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## *The Cosmic Destination of All Life — Newsletter Issue 194, June 2025*

In this newsletter, which summarises our last two months of daily content, we welcome two new writers - Paul Bodine and Andreas Rey - and welcome back Malcolm Miller.

### ENSEMBLE — THE 'ALICE IN WONDERLAND' PHENOMENON

**Paul Bodine:** The San Diego Symphony, California's oldest - founded 1910 - ended its 2024-25 regular-program season as it began it, with a sprawling early Mahler symphony. Last October, Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* (No 2, 1894) nicely symbolized the unveiling of the Symphony's thoroughly renovated concert hall, Jacobs Music Center, in downtown San Diego. On 23 May 2025, **Mahler's** Symphony No 3 (1896) symbolized several things: the symphony's thorough assimilation of its new hall's acoustic into its sound, its easy confidence in executing the most challenging works in the canon, and music director **Rafael Payare's** confirmation as a credentialed 'Mahlerian'.

The daunting scale of Mahler's second symphony notwithstanding, the composer boasted that his third symphony's opening movement alone made 'the Second Symphony seem like a child'. Its length - longer than most full symphonies - was unheard of: it stretched sonata form to its breaking point, demanded unconventional instrumentation (eight horns, four trumpets, etc), and ambitiously sought to give 'the whole of nature ... a voice'. That first movement was only one of six in which Mahler traced the course of life from basic evolutionary nature to the cosmic destination of all life: love. If Mahler's first two symphonies dramatized a hero's life (and death), his third was meant to capture - compose - life itself. [READ MORE](#)

Paul also listens to the New Orford Quartet's performance of music by Mozart, Beethoven and Dinuk Wijeratne, to music by Unsuk Chin and Bruckner played by Alisa Weilerstein and the San Diego Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rafael Payare and to Beethoven and Tchaikovsky played by Anne-Sophie Mutter, Yefim Bronfman and Pablo Ferrandez.

[READ PAUL BODINE'S LATEST FEATURES](#)

**Andreas Rey:** From 29 April to 28 May 2025, Opéra Bastille in Paris, France presents a co-production (with the Salzburg Festival) of Puccini's *Il trittico* (The triptych), directed by Christof Loy and conducted by Carlo Rizzi. Three operas of different natures are all juxtaposed to demonstrate the breadth of the Italian composer's genius. Contrary to Puccini's own instructions, the German director begins the work with the comic opera *Gianni Schicchi*, continues with the verismo opera *Il tabarro* (The Cloak, based on Didier Gold's play *The Houpelande*) and finishes with the Puccinian opera *Suor Angelica* (Sister Angelica), allowing star Lithuanian soprano Asmik Grigorian to build up the dramatic intensity before ending with a climactic finale.



Lithuanian soprano Asmik Grigorian as Sister Angelica in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* at the Salzburg Festival.  
Photo © 2022 Monika Rittershaus

We must begin by saluting the excellent work of the director's team, namely set designer Étienne Pluss, costume designer Barbara Drosihn, lighting designer Fabrice Kebour and dramaturg Yvonne Gebauer, who give each opera a different atmosphere, inspired by a film genre.

To capture the atmosphere of the *opera buffa*, the German director drew inspiration from the Italian comedy films of the 1960s and 1970s. Here, the stage is the death chamber of the wealthy bourgeois Buoso Donati. The dead man lies in his king-size bed, his family eating pork by his side. Evening lighting softens the colours of Tuscany as time passes. Her family's costumes are indicative of their middle-class Italian provincial lifestyle.

One of the great qualities of this performance is the acting, which although fluid and different in nature for each opera, is perfectly assimilated. In the case of *Gianni Schicchi*, the heirs' characters, veiled and self-interested to the point of crassness, are rendered by the grotesque and jubilant exaggeration of their actions. They rummage through the furniture to find his will, and don't hesitate to steal the candelabras and a still-lit lamp from the hall console as if in *libeccio*, once Gianni Schicchi has become the owner and chased them out of his house. This exaggeration is used to enshrine almost outrageous moments, such as the dance of satisfaction when they find the famous document, or when the women rudely try to seduce Gianni Schicchi.

Unfortunately, as the voices were not yet broken in, the quality of the singing was not yet optimal in the secondary roles, so Rinuccio's monologue sung by the young tenor Alexey Neklyudov and the group scenes did not go down well with the orchestra. And soprano Asmik Grigorian did not quite manage to convey all the enchanting sweetness of *O mio babino caro*, still lacking roundness in the voice, even though her radiant uprightness was already beginning to make itself heard. She would make herself heard even more clearly in subsequent operas. [READ MORE](#)

Andreas also experiences an Alsatian production of *La traviata*. [READ ANDREAS REY'S LATEST FEATURES](#)



**Malcolm Miller:** Sir András Schiff gave a performance to relish as soloist and conductor with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment [OAE] at a well-filled Royal Festival Hall [London, UK] on 22 May 2025, in a memorable concert featuring works by Schumann and Mendelssohn. This final leg of the OAE's eight-city European tour featured **Robert Schumann's** Piano Concerto and less often played *Konzertstück* Op 92 played on an early piano, as well as a selection from **Felix Mendelssohn's** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* music. The concert was poignantly dedicated, as double bassist Cecelia Bruggemeyer explained, to the memory of two distinguished musicians and former OAE members who had recently passed away, cellist David Watkin and theorboist Dai Miller.



**András Schiff and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at London's Royal Festival Hall on 22 May 2025. Photo © 2025 Bea Lewkowicz**

The chief point of interest of the Leipzig-centred programme was Schiff's choice of a restored Southern German *circa* 1859 Blüthner 'fortepiano', straight strung and, at 2.5 metres, very long. Schiff has long advocated refining the art of listening by drawing on different piano sonorities. Earlier instruments, he argues, have more subtle nuances of timbre across the registers than the modern Steinway (or similar) grand. On this occasion the Blüthner produced a distinctive tone, powerful yet ringing, clear in the bass and top and emerging clearly through the transparent textures of the period orchestra. The high registers penetrated with brightness even though there was a certain element of 'restored' sound to it, pure toned yet resisting the singing resonance of a new instrument. The bass was strong, warm, often projected with extreme clarity penetrating across the thick orchestral bass textures. From the very start there was a sense of chamber music interaction, whilst throughout the evening Schiff's assured pianism elicited responsive playing from the orchestra which often initiated gestures, intuiting collectively exactly where and how to engage with the piano, thus allowing Schiff freedom to explore the instrument's colour. In both concertante works, the piano's colours kept the soundscape alert and alive, in the case of the concerto, injecting fresh imaginative sounds into a familiar masterpiece.

The *Konzertstück* Op 92 is a great, if unfamiliar work, comprising a slow introduction and sonata *Allegro*, the different themes here vividly characterised. The slow

introduction features a beautiful theme showing off the OAE's wind section - solo flute, oboe, clarinet and horn - and then rich strings, doubled by the piano's melody Schiff etched out of the quintessentially Schumannesque flowing arpeggios, gradually adding wisps of melody and a richer bass, to assert its solo role for the resplendent main *Allegro*. With the more boisterous motive and impetus, András Schiff jumped from his seat to cue in the chromatic woodwind harmonies, shaped eloquently to cast luminous mystery over the proceedings. The lyrical qualities of the development were enthralling, with a sudden resurgence of energy for the recapitulation, the richness of Schumann's harmony glistening in technicolor in Schiff's articulation and emphasis, and a return to the luscious solo horn and clarinet timbres in the coda.

Mendelssohn's more familiar music for *A Midsummer's Night Dream* (without the Wedding March) was again engrossing for its vivid textures, Schiff's conducting displaying the detail and delicacy of his pianism translated into the orchestral palette. Interesting details were pointed up, unexpected accents - often from the horns and ophicleide - enlivened the gossamer texture like flashes of radiant light through a romantic mist. Performing all repeats, the Overture acquired purposeful dynamism unlike more decorative readings, with fizzing strings and skimpish woodwind, and the framing chordal passage for two flutes that blossom into full wind adding telling flavour to the OAE's rarified HIP sound world. Highlights included the delicacy of the Intermezzo, the horns' radiant tone in the Nocturne, and the Scherzo's fairy tale pointillism, picturesque colours conjured up masterly. Schiff eschews a baton and uses his hands as on the keyboard yet traversing the invisible air in gestures conveying the tiniest of articulations.

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[READ MALCOLM MILLER'S LATEST FEATURES](#)

**Frances Forbes-Carbines:** The competition is won. Engineers must put down their gauges and squares; sound tech professionals must hang up their headphones; audio technology titans must graciously cede defeat, for French pro-audio company L-Acoustics has created truly the best sound system in existence, and last night (Friday 2 May 2025) at the O2 Arena in London, UK, lucky attendees were able to hear Andrea Bocelli and a full choir and orchestra as never before.

Through L-Acoustics' groundbreaking L-ISA Hyperreal sound system, every single person among the twenty thousand attending the Bocelli concert was able to hear the sound as clearly and as richly as though they were in a tiny chapel with the great tenor only a few feet away: this is an amazing treat, to experience the artist in this way, especially as Bocelli is globally renowned for his vocal purity. I was lucky enough to be present, and the effect of the sound system was a genuine phenomenon: I could hear every instrument of the fifty-four-piece symphony orchestra vividly and fully, while Bocelli's notes rang out with a timbre so rich that when I closed my eyes it was as though he were singing to me in a small enclosed Tuscan courtyard.

The sound lost nothing in translation from instrument to microphone to speakers to my ears, some one thousand feet away from the source of it. The sound system is also being used for *ABBA: Voyage* and at multiple festivals: we had the opportunity to speak with Andrea Bocelli's sound engineer, Davide Lombari, who has worked with the London Symphony Orchestra as well as artists including Amy Winehouse and Peter Gabriel. I asked Davide if as sound engineer he did anything to distort the sounds of the orchestra - this was denied, and he explained:



**Andrea Bocelli at the O2 Arena in London.**  
Photo © 2025 Luca Rosetti



**Andrea Bocelli at the O2 Arena.**  
Photo © 2025 Luca Rosetti

*I want to be as transparent as possible, in order to give the audience the truest experience of the sound.*

The strings sounded rich and full, and I could hear the differences between violins, violas and cellos very clearly indeed. Hearing the timpani on the L-ISA Hyperreal system made me feel as though the beats were resounding in my chest. **Andrea Bocelli** smiled to the audience, commenting:

*Someone told me that I have performed here at the O2 arena fifteen times. The last time I was here was many years ago now. My hair was still black in those days!*

Wearing a fetching gold jacket over his tuxedo, Bocelli cut a dashing figure, emoting while singing and at times moving a hand over his heart as though overwhelmed by strength of feeling. Bocelli came out for three encores including *Con te partirò* (Time to Say Goodbye) before finishing with *Nessun Dorma*: an enormous image of Turandot's palace in China was shown on the screens behind him, and the audience - seemingly half of them, so let's say ten thousand people - all held aloft their phone torches, so that the effect was a strikingly beautiful sea of stars in a black morass.

The performance was conducted by Carlo Bernini; Bocelli was joined by pop guest Pia Toscano, and sang with soprano Mariam Battistelli, while flutist Andrea Griminelli came on stage for several awe-inspiring pieces. The audience was very taken with Moldovan

violinist Rusanda Panfili, whose almost mephistophelian energy made the stage come alive, and who was one of the most glamorous women I have seen, in a orient-inspired emerald green dress and with the poise of a revered biblical queen.

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**Mike Wheeler:** There's something particularly satisfying in a programme that mixes the familiar and the unfamiliar. With conductor Olivia Clarke making a welcome return just two months after her previous appearance with Sinfonia Viva, this was a case in point - Derby Cathedral, Derby, UK, 21 May 2025.

A gutsy performance of **Felix Mendelssohn's** *Hebrides* overture had everything, from flat calm and gentle swell, to crashing waves, with fierce roaring from the timpani.

Jonathan Leibovitz played the solo part in **Mozart's** Clarinet Concerto on a basset clarinet, which more or less comes as standard these days. Once heard, who would willingly forgo those luscious additional bottom notes? The orchestral introduction was brisk and airy, and Leibovitz's agility across the instrument's full range made its mark straightaway. His low notes had a slight edge to them, which was not unattractive, and the little cadenzas he added at Mozart's marked pauses lent some extra sparkle.

The steady, flowing account of the second movement made much of its aria-like nature, with a compelling hush to the final episode, and more of Leibovitz's effortless leaps between registers. The finale's high spirits were given mercurial treatment, punctuated with a few teasing hesitations.

There was more Mozart to start the second half, the overture to his unfinished opera *Lo Sposo Deluso* (The Deluded Bridegroom). The opening trumpet-and-drum march had an apt tongue-in-cheek feel, gradually overtaken by comic-opera scurrying, before the slower second section suggested more personal emotions. [READ MORE](#)



British/Irish conductor Olivia Clarke.  
Photo © 2021 Rebecca Need Menear

**Mike Wheeler:** Bringing together two composers, both quintessentially American, in their different ways, Copland and Barber, with the first major musical outcome of Dvořák's three years in America as Director of the National Conservatory in New York, may seem like an obvious piece of programming, but in the hands of the Hallé Orchestra and conductor Marta Gardolińska, it was positively inspired - Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham, UK, 2 May 2025.

Dvořák's pastoral moods were echoed by the orchestral suite from **Copland's** 'ballet for Martha' (dancer and choreographer Martha Graham), *Appalachian Spring*. After the fresh, early-morning stillness of the opening, the first quick episode cut in with an alert rhythmic edge, coloured by glinting points of light from the xylophone. The following episode was full of perky square dance rhythms, combined with Stravinskian incisiveness, from which a magically hushed linking passage took us into the variations on the Shaker song 'Simple Gifts', introduced by Rosa Campos-Fernandez's appropriately straightforward clarinet solo. The last variation was bold but not inappropriately grandiose, and the withdrawal at the end had an effect equivalent to that of a film camera slowly pulling back.

If ever a concerto in the grand tradition contradicted the soloist-versus-orchestra stereotype, it's **Barber's** Violin Concerto. The solo part wears its virtuosity lightly, and it was navigated by Alena Baeva with an unassuming authority evident both right at the start and in the soloist's skittish new theme that follows soon after. The orchestral statement of the opening theme later had just enough expansiveness. Stéphane Rancourt's oboe solo at the start of the second movement laid the ground for Baeva's spacious phrasing, against which the knottier solo passages stood out in sharp relief. [READ MORE](#)

Mike also listens to music by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, to Opera North's *Simon Boccanegra*, to Jon Turner's memorial concert, to the Sitwell Singers' *Serenade to Shakespeare*, to Derby Cathedral Choir's *St John Passion*, to Haydn, Handel and McDowall from Derby Choral Union, to Kodály and Haydn from Derby Bach Choir, to Esther Yoo and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vasily Petrenko and to Sinfonia Viva's *American Odyssey*. [READ MIKE WHEELER'S LATEST REVIEWS](#)

# THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: An Evening with Ken Burns Presented by the BSO & GBH



Boston Symphony Orchestra  
Symphony Hall, Boston, MA

Rhiannon Giddens, vocals  
Kyle Sanna, guitar  
Johnny Gandelsman, violin  
Christina Day Martinson, violin  
Celia Hatton, viola  
Mike Block, cello  
Zachariah Hickman, double bass  
Mikael Ringquist, percussion  
Marcus Santos, percussion  
Mathias Kunzli, percussion



Publicity from the Boston Symphony Orchestra website  
for the 'Evening with Ken Burns' event

**John Dante Prevedini:** On the evening of 16 April 2025 at Boston's Symphony Hall, a highly unique event took place which was part concert, part panel discussion and part film screening in commemoration of the 250th anniversary - the semi-quintcentennial - of the outbreak of the war which would give birth to the United States of America as a nation. Film director Ken Burns led the event before a full house, showing segments of his upcoming film *The American Revolution*, joining a panel discussion on the film's subject matter and introducing a performance of the music featured in the film. The film itself is scheduled to premiere in the USA on 16 November via GBH and PBS.

The two-hour event opened with introductions by presidents Chad Smith of the BSO and Susan Goldberg of GBH, two of the partnering organizations for the occasion. The remainder of the evening featured clips of the nearly-finished film interspersed with live performances of the film's music by a chamber ensemble. The featured musicians were Rhiannon Giddens (banjo and voice), Kyle Sanna (guitar), Johnny Gandelsman (violin), Megumi Stohs Lewis (violin), Celia Hatton (viola), Mike Block (cello), Zachariah Hickman (double bass), Mikael Ringquist (percussion), Marcus Santos (percussion) and Mathias Kunzli (percussion). The panel discussion took place halfway through the evening and featured Ken Burns alongside co-director and co-producer Sarah Botstein, Harvard history professor Vincent Brown, Harvard history professor Philip J Deloria, Harvard history professor Maya Jasanoff and Susan Goldberg.

Over the course of the evening, every one of the speakers drew connections between the symbolism of the historic events being commemorated and their meaning in the present moment, to which the audience responded by breaking out in repeated enthusiastic applause. The point was echoed numerous times, and in numerous ways, that the theme of national identity had come into focus. The film, and the music in it, were an invitation for everyone in the hall to reflect on the nature of that identity, how it was symbolically articulated a quarter of a millennium ago and how it is symbolically articulated today. [READ MORE](#)

[READ JOHN DANTE PREVEDINI'S LATEST REVIEWS](#)

**Ron Bierman:** Richard Strauss's eerie and perverse *Salome* is based on Oscar Wilde's play of the same name as adapted by librettist Hedwig Lachmann. Wilde was inspired by the Biblical tale of Princess Salome and John the Baptist, a prisoner of King Herod, her stepfather.

In every version of the story, Salome dances for Herod, and he is so pleased with her dancing that he offers her anything she desires. Influenced by her mother Herodias whose marriage to the king had been condemned by John the Baptist, Salome asks for John's head.



**Kirsten Chambers in the title role of Richard Strauss' *Salome* at San Diego Opera. Photo © 2025 Karli Cadel**

But it was Wilde who took the tale beyond creepy stepdad and royal corruption by turning Salome into a spoiled young girl infatuated with John the Baptist. When he doesn't yield to her clearly expressed desires, she needs little urging from her mother to demand his head on a platter.

**San Diego Opera's** latest production was yet another demonstration of its ability to attract some of the world's finest singers.

Soprano Kirsten Chambers seductively danced and sang the lead. Well known for the part, she received strong reviews when she sang it at the MET and, despite its exhausting demands, here she was performing it for a San Diego company with an annual budget far less than one percent of the MET's.

The role of Salome is unusually challenging. The one-act opera runs for around an hour and fifty minutes, and the soprano is seldom off the stage and rarely not singing while she is.

Does composer Richard Strauss take that into consideration? No! The part requires wide vocal and dynamic ranges, and though composed more than a century ago, the music is lyrically and harmonically modern sounding, full of clashing keys and melodies that take unexpected turns that make them more difficult to learn. [READ MORE](#)

[READ RON BIERMAN'S LATEST REVIEWS](#)



**Keith Bramich:** I don't think I've ever experienced a quieter, more attentive large audience than at yesterday morning's choral concert. Stephen Shellard's Proteus Ensemble, performing at **Ken Woods'** Elgar Festival, gave us about an hour of beautifully controlled part songs by the area's most famous composer, **Edward Elgar**.

I always think of Pershore Abbey in Worcestershire, UK, as a kind of 'sawn-off' church, because of its strange shape, due to its partial demolition in 1540 following the reformation. Inside, however, the acoustic is glorious.



Stephen Shellard (centre) with The Proteus Ensemble in the grounds of Pershore Abbey on Saturday 24 May 2025.  
Photo © 2025 Michael Whitefoot

Stephen Shellard's eight professional singers performed *a cappella* for about an hour, interspersed with speech by local speaker Peter Avis. We heard fifteen part songs, setting a wide range of authors.

Sopranos Vicki Field and Alison Shone, male altos Sebastian Field and David Whitworth, tenors Ed Harrison and Ashley Turnell and basses Christopher Monk and Steve Grice blended beautifully, the standard remained high throughout the concert, and the quiet passages and cadences in Elgar's writing sounded especially beautiful.

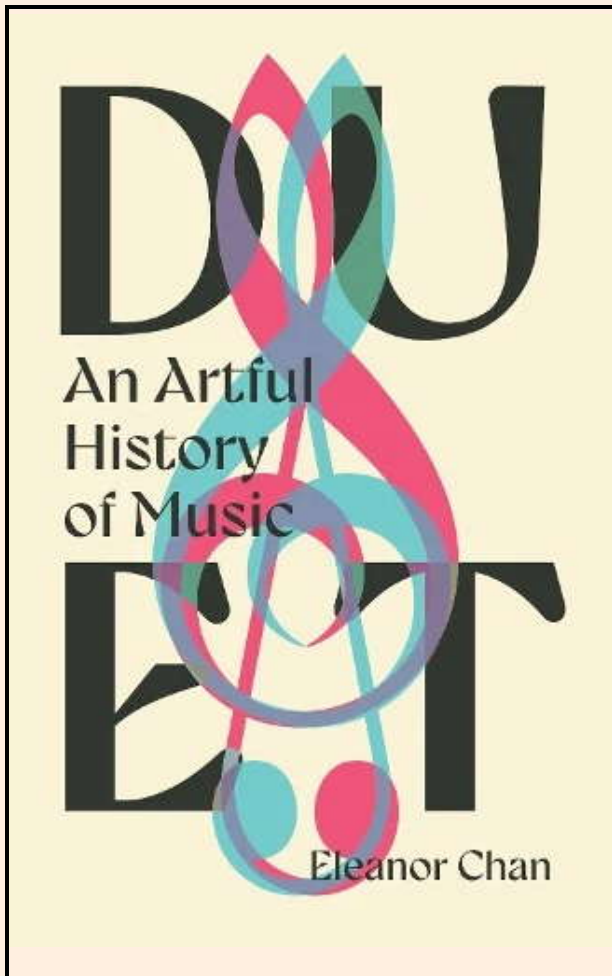
Particularly lovely were *There is sweet music* from 1907 - fantastically performed, and apparently very difficult to sing, partly because it's in two keys at once, with the tenors and basses in G major and the sopranos and altos in A flat major - and also *They are at rest*, setting words by John Henry Newman. Elgar's song dates from 1909, so this came after his much better known setting of Newman's *The Dream of Gerontius*.

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[READ KEITH BRAMICH'S LATEST REVIEWS](#)

[READ CLASSICAL MUSIC DAILY'S LATEST CONCERT REVIEWS](#)





**Frances Forbes-Carbines:** The 'prelude', rather than prologue, of *Duet: An Artful History of Music* by classically trained musician and art historian Eleanor Chan opens with the author giving a public performance at Brighton Pavillion in the UK. It is her first professional concert, and she is all of seven years old. A life in music is to follow, both in terms of career and of lifelong passion and fascination.

Chan writes:

*To be a musician is to walk this tightrope and continually negotiate the balance between the visibility of what we hear, and the acoustics of what we see.*

The book explores choral music, the music of early hominids, the first sheet music notation and scales, Taylor Swift's copyright battles and the musicality of Beyonce. The thread running throughout, Chan states, is one of capturing for the reader 'the briefest impression of just how much visual information goes into the experience of music-making'.

Chan takes us right back to eighteen thousand years before the birth of Christ, to the time when in the entrance of a painted cave at Marsoulas, France, a conch shell was fashioned into a horn in order to make music. Music archaeologists, the author states, have conducted performance experiments to work out how these rudimentary instruments might have sounded. In the case of the conch shell:

*this meant playing a 3D-printed resin replica of the instrument on the edge of the ravine outside the opening of the cave [...] Observers of the experiment noticed that the sound of the seashell 'filled the cave', but without any of the eerie reverberations and phantom 'warblings' or 'throbbings' of tone recorded at other cave sites.*

A moving passage in the book is when Chan turns her attention to the Seikilos epitaph, 'the oldest complete song in the world'. Looted in 1883 from the ruins of the ancient Greco-Roman city of Tralles, in the hills above the modern city of Aydin in south-west Turkey, it 'commemorates in music someone lost and loved'. Dating from the first or second century AD, the epitaph is chiseled upon a standing column, reading:

*I, the stone, am an image.  
Seikilos placed me here as a long-lasting sign of deathless remembrance.  
While you live, shine  
Have no grief at all.  
Life exists only for a short while  
And Time demands his due.*

Chan explains:

*The song remembers the life of a woman named Euterpe, perhaps [Seikilos'] wife, lover, sister or daughter [...] But this also could have been a lament by Seikilos for his own mortality.*

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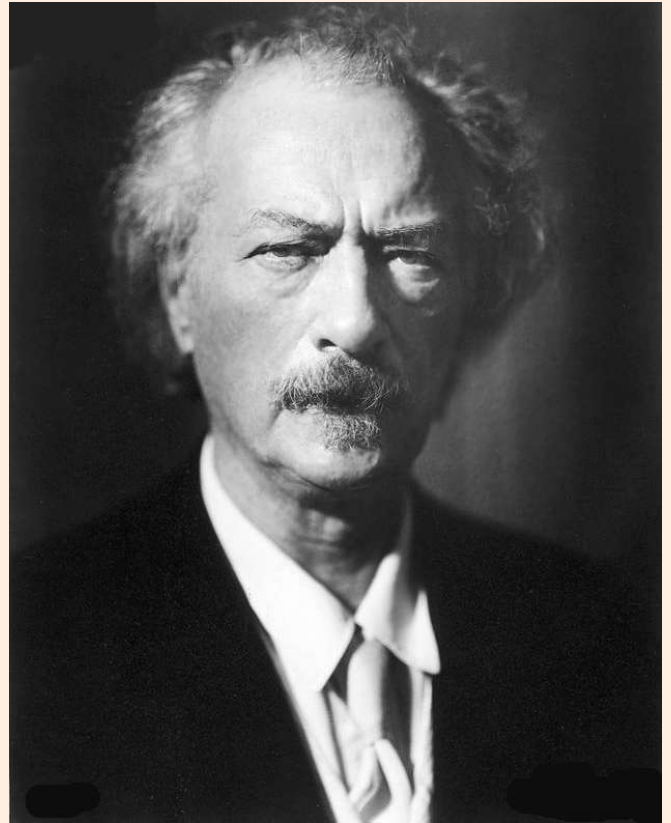
## WHAT HARPSICHORDISTS CAN LEARN FROM PADEREWSKI

**Endre Anaru:** Far be it from me to teach others better than myself to practice their art. But, I must draw attention to this issue lest musicians keep poking away at Music until nothing is left but wood chips and dust.

After a hundred year (or so) lacuna, the art of the harpsichord was revived in the twentieth century. The amount of research and discussion is astounding, but I fear that though many critics of historically informed performance (HIP) are on the right track: something is wrong with the results. But they can't quite figure out what it is.

First, we must remember that this language of harpsichord playing has been relearned without a living exemplar of its speech. No one was left alive who had heard and mastered the art of harpsichord playing before it was annihilated by the new methods and the new instrument of the fortepiano. That its sound is a little off kilter in not at all to be surprised. The question becomes:

*Is there anything that can help add to the stock of knowledge that might assist resuscitating harpsichord performance into a living and breathing language?*



Ignace Jan Paderewski (1860-1941), in circa 1935

Second, the revival of ancient music that took place after 1945 is itself a stylistic rejection of Pre-World War II musical notions, and a continuance of the rejection of nineteenth century practice. But the rejection became more and more tenuous as time passed and more and more irrelevant as the style changed, but the mind-set of the critics did not. By 1955 most keyboardists were not playing like nineteenth century pianists, and the ones that were, were either the old-timers (**Egon Petri**, Josef Hofmann - both of whom were sidelined by health issues), or were relegated to the back of the professional bus (like **Earl Wild** or **Shura Cherkassky**, both outstanding pianists whose careers did not properly flourish because they were practitioners of older stylistic methods. In Wild's case, it was repertoire such as Liszt operatic paraphrases and Cherkassky for his flexible approach to rhythm and layered sounds). But HIP performers have been lambasting those modern pianists who did not play in the nineteenth century fashion, as if they did. They didn't. I omit names for the sake of potential quagmires of argumentation.

I suggest that attending to very old 78rpm recordings and piano roll recordings of pianists (and certain specific ones at that) would be useful as they reveal techniques of performance that have been forgotten and are of interest because they are real expressive devices. That they are out of fashion is irrelevant.

After you cool your jets in offence at such an obviously nonsensical idea, I ask this: 'In what way can they be useful?' I follow here then the philosophical approach of pragmatism - a quintessentially American psyche construct - as exemplified by John Dewey (1859-1952). The answer to 'What is true?' is 'What works in real life'. Thus, in this hypothesis building experiment, the search is always for the useful.

Concerning the old recordings, the reason is simple: on early recordings we can hear how people spoke (that is musically spoke) before the catastrophe of 1914, before modernism, before jazz, before recording technology changed how to listen (and how to perform).

This next point is very important: I am *not* suggesting that these pianists represent a performance practice tradition that extends back in the remotest past (though it was always to habit of those pianists to trace their lineage: this one to Bach, another to perhaps Sweelinck). This lineage seeking fell out of favour in the twentieth century (*cf* insults to the *Canadian Encyclopedia of Music* in its first incarnation), but lineage is crucial in aristocracy, religion, and the confluence of the two (such as the Sayyids of Islam descended from the Prophet Mohamed).

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## CLASSICAL MUSIC NEWS — NOTES FROM THE FIRES



Caroline Wettergreen.  
Photo © Gerard Collett

Norwegian soprano Caroline Wettergreen and French mezzo Adèle Charvet have joined the classical music and opera agency Intermusica. French soprano Juliette Tacchino and American soprano Sarah Fleiss are the first vocal performers to join the roster of Curtis Artist Management.

American conductor Bryan Ijames (pronounced *eye-ems*) has been appointed artistic director of the Masterworks Chorus of the Palm Beaches in Florida, USA. English-Italian conductor Antonio Pappano has been appointed the first Conductor Laureate of the UK's Royal Opera. David Chan, concertmaster of the New York Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, is to become a professor at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music in Texas, USA.



Bryan Ijames

The application deadline for the 2025 Andong Global Young Artist Competition is 13 June 2025, and the competition will take place in Andong, South Korea, in July 2025.

# 2025 안동 글로벌 영 아티스트 콩쿠르

# ANDONG GLOBAL YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION

The Global Young Artist Competition, which aims to discover and foster young classical musicians from around the world, is organized by a panel of prestigious European judges to select promising artists and provide them with performance opportunities.

<b>Application Period</b> June 2, 2025 – June 13, 2025 18:00PM (KST)	<b>Category</b> Vocal, Piano, Orchestral Music	<b>Age limitation</b> Ages 20 to 35 (born between 1990 and 2005)
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안동시
 한국교향악단
 강원도필하모닉
 안동문화예술의전당

## 2025 ANDONG GLOBAL YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION

Application Period: June 2, 2025 – June 13, 2025 / 18:00PM (KST) Category: Vocal, Piano, Orchestral Music

### Jury

- Viviana Barrios / Associate Artistic Director of Deutsche Oper Berlin
- Uta Sander / Assistant Director of Wiener Staatsoper Opernstudio
- Stela Sabolic / Assistant Director of Ehrbar Sall
- Eduard Kutrowatz / Professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria
- Andrea Götsch / Associate Principal Clarinet of the Vienna Philharmonic, Austria
- Yury Revich / Austrian Violinist and Composer & Honorary Representative of UNICEF Austria
- Choi Sang mu / Director of Andong Culture & Art Center, Republic of Korea

### Participation Schedule

Classification	Date	Venue
1 Submission Deadline	June 2, 2025 (Fri) – June 13, 2025 (Fri)	Email Submission
2 Announcement of Document Screening Results and Performance Order	June 20, 2025 (Fri)	Andong Culture & Art Center Web site and individual notification
3 On-site Registration and 1st Round Individual Performance Evaluation	July 1, 2025 (Tue)	Andong Culture & Art Center, Ungbu Hall
4 On-site Registration and 1st Round Individual Performance Evaluation	July 2, 2025 (Wed)	
5 2nd Round Performance Evaluation and Finalist Announcement	July 4, 2025 (Fri)	
6 3rd Round Final Performance and Winner Announcement	July 5, 2025 (Sat)	
7 Andong Global Young Artist Concert with HANKYUNG ARTE PHILHARMONIC	July 12, 2025 (Sat)	

### Benefit

Classification	Information
Performance honorarium for the 1st prize winner	1 person – KRW 15,000,000
Performance honorarium for the 2nd prize winner	1 person – KRW 5,000,000
Performance honorarium for the 3rd prize winner	1 person – KRW 3,000,000
Performance honorarium for the Finalists	7 persons – KRW 1,000,000 each

The prize money will be paid after tax deductions in accordance with South Korean tax law.

All winners must perform at the 'Andong Global Young Artist Concert with HANKYUNG ARTE PHILHARMONIC' held at the Ungbu Hall of Andong Culture & Arts Center, on July 12, 2025, at 17:00. (Pre-rehearsal date: July 9, 2025 (Hankyung Arte Philharmonic rehearsal room))

- Some of the final winners will have the opportunity to perform at the '2025 Andong Global Young Artist Winner Concert' at the Ehrbar Sall concert hall in Austria on November 5, 2025.
- Winners will be granted the qualification to participate in the final auditions for the Young Artist Programs at the Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden (Berlin State Opera) in Germany and the Vienna State Opera in Austria in 2026.
- Winners will also be given the opportunity to perform in classical planned concerts at the Andong Culture & Arts Center from 2025 – 2026.

### Required Documents

- 1 application form
- 5 copies of the performance sheet music
- 1 profile photo (1MB or more, JPG file)
- 1 copy of ID card or passport

### Rules and Guidelines

- Criteria**
  - Anyone born between January 1, 1990 – December 31, 2005, can participate regardless of nationality
  - Eligibility for Participation in the 'Andong Global Young Artist Concert with HANKYUNG ARTE PHILHARMONIC' on July 12, 2025
- Application Method**
  - June 2, 2025 – June 13, 2025 / 18:00PM (KST)
  - Download the application form from the Andong Culture & Arts Center web site and submit by email.
  - e-mail address: andongartfestival@korea.kr
  - When you fill out the application, You can use both Korean and English
- Participation fee:** Free of charge.
- Rehearsal**
  - During the competition period, practice pianos and spaces will be provided. Participants will have a designated rehearsal period according to the regulations. (\* If accompaniment is required, participants must bring their own accompanist.)
- Performance**
  - All performance assessments will be conducted fairly according to categories and parts, following the order set by the host.
  - Additional pieces may be requested by the judges.
  - All competition performances will be open to the general public.
- Judging Criteria**
  - Judging will be carried out by seven internationally renowned judges and will follow the regulations of the organizing committee.
  - If there are any objections or questions about the competition rules, they will be addressed and resolved according to Korean law. The decisions of the host and judging committee are final and cannot be appealed or reconsidered.
- Music Submission Guidelines**

Classification	Detailed content
General Requirements	All pieces must be performed from memory. Submit sheet music for five free-choice pieces at the time of application.
1st Round Performance	Perform one of the five pieces listed in the application, selected by the applicant.
2nd Round Performance	Perform one of the five submitted pieces as designated by the jury.
3rd Final Round Performance	
- Rights and Responsibilities Related to the Performance**
  - By submitting the participation application, the participant agrees that the organizer will have all rights related to archiving and promoting audio, photos, videos, etc. produced during the competition period. These materials may be used for TV and radio broadcasts, online streaming, and other purposes. The participant cannot claim any compensation for this.
- All personal expenses related to participation in the competition must be borne by the participant.**
- Upon on-site registration, participants must present an ID card or passport for identity verification.**

Contact Information: Performance Planning Team of Andong Culture and Art Center: +82 54-840-3612

### Publicity for the 2025 Andong Global Young Artist Competition

Concours de Genève has announced the candidates for its 2025 viola competition and its 2025/26 conducting competition.



Classical California's *Notes from the Fires* is a weekly series highlighting resilience and recovery after the Palisades and Eaton Fires. John Schaefer's US radio programme *New Sounds* is to continue, thanks to support from listeners and donors.

The Association of British Orchestras has announced the next phase of its 'An Orchestra in Every School' initiative.

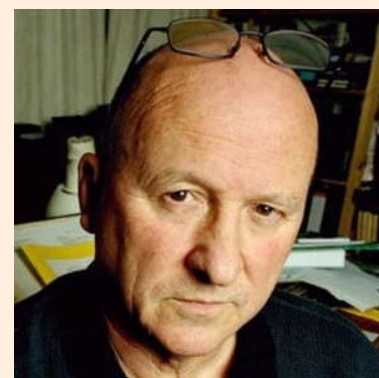


Andrew Arceci

Andrew Arceci's Winchendon Music Festival, happening now in Massachusetts, USA, has concerts in June and October 2025. Schumannfest 2025, with the motto 'Romanticise Yourself', runs from 5-30 June 2025 in the German city of Düsseldorf.

On Saturday 14 June 2025 in Philadelphia, USA, Donald Nally's chamber choir The Crossing gives the first performance of British composer Gavin Bryars' new work *The Last Days of Immanuel Kant*. The Bowdoin International Music Festival (BIMF) in Brunswick, Maine, USA has announced its summer season, from 30 June until 8 August 2025. Birmingham Bach Choir returns to Great Malvern Priory in Worcestershire, UK

on Saturday 5 July 2025 for a French-flavoured concert.



Gavin Bryars

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## OBITUARIES — PER NØRGÅRD AND YURY GRIGOROVICH



Per Nørgård (1932-2025).  
Photo © Lars Skaaning

Danish composer and music theorist Per Nørgård studied with Vagn Holmboe and Nadia Boulanger. He created his own kind of serialism with 'infinity series' and also wrote about the technical and philosophical aspects of music. He died in Copenhagen at the end of May 2025.

Russian ballet dancer, ballet master, choreographer and teacher Yury Grigorovich became known when he staged Prokofiev's ballet *The Stone Flower*, and later dominated the Russian ballet scene for nearly thirty years, as artistic director of the Bolshoi Theatre. He died in May 2025.



Yury Grigorovich

[READ MORE OBITUARIES](#)



## MUSIC ON THE FRONT LINE

**Peter King:** Beauty and brutality seem odd bedfellows. For correspondents on the front line, however, music can provide an essential release, even if it has no power to make sense of the horror that is unfolding.

Television journalists paid to witness man's inhumanity to man have been known to turn to their battered Walkmans to listen to cassettes in the lulls between the storms. One such is broadcaster John Suchet, who was unaware that **Beethoven** had composed a triple concerto until discovering a recording in a shop in Beirut during his coverage of the Lebanese civil war as an ITN reporter in the 1980s. In a voice note for BBC Radio 3's *Record Review of the Century* transmitted in April 2025, Suchet revealed that when he loaded the tape into the machine back in his hotel room and played the music he hardly breathed for the next thirty minutes.



Nicola Benedetti, Benjamin Grosvenor and Sheku Kanneh-Mason's  
2025 recording of Beethoven's Triple Concerto.  
© 2025 Universal Music Operations Ltd

In his introduction to a new recording of the third movement of the Triple Concerto in C major by three soloists regarded as among the brightest young stars on the classical music scene - **Nicola Benedetti** (violin), Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello) and Benjamin Grosvenor (piano) - the veteran broadcaster described this version as the German giant's triple concerto for all time.

The BBC international editor, Jeremy Bowen, sketched in the back story to his choice of **Rachmaninov's** Piano Concerto No 2 on *Desert Island Discs* in 2023. Filing reports early in his career from Lockerbie, the scene of the United Kingdom's deadliest terrorist attack, he had an office in an upstairs room of one of the pubs in the town. In a corner there was an old piano and one of his colleagues played the refrain a stone's throw from the carnage.

One of Bowen's choices for the desert island was *Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras*, by **Brahms**, which awoke memories of Baghdad during the Gulf War in 1991. The cameraman, Rory Peck, 'had a knackered old cassette player with about three home-recorded tapes'. They were trying to cook something on a 'horrible' Primus stove as the

bombing was going on outside. The windows were shaking and they could see the tracer - and they would play this music.

Almost forty years earlier, Sir Don McCullin, the photojournalist, told Roy Plomley on the same programme about the loneliness of the dark room, a scene captured by Carol Ann Duffy in her poem, *War Photographer*. 'In his dark room he is finally alone/with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows'. Explaining his choice of **Samuel Barber's** *Adagio for Strings* he said that when he played this music and printed his pictures it made him believe in what he was doing.

And when McCullin was talking to Clive Myrie in April 2025 on BBC Radio 3's *Music Matters*, *Music on the Front Line*, the host explained that **J S Bach** had accompanied him on many assignments: Afghanistan, Iraq and so on. 'His cello suites, you know, they're something that helped me get through all this horrible stuff', said Myrie. [READ MORE](#)

[READ PETER KING'S LATEST ARTICLES](#)

## PROFILE — FRANK COOPER

Obscurity seems to be a gift given to great creators. Bach was known only to the cognoscenti for almost a century, the number of performances of Liszt's great B minor Sonata for twenty years after its creation can be counted on the fingers of one hand, Melville's whale slept for a good fifty years, and Ignaz Brüll's piano concerto waited a century before its first recording.

I beg your pardon? Who?

Brüll (1846-1907) was a nineteenth century composer and pianist who received strict musical education under eminent teachers and eventually, through his talent and good nature, became a very close associate of Brahms. That that great Master highly esteemed Brüll should make us pay attention. Brüll had a significant success with his 1875 opera *Das goldene Kreuz* (The Golden Cross), Op 27, which was performed widely. Indeed, he wrote numerous other operas and a considerable amount of music in many genres. His creativity is that of a 'fine, civilized musician', said Frank Cooper in the notes to his 1972 recording. Cooper went on to say of this work that it is: 'a make-believe world of fairy-tales and fables where all is right in the end, and moral ... It is carefree. Grand and warm - suffused with poetry and song from first to last. A handsome work for a lad of twenty.'



Frank Cooper

Perhaps the disappearance of his music has to do with this spirit, so opposite to the angst ridden twentieth century, or perhaps it was that his music, having been banned during the Nazi era, never recovered its reputation. But, lost he was.

Now, how can this truly be? The usual answer seventy-five years ago was that his music is mediocre and deserves its oblivion.

This is just not true as actually listening to the music will prove. But, many artists of undeniable quality suffered from a vanishing, a disappearance and a neglect for some period of time. The great Roman philosopher Lucretius vanished for the better part of a millenium.

Did Bach, Liszt, Shakespeare, Melville and Proclus deserve their oblivion? Most emphatically: *No*, and let's see how. At a certain point these creators were rediscovered and made more widely known. Someone helped in the re-evaluation of their legacy (or just rediscovered a mouldy manuscript).

Remember: our modern civilization has learned to respect the archaeologist who digs up fragments of the past. Each new discovery is hailed as a great achievement that widens our knowledge and understanding. This spirit is transferred to other realms than that found in the ground or in barrows of the past.

We can see this transference in the history of art, poetry, philosophy and in the Early Music movement where the most obscure of composers are resuscitated. And of this, like all archeology, I approve. The popularity of Indiana Jones, fictional archeologist and adventurer, might prove it at a popular level.

[READ MORE](#)

(The author has requested that this feature be published anonymously.)

[READ MORE INTERVIEWS, PROFILES AND TRIBUTES](#)



## DISCUSSION — THE PERFORMING ARTIST AS CO-CREATOR

Have you seen our recent video of a discussion led by John Dante Prevedini? *The performing artist as co-creator*, our May 2025 newsletter, runs for nearly seventy minutes, and features Béla Hartmann, David Arditti, Halida Dinova, John Dante Prevedini, Keith Bramich, Stephen Francis Vasta and Yekaterina Lebedeva, who attempt to answer the following questions:

- What is a 'work' in the Western classical tradition?
- How much interpretive freedom does a performer have before a work loses its identity?
- How does the composer-performer relationship differ in this genre from in other genres (like jazz or pop)?
- How do techniques such as aleatory composition affect the balance between composer and performer?

[WATCH THE VIDEO NOW](#)

## SPOTLIGHT — RELEVANT AUTHENTICITY



'... a fine recording ...'

**Geoff Pearce:** I discovered Grażyna Bacewicz in my youth when I was introduced to her music by the Polish Embassy in New Zealand, something I am grateful for, as otherwise, like so many people, I would not know of her colourful and innovative music. Her *oeuvre* is quite large and varied, and she was well known over her lifetime as both a violinist and a composer.

This second volume of Bacewicz's orchestral music begins with the second symphony, written 1950-51. This four movement work is one of her better known works, and the first movement, *Con passione*, is colourful and skillfully orchestrated. A few different sections make up this movement, so there is much contrast.

The second movement, *Lento tranquillo*, is a respite from the nervous energy of the first movement and the business of the third movement. It is reflective and quite glorious.

The third movement, a scherzo, is the briefest of movements, and is vivacious and dancelike. Its whirlwind of

energy takes the listener along with it.

The final movement starts in a quiet, almost subdued manner, although one can sense the tension and excitement behind it, and this is revealed quite quickly. This short movement, under five minutes in length, is quite varied in mood and energy. The work ends energetically. [READ MORE](#)

Geoff also listens to music by Gustav Holst on the Somm Recordings label, and to music by Justin Connolly on Métier. [GEOFF PEARCE'S LATEST REVIEWS](#)

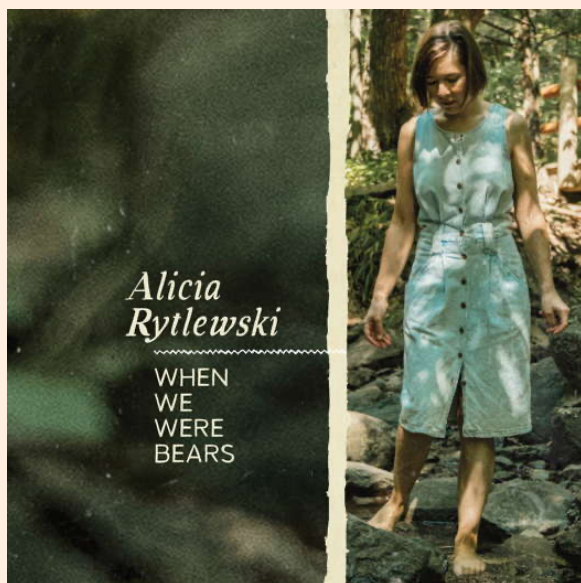
**Gerald Fenech:** English composer Herbert Howells' way of composing was sometimes rather weird, and his psalm chants were written quickly while he was doing something else.

Howells was an exponent of the so-called English musical Renaissance, a historical period between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, which saw composers such as Vaughan Williams, Holst and Stanford engaged in charting a new path in English music. This was a path marked by tradition and, at the same time, by a freer use of musical language in which composers strived to find new ways of using the tonal and modal system, thus succeeding in creating a style that was framed in tradition but, at the same time, original and immediately recognizable.

Howells' organ works, spanning a range of styles and moods, showcase his profound understanding of the instrument's capabilities. His compositions often intertwine rich harmonies, intricate counterpoint and a deep sense of spirituality, reflecting both his personal experiences and the broader cultural context of his time. [MORE](#)

Gerald also listens to 'Jewish Vienna' on Onyx Classics and to *The Last Rose* on Harmonia Mundi.

#### READ GERALD FENECH'S LATEST CD REVIEWS



'... a highly original path ...'

**John Dante Prevedini:** *When We Were Bears* is the recent self-released digital album of original works by Wisconsin-based composer and pianist Alicia Rytlewski. The thirty-eight-minute album features twelve pieces; these include a three-movement suite and eleven single-movement works. The album showcases Rytlewski on piano with Abigail Peterson on violin and Ben Kalb on cello. Rytlewski additionally sings in a few brief moments where the pieces call for sung text.

The album opens with *Under the Hackberry Tree* for piano and cello, a triple-meter piece with a medium-fast tempo in a contemporary diatonic idiom with modal and tonal influences. The cello's role alternates between the melody played *arco* and a *pizzicato* doubling of the piano's bass lines. This is followed by *Ephraim* for solo piano, a pandiatonic piece which retains a similar meter and tempo to the previous one while expanding the range of registers and chord voicings. The forceful and instantly memorable melodic theme undergoes a variety of unexpected transformations, lending this piece a highly original sense of

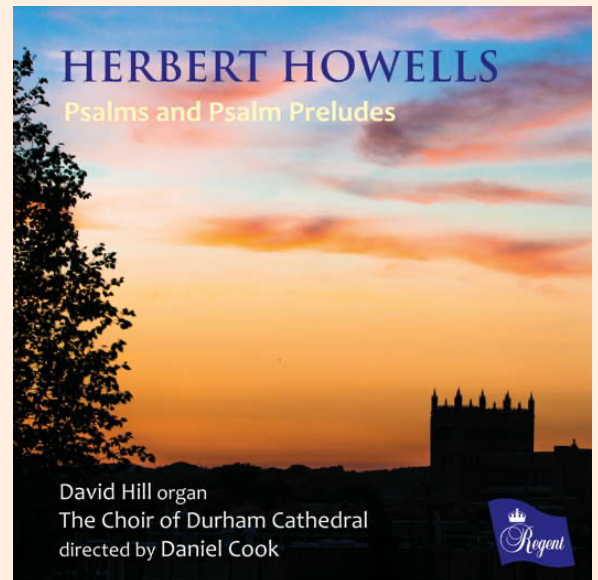
continuous surprise that bears repeated listenings. [READ MORE](#)

#### READ JOHN DANTE PREVEDINI'S LATEST FEATURES

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.

[LATEST CD REVIEWS](#)

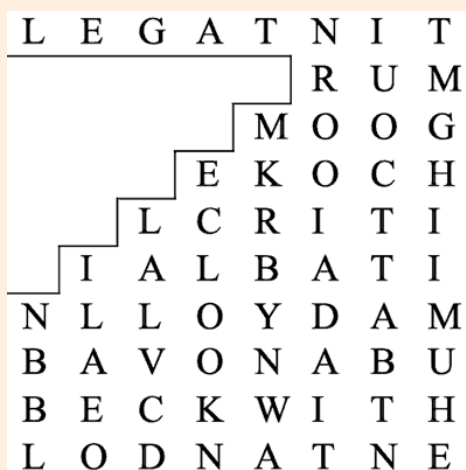
[NEW RELEASES](#)



'... as virtuosic as one could wish for.'



## CLASSICAL MUSIC WORD-SEARCH PUZZLES — BLACKOUT AND ATAYOSKEWIN



Canadian composer **Allan Rae's** latest classical music word-search puzzles, ***Blackout*** and ***Atayoskewin***, have been published to keep you busy, if you have time.

The images on either side have been derived from small sections of these puzzles. The image on the left includes the word 'blackout' and that on the right includes the word 'atayoskewin'.



You'll find well over twenty of these puzzles linked from **Allan Rae's page**, and we're currently publishing one each month.

### GAMES AND PUZZLES WITH A CLASSICAL MUSIC CONNECTION

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