

## **The Wilderness Pleases: Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's dive into the natural world with 2021-22 Southbank Centre Season**

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE) joyfully return from the digital wilderness to present the fifth of their 'Six Chapters of Enlightenment' at Southbank Centre. In the first wave of the season announcement, the OAE reveal the first three concerts in their 2021/22 season, *The Wilderness Pleases*.

'Six Chapters of Enlightenment' are concert seasons at the Southbank Centre, where the OAE is Resident Orchestra. The series is inspired by the golden age of science and philosophy that gave the Orchestra its name. *The Wilderness Pleases* is inspired by one of the many influential pieces of work to come out of the Enlightenment era; Shaftesbury's *The Moralists*.

In the book, the main character Theocles describes the terror of encountering a group of crocodiles in an Egyptian desert. After escaping the monsters, he is overcome with a desire to admire them as wondrous creatures of the natural world. He says, 'let us fly to the vast deserts of these parts [...] ghastly and hideous as they appear they want not their peculiar beauties. Wilderness pleases.'

Joined by conductor Bruno Weil, the OAE begin their season on 8 November with **Mozart and Beethoven**. The concert features the overture from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, an iconic piece that at once captures the Enlightenment's fascination with wisdom, reason and nature. Then follows Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 'Pastoral' performed on period instruments to paint the full colours of the singing birds, flowing streams and violent thunderstorms that Beethoven's audience would have experienced when the piece was first performed in 1808.

The Orchestra then delve into the darker side of the wilderness with **Demons in the Bath: Aci, Galatea e Polifemo** on 23 January. Starring bass Trevor Eliot-Bowes, the OAE tackle Handel's tragic tale of two lovers who are being kept apart as servants by a villainous cyclops creature. With its thrilling and varied scoring, the music excites a sense of both determination and helplessness in confronting the natural world. As Handel's music so often does, this concert challenges our understanding of order and fairness and delivers us to a supernatural world of poetic possibilities.

Young music lovers are encouraged to bring their stamping feet and clapping hands to OAE **TOTS** in January, the Orchestra's magical music-making sessions for 2-5 year olds. More details of this concert will be released later in the year.

It is credit to the Southbank Centre that the OAE can provide so many performance opportunities to their *Rising Stars* this season. *Rising Stars of the Enlightenment* is a scheme that the Orchestra set up in 2017 to support breakthrough new vocalists, offering them masterclasses with international artists, performance opportunities and publicity. Bethany Horak-Hallet and Zoe Brookshaw star in the OAE's **Demons in the Bath: Aci, Galatea e Polifemo**

These concerts go on sale on 8 July 2021. Book your seats from [oae.co.uk](http://oae.co.uk). The OAE will also present additional content and hybrid event experiences on OAE Player

## Notes to Editors

For further information, please contact: Anna Bennett Press Officer, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment [anna.bennett@oae.co.uk](mailto:anna.bennett@oae.co.uk)

Later this year, the programme and details of OAE concerts for February-June 2022 will be released.

Please find below the details of the first three concerts in the OAE's 21/22 Southbank Centre season

### Mozart and Beethoven

Monday 8 November 2021, 7pm

**Conductor** Bruno Weil

MOZART Overture to *The Magic Flute*

HAYDN Sinfonia Concertante

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 6, 'Pastoral'

### Demons in the Bath: *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*

Sunday 23 January 2022, 7pm

**Bass** Trevor Eliot-Bowes

HANDEL *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*

### OAE TOTS

January 2022

The OAE's interactive, music-making session for 2-5 year olds.