



BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra & Martyn Brabbins, with Annelien Van Wauwe & Sarah Connolly – Debussy, Wim Henderickx, Chausson – Marche écossaise, Sutra, Poème de l’amour et de la mer, La mer [live broadcast on BBC Radio 3].

Mar 31, 2022 | Concert Reviews, Outstanding [category w.e.f. January 2021] | 0 comments



Thursday, March 31, 2022

City Halls, Glasgow

The concert opened with Debussy's *Marche écossaise sur un thème populaire*, charming, just a little sad, the Trio going even further in the latter direction, in this sprightly and tenderly turned rendition that found the required extra gear for the conclusion.

Yoga, the mellow sound of a basset clarinet, and electronics – and a full orchestra – come together for *Sutra* (in this first public performance) by Wim Henderickx written for Annelien Van Wauwe (please see link below for some background). It's an atmospheric/suggestive score, of slow formations, otherworldly, involving evocative chanting from the soloist and some orchestra members, and hypnotic in effect, a variety of colours and details sustaining the thirty-minute-plus whole, whether electronic (courtesy of Sound Intermedia, Ian Dearden) and/or orchestra – the two

are in fact indivisible; and, to regulate the trance-like inducements, there is fast and *fortissimo* music, too, requiring virtuosity from all concerned – duly received – Van Wauwe's basset cutting through with glee, the music dancing ecstatically, until a return to meditation and a fade to silence (or another dimension beyond our consciousness). *Sutra* is a fascinating listen and is recorded on Pentatone (released tomorrow, April 1, Andrew Manze conducting, with Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in tandem).

The rest of the concert featured *The Sea, The Sea*. Dame Sarah Connolly and Martyn Brabbins teamed up again (their Proms 2021 Berlioz was memorable, <http://www.colinscolumn.com/bbc-proms-2021-bbc-symphony-orchestra-martyn-brabbins-conducts-anthony-paynes-springs-shining-wake-beethovens-pastoral-symphony-sarah-connolly-sings/>), and stayed French, Ernest Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer* (completed in 1892 following several years' of composing), young love blossoming/then tarnished and dying – substantial settings of two poems by Maurice Bouchor separated by an orchestral interlude; rapturous music that paints pictures, not overtly, for this is heart and soul music – joy then darkness (graveyards, spectres), the performance flowing rather than indulging, Dame Sarah living and breathing the different emotions, Brabbins securing a sensitive, voluptuous and anguished accompaniment, as required, grief and darkness enveloping the closing measures.

Like Connolly, Brabbins was 'on song' for Debussy's *La mer*, a meticulously prepared account that went beyond dotting Is and crossing Ts. This was a symphonic seascape that also allured and glinted, and paid careful attention to orchestration ... this sea was playful and dramatic: waves crashed.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0015m4z>

Concert was also live-streamed: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p0bxhdxw/bbc-scottish-symphony-orchestra-debussys-la-mer>