

ENGLISH RECORDER CONCERTOS

Richard Harvey

World Premiere Recording

Sir Malcolm Arnold

Gordon Jacob

Michala Petri

City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong

Jean Thorel - Conductor



SUPER AUDIO CD

OUR Recordings

Richard Harvey (b. 1953)

Concerto Incantato (2009)

World premiere recording

1	Sortilegio	05:38
2	Natura Morta	05:15
3	Danza Spiriti	04:16
4	Canzone Sacra	05:44
5	Incantesimi	07:36

Sir Malcolm Arnold (1921- 2006)

Concerto for Recorder and Orchestra, Op. 133 (1988)

6	Allegro	03:53
7	Lento	04:53
8	Vivace	03:09

Gordon Jacob (1895-1984)

Suite for Recorder and Strings (1957)

9	Prelude (Adagio ma poco con moto)	02:27
10	English Dance (Allegro molto)	01:11
11	Lament (Adagio)	03:59
12	Burlesca alla Rumba (Allegro giocoso)	02:38
13	Pavane (Lento)	02:51
14	Introduction and Cadenza (Andante sostenuto)	03:21
15	Tarantella (Presto con fuoco)	02:15

Total: 59:06

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ENGLISH RECORDER CONCERTOS



A new concerto for the Harry Potter generation

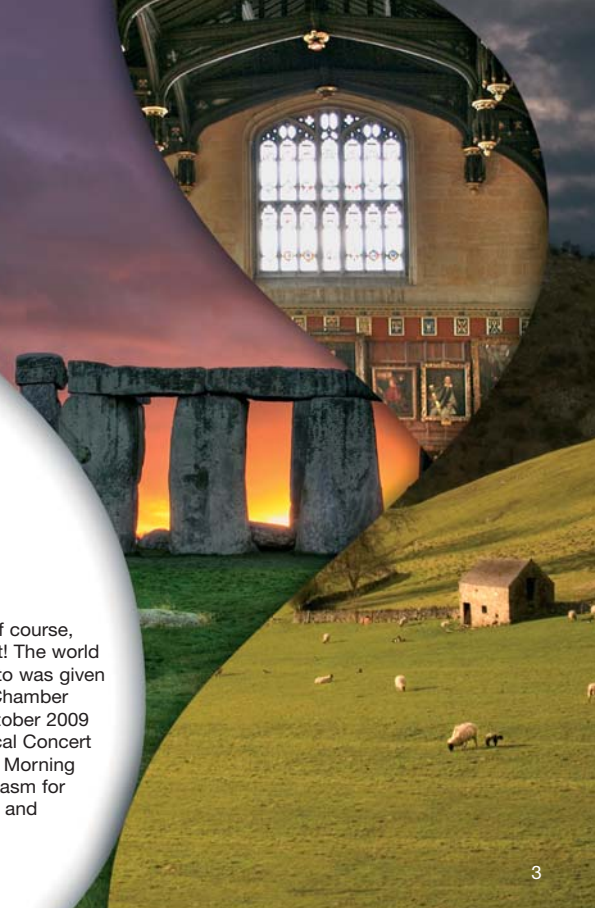
The recorder has been part of Western music for more than seven hundred years, during which time it has enjoyed a particularly special relationship with the composers and musicians of England. Played by professionals, virtuosos, dilettantes and even royalty (King Henry VIII owned a collection of 47), the recorder was at one time known as the "English Flute". Even as the recorder faded from the concert halls of Europe during the Classical and Romantic periods, its bucolic tones (and those of its near relatives) continued to echo through the English countryside.

It is one of the great ironies of Western music that, just as the dominance of the major/minor tonal system began to collapse, numerous revivals and explorations of early music were under way throughout Europe. The recorder was one of the first beneficiaries of this renewed interest and by the first decade of the twentieth century, its popularity began to spread again as numerous recorder schools and early music associations appeared in Germany and, of course, England.

Leading the recorder's return to England's concert halls was the instrument builder, musicologist and multi-talented instrumentalist Arnold Dolmetsch, and more especially his son Carl, who would fuel the creation of contemporary recorder music that has continued to this day. The distinguished list of British composers approached by Dolmetsch included Edmund Rubbra, Gordon Jacob, Sir Lennox Berkeley, Arnold Cooke, York Bowen and Alun Hoddinott.

The present recording showcases the music of three generations of English composers who have embraced the recorder anew, making significant contributions to the repertoire. Gordon Jacob, the eldest, was a Dolmetsch favorite and a recipient of multiple commissions. Sir Malcolm Arnold was to follow Jacob with his *Concerto for Recorder*, originally written for and premiered by Michala Petri. Arnold's amphibious existence as a composer for both film and the concert hall is echoed in the career of our more recent contributor, the BAFTA award-winning composer and recorder player Richard Harvey. Filling a hiatus in the repertoire that had lasted for almost twenty years, Harvey's *Concerto Incantanto* also offers an alternative vision for contemporary recorder concertos. The result? A dazzling concerto for the

Harry Potter generation with, of course, a liberal sprinkling of faery dust! The world premiere of *Concerto Incantanto* was given by Michala Petri and the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong in October 2009 in a concert voted Best Classical Concert of the Year by the South China Morning Post. Petri's immediate enthusiasm for the work has led to this unique and delightful recording.



Richard Harvey: Concerto Incantato (2009)

Richard Harvey's *Concerto Incantato* was written for Michala Petri and commissioned by Leanne Nicholls for the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong's tenth anniversary concert. The work draws on both aspects of Harvey's musical life, as a recorder player and as a composer of movie and television music. The declared aim was to write something challenging, energetic and fun, while exploring the different characters of the full set of recorders, from sopranino to tenor. Searching for a light touch to balance the flauto dolce, the composer chose to use a small orchestra, combining muted and pizzicato strings, flutes and clarinets with harp, celesta and percussion. Petri's dazzling playing and astonishing technique meant that Harvey was free to create without limits, and that every idea could be followed through.

Composed in five sections, the work opens with *Sortilegio* (Sorcery), a buoyant, dancing movement in compound time. The solo sopranino recorder gently emerges out of the texture after a short and tentative orchestral introduction, and later gives way to solo passages for both soprano and treble recorders. The whole movement is saturated with sparkling, shimmering filmic effects and moments of delicate interplay between the recorder and a solo cello or violin. *Sortilegio* gradually dims down to a hushed pianissimo in preparation for *Natura Morta* (Still Life).

The wistful, almost human, tones of the tenor recorder lead us through this hauntingly atavistic reverie. Expressive styles and techniques characteristic of other end-blown flutes, like the Chinese xiao and the native North American flute, are employed throughout the movement to great effect. The mood is calm and melancholic, until we are sharply reawoken by *Danza Spiriti* (Dance of the Spirits).

Sopranino and soprano recorders breathe life into this short and vibrant scherzo. The movement conjures up images of inanimate objects or wispy sprites, flying around with a life of their own, sometimes nearly colliding and at other times treating us to a delightfully choreographed aerial ballet. The movement ends abruptly as if the last sprite is flying through the door just as it is about to slam shut! Composure returns in the more contemplative *Canzone Sacra* (Sacred Song) to follow.



The warm tones of the treble recorder are a special feature here. The movement opens with a quasi-improvisatory recitative, before settling into a stately hymn-like tune, known as the English Theme. The orchestra, playing at a bare whisper, allows the soloist to intone these themes in the lowest register of the instrument, a sound both sweet and poignantly pianissimo. A musical box-like melody marked by odd, bittersweet dissonances makes for a curious conclusion and sets the scene for the final Incantesimi (The Spells).

Unaccompanied, the solo soprano recorder engages in a series of minimalist arpeggiated passages which occasionally explode into double time, before settling into a quirky renaissance-style dance with multiple time signatures. As the orchestra enters, the dance builds in intensity, before freeing the soloist for several pyrotechnic flights of fancy, using double-tongued articulation at very high speeds. A short cadenza ensues, only to be rudely interrupted by the orchestra, which swirls around the recorder like a tornado. The soloist enters again, this time with a humble rendition of the previously heard English Theme. Thereafter, with the more brilliant sopranino recorder to hand, the soloist races the orchestra to the end, bringing the work to a dramatic, whirling conclusion.

Richard Harvey began his composing career working with the celebrated composer Maurice Jarre and has gone on to create scores for over seventy television and film projects, including the International Emmy Award-winning *Death of a President*, the moving historical drama *Eichmann* and the idiosyncratic fantasy *Les Deux Mondes*. He also made a key contribution to the score for *The Da Vinci Code* with his unforgettable *Kyrie for the Magdalene*. His work in film and television has been recognised with a British Academy Award (shared with co-composer Elvis Costello) and three Ivor Novello nominations. Harvey's skills as a multi-instrumentalist have often been called upon for feature films, including Disney's *The Lion King*, *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* and the *Harry Potter* movies.

Away from the screen, Harvey's best-known works include *Concerto Antico*, written for guitar virtuoso John Williams, and the hugely ambitious eco-oratorio *Plague and the Moonflower*,

created with artist and writer Ralph Steadman. Harvey has conducted and written for the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and has collaborated in recordings with artists such as Kate Bush, Sir Paul McCartney, Hans Zimmer and both John Williamses.

Sir Malcolm Arnold: Concerto for Recorder and Orchestra, Op. 133 (1988)

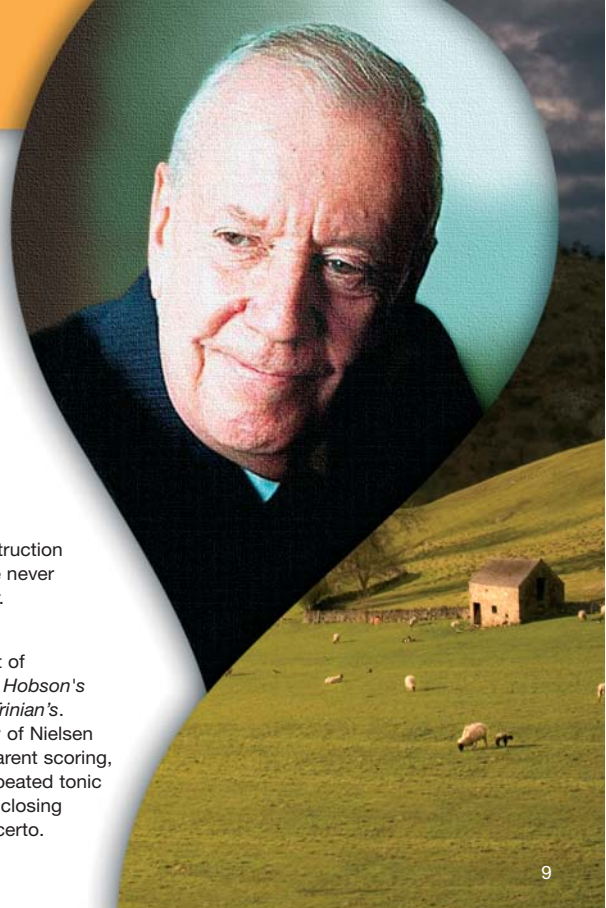
Sir Malcolm Arnold's Recorder Concerto is composed for Michala Petri and dates from a final burst of musical creativity that also produced the Ninth Symphony, the Fantasy for Cello and the Cello Concerto (both written for Julian Lloyd Webber), the Fantasy for Recorder and the Fantasy for Recorder and String Quartet (both written for Michala Petri), the Second Brass Quintet, the Wind Octet (Divertimento) and two sets of orchestral dances. As with most of Arnold's concertos, the work is a breezy affair that refuses to overstay its welcome. Yet beneath the surface wit is the confident craftsmanship of a master. Perhaps most ironic of all are Arnold's suggestive allusions to the sound world of Danish composer Carl Nielsen, as a sly tribute to Petri.

The work opens with an almost childishly simple gesture - the recorder playing rapid arpeggios accompanied by sparsely scored descending scales, punctuated by a few notes from the oboes and horns. No sooner does this passage end than the recorder introduces the yearning second theme, this time accompanied by spare pizzicati from the cellos and basses. The peculiar, fragmentary open textures, consisting of a mere handful of chords, creates an unexpectedly desolate feeling for a work that began with so obvious a flourish. A solo oboe, accompanied by sustained notes from a pair of horns, repeats the second theme before launching into the movement's abbreviated development section. Here the recorder returns to the spotlight, modulating to ever more distant keys, finally losing all forward momentum in a series of stuttering, repeated notes, in a sort of "anti-cadenza". Only then does daylight finally break through, as the opening music returns, the recorder delivering a musical raspberry (in the form of some wicked flutter-tonguing) and a two octave glissando, as if to say: "Nyeah! - I told you this was s'posed to be fun!"

If the first movement of Arnold's concerto seems little more than a witty bonbon, the thoughtful Lento second movement reveals the composer's mastery. Sounding at first like a slyly chromatic cantilena, this movement is actually a complex passacaglia, built upon a slippery eight-measure theme repeated eleven times before reaching its close.

So seamless is Arnold's construction that the movement's structure never advertises itself to the listener.

The final Allegro begins with a sprightly march, reminiscent of the sort Arnold composed for *Hobson's Choice* and *The Belles of St Trinian's*. Here, once again, the shadow of Nielsen is never far away, with transparent scoring, sardonic brass effects and repeated tonic chords that bring to mind the closing bars of the Nielsen Flute Concerto.



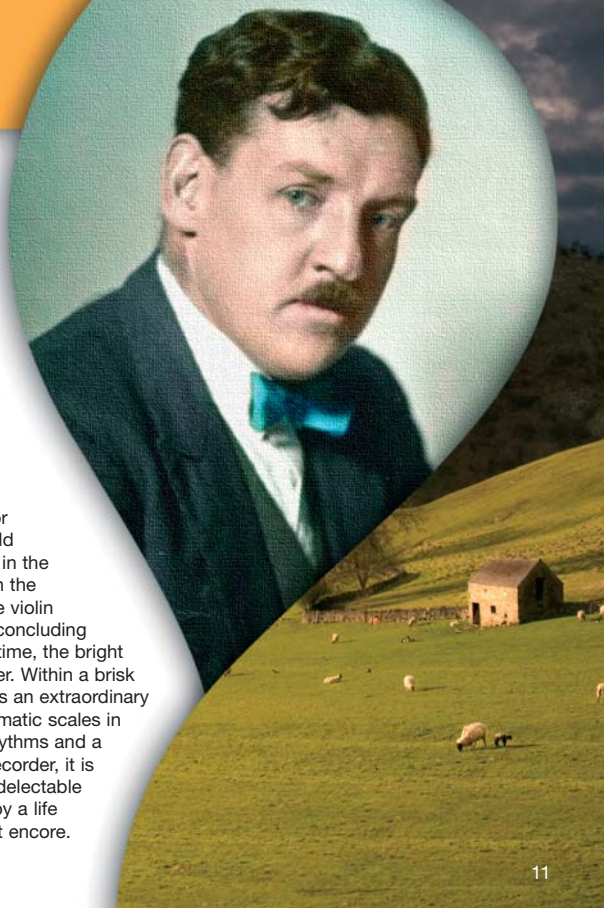
Gordon Jacob: Suite for Recorder and Strings (1957)

No collection of twentieth century English recorder music would be complete without at least one representative work from the pen of Gordon Jacob. While not the first modern English composer to write for the recorder, Jacob returned to the instrument time and time again, crafting a delightful series of miniature masterworks. Following his harrowing experiences in World War I (he was one of only sixty survivors out of a battalion of eight hundred), Jacob entered the Royal College of Music, where he studied composition with Sir Charles Villiers Stanford and Herbert Howells. He would eventually depart from the excesses of his late Romantic teachers, pursuing a more neo-classical style, seasoned with a tasteful dose of English pastoralism, courtesy of his later mentor and friend, Ralph Vaughan Williams. Jacob returned to the Royal College of Music in 1926, where he taught composition for a total of forty years. Among Jacob's students was Malcolm Arnold, who was obviously influenced by his teacher's solid craftsmanship, wit and characteristic lightness of touch. In later life, Jacob composed several works for recorder expressly for Michala Petri, including the Sonatina for treble recorder and harpsichord and the enchanting Duetтино (an encore for Michala), which requires the performer to play a tune while simultaneously singing a counter-melody!

Jacob's Suite for Recorder and Strings was the result of a 1957 commission (the first of several) from recorder virtuoso Carl Dolmetsch. At this time, Jacob was at the height of his popularity and highly regarded as an expert composer for wind instruments. Jacob approached the challenge confidently, providing an enchanting divertissement that treated the recorder, as he would later write, "as a perfectly normal musical instrument...and not in any way as a museum piece". The suite is in seven movements, beginning with a gently flowing Prelude, tinged with echoes of autumn melancholy. A lively, bumptious English Dance follows, its slippery modulations passing by artlessly, lost in the playful high spirits.

The sinuous and not-too-sad Lament provides the work's lyrical centrepiece. Jacob's masterful string writing creates some lovely, pensive harmonies, while the recorder moves ambiguously between major and minor to give the movement more the feel of a smoky jazz ballad than a lament. Jacob's sense of humour once again comes to the fore in the infectious Burlesca alla Rumba, where jazzy rhythms and syncopated pizzicati punctuate a sensuous recorder line replete with seductive slides and trills. The Pavane provides a moment of repose, allowing us

to sample the recorder's dignified heritage, with just a hint of Dowland's famous Lachrimae Pavane thrown in for good measure. The sound world of Vaughan Williams is evoked in the Introduction and Cadenza, with the recorder taking the place of the violin as the 'ascending lark'. In the concluding Tarantella we hear for the first time, the bright sound of the sopranino recorder. Within a brisk two minutes or so, Jacob crafts an extraordinary miniature. From slithering chromatic scales in the strings to the propulsive rhythms and a dazzling bit of writing for the recorder, it is no surprise that this short but delectable movement has gone on to enjoy a life of its own as a popular concert encore.



Michala Petri

Since her sensational debut as a child prodigy at the Tivoli Concert Hall in 1969, Michala Petri has established herself as the world's leading exponent of the recorder. She has toured the globe, appearing as a soloist with all the major chamber and symphony orchestras, and with artists such as Pinchas Zukerman, Sir James Galway, Joshua Bell, Maurice André, Gidon Kremer, Heinz Holliger, Claudio Abbado, and jazz icon Keith Jarrett. In 1992 she formed a duo with Danish guitarist and lute player Lars Hannibal, with whom she performs worldwide.

Petri has demonstrated her astonishing virtuosity across a broad repertoire, from Baroque and Early Music to challenging contemporary pieces, many of them composed especially for her. Among her many recordings are the *Vivaldi Recorder Concertos*, with Vladimir Spivakov and the Moscow Virtuosi, which won the Deutscher Schallplattenpreis, so did *Kreisler Inspirations*, with Lars Hannibal, the *Bach Sonatas* and *Handel Sonatas*, with Keith Jarrett, and the highly acclaimed *Los Angeles Street Concerto: Michala Petri plays Thomas Koppel*, which topped the Best Classical Album category at the 2006 Danish Music Awards. She was also awarded the 1. rank of Knight of Dannebrog in 2011 and the prestigious Léonie Sonning Music Prize in 2000. Michala Petri is Vice-president of the *Danish Cancer Society* and an Ambassador for *UNICEF Denmark*.

In late 2006 Petri and Hannibal established the record label, OUR Recordings. More than a dozen CDs have been released under this label, including the Grammy-nominated *Movements* and the pioneering *Dialogue - East meets West* series, which includes the Grammy-nominated *Chinese Recorder Concertos*.



Jean Thorel

Frenchman Jean Thorel, chief conductor of the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong since 2008, has given over four hundred world premieres. In 1989, he won the Vocation Foundation Prize for outstanding work with the Stringendo Orchestral Ensemble in Paris, where he has been permanent conductor since 1984. Jean Thorel conducts a wide range of music, from ballet to chamber and orchestral programmes. He has appeared as a guest conductor throughout Europe with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, the Danish Chamber Players, Musica Vitae, Musiques Nouvelles, the EQ Ensemble in Ireland, the Copenhagen Royal Ballet, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, the Stockholm Lans Symfoniker and the Nice Philharmonic Orchestra.

A passionate promoter of new and rare music, Thorel is a regular conductor at major contemporary music festivals and has recorded over twenty CDs. His recording of works by Louis Saguer with the Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble was joint winner of the 2002 Académie du Disque Lyrique Orphée d'Or, alongside Pierre Boulez's interpretation of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Thorel was also the first French conductor invited to record with the Russian National Orchestra. His teachers included Jean-Jacques Werner, Léon Barzin, Antal Dorati and André Girard.



City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong

The City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong (CCOHK) holds a unique position as one of the most active chamber orchestras in the Asian region. Comprising an international group of professional musicians living in Hong Kong and Asia, the CCOHK gives an annual subscription series of concerts with locally and internationally renowned artists. The orchestra's programming spans a wide repertoire, from Baroque to contemporary Chinese compositions and newly-commissioned works. On tour, the CCOHK has made its mark in China and at the Thirteenth Mostra Biennale di Luteria nel Mezzogiorno Festival in Italy. In Hong Kong itself, the CCOHK has performed for Le French May, the Hong Kong International Arts Carnival, the Second Hong Kong International Piano Competition and RTHK Radio 4's annual Christmas in the Park concerts, televised by RTHK.

Since its formation in 1999 by oboist and Artistic Director Leanne Nicholls, the CCOHK has performed with many great artists including Michala Petri, Dame Emma Kirkby, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Alexander Rudin, Michael Chance, Takako Nishizaki, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Giovanni Sollima, Daniel Binelli, and Karl Jenkins. The CCOHK often broadcasts on RTHK Radio 4 and has appeared on TV in Hong Kong, mainland China, Australia and Spain. In 2003 the Hong Kong Arts Development Council honoured the CCOHK with the Rising Artist Award, for outstanding contribution to music in Hong Kong.



*World premiere of Richard Harvey: Concertato Incantato
at City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong's 10th Anniversary Concert,
Hong Kong City Hall, 2009.*







A duo encore...



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Richard Harvey (b. 1953)

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