

7.00pm, Thursday 9 January, Queen Elizabeth Hall

What makes a piece of music a 'hit'? Why do some become famous and others get consigned to obscurity?

There is a scene in the seminal 1990s TV series *The Wonder Years* where the main character, Kevin, inadvertently starts a student walkout due to a call of nature. Borrowing from Shakespeare he observes, "It seems some are born great, some achieve greatness and others have greatness thrust upon them while they're in the bathroom." It is a good analogy for the enduring fame or misfortunes of Baroque composers and their work.

In Baroquebusters we explore that enigmatic idea of greatness. Why certain tunes have become earworms and part of the soundtrack of our daily lives. The explanations are often not as straightforward as we might expect and we'll discover that a good deal of chance is involved.

SOUTHBANK CENTRE RESIDENT

WELCOME

to our 2024/25 season here at the Southbank Centre

The music we love to play at the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment is a tangle of riddles and puzzles.

These enigmas have always nourished the human imagination. The secret themes, lost manuscripts and broken celebrity crushes that tease us are all part of the thrill. The idea that we might solve the mystery drives us on. If we're honest, though, we can't promise to uncover all the answers for you. So that leaves us with a simple choice: go mad... or just decide to enjoy the music!

If there is an underlying truth to be found it is in the act of coming together to share this wonderful, messy cosmos of music – the gathering of the musicians of the OAE with our inspiring artistic partners and you, our audience. Together we might find the secret key: one that unlocks the door to joy, generosity and, of course, Enlightenment.

Thank you for being part of our enigmatic adventure.

I'll have a B please, Bob

- The period we refer to as the Baroque in European music history covers just over 150 years from 1600 to the 1750s. The music pulses with the rhythms of dance, is often complex yet crafted to affect our thoughts and emotions, and characterised by 'ornamentation' of the melodies (seen as being equivalent to the flourishes Baroque architecture was known for).
- It was a time of stunning scientific discoveries and radical thinking. There was Galileo's revelation of the solar system and Newton's theory of gravity, alongside the political upheavals that led to events such as the English Civil War, the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, and ultimately the French and American Revolutions at the end of the 18th Century.
- Italy with wealthy cities like Venice was an early driving force for the new ideas of the Baroque.
 Antonio Vivaldi (1678 1741) was one of the most colourful and dazzling composers of the era, producing many operas and hundreds of concertos. Despite his apparent fame now he died a pauper in Vienna just a year after arriving there in a final bid to find his fortune at the Imperial Court.

- Perhaps the two most famous composers of the Baroque, Georg(e) Handel and Johann Sebastian Bach were both born in 1685. Bach (who died in 1750) never went far from his native state of Thuringia in Germany, whilst Handel travelled more widely - he eventually settled in London, where he became a British citizen and died in 1759.
- The best-known composers working in France were Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632 – 1687, although he was born Giovanni Battista Lulli in Florence) and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683 – 1764). Both were huge celebrities in Parisian society as composers of opera.
- The "flowering of the English Baroque" was Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695). No English-born composer matched his fame and reputation for over 200 years. He lived his whole life just across the river in Westminster. The Purcell Room next door is named after him.
- The achievements of the Baroque's women composers are only now being recognised as they should be. Barbara Strozzi (1619 1677) was reputed to have had more secular music in print than any other composer of her time. Keep an eye (or ear) open for a cameo from another, Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665 1729) who was held in very high regard by the Paris music scene in her lifetime.

Tonight's Music

Thursday 9 January 2025
7.00pm at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Overture from *Music for the Royal Fireworks* 'Verdi prati' from *Alcina*

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Spring from The Four Seasons

HENRY PURCELL

Trumpet Sonata

HANDEL

La Paix from Music for the Royal Fireworks
'The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba' from Solomon
'Da tempesta' from Giulio Cesare

There will be an interval of 20 minutes
Drinks in plastic glasses can be brought in to the auditorium

BARBARA STROZZI

Che si può fare

JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY

Marche pour la cérémonie des Turcs from Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme

PURCELL

'If Love's a Sweet Passion' from The Fairy Queen

JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU

Les Sauvages from Les Indes Galantes

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3

HANDEL

'Let the Bright Seraphim' from Samson

JOHANN PACHELBEL

Canon

HANDEL

La Réjouissance from Music for the Royal Fireworks

This concert is supported by Bruce Harris

Performers

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Julia Bullock singer

Kati Debretzeni violin / director Daniel Edgar violin Alice Evans violin Claire Holden violin Sophie Simpson violin

Rodolfo Richter violin Henry Tong violin Debbie Diamond violin Rebecca Harris violin

Francesca Gilbert viola Martin Kelly viola Kate Heller viola Andrew Skidmore cello Catherine Rimer cello Ruth Alford cello

Cecelia Bruggemeyer double bass

Daniel Bates oboe Alexandra Bellamy oboe Bethan White oboe / taille

Gyorgyi Farkas bassoon

Roger Montgomery horn Martin Lawrence horn Gavin Edwards horn David Blackadder trumpet Paul Sharp trumpet Phillip Bainbridge trumpet

Adrian Bending timpani / percussion

James Johnstone harpsichord

Sergio Bucheli theorbo

Everything You Need To Know To Enjoy Tonight's Concert

Chris Addison

May I congratulate you on your excellent choice of evening's entertainment: sitting in a room, listening to people who really know their way round an instrument using them to play a bunch of stone cold classical bangers – not to mention a singer whose beautiful voice is trained to seep into your very soul – is pretty hard to beat, if you ask me.

And a particular welcome to you if this is your first time at a classical music do. You're in for a treat. I realise that classical music can sometimes seem like it's another world and that you need some kind of degree and years of training to appreciate it, so I thought it might be helpful if I put together a comprehensive list of everything you need to know to appreciate tonight's concert.

Here it is:

1. Nothing

Read it? You might want to give it another quick look over to make sure you've got it all in your head.

It's true. There's only one thing you really need to know when going to a classical music concert and that's where you put the tickets for safekeeping. Everything else is optional. You don't even need to know the names of the composers or the pieces, although it does help to find out if you want to listen to them again afterwards.

Of course, there are plenty of people who know astonishing amounts about it all. There are folk who enjoy analysing the music from a technical point of view and will happily buttonhole you in the bar at the interval to talk about motifs and parallel fifths and suspended chords and all manner of baffling-sounding



musical theory. There are people who've been going to concerts since they saw Beethoven live at the age of four and will talk ever so earnestly about how they preferred the second trumpet today to the one they saw in Prague in 1902. Those are *of course* totally legitimate ways to engage with and enjoy the music, but – and this is key – they're just personal approaches.

Which isn't to say, by the way, that there's nothing to be gained by knowing some stuff about what you're listening to, only that it's more like a fun bonus than a necessity. Do you need to know that the particular Royal Fireworks which Handel wrote his suite for were a celebration of the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle at the end of the War of the Austrian Succession? Of course not. Will it come in useful? Maybe it'll add an extra bit of interest if you're a history nut, or planning to go on Only Connect. Do you need to know that the King banned Handel from putting violins in it and Handel was so annoyed that he put them right back as soon as the fireworks were over? Does it sound like you need to? I can't imagine why you would - but it lends a bit of did-you-know trivia colour to the thing and you get something of Handel's personality from it, if – and only if – that's your bag. Is it important to be aware that the fireworks themselves were an utter disaster – a pavilion was set on fire, as was a lady's dress, and a soldier was blinded by an explosion? Definitely not, but it's a fun fact. Fun, that is, unless you're the lady, the soldier or the pavilion.

Listening to classical music for me is no different to when I listen to Taylor Swift (which I do *a lot*). I know people who could pick any of Tay-Tay's songs and tell you the key it's in, the specific chord sequence she's using and how she's subverting it. There are millions of people who could tell you which of her dastardly exes the lyrics are about and the exact circumstances of the break-up. I don't know any of those things. But I do know all the words and will sing them loudly in the car. I don't feel my enjoyment is being limited by my lack of knowledge, even if I am limiting the enjoyment of the other people in said car.

The composers who wrote classical music didn't do it for experts. They didn't do it in the hope that people would stroke their chins and nod with intellectual understanding. The music

you're going to hear tonight was designed to *move* audiences – physically and emotionally. What do you know about it? Doesn't matter. What do you *feel*? Well, that's everything. Does it make you want to tap your feet? Does it make your heart melt right into your boots? Those questions are way more important than knowing which of Bach's cantatas the opening to his first Brandenburg Concerto is based on, or whatever.

And here's the kicker: It's also fine if some (or even all, come to that) of the music doesn't move you. Not every piece is for everyone. I mean, how could it be? That'd be awful - we'd all be the same. You know that scene in Pretty Woman where Richard Gere takes Julia Roberts to the opera and she cries at the emotion of it all and he says something along the lines of "You either get it or you don't"? I tell you: if I could, I'd find and ceremoniously burn every copy of that accursed scene because what he says there is tripe of the rubberiest kind and dangerous hooey. Only a month or so ago I was talking to yet another person who'd been put off opera for years because she believed that line and its implication that there's some innate quality you have to possess in order to enjoy a particular kind of music – as though if you've not dissolved into a gloopy puddle of inconsolable sorrow on hearing it you've revealed yourself as unworthy of the glorious things laid before you. As though, in fact, it's some kind of test.

Well, it's not. This, here, tonight – *this is not a test*. You know what it is? It's a bunch of lovely tunes. And you either like them or you don't. It's really not much more complicated than that.

Luckily for you, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, who are (and please don't tell them I said this) unbelievably good at their jobs, have laid on some absolute killers this evening. Some of these pieces are so good and sticky and well-known that by this point they're practically part of human DNA. And all played and sung by the very best in the business. Just sit back, let the music surround you, and see where it takes you.

Bon voyage.



Chris Addison. Credit Clara Wolden.

Chris Addison is a stand-up comedian, writer, actor and director. As an actor, Chris' most recognised role is as Oliver Reeder for all four series of the multi-award winning *The Thick of It.* In recent years Chris has moved behind the camera, co-creating and directing *Breeders* (Sky / FX) and as an Emmywinning Executive Producer and director on *Veep* (HBO). He has been a fan of classical music and opera since childhood.

Q&A with Julia Bullock

hat led you to become a specialist in Baroque music?

I am not a specialist in Baroque music, but Baroque music is among the first music that I studied when I was introduced to Western European Classical music and I think that is very special – even though I'm not a specialist.

What do you love about Baroque music?

I love the melodies. I love that it makes me want to dance. I love the virtuosity and I also love the interplay and exchange between all the musicians.

Why have you chosen Barbara Strozzi and Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre and why should we hear more of their music?

The music of Barbara Strozzi and Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre was really influential during their time, and they were also popular these two women. So, I just thought it was appropriate to include them in this programme of Blockbuster Baroque pieces. I honestly just encourage everyone to go online and look up their biographies because they're really interesting. Well anyway, that's exactly what I did and I just I fell in love with their music, so I hope everyone who hears their music and also reads about them feels the same.

What do you think makes Purcell's music so magical?

I first came across Purcell's music when I was singing *The Indian Queen* several years ago. I just love that all of his songs they're like the best pop songs. When you think it's a love song, but it ends up being a song about heartbreak. Or it's a song about heartbreak, but actually it's just talking about all the ways that you fell in love and reminiscing about it.

What are some of the challenges of singing Handel's music?

I think the challenge is that it is so emotional and also so demanding musically and vocally. You really have to find a way to hold the emotional temperature and those extremes alongside all the facility and ease of vocalism because then, actually just the feeling of freedom that you have is tremendous. There's really nothing quite like singing Handel's material.

What is your earliest musical memory?

My earliest musical memory is of my dad. He died when I was young, but he had a very beautiful baritone voice and he was singing spirituals and civil rights songs.

Do you have a lucky charm or ritual that you follow before performances?

I don't have any real lucky charms or rituals before performances although... well that's not true. I eat a banana always – need energy! I always, I try to make sure I'm hydrated because even if I'm not well rested water is important. If I'm feeling really anxious or I start to feel myself getting anxious I do this exercise, breathing. I inhale for four counts, hold for four counts, exhale for four counts, hold for four counts, inhale for five counts, hold for five, exhale for five, hold for five, and I count up and up, usually until 8 or 9, and then, yeah, I just start to feel centered again I guess... yeah, that's my ritual.

When did you realise you were going to be a singer?

I was seven years old, I had the role of the cow in the school play. I had one line which was "here's a pen". I looked at myself in the mirror after the performance and I said, "you are going to be a performer" ...and I am.



Biography

Grammy-winning American classical singer Julia Bullock combines versatile artistry with a probing intellect and commanding stage presence. As well as headlining productions and concerts at preeminent arts institutions around the world, she has held positions as Featured Artist of London's Philharmonia Orchestra and Artist-in-Residence of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the San Francisco Symphony. A prominent voice of social consciousness and activism, she was named a 2021 Artist of the Year and "agent of change" by Musical America.

Bullock's operatic career spans repertoire from the Baroque canon to contemporary works written expressly for her voice. This season, she makes title role appearances in both Handel's Theodora at the Teatro Real Madrid and John Adams's Antony and Cleopatra, a work composed with her in mind, at the Metropolitan Opera, where she recently made her house debut in his El Niño. She has previously created important new roles in Terence Blanchard's Fire Shut Up in My Bones, Michel van der Aa's Upload, and Adams's Girls of the Golden West. In concert, she has performed with ensembles including the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics; the Baltimore, Boston, London, NHK, and San Francisco Symphonies; the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin; and London's Philharmonia Orchestra and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with which she gives a transatlantic tour this season. Past solo

highlights include tours with the American Modern Opera Company, of which she is a founding core member; the American, British, Belgian, and Russian premieres of Zauberland; and recitals at New York's Carnegie Hall, Los Angeles's Disney Hall, Philadelphia's Kimmel Center, Boston's Celebrity Series, Washington's Kennedy Center, and London's Wigmore Hall.

Bullock has developed and launched three signature projects, all flourishing nationally and beyond. Her multimedia ensemble program "History's Persistent Voice" addresses the transatlantic slave trade through songs by people enslaved in the U.S. and through visual art, poetry, and new music by B/black female composers. Devised with her husband, Christian Reif, El Niño: Nativity Reconsidered is a chamber orchestral arrangement of El Niño that amplifies the voices of women and Latin American poets. Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine, created with Tyshawn Sorey, Claudia Rankine, Michael Schumacher, and Peter Sellars, reexamines the life and legacy of Joséphine Baker. Recorded with Reif and the Philharmonia Orchestra for Nonesuch, Bullock's solo album debut, Walking in the Dark, won the 2024 Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal, as well as Opus Klassik and Edison Klassiek awards. Her discography also includes Grammy-nominated recordings of Doctor Atomic and West Side Story, while other honors include the Sphinx Medal of Excellence, Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, and First Prize at the Naumburg International Vocal Competition.

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In 1986, a group of inquisitive London musicians took a long hard look at that curious institution we call the Orchestra, and decided to start again from scratch. They began by throwing out the rulebook. Put a single conductor in charge? No way. Specialise in repertoire of a particular era? Too restricting. Perfect a work and then move on? Too lazy. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment was born.

nd as this distinctive ensemble playing on period-specific instruments began to get a foothold, it made a promise to itself. It vowed to keep questioning, adapting and inventing as long as it lived. Residencies at the Southbank Centre and the Glyndebourne Festival didn't numb its experimentalist bent. A major record deal didn't iron out its quirks. Instead, the OAE examined musical notes with ever more freedom and resolve.

That creative thirst remains unquenched. The Night Shift series of informal performances are redefining concert formats. Its former home at London's Kings Place has fostered further diversity of planning and music-making. The ensemble has formed the bedrock for some of Glyndebourne's most ground-breaking recent productions.

In keeping with its values of always questioning, challenging and trailblazing, in September 2020, the OAE became the resident orchestra of Acland Burghley School, Camden. The residency – a first for a British orchestra – allows the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment to live, work and play amongst the students of the school.

Now nearly 40 years old, the OAE is part of our musical furniture. It has even graced the outstanding conducting talents of John Butt, Elder, Adam Fischer, Iván Fischer, Jurowski, Rattle and Schiff with a joint title of Principal Artist. But don't ever think the ensemble has lost sight of its founding vow. Not all orchestras are the same. And there's nothing quite like this one.

Andrew Mellor

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Joanna Wyld explores how the composers in our season were supported by a cast of generous and often quirky patrons.



lyrical about his patroness, Lady Catherine de Burgh. In music history, the dynamic between patrons and those they support is usually more nuanced, often resulting in real friendship. Even so, composers sometimes had to resort to similar tactics: JS Bach showed Mr Collinsesque levels of flattery in the dedication of his Brandenburg Concertos to Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg-Schwedt, in which he referred modestly to his own 'little talents'. Barbara Strozzi, meanwhile, was determined to make a living for herself, and did so by dedicating compositions to patrons including Ferdinand II of Austria and Eleanor of Mantua.

Handel's royal patrons made some elaborate requests: his Water Music was written for George I's boat party on the Thames, while the Music for the Royal Fireworks was for George II's display in Green Park. The music went well, the fireworks less so: some were rained on, some flew off, and others set fire to the stage.

Felix Mendelssohn was a favourite with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, writing vivid accounts of visiting them and their pet parrot: 'It was a delightful day! Just as the Queen was going to sing she said: "The parrot must be taken out or he will scream louder than I can sing". Some of Beethoven's patrons even knew each other; Count Razumovsky said of Prince Lobkowitz: 'He played music from dusk to dawn and spent a fortune on musicians. Innumerable musicians gathered in his house, whom he treated regally.'

Portrait of King George II of Great Britain (1683 – 1760) by John Shackleton, 1749 – 55. lanDagnall Computing / Alamy Stock Photo





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When you become an OAE Friend, you join us in bringing great music to life. We then give you a front-row and behind-the-scenes view of our work, so that you can see the impact that your donation really makes. This includes supporting our ambitious season of concert performances, digital productions, improving access to music through our Education programme, and our community work at Acland Burghley School.

Whether you wish to watch the rehearsals or get to know the players, a Friends membership offers a heightened OAE concertgoing experience and allows you to support the orchestra you love. With your help, we can keep the music playing.

Become a Friend for as little as £50 a year and receive the following benefits:

- Priority booking
- Access to open rehearsals
- Get to know the players
- Regular updates from the orchestra.



Every penny spent on the arts is a penny spent on education.

At the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment we believe that access to culture should be a natural part of growing up in the UK for every child. The OAE's permanent residence at Acland Burghley School, a state comprehensive school in north London, has created a new model for cultural revival and lifelong engagement.

As in Bach's time, there is a need today for a radical rethinking about how our society works and the role that culture plays in it. Classical music and creativity can be at the heart of our ambitions as a nation. Acland Burghley School rises to the challenge of being in an area of high economic inequalities – where 32% of students are eligible for free school

meals – through positive leadership. Our in-school programmes provide curricular and extracurricular enrichment, professional skills training, impactful therapies for students with special educational needs and disabilities, and have contributed to improvements in GCSE pass rates. The students perform with us. They make films, sets and costumes with us. They learn about event management and get absorbed in Excel spreadsheets (yes, really!). The student community is empowered to see creativity as the gateway to a world of freedom and equality. Imagine having an orchestra – or a dance troupe or a poet – resident every day in every school in the country.

To find out more about our work here or to arrange a visit see:

oae.co.uk/mission

The Fairy Queen is going on tour



Building on the success of *The Moon Hares* in 2022, we expanded our existing Fairy Queen projects into an exciting new community opera, created collaboratively with communities across the UK. Composer James Redwood and writer Hazel Gould wove their creative magic, seamlessly blending the story of Shakespeare and music of Henry Purcell's 1692 opera into a magical new adventure for the whole family. Our reimagining of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* is about wishes that come true, and what happens when they do, as we learn about friendship, love and telling the truth...

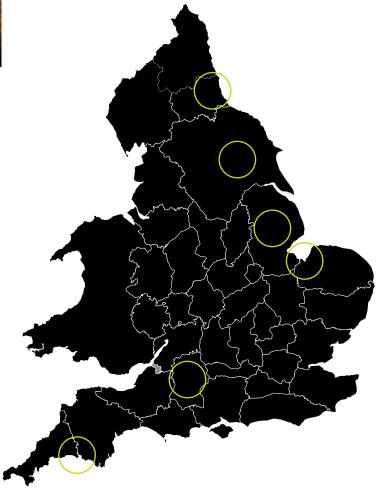
In January 2024 the OAE were joined on stage by performers from Camden and our national residencies, showcasing a diverse group of individuals with varying abilities united in the celebration of the collective power of music-making. We had dancers and musicians from Acland Burghley and Northgate secondary schools, a primary choir made up of pupils from three of our Camden partner primary schools and a community choir made up of singers from across the country and of course the OAE – 191 performers in all – an OAE record!

We are delighted that we have been awarded a grant from Arts Council England (ACE) to support this project to tour to Country Durham, York, King's Lynn, Wiltshire, Plymouth and Lincolnshire over the next three years. Each performance will be different and celebrate the diverse communities we work with. "The OAE's programmes", says Anna Rimington, "enable students

with a range of complex needs to collaborate with their peers to make and perform music guided by players who bring deep experience of working with AEN students across the country in a range of different settings."

"What an incredible experience last night was. It was so exciting, immediate, funny, engaging that I feel compelled to share with you how much I enjoyed it. To see so many young people being part of such a top-quality production makes your heart dance with excitement. I don't think I've ever felt so connected to the collaboration between a live classical score and a dance piece."

Acland Burghley School Parent



Read our Education 2023/24 Review

Over the past 25 years, the OAE's Education department has grown in stature and reach to involve thousands of people nationwide in creative music projects.

The programme takes inspiration from our repertoire, instruments and players. This makes for a vibrant challenging and engaging programme where everyone is involved; players, animateurs, composers, participants, teachers, partners and stakeholders all have a valued voice.

From our base in Acland Burghley School in north London, we travel the length of England to deliver our work. In 2023 / 24 we

visited County Durham, East Riding, Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Wiltshire, Somerset, Plymouth and Brighton and Hove as well as the London boroughs of Brent, Camden, Ealing, Greenwich, Harrow, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Merton, Newham and Wandsworth.



→ Read the review on our website at oae.co.uk/discover or scan the QR code

CryptOAEgram

CLUE: CRACK THE CODE TO REVEAL THE HIDDEN WORDS FROM TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME.

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Tag us or let us know on social media if you've managed to crack it.











Discover more, sign up for updates and follow us



