


**EDINBURGH
INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL**

CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA & WILLIAM EDDINS

—

17 Aug 6pm

EDINBURGH ACADEMY JUNIOR SCHOOL

The performance lasts approx. 1hr 10mins
with no interval.

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Susie Thomson

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CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA & WILLIAM EDDINS

William Eddins Conductor

Andrea Baker Mezzo soprano

Ayanna
Witter-Johnson

Blush WORLD PREMIERE

Judith Weir

woman.life.song

1a On Youth (Maya Angelou)

1b Breasts!! Song of the Innocent
Wild-Child (Clarissa Pinkola Estés)

1c Edge (Toni Morrison)

2 Eve Remembering (Toni Morrison)

3a (Stave 1) The Mothership:
When a Good Mother Sails
from This World (Clarissa Pinkola Estés)

3b (Stave 2) The Mothership, Part 2
(Clarissa Pinkola Estés)

4 On Maturity (Maya Angelou)

PROGRAMME NOTES

It was legendary US soprano Jessye Norman who conceived and devised what became *woman.life.song*, an extended song cycle about a woman's life from youth to old age. And to do so, she assembled a quintet of eminent female artists: herself as the new work's solo singer; Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison and Clarissa Pinkola Estés as writers of the work's texts, which bring together poetry and prose across a rich range of styles; and composer Judith Weir. Premiered at New York's Carnegie Hall in 2000, as the culmination of a three-year creative period, the result is a radical, 21st-century counterpart to Schumann's *Frauenlieben und -leben*, viewed entirely from a female perspective, an expansive set of songs that progress from childhood and youthful love to maturity and loss. Weir charts the life journey that Norman divided up between her three writers in music whose harmony grows in complexity as the work progresses, and whose instrumental palette likewise broadens and grows richer as the piece moves towards its glittering conclusion. *woman.life.song* is a celebration of experience passed from mother to daughter, of the embrace of emerging sexuality and of a luminous spirituality, especially in its closing contemplation of impermanence.

Today's concert opens with a new work by London-born composer, singer, songwriter and cellist Ayanna Witter-Johnson, whose music straddles contemporary classical and alternative R&B. *Blush* is inspired by the excitement and the ups and downs of young love.

David Kettle

David Kettle is a music and arts writer based in Edinburgh, who contributes regularly to the *Scotsman* and the *Daily Telegraph*. He has also written for publications including *BBC Music Magazine*, *The Times*, *The Strad* and *Classical Music*, and for organisations including the BBC Proms, Glyndebourne and Scottish Opera.

CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA

Chineke! was founded in 2015 by the double bass player Chi-chi Nwanoku OBE, to provide career opportunities for young Black and ethnically diverse classical musicians in the UK and Europe. Chineke!'s mission is 'championing change and celebrating diversity in classical music'. The Chineke! Orchestra, the Foundation's flagship ensemble, works closely with its sister ensemble, the Chineke! Junior Orchestra, a youth orchestra of Black and ethnically diverse players aged between 11 and 22, with senior players acting as mentors, teachers and role models to the young musicians. In 2017, the Chineke! Orchestra made its BBC Proms debut at the Royal Albert Hall in August and performed at many other leading festivals throughout England, all to great critical acclaim. Chineke! has released four CDs to date.

WILLIAM EDDINS

William Eddins is the Music Director Emeritus of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and a frequent guest conductor of major orchestras throughout the world.

His previous engagements have included performances with the New York Philharmonic, St Louis Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of San Francisco, Boston, Minnesota, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Detroit, Dallas, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Milwaukee and Houston, and the Los Angeles and Buffalo Philharmonics. Eddins was Principal Guest Conductor of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Ireland, and has also conducted the Berlin Staatskapelle, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Welsh National Opera, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra.

Career highlights include taking the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra to Carnegie Hall in 2012; conducting RAI National Symphony Orchestra on Italian television; and leading the KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra on tour in South Africa with soprano Renée Fleming. Equally at home

with opera, Eddins conducted a full production of *Porgy and Bess* with Opéra National de Lyon, both in France and at the Edinburgh International Festival, as well as a revival of the production during 2010.

Eddins is an accomplished pianist and chamber musician, and regularly directs from the piano in works by Mozart, Beethoven, Gershwin and Ravel. A native of Buffalo, New York, he attended the Eastman School of Music, studying with David Effron. Eddins also studied conducting with Daniel Lewis at the University of Southern California and was a founding member of the New World Symphony in Miami, Florida.

ANDREA BAKER

Described as possessing a ‘luscious and full-bodied tone’ by magazine *Das Opernglas*, British-American mezzo soprano Andrea Baker is renowned for her distinctive voice, intense artistry and passion. She has starred as Die Amme in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and debuted as Auntie in Britten’s *Peter Grimes*, both State Theatre of Hessen productions. She made her debut in Sweden with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra’s Wagner Gala as Ortrud in *Lohengrin*, conducted by Stefan Solyom. Baker conceived and wrote *Sing Sista Sing!* which was recently performed at the State Theatre of Hessen and will be featured in the German American Institute’s concert series in the Hirsvogelsaal in Nuremberg’s Tucherschloss Museum, followed by a United States tour with performances in Alabama and Massachusetts.

Highlights of her international appearances include the title role in *Carmen* for Opera Australia, Finnish National Opera and Opera Leipzig; Serena in *Porgy and Bess* for the Berliner Philharmoniker, Opéra National de Lyon, Houston Grand Opera and Edinburgh International Festival; Amneris in *Aida* for the State Theatre of Hessen,

Nuremberg State Theatre and Dortmund State Theatre; Ortrud in *Lohengrin* for the German National Theatre Weimar, State Theatre of Hessen and Kassel State Theatre; and Venus in *Tannhäuser* for the Teatro Verdi Trieste.

Baker studied singing at the Aspen Music Festival and the Eastman School of Music with Jan DeGaetani, and privately in San Francisco with Blanche Thebom. She was a Metropolitan Opera Competition National finalist, and began her stage career with the San Francisco Opera in 1994 in the role of Schwertleite in *Die Walküre*, conducted by Donald Runnicles. In addition to her celebrated work on the opera stage, Baker also works as a presenter for the BBC.


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