

Quarternotes

Dean Hamlet at Glyndebourne & beyond

Brett Dean's new opera *Hamlet* won acclaim at its Glyndebourne premiere in June, tours in the UK this autumn and travels to the Adelaide Festival in March.

Shakespeare's classic play has been successfully recast by composer Brett Dean as a powerful and multi-layered opera, attracting acclaim from press and public alike at its premiere in June. The Glyndebourne staging of *Hamlet* by Neil Armfield featured a starry cast led by Allan Clayton in the title role, Barbara Hannigan, Sarah Connolly, Rod Gilfry and John Tomlinson, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Vladimir Jurowski.

"...it rises to the challenge set by Shakespeare's great play..." *The Guardian*

The production was webcast, screened in UK cinemas and returns this autumn on Glyndebourne's tour, visiting Canterbury, Norwich, Milton Keynes and Plymouth. *Hamlet* will be screened on BBC4 TV and a DVD is planned for future release on the Opus Arte label. The Armfield staging will be a highlight at the Adelaide Festival in March when *Hamlet* receives its Australian premiere with Allan Clayton repeating his star turn as the moody Dane. *The Times* summed up *Hamlet* as "an opera audiences will want to hear again, and the world's theatres will queue up to

put it on" – discussions are already underway with leading opera houses in Europe and North America to schedule territorial premieres.

Matthew Jocelyn's libretto for *Hamlet* is a masterly distillation of the various versions of Shakespeare's text, reduced from 30,000 words into a two-act opera. The dramatic focus points towards family dynamics rather than affairs of state, allowing Dean to probe characters and inner conflicts while walking the tightrope between tragedy and comedy.

"A magnificent new opera on *Hamlet*... Forget Cumberbatch. Forget even Gielgud. I haven't seen a more physically vivid, emotionally affecting or psychologically astute portrayal of the Prince of Denmark than Allan Clayton gives in this sensational production. Dean's skill at creating a supercharged orchestral subtext to each scene is matched by his immense theatricality. Quite apart from his unerring pacing of the story, he also creates at least a dozen moments where sheer sonority alone sends shivers up the spine." *The Times*

"Brilliant music, rapturously received... Dean is rare among contemporary opera composers in understanding how to present people singing together – the forceful duets, ensembles and choruses are highlights of the score..." *Daily Telegraph*



Hamlet at Glyndebourne with Jacques Imbrailo (Horatio), John Tomlinson (Gravedigger) and Allan Clayton (Hamlet)

"...a fascinating spectrum of colour and unerring virtuosity..." *The Sunday Times*

"...a dark, complex, sometimes wryly postmodern slant on the play... there are no limits to where Dean finds his music – amplified chattering noises, singing groups from the balconies, and a virtuoso array of orchestral effects like the gravedigger's otherworldly whistling." *Financial Times*

Arnesen signs with B&H



Norwegian composer Kim André Arnesen has signed a new publishing contract with Boosey & Hawkes. Specialising in choral music, Arnesen has a growing reputation on both sides of the Atlantic thanks to his accessible melodic style and rich expressive vein. Latest works include the *Holy Spirit Mass* for choir, piano and strings, composed for the National Lutheran Choir in commemoration of 500 years since the Reformation, receiving its premiere in Washington DC on 22 October with further performances in Minneapolis and St Paul.

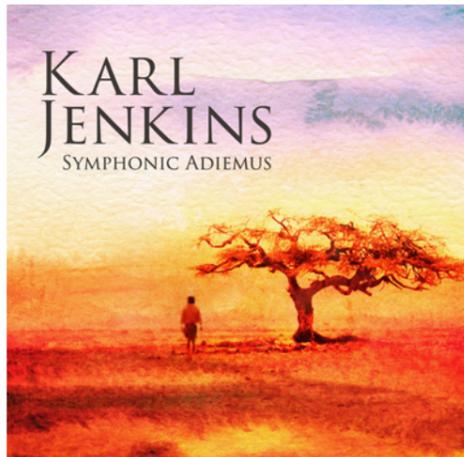
Born in 1980 and now resident in Oslo, Arnesen grew up in Trondheim, singing as a chorister at the Nidaros Cathedral and studying at the Music Conservatory. He composed his first works for performance by the choirs at the cathedral, the St Olaf Festival and for the award-winning TV special *Christmas in Norway*. His output includes a *Requiem*, *Magnificat*, anthems, carols and secular choral works.

In the USA Arnesen's music has been performed at Carnegie Hall in conjunction with DCINY, by the St Olaf Choir in Minnesota, at the Oregon Bach Festival, and at The White House for president Barack Obama. A recent album, collecting his music written as composer-in-residence for the Denver-based choral ensemble Kantorei, is released by Naxos later this year. For further information visit www.kimarnesen.com.

Contemporary Choral sampler

A new 2CD sampler has been released exploring the Boosey & Hawkes Contemporary Choral Series, with 73 audio clips from 19 composers. Music ranges from well-established international figures such as Henryk Górecki, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Karl Jenkins and James MacMillan to the finest emerging composers of our time including Will Todd and Kim André Arnesen. The sampler features music for mixed choir and upper voices and highlights latest choral publications for the Christmas season. To request a free copy of the sampler visit www.boosey.com/CCSsampler.

Jenkins new Decca contract



Karl Jenkins has signed a new exclusive contract with Decca and the first recording under the agreement is *Symphonic Adiemus*, released last month (Decca 5793828). This new incarnation of *Adiemus* rescues hits from his best-selling series for SATB choir and full symphony orchestra, making the music available for concerts by mixed choirs for the first time. Selections from *Symphonic Adiemus* were also heard in concert at the Royal Festival Hall in London last month, touring in the coming months to Symphony Hall in Birmingham and the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. A new vocal score of *Symphonic Adiemus* is published this month.

Since it was first heard in 1994, Karl Jenkins's *Adiemus* has captured the imaginations of music lovers worldwide thanks to its unique combination of classical principles with the flavours of ethnic music. The first release in the series, *Adiemus: Songs of Sanctuary*, has sold over 1.5 million albums worldwide. The new *Symphonic Adiemus* draws on numbers from the first three CDs in the series – *Songs of Sanctuary*, *Cantata Mundi* and *Dances of Time* – all of which topped the charts. As well as recasting the new version for traditional mixed SATB choir, Jenkins has rescored the accompaniment for full symphony orchestra:

"The original was scored for female singers only but over the years I've been inundated with

requests for a full SATB version, thus including male voices. In response to this, I considered changing the orchestration, expanding the original instrumentation of string orchestra to that of the 'Romantic' period of music history, resulting in a basic orchestra of 84 musicians before adding a galaxy of 'world' percussion.

"There is a school of percussion playing that is rarely heard with an orchestra, even in contemporary works, but which is featured on *Symphonic Adiemus*, and that is hand percussion which is common in 'world music'. Some of the instruments used are: from Africa the *shekere*, *djembe* and the *caxixi* which is also found in South America; from Afro-Cuban culture, *congas*, *maracas* and '*shaker*'; and from Arabic culture, *riq* and *darbuka*. The drum patterns generated here are more generic than specific to these cultures and employ a multitude of techniques to create a varied palette of sounds and colours."

"Adiemus can now be sung in concert by mixed voice choirs." *Karl Jenkins*

The autumn tour programme also includes numbers from *The Peacemakers* and a full performance of *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* in the lead up to the centenary of the end of World War I hostilities in 1918. One of the most popular works by a living composer, *The Armed Man* has received over 2000 performances around the world and has been a fixture on the classical charts ever since the CD was released in 2001.

Chin on Rattle tour



Simon Rattle has commissioned a new work from Unsuk Chin for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra's tour to the Far East this autumn, a major musical journey in the conductor's final season with the orchestra. *Chorós Chordón* is dedicated to Rattle, who has conducted a number of Chin's works over the past 15 years including *Acrostatic-Wordplay*, the *Violin Concerto* and *Le Silence des Sirènes*. Following its premiere at the Philharmonie in Berlin on 3 November, the new score travels to Hong Kong, Shanghai, Seoul, Kawasaki and Tokyo.

The title *Chorós Chordón* is literally translated as *Dance of the Strings*, though the music proliferates beyond the string section to the full orchestra. The ten-minute work also carries hints of celestial music with the cosmological theme continuing from Chin's recent *Le Chant des Enfants des Étoiles*. As the composer notes, "physical and biological processes have been a constant source of inspiration, and a number of my scores offer musical and poetic reflections on natural phenomena and our physical relationship with the cosmos".

Chin's music is profiled in Melbourne this season, with the Australian premiere of *Mannequin* for orchestra last month and a feature at the Metropolis festival in April.

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Interview explores creative impulses beyond music



Birtwistle
Deep Time revealed in Berlin and London



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Orchestral works travel from China to the West



Andriessen
Theatre of the World released on Nonesuch



Cross-Atlantic composer
Anna Clyne
 describes her curious route to
 symphonic music, fusing a rich
 range of artistic impulses.

You sometimes seem genuinely surprised to be a symphonic composer. How did your career evolve? I've composed music from a young age, though I never had a grand plan of "being a composer" – it is just something that I've always enjoyed doing. As soon as I started playing the piano, I also began to compose and the two felt very intertwined. When studying at Edinburgh University I took an exchange year abroad at Queen's University in Canada, and it was there that I had my first composition sessions, followed later by lessons with Julia Wolfe at the Manhattan School of Music in New York.

To start with my music was primarily electro-acoustic – combining recorded, processed and layered sounds, with live instruments. My first substantial orchestral piece, *Rewind*, applied the same processes, such as stretching, compressing,

and adding reverb and delays, by means of the orchestration. This work became my window onto the orchestral world, leading to a residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 2010-2015. I've been very fortunate to receive support from some renowned conductors such as Marin Alsop who have nurtured my career as a symphonic composer.

You seem to have consciously avoided the baggage of music history. Does this help you take a fresh approach?

I've a wide array of musical influences ranging from Bach and Stravinsky to Stockhausen and Björk but, when I'm composing, I focus my attention upon what I'm trying to express. I try to follow my own voice and tend to avoid listening to too much music of a similar nature to my own, so that I keep an open canvas in my imagination.

Coming to orchestral composition from an electroacoustic background has also brought a different perspective historically.

How do you view the pre-compositional phase? You are just as likely to be talking to choreographers, or painting ideas on a wall, than sketching on manuscript.

The process may begin with a conversation with an artist or a choreographer, an image, a poem – many things. Recently I've been exploring a more visual approach, which I've found helpful for envisioning the overall structure and trajectory of a piece before starting to write the actual notes. In my home-studio I pin lots of images or sketches to the wall, sometimes within a timeline, and then I start composing the actual music at the piano. My work subsequently moves between the piano and my laptop, using Finale and/or ProTools, as the music evolves.

A lot of your creative impetus comes through collaborating with other artists. How did this work with *Three Sisters*, your new concerto for mandolin and strings?

Collaboration is often at the core of my work and *Three Sisters* was inspired by mandolinist Avi Avital, whose incredible virtuosity, dexterity and sensitivity as a performer and interpreter provided a great starting point. Avi shared a wide range of recordings and scores of existing works for mandolin, which was very helpful to get a sense of its capabilities. It was a challenge to write for what is essentially quite an intimate and intricate instrument, and to find a way for the string orchestra to complement and not overpower it.

What attracts you especially to nocturnal imagery such as in your recent orchestral work *This Midnight Hour*?

This Midnight Hour was inspired by a very short poem by Juan Ramón Jiménez:

Music –
 a naked woman
 running mad through the pure night!

And the imagery from Baudelaire's poem *Harmonie du Soir* with lines such as:

Sounds and perfumes turn in the evening air;
 Melancholy waltz and languid vertigo!

This very evocative imagery was a natural point of departure for an orchestral work, with all the colours and textures at hand. Movement, such as running, and the sounds of the air and waltzes translate very naturally into music.

How was the experience of creating the BBC Proms theme music from your *Last Night commission Masquerade*?

It was a great honour, and an exciting process, to re-compose *Masquerade* for the TV and radio themes for the BBC Proms, and I hope to compose more music for film going forward. Being a very visual composer, I find the experience fascinating – creating sounds and music that complement a moving image.

Your new orchestral work *Beltane* has a distinctly Scottish background. Where do you see yourself positioned between the UK and US?

Beltane is inspired by the dramatic Beltane Fire Festival which is held in Edinburgh annually to celebrate the death of Winter and the birth of Summer, and was commissioned as part of a series of new works inspired by Scotland. It was a great opportunity to recall my time at Edinburgh University, during which time I attended Beltane. Although I live in New York, I still feel very connected to my home roots in the UK and am thankful that my music is being performed on both sides of the ocean. My music often includes elements of English folk music, but it is also influenced by the current new music scene in the US, and specifically that of New York.

This Midnight Hour (2015) 12'
 for orchestra
 Italian, Austrian, Swiss and
 UK premieres this season

Three Sisters (2017) 15'
 for mandolin and string orchestra
 Premiere: 7 August 2017
 Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg
 Avi Avital/Kremerata Baltica

Beltane (2017) 15'
 for orchestra
 Premiere: 9 December 2017
 City Halls, Glasgow
 BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/
 Thomas Dausgaard

Little The Conjured Life in Cabrillo



David T. Little's most ambitious orchestral work to date was premiered at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in August under the baton of new artistic director Cristian Macelaru. The 16-minute score, cast in three continuous movements, is a centennial tribute to composer Lou Harrison, a founding father of the festival and an inspiration to Little. Distinctive colours are provided by an Indonesian bell tree, Korean folk drums and a washtub, moving towards Harrison's beloved gamelan sonorities in the final movement.

"...it turned out to be an overwhelming emotional journey. The second movement became a relentlessly pounding depiction of doom... until Harrison's gentle Asian-flavoured gamelan language suddenly washed all of the anger and hostility of the real world away." *Classical Voice America*

"Little's score gave the impression of a bold conjurer indeed, with its pounding sounds and tempos suggesting an emphatic purpose. In the midst of the conjuring came Asian melodies and flavours that would make Harrison smile." *Santa Cruz Sentinel*

JFK, Little's opera exploring the president's last hours in Fort Worth before his assassination, receives its Canadian premiere at the Opéra de Montreal in January.

Birtwistle Deep Time premiere



Harrison Birtwistle's new orchestral work, *Deep Time*, received first performances under the baton of Daniel Barenboim in Berlin and London in June and July. The 23-minute score, dedicated to the memory of Peter Maxwell Davies, was commissioned by the Berlin Staatskapelle and BBC Proms and, following performances at the Philharmonie and the Konzerthaus, travelled with orchestra and conductor to the Royal Albert Hall. Barenboim has championed Birtwistle's music across two decades, including the premiere of *Exody* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the premiere staging of *The Last Supper* at the Berlin Staatsoper, and performances of *The Triumph of Time*.

"Birtwistle was inspired to compose this magnificent avant-garde orchestral geology by the Scottish geologist James Hutton, by the idea that "we find no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end" in the rocks of this earth, only a state of constant alteration... Musical layers of rock grate against each other, interrupted by violent percussion outbursts and shrill wind sounds – magma and scree, hurled musically into the air... *Deep Time* ends with a great percussion finale. The four percussionists received a tremendous ovation for this, but louder still was when Daniel Barenboim invited the 82-year-old composer onto the stage." *Der Tagesspiegel*

"...an immensely powerful, sometimes breathtakingly beautiful work... Birtwistle may use an orchestra in which low-pitched instruments – tubas, bass and contrabass clarinets, contrabassoons – are emphasised, but the landscapes that the music traverses are wonderfully

varied and coloured. There are pulsing Stravinskian repetitions, cascades of chattering woodwind, Boulez-like toccatas of tuned percussion and long-limbed solos, led off of by soprano saxophone, which float over transparent webs of strings." *The Guardian*

"The work was inspired by the vast slowness of geological time, and the way this slowness is occasionally riven by sudden catastrophes and slippages. The piece itself revealed a more human scale, with a melancholy cor anglais solo arousing memories of Birtwistle's earlier processions, and moments of pulsating energy in marimbas and plucked cellos. It was grandly impressive..." *Daily Telegraph*

"...one of Birtwistle's finest orchestral achievements..."

The Guardian

"Birtwistle's fingerprints are all over this new work – the fascination with layers of time, the growling echoes of the distant past, the rhythmic tread of the passing years, each as distinctive as ever..." *Financial Times*

The German spotlight on Birtwistle continues in the coming season with the first performance there of *In Broken Images* with Ensemble Modern and Paul Daniel in Cologne and a tour of *Panic* by the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie conducted by Ingo Metzmacher.

Gruber composer festival



HK Gruber is featured at the 2017 Stockholm Konserthuset's International Composer Festival.

16 November, 19.00 / 18 November, 15.00

Piano Concerto (Swedish premiere) /

Charivari / Dancing in the Dark

Emanuel Ax/Royal Stockholm Philharmonic/Sakari Oramo

19 November, 15.00

Frankenstein!!

HK Gruber/Royal Swedish Opera Orchestra

22 November, 19.00 / 23 November, 18.00

into the open... (Swedish premiere) /

Northwind Pictures (Swedish premiere)

Colin Currie/Royal Stockholm Philharmonic/HK Gruber

24 November, 19.00

Cello Concerto / Manhattan

Broadcasts / Timescapes

Matthew Barley/Swedish Chamber Orchestra/Thomas Dausgaard

www.konserthuset.se/en

Mackey returns to Sydney

Steven Mackey travelled to Sydney for the Australian premiere of his symphonic-scale orchestral work *Mnemosyne's Pool*, first performed under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel in Los Angeles in 2015. This was the third major Mackey work to be performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and David Robertson in recent years, following the piano concerto *Stumble to Grace* and the violin concerto *Beautiful Passing*.

"*Mnemosyne's Pool* explores music's reliance on memory... The title refers to the pool in Hades guarded by Mnemosyne, goddess of memory, in which the dead bathed to recall earthly memories, as opposed to River Lethe where they immersed to forget... it demonstrated Mackey's deft handling of dense orchestral textures, complex cross rhythms and imagination for gesture." *Sydney Morning Herald*

"...the first movement, *Variations*, presents a winding string figure that becomes hazed and distorted through its repetitions, gritty textures, and colourful reworkings of instrumentation... The finale, *Echo*, opens with glittering percussion, repeated plucked harmonics from the double bass then harp creating a sense of rhythmic stability against the surging ensemble... by now the music seemed full of memories, allusions and vague, false memories, the mass of sound finally disintegrating into shimmering transparency." *Limelight Magazine*



Photo: Lucerne Festival

Photo: Javier Oddo

Photo: Merril Cyr

Photo: Konserthuset Stockholm

Photo: Jane Pichey

Photo: Hanyu Chiba/Arena PAL

Glanert Leyla and Medjnun



Photo: Thomas M. Jauk

Detlev Glanert's *Leyla and Medjnun* in his new version at the Hannover Staatstheater

The newly revised version of Detlev Glanert's one-act chamber opera *Leyla and Medjnun* was unveiled to acclaim at the Staatstheater in Hannover in May. Returning to his first opera, the composer described how he "reworked the vocal lines, the proportions of dramaturgy, instrumentation and dynamics. I corrected it like a teacher with a student, so that hardly a single page is untouched, but tried to preserve the sense, idea and atmosphere of the 1985 work."

"The libretto: a story as old as mankind. Leyla and Medjnun are inseparable. Only their families have anything against their liaison – then the clan becomes

a hate-filled mob, and the lovers are violently separated... Glanert's music is entirely at the service of the emotional structure of the story: from soaring intimacy to expressive ordeal, it portrays the age-old themes of Romeo and Juliet or Orpheus. Glanert's crossover with the ancient Persian musical tradition is particularly exciting... he adds an oud, an oriental lute, which enters with constantly circling motifs, commenting on the events... There was long applause and many bravos..." *Neue Presse Hannover*

The German premiere of Glanert's *Requiem for Hieronymus Bosch* is at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg on 28 November.

Chen from Beijing to the West



Photo: Zhang Qi

Three works with orchestra by Qigang Chen have their premieres in Beijing this season followed by performances from an extensive list of international co-commissioners. A new set of orchestral variations, *Itinéraire d'une illusion*, is unveiled on 18 October

by the National Centre for the Performing Arts Orchestra under Lü Jia in Beijing, travelling on tour to Carnegie Hall in New York and San Francisco. Future performances are planned by the Philharmonie Zuidnederland and the Orchestre national du Capitole in Toulouse and at the Philharmonie de Paris next season.

The itinerary of the title sees Chen sensing parallels between the compositional process and the journey of life itself: "We start off with good wishes and faith in pursuit of the perfect ending. Yet unpredictability is always lurking somewhere along the way, waiting to deviate us from our path. Life as a play on stage, success and failure, glints and glamour, the seeming authenticity of

celebrities, politicians or scavengers on the streets – all will have to come to an end."

Maxim Vengerov is soloist in Chen's new violin concerto *La Joie de la souffrance*, premiered at the closing gala concert of the 20th Beijing Music Festival on 29 October with the China Philharmonic and Long Yu. Other commissioners include the Melbourne Symphony, Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition, New Jersey Symphony and Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse. The work is based on an ancient Chinese melody dating from the Tang Dynasty and explores the relationship between joy and suffering. Chen views these seeming opposites as "a matter of 'Yin' and 'Yang', inseparable and hence all things should contain both. Like loss and gain, they are bound to balance out."

Next spring brings a new work for chorus and orchestra with a solo part for traditional Chinese opera singer, setting an 11th century text by Su Shi, a polymath and statesman from the Song Dynasty. Following performances in Beijing on 2 and 3 March by the NCPA Orchestra and Chorus under Alexandre Bloch, the work is performed by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales at the Vale of Glamorgan Festival and by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.



Photo: Joel Chester Files

Available Light, the classic minimalist collaboration between composer John Adams, choreographer Lucinda Childs and architect Frank Gehry was revived in Los Angeles in 2015, travelling onwards

to Berkeley, Philadelphia, Berlin, Hamburg, Athens, Paris and most recently the Manchester International Festival as part of the 70th birthday celebrations for John Adams.

Kats-Chernin Melbourne premieres

Elena Kats-Chernin's residency with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra has produced two new works, the harpsichord concerto *Ancient Letters* written for Mahan Esfahani and the concert-opener *Big Rhap*, both premiered in May.

The title *Ancient Letters* refers to the first known documents of the Sogdian people who lived across what is today Uzbekistan, the place where Kats-Chernin was born. The opening movement *Tiger Cub* refers to a woman featured in the letters and is launched by the harpsichord alone in what according to the composer "is a portrait of this feisty, desperate, beautiful, deserted woman the way I see her." This is followed by *Musk Trade*, a diptych depicting the valuable aromatic scent and the busy deal-making along the Silk Road.

"...the 'ancient letters' were found along the Silk Road, dating from the 4th century..." *Elena Kats-Chernin*

The final movement recalls memories of the composer when she lived in the fabled desert city of Samarkand and the sense of displacement and yearning for home that is communicated strongly in the Sogdian letters. "In *Goodbye Samarkand* I have written a little ballad to home – the place, to paraphrase Thomas Wolfe, you can never go to again. It is the winds that feature first in this movement. The melody came to me as I imagined looking back at a desert horizon and realising that life is different forever; a mix of misgivings, hopes and longings."



Photo: © Steven Siewert

The ten-minute *Big Rhap* puns on Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody No.2* and the idea of 'wrapping up' that composer's virtuosity in a short orchestral piece. Neither a transcription nor an arrangement, it is more an attempt to capture Kats-Chernin's memories of her mother playing the piano work when they lived in Yaroslavl in Russia: "In writing this piece I am transferring my early memories of the spectacle, the merriness and the hyperbole of what I saw and heard in my living room to paper!"

"A well-filtered reminiscence of childhood memories about her mother playing the well-known Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsody No.2*, the piece has most of the Kats-Chernin trademarks: motor rhythms, simple melodies, lashings of orchestral excitement, just enough hints at the past to bring near-recognition during the relentless forward drive..." *Sydney Morning Herald*

MacMillan The Sun Danced



Photo: Archive of the Fátima Shrine, Photography Section

The three children who experienced divine visitations near Fátima in Portugal 100 years ago

When three shepherd children living near Fátima in Portugal in 1916 reported angelic visitations, few could have predicted the sequence of events that would transform the town into a major pilgrimage site. The following year the children described appearances by the Virgin Mary – "the lady more brilliant than the Sun" – telling them that a divine miracle would occur on 13 October 1917.

Newspaper coverage spread the word, attracting over 50,000 to travel to the town, many seeing the sun dancing across the heavens.

To celebrate the centenary of this miraculous event, the Shrine of Fátima has commissioned James MacMillan to create a new work, *The Sun Danced*, for soprano, choir and orchestra, receiving its premiere in Fátima on 13 October followed by a performance in Lisbon two days later. The 15-minute score will be performed by Elisabete Matos and the Gulbenkian Choir and Orchestra conducted by Joana Carneiro. At the centre of the work is an orchestral fantasy in the form of an instrumental dance describing the solar and spiritual spectacle.

MacMillan describes how "*The Sun Danced* will receive its premiere in the Basilica at Fátima exactly 100 years after the Miracle of the Sun. The miraculous events made this unremarkable little Portuguese town famous throughout the world, and provided the focus of an amazing ongoing spiritual phenomenon. The texts are taken from the Apparitions of the Angel and of Our Lady, and also from documented verbal expressions from members of the crowd present at the Miracle of the Sun. The work is written in three languages – Latin, English and Portuguese and also includes texts from hymns associated with Fátima – *Sanctissimae Trinitatis* and *Ave Theotokos*."

New MacMillan works this season also include a *Saxophone Concerto* for Amy Dickson with premiere by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra next April and future performances by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Aurora Orchestra. MacMillan's *Trombone Concerto* receives territorial premieres in the USA and Germany, *St Luke Passion* in Denmark and Belgium and *Stabat Mater* in the Netherlands.

Stravinsky 100 Funeral Songs

Igor Stravinsky's rediscovered early work *Funeral Song* has reached the milestone of 100 performances either given since its premiere last December or planned for the coming season. Conductors who have taken the rostrum for first national performances are a host of Stravinsky specialists including Valery Gergiev, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Simon Rattle, Charles Dutoit and Riccardo Chailly. The 100 performances span four continents and more than 25 countries, with the rapid take-up of the score indicating



Photo: Stravinsky, 1910, Wikimedia Commons

Stravinsky's continuing fascination as the 20th century's most iconic composer.

Funeral Song was composed by the 26-year-old Stravinsky as an orchestral memorial to his teacher Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov but disappeared after its only performance in 1909. It returned to the light thanks to the musicological sleuthing of Dr Natalia Braginskaya when the St Petersburg Conservatory library was moved for renovations. The rediscovery offers a missing link between Stravinsky's earliest works and his ballet *The Firebird*, which was to launch his international career with Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

The first recording of *Funeral Song* is planned for release this autumn and a study score of the work is now available on sale.

Xenakis Bieito stages Oresteia



Michael Wächter as Orest in Calixto Bieito's new production of Xenakis's Oresteia at Theater Basel

The controversial Spanish director Calixto Bieito unveiled his new stage version of Xenakis's *Oresteia* in Basel in March. This classic music theatre work morphed through a sequence of versions in the composer's lifetime, and was here presented in his final version for baritone, chorus and chamber ensemble combined with actors speaking lines from Aeschylus's play in modern vernacular, with a running time of 90 minutes.

With its use of microtones, glissandi and extreme registers Xenakis's writing for chamber ensemble has a stark ritualistic power, fronted by solo cello and a pair of percussionists. Both the chorus, declaiming in Greek, and the orchestra amplify the ancient rhythms with additional percussion. The male soloist, Holger Falk, provided two scenes of extraordinary virtuosity, telling of the soothsayer Cassandra and of the goddess Athena sitting in judgement upon Orestes, requiring wild leaps from normal register into falsetto. The action was played out in front of the Basel Sinfonietta under Franck Ollu with video projections linking the drama to contemporary events.

"...a deeply moving theatrical poetic masterpiece." *Opera Now*

In an interview in the *Badische Zeitung* Bieito described *Oresteia* as "quite simply a magnificent piece. It comes from a man who was involved in

a war, that is, in a civil war... so he stands side by side with Bernd Alois Zimmermann and György Ligeti, both of whom lived through the war. They were able to describe the trauma which war leaves in its wake like nobody else. I believe that this legacy is so important because of this, and it is good that we can still work with it.

"Xenakis loved music and mathematics greatly, and used both in the cause of peace. And as far as Aeschylus is concerned: I think this text contains everything that still has meaning today. The modern family comes to life in it again, the relationships between people and the violence. In my opinion, Xenakis created an impressive combination of very important things, with the poetry of Aeschylus, his own music and the themes which they talk about, the hatred, the love, the compassion, the aggression and what democracy means today. It is a text for eternity."

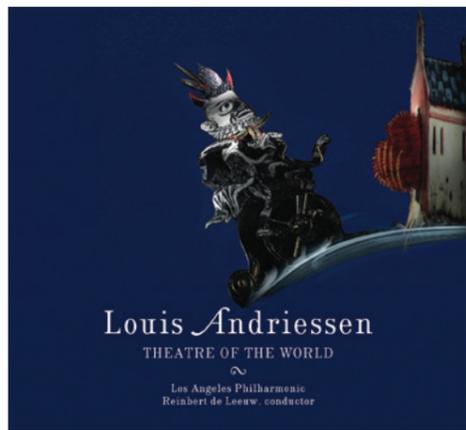
"Xenakis was first and foremost interested in the ancient Greek metres, which do not take into account stressed and unstressed syllables as today... Even stranger is the archaic, merciless tone of his music. Distant from any more restrained emotion, fear and horror are elementally experienced through dark and threatening sounds." *Suddeutsche Zeitung*

"...a single cello is positioned right in the middle of the action on the stage, while a three-piece percussion ensemble forms a musical counterpart to this on another rostrum. The instrumental sounds of the evening are sharp, direct and brittle. Glissandi tear away the firm ground from under the feet, harsh drumbeats strengthen the emotions..." *Die Deutsche Bühne*



Photo: Gilbert Ranicy

Andriessen Theatre of the World



Nonesuch has released the premiere recording of Louis Andriessen's most recent stagework, *Theatre of the World*, recorded live at its first performances in Los Angeles in 2016 (Nonesuch 561784). Reinbert de Leeuw conducts the Los Angeles Philharmonic with a cast including Leigh Melrose, Lindsay Kesselman and Cristina Zavalloni. Following the premiere staging at Walt Disney Concert Hall, the production by Pierre Audi and the Quay Brothers travelled to the Holland Festival for performances by Dutch National Opera.

Theatre of the World, subtitled by the composer as 'a grotesque in nine scenes' and setting a libretto by Helmut Krausser, crosses boundaries between opera, music theatre and multi-media and is similarly wide-ranging in its allusiveness and use of multiple languages. As *Opera* described it:

"*Theatre of the World* is built around the life and multifaceted achievements of the 18th-century Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, who was once called the 'last man who knew everything'... The opera takes the aged Kircher on a time-travelling journey back through the important events of his life, on which he is guided by a boy who may be an angel or an apprentice devil, even perhaps a reincarnation of the scholar himself as a young man..."

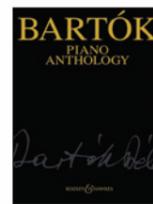
"...a dizzying work that's vast in its scope yet unnervingly claustrophobic... Andriessen is the great argumentative opera composer of our day... He is a clear-eyed Dutch sceptic and humanist who surfs the alarmingly narrow arteries that separate life from death, wisdom from belief, the known from the unknown... Andriessen's music compels from start to finish." *Los Angeles Times*

This is the eighth Nonesuch release featuring Andriessen's music in a relationship that has spanned 25 years. The composer's earlier stageworks include *De Materie* (1985-88), recently staged by Heiner Goebbels at the Ruhr Triennale, Park Avenue Armory in New York and in Buenos Aires, *ROSA: the Death of a Composer* (1993-94) and *Writing to Vermeer* (1998-98) – both in collaboration with Peter Greenaway, and *La Commedia* (2004-08) based on Dante's classic narrative poem.

Andriessen future highlights include the German premiere of *Writing to Vermeer* at the Theater der Stadt Heidelberg and a new orchestral work for the New York Philharmonic and Jaap van Zweden in 2018/19, commissioned as part of the Kravis Prize for New Music awarded to the composer last year.

New publications

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979-0-051-24692-2 £13.99

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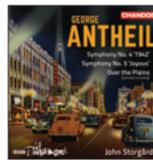
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New recordings

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Symphony No. 4
BBC Philharmonic/
John Storgårds
Chandos CHAN 10941



Dominick Argento
The Andrée Expedition/ From the Diary of Virginia Woolf
Brian Mulligan/Timothy Long
Naxos 8.559828

Brett Dean
Dramatis Personae
Håkan Hardenberger/
Gothenburg Symphony/
John Storgårds
BIS 2067



Detlev Glanert
Requiem for Hieronymus Bosch
Royal Concertgebouw
Orchestra/
Netherlands Radio Choir/
Markus Stenz
RCO Live 17005

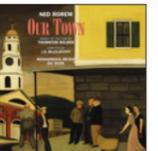


Simon Laks
String Quartet No. 4/Divertimento/ Concertino/Piano Quintet
ARC Ensemble
Chandos CHAN 10983

Peter Maxwell Davies
String Trio
Hebrides Ensemble
Delphian DCD 34178



Ned Rorem
Our Town
Monadnock Music/Gil Rose
New World NW80790

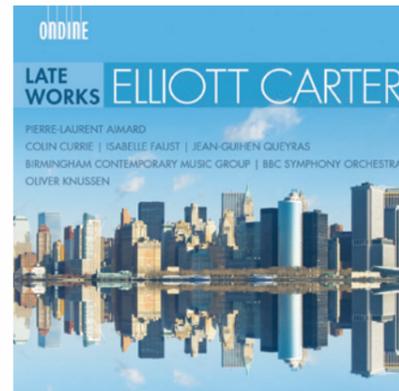


Mark Simpson
After Avedon
Gould Piano Trio
NMC DL201709 (download)

Mark-Anthony Turnage
Remembering
London Symphony Orchestra/
Simon Rattle
LSO Live 0306
(download)



Carter Late works on new CD



Ondine has released an outstanding CD of late works by Elliott Carter performed by leading interpreters of his music (ODE 1296-2). *Gramophone* introduced the disc with a major feature on the composer headed "Elliott Carter's grand finale", noting that "in his last three decades, the US composer's productivity only increased as the once-painstaking process of composing was replaced by a new-found fluency and freedom." The magazine's review of the CD predicted that "there are unlikely to be any better discs of contemporary music this year."

Pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard appears as soloist in six of the Carter works on the new CD, including *Interventions* and *Soundings* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the diptych of *Dialogues* with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, with both ensembles under the expert direction of Oliver Knussen. Percussionist Colin Currie joins Aimard as sparring partner in *Two Controversies and a Conversation*, and the disc ends fittingly with the premiere recording of Carter's final piano trio *Epigrams*.

"Elliott Carter's productivity in the final decade of his life was extraordinary... all this music, whatever its scale, has the sinewy energy and constant ability to reinvent itself that was typical of everything he wrote from the 1980s onwards... The pieces here provide a perfect introduction to the spare, regularly surprising world that his last works inhabit..." *The Guardian*

"In the case of Elliott Carter "late works" really do mean "late". The earliest work here, *Dialogues* for piano and chamber orchestra, was composed when he was 95. The last, *Epigrams* for piano trio, a collection of characteristically terse miniatures, dates from the year of Carter's death at the age of 104 in 2012. His music retained its intellectual grip right to the end and an all-star line-up of performers does it proud." *Financial Times*