



Helen HABERSHON    clarinet  
John LENEHAN    piano  
**FINZI & BRAHMS**  
music for clarinet & piano

# FINZI AND BRAHMS

## Music for clarinet and piano

### Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

#### Five Bagatelles

1	I	Prelude	3:56
2	II	Romance	4:26
3	III	Carol	2:13
4	IV	Forlana	3:09
5	V	Fughetta	2:27

### Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

6	Meine Lieder, Op. 106 No. 4 (arranged by John Lenehan)		2:00
7	Intermezzo in B minor, Op. 119 No. 1 (arranged by John Lenehan)		3:22
8	Intermezzo in A major, Op. 118 No. 2 (arranged by John Lenehan)		5:49
9	Wie Melodien zieht es mir, Op. 105 No. 1 (arranged by John Lenehan)		2:08

#### Clarinet Sonata in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1

10	I	<i>Allegro appassionato</i>	8:06
11	II	<i>Andante un poco adagio</i>	5:04
12	III	<i>Allegretto grazioso</i>	4:44
13	IV	<i>Vivace</i>	5:36

Total playing time: 53:04

Helen Habershon clarinet ♦ John Lenehan piano

# Helen Habershon and John Lenehan:

## Music for clarinet and piano by Finzi and Brahms

This album follows Helen's latest release *Found in Dreams*, a beautiful collection of her all-time favourites, new pieces and a select few movements of outstanding clarinet repertoire by Brahms and Finzi, performed here as full works.

Helen writes:

It has been my intention for some time to record more of the clarinet repertoire but until now my composition has been more of a priority for me!

Brahms is one of my favourite composers, but this has not always been the case. When I was learning his clarinet sonatas as a student at the Royal College of Music, I didn't really appreciate them fully and it was only after hearing the absolutely beautiful violin sonata in G major that I rediscovered them. I was then studying at the Institute of Advanced Musical Studies in Montreux, Switzerland and staying with a friend in the countryside when he put on a recording of the work played by Josef Suk and Julius Katchen. As I looked at the magical scene through the window, of the snow falling gently to the ground, I was entranced by the sheer beauty of this music and realised that the composer was the very same Brahms who had written sonatas for the clarinet! Since then I've never looked back and I never tire of performing them, seeing them as very dear friends.

Brahms wrote both his Clarinet Sonatas in 1894, only three years before his death. In 1890 he had announced his retirement from composing but, having heard the wonderful playing of Richard Mühlfeld in Meiningen the following year, he fell in love with the sound of the clarinet and was inspired to write these late works in addition to a trio and quintet.

When John suggested also including four more works by Brahms, I was amazed how well they worked on the clarinet and I like to think that the composer would not be disappointed. They are wonderfully arranged by John and lovely to play. I feel they are a welcome addition to the clarinet and piano repertoire.

*Wie Melodien zieht es Mir*, one of his most popular songs was written in 1886 and *Meine Lieder* around the same time – between 1885-1886. His Intermezzi were written late in life: the A major, Op.118 No.2 in 1892 and the B minor, Op. 119 No.1 in 1893.

I was introduced to Finzi's Bagatelles at quite an early age and I find them as enchanting now as I did then. I remember the first time I performed them: I knew without any doubt that I wanted to be a performer. They have stood the test of time and are still favourites amongst players and listeners alike.

Written in 1940, these works exploit the clarinet to its full, taking full advantage of its unusually large range, its many colours and tonal possibilities. He loved its rich deep-hued sonorous sound. Although these pieces immediately became his most popular, Finzi dismissed them as 'only trifles' and 'not worth much, but got better notices than my decent stuff'.

The lively opening 'Prelude' is followed by three more peaceful little movements; the beautiful 'Romance', the 'Carol', full of tenderness which always inspires a soft sigh from the audience, and the charming 'Forlana.'

The Bagatelles end with a stirring Finale which shows off all the versatility of the instrument.

*Helen Habershon, 2021*

# The musicians

## Helen Habershon

As a composer and clarinettist with a distinguished performance history, music has always been a part of Helen's life. Strongly encouraged by her very talented mother, she began playing the recorder at the age of 4 and went on to the clarinet at age 10. By now she was also composing and winning composition prizes at local music competitions and playing regularly with her flautist twin sister, Cathrine, with whom she later went on to perform together as the 'Saunders Twins and Friends' with much international success.

Having continued to focus on performance, Helen won scholarships and exhibitions to Dartington College of Arts, the Royal College of Music, where she studied with the legendary Sydney Fell, and the IHEM in Switzerland where she had the fortune of receiving tutelage from some of the world's leading musicians.

Helen also won the notice of Gervase de Peyer who singled her out, heralding her as the next Thea King after she played at one of his masterclasses at the Dartington Summer School. He took her on as his only student and she feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to study with him alongside Syd, describing her lessons with them both as truly inspirational.

After Switzerland and a spell as principal clarinettist of the Academy of the BBC under Norman Del Mar, his favoured principal, Helen was appointed principal clarinettist of the Gulbenkian Orchestra at the age of 22. Helen has performed as a soloist in prestigious venues in many countries in Europe, and a highlight was a concerto with her twin sister at the Lincoln Center with the New York Chamber Symphony Orchestra under Gerard Schwarz. She has appeared on television (including Sir Michael Parkinson) and radio on many occasions and has performed alongside icons such as Sir Cliff Richard and Dame Vanessa Redgrave.

Having established a career as an international clarinettist, a twist of fate resulted in her going back to serious composition. Unable to play the clarinet for a couple of months due to two broken wrists she was allowed to play the piano. As a result she found herself hooked and the music began to flow from her pencil!

Her first three albums, 'Found in the Rain' (2009), 'Found in the Sunlight' (2014) and 'Found in Winter' (2018) were all immediately taken up by global Classic FM as 'Album of the Month' and 'Albums of the Week' respectively. They are played worldwide and have also enjoyed much success in the United States. The tracks *Found in the Rain* and *Far Out in the*

*Ocean*, are well known to many Classic FM listeners. The former was selected by Georgia Mann for her playlist on Essential Classics on BBC Radio 3 and the latter was a jingle on Anne-Marie Minhall's request programme.

On her previous album, 'Found in Dreams', (Divine Art DDA 25225 released in March 2022), Helen once again collaborated with John Lenehan. That recording is a diverse mix of what she describes as some of her very favourite pieces including beautiful arrangements by John, some delightful new compositions by them both and a few select movements of outstanding standard clarinet repertoire from Brahms and Finzi. This prompted them to produce this current album.

Helen is deeply influenced and inspired by nature and this can be easily recognised in much of her music. When she was 8 years old she remembers looking out of her bedroom window on to a wood and hearing her first tune which she knows to this day. This has been a regular occurrence and she feels very blessed to be the recipient of what she feels can only be described as a magical source of inspiration. Another example was in Brittany in 2003. Whilst swimming in the sea she noticed that all around her was sea, sky and a sandy beach and that it could have been a million years ago. In that moment she heard a tune which was to become 'A Million Years Ago.'

Helen cares deeply about 'our beautiful planet' and in 2016 she was appointed 'Composer in Residence' for the very exciting Ice Warrior program with polar explorer and keynote speaker Jim McNeill, with an invitation to join an expedition to the North Pole, postponed now until 2023! Despite their totally different backgrounds of musician and explorer they decided to collaborate by giving inspirational talks on the theme of music and nature which have been enthusiastically received. Helen has written 'Farewell Ice' for the project, inspired by the Arctic. Her music is also featured at Jim's icon interview series at HQS Wellington, London. She is also currently working at an audio book with her own story and music.

Helen would like to thank her family and friends for their wonderful support and encouragement. Also, she makes a very special mention to 'Help Musicians' for their invaluable support. In her own words: 'They have helped me and so many other musicians in challenging times and are a much cherished institution.'

## John Lenehan

With more than 70 albums to his credit, reflecting an enormous variety of genres and styles, John Lenehan ranks as one of the most versatile pianists on the classical scene today. Praised by the New York Times for his “great flair and virtuosity” and the (London) Times – “a masterly recital”, John Lenehan has appeared in concerts throughout the World from Abu Dhabi to Zurich and from Aberdeen to Zimbabwe. As a soloist he has appeared with orchestras such as the London Symphony at the Barbican and the Royal Philharmonic in the Royal Albert Hall. John Lenehan has also collaborated with some of the leading instrumentalists of our time and is recognised as an outstanding and versatile chamber musician.

His many recordings include piano recitals and concertos as well as duo sonatas, chamber music and jazz. His four-disc survey of John Ireland’s piano music received great critical acclaim including a Gramophone award. His other solo recordings include three discs for Sony Classical of minimalist piano works and a disc of Erik Satie (for Classic FM). Most recently he has recorded concertos by Mozart (K.467) and Beethoven (Emperor) with the National Symphony Orchestra.

John Lenehan also composes, with works published by Faber, Novello and Schotts. His Fantasy on Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker has recently been recorded by the Budapest Symphony Orchestra. He has written and arranged for a long list of soloists and orchestras including Nicola Benedetti, Leonidas Kavakos, Nigel Kennedy, Tasmin Little, Ksenija Sidorova (at the last night of the Proms 2021) and Yuja Wang. John also presents film and music programmes, reviving the art of the improvising pianist – the most recent being “The Roaring Twenties.”

This album was recorded at St George’s Headstone, Pinner View, Harrow, London,  
on 1-3 May, 2021

Engineered and produced by Michael Ponder

Mastering: Adaq Khan

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*Helen Habershon*







*John Lenehan*

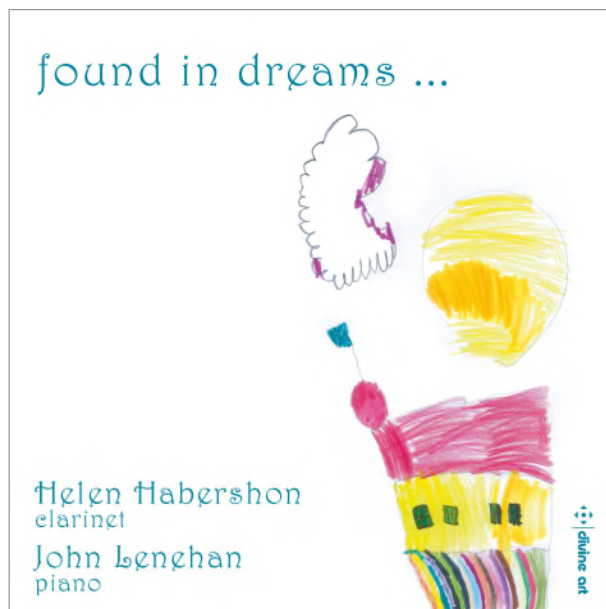


## 'FOUND IN WINTER' (Divine Art DDA 25191)

*Helen Habershon (clarinet)*  
*John Lenehan (piano)*  
 with  
*John Anderson (oboe)*  
*Andrew Fuller (cello)*  
*London Primavera*  
*Conducted by Anthony Halstead*

"Flowing and melodic...  
 attractively appealing" – *Planet Hugill*

"Charming and uncomplicated. All of the players do an excellent job." – *Fanfare*



## 'FOUND IN DREAMS' (Divine Art DDA 25225)

*Helen Habershon (clarinet)*  
*John Lenehan (piano)*

*A recital of pieces by Brahms, Debussy, Dvořák, Elgar, Finzi, Habershon, Horowitz, Lenehan & Schumann*



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