
Nicholas Cleobury

Selected Reviews

Oxford Bach Choir / London Mozart Players, Sheldonian Theatre, March 2012

"Conductor Nicholas Cleobury was firmly in control, expressive as always in the way he communicated with the choir, drawing from them some lush sounds and well-observed dynamics." - **The Oxford Times**

Oxford Bach Choir, Sheldonian Theatre, December 2011

"Conductor Nicholas Cleobury coaxed some sensational sounds from the choir" - **The Oxford Times**

Madam Butterfly, Mid Wales Opera (September 2011)

"Nicholas Cleobury's very sure handling of the reduced score...made this performance affecting. Cleobury struck an excellent balance between pushing the piece forward and relishing the moments of tenderness without any trace of sentimentality."
- **Opera Magazine**

"It is thanks to artistic director and conductor Nicholas Cleobury driving the score forward with a real feel for its detail that Puccini's characterisations begin to shine through." - **Rian Evans, The Guardian**

"MWO's musical director, Nicholas Cleobury, led a tight, beautifully paced account of the pared-down score."
- **Hugo Shirley, The Telegraph**

"Conductor Nicholas Cleobury created a sensitive balance." - **Birmingham Post**

"Nicholas Cleobury conducts briskly, not lingering over those moments (especially at the end of Act II) where Puccini places a bit too much faith in plain sentiment." - **TheArtsDesk**

Falstaff, Mid Wales Opera (September 2010)

"Verdi's original score is for large orchestra, but Mid Wales Opera's pocket version loses none of its intricacy, thanks to Tony Burke's brilliant arrangement, the skilful playing of the ten-piece band and the exemplary control of conductor Nicholas Cleobury" - **Hereford Times**

'MWO's new music director, Nicholas Cleobury, is off to a great start: he conducts a treacherous score with distinction. The whole thing's a delight.' - **Neil Fisher, The Times**

"...with Nicholas Cleobury conducting a sprightly account of the sublimely mercurial score, this is altogether a treat."
- **Rupert Christiansen, The Daily Telegraph**

"In his debut as MWO's artistic director, Nicholas Cleobury ensures a lively pace throughout" - **Rian Evans, The Guardian**

"Here we are allowed to concentrate on what is actually a wonderful ensemble opera, with its tiny cast so busy and willing, its reduced orchestra sparkling and zestful under Nicholas Cleobury's well-paced conducting"
- **Christopher Morley, Birmingham Post**

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'Nicholas Cleobury's precise, pacy conducting kept things moving.' – **The Public Reviews**

A French Affair, Eastern Cape Philharmonia, South Africa (July 2010)

"Conductor Nicholas Cleobury certainly knows what he wants and thanks to his clear and precise technique is well able to convey his intentions to his musicians." – **Professor Rupert Mayr, Rhodes University**

"During this exploration of music with a "French Connection", whether through composer of style, the Eastern Cape Philharmonic Orchestra's musical potential was unleashed most impressively under the baton of Nicholas Cleobury.(...) Cleobury led the reduced 'Rococo' orchestra most skillfully through a tidy performance that honoured the elegant, emotionally restrained underpinnings of the work." – **Lestie Hughes, Weekend Post**

Handel, Messiah / Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra

"The clarity of singing was captivating and the balance of the choir - so often with choirs over-endowed with sopranos - was superb. Much credit must go to Nicholas Cleobury, whose appreciation of detail, particularly in choral performance, showed brilliantly.(...)This performance balanced every emotion superbly and was certainly the performance of the season so far."
– **Surrey Advertiser**

Stephen McNeff, Tarka the Otter (Premiere) / Two Moors Festival

"Well conducted by Nicholas Cleobury, to expose the dark undertones of Henry Williamson's 1927 nature story...the overall feel is of feisty originality....I hope Tarka the Otter will soon surface somewhere else".- **Richard Morrison, The Times**

Mozart, Wind Collection / Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (2006)

"Throughout the RPO plays eloquently and with neat balance, and Nicholas Cleobury sees to it that each of the wind soloists gets an appropriately stylish, well-paced accompaniment."– **International Record Review**

Rushton: Harley (World premiere 2005) / Zurich Opera

"The evening was also musically a success. Under Nicholas Cleobury the Opera House Orchestra played cleanly and was brilliantly colourful." – **Neue Luzerner Zeitung**

"Nicholas Cleobury conducts with elan and precision." – **Financial Times**

Tippett, Concerto for Double String Orchestra / Orchestra of the Swan

"...Cleobury elicited a vibrant sound and a real spring to the rhythm." – **The Guardian**

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Handel, Acis and Galatea / Chicago Opera Theater

"Given Nicholas Cleobury's stylish and attentive conducting of an ensemble of period instruments, there's never a danger of the pit overbalancing the voices." – **Chicago Tribune**

Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique / Czech Philharmonic

"With impeccable ensemble playing the conductor convincingly presented his sense of form, skillfully shaping long sections and conveying his immersion in the music to the orchestra." – **Ivan Zacek**

Duruflé, Requiem / BBC Concert Orchestra & BBC Singers (St Albans Festival)

"A highly sympathetic reading, taking full advantage of the resonant cathedral acoustic." – **Cathedral Music**

Britten, Nocturne / Britten Sinfonia (BBC Proms)

"He (Ian Bostridge) returned for Britten's strangely dreamy, sometimes nightmarish Nocturne, a performance which Cleobury conducted sensitively." – **The Times**

Beethoven, Symphony 8 / Britten Sinfonia (Queen Elizabeth Hall)

"This was music of iron and sinew, in Cleobury's hands, fearsomely strong but nimble." – **The Times**

Martin, Le Vin Herbe / Zurich Opera

"The innate musicality of the Zurich production was the result of Nicholas Cleobury's conducting, which welded both singers and orchestra into a gripping whole." – **Basler Zeitung**

"...the orchestra was led with sovereign authority by Nicholas Cleobury." – **Der Bund**

Holloway, 2nd Concerto for Orchestra / Royal Scottish National Orchestra

"Nicholas Cleobury conducted so intelligently and the Orchestra played with such virtuoso skill that few members of the audience can have failed to be intrigued or dazzled...." – **The Guardian**

De Falla, El amor brujo / El Corregidor ya la molinera

"Nicholas Cleobury paced and shaped the scores with that hard-edged bite and clarity which lets Falla's expressiveness emerge." – **The Observer**

Tippett, The Knot Garden / Royal Academy of Music Orchestra

"...for it was the pit that claimed attention time and time again...with orchestral playing which, under the baton of Nicholas Cleobury, was as tense and terse as the score itself." – **The Times**

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Bridge, There is a Willow Aslant a Bank / Britten Sinfonia

"Cleobury brings out the human anguish in this extraordinary essay. Indeed there is a refinement of texture and suppleness about this dedicated music-making that I find deeply moving." – **Gramophone**

Mozart Concertos / Britten Sinfonia

"Nicholas Cleobury certainly has his ear finely attuned to the balance and weight of these works so nothing is over-stated, the music being allowed to express its own beauty and simplicity." - **Classic CD**

Carter, Variations for Orchestra / Royal Academy of Music Orchestra

"...the towering variations concluded the concert to magnificent effect. The skill and unyielding dramatic intensity Cleobury and his players brought to them was worthy of a far more seasoned band...this was a seriously exciting performance."

– **Financial Times**

Britten, Gloriana, Camden Festival / Chelsea Opera Group

"The conductor Cleobury lavished infinite care on the vocal and instrument realization of the score." - **Sunday Telegraph**

Verdi, Four Sacred Pieces, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra / Oxford Bach Choir

"Under the inspired conducting of Nicholas Cleobury, Choir and Orchestra combined to give a truly memorable performance."

– **Oxford Times**

Strauss, Ariadne auf Naxos / Britten Sinfonia

"The Britten Sinfonia under Cleobury, shone in an account of this score worthy of Glyndebourne or Covent Garden."

– **Sunday Times**

Elgar, Enigma Variations

"I loved Cleobury's reading of the work - he perfectly captured its English essence and conveyed it to the listener."

– **Kwana Newspaper, Durban**