

Quarternotes

Clyne works astride the Atlantic

Anna Clyne, born in the UK and resident in New York, has a lively international schedule of orchestral performances.

During the 2010s Anna Clyne has developed into a sought-after composer of symphonic music, with an output also encompassing powerful chamber pieces with electronics, intimate string ensemble works and colourful scores forging musical links with art or dance. Clyne's music has been championed on the rostrum by Marin Alsop and Riccardo Muti, as well as by an emerging generation of conductors including Elim Chan, Alpesh Chauhan, Ben Gernon, Cristian Măcelaru, Enrique Mazzola, Robert Trevino and Joshua Weilerstein.

A good introduction to Anna Clyne is her popular concert-opener *Masquerade*, commissioned for the Last Night of the BBC Proms in 2013, which draws upon the array of dance music presented at 18th century concerts in London's pleasure gardens. It has enjoyed over 40 performances to date, including those conducted by Marin Alsop in Europe, the US and South America, while it continues to be heard on UK TV as the theme music for BBC Proms telecasts.

Night Ferry dates from 2012 during Clyne's residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and is described by the composer as "music of voyages, from stormy darkness to enchanted worlds". The 20-minute score receives its Swedish premiere next April with Edward Gardner conducting the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic.

The nocturnal theme is also explored in *This Midnight Hour* which reflects on poetry by Jiménez and Baudelaire and has received over 30 performances since its premiere in 2015. These include its Austrian, Italian, Swiss and UK premieres last season and its German and Swedish premieres this season.

"An artist who writes from the heart, who defies categorization..."

Riccardo Muti

Clyne has a special affinity with strings, as heard in two widely performed ensemble works, *Within Her Arms* and *Rest These Hands*. These were followed by the double violin concerto *Prince of Clouds* and the imaginary ballet for violin and orchestra *The Seamstress* which weaves together folk fiddling and poetry by Yeats. Her collaboration with artist and stop motion animator Josh Dorman, *The Violin*, combining music and film, was released as a DVD in 2014.

In recent years Anna Clyne has been reconnecting with Scotland where she studied at Edinburgh University. *Beltane*, premiered last year by the BBC Scottish Symphony under Thomas Dausgaard,



Photo: Javier Oddo

celebrates the victory of summer over winter with electronic auras adding a timeless bloom to the orchestral sound. The work charts the Celtic festival which Clyne attended as a student, witnessing the dramatic procession of actors, drummers, dancers and fire jugglers. The Scottish Chamber Orchestra tours *Within Her Arms* in the UK next spring,

travelling onwards to Tivoli in Copenhagen and the Mozartfest in Würzburg.

Clyne's most recent scores include *Abstractions*, an orchestral suite inspired by five contemporary artworks, and a mandolin concerto for Avi Avital, *Three Sisters*. For further information and a list of works visit www.boosey.com/clyne.

Lindberg Triumph to exist



Photo: Philip Gattward

Magnus Lindberg's new work for choir and orchestra, *Triumf att finnas till...* (*Triumph to exist...*), is a 20-minute setting of Swedish-language poetry by the Finnish writer Edith Södergran. The first performance is given on 10 November by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir conducted by Vladimir Jurowski, following on from Lindberg's residency with the orchestra between 2014 and 2017. The work is co-commissioned by the LPO, 14-18 NOW, the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lille and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

The seven poems were selected in the light of the centenary of the end of World War I but they also celebrate the triumph of humanity in the face of adversity, as explained by the composer: "I am particularly drawn to the work of Edith Södergran who was the first Finnish modernist poet, and like me, was part of the Swedish-speaking community of Finland. The opening poem, *Triumf att finnas till...*, was written by her in 1916, in the middle of the catastrophe and despair of World War I."

"Despite the world events of the time, which are surely the unspoken background to this poem, its meditation on the transience of life is a defiantly positive affirmation of the joy of existence, the outpouring of one who refuses to submit to the hopelessness all around her. For me, it says something deeply essential about the tragedy of millions of young men that gave their lives in that useless slaughter. They were deprived of the simple human triumph to merely exist. Every syllable cries out to be set to music."

Magnus Lindberg is resident composer with the Orchestre National de Lille, launched with the French premiere of *TEMPUS FUGIT* last month.



Buddha statue (Dreamstime)

The Festival d'Automne in Paris is presenting a major feature on the music of Claude Vivier, culminating in a staging of *Kopernikus* directed by Peter Sellars. The past decade has seen a growth of interest in the Canadian-born composer, with performing groups rising to the challenge of his music and audiences responding to its beauty and vision. Nine works by Vivier are programmed in Paris, ranging across his output from solo piano to full orchestra, alongside music by Dusapin, Murail and Grisey.

"I want art to be a sacred art, the revelation of forces..." Claude Vivier

Events opened last month with a performance of *Orion* by the Orchestre National de France conducted by Cristian Măcelaru. Offering a good entry point for orchestras wanting to explore Vivier's music, this work summons up the constellation on the celestial equator by deploying a wide-ranging melody, repeated in mantra fashion. The composer captures the illusion of stasis within travel, "as if in an airplane standing still".

Siddhartha, which Vivier based on the novel by Hermann Hesse, is imaginatively paired with Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* in a concert by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France under Olari Elts. Completed after Vivier's studies with Stockhausen, the work spatially divides the orchestra into eight chamber groups and alludes to the Buddha-like spiritual journey undertaken by Hesse's lead character, predicting the composer's own quest to the East in search of enlightenment and rebirth.

Vivier's final work, *Glaubst Du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele?* (*Do you believe in*

the immortality of the soul?), is an uncanny prediction of his own murder in Paris in 1983, describing not the fear of being dead but rather that of dying. Twelve voices from Choeur Solistes XXI are joined by three synthesizers and percussionists from the Ensemble Intercontemporain under the baton of Stéphane Grapperon. A concert of ensemble and chamber works featuring *Shiraz*, *Bouchara* and *Pulau Dewata* tracks Vivier's journey of influences along the Silk Road and onwards to Bali.

Peter Sellars brings Vivier's 'ritual opera of death' *Kopernikus* to three French stages, opening at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris on 4 December and travelling on to the Nouveau Théâtre de Montreuil and the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse. All performances feature the seven voices of Roomful of Teeth together with seven instrumentalists of L'Instant Donné.

The astronomer of the title represents the point where man's perception of his place in the cosmos shifted. Vivier replaces drama and characters with a ritual of purification of the mind through fire and water. As Peter Sellars writes: "Vivier's music finds a peace beyond peace, sacred rest in metaphysical action. The visionaries are arriving. We no longer need to be afraid."

Kopernikus received its first Argentinian staging at the Festival Nueva Opera in Buenos Aires in August and a new production opens at the Staatsoper in Berlin on 18 January. Other Vivier highlights this season include a feature at the Casa da Música in Porto with *Orion* and *Siddhartha* in the New Year. Performances of his haunting *Lonely Child* for soprano and orchestra can be heard in Cologne in January and Stockholm in May.

For full information on Paris events visit www.festival-automne.com.



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Reich Music for Ensemble and Orchestra

Steve Reich introduces his new score combining ensemble and orchestra, which is premiered in Los Angeles in November and travels to London and Sydney this season.



Photo: Worgie Bergmann

In 1987 you decided not to write any more for orchestra. Why was this, and what has changed in the past 30 years?

In the 1980s I was starting to write for larger forces beyond the size that my ensemble could tour. Besides *The Four Sections* and *Three Movements* my longtime devotion to the poetry of William Carlos Williams led to composing *The Desert Music* for large orchestra, percussion and chorus in 1984. However, at the premiere in Cologne, it was clear the WDR players and singers were completely out of touch with my idiom and were unable to play it well at all. Shortly afterwards Michael Tilson Thomas conducted the Brooklyn Philharmonic with several members of my ensemble in principal positions and the result

was excellent, as you can hear on the Nonesuch recording from 1984. Nevertheless, the general orchestral outlook for my music was not encouraging, so, at that time, I decided “no more”. Now it’s over 30 years later and the situation is very different: a lot of the orchestral musicians know my style, particularly the percussionists, and there is a new generation of younger conductors that are well aware of my music and very skilled at performing it.

Is the score an extension of your works that pit a soloist or group against itself?

Not really. With *Music for Ensemble and Orchestra* I looked at the orchestral stage and saw that an ensemble very similar to what I usually write for was already sitting there in two horseshoes, with the front strings and the principal woodwinds. These players, together with two pianos and two vibes became my ensemble. For the orchestra I added four trumpets and a string section. The ensemble certainly contains a great deal of melodic interlocking while the orchestral strings have a simpler more harmonically supportive role. The trumpets are often melodic without complex interlocking. I would say the piece is quite different from either the Counterpoint series or the multiple ensemble pieces like *Double Sextet* and *Triple Quartet*.

You’ve drawn upon aspects of the Baroque concerto grosso?

Bach’s 5th Brandenburg Concerto is one of my all-time favorite pieces of music. I love the signature opening broken D major chord played

in double sixteenths, the canonic writing between the flute and principal violin and the way motivic fragments are thrown back and forth – these features are alluded to in some of the details of *Music for Ensemble and Orchestra*. However I don’t follow the integrated exchange of material between Concertino and Ripieno groups like Bach does. My orchestra mainly provides harmonic support for what the ensemble is doing, so their functions are distinct.

How do you decide on a language and shape for an abstract work like this?

The shape of the piece is formed into five movements determined by the speed of the pulse in the pianos. The tempo is fixed but the speed varies from movement to movement via different note values: 16ths, 8ths, quarters, 8ths and 16ths. A five movement arch form is rhythmically delineated. The harmonic ground plan in each movement moves from one key to another that are generally a minor third apart: A-C-Eb-F#-A.

You’ve avoided complex metrics and the regular pulse continues throughout the 20-minute span. Why is this?

My rhythmic plans tend to fall into two types. In my early works I used what I call an ‘ambiguous triple metre’ of 3/2 containing 12 pulses. This took me up to *Tehillim* where I found the music falling into more complex patterns combining groups of 2s and 3s. First I thought this was a metrical necessity of setting classical Hebrew, but the same thing happened with the William Carlos Williams text in *The Desert Music*. It seems I was unconsciously remembering the changing meters of Stravinsky’s *Danse Sacrale* and Bartók’s compound ‘Bulgarian’ meters. Some works combine these two distinct approaches,

but *Music for Ensemble and Orchestra* is back to plan A, running continuously at quarter note = 100, but with changing note values as I mentioned.

Could the new piece open up the possibility of further orchestral scores?

I’ve nothing orchestral planned at the moment. I’m going to write a piece for the Colin Currie Group and Synergy Vocals which will set Biblical texts and right at the moment I’m completing a work in collaboration with artist Gerhard Richter. This will be premiered together with a film by Richter, related to his *Patterns* book, to open The Shed in Manhattan next Spring.

Reich Music for Ensemble and Orchestra (2018) 19’

Commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Baltic Sea Philharmonic

1-4 November 2018

(world premiere)
Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles
Los Angeles Philharmonic/Susanna Mälkki

29 November 2018

(European premiere)
Barbican, London
London Symphony Orchestra/Kristjan Järvi

13/15/16 February 2019

(Australian premiere)
Sydney Opera House
Sydney Symphony Orchestra/
David Robertson

Goldschmidt Cenci in Bregenz

Berthold Goldschmidt’s opera *Beatrice Cenci*, composed in 1950 and first staged in 1994, received its Austrian premiere in July with a production by Johannes Erath at the Bregenz Festival. This dramatic examination of the debauched 16th century Cenci family attracted positive reviews, particularly for the transcending quality of the composer’s music for the heroine, both murderess and tragic victim. The *Sunday Telegraph* noted that, “as the Austrians show in Bregenz, it’s never too late to fall back in love with Goldschmidt’s music. How many times does a composer need to be vindicated before he remains in repertoire?”

“The music is amazingly beautiful. Yes, you hear about evil deeds, and see something of it – but nothing sounds cruel... In the third and final act, after Cenci’s murder, the opera turns into a requiem for the upright Beatrice,

initiated by a farewell to the world – an absolutely stunning, song-like aria with orchestral interludes, dark poetry and a gorgeous melody.” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

“A brilliantly focused staging of a neglected work” *Sunday Telegraph*

“Goldschmidt himself described his *Beatrice Cenci* as a *bel canto* opera. In contrast to the brutality of the drama the predominantly lyrical gestures intensify the pain, while the orchestra responds in symphonic manner with sharply accentuated percussion, free-tonal passages and powerful brass emerging from the abyss... In view of the compositional quality and the timeliness of the subject, more stages should devote themselves to this worthwhile opera.” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*



Photo: Bregenz Festival/Karl Forster

Berthold Goldschmidt’s *Beatrice Cenci* staged at the Bregenz Festival.

Höller Viola Concerto premiere



Photo: Marco Borggreve

York Höller’s new *Viola Concerto* for Tabeca Zimmermann was premiered in May at a centenary tribute concert for his teacher Bernd Alois Zimmermann at the Philharmonie in Cologne, featuring the Gürzenich Orchestra conducted by François-Xavier Roth. The Asian premiere follows this month with the Seoul Philharmonic under Roland Kluttig.

“As played by the fabulous soloist, this piece has a good chance to get into the repertoire... It’s a real concerto, and that means above all it is written for and not against the instrument. Firstly, the solo part is sonorous and very suitable for viola: with flageolet tones, glissandi, playing hard on the bridge or at high altitudes, the viola’s possibilities are savoured, while in recitative-like passages

it is always expressive and speaks directly. In addition, the viola’s dialogue with the orchestra or its individual groups is fascinating and imaginative – there are beautiful reciprocated motivic exchanges.” *Kölnischer Stadt-Anzeiger*

“Höller has composed a delicate concerto for viola and large orchestra, adopting the classical three-movement form of fast-slow-fast, with a chaconne underpinning the elegiac middle movement composed in response to Pierre Boulez’s death... You do not have to be a special fan of “modern” music in order to succumb to the sonic charm of this work, which is by no means scary, and Höller, acclaimed by the audience, shows that you can still write repertoire-friendly music today.” *Online Music Magazin*

A further Höller tribute to Zimmermann took the form of the miniature *Kondukt* for chamber ensemble, referring both to his teacher’s soundworld and that of Josquin des Prez’s motet on the death of Ockeghem.

Neuwirth Lost Highway for 50th

Austrian composer Olga Neuwirth is enjoying an active diary in her 50th birthday year, with highlights ranging from a residency at the Lucerne Festival to the BBC Proms and portrait series at the Vienna Konzerthaus and Hamburg Elbphilharmonie. Last month brought the German premiere of *Lost Highway*, her major music theatre work dating from 2003, presented as a collaboration between Frankfurt Opera and Ensemble Modern.

With a libretto by Elfriede Jelinek based on the film script by David Lynch and Barry Gifford, Neuwirth’s *Lost Highway* adds further layers to the dark labyrinth of the cult movie. Karsten Januschke conducted the new staging by Yuval Sharon, with cast including John Brancy, Hugo Armstrong, Elizabeth Reiter and the extraordinary vocal artist David Moss in the role of Mr Eddy. The production featured an enhanced electronic soundtrack, specially reworked for the staging.

Neuwirth created a suite from *Lost Highway* for six instrumental soloists, ensemble and live electronics which reached its definitive form in 2008. This version will receive its US premiere on 13 October performed by the International Contemporary Ensemble in a special 64 speaker surround sound



Photo: Harald Hoffmann

presentation celebrating the 10th anniversary of EMPAC in New York.

The complete *Lost Highway* is recorded on Kairos with Klangforum Wien conducted by Johannes Kalitzke. The label is soon to release a new disc containing two major concertante works by Neuwirth: *...miramondo multiplo...*, featuring trumpeter Håkan Hardenberger, the Mahler Youth Orchestra and conductor Ingo Metzmacher and *Remnants of songs... an Amphigory* with violist Antoine Tamestit and the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra under Susanna Mälkki.

Turnage Testament from Ukraine



Photo: Philip Gaiward

Mark-Anthony Turnage’s new work for soprano and orchestra, *Testament*, is premiered on 7 November by Natalya Romaniw and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Kirill Karabits. The Ukrainian conductor suggested a work relating to his homeland, soon after the siege of Kiev Airport, and the project developed as described by the composer:

“I decided to write a score focused on themes of displacement, conflict and the particular political history of Ukraine which has often suffered oppression under the Russians. I found this great poem by Serhiy Zhadan and set out to find other Ukrainian texts to surround it. Then I discovered Vasyl Stus who is highly rated in his homeland

which led back to Taras Shevchenko and his celebrated poem *Testament* that was also set by Prokofiev. The four texts span the Imperial, Soviet and modern eras and I’ve employed a few Ukrainian folk songs to underpin the work.”

The vocal part of *Testament* can be sung in English translation or in the original Ukrainian. The German premiere follows in Weimar on 9 December with the Staatskapelle conducted by Kirill Karabits.

Turnage’s chamber opera for family audiences, *Coraline*, based on the dark fantasy by Neil Gaiman, is travelling internationally after its premiere by The Royal Opera in London. The production by Aletta Collins received its German premiere at the Theater Freiburg in June and reaches the Opéra de Lille next month.

Other highlights this season include the US premiere of his orchestral work *Remembering* in November with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Andris Nelsons, and the UK premiere of *Symphonic Movements* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Carlos Kalmar in February.

Turnage’s new string quartet for the Piatti Quartet, *Winter’s Edge*, is premiered at the Flagey’s Klarafestival in Brussels in March, with the first UK performance following at the Wigmore Hall in May.

From war to peace



Photo: Ernest Brooks/Wikimedia Commons

Britten War Requiem on stage

The dramatic strength of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* has led to a series of visual realisations beyond the concert platform. The latest of these opens at the London Coliseum on 16 November with six performances staged by English National Opera in the weeks following Armistice Day. Daniel Kramer's production with designs by Turner Prize-winning artist Wolfgang Tilmans is conducted by Martyn Brabbins with singers Emma Bell, David Butt Philip and Roderick Williams.

Combining anti-war English poetry by Wilfred Owen and the Latin Requiem Mass, the *War Requiem* was written to mark the opening of the new Coventry Cathedral in 1962 alongside the bombed old cathedral. Britten's powerful score captures the personal experience of soldiers like Owen in the World War I trenches but also sends a universal plea for peace. Owen survived until the final week of the war – news of the poet's fate reached his parents as the Armistice bells were ringing on 11 November. Britten heads his oratorio with a quotation from Owen: *My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity. All a poet can do today is warn.*

The first visualisation of the *War Requiem* came with Derek Jarman's 1989 film adaptation using the 1963 Decca recording. Scenes are drawn from memories of an old soldier, played by Laurence Olivier in his last acting role, including

Owen's 'strange meeting' on the battlefield, and hospital scenes with Tilda Swinton as the nurse tending Owen. Jarman's unique visual world is combined with footage of more recent conflicts.

Stagings of the *War Requiem* followed, with notable productions in recent years including Calixto Bieito's radical interpretation seen at the Theater Basel in 2013 and Norwegian Opera in Oslo. This terrifyingly intense production set the drama in a church, complete with stained glass, scaffolding, chorus in the pews and the chamber orchestra on stage. A further production at the Lyon Opera by Japanese director Yoshi Oida was staged last year with a trio of English, German and Russian soloists matching the symbolic reconciliation of warring nations at the work's premiere under Britten's baton.

"All a poet can do today is warn" *Wilfred Owen*

The centenary of the end of World War I has attracted high profile performances of the *War Requiem* in its more conventional concert setting, both in the UK and internationally in Paris, Lille, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, Madrid and Washington.



Britten's War Requiem staged by Calixto Bieito at Norwegian Opera (2016)

Photo: Erik Berg

Jenkins The Armed Man

This autumn sees Karl Jenkins conducting *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* in London, Swansea and Berlin at major Armistice centenary commemorations: these are among over 200 performances of the work scheduled around the world this year. The Royal Armouries commissioned the score from Jenkins in 1999 and presented it again within its 100 Days of Peace concert last month at Westminster Central Hall with the Royal Choral Society and Philharmonia Orchestra. The gala event in aid of mental health charities supporting military veterans was attended by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.



Photo: courtesy of Warner Classics

This month brings a performance of *The Armed Man* as a highlight of the Swansea Festival on 6 October at Brangwyn Hall with the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales. Jenkins, who grew up nearby on the Gower peninsula, also conducts his setting of Laurence Binyon's poem *For the Fallen*, famous for its recitation on Remembrance Day, and the world premiere of his new *Lamentation* for mezzo, cello, choir and orchestra. This sets the poem *Lament for Syria* by the 13-year-old refugee Amineh Abou Keresch which won last year's Betjeman Poetry Prize.

On 2 November over 3000 choral singers will assemble at the Mercedes-Benz Arena in Berlin for a historic *Sing for Peace* concert including *The Armed Man*. The composer conducts the World Orchestra for Peace and the performance, together with a film screened around the arena, will be recorded for future television broadcast. Choristers from over 20 countries, stretching from Canada to the Philippines and New Zealand, will travel to the German capital to participate in this international plea for peace.

2019 is Karl Jenkins's 75th birthday year and celebrations include a UK tour of *The Armed Man* visiting Cardiff (10 February), Glasgow (3 March), Birmingham (10 March) and Manchester (16 March). The programme also features the recent organ concerto *6000 Pipes* with soloist Jonathan Scott, *Palladio* and selections from *Symphonic Adieu*.

MacMillan All the Hills and Vales Along

Ian Bostridge is tenor soloist in James MacMillan's new work commissioned by 14-18 NOW and the London Symphony Orchestra to mark the centenary of the Armistice. Scored for tenor, chorus, brass band and string quintet or string orchestra, *All the Hills and Vales Along* sets five texts by Scottish wartime poet Charles



Charles Hamilton Sorley (1895-1915)

Photo: unknown 1914/15

Hamilton Sorley. First performances take place on 6 October as the centre-piece of MacMillan's Ayrshire festival Cumnock Tryst conducted by Eamonn Dougan and on 4 November by the LSO strings and Chorus under Gianandrea Noseda at the Barbican.

MacMillan notes that "although his body of work is small, Masfield and Graves thought of Sorley as one of the most significant war poets. Years ago I was given a book of Poems of the First World War, edited by Martin Stephen, and I immediately turned to the ones by Owen, Sassoon and Graves. However, I was also directed towards a beautiful poem *All the Hills and Vales Along* by CH Sorley and I made a mental note. I returned to it years later, along with others by him, which are now set in the new oratorio."

All the Hills and Vales Along features settings of five of Sorley's poems including his last, *When you see millions of the mouthless dead*, discovered in his kit bag after his death on the Western Front in 1915 aged only 20. Following movements for instruments, choir and soloist alone, forces join for the final setting *To Germany* including the lines *When it is peace, then we may view again with new-won eyes each other's truer form and wonder*. This is MacMillan's second work written for Ian Bostridge, following the *Gloria* dating from 2011, commissioned for the 50th anniversary of the opening of the new Coventry Cathedral and performed there again in June this year.

A few days before the Barbican performance of the new oratorio the LSO and soloist Peter Moores give the UK premiere of MacMillan's *Trombone Concerto*, which ranges from hymn-like melodies through powerful eruptions from brass, percussion and siren to a final soulful lament.

Prokofiev Fiery Angel in Aix

"There is no doubt that *The Fiery Angel* is Prokofiev's most intense dramatic music... a medieval tale of expressed sexual desire told from an early twentieth century symbolist perspective." So wrote *Opera Today* summing up the opera seen in a new staging by Mariusz Treliński at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in July. Kazushi Ono conducted the Orchestre de Paris with a cast headed by Lithuanian soprano Ausrinė Stundytė in the musically and psychologically demanding lead role of Renata, repeating her acclaimed portrayal heard in Munich and Lyon, and Scott Hendricks as the lonely Ruprecht, progressively trapped into her madness.

Mariusz Treliński's production is set in a small town hotel perhaps in Eastern Europe, with Renata's obsession with the fiery angel a projection of her hallucinogenic state rather than the result of diabolical possession. In cinematic style recalling David Lynch and Fassbinder the staging offers a visual psychoanalysis drawing Renata back to the teenage experiences that control her adult life. This production was also

seen at Polish National Opera in May and travels on to Norwegian National Opera in a future season.

"Prokofiev's *Fiery Angel* throws the audience into a lyrical delirium in which the lush frenzy of the orchestral writing emerges triumphant... Raving, hysterical, Renata sets her sights on the unhappy Ruprecht: out of love, he will follow her in a race to the abyss where reality and mystical fantasies, past and present, in heaven, earth and hell, mingle happily." *La Croix*

There has been a wave of interest in Prokofiev's experimental operas *The Gambler* and *The Fiery Angel* across the past five years, attracting directors including Benedict Andrews, Calixto Bieito, Caroline Gruber, Barry Kosky and Harry Kupfer. As well as its full orchestral version, *The Fiery Angel* is available in a reduced ensemble version for smaller theatres first heard in Vienna in 2010.

Arthaus Musik has released a new DVD box set of Prokofiev's complete symphonies and concertos with Valery Gergiev conducting live performances from the Mariinsky Theatre (NTSC 109239).



Photo: Pascal Victor/Artcompres

Prokofiev's The Fiery Angel at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

Andriessen Writing to Vermeer

Louis Andriessen's opera *Writing to Vermeer* received its German premiere at the Theater Heidelberg in May – the work's first new production since its initial international run of performances in 1999/2000. Johannes von Matuschka's staging, conducted by Dietger Holm, offered an alternative vision of the opera, focusing on the intimate interiors of Vermeer's paintings. This was in marked contrast to the spectacular original production by Peter Greenaway and Saskia Boddeke with its sophisticated film sequences, torrential flooding of the stage and livestock in the theatre.

Photo: Francesca Patella



Writing to Vermeer is built from letters sent to the Delft artist by the women in his life, combining Andriessen's music with a libretto by Greenaway and electronic inserts by Michel van der Aa. It originally travelled from the Netherlands Opera to the Adelaide Festival and Lincoln Center in New York, the London Sinfonietta presented a concert performance at the Southbank Centre, and the opera was released on disc by Nonesuch in 2006. With a compact cast of female and children's voices and its medium-sized orchestra, the work is well suited to smaller opera theatres, as demonstrated by the new production in Heidelberg.

"Overall, *Writing to Vermeer* is a very unusual piece. Minimal action and abundant artistic craft result in a total work that stimulates the imagination and tells of Vermeer's era, without becoming a history lesson." *Das Opernglas*

"With his characteristic chamber music-like scoring, Andriessen assembles the most heterogeneous stylistic patterns in the manner of a *pasticcio*, mixing minimalist constructivism with jazz sounds, strict neoclassicism with lyrical vocal phrases, and composing baroque quotations from Sweelinck and Lully in his own idiom. Above all the opera captures a poetic, intimate, colourful tone... There was strong, unanimous applause." *Opernwelt*

This autumn brings a special feature on the composer's music presented by the New York Philharmonic under its new Dutch Music Director Jaap van Zweden. The October series entitled *The Art of Andriessen* includes the world premiere of *Agamemnon*, commissioned by the orchestra with support from the Marie-Josée Kravis Prize for New Music. This 20-minute tone poem energetically depicts the Greek warrior and the characters surrounding him in the Trojan war. The score travels to Europe in January with performances by the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Marin Alsop and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic under JoAnn Falletta within the Zaterdag Matinee series at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw.

Andriessen's 80th birthday falls on 6 June 2019 and the preceding month launches celebrations with a new work commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and a concert series at the Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam.



Louis Andriessen's *Writing to Vermeer* in its German premiere production at the Heidelberg Theater.



The 50th anniversary of Roberto Gerhard's death in 2020 offers the opportunity to explore the orchestral music of this 20th century master, including his five symphonies and four concertos. These works date from the second phase of his creative life, exiled from his Catalan homeland after the Spanish Civil War and building a new composing life in Cambridge.

The *Violin Concerto* (1942-45) is the most traditional of Gerhard's three solo concertos, attracting soloists including Olivier Charlier, Daniel Hope and Ernst Kovacic. Extrovert in its solo violin writing, the work is also deeply personal, exploring themes of exile in the middle movement, and the shift from wartime to freedom in the rondo variations finale. The concerto also signalled Gerhard's rapprochement with the music and techniques of his teacher Schoenberg, though the score's richness is perhaps closer to Berg's concerto, coupled with Bartókian atmospheric.

Gerhard's *Piano Concerto* (1951), premiered at the Aldeburgh Festival, has proved to be his most readily programmable thanks to its string orchestra accompaniment, with performances by pianists including Peter Donohoe, Rolf Hind, Laura Mikkola and Gabriele Montero. Gerhard's idiom draws on Spanish baroque keyboard techniques, combining Bartók's punchy piano style in the outer movements and guitar-like figurations in the Requiem-imbued central set of variations. The *Harpichord Concerto* (1955) is perhaps his most experimental in its opening movement, using percussion to complement the string orchestra

and mirror the jangling resonances of the solo part. The second movement is a brooding Goyaesque interlude leading to a final *danse macabre*.

The earliest symphonic work undertaken by Gerhard in Cambridge was his *Symphony 'Homenaje a Pedrell'* (1941), written as a tribute to his teacher Felipe Pedrell. Drawing on Catalan folk themes from his mentor's opera *La Celestina*, the symphony remained unperformed in Gerhard's lifetime, though the final movement was extracted as the highly popular *Pedrelliana* for orchestra. *Symphony No. 1* (1952-53) built upon the musical evolution in the violin and piano concertos and points towards Gerhard's mature style, with the Spanish inflections and dance rhythms increasingly abstracted. The work explores states of tension and danger, no doubt linked to the first of the composer's heart attacks, with the final movement injecting a *scherzando* element alongside the drama.

Symphony No. 2 (1957-59), commissioned for the BBC Symphony Orchestra, saw Gerhard exploring the mathematical control of rhythm, form and orchestration as well as pitch. He returned to the work at the end of his life, expanding the orchestration in his late style to produce *Metamorphoses* (1967), though the task was left incomplete at his death and was edited for performance by Alan Boustead. His final decade brought *Symphony No. 3 'Collages'* incorporating electronics and *Symphony No. 4 'New York'* commissioned by the New York Philharmonic following Bernstein's US premiere of the first symphony, as well as the masterly *Concerto for Orchestra* (1965) [all three works published by Oxford University Press].

Barcelona and Madrid lead preparations for the 50th anniversary with performances this season of the complete *Don Quixote* by the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra on 9 February conducted by Josep Caballé-Domenesch, and a staged version of his Camus-based cantata *The Plague* [OUP] at the Teatro Real in Madrid conducted by Juanjo Mena next June.

All Gerhard's symphonies and concertos can be heard in exemplary Chandos recordings featuring the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Matthias Bamert. For further information, visit www.boosey.com/gerhard2020.

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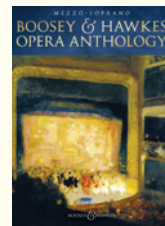
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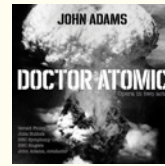
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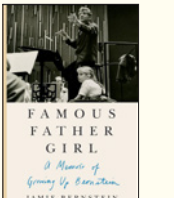
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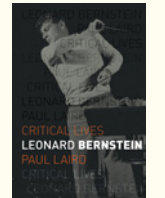
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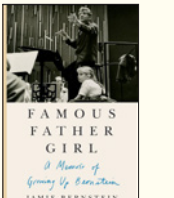


Photo: Peter Torpey

Boston Lyric Opera presents the world premiere on 14 November of Tod Machover's new chamber opera, *Schoenberg in Hollywood*, with a libretto by Simon Robson. The singing cast of three is headed by Omar Ebrahim as composer Arnold Schoenberg, cast into exile in Los Angeles in the 1930s. The performances, conducted by David Angus, take place at a restored Bostonian cinema from the golden age of American movies, with a

production directed by Karole Armitage drawing on the scenario by the late Braham Murray.

Fleeing the darkness and despair of Europe beset by growing Nazism, Schoenberg found himself in sunny California with its booming Hollywood studios. The opera explores an alternative history after Schoenberg was introduced by Harpo Marx to the movie mogul Irving Thalberg. What if the composer had accepted Thalberg's invitation to write the music for the MGM blockbuster *The Good Earth*? Would he have viewed it as a vehicle to reach millions with a distinctly Schoenbergian vision of artistic complexity, spiritual unity, and political action?

Tod Machover has extended the operatic artform, often incorporating innovations in technology. His stageworks range from Philip K. Dick's sci-fi classic *VALIS* (1987) through the children's opera *Skellig* (2008) based on Marc Almond's novel, to the chilling fusion of humanity and robotics in *Death and the Powers* (2010), staged in Monaco, Boston, Chicago and Dallas.