

## GREEK MYTHS – THE PROMS THEME

- Berlioz's *The Trojans*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Tippett's *King Priam* and Strauss's *Elektra*
- Stravinsky's *Oedipus rex* and *Perséphone*, Mendelssohn's *Antigone*
- Music by Henze, Birtwistle, Musgrave and the world premiere of John Woolrich's *Double Mercury*

Music inspired by Greek myths is the vast single theme of this year's BBC Proms. No other source – with the possible exception of the Bible – has stimulated so much great art from writers, painters, film-makers and composers. To celebrate the fact, the Proms, in one of its most ambitious seasons ever, presents more than 30 Greek-myth inspired works spanning the centuries. At its heart is Berlioz's *The Trojans* (Proms 47 & 48, Monday 25 August). Sir Colin Davis, arguably the two-part epic's greatest interpreter of our time, conducts a superb cast with the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in what promises to be one of the season's top highlights.

Based on Homer's account of the Trojan War, Michael Tippett's opera *King Priam* (Prom 3, Sunday 20 July) receives a concert performance from the BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by David Atherton and starring David Wilson-Johnson in the title role. Concluding the season's sequence of operas based on the Trojan War and its aftermath, leading British mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly joins the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for a Late Night Prom performance of Purcell's much-loved *Dido and Aeneas* (Prom 58, Tuesday 2 September). Moving to Sophocles' tragedy *Elektra*, Richard Strauss's thrillingly intense operatic version comes to the Proms courtesy of Donald Runnicles and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. It boasts an outstanding cast including Gabriele Schnaut, Janice Watson and Felicity Palmer (Prom 15, Tuesday 29 July).

Around these great operas Proms audiences can also hear a wide range of orchestral pieces and dramatic vocal works. The great American mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson stars in two 20th-century works based on Greek myths of incestuous passion – Britten's *Phaedra* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus rex* in which she sings Jocasta (Prom 65, Sunday 7 September). There is also a rare opportunity to hear Stravinsky's multi-media melodrama *Perséphone*, which fascinatingly reworks a Greek fertility myth in Christian terms (Prom 30, Sunday 10 August).

While the myths have been a major source of inspiration to 20th-century composers they also fired the Romantic imagination. Mendelssohn's little-known incidental music to Sophocles' *Antigone* will be presented with a narration from the original text by Richard Hickox and the City of London Sinfonia (Prom 8, Wednesday 23 July). And you can hear how Greek myths continue to inspire living composers such as John Woolrich, whose BBC/Britten Sinfonia co-commission *Double Mercury* receives its world premiere (Prom 51, Wednesday 27 August). As well as this feast of music at the Proms there is a Greek Myths Study Day at the British Museum on Saturday 19 July with a special combined ticket offer for *King Priam*. There are also talks about myth-inspired paintings at the National Gallery throughout the season, and Peter Sellars gives this year's Proms Lecture on 'The Culture of Democracy' and the relevance of Greek myths today.

## Greek Myths at the Proms

Prom 2, Saturday 19 July, 7.00pm

The Nation's Favourite Prom

**Khachaturian** Spartacus – Suite No. 2

BBC Concert Orchestra, Barry Wordsworth conductor

Prom 3, Sunday 20 July, 7.00pm

**Tippett** King Priam

David Wilson-Johnson Priam, Elizabeth Connell Hecuba/Athene, Susan Bickley

Andromache/Hera, Susan Parry Helen/Aphrodite, Marcel Reijans Paris, Martyn Hill Achilles,

Stephen Roberts Patroclus, William Dazeley Hector, Timothy Robinson Hermes, Christine Rice

Nurse, Christopher Gillett Young Guard, Stephen Richardson Old Man, James Eager Paris as a boy, BBC Singers, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, David Atherton conductor

Prom 4, Monday 21 July, 7.00pm

**Beethoven** The Creatures of Prometheus – Overture

Budapest Festival Orchestra, Iván Fischer conductor

Prom 5, Monday 21 July, 10.00pm

**Stravinsky** Apollon musagète

Northern Sinfonia, Thomas Zehetmair director

Prom 7, Wednesday 23 July, 7.00pm

**Schuman** A Song of Orpheus

Paul Watkins cello, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin conductor

Prom 8, Wednesday 23 July, 10.00pm

**Mendelssohn** Antigone – incidental music to the tragedy of Sophocles

Zoë Waites Antigone, Brian Protheroe Creon, Stephan Loges baritone, Roderick Williams

baritone, Eugenia Arsenis director, BBC Singers (men's voices), City of London Sinfonia, Richard Hickox conductor

Prom 15, Tuesday 29 July, 7.00pm

**R. Strauss** Elektra

Gabriele Schnaut Electra, Janice Watson Chrysothemis, Felicity Palmer Clytemnestra, John

Treleaven Aegisthus, Alan Held Orestes, Susan Gorton First Maid, Antonia Sotgiu Second Maid,

Sarah Castle Third Maid, Gweneth-Ann Jeffers Fourth Maid, Rebecca Nash Fifth Maid, Mary

Lloyd Davies Overseer, Huw Rhys-Evans Young Servant, London Voices, BBC Scottish

Symphony Orchestra, Donald Runnicles conductor

Prom 24, Tuesday 5 August, 7.30pm

**R. Strauss** Die Liebe der Danae – Symphonic Fragment; An den Baum Daphne\*

Choristers of King's College, Cambridge, BBC Singers, BBC Symphony Orchestra,

Stephen Cleobury conductor\*, Sir Charles Mackerras conductor

Prom 30, Sunday 10 August, 7.30pm

**Stravinsky** Perséphone

Paul Groves tenor, Trinity Boys' Choir, Cantate Youth Choir, BBC Symphony Chorus,  
BBC Symphony Orchestra, Sir Andrew Davis conductor

Prom 33, Tuesday 12 August, 7.30pm

**Rameau** Hippolyte et Aricie – suite

Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Daniel Harding conductor

Prom 34, Wednesday 13 August, 7.30pm

**Mozart** Idomeneo – Overture and ballet music (excerpts)

Ulster Orchestra, Thierry Fischer conductor

Prom 35, Thursday 14 August, 7.00pm

**Stravinsky** Agon

BBC Symphony Orchestra, Oliver Knussen conductor

Prom 36, Thursday 14 August, 10.00pm

**Sir Harrison Birtwistle** Nenia: The Death of Orpheus

Claron McFadden soprano, Nash Ensemble

**Hans Werner Henze** Orpheus Behind the Wire

Swedish Radio Choir, Stefan Parkman conductor

Prom 40, Monday 18 August, 7.30pm

**Nielsen** Overture 'Helios'

**Sibelius** The Oceanides (Yale version) UK premiere

Lahti Symphony Orchestra, Osmo Vänskä conductor

Prom 41, Tuesday 19 August, 7.30pm

**Barber** Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance

**Ravel** Daphnis and Chloë\*

BBC Symphony Chorus\*, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin conductor

Prom 47, Monday 25 August, 3.00pm

**Berlioz** The Trojans – Part 1 'The Capture of Troy'

Petra Lang Cassandra, Ben Heppner Aeneas, Tigran Martirosian Panthus, Clive Bayley Priam,

Pamela Helen Stephen Ascanius, Jonathan Lemalu Ghost of Hector, Anna Burford Hecuba,

Mark Stone A Greek Captain, Leigh Melrose A Trojan Soldier, Bülent Bezdüz Helenus,

London Symphony Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Colin Davis conductor

Prom 48, Monday 25 August, 7.00pm

**Berlioz** The Trojans – Part 2 'The Trojans at Carthage'

Michelle DeYoung Dido, Ben Heppner Aeneas, Sara Mingardo Anna, Robert Lloyd Narbal,

Kenneth Tarver Iopas, Toby Spence Hylas, Tigran Martirosian Panthus, Pamela Helen Stephen

Ascanius, Darren Jeffery Trojan Sentry 1, Roderick Earle Trojan Sentry 2, Petra Lang Ghost of

Cassandra, Jonathan Lemalu Ghost of Hector, Clive Bayley Ghost of Priam, Leigh Melrose

Mercury, London Symphony Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Colin Davis conductor

Prom 51, Wednesday 27 August, 10.00pm

**Britten** Young Apollo\*

**Thea Musgrave** Helios – Concerto for oboe and orchestra†

**John Woolrich** Double Mercury BBC/Britten Sinfonia co-commission: world premiere

**Stravinsky** Orpheus

Paul Lewis piano\*, Nicholas Daniel oboe†, Britten Sinfonia, Nicholas Cleobury conductor

Prom 52, Thursday 28 August, 7.30pm

**Nielsen** Pan and Syrinx

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Sakari Oramo conductor

Prom 58, Tuesday 2 September, 10.00pm

**Purcell** Dido and Aeneas

Sarah Connolly Dido, Christopher Purves Aeneas, Carolyn Sampson Belinda, D'Arcy Bleiker Sorcerer, Elizabeth Cragg Second Woman, Matthew Beale Sailor, Lucy Crowe Spirit

Choir of the Enlightenment, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment,

Richard Egarr director/harpsichord

Prom 65, Sunday 7 September, 8.00pm

**Britten** Phaedra\*

**Stravinsky** Oedipus rex

Lorraine Hunt Lieberson mezzo-soprano\*/Jocasta, Robert Gambill Oedipus,

Edgaras Montvidas Shepherd, Jan-Hendrik Rootering Creon/Messenger, Juha Uusitalo Tiresias,

BBC Singers (men's voices), BBC Symphony Orchestra, Jukka-Pekka Saraste conductor

Prom 67, Monday 8 September, 10.00pm

**Xenakis** Idmen A & B UK premiere

Amadinda Percussion Ensemble, James Wood conductor

Prom 70, Wednesday 10 September, 10.00pm

**Rameau** Dances from 'Platée', 'Dardanus' and 'Les Boréades'

Les Musiciens du Louvre – Grenoble, Marc Minkowski conductor

Prom 73, Saturday 13 September, 7.45pm

**Vaughan Williams** The Wasps – Overture

BBC Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin conductor

PCM 1, Monday 21 July, 1.00pm, Victoria & Albert Museum

**Debussy** Syrinx

Kathryn Thomas flute (member of the Galliard Ensemble)

**Britten** Six Metamorphoses after Ovid

Owen Dennis oboe (member of the Galliard Ensemble)

PCM 4, Monday 11 August, 1.00pm, Victoria & Albert Museum

**Haydn** Arianna a Naxos

Alice Coote mezzo-soprano, Julius Drake piano

PCM 8, Monday 8 September, 1.00pm, Victoria & Albert Museum

**Berlioz** La mort d'Orphée – Monologue and Larghetto

Françoise Masset mezzo-soprano, Ensemble Carpe Diem