

The Shackled King and Brünnhilde's Dream Premiere at the Wigmore Hall

BARRY MILLINGTON

One of my most treasured memories, in over five decades of attending Wagner operas, is that of watching Sir John Tomlinson, the finest Wotan of my generation, striding the stage at Bayreuth as the ruler of the gods in Harry Kupfer's landmark Ring production of 1988. I little suspected back then that I would ever have the privilege of working with him, as I have been doing for the last few years on a

couple of projects involving Counterpoise, the ensemble I run with my wife, the trumpeter Deborah Calland.

Our latest commission is a work written by one of the most significant British composers of our time, John Casken. The Shackled King, is essentially a reworking of Shakespeare's King Lear, incorporating Shakespeare's text, but reordered and set in a vocal continuum that embraces conventional word-setting, spoken text and a form of Sprechstimme



Rozanna Madylus and John Tomlinson rehearse The Shackled King (Photo: Barry Millington)

that lies between. The now white-maned Sir John is magnificent in the role of Lear: a Daily Telegraph review referred to his 'titanic,

heart-rending performance'. Our wonderful mezzo-soprano, Rozanna Madylus, takes the part not only of Cordelia, but also her two sisters, Goneril and Regan, and the Fool. Quite a tour-de-force!

The Shackled King receives its London premiere at the Wigmore Hall on 26 January in tandem with a musical monodrama I have put together under the title Brünnhilde's Dream. The eponymous Valkyrie, Brünnhilde, is put to sleep by her father Wotan on a mountain rock at the end of Act 3 of Wagner's Die Walküre. Brünnhilde's Dream begins by attempting to imagine what was going through her mind on the rock, not only her vortex of emotions about the future, but also her anger about the past.

She also speaks, to some extent, for Everywoman: we go beyond the confines of Die Walküre to contemplate the injustices done to women through the ages. That experience is refracted through a carefully chosen sequence of post-Wagnerian repertoire, including several female composers only just receiving the attention they deserve.

The sequence begins with Wotan's Farewell to Brünnhilde. Knowing we'd have the incomparable Sir John Tomlinson with us to sing The Shackled King, it was too great a temptation not to ask him to open Brünnhilde's Dream for us with this passage.

Booking is now open for The Shackled King/Brünnhilde's Dream at www.wigmore-hall.org.uk.

An Autumn Concert at Fellowship House

SHELLEY-ANNE SALISBURY

I always feel a sense of dread as the clocks turn back, signifying the end of summer and the start of shorter days and dark evenings. So, it was a particular delight to go along to one of Fellowship House's Sunday Afternoon Autumn Concert Series the first Sunday after daylight saving ended. Noriko Ogawa and her partner, Philip Smith, delighted us with a selection of works by French composers, Chabrier, Ravel and Saint-Saëns. As Noriko explained, playing duets on the piano could be challenging as there was a great deal of physical proximity and fingers often got entangled. The grand piano (originally test driven by Noriko for Fellowship House) suddenly looked rather small as the pair sat down side by side. I sincerely hoped the couple would be on speaking terms by the end of the concert.



Photo: Shelley-Anne Salisbury

I needn't have worried. Commensurate professionals and world class pianists, Noriko and Philip played beautifully and without the slightest contretemps. The 3 Romantic Waltzes by Chabrier were a charming voyage through the heady initial stages of flirtation and courtship through to the more settled romantic period of true love and ended with the peaks and troughs of the matured relationship. We were then treated

to a selection of Ravel's charming short pieces inspired by the world of childhood fantasy and fairy stories. These were technically challenging and it was hard to believe Ravel had written them for young children as teaching pieces. Noriko and Philip definitely had to concentrate and keep their composure as they crossed over into one another's half of the keyboard. The concert ended with the extremely well-known and much loved Saint-Saëns' Carnival of the Animals and it was an absolute joy.

It might have been the combination of the uplifting music and the glass of prosecco included in the £12 ticket (which is heavily subsidised by Fellowship House and its two sponsors, the John S Cohen Foundation and the HGS Trust) but I didn't even notice it had started to get dark at 4.30pm. What an ideal way to banish those Autumn Sunday night blues.



JOSHUA BERGER
CARPENTRY

For all your professional carpentry needs

I specialise in all domestic and commercial carpentry to the highest possible standards

Professional decorating services also managed with over 10 years of excellence

Call now for a free quotation
07811 911 389
joshuabergercarpentry.com

Hall and Randall Plumbers

Plumbing and Heating Services • Property Maintenance



Central Heating, Plumbing Repairs & Advisory Service

Look no further... your local plumbers

Emergency repairs, blocked pipes, drainage, guttering, roofing, central heating and boilers.
12 months guarantee, 40 years experience

132 Manor Way, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 1QX

Web: www.hallandrandallplumbers.com
Email: office@hallandrandall.com
Tel: 020 8953 2094 • Fax: 020 8905 1602

Evenings: Garry 020 8207 3286 • Greg 020 8953 9828




