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Collon is aware of the pitfalls of such an approach: 'Loads of thought needs to go in to the idea in order to make it work and not a cliché or a gimmick. It's about trying to find exactly the right repertoire that will be enlightened by the art form we're collaborating with – with the capoeira we did a piece by Lully which brought out the elements of baroque dance. You have to really look into what the art form can bring to music, to enlighten music, and to look at how music might need it. We tend not to use Beethoven symphonies because they're not works that need enlightening in that way.'

As for that new dawn, does Collon see his work with the orchestra as an attempt to sweep away tradition, to revitalise an art form in decline?

'I don't think there are such things as traditionalists really. People either go to a concert because they want to and they enjoy it, or they don't. I'm wary of branding what we do as a contrary exercise, that we're trying to create a new path, however exciting that seems. We can't but realise what amazing music there is going on; but a lot of it is about presentation, that's all I'm saying.'

'But generally I feel totally optimistic; I love music, all the players I work with love music, all the amateur orchestras I work with love music [as for many conductors, amateur orchestras such as the Salomon Orchestra and Kensington Symphony Orchestra have proved an important training ground for Collon]. I'm so convinced of music's worth that I could never ever imagine it would stop being worthwhile to people. I'm absolutely not pessimistic at all because I've never been given reason to.'

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