

# New Faces, New Voices

This year, classical music tries something different

By Daniel Johnson

After a few years in a college town, the classical music scene can start to seem a little familiar, as the same handful of reliable faculty talents make up the best of season after season. But lately, it seems, things are a little different. On campus and off, surprising new sounds are coming up in the mix.

The biggest news this season is the arrival of Masaaki Suzuki to replace Simon Carrington as director of the Yale Schola Cantorum. The founder of the Bach Collegium Japan might not exactly be a household name, but connoisseurs of baroque music know him as one of the very finest Bach interpreters among a generation positively spoiled for first-rate Bach interpreters.

Suzuki leads Yale's premier chorus in a pair of free concerts at St. Mary's Church — on Oct. 24 (5 Hillhouse Ave., 8 p.m.) of Bach motets and cantatas, and on May 2 (3 p.m.) with the music of Monteverdi — and giving a solo recital on Marquand Chapel's (409 Prospect St.) much-ballyhooed baroque organ on April 25 at 8 p.m. Get there early for all of these; they will be packed.

Schola's beloved director emeritus Simon Carrington returns to guest-conduct a pair of concerts, a medieval program on Dec. 11 (St. Thomas More, 5 p.m.) and a characteristically intriguing program of works from the Renaissance to the present on Jan. 23 (Christ Church Episcopal, 8 p.m.).

Schola's mother institution, Yale's lavishly funded Institute of Sacred Music, will be presenting a trio of free concerts by stellar guest artists in the English tradition. Probably the best mixed male chorus in the United States, New York's St. Thomas Choir of Men & Boys, is singing a program at Christ Church on Oct. 2 (5:30 p.m.), and *Stile Antico*, a young British choir very much on the rise, will be performing the Renaissance repertoire that is making them famous on Oct. 29 (Marquand Chapel, 8 p.m.). And on Oct. 18, none other than the first lady of the early-music movement, Dame Emma Kirkby, presents a solo recital in Morse Recital Hall (4 p.m., free, but tickets are required).

Yale offers a string of irresistible chamber-music

concerts as well, starting with star clarinetist David Shifrin's Sep. 22 salute to the classical side of Benny Goodman, new chamber music from the heavily hyped Imani Wind Quintet on Nov. 17 (both 8 p.m., Morse, \$10-24), and at the Collection of Musical Instruments, baroque duo Florilegium (Oct. 18 at 3 p.m., \$10-20).

Meanwhile, outside the Ivy gates, a pair of promising beginnings are proving themselves to be viable new institutions. At the venerable New

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This season is the beginning of Masaaki Suzuki's tenure as director of the Yale Schola Cantorum.

Haven Symphony, William Boughton's music directorship enters its third season (*Beethoven and Beyond*) with a full cycle of Beethoven symphonies juxtaposed with the work of not one but two composers in residence.

Among the highlights: Beethoven's Seventh versus recent works by Korean-influenced composer Jin Hi Kim and established New Yorker Augusta Read Thomas (Oct. 13 at 7 p.m., Sacred Heart University; Oct. 15 at 7:30 p.m., Woolsey Hall), the Fourth with a piece by Thomas (Feb. 18 at 7:30 p.m., Woolsey; Feb. 19 at 7 p.m., Sacred Heart), and the Fifth and

Sixth with a work by Kim (April 22 at 7:30 p.m., Woolsey; April 24 at 7 p.m., New Canaan High School; ticket prices vary).

And one of the most exciting recent developments on the local scene is the arrival of the former Hillhouse Opera Project, now the Hillhouse Opera Company. Nov. 5-7 at 7:30 p.m. (with a Saturday matinee at 1:30 p.m.), they perform Handel's masterpiece *Alcina*, hours of rapturously beautiful music — not easy stuff. At a time when professional opera companies are going extinct at an alarming rate, the mere existence of a community opera company is worth mentioning. That Hillhouse Opera puts on such an interesting and challenging work is cause for jubilation.

Those who take the train to New York should note that Hillhouse's top ticket price is a "suggested donation" of \$10. Compare that to \$375 at the Met. It's never been so easy to support your local diva.