

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

The sounds that accompany video games have changed over the past four decades as much as the games themselves.

While movie soundtracks have long been able to rely upon lush orchestral scores, video games initially had to wait for the technology to catch up. Now we experience aural vistas every bit as imaginative and transportative as the extraordinary visual worlds.

Tonight's Gaming Prom – the first ever – has something for everyone, whether you're nostalgic for the 1980s (in which case there's Matt Rogers's tribute to 1987's *Chronos*) or the 1990s (if so, you'll recognise references to Pokémon Red and Blue in CHAINES's new tribute to music of that decade) or prefer to stay bang up to date with Hildur Guðnadóttir and Sam Slater's score for 2021's *Battlefield 2042*.

This mini sonic history of gaming comes courtesy of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under conductor and game-enthusiast Robert Ames, transforming the Royal Albert Hall into a vast gaming soundstage.



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 21 • MONDAY 1 AUGUST 7.30pm–c9.00pm

Gaming Prom: From 8-Bit to Infinity

Matt Rogers (aka Gameshow Outpatient)/Tim Follin, arr. Matt Rogers

Loading Chronos

BBC commission: world premiere c10'

Koji Kondo, arr. Nic Raine

The Legend of Zelda – suite 5'

CHAINES Tribute to Pokémon, Ecco and

Secret of Mana *BBC commission: world premiere c10'*

Nobuo Uematsu, arr. Andrew Skeet

Final Fantasy VIII – Liberi Fatali

first performance at the Proms 7'

Kow Otani, arr. Tomomichi Takeoka

Shadow of the Colossus – suite

first performance at the Proms 8'

Yoko Shimomura, orch. Kaoru Wada

Kingdom Hearts – suite *first performance at the Proms 4'*

Austin Wintory Traveller: A Journey

Symphony – excerpts *first performance at the Proms 15'*

Hildur Guðnadóttir/Sam Slater, arr.

Robert Ames Battlefield 2042 – excerpts

European premiere 14'

Jessica Curry, arr. Jim Fowler

Dear Esther – I Have Begun My Ascent/So Let Us

Melt – The Leaving *first performance at the Proms 6'*

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Duncan Riddell *leader*

Robert Ames *conductor*

There will be no interval



RADIO **3** FOUR SOUNDS iPLAYER

This concert is broadcast live by BBC Radio 3 and shown on BBC Four on Friday at 8.00pm. You can listen on BBC Sounds and watch on BBC iPlayer until Monday 10 October

The Big Players in Gaming Music

Tonight's conductor **Robert Ames** navigates through tonight's Prom, and argues that gaming music can stand alongside the classical-music giants

As a music and video game lover, it's incredibly exciting to be given the opportunity by the BBC Proms to look back over the history of the genre. The range of music here is huge! As is the very passionate audience. The connection that people feel with video game music is so deep, because players often spend months with a game and its soundtrack – thus it has the potential to become embedded in their memory in a way a movie score or album can't. We feel nostalgia with our favourite gaming scores, as their music can take us back to periods of our lives that hold special significance. If I hear the original *Sonic* soundtrack, I am instantly transported back to the Christmas morning when my two sisters and I got our first console as a joint present, a very happy memory!

We are trying to shine a light on the diversity and quality of music in this genre. Going on a whirlwind tour from the 1980s all the way through to the present day, commissioning orchestral arrangements of early 8-bit chiptune as well as iconic 1990s scores has been particularly fun, as it gives us an opportunity to hear this music in an entirely new way. Much-loved modern game productions with sweeping cinematic orchestral scores are also very much a feature of tonight's Prom and highlight the moment when video games became free-roaming landscapes with infinite possibilities.

For me, it was important to show the connection between video game music and electronic music. Early gaming music was limited by technology, which wasn't advanced enough to accommodate orchestral or analogue music,



The past in the present: visitors play computer games from the 1980s and 1990s at the Gamescom computer and video games fair in Cologne, 2015

so composers needed to be as creative as possible within the boundaries of the hardware and software of the time. As consoles grew in sophistication, so did video game music. This growth ran side by side with the melding of analogue and electronic music, which we now very much take for granted in modern culture. The cultural significance and quality of gaming music are quite breath-taking and gaming music since its inception has been ahead of the curve in terms of diversity. Tonight's Prom give us a unique possibility to share the music of somebody like Yoko Shimomura on equal terms with composers like Brahms and Mahler.

Introduction © Robert Ames

PROMS Q&A

Robert Ames conductor

Tonight is the first ever Gaming Prom, and it's received quite a lot of attention as a result. Does that place a lot of expectation on you as the conductor and arranger?

What's going on in gaming music at the moment is huge. Lots of people listen to it, and it's very interesting to get new audiences for live music because of that. The acoustic instruments from what's traditionally been the classical world are the instruments I love, so it's great to introduce them to a new audience. Does it put expectation on my shoulders? Maybe, but really I'm here to represent the music, push the genre forwards, maybe break some boundaries and, most importantly, make a deeply satisfying experience for the audience.

Are you a gamer yourself?

Yes – less and less the older I get, sadly, but I still make time to play games. It's more of a social thing for me now, playing with my wife and friends, and a really good excuse to do something completely different from what I do most of the time. But I had some early consoles when I was younger, and I grew up with them.

How have you gone about choosing tonight's music?

I've been looking at each decade to see how gaming, and therefore gaming music, has changed. One big shift was when computing power allowed for actual recordings to be used in games, rather than everything having to be created electronically. And now, as budgets increase, scores are getting more ambitious and more symphonic.

More recent gaming music is very flexible, adapting to what's happening in the game itself. How do you go about translating that into a linear concert experience?

With the earliest gaming scores it was more a case of different levels in a game having different kinds of music. But modern game scores



are more like mazes or jigsaw puzzles, recorded in tiny segments that can be changed and adapted as the game progresses. It's about working closely with the composers, and almost making a suite of music that takes people on a journey that they'll recognise.

Hearing gaming music in concert still feels quite new, but music has obviously been used alongside other art forms for centuries. Are we nearing a time when gaming music will receive the same kind of recognition?

If you strip away the games, close your eyes and just listen to a lot of this music, it's just really, really good. Even a lot of the earliest gaming music was genuinely forward-thinking. We're in a position now where gaming itself is becoming more and more culturally important. And it's interesting that composers from outside the gaming world are getting involved. Lines are getting blurred and, as a result, the music is becoming richer. Concerts of gaming music have been around for a while, but hopefully tonight's will bring new audiences to it – and also bring new listeners to the BBC Proms too.

Interview by David Kettle

MATT ROGERS (AKA GAMESHOW OUTPATIENT)
 (born 1976)/**TIM FOLLIN** (born 1970),
 ARR. MATT ROGERS

Loading Chronos

(1987, arr. 2022)

BBC commission: world premiere

In 1987 I was 11 years old. It was the year of the Great Storm, the year I started learning to play the cello, and the year that Mastertronic released *Chronos* for the ZX Spectrum. I played that game non-stop and quickly became obsessed with Tim Follin's incredible music for it.

Writing music for the 48K Spectrum's 1-bit beeper is as much a feat of programming as it is of composition, and the *Chronos* soundtrack seemed to achieve the impossible. Of course, when a game had great music, people would load it just to listen, ear to the computer's built-in speaker, concentrating hard to squeeze out every last grain of sound. And loading from tape is an experience that never leaves you, the noisy chuntering of it both thrilling in its promise of the game to come, and fraught with the prospect that this delicate, occult procedure might not work. The 48K Spectrum+ didn't have an integrated tape player, so, for me, a key part of the loading rite was the same cassette recorder that blared my classical music, enthusiastically distorted, from its single, overdriven speaker.

Loading Chronos brings all these aspects together in an orchestral arrangement of Tim Follin's title-track for the game. We begin with a fantasia on the Spectrum's



The chips are down: the original 48K Sinclair Spectrum: writing for its 1-bit beeper, Matt Rogers says, 'is as much a feat of programming as it is of composition

loading process – which, after all, is the prelude to all game music written for that mighty machine. This opening section reflects on the clamour of the iconic sound, the unpredictable gestures, riffs and grooves that emerge from it and the impatient excitement that comes with waiting for a game to load – all refracted through the prism of classical music. Once the piece has 'loaded', it bursts immediately into the *Chronos* theme itself, distilled into the orchestral idiom – not greater than the original (how could it be!), but radiating a different energy as the orchestra explores and revels in material it has never encountered before.

Programme note © Matt Rogers



MATT ROGERS

The range of Matt Rogers's commissions is matched by the variety of spaces for which he's been asked to compose. He has been an Artist-in-Residence at London's Southbank Centre

and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and his music has received premieres at King's Cross Station and the inner circle of Stonehenge. He studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Britten-Pears School with Oliver Knussen, Magnus Lindberg, Julian Anderson and Colin Matthews. This academic pedigree, however, hasn't limited the voracity of his approach to styles and sounds. Alongside operas (*The Virtues of Things* at the Linbury Theatre in 2015; *On the Axis of this World* for Cambridge City Opera; *La Celestina* for Opera Erratica), he also makes chiptune as Gameshow Outpatient, influenced, as he notes, by 'the dayglo rush of video arcades, the theme tunes of 1980s TV and the more neurotic corners of Classical rhythm', and as *The Something Puffs*. 'I grew up playing in punk, rock and indie bands and then spent 20 years writing classical music,' he says. 'The Something Puffs smashes all that together.' His solo clarinet piece *Orac* (named after a computer in the 1970s BBC space drama *Blake's 7*) has been recorded by Mark van de Wiel and the album *Premonitions of the Unbuilt City*, based on his opera *She Described it to Death* and co-arranged with keyboard player Kit Downes, was issued last year.

Profile © BBC

CHAINES (born 1990)

Tribute to Pokémon, Ecco and Secret of Mana (2022)

BBC commission: world premiere

Original music by Junichi Masuda, Spencer Nilsen, Attila Dobos, András Magyari, David Javelosa, Andy Armer and Hiroki Kikuta

Is it harder to write for a Game Boy sound chip or for a symphony orchestra? Honestly, that's a hard question to answer. You could be forgiven for assuming it must be easier to write for the sound chip. After all, there are only four parts to write for! Two square waves, one wavetable and some noise. Surely that's easier than writing for a massive orchestra with over 40 instruments?

Well, I'd say you'd be dead wrong. Obviously, it takes a lot of specialist knowledge to write for an orchestra; you've got to know lots about all kinds of different instruments, and then be able to write it all down. When you've got that knowledge, however, you have so many options! It's much more difficult to write distinctive and engaging music with the Game Boy's minimal and restrictive sound technology.

The fact that the music in this tribute has been pretty easy to adapt for an orchestra is a testament to its incredible ingenuity. When I listen to this music, I hear entire worlds of sound, all suggested by very basic electronic instruments – a bit like viewing an Impressionist painting. The ways in which the composers writing for these games



Pokémon Blue, Red and Silver: CHAINES includes an excerpt of the Lavender Town music (Blue and Red) in her tribute to the sounds of 1990s video games

were able to realise distinct and memorable musical visions, to conjure up so much with so little, is nothing short of ingenious.

I have opted to use electronically enhanced oboes and cor anglais to mimic the synthesizers used in the original music, and to act as a bridge to the sound world of the orchestra. I hope that these orchestral treatments encourage people to rediscover these fantastic soundtracks – maybe even to dig an old console from out of the attic and have a grand old time this weekend. I wasn't allowed a console growing up in the 1990s (thanks, Mum), so do it for me!

Programme note © CHAINES



CHAINES

Manchester-based composer, multi-instrumentalist and multimedia artist CHAINES (Cee Haines) works not only in electronic music but also enjoys a continuing collaboration on

electro-acoustic projects with the London Contemporary Orchestra, which have included an arrangement of their *Knockturning* in a 2018 Royal Albert Hall Prom celebrating the 60th anniversary of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. CHAINES has also collaborated with composer Laura Bowler and director Daisy Evans on *Lambs*, an opera in the form of a podcast presented at the Royal Opera House in last year's Engender Festival. Their album *The King*, intended as 'a claustrophobic, dank book of abstracted torch songs, festering in an uneasy grandeur', was issued in 2018 and greeted with enthusiastic reviews. They lecture in Sound Art and Composition with Technology at Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music.

Profile © BBC

KOJI KONDO (born 1961)
ARR. NIC RAINE (born 1953)

The Legend of Zelda (1998) – suite

first performance at the Proms

Japanese composer Koji Kondo has a lot to answer for. Not only have his incredible scores for the Super Mario games been seared into our collective consciousness over the years, but he is also the man responsible for the iconic

soundtracks for *The Legend of Zelda* series. This means that, if you had a Nintendo console of any generation as a child, chances are that Kondo's scores will spark a fierce fire of nostalgia, potentially evoking a simpler time as pixels were brought to life on CRT screens and technology was pushed, excitingly, to new limits.

Every game in the series has its own unique soundscape, its own sweeping score to accompany our quests with Link (no, not Zelda...!). And one thing is always key. A sense of adventure is palpable. Whether you started in 1986 with chiptunes in your ears or with the pioneering – not to mention musically layered – *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, you know the feeling of having the land



Nintendo amiibo toys of Princess Zelda characters: (centre to right) *Breath of the Wild*, *Ocarina of Time* and *The Wind Waker*; with (left) Gerudo Champion, Urbosa

of Hyrule under your feet and the potential that awaits. You don't have to be playing an in-game ocarina between swings of your sword to know that music is vital here.

As we eagerly and not-so-patiently await the sequel to *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, let's celebrate Koji Kondo's pioneering work on the definitive series. These are games that cemented the third-person action-adventure genre that we know today. The aforementioned sprawling *Ocarina of Time* in particular was a huge step forwards in 1998, as Kondo's score constantly adapts to match Link's environment. Whether he's exploring under blue skies, browsing the wares of the market or exploring temples, the soundtrack perfectly reflects each space, a thoroughly revolutionary idea for the time. Thankfully, as it would be dangerous to go alone, Hyrule comes to the Royal Albert Hall tonight.

Programme note © Louise Blain

Louise Blain is a writer and broadcaster specialising in games and technology. She is the presenter of BBC Radio 3's *Sound of Gaming*, a monthly deep dive into the best game scores.



KOJI KONDO

Koji Kondo is one of the pioneering legends of video game music. Although he was not academically trained in music, a background as a jazz and rock pianist and a love of early arcade games led him,

after study at the Osaka University of Arts, to Nintendo. His first assignment there was the sound design for the 1984 game *Punch-Out!!*, which he followed with his first major score, for *Super Mario Bros.* (1985). Further involvement in collaborations on a number of subsequent games in the *Super Mario* series has run alongside his major contributions to *The Legend of Zelda* (1986) and its sequels. Kondo continues to work as a supervisor, arranger and consultant at Nintendo's Sound Department.

Profile © BBC

“The sound of *Mario* is kind of like popular music, and *Zelda* is like ... a kind of music you've never heard before. So [in *Zelda*] I try to incorporate many different types of music to create an other-worldly feel.”

Koji Kondo comparing the sound-worlds of *Super Mario Bros.* and *The Legend of Zelda* in a 2007 interview

NOBUO UEMATSU (born 1959)
ARR. ANDREW SKEET (born 1969)

Final Fantasy VIII (1999) – Liberi Fatali

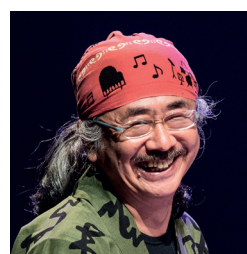
first performance at the Proms

‘Liberi Fatali’ is one of the main musical numbers featured in the eighth instalment of the long-running (35 years so far) Japanese science-fantasy franchise *Final Fantasy*. The title, which means ‘Fated Children’, refers to the core cast, a group of young mercenaries who, as in other iterations of the game, are battling an evil world-force on an unnamed futuristic and fantastical world, although in design redolent of the European continent. The cast are aged in their late teens and the Latin text exhorts them metaphorically to awaken from their slumber, and more literally to grow up quickly and discover the alarming truth about the world – a world for which they must fight to save.

As with the previous instalments, the music is written by the self-taught and renowned video-game composer Nobuo Uematsu and it was notably his first experiment using a combination of chorus and full orchestra. It’s written in a virtuosic and highly decorative style with an other-worldly quality and seems to be summoning energy and new vitality from the ground and the air. The woodwind rush and hurry here and there, while the percussion implore more energy and incite the whole ensemble to greater heights.

‘Liberi Fatali’ also contains a few thematic elements that feature in other tracks from the game and it also has something of the quality of an overture to it – indeed it plays right at the start of the game itself, during the opening full-motion video. Stylistically it draws on a few staples from the early- to mid-20th century orchestral repertoire, as well as on film composers such as John Williams, and it might be fun for a Proms audience to see how many references, intentional or otherwise, they can spot in this piece!

Programme note © Andrew Skeet



NOBUO UEMATSU

A self-taught pianist, Nobuo Uematsu studied English at Kanagawa University and wrote music for TV commercials before being invited to create music for Square Enix’s video games. He joined the company in 1985 and achieved his first major success two years later with *Final Fantasy*. Uematsu went on to compose the music for more than 30 Square titles, including the many follow-ups to *Final Fantasy*. He went freelance in 2004 and set up his own production company, Smile Please, but continues to contribute to Square Enix, as well as contributing to games such as *Blue Dragon* (2006), *Lost Odyssey* (2007), *Awat: Shuffle Dungeon* (2008), *The Last Story* (2011) and *Terra Battle* (2014). In 2012 Uematsu’s score for *Final Fantasy* became the first piece of video game music to enter the Classic FM Hall of Fame.

Profile © BBC

KOW OTANI (born 1957)
ARR. TOMOMICHI TAKEOKA (born 1979)

Shadow of the Colossus (2005) – suite

first performance at the Proms

Video games are synonymous with the idea of the ‘boss’, a bigger, badder version of the enemies who have come before. Vanquish the boss and you’ll progress with a smug sense of heroic moral superiority. *Shadow of the Colossus* turns this concept upside down. It’s made up entirely of what we would consider bosses: hulking giants lumbering across a sprawling world. We are told that these titular colossuses must be killed by our hero Wander as a way to bring back a young girl who has been sacrificed. As Wander, we dutifully clamber up each Godzilla-like creature, finding their weak points and ending their lives, just as we would a regular video game boss. Yet this feels much more morally fragile. Are we truly saving a life? Or becoming a merciless murderer and the destroyer of a realm?

Kow Otani has said that his score is akin to a prayer or requiem. Instead of a sense of triumph as each colossus falls, he wants us to feel that we might be saving someone we love. The game was originally released in 2005 by Japanese development studio Team Ico, but has been remastered over the years for fresh generations of players. This is bold storytelling, forcing us to question our own actions and even the concept of a gaming hero. Whether you’ve ridden across these dramatic landscapes on your trusty steed Agro, or are discovering the game for the first time, let this performance transport you to a

mystical realm where monsters roam. The only problem is that you might be one of them ...

Programme note © Louise Blain

KOW OTANI

Kow Otani has become famous as the man behind the music for monsters such as Gamera, Godzilla, Mothra and King Ghidorah, while his best-known video game work is the soundtrack to the award-winning and influential *Shadow of the Colossus* (2005, remade 2018). He made his debut as a video game composer with *Philosoma* (1995) and has been responsible for the music for anime adaptations of games such as *Night Warriors: Darkstalkers’ Revenge* (1997), *Popolocrois Monogatari* (1998) and *Wild Arms: Twilight Venom* (2000). His most recent work includes the soundtrack to the film *Godai: The Wunderkind* (2020).

Profile © BBC

“As a whole, this score has more in common with a prayer or a requiem.”

Kow Otani on *Shadow of the Colossus*

YOKO SHIMOMURA (born 1967)
ORCH. KAORU WADA (born 1962)

Kingdom Hearts (2002) – suite

first performance at the Proms

There's surely no better way to celebrate the 20th-anniversary year of the *Kingdom Hearts* series than with an orchestral performance of Yoko Shimomura's exceptional score. Her previous works were many, including *Street Fighter 2* and *Final Fight*, but in 2002 Shimomura defined the soundtrack of this unique mash-up that sees the worlds of Disney combined with Japanese role-playing games.

Across more than 13 titles and countless spin-off games, the *Kingdom Hearts* series stars young hero Sora, who teams up with House of Mouse staples Donald Duck and Goofy and even takes on the nefarious Maleficent. This is a world of oversized magical Keyblades and endless cameo appearances from Disney heavy-hitters, but it's not just a skip through the so-called Happiest Place on Earth. These tales of adventure, destiny and, importantly, loss have real emotional heft, something Shimomura has effortlessly reflected in her (pun intended) heartfelt soundtracks over the years.

Kingdom Hearts is especially fitting for the theme of tonight's Prom, 'From 8 Bit to Infinity'. Shimomura has talked about making the most of the limited technology of 2002. The *Kingdom Hearts* theme, 'Dearly Beloved', was directly inspired by her visions of waves and the

sea, but realising this creatively on the PlayStation 2 console meant only a minimal number of tracks could be studio-recorded. Remastered versions of the games with improved visuals in recent years meant Shimomura could reorchestrate her work for a fresh audience and for those who want to revisit the original classics without losing anything that made these scores so powerful in the first place. Everyone will have their own favourite *Kingdom Hearts* theme but let tonight's arrangement sweep you away to magical lands where happily ever afters aren't always guaranteed but still seem within our grasp.

Programme note © Louise Blain

YOKO SHIMOMURA

Yoko Shimomura studied at the Osaka College of Music as a pianist, graduating in 1988. An avid gamer, she dismayed her family and teachers by joining Capcom, where she was involved with the creation of soundtracks for games such as *Final Fight* (1989) and *Street Fighter II* (1991). She switched from Capcom to Square Enix in 1993 to further her interest in writing 'classical-style' music for fantasy role-playing games. Her music for *Kingdom Hearts* (2002) was a turning point in her career; she subsequently branched out as a freelance composer, continuing to work on the *Kingdom Hearts* franchise as well as series such as Nintendo's *Mario & Luigi*. Last year her concert work *Merregnon: Land of Silence* was premiered by the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, with worldwide performances commencing this year.

Profile © BBC

AUSTIN WINTORY (born 1984)

Traveller: A Journey Symphony (2022) – excerpts

first performance at the Proms

Journey first came out in 2012 and rather instantly changed my life, personally and professionally. It was the most invested I'd ever been in a project, having worked three years on it and, even 10 years later, it remains utterly surreal to me that it got the reaction it did: emails and calls from people all over the world not simply happy with it but sharing such personal stories about the way it had changed their thinking in life, or offered a needed catharsis during a difficult moment. This level of personal interaction wasn't even the goal – we simply wanted to make a compelling game!

The fact that, a decade later, I still get messages on a daily basis from players, never mind opportunities like this very historic concert, is hard to comprehend. I'll never be able to fully articulate my gratitude to everyone. That said, I hope that those in tonight's audience who are unfamiliar with the music or the game find some meaning in the music without the fuller context. It's a privilege to be in such illustrious company!

Programme note © Austin Wintory

AUSTIN WINTORY

Inspired by the film scores of Jerry Goldsmith, Austin Wintory began composing at the age of 10. Constantly working across genres, he moves seamlessly between concert works, movie scores and video-game soundtracks.

Since 2009 he has written the music for almost 50 films, including *It's Not You, It's Me*, *Bullet Head*, *The Assassin's Code* and *A Violent Man*.

The soundtrack for the 2012 PlayStation3 game *Journey* entered the *Billboard* charts higher than any other original game soundtrack and became the first video-game soundtrack to gain a Grammy nomination. *Woven Variations*, a mini concerto drawn from the score, has been performed around the world.

Subsequent game scores have included the multi-award-winning *The Banner Saga* trilogy (2014/2016/2018), *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* (2015), *Abzû* (2016), *John Wick Hex* (2019) and *Aliens: Fireteam Elite* (2021).

Wintory is motivated, he says, by two key aspects when composing: 'working with creative and talented people, and the fundamental hope to write meaningful music.'

Profile © BBC

HILDUR GUÐNADÓTTIR (born 1982)
/SAM SLATER (born 1989)
ARR. ROBERT AMES (born 1985)

Battlefield 2042 (2021) – excerpts

European premiere

Battlefield 2042 depicts an unnervingly prescient future in which the climate crisis we are experiencing today has had another 20 years to destabilise our world, and two major superpowers fight for resources and dominance in a series of chaotic, yet distinctly tangible, landscapes. As composers, Hildur and I have little interest in dramatising war; however, when we were presented with the opportunity to bring the worlds of *Battlefield 2042* to life and help reinforce their authenticity to the players, the challenge became important to us.

Our creative approach focused on exploring the dominant physical materials of each level. We took rusted metal, desert sands, artificially irrigated greenery and towering glass structures reflecting solitary human voices, then used each material to create chaotic, out-of-control sound-making systems in our studio in Berlin. We were surrounded by loudspeakers, buckets of gravel, bass instruments that set large plates of metal self-oscillating, and custom-built neural networks which forced field recordings onto human voices, in turn creating a score which features no traditional instruments yet doesn't feel synthetic. Like the levels themselves, the sound-worlds are tangible – not science fiction – with each new sound resting on a familiar sonority. This concert version is

Robert Ames's orchestral investigation of the original electronic score, translated into an orchestral context, as traditional instruments are pushed to replicate and foreshadow 2042 here in 2022.

Programme note © Sam Slater



HILDUR GUÐNADÓTTIR

The world premiere of Icelandic composer Hildur Guðnadóttir's BBC-commissioned *The Fact of the Matter* was heard at the Proms earlier this season. She won an Oscar, a BAFTA and a Golden

Globe for her film soundtrack for *Joker* (2019), becoming the first solo female composer to win all three in a single season. Her soundtrack for the HBO mini-series *Chernobyl* (also 2019) was created solely from sounds recorded and processed from a decommissioned Lithuanian nuclear power station and choral voices, and won a Primetime Emmy, a further BAFTA and a Grammy Award. Her technique of looping and collaging sounds made her the ideal candidate to co-compose, with her husband, Sam Slater, the music for *Battlefield 2042*. 'If you want to go as far outside the box as you can possibly go,' she has said of her work on the game, 'it kind of makes a lot of sense to hire someone that has no idea what the box is to begin with.'



SAM SLATER

Sam Slater studied experimental composition at Leeds University before gravitating to Berlin. He launched his career collaborating as sound designer and creative engineer with Jóhann Jóhannsson and has more recently worked as score producer with his wife, Hildur Guðnadóttir, on *Chernobyl* and *Joker*. He has also created scores for the 2020 film *Guerrillas* and the documentary *The River Between Us*, and for the BBC/PBS podcast *I Am Not a Monster*. He has produced recordings for composers including Colin Stetson, Ben Frost, Valgeir Sigurðsson, Yair Elazar Glotman and Mica Levi and in 2018 issued his debut album, *Wrong Airport Ghost*; a follow-up album is due this year. In 2019 he engineered a live performance of the *Chernobyl* score for an immersive sound system inside a disused telephone factory in Cracow, which commences touring during 2022.

Profiles © BBC

“It’s messy, it’s chaotic, it’s falling apart. You can’t really have something that’s clean and pristine – the music has to live in the same world as the game. So it needed to be ugly, messy and really tangible.”

Hildur Guðnadóttir on composing for *Battlefield 2042*

JESSICA CURRY (born 1973)

ARR. JIM FOWLER (born 1977)

Dear Esther (2012) – I Have Begun My Ascent/ So Let Us Melt – The Leaving

first performance at the Proms

Ten years ago, husband Dan and I made and released our first game. It was a story about a lone man wandering on a desolate Scottish island looking for his lost love. *Dear Esther*’s themes of love, loss, guilt and redemption struck a chord with players and the game became an overnight sensation. It also opened up a raging debate as to whether games can be art and as a result the game was exhibited in major galleries around the world. Suddenly Dan and I found ourselves propelled into the games industry and our lives changed for ever. The game was also the beginning of our journey into some amazing worlds: from the Hebrides to Victorian London, from subterranean kingdoms and terraformed worlds to central Shropshire. What linked these imagined spaces was our love of telling real stories through the medium of games.

The original soundtrack for *Dear Esther* is a moody blend of piano and string quartet with experimental soundscapes and electronics. When the piece was selected for tonight’s Prom, I knew I wanted to take listeners on a new and reimagined sonic journey: one that recognised and honoured the 10th anniversary of the game and that celebrated the incredible journeys that I’ve embarked on



The remote and desolate Outer Hebridean world of *Dear Esther*

since its release. So I worked with my extraordinarily talented collaborator and friend Jim Fowler to expand the original piece to create a new version of 'I Have Begun My Ascent'. We wanted to preserve the spirit of the original, but also to take you on a trip through the music and worlds of The Chinese Room's games, culminating in the science-fiction fairy tale *So Let Us Melt* (2017). Die-hard fans will hear echoes of 'The Leaving' from that game in this version of 'I Have Begun My Ascent' and I think that this alchemic melding of the two pieces captures what I love most about game music – scores that are epic and intimate, restlessly creative, unashamedly lush, full of light, motion and wonder. I hope you enjoy it.

Programme note © Jessica Curry



JESSICA CURRY

Jessica Curry's music for the PS4 game *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture* won a 2016 BAFTA and was named soundtrack of the year by *MOJO* magazine. Having presented Classic FM's Saturday

night video game music show *High Score*, she moved to the BBC as host of Radio 3's *Sound of Gaming* and of concerts with the BBC Concert Orchestra. *Dear Esther*, the score she wrote for the experimental video game, was performed in an orchestral version at the Barbican in 2016 and subsequently toured internationally. She has also worked on projects with the Royal Shakespeare Company (*The Seven Ages of Man*, selected for the 2019 Sundance Film Festival), London Oriana Choir (composer-in-residence, 2018) and Crouch End Festival Chorus (*Echo*, premiered at Alexandra Palace last October). She won an Outstanding Contribution award at Women in Games in 2018.

Profile © BBC

“Life in general inspires me – nature, my child, travel, friends, laughter, music, illness and loss – it all goes into the pot.”

Jessica Curry on her musical inspiration

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.



Robert Ames *conductor*

Robert Ames is Co-Artistic Director and Co-Principal Conductor of the London Contemporary Orchestra, which he has directed at London venues ranging from Printworks London and Oval Space to the Royal Festival Hall, Barbican Centre and Royal Opera House,

Covent Garden, as well as at the Tate Modern and Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms.

He has worked closely with many leading figures in new music, including Bryce Dessner, Philip Glass, Anna Meredith, Meredith Monk, Terry Riley and Steve Reich, and collaborated with a varied range of artists, from fashion designer Vivienne Westwood to architect-designer Ron Arad and musicians Actress, DJ Shadow, Jonny Greenwood, Frank Ocean and Thom Yorke.

His work has encompassed a number of film projects as conductor, producer and orchestrator. These include soundtracks for Naji Abu Nowar's *Theeb* (Oscar nomination 2014), John Maclean's *Slow West* (Sundance Award 2015), Ridley Scott's *Alien: Covenant* (2017), Paul Thomas Anderson's *Phantom Thread* (Oscar nomination 2018) and Alma Har'el's *Honeyboy* (Sundance Film Festival 2019).

Other highlights include conducting Philip Glass's *The Bowie Symphonies* Trilogy at the Royal Festival Hall, a world tour of Jónsi and Alex Somers's album *Riceboy Sleeps*, the world premiere of William Basinski's *Disintegration Loops, Other Worlds* at the Barbican, a BBC Prom of sci-fi film music, and work with Manchester Camerata, the Symphony Orchestra of India and the National Orchestra of Lyon.

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Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Having celebrated its 75th anniversary last year, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's continues its mission to enrich lives through orchestral experiences that are uncompromising both in their excellence and appeal. Performing approximately 200 concerts each season and with a worldwide audience of more than half a million people, the orchestra embraces a broad repertoire.

Vasily Petrenko became Music Director last August and together they will pursue a strategy to broaden the audience for orchestral music while enhancing the RPO's reputation at home and abroad.

The RPO aims to place orchestral music at the heart of contemporary society, collaborating with creative partners to foster a deeper engagement with communities to ensure that live orchestral music is accessible to as inclusive and diverse an audience as possible. To achieve this, in 1993 the orchestra launched RPO Resound, which has grown to become an innovative and respected orchestral community and education programme in the UK and internationally. The programme delivers bespoke, pioneering education, community and talent-development projects to a wide range of participant groups, always with the overarching objective to leave a lasting legacy.

Music Director

Vasily Petrenko

First Violins

Duncan Riddell
leader
Shana Douglas
Esther Kim
Joana
Valentinaviciute
Eriko Nagayama
Andrew Klee
Kay Chappell
Anthony
Protheroe
Adriana
Iacovache-Pana
Sophie Mather
Rosemary
Wainwright
Judith Templeman

Second Violins

Andrew Storey *
Elen Hâf Rideal
David O'Leary
Stephen Payne
Sali-Wyn Ryan
Nicola Hutchings
Susan Evans
Colin Callow
Catriona Parker
Elspeth Macleod

Violas

Abigail Fenna *
Liz Varlow
Joseph Fisher
Ugne Tiškutė
Chian Lim
Esther Harling
Jonathan Hallett
Clive Howard

Cellos

Richard Harwood *
Jonathan Ayling
Chantal Webster
Roberto
Sorrentino
Rachel van der
Tang
Naomi Watts
Anna Stuart
Emma Black

Double Bases

Edward Francis-Smith †
Benjamin
Cunningham
David Gordon
Ben Wolstenholme
Cathy Colwell
Joseph Cowie

Flutes

Harry Winstanley †
Joanna Marsh

Piccolo

Jenny Farley †

Oboes

John Roberts *
Lauren Weavers

Cor Anglais

Jessica Mogridge †

Clarinets

Katherine Lacy *
Sonia Sielaff

Bass Clarinet
Massimo di Trolio †**Bassoons**
Richard Ion *
Helen Storey**Contrabassoon**
Luke Whitehead †**Horns**
Mark Vines †
Diego Incertis
Sanchez †
Kira Doherty
David McQueen
Flora Bain**Trumpets**
Richard Blake †
Adam Wright
Mike Allen
Toby Street**Trombones**
Matthew Knight *
Rupert Whitehead
Benny Vernon**Bass Trombone**
Josh Cirtina ***Tuba**
Kevin Morgan ***Timpani**
Patrick King †**Percussion**
Stephen Quigley *
Martin Owens ‡
Gerald Kirby**Harp**
Bryn Lewis †**Keyboard**
Richard Mark
Etherington**Guitar**
Pete Callard** Principal*
† Guest Principal
*‡ Co-Principal**The list of players
was correct at
the time of going
to press***Managing Director**
James Williams**Deputy Managing
Director**
Huw Davies**Concerts Director**
Louise Badger**Concerts Manager**
Frances Axford**Concerts
Co-ordinator**
Michaela Higham**Tours and
Projects Manager**
Dawn Day**Tours Co-
ordinator**
Victoria Webber**General Manager,
Royal Philharmonic
Concert Orchestra**
Malcolm Wilson**Projects and
Recordings
Manager**
Elli Clements**Senior Orchestra
Manager**
Kathy Balmain**Orchestra
Manager**
Rebecca
Rimmington**Librarian**
Patrick Williams**Transport and
Stage Manager**
Nathan Budden**Stage Manager**
Dan Johnson**Assistant Stage
Manager**
John Pullig**Orchestral Driver
(Part-time)**
Peter Lever**Business
Development
Director**
Huw Davies**Head of Sales
and Marketing**
Louise Williams**Digital Marketing
Manager**
Matt Otty**Friends and
Groups Manager**
Jo Thomson**Programme Editor**
Doran Crowhurst**Content Co-
ordinator**
Tim Lutton**Development
Coordinator**
Lucy Evans**Marketing and
Box Office
Assistant**
Miriam Franklin**Director of
Community and
Education
(Maternity Cover)**
Lisa Rodio**Women's EURO
Anthem Project
Manager**
Henrietta Ford**Community and
Education
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Rhianon
Crompton**Finance Director**
Ann Firth**Finance Officer**
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