



WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

GRAND
PIANO

A HUNDRED YEARS OF BRITISH PIANO MINIATURES

BUTTERWORTH • FRICKER • HARRISON
HEADINGTON • L. & E. LIVENS • LONGMIRE
POWER • REYNOLDS • SKEMPTON • WARREN

DUNCAN HONEYBOURNE

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BRITISH PIANO MINIATURES**

**BUTTERWORTH • FRICKER • HARRISON • HEADINGTON
L. & E. LIVENS • LONGMIRE • POWER • REYNOLDS
SKEMPTON • WARREN**

DUNCAN HONEYBOURNE, piano

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Recording Venue: The National Centre for Early Music, St Margaret's Church, York, UK

Producers: David Power and Peter Reynolds (1–21), Peter Reynolds and Jeremy Wells (22–28)

Engineer: Jeremy Wells

Editors: David Power and Jeremy Wells

Piano: Bösendorfer 6'6" Grand Piano (1999). Tuned to modern pitch.

Piano Technician: Robert Nutbrown

Booklet Notes: Paul Conway, David Power and Duncan Honeybourne

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LEO LIVENS (1896–1990)		
1	MOONBEAMS (1915)	01:53
EVANGELINE LIVENS (1898–1983)		
2	SHADOWS (1915)	03:15
JULIUS HARRISON (1885–1963)		
SEVERN COUNTRY (1928)		02:17
3	III, No. 3, Far Forest	02:17
CONSTANCE WARREN (1905–1984)		
4	IDYLL IN G FLAT MAJOR (1930)	02:45
ARTHUR BUTTERWORTH (1923–2014)		
LAKELAND SUMMER NIGHTS, OP. 10 (1949)		10:07
5	I. Evening	02:09
6	II. Rain	02:30
7	III. Night Sky	05:13
CHRISTOPHER HEADINGTON (1930–1996)		
8	ITALIAN DANCE (1959)	01:34
JOHN BASIL HUGH LONGMIRE (1902–1986)		
9	REGENT STREET (1962)	03:27
HOWARD SKEMPTON (b. 1947)		
10	QUAVERS (1972)	02:48
11	INTERMEZZO (1973)	01:32

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

PETER RACINE FRICKER (1920–1990)
TWO EXPRESSIONS FOR PIANO (1981)

05:03

12 No. 1

03:00

13 No. 2

01:59

DAVID POWER (b. 1962)
EIGHT MINIATURES (1998–2001)

08:56

14 No. 1

00:32

15 No. 2

01:43

16 No. 3

00:30

17 No. 4

01:08

18 No. 5

00:46

19 No. 6

00:35

20 No. 7

00:25

21 No. 8

02:55

PETER REYNOLDS (1958–2016)
CIPPYN (2015)

09:40

22 I.

01:06

23 II.

01:31

24 III.

00:52

25 IV.

01:44

26 V.

01:05

27 VI.

01:31

28 VII.

01:28

TOTAL TIME: 54:03

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

A HUNDRED YEARS OF BRITISH PIANO MINIATURES

About three years ago, I was sorting through my music in preparation for setting up a website about my work. When I came to the *Eight Miniatures*, I was vividly reminded of the circumstances in which I had written them in the late 1990s. As I reflected on all this, I found myself wondering what sort of circumstances had prompted other composers to write piano miniatures. I rang my friend Peter Reynolds, a composer who is a master of the miniature – he is even listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the composer of the world's shortest opera – and we discussed the miniatures question. We came to feel that they tended to be written quickly and therefore perhaps had a 'postcard' quality. Gradually the idea of an album of piano miniatures evolved. We felt if we could do an album of miniatures that had never been recorded before and featuring little known composers, then we would effectively have 'postcards' from some of the alternative/neglected pathways through musical history. We decided to try.

It was Peter who suggested Duncan Honeybourne as the ideal pianist, both because of his skill as a pianist and also his very extensive knowledge of neglected English music. I contacted Duncan about our plans and arranged to meet him at the Steinway Rooms in London. He certainly did his homework for this meeting. He brought about four pieces from every decade from the last hundred years! We worked through these and agreed our selection. All the pieces on this recording up to the Peter Racine Fricker are from Duncan's collection. For the rest of the years, mine covered the 1990s and I was delighted when Peter offered to write some new miniatures especially for this project. For the period before my miniatures, we all wanted music from the English experimental school and eventually settled on Howard Skempton. Finally, we wanted music by a composer whose work showed awareness of the innovations of the continental post-World War Two avant-garde but didn't wholly embrace it. For a while we were stuck between Fricker and John McCabe but, in the end, decided on Fricker.

As for Peter's miniatures, he decided he wanted to include some electronics – an entirely new departure for him. We recorded the album and the additional items that would be treated electronically for Peter's piece in August 2015 at the National Centre for Early Music in York. It was then on-the-job training for



DAVID POWER
© Tina Waller

Peter as he learned how to write electronic music while composing his electronic miniatures. In this he was aided extensively by the recording engineer Dr Jeremy Wells of the University of York. During 2016, I received a number of exciting reports about progress from Peter and Jez.

Then tragedy struck. Peter collapsed and died of a heart attack at his home in Cardiff. He was just 58. A few days later, I sent a nervous email to Jez asking if Peter's piece was finished. Not quite, but a combination of his last demo and last set of instructions meant that Jez could complete it. He did finish it and, it seems to me, made an excellent job of it. Complications with Peter's executors, due to the suddenness of his death, caused further delays but these were eventually resolved and we were able to offer the recordings to various record labels. I am delighted that Grand Piano has accepted it but sad that Peter didn't live to see this day. The album is dedicated to the memory of Peter Reynolds (1958–2016).

David Power

ABOUT THIS RECORDING

Some British composers, such as Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, have written piano works on a grand scale, yet many others have been drawn to small forms. These miniatures make their mark swiftly, sometimes offering a glimpse into more elaborately conceived worlds or else capturing the essence of a whole genre in their brief durations. The examples featured in this conspectus range from character pieces to sets of studies. They all present a distillation of their composers' musical language.

Son of the English artist Horace Mann Livens, Leo Livens (1896–1990) was a virtuoso concert pianist and composer. He wrote mainly for his own instrument and his most celebrated works were based on nursery rhymes: *Sing a Song of Sixpence* and *Little Polly Flinders*. *Moonbeams* (1915) is a polished and evocative example of his art featuring delicate, cascading lines that call for a secure technique and a sense of poetry.

Evangeline Livens (1898–1983), sister of Leo, was also a fine pianist and wrote several piano pieces. In *Shadows* (1915), she assembles a wide-ranging structure from varied reflections on the haunting, four-note modal phrase heard at the outset.

Known primarily as an opera conductor, Julius Harrison (1885–1963) was also a prolific composer, whose most popular work, *Bredon Hill*, a rhapsody for violin and orchestra (1942) was inspired by the Worcestershire countryside. Concise and eloquent, *Far Forest* (1928) exploits contrasts in register and incorporates a mini-cadenza and a wistful coda. It is the last of three sketches Harrison wrote for piano, collectively entitled *Severn Country*.

Constance Warren (1905–1984) was a composer and piano teacher. She taught at the Birmingham School of Music and Birmingham Conservatoire, and her pupils included the composer Brian Ferneyhough. In her *Idyll in G flat major* (1930), an intense chromaticism lends an emotional depth and ambiguity to the thematic material.

Arthur Butterworth (1923–2014) had a long and successful career in music. A trumpeter in the Scottish and Hallé Orchestras, he gave up professional playing in his late thirties to focus on conducting, instrumental teaching and, primarily, composition. He was drawn to traditional genres such as the symphony and the concerto and wrote several fine pieces for brass band.

Some of Butterworth's first acknowledged scores were performed while he was still a student at the Royal Manchester College of Music (RMCM, now the Royal Northern College of Music). Among them is the piano piece *Lakeland Summer Nights, Op.10*, which dates from March 1949 and was premiered by Jean Barker at an RMCM recital on 14 February 1950. Contrary to the series of peaceful, calming lullabies suggested by its title, it depicts scenes of forbidding and desolate loneliness under the luminous darkness of a summer night. The opening movement, *Evening*, recalls being alone on the remote north-west coast of Sutherland, watching the slowly gathering clouds in the growing darkness as the last streaks of daylight disappeared far out over the North Atlantic. The central movement, *Rain*, is an evocation of a night of lowering clouds and the dull monotony of persistent rain, dying away in the early hours to leave only the dripping leaves on their sodden branches to break the stillness of the night. (These first two movements were later used in the orchestral piece *Northern Summer Nights, Op. 18*, for which Butterworth composed an entirely new, extended last movement.) *Night Sky* contemplates the vast illimitable distances of the stars and the dark and utter silence of space, remote and incomprehensible: this movement was revised and rewritten for a performance of *Lakeland Summer Nights* by Nicholas Rimmer at the Brewery Arts Centre, as part of the Lakeland Composers' Music Festival in May 2000.

Composer and writer Christopher Headington (1930–1996) also had a successful career as a pianist which took in recitals, broadcasts, films and recordings. His repertoire was extensive and embraced neglected compositions. As a creative artist he often wrote for his own instrument and his output includes a piano concerto, a piano quartet and several keyboard works. *Italian Dance* (1959) is a spirited vignette, driven by an insistent, tarantella-like rhythm in compound time. The insouciant closing gesture sets the seal on the score's epigrammatic drollery.

Born in Gainsborough in Lincolnshire, John Longmire (1902–1986) studied with John Ireland at the Royal College of Music. He became a lifelong friend of Ireland and published a biography of him. Longmire's compositions were mainly for piano but he also wrote operettas, choral works, chamber music and some orchestral scores. *Regent Street* (1962) is a light piece in the same vein as Eric Coates's *Oxford Street* march. Marked 'with swing', the jazzy main idea is contrasted with a flowing, trio-like theme of understated nobility.

Howard Skempton (b. 1947) has written more than 300 works in various genres. He is active as a pianist and, especially, an accordionist and the core of his catalogue consists of miniatures for his own instruments that display a remarkable economy of means. Both *Quavers* (1972), which only uses four chord types throughout, and *Intermezzo* (1973) are straightforward and refined. Their pared back simplicity exerts a hypnotic power. Technically a child could play these two pieces, but the delicacy and sophistication of Skempton's sonorities demands an experienced executant with a highly developed musical sensibility.

Peter Racine Fricker (1920–1990) was the first British composer to make his reputation entirely after World War Two. He produced an impressive body of work in his highly expressive, urbane and freely atonal language. His catalogue encompasses all the main genres with the exception of staged opera. He was a trained organist, and keyboard works figure prominently in his output. *Two Expressions* for solo piano (1981) is thoroughly idiomatic, showing an innate understanding of the instrument's character. It was written for Jack Behrens, who gave the first performance at the University of Western Ontario, Canada on 29 October 1981.

David Power was born in London in 1962 but spent most of his childhood in York. He studied composition with Richard Steinitz, Steve Ingham and Roger Marsh. In the late 1990s, following a creative crisis, Power decided to write some piano pieces that would never be performed as a way of discovering what really mattered to him as a composer when external pressures and expectations were removed. In doing this, he found his true voice and, once it was clear that that had happened, he relented and allowed performances of the *Eight Miniatures* (1998–2001). These elegant short pieces have a Classical balance

and restraint. Several contain familiar gestures such as grace notes, octave leaps and an Alberti bass, like lovingly harvested vestiges of a bygone era. There is a feeling of eavesdropping into scrupulously selected excerpts from a larger work yet each miniature has a rare cogency and integrity. Writing *Eight Miniatures* proved to be something of a turning point for David Power: from this point onwards, he adopted a simpler and more direct tone in his music which continues to this day.

A key figure in Welsh music for several decades, Peter Reynolds (1958–2016) was especially active in the musical life of his hometown of Cardiff, where he taught at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. He was artistic director of the Cardiff-based PM Music Ensemble, which he formed in 1991, and also the Lower Machen Festival (1997–2009). His compositions feature a number of short instrumental pieces, including *Penllyn* for solo piano, which was premiered in August 2016 by Duncan Honeybourne at a York Late Music concert.

The piano work *Cippyn* (2015–16) is based on material Reynolds wrote as the soundtrack to a short, wordless film. The title of both pieces refers to the derelict Bryn Salem Chapel in Cippyn, Pembrokeshire, originally built in the middle of the 19th century and now being gradually taken over by the natural world. The keyboard work retains and develops some of the film music, including bird calls recorded on site and subsequently transcribed. Breaking new ground in Reynolds' music, the score includes effects, some of which can only be realised as a recording with the piano overdubbed, rather than in the context of a live concert. For example, conventional sounds produced by the keyboard are combined with sounds from inside the piano (with the aid of drumsticks and a glass marble) that need to be recorded and then superimposed on the final result. Reynolds' concern for detail and clarity is palpable throughout the work and reaches an apogee in the final movement's unharmonised single line, made up of small, jewel-like phrases.

Paul Conway

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE PIANIST

I was delighted and intrigued to receive an invitation to collaborate in this fascinating project, helping to devise a balanced and cogent musical narrative via a century of hitherto unrecorded British piano miniatures. The idea aroused my passionate interest from the outset, and a stimulating dialogue with David Power and Peter Reynolds ensued. Our *raison d'être* was to maintain a high quality of musical ideas, identifying pieces that successfully achieved their aims within the parameters their composers had set for them, in whatever style they had chosen to write.

British music has been especially rich in the evocation of specific images and a tangible sense of place. This, being what David Power aptly calls a 'postcard quality', is evidenced in several of the chosen miniatures. Thus Julius Harrison evokes the natural beauty of his native Worcestershire in a pastoral miniature depicting the village of *Far Forest*, on the edge of the Wyre Forest. In his romping *Italian Dance* of 1959, Christopher Headington sends an invigorating postcard from Italy at a time when continental travel was becoming far more common practice for the British masses. The well-travelled John Longmire sends a highly entertaining and colourful postcard from London's *Regent Street*, and it is hard to imagine the bustle of this iconic location being more effectively evoked in musical terms. Arthur Butterworth's triptych, too, is directly place-related, as is Peter Reynolds' remarkably evocative sequence *Cippyn*.

As this may be the first appearance on this recording of the remarkable sibling pianist-composers, Leo Livens (1896–1990) and Evangeline Livens (1898–1983), a few words about this talented and tragic duo may be timely. Their father, Horace Mann Livens, was a renowned artist and a close friend of Vincent Van Gogh, with whom he had been a fellow student in Antwerp in the 1880s. Both Leo and Evangeline enjoyed illustrious student careers at the Royal Academy of Music, where Leo joined the staff as a young man. But their family's outward decorum hid a dark seam of mental illness that was to cut both careers tragically short and lead to professional oblivion and lifelong incarceration in a psychiatric hospital. An early flicker of this might be glimpsed in a tantalising file held in the National Archives, containing representations by Horace Mann Livens that his son should be exempted from military service. 'From infancy', writes Leo's

father, 'he (Leo) has had a very delicate companion and doctors under whose care he had been have told us plainly that he would always require the utmost care [...] At the age of 18 he published a suite of compositions for the pianoforte [probably that containing *Moonbeams*] which competent judges say displays a most original talent. He is now 19.'

Livens goes on to elaborate, 'as a proof that his physical condition is not merely a temporary weakness [...] I have seen him faint after standing quite a short time at the Promenade Concerts, and a fortnight after the long summer vacation [...] the boy's condition was so serious that I had to take him to Dr Hildige, who told me in the plainest language that if he continued to work as hard as he had been doing a nervous breakdown was inevitable.'

Livens' solicitor later wrote to the Central Appeal Tribunal stating that 'there has been insanity on both sides (of the family) and that Leo himself has a great fear of falling a victim to the same disease', but the composer's father also alluded to his own desire not 'to cast a stigma on the boy's public career'. In an extraordinary sequence of events, the tribunal ruled that Livens should not be exempt from service, and the subsequent appeal upheld this verdict. A report dated 28 August 1916 notes that 'the appeal is alleged to be based entirely on the ground that the son is subject to a hereditary tendency to commit suicide, which would probably be enhanced if he joined the Army. The matter was not raised when the son was medically examined, as he is being kept in ignorance of his condition.'

We know that Leo's mother, Gertrude Evangeline Brock, suffered from chronic psychosis and was eventually committed to Shenley Hospital in Hertfordshire, where she died in 1950. But what became of Leo and Evangeline? Speculation aside, the bare and irrefutable facts are that in relative youth they both joined her at the Middlesex County Mental Asylum. Lifelong inpatients for many decades, the two composers died there at advanced ages. Their careers, full of sparkle and promise, blossomed in the decade of the Great War, and their finely-crafted vignettes fully deserve their place as the disc's two 'openers'. It is a sobering realisation that both siblings went on to live, condemned to musical silence, three-quarters of the way through the century we explore in this conspectus.

The concentration imposed on a composer by the time restriction of a miniature engenders a useful focus and stylistic discipline, while character and colour emerge sharply in focus. I hope this quirky selection of snapshots from a turbulent century proves as stimulating and thought-provoking to listeners as it was for us in the planning.

Duncan Honeybourne

DUNCAN HONEYBOURNE

Duncan Honeybourne has established a colourful and diverse career as a pianist, writer and in music education. His debut in 1998 as concerto soloist at Symphony Hall, Birmingham and the National Concert Hall, Dublin, was broadcast on radio and television, with further recitals given in London, Paris, and at international festivals in Belgium and Switzerland.

Honeybourne has toured extensively in the UK, Ireland and Europe as recitalist, concerto soloist and chamber musician, appearing at many major venues and leading festivals. He has been a frequent soloist on radio networks worldwide, including BBC Radio 3, Irish, French, Swiss and Finnish Radio, SABC (South Africa), ABC (Australia) and Radio New Zealand.

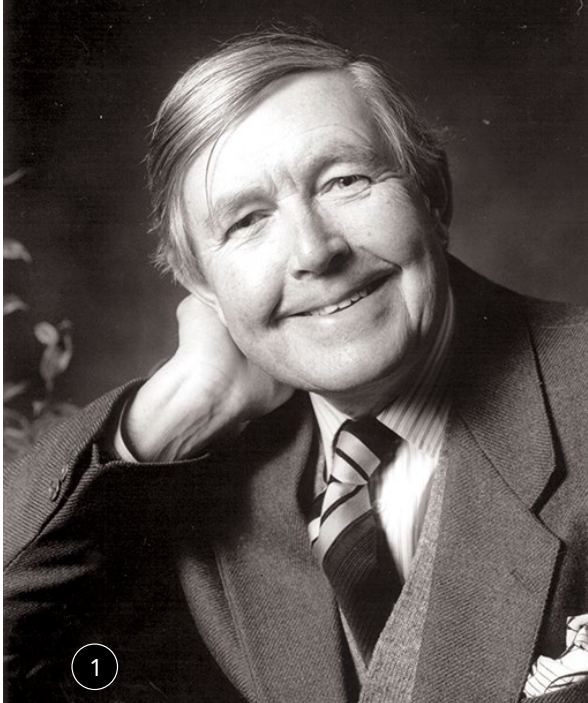
Many acclaimed recordings reflect Honeybourne's long association with 20th- and 21st-century British and Irish piano and chamber music, and include works dedicated to him by several celebrated composers. Premieres of over 30 solo works have included John Joubert's *Third Piano Sonata*, Sadie Harrison's piano cycles *Lunae* and *Shadows*, Luke Whitlock's *Flowing Waters* (an Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government commission) and the Andrew Downes *Piano Concerto* at Birmingham Town Hall.

Duncan Honeybourne has written widely on musical topics for journals ranging from *Classical Music* magazine to *The Times*. He is a piano tutor at the University of Southampton and Sherborne School and gives regular masterclasses, lecture-recitals and adjudications.

www.duncanhoneybourne.com



DUNCAN HONEYBOURNE
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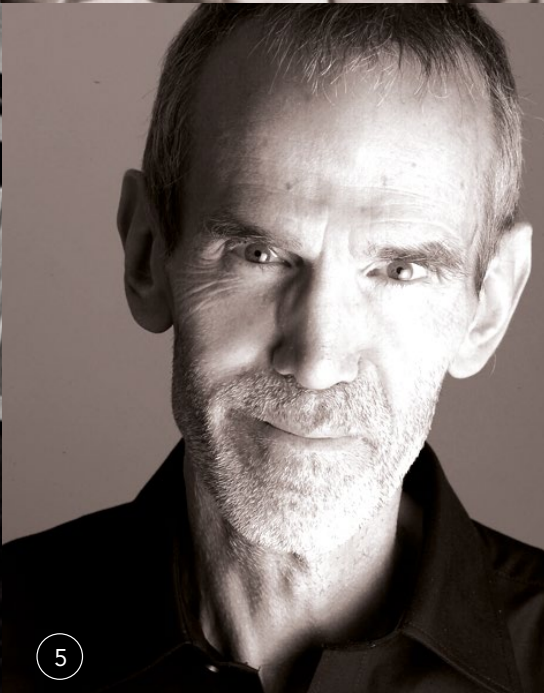
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1. **ARTHUR BUTTERWORTH** © David Hyde
2. **PETER RACINE FRICKER** © Schott Publishing
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5. **HOWARD SKEMPTON** © Katie Vandyke
6. **CONSTANCE WARREN** © Michael Jones Collection

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BUTTERWORTH • FRICKER • HARRISON • HEADINGTON • L. & E.
LIVENS • LONGMIRE • POWER • REYNOLDS • SKEMPTON • WARREN

The piano pieces here trace a trajectory from the Edwardian poetry of Leo Livens to the overdubbing of Peter Reynolds by way of a century of evocative, descriptive and exciting miniatures. Reflecting pastoral, light and experimental traditions, these previously unrecorded works offer rich variety from neglected composers.

- | | | | | | |
|------------|--|-------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | LEO LIVENS (1896–1990)
MOONBEAMS (1915) | 01:53 | 8 | ITALIAN DANCE (1959) | 01:34 |
| | EVANGELINE LIVENS (1898–1983) | | | JOHN LONGMIRE (1902–1986) | |
| 2 | SHADOWS (1915) | 03:15 | 9 | REGENT STREET (1962) | 03:27 |
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| 5–7 | LAKELAND SUMMER
NIGHTS, OP. 10 (1949) | 10:07 | | DAVID POWER (b. 1962) | |
| | CHRISTOPHER HEADINGTON
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| | | | | PETER REYNOLDS (1958–2016) | |
| | | | 22–28 | CIPPYN (2015) | 09:40 |

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 54:03

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HONEYBOURNE



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