



# Clarinet & Saxophone

Spring 2022 Volume 47, No 1

## *Gentle Annie*

FREE SAX QUARTET  
SHEET MUSIC

## *Diversify your repertoire*

10 PIECES BY UNDERREPRESENTED  
COMPOSERS

## *Squeaks and squawks*

PAD LEAKAGE  
EXPLORED

## *Single Reed Doctor*

CANE, TRAVEL AND HUMIDITY

## *The Saxophone Craze*

HOMAGE TO  
RUDY WIEDOEFT



# SHARON KAM

## Staying true to herself

**PLUS:** CASSGB CLARINET COMPOSITION COMPETITION FOR YOUNG COMPOSERS | REVIEWS  
TRIBUTE TO KOVÁCS | ARNOLD CONCERTO CADENZAS | NEWS | DIARY | CLASSIFIEDS

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# awards round-up

## Fröst triumphs at International Classical Music Awards

Swedish clarinettist Martin Fröst has been named Artist of the Year at the 2022 International Classical Music Awards (ICMA). Aside from his clarinet activity, including his recent *Vivaldi* disc of newly composed clarinet concertos drawn from the composer's opera and oratorio arias, the award also recognises Fröst's growing profile as a conductor, namely in his position as principal conductor of the Swedish Chamber Orchestra.

The jury remarked: 'Martin Fröst is an artist who breaks boundaries and who is certainly not limited to the core repertoire of his instrument, but is constantly looking for something new. He plays Vivaldi as well as new works with equally imaginative virtuosity and finds a fresh, inspired grip on the classics. In his hands, the clarinet becomes an extension of the human voice and a magic wand of new soundworlds. The transition to conducting orchestras was a natural step for Fröst, and in that role he also shows the same sovereign and wide-ranging musicianship and transfers his own energy to the entire orchestra.'

The International Classical Music Awards were first awarded in 2011, replacing the Cannes Classical Awards (CCA) presented at the *Marché International du Disque et de l'Édition Musicale (MIDEM)* music convention in Cannes, France, from 1994 until 2010. The jury consists of a selection of music critics and representatives from classical music media outlets worldwide. However, all the 2022 jury members named were based in Europe.



Martin Fröst

## Young clarinettist wins French TV show



Simon Lopez

16-year-old clarinettist Simon Lopez has been crowned winner of the French TV talent show, *Prodiges*. Now in its eighth season, the show's format could be best described as a classical-genre junior version of *The X Factor*, open to young classical instrumentalists, singers and dancers aged seven to sixteen. It is broadcast in primetime on France's public television channel, France 2.

After his semi-final performance of Martin Fröst's *Klezmer Dance*, Lopez was one of 10 performers from across the show's three categories (instrumentalists, singers and dancers) to proceed to the grand final. The young clarinettist then

picked up the show's overall first prize following his performance of Mozart's aria *Queen of the Night*, arranged for clarinet and orchestra. The prize includes a study bursary of €10,000 and the chance of a commercial recording with the show's partner label, Warner Classics.

Hailing from Saint-Julien-en-Genevois on the French-Swiss border, Lopez started learning clarinet around age six and currently studies at the Geneva Conservatoire alongside his school education. At the time of writing, both his semi-final and final performances are available to watch on YouTube.

## Scottish Jazz Awards

Saxophonists Laura Macdonald and Rachel Duns have been named among the winners at the 2021 Scottish Jazz Awards, announced at Glasgow venue The Savings Bank on 8 December. Macdonald took home the award for Best Instrumentalist, while Duns received the Rising Star Award. Both awards were decided by public vote.

Best Instrumentalist Macdonald, 47, studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Berkeley College of Music in Boston, USA, and has worked with jazz musicians including Tommy Smith, Jeff 'Tain' Watts, Guy Barker and Jason Rebello. It was a particularly busy 2021 for Macdonald, who, alongside playing concerts and jazz festivals across Scotland, showcased her culinary skills to the nation by making it to the final four of BBC *Masterchef*.

Rising star Rachel Duns, 21, is currently in her fourth year at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, studying under Tommy Smith. As a teenager, she gained experience as a member of various youth bands, including the Tommy Smith Youth Jazz Orchestra and the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Scotland.

2021 marked the ninth edition of the Scottish Jazz Awards, produced as an independent event by the organisers of Glasgow Jazz Festival and supported by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland.



Rachel Duns



Laura Macdonald

# Sharon Kam

*One of the world's leading clarinet soloists speaks to Chris Walters about the competition that launched her career, staying true to herself in an ever-evolving profession, and her new recording of works by Hindemith*



PHOTOGRAPHY: NANCY HOROWITZ

**Chris Walters:** The pandemic has been such a challenging time for musicians. How has it been for you?

**Sharon Kam:** In the beginning, I really had a feeling of the end of the world – lying in bed thinking, there's no way I can get up. I have three kids – two of them not living at home, but one that just turned 13. And that means you have to get out of bed, to be there for her and make sure she's okay.

Also, everything that has to do with music – management, instruments, factories, manufacturers, stores – was relying on us to find a way to continue the profession. This was something very new to me, because normally I'm doing my art, concentrating on practice, going out teaching and inspiring people. But I didn't realise that it's not just me and my audience – there's also a whole industry around me which is very fragile. And this made me sit up and think, this is a situation we have to deal with.

Even after difficult times and wars, art came back, and it was important for building up society again. We have to believe that's going to happen now too.

**CW:** I wanted to congratulate you on your new album and ask you a little bit about Hindemith. What is it that you admire about this composer's works for clarinet?

**SK:** Well, I grew up in a viola family, and Hindemith and the viola are very connected because he played viola himself. And he wrote so much for the instrument, not all of it great.

As a young artist here in Germany, I had the chance to record the Hindemith Sonata. I played it studying in Israel already, but I didn't go into it very deep. It's true for many composers, but especially for Hindemith – the fluctuation between fantastic, experimental and horrible is huge. And I felt his music did not deserve to be all put together in one drawer – there are some pieces that really should be played.

I still have my first score of the Hindemith Sonata where my mother wrote the Hebrew definitions of the German words. He writes all his tempo markings in German, which was not a language I spoke back then. And then I came to Germany and realised I can actually read and understand what he wants. That fascinated me, because as I got to know this language and this country, I felt I was getting closer to him by the minute.

I was then asked to perform the Hindemith Concerto, I think the first time was in Basel. I learned it by heart, becoming totally fascinated by the piece – and the fact that nobody plays it! That was in my late 20s. I have tried and tried to replay it, and I've managed maybe three or four times in my whole career. Nobody wanted it. I just found that so sad.

# The Saxophone Craze

*Guy Passey hears from saxophonist Jonathan Radford about his upcoming debut album, which pays homage to the early American saxophone pioneer Rudy Wiedoeft*

Jonathan Radford's CV to date certainly marks him out as one of the leading lights among the younger generation of saxophonists. After attending Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, he entered the class of Claude Delangle at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris, before studying at London's Royal College of Music with Kyle Horch. Success in international competitions swiftly followed, notably Commonwealth Musician of the Year and overall Gold Medal winner at the Royal Overseas League Annual Music Competition in 2018. Now aged 31, he is a regular fixture at festivals and venues around the world, including recent recital appearances at Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre, Bridgewater Hall, Philharmonie de Paris, Seoul Arts Centre in South Korea, and Grieg Hall in Bergen, Norway.

His first solo recording, *The Saxophone Craze*, released in April on Champs Hill Records, is therefore eagerly awaited. The ambitious and intriguing theme (and, not coincidentally, the subject of Radford's current doctoral studies at the RCM) is the music of legendary American saxophone pioneer Rudy Wiedoeft. Wiedoeft is almost unknown to general audiences, but his recordings are being rediscovered in particular by keen saxophonists, who are gradually becoming more aware of his remarkable instrumental skill and influence on the history of the instrument generally. ➡

Because Wiedoeft's musical style sits somewhere between jazz and classical, there is a general misunderstanding amongst saxophonists that his music may not be for the 'serious' player

# concert

## CONCERT REVIEWS



From left: Zeynep Özsuca (piano), Jess Gillam (saxophone), Shelagh Sutherland (piano)

### JESS GILLAM AT WIGMORE HALL

**Jess Gillam (saxophone), Zeynep Özsuca (piano), Shelagh Sutherland (piano)**

**4 November 2021**

**Wigmore Hall, London**

'Which way is Wigmore Hall?' asks a gentleman as we pass on Wigmore Street. Delighted to be able to assist with directions for once, I point him past Cavendish Square. The concertgoer turns out to be the husband of Shelagh Sutherland, one of the pianists performing with Jess Gillam at this evening's recital. I say one of the pianists, as the first piece in Gillam's recital is *Hard Fairy*, Graham Fitkin's 1994 hard-edged minimalistic romp, scored for two pianos and soprano saxophone. Originally intended as the closing work, Gillam informs us in her characteristically charming way that she's decided to switch around the as-advertised programme. It was a good call; Fitkin's engaging, jazz-infused soundworld set the tone for a concert that was both reflective and energising – and, ultimately, hugely enjoyable.

Moving between Sutherland and fellow pianist Zeynep Özsuca, Gillam drew out the lyricism in the opening section to *Hard Fairy* before zipping through the fast-paced percussive passages. The complex texture tempered by moments of tutti between saxophone and piano, and long, drawn-out notes. Having demonstrated enviable stage presence over recent years, Gillam held us captivated by her colourful virtuosity, swirling upwards to a repeated motif and a false ending. Hearing two pianos in Wigmore Hall's crisp acoustic is always a treat; when layered with Gillam's cantabile line, the effect became remarkable. *Hard Fairy* is not always practical to programme; few venues can support two pianos and two pianists. But that hasn't deterred the likes of saxophonist Sarah Field and pianist Dawn Hardwick, who, by the wonders of technology, have created a glorious video of their performance of *Hard Fairy*, with Hardwick playing both piano parts – watch the performance on YouTube.

Two 21st-century pieces followed – Ayanna Witter-Johnson's *Lumina Rhythm* (2021) and *The Unseen Way* (2015) by Barbara Thompson. *Lumina Rhythm*, premiered at last year's Cheltenham Music Festival, was commissioned by Gillam and explores the expressivity of solo saxophone. It sat nicely alongside Thompson's more idiomatic piece, which is inspired by a poem by Rabindranath

Tagore ('Where roads are made I lose my way ... I ask my heart if its blood carries the wisdom of the unseen way'.)

Gilliam is the first ever saxophonist to be signed to Decca Classics, and the label seems keen to embrace broad programmes. For her debut album *Rise* (2019), she opted for a mixtape approach – arrangements of pop songs such as David Bowie's *Where Are We Now?* sat alongside transcriptions of works by Shostakovich and Kurt Weill. The result was a something of a mixed bag. At this Wigmore recital, while Gillam's signature cross-genre style could be felt throughout the programme, the individual works were of a higher calibre and together created a pleasingly eclectic selection. Benjamin Rimmer's arrangement of *Suspirium* (Thom Yorke, 2018), featured on Gillam's second album *Time* (2020), paired with Chilly Gonzales's *Overnight* (2004) and showed once again the versatility of the soprano saxophone – and, of course, Gillam's own creativity.

Simon Parkin was responsible for the latter arrangement, as well as a transcription of Telemann's Sonata in F minor. There are increasing numbers of high-quality Classical and Baroque arrangements for saxophone, with Parkin – who was in the audience – and Iain Farrington leading the charge (Farrington's arrangements of works by Bach, Handel, Purcell, Corelli and Byrd were recorded by the Ferio Saxophone Quartet for Chandos in 2018, reviewed in the Spring 2022 issue of *Clarinet & Saxophone*). Gillam's clear tone and clean phrasing brought nuance to the four movements.

Although she was only four when Fitkin composed *Hard Fairy*, Gillam has a personal connection with the work: it was dedicated to John Harle, Gillam's teacher and mentor. Harle also made the first recording of the piece, which has been re-released by Argo. This programme began with a Harle piece, Gillam explained, and it concluded with one – *RANT!*, composed by Harle for Gillam in 2018, two years after her success at BBC Young Musician. It featured on *Rise*, recorded with the BBC Concert Orchestra under Jessica Cottis. In this smaller scale version, the featured folk tunes – plucked from Gillam's native Cumbria – were given space to breathe and grow before the recital reached its spectacular conclusion.

Claire Jackson

Fitkin's engaging, jazz-infused soundworld set the tone for a concert that was both reflective and energising