The new-music ensemble Alarm Will Sound built its reputation on innovation and disruption, and those qualities have persisted in the group's covid-era projects, starting with a genuinely moving video-based reimagining of John Luther Adams’s “Ten Thousand Birds,” shared on YouTube in June. That composition, in its original form, will be featured in two live performances in upstate New York—at PS21, in Chatham (Aug. 7), and Artpark, in Lewiston (Aug. 9)—both of which will impose limited attendance and social distancing. August also brings the début of “Video Chat Variations,” an online series in which eminent creators are commissioned to write new works expressly designed for remote online performance; the first episode (Aug. 1) features the world première of “Anthem,” by the iconic vocalist and composer Meredith Monk.

— Steve Smith

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

Christopher Rouse: Symphony No. 5

For the many admirers of Christopher Rouse, a well-loved American composer who died last
By Jaap van Zweden and the Dallas Symphony, Rouse translates childhood memories of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony into his own muscular, fantastical idiom. Also included here are “Supplica,” a rapturous meditation from 2013, and Concerto for Orchestra, a kaleidoscopic showpiece from 2008. Abetted by robust performances, the album offers persuasive justification for Rouse’s enduring appeal.

— Steve Smith

“Met Stars Live in Concert”

It’s hard to replicate the experience of seeing a show at the Metropolitan Opera, with its starburst chandeliers and its multistory, gold-leaf ceiling, but the company isn’t taking the lockdown lying down. Its new pay-per-view online series, “Met Stars Live in Concert,” features some of its biggest headliners singing beloved arias and duets in sumptuous settings. On Aug. 1, Renée Fleming revisits gorgeous moments from her considerable discography, including solos from “Die Tote Stadt,” “Faust,” and “Der Rosenkavalier,” at the Dumbarton Oaks estate, in Washington, D.C. Later this month, the husband-and-wife team of Roberto Alagna and Aleksandra Kurzak sing Romantic-era duets at a château on the French Riviera (Aug. 16), and the budding dramatic soprano Lise Davidsen nods to a legendary predecessor by closing her recital at a Norwegian palace with Birgit Nilsson’s famous party piece “I Could Have Danced All Night” (Aug. 29). Each concert is available to stream for twelve days.

— Oussama Zahr

“To My Distant Love”
Distant Love. The baritone Mario Diaz-Moresco, accompanied by the pianist Spencer Myer, places a phone call to one ticket holder and sings the six songs of Beethoven’s “An die Ferne Geliebte,” a gentle expression of longing in a time of separation; the audience member, assuming the role of the beloved, can take the call from a couch, a sidewalk, or a perch at a misty window. The soprano Jennifer Zetlan and the pianist David Shimoni take over these one-on-one performances from July 30 to Aug. 16.

— Oussama Zahr