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TOTAL IMMERSION MISSY MAZZOLI

Sunday 25 February 2024

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RADIO **3**

SOUNDS

The BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican

Be transported to a world where music tells powerful stories, and no emotion is off limits.

CONCERTS MARCH – APRIL

FRIDAY 8 MARCH 7.30pm

EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA

A Requiem in Our Time

AULIS SALLINEN Mauermusik

JOHANNES BRAHMS A German Requiem

Sakari Oramo *conductor*
Anu Komsis *soprano*
Christian Senn *baritone*
BBC Symphony Chorus

FRIDAY 15 MARCH 7.30pm

ARVO PÄRT Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

BENJAMIN BRITTEN Sinfonia da Requiem

EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA Into the Heart of Light (Canto V)

SIR JAMES MacMILLAN Fiat lux *UK premiere*

Sir James MacMillan *conductor*
Mary Bevan *soprano*
Roderick Williams *baritone*
BBC Symphony Chorus

WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 7.30pm

MICHAEL TIPPETT

The Midsummer Marriage – Ritual Dances

RAYMOND YIU Violin Concerto *BBC commission: world premiere*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 7 in A major

Sir Andrew Davis *conductor*
Esther Yoo *violin*

WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH 7.30pm

THE DEATH OF STALIN – IN CONCERT

Screening of Armando Iannucci's 2017 film satire with live accompaniment of Christopher Willis's orchestral score, followed by a Q&A with the film's director, producer and cast members, including Jason Isaacs and Michael Palin.

FRIDAY 19 APRIL 7.30pm

CAMILLE PÉPIN Les Eaux célestes *UK Premiere*

FRANCIS POULENC Gloria

HECTOR BERLIOZ Symphonie fantastique

Daniele Rustioni *conductor*
Sally Matthews *soprano*
BBC Symphony Chorus

FRIDAY 26 APRIL 7.30PM

KATE ATKINSON AND THE BBC SO

Author Kate Atkinson joins the BBC SO for an evening of words and music.

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SAKARI ORAMO CHIEF CONDUCTOR

TOTAL IMMERSION

Missy Mazzoli

SUNDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2024



RADIO **3** SOUNDS

Please ensure all mobile phones and watch-alarms are switched off.

TOTAL IMMERSION: MISSY MAZZOLI

11.00am

FOUNTAIN ROOM

FREE EVENT

Meet Missy Mazzoli – in person and on film

A collection of short films introducing Missy Mazzoli and her music, hosted by Sara Mohr-Pietsch, with an introduction to the music to be played in the BBC Symphony Orchestra's concert at 1.30pm. *Free event. Limited availability but entry guaranteed to Day Pass holders. Please note that two of the films will also be shown in the 3.30pm event.*

1.30pm

BARBICAN HALL

CONCERT 1

Worlds in Us

Missy Mazzoli

Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres) 9'
Violin Concerto, 'Procession' 21'
These Worlds in Us 9'
Orpheus Undone *UK premiere* 16'

Elina Vähälä violin

BBC Symphony Orchestra

Dalia Stasevska conductor

There will be no interval

For programme notes, see page 8

3.30pm

FOUNTAIN ROOM

FREE EVENT

Meet Missy Mazzoli – in person and on film

A collection of short films introducing Missy Mazzoli and her music, hosted by Sara Mohr-Pietsch, with an introduction to Mazzoli's opera *Song from the Uproar*. *Free event. Limited availability but entry guaranteed to Day Pass holders. Please note that two of the films were also shown in the 11.00pm event. Due to the nature of its content, this afternoon's film screening is advised as being for an adult audience only.*

5.00pm

MILTON COURT CONCERT HALL

CONCERT 2

Guildhall Musicians

Missy Mazzoli Vespers for Violin 5'
Jessie Montgomery Lunar Songs 7'
Missy Mazzoli Harp and Altar 10'
Breaking the Waves – 'His name is Jan'
UK premiere 5'
A Thousand Tongues *UK premiere* 7'
Breaking the Waves – 'Goodness! What powers you possess'
UK premiere 3'
Hildegard of Bingen O frondens virga (arr. Mazzoli) *UK premiere* 4'
Missy Mazzoli Ecstatic Science 10'

Guildhall School Musicians

Richard Benjafield conductor

There will be no interval

For programme notes, see page 12

8.00pm

BARBICAN HALL

CONCERT 3

Song from the Uproar

Missy Mazzoli

Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt
UK premiere 75'

Kitty Whately mezzo-soprano

Lucia Chocarro dancer

BBC Singers

BBC Symphony Orchestra Ensemble

Sofi Jeannin conductor

Isabelle Kettle stage director

There will be no interval

For programme notes, see page 21

“ It’s part of my job as a composer who is alive in 2023 to make things that are new, and make things that don’t sound like anything else. And I’m particularly interested in making music that is hard to categorise. I’m very influenced by Baroque music and traditional opera, but also indie rock and noise rock. And the older I get, and the more music I make, the harder it is for me to nail down exactly what the label of my work is, or should be or could be. I think that’s great. I think that it’s a sign that I’m synthesising all these things in my environment, and making something that I hope is truly new.

Missy Mazzoli in conversation with Emma Robertson for the online interview magazine The Talks.



MISSY MAZZOLI – TAKING CHARGE

Steve Smith introduces the music and outlook of the American composer

‘I feel, in my life, like I’m writing one big piece,’ Missy Mazzoli told me recently over steaming bowls of ramen near her home in Brooklyn. ‘Every single piece comes out of the piece before, and is hearkening back to [my] first pieces. I can think of things that I was experimenting with as a teenager – in terms of harmony and moods that I wanted to create, even before I had the skills to do it – that I’m still working on.’

It’s an exciting time now for Mazzoli, a prominent, celebrated fixture in the contemporary concert hall and opera house. In practical terms, she’s come a long way from the early days when you were more likely to find her performing her own music in an art gallery or a nightclub that normally catered to indie rock bands.

She wasn’t slumming or trying to ‘cross over’. As she attested in the 2007 documentary film *The End of New Music*, which followed her on a 2005 tour of what might now be termed ‘alternative spaces’, she was taking charge: not only over the art she was making but also over the way it reached a receptive public.

‘I finally felt like I had control over how my music was reaching an audience, for maybe the first time in my life,’ Mazzoli

told me back then for a profile published in *The New York Times*. ‘That was a really moving, powerful, addictive thing for me, and it was a turning point in the way I thought about how I wanted to get my music out there.’

Born in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, in 1980, Mazzoli proclaimed herself a composer at the age of 10. She pursued her education at the Yale School of Music, the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and Boston University. She studied with prominent composers representing a wide range of stylistic practices and idioms, including Louis Andriessen, Richard Ayres, David Lang, Martin Bresnick, Aaron Jay Kernis and John Harbison.

That none of her teachers were women was a disappointment Mazzoli would devise a way to tackle head-on years later, when in 2016 she co-founded Luna Composition Lab with fellow composer Ellen Reid. The programme has given dozens of teenage female, non-binary and gender non-conforming composers not only guidance and opportunities but also recognition, validation and a supportive community.

‘I didn’t meet another female composer until I was in my 20s, and I didn’t meet a professional female composer until I was in college,’ Mazzoli said in a 2023 NPR interview. ‘I didn’t really have colleagues in my early career who were other women. That sort of support network is essential as an artist – having people around

you who can share that aspect of your experience is really key.’

Even so, the disparate lessons and viewpoints Mazzoli gleaned from her training gave her skills and tools suited to any setting. Working with other independent artists and performers, she established herself as an inspired writer of dramatic vocal works with the early chamber opera *Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt*, which was premiered in New York in 2012 (and receives its UK premiere tonight at 8.00pm).

Major institutions soon came calling. Mazzoli won global acclaim in 2016 for her second opera, *Breaking the Waves*, based on the controversial Lars von Trier film – a work nurtured jointly by Opera Philadelphia and Beth Morrison Projects. *Proving Up*, a haunting chamber opera jointly commissioned by the Washington National Opera, Opera Omaha and Columbia University’s Miller Theatre, arrived in 2018.

That year, the Metropolitan Opera awarded Mazzoli one of the company’s first two commissions ever extended to a woman composer, for a work based on George Saunders’s novel *Lincoln in the Bardo*. With that work still on her desk, in 2022 Mazzoli oversaw the premiere by the Norwegian National Opera of another new opera, *The Listeners*, commissioned jointly with Opera Philadelphia and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Mazzoli resides on a global stage now, with operas and orchestral works mounted worldwide – not least under the auspices of the BBC, which has presented several major works prior to today’s Total Immersion. Having such a broad span of her works presented together reinforces Mazzoli’s own perception that the ideas now motivating her art are the same impulses that sparked her creative drive initially.

For example, she views *Harp and Altar*, her debut string quartet from 2009, as a kind of prototype for *Orpheus Undone*, an orchestral work she composed in 2020, during her three-season residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. ‘I finally had the skills to explore things on a bigger palette when I was writing *Orpheus* and had an orchestra to work with, but it’s the same sort of rhythmic driving idea,’ Mazzoli said.

‘Those kinds of connections are happening all the time as I’m looking at this programme – I kind of wish I could invite people into my brain to see all this,’ she added, laughing.

‘But you can come into it knowing none of that, not even knowing who I am, I think, and still have a valid, deep, rich experience.’

Steve Smith is a journalist, critic and editor based in New York City. He has written about music for *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* and served as an editor for the *Boston Globe*, *Time Out New York* and National Public Radio.

MISSY MAZZOLI: TIMELINE

1980

Born on 27 October in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

2006

Having studied at Boston University's College of Fine Arts, she receives a master's degree from the Yale School of Music. *These Worlds in Us* is premiered by the Yale Philharmonia and given its professional premiere by the Minnesota Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä.

2007

Becomes Artistic Director of the MATA Festival in New York City, an organisation dedicated to promoting the work of young composers (2007–10).

2008

Founds the ensemble Victoire to perform her own compositions.

2010

Her first portrait CD, *Cathedral City* with Victoire, is released.

2011–12

Becomes Composer/Educator in residence with the Albany Symphony.

2012

Her first opera, *Song from the Uproar*, is premiered at The Kitchen in New York. A further dramatic work, the 'cello opera' *SALT*, is premiered by Maya Beiser and vocalist Helga Davis at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She is appointed Composer-in-Residence with Opera Philadelphia (2012–15).

2014

Premiere of *Vespers for a New Dark Age* at Carnegie Hall, New York. John Adams conducts the premiere of *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)* at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra's 'Minimalist Jukebox' festival.

2015

Vespers for a New Dark Age issued on CD in a performance by percussionist Glenn Kotche, electronic producer Lorna Dune and Victoire.

2016

Premiere by Opera Philadelphia of her opera *Breaking the Waves*, which goes on to win Best New Opera at the Music Critics Association of North America Awards. Co-founds Luna Composition Lab with fellow composer Ellen Reid, a mentorship programme and support network for teenage female, non-binary and gender non-conforming composers.

2017

Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres) receives its UK premiere at the BBC Proms in a performance by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Karina Canellakis.

2018

Becomes one of the first two women (the other is Jeanine Tesori) to receive a commission from the Metropolitan Opera, New York, and is appointed the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Mead Composer-in-Residence (2018–21).

2019

Breaking the Waves receives its European premiere at the Edinburgh International Festival. *Vespers for Violin*, recorded by Olivia De Prato, is nominated for a Grammy Award in the Best Contemporary Composition category.

2020

Profiled in *Gramophone* magazine.

2022

Her most recent opera, *The Listeners*, is premiered in September in Oslo, and she is named Composer of the Year by *Musical America*. The Violin Concerto, 'Procession', a BBC co-commission, is premiered by Jennifer Koh and the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington DC and is given its European premiere at the Proms by Koh and the Philharmonia Orchestra under Santtu-Matias Rouvali. Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra give the world premiere of *Orpheus Undone*. Joins the faculty of Bard College, New York.

2023

A flurry of recordings includes *Dark with Excessive Bright*, a portrait CD including performances by violinist Peter Herresthal and the Bergen Philharmonic and Arctic Philharmonic orchestras; *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)*, performed by the Iceland Symphony Orchestra under Daníel Bjarnason; and Third Coast Percussion's performance of *Millennium Canticles*.

2025

Mazzoli's opera *Lincoln in the Bardo*, based on the novel by George Saunders and commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, New York, scheduled to be premiered in London by English National Opera.

CONCERT 1
1.30pm BARBICAN HALL

Worlds in Us

MISSY MAZZOLI
Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres) 9'
Violin Concerto, 'Procession' 21'
These Worlds in Us 9'
Orpheus Undone *UK premiere* 16'

Elina Vähälä violin
BBC Symphony Orchestra
Dalia Stasevska conductor

There will be no interval

This concert is being recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast in *Radio 3 in Concert* on Wednesday 28 February at 7.30pm. The programme will be available for 30 days after broadcast via BBC Sounds, where you can also find podcasts and music mixes.

MISSY MAZZOLI (born 1980)
Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)
(2013, rev. 2016)

Commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra for its innovative Green Umbrella new music series – and specifically for a marathon concert presented during the orchestra's 'Minimalist Jukebox' festival in 2014 – *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)* confirms in a way the Minimalist lineage that informs Missy Mazzoli's musical style. The nine-minute work, composed initially for chamber orchestra and subsequently expanded into a version for full symphony orchestra, is almost wholly consonant and punctuated regularly with steadily pattering rhythms.

At the same time, the *Sinfonia* also proves just how far afield of Minimalist convention Mazzoli's work actually is. The piece adheres to no key, drifting from one tonal region to another like the celestial motion evoked in the title. Distensions and distortions regularly sunder consonance. She embeds within the ensemble multiple harmonicas, both to simulate the archaic wheeze of the medieval hurdy-gurdy (an early term for which was 'sinfonia') and to destabilise still more any sense of constant intonation.

Rhythmically, too, it deviates considerably from the hypnotic constancy presumed in formal Minimalism. Steady-beat patterns arrive in bursts and depart in short order. The real motion of the piece comes in long

loops spinning at disparate speeds, meant to evoke the celestial mechanics of orbs in common yet unequal motion.

When you remember that the hurdy-gurdy's signature sound is produced by strings stimulated with the circular motion of a hand crank, you begin to discern a formal logic within Mazzoli's cosmic plan: wheels within wheels; music at once approachable and elusive; a friction that disfigures flawless beauty, yet in so doing produces a more idiosyncratic experience. It all adheres to a signature methodology consistent with the larger body of Mazzoli's work, in whatever form it assumes.

Programme note © Steve Smith

Steve Smith is a journalist, critic and editor based in New York City. He has written about music for *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* and served as an editor for the *Boston Globe*, *Time Out New York* and National Public Radio.

Violin Concerto, 'Procession' (2021)

- 1 Procession in a Spiral –
- 2 St Vitus –
- 3 O My Soul –
- 4 Bone to Bone, Blood to Blood –
- 5 Procession Ascending

Elina Vähälä violin

At the start of her career, Missy Mazzoli wrote works meant chiefly for the friends and colleagues who comprised her immediate circle, as indeed most

composers do. It follows that as a composer's international profile grows, so too do opportunities to write for an ever-broader range of artists and ensembles.

Some creative partnerships, though, are built to last. For Mazzoli, that's true of the bond she's formed with Jennifer Koh, a skilful violinist, steadfast advocate for contemporary music and adamant champion for artists of colour and female composers. The two artists initially connected when Koh introduced Mazzoli's unaccompanied violin work *Dissolve, O my Heart* of 2010, and continued with a string of intimate pieces featured on Koh's albums *Limitless* (2019) and *Alone Together* (2021). The two continue to perform together regularly as a duo.

Naturally, it was for Koh that Mazzoli wrote her Violin Concerto in 2021, commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington DC and the Cincinnati Symphony and BBC Symphony orchestras. She created the work during a pandemic-era retreat to a Swedish island where the film director Ingmar Bergman once lived.

The web publication *DC Theater Arts* recorded what Mazzoli told the audience that assembled for the work's premiere: 'I was thinking a lot about music as a healing ritual, and how we use music to heal – for obvious reasons, given everything that we've gone through and we continue to go through with the pandemic. I became very interested in

medieval rituals of healing, especially around outbreaks of the plague.’

The concerto, which bears the title ‘Procession’, consists of five sections played continuously, during which the soloist acts, in Mazzoli’s words, ‘as a soothsayer, sorcerer, healer and pied piper-type character, leading the orchestra through five interconnected healing spells’. The first, ‘Procession in a Spiral’, is meant to evoke medieval penitents. The second, ‘St Vitus’, honours the Sicilian martyr whose dancing was said to possess healing powers.

The third section, ‘O My Soul’, is a distorted version of the hymn of the same name, suffused with gracefully descending woodwind figures and incorporating a pensive extended cadenza for the soloist. ‘Bone to Bone, Blood to Blood’, the brittle, agitated fourth section, references the Merseburg charms, a pair of 9th-century German pagan incantations intended to mend broken bones.

The finale, ‘Procession Ascending’, opens with suspenseful, murky uncertainty. A plaintive bassoon soliloquy prefaces the entry of the soloist, who gradually attains sufficient velocity to defy gravity, arcing skywards in the concerto’s final bars.

Programme note © Steve Smith

These Worlds in Us (2006)

The title *These Worlds in Us* comes from James Tate’s poem *The Lost Pilot*, a meditation on his father’s death in the Second World War.

This piece is dedicated to my father, who was a soldier during the Vietnam War. In talking to him it occurred to me that, as we grow older, we accumulate worlds of intense memory within us, and that grief is often not far from joy. I like the idea that music can reflect painful and blissful sentiments in a single note or gesture, and sought to create a sound palette that I hope is at once completely new and strangely familiar to the listener.

The theme of this work, a mournful line first played by the violins, collapses into glissandos almost immediately after it appears, giving the impression that the piece has been submerged underwater or played on a turntable that is grinding to a halt. The melodicas (mouth organs) played by the percussionists in the opening and final gestures mimic the wheeze of a broken accordion, lending a particular vulnerability to the bookends of the work. The rhythmic structures and cyclical nature of the piece are inspired by the unique tension and logic of Balinese music, and the march-like figures in the percussion bring to mind the militaristic inspiration for the work as well as the relentless energy of electronica drum beats.

Programme note © Missy Mazzoli

Orpheus Undone (2020)

UK premiere

1 Behold the Machine, O Death –

2 We of Violence, We Endure

‘The Orpheus story has been told a million times, in opera, in music, in dance,’ Missy Mazzoli said in a 2022 video interview shared by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, where she had recently completed a three-year tenure as composer-in-residence. ‘The first opera ever was a telling of the Orpheus story, and I think the second opera ever written was also a telling of the Orpheus story.’

That story, from Greek antiquity, centres on the tragedy of a musician, poet and heroic adventurer who stormed the gates of the Underworld in an ultimately futile attempt to save his lost wife, Eurydice. The story, with its exaltation of music and themes of determination, love and loss, has naturally appealed to artists across the ages. Understandably, Mazzoli wanted to do something unique. Her own Orphic journey began with writing the music for *Orpheus Alive*, an hour-long ballet she created with choreographer Robert Binet and playwright Rosamund Small, commissioned by the National Ballet of Canada.

For *Orpheus Undone*, Mazzoli transformed material from the ballet into a 16-minute stand-alone piece for orchestra. ‘This piece focuses on a very specific, small moment of the Orpheus story, right when

Eurydice has died and has gone to the Underworld, and has left Orpheus,’ she explains in the CSO video, ‘and it’s just that very small moment, stretched out into 20 minutes.’

Perhaps, but that’s not the entire story. What Mazzoli seeks to illustrate with *Orpheus Undone* is how, in times of trauma, time comes unstuck: sped up to a frenetic pace and slowed to near stasis seemingly at once. The tick-tock beat of a woodblock is the first sound heard in the work’s opening section, ‘Behold the Machine, O Death’, its steady pace implacable as other sections of the orchestra tremble and ooze across the pulse. The music is agitated, ponderous and mysterious by turns, a resourceful evocation of an inexplicable state, rendered vividly with unorthodox tones and techniques. Even the woodblock eventually becomes an unreliable timekeeper. The second section, half as long, is titled ‘We of Violence, We Endure’. (Both section titles come from Rilke’s *Sonnets to Orpheus*.) The music is brittle and becalmed, the effect more aftermath than resolution.

Programme note © Steve Smith

“*Orpheus Undone* is a massive orchestral piece, but I am treating the materials in a new way – strings producing a scratchy tone, percussion used in vibrant expressive ways. Plus, I’m experimenting with form.

Missy Mazzoli talking to Nancy Maltz for the Chicago SO

CONCERT 2
5.00pm MILTON COURT CONCERT HALL

Guildhall Musicians

MISSY MAZZOLI

Vespers for Violin 5'

JESSIE MONTGOMERY

Lunar Songs 7'

MISSY MAZZOLI

Harp and Altar 10'

Breaking the Waves – ‘His name is Jan’

UK premiere 5'

A Thousand Tongues *UK premiere* 7'

Breaking the Waves – ‘Goodness! What powers you possess’ *UK premiere* 3'

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

O frondens virga (arr. Mazzoli)

UK premiere 4'

MISSY MAZZOLI

Ecstatic Science 10'

Guildhall School Musicians

Richard Benjafield conductor

There will be no interval

MISSY MAZZOLI (born 1980)

Vespers for Violin (2014)

Kryštof Kohout violin

Like several of the works in this evening's concert, *Vespers for Violin* is an example of the ways in which Missy Mazzoli has extended works conceived for a particular performer or ensemble by reconfiguring material, sometimes radically, for another format.

Here, tasked with creating a piece for the duo of violinist Monica Germino and sound designer Frank van der Weij, Mazzoli sampled keyboards, voices and strings from a recording of another recent composition, *Vespers for a New Dark Age*, which she had written for her electroacoustic band Victoire, plus percussionist Glenn Kotche and members of the vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth.

The result, expansive in effect yet eminently portable, has become one of Mazzoli's signature works. Widely performed and twice recorded – by former Victoire violinist Olivia De Prato and more recently by Peter Herresthal – *Vespers for Violin* is now part of the repertoire Mazzoli herself plays in her duo with violinist Jennifer Koh.

This concert is being recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast in *Radio 3 in Concert* on Wednesday 28 February at 7.30pm. The programme will be available for 30 days after broadcast via BBC Sounds, where you can also find podcasts and music mixes.

JESSIE MONTGOMERY

(born 1981)

Lunar Songs (2019)

1 Lunar Songs

2 Oh, Lenny

3 Oceanic

Hannah McKay soprano

Elmore Quartet

Gabriel Maclel Rodrigues double bass

For text, see page 18

Like Mazzoli before her, Jessie Montgomery has risen from initial recognition as a gifted composing violinist of enormous promise to her current perch as one of the most in-demand creative artists in the United States. Born on New York City's Lower East Side in 1981, she grew up surrounded by art makers: her father a musician, her mother a theatre artist and storyteller, and both community organisers and activists.

Montgomery initially came to notice as a violinist, playing with the Sphinx Virtuosi, the Catalyst Quartet and PUBLIQuartet, the last of which she co-founded. She continues to play regularly and works in a string duo, Big Dog Little Dog, with bassist Eleonore Oppenheim, a former member of Mazzoli's group Victoire. As a composer, Montgomery has had works performed by many leading US ensembles. In 2021 she succeeded Mazzoli as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Mead Composer-in-Residence.

Lunar Songs was commissioned by the US performing-rights organisation ASCAP for the Leonard Bernstein Centennial in 2019. 'The text by poet and writer J. Mae Barizo pays tribute to Bernstein's iconic persona, his love for New York City and his desire for human progress,' Montgomery stated in a composer's note. 'The music is inspired by German art song, polyrhythmic overlays and tone painting.'

MISSY MAZZOLI

Harp and Altar (2009)

Elmore Quartet

'I think that Brooklyn has maybe become the music capital of the world,' violinist David Harrington said from the stage of the Prospect Park Bandshell on a Thursday night in 2009. Harrington, founder and first violinist of the Kronos Quartet, went on to claim that you would have to look to Vienna in the late 1700s to find a similar concentration of artistic vitality. (As the critic on assignment for *The New York Times* that night, I dutifully transcribed his words.)

Whether accurate or hyperbolic, Harrington's viewpoint was substantiated in that moment through evidence provided by the music on the programme – not least *Harp and Altar*, Missy Mazzoli's first composition for string quartet. According to the composer, the piece is meant to honour and celebrate

the Brooklyn Bridge as a grand, majestic symbol for the vastness and complexity of the borough itself.

She derived the work's title from a Hart Crane poem, *The Bridge*, which describes the landmark span as 'harp and altar, of the fury fused'. The piece opens with a sweetly soaring violin line, attended by fidgety accompaniment. Midway through, the recorded voice of singer, songwriter, pianist and composer Gabriel Kahane enters, at first juddering rhythmically, then delivering words from Crane's poem in an ethereal yet penetrating falsetto: 'Through the bound cable strands, the arching path upward, veering with light, the flight of strings, taut miles of shuttling moonlight syncopate the whispered rush, telepathy of wires.'

Breaking the Waves (2016) – 'His name is Jan'

UK premiere of this version

Holly Brown soprano

For text, see page 19

'Savage, heartbreaking and thoroughly original,' proclaimed the *Wall Street Journal* critic Heidi Waleson, an operatic authority, of Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves*. Just Mazzoli's second opera – and her first to embrace a conventional dramatic scenario, adapted from Lars von Trier's controversial

film – the opera propelled its composer to global attention and renown. *Opera News* pronounced it 'among the best 21st-century American operas yet'.

Commissioned by Opera Philadelphia and the intrepid independent production company Beth Morrison Projects, *Breaking the Waves* introduced a grand new scale for Mazzoli, who until then had been associated with small groups and hybrid ensembles. Even her debut opera, *Song from the Uproar*, had involved just one character, accompanied by a handful of vocalists and a small electroacoustic band. *Breaking the Waves*, on the other hand, requires nine principal singers, men's chorus and chamber orchestra.

As in the original film, the opera is centred on Bess McNeill, a religious young woman whose oil rig worker husband, Jan, is paralysed in an offshore accident. Attempting to keep their amorous life alive, Jan urges Bess to seek other lovers and then report her trysts to him – with ultimately tragic results.

A rousing success and a world-class calling card for Mazzoli, *Breaking the Waves* has been produced around the world. Detroit Opera will mount the work this April, with performances to follow at Opera Australia and Houston Grand Opera. So far, however, the work remains unrecorded, which means that, apart from complete productions, performances of selected arias are the principal means by which this drama has reached audiences outside the opera house.

Of the two selections featured here, the first, 'His name is Jan', evokes the intensity of Bess's rapturous love for her husband, subtly underscored with threads of ambiguity.

A Thousand Tongues (2011)

UK premiere of this version

Trio Casella

'Yes, I have a thousand tongues, and nine and ninety-nine lie.' Thus begins a brief yet potent poem by Stephen Crane, a 19th-century American poet and novelist. Mazzoli composed the piece expressly for Jody Redhage, a cellist who has commissioned more than 30 original works for cello, voice and electronics from leading composers including Mazzoli, Anna Clyne and Ted Hearne.

In its original format, *A Thousand Tongues* shows off Mazzoli's compelling mastery in combining acoustic and electronic musical sources. The work has also proved especially amenable to practical reworkings: there are versions for viola and electronics; violin, piano and electronics; and piano trio with electronics, each with optional vocals.

Breaking the Waves – 'Goodness! What powers you possess'

UK premiere of this version

Steven van der Linden tenor

For text, see page 19

In the second of the two arias from *Breaking the Waves*, 'Goodness, what powers you possess' – available in versions for tenor with either piano or small ensemble – Dr Richardson, Jan's doctor, addresses Bess after her husband's accident. In soaring proclamations, the physician attempts to assure Bess that Jan's return is not the result of her fervent prayer but instead the result of a terrible injury; Bess, to her later misfortune, misconstrues the doctor's intent.

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN (1098–1179), arr. Missy Mazzoli

O frondens virga (arr. 2020)

UK premiere of this arrangement

Rachel Roper mezzo-soprano

Kosta Popović cello

For text, see page 20

Missy Mazzoli arranged this psalm antiphon by the 12th-century German abbess, mystic and composer Hildegard of Bingen for *Enargeia*, a mesmerising 2021 album by Canadian mezzo-soprano Emily D'Angelo. The album included

another Hildegard arrangement, prepared by fellow American composer Sarah Kirkland Snider, plus arrangements of original works by Mazzoli, Snider and the celebrated Icelandic composer Hildur Guðnadóttir.

The source of the hymn is the Dendermonde Codex, a manuscript containing Hildegard's *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum* ('Symphony of the Harmony of Heavenly Revelations'). According to scholar and musician Dr Beverly R. Lomer, the hymn 'recalls the elemental association of the divine feminine with earthly fertility', referring to Mary as 'O frondens virga' (O blooming branch).

Mazzoli's arrangement puts the singer front and centre. Her vocal lines flow gently, with sensitive counterpoint from a cellist and subtle, atmospheric electronic effects.

MISSY MAZZOLI **Ecstatic Science (2016)**

Alex Ho flute

Sofia Mekhonoshina clarinet

Nina Tyrell trumpet

Violetta Suvini violin

Izzy Doncaster viola

Gabriel Francis-Dehqani cello

Richard Benjafield conductor

The quirky instrumentation required by *Ecstatic Science* – flute, clarinet, trumpet, violin, viola and cello – is that of yMusic, the group that commissioned the 10-minute piece, and applied its title to the album on which it was released.

'yMusic has a unique mission: to work on both sides of the classical/popular music divide without sacrificing rigour, virtuosity, charisma or style,' reads the group's mission statement. And indeed, yMusic has collaborated fruitfully with an extraordinarily wide range of artists including Paul Simon, John Legend, Andrew Norman and Caroline Shaw.

Mazzoli's piece is ideally matched to its players. The 'ecstatic' part of the title is instantly evident in the music's bubbly tone, bright colours and playfully insouciant rhythms. The work's charms are abundant. Yet, according to Mazzoli's own programme note, there's plenty of 'science' too – or perhaps, more properly, mathematics: 'Chord progressions are drawn out, multiplied, condensed and

layered,' Mazzoli writes. 'Melodies are flipped upside down and fractured into the smallest possible element. The horizontal becomes vertical and the vertical stretches systematically into a twisting melody.' Such rigour might seem daunting on paper but Mazzoli and her interpreters make it all sing.

Programme notes © Steve Smith

Steve Smith is a journalist, critic and editor based in New York City. He has written about music for *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* and served as an editor for the *Boston Globe*, *Time Out New York* and National Public Radio.



FRIDAY 8 MARCH 7.30pm

Oramo conducts Brahms

EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA

A Requiem in Our Time

AULIS SALLINEN Mauermusik

JOHANNES BRAHMS A German Requiem

Anu Korsi soprano

Christian Senn baritone

BBC Symphony Chorus

BBC Symphony Orchestra

Sakari Oramo conductor

Still waters run deep: Sakari Oramo and the BBC Symphony Chorus perform Brahms's *German Requiem* plus two emotionally charged rediscoveries from post-war Finland.

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Associate Orchestra

JESSIE MONTGOMERY

Lunar Songs

1 Lunar Songs

Through the evening's
floating gold
I am listening

There is a cold
clock ticking
in my mouth

The moon doesn't care
Your light glows
from the inside

In the night
a mad waltz, in
the morning
a cantata

2 Oh, Lenny

Oh Lenny, the sea
folds over me –
anti-nuclear, the trees
are infrared, oh Lenny

In dreams, symphonies
pour down the page, hear
the subway trains slice thru
the air, we are so near

to Lincoln Square, the blue
stripes on your socks,
oh Lenny and all of this
an opera almost paradox-

ical. Oh lenny, we watch
you in your sleep, the trees
tonight, the sea which sleeps

3 Oceanic

Oceanic what was lost
Ice cannot hold back the sea

All empires end; we're empire
Now. New song: disturb the peace.

To our children you will be
both past and future: a seed.

J. Mae Barizo

MISSY MAZZOLI

His name is Jan

His name is Jan; you do not know him,
 he's from the rig
His name is Jan
Funny name for a man; an outsider has
 wormed his way inside of me
Jan from the rig
He wants to marry me
Holy matrimony: when two people are
 joined in God
I want to be his wife
Missus Jan from the rig
And God will be witness to our covenant;
 the whole community will know our love
Jan's love of me, my love of Jan
Jan is my shaggy-faced man
Jan is my strange, beautiful music; the
 whole community will know his name
His name sounds like church bells
God has given me a man, you do not
 know him
A Norwegian man; a man that I'm to
 love forever
With your permission

MISSY MAZZOLI

Goodness! What powers you possess

Goodness! What powers you possess!
What a deal you've struck with God.
Is he rewarding Bess for cleaning the church?
Is Bess his wee pet?

You pray with all your might,
folded hands clenched so piously.
What powers you possess!
You pray to send Jan home,
And God obliges,
By smiting him with a drill.
Is that what you think, Bess,
God is playing a game?
Twisting the intention of your prayer
To teach a lesson?

I know you people believe a lot
 about yourselves,
But God wouldn't punish you
For missing Jan.
God wouldn't punish Jan
For your devotion.
I need to know you understand this, Bess.

Have fun! Go dancing.
Dodo says you love to dance.
Just do a little grieving for yourself.
It's a lot to endure alone.

Goodness! What powers you possess!
What goodness, what goodness you possess.

*Royce Vavrek, from his libretto for the opera
'Breaking the Waves'*

HILDEGARD VON BINGEN

O frondens virga

O frondens virga,
In tua nobilitate stans
Sicut aurora procedit:
Nunc gaude et letare
Et nos debiles dignare
A mala consuetudine liberare
Atque manum tuam porrige
Ad erigendum nos.

*Psalm antiphon for the Virgin
by Hildegard of Bingen*

O blooming branch,
you stand upright in your nobility,
as breaks the dawn on high:
Rejoice now and be glad,
and deign to free us, frail and weakened,
from the wicked habits of our age;
stretch forth your hand
to lift us up aright.

English translation by Nathaniel M. Campbell

CONCERT 3

8.00pm BARBICAN HALL

Song from the Uproar

MISSY MAZZOLI (born 1980)

**Song from the Uproar: The Lives
and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt**

(2007–12) UK premiere

(with English surtitles) 75'

Kitty Whately mezzo-soprano

BBC Singers

BBC Symphony Orchestra Ensemble

Sofi Jeannin conductor

Isabelle Kettle stage director

Ben Cook stage manager

Damien Kennedy surtitles

Simon Hendry sound

There will be no interval

Isabelle Eberhardt (1877–1904) was an explorer, nomad, journalist, novelist, passionate romantic and Sufi, and one of the most unique and unusual women of her era. At the age of 20, after the death of her mother, brother and father, she left her life in Switzerland for a nomadic and unfettered existence in the deserts of North Africa. She travelled extensively through the desert on horseback, often dressed as a man, relentlessly documenting her travels through detailed journals. At the age of 27 Isabelle drowned in a flash flood in the desert. *Song from the Uproar* uses texts inspired by her writing to immerse the audience in the surreal landscapes of Isabelle's life; she describes the death of her family, the thrill of her arrival in Africa, her tentative joy at falling in love, the elation of self-discovery and the mystery of death.

In 2004, within hours of picking up a copy of her journals in a Boston bookstore, I officially became obsessed with Isabelle Eberhardt's strange and moving life story. Within two weeks I had read everything she had ever written and nearly everything written about her, but despite my compulsive reading habits, I still had more questions than answers. I was struck by the universal themes of her story – how much her struggles, her questions, her passions mirrored those of women throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Isabelle made a great effort to define herself as an independent woman in extreme circumstances. She dressed as a man, seeing this as the only way to move

This concert is being recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast in *The New Music Show* on Saturday 2 March at 10.00pm. It will be available for 30 days after broadcast via BBC Sounds, where you can also find podcasts and music mixes.

freely and live the life of her choice. She let herself fall deeply in love but struggled to maintain her independent lifestyle.

I knew immediately that I wanted to create a large-scale work about Isabelle, and I knew that I wanted it to be more of a personal response to her life than a detailed retelling of her story. I needed to start answering my own questions, imagining how she felt, filling in the spaces between journal entries and exploring the universality that made her story so vibrant and relevant to me more than a century after her death. In 2007, three years after discovering Isabelle, I began work on the libretto for *Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt*, pulling phrases and ideas from her journals and creating singable texts that, over the following year, I set to music. Working in response to my score, Stephen Taylor started to create films using archival footage from the early 20th century, generating a collection of images that went beyond a mere depiction of Isabelle's story to reflect the emotional themes of each section. Early in 2009 Steve and I began our collaboration with director Gia Forakis, who worked with us to stage the work and bring together all the elements of the project.

I wrote this work for NOW Ensemble and Abigail Fischer, musicians whose virtuosic technique and adventurous spirit made them an ideal choice for what I envisioned.

Introduction © Missy Mazzoli

The story of the 19th-century Swiss adventurer Isabelle Eberhardt – leaving home following the deaths of her parents for a nomadic life in North Africa, learning Arabic and converting to Islam before her death in a flash flood while saving her husband's life – is surely the stuff of a powerful dramatic opera. Missy Mazzoli's world was rocked when she chanced upon a new edition of Eberhardt's journals in a Boston bookstore in 2004: 'This book was a revelation,' she exclaimed. 'She was very open about her poverty, her emotional state, her sense of desperation. It didn't have the formality and the sort of posturing in a lot of journals of the late Victorian era; it's shocking even by today's standards. For a woman to just say what she felt at the time was revolutionary – and actually still is.'

Rather than adapting Eberhardt's journals in a slavishly straightforward manner, though, Mazzoli and librettist Royce Vavrek fashioned a series of vignettes that evoke universal sensations – loss, yearning, passion – stitched together with electronic interludes that crackle like shortwave signals traversing great distances.

The original stage concept – grainy photographs and videos by Stephen Taylor and swirls of dervish motion designed by director Gia Forakis – was similarly open to interpretation. The production evoked foreign lands and vast plains of memory economically. The score was tailored to the talents of the performers



for whom Mazzoli was writing: Abigail Fischer, a charismatic, alluring mezzo-soprano, and NOW Ensemble, the house band of New York City's early-2000s 'post-classical' revolution.

With its throbbing post-Minimalist rhythms and growling electric guitar, *Song from the Uproar* echoes its moment of arrival. But the work also confidently foreshadows a future in which Mazzoli would blaze trails as a formidable operatic creator keen to illuminate the triumphs and challenges faced by formidable women making their way in the world without compromise.

Programme note © Steve Smith

DALIA STASEVSKA
CONDUCTOR

Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Dalia Stasevska is also Chief Conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Director of the International Sibelius Festival. She made her BBC Proms debut in 2019 and conducted the Last Night of the Proms in 2020 and the First Night in 2021 and 2023.

Last season she undertook a six-concert tour of Japan with the BBC SO. Other recent engagements include performances with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestras, Chicago, San Francisco and Toronto Symphony orchestras, Philadelphia and Minnesota orchestras, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington DC) and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. The current season includes concerts with the Cleveland Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Berne, Cincinnati, Seattle and Sydney Symphony orchestras and West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

This spring sees the release of Dalia Stasevska's debut recording, *Dalia's Mixtape* with the BBC SO, featuring music by Anna Meredith, Caroline Shaw, Andrea Tarrodi, Noriko Koide, Judith Weir and others.

SOFI JEANNIN
CONDUCTOR

Sofi Jeannin studied conducting and singing at the Stockholm Royal College of Music and the Nice Conservatoire, and with Paul Spicer at the Royal College of Music. She conducted her first BBC Radio 3 broadcast, the UK premiere of Helmut Lachenmann's *Consolation I*, in 2006 and became Chief Conductor of the BBC Singers in 2018. She is also Music Director of the Maîtrise de Radio France.

Highlights of her guest-conducting career this season include Handel's *Messiah* with Britten Sinfonia, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the Dunedin Consort, Poulenc's *Stabat mater* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Unsuk Chin's *Alice in Wonderland* with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. In April she will take part in the choral music festival Tokyo Cantat. Sofi Jeannin continues her relationship with the vocal ensemble Ars Nova Copenhagen with three visits this season.

Recent work with the BBC Singers includes appearances at the BBC Proms with world premieres by Shiva Feshareki and Nico Muhly in 2021, a collaboration with the Academy of Ancient Music and South Asian dance company Akademi, Poulenc's *Figure humaine*, Fauré's *Requiem* at Milton Court Concert Hall and a continuing collaboration with South African cellist and vocalist Abel Selaaocoe.

RICHARD BENJAFIELD
CONDUCTOR

A professor at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama since 1995, Richard Benjafield was appointed Head of Wind, Brass and Percussion in 2009 and made a Fellow in 2013. As a conductor he has directed BBC Total Immersion concerts of music by Cage, Xenakis and Philip Glass.

He is a founder member of Ensemble Bash, the first established percussion quartet in the UK. As well as commissioning more than 40 new works, many now established in the standard repertoire, since 1992 the quartet has travelled worldwide, including performances at the BBC Proms and in Ghana and Hong Kong. Additionally, it has worked with musicians from the Ghana Dance Ensemble and Pan-African Orchestra.

Richard Benjafield also performs with the Colin Currie Group and has collaborated with composers including Steve Reich, Harrison Birtwistle, Peter McGarr and Dobrinka Tabakova.

ISABELLE KETTLE
STAGE DIRECTOR

Isabelle Kettle is an opera and theatre director specialising in 20th-century and contemporary music. Staging classics and new work, she collaborates across many disciplines and has worked with, among others, designers Hyemi Shin and Lizzie Clachan, dramaturg Uzma Hameed and choreographer Julia Cheng. A 2018 graduate of Columbia University's MFA in Theatre Directing, led by Anne Bogart, she is a member of the new Polyphonic collective and was the 2019–21 Jette Parker Young Artist Director of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

Isabelle Kettle's directing credits include *The Turn of the Screw* and *Dido and Aeneas* (Theatre Royal, Bath), *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *Mahagonny Songspiel* (Royal Opera main stage), Handel's *Susanna* (Linbury Theatre), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Waterperry Opera Festival), Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* (UCOpera at the Bloomsbury Theatre), *Dido and Aeneas* (a site-specific promenade production at the Queille Festival, Toulouse), Chabrier's *Une éducation manquée* (Grimeborn Festival for Pop-up Opera at the Arcola Theatre) and *Ariodante* (semi-staged for the Royal Opera).

Her theatre credits include Melis Aker's *Manar* and a workshop performance of Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* in New York, *Arden Creatures* with Footfall Theatre and Cockpit Theatre in London and *Machinal* at the Lenfest Center for the Arts, New York.

HOLLY BROWN
SOPRANO

Holly Brown is a British-Pakistani soprano from London. She completed her undergraduate and master's studies at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where she is currently enrolled in the Opera School under the tutelage of John Evans and Yvonne Kenny.

Previous operatic roles include the title-role in Respighi's *Maria egiziaca* for GSMD Opera, Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) with Cumbria Opera Group and Orchestra Vox, The Queen of Shemakha (*The Golden Cockerel*) with Orchestra Vox and Clorinda (*La Cenerentola*) for British Youth Opera. On the concert platform she has sung in various items for the London Symphony Orchestra's Discovery series, with Glasgow Orchestral Society in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and at the Queen Charlotte's Ball for the London Season.

Forthcoming roles include Susana San Juan (the world premiere of Stephen McNeff's *A Star Next to the Moon*) for GSMD Opera and Thalie (*Platée*) and Giulietta (*Un giorno di regno*, understudy) for Garsington Opera.

Holly Brown is generously supported in her studies at the Guildhall School by the Behrens Foundation, the Walter Hyde Memorial Prize and the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers, and is a Help Musicians Sybil Tutton Award holder.

LUCIA CHOCARRO
DANCER

Lucia Chocarro is a devising, collaborating contemporary dance and physical theatre performer and facilitator. She trained at London Contemporary Dance School and has worked on a variety of projects across the UK and internationally.

She has performed with Akram Khan Company, Punchdrunk, Gecko Theatre, Agudo Dance Company, Dickson Mbi, Jamaal Burkmar, Maxine Doyle and Sillis Movement among others, and worked as a Special Action Artist for *Wonder Woman* and *Justice League* with Warner Bros Productions. Lucia Chocarro is also a founding member of Feet off the Ground collective and a certified Yoga Alliance teacher and practitioner.

KRYŠTOF KOHOUT

VIOLIN

Czech violinist Kryštof Kohout studies at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with David Takeno. He has also worked with Midori, Leonidas Kavakos, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Pierre Amoyal and Josef Špaček and attended international courses including IMS Prussia Cove and Kronberg Violin Masterclasses.

Having recently made his Carnegie Hall debut, he regularly performs as a soloist and chamber musician in Europe and the USA at venues including Wigmore Hall, Berlin Konzerthaus, Vienna Musikverein and the Gstaad Menuhin, Plovdiv International Chamber Music, Smetana Days, Schiermonnikoog and Northern Lights festivals. He made his debut at the Barbican in 2022 playing Berg's Violin Concerto and has recently performed Beethoven's Concerto at the Liszt Academy, Budapest, with the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. As a soloist he has also collaborated with the Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra, Moravian Chamber Soloists and London Classical Orchestra. His performances have been broadcast on Czech Radio, Dutch Concert Radio and BBC Radio 3.

Kryštof Kohout is a founding member of the Fibonacci Quartet. He receives support through the Help Musicians Parikian Award, Countess of Munster Trust, Hattori Foundation, Harrison-Frank Family Foundation and Velehrad London.

HANNAH MCKAY

SOPRANO

Northern Irish soprano Hannah McKay studied Music at Durham University. She now studies with Janice Chapman and embarks on the Guildhall School of Music & Drama's Opera Course in September.

Recent concert work includes Handel's *Messiah* with St Ives Choral Society, Haydn's 'Nelson' Mass for Merchant Taylors' School and Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* at Durham Cathedral. Last April she was invited to the Ludlow English Song Weekend to perform in the young artist masterclass with Rachel Nicholls and Iain Burnside; previously, as a member of the Samling Academy, she sang in masterclasses with Sir Thomas Allen.

Recent operatic roles for GSMD Opera include Suzel (scenes from *L'amico Fritz*), Ellen Orford (scenes from *Peter Grimes*) and Vitellia (scenes from *La clemenza di Tito*) and, as understudy, La Fata Azzura (Respighi's *La bella addormentata nel bosco*) and Signora Guidotti (Rota's *I due timidi*). She is currently preparing to understudy the title-role in *Suor Angelica* for West Green House Opera in July.

Hannah McKay's studies are supported by a number of generous scholarships. She is the Behrens Foundation scholar and Sidney Perry Foundation scholar, as well as being supported by a private donor.

KOSTA POPOVIĆ
CELLO

Montenegrin cellist Kosta Popović is currently pursuing his master's degree in Music Performance with Louise Hopkins at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

He studied at the International Chamber Music Institute of the Reina Sofía School of Music in Madrid with Günter Pichler and the Dutch String Quartet Academy with Marc Danel. Last summer he took part in the Encuentro de Música y Academia de Santander with Jens Peter Maintz, Stanislav Ioudenitch and Antoni Ros-Marbà. He attended the International Summer Academy in Vienna where he received mentorship from Louise Hopkins and performed with Laura Aikin.

For four years he was cellist of the Fibonacci Quartet, which performed at music festivals in the UK and abroad. The quartet has broadcast on Radio 3's *In Tune* and *Podium Witteman* for Dutch television, and performed at the Schiermonnikoog and Art Amanti Chamber Music festivals. Recently the quartet won the 71st Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition.

Kosta Popović is the 2023/24 London Symphony Orchestra String Experience player and will make a number of appearances with the LSO in the coming months. His postgraduate studies are supported by the Ian Fleming Award and a Countess of Munster Musical Trust Study Grant.

RACHEL ROPER
MEZZO-SOPRANO

Rachel Roper is currently a recipient of the Marianne Falk Award at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, studying on the Opera Course with John Llewellyn Evans.

She is featured on Dave Billbrough's album *Hidden Kingdom* and sang the role of the Angel in the premiere of Bob Chilcott's *A Christmas Oratorio* (recorded for BBC Radio 3). She performs around the UK as a recitalist with her duo partner Claire Habbershaw.

Rachel Roper's operatic roles include Third Boy (*The Magic Flute*) for Bloomsbury Opera, Mistress Ford (*Sir John in Love*) for British Youth Opera and a chorus role in *La bohème* for Nevill Holt Opera. For GSMD Opera she has sung Ottavia (*The Coronation of Poppaea*), Jade Boucher (*Dead Man Walking*), Berthe (*Blond Eckbert*) and understudy roles in the GSMD's New and Early Opera programme at the Barbican. She recently created the roles of Jewish Child (Noah Max's *A Child in Striped Pyjamas*) for Cockpit Opera and the Artist (Elif Nur Karlidag's *Reborns*) at the Barbican.

Concert engagements include Mozart's 'Coronation' Mass and Mass in C minor, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, David Matthews's *Stars*, Karl Jenkins's *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*, Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle*, Haydn's 'Nelson' Mass, Handel's *Messiah* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*.

ELINA VÄHÄLÄ

VIOLIN

Born in the USA and raised in Finland, Elina Vähälä made her orchestral debut with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra at the age of 12 and was later chosen by Osmo Vänskä as the orchestra's 'Young Master Soloist'.

She appears regularly with all the major Finnish orchestras and is a guest of high-profile orchestras around the world, working with conductors such as Josep Caballé Domenech, Thierry Fischer, Jakub Hrůša, Carlos Kalmar, Okko Kamu, Alexander Liebreich, Daniela Musca, Michał Nesterowicz, Sakari Oramo, Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Leif Segerstam and Leonard Slatkin.

Engagements this season include concerts with the Columbus Symphony (Ohio) and Symphony Nova Scotia and in Slovenia, Sweden and Finland. She also returns to the Wrocław and Tampere Philharmonic orchestras, the Hamburg, Lahti and Norrköping Symphony orchestras, Lohja City Orchestra and the Naantali and Seoul International festivals. Last year she became Artistic Director of the Naantali Festival, having previously been Artistic Co-Director of the Oulu Festival.

Elina Vähälä plays a Giovanni Battista Guaragnini violin, made in 1780.

STEVEN VAN DER LINDEN

TENOR

Steven van der Linden is a young tenor from Utrecht, the Netherlands. He studied with Scot Weir at the Hochschule für Musik 'Hanns Eisler' in Berlin, where he was a member of Wolfram Rieger's Liedklasse, and with John Evans at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he is currently studying on the Opera Course. He has also attended masterclasses with Nelly Miricioiu, Margreet Honig, Dame Emma Kirkby, Tobias Truniger and Nicky Spence.

Professional highlights include Varo (Handel's *Arminio*, understudy) for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Lili Boulanger's *Du fond de l'abîme* at the Barbican, Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*) on tour in the Netherlands and at the Teatro Pérez Galdós in Gran Canaria, Fenton (*Falstaff*) for British Youth Opera, and Mozart's Mass in C minor and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* at Flensburg and Eckernförde cathedrals. Last year he created the role of Norman (Maarten Ornstein's *Papoea Opera*) at the Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam. He also presents recitals with pianist Claire Habbershaw.

Steven van der Linden is supported by the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, VandenEnde Foundation, Countess of Munster Trust and Help Musicians Sybil Tutton Opera Awards. He is a Josephine Baker trustee and a Samling Artist for the 2023–4 season.

KITTY WHATELY

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Kitty Whately trained at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Royal College of Music International Opera School. She was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, 2013–15.

She has performed with all the BBC orchestras and with many of the UK's leading orchestras and choruses, and made her BBC Proms debut in 2014. Forthcoming engagements include a recital with pianist Natalie Burch at the Oxford Lieder Festival, Fortune/Poppaea (*The Coronation of Poppaea*) at The Grange Festival and Marcellina (*The Marriage of Figaro*) at the Verbier Festival.

Kitty Whately's recordings include the solo albums *This Other Eden: A Landscape of English Poetry and Song* with pianist Joseph Middleton and *Nights Not Spent Alone* with Simon Lepper, featuring Jonathan Dove's complete works for mezzo and piano, including a song-cycle commissioned by and dedicated to her. Her latest album, *Befreit: A Soul Surrendered* with Joseph Middleton, featuring songs by Mahler, Strauss, Johanna Müller-Hermann and Margarete Schweikert, was released last year.

TRIO CASELLA

Violetta Suvini violin

Gabriel Francis-Dehqani cello

Luke Lally-Maguire piano

Trio Casella won the Ivan Sutton Chamber Music Competition and the St James's Chamber Music Competition in London last year. The trio has broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and performs regularly throughout London, appearing at venues such as St John's Smith Square, Milton Court Concert Hall and Princess Alexandra Hall.

ELMORE QUARTET

Xander Croft violin • **Miles Ames** violin

Inis Oírr Asano viola • **Felix Hughes** cello

Currently a Kirckman Concerts artist and recipient of a Tunnell Trust award in 2021, the Elmore Quartet was founded in 2017 at the Royal Northern College of Music. The quartet has been guided by prominent chamber musicians including Donald Grant (Elias Quartet), Petr Prause (Talich Quartet), Henk Guittart (Schoenberg Quartet), David Waterman (Endellion Quartet) and Marc Danel (Quatuor Danel).

The group accepted the position of Studio Quartet at the RNCM in 2020 and the players were appointed Junior Fellows in Chamber Music at the college from 2021 to 2023. Over the past two years the quartet has recorded for BBC Radio 3 and performed at venues throughout the UK including Wigmore Hall, Conway Hall, the Pitville Pump Room in Bath and Holywell Music Room in Oxford.

In 2020 the quartet launched the Elmore Chamber Music Festival, held annually in Elmore, Gloucestershire, every August. Currently Chamber Fellows at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, the quartet has performed across the UK and Europe over the past year. Notable collaborations have included performances with the Jerusalem Quartet, the Elias Quartet and pianists Keigo Mukawa and Victor Lim.

BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

For over 90 years the BBC Symphony Orchestra has been a driving force in the British musical landscape, championing contemporary music in its performances of newly commissioned works and giving voice to rarely performed and neglected composers. It plays a central role in the BBC Proms, performing regularly throughout each season, including the First and Last Nights. The BBC SO is Associate Orchestra at the Barbican, where it performs a distinctive annual season of concerts.

Chief Conductor Sakari Oramo opened this season, which features themes of voyaging and storytelling, including Stravinsky's *The Firebird* and Ravel's *Shéhérazade* and an evening of words and music with author Kate Atkinson. There are world and UK premieres from Detlev Glanert, Tebogo Monnakgotla, Outi Tarkiainen and Lotta Wennäkoski, and the BBC SO takes a deep dive into the musical world of 'Italian Radicals' Luciano Berio, Luigi Dallapiccola and Luigi Nono in a further Total Immersion day in May. Performances with the BBC Symphony Chorus include José Maurício Nunes Garcia's *Missa di Santa Cecília* (1826).

In addition to its Barbican concerts, the BBC SO makes appearances across the UK and beyond and gives regular free concerts at its Maida Vale studios.

You can hear the vast majority of the BBC SO's performances on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Sounds, with all concerts available on BBC Sounds for 30 days after broadcast and several concerts including the First and Last Night of the BBC Proms currently available to watch on BBC iPlayer.

The BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus – alongside the BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Singers and BBC Proms – offer innovative education and community activities and take a lead role in the BBC Ten Pieces and BBC Young Composer programmes, including work with schools, young people and families in East London ahead of the BBC SO's move in 2025 to its new home at London's East Bank cultural quarter in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford.

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Chief Conductor
Sakari Oramo

Principal Guest Conductor
Dalia Stasevska

Günter Wand Conducting Chair
Semyon Bychkov

Conductor Laureate
Sir Andrew Davis

Creative Artist in Association
Jules Buckley

1.30pm Concert

First Violins

Igor Yuzefovich *Leader*
Cellerina Park
Philip Brett
Jenny King
Celia Waterhouse
Colin Huber
Ni Do
James Wicks
Stuart McDonald
Lulu Fuller
William Hillman
Cindy Foster
Kirsty Macleod
Clare Hoffman

Second Violins

Dawn Beazley
Rose Hinton
Alice Hall
Vanessa Hughes
Danny Fajardo
Rachel Samuel
Tammy Se
Victoria Hodgson
Lucica Trita
Nihat Agdach
Dania Alzapiedi
Shelley Van Loen

Violas

Richard Waters
Joshua Hayward
Nikos Zarb
Natalie Taylor
Carolyn Scott
May Dolan
Mabon Rhyd
Anna Barsegjana
Victoria Bernath
Emily Frith

Cello

Timothy Hugh
Tamsy Kaner
Michael Atkinson
Jane Lindsay
Sophie Gledhill
Gilly McMullin
Chris Allen
Danushka Edirisinghe

Double Basses

Nicholas Bayley
Richard Alsop
Anita Langridge
Michael Clarke
Beverley Jones
Elen Pan

Flutes

Michael Cox
Tomoka Mukai

Piccolo

Diomedes Demetriades

Oboes

Tom Blomfield

Clarinets

Peter Sparks
Jonathan Parkin

Bass Clarinet

Katie Lockhart

Bassoon

Julie Price

Contrabassoon

Ruth Rosales

Horns

Nicholas Korth
Mark Wood
Jack Pilcher-May
Paul Cott
Phillippa Koushk-Jalali

Trumpets

Philip Cobb
Joseph Atkins
Martin Hurrell

Trombones

Becky Smith
Dan Jenkins

Bass Trombone

Robert O'Neill

Tuba

Sam Elliott

Percussion

David Hocking
Joe Cooper
Heledd Gwynant

Harp

Elizabeth Bass

Piano

Philip Moore

8.00pm Concert

Double Bass

Enno Senft

Flute/Piccolo

Daniel Pailthorpe

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Meline le Calvez

Piano

Elizabeth Burley

Electric Guitar

James Woodrow

The lists of players were correct at the time of going to press

Director

Bill Chandler

Planning Manager

Tom Philpott

Orchestra Manager

Susanna Simmons

Orchestra Personnel Manager

Murray Richmond

Orchestras and Tours Assistant

Indira Sills-Toomey

Concerts Manager

Marelle McCallum

Tours Manager

Kathryn Aldersea

Music Libraries Manager

Mark Millidge

Orchestral Librarian

Julia Simpson

Chorus Manager

Wesley John

Chief Producer

Ann McKay

Assistant Producer

Ben Warren

Senior Stage Manager

Rupert Casey

Stage Manager

Michael Officer

Commercial, Rights and Business Affairs Executive

Geraint Heap

Business Accountant

Nimisha Ladwa

BBC London Orchestras Marketing and Learning

Head of Marketing, Publications and Learning

Kate Finch

Communications Manager

Jo Hawkins

Publicist

Freya Edgeworth

Marketing Manager

Sarah Hirons

Marketing Executives

Jenny Barrett
Alice White

Senior Learning Project Managers (job share)

Lauren Creed
Ellara Wakely

Learning Project Managers

Melanie Fryer
Laura Mitchell
Chloe Shrimpton

Assistant Learning Project Managers

Siân Bateman
Deborah Fether

Learning Trainees

Dylan Barrett-Chambers

BBC SINGERS

The BBC Singers has held a unique place at the heart of the UK's choral scene for almost 100 years and has collaborated with many of the world's leading composers, conductors and soloists. Based at the BBC's Maida Vale Studios, the choir records music for broadcast on BBC Radio 3 alongside work for other network radio, television and commercial use. It presents an annual series of concerts at Milton Court Concert Hall, gives free concerts in London and appears at major festivals.

The BBC Singers champions composers from all backgrounds. Recent concerts and recordings include music by Soumik Datta, Reena Esmail, Joanna Marsh, Cecilia McDowall, Sun Keting and Roderick Williams, and recent collaborations have featured Laura Mvula, Clare Teal, South Asian dance company Akademi and world music fusion band Kabantu.

The BBC Singers appears annually at the BBC Proms. The 2023 season saw the group perform at the First and Last Nights, as well as in a concert with Sir Simon Rattle, an evening with Jon Hopkins and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and a concert with Chief Conductor Sofi Jeannin.

At the heart of the BBC Singers' work is a wide-ranging programme of learning activities with children and adults in schools, music colleges, universities and community groups.

Chief Conductor
Sofi Jeannin

Principal Guest Conductors
Bob Chilcott
Owain Park

Associate Conductor, Learning
Nicholas Chalmers

Associate Composer
Roderick Williams

Artists in Association
Anna Lapwood
Abel Selaoocoe

Sopranos
Eleanor Bray
Rebecca Lea
Clare Lloyd-Griffiths
Olivia Robinson
Emma Tring

Altos
Eleanor Minney
Margaret Cameron
Katherine Nicholson
Ciara Hendrick

Tenors
Peter Davoren
Stephen Jeffes
Jonathan Maxwell-Hyde
Tom Raskin

Basses
Timothy Dickinson
Charles Gibbs
Jamie W. Hall
Edward Price
Andrew Rupp

The list of singers was correct at the time of going to press

Acting Co-Director and Choral Manager
Rob Johnston

Acting Co-Director and Producer
Jonathan Manners

Assistant Choral Manager
Eve Machin

Assistant Producer
Jo Harris

Tours Manager
Kathryn Aldersea

Librarian
Naomi Anderson

GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA

Guildhall School of Music & Drama is a vibrant international community of musicians, actors and production artists in the heart of the City of London.

Ranked as one of the top 10 performing arts institutions in the world in the QS World University Rankings 2023, as well as the No. 1 institution in both *The Guardian University Guide* music league table and the *Complete University Guide* arts, drama and music league table, the School delivers world-class professional training in partnership with distinguished artists, companies and ensembles.

A global leader in creative and professional practice, GSMD promotes innovation, experiment and research, receiving Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework in both Student Experience and Student Outcomes. It is also one of the UK's leading providers of lifelong learning in the performing arts, offering inspiring training for children, young people, adult learners, and creative and business professionals.



BBC singers

CONCERTS
2023/24



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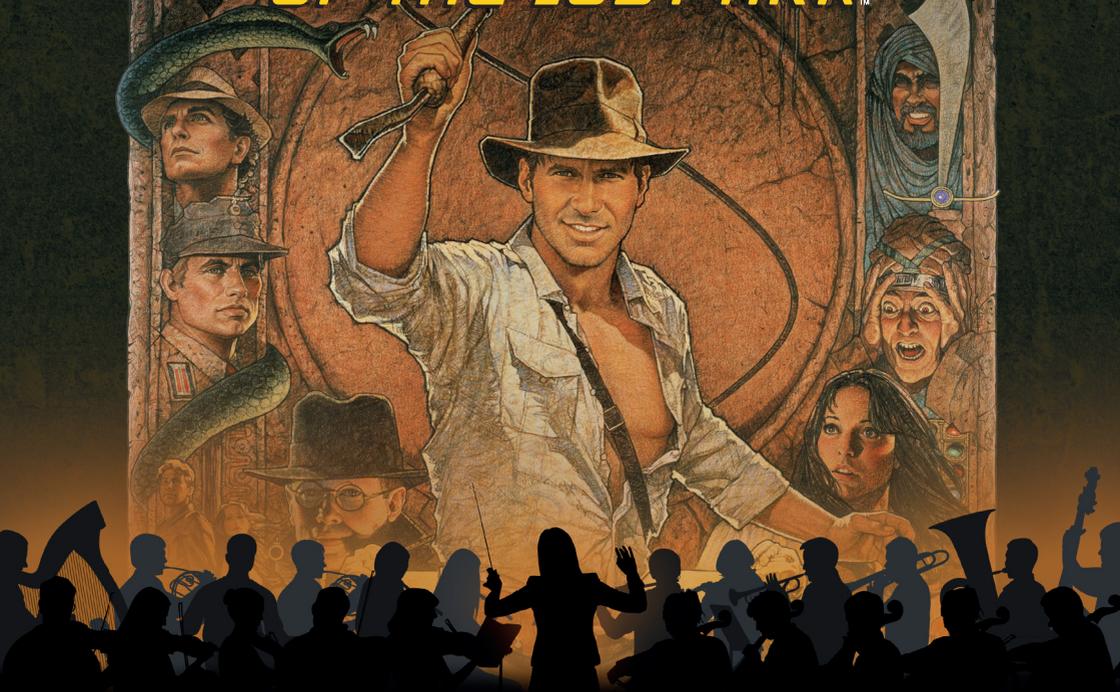
Clive Myrie joins us to narrate a modern day re-telling of the passion story with music spanning nearly 1000 years in March; and **Sandi Toksvig** guides us on a journey through time and music in May,

illuminating the stories of great women who have changed the course of history.

To find out more and book tickets:
bbc.co.uk/singers

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