

LONDON CALLING

In Focus Season 2 Episode No. 5

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THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

Jane Glover, *conductor*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–91)

Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major, K. 482

- I Allegro
- II Andante
- III Allegro

Imogen Cooper, *piano*

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913–76)

Suite on English Folk Tunes, "A time there was ...",

Opus 90

- I Cakes and Ale
- II The Bitter Withy
- III Hankin Booby
- IV Hunt the Squirrel
- V Lord Melbourne

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

CONCERT OVERVIEW

TWO TOWERING artistic figures — Maestro Jane Glover and pianist Imogen Cooper — reunite in Cleveland to perform Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major. The program will also feature Benjamin Britten's *Suite on English Folk Tunes*, Op. 90 and Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. We'll visit Glover in her London home as she reflects on music by her fellow countrymen, her enduring collaboration with Cooper, and her lifelong connection with Mozart (as she prepares a follow-up to her book, *Mozart's Women: His Family, His Friends, His Music*).

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 22 in E-flat major, K. 482
by **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756–91)

Composed: 1785

World Premiere: December 23, 1785, in Vienna

Scored for: flute, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, timpani, and strings, plus solo piano.

Duration: about 35 minutes

THIS CONCERTO WAS WRITTEN during one of the most successful periods in Mozart's life. He was at the height of his popularity in Vienna, where he gave about a dozen concerts in 1785 alone. During that time, his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* was being performed in many German cities. In October of 1785, Mozart began work on the opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. A concert review in the *Wiener Zeitung* said Mozart was "universally valued" and referred to his "deserved fame."

Concerto No. 22 shows especially well how Mozart expanded upon earlier iterations of the form. Denis Forman, author of the book *Mozart's Concerto Form: The First Movements of the Piano Concertos*, places it in the category of galant works. Galant music was defined in the 18th century as music written in a simple yet elegant style, light in tone and limpid in structure.

Composer Johann Christian Bach, whom the 8-year-old Mozart met in London and who gave the child much encouragement, was one of the main proponents of this style. In Concerto No. 22, Mozart took some typical galant gestures and carried them as far as they would go.

The E-flat major fanfare heard in the first two measures of the concerto's first-movement **Allegro** is something of a cliché; Mozart opened several of his works that way. Yet the third measure already brings something unexpected; a series of harmonic suspensions, dissonances followed by resolutions, scored for bassoons and horns alone. The fanfare is repeated and so are the suspensions, this time played by the clarinets and the violins. Such details of orchestration — never found in J.C. Bach — greatly enhance the impact of Mozart's music. The use of clarinets instead of oboes is particularly noteworthy, since this is one of only two Mozart concertos to use this woodwind instrument, which at the time was still a newcomer in the orchestra. This remarkable opening is followed by a movement rich in lyrical ideas, with plenty of virtuosic piano passages.

The heart of the concerto is its second-movement **Andante** in C minor. A highly emotional instrumental aria is played by the violins *con sordino*, or with mutes. This theme, varied at each repeat, alternates with major-key episodes, in which the piano is silent and the orchestral woodwinds become soloists. The movement ends with a coda for piano and woodwinds, in which one melody from the first major-key episode is heard in the minor, to magical effect.

The **last movement** is a rondo that, like the opening *Allegro*, starts with a stock melodic formula. As before, however, the continuation is completely individual, with a wealth of themes and one big surprise: the appearance of an *Andantino cantabile*, a slow minuet in the new key of A-flat major. Mozart had introduced the very same changes in his early E-flat major concerto (No. 9, nicknamed "Jeunehomme") in 1777. The episode in No. 22 is another dialogue between the piano and the woodwinds; its tone anticipates the moment in *Così fan tutte* where, shortly before

the end of the opera, Ferrando and Fiordiligi drink to their love. (It should be remembered, though, that Fiordiligi was originally engaged to Ferrando's friend, Guglielmo.) The rondo theme then returns and the cheerful mood continues, just like in the opera where the original state of affairs is restored at the end and all the characters go back to their initial partners.

The piano's very last phrase is one of Mozart's incomparable smiling-through-tears moments, finally interrupted by six closing measures where the orchestra seems to say: "Enough of that, it's time to go."

— Peter Laki

*Peter Laki is a musicologist and frequent lecturer on classical music.
He is a visiting associate professor at Bard College.*

SUITE ON ENGLISH FOLK TUNES, "A time there was . . .", Opus 90
by **Benjamin Britten** (1913–76)

Composed: 1974

Premiered: June 1975 at the Aldeburgh Festival in Aldeburgh, U.K.

Scored for: flutes (second doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (second doubling english horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, percussion (snare drum, chimes, bass drum, triangle), and strings.

Duration: about 15 minutes

A PROLIFIC COMPOSER, conductor, and pianist, Benjamin Britten was one of the most prominent cultural ambassadors in English history. Over four decades, he produced 95 works — from operas and concertos to the massive *War Requiem* and numerous song cycles composed for the tenor Peter Pears, Britten's life partner and artistic collaborator. Performing and conducting those works himself at concert halls across the globe, Britten became a national treasure at home, a favorite of audiences ranging from schoolchildren to Queen Elizabeth II.

Part of Britten's allure was how very English his music was — inspired by England's culture, written to connect with its people. Britten was a traditionalist in an age of spiraling modernism, the antithesis of the postwar European avant-garde, who sacrificed late Romanticism's lush harmonies for increasingly dissonant vocabularies. Britten's goal was to make music that was accessible to listeners, with melodies they could whistle on the street. He said in 1963 that:

"It is the composer's duty, as a member of society, to speak to or for his fellow human beings . . . I do not write for posterity . . . I write music, now, in Aldeburgh, for people living there, and further afield, indeed for anyone who cares to play it or listen to it."

Britten lived most of his life in Aldeburgh, a coastal town on the North Sea that E. M. Forster described as “a bleak little place; not beautiful.” Although Britten found comfort and refuge in the remote, storm-shellacked town, its bleakness mirrored his physical and emotional states in late 1974. One year earlier, while undergoing heart surgery to replace a faulty valve, he suffered a mild stroke during the operation that greatly weakened his right arm.

Despondent and depressed at his inability to play piano or conduct, Britten found it difficult to focus on composition. But Rita Thomson, Britten’s full-time nurse and one of his closest confidantes, made it her mission to lift the composer’s spirits and supply him with the materials and quiet he needed to write.

It was on an extended stay with Rita at Schloss Wolfsgarten in autumn 1974 that Britten sketched the *Suite on English Folk Tunes*, “A time there was . . .”, his final work for orchestra. Although originally conceived as a vehicle for “Hankin Booby,” a short dance for wind band Britten had composed in 1966 for the opening of London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall, his new suite became an homage to English music itself — a nostalgia-laced look at the popular songs of Britten’s youth, suffused with both energy and longing.

“Lovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Percy Grainger,” a composer friend of Britten’s who shared an interest in collecting folk songs, the suite is a testament to Britten’s economical musical style. In roughly 14 minutes, he develops 10 folk tune snippets in five fleeting movements.

Marked “fast and rough,” the opening “**Cakes and Ales**” pits brassy, militaristic fanfares against relentless rhythms from drums and strings. After a lyrical chorale led by the woodwinds, the military drums return — now off in the distance — while an eerie solo violin skitters up one final scale before the music evaporates.

“**The Bitter Withy**” recalls a ballad based on a medieval poem about Christ’s childhood. Lush string lines alternate with scampering figures in the solo harp, the sound of children cheerfully at play. The music slowly grows in intensity, culminating in Mary disciplining the Christ child with three lashings — brilliantly brought to life with rapid glissandos in the harp that end in the raspy snap of the double bass section hitting their strings with the wooden side of the bow.

“**Hankin Booby**” is a Tudor-era dance in triple time, with spiky dotted rhythms from oboes and clarinets punctuated by snareless drums. Trumpets, flutes, and bassoons add to the revelry, replete with quivering trills and swift scalar flourishes.

Lasting less than 90 seconds, “**Hunt the Squirrel**” is a feat of virtuosic fiddling. Divided into four parts, the orchestra’s violins swiftly navigate sudden changes in dynamics, biting accents, and rapid-fire string crossing in its race to the finish line.

Dark clouds and icy breezes permeate the closing “**Lord Melbourne.**” The energetic drums and fiddlers of earlier movements have departed, replaced by a solo english horn singing its melancholy tune, marked “always flowing” in the score. Yearning turns to resignation as the soloist’s final phrase echoes across the winds and a plush major chord in the strings fades to nothing.

The suite’s title, “A time there was . . .”, is a nod to the first line of “Before life and after,” a Thomas Hardy poem that held great emotional resonance for Britten. In 1953, he had set the poem as the final movement of the *Winter Words* cycle composed for Pears — a work they performed many times on their international recital tours. To understand its placement on the suite’s title page more than two decades later, we must turn to perhaps the most moving love letter the couple shared. Shortly after Britten finished sketching the new suite, he wrote to Pears in New York:

"My darling heart ... I do love you so terribly, and not only glorious you, but your singing. I've just listened to a re-broadcast of *Winter Words*, and honestly you are the greatest artist that ever was — those great words, so sad and wise ... What have I done to deserve such an artist and man to write for? ... I love you, I love you, I love you."

Already swept up in the nostalgia of his new work, and with Pears thousands of miles away for the Metropolitan Opera premiere of Britten's final opera, *Death in Venice*, hearing *Winter Words* prompted not only a spectacular confession of love from Britten, but a means to encode that love for Pears in his new work. And having come to terms with his declining health and accepting that the days he had left were far too few, he chose to express that love both nobly and unabashedly.

— Michael Cirigliano II

Michael Cirigliano II is a freelance arts journalist and copywriter. He has written for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Oregon Symphony, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

FANTASIA ON A THEME BY THOMAS TALLIS

by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872–1958)

Composed: 1910

Premiered: September 6, 1910, at Gloucester Cathedral as part of the Three Choirs Festival.

Scored for: double string orchestra, divided into string quartet and an ensemble of nine instruments.

Duration: about 15 minutes

THE SEAMLESS unanimity of sound that a group of strings can create has induced many composers to write works specifically for large ensembles of strings. A number of these — by Tchaikovsky, Elgar, and Dvořák — have become popular staples for orchestras around the world.

For his *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams approached the idea of a work for strings from several different angles all at once. Vaughan Williams had come of age in an era with renewed interest in music from the English Renaissance — when Shakespeare lived and England's first great crop of composers were writing hymns, songs, and instrumental works. In 1906, Vaughan Williams undertook editing a new English Church Hymnal. To the many popular Victorian tunes from the 19th century, he set about adding some older English tunes, choosing a variety of appropriate melodies by

Henry Purcell (1659–1695), William Byrd (1543–1623), Thomas Morley (1557–1602), and Thomas Tallis (1505–1585).

Vaughan Williams was particularly intrigued by some of Thomas Tallis's tunes, and when asked to write a new piece for the Three Choirs Festival — which rotates each year among the three cathedral cities of Gloucester, Hereford, and Wooster — he reached across four centuries of music and chose one of these as his starting point.

Having spent three months in France studying with Maurice Ravel, Vaughan Williams also started to experiment with sonority, giving rise to an inspired design for the work. Rather than writing simply for a string orchestra, he composed for three string groupings of unequal sizes. The *Fantasia* is thus scored for a large string orchestra, a smaller group of nine instrumentalists, and a separate string quartet. Part of Vaughan Williams's intentions was to amplify the natural echo and resonance inside Gloucester Cathedral, the site of that year's festival. In doing so, he also succeeded in recreating some of those same sound characteristics wherever the piece is played.

The ethereal beauty and timeless nature of the *Fantasia* emanates from the full string orchestra at its beginning, cycling through the main theme twice. The instrumental forces are then divided and set into dialogue with each other, spinning new textures and creating an array of shimmering harmonies before reuniting at the end.

So effective are Vaughan Williams's techniques that they have been frequently emulated in film music to set an atmosphere of calm expectancy. And, as popular as this piece has become through recordings, it is considerably more fascinating to experience in performance, where we can hear in full relief the effect of the three different ensembles playing with and against one another and juxtaposed in space.

— Eric Sellen

Eric Sellen is The Cleveland Orchestra's editor emeritus. He previously was program book editor for 28 seasons.

CONDUCTOR: JANE GLOVER

ACCLAIMED BRITISH CONDUCTOR Jane Glover has been music director at Chicago's Music of the Baroque since 2002. She made her professional debut at the Wexford Festival in 1975, conducting her own edition of Cavalli's *L'Eritrea*. She joined Glyndebourne in 1979 and was music director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera from 1982 until 1985. She was artistic director of the London Mozart Players from 1984 to 1991. From 2009 to 2016, she was director of opera at the Royal Academy of Music where she is now the Felix Mendelssohn Emeritus Professor of Music. She was recently visiting professor of opera at the University of Oxford, her alma mater.

Ms. Glover has conducted all the major symphony and chamber orchestras in Britain, as well as orchestras in Asia, Australia, Europe, and the United States. In recent seasons, she has appeared with The Cleveland Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

A Mozart specialist, she has conducted all the composer's operas around the world regularly since she first performed them at Glyndebourne in the 1980s. Her core operatic repertoire also includes Britten, Handel, and Monteverdi. Highlights of recent seasons include *Alcina* with the Washington National Opera, *Così fan tutte* for Lyric Opera of Kansas City, *Don Giovanni* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, *The Elixir of Love* for Houston Grand Opera, *The Magic Flute* with the Metropolitan Opera, and *Medea* for Opera Omaha.

Ms. Glover holds a personal professorship at the University of London, is a fellow of the Royal College of Music, and the holder of several honorary degrees. In 2020, she was awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society's Gamechanger Award for her work in breaking new ground for other female conductors. The author of the critically acclaimed books *Mozart's Women* and *Handel in London*, she was created a Commander of the British Empire in the 2003 New Year's Honours and a Dame Commander in the 2021 New Year's Honours.

The Cleveland Orchestra is grateful to these organizations for their ongoing generous support of The Cleveland Orchestra:

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The Cleveland Orchestra is proud of its long-term partnership with Kent State University, made possible in part through generous funding from the State of Ohio.

The Cleveland Orchestra is proud to have its home, Severance Hall, located on the campus of Case Western Reserve University, with whom it has a long history of collaboration and partnership.



GUEST ARTIST: **IMOGEN COOPER, *piano***

PIANIST IMOGEN COOPER is regarded as one of the finest interpreters of Classical and Romantic repertoire and internationally renowned for her virtuosity and lyricism. Recent and future concerto performances include the Hallé Orchestra with Sir Mark Elder and the London Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle. Recent and future recitals include performances at Germany's Klavierfest Ruhr, London's Wigmore Hall, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and Spain's Schubertiada. In 2021, Ms. Cooper served as chair of the jury at the Leeds International Piano Competition.

Ms. Cooper has a widespread international career, appearing with the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Vienna Philharmonic, among many others. She played at the BBC Proms and with all major British orchestras. She enjoys particularly close relationships with Britten Sinfonia and the Royal Northern Sinfonia. Her recital appearances have included Hong Kong, New York, Paris, Prague, Singapore, Tokyo, and Vienna.

Ms. Cooper is a committed chamber musician and performs regularly with cellist Adrian Brendel and violinist Henning Kraggerud. As a Lieder recitalist, she has had a long collaboration with baritone Wolfgang Holzmair in both the concert hall and recording studio. Her recent recordings for Chandos Records feature music by French and Spanish composers, as well as Beethoven, Liszt, and Wagner.

Ms. Cooper received a Dame Commander of the British Empire in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2021. The honor adds to her many awards and accolades, which include the Queen's Medal for Music (2019), Royal Philharmonic Society Performers Award (2008), Commander of the Order of the British Empire (2007), and Honorary Membership of the Royal Academy of Music (1997). The Imogen Cooper Music Trust was founded in 2015 to support young pianists at the cusp of their careers.

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

NOW IN ITS second century, The Cleveland Orchestra, under the leadership of Franz Welser-Möst since 2002, remains one of the most sought-after performing ensembles in the world. Year after year the ensemble exemplifies extraordinary artistic excellence, creative programming, and community engagement. In recent years, *The New York Times* has called Cleveland “the best in America” for its virtuosity, elegance of sound, variety of color, and chamber-like musical cohesion, “virtually flawless,” and “one of the finest ensembles in the country (if not the world).”

Founded by Adella Prentiss Hughes, the Orchestra performed its inaugural concert in December 1918. By the middle of the century, decades of growth and sustained support had turned the ensemble into one of the most admired around the world.

The past decade has seen an increasing number of young people attending concerts, bringing fresh attention to The Cleveland Orchestra’s legendary sound and committed programming. More recently the Orchestra launched several bold digital projects, including the streaming broadcast series *In Focus*, the podcast *On A Personal Note*, and its own recording label.

The 2021-22 season marks Franz Welser-Möst’s 20th year as music director, a period in which The Cleveland Orchestra earned unprecedented acclaim around the world, including a series of residencies at the Musikverein in Vienna, the first of its kind by an American orchestra. The Orchestra’s 100th season in 2017-18 featured two international tours, concluding with the presentation of Welser-Möst’s *Prometheus Project*, featuring works by Beethoven, on three continents.

Its acclaimed opera presentations, including Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* (2019), Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* (May 2017), Bartók’s *Miraculous Mandarin* and *Bluebeard’s Castle* (April 2016), and Janáček’s *The Cunning Little Vixen* (2014 and 2017), have showcased the ensemble’s unique artistry and collaborative work ethic.

Since 1918, seven music directors — Nikolai Sokoloff, Artur Rodziński, Erich Leinsdorf, George Szell, Lorin Maazel, Christoph von Dohnányi, and Franz Welser-Möst — have guided and shaped the ensemble’s growth and sound. Through concerts at home and on tour, broadcasts, and a catalog of acclaimed recordings, The Cleveland Orchestra is heard today by a growing group of fans around the world.

For more information, visit: www.clevelandorchestra.com.