



## LSO/Roth review - Lang premiere gave voice to the community

**Barbican, London** Local choir members are among the 500 singers who debuted David Lang's new choral work, while François-Xavier Roth led a diaphanous account of Scriabin

**Andrew Clements**

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**I**n 2014, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group mounted the first performance of David Lang's *Crowd Out*, a piece for 1,000 voices of all levels of ability. It was a memorable event, touching and only a little chaotic, just like the UK premiere of its sequel, *In the Public Domain*, which was put on by the London Symphony Orchestra as part of its community programme.

Five-hundred voices - members of the London Symphony Chorus, and Community Choir with others who joined up for this occasion - moved in groups around the foyers of the Barbican Centre, mingling with the audience, cued by megaphone, before coming together for the final section under chorus director Simon Halsey. *In the Public Domain* follows the same process as its predecessor, mining texts from internet search engines and setting them in overlapping sections that are sometimes chanted, sometimes sung, and punctuated by bursts of rhythmic clapping. It is, says Lang, an exploration of "a wide range ideas about what we think we all might share".

The rest of the evening was more conventional - an LSO programme conducted by François-Xavier Roth that ended with a diaphanous account of Scriabin's Poem of Ecstasy with exactly the slow-burn quality the piece needs, preceded by two new works. Philippe Manoury's Ring (a UK premiere) started as the audience entered, with brass and percussion arrayed around the hall and the rest of the orchestra on the platform, though what followed was over-long, its best moments too obviously indebted to Stockhausen and Messiaen. But Donghoon Shin's Kafka's Dream, a Panufnik Composers Scheme commission, inspired by a Borges poem, was much more impressive. It managed to say exactly what it wanted in a series of vivid, elegant gestures that never outstayed their welcome.

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