

CLASSICAL DESTINATIONS

An armchair guide to classical music

CLASSICAL DESTINATIONS PRESENTER - SIMON CALLOW

Actor and director, Simon Callow, also renowned throughout the UK as a writer and commentator on classical music, hosts and presents the new television series CLASSICAL DESTINATIONS (2006). He will appear in each of the thirteen episodes, offering his personal reflections on some of the greatest classical composers while visiting the European cities in which they lived and worked.

Simon Callow's association with music is known internationally through his work in Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*. He created the title role of Mozart when the play premiered at the National Theatre in 1979, and when *Amadeus* was turned into the multi Academy Award-winning film in 1984 he played the part of the impresario Schikaneder.

He studied briefly at Queen's University, Belfast, then trained as an actor at Drama Centre London. After seasons in repertory at Lincoln and at the Traverse in Edinburgh, he made his London debut in the Traverse Theatre production of C P Taylor's *Schippel*, which later transferred to the West End as *The Plumber's Progress* (1975), starring Harry Secombe. He then appeared with Gay Sweatshop in Martin Sherman's *Passing By* (1975), before spending a year with the co-operative Joint Stock Company, appearing on tour in 1977 in *Fanshen*, *A Mad World My Masters* and *Epsom Downs*. In 1978 he played the title role in *Titus Andronicus* at the Bristol Old Vic and in Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* at the Half Moon Theatre.

In 1979 he joined the National Theatre. After playing Orlando in *As You Like It*, he appeared in *Sisterly Feelings* (1980) and *Galileo*. While still at the NT, he gave a one-man performance of all of Shakespeare's sonnets – a show that he has subsequently toured internationally. In 1981 he played Verlaine in Christopher Hampton's *Total Eclipse*, Lord Are in Edward Bond's *Restoration* and Beefy in J P Donleavy's *The Beastly Beatitudes of Balthasar B*. In 1988, he played Faust in both parts of Goethe's play and appeared in and co-directed Alan Bennett's *Single Spies* at the National Theatre and in the West End. In 2000, he played in *The Mystery Of Charles Dickens*, which, after playing two seasons in the West End, he took to Ireland, Australia, Chicago, and New York.

Other film roles include the Reverend Mr Beebe in *A Room with a View* (1985), Mr Ducie in *Maurice* (1987),

Gareth in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994), Mr Tilney in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). He also appeared in Mike Nichols's *Postcards From the Edge* and, fifteen years later, for the same director, the critically acclaimed HBO mini-series *Angels in America*. His most recent films are *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Bob the Butler*. He directed the film of *The Ballad of the Sad Café*, starring Vanessa Redgrave, Keith Carradine and Rod Steiger. He has starred in several one-man shows as well as appearing in batch of TV dramas including, in the current series of *Dr Who*, as one of the characters he has made very much his own on stage and page, the author Charles Dickens.

He has directed many productions that include his own translations of Jean Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine* (with Maggie Smith) and Milan Kundera's *Jacques and his Master* (1987), as well as, in the West End and on Broadway, Willie Russell's *Shirley Valentine* (1988) and *Jus' Like That* (2003); and the operas *Die Fledermaus* (1988) for Scottish Opera, *La Calisto* (1996, *Glimmerglass*), *The Consul* (Holland Park), the musical *Carmen Jones* (1991) and *les Enfants du Paradis* for the Royal Shakespeare Company. He is also an author whose published work includes many books on actors and acting as well as highly-acclaimed biographies of Charles Laughton and Orson Welles and a memoir called *Love Is Where It Falls*. He is recently appearing at London's Palace Theatre starring in Andrew Lloyd-Weber's musical version of *The Woman In White*.



Publishing plans for Simon Callow in 2006 include the second volume of his biography of Orson Welles, Hello Americans, and the companion book based on the second television series of CLASSICAL DESTINATIONS.

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