Tempo 64 (252) 101–113 © 2010 Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S0040298210000227 Printed in the United Kingdom

CD REVIEWS

GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ: Violin Concertos 1, 3 and 7; Overture. Joanna Kurkowicz (vln), Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra c. Łukasz Borowicz. Chandos CHAN 10533.

BACEWICZ: Concerto for string orchestra; Sinfonietta; Symphony for string orchestra; *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*. New London Orchestra c. Ronald Corp. Hyperion CDA 67783.

BACEWICZ: Divertimento for string orchestra; Piano Quintet No.1 (transcription for piano and string orchestra); Concerto for string orchestra. Bartlomiej Kominek (pno.), Radom Chamber Orchestra c. Maciej Zóltowski. DUX 0691.

It is excellent that, during the centenary year of the birth of Grażyna Bacewicz (1909–1969), several recording companies have marked the occasion with new releases of her music. Bacewicz had a distinctive creative personality and an intuitive approach to form that rewards close study. Her experience as an orchestral leader and concert violinist informed and enriched the string writing in her seven violin concertos, seven string quartets, five sonatas for violin and piano and two solo violin sonatas, among many other pieces. Outside her native Poland, her works have not received the acclaim and attention they merit. Among three recent discs devoted exclusively to her music, the most instantly attractive is a Chandos CD featuring three violin concertos with soloist Joanna Kurkowicz (who has already proved to be an effective advocate for Bacewicz in recordings of the composer's violin sonatas, also for Chandos). Completing the programme is an early Overture (1943) whose Hindemithian rhythmic drive is briefly but significantly held in check by a more pastoral-sounding episode. Typically, formal recapitulation is eschewed in favour of a process of ceaseless motivic and melodic development. Symbolic use is made of the BBC's 'V for Victory' wartime call signal, though to less shattering effect than Panufnik's compulsive exploitation of it in his *Tragic Overture*, composed the previous year. An ebullient curtain-raiser, Bacewicz's Overture generates a heady sense of urgency as it hurtles towards its conclusion.

Dating from 1937, the First Violin Concerto is an appealingly eccentric mini-concerto. After a cadenza-like opening on solo violin, the *Allegro* first movement establishes the work's capricious nature, informed by the composer's instinctive approach to her craft. The central *Andante* is predominantly lyrical in tone, but its gentle fairytale atmosphere is memorably disturbed near the end by a spectral apparition conjured up by orchestral string harmonics in combination with high woodwind. A lively, good humoured *Vivace* rounds off this compact, attractive work. Bacewicz resumed her concert career shortly after the Second World War and this period coincided with a flood of compositions, many of them among her finest works, such as the Third String Quartet (1947), the Fourth Violin Sonata (1949) and the Third Violin Concerto of 1948, which happily combines two of the composer's key attributes – lyrical warmth and rhythmic liveliness. The modally inflected opening *Allegro molto moderato* contains many folkloric touches, whilst the overtly Romantic, Debussyian central *Andante* is based on what the composer described as 'a very little known but very beautiful song'. The breezy *Vivo* finale has the rhythm of an oberek (an accelerated mazurka). Vibrant and inventive, the Third Violin Concerto deserves to be heard more often, especially in the concert hall, where it would undoubtedly make a strong impression.

Stylistically advanced and notably virtuosic, the Seventh Violin Concerto (1965) was written during the final period of Bacewicz's creative life, when she was responding to the developments of younger avant-garde Polish composers such as Henryk Górecki and Krzysztof Penderecki. Despite its freely atonal language, the concerto is still recognizably by Bacewicz, in its fluid approach to structure in the opening movement (marked *Tempo mutabile*), the outstandingly imaginative scoring of the dream-like central *Largo* and the energy of the virtuosic 6/8 *Allegro* finale. The resourceful use of percussion in this work (with different instruments inflecting each movement) is matched by the technical ingenuity of the solo part with its mordant glissandi, trills, harmonics and *sul ponticello* effects.

The Seventh Violin Concerto has previously appeared on disc in a 1988 recording featuring violinist Roman Lasocki with the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra under Karol Stryja as part of a long-deleted Olympia release (OCD 323), and that version retains its own spe-

cial insights. However, in terms of sound-quality, it cannot compete with the new Chandos CD, which is superbly clean and clear, and Kurkowicz brings many unique qualities of her own (her thoughtful, probing account of the first movement cadenza is entirely representative of her committed, exploratory approach). Indeed, in all three concertos, she is a brilliant and engaging soloist, with warm and intelligent playing, alert to every nuance of the often quirky and demanding solo parts. Łukasz Borowicz and the Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra contribute idiomatic and sensitive accompaniments to the concertos and make a strong case for the Overture. This disc is strongly recommended.

Hardly less desirable is a new Hyperion CD featuring the New London Orchestra under Ronald Corp. It includes a performance of the Concerto for String Orchestra of 1948, a splendidly confident mid-20th-century take on the Baroque concerto grosso, and the work with which the composer achieved her first international recognition. Immediately apparent in the boldly neo-classical opening *Allegro* is Corp's wonderfully responsive, light touch, which serves the music well. In the more introspective and emotionally engaged central *Andante*, his sane but tender, well-proportioned account also impresses. The *Vivo* finale (an early example of the composer's favoured use of 6/8 time), has both spirit and elegance in abundance. This is a warm and finely-balanced account of a sunny and delightful work that shows Bacewicz in complete control of her technique and individual voice. It remains a mystery why this gem is not a cherished part of the mainstream repertoire. Ten years after the Concerto, Bacewicz wrote another key work, the *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*, which quickly became her best- known and most-performed piece. Corp and his London-based players are on excellent form here, relishing the piquant dissonances and jazzy dislocations of the opening *Allegro*, invoking a properly mystical, occasionally troubled and ultimately bleak interior soundscape in the central *Adagio* and unearthing an obsessive intensity among the athleticism of the sparkling *Vivace* sonata-rondo finale. Bacewicz's use of percussion (celesta, xylophone, side-drum and timpani) and five trumpets is spare and telling and the satisfyingly homogenous recording complements Corp's holistic and finely blended conception of the piece.

Of especial interest is the inclusion of first recordings of two rarely-heard compositions from outside the composer's official catalogue. Even in such an early, light work as the brief but charming Sinfonietta of 1935, Bacewicz imbues her central *Andante* with an intensely dark introspection. The more substantial Symphony for string orchestra (1946) sports a rhythmically and texturally inventive opening *Allegro ma non troppo*, followed by a sparely scored, tortured *Adagio*. After a darting scherzo-like *Allegretto*, the flowing Theme and Variations finale favours a generally sweeping forward momentum over any strikingly individual vignettes. All the performances on this Hyperion release are impressively polished and well characterized. Polish music expert Adrian Thomas provides excellent accompanying programme notes. Well worth purchasing, this disc is one of the finest I have encountered from Corp and the NLO and they are admirably recorded in very natural sound.

Finally, a recent release on the DUX label features the 13-strong Radom Chamber Orchestra, who are forwardly balanced in a strongly resonant recording. The programme, which amounts to a frankly ungenerous 47 minutes, contains vigorous, spontaneous-sounding readings of Bacewicz's Concerto (1948) and Divertimento (1965) both of which give much pleasure. In the Concerto, the players are impressively committed and dig deep, especially in the hushed, shimmering tremolos of the central *Andante*, where they are marginally more atmospheric than their London-based rivals on Hyperion. The Divertimento is a concise piece, rather weightier than its title might suggest, and written in a more advanced tonal language than the Concerto, yet the composer's sense of fun is still to be heard in the woozy *glissandi* of the outer movements and her lyrical strengths are present in the muted nocturnal central *Adagio*. This distinctive late work receives an unforced and alert performance from the RCO.

The scanty programme is completed by Bacewicz's Piano Quintet No.1 in a recent transcription for piano and string orchestra by the RCO's conductor Maciej Zóltowski. This arrangement alters the balance between piano and stringed forces (exaggerated by the close recording); as if to compensate, pianist Bartlomiej Kominek occasionally beefs up his own contributions: his handling of the introduction to Bacewicz's pensively questing *Grave* slow movement sounds massively portentous. Others may enjoy such a big-boned, concerto-like approach, but I cannot escape the feeling that a crucial sense of intimacy in this eloquent chamber work has been lost. In any event, the original version is available in a splendidly expressive and judiciously balanced recording by pianist Waldemar Malicki with the Amar Corde String Quartet on the Acte Préalable label (AP0019), so listeners can decide for themselves. The DUX disc is billed as 'Music

for Chamber Orchestra Volume 1', so I look forward to future releases in the hope that inessential transcriptions will be abandoned in favour of important Bacewicz chamber works currently outside the catalogue – *Pensieri notturni* (1961) and *Contradizione* (1966), for example. In an ideal world we would also be anticipating from some enlightened source a series of recordings of her impressive works for large-scale forces such as the Piano Concerto (1949), Violin Concerto No.4 (1951), Symphony No.3 (1952), Violin Concerto No.5 (1954), Concerto for Orchestra (1962), *Musica sinfonica* (1965), *In una parte* (1967), the ballet *Desire* and the outstanding Viola Concerto (1968). I hope the strength of the music evident in the three new releases considered here precipitates a further exploration of the output of this eloquent, highly individual and currently underrated composer.

Paul Conway

Russian Wartime Music Series

Vol 2. SCHERBACHOV: Symphony No. 5; Suite *The Tobacco Captain*. St Petersburg State Academic Symphony Orchestra c. Alexander Titov (and for all other discs listed). Northern Flowers NF/PMA 9970.

Vol 4. POPOV: Symphony No. 3, op 45 *Heroic*; *Symphonic Aria* for cello and strings, op. 43. Dmitry Khrychov (vlc). Northern Flowers NF/PMA 9972.

Vol 5. WEINBERG: Symphony No. 1, op. 10; Cello Concerto, op. 43. Dmitry Khrychov (vlc) Northern Flowers NF/PMA 9973.

Vol 6. KNIPPER: Violin Concerto No. 1; Symphony No. 8. Mikhail Krutik (vln). Northern Flowers NF/PMA 9975.

Vol 9. MOSSOLOV: Cello Concerto No. 2; Symphony in E major. Dmitry Yeremin (vlc). Northern Flowers NF/PMA 9978.

This unusual and promising series will eventually feature about 25 CDs (nine volumes have so far been issued, some including familiar Myaskovsky and Shostakovich repertoire) and is supported by the City of St Petersburg as part of its tercentenary celebrations. The war years evoked a powerful response from composers in the USSR, many of whom were no doubt anxious to register their socialist credentials with the authorities. The Melodiya era left us with a huge legacy of recorded Soviet music, but very few re-issues have appeared on CD. In the late 1990s another short-lived series devoted to the Soviet radio music archive (said to number in excess of 400,000 reels of tape) started on the Revelation label, but there have been few if any other modern explorations of the hinterland of this vast terrain.

Lev Knipper (1898–1974), partly of German descent, studied with Glière and was related to the family of the playwright Anton Chekhov. After an early avant-garde phase, he followed the path of Socialist realism in his vast output. His music remains little known (only one of the 20 symphonies having previously been recorded). His life during the War is shrouded in mystery too: he was almost certainly involved in secret work for the Soviet state. He spent time in Tehran, where both works on this CD were composed. The lengthy Violin Concerto No. 1 (1943), which was premièred by the 19-year-old Leonid Kogan, is remarkably serene, especially the very attractive slow *Andantino*, which evokes Myaskovsky whom Knipper deeply admired. The first of three wartime symphonies, Knipper's Eighth is again relatively untroubled music. He was clearly a skilled craftsman with a warm lyrical gift.

His near contemporary Alexander Mossolov (1900–73) also studied with Glière but was more deeply influenced by the modernist school than Knipper. Though well known for *The Iron Foundry*, a movement from his ballet *Steel* (1926), his early success evaporated when he failed to toe a more conformist line as music became industrialized in the collectivist Stalin regime of the 1930s. He was even imprisoned for a time. The monumental 50-minute Symphony in E major (1942), scored for huge orchestra, was actually the first of five. Its deeply tragic tone can seem plodding at times (when you compare it with the unbridled power of Shostakovich's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, for example) but there is no denying the range and beauty of instrumentation of some of the Russian folk melodies and the keen yearning for the Motherland. The work certainly grew on me with repeated listenings, which kept opening up new perspectives, aided by splendidly informative sleeve notes. Mossolov is undoubtedly worthy of further investigation.

Vladimir Scherbachov (1889–1952) grew up before the events of 1917 and was in his mid-50s when he wrote his epic Symphony No. 5, a task which occupied him over 10 years until 1950; it proved to be his last work. The abundant folk melodies and ancient *Znamenny* chant point to a much deeper patriotism than the superficial heroics of socialist realism. The opening movement depicts a vast landscape of tranquil beauty which soon yields to a more animated march, inspired by 'The Battlefield' of the composer's favourite poet, Alexander Blok. Tremolo strings in the slow move-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ment suggest a wordless choir. Scherbachov's music celebrates Russian tradition with passion and joy, especially in the troika of the last movement. *The Tobacco Captain* continues in much the same vein.

Mieczysław Weinberg (1919–96) was born in Warsaw to a Jewish family. His life was one of seemingly endless struggle and tribulation. Much of his family perished in the Holocaust. He escaped from Warsaw to Minsk at the outbreak of the War and was evacuated when Hitler invaded Russia in 1941. In 1943 he settled in Moscow and befriended Shostakovich, who greatly admired his music and whose intercession with the authorities saved him from torture and imprisonment in 1953. Though Weinberg was extremely prolific, a respectable number of his works has appeared on CD in the past decade of so. The First Symphony was composed in Tashkent in 1942 and displays the many influences which came to bear on his work: neoclassicism, Mahler, and of course Shostakovich himself. The raw power and emotion, to say nothing of confidence and flair, is simply amazing for a 22-year-old. This is taken further with the elegiac and tragic Cello Concerto (1946).

The most unusual disc, however, belongs to Gavriil Popov (1904–72), another member of Shostakovich's circle and a pupil of Scherbachov. Popov's music was explored on several Olympia CDs a few years ago, but not the two works here. He was a composer of complex imagination and vivid sensibilities. The Third Symphony (1946) is possibly the longest ever written for strings (54 minutes). Each of these war symphonies is distinct in its own way and showcases the astonishing range of Russian symphonic art. The St Petersburg Academic Symphony are not a world-class band but they are quite acceptable, and often at their best during the quieter episodes, whereas the loud tuttis can sound rough and ready. A tumultuous musical era is enjoying some well-deserved illumination.

Bret Johnson

JOHN ADAMS: *Nixon in China*. Robert Orth (bar), Maria Kanyova (sop), Thomas Hammons (bass), Marc Heller (ten), Tracy Dahl (sop), Chen-Ye Yuan (bar), Melissa Malde (mezzo), Julie Simson (mezzo), Jennifer DeDominici (mezzo), Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Opera Colorado Chorus c. Marin Alsop Naxos 8.669022-24 (3-CD set).

In music as in marriage, anniversaries provide a time for stock-taking. Since its October 1987

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Houston première, John Adams's *Nixon in China* has fared far better than most new operas. It has been performed more than 150 times, with production in over a dozen countries and more on the way. Now, 20 years after the release of the first (Nonesuch) recording of *Nixon*, this new 3-CD set on the Naxos label provides more evidence of the opera's enduring qualities.

A great buzz of media attention preceded *Nixon*'s première. When many expected a satire, Adams and librettist Alice Goodman created a traditional grand opera in a carefully crafted form. The three scenes of the opening act depict the grand events and iconic images: Nixon's arrival on Air Force One, Mao Zedong's study, Richard Nixon and Zhou En-lai raising their glasses at a state banquet. Act Two focuses on the wives: Pat Nixon and Jiang Qing (Madame Mao). In Act Three, the principal characters reflect on their lives and achievements. Built on repetition and simple harmonic progressions, Adams's musical language proved surprisingly effective in conveying drama. Voice types contributed to characterization in long-established ways, and the original casting was excellent. Baritone James Maddalena brought unexpected depth to Richard Nixon. Tenor John Duykers's intense Mao Zedong contrasted fittingly with baritone Sanford Sylvan's eloquent Zhou Enlai. Soprano Carolann Page presented a sympathetic Pat Nixon, Trudy Ellen Craney a shrill Jiang Qing, and Thomas Hammons the buffoonish Henry Kissinger. Many who did not see the original production on stage, saw it on television. Soon after, Nonesuch released an original cast recording, featuring Edo de Waart leading the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

On this new Naxos 3-CD set, recorded live during a June 2008 production, Hammons reprises his role as Kissinger. Otherwise, we have an entirely new cast. And while the Naxos crew may not quite rise to the level of the original cast, they are never far behind. If Robert Orth's pronunciation is sometimes odd, from the scene one set-piece, 'News', he captures both Richard Nixon's wide-eyed exuberance and his angst. Soprano Maria Kanyova was an especially fine choice for the outwardly cheerful Pat Nixon. Marc Heller and Tracy Dahl, as Chairman and Madame Mao, sing with conviction if with less intensity than Duykers and Craney. There is an awkward transition near the start of scene two, but it is one of the rare moments when Marin Alsop's conducting of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra is less than superb. The Opera Colorado Chorus sings convincingly and with clarity in the opera's opening numbers and throughout. Listening to this recording from start to finish, I could not help but be reminded of the mastery of form that Adams and Goodman achieved in this, their first opera. The opening scenes continue to captivate while the unusually meditative closing, sung here by Yuan Chen-Ye as Zhou Enlai, gives much pause for thought. In these final moments especially, the beautiful simplicity of Adams's music seems the perfect vehicle for Goodman's rich imagery. This just might be the great American opera of the 20th century.

Brian Christopher Thompson

HARBISON: *Full Moon in March*; *Mirabai Songs*; *Exequien for Calvin Simmons*. The Boston Modern Orchestra Project c. Gil Rose. BMOP Sound 1010.

John Harbison (b. 1938) has gained a firm toehold in the recording programme of the new contemporary music label, BMOP Sound. This is their second recording devoted entirely to him: the whole series kicked off in 2008 with the first complete recording of his ballet, *Ulysses*,[1] and in early 2010 his opera *The Winter's Tale* (after Shakespeare) will be released. The current offering of one of Harbison's early chamber operas – *Full Moon in March* (1977), based on the late play by W.B. Yeats – is somewhat acrid fare. The obscure subject matter of this 35-minute piece, in the nature of a mystery play, concerns a noxious encounter between two shadowy figures, a queen and a swineherd. The latter tries to seduce the former, who has him beheaded. The notes argue that we are in the realms of the conflict between the real world and the desired worlds of the ritualistic and the 'hieratic', but I seriously doubt if this paradox will cut much ice with your average opera-goer. Harbison is a master of the dark musical dialect, which is probably what was appropriate here, but I was left wondering at the end what was the point of it all? The opera bordered on the tendentious and pretentious and was nasty into the bargain. The instrumentation is bleak and spartan. Thank heavens Harbison has found some really gripping subject-matter for his other operas, such as *The Great Gatsby*, which was a triumph when performed at the Met a few years ago and deserves a proper recording.

Much is redeemed by the *Mirabai Songs* (1982). This is quite a well-known Harbison piece,[2] originally with piano accompaniment, presented here in its orchestral version. Mirabai was a 16th-century Indian mystic poet who, instead of throwing herself on her husband's funeral pyre,

[1] See my review in *Tempo* Vol. 62 No. 246 (October 2008), p. 88.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

went around the streets singing her own poems about Krishna, 'The Dark One'. These poems are most engaging, sensual and direct. The poet struggles between earthly desire and spiritual devotion (somewhat analogous, as the sleevenotes say, to St John of the Cross, whose sexuality is closely related to religious fervour): for example – 'Making love with the Dark One and eating little, these are my pearls and my carnelians', or 'I have felt the swaying of the elephant's shoulders: and now you want me to climb on a jackass?'. I kept going back to these very colourful little miniatures. The brief elegy for Calvin Simmons commemorates the young conductor of the Oakland Symphony and the Cabrillo Festival in California, unexpectedly drowned in a boating tragedy in 1981. Simmons had a keen interest in ethnomusicology, and championed composers such as Lou Harrison and Henry Cowell. It is one of Harbison's finest small-scale works: elegant, dignified and direct. He is at his best as a composer for orchestra and his two recent symphonies, Nos. 4 and 5, will hopefully soon join the long procession of pieces already available on CD.

Bret Johnson

NED ROREM: 'On An Echoing Road' and other songs. The Prince Consort dir. Alisdair Hogarth. Linn CKD 342.

While prolific in a broad range of genres, Ned Rorem regards the human voice as the primary musical instrument. His song output now comprises more than 600 pieces. 'On An Echoing Road' presents 29 songs, their texts stretching from a simple 'Alleluia' to Rorem's translation of a passage in Colette's *L'Etoile Vesper*. Though often favouring late 19th- or 20th-century poetry, Rorem doesn't shrink from applying his fingerprint to a familiar text by Tennyson or Wordsworth. What nearly all Rorem's chosen lyrics have in common, however, is a succinctness that their musical setting preserves and enhances. Well over half the songs in the present selection are of less than two minutes' duration – even briefer, therefore, than the average pop song, albeit of manifestly greater subtlety.

Rorem himself acknowledges the Beatles' restorative influence on an over-intellectualized American scene, following an earlier efflorescence of song which culminated in Copland's *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1950). And Armin Zanner, in his liner notes for the present recording, sees Rorem's songs as having the intimacy of an Edith Piaf or Burt Bacharach. But the composer has always nailed his colours to the 'art song' as adumbrated in his article 'Poetry of Music', where he writes of the 'crystalline simplicity' of American song.

In addition to well-documented French mentors, elements of Britten and Finzi occasionally reverberate in Rorem's music. Until recently, however, British singers haven't championed it to any marked extent. With Alisdair Hogarth at the piano, the soloists of the Prince Consort make vivid amends. To single out just a few gems, baritone Jacques Imbrailo contributes 'Jeanie with the light brown hair' in an atmospheric arrangement of Stephen Foster's classic. Soprano Anna Leese and counter-tenor Tim Mead shine in some of the disc's Whitman songs; and the three voices combine beautifully in Oscar Wilde's *Requiescat*. Andrew Staples – a fine tenor who sings Rorem's *Alleluia* – completes the quartet in Thomas Ken's 'Hymn for Evening'. Mezzo Jennifer Johnston impresses with a setting of Theodore Roethke's 'Orchids' and, together with Leese, in 'Comment on War' (Langston Hughes) .

The disc's outstanding feature is the speed with which all the performers get under the skin of an individual piece and give it character and immediacy. Such enterprise deserves the new work that Rorem has composed for them to perform in London.

Peter Palmer

NEUWIRTH: String Quartet 1976; Six Pieces for String Quartet; *L'oubli bouilli*. Donatienne Michel-Dansac, Klangforum Wien, c. Etienne Siebens. Kairos 0012972KAI

Born in 1937, Gösta Neuwirth belongs with the Austro-German generation dominated by Helmut Lachenmann, and having affinities with figures born a decade or more earlier, like Friedrich Cerha and Klaus Huber, not to mention Stockhausen and Schnebel. Viennese by birth, active in Berlin and Freiburg, Neuwirth may be better known as a writer on Schreker than as a composer. But this welcome, impressively-produced disc introduces a distinctive voice, progressing from a fiery, compressed expressionism to something stranger, more surreal, the entire enterprise seemingly in thrall to Adorno-inspired ideas of *musica negativa*.

[2] It is discussed in detail in 'John Harbison's *Mirabai Songs*: Religion, Ritual, Love and Eroticism' by Barbara Bonous Smit, *Tempo* No. 246, pp. 22–34 – (Ed).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The story told here spans four decades, from the four-movement String Quartet of 1976 to a pair of works completed in 2008. The quartet is an accomplished example of expressionistic drama geared to the era of late modernism, when sound veers elementally yet elaborately between noise and music. The earnestness is manifest, and the melancholic intensity of the second movement is particularly impressive in failing to eliminate all traces of lyricism from its predominantly aggressive gesturing. A generally austere demeanour, with much 'non-vibrato' playing, is powerfully sustained, but the Neuwirth voice as such is not especially distinctive. The expressive range seems to have widened by the time of the Six Pieces for String Quartet from 2008, and the miniature forms, as if in homage to Webern's *Bagatelles* op. 9, suit the aphoristic, allusive idiom. Each movement has a French title, and the last, the 88-second 'l'oubli bouilli' provides the concept for the 30-minute composition of that title for female voice, 22-strong instrumental ensemble and tape, which completes the disc.

Though given the terse English title *Vanish*, *L'oubli bouilli* punningly evokes notions of forgetfulness in ferment which seem to fit with the music's generally distracted state. The work's long history and elaborate background is set out in the booklet notes, but the finished product strikes me as profoundly uneven. I found most of interest in the first, purely instrumental section, though even here the marked thinning-out of material and texture, compared to the previous works, and leading at times to an almost improvisatory quality, is of questionable value. When the voice (often in quasi-boyish, *faux-naif* character rather than full singing) takes over, with the accompanying tape, the sense of something self-referentially self-indulgent, mocking communicativeness while appearing eager to embrace it, is difficult to suppress. And although the final stages, with the return of the live instruments, provide a deeper, darker quality, and some genuine forcefulness, to counter the prevailing sense of drift, the result remains enigmatic in ways which Neuwirth's honest but frustrating notes on the piece can only reinforce.

All credit to Kairos, even so, for making this provoking disc available in such excellent recordings and expert performances. Few other companies today will take on the wilder, wider shores of music's continuing engagement with the modern.

Arnold Whittall

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

BATE: Symphony No. 3. ARNELL: Prelude, *Black Mountain* op. 46; *Robert Flaherty – Impression* op. 87. CHISHOLM: *Pictures from Dante*. Royal Scottish National Orchestra c. Martin Yates. Dutton Epoch CDLX 7239.

The second major work of Stanley Bate to appear on the Dutton label following the Viola Concerto (CDLX 7216), Symphony No. 3 (1940) is a closely wrought, tragic essay with a driven, restless inner spirit. Although dating from the early years of the War, the piece was written in New York. It speaks of a young man's anxiety and uncertainty (Bate was still only in his late twenties) in a world of upheaval and foreboding. There are perhaps some echoes of Vaughan Williams (especially the Fourth Symphony) but the idiom is much more advanced: the driving rhythms of the last movement seem to evoke Shostakovich and it is fascinating to speculate whether Bate was familiar with the recently-composed Fifth and Sixth Symphonies. The same can be said of the woodwind writing in the slow movement. However, as in the Viola Concerto, Bate speaks very much with his own voice. The edginess, range and depth of emotion of the long opening movement (comprising nearly half the piece) culminates in a sort of neo-Gregorian chant for strings and then a full orchestral sequence of multi-layered triadic harmonies. It is remarkable that such an important work, whilst popular in Britain in the 1950s, has been hidden since Bate's early death in 1959 – although the removal of his scores to Brazil by his second wife partly accounts for it. At all events these recordings are beginning to define a unique new figure in mid-20th-century British music and one keenly awaits whatever next comes along.

Richard Arnell died in April 2009 aged 91, and we have already enjoyed a feast of his work on Dutton. His 20-minute *Robert Flaherty – Impression* (1958) records Arnell's association with the eponymous American film director, for whom he wrote two scores whilst resident in the USA during the War. It has a lot more in common with RVW (and, by proxy, with Bate too) than much of Arnell's other music. A strongly pastoral aura of lush harmonies defines the first half which yields, as Lewis Foreman points out in the notes, to a more neo-classically-conceived transatlantic dance episode. Arnell's trademark fanfare mottos and brilliantly colourful orchestral palette lead one to wonder, yet again, why such evocative music sank into such undeserved obscurity. Erik Chisholm's *Pictures from Dante* (1948) is the 'diabolicus in musica' of this CD. Like the Arnell, film music is the template and the swirling first part 'Inferno' seems to presage the fantasy scores of Bernard Herrmann such as *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* and *Jason and the Argonauts*. The contrasting serenity of the second part, 'Paradisio', plays like a stately, Respighian procession. Those Pines are on the march again! Erik Chisholm (1904–65) was celebrated as an opera director who spent many years in Canada and South Africa and comparatively few in his native Scotland. His skill as a composer of brilliantly evocative music is compellingly in evidence in this exquisite diptych. This disc ingeniously unites a triad of composers who first came to prominence in the early years of the War, each threading a parallel set of richly-coloured strands into the tapestry of British music.

Bret Johnson

HAKOLA: Piano Concerto[1]; Sinfonietta. [1]Henri Sigfridsson (pno), Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra c. John Storgårds. Ondine ODE 1127-2.

WENNÄKOSKI: *Nosztalgiaim*[1]; *Sade Avaa*[2]; *Culla d'aria*[3]; *Naisen rakkautta ja elämää*[4]. Avanti! Chamber Orchestra c. [1]Thomas Hannikainen, [2]Dmitri Slobodeniouk, [4]Pietari Inkinen, with [2]Heikki Nikula (bass-cl), [4]Eija Räisänen, Tanja Kauppinen (sops), Riikka Rantanen (mezzo); [3]Anna-Leena Haikola, Emma Vähälä (vlns), Tuula Riisala (vla), Mikko Ivars (vlc). Alba ABCD 253.

An exact contemporary of Magnus Lindberg, the Finnish composer Kimmo Hakola (b. 1958) is now thought of as one of the leading figures of his generation, after a development of stops and starts whereby impressive works have been followed by unproductive years in which he has wrestled with the issue of continually expanding his stylistic palette. His Piano Concerto of 1996 was several years in the making, its première several times postponed, raising high expectations before it was eventually performed; in the event it was thought rather sensational, a liberating work that enshrines Hakola's enthusiasm for producing 'imbalance, surprise and plurality'.[3] This excellent new Ondine recording lets us judge why it caused such a stir.

It's certainly an extraordinary piece, divided into nine movements lasting almost an hour, with a hugely virtuosic piano part and a cheerfully kaleidoscopic stylistic palette. The result sounds, on the one hand, like a post-modern free-for-all, yet on the other, given the pervasive echoes of Messiaen, more like a kind of parody *Turangalîla-*

[3] To quote Kimmo Korhonen in *Inventing Finnish Music* (Helsinki: Finnish Music Information Centre, 2007), p. 199.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Symphonie without the love theme or the ondes martenot (but with, I swear at one point, an organ). American-style Minimalist repetitive patterns accumulate and proliferate until ostinato piles on ostinato; gawky orchestral unisons cavort in additive rhythms; the pianist crashes about in great chordal sequences or spins rainbow webs of Lisztian étude-like figuration; dissonant quasi-serial writing will stumble and lurch into sententiously conventional tonal cadences; the penultimate movement, 'Triste' is essentially a dazed and weepy seven-minute cor anglais solo with a *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*-type chordal piano accompaniment.

It's easy to feel that, in embracing/thumbing its nose at several Modernist and Postmodernist attitudes simultaneously, the work is too much of an indulgence, and really a bit of a mess. And yet at least it doesn't take itself too seriously, and its good-natured gusto reveals frequent flashes of inspiration. Time and again there came to my mind, as I listened, the image of the late John Ogdon seizing and devouring the raw red meat of the piano part. This is the kind of concerto that would have been tailor-made for his talents.

Whereas the Piano Concerto occasionally seems drunk on the heady stuff of pluralism, Hakola's Sinfonietta (1999) is formidably single-minded. Cast in a single 14-minute movement at an unyielding, headlong *furioso* tempo, this is more of an heterophonic, polymetric mélange, with solid blocks of texture expanding in contrary motion and a rhythmic hierarchy within the orchestra that gives the liveliest material to the strings and the slowest-moving to the brass, while the timpani interjects plenty of purposeful impetus to the music's course. This kind of constructivism reminds one not so much of Messiaen as of Ives – and so does the harmonic language, I have to say, though in the closing pages, with their plethora of repeated-note fanfares, John Adams seems to take over as the presiding model. The piece would certainly make a rousing concert-opener (A Medium-Length Ride in a Flying Machine?), and intrigues simply because it is so different from the Piano Concerto. Reports of Hakola's First Symphony, down for première in Helsinki in May 2010, will be awaited with interest.

Lotta Wennäkoski (b. 1970) presents a very different prospect. Though just as aware as Hakola of competing stylistic possibilities, she tends – on the strength of those works I have heard – to work towards a restrained, lyrical synthesis with a finely nuanced sense of tonal colour. On first acquaintance some of her pieces appear slight, yet there tends to be something in them that draws you back for repeated hearings, and with greater familiarity comes a greater appreciation of their tensile strength. The first CD devoted to her work, on the Alba label, which does not seem to have a current UK distributor, is well worth seeking out. Wennäkoski, who was a pupil of Kaija Saariaho and Paavo Heininen at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, had previously studied violin, theory and folk music in Budapest at the end of her teens, and her Hungarian experience is mirrored in the disc's wondrously inventive title track, the fantasy for ensemble *Nosztalgiaim* (Hungarian for 'my nostalgias'), which is also the most recent work here (2006–7). All the material in this vibrant piece, at one moment cheeky and capering, at the next as melancholy and magical as a night on the *Puszta*, derives from two Hungarian folksongs – not delivered 'pure and authentic' but rather, according to the composer 'deliberately sullied' by her own nostalgia and what she remembers and wants to remember of that time. There are also, if I'm not mistaken, a few fractured reminiscences of Sibelius's *Tapiola* about ten minutes in, so maybe the piece would be better characterized as a Finno-Ugaric fantasy.

Sade avaa ('Rain opens', 1998–99, written while studying with Louis Andriessen in Amsterdam) is scored for solo bass clarinet and ensemble; the soloist (here the excellent Heikki Nikula, who also happens to be Wennäkoski's husband) 'secretly recites' the poem by Eeva-Liisa Manner which inspired the piece while the ensemble evokes the noises of rain and wind. The gesture of 'opening' is built into the motivic material (semitones enlarge by quarter-tones; the bass clarinet moves from a single line to multiphonics, and so on), and though I find the idea too long-drawn-out, the wittily resourceful sonic palette intrigues the ear throughout. The very atmospheric single-movement string quartet *Culla d'aria* (2004) is the gentlest piece, highly refined in its use of string sonority. It's dominated by a rocking motion: when she was writing it Wennäkoski thought *culla* meant a swing, and only later realized it meant a cradle – but of course the motion is appropriate to either. From fragmentary, almost disembodied beginnings the work takes on ever more solid substance, swelling to a passionate climax, then retreats into ever more evanescent sounds.

The most important work here, however, is the song-cycle *Naisen rakkautta ja elämää* for three female voices and large ensemble (2003). The title translates as 'Love and Life of a Woman', and any reference to Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* is entirely intentional. Wennäkoski sets a dozen poems by half-a-dozen Finnish women poets (very good ones, if one can judge in transla-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tion) to put an altogether bleaker contemporary spin on the state of womanhood. There are allusions to two expressive melodic motifs from the Schumann cycle (as Wennäkoski comments, 'yearning sounds the same despite the passage of 150 years'), and the work covers a remarkable stylistic range, sometimes bringing past and present into open collision. It may be my own cultural preconceptions that lead me to prefer a song like 'Morning after Morning', with the almost *Luonattar*-like epic grandeur of its long-spanned vocal line, beautifully voiced by mezzo-soprano Riikka Rantanen, rather than the jazz/pop influenced 'Boogie mama', which sounds more of an avant-garde/crossover cliché. But in this first-rate account (and all the performances are very good indeed) the cycle as a whole generates a remarkable cumulative power and conviction, confirming that Wennäkoski is a genuine talent with a stubbornly individual voice.

Calum MacDonald

CASELLA: Symphony No. 3, op. 63; *Italia*, op. 11. WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln c. Alun Francis. cpo 777-265-2.

Alfredo Casella (1883–1947), unlike most other members of the Italian 'generation of the 80s', wrote just three operas, of which only one, *La Donna Serpente*, is full-length. He preferred instrumental, vocal and orchestral music (including four ballets). The key to his wide aesthetic outlook stems from the 19 years he spent in Paris (1896–1915) at a time when it was the artistic capital of the world. His inclinations were strongly neo-classical and whilst his output is not huge (71 opus numbers) it nonetheless contains a valuable corpus of piano music and songs. He left three symphonies, the first two of which appeared in his twenties. The Symphony No. 3 (1939–40) is his most substantial late work, its four movements running to almost 45 minutes. (His final piece, the vast *Missa Solemnis 'Pro Pace'*, op. 71 (1944) was written at a time of great personal grief and horror at the savagery and suffering of the War when his own health was already in sharp decline.)

Casella has not been well represented on recordings, even in the CD era, and the Third Symphony has not fared well either. It was a Chicago Symphony Orchestra 50th anniversary commission and was heard a number of times in 1941–42 in the USA and then in Europe (with Casella conducting) but was then soon forgotten – as was much of his other music following his relatively early death in 1947. It is not a spectacular piece, but it displays formidable technical assurance and strength of character. The mood is sombre and languid at many points, especially in the long slow movement where Casella, clearly impressed by the modernistic language of his younger contemporaries Honegger and Milhaud, flirts with bitonality. The cosmopolitan ethos extends into the third movement (Scherzo) with Russian march-like motifs echoing Stravinsky and the young Shostakovich. The final movement is one of tightly-controlled and restrained exuberance, rather in the manner of the earlier *Concerto Romano* for organ and orchestra (1926), the ever more insistent fugati never losing their transparency. After revisiting the elegiac mood of the earlier movements the work ends with a briefest of codas.

By contrast the earlier tone poem *Italia* (1909) is much more rhapsodic and liberally constructed. Casella wrote a good deal about his own music and his perceptive commentary on *Italia* recognized the place of nationalism and the interpolation of folk material into his early work. The music evokes the atmosphere of Naples and Sicily with several songs from both Trapani and Naples, including the well-known *'Funiculi-Funicula'* by Luigi Denza. Casella had recently met Gustav Mahler, who provide much encouragement and who introduced him to Universal Edition in Vienna, enabling *Italia* to be published and ensuring its success.

This is an excellent cpo recording: their continued investigation of this important Italian school is commendable. We have already had releases devoted to Zandonai, Alfano and the complete Malipiero and there is quite a lot of unexplored symphonic music by them and by Pizzetti and Casella which is worthy of their (and our) attention.

Bret Johnson

MÁTYÁS SEIBER: String quartets Nos. 1–3. Edinburgh Quartet. Delphian DCD34082.

At last! A really good recording of three major works by someone who for far too long has been remembered by his many pupils in Britain as a remarkable composition teacher but, as a composer, is known by most people mainly for folksong arrangements, dances and other short pieces.

Seiber (1905–1960) was born in Budapest and studied composition with Kodály. He played the cello in a ship's orchestra, was the cellist of the Lenzewski Quartet (performing many of the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

most advanced string quartets of the 20th century), collaborated with Adorno in research on jazz (but was enthusiastic about it), was Professor of Jazz at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, and settled in England in 1935, where he formed and conducted the Dorian Singers, taught at Morley College as well as privately, and composed major chamber, orchestral and choral works as well as film music.

It was perhaps because of this variety of musical experiences and influences that he was such an outstanding composition teacher, never imposing his own stylistic preferences, always commenting on students' works from within their own stylistic and syntactical norms. But in his own works, despite their variety, a personal voice, recognizable though hard to define, is always present, and his three string quartets exemplify this, although they span Seiber's entire career.

The First Quartet, composed in 1923–24, when Seiber was only 18 and a student of Kodály's, is already a fully-achieved work, idiomatically Hungarian, in three motivically-related movements: a vigorous and motif-rich sonata movement, an elegiac ternary-form Lento and a vigorous folk-dance-like Rondo. Not yet intensively polyphonic, and with frequent octave doubling of melodies, the music is direct in expression rather than intimately conversational; the momentary fugato in the first movement suggests the influence of Bartók in its successive entries in rising fifths.

The themes are modal, sometimes hinting at pentatonicism, but the harmonies combine diatonic with more strident whole-tone ones, their most startling confrontation being at the very end of the Rondo, where the modal A minor main theme, Dorian by virtue of the F sharp of its doubling at the lower fourth, is stamped out over syncopated A–E fifths and ends on repeated *pesante* unison As, as final as you like, only to be succeeded by a repeated A major triad with added D sharp in the uppermost voice, a whole-tone chord that reaffirms the tonic and at the same time disturbingly points away towards an unstated dominant. That gesture will find its infinitely more subtle, deeply moving counterpart at the end of the Third Quartet.

The Second Quartet is a very different matter. By the time it was written in 1934–5, Seiber had discovered the music of Schoenberg, Webern and, above all, Berg, and had thoroughly assimilated 12-note technique, used freely, into a tough, dissonant, polyphonic style saturated with Bartókian motivic imitation and complementary rhythms.

The first movement has elements of introduction and sonata form. Schoenberg wrote a 12-note waltz in his Suite, op. 25; Seiber went one better, making his second movement a ternary-form Intermezzo, headed 'Alla "Blues" '. No 12-bar phrasing or blue notes, though; it is a slowish, smoochy dance, with a spikier, *scherzando* middle section. The third is formally the longest and most complex, a rondo whose main material is varied on its two recurrences and whose two episodes represent the scherzo and the expressive slow movement of the quartet.

This is the moment to mention the booklet accompanying the CD. The exemplary notes, by the composer Hugh Wood, who was himself a student of Seiber's, incorporate material from letters recently discovered by his daughter and provide brief, clear formal and stylistic analyses as well as historical and biographical context. (The preface to the miniature score of the quartet, published by Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, Milan, includes a more detailed analysis of the work by John S. Weissmann.) This is a powerful, exciting work that ought to take its place alongside works that inhabit comparable aesthetic worlds, such as Schoenberg's Third Quartet, Berg's *Lyric Suite* and Bartok's Third and Fourth Quartets.

The *Quartetto Lirico,* Seiber's Third Quartet, written between 1948 and 1951, is dedicated to the Amadeus Quartet and is one of the few modern works that they played regularly and recorded. Partly as a consequence, partly because it is 'easier on the ear' than the Second, but mainly because it is a major work of Seiber's full maturity, it is the only one of the three to have become at all familiar.

A totally assured technique of motivic development based freely on a single 12-note row now allows Seiber a new richness of content, clarity of form and depth of feeling. The first theme of the opening *Andante amabile* – not just the initial quick six-note motif (which permeates the entire quartet), but also the following rocking motif of a whole tone in dotted rhythm (from which both the first movement's cadenza and the cello's cadential figure at the end of the work derive) – vividly recalls the opening of Berg's op. 3 string quartet, while somehow sounding quite un-Bergian and, indeed, subtly Hungarian. The movement's sonata form, the development dissolving into a violin cadenza before the recapitulation, recalls Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, but, like many of Mozart's sonata-rondos, recapitulates the first subject after the second. The coda ends, over a sustained cello C sharp, with a sequence of unrelated diatonic triads that finally combine with the cello's note into a sonorous, low-placed, D flat major chord.

Seiber himself described the second movement, a dancing scherzo with a dramatic, fantasia-like

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

trio, as Mendelssohnian; but to the present writer it sounds darker, edgier, and somehow recalls the scherzo of Schubert's G major string quartet. (Seiber once remarked that Schubert might have become the greatest composer of all if he had lived a couple of years longer.)

The third movement is a deeply felt, introspective *Lento espressivo*, a polyphonic meditation on various slow versions of the first movement's opening motif, with just one *forte* climax – but saturated with versions, too, of the rocking motif, over which (with mysterious *sul ponticello* tremolandi) the music finally comes to rest with the same triadic progression as the first movement. This time the D flat chord lacks its fifth, but sounds again, the second violin shifting down from the root to the fifth, simultaneously completing the triad and dialectically questioning the tonic. A memory of the First Quartet?

This profoundly moving conclusion is wonderfully played by the Edinburgh Quartet. But, indeed, throughout all three works the performances are musically and technically excellent. Helped by a bright, close acoustic, the textures are clear, the ensemble impeccable, the playing vivid and expressive. Inevitably, there are moments when opinions may differ about detailed interpretative decisions. The tempo of the Third Quartet's scherzo, for instance, feels a notch on the metronome too comfortable, not because it is, in fact, just below Seiber's metronome mark (about dotted crotchet = 73 as against Seiber's 76), but because it does not quite catch either the Mendelssonian lightness or the underlying tension. In the Second Quartet, *allargandi* and caesurae are once or twice exaggerated a little, prioritizing structural clarity over continuity. And before the middle section of the First Quartet's *Lento*, the upper and lower pairs of instruments in turn repeatedly hold long notes, marked *pp*, while the other pair play accented thematic phrases marked *p*. The players lead into the thematic phrases with short crescendi – which, happening repeatedly and introducing anacruses where none is intended, become slightly obtrusive.

These are subjective reactions to isolated details. This is a marvellous set of performances, excellently recorded, which ought to go a long way towards introducing these powerful, beautiful, characterful works to the listening public and to the repertoire of other ensembles. Can we now hope for good recordings of Seiber's other major works and for his rediscovery as a composer as well as a teacher?

Michael Graubart

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

An English Recital: VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *The Lake in the Mountains*; *Hymn-Tune Prelude on 'Song 13'*; *Suite of Six Short Pieces*. HOLST: 2 Pieces; *Two Northumbrian Folk Tunes*. IRELAND: Sonatina. BAX: *Allegretto quasi Andante*. BRITTEN: *Night Piece*. JOUBERT: *Dance Suite*. E.J. MOERAN: *Bank Holiday*. WARLOCK: *Five Folksong Preludes*. John McCabe (pno). British Music Society BMS 103 CDH.

This British Music Society historic series CD consists of recordings originally made in 1968 and 1972, and previously issued on vinyl. Both the CD title and the cover photo of 'an idyllic village' are suggestive of a pastoral content: indeed tracks 1–12 are devoted to the godfathers of the English folksong revival.

The disc opens with two attractive pieces by Vaughan Williams: *The Lake in the Mountains* (1947, derived from film music to *The 49th Parallel*) and *Hymn-Tune Prelude on 'Song 13' by Gibbons* (1928). The *Suite of Six Short Pieces* (1921) present folksong-derived items in a variety of moods, tempi, and genres from the hornpipe-ish to the contemplative to the weighty and serious, in varying degrees of escapism. This lengthy contribution from Vaughan Williams is followed by Holst's *Two Pieces for Piano,* consisting of a *Nocturne* (1930) displaying vague orientalisms, and a quirky *Jig* (1932) with a bitonal nod towards modernity thrown in for good measure.

Thus far all the items on the disc make pleasant enough occasional pieces, albeit in conventional piano writing terms, giving little clue as to the true stature of either composer. Holst's *Two Northumbrian Folk Tunes* (1927) are an altogether different proposition. The first, *O! I hae seen the roses blaw*, presents a delightful lover's 'song', later skilfully overlaid with decorative keyboard figurations. Its companion piece, the fleet *The Shoemakker*, makes a fitting foil, but (at a mere 40 seconds!) almost acts as a coda, leaving us wanting more … which is no bad thing.

An altogether more substantial contribution is found in John Ireland's three-movement *Sonatina* (1927). Perhaps the best movement is the first, which opens with music that is immediately attractive, impressionistic almost, yet of greater weight and drama than much of the foregoing, and a more varied range of piano writing. The *Allegretto quasi Andante* from Arnold Bax is the slow movement from his Piano Sonata No. 4, and makes for a satisfying freestanding piece. Written in 1934, it is more adventurous both in terms of its piano writing and its harmonic pallette than the rest of the disc thus far. The essential journey of the piece is from G sharp minor to E major, which is enlivened by a near-constant and hypnotic pedal effect, contributing to the sense of forward momentum.

Night Piece, one of Benjamin Britten's few works for solo piano, was written as a test piece for the inaugural Leeds Piano Competition of 1963. Despite skilfully deployed textures reminiscent of late Liszt or Debussy and inventive use of the pedals, the work (the longest single movement on the disc) seems a tad overlong, and out of keeping with the rest of the programme. John Joubert's *Dance Suite* (1958) consists of five pieces. The three quick odd-numbered dances have considerable drive, are sometimes bitonal, and with the occasional nod towards Bartók. They are interspersed by two slow dances, the first displaying music both attractive and mysterious, the second a kind of ungainly yet humorous waltz.

However, good as all these various pieces are, for me the two real highlights of the disc come from Jack Moeran and Peter Warlock. McCabe plays with panache in Moeran's ebullient *Bank Holiday* of 1925, and thereby ensures a rollicking good time for all on this particular holiday outing – and if Moeran makes no attempt to hide his debt to Grainger, when it's done this well, who cares? My only quibble is that the underrated Moeran surely deserves more than a single piece. By contrast Warlock is represented by the set of *Five Folk-Song Preludes* dating from 1918. All are exceptionally fine pieces with a somewhat tragic or elegiac flavour: the third piece sounds like a sketch for a larger work. The first piece, in reflective mood, demonstrates Warlock's exceptional ear for harmony. The last, longer in length than the previous four combined, is unremittingly bleak (reminding one of Constant Lambert's 1931 *Concerto for Piano and Instruments* written in Warlock's memory). The real gem of this collection, however, is the second piece: achingly poignant and (at 56 seconds) over all too soon … like the life of Warlock himself.

Tim Mottershead

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ArtMusFair

www.artmusfair.pl

YOU'RE WELCOME TO WARSAW!

WARSAW 2010

European Composers' Forum

Polish Composers' Union

Polish Music Information Centre

Fryderyk Chopin University of Music (on the 200th anniversary of the university's inception)

22nd – 25th September 2010, Warsaw in the year of Fryderyk Chopin's 200th birthday anniversary

held parallelly to the 53rd WARSAW AUTUMN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

WARSAW 2010

New Music Convention

ArtMusFair 2010

MUSIC FOR THE FUTURE, FUTURE FOR MUSIC

EVENTS

- trade show stands
- composers' panel
- concerts
- live music stages
- open rehearsals
- music workshops
- project stages
- interactive installations
- music club

WARSAW 2010

PARTICIPANTS

- composers and musicians
- students and teachers
- promoters, managers and agents
- composers' societies
- music information centres
- music publishers
- record labels
- educational institutions

ELECTRONICS MEETS CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

RE:NEW MUSIC
Bringing the best of new music across Europe

NEW MUSIC FOR NEW PLAYERS

ELECTRONICS MEETS CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY, A POLISH-NORWEGIAN PROJECT ON NEW TECHNOLOGY
concert / composers' panel / conference / discussion
www.electronics2010.pl

RE:NEW MUSIC, A EUROPEAN PROJECT ON THE MOBILITY OF MUSIC AND ENSEMBLES
concerts / open rehearsals / workshops / meetings with composers

NEW MUSIC FOR NEW PLAYERS – CONTEMPORARY WORKS FOR BEGINNERS

MORE INFORMATION
www.polmic.pl polmic@polmic.pl

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000227