

# Robin STEVENS

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO  
OCEANIC LULLABY  
CELLO CONCERTO  
INTO THE DEEP

Alice Neary, cello  
Stéphane Rancourt, oboe  
Royal Scottish National Orchestra  
Paul Mann

FIRST RECORDINGS

## A COMPOSING CAREER

by Robin Stevens

I was born in Wales in 1958, into an artistic family. My father, Desmond Stevens, was a devoted music-lover, and my mother was the pianist and lecturer Gillian Butterworth. I began playing the cello aged eight, and the piano aged twelve. Throughout my teenage years I dabbled in composition of a highly derivative kind, a pattern continued as an undergraduate with the exercises in pastiche which, in the late 1970s, were still a central component of a university music degree. In retrospect, perhaps the most important snippet of wisdom anyone ever passed on to me as a composer came, aged twenty, when the composer and lecturer Geoffrey Poole, realising my fledgling essays in creativity were rather four-square and predictable, introduced me to the fluidity of mediaeval plainsong: my love of rhythmically free, recitative-like instrumental solos has its source in that one precious piece of advice. I began to take composing more seriously during my two years studying for an MA at Birmingham University (1980–82), under the sensitive direction of John Joubert. My first major composition, a four-movement string quintet, was written at this time: it is a stylistic *mélange*, aspects of Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Walton, Bartók and Bloch, coalescing, I dare to believe, into a surprisingly satisfying whole.

During the five years I spent at St Paul's Church, York (1982–87), I was mainly occupied with composing choral settings and congregational songs. Writing songs for a very middle-of-the-road congregation developed my lyrical gift, and encouraged me to avoid over-complication in my classical compositions. Towards the end of this period I changed to working part-time in the church, allowing me the space to compose three substantial pieces: a *Fantasy Sonata* for violin and piano; a *Sonata Tempesta*, also for violin and piano; and a Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello. Of these pieces, the *Fantasy Sonata* is the seminal work: a single-movement composition sixteen minutes long, based entirely on an octatonic scale (B–C–D–E flat–F–

F sharp–G sharp–A–B), giving the piece a limited but highly distinctive harmonic palette. The *Fantasy Sonata* is in two halves, comprising a statement and a varied counter-statement, the second half of the piece telescoping development and recapitulation, a practice that would become one of my most characteristic stylistic fingerprints.

For the best part of the next two decades my creativity was severely hampered by the debilitating effects of post-viral fatigue. As a result, my next important work, the *Three Character Pieces* for cello and piano, did not emerge until 2004. In this highly charged composition, dissonance is employed in a visceral, Expressionist manner. Vestiges of lyricism remain, but harmonic invention is the propelling force behind the music. *Say Yes to Life* for violin and piano (2005), inhabits a similar expressive world, but with the melodic dimension rather more prominent.

Restored to full health in 2007, I embarked upon six years' part-time study for a Ph.D. in composition at Manchester University, and in that time wrote six major works. In the first of these, my String Quartet No. 1 (2008), counterpoint takes centre-stage, and polyrhythms (originating in my study of Elliot Carter's own String Quartet No. 1) make their first appearance in one of my large-scale compositions. This piece marks the apogee of my Modernist style: it is a tough, gnarly work, uncompromisingly forthright, and very demanding for performers and listeners alike. The *Fantasy Trio* for flute, guitar and cello (2009), is similarly dissonant but, inspired by the unusual ensemble – a highly effective instrumental combination which I heartily recommend to other composers – I laid more emphasis on unorthodox instrumental colours and textures. The exploration of texture and timbre continued in my *Romantic Fantasy* for flute, clarinet, harp and string quartet (2010), which employs the same, single-movement, statement-varied counterstatement structure of the *Fantasy Sonata* of 25 years previously, a structure I would use once more in my *Sonata Romantica* for cello and piano. In the *Romantic Fantasy* I also employ a personal adaptation of bitonality: rather than the music ever being in two distinct keys at once, certain passages in this work embody a duality in which dissonant, atonal accompanying chords undermine any sense of tonality implicit in the melodic line.

The principle of ‘continual variation’ is important in much of my music, and in my String Quartet No. 2, *Three Portraits* (2011), it takes me in a fresh direction. The central slow movement of this quartet is in itself a set of variations, and there are strong thematic connections between all three movements, which follow one another without a break. Reflecting the cyclic processes at work in this piece, each movement of the quartet is a portrait of a different member of one imaginary family – a shared DNA, but a distinct individual personality depicted in each movement, hence the subtitle.

*Mourning into Dancing*, a tone-poem for symphony orchestra (2011),<sup>1</sup> is, like the String Quartet No. 2, a continuous musical span divided into distinct sections, each with a definite tempo and character, but having thematic material in common. Continual variation is most prevalent in the Scherzo section, though the variation here consists entirely of changing instrumentation, the main Scherzo theme itself remaining immutable. Bitonal harmony, particularly the combination of minor triads a tritone apart (for example, B minor and F minor), is a central feature in this work.

*Brass Odyssey* for brass band and eight percussionists (2012–13), the last of my Ph.D. compositions, is in two parts. Part I sees the principle of continual variation operating in an accumulative manner: the music is bound together by three appearances of a chorale, and five appearances of a fanfare, both chorale and fanfare growing in intensity and complexity on each restatement. In Part II the pattern of accumulative impact is observed again in my treatment of the bold, two-phrase *ritornello* theme with which Part II opens: on its four subsequent reappearances the *ritornello* acts as a structural marker, separating the four dance-episodes of Part II from one another, and becoming louder and more majestic each time it is heard. In *Brass Odyssey* the polyrhythms of earlier works are replaced by east European additive rhythms, asymmetrical bar-metres such as  $\frac{5}{8}$  and  $\frac{7}{8}$  being dominant in the faster passages: in the slower passages the rhythmic freedom of solo recitatives alternates with the solemn tread of a processional, recalling the first two sections of *Mourning into Dancing*.

<sup>1</sup> Recorded on Volume Three of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0788.

After completing my Ph.D. in 2013, my fondness for pastiche, prevalent in my youth, resurfaced in two works. The *Tè Deum* for choir and orchestra (2013) is an affectionate tribute to the British choral tradition, doffing its cap in turn at Handel, Stanford, Holst and Walton, but also incorporating more personal passages of harmonic complexity to convey mystery and awe. The *Balmoral Suite* for recorder, harp and strings (2017) unashamedly mimics Scottish folk-music, throwing in the occasional Modernist twist in a manner recalling my *Suite Écossaise* (2005, orchestrated 2010).<sup>2</sup>

In the period immediately following my Ph.D., as well as returning to pastiche, in the sharpest possible contrast, I also experimented with using microtones in an extensive series of miniatures for unaccompanied cello. These shorter pieces proved a testing ground for incorporating microtones into almost all my subsequent major works, beginning with the epic, single-movement *Sonata Romantica* for cello and piano (2019), and continuing with the four-movement Clarinet Quintet (2019–20), and the Cello Concerto and the Viola Concerto.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, therefore, as some new stylistic traits have appeared in my music, other old ones have come full circle. The slow movement of my Clarinet Quintet, for example, contains two *fugato* sections, strongly recalling the parallel movement of my earliest major work, the String Quintet. The solo cadenzas and numerous solo passages in *Sonata Romantica* recall, and indeed were consciously modelled on, the solo cadenzas for violin and for piano in the *Fantasy Sonata*, written 34 years previously. And the catchy rondo subject and the ‘Child’s’ Theme from the finale of my Bassoon Concerto (2014–16)<sup>4</sup> hark back to the cheerful tunefulness of the main finale theme in my *Sonata Tempesta* (1986). The Bassoon Concerto also testifies to my continued love of instrumental recitative, whether accompanied (as, for example, at the start of the work) or unaccompanied, as in the many solo passages scattered throughout the piece.

Through the receipt of a generous family bequest in 2018, I have been able to record the majority of my back catalogue (five albums on the Divine Art label, and three on

<sup>2</sup> Recorded on Volume One of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0758.

<sup>3</sup> Recorded on TOCC 0788.

<sup>4</sup> Also recorded on TOCC 0758.

Toccatà Classics), and it has been my immense privilege throughout the recording process to have worked with some of the best instrumentalists in the UK.

*[www.robinstevenscomposer.co.uk](http://www.robinstevenscomposer.co.uk)*

In western classical music the two main instrumental forms employing large forces are the symphony and the concerto. Of these, the concerto is for most composers, and certainly for myself, the more approachable form. In daring to begin a symphony, a certain self-consciousness can kick in, a sense that one is putting one's reputation on the line, that critics – both internal and external – will be lining up to say, 'Right, show us what you are made of, then!'. Creatively this feeling can be inhibiting. Conversely, writing concertos can be liberating; the character, capabilities and limitations of one's chosen solo instrument immediately suggest certain types of musical expression, and, just as helpfully, exclude some others; one is not then overwhelmed with too much freedom, too much choice, too many possibilities. Additionally, in choosing and defining the type of relationship the soloist will have with the orchestra – a confrontation of opposing forces; the respectful interaction of equals; the soloist dominating while the orchestra meekly accompanies; or a subtle mingling of all these options – a stylistic framework begins to emerge. And if, in one's temperamental make-up, there is a love of theatricality (and in mine there certainly is), then the drama inherent in the interplay of soloist and orchestra can act as a compositional springboard.

The Cello Concerto, the second of my three concertos to date, was written between the autumns of 2018 and 2020, and is therefore a child of my early sixties. A cellist myself, I was concerned to honour the essentially lyrical nature of the instrument and wrote the solo part with cello and bow in hand, responding instinctively, rather as a potter does to clay. Somewhat unusually, the concerto is in four movements, the scherzo being placed second and the slow movement third, and the complete work is half an hour long.

The Concerto [2] begins with introductory fanfares in the orchestra separated by accompanied recitatives on the cello, before pulsing quavers in the strings set the moderately paced main body of the first movement in motion. There are three main

themes in this movement: a singing cello line, in the unusual bar-metre of 2+2+2+3 quavers; a rather more urgent cello theme beginning in triple time, with *pizzicato* accompaniment; and a dissonant chordal idea in which flutes and clarinets both play in thirds, but in contrary motion to each other. A development section ensues, the material already heard being fragmented and combined in a manner befitting traditional sonata-form procedure, and the recapitulation is heralded by the reappearance of the introductory fanfares and cello recitatives. Then an unexpected turn, as the soloist embarks on a cadenza, leading to a varied restatement, not of the first, but of the second and then the third main themes, building to a climax centred exclusively on the notes D and E, which together are the tonal centre of the movement as a whole. The climax quickly subsides, and now, at last, the first main theme is recapitulated, functioning here as a reflective, understated coda to a movement which, in its entirety, has an ambiguous, introductory quality to it.

The brief, fleet-footed scherzo [3] begins with shards of bassoon melody and brass fanfare skimming by, over a cello *ostinato* in  $\frac{7}{8}$ . Fragmentation abounds in this movement, but as the *ostinato* transfers to the woodwind, the cello sings out a short 'trio' melody, double-stopping in sevenths, and playing in  $\frac{4}{4}$  time against the continued  $\frac{7}{8}$  in the orchestra. This 'trio' theme is heard twice more, in the middle and at the very end of the movement, both times played by the winds, to an accompaniment of polymetric complexity which only disentangles at the very end of the movement.

A lonely horn solo sets in motion the expansive *Adagio* [4], the expressive core of the Concerto. Beneath a halo of string harmonics the cello intones a keening melody, disturbingly coloured by unorthodox microtone tunings. A wind chorale follows, and then a lyrical dialogue between the cello and unison flute and clarinet, over a drone bass. The entire string section in rhythmic unison now sings out an ardent chordal idea in five- and six-part harmony, with expressive interjections from a solo bassoon. Then a chromatic cello theme metamorphoses into a dovetailing duet with solo oboe. Chromatic, microtonal cello lines continue, but the accompanying backdrop changes to a blurry, Impressionistic texture; flute and clarinet cross-rhythms, artificial harmonics in the violins and a relentless crotchet pulse in the timpani. As the intensity builds, the cello

sings out a brief, impassioned lament in its soaring upper register, but the music soon collapses into the depths of the orchestra. The second half of the movement has arrived, a varied restatement of the first half, but with the keening cello melody and lonely horn solo now placed at the end. This restatement goes far beyond mere decorative repetition: rather, each idea is developed and extended so that, in the second half of the *Adagio*, its true character is revealed. Each phrase of the original wind chorale, for example, is transferred to the solo cello, *pizzicato*, then echoed by the strings, and by the wind in diminution. And the climactic cello lament now reaches towards the upper limits of the cello range – a fraught and frenetic outpouring, the crux of the whole piece – after which only an exhausted descent is possible, returning to base with a sombre reminder of the opening of the movement.

Strings, *col legno*, make a hesitant start to the Finale [5], as if mindful of intruding upon the deep introspection of the conclusion of the *Adagio*. But the cello, on its entry, launches into a bold, wide-ranging theme, full of courage and determination. This spacious opening section eventually gives way to a quieter *staccato* pattern in the brass, recalling the additive rhythms and asymmetrical bar-metres of the third main theme of the first movement. Once this pattern is transferred to the woodwind, it functions as an accompaniment to a sustained melody in the lower register of the cello, effectively the second subject of the movement. A subsidiary idea – descending slides in major seconds on the cello, against fast ascending figures in the woodwind – makes a brief appearance, before the cello restates its bold opening theme.

The music now embarks on an extended development section in which, early on, the second subject is handed to the bassoon in its upper register, against a cello counter-melody. A mysterious chorale emerges, actually comprised of augmentations, or ‘stretchings’, of a four-note *legato* phrase from the opening theme, a phrase which haunts the remainder of the middle section of the movement. Increasingly the sliding major seconds of the subsidiary idea come into prominence, and as tension grows, the major second interval itself becomes central to the musical discourse, linking the Finale to the first movement, where it was so dominant. At last the complex weaving and interlocking of the development section is abandoned in a loud recapitulation of the

opening theme of the Finale, now heard on full orchestra, after which the cellist embarks upon an extended cadenza. The brief coda sees the soloist again returning to the main Finale theme, here transformed into a cheeky, lop-sided, five-in-a-bar rhythm. Amidst quiet, fleeting references to the opening fanfares of the Concerto, the cello abandons its habitual soulfulness, and the composition ends in a mood of insouciant playfulness, as if to say: ‘What was all that fuss about?’

*Oceanic Lullaby*, a miniature for solo oboe and chamber orchestra [1], depicts a person floating on water being lulled to sleep by the rise and fall of the waves. The simplicity of the opening oboe melody belies the complexity of the accompanying cross-rhythms – quintuplets in the cellos and triplet crotchets in the flutes and violins. In the more turbulent central section the cross-rhythmic element intensifies: against a plaintive oboe theme in simple triple time, plucked strings divide each bar into quarters, and the upper wind play septuplets. Several years after originally completing this piece, it came to me that, with the return of the opening section, the main melody should be heard in canon; thus, in this revised version, the horn leads the reprise, and the oboe follows on.

I wrote the orchestral tone-poem *Into the Deep* [6] in spring 2025. The piece is predominantly slow-paced and, as the title suggests, probing and exploratory in character. More than in any other of my major works, sonority and tone-colour are central to the musical discourse: bitonal passages, where the music simultaneously inhabits two different tonal centres, abound, and the harmonic dichotomy inherent in bitonality is emphasised by assigning different dynamic levels and instrumental timbres to the conflicting tonalities – a technique strikingly employed at the very start of the work.

Taking its cue from my three solo concertos, for bassoon, cello and viola, *Into the Deep* makes extensive use of both solo recitatives and extended lyrical solos for individual instruments which are not normally the centre of attention, and so bassoon, contrabassoon, bass clarinet, double-bass, tuba and the three trombones are all, briefly, centre-stage during the course of the piece, often heard at the upper or lower extremes of their register. Another colourist effect is the use of the piano.

The title, *Into the Deep*, is taken from Jesus' words to His disciples in Luke's gospel, chapter five and verse five. The disciples have been fishing all night, and have caught nothing. Christ then tells them to 'Launch out into the deep', and immediately their fishing boat starts to sink under the weight of a huge catch of fish. I love these words for their call to adventure and exploration: to eschew a risk-averse lifestyle, and instead to embrace life in all its fullness, with all the uncertainty and unpredictability that courageous living entails. I hope that, on occasions at least, my music manages to encapsulate that venturesome spirit.

**Alice Neary** enjoys a varied performing career as a chamber musician, soloist and orchestral player; she is much in demand as a guest principal cellist. She is delighted to have recently joined the London Haydn Quartet.

She is familiar to listeners of Radio 3, and her festival performances include BBC Proms chamber series, Marlboro (USA), Bath International, Santa Fe (USA), At the World's Edge festival in New Zealand and Lofoten in northern Norway. Recent concerto performances include Strauss' *Don Quixote* and the Honegger and Frances-Hoade concertos, with the Brahms Double Concerto with BBC National Orchestra in her diary.



Alice Neary was a member of the Gould Piano Trio from 2001 until 2018, the highlights including performances of the complete piano trios of Beethoven, Schubert and Dvořák at the Wigmore Hall, the commissioning of new works from Sir James MacMillan and Mark Simpson, frequent US tours and over 25 album releases. Her solo recordings include concertos by Tovey (on Toccata Classics) and Howells and sonatas by Mendelssohn, Sterndale Bennett, Tovey (again on Toccata Classics), Pamela Harrison and Ireland.

She has appeared as guest cellist with numerous other groups, among them the Nash Ensemble, Manchester Collective, Academy of St Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble, Ensemble 360 and the Endellion, Elias, Sacconi, Maxwell and Heath quartets. She collaborates with the pianists Viv McLean, Jâms Coleman and Benjamin Frith. Frequent visits to the International Musicians' Seminar at Prussia Cove, in Cornwall, the Wye Valley Chamber Music festival on the Welsh border and the Marlboro Festival in the USA provide ongoing inspiration.

From 2017 to 2024 she was principal cellist of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and has made recent appearances as guest principal cello with the Oslo Philharmonic, Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Philharmonia, Hallé, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, BBC Philharmonic and BBC Symphony Orchestras.

Alice Neary studied with Ralph Kirshbaum at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and, as a Fulbright scholar, with Timothy Eddy at Stonybrook, Long Island, USA. She won the 1998 Pierre Fournier Award, leading to her Wigmore Hall debut recital. She has been tutor in cello at the RNCM and Royal College of Music in London and now teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, where she was awarded a Fellowship in 2015. She and her husband, the violinist David Adams, founded the Penarth Chamber Music Festival in 2014. She plays a cello by Alessandro Gagliano of 1710.

**Stéphane Rancourt**, oboe, was born in Quebec in 1967, where he studied with Jacques Simard, at the Conservatoire de Musique de Québec, and in Europe, with Thomas Indermuhle, at the Rotterdam Konservatorium and the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Karlsruhe. In Canada, he was the first oboist to win the Sylva Gelber Award, given by the Canada Council for the Arts, and was also the prize-winner of the 1991 Prix d'Europe. As an orchestra player and soloist, he has performed in most European countries as well as in South America, Russia, Canada, Japan and Australia. Before taking up his appointment as Principal Oboe with the Hallé Orchestra in 2003, he was for eight years Principal Oboe with the RSNO.

His discography includes Alan Rawsthorne's Oboe Concerto, nominated for a *Gramophone* Award, and Samuel Barber's *Canzonetta* for oboe and string orchestra and *Capricorn Concerto*, selected as a *Gramophone* 'Editor's Choice'. For the Hallé label, he recorded the Vaughan Williams Oboe Concerto, and NMC recently released his live performance of John Casken's *Apollinaire's Bird*, which was written for him and commissioned by the Hallé.

He teaches oboe at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester and is a visiting oboe tutor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.



Photograph: Nelson Reeves

**Paul Mann** is a regular guest-conductor with many orchestras throughout Europe, the USA, Australia and the Far East. His work as chief conductor of the Odense Symphony Orchestra in Denmark achieved considerable critical success, particularly in the symphonies of Beethoven, Elgar, Mahler, Schumann and Shostakovich; with it he made numerous recordings of a wide range of repertoire, for such labels as Bridge, DaCapo and EMI.

He first came to international attention as winner of the 1998 Donatella Flick Conducting Competition, as a result of which he was also appointed assistant conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. He made his LSO debut shortly afterwards, and subsequently collaborated frequently with the Orchestra, in both the concert-hall and the recording studio. Special projects with the LSO included the Duke Ellington Centenary Concert at the Barbican Hall with Wynton Marsalis, and a famous collaboration with the legendary rock group Deep Purple in two widely acclaimed performances of Jon Lord's *Concerto for Group and Orchestra* at the Royal Albert Hall, the live DVD and CD of which remain international bestsellers. Among his most prominent recordings are the first-ever studio account of Lord's *Concerto*, with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, in collaboration with Jon Lord himself and a star-studded cast of soloists, and the live recording of *Celebrating Jon Lord*, a special concert which took place at the Royal Albert Hall in April 2014 with an all-star cast paying tribute to the late composer.

This is his 33rd recording for Toccata Classics, furnishing a discography that spans a wide range of music, both new and forgotten. His first album for Toccata Classics was of orchestral works of Leif Solberg, closely followed by three-disc surveys of the complete orchestral music of the Scottish Romantic Charles O'Brien and of the Victorian English composer Henry Cotter Nixon, both series including works in his own orchestrations and reconstructions. He has recently been closely associated with a revival of interest in the music of the Swiss composer Richard Flury, recording the complete cycle of symphonies and other orchestral works with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, together with three of the composer's four operas, and many other shorter symphonic pieces, also including rarities in his own orchestrations. As often with his recordings, they were all made from his own specially created editions.



He has also established himself as a champion of contemporary British symphonists, recording the Ninth (TOCC 0393), Tenth and Thirteenth (TOCC 0452) and Fifteenth (TOCC 0456) Symphonies of David Hackbridge Johnson and the Third by Steve Elcock (TOCC 0400), each accompanied by smaller works, as well as the Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4 and tone-poem *Distant Nebulae* by Rodney Newton (TOCC 0459), together with explorations of other living British composers, including Rob Keeley and Arnold Griller and four volumes of music by Derek B. Scott. Latterly, an album (TOCC 0450) of Robin Holloway's orchestrations – of the Brahms Piano Quintet, Op. 34, as a Symphony in F minor, the Op. 23 *Variations on a Theme of Schumann* and Schumann's *Canonical Studies*, Op. 56 – has been particularly well received.

Paul Mann is curating, as well as conducting, a series of new works for string orchestra, *Music for My Love*, all written in memory of Yodit Tekle, the partner of Martin Anderson, founder of Toccata Classics. The first volume (TOCC 0333) featured music by Brahms (arranged by Ragnar Söderlind), Maddalena Casulana (arr. Colin Matthews), Brett Dean, Steve Elcock, Andrew Ford, Robin Holloway, Mihkel Kerem, Jon Lord (arr. Paul Mann), John Pickard, Poul Ruders and Ragnar Söderlind himself. The second volume presented music by Nicolas Bacri, Ronald Corp, Wim Hautekiet, Sean Hickey, John Kinsella, David Matthews, Phillip Ramey, Gregory Rose, Gerard Schurmann, José Serebrier, Robin Walker and Richard Whilds (TOCC 0370), and the third volume (TOCC 0504) brought music by Michael Csányi-Wills, David Braid, Martin Georgiev, Adam Gorb, Raymond Head, Ian Hobson, David Hackbridge Johnson, Robert Matthew-Walker, Lloyd Moore, Rodney Newton and Dana Paul Perna. Further volumes are in preparation.

Formed in 1891, the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** (RSNO) is one of Europe's leading symphony orchestras. Awarded royal patronage by Her Late Majesty The Queen in 1977, its special status in UK cultural life was cemented in 2007 when it was recognised as one of Scotland's five National Performing Companies, supported by the Scottish Government.

Led by its Music Director, Thomas Søndergård, the Orchestra performs across Scotland, including concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness, and appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival and the BBC Proms. It also tours internationally, most recently visiting the USA, China and Europe.

The RSNO has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving a 2020 *Gramophone* Classical Music Award for the Chopin Piano Concertos (soloist: Benjamin Grosvenor), conducted by Elim Chan, two Diapason d'Or awards (Denève/Roussel, 2007;

Denève/Debussy, 2012) and eight Grammy Award nominations. In recent years, the RSNO has increasingly recorded soundtracks for film, television and video games, with notable titles including *Horizon: An American Saga* (Warner Bros.), *Life on Our Planet* (Netflix), *Star Wars Outlaws* (Ubisoft) and *The Woman King* (Sony Pictures). The Orchestra records at its bespoke in-house facility, Scotland's Studio, in Glasgow.

The RSNO believes that music can enrich lives and aims to inspire, educate and entertain people throughout Scotland and beyond with its performances, recordings and engagement programmes. Supporting schools, families, young professionals and wider communities, the RSNO delivers high-quality initiatives for all ages and abilities. Recent additions to RSNO engagement offerings have included an expansion of its singing strand to encompass Chorus Academies in Dundee and Glasgow, a lunchtime Workplace Choir and a Buggy Choir, in addition to the established and highly respected RSNO Youth Choruses and RSNO Chorus. The community choruses are designed with the benefits of group singing for health and wellbeing at their core and are open to all.

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Tamás Fejes, Assistant Leader  
Patrick Curlett  
Eleanor Wilkinson  
Susannah Lowdon  
Alan Manson  
Liam Lynch  
Caroline Parry  
Liu-Yi Retallick  
Ursula Heidecker Allen  
Lorna Rough  
Elizabeth Bamping  
Helena Rose  
Sharon Haslam  
Joe Hodson  
Veronica Marziano  
Sian Holding

#### *Second Violins*

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Jacqueline Speirs  
Colin McKee  
Kirstin Drew  
Robin Wilson  
Nigel Mason  
Sophie Lang  
Harriet Hunter  
Paul Medd  
Tom Greed  
Laura Embry  
Seona Glen  
Harry Kerr  
John Robinson

#### *Violas*

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Felix Tanner

Asher Zaccardelli  
Francesca Hunt  
Claire Dunn  
Nicola McWhirter  
Maria Trittinger  
Beth Woodford  
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Katie Smith

*Trombones*

Dávur Juul Magnussen, Principal  
Joshua Parkhill  
Alastair Sinclair, Principal Bass Trombone

*Tuba*

Andy Duncan, Guest Principal

*Timpani*

Paul Philbert, Principal

*Percussion*

Simon Lowdon, Principal

Colin Hyson

David Kerr

Philip Hague

Peter Murch

*Harp*

Pippa Tunnell

*Piano*

Lynda Cochrane



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## ROBIN STEVENS Orchestral Music, Volume Two

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*Oceanic Lullaby* for solo oboe and small orchestra (1999, orch. 2009)

**2:26**

[1] *Poco adagio* (swelling like the sea)

**Cello Concerto** (2018–20)

**36:23**

[2] I *Andante maestoso – Moderato*

11:04

[3] II Scherzo: *Allegro vivo*

2:41

[4] III *Adagio*

11:13

[5] IV Finale: *Allegro molto moderato*

11:25

*Into the Deep* (2025)

**18:57**

[6] *Poco andante* (with tension and suspense)

**TT 58:00**

**Stéphane Rancourt, oboe** [1]

**Alice Neary, cello** [2]–

**Royal Scottish National Orchestra** [5]

**Paul Mann, conductor**

FIRST RECORDINGS,  
RECORDED IN THE PRESENCE  
OF THE COMPOSER