

Welcome to the 2023 BBC Proms



A very warm welcome to the 2023 BBC Proms. It's thrilling to be sharing in an experience in which tradition and innovation sit side by side, and I hope these concerts continue to delight you with familiar favourites and entice you to discover new composers and artists.

Our composer celebrations reflect both sides of that coin, from the works of Sergey Rachmaninov (born 150 years ago) – whose music has featured regularly at the Proms since 1900 – to the less familiar worlds of Dora Pejačević and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. This summer's extensive opera and choral programme brings you landmark operas by Berlioz and Poulenc alongside the UK premiere of György Kurtág's Beckett-inspired *Endgame* and the first complete performance at the Proms of Schumann's ravishing *Das Paradies und die Peri*. Opera also forms part of our family offering this year, with the *Horrible Histories* team taking an irreverent look at the art form, while a bank holiday concert delves into fantasy, myths and legends from TV, film and video games. And, following our series last year of 'Proms at' chamber music Proms around the UK, this year there are performances by leading soloists, ensembles and chamber choirs in Aberystwyth, Dewsbury, Gateshead, Perth and Truro.

The Proms celebrates genres and artists from around the world. This year we bring Portuguese fado and Northern Soul to the Proms for the first time, as well as a tribute to Bollywood playback singer Lata Mangeshkar. We also welcome four very individual artists in special orchestral collaborations – Rufus Wainwright with the BBC Concert Orchestra, Cory Henry with the Jules Buckley Orchestra, Jon Hopkins with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and – as part of our weekend at Sage Gateshead – Self Esteem with the Royal Northern Sinfonia. Visitors from further afield include orchestras from Berlin, Budapest and Boston. The Proms continues to redefine the boundaries of a classical music festival but one thing remains constant – we seek out and showcase the very best.

Every Prom here at the Royal Albert Hall and in our 'Proms at' series is broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, where the station's expert engineers and presenters bring you the live experience wherever you are – and you can listen again on BBC Sounds. You can also enjoy 24 Proms on BBC TV, all available for 12 months on BBC iPlayer.

David Pickard
Director, BBC Proms

BBC Proms

THE BBC PRESENTS THE 129TH SEASON OF HENRY WOOD PROMENADE CONCERTS

Tonight at the Proms

Welcome to today's Prom, which features one of the grandest of all Romantic operas – Berlioz's *The Trojans*.

Under their Associate Conductor Dinis Sousa, the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and Monteverdi Choir are joined by a stellar line-up of soloists, in a cast led by Alice Coote as Cassandra, Paula Murrinhas as Dido and Michael Spyres as Aeneas.

Berlioz first encountered Virgil's *Aeneid* while still a boy, and it made such an impression on him that it inevitably gave rise to his most ambitious opera project as an adult. So ambitious, in fact, that it was not finally staged in its complete five-act form until 1957.



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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.



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Prom 64

SUNDAY 3 SEPTEMBER • 4.00pm–c9.25pm



Hector Berlioz *The Trojans* (concert performance; sung in French with English surtitles) 235'

Grand opera in five acts. Text by the composer after Virgil's 'Aeneid'

Cassandra **Alice Coote** *mezzo-soprano*

Aeneas **Michael Spyres** *tenor*

Dido **Paula Murrin** *mezzo-soprano*

Coroebus **Lionel Lhote** *baritone*

Ascanius **Adèle Charvet** *mezzo-soprano*

Narbal **William Thomas** *bass*

Panthus **Ashley Riches** *bass-baritone*

Anna **Beth Taylor** *mezzo-soprano*

Iopas/Hylas **Laurence Kilsby** *tenor*

Hecuba **Rebecca Evans** *soprano*

Hector/Trojan Sentry 2 **Alex Rosen** *bass*

Helenus **Graham Neal** *tenor*

A Soldier **Sam Evans** *baritone*

Tess Gibbs *movement director*

Rick Fisher *lighting designer*

Monteverdi Choir Sam Evans *chorus-master*

Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique Peter Hanson *leader*

Dinis Sousa *conductor*

There will be one interval of 40 minutes after Act 2 and one interval of 25 minutes after Act 4

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, the advertised conductor, has decided to withdraw from tonight's performance.

The BBC Proms is grateful to Dinis Sousa for taking his place at short notice.

RADIO 3 SOUNDS

This concert is broadcast live by BBC Radio 3 and available on BBC Sounds.

An Ancient Epic Tale Retold

Sarah Ruden explores how Virgil's *Aeneid*, commissioned by Rome's first emperor, has captivated generations of composers, none with more ambitious results than Hector Berlioz

Berlioz's grand five-act opera *The Trojans* is the most ambitious work about the Trojan War and its aftermath since Virgil's *Aeneid*. The French composer (who also wrote the libretto) recalled in a letter how a passion for the great Roman epic had first seized him. As a young boy, he had been reading the 12th and final book in the original Latin under his father's direction. But 'construing', not 'reading', was how he put it; at that early age, he would have strained to puzzle out the intricate sentences. Even so, he was transported by its splendour and tragedy. He recalled how, while attending vespers one Sunday, the 'sad, persistent chant' of Psalm 114 – about the escape of the Israelites from Egypt – had the effect of plunging him back into a Virgilian daydream. He was struck by the heroic glory of the *Aeneid*'s characters, escaped from the fall of Troy – refugees on a quest for a secure realm in Italy. Significantly, Berlioz indicates that he found himself especially drawn to the women in the story, including the Italian princess Lavinia. (In Virgil's poem she does not speak a word but only sobs when her betrothal – hotly contested, because her dowry comprises her father's kingdom – ignites a catastrophic war.)

Upon leaving vespers, the young Berlioz wept for the rest of the day, powerless over his 'epic grief'. Such a response was not a phenomenon unique to 19th-century French Romanticism. The boy was subject to an enchantment active since around the year 30 BCE, when the start of

the *Aeneid*'s composition was little more than a rumour. Virgil had produced two beautiful but relatively short and personal poems, the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*, under the sponsorship of the first Roman emperor Octavian (known after 27 BCE as Augustus); now his fellow poet Propertius announced that 'something greater than the *Iliad* is being born'.

Virgil's Latin reprise of the Homeric epic celebrated Octavian's family as divinely descended and recounted his legendary ancestor Aeneas's quest to found the Roman nation as an indestructible replacement for devastated Troy. But it was the *Aeneid*'s erotic, emotional and feminine takes on war, religion and the state that won Roman readers' hearts. Schoolteachers favoured Book 1, with its ground-level and victim-oriented account of Troy's fall, and Book 4, the love story of the shipwrecked Aeneas and Dido, Queen of Carthage, which ends in her suicide when he leaves for his destined homeland in Italy. These parts of the *Aeneid*, elegies of human helplessness against the storm of history, marked young memories like a hissing brand, and within a few decades of the epic's publication, quotations, allusions, parodies, graffiti, artwork and derivative performances testified that the *Aeneid* was the myth of myths, a powerful new way for Rome to think about itself, much as Virgil's exquisite versification had remade Latin poetry.

But that wasn't the effect the emperor had planned. True, there is plenty about the gods' will for Rome, and many examples of patriotic and patriarchal self-sacrifice decreed from on high. But altogether the exhortations

Italian soprano Anna Caterina Antonacci as Cassandra in a 2012 production of *The Trojans* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden



and prophecies, toils and dangers, miracles, embassies and battles stand up poorly against a single figure: Dido. Her claims on the popular mind prevailed, even though she represents Rome's arch-enemy Carthage, which was devastated by a Roman army in the year 146 BCE; Virgil suggests that event by comparing the chaos caused by Dido's suicide to the city's sacking, which occurred a putative 1,000 years or so later.

Writing more than a century after Virgil's death, the Roman satirist Juvenal observes how tiresome Roman women could be at dinner parties when they got going in Dido's defence. But even Roman schoolboys could feel that the queen was special. In late antiquity, when the Empire began to wobble under barbarian invasions and the Christian Church was emerging as the regime that would outlast it, the schoolboy who was to become Saint Augustine of Hippo did not even think through the rights and wrongs of the heroine's situation, but merely 'wept for Dido'. Augustine was probably just one of many predecessors to Berlioz, sobbing deliciously over her proud pathos and doomed glory.

Hence the adult Berlioz's transformation of the *Aeneid* into the grandest of grand operas has far more behind it than the modern Romantic movement. He might have unwittingly privileged what I believe was Virgil's own narrative nucleus, a 'little epic' about Dido in the affecting style of Greek Alexandrian literature and its imitators, the Roman Neoteric poets. Declaiming damsels in distress were not likely Augustus's preference for his nationalist epic, but time after time in his career Virgil got away with placing a proto-Romantic picture in a propagandistic frame.

In any event, Berlioz hurtled much further in the Romantic direction. In Virgil, Dido's story takes up part of Book 1 and all of Book 4; this is out of 12 books. At the

start of Book 5, Aeneas is shaken to see the flames of Carthage as he sails away, but he is never shown thinking of Dido again, except briefly (in Book 6) when her angry ghost confronts him in the Underworld. By contrast, Berlioz nearly fills the final three acts of his five-act opera with Dido's story. This unfolds from her glorification by her subjects, builds to the climactic 'Royal Hunt and Storm' and the touching love duet that follows, and culminates in her spectacular suicide. Among all this, Aeneas's role is more like that of a subsidiary character than a leading man. If we knew the *Aeneid* story only through this opera, we would not suspect that he had ever been the protagonist.

“Berlioz's Cassandra is the real Trojan hero of the fall of Troy. Much unlike in the myths, she is not disregarded as if she were babbling nonsense. She even manages to rally the Trojan women to choose death over the shame of rape and servitude.”

But Dido is not the opera's only leading lady. The apotheosis of the feminine also informs the first two acts of *The Trojans* – perhaps even more strikingly by comparison. There are only three very brief mentions of Cassandra in the *Aeneid*'s story of the fall of Troy – and no wonder. In the ancient world she was a byword for victimhood, coming out of an affair with the god Apollo not with a half-divine child (as was usually the case when a god mated with a mortal) but with the curse of the world's deafness to her frantic prophecies. Mythology treats her ruthlessly: she is blighted in her

chance for human love (her foreign suitors Coroebus and Othryoneus are besotted enough to come and fight for doomed Troy, but they are doomed as well), sacrilegiously raped during Troy's sacking, maddened with helpless grief, sexually enslaved, murdered.

But Berlioz's Cassandra is the real Trojan hero of the fall of Troy. Much unlike in the myths, she is not disregarded, as if she were babbling nonsense. She even manages to rally the Trojan women to choose death over the shame of rape and servitude. Freedom and dignity are embodied in her more than in any of her male compatriots; Aeneas's escape with Priam's treasure feels like a narrative afterthought in comparison to her lengthy eloquence.

Conditions for the expression of genius were very different in early Imperial Rome and in 19th-century France. At one point Augustus wrote a teasing letter to Virgil, trying to extract just a little of the epic that took more than decade to write, at the rate of two lines a day. In fact, the poet left it not quite complete at the time of his death, and demanded that it be destroyed as not perfect enough; it was instead reverently saved, to become an instant classic. Discounting later revisions, Berlioz finished his opera in only two years (despite the demands of journalism and many other enterprises), but he was the one utilising contacts at the court of Napoleon III, among untold other efforts, to wrangle a production. He was unsuccessful, and left largely to the hazards of the commercial and semi-commercial music business in an age when audiences were jaded and mythological subjects were in disfavour. During Berlioz's lifetime, *The Trojans* was produced just once, and even then only including the Dido storyline, at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris in 1863. It was not produced in full, with the original French libretto, until 1969, at Covent Garden.

But Berlioz was not entirely without fault. Like Cassandra and Dido, and like his boyhood self, he was exploding with heroic grandeur and did not acknowledge practical limitations. The work demanded a cast on a military scale and technology with precariously moving parts. He scorned consideration of (for example) what a sluice of diverted Seine water might do to an ordinary stage. Perhaps the 21st century, humble in its experience of real-life cataclysm, yet with a head-spinning range of production choices, is a propitious time to revisit this brilliant yet daunting work.

Introduction © Sarah Ruden

Sarah Ruden is a scholar, translator of ancient literature and visiting researcher at the University of Pennsylvania. Her latest books are an extensively revised second edition of her 2008 translation of the *Aeneid* (Yale UP, 2021) and a new English version of the Gospels (Modern Library, 2021).

This article first appeared in the BBC Proms 2023 Festival Guide.

“I assure you that the music of *Les Troyens* is noble and grand and that it has a poignant truthfulness. I feel that if Gluck were to return to earth and hear it, he would say of me, ‘This is my son’. I am not exactly modest, am I? At least I have the modesty to admit that lack of modesty is one of my failings.”

Hector Berlioz, 11 March 1858

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803–69)

The Trojans (1856–8, rev. 1859–60)

SYNOPSIS

For programme note, see page 12

ACT 1*Troy: the abandoned Greek camp outside the walls*

The Trojans celebrate their deliverance from 10 years of siege. They examine the remains of the camp, then hurry off to look at the huge wooden horse left by the Greeks as – many believe – an offering to the goddess Pallas Athene. Cassandra, who has been watching them, gives voice to her fears. Dimly she foresees the fate of Troy: the people, led by the king, going blindly to their doom, and with them her betrothed, Coroebus, whom she will not live to marry.

When Coroebus appears, she rejects his soothing words and, as her vision takes shape, prophesies the destruction of Troy. She urges Coroebus to save himself by leaving the city; he, equally vehemently, dismisses her terrors.

Trojan leaders lay offerings of thanks at a field altar. The rejoicings break off at the sight of the silent figure of Andromache, widow of Hector.

Aeneas rushes in and describes the appalling death of the priest Laocoön, devoured by sea-serpents as he was inciting the people to burn the wooden horse. The whole assembly is struck with horror. Aeneas interprets the

portent as Athene's anger at the sacrilege. Priam orders the wooden horse to be brought into the city and placed beside the temple of the goddess; Cassandra's warning cries are ignored.

Cassandra listens as the torchlit procession draws near through the darkness, chanting the sacred hymn of Troy. Suddenly it halts. From within the horse comes a sound like the clash of arms. But the people, possessed, take it as a happy omen. The procession passes into the city.

ACT 2**Scene 1:** *A room in Aeneas's palace*

The ghost of Hector appears to Aeneas and commands him to escape from the burning city and found a new Troy in Italy. As the apparition fades, Panthus enters, carrying the holy images of Troy, followed by Coroebus at the head of a band of armed men. He reports that the citadel is holding out. They resolve to defend it to the death.

Scene 2: *A hall in Priam's palace; at the back, a high colonnade; women praying before an altar to Vesta*

Cassandra prophesies that Aeneas will found a new Troy in Italy. But Coroebus is dead. She asks the Trojan women whether they would rather become slaves or die by their own hands. A few, too frightened to face death, are driven out. The rest vow to die with Cassandra and, taking their lyres, sing a hymn of defiance. A Greek Captain, running in, stops in amazement at the sight. Cassandra stabs herself. Greek soldiers announce that Aeneas has escaped with the treasure of Troy. With a final cry of 'Italy!', some of the women throw themselves from the colonnade, others stab or strangle themselves. Fire engulfs the palace.

INTERVAL: 40 MINUTES

Now playing on BBC Radio 3 ...

Writer, director, composer and opera translator Jeremy Sams joins Radio 3's Martin Handley to discuss Berlioz's epic opera and its tortuous journey to the stage.



Available on BBC Sounds

ACT 3

Carthage, the city founded by Dido on the North African coast after she fled from Tyre and from her brother Pygmalion, murderer of her husband Sychaeus

In a hall in Dido's palace, decorated for a festival on a brilliant day after storms, the people greet their queen. Dido reviews the achievements of the city's first seven years, and appeals to her people to defend her against the Numidian king, Iarbas. Builders, sailors and farm-workers are presented with symbolic gifts.

Alone with her sister Anna, Dido confesses to a strange sadness. She denies that she is pining for love, and resists Anna's plea that she should marry again, but to herself she admits the appeal of her sister's words.

Iopas, Dido's court poet, announces the arrival of an unknown fleet, driven ashore by the storm. Dido, recalling her own wanderings on the sea, agrees to receive the strangers.

Trojan chiefs enter. Ascanius, Aeneas's young son, presents trophies from Troy; Panthus explains that Aeneas's mission is to found a new Troy in Italy. Narbal, Dido's chief minister, rushes in with the news that Iarbas

and his Numidian hordes have attacked. Aeneas, till now disguised, reveals himself and offers the dazzled queen an alliance and, after entrusting Ascanius to her care, leads the Trojans and Carthaginians to battle.

ACT 4

Scene 1: *Royal Hunt and Storm*

In a forest near Carthage, naiads bathing in a stream take fright at the sound of hunting horns and vanish just before the royal hunting party enters the clearing. A storm breaks. Dido and Aeneas, separated from the rest, take refuge in a cave and there acknowledge and consummate their love, while satyrs and wood-nymphs utter cries of 'Italy!'. The storm passes.

Scene 2: *Dido's garden by the sea; evening*

Narbal and Anna discuss the situation, he full of foreboding ('Inexorable fate calls Aeneas to Italy'), she light-hearted and optimistic ('The greatest of the gods is Love').

Dido, Aeneas and the court watch dances performed in honour of the victory over the Numidians. At the queen's request Iopas sings of the fruits of the earth. Still restless, Dido asks Aeneas for further tales of Troy and learns that Andromache has married Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, the slayer of her husband Hector. Dido feels absolved; she hardly notices when Ascanius slips Sychaeus' ring from her finger. All rise and contemplate the beauty of the night.

Alone, Dido and Aeneas celebrate their love in a rapt duet. As they leave together, Mercury appears beside a column on which Aeneas's armour is hung and, striking his shield, calls three times: 'Italy!'



A lithograph of the setting for Act 5 scene 1, in which Aeneas is visited by the ghost of Priam and reminded of his inescapable fate, which is to found a new Troy in Italy

INTERVAL: 25 MINUTES*Now playing on BBC Radio 3 ...*

Classicist and author Natalie Haynes joins Martin Handley to discuss the history of Troy and the myths it has produced.

Available on BBC Sounds



ACT 5**Scene 1: *The harbour of Carthage; night; the Trojan ships at anchor***

Hylas, a young Phrygian sailor, sings of his longing for the forests of Mount Ida.

Panthus and the Trojan chiefs agree they cannot put off their departure for Italy any longer: the gods are angry at the delay and daily send portents.

Two Trojan sentries exchange views: they are enjoying life in Carthage and don't see why they shouldn't stay.

Aeneas enters, determined to leave but torn by love and remorse. The ghosts of dead Trojan heroes appear and urge him to be gone. Aeneas rouses the sleeping army. Dido, distraught, confronts him. But her entreaties and her curses are equally vain.

Scene 2: *A room in the palace*

The Trojan fleet is seen setting sail. Dido orders a pyre on which to burn all memorials of Aeneas. Alone, she resolves on her death, and bids farewell to life, friends and city.

Scene 3: *A terrace overlooking the sea*

Narbal and Anna pronounce a ritual curse on Aeneas. Dido ascends the pyre. To the horror of all she stabs herself with Aeneas's sword. Before doing so, she has prophesied the coming of a great conqueror, Hannibal, who will avenge her wrongs. But her final vision is of Eternal Rome.

Synopsis © David Cairns

Writer, lecturer and conductor David Cairns is a former music critic of *The Sunday Times*. His two-volume Berlioz survey – *Berlioz: The Making of an Artist 1803–1832* and *Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness 1832–1869* (Penguin) – has been widely praised. He has translated the composer's *Mémoires*, and his collection *Discovering Berlioz – Essays, Reviews, Talks* was published in 2019 (Toccatà). In 1997 he was appointed CBE and in 2013 he was made Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

The Trojans

The Trojans is one of the great monuments of 19th-century art. Writing it in 1856–8, towards the end of his life, Berlioz knew it was the culmination of his entire output – which makes the story of what actually happened to his opera deeply poignant. In 1863, the year he had lost patience with the vacillating Opéra de Paris, the institution for whose resources he had composed the opera, he signed a contract with the smaller but enthusiastic Théâtre Lyrique. He soon discovered, however, that if he wanted to hear at least some of the work before he died, he would have to agree to a management economy – the last three acts only, with additional cuts, would be performed, as *The Trojans at Carthage*. Subsequently Berlioz refused to authorise performances of the first two acts, by now called *The Capture of Troy*, because he didn't want any more humiliating compromises. So began the legend that *The Trojans* was really two operas; with it came the licence to perform them separately. The opera was generally dismissed as tedious, impracticable, needing ruthless cutting – although admittedly inspired here and there.

The scandal of how *The Trojans* lay hidden like a sunken cathedral for a hundred years has since been put right. The opera first rose from the depths in a Covent Garden production of 1957, when it was given very nearly as Berlioz had written it, and in one evening – and revealed as a remarkable masterpiece. In 1969, the centenary of Berlioz's death, the full score of the opera was published for the first time, two new productions were mounted (by Scottish Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden) and the opera was recorded. Since then it has been regularly performed complete and uncut in opera houses across the world.

BERLIOZ AND VIRGIL

The Trojans has no overture. The *Aeneid* also begins after the beginning, as it were, with the arrival of the Trojans in Carthage rather than with the sack of Troy and Aeneas's escape. Virgil famously plunged *in medias res* – 'into the middle of things'. Berlioz did the same, thereby instantly showing his sympathy with Virgil's narrative and narrative method. His motivations, however, were different. What had moved him most of all, and from childhood, was the love story of Dido and Aeneas, its background and consequences, and his opera focuses on that (Books 1, 2 and 4 of the *Aeneid*). Virgil's priorities were much more complex, to write a history of the Roman people, from its beginnings (the survival of Aeneas and a Trojan remnant) until its culmination in the benign authority of the emperor Augustus, Virgil's patron. Berlioz couldn't cramp the flow of his narrative with Virgil's diversions, sub-plots and tricks of chronology. In the original version of the opera's final scene, the gap between Dido and Augustus is filled by an interlude, followed by an apotheosis of Roman luminaries, Virgil included. Berlioz was persuaded that this was a cliché and wrote the present finale, whose brash triumphalism in fact provides as disturbing an ending as Virgil's – the vicious killing by Aeneas of his heroic rival Turnus.

For the rest, Berlioz had every reason to follow Virgil faithfully, albeit with selective emphases and adjustments. He made two major alterations to Virgil. He cut out the gods, with the exception of Mercury at the dramatic close of Act 4. And he gave Cassandra a significance out of all proportion to her cameo role in the *Aeneid*. In the opera she finds an honourable death in suicide, thus avoiding the fate of a concubine as in the Greek classics, where she is captured by Agamemnon and murdered, with him, by his wife Clytemnestra.

Why was Cassandra so crucial for Berlioz? Partly, no doubt, to provide the opera's opening acts with a counterweight to Dido. And, as a prophetess, she was the one Trojan to reveal Aeneas's destiny to found a new Troy in Italy, the central theme of the opera.

Dido, like Cassandra, was beautiful, courageous, inspiring – as well as generous and passionate; but in addition she was gullible, unfruitful, shamelessly sexual, a dealer in magic, a suicide without honour – attributes that Virgil deplored but to which Berlioz turned a blind eye. His Dido is wholly sympathetic and one of the great tragic heroines in opera.

Aeneas is a foil to the two women, rather than the focal point as in Virgil, perhaps because Berlioz found his behaviour questionable, if not despicable. All the same, Aeneas is central and his heroic moments, which is to say most of them, are as powerful as any in the opera.

THE OPERA AND ITS MUSIC

Berlioz was an innovator, indeed an iconoclast, when composing symphonies and non-operatic dramatic works. But he was also a realist and he accepted the restraints and requirements



Anna Caterina Antonacci as Cassandra in Yannis Kokkos's 2003 production of *The Trojans* at the Théâtre du Châtelet.

of the great machine of an opera house – in the case of *The Trojans*, the five-act design, the spectacular scenes, the ballets, the conventional components of a ‘number opera’: aria, duet, recitative, chorus and so forth. Apart from the sheer originality of his music, what distinguished his treatment of these ingredients was his ability to make each number the consequence of the previous one: groups of numbers forming musical wholes that live and breathe on their own terms, regardless of the story behind them. He bound the huge work together with malleable motifs and rhythms representing abstractions such as fate, harmonies representing Trojan destiny, with the Trojan March itself and the recurrent cry of ‘Italy!’.

ACT 1

For the opening wild excitement of the Trojans at the apparent departure of the Greeks (No. 1) a self-contained tune would have been irrelevant. Berlioz produces instead a family of about 10 little motifs that sprout out of each other in all directions. Pause for breath. Crazy dances. Cassandra, the only one who is not crazy – though they all think she is – is left isolated.

In her recitative and aria (No. 2) she recalls her vision of her dead brother Hector pacing the ramparts (like the ghost in Hamlet: the first example of what Berlioz meant when he said his opera was Virgil ‘Shakespeareanised’). The extraordinary sounds of muffled horns will return when Hector’s actual ghost appears in Act 2. Cassandra’s aria of foreboding divides into two layers – the music of a warm, compassionate woman thinking of her father and her beloved, and the music of menace, lurking in the cellos and basses (an area of the orchestra Berlioz opened out for some of his most striking gestures).

The following duet (No. 3) – almost an opera in itself, between Cassandra and the stupid, if brave, Coroebus –

gains its impetus through violent collisions of mood and attitude, eventually resolving in a kind of desperate fervour.

The whole city assembles for a solemn, measured procession (No. 4) offering thanks for the supposed lifting of the 10-year siege. Pieties over, celebrations can begin. Trojan games were elaborate affairs (two sets are described in the *Aeneid*) but here (No. 5) there is only time for a little boxing and wrestling, before the games are interrupted – out of respect for Andromache, Hector’s widow, and their little son Astyanax, now heir to the throne, who have come to present their offerings in a Pantomime (a section of expressive movement, familiar from Berlioz’s beloved Gluck) to a famous clarinet solo (No. 6). The games are held up a second time by the entry of Aeneas (No. 7), arresting and dramatic, as befits the principal tenor, but not such as to upstage Cassandra. (His entry in Act 3 is an equally subtle piece of dramaturgy.) What especially marks it out are pedal (sustained bass) notes on the trombones, depicting the sea-serpents that strangled Laocoön and his sons. The consequence is another huge ensemble (No. 8), beginning in a state of shock and straining towards one of acceptance. It prompts the decision (No. 9) to drag in the ‘holy object’ from the river bank, or, in other words, to set in motion an interlocked sequence of numbers leading to the end of the act – Cassandra’s anguished aria (No. 10), the procession of the wooden horse (No. 11), Cassandra’s final despair and a tiny but terrifying orchestral coda.

The situation of Cassandra, again alone, seized by convulsive yet strangely exhilarating shocks, creates a supremely theatrical counterpoint to the sounds of the Trojan March, slowly getting louder as the procession advances and then dies away again. It is a breathtaking conception, not least because it concludes a long and predominantly slow-moving act with a burst of activity.

ACT 2

The first scene is for male voices, the second for female voices; the act as a whole is short and quick-moving, a calculated contrast to Act 1.

The louring opening of the act (No. 12) leaves no doubt that sinister battles are being fought in the background. This is juxtaposed with another ‘Shakespearean’ interpolation, the abrupt arrival of a small boy, to be followed by another, the appearance of Hector’s ghost (genuine Virgil, as is Hector’s deep sigh). The scene then moves with lightning speed (No. 13). Aeneas is joined by his men and by Coroebus (a marvellous moment, with cymbals) and, thus encouraged, ignores Hector’s advice to leave, rouses his men with a battle hymn and goes out to fight. The scene ends with a superb, flaming coda.

The second scene opens in a strange, unsettled modality with a choral Prayer (No. 14) for the ‘wailing’ women, as Virgil described them. Cassandra’s scene with the Trojan women (No. 15) is a sequence of recitative and *arioso* sections culminating in an as yet incomplete tune (No. 16) accompanied by harps. This soon returns in a brighter key, is miraculously developed, and completed. Aeneas has escaped; the Trojan women defiantly commit mass suicide. Berlioz finishes the Trojan acts with another orchestral coda, short but grimly satisfying.

ACT 3

Act 2 ends with the destruction of one city; Act 3 begins with the construction of another. The contrast between the darkness of Troy and the brilliance of Carthage, breezy and sunny after the storm which in fact has driven the Trojans to the Carthaginian coast, is a carefully calculated effect. The chorus (No. 17) sets up the entrance of Dido, who is welcomed by the national anthem of Carthage (No. 18),

a grand if, compared with its Trojan counterpart, guileless number. It is adapted from the refrain in *Hymn to France*, a work Berlioz had written in 1844 for a mammoth concert featuring about 1,000 performers and thus recalling the fêtes held in the first decade of the 1789 Revolution. In this fête commanded by Dido, Berlioz was no doubt doing the same – especially in the middle, where the anthem is converted into a revolutionary hymn and where honour is bestowed on the builders, sailors and farm-workers who have made the new city (Nos. 20–22). Meanwhile he has given Dido a ceremonial entry and a two-stanza opening aria (No. 19). This reveals a touch of ostentation within its queenly assurance and it also allows time for her subjects to express their loyalty. After the prize-giving the anthem rounds off the scene (No. 23).

Alone with her sister Anna (No. 24), the private and sad Dido emerges. She will not betray the memory of her murdered husband. Yet, in the final, slow section of this exquisite duet, arguably the most beautiful music in the whole opera, both women think she will.

Hearing of the arrival of the unknown fleet (No. 25) Dido can hardly contain her excitement at the prospect of receiving what turn out to be Trojans (No. 26). In a charming episode (No. 27), Ascanius presents gifts from his father. This is Berlioz’s own gloss on the situation, as is the Finale (No. 28), in which Aeneas, hearing that Carthage is under attack, thrusts aside his disguise (in the *Aeneid* Venus disperses the cloud concealing him). His battle hymn is a splendid counterpart to the one in Act 2, even more so in its second stanza when it is reinforced by the Carthaginian ‘army’ (who emerge carrying the crude weapons that will have reminded a contemporary audience of the ‘holy scum’ of the 1830 Revolution). Between the verses Aeneas entrusts Ascanius to the care of Dido, thus sealing their relationship and, as the orchestral epilogue makes clear, her fate. Like the Trojans in Act 1, she has let in an enemy.

ACT 4

The music of the first scene, the famous ‘Royal Hunt and Storm’ (No. 29), is entirely orchestral, its narrative being conveyed by gesture and movement – the pantomime to end all pantomimes. Dramatically, it is essential, providing the physical consummation that justifies the easy languor of the rest of the act. Musically, it is as vivid a piece of descriptive music as exists.

The second scene’s opening number, a duet between Anna and Narbal (Nos. 30 and 31), switches to the depressing reality of court politics. They can’t agree. Berlioz superposes Anna’s music on Narbal’s in a metaphor of this impasse and of the inertia that is crippling the city. It is clear, however, from the sparkling entry of Dido (No. 32) that her thoughts lie elsewhere – in careless intimacy and lavish entertainment.

Firstly, the ballets (No. 33). The opening dance of almas (Egyptian dancing girls with little bells sewn into their dresses) is voluptuous and languorous. The dance of the slaves is virile and thrusting, making the two a nicely balanced pair, confirmed by the apparently conclusive climax of the second one. At this point Berlioz adds a quasi-



A sketch for a poster design for *The Trojans* by René Piot (1869–1934)

encore, the tiny dance for Nubian slave girls, very fast, very exotic, the invented words deriving apparently from Berlioz's interest in the Persian poet, Hafiz.

Secondly, the song (No. 34), for that French/Carthaginian speciality, the high lyric tenor. Iopas does not, as in the *Aeneid*, sing of the wandering moon and the toiling sun, which would perhaps have been too close to the bone, but of the bounty of the goddess of the harvest. Dido listens to Iopas' expert performance of his bland subject-matter, gets restless and, after the song's astonishing climax, concludes the entertainment.

Now begins the real substance of this scene, a sequence of three numbers of exquisite sensual beauty. It is reasonable to applaud the dramaturgical skill with which Berlioz has justified the first of these numbers – by revealing that Andromache has married again (Aeneas's account is a censored version of that in the *Aeneid*) and by having Ascanius behave like Cupid (vice versa in the *Aeneid*): Dido can therefore love Aeneas without remorse. But of the quintet (No. 35), the listener hears only the soaring, singing lines and the ambivalent commentaries in the bass; of the septet (No. 36), only the sumptuous tune with its inimitable harmonies and perhaps the cicadas and the swell (we are after all in Mediterranean gardens at nightfall); of the duet (No. 37), only the still, intertwining intimacy, a love so enduring that the lovers can tease each other about it. Berlioz was proud of borrowing the idea for his text from Jessica and Lorenzo's exchanges in *The Merchant of Venice*, even though they were Virgilian (*Eclogues* III, IV) as well as Shakespearean. But, actually, all this is subsumed in the music. The end is pitiless.

ACT 5

The first scene is really Aeneas's but Berlioz initially sets him in a larger Trojan context ('Shakespeareanised')

again, like the soldiers in *Henry V*), including a sailor, two sentries and some Trojan captains. Hylas, in classical poetry, was a page-boy who drowned. Is the dreamy song of Hylas at the masthead (No. 38) not only a nostalgic lament for home but also Berlioz's intimation that Hylas will drown on the journey to Italy? The Trojan captains (No. 39) anxiously prepare to set sail because they have heard admonishing voices crying 'Italy'. The two sentries (No. 40) haven't heard them and prefer to remain in Carthage, where the living is easy. Berlioz thought this duet the most Shakespearean of all his interpolations because it introduces comedy into tragedy.

Aeneas, the hub around which the opera revolves, has never yet been allowed the stage to himself. Berlioz now, at the last moment, releases the tension in a long multi-sectional aria (No. 41), itself prolonged by two extensive additions. Its first section teems with heroic melodic fragments, eagerly sanctioned by wind instruments; in the second, pleading appoggiaturas are accompanied by Aeneas's benign shadow, a solo horn; in the final allegro his rapturous excitement summons up the extraordinary presence of ghosts (No. 42). The momentum is stopped in its tracks. Aeneas's hair stands on end (Berlioz creates this effect with violin harmonics). The whole of this sequence is powerfully and psychologically right. To a thrilling suggestion of the Trojan March (No. 43), he summons his men and delivers a superb apostrophe to Dido, his agony still welling up in poignant phrases in the lower strings. This is the point at which Berlioz introduces Dido for a last, messy confrontation (No. 44), an instance of dramatic integrity most composers would prefer to have avoided. She curses him. Berlioz's trump card – the Trojan March, now bold and assured – is reserved for the end.

In the second scene Dido takes centre stage, her grief the more poignant for its contrast with the assurance of Aeneas (No. 45). She can hardly articulate her emotions:

they are conveyed by harrowing phrases on the cellos, sobs in the double basses. With the news of Aeneas's departure (No. 46) they are suddenly let loose in an extraordinary *scena* as vehement as anything in opera. As she calmly delivers her commands, she is momentarily in control. The stage clears. But, alone for the first time (No. 47), she is convulsed by desperation; then, in a slow, lugubrious section featuring a bass clarinet, she makes her decision. Heart-rending phrases culminate in the most affecting of all: 'Venus, give me back your son.' In a final section of the utmost purity (No. 48), Dido bids farewell to everything her life has been.

The last scene of the opera begins with the tread of a solemn ritual, the priests calling on the gods of the Underworld to grant peace to Dido (No. 49). Between the verses of this prayer, things happen: the frenzied Anna and Narbal call on the gods to send Aeneas to his death; Dido, to drooping chromatic harmonies, claims to find peace (No. 50); she then rushes to the top of the pyre and, to a throbbing background on clarinets, gazes on the awful relics that shortly will be burnt. Berlioz now makes use of the belief that those about to die have prophetic vision. Dido takes Aeneas's sword, prophesies that Hannibal will avenge her, and stabs herself. The disorienting short chorus of the shocked Carthaginians (No. 51) is ended by Dido's moans and her second vision (No. 52), of Rome triumphant, the Carthaginians hurling futile curses. It is a brutal ending.

Programme note © estate of Ian Kemp

Ian Kemp (1931–2011) taught music at Aberdeen, Cambridge, Leeds and Manchester universities. An authority on Berlioz and Tippett, he was also the author of books on Hindemith and Weill.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

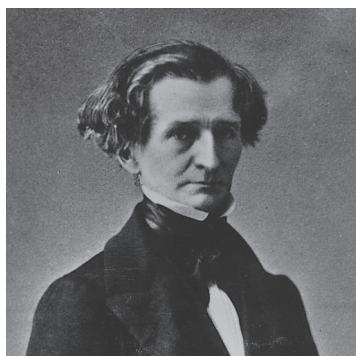
For reasons of taste and economics opera played little part in the early days of the Proms, typically mined for popular vocal highlights or else dished up in the form of instrumental potpourris. It was in 1896, the second year of these concerts, that Berlioz's concert arrangement of the Trojan March afforded a first glimpse of his five-act epic. From 1923 Proms founder-conductor Henry Wood also programmed the purely instrumental 'Royal Hunt and Storm'. With his newly formed Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the BBC Theatre Chorus, Thomas Beecham led a broadcast performance of more or less the entire opera in 1947, but it was only after the complete work was staged at Covent Garden in 1957 that the Proms got in on the act. Part 1 was given here in 1966 with Dame Janet Baker as Cassandra; Part 2 in 1967 saw Evelyn Lear cast as Dido. The first unbroken rendition was undertaken in 1968; conducting on all three occasions was Colin Davis. In 1982 Gennady Rozhdestvensky's performance was split between the first and third concerts of the season. Joining his BBC forces (with Richard Pasco and Dorothy Tutin serving as narrators) was a star line-up: Richard Cassilly (Aeneas), Jessye Norman (Dido), Dame Felicity Palmer (Cassandra) and John Shirley-Quirk (Coroebus). The front cover of that year's *Proms Guide*, or *Prospectus* as it was then known, made comic allusion to the event, its top left corner showing Prommers dragging a cartoon wooden horse into the Royal Albert Hall. In 2003 the bicentenary celebrations of Berlioz's birth prompted a further full revival with Colin Davis at the helm. In 2012 the conductor was Sir Antonio Pappano with a concert version of the then current Royal Opera production; Eva-Maria Westbroek sang Dido. Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Berlioz crusade with his *Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique* has embraced such rarities as *Le Freischütz*, Berlioz's Frenchification of Weber's opera *Der Freischütz*, revived here in 2011. The ORR's 2018 all-Berlioz Prom offered a foretaste of *The Trojans* with the 'Royal Hunt and Storm' and 'Dido's death scene' (featuring Joyce DiDonato). Also heard were the overture *Le corsaire*, the cantata *La mort de Cléopâtre* (again with DiDonato) and *Harold in Italy* (with violist Antoine Tamestit). DiDonato returned, with Tamestit, for an encore, Marguerite's 'Le roi de Thulé' from *The Damnation of Faust*. That work had featured in its entirety in 2017. In 2019 it was the turn of *Benvenuto Cellini*.

© 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 *Classical Source*.

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

HECTOR BERLIOZ



The son of a country doctor, Berlioz arrived in Paris at the age of 18 as something of a musical innocent who had never heard an orchestra.

Overwhelmed by the performances he heard at the Opéra de Paris, he at first immersed himself in the French operatic

tradition. Although he benefited from the strict training of the Conservatoire, he was far more stimulated by his discovery of German Romanticism, Shakespeare and Beethoven. The climax of these early years was his *Symphonie fantastique* of 1830, which exemplified his free approach to form, his vivid orchestral sense and a very expressive type of extended, often irregular melody.

In that year he was awarded the Prix de Rome. Already prejudiced against Italian music, he considered the months he spent in Italy musically barren but they allowed him to cultivate a wider individuality that included grace, light, wit, irony and a Classical detachment. His first major work on returning to France was *Harold in Italy* (1834); the later 1830s saw the composition in quick succession of three masterpieces: the opera *Benvenuto Cellini* (1836–8), the *Requiem (Grande messe des morts)* of 1837 and the dramatic symphony *Roméo et Juliette* (1839).

Berlioz was never really accepted by the Parisian musical establishment and what little money he earned came mainly from journalism, which he resented because it prevented him from devoting more time to composition. From the early 1840s he began to look further afield and

embarked on a series of tours conducting his own compositions in other European countries, astonishing audiences with both his music and his ability to inspire orchestras. After the poor reception of *The Damnation of Faust*, his major work of the mid-1840s, he recovered some of his losses with the first of two visits to Russia, where his influence was to prove vital over the next decades.

In 1855 he published the ceremonial *Te Deum* (1849) and the gentle oratorio *The Childhood of Christ* (1850–54), a surprise to all those who thought him capable only of the wild and the extreme. Between 1856 and 1858 he summed up all his achievements in the grand opera *The Trojans* on the fall of Troy and the love of Dido and Aeneas, a subject that had haunted him since childhood. Its partial and inadequate performance completed his disillusion with Parisian musical life. His final work was the witty *Béatrice et Bénédict* (1860–62), based on Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*.

For a long time after his death Berlioz's reputation was compromised by romantic legends and an ignorance that exaggerated his music's impracticability. Recent decades have seen a full rediscovery and appreciation of him in all his variety and colour, his unique passion and yearning, his sharp brilliance and deep human insights.

Profile © Andrew Huth

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



The Proms Listening Service

As Radio 3's *The Listening Service* revisits earlier episodes reflecting some of this summer's Proms programming, presenter Tom Service takes a wide-angle view of the common themes in this weekly feature

Week 8 Mozart's 'Requiem'

Mozart's *Requiem* is restless. It always has been, ever since Mozart's death at the age of only 35 in December 1791, which is the very moment the myths of the *Requiem* – which he didn't live to finish – were born: that the composer was poisoned, that the Freemasons murdered him, that the piece was commissioned by a mysterious messenger for an aristocrat who wanted to pass off Mozart's music as his own.

In fact, that last myth-like story – perhaps the strangest of all – is the only one that's true, and so too is the certainty that Mozart knew he was writing his last music in a delirium of disease, during which he was nonetheless able to transmit his wishes as fully as he could to his friends and pupils, like Franz Xaver Süssmayr, whose completion forms the backbone of Raphaël Pichon's performance this week at the Proms with Pygmalion.

Pichon's performance also includes his own interpolations of a scintillating selection of Mozartiana in between the *Requiem*'s movements. And generations of musicians and listeners have used the incompleteness of the *Requiem* as a chance to open up its meanings and resonances.

Scholarly debate has raged since Süssmayr's completion was published: did he follow Mozart's instructions closely enough? Can you hear the difference between *echt*-Mozart and Mozart/Süssmayr – that composite composer who is the real author of every movement of the *Requiem*, apart from the opening Introitus? Performers and musicologists

from Robert Levin to Duncan Druce have made their own completions, including writing an 'Amen' fugue that Mozart probably planned but which Süssmayr didn't dare compose. Most radically and creatively, the British composer Michael Finnissy made a version in 2011 that fills in the gaps of music-historical time, writing in references to Schubert, Busoni and Charles Ives, and leaving 'traces' (as he calls them) of other composers who have had an impact on him.

And that means following Mozart's example, because the *Requiem* is full of traces of music by other composers whom he loved. The Introitus in particular is clearly made of music inspired by the composer he most admired: Handel. Mozart had already arranged Handel's music, including *Messiah*, and in the *Requiem* he recomposes it. He uses tunes and ideas from Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, his *Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline* and *Messiah*, transcending them in the new context of the *Requiem*.

Even if Mozart had completed it, it wouldn't alter the fact that this *Requiem* isn't a single statement, but a dialogue with music history. Its incompleteness allows us to be as imaginative as we like in our responses to it, so that each set of performers and audiences remakes it in their own image. That's the creative restlessness that Mozart bequeathes to us in the paradoxically complete experience of his unfinished *Requiem*.

Pygmalion under Raphaël Pichon performs Mozart's 'Requiem' this week on Thursday 7 September.

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 220-plus editions of the series on BBC Sounds. Tom's book based on the series was published last year (Faber).

Coming up at the Proms



Aga Tomaszek

THOMAS GOULD



Monarca Studios

ERIN MORLEY

WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

PROM 68 LERA AUERBACH, CORELLI, TIPPETT & MAX RICHTER

7.30pm–c9.35pm • Royal Albert Hall

Max Richter's *Recomposed* is the composer's celebrated reimagining of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. Here, violinist Thomas Gould and the Britten Sinfonia give its Proms debut performance alongside works by Lera Auerbach, Arcangelo Corelli and Michael Tippett.

THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

PROM 69 MOZART'S 'REQUIEM'

7.00pm–c8.30pm • Royal Albert Hall

Raphaël Pichon, his exciting ensemble Pygmalion and a solo line-up featuring American soprano Erin Morley present an alternative vision of Mozart's famously unfinished *Requiem*. Tonight's reimagining swells the popular completion by Mozart's pupil Süssmayr with additional pieces to create a compelling alternative sequence.



Mark Allan

BBC SINGERS



DOMINGO HINDOYAN

THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

PROM 69A JOANNA MARSH, DANIEL-LESUR & SOUMIK DATTA

10.15pm–c11.30pm • Royal Albert Hall

The BBC Singers and Chief Conductor Sofi Jeannin present a late-night Prom of choral works. Two contemporary pieces – Joanna Marsh's *SEEN* and Soumik Datta's *Awaaz* – explore themes of identity, while Daniel-Lesur's masterpiece *Cantique des cantiques* sets the biblical Song of Songs.

FRIDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

PROM 70 HONEGGER, RACHMANINOV, GABRIELA ORTIZ & BERNSTEIN

7.30pm–c9.50pm • Royal Albert Hall

Japanese pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii returns as soloist in Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 3 alongside the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and its Venezuelan-born Chief Conductor Domingo Hindoyan. Also featured are works by Bernstein, Honegger and Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz.

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Dinis Sousa *conductor*

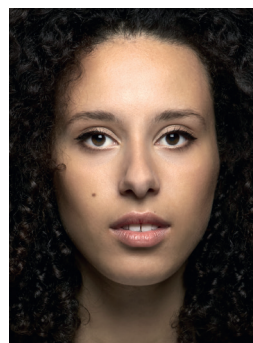
Born in Portugal, Dinis Sousa studied conducting with Sian Edwards and Timothy Redmond and piano with Philip Jenkins and Martin Roscoe at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he was Conducting Fellow.

His inaugural season as Principal Conductor of the Royal Northern Sinfonia culminated in his BBC Proms debut with the orchestra last year. In July this year he conducted the group as part of the weekend-long Proms festival at Sage Gateshead. Highlights of the coming season include multiple projects with Dame Sarah Connolly, Beethoven's Triple Concerto with Nicola Benedetti, Benjamin Grosvenor and Sheku Kanneh-Mason, and a concert at the Tongyeong Festival in Korea.

He is also the Founder and Artistic Director of Orquestra XXI, which brings together some of the best young Portuguese musicians from around Europe. Recent highlights with the group include opening the Gulbenkian Foundation season and appearing at the Belém Cultural Centre's festival Dias da Música for a televised concert of Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri*.

Dinis Sousa has also worked closely with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and his ensembles, and was appointed the Monteverdi Choir & Orchestras' first Assistant Conductor in 2018. Highlights of his tenure include co-conducting the Monteverdi Choir in Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* at the Proms and conducting the English Baroque Soloists in Colombia.

As a guest conductor, recent and forthcoming highlights include projects with the Edmonton Symphony, Gulbenkian and BBC Philharmonic orchestras.



Adèle Charvet *Ascanius*

French mezzo-soprano Adèle Charvet is a graduate of the Paris Conservatoire. She sings leading roles from the Baroque, Mozartian, Italian *bel canto* and French repertoires, including the title-roles in *Serse*, *Carmen* and *Pelléas and Mélisande*, Hermione

(Lully's *Cadmus and Hermione*), Idamante (*Idomeneo*), Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*), Ascanio (*Benvenuto Cellini*), Sélysette (*Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*) and Stéphan (Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*).

She has sung at many of the major European venues and with leading opera companies, including the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Dutch National Opera, the Paris Opéra and Opéra-Comique, Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse, Opéra Royal de Versailles, the national opera companies of Bordeaux and Lyon and the Aix-en-Provence and Verbier festivals.

As a recitalist she regularly performs with pianist Florian Caroubi. Future projects include Angelina (*La Cenerentola*) in Toulouse, *Carmen* and *Giulietta* (Zingarelli's *Giulietta e Romeo*) at Versailles, the title-role in *Ariodante* in Strasbourg and Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*) at Glyndebourne.



Alice Coote *Cassandra*

British mezzo-soprano Alice Coote was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist (2001–3). She performs in opera, concert and recital throughout the UK, Europe and the USA with leading ensembles such as the Boston, Chicago and London Symphony orchestras

and at prestigious venues, among them the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Paris Opéra and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Bavarian State Opera, Salzburg Festival, Wigmore Hall, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall in New York.

Her operatic roles include the title-roles in *Carmen*, *The Rape of Lucretia* and *Dido and Aeneas*, Sesto (*Giulio Cesare*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Sesto and Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*), Charlotte (*Werther*), Prince Charming (*Cendrillon*), Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*).

Recent highlights have included Orfeo (Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*) for Opera North, the title-role in Handel's *Agrippina* for the Hamburg State Opera; Mère Marie and Madame de Croissy (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*) in Zurich and New York respectively, Ravel's *Shéhérazade* with the Sinfonia of London under John Wilson at the Barbican, Elgar's *Sea Pictures* with the Philharmonia under Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Orchestra of the Academy of Santa Cecilia and Verdi's *Requiem* and Elgar's *The Apostles* and *The Dream of Gerontius* with the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder. She returns to Covent Garden this autumn in Handel's *Jephtha*.

Alice Coote was appointed OBE in 2018 for services to music.



Rebecca Evans *Hecuba*

Welsh soprano Rebecca Evans studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. A Grammy Award-winning artist, she has recorded prolifically.

Career highlights include Countess Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*),

Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Mimì (*La bohème*) and Pamina (*The Magic Flute*) for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*), Romilda (*Xerxes*) and Ginevra (*Ariodante*) for English National Opera; and Mimì, Countess Almaviva, Pamina, Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Liù (*Turandot*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Angelica (*Orlando*) for Welsh National Opera. She has also sung Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Ginevra, Despina and Ilia at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich and Despina at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin.

Recent highlights include the title-role in *Rodelinda* for ENO, Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*) for WNO and Alice Ford (*Falstaff*) for her debut at the Teatro Real, Madrid. Concert appearances include the Salzburg, Edinburgh, Ravinia and Tanglewood festivals and she is a regular guest at the BBC Proms.

Engagements this season have included Nerys Price (the world premiere of David Hackbridge Johnson's *Blaze of Glory*) for WNO and concerts at Wigmore Hall and the Fishguard and Penarth festivals.

Rebecca Evans was appointed CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2020.



Laurence Kilsby

lopas/Hylas

PROMS DEBUT ARTIST

Currently a member of the studio at the Paris Opéra and a Rising Star of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, British tenor Laurence Kilsby studied at the Royal College of Music and the

Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Last year he won the Wigmore Hall/Bollinger International Song Competition and the Cesti Competition at the Innsbruck Festival of Ancient Music, followed earlier this year by the Das Lied Competition at the Heidelberg Spring Festival.

He began his formal training as a chorister with the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum and won the title of BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year in 2009, subsequently making his solo debut at the Royal Albert Hall. He appears as treble soloist on several recordings.

Recent engagements include Lucano (*The Coronation of Poppaea*) for his debut at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Apollo (*Orfeo*) for Netherlands Reisopera and Henrik Egerman (*A Little Night Music*) for Opera North. Recent concert engagements include Mozart's Mass in C minor and Schubert's *Hymnus an den heiligen Geist* at the Salzburg Festival with Pygmalion under Raphaël Pichon and Bach's *St John Passion* on tour with the OAE under Mark Padmore.

Laurence Kilsby's current engagements include returns to the Salzburg and Aix-en-Provence festivals and debuts at the Opéra-Comique in Paris and Cologne Opera.



Lionel Lhote *Coroebus*

Belgian baritone Lionel Lhote initially studied with his father at the Académie de Musique de La Bouverie-Frameries. After studying at the Mons Royal Conservatoire with Marcel Vanaud and Jacques Legrand, he graduated from the Brussels Conservatoire. In 2004 he

was a finalist and won the Audience Prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition.

He has appeared with opera companies throughout Europe, including Glyndebourne, the Paris Opéra, Liceu in Barcelona, La Monnaie in Brussels, Frankfurt Opera, Stuttgart State Theatre, Teatro Massimo in Palermo, Chorégies d'Orange and the companies of Monte-Carlo, Liège, Avignon, Nice and Marseilles.

Lionel Lhote has sung under conductors such as Philippe Auguin, Adám Fischer, Patrick Fournillier, Alain Guingal, Emmanuel Joel-Hornak, René Jacobs, Emmanuel Krivine, Marc Minkowski and Kazushi Ono, and has worked with directors including Achim Freyer, Karl-Ernst and Ursel Herrmann, Guy Joosten, Dieter Kaegi, David McVicar, Jonathan Miller, Laurent Pelly, Mariusz Treliński and Keith Warner.

Recent highlights include the title-roles in Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* at La Monnaie and in Thomas's *Hamlet* for Opéra Royal de Wallonie Liège, Nilakantha (*Lakmé*) for Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Don Pedro di Hinoyosa (*La Périchole*) at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris and Pandolfe (*Cendrillon*) for the Paris Opéra.



Paula Murrihy *Dido*

Irish mezzo-soprano Paula Murrihy studied at the DIT Conservatory of Music & Drama in Dublin and the New England Conservatory in Boston. She participated in the Britten–Pears Young Artist Programme, San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program and as an

apprentice at Santa Fe Opera. Previously a member of the ensemble at Frankfurt Opera, her many roles there included *Dido* (*Dido and Aeneas*), *Lazuli* (*L’Étoile*), *Octavian* (*Der Rosenkavalier*), *Medoro* (*Orlando furioso*) and the title-role in *Carmen*.

She opened the current season with a return to the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, as *Donna Elvira* (*Don Giovanni*) and her debut at the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen as *Carmen*. Further season highlights include *Countess of Essex* (English National Opera’s Platinum Jubilee performance of *Gloriana*), *Octavian* for Irish National Opera, *Messenger* (Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*) for Santa Fe Opera and *Dejanira* (Handel’s *Hercules*) at Frankfurt Opera under Laurence Cummings.

In concert Paula Murrihy’s performances include *Judith* (*Duke Bluebeard’s Castle*) with the Vorarlberg Symphony Orchestra in Bregenz, *Cherubino* (*The Marriage of Figaro*) with the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston and *Sara* (Mysliveček’s *Abraham and Isaac*) with Collegium 1704 at the Salzburg Festival.



Ashley Riches *Panthus*

British bass-baritone Ashley Riches read English at the University of Cambridge, where he was a member of the Choir of King’s College under Stephen Cleobury, and studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. He was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist

(2016–18) and a Jette Parker Young Artist of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where his roles have included *Moralès* (*Carmen*), *Mandarin* (*Turandot*), *Baron Douphol* (*La traviata*) and *Officer* (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*). For English National Opera he has sung *Escamillo* (*Carmen*), *Count Almaviva* (*The Marriage of Figaro*), *Schaunard* (*La bohème*) and *Pirate King* (*The Pirates of Penzance*).

Concert highlights include Berlioz’s *Lélio* with Sir John Eliot Gardiner at Carnegie Hall, New York, Bernstein’s *Wonderful Town* with the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle, a European tour of *Giulio Cesare* and *Agrippina* with Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques, and *Creon* (*Oedipus rex*) with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Engagements this season have included *Angelotti* (*Tosca*) with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra under Edward Gardner, Messiaen’s *St Francis of Assisi* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Ryan Wigglesworth, Schumann’s *Paradise and the Peri* with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under Daniel Harding and concerts with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Sir Andrew Davis, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Stephen Layton, The English Concert under Harry Bicket, the Gabrieli Consort & Players under Paul McCreesh and the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder.



Alex Rosen

Hector/Trojan Sentry 2

PROMS DEBUT ARTIST

American bass Alex Rosen is a native of La Cañada, California.

Engagements during the current season have included Seneca/ Consul (*The Coronation of*

Poppaea) at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Haydn's *The Creation* at Theater Basel, Handel's *Messiah* with the Orchestra of the Opéra Royal de Versailles under Franco Fagioli, Melisso (*Alcina*) with Les Musiciens du Louvre on tour in Germany, Spain and the Netherlands and King of Scotland (*Ariodante*) on a European tour with Il Pomo d'Oro.

Other recent engagements include Cadmus/Somnus (*Semele*) with Opera Philadelphia, Charon (Monteverdi's *Orfeo*) with Netherlands Reisopera, Cithaeron (*Platée*) with Des Moines Metro Opera, Truffaldino (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at the Liceu in Barcelona, Time/Neptune/Antinous (*The Return of Ulysses*) at Theater Basel, Ian Bell's *The Man with Night Sweats* at the Opera Rara Festival in Kraków, Masetto/Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*) at the Liceu and for Bordeaux Opéra, Haydn's *The Creation* with the Orchestre National de Metz and Bach's *St John Passion* with Les Arts Florissants and the Royal Concertgeouw Orchestra under William Christie.

Alex Rosen collaborates in recital with pianist Michał Biel, with whom he won second prize at the 2018 International Hugo Wolf Academy Competition. As laureates of the Royaumont Foundation's Art Song Academy, they have given recitals across Europe at venues including Wigmore Hall and at the Victoria de los Ángeles Lied Festival in Barcelona.



Michael Spyres *Aeneas*

Michael Spyres was born into a musical family in the Ozarks, USA. He has performed more roles than any active tenor, with 83 roles in 78 separate operas. His career spans every genre, from Baroque and Classical to 20th-century music, and he is established as a specialist

in the *bel canto* repertoire and French *grand opéra*.

His operatic appearances this season have included returns to the Metropolitan Opera, New York, in the title-role in *Idomeneo* and as Pollione (*Norma*), to the Paris Opéra as Don José (*Carmen*) and to the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as Jupiter (*Semele*). His latest album, *Contra-Tenor*, released in April, was recorded with the period-instrument ensemble Il Pomo d'Oro and sets out to challenge perceptions of the tenor in the Baroque era.

He has worked with leading conductors, including Riccardo Muti, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Mark Elder, Valery Gergiev, Emmanuelle Haïm and Sir Andrew Davis, and has sung at many eminent opera houses and festivals. In addition to his operatic career he has given concerts and recitals throughout the world.

Since 2015 Michael Spyres has been Artistic Director of his hometown opera company, the Ozarks Lyric Opera. He has made 30 CD recordings and appeared on 10 opera DVDs.



Beth Taylor *Anna*

PROMS DEBUT ARTIST

Scottish mezzo-soprano Beth Taylor is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Open University, and currently studies with Jennifer Larmore and Iain Paton. She has participated in masterclasses with Dame Sarah

Connolly, Susan Graham, Sir Thomas Allen, Sophie Daneman and Dame Emma Kirkby, and is the winner of the 2022 Elizabeth Connell Award and the 2018 Gianni Bergamo Classical Music Award.

Over the past three years she has made a number of debuts at venues including, last summer, Glyndebourne as Bradamante (*Alcina*) and, following her house debut as La Cieca (*La Gioconda*), her role debuts as Erda (*Das Rheingold*), First Norn (*Götterdämmerung*) and Schwertleite (*Die Walküre*) in the Deutsche Oper Berlin's *Ring* cycle under Sir Donald Runnicles.

Recent engagements have included her role debut as Arsace (*Semiramide*) at the Deutsche Oper and debuts at the Zurich Opera House as Giuliano Gordio (Cavalli's *Eliogabalo*), the Berlioz Festival in La Côte-Saint-André as Ursule (*Béatrice et Bénédicte*), the Théâtre de Beaulieu in Lausanne in Mozart's *Requiem* and the Gulbenkian in Lisbon in Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*.



William Thomas *Narbal*

A recent graduate of the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, British bass William Thomas was a member of the Harewood Artists programme at English National Opera (2021–2) and is a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist (2021–3).

This season his engagements have included Colline (*La bohème*) for Glyndebourne Tour and at the Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival, Snug (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) in his debut for Opéra de Rouen Normandie, Handel's *Messiah* with the Academy of Ancient Music under Laurence Cummings, Mozart's *Requiem* with Glyndebourne Tour and Bach's *St John Passion* with the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra under Philipp von Steinaecker. Plans include his debuts with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, as Colline and at La Scala, Milan, as Hobson (*Peter Grimes*).

Other recent engagements include Colline for English National Opera, Grail Knight (*Parsifal*) for the Paris Opéra, Nicholas (the UK premiere of Barber's *Vanessa*) at Glyndebourne, Shepherd (*Pelléas and Mélisande*) for Garsington Opera and Snug at the Vienna State Opera. Previous appearances at the BBC Proms include Mozart's *Requiem* with Britten Sinfonia under David Bates in 2021 and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* with the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique under Sir John Eliot Gardiner last year.

William Thomas represented England at the 2023 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition and won the 2020–21 Critics' Circle Award for Young Talent (Voice).

Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique

Founded in 1989 by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique strives to provide bold new perspectives on the music of the 19th and early 20th centuries through its stylistic fidelity and intensity of expression.

Since its inception the ORR has specialised in interpretations of major early Romantic composers, ranging from Beethoven to Berlioz, as well as later works by composers from Verdi to Debussy. Major projects have included ‘Schumann Revealed’ and ‘Brahms: Root and Memories’, in which the ensemble recorded the complete symphonies of each respective composer, as well as cycles of Beethoven’s symphonies.

Additionally, the ORR has performed operas by composers including Weber, Bizet and Verdi, and is noted for its interpretations of works by Berlioz. The orchestra has performed Berlioz’s large-scale works, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Damnation of Faust*, *Symphonie fantastique*, *Harold in Italy* and *Lélio*, on extensive tours, and in 2019 marked the 150th anniversary of the composer’s death with the first contemporary performances on period instruments of his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*.

The 2019–20 season also marked 30 years since the founding of the ORR and Beethoven’s 250th anniversary. In celebration of these twin milestones, the orchestra embarked on another large-scale project, performing a cycle of all nine of the composer’s symphonies in residencies across Europe and the USA, and last summer it gave a series of European performances of his last masterpiece, the *Missa solemnis*. The Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique is under the patronage of HM King Charles III.

Chief Conductor

Sir John Eliot
Gardiner

Associate Conductor

Dinis Sousa

First Violins

Peter Hanson
leader
Morane Cohen-
Lamberger
Miranda Playfair
Bradley Creswick
Beatrice Philips
Davina Clarke
May Kunstovny
Silvia
Schweinberger
Clare Hoffman
Rachel Rowntree
Mark Seow

Second Violins

Jane Gordon
Jayne Spencer
Bérénice Lavigne
Hatty Haynes
Håkan Wikström
Will Harvey
Lucy Waterhouse
HyeWon Kim
Will McGahon
Michael Jones

Violas

Judith Busbridge
Fanny Paccoud
Lisa Cochrane
Joe Ichinose
Mark Braithwaite
Cara Coetzee
George White
Hannah Gardiner

Cellos

Robin Michael
Catherine Rimer
Ruth Alford
Filipe Quaresma
Lucile Perrin
Eric de Wit
Poppy Walshaw

Double Basses

Markus van Horn
Elizabeth Bradley
Jean Ané
Louis van der
Mespel
Dawn Baker

Flute

Marten Root

Flute/Piccolo

David Westcombe

Piccolo

Neil McLaren

Oboes

Michael
Niesemann
Rachel Chaplin

Clarinets

Nicola Boud
Fiona Mitchell

Bassoons

Jane Gower
Philip Turbett
Antoine Pecqueur
Catriona
McDermid

Horns

Anneke Scott
Joseph Walters
Simon Poirier
Gijs Laceulle
Peter Moutoussis

**Trumpets/
Cornets**

Neil Brough
Robert Vanryne
Michael Harrison
Paul Sharp

Trombones

Matthew Lewis
Miguel Tantos
Sevillano
James Buckle

Ophicleide

Marc Girardot

Timpani

Robert Kendall

Percussion

Tim Palmer
Steve Gibson
Elsa Bradley

Harps

Gwyneth Wentink
Eric Groenestein
Rachel Wick
Claire
Moncharmont

Offstage**Oboes**

Mark Baigent
Fiona Last
Cait Walker

Trombones

Laura Agut
Fabio De Cataldo
Martyn Sanderson

Percussion

Bobby Ball

Saxhorns

Gilles Mercier
Jérôme Prince
Jean François
Madeuf
Jean-Daniel
Souchon
Fraser Tannock
Richard Thomas
Katie Hodges
Jeff Miller
Andrew Kershaw

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

**Monteverdi Choir
and Orchestras
Team**

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and Chief
Executive**
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**Planning and
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Administrator
Emily Denton

Orchestra Fixer
Philip Turbett

Stage Manager
Matthew Muller

**Assistant Stage
Manager**
Finan Jones

Monteverdi Choir

The Monteverdi Choir, founded by Sir John Eliot Gardiner in 1964, celebrates its 60th anniversary next year. It has established itself as one of the greatest choirs in the world. Through a combination of consummate technique, historically informed performance practice and a strong appreciation for visual impact, it strives to bring fresh perspectives, immediacy and drama to its performances.

In April the Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists and Gardiner performed Bach's Mass in B minor on a European tour; this October they reprise the work, together with Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, on an American tour. In May 2023 the choir, together with the EBS and Gardiner performed at the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla. As well as presenting *The Trojans* here at the Proms, the choir also sings it at prestigious European festivals.

The Monteverdi Choir has taken part in a variety of projects across different repertoire, ranging from a tour of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (performed from memory) with the EBS to Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust* and Verdi's *Requiem* with the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. In 2017 it participated in the RPS award-winning 'Monteverdi 450' project, performing all three of Monteverdi's surviving operas with Gardiner and the EBS. Among its many trailblazing tours was the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage in 2000 which was recorded and released by the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra's own record label.

The Monteverdi Choir is under the patronage of HM King Charles III.

Sopranos

Rachel Allen
Emily Armour
Sam Cobb
Hilary Cronin
Rebecca Hardwick
Eloise Irving
Laura Jarrell
Angela Kazimierczuk
Emily Kirby-Ashmore
Lucy Knight
Gwen Martin
Emily Owen
Theano Papadaki ‡
Ali Ponsford-Hill
Lorna Price ‡
Billie Robson ‡
Elinor Rolfe-Johnson
Cressida Sharp
Rosalind Waters
Claire Ward ‡
Amy Wood

Altos

Francesca Biliotti
Luthien Brackett
Margaret Bridge
Rosie Clifford
Jacqui Connell
Christie Cook
Sarah Denbee
Annie Gill
Iris Korfker
Margarita Slepakova
Susanna Spicer
Avalon Summerfield ‡
Kate Symonds-Joy

Tenors

Mark Bonney
John Bowen
Andrew Busher
Jacob Ewens
Jonathan Hanley
Jack Harberd ‡
Ed Hastings
Tom Herford
Sam Jenkins
Nicholas Keay
Tom Kelly
Vernon Kirk
Graham Neal *
Benedict Quirke
Cameron Rolls
Joseph Taylor ‡
Ben Thapa
Adam Tunnicliffe

Basses

Jack Comerford
Peter Edge
Sam Evans *
Tristan Hambleton
Ben Kazez
Michael Lafferty
James Mawson
Stuart O'Hara
Alistair Ollerenshaw
Edmund Saddington
Henry Saywel ‡^l
Jon Stainsby
David Stuart
Lawrence Wallington
Jonty Ward
Christopher Webb
Laurence Williams

* *step-out soloists*
‡ *Monteverdi Apprentice*

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



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Book now to see **Sir John Eliot Gardiner** and the **Monteverdi Choir and Orchestras** perform **Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*** in October 2023, **Handel's *Israel in Egypt*** in March 2024 and finally **Beethoven's *Symphony Cycle*** in its entirety in May 2024. Visit smitf.org to find out more.





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