

The Music & Vision

Classical Music Newsletter

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A Tremendous Creative Output — Issue 78, 1 September 2014

'Most people in the classical music world will know of the death, aged eighty-five, of Peter Sculthorpe, the best known and most famous Australian composer of the latter half of the twentieth century. One wonders with surprise why someone with such a tremendous creative output — 393 compositions are listed between 1941 and 2012, including eighteen string quartets — should be so little known outside his native Australia

...

'... I hope that more of Sculthorpe's work is heard, both on the concert platform here in Australia, but also internationally, so that this very pivotal composer from 'A land down-under' gets the recognition he so richly deserves.'

Geoff Pearce muses on the career of Peter Sculthorpe ...



We also mark the passing of Frans Brüggen, Cristina Deutekom, Ik-Hwan Bae and Norman Leyden.

In other news, English composer John McCabe receives the 2014 Iles Medal and the 2014 Ivors Award for Classical Music, and the Villiers String Quartet announces finalists in its 2014 New Works Competition.



Read this news in detail ...



Joseph Dennis as Sun Yat-sen and Corinne Winters as Soong Ching-ling (centre) with members of the chorus in Santa Fe Opera's production of Huang Ruo's *Sun Yat-sen*. Photo © 2014 Ken Howard

'Huang Ruo's opera, *Sun Yat-sen* depicts a seminal period in Chinese history. The opera contains both romance and documented history. Sun was a charismatic leader who tried to unify China and bring it into the modern world. Since his first wife, Lu Mu-zhen, had the traditional bound feet of an upper class bride, she was not able to keep up with Sun's travels and many political appearances. Eventually, he found a more suitable companion in Soong Ching-ling.

'Act I shows Ching-ling's parents, Charlie Soong and Ni Gui-zhen, collecting money for Sun's Revolutionary Alliance. Soon after Sun arrives, a messenger tells Charlie that there is a price on the leader's head. During that visit Sun falls in love with Ching-ling, however, and their union will eventually become a part of history. In Act II they marry while exiled in Japan, after the self-sacrificing Mu-zhen grants him a divorce. Act III shows the couple's return to China where the political strife continues. One terrible night Ching-ling miscarries while she and Sun are trying to escape from assassins. The finale of the opera shows a huge statue of the iconic leader, Sun Yat-sen, and indicates his place in history.

'By emphasizing the love between Sun and his second wife, Ruo showed us the human side of this universally revered modern Chinese leader. Also an important figure in modern Chinese history, Soong Ching-ling was vice-president of the People's Republic of China until she died in 1981. Writer Lindsley Miyoshi has quoted the composer as saying that the opera is 'about four kinds of love'. It speaks of affection between friends, between parents and children, between lovers, and between patriots and their country.'

Maria Nockin experiences all of Santa Fe Opera's 2014 productions ...

Tony Westerman, Tom Corfield and Mike Wheeler listen to weekly summer organ recitals at Derby Cathedral in the UK, with a special strand of music by C P E Bach.

Giuseppe Pennisi visits the Puccini Festival for *Madama Butterfly* and *Il Trittico*, and Salzburg for the *Ouverture spirituelle*, *Rosenkavalier* and 'Women and War'.



A scene from Harry Kupfer's production of *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Salzburg Festival. Photo © 2014 Monika Rittershaus

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CD REVIEWS - LONGING FULFILLED



'When Cyprien Katsaris was just a kid he had the good fortune to listen to a vinyl recording of Beethoven's masterpiece by the legendary Vladimir Horowitz with the RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. Although Katsaris was hooked right from the very first bars, later on he was left somewhat frustrated when he discovered that the first introductory *tutti*, which is the exclusive domain of the orchestra, was not included in the piano score. Since then, he always hoped to one day appease his longing by writing a solo piano arrangement of the whole work, but somehow never found the right circumstances and time to achieve his goal. Now, with this issue that includes both Beethoven's original conception and Katsaris' imaginative arrangement, this longing has been fulfilled, and with unparalleled success, as this solo piano arrangement reveals a large number of little details that might escape the ear when listening to Beethoven's towering 1809 creation.'

Gerald Fenech enjoys Cyprien Katsaris' arrangement of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, heard alongside the original, on Katsaris' own label, Piano 21. Stephen Francis Vasta listens to Claudio Abbado at the Lucerne Festival. Robert Anderson listens to sensitive playing of Rameau from Bruno Procopio and colleagues on Paraty, admires Ludus Baroque's Handel's *The Triumph of Time and Truth* on Delphian and acknowledges the great accomplishment of Philip Sawyers' music, recorded by Kenneth Woods and the Orchestra of the Swan on Nimbus Alliance.

Howard Smith listens to the classical-dance fusion of Martha Cuncell-Vargas, to Derek Polischuk playing Schubert and Thomas Osborne on Blue Griffin, to Nicole Molumby playing Slovenian Flute Music on MSR Classics, improvisations from Sophie Harris on Music and Media, music composed and played/sung by Hope Wechkin on Ravello, contemporary music for cello performed by Ovidiu Marinescu and friends on Navona, Penelope Lynex and Alexander Wells playing music for cello and piano on London Independent Records, Jean Muller's feisty Liszt on JCH Productions, and to traditional European music performed by the Apollo Chamber Players on Navona. Keith Bramich is impressed with Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie* from Hannu Lintu and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra on Ondine.

Browse our latest CD reviews ...

FESTIVALS AND OTHER LIVE PERFORMANCE IN SEPTEMBER 2014

Coming soon — live performance in September 2014

Add your concert here if not listed

ASK ALICE — ON PLAYING THE RECORDER

'... after decades of thinking that more fingers down mean that the notes are getting higher (as in the cello), putting more fingers down on the recorder means that the notes are getting lower. If feeling particularly bright, I can get my head around this. If caught unawares ('Try this fun recorder trio!') I haven't a prayer.

'Frankly, I feel that this is a conspiracy, in order to prevent normal decent musicians from picking up a so-called "easy" instrument, and I wish to protest in the strongest possible terms, possibly to Parliament.'

Read more ...

Ask Alice your classical music-related questions ...

NEW RELEASES — CDS, DVDS AND BOOKS RECEIVED

See (and hear) information about the latest material received by M&V for review, and keep track of the status of these items, as they pass through our review process:

New Releases

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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