



# THOMAS ADÈS VIOLIN CONCERTO

## THREE STUDIES FROM COUPERIN



PETER HERRESTHAL  
NORWEGIAN RADIO ORCHESTRA / ANDREW MANZE

In memory of Matt Fretton and Sussie Ahlburg

# ADÈS, THOMAS (b. 1971)

## VIOLIN CONCERTO 'CONCENTRIC PATHS', Op. 23 (2005) 19'10

- |   |             |      |
|---|-------------|------|
| 1 | I. Rings    | 4'13 |
| 2 | II. Paths   | 9'38 |
| 3 | III. Rounds | 5'11 |

## THREE STUDIES FROM COUPERIN (2006) 14'09

for chamber orchestra

- |   |                             |      |
|---|-----------------------------|------|
| 4 | 1. Les Amusemens            | 4'49 |
| 5 | 2. Les Tours de Passe-passe | 3'45 |
| 6 | 3. L'Âme-en-Peine           | 5'31 |

TT: 34'13

PETER HERRESTHAL *violin* [1–3]

NORWEGIAN RADIO ORCHESTRA (KRINGKASTINGSORKESTRET)

ATLE SPONBERG *leader*

ANDREW MANZE *conductor*

*Music publisher: Faber Music*

What on earth are ‘Concentric Paths’? The title of Thomas Adès’s Violin Concerto is a typically teasing and paradoxical concatenation: a path suggests linearity, a journey from one point to another in time and space, but their ‘concentricity’ seems to contradict that teleological progress and instead connotes circles, loops, or spirals. Adès’s own enigmatic note for the piece might help us a little:

‘This concerto has three movements, like most, [the movements are called *Rings – Paths – Rounds*] but it is really more of a triptych, as the middle one is the largest. It is the “slow” movement, built from two large, and very many small, independent cycles, which overlap and clash, sometimes violently, in their motion towards resolution.

The outer movements too are circular in design, the first fast, with sheets of unstable harmony in different orbits, the third playful, at ease, with stable cycles moving in harmony at different rates.’

The cover of the published score adds another circular metaphor to this labyrinthine mix of points and cycles, of lines and orbits: a reproduction of the geometrically overlapping trajectories of a ‘Map of The Earth and Planetary Orbits’ from a Celestial Atlas of 1661. And there are further suggestions of the cosmic in Adès’s commentary on the piece: he describes the opening of the first movement, *Rings*, as an ‘aerial view’ of its material that’s similar in approach, he has told me, to the way some of his pieces have ended – *In Seven Days* for piano and orchestra, and *Tevot* for orchestra, for example – and the way the ‘camera pulls out at the end’ in those pieces to reveal a vertiginous perspective on the whole piece.

All of which suggestive circularities mean that there are many dimensions of musical material, historical reference, and cosmic experience in this concerto for us as listeners to navigate – and for Peter Herresthal and Andrew Manze to

negotiate in the spellbinding and stratospheric virtuosity of soloistic brilliance and ensemble playing that this music demands. The flighty instability of the first movement is sounded right at the start of the piece, when the violin sets out on a musical tumult of nearly constant semiquavers with which it gradually infects the orchestra. The music glints and glimmers in and out of moments of reflective consonance and churning dissonance; alighting on fragments of melody, the soloist at last soars above the orchestra with a tune that feels like a moment of arrival – a point, perhaps, or even a musical planet, around which the orchestra can orbit. But as the scholar Alexi Vellianitis has pointed out, this melody embodies on a small scale the larger, liquefying dynamics of the whole piece. The melody, so easily recognisable, singable, and audible, actually moves from one field of magnetic-tonal attraction to another, from E flat to A. It creates a sort of irrationally functional harmony such that the phrase ‘E flat minor is A minor’, as Vellianitis puts it, makes a kind of surreal sense in the context of this tune. This melody cascades through the next section of the movement, before the music is temporarily mired in a miniature black hole, a brief moment of harmonic stasis that’s anchored by a pedal B in the double basses, before soloist and orchestra are thrown back into a vortex that will hurl them towards the slammed door triple-*forte* of the end of the movement.

Such are the rings that Adès’s music runs around his musicians, and his listeners. The *Paths* of the long second movement describe a simultaneously larger and more intimate emotional journey. The movement is based on a warped chaconne, a repeating sequence of fourteen chords that you hear in the violin part at the start of the movement, accompanied by the trumpets and trombone. This music has an almost ritualistic power, from the splintery play of silences and *pizzicatos* in the violin’s opening music to the shocking orchestral tutti that introduces the second cycle, complete with ceremonial-sounding cymbals. The

music sings and swings between extremes of lyrical intensity and vertical dissonance, but the larger cycles of Adès's structure produce a final section that moves 'towards resolution', announced by a descending flute melody of cosmic calm, which is taken up by the soloist. But the music escapes a feeling of true 'resolution' by the end of the movement, as the violin descends by degrees to the bottom of its register, finding it can take the melody no further than its G string.

The playfulness of the final movement takes in infectious rhythmic momentum and ear-worm-like melodies, as you'll hear right at its opening. But there are superimposed cycles of time in this music, too: the solo violin's first entry in *Rounds* floats like a satellite with a soaring, slow melody above the orchestra's mundane energy. But the soloist is drawn to earth to play at the orchestra's level as well, and navigates both ethereal and earthy regions throughout the rest of the movement. The ending is a surprise: the texture thins and fractures, and the violin's semiquavers hurtle upwards, only to be stopped in its tracks by a violently conclusive orchestral chord. Yet the cycles might still be going on somewhere: as Adès has said, 'there's an alternative version [of the ending] in my head, which is quiet, where the caravan moves on and fans out, endlessly'.

The orbits of the Violin Concerto don't just concern its own material, they take in the wider story of the concerto as well, from baroque forms to György Ligeti's violin concerto, a tradition that these Concentric Paths renew, respect – and liquidate. In the *Three Studies From Couperin*, premièred the year after the concerto in 2006, there seems no question of anything but honouring the music of the baroque composer Adès loves most of all. 'My ideal day', he has said, 'would be staying home and playing the harpsichord works of Couperin – new inspiration on every page'. Or, perhaps, arranging them for small double orchestra: on one level, these pieces are less 'studies' than 'orchestrations', since the

structures and notes of Couperin's *Les Amusemens*, *Les Tours de-Passe-passe*, and *L'Âme en-Peine* are preserved. But Adès's reworkings are an object lesson in how to reveal the richnesses latent in something you might think you know. His orchestration amplifies the dimensions of Couperin's music, making you realise just how inventive these pieces really are, but he also renders them strange and new, in the submerged sounds of the alto and bass flute in *Les Amusemens*, the rhythmic density of *Les Tours de Passe-passe*, and the languid, aching sighs of the final 'Soul in Pain'.

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**Peter Herresthal** is recognised as a brilliant and inspired interpreter of contemporary violin music, strongly associated both in concert and recordings with works by composers including Per Nørgård, Arne Nordheim, Henri Dutilleux, Thomas Adès, Olav Anton Thommessen, Henrik Hellstenius and Jon Øivind Ness. He has appeared with orchestras and ensembles including the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Oslo, Bergen and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestras, Remix Ensemble Porto, Tapiola Sinfonietta, the symphony orchestras of Melbourne, Navarra, Stavanger, Trondheim and Helsingborg, Oslo Sinfonietta, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Ensemble Ernst and Bit20, with conductors such as Andrew Manze, Anu Tali and Sakari Oramo.

Peter Herresthal has given the Austrian, Norwegian, Spanish and Australian premieres of Thomas Adès's violin concerto 'Concentric Paths', the latter conducted by the composer at the 2010 Melbourne Festival. Other festival appearances include the Bergen Festival, where Herresthal currently curates an annual series, Risør Chamber Music Festival, MAGMA 2002 Berlin, and the Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern festivals.

His previous recordings for BIS include acclaimed discs with works by Nordheim and Thommesen, and his most recent release, of Nørgård's violin concertos, was shortlisted for a *Gramophone* Award, recommended by *The Strad* and selected as 'IRR Outstanding' in *International Record Review*. Peter Herresthal is a Professor at the Oslo Academy and visiting Professor at the Royal College of Music, London. He performs on a violin by G.B. Guadagnini from 1753.

*For further information please visit [www.peterherresthal.com](http://www.peterherresthal.com)*

Founded in 1946, the **Norwegian Radio Orchestra** (Kringkastingsorkesteret) was originally established in order to provide entertainment music and light classics for radio broadcasting. Since then its repertoire has expanded, and is now exceptionally broad, ranging from baroque, classical and contemporary music to jazz, pop and rock. Its great versatility has earned it the epithet 'an orchestra for the whole of Norway' and makes it a popular participant at a wide range of music events such as Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival, Oslo World Music Festival and various jazz festivals. Over the years the orchestra has collaborated with international musicians and conductors such as Mario Venzago, Kees Bakels, Mikail Jurowski, Anna Netrebko, Truls Mørk, Chloë Hanslip, Yo-Yo Ma and Stephen Kovacevich, and each year it enjoys the privilege of performing at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert. Since 2013 the orchestra's principal conductor has been Miguel Harth-Bedoya.

*For further information please visit [www.kork.no/en](http://www.kork.no/en)*



**Andrew Manze** has rapidly emerged as one of the most stimulating and inspirational conductors of his generation. His extensive and scholarly knowledge of the repertoire together with his rare skill as a communicator and his boundless energy mark him out.

As a guest conductor Manze has regular relationships with a number of leading international orchestras including the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Mahler Chamber Orchestra. From the 2014/15 season, Manze will be principal conductor of the NDR Radio Philharmonic Orchestra in Hanover.

Manze is a fellow of the Royal Academy of Music and a visiting professor at the Oslo Academy, and has contributed to new editions of sonatas and concertos by Mozart and Bach published by Bärenreiter and Breitkopf and Härtel. In November 2011 Andrew Manze received the prestigious ‘Rolf Schock Prize’ in Stockholm.

ALSO AVAILABLE



## PER NØRGÅRD · VIOLIN CONCERTOS

Helle Nacht – Violin Concerto No. 1 (version for violin and chamber orchestra)  
Spaces of Time for orchestra with piano · Borderlines – Violin Concerto No. 2

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The *Strad* recommends *The Strad*

„Der Geiger Peter Herresthal erweist sich als denkbar geeigneter Interpret, um die Kostbarkeiten der Musik von Per Nørgård in Klang zu verwandeln.“ *klassik.com*

‘One of the most significant figures in contemporary music... this disc deserves the warmest recommendation.’ *International Record Guide*

‘This compelling disc serves as much as a showcase for the unfussy, no-nonsense musicianship of Norwegian violinist Peter Herresthal as it does for the rarefied music of Danish composer Per Nørgård...’ *The Strad*

”En tvers igjennom herlig CD, og hvis du er en av dem som fremdeles trenger å overbevises om at samtidsmusikk kan være vakker, bør du begynne her.” *Klassisk Musikkmagasin*

« Le jeu virtuose du violon de Peter Herresthal rend compte du foisonnement des idées. » *Classica*

## INSTRUMENTARIUM

Violin: G. B. Guadagnini, Milan 1753

Bow: Benoit Rolland 'Signature bow'

The present recordings are currently (February 2014) available only for downloading / streaming.  
For information about our physical products (CDs and Super Audio CDs), please visit [www.bis.se](http://www.bis.se).

### RECORDING DATA

Recording: April 2013 at Store Studio, NRK Oslo, Norway  
Producer: Thore Brinkmann (Take 5 Music Production)  
Sound engineer: Hans Kipfer (Take 5 Music Production)  
Equipment: Neumann microphones; RME Micstasy microphone preamplifier and high resolution A/D converter;  
MADI optical cabling; Sequoia Workstation; Pyramix DSD Workstation; B&W Nautilus 802 loudspeakers;  
STAX headphones  
Original format: 24-bit / 96 kHz  
Post-production: Editing: Thore Brinkmann  
Executive producer: Robert Suff

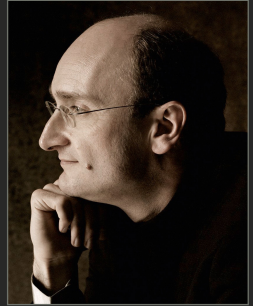
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Thomas Adès / Peter Herresthal / Andrew Manze