

OAE launches new online player

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has launched a new digital platform. Rather than simply offer concert recordings, OAE Player will offer performances and programmes created specifically for an online audience, many filmed over the past summer with scripts written and music chosen by the musicians.

Content will initially focus on *The Edge of Reason*, a theme exploring the golden age of science and philosophy that gave the ensemble its name, and which was to have underpinned the current season prior to Covid cancellations.

An early addition to the Player will be a performance of Bach's Cantata BWV82 directed by baritone Roderick Williams and featuring soprano Rowan Pierce, an alumnus of the Orchestra's 'Rising Stars' singers scheme. Venues used for other films include the Fitzrovia Chapel, an ornate Gothic Revival chapel that once



The OAE: online creativity

formed part of Middlesex Hospital, and the Asylum Chapel in south London, in which the OAE recreated Don Giovanni's palace party. Some programmes will offer a quirky spin – one series set to appear at a later date on the Player will be 'Haydn Under the Knife', in which OAE musicians gather in London's Old Operating Theatre and dissect Haydn's lesser-known quartets to explore their brilliance.

The videos will be available on either a pay-as-you-view basis or via an annual pass costing £99.

The Player follows other recent initiatives by the OAE exploring different ways to relate to audiences. Earlier this autumn, it took up permanent residency at Acland Burghley secondary school – the first of its type for a British orchestra – where it is working with GCSE dance students to choreograph and record a project series for the OAE Player.

ONE TO WATCH

Nathan Meltzer Violin

The American violinist Nathan Meltzer studied at Juilliard with Itzhak Perlman and Li Lin, and in 2017 became the youngest winner of the Windsor Festival International String Competition at the age of 16. Part of his prize was to make a recording for Champs Hill Records, an album that has just been released (and will be reviewed next issue) containing music by Bach, Bartók, Szymanowski, Wieniawski and a stunning account of Franck's oft-recorded Violin Sonata. For many this will be their first encounter with his playing. It won't be the last.

Still only 20, Meltzer plays a 1734 Stradivarius that was previously owned by the American-Polish violinist Roman Totenberg, before it was stolen in 1980 and resurfaced only after Totenberg's death. Totenberg's family were thrilled that the instrument's recovery meant that its gorgeous voice could be heard once again in the hands of another great artist. The instrument is now on long-term loan to Meltzer, whose debut album is titled 'To Roman Totenberg' in honour of the older violinist's memory and in acknowledgement of the importance of this



instrument to the youngster's fledgling career. Meltzer draws from it a hugely cultivated sound, with a sweetness to his tone and gorgeously shaped legato lines. As with his teacher Itzhak Perlman, Meltzer's technique is of the sort that rarely draws attention to itself but enables a full expressive command of whatever he is playing. It is surely only a matter of time before a larger record label snaps him up.

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Anna Clyne appears on the Gramophone Podcast

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