'To its credit, King's disc (VIVAT 105) contains some less obvious, as well as celebrated arias. Yet it is one of the most famous, "Eternal source of light divine", which launches the 1713 Birthday Ode for Queen Anne with its stunning opening cantilena over held — almost drone-like — strings, and trumpet in reserve, that absolutely sweeps one off one's feet: notably for the phenomenal flowering of its questing long line, the exquisiteness of the diction, and the purity Davies brings to its amusingly adulatory text, very much of its time. A quite sensational achievement.' — Roderic Dunnett is impressed by the latest disc on Robert King's Vivat label.

'Heinavanker explores early sacred music and folklore through the polyhedron of contemporary imagination in harmonia mundi usa's evocative program of ancient runic songs and folk hymns ... Aeons pass and this music retains an enduring, limitless appeal.'

Howard Smith listens to Estonian folk hymns and runic songs (harmonia mundi usa, HMU 907488), to Julian and Jiaxin Lloyd Webber (Naxos 8.573251) and to Stanislav Skrowaczewski conducting Brahms (Oehms Classics OC410).

Barbara Sealock listens to Martha Argerich and friends, playing in Lugano (EMI Classics 5099972111925). Andrew Schartmann suggests that we listen closely to Mark Isaacs' charming Children's Songs (Soundbrush Records, SR1029).

Robert Anderson finds unexpected serendipity in Grieg-Finnissy Piano Quintets (Metier msv 28541) and much to enjoy in Todd Crow's Brahms and Dvořák (MSR Classics MS 1487), Lully's Phaéton (Aparté AP061), Nadav Hertzka's Tchaikovsky (Skarbo DSK1125) and Inna Faliks' Beethoven (MSR Classics MS 1446).
Gerald Fenech listens to delectable performances from the Repast Baroque Ensemble (MSR Classics, MS 1488), to music for radio and theatre from Benjamin Britten (NMC, NMC D190), and to Vasily Petrenko conducting Shostakovich's Symphony No 4 (Naxos 8.573188).

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WHEN MY BROTHER FELL INTO THE RIVER

"When my brother fell into the river is a cantata, at once highly communicative and dramatic, and at the same time autobiographical in its memorialization of the composer's brother Jolyon, on whose story it is based. The seven movements interweave an objectified yet personal narrative, articulating a sense of loss coupled with life-affirming universal reflective comments centred on the symbol of the holy river in India, the river of the work's title. The work overall is very expressive, full of colour and momentum, as one would expect from a composer as experienced in film media as is Murray Gold."

Malcolm Miller listens to Murray Gold's first major choral work, plus music by Robert Fripp and David Bedford.

Maria Nockin experiences Candace Evans' new production of Puccini's La bohème at Arizona Opera.

Suzanne Torrey listens to Brahms from the Cleveland Orchestra.

Mike Wheeler listens to John Wilson conducting the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, to pianist Sarah Beth Briggs and to saxophonist Anthony Brown.

Giuseppe Pennisi was at Richard Strauss' rarely performed opera Feuersnot, and at a new production of Wagner's Parsifal, and also looks at options for celebrating New Year in Italy with music.

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Music & Vision has received a new article sponsorship for Howard Smith's review of the Naxos CD A Tale of Two Cellos. Smith's review Uncommon Piquancy - Music for two cellos was published here in January 2014 and can now be read in its entirety by non-subscribers.

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IN THE NEWS


We mark the passing of Udo Kasamets, Claudio Abbado, Flavio Testi, Aram Gharabekian, H Owen Reed and Milan Horvat.

Read this news in detail ...

COMING SOON — LIVE PERFORMANCE IN FEBRUARY

A Landscapes of the Mind festival celebrates John McCabe's 75th birthday, with two days of his music in Manchester, from artists including the Kreutzer Quartet, Linda Merrick and Aaron Schorr. There's more McCabe elsewhere in the UK: Trumpet Concerto (Simon Desbruslais, Guildford, Surrey), Psalm Cantata (singing day in London), Two Scenes from Edward II (Piano4Hands at Luton Music Club) and the first performance of his Sonata after William Byrd's 'Haec Dies' (Deal Festival, Kent).


Canadian Opera Company presents Verdi's Un ballo in maschera in Toronto. Orquesta Clásica de Málaga presents Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona with Martin-Jaime conducting.

Distinguished Concerts International New York presents Oslo's Nordic Voices at Carnegie Hall, with repertoire including newly commissioned music by Norwegian composers. Also in New York, the Orchestra of St Luke's plays Strauss & Strauss ... comparing the music of Johann Strauss I and II with that of Richard Strauss.

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ASK ALICE - STRESS IN THE FIRST VIOLINS

Alice discusses how first violinists and conductors are those with maximum stress, whether parents should be allowed in music lessons, Wagner's string writing, Fred Sherry's two cello Bach arrangements and post-1945 solo cello repertoire.

Read more ...

Do you have a classical music-related question? Ask Alice here ...
This newsletter, edited by Keith Bramich, is a monthly taster for Basil Ramsey's high quality and colourful online classical music magazine, published every day since January 1999.

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