



Classical Music Daily

The Angry Planet – Issue 185, September 2024

Roderic Dunnett: If Scotland has enjoyed three weeks of Edinburgh, and The Albert Hall countless days of the BBC Proms, is there an annual British festival outside London whose awesome programme of concerts can possibly rival the impact of those extensive, enviable events?

The answer is yes - definitely. The Three Choirs Festival can claim to be the world's very oldest Festival, its first dating from most likely Queen Anne's reign, roughly in 1710; or if not, then took off in George I's, which began in 1714.

Every summer between late July and August the organist (Music Director) of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester cathedrals - this year, Samuel Hudson at Worcester - designs a sumptuous programme of massive choral events, chamber and instrumental music, organ recitals, polished chamber choirs and chorale concerts, late night happenings, lectures, plays, and much else. Every day - morning, afternoon and evening - is packed. [READ MORE](#)

Roderic Dunnett also writes about Giuseppe Gazzaniga's *L'isola d'Alcina* at Bampton Classical Opera.

[READ RODERIC DUNNETT'S LATEST FEATURES](#)

Lucas Ball: The whole of the second half of this concert was devoted to **Bob Chilcott's** *The Angry Planet*. The spoken words amid the singing are effective in this, demonstrating a range of feeling besides mere anger. Also interesting is Chilcott (in collaboration with poet Charles Bennett) appearing to create voices that work against one another. This happens in the movement *6 am (Lutra lutra)*. It is as though Chilcott wants to convey the struggle of existence here. Mind you, the movement *Remember* is more of a lament, as if Chilcott is imagining a future Planet Earth with no land on it at all. It too has suspenseful harmonies as an adept add on. When the movement *9pm* came, the music was quite disturbing.

Bob Chilcott's *The Angry Planet* is said to have created a stir when it was first performed. *The Angry Planet* is more than just a stir though; it is a musical wake up call. The world needs to listen. [READ MORE](#)

[READ LUCAS BALL'S LATEST FEATURES](#)

Mike Wheeler: If you thought the average *opera seria* plot was confusing, wait till you've encountered Haydn's spoof, *La Canterina*. As originally conceived, the cast of four comprises three sopranos and a tenor. One of the sopranos takes a male role, while another plays a male character who spends most of the opera disguised as a female character.



From left to right, Helen Maree Cooper as Don Ettore, Dominic Mattos as Apollonia, Jane Burnell as Gasparina and Jonah Halton as Don Pelagio in Haydn's *La Canterina* at the Buxton Festival. Photo © 2024 Genevieve Girling

But it all makes a zany kind of sense in Lysanne Van Overbeek's **Buxton Festival** production - Pavilion Arts Centre, Buxton, UK, 7 July 2024. The action revolves around Gasparina, the singer of the title; in tow are her lover, not named but mostly disguised as her mother, Apollonia - originally a (castrato?) soprano, here a counter-tenor - and Gasparina's two would-be suitors, Don Ettore (the 'trouser' role), and Don Pelagio (the tenor). Designer Elliott Squire places the action in Gasparina's boudoir. [READ MORE](#)

Mike Wheeler covers much of this year's Buxton Festival in a series of twelve reviews.

[READ MIKE WHEELER'S LATEST REVIEWS](#)

Jeffrey Neil: One of the many things to set *Innocence* apart from other operas is that it portrays a massacre. In visual art, this is not an uncommon subject: think of the many paintings of the biblical Massacre of the Innocents or Goya's war series, to name a few. But in the world of musical representation, and specifically in opera, murder is generally limited to a crime of passion or a politically-motivated homicide or two. Opera librettists have heeded Aristotle and kept major violence offstage.

The late Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho** took up this seemingly unrepresentable theme.

When she contemplated writing an opera of great social implications, she chose a mass shooting at an international school. It's no small irony that the setting was not the United States, where slaughters of the innocent are everyday, but safe and peaceful Finland. This setting may have enabled American audiences to be less defensive and more receptive when the opera came to San Francisco, the first American city to experience *Innocence*.



A scene from *Innocence* by Kaija Saariaho, Sofi Oksanen and Aleksis Barrière at San Francisco Opera.
Photo © 2024 Cory Weaver

By staging an opera about a mass shooting, Saariaho entered uncharted territory, both in terms of how to dramatize such an event and how to compose music that communicates the initial violence and the emotional ripple effects over time. To do so, the score and the libretto needed to obey the structure and rules of trauma. *Innocence* largely succeeds, although it didn't impress me as much as it did virtually every critic who has reviewed it since its premiere in Aix-en-Provence exactly three years ago, many declaring it a 'masterpiece'. [READ MORE](#)

[READ JEFFREY NEIL'S LATEST ARTICLES](#)

Keith Bramich: Amsterdam's Oosterpark (Eastern Park) in the Netherlands is a large municipal park in the English style, dating from the end of the nineteenth century. Located in a culturally diverse part of the city, it was Amsterdam's first big municipal park. Full of trees and home to many wild birds, it's based around a large lake.

On a fine Sunday afternoon, 25 August 2024, in this park, a small, select group of walkers met in the sunshine, in front of the park's Music Dome, for a guided walk. But this was no ordinary guided walk. Everyone came prepared with a GPS-enabled mobile phone, headphones and a *SonicMaps* website link for an hour-long experience that combined fresh air, the sights and sounds of the park, classical (and other) music, the latest technology and some of the world's strangest mythical creatures. [READ MORE](#)

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Evelien van den Broek, creator of the *Avian Humanoids* sonic walk

'OBSCURE' REPERTOIRE



Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813-1888).
Public domain - photographer unknown

When I was a piano student in the decade of Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter - that's Heath, Wilson, Callahan and early Thatcher for UK readers - I preferred to play obscure music by forgotten/ignored composers: **Liszt**: yes, that's what I said, **Paderewski**, **Busoni**, **Clementi** and **Alkan**. (Locating copies of Alkan's music was difficult.) My teachers were appalled. My fellow students laughed.

I even prepared one performance of a Paderewski piece and based my performance practice on his own recording. It involved rolled chords and *rubati* not specified in the published score. I thought this was a 'historically informed performance' (HIP) method. When my teacher mocked my performance and explanation, he said 'Well, then Paderewski wasn't a very good musician, was he?'

When a teacher (in great frustration with my interpretations) asked me what I was listening to, I put a recording by a mid-nineteenth-century-born pianist on the turntable (before CDs) and she lifted the stylus after three bars and said 'That's enough of that'. Later though I heard she had taken up the music of one of my favourite obscure composers.

I recall one musician who mocked Alkan as a worthless composer after having heard one of his compositions. The *Allegro barbaro* is arguably not one of his best, but, I asked if we should judge a composer by one single work, by their worst work or by their best work. I suggested some of **Mozart's** Masonic music as an example. It

didn't go over well. Of course, we can ask if it is fair to judge any creator by just one of his works. The famed potter George E Ohr was asked to submit a couple of his works to a show and he replied that it was like asking Shakespeare for a couple of lines of his poetry and that they would have to guess the rest.

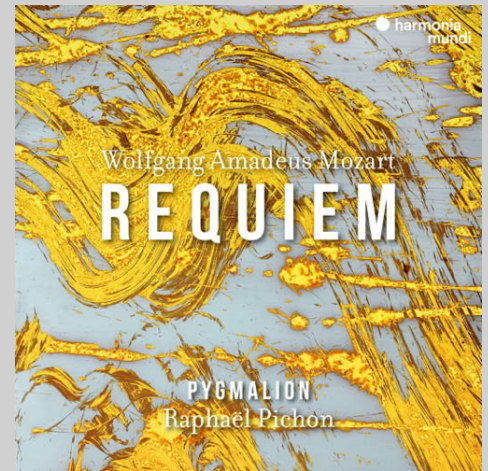
Long ago, when I told a professor of a program of mine that included works by **C P E Bach**, Busoni and little known Liszt, she asked 'Who allowed you to play that programme?' My answer was 'I choose my programmes and accept no more than advice and certainly do not accept orders'. [READ MORE](#)

SPOTLIGHT — A SWEEPING EXPERIENCE

Gerald Fenech: This version of Mozart's Requiem might surprise many because conductor Raphaël Pinchon inserted other pieces by the composer that were never included in other performing versions. People will ask why? The original version can hold its own without any additions to embellish it ...

I have heard many fine versions of this monumental masterpiece so I was slightly wary approaching this wholly new creation as visualized by Maestro Pinchon. What a sweeping experience I found myself in.

Absolute beauty, overflowing with a shimmering musical light that sows joy and hope for the transcendent. Forget that you already have this Requiem in your collection. Go and get this issue without teetering any further, and immerse yourself in the experience of what is to come. [READ MORE](#)



'... overflowing with a shimmering musical light that sows joy and hope for the transcendent.'



'Performances are alive, clear and cheery.'

Fauré and Gounod on Alpha Classics, to Mendelssohn from Isata Kanneh-Mason and Karl Jenkins' *Stravaganza* on Decca, and more.

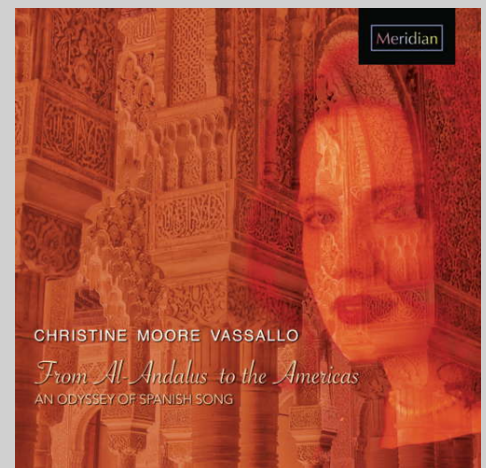
[READ GERALD FENECH'S LATEST CD REVIEWS](#)

Gerald Fenech: Francesco

Cilea (1866-1950) is one of those Italian composers who, one might say, was born at the wrong time. He was primarily an opera composer, but apart from *L'Arlesiana* and *Adriana Lecouvreur*, all his other stage-works have practically fallen by the wayside. Still, there is a glimmer of hope with a recent revival of 'Gloria', a work that has not been performed for decades. Maybe the reason for this lack of success lies in the fact that he was overshadowed by such giants as Verdi, Puccini and Mascagni, who here his contemporaries.

But here we are not concerned with the operatic Cilea but with a composer who displayed great acumen in other genres such as piano music, songs, chamber music and orchestral pieces, and this disc focuses quintessentially on the latter, a genre that bears witness to a unique Italian voice and aesthetic philosophy. [READ MORE](#)

Gerald also listens to music by Marin Marais on Harmonia Mundi, to

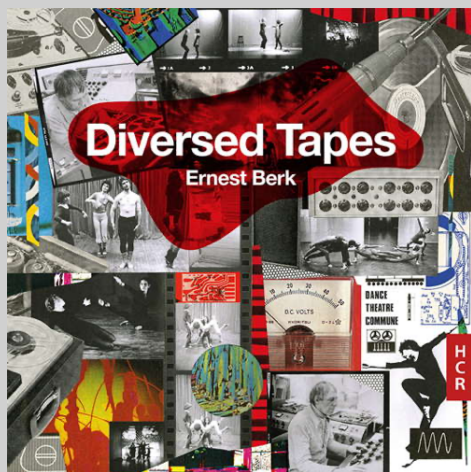


Amber Lin and Jeffrey Neil: This album's vocalist, soprano Christine Moore Vassallo, has selected what she calls a 'musical odyssey', a collection of thirty-three songs in different styles, from different countries, and in three languages. What they share in common is that they all are connected to the Iberian Peninsula. They do not progress chronologically either; for instance, the last cycle is based on some of the oldest material - translated poems from eighth to ninth century Baghdad, the center of the Islamic Golden Age. This album is an ambitious endeavor, and no matter how familiar you are with Spanish or Latin American music, there will be at least something you have never heard. The album booklet is almost encyclopedic, offering a generous helping of useful history and musical context for each song, along with the original Spanish, Ladino or Arabic lyrics translated into English.

'Christine Moore Vassallo and her ensemble were a delight to experience.'

For somebody who wants to expand his musical repertoire and also learn about the complex interconnections between the music of Mediterranean cultures and various diasporas, this album is a must. Medieval Spanish texts are set to nineteenth-century Ottoman or contemporary Spanish music; the lyrics of old flamenco *cante* are arranged by García Lorca - who knew he was a musician too? - and there is even some Argentine folk music for good measure. The selection demonstrates the complexity of musical history - of cross-pollination of music from different parts of the world; and the vocalist reminds us of how music can breathe life into ancient texts. Christine Moore Vassallo and her accompanists have revived these songs, and the performances are all superb. [READ MORE](#)

READ MORE ABOUT AMBER LIN



'... increased subtlety and variety of techniques employed ...'

The pieces featured on the album represent a varied, though small, sample of Berk's substantial output in the medium. These works, composed between 1957 and 1984, are presented out of chronological order on the release, and only a minority of them are given specific dates in the booklet notes. Listeners can nonetheless still come away with a sense of how Berk's compositional voice gradually evolved under the unusual circumstances of his own self-imposed creative conditions.

By limiting himself to the same equipment over the course of nearly thirty years, for example, he enabled himself to cultivate a rare mastery of his particular instrument - a setup of 'tape recorders, tone generators, filters, and modulators' according to the liner notes. Indeed, one can hear the increased subtlety and variety of techniques employed in his palette as the decades progress. [READ MORE](#)

Keith Bramich: In Egyptian, Greek, Persian and Phoenician mythology, the phoenix is a mythical bird which regenerates or rises from the ashes of its predecessor, and is associated with hope and rebirth - eternity and transfiguration. As this album's title, *Phoenix Rising* also symbolises Ross Salvosa's process of self-discovery - a coming to terms with his sense of injustice and his anger and grief.

Ross Salvosa is half-Filipino, and the first three tracks on this album showcase music by Filipino composers who are all new to me - a rare treat of some unusual music. Salvosa states in his notes that these works are 'threads of my cultural tapestry, reclaiming my heritage and identity'.

The opening track, *Malikmata* (Transfiguration) by composer, conductor and administrator **Antonio Jesús Naguiat Molina** (1894-1980) is mysterious, sultry and thoughtful, with two big climaxes - one near the beginning, and one near the end - which both feature multiple octave piano *glissandi*. [READ MORE](#)

Our reviews of recorded music 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.

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CLASSICAL MUSIC NEWS — PACHELBEL CAROLS

German pianist Burkard Schliessmann has signed exclusively to SOMM Recordings. A new novel, *Anton Bruckner - A Genius Emerges* by Gordon L Thomas, has been published. American broadcaster Fred Child will step down in October 2025 from his position as host and senior editor of YourClassical's *Performance Today*. The USA's Bowdoin International Music Festival has announced a USD 3.7 million bequest from Patricia Crawford Brown. The Boston Philharmonic Orchestra recently appointed Derek Beckvold as its new managing director, and has announced its 2024/25 season. British conductor John Eliot Gardiner steps down from his position with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestras.



Burkard Schliessmann in 2009



Andrew Arceci

Andrew Arceci's Winchendon Music Festival will run from 25-29 September 2024. The first performances of Christopher Wheeldon's new ballet *Oscar*, inspired by the life and work of Oscar Wilde, take place in Australia in September and November 2024. Northern Ireland Opera's performances of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* take place in Belfast on 14, 17, 19 and 21 September 2024.

At the World's Edge chamber music festival takes place in New Zealand's Southern Alps, from 5-18 October 2024. Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the UK's largest international festival of new and experimental music, takes place Friday 15 until Sunday 24 November 2024. Looking

ahead, Toronto Summer Music runs from 10 July until 2 August 2025 in Canada.

British composer and arranger Paul Ayres announces various new arrangements, including a carol medley set to the bass part of Johann Pachelbel's Canon.



Paul Ayres in 2021

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OBITUARIES IN JULY AND AUGUST 2024

Spanish conductor and composer **Miguel Ángel Gómez Martínez** died in Málaga on 4 August 2024, aged seventy-four.

English businessman, pianist and composer **Ernest Hall** died on 3 August 2024, aged ninety-four.

Brazilian cellist and teacher **Antônio Meneses** died from glioblastoma multiforme in Basel, Switzerland on 3 August 2024, aged sixty-six.

German organ builder **Jürgen Ahrend** died on 1 August 2024, aged ninety-four.

German composer and teacher **Wolfgang Rihm** died in Ettlingen on 27 July 2024, aged seventy-two, following a long battle with cancer.

Cornish baritone **Benjamin Luxon** died in Sandisfield, Massachusetts, USA on 25 (or 26?) July 2024, aged eighty-seven.

Armenian soprano **Anna Nshanyan** died in Los Angeles, USA on 24 July 2024, aged ninety-two.

Polish baritone and teacher **Jerzy Artysz** died in Warsaw on 22 July 2024, aged ninety-three.

Romanian violinist **Eugene Sârbu** died on 21 July 2024, aged seventy-three.

Hungarian tenor **János Csányi** died on or before 20 July 2024, aged ninety-two.

Salvadoran soprano, teacher and cultural manager **Gladys de Moctezuma** died on 20 July 2024, aged ninety-six.

Argentinian-born Canadian composer **Alcides Lanza** died on 17 July 2024, aged ninety-five.

English soprano **April Cantelo** died on 16 July 2024, aged ninety-six.

Italian soprano **Elena Mauti Nunziata** died in Monte Carlo, Monaco on 16 July 2024, aged seventy-seven.

French composer and teacher **Édith Lejet** died on 15 July 2024, aged eighty-two.

American pianist and composer **Sarah Gibson** died from colon cancer in Los Angeles on 14 July 2024, aged thirty-eight.

German mezzo **Ruth Hesse** died in Hallstatt, Upper Austria, on 13 July 2024, aged eighty-seven.

Belgian organist and teacher **Stanislas Deriemaeker** died on 11 July 2024, aged ninety-two.

Russian ballerina **Marina Kondratyeva** died in Moscow on 8 July 2024, aged ninety.

Moldovan conductor and composer **Teodor Zgureanu** died in Chişinău on 6 July 2024, aged eighty-five.

Georgian violinist and conductor **Liana Alexandres asuli Isakadze** died in Tbilisi on 5 July 2024, aged seventy-seven.

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Use *Classical Music Daily's* search feature to search over twenty-five years of features, reviews, news and other articles. The search facility is [here](#).

RESOUNDING ECHOES — TOWARDS THE FLAME

Robert McCarney: Hello, good afternoon, and welcome to today's episode of *Resounding Echoes*. Despite wishful thinking to the contrary, I doubt if there has been a year in the last two or three thousand of human history where some sort of savagery has not been inflicted by some group of humans on another group, or on another species of life with which we, as latecomers to the wonder of occasionally faulty replicating DNA, share this planet ... [LISTEN TO THIS EPISODE](#)

Robert McCarney's new audio series of *Resounding Echoes* is currently exploring lesser known twentieth century music, in chronological order. [EXPLORE THIS SERIES](#)



An AI-generated image for the *Resounding Echoes* episode 'Happiness is a warm hand'

INITIATING CHANGE, AND THE PROGRAMMING OF LIVING COMPOSERS

If you're looking for audio-visual classical music content, have you seen our August 2024 newsletter, *Initiating change, and the programming of living composers*, led by John Dante Prevedini? It runs for about seventy-two minutes, and includes contributions from David Arditti, Han Chen, James Lewitzke, James Ross, Jane Stanley, Robert McCarney, Sean Neukom and Steve Vasta.

[WATCH THIS NEWSLETTER](#)



CLASSICAL MUSIC WORD-SEARCH PUZZLES

Canadian composer **Allan Rae's** classical music word-search puzzles, including the latest, *Syrinx* and *Chocallo*, are **here**.

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| H | U | L | P | N | N | L | S |
| D | L | G | E | O | P | G | E |
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The left image depicts the Greek god Pan (left), who taught his lover Daphnis, the legendary Sicilian cowherd, said to be the inventor of

pastoral poetry, to play the panpipes.

The right image is a detail from the *Chocallo* puzzle, in which is hidden the word 'Chocallo'.

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Founded by the late **Basil Ramsey** and current editor Keith Bramich.

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