

## First steps to live performances taken

Just a few weeks ago it seemed distinctly uncertain whether there would be any chance of watching live music-making this summer. Now – for a limited, and



Keeping the spirit of Pärnu: Paavo Järvi and players

lucky, few – a number of organisations have announced plans to perform for live audiences, albeit each stressing that they are strictly working within the restrictions imposed by their respective governments.

On June 15, within a few days of the publication of this issue, the Bergen Philharmonic is set to mark Grieg's birthday with its first public performance since lockdown. Following the lifting of many virus-related restrictions in Norway, there will be two performances that evening, each for 200 guests, all of whom have contributed to fighting Covid-19.

The following week, on June 21, Riccardo Muti will open a re-imagined Ravenna festival – set to be the first public concerts in Italy since lockdown began.

Running until July 30, the festival will offer 40 open-air events in the city's 15th-century fortress, Rocca Brancaleone for audiences of up to 250 people.

Then in July, Estonia's Pärnu Music Festival has announced that its 10th anniversary season will still go ahead from July 16 to July 23, albeit with a new programme, and to audiences of approximately 300, each concert also being live-streamed. The focus will be on Estonian artists, both young and established, and music will feature works by Estonian composers Lepo Sumera and Tõnu Kõrvits. Conducting masterclasses will also be streamed live. 'Even though the musical celebrations will be smaller than originally planned, the spirit of Pärnu will compensate one hundred fold and I cannot wait to return to one of my favourite places to be reunited with so many friends on stage,' said conductor Paavo Järvi.

## ONE TO WATCH

### *Amatis Piano Trio*

In 2014, the German violinist Lea Hausmann and British cellist Samuel Shepherd were busking together in Amsterdam when they decided they wanted to form a piano trio. In search of a pianist, they attended the International Liszt Competition that was taking place in Utrecht, and invited the Chinese/Dutch pianist Mengjie Han – who won the third prize – to join them. They formed the Amatis Piano Trio, and gave their first performance a week later.

Accolades came quickly. They won the Parkhouse Award in 2015, the final taking place at Wigmore Hall, where they have subsequently performed numerous times. In 2016 they were selected for the BBC New Generation Artists scheme, and then in the 2018/19 season they were chosen as ECHO (European Concert Hall Organisation) Rising Stars, and toured many of Europe's leading concert venues. In 2020 they were awarded a **Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship**.

The three musicians have developed a close bond, and their individual personalities shine through while also blending to form a strongly communicative ensemble. They have made



their first commercial recording, for AVI-Music, including Ravel's mature Piano Trio, a work they've played many times in concert, alongside youthful works by Enescu and Britten (see review on page 47). Recording plans are under discussion, although it is encouraging to hear that they are committed to exploring unusual repertoire. Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* will probably be next – do look out for it.

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### Podcasts

This month on the *Gramophone* Podcast Editor Martin Cullingford meets guitarist Sharon Isbin, whose two new albums explore the versatility of her instrument. The first ('Affinity') includes contemporary music for guitar by Chris Brubeck, Leo Brouwer, Tan Dun and Richard Danielpour while the second album ('Strings for Peace') features sarod master Amjad Ali Khan and his sons Amaan and Ayaan Ali Bangash for a journey through the ragas and talas of North Indian classical music.



Sharon Isbin is a guest on the Gramophone Podcast

Also this month, James Jolly speaks to clarinettist Martin Fröst about his new recording of Vivaldi 'clarinet concertos', works created with the assistance of the composer and arranger Andreas Tarkmann from arias drawn from the composer's operas.

### Specialist Classical Chart

The Official Specialist Classical Chart Top 20 is now available on the *Gramophone* website. Updated every Friday, it is an excellent guide to new classical releases.