



Welcome to the 2022 BBC Proms



Welcome to the BBC Proms 2022. I am delighted that, in this centenary year of the BBC, we can return to the first full eight-week season since 2019, and to the scale and ambition for which the Proms is famous. We see the return of big orchestral and choral repertoire,

visits from some of the world's finest symphony orchestras, family concerts with big screens, and Relaxed Proms in a more informal environment. This is the Proms as we know and love them, and we hope you will find much to enjoy.

When in 1927 the BBC, just five years into its existence, took over the running of the Proms, the introduction of broadcasts – first on radio and then also on TV – enabled our founder-conductor, Henry Wood, to reach the widest audiences that were so central to his vision. In 2022 that partnership is stronger than ever. The BBC's own orchestras and choirs play a central role in our programme, and other BBC collaborations include the return of our hugely popular CBeebies Proms and a celebration of the remarkable work of the Natural History Unit. We also have a special new commission from the band Public Service Broadcasting that draws together material from the BBC archive to create a new work reflecting the origins of the organisation.

Mixing the familiar with the lesser-known is one of the cornerstones of the Proms. There will always be a place for the central pillars of the repertoire, but I hope you will also want to know more about Ethel Smyth, George Walker and Doreen Carwithen – composers less frequently heard on the concert platform. They sit alongside a huge range of contemporary work that embraces Oscar-winning composer Hildur Guðnadóttir, composer-performer Jennifer Walshe and Minimalist icon Philip Glass. This summer also features our first ever Gaming Prom, as well as celebrations of the legendary Aretha Franklin, singer and actress Cynthia Erivo and distinguished sarod player Amjad Ali Khan.

This year our concerts venture into all corners of the UK, as well as to other London venues. But our home remains here at the Royal Albert Hall, where so many extraordinary Proms events have taken place. Here's to a memorable summer of shared musical exploration!

David Pickard
Director, BBC Proms



BBC Proms

THE BBC PRESENTS THE 128TH SEASON OF HENRY WOOD PROMENADE CONCERTS

Tonight at the Proms

We can judge how difficult the piano, violin or cello are to play by looking out for flashy fingerwork or superhuman strength – but with the theremin, the electronic device invented by Léon Theremin featuring two antennas surrounded by electromagnetic fields, the player never physically touches the instrument. Which doesn't mean it's an easy instrument to play. Tonight the fine motor skills and spatial awareness of international thereminist Carolina Eyck are on display in the concerto written specially for her by the prolific Finnish composer Kalevi Aho.

The Finnish theme continues with the detailed but dream-like textures of Kaija Saariaho's *Vista*, whose title was suggested by a drive along America's West Coast.

And tonight's musical journey ends with the final symphony of Dmitry Shostakovich, the darkly tinged, enigmatic conclusion to a career that was punctuated by conflict and political oppression.



Because every Prom is broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 ... Please silence your mobile phones, watch alarms and other electronic devices.
Please be considerate to the performers and other audience members, while also recognising that listeners may show a variety of responses to the music.



Royal Albert Hall

If you leave the auditorium during the performance, you will only be readmitted when there is a suitable break in the music. There is no requirement to wear a face covering, but please feel free to wear one for your protection and the safety of others.



Please do not take photos, or record any audio or video during the performance





For an online exhibition
relating to the 2022
BBC Proms season, scan here



PROM 25 • THURSDAY 4 AUGUST 7.30pm–c10.00pm

Kalevi Aho Eight Seasons (Concerto for Theremin and Chamber Orchestra) *London premiere* c34'

INTERVAL: 20 minutes

Kaija Saariaho Vista *first performance at the Proms* 27'

Dmitry Shostakovich Symphony No. 15 in A major 44'

Carolina Eyck *theremin*

BBC Philharmonic Zoë Beyers *leader*

John Storgårds *conductor*



RADIO **3** SOUNDS

This concert is broadcast live by BBC Radio 3 (repeated on Monday 15 August at 2.00pm). You can listen on BBC Sounds until Monday 10 October. Visit bbc.co.uk/proms for all the latest Proms information.





KALEVI AHO (born 1949)

Eight Seasons (Concerto for Theremin and Chamber Orchestra) (2011)

London premiere

- 1 Harvest –
- 2 Autumn Colours –
- 3 Black Snow –
- 4 Christmas Darkness –
- 5 Winter Frost –
- 6 Crusted Snow –
- 7 Melting of the Ice –
- 8 Midnight Sun

Carolina Eyck *theremin*

Kalevi Aho's theremin concerto *Eight Seasons* takes its place among an amazing flood of concertos from Finnish composers written since the beginning of the 21st century – not only the 37 that Aho himself has composed (so far), but also works from Sebastian Fagerlund, Kimmo Hakola, Jouni Kaipainen, Jaakko Kuusisto, Magnus Lindberg, Jukka Linkola, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Jukka Tiensuu and dozens more. This sudden explosion is a cultural phenomenon that the rest of the world has yet to catch on to.

The invention of the theremin in 1919 was a matter of pure chance, as tonight's soloist, Carolina Eyck, has explained. The Russian physicist Lev Termen (or Léon Theremin) – who also played the cello – 'was just

experimenting in his lab and somehow found out that you can create a sound by moving your hand in electromagnetic fields. So, with the right hand you can change the pitch the closer you get to an upright antenna, and with the left hand you can change the volume the further away you go from a loop antenna.'

The Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin was fascinated by this new instrument and sent Theremin all over the USSR as an ambassador for the electrification of the nascent state. Theremin was then despatched to Europe and the USA, where his magical invention seized the public imagination, and in 1929 the American electronics company RCA offered him the then fabulous sum of \$100,000 for a licence to manufacture it. This instrument that, in principle, anyone could play was set to pop up in every American home. But two things burst RCA's bubble: the stock-market crash a month after the first instruments went on sale, and the discovery that the theremin was not as easy to play as first expected. Indeed, it requires as much skill in performance as any other musical instrument.

Theremin himself nonetheless stayed on in the USA as an industrial spy for the Soviet Union but, while his privileged access to the foremost American technology companies was valued by his spymasters, it provided no protection when he returned home in 1938: Stalin was deeply suspicious of anyone who had had contact with the West, and so Theremin ended up in the Gulag. With the outbreak of war he was set to work for the state, as he continued to do after his release in 1947. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the elderly Theremin (who died two years later, aged 97) was surprised to discover that, in the intervening decades, his invention had become a favourite of film-music composers and pop groups.

One of Aho's many concertos is for the contrabassoon, and Lewis Lipnick, who commissioned it, recommended



Good nature: engraving showing Sámi people of Lapland with a herd of reindeer; Kalevi Aho's *Eight Seasons* draws on the fact that these indigenous inhabitants recognise eight seasons in each calendar year rather than four

to Carolina Eyck that she too should ask the composer for a concerto. She listened to his music and Aho in turn listened to her playing. He visited Eyck at her home in Leipzig, where she demonstrated the possibilities of the instrument and, with a commission from the Lapland Chamber Orchestra, the work was born.

That commission explains the title of the work: *Eight Seasons* is not an attempt to go four better than Vivaldi. Rather, the Sámi people of Lapland divide the year not into four seasons but into eight, and Aho's concerto follows the progress of those eight seasons without a break. Aho also saw a link between the theremin itself and Lappish culture:

My choice to use an electronic instrument to depict the course of the year in the Far North reflects the shamanistic aspect of the instrument. To hear the theremin as a solo instrument can be a magical experience for the listener. The soloist is like a magician, a weaver of spells, producing music just by moving her hands without touching the instrument at all.

Aho has provided a commentary to walk the listener through his eight seasons:

The concerto begins with a movement entitled 'Harvest'. The atmosphere here is full-bodied and warm, but at the same time very melancholy – summer is already coming to an end. 'Autumn Colours' and 'Black Snow' lead to the



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static calm of 'Christmas Darkness'. In the 'Winter Frost' movement we hear a musical depiction of a snowstorm and 'Crusted Snow' is dominated by dazzling spring brightness. After the dramatic 'Melting of the Ice' we finally arrive at the endless light of the 'Midnight Sun'. The tonal centre of the work's ending is the note E flat, just like at the beginning of 'Harvest' – as if this yearly cycle could continue for ever.

The piece was first performed in Rovaniemi, the capital of Lapland, on 11 October 2012 by tonight's soloist and conductor, Carolina Eyck and John Storgårds, with the Lapland Chamber Orchestra.

Programme note © Martin Anderson

Martin Anderson writes on music – often on Nordic and Baltic composers – for a number of publications, including *Musical Opinion* in the UK, *Fanfare* in the USA and *Finnish Music Quarterly*. He also publishes books on music as Toccata Press and releases recordings of unfamiliar music as Toccata Classics.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Prior to his participation in 2019's multi-composer tribute to the conductor Martyn Brabbins, *Pictured Within: Birthday Variations for M. C. B.*, Kalevi Aho had been represented at the Proms by two scores, both conducted by Osmo Vänskä. The 1998 season included the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra's UK premiere of Aho's elemental orchestral fantasy *Rejoicing of the Deep Waters*. For the London premiere of the Ninth Symphony (bearing the subtitle 'Sinfonia concertante No. 2'), Vänskä's Lahti Symphony Orchestra was joined in 2003 by ace trombonist Christian Lindberg. This polystylistic hybrid, in which the soloist performs on sackbut as well as trombone, was framed by the more familiar Nordic fare of Nielsen and Sibelius.

© David Gutman

David Gutman is a writer and critic who since 1996 has contributed extensively to the BBC Proms programmes; his books cover subjects as wide-ranging as Prokofiev and David Bowie, and he reviews for *Gramophone* and *The Stage*.

Delve into Proms history for yourself by searching the online database of all Proms performances at bbc.co.uk/proms/archive.

KALEVI AHO

Kalevi Aho is a phenomenon of almost Mozartian energy. It's not simply a question of his extraordinary productivity – after all, many composers have written lots of pieces – but, like Mozart, he constantly shows himself able to write music of exceptionally high quality with astounding facility. The improbability of his achievements is heightened by his boyish appearance – although he turned 73 earlier this year – and his enduring personal modesty: he doesn't seem to see anything unusual in his abilities.

The statistics, however, make his achievement clear: 17 symphonies written between 1969 (when he was 20) and 2017, as well as three chamber symphonies; around a dozen other orchestral works; 37 concertos; five operas; and a vast amount of chamber, instrumental and vocal music. There are also numerous arrangements, orchestrations and completions of works by other composers, not least his compatriot Jean Sibelius.

Aho was born in Forssa, between Helsinki, Tampere and Turku, on 9 March 1949 and studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, where his chief composition teacher was Einojuhani Rautavaara. After graduating in 1971, he studied with Boris Blacher in Berlin for a year before taking up a series of teaching posts in Helsinki, at the University (1974–88) and the Sibelius Academy (1988–93). He has since lived as a freelance composer.

A major step towards international prominence came in 1992 with his appointment as Composer in Residence of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, based an hour or so north of Helsinki. The close relationship of the orchestra and its then Chief Conductor Osmo Vänskä with the Swedish record label BIS led to an agreement to record all of Aho's major orchestral and chamber works. As a result the label



striking power and energy to a harmonic palette of translucent delicacy and – as with his most important Finnish forebear – a strong identification with the natural processes of his native North.

Profile © Martin Anderson

now has an astonishing 40 albums of Aho's music in its catalogue, most recently a coupling of a Double Concerto for cor anglais, harp and orchestra and Triple Concerto for violin, cello, piano and chamber orchestra. Even so, the spring and early summer of this year saw further premieres of no fewer than four different concertos and five smaller works. Moreover, his in-tray is stuffed full of further commissions.

In Aho's earlier works one can hear him absorbing elements that fed into his mature style: a Mahlerian feeling for epic narrative and drama, the kind of magpie stylistic openness found in Schnittke and the symphonic sweep characteristic of so many Nordic composers. The resulting alloy is entirely individual, with a range that runs from mighty statements of

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

Now playing on BBC Radio 3 ...

Following the London premiere of Kalevi Aho's *Eight Seasons*, Radio 3's Tom McKinney is joined by Kenneth Steven, who has immersed himself in the world of Lapland's Sámi people.

Available on BBC Sounds until 10 October



PROGRAMME NOTES

KAIJA SAARIAHO (born 1952)

Vista (2019)

first performance at the Proms

- 1 Horizons
- 2 Targets

In January 2019 I attended the US premiere performances of my harp concerto, *Trans*, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, played by Xavier de Maistre and conducted by Susanna Mälkki. I had completed my latest opera, *Innocence*, just a month earlier, and I was letting my mind get fixed on new ideas that were forming in my consciousness, planning to get to work on them after returning home to Paris. My next piece was to be an orchestral piece for Susanna.



New views, new ideas: part of the picturesque West Coast route from Los Angeles to San Diego along the I-5; the various vantage points along the way suggested to Kaija Saariaho the title of her piece *Vista*

Mary Evans Picture Library





After the last *Trans* performance we spent some days driving from Los Angeles to San Diego. I was filled with joy after such beautiful performances and enjoyed the scenery unfolding on my right during the ride. We stopped every now and then to admire the view, and I later realised that many of these places were designated vistas. I also felt that new music was flowing into my mind and opening up different ideas for the piece, so I started calling it simply *Vista*.

The score has two movements: 'Horizons' and 'Targets'. The excitement of writing for a full orchestra without soloists – after many years of opera composition – was inspiring, and is obvious when hearing the piece. Nevertheless, I also wanted to challenge myself and deliberately left out some of my signature instruments in this orchestral context, namely harp, piano and celesta. I also chose varied colours for the triple woodwind section and wanted to give them more presence than usual.

These simple decisions made the composition process challenging, as they forced me to find new ways of expressing myself with the orchestra. But, after patient digging, I found a fresh sonority that is more clearly defined without the unifying resonances of harp and piano, and in which the individual wind instrument lines and textures are prominent.

The two movements use the same musical material but have contrasting characters. Whereas 'Horizons' is based on lines and abstract textures, 'Targets' is more tense and dramatic, with much physical energy. The formal construction of *Vista* is based on ways of varying the quite reduced musical material. There are recognisable gestures that go through disparate transformations and, especially in 'Targets', restlessly seek out new combinations of existence; several energetic attempts

to break out are finally resolved into a slow coda section, during which the music returns to the calm confidence of the opening bars.

Programme note © Kaija Saariaho

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Three of Kaija Saariaho's aurally adventurous large-scale works have been played here before. In 1995 Esa-Pekka Salonen and the BBC Symphony Orchestra gave the world premiere of the original version of *Graal théâtre* ('Grail Theatre') with its dedicatee, the violinist Gidon Kremer, as soloist. In 2004 Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducted the same orchestra in the first UK performance of the purely orchestral *Orion*. And in 2012 came another national premiere, music inspired by the autobiography of the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman. *Laterna magica* includes sections in which the players of Juanjo Mena's BBC Philharmonic were called upon to whisper extracts over instrumental murmuring. Chamber pieces had been included in the Proms Plus Portrait at the Royal College of Music preceding the main event.

© David Gutman



KAIJA SAARIAHO

Kaija Saariaho will celebrate her 70th birthday in October. She is a leading member of the cohort of Finnish composers and performers who have made such an impact on the present-day musical world. Born in Helsinki, she studied at the Sibelius Academy there with the pioneering Finnish modernist Paavo Heininen, and was one of the founders of the progressive 'Ears Open' group, alongside (among others) Magnus Lindberg and Esa-Pekka Salonen. She continued her studies in Freiburg with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber, at the Darmstadt summer courses and, from 1982, at the IRCAM research institute in Paris – the city where she has since made her home.

At IRCAM Saariaho developed techniques of computer-assisted composition and acquired fluency in working on tape and with live electronics. The experience of working in electronic media influenced her initial approach to writing for orchestra, with its emphasis on the shaping of dense masses of sound in slow transformations. In Paris Saariaho also became allied with the French 'spectralist' school of composers, whose compositional techniques are based on computer analysis of the sound-spectrum of individual notes on different instruments. This led her to the regular use of harmonies resting on long-held bass notes, microtonal intervals (smaller than a semitone) and a continuum of sound extending from pure tone to unpitched noise. Yet she has harnessed these abstract-sounding techniques to the composer's traditional concerns of writing for specific performers and expressing clearly defined emotions.

In recent decades Saariaho has explored a new vein of simpler, modally orientated melody, often accompanied by regular repeating patterns, though without



Christophe Abramowitz



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abandoning her habitual precision of detail. This change apparently resulted from a new interest in writing for voices, centring on her widely performed opera *L'amour de loin* (Salzburg, 2000), set in the period of the troubadours. This has been followed in the opera house by *Adriana Mater* (Paris, 2006); the monodrama *Émilie* (Lyon, 2010); *Only the Sound Remains*, a double bill of chamber operas inspired by Japanese Noh plays (Amsterdam, 2010); and *Innocence*, an opera with a multilingual libretto and a modern-day setting (Aix-en-Provence, 2021 – and scheduled for performances at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, next season).

Profile © Anthony Burton

Anthony Burton is a former producer for BBC Radio 3 and presenter on Radio 3 and the BBC World Service. He has written programme notes on thousands of works of all periods.

MORE SAARIAHO AT THE PROMS

SUNDAY 14 AUGUST, 11.00am • PROM 37

Vers toi qui es si loin

For full Proms listings, and to book tickets, visit bbc.co.uk/proms.

DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–75)

Symphony No. 15 in A major, Op. 141 (1971)

- 1 Allegretto
- 2 Adagio – Largo
- 3 Allegretto
- 4 Adagio – Allegretto

Shostakovich's last symphony, written four years before his death, seems to sum up everything paradoxical and contradictory about the man and his music. The surface had never been more lucid, the ideas never more clearly and forcefully presented, and the actual meaning of the music never more mysterious. In the 50 years since it was first performed, the 15th Symphony has fascinated and puzzled listeners in equal measure, and perhaps even suffered from the enthusiasm of commentators who suffocate the music itself under a shower of words speculating about its 'real' meaning.

By the mid-1960s, as Russia entered the dreary and oppressive Brezhnev period, the official pressures that had tormented Shostakovich for so much of his life were beginning to ease off. This was partly because he had come to a tacit agreement with the Soviet authorities: he read the right speeches, signed the right articles (he usually didn't even bother to read what was prepared for him) and generally behaved himself in public. He took no part in the growing dissident movement, and didn't seem to care what words were attributed to him, as long as he could speak the truth in his music.



The final scene of Rossini's opera *William Tell* (as depicted on a promotional card for the Liebig meat extract company); Shostakovich quoted the famous galloping theme from the overture in his 15th Symphony



It was also because his music was changing, moving into a more private sphere. His last serious confrontation with the Soviet state had occurred in 1962, with the 13th Symphony. The authorities had objected to the texts by the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, which were understood as a direct attack on many aspects of Soviet life. This proved to be the last of Shostakovich's big public works. The 14th Symphony – a cycle of 11 poems for soprano and baritone accompanied by a small string orchestra with percussion – invited disapproval in 1969 by its concentration on poems dealing with the virtually taboo subject of death, but it could never have been intended as a work of mass appeal. In the last decade of his life, Shostakovich's music tended to speak in a quieter voice and to a more intimate audience. Just like his music, photographs of the composer show him becoming gradually frailer, withdrawing year by year into a private world of anxiety and darkness.

The 15th Symphony was composed during July and August 1971 and premiered in Moscow on 8 January 1972, conducted by Shostakovich's son Maxim. Scored for a fairly standard orchestra (but with plenty of percussion) and cast in the standard four movements, in standard proportions, it was Shostakovich's most outwardly conventional symphony since the 10th of 1953. In common with much of his late music, the textures are often very sparse, at times pared down to solo lines for single instruments; but, however thin the texture, it is a style where every note counts, the effect of every bar minutely calculated. As Shostakovich said of his music for the 1970 film of *King Lear*, 'There may be few notes, but there's lots of music.'

...

Shostakovich's own public comments on his music were usually trite, if not downright misleading, so there is no

need to take too seriously the 'toy shop at night' image with which he is supposed to have explained the symphony's first movement. The opening bars, though, suggest an interesting connection with another last symphony, which Shostakovich may not have known: the Sixth – the 'Sinfonia semplice' (1924–5) – by Carl Nielsen. This too begins with an innocent chiming and a naive woodwind figure. Nielsen intended to write a work that was both simple and idyllic but couldn't achieve it: ill-health, depression and disillusion led him into strange, complex territory where innocence is threatened by experience and hostility. A similar situation may well lie behind the first movement of Shostakovich's 15th (but with a streak of bitterness and sarcasm foreign to Nielsen) and explain the impudence of the quotations from Rossini's *William Tell* overture that seem so wildly inappropriate, but which grow so naturally out of Shostakovich's own themes.

An important aspect of this symphony is its variety: from the playful and ironic to the deeply tragic; from sparse textures to full orchestral scoring; from the epic to the enigmatically personal; from the assertive to the resigned. This aspect emerges from the flexible nature of the themes themselves, which can be extended indefinitely or wander off into distant regions, changing their shape and character, suggesting further themes, or twisting themselves into quotations of other music. They vary from childishly simple tunes, like the opening of the first movement, to complex themes which include all 12 notes of the chromatic scale, like the intense cello solo of the second movement.

This elegy, as far removed as possible from the innocence aspired to in the first movement, moves from the most withdrawn type of music (a solo cello) to the most violent, as the rhythms of a funeral march introduced by a pair of flutes eventually build up to a massive and violent



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climax, the first occasion in the symphony when the entire orchestra is playing. In the wake of this huge climax the music seems to express exhaustion or numbed shock, with some of the eeriest sounds in the symphony, such as a passage for vibraphone, cello harmonics and solo double bass.

The third movement, in common with so many other of Shostakovich's scherzo movements, is short and spiky, uncomfortable in its distortions and twisted rhythms. There is a brief appearance of Shostakovich's musical signature (the notes D–E flat–C–B natural, giving DSCH in German musical notation); here it is accompanied by a weary trombone glissando, a gesture also found in the scherzo movement of Nielsen's Sixth Symphony, no doubt quite coincidentally.

The finale begins with another, more easily unexplained, quotation from someone else's music: the doom-laden brass motif from Wagner's *Ring* associated with fate and death, followed by the timpani rhythm from Siegfried's Funeral March; and the repeated bass pattern introduced by pizzicato cellos and basses in the middle of the movement recalls the motif of mechanised evil which is repeated over and over again in the first movement of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, which he had composed during the German siege of Leningrad.

The 15th Symphony contains other veiled allusions to earlier works, stressing its autobiographical dimension, but these cross-references and quotations are so absorbed as to become a natural part of the symphonic discourse. They certainly add a layer of private meaning to the music but they are by no means the only key to its understanding, which each listener must find from immediate experience. The finale ends with an effect of both simplicity and distance, not unlike the 'Immortality' movement that concludes the *Suite on Verses by*

Michelangelo, composed three years later. It is not so much a resolution as a 'freeze', the cold ticking of percussion instruments against a frozen A major chord in the strings, an ending as mysterious and enigmatic as anything else in this strangest of symphonies.

Programme note © Andrew Huth

Andrew Huth is a writer and translator working extensively in Russian, Eastern European and French music.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Shostakovich's symphonic farewell was brought to the Proms in 1973 by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain under Charles Groves. The concert also took in Alan Rawsthorne's *Symphonic Studies* and Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto with Alfred Brendel the soloist. There have been just four subsequent renderings of the symphony, reaching back from Charles Dutoit in 2015 via Kazushi Ono in 2006 and Mark Wigglesworth in 1999 to Edward Downes in 1992. His carefully constructed BBC Philharmonic programme began with a certain Rossini overture and proceeded by way of Britten's Piano Concerto (with Leif Ove Andsnes).

© David Gutman



DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH

Perhaps no other composer in history has been so beset by political debate as Shostakovich. Within his homeland, his stature was quickly established and, at least after the monumental successes of his Fifth and Seventh Symphonies (1937 and 1941), his pre-eminence as the foremost Soviet composer was never seriously questioned. Yet, along with several distinguished contemporaries, he endured periods of official disgrace and public humiliation in 1936 and 1948, as the pendulum of Stalinist cultural values swung in new, unpredictable directions. Certainly, after the harsh official criticism of his second opera, *The Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, in 1936, he never completed another, becoming instead one of the 20th century's leading symphonists.

Shostakovich paid a high price for his greatness: his visibility and stature within Soviet culture placed him in a position that could bring destruction just as easily as reward. From around 1936 – the year when the Stalinist purges began and he was first publicly attacked – to Stalin's death in 1953, he lived his career on a knife-edge that was unquestionably the source of the dark, often anguished tone of his music. But, miraculously, the sense of humour that had been a hallmark of his earlier style never wholly left him, and even right at the end of his life he could still write funny music. Alongside his 15 symphonies and 15 string quartets – all 'serious' works – there is a body of lighter music: ballets, incidental music, an operetta (*Moscow, Cheryomushki*), film scores, a jazz suite and popular songs. He was a brilliant satirist, able to turn his gift for musical sarcasm as easily to hilarious effect as to tragedy. Sometimes he combined both extremes within a single work: the Sixth Symphony (1939), with its lamenting first movement and capering circus finale, is perhaps the clearest example of this in his orchestral music, while



The Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District has few, if any, operatic rivals for its handling of tragi-comedy.

Although it is as chronicler of one of the cruellest dictatorships of the 20th century that Shostakovich is still most clearly remembered, it does him a disservice to focus exclusively on that part of his career. He lived for another 22 years beyond Stalin's death, during which time some of his best music was written: the majority of his string quartets, his last five symphonies and his masterly late song-cycles. Shostakovich wrote his last work, the Viola Sonata, as he lay dying in hospital; it was the only one of his mature compositions that he never heard performed.

Profile © Pauline Fairclough

Pauline Fairclough is a Professor of Music at the University of Bristol, and a specialist in Shostakovich and Soviet musical culture.

MORE SHOSTAKOVICH AT THE PROMS

SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER, 7.30pm • PROM 65
Symphony No. 10 in E minor

For full Proms listings, and to book tickets, visit bbc.co.uk/proms.



The Proms Listening Service

As Radio 3's *The Listening Service* revisits earlier episodes reflecting a range of this summer's Proms themes, presenter **Tom Service** takes a wide-angle view of each theme in this weekly column



Week 3 How does video-game music work?

There's a riff that's going through my brain right now, a loop of circuitous chromaticism that's indelibly associated with my now hundreds of trepidatious visits to a volcanically terrifying mountain top to dispatch a creature that has the body of a raging bull and the magic-spewing mandibles of a gigantic earwig: the Full-Grown Fallingstar Beast in this year's game of games, *Elden Ring*. It's music that has become part of my muscle memory, a musical madeleine of my seemingly infinite failures to defeat this boss in FromSoftware's sprawling and fantastical magnum opus.

That symbiosis of the music that this beast conjures every time I enter its domain with my unique – and uniquely incompetent – playing of *Elden Ring* symbolises the visceral power of music in video games. Throughout the unfolding story of music's essential role in gaming, one constant remains, from the 8-bit bleep-scapes of *Space Invaders* in the 1970s to the orchestral sweep of scores for *Battlefield 2042* or *Shadow of the Colossus*: when we play video games, we play (and are played by) their soundtracks and their sound-worlds, so that no two people's experiences of any video game's music are the same.

We compose our own journeys in sound through the running and jumping levels of *Super Mario World*, the game-overs of *Donkey Kong* and the energising epics and consoling pastorals of *The Legend of Zelda*. The music we hear in our particular playthroughs will be a totally different remix of the game's

sound-world to any other player's. Over sometimes hundreds and thousands of hours, a team of composers will have created inspirational combat themes, gentle soundtracks for villages and towns, and sound design for in-game menus and interfaces, all of which are played in a sequence that's made by the player's own decision-making and skill.

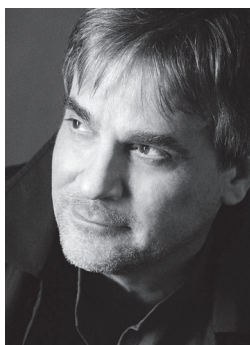
This all means that, when we play video games, we are playing – improvising, co-creating – their sound-worlds. That's why there's such a strong attachment from gamers to these soundtracks. Those theme tunes and boss fights are repeated more than in any other music in our lives; they become part of us, so that, when we hear them, we're plunged back into that moment of the game when we finally bested Bowser, Calamity Ganon or the Full-Grown Fallingstar Beast.

Video-game soundtracks aren't only the sounds of the music itself, they're the sounds of the agency we experience in all of these fantastical game-worlds – visceral embodiments of the intense connection between us and our in-game avatars. Writing music for video games is a unique challenge for today's composers: to create soundtracks that will stalk our imaginations for weeks, months and years to come. Mind you, I hope I move on to another of *Elden Ring*'s boss themes soon or the Fallingstar Beast's tune will be a riff I never escape ...

Video-game music features this week at the Proms in the 'Gaming Prom: From 8-Bit to Infinity' on Monday 1 August.

➔ Next week: **What is it about Mozart?**

Join Tom Service on his Proms-themed musical odysseys in *The Listening Service* on BBC Radio 3 during the season (Sundays at 5.00pm, repeated Fridays at 4.30pm). You can hear all 200-plus editions of the series on BBC Sounds. Tom's book based on the series is now available, published by Faber.



John Storgårds *conductor*

John Storgårds studied the violin with Chaim Taub and subsequently became concertmaster of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen, before studying conducting with Jorma Panula and Eri Klas. He is Chief Guest Conductor of the BBC

Philharmonic, Principal Guest Conductor of the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Canada and Artistic Director of the Lapland Chamber Orchestra.

Highlights of the current season include the world premiere of Sebastian Fagerlund's chamber symphony *Auroral* with the Tapiola Sinfonietta, the world premiere of Fazıl Say's *Phoenix*, a concerto for two pianos with Lucas and Arthur Jussen and the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, his return to the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra for a 'podium swap' in which he plays and shares conducting duties with Barbara Hannigan, and his return to the SWR Symphony Orchestra. In June he made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in a programme featuring Bruckner's Sixth Symphony and the world premiere of Gerald Barry's Double Bass Concerto.

John Storgårds's award-winning discography includes recordings of music by Schumann, Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn, as well as rarities by Holmboe and Vasks featuring him as soloist. With the BBC Philharmonic he has recorded symphony cycles by Sibelius and Nielsen, and embarked upon a series of the late symphonies of Shostakovich. With the Lapland CO he has recorded Mahler's Symphony No. 10 in a chamber orchestra arrangement by Michelle Castelletti and tonight's concerto by Kalevi Aho.



Carolina Eyck *theremin*

PROMS DEBUT ARTIST

Carolina Eyck is a German-Sorbian musician and composer. As a soloist and ensemble musician she has given concerts in more than 30 countries and has performed with ensembles such as the BBC Philharmonic, Brussels

Philharmonic, Berlin Radio Symphony and Argentine National Symphony orchestras.

In 2016 she released an album featuring her own composition *Fantasias for Theremin and String Quartet* with the American Contemporary Music Ensemble. Other recordings include tonight's concerto – Kalevi Aho's *Eight Seasons* – and the solo albums *Elegies for Theremin & Voice* (2019) and *Thetis 2086* (2022), and she performed in the premiere performances and recordings of Fazıl Say's *Mesopotamia* and *Universe* symphonies. Her transcription of Ennio Morricone's *The Ecstasy of Gold* has been viewed online more than 15 million times.

Since 2016 she has toured her innovative 'Theremin & Voice' programme, which uses a surround-sound system to allow her theremin to break free and fill the performance space, generating loops and vocal layers live on stage to fly through the room in sync with her dancelike performance.

Carolina Eyck regularly conducts theremin workshops, lectures and masterclasses worldwide. She developed her own precise eight-finger-position playing technique by the age of 16 and published the first extensive theremin method book, *The Art of Playing the Theremin*. Her method is now being used by thereminists around the world and has revolutionised the way the instrument is played.



BBC Philharmonic

With a home in Salford and worldwide recognition, the BBC Philharmonic started life as the 2ZY Orchestra in Manchester in 1922. Ever since, its distinctive energy and character has helped to make the Greater Manchester region both a destination and a hub for world-class talent in orchestral music.

Along with around 35 free concerts a year at its MediaCityUK studio in Salford, and a series of concerts at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, the orchestra broadcasts concerts from venues across the North of England, annually at the BBC Proms and from its international tours. Its performances are broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and available on BBC Sounds. The orchestra also records regularly for the Chandos label and has created a catalogue of over 300 discs and digital downloads.

The BBC Philharmonic enjoys working with a range of artists, conductors and composers – with a growing family that includes both familiar faces and exciting new talent. Ludovic Morlot is the orchestra's Associate Artist and in May 2021 British composer and rising star Tom Coult was announced as Composer in Association. Finnish conductor John Storgårds joined in 2012 as Principal Guest Conductor and has been Chief Guest Conductor since 2018.

Championing new and neglected music, the BBC Philharmonic has recently given world premieres of works by Tom Coult, Emily Howard and Outi Tarkiainen, with the scope of the orchestra's programme extending far beyond standard repertoire. In 2020 the orchestra entered the UK Top 40 charts with *Four Notes: Paul's Tune* and in February 2022 it released *The Musical Story of the Gingerbread Man* – a unique musical retelling of the classic children's tale narrated by BBC Radio 5 Live's Nihal Arthanayake.

Chief Guest Conductor

John Storgårds

Associate Artist

Ludovic Morlot

Composer in Association

Tom Coult

First Violins

Zoë Beyers

leader

Midori Sugiyama

assistant leader

Thomas Bangbala

sub-leader

Kevin Flynn[†]

Austeja

Juskaite-Igl

Anna

Banaszkiewicz-

Maher

Martin Clark

Julian Gregory

Karen Mainwaring

Catherine

Mandelbaum

Anya Muston

Robert Wild

Ian Flower

Liz Rossi

Sarah White

William Chadwick

Second Violins

Lisa Obert^{*}

Glen Perry[†]

Lily Whitehurst

Rachel Porteous

Gemma Bass

Helen Evans

Simon Gilks

Sophie Szabo

Christina Knox

Rebecca Mathews

Claire Sledd

Anna O'Brien

Natalie Purton

Oliver Morris

Violas

Kimi Makino[†]

Alex Mitchell

Bernadette

Anguige[‡]

Kathryn Anstey

Matthew Compton

Ruth Montgomery

Rachel Janes

Roisin Ni Dhuill

Amy Hark

Carolyn Tregaskis

Rosamund

Hawkins

Rosalyn Cabot

Cellos

Peter Dixon^{*}

Maria

Zachariadou[†]

Steven Callow[‡]

Jessica Schaefer

Rebecca Aldersea

Melissa Edwards

Elinor Gow

Miriam Skinner

Marina Vidal Valle

Elise Wild

Double Basses

Ronan Dunne^{*}

Mark O'Leary[†]

James Goode

Andrew Vickers

Peter Willmott

Mhairi Simpson

Nathan Knight

Ben du-Toit



Flutes

Alex Jakeman *
Victoria Daniel ‡

Piccolo

Jennifer
Hutchinson

Oboes

Jennifer
Galloway *
Kenny Sturgeon
Helen Clinton

Cor Anglais

Gillian Callow

Clarinets

John Bradbury *
Fraser Langton
Jillian Allan

Bass Clarinet

Elliot Gresty

Bassoons

Roberto
Giaccaglia *
Angharad Thomas

Contrabassoon

Bill Anderson

Horns

Ben Hulme *
Rebecca Hill ¥
Phillip Stoker
Tom Kane
Jonathan Barrett

Trumpets

Richard Blake §
Gary Farr ‡
Stephen Murphy
Tim Barber

Trombones

Richard Brown *
Gary MacPhee

Bass Trombone

Russell Taylor

Tuba

Christopher Evans

Timpani

Paul Turner *

Percussion

Paul Patrick *
Geraint Daniel
Christopher Lane
Michael Harper
Ben Gray
Sophie Hastings

Celesta

Ian Buckle

* *Principal*

† *Assistant*

Principal

‡ *Sub-Principal*

¥ *Associate*

Principal

§ *Guest Principal*

*The list of players
was correct at the
time of going to
press*

Director

Simon Webb

**Orchestra
Manager**

Tom Baxter

**Assistant
Orchestra
Managers**

Stefanie Farr
Beth Wells

**Orchestra
Personnel
Manager**

Helena Nolan

**Orchestra
Administrator**

Maria Villa

Senior Producer

Mike George

**Programme
Manager**

Stephen Rinker

Assistant Producer

Katherine Jones

**Marketing
Manager**

Amy Shaw

**Marketing
Executive**

Jenny Whitham

**Marketing
Assistant**

Kate Highmore

**Learning and
Digital Managers**

Jennifer Redmond
Beth Wells

**Learning Project
Co-ordinators**

Youlanda Daly
Róisín Ní Dhúill

Librarian

Edward Russell

Stage Manager

Thomas Hilton

Transport Manager

Will Southerton

Team Assistant

Diane Asprey

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Last Night live on BBC Two/BBC One
Broadcasts on BBC Four on Thursdays,
Fridays and Sundays



Online

Listen/watch online until 10 October –
on Sounds or iPlayer
Visit bbc.co.uk/proms for the
latest programme and broadcast
information

Coming up at the Proms

Highlights of the next few days



Umberto Nicoletti

KATIA AND MARIELLE LABÈQUE



Kaupo Kikkas

ANDREW GOURLAY

FRIDAY 5 AUGUST

PROM 26 JULIAN ANDERSON,
MARTINŮ & RACHMANINOV
7.30pm–c9.45pm • Royal Albert Hall
Semyon Bychkov conducts the UK premiere of
Julian Anderson's Second Symphony, which takes
its cue from old photographs of Prague – plus
Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*, and a Martinů
concerto with the extraordinary Labèque sisters.

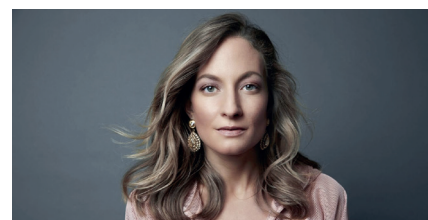
SATURDAY 6 AUGUST

PROM 27 DANNY ELFMAN,
GERSHWIN & RAVEL
7.30pm–c9.35pm • Royal Albert Hall
The National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain,
under conductor Andrew Gourlay, brings all its
signature energy and joy to a truly kaleidoscopic
programme: a London premiere from Hollywood
legend Danny Elfman, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*
and Ravel's luscious ballet *Daphnis and Chloe*.



Helge Hansen/Sony

LEIF OVE ANDSNES



Gisela Schenker

CHRISTIANE KARG

SUNDAY 7 AUGUST

PROM 28 MOZART MOMENTUM 1
3.00pm–c4.45pm • Royal Albert Hall
Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes stands in for
Mozart with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, as he
directs and plays two contrasting piano concertos
from 1785: the dark-hued Concerto No. 20, and
the gloriously playful Concerto No. 22.

SUNDAY 7 AUGUST

PROM 29 MOZART MOMENTUM 2
7.30pm–c9.35pm • Royal Albert Hall
In the second of three all-Mozart Proms with his
Mahler Chamber Orchestra colleagues, Norwegian
conductor-pianist Leif Ove Andsnes zooms in on
the year 1786. He directs Mozart's tragic C minor
Piano Concerto from the piano, while soprano
Christiane Karg performs songs and a concert aria.
Mozart's Symphony No. 38 opens the programme.