

THAT DECISIVE MOMENT

Eloquent Understatement: This Week's 8 Best Classical Moments

JUNE 30, 2017

In addition to reviews, features and news during the week, our critics and reporters collect the best of what they've heard: notes that sent shivers down their spines, memorable voices, quotations that cut to the heart of the story.

Read the rest of our classical music coverage here
(<https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/classical-music-reviews>).

Emoke Barath, left, and Ana Quintans in "Hipermestra" by Francesco Cavalli. Tristram Kenton

GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL, JUNE 23

Harmony Stands Out

There's not a whole lot of drama in Cavalli's "Hipermestra," which is having (through July 8) a very rare revival at the Glyndebourne festival in England. But there's a whole lot of gorgeous music, rendered with sensitivity and nuance (from velvet to prickle) by William Christie, leading from the harpsichord just nine players from Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Solo singing — aria and recitative — is the name of the game here, which makes a short duet, aching close harmony from Emoke Barath and Ana Quintans, stand out. **ZACHARY WOOLFE**

PERGOLESI & VIVALDI, JUNE 24

Rising Above the Clutter

LoftOpera's current production

(<https://scoop.nytimes.com/2017/06/26/arts/music/review-loftopera-stages-a-rarity-with-lingerie.html>)
the Muse in Brooklyn — anchored by Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater," a multifaceted reflection on the sorrows of Mary, Jesus's mother, at his crucifixion — is perhaps best appreciated as a concert, with fine performances by the soprano Heather Buck and the countertenor Randall Scotting. The sensuous and vaguely suggestive staging of the liturgical work, with the singers seeming sometimes to personify Mary and Jesus and sometimes not, serves mainly to confuse and distract. Ms. Buck, in particular, had many excellent moments, none more beautiful than the prayerful start of "Sancta Mater." **JAMES R. OESTREICH**

Read our review of the production.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/26/arts/music/review-loftopera-stages-a-rarity-with-lingerie.html>)

Barbara Hannigan and Allan Clayton in "Hamlet." Richard Hubert Smith

GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL, JUNE 24

Pounding Fist

Brett Dean’s “Hamlet,” a new operatic adaptation of the classic play, is full of dazzling moments: eerie shudders of percussion sent electronically around the hall, an offstage chorus forming wordless halos of sound around certain lines. But I keep coming back to one: Barbara Hannigan, the fearless soprano playing Ophelia, singing a keening tone while pounding her chest with her fist, summing up the character’s instability with nerve-racking economy. *ZACHARY WOOLFE*

Read our review of the new “Hamlet.”

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/30/arts/music/hamlet-a-new-opera-makes-shakespeare-strange.html>)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS, JUNE 26

Slavic Accent

In a bit of luxury casting, the Serbian violin virtuoso Stefan Milenkovich joined string groups in a quintet by Louis Spohr and a quartet by Beethoven at the ensemble’s recent concert in Christ and St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church on the Upper West Side. Mr. Milenkovich provided strong leadership in both works, but the most delicious moment came in the third-movement Allegretto of Beethoven’s Quartet No.8, with its incorporation of a Russian theme. Mr. Milenkovich seemed to celebrate his Slavic origins with special relish in a delightful reading. *JAMES R. OESTREICH*

A scene from Alexei Ratmansky’s “Whipped Cream.” *Andrea Mohin/The New York Times*

AMERICAN BALLET THEATER, JUNE 28

Cutting the Froth

Over the past 15 months it has been possible to see Richard Strauss’s deranged dance for “Elektra (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/16/arts/music/review-elektra-at-the-met-does-full-justice-to-strauss-masterpiece.html>),” his decadent striptease for “Salome (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/arts/music/classical-music-this-week-nyc.html>)” and the bittersweet waltzes of his “Der Rosenkavalier (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/14/arts/music/rosenkavalier-renee-fleming-met.html>)” onstage at the Metropolitan Opera. It was still eye- and ear-opening to experience a bona fide Strauss ballet: the rarity “Whipped Cream (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/23/arts/dance/review-ratmansky-whipped-cream-abt-gala.html>),” choreographed by Alexei Ratmansky (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/arts/dance/alexei-ratmansky-whipped-cream-american-ballet-theater.html>). At first the music seemed insubstantial compared to his operas — unsurprisingly, given the work’s frothy sweet-shop subject matter. Then it clicked, with an exquisite “Träumerei (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9j2U7VJc3mQ>),” featuring the seductive violin playing of Benjamin Bowman, Ballet Theater’s concertmaster, during a pas de deux for Princess Tea Flower and Prince Coffee. Here at last was some utterly satisfying Strauss — and it paved the way for more, right up to the slightly demented, lopsided waltz at the ballet’s end. *MICHAEL COOPER*

Read Alastair Macaulay’s review of Ballet Theater’s “Whipped Cream.”

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/23/arts/dance/review-ratmansky-whipped-cream-abt-gala.html>)

BRUCKNER’S SYMPHONY NO. 9, CSO RESOUND

Eloquent Understatement

“I adore Bruckner,” Riccardo Muti told the website Chicago on the Aisle (<http://chicagoontheaisle.com/2012/06/19/interview-with-conductor-riccardo-muti>) in 2012, adding that it “would be fantastic” to record all nine symphonies in the Bruckner canon with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on its own label. That may be tough at this rate, but here is a great start: Mr. Muti’s first recording of Bruckner’s unfinished, final masterpiece. For me, the high point of this work in any good performance is the understated second theme of the first movement, the tune that made me fall in love with Bruckner’s music many years ago (in an old Furtwängler recording). Mr. Muti does that moment, and the piece as a whole, eloquent justice. *JAMES R. OESTREICH*

Jad Abumrad in his Brooklyn studio. Landon Speers for The New York Times

JAD ABUMRAD, JUNE 27

Symphony of Seals

Jad Abumrad, the MacArthur “genius” fellow and creator of “Radiolab,” sat down with us at his studio for an interview about his second life as a composer. While at Oberlin in the mid-1990s, he fell in love with writing electronic music. Today, he often experiments with sound by recording something organic — a pluck on his son’s ukulele, for example — and manipulating it into a drawn-out drone. Among the surprising sounds in his library: seal barks. “I have like 12 gigs of seal sounds,” he told us with a laugh. *JOSHUA BARONE*

Read our interview with Jad Abumrad.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/28/arts/music/jad-abumrad-the-creator-of-radiolab-a-lapsed-composer-returns-to-music.html>)

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, JUNE 21

Hooded Mournfulness

There are, roughly speaking, two flavors of tenor voices among those that have excelled as Verdi’s Otello: bright and trumpeting (Martinelli, Del Monaco, Domingo) and dark and veiled (Vinay, Vickers). Jonas Kaufmann, who took on the role for the first time last week in London, is assuredly the latter, with a hooded tone that brought particular mournfulness to “Ora e per sempre addio,” a ferocious cry of despair. *ZACHARY WOOLFE*

Read our review of “Otello.”

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/22/arts/music/jonas-kaufmann-otello.html>)

That Decisive Moment (<https://www.nytimes.com/column/that-decisive-moment>)

Our critics and reporters collect the best of what they’ve been hearing: the notes that sent shivers down their spines, the memorable voices, the set changes that left them breathless.





Jacob Blickenstaff for The New York Times

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/18/arts/music/bleak-gentle-and-sweet-this-weeks-eight-best-classical-music-moments-on-youtube.html>)

Bleak, Gentle and Sweet: This Week's 8 Best Classical Music Moments on YouTube

A work by the Arkansas-born composer Florence Price, and a performance by Vikingur Olafsson were among the highlights.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/18/arts/music/bleak-gentle-and-sweet-this-weeks-eight-best-classical-music-moments-on-youtube.html>)

Aug 21



Vincent Tullo for The New York Times

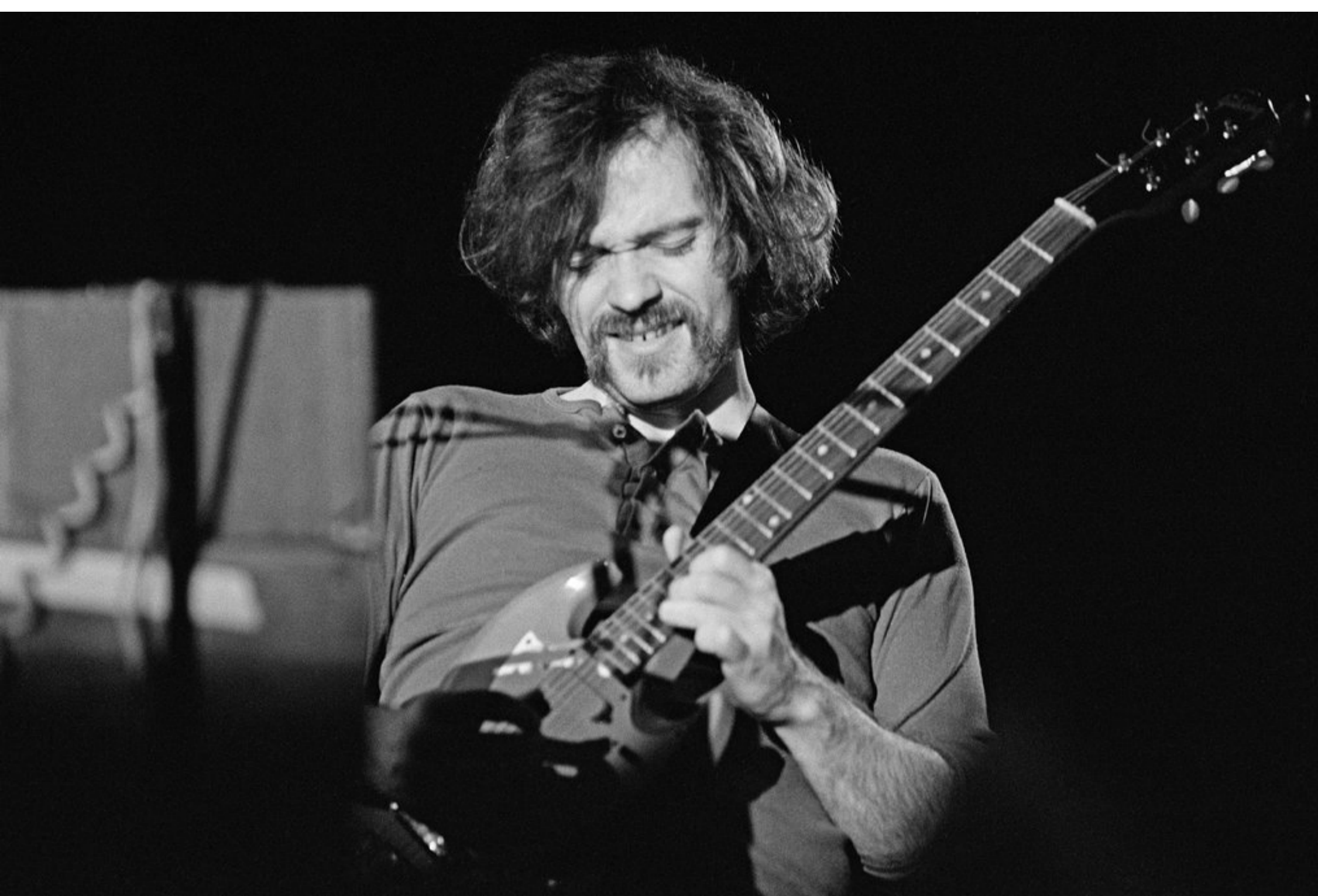
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/11/arts/music/a-touch-of-madness-this-weeks-eight-best-classical-music-moments-on-youtube.html>)

A Touch of Madness: This Week's Eight Best Classical Music Moments on YouTube

The pianist Vikingur Olafsson, the music of Alexander Hamilton's time and Barbara Cook were among the highlights.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/11/arts/music/a-touch-of-madness-this-weeks-eight-best-classical-music-moments-on-youtube.html>)

Aug 11



Fin Costello/Redferns, via Getty Images

(/2017/08/23/arts/music/john-abercrombie-lyrical-jazz-guitarist-dies-at-72.html)

John Abercrombie, Lyrical Jazz Guitarist, Dies at 72

Mr. Abercrombie had a knack for understatement and was an expert at finding the moments of opportunity in a band's interplay.

(/2017/08/23/arts/music/john-abercrombie-lyrical-jazz-guitarist-dies-at-72.html)

55m ago



Carlos Gonzalez for The New York Times

(/2017/08/23/arts/music/cardi-b-bodak-yellow.html)

How Cardi B's 'Bodak Yellow' Took Over the Summer

The Instagram star turned budding rapper's song has raced up the

Billboard chart without a boost from a meme or viral video.
(/2017/08/23/arts/music/cardi-b-bodak-yellow.html)

3h ago



Kristina Barker for The New York Times

(/2017/08/23/theater/a-star-spangled-revue-kicks-up-its-heels-in-the-badlands.html)

A Star-Spangled Revue Kicks Up Its Heels in the Badlands

Medora, N.D., population 132 — except in summer when 100,000 tourists pour into town to see a musical celebration of Old West values.

(/2017/08/23/theater/a-star-spangled-revue-kicks-up-its-heels-in-the-badlands.html)

6h ago



(/2017/08/23/theater/primer-for-a-failed-superpower-rachel-chavkin-team.html)

Overcoming Through Song in a Summer of Discontent

“Primer for a Failed Superpower,” a concert in Brooklyn directed by Rachel Chavkin, asked an audience to raise its voice in protest songs of many generations.

(/2017/08/23/theater/primer-for-a-failed-superpower-rachel-chavkin-team.html)

4h ago



Adam Lach for The New York Times

(/2017/08/23/travel/warsaw-poland-budget-chopin-music-arts.html)

In Warsaw, With Chopin as Muse

Through the great Polish composer, finding a deeper understanding and appreciation of a city that is an oft-overlooked gold mine for budget travelers.

(/2017/08/23/travel/warsaw-poland-budget-chopin-music-arts.html)

Aug 23





Liu Heung Shing/Associated Press

(/2017/08/22/arts/music/prince-exhibition-o2-arena-london.html)

Prince Exhibition Will Bring Paisley Park Memorabilia to London

“My Name Is Prince,” at the O2 Arena in London, will be the first international exhibition of guitars, outfits and other items from Prince’s estate.

(/2017/08/22/arts/music/prince-exhibition-o2-arena-london.html)

Aug 22
