

The 2004 BBC Proms season features the traditional mixture of great music, great artists and great occasions – this year including the biggest ever celebration of Proms in the Park around the United Kingdom on the Last Night. It also introduces new music, new outreach events, new interactive elements and more Proms on television than ever before, creating a renewed commitment to the audience of the future.

# Overview

**The Proms look East** The Proms' East/West theme brings charismatic cellist Yo-Yo Ma and his Silk Road Ensemble to the Proms for the first time, as well as new music by Chinese-American composers Tan Dun, Zhou Long and Bright Sheng. Many of the finest works of Western music influenced by Eastern themes by composers such as Britten, Debussy, Mahler, Messiaen and Ravel are also heard.

**Bohemian Rhapsodies** Anniversaries for Dvořák and Janáček have stimulated an exploration of Czech music which goes beyond those composers to Biber (whose anniversary is also marked), Martinů and other Czech masters. There are great classics: Dvořák's last four symphonies under Bernard Haitink, Mariss Jansons, Sir Charles Mackerras and Vassily Sinaisky; Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, and Smetana's *Má vlast*. 'Back to Bohemia' also brings rare gems such as Dvořák's little-known opera *Dimitrij*, Biber's *Missa bruxellensis* and music by neglected composers which might not otherwise be heard.

**The rebirth of English music** 'England at the Crossroads: 1934' celebrates the work of the great patriarchs of English music, Elgar, Delius and Holst who all died in 1934, as well as the births of two great Proms names of today, Sir Harrison Birtwistle and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, both born that year. Popular classics such as Holst's *The Planets* are heard alongside rarer works such as Elgar's elegiac choral masterpiece *The Music Makers* and Delius's Whitman setting *Sea Drift*. Anthony Payne's acclaimed realisation of Elgar's Third Symphony receives a second Proms hearing and there are premieres of new works by Sir Harrison Birtwistle. A first Proms performance of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's 'Antarctic' Symphony and a concert on his actual birthday form part of the celebrations for the new Master of the Queen's Music.

**Creating the new** The BBC Proms has always championed new music. This season there are major commissions for the BBC orchestras from John Casken, Zhou Long and Joby Talbot, a commission from Sir Harrison Birtwistle (as well as the first hearing here of a new co-commission) and new choral works from Judith Bingham and Mark-Anthony Turnage. The Proms also continues to place music by composers of today at the heart of its season with more than 15 other premieres of works by popular composers of our time as diverse as John Adams and Sir John Tavener. There are pieces by around 30 living composers, and nearly 90 works which have never been heard at the Proms before.

**Audiences of the future** In its ongoing commitment to provide greater access to the riches of the Proms, there are three projects which aim to help build audiences of the future. *BBC Proms: Out & About* events with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and BBC Concert Orchestra take high-quality live orchestral music-making to the Hammersmith Town Hall and the Hackney Empire as an upbeat addition to the 2004 season. Building on the success of the event with John Adams at the Carling Brixton Academy in 2003, the aim is to give children from the local communities the chance to experience the vibrancy of an orchestral concert for the first time. In collaboration with the British Library, another project brings together 120 teenage students from the UK's Turkish, Chinese and various other Asian communities in a series of creative workshops culminating in an event involving Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. The BBC Proms/*Guardian* Young Composers Competition, now a well-established strand in the Proms' audience development programme, is expecting more entries than ever from 12- to 18-year-olds around the country. Participants in all three projects are invited to attend Proms concerts at the Royal Albert Hall.

There are also major events aimed at attracting younger audiences to the Proms. The Blue Peter Prom has been such a popular fixture in recent years that the BBC Proms is introducing a repeat performance in 2004. Hosted by Blue Peter presenters Simon Thomas and Liz Barker, this year's event picks up the East/West theme as Japanese drums and a Chinese Lion Dance troupe join the BBC Philharmonic under its Chief Conductor, Gianandrea Noseda. The fifth BBC Children's Prom in the Park, which follows the festivities of the Last Night in Hyde Park on Sunday 12 September, introduces the best-loved music of Disney to the Proms with plenty of on-stage action and footage from the classic films relayed on giant screens around the park.

**The organ is back** A £ 7 million refurbishment of the Royal Albert Hall organ, which includes money raised by Proms audiences, puts the country's largest instrument at the heart of the 2004 season. It has not been heard by Prommers since 2001 and brings many of the world's leading organists, including Naji Hakim, Martin Neary, Simon Preston, Thomas Trotter and Dame Gillian Weir to the Proms. Solo organ works feature in the 2004 season, from Bach's famous *Tocatta* on the First Night to Barber's *Tocatta festiva* on the Last, and there are many giants of the choral and orchestral repertoire with prominent parts for organ, including Saint-Saëns's 'Organ' Symphony, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* and Britten's *War Requiem*.

**Great artists** From Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker to Wynton Marsalis and his Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, and from William Christie and Les Arts Florissants to Pierre Boulez and Ensemble Intercontemporain, the range of top partnerships is unparalleled. Among the other great conductors and orchestras are Bernard Haitink and the

Dresden Staatskapelle, Sir Charles Mackerras and the Czech Philharmonic, Mariss Jansons and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Valery Gergiev gives his first Prom with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Outstanding singers permeate the season from Lorraine Hunt Lieberson on the First Night to Thomas Allen on the Last Night. Great violinists include the return of Anne-Sophie Mutter (with the Violin Concerto written for her by her husband, André Previn, who conducts is [29.8(Anne-che.7(rain|9.6(eHunt Lieber