



Christ Recrucified – Issue 114, 1 October 2017

ENSEMBLE – PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

Giuseppe Pennisi: *'Mathis der Maler* is one of the nineteenth century's most important operas, yet it is rarely performed. One reason is the demands made on theatre management: a gargantuan orchestra, a double chorus, eleven soloists (of whom eight are principals), seven scenes with various changes of sets, and a performance length of nearly four hours. Another reason is the demands on the audience; under a comparatively simple main plot, there are several minor sub-plots and a libretto dense with philosophical and theological considerations. It is performed in the German world but seldom elsewhere. I recall a mediocre production at the British Royal Opera House some twenty years ago. I have no memory of any productions in Italy. The production I saw and heard on 13 September 2017 was the first in Romania.

'The key theme is the role of the artist and intellectual in a period of political strife. The action takes place in the sixteenth century during the war of religions and the peasants' revolt against their landlords. Almost all the characters are personalities who lived through that period.

'Hindemith spent two years composing the work which had its debut in 1938 in Zurich (since it was forbidden in Germany). It was the result of his desire to write in a more popular way and also to transmit political, philosophical and social messages. Thus, the music is organized in numbers and based, to a certain extent on folksongs and church choral works, though these are only occasionally quoted directly. Another important element lies in the tonal relationship, based on ideas that Hindemith developed while teaching in Berlin and writing his treatise on composition. However, there is nothing academic about the opera, which is a powerful expression, clearly autobiographical, of the artist in time of strife. Words and music are skillfully used to present the main characters — Mathis, Albrecht, Schwalb, Riedinger, Ursula and Regina — as human beings with strong personalities. The lyrical scenes are touching. The dramatic scenes — the burning of the Luther books, the battle fight, the St Anthony temptations — are spectacular.'

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2017
Foto - Andrei Gîndac



Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* at the Grand Palace Hall in Bucharest, Romania. Photo © 2017 Andrei Gîndac

Giuseppe also reports on two orchestral concerts at the Enescu Festival, given by the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Filarmonica della Scala, and on orchestral concerts at the Salzburg Summer Festival. Back in Italy, he reports from Parma on *Jérusalem*, a seldom-performed Verdi opera :

'This was Giuseppe Verdi's first French opera commission from *La Grande Boutique*, as the composer used to call the Paris Opera House. There has been a long dispute among

musicologists: is *Jérusalem* an adaptation of *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata* to suit French taste and style — complex plot, special scenic effects and ballets — or an autonomous work? I stand for the second hypothesis for the following reasons. Only eleven (of the twenty seven) musical numbers of *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata* are reproduced in *Jérusalem*, often with adaptations and modifications — after all there are seven operas between *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata* and *Jérusalem*, and Verdi's own style had evolved. The protagonist is a *bel canto* tenor, not the customary Verdian melodramatic tenor. Emphasis is on the atmosphere and on the grand tableaux, not on psychological development of the main characters. *Jérusalem* had a good circulation in France and Belgium until the late nineteenth century. It was revived in Venice in 1952. Performances are rare and far between.

'This production is a joint venture with the Monte Carlo Opera, where it will be staged later in this operatic season. It has two strong points. First of all, the stage direction, stage sets and costumes by Hugo de Ana. With skilfull use of painted canvas scenes and projections (by Ideogramma srl and Sergio Metalli), De Ana is able to create the atmosphere of French grand opéra. The second aspect is the presence of three exceptional singers as the main protagonists, with voices as similar as possible to those of the leading cast when the opera was conceived.

'Mexican tenor Ramón Vargas, born in 1960, has maintained the fresh *bel canto* style and the High Cs which impressed the panel of the "Enrico Caruso Prize" in 1986. Annick Massis is one of the few sopranos who can sing the four women's roles in Offenbach's *Les Contes de Hoffmann*. In the same evening, and during the same opera (as in *Jérusalem*), she can easily switch between coloratura soprano, lyric soprano and dramatic soprano. Michele Pertusi is an excellent bass and was covered by ovations.'

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Michele Pertusi as Roger in *Jérusalem* at the Verdi Festival. Photo © 2017 Roberto Ricci



Stéphane Bullion and Eleonora Abbagnato in Roland Petit's 'Le Jeune Homme et la Mort' at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma.
Photo © 2017 Yasuko Kageyama

Back in Rome, Giuseppe reports on how Teatro dell'Opera di Roma is challenging La Scala Milan in the field of ballet :

'*Soirée Roland Petit* included three works; two of them were created by Roland Petit in the late 1940s (*Carmen* and *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*), the other (*L'Arlésienne*) in 1974. They are vintage French ballets from the second half of the last century. *Carmen* and *L'Arlésienne* had already been performed at Teatro dell'Opera in 1992 and 2013. *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* was a new entry for Rome. I saw and heard the performance on Sunday afternoon 10 September 2017.

'Let us start with this short and very moving ballet. It is based on a poem by Jean Cocteau, who also designed the costumes. The sets are by Georges Wakhévitch. The music is by Johann Sebastian Bach. A young man knows that he is about to die, and thinks of committing suicide, but a young woman arrives, unexpectedly, in his poor

apartment. He seems to acquire a new sense for life. But the woman is Death herself. A short and poignant ballet with a splendid Eleonora Abbagnato and an excellent Stéphane Bullion.

'The performance opened with *L'Arlésienne*, the well known symphonic suite by Georges Bizet. The sets by René Allio, based on van Gogh paintings and the costumes by Christine Laurent were very elegant. Based on a short but tragic, novel by Alphonse Daudet, the ballet renders the colors and atmosphere of Provence. The athletic Alessio Rezza excelled among the many dancers.

'The third and final part of the performance was *Carmen*, based on a suite from Bizet's masterpiece. The plot is summarized in five scenes. The sets by Antoni Clavé are based on Pablo Picasso's paintings. The salient points of the opera were rendered quite well. Rebecca Bianchi and Claudio Cocino excelled among the dancers.' [Read more ...](#)

Mike Wheeler: 'There was an enthusiastic reception for flexibly-constituted chamber ensemble London Concertante's first visit to Derby Cathedral (Derby, UK, 9 September 2017) but, sadly, I find myself unable to raise the full three cheers.

'The mostly Vivaldi evening began well, with Claire Kennington and Jonathan Storer as the lively soloists in the A minor Concerto for two violins, No 8 from the Op 3 collection *l'Estro Armonico*. The brisk outer movements, in particular, were played with impressive unanimity.

'In the Trio Sonata Op 1 No 12 in D minor, RV 63, "Follia" — I make a point of including these details because the printed programme seemed to be making a point of not including them — the individual variations were vividly characterised, from racing figuration to a gently rocking siciliana, followed by a positive blizzard of notes.



London Concertante

'Doubts started to creep in as the evening wore on. With Tesumi Nagata as the soloist, "Summer" from *The Four Seasons* ended with a furious and exciting storm, but lyrical passages in the first movement were a touch over-romanticised, and rather more vibrato than necessary was becoming apparent. The first half ended with an off-piste excursion into Piazzolla — a soulful account of his hit *Oblivion*.' [Read more ...](#)

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CD SPOTLIGHT — CHRIST RECRUCIFIED

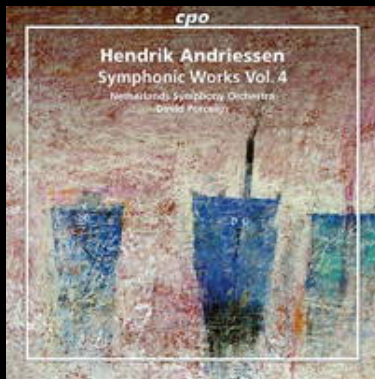
Paul Sarcich: 'The plot of Martinů's 1954 opera now seems horribly prescient — a Greek village has to cope with an influx of refugees, and becomes divided over how to treat them. The difference between this and the present Syrian situation is that the refugees themselves are Greek (and Christian), having been forced from their lands by the Turks. But that got in the way of the intended premiere of the opera in 1957 at the Royal Opera House, because of the then current situation in Cyprus.'



'So an inflationary situation all round then. But Martinů's concern is not with politics, nor really religion, as he was not particularly religious himself. He uses the Passion story as a peg on which to hang an examination of the eternal tragedy of humanity struggling with its own ego.'

'... the production is nothing less than workmanlike, rising in places to something more inspired ...'

'The opening is at Easter, and the village is about to mount its Passion Play, nominating which villagers are to play which parts in it. Gradually those taking the roles become overwhelmed by them, the presence of the refugees putting all to the test in whether Christian charity can overcome the interests of entrenched power. By the end, Manolios (playing Christ) has been transformed from a simple shepherd to a dangerous revolutionary and must be killed.' (*Martinů: The Greek Passion*, Oehms Classics, OC 967)



Geoff Pearce: 'Today, Hendrik Andriessen (1892-1981) is known mainly for his organ works and some liturgical music, and is regarded as an important figure in the revival of Netherlands Catholic church music, but in reality, he is much more than this, having been an important teacher and writer about music, a composer of four symphonies, a number of concertos or concertinos, and other orchestral works, plus a good number of chamber pieces, music for piano, organ, choir and two operas.'

'I am really impressed with the music and the performances on this disc ...'

'This disc begins with Symphony No 4, written in 1954. Each of its three movements is built on the same twelve-tone note melody, although this is not reflected in the harmony, which, to

my ears, owes a lot to a Dutch composer I am very fond of, Alfons Diepenbrock. (If you do not know of him, you're in for a treat.) French composers Franck and Roussel are also important influences. The melody is more of a unifying device than anything else, and is not angular in nature.

'The first movement is dramatic and driving, with nothing to scare off more conservative listeners. After a nice rhapsodic middle section, the opening idea reasserts itself. The main character of this movement is forward motion. The composer also shows himself to be a master orchestrator.' (*Hendrik Andriessen: Symphonic Works Vol 4*, cpo, 777 845-2)

'It is great to see this compilation, with rising stars, on the Melodiya label.'

'The first piano concerto is played in fine fashion by Lukas Geniusas, dazzling in his technique and in the realisation of the rapid changes in mood. The orchestra is also great, and I was particularly impressed with the attention to detail in the articulation, and the responses to changes of mood and texture. The rhapsodic nature of the first movement is particularly well realised. The all-important trumpet part is played with panache, especially those treacherous low notes at the end of the first movement.'

'The second movement, a little unsettling in its mood, is captured with good separation between the bass and treble lines in the opening, and then the piano enters with its trill and nocturne-like melodic line, beautiful and seamless, gradually building in power and intensity until the piano's cadenza-like section, the pianist revealing his considerable power, but never sounding coarse. Then a hymn-like section follows, again entrancing when the trumpet comes in, with the first note showing what control this master, Dmitri Trubakov, exhibits. Very often trumpeters bray on the lower notes, but not here. This movement's atmosphere is beautifully realised.' (*Alexander Sladkovsky — Shostakovich: Complete Concertos*, Melodiya, MEL CD 10 02465)



'... unreservedly first class, not just for the technical prowess of the soloists and orchestra but also in the artistic vision of all involved.'



'The orchestral sound is sumptuous and detailed, and the solo vocalists are all first class.'

'*L'enfant et les sortilèges* (The child and the spirits) was introduced to me by a colleague when I was a student, and I have loved this forty-five minute mini-opera-ballet ever since. This is a magical work — a sort of "what goes around comes around". A child, scolded for not doing his homework and banished to his room, starts destroying things in the room in a fit of rage. Slowly but surely, the items in the room distort, then come back to torment the child. The furniture is distorted, the ornaments dance and sing to each other, and the animals sing and claw the child, but ultimately return him to his "nest" after teaching him a good lesson.

'This is Ravel at his very best, displaying his amazing orchestration, his love of European jazz of the time, his taste for the bizarre and fantastic, and his visions of the world through the eyes of a child. He is even able to provide a cat courtship — somewhat demonic in the climax — which was evidently inspired by his Siamese cats.' (*Maurice Ravel: L'enfant et les sortilèges; Ma mère l'oye*, SWR Music, SWR19033CD)

Gerald Fenech: 'From Handel's forty or so operas, none is more enigmatic than *Silla*. Composed to a libretto by Giacomo Rossi, this work was the composer's fourth for London. Incredibly, that is the extent to what we know for certain about this opera. The rest is either pure speculation or shrouded in uncertainty. The autograph and manuscript scores are incomplete, and as far as we know, there was no contemporary performance. Indeed, Handel scholars failed to come up with information to this end, and consequently it is surmised that Handel wrote this piece for private performance.



'Fabio Biondi keeps things moving briskly, and his team responds with committed enthusiasm and minute precision to the demands of the score.'

'Following the 1969 discovery of a printed wordbook dated 2 June 1713, settling a possible date for a first performance, one can only suspect a premiere in that same year. But there again, the verdict is not final. The subject matter is also one of *Silla*'s drawbacks. One of Handel's few historical operas, the story is based on Plutarch's account of the latter part of the life of Lucius Cornelius Silla, who after taking Rome became a tyrannical despot who murders his opponents, before retiring to his country estate as if nothing has happened. Rossi's libretto depicts all of this cruelty, and more.

'As the opera unfolds, one has to face the massacre of refugees and seven sexual advances by a predator who cannot control his licentious behavior. While all these absurdities leave *Silla* an unlikely candidate to make a mark in the repertoire, it has its fair share of rewarding music, and of this Handel was well aware.' (*Handel: Silla — Europa Galante / Fabio Biondi*, Glossa, GCD 923408)



'This world premiere recording is in every way exemplary ...'

'Johann Simon Mayr (1763-1845) remains famous as having been Donizetti's teacher and mentor, but he was indeed also one of the most innovative and industrious composers of his time. His output is prodigious, and the many works in these genres attest to his immense talent.

'By the turn of the eighteenth century one of the sacred texts most being put to music was Jacopo da Todi's "Stabat Mater", so it is no surprise that Mayr also caught the bug. Indeed, the composer became an avid collector of *Stabat Mater* settings, and his collection included versions by Bertoni, Jommelli, Marcello, Naumann, Pergolesi and Vogler, so he had enough material for inspiration to write his own setting. Unfortunately

the piece has come down to us somewhat fragmented, and we owe this version in hand to the scholarly research of Franz Hauk, whose indefatigable efforts to put Mayr's music on the map are paying rich dividends thanks mainly to Naxos' unstinted support, which I cannot praise too highly.

'This world premiere recording is in every way exemplary, and has been restored from two extant manuscripts that proved somewhat difficult to sort out. We do not know the date of its first performance, but the work must have left a great impression. We can deduce this fact from comments by Girolamo Calvi, Mayr's first biographer, who singled out this *Stabat Mater* as a work of marvelous effect and heavenly beauty.' (*Mayr: Stabat Mater in F minor; Ave maris stella*, Naxos, 8.573781)

'When Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) embarked on the writing of *Pygmalion* in 1748, he was by that time the composer *par excellence* not only of the Royal Court, but of the whole of France. In February of that year the composer had a somewhat mixed success with *Zais*, a heroic ballet in a prologue and four Acts, but this did not deter the new directors of the Academy of Music from commissioning Rameau to write an *acte de ballet* with the aim of replenishing the coffers of the establishment. It is believed that the composer wrote *Pygmalion* in less than eight days, and even if this timeframe seems very short, it is quite possible that this work was indeed composed very quickly, probably between June and July 1748.



'Rousset and his team give absolutely flawless performances, brimming with zestful enthusiasm and razor-sharp precision, and in such able hands how can Rameau's star not be one of the brightest in the baroque firmament?'

'The story in five scenes, after a text by Sylvain Ballot de Savot, the brother of Rameau's notary, is inspired by Ovid's metamorphoses, and depicts the love of the sculptor Pygmalion for a statue he had just completed.

'Three years before *Pygmalion*, Rameau had produced a heroic ballet, *Les Fêtes de Polymnie*, a composition written to celebrate the victory of Fontenoy (11 May 1745). Originally intended for the Court, this ballet was first performed on 12 October 1745, and the music left many critics (and audiences) pleasantly surprised. Indeed, the opening of the Overture with its daring seventh chord, left the musical establishment in a state of awe.' (*Jean-Philippe Rameau: Pygmalion*, Aparté, AP155)



'... a performance full of dramatic passion and unbridled commitment that keeps the tension at fever-pitch throughout.'

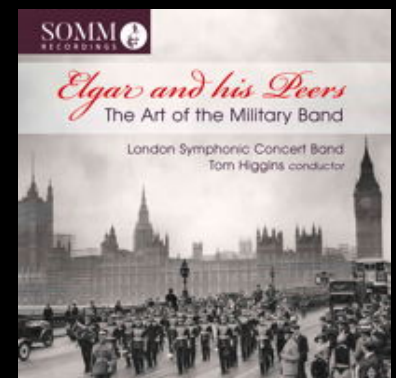
'With the exception of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, Verdi's *Don Carlo* is, maybe, the only opera to have practically the whole spectrum of human emotions. As far as I know, it is also the only stage-work to boast three premieres. Originally composed for Paris, the work made its first bow on 11 March 1867. Success was modest, and despite stagings in other cities, Verdi was not satisfied with the structure of the work, and by 1882 several modifications were made. The first act was discarded almost completely and the opera was reduced from five to four acts with an Italian libretto. This version was premiered on 10 January 1884 at La Scala, but the composer was still not content, and by 1887 he had rearranged a third version, in Italian and with the first act restored. This third attempt was

premiered in Modena on 29 December 1886.

'Of the three, the shorter one in four acts has always been the favourite, and it is this version that we have on this recording. The opera has everything: politics, Church power, love, jealousy, betrayal, fidelity, patriotism and a strong sense of liberty that gives it a special sense of dignity not often found in other works of the period. The work also demands six top singers, if one wants to do justice to the hypnotic beauty of the music.'

'Indeed, listening to this live version from Parma one can hardly detect any strains in its composition, and, I dare say, that after *Otello* this must be Verdi's greatest work. You might disagree, but for me *Don Carlo* will always have a special place in my affections. An opera of towering beauty with a white-hot story that makes your blood boil in your veins.' (*Giuseppe Verdi: Don Carlo*, Dynamic, CDS7776.03)

'The sound of the British bands has always been at the forefront of the genre for almost three centuries, but from the Victorian era onwards its significance grew considerably. Indeed, the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century bandstands of Britain are testament to the popularity of music played out of doors before the arrival of the gramophone and radio. Bands played a variety of music, from popular songs of the day to arrangements of orchestral works and arias from operetta and opera. The performers might be the nearby regimental ensemble or the local Brass or Silver bands often under the auspices of a local employer.'

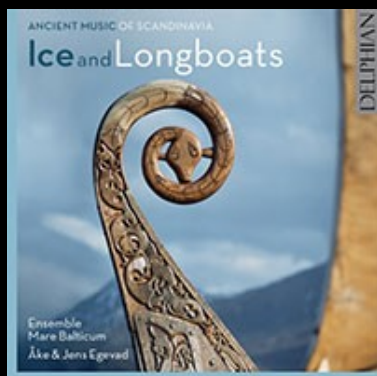


'... some great off-the-beaten track items that deserve to be heard more often.'

'Military bands added woodwind to their instrumentation and this development gave their sound a closer resemblance to the spectacular effect of a large symphonic orchestra. Outdoor performances focused mainly on music written for string instruments and this presented a formidable challenge in the fact that the concert had to avoid inclement weather, as their use would have been inappropriate or impossible. Also, works specifically composed for the combination of band and chorus are rare, although in recent times composers such as Malcolm Arnold have contributed to the genre.'

'This highly interesting issue incorporates music by some very famous names such as Elgar, Sir Thomas Beecham, J S Bach, Walton O'Donnell and Vaughan Williams; and the

programme, which consists mainly of arrangements for military band is varied indeed, throwing up some great off-the-beaten track items that deserve to be heard more often.' (*Elgar and his Peers — The Art of the Military Band*, SOMM Recordings, SOMMCD 0170)



'... a highly innovative undertaking which may not be everybody's cup of tea, but for those who have a flair for adventure this programme will definitely enthrall.'

'Scandinavia's archaeologically known prehistory encompasses about twelve centuries. Until about 13,000 years BC this harsh and remote part of Northern Europe was an unpopulated area covered by the glaciers of the last Ice Age. Then the ice cap began to recede, and man migrated into the area as soon as conditions were ideal enough for him to make it his home. The Viking period (c800-1050 AD) is the culmination of the last period of this prehistory, and from it, we have several material traces of music-making.

'The Middle Ages then followed, around six hundred years later than in Continental Europe. This was due to the long period in which ice still covered this part of the Continent, but eventually this period (c1050-1530AD) did arrive, and with it a consolidation of the Christian faith that could trace its roots to a not too distant past. This, inevitably, had profound political and cultural consequences, and in almost an instant, Scandinavia was connected to a network that the rest of Europe had already become part of — one centred on Rome and the Catholic Church.

'This is Volume 2 in Delphian Records' groundbreaking series with the European Music Archaeology Project, constructing a soundscape of these two periods.

'The disc features both music improvised on Viking instruments and notated songs and instrumental pieces from the early centuries of the Christian era in Scandinavia.' (*Ice and Longboats*, Delphian, DCD34181)

Keith Bramich: 'What does music mean, what does it communicate, what makes "good" music, and when does music for a single instrument need to be composed and written down and as opposed to simply being improvised? I found myself asking all these questions while pondering this disc of ten short miniatures, performed and recorded in Poland on a Steinway D piano by their composer, Tomasz Betka.



'The first piece, *The Way He Has To Go Through*, for example, plays for barely ninety seconds: a simple figure in the right hand uses the first five notes of a rising major scale, and this figure is repeated five times, dropping the fourth note of the scale on the fourth repetition only and placing accents so that the notes of the fourth repetition are highlighted, spread out across the whole figure, then the whole thing is repeated thirteen times, accompanied by simple chords in the left hand.

'... romantic, jazzy, simple, dreamy, dramatic, passionate, euphoric, sad and even Satiesque, by turns.'

'Betka plays very sensitively and expressively, giving the music surface beauty, there's lots of sustain pedal, allowing build-up of a background shimmer of sound, and the piece is shaped by volume and harmonies to give a climax towards the end — classic stuff, a little minimalist in feel, and very effective.

'No CD booklet is provided (and neither is there a barcode or CD number), but in his "Prologue" — three paragraphs of explanations printed on the inside of the CD case — Tomasz Betka explains that his miniatures are all about emotions and feelings, and hints that he might have suffered a lot due to the departure of a "closest person" from his life. Maybe these short pieces document the various stages of a relationship?' (*Tomasz Betka Miniatures — piano solo*, Tomasz Betka, (31382))

The late **Howard Smith** listened to three discs of violin music (*In my own voice — Kelly Hall-Tompkins, violin*, MSR Classics, MS 1278, *Essentials — Works for Solo Violin*, Avie, AV2155 and *The Romantic Violin Concerto — 7*, Hyperion, CDA67642) and one cello and piano disc (*Soirées Internationales*, Avie, AV2162).

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CLASSICAL MUSIC NEWS — WINTER LEGENDS



Cosima Soulez-Larivière

Twenty-one-year-old French-Dutch violinist Cosima Soulez-Larivière has won first prize at the Bartók World Competition in the violin category, at the Grand Final held on the evening of 16 September 2017.

The competition's Grand Final took place two days after the final round, where finalists were accompanied by chamber orchestra.

From forty-four registered contestants, three were shortlisted for the Grand Final: French-Dutch Cosima Soulez-Larivière, Japanese Takagi Ririko and Hungarian Ágnes Langer.

Parma Recordings announces that composer Gregory W Brown's upcoming Navona Records release *Missa Charles Darwin*, recorded with New York Polyphony, will be featured in Dan Brown's new novel *Origin*.

'I've always been fascinated by the interplay between science and religion; *Missa Charles Darwin* is an ingenious fusion of the two, and it immediately captivated me. *Missa Charles Darwin* got me thinking about evolutionary processes, spiritual views, and the origins of our species and our belief systems. These are themes I explore in my new novel.' — Dan Brown

Gregory W Brown originally composed the piece for New York Polyphony in 2011 when the group's bass, Craig Phillips, suggested the idea. Craig then edited and compiled Darwin's texts in collaboration with the composer to create the basic structure of the piece. To create the music Brown began by translating the DNA sequence



Gregory W Brown:
Missa Charles Darwin.
© 2017 Navona Records

of one of Darwin's finches into the initial melodic fragment that informs the whole work. *Missa Charles Darwin* follows the basic structure of a five-movement mass with the addition of an Alleluia. Where religious and sacred texts would lie, excerpts from *On The Origin of Species*, *The Descent of Man*, and Darwin's extant correspondence have been substituted. The interplay of frame and content is the heart of *Missa Charles Darwin*.

Origin, the highly anticipated upcoming novel by Dan Brown, is fittingly named based on that idea of the origin of life, which is asked through music in Gregory W Brown's Mass. This notion of our origin inspired multi-million selling author Dan Brown to write the novel and delve into the eternal questions of 'where do we come from?' and 'where are we going?' in the thrilling, brain-teasing way that he's so famous for.

Missa Charles Darwin, with deluxe special edition packaging, will be available to purchase on Friday 29 September 2017. A limited amount will include a hand-signed photograph by both Gregory and Dan Brown.

In 1978 John McCabe was the soloist in a BBC broadcast of Arnold Bax's evocative *Winter Legends* for piano and orchestra, with the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra (now known as the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra) and Raymond Leppard.

Thanks to the devotion of Lyrita's Richard Itter, this performance will become available again from 3 November 2017, on a CD in the Lyrita Broadcast Edition series, in collaboration with the BBC, and sound restored by Nimbus. The CD will also include another rare reissue — Bax's Symphony No 2, played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugene Goossens.



Bax: Symphony No 2; Winter Legends
© 2017 Lyrita Recorded Edition



John McCabe in the 1980s.
Photo © Rex Wilson

John McCabe had a great love for the music of Bax, and one of his earliest piano recordings, of the *Allegretto* from Bax's Piano Sonata No 4, is available on *BMS 103CDH* from the British Music Society.

Since McCabe's death early in 2015, his own music continues to appear on new recordings and to be performed internationally. His Concerto for two violins and string orchestra, *Les Martinets Noirs* (Swifts), recently received its first performance in Sweden, on 9 August 2017, courtesy of the violin duo Retorica — Harriet Mackenzie and Philippa Mo, as part of the Lidköping Festival. The duo recorded this work with George Vass and Orchestra Nova for Dutton Epoch in 2012 (on *CDLX 7290*).

On 8 September 2017 pianist Jane Ford's first volume of the *Complete Solo Piano Works of John McCabe* was issued on Steve Plews of ASC Records' Prima Facie label (*PFCD 054*), featuring

six first recordings. Included in the recital are *Three Impromptus* (1959), *Five Bagatelles, Afternoons and Afterwards*, *Tunstall Chimes* (Study No 10 — *Hommage à Ravel*), *Lamentation Rag* and *Berceuse* (Study No 13, 2011).

Two McCabe works were featured at the Presteigne Festival in August 2017 — *March Sonatina* for solo flute, played by Katherine Baker, and the 1999 Sonata for Cello and Piano, played by members of the Leonore Trio. The new Hertfordshire Music Festival (9-11 June 2017, run by Tom Hammond and James Francis Brown) featured an evening recital by Clare Hammond, at which she played the *Haydn Fantasies for John McCabe*, written by seven composers and commissioned by the 2009 Presteigne Festival.

British pianist and composer Julian Jacobson celebrates his seventieth birthday in style with a series of Sunday afternoon piano recitals at St John's Smith Square, London UK. The series features masterpieces by four composers particularly associated with Jacobson's long career — Beethoven, Schubert, Prokofiev and Gershwin. The last of the four concerts also introduces Jacobson's regular piano duo partner, Mariko Brown, and hints at Jacobson as arranger/composer.

The first concert on 22 October 2017 features Beethoven's *Eroica* Variations, Op 35, Schubert's Four Impromptus, D 899 and Prokofiev's Sonata No 6 in A, Op 82 (the first of Prokofiev's 'War Trilogy' sonatas, which can all be heard in this series, marking the end of the centenary of World War I).

The middle two recitals concentrate on great piano sonatas: on 26 November 2017, Schubert's Sonata in D, D 850, Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata and Prokofiev's *Stalingrad* Sonata, then on 11 February 2018, Beethoven's *Pathétique*, Schubert's No 20 in A, D 959 and Prokofiev's No 8, Op 84.

At the last concert on 11 March 2018, Jacobson plays Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* in C, D 760, Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata and a selection from Prokofiev's Ten Pieces Op 75 *Romeo and Juliet* — 'Folk Dance' (No 1), 'The Young Juliet' (No 4), 'Montagues and Capulets' (No 6) and 'Romeo Bids Juliet Farewell' (No 10). The series then finishes in a lighter mood, as Jacobson is joined by Mariko Brown for his own transcription for four hands at one piano of Gershwin's colourful *An American in Paris*.

All four recitals begin at 3pm on Sunday afternoons, and booking is open now at sjss.org.uk

If you can't make it to London to hear these recitals, Jacobson will also play some of these sonatas in France and Germany. On Saturday 11 November 2017, 7.30pm at Langenfeld in Germany and on Saturday 18 November, 7.30pm at Scots Kirk, Rue Bayard, Paris 75008, France, Jacobson will play Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata, Schubert



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in D, D 850 and Prokofiev's No 7 in B flat Op 83. He is also due to appear with the Amati Orchestra at St James Piccadilly in London, 7.30pm on 28 April 2018 to play Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto, and on Saturday 26 May 2018 he'll play Brahms' Piano Concerto No 2 with the Brandenburg Sinfonia and conductor Peter Robinson at St James Sussex Gardens, London W2 3UD, UK. Next summer, on 3 and 5 August 2018 he will make two appearances at the Altaussee Chamber Music Festival in Austria with violinist Priya Mitchell, playing music by Bach, Brahms and Beethoven.

Julian Jacobson was born in Peebles, Scotland into a musical family — his father, Maurice Jacobson, studied piano with Busoni, and his mother, pianist and composer Margaret Lyell, studied in Berlin with Else Krause, daughter of Liszt's pupil Martin Krause.

Julian studied in London from the age of seven — piano with Lamar Crowson and composition with Arthur Benjamin, and had published four songs by the time he was nine. At the Royal College of Music in London (1959-1968) he studied with John Barstow and Humphrey Searle and graduated with the Sarah Mundlak Piano Prize. He then read music on a scholarship at Queen's College, Oxford. He also became a founder member of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra.

Following further studies with Louis Kentner, Jacobson's London debut was at the Purcell Room in 1974, followed by five appearances in the Park Lane Group's Young Artists series and his Wigmore Hall debut as solo pianist and chamber musician.

During the 1980s he established himself as a duo and ensemble pianist, appearing with many well-known artists. In 1992 he became Head of Keyboard Studies at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, leading to increasing concentration on solo work.



Julian Jacobson

In 1994 he played the first of eight performances of the complete cycle of 32 Beethoven piano sonatas. On the last two occasions he performed the cycle in a complete day — apparently only the second pianist to have accomplished this. His 2003 marathon at St

James's Piccadilly in London attracted worldwide media coverage and raised more than £6000 for WaterAid.

Jacobson has performed as soloist with orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, London Sinfonietta, Bournemouth Sinfonietta, Bucharest Philharmonic, Iceland Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Omani Symphony Orchestra, working with many conductors including Simon Rattle, Tamas Vasary and Jane Glover.

He has also appeared at many festivals in the UK, and in more than forty countries on five continents. He appears to have given the first Chinese performance of Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata in 1994. He is also committed to performing contemporary music and to recording.

From 1988 until 2004 he was Artistic Director of the Paxos International Festival in Greece, and is Artistic Director of *Rencontres Musicales à Eygalières*. He has given masterclasses throughout the world, and teaches regularly at Cadenza Summer School at the Purcell School in North London.

Julian Jacobson is currently a professor of piano and chamber music at the Royal College of Music in London.



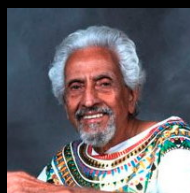
Zuzana Růžicková
(1927-2017)



Brenda Lewis
(1921-2017)



Derek Bourgeois
(1941-2017)



Halim El-Dabh
(1921-2017).
Photo ©
Gary Harwood

We mark the passing of Zuzana Růžicková, Caesar Giovannini, Tsisana Tatishvili, Brenda Lewis, Siegfried Köhler, Derek Bourgeois, Wilhelm Killmayer and Halim El-Dabh.

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.

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