



Lennox

BERKELEY

Music for Solo Piano
and Piano Duet

Raphael Terroni, Piano

Norman Beedie, Piano



Sir Lennox Berkeley (1903-89)

Music for Solo Piano and Piano Duet

Piano was Sir Lennox Berkeley's own instrument, for which he left a generous legacy of sensitively constructed works for soloists, chamber musicians and accompanists. Berkeley's earlier works for keyboard were composed at school and later at Merton College, Oxford. He admired Chopin and Mozart from his earliest days, and heard the Beethoven sonatas on pianola rolls as a child. After college, Berkeley spent seven years (1927-34) in Paris, where he studied composition with Nadia Boulanger. She disciplined his natural ear for melody and harmony through a rigorous study of counterpoint.

Amongst his first piano works of importance were the *Five Short Pieces, Op. 4* (c.1934). They are indeed short, none exceeding a few minutes in duration. Each contains a simple melodic idea, in some cases no more than an interval, and an essential rhythmic ingredient, sometimes with an additional contrasting idea. Most of the movements stray quickly from the key signature: rapid harmonic change and frequent modulations were always hallmarks of the Berkeley style. However the particular character of this set, with its lyricism and subtle harmonies, conjures up the atmosphere of piano works by Francis Poulenc, Berkeley's lifelong friend. The first piece, marked *Andante*, begins with a whimsical melody in perpetual modulation that is interrupted by an insistent rhythmic section. The melody appears in other voices and the final bar confirms a key centre of D major. The second, an *Allegro moderato*, contains a simple singing tune under which a steady quaver pulse creates a texture suitable for contrapuntal development, weaving elements of the tune one on top of the other. The *Moderato* third movement is more thoughtful and lyrical, the melody set over a steady rhythmical pattern in the bass line. The melodic idea is characterised by the descending interval of the sixth and by constant modulation, finally ending with the theme repeated over the same rhythmic pulse. In the fourth piece, again an *Andante*, Berkeley picks up the pace with the melody beginning in the bass line and moving throughout the voices, spun around regular semi-

quavers and modulating as it goes. By comparison, the last of the set, an *Allegro*, is characterised by an interrupted rocking motif and sounds rhythmically halting, seeming to search for its own key signature without success until it closes on a fortissimo unison A in octaves.

Between 1934 and 1944 Berkeley established himself as one of the major British composers of his generation with a string of major works. A decisive factor in his development was the influence of a like-minded younger composer, Benjamin Britten. Berkeley had first encountered Britten at the 1936 ISCM Festival in Barcelona, and their subsequent friendship resulted in a rare example of musical collaboration, the orchestral suite *Mont Juic*. Berkeley wrote that meeting Britten helped him liberate certain elements of his style from an overwhelming French influence, allowing him freedom to speak in his own voice with musical integrity. Without losing his early charm he became more focused and could extend his ideas to write longer and more dramatic works, such as the *Serenade for Strings, Op. 12* (1940), the *First Symphony, Op. 16* (1940), *Divertimento, Op. 18* (1943) and the *Sonata, Op. 20* (1941-45) for piano.

The *Sonata, Op. 20* (1941-45) is a large-scale work for piano in four contrasting movements. It was written for and premiered by Clifford Curzon at the Wigmore Hall in 1946. The structure of the work is loosely based on traditional classical models, but the development is organic rather than formal, departing from a strict traditional structure almost immediately. The *Moderato* first movement is loosely cast in sonata form, and the germ of the entire four-movement work is presented in the first bars. It is like a fanfare in A (E-C#-A-E) with a rising sixth which recurs elsewhere in this movement and in the piece. The second theme is more lyrical and dissonant. The themes are not repeated literally in the recapitulation sections, but are intimated by foreshortened elements of melody, rhythm and harmony, thus presenting the essence of a recapitulation but leaving more room for development. The *Presto* second movement begins with

the rising sixth again and is characterised by rapid figuration. The *Adagio*, in E minor, is hauntingly beautiful with sensual harmonic shifts. The last movement, an *Introduction and Allegro*, is a rondo which is introduced by material reminiscent of the first movement, before developing into the rhythmic rondo theme. By contrast, more lyrical material comes between the three appearances of the rondo theme. The movement closes with the reiteration of the introductory bars, followed by the opening measures of the first movement (the recapitulation that did not happen in the first movement), bringing the work full circle.

The *Six Preludes, Op. 23* (1945), written for Colin Horsley, are perhaps better known. Sir Lennox wrote, 'My aim was to provide some piano music that would not be technically beyond the range of the competent amateur and yet be thoroughly pianistic. In the event, two of them turned out to be somewhat more difficult than I had intended, but none requires a virtuoso performer.' Just as in the *Five Short Pieces*, there is a simple and distinctive melodic and rhythmic idea for each work, but in this context the ideas require and receive a more sustained treatment. The first *Prelude* begins with rapid figuration, out of which emerges a soaring melody in the treble which develops over the *moto perpetuo*. The second *Prelude* is slower, with a chordal ostinato bass underlying a whimsical melodic line. The third *Prelude* is a study in rapid figuration, and is the most purely 'pianistic' of the set. The fourth *Prelude* is a sort of Chopinesque *Sarabande*, whilst the fifth glitters like a brilliantly scored music box, Berkeley handling the 7/8 rhythm with finesse and wit. The last *Prelude* is actually a slow and meditative movement, lyrical and elegant.

Berkeley wrote works for two pianos and piano duet throughout his life. In fact, it was his popular *Polka, Op. 5, No. 1* (1934) for two pianos, written for and toured by the piano duo Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson, which first introduced his music to wider audiences round Europe and the United States. In addition it was a Berkeley dinner party convention to perform piano duets after supper, and his Maida Vale house was well-stocked with classical repertoire for this combination. His own works for piano duet range in

style from the rather serious *Sonatina* to the light-hearted *Palm Court Waltz*. Berkeley was a master of intricate writing for duet performers, and in his ability to create a lucid texture despite the greater number of moving parts.

Berkeley wrote the *Sonatina, Op. 39* (1954) after he had finished his first two operas, *A Dinner Engagement* and *Nelson*. It was first performed by Liza Fuchsova and Paul Hamburger at the Wigmore Hall on 18th January 1955. The first movement begins in commanding style, with the interval of the fourth as the main thematic ingredient. The second movement is a typically lyrical Berkeley *Andante*, very good-natured and elegant. The last movement, an *Allegro*, features rapid figuration in fourths. The contrasting movements and strong thematic coherence create a satisfying and well-rounded work.

The *Theme and Variations, Op. 73* (1968) for piano duet was written for Gerald Stofsky and Annie Ault, and recorded for the first time by Raphael Terroni and Norman Beedie on this disc. Theme and variations was a favourite Berkeley vehicle for ideas throughout his career. In this instance, the theme is presented as a rising arpeggio in A major, with a distinctive double-dotted rhythmic feature following on. In all, there are seven variations, with the first four alternating between *allegro* and *lento*. The fifth, an *Andante*, acts as a bridge to the extended sixth variation, in an A-B-A form. The seventh and final variation is a coda, reiterating the original theme to close.

The final piano duet on this recording is the *Palm Court Waltz, Op. 81, No. 2* (1971), originally an orchestral work for performance at the Coliseum, commissioned and dedicated to a dinner party duet partner and friend, Burnet Pavitt. The work begins with a humourously overblown fanfare. The waltz begins just after the fanfare, and both partners have their turn with the tune. At certain moments it sounds as though the players have lost their way, stopping or pausing and starting again, but in fact never losing the beat or the momentum. With typical modesty Sir Lennox said, 'The *Waltz* is not exactly a parody, though rhythms and melodies very close to the Viennese model will be recognised. I have tried to incorporate these into my own musical idiom, rather in the manner of Ravel, but not, I feel, nearly so well!'

Lennox Berkeley wrote primarily for the ear. His approach to composition is organic, based on a contrapuntal development of ideas which relies on subtle hints of theme and radical modulations, often leaving the listener wondering where the work is going until the end. This feeling of imbalance is deliberate and creates drama and tension, released at the last by an orientating repetition of the initial theme and harmony. Just as with one of Berkeley's most admired composers, Fauré, repeated listenings made possible by welcome recordings such as this give ever deeper insights into this sensitively constructed music.

Joan Redding (1993)

I have always especially loved my father's piano music, because his approach is so pianistic and shows a deep love and understanding of the instrument. It also invariably mirrors his character in its charm and wit, and in its bittersweet nostalgia. One of my abiding images of my father is of him working his way through the Chopin piano music; this is reflected in the technical demands that he himself mischievously engineers. Another passion was Mozart, as I think one might deduce from the phrasing and melodic construction; while, harmonically, the influence of France – Debussy, Ravel and in particular Poulenc – has been absorbed into a highly individual personal language. For me, my father's piano literature represents in microcosm his compositional talents at their very best.

Michael Berkeley (1993)

Raphael Terroni



Photo: John Terroni

Raphael Terroni was born in 1945, and studied the piano with John Vallier and Cyril Smith. For fifteen years he was Head of Piano at the London College of Music and Media, and examined and adjudicated at music festivals in Britain and abroad. He worked with broadcaster Richard Baker, giving first performances in Britain of several works for narrator and piano. He was active in concerts worldwide, and appeared at major festivals as a soloist, accompanist and chamber-music player. A founder member of the British Music Society, he served two terms as the Society's Chairman, and made several critically acclaimed recordings of music by British composers, Lennox Berkeley, Robin Milford, Howard Ferguson, Josef Holbrooke, Eric Coates and Arthur Butterworth among them. His 1989 recording of piano quintets by Cyril Scott and Frank Bridge with the Bingham Quartet was issued on CD for the first time shortly after his untimely death in 2012.

Norman Beedie



Photo: D. Stuart

The Scottish-born pianist Norman Beedie was one of the last students of the great musician and teacher, Nadia Boulanger, who described him as "a real artist, a real musician!" A United Kingdom national prizewinner, he has since performed as concerto soloist, in chamber music, and as an accompanist to instrumentalists as well as singers in the United Kingdom, Europe and the Far East. He is also an orchestral, operatic and choral conductor of distinction with an extremely varied repertoire, including Lyatoshinsky's *Second Symphony* and Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite*. He conducted the first Ukrainian performance of Rubbra's *Violin Concerto* and the United Kingdom première of Dmitri-Missis Plessas' oratorio *St Paul*. Norman Beedie is a sought after teacher, mentor and educator – many of his students have won prizes in international competitions – and is at present developing Improvisation as a core subject for musicians at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He has given master-classes in the United Kingdom, Europe, the Far East and the United States.



The **British Music Society** (Registered Charity No. 1043838), founded in 1979, brings together professional and amateur musicians, students and scholars, and music enthusiasts young and old from around the globe to promote, preserve and celebrate British music, pre-dominantly from the Twentieth century, both at home and abroad. Its extensive discography is now being re-issued by Naxos, bringing to a wider audience many highly-acclaimed performances, often world premières, of neglected British works. The Society's Historic label includes a number of famous vintage recordings by artists such as Noel Mewton-Wood and Walter Goehr.

In addition the Society produces a Journal, *British Music*, packed full of scholarly articles and reviews, as well as a regular e-newsletter for members. Our website lists forthcoming BMS events as well as performances of British music, and also provides a forum for discussion and debate.

www.britishmusicsociety.com

The piano was Lennox Berkeley's own instrument and his piano works represent a microcosm of his very best compositional talents. Influenced harmonically by French models, his music is suffused with lyricism and subtle harmonies. The *Sonata, Op. 20* possesses a particularly haunting beauty in its slow movement, while simple but distinctive melodic and rhythmic ideas permeate the *Six Preludes, Op. 23* and *Five Short Pieces, Op. 4*. The *Theme and Variations, Op. 73*, recorded here for the first time, offers a favourite Berkeley vehicle for conveying a highly individual and personal language.



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Six Preludes, Op. 23 (1945)	10:06	13 III. Moderato	1:39
1 I. Allegro	1:46	14 IV. Andante	1:39
2 II. Andante	1:30	15 V. Allegro	0:48
3 III. Allegro moderato	1:35		
4 IV. Allegretto	1:43	Sonatina, Op. 39	
5 V. Allegro	1:39	for four hands (1954)*	8:05
6 VI. Andante	1:53		
Sonata, Op. 20 (1941-45)	22:46	16 I. Allegro moderato	3:04
7 I. Moderato	8:19	17 II. Andante	2:29
8 II. Presto	1:56	18 III. Allegro	2:32
9 III. Adagio	5:35		
10 IV. Introduction and Allegro	6:56	19 Theme and Variations, Op. 73	
Five Short Pieces, Op. 4		for four hands (1968)*	7:56
(c.1934)	5:52		
11 I. Andante	0:55	20 Palm Court Waltz, Op. 81, No. 2	
12 II. Allegro moderato	0:51	for four hands (1971)*	3:26

Raphael Terroni, Piano solo / Piano primo*
Norman Beedie, Piano secondo*

Previously released on BMS

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