

FIRST PERFORMANCES

Salzburg Festival: Hans Werner Henze's 'L'Upupa and the Triumph of Filial Love'

An ancient tale is told by an Old Man in a tower. He experiences the story both in his dreams and as his present hopes and fears. L'Upupa¹ appears, a mysterious hoopoe who is the sum of the Old Man's joys. Impetuously he grabs hold of her but she struggles free and manages to fly away. Left behind are a golden feather and a bleeding finger. The Old Man sends his three sons in search of the bird, knowing that neither the eldest, Gharib ('the Untrustworthy'), nor the second son, Adschib ('the Fanciful'), can succeed. It is Kasim ('the Sharer') – the youngest – who will fulfil the quest, for he is virtuous and wholly without guile. The ensuing developments in this Syrian legend may be quickly enumerated here: tasks are set, songs are sung, and potentates take and release captives, for in sending his sons on such a mission, the father has knowingly endangered their lives. Kasim returns not only with the bird, but also with an angelic Demon who has safeguarded him on his journeys, and Badi'at, a beautiful Jewish maiden.² To great astonishment the old man sets free l'Upupa. And although a wedding is announced, Kasim will not stay to marry Badi'at, setting off instead to seek one of the famous red apples of Manda in order to redeem his pledge against the Demon's protection. The end is marked by the beginning, and a quest starts anew.

Premiered this summer at the Salzburg Festival,³ *L'Upupa und der Triumph der Sohnesliebe* proves to be a significant *Spätwerk* by Germany's senior composer. Like many an earlier opera, it must be seen against Henze's own life: just as he has always identified himself strongly with sundry protagonists in his other works of music theatre, it is the Old Man whom we are to imagine as the artist.

For 40 years now, Henze has lived and worked in Italy, acquiring by osmosis expertise in a second language. By his own admission, German has become for him something slightly foreign, its sound and grammar sitting strangely on the tongue, just as the German symphonic tradition

now seems to his ears somewhat alien and unfamiliar.⁴ That gainsaid, Henze's musical vocabulary of highly specific gestures, signs and symbols forms grammatical structures that are to be found in much earlier German music and the tempered system; these configurations seep like mythological fragments into his consciousness, where they serve to recall childhood experiences and memories that in turn take on the guise of fairy-tales and the songs of heroes.

Henze never believed he would be able to grasp music as a serial system in which each parameter was strictly organized. His sense of intuition told him otherwise. Immediately after the Second World War he had rejected the possibility of a musical style that would not, could not and should not express anything at all. The conflict of compositional techniques in *Der Prinz von Homburg* is a remarkable response to this dialectical issue. And in *König Hirsch*, too, he could not resist the lyrical vein.

Where these rivers merge – Henze's life, his music, and his views on art and myth – is in the new work *L'Upupa and the Triumph of Filial Love*. After his years in Naples, the time with the Festival at Montepulciano, and now the Roman period – if that is not too fanciful a description – we now understand that long ago he felt himself to be part of Magna Graecia,⁵ a moiety of the Graeco-Arabic world. Just as he is the Old Man who longs to own the Upupa, he is identical with Pentheus in *Die Bassariden*; he is the tenor Dionysos; he is the Prinz who in the torchlit gardens of Brandenburg removes the bandages from his eyes; he is Armand Desgrieux in his first opera *Boulevard Solitude*, Mittenhofer the murderer in *Elegie für junge Liebende*, and many a mythological creature who, seeking companionship amongst humans, sneaks like a wary cat into their midst.

Like Monteverdi and Mozart before him, Henze is a maker of myth. The musical past is not historical finality, but a way of thinking and a lifestyle that together encourage a rare sensibility towards sentient existence. Again, life, art, and myth meet. Mythology once more provides the models for

¹ Italian for hoopoe.

² According to Persian legend the hoopoe was a married woman who was transformed into a bird after her father-in-law suddenly appeared as she was combing herself in front of the mirror (the Farsi is *shānēser* 'with a comb on its head').

³ On 12 August 2003 in the Kleines Festspielhaus.

⁴ Remarks on the relationship between music, language and mythology freely translated from 'Mitten in die Herzen der Menschen hinein', an autobiographical essay by Hans Werner Henze in the programme to *L'Upupa und der Triumph der Sohnesliebe*, Salzburger Festspiele, August 2003, pp. 14–25.

⁵ *ibid.* p. 18.

music theatre of great perspicacity. And as we gradually absorb the symbiosis of music and language in *L'Upupa*, we catch glimpses of the composer's own artistic imagination: the musicality of language and the linguistic nature of music are married as in no other Henze opera before.

For the first time, Henze is his own librettist. The tale is from the Arabic, the German text in the tradition of the *Singspiel*, the opera itself subtitled 'Ein deutsches Lustspiel', for which the translation 'A German Comedy' will just about suffice. In *L'Upupa* every theme has, in the very moment of its creation, been tried out first by the voice; each motif has, according to the composer, been sung, chanted and warbled, or been sounded out, tapped, rapped or thumped in order to test its qualities. Only later does the musical material shed itself of any vocal connotations, becoming the warp and weft of a lavish orchestral score. The response to the text in *L'Upupa* is as immediate as it ever could be.

Cast in eleven tableaux, *L'Upupa* is very much a number opera (quite why this term should be used disparagingly by some is bewildering). The first five scenes are written almost entirely in parlando style, and any overlapping between the voices is virtually absent, there being no hint of a duet, much less of a trio. The masterstroke is the love duet at the beginning of the sixth tableau, immediately after the interval.⁶ A desire for duetting voices was palpable amongst the audience by this stage, and Henze intensifies the theatrical effect by turning the duet fleetingly into a trio about half way through.

In *L'Upupa* Henze continues with his usual – one might say his unusual – amalgam of styles. The score is a river; it is a river of tears, and the tears are the Old Man's. There are many layers of polyphony, some pan-consonant, others experimenting with some quite common chords. Islands of tonality emerge in a narrative stream, but any strong major and minor associations are felt in a different context, the music flowing around such obstacles. The composer's attention to all the inner voices is meticulous, Henze following age-old principles of tension and relaxation, of preparation and resolution, and ultimately of consonance and dissonance. The score to *L'Upupa* is lyrical and expressionistic; it is Henze's own *musica impura* at its most heady, volatile and pungent.

A lush euphony emanates from the pit, an adroit Markus Stenz in charge of the Wiener Philharmoniker no less (the orchestra is a luxury we have come to associate with the Salzburg Festival). Matthias Goerne as Al Kasim strides

manfully across the stage just once too often, but carries off a weighty role with aplomb; Laura Aikin as Badi'at is lyrical and lovely, as one would expect the Jewish maiden to be; Adschib and Gharib, sung by Axel Köhler and Anton Scharinger respectively, emerge as buffoons whose uncertain humour teeters and falls flat; and John Mark Ainsley as the Demon is, like all around him, in fine voice, he alone finding something deeper in his role and managing to offer a tad of psychological insight into the character he is playing. It is as if the director, Dieter Dorn, despite years of experience in Salzburg, has missed the mark. Henze notes in the libretto that the figures should turn but occasionally to the audience: Dorn creates cardboard cut-outs who address us for an unrelenting three hours. He must have grasped the allegorical significance of the Old Man wishing to cling on to that which he still finds beautiful, or of those mighty rulers who, when confronted by Kasim 'the Sharer' and his alter ego the Demon, must relinquish their treasures when life demands; and surely Dorn discerned the poignancy of the Old Man setting free *L'Upupa* at the close. Myths are polyvalent. The director remains obstinate, stuck on a single track. Only the stunning stage designs by Jürgen Rose that rely on giant flowers of scumbled hue against the collied void mitigate against this rigid rendering of the parable.

The final set piece is cast as an orchestral 'twilight hour', and there was much talk of Henze's 'Blaue Stunde'. But the significance of azure in aesthetic theory in general and the composer's oeuvre in particular⁷ must be the subject of another discussion. We can only hope that the Mahlerian farewell of *L'Upupa* and the *Triumph of Filial Love* is not a true *Abschied*, and that Hans Werner Henze will not disappoint our hopes for yet another work from the wellspring of his memory.

Graham Lack

London, Royal Albert Hall Proms 2003

(1) MacMillan, Adams, Kancheli

The title of James MacMillan's Symphony No. 3, *Silence*, could easily mislead. An avowedly religious work from a devotedly Catholic composer, the symphony does not stand back in contemplative reverence before God. On the contrary, in choosing as his inspiration Shusaku Endo's 1966 novel of the same name, MacMillan has drawn upon a text that admirably meets and mirrors the fundamentals of his own musical personality.

⁶ Henze had originally expressed the need for a straight-through performance.

⁷ e.g. Henze's setting of Hölderlin's apocryphal prose poem 'In liebliche Bläue' in the *Kammermusik* 1958.

Endo's novel deals with Western attempts to convert the inhabitants of 17th-century Japan to Catholicism and their bloody failure. The agents of the Lord are defeated by the violent resistance of the Japanese and the inhospitable terrain. Struggle, hope, grace, martyrdom, defeat. MacMillan's devotees will recognize his trademarks in a dramatic new piece, albeit one whose narrative is rather more oblique than *Isabel Gowdie* or *Veni, Veni Emmanuel*.

In a talk given just prior to conducting the BBC Philharmonic in the European première at the Proms on 24 July (the piece was given its first performance by the NHK Symphony Orchestra of Japan a few months earlier), MacMillan was keen to point out the difference between his approach to religious music and that written by Pärt or Tavener. Certainly, as MacMillan claimed, the symphony has a drama and anguish rarely found in the 'holy minimalists'; on the other hand, his pained uses of silence in the piece lack the religious intensity of Pärt or even Bruckner. This is largely because doubt – doubt about the soundness of the missionaries' journey in Endo's novel, and self-doubt about the strength of the composer's own faith – is given a pre-eminent position in the symphony. The opening $\text{♩} = 72-80$ of this one-movement work, for example, is structured around small groups of instruments painstakingly developing material over 20 or 30 bars before a bar's silence interrupts progress and the enterprise starts again.

Those instrumental combinations sometimes evoke a Japanese feel: a slow, breathy flute alongside an alto flute soloist who sings in unison with the notes that she plays makes an extraordinarily delicate sound against a marimba accompaniment. Elsewhere a thundersheet menaces. A double-bassoon's prominent part is an ugly disturbance from the jungle. The British critic who wondered why Beethoven's Fifth had been programmed in the BBC Philharmonic's concert was obviously deaf to growing dramas of MacMillan's symphony and even the resemblances between Beethoven's stark repeated-quaver motif and MacMillan's own recurring motto of five semiquavers on the same note, as God – or is it some other force? – urges on His party. MacMillan was keen to point out the differences between this work and his Second Symphony (1999) but both in truth have a rough, almost militaristic edge, as well as making uses of quotations from Wagner operas (here from *Das Rheingold*) to emphasize themes of hope and re-growth.

The 35-minute Third Symphony initially appears more disjointed than the First or Second, but on re-hearing it is the emotional range that is

most impressive. MacMillan's orchestra is alternately angry, uncertain, plodding or fleeing as that semiquaver motto, angry and insistent, transforms itself into an uncertain string accompaniment. As the piece's pauses become fewer, the music gathers momentum towards an almost Mahler 6-like climax of metal percussion tattoos that initiate the symphony's most impressive central section. Here chorale-like string melodies are dive-bombed by brass sweeping from high to low *fff* and the symphony metamorphoses into music of unrelenting fury reminiscent of Robert Simpson. After the collapse comes a slow re-building, the Wagner primeval stirrings suggesting hope emerging out of a swirling string miasma. The choice of the *Ring*'s old-fashioned, European symbolism may be an odd reference to evoke, but the symphony concludes as it began with tremulous flutes moving uncertainly across the wastes. Echoes of the earlier drama are briefly resurrected, but the symphony ends with the sounds and silence of the earth which remain, though MacMillan may wish it otherwise, more compelling than the silences of an absent God.

Where MacMillan keeps returning to religion and the history of its struggles as inspiration, John Adams has acquired a reputation as a commentator on recent events of political significance. *Nixon in China* (1987) was based on events that took place only 15 years previously and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991) narrowed the gap to only six years. In his latest work for chorus, orchestra and pre-recorded tape, *On The Transmigration of Souls*, Adams is speaking almost about yesterday. The piece was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic in response to the World Trade Centre attack on 11 September 2001. Premiered in that city just one year after the event, *Transmigration* made it to London for its European première on 27 July with the composer conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus with the Southend Boys' and Girls' choirs.

Whereas the challenge of the two operas was to attempt an understanding of controversial or unsympathetic characters – Nixon, Kissinger, the hijackers of the *Achille Lauro* – with *Transmigration* the problem is almost the opposite: how to respond in music to the most well-documented and vivid mass-murder in the West in recent times. An event that, through constant media attention, feels as if all the emotion has already been squeezed from it. Adams himself clearly felt unease at the commission and would, as he confided in a talk, have wondered about the judgement of any composer who had chosen to take on such a subject. Apart from the elevated title (which points, MacMillan-like, to religious

texts, though there are none), the basis of Adams's approach is simplicity and plainness. Fresh and raw in our minds as the tragedy is, Adams is able – literally – to let it speak for itself. The text consists almost entirely of phrases drawn from missing-person posters put up immediately after the event and verbatim first-hand quotes from contemporary newspaper reports. Beginning with traffic noises from the city, the voices on the tape read names of the dead over the repeated word 'missing' as the chorus slowly and steadily intones 'We all love you / We miss you.' A trumpet meanwhile plays deliberate homage to Ives's own mournful American vision with a quote from *The Unanswered Question*.

Adams has likened the intended texture of the piece as akin to the sensation one gets 'when entering a cathedral like Chartres'. This is a useful description and it points to essential features of the work. First, the neutral, largely undifferentiated word-setting that embraces all within it (so that the reflective memory 'She looks so full of life' is given the same weight and tone as the immediately following 'I see water, I see buildings', the horrified words of the stewardess just before her plane collided with the Towers). Second, *Transmigration*'s almost static imperturbability. 'Architecture is frozen music' Goethe claimed, and there is an appropriate coolness about the piece, a successful attempt to avoid sentimentality (all too easy a trap here) by eschewing florid gestures in the vocal parts.

The music does eventually arrive at its one desperate climax around two-thirds of the way through, when the meditative tone gives way to one of sudden urgency on 'I know just where he is'. This is a powerfully effective passage of rushing string tremolos and held notes in the brass, producing the horrifying effect of running inexorably towards a disaster even as the disaster itself engulfs us. Against this Adams then immediately sets in an opposing rhythm the choruses' cries of 'Light' and 'Love' as the elements of fear and hope that underpin the piece clash starkly. After that the subdued 'Unanswered Question' strings and names of the dead once more are sent to remind us, only to fade away.

Transmigration has a modern, populist heart and is aptly described by the composer as a 'memory space'. With its emphasis on fragments of ordinary, even clichéd speech it has similarities with the improvised and spontaneous memorials that went up around Ground Zero in the days after the attacks. Like those memorials, the plainness of its language and the straightforwardness of its rhythms gain in directness what they lose in depth. Adams has admitted his concern that the

piece may be so tied to a place and time – very few other orchestras have asked to perform it yet – that its appeal may be limited, but it communicates honestly as well as easily and in a distinctly American style. It is the piece the tragedy merited.

Another work given its world première in September 2002 also received its UK première at the Proms: on 21 August, by the Rotterdam Philharmonic under Valery Gergiev. Giya Kancheli's *Warzone* is a 10-minute curiosity, dedicated to the conductor to mark his 50th birthday. The word *Warzone* leads us to expect Kancheli's trademark military eruptions – and they are certainly there, but the title is actually derived from the Ossetian *vorzon* (love). Kancheli, born in Tbilisi, is preoccupied with the fragility of love and its proximity to war, and the work ranges to the extremes of joy and sorrow on the most unexpected ways. Even the beginning plays up Kancheli's habitual innocence/violence juxtaposition with greater contrast than usual. The solo wind instruments with lush strings gently supporting them are more tender than usual, the slow string bass-heavy waltz rhythm and the glinting percussion create no atmosphere more strongly than a Hollywood vision of Christmas circa 1950. And yet, as the easy melodies pass and we steel ourselves for the war machine to come storming in, Kancheli gives us instead a brisker dance, gleaming in yet more snow. Then silence, then circus music, then another slow mechanical dance, as if Pulcinella had himself arrived.

To put Kancheli's trademark innocent flute solos in this brash and unlikely context has the unfortunate effect of making them sound less like genuine cries from the barren steppes than a film-music imitation of the same. The whole thing is best thought of as a bit of fun, but this emotion is hardly the composer's strong suit. Nevertheless the orchestra sounded as if they enjoyed it all immensely.

Robert Stein

(2) Weir, Woolrich, Chen Yi

At its best, Judith Weirs's music makes use of very simple and clear musical ideas with great wit to great effect. This quality is most apparent in pieces which have some dramatic, or at least extra-musical aspect, often connected with some type of folklore or folk music. When the music becomes more abstract, it can also be less lively and less appealing. The Composer Portrait concert which was presented as a preface to the UK première at the Proms on 7 August of her orchestral piece *The Welcome Arrival of Rain* contained examples of both of these sides of the composer's

work. *Distance and Enchantment*, for piano quartet, is based on Northern Irish and Scottish folk songs, worked into a beautiful and compelling instrumental texture. *Sketches from a Bagpiper's Album* evokes the sound of the bagpipes and the instrumental and compositional techniques associated with its repertory. Next to these works, *Music for 247 Strings*, for violin and piano, has much less profile and less personality. Even though it strikingly employs a texture which is a favorite of Weir's, distinctly different contrapuntal lines presented in rhythmic unison, it just doesn't seem to be about much of anything.

The Welcome Arrival of Rain is, in a way, an exception to the rule stated above, being both somewhat abstract in its material and development, and at the same time suggestive of an extra-musical situation. Two musical ideas of contrasting melodic and textural quality, continually developed, alternate, interrupted at moments by energetic percussion music. Initially spare and dry, the work evolves an increasingly more lush and exuberant texture, followed by a gentle coda evoking the sound of rain. The progress of its composition caused Weir to think of the annual arrival of the monsoon in India. Although not imitating Indian music in any overt way, the piece does seem to show the effect of Weir's recent work with Indian music and storytelling. Its melodic material is possibly on the neutral side, but its orchestration is arresting and the effect of the whole is quietly satisfying. Commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra and first performed by them in January 2003, it received its magisterial Proms performance by Illan Volkov and the BBC Scottish Symphony.

The Proms offered, in one of the Chamber Music Concerts presented on Monday afternoons at the Lecture Theatre at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the first performance of a Weir piece commissioned for series. *The Voice of Desire*, for mezzo-soprano and piano, sets poems by Bridges, Hardy, Keats, and an anonymous African poet, concerning birds and human folly. Deeply and urgently serious and strikingly beautiful, the songs received a performance by Alice Coote and Julian Drake which did not quite penetrate to their depths.

John Woolrich's *Double Mercury* received its première performance by the Britten Sinfonia, who had commissioned it jointly with the BBC, at a late-night Prom on 26 August. In keeping with one of the themes of this summer's Proms, the work was programatically related to Greek myths, in this case as recounted by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*. Unlike a number of Woolrich's works, whose texture can be on the minimal side,

Double Mercury consisted of music which was florid and active. The program listed seven sections, each representing a story from Ovid. Although certain aspects of the story – the ass's braying of King Midas and the transformation of King Picus into a woodpecker, for instance – were quite clearly portrayed, in fact the representation of the different stories was not so easy to follow. What was clear, though, was that there was a lively, attractive, and constantly engaging musical narrative of considerable substance, realized with enormous energy and skill.

Like Judith Weir, Chen Yi was featured in a Composer Profile Concert at the V & A previous to the European première of her Percussion Concerto in the Proms concert on 19 August. In *Duo Ye, As in a Dream* (in which she sang, joining performers from the Guildhall School), and Qi, Ms Chen was represented by ardently beautiful works which combine in a masterly manner the indigenous sounds of Chinese music with the western modernist language practiced in American academic institutions such as Columbia University, where she did her advanced studies. Later, in the Albert Hall, one might have for a moment been justified in thinking that we had wandered into a show in Las Vegas. As the hall lights went down, red lights went up on the large percussion setup which stood in front of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and Evelyn Glennie swept onto the stage in a brilliant red outfit with very long flowing sleeves.

The manner and language of the Percussion Concerto might be more in keeping with the practices of Barnum than of Davidovsky, which is to say the work was highly effective in a very old-fashioned western kind of way. The outer movements, 'The Night Deepens' (based on a tune from the Beijing opera entitled *Farewell My Concubine*) and 'Speedy Wind', had martial qualities with lively and driving rhythms. The slow central movement, 'Prelude to Water Tune', which had a lovely and intensely expressive nocturnal quality, required the soloist to recite/sing the poem by Su Shi which was the sound source as well as the expressive basis of the work. Ms Glennie's dispatching of demands of this movement, especially in the specificity of the coordination of rhythm and pitch with the orchestra, were extremely impressive. MsChen presented her soloist with a very effective vehicle, in the manner of the high romantic piano concerto, for her very considerable virtuoso musical and technical abilities, and Ms Glennie made a meal of it. The musical satisfaction that one could derive from this might be less than that offered by the chamber pieces on the earlier concert, but one

could hardly fail to be impressed by the way that both composer and performer knew exactly what they meant to do and exactly how to do it. Certainly, the audience, which went wild when it was over, seemed to love it all.

Rodney Lister

(3) Duddell, Gruber, Pintscher, Birtwistle *et al.*

Until the world première of Joe Duddell's *Ruby* on 25 July, I had yet to hear a percussion concerto which didn't trip itself up. I thought it was in the nature of the beast: the orchestra develops some material, which is then passed to the percussion, at which point all development perforce stops. Duddell (b. 1972) solved the problem by turning it on its head, and limiting the orchestral material to what the solo percussionist could handle; the downside is that he necessarily limits the expressive scope of the orchestra. *Ruby* – the title is simply a rhyming-slang working label that stuck: it's the final part of a trilogy of works written for the percussionist Colin Currie – opens with a vibraphone pattern that suggests a lyrical music-box and soon shows a stylistic affinity with American minimalism, which alternates with slabs of good-natured energy. The slow move-

ment begins with tremolo marimba chords over string lines that drift aimlessly and agreeably, with a more active central section spurred by brief brass figures which trigger rising scalic patterns in the vibraphone. The initial material returns with soft-centred strings above hypnotic vibraphone figuration and is sung to a close by the rapturous sound of bowed vibraphone chords. The finale likewise deals in cheerfully mesmeric vibraphone patterns over a wash of strings and stuttering comment from horns and trumpets; the soloist then offers an improvised toccata on drum-kit backed by forceful rhythms from a near-*tutti* orchestra. The vibraphone resumes its jolly prattle until, seemingly having run out of things to say, the music just stops dead. Currie, supported by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under the functional Marin Alsop, played it with obvious commitment, and from memory – no small achievement in such motoric music.

HK Gruber's recent works underline how much the impish *chansonnier* of *Frankenstein!!* has evolved into one of the major lyrical voices of the age. And indeed his *Dancing in the Dark*, described in the score as a 'Concert Piece for large orchestra', was for me the outstanding première in this Proms season, given its first UK performance by



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Orchestra
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Composer Portrait

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for a Mad King; Worldes Blis

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Roderick Williams *baritone*

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St Giles Cripplegate
Choral Max!
BBC Singers; Nicholas Kok *conductor*

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UNSUK CHIN Violin Concerto

(UK premiere)

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Martyn Brabbins *conductor*
Viviane Hagner *violin*

Saturday 6 March 7.30pm

POUL RUDERS Listening Earth

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David Robertson *conductor*
Soloists: Leonidas Kavakos; Jeffrey
Lloyd-Roberts; Jonathan Lemalu
BBC Symphony Chorus

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Great Danes
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the composer and the BBC Philharmonic on 2 August. It's in the two-movement structure that has become a Gruber hallmark: Paul Driver's note quoted Gruber to the tune that this format 'provides the strongest possible contrast, rather like a slow upbeat and a fast downbeat'. He's selling himself short, of course: the 'slow upbeat' here is a 15-minute nightscape, a blend of Bruckner and Ives. The ferocious opening gesture – two crashing, dissonant *Andante pesante* bars which are repeated several times in the first part of the movement – is followed by a sombre nocturne, the murk occasionally disturbed by distant chatter as it drifts into exquisite string-writing of the sort one finds in Mahler slow movements. One senses here, though, that there are other musics dancing behind the one we're hearing – indeed, the entire piece is an allusive potted history of the 20th-century – as Gruber's textures grow increasingly complex, deliberately overloaded, until the dislocated rhythms force a climax. The music fades close to silence (only the strings are left, *ppppp*) and we have the 'upbeat', an explosive, maximalist tapestry of phenomenal sophistication – Gruber's inner ear is staggeringly resourceful. This eight-minute *Allegro moderato* – additionally marked *rigoroso* – spins a heady, honeyed kaleidoscope of sound past the exhilarated ear; it's a swirling dance rhapsody, a rhythmically unpredictable layer-cake of superimposed tempi, an improbable blend of angst and animal fun exuding caustic humour and skinhead energy that rollocks into one of the loudest climaxes I've heard in the concert hall until it comes to rest on a Rheingoldian E high in the strings. It is probably a masterpiece; it is certainly a phenomenal achievement.

BIS has simultaneously released a first-rate CD of three other Gruber orchestral pieces, with the man himself conducting the Swedish Chamber Orchestra (BIS-CD-1341). The Cello Concerto, first performed in 1989, is in a single span of 23 minutes, in the Brittenesque form of variations and theme. Much of the lead-up to the central cadenza requires the cello (here the excellent Robert Cohen) to rhapsodize with kindly passion over Waltonian washes of orchestral colour; the outgoing variations are more rhythmically energized, though the spirit of popular dance bubbles in the background of the whole work. When the tune finally emerges, wistful and lyrical, it's like the embrace of an old friend. *Zeitfluren* ('Timescapes'), premièred in 2001, uses the slow-movement/fast-movement form of *Dancing in the Dark* – for which, in fact, it seems almost a dummy run: over 11 minutes an atmospheric *Largo* born of Mahler 7's *Nachtmusiken* slowly accumulates the material to fashion a despairing, angular funeral

march, which sinks back into silence; the dance rhapsody which concludes this piece takes its cue from the 1920s ballroom floor and shimmies around in growing metrical complexity and unremitting onward drive – imagine Vermeulen's Fourth Symphony with a lusty grin. *Manhattan Broadcasts*, written as far back as 1962–64, either side of Gruber's twentieth birthday, reveals that he has been at it from the start: written for light orchestra, the first movement is another dance-band treatment, though of several stages less convolution than the second part of *Zeitfluren*, and the second is a louche blues that moves up into foot-tapping gear midway through and half-quotingly sends the saints marching home.

Mark O'Connor's Violin Concerto No. 6, *Old Brass*, given its world première in the Prom on 11 August, was a disappointment. The composer explains the title thus: 'Old Brass is a "southern" term relating to a person of both African and Native American heritage'; Frank Lloyd Wright, he continues, designed a plantation in Southern Carolina which he named 'Auld Brass' and that building was O'Connor's inspiration. Scored for strings, two horns, woodwinds, and with amplified soloist (O'Connor himself, with the Academy of Saint Martin's-in-the-Fields), it begins appealingly enough, with part-minimalist, part-folky patterns over Canteloube-style arabesques in the orchestra. But it soon meanders, and incidental points of interest, such as the Celtic colours which suggested Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy*, quickly lose their charm in the woozy heat of the interminable repetitions of violin patterns over soft-centred harmonies. The slow movement begins promisingly, like a Hebridean seascape – until, as if we hadn't had enough of the first-movement material first time around, he introduces it here again and starts off another directionless, easy-going stroll. The slow, rambling third-movement fugue suggested a mixture of O'Connor's folk background and cod VW. The 40 minutes of *Old Brass* were 30 too many.

I hadn't caught any of the music of Heiner Goebbels (b. 1952) before, so I was looking forward to the UK premiere of his *Aus einem Tagebuch* ('From a Diary'), labelled 'Short Notes for Orchestra' and played by the Berlin Philharmonic under Simon Rattle on 1 September. Neither the pre-concert discussion with the composer nor the programme notes prepared me for the sheer vigour of his orchestral writing. *Aus einem Tagebuch* begins rather like one of Villa-Lobos's jungle tableaux, all howling brass and stomping percussion, and a distinct sense of looming danger. The temperature drops and a jazz riff emerges, but one with a powerful symphonic

voice, half big band, half Varèse, the genuine excitement heightened by a sampled march rhythm beneath. After an oboe cadenza, a passage animated by short, repeated rhythmic patterns leads to a fierce tattoo and some crushing *tutti* chords – the high energetic charge here reminded me of Roberto Gerhard, though the music itself is very different. There's a sly sense of disruptive humour not far from the surface, too. Lazy, dislocated Latin rhythms shuffle by, and the sampler produces what sounds like the cackle of a chicken so large I wouldn't like to bump into it crossing the road. The slow section which follows is too long for its content, too devoid of incident, particularly in this context; it seems a long time before the power surges back, in a series of fiercely dissonant chords from the brass, introducing a passage that sounds like slow Revueltas. Ultimately, the material is too disparate for the piece to hold together – and, to be fair, the title does post a warning that the structure will be episodic; in the event, the best of its 24 minutes have the sweep of a racy adventure tale, but I wonder whether we don't have two separate short stories here instead of one longer narration.

The 'Music for Violin and Orchestra' which its composer, Matthias Pintscher (b. 1971) calls *en sourdine* ('with mute') was given its UK première a day later by Frank Peter Zimmermann and the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Jukka-Pekka Saraste (in the second half of the concert, by the way, they gave the most penetrating account of Bruckner's Fifth Symphony I have yet heard). Peter Laki's programme note opened with a quote from Pintscher, the kind of Statement that makes one suspicious:

My music is rooted in the power of poetry. It creates situations and spaces, inhabited by various constellations of sound. Materials previously introduced can be altered and completely dissolved in those environments, and reconstituted in new forms of existence. These are processes that follow a dramatic principle.

That tells you bugger all – you could say the same of virtually any sonata-form since Sammartini. His bold claims notwithstanding, Pintscher could have called the piece 'Textures in Search of a Shape'. But as a study in timbre, *en sourdine* does manage its share of subtlety: it opens in quarter-lights, with the smallest gestures from the orchestra creeping out below an understated violin line before a series of *sforzati* generates some activity – and yet the music seems continually to seek silence, shrinking back whenever it can. Constantly shifting time-signatures and kaleidoscopic flashes of colour underline the sense of impermanence. The intense *pianissimo* of

the closing pages would have pleased John Cage: the silence of the hall began to become a part of the music, and *en sourdine* didn't so much come to an end as slip beyond perception.

Another day later, another UK première, this time of Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Insomnia*, written last year; the NDR Symphony Orchestra was in jubilant form under Christoph Eschenbach. Salonen talks about his music rather more meaningfully than Pintscher about his: 'Technically speaking, it is a set of variations based on a harmonic model separated by a *ritornello*-like section, which is essentially a pedal-point on the note E'. 'The two basic archetypes of my music', he adds, 'the chorale and the machine, are still an important part of the vocabulary, but now they are quite often in a state of flux, one thing becoming another gradually.' Later he explains how he deploys them in this particular narrative:

The musical processes in *Insomnia* have a lot to do with the psychology of a sleepless night: some thoughts become prison cells we cannot escape; other keep coming back persistently'.

The dark chorale in woodwind and then brass which opens the piece is one such thought; on its first appearance it suggests some huge ritual is about to begin. Instead, a crazy, short-breathed scherzo breaks out, peppered with nervous humour. The front-desk violins leap into manically folky cadenzas; rocking figures spread into the strings to whoops from the horns, swirls from the woodwind and tattoos from the percussion in a mounting crescendo – which suddenly abates, and the music stutters forwards on little minimalist rhythmic fragments, with snippets of melody drifting downwards like flecks of dust in the eye. Desperate, jerking figures in the strings under pounding percussion sound like a kind of crazed Panufnik, and more rhythmic fragments suggest that this is another obsessive dream-thought, with the brass urgently intoning their doom-laden forecasts. But relief is at hand: the tension ebbs away and dawn arrives in a richly harmonized textures, with horn-writing à la Nielsen slowly growing in manly strength – and, as for Gruber, E major proves hard to resist, either for its association or for the sheer glory of the sound as the pedal point of his *ritornelli* swells into the arrival of day.

The UK première of Xenakis' *Idmen A & B* (1985) shared its late-night Prom on 8 September with the world premiere of James Wood's *Tongues of Fire* (and with Xenakis' *Nuits* and Cage's *Third Construction*); Wood was conducting his own New London Chamber Choir and the Amadinda Percussion Group from Hungary. *Idmen A* is

scored for choir and marimbas, *B* for six percussionists; they can be played separately or with the three movements of each interlocked, as they were on this occasion, a lasagne of clusters, rhythms v. arhythms, teeming textures, and swooning intonations from the chorus supported by hissing crescendi from us, the audience – a typical Xenakis divertimento, really. *Tongues of Fire* was rather more substantial: a 24-minute cantata, in four sections plus introduction, setting parts of the Acts of the Apostles in Latin-American Spanish, with eight other languages cascading through the music, Maori and Hungarian among them. After the brief introduction, the chorus hisses and susurrates before the 'Veni, creator Spiritus' stirs it into syllabic life. Four oil drums begin to speak, bringing weight and colour to the sound and growing excitement to a welter of languages and rhythms, though occasionally the advent of a piece of Gregorian chant will cause Wood to pull back the tension. Part III opens with female voices intoning Hildegard's 'O ignis Spiritus Paracliti', with the rest of the choir whispering, in which they were joined by the audience – and, somewhere near me, someone snoring (well, it was nearly midnight). The final part begins with the choir whistling, until the percus-

sion bang them back into rhythmic shape, and the piece rises to an urgent and confused climax. Enormous fun.

The penultimate night, 12 September, brought the UK première of Harrison Birtwistle's *The Shadow of Night*, another of those gigantic orchestral canvasses, like *The Triumph of Time* and *Earth Dances*, that stride across his output, and *The Shadow of Night* is indeed another processional, with a three-note figure – a rising and falling semitone derived from Dowland's 'In darkness let me dwell' – marking important points of arrival on the journey; much of the writing suggests that Birtwistle was thinking in terms of a concerto for orchestra, too. David Beard's note quotes the composer's description of the piece as 'an exploration of a particularly English mode of melancholy'; it's a study in half-lights, as unapologetically imprecise as a Turner canvas – interestingly, though there are five percussionists, the scoring does not call for timpani. The lowering darkness of the opening half-conceals something stirring, like movement perceived below water. The shapes grow bigger, clearer, leading to a dense polyphony of endless melodic lines in woodwind and brass, with a sense of some huge power below (have you ever walked across the lava field of a live

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volcano? It's something like that), as the music advances towards a climax, with ideas slipping into focus and then disappearing, as if some natural calamity is about to bear down on the orchestra. The climax, two-thirds of the way through, seems to drain it of all strength, and the music drifts on desolately until a delicate string threnody emerges. It, too, builds to a climax before falling back into bleak, quiet despair, to ebb away *ppp*. Whether *The Shadow of Night* quite sustains its 24 minutes I'm not sure (another hearing should sort that out), but its sheer restraint indicates that there's more here than met this ear first time round.

Martin Anderson

Deal Festival: Pavel Novák

In describing the performance of three extraordinary pieces by the Czech composer Pavel Novák, I have to begin by declaring an interest in my capacity as Artistic Director of the Deal Summer Music Festival, at which he was a featured composer. Novák was born in Brno in 1957, and has achieved a high reputation in Moravia, where he is now acknowledged to be the leading composer of his generation. He is not yet well known outside the Czech Republic, although the Schubert Ensemble have commissioned three pieces from him – *Lord, We Seek the Song of the Chosen* for piano trio (1991); *Royal Funeral Procession to Iona* for piano quintet (1995); *St Mary Variations* for piano quartet (2000) – and have played them in Britain and abroad. Novák's teacher, Miloslav Íltvan, was a pupil of Janáček's pupil Jaroslav Kvapil, and Novák, more than any other composer in Moravia, seems the true inheritor of the Janáček tradition. That tradition remains a vital force in Brno, partly because Janáček is the most local of composers and his music still, and in a vital way, haunts his home town with its Janáček Academy (where Novák studied), and the Janáček Theatre (where Novák played the oboe for a number of years in the opera orchestra) at which Janáček's operas are performed as nowhere else, players and singers alike attuned to the Moravian dialect; partly through the continuing vitality of Moravian folksong, whose spirit and melodic contours inform Novák's music as they did Janáček's.

One of the three pieces played in the Deal Festival has a direct link with the master: the 25 *Caprices on a Theme of Janáček* for solo violin, which Peter Sheppard Skaerved played with compelling and insightful mastery at an afternoon concert in the tiny Norman church at Barfrestone

on 20 July, are based on the opening theme of Janáček's *Kreutzer Sonata* Quartet. Novák's act of homage is emphasized by the insistent audibility of this theme during the swift progression of variations, which subside to fragile stillness at the centre of the piece, then rise again to a sustained passionate intensity equal to anything Janáček himself wrote.

At the opening concert of the Festival on 19 July in St George's Church, Deal, the Schubert Ensemble gave a rapt performance of the *St Mary Variations*, whose delicate tracery (at a dynamic level which, as often in Novák's music, never rises above *p* and frequently descends to *pppp*), was inspired by the architecture of St Mary's Church in Painswick, Gloucestershire, for which the work was commissioned. The variations are based on the 'Clipping Hymn' which is traditionally sung while the churchyard's celebrated yew trees are being trimmed. The showers of demisemiquavers have a mesmerizing effect, and more than that: Novák is a devout Catholic, and it is impossible not to feel the music's intense, refined spirituality. Inevitably comparisons can be made with Messiaen, and there is a similar otherworldliness in Novák's music, although the harmony – which is often modal – is less obviously sensual, yet always luminous. The spacing of his chords is strikingly original: there is frequent use of triads, but they sound like no-one else's. The form of the piece is another concise set of variations which run into one another but are divided into four sections, evoking the four seasons, and are separated by three ritornellos. Each of these is made up of three 11-second chords, the 33-second duration of the ritornellos symbolizing the 33 years of Christ's life.

The third Novák piece, superbly played by William Howard in a late night concert at St George's Church on 21 July, proved to be the most outstanding of all: the first complete performance of the 12 *Preludes and Fugues* for piano, Part I of a projected series of 24 Preludes and Fugues, drawing its inspiration from the Bible (Part I is based on episodes from the Old Testament; Part II will be based on the New), on which Novák has already been working for ten years. Part I begins with the Creation, which is presented with the severest economy, a mostly two-part prelude followed by a one-part fugue. Novák's fugues are very odd: they often try to avoid counterpoint altogether, and there are very few places where the texture is recognizably fugal in the traditional sense. Certain conventions are adhered to: characteristically, a subject – often a harmonized entity – will immediately be repeated a fifth higher. Fugue No.6 ('King David') is the most extreme of these fugues: pref-

aced by an *Introitus*, the fugue consists of only seven notes – a one-note subject, which is repeated a fifth higher; two notes for the development and three (the first two plus one other) for the recapitulation, all *fff*. An austere king!

The musical language Novák employs here is very diverse. He can introduce references to other composers – Scarlatti, Bach, Mendelssohn (a passage from *Elijah* provides the material for Novák's own 'Elijah' prelude) – without their sounding in any way incongruous or gratuitous. At every moment one is conscious of the richly inventive imagination of a truly original musical mind.

Pavel Novak will be composer in residence at the 2004 Dartington International Summer School, where he will also teach the advanced composition class. A number of his works will be heard there, including the first performance of his Third Symphony for piano and strings, in which William Howard will be the soloist. Meanwhile some organization in this country (the BBC?) should be considering his Second Symphony (*St John Passion*), an apocalyptic choral and orchestral work which won the Janáček Foundation Prize in 1998, but which so far has had only one complete performance.

David Matthews

Lindberg, Concerto for Orchestra, Barbican, London

There would hardly seem to be a composer better placed to write a concerto for orchestra than Magnus Lindberg: his complete mastery of orchestral texture – demonstrated in a string of modern classics, *Joy* (1989–90), *Arena* (1994–95), *Feria* (1997) and *Cantigas* (1998–99) among them – makes it a wonder he hasn't tackled the genre before now. Indeed, he quietly billed the magnificent *Aura* (1994–95) as a concerto for orchestra, although in reality it's as good a symphony as anyone has written this past half-century – my suspicion is that the label allowed him to dodge the issue.

This new, explicit *Concerto for Orchestra* was written earlier this year and given its première in the Barbican on 30 September in what seemed an utterly authoritative performance by Jukka-Pekka Saraste and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. It, too, inhabits symphonic form: its single span of exactly half-an-hour subdivides into five clearly distinguishable smaller sections – almost the Classical introduction-and-four-movements *à la* Beethoven 4. Risto Nieminen's perceptive programme note explained how Lindberg bases the

structure on two series of massive chords – 'chaconnes', the composer calls them – one soft, the other granitic, but both evolving within the piece like living organisms, and finally brought together in the closing section; throughout, the intrusion of the darker second chaconne into the ongoing deployment of the first is readily perceived.

The work opens with brass fanfares, swings on to harp, piano and glittering percussion, then onwards to the strings, with Lindberg's characteristic up-and-down patterns spreading around the orchestra like the approach of light; you sense an awakening, a growing power – but the tone darkens as (second chaconne) the lower brass and heavy percussion stamp their authority on the music. The textures thin, before the energy comes surging back decisively, and the orchestra heaves and boils as it piles towards a monumental climax. The air clears: we've reached a peak (with *Alpensymphonie* horns underlining the metaphor) from which the music thins out into long instrumental lines which suggest huge vistas. We're at the still centre of the work, where the orchestra is divided into solos and small ensembles, most strikingly when an alto flute rhapsodises over four solo violas (this tapestry reminded me of Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, a template of orchestral subtlety). Chattering woodwind and harp suggest birdsong – this is nature music, as the Romantic harmonies of a piano cadenza now seem to confirm.

Suddenly we're in the scherzo section – and, indeed, it does sound as if some huge joke is passing around the orchestra. Dance rhythms animate the action, and the piece again rises to a massive, sumptuous climax (the scores expands to 44 staves at this point), from which, passion spent, it drifts lazily downwards. A virtuoso cadenza for the leader attracts the attention of the other front-desk strings, and they're soon joined by their sections. A cheery passage running up and down the woodwind is adopted by the brass and, after another scherzo-like section, a colossal chord knocks the puff out of orchestra, which sinks downwards – but another series of huge chords pulls it back up for the closing minutes, which exhibit surprisingly (for Lindberg) conventional writing: swirling woodwinds, heroic brass, striving strings – though the impression is that this relative orthodoxy is something he has earned. A whirl of glittering percussion introduces the luminous string chords which cuddle the work to a close in a radiant G major – a tonal conclusion that, coupled with the scoring, suggests some kind of rite of passage. The extended stretches of unsullied C major in Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto, given its UK première in January, also in the Barbican, hinted that he might have been

heading for some kind of 'new simplicity'; this *Concerto for Orchestra* proves that complexity is still a natural part of his language – but, exactly because it is natural, one hardly notices just how much is going on: the music comes towards the listener without a hint of compromise.

Concertos for orchestra tend to spotlight sections or solo instruments, most obviously in Britten's openly didactic *Young Person's Guide*. What was striking about Lindberg's is that the music seemed to spread though the orchestra like tendrils seeking a natural path for their growth – it inhabits its medium: there's no sense of discontinuity in the kaleidoscopically shifting surfaces. And if they sounded similar to the Lindberg we know from those earlier works – though here even more refined – his structural handling of harmony has deepened: there's an end-directed luminosity to the *Concerto for Orchestra*, introducing an emotional subtlety new in his writing. *Aura* leaves one shattered, drained and elated at the same time, and after my first live hearing of *Cantigas* I was so excited I couldn't listen to the rest of the concert. But the *Concerto for Orchestra* brings a – dare one say – spiritual element into Lindberg's music that I found quietly moving.

Where will he go now? On holiday, perhaps: as I write this, news come through that he has won the Wihuri Sibelius Prize – a tidy £100,000 – in succession to Sibelius himself, Shostakovich, Britten, Stravinsky, Messiaen, Ligeti; he's the first Finnish composer to win it on his own, and at 45 he is probably its youngest recipient. His textural mastery was never in doubt; with the harmonic potency he has acquired over the last decade or so, he is now supremely qualified to deliver a few middle-period masterpieces.

Martin Anderson

London, Globe Theatre: Music for 'Dido, Queen of Carthage'

Claire van Kampen, the Director of Music at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre on London's Bankside, followed up her jazz score for *Macbeth* and innovative minimalist style score for *Cymbeline* – complete with authentic ritualistic temple gongs from Burma – with an intriguing modern score for one of the plays for Season 2003 too.

Globe Theatre Season 2003, entitled 'Regime Change', included a revival of Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, presented as 'a modern practises production which explores clothing, music and settings possible in 2003'. As Claire van Kampen expressed her philosophy to

me when I interviewed her on the opening press night of *Dido* on 20 June: 'Shakespeare's plays must not become ossified. They live on'. Of course this applies equally to Marlowe, born the same year as Shakespeare.

She went on to explain that for the music for *Dido*, played live by modern acoustic instruments from the Musicians' Gallery visible above the open-air stage, she turned to ideas sparked off by Purcell. 'Every single piece of music used during the play is constructed on ground basses from Purcell's 'Airs for recorders', with the ground bass from *Dido's Lament* (in *Dido and Aeneas*) used at the end (in her famous death scene)'. She continued: 'Three musicians remarkably took on the challenge of improvising on Purcell's 'Ayres over a ground', using modern instruments, a bit like constructing jazz, playfully, as Marlowe's play was originally performed by a group of children, and in our modern production, the gods are represented as children'.

Of course the soft atmospheric sounds issuing from the Musicians' Gallery as Jupiter consoles Ganymede, at the opening of the play (described as 'trilling on the vibraphone' by a young VI form student in the audience), and later thunder claps produced by a tam-tam and large bass drum, were basically scored, as all the music, by Claire van Kampen to be improvised upon. As those familiar with music at the Globe will know, all the music is produced by acoustic instruments without amplification, playing in the Gallery, as in Shakespeare's day, or on stage, or even in some instances musicians take up positions at vantage points around the audience galleries.

'We use small percussion, marimba, vibraphone, tam-tam, saxophone, bass clarinet, flutes and recorders' Claire van Kampen enumerated. The musicians had to be happy to move around from instrument to instrument in the 'divine realm' of the Musicians' gallery, 'home of the Muses', whilst on the earthly realm of the stage the actors played toy pianos, kazoos, school recorders etc. The set was constructed as a school adventure playground, complete with slide and climbing frame, which did not altogether please some of the drama critics, but I was interested to note that the score was greeted with much critical acclaim.

There were indeed sequences of airs on the soprano or alto saxophone, and flute episodes, that floated so eloquently above Purcell's ground bass that one was reminded of the sheer beauty of his *Dido and Aeneas* and momentarily transported away from the banality of the school playground set. Though much integrity and complexity of thought went into devising the modernity of

approach on stage, it was Claire van Kampen's sublime score which managed to recall enough of the *Dido* of Purcell, and of Marlowe, to preserve in the production something of that dignity and composure we traditionally expect of the subject. Even when the Master of Play, Tim Carroll, had Dido's death scene staged with her bizarrely holding a smouldering sparkler in hand to represent her self-immolation on her funeral pyre, Claire van Kampen's use of the ground bass from Purcell's opera to underpin the background music went a long way to add dignity and sense of composure on stage.

Oh that Dido had been allowed to sing her famous death scene aria: 'When I am laid in earth – remember me, but oh forget my fate', even if in a modern improvised form, or if a flute could have played Purcell's immortal melodic line of this her dying Air, more of the majesty of this much-hallowed theme might have been conveyed, and Marlowe's play better represented to a 2003 audience. Van Kampen's score for the death scene did in fact use two flutes and soft sounds from the vibraphone for the closing sequence, but the effect was to leave one hankering after the Purcell aria itself, not just the use of its bass, and the sight of players from the Musicians' Gallery sliding down the metal slide to reach the stage for the curtain call, following an epilogue for recorder over Purcell's ground bass, did nothing to fill the cul-

tural and musical gap. I felt here a musical opportunity was missed, leaving the final scene musically something of an anticlimax.

However the use of new music for *Dido* in 2003 was notably more successful than that for the Globe's 21st-century production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the previous year, complete with the characters 'dreaming' in pyjamas on stage in sleeping bags. The music for this rarely rose above the level of the intermittent plucking of guitars, plus the occasional song, delivered with various degrees of success by the actors on stage. There is such a wealth of music already written, inspired by Shakespeare's plays, that I feel it is a pity to lean so far over backwards to be innovative: one ends up with a *Waiting for Godot* effect musically, with music so minimalist that it hardly arrives at all. However, I greatly admire Claire van Kampen's overall philosophy and enterprise, and look forward to what The Globe has in store for 2004, in its ongoing experimentation with the use of modern music for the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. In trying to reinterpret them on stage for each new Season, one cannot please everyone all of the time, especially not the drama and music critics. Perhaps the Globe's box office success, with so many 'full houses', lies in the fact that their innovative approach keeps the audience on their toes, a feeling of 'whatever next!', rather than 'I did that play at school'.

Jill Barlow