

BRITISH MUSIC SOCIETY

news

Spring 2021

**Live music is back
for the summer!**

*Aurora Trio to perform at
the English Music Festival*

10 pages of CD reviews

*Including reviews of
music by Walton,
Alwyn and Robert
Simpson*

**THE LIFE OF
FELIKS YANIEWICZ**

*Co-founder of
Edinburgh Festival
and composer*



Chairman's welcome

Dear Members,

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Printed News.

I'm aware that some of you will note the small amount of time between this issue and receipt of your Winter edition of the Printed News.

The timing of the latter was 'on track' before the troubled waters of Brexit at the beginning of the year created serious delays at customs when our printing crossed the channel from Germany. Then DPD 'lost' our order.

Two months later Saxoprint initiated a reprint at no extra cost to the Society so we achieved our goal eventually!

Please note the date and time of our next AGM, again on Zoom owing to the continued uncertainty this year of events involving gatherings of people and travel being involved: Wednesday September 15, 2-4pm. The link for this meeting will be provided in the summer Printed News.

As you will see on this page, the BMS will be making a video documentary about composers John McCabe and John Joubert. Many of their friends and colleagues have been in touch with offers of interviews, performances and memorabilia.

I would like to thank everyone for their generous donations of time and material. Filming will commence over the coming summer months with the BMS working closely with the heirs and estates of both composers.

With all good wishes,
- Dr. Wendy Hiscocks

British Music Society committee

The committee comprises:

Wendy Hiscocks (Chairman), John Gibbons (Vice Chairman), Stephen Trowell (Treasurer), Dirick von Behr (Secretary), Dominic Daula (Journal Editor), Dr Jonathan Clinch. Advisory role: Karen Fletcher

Printed News designed by
Revolution Arts

News

British Music Society's news and events

BMS announces plans for new documentaries

The BMS has announced plans for two video documentaries on John McCabe and John Joubert, two composers who were past members of the Society.

BMS Chairman, Wendy Hiscocks will be working closely with the descendants of both composers and has been impressed by the generosity of musicians volunteering interviews and performances.

Filming will start during the summer and Wendy would be delighted to hear from any BMS member who have any kind of film footage, photographs or memorabilia relevant to these composers.

If you have relevant content, please email wendyhiscocks@btinternet.com

These film tributes are only possible because of the goodwill and devotion of all the people involved in making them.



Composers John McCabe and John Joubert

BMS is launching an opportunity for members to support this initiative and will be creating a dedicated webpage about this exciting project.

Although the people involved in making these films are donating their time and skill for free, there will still be unavoidable expenses such as train travel, petrol, equipment and copyright fees.

BMS hopes to cover the cost of these expenses by launching a members' appeal - more details to follow.

Elgar box set for sale



A mint copy of the original box set, still in its shrink wrap, of Sir Colin Davis' LSO recordings of the three Elgar Symphonies live at the Barbican and first released nearly 20 years ago is available to buy.

Long out of print, this set has now become a collector's item.

Offered on a first come first served basis, the three CDs are available for £30 including postage to the UK. If interested please email andrew.youell@btinternet.com or telephone 01608 652956.

Video series goes live



Humans of Classical Music Video Series, a new initiative from Alternative Classical, sees musicians, actors, comedians and podcasters from around the world recommend their favourite piece of classical music in a series of one minute videos.

A new video goes live every Thursday with a link to the piece on Spotify or YouTube.

This initiative has been co-founded by Hannah Fiddy (pictured above).

Marking 100 years of female composers

BMS member Madeleine Mitchell directed two concerts on International Women's Day which will include the world premiere of a new violin work by Errollyn Wallen CBE.

These two concerts presented a fantastic range of chamber music celebrating some of the finest British female composers of the past 100 years.

It embraced the passionate lyricism of Grace Williams' rarely performed large chamber works, the beautiful and finely crafted piano by Rebecca Clarke of 1921, the year of Ruth Gipps' birth and pieces by five living composers, including the Master of the Queen's Music and the world premiere of a new violin piece for Mitchell by Errollyn Wallen.

Madeleine Mitchell said: 'I think it's really important to celebrate British women with the fine music they've written over the past century, in a range of styles, some of it unjustly neglected.'

'I'm particularly thrilled to have a new work by Errollyn Wallen, which I will include on my next album.'

The programme also included the piano trio of 1921 by Rebecca Clarke – a



romantic three movement work reminiscent of Ravel; Miniatures for oboe & piano by Helen Grime MBE performed by her former RCM oboe teacher, John Anderson; and celebrating the flow of traditional music between the British Isles and North America, Master of the Queen's Music, Judith Weir's *Atlantic Drift* for two violins.

2021 is also the centenary of the birth of Ruth Gipps MBE whose music was celebrated on BBC Radio 3 Composer of the Week ahead of one of the concerts.

Other composers featured in the programme included:

- * Judith Weir, *Atlantic Drift* duo for 2 violins (1995-2006)
- * Cheryl Frances-Hoad, *Invocation for cello & piano* (1999)
- * Thea Musgrave, *Colloquy* (violin & piano, 1960).

A Nice Conundrum - composer and pianist publishes autobiography

Pianist, composer and writer Alan Poulton (pictured) has announced the publication of his autobiography *A Nice Conundrum - my life in two worlds*.

One world was in Industrial Chemicals, the other in classical music. He worked on and off as Sir Malcolm Arnold's Business and Promotional Manager until his death in 2006. Since 2014 Alan has been Chairman of the Malcolm Arnold Society.

As an only child brought up in post-war middle-class suburbia, Alan studied piano from an early age. But by the age of 18 he was sent out to work in the sales ledger department of an American tyre manufacturer.

Four years later he joined the industrial gases giant British Oxygen (BOC) climbing through a number of

senior management roles despite not having any technical qualifications.

Enforced early retirement at 52 gave Alan the opportunity to return to his musical roots and forge a new career as freelance pianist and entertainer. But once he befriended composer Sir Malcolm Arnold in 1982, life for Alan and his family would never be quite the same again...

With 554 pages and over 180 photographs & illustrations, *A Nice Conundrum* is available at £15 with post free to BMS members. To order please email alanpoulton@hotmail.com



CD offer to celebrate Thurston Dart centenaries

Saturday 6 March marked the 50th anniversary of the death of Thurston Dart and 3 September will be the centenary of his birth.

A distinguished musicologist and performer, Thurston Dart did much to revive interest in early English keyboard music in the 1950s and '60s by preparing editions and making recordings.

To commemorate these anniversaries, BMS member Martin Stafford, proprietor of the independent label Ismeron, is offering CDs of his recordings at a special discount to BMS members.

The following collection is available for a special price of £20 (normal price £10 per CD) or bought separately at £7 each.



- * English Organ Music on four historic organs (1957)
- * Complete clavichord recordings of Bach and Purcell (1961/1958)
- * Froberger and early English pieces (1961/1954).

Also available are other discounted CDs from the catalogue including:

- * E.J. Moeran: Complete Piano Works (Eric Parkin) – £8
- * Geoffrey Bush: Piano Works (Eric Parkin) – £4
- * William Croft: Complete Harpsichord Works (Julian Rhodes) – two CDs £16
- * Robert Still: Chamber Works and Songs – £6
- * Hindemith plays Hindemith – viola and piano for RCA, 1939 – £5.

Full details of all nine releases, including sound samples, can be found at www.ismeron.co.uk

Postage and packing costs are as follows:

- UK postage included in the price
- Europe (one or two CDs) – £3
- Outside Europe – £4.30
- Australia and New Zealand – £5.30

For enquiries and orders please email orders@ismeron.co.uk

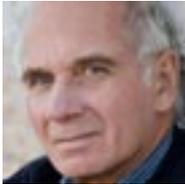
Dame Fanny Waterman dies

It is with regret that we announce the sad death of Dame Fanny Waterman on December 20th at the age of 100. She will be remembered as the co-founder with Marion Thorpe of the Leeds International Piano Competition in 1963. Indeed, her name became synonymous with that city, and Leeds will certainly be the poorer without her.



Aldeburgh artistic director dies

Conductor Stuart Bedford had died at the age of 81. He was best known as Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival from 1974 to 1988 and gave the world premiere of *Death in Venice*, as well as making its first recording, and was in demand as a conductor of many of Britten's other operas.



RCM professor Ross Winters has died

We regret to announce the death of Ross Winters at the age of 69. As Professor of Recorder at Royal College of Music, he inspired a whole new generation of recorder players, many of whom can be heard on the CD *English Recorder Music: The Dolmetsch Legacy* which includes a programme of music by Rubbra, Scott, Gordon Jacob, Antony Hopkins and others.



Malcolm Binns celebrates birthday

The celebrated pianist Malcolm Binns, who is also a member of the BMS, celebrated his 85th birthday on 29 January.



We are sure members would have wished him very many happy returns and send their best wishes.

Elaine Hugh-Jones dies aged 93

The renowned song-composer Elaine Hugh-Jones died in her sleep at 1am on Monday 29th March, aged 93.

Born in London, she started playing the piano at four, but lessons were disrupted when her parents divorced and she had to live with her mother at the Solway Firth near Carlisle.

It was with the assistance of Dr. Frederick Wadeley at Carlisle Cathedral that Elaine gained both the LRAM and ARCM diplomas at the age of 18.

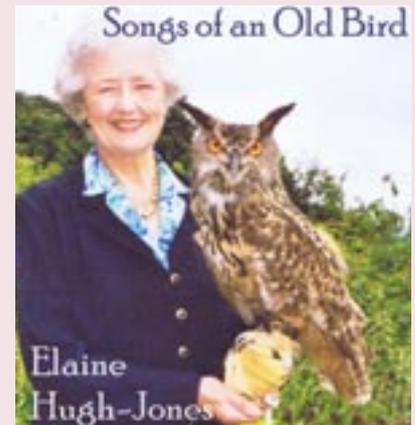
That same year (1945) was fortuitous in that she was asked to accompany a soprano friend for a BBC audition in Manchester – and was herself invited to become a BBC Accompanist!

This work, primarily for the Midland Region Birmingham studios, included TV appearances on 'Pebble Mill at One' accompanying guest singers throughout the 1970's and 80's.

During the late 1940's, Elaine had been able to perfect her piano playing with Harold Craxton and the emigre' Russian pianist Julius Isserlis, becoming briefly engaged to his son George before her mother stepped in to prevent it going further. On the advice of Hans Keller she studied composition with Lennox Berkeley who helped her polish and perfect her individual style.

Her first songs date from 1961: '2 Poems of Robert Graves', but four songs from her first major cycle: *8 Songs of Walter de la Mare* were featured in a broadcast in 1968, for which Elaine accompanied the tenor Philip Russell. This cycle would continue to evolve until 1989. Also during this period Elaine was able to get her songs broadcast with Pamela Bowden, Philip Russell and John King; more recent singers championing Elaine's work include the late Jane Manning ("It is a rare and special pleasure to discover a major song writer."), Elizabeth Watts, Fiona Kimm, John Potter, Brendan McBride, Velma Guyer, Diana Moore, Claire-Louise Lucas, James Gilchrist and Roderick Williams. Her work has also been appreciated by fellow composers and personal friends, including Ian Venables, Anthony Payne and John Rushby-Smith.

Outside of BBC work Elaine worked as a music mistress, firstly at Derby High School from 1949, Kidderminster High School from 1955, and then Malvern Girl's College from 1963 onwards until retirement in 1997. Malvern gave her the opportunity to have some of her six choral pieces performed, of which three are published by OUP: *Chanticleer*, *The Song of God is Born for All*, and *Torches*



very different in character from John Joubert's renowned setting but equally as effective.

Elaine was grateful for John's practical advice over the orchestration of her song-cycle *The Unreturning* (Songs of War by Wilfred Owen) – four settings for Tenor and Orchestra, which won First Prize in the English Poetry and Song Society Competition of 2004. Since then her songs have been recorded on CD by Velma Guyer (with pianist Martine Jacques) and baritone David Hackbridge Johnson (currently in preparation).

Elaine's songs have featured in concerts in USA (5), Norway, Germany, France and Italy, and in the UK at the Ludlow English Song Festival in 2013. Very recently a sizeable selection of her songs featured recently in an concert given in the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama called *Forgotten Voices* given by several highly promising students – connecting the link with Elaine's Welsh family background.

I got to know Elaine personally later in the 1980's when I assisted with transcribing some of her off-air broadcasts to digital format – some of which she released privately for friends on a CD entitled: *Songs of an old Bird* (see illustration)! Her piano touch was always immaculate and sensitive and her dedication to her creative art total; she also had a wide understanding of spiritual and philosophical matters which we enjoyed discussing together.

As well as OUP, Elaine's songs are published by Hildegard Publishing (Philadelphia) and in the UK by Caradoc Press – whose website contains an excellent obituary (with some lovely photos) – and to whom all enquiries about her songs should be addressed.

ELAINE HUGH-JONES, 1927 – 29 March 2021. – **Michael Jones**

Fury at Brexit blow to touring musicians

Many media outlets have been reporting that musicians from all genres are furious that the imposition of red tape and visa fees will mean that working in Europe will simply not be viable for many performers, *writes Nicholas Keyworth.*



British musicians from Sir Elton John to Sir Simon Rattle have accused the government of 'shamefully failing' the country's performers with its recent Brexit deal.

Pop and rock figures from Ed Sheeran to the Sex Pistols have joined classical performers such as Nicola Benedetti and composer Judith Weir, master of the Queen's music, to denounce a Brexit agreement they claim will make Europe a no-go zone for musicians.

The UK government has rejected calls to pursue a waiver scheme that would allow British musicians to tour the EU without the need for visas, customs waivers and work permits for each individual member state.

A letter signed by more than 100 artists and published in The Times recently called on the government to negotiate paperwork-free travel for British musicians touring in Europe.

The letter which was coordinated by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) Chief Executive, Deborah Annetts, said:

'It is essential for the government to negotiate a new reciprocal agreement that allows performers to tour in Europe for up to 90 days, without the need for a work permit.'

Caroline Dinenege had said that the EU's 'very broad' offer 'would not have been compatible with the government's manifesto commitment to take back control of our borders. She said 'the door is open' if the EU were willing to consider the UK's proposals to reach an agreement for musicians.

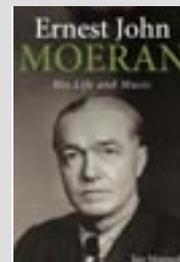
However, a series of reports in the Guardian state that the UK government's proposals were 'not fit for purpose'. According to an EU spokesperson this 'would not solve the problem of British musicians having to negotiate individual visa requirements with each member state.'

The Musicians' Union (MU) has also been lobbying for the creation of a 'musicians' passport' to facilitate touring.

A change.org petition supporting such a proposal has already been signed by over 155,000 people.

Moeran biography to be published in June

A long-awaited study of the life and music of Anglo-Irish composer Ernest John Moeran (1894-1950) is to be published providing a full biography of the last senior figure in early 20th century British Music to have been without one.



Published by Boydell & Brewer, Dr Ian Maxwell of the University of Sheffield's biography: *Ernest John Moeran: His Life and Music* will be published in June.

This will be the first and only full-scale biography of a British composer whose life has hitherto been obscured by misunderstanding and misconception.

Find out more at Boydell and Brewer's website.

A warm welcome to new BMS members

We welcome new members from across the world who have joined the Society in recent weeks.

New members include:

- * Mark Jacques (Perth)
- * Harry Kneeshaw (London)
- * Michael Matthews (Norfolk)
- * William McCarthy (Devon)
- * Simon Padday-Barrow (Edinburgh)
- * Benjamin Sars (Switzerland).

If you are not yet a member of the society, please consider joining us.

BMS member Eric Wetherell dies aged 95

BMS member Eric Wetherell has died aged 95.

In the words of his daughter: 'He was a remarkable all-round musician, a fine composer, well respected conductor, as well as a dearly loved husband, father and grandfather.'

Wetherell studied at Queen's College Oxford and later with Gordon Jacob, Harold Darke and Herbert Howells.

He played French horn with several British orchestras, and regularly conducted the various BBC staff orchestras as well as serving as Musical Director of Harlech Television for six years.



For several years he was conductor of the BBC Northern Ireland Orchestra and his enthusiasm for jazz led him to the BBC Big Band.

He was Senior Musical producer at Radio 3 until his retirement.

A number of biographies were commissioned from him; these included the British 20th century composers Gordon Jacob and Patrick Hadley, and the great British violinist, Albert Sammons.

For the BMS, he contributed a small book on Arnold Cooke which was published in 1996.

He contributed entries on all four to the latest edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

What's on GSOpera.tv



The new Gilbert & Sullivan streaming channel gsopera.tv has announced its catalogue of upcoming productions which include:

*** The Magic of Gilbert and Sullivan**

A series of Monday lectures from the 2014 Magic of Gilbert and Sullivan symposium – each giving insight into the works of Gilbert and Sullivan and the context the operas were written in..

*** Competing Amateur Productions**

Every Friday the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival will announce winners, runners-up and other fabulous productions from the Festival Competition – where amateur groups from all over the world come to the Festival to compete for the International Festival Trophy.

*** The National Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company**

Wednesday's will see a new release of one of the exceptional productions from the world class, professional National G&S Opera Company

*** Sunday Shorts**

Bitesize G&S merriment is on offer every Sunday with exclusive interviews, G&S Singalongs and rarely produced WS Gilbert plays.

Find out more about GSOpera.tv.

Osian Ellis dies at 92



Osian Ellis, one of Britain's most widely respected harpists, died on January 6th at the age of 92.

Born in 1928, he was principal harp of the London Symphony Orchestra, a member of the Melos Ensemble, and a professor at the Royal Academy of Music.

He was particularly associated with the music of Benjamin Britten, having commissioned his *Suite for Harp*, and also played the important harp part in *A Ceremony of Carols* many times.

Among his best selling recordings over the years, were the Ravel *Septet* with the Melos Ensemble (Oiseau-Lyre) and the Gliere Harp Concerto with Richard Bonyngne and the LSO (Decca). He also recorded Welsh traditional songs accompanying himself on the harp.

Picture credit: Osian Ellis by Richard Williams

In Memoriam: Chris Bye

It is with much sadness that we inform members of Chris Bye's death on March 8 aged 69 shortly after being diagnosed with cancer.

His wife Annette said that Chris gained much pleasure from listening to classical music and in writing his reviews for the BMS monthly E-News.

His application on the Society's behalf to Historic Environment Scotland for a plaque dedicated to Arnold Bax at the Morar Hotel was successful and it was only the arrival of Covid 19 that postponed its unveiling in April last year.

Many people beyond the BMS will miss Chris.

His former chief photographer Mike Cowling at the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, where Chris acted as editor from September 1987 to January 1999, described him as "very dynamic and focused. He instilled enthusiasm. It was fun working with him".

Tony Watson, another former editor, pointed out that Chris "was passionate about Leeds and its people and used the power of the newspaper to campaign on causes they cared about".



This included his heroic effort in securing his newspaper's sponsorship at the last minute of Leeds United and his support of the Wheatfields and St. Gemma's hospices for whom £1.7 million was raised.

In Annette's words: "He had a keen wit and sense of humour, he swam against the tide, a maverick, he stood up to authority, he challenged.

'A true gentleman, erudite, well-read, lover of the arts. He was the most loving, devoted husband."

At Annette's request, Petroc Trelawny played Vernon Handley's recording of Bax's *Spring Fire* on his BBC Radio 3 breakfast programme in memory of Chris. A fitting tribute.

- Dr Wendy Hiscocks

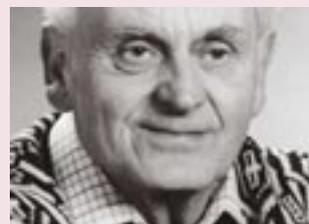
Margaret Catchpole opera to be released by Naxos

A new recording of the opera *Margaret Catchpole* by British composer Stephen Dodgson (pictured right) is being released on Naxos.

Recorded at Snape Maltings last year, the opera tells the story of Suffolk heroine, criminal and chronicler Margaret Catchpole.

With Stephen Dodgson's evocative music and vivid characterisation, we are immersed in the internal battle between Margaret's own good character and values, and her heartfelt loyalty to Will Laud, a smuggler – the man she loves.

Two other works by Stephen Dodgson are also being



released on a beautiful new CD of solo harp music.

The Curious Harp features a programme of mainly unrecorded British music for solo harp performed by the distinguished harpist Eleanor Hudson, and includes Dodgson's *Ballade* and *Fantasy for Harp*.

You can find out more at Stephen Dodgson's website.

Live music returns at English Music Festival

Live music returns this Spring as the English Music Festival brings a star-studded programme of British Music to the stage over the Bank Holiday weekend 28 - 31 May.

Festival director Em Marshall-Luck said: 'We increasingly realise how inestimably important live music-making is for some people, and how heavily they rely upon it for their emotional, social, mental and spiritual health and well-being'.

The Sussex town of Horsham plays host to this 14th festival which celebrates the brilliance, innovation, beauty and rich musical heritage of Britain.

Performers include the internationally-renowned baritone, Roderick Williams performing with pianist Michael Dussek and the Bridge Quartet.

Midlands-based Orchestra of the Swan under their conductor David le Page, bring a programme of sparkling string works by Warlock, Leigh, Holst, and Ireland together with Vaughan Williams' rarely heard Concerto Accademico.

Enthusiasts of English song are well provided for with recitals of music ranging from Purcell to Tippett which will be performed by singer Lucy Steven, baritone Gareth Brynmor John and pianist Elizabeth Marcus.



Followers of Chamber music will enjoy the likes of Ensemble Hespri, the Aurora Trio and the Armonico Consort.

One of the highlights must be the world première performance of Edgar Bainton's Variations and Fugue in B minor performed by Rupert Marshall-Luck and Duncan Honeybourne.

In lighter vein, regular Festival favourites, the New Foxtrot Serenaders, perform effervescent works by Ivor Novello, Noel Coward and Flanagan and Allen.

Informative and entertaining talks, setting the composers and their music in context, will also take place with speakers including cellist Joseph Spooner, musicologist and conductor Dr Joseph Fort and composer Paul Lewis.

Full details and tickets are available by calling 07808 473889 or www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk



The New Foxtrot Serenaders (top) and The Aurora Trio will be performing

Exclusive content now available to members online

Members can now access exclusive content on the website including back issues of BMS Printed News.

To access this content and to keep your personal details updated members need to do the following:

* Go to britishmusicsociety.co.uk and click on Members on the top right.

* Under Login type your email address (the one you normally use for BMS).

* Type in your Password if you have already registered here before. If you don't have one or have forgotten it simply click on Lost your password

* You will receive an email which includes a link to enable you to reset your password.

* Once you have logged in you can update your membership details in the members area.

* You can also access additional content which is not available to non-members. To start with go to Publications on the top menu bar and visit BMS News where you can view and download past copies of our printed news for free from 2018.

New content is being added all the time so remember to explore the website regularly to get the most out of your membership.

If you have any issues email secretarybms@outlook.com

New Journal Editor needed by Society

Our present Journal Editor

Dominic Daula has informed the Society that he will be stepping down from this role after production of the 2021 Journal is complete at the end of this year.

The Society is very grateful for the long hours and dedication Dominic has devoted to this publication and his professional manner when taking on the task at a difficult moment in its history deserves our sincere appreciation.

The Committee now invites members to contact the Secretary Dirick von Behr to express an interest in the role of Journal editor at secretarybms@outlook.com



Feliks Yaniewicz

As Britain severs its political ties with Europe to the dismay of many musicians, this seems an important moment to reflect on how much British musical culture owes to the continent. Freedom of movement for musicians has fostered a process of cultural cross-fertilisation which has a long and deep history.

While music hailed as British has often been celebrated as distilling something native to these islands, in truth even composers most closely associated with this strand of our musical culture have continental roots. When we sing 'I vow to thee my country' we are reaping the fruits of Gustav Holst's Swedish, German and Latvian musical ancestry.

Britain has long welcomed musical migrants, and some of our most cherished musical traditions (I write this in December to the sound of Handel's Messiah) have sprung from the welcome that this country has afforded over the centuries to composers and performers from the continent.

I have been reflecting on all this while discovering the life story of my great-great-great-grandfather Feliks Yaniewicz, a Polish-Lithuanian violin virtuoso and composer, who came to this country in the late eighteenth century and co-founded the first Edinburgh Music Festival in 1815.

When I was growing up, his striking portrait hung in my grandmother's cottage, looking – I fancied – rather like a cross between the young Beethoven and Mr Darcy. Among his surviving possessions, passed down the generations and scattered among different branches of the family, are a set of silver forks bearing his crest – a mailed arm brandishing a curved sword with the motto 'Pro Lithuania' – and an inlaid double violin case (now in the museum of historical instruments at St Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh) which once contained a Stradivarius and an Amati.

This was an intriguing piece of family mythology, but it was only recently that I was prompted to discover the trail of evidence leading back to the man behind the portrait, and to learn how Yaniewicz came to make Britain his home.

It all began just over a year ago when, quite by chance, I came across an advertisement for a square



piano dated c.1810 bearing the label Yaniewicz and Green. Inside the piano, Yaniewicz's signature in Indian ink has been matched with the signatures on my ancestor's marriage certificate and on a surviving letter.

The instrument had turned up a few years earlier in a shabby condition in a house in Snowdonia, where it was discovered by Douglas Hollick who bought it for restoration.

Now returned to its original handsome condition and in beautiful working order, the piano is the focus of a crowdfunding campaign to be launched this month, to bring it to Edinburgh as the centrepiece of an exhibition in 2022 at the Georgian House museum, telling Yaniewicz's story and offering a fascinating insight into the cosmopolitan roots of musical culture in Georgian Britain.*

Born in Vilnius (then part of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth), Yaniewicz began his career as a violinist in the Polish Royal Chapel.

Impressed with the young player's brilliance, King Stanisław August Poniatowski arranged for him to travel to Vienna where he met Haydn and Mozart.

When Mozart heard Yaniewicz play the violin, he was greatly impressed; Otto Jahn in his *Life of Mozart* considered that his lost *Andante in A major K.470* may have been composed for Yaniewicz.

Michael Kelly, a famous tenor of the time, wrote that while in Vienna he was privileged to hear two of the foremost performers on the violin in the world, one of them being Yaniewicz, 'a very young man, in the service of the King of Poland; he touched the instrument with thrilling effect, and was an excellent leader of an orchestra.'

His concertos always finished with some pretty Polonaise air; his variations were truly beautiful.'

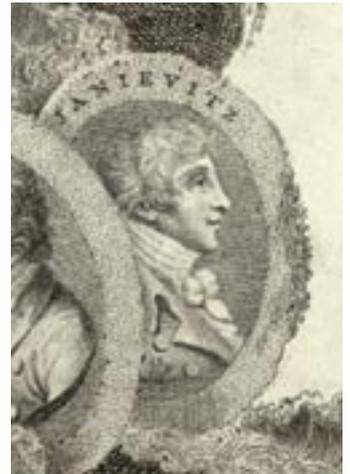
Yaniewicz subsequently travelled to Italy and from there to Paris, where he made his debut on 23 December 1787, performing on the violin at the *Concert Spirituel*.

A mid-nineteenth century encyclopaedia of music evokes the political upheavals which interrupted the rise of his career in France: 'Whilst in Paris, where he was particularly noticed by several members of the royal family, the French revolution broke out, and soon after the sun of Polish liberty set, perhaps forever.'

Amidst the tempest of political commotion which involved the ruin of Stanislaus and the dismantlement of Poland, Yaniewicz's fortunes were involved in the general wreck.'

He fled to Britain, where he would spend the rest of his life.

In London Yaniewicz played in Salomon's orchestra conducted by Haydn, and towards the end of Haydn's first visit to London played solo concertos at the Hanover Square Rooms in 1792.



Performing in Bath later that year, he was hailed as ‘the celebrated Mr Yaniewicz’ and now spelling his name (hitherto Janiewicz or, on a visiting card which survived as far as a family inventory dated 1925, ‘Janowicz, Count Felicien Stadwici’) with the anglicised Y which he adopted for the rest of his life.



Yaniewicz subsequently moved to Liverpool – by then a fashionable metropolis built on wealth from the slave trade – where he met and married Miss Eliza Breeze in 1799. He was described in the *Monthly Mirror* in March 1800 as a man who ‘combined the utile with the dulce. He is married at Liverpool; leads the concerts; and is (à la Liverpool) a man of business.’

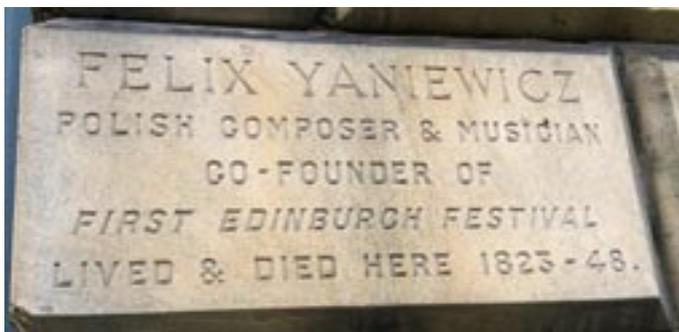
In 1801 he opened a warehouse for musical instruments in Lord Street, which was to become one of two premises for his business (the other in London), in partnerships with John Green and a London pianoforte maker, Thomas Loud.

By the time these partnerships were dissolved and Yaniewicz setting up new premises of his own, an advertisement in January 1812 announced ‘New Music Rooms and Piano-forte Warehouse in Lord Street, LIVERPOOL: ‘an entirely new assortment of grand and square pianos... including Clementi & Co, Broadwood, Stodart, Tomkinson etc with upwards of 50 on sale at any time...’ testifying to a sizeable business operation. His final partnership was with a flautist, Gaspard Weiss, who ran the Liverpool operation until it was finally dissolved in 1817.

Yaniewicz’s London base was in Leicester Square, where in 1810 he used a subscription concert series to promote his business and court wealthy patrons: instruments for sale were to be played by ‘first professors’, while his house offered ‘suitable and spacious apartments for the Nobility and Gentry who may honour him with their patronage’.

In 1813, he became a founder member of the Philharmonic Society; predating London’s first permanent orchestras, it brought together thirty prominent musicians endeavouring to cooperate rather than compete on London’s busy musical scene. A notable concert in 1814 saw Yaniewicz mounting the first British performance of Beethoven’s oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*.

Yaniewicz had begun performing in Edinburgh in 1804, in the subscription concerts organised by Domenico Corri (an Italian who had moved in 1771 to Edinburgh to direct the concerts of the



Edinburgh Musical Society in the new St Cecilia’s Hall). His performance in a benefit concert in the Theatre Royal in 1804 was hailed by an enthusiastic reviewer as ‘a perfect masterpiece of the art. In fire, spirit, elegance and finish, Mr Yaniewicz’s violin concerto cannot be excelled by any performance in Europe’.

In 1815 he moved to Edinburgh, and co-founded the first Edinburgh Festival which took place in October and November, with an impressive list of aristocratic patrons. Yaniewicz led the orchestra in an ambitious programme featuring Haydn’s *Creation*, Handel’s *Messiah*, and symphonies and concertos by Haydn, Mozart

and Beethoven. After Corri’s retirement in 1816 he became Edinburgh’s chief concert promoter, instituting a series of morning concerts of chamber music for the leisured upper classes ‘attended by a numerous and fashionable audience’.

Yaniewicz’s farewell concert was in 1829, at the age of 67. He remained in Edinburgh until his death in 1848, living at 84 Great King Street, where a cornerstone still marks his residence.

Around 1845, his violins were sold, perhaps to clear remaining debts from his musical enterprises (a surviving letter written from Bath in 1822 gives an insight into the financial risks associated with his operations as an impresario, negotiating subscription ticket prices for a concert series in the hope of covering the expenses of the great Mme Catalani, a famous soprano of the day who commanded enormous fees).

The violins are mentioned in a family inventory of 1925, drawn up by Yaniewicz’s grandson, the architect Charles Harrison Townsend. An entry on the inlaid double violin case, which survived in his possession, recounts the story: ‘His Strad he sold for £60, about 1845. See his own letter on the subject...’

This violin was (so says the violin-expert A Hill of Bond Street – who knows it well) a celebrated instrument, and is now in the possession of a New York collector, well known to Hill. His Amati was ruffled for, and produced, 40 guineas!’ The instruments have yet to be traced, but it is intriguing to wonder who is now playing the violins that thrilled his audiences two centuries ago.

Despite his impact on British musical life in the Georgian period, Yaniewicz’s music is now little known outside Poland, though his compositions represent a significant contribution to the repertoire of the period, with their unique fusion of classical influences from Haydn and Mozart with elements of Polish folk music. Most important are his five violin concertos written between 1788 and 1803, which have been recorded by the Polish violinist Zbigniew Pilch.

As Douglas Hollick has observed, ‘His violin concertos demonstrate [Yaniewicz’s] prodigious technique, with a love of fluent melody, and an unusual ability to play in double octaves. His atmospheric use of Polish melodies gives them a unique quality.’ Yaniewicz also wrote a piano concerto, orchestral divertimenti, six string trios, a sonata for pianoforte and violin, a Polish Rondo for pianoforte, and many arrangements such as *The Ladies Collection of Pianoforte Music*, designed to suit the tastes of his fashionable clientele.

The forthcoming exhibition in 2022 at the Georgian House museum in Edinburgh (to include a recital on the Yaniewicz & Green square piano) will celebrate Yaniewicz’s remarkable contribution to British musical culture. If funding can be found for a performance of his violin concertos, it will highlight his more enduring legacy as a composer, and allow 21st century audiences to hear once again the music of one of the great violinists of his age.

The last word belongs to the author of *Noctes Ambrosianae*, published in Blackwoods Magazine in 1826: ‘Let Yaniewicz, and Finlay Dun and Murray, play solos of various kinds – divine airs of the great old masters, illustrious or obscure – airs that may lap the soul in Elysium. Let them also, at times, join their eloquent violins, and harmoniously discourse in a colloquy: they are men of taste, feeling, and genius.’

It is good to think that in Elysium at least, music-making is truly cosmopolitan. Whatever our future holds for relations with Europe, may we continue to offer a warm welcome to migrants like Yaniewicz, who have done so much to enrich our musical culture.

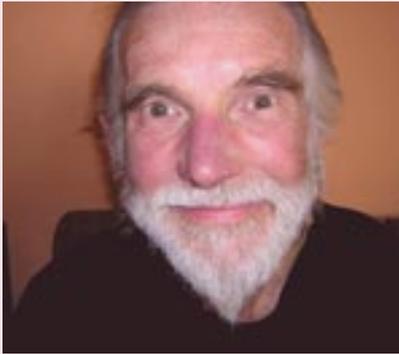
– Josie Dixon

* While restoring the piano, Douglas Hollick began an investigation into Yaniewicz’s life, aided by the archivist Christine Barnes, and editor Elizabeth Rees; his article published by the Dolmetsch Foundation in *The Consort* journal offers a fascinating insight into Yaniewicz’s life. This article is greatly indebted to their research.

Farewell to leading figures from the musical world

RICHARD STOKER

(8 November 1938 - 24 March 2021)



After encouragement from Arthur Benjamin and Benjamin Britten, Stoker went on to study under Lennox Berkeley at the RAM, where he eventually became a Professor of Composition for 26 years.

Although his main instrument was the piano, he was also a guitarist and a prolific composer. He wrote operas, a piano concerto, three string quartets, three piano trios, song cycles, orchestral works and a huge amount of choral music. He was certainly prolific.

In later life he was also an actor, appearing in many film and television productions. He also found time to write novels, poetry and plays - truly a Renaissance man of his own time.

SIMON BAINBRIDGE

(30 August 1952 - 2 April 2021)

He was Head of Composition at the RAM from 1999-2007 and also Professor of Composition at the University of Louisville, Kentucky. He won the British Composers Award in 2016. He was married to the soprano and teacher Lynda Richardson.

LADY VALERIE SOLTI

(19 August 1937 - 31 March 2021)



Born Valerie Pitts in Leeds, she spent many years at the BBC as an announcer.

She was the widow of Sir Georg Solti to whom she was married for 30 years from 1967 until his death in 1997.

She will be remembered especially for her patronage of the World Orchestra for Peace which

she and her husband founded, and for her extensive charity work with many musical organisations.

After her husband's death, Lady Solti and her two daughters, Gabrielle and Claudia, continued the work of the Solti Foundation which gives practical assistance to young musicians at the beginning of their careers.

JANE MANNING OBE

(20 September 1938 - 31 March 2021)

Jane Manning was one of the most influential singers of our time. She specialised in contemporary music, but was equally at home in music from all periods.

In 1968 she formed Jane's Minstrels with her husband, Anthony Payne, and the group performed not only music by Purcell, Elgar, Bridge and Grainger, but also Webern and Schoenberg - "Pierrot Lunaire" was a regular favourite of hers.

Many composers regarded it as a privilege to write for her and these included James MacMillan, Oliver Knussen, Harrison Birtwistle, Colin Matthews, Judith Weir and Richard Rodney Bennett. She will be much missed on the British Music scene.

BASC recital

BMS members can see online the postponed December 12 Recital 'He that dwells in Shadows' by the 2019 BASC winners as part of his London Song Festival.

Soprano Olivia Boen is accompanied by the pianist Camille Lemonnier with John Rayment as speaker.

This event was sponsored by the British Music Society Charitable Trust and includes rare songs by Gurney. See the London Song Festival Youtube channel.

Who's Who

Some of our BMS friends and members have been sorting through their photo collections over Christmas and have unearthed some interesting photographs of musicians.

Now we would like your help to identify who they are. Some we recognise but we are not sure about many of them. Can you let us know if you recognise any? If you have any answers, please email us at contact@revolutionarts.org.uk



MALCOLM ARNOLD
The Dancing Master

TBBC Concert Orchestra
John Andrews Conductor
Resonus Classics RE10269



A BBC rejection of Malcolm Arnold's only opera still leaves indelible scars after 60 years. It was one of many disappointments (both personal and professional) to befall the prolific composer who is now widely acknowledged as a master in all British classical music.

This new recording of his one-act opera, *The Dancing Master*, is a laudable attempt to give the rushed 75-minute work a renewed lease of life. It was originally proposed for television broadcast (composed in a mere two weeks!) but never really meets the level of excellence now so adored in other Arnold works. Even a flimsy storyline, built on that perpetual 'boy-meets-girl' plot, fails to grip the imagination.

Despite the consummate vocals and committed orchestral playing under the studied baton of John Andrews, the musical miracle of 'silk purse from a sow's ear' never really comes off.

This is an early work from Malcolm Arnold's extensive repertoire and there are distinct flashes of the genius that was to emerge so distinctively in subsequent years.

Nine brilliant symphonies and the famous series of totally engaging orchestral dance suites were among eminent works that brought Arnold's wide-ranging composing talent to the world. The overwhelming case for more Malcolm Arnold pieces to grace both concert halls and recording studios deservedly and relentlessly goes on. Alas, this latest release seems to add little to a very worthy cause.

There can be no doubt, however, that the highly polished instrumentalists, and six soloists on this recording give heart-and-soul commitment to what, sadly, is a basically flawed piece. Despite this, Ed Lyon (tenor), Graeme Broadbent (baritone), Catherine Carby (mezzo-soprano) and

Eleanor Dennis (soprano) make particularly note-worthy contributions

Could it be that *The Dancing Master* was hurriedly composed in a forlorn attempt to break into the up-and-coming 50's pioneering television world? Were politics the driving force rather than the pure talent of musical inspiration?

One thing for sure: this torrid argument will deservedly rage on.

- Chris Bye

ARNOLD COOKE
Chamber Music

The Pleyel Ensemble
Jonathan Rimmer flute

Janet Hilton clarinet
Heather Bills cello
Harvey Davies piano
Mike Purton Recording MPR109

In his extensive accompanying programme note, pianist Harvey Davies mentions that Arnold Cooke has been called the English Hindemithian and indeed Cooke did study composition with Hindemith from 1929 to 1932, but, as Davies says, there is much more to Cooke's compositional style than that.

The Hindemithian elements in Cooke's music include a rhythmic urgency as well as melodic and harmonic writing that is dispassionate, modern, edgy perhaps, but not atonal.

To open their performance of six chamber works by Cooke, the Pleyel Ensemble present a clear, clean performance of the Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano, D98 (1965). The first movement is bustling and eventful. Hindemithian certainly, but also with an underlying English pastoral quality.

The second movement is a scherzo with rhythmical interest well shared across the

three instruments. The slow movement is definitely pastoral.

Here the cello gets to stand out while the piano hints at the languid qualities of the Berceuse in Fauré's *Dolly Suite*. The bright fiery finale has a spirit of the dance that recalls the more folksy Bartók.

The Quartet for Flute, Clarinet, Cello and Piano D93 (1964) opens with a rhythmically crisp melodically restive Allegro.

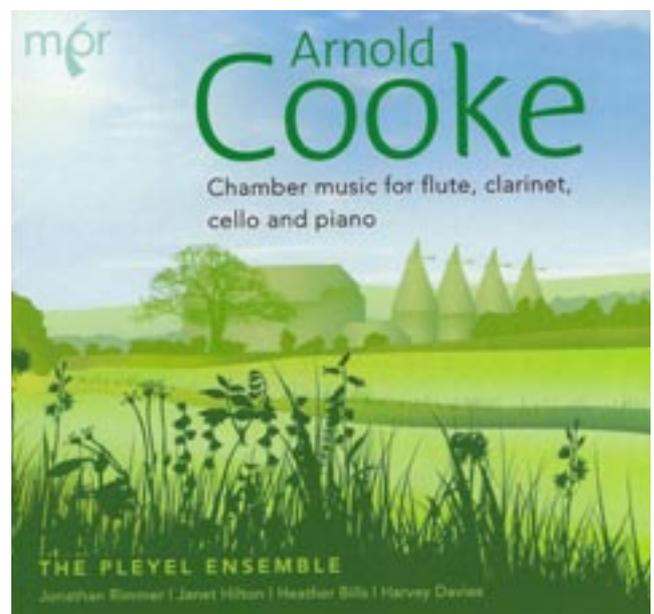
The slow movement is smooth and pastoral with the cello again being allowed to stand out. The finale is good humoured, even ribald in a finely crafted fugato. The flute often stands out atop the instrumental blend.

The other works are for one solo woodwind instrument with piano. The Sonata for Alto Flute and Piano, D156 (1985) is the latest and the most instantly attractive work. Flute and piano are beautifully well-teamed in all three movements.

The Pavane for Flute and Piano, D142 (1979) is translucent with an impressionist feel, not unlike Debussy perhaps. The Prelude and Dance for Clarinet and Piano, D142 (1979) has a similar feel to it. Cooke's love for the clarinet certainly shines through. The earliest of the pieces, *Alla Marcia* for Clarinet and Piano (1946) is simple and tuneful.

These are all outstanding first ever recordings of stunningly well-crafted chamber works. Many have been broadcast before but the Pleyel Ensemble are to be congratulated for being first to give them a more permanent afterlife on CD.

- Alan Cooper





PETER DICKINSON Chamber & Instrumental Music

Peter Sheppard Skærved violin
Roderick Chadwick piano
Kreutzer Quartet

TOCCATA TOCC 0538

Though the music in this disc stretches from *Metamorphosis* in 1955 to the 2018 revision of *Tranquillo*, both for solo violin, its focus is rather more on the earlier part of Peter Dickinson's compositional life.

The three largest works are the *Violin Sonata* and the two *String Quartets*.

The *Sonata* (1961) is one of the works written during his American sojourn and is an example of Dickinson embracing, to a degree, serialism.

Its abrasive elements, and its withdrawn, even brooding introspection are largely swept aside in an extrovert and brilliant finale with a panoply of changing metres and dynamics.

The quartets were composed nearly two decades apart. The First is compellingly terse and unresolved and has curious little figures and pizzicati, with a finale that revisits earlier material. The Second is both structurally and sonically unusual. A recording of a piano is juxtaposed with the live playing of the quartet.

The former is fragmentary, the latter beautiful, the music predominantly slow and refined, refractive. The piano gradually coalesces and becomes more cohesive and insistent in its statements, albeit unsynchronised with the quartet, until in the second very brief movement, *Rag*, the full force of its intent is unleashed. American and European traditions conjoined in a most sonically vigorous way.

Dickinson's body of music for solo violin is both richly personal and highly effective. The *Air* and *Metamorphosis* were originally written for flute, the former quietly luminous and the latter sharing its quality of raptness.

The process of metamorphosis ensures that a powerful trajectory is achieved in four minutes of evolving interest.

The *Fantasia* (1959) is quite substantial at nine minutes and encodes New York skyscrapers, but on a more concrete level also employs the serial-like devices that so attracted Dickinson at this time. Sonically compelling, it would be interesting to know if Bartók – his solo sonata in particular – was in Dickinson's mind at the time of composition.

The lullaby from the uncompleted opera *The Unicorns* is a beguiling song, the *Quintet Melody* showing again his abundant lyrical gifts. *Tranquillo*, one of the *Adagios* from his excellent *Violin Concerto* is redolent of popular song.

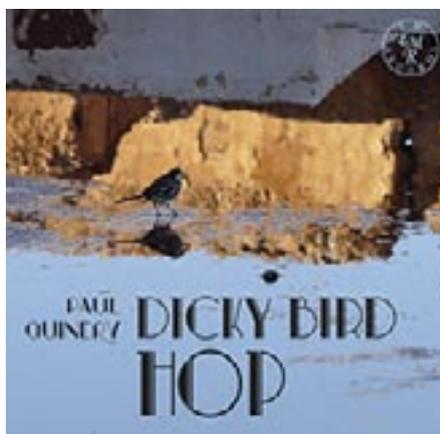
These are all first recordings in excellent sound and are played with utter conviction. Dickinson's own notes set the seal on things.

– Jonathan Woolf

DICKY BIRD HOP Light Music Classics

Paul Guinery piano

EM-RECORDS CD064



Paul Guinery is clearly a sort of 'Renaissance Man'. His warm enthusiasm for music will be familiar to anyone who listens to Radio 3, as he is an announcer (and a news reader) for the BBC.

He is chairman of the Delius Trust and has co-written *Delius and his Music* with Martin Lee-Brown. He has long been associated with the English Music Festival. And – it turns out – he is an expert pianist.

This disc is a collection of 22 tracks of the sort of easy-listening music much in vogue in the first half of the last century. If, as I remember was when young, you lived in a house where the *Light Programme* was on

a lot you will find well-remembered items from Jack Strachey's *In Party Mood* – the signature tune of *Housewives Choice*, to dimly remembered ones such as Vivian Ellis's *Alpine Pastures of My Word*.

Then there are some with which is pleasant to be newly acquainted like the three movements from Madeleine Dring's *Colour Suite*.

The strange title of the disc is a humorous novelty by Raymond Gourlay, whose music I suspect is now largely forgotten.

As a young pianist I was very familiar with the sort of light music publications produced in the era. I recall being very disappointed that the printed editions were very simple, threadbare almost, and quite unlike the renditions heard on the radio.

Mr Guinery modestly does not mention that it is obvious that he has sexed up these basic forms into concert-level items, and very engagingly too.

There are very full notes on the composers and the music in a 32-page booklet. Mr Guinery makes the point that the skill involved in producing these minor masterpieces is not to be underestimated in the same way that a well-plotted thriller may involve techniques more associated with 'literature'.

The most impressive items included are a pair of concerto-like creations which tended to be paired together on 78s (remember them?) – Hubert Bath's *Cornish Rhapsody* and Richard Addinsell's *Warsaw Concerto*, both of these pieces being music written for Romantic WW2 escapist film fantasies.

I always thought the Addinsell superior to the Bath, good though that is. It is an 'outrageous' pastiche of Rachmaninoff to be sure, but the tunes are lovely all the same.

Mr Guinery has here arranged the full score of the whole work for solo piano and it brings this fascinating disc to a barnstorming conclusion.

The final point to be mentioned is that the piano is superbly recorded in a very natural sound.

– Geoffrey Atkinson

ENTENTE MUSICALE Music for Violin and Piano

Clare Howick violin
Simon Callaghan piano

SOMMCD 0625

This carefully designed and interesting programme reflects the cultural warmth which developed in Edwardian times between France and England, a warmth fostered by the hedonistic Edward VII's personal diplomacy.

Thus, we have two major English violin sonatas and a French one, between which are sandwiched some shorter items. The major work is Ireland's first sonata in D minor.

Less well-known than his second, the spectacular success of the latter work helped draw attention to its predecessor. It won the Cobbett prize in 1909 being adjudged first out of 134 entries.

Some of these (though doubtless not all) would have been worthy efforts, but what will have distinguished the Ireland is the quality and sheer memorable-ness of its invention.

Written in the shadow of Celtic Twilight and the spooky influence of the writings of Arthur Machen, its nervous energy continually holds the attention.

The electrifying Druidic chords in the slow movement seem to colour everything which has gone both before and after. Needless to say these expert performers give a magnificent account of this piece.

The other major English work is the early sonata by Delius, never published in his lifetime. This may be partly, the liner notes suggest, because of the unusual key of B major with its five sharps. There are intriguing foreshadowings of the mature composer, but the main debt is to Grieg with some Brahmsian heft.

Again, the performance is excellent. It is pertinent to note that both Ireland and Delius were approximately the same age when they wrote these sonatas, but that Ireland has easily the most mature musical personality.

The French sonata on the disc is Debussy's spectral, death-haunted work of 1916-17. I loved the mastery of phrasing and pacing of this performance, though at times the violin seemed a little too reticent.

There are five shorter works on the disc. Cyril Scott's arrangement of *Cherry Ripe*, and a *Valse Caprice* receiving its first recorded performance. The latter is more interesting than the decidedly naff arrangement of the 18th century popular song, which, by the way, is not a folksong as the notes suggest, but a composition by one



Charles Horn – you can find the original on Google!

Two Heifetz arrangements are the other items included here. Firstly, there is Ravel's *Pièce en forme de Habanera*, and secondly Bax's early sweetmeat *Mediterranean*.

- Geoffrey Atkinson

York Bowen Fragments from Hans Andersen & Studies

Nicolas Namoradze piano
Hyperion CDA68303

The revival on CD of Bowen in recent years – not least from Hyperion – has been astonishing, although I wonder if he has yet found a wider public. (It's hard to imagine a Bowen concerto featuring at the Proms, say, let alone on the South Bank.)

Is he destined to remain a “musician's musician”? This new issue suggests that while performers of the highest calibre are increasingly drawn to his music, he may yet be destined to remain something of a marginal figure.

You might expect a Hans Andersen suite featuring titles like *The Windmill* and *Thumbelina* (nothing like Danny Kaye!) to be heavy with charm and invention, and Bowen doesn't disappoint.

The idiom is not especially Danish, but it is vividly pictorial and fluently melodic, if only rarely outright tuneful.

Occasionally I was even put in mind of Billy Mayerl at his winsome best, while the final piece achieves a sombre depth of autumnal poetic feeling.

The two Concert Studies provide brilliant finger-fodder for the virtuoso. Backward-looking and overtly Romantic in their idiom, there is nothing of the ‘English Musical Renaissance’ – or indeed most other 20th century musical movements – about them, and this may be one reason Bowen has fallen between the cracks of the repertoire.

For all the outward Romantic gestures, compared to (say) Bax or Ireland this is not confessional music; we are kept at arms' length – invited to admire without becoming especially involved.

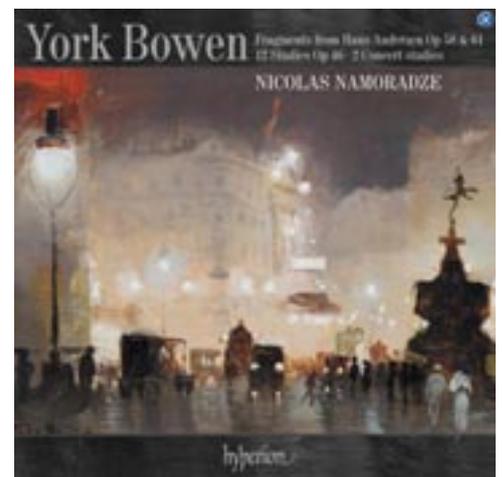
Similarly, a series of pedagogical Studies featuring titles like *For forearm rotation* and *For octave playing* might well

sound unpromising, and indeed it begins off-puttingly with a grim study in pounded lugubrious chords; but thereafter one is constantly struck by the apparently effortless ingenuity and variety with which the composer enlivens what are actually intended to be concert as much as teaching pieces, even smuggling in moments of touching repose among all the dazzling finger-work.

Nicolas Namoradze is a new name to me, but he has awards coming out of his ears, irreproachable taste, impeccable technique, and the exact measure of Bowen's sound world. The recorded sound is first-class.

This is probably not the disc for the newcomer to Bowen – that might well be Stephen Hough's recording of the superb *24 Preludes* which really do invite emotional participation. But, for anyone seeking to deepen their knowledge of Bowen's extensive oeuvre this recording merits an unquestioning recommendation.

- Kevin Mandry



CD REVIEWS

Charles Villiers Stanford Songs of Faith, Love & Nonsense

Roderick Williams baritone
James Way tenor
Andrew West piano

SOMM RECORDINGS SOMMCD0627



This generous collection of song settings by C. V. Stanford contains 33 items divided into five different sections.

Twenty-one are sung by baritone Roderick Williams, 10 by tenor James Way and there are two short piano solos played by Andrew West.

Both singers are splendid, but I was particularly impressed by the relaxed warmth of Roderick Williams, so perfectly suited to this music.

Stanford's choice of poets and their works has a great deal to do with the success of his songs. In the first section, 'Songs of Faith', the first setting, Tennyson's *Strong Son of God, immortal Love*, stands out for its clear expression of Christian belief. The other two, *God* and the *Universe and Faith* are more challenging.

In a similar way, it is the third setting of verse by Walt Whitman Joy, *Shipmate, joy!* that hits home immediately.

Three love poems by Robert Bridges are fine but the second, *I praise the tender flower* is the best.

Stanford's music, especially his gentle underlying piano accompaniments, subtly magnify the expressiveness of the texts.

Remember that Stanford was Irish by birth. Four songs on Irish themes are drawn from Stanford's romantic comedy *Shamus O'Brien*, now forgotten but popular at the time. Here there is a British soldier whose love for an Irish maid conflicts with his duties, and an Irish rebel facing his execution. Neither is out of place in our time.

The Nonsense Rhymes are settings of limericks by Edward Lear. The music is better than the poems. Here Stanford displays his broad musical knowledge.

His piano writing seizes upon music by Grieg, also Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. These all pop up. Stanford makes cruel fun of Handel and he does not seem to like Richard Strauss. It is fun for us though, playing 'name that tune!'

The final section sets five sonnets from *The Triumph of Love* with poems by the Irish poet and Schools Inspector Edmond Gore Alexander Holmes (1850 – 1936). No? Nor me. I had to look him up.

The best are *Like as the thrush in winter* and *I think that we were children*. These poems live up splendidly to their titles. Stanford's piano writing once again subtly underlines the colours of the texts.

- Alan Cooper

Reawakened Clarinet Concertos

Robert Plane clarinet
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra
Martyn Brabbins conductor

CHAMPS HILL RECORDS CHRCD160

The aim of this disc, *Reawakened*, is an attempt, in three cases, to restore to public favour forgotten clarinet concertos and, in addition, to widen the appeal and scope of the fourth work.

The first thing to say is that the performances are truly excellent and very well recorded. Mr Plane has magisterial control of his instrument, and Mr Brabbins does exceptionally good work in this repertoire.

For me, the most welcome introduction is the op.9 concerto in G minor by Ruth Gipps, a composer whose efforts seem at last to be deservedly gaining favour.

It was composed in 1940 and the music is very assured for a 19 year-old. This year was significant for her in two ways – she had just come under the tutelage of RVW (who she claimed was 'the only altogether good person she ever met'). At the same time she became engaged to the clarinetist Robert Baker.

There is a charming reflection of this happy event in the slow movement which begins and ends with an unaccompanied duet for oboe (Gipps' own instrument) and clarinet.

The music is very attractive and while mostly in good spirits also has those characteristic winning passages of a gentle reflective melancholy.

I wish I were equally impressed by the other two concertos here – those by Iain

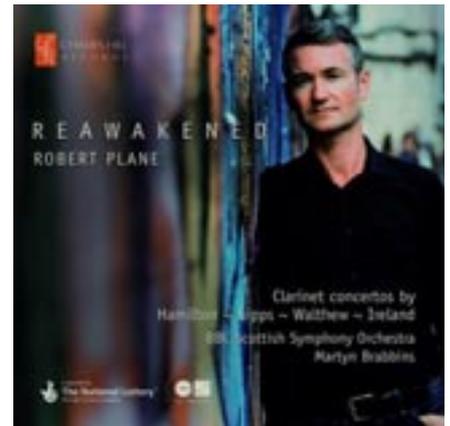
Hamilton and Richard Walthew.

The notes to the Hamilton work of 1950 refer to the influence of Bartok, Stravinski, Britten, and, allegedly, Walton, references that may have some substance, but the music is pretty noisy and dissonant, with the clarinet often jumping about like a cat on hot bricks. This idiom is clearly quite advanced for a British (? Scottish) composer in 1950.

The Walthew work is a true oddity. He was an exact contemporary and, indeed close friend of RVW, though you would not become aware of this in his music.

He left this 1902 work mostly completed but it has had to be orchestrated by Alfie Pugh. The idiom though is about 70 years out of date and sounds a bit like a third concerto by Weber with a few nods towards Mendelssohn.

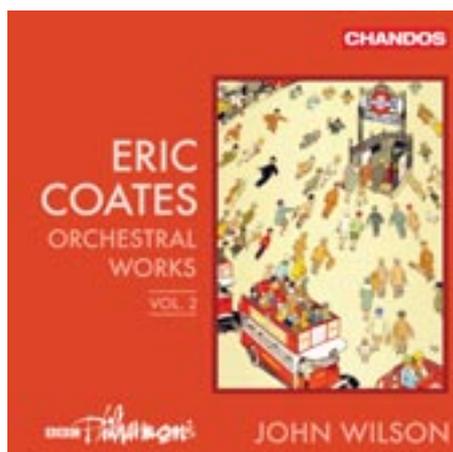
We are in much stronger territory with Ireland's Clarinet Sonata of 1943 with Graham Parlett's excellent arrangement for strings of the accompaniment. From the very first five notes we are aware that we are in the presence of a significant musical voice.



At first, I rather missed to harmonic bite of the original piano part – the dissonances are softened by string sound, but in the end, I began to very much enjoy the pastoral character of this new version. It could almost have been by Finzi.

I wonder whether the old boy would have approved.

- Geoffrey Atkinson



Eric Coates Orchestral Works Volume 2

BBC Philharmonic
John Wilson conductor

Chandos CHAN 20148

Having also triumphed with English String Music (see review) Mr Wilson demonstrates his versatility in this equally fine account of a further selection of Coates' music.

This music was undoubtedly given more exposure in first half of last century, and it is good that it is still taken seriously by at least some modern conductors.

It lies of course in a tradition of peculiarly English light music in a line from Sullivan through Edward German and Lionel Monckton.

The craftsmanship is impeccable, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, form, are all up there with the best. And some of

Coates' tunes are haunting and memorable. Listening with great pleasure to the latest offering from the above forces, it becomes clear (to me, at least) that Coates best music lies in short movements, especially those in the succession of suites – for example, *Summer Days* (as here), *London*, *London Again* and *The Three Men*, and the *Marches London Bridge* and *Calling all workers* (as here), to say nothing of *The Dambusters* (reputedly tossed off at the last moment) and *High Flight*.

As has been noted elsewhere, it just so happens most of these would fit on one side of a 12" 78. This format seems to concentrate Coates' thoughts and energy. In the longer pieces – here *The Selfish Giant*, and *The Enchanted Garden*, I find that the invention does not hold the attention strongly enough for the span involved.

On this disc the marches are perhaps the most striking – *London Bridge* is delivered with great brio. *Calling all workers* was used (er, c.16,000 times)

as the signature tune for the BBC radio programme *Music while you work*. Given that the radio was on a lot in my young life I must have heard it at a least a proportion of the figure, but, of course, on a basic radio set of that era which turns out to have formed a misleading impression as to its blandness.

Here, in dazzling Chandos sound, and with John Wilson's extraordinary energy and drive, it emerges as the equal of all those other much-loved marches.

Three shorter pieces make up the rest of the programme offered here – *Wood Nymphs*, *For Your Delight* and *Lazy Night*, all of which help build a rounded picture of this composer and his achievements.

Coates' work list is extremely impressive – check it out! There is a long way to go yet.

– Geoffrey Atkinson

David Matthews A Vision of the Sea

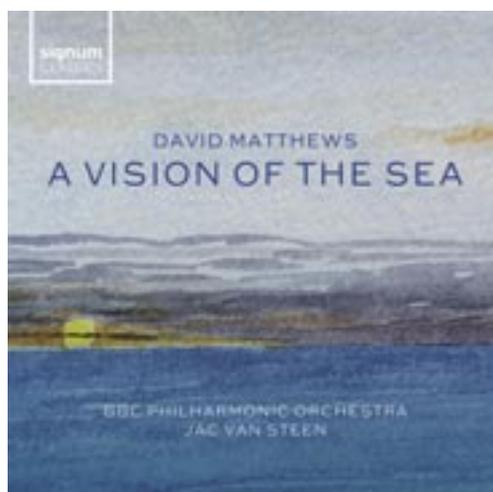
BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
Jac van Steen conductor

Signum Records SIG 647

A deeply felt affinity with nature proudly sits at the heart of David Matthews' latest collection of works, a collaboration with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and Jac van Steen, under the title *A Vision of the Sea*.

Included in the collection is the notable Eighth Symphony, Opus 131, commissioned by the BBC Philharmonic and written in 2014.

Perhaps most moving is the Adagio, con molto sentimento – an elegiac movement revealing emotional upheaval, which is dedicated to the memory of fellow Mancunian composer Normal Worrall, who died whilst Matthews was writing this.



Intensely expressive phrases open with plaintive and querulous strings and woodwind. Matthews reveals real depth of his feelings in this movement.

The contrast between the second and third movements of the Eighth Symphony is summed up by the composer:

"While I no longer feel the need to defend my use of tonality since it seems obvious now that non-tonal music has not replaced it, perhaps I should say something about my light-hearted Finale, with its use of melodic ideas that some might think naïve.

"Of course I am aware I am going very much against the zeitgeist, and that most major art today is pessimistic in tone, which given the state of the world is hardly surprising, yet shouldn't it still be possible to express feelings of delight, love of life, elation? They will inevitably be mingled with other darker moods but if we can't contrast one with the other, then surely we are not fully human."

The highlight of this recording is the symphonic poem, *A Vision of The Sea Opus 125* premiered at the Proms in 2013 by the BBC Philharmonic, originally inspired by the thoughts of Claude Debussy completing the great and popular *La Mer*.

A Vision of the Sea was written partly in London, partly in the seaside town of Deal, Kent, where Matthews composes much of his music. The first section, *Poco lento e calmo*, opens with a calm sea, and the unmistakable sound of warbling herring gulls, contrasting with the chilling, fraught Lento.

This is indeed music deeply inspired by the sea. In the words of the composer: "*A Vision of the Sea* is the third piece I have written influenced by this particular part of the English Channel, the title derives from an unfinished poem by Shelley which describes a violent storm. There is no actual storm in my piece, but I liked the title and chose two lines from the poem as an epigraph, 'Round sea birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure smile, the wide world of waters is vibrating'".

The intriguing *Toward Sunrise Opus 117*, has equal impact, inspired by the sound of the sun as recorded by scientists at Sheffield University.

Also included in this collection is the recently rewritten Sinfonia, Opus 67, dedicated to the composer's brother, Colin, on his 70th birthday "with love and admiration".

This release is certainly a worthy acquisition to any serious collection of British music.

– Chris Bye

CD REVIEWS

English Music for Strings Britten, Bliss, Bridge, Berkeley

Sinfonia of London
John Wilson conductor

CHANDOS CHSA 5254

This disc represents the latest triumph from Mr Wilson and the Sinfonia of London. Four important 'B's of English music are included with three of the works dating from the late '30's.

The playing and the recording are both simply exceptionally good. There is a thrilling immediacy to the sound and the players perform their roles with enormous commitment and enthusiasm.

Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* is first up. Again, this is a work which attracts superlatives. The young composer's technical imagination was immediately recognised as unique.

It was written at the request of Boyd Neel for the Salzburg Festival of 1937 and Neel was to remark that 'the resources of the string orchestra were exploited with a daring and invention never known before'. Nonetheless, while I find it a work to greatly admire, also, for me, it does seem a little lacking in emotional warmth.

This last quality though is certainly much in evidence in the other main work included here – Bliss's *Music for Strings of 1935*. This work is more in the tradition of VW's Tallis Fantasia and Elgar's Introduction and Allegro, with its sweeping, full-blooded invention and drive.

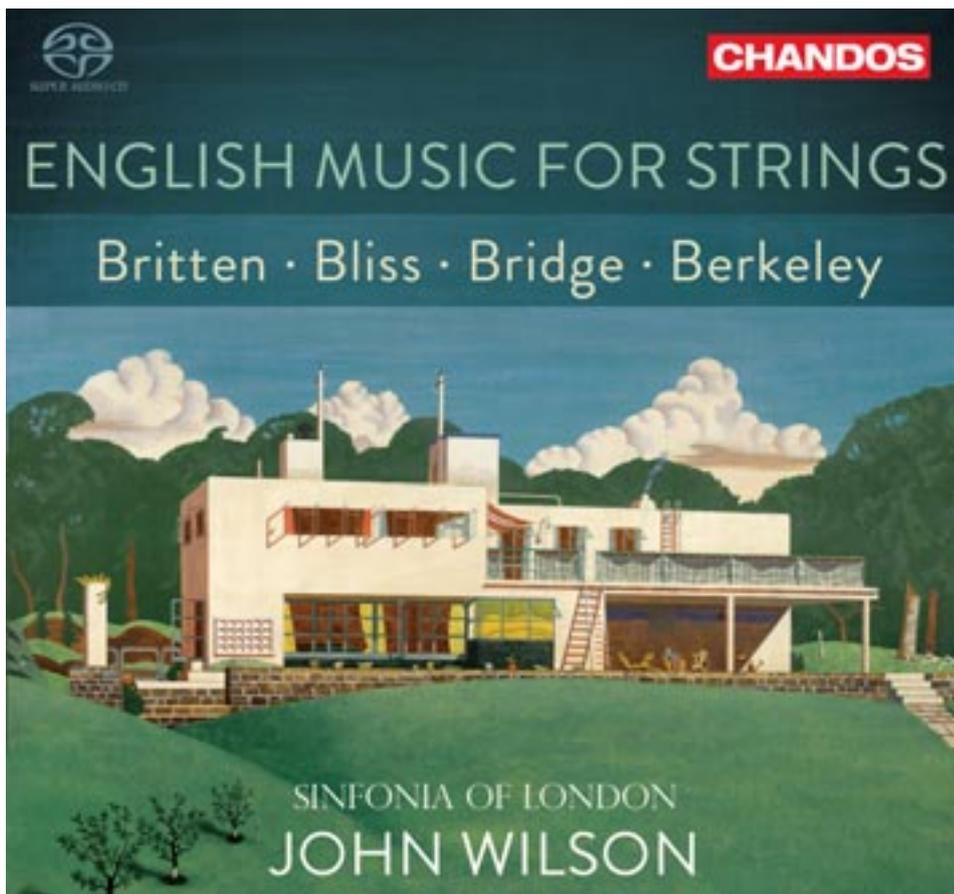
Interestingly, Bliss commented that 'I was weary of only writing music that illustrated other people's ideas, and as an antidote I started to compose a substantial piece of 'pure' music. With great success, one may add, its qualities are spectacularly recreated in this performance.

Lennox Berkeley's *Serenade for Strings* acts as a contrast to the above blockbusters. Cool and poised it is none the less very attractive. As the liner notes remark, it does exhibit an oddity though, an understandable one in the circumstances.

One might expect a 'Serenade' to conclude with a frothy 6/8, but Berkeley wrote his finale just after the start of the war in 1939, and as Peter Dickinson, in his study of the composer, remarks 'the music seems to reflect the composer's anxious mood as the world faced an uncertain future'.

And in this vein there is Frank Bridge's *Lament of 1915*, the final inclusion here, the composer's string transcription of a piano piece composed as a memorial to a family lost when the Lusitania was sunk earlier that year.

- Geoffrey Atkinson



Ralph Vaughan Williams Folk Songs Volume 2

ALBION ALBCD043

The charisma and charm that oozes and enchants its way throughout Albion's second collection of Vaughan Williams's Folk Songs is masterfully delivered here.

Fine British music and choice words combine to produce a finely balanced mix in this recording, which depicts RVW at his folklore best.

This is the second in a series of four recordings of all the English folk songs that Vaughan Williams arranged for voice and piano/violin.

Here in Volume 2 we have a total of 19 songs, including 15 world premieres: nine folk songs collected from the remote Southern Appalachian mountains by Karpeles and Sharp in 1916-18 and arranged by VW with piano accompaniment around 1938, together with two English folk songs for voice and violin and a miscellaneous selection of an additional eight folk songs.

Prize-winning pianist William Vann, together with violinist Thomas Gould (leader of Britten Sinfonia) and the three soloists, create a rustic simplicity, with wit and spirit in abundance.

Listen out for the soprano Mary Bevan's farmyard noises in

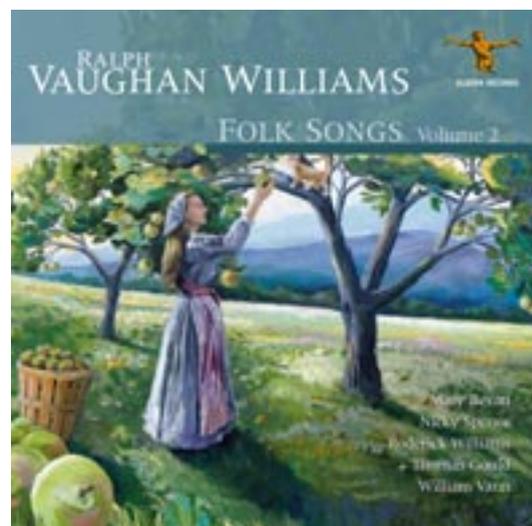
Farmyard Song, showing a feat of composure amidst much hilarity.

Tenor Nicky Spence and baritone Roderick Williams show their skill in this collection, their enjoyment is infectious.

These are songs of a distinctive craft which will soothe the hardest of souls, once again revealing the composer's passion for this genre, beautifully recorded at Henry Wood Hall, London and Potton Hall Suffolk (Albion ALBCD043).

Fundamental RVW at its best.

- Chris Bye

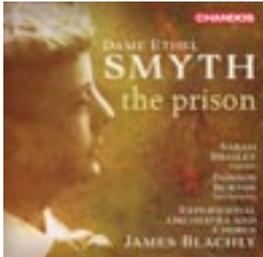


Dame Ethel Smyth
The Prison

Experiential Orchestra and Chorus
James Blachly conductor
Sarah Brailey soprano
Dashon Burton bass-baritone

CHANDOS CHSA5279

The Prison (1929 –30), Dame Ethel Smyth's only symphony and her last major work, is



not really a symphony in any conventional sense.

It was published as such and at that time was not alone in this category. Mahler's

Das Lied von der Erde (1908 – 09), nowadays thought of as a song cycle, was called a symphony at its first publication.

But *The Prison* is not really like a song cycle either, more like a short non-staged opera or oratorio. Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* is mentioned in the accompanying programme note as a similar work. It is for two solo singers, chorus (in its function, not unlike in Greek Drama), with full, opulent symphony orchestra.

The soloists, soprano, Sarah Brailey and bass-baritone, Dashon Burton are both masterful.

The Experiential Orchestra and Chorus, founded in New York City by conductor James Blachly, are made up of top freelancers and members of prestigious chamber ensembles. Their sound is radiant and lavish.

I did have problems with the text by H. B. Brewster (Henry Bennet). His metaphysical ideas are exceptionally arcane, and for me, difficult to understand.

The Prisoner, sung by Dashon Burton, though innocent, awaits execution. He converses with his soul, sung by Sarah Brailey.

Their ideas are echoed and developed by the Chorus. The prisoner concludes by not only accepting his fate, but welcoming it enthusiastically:

*This is no leave taking ...
Let there be banners and music!*

Well, Dame Ethel certainly gives us that aplenty, as do all the performers, but I can't say I understand why.

Dame Ethel's music amplifies the emotional sense of the words, so full of orchestral and vocal colour. There are several purely orchestral interludes, richly expressive and pictorial.

How do I describe the music itself? Late German romantic, I think. (Dame Ethel did study at the Leipzig Conservatoire).

I was strangely reminded, especially in the orchestral interludes, of the film music of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, although his scores were composed some five or 10 years later.

Both composers shared a similar musical ambience. Surely both would have been familiar with Schoenberg's lavishly romantic Gurrelieder?

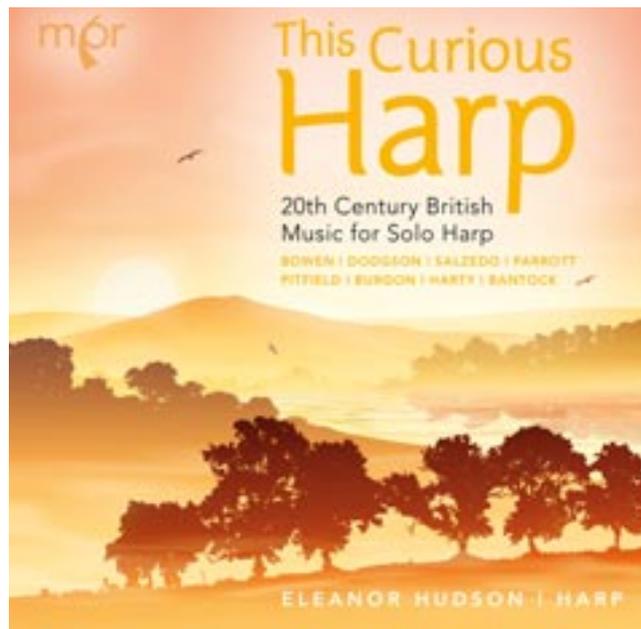
Lavish and romantic are certainly words I would use to describe this latest Chandos recording.

- Alan Cooper

This Curious Harp
20th century British Music for Solo Harp

Eleanor Hudson harp

Mike Purton Recordings MPR110



Writing for the harp needs study and sometimes guidance from a willing player, as I know from my own experience.

After a while you suddenly get the knack but it's historically been the French who have expressly developed and exploited the instrument.

It is good therefore to be reminded that British composers throughout the 20th century were also perfectly able to write idiomatically and vividly for the instrument.

One of the inspirers was Sidonie Goossens (d. 2004) and previous to that, as mentioned in John Humphries' excellent notes, there was Miriam Timothy (d. 1950).

Try to imagine a typical piece of harp music, then listen to York Bowen's *Arabesque*, once described as of 'utmost beauty' or to another work Timothy promoted, Hamilton Harty's rather sugary-sweet *Spring Fancies*, subtitled *Two Preludes*, described as 'fairy-like, graceful airs'.

Then compare those pieces with more challenging works like the two by Stephen Dodgson, a Ballade and a Fantasy. Pedal changes are always the player's nightmare and it's best to write diatonically but modern composers, like Dodgson will always feel the need to explore more complex harmony, as does Ian Parrott.

The first part of his Soliloquy and Dance explores, with great skill, bi-tonality. The second part is in a foot-tapping 15/8.

Similarly, Geoffrey Burgon, in his curiously enigmatic and pensive *Three Nocturnes*, finds much originality in his unstable harmonic language.

The harp can also be useful for a composer in the exploration of the traditional music of their own country often using forms of modality.

Leonard Salzedo's inheritance is

from Sephardic Jews, so his late work, *Tonada*, evokes a lost and sultry Iberian landscape using middle-eastern scales and melodic motifs.

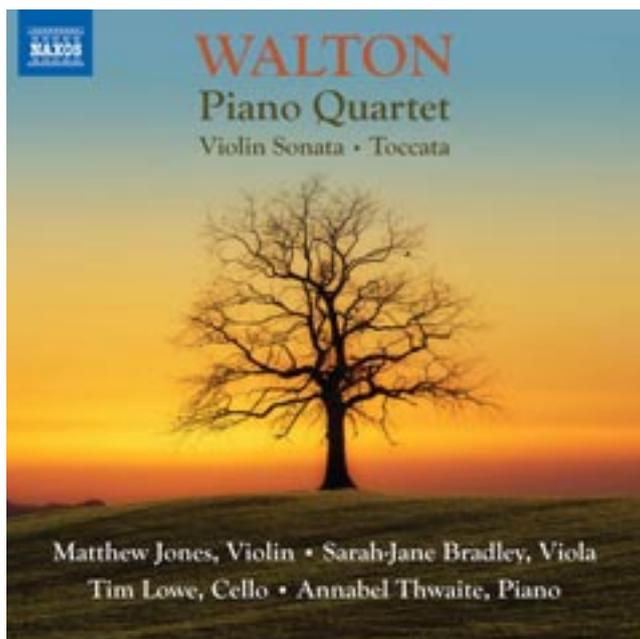
Thomas Pitfield's wife was Russian and the second of the two movements of his *Sonatina*, written for the late Welsh harpist Osian Ellis (and playable also on the Celtic Clarsach harp) is a set of simple variants on a Russian folk tune. The first movement is in a dance-like 7/8.

The remaining work is Granville Bantock's *Sapphic Dance*, the second of his *Dramatic Dances*, is the longest piece on the disc. It sounds improvisatory and indeed is inspired by the idea of Sappho improvising

on her lyre. Bantock had something like an obsession for Sappho, including composing *A Sapphic Poem* for cello and orchestra.

Eleanor Hudson is a fine advocate of this little known music, much of which is quite challenging, technically. She has been closely but atmospherically recorded.

- Gary Higginson



William Walton Piano Quartet

Matthew Jones violin
Sarah-Jane Bradley viola
Tim Lowe cello
Annabel Thwaite piano

Naxos 8.573892

Walton shows flashes of astonishing genius in this composition of his punchy four-movement Piano Quartet written in 1919 at the tender age of just 16. It is a juvenile gem from the late Romantic era.

Here riveting Waltonian moods are sublimely captured in a sparkling performance of unashamed sentimentality.

This is gripping music of real vitality and ingenuity, packed with a musical creativity which was destined to mature so convincingly in ensuing years.

After this marked beginning, Walton seldom returned to chamber music during his auspicious career.

This disc contains all the chamber music Walton composed for violin and piano duo.

The Violin Sonata is in the unusual shape of two movements, the second a theme and variations with a coda lasting for an overall 25 minutes and completed in 1949.

Here revealed is a fascinating exposure of Walton's complex musical personality. Walton later labelled the Toccata as "the product of a drooling baby."

Pianist, Annabel Thwaite is no pedestrian player but provides beautiful harmonies.

The end result benefits from vivid record engineering. This splendid budget-priced recording comes from London's Guildhall School of Music and is a real

revelation, giving an insightful impact from well-balanced individual players. A winner!

– Chris Bye

Richard Durrant Rewilding

Rewilding is available on vinyl as a limited edition gatefold with artwork by the English 'unrealist' artist, Jon Everitt.

Although there are no plans for a CD release, the album is widely available to stream or download, including hi-rez audio formats (included in the

vinyl price).

This music, written, recorded and produced by Richard Durrant, is very much a studio production.

I have included just some of the instruments played by Richard Durrant and Brian Gulland. There are many more in both cases, but those I have included will tell you the kinds of sounds to expect.

It is hard to classify this music. It has strong flavours of traditional folk music, early music perhaps, and film or television music too.

It is fresh, attractive and easy to listen to. The playing manufactured in the studio is of exceptionally high quality, at least that's how it sounds.

The record is divided into two

halves, the first has four pieces under the overall title *Above Ground*, the second, with three pieces, is *Below Ground*. Some of the titles need explanation.

The first, *Aurochs*, refers to an extinct breed of cattle from which our modern breeds are said to be descended.

The second in *Below Ground*, *Triskelion*, refers to an ancient Celtic triple spiral with sacred meanings, dating back to the Neolithic era. The subtitle of the same piece, *Tinner's Rabbits* is probably related to a Morris Dance from the Dartmoor area.

The second piece in the *Above Ground* section entitled *Forr All Mannkinne Nede* (spelled thus) had an Elizabethan feel to it, a touch of Peter Warlock perhaps. The third number in this section, *Knepp (The Return)* refers to Knepp Castle Estate in West Sussex. Several of the pieces contain moments of birdsong recorded there.

The pieces in the second half, in particular the last two, are dance-like with definite folk-cum-early-music connotations, exploiting the crumhorn for instance.

Guitars and cello are an attractive blend, and the percussion sounds, bells and glockenspiel, give the music a kind of spicy freshness.

Actually, this music is quite unique. I found it refreshing, rhythmically compelling and not like anything I had heard before, and at my age that is quite surprising!

– Alan Cooper

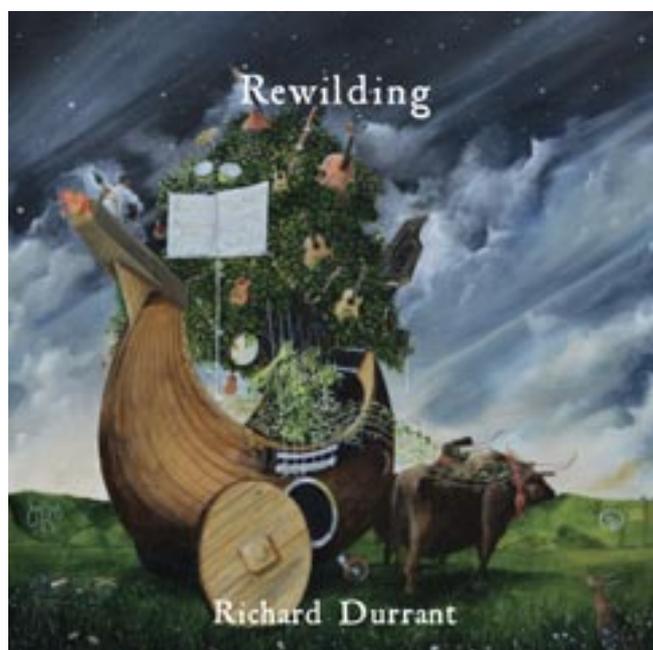
William Alwyn Miss Julie

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Sakari Oramo conductor

CHANDOS CHSA 5253 (2)

In his middle years William Alwyn (1905–1985) was moving away from his extensive interests in music for film towards a more symphonic musical language. For Alwyn this was a logical step. 'Film music', he wrote, is 'essentially dramatic music'.

The composer was greatly attracted to Swedish dramatist, August Strindberg's



tragic tale of Miss Julie, who is presented as a member of doomed aristocracy battling against an aggressive servant class.

The musico-dramatic language is Alwyn at his most assured with more than a passing reference to the verismo works of Puccini and Mascagni.

Not surprisingly Alwyn underlines the Strindbergian symbolism. As the writer Rodney Milnes points out 'virtually every sentence the characters utter is only about a quarter of what they mean'.

Andrew Palmer's programme note reminds us that Alwyn 'set an intimate chamber-like drama featuring a cast of four and one set'. The music, though, has a real romantic sweep combined with not a little subtlety.

Palmer points out that waltz rhythm permeates the opera as a whole – initially carefree but, like Ravel's *La Valse*, becoming progressively more distorted as the characters become more absorbed in their nightmare.

The opera is set in the late 19th century on Midsummer Night in the kitchen of a Swedish country house, the owner of which is the Count. The staff and servants are celebrating midsummer led by Jean, the count's valet. He has already taken up with the Count's daughter – the eponymous Miss Julie.

The valet is taunted by Miss Julie and eventually, they embrace, incidentally jilting Kristen, the cook. Jean and Miss Julie spend the night together after planning to escape to Italy. Julie is now half crazed while Jean now suggests that suicide might be the only way out. Miss Julie picks up a razor and walks out of the kitchen.

All in all, musically and dramatically this is a fascinating recording, excellently performed and produced.

The soprano Anna Patalong has the full measure of the demanding role of Miss Julie, scaling the high tessitura with little difficulty. Benedict Nelson makes a suitably sleazy Jean.

Of particular note is the conducting of Sakari Oramo – which is excellently paced and balanced. Alwyn's always colourful orchestral writing is impressively realised. This recording is well worth acquiring, giving Britten's better-known (but not inferior) works a run for their money.

- Alistair MacDonald



Alexander Campkin True Light

vOx Chamber Choir
David Crown conductor

NAXOS 8.574186

Alexander Campkin's five choral works performed by the Oxford-based vOx Chamber Choir under David Crown are pretty much unique, although at first listening, I was reminded of the *Kyrie* or *Lux Aeterna* of György Ligeti.

Campkin's harmonies, however, are more euphonious but still with more than a few surprising turns.

His word setting is sometimes difficult to follow in particular with his use of rhythm in the opening piece.

I get the impression that it is the musical sound qualities of the words in the text that matter more to him than getting across the meanings, which are of course written out fully in the accompanying pamphlet.

The recording opens with the three movement *True Light* (2011) with its text from the Gospel of St. John – 'In the beginning was the Word'. This is the only piece that uses the pitch-less tam-tam (different from the gong which has a definite musical pitch).

The work opens with organ and crescendo-ing tam-tam before the choir enters in wordless harmonies. All three

sound sources are blended together producing a mystical atmospheric quality.

In many of the pieces, the music suggested a cathedral atmosphere – bell sounds, the projected colours of stained-glass windows, moving and changing in kaleidoscopic harmonic fluctuation.

The other large-scale work on the CD is Campkin's *Missa Brevis* (2009). It is punctuated by two other shorter works. *The First Kiss* (2015) has the direction 'Dreamful' at the head of the score and it is certainly that. It was this piece that first suggested a kaleidoscope.

O Lord, in thee is all my trust has its text sung clearly by the male voices surrounded by softly sung clouds of harmony. *Glorious, beauteous, golden bright*, is a Christmas Carol setting but very far from what you would normally expect.

Nearest to more traditional ideas of text setting is the *Missa Brevis* though it still offers many harmonic twists and surprises. As is often the case, the Benedictus and Agnus Dei are the most instantly attractive.

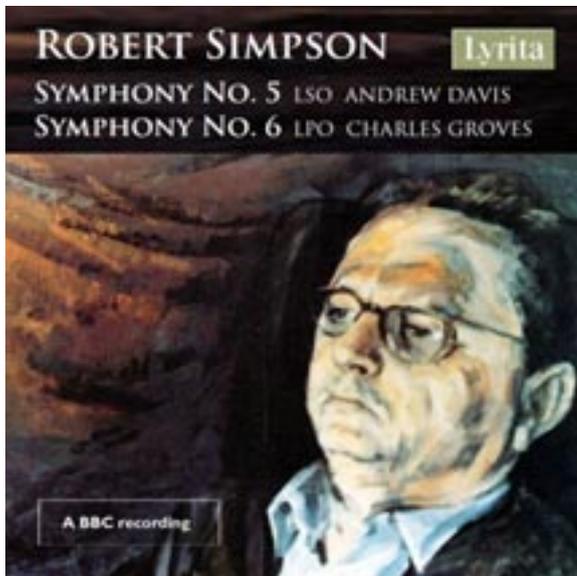
For those interested in fresh and imaginative techniques of choral writing, with the voices treated more like sections of orchestral instruments than a choir, this CD is well worth hearing.

- Alan Cooper

Robert Simpson Symphony No 5 and No 6

LSO: Andrew Davis conductor
LPO: Charles Groves conductor

LYRITA SRCD.389



The young Andrew Davis was entrusted with Robert Simpson's new 5th symphony in 1972 – and delivered one of the great premières.

The staggering virtuosity of the LSO and the completely conceived grasp of the performance are breath-taking.

It's not simply a matter of playing loud and fast; the quietly pulsing slow passages (which can sometimes seem to meander) have a hushed tension that is both riveting and symphonically compelling.

By the volcanic end I felt as if I had tottered off an exhilarating roller-coaster of a work, seemingly imagined and written at white heat.

There are some issues; a slight broadcast hiss, a lack of weight to the orchestral sound, and a constricted dynamic range – but none of these is a serious problem. (Unlike the bronchial idiot who coughs loudly throughout.) Nevertheless, this is a classic performance, on a par with, say, Mravinsky's *Leningrad Pathétique*.

I was at this RFH première of the 6th symphony, which closed a long wearying evening of Dvorak and Rachmaninov. The sound is warmer, though still rather thin, with fewer TB patients in the audience. But while (unlike Eric Morecambe) the musicians play all the right notes in the right order, they are clearly not truly inside the music.

The creation, maintenance and painstakingly controlled release of tension – the core of Simpson's method – is missing here. The

climax of the first movement – all pounding timpani and striving strings – goes for little; the tapestry of searching winds that open the second sounds like noodling.

Things pick up with the tempi but still lack conviction, and the final climax feels unachieved.

While this recording has archival value, the superior performance of the revised score makes Handley's Hyperion recording preferable. But this disc more than earns its place for the first work alone.

It's unlikely that Simpson will ever become a popular composer, and it may be that he has yet to find a true champion. (I wonder if Christian Lindberg knows this music.)

Good though the Handley recordings are it is noticeable that the few alternatives (Boult, Horenstein, Davis) have a "something" extra that really lifts the music.

In the meantime, there has been at least one performance that truly did his work

justice – and we are lucky to have this recording of it.

– Kevin Mandry

Colloquy Works for Guitar Duo

Duo Guitartes

EMR CDo67

Life in Elizabethan England might have been 'nasty, brutish and short'.

But on hearing the music of Peter Philips, his *Pauana dolorosa Tregian* from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, John Dowland's two movements from *Lacrimae* and two pieces by court composer John Johnson, it seems that life in those days certainly had some compensations.

We are also treated to a beautiful arrangement of Vaughan Williams's ubiquitous *Greensleeves*, popular throughout 16th century England, played so warmly and elegantly by these two fine guitarists Anne-Kathrin Gerberth and Bernhard Dolch.

The two pieces by Johnson were, originally, for lute duet – where one is more likely to encounter them on CD. One is a set of variations on *Greensleeves*, composed some 400 years before VW's – a nice link. The other early works are not 'proper' guitar music, such as the Purcell Suite (normally

printed as No 2 in G minor for keyboard) which opens the programme, but everything works so fluently and naturally that you might think that a long lost manuscript of guitar duets by Purcell had turned up.

Arrangements of these pieces have been made by the two performers and mostly the hands of the keyboard have been divided so that the bass parts are in one guitar, often transposed up an octave and the treble, right hand part, on the other.

It is good however to have represented three modern works especially for the guitar duo combination, by Stephen Dodgson, his *Promenade*, Peter Maxwell Davies' *Three Sunday Pieces* of 2009 which have been arranged from piano pieces, and constitute one of Max's more listener friendly compositions, and the premiere recording of *Serenade*, a succinct three movement suite by Joseph Phibbs, the middle movement of which is a *Corrente*, the same dance as is found in the Purcell Suite.

Colloquy, of course, means conversation and Phibbs's delicately beautiful *Serenade* is just that, so where one guitar ends another begins, as it were, and this produces a true sense of ensemble, from the pen of a young and highly polished composer.



The same comment also applies to the longest work on the disc, Dodgson's *Promenade*. This is mostly contrapuntal and energetic but with some delightful, lyrical moments making it varied and captivating throughout.

The disc comes with an excellent 26 page booklet, full of photos and details of the works, also composer biographies, written by a variety of hands, making this release quite fascinating and pleasingly refreshing.

– Gary Higginson