



RAM
page

RAMpage Renewal Edition

**A guide to sustainable
clothes shopping**

**An exclusive interview with
Judith Weir, Master of the
King's Music**

**Let Agony Aunt solve
your problems!**

**Includes a brand new
crossword!**

Editor-in-Chief

Jonty Watt

Design and Production

Jonty Watt

Kiersten Gustafson

Contributors

Agony Aunt

Toby Anderson

Kennedy Blair Miller

Declan Hickey

Ruby Howells

Mia Serracino-Inglott

Emily Trubshaw

Jonty Watt

Editors

Toby Anderson

Declan Hickey

Jonty Watt

Artwork

Jess Abrahams

Jess Bull Anderson

Sena Bielander

Ruby Howells

Front Cover Design:

Sena Bielander

@artsysen.aa

Sponsor

Schott Music London

48 Great

Marlborough Street,

London

W1F 7BB

Table of Contents

An Interview with Judith Weir	3
The Invincible Musician	5
Growing Marigolds	7
Dance Renewal	8
Classical Music in <i>The White Lotus</i>	10
Curating a Wardrobe That Doesn't Cost the Earth	12
Agony Aunt	14
Crossword	16

Editor's Note

Spring term was another extremely busy one at RAM, and particularly here at RAMPage. We've seen a number of exciting new initiatives get underway over the last few months, including our RAMPage Spotlight series and our series of posts to celebrate Women's History Month (check all this out over on our website, rampagenews.co.uk). Most recently, we all bore witness to the explosive debut of our newest team member: Agony Aunt. Read on to see what she has to say about RAM's most pressing student issues...



As we collectively brace ourselves for the dreaded summer term (exam term...), I think it's extremely important to take some time for ourselves, and to remember that, despite how it sometimes feels, there's so much to be thankful for about where we study. To realise this, you need only saunter through Regent's park on a sunny day, or duck into one of the High Street's cosy pubs, or breathe in the crisp, fresh air of Euston road (...okay, it's not ALL perfect).

And that's the theme for this edition. Whether it's thoughts about returning to dancing after lockdown, or growing marigolds, or eco-conscious fashion, or mental wellbeing, or classical music in the media: it's all about growth and change. In a word, it's about renewal.

I want to thank the wonderful team who have been involved in RAMPage over the past term, whose combined talents really make it something to be proud of. And thanks, of course, to you: our readers.

Jonty x

An Interview with **Judith Weir**, Master of the King's Music

By Declan Hickey

Judith Weir is a composer and current Master of the King's Music.

Declan Hickey: The theme of our current issue is 'renewal'. A lot of your music draws on historical stimuli—what is it that attracts you to these old sources, and how do you bring them to a twenty-first-century audience?

Judith Weir: I'm always looking at a place to start, and it's certainly true that a lot of these historical sources offer well-documented and interesting material. King Harald's Saga, for example, comes from an Icelandic saga, and there's a certain bareness about the material, which allows me as a composer to embroider my own version of it. Sometimes there's even a fun side to taking a very old source and giving it a very modern presentation—I think there's an element of surprise in that. One of my operas features an ancient Chinese play, which I try to turn into a modern view of technology, ecology, and democracy.

DH: This is *A Night at the Chinese Opera*?

JW: Yes, that's right. But thinking of my work in recent years, I'm very anxious to write about the contemporary world. Maybe I do use historical subjects as a way of doing that.

DH: You've mentioned King Harald's Saga and *A Night at the Chinese Opera*. It seems to me that your inspirations comprise a broad geographical, as well as historical, compass. Have you deliberately sought to draw on a global range of materials?

JW: Well of course there's a danger in the modern world, where we have access on a superficial level to everything, of just plucking any source from anywhere in the world. I'm anxious not to do that. When I see a source I'd like to study, I go quite deeply into it. There was a whole decade when I wrote pieces on Chinese subjects, and during that period I was trying to learn Chinese as a speaker and reader. It's a project for me to become involved in these subjects, which are often far away from my own experience—out of that a lot of inspiration comes. Again, surprises are what I'm looking for.



Judith Weir (left) and Declan Hickey (right)

DH: Has that interest in Chinese culture stayed with you?

JW: I'm still very interested in China—I think everybody should be at the moment! Looking at my catalogue of work, I haven't written any Chinese-themed pieces in the last twenty years, but I feel there's an underlying philosophy I learned from some of the ancient writings—the contrast between Daoism and Confucianism—that's still there in the background.

DH: You are of course Master of the King's Music, an overtly British role. What does this position mean to you as a composer?

JW: It's been an interesting exercise to write music for events which are national, sometimes international, and therefore unusual in reaching people in their millions

through television broadcasts and streaming. A majority of these people will have no particular interest in new music, so that is an incredible opportunity to speak to them. If I've had one quest composition-wise, it's been to reassure those who put on these events that it's great to have new music; it adds new energy and stimulus. This coming Coronation, I'm so thrilled that there will be twelve, perhaps more, new pieces.

DH: I recently came across Michael Tippett's *Suite for the Birthday of Prince Charles*, written in 1948. It seems that classical music has been a presence from the very earliest stages of the King's life!

JW: Yes, that's true. I don't know King Charles very well at all, but I do know that he is a huge classical music fan, and not embarrassed about it. So it's a great thing that he's acceded to the throne. We're already seeing the accent on music in the Coronation, with classical music given its proper place—that's so important today when institutions like the BBC are apparently a little embarrassed by classical music. I always felt the Queen was more interested in classical music than people said, but the 'new guy' is really devoted to it. Perhaps it was the Tippett piece which set the tone.

DH: Do you feel the weight of history on your shoulders when you write music for such occasions?

JW: Well, you don't have years to think about these pieces. It's not like a commission for the LSO, who will probably ask you three years in advance. Commissions for royal events are all short pieces—three, four, or five minutes—so it's a simple task to begin with. There's not enough time to start worrying about it; you have to go with your first thought. Most of these events have a very clear profile: funeral, coronation, jubilee. Each has an emotional profile which is very easy to access.

DH: Do you have any specific compositional plans for when your tenure comes to an end?

JW: My composing is really a continuum. There are always one or two things I'm working on for the future, and I quite like to keep an eye on recent pieces. Again, renewal is a good word: it can be great to write a new version of a piece for different instruments. I haven't thought of my tenure as a stopping point after which things will be different.

DH: Do you still find your aesthetic as a composer evolving? Do you like the direction of travel?

JW: I have no deliberate input into how my work evolves; I feel I write it quite naturally without deciding it should be

more this or that. I try to be critical of the work I'm doing, but it's quite hard for me to step outside and see that evolution, especially because I enjoy having a big mix of media. Although I always write for acoustic instruments, there's a huge range from solo pieces to large-scale orchestral works. There's such variation in that work that it's hard to say in what direction it's going.

Conservatoires have never been as amazing as they are now, but can be so easily damaged, so I think it's a highly significant moment—we are questioning the very existence of what we do.

DH: Opera has been an important part of your output. Did you always want to write opera?

JW: When I was a student I was an oboe player, and my favourite thing was playing in opera orchestras. Some of the most fabulous oboe music comes from the Mozart operas and so on, so from a rather odd angle I began to love opera. When I lived up in Glasgow, it was a great time for Scottish opera—I would see everything in the season. I didn't decide to be a composer of opera; it came more gradually via smaller-scale pieces like King Harald's Saga. In a way that's my joke about opera: it's in the form of a huge Wagnerian opera for just one person, who plays everything including the scenery! It's been great to do a few larger-scale operas, but I put them in the mix of what I do.

DH: You recently signed an open letter opposing the decision to axe the BBC Singers. Is this a portentous moment for classical music in the UK?

JW: Well, that particular decision has been paused, but this is a very high-profile moment. The suggested BBC cuts reflect a change in philosophy for the BBC, away from its role as a public-service guardian of things which otherwise can't be done. At the same time we have a row of Arts Council cuts which in effect do the same thing. Don't get me wrong: I totally approve of trying to do more work outside the big urban centres. I definitely want there to be more educational work, and to go to smaller venues, but it can't be an 'either/or'. If we don't have the high-end professional activity, the other stuff won't happen either—we have a very finely balanced ecology in music in this

country. Conservatoires have never been as amazing as they are now, but can be so easily damaged, so I think it's a highly significant moment—we are questioning the very existence of what we do. The rewarding thing, though, has been the unity of the musical profession.

DH: Classical music programmes on TV are relatively few and far between these days. Does our medium exist in more of a cocoon than it once did?

JW: Actually, we are the least cocooned we've ever been. The very finest musicians are also teaching, going into schools, doing really creative things online. I sometimes think that we classical musicians do the most outreach of anyone. But you're right: BBC TV deserves particular attention. I love gardening, but goodness that is it well catered for!

DH: You have often written about music education. Are you optimistic about the next generation of musicians? Is music education in a good place?

JW: Because of the terrible education cuts, it would be wrong to say it's in a good place. But the thing that gives me optimism is that there are still music teachers doing fantastic work in state schools. I've never seen such fantastic

teaching when they get the chance to do it. Private schools, which make up only 7% of our school force, often have superb music departments. I'm almost glad they're there to show what happens when you spend money on music, as you should. I feel that one day we will reconnect schools with music, but it has to be in an exciting way. It can't just be a compulsory exam subject; it has to be an activity that people love and look to for ... renewal!

DH: Other than the Coronation, what's next for you?

JW: I'm really looking forward to two pieces over the next year: one is a string quartet, the other for small chamber orchestra. These forces are not well represented in my catalogue, so I'm very much looking forward to them.

The Invincible Musician?

By Emily Trubshaw

I cried for my lost career. For seventeen years of trying to make the best of it. For getting so close to my return and having it taken away from me. For all the loss, and pain, and suffering of being pulled away from the career that was all I had ever wanted. I wanted it so much. I had tried so hard to do everything right. And I was left, again, with a hollow shell, something that tasted of failure, crying my heart out.

Leon Fleischer (1928-2020)

On reading these words, I am filled with a flood of emotion as I remember a period not so long ago when I too thought that I would never play again. It is hard to describe the feeling of loss, whether temporary or not, that a musician experiences when music is torn away from them. For Leon Fleischer, an internationally renowned American pianist who, at the age of 36 – the height of his professional solo career, lost the use of his right hand (due to a condition now recognised as focal dystonia), the feelings of embarrassment, of psychological pain, of stress and anxiety, caused him to descend into a pit of depression. Whereas pianists, one would think, are used to being locked away on their own, spending many hours practising, this state of 'aloneness' is quite different from the loneliness and deep sense of isolation that arises if the piano is removed from the equation. And so, in his biography 'My Nine Lives', Leon Fleischer talks about his inner psychological deterioration and the presentation of suicidal thoughts that swiftly penetrated his awareness following the onset of his symptoms.

I don't want to make this article too morbid, but it seems to me as though these feelings are all too common amongst musicians. I believe that there is a stigma surrounding pain and injury that reinforces and worsens our psychological, mental, and physical well-being.

You have an injury: you have poor technique.

You are in pain: you have bad posture.

You have the wrong anatomy for your instrument.

You are practising too much.

You are too tense.

You are doing something wrong.

Naturally, these assumptions that we all make, which have some scientific basis, cause musicians to be embarrassed of injury and fearful of its long-term consequences – with regards to their reputation and career, and their financial stability. This generally causes musicians to become extremely secretive about their physiological and psychological states, even to the point that they might convince themselves that nothing is wrong. Until it's too late. This lack of transparency can cause not only psychological pain and isolation, but also real, physical pain as musicians neglect their own needs and fail to ask for help. In fact, a recent study has demonstrated how the perception of pain among musicians can be directly influenced by context, social and environmental aspects, as well as psychological state (Stanhope et al., 2020).

This issue becomes even more complex when considering the possibility of both good and bad pain. In a short survey sent out to several fellow musicians at conservatoire and university, there was a notable inconsistency in responses with regards to what sort of pain might be bad or good, whether pain is needed to make progress, and whether music itself should be viewed as an intense sport that requires intense physical training. Young musicians don't always agree on the goals of musical practice and the ways in which pain can be most effectively managed, if they have it in mind at all. Whereas some tend towards an ideal of the 'perfect musician', practising regularly for more than five hours a day, or until they have got something right, pushing their physical limits and surpassing them, striving towards making themselves achy at the end of practice, and finding satisfaction in this feeling, there are also those at the opposite end of the spectrum. There seems to be no obvious answer; both types of musician can experience pain or injury. Some sort of education about healthy musicianship is surely needed to ensure that we can pursue sustainable musical careers. Here I refer not only to an education on how much and in what way one should practise, but also to an education on maintaining a healthy mindset.

I had probably been overworking my hand for years...I would do six or seven hours, just enough to keep me feeling slightly guilty that I wasn't doing more. It still didn't seem like enough. I was driving myself toward an ideal of perfection.

Leon Fleischer (1928-2020)

Leon Fleischer, in some ways, represents the pinnacle of the perfectionist mindset: an obsessive attitude demonstrating fixated and compulsive tendencies. At the extreme, neurotic perfectionism and psychoneuroticism have been shown to be positively associated with the onset of upper limb disorders in musicians (Baadjou, 2018). This may seem harsh and offensive given that a large proportion of musicians probably treat practice in a very similar way – I certainly do, but the bitter truth is that practice out of guilt is unhealthy and generally underpinned by these characteristics. It has been ingrained in us from a very young age that to 'win' in music, whatever that means, you have to practise, and you have to practise a lot. Just a short step away from this mindset is the belief that pain equals progress. Too often, I practise to the point of extreme hand fatigue, even after a significant injury (not to mention several relapses); I believe that I am having 'good pain', which is needed for me to reach the next level. We often liken this to the 'good pain' that we feel after going to the gym. Nevertheless, though I cannot speak for everyone, I could not push myself to my physical limits at the gym every day and come out of the week alive. In music, this is even less sustainable. With little time to rest away from the instrument, it is all the more likely that unless you really listen to and respect your body, it will collapse beneath you. We are not invincible, no matter how much we may believe it, and it is time for pain and injury to be talked about freely and for education to move with the times, providing musicians with the knowledge that will allow them to navigate this rewarding career path.

Growing Marigolds

By Kennedy Blair Miller

At the beginning of 2021, I impulsively decided to buy six large, leafy plants. I placed them in ornate marble pots and decorated my small university bedroom with their soft stems and silky petals to give the space some life. This was quickly complicated by the fact that, as it turns out, I was a dreadful mother to plants. I often forgot to water them. The one window in my bedroom never invited enough sunlight inside. By the end of the third month, their vibrant green turned brown, their healthy stems bent and wobbled, and their large leaves shrunk into a lifeless pile of crunchy dead.

A few months ago, I went through a phase of videoing myself practising. As a soprano, so much of my practice is reliant upon sensing what my anatomy might be doing to support or inhibit my singing. I wondered if watching myself would help me clue into problems I might not be noticing in real time, like jaw tension or a collapse in my posture.

I like how to be a singer is to use an instrument that cannot be replicated and which I use, share, and nurture upon my own terms and boundaries.

As I watched the videos back, what surprised me was not the presence or lack of good technique, but how intensely unkind I was to myself and my voice. Over the course of the practice session, I watched from my iPhone as improvements came to life, but then I would never validate myself for the accomplishments. I was being a dreadful mother to my own voice, which is my own anatomy, which is my own self.

I wondered whether buying plants that were already fully grown had contributed to my failed attempt at keeping

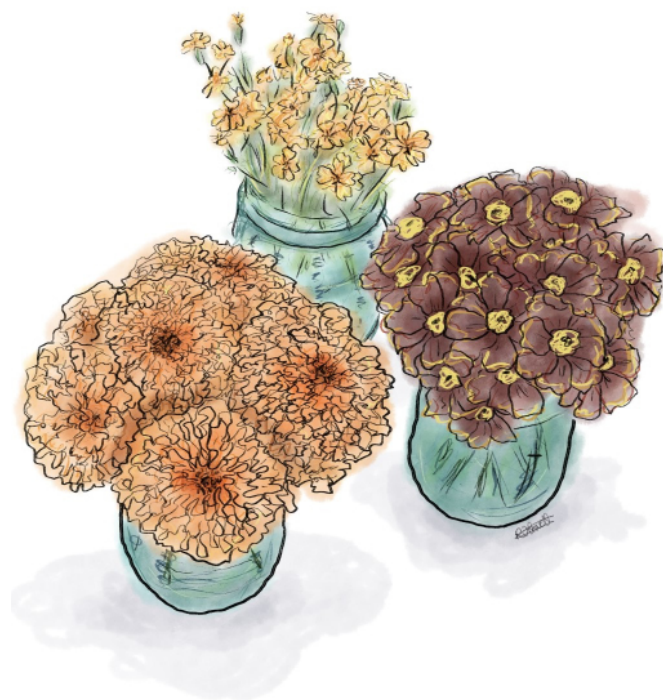
them alive. Maybe, subconsciously, I felt less liable to care for them since they seemed to be doing so well already. After my irresponsibility led to their downfall, I decided to buy marigold seeds and start from scratch. I researched how best to keep them alive and thriving: water them daily, keep them proximate to direct sunlight, and be patient. Marigolds can take up to eight weeks to bloom into vibrant orange and gold flowers. I got to work.

The malice I was routinely enacting upon my own voice disconcerted me deeply. I decided the first step to remedying this unkindness was to make a list of traits about my voice and about singing that I enjoy or am proud of. I like my bright timbre and how it carries in a big hall. I like the way I can consistently sing a high G very well. I like how I sing that one Robert Schumann piece that makes me fall in love with singing again every time I perform it. I like how to be a singer is to use an instrument that cannot be replicated and which I use, share, and nurture upon my own terms and boundaries. Going back to these basics grounded me in remembering why I train so hard to develop my craft. Moreover, I was reminded that any success I achieve with my instrument should not be an excuse for me to chase further development with an intensity that leads to malevolence. If an aspect of singing I adore is its innate novelty based upon my own personal and anatomical novelty, I am not being my best self as a musician or individual if I am willing to disparage myself. Rooting myself in my love for my art was a necessary step in helping me fall back in love with crafting my instrument.

My marigolds bloomed seven weeks after I first planted their seeds in the ornate marble pots that once cradled my large dying plants. I began to relish the small routine tasks like watering them and adjusting the pot to better hit the sunlight, because it seemed that, every time I went back to the pot, their stems had grown another millimetre, or another small leaf had bloomed. I noticed, and became enamoured with, the small growths, so that by the time I had a pot full of vibrant flowers, I felt just as proud of

the blooms of orange petals as I did of the millimetre growths of the stems. I bought more plants to accompany the marigolds, and their thriving leafy presence was a welcome addition to the space.

By continuously prioritising the joy singing gives me, I began to fall in love with practising again, too. I started videoing myself again. I noticed adjustments to my personal practice narration. I would sing a melisma and say to myself, 'Your jaw was doing less work to produce the sound that time. This time, let's keep that and try making it more legato'. By acknowledging the small accomplishments while also acknowledging there was more work to be done, I kept better track of the progress of my work. Thus, by the time the piece was scheduled to be performed, I felt even more confident in my preparation. Kindness and patience have become my water and sunlight, and me and my marigolds are doing better than ever.

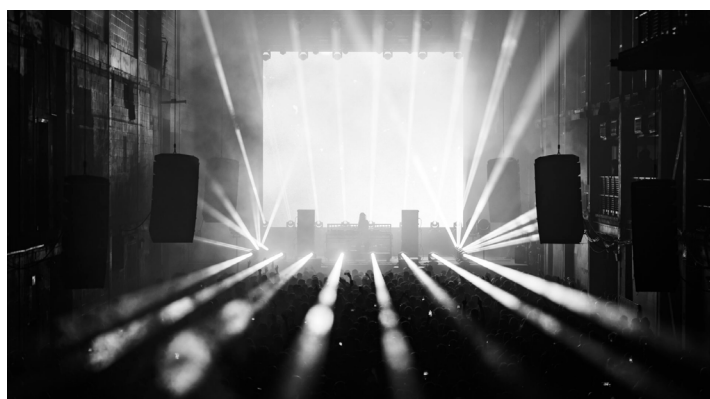


Dance-Renewal

By Toby Anderson

There has already been far too much postulatory posturing on how Covid lockdowns have affected 'the culture', but alas here I am adding my own contribution to the discourse. It may seem an obvious truism to suggest that lockdowns were most effective in their limiting of physical touch, but I think touch, and its restriction by the state, is actually a very interesting thing to talk about. It's not a new idea to suggest that the atomisation of society into small familial units is a pillar in the framework of global capitalism, but the restriction of our interpersonal interactions into indivisible 'households' and 'bubbles' created a certain eerie materialisation of how Western capitalist societies are socially organised; a somewhat invisible abstract phenomenon suddenly made very visible. It's not surprising that a lot of queer people were especially jarred by this return to an eerie vision of 1950s domesticity, as this vision removed the element of touch from almost all interpersonal contact and left them in a state of individualised and isolating sexlessness.

I think it hardly surprising, then, for lockdown to awaken a deep urge within people, an urge for collectivity, to rebel against the numbing myopia of individualism and embrace a hedonistic absorption into larger consciousness. I spent a lot of lockdown listening to music, but it felt overly cerebral



and totally unembodied; what I really yearned for was the feeling of music hitting my skin, of it passing through the soles of my feet and making my bones vibrate; I wanted music deep inside my body, not just in my ears. I don't think I was alone in this feeling – I remember when Lady Gaga released *Chromatica*, a sweeping dance album set in myriad queer alien-utopic worlds, the general feeling among my friends was a deep dissatisfaction with 'just listening' to it. We wanted to feel it on our skin and let it guide us into rites of ecstatic movement.

You would think that this would set the scene for a huge revival in the clubbing world as we transitioned away from lockdowns. Many young people were not overly concerned with the health risks of engaging in high-interpersonal contact activity and were ostensibly happy to jump back into large group events. Further, we were subjected

to a nostalgia narrative of 'reclaiming lost youth', a kind of mass psychological sense of FOMO directed not against

think we can empathise with the challenges facing our friends working in nightlife.

I wanted hard techno with no discernible pitches, naked bodies, cold concrete floors, and dark-rooms.

our coevals but against past and future generations of young people who 'got to be young'.

And yet, we haven't seen the club sector 'bounce back' as was promised in 2021. The sector lost 20% of its venues in the pandemic and has not reached pre-covid levels. The cost-of-living crisis means people simply have less money to spend on nights out, and the astronomical rise in rental prices has put huge financial strain on clubs. It's not only the smallest parties and venues that are being affected. The gentrifying efforts of British Land's controversial 'Canada Water Masterplan' are closing the legendary Printworks this month to convert it into a "sustainable office-led redevelopment" – cultural vandalism of the most unbecoming sort. As musicians facing huge funding cuts in the arts, I

However, in visiting such places, you wouldn't know the precarity of their situation. I emerged from lockdown a lot more interested in dance music than I was before; and further, I wanted to engage with musics and scenes that would have scared me before. I wanted hard techno with no discernible pitches, naked bodies, cold concrete floors, and darkrooms. And when I finally leant in and fully let myself go, the feeling was totally utopian: thrashing in a mass of sweaty bodies, the smell intoxicating, the lights hypnotic, you feel rather than hear the music hitting your body; you move without choice, it's a total surrender to mass that you have no control over – a mass that moves in chaotic unpredictable swerves. I've been deeply touched and inspired by how the people I meet in these parties continue to find ecstatic joy despite everything. It feels like an act of defiance against the stultifying effects of current political policies simply to have these moments of pure joy, and at the same time we're all having this massive cathartic release of the putridity of two years of individualism. Finally touching, we undo the pain of touchlessness, finally together, we find healing. In this precarious dance renewal, despite all the odds, we find hope.



Photo credits: printworkslondon.co.uk

An Analysis of the Classical Music in *The White Lotus*

(and why it's relevant)

By Mia Serracino-Inglott

Like many, my viewing habits are driven by internet trends. So when it came to *The White Lotus*, my desire to binge-watch it was sparked by the incessant repetition of the season two theme tune all over TikTok. I went into the show expecting great acting, a star-studded cast, and some laughs but I was surprised to find, woven into the very fabric of the series, a dynamic soundtrack that heavily featured classical music. It has never been surprising to hear classical music in television and cinema (think *Die Hard* or *2001: A Space Odyssey*), but it is rare to see classical music utilised as such a strong storytelling device as in *The White Lotus*. This made me wonder: if classical music plays an integral part in such a popular show, then why are we (classical music fans/performers) not making more of this popularity (... writing articles about it for our university newspaper)?

'White Lotus' is the name of a luxury resort chain that promises to provide the highest quality care to the highest calibre of client, and in season one we spend a week at their Hawaii location. We meet various groups of high-profile customers and watch on as they abuse their privilege, causing untold problems for the staff of the hotel. The majority of the music in this series comprises traditional Hawaiian songs, either played explicitly or woven through as leitmotifs in Cristobal Tapia de Veer's soundtrack. However,

at points in the series, this musical consistency is ruptured and inserted into the soundtrack are prominent appearances of classical music including Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2 (Movement IV, 'Allegretto') which we hear in episode four. This underscores the actions of a specific character (Armond the hotel manager) and exemplifies his tragic downfall throughout the series.

Armond is introduced to us as the high-functioning but friendly manager of the 'White Lotus', and we quickly learn that he has been sober for the past five years. From the outset of the series, the pedantic requests of the hotel guests challenge his sobriety, and, by episode four, his resolve

For the working classes, classical music is a means for detachment from reality. For the upper classes, it is a vessel for emotional connection, a moment of sincerity.

has crumbled. After stumbling upon an abandoned bag filled with drugs, Armond takes to using these drugs to get through the day. We see this halfway through the episode, when the show cuts to Armond in his office, accompanied by the haphazard Shostakovich. The shift to a new music style is jarring, but it is made appropriate by Armond joining in the creation of the staccato music by percussively cutting a line of ketamine. Shostakovich's music mirrors the effect of the drugs in Armond's body: pulsating, disjointed, overwhelming. The music swells as we follow Armond's intense march through the corridors of the resort, accenting each step that he takes. The musical texture then suddenly thins as he is confronted by two of the hotel customers. The music does not change when we cut to a new scene, instead, the lingering harmonic of the violin is dovetailed into the familiar Hawaiian soundtrack when the camera emerges from under the water. We think that perhaps there is hope for Armond, that he too can emerge from the 'water' of his drug-use and return to the serenity of the Hawaiian landscape, however the returning use of classical music in the final episode signals to us that this may not be so...

In Season Two, we visit the 'White Lotus' in Sicily and again, de Veer's soundtrack makes use of 'native' music. We hear lots of Italian pop songs and operatic pastiche,





which feels natural since we are in the birthplace of opera. Opera, however, comes to represent much more as the season develops. In episode five, a large group of characters go to the Palermo Opera House and watch a production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. We follow the excitement of it through Tanya, an immensely wealthy woman who has never before been to the opera. Tanya, played by Jennifer Coolidge, is an inherently comic character, and yet here we see a more tender side. Upon arrival at the

It feels incredibly validating to have an art form I love being used in such an exciting way.

opera house the camera pans across the room as we see people dressed to the nines, all holding themselves highly and indulging in glasses of champagne. Tanya's brash personality seems almost too much for the faux-modest elegance of the opera. Her companion remarks to her that the woman sitting in the box opposite is the Queen of Sicily and Tanya excitedly makes her introduction. The companion smirks to his friends: the phrase 'side eye' comes to mind. The viewer understands that the opera is not the place for casual niceties and as the lights dim we hold our breath to maintain the still anticipation of the overture. We return to *Madame Butterfly* during her final suicide scene but the camera does not focus on the action on the stage, instead intently focussing upon Tanya and her emotional response to the music. We see her completely enrapt, with tears in her eyes. Her companion, who earlier seemed amused at her brashness, tenderly holds her hand in comfort, sharing in the pity they feel for Butterfly. We see Tanya as our own tragic operatic heroine in the *White Lotus* story.

The way that *The White Lotus* uses classical music is integral to its storytelling and these two examples show it being utilised in very different ways. For the working classes (represented through Armond) classical music is a means for detachment from reality. For the upper classes (Tanya and her friends) it is a vessel for emotional connection, a moment of sincerity amidst her comical persona. This perhaps represents the public perception of classical music and the fact that classical music is not considered popular listening for the majority of the world. Or perhaps it represents the notion that classical music is 'high art', and therefore something beyond ordinary listening. Its inclusion in the show is notable and understandable since this is a show that deals with class and wealth at its very core. One cannot ignore the colonial juxtaposition of the overwhelmingly white institution of classical music when placed next to traditional Hawaiian music in season one. Nor can one ignore the slight ridiculousness of Tanya (the billionaire) seeing herself reflected in *Madame Butterfly*'s plight. Has classical music simply come to reflect a 'hyper-reality' which can only be felt in contrast to 'grounded-reality' which is created by more modern, popular music?

Maybe it has... and so what! As a classical musician myself, it feels incredibly validating to have an art form I love being used in such an exciting way. The classical music clues are everywhere in *The White Lotus*. Even the main theme of Season 2, the most popular piece of music to come out of the show, is a half-operatic, half-yodelled version of a 'Dies Irae' chant. *The White Lotus* is one of the most popular shows currently on streaming services, so classical music's inclusion in it is something to be celebrated. No matter the use, it serves as proof that classical music can interact and work with other art forms in a contemporary way, and perhaps that will be the thing to get classical music trending...

Curating a wardrobe that doesn't cost the earth

Shopping to save your bank balance and the planet

By Ruby Howells

We are living in a world of crisis, with two of the most prominent being the climate crisis and the financial crisis. Different reports vary, but the general consensus across most credible reports is that the fashion industry is in the top five most polluting industries. Moreover, the cost of living in the United Kingdom is leaving many with very little or no extra cash to enjoy in their own time, and as students it can be difficult for us to budget our essentials and 'treats' correctly – and I include myself here! So... if you are in the market for a new jumper, some concert blacks, or have been saving up for a special purchase, here are some tips to ensure you are getting more for your money whilst having less of an impact on Mother Earth.

Tips for buying firsthand:

- It's important to recognise that buying second-hand and vintage clothing is a privilege that not everybody has physical or monetary access to. You should never be ashamed of purchasing fast-fashion if it is all you can afford, but it is good to know what the brands you are supporting are doing – or not – to reduce their environmental impact (whilst paying their workers fair wages). That being said... think carefully before buying from SHEIN or the BooHoo group who currently have a poor reputation! (PLT, Nasty Gal, Motel etc.; these are known as ultra-fast-fashion retailers).
- Be aware of 'greenwashing' – many fast-fashion giants have been challenged on this, especially H&M and Zara when they released so-called 'conscious' collections, which are only made of a minimal amount of recycled and natural materials.
- Always consider the price-per-wear; is what you are buying a staple that will last forever or a microtrend that will be out of fashion in a few months' time? If you genuinely believe that you will love and cherish something for many years, and that you are not being influenced by the latest trends on social media, then it is more likely to be worth the buy.
- Make sure you check the care labels on all the garments you purchase. The best materials are natural ones such as cotton, wool, mohair, and cashmere (though I understand not all of these are vegan and



are more expensive), as they last much longer. It's even better if they are recycled or organically sourced. Materials to avoid are man-made ones such as polyester, polyurethane (PU), nylon, and acrylic. Man-made materials are usually made from fossil fuels, thus you are contributing to both the fashion and fossil industries!



- Viscose, known also as rayon, is an interesting material as it's not man-made – it's actually made of wood pulp. However, the way in which it's treated (with highly toxic chemicals) makes it an unsustainable option. Be on the lookout for better alternatives to viscose such as Lenzing™ ECOVERO, which is far better for the environment.

- If you are thinking of purchasing designer items, again consider whether what you are buying is timeless or a trend. Similarly, also research whether you are paying for the materials or the brand name – a brand new Chanel bag may be beautiful, but the true value of the materials



is less than 5% of the price of the item. A vintage designer handbag is almost certainly better constructed and retains its value more than a new one. Look into smaller and upcoming mid-range brands with an environmentally conscious mindset such as Polène (for bags) and Pangaia or Mother of Pearl (for clothing and shoes).

Tips for buying second-hand:

Now onto the best bit... tips for buying secondhand! I can proudly say that probably 80% of my wardrobe these days is preloved or a TKMaxx buy. Here are my top tips for secondhand shopping:

- Charity shopping is not only usually far cheaper than buying firsthand, but you have the added benefit of giving your money to charity whilst curating a totally unique wardrobe. There is something for everybody's style at a charity shop, and contrary to popular belief not everything in there was donated by somebody's grandmother! Fortunately, the stigma of charity shopping is slowly fading away and more people are embracing the fun of rummaging around to find a bargain. My favourite charity shops in London are All Aboard and Cancer Research in West Hampstead, and FARA in Islington, as well as the Oxfam on Marylebone High Street which has regular sales and discounts. So the next time you are going to Cross Keys, pop into Oxfam and see if you can find a gem! (RAM also donates old sheet music there too...)

- Become familiar with secondhand selling sites and apps including Vinted, Depop and eBay. Not only can you sell your old clothes on these sites to make some extra money, but you can find some beautiful items too. I always filter my searches to be in either brand new, new without tags, or very good/excellent condition, and if you do a broad search (e.g. cowboy boots) you never know what you will stumble upon that may be just perfect! I've had a pair of designer shoes for about 97% off of the retail price using Vinted, previously worn once and with the box & original receipt, so definitely keep on browsing. Fun fact – I'm actually wearing the shoes as I write this article!

- Organise a clothes swap with friends if you are similar sizes, or join a clothes-swapping group on Facebook. The Great British Clothes Swap is a lovely and friendly group

where you can swap items of similar value and refresh your wardrobe.

Another clothes-swapping app to try is Nuw, which is available in the UK, Ireland, and the US.



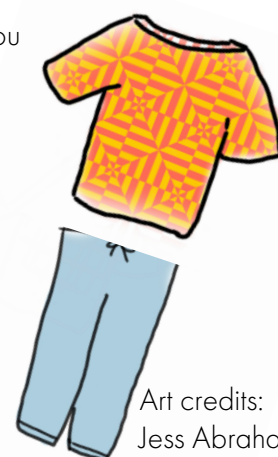
- It goes without saying that when buying secondhand, always check for faults. It's not usually the end of the world, and if you are the crafting type you can always upcycle pieces and turn them into something new.

- Vintage sizing (pre-2000s) does not align with current sizing standards! Do not be alarmed if in 2023 you're a UK size 12 but purchasing a vintage size 16 or 18 – this is perfectly normal! Remember clothes are meant to fit you; you are not meant to fit clothes.

- Although buying from TKMaxx isn't secondhand shopping, much of their stock is usually past collections and deadstock that could otherwise end up in landfill. The best bargains will have a number 2 or 7 on the tag.

- Also consider renting clothes for fancy events (graduation!!) if you want something beautiful without breaking the bank! Try a rental site such as ByRotation or HURR.

Overall, never forget that the most sustainable way to shop is not to shop at all; finding new ways to style what you already have is part of the fun. I encourage you to 'shop your wardrobe' and then, if you realise that you're missing something fundamental from your closet, come back to this article and strategise the best way to purchase what it is that you need.



Art credits:
Jess Abrahams

Some good Instagram pages to follow for more:

@andreacheong_
@onescoopstore
@goodclothesfairpay
@fash_rev
@bigsisterswap
@hurr
@ethical.fashion.guide

@charityshopgirlcsg
@found_it_at_the_charity_shop
@ms.rachelboo
@thethriftyedit_
@rosieokotcha
@wearenuw

AGONY AUNT

Here to solve YOUR problems!

This past term saw the introduction of RAM's hottest new associate: Agony Aunt. With her characteristic blend of incisive critique and acerbic wit and all bound up with lashings of irresistible charm, Agony Aunt is here to help with all that ails you. From Asimut frustrations to relationship woes to parallel fifths, there's nothing she can't handle.

Remember, you can't spell drama without RAM...

To submit a question to Agony Aunt, please email ramagonyaunt@gmail.com. Not all questions will be answered. Agony Aunt should not be treated as genuine advice.

Dear Agony Aunt...

The sexual tension between me and the card reader as I decide whether to sign in or not is palpable and I think it's starting to put the porters on edge. Help...?!

Dear Reader,

I think it's safe to say the average heart rate of the RAM student body has increased by 10% since the installation of the reader on the 23rd of January. I'm not sure what's more exciting: the approach to the building as you decide whether or not to pander to your criminal tendencies and bypass the scan-in, or the thrill of successfully making it past the porters without being summoned back.

But let us be under no illusion, the porters see this sort of illegality hundreds of times per day...they've given up caring, and we're nothing special. So, continue as you are, I say!

Dear Agony Aunt...

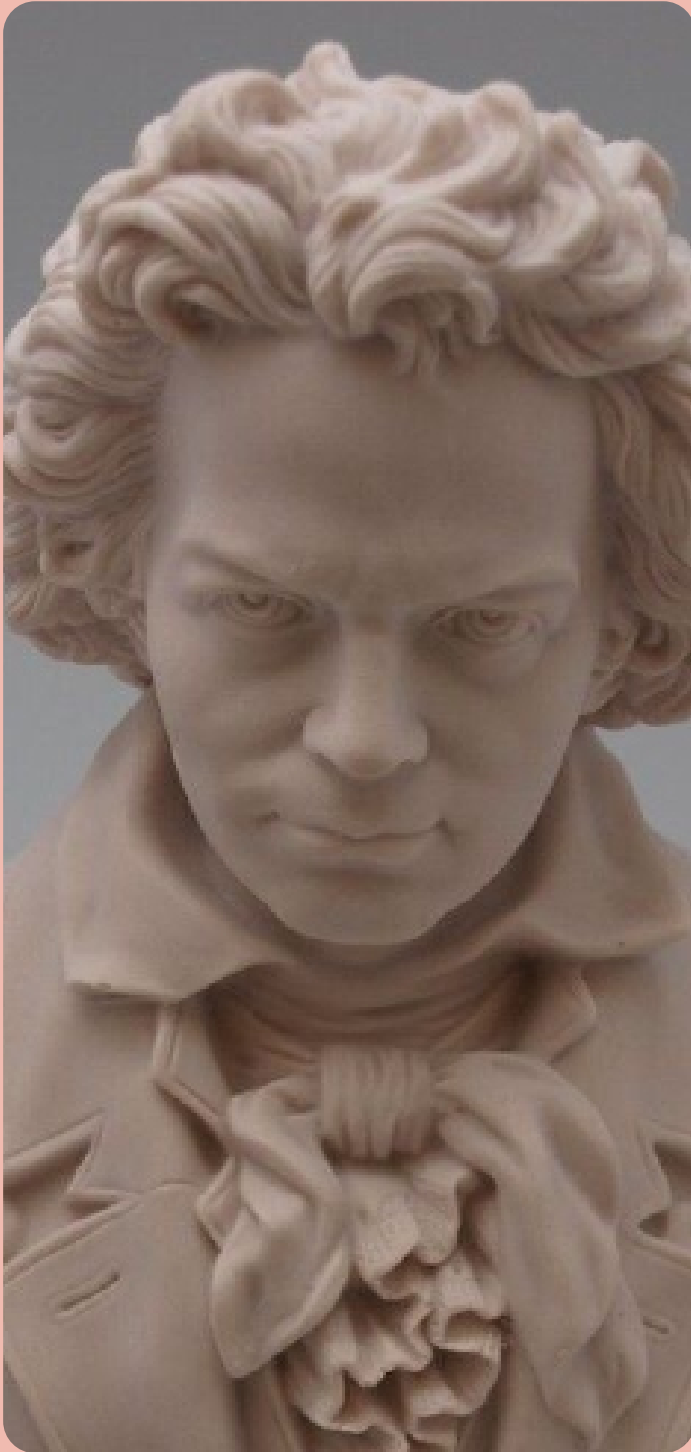
I have a crush on someone in one of my projects. I feel like I can't keep it in anymore

- I really want to tell them but I don't want to jeopardise this concert. What do I do??

Well, dear writer, when I say you are not alone, I could not mean that more emphatically. Musical chemistry is like no other. When you spend so much time with one person in an intimate musical setting, it's only natural feelings will arise. When you lock eyes from across the horn section, when your hands brush as you turn the page, when you finish each other's cadences: it's only natural feelings will arise. But these relationships end up undefined, and not knowing where you stand with someone can only feed into these feelings.

Before you do anything, get this project out of the way. If you still feel this way, for your and their sake, you should tell them how you feel. This is the only way you will be able to move on properly while maintaining a strong relationship. And who knows, you won't know until you try? Personally, I've never been turned down after confessing my feelings (but then I am a complete and utter dish).

Not being honest about your feelings is likely to result in one or both of you getting hurt. Rejection is not the worst thing in the world, but the unknown will torment you.



Dear Agony Aunt...

Why ON EARTH are there so many busts in RAM? Every week it seems that I am accosted by a new, dead, straight, white man staring at me with soulless eyes of steel, and it's unnerving. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to practice in peace without the piercing stare of Elgar from the third-floor corridor; or the room-filling presence of Karl Jenkins's moustache judging my every move as I try to remember the notes of an F-major arpeggio in the Forsyth room. Could there be a series of warnings/cautionary posters, supplied by RAM and implemented throughout the building, to warn us whose statued presence we might be subjected to?

Dear statue hater,

I agree, the intimate glare of a suspiciously shiny Finzi is, indeed, an unsettling sight whilst one attempts to study in the 'airport lounge'.

Although supposed celebrations of musicians associated with RAM, the pasty complexion of these outdated gentlemen is no reflection of our community today. My recommendation is to very subtly, yet forcefully, nudge said busts off their pedestals. Then we can work to replace them with some improvements, such as a bust of yours truly, Agony Aunt - the real face of RAM.

For legal reasons Agony Aunt will not be associated with any RAM property damage.

Dear Agony Aunt...

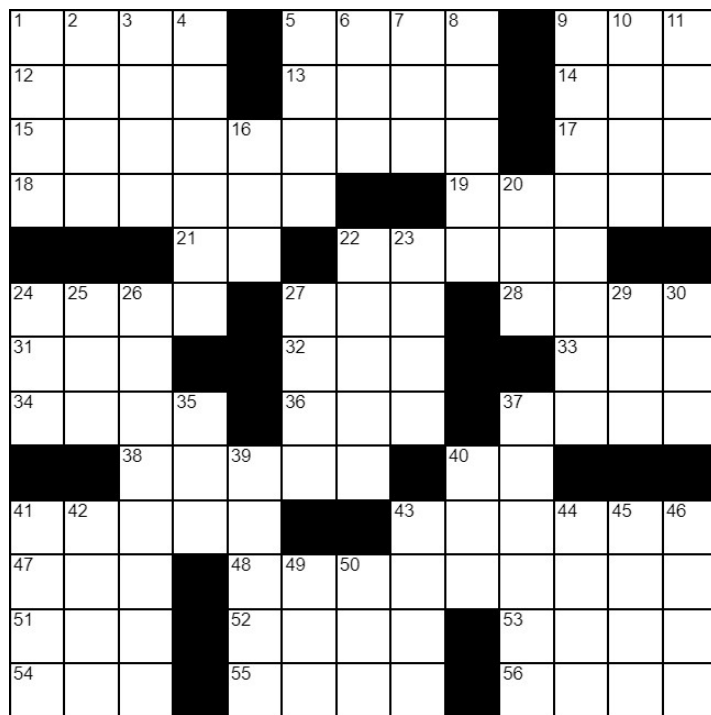
I'm addicted to Sprite - help. The Canteen staff keep laughing at me.

Grow up. Have a coke.

DISCLAIMER: Agony Aunt does not accept responsibility for any poor decisions made following her advice

The Crossword

By Jonty Watt



Across

1. Dalmatians have lots of these (4)
5. Material used for making oboe reeds (4)
9. Timid (3)
12. A fish with species including the Atlantic bluefin (4)
13. Composer and author of many ancient works (4)
14. A sound of laughter (3)
15. A group of people who make a lot of noise (8)
17. A large deer (3)
18. Make a drink cold before the guests arrive (6)
19. What you might miss when sight-reading (5)
21. How to respond if someone asks whether you have ever read a better paper than RAMpage (2)
22. Cornish Orchards, Frontier, and Asahi, at RAMbar (2,3)
24. Colourful berry in smoothie bowls (4)
27. ___ Rida, rapper of "Good Feeling" (3)
28. Latin word for 'goddess'; possibly a singer (4)
31. Neither this ___ that (3)
32. Like some parties (3)
33. Appearing after a typo (3)
34. Sasquatch (4)
36. "___ Maria", by Charles Gounod (3)
37. Indian lentil stew (4)
38. A reader of RAMpage News clearly has very good ___ (5)
40. Country bordering LES and SZ (2)
41. Comic featuring Dennis the Menace (5)
43. Leapt energetically (6)

47. Exaggerated (too far?) (3)
48. Composers Lili and Nadia (8)
51. Wildebeest (3)
52. Character from *Frozen* (4)
53. Small and insignificant (4)
54. Frodo's friend (3)
55. ___ what you sow (4)
56. Small whirlpool (4)

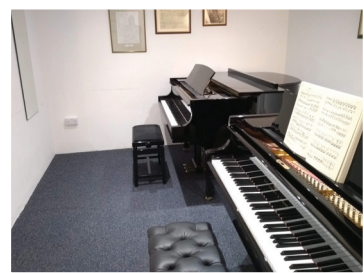
Down

1. Church organs have lots of these (4)
2. Sound of a contented cat (4)
3. How often you get to complete this crossword for the first time (4)
4. Important ingredient in hummus (6)
5. Violins are stored in one (4)
6. Adam ___, singer of "Stand and Deliver" (3)
7. See 31 across (3)
8. Put into practice (5)
9. Feeling a bit embarrassed - what you get when you combine a farmyard animal with a place to dance (8)
10. A hemidemisemiquaver compared with a demisemiquaver (4)
11. Cattle at home on Everest (4)
16. ___-friendly (3)
20. A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire* ___ (3)
22. Ingredient in tapenade (5)
23. A and E, for example (4)
24. "Can ___body, find me, somebody to love?" (3)
25. Speedy Sebastian (3)
26. Legendary jazz pianist (3,5)
27. The fate of many a high note (4)
29. By way of (3)
30. Knee ligament (3)
35. McDiarmid who Darth Vader tossed off a bridge (3)
37. What old socks might say (4,2)
39. Teetotal (5)
40. A place to relax (3)
41. Wet and muddy places (4)
42. Stratovolcano in Sicily (4)
43. Type of bass playing (4)
44. Old (4)
45. Big fan of Star Trek (4)
46. The colour of English skies, often (4)
49. What you might hear at a bullfight (3)
50. Nation of Maya Angelou and Alice Coltrane (3)



SCHOTT MUSIC LONDON

The biggest selection of sheet music in London



One of London's oldest music shops, with a fantastic selection of music, including a broad range of contemporary repertoire

Full Scores, Vocal Scores, Study Scores and Teaching Resources

An extensive range of publications from every major music publisher

Full range of strings, reeds, rosins and other accessories

5 practice rooms perfect for rehearsals and teaching

Plus a world-wide mail order service - call us on 020 7534 0710



48 Great Marlborough Street, London W1F 7BB · Closest Tube Station: Oxford Circus
Open: Mon-Fri 10am-6.30pm, Sat 10am-6pm

www.schottmusiclondon.com