

NAXOS

Stephen
DODGSON
Guitar Chamber
Works
Change-Ringers
Divertissement
Four Poems of John Clare
The Selevan Story
Antonia Gentile, Soprano
Hartmut Richter, Violin
Evva Mizerska, Cello
Octavia Lamb, Flute
Michael Butten, Bass guitar
Eden Stell Guitar Duo
Mēla Guitar Quartet



1	Change-Ringers for four guitars	6:22
	Mēla Guitar Quartet	
2	Roundelay for cello and guitar ensemble	5:55
	Evva Mizerska, Cello • Mēla Guitar Quartet	
	Divertissement for violin and guitar ensemble	16:28
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10	Intermezzo (Citharae Chordae pro Pace) for four guitars	3:36
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	The Selevan Story for flute, violin, guitar duo and guitar ensemble	18:12
16	1. Prelude (On the rocks)	2:36
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18	3. Pastoral (The Saint's Path)	3:25
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20	5. Concertino (Two fish on one hook)	7:15
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 ESG Music **11** **16-20**. For tracks **2-9**, unpublished manuscripts were used
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 These works may, however, be published by Les Productions d'Oz at a later date.

Stephen Dodgson (1924–2013)

Guitar Chamber Works

Stephen Dodgson, born in London, studied at the Royal College of Music between 1947 and 1949. Between 1957 and 1982 he taught theory and composition at the Royal College, one of his pupils being John Williams, at that time a junior exhibitor. Dodgson became a Fellow of the College in 1981 and in 1986 was appointed chairman of the National Youth Wind Orchestra of Great Britain.

His output includes many vocal works and orchestral pieces, as well as chamber and instrumental compositions. He also wrote for the harpsichord, clavichord and harp, as well as six virtuoso piano sonatas.

Dodgson began writing for guitar in the 1950s on the advice of Julian Bream who premiered his *Suite for Guitar* in a concert at the Wigmore Hall, London, in September 1952. John Williams gave the first performance of Dodgson's *Partita* at the Cheltenham Festival in 1963, and Julian Bream played the same work at his Cheltenham recital in November 1965. Many guitar works followed including solos, concertos, guitar duets and trios, works for guitar ensemble, compositions for voice and guitar, and a quantity of chamber music which included the guitar. The selection presented here includes a work not previously recorded and demonstrates the variety and imaginative range of Stephen Dodgson's pioneering endeavours in this somewhat neglected area of guitar music.

Change-Ringers for guitar quartet was commissioned by the Dutch ensemble Attacca in 1996. It is a free adaptation of *Carillon* (1967) for two harpsichords, an imitation of bells, rung at first in orderly symmetry to the motif proposed. As the composer described it: 'Soon the patterns proliferate, rhythms split up and kaleidoscopic intermingling takes place; fast motifs heard excitedly against slower ones, with interruptions and echoes. A coda in faster time brings a general animation and integration, but an accumulating massiveness slows the piece to its final cadence.'

Roundelay for cello and guitar ensemble (2005) was commissioned by the National Youth Guitar Ensemble. *Roundelay* comes from the Middle French word *rondelet*,

a diminutive of *ronde*. The genre implies the repetition of lines or phrases whether in a musical composition or poem, and the image of dancing round in a circle. The inclusion of a solo cello here adds a characteristic sustained timbre to the texture. The work combines rhythmic vitality with lyrical expressiveness.

In 1984 Stephen Dodgson was invited by the Toronto Guitar Festival to provide a work for guitar ensemble. To fulfil this commission the composer combined a bowed string soloist with guitar sonorities, hence the inclusion of a violin part in *Divertissement*.

The opening *Sinfonia* was described by Dodgson as being 'the only substantial movement, having a classical shape in miniature', the others being dances in accordance with the French title. The composer commented that *Scherzo* II presents the same music as *Scherzo* I but 'turned inside-out'. Thus the violin's 'perpetuum mobile passes to the guitars on the second appearance, obliging the violin to struggle with the ungainly steeplechase previously allotted to the guitars. Either way round, the movement has no proper ending.' At the second appearance, this lack of a proper ending seems the equivalent of not knowing where to go next, an effect exploited in the brief sixth movement. Out of its 'spluttering fits and starts there finally loom three hugely portentous notes. But instead of heralding some profound utterance, they lead impishly to an innocent Rondo theme, at whose last appearance the music dashes to a sudden breathless finish.'

Intermezzo (Citharae Chordae pro Pace) for four guitars (1987), written in response to a request for a multi-movement and multi-composer work, was first performed at the Esztergom Guitar Festival, Hungary, in August 1987. The score is prefaced with lines from Act V, Scene V, of Shakespeare's *King Henry the Eighth*:

*In her days every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine, what he plants; and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.*

In 1983, the composer was involved with guitar festivals in Toronto and Esztergom. A feature of the latter was the massed guitar concert given by students at the end of the course in the city's extremely resonant Basilica. Stephen Dodgson was invited by László Szendrey-Karper, the festival director, to compose a work for solo voice and guitars, dedicated to the Hungarian soprano opera singer Karola Ágai.

It was decided that a Latin text would provide an appropriate linguistic basis for the song acceptable both to the composer and the singer. Szendrey-Karper therefore brought to Dodgson's attention the medieval panegyric *Hymnus de Sancto Stephano*, written in honour of Hungary's patron saint and king. The *Hymn*'s four quatrains are introduced and linked by *ritornelli*, the two central verses forming a reflective middle section between the rapturous acclamations which frame them.

Four Poems of John Clare (1963) were written for the tenor Wilfrid Brown and the guitarist John Williams, who played many concerts together in the 1960s. The composer has commented that *'The only reflective song is the second, a self-portrait of Clare. I have presumed the wagtail was spied from Clare's asylum window, hence the heartache felt in the final verse with its goodbyes. Turkeys catalogues the repertoire of antics and noises colourfully observed in these bizarre creatures, which in music becomes a scherzo. The Fox is a dramatic scene in miniature.'*

The Selevan Story, commissioned to celebrate the 10th Prussia Cove Guitar Seminar in 1992, is based on the legend of St Levan (a variant of Selevan) (born c. 492), who lived in a remote parish in the far west of Cornwall. Various elements of the legend are featured within the five movements.

Prelude (On the rocks) depicts the favourite rock, situated near the church, from which the saint fished every day. The second movement, *Dialogue (Johana's garden)*, recalls the story of how one Sunday morning, as St Levan went on his way to fish from his rock, he passed his neighbour, Johana, picking herbs in her garden. Johana severely rebuked the holy man for fishing on Sunday. St Levan replied that it was no more sinful to take his dinner from the sea than for Johana to work in the

garden. The woman insisted he was in the wrong. An argument ensued in which St Levan called the woman a fool and proclaimed that in future any child of the parish called Johana would find herself to be as stupid as her namesake. (Hence no baby born in the village of St Levan has been christened Johana ever since.)

Pastoral (The Saint's Path) celebrates the exceptionally verdant grass along the path to the rock where the holy man trod.

Passamezzo (The Saint Levan Stone) refers to a rock on the south side of the Church where St Levan used to rest after fishing. Just before he died he gave the rock a blow with his fist and cracked it in two. He prayed over the rock and uttered the following prophecy:

*When with panniers astride
A pack-horse can ride
Through St Levan's stone
The world will be done.*

The title *Passamezzo* is a pun by the composer as if the word could be translated 'to pass through the middle', rather than 'a pace and a half'. The section has the character of a dance.

The final movement, *Concertino (Two fish on one hook)* tells a sad and strange legend about the saint. One evening as St Levan fished, there was a heavy tug on his line. Hauling it in he found two chad (breem) on one hook. As he only ate one fish a day he cast them back into the sea. But the same thing happened twice more. Taking this as a sign the saint decided to carry both fish home where he found his sister, Breage, with her two hungry sons. The moment the fish were cooked the children ate them greedily. But they did not remove the bones, which choked them and they died. (Since then this type of fish has been known as *chuck-cheels* or *choke-childs*.)

Stephen Dodgson commented: *'This marks the point of climax. Mounting animation ceases abruptly, giving way to a brief but heartfelt threnody. As this too passes, the music broadens out into the soft glow of a marine sunset.'*

Graham Wade

¶ Hymnus de Sancto Stephano

Gaude, Mater Ungaria,
Prolis agens preconium,
Cum laude multipharia
Patronum lauda proprium.

Cuius ortus predicatur
Patri celesti nuncio
Martyr ad matrem mittitur
Nascentis vaticinio.

Puer crescens progreditur
Sicut cedrus in Lybano
Predictum nomen inditur
Humic a Beato Stephano.

Trino Deo et simplici
Sit laus honor et gloria
Qui sancti regis supplici
Concedat celi gaudia. Amen.

¶ Hymn of St Stephen

Rejoice, Mother Hungary,
proclaiming your child
with many-sided praise
praise your own patron.

Whose rise was foretold
by his heavenly father,
martyr sent to mother
by the prophecy of the child.

The boy, growing, goes forward
like the cedar of Lebanon,
the predicted name given
by Blessed Stephen.

To God, three in one,
be praise, honour and glory
who, by the prayer of the holy king
may bring the joys of Heaven. Amen.

Four Poems of John Clare (1793–1864)

¶ 1. Trotty Wagtail

Little Trotty Wagtail he went in the rain
And twittering, tottering sideways
 he ne'er got straight again,
He stooped to get a worm and looked up to get a fly,
And then he flew away ere his feathers they were dry.

Little Trotty Wagtail he waddled in the mud,
And left his little footmarks, trample where he would.
He waddled in the water pudge and waggle went his tail,
And chirrup up his wings to dry upon the garden rail.

Little Trotty Wagtail, you nimble all about,
And in the dimpling waterpudge you waddle in and out;
Your home is nigh at hand and in the warm pig sty,
So, little Master Wagtail, I'll bid you a goodbye.

13 2. The Peasant Poet

He loved the brook's soft sound,
The swallow swimming by.
He loved the daisy-covered ground,
The cloud-bedappled sky.
To him the dismal storm appeared
The very voice of God;
And when the evening rack was reared
Stood Moses with his rod.
And everything his eyes surveyed,
The insects in the brake,
Were creatures God Almighty made,
He loved them for His sake –
A silent man in life's affairs,
A thinker from a boy,
A peasant in his daily cares,
A poet in his joy.

14 3. Turkeys

The turkeys wade the close to catch the bees
In the old border full of maple trees
And often lay away and breed and come
And bring a brood of chelping chickens home.
The turkey gobbles loud and drops his rag
And struts and sprunts his tail and then lets drag
His wing on ground and makes a huzzing noise,
Nauntles at passer-bye and drives the boys
And bounces up and flies at passer-bye.
The old dog snaps and grins nor ventures nigh.
He gobbles loud and drives the boys from play;
They throw their sticks and kick and run away.

15 4. The Fox

The shepherd on his journey heard when nigh
His dog among the bushes barking high;
The ploughman ran and gave a hearty shout,
He found a weary fox and beat him out.
The ploughman laughed and would have ploughed him in
But the old shepherd took him for the skin.
He lay upon the furrow stretched for dead,
The old dog lay and licked the wounds that bled,
The ploughman beat him till his ribs would crack,
And then the shepherd slung him at his back;
And when he rested, to his dog's surprise,
The old fox started from his dead disguise;
And while the dog lay panting in the sedge
He up and snapt and bolted through the hedge.

He scampered to the bushes far away;
The shepherd called the ploughman to the fray;
The ploughman wished he had a gun to shoot.
The old dog barked and followed the pursuit.
The shepherd threw his hook and tottered past;
The ploughman ran but none could go so fast;
The woodman threw his faggot from the way
And ceased to chop and wondered at the fray.
But when he saw the dog and heard the cry
He threw his hatchet – but the fox was bye.
The shepherd broke his hook and lost the skin;
He found a badger hole and bolted in.
They tried to dig, but, safe from danger's way,
He lived to chase the hounds another day.

Antonia Gentile

Photo: Jamie Cowlishaw



Antonia Gentile studied at Birmingham Conservatoire and specialised in Opera and Vocal Studies under the tuition of Rita Cullis; she then went on to study with Neil Baker. Gentile is a versatile soprano and performs both opera and chamber music and is passionate about contemporary music. She is perhaps best known for performing music written for voice and guitar, particularly the works of Stephen Dodgson, with the Vickers Bovey Guitar Duo and Mēla Guitar Quartet. Her operatic roles include The Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), 1st Boy (*The Magic Flute*), Miles (*The Turn of the Screw*), Jenny Hildebrand (*Street Scene*), Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*) and Pepik (*The Cunning Little Vixen*). Upcoming operatic roles include Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*.

www.antoniagentile.com

Hartmut Richter



German-born violinist Hartmut Richter is a soloist and chamber musician, giving regular concerts in Europe and North America. He is active in several ensembles including the Veles Ensemble, the Richter-Housden Duo (violin/guitar) and the Richter-Ardelean Piano Duo. Richter studied at the Hanover Academy of Music, Germany, under Krzysztof Wegrzyn, Atila Aydintan and Ina Kertscher, before completing his studies with a soloist diploma at the Nuremberg Academy of Music under Lydia Dubrovskaya. Richter won several first prizes in German national competitions including Jugend Musiziert and the Mozart Competition Hildesheim, and has received scholarships for international masterclasses working with renowned professors including Robert Szreder, Rosa Fain, Kurt Sassmannshaus and Christian Altenburger.

www.hartmutrichter.com

Evva Mizerska



Photo: Ula Wiznerowicz

Named a 'rising star' by *The Strad*, Evva Mizerska is a recitalist, chamber musician and teacher. She has been awarded numerous prizes and scholarships and has given recitals in major venues in the UK as well as in Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, the Czech Republic, the USA and Brazil. She has made three critically acclaimed recordings for Toccata Classics, featuring cello and piano music by Krzysztof Meyer, Algernon Ashton and, most recently, the complete cello and piano music of Stephen Dodgson. Besides her solo career, Mizerska is a cellist in the Veles Ensemble and lectures at Morley College.

www.evvmizerska-cellist.co.uk

Octavia Lamb



Photo: Nick Rutter

Octavia Lamb studied at the Royal College of Music, London, where she was a scholarship student supported by a Douglas and Hilda Simmonds Award. She was Principal Flute of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain from 2012–13, with whom she has toured and performed at the BBC Proms. While at the RCM, Lamb appeared as principal flute with the RCM Philharmonic under the batons of conductors such as Peter Stark and Michael Seal. Octavia Lamb is supported by The Cherubim Music Trust, and plays on the platinum Muramatsu flute they purchased for her.

Michael Butten



Born in Berkshire, Michael Butten studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Michael Lewin. He is the winner of the 2016 Ivor Mairant's Guitar Award and a Yeoman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. One of Butten's main interests is British guitar music, and the link between contemporary British guitar music and the music composed for the lute in the renaissance period. He has drawn warm critical acclaim from *The Daily Telegraph* for his performance of Lennox Berkeley's guitar works, and has performed the Malcolm Arnold *Guitar Concerto* numerous times with the Berkeley Ensemble, as well as recording Malcolm Arnold's *Serenade* with the Chamber Ensemble of London. He is currently preparing a solo recording devoted to the music of John Dowland.

www.michaelbutten.co.uk

Eden Stell Guitar Duo



Photo: Felicity Ingram

Mark Eden and Christopher Stell have had a long association with Stephen Dodgson, stretching back to the origin of the duo's genesis in 1990, performing Dodgson's *Promenade* at a festival dedicated to his works. Close collaboration between the composer and duo continued, culminating in the premiere of Dodgson's *Concertino for Two Guitars and Strings 'Les Dentelles'* in 2001 at the Presteigne Festival of Music, and a recording soon after in 2003 of all Dodgson's guitar duo works entitled *Follow the Star*; the only guitar recording to be selected as Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine since Julian Bream. 'The Eden Stell Duo are one of the best duos around. This is a landmark recording on the guitar's map.' (*Gramophone*) The duo are Associates of the Royal Academy of Music and D'Addario Strings artists.

www.edenstell.com

Mēla Guitar Quartet

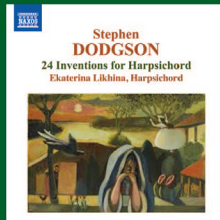


Photo: David Hughes

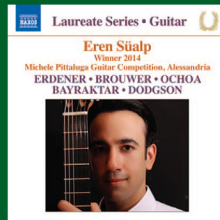
Mēla, an Indian word meaning 'festive gathering', embodies the ethos of the Mēla Guitar Quartet. Bringing the colours and textures of four classical guitars to life with a wonderfully inventive, eclectic mix of repertoire, the Mēla Quartet explores the art of a classical quartet to the highest level while still making their style accessible for all. Members Matthew Robinson, George Tarlton, Daniel Bovey and Jiva Housden have a wealth of concert experience, from performances on BBC Radios 3 and 4 to concerto performances in venues including the Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, Birmingham Symphony Hall and the Purcell Room. The quartet regularly presents their own arrangements and transcriptions in concert, and this recognition has paved the way for collaborations with contemporary composers such as Johannes Möller and Richard Melkonian. In October 2014, Mēla performed at Kings Place as part of the London Guitar Festival, at Winchester Guitar Festival, and in 2015 opened the Founders Hall recital series on the King's Road in Chelsea. They later recorded the world premiere of Stephen Dodgson's *Change-Fingers* for the Dodgson Trust. In 2016 Mēla opened the Hendrix Museum as well as performing a sold-out concert for them. The quartet performed at Milton Court as part of the Guildhall Alumni series and have spent their time recording and filming for 'The Fly on the Wall' series and performing at Sofar Sounds. They also performed for the Burgess Foundation as part of Anthony Burgess' centenary. Mēla were named the International Guitar Foundation 'Young Artists' in 2016. The quartet all play on guitars by master luthier Michael Gee.

www.melagq.com

Also available



9.70262



8.573487

Stephen Dodgson's work embraced a wide variety of genres but, encouraged by Julian Bream in the 1950s, he became one of the most prolific and respected 20th-century composers for guitar. Including a premiere recording of the ingenious *Change-Ringers*, the chamber works on this recording make use of a fascinating palette of tonal colours, taking us on an unconventional and often witty journey of rhythmic excitement, serenity, dissonance and beauty.

Stephen DODGSON

(1924–2013)

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|-------|---|-------|
| 1 | Change-Ringers for four guitars (1996)* | 6:22 |
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*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Antonia Gentile, Soprano 11-15 • **Hartmut Richter, Violin** 3-9 16-20

Evva Mizerska, Cello 2 • **Octavia Lamb, Flute** 16-20

Michael Butten, Octave bass guitar 3-9

Eden Stell Guitar Duo 16-20

Mēla Guitar Quartet 1-11 16-20

Daniel Bovey 12-15, **Jiva Housden, Matthew Robinson, George Tarlton**

A detailed track list and publishers' details can be found on page 2 of the booklet.

The sung texts can be found inside the booklet, and also at www.naxos.com/libretti/573762.htm

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Produced, engineered and edited by John Taylor • Booklet notes: Graham Wade

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Playing Time
66:21

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