

Classical Music Daily



Hilary Tann — Issue 167, March 2023

Welsh composer and teacher Hilary Tann was born in Llwynypia, Glamorgan on 2 November 1947. She studied at the University of Wales, Cardiff with Alun Hoddinott and at Princeton University with J K Randall and Milton Babbitt.

Her music is published by Oxford University Press and has been recorded on various labels, including Navona Records and Lorelt. She held a series of composer residencies, and wrote concertos for violin, alto saxophone and her own instrument, the cello. The popular *Shakkei*, a dyptich for solo oboe and chamber orchestra, commissioned by the Presteigne Festival of Music and the Arts on the Welsh borders, was first performed by Virginia Shaw at the 2007 Presteigne Festival.

Hilary Tann, also a published haiku poet, was taught to play the shakuhachi and Japanese music influenced her own output, as did the natural world and Wales in particular.

She lived in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains, NY, USA. From 1980 until 2019 she was the John Howard Payne Professor of Music at Union College, Schenectady, New York, USA.

Hilary Tann died suddenly on 8 February 2023, aged seventy-five. Further information: hilarytann.com

WATCH OUR JUNE 2022 VIDEO NEWSLETTER, FEATURING HILARY TANN

READ ONA JARMALAVIČIŪTĖ'S 2020 INTERVIEW WITH HILARY TANN

READ MORE ABOUT HILARY TANN

There are more classical music obituaries at the very end of this newsletter.

CLASSICAL MUSIC NEWS - TAN DUN

Decca Classics has signed the multi award-winning composer and conductor Tan Dun.

Fresh from conducting the first UK performance of his epic work, the *Buddha Passion*, at London's Royal Festival Hall last month - a performance which was met with glowing reviews from the critics - Tan Dun is thrilled to begin this major new recording partnership with Decca.

Tan Dun says, 'Decca has always been a dream for me. As a young artist, I could never have imagined that one day we would embrace each other. I've worked with many recording labels over the years, but now, connecting with Decca, I understand. It is so pure and classical and, yet cool and fresh and open to all sorts of music and cultures, it is a very special place. I feel deeply honoured to be part of it.'

From planting rice during Mao's Cultural Revolution, despite years of discouragement, **Tan Dun** has earned a global reputation as 'a kind of rock star of the modern music scene.' (*New York Times*).

In the 1960s Tan Dun was a young boy running barefoot through the fields of remote Hunan in China, yet always aware of the sounds and traditions surrounding him. Today, based in New York, he is one of the world's most exciting composers. Having been catapulted into the mainstream by his Oscar, Bafta and Grammy-award winning score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the UNESCO Global Goodwill Ambassador has scored music for global events such as the reunification of Hong Kong with China, the world's celebration of the new millennium and the Beijing Olympics. He has also written music for some of the biggest names in music, such as Lang Lang, and for many of the world's leading orchestras, and was the first composer ever commissioned by *Google/YouTube*.



Tan Dun. Photo © 2003 Nana Watanabe

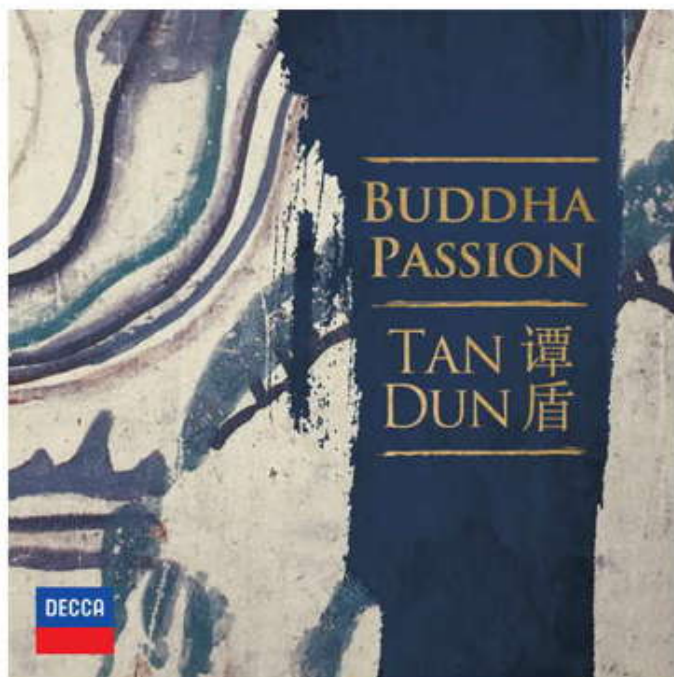
When the Cultural Revolution broke out in 1966, Tan Dun's parents were sent away and he stayed at home with his grandmother. He would go down to the river when she would wash the clothes and find it infinitely soothing. Today, the world-renowned composer frequently uses the sound of water as an instrument in his compositions. Ever curious about the connection between sound and the earth itself, Tan Dun also employs other organic materials as instruments, such as stones and paper.

Aged sixteen, Tan Dun was also sent to the country to work planting rice. On arrival he had to sign a statement saying that he would work in the rice fields for the rest of his life. One day a local Peking Opera troupe lost some members after a ferry disaster. They came to the village asking if anyone could play an instrument - Tan Dun had taught himself the violin so joined the travelling opera troupe. The Cultural Revolution came to an end after Chairman Mao's death in 1976 and it was announced that the music conservatories would open again for the first time in ten years. Having no money for the fare, Tan Dun smuggled himself onto a train to audition for Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music.

Since then Tan Dun's success has been meteoric.

On 3 March 2023 **Decca** releases *Five Souls*, which Tan Dun describes as a 'a journey from the universe to the metaverse where we discover our spirit, who we are and what we are meant to be'. The five movements for small ensemble include water percussion, harp, brass, strings and digeridoo.

The first major new album from Decca, to be released on 7 April 2023, will be the first recording of Tan Dun's *Buddha Passion*: a tale of wonder, of truth and of gentle but irresistible transformation. The monumental work, involving massed choirs, large orchestra, six percussionists and an array of soloists including indigenous singers, traditional Chinese instruments and a dancing pipa player, is the first such 'Passion' on a Buddhist rather than Christian narrative.



Album covers for Tan Dun's *Five Souls* and *Buddha Passion*. © 2023 Decca Classics

Another major first recording, *The Tears of Nature*, follows in September 2023. The twenty-five-minute percussion concerto was written in the wake of three major natural disasters - the Sichuan earthquake in 2008, the Japanese Tsunami in 2011 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012, all of which affected Tan Dun personally.

Co-Presidents of Decca Label Group, Tom Lewis and Laura Monks, say, 'We are so proud to welcome Tan Dun to Decca. He is a global statesman for classical music; arguably one of the most inventive, energetic and warm-hearted composers alive. His story is quite extraordinary. He embodies the sometimes unimaginable and unique way in which music can change your life.'

'I have two goals in my heart: I don't just want to establish a musical idea ... I want to develop a cross-cultural idea that brings nature and classical music, ancient and modern, together.' - Tan Dun

MONTHLY AND DAILY UPDATES BY EMAIL

send us an email and ask to be put on the mailing list. We'll send you an email each month so that you can read each newsletter immediately. You can also ask to receive an email from us every day, if you'd like to know as soon as each daily feature is published. The monthly and daily emails can be stopped easily by clicking on a link at the bottom of each message.



Opera Forward Festival 2023

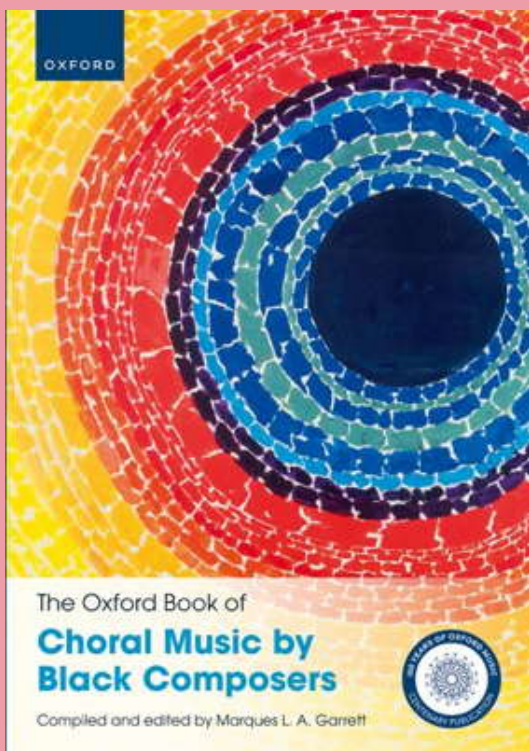
Urgent, compelling and extravagant. Dutch National Opera's Opera Forward Festival (OFF) is a contrarian exploration of as yet uncharted territory. OFF seeks sounds that are still under-represented in opera through groundbreaking musical theatre productions, in-depth programs, and new collaborations. Experience the conversation with progressive and critical voices about the future of the art form. OFF is a celebration of what opera essentially is: a fusion of diverse arts into a musical-theatrical whole.

Three big performances are at the heart of the Opera Forward Festival 2023:

The first production of *Animal Farm* by Alexander Raskatov has a libretto by Ian Burton, stage direction by Damiano Michieletto and musical direction by Bassem Akiki, with Gennady Bezzubenko, Misha Kiria, Michael Gniffke, James Kryshak, Germán Olvera, Karl Laquit, Artem Krutko, Helena Rasker, Maya Gour, Elena Vassilieva, Holly Flack, Karl Laquit, Marcel Beekman, Francis van Broekhuizen and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra.

This is a musical adaptation of a satirical fable. *Animal Farm* is a revolutionary opera, based on George Orwell's timeless novel about a fight for freedom doomed to failure. The dystopian atmosphere and turmoil of shifting world views are interpreted in a new, extreme, heady composition.

There are seven performances of *Animal Farm* at Nationale Opera & Ballet, Amsterdam, Netherlands: Friday 3 March at 8pm, Sunday 5 at 2pm, Wednesday 8 at 8pm, Friday 10 at 8pm, Sunday 12 at 2pm, Tue 14 at 8pm and Thursday 16 March 2023 at 8pm. [READ MORE](#)



The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers (2023, OUP), compiled and edited by Marques L A Garrett

Oxford University Press (OUP) has published one of the world's most comprehensive collections of choral music by black composers, ranging from the sixteenth century to the present day. In showcasing music from notable black composers, *The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers* - edited by established American conductor, teacher and composer Marques L A Garrett - aims to address a historical lack of representation of black musicians and composers in the choral canon.



Marques L A Garrett.
Photo © 2013 Justin R Robinson

The collection, published on 2 February 2023 during OUP Music's centenary year, includes music by historical composers such as Vicente Lusitano, Florence Price and Nathaniel Dett, as well as living composers including Zanaida Robles, B E Boykin, and Robert A Harris, showcasing the talents of choral music today. Music from the anthology has been recorded by London Voices, conducted by Shivani Rattan and produced by Ken Burton, and is available across all major streaming platforms from 16 January 2023.

Speaking about the publication, editor Marques L A Garrett said:

The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers is a product of my research into the original, non-idiomatic choral music of black composers. Through publishing this anthology with Oxford University Press, we are raising the profile of composers who have added great value to the choral repertoire but who have previously been and continue to be underrepresented. It is my hope that the collection will be a great resource for classes, conductors, teachers and choirs everywhere, and a source of inspiration for those in underrepresented communities looking to pursue their passions.

Non-idiomatic, as it relates to black composers, refers to the original concert music that is not part of the traditional idiomatic canon associated with black musicians. That canon includes spirituals, gospel, jazz, hip-hop and rap among others.

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In October 2022, it was announced that Czech conductor Jakub Hruša would become the next music director of London's Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Laurence Lewis recently interviewed Hruša in London for one of Lewis' Czech Music Direct podcast shows. [LISTEN TO THE JAKUB HRUŠA INTERVIEW](#)

Grace Williams, generally regarded as Wales' most notable female composer, and the first British woman to score a feature film, studied music under Ralph Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music in London, UK. She was evacuated to Grantham, Lincolnshire during the second world war, from where she published her most popular work, *Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes*, in 1940. It is performed by orchestras around the world. It was modelled on Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* or the fantasias on folk tunes by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

William Jones, now playing alto sax with the Chalfont Concert Wind Band in Buckinghamshire, UK, played in the brass section of its first recording on the 1969 Music For Pleasure, 12" vinyl LP, National Youth Orchestra of Wales recording of the *Fantasia*. Stimulated by the boredom of the COVID19 pandemic, he wondered whether the *Fantasia* could be arranged for a concert wind band and embarked on a journey which culminates with a world premiere of the first arrangement of the *Fantasia* for a concert symphonic wind band at Chalfont Concert Wind Band's spring concert: *Musical Tour of the British Isles*, 7:30pm, Saturday 1 April 2023 at The Hub, Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire, SL9 9RF, UK. [MORE INFORMATION AND TICKETS](#)

Tickets	In Advance	On the door
Adults	£13	£15
Concessions	£10	£12
65 + & students		
School age	£4	£5
Card sales only :		

chalfontwindband.co.uk/concerts.htm

Coming on 11 March 2023 at 19:00 to the Renee Weiler Concert Hall at Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow Street in Manhattan, New York, USA, Lower East Side Performing Arts presents Songs and Vocal Works by American Composers. Works to be performed include Elodie Lauten's *The Five-Petal Proportion* (from *Two Cents Opera*) for flute, voice and electronic recording, the first performance of Beth Anderson's *Various* for solo flute, *Mantra* by Jim Theobald for flute, voice and piano, John Cage's *A Flower* for voice and piano and Frank Wigglesworth's *Five Songs of Robert Frost*.

The programme will also include songs by Charles Ives for voice and piano: *Ann Street* (words by Maurice Morris, courtesy of 'the New York Herald'), *The Cage*, *The Side Show*, *The Things Our Fathers Loved (and the greatest of these was Liberty)*, *The Childrens' Hour* (words by Longfellow) and *He is There!* for voice, piano & piccolo. The performers will be Andrew Bolotowsky, flute, Elizabeth Rodgers, piano and Mary Hurlbut, voice. The concert is free and open to the public. Proof of vaccination is required upon entry. Masks are strongly encouraged but not required. For more information, call Greenwich House Music School at +1 212-242-4770.

ENSEMBLE — DO YOU LIKE CHUNG?



Myung-whun Chung conducting in Rome. Photo © 2023 Riccardo Musacchio

Giuseppe Pennisi: The title of the concert is *Aimez vous Brahms?* from a very successful novel by Françoise Sagan of the late 1950s and a film of equal commercial and critical success of 1961. There were four performances, from 16 to 19 February 2023, including one in Ferrara, and I was at the one on 18 February. Rome's Sala Santa Cecilia - about 3,000 seats - was almost full, although **Myung-whun Chung** has the reputation of being little 'loved' by journalists or the public. He does not give interviews: when I spoke with him privately, the agreement was that nothing would come out in the press. He had a long legal dispute with the Opéra de Paris (which ended with a settlement). Very reserved, he is close to Pope John II and was close to the recently passed 'Pope Emeritus', but is less close to Pope Francis. [READ MORE](#)



Daniel Brenna as Mephistopheles in Busoni's *Doktor Faust* in Florence. Photo © 2023 Michele Monasta

Giuseppe Pennisi: The 'Carnival Festival' of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino has, among its titles, an opera little represented in Italy: *Doktor Faust* by Ferruccio Busoni - composed between 1916 and 1924, interrupted by the composer's death - in the version completed in 1925 by his pupil Philipp Jarnach. I think it is only the fourth time that it has been staged in Italy: the debut was in Florence in 1942. I remember a good staging in Bologna in 1985 and one at La Scala in 2021. I saw and heard this Florentine production on 11 February 2023.

The myth of Faust (in its many versions) has always fascinated musicians and continues to attract them; for example, this is the theme of a recent work by Silvia Colasanti. *Doktor Faust* by **Ferruccio Busoni**, taken mainly from Marlowe, not from Goethe, concludes with the prospect that the descent born from the union between Faust and the Duchess of Parma leads, some day, to redemption. Not only that, but the role of the Doctor is entrusted to a baritone while that of the Devil to a 'pushed tenor' - with a texture almost at the limits of that of a Wagnerian 'heroic tenor'. There is almost a reversal of vocal roles between the 'positive' character of both melodrama and verismo - the tenor - and the 'negative' or at least 'problematic' - the baritone. Busoni did not complete the work, the first performance of which in Dresden in 1925, with the musical direction by Fritz Busch, took place a year after his death. Later performances mainly use a new completion made by Anthony Beaumont in 1982 on original sketches by the composer.

The opera is in repertoire in German and French theaters - especially after a magnificent edition of the Opéra National de Lyon in 1998, revived at the Salzburg Festival and on many other stages - as well as in the American ones, after a very successful production at the San Francisco Opera in 2004. In the early eighties, I listened to a complete version - Philipp Jarnach's - but in concert form, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, where I then lived. [READ MORE](#)

Back in Rome, Giuseppe Pennisi also listens to a special performance of Verdi's Requiem, to Mariangela Vacatello's Scriabin and to Opera di Roma's *Aida*.

[MORE FROM GIUSEPPE PENNISI ...](#)



Alpesh Chauhan. Photo © Alexander Basta

Mike Wheeler: Alpesh Chauhan first came to wide attention during his years as Assistant Conductor with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and his career has since taken off in a big way. So too has that of pianist Elisabeth Brauss, a former BBC New Generation Artist. Together with the Hallé Orchestra, they gave one of the most beguiling performances of the Grieg Piano Concerto I can remember.

Brauss's imperious opening flourish told us that the big rhetorical moments were going to be in safe hands, but it was the quiet moments that made an even bigger impression. Her control of dynamics produced passages of breath-taking delicacy, and an expressive range, from the impetuous to the inward, that somehow all hung together. The cadenza was a carefully graded crescendo to the final trill. The orchestra's contribution was equally engrossing, particularly some wonderfully limpid woodwind sonorities.

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Mike also listens to Petr Limonov playing Ravel and Chopin, and to a variety of music from Amy Dickson and Martin Cousin.

[MORE FROM MIKE WHEELER ...](#)



Elisabeth Brauss playing Grieg's Piano Concerto with Alpesh Chauhan and the Hallé Orchestra at Nottingham Royal Concert Hall on 27 January 2023

PROFILE — CREATIVITY, IMAGINATION AND CURIOSITY

Ron Bierman: Stephanie Blythe is probably the only opera singer who represents a ukulele company. That she embodies the unexpected is further confirmed by her upcoming roles in the San Diego Opera's next production, two one-act operas by Puccini. The mezzo soprano will first sing a deeper contralto as the Principessa in *Suor Angelica*. Then, in the title role of *Gianni Schicchi*, she'll be in the baritone range traditionally assigned to a male singer.

A headline once nailed it: 'Stephanie Blythe can do anything, and apparently will.' The 'can do' is appropriate for a singer who, in 1995, just eighteen months out of school, landed at the Metropolitan Opera and has performed there in a wide variety of roles ever since. We spoke via *Zoom* about her career and the roles she will be singing in four performances, the first on 11 February 2023.

San Diego audiences have seen her in grand opera, **Verdi's** Requiem, a recital of songs associated with Kate Smith, and last year, a recital of the pop songs of Johnny Mercer. She's had the lead in *Carmen*, but recently starred in Chicago as Don José, Carmen's bewitched lover. 'And I had the most marvelous time. This is not a lark for me. I take it very seriously. And I'm not trying to thumb my nose at anybody. I'm just trying to make the art that I can, that I dreamed of doing.' (In case you wondered, the reviews were favorable.)

You might think all that covers apparently *will* do anything, but the headline I quoted was triggered by a Philadelphia drag show in which she donned a beard and mustache to become her twin, tenor Blithely Oratonio. They've begun to sing video duets on *Twitter*. Can a recording of *Carmen* with her in every role be far behind? (Though the bass-baritone of the Toreador *may* be a challenge.)

The two one-act operas in her upcoming performance are taken from a set of three **Puccini** works titled *Il trittico*. I wondered if singing two characters in different voice ranges required more rehearsal time.

'This isn't the first time I've done multiple roles in a show. I've often sung in (**Handel's**) *Julius Caesar*, first as Tolomeo, then Cornelia, then Caesar, and back to Cornelia. I've been doing *Il trittico* for a very long time and often had a different role in each one. Rehearsal for multiple roles depends on the piece and the company, but I'm used to it, and we have enough.'

Having performed multiple roles in the same opera allows a deeper understanding of what the composer had in mind and how characters interact. Costumes are another priority in her chameleon-like approach to new roles.

'Absolutely! There's a lot of wonderful work that you can do in staging, too. But once the costume comes on, that really is the thing. It changes the way you move, the way you feel about yourself, because it's a part of how you signal to the world who you are.'

Why does Blythe take on so many roles? 'I'm attracted to projects that allow me to explore different passions and transitions in my life. I think 'transition' is one of the most important words for any artist. Voices change from the moment you start singing. It's never the same - from one day, one year, one decade to the next. It's part of the body, and so affected by intellectual, physical and spiritual change. And that has to be accepted.'

[READ MORE](#)



Stephanie Blythe as Eduige in Handel's *Rodelinda* at New York Metropolitan Opera.
Photo © 2014 Ken Howard

Ron also treats us to a review of San Diego Opera's Puccini double bill, featuring Stephanie Blythe singing in the baritone range:



Stephanie Blythe in the title role of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* at San Diego Opera

Ron Bierman: The family decides to call on the devious Gianni Schicchi to salvage their inheritance and baritone Stephanie Blythe arrives in a costume of wig, facial hair and men's clothing, a comic opposite of the stern Principessa of *Suor Angelica*. But for advanced publicity, few would have recognized her or even suspected it wasn't the usual male baritone. Nor would her spoken or singing voice have offered a clue.

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ASTOUNDING! — AN OPEN LETTER TO A GREAT ARTIST

Esdras Mugatik: Greetings Professor Rose,

I have just heard your Rachmaninoff Sonata No 2 performance on *YouTube* and I want to tell you that it is astounding - just astounding. Many words of acclaim and praise are due to you for this superb interpretation.

I have long admired your great musicianship and great virtuosity and they are found here in a performance of total command, deep insight and true musical wisdom. Just fantastic!

It is also obvious that your knowledge is based on vast experience, for you have performed for many decades, appeared around the world in concert and *concerti*, made a shelf full of recordings and taught countless students in lesson and masterclass. You studied with Adolph Baller, Leonard Shure and Rudolf Serkin and have collaborated with a luminous array of conductors and orchestras (such as Georg Solti, Sergiu Comissiona and Charles Mackerras). All of those experiences add up to create the command that your performance exhibits.

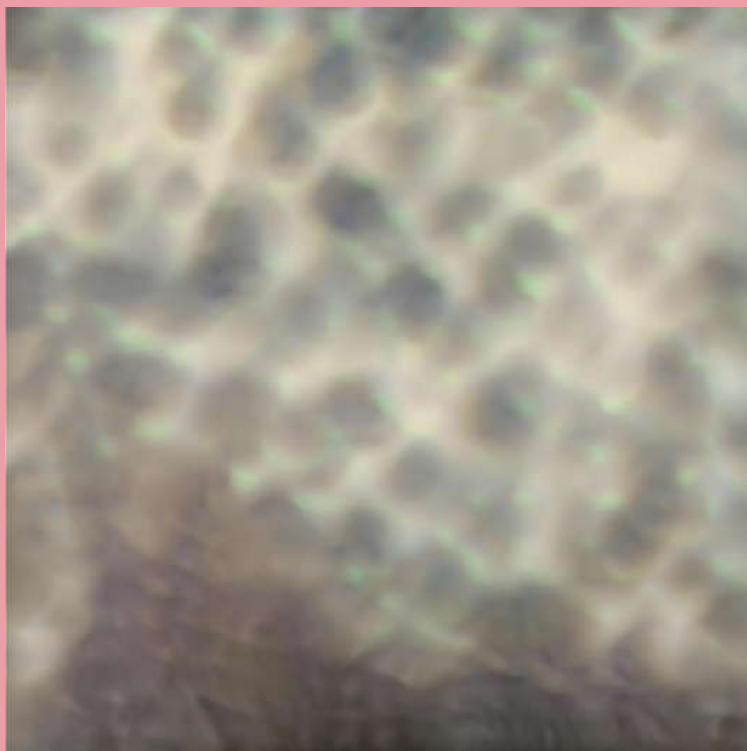


Jerome Rose, introducing his performance on *YouTube*

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[MORE FROM ESDRAS MUGATIK ...](#)

CD SPOTLIGHT — THE PIANO TURNED INSIDE-OUT



'... a remarkably fresh and distinctive pianistic listening experience ...'

John Dante Prevedini: *Ourselves, as we are* is the new release from Warner Classics of a collection of nine improvised piano pieces by Berlin-based pianist **Carlos Cipa**. The roughly forty-minute album is available in CD, vinyl and digital download formats and has liner notes available on the label's website. The pieces, whose titles evoke different facets of contemplative introspection, showcase a novel approach to piano composition and performance made possible only in the recording studio: the use of extremely close-range microphony to capture the instrument being played 'as quietly as possible', to quote the liner notes. This creates a piano sound world in which the instrument's percussive elements are suppressed and its lyrical qualities enhanced. Furthermore, at this level of sonic magnification, the innate sounds of the piano's action become an ever-present feature of the music. Yet, far from necessarily being a distraction, these sounds arguably add to the aesthetic an element which some listeners might enjoy as a kind of 'piano ASMR' experience.

While the *tempi*, meters, harmonic palettes and titular associations of the nine pieces are varied over the course of the album, they nonetheless remain united in several aspects of compositional structure. All of the pieces are single-movement works in a diatonic harmonic idiom, focusing heavily on *ostinati*, spanning about four to six minutes in length and stressing singularities of both tempo and emotional profile. Seen through the lens of contemporary classical practice, such a compositional palette might likely be described as broadly post-minimalist, overlapping somewhat with models commonly associated with composers like **Arvo Pärt** or Max Richter. Yet Carlos Cipa's work also lends itself well to multi-genre crossover and might additionally find broader appeal among audiences of the so-called 'ambient music' market. In other words, it rewards both casual and deeper listening. In any case, I find it safe to say that the album's sonic design provides a remarkably fresh and distinctive pianistic listening experience that a range of listeners will likely enjoy.

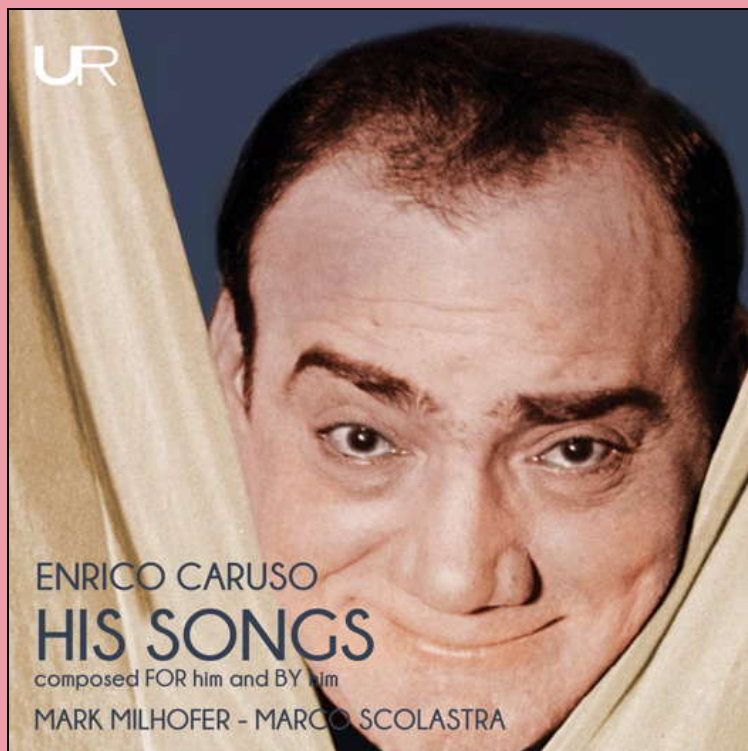
The first piece, *Took*, presents us with an understated - yet emotionally powerful - Aeolian modal ostinato in a medium-slow compound quadruple meter, punctuated by upper-register melodic gestures. This is followed by *Between two strangers*, a minor-keyed piece in medium-tempo compound triple meter with an apparent secondary beat division of 3-2-2-2. The third track, *Walk so silently*, is a medium-fast piece in duple meter with an Aeolian harmony showcasing open fourths and fifths and making particular use of the piano's lower registers. This is followed by *Unpredictable patterns*, which has a very dissonant beginning followed by harmonies based on consonant intervals and a wide registral range. Meanwhile, the pulse tempo resembles a slightly slower version of the one used in the previous track. Here, the piano's action takes on more of an apparent percussive role. In addition, the music seems even quieter than that heard in the surrounding tracks, and *Unpredictable patterns* thus appears true to its title within the context of the album's overall sonic world. Track five is the eponymous *Ourselves, as we are*, appropriately placed in the album's midpoint. This piece utilizes a moderate pulse tempo with what is effectively a duple-triple polymeter, and its melodic structure strikes me as highly poignant, emotionally complex and particularly memorable.

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[MORE FROM JOHN DANTE PREVEDINI ...](#)

Giuseppe Pennisi: Enrico Caruso was born on 25 February 1873 in Naples where he died on 2 August 1921. He was both a lyric and dramatic tenor; Caruso's voice extended up to high D-flat in its prime and grew in power and weight as he grew older. At times, his voice took on a dark, almost baritone coloration. He sang a broad spectrum of roles, ranging from lyric, to spinto, to dramatic parts, in the Italian and French repertoires. He sang two Wagner operas (in Italian rhythmic translation).

He was one of the first operatic singers to appreciate fully the importance of recording. At the beginning of the twentieth century, he was engaged by the Gramophone Company to make his first group of acoustic recordings in a Milan hotel room for a fee of one hundred pounds sterling. These ten discs swiftly became best-sellers. Among other things, they helped spread twenty-nine-year-old Caruso's fame throughout the English-speaking world. One of the first major singing talents to be commercially recorded, **Enrico Caruso** made 247 commercially released recordings from 1902 to 1920 which made him an international popular entertainment star.



'One of the first major singing talents to be commercially recorded ...'

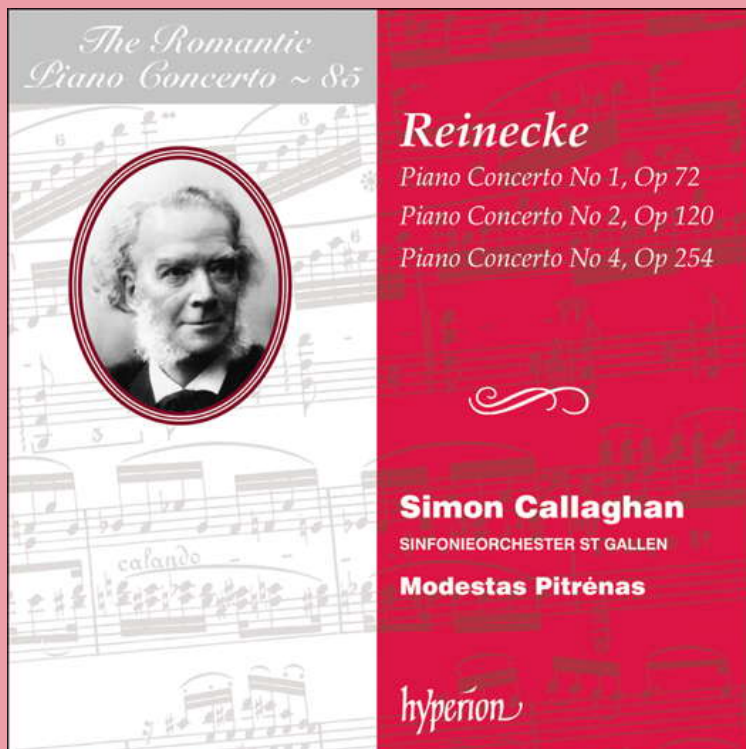
Therefore, it is only natural that his anniversaries are celebrated with records. Some fifty years ago, I recalled purchasing at the discount record shop at the M at 18 Street NW of Washington DC (where I then lived) some of his early recordings reissued as LPs. Although the technical quality left quite a bit to be desired, the listener could feel the extraordinary extension of his voice.

For this anniversary in 2023, Urania Records has had an excellent idea: to produce a two CD album and a booklet with songs written and composed by Caruso himself or by his closest friends and associates - Tizzi, Tirindelli, Bozzi, Buzzi-Pecchia and Mugnone, to mention only those best known. A selection of some twenty five songs from a wide catalogue of about ninety songs. The album will be for sale in record shops and platforms in a couple of weeks but 'early birds' can purchase it now from Urania Records.

Caruso's career, which lasted from 1895 to 1920, included 863 appearances with the New York Metropolitan Opera - both at the Met and on tour - before his death at the age of forty-eight. Thanks largely to his tremendously popular phonograph records, Caruso was one of the most famous entertainment personalities of his day, and his fame has continued to endure to the present. He was one of the first examples of a global media celebrity.

Beyond records, Caruso's name became familiar to millions throughout the world via newspapers, books, magazines, and the new media technology of the twentieth century: cinema. Caruso toured widely, both with the Metropolitan Opera touring company and on his own, giving hundreds of performances throughout Europe, and North and South America. Beverly Sills noted in an interview: 'I was able to do it with television and radio and media and all kinds of assists. The popularity that Caruso enjoyed without any of this technological assistance is astonishing'. [READ MORE](#)

[MORE FROM GIUSEPPE PENNISI ...](#)



'Simon Callaghan despatches these works with passionate expressiveness ...'

Gerald Fenech: The Hyperion 'Romantic Piano Concerto' bandwagon never ceases to surprise. This Volume 85 is dedicated to three of four piano concertos - Nos 1, 2 and 4 - by German composer Carl Reinecke (1824-1910), a very important name in the annals of German Romantic Music, but still unjustly underrated, as these works testify. Written respectively in 1860, 1872 and 1900, they reflect big changes both in their musical hinterland and in the composer's revolving art.

The first in F sharp minor is imbued with the influence of Mendelssohn in its graceful virtuosity, while the second in E minor finds a tone of elegiac grandeur in its *Allegro* and a songfulness reminiscent of Tchaikovsky in its *Andantino*.

The first two movements of the fourth, coming twenty-eight years later, in B minor, represent the fruits of maturity. With virtuosity now at the service of a noble structure, its opening *Allegro* has a Brahmsian authority, while its *Adagio* has a rapt beauty worthy of Chopin. [READ MORE](#)

Gerald Fenech also listens to Riccardo Chailly conducting Verdi choruses and to Renée Fleming at New York Metropolitan Opera, both on Decca Classics. [MORE FROM GERALD FENECH ...](#)

Geoff Pearce: I was introduced to the music of Antonio Lauro (1917-1986) by my first partner, who was a budding classical guitarist. There were not a huge number of recordings of his music around at the time, but I was struck by his clear melodic simplicity and a style that was very much in keeping with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century style of Spanish guitar writing and playing. There are fifty-two tracks on two CDs.

Most of them are short pieces or a collection of pieces within a set, and they share a joy and vivacity, and sometimes a wistful meditateness that I find attractive.

The guitarist, Cristiano Poli Cappelli, is a very accomplished artist and plays with technical accomplishment, a nice clean style, a strong sense of rhythm and obviously strongly identifies with this repertoire. There was a guitarist who very much impressed me with early recordings of Lauro's pieces, all of which appear on this current set, called David Russell. I feel their approach is similar and I do enjoy both. [READ MORE](#)



'I recommend this recording to anyone who loves and appreciates fine classical guitar playing ...'

Geoff Pearce also listens to music for cor anglais on Navona Records. [MORE FROM GEOFF PEARCE ...](#)

Our CD reviews are worth exploring in more detail than shown here. They are all illustrated with short sound samples, usually chosen by the author of each review, and each review has a detailed information page about the album under scrutiny. We also publish a long list of new releases, normally once each month, with a new selection due later this month.

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ECHOES OF OBLIVION — GOING FOR A SONG

Robert McCarney: The spur for this week's selection - and associated ramblings - is a very welcome new CD released two days ago that is a marvellous compendium of the great art of song. As many of the greatest art songs are settings of words not originally written in English, this state of affairs leads me to reflect upon the art, yes I say art, of translation. The late Javier Marías in his last column for *El País* talked about how badly paid translators are. This reality and the fact that so many translations, especially in booklet notes for classical music, are so unacceptably atrocious, makes plain that the modern world does not take the importance of translation seriously enough or realise just what a precious art it is when done well or, more prosaically, what a most noble endeavour when merely done correctly. This sorry situation is only made more lamentable in the English-speaking world; many of whose denizens seem to take some kind of obtuse pride in remaining stubbornly monolingual. A man who created the lyrics for many of the greatest songs ever composed once wrote:

Wer fremde Sprachen nicht kennt, weiß nichts von seiner eigenen.

Music may be a universal language but poetry is not and as such the greater the poet the greater the translator needed and the greater the gratitude owed to them by readers. [READ MORE](#)

Echoes of Oblivion is Robert McCarney's regular series of features about little-known twentieth century classical composers, which currently appears every Sunday.

Recent issues include *A short night at the opera*, *What's in a Number?* and *Selling like hot cakes ... maybe, hopefully*.

How much do you really know about these composers: Deirdre Gribbin, Rudolf Escher,

Mikhail Nosyrev, Othmar Schoeck, Sándor Balassa, Gerhard Schedl, Väinö Raitio, Rudolph Simonsen, Ketil Hvoslef, Ina Boyle, Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour, Marlos Nobre, Tomás Marco, Miloslav Kabeláč, John J Becker, Yuri Falik, David Wynne, Niccolò Castiglioni, Czesław Marek, Poul Rovsing Olsen, Rudolf Kelterborn, Kate Moore, Josep Soler i Sardà, İlhan Usmanbaş or Paul Dessau?

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FEBRUARY 2023 OBITUARIES

Here are brief details of some of the people lost to the classical music world during February 2023. May they rest in peace.

British choirmaster, harpsichordist, organist and teacher David Lumsden died on 25 February, aged ninety-four. Born in Newcastle on 19 March 1928, he studied music at Cambridge University with Boris Ord and Thurston Dart. He took a series of appointments as church organist, then became an academic. He was director of music at Keele University (1958-59), professor of harmony at the Royal Academy of Music (1959-61), principal of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (1976-82) and principal of the Royal Academy of Music in London (1982-1993). He founded and conducted the Nottingham Bach Society, and conducted the Oxford Harmonic Society, the Oxford Sinfonia and the BBC Scottish Singers.

Austrian composer, conductor and teacher Friedrich Cerha died on 14 February, aged ninety-six in Vienna, where he was born on 17 February 1936. He began to play the violin at six, and started composing when he was eight. After an eventful time in World War II, being conscripted as a child soldier, working in the resistance, deserting (twice) and hiding in the mountains, he was able to study at the Vienna Music Academy and at the University of Vienna. He's best known for completing Alban Berg's *Lulu*, but also wrote several operas of his own, and founded the ensemble Die Reihe which helped to spread contemporary music in Austria.

French composer and musicologist Thierry Alla died in Fronsac on 13 February, aged sixty-seven. Born in Algiers on 24 March 1955, he studied with Jean-Michel Vaccaro at the University of Tours, and then at the Bordeaux Conservatoire and at the University of Rouen Normandy. He studied the music of Tristan Murail and later published articles on spectral music.

American tuba soloist, conductor, brass teacher and writer Roger Bobo died on 12 February, aged eighty-four, in Oaxaca, Mexico. Born in Los Angeles on 8 June 1938, he enjoyed a varied life and career, which included being the dedicatee of Alexander Arutiunian's Tuba Concerto and being the subject of John Updike's poem *Recital*. Bobo wrote the book *Mastering the Tuba* and recorded extensively. In 2001 he retired from performing to devote his time to conducting and teaching, and in these capacities he worked in England, Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Mexico.

Canadian composer, conductor, organist and teacher Ben Steinberg died on 10 February, aged ninety-three. He was born to Jewish parents in Winnipeg on 22 January 1930 - his father was the cantor and conductor Alexander Steinberg. Ben Steinberg is known best for his contributions to Jewish music - he composed several sacred services. His method for youth choirs, *Together Do They Sing*, was commissioned and published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1961.

German opera and theatre director, theatre manager and teacher Jürgen Flimm died in Hamelwörden on 4 February, aged eighty-one. Born in Gießen on 17 July 1941, he grew up in Cologne, where he studied drama theory, literature and sociology at Cologne University. He worked in a series of theatres, and directed his first opera, Nono's *Al gran sole carico d'amore* at Oper Frankfurt in 1978, going on to direct operas at major venues worldwide.

German conductor Caspar Richter died on 2 February, aged seventy-eight. Born on 16 September 1944, he was chief conductor of Vereinigte Bühnen Wien for nearly a quarter of a century.

Canadian bassoonist and concert organiser George Benedict Zukerman died on 1 February, aged ninety-five. Born in London, England on 22 February 1927, he was the dedicatee of Colin Brumby's bassoon concerto and was founder and artistic director (1956-2015) of White Rock Concerts.

This newsletter is an occasional PDF taster for our high quality and colourful online classical music magazine, published every day since January 1999. Founded by the late Basil Ramsey and current editor Keith Bramich.

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