

‘Incomparable.’

REVIEW OF A 1770 CONCERT BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART IN TODAY'S EDITION OF THE GAZZETTA DI MANTOVA

JANUARY

BIRTHS & DEATHS**1833** French opera composer Ferdinand Hérold dies in Paris.**1896** Bohemian musical instrument inventor Václav Červený dies in Königgrätz.**1955** Conductor Simon Rattle is born in Liverpool.**FIRST PERFORMED****1787** Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony (No. 38) is premiered, unsurprisingly, in Prague.**1873** Saint-Saëns' *Cello Concerto* No. 1 is premiered in Paris.**1884** Massenet's opera *Manon* is premiered in Paris.**TODAY'S THE DAY****1609** Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi persuades his boss Duke Vincenzo to increase his pay, give him a housing allowance and promise him a pension. Cue a celebration in the Monteverdi household? Not really. The composer had terrible trouble prising the pension cash

out of the Duke's pocket for much of the rest of his life.

1949 Industrial unrest at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, after the musicians are asked to work with the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler. They lay down their instruments in protest, accusing him of being a Nazi collaborator.**CONDUCTOR PROFILE:**

Simon Rattle

Simon Rattle was very talented very young, rising through the Merseyside Youth Orchestra and then the National Youth Orchestra. He played the piano, violin and percussion, but it was conducting that always attracted him. He studied it at London's Royal Academy of Music from the age of 16 and three years later won the John Player International Conducting Competition. The prize was a two-year assistant conductorship with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. After successes with the Nash Ensemble, the Philharmonia Orchestra (at the record-breaking age of 21) and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Rattle became music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in 1980. He was to remain with the orchestra for 18 years. Under him,

the CBSO won an international reputation. It soon became clear that Rattle was a conductor of genius as he worked wonder after wonder with his band. His spectacular 'Towards the Millennium' series of concerts – and, indeed, the CBSO's move into the new Symphony Hall in 1991 – were highlights of his period with the orchestra. In 2002, Rattle succeeded Claudio Abbado as chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, possibly the greatest orchestra in the world. After an initially stormy honeymoon, he took the orchestra to even greater heights of accomplishment, with the result that his contract has been extended to 2018, when he has announced that he will leave the orchestra.

HALL OF FAME HITWolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Requiem***Recommended Recording**

Various soloists; Academy of Ancient Music conducted by Christopher Hogwood; Decca 411 7122

‘For changing people's manners and altering their customs there is nothing better than music.’

SHU CHING, 600 BC

JANUARY

BIRTHS & DEATHS**1855** French composer Ernest Chausson is born in Paris.**1951** Hungarian conductor Iván Fischer is born in Budapest.**2014** Italian conductor Claudio Abbado dies in Bologna.**FIRST PERFORMED****1961** Poulenc's *Gloria* is premiered in Boston by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Chorus.**TODAY'S THE DAY****1626** Possibly the day that English composer John Dowland died. It's certainly the last day he was paid by the English royal court, although he wasn't registered as being buried for another month.**1797** Composer Joseph Haydn is given free tickets for life to all concerts promoted by the Tonkünstler-Societät in Vienna.**1802** Italian composer Luigi

Boccherini is awarded a pension of 3000 francs a year by Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon.

1949 Catholic wedding ceremony for English composer William Walton and his Argentine bride Susana Gil Passo, following a civil ceremony in December 1948.

William and Susana spent the rest of their married lives on Ischia, a volcanic island of in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

ERA FOCUS:

Early music: part I

Early music is a group term combining the medieval and Renaissance periods, which together cover just about all music-making up to 1600. The medieval period of early music ends around 1400, with the Renaissance period covering the next two centuries. Although there was undoubtedly music-making before 500 AD, this is the rough date from which many musical histories start. Between 500 and 1400, the principal surviving music is plainchant. It had already been handed down for centuries by the year 500. A bishop called Ambrose gave his name to an early variety (known as Ambrosian chant). Many of the formal rules around plainchant were organised by Pope Gregory the Great, who lent his name to

Gregorian chant – a sub-grouping of plainchant that has proved extremely popular in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Pope Gregory was responsible for formalising chant through his Schola Cantorum, which was not just a papal choir but a whole system of handing down choir music from generation to generation. He also produced publications such as *The Antiphonar*, a compendium of chants. As ancient and far removed as this period might seem to us now, it was a time of amazing and exciting developments. Worthy of mention is Guido d'Arezzo, a Benedictine monk who died around 1050, but not before inventing what we now know as the musical staff – the five lines on which all music is written.

HALL OF FAME HITAntonio Vivaldi: *Four Seasons***Recommended Recording**

Fabio Bondi (violin); Europa Galante; Naïve NC 40018