Falklands conflict still an open wound, says Argentine ambassador

The memory of the Falklands conflict is an "open wound" for Argentina, its ambassador to Britain said to mark the 40th anniversary.

Javier Figueroa said fighting over the islands' sovereignty was "ridiculous", comparing it to the relationship between North and South Korea.

He said most young people in the UK had no idea "Britain has a beef with Argentina" in the South Atlantic but in Argentina it has "huge visibility in public opinion and the ruling class".

"In Argentina the war is still a wound, an open wound. It's almost 40 years, but in Argentina it's a deeply emotional issue," he said. "It's not only emotional, it is political as well. The question is the highest priority of my country in foreign policy."

He said the issue was like a "monster in a room roaring" when it came to relations between the two countries, and he wants to re-engage in negotiations with the British government to discuss the islands' sovereignty.

"It's unbelievable that after 40 years we have a situation like North Korea-South Korea in the South Atlantic, which is ridiculous," he said.

Figueroa referred to polling by the veterans' charity Help for Heroes which suggested the conflict could become forgotten. Half of those aged 18-34 said that they did not know when it was; one in ten thought the islands were in the Channel.

"I am completely sure that the new generation [do not] have any idea regarding the war or that Britain has a beef with Argentina regarding the South Atlantic," Figueroa said. "Any war is a mistake. I think it's a tragedy, but there were almost 1,000 lives lost in that war, 600 Argentinian soldiers and servicemen, and 300 or more British soldiers lost their life, and I think we have to pay homage for the families.

"Argentina recovered democracy more than 40 years ago and in a way the war was instrumental in that, in a way accelerated a process in which the civil society and the political parties in Argentina began to regroup and fight against the dictatorship."

Teenage melody maker is a classical hit on TikTok



CHRIS LEE

Alma Deutscher made her debut at Carnegie Hall in New York in 2019. She had written a violin concerto by the age of ten

Enough with the dissonance of the modern age, the teenager said. And let TikTok do the talking.

A 17-year-old British classical music composer who has rejected "ugly" modern music in favour of the "beautiful melodies" of the past has become a hit on the very modern TikTok social media platform (David Sanderson writes).

Alma Deutscher was raised in Surrey but moved to Vienna with her family where she now studies at the city's university.

She has been frowned upon by the musical elite for her rejection of "atonal" contemporary classical music in favour of unfashionable melody.

The teenager has however begun to attract enormous social media audiences, with one video of her conducting a small Viennese choir attracting nearly a million views within hours of it being posted.

Deutscher said the size of her audience on TikTok, which is primarily used by those under 30, showed that classical music could attract new listeners, if it was easier to listen to.

"The essence of music is melody and if you take that away there is nothing," she said. "People who push noise down the throats of audiences and pass that off as music that only very educated people can understand, these are the people killing classical music."

Deutscher, who in her 2019 acceptance speech for the European Culture Prize said she hoped a "more tolerant age is dawning when melody and beauty will once again be permitted", admits that her musical influences do not extend much into the 20th century.

While there is Mahler, Mozart and Beethoven there is no Igor Stravinsky, whose influential Rite of Spring in 1913 brought experiments in dissonance to the forefront of the classical music world. "It is extremely easy to create ugliness," Deutscher said. "That needs absolutely no talent. But to create beauty? That is a challenge. And I don't want to inflict misery on my audience or myself. This fanatical, ideological idea that anything that has a hint of melody is old fashioned and that anything that is not "noise" is derivative, is nonsense. People say that music has to reflect the ugliness of the modern world. But you can take the ugliness of the world and through music turn it into something beautiful and you can see it has such a strong effect on people."



While producers of classical music events such as the BBC Proms, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra have made huge strides in attracting younger audiences, there is still a perception among younger generations that classical is a "stuffy, rule-ridden" world.

Deutscher said it had been a "dream" to reach young people and show them that classical music "has the best tunes and harmonies".

The composer, who started playing the piano aged two and by ten had premiered a violin concerto and an opera, said she was pleased she could not now be called a "child prodigy". "I was furious when I was called that," she said. "But I am too old now."

Not too old for TikTok though.

In music beauty should trump ingenuity, leading article, page 27

Order is restored for the man who lost his manhood

Tom Whipple

A man has spoken of his delight at having his penis restored after an operation involving a skin graft from his arm.

Malcolm McDonald, 47, spent six years with a reconstructed penis attached to his arm, awaiting an operation to move it to his groin. He said that he had given up hope of regaining his penis, and did not believe the nine-hour operation would be successful.

"The first thing I did was I looked down and I was like, 'Oh my days. They got it right this time'."

McDonald, a former alcoholic, lost his penis after a blood infection. Doctors constructed a replacement from a skin graft but had to abandon an operation in 2015 to attach it to his groin because of a lack of oxygen in the blood, possibly caused by drinking and smoking. This meant it stayed on his arm.

Having it there, McDonald told a Channel Four documentary, which was broadcast last night, made choosing clothes difficult. It also caused problems when cooking but made little difference when he played darts.

A follow-up operation, costing an estimated £50,000, was delayed in part because of the pandemic and in part because McDonald did not turn up for appointments. The operation to attach the penis was performed by surgeons at University College Hospital, in London. It will be followed up by more surgery, which will include attaching a pump in the scrotum so that he can have sex.



Malcolm McDonald had his newly constructed penis attached to his arm for six years

McDonald said it was strange coming to terms with having a penis again. "It's been 12 years. It didn't come with instructions," he said. Referring to the scar on his forearm where it used to be, he said: "It's been a nightmare but it's gone now, the little bugger, put to rest." He added that he was looking forward to a "bit of normality. I walked around for six years with a [penis] on my arm. Something to tell the grandkids".

Operations to construct penises are used in transgender people transitioning from female to male, and also in those born with intersex disorders. What marked out McDonald's experience was the length of time in which he had it on his arm. McDonald said he hoped the operation could be a turning point. "My luck in life hasn't been too good so far," he said, "but it can only go bad for so long, can't it?"

Pregnant climber won't give up in face of online 'bullies'

Nadeem Badshah

Britain's most decorated elite climber, Shauna Coxsey, has defended her decision to continue the sport while pregnant and has hit back at online "bullying".

The double World Championship bronze medallist is 38 weeks pregnant with her first child and has faced criticism on social media for her decision to keep climbing.

Coxsey, 29, who has been involved in the sport since she was three, told the BBC: "I wouldn't put my baby in danger. People think I might be able to fall and land on my stomach, which is something I have never ever done or seen happen before.

"For me to share a bit and communicate how I have gone about this pregnancy and say it is possible to keep climbing in a safe way has been really important. It's frustrating that other women are getting this judgment and choosing to give up something they love and are comfortable with because of the fear of judgment. It is bullying."



Shauna Coxsey said that the sport was not a danger to her unborn baby

Coxsey retired from competitive climbing after the sport's Olympic debut in last year's Tokyo Games, where she created history as Britain's first competitor in the event.

"People perceive me climbing as risky when I am actually climbing so well within my comfort zone," she said. "It feels way more risky for me to walk down the street. I feel much more likely to trip over on a bumpy road than I do to go up an easy climbing wall."