



Sinfonietta



CHANNEL FOUR TELEVISION



Sinfonietta

The main reason why many of the greatest works of 20th century music seem so difficult, and why they remain neglected or misunderstood, is because they are **exceptional** – worlds in and of themselves, with their own unique terms of reference – you can't quite pin them down or say what they are.

Sinfonietta considers seven such pieces as models of what has come to be known as 'modern music'.

The focus of each programme is a performance – the best statement of 'what a piece is'. The series is devoted to music **made, re-created, now.**

And so, as the title acknowledges, the series is also a celebration of a great ensemble, the London Sinfonietta.

The television treatment is **never** merely décor or backdrop, but has been devised and filmed to provide its own commentary in its own language.

Cover: Paul Crossley, presenter of Sinfonietta.

Ghosts



Arnold Schoenberg: **Song of the Wood Dove (from Gurrelieder)** **Pierrot Lunaire**

Ghosts is about language, communication, and expression. It is a film about isolation, alienation, and 'coming-to-terms'. Alone of all the composers in this series, Schoenberg – as we hear in **Song of the Wood Dove** – had a 'pre-modern' musical language of which he was a master; a language in which he was 'at home' and with which we feel at home. As we hear the fractured musical images of *The Dandy* – one of the melodramas which comprise **Pierrot Lunaire** – we can scarcely believe that this music is by the same man. We wonder why on earth someone should want to confront us with something – on the surface – so **alienating**.

Yet, surface and what lies beneath the surface make up the musical entity of **Pierrot Lunaire**. How do you give utterance to the teeming inner world of a modern spirit, stifled and smothered beneath the lifeless mask of convention?

Schoenberg was commissioned by an actress – a *diseuse* – called Albertine Zehme, to write some melodramas, that is, words spoken against a background of music, using a collection of verses called "Pierrot Lunaire". Immediately he grasped that this was "a marvellous idea – absolutely right for me". The absurdly outmoded genre of the melodrama and the stock *commedia dell'arte* masked figure of Pierrot were just what he needed.

The film mirrors the way we experience the music – moving from harmonisation, through degrees of disintegration and separation, to eventual re-integration – using images drawn from the *commedia dell'arte*, and the paintings of masked figures by James Ensor.

Frau Zehme must have been amazed with what she got – a vocal part that is neither speech nor song – as indeed must the instrumentalists at the first performance who needed 25 rehearsals! There have always been attempts, from the first, to dispense with the vocal part. Schoenberg always refused such suggestions. It would deny the very nature of **Pierrot Lunaire** which is to do with "getting through".

On Record.

Song of the Wood Dove from Gurrelieder
(c/w **Serenade Op.24/Ode to Napoleon Op.41/Four Songs Op.22**)

Jessye Norman/Ensemble Intercontemporain/
Boulez
CBS 74025

Pierrot Lunaire Op.21 (c/w **SCHOENBERG:**
Nachtwandler/Herzgewaechse Op.20)

Mary Thomas/London Sinfonietta/Atherton
Decca Ace of Diamonds SDD 520
SCHOENBERG: Chamber Symphony No.1
(c/w **Verklaerte Nacht**)
London Sinfonietta/Atherton
Decca Ace of Diamonds SDD 519

Labyrinth

Arnold Schoenberg was born in Vienna in 1874. He learned violin and piano as a child, and soon began composing music for small string ensembles. On leaving school he became a bank clerk, but continued playing and composing in his spare time. He soon became established as a teacher, beginning his close association with Berg and Webern in 1904. Schoenberg was also becoming known as a composer, although largely because of the public scandals which performances of his works aroused – pieces such as the *First String Quartet* (1905) and *Chamber Symphony* (1907) stretched the boundaries of traditional tonality to the limit, and it was only with the premiere of *Gurrelieder* in 1913, a work completed 13 years earlier, that Schoenberg gained any popular recognition. In 1918 he organised the Society for Private Musical Performances. Critics were not admitted to the concerts, applause was forbidden and new pieces were often performed two or three times at the same concert. About this time, Schoenberg started working on his theory of composing using “12 notes related only to each other”, and this was first put into practice in works such as *5 Piano Pieces* (1923), *Serenade* (1923) and *Piano Suite* (1923). In 1926 Schoenberg was asked to become Professor of Composition at the Prussian Academy of the Arts in Berlin, but he was dismissed in 1933 under the Nazi’s anti-semitic laws and his music was condemned as having communist leanings. He emigrated to America where he was appointed Professor of Music at the University of California at Los Angeles, and composed such works as the *Piano Concerto* (1942), *Ode to Napoleon* (1942) and *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947). He died in Los Angeles in 1951.



Alban Berg: Chamber Concerto For piano, violin, and 13 wind instruments

Movement 1: Theme and Variations

Labyrinth is about ensemble, about isolated, complex individuals learning to ‘play together’; about the way, in the 20th century, we have endlessly to re-adjust, to re-compose all our values and attitudes to do that. It is about people, and people are all you see on the screen.

Berg was one of the greatest dramatic composers of this, or any century. **Chamber Concerto** follows on immediately from his opera *Wozzeck* and, though an entirely instrumental piece, uses many of the opera’s dramatic techniques. So, **Theme and Variations** refers not

solely to some compositional procedure but to a dramatic strategy as well – a sequence of scenes, insights into different possible interrelationships, variations of dramatic viewpoint.

The film examines the piece from three viewpoints – the composer's, the musician's and the listener's – by considering what the implications of those seemingly incompatible words **Chamber Concerto** are for each. It finds that everyone involved – and that includes the listener – is obliged to be a 'virtuoso'.

Berg, the composer, marshals a bewildering array of musical materials and objects and techniques – many of which you'll have heard of, many not (it doesn't matter) – and builds them into a fantastic piece of architecture, but in a way that always keeps you guessing: nothing can be accepted at face value.

For the musician, the piece is a drama of uncertain relationships – with the text, and with his fellow musicians. The music is very difficult to play, and very difficult to sort out. Berg gives his musicians a kind of thread to get them through the maze of material, but a tremendous responsibility devolves on the players themselves and their conductor. Between themselves they have to listen and interpret very carefully. They must combine a strong degree of individual involvement with a highly developed sense of collaboration and co-operation. What's called for is not just virtuosity of technique but virtuosity of response. It's a very 'democratic' piece!

And what about the listeners, with such a wealth of material thrown at them? Quite simply, with a piece like this, they cannot hear it all; either they stop listening, or they listen creatively. This piece actually proposes a new way of 'playing' music. What is heard at each and every point of this piece is determined by each individual listener. With much twentieth century music you have to be an active, creative listener and with the Berg **Chamber Concerto** a positively virtuoso listener! In a work like this, the listener becomes a co-producer of the piece.

On Record.

BERG: **Chamber Concerto** (c/w STRAVINSKY: **Agon**)

London Sinfonietta/Atherton
Decca/Argo ZRG 937

BERG: **Lulu** (Opera)

Paris Opera/Boulez

Polygram Classics/DG 2740 213

BERG: **Violin Concerto (1935)** (c/w BARTOK:

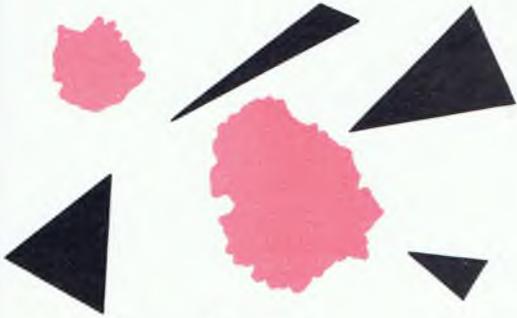
Violin Concerto No.1)

Kyung-Wha Chung/Chicago S.O./Solti

Decca (DEC) 411 804-1

Alban Berg was born in Vienna on 9 February 1885. Although he began composing songs as a teenager, he received little formal education in music, and on leaving school he entered the civil service as an unpaid apprentice. In 1904, Schoenberg took him on as a pupil, along with Webern. Works such as the *Piano Sonata* (1907) and *Three Pieces for Orchestra* show Berg developing a fluent and individual style, and in 1922 he completed his first opera *Wozzeck*, based on the play by Georg Buchner. The opera was to give him more success in his lifetime than either of his two contemporaries, Schoenberg and Webern, ever enjoyed, and allowed him to live by composing for most of the rest of his life. Although Berg adopted his teacher's 12-note method of composition in works such as the *Lyric Suite* (1926) and the *Violin Concerto* (1935), he used it freely and in a way which allowed him to explore his preoccupations with numerology, quotation from other works, and underlying extra musical 'programmes'. The *Lyric Suite* is a documentation of Berg's secret love affair with Hanna Fuchs-Robettin, and the *Violin Concerto* is a requiem for Manon Gropius, the daughter of Alma Mahler and architect Walter Gropius. In 1929, Berg began work on his largest work, the opera *Lulu*, an adaptation of Frank Wedekind's plays *Earth Spirit* and *Pandora's Box*. He died in 1935 at the age of 50.

Everywhen



Edgard Varèse: *Intégrales*

"The Australian Aborigine's outlook on the universe is shaped by a remarkable conception – The Dreaming Time: a sacred, heroic time, long ago, when men and nature came to be as they are. But neither time nor history as we understand them, is involved. One cannot fix The Dreaming Time *in* time. It was, and is – everywhen."

... The first words you hear in the final film of *Sinfonietta*. At the same time you see Ayer's Rock – the largest monolith in the world, situated in the very centre of Australia. Can this really be a programme about 'modern music'? Yes, when it's about the 'radical' music of Edgard Varèse. Varèse felt that modern man was increasingly losing the sense of his 'cosmic roots' and, in particular, his sense of *being in time* – that sense of the total interpenetration of man, nature, and time that primitive peoples still retain, and that children instinctively feel but then lose.

This is what Varèse, the composer, tried to recapture in his art by going back to the roots of music, that is to the nature of *sound* itself. The immensely simple question he asked himself was: "in what fundamental sense does sound, and therefore music, exist?". Can music be said to have an 'essential being'? *Is* music? Already the words and the concepts are becoming awkward, and one aspect of the film is to show that Varèse in *Intégrales* is managing to 'sing' something that it's impossible to put into words.

It's something to do with what he called 'force' and 'life'; something which the aborigines – and we – feel at Ayer's Rock, something Varèse felt as a child in Burgundy in his village of Le Villars and in the abbey church of St. Philibert in Tournus, and something that art and technology can still conjure up.

On Record.

VARESE: *Intégrales. Arcana (1927)/Ionisation (1931)*

Los Angeles P.O. Mehta

Decca SXL 6550

Edgard Varèse was born in Paris on 22 December 1883, the son of a mining engineer. He spent his early childhood with his aunt and uncle in Burgundy. In 1893 they moved to Turin and, in 1903, left for Paris, after quarrelling with his father. He studied at the Schola Cantorum and at the Conservatoire. In 1907, having been expelled from the Conservatoire by Fauré, he moved to Berlin to study with Busoni. By then he had established close associations with some of the major artistic figures of the day – Busoni, Debussy, Strauss, Romain Rolland and Rodin. In 1915, Varèse moved to New York; *Ameriques*, written as a gesture to his new home, is the first of his compositions which survive today. In his early American years he founded the New Symphony Orchestra for the performance of contemporary music, and the International Composers' Guild. Pieces like *Intégrales* and *Hyperprism*, which show an increasing reliance on percussion, and the use of early electronic instruments in *Ecuatorial* indicate that Varèse was searching for a new sound world away from the conventional notions of pitched sound. In 1953 he was anonymously given a tape recorder, on which he assembled sounds for an electronic tape piece to be heard in Le Corbusier's pavilion at the Brussels World Exhibition. The results was *Poème électronique* perhaps the first masterpiece of tape music. Varèse died in New York on 6th November 1965.

Rainbow City



Olivier Messiaen: *Colours of the Celestial City*

Most composers are reluctant to point to music's "essential being", to "what it is". Not so Messiaen. He sees music as an image, a reflection, a symbol of the transcendental, of God. His admitted aim is to manifest 'the truth' which his Christian faith has revealed to him. His works are contemplations, meditations on this truth. A piece like *Colours of the Celestial City* is an imaginative discipline which enables such a meditation.

Messiaen assembles a rich variety of musical materials—stylistic transformations of birdsong, plainchant Alleluias, colours, Greek and Hindu rhythms ("a resumé of all my pre-occupations") – to provide a concrete, vivid, dramatic setting for the meditation.

His 'method' is strikingly similar to the manuals laid out by religious thinkers of earlier centuries for the process of meditation. The film draws freely on an English treatise – Richard Baxter's *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (1650) – which recommends those meditating to:

... take thy heart into the land of promise ... enter the gates of the holy city, walk through the streets of the new Jerusalem ...

... suppose thou wert now beholding this city of God, and that thou hadst been companion with John in his survey of its glory ... draw as strong suppositions as may be from thy sense for the helping of thy affections ...

... get the liveliest Picture of them in thy minde that possibly thou canst; meditate of them, as if thou wert all the while beholding them, and as if thou wert even hearing the Hallelujahs, while thou art thinking of them.

Just as Messiaen's music does that in sound, so the film unwinds in an imaginary 'Celestial City', using, undeniably, the 'liveliest Pictures'!

On Record.

Colours of the Celestial City. No recording of this work is currently available.

Additional Listening:

Turangalila-Symphonie (1948)

Beroff Loriaud London S.O. Previn
HMV SLS 5117

Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps (1941)

Yordanoff Tetard Desurmont Barenboim
Polygram Classics DG 2531 093)

Olivier Messiaen was born in Avignon, France in 1908. He composed from the age of nine and was introduced at the age of 10 to Debussy's *Pelleas and Melisande*, a work that was to prove decisive in determining the direction of his life. After study at the Paris Conservatoire, Messiaen was appointed organist at the church of La Sainte Trinite in Paris, a position he still holds. In 1936 he joined with three other composers – Jolivet, Daniel-Lesur and Baudrier – to form the group La Jeune France, a reaction against what they saw as the cynicism and soullessness of much of the music being produced in France at the time. During the Second World War, Messiaen was imprisoned in a German prison camp, where he wrote *Quartet for the End of Time*, which he performed, in the camp, with three other prisoners. After the war, Messiaen



became established as the most important teacher of his generation, and his pupils at the Paris Conservatoire included Boulez, Stockhausen, Xenakis, Barraque and Goehr. He continued to explore his preoccupations with nature, birdsong, divine love and Roman Catholic theology in works such as *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ* (1969). His travels abroad have resulted in pieces which reflect the spiritual atmosphere, landscape and birdsong of the countries visited; Japan in *Sept Haikai* (1962) and the USA in *From the Canyons to the Stars* (1974). His latest work, the opera *St Francis of Assisi* was given its world premiere in 1984.



A Universal Singing



Charles Ives::

Three Places in New England

Anton Webern:

Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op.10

The series was filmed in 1985, the year that the musical world celebrated the tercentenaries of Bach and Handel. When we listen to *their* music, its musical time seems composed of such a meaningfully ordered, organic sequence of events as to suggest that the age that gave it birth was one in which the structure of experience had some universality about it. In our century, the structure of experience is not like that. That 'shared' experience has given way to something more personal, more private, more isolated.

So, does music still continue to be about some ultimate 'truth'? Does it still represent, refer to, something other than itself? And if so, how, in an age which seems so distanced from meaning, when experiences are, at best, meaningful only for each individual, is this 'otherness' to be disclosed?

The programme shows how two composers in two utterly dissimilar works used *silence* as a route to the 'universal'. It begins with the idea, shared by both composers, that "the music is not in the notes", so asks the questions "where is it?", and "what is it?". In search of an answer we find that the fundamental idea of both Ives and Webern is to turn us, each and every one of us, into *artists*. They do that by displacing our accustomed way of hearing things. In their entirely different ways they present us with 'unclassified material' in an attempt to convey something 'unedited', 'unmediated', something that demands our involvement in the articulation of our own experience.

In **Three Places in New England**, a seething foreground of musical fragments – a junkroom of associations – breaks through any idea of order, never allows us to come to rest on a familiar level, but urges us forward to a moment of silence – a tiny visionary moment which seems to take us to some transcendent truth.

Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op.10 achieves this by *reduction*, by purifying and refining the musical material to a texture of silence and fragmentary gestures, heavy with background, which can only be structured as an individual vision that we create from our own instincts.

Finally – and surprisingly – the programme answers its opening question of "what is the music?".

On Record.

Three Places in New England (Third Symphony)

Eastman-Rochester Orchestra/Hanson

Phonogram/Mercury Golden Import SRI 75035

IVES: Central Park in the Dark (c/w IVES: Fourth Symphony)

Boston S.O./Ozawa

Polygram Classics/DG 410 933 – 1GC

WEBERN: Five Pieces for Orchestra Op.10

Passacaglia Op.1/Six Pieces Op.6/Symphony

Op.21/Variations for Orchestra Op.30)

London S.O./Boulez

CBS 76911

Charles Ives was born in Connecticut on 20 October 1874, the son of a town band leader. His father introduced him to the baroque and classical repertoire, church and band music, and encouraged him to experiment with radical approaches to sound. Aged 12, he began composing and playing drums and piano. In 1894 Ives entered Yale, where he spent most of his free time composing, producing numerous psalm settings and songs, the *First Symphony* (1895) and the *First String Quartet* (1896), all of which continued in the experimental vein. He founded an insurance business, became very successful, devoting evenings and weekends to composition. His music, broke new bounds in pieces such as *The Unanswered Question*

(1906), *Central Park in the Dark* (1906) *The Concord Sonata* (1911) and the *Fourth Symphony* (1916), all of which made a feature of several apparently unrelated layers of sound going on simultaneously. All of this music was written without any recognition or thought of performance; it was only after Ives retired from business and, effectively, from composing in 1929, that his reputation began to grow and pieces were performed. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1947 for the *Third Symphony*. He died at West Redding, Connecticut on 19 May 1954.

Anton von Webern was born in Vienna on 3 December 1883. He studied music at the University of Vienna, where he began composing seriously. Doctoral research led to the publication of an edition of the **Choralis Constantinus** by the 16th century Flemish composer Heinrich Isaac, and his involvement with renaissance music was to have a profound influence on Webern's later work. In 1904, along with Alban Berg, he became a private pupil of Schoenberg. The three composers had a close, life-long association, and became known as 'the Second Viennese School'. Webern's music moved towards a highly individual style characterised by brevity and extremes of expression in such works as **5 Pieces for Orchestra** (1913), **Six Bagatelles** for String Quartet (1913) and **5 Canons after Latin Texts** (1924). In his later works such as **Symphony** (1928) and **Concerto for 9 Instruments** (1934), Webern developed a particularly rigorous form of Schoenberg's 12-note method of composition. Webern made his living as a conductor in provincial opera houses, conducted the Vienna Workers Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and was musical advisor and conductor to Austrian Radio. He became increasingly isolated when the Nazis forbade his work, along with Schoenberg's and Berg's. After his only son was killed in action on 15 September 1945, Webern went outside his daughter's house to smoke a cigar, and was accidentally shot and killed by an American soldier.

Figures of Fun



Igor Stravinsky: *Reynard*.

A Burlesque about the fox, the cock, the cat and the goat, to be sung and played on the stage.

In his account of the genesis of *Reynard* in his autobiography, Stravinsky states "I consider that music is, by its very nature, powerless to express anything at all . . .". In that form it has become one of the most scandalously misquoted and misconstrued remarks of 20th century music. In fact, Stravinsky immediately explains his statement: expression is something "we have come to confuse with its essential being". Instead, "music is given to us with the sole purpose of establishing an order in things . . . to be put into practice, its indispensable and single requirement is construction . . . It is precisely this construction, this achieved order, which produces in us a unique emotion . . .". In the case of *Reynard*, he did – later – put a name to this 'unique emotion', and it's what this film is about – fun.

Reynard shows order being constructed and, as such, is probably the first piece of a new genre that we have come to call 'music theatre': that is, a piece using all the elements of theatre to embody a purely musical 'action'; or, to put it another way, music is 'enacted' in the physical conditions, the 'theatre' of performance; or, to put it even more simply, in Stravinsky's own words, "one sees music".

Stravinsky said that **Reynard** was "imbued with the spirit of mountebank buffoonery" and described it on the score as a 'burlesque'. The film takes him at his word and attempts, for once to produce the piece as 'buffoon theatre'.

Reynard plays all the while between the idea of order and disorder. The *disorder* is in the dislocation of all the different means of human 'expression' – words, movement, sounds – into a set of 'raw materials' (for example, the words are only used for their sound and their rhythm – not for their meaning); and in the 'carnival licence' of the whole thing, the buffoonery which disrupts every convention and every illusion, which 'sends everything up'.

The *order* and the involvement is all with the musical process. That is, Stravinsky constructs a frame of mechanical discipline and emotional control to produce and contain a 'pattern'. The emotional control comes from the detachment and dispassionate nature of all the human actions, and the discipline comes in the music from the endless play and balance of rhythms.

We, the audience enter Stravinsky's playground and play his game of taking things to pieces and putting them back together again – we join in the fun.

On Record.

STRAVINSKY: **Reynard**. Recordings of this work are currently only available as deletions from specialist dealers.

Ebony Concerto (c/w STRAVINSKY: 'Dumbarton Oaks' Concerto/Concertino for String Quartet/ Elegie for Solo Viola/Epitaphium/Eight Instrumental Miniatures/Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo)

Michel Arrignon/Ensemble Intercontemporain/
Boulez

Polygram Classics/DG 2531 378)

Igor Stravinsky was born near St Petersburg on June 18 1882, the son of Feodor Stravinsky, an opera singer. He learned piano, harmony and counterpoint and attended rehearsals at the Imperial Opera House. He took composition lessons with Rimsky Korsakov at St. Petersburg university, and Serge Diaghilev, the director of the *Ballet Russes*. Their close association lasted until Diaghilev's death in 1929. In 1909, Diaghilev commissioned Stravinsky to write music for *The Firebird*, closely followed by *Petrushka* (1910). Stravinsky travelled around Europe with Diaghilev's company. In 1913 the *Ballet Russes* gave the premiere of *The Rite of Spring* in Paris – it caused a riot. He left Russia during World War 1 and settled in Switzerland. In 1920 wrote *Pulcinella*, a work which marked the beginning of a period where he made use of 18th and 19th century forms and conventions – this is often known as the 'neo classical' period and includes *Apollon Musagete* (1928) *Symphony of Psalms* (1930) and *Symphony in C* (1939). He moved to Paris, in 1934 and in 1939 settled in California. In 1947, he began a collaboration with W.H. Auden on *The Rake's Progress*, an opera based on the Hogarth engravings; and in 1948 he met Robert Craft, a young American musician, who introduced him to the later works of Webern. Under this influence, Stravinsky incorporated the 12-note 'serial' method of composition into his music, although still retaining his own highly individual style in works such as *Agon* (1954), *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas* (1954) and *Requiem Canticles* (1966). He enjoyed a life of celebrity, travelling the world, conducting, performing and recording, until he died on April 6 1971.

The London Sinfonietta



Since its foundation in 1968, the London Sinfonietta has earned an international reputation for its performances of 20th century music. It performs an enormously diverse repertoire, very often otherwise ignored, and its policy of commissioning new works from a great variety of composers of all nationalities is part of the life-blood of the organisation.

Many of these composers, including Luciano Berio, Harrison Birtwistle, Pierre Boulez, Hans Werner Henze, Oliver Knussen, György Ligeti, Witold Lutoslawski and Karlheinz Stockhausen, have also worked closely with the orchestra, often in performances of their own works, both in the recording studio and on the concert platform. To date, the Sinfonietta has given the world premieres of 178 works, of which 69 were specially commissioned.

Since 1973, the Sinfonietta has been responsible for a number of festivals, performed on the South Bank in London, which have thrown the spotlight on a particular composer or composers. These concerts have been accompanied by pre-concert events as well as special literature.

At the most recent festival, presented in collaboration with the BBC and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the complete works of Ravel and Varèse were performed. Nearly all have been conducted by David Atherton, who continues to have a very close relationship with the orchestra. The Sinfonietta has also presented three festivals, entitled "1945->", "1952->" and, most recently, "1955->", devoted to the music of the last 30 years, which have been received with great enthusiasm by both audiences and critics.

The Sinfonietta is the most widely travelled orchestra in Great Britain, having given concerts in most parts of the world. In June 1985, it made its debut in Japan.

Since 1981, the Sinfonietta has been attempting to break down the barriers between the music of our time and the public. Members of the Sinfonietta's family of talent go into schools and colleges and involve the students in various activities, such as compositional workshops, rehearsals and performances, very often culminating in the students attending a London Sinfonietta performance of the composer or the piece in which they have been interested.

In 1984 the Sinfonietta joined forces with Opera Factory to found Opera Factory London Sinfonietta, which made its first appearance with the world premiere of the newly-revised version of Tippett's *The Knot Garden* and Cavalli's *La Calisto*, playing in the opening season of Wilde Theatre, Bracknell.

A highly valued part of the Sinfonietta's schedule is an annual tour of Britain at the invitation of the Arts Council of Great Britain, as part of the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network. This allows the Sinfonietta to take exciting and adventurous programmes around the country, which otherwise would not be possible.

The Sinfonietta has its headquarters on the Gipsy Hill campus of Kingston Polytechnic and is the only orchestra resident in a Polytechnic or University in Great Britain.

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