
Mhairi Lawson

Selected Reviews

Bach *B minor mass*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Usher Hall Edinburgh (October 2023)

"With a luxury line-up of five top-notch vocal soloists... this was always going to be a Bach B minor mass to remember... [the] quintet of soloists each had their moment in the spotlight, sopranos Rowan Pierce and Mhairi Lawson tripping off each other in a jaunty 'Christe eleison', while Lawson returned with wonderfully characterful support from orchestra leader Stephanie Gonley in a 'Laudamus te' full of blossoming promise."

- David Kettle, *The Scotsman******

Purcell *King Arthur*, Early Opera Company, Temple Church (September 2023)

"Mhairi Lawson offered delightful melisma as Cupid, and the two sopranos sounded well together as the Two Sirens of Act 4."

- Roy Westbrook, *Bachtrack*

"Mhairi Lawson's delightfully characterful bright spirit... Rowan Pierce and Mhairi Lawson as shepherds full of graceful, shapely elegance... Mhairi Lawson as an engagingly witty Cupid... Mhairi Lawson made St George rather more stylish and less tub-thumping than usual..."

- Robert Hugill, *Planet Hugill*

Handel *Scipione (Berenice)*, Early Opera Company, London Handel Festival (March 2023)

"Mhairi Lawson impressed with some stunningly expressive vocalism, particularly in the accompanied recitatives. Her purity of tone and consistency of line brought tremendous dignity and profundity to the siciliano at the end of Act 2 in which Berenice laments the never-ending trials she must forbear; elsewhere Lawson conveyed a gamut of emotions, from bewilderment to self-pity and, in a showstopping outburst of exuberant coloratura fireworks – with super support from vigorous strings and sumptuous oboes and bassoons – feisty resolution."

- Claire Seymour, *Opera Today*

Record Review Radio 3: Building a Library, with Nicholas Kenyon

"I think the exuberance of Mhairi Lawson for Paul McCreesh's version of 'Hark the echoing air' – rapid fire virtuosity with just a touch of elaboration and a cheerfully rustic trumpet – is just what we need"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001hp5p>

Handel *Messiah*, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall (January 2023)

"From hereon in, the narrative was foremost, whether issued through ... the seraphic purity of Mhairi Lawson's soprano (thoughtfully changing her garb from angelic white in Part I to a more demure black in Parts II & III for such golden reflective moments as her *I know that my redeemer liveth*)"

- Ken Walton, *VoxCarnyx*

Bach *St Matthew Passion*, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, St David's Hall Cardiff (April 2022)

"...soprano Mhairi Lawson gave a haunting account of the Aria: 'For love will my Redeemer die.'"

- Peter Collins, *Nation Cymru*

Handel *Messiah*, Dunedin Consort, Queen's Hall Edinburgh (December 2021)

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"It was a directness mirrored in his quartet of soloists' contributions. Mhairi Lawson's I know That My Redeemer Liveth, for example, was a simple, sincere expression of faith, and all the more powerful for that, delivered with her exquisite silvery soprano."

– David Kettle, *The Scotsman******

CD: *Chisholm: Songs*, Delphian DCD34259 (October 2021)

"A rather different style of humour is on display in Glances, which John Purser aptly sums up as "highly suggestive and harmonically coquettish". Mhairi Lawson and Iain Burnside deliver this with a definite twinkle in the eye. ...Diarmait's Sleep, sung by Mhairi Lawson, is a touching lullaby to a sleeping lover. This is beautifully performed, as is Lament, which is all the more affecting on account of the restraint of the setting. Right at the end of the programme Ms Lawson gives us Home Sickness. This is very beautiful. ...The penultimate song, 'Innocence' has Ms Lawson back in front of the microphone. This may well be my favourite among the set; its simple eloquence touches the heart and the fragile delicacy of Mhairi Lawson's singing is just right. ...Their voices sound extremely pleasing and the clarity of voice and of diction that each of them brings to their respective performances is very welcome."

– John Quinn, *MusicWeb International*

"Reflective prayers and laments are given a spring-water freshness by Lawson'.

– David Patrick Stearns, *Gramophone*

Handel *Brookes-Passion*, Arcangelo, Alpha Classics ALPHA644 (March 2021)

"Mhairi Lawson's shining soprano excels in her reflective arias towards the end of the work (the assuaging 'Was Wunder, dass der Sonnen Pracht', softly coloured by bassoons, is one of several foretastes of Acis and Galatea)" – *Gramophone*

Purcell: *Songs & Ayres*, Dunedin Consort at the Lammermuir Festival (September 2020)

"Dunedin programmes are always inventive affairs, and this one showed not just a creative choice of repertoire, but joy taken in the variety of what was on offer, crowned by Mhairi Lawson's shining soprano which gave the songs star quality that they probably didn't have when they were first performed."

– Simon Thompson, *Seen and Heard International*

Purcell *The Fairy Queen*, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Signum Classics SIGCD615 (April 2020)

"Lawson's brilliant 'Hark the echoing air'"

– David Vickers, *Gramophone*

Purcell *King Arthur 1691*, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Signum Classics SIGCD589 (October 2019)

"Nine singers shared the songs and choruses between them, a flawless ensemble of equals, though Anna Dennis and Mhairi Lawson stood out as a seductive pair of sirens"

– Tim Ashley, *The Guardian******

Purcell *King Arthur*, Gabrieli Consort & Players, St John's Smith Square (October 2019)

"Overall, this is a cultivated performance, well sung and played ...First-rate voices are onboard, including Anna Dennis, Mhairi Lawson..."

– Richard Fairman, *The Financial Times******

Purcell *King Arthur*, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Auditorio Baluarte, Pamplona (October 2019)

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"The most important sopranos were Anna Dennis and Mhairi Lawson, who among other pages offered a delicious duet, in which the two shone in their own light."

- José M. Irurzun, *Beckmesser*

"It is important to mention the other three vocal soloists, the soprano Mhairi Lawson, the tenor Jeremy Budd and the bassist Robert Davies (replacing Marcus Farnsworth), who in all their solo interventions were singing at a high tessitura."

- Enrique Bert, *Platea Magazine*

Handel and the Rival Queens, Early Opera Company, St John's Smith Square (April 2019)

"Lawson delivered Bordoni's florid numbers with neat technical fluency." - Hugh Canning, *The Times*

Purcell King Arthur, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Melbourne Recital Centre (February 2019)

"All six of Gabrieli's high-calibre soloists brought something special, including soprano Mhairi Lawson and bass-baritone Ashley Riches injecting gentle fun into the masque led by Cupid and the Cold Genius." - Patricia Maunder, *Limelight Magazine*

"Soprano shepherdesses Anna Dennis and Mhairi Lawson blended marvelously ... The final duet of this act was a beautifully engaging parley between Riches and Lawson, both blending, matching so engagingly, leading everyone to join in a rousing "'Tis Love that has warm'd us". It was an uplifting way to end. Even the conductor joined in." - Brian Angus, *Bachtrack*

Bach Fest Carmel Bach Festival (July 2018)

"The soloists were superb. Soprano Mhairi Lawson's supple vocal beauty lent a special grace to the evening"

- Barbara Rose Shuler, *The Monterey Herald*

Mad Women, Queens & Lovers, East Neuk Festival (June 2018)

"As ever, Lawson's engaging delivery found purity and passion in nascent operatic numbers by Carissimi, Francesca Caccini and Monteverdi, set within a framework of couthy Scots songs, and English ones by Purcell and Lawes."

- Ken Walton, *The Scotsman*

Mozart Mass in C Minor, Scottish Chamber Orchestra (February 2018)

"Anna Dennis and Mhairi Lawson were contrasting but well-matched as Butt's two soprano soloists"

- David Kettle, *The Scotsman******

Songs From The Heart, National Centre for Early Music, York (February 2018)

"The most ornate songs were the Haydn settings edited by Domenico Corri ... Lawson never let the virtuosity come to the fore, but was beautifully integrated into the song itself."

- Steve Crowther, *The York Press*

King Arthur, Academy of Ancient Music, Barbican (October 2017)

"Mhairi Lawson sang with precision and agility, injecting colour and weight into her soprano with expressive thoughtfulness."

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"Mhairi Lawson, whose swallow-like soprano was on fine form."

- Claire Seymour, *OperaToday*

"Mhairi Lawson ... made an effective contribution"

-Hannah Nepil, *Financial Times*

-Neil Fisher, *The Times*

Mozart *Mass in C Minor*, K.427, Carmel Bach Festival (July 2017)

"In the following *Christe* section, Mozart introduces the E-flat relative major with an expressive and joyful solo sung by soprano Mhairi Lawson, whose range was tested as she sang a long, soft b-flat and a-flat below middle C, and then jumped dramatically to the a-flat two octaves higher. It was a thrilling moment and beautifully accomplished by Ms. Lawson."

- Lyn Bronson, *Peninsula Reviews*

Recording: *The Sunlight on the Garden: The Songs of Stephen Wilkinson*, Signature (June 2017)

"the more overt brightness of Mhairi Lawson, exquisite in 'Winter Snow' and 'Proud Songsters'." -Tim Ashley, *Gramophone*

Handel *Semele* (title), CBSO / Egarr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham (January 2017)

"In the title role, Mhairi Lawson soared like a morning lark through these emotional thunderstorms, delivering her solo numbers with celestial tone."

- Rebecca Franks, *The Times*

Handel *Messiah*, Dunedin Consort, Kings Place, London (December 2016)

"Lawson's Rejoice Greatly, taken at a tremendous lick, was very virtuoso; I Know That My Redeemer Liveth was grandly assertive."

- Tim Ashley, *The Guardian*

***Cryptic, Fantasy and Madness*, Dunedin Consort, Assembly Roxy, Edinburgh (October 2016)**

"Singers Mhairi Lawson and Matthew Brook – both ruddy-cheeked and grinning suggestively – gave brilliantly vivid performances, full of vocal theatrics, savouring every word for its dramatic potential. Lawson's tearjerking *Plaint from Purcell's The Fairy Queen* was as heartbreaking as it was exquisite."

- David Kettle *The Scotsman*

Purcell *The Fairy Queen*, Academy of Ancient Music, Barbican, London (October 2016)

"Unforgettable in the last act was Lawson's appearance as Juno, vogueing in a tricorn hat, while singing in top form. She captured perfectly the joy of this extraordinary, bizarre entertainment."

- Cary Gee, *Tribune*

Handel *Apollo e Dafne*, Ensemble Maryas, Linn Records CKD 543 (October 2016)

"[Lawson's] exquisite entrance aria, 'Felicissima quest'alma', barely touches the ground, so lightly spun are its phrases."

- Alexandra Coghlan, *Gramophone*

"The heroic bluster of 'Spezza l'arco' beautifully sets up *Dafne's* oboe-gilded first number which is exquisitely shaped by Mhairi

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Lawson (no wonder Apollo is smitten)." – **Paul Rily, *BBC Music Magazine***

"Mhairi Lawson, as Dafne, and Callum Thorpe, as Apollo, are in complete command of all this glorious music, and bring it to life with enormous dramatic energy, ably partnered by Ensemble Marsyas's superb playing."

– **Alastair Harper, *Early Music Review***

"I find Mhairi Lawson ideal as Dafne; she has caught the measure of the expressive qualities required and is also able to articulate the somewhat fragile nature of Daphne's plight. All this is contrasted with her determination and with a variety of vocal colours."

– **Gary Higginson, *MusicWeb International***

Mozart *Idomeneo* (Elettra), Carmel Bach Festival (July 2016)

"Lawson, making her stunning festival debut this summer, electrified as the seething, jealous Elettra."

– **Barbara Rose Shuler, *Monterey Herald***

Handel *Messiah*, Wrocław Baroque Orchestra, Göttingen International Handel Festival (May 2016)

"The soloists, too, contributed wonderfully to the proceedings: Mhairi Lawson a graceful and vibrant soprano...roaring applause for all involved." – **Georg Pepl, *Hessische Niedersächsische Allgemeine***

"The highlight of the evening was the soloists. The women in particular were ravishing. Mhairi Lawson sang the coloraturas light as a feather and with a dynamic range from forte down to a delicate pianissimo." – **Maria Widemann, *Kulturbüro Göttingen***

"Among the quartet of soloists Mhairi Lawson shone with light, effortless top notes and floaty coloraturas."

– **Michael Schäfer, *Goettinger Tageblatt***

Bach *St Matthew Passion*, St Paul Chamber Orchestra, Ordway Concert Hall (October 2015)

"The others, all of whom contributed mightily, were Mhairi Lawson, Anna Dennis, Helen Charlston, Nick Pritchard and Matthew Brook."

– **Michael Anthony, *Star Tribune***

Purcell *King Arthur*, Early Opera Company / Curnyn, Wigmore Hall, London (February 2015)

"Sopranos Joëlle Harvey and Mhairi Lawson duetted ravishingly as sirens out to waylay the unsuspecting Arthur...The whole thing was a classy entertainment, and hugely enjoyable."

– **Tim Ashley, *The Guardian***

"Act two saw Mhairi Lawson as a vividly characterful and finely sung Philomel. Throughout the evening Lawson showed skill at combining immense charm, vivid and rather wicked sense of characterisation whilst never distorting the musical line."

– **Robert Hugill, *planethugill.com***

Handel *Messiah*, Dunedin Consort, St John's Kirk, Perth (December 2014)

"Soprano Mhairi Lawson added unshowy, effortless glamour."

– **Kate Molleson, *The Guardian***

"Mhairi Lawson's "Rejoice" was effortlessly exhilarating, her performance in general one of engaging affection."

– **Ken Walton, *The Scotsman***

Handel *Messiah*, Royal Northern Sinfonia / McCreesh, The Sage Gateshead (December 2014)

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"Lawson's light, agile voice was perfect for the ecstatic soprano arias: "Rejoice greatly" exuded pure, uncomplicated happiness and "I know that my Redeemer liveth" was quietly serene, and sung with a smile." – **Jane Shuttleworth, *bachtrack.com***

"Each soloist – soprano Juliet Bauer, countertenor James Laing, vigorous tenor Samuel Boden and robust bass Ben Bevan – was given a moment to shine by the composer. The soprano air, Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Sion, was a model of precision."

– **Rob Barnes, *The Journal***

Schubert *Abendröte* Cycle, Oxford Lieder Festival (October 2014)

"He shared the "Abendröte" (Sunset) cycle with soprano Mhairi Lawson, well-known for outstanding work in early opera and the Italian Baroque. She has a real talent for the intimate scale of Lieder – always engaging with wit and charm. Lawson knows every part of every note and word not just the general phrase and she really does "tell the story" contrasting the skittishness of "Die Vögel;" with the exquisite stillness of "Das Mädchen ". Both singers demonstrated great stagecraft, a quality not always evident in lieder recitals, and closed the evening with the slightly sentimental duet "Licht und Liebe". – **Cary Gee, *Tribune***

Recital at the Spitalfields Festival, London (June 2014)

"Things could only get better, and they did. At 6.30pm a lucky few who had tickets assembled at an address down a back street, which turned out to be the large and deeply eccentric house of a long-standing friend of the Festival. There we heard a concert of Baroque song from England and Italy, together with some of the Scots songs collected by Robert Burns. They were sung with engaging vigour and grace by Mhairi Lawson, ably partnered by Christian Curmyn at the harpsichord. It was a delight."

– **Ivan Hewett, *The Telegraph***

Bach *St Matthew Passion*, Royal Northern Sinfonia / Zehetmair, The Sage Gateshead (April 2014)

"Mhairi Lawson was equally outstanding in the soprano arias."

– **Alfred Hicking, *The Guardian***

"Soprano Mhairi Lawson's "Blute nur" was full of emotion, sighing in anguish against the pulsing flow of the accompanying flutes and strings, and her "Aus Liebe" was touching in its innocence, surrounded by a protective cocoon of wind instruments, led by the expressive flute of Juliette Bausor. Lawson and countertenor Christopher Ainslie blended wonderfully in their duet "So ist mein Jesus nun gefangen", their twisting lines dripping with woe."

– **Jane Shuttleworth, *bachtrack.com***

"Soprano Mhairi Lawson's voice had a ringing clarity and soared to the heavens in Blute nur."

– **Gavin Engelbrecht, *The Northern Echo***

Handel *Messiah*, City of Bath Bach Choir, Bath Abbey (March 2014)

"Mhairi Lawson's soprano was very fine: I enjoyed Rejoice Greatly, immaculately phrased and paced."

– **Lloyd Williams, *The Bath Chronicle***