Lydia Kakabadse (b.1955)

The Phantom Listeners • The Mermaid • Arabian Rhapsody Suite • Russian Tableaux

The Song of the Shirt

Of Georgian/Russian and Greek/Austrian parentage, Lydia Kakabadse started composing in her early teens and her works fall mainly into the category of music theatre, songs, choral and chamber music. Her distinctive style combines open triads and Gothic features with Middle Eastern traits and rich melody/texture.

Lydia Kakabadse grew up in Altrincham, Cheshire, and began piano lessons at the age of five, later studying the double bass under Ida Carroll. She went on to read music at Royal Holloway College, University of London, where she was a composition pupil of Brian Dennis. She then spent several years studying, teaching and performing Greek and Middle Eastern dance, the rhythmic and melodic features of which served to widen her creative writing. This is evidenced in a number of her works, most notably the Arabian Rhapsody Suite. In recent years a selection of her works has been performed at Ely Cathedral, St John’s Smith Square in London and Norwich Cathedral.

The Mermaid

For mezzo-soprano, narrator, piano and strings, The Mermaid, based on a story by the composer, was adapted in 2005 from one of Lydia Kakabadse’s early compositions and revised in 2008.

I Enchanting Times. Persephone, a mermaid, is much loved by her fellow sea creatures (her “cherubs of the sea”). Her first song, the Mermaid’s Song, features the piano’s extensive use of arpeggios portraying the cascading waves. Persephone’s second song, the Calling Song, is sung whenever she wishes to call her cherubs to her. The scene ends with a sense of foreboding as the boat takes her evermore further from her beloved cherubs.

II Danger Lurks. An ominous basso ostinato features with Middle Eastern traits and rich melody/texture. Persephone’s Song is restated in an ornately varied form by each of the viola, cello and violin. Persephone falteringly sings her Calling Song as the boat takes her evermore further from her beloved cherubs. III Cherubs to the Rescue. The cherubs are led to the pirates’ boat by Persephone’s enchanting Calling Song. They manage to overthrow the pirates and set about rescuing Persephone, the urgency of which is represented by the fast chromatic playing of the violin and viola, a fourth apart. Fully recovered from her ordeal, a joyous Persephone hums the Mermaid’s Song, accompanied by the gentle rippling effect of the piano.

Russian Tableaux

For string quartet (violin, viola, cello, double bass), Russian Tableaux was composed in 2009.

I Mother Volga. The river Volga is known as the

Tim Amherst

Tim Amherst played the horn in his youth orchestra years and switched to the double bass at university. He then studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Robin McGee and privately with Thomas Martin. He plays with a number of ensembles in Britain, particularly with those which specialise in period performance. These include the Academy of Ancient Music, the Gabrieli Consort, the Avison Ensemble, Florilegium and the Classical Opera Company. He was for nine years principal bass of the King’s Consort.

Nigel Shipway

Nigel Shipway studied with studio percussionist Alan Grahame, attended the Royal Academy of Music studying with James Blades and Reginald Barker and continued with American percussionist Bobby Christian in Chicago. He has played with practically every important orchestra in Britain, in over 500 recordings, in Torvill & Dean’s Bolero, on television, radio, films and in West End shows.

Ben Fullbrook

After graduating from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2007, Ben Fullbrook held the post of Principal Timpani for the Orquesta Filarmónica de Santiago in Chile. Since his return to London, he has performed and recorded for most of the major London orchestras, as well as numerous chamber orchestras as a freelance percussionist and timpanist.

Christian Wilson

The organist Christian Wilson has performed as a soloist throughout Europe, the United States and Australia and has appeared regularly on BBC radio and other European stations. Following a period as organ scholar at Christ Church, Oxford, he was subsequently awarded the Nicholas Dunby Scholarship for study abroad and in 2008 completed the solo course at the Hochschule für Musik in Stuttgart, where he studied with Jon Lauvøvik and Ludger Lohmann.

George Vass

English conductor George Vass studied at the Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Music. As artistic director of Orchestra Nova he has appeared at many major British concert halls and festivals. As a guest he has worked with the Bournemouth Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Royal Scottish National orchestras, the Ulster Orchestra, Joyful Company of Singers, London Mozart Players, Malmö Opera Orchestra and the Royal Orleans Oscar da Camera. He has broadcast for BBC Radio 3 and Channel 4 television. His recordings include works by British composers for Dutton Epoch, Guild and Toccata Classics. He is also artistic director of the Presteigne Festival.

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Madeleine Easton
The Australian violinist Madeleine Easton has appeared as a soloist with many symphony orchestras in Australia and Britain, and as concertmaster with orchestras including the Independent Opera Company at Sadler’s Wells, the Orquesta Nacional de Madrid, Lauda Música, La Gran Chapelle opera production in southern Spain, and the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. She enjoys an active career also as a chamber musician, with recordings including works by Ivan Khandoshkin and by Schubert. At the Royal Academy of Music she directs the Bach Cantata series, leading the baroque orchestra and directing the Modern Instrument Period Orchestra.

Sarah-Jane Bradley
Since her concert debut with the Philharmonia in 1992, and the Wigmore Hall in 1997, the viola-player Sarah-Jane Bradley has established a distinguished international reputation as a soloist and chamber musician. She has given premières of many works for solo viola, and recorded four concertos CDs for Dutton. Her work as a chamber musician has taken her to festivals such as Marlborough and Kuhmo. A former member of the Leopold String Trio and Sorrel Quartet, she currently works with the Fulfilio Piano Quartet.

Bozidar Vukotic
Bozidar Vukotic is a founder member of the Tippett Quartet. Born in London, he studied with Stefan Popov at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and with Alexander Kniazev in Moscow. He performs regularly at the Wigmore Hall, on BBC Radio 3, and throughout Britain and Europe. He has recorded extensively for Naxos, EMI Classics, Classic FM Records, Guild, Dutton Epoch, Signum and Real World Records. He teaches at the Royal Academy of Music.

Caroline Dale
The cellist Caroline Dale studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and later with Pierre Fournier in Geneva. At fifteen she was the youngest ever recipient of the Isleriss Scholarship. She was a member of the Nigel Kennedy Quartet and the Balanescu Quartet, and a founder member of the American-based Apollo Piano Trio. Prior to her appointment as Principal Cellist of the English Opera Company at Sadler’s Wells, the Orquesta Nacional de Madrid, Lauda Música, La Gran Chapelle opera production in southern Spain, and the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. She enjoys an active career also as a chamber musician, with recordings including works by Ivan Khandoshkin and by Schubert. At the Royal Academy of Music she directs the Bach Cantata series, leading the baroque orchestra and directing the Modern Instrument Period Orchestra.

Ben Griffiths
Born in Cambridge in 1979, Ben Griffiths has a busy schedule as a chamber musician and orchestral bass player. He is a regular guest player with the London Symphony Orchestra, with which he tours and records extensively. He has made numerous CDs and broadcasts, including live from the Wigmore Hall with the Royal Quartet, and as a soloist on a CD of music by Cecilia McDowall.

Mother of Russian civilisation and came to be called “Mother Volga”. Accompanied by the double bass, the piece opens with the cello, followed by the viola and then the violin, each representing a tributary that flows into the river. As the river gathers momentum following the announcement of the main theme by the cello, the viola attempts to steer a steady course against the arpeggio-like runs. The second theme, announced by the double bass. This theme is then taken up by the violin and later by the viola in their lower registers. Despite an increase in tempo, the feeling of despair cannot be shaken off.

III Dance of the Matryoshka Dolls.
The matryoshka is a hollow wooden doll containing a number of smaller dolls. The dance starts fast and lively and the first theme, announced by the violin, characterizes the dainty dancing of the smaller dolls. In contrast, the second theme, when played by the double bass, characterizes the heavy plodding movements of the larger dolls. The tempo reverts to the original Allegro, bringing the dance to a fast and furious close.

The Song of the Shirt
Of Eslovop’s early compositions, only The Song of the Shirt, for soprano and piano, written when she was fifteen, is still performed today in its original form. The words, by Thomas Hood (1799–1845), depict abject poverty and the cruel exploitation of the poor. They conjure up a picture of a woman in rags, worn out by endlessly sewing in filthy, pitiful conditions, appealing to the consciences of men. The melancholic tone of the words is reproduced by the wide use of minor keys. The monotony of such a pitiful existence is reflected in the repetition of the same note and sequence of notes. The use of the falling augmented second, rising diminished seventh and open fifths adds to the desperation and misery.

Arabian Rhapsody Suite
Scored for string quartet (violin, viola, cello, double bass), Arabian Rhapsody Suite was composed in 2007–2008.

I. Marrakesh.
Much use is made of embellished melodies, syncopated rhythms, frequent accidents and ornamented passages over an open fifth accompaniment, all of which seek to capture the thrilling vibrancy and mystique of Marrakesh. There is frequent interplay between the instruments and each one is given an opportunity to exhibit its technical ability.

II. Reverie.
As its name suggests, this movement is deceptively simple in character. Played sempre tranquillo, it is characterized by the flow of dainty runs in the form of rising and falling triplets followed by the rapid alternation of notes an augmented second apart. The viola announces the main theme, which is later taken up by the violin and then the cello.

III. Sultan’s Feast.
Rich and heavy in equal measure and played con gusto, this movement features low register unison playing, accented off-beats, an abundance of melody and arpeggio-like accompaniments. With its fast arpeggio-like pizzicato accompaniment, the double bass simulates the pulsating throb of the tabla, bringing the movement to a piano close.

The Phantom Listeners
For soprano, mezzo-soprano, baritone, narrator, church pipe organ, percussion and strings, The Phantom Listeners was composed in 2005–2007, with a Latin text written by the composer. This requiem drama was inspired by Walter de la Mare’s poem The Listeners, on which the first scene and epilogue are based. Lydia Kakabadse collaborated with her good friend and writer Jen Syrkiewicz, who added four more scenes. The voices, which collectively represent the phantom listeners, sing throughout in Latin.

I. The Traveller’s Message.
The Traveller un成功es tries to obtain a response from a house inhabited by the Phantom Listeners, who strongly oppose his presence. Tabular bells and the sound of
Kit Hesketh-Harvey
Born in Nyasaland in 1957, Kit Hesketh-Harvey was educated at the Cathedral Choir School, Canterbury, and Tonbridge School, and was a Choral and English Exhibitioner at Clare College, Cambridge, followed by post-graduate study in theatre writing under Stephen Sondheim at St Catherine’s College, Oxford. He has a distinguished reputation as a writer and producer for television, a playwright, broadcaster, actor, lyricist and librettist. He was co-author with Ronald Harwood of All The World’s A Stage (Secker) and with Maria S. Just of Five O’Clock Angel (Knopf). His two-man musical satire Kit and the Widow has been nominated three times in the West End for Olivier Awards. He received the Writer Of The Year Award 2009 for his regular column in Country Life Magazine.

Emma Brain-Gabbott
Emma Brain-Gabbott read music at Trinity College, Cambridge, where she was also a choral scholar. She has since taken part in a wide range of musical activities, ranging from pop, West End shows, television and film soundtrack projects, through to opera, including Peter Grimes in Salzburg under Sir Simon Rattle. She also enjoys performing, touring and recording with such groups as the Sixteen, the BBC Singers, European Voices, Polyphony and I Fagiolini, among others. She has recorded extensively with Opera Rara and appears regularly as a soloist in Britain and abroad.

Clare McCaldin
Clare McCaldin has sung with the Royal Opera, Scottish Opera and English National Opera, appeared in stage works by John Adams, Brian Irvine, Judith Weir and Stephen McNeff, and given premières of solo works written for her by McNeff and Hugh Wood. Collaborations in traditional repertoire include French baroque with La Réjouissance, Bach with the Academy of Ancient Music, and recitals with Simon Lepper and Linly Tennent-Brown.

Michael Bundy
The baritone Michael Bundy has a very wide musical repertoire, encompassing the Baroque era, having worked extensively with Gardiner, Pinnock and Christophers, the romantic period, particularly obscure French repertoire, and the contemporary, having given premières of works by McDowall, Maguire, Hardy and Noam Shariff. His recordings include three solo discs of French mélodies for Naxos (Widor, Vierne and Tournemire, Naxos 8.572345-47), Purcell’s Fairy Queen, Tovey’s The Bride of Dionysus and Michael Hard’s The Widow of Ephesus.

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## Lydia KAKABADSE

**The Phantom Listeners**

**Arabian Rhapsody Suite • The Mermaid**

**Hesketh-Harvey • Brain-Gabbott**

**McCallin • Bundy**

**Instrumentalists • George Vass, Conductor**

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<td>2</td>
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**Conductor**

George Vass

**Narrator**

Kit Hesketh-Harvey

**Soprano**

Emma Brain-Gabbott

**Mezzo-soprano**

Clare McCallin

**Baritone**

Michael Bundy

**Violin**

Madeleine Easton

**Viola**

Sarah-Jane Bradly

**Cello**

Bozidar Vukotic

**Piano/Organ**

Ben Griffiths

**Double bass**

Bozidar Vukotic, Timpani

**Conductor**

Nigel Shipway

**Percussion**

Ben Fullbrook

**Piano/Organ**

Christian Wilson

**Conductor**

Nigel Shipway