



Christian Curnyn

Conductor

HANDEL Giulio Cesare, Opera North

Christian Curnyn had his stylish orchestra sounding like period-instrument veterans, colourfully underlining the vacillating emotions of an evening in which sibling rivalry had the upper hand over sin and strife.

Martin Dreyer, Opera Magazine, December 2019

Baroque specialist Christian Curnyn elicits eminently stylish playing from the orchestra

The Reviews Hub, September 2019

All are accompanied with flair by the Opera North Orchestra under Christian Curnyn's idiomatic direction.

Richard Morrison, The Times, September 2019

The Orchestra of Opera North responded with gusto to Christian Curnyn's fast-paced yet elegantly phrased direction

Melanie Eskenazi Music OMH, September 2019

HANDEL Solomon, Royal Opera House/Early Opera Company

[...]the players revealed all the experience they have in Handel performance, directed with customary verve and passion by Christian Curnyn.

Melanie Eskenazi 13 October 2018

MONTEVERDI The Return of Ulysses, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Kilkenny Arts Festival

...the restrained, elliptical cadences of Monteverdi's score, fluently conducted by Christian Curnyn, who also plays the harpsichord. [...] a Ulysses to remember, which is unlikely to be equalled on these shores for some time.

Max McGuinness, Financial Times, 12 August 2018 (5)*

HANDEL Acis and Galatea, Early Opera Company, Chandos

Christian Curnyn brings us the best *Acis and Galatea* – ever! In the past, critics have named William Christie's 2012 recording as 'the best', but this performance leaves Christie in the dust. Curnyn hits on a secret that eluded previous interpreters of this work: it was conceived specifically to showcase the beauty of the English language [...] Channelling Handel's enthusiasm, Curnyn and his fellow artists forge a musical rhetoric powered by native sonorities.

Berta Joncus, BBC Music Magazine, August 2018 (5)*

MOZART Die Zauberflöte, Garsington Opera

The musical side of things is unalloyed delight. Early music specialist Christian Curnyn stirs the Garsington Opera Orchestra to exuberant heights, adding a zest of Handelian energy to the Mozartean stew, and galvanises a wonderfully distinguished cast.

Mark Valencia, WhatsOnStage, June 2018

Christian Curnyn conducts with springy Mozartian grace

Michael Church, The Independent, June 2018

Musically, the show is strong. The conductor Christian Curnyn opts, as is the fashion, for period textures but romantically nuanced tempos.

Richard Morrison, The Times, June 2018

Musically, Flute sounds well under the experienced baton of Christian Curnyn.

David Mellor, Daily Mail, June 2018

Christian Curnyn brought his wealth of experience to his musical direction of the score, and the Garsington Opera Orchestra played with style. The overture and the great choral pieces were solemn and dignified, and the duets sparkling.

Melanie Eskenazi, Music OMH, June 2018

HANDEL Giulio Cesare, Early Opera Company

Christian Curnyn was a superbly stylish guide of his long-established, and now seemingly indispensable, artistic enterprise.

Roy Westbrook, Bachtrack, 12 April 2018

MONTEVERDI *The Return of Ulysses*, Royal Opera Covent Garden, (Roundhouse)

Supported by Christian Curnyn's lyrical, subtly coloured conducting[...]

Richard Bratby, The Spectator, 20 January 2018

Christian Curnyn gets expressive playing from the Early Opera Company musicians. There is a Shakespearean emotional directness to this myth-telling and it is very effective.

Richard Fairman, Financial Times, 12 January 2018

The production is simple, focuses on the central dilemmas and is very finely accompanied by Christian Curnyn and the orchestra of the Early Opera Company, playing with unforced nobility in the more solemn parts and sparking verve in the more light-hearted ones.

Melanie Eskenazi, MusicOMH, 14 January 2018

Curnyn's players glittered, danced, scythed and at times improvised their way through a fuller version of the score than we usually hear. Monteverdi has never sounded more persuasive.

David Nice, The Arts Desk, 11 January 2018

Baroque specialist Christian Curnyn superintends the music, keeping things stylish and moving steadily forwards.

George Hall, The Stage, 11 January 2018

...an altogether well integrated cast, expertly supported by Christian Curnyn and the Early Opera Company's chamber orchestra.

Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph, 11 January 2018

In the pit presides Christian Curnyn surrounded by his crack team of continuo players on violin, viola, theorbo, lutes, guitars, harps, harpsichords, an organ and a lirone: all this creates a lovely efflorescence of plucked, bowed, and blown sounds.

Michael Church, The Independent, 11 January 2018 (5)*

Right at the centre of this massive Victorian space sits the orchestra of Christian Curnyn's Early Opera Company: 15 fine players who caress the bare bones of Monteverdi's score into wonderfully luscious, responsive accompaniments.

Richard Morrison, The Times, 11 January 2018 (5)*

An outstanding cast, then, and one that's beautifully steered by Christian Curnyn and his Early Opera Company orchestra. As well as featherbedding the singers with lyrical warmth these expert musicians let Monteverdi speak to us like a contemporary. Indeed, on an aural level this was a haloed evening.

Mark Valencia, WhatsOnStage, 11 January 2018

HANDEL *Rodelinda*, English National Opera

[The production] offers genuine and persuasive dialogue with the musical performance – which was led incisively and with great sensitivity by Christian Curnyn. On the opening night, he drew finely shaded phrasing from a pared-down ENO orchestra (Baroque-like playing throughout) as well as moments of visceral, gritty continuo drama, particularly from Eligio Luis Quinteiro's theorbo.

Flora Wilson, Opera Magazine, January 2018

Jones's production never falters, the stage transforming itself again and again to match the character of the score which, thanks to Christian Curnyn's direction in the pit, runs the gamut with magisterial ease from tempestuousness to the most exquisite tenderness.

Michael Church, The Independent, 31 October 2017

Beginning with the excellent conducting of Baroque specialist Christian Curnyn, the evening's musical credentials are exceptionally strong.

Sam Smith, Music OMH, 6 November 2017

If the evening belongs to anyone, though, it's probably Christian Curnyn in the pit, spinning Baroque gold from an ENO Orchestra at the top of its game. Curnyn's transparent love of Handel's music is highly contagious and he rightly received the loudest ovations on opening night.

Nick Marlowe, ArtMuseLondon, 29 October 2017

Perhaps best of all, however, was the music itself, with the orchestra, under Handel specialist Christian Curnyn, giving a sublime account of this composer's glory.

William Hartston, The Express, 30 October 2017

Christian Curnyn draws stylish, judiciously paced playing from the orchestra.

Barry Millington, Evening Standard, 27 October 2017

To do justice to English National Opera's *Rodelinda*, close your eyes and it's a world-beater. One of Handel's most captivating scores is treated like musical royalty by Christian Curnyn and the ENO Orchestra; they provide an evening of ideal tempo choices, sweet dynamics and vivacious dramatic energy.

Mark Valencia, *WhatsOnStage*, 27 October 2017

Christian Curnyn conducts with exemplary flair.
Edward Bhesania, The Stage, 27 October 2017

Christian Curnyn draws admirably stylish playing – strings thrillingly passionate, woodwinds mellifluous and the *continuo* group provides secure and responsive anchorage.

David Truslove, Classical Source, October 2017

HANDEL *Alceste*, Early Opera Company

In the company of an inventive little serenade by Boyce and a great Concerto grosso, it gave us an evening of "endless pleasure, endless love" under the ever-stylish guidance of Christian Curnyn. [...] In the Concerto grosso Op. 6 No. 1, ripieno soloists Catherine Martin and Oliver Webber gave a spirited lead to the small but meaty string ensemble - a very different sound to the airy elegance Curnyn is currently extracting from the ENO Orchestra in a peerless *Partenope*.

David Nice, The Arts Desk, 30 March 2017

The Wigmore Hall was packed to hear Christian Curnyn's Early Opera Company present spirited and stylish performances

Richard Morrison, The Times, 31 March 2017

If "incidental music" suggests something insubstantial, this performance by Christian Curnyn and his Early Opera Company was near enough top-drawer Handel.

Evening Standard, 31 March 2017

[Handel] lives on through his music, of course, played and sung by peerless professionals such as Christian Curnyn's Early Opera Company. And on Wednesday we revelled in the taut, tangy sound of their playing

Stephen Pritchard, The Guardian, 2 April 2017 (5*)

HANDEL *Partenope*, English National Opera

Taking charge in the pit, meanwhile, conductor Christian Curnyn superintends a performance combining vivacity with delicacy.

George Hall, The Stage, 16 March 2017

There is an archness to the whole thing that is lightly worn and worked into everything, including Christian Curnyn's pacy conducting of the ENO orchestra, playing with period style on modern instruments

Erica Jeal, The Guardian, 16 March 2017

They are all admirably sustained by Christian Curnyn, whose buoyant conducting draws vivacious playing from the band.

Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph, 16 March 2017

Christopher Alden's Handel is back at ENO, making inconsequentiality seem wondrous. Christian Curnyn's conducting sets the tone, with orchestral playing as light as air

David Nice, The Arts Desk, 16 March 2017

...with terrific ensemble playing under Christian Curnyn of the Early Opera Company

Cara Chanteau, The Independent, 17 March 2017 (5)*

Christian Curnyn, who conducted ENO's production when it first appeared in 2008, returns to give a most eloquent account of Handel's refulgent score. He draws playing of variegated beauty from the versatile ENO Orchestra and makes their predominantly modern instruments sound like an extension of his own Early Opera Company players.

Mark Valencia, WhatsOnStage, 16 Mar 2017

Christian Curnyn conducts the ENO orchestra with a light touch. [...] Everything works. Everything is a delight.

Richard Fairman, The Financial Times, 17 Mar 2017

ROSSI *Orpheus*, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse)

Powered by Christian Curnyn and his brilliant Early Opera Company band, this is an absolutely entrancing show.

Michael Church, The Independent

Peerless young cast and musical ravishment from Christian Curnyn in a Rossi delight... the melting beauty of Christian Curnyn's Early Opera Company Orchestra up in the gallery (one of early music's true heroes).

David Nice, The Arts Desk

Now that it's teamed up with Christian Curnyn's Early Opera Company, the Royal Opera seems unable to put a foot wrong with its forays into early music. Curnyn draws glorious colours from his orchestra and makes the ten-strong period band sound like a parallel aural universe. The score itself is a panoply of musical delights: Curnyn easily convinces me that this Orpheus (Orfeo in the original, an appellation the Royal Opera may have resisted in order to avoid confusion with Monteverdi) is a masterpiece.

Mark Valencia, WhatsOnStage

Sympathetically underlined by Christian Curnyn's orchestra of the Early Opera Company, it was the most beautiful moment of this beautifully judged production..

Hannah Nepil, The Financial Times

In the gallery, Christian Curnyn conducted musicians of his Early Opera Company from the harpsichord: they are very accomplished.

Rupert Christiansen, The Daily Telegraph

[Orpheus's] presentation in the exquisite candlelit Sam Wanamaker Theatre by Christian Curnyn and the orchestra of his Early Opera Company... is a revelation. Rossi's score, chock-full of ariosos, ensembles and love duets, is realised superbly by Curnyn and nine musicians perched in a gallery. Music and staging breathe together and the result is constantly engaging, often magical.

Barry Millington, The Evening Standard

Leading a small gallery band from the Early Opera Company, Curnyn boldly encourages his singers to turn baroque arioso, where appropriate, into something close to speech. Yet when full-blooded lyricism is required, they deliver.

Richard Morrison, The Times

RAMEAU *Castor et Pollux*, Early Opera Company

Find anything exciting happening in period opera in the UK and Curnyn will be involved, whether it's conducting at the Wanamaker or ENO, recording Handel or directing his own projects. Last week's concert performance of Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* was a perfect example. This is a work that simply shouldn't work in concert, so reliant is it on spectacle and physicality to drive the drama. Yet such was the rhetorical clarity of Curnyn's players, the dramatic skill of his young singers, that you felt no lack. With such vivid, compelling persuasion, surely the UK can't continue to hold out against the charms of Rameau, Lully and Charpentier?

Alexandra Coghlan, The Spectator, 27 November 2015

HANDEL *Rodelinda*, English National Opera

Curnyn sets up a sleek, muscular sound which the classy principals are more than able to emulate, filling the Coliseum with authentic Handelian style

David Nice, The Arts Desk, 1 March 2014

Christian Curnyn conducts with his usual infectious enthusiasm.

Rupert Christiansen, The Daily Telegraph, 4 March 2014

Bickley is formidable throughout and Christian Curnyn's conducting is well-nigh flawless, as always.

Tim Ashley, The Guardian, 4 March 2014

CAVALLI *L'Ormindo* Royal Opera House Covent Garden, (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse)

L'Ormindo enjoyed an initial surge of popularity half a century ago in the somewhat saccharine edition by Raymond Leppard. In Curnyn's hands, the score sounds no less enchanting, though his realisation, executed with just eight players (including himself on continuo), is more attuned to the Cavalli style [...] Above all it's a dynamic partnership between Curnyn and Holten, bringing the piece alive as music theatre.

Barry Millington, The Evening Standard, 26 March 2014

But what makes the evening magical is the delicate balance maintained between the raunchiness on stage and the exquisite tissue of arias, duets, and intermezzi spun out under Christian Curnyn's musical direction, perfumed by the dark suggestiveness of the theorbo and the sweetness of the harp.

Michael Church, The Independent, 26 March 2014

Christian Curnyn, a master of this repertoire, directed from the harpsichord with energy, flair and control.

Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, 31 March 2014

CHARPENTIER *Medea*, English National Opera

All credit to the chorus too, and to the conductor Christian Curnyn, who gave the music swagger and bounce.

Rupert Christiansen, The Daily Telegraph, February 2013

...supported by an orchestra that sounds more naturally attuned to baroque style than the imported period bands proliferating elsewhere. That's not just because ENO's ensemble has mastered the instruments, but also because it knows how to follow singers. Under Christian Curnyn, the sound blossoms in the tricky Coliseum acoustic, with ravishing recorder accompaniments.

Andrew Clark, The Financial Times, February 2013

None of it would work half as well, though, without Christian Curnyn, whose exquisite conducting is near-perfect. Unmissable.

Tim Ashley, The Guardian, February 2013

HANDEL *Julius Caesar*, English National Opera

No argument, however, about the stylish orchestral playing under Christian Curnyn's superb direction.

Richard Morrison, The Times, October 2012

Christian Curnyn's conducting, as one might expect, is wonderfully passionate.

Tim Ashley, The Guardian, October 2012

...with the singers and conductor Christian Curnyn on such wondrous form, there is nothing to beat the musical output.

Barry Millington, The Evening Standard, October 2012

Rameau, Gluck and Vivaldi, Scottish Chamber Orchestra

It was a collective triumph: it could only have happened in this way, at that moment, with Curnyn and the mind-blowing SCO unanimous in their thought and execution.

Michael Tumelty, The Herald Scotland, May 2012

Conductor Christian Curnyn's precise, energetic direction ensured a warm, luminous sound from the SCO that was all rounded edges and elegant



phrasing...Curnyn really came into his own in a sparkling suite from Rameau's opera *Les Paladins*, which he managed to make both poignant and hilarious.
David Kettle, The Scotsman, May 2012

Christian Curnyn confirmed himself as a remarkably successful period practitioner, responding to each nuance with flair and grace. He drew a clipped, precise sound from the orchestra and his approach to the grace notes in the Gluck lent each phrase an individual air. Both the martial and contemplative aspects of *Orfeo* sounded vigorous and alive in his hands and you never lost the sense that we were listening to ballet music...Curnyn massaged the sound [of the Rameau] with elegance and flair.

Simon Thompson, Seen and Heard International, May 2012

It is always a bit of a treat when an unfamiliar conductor pulls off one of those just-the-right-moment starts, as Christian Curnyn did with the Gluck overture.
Peter Cudmore, Musical Criticism, May 2012