

## CLASSICAL

## Scaling new heights

Joep Beving's recordings have been streamed over 85 million times – and **Claire Jackson** says the final album of a trilogy should see the 6ft 10in artist's popularity grow



**J**oep Beving sits at an upright piano, his back slightly hunched. The instrument appears doll-like against the Dutch pianist's 6ft 10in frame. The audience waits. The stage is dimly lit by a photograph of hands stretching towards each other, projected on to a screen above the piano. From the darkness comes a gentle keyboard motif that grows in gradual confidence. Beving coaxes the melody, like a sculptor moulding clay. Cameras flash: this is the first official showcase of Beving's latest album, *Henosis*, due for release in April. It's the third instalment in a trilogy of albums, and concludes an unexpected chapter in Beving's life that has seen his recordings streamed online over 85 million times – almost accidentally.

It all came as a something of a surprise to Beving, who had been quietly creating music at home in Amsterdam. Encouraged by his family and colleague Rahi Rezvani, with whom he had collaborated during his day job in advertising, Beving decided to share his music with a wider audience. He just didn't realise how wide that audience would become. His first album, *Solipsism*, was a hit with streaming service Spotify, with listeners drawn to the contemplative nature of Beving's simple, beautiful melodies. Deutsche Grammophon, whose roster includes electro-classical composer Max Richter and popular composer-pianist Ludovico Einaudi alongside its 'core' classical artists, signed Beving right away.

Beving's sound encompasses solo piano, strings and voice, and straddles the space between pop, electronica and art music – sometimes referred to as 'post-classical' music. Last year he wrote and performed *Drone Ballet* at Burning Man festival, where an autonomous flying swarm of 300 illuminated drones lit up the sky. Like Einaudi, Beving makes his albums available to purchase in sheet music form, so that fans can also play the pieces as well as listen. (The music to *Solipsism* and *Prehension* is out now, with *Henosis* coming soon.)

Making the score available to others might be more problematic for Larry Goves, whose experimental *Happy/Boomf/Fat* will be

**Big success: Joep Beving's trilogy of albums have proved popular**



Photo: Rahi Rezvani

performed by Kathryn Williams and Andy Ingamells at The Victoria in Dalston, East London as part of nonclassical's ongoing concert series (March 20). *Happy/Boomf/Fat*, written for voices and marshmallows, requires the performers to follow instructions that are written on edible scores. These are then eaten as part of the concert, making the piece highly theatrical. Goves says that the work explores the issue of eating in public, highlighting that although it can be joyful for some, others find it challenging and even shameful.

Down the road from Dalston to Peckham for new opera *Robin Hood*, which recently premiered at the CLF Art Cafe. The work – the first opera written by 25-year-old composer Dani Howard – was the third production to be presented by the enterprising company The Opera Story, who are quickly gaining a reputation for bringing intriguing stage works to life. In this new version of the much-loved legend, Robin is Lord of the Greenwoods, an MP who promises to help 'hard-working families'. In private, however, he leads a raucous rabble of Merry Men who hunt, drink and generally give a bad name to green tights. Robin's sister, Marian, is an eco-warrior determined to save Greenwoods from property developer Joanna Gold. Against the political backstabbing, Robin is haunted by the realisation that the stag he's just killed may not have been a stag after all. Despite an occasionally sagging storyline, the cast brought Howard's scintillating score into focus, with some haunting drama in the closing act.

Howard's 2018 composition *Argentum* (performed by BBC Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Michael Sea) was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on March 8 as part of a programme of works by female composers to mark International Women's Day. It is available to listen to via BBC Sounds.

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**ALBUM OF THE WEEK**

**Berlioz: The Complete Works**  
Hector Berlioz  
Warner has

unveiled *Berlioz: The Complete Works*, thought to be the first-ever complete collection of the composer's oeuvre. The set, created in partnership with the Hector Berlioz Museum and Hector Berlioz Festival, marks this year's 150th anniversary of the composer's death and includes recordings from over 60 years of the Warner Classics, Erato, and Universal catalogues, including a number of world-premiere recordings. The 27-CD set is out now in digital and physical formats.