



C L A S S I C A L  
M U S I C D A I L Y

*Three Blind Mice — Issue 126, 1 October 2018*

### ENSEMBLE — TRIUMPH FOR THE 'FIRST' MACBETH

**Giuseppe Pennisi:** The 2018 Verdi Festival started on 27 September with a real triumph for a rarely performed opera: *Macbeth* in the 1847 version for the Teatro La Pergola in Florence. Verdi revised the opera twice: in 1865 for the Théâtre des Italiens in Paris and in 1874 for La Scala Milan. The 1865 revision was drastic, not only to accommodate the French taste and rules — ie a ballet scene — but also to take account of Verdi's own evolution over twenty years. Less deep the 1874 version, it is often ignored in music books. As a matter of fact, the 1865 version is normally performed. I remember having seen and heard the 1874 version only once, some fifteen years ago at the Macerata Sferisterio Festival. In 2011, the Salzburg Summer Festival and Teatro dell'Opera di Roma presented a version that combined the 1865 and the 1874 edition: that experiment was strongly supported by Riccardo Muti, a staunch fan of *Macbeth*.

This summary of performance histories is important to understand the relevance of the Verdi Festival's rediscovery of the 1847 version. It is, in a way, composed in a style similar to that of *Ernani* or *Giovanna D'Arco*. However, in the use of recitative and declamation it is very modern, and it contains the germs of *Otello* ...

The opening night was a triumph, even though some upper tier strong traditionalists expressed discontent with the staging. Daniele Abbado (stage director), Carla Teti (costumes) and Angelo Linzalata (lighting) set the action in a modern but not clearly defined context, and with a few elements emphasizing the mist and rain of Scotland. The costumes leave the impression that the period is approximately the 1930s, when dictatorship was a feature of some European countries. I dare say that I did appreciate this economical and suggestive staging, very much in line with the music. [READ MORE ...](#)



Giuseppe was also in Busseto for the Verdi Festival's *Un Giorno di Regno*, at the Puccini Festival for *Il Trittico*, in Jesi for Spontini's rediscovered *Le metamorfosi di Pasquale*, and at the Sagra Musicale Umbra.



Maddalena Crippa and Suoni Riflessi at the St Francis Museum in Montefalco

The seventy third Sagra Musicale Umbra (13-22 September 2018) has War and Peace as its main theme. The twenty-eight concerts scheduled in various towns of Italy's Umbria Region all deal with this subject. The festival started with Haydn's *Missa in tempore belli* and ends with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; a major production is also Britten's *War Requiem*. As is customary at this festival, in spite of a low budget and very limited financial support from central Government, well-known Italian and international artists and orchestras perform in the large number of concerts during the ten days. In this 2018 edition, as Perugia's main theatre is under repairs, concerts are being performed in other venues such as churches and museums.

This year, for a number of reasons, I could not attend the most spectacular events and had to focus on relatively less followed, but often more sophisticated and rare concerts. On the afternoon of 16 September, both the end of World War I and the death of Claude

Debussy were celebrated in the charming St Francis Museum of Montefalco — about one hour's drive from Perugia. The program was unusual. It featured Debussy's last three sonatas (composed in 1915-1917) and the short piano piece *Les Soirs Illuminées per l'ardeur du charbon*. They were played by the ensemble Suoni Riflessi. A well-known Italian actress (Maddalena Crippa) read passages from writing by Marcel Proust and Debussy himself. The Suoni Riflessi ensemble includes Mario Ancillotti (flute), Ekaterina Valiulina (violin), Yuval Gotlibovich (viola), Erica Piccotti (cello) and Matteo Fossi (harp). Together, music and literature blended well and provided the perfect atmosphere of World War I as perceived by Parisian intellectuals. On the musical side, the ensemble was very good; within the group, the cellist Erica Piccotti excelled. There was warm applause.

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**Alice McVeigh:** From the first note, the orchestra, in mufti, were in no mood to mess about. From my stalls circle seat I could only see three quarters of the stage, and the heart rather sank when I realised that they had put cymbals and timpani hard by me — but the timpanist was so astonishing that I actually wound up enjoying the sensation. I have never, in all my years of concertgoing heard more soulful, powerful and immaculate timp playing than from Russell Jordan.

But to get back to the res, Antonio Pappano and the entire orchestra were glorious. The horns glowed; the trombones brooded; the lower strings billowed; the solo violin emerged, like Erda herself, from the pack in sensuous colours; the woodwinds each seemed intent upon making the most of every phrase. (In the case of the solo piccolo, an effervescent glitter.)



A scene from *Das Rheingold* at Covent Garden, showing one of the sets by Stefanos Lazaridis and Matthew Deely.  
Photo © 2018 Bill Cooper



But what of the singers? I hear you cry. Well, on Saturday I enjoyed one of the most spine-tingling moments in my entire life, when Wiebke Lehmkuhl half-rose up from the stage. Her Erda was sublime: the depth, resonance, sorrow and sheer beauty of her sound almost indescribable.



John Lundgren as Wotan and Wiebke Lehmkuhl as Erda in Richard Wagner's *Das Rheingold* at Covent Garden. Photo © 2018 Bill Cooper

Another standout, for glory of sound in a very different timbre, was unquestionably Lise Davidsen's Freia, whose effortless soprano reminded me of a golden flute.

The workhorses of *Rheingold* were all on form: Johnannes Martin Kränzle's Alberich was notably expressive; John Lundgren sang wonderfully strongly as Wotan without quite convincing as a god; Alan Oke acted and sang Loge with ease — his impishness at the end had a darkly sardonic edge. [READ MORE ...](#)

**Roderic Dunnett:** If Elgar's *King Olaf* was the big choir triumph of the week's earlier part, there followed on Thursday evening Parry's *Invocation to Music*, by expert consent 'top-drawer Parry', in an all-Parry concert, an exciting prospect, especially with a seasoned conductor and fine English music interpreter as Sir Andrew Davis at the helm. HRH the Prince of Wales, an ardent Parry fan and an actively supportive President of the Three Choirs Festival Association — he invited the whole flock to perform in the ballroom at Buckingham Palace for the 2015 tercentenary, and attended and introduced the event himself — regretted not being able to get to it.



David Stout, a magnificent vocal presence in Parry's enraptured *Invocation to Music* at this year's Three Choirs Festival at Hereford. Photo © 2018 Michael Whitefoot

His reaction to all the sundry Parry works throughout the week (including in the services) would have been delighted and approving, as might that of any Parry admirer. I wonder if it would have been ecstatic. So effective and exciting was Davis' *King Olaf* on the Tuesday, giving fire to even the most textually ludicrous (or at least parodiable) passages, he somehow on the Thursday missed hitting the Parry jackpot, at least for me. As with the Longfellow (Olaf) saga, he had mastered both works, which surely reflects dedication and a fair bit of candlelight work from the Music Director of the Lyric Opera, Chicago. But I fear much, or at least some, of the all-Parry evening disappointed. To be fair, others, less picky than me, will still have enjoyed it vastly.

Was there a problem of communication in the choral work, or of interpretation, or neither? The best reading of the three was probably Parry's Fifth Symphony, a lovely work with Schumann overtones as well as undertones, which the Philharmonia Orchestra, despite its marvellous proficiency under its hugely eloquent and expressive leader Zsolt-Tihomér Visontay, being unfamiliar with the work, did not, arguably, entirely succeed in delving into. Perhaps it could not be expected. All five Parry Symphonies are worth a listen: they're each on disc — Boult recorded some, and the Swiss-born conductor Matthias Bamert did the whole cycle to glorious effect on Chandos.

But despite the wonderful dark opening to Symphony No 5, Sir Andrew's nursing of superb *decrescendi* from the woodwind, with echoes not only of Brahms but possibly Dvořák too — his Eighth Symphony, for instance; an exquisite clarinet solo atop the cellos, a return to darkness with bass clarinet, a glorious pirouette from the horns and a

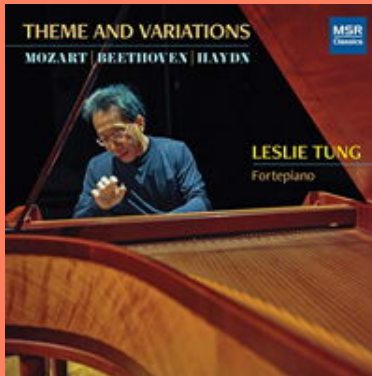
violin solo worthy of Strauss' *Tod und Verklärung*, all capturing the wondrous musicianship and generous-heartedness of the man which flow into the music, the allure was a bit patchy, and not quite captivating here until the close, where the substantial *dénouement* Sir Andrew achieved seemed quite perfect, just as the quieter episodes he elicited amid the noises earlier came closer perhaps to what Parry intended. [READ MORE ...](#)

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## CD SPOTLIGHT — BEAUTIFULLY PLAYED



*Theme and Variations —  
Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn  
— Leslie Tung*

MSR Classics MS 1683

'... a rare and unusual  
musical find.'

**Anett Fodor:** When I first heard the opening bars of Leslie Tung's CD *Theme and Variations*, it was the unfamiliar resonance that aroused my curiosity. I hastily read through the CD booklet for details about the instrument. The slightly buzzing tone in the bass and the tinkling high sounds came from what is a lesser-known instrument today. Mr Tung's five-octave fortepiano — based on Johan Lodewijk Dulcken's 230 year old instrument — was built by Janine Johnson and Paul Poletti thirty-five years ago.

It was always difficult for me to imagine the difference between the timbre of a modern piano and its small-sized ancestor. Thus, for me this CD was not only an ordinary recording but a discovery alike.

Leslie Tung is Professor Emeritus of Music at Kalamazoo College, Michigan. His new album contains three sets of classical variations. In the eighteenth century, the three Viennese classical composers — Mozart, Haydn and the young Beethoven — wrote several pieces of music for this instrument.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's ten Variations on Gluck's 'Unser Dummer Pöbel Meint' in G major, K 455 was first performed in Vienna by the composer himself in 1783.

Mozartian playfulness, as well as a humorous and sometimes grotesque flavour can be felt throughout the whole piece. This is conveyed by Mr Tung's well-structured classical interpretation. His appropriate *tempi*, strong and punctual accents, masterfully played embellishments and effectively interpreted dynamics sustain the listener's interest in his musical performance.

The tone of Franz Joseph Haydn's Andante with Variations in F minor, Hob XVII:6 contrasts with the previous work. This set of so-called 'double variations' — which was inspired by the death of his friend, Marie Anna von Genzinger in 1793 — is one of Haydn's most popular keyboard pieces.

Though this masterwork is quiet and sounds relatively 'simple', it requires advanced musical knowledge and a sharply honed fortepiano technique to do it justice. The tiny nuances of classical musical expression, which often challenge even the best qualified musicians, did not present any challenge to Leslie Tung. [READ MORE ...](#)



**Alice McVeigh:** In case you have never heard of him — guilty as charged, in my case — Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) was at first famous as a composer for the guitar, and then in Hollywood. More interestingly, he loved the cello, and was hugely impressed by Gregor Piatigorsky. As he wrote, 'He advances, carrying his instrument by the neck ... he instantly puts you in a good humour, immediately establishing a warm connection between himself and the audience ... His sound is a rare beauty, his technique is prodigious, his warmth is irresistibly communicated.'

Piatigorsky returned the compliment, begging Castelnuovo-Tedesco to write a cello concerto for him ('A great many cellists play your works as well as I do, but nobody loves them as much as I do!') The Italian obliged. In the spring of 1933 Piatigorsky and Toscanini were companions on a cruise together. During one late-night conversation, according to Terry King, in *Gregor Piatigorsky: The Life and Career of the Virtuoso Cellist*:

*Piatigorsky mentioned a new concerto by Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Toscanini immediately demanded the score, retired with it for the night, and returned with it at seven the next morning. He stormed through the door of Piatigorsky's cabin waving the manuscript in his face. 'The double-stops in the second movement must go and in one place the winds are too thickly orchestrated. But it is good — good!' he muttered excitedly, pouring out a stream of minute analysis and comment, the cellist recalled the scene with awe. 'Only a few hours before he had set his eyes on the music for the first time and there he was, with the entire score at his fingertips. While I, who had worked on it the entire trip knew little more than my part.'*

The concerto starts with cellist in powerfully declamatory mode — not unlike the Elgar — but swiftly becomes *agitato*, with astringent affirmations from the orchestra.

These are however about the only really astringent notes in the work, which is really a *Schelomo*-esque cello symphony, complete with two cadenzas, with its protagonist almost never, even briefly, off-stage.

The first movement — much the most ambitious — gives the orchestra very little to do, between comments on various rhapsodic or else plangent playing from the excellent Brinton Averil Smith (for whom there is no let-up). Occasionally the winds sustain the theme, while the cello merely decorates. Eventually the full orchestra asserts the main theme (thrice) — each time overruled by the solo cello.

A more delicate, lightly scored, section ensues, with fragments of theme in solo winds and the violins ethereal above the cello's sonorousness. Soloistic pyrotechnics eventually fizzle into a restatement of the principal theme, which grows lighter and flightier before the — extended — cadenza. This was beautifully played, with filigree figurations, rich lower-string tone and nailed double-stops. The orchestra — finally empowered — asserts itself briefly afterwards, with horns calling out to trumpets across the orchestra — but the cello in low register assists the movement to slip away into the distance.

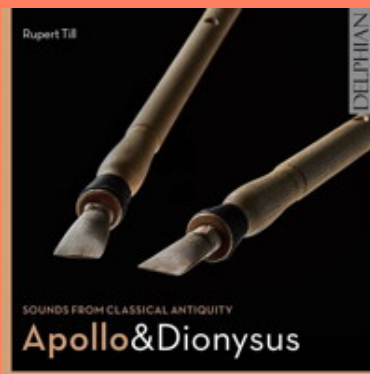


**Castelnuovo-Tedesco:  
Cello Concerto**

**Naxos 8.573820**

'Brinton maintains a clear, sonorous and resonant sound even in the highest register, though he could perhaps have been willing to take a few more risks.'

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***Apollo & Dionysus —  
Sounds from Classical Antiquity***

**Delphian DCD34188**

'... this unique and exciting  
project is now at  
its consummation ...'

**Gerald Fenech:** Five years ago the European Music Archaeology Project (EMAP) was the beneficiary of a significant fund awarded by the Culture Programme of the European Union. Although this was the first time that such a large grant had been donated to this area, composer, producer and performing musician Rupert Till quickly spotted huge possibilities in realising a lifelong dream; that of creating reconstructions of ancient music, and he immediately set out on his mission. Five years on and with the help of Delphian Records, Till has now arrived at his destination. With this fifth album the project is now complete ...

With the disc under review, this unique and exciting project is now at its consummation, and what a fitting conclusion it is, as 'Apollo and Dionysus' focuses on the *aulos*, a Greek double-reed instrument known as the 'tibia' in the Roman period.

Playing this is akin to putting two oboes in your mouth

simultaneously with the added complexity of circular breathing to contend with.

Overall, the aim of this most ambitious musical adventure was not to reconstruct the music of the past — it is impossible to do this accurately. Rather the intention is to provide an idea of the first man-made sounds, and to invite listeners to take the plunge into the acoustic ecology of antiquity. [READ MORE ...](#)

**Gerald Fenech:** From an early age Handel always dreamed of becoming an opera composer and indeed, one can say that he realised his ambition to the full, as by the time of his death in 1759, aged seventy-four, he had composed some forty such works. His operatic career took flight after 1710, soon after arriving in England, but by that time the composer was already well-versed in the art of writing for the stage.

In 1706 Handel had raised the capital needed to travel to Italy where he hoped to learn the craft of writing operas in the country considered to be Western Europe's dominant force in this genre. He stayed there up to 1710, learning and composing, with the longest stays being in Rome, but since opera in the capital was banned by papal decree as penitence for a devastating earthquake in 1703, Handel had to resort to the chamber cantata to advance his fame as a budding young composer, and it was in this city that he wrote most of his Italian cantatas.

These works normally comprised two 'da capo' arias each preceded by a recitative, and almost invariably the topic was the pain of the lover who was usually anonymous or given a stock Arcadian name. Passion, not character, was to be explored, and the dramaticity of the scene was to be kept at fever-pitch as much as possible.

All four cantatas on this recording, naturally, date from this period of Handel's apprenticeship, but by contrast in the composer's instrumentally accompanied cantatas the exploration of passion was often linked to a well known figure of literature or history



***Abbandonata —  
Handel Italian Cantatas***

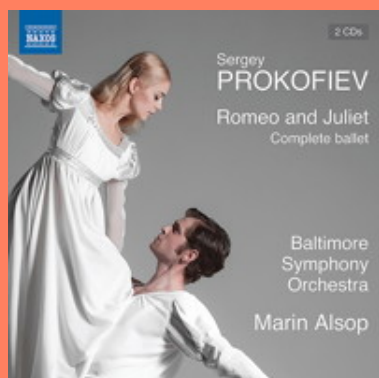
**Vivat VIVAT 117**

'... music of the utmost beauty,  
full of emotional outpourings  
that cover the whole spectrum  
of the human condition ...'



such as in *Armida abbandonata* and *Agrippina condotta a morire*, and more of them have moral-philosophical connotations as in *Figlio d'alte speranze* and *Tra le fiamme*.

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**Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet*  
— complete ballet**

**Naxos 8.57353435**

'... this interpretation has passion and drama aplenty, and climaxes are handled with meticulous control.'

**Gerald Fenech:** Maybe after Tchaikovsky's three immortal works in the genre, Prokofiev's setting of Shakespeare's play of the star-crossed lovers remains the most popular ballet ever written. Today we take it for granted, but it is a measure of the achievement of the composer that he makes us accept the concept of a narrative full-length ballet in which every dance and action advances the story. Indeed, we are now so familiar with this masterpiece that it is easy to discard the audacity of his vision of translating so verbal a drama into a full-length ballet.

We largely owe the existence of this work to Sergey Radiov, a well-respected stage director of the 1930s who was famous for staging Shakespeare's plays. A friend of Prokofiev from before the Revolution, he was aware of the composer's ballets written in Paris for the great Diaghilev, whose company had taken the French capital by storm shortly before the 1917 upheavals. The

1929 ballet *The Prodigal Son* had already consolidated Prokofiev's fame as a composer of a newly forged lyrical style full of emotional depth, so when *Romeo and Juliet* had its premiere in Brno, Czechoslovakia, on 30 December 1938, the composer was well in command of his abilities to write for the dance medium ...

Today it is one of the most performed ballets, and the beauty of its music never fails to captivate young and old alike. Deservedly so, *Romeo and Juliet* has fared brilliantly where recordings are concerned, so Marin Alsop and her Baltimore colleagues have some stiff competition, particularly from such old time names as Previn and Svetlanov.

Notwithstanding, this interpretation has passion and drama aplenty, and climaxes are handled with meticulous control.

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Keith Bramich listens to *Torch* (Common Tone Records 8 88295 68762 1) and the late Howard Smith reviewed music for oboe, viola and piano (Cedille CDR 90000 102), music by Andrew Paul Macdonald (*The Winds of Thera*, Centrediscs CMCCD 12407), music performed by Adam Frey and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (*Taking Flight*, MSR Classics MS 1248) and *Aranis II* (Aranis ASMLLJJ002).

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## THE GREAT SATIRE 'CANDIDE' IN BERNSTEIN'S ANNIVERSARY YEAR

**George Colerick:** As a young man, Bernstein had already succeeded with light musicals in 1940s 'Broadway' style before he decided on two large-scale operatic projects. He started work on both at roughly the same time. One was a tragedy located in New York City, *West Side Story*, based on the theme of *Romeo and Juliet* to an inspired text by Stephen Sondheim. It was to have instant success in 1957, a modern opera with a very broad appeal. The other was to have an uncertain start though no less innovative, an adaption of the eighteenth century novel, *Candide*.

Bernstein's intention was to follow as closely as possible the text and the narrative, so problematic that several collaborators fell by the wayside. The first version was too much directed at political extremism in the USA, the second was reduced in size and though it won a major award, Bernstein was not satisfied. The music was too good to be reduced and the play deserved the large-scale spectacular originally planned and finally produced by Scottish Opera in 1981. Like *The Threepenny Opera*, it stands as one of regrettably few great musical satires of the twentieth century.

Voltaire had written a devastating comment on the human condition, drawing on real events in his own times:

*The University of Coimbra had decreed that the spectacle of some being burnt alive on a slow fire was an infallible prescription for preventing earthquakes. So when the earthquake had destroyed three quarters of Lisbon, the authorities could find no more certain means of avoiding total ruin than by offering the people a splendid auto da fé ... a Basque convicted of marrying his godmother and two Portuguese Jews who had refused to eat bacon were burnt, and Pangloss was hanged ... Candide was flogged in time with the anthem.*

Though the novel was short, this dramatic episode was just one item in a very long catalogue of disaster and misery, relieved only by Voltaire's wit. Tales of political corruption, extortion, mass slaughter and the sex slave trade were so common two centuries later that Bernstein felt no need to soften the effects. [READ MORE ...](#)



An 1803 illustration of two monkeys — actually apes — chasing their lovers. This depicts the scene from Voltaire's *Candide* where Candide and Cacambo spot two monkeys apparently attacking two naked women, and Candide shoots the monkeys



Eric Lu (left) wins first prize at the 2018 Leeds International Piano Competition

The 2018 Leeds International Piano Competition came to an end on 15 September 2018. The final evening's playing was accompanied by the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Edward Gardner.

The £25,000 First Prize and the Terence Judd Hallé Orchestra Prize were both won by twenty-year-old American pianist Eric Lu, the youngest of the five finalists. Eric Lu, born in Massachusetts in 1997 to Chinese parents from Kaohsiung and Shanghai, studied at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and his teachers are Robert McDonald, Jonathan Biss and Dang Thai Son.

He also receives a ground-breaking portfolio prize designed with long-term career development in mind, including worldwide management with arts management agency Askonas Holt, an international album release on Warner Classics and a range of performance and recording opportunities with *BBC Radio 3*.

The runners up also won two prizes each. Twenty-eight-year-old Mario Häring from Germany, a student of Lars Vogt, Karl-Heinz Kämmerling, Fabio Bidini and Kimiko Higuchi, won Second Prize and the Yaltah Menuhin Award. Twenty-three-year-old Xinyuan Wang from China, a student of Balázs Szokolay at the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt in Weimer, was the winner of the Third Prize and the Audience Award.



The other finalists, who will doubtless also receive some attention in the future, were twenty-seven-year-old Anna Geniushene from Russia and twenty-nine-year-old Aljoša Jurinić from Croatia.

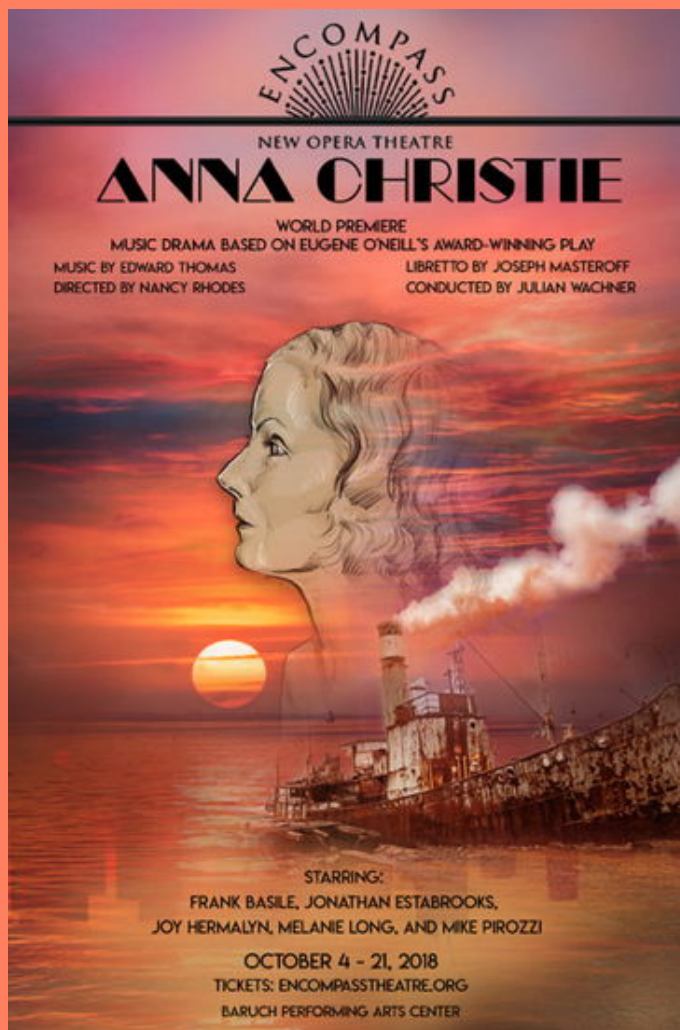
The Leeds International Piano Competition, one of the world's top piano competitions, takes place every three years in the Great Hall of the University of Leeds and in Leeds Town Hall, West Yorkshire, England. It was founded in 1961 and first held in 1963. Fanny Waterman (born 1920), one of the founders, was artistic director and chaired the jury until retiring in 2015. Paul Lewis and Adam Gatehouse are currently co-artistic directors, and Lewis chaired the jury in 2018. Murray Perahia (who won the fourth Leeds competition in 1972) is Patron, and Lang Lang is the competition's Global Ambassador.

In 2018, for the first time, the preliminary rounds were held in Berlin, New York and Singapore in April, several months ahead of the main competition. Several other changes were made to the format of the competition for 2018.

Encompass New Opera Theatre will present the world premiere of *Anna Christie* with music by Edward Thomas, set to a libretto by Joseph Masteroff, with twelve performances beginning on Thursday 4 October 2018 at 8pm and running through Sunday 21 October 2018, at the Baruch Performing Arts Center (at 55 Lexington Avenue, entrance on 25th Street, between Lexington and Third Avenues) in Manhattan, New York, USA.

Nancy Rhodes is stage director and Julian Wachner conducts the Ionisation New Music Ensemble. The cast includes Frank Basile (as Chris Christopherson, Anna Christie's father), Jonathan Estabrooks (as Mat Burke), Melanie Long (as Anna Christie), Joy Hermalyn (as Marthy Owen), and Mike Pirozzi (as Larry the Bartender).

*Anna Christie*, based on Eugene O'Neill's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, explores the lost relationship of a woman and her father, and the sailor she falls in love with. The sea is a powerful symbol in the play and O'Neill, having lived by the docks in New York City's waterfront, was acquainted with the sailors, booze, saloons and night life that he wrote about with such passion and authenticity. Abandoned by her father when she was five years old, Anna suffered a life of hardship and carries a dark secret from her past. An



***Anna Christie* — Encompass New Opera Theatre  
4-21 October 2018**

emotionally charged reunion with her father, a captain of a coal barge, intensifies when a merchant sailor is pulled from the cold, dark waters of the Atlantic on a foggy night. When the fog clears, Anna, the sailor and her father are caught in a riveting struggle between love and the sea, changing their lives forever. The play made its Broadway debut at the Vanderbilt Theatre on 2 November 1921 and was made into a 1930 Hollywood film starring Greta Garbo in her first talking picture.

Richard Pearson Thomas serves as Assistant Music Director, and set design is by Charles Wittreich, costume design by Angela Huff, projections by Lachlin Loud/Charles Wittreich and lighting design by Colin Chauche. Sound design is by Avery James Orvis.

A special ninety-fourth birthday celebration for composer Edward Thomas will take place on Sunday 7 October, immediately following the matinee 3pm performance.

Edward Thomas, composer, studied composition with Tibor Serly and spent the early part of his musical life as a guitarist and ensemble singer. In 1967, his String Quartet was premiered by the Harold Kohon Quartet at New York's Town Hall. Thomas is the composer of the opera *Desire Under the Elms* (from 1978) set to a libretto by Joe Masteroff that was produced at New York's City Center. The opera was later recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra under the direction of George Manahan, featuring James Morris, Jerry Hadley and Victoria Livengood. The recording, nominated for a 2004 Grammy Award, was produced by Tom Shepard and released internationally in October 2002 on the Naxos American Opera Classics series.

His Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra was premiered at Lincoln Center with the London clarinetist Sidney Fell and the Master Virtuosi of New York conducted by Gene Forrell. His Images for Oboe and Strings received its world premiere at the American Music Festival in Oklahoma, and his Fantasy for Two Clarinets was recorded in 2011 by Stanley and Naomi Drucker and the American Composers Orchestra conducted by George Manahan. Also, in 2011, Glenn Dicterow recorded his Reflections for Violin and Piano. His one-act opera, *A Sunny Morning*, was recorded in 2012 by Judy Kaye and Tim Jerome.

One of the United States of America's leaders in championing new music theatre and American opera, Encompass New Opera Theatre is celebrating its fortieth season dedicated to creating, developing and producing adventurous productions of new music theatre. Striving to discover and nurture emerging singers, composers, librettists, and musicians, to premiere groundbreaking new productions, and revive important twentieth century musical works by American and international composers, Encompass has produced more than sixty-three full-scale opera productions with orchestra and staged readings of more than 165 new works.

Encompass was founded by Nancy Rhodes and Roger Cunningham, and most recently performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, BAM Fisher in January 2016, with the New York premiere of *The Astronaut's Tale* by Charles Fussell and Jack Larson.



*Callas in Concert — The Hologram Tour*  
© 2018 Warner Classics

'I don't know what happens to me on stage. Something else seems to take over.' — Maria Callas

A new generation of opera lovers can experience the larger-than-life diva Maria Callas perform live in a worldwide concert tour, in the form of a three-dimensional hologram. BASE Hologram has captured Callas at the height of her powers with innovative technology and finely-honed stagecraft for a unique and compelling show: *Callas in Concert — The Hologram Tour*.

Performing her most beloved arias live in the form of a state-of-the-art hologram, and accompanied on stage by a full orchestra, the original opera diva Maria Callas is set to return with a UK premiere concert at the prestigious London Coliseum on Sunday 25

November 2018. The show also marks forty-five years since Callas' last London performance before her death — a farewell show at Royal Festival Hall in 1973.

BASE Hologram has partnered with Warner Classics, the sole guardian of La Divina's recorded legacy, to curate the official soundtrack and playlist of the tour. The *Callas in Concert* album mirrors the program and encores of the stage show, with her original iconic recordings, re-mastered in 24-bit/96kHz sound at Abbey Road Studios. (For *The Hologram Tour*, a team of highly experienced sound engineers isolated the voice of Callas so that her hologram incarnation could once again take the stage with a live orchestra.) The recital includes many of the arias in which she proved her prowess on stage and in the studio, and in which she remains unrivalled today: Bellini's *Casta Diva*, Puccini's *Vissi d'Arte* and Bizet's *L'Amour est un oiseau rebelle*, among others.

This unique performance concept has been directed with expertise, respect and love by The Juilliard School's Stephen Wadsworth (Masterclass), a veteran of the hallowed halls in which Callas reigned supreme, including La Scala, the Met and Covent Garden. 'The event will appeal to generations of audiences who never experienced Callas and who may know little about her beyond her reputation, as well as to opera lovers who are very familiar with her work, her recordings, and her complex life story', said Wadsworth. 'We've had the opportunity to curate one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century, and we must do that with great care — from her fantastically diverse repertoire to her revealing gestural language and her complicated relationship with her audience. We are all in different ways close to Callas' influence, because her work had a huge impact on every artist working in music, opera, acting, stage design and fashion.'

It's the Maria Callas comeback we could only have dreamed of. The *New York Times* has hailed it 'amazing ... Callas — eerily, well, radiant in a white satiny gown and rich red stole — was recreated for the occasion, down to the minutest movements of her hands and the subtlest facial gestures.'



'Callas, a symbol of chic, remains an object of fascination extending even beyond opera fans. Perhaps the hologram will introduce some newcomers to her incredible artistry; I'd urge everyone to listen to Callas' extensive discography. Like so many now, I loved her without ever seeing her live; this holographic spectre was weirdly tantalizing.'

Although Maria Callas died, aged just fifty-three, as long ago as September 1977, she remains the epitome of the operatic diva: the American-born Greek soprano who defined, and even redefined, opera in the twentieth century, and who has never lost her place among the world's top-selling classical artists. With music from the Warner Classics catalogue, BASE Hologram captures Callas at the height of her glory. She returns to the stage, in all her grandeur, confirming her immortality to stunned audiences. As this unprecedented performance unfolds, audiences will surrender all notions of what is real and get lost in the magic of undoubtedly the greatest opera singer of all time.

For many years, American composer and pianist Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867-1944) was referred to by the stuffy male-composer-oriented musical establishment as Mrs H H A Beach. But she was a trend-setter in several ways. As the first successful American female composer of large-scale art music, her *Gaelic Symphony* was the first symphony composed and published by an American woman. She was also one of the first successful American composers not to have studied in Europe. As a pianist, she gave successful concerts featuring her own works in Germany and the USA.



Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Psallite Women's Choir's Autumn Concert — Sunday 7 October 2018, 5pm at St Bartholomew-the-Less Chapel, West Smithfield, London EC1A 7BE, England, features two works by Amy Beach — *Dusk in June* and her Three Shakespeare Songs.

The concert also features works by two living women composers. Janet Wheeler is a British composer writing primarily choral music, who studied with Robin Holloway and Hugh Wood at Cambridge. She is also a choral conductor, working with choirs in the east of England, and sometimes running choral workshops. Psallite and their conductor Nancy Hadden will perform Janet Wheeler's *Sing a song of joy*.

Cecilia McDowall was born in London in 1951 and studied music at Edinburgh University and at Trinity College of Music. She studied composition with Joseph Horowitz, Robert Saxton and Adam Gorb. She was taken on by Oxford University Press in 2010 and has been widely commissioned, performed and recorded. Hadden and Psallite will perform McDowall's *Deus, qui claro lumine* (2005).

Also on the programme are Palestrina's motets *Ave regina coelorum* and *Alma redemptoris mater*, Orlando di Lasso's Magnificat *Margot labourez les vignes*, and madrigals and chansons by Morley, Weelkes, Lassus and Passereau.

Psallite women's choir was formed in 1994 by flautist, singer and conductor Nancy Hadden. She has created an impressive and unusual repertoire of early music for women's voices, drawn from music for high voices and also pieces which Nancy has arranged from music originally for mixed choir.

In recent years the choir has added contemporary music to its programmes, highlighting works by Sally Beamish, Judith Cloud, Jennifer Higdon and Hilary Tann.

Psallite sings regularly in London and other UK cities; in 2011 the group performed two concerts in Arizona, USA.

The choir's first CD, *Ceremonyes of Carolles* was released in 2008. It juxtaposes Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* alongside the melodious, vigorous and mystical Medieval and Renaissance lyrics and music which inspired Britten's settings. In 2014 Psallite released its second CD, Judith Cloud's *Three Spells*, composed especially for Psallite, with motets by Lassus, Victoria, Guerrero and others.

Tickets for this concert cost £10 or £8 concessions, and they're available at the door. Entrance to the chapel is via St Bartholomew's Hospital Henry VIII gate, and the nearest tube stations are Barbican, Farringdon and St Paul's.



Béla Bartók in 1899

Even the organisers were surprised by the immense popularity of the composition round of the Bartók World Competition and Festival. 214 young composers from all over the world have submitted their piano compositions for next year's Bartók World Competition's Piano Round — funded by the Ministry of Human Capacities after the unparalleled acclaim accomplished by the Violin round. The number of applicants is a clear reflection of the World Competition's good reputation and continuity as well as of the confidence of the music world in the dependability of a contest by which Hungary is placed in the focus of attention and respect for the Bartókian traditions, the universally unique competition structure and the high-quality organisation process. In accordance with the Constitution of the Bartók World Competition, the winning compositions of this year's composers'

contest will constitute a part of the obligatory repertoire — besides Bartók's prominent piano works — at the 2019 Piano Round.

214 works were submitted from 53 countries to get judged by the Selection Committee by the end of the application period, 31 August 2018. Besides the 25 Hungarian applicants, most candidates are from Italy, the USA and South Korea, but there are also Uzbek,

Mexican and Iranian composers among the applicants. The submitted piano pieces — from all together five continents — prove Béla Bartók's worldwide prestigious position and great international significance.

The third annual *Organ Reframed* returns to London's Union Chapel with a truly experimental approach to this culturally important instrument. The only festival of its kind in the UK, *Organ Reframed* focuses on commissioning innovative new music and introducing new artists and audiences to how versatile this instrument is. The two-day international festival will invigorate this remarkable instrument and embed it in the music of the 21st century.

Running from 12 to 13 October, the 2018 festival will see nine world premieres of cutting edge new works from composers at the forefront of contemporary music. With a mixture of film, music and sound art, the festival will conclude with a landmark performance of a new work by Éliane Radigue — widely regarded as one of our greatest living composers and a pioneer of experimental music.

The opening night of *Organ Reframed* will feature a special screening of *Visions in Meditation*, a collection of short films by the legendary experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage. The dreamlike silent films, often described as visual music, will be interwoven with three new works from electronic artists, whose aesthetics resonate with Brakhage's work. Philip Jeck, Sarah Davachi and Darkstar will perform their new works alongside James McVinnie on organ — recent collaborations include Nico Muhly, Martin Creed and Bryce Dessner — and the London Contemporary Orchestra — Radiohead, Frank Ocean, Steve Reich, Actress and Beck.

Saturday evening's programme opens with a new piece from one of Hollywood's most sought after film composers, Hildur Guðnadóttir, currently making headlines as the newly signed composer for the upcoming film *Joker* with Joaquin Phoenix, making her the first woman to compose a score for a live-action DC Comics film. Previous scores include *Sicario: Day of the Soldado* and *Mary Magdalene*. Hildur has also released four critically acclaimed solo albums on touch and written widely for theatre and dance. Hildur will be performing her new work live with James McVinnie and the London Contemporary Orchestra Soloists.

The second half of Saturday evening is nothing short of a historic event for contemporary music. Éliane Radigue, a pioneer of musical evolution since the 1960s, has composed her first work for organ, which will be performed by Frédéric Blondy. After the performance there will be a screening of a short documentary of Éliane working on the commission which will afford attendees a rare glimpse into her artistic process.

A staple of the Union Chapel calendar, Daylight Music curated by Arctic Circle combines an eclectic programme of music with a magical atmosphere every Saturday from noon. A



Organ reframed



special edition for *Organ Reframed* will feature multi-instrumentalist Terry Edwards (P J Harvey, Spiritualised, Nick Cave) joined by Seamus Beaghen (Iggy Pop, Death in Vegas, Morrissey), plus performances from singer-songwriter Douglas Dare and electropop keyboard player, singer and producer Deerful.

Ahead of both Friday and Saturday evening concerts, festival partners Spitfire Audio will present panel discussions on Composer Insights with Emmy award winner composer Michael Price (Sherlock) and more to be announced.

Throughout the weekend, attendees to any of the *Organ Reframed* events will also get to enjoy a special sound installation by Kathy Hinde. *Exhale* is inspired by the impressive bellows that provide pressured air for the Union Chapel organ and uses mechanical bellow systems to resonate acoustic sound making devices.

*Organ Reframed* is curated by composer and Music Director of the organ at Union Chapel, Claire M Singer, whose recent albums *Solas* and *Fairge*, released on Touch, received wide acclaim. Working closely with the highly sought after London Contemporary Orchestra she has created a unique festival at Union Chapel, Islington's magnificent cultural venue and home to one of the finest organs in the world.

Curator of *Organ Reframed*, composer Claire M Singer said of the festival: 'I've been writing and performing with the organ experimentally for over ten years now. Knowing what an incredible instrument it is and the scope of what is possible, the idea behind the festival is to commission artists to write new music for it, broadening the current repertoire and pushing the boundaries of experimental music. It seems that most people associate the organ with church or classical music and the festival is about showing that it is a hugely versatile instrument, in fact it can be thought of as the world's first synthesiser and can be incorporated into many different genres of music. To have the opportunity to build on the organ's rich history and bring it to the attention of a new generation is incredibly exciting.'

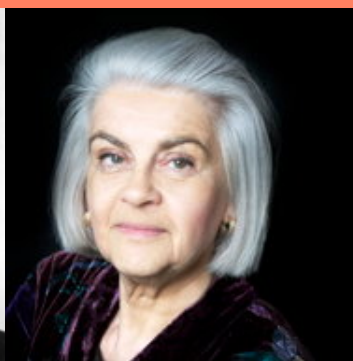
*Organ Reframed* is brought to you by Union Chapel, in partnership with the London Contemporary Orchestra, Arctic Circle, Spitfire Audio, As Described and LUX with generous support from Arts Council England, Cockayne and The London Community Foundation.



Claudio Scimone



Kenneth Bowen



Katherine Hoover



Piotr Lachert

We mark the passing of Katherine Hoover, Piotr Lachert, Bohumil Kulínský, David DiChiera, Ivo Petrić, Kenneth Bowen, and Claudio Scimone.



Garsington Opera's *Die Zauberflöte*

Garsington Opera's production of Mozart's final opera, *Die Zauberflöte*, directed and designed by Netia Jones, is available online for free on **OperaVision** for six months.

This colourful and quirky new production features Louise Alder, winner of the Dame Joan Sutherland Audience Prize at the 2017 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, as Pamina. The cast also includes Benjamin Hulett as Tamino, Jonathan McGovern as Papageno, James Creswell as Sarastro, Sen Guo as the Queen of Night and Adrian Thompson as Monostatos.

The Three Ladies are sung by Katherine Crompton, Marta Fontanals-Simmons and Katie Stevenson. Christian Curnyn conducts the Garsington Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

Garsington Opera is also delighted to announce that on Saturday 6 October 2018, BBC Radio 3's *Opera on 3* will broadcast the production of its first festival world premiere — *The Skating Rink* by David Sawer, set to a libretto by Rory Mullarkey based on a novel by Chilean author Roberto Bolaño. Garry Walker conducts, with a cast including Grant Doyle as Enric, Susan Bickley as Carmen, Alan Oke as Rookie, Sam Furness as Gaspar, Lauren Zolezzi as Nuria, Ben Edquist as Remo, Claire Wild as Caridad and Louise Winter as Pilar, with the Garsington Opera Orchestra. The production was directed by Stewart Laing.



David Sawer (born 1961)



Peter Phillips and the Tallis Scholars

On 2 November 2018 Gimell Records will release a new recording by The Tallis Scholars of Josquin's *Missa Gaudeamus* and *Missa L'ami Baudichon*. This is the seventh of nine albums in The Tallis Scholars' project to record all of Josquin's masses before the composer's 500th Anniversary in 2021.

Josquin is known as the most adventurous composer of his time — the one who could turn his hand to any challenge. This restless, searching intellect is on display in every one of his Mass settings, yet as Peter Phillips says, few offer as great a contrast as *Missa Gaudeamus* and *Missa L'ami Baudichon*.

*Missa Gaudeamus* represents Renaissance artistry at its most intense. Largely based on the first six notes of a substantial chant melody, it deploys mathematics in a number of clever, but rewardingly audible ways. Written for the Feast of All Saints, this is high art.

By contrast, *Missa L'ami Baudichon* represents Renaissance artistry at its most skittish. Based on just three notes from a popular secular song, which sound to an English ear distractingly like the opening of *Three Blind Mice*, it makes few demands on the listener outside enjoying a luminous C major sonority. This comes close to low art — a vulgar reference to female genitals comes twice in the French-language text of the very secular folksong that Josquin used as his melodic model and name for the Mass. The vulgarity of the original song makes it an unusual starting point for a sacred work, yet despite this, the Mass survives in one of the Vatican choirbooks, where presumably it was sung as part of the liturgy. [READ OUR LATEST NEWS ...](#)

## RUSSIAN POLITICAL SATIRE — 'THE GOLDEN COCKEREL'

**George Colerick:** Rimsky-Korsakov's fourteenth opera might have been his last but for the shattering events of 1905 and Russia's humiliation in the disastrous war against Japan. It was his expressed sympathy for the unsuccessful uprising against the Tsarist regime that caused his dismissal from the St Petersburg Conservatoire. This led to his composing *The Golden Cockerel*, his only direct political satire, and unlike any other opera in the existing international repertoire.





Vladimir Pikok as the Astrologer — a difficult role for a tenor altino, as the character is a eunuch — in the first production of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Peacock* in 1909

Dodon, King of an unspecified country, hopes at minimal effort to achieve military glory. This idea often seduces tyrants, but the resemblance of his behaviour to the realities of Tsarist Russia in 1905 was so clear that a ban was placed on the opera completed two years later. The composer had not seen it by his death in 1908.

Dodon's sons know even less about military strategy than General Polkan and their argument is interrupted by the appearance of a mysterious Astronomer, a eunuch with a curious vocal range. He offers as tribute a Golden Cockerel who will crow whenever danger threatens the King. Could it in war become his secret weapon? He wants to try it out before paying the Astronomer who seems annoyed as he suddenly disappears. Dodon's taste for adventure has long since gone, but is briefly revived by a dream of meeting a beautiful princess, as he thinks from the neighbouring country, so he sends his unwilling sons off to occupy it.

Weeks pass before the Cockerel crows again; the war is going badly. Dodon is obliged to look for his sons, coming across them in a mountain pass but they are dead. He and the General sing a Slavonic lament. The

enemy are hidden by the mists, but then the vision of a tent which proves to be indestructible. Out comes the beauty of his dream claiming to be the Queen of Shemakhan, a pagan of strange demeanour but radiant presence. Offering a *Hymn to the Sun*, she sings of her beauty and desire to find a real man, one who will dominate her. Dancing in seductive manner, she begs Dodon to join in, which he does; but in one of his age this is not short of grotesque. Still she professes to admire his kingship, and he is entranced. She is furious when General Polkan starts asking questions, and Dodon offers to execute him if she agrees to become his Queen. As when meeting the Astrologer, he can only accept events at their face value.

The people are told of his foreign 'victory' and how he rescued a Queen from a dragon. Assembled for his homecoming, the crowd are thrilled by the sight of two splendid corteges with the Queen and King in a golden chariot. It is halted by the Astrologer making a most untimely entry. This causes general alarm for their royal couple, which troubles him not; he is to be the spectre at the feast. Only the Queen seems undisturbed. He claims his reward, and Dodon is ungrateful, then shocked when the Astrologer will accept nothing less than the Queen. Dodon strikes him down with his sceptre, and for the moment she remains impassive. It is when he presumes to ask for a kiss that she tells him to clear off and take his court with him. A storm erupts, the Cockerel gives his final screech and springing onto the chariot, pecks the King who falls dead. In the darkness, the Queen laughs mockingly, then she and Cockerel are no more. [READ MORE ...](#)

## DON'T FORGET THE SINGING — CALGARY'S RECENT 'LA TRAVIATA'

**Richard Meszto:** Calgary is best known for sandy oil, cattle roping or riding, and big skies arching above and over the giant mountains in the West. Culture is a little different. In many European cities you can attend an opera on almost any given night during the season. In Calgary, opera is a little more rare.

Some years ago mezzo-soprano Barbara King and businessman Chris Gieck imagined something both grand and simple. Knowing the beauty of song, the voice and the musical form of opera, they decided to create an organization that promoted all three — and also offered vocalists the opportunity to perform important roles from the major opera repertoire in concert renditions ...

One of the top operas by one of the greatest opera composers, *La Traviata* tells the forlorn tale of lovers condemned by society. Based on a work by Alexandre Dumas, fils, (itself frequently staged and filmed), the music of Verdi is now fixed in the standard repertoire.

Violetta is the doomed courtesan (spoilers) who only wishes to escape (or evade) her past. But, her sense of honour and moral strength (in spite of her degenerate condition as courtesan and as consumptive), far transcends what society views as her dishonourable condition. In her case, goodness arises from the 'gutter' ...

The singers have been coached by the excellent Grace King, LRSM, and are supported by the **Foothills Philharmonic Opera Chorus** directed by Tim Korthius. The concert is accompanied by the **Rocky Mountain Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Carlos Foggin.

**CODA:** I once talked with a fellow traveler on board a jet back to Canada. I was asked where I was from. I replied 'Alberta', to which was said: 'It doesn't have much culture, but the scenery is nice.' Perhaps. But, don't forget to mention the voices. Don't forget the singing ...

## YOU SPOTTED SNAKES — MENDELSSOHN AND INCIDENTAL MUSIC

**George Colerick:** From Felix Mendelssohn's cultured family he gained an early love of Shakespeare, leading to an inspired composition when aged only seventeen, an overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is unlikely he could have been familiar with Weber's English opera *Oberon* because it was first performed in the same year, 1826, but it has some affinity. The overture relates to those parts of the story where the magic spell operates, solemn wood-wind chords, fairy music on high strings, the boisterous fun following, even the braying of a donkey. A descending four-note motif ends the magic spells, bringing harmony to the courtiers and Queen Titania who have been victims of Oberon's elaborate joke.

The overture was admired for years before the Prussian King asked Mendelssohn to compose more music for the play, and this was sensitively integrated. The solemnity of the opening court scene has no musical accompaniment, which is mainly provided for interludes. Mendelssohn's scherzos were unique in their lightness of touch, and this one introduces the second Act and its frivolity. Excellent scene-painting, the sopranos' fairy song, *You spotted snakes*, is his most inspired duet. Sinister music accompanies the spell Oberon places on Titania, to become infatuated with the first creature she sees :

*What thou see'st when thou dost wake,  
Do it for thy true love take.*

She is awoken to an embracing nocturne for horn, the young lovers having been soothed to sleep through the night. Whilst recovering their senses, they witness a makeshift play put on by clownish workers. Its funeral march suggests a grotesque mockery, a plodding clarinet out of rhythm with a gloomy bassoon. Touched by magic, the chorus of fairies, *Through the house give glimmering Light*, ends the play. [READ MORE ...](#)



***Oberon, Titania and Puck with Fairies Dancing*** — a watercolour painting circa 1786 by William Blake (1757-1827), based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

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