



The Music & Vision

Classical Music
Newsletter

Kirill Petrenko – Issue 88, 1 July 2015

During an orchestra assembly on 21 June 2015, Kirill Petrenko was elected by a large majority of the members of the Berlin Philharmonic as Chief Conductor Designate of the orchestra and Artistic Director of the Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation. He succeeds Simon Rattle, who will leave the orchestra in August 2018.

Kirill Petrenko commented: 'Words cannot express my feelings - everything from euphoria and great joy to awe and disbelief. I am aware of the responsibility and high expectations placed in me, and I will do everything in my power to be a worthy conductor of this outstanding orchestra. Above all, however, I hope for many moments of artistic happiness in our music-making together which will reward our hard work and fill our lives as artists with meaning.'

Orchestra Board members Ulrich Knörzer and Peter Riegelbauer said: 'We are extremely pleased that Kirill Petrenko has accepted his election as Chief Conductor Designate of our orchestra. We look forward to our musical future together with great confidence.'

In other news, Australian-Taiwanese pianist Belle Chen wins the Classical Music Rising Star Award in London; The OGREOGRESS Productions catalogue is now available online; The New York Choral Society presents its 55th annual Summer Sings; Stefan Arzberger, leader of the Leipzig String Quartet, has been accused of attempted murder and strangulation.

We mark the passing of Gunther Schuller, James Horner, Joseph de Pasquale, Peter Prier, Walter Weller, Ernest Tomlinson, James Last, Jean Ritchie. Nico Castel, Margaret Juntwait and Peter Cropper.

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Andrew Schartmann: 'This disc marks the halfway point of James Brawn's ambitious project to record all thirty-two of Beethoven's piano sonatas. Like the first three volumes, the fourth is replete with dazzling technique, expert phrasing, and sensitive voicing. But these are not the things that keep me coming back time and time again to Brawn's recordings. It's the intellectual nature of his playing that has my ears begging for more. So often I find myself raising an eyebrow at one of Brawn's artistic decisions, only to be won over by his "argument" as a whole — his overall conception of a work.' (MSR Classics, MS 1468)

Schartmann is also impressed with Haskell Small's *The Rothko Room: Journeys in Silence*, also on MSR Classics (MS 1497): 'If you want to hear what decades of dedication and hard work sound like, purchase a copy of Haskell Small's recording of original music for piano. This is a man who has mastered his craft as a composer. He also happens to play the piano beautifully.'

Stephen Francis Vasta: 'This generous collection, comprising mostly less-familiar Bizet, benefits from the attentive conducting of Jean-Luc Tingaud, who takes particular care to use dynamics expressively in the *cantabile* phrases, and never lets the *tuttis* settle into routine.' (*Bizet: Roma; Patrie; Petite suite; Overture in A*, Naxos 8.573344)

Howard Smith listens to two pianists on the Eito label - An-Ting Chang, playing Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy and Ravel, and Masahiro Yamaguchi, playing Debussy and Haydn. He also

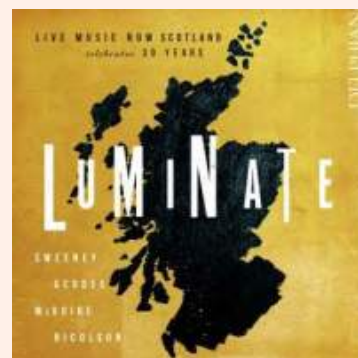


explores the chamber, vocal and choral music of Bruce Babcock.



Ron Bierman: 'The marimba produces beautiful, rich tones, and Álamo takes advantage during this release's slower softer moments. His fond treatment of "Waltz for Debbie" is especially effective. But, as well as he plays, even with added Latin percussion there is only modest excitement on the up-tempo numbers. The release will have limited appeal beyond marimba players and others particularly interested in the instrument.' (Juan Álamo: *Marimjazzia*, Big Round Records BR8933)

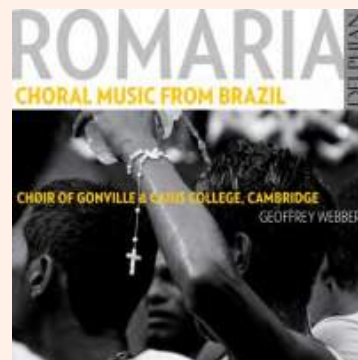
Geoff Pearce is impressed by Scottish music from young performers: 'A Castle Mills Suite, by John Maxwell Geddes (born 1941), is the work of a master songwriter, and I think that this composer's music will surely become a much better known. This enjoyable song cycle revolves around Edinburgh's Castle Mills rubber mills, at around the time of World War I, and it was inspired by interviews with as many as possible of the few survivors from the factory's workforce — the oldest of them was one-hundred-and-three.' (*Luminate - Live Music Now Scotland celebrates 30 years*, Delphian DCD34153)



Pearce also listens to Michael Murray's *Percipience* (Navona Records NV5994) and Trio des Alpes' *20th-Century Women Composers* (Dynamic CDS 7717).



Gerald Fenech finds much to appeal on *Romaria - Choral Music from Brazil* (Delphian DCD34147) and recommends *Valentina Lisitsa plays Philip Glass* (Decca 478 8079) as a must for all Glass enthusiasts. He also delves into the symphonies of Salamon Jadassohn on a double disc set from CPO (777 607-2).



Browse our latest CD reviews ...

If you enjoy listening to the sound samples in our CD reviews, you might already know that you can usually hear an extra sample on the 'CD information page' which is linked from the bottom of each review. An alternative way to reach these CD information pages is via our **New Releases** section, where you can also listen to samples from CDs which haven't yet been reviewed.

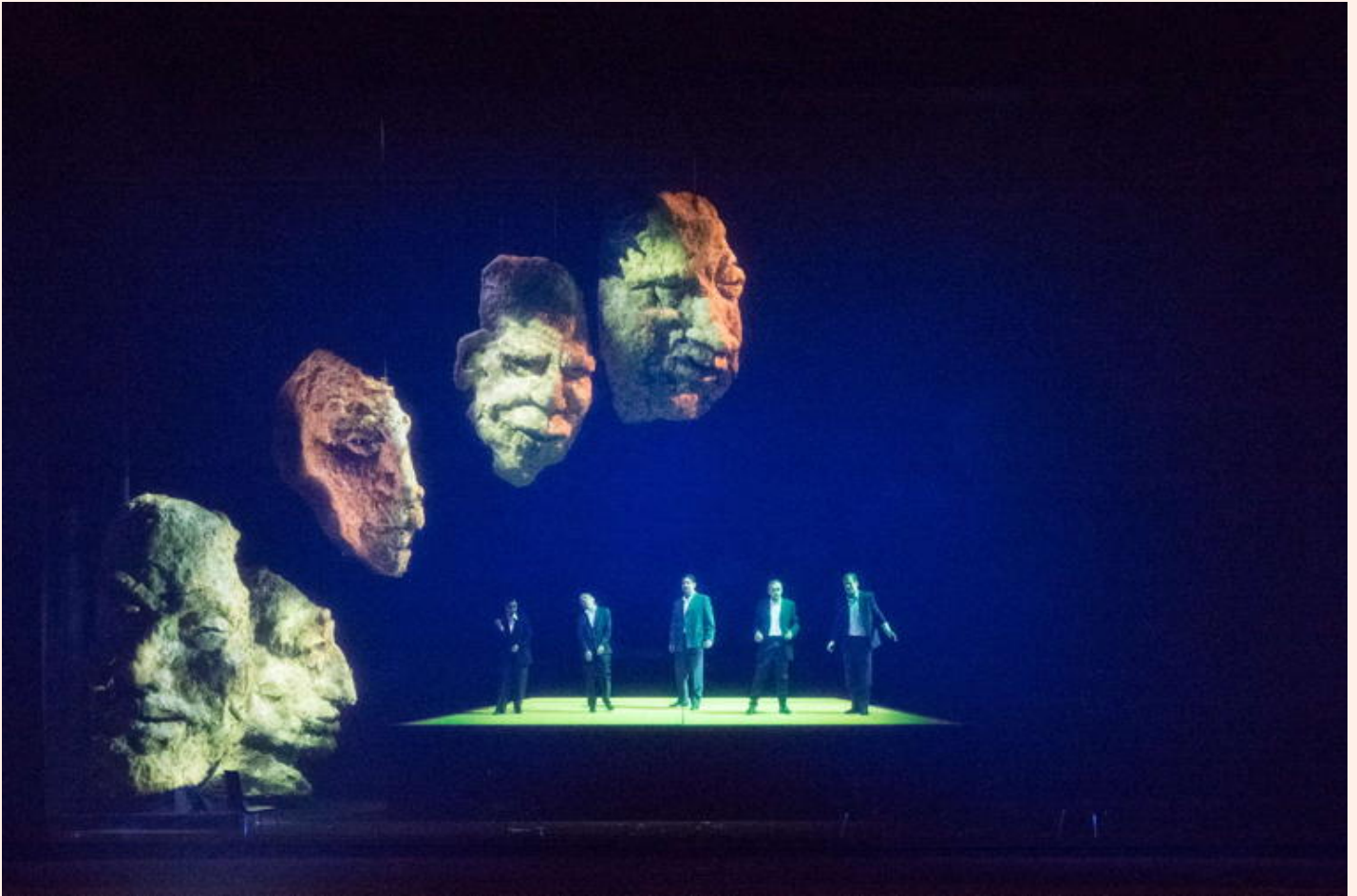
ENSEMBLE — VIVIDLY DELIVERED



Benjamin Grosvenor. Photo © 2013 Patrick Allen

'Benjamin Grosvenor was the soloist in Shostakovich's Second Piano Concerto, at twenty-two just three years older than the composer's son, Maxim, when he gave the premiere. Crisply dapper one moment, boisterously high-spirited the next, this was an entertainingly alert performance, shaped by Grosvenor's ear for both textural clarity and dynamic shading, and pert, characterful playing from the orchestra. It was nice to hear the second movement handled with a tenderness and restraint that allowed it to make its expressive points without being over-inflated, Grosvenor's singing tone also finding room for melancholy introspection.' - Mike Wheeler is impressed with a Hallé Orchestra concert which also featured Tom Redmond's new spoken commentary to Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*.

'There are many types of silence: the silence that filled London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on 12 February 2015 after the end of the 'Sarabande' from Bach's Suite for solo cello, BWV 1001, played with intimate intensity by Nicolas Altstaedt, was one of reflection and affection, directed towards the memory of Alexander Ivashkin (1948-2014), the Russian international cellist and conductor ... Ivashkin was an influential champion of new Russian music, whose activities combined both performance and scholarship. His untimely sudden death on 31 January 2014 shook the musical and musicological worlds; a year later, this concert tribute offered a chance for colleagues and friends, those who worked with him at Goldsmiths College and on the international concert scene, as well as the general public, to recall and celebrate his achievement, artistry and humanity.' - Malcolm Miller describes Goldsmiths College's special tribute to Alexander Ivashkin.



Laura Catrani, Alda Caiello, Paolo Antognetti and Maurizio Leoni in Scene II of Alessandro Solbiati's *Il Suono Giallo* at Teatro Comunale di Bologna. Photo © 2015 Rocco Casaluci

'Musically, *Il Suono Giallo* is essentially a symphonic and choral work. The scenes are separated by short intermezzi of ninety seconds to two minutes each. The choral part is very important. A 'grand chorus' is out of the scene (mostly in the front of the audience in the orchestra seats section). A small chorus is on stage as intermediary between the singers, the mimes and the actors.' - Giuseppe Pennisi visits Bologna and enjoys Alessandro Solbiati's opera *Il Suono Giallo* ('The Yellow Sound'). He also listens to Pierre Boulez, Adriano Guarnieri and Nicola Piovani in Bologna. Back in Rome, he takes in the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia's Gershwin Gala and Teatro dell'Opera di Roma's *The Queen of Spades*.

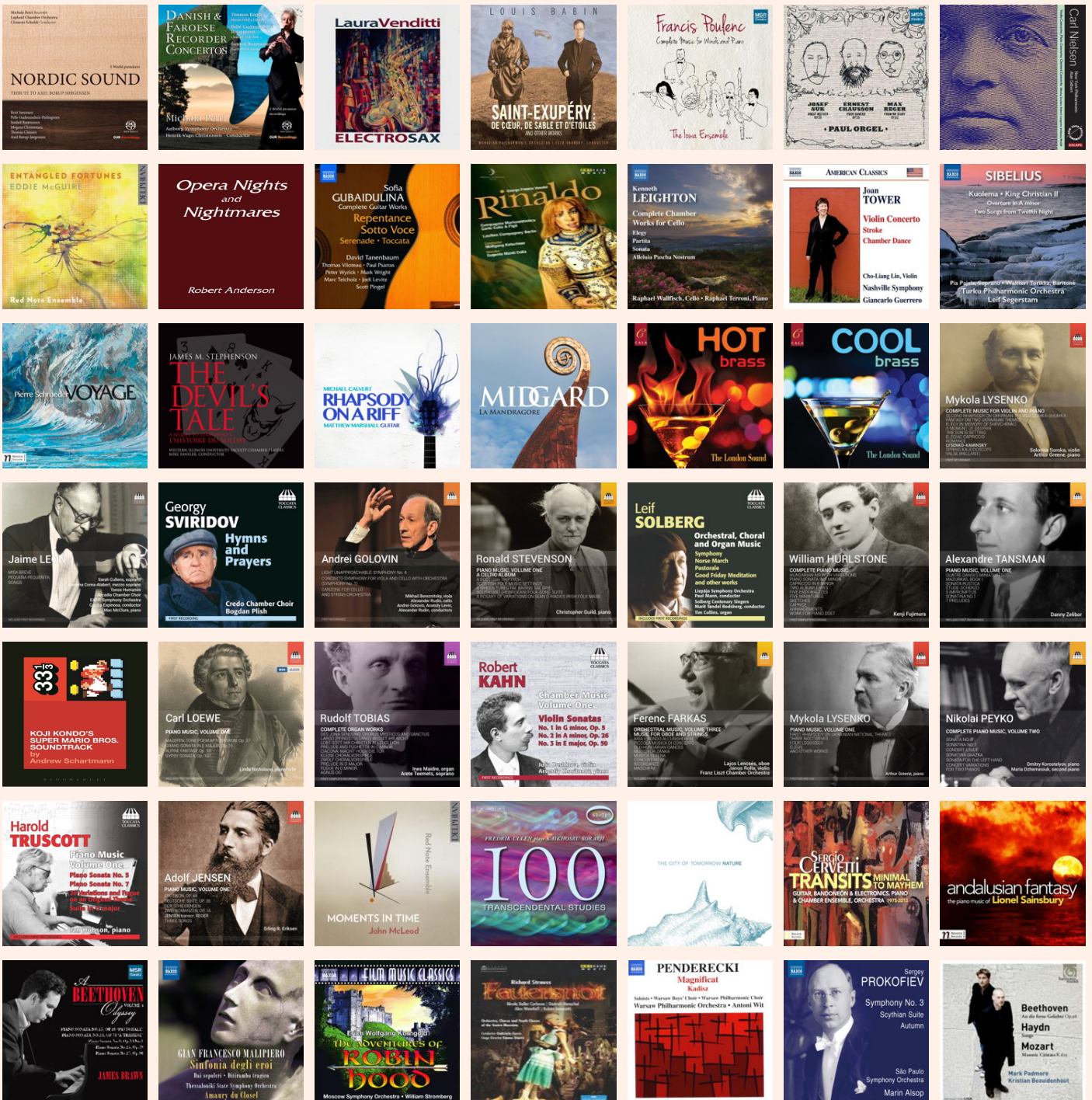
'Given its patent musical qualities, and even dramatic potency, it's perhaps surprising that Camille Saint-Saëns' opera *Samson et Dalila* ('Samson and Delilah') rarely gets outings in the UK. (Not even the enterprising Dorset Opera has got to Samson yet.) It is relatively easy to stage, and from what Grange Park's latest production, by director Patrick Mason and designer Francis O'Connor, demonstrates it has a kind of immediacy that reminds one of Handel's biblical oratorios — *Saul* or, on the same subject as this one, the three-act *Samson*.' Roderic Dunnett reports from Northington, Hampshire, England.

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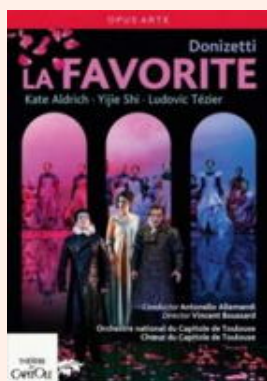
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SELECTED NEW RELEASES



DVD REVIEW — TELLING EFFECT — 'LA FAVORITE'



'The three international stars are truly up to the remarkable demands of their roles: Chinese tenor Yigie Shi brings an easy and transparent tone to Fernand, baritone Ludovic Tézier is a richly toned and authoritative Alphonse, while American mezzo Kate Aldrich fathoms the emotional depths of Leonore's music with a heart-wrenching intensity that sends shivers down the spine. Antonello Allemandi keeps the music ticking at an astute pace, and his sympathetic support for the voices also manages to bring out the best from the minor roles.' - Gerald Fenech is impressed by Donizetti from Toulouse on Opus Arte (OA 1166 D). [More ...](#)

ASK ALICE — MUSICAL COMPASSION FATIGUE?

'I shared what seemed to me to be a completely reasonable aspirational campaign on *Facebook*. Not one of my friends 'liked' it. Could one of the three friends who wrote to me privately be right?: 'I think the profession is in such terrible state that it would only encourage more people to feel the despair that I feel, as a clarinetist.' (To which I had to point out that he'd missed the point: nobody's suggesting that every kid do it for a living, but as a life enrichment.) The other two wrote similarly. Or is it compassion fatigue?' - Alice McVeigh monitors the effect of a campaign for free instrumental lessons in schools, and explores issues surrounding firing and retiring instrumental players.

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CONCERTS AROUND THE WORLD

Our July listings include the Glasperlenspiel Festival in Tartu, Estonia, chamber music in Uppsala, Sweden, New York Choral Society's Summer Sings, the West Cork Chamber Music Festival in Ireland, the Budapest Music Festival, Wagner's Ring in Sofia, Bizet's *Carmen* in Athens, Britten's *War Requiem* in Israel, the Deal Festival of Music and the Arts and Cardiff's Welsh Proms in the UK, and events in South Korea, Italy, Thailand, Austria and the Netherlands. [Read more ...](#)

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