

## The Arts

## Annie's rock album

## EXHIBITION

**Annie Leibovitz**  
The Hospital, WC2  
**Nick Hackworth**

ANNIE Leibovitz made her name in the Seventies with Rolling Stone magazine, for whom she produced a steady stream of iconic portraits of the pop, rock and public figures of the day. Images such as John and Yoko in a Hug, taken two hours before Lennon was shot dead in 1980, have made her one of the world's most celebrated photographers.

Since then, she has enjoyed a rare combination of commercial, critical and popular success, and taken on a range of projects, from the corporate to the more purely artistic. Her latest work, *American Music*, is a book of portraits of American musicians, shot over the past four years — a project inspired by her desire to return to her original subject with a "mature eye". The exhibition at The Hospital, a shining new complex in Covent Garden with a gallery and recording studios, includes around 70 photographs from the book.

It is a pictorial roll-call of musical mega-stars: Puff Daddy, Aretha Franklin, John Lee Hooker, Eminem, Johnny Cash, Beck, Patti Smith, Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, Dr Dre, the White Stripes and more. The faces and the names, and the music attached to them are familiar, but collectively the images conspire to conjure something of the vastness of American culture. They amount to a particular, though fragmentary, portrait of a nation. Each one of Leibovitz's subjects, whether blues musician or country singer from the South, traditional Mexican musician from Texas or new-wave Seattle punk, is a living, symbolic representation of a lifestyle aspired to, and the embodiment of a dream.

This is amplified by Leibovitz's desire to capture authenticity with her camera, to capture the essence of each musician. So here we have a simple shot of Dolly Parton, lying



Have guitar, will travel: Ryan Adams in the Hollywood Hills Best Western Hotel, Los Angeles, 2002

on the grass in her home town, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, staring dreamily into the sky. We have Johnny Cash strumming his guitar on the porch with his daughter and grandchildren. Hip-hop outfit the Roots play on a Philadelphia street corner, LA slacker Ryan Adams sits, guitar under arm, on a dishevelled bed in a cheap Hollywood hotel. DJ Shadow is in a bedroom in California, while rapper Nas is pictured on the steps of his childhood home in New York.

These are images of homes and origins, with no hint of the packaging, publicity and products that lie behind Leibovitz's subjects.

This visual selectivity is perhaps the paradoxical but inevitable result of working in a country and an industry whose commercial power and manipulation of images and lifestyle aspirations is so powerful as to have disrupted our very notions of what is authentic. Nevertheless, these romantic pictures are captivating, and even moving, carrying as they do the deep empathy of the photographer for her subject.

● *Annie Leibovitz's American Music is at The Hospital, 24 Endell Street, WC2, 20 Feb-9 May, Monday to Saturday 10am-10pm. Sunday 12-8pm. Information: 020 7170 9100.*

## Women are still catching up

## CLASSICAL

**Ambache Chamber Ensemble**  
Wigmore Hall  
**Nick Kimberley**

WHEN she founded the Ambache Chamber Ensemble in 1984, Diana Ambache must have hoped that, come the 21st century, there might be no further need of an ensemble specialising in women's music. Things have changed little; the ensemble is still a pioneer.

This penultimate concert in its series Old Masters, New Mistresses made an intriguing contrast between the new piano quintet by Jamaican-born Eleanor Alberga, and the European premiere of the string quartet by American Amy Beach,

who died 60 years ago. Where Beach's single movement proved dense and compact, Alberga's quintet was a hyperactive exercise in contrasts that resembled a complicated clockwork machine, forever running down then winding up again.

A dreamy piano ripple set things in motion, spreading through the strings before a brief spasm of rhythmic urgency, quickly subdued. No moment of peace lasted long, but nor did the agitations that repeatedly broke through.

If, on first hearing, the quintet seemed a sequence of transitions skittishly refusing to settle, its drama and energy generated a fund of memorable musical events.

Beach's 1929 quartet took its central ideas from

three Alaskan Inuit folk tunes. When the most poignant first appeared on viola, its stark, fragile beauty seemed to come from another dimension, but Beach fully integrated these "alien" melodies into a harmonic language that was neither expansively

romantic nor aggressively modernist.

Bookending the premieres, Mozart's Piano Trio No 3 and Brahms's First Piano Quartet were both more forthright than exquisite but made for a generously filled programme.

Royal Festival Hall | Queen Elizabeth Hall | Purcell Room

08701 900 901 9am-8pm daily - Tel cc bkg fee £1.50 www.rfh.org.uk sbc

Coming soon to the South Bank 19 FEB 7:30PM RFH **Philharmonia Orchestra** Ashkenazy conducts Prokofiev/Debussy programme • 19 FEB 7:45PM QEH **Steven Osborne** Piano Recital: Brahms, Schubert, Mussorgsky programme • 23 FEB 7:30PM QEH **Fairport Convention** • 25 FEB 7:30PM RFH **BBC Concert Orchestra** songs from Yiddish Theatre and Sephardi music • 27 FEB 7:45PM QEH **Bali and the Touaregs of Ahaggar** • 28 FEB 7:30PM RFH **Haydn: The Creation** London Philharmonic Orchestra • 28 FEB 7:45PM QEH **Cuban Jazz Allstars** + Ogun • 29 FEB 7:15PM QEH **Rossini: Ermione** Chelsea Opera Group • 29 FEB 7:30 PM RFH **Glenn Miller Orchestra UK** Centenary Celebration • 1 MAR 7:45PM QEH **Peter Cincotti** jazz sensation • 2 MAR 7:30PM RFH **Maurizio Pollini** Piano Recital: Beethoven/Chopin programme • 5 MAR 7:30PM RFH **London Philharmonic Orchestra** Tchaikovsky Symphony No.6 • 6 MAR 7:30PM QEH **Steve Howe in concert** • 11 MAR 7:30PM RFH **Philharmonia of the Nations** Sibelius/Tchaikovsky/Rachmaninov programme • 13 MAR 7:45PM QEH **Elgar: The Dream of Gerontius** London Orpheus Choir and Orchestra • 18 MAR 7:45PM QEH **Virginia Rodrigues** new diva of Brazilian music

**ROY LICHTENSTEIN**  
at the Hayward Gallery  
26 February - 16 May 2004