and April and a Trinity Wall Street series with 15 Ginastera works.
- Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel tour Piano *Concerto No. 1* with Sergio Tiempo to New York, London, Paris and Luxembourg in March.
- Performances of concertos, orchestral works and chamber music in Berlin, London, Madrid, Basel, Karlsruhe, Stavanger, Gothenburg, Katowice, Melbourne and Seoul.
- Brazilian centenary feature across São Paulo Symphony Orchestra's season with five Ginastera works.
- 2016/17 season at Teatro Real in Madrid includes new staging of *Bomarzo* by Pierre Audi, travelling on to Dutch National Opera.

## New publications

**Benjamin Britten**  
*Symphonic Suite from Gloriana*  
Study score  
979-0-060-12973-5 £29.99

**Aaron Copland**  
*Duo*  
Flute part and Piano score  
(revised edition)  
979-0-051-59019-3 £10.99

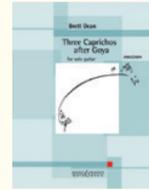
**Brett Dean**  
*Three Caprichos after Goya*  
Guitar score  
979-0-2025-3191-4 £10.50

**David Del Tredici**  
*Belgian Bliss*  
for wind quintet  
Score and parts  
979-0-051-10762-9 £30.00

**Gerald Finzi**  
*Romance*  
for string orchestra  
Full score (new edition)  
979-0-060-12263-7 £9.99

*Interlude*  
for oboe and string orchestra  
Full score  
979-0-060-12338-2 £11.99

**Elena Kats-Chernin**  
*Autumn*  
Piano score  
979-0-2025-3412-0 £3.99



**James MacMillan**  
*Four Little Tributes*  
for piano quintet/quartet  
Score and parts  
979-0-060-12980-3 £26.99

**Will Todd**  
*Jazz Missa Brevis*  
Choral score  
979-0-060-13111-0 £7.99

**Mark-Anthony Turnage**  
*Four Pieces*  
Clarinet part and Piano score  
979-0-060-13101-1 £14.99

### English Song Downloads

The Boosey & Hawkes Digital Store has expanded to include over 150 English Songs, with many treasures from the archive returned to availability. Boosey & Hawkes enjoyed a close publishing relationship with the leading English Song composers during the golden half-century between 1900 and 1950, both through its own composer list and the publications drawn in through the Winthrop Rogers catalogue. Many of these vocal gems are now available to customers worldwide with instant download and printing via your computer at an attractive price of £2.50. Featured composers include Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Gurney, Ireland, Bridge, Warlock, Quilter and Head.

For full details including sample pages visit [www.boosey.com/EnglishSong](http://www.boosey.com/EnglishSong).

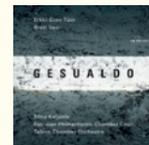


## New recordings

**Brett Dean**  
*Carlo*  
Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir/  
Tallinn Chamber Orchestra/  
Tõnu Kaljuste  
ECM 4811800

**Henryk Mikołaj Górecki**  
*Symphony No. 4: Tansman Episodes*  
London Philharmonic Orchestra/  
Andrey Boreyko  
Nonesuch 549570

**York Höller**  
*Piano Works* including *Piano Sonatas Nos. 1-3*  
Kristi Becker/Pi-hsien Chen/Tamara Stefanovich/  
Fabio Martino/Florian Müller  
Edition Abseits EDA 41 (2 CDs)



**Karl Jenkins**  
*Voices* (8 CDs)  
including premiere recording of *The Healer*  
Warner Classics 2564610051

**Peter Maxwell Davies**  
The classic Unicorn-Kanchana recordings of Maxwell Davies are now available again as Treasure Island Music downloads. Repertoire includes *Eight Songs for A Mad King*, *Vesalii Icones*, *The Martyrdom of St Magnus* and *Ave Maris Stella* with The Fires of London and Scottish Chamber Orchestra conducted by the composer.

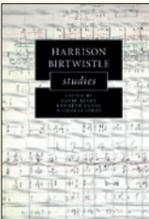
**Christopher Rouse**  
*Seeing/Kabir Padavali*  
Orion Weiss/Talise Trevigne/  
Albany Symphony Orchestra/  
David Alan Miller  
Naxos 8.559799  
2016 Grammy nominee



## New books

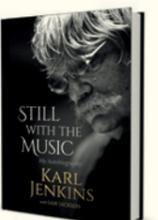
**Harrison Birtwistle**  
*Harrison Birtwistle Studies*  
Edited by David Beard, Kenneth Gloag and Nicholas Jones  
Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-09374-4  
Hardback 334pp £65.00

**Benjamin Britten**  
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*The Composer and the Community*  
Edited by Peter Wiegold and Ghislane Kenyon  
Boydell & Brewer  
978-1-84383-965-1  
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**Karl Jenkins**  
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*Critical Lives: Igor Stravinsky*  
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Reaktion Books  
978-1-78023-494-6  
Paperback 208 pp £11.99



## Bartók Definitive Edition



A range of new Bartók publications are available this month, catering for a wide range of performing abilities. The Definitive Bartók Edition offers two progressive piano collections, bringing together over 50 selected highlights from the composer's extensive pedagogical catalogue. The two albums draw upon *Mikrokosmos*, *For Children*, *Ten Easy Pieces*, *Romanian Christmas*

*Carols* and *Fourteen Bagatelles* and are packaged with audio CDs containing demonstration performances by Iain Farrington.

The nine initial volumes in the new Boosey & Hawkes Bartók Edition showcase stylish and idiomatic arrangements of Bartók classics by Hywel Davies, opening the composer's musical world to a wider range of instrumental students. Collections for clarinet, flute, alto saxophone, trumpet and violin with piano accompaniments, are joined by three volumes of duo and trio arrangements for flute, violin and saxophone, and a volume of *Romanian Folk Dances*. Future releases are planned for an extended range of instruments.

The original and definitive edition of *Mikrokosmos* remains available in six volumes, with a range of language options. For further information visit [www.boosey.com/bartokedition](http://www.boosey.com/bartokedition)