

THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

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300TH ANNIVERSARY

CPE BACH

*Dazzling, shocking,
innovative – the
18th century's unsung*

*maverick
genius.*

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recording of Mozart's Requiem*

*Reinventing the organ
for today's audiences*

*Choosing the best recording of
Vaughan Williams's Symphony No 4*

PLUS
NEW IN-DEPTH
REVIEWS

SECTION

*with special focus
on reissues*



Why is the wider media failing classical music?

Attend classical music concerts – be it at Southbank Centre in season or at the Proms in the summer – and you’d be forgiven for thinking that the appetite for classical music remains as strong as ever. Both venues buzz with a surprisingly wide range of people thirsting for a profound artistic experience. So does the Barbican. And Manchester’s Bridgewater Hall. And the Berlin Philharmonie. Pre-concert anticipation retains its thrill, and equally rewarding is the chance to pore over the performance afterwards as the crowds linger in places that increasingly see themselves as destinations in their own right, not merely concert halls. Classical music – even when the actual music is hundreds of years old – feels vibrantly alive, and that’s something you’ll always find celebrated in our pages as we explore and assess the recorded side of music-making.

The wider media, however, doesn’t seem to see it like that. Newspapers are, increasingly, marginalising the coverage given to classical music. In recent years many newspapers have reduced the number of critics on their payroll and the space afforded to those that are left. Websites allow newspapers to see how many people are reading what, and to make their editorial decisions accordingly. It is, of course, self-fulfilling: if you don’t give the space to classical music then people won’t read about it and the audience shrinks. The arts – let alone classical music – will never, sadly, generate as many hits as other fields. Chasing clicks for clicks’ sake – or, in the case of broadcasting, audiences for audiences’ sake – always risks pandering to the lowest common denominator.



Martin

Of the titles covering London, *Time Out* dropped the post of classical music editor late last year, and the morning freesheet *Metro* has now stopped publishing daily concert reviews. London is one of the great cities in the world for music, so these seem very depressing steps taken by those purporting to survey the city scene. Music – of every genre – is one of the UK’s great success stories, and classical music a significant part of that. The *Metro* says it will still cover the arts through features, but daily reviews act as an important barometer of the musical climate. The situation is even worse in America.

There are exceptions, both in print and on the airwaves. BBC director general Tony Hall has just promised ‘the biggest push we’ve made for the arts in a generation’ – it’s a bold and encouraging claim, and one that whoever succeeds Roger Wright as controller of Radio 3 should hold him to.

Those making decisions about the place of classical music in the wider media should visit events such as Radio 3’s recent Southbank Centre residency and look around them. They’ll see a substantial audience that is engaged, inquisitive, passionate and there for the long haul (during which they will happily part with substantial amounts of money to pursue that interest).

People want to know more about classical music, and *Gramophone* will continue to offer informed, considered and contextualised opinion and advocacy for it. It’s a position I’m proud we hold – but I just wish we weren’t so increasingly alone in doing so.

martin.cullingford@markallengroup.com

THIS MONTH’S CONTRIBUTORS



‘With a lifetime’s involvement with choirs of all shapes and sizes, I’m an ardent admirer of composers who

write original and distinctive choral music,’ says **MARC ROCHESTER**. ‘I have become particularly intrigued by the way in which James MacMillan has maintained his strong Scottish heritage while working in an international arena.’



JEREMY NICHOLAS, who’s written about the resurgence of interest in the organ, says: ‘In the right hands

(and feet), there are few musical experiences more thrilling than an organ recital. I’ve discovered that with new ways of presentation and a more flexible repertoire, audiences are flocking to them in a way that hasn’t been seen for over a century.’



‘“Poor you” was a musician friend’s off-the-cuff reaction as I prepared to immerse myself in CPE Bach,’

says **RICHARD WIGMORE**. ‘How wrong she was. Prolonged absorption in CPE’s waywardly inventive, often astonishing music has only increased my admiration for the 18th century’s greatest musical eccentric.’

THE REVIEWERS Andrew Achenbach • Nalen Anthoni • Mike Ashman • Philip Clark • Alexandra Coghlan • Rob Cowan (consultant reviewer) • Jeremy Dibble • Peter Dickinson • Jed Distler • Duncan Druce • Adrian Edwards • Richard Fairman • David Fallows • David Fanning • Iain Fenlon • Fabrice Fitch • Jonathan Freeman-Attwood • Caroline Gill • Edward Greenfield • David Gutman • Lindsay Kemp • Philip Kennicott • Tess Knighton • Richard Lawrence • Ivan March • Ivan Moody • Bryce Morrison • Jeremy Nicholas • Christopher Nickol • Geoffrey Norris • Richard Osborne • Stephen Plaistow • Peter Quantrell • Guy Rickards • Malcolm Riley • Marc Rochester • Julie Anne Sadie • Edward Seckerson • Pwyll ap Siôn • Harriet Smith • Ken Smith • David Patrick Stearns • David Threasher • David Vickers • John Warrack • Richard Whitehouse • Arnold Whittall • Richard Wigmore • William Yeoman

Gramophone, which has been serving the classical music world since 1923, is first and foremost a monthly review magazine, delivered today in both print and digital formats. It boasts an eminent and knowledgeable panel of experts, which reviews the full range of classical music recordings. Its reviews are completely independent. In addition to reviews, its interviews and features help readers to explore in greater depth the recordings that the magazine covers, as well as offer insight into the work of composers and performers. It is *the* magazine for the classical record collector, as well as for the enthusiast starting a voyage of discovery.

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