

Sunday 29 January 2012 7.30pm
Barbican Hall

Jonathan Harvey

Wagner Dream *UK premiere*

Libretto by Jean-Claude Carrière; semi-staged performance

BBC Symphony Orchestra

Martyn Brabbins *conductor*

Orpha Phelan *director*

Simon Bailey *Vairochana*

Claire Booth *Prakriti*

Andrew Staples *Ananda*

Roderick Williams *Buddha*

Hilary Summers *Mother*

Richard Angas *Old Brahmin*

Nicholas Le Prevost *Richard Wagner*

Ruth Lass *Cosima Wagner*

Julia Innocenti *Carrie Pringle*

Richard Jackson *Dr Kepler*

Sally Brooks *Betty/Vajrayogini*

Gilbert Nouno *IRCAM computer music designer*

Franck Rossi *IRCAM sound engineer*

Charlie Cridlan *designer*

Wagner Dream is part of the Barbican's present Voices series.



Produced by the Barbican and the
BBC Symphony Orchestra

Present Voices

Present Voices, the Barbican's critically acclaimed biennial series of contemporary opera, presents UK premieres by international composers, enabling world-class concert performances of the most exciting new opera.

This season's series features two UK premieres and one European premiere. Linking in with the BBC Symphony Orchestra's 'Total Immersion' day, Present Voices begins with tonight's performance of Jonathan Harvey's third opera *Wagner Dream*.

The European premiere of Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (based on the text by Oscar Wilde, co-commissioned by the Barbican together with the Los Angeles Philharmonic) takes place on 26 April 2012, following the work's world premiere in Los Angeles on 7 April last year. Following the success of his one-act opera *La Plus Forte*, the Irish composer's fifth opera is performed by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, conducted by Thomas Adès.

Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* is widely regarded as one of the greatest operatic achievements of the 20th century and propelled its creators Robert Wilson and Philip Glass to international success when it was first produced at the Metropolitan Opera in 1976. It will be reconstructed for a major international tour that includes its first UK performances in the Barbican Theatre (4–13 May 2012).

**Barbican classical music podcast:
Wagner Dream**



Marcus O'Dair and Ben Eshmade speak to the key people involved in this exciting project and unearth its many delights and surprises. Available now on iTunes and at barbican.org.uk/music/podcasts

New dawns in sound: the music of Jonathan Harvey

‘I have the feeling,’ Harvey once said, ‘there’s some new type of music hovering on the horizon, which I can glimpse very fleetingly now and then, and which does seem like a change of consciousness.’ Any dawn, though, is also the return of yesterday, and the newness of Harvey’s music – a material newness of sound, of harmony, of rhythm, of shape and process, as well as an immaterial newness of mind – bites on the tail of an oldness: an oldness of ritual, of music as a spiritual agency, of sound as the radiance of unseen worlds.

The ego-less music to which he looks forward is a renewal of the music of pre-Renaissance Europe, and of cultures still further removed in time and space – particularly those of India, which seem specially sympathetic to a man whose indomitably sunny disposition suggests a gentle serenity, and to an artist for whom sensuality and spirituality exist in an embrace.

Harvey’s humility and easeful, soft-spoken manner, and the luxuriation of his art, go along with a mental toughness that has led him to take some hard roads. While a student at Cambridge, in the late 1950s, he studied – at Britten’s suggestion – with Erwin Stein and Hans Keller, who gave him a thorough grounding in the Viennese tradition from Haydn to Schoenberg. Then, in 1969–70, when he was 30 and

well-established as both composer and teacher, he went off to Princeton for a year to learn new lessons in deep musical structure from Milton Babbitt.

Since then he has gone on producing works that refresh, and are refreshed by, the basic musical elements of melody, harmony and timbre. His melodies generally flow (or bounce, for dance is important to him as well) among a relatively small number of fixed notes and, though they trace a long history, they also sound pristine. At the same time, they relate closely to his harmony, which is often based on symmetrical chords, chords containing the same intervals up and down around a midpoint, as well as on natural overtone spectra. Harmonies of both these kinds easily introduce, as a special case, the triad of familiar tonality, made new by a new context.

As for timbre, Harvey has regularly challenged his orchestral imagination by adding an electronic component that enlarges the way instruments can sound, imitate one another and join together. His major work of the mid-1970s was *Inner Light*, a triptych of pieces for groups of live musicians answering electronic sounds on tape, and he has since worked frequently at Paris’s computer-music research centre IRCAM and also at the computer music department of

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Stanford University, where he was on the faculty between 1995 and 2000, after 16 years as professor at the University of Sussex. Many of his works involve electronic transformation of humanly performed sound, as an image of expanding mental capabilities and reaching towards the unknown.

The drive can be the same, though, when the resources are unmodified voices and instruments. Harvey is one of the great choral composers of our time, and one who finds vocal melody – and vocal harmony – to be vital and inexhaustible, even if his music depends also on the many other things voices can do. He is, too, a virtuoso in his handling of instrumental resources. Instruments are voices by other means, and their combining is like that of selfless participants in a ceremony, finding ways together to exceed the powers of any individual: to project visionary states of mind, to mediate between opposites (light and dark, improvised and prescribed, sensual and spiritual) and to strike towards new sounds.

Harvey's ability to find those sounds, through a creative life now spanning half a century, has been consistent. This weekend's 'Total Immersion' concerts concentrate on the past decade and a half but have still had to leave out a

number of pieces: these, with similarly varied compositions from earlier in his output, would be enough for a week-long immersion.

The new sounds discovered in all this music are contained in, grounded in, the context of the old. Harvey is indisputably a modernist, whose music is informed by Stockhausen as well as Babbitt, and by the French spectralists of his own generation. At the same time, he has learnt from plainsong and from Buddhist ritual, from the data of our own bodies (the sound and rhythm of breathing, for example) and from the physical nature of sound, in particular from the luminous stacking of overtones in the sounds of bells, of voices or of rippling water. Sound, for him, if it is composed aright and heard aright, becomes holy, a gateway.

Whither? Harvey has set sacred and mystical texts from the traditions of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, but not as an adherent of any. The words or images are there as springboards, as questions to be answered by music, which will present us with questions of its own. In this sound, though, there is light.

Introduction © Paul Griffiths

Jonathan Harvey (born 1939)

Wagner Dream *UK premiere*

Libretto by Jean-Claude Carrière

Performed by arrangement with Faber Music Ltd, London

Jonathan Harvey and Martyn Brabbins in conversation with Christopher Cook

'When I have finished the Nibelungen, R[ichard] ... said, 'I shall write some plays for the theatre.' 'And Parzival?', I asked. 'That will be done in my 80th year. I shall perhaps do Die Sieger as a play.' (29 June 1869)

In the tear-stained diary that Cosima kept through the years that she lived with Richard Wagner, first as his mistress and mother of his three children, then, after 1870, as his wife, she and the composer keep returning to the subject of *Die Sieger*. Wagner had completed a prose sketch for this projected 'Buddhist' opera as early as 1856, having recently finished scoring *Die Walküre* while in exile in Switzerland. But, as tonight's composer Jonathan Harvey reminds us, the first seeds of 'The Victors' were sown much closer to home.

'It was begun only a few months after Wagner had read Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*. He was staying in London where he came across and read a book of Indian tales. (He hated London except for meeting Queen Victoria, whom he liked and with whom he doubtless spoke German.) Shortly afterwards he read Eugène Burnouf's *Introduction à l'histoire du bouddhisme Indien*, which had the full story. And Wagner, a very egotistical man, complex too, took immediately to this compassionate figure of the Buddha and the way he changed the world, and particularly how Prakriti – the woman in the story who loves the young monk Ananda – is unlike Kundry, Brünnhilde and Isolde in that she really lives happily ever after.

'There's no question of dying into some murky twilight or nirvana or whatever. She converts and becomes a nun after the Buddha's change of mind to admit women to his Order. So the feminine principle, which was so important to him, was accepted. "Prakriti" actually means nature in Sanskrit, so nature is accepted into the scheme of purification. Some of this came out in *Parsifal*, of course, but even after that work he was still talking about writing *The Victors*, as scholars have discovered from references in Cosima's diaries.'

'In the evening R[ichard] reads us the little sketch of Die Sieger. How splendid! I hope to God ... that he will complete this work – God will hear me and I want, mean to force him to it through this prayer. R says he will write Parzival when he is 70 and Die Sieger when he is 80. I say when he is 65 and 70. He says yes, if I do not hold him back through my timidity ... We laugh; but I [as] always restraining my tears.' (23 Nov 1873)

God did not answer Cosima's prayer: Wagner never transformed his prose sketch for *Die Sieger* into opera. That would have to wait until the early years of this century, when Jonathan Harvey, a composer with a deep interest in both Wagner and Buddhism, took up the sketch of *The Victors* with serious musical intent.

'I had first become fascinated with the sketch for *Die Sieger* a lot earlier ... I thought that this was a wonderful Indian

Buddhist tale and that it would make a terrific opera. Yet there was something missing, and it wasn't until about 2003 that I had the idea of bringing in Wagner himself as a protagonist and the whole ethos of the world of Wagner which I have known since I was a boy, the Schopenhauerian Wagner, the later Wagner particularly.

'I began to see that it could have a complexity and richness of texture that was many-coloured and that went deep into my own concerns between a love of 19th-century passion, myth, Freudianism, melancholy, insanity and all that and the world of purity of renunciation, beauty, peace and harmony. So these two came together in that juxtaposition of Wagner and Buddha.'

As Harvey writes in a note at the beginning of the score for *Wagner Dream*, 'Wagner, most egotistical and most complex of men, was yet one of the few who knew anything about Buddhism in his time – he contained, as in so many respects, a fusion of opposites. Yet it is not a contradiction in Buddhist tantric terms; that is to say, there is a possibility to understand the sufferings caused by attachment through understanding with skill the very nature of consuming attachment. But it is a delicate and easily misunderstood bridge.'

Wagner thought long and hard about human suffering and the nature of compassion and they are at the core of his last work, *Parsifal*. These are also things upon which the Buddha meditated deeply. In *Parsifal*, says Harvey, Wagner 'created a bodhisattva figure, a Buddha in becoming. Yet Wagner's racialism, nihilism and hatred of the world ... distort Buddhist philosophy in this work too. Only in the scenario of *Die Sieger*, never taken further, do we find a "truly noble" Buddhist subject.'

'After lunch ... [Richard] relates to us the story underlying his Sieger, wonderful and moving. He says he will write it in his ripe old age. It will be gentler than Parsifal, where everything is abrupt, the saviour on the cross, blood everywhere ...'
(1–5 March 1880)

Wagner Dream begins with bad blood. Wagner and Cosima have a vicious quarrel on 13 February 1883 and, as you might expect in the Wagnerhaus, it was about another woman, Carrie Pringle. Pringle, who had caught the composer's eye when singing one of the Flowermaidens in the first performances of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth the previous year, has followed the composer, and perhaps her heart, to Venice, where the Wagners, including their daughter Isolde, were comfortably installed in the Palazzo Vendramin.

Jonathan Harvey admits that Carrie Pringle was scarcely even a name to him before he began work on *Wagner Dream*. 'She actually lived in Brighton and Jean-Claude Carrière [the librettist] and I took a little liberty: she probably didn't visit the Wagners' apartment on the Grand Canal, but she was certainly the cause of the row, according to Isolde who was downstairs at the time. There's something in this, because though Wagner scholars disagree about many things, they do seem to agree that there was something going on between Wagner and Carrie. They don't know whether they slept together but it seems quite likely.'

After the row with Cosima, Wagner retired to his study and had the heart attack that would kill him. And that is where Jonathan Harvey's *Wagner Dream* begins. 'Buddhists believe that the last moment in a life is very important for future incarnations and Wagner was obsessed by reincarnation – he and Cosima often talked about it. At the

moment of his death he was halfway through writing an essay on "The Feminine Element in Humanity". After his quarrel with Cosima he started to think about the Buddha so I thought the whole question of "Why did I never write *Die Sieger*?" might have been on [his] mind because in a sense that is a more noble theme than any that he had taken up before. So why hadn't he done it? I ... wanted to dramatise that as the delirium following his heart attack, those few minutes just an hour or two before he finally became silent as he lay in Cosima's arms. So that whole scene in Venice is very much based on fact except for what was in Wagner's mind. That I have made up, of course.'

'While still in bed, [Richard] says, "If you look after me well, clothe me well, feed me well, then I shall still compose Die Sieger ... My difficulty there is the locality, and the speech. Christianity is all noble simplicity, but in Buddhism there is so much education, and education is very inartistic." We talk of the fact that in both, Parsifal and Sieger, more or less the same theme (the redemption of a woman) is treated.'

(6 January 1881)

The Wagners, their doctor, Carrie Pringle and Betty are speaking roles for actors; the opera, *The Victors*, is sung by a cast of six soloists and a small chorus. These two worlds are separate, the story of Prakriti's redemption through her love for the monk Ananda takes place in a parallel world to Wagner's Venice, though the action in each overlaps. Only one character can travel between the two: Vairochana.

Jonathan Harvey sees Vairochana as 'a sort of intermediary. A psychopomp who guides the dead and greets them when they pass through the veil. He's a traditional figure in the sense that he comes out of the Buddhist tradition. He sings to

Wagner, who talks back, but this is the only example of talking and singing in the same dialogue. So he fulfils traditional roles connected with ritual guidance and also offers moral and ethical guidance to Wagner to help him to clarify his choices. I hope that he's not judgmental: he's just helping Wagner to orientate himself.'

Harvey started work on *Wagner Dream* before there was even a libretto. While waiting for Jean-Claude Carrière to get started he composed 'the "Death Interlude", where Wagner has his heart attack and meets the Buddha Vairochana and has a kind of near-death experience, if you like – not yet dead but already in the other world, a concept which comes, as Wagner himself says, from Act 3 of *Tristan*. He wrote to Liszt, "If you want to understand what I am thinking of in *Die Sieger* you must first understand Act 3 of *Tristan*". That's very interesting.'

While writing this Interlude Jonathan Harvey began to establish the musical parameters of the work, which combines 20 instrumentalists (the scoring includes strings, bass and alto flute, oboe d'amore, tenor trombone, harp and a battery of percussion instruments), with electronics.

'I was setting up the electronics and setting up the harmonies. There are basically two harmonies. This is perhaps a rather sweeping statement but there is the Wagner harmony and the Buddha harmony, but with many transformations. And I set them up in that First Interlude and in a way the whole opera proceeds from those two harmonies. One is like the "Tristan chord", with those sorts of intervals in various inversions, and that haunts a lot of the pages of the score. And the Buddha harmony is basically pentatonic, a kind of building-up of a more complex pentatonic sphere ... The pentatonic

representing the archetypal music, the old music completely free from the tonal tensions and so on that arrived in around 1500. It's music that floats, like plainsong and a lot of oriental music. For me the pentatonic has always been very special, liberation music. It reaches back beyond the world of the suffering harmony and grating dissonances that we love in Wagner!

'Richard works on his score [for Parsifal] and tells me that the aversion he feels for magicians and evil beings will perhaps induce him to write Der Sieger.' (16 June 1881)

Electronics have been an essential part of Harvey's music since he was invited by Pierre Boulez to IRCAM in Paris in the 1980s. 'If you ask me if I "hear" the electronics as I am composing, the answer is difficult to recall. But I certainly have a stab at writing down in my notes for Gilbert Nouno at IRCAM (with whom I have collaborated since about 2001) what sound I want at a particular point and when we go into the studio and fiddle around, sometimes I'll say, "Ah, I recognise that – that's what I was looking for". So it's a little bit more difficult than writing for the orchestral instruments. And very, very subtle.

'Of course, it's very exciting going into the studio and finding something you hadn't expected with someone creative like Gilbert. He doesn't say much but he sets up the parameters according to our discussions. We may change a little bit of vibrato or modulation or the speed of a glissando. He just experiments with it and we listen and shake our heads or nod our heads and eventually this improvisation sort of bonds itself.'

Electronics also offer a composer the possibilities of 'chance'. 'You can use random mechanisms. You put things

into repetition and they will repeat now and again but you don't know quite when they will come into the texture. Perhaps a little recording that's made at 52'20" will come back at odd places. Or single notes; a quarter-tone harp note, for instance, could either spew out notes very, very fast or in a more spaced-out way. So we have these random programs ... which are by their nature unpredictable.'

Unpredictability is not to the taste of many conductors. However, tonight's conductor Martyn Brabbins has worked with Jonathan Harvey over many years and on a number of different pieces; indeed it was Brabbins who conducted the first performances of *Wagner Dream*, in Amsterdam in 2007.

'As always with Jonathan's music, when you first open the score you can barely read it. I am a great believer in handwritten scores, but his hand can be a little bit difficult! Then, as with any score you approach, what's there on the written page is set out in a very practical way, however, and when you start rehearsing you realise just how huge a role the electronic element plays in this piece. There are clearly two different worlds going on throughout the whole piece which somehow he manages to combine into a completely convincing whole.

'In a very basic way the musicians, the singers and the orchestra, every voice and instrument, have a microphone so their sound can be extracted from the whole by the creative electronic guys from IRCAM and then the sound that is taken from that particular moment is treated electronically in the most incredibly effective ways. This means that a single note can end up with a whole spectrum of harmonics, can go on and on to infinity if you like. There's something in Jonathan's language that makes this kind of treatment work and I've never really been able to understand how. Of course he's

been doing this for many, many years so he knows how it works by now!’

The difficulty for both the conductor and the composer, or whoever is controlling the electronics, is balance. Sometimes it’s the composer himself. As Harvey says, ‘Of course the balance is not fixed and that’s very difficult. I try at each performance to regulate the balance and it can have a remarkable effect if you just have one fader on one treatment two or three decibels too loud or too soft. You can change a lot.’

The conductor’s position in front of an orchestra is possibly the worst in terms of balance, as Martyn Brabbins will tell you. ‘In Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart – in any music it’s not the best place to be. Funnily enough you often feel the woodwinds are not loud enough, but go back 10 metres and they’re fine. It gets even more complicated when you involve electronics; I remember many times in rehearsals not hearing certain things that needed to be heard and vice versa – hearing things too loudly because you’re in a disadvantageous position. So you always need at least one pair of ears somewhere behind you dealing with the whole picture; it’s extraordinarily complex, I must say.

‘The bizarre thing is that sometimes Jonathan is actually writing tonal music, D flat major and E flat major chords and at other times it’s incredibly rebarbative, aggressive contemporary music, but somehow the two worlds combine. He uses sound for its own sake. C major will not work with totally atonal music but in his world the two can combine or counterbalance each other and maybe there is something in that that makes the electronic enhancement of the whole experience so practical.’

[Richard says] “All I care for now is tranquillity. Tristan came storming along and gave rise to Siegfried, too, but now I

find emotional scenes repugnant, and it is something which disturbs me in Parsifal as well” ... Strange evening with Mme Gautier [Judith Gautier with whom Wagner was deeply enamoured] ... My feelings are strange, I leave the room; when I return, R is reading aloud his material for Die Sieger from Burnouf. (22 September 1881)

Surrounded by domestic tension, in a house where his wife knows she is entertaining his mistress, Wagner reaches for *The Victors*. As Jonathan Harvey suggests in *Wagner Dream*, the Wizard of Bayreuth knew what he ought to do – in his art that is, if not his life. Harvey reminds us that when he was first working on *Die Sieger*, Wagner wrote to Mathilde Wesendonck, who had been his ‘muse’ for *Tristan und Isolde*, that ‘he would love to be a saint and for the two of them to live in a kind of pure harmony’. ‘But’, he says, ‘I am an artist and I always turn back to what the Buddha would disapprove of, I am always torn back into art, and I have to enter it in all its sufferings.’

On the other hand, as Harvey explains, ‘The snares of the world, with its greed and power, is one of the big themes of *The Victors*, the response of the Buddha to the injustice of the caste system and the Brahmins and common selfishness.’

It is the ambition quite as much as the remarkable achievement that *Wagner Dream* represents that is most admirable in Jonathan Harvey’s opera. To finish what Richard Wagner could not is, indeed, a dream.

Programme note © Christopher Cook

All quotations taken from Cosima Wagner’s Diaries Vols 1 and 2, published by Collins in 1978 and 1980.

Surtitles by Kenneth Chalmers

Synopsis

Richard Wagner and his wife Cosima have come to Venice, where Wagner has begun work on an essay, 'The Feminine Element in Humanity'. On the morning of 13 February 1883 there is a jealous quarrel with Cosima over the arrival of the young singer Carrie Pringle, who had appeared as a Flower Maiden in the first performances of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth. The composer returns to his study and reflects upon *Die Sieger*, an opera with a Buddhist subject that he had first begun to think about 28 years earlier. Then he suffers a heart attack.

Buddhism teaches that one's state of mind at the moment of death is crucial to one's future incarnation, that it is 'the most important mind of one's whole life'. It also teaches that one experiences a sequence of encounters in which the individual is presented with choices. These choices are clarified for Wagner at the moment of his death by Vairochana, a Buddha who is to be the composer's guide; Wagner decides that he must repair his failure to compose *Der Sieger*. He therefore 'creates' his opera. As it unfolds before him, he responds to the performance. But only he can see it from among those in his household. His wife Cosima, the doctor who has been summoned to attend him, Carrie Pringle and the housemaid can't understand what Wagner is talking about.

The opera *Die Sieger* has begun. Prakriti works in a low-life inn. Ananda, a young monk who is both a disciple and a cousin of the Buddha, enters and asks for a glass of water. Prakriti tells him that this is no place for him. And Ananda replies that he doesn't care what kind of place it is. All he wants is a glass of water. Prakriti serves him and falls in love with him.

Prakriti's mother is keen to further the relationship between her daughter and 'Prince Siddhartha's cousin' and invites Ananda to eat with them. As the young couple fall ever more deeply in love, the Buddha appears, unseen by Ananda,

and creates a Tantric vision of Prakriti as the beautiful but terrifying goddess Vajrayogini. Ananda, overcome by this vision, prostrates himself and leaves, as Prakriti returns to her normal appearance.

Buddha is sitting under a tree with his disciples when Prakriti approaches and asks if she can be with Ananda. If she loses him she will die. Buddha is sympathetic but explains the conditions of the Path set for his followers that make this impossible. An Old Brahmin taunts Prakriti and, enraged, she seizes Ananda's hand and tries to drag him away.

Buddha explains Prakriti's behaviour to his followers. In a former life she had been the daughter of an arrogant court priest and she had met a young man from a humble background by a well and he had fallen in love with her. She soon forgot him but then he arrived with his father at the palace where the priest's daughter lived and asked her to marry him. Rejected, the young man lived alone for the remainder of his life, unable to wipe her memory from his mind. That woman was Prakriti and the young man was Ananda.

Buddha's teaching provokes a crisis in which Prakriti threatens to kill herself and burn the earth to ashes; Ananda steps forward to entreat Buddha to admit a woman to the Order for the very first time. To the disgust of the orthodox Brahmin, Buddha agrees and Prakriti joins the Order as a sister welcomed by Buddha and Ananda as all celebrate this unique moment.

Wagner is dying and begins to question whether the work he's seen was really his choice. He is reconciled to Cosima and asks for her forgiveness. Guided to the end by Vairochana, the composer passes away.

Synopsis © Christopher Cook

About tonight's performers



Sasha Gurov

Martyn Brabbins *conductor*

British conductor Martyn Brabbins was recently announced as Chief Conductor of the Nagoya Philharmonic (Japan) from 2013 and is currently Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic Orchestra. He was Artistic Director of the Cheltenham International Festival of Music from 2005 to 2007 and Associate Principal Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra from 1994 to 2005. He studied composition in London and conducting with Ilya Musin in Leningrad, winning first prize at the 1988 Leeds Competition.

Since then he has regularly conducted all the major UK orchestras, including the Philharmonia and the BBC Symphony and BBC Scottish Symphony orchestras, and has appeared

annually at the BBC Proms. He is also much sought-after in Europe, as well as undertaking guest-conducting engagements in Australia and, more recently, Japan.

Highlights of last season include Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with the Hallé for the Huddersfield Choral Society's 175th anniversary and a rare performance of Havergal Brian's monumental 'Gothic' Symphony at the BBC Proms, a recording of which has recently been issued.

This season he appears with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Philharmonia, Deutsches Symphonieorchester Berlin, BBC Scottish and Iceland Symphony orchestras, the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Musikfabrik. Highlights with the Royal Flemish Philharmonic include the curatorship of a new cutting-edge festival and Remembrance Day performances of Britten's *War Requiem* across Flanders. In the opera house, he will conduct the premiere of Christian Jost's *Rumor* and a Ravel/Zemlinsky double-bill for Opéra de Lyon.

Known particularly for his Elgar, Britten and Walton, Martyn Brabbins also has a strong affinity for the great 19th-century Romantics. He has conducted

hundreds of world premieres and has close links with many of today's foremost composers.

His extensive discography ranges from Romantic to contemporary repertoire; he has made more than 30 recordings with the BBC Scottish SO, including a recent highly acclaimed disc of Walton's symphonies, and is now also recording with his Antwerp orchestra.



Nick Gurney

Orpha Phelan *director*

Orpha Phelan was born in County Kilkenny, Ireland. She studied at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, read economics at University College Galway and was awarded an MA in arts criticism from City University, London.

She has been directing opera nationally and internationally for over a decade. Last season she directed *Les contes d'Hoffmann* for Malmö Opera, returning there this season for *Jenůfa*. Past highlights have included *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* for Opera North and at the Sydney Opera House, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's *The Lighthouse* at Dartington International Summer School, *Iolanta* and *Gianni Schicchi* for Royal Academy Opera and *The Marriage of Figaro* for Graz Opera and Opera North at Hampton Court Palace. She has also worked on several productions at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Glyndebourne and Wexford Opera and has directed workshops for Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Aldeburgh and Almeida Opera. Recent awards include The Ring Award/Audience Prize for her concept of *Figaro* and the European Opera Directors' Prize for her concept of *Hans Heiling* for Strasbourg Opera

She also has a keen interest in noh theatre. She directed *Sumidagawa*, the noh play on which Britten based *Curlew River*, for the Britten Festival in 2001. She has recently collaborated with Hideki Noda on his contemporary noh play *The Diver* at London's Soho Theatre and the Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo.



Barbara Amueeller

Simon Bailey *bass-baritone*

Simon Bailey was born in Lincoln and read music at Cambridge before studying at the Royal Northern College of Music and the La Scala Academy, Milan. In 2002 he joined Opera Frankfurt as a company principal, singing a wide range of repertoire, from Handel to Pizzetti.

Internationally, his roles have included the title-roles in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Handel's *Hercules*, Schounard (*La bohème*), Alessio (*La sonnambula*), Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and Zuniga (*Carmen*). Recent engagements include Truffaldino (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) for Theater an der Wien, and the world premiere of Michaël Levinas's *La métamorphose* for Opéra de Lille.

He is also in demand in the concert hall, including Berlioz's *L'enfance du*

Christ in Cambridge, Haydn's *The Creation* in Lima, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* with the Tampere Philharmonic, Mozart's Requiem in Bordeaux, London and Manchester and Verdi's Requiem in Dublin.

Engagements this season include Sulpice (*La fille du régiment*) and David (Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*) in Moscow, while roles in Frankfurt range from Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) to Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*).

Future engagements include Brander/Méphistophélès (*La damnation de Faust*) for De Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp.



Sven Arnstein

Claire Booth *soprano*

A finalist in the 2004 Kathleen Ferrier Competition and a recipient of many

scholarships and awards, Claire Booth is in demand in repertoire ranging from Handel and Mozart to complex scores of the 20th and 21st centuries. She made her professional debut at the Royal Festival Hall, singing Oliver Knussen's *Océan de terre*; he later wrote his *Whitman Settings* and *Requiem: Songs for Sue* for her.

Her busy concert career has included appearances with the Academy of Ancient Music, the BBC, BBC Scottish, Chicago and City of Birmingham Symphony orchestras, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Ensemble Intercontemporain, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Northern Sinfonia and The King's Consort.

Operatic highlights include Nora in Vaughan Williams's *Riders to the Sea* for English National Opera; Dorinda (*Orlando*) for Scottish Opera; Pascal Dusapin's *To be Sung* in Paris; Miranda in Thomas Adès's *The Tempest* at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Elle in Poulenc's *La voix humaine* for Opera North.

This season she sings Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*) for Scottish Opera and performs with the Bournemouth and City of Birmingham Symphony orchestras, Early Opera Company

and the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra.

Claire Booth's recordings include Webern cantatas, Pallas in Eccles's *The Judgement of Paris*, Luke Bedford's *Or voit tout en aventure* and a disc of 20th-century songs for the NMC Songbook.



Andrew Staples *tenor*

Andrew Staples sang as a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral before winning a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge. He was the first recipient of the Royal College of Music's Peter Pears Scholarship and currently studies with Ryland Davies.

His concert appearances have included works by Schumann, Mahler, Sir John Tavener, Britten and Mozart,

and he has worked with conductors such as Andrew Manze, Semyon Bychkov, Daniel Harding, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Simon Rattle and Robin Ticciati.

He made his Royal Opera House debut as Jacquino (*Fidelio*), returning for First Armed Man (*The Magic Flute*), Artabenes (Arne's *Artaxerxes*) and Narraboth (*Salome*), and sang Belfiore (*La finta giardiniera*) for the National Theatre, Prague – a role he repeated in the same production at La Monnaie in Brussels. Last summer he sang Tamino (*The Magic Flute*) at the Lucerne Festival.

This season Andrew Staples will sing Tamino for the Royal Opera House, Ferrando for Opera Holland Park and Narraboth for the Hamburg State Opera. In concert he appears with the Swedish Radio Orchestra and the Bavarian Radio Symphony with Harding, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Bychkov, the Vienna Philharmonic with Rattle and the Philadelphia Orchestra with Nézet-Séguin.

Benjamin Ealovega



Roderick Williams *baritone*

Roderick Williams encompasses a wide repertoire, from Baroque to contemporary music, in the opera house, on the concert platform and in recital.

He has enjoyed close relationships with Opera North and Scottish Opera. He has also sung Papageno (*The Magic Flute*) for English National Opera and Schaunard (*La bohème*) for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. He has also sung in premieres of operas by David Sawer, Sally Beamish, Michael van der Aa and Alexander Knaifel.

He has worked with orchestras throughout Europe, including all the BBC orchestras, Manchester Camerata, London and Royal

Liverpool Philharmonic orchestras, City of London Sinfonia, the Hallé, Le Concert Spirituel, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Avanti Chamber Orchestra, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra and Bach Collegium Japan. His many festival appearances include the BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Cheltenham and Aldeburgh.

Recent and future operatic engagements include the Count (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for Scottish Opera, Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*) for the Royal Opera, Goryanchikov (*From the House of the Dead*) for Opera North and Pollux (Rameau's *Castor and Pollux*) for English National Opera.

He is an accomplished recitalist, having performed at the Wigmore Hall, Perth Concert Hall, Howard Assembly Room and the Vienna Musikverein.

Roderick Williams is also a composer and has had works premiered at the Wigmore Hall, Barbican, Purcell Room and on national radio.

Claire Newman-Williams



Hilary Summers *contralto*

Hilary Summers enjoys a varied career encompassing repertoire from the 12th to the 21st centuries. A true contralto with a wide vocal range, she has excited the attention of many contemporary composers, creating the roles of Stella in Elliott Carter's opera *What Next?*, Irma in Peter Eötvös's opera *Le balcon* and the lead role in Michael Nyman's *Facing Goya*.

She has also performed Boulez's *Le marteau sans maître* throughout Europe under the composer and others, her recording of which won a Grammy Award. As part of the celebrations for Boulez's 80th birthday, she sang *Le visage nuptial* under his direction.

In Britain she has forged a special relationship with Michael Nyman, recording soundtracks to many of his film scores. She has also worked frequently with Joby Talbot.

Hilary Summers has worked extensively with leading exponents of Baroque music too, including Christopher Hogwood, Paul McCreech, Robert King, Christian Curnyn, Christophe Rousset, Thomas Hengelbrock, Andrew Manze, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and William Christie.

In recent years her operatic roles have ranged from Handel to Mescalina in Ligeti's *Le grand macabre*, as well as Mrs Sedley (*Peter Grimes*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Washerwoman (Rob Zuidam's *Rages d'amour*) at De Nederlandse Opera and Hippolyta (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) for the Teatro Real, Madrid. This season she sings Geneviève (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) in Madrid and Barcelona, Juno (*Semele*) in Paris and the Sorceress (*Dido and Aeneas*) with the Early Opera Company.

In the concert hall she has sung *The Dream of Gerontius* and *Sea Pictures* under the late Vernon Handley.

Her many recordings range from Handel via Rossini to Nyman.



Jeremy Young

Richard Angas *bass*

Plans for 2012 and beyond include Schigolch (*Lulu*), Parson (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) and Old Brahmin (*Wagner Dream*) for Welsh National Opera; Majordomo/Fouquier-Tinville (*Andrea Chénier*) at the Bregenz Festival; Old Adam (*Ruddigore*) for Opera North; Shadbolt (*The Yeomen of the Guard*) under John Wilson.

Recent highlights have included Policeman/General (Weinberg's *The Portrait*) for the Bregenz Festival and Opera North; Older Passenger/Steward (Weinberg's *The Passenger*) in Bregenz; *The Mikado* and Alcindoro (*La bohème*) for English National Opera; and *Trial by Jury* and a concert of Gilbert & Sullivan highlights with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

Richard Angas studied in London and Vienna. He worked for many years in Germany and at English National Opera, where he was a company principal for 15 years. His repertoire there and internationally encompasses works by Verdi, Barber, Mozart, Wagner, Berg, Smetana, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Britten, Janáček, Martinů, Dvořák, Richard Strauss, Debussy and Ravel.



Nicholas Le Prevost *actor*

Nicholas Le Prevost's recent television credits include *Doc Martin*, *Wild at Heart*, *Cranford*, *Psychoville*, *Margaret*, *Above Suspicion*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Half Broken Things*, *Mary Whitehouse*, *A Very British Sex Scandal*, *HR*, *Silent Witness*,

Life Begins, Poirot, Absolute Power, The Murder Room, Forty Something and *My Dad's the Prime Minister*. He has worked alongside actors such as Penny Wilton, Julie Walters, Jonathan Pryce, Caroline Quentin, Stephen Fry and Martin Shaw.

His theatre credits include *27, My Fair Lady, The Critic/The Real Inspector Hound, The Misanthrope, Bedroom Farce, Last Cigarette, Uncle Vanya, How the Other Half Loves, The Wild Duck, The Philadelphia Story, Insignificance, Fuddy Meers, Blood, Mozart's Impresario, Where There's a Will, Much Ado about Nothing, The Recruiting Officer, As You Like It, Amadeus* and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*.

Nicholas Le Prevost has also appeared in a number of films, including *Run For Your Wife, Broken Lines, Buy Borrow Steal, The Independent, Gladiatress, Bright Young Things, Being Considered, Land Girls, Shakespeare in Love, Cold Enough for Snow, Letters from the East* and *Clockwise*.



Ruth Lass actor

Ruth Lass's theatre credits include *The Tempest* (Barbican); *Junun (Dementia)* (GBS Theatre); *The Girl on The Sofa* (Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh International Festival); *Martin Yesterday* (Manchester Royal Exchange); *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Young Vic/Shared Experience); *Uganda* and *Live Like Pigs* (Royal Court); *The Skryker* (National Theatre); *Hurricane Roses* and *Uganda* (National Theatre Studio); *Les justes* and *Hecuba* (The Gate); *Mrs Klein* (Watford); and *And All Because The Lady Loves* (Soho Theatre).

She has also appeared in the films *Mad Cows, Fill Up* and *Indian Summer*. Her television credits include *Trial and Retribution, High Stakes, Coupling, Antigone, Silent Witness, Holby City, Casualty* and *The Bill*.



Julia Innocenti actor

Julia Innocenti trained at the Jacques Lecoq School in Paris. Her theatre credits include *A Thousand Paper Cranes* (Catherine Wheels); *The 13 Midnight Challenges of Angelus Diablo* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *1984* and *Low Life* (Blind Summit); *Cymbeline* (Kneehigh); *Sisters* (The Gate and for Headlong Theatre); *Pinocchio* (Theatre Royal in Northampton); *Madam Butterfly* (English National Opera); and *Lady Macbeth* (Quebracho Theatre, Lille); the award-winning *Drip* (Attic People).

She is joint artistic director of the award-winning theatre company Inspector Sands. With them she has written, devised and performed in two award-winning shows, *Hysteria* and *If That's All There Is*, which have both toured in the UK and internationally,

most recently to Beijing and New York. She also performed in *A Portrait of the Average Festival Goer* – a site-specific piece commissioned by the Southbank Centre. Inspector Sands are currently working on their next show, *Mass Observation*, which will be premiered at the Almeida Theatre this July.



Richard Jackson actor

Richard Jackson was born in Cornwall, and educated at King's College, Cambridge, and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

His specialisms as a singer included contemporary music and the art-song repertoire. He was a founder-member of *The Songmakers' Almanac* and he sang with English National Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne, and at La Monnaie, Brussels. He gave many

opera premieres with Almeida Opera as well as singing in new music concerts in Europe and America. Among the composers with whom he collaborated are Wolfgang Rihm, Michael Finnissy, Brian Ferneyhough, Peter Eötvös, Pascal Dusapin and Judith Weir.

Having retired as a singer, Richard Jackson has now embarked on a flourishing teaching career at the Royal College of Music and the Guildhall School. He has taught in Australia and Hong Kong; this July he will lead a singers' course in Beijing. He has served twice on the panel of the Kathleen Ferrier Awards.



Sally Brooks actor

Sally Brooks trained at Bird College and, since graduation, has worked as both an actor and choreographer. Her

theatre credits include *Two Boys* (English National Opera), *The Secret Garden*, *Peter Pan* and *The Railway Children* (all for Heartbreak Productions), *Charlotte's Web* (Watershed Productions) and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Broadway Theatre, Catford). Her choreography credits include *Sweeney Todd* (Aarhus Teater, Denmark), *Snow White* and *Aladdin* (Buxton Opera House), *Rough Crossing* (English Theatre, Vienna), *Bea* (Soho Theatre), *State Fair* (Trafalgar Studios and Finborough Theatre), *The Ride of your Life* (Polka Theatre), *Dick Whittington* (Cochrane Theatre) and *Me and Juliet* (Finborough Theatre).

Gilbert Nouno

IRCAM computer music designer

Gilbert Nouno is a composer, artistic designer and researcher at IRCAM. He lives and works in Paris and in Rome.

He was awarded the Rome Villa Medici's grant in 2011 and the Kyoto Villa Kujoyama grant in 2007. His music draws inspiration from graphic works, design and visual arts and combines the processes of improvisation and writing. He holds Master's and PhD degrees in computer music and artificial intelligence and is currently

carrying out research on human-machine rhythmical interactions.

He works with many distinguished artists and composers, including Pierre Boulez, Susan Buirge, José Luis Campana, Brian Ferneyhough, Jonathan Harvey, Michael Jarrell, Michaël Levinas, Philippe Manoury, Marc Monnet, Kaija Saariaho, Philippe Schoeller, the jazz collective Octurn and the saxophone player Steve Coleman.

Franck Rossi IRCAM sound engineer

Franck Rossi is a sound engineer specialising in electro-acoustic and computer music. He has worked at IRCAM since 1989 as well as with numerous ensembles, musicians and composers.

He has produced several recordings for different labels, notably the entire Pianovox collection dedicated to classic and contemporary piano and Shai (jazz).

He is currently developing a virtual console that allows users to create an electronic work environment quickly and efficiently for use in concert or post-production situations.

Pit Chorus

Juliet Fraser soprano

Juliet Fraser's repertoire is focused on music from the extreme ends of the canon. She is principal soprano and managing director of EXAUDI vocal ensemble, which she founded in 2002 with composer/director James Weeks, and is also a member of the soloists of Collegium Vocale Gent, directed by Philippe Herreweghe.

She has appeared as a soloist with the CBSO (Stravinsky's *Threni*), London Sinfonietta (Larry Goves's *Springtime*; Nono's *Prometeo*), Plus Minus Ensemble (Laurence Crane's *Weirdi*), Endymion (Arvo Pärt's *Stabat mater*), Ensemble Risognanze (Stefano Gervasoni's *Godspell*), L'Instant Donné (Gervasoni's *Dir – In dir*), Ensemble Modern (Peter Eötvös's *Schiller: energische Schönheit*) and Ensemble Intercontemporain (Enno Poppe's *Interzone*).

Polly May mezzo-soprano

Polly May is based in London. She has worked across the UK and Europe as a soloist and ensemble-member and has appeared at a number of festivals, including Cheltenham, Three Choirs, Aldeburgh and St Magnus. Her

oratorio performances include *Messiah* at the Usher Hall and Haydn's 'Nelson' Mass under Charles Mackerras.

Her concert and opera repertoire includes Mahler's Symphonies Nos 2 and 3 and *Rückert-Lieder*, Berg's *Seven Early Songs*, Britten's *Phaedra*, Falla's *Siete canciones populares*, Berlioz's *Cléopâtre* and Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. In August, she will make her solo debut at the BBC Proms with the BBCSO and Oliver Knussen.

Jonathan Bungard tenor

Jonathan Bungard enjoys a varied career as a member of the Choir of Westminster Cathedral, a member of EXAUDI vocal ensemble and running Quintessential Voices. Recent solo highlights include Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* in Spain, Stravinsky's *Threni* and *The Flood* with the CBSO and the premiere of Gérard Pesson's *Trois cantates* in Paris. He is the editor of *arco* and *JESTA* for the European String Teachers' Association, teaches the piano and runs a singing outreach programme across London for Westminster Cathedral.

Jimmy Holiday *bass*

Jimmy Holiday recently graduated from the National Opera Studio, having previously studied at the Royal College of Music. While there, he won the McCulloch Prize for Opera, was awarded the inaugural Richard Van Allan Award and won the Hampshire Singer of the Year competition. He was recently awarded an Independent Opera Voice Fellowship.

He is a regular oratorio performer around Europe, and appears with the UK's leading ensembles. Operatic roles include Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*) and Kecal (*The Bartered Bride*). Future projects include his debut with English National Opera in Wolfgang Rihm's *Jakob Lenz*.

BBC Symphony Orchestra

The BBC Symphony Orchestra has played a central role at the heart of British musical life since its inception in 1930. It provides the backbone of the BBC Proms with around a dozen concerts each year, including the First and Last Nights, and is Associate Orchestra of the Barbican.

The BBC SO has a strong commitment to 20th-century and contemporary

music, with recent performances including commissions and premieres from Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Unsuk Chin, Marc-André Dalbavie, Peter Eötvös, Brian Ferneyhough, Detlev Glanert and Judith Weir.

Last season saw the BBC SO celebrate its 80th anniversary with a typically rich range of repertoire and highlights of the 2011/12 season include a Sibelius symphony cycle, Dvořák's opera *The Jacobin*, conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek, a concert with Rufus Wainwright, Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, Total Immersion days dedicated to Brett Dean, Jonathan Harvey and Arvo Pärt and commissions and premieres from composers including Kaija Saariaho, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Alexander Goehr and Rebecca Saunders.

The BBC SO works regularly with its Chief Conductor Jiří Bělohlávek, Principal Guest Conductor David Robertson, Conductor Laureate Sir Andrew Davis and Artist in Association Oliver Knussen. Central to the Orchestra's life are studio recordings for BBC Radio 3 at its Maida Vale home, some of which are free for the public to attend. In addition, the BBC SO records for several commercial labels: its CD of works for piano and orchestra by Debussy, Ravel and Massenet with Jean-Efflam Bavouzet

under Yan Pascal Tortelier last year won a *Gramophone* Award. The Orchestra performs throughout the world and its current touring plans include concerts in Germany, Belgium and Spain.

All concerts are broadcast on BBC Radio 3, streamed live online and available for seven days via the BBC iPlayer; and a number are televised, giving the BBC Symphony Orchestra the highest broadcast profile of any UK orchestra.

The Orchestra is committed to innovative education work. Among ongoing projects are the BBC SO Family Music Intro scheme, introducing families to live classical music, BBC SO Student Zone and the highly successful BBC SO Family Orchestra, alongside work in local schools. Total Immersion composer events also provide rich material for education work and extensive plans are under way in partnership with the Barbican and with the Hammersmith & Fulham music services, the Royal College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

bbc.co.uk/symphonyorchestra

BBC Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Laura Samuel
guest leader
Jeremy Martin

Violin 2

Amyr Merchant
Ruth Hudson

Viola

Norbert Blume *
Philip Hall

Cello

Graham Bradshaw †
Marie Strom

Double Bass

Paul Marrion *

Flute/Piccolo/Alto

Flute/Bass Flute
Kathleen Stevenson

Oboe/

Oboe d'amore

David Powell †

Clarinet

Peter Sparks

Bass Clarinet

Duncan Gould

Bassoon/ Contrabassoon

Claire Webster

Horn

Nicholas Korth †

Trumpet

Gareth Bimson †

Trombone

Roger Harvey †

Tuba

Sam Elliott

Percussion

Alex Neil †
Fiona Ritchie

Harp

Sioned Williams *

Electric Keyboard

Jean-Luc Plouvier

** principal*

† co-principal

Music Production Staff

Andrew Griffiths
Christopher Willis

Indian Dance Advisor

Shane Shambu