

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> Guildhall School of Music &amp; Drama</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Raising expectations of performers, audience and bodies supporting young composers: <i>Fantasias for orchestra</i> by Julian Anderson</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> The impact claimed in this statement comes from the composition and performance history of <i>Fantasias</i> by Julian Anderson, a major work for large orchestra composed in 2009. Three key spheres of impact are noted: first, improving the technical and expressive abilities of seasoned and young professional musicians through the preparation and performance of a challenging piece of contemporary music; secondly, drawing a wider audience than that which normally listens to uncompromising contemporary music; and lastly, supporting young composers by the involvement of <i>Fantasias'</i> composer in various bodies concerned with new music.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> <b>Introduction</b> The research findings concerned continuity within contemporary musical composition. In summary the apparently arcane investigation the researcher/composer undertook into the continuum from discontinuity to continuity of musical materials drew from him an unusually vivid language of musical expression in order to clarify to the audience the experiments it was observing. It is this vividness of language, and the unfolding of language, that has contributed much to the research's subsequent impact. Music from many cultures and ages relies on a debate between continuity and discontinuity. The research submitted here took this seesaw of construction and, through experiments with colleagues at various international conferences and seminars, plotted the possible trajectories that a number of musical fragments might take in different sonic environments. <i>Fantasias</i> is a controlled detonation releasing this melodic, harmonic and structural energy found in the material finally selected. It is plausible that the subsequent impacts of the work are related, in part, to its audiences' excitement at the heated debates, rational arguments and sudden contradictions that are outcomes of the research process encapsulated in the music. The research is submitted as REF output 1b.</p> <p><b>Impact 1 – Improving technical abilities</b> The required clarity of aesthetic intention and musical voice introduced above resulted in a challenging score, one that stretched the technical abilities of even the commissioning body – The Cleveland Orchestra (Cleveland, Ohio, USA). When the work was subsequently performed by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (NYO) it naturally posed significant challenges to its young musicians. But the fact that both professionals in the USA – and subsequently at the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) – and seasoned and young professionals in the UK chose to master the work, record, broadcast, and include it in their repertoires demonstrates that its impact is based on musical criteria of quality rather than just technical utility.</p> <p><b>Impact 2 – Widening audiences</b> The musical language of <i>Fantasias</i> is complex both in terms of material and in its handling of that material. Although no concessions are made to seduce a widened audience this piece has received many repeat performances after its US premiere, being heard at Birmingham's Symphony Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, the 2010 Snape Proms and in four concerts by the NYO. It has been broadcast on radio in both the UK and USA and on TV following its Proms performance. The research has therefore impacted the lives of many who would not normally wish to trace the contrapuntal derivation of a non-tonal segment.</p> <p><b>Impact 3 – Supporting young composers</b> The popular impact of the research has led the researcher/composer to be invited to join commissioning and selection panels for new work, and has convinced these groups that contemporary pieces can enhance the standing of their ensembles in the eyes not only of an elite cadre of specialists but also in the eyes, and ears, of a wider public that wishes to be entertained as well as challenged. The research was carried out between 2008 and 2009. The researcher was Julian Anderson, during this period Professor of Composition and Composer in Residence at the Guildhall School.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> The first two references below discuss the Royal Festival Hall performance of <i>Fantasias</i> given by</p>

the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Vladimir Jurowski on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011. The remaining references review an earlier Royal Albert Hall performance given by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in 2010.

**Author: Paul Driver**

**Year of Publication: December 11<sup>th</sup> 2011**

**Type of output: Review, The Sunday Times**

Available from Guildhall School

'This work, virtually a symphony... was written for the Cleveland Orchestra in 2009... and had its premiere from the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, who brought it to the Proms in 2010. I remember being particularly struck then by the third movement and most fantastical of its five movements, a great static continuum filled with aqueous, vegetal, ornithological inventions that plausibly evoke, as intended, a rainforest. This came off splendidly at the RFH, suggesting an unusual kind of symphonic slow movement. The scherzo that follows is brief, effective and very fast. But the opening of the sizeable finale is even faster, which would be another interesting subversion of expectations if this really were a symphony. The first movement is a fanfare for the brass, who stood to play, and seems to remember the opening of Janáček's Sinfonietta... By freeing himself with fantasia from the inhibitions of undertaking a symphony, Anderson has produced a strikingly successful one anyway.'

**Author: Hilary Finch**

**Year of Publication: December 6<sup>th</sup> 2011**

**Type of output: Review, The Times**

Available from Guildhall School

'Fantasias is an extraordinary challenge for both players and listeners, with its complex, multifaceted texture, its improvisatory appearance, yet its need for meticulous control. From the opening ricocheting brass, to the subsequent whirling and skirling dance, and on to a cartoon-like scherzo, Vladimir Jurowski and his players spared nothing to realise the work's virtuoso kaleidoscope of craft. At its heart is a long nocturne, an insect-play of jungle reverberations and avian song – with two wonderful pauses for silence – brave in these applause-hungry days.'

**Author: Andrew Clements**

**Year of Publication: August 8<sup>th</sup> 2010**

**Type of output: Review, the Guardian**

<http://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/aug/08/nyo-bychkov-proms-review>

'It is Anderson's first multi-movement work for orchestra, and, for all their subtle interconnections, the five pieces that make up Fantasias aim at maximum variety and contrast. The opening fantasia, for brass alone and sounding like a Gabrieli sonata with a postmodern makeover, is followed by a movement overflowing with ideas and luscious, deliquescent textures, and a whispering, creaking nocturne apparently inspired by rainforest sounds. The tiny, evanescent scherzo and breathtaking prestissimo finale both introduce quarter-tones, giving a fuzzy strangeness to some of the harmonies. It's a wonderfully rich score, which the NYO at maximum strength – six bassoons, five harps, three tubas – played with remarkable precision.'

**Author: Edward Seckerson**

**Year of Publication: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2010**

**Type of output: Review, the Independent**

<http://www.edwardseckerson.biz/reviews/465/>

'It's an incredibly arresting start to a piece which sets out to pitch sound against motion in a succession of brilliantly imagined polyphonies and is expressly designed to excite and tantalise and, in the case of the NYO, challenge and exercise. Even the extended "Nocturne" at its heart hums to a profusion of Bartokian insect life, all manner of con legno, slap-pizzicati, knocking and scratching effects conspiring to produce hyperactivity against a calm backdrop.'

**Author: Colin Anderson**

**Year of Publication: 2010**

**Type of output: Review, classicalsource.com**

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[http://www.classicalsource.com/db\\_control/db\\_concert\\_review.php?id=8418](http://www.classicalsource.com/db_control/db_concert_review.php?id=8418)

'Stealing the show though was Julian Anderson (no relation to this reviewer). ... In five movements lasting 25 minutes, Anderson has composed a major addition to the repertoire beginning with snazzy calls to attention from the brass, which turns out to be the exclusive scoring of 'Fantasia 1', an exhilarating, here dazzlingly played entrée. Using a large orchestra, including an eight-person timpani-less percussion section (which never seems over-used), Anderson goes on to challenge any orchestra with much brilliant and subtly intertwined writing, not least the polyphony of 'Fantasia 2', a propulsive scherzo, further distinguished by long string lines. Much of the music is active, there is much surface incident, and one is aware of linking features that are below the beguiling top-soil, such as in the relatively lengthy 'Fantasia 3' that seems to be in three sections, or at least has two significant pauses, in which melody, texture and suggestiveness are at their most lush, in contrast with the whimsical, witty miniature that follows. As reference, and no more than that, one could cite Birtwistle, Ligeti, Lutosławski and Tippett as being co-conspirators in Anderson's gripping orchestral adventure(s), the five movements seeming closely connected yet significantly different to stand apart, heavy-duty brass returning towards the close of 'Fantasia 5' as a sort of full-circle marker to give relationship to the whole.

If rainforests and "Tom and Jerry" have been, respectively, a direct influence and a post-composition suggestion then these may not be immediately apparent to the listener. But what is not in doubt is Anderson's masterly handling of the orchestra and his vibrant invention, the 25 minutes of *Fantasias* proving a very gratifying listen. Semyon Bychkov, in a previous Prom this season, introduced us to Gunther Schuller's singularly impressive *Where the Word Ends*; now his championing of Julian Anderson's *Fantasias* is another triumph. Written for the virtuosity of The Cleveland Orchestra, I doubt if the NYO was in any way inferior to its American counterpart, for the Proms performance was immaculately prepared and seemed entirely on top of every nook and cranny of Anderson's engrossing and multi-faceted orchestral caprice.'

Grant awarded to Julian Anderson by Daniel R. Lewis for The Cleveland Orchestra (Cleveland, Ohio, USA). Period of grant: 2008-2009.

*Fantasias for orchestra* is published by Faber Music Ltd.

#### 4. Details of the impact

Three main areas of impact are presented below: improving the abilities of both professional and emerging practitioners; widening the audiences for contemporary music; and supporting young composers. The Impact Template (REF 3a section d) notes that these articulate all three of the more generally-worded aims for institution-wide impact described in the Impact Template (REF 3a. context).

##### Impact 1 – Improving abilities

The research was encapsulated in the production of the score of *Fantasias*. This score, for reasons set out above, is of necessity extremely challenging to its performers. The impact claimed here is that the study of *Fantasias* provided a learning opportunity not only for the NYO but also for the professional orchestras that have played the work. This position of *Fantasias* within the evolution of orchestral technique was confirmed at a conference *Getting it Right?* held at LSO St. Luke's in April 2010 and February 2013 at which artists (including Helmut Lachenmann (keynote speaker), Michael Finnissy, Jane Manning, Diego Masson, Rolf Hind, David Alberman, Richard Baker and Julian Philips) discussed the development of technique from the early 20th Century to the present day. Other evidence includes the NYO participant's blog in which the performers exchange views on the challenges of the work (see section 5. below).

##### Impact 2 – Widening audiences

*Fantasias* was first performed in the US to full houses at Severance Hall, Cleveland (capacity: 1,844) on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December 2009. Other performances include, so far, the NYO's tour of the UK held in August 2010 to sell-out houses that culminated in the orchestra's Prom concert of that year with an Albert Hall audience of about 2,000 and a BBC radio broadcast. It subsequently received a BBC2 TV screening with an estimated audience of over 700,000 plus those who later viewed it on i-player.

The work was performed by the LPO in December 2011 in the Royal Festival Hall with an audience of approximately 2,500. A commercially available CD recording made by the LPO was

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released on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

*Fantasias* won first prize for Best New Large Scale Work in the BASCA British Music Awards of 2011.

It is of course impossible to estimate – especially in quantitative terms – the impact this degree of dissemination might have had so far on *Fantasias*' listeners. But one proxy measure might be to contrast this performance history with the fate of the vast majority of new works that rapidly find a first performance but search in vain for a second. *Fantasias*, to put it mildly, is being unusually successful in impacting a widened audience.

A second proxy measure of impact in this sphere of audience development has been the increased number of commissions the researcher has received since the first performances of *Fantasias*. These works include *The Discovery of Heaven* of 2012 and a concerto for violin and orchestra to be premiered in 2015, both commissioned indirectly on the basis of *Fantasias*' success. Part of the explanation for this is the breadth of audience that the earlier work commanded, a quality subsequent commissioning bodies wished to see again, and that was important, for example, in securing - in 2010 - Anderson's on-going position as Composer in Residence at the LPO.

**Impact 3 – Supporting young composers**

Until the NYO's performance of *Fantasias* the orchestra played new work at its Prom concerts only intermittently, since *Fantasias* a new work has been performed every year.

The impact of the research continues to affect positively the development of new music. Since the success of *Fantasias* the composer has been invited to join official bodies at, for example, Wigmore Hall (composer in residence until 2016), LPO Young Composers (12 composers commissioned since 2010) as well as various judging panels including Tactus Young Composers' Forum and the *Conseil Musical - Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco*. He has also been invited to speak at numerous conferences including the RMA Research Students' Conference at which he gave the keynote speech on new music's ability to find a lasting and effective means of communication with jaded audiences (King's College London, January 2009). It would of course be ambitious to argue a direct cause and effect from *Fantasias* to Anderson's position on these bodies for the promotion of new work from young composers, but what is certain is that the research underpinning *Fantasias* – and to a lesser extent his other works of the period – was crucial to the success of *Fantasias* and that this reinforced his position as a leading composer of his generation and thus an obvious choice when the directions of music today and tomorrow are being discussed.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

These sources listed here are in addition to those given above in section 3.

- For feedback from the conductor of the NYO performances see email from him dated Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 2012. (Available from Guildhall School)
- For feedback from the Former Director of Communications of the NYO see email dated Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 2012. (Available from Guildhall School)
- For feedback from members of the NYO see compilation of blog comments. (Available from Guildhall School)
- Score: Anderson, J., *Fantasias for orchestra*; (Faber Music: 2009).
- For information on the LPO's recording of *Fantasias* see: <http://www.lpo.org.uk/recordings-and-gifts/search-events/183-cd-julian-anderson-orchestral-works.html>
- For information from panels supporting young composers:

Tactus Young Composers' forum <http://www.tactus.be/en/home.html>

Fondation Prince Pierre

<http://www.fondationprincepierre.mc/fr/3-prix-de-composition-musicale.html>