

- **7 premieres of new BBC commissions**
- **16 other major world, UK or London premieres**
- **Music by 31 living composers**
- **Nearly 90 works new to the Proms**

long been a Proms tradition thanks to Sir Henry Wood, who brought a huge range of 'novelties' to Proms audiences from the very

The BBC Proms continues its great tradition of championing new music in 2004. The BBC has been the most active patron of new music in the UK since its earliest years and has commissioned many hundreds of hours of new music since it first invited Gustav Holst to write his choral ballet *The Morning of the Year* in 1927. This season there are major commissions for the BBC Orchestras from John Casken, Zhou Long and Joby Talbot as well as two commissions from Sir Harrison Birtwistle and commissions for the BBC Symphony Chorus from Judith Bingham and Mark-Anthony Turnage.

The BBC Proms also continues to place music by composers of today at the heart of its programme with 16 other major premieres of works by composers as diverse as John Adams, Hans Werner Henze and Carl Vine, and performances of music by over 30 living composers. There is also the world premiere of a brief organ piece by Benjamin Britten given by Timothy Bond, and first hearings of major reworkings of music by composers including Sir John Tavener and Tan Dun.

Introducing British audiences to work they might not have the opportunity to hear has



Joby Talbot (pictured above), perhaps best known for his work with *The Divine Comedy* and his music for television (*The League of Gentlemen*, BBC Young Musician of the Year and Comic Relief's *Robbie the Reindeer*), completes a major orchestral work for the 2004 Proms season. *Sneaker Wave* is named after a dangerous US West Coast phenomenon in which a rare type of wave gathers force by taking on the energy of the smaller ones that it travels through. These waves can strike on calm or stormy days, sneaking forcefully up the beach and even on to dry land and Talbot's 'wave of sound' is a single movement for full orchestra, which gathers its own energy, ideas and intricacies as it travels over 13 minutes (Prom 63).

Sir Harrison Birtwistle, one of the BBC Proms 1934 anniversary composers, has two premieres in this, his 70th birthday Proms season. William Dazeley sings the world premiere of his settings of three poems by his great friend Alfred Brendel to add to the one he completed for the pianist's 70th birthday. Dazeley joins the Philharmonia Orchestra under its Principal Conductor Christoph von Dohnányi for this concert which also has

Brendel play Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto (Prom 43).

Birtwistle's *The Ring Dance of the Nazarene*, with a text by *Gawain* librettist David Harsent, was written specially with the BBC Singers and baritone Roderick Williams in mind. It was co-commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and The Netherlands' VARA Radio and given its world premiere in Amsterdam in October 2003. The BBC Singers give the UK premiere here with Endymion providing the wind ensemble and Martin Allen playing the solo Iranian drum (Prom 5).

Judith Bingham wrote *The Secret Garden* especially for the BBC Symphony Chorus (with which she used to sing while still a student in the 1970s), organist Thomas Trotter and the newly-restored Royal Albert Hall organ (Prom 48). In the same concert we hear the world premiere of another work written specially for the BBC Symphony Chorus, Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Calmo*.

Simon Holt's BBC commission receives its world premiere at the last Proms Chamber Music concert of the season with Nicholas Daniel and the Britten Sinfonia. Holt was invited to write a piece which used any or all of the unusual combinations of instruments in the works by Dallapiccola, Janáček, Martinů programmed for this concert. The new work, entitled *The Coroner's Report*, develops the subject of his recent opera, *Who Put Bella in the Wych Elm?*, to create a series of 'exhibits' related to the case (PCM 8).

Other world premieres for the 2004 BBC Proms are first performances of new versions of major existing works. Sir John Tavener has reworked his acclaimed seven-hour *The Veil of the Temple* into a 160-minute concert version for the 2004 BBC Proms (Prom 23). Tavener hopes the new version 'will capture the

# New Music

magisterial pacing of the entire vigil. Without staying up all night, the audience will experience the impact of the remarkable seven-hour work in the unique space of the Royal Albert Hall'. Tan Dun's Concerto for water percussion and orchestra, to be performed by Evelyn Glennie and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, has also undergone major revisions since its 1999 New York premiere (Prom 24).

## UK and London premieres

The BBC Proms has a sneak preview of John Adams's new opera *Doctor Atomic*, based on the story of Robert Oppenheimer and the creation of the atom bomb, due to receive its full premiere in San Francisco in 2005. Audra McDonald, who sang at the Last Night in 2002, takes on the role of Kitty Oppenheimer for a 12-minute scene called 'Easter Eve 1945' with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer himself. The concert also includes the UK premieres of two other new works: *The Dharma at Big Sur*, performed at the opening concert of the new Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles in October 2003 to tremendous acclaim, and new arrangements of songs by anniversary composer Charles Ives (Prom 49).

Four years after the UK premiere of Hans Werner Henze's Ninth Symphony at the Proms, Ingo Metzmacher (the conductor at that event) brings the UK premiere of Henze's Tenth Symphony, inspired by Sir Simon Rattle who gave its world premiere in 2002 (Prom 44). Kaija Saariaho's music also makes a welcome return to the Proms when Jukka-Pekka Saraste and the BBC Symphony Orchestra give the UK premiere of *Orion*, a 25-minute orchestral work which depicts *Orion* as a constellation, mythical hunter and demigod in each of its three sections (Prom 69).

Another UK premiere is by Swedish composer Anders Hillborg, whose substantial orchestral work, *Exquisite Corpse*, was inspired by an old parlour game adopted as a method of random collaboration by the Surrealists, in which each player adds a word or phrase to a poem without seeing the previous contributions (Prom 28).

Among the London premieres to look out for are Alun Hoddinott's Euphonium Concerto, written for BBC Young Musician finalist David Childs (Prom 63) and performed in honour of the composer's 75th birthday; the London premiere of a new work for solo violin by Esa-Pekka Salonen entitled *Laughing Unlearned* (Prom 24); and John Corigliano's Clarinet Concerto played by Michael Collins (Prom 62).

## New to the Proms

### Prom 2

**Boito** Mefistofele – 'Son lo spirito che nega'

### Prom 3

**Dvořák** Dimitrij

### Prom 5

**Ockeghem, arr. Birtwistle**

Ut heremita solus

### Prom 7

**Vejvanovský** Sonata vespertina a 8;  
**Mysliveček** L'Olimpiade – 'Che non mi disse un di!'; **Mozart** 'Alma grande e nobile core', K578; **Novák** Melancholic Songs of Love

### Prom 9

**George Benjamin** Palimpsest II

### Prom 13

**Dvořák** Mass in D major

### Prom 14

**Taverner** In nomine

**Prom 15**

**Dvořák** Czech Suite

**Prom 16**

**Janáček** Hukvaldy Songs

**Prom 24**

**Shostakovich** Overture on Russian and Kirghiz Folk Themes; **Cage** The Seasons; **Tan Dun** Out of Peking Opera

**Prom 25**

**Szymanowski** Concert Overture in E major, Op. 12

**Prom 26**

**Zelenka** Overture a 7 in F major, ZWV 188; Concerto a 8 in G major, ZWV 186

**Prom 27**

**Sir Peter Maxwell Davies** 'Antarctic' Symphony (Symphony No. 8)

**Prom 28**

**Alfvén** Skogen sover, Op. 28 No. 6; **Stenhammar** Songs; **Sibelius** Songs

**Prom 53**

**Dvořák** Legend in G minor, Op. 59 No. 3

**Prom 54**

**Lambert** Eight Poems of Li-Po

**Prom 55**

**Rakhmaninov** The Miserly Knight;

**Puccini** Gianni Schicchi

**Prom 57**

**Berio** Stanze

**Prom 58**

**Debussy, orch. Koechlin** Khamma

**Prom 60**

**André Previn** Violin Concerto

**Prom 65**

**Pierre Boulez** Sur Incises

**Prom 71**

**Sir Peter Maxwell Davies** Fantasia and a

Ground on Two Pavans after Purcell; Missa

super L'homme armé; Linguae ignis

**Prom 72**

**Charpentier** Messe pour plusieurs