

Saturday 14 September 2019

**RATTLE
SEASON OPENING**

Emily Howard Antisphere (world premiere)*

Colin Matthews Violin Concerto †

Interval

Walton Symphony No 1

Sir Simon Rattle conductor

Leila Josefowicz violin

* Commissioned for Sir Simon Rattle and the LSO by the Barbican, supported by PRS Foundation's Open Fund for Organisations. Performance generously supported by The London Community Foundation and Cockayne - Grants for the Arts.

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† Generously supported by Resonate, a PRS Foundation initiative in partnership with the Association of British Orchestras, BBC Radio 3 and Boltini Trust.



Concert ends approx 9.40pm

Filed for broadcast at [youtube.com/lsoc](https://www.youtube.com/lsoc)
on Saturday 21 September at 7.30pm

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Emily Howard Antisphere (world premiere) 2019 / programme note by Paul Griffiths



n antisphere is, as anyone might guess, the opposite of a sphere.

Where a sphere curves round its centre, the surface of an antisphere is everywhere curving away. Its form is something like that of a spindle, with an infinitely wide circle at its middle, narrowing in each direction to ends that reach to their own infinities – a strange thing, impossible to realise, but to the imagination full of potential.

To Emily Howard's imagination it spoke, in particular, of infinity, of shrinkage (for images on the surface of an antisphere will be squeezed relative to their appearance on a flat plane, and squeezed the more as they move towards the infinite edge and ends), and therefore of designs in which the same pattern is repeated in smaller and smaller versions of itself, down to the infinitesimal (or larger and larger versions, up to the infinite), as in some of the works of [M.C. Escher](#). Howard was also stimulated by the collision in the very word of two radically dissimilar elements: 'sphere', with its rich range of reference (from mustard seeds to suns, not excluding 'personal sphere', 'sphere of knowledge', and so on), and 'anti', with its single impulse to negate.

Her work's urgent opening – 'Viscerally' is the marking – presents a sequence of

chords (thirds in the double-basses are fundamental) that will recur through the course of the piece. Thickening with quarter-tones adds grit and force, here and in much that follows. The sequence speeds up, to a tutti chord whose repetitions conversely slow down, allowing other music to come through and begin a new process. (Howard has said how she wanted to give the LSO opportunity to show off their command of dynamic extremes, and of swift moves between them). Soon after comes another graphic image, from the five percussionists, of speeding up and slowing down.

All the time, in different ways, the basic chord sequence is contracting and expanding. When spaced out, it may cease to be heard as a sequence at all; at the other extreme, it may be compacted into a single event. Connections will sometimes be emphatic: there is a massive shivering on the first of the basses' thirds, with further intensification and release, and much later an outburst of E-flat minor, which comes from the basses' endpoint. This is by no means the only element of traditional tonality that will be encountered, but estranged now, as if inscribed on the antisphere's inward curving. It is on this unfamiliar surface, too, that we find motifs expanded and contracted in the work's



M.C. Escher's *Fish and Scales*

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central, quasi-fugal passage. Finally, after a long deceleration–acceleration, the music becomes slow, quiet and bare, until the arrival of its chord sequence in one last transformation.

Antisphere completes a triptych with other works Howard has based on curvatures: *Torus*, which was played at the 2016 BBC Proms, and *sphere*. We might feel, once again, the excitement of hearing geometry, but the excitement, too, of music stretching its limbs – and wrapping itself back up into an instant. □

Commissioned for Sir Simon Rattle and the LSO by the **Barbican**, supported by **PRS Foundation's Open Fund for Organisations**. Performance generously supported by **The London Community Foundation** and **Cockayne – Grants for the Arts**.

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Part of **Life Rewired** at the Barbican, a season exploring what it means to be human when technology is changing everything.

Emily Howard in profile b 1979



Emily Howard's music is known for its particular connection with science. Her 2016 BBC Proms Commission *Torus* (Concerto for Orchestra), described by *The Times* as 'visionary' and by *The Guardian* as 'one of this year's finest new works', won the orchestral category of the 2017 British Composer Awards. BBC Radio 3's Record Review described her NMC Debut Disc *Magnetite* as 'a confident, major orchestral debut', hailing its 'scientific ideas brilliantly articulated'.

Magnetite (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra / Vasily Petrenko), commissioned by Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008, first won Howard critical acclaim the year she received the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for Composers. Works include *Solar* (London Symphony Orchestra / Nicholas Collon, 2010); *Calculus of the Nervous System* (Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra / Sir James MacMillan; Wien Modern 2011 and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra / Andris Nelsons; BBC Proms 2012); *Mesmerism* (2011), commissioned for pianist Alexandra Dariescu, which won a 2012 British Composer Award; *Axon* (BBC Philharmonic / Juanjo Mena; 2013); *Afference* (Elias String Quartet, 2015); *sphere* (Bamberg Symphony Orchestra / Alondra de la Parra; 2017); *The Music of Proof* (Piatti

Quartet, mathematician Marcus du Sautoy, New Scientist Live 2017); and mini-operas *Ada sketches* (Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre, 2012) and *Zátopek!* (New Music 20x12, London Cultural Olympiad).

Howard was a featured composer at the Aldeburgh Festival 2018 with the world premiere of her opera *To See The Invisible*, an Aldeburgh Festival Commission. *The Anvil: An Elegy for Peterloo*, the first of three world premieres in the current year, is a major new work for orchestra, chorus and soloists with a text by Michael Symmons Roberts, commissioned by the Manchester International Festival and BBC Philharmonic. A new chamber work featuring mezzo-soprano Marta Fontanals-Simmons is part of a day-long exploration of the work of Ada Lovelace curated by the composer with Britten Sinfonia for the Barbican Centre. Her new orchestral score *Antisphere* receives its world premiere with the LSO in tonight's concert. □

EMILY HOWARD AT THE BARBICAN

Friday 1 November 7.30pm, Barbican

Emily Howard *Torus*
Vaughan Williams
The Lark Ascending; *Symphony No 5*

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Martyn Brabbins conductor
Elena Urioste violin

Saturday 2 November 6.30pm,
Milton Court Concert Hall

ADA LOVELACE: IMAGINING THE ANALYTICAL ENGINE

Emily Howard new work; *Ada sketches* and works by Patricia Alessandrini, Shiva Feshareki & PRiSM Team led by Robert Laidlow

Emily Howard curator
Marta Fontanals-Simmons mezzo-soprano
Britten Sinfonia

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Emily Howard in conversation / interview by Lydia Heald



head of the world premiere of *Antisphere*, we caught up with composer, professor and LSO

Panufnik Scheme alumna Emily Howard to talk about her writing, influences, and being a composer in the 21st century.

What's a typical day in your life?

I usually start work very early, mainly because I find that the best ideas come in the morning. I have to feed the cat, after that I'm allowed some coffee and then I read something to stimulate my brain. It could be mathematics, philosophy, poetry, anything. And then I start writing. Often in the afternoon I do something else – I might read, go for a walk or go to the gym. When

I'm in composing mode I'm quite rooted to my desk, so it's nice to get away from that.

How did it feel to be commissioned to write for Sir Simon Rattle and the LSO?

It was an amazing email I received; would I like to write a piece for the LSO conducted by Sir Simon Rattle? It was one of those wonderful moments when you jump around the room and say 'yes I really would like to do that'. It's over 10 years on from my experience on the LSO Panufnik Composers Scheme, so to have had time to mature and to have written so much music in between and then to go back – it's an opportunity to return but to have grown.

How do you start writing a new piece?

At the start of a piece I have a huge moment of brainstorming. I collect ideas (there are usually too many) and at some point I find I need to actually just decide on a few ideas to use. That's when the hard work begins. Often I will then set up a strict framework based on algorithmic processes for working with these musical ideas until there comes a point when I then work much more freely. There are usually a couple of moments where somehow the point of the piece crystallises in my head, and in these moments I need to be completely focused. There are also always a couple of moments where you have a slight doubt, but you just have to learn that this is part of the process. In fact, it wouldn't be right if you never worried about it.

What is it like composing in the 21st century?

I think it's different for different people. Some people comment on society in a very extrovert way and some people are much more subtle with what they're doing. I think your role is to say something about what's happening around you, but it's up to the artist how visible that is. With my music currently, most often I'm overtly responding to artificial intelligence and algorithms, mathematical shapes and structures.

Tell us about *Antisphere* ...

It's the third in a triptych of pieces influenced by mathematical shapes and geometries alongside a piece called *sphere* and another called *Torus*. The idea for *Antisphere* came when speaking with my colleague, mathematician Marcus du Sautoy. We were discussing *Torus* and the positive curvature of the sphere and he said, 'Have you thought about the opposite of that?'

I like to use extreme moments of very, very loud or very, very quiet. I think the LSO are so fantastic at making these changes. When I knew I was writing for them I thought, 'I'm going to make these shapes in the music that go from one extreme to the other.'

I think it's important not to tell the audience how to listen to a piece of music. Everyone has had their own experience in life and their own experience of music. When a new piece is put out there, each person will have a different experience. I've had moments where performers and audience members have said things to me about my piece and they're things that I hadn't thought about myself. That is a very exciting experience, to put something out there and have people react in different ways. □

Colin Matthews Violin Concerto 2009 / programme note by Paul Griffiths

- 1 **Sognando – Scherzando – Tempo primo – Scorrevole**
- 2 **Molto sostenuto – Sostenuto con moto – Animato – Allegro molto**

Leila Josefowicz violin



striking number of composers have written violin concertos this century, urged on in many cases by violinists, among whom tonight's soloist – Leila Josefowicz – prompted not only this concerto from Colin Matthews but also Oliver Knussen's (not to mention others by Esa-Pekka Salonen, Luca Francesconi, John Adams ...). She played the Colin Matthews for the first time with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra just under ten years ago, on 30 September 2009, Knussen conducting, and has since repeated the work elsewhere in Europe and in the United States.

The two movements, each playing for around ten minutes, are different not so much in speed – both start out slow and have full capacity to accelerate – as in character, mood, orchestral colour and rhythm. Where colour is concerned, Matthews writes for a relatively modest ensemble, but with superb resource and authority as he scans light in the first movement and darker tones in his

second. At the same time, a generally free, supple flow is replaced by stern but ever-changing pulsation.

From the opening sound of the first movement we are in a magic garden of high and glistening sonorities – piccolos, harp – in slow descent over brass chords (through most of the work trumpets are replaced by their warmer cousins, flugelhorns). And the solo violin is here, too. This is its home, or its dream home; the marking is 'sognando', dreaming. In this decelerated time, it dreams in great breaths that reach up to high notes and slowly, waveringly descend, often echoed by the orchestra. Then it finds another voice, at the bottom of its range, a little more urgent. It will need this voice again, to start the second movement.

Meanwhile, there comes a turning, out of the dream into play. The violin is now spinning down like a sycamore seed, the orchestra bouncing along beside and around. Excitement increases, but the violin is trying to bring back dream time, and eventually it succeeds, leading the music towards a climax. Here, however, it creeps out of its own dream, has to be called back, and returns with a different sort of music, fizzing with little notes in rapid repetition. Racing around as if in search, reclaiming elements of the dream,

the violin ends as if it has discovered the gateway to the garden again. The question is whether it stands open or is closed.

Remembering its initiatory, low-register idea from before, the violin repeats it as a summons, which sends echoes through the orchestra, fading and changing. From the outdoor space of the first movement we have come inside, into a kind of glowing gloom. The violin, while responsible for this new ambience, appears to want out, and eventually, after some attempts at the dream, it makes its exit, leaving the orchestra to repeat the summons majestically. Then the violin returns, seemingly with new confidence as it runs. The clamour of the orchestral cage, however, comes right forward, and the solo instrument is stopped. It comes back again with new vigour, and recovers its dream. Nobody else, however, is dreaming. The orchestra is, rather, storming on, and the violin can only storm with it, at a peak of virtuosity, towards a stop that is abrupt, enigmatic. □

Generously supported by **Resonate**, a PRS Foundation initiative in partnership with the **Association of British Orchestras**, **BBC Radio 3** and **Boltini Trust**.



PRS FOUNDATION: RESONATE

PRS Foundation's Resonate initiative is a fund and resource which encourages professional orchestras to programme into their repertoire the best pieces of UK music from the past 25 years. Resonate aims to inspire more performances, recordings and broadcasts of outstanding contemporary repertoire, as chosen by UK orchestras, whilst strengthening approaches to programming this music for the benefit of audiences, composers and players in the UK and overseas. PRS Foundation offers financial support with grants of up to £10,000 to orchestras who commit to exploring contemporary UK repertoire as part of their season and longer term audience development programme.

Resonate is run by PRS Foundation in partnership with the Association of British Orchestras (ABO), which has received support from The Foyle Foundation to create a comprehensive database of pieces commissioned by UK orchestras in the last 25 years. BBC Radio 3 is the broadcast partner for Resonate and aims to broadcast as many of the Resonate pieces as possible whilst also helping to raise awareness of this national programme.

Colin Matthews in profile b 1946

'The challenges associated with securing repeat performances of new orchestral works are a long-standing topic for composers, orchestra directors and funding agencies. With our Resonate initiative, together with the ABO, Foyle Foundation and BBC Radio 3, we're able to respond to these challenges by offering funding to UK orchestras who would like to invest in their programming of new and exciting UK music from the last 25 years and allow audiences to get to know this fantastic music beyond its first performance.'

Joe Frankland, CEO of PRS Foundation

'I am proud to be an ambassador for PRS Foundation's Resonate Fund, which helps to ensure that the most incredible orchestral works written over the past 25 years can be performed and heard again. There is such a rich repertoire out there, I believe we simply must ensure it is played. The Resonate scheme is helping to make that possible.'

Sir Simon Rattle



Colin Matthews was born in London in 1946. He studied with Arnold Whittall and Nicholas Maw; in the 1970s he was assistant to Benjamin Britten, and worked for many years with Imogen Holst. His collaboration with Deryck Cooke on the performing version of Mahler's Tenth Symphony lasted from 1963 until its publication in 1975.

Over four decades his music has ranged from solo piano music through five string quartets and many ensemble and orchestral works. From 1992 to 1999 he was Associate Composer with the LSO, writing amongst other works a Cello Concerto for Rostropovich. In 1997 his choral/orchestral *Renewal*, commissioned for the 50th anniversary of BBC Radio 3, was given a Royal Philharmonic Society Award.

Orchestral works since 2000 include *Reflected Images* for the San Francisco Symphony, *Berceuse for Dresden* for the New York Philharmonic, *Turning Point* for the Concertgebouw Orchestra and *Traces Remain* for the BBC SO.

Matthews was Composer-in-Association with the Hallé – for whom he completed his orchestrations of Debussy's 24 Preludes in 2007 – from 2001 to 2010. He is now the orchestra's Composer Emeritus.

His Violin Concerto for Leila Josefowicz and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra was premiered in 2009. In 2011 he completed works for the London Sinfonietta, City of London Sinfonia and Leipzig Gewandhaus. He wrote his Fourth String Quartet, for the Elias Quartet, in 2012, and his Fifth, for the Tanglewood Music Center, in 2015; *Spiralling* was written for Spira Mirabilis in 2014; *The Pied Piper*, a collaboration with Michael Morpurgo, was performed by the LPO in 2015. Recent projects include two song cycles for voice and ensemble (for the London Sinfonietta and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, respectively) and *Postludes*, an octet for oboe and strings for Nicholas Daniel and Britten Sinfonia.

Matthews is Founder and Executive Producer of NMC Recordings, Executive Administrator of the Holst Foundation and Music Director of the Britten-Pears Foundation. Together with Oliver Knussen he founded the Aldeburgh Composition Course in 1992, and has been Composition Director of the LSO's Panufnik Scheme since 2005. He holds honorary posts with several universities and is Prince Consort Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music.

Colin Matthews' music is published by Faber Music.

Interval – 20 minutes

William Walton Symphony No 1 in B-flat minor 1932–35 / programme note by Paul Griffiths

- 1 **Allegro assai**
- 2 **Scherzo: Presto con malizia**
- 3 **Andante con malinconia**
- 4 **Maestoso**



It was Hamilton Harty, then conductor of the Hallé, who recognised that, after the turning point of the Viola Concerto of 1929, which was Walton's first big orchestral piece, the young composer should go on to a symphony. Harty offered the invitation in January 1932, and the following month Walton set to work. The task was not, however, to prove easy. Almost four years passed before the score was ready. Meanwhile, Walton had been persuaded against his will to allow a performance in December 1934 of the first three movements, the finale as yet unwritten. That partial performance, given by the LSO, was conducted by Harty, as was the full one with the BBC Symphony Orchestra almost a year later.

Walton's delay has been ascribed to an understandable wariness in the face of this classic genre, to his general inclination not to hurry, and to complications in his love life (a six-year affair with a German baroness, Imma von Dörnberg, was ending, though he dedicated the work to her). The dates, however, tell their own story. It was

in March–April 1932 that Adolf Hitler won more than a third of the vote in the German presidential election, from which he went on to gain supreme power in Germany at the start of the following year. Meanwhile, in October 1932, Oswald Mosley had founded the British Union of Fascists. If there is turbulence and alarm in this symphony, so there was in the world out of which it came. And if the symphony as a form is most typically engaged with progress, resolution, optimism, here may have been some of Walton's difficulty.

Like many composers at the time, Walton found a new model for progress in the symphonies of Sibelius, and his opening is very much in that mould. Over a timpani roll, a relatively static texture is built, to form a foil for an urgent signal from the oboe, to which the bassoon makes a response going in the opposite direction, upwards. From these two ideas almost the whole big first movement will be built – as very soon it begins to be, through dialogue and dynamism, the pressure steadily increasing towards a break that only prompts a new phase of growth. This arrives at a plateau, where the bassoon develops its first notion into an expressive solo, and the symphony begins to consider whence it came. The materials are all there for further

onwardness, which some oceanic swells at last make possible. Now more march-like and martial, the music pushes on to another plateau from which to review itself. Slow rotations from the trombones suggest a great machine lumbering into action, and the drive becomes almost painful until roarings of the original themes signal that, despite a new impulse to march, it must all stop.

The scherzo that follows, though half as long as the first movement, could be said to throw up more ideas. Everything, though, comes from the same store and is bound to the same high speed: a presto 'with malice', yet also surely with humour, sometimes sardonic but also sometimes open and free-spirited. Much is impelled, too, by the recurrent long–short–short rhythm, the second short emphatic.

Out of the thin grey light of a sustained C sharp, a solo flute unfolds the melody on which the slow movement will be based – a melody, in a modal variant of C sharp minor, that Walton had at first planned using, at higher speed, as the main theme of his first movement. In its new function it prompts variants, often still on solo woodwinds. About halfway through, the wandering meditation passes under thunderclouds announced by the brass, but the climax

comes later, with the strings passionately urging short fragments of the theme. Then we are back with the solo flute.

It is hard to imagine now the impression the symphony made when it ended here. There had to be more. But what? We have had power, acid comedy and lament. What could wrap up the experience? Walton's answer is a blaze of sunlight followed by rip-roaring ebullience and jazzy fugue. Oboes introduce a moment of pensiveness, but the development and recapitulation concentrate on the positive and offer plentiful opportunities to soloists and groups right across the orchestra. The sunlight returns, and it might seem joy could go no further. However, a trumpet changes the mood with what might be a bugle call, though Walton then does his huge best to reassure us that all is well, very well indeed.

Maybe it is, but maybe it is not. We have become used (perhaps too used) to thinking of Shostakovich's exuberance as forced. Of course, Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister through almost all the time the symphony was in progress, was no Stalin, but the splendid joyfulness of the finale may have been something Walton forced on himself, or felt obliged to present, at a time when a new dawn was the least likely prospect. □

William Walton in profile 1902–83 / profile by Lewis Foreman



Walton was born in Oldham, Lancashire, the son of a local choirmaster and singing teacher.

At the age of ten he became a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford, and an undergraduate at the age of 16, but he never took a degree. He received encouragement from various leaders of Oxford musical life, though as a composer he remained essentially self-taught.

His earliest music still heard today is the unaccompanied choral piece *A Litany* ('Drop, drop, slow tears') written when he was only 14. He was established as a name by the succès de scandale of *Façade*, Edith Sitwell's poems recited through a megaphone to his

music, first heard privately at the Sitwells' home in January 1922 when the composer was 19. The ensuing press rumpus actually followed the first public performance at the Aeolian Hall on Bond Street 18 months later. Over the succeeding years Walton gradually refined this score, its evolution marking his own emergence as an individual voice. In the long-term its royalties became a major strand of his income.

His reputation as a composer of achievement dates from the premiere of his *Viola Concerto* in 1929. *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931) and the *Symphony in B-flat minor* (1934–35) consolidated this reputation as the leading young composer of the day. In the later 1930s Walton became known for his film music and various shorter works, notably *Portsmouth Point* and *Siesta*, and these would soon be joined by his notable orchestral marches, starting with *Crown Imperial* written for the Coronation of George VI in 1937. □

▷ FROM THE ARCHIVES



△ L to R, André Previn, Richard Rodney Bennett, Thea Musgrave, Walton, Robert Simpson, Peter Maxwell Davies, Nicholas Maw and Malcolm Arnold, pictured at Walton's 70th birthday concert in 1972

Leila Josefowicz violin



Leila Josefowicz's passionate advocacy of contemporary music for the violin is reflected in her diverse programmes and enthusiasm for performing new works. In recognition of her outstanding achievement and excellence in music, she won the 2018 Avery Fisher Prize and was awarded a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 2008, joining prominent scientists, writers and musicians who have made unique contributions to contemporary life.

Highlights of Josefowicz's 2019/20 season include opening the London Symphony Orchestra's season with Sir Simon Rattle and returning to San Francisco Symphony with the incoming Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen to perform his Violin Concerto. Further engagements include concerts with Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, where she will be working with conductors at the highest level, including Susanna Mälkki, Matthias Pintscher and John Adams.

A favourite of living composers, Josefowicz has premiered many concertos, including those by Colin Matthews, Steven Mackey

and Esa-Pekka Salonen, all written specially for her. This season, she will perform the UK premiere of Helen Grime's Violin Concerto with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Dalia Stasevska. Other recent premieres include John Adams' *Scheherazade.2* (Dramatic Symphony for Violin and Orchestra) in 2015 with the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert, and Luca Francesconi's *Duende - The Dark Notes* in 2014 with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Susanna Mälkki. Josefowicz enjoyed a close working relationship with the late Oliver Knussen, performing various concertos, including his Violin Concerto, together over 30 times.

Alongside pianist John Novacek, with whom she has enjoyed a close collaboration since 1985, Josefowicz has performed recitals at world-renowned venues such as New York's Zankel Hall, Washington DC's Kennedy Center and London's Wigmore Hall, as well as in Reykjavik, Chicago, San Francisco and Santa Barbara. This season, they appear together at Washington DC's Library of Congress, New York's Park Avenue Armory and Amherst College. She will also join Thomas Adès in recital to perform the world premiere of his new violin and piano work at Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris and the Japanese premiere at the Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation.

Recent highlights include engagements with the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Washington's National Symphony Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and Boston and Finnish Radio symphony orchestras. In summer 2017, Josefowicz appeared at Birmingham's Symphony Hall and London's Royal Albert Hall at the BBC Proms with City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under conductor Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla.

Josefowicz has released several recordings, notably for Deutsche Grammophon, Philips/Universal and Warner Classics and was featured on Touch Press's acclaimed iPad app, *The Orchestra*. Her latest recording, released in 2019, features Bernd Alois Zimmermann's Violin Concerto with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hannu Lintu. She has previously received nominations for Grammy Awards for her recordings of *Scheherazade.2* with the St Louis Symphony conducted by David Robertson, and Esa-Pekka Salonen's Violin Concerto with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer. □

Leila Josefowicz in conversation / interview by Ariane Todes



I've always been attracted to modern music. Perhaps it is the daring of playing something that audiences don't know. It's in my rebellious nature not to do the things that everyone predicts. There is also a spontaneity in performing something for which people can't rely on comparative listening – if they hear something totally new, your performance can't be compared to another version. I find that refreshing. Growing up, I played all the standard repertoire over and over, and was always being compared to other players, which is very competitive. I wanted to get away from that feeling to something more creative.

I enjoy the process of conversing with a composer as I work on their piece. They're

composing it and I'm trying to translate it into ways that are more feasible for the audience, or more performable. It's so satisfying. I'm making the piece into what it is for the composer, but I'm also giving it to future generations of players. Every composer has a different language and I love putting care and diligence into understanding their grammar and the subtle markings of what they've written.

For young players thinking of exploring new music, listening is key. If you want to be more informed, poke around YouTube and the internet. Sometimes you need an introduction. I remember the first times people played John Adams and Thomas Adès for me – I was blown away. Look for

new composers and do some explorative listening. Go to concerts. As players we need to find the things that we're most passionate about. Listening around can help you find out what that is. If you're open, certain pieces start speaking to you. Already when I was at school, I was playing Berg and Bartók (which were considered new when I was at Curtis!).

We have to listen to our instincts. What attracts us? What do we enjoy? If we don't enjoy it, there's no point about being in music, so these are important questions to ask. Audiences are not going to be convinced if performances are not persuasive, so we have to be diligent and enthusiastic – it makes a difference.

Things have progressed since I was a student. There are many more performances of new music and composer-in-residence schemes, and new works are not so isolated on programmes – they may be thrown in among more standard repertoire. We're moving in the right direction.

What makes a piece great? Everyone will say something different. For me, it can have certain flaws, but in general if the sound arrests you and stays with you, or if you're left with strong feelings or impressions

about it, that is a huge achievement by the composer – if you can say, 'When I heard things happening in this section, or those chords, feelings came over me.' These might be more abstract feelings than you would get from a more classical composer, but not always. If you're struck with huge thoughts or emotions, or you remember certain moments, that means the piece is great. This is what composers strive for.

I'm lucky that my career is built on 20th- and 21st-century music. It's where my passion lies so I don't play a lot of standard works at this point. But my practice routine is very much like it was when I was younger. Just because the music is newer, what suits me as a player doesn't mean that my regime has to be different. I'm still aiming for the same things: to understand the musical content and to conquer the technical difficulties so the musical content can speak, whatever the genre of music. In my head this does not change. Maybe it takes more time to understand so that part of the process takes more time, but that's what I find interesting, and why I gravitated to it in the first place.' □

London Symphony Orchestra on stage – 14 September 2019

Leader

Roman Simovic

First Violins

Clare Duckworth
Ginette Decuyper
Laura Dixon
Gerald Gregory
Maxine Kwok-Adams
William Melvin
Claire Parfitt
Harriet Rayfield
Rhys Watkins
Soong Choo
Morane Cohen-
Lamberger
Eleanor Fagg
Lulu Fuller
Jan Regulski
Patrick Savage

Second Violins

David Alberman
Thomas Norris
Sarah Quinn
David Ballesteros
Matthew Gardner
Julian Gil Rodriguez
Naoko Keatley
Csilla Pogany
Belinda McFarlane
Iwona Muszynska
Paul Robson
Siobhan Doyle
Victoria Irish
Hazel Mulligan

Violas

Jane Atkins
Gillianne Haddow
German Clavijo
Carol Ella
Robert Turner
Ilona Bondar
Samuel Burstin
Cameron Campbell
Luca Casciato
Fiona Dalgliesh
Alistair Scahill
Sofia Silva Sousa

Cellos

Tim Hugh
Alastair Blayden
Jennifer Brown
Noel Bradshaw
Daniel Gardner
Hilary Jones
Laure Le Dantec
Jessie Ann Richardson
Victoria Simonsen
Judith Fleet

Double Basses

David Desimpelaere
Colin Paris
Patrick Laurence
Matthew Gibson
Thomas Goodman
Joe Melvin
José Moreira
Paul Sherman

Flutes

Gareth Davies
Patricia Moynihan

Piccolo

Sharon Williams

Oboes

Juliana Koch
Rosie Jenkins

Cor Anglais

Christine Pendrill

Clarinets

Chris Richards
Elizabeth Drew

Bass Clarinet

Renaud
Guy-Rousseau

Bassoons

Daniel Jemison
Joost Bosdijk

Contra Bassoon

Andrew Watson

Horns

Timothy Jones
Angela Barnes
Alexander Edmundson
Jonathan Bareham
Paul Gardham

Trumpets

Philip Cobb
Gerald Ruddock
Niall Keatley
Toby Coles

Trombones

Peter Moore
James Maynard

Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

Tuba

Ben Thomson

Timpani

Nigel Thomas
Mark Robinson

Percussion

David Jackson
Sam Walton
Tom Edwards
Jake Brown

Harp

Susan Blair

Piano

Joseph Havlat

LSO String Experience Scheme

Since 1992, the LSO String Experience Scheme has enabled young string players from the London music conservatoires at the start of their professional careers to gain work experience by playing in rehearsals and concerts with the LSO. The musicians are treated as professional 'extra' players (additional to LSO members) and receive fees for their work in line with LSO section players. The Scheme is supported by:
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