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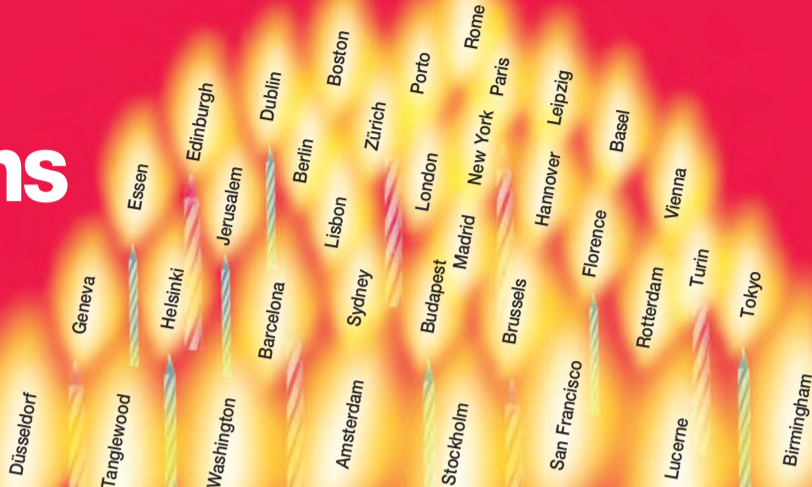
Included in this issue:

Andriessen
La Commedia premiered
 in Amsterdam



Carter birthday celebrations

The musical world is celebrating the 100th birthday of Elliott Carter, the senior statesman of American composition.



This summer brought a major retrospective of Elliott Carter's music at the Tanglewood Music Center, programmed in honour of his centenary by James Levine. This was the first time for the TMC Festival of Contemporary Music to devote itself to a single composer, and probably the first time ever a composer has attended his own centenary feature.

The New York Times applauded the "fantastic" standards of performance achieved by a new generation of young players and acknowledged the historic nature of the event, describing a "standing ovation from an audience that yelled and whooped and held up cellphones to take photos as Carter walked to center stage for the first of three curtain calls". Blogs discussed enthusiastic reactions from new converts to the composer's music as well as from dedicated 'Carterheads'.

47 of Carter's works were programmed over a five day period, ranging from orchestral to chamber, from a film of Carter's opera *What Next?* to live discussions with performers and the composer. Sadly James Levine was incapacitated and could not conduct as planned, so the baton was passed between Oliver Knussen, Stefan Asbury, Ryan Wigglesworth and Shi-Yeon Sung.

Works commissioned for the event included *Sound Fields* for string orchestra and the witty *Mad Regales* for six voices, setting texts by poet John Ashbery who witnessed the premiere alongside the composer. The feature ended with the Boston Symphony Orchestra giving a complete Carter programme, culminating in his



Elliott Carter is led onto the stage by Oliver Knussen at the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music in July.

Symphonia: Sum Fluxae Pretium Spei, which according to the Los Angeles Times's critic "gets my vote as the Great American Symphony".

"Time clearly is on Carter's side" Los Angeles Times

Miraculously, Carter is still actively composing: his new *Flute Concerto* was premiered last month at the International Jerusalem Chamber Festival with soloist Emanuel Pahud and conductor Daniel Barenboim, and a new piano concerto, *Interventions*, forms the centrepiece of American events around the 100th birthday itself on 11 December. James Levine conducts the world premiere with Barenboim as pianist and the Boston Symphony

Orchestra (4 Dec) and takes the work to New York as part of a two-day Carter event at Carnegie Hall (11-12 Dec).

In Europe the Finnish premieres of *Three Illusions* and *Symphonia* are hosted in Helsinki (10/11 Dec), while in London Pierre Boulez conducts a birthday concert by the Ensemble Intercontemporain at the Southbank Centre (11 Dec) and Oliver Knussen leads an all-Carter programme by the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican (16 Dec) including the premiere of *Wind Rose* – a piece whose wind scoring complements the string instrumentation of *Sound Fields*.

Visit www.carter100.com and let us know your centenary plans by emailing composers.uk@boosey.com

Currier joins B&H



American composer Sebastian Currier has signed with Boosey & Hawkes to publish all future works and the majority of his existing catalogue. A small number of works will continue to be represented by Carl Fischer Music and European American Music.

Sebastian Currier

(b.1959) was raised in Providence, Rhode Island, within a family of talented musicians. He received degrees from the Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music and went on to teach at the Juilliard School from 1992-1998 and at Columbia University from 1999-2007. Currier received the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in 2007 for his chamber work *Static*.

Currier's orchestral works have been performed by such orchestras as the San Francisco Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington), and the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra. His music has also been championed by violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, who commissioned and premiered his violin and piano piece *Aftersong* and has commissioned a new violin concerto. Currier's chamber music was showcased in 2005 by members of the Berlin Philharmonic and the following year brought the premiere there of *Broken Minuets* performed by harpist Marie-Pierre Langlamet and the Oriol Ensemble.

Currier is currently composing a piece for panoramic video, electronics, and string quartet in collaboration with the Ying Quartet, video artist Pawel Wojtasik, and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA). A DVD of his 2005 multimedia work *Nightmaze*, based on the text of Thomas Bolt, is in production for release on Bridge Records. Looking ahead, his *Group Dynamics* for wind ensemble will receive its premiere on 13 November 2008.

For further information visit www.boosey.com/currier and www.sebastiancurrier.com

Adams
 Latest operas on DVD
 and CD; new book



Van der Aa
 Interview about his new
Book of Disquiet



Roem
Our Town travels to
 New York



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Gruber Busking premiere

HK Gruber's new work for trumpet virtuoso Håkan Hardenberger is scheduled to travel around Europe in coming seasons, following its successful first performances in Amsterdam and Essen in May. *Busking* takes the form of a three movement concerto in which Hardenberger moves progressively from E₁ trumpet, via flugelhorn, to C trumpet, exploring both contemporary soundworlds and popular music idioms.

Whereas Gruber's earlier concerto *Aerial* – which Hardenberger has performed 45 times – was scored for full symphony orchestra, *Busking* features only a string orchestra accompanying the trumpet, accordion and banjo as concertante players. The solo line-up draws parallels with Picasso's painting *Three Musicians*, depicting bohemian music-making with carnivalesque overtones. In musical terms Gruber's soloists function as modern equivalents of a baroque trumpet coupled with organ or harpsichord continuo, perhaps as heard on the streets of New Orleans.

Busking was jointly commissioned by the Philharmonie Essen, Amsterdam Sinfonietta, Swedish Chamber Orchestra and Saint Paul



HK Gruber congratulates Håkan Hardenberger after the performance of *Busking* at the Essen Philharmonie.

Chamber Orchestra, and during his exclusivity period Hardenberger has further performances planned in Sweden, Finland, Austria, the UK and USA in 2009/10.

"Star trumpeter Håkan Hardenberger brought the entire spectrum of his virtuosity to bear, playing on the separate mouthpiece, and getting the various trumpets to twang and squawk using mutes. A performance piece with pulsating drive, which was great fun for the audience. Much applause and cheers in the well-attended Philharmonie in Essen." *Neue Ruhr Zeitung*

Van der Aa The Book of Disquiet

Michel van der Aa's new music theatre work, *The Book of Disquiet*, is premiered in Linz in January, starring Klaus Maria Brandauer



Photo: Marco Borggreve

The Book of Disquiet is based on texts by the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935). How did you discover his writings?

I'd read a few of his poems but it was Airan Berg, one of the artistic directors of Linz09, who suggested basing a theatre piece on Pessoa and I was excited to learn that the actor Klaus Maria Brandauer would be interested in such a project. Then I started reading more of Pessoa's writings and homed in on what I think is his masterpiece, *The Book of Disquiet*, a collection of fragmentary texts, diary entries and autobiographical anecdotes only published 50 years after the poet's death.

Were you attracted to Pessoa's technique of writing through a series of alter-egos? This has links with your interests in masks and the multiple representation of characters.

Yes, Pessoa often casts himself in a series of distinct characters, 'heteronyms' as he calls them, both male and female. I was intrigued by the idea that the sum of these doubles could provide a total representation of the poet. This gave me the scope for the video element of the piece: the actor on stage represents the central character of *The Book of Disquiet*, the Lisbon bookkeeper Bernardo Soares, but he is also seen on the video as himself and as a series of alter-egos acted by three men and one woman. The drama is his coming to terms with his identity.

How did you transform Pessoa's fragments into a theatrical shape?

The Book of Disquiet was assembled from loose sheets of paper, found in a box trunk on Pessoa's death. I had to narrow the texts down through a process of selection in order to create a piece that could exist in 'real' time in the theatre. The task wasn't as hard as I feared because a series of recurring themes emerged, allowing me to group the fragments by subject matter, for instance isolation, love or dreams.

George Steiner has described *The Book of Disquiet* as a "haunting mosaic of dreams". How have you created this dreamworld in visual terms?

There are realistic scenes with the alter-egos of Bernardo Soares but also scenes that are much more

abstract, drawing upon entries found in the book to create a more dreamlike *mise-en-scène*. So the video switches between imagery that literally extends the physical events on stage, and more surreal scenes that make us delve deeper into the mind of the protagonist.

The fracturing of time and personality can give Pessoa's works a dark colour. How did you vary this in the theatre?

I also found texts with a distinctive, ironic brand of humour, for instance when he talks about unhappily married women including "all who are married and some who are single". He is also very playful with language, having worked as a translator, so I've used these elements to lighten the philosophical tone. To break up the spoken text I've set some poems by Pessoa for the vocalist Ana Moura, who sings them on the video where she appears as the female double of the bookkeeper, the enigmatic herdsman with the ox.

What form did your collaboration with Klaus Maria Brandauer take?

We met a number of times in the early days to discuss the project and Klaus watched the films of *One* and *After Life* to get a feel for my work. Collaborating with musicians holds no fears for him, having performed *A Survivor from Warsaw* and *Egmont* with conductors like Karajan and Bernstein. Once he'd seen how I incorporate film elements into my music theatre pieces he became excited about working with video projections. The next stage was to make a recording of him reading the text, so that I could model the music and rhythmic structures to match his inflections. During the composition phase he kept his distance and gave me the space to go my own way. It was totally inspiring working with Klaus on the video, watching his sheer professionalism in the face of what I demanded of him.

How do speech and music interact in the work?

In many sections the spoken text is rhythmically notated so that synchronisation can be achieved, while in others Klaus is paired with instrumental soloists whose playing interacts with his free speech. The ensemble consists of 15 players - wind, strings

and percussion - and there is an electronic element with pre-recorded samples, processed sounds of the ensemble, plus the songs and speech.

What other projects do you have in the coming months?

There are a number of performances of *Mask*: in London by members of the Philharmonia Orchestra on 6 October and in Vilnius by the Ensemble Modern on 26 October. I've also completed a new song cycle, *Spaces of Blank*, written for the wonderful mezzo-soprano Christianne Stotijn and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra to premiere next March, with further performances planned by Radio France and the NDR Orchestra. I looked for texts that would suit Christianne's dark brown voice and theatrical presence, and selected poems by Emily Dickinson, Anne Carson and Rozalie Hirs. They all describe anxiety by making an analogy with a space or building, and during the piece we follow the mezzo as she moves through these virtual spaces. There are dark sections with very edgy orchestral outbursts, but also some engaging moments of real intimacy.

Van der Aa
The Book of Disquiet (2008) 75'
Music theatre for actor, ensemble and video projections

Libretto by the composer on texts by Fernando Pessoa (E)

Commissioned by Linz 2009 (Capital of Culture), ZaterdagMatinee Amsterdam and Bruckner Orchester Linz

2/3/4 January 2009

Klaus Maria Brandauer/Bruckner Orchester Linz/
Dennis Russell Davies

Chen at the Olympics



The music of Chinese composer Qigang Chen, who signed a new publishing agreement with Boosey & Hawkes earlier this year, reached new audiences in August when it was telecast worldwide from the Opening Ceremony for the 2008 Beijing

Olympics. As Director of Music for the ceremony at the Olympic stadium, Chen's task was to devise the entire music programme for the event, commission other composers to create new music, and write music himself for many sections of the ceremony. Chen collaborated with celebrated stage director and auteur Zhang Yi-Mou, following their work together on the ballet *Raise the Red Lantern*, which has been toured internationally by the National Ballet of China.

Chen, along with other composers, submitted a song as a contender for the official theme song for the Olympics. Its final selection was kept a closely guarded secret in the lead up to the opening ceremony, being omitted from all of the rehearsals in the Bird's Nest stadium. Chen's song, entitled *You and Me*, was performed at the end of the ceremony on 8 August by British soprano Sarah Brightman and the popular Chinese male vocalist Liu Huan, to an estimated audience of 100,000 in the stadium, and several billion worldwide watching on TV.

With the completion of his Olympic labours, Qigang Chen returns to his regular activities as a classical composer. His plans include a work for piano and orchestra, a second ballet, a new orchestral work for the Hong Kong Philharmonic, and a feature at Shanghai EXPO in 2010.

Reich Double Sextet tours



Photo: Woppe Bergmann

Steve Reich's latest work, *Double Sextet*, is toured to Australia and Europe this autumn by its commissioners eighth blackbird, including performances at the Melbourne Festival (16 October), Liverpool City of Culture (21 November), and at De Doelen in Rotterdam (23 November).

The 22-minute work has two performance options, either as a live sextet of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, vibraphone and piano playing against a pre-recorded sextet on tape, or as an ensemble of 12 instrumentalists. The result is "...the kind of explosion of fractured rhythms that never ceases to amaze the ear" (*Los Angeles Times*). *Double Sextet* is exclusive to eighth blackbird until March 2010.

"Six musicians are playing a duet with recorded versions of themselves. It is like looking into an electronic mirror. The mirror refracts the rapid, driving beat of piano and marimba; it adds a reflected gleam to long-held chords of strings and winds. The players, live and recorded, create layer upon layer of sound, a rich *mille-feuille* of music." *Washington Post*

"...intricate rhythmic counterpoint and thickening harmonies displace the repetitive opening figure. Parts of the score are almost episodic, with distinct shifts of mood set apart by percussive full stops. In one fleeting passage a lyrical violin-cello duet over a hazy accompaniment sounded like a lightly distorted glimpse into a 19th-century European ballroom. That didn't last long: Mr. Reich's insistent rhythms quickly returned, restoring the work to its contemporary moorings." *The New York Times*

Reich's music is also travelling widely with the Rosas dance company, who are performing a Steve Reich Evening on both sides of the Atlantic with danceworks choreographed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker.

Rosas tours Reich danceworks

Following performances at the Edinburgh Festival, in Gothenburg, Hamburg and Sadlers Wells in London, the Steve Reich Evening travels on with the Ictus ensemble to Dijon (7/8 October), Aix-en-Provence (10/11 October), the BAM Next Wave festival (22-25 October), at the Kaaitheater in Brussels (15-22 November) and in Caen (11 December).

For full details visit www.rosas.be

Michael Corder's new choreography of Stravinsky's *Le Baiser de la fée* (*The Fairy's Kiss*) for Birmingham Royal Ballet which appears at Sadlers Wells in London (31 October - 1 November). Birmingham's four-year Stravinsky celebration, IgorFest, reaches its conclusion next June with a fireworks finale.



Photo: EMI Cooper

Adams news update

Opera cycle launched in NY

A full cycle of Adams's operas will be performed in New York across the 2008-2010 seasons with participation from The Metropolitan Opera, The Juilliard School, Carnegie Hall, the Orchestra of St. Luke's and Lincoln Center. The cycle opens with Adams's Metropolitan Opera debut: Penny Woolcock's new staging of *Doctor Atomic* conducted by Alan Gilbert (opening 13 October), a co-production with English National Opera in London (opening 25 February). The Juilliard School's FOCUS! Festival continues the cycle with Adams conducting *The Death of Klinghoffer* (31 January).

Doctor Atomic DVD



Opus Arte has just released a DVD of *Doctor Atomic* in the original Peter Sellars production, filmed at the Holland Festival in Amsterdam last year (OA 0998 D). Gerald Finley sings the title role of J Robert Oppenheimer, joined by Jessica Rivera, Eric Owens, the Netherlands Opera Chorus and the Netherlands

Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lawrence Renes. Set in the New Mexico desert in 1945, *Doctor Atomic* explores the human and scientific dilemmas faced by the nuclear physicists employed to create and test the first atom bomb.

A Flowering Tree CD



John Adams's most recent stagework, *A Flowering Tree*, was released last month on CD by Nonesuch, with the London Symphony Orchestra and Schola Cantorum Caracas conducted by the composer (7559-799-

651). The opera blends elements drawn from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* with a magical folk tale from Southern India, describing a young couple undergoing rituals and trials to discover the transfiguring power of love.

Following the world premiere in Vienna in 2006 in the production by Peter Sellars, *A Flowering Tree* has travelled to San Francisco, Berlin, London, Amsterdam and Chicago. The full Sellars staging will be seen at Lincoln Center in New York next summer with further presentations this season in Tokyo and Los Angeles. The Perth International Arts Festival presents a new production next March directed by Patrick Nolan.

Hallelujah Junction book



October brings the much-anticipated release of Adams's memoirs, *Hallelujah Junction: Composing an American Life*, published by Farrar, Straus, & Giroux in America (978-0-374-28115-1) and Faber & Faber in Europe (978-0-571-23115-7). Both an autobiography and a fascinating journey through the musical landscape of Adams's life and times, the new

book travels from his early New Hampshire days to California, and charts his development as a composer over the past 40 years.

Nonesuch celebrates the book's publication this month with a companion 2-CD set under the same title, providing a musical sequence through a selection of Adams recordings, from *Harmonielehre* to *The Dharma at Big Sur* (7559 798 921).

New string quartet

January brings the world premiere of John Adams's new string quartet written for the St Lawrence String Quartet. The work is the composer's first full-length work for the medium since *John's Book of Alleged Dances* in 1994. Following the premiere at The Juilliard School in New York on 29 January, as part of a Californian feature at the 2009 FOCUS! Festival, performances are programmed around North America, with the quartet planning to tour the work to Europe in 2010.

Andriessen La Commedia

Louis Andriessen's *La Commedia*, his highly individual operatic distillation of Dante's epic journey through heaven and hell, was premiered at the Holland Festival in June. Hal Hartley's film provided haunting counterpoint to Andriessen's score in Amsterdam's 'circus' venue, the Royal Carré Theatre, with Reinbert de Leeuw as conductor and ringmaster. Vocal leads were taken by soprano Claron McFadden, chanteuse Cristina Zavalloni and singing actor Jeroen Willems as Beatrice, Dante and Lucifer, with Netherlands Opera forces, actors on film, and musicians of the Asko and Schoenberg Ensembles, summoning up the joys, sorrows and follies of humanity.

"An 'opera' by Louis Andriessen is never a traditional work. Classical ingredients like a clear-cut plot or the psychological development of the characters give way to a more abstract approach: a web of ideas and associations. [...] *La Commedia* is bursting with details, allusions and quotes, and at times brilliantly combines contrasting musical ideas. Here, the banal sounds cheekier than ever, and the lofty lacerates your soul." *De Standaard*

"There is nothing ethereal about this opera. Its questing vigour is of a materialist, Brechtian, Godardian kind. It relishes the mixture of media, musical quotations and parody, intellectual subtexts and ironic commentary while remaining spunkily itself — a brilliant, new-fangled circus. Whether rhythmically driven in his minimalist manner, harmonically block-like with a Stravinskian bite, flaring up like a big band or essaying startling textures, such as those produced by the lowest woodwinds dancing together, Andriessen's score is a holiday of inventiveness... It was expertly conducted by his lifelong supporter Reinbert de Leeuw." *Sunday Times*

Louis Andriessen's *La Commedia* at its premiere in Amsterdam, staged by Hal Hartley.



Photo: Netherlands Opera/Hans van den Boggaard

"Hell is replaced by something that Andriessen has moulded into a musical playground full of reminiscences, references and quotes. In his depiction of a serpent he even competes with the musical tone-painting of Richard Strauss. The musical rendering of Paradise is sublime; the music is at times just as over-illuminated as the accompanying film images: minuscule, isolated tufts of sound... With this work, Andriessen outdoes his earlier large-scale compositions, *De Materie* (1989) and the *Trilogy of the Last Day* (1997) — reflections on spirit, matter and death, that now, with *La Commedia*, reach into the hereafter. It makes you wonder what's next." *De Volkskrant*

"... the distillation of a lifetime's creativity." *Sunday Times*

"Andriessen's music is often forceful and driving, which is his characteristic style, especially in the first two scenes... But these just hinted at the humour, the ingratiating jazziness, the terrible fury and, in the end, the ravishing grace of the later scenes... The opera, which is dedicated to [his wife's] memory, is what happened when the hippest, sassiest, most savvy major composer we have dealt with the most meaningful moment of his life and left nothing out. *La Commedia* is an opera that should be seen again, and it will be." *Los Angeles Times*

Andriessen's *The Hague Hacking*, a new double piano concerto for the Labeque Sisters commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, is premiered under the baton of Esa-Pekka Salonen at the Walt Disney Concert Hall on 16 January. Further performances are planned in the Netherlands and the UK in 2009 during Andriessen's 70th birthday year.

Rouse Concerto for Orchestra



Photo: Christian Steiner

Christopher Rouse is known not only for his masterful orchestral scores but also for adding exciting new concerti to the symphonic repertoire. As a combination of these two strands, his new *Concerto for Orchestra* was much anticipated. Marin Alsop conducted the premiere at the Cabrillo Festival on 1 August, revealing a work that delivered all the expected virtuosity but intriguingly eschewed the traditional three-movement form. Instead Rouse divides the concerto into two halves, the first alternating through five brief sections — fast, slow, fast, slow, fast — while the second half consists of a slow and a fast section, "each meant to represent a sort of 'full blossoming' of the related ideas from their counterparts earlier on... with the final allegro building to a frenzied, almost hysterical, climax".

"It's a boisterous, exhilarating concoction, in which fiercely patterned rhythmic explosions alternate with lyrical interludes headed by the strings, and as the title suggests, it's a display piece for the orchestra members, who dispatched it superbly under Alsop's taut, fluid leadership." *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Among seven new orchestral works heard during the first weekend of the Cabrillo Festival, one stood head and shoulders above the rest. Christopher Rouse's *Concerto for Orchestra*, composed with dazzling virtuosity, gave Marin Alsop's musicians a showpiece of fierce demands and breathtaking execution... Chattering brass, intoning winds, punctuating and pounding percussion and eerie strings traded their material kaleidoscopically, often at high speed... The work is an orchestral masterpiece and deserves ongoing exposure." *Metro Active, Silicon Valley*

The *Concerto for Orchestra* travels to Rouse's home town on 21 November when Alsop conducts the work with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. The composer's 60th birthday season also includes orchestral performances by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Saint Louis Symphony (*Der gerettete Alberich*), Dallas Symphony Orchestra (*Symphony No. 2*), Singapore Symphony Orchestra (*Trombone Concerto*), the New York Philharmonic and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (*Rapture*), and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (*Friandises*). These lead up to the premiere of Rouse's new *Oboe Concerto* on 5 February with Basil Reeves and the Minnesota Orchestra conducted by Osmo Vänskä.

Emerging composers

Boosey & Hawkes in New York has launched a new sponsorship initiative for young America-based composers, providing publishing, promotion and career support to help nurture the next generation of creative talent. The first three 'Emerging Composers' under the new programme all demonstrate how traditional skills are being combined with new styles of composition, reaching across artistic disciplines.

Oscar Bettison (b.1975)



The music of Oscar Bettison, with its repeating rhythmic cycles and industrial sonorities, explores the boundaries of pitch and noise, classical and rock, convention and invention. Bettison was born in the UK and studied at the Royal College of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Royal Conservatory in The Hague. He won the Lloyds Bank/BBC Young Composer of the Year in 1994 and the Royal Philharmonic Society Prize in 1997 and is currently based in the USA where he is completing a PhD at Princeton. He has written works for the London Sinfonietta, BBC, New London Orchestra and the Eliza Miller Dance Company.

Visit www.boosey.com/bettison

Anna Clyne (b.1980)



Anna Clyne's music combines resonant soundscapes with propelling textures that weave, morph and collide in dramatic explosions. Equally adept at creating acoustic and electro-acoustic music, Clyne has collaborated with cutting-edge choreographers, film-makers

and visual artists as well as musicians, and has been performed internationally. Born in London, she studied at Edinburgh University and the Manhattan School of Music and is now resident in Brooklyn. Works have been commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Carnegie Hall and performed by the American Composers Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra. A new work for the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group will be premiered in the Green Umbrella series on 7 April 2009.

Visit www.boosey.com/clyne

Du Yun (b.1977)



In addition to composing notated music for concert halls, Du Yun writes for experimental theatre and dance and performs at avant-garde venues on the amplified/processed Chinese zither (zheng), piano, laptop, and with her own voice. Her approach to music is ultimately visceral: corporeality stripped-down from spirituality. Born in China, Du Yun studied at the Shanghai Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory and Harvard University, and is now based in New York City. Her works have been performed internationally by Bang On a Can All-Stars, Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (Canada), Nueva Musica (Mexico), Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

Visit www.boosey.com/duyun

Jenkins Te Deum



Photo: Mitch Jenkins

Following the premiere of Karl Jenkins's *Stabat Mater* in March, Liverpool also plays host to the launch of the composer's new *Te Deum* on 30 November at Philharmonic Hall. The 15-minute canticle setting, scored for chorus and a small orchestra of two trumpets, strings and five percussionists, was commissioned by the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union for the city's 2008 European Capital of Culture Year, and will be premiered under the baton of the composer.

The Liverpool concert also includes the first performances of *Sacred Songs*, a new seven-movement choral suite drawn from Jenkins's most popular works including *The Armed Man*, *Requiem* and *Stabat Mater*. The composer's preferred scoring for the accompaniment of *Sacred Songs* is flute, cor anglais, horn, strings and organ, though alternatives for organ and strings, and for organ only are also available. A new vocal score of *Sacred Songs* will be released to tie in with the first performance and *Te Deum* will be published in early 2009.

Stabat Mater continues to travel widely, and can currently be heard on an eight-venue UK tour conducted by the composer and John Gibbons, running through to 15 November. The work's US premiere is scheduled for Lincoln Center in New York on 19 January and the German premiere takes place in Augsburg on 29 March.

Though Jenkins has recently attracted most international attention for his choral music, his orchestral music comes to the fore in the latest release from EMI, which gathers together four of his concertos (50999-5002352-3). *Quirk* was written for a concertante group of flute, keyboard and percussion soloists from the London Symphony Orchestra, who give the Welsh premiere of the work in Swansea on 4 October. The other works on the disc are the new violin concerto *Sarikiz*, *Over the Stone* for harp and orchestra and the Corelli arrangement *La Folia* for marimba and strings - all attractive fare for the choreographers who are increasingly setting Jenkins's music for dance.

Birtwistle Tree of Strings

Following its first performances at the Witten and Aldeburgh Festivals, Harrison Birtwistle's new *Tree of Strings* is being toured this autumn by the Arditti Quartet to Parma, the Venice Biennale, Wien Modern and the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. The title is taken from a poem on 'music' by the Gaelic poet Sorley MacLean and the quartet explores memories — both personal and cultural — from Birtwistle's time on the island of Raasay in the 1970s:

"...on a lonely island off the west coast of Scotland to which he had withdrawn to compose, he discovered, probably because of earlier prohibitions, that no musical tradition had survived... Birtwistle doesn't attempt a reconstruction of something as it might have been, rather... [he dedicates] new music from the spirit of the present to the de-musicalised land. The four members of the Arditti Quartet are sent on a voyage of discovery with great independence, they discover sound spaces, isolated movements, which diverge then again converge, and all leads to a densely-composed, concentrated form." *Neue Musikzeitung*

"... a half hour of the art of the string quartet at its finest and greatest." *Neue Musikzeitung*

"Beginning with barely audible, otherworldly flutings and tremolandos, and sounds produced with the stick of the bow, the work offers itself as an antenna picking up an island's subtlest signals. The level soon rises to fortissimo, but the sense of rarefied evocation prevails. The writing is unmistakably Birtwistle's, the latest, most supple development of an idiom that says so much with pulsing, block-like ostinato accompaniments and the dramatic contrast of strict group rhythm and untethered solo excursions." *Sunday Times*

"There is an elemental beauty in the music that evokes enveloping mists and infinite skies, yet the sometimes austere nature belies its richness of metaphor. While the viola apparently instigates, it is the cello whose dark, baritone utterances most characterise the incisive writing and condition the emerging patterns. At the same time, it is impossible to ignore the theatricality of the setting: four empty chairs and music stands transcribe an arc well beyond the confines of the quartet's tight semi-circle." *The Guardian*



Photo: Hanna Chleba/ArnePAL

Stageworks by Birtwistle are receiving Italian and German premieres this autumn, with *The Last Supper* featured at the Settembre Musica festival in Turin and Milan last month and *The Io Passion* staged by the Berliner Kammeroper at the Konzerthaus (7-16 November). Birtwistle is currently working on a double-bill of music theatre works for two voices and ensemble for premiere next summer.

Bernstein 90th celebrations



New York salutes Leonard Bernstein this autumn with a major city-wide celebration, *Bernstein: The Best of All Possible Worlds*, presented by Carnegie Hall and the New York Philharmonic. The series commemorates the 90th anniversary of his birth and

the 50th anniversary of his appointment as music director of the orchestra. Festivities run until 13 December and take in a host of leading orchestras and conductors, with performances including his three symphonies, the extraordinary *Mass*, and selections from his music for film, ballet and stage.

Other 90th highlights this month reflect Bernstein's interests in education - concerts by Chetham's Music School in Manchester and London (7-24 October) — and in crossing international barriers, with events in Beijing (11 October) and Singapore (17 October). Bernstein's Jewish roots are traced in a performance of his third symphony as part of a Kaddish Commemorative Concert at the Barbican in London on 28 October: John Axelrod conducts the Lucerne Festival Orchestra and Samuel Pisar narrates his own version of the text, as heard on the recent Nimbus recording (NI 5807).

Rautavaara at 80



Concert celebrations in Finland around the birthday on 9 October

7 October
Sibelius Academy, Helsinki
Lost Landscapes (Finnish premiere)
Kajja Saarikettu, *violin*

8/9 October
Finlandia Hall, Helsinki
Tapestry of Life (Finnish premiere)
Helsinki Philharmonic/Olli Mustonen

9/10 October
Concert Hall, Turku
Angel of Dusk / Angel of Light (Symphony No.7)
Mikko Multamäki, *db*/Turku Philharmonic/Petri Sakari

30 October
Temppeliaukio Church, Helsinki
Angels and Visitations / Book of Visions / Opera Arias
Finnish National Opera Orchestra/Mikko Franck

Photo: Ondine Records

Dean CD portrait

A new CD released by BIS (CD-1696) focuses on Brett Dean's twin creative roles, as "a formidable and musical player as well as an impressive composer" (The Guardian). The central work is Dean's *Viola Concerto* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Simone Young and the composer playing the virtuosic solo part. Dean has already performed the concerto 17 times on four continents since its premiere in 2005.



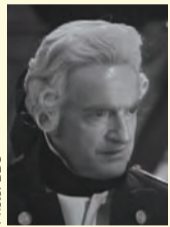
that Simon Rattle commissioned to accompany Holst's *The Planets*. It all makes an excellent showcase of Dean's range as a composer." *The Guardian*

"...imaginative reflection touching on the darkness of Berg, Shostakovich and late Beethoven, contrasted with energy vexed to nightmare by the modern world. A fine recording of a composer who continues to grow in stature." *Sydney Morning Herald*

Brett Dean's *Songs of Joy* were premiered on 2 October with

Simon Rattle conducting the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and baritone Peter Coleman-Wright. The work sets texts by Amanda Holden and relates to Dean's operatic adaptation of Peter Carey's *Bliss*, to be unveiled in Sydney in 2010. Lars Vogt and the Ensemble Wien-Berlin are touring Dean's *Polysomnography* for piano and wind quintet to the UK, Belgium, Germany and Austria this month, following its premiere at the Lucerne Festival.

Britten Pears on DVD



Decca has released historic DVDs of Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* and *Billy Budd* with Peter Pears in the roles he created, as part of a Britten-Pears DVD Collection. *Peter Grimes* was filmed in colour for a 1969 BBC TV production by Brian Large, conducted by the composer, capturing Pears' last performance as the haunted fisherman (074 3261). The *Billy Budd* dates from three years earlier, produced for TV by Basil Coleman and conducted by Charles Mackerras, with Pears as a definitive Captain Vere (074 3256).

"[Pears'] patrician features, with the high forehead and aquiline nose, so perfectly suits Edward Fairfax Vere that this, of all his roles, is the one with which he is most inseparably identified. The film production moves from the old man in his study to the Captain of the *Indomitable* aboard ship and back again, freely and movingly..."

"But if *Budd* is to be strongly recommended, *Grimes* has to be urged, passionately: intensely moving, beyond expectations even though those were high... The set built at the Maltings and filmed under difficulties becomes the Borough; it becomes our world as surely as it was the world for that narrow-minded community. Monolithic as a force, the chorus are all individuals and part of a marvellously individuated cast." *Gramophone*

Pears can also be heard as *Albert Herring* on a recording of the English Opera Group at the Theatre Royal in Copenhagen in 1949, with the composer in the pit, recently issued on CD by Nimbus (NI 5824/6). This is a historic document of the work only two years after its premiere with eleven members of the original cast and surprisingly good sound quality.

The Britten Centenary is in 2013. To discuss your advance plans, contact the Promotion Department by email on composers.uk@boosey.com

Ferguson Centenary



Howard Ferguson, whose centenary falls this month, is remembered as a composer of great craftsmanship – the evidence is clear in his masterly *Octet* – as a pianist of distinction, as teacher and musicologist, and as a close associate of Gerald Finzi, Myra Hess and Yfrah Neaman. This summer brought a number of high level performances of Ferguson's music, with his visionary *Amore Languet* for soloists, chorus and orchestra at the Three Choirs Festival and the Ulster Orchestra featuring his works in Belfast and at the BBC Proms, and the Japanese premiere of his *Four Diversions on Ulster Airs* conducted by Takuo Yuasa.

Autumn events include a special celebration of Ferguson's close collaboration with Myra Hess at the National Gallery in London, curating a series of memorable daily chamber concerts to lift spirits during World War II. On 25 November the annual Myra Hess day includes Ferguson's *Partita* for two pianos at a lunchtime concert and an afternoon discussion focuses on their work together. Mark Bebbington has recorded the composer's *Piano Concerto* for future release on the Somm label, and on 12 December *The Dream of the Rood*, Ferguson's other large-scale choral classic, is performed at Hull University.

Rorem Our Town in NY



Ned Rorem's recent opera *Our Town*, based on the Thornton Wilder classic, reached New York in April when Ed Berkeley's production was staged at The Juilliard School conducted by Anne Manson. With its economical casting and chamber orchestra scoring *Our Town* is proving popular with smaller opera companies, at conservatoires, and with a wide range of audiences, having received over 30 performances in ten theatres to date.

"Few composers take on a classic drama and come out artistically alive... As a Midwestern-born American, Rorem understands the setting of Thornton Wilder's great drama *Our Town*. As an exceptionally intellectual man, he understands Wilder's philosophical foundations. And as one of the great art-song composers today, he has conserved his operatic writing for what he feels will work. With a play 90 percent Wilder, and mainly structural changes by America's favorite opera librettist, poet J.D. McClatchey, Rorem has written a drama which is poignant, emotional, sometimes funny, but never far from Wilder's original study of life, death, remembrance and the meaning of existence itself."

Concertonet.com

"Wilder's play and, happily, Mr. Rorem's setting of it are sweet-tempered without being sugar-coated. Death and the unhappinesses it leaves behind are as much topics as life and its small pleasures. Mr. Rorem's music builds on favorite hymns and sings with a familiar tunefulness subjected to touches of acid... Mr. Rorem's vocal style could possibly be described as one continuous horizontal flow, but I like to think of it as a series of closely connected, self-sufficient arias." *New York Times*

"Throughout the opera, he calls on various American traditions. Act 1 has what I might term a barbershop trio. Along the way, he quotes Handel's *Largo* and Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*, to enjoyable effect. The scene at the soda fountain, where the young couple, George and Emily, confess their love, is marvelously tender. Later, their declarations in church are both intimate and stirring... a successful evening, especially for Ned Rorem, from whom music still streams." *New York Sun*

Rorem's *11 Songs for Susan*, written for Susan Graham and commissioned by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, are premiered at Carnegie Hall in May 2009. The set combines newly composed songs with new orchestrations of Rorem vocal favourites.

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Donald Mitchell
Boydell Press 978-1-84383-382-6
hardback 784 pp £45.00

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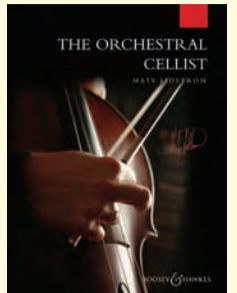
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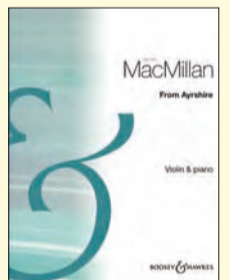
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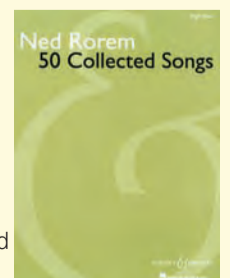


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