

CONDUCTOR JESSICA COTTIS TO PREMIERE MAJOR NEW WORKS LEADING INTO 2019



Jessica Cottis © Kaupo Kikkas

**7 December 2018: World premieres of works by Mark Bowden and Colin Matthews w/
London Sinfonietta, Purcell Room, Southbank Centre**

**17 – 20 January 2019: New commission by Errollyn Wallen with Royal Northern Sinfonia,
Darlington/Gateshead/Leeds/Kendal**

**21 February – 3 March 2019: World premiere of *The Monstrous Child*, Linbury Theatre,
Royal Opera House**

"Precision, energy and elegance. Most impressive was the finale where Cottis chose a speed that highlighted Mozart's breathtaking plenitude of invention with exhilarating delight. We will hear more of her welcome talent."

Sydney Morning Herald

"The director was the extraordinary Jessica Cottis, Anglo-Australian conductor, who last night led the orchestra as a queen. Full of energy and verve, Cottis was repeatedly able to tear applause even in the middle of scenes."

Rolling Stone

The coming few months sees Australian-born, London based, conductor **Jessica Cottis** focus on one side of her musical life when she gives a series of world premieres of major new works leading up and into 2019. Cottis's innate musicality, intellectual rigour and dynamism on the podium have gained her international attention with long-running relationships with some of the world's leading orchestras and ensembles.

Alongside her performances of core repertoire, Cottis has also devoted a great deal of time and energy to performing new music: "*There's a particular thrill of working on a new score when the ink is barely dry on the page. Those first moments of looking through, starting to discover a work's beauty, complexities, and personality. It's a wonderful opening up of possibilities.*"

This Friday Cottis returns to conduct the **London Sinfonietta** (after premiering Philip Venables's *The Gender Agenda* with them in 2017) to give two world premieres: **Mark Bowden's** *Sapiens*, a concerto for saxophone and ensemble, takes inspiration from Yuval Noah Harari's book *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, and **Colin Matthew's** *As Time Returns* which sets words by Czech poet Ivan Blatný.

Cottis then starts work on the first opera production to open the **Royal Opera House's** redeveloped **Linbury Theatre**, **Gavin Higgins's** *The Monstrous Child* (opening February 21st). Higgins's first opera is an adaptation by bestselling author Francesca Simon of her own darkly-humorous novel of the same name, focusing on the myth of Hel, the teenage daughter of Norse god Loki, and the prophecy surrounding his other monstrous children.

Combining puppetry, Norse mythology and a stellar cast featuring seasoned Royal Opera singers (including **Graeme Broadbent** and **Tom Randle**) as well as up-and-coming singers such as **Marta Fontanals-Simmons** and **Dan Shelvey**, Cottis conducts the **Aurora Orchestra** through Higgins's bold and imaginative score. This marks Cottis's second engagement with the Royal Opera House, having conducted the world premiere of Na'ama Zisser's *Mamzer Bastard* at the Hackney Empire in their 2017/18 season.

In January Cottis premieres a new commission by **Errolyn Wallen MBE** with **Royal Northern Sinfonia**, touring venues in Darlington, Gateshead, Leeds and Kendal; joined by Cottis regular partner saxophonist and BBC Young Musician **Jess Gillam**, who performs Milhaud's *Scaramouche* after her critically-acclaimed performance of the piece at 2018's Last Night of the Proms), the programme also includes works by Debussy, Stravinsky and Villa-Lobos.

Cottis and Gillam then return to the recording studio to finish sessions for Gillam's debut album for Decca.

Cottis's star has been rising steadily over the last few years, garnering a reputation as one of the most exciting and intelligent young conductors working today. Having received mentoring from legendary conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy and Donald Runnicles, Cottis has forged an international career working with some of the world's most prestigious orchestras, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra (of which she was previously Assistant Conductor) and more. She was appointed both Assistant Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Fellow in Conducting at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in the same month that she graduated the postgraduate conducting course at the Royal Academy of Music, having studied with Colin Metters and Sir Colin Davis.

Jessicacottis.com

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London Sinfonietta – ‘Sapiens’

Purcell Room, Southbank Centre - 7 December 2018, 7.45pm

Mark Bowden: *Sapiens* (world premiere of commission by London Sinfonietta)

Colin Matthews: *As Time Returns* (world premiere of commission by London Sinfonietta)

Oliver Knussen: *Songs Without Voices*

Royal Northern Sinfonia – New Year, New Artists

Darlington Hippodrome – 17 January 2019, 7.30pm

Debussy: *Dances sacree et profane*

Milhaud: *Scaramouche*

Stravinsky: *Dances concertantes*

Debussy: *Sarabande*

Villa-Lobos: *Fantasia for Soprano Saxophone*

Milhaud: *Le boeuf sur le toit*

Jess Gillam – Saxophone

Royal Northern Sinfonia – New Year, New Artists

Sage Gateshead – 18 January 2019, 7.30pm

Debussy: *Dances sacree et profane*

Milhaud: *Scaramouche*

Stravinsky: *Dances concertantes*

Debussy: *Sarabande*

Villa-Lobos: *Fantasia for Soprano Saxophone*

Milhaud: *Le boeuf sur le toit*

Jess Gillam – Saxophone

Royal Northern Sinfonia – New Year, New Artists

Leeds Town Hall – 19 January 2019, 7pm

Debussy: *Dances sacree et profane*

Milhaud: *Scaramouche*

Stravinsky: *Dances concertantes*

Debussy: *Sarabande*

Villa-Lobos: *Fantasia for Soprano Saxophone*

Milhaud: *Le boeuf sur le toit*

Jess Gillam – Saxophone

Royal Northern Sinfonia – New Year, New Artists

Kendal Leisure Centre – 20 January, 4pm

Debussy: *Dances sacree et profane*

Milhaud: *Scaramouche*

Stravinsky: *Dances concertantes*

Debussy: *Sarabande*

Villa-Lobos: *Fantasia for Soprano Saxophone*

Milhaud: *Le boeuf sur le toit*

Jess Gillam – Saxophone

[The Monstrous Child](#)

Royal Opera House – 21 February – 3 March 2019

Gavin Higgins: Composer

Francesca Simon: Librettist

Timoth Sheader: Director

Howard Hudson: Lighting Designer

Josie Daxter: Movement Designer

Sound Intermedia: Sound Design

Notes to Editors

Jessica Cottis

Born in Australia and a dual British-Australian citizen, Jessica Cottis was awarded a first-class honours degree in organ, piano and musicology from the Australian National University. She began conducting studies in 2006 on the postgraduate conducting course at the Royal Academy of Music, studying with Colin Metters and Sir Colin Davis; Cottis was awarded the Academy's top conducting prizes on graduation in July 2009, the same month she was appointed Assistant Conductor at the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Fellow in Conducting at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. From 2012 to 2014 she held the position of Assistant Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and took up the position of Principal Conductor of the Glasgow New Music Expedition in 2014. She was also appointed Associate Member of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) in 2015, an honorary award for former students who have made a significant contribution to the music profession.

Recordings include the *Gallipoli Symphony* in 2015, a tri-nation project of cultural diplomacy between Australia, New Zealand and Turkey, for ABC Classics, and a recording project with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Education also plays an important part in Cottis's work, having conducted projects with organisations such as the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, Aldeburgh Young Musicians and Sistema Scotland, as well as filming projects for Play School (ABC Australia), CBeebies and the Royal Opera House. She has also led courses for female conductors with the Royal Philharmonic Society, and was one of the judges for the 2018 BBC Young Musician competition.