

We asked OAE violinist, and the man behind our performances of it on 15 May, Roy Mowatt, a little bit more about Purcell's *Bonduca*.

1 -Could you explain what makes Purcell's last major work, Bonduca, so special and distinct?

I love all of Purcell's theatre music. If *Bonduca* is different it is because it seems to be without any Italianate tendencies. It is perhaps particularly "English" and presumably deliberately so to enhance the patriotic feel. [*Bonduca* is *Boadicea* or *Boudica*, the British heroine who fought against the Romans]. The big difference in this case, though, is that I have set it within a dramatic context, whereas we normally just hear suites of Purcell's theatre music without any feeling for the reasons for their composition. I have used extracts from the play to create a dramatic context.

2 -What do you are you most looking forward to when playing Bonduca and what does the piece mean to you?

There is something special about a composer's final works and although I wouldn't claim *Bonduca* is better than his other works it is certainly top-notch. It is also much more substantial than many of his theatrical incidental compositions which are sometimes just a song or two, or a few instrumental numbers.

3 -Why do you think playing Bonduca with the OAE is special, what will the OAE add to this piece?

The OAE is always lively and looking for new ways to present and communicate the music they play. I am looking forward to seeing their reaction to what I have done - one is always most nervous of the judgement of one's colleagues! I am also very excited to see what the director Pia Furtado makes of the dramatic elements. She seems to have limitless ideas and I think it will be fascinating to see what she comes up with within the strict limits we have as far as space and resources are concerned.

4 - Why do you think that this performance is an event not to be missed?

I'm sure by now it is clear that I am really looking forward to this venture and I think it is the first time *Bonduca* has been done in this way. Actually, Boadicea comes out of it rather badly – she is blamed for the British defeat! There is the common myth that Boadicea is buried between platform 9&10 at Kings Cross – yes precisely where the Hogwarts Express departs from! Although there is no historical justification for her being buried there it nevertheless feels right that we should be performing Bonduca at Kings Place.