

Emilia: The Music of the Dark Lady at Shakespeare's Globe, Remembrance at the Peacock Theatre, 45th Anniversary at Queen Elizabeth Hall and Semele at the Barbican and US tour

The English Concert announce 2018-19 season, celebrating their 45th Anniversary



'One can't say enough about the splendors of The English Concert under Bicket'
Broadway World, 2018

The English Concert celebrates its **45th Anniversary** year with a star-studded **2018-19 season** featuring **Brenda Rae, Fflur Wyn, Dorothee Mields, Elizabeth DeShong and Ailish Tynan**. Led by **Harry Bicket**, the season also showcases guest director **Kristian Bezuidenhout** and the ensemble's principal musicians. Following critically acclaimed performances of **Rinaldo** in March 2018, The English Concert and Harry Bicket continue their celebrated annual Handel opera series with **Semele**, touring throughout the USA, Paris and London next spring. Elsewhere in the season the orchestra explores the cross-pollination of ideas through the music of Mozart and Haydn in a programme entitled '**The Art of the Arrangement**'. Meanwhile in September, they commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I with the world premiere of Wayne Eagling's ballet **Remembrance** set to Handel's **Ode to St Cecilia's Day**.



Following their new staging of *Messiah*, The English Concert continues to pursue powerful new collaborations with cross-artform partners. On **8 July** they return to the **Sam Wanamaker Playhouse** at **Shakespeare's Globe** in anticipation of **Morgan Lloyd Malcolm's** latest play **Emilia**. The supposed 'Dark Lady' of Shakespeare's sonnets, **Emilia Bassano** was Britain's first published female poet. Largely erased from history, this programme pairs her poetry with the music of her family and their contemporaries at the Elizabethan/Stuart Court.

To commemorate the centenary of the Armistice, The English Concert join forces with **New English Ballet Theatre** and **The Erebus Ensemble** to present choreographer **Wayne Eagling's** new ballet **Remembrance** at the **Peacock Theatre** on **27-29 September**. Set to **Handel's Ode to St Cecilia's Day**, *Remembrance* follows the whirlwind romance between Dame Marie Rambert and Ashley Dukes, cut short as Dukes is recalled to the battlefield. After months of writing letters to and from the trenches, and having met only on four occasions, these hugely influential figures in the arts world finally married in 1918. Handel's musical depiction of nature and creation is a timeless backdrop to the story of perseverance and love in the face of war and destruction.



"At long last this country possesses a first-class baroque ensemble shining brightly in our midst"
The Telegraph, May 1973

In 1973 The English Concert gave its first concert at the Purcell Rooms with a young Trevor Pinnock. Now forty-five years later, they return to the newly refurbished Queen Elizabeth Hall on **11 October 2018** to celebrate four and a half decades of music making. Under keyboard virtuoso **Kristian Bezuidenhout** (the orchestra's newly appointed guest director), the ensemble performs works by **CPE Bach, JC Bach and Mozart**.

"In arguably one of the most memorable performances of any opera in 2018, The English Concert came in with a superstar cast and conquered in a big way".
OperaWire, 2018



The highlight of each season is The English Concert's annual **Handel opera tour**, commissioned by New York's Carnegie Hall. Following hugely successful performances of *Rinaldo* in 2018, **Harry Bicket** directs *Semele* from **3-16 April 2019** with an all-star cast including **Elizabeth DeShong, Benjamin Howard, Christopher Lowrey, and Brenda Rae** in the title role. Blending both Italian opera and English oratorio, *Semele* is a rare hybrid steeped in eroticism and puritanism.

A tale of adultery and intrigue amongst gods, the innuendo proved too much for the London audiences in 1744 and Handel was forced to present a revision after only 4 performances. *Semele* is performed at the **Théâtre des Champs-Élysées** on **3 April** before travelling to the **Barbican** on **5 April** and **Sage, Gateshead** on **7 April**. The production then embarks on a **US tour to Dartmouth, Ann Arbor, New York and Philadelphia from 10-16 April**. Since the first instalment in 2013 with *Radamisto*, Bicket continues to unite the orchestra's virtuosic instrumentalists and high-calibre casts with Handel's greatest music, making this series an unmissable event in the musical calendar.

'They are also virtuosic, and this is a virtuosic score for everyone, singers and instrumentalists.'

New York Classical Review, 2018

That same brilliance shines through in the rest of the season as the spotlight focuses on the orchestra's principal musicians. A feature of many recordings in The English Concert's discography, principal flautist Lisa Beznosiuk – one of the world's leading performers on early flutes – appears in Kristian Bezuidenhout's all-Mozart programme on **3 May 2019** at **St John's Smith Square**. The beautiful ***Andante for Flute and Orchestra*** is a wonderful contrast to the stormy intensity of ***Symphony No.40*** or Mozart's lyrical final piano concerto.



Watch now: Kristian Bezuidenhout on the place of keyboard instruments in Mozart

In a programme inspired by one of the last of the Medici dynasty, principal oboe **Katharina Spreckelson** performs **Marcello's *Oboe Concerto in C minor*** (featured on The English Concert's forthcoming CD release this Autumn) on the **11 June 2019** at **Wigmore Hall**. A keen supporter of the arts, and an avid musician himself, Grand Prince Ferdinand of Tuscany turned Florence into a bustling centre of arts and culture, attracting the best artists from across Europe.

On **28 October 2018** at **Wigmore Hall** The English Concert and **Harry Bicket** examine the art of arrangement in a programme that explores the influence and cross-pollination between creative minds. Throughout history composers have been inspired by one another: Mendelssohn is largely responsible for Bach's re-emergence through his re-orchestration and significant revisions of the *St Matthew Passion*, Mozart reimagined *Messiah* and Bach transcribed Vivaldi concertos for other instruments. **Bicket** takes a leaf from the past and directs arrangements of **Mozart** and **Haydn**, including a number of his own creations.



The theme of rediscovery continues on **26 January 2019** when The English Concert return to **Saffron Hall**. The orchestra celebrates four baroque masters (Vivaldi, Purcell, Locatelli and Bach) largely forgotten after their own era but who have risen to the top of the pile in more recent times. The English Concert's exceptional leader **Nadja Zwiener** performs **Bach's *Violin Concerto in A minor***, joined later by her fellow principals for **Locatelli's *Concerto for four violins***.

After appearances with the orchestra in February 2018 of Buxtehude's most touching vocal works, soprano **Dorothee Mields** returns on **20 November** at

Wigmore Hall alongside **James Hall**, **Nick Pritchard** and **Ashley Riches** for a concert devoted to Bach's surviving cantatas for Advent.

The English Concert welcomes several guest directors throughout the season, including **Laurence Cummings** on **12 December** at **St John's Smith Square**. Cummings continues the festive mood with a mixture of **Bach Holy Week cantatas** and **Scarlatti's *Messa par il Santissimo Natale***, a standout work in his much-overlooked liturgical music. Later in the year on **8 March** **Christian Curnyn** will direct The English Concert for a suitably eclectic programme featuring two suites at **Wigmore Hall** - **Leclair's *Suite from 'Scylla et Glaucus'*** and music from **Purcell's** first work for the English stage ***Dioclesian*** - plus **Bach's** timeless masterpiece, his ***Concerto for two violins in D minor***, with violinists **Nadja Zwiener** and **Tuomo Suni**

SUMMER 2018

8 July 2018

Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

Emilia: The Music of The Dark Lady
Songs and sonnets of Emilia Bassano

Including music by **William Lawes**, **Nicholas Lanier** and **John Dowland**, paired with poetry by **Emilia Bassano**.

The English Concert
Nicholas Mulroy *tenor*
William Carter *lute*
Elizabeth MacCarthy *violin*
Persephone Gibbs *violin*
Alfonso Leal del Ojo *viola*
Jonathan Byers *cello*

19 July 2018

Buxton International Festival, St John's Church

Purcell *Suite from The Fairy Queen*
Corelli *Concerto Grosso in C Op.6, No.10*
Bach *Harpsichord Concerto in A BWV 1055*
Bach *Sinfonia from Cantata No.42 BWV 42*
Vivaldi *Concerto for Strings in G minor RV 157*
Handel *Concerto Grosso in G minor Op.6, No.6*
Telemann *Tafelmusik Suite No.3 in B flat TWV 55:B1*

The English Concert
Christopher Bucknall
director/harpsichord

2018 - 2019 SEASON

27, 28, 29 September 2018

Peacock Theatre, London

Remembrance

Handel *Ode to St Cecilia's Day* HWV 76

The English Concert
New English Ballet Theatre
The Erebus Ensemble
Harry Bicket *conductor/harpsichord*
Wayne Eagling *choreographer*
Fflur Wyn *soprano*
Joshua Ellicott *tenor*

11 October 2018

Queen Elizabeth Hall

45th Anniversary Concert

CPE Bach *Sinfonia for Strings in C Wq.182/3*
JC Bach *Symphony in G minor Op.6, No.6*
CPE Bach *Concerto in D minor Wq.23*
Mozart *Piano Trio in B flat K502*
Mozart *Symphony No.29 in A K201*

The English Concert
Kristian Bezuidenhout
director/fortepiano

28 October 2018

Wigmore Hall, London

The Art of the Arrangement

Mozart *Fantasia in F minor (after K608 for mechanical clock)* arr.

Bicket

Haydn *Symphony No.104 in D* arr.

Salomon

Mozart *Fantasia in F minor/major (after K594 for mechanical clock)* arr.

Bicket

Haydn *Divertimento No.2 in D (after String Quartet Op.71, No.2)* arr.

Wranitzky

The English Concert

Harry Bicket *director/fortepiano*

20 November 2018

Wigmore Hall, London

Music for Advent: Nun komm der Heiden Heiland

Bach *Cantata 'Nun komm der Heiden Heiland' BWV 61*

Bach *Cantata 'Schwingt freudig' BWV 36*

Erlebach *Ouverture No.6 in G minor*

Bach *Cantata 'Nun komm der Heiden Heiland' BWV 62*

The English Concert

Harry Bicket *director/organ*

Dorothee Miels *soprano*

James Hall *countertenor*

Nick Pritchard *tenor*

Ashley Riches *bass*

12 December 2018

St John's Smith Square

Il Santissimo Natale

Scarlatti *Messa par il Santissimo Natale*

Gabrieli *O magnum mysterium*

Gallus *Omnes Saba*

Bach *Cantata 'Selig is der Mann' BWV 57*

Bach *Cantata 'Ich feue mich in dir' BWV 133*

The English Concert

Choir of The English Concert

Laurence Cummings *director/organ*

Cecilia Osmond *soprano*

Rebecca Outram *soprano*

Helen Charlston *alto*

Nick Pritchard *tenor*

Marcus Farnsworth *baritone*

26 January 2019

Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

Baroque's Avengers

Vivaldi *Concerto for strings in G minor RV 157*

Purcell *Suite from Abdelazer Z570*

Bach *Concerto for violin in A minor BWV 1041*

Locatelli *Concerto for four violins in F major Op.4, No.12*

Bach *Orchestral Suite No.3 in D BWV 1068*

The English Concert

Harry Bicket *director/harpsichord*

Nadja Zwiener *violin*

8 March 2019

Wigmore Hall, London

Christian Curnyn

Handel *Concerto Grosso in D Op.6, No.5 HWV 323*

Purcell *Suite from Dioclesian Z627*

Bach *Concerto for two violins in D minor BWV 1043*

Leclair *Suite from 'Scylla et Glaucus'*

Muffat *Sonata V in G from Armonico Tributo*

The English Concert

Christian Curnyn

director/harpsichord

Nadja Zwiener & Tuomo Suni *violins*

3 April 2019

Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris

5 April 2019

Barbican, London

7 April 2019

Sage, Gateshead

10 April 2019

Hopkins Center for the Arts, Dartmouth

12 April 2019

Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor

14 April 2019

Carnegie Hall, New York

16 April 2019

Annenberg Center, Philadelphia

guests such as our newly appointed Principal Guest Director and fortepianist Kristian Bezuidenhout, we always strive for excellence.

"Harry Bicket and his English Concert chamber orchestra, held Carnegie Hall's audience in thrall for nearly nine minutes as she [Joyce DiDonato] wrung every bit of emotion from this music."

New York Times

But it is not just about our award-winning discography, or who we have worked with, it is about reaching the audience and making music together. This is why we are always on the look-out for exciting new opportunities and new ways to tell a story, whether we are working with the likes of Tom Morris to stage Handel's *Messiah*, bringing its emotional and dramatic essence to the fore, or interacting in a more intimate way in Shakespeare's Globe or the Wanamaker Playhouse.

"Through it all, Bicket and The English Concert were nothing short of brilliant. Sporting perfectly tight ensemble, spacious and ringing tone, a variety of colors, gleaming strings and clean, forceful brass, they are the model of a period chamber orchestra in every sense." New York Classical Review

Central to our activities is our flourishing commission from Carnegie Hall to present one Handel opera-in-concert each year. Starting with *Radamisto* in 2013, subsequent performances of *Theodora*, *Alcina*, *Hercules*, *Orlando*, *Ariodante* and most recently *Rinaldo*, have seen the orchestra in major concert halls across Europe and the US, alongside Joyce DiDonato, David Daniels, Sarah Connolly and Iestyn Davies. This season, Brenda Rae appears in the title role of *Semele*.

"Primed and polished over a sequence of concert performances in New York, Vienna and Hamburg, Harry Bicket and The English Concert's Ariodante was fuelled by female energy"

The Times – 5* review of *Ariodante*, 2017

"a performance so stunning it was liable to make even the most jaded of early-music skeptics take note."

New York Classical Review – review of *Ariodante*, 2017

"A superb performance that left the audience glowing with pleasure. Unobtrusively yet firmly overseen by Harry Bicket, leading the spritely English Concert from the harpsichord, it was staged in bare, uncostumed concert form."

Telegraph - 5* review of *Orlando*, 2016

"The choir and orchestra of The English Concert were on impeccable form under Bicket, with high-definition articulation and tonal quality underlying everything they did"

The Guardian – 5*review of *Hercules*, 2015

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