

# MUSIC & VISION

classical music newsletter



Marie Lys as Asteria in Handel's 'Tamerlano' at the Buxton Festival. Photo © 2016 Robert Workman

## *Summer Festivals and Opera — Issue 100, 1 August 2016*

In this specially extended 100th issue of our monthly newsletter, we look in depth at some summer festivals and opera performances.

### **ACCADEMIA NAZIONALE DI SANTA CECILIA — *COSÌ FAN TUTTE***

Giuseppe Pennisi: 'The use of B flat trumpets in lieu of horns, the imaginative utilization of woodwinds, the application of string mutes and the exploration of a wider than usual range of keys and key relations all create an unprecedented voluptuous coloring. This was somewhat lost, either because of the size of the Sala Santa Cecilia or because of the large orchestra or due to Semyon Bychkov's heavy baton and a style which lacked the elegant ambiguity of Mozart's score. The lightness, yet married with cruelty, was lost in translation to a *mise en espace* in a larger-than-life auditorium. Semyon Bychkov should pay attention in view of the September performances in London's Royal Opera House with a capacity for an audience of one thousand eight hundred, still excessive to fully appreciate *Così's* jewels of orchestration. A lighter baton would, no doubt, help.'

**Read more ...**

### **BUXTON — *TAMERLANO; I CAPULETTI E I MONTECCHI***

Mike Wheeler: 'Handel's *Tamerlano* has a typically labyrinthine plot of complex relationships. The Tartar emperor Tamerlano (Tamburlaine) has captured and imprisoned the Turkish sultan Bajazet. When he is unexpectedly released by the emperor's right-hand man, Greek prince Andronico, Bajazet suspects Tamerlano's motives, and is only prevented from killing himself when Andronico explains that this would put his daughter,

Asteria, in danger. Tamerlano is, in fact, playing power games with Bajazet, which involve proposing to marry Asteria, so breaking his betrothal to Irene, princess of Trebizond. He intends that Irene should marry Andronico, who will be rewarded with the throne of the Byzantine empire. But Andronico and Asteria are in love.

'A tangled web indeed, on paper, but this co-production by the Buxton Festival and The English Concert, directed by Francis Matthews, makes reasonably lucid sense of it all (Buxton Opera House, Buxton, UK, 10 July 2016). It opens with a brilliant theatrical flourish — Tamerlano stands over the cowering Bajazet, sword raised, apparently about to behead him; this turns out to be merely a pose for the portrait-in-progress revealed on an easel behind them. We then become aware of Bajazet in a glass case to the side of the stage: just one more exhibit in the collection of artefacts scattered in a jumble about the stage, assembled by someone who soaks up art as a conscious image-building exercise, but has no idea what to do with it all.

'Rupert Enticknap brings considerable vocal agility to the role of Tamerlano. In his Act I aria "Dammi pace, o volto amato" he hints at the emperor's underlying cruelty, as he tries to bargain with Asteria. A little later, in "Bella gara che faranno", he turns on the charm as a monster who knows how to make a show of being reasonable.

'Paul Nilon's Bajazet is clearly a man at the end of his tether. Though not entirely at ease at the very bottom of the role's exceptional range, he is equally compelling in his defiance of Tamerlano, his tenderness and concern towards Asteria, and the huge demands of his eventual suicide, which almost amounts to a full-blown baroque mad scene.

**Read more ...**



Marie Lys as Asteria and Paul Nilon as Bajazet in Handel's *Tamerlano* at the Buxton Festival.  
Photo © 2016 Robert Workman



Mike Wheeler: 'Buxton Festival's nod to this year's Shakespeare commemorations takes the oblique form of Bellini's treatment of the *Romeo and Juliet* story (Buxton Opera House, Buxton, UK, 9 July 2016). *I Capuletti e I Montecchi* is derived not from Shakespeare but from a variety of other sources (some of which Shakespeare drew on). So instead of just feuding between themselves, the Capulets and Montagus are on opposite sides of a civil war. We don't witness Romeo and Giulietta's first meeting, so we have to take their affair as a given. There is no Nurse, Mercutio or Benvolio. Juliet's father Capellio, the Capuletti leader, is planning to marry her to Tebaldo (Tybalt), commander of the Capuletti army. And in the tomb scene Juliet wakes up from Lorenzo (Friar Lawrence)'s death-feigning potion to find Romeo self-poisoned but not yet dead.



Sarah-Jane Brandon as Giulietta and Stephanie Marshall as Romeo in Bellini's *I Capuletti e i Montecchi* at the Buxton Festival. Photo © 2016 Robert Workman

'Director Harry Fehr sets the action in an un-named contemporary war-zone, placing it all in a room in Capellio's headquarters. In designer Yannis Thavoris' set, the elegantly furnished interior is counterpointed against steel-mesh walls topped with barbed wire; a large portrait of Capellio stares out inscrutably from the rear wall. At the start of Act 2, after the Montecchi have stormed the Capuletti compound at the end of Act 1, the portrait has received a couple of huge gashes, and "Morte ai Capuletti" has been sprayed on the door.

'And instead of Giulietta simply falling dead on Romeo's body, Capellio stabs her in anger; it's only then that the truth hits him.

'Stephanie Marshall's Romeo and Sarah-Jane Brandon's Giulietta off-set each other to perfection. Marshall is a forceful rebel leader with a core of steel in her lower voice, while the ringing clarity of Brandon's upper range makes a compelling moment of Giulietta's plea for Capellio's forgiveness. **Read more ...**

Mike also reports on Beethoven's *Leonore*, on song recitals by Josep-Ramon Olivé and Gemma Lois Summerfield, Jackie Campbell's piano recital, a concert by the Elias Quartet, and more of Mike's Buxton Festival reviews will be published here this month.

### CHIGIANA — MUSIC FOR SÓLARIS

Giuseppe Pennisi: 'Last year, I reported on the Italian Summer's longest and most interesting musical festival: the Chigiana International Festival and Summer Academy in Siena (**A Long Musical Summer, 28 July 2015**), explaining that the festival was built on two different experiences: the Chigiana Academy of Music (started in 1938) and the Chigiana Week (started after World War II). Both were initiatives by a private sponsor, Count Chigi-Saracini, who had organized a contemporary music festival in 1928. The new director, Nicola Sani, a composer and also Superintendent of the Bologna Teatro Comunale, had the idea of fusing these two ventures. Academy of Music masterclass participants are selected via a worldwide competition, and have the best international musicians as their instructors. Necessarily, they focus on the classics. Their concerts in the magnificent Palazzo Chigi-Saracini are open to the public. The Siena Academy is a gateway to fame. During the period of the Academy, this year 8 July until 31 August, their concerts are intertwined with first performances by contemporary composers. Siena has two lovely theatres and several other venues — churches and palaces — for performances.



The 2016 Chigiana International Festival opening concert — *Music for Sólaris* (8 July 2016)

'During the first edition of the festival in 2015 there was a certain amount of improvising. This year, the fifty concerts have a central theme: *Spazio in Suono* ("Space in Sound"), based on Gurnemanz's last verse at the end of Act I of *Parsifal*: "zum Raum wird hier die Zeit" ("Here Space Becomes Time").

'On this theme, the 2016 festival presents contemporary and near-contemporary composers (Ben Frost, Salvatore Sciarrino, Gérard Grisey, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Giacinto Scelsi and György Kurtág), those of the great classical tradition (Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert and Brahms) plus those who have elevated jazz to the role of art (David Krakauer and Avishai Cohen). The festival is dedicated to György Kurtág on his ninetieth birthday: three concerts are based on his music and there are often quotations from his work in other music performed.

'I was able to attend only very few concerts and get a flair of the festival. The inauguration (8 July 2016) was *Music for Sólaris* by Ben Frost and Daniel Bjarnason, with videos by Nick Robertson and Brian Eno. The Orchestra della Toscana, mostly strings, was conducted by Bjarnason, who also played a well-prepared piano, whilst Ben Frost was at the laptop (to give an electronic flavor to the strings) and played an electric guitar. *Music for Sólaris* is a one hour theme poem (with eleven sections), based on the 1963 Tarkovskij movie, which, on its own account, was drawn from a novel by Stanislaw Lem. Apparently both novel and movie are science fiction but deal with very philosophical subjects such as the meaning of life. The score married Philip Glass' minimalism with traditional melodic twentieth century music. The Teatro dei Rinnovati was full and the audience was enthusiastic.' **Read more ...**

### **FAST FORWARD FESTIVAL — SCHWARZ UND WEISS**



A scene from Opera Roma's *Schwarz auf Weiss* at Teatro Argentina in Rome.  
Photo © 2016 Yasuko Kageyama

Giuseppe Pennisi: 'Under the leadership of Teatro dell'Opera, and especially of its artistic director for contemporary music, composer Giorgio Battistelli, all the main musical institutions in Rome, with the support of foreign institutions such as the Academy of France and the Goethe Institute, held a very compact festival of contemporary musical theatre from 27 May until 9 June 2016, featuring ten different works in eleven days. Six different theatres were involved — Teatro Argentina, Teatro Studio Borgna of the



Auditorium Parco della Musica, Teatro India, Teatro Nazionale, Teatro di Villa Torlonia and Villa Medici.

'The works presented were: *Schwarz auf Weiss* ("Black on White") by Heiner Goebbels, *La Passion selon Sade* by Sylvano Bussotti, *Vie de Famille* by Jean Pierre Drouet, *Empty moves* Part I, II & III by Angelin Preljocaj and John Cage, *Blank Out* by Michel van der Aa, *Miroirs/Ravel* by Francesco Prode, *Inevitable*, *Music #5* by Sébastien Roux, *Il Suono e il Gesto* by Ars Ludi Ensemble, *Jean Pierre Drouet One Man Show* and *Proserpina* by Wolfgang Rihm.

'The festival was inaugurated at Teatro Argentina on 27 May 2016 with *Schwarz und Weiss* ("Black on White") by Heiner Goebbels, who conducted the Ensemble Modern from Frankfurt and directed the eighty minute work. There is no plot as such, but quite a lot of action because the eighteen members of the Ensemble Modern act while playing with their own instruments. Stage sets and lighting (Jean Kalman) and costumes (Jasmin Andrae) are quite important. The work, premiered in 1996 but still alive and vibrant after twenty years, has quite strong dramaturgy and is what in Caribbean music jargon can be called a wedding and funeral dance. It is a farewell to the German writer and poet Heiner Müller (1929-1996); his taped voice reads the spoken passages, texts of Edgar Allan Poe, Thomas S Eliot and Maurice Blanchot. Among the eighteen soloists, the brass, woodwind and percussion have prominence, but there is also the sweetness of the Japanese koto. Pure sound fits pure movement in rapid scenes made only with lighting. Even tough, the rhythm is obsessive, the key theme is a reflection on the passage from the human adventure to the after-world. The audience, mostly young, was enthusiastic.'

**Read more ...**

### **GARSINGTON — IDOMENEO**

Roderic Dunnett: 'That Garsington Opera has picked out *Idomeneo* for this year's repertoire proved something of a triumph — just as their staging of Britten's *Death in Venice* was last season.

'This production [seen 11 July 2016 at Wormsley Estate, Stokenchurch, Buckinghamshire, England] had just about everything: sound and imaginative direction (by Tim Albery), a dramatically impacting set (Hannah Clark), with a kind of timeless costume that could be deemed contemporary or antique; and extraordinarily well driven orchestra under the command of Swedish-born Tobias Ringborg (who will conduct Giordano's *Fedora* at the Royal Swedish Opera next season, and Bellini's *I Puritani* for Danish National Opera). Plus a tremendously well-martialled, vocally inspired chorus.

'But the focus of the opera inevitably falls upon the soloists, and here one was swept off one's feet by the first aria of Idomeneo's son (and the future king) Idamante, sung and acted to glorious effect by the superlative Australian mezzo, Caitlin Hulcup. This was a golden voice, a gorgeous tone that one would give anything to hear again. Not only was the excitement and drama of her voice quite breathtaking — casting a magical spell on everything she sang — but the treble poignancy of her role, first in attempting to woo the captive Trojan princess Ilia (the touching Louise Alder), then in rediscovering his father alive, but incapable of understanding the reason for Idomeneo's apparent indifference to him (because of the oath extracted from him by Neptune), and then, having learned the truth, subjected to the grim preparations for his own sacrifice.



The impending sacrifice of Idamante: Robert Murray as the High Priest, Toby Spence as Idomeneo, Caitlin Hulcup as Idamante and Louise Alder as Ilia in Garsington Opera's 'Idomeneo'. Photo © 2016 Clive Barda

'If Hulcup seemed to me the voice — and acting presence — to die for, she had a rival. Elettra (Elektra), the daughter of Agamemnon, has been in Crete seeking refuge after her joint murder of Clytemnaestra (her mother) and Aegisthus, and she covets the love of Idamante, who is already unhappily — he thinks unrequitedly — in love with Priam's daughter, the Trojan, Ilia. Elettra is a somewhat wild character — jealous, unforgiving, mean-spirited, quick to anger, instantly affronted, and Rebecca von Lipinski, currently part of the strong in house team at Opera Stuttgart, proved an inspired piece of casting. Her capacity for exuding wild hatred, savage vengefulness and bitter competitiveness renders her a fascinating character.' **Read more ...**

### HERITAGE OPERA — *DON GIOVANNI*

Roderic Dunnett: 'Touring opera companies can sometimes achieve results way beyond what might reasonably be expected from an ensemble that relies on slim funds, modestly rewarded young singers, slim, intimate premises, and its own vital flair and intelligence to produce a cogent, attractive and — often enough — impressive, exciting and authentic production of one of the great operatic classics.'

'Now ten years old — it was founded in 2006 — Heritage Opera is one of those companies that is most gifted in this way. It has performed a sterling service by making available to audiences in (especially) the North West of England — and now further afield — serviceable stagings of the classics, from Puccini (a vigorous *La bohème*, strikingly

touching *Madam Butterfly* and a miraculously powerful *Tosca*), Verdi (a poignant recent *La traviata*), Rossini (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Donizetti (*L'Elisir d'amore*) to Bizet's *Carmen* and Britten (a notably haunting *Turn of the Screw*).

'Now Heritage has turned to *Don Giovanni*. Chris Gill, the company's founder, has returned to bring an ever steady hand to a not quite flaw-free — the horns had their moments — but very acceptable orchestra, the Isis Chamber Orchestra; Helsby Hughes and her fellow company director, Nick Sales, were cast to mostly splendid effect as Donna Elvira and Don Ottavio; and a team of highly effective or at least strongly committed singers has been lined up to keep the vocal as well as acting standards Heritage is so clever at maintaining.

'The production, seen here [25 June 2016] at Rye St Antony School on the verge of Headington in Oxford, will incidentally move on to Wiltshire, North Wales and Cheshire, and has already trekked as far north as Stirling, to Hatfield in Hertfordshire and one of its regular haunts, the Grand Theatre in Lancaster. So with this sharp-witted, entertaining production, Heritage is spreading its wings.



Plotting revenge. The three ladies are Andrea Tweedale (Donna Anna), Aimee Toshney (Zerlina) and Sarah Helsby Hughes (Donna Elvira), in Heritage Opera's *Don Giovanni*. Photo © 2016 Martin Cassell

'Gill is such a steady pair of hands and so at ease with his role that he drew from the Isis players good, strong ensemble playing and a host of appealing individual details. The woodwind served up countless desirable touches: their support for Donna Anna's tragic outburst in the initial murder scene; sympathetic underscoring of one quartet and a clutch of contrasted duets, Don Giovanni and Leporello not least; the accompaniment of a



pained Don Ottavio, and even more an optimistic but vulnerable Zerlina; the solo woodwind in turn, one following another, for the late Act I trio; and best of all, some wonderful paired clarinets for Donna Elvira, highlighting her poignant gullibility; plus some splendid slow violins for her at the start of Act 2.' **Read more ...**

### **Longborough Festival Opera — *Tannhäuser***

Roderic Dunnett: '... the special treat for me in this Longborough production was two still young singers, well-directed and vocally sheer pleasure. These were — as is often the case — Wolfram von Eschenbach, who does more than anyone to point out to Tannhäuser the merits of changing his ways: less judgmental than his peers, less demanding of self-castigation, but seeing both sides of the argument and seeking to present a case for respectability rather inflict it. Every time the Icelandic baritone Hrólfur Sæmundson opened his mouth there emerged the most wonderfully mellifluous sound, the sort of melodiousness that would win a Minnesänger competition anywhere and in any era.



Donald Thomson as Landgraf Hermann in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at Longborough Festival Opera.  
Photo © 2016 Matthew Williams-Ellis

'And if I had to pick out the masterly performance of the whole production, it would without a shadow of doubt be Donald Thomson, a performer whom to my shame I have not encountered before, who began his studies in Scotland but has gone on to win the Carol Rees Award for advanced musical studies in Wagnerian Repertoire: a bit of a mouthful, but surely well deserved and a good, worthwhile investment. Thomson has sung the

Commendatore (for Westminster Opera) and there is no doubt that that role — and Sarastro — would suit this beautiful bass voice perfectly. He also sang Hunding (for Secret Opera) — a role he would surely excel in effortlessly. His Landgrave here had dignity and stature, obvious leadership qualities to which the others deferred, and a wonderful serenity and nobility to the voice.

'Singers of such quality as this ensured Longborough's *Tannhäuser* provided a pleasing and satisfying follow-up to its *Ring* and *Tristan*. With Negus and the Longborough Festival Orchestra in the pit, yet again the English Bayreuth has proved its mettle. It gives one plenty of appetite for a new *Rheingold* in a year's time.' **Read more ...**

## OPERA NORTH — WAGNER'S *RING*

Mike Wheeler: 'In this part of the cycle Alberich is a more shadowy presence than before, but for all that, Jo Pohlheim made him no less a force to be reckoned with. At the start of Act II he and Hagen were on stage before the start, Alberich slowly emerging from behind the seated Hagen like the venomous toad he changed into in *Das Rheingold*.

'Siegfried's encounter with the Rhinemaidens at the start of Act III brings a momentary lightening of tone. Jeni Bern, Madeleine Shaw and Sarah Castle recaptured their playful tone and manner from the start of *Das Rheingold*, before darkening both, as they tried to warn Siegfried about the ring's dangers.



Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* — the Orchestra of Opera North conducted by Richard Farnes. Photo © 2016 Clive Barda

'By the end, Brünnhilde has become the central character, and Kelly Cae Hogan commanded the building of Siegfried's funeral pyre, and prepared to join him on it, with a powerful mixture of authority — a Brünnhilde every inch her father's daughter — and an inner core of serenity, combining impressive control with a big-hearted generosity of voice.

'Once again, conductor Richard Farnes and the Opera North orchestra were the foundations of the whole production, pointing up, for example, just how integral the

orchestral interludes are to the overall structure, culminating in a funeral march of unrelenting power and eloquence. The cataclysmic ending was a colossal wall of sound, after which the broad string theme positively gleamed.

'So, thanks and farewell, Richard. We hope to see you again from time to time. Meanwhile, if any major opera company (or anyone else) out there is looking for a new Music Director, get him on your short list, now.' **Read more ...**



## ***SALZBURG — THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL***

Giuseppe Pennisi: 'After the customary *Ouverture spirituelle*, a series of concerts devoted to religious or philosophical subjects, the Salzburg Summer Festival was inaugurated on 28 July 2016 with the much awaited world premiere of *The Exterminating Angel*, British composer Thomas Adès' third opera, on a libretto by Tom Cairns. The production is a joint effort by the Salzburg Festival, the Metropolitan Opera House, ROH Covent Garden and the Royal Opera of Copenhagen. Thomas Adès and Tom Cairns had worked on this opera since 2009. The former was in the pit conducting the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra. The latter was the stage director; his team included Hildegard Bechtler (sets and costumes), Jon Clark (lighting), Tal Yarden (videos) and Amir Hosseinpour (choreography).

'The Haus für Mozart Theatre was sold out, including the "standing room" seats. I was in the audience. The expectations were met as indicated by twenty minutes of applause and ovations. It is highly possible that, over the next few years, *The Exterminating Angel* will be staged in many more theatres than those of the four original co-producers.



David Adam Moore as the Colonel, Sally Matthews as Silvia, Iestyn Davies as Francisco, Charles Workman as Nobile, John Tomlinson as the Doctor, Frédéric Antoun as Raúl, Amanda Echaz as Lucía, Audrey Luna as Leticia, Thomas Allen as Roc and Christine Rice as Blanca in Thomas Adès and Tom Cairns' *The Exterminating Angel* at the Salzburg Summer Festival. Photo © 2016 Monika Rittershaus

'The plot closely follows the 1962 Luis Buñuel movie of the same title, even though the number of characters has been reduced from twenty six to fifteen for operatic reasons. In short, after an evening at the opera, six upper class couples meet for a dinner party at a villa owned by one of the couples. When it is time for everybody to go home, although the doors are open and there are no apparent obstacles, no one is capable of crossing the threshold. As time goes by, even though the police, their families and the local priest attempt to help them to leave the villa, the group is increasingly thrown back to each

individual's instinct for self preservation. This includes even thinking of murder. Eventually, they will be able to exit the villa. But they will be trapped again. A parable of the human condition? According to Buñuel, this is a parable of the upper class condition.'

**Read more ...**

Giuseppe continues to report from the Salzburg Festival this month.

### **SAN FRANCISCO — *DON CARLO* AND *JENŮFA***

James Sohre: 'Two triumphant role debuts were augmented by four of the world's leading Don Carlo soloists to create a memorable evening at San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House.

'In his first outing in the title role, Michael Fabiano embodied an emotion-laden interpretation, his rock solid tenor ringing out in the house with thrilling conviction and with squillo to spare. Mr Fabiano is such a committed, generous artist, and strappingly handsome to boot. He restlessly probes every corner of the characters he portrays, making each new role assumption seem immediately "definitive". Lacking a major showcase aria that Verdi afforded every other major character, Mr Fabiano nevertheless made an indelible impression, never letting us forget that the opera is after all called *Don Carlo*. He is rapidly becoming one the world's most indispensable tenors in this repertoire.



Michael Fabiano in the title role of Verdi's *Don Carlo* at San Francisco Opera. Photo © 2016 Cory Weaver

'Ana María Martínez, another winning artist, was assuming Elizabeth of Valois for her first time. Ms Martínez is possessed of a pliable, even, sumptuous soprano and her unerring musicality is always in evidence. She seemed to start a bit slowly, not helped by being



placed a bit far upstage. Her lower middle register inexplicably lacked presence for the first part of the evening. By the time the love duet came around she was firing on more cylinders and her ringing top was especially brilliant and exciting. Fast forward to Act V, and Ana summoned a near perfect eleven o'clock stunner, executing arguably the most moving, varied and flat out gorgeous version I have yet heard of *Tu che le vanità*.

'It was gratifying to see how mezzo Nadia Krasteva's impersonation of Princess Eboli has matured. When I first encountered her in the part some years ago, the incisive bite of her substantial, meaty instrument was laser-like and accurate, but the technique was somewhat uneven. Happily, in the intervening years Ms Krasteva has found exciting ways of bridging her registers with seamless skill, and the tone has been modulated to encompass a thrilling, rounded outpouring of legato. Her stage presence was always a considerable asset, and she has further developed the Princess into a creature of dangerous variety and plausibility.

'Mariusz Kwiecień is a top tier artist, whose potent, rolling baritone always lands well on the ear. Rodrigo is possibly his finest achievement to date. The singing is perfectly poised, meltingly beautiful, and deployed with consummate attention to well-judged detail and mood. Mr Kwiecień can tend to slightly over-sing, sometimes opting for power over dimension. On this occasion, he discovered every cranny of emotional truth in the role. As he descended into death during his big aria, Mariusz was so incredibly moving as he selflessly urged Carlo to save Flanders, I concluded this is as good as it gets, opera fans.'

**Read more ...**



Malin Byström in the title role of Janáček's *Jenůfa* at San Francisco Opera. Photo © 2016 Cory Weaver

James Sohre: 'San Francisco Opera knew what they were getting when they co-opted the Hamburgische Staatsoper's *Jenůfa*, and what they got was a riveting, stylized production

of world-class stature.

'Musically, the evening was almost beyond praise from a mere mortal. Conductor Jiří Bělohlávek and the meticulous, idiomatic playing from one of operadom's best orchestras have spoiled this work for me for any future production. This was music-making in a very heady class of its own. Maestro Bělohlávek drew out every gradation of color in this powerful score, from the pulsing rhythms to the effusive, arching phrases. Whether *tutti* or *solí*, each instrumentalist was playing at the highest level, but especial kudos needs to be reserved for the luminous violin solo work.

'With this cushion of perfection coming from the pit, the soloists were inspired to their own excellence. Both Malin Byström and Karita Mattila made unforgettable impressions in role debuts. Ms Byström was a revelation, singing with genuine warmth and awesome power in all ranges. Her plush singing was matched by a compelling star presence, and her solid technique allows her to be effortlessly musical. Her sylphlike physique is a real asset to the portrayal. If she has not yet performed Salome, producers take note: she would be ideal.

'Karita Mattila, an acclaimed Jenůfa in her own right, has found an equally effective vehicle for her gifts in the unyielding, self-destructive Kostelnička Buryjovka. If her substantial voice has lost a bit of its youthful sheen, her maturing soprano still has plenty of gleam in its passionate delivery. Ms Mattila is a fearless artist, and in this role she found an ideal outlet for her fierce commitment, emotionally infused delivery, and coolly statuesque physical beauty. At curtain call, this treasurable artist got the raucous heroine's welcome she deserved.' **Read more ...**

James Sohre also reviews San Francisco Opera's *Carmen*.

### TEATRO COMUNALE DI BOLOGNA — *LUCI MIE TRADITRICI*

Giuseppe Pennisi: 'The new production is signed by Jürgen Flimm. The sets are by Annette Murschetz, the costumes by Birgit Wentsch, the lighting by Irene Selka and the dramaturgy by Detlef Giese. On the musical side, an ensemble of soloists from the Teatro Comunale was led by a specialist in contemporary music, Marco Angius.

'The four singers (and actors) — Katharina Kammerloher, Otto Katzameier, Lena Haselmann and Christian Oldenburg — also specialize in today's repertory, and there was a madrigal group, singing off-stage.

'The plot is based on a true story of the Renaissance composer Gesualdo who murdered his wife and her young lover out of jealousy. The action is moved to the end of the nineteenth century in a Northern European Biedermeier mansion. The underlying theme is the transience of love. In one day's morning, the Duke and the Duchess invoke their eternal love. At mid-day, she betrays him with a young guest. The Duke is informed by a servant. In the evening, the couple has a discussion and he forgives her. As she opens the curtains in their bedroom in the presence of her husband, she sees the dead body of her lover, and she is stabbed by the Duke. In Flimm's staging the servant is also killed by the Duke, who does not want to have any witnesses. As the curtain drops, the Duke takes a gun and walks toward the garden. He will most likely commit suicide.





The final scene of Salvatore Sciarrino's one act opera *Luci mie traditrici*. Photo © 2016 Rocco Casalucci

'The staging provides a Strindberg-obsessive atmosphere (even though Sciarrino is Sicilian and the original Renaissance plot developed in Southern Italy). This fits perfectly with Sciarrino's soundscape — his own term — where the score marks the passage of the hours and the change of climate and temperature during a Nordic day and time. Also, the score features isolated sonorities, extended playing techniques, frequent silences (where one can almost feel the heartbeats of the characters) as well as ironic and almost confrontational quotations. Also Sciarrino uses a 1609 chanson by Claude Le Jeune as a musical reference. After a few quotations in various parts of the opera, the chanson resounds in the tragic final scene.' **Read more ...**

## TEATRO DELL'OPERA DI ROMA — *LA TRAVIATA*

Giuseppe Pennisi: 'Teatro dell'Opera di Roma held a very special gala evening challenging the traditional 7 December opening night of La Scala's "season". The dress code required a black tie for gentlemen and evening attire for ladies. During the two intermissions, ice cold champagne was served in the foyer. The gala was for a new production of Verdi's *La traviata* which, every other year, contends with Bizet's *Carmen* as the world's most performed opera. But Teatro dell'Opera was presenting a new and much awaited production which may become a feature over the next ten seasons, or even longer. The attention was such that the 19 May *International New York Times*, which rarely pays attention to opera in Italy, devoted half a page to the production's preparation.

'The production stems from an idea of Teatro dell'Opera's manager, Carlo Fuortes, and one of the world's best known high fashion designers, Valentino Clemente Ludovico Garavani (usually known just as Valentino). An equally world famous movie director, Sofia

Coppola, liked the idea of presenting the ultimate *traviata* with high fashion and a good looking young couple of protagonists (Francesca Dotto and Antonio Poli, alternating with Maria Grazia Schiavo and Arturo Chacón Cruz) and a young conductor (Jader Bignamini). The impressive stage sets are by Nathan Crowley. Valentino Garavani and his long-time associate Giancarlo Giammetti designed four fabulous costumes for Violetta; the others were prepared by two senior members of his *maison d'haute couture*, Maria Grazie Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli, with Teatro dell'Opera's tailor shop. Obviously, at the gala, many exponents of the world of high fashion as well as Rome's "high society" were in the orchestra seats and boxes.



Francesca Dotto as Violetta in *La traviata* at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. Photo © 2016 Yasuko Kageyama

'Sofia Coppola offers a rather traditional staging with the action moved from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The acting is not extraordinary but may improve as the performances proceed. Each scene has a different basic color: in the first act, Violetta's reception hall is white, in the second act the country house reminds the audience of Corot paintings and Flora's house is almost black (indeed most of the costumes are also black to give better relevance to Violetta's stunning red Valentino evening dress); in the third act dark blue dominates.' **Read more ...**

Giuseppe also reviews Teatro dell'Opera's co-production with Barcelona's Teatre del Liceu of Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix*.



### THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL — THE KINGDOM

Keith Bramich: 'The evening's main fare was a super performance of Edward Elgar's oratorio *The Kingdom*, Op 51 (1906). Martin Lee-Browne's fascinating programme notes describe Elgar's plan to write a trilogy of oratorios on the teachings of Christ, inspired by the epic scale of Wagner's *Ring*, and complete with *leitmotifs* :



The first occurrence of Jaeger's 'New Faith' leitmotiv in the orchestral prelude to Elgar's *The Kingdom* (in piano reduction) — a theme which recurs throughout the work

'Elgar managed to write two of the projected three works, *The Apostles* (ending with Christ's ascension) and *The Kingdom*, which dramatises the apostles in Jerusalem and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Part three, *The Last Judgement*, never progressed beyond sketches.

'After its strong orchestral prelude, *The Kingdom*, a narrative work running for over ninety minutes, has five sections — *In the Upper Room*, *At the Beautiful Gate*, *Pentecost*, *The Sign of Healing* and *The Upper Room* — but came across as a big, deliciously romanticised and continuously varied whole, helped by [Adrian] Partington's swift *tempi*.

'Nimble and well-rehearsed, the Three Choirs Festival Chorus (formed from members of the choral societies of each participating city — Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester) took

on various roles in this piece, notably Disciples and Holy Women, "the people", the mystic chorus (sopranos and altos only), and, at one point, providing a choral recitative.

'In addition to fine violin solos from the Philharmonia's leader, Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay, a super team of vocal soloists took the main roles of Mary (Claire Rutter, soprano), Mary Magdalene (Sarah Connolly, contralto) and Peter (Ashley Riches). Due to the advertised tenor soloist James Oxley being indisposed, one of Gloucester Cathedral's choral scholars, Magnus Walker, gallantly stepped in at literally only a few hours' notice, to sing the tenor role of John, receiving a big audience cheer at the end. Only eighteen years old, he leaves Gloucester for London in September 2016 to take up a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music to study with Ben Johnson.' **Read more ...**

Roderic Dunnett plans to review the whole of the 2016 Gloucester Three Choirs Festival in due course.

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### **FESTIVALS AND SUMMER SCHOOLS — NOW AND COMING SOON**

**Aspen Music Festival and School** (30 June-21 August 2016, Colorado, USA)

**Bayreuther Festspiele** (25 July-28 August 2016, Bayreuth, Germany)

**BeethovenFest** (9 September-9 October 2016, Bonn, Germany)

**Besançon Music Festival** (9-18 September 2016, France)

**BRQ Vantaa Festival** (7-14 August 2016, Vantaa, Finland)

**Chopin and his Europe** (15-30 August 2016, Warsaw, Poland)

**Colorado Music Festival** (30 June-7 August 2016, Colorado, USA)

**CoMA Contemporary Music Summer School** (7-13 August 2016, Yorkshire UK)

**Dubrovnik Summer Festival** (10 July-25 August 2016, Croatia)

**EAR-ly Competition** (5-6 August 2016, Vantaa, Finland)

**Edinburgh International Festival** (5-29 August 2016, Edinburgh UK)

**Festival Maribor** (6-17 September 2016, Slovenia)

**Festival of Choirs and Orchestras in Prague** (6-10 September 2016, Czech Republic)

**George Enescu Competition** (3-25 September 2016, Bucharest, Romania)

**Grant Park Music Festival** (14 June-20 August 2016, Chicago, USA)

**Haydn Festival** (8-18 September 2016, Eisenstadt, Austria)

**Henry Wood (BBC) Promenade Concerts** (15 July-10 September 2016, London UK)

**Korkyra Baroque Festival** (3-17 September 2016, Korcula, Croatia)  
**La Mariette Masterclasses** (21 July-25 August 2016, Indre-et-Loire, France)  
**Mendelssohn Festival** (15-25 September 2016, Leipzig, Germany)  
**Mostly Mozart** (22 July-27 August 2016, New York, USA)  
**Presteigne Festival of Music and the Arts** (25-30 August 2016, Powys, UK)  
**Puccini Festival** (15 June-23 August 2016, Torre del Lago, Italy)  
**Rossini Opera Festival** (8-20 August 2016, Pesaro, Italy)  
**Salzburg Summer Festival** (26 July-31 August 2016, Austria)  
**Schubertiade Scharzenberg** (23-31 August 2016, Austria)  
**Schubertiade Hohenems** (3-7 September 2016, Austria)  
**Tanglewood** (17 June-3 September 2016, Massachusetts, USA)  
**Toronto Summer Music** (14 July-7 August 2016, Canada)  
**Verbier Festival** (22 July-7 August 2016, Switzerland)  
**Verdi Festival** (1-30 October 2016, Parma and Busseto, Italy)  
**Wexford Festival Opera** (26 October-6 November 2016, Wexford, Ireland)

### ENSEMBLE — FESTIVE SPARKLE

Michael Landes: 'On 28 May 2016, in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, an unusual recital took place. *American Protégé*, an annual contest, held one of its winners' recitals there, featuring performers ranging from four years old all the way up to distinguished professional musicians boasting degrees from many conservatories. Many performers already had impressive credits to their names, including a viral eight-year old pianist from *Britain's Got Talent*, published authors of classical-music criticism, and two doctorates. But these artists shared the stage with performers from more amateur backgrounds — a term not at all intended as an insult — giving the event a less competitive slant but rather a clear celebration of the love of classical music, whether the person on stage might continue to follow a career in the field or focus elsewhere.' **Read more ...**

Tiara Ataii: '[Yaniv] D'Or's singing is generally very well produced and even across all registers — a rare feat for countertenors — though he sometimes loses tone in sustained or frenetically fast passages. Nonetheless, when he lets loose, the higher registers have all the drama of high opera, and create a burnished tone that is very pleasing to listen to. This is often at the detriment of the text, which seems a little contradictory to the spirit of folk music his programme seems determined to engender.



'For all his efforts, it seems that d'Or is having artistic teething problems. He self-defines as "folk-Baroque", as the music "dat[es] from the seventeenth century but [is] passed down the generations ... gathering inflections of different popular traditions on the way", but nonetheless writes in a style that is culturally ambiguous and most of all, unambitious. For all the boldness of his artistic vision, the substance of the music does not quite deliver. Easy on the ear it never fails to be, though earth-shattering stuff it is not. **Read more ...**

Malcolm Miller: 'There was festive sparkle in the air at the climax of the Park Lane Group's Wigmore Hall concert on 13 June 2016 to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of composer Joseph Horovitz, with the resonant glow of soprano Susanna Fairbairn's resilient lyricism soaring above a rousing audience rendition of "Happy Birthday" with the composer on the concert platform. The celebratory mood was apt following a superb recital as part of the PLG's own sixtieth anniversary in which Susanna Fairbairn, expertly partnered by Matthew Schellhorn, offered a welcome chance to appreciate a selection of Horovitz's music for solo voice in context; the quality of their performances augurs well for a recording by the artists, which one hopes may follow in the near future.

'The programme opened with a wonderful selection of six of Debussy's *Ariettes oubliées*, displaying a remarkably impressive voice full of richness and colour; whilst experienced on the operatic stage, including roles with English Touring Opera, here Fairbairn showed nuanced interpretation in the smaller scale song genre, with evocative contrasts and emphases to convey the imagery of Verlaine's poetry. Matthew Schellhorn's responsiveness both to music and singer added to the involving experience, with Debussy's harmonic textural details beautifully underlined and exciting passionate interplay as in the shimmery canvas of "Il pleure dans mon coeur" and the stark unisons of "Cheveaux de Bois", with plangent tolling bells to close.' **Read more ...**

Mike Wheeler: 'I'm about to get heretical again. Handel's *Israel in Egypt* is popular with choral societies because of its high proportion of choir numbers, but this, to me as a listener, is what fatally unbalances it. If you want the musical equivalent of a Cecil B de Mille biblical epic, fine. Handel's great strength, though, is the humanity that gets under the skin of his characters and creates the powerful psychological portraits in the best of the operas and in other oratorios like *Saul* and *Jephtha*. There's simply no scope for that here. The illustrative numbers in Part 1 help liven things up, but Part 2 becomes increasingly wearisome, as chorus follows hefty chorus with scarcely any let-up.

'Derby Bach Choir and conductor Richard Roddis [St John's Church, Derby, UK, 2 July 2016] gave the work their best shot, and were solidly supported by organist Tom Corfield, who, among other things, was clearly having fun with the hopping frogs in the plague sequence.' **Read more ...**

Mike also reviews a recital by Reiko Fujisawa and a concert by Jamie Phillips and the Hallé Orchestra.

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## LOVELY GENTLE THEMES — CD REVIEWS



'... romantic and deeply-felt ...'

Ron Bierman: 'When Australian Grant Foster's career as a concert pianist was interrupted by an injury, he began to concentrate on composition. He is both composer and performer on this release. In album notes he says, "Especially rewarding for me in this recording is that it brings my two careers, my two loves, together again." Whether or not listeners feel as rewarded as the composer will depend heavily on their fondness for neo-romanticism. Many will revel in Rachmaninov-like melodies and harmonies; some may gag on moments of cinematic sentimentality. But only a truly curmudgeonly academic could dislike this sort of lovely gentle theme.' (Melba

Recordings MR301147)

Geoff Pearce: 'After No 5, Symphony No 2 is probably the most popular Sibelius symphony, and there are many fine recordings of it. I found the opening tune here just a little fast, and every time it returned, I felt the same — I would have liked it just a whisker slower. All sections of the orchestra excelled, though, and the tremendous range of expression was very well realised.

'The big second movement, almost a symphony in itself, has a great range of emotions. Again, there was a woolliness present in the louder sections but the mercurial changes of mood and dynamics were not diminished by this, and the performance was impressive.

'The third movement took off at a very apt and cracking pace, and had me on the edge of my seat. It was exciting, and in the two *Lento e Soave* sections, the changes wrought were magical. When the opening returns, it reminds me of a chariot ride to the abyss. The *lento* returns but builds in excitement and leads right into the last movement.

'The finale, with its pomp and grandeur, is really music of the gods. There are many changes of mood, and references to material from previous movements. In this good, solid performance, the orchestra responds superbly to Jansons. The quiet sections are particularly impressive, with delicious sound, and finely wrought details.' (BR Klassik 900144)

Geoff also reviews Wolf-Ferrari's *I Gioielli della Madonna* (Naxos 8.660386-87).



'... the orchestra responds superbly to Jansons.'



'... superlative performances ...'

Gerald Fenech: 'The two works on this disc give the listener a chance to hear the Danish composer's symphonic thinking and development, and the Second Symphony in particular is deeply rooted in a mysterious aura of timeless sandscapes, the integer sequence discovered by Nørgård in the 1960s that later controlled many of his works of that period.

'Frank Lehman suggests the music is "locally unstable but globally secure", and the piece is beguilingly deceptive to the point that one has to delve deep into the score to find, well, some of the answers. The opening, a delicate unison, slides

gradually into a semitone, and then the piece shoots off on its way — cumulatively attractive, structurally tangible and spotlessly pure.

'The Sixth Symphony is less cosmic and more rooted, but the music is still flowing through rapids, dark volcanic rocks and serene waterfalls — an apt visualization of the composer's home country with all its breathtaking natural beauties.' (Dacapo 6.220645)

Gerald Fenech: 'One of England's foremost composers of the second half of the twentieth century, Jonathan Harvey (1939-2012) is still hovering on the edge of recognition. So this disc is not only timely but essential, not only for admirers of Harvey's work, but for all those that harbor an interest in contemporary sacred music. Many critics find his pieces difficult to come to terms with, but despite stretching Anglican church music in a way not seen since Tippett's 1961 *Evening Canticles*, Harvey has remained consistently faithful to his call, and it is only recently that his choral mastery is starting to emerge. Indeed, his vocal compositions have so far never achieved a regular foothold in the worship of the Anglican Church, something that must be attributed to the technical difficulties involved. So hopefully, this outstanding issue will help to change that.



'... beautifully executed and recorded ...'

'All the pieces on this recording are worth their weight in gold, but the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* of 1977, the 1995 *Missa Brevis*, and his last choral piece, *The Annunciation* of 2011, must be singled out not only for their epic scope and dazzling colours, but also for the many moving moments that abound, particularly in that last work.' (Signum SIGCD 456)

Gerald also reviews *Spellweaving — Ancient Music from the Highlands of Scotland* (Delphian DCD34171), Eli Tamar's *Laudato Si* (Navona Records NV6036), *Simple Gifts* (20th Century American and British Art Songs on MSR Classics MS 1555), Jean-François Paillard's *Bach: 6 Brandenburg Concertos* (Erato 0 825646 138654), Luigi Gazzotti *Chamber Arias* (Tactus TC 880701) and on Naxos, Tom Winpenny's *Messiaen* (8.573471), Henning Kraggerud's *Mozart Violin Concertos 3, 4 and 5* (8.573513) and *Granados Orchestral Works 1* (8.573263).



'Ines Maidre is a performer of attractive virtuosity and sound judgment.'

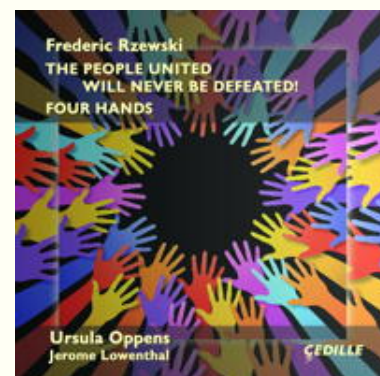
Roderic Dunnett: 'Scandinavia and the Baltic states are one of the regions of which the enterprising Toccata label is making a special focus. This record, which embraces effectively all the organ music by the Estonian composer Rudolf Tobias (1873-1918), arguably the first in his country's great line of composers, who was himself highly proficient on the instrument (and famous or notorious for his often wild and dramatic improvisation), is a valuable part of a series in which Toccata plans to explore and bring to wider notice several of Estonia's most significant keyboard composers.

Ines Maidre is a performer of attractive virtuosity and sound judgment. She made a previous disc featuring Tobias' work (on the Forte label) some twenty years ago. Tobias was a composer of stature, who ranged widely in his output: symphonies and concertos, chamber works and keyboard pieces such as these. One of his masterworks was the oratorio *Des Jona Sendung* (he also wrote an early cantata,



*Johannes Damascenus*), and it is pleasing to see here the *Chorus Mysticus* from the oratorio, perhaps surprisingly dramatic in nature, which though relatively tonal perhaps lies in the tradition of Liszt. (One of Tobias' teachers, in St Petersburg, was Rimsky-Korsakov.)' (Toccata Classics *TOCC 0288*)

Roderic Dunnett: 'The somewhat provocative title here is relevant: "The people united" is one of those immensely powerful melodies which emerged from the desperate struggles between Right and Left in Southern America — most famously Argentina and Chile — during the 1970s and 80s. The song originated with the Chilean composer Sergio Ortega (1938-2003), sung by popular folk group Quilapayún, and expressed the determination of the common people not to knuckle under to the dictatorial, self-appointed military regimes which seized power, overthrowing legitimate governments such as that of Salvador Allende, with every intention of holding and clinging on to power for an indeterminate time.



'... a marvel of composition, enjoyable by anyone.'

'Being a popular melody, it lends itself surprisingly effectively to a variation treatment. What Frederic Rzewski (born 1938) has done is to come up with a set of thirty-six keyboard variations, which can easily be likened to Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, or to give a later example, the Brahms variations on a theme by Handel.' (Cedille *CDR 90000 158*)



'... a profound, unusual and striking work ...'

Keith Bramich: 'How to describe *A Hopeful Place* [Navona Records *NV6045*], a song cycle for soprano and chamber orchestra, with music by Dan Redfeld and text by John Gabriel Koladziej? In nine movements it portrays a woman's life, chronologically, from birth to death, with her life force described in music and words. The focus is on soprano Kristi Holden, with the rich backing of the Hollywood Studio Symphony which, with only twenty or so players, whips up a modern symphonic sound, pointed with harp, drum kit and a variety of delicate percussion.

'From the start of the long orchestral introduction, we're in a fairy-tale fantasy world with a much larger feel than a song cycle — the introduction to maybe a musical or an opera.

'At the first vocal entry, three-and-a-half minutes in, we get a strong sense of the sound world of Stephen Sondheim, and the measure of Holden's powerful, jazzy voice in Koladziej's poetic opening words :

*I wish you music:  
A song for singing, A tune for falling in love -  
Another in your solitude.*

The late Howard Smith listened to Burkard Schliessmann's *Chopin — Schumann — Anniversary Edition* (MSR Classics *MS 1361*), to *Violino o Cornetto — Seventeenth-century Italian solo sonatas* (Nimbus Alliance *NI 6134*) and to Regis Records' *The Artistry of Denis Brain* (*RRC1363*).

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# ROS BETHAN: A CHORUS OF DISSENT

**A CHORUS OF DISSENT**

*Allegro*  
*Andante*

Mr Quaver had a crotchet  
One day in the bar.  
He insulted Mr Minim,  
Who thought he was the **STAR!**  
And taunted Mr Quaver,  
Whose voice spluttered with passion,  
Then started to waiver,  
You're not that important, Minim  
You're just a **HUGE PAIN!**  
Colonel Semibreve's twice as long,  
And not nearly so vain!"

*mf*

*con*  
*Vivace*

A cheer from the triplets  
As they charged up and down,  
Caused Madam Repeat  
To get muddled, and frown.  
Colonel Semibreve smiled,  
A self-satisfied grin...  
So, to head off more trouble,  
All the Rests, woke,  
And stepped in  
To restore a calm note,  
**AND SILENCE THE DIN!**  
Alas, they were too late!  
More musical terms joined the furore  
And with Madam Crescendo  
**Created UPROAR!!!**

*dolce*

*legato*  
*Larghetto*

Lady Treble Clef tut tutted;  
Lord Base Clef looked grave,  
For Mr Quaver's behaviour  
**MEANT DISASTER-FOR ALL ON THE STAVE!**  
**SUDDENLY** with a few strokes of the pen,  
The composer struck out his work,  
**AND STARTED AGAIN!**

*rit*  
*legato*  
*Cantabile*  
*Poco Cresc*

To CODA

To where?

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www.rosbethan.co.uk

A Chorus of Dissent. Poem and artwork © 2016 Ros Bethan

[Download a larger version of Ros Bethan's poem here.](#)

For more information about the fantasy novelist, poet, illustrator and singer Ros Bethan, visit [rosbethan.co.uk](http://rosbethan.co.uk)

## JOHN POOLE — CLASSICAL MUSIC NEWS



John Poole

John Poole, the choral conductor who led the BBC Singers in the 1970s and 80s, will make a rare appearance conducting the Bloomsbury Singers — the London University choir he worked with before his BBC appointment — at L'Église de Notre Dame, Bellac, Limousin, France on Friday 19 August 2016 at 8.15pm — entrance free of charge.

The Bloomsbury Singers are visiting the Limousin area for a week, and John Poole will rehearse them each day to prepare their concert programme. This is the fourth such visit, with previous weeks during the summers of 2010, 2012 and 2014.

On the programme are choral classics by Britten, Byrd, Rachmaninov, Ramsey, Tallis, Tchaikovsky, Tomkins, Warlock and Wilbye, plus two solo items by English clarinettist Janet Hilton.

Inspired by the people, artists, and heritage of the city of Boston [Massachusetts, USA], the Boston Landmarks Orchestra (LO) under the direction of Music Director Christopher Wilkins, and Executive Director Jo Frances Meyer present free outdoor concerts at the US Department of Conservation and Recreation's Hatch Shell at the Esplanade. Free Hatch Shell concerts (and one film) are performed by New England's most talented professional musicians every Wednesday evening (7pm) through 31 August 2016.



Christopher Wilkins

'Universal access and summertime fun lie at the heart of all Boston Landmarks Orchestra programs. Children, families, cultural organizations and first-time concertgoers all have an important role to play', says Wilkins. 'The orchestra's fifteenth anniversary season is also the most interactive in our history, as members of our community are active participants in almost every program.'

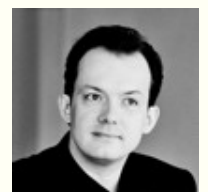


Ruth Draper

The Seattle Chapter of the American Guild of Organists has announced the results of its *Bach to the Future* composition competition. The winning works *A Lover's Farewell* by Ruth Draper (New Haven, CT, USA — first prize, US\$1,500), and *Mostly Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor* by Paul Ayres (Middlesex, UK — second prize, US\$750), will be performed by Michelle Horsley on 3 August 2016 at First Baptist Church Seattle.

The competition, which is the second iteration — the first being *The Organ rEvolution* in 2013/14 — was judged by Kai Kirayama, Shirley Lindberg, Samuel Libra, Michelle Horsley, Rich Irish and Christopher Glenn.

Andris Nelsons, widely considered as one of today's most charismatic and compelling conductors, has asked the Bayreuth Festival's management for rescission of his contract for the summer 2016 production of Wagner's *Parsifal*. Due to a differing approach in various matters, the atmosphere at this year's Bayreuth Festival did not develop in a mutually comfortable way for all parties. With regret, the Bayreuth Festival has agreed to Nelsons' request.



Andris Nelsons



Nelsons recently signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, however, which represents a major milestone in the Latvian artist's recording career and prepares the way for three landmark projects.

Following their Grammy Award earlier this year, Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra have extended their recording partnership with DG, which will now encompass Shostakovich's complete symphonies and his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*.

Advanced discussions are underway between Deutsche Grammophon, Nelsons and the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig about a collaboration that will shed new light on the symphonies of Bruckner, redefining Bruckner's very distinctive sound world.

In addition, Nelsons will record Beethoven's complete symphonies with the Wiener Philharmoniker over the next four years. The enterprise will culminate in 2020 with performances of the complete cycle in Vienna, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth.



Carmine Miranda

Navona Records has released an album featuring the young Venezuelan born Italian-American cellist Carmine Miranda. This recording of the Schumann and Dvořák *concerti* with the Moravian Symphony Orchestra and Petr Vronský (NV6034) was recorded over two days in June 2015 in the Czech Republic, with state of the art equipment and audio engineering.

Twenty-six-year-old Miranda, who has spent his career so far mastering these concertos, was also recently published in the March 2016 *Musical Times*, writing in 'Decoding the Schumann Cello Concerto' about his discovery of secret codes hidden within the pages. He makes a compelling case that Robert Schumann's concerto is brimming with embedded codes and underlying meanings which, when viewed together, point to something very different to the usual vision of this work. Miranda's take is different from other contemporary interpretations — he deliberately follows historical traditions of *tempo*, dynamics and phrasing, but Schumann's musical intentions are interpreted as a series of internal conflicts and conversations between solo cello and orchestra.

We mark the passing of Einojuhani Rautavaara, Alirio Díaz, Sergei Cortez, Charles Chaynes, Harry Rabinowitz, Peter Feuchtwanger, Oleg Karavaichuk, Ofelya Hambardzumyan, Phyllis Curtin, J Reilly Lewis and Joel Hastings.



Einojuhani Rautavaara  
(1928-2016)

**Read our latest news**

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.

The editorial and advertising copy deadlines for our September newsletter are both Friday 26 August 2016. [Details here.](#)

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