

## The Long Read

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The invention of English opera  
The complex tale of Siegfried Wagner  
The true *Carmen*?  
Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann*  
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Meyerbeer, Wagner & Verdi

Adventures on the Green Hill: Tony's Wagner explorations

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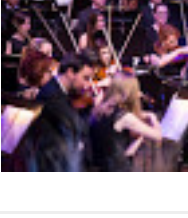
- **Film opera premiere:**  
Opera Sunderland *The Soldier's Return*
- **Imaginative & engaging:**  
Guildhall School's live-streamed triple bill
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Music, neuroscience, & fear of death
- **Late Beethoven quartets:**  
Brodsky Quartet at Kings Place
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Oxford Lieder Festival
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Oxford Lieder Festival
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The Sixteen at Temple Church
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Offenbach at Glyndebourne

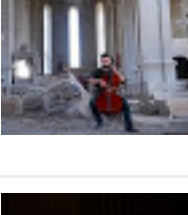
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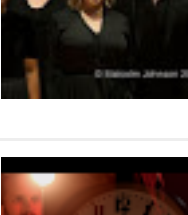
## CD Reviews

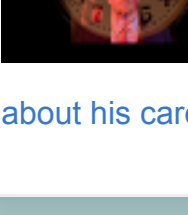
- **The folk-song as art song**  
Albion Records's first volume of its complete Vaughan Williams folk-song arrangements
- **Closely worked arguments**  
Rory MacDonald & the RSNO in Thomas Wilson's Symphonies Nos. 3 & 4
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new music from Spain and Latin-America from Camerata Gala and Alejandro Muñoz
- **The See Within**  
Belgian ensemble The Echo Collective
- **Engaging breath of fresh air and, frankly, fun**  
*Messe de...* *Carmina Burana* from the Estonian ensemble, Hortus Musicus
- **L'île du rêve**  
Reynaldo Hahn's first opera proves to be a charming lyrical interlude
- **2 different ways of seeing**  
Tabea Zimmerman, Bach, Kurtág
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Thursday, 21 November 2019

## Music, robotics, AI: Recording the Lim Fantasy of Companionship for Piano and Orchestra

Labels: [news](#)

Having recently reviewed a disc of music inspired by particle physics [Matthew Whiteside's *Entangled*, see [my review](#)], on Tuesday 19 November 2019 I found myself listening to the studio recording of a new work for piano and orchestra inspired by robotics and artificial intelligence!

The *Lim Fantasy of Companionship for Piano and Orchestra* was commissioned by Dr Susan Lim, a Singaporean surgeon who is a specialist in the field of transplantation, robotics and stem cell research. The work was written by the French composer Manu Martin, and arises out of Lim's ALAN project which aims to explore [disruptive technologies](#), the intersection between technology and humanity, in the form of robotics and AI, via music. The idea that human engineering of the inanimate may ultimately produce companions previously unimagined. And that is Fantasy of Companionship which is depicted in Manu Martin's work.



French composer Manu Martin is best known for his work in television and radio, working alongside some major French artists. His *Lim Fantasy of Companionship for Piano and Orchestra* is written for large forces, substantial orchestra along with choir and solo voice, plus electric guitar, electric bass and drums.

I heard part of the recording at Abbey Road Studios, with Arthur Fagen (musical director of the Atlanta Opera) conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. The solo piano part was played by the Belgian-American pianist [Tedd Joselson](#), the role of the piano was not so much that of a concerto soloist as an important concertante part. The *Fantasy* is in six sections, which tell a clear narrative story. Musically, Martin's piece draws inspiration from a companion work, *ALAN the Musical*, and his background in writing for TV and radio was apparent in his fluent and engaging writing for large orchestral forces. It is always difficult judging a work from hearing sections out of order, and it will be fascinating to see how the *Fantasy* builds when the recording is complete.

Dr Lim described the project thus:

*"In November 2019, I commissioned Manu Martin to write me a Fantasy conveying hope for the future companionship between and inanimate and a human; a Fantasy that would ... unfold and explain the journey of a soul from wild to captive, from animate to inanimate and with the addition of electric sounds, to herald the inanimate's bold futuristic step into a new world order of synthetic biology, AI and robotics"*

As part of the same planned recording, Tedd Joselson is recording, next week, Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2* with the Philharmonia Orchestra, and Grieg's *Piano Concerto* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, both conducted by Arthur Fagen.


Posted by [Planet Hugill](#) at [Thursday, November 21, 2019](#)



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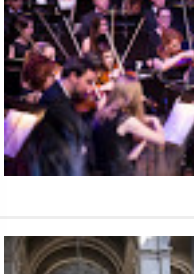
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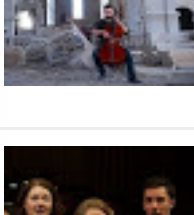
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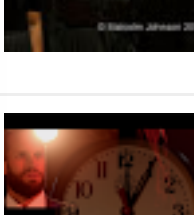
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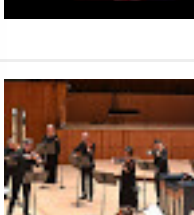
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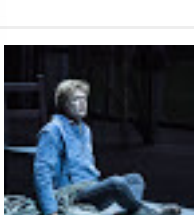
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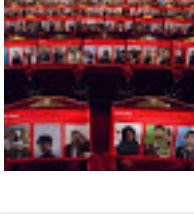
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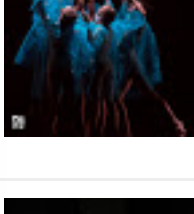
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Marcos Fernandez-Barrero: The Soldier's Return - Ian Priestley, Austin Gunn - Opera Sunderland (Photo Mark Savage) Marcos Fernandez-...
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ENO Baylis I am Here creative photography installation © Karla Gowllett, courtesy ENO On 14 November 2020, BBC Two will be broadcasting Engl...
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## Featured interview

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## Quickening: Songs by Robert Hugill to texts by English and Welsh poets now available from Amazon

*four delicate, sensitive settings of Ivor Gurney, drawing performances of like quality. It is Rosalind Ventris's viola, weaving its way around and between the voice and William Vann's piano, that is most beguiling*  
Gramophone magazine Jan 2018

*'A disc worth hearing' - Classical iconoclast*

*'His candid gift for gracious melody' - MusicWeb International*

*'performed with considerable sensitivity...Quickening is something different' - InfoDad*

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