



DISCOVERING WILFRED HEATON

Murray McLachlan, *piano*

James Gilchrist, *tenor*

Alex Jakeman, *flute*

Linda Merrick, *clarinet*

Rose McLachlan, *piano*



DISCOVERING WILFRED HEATON

Two Morning Songs *

for high voice and piano

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. | The Dove's Answer, WH61 | 1:48 |
| 2. | Hay Harvest, WH57 | 2:09 |
| 3. | With Empty Hands, WH62 | 5:00 |

for high voice and piano

Two Love Songs, WH52a *

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 4. | O Fortune for solo voice (from The Firstborn) | 1:27 |
| 5. | The Chief Glory for voice and piano (from The Mighty Magician) | 3:11 |

Piano Sonata, WH34 *

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 6. | I. (no tempo indication) | 6:06 |
| 7. | II. <i>Presto con energia</i> | 7:06 |
| 8. | III. <i>Lento</i> | 10:00 |
| 9. | IV. <i>Allegro vigoroso</i> | 5:30 |
| 10. | Pilgrim Reflections, WH54d * | 11:10 |

Variations for piano (adapted from Pilgrim's Song)

Three Pieces for piano, WH36 (1954) *

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|------|
| 11. | I. <i>Tempestuoso</i> | 2:32 |
| 12. | II. <i>Andante tempo rubato</i> | 2:38 |
| 13. | III. <i>Vivo</i> | 1:52 |

Little Suite for flute and piano, WH31 (1955)

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|------|
| 14. | I. <i>Grave – Prestissimo</i> | 1:27 |
| 15. | II. <i>Con energia</i> | 1:08 |
| 16. | III. <i>Cantabile</i> | 3:17 |
| 17. | IV. <i>Giocoso e ritmico</i> | 1:08 |
| 18. | V. <i>Presto</i> | 1:57 |

19. **Welcome for Me, WH63** 3:56
for medium voice and piano

Three West Indian Melodies, WH37 *
arranged for piano duet

20. I. *Prestissimo* 1:09
21. II. *Andante* 2:34
22. III. *Allegrissimo* 1:28

Bonus tracks (digital only)

Four Vignettes *
for clarinet and piano

23. Prelude (from *The Firstborn*, WH50) 1:36
24. *The Celestial City* (from *Pilgrim's Song*, WH54) 1:23
25. *Slow Dance* (from *The Mother*, WH52) 0:57
26. *Berceuse Elegiaque*, WH28 1:30

Total Playing Time 84:38

* First recordings

Murray McLachlan, piano (tracks 6-18, 20-26)
James Gilchrist, tenor (tracks 1-5, 19)
Rose McLachlan, piano (tracks 1-5, 19-22)
Alex Jakeman, flute (tracks 14-18)
Linda Merrick, clarinet (tracks 23-26)

Arrangements and editions by Paul Hindmarsh:
The Chief Glory (track 5) – addition of piano part
Piano Sonata (tracks 6-9) – performing edition
Pilgrim Reflections (track 10) – arrangement
Four Vignettes (tracks 23-26) - arrangement

Discovering Wilfred Heaton

Wilfred Heaton (b.2 December, 1918; d. 20 May, 2000) is a revered figure among brass band musicians and enthusiasts around the world. Much of his brass music – like the march *Praise* from the late 1930s and his sinfonietta *Contest Music* (1973) – has achieved ‘classic’ status. In researching my biography of Heaton, *Wilfred Heaton: His Life – His Music* (2025), I discovered a reserved, private, yet complex man of fierce intelligence, with an enquiring mind – not only a composer, but a much-admired conductor, pianist and teacher in his native Yorkshire. However, in what he termed “the wider worlds” of classical and contemporary music, his name is virtually unknown. As a young man before World War II his ambition was to become a professional composer “first and foremost.” Heaton said to me in March 2000, during what turned out to be our last phone call, “I can’t remember a time when I didn’t want to compose,” adding, “I suppose the creative instinct never really leaves you.” This was a curious rider, since for over half his life he composed very little. Heaton left just 77 original works and arrangements to posterity, the majority composed before the age of 40.

John Wilfred Heaton, to give him his full name, was brought up in what was one of the poorest areas of Sheffield, the Park Hill district now dominated by the Grade 2 listed Park Hill estate – bastions of 1950s modernist architecture. Just round the corner from the family’s little grocery shop run by his mother was the local Salvation Army church [SA], Sheffield Park. Wilfred’s father John, a finisher of forks and spoons by trade, was the bandmaster and fully expected his son to dedicate his exceptional gifts to the Christian witness of The Salvation Army. From the age of 16 Wilfred played the piano for SA worship meetings. His hymn tune improvisations were much admired. Throughout his childhood and teenage years, the Sheffield Park SA was the centre of this gifted young musician’s musical experience and the inspiration, later, for many of those ‘classic’ band pieces.

Wilfred left school at 14. He would like to have stayed on like his elder sister Hilda, but there was little money for him both to continue at school and maintain his music studies privately. His father found him an apprenticeship at a small brass instrument repair business in the city centre, Cocking and Pace. Wilfred’s piano teacher – May Fantom, a fellow Salvationist – guided him to an LRAM performance diploma at 18. His cornet tutor, Mr Grieve, instilled a solid, reliable technique. Music theory, harmony and counterpoint continued through correspondence with the noted SA composer George Marshall (1888-1956).

Three teenage songs

Away from The Salvation Army, “a local man” who Heaton never identified, “opened my ears to the wider world of chamber and orchestral music.” This instruction proved to be crucial in broadening the teenager’s musical horizons away from the band and choral music he was writing. What better method could this teacher have chosen than to encourage his pupil to

write for his own instrument and the voice. Four of Heaton's eight songs were composed around this time, when he was about 17 years old. *The Dove's Answer* and *Hay Harvest* form a complementary pair of morning songs. They reveal a 'folk song' freshness and lightness of touch informed both by the English art song and the popular ballads of the day. *The Dove's Answer* is a sophisticated and polished setting of a touching, if sentimental poem about the dawn chorus by the popular Victorian poet Jean Ingelow (1820-1897). Heaton set the first two of its three verses. *Hay Harvest*, by the Irish poet Patrick R. Chalmers (1872-1942), is a bucolic, pastoral lyric, once popular for class recitation in schools. Both songs demonstrate the fluency of his youthful melodic invention, responsive to the text with an imaginative command of keyboard colour and texture.

Composed around the same time, *With Empty Hands* is one of three Christian lyrics written specially for Heaton to set to music by Albert E. Mingay (1904 - 2002), who was the Corps Officer, or Pastor, at Sheffield Park SA between 1936 and 1937 and one of the finest SA poets and lyricists of the 20th century. *With Empty Hands* is an intimate prayer focusing on the promised 'gift' of God's saving presence. Mingay invites us to receive this gift simply, openly, 'with empty hands'. While the melody complements these sentiments admirably, the piano part is anything but simple or straightforward. Heaton later described its impressionistic wash of triplet figuration as, "an acute bout of Debussy-i-tis," although there is also a hint of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in the harmonic sequences of the extended prelude and postlude that stretch the SA convention of strophic settings to its limit.

Finding his voice

For his 18th birthday Heaton asked his parents for a collection of music scores by the young British composer of the moment, William Walton (1902-1983), and he continued to collect Walton scores as they appeared. The Walton influence dominates much of the music Heaton composed either side of the war. Not surprisingly perhaps, much of the brass band music he offered to The Salvation Army was considered too advanced in language, too irreverent in its parody and sense of fun, or too challenging to perform. Most of it didn't see the light of day until many years or even decades later.

By the time he reached 30, Heaton was determined to give himself the chance of making it into the wider musical world. He set about searching, as he once wrote, "for a language in which I could feel comfortable." He aimed high, leaving his apprentice in charge of the brass repair workshop and taking himself off to London for a few lessons from one of the leading composition teachers of the day – the eminent Hungarian émigré Mátyás Seiber (1905-1960), who taught at Morley College. Seiber's approach was founded on close analysis of Bach, the classics and from the 20th century his friend Béla Bartok among others.

Without leaving the pre-war obsession with Walton entirely behind, Heaton found his mature voice though an eclectic amalgam built on classical foundations. His heroes were Bach and Beethoven. He drew on aspects of technique and language from Hindemith, Bartok, Stravinsky, Sibelius and even the self-taught Elgar, with whom self-taught Heaton felt a special affinity. He also admired Webern (composer of pristine, atonal jewels) but was not attracted to 12 tone techniques, preferring to anchor his music to the natural harmonic series. But that's not to say he didn't like to stretch things.

Heaton never spoke a great deal about his trips down to London, but their impact on his music was transformational. We know that two of his finest band works – *Contest Music* (1973) and *Sinfonia Concertante* for cornet and band (1990) were composed from sketches dating from that time. After Heaton's death, a number of orchestral and instrumental manuscripts came to light – an epic *Piano Sonata*, a lively *Little Suite* for recorder or flute (1955), a colourful *Suite for Orchestra* (completed in September 1950), a 25-minute *Rhapsody for Oboe and String Orchestra* (1952) and *Three Pieces for Piano* (1954). The last two received London performances in May and September 1954, respectively, under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of New Music (SPNM). Being performed by one of the country's top young oboe soloists, Joy Boughton, with the Boyd Neel Chamber Orchestra and Norman Del Mar, or sharing a programme of instrumental music with the likes of Elizabeth Maconchy could have been a stepping-stone along a professional path, but Heaton resisted taking the opportunity further. He had promised himself before his RAF war service that if he couldn't break free from "the incarceration" of writing for bands by his mid-30s he would, "say goodbye to composition altogether". And he kept to his word.

Personal re-orientation

In his 70s, Heaton revealed more about the reasons behind this life-defining decision. As a tonal composer, he recognised how difficult it would be to make a mark in his 30s without aligning himself to the "atonalists' confederation" – his description of the new wave of young composers. Completing his mighty handful of mature major compositions came a cost, and that was his time. Thus, when other composers with his imagination and skill were reaping the rewards of years of study, he was turning down requests that came his way. His stock answer was evasive: "There are so many other things occupying my time," he would say and rarely explained further, "for want of being misunderstood." Hence the air of mystery that surrounded the man and his music.

A note on the short score of his final work, *Variations* for brass band, offers another explanation: "... all compositional ambitions were brought to a halt through my contact with

Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical movement. I lost the impulse to compose. Such an activity seemed unimportant compared to the spiritual impulses provided by Steiner." Heaton's discovery of Anthroposophy, or the Science of the Spirit, promulgated through the prolific writings and lectures of the Austrian philosopher, esotericist and social reformer Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was the catalyst for what Heaton described as a "drastic personal re-orientation", which re-defined all aspects of his life – spiritual, creative and personal.

Finally, irreconcilable conflicts between SA doctrine and aspects of Steiner's philosophy – in particular clairvoyance, karma and re-incarnation – forced a decade long rift from The Salvation Army. Heaton's spare time was now dedicated to reading and reflection, meditation and prayer. The interruption of war service and family responsibilities (Heaton married in 1941) had prohibited a university or college path. In other circumstances he could without question have followed an academic career in theology, philosophy, the humanities as well as music. By the end of his life his personal library would have graced any academic institution.

Two Love Songs

Between 1949 and 1952 Heaton was fully immersed in the activities of the Sheffield Educational Settlement, having enrolled to take evening classes in art history. Founded by Arnold Freeman, the Settlement was run according to Steiner principles. Heaton gave foundation classes in the history of music and became the *de facto* resident composer and musical director (at the piano) for its small cast plays, which were staged in the Settlement's Little Theatre. His incidental music comprises miniature dances and songs, all of which that are preserved as single lines without piano in Sheffield University Library. I have adapted the most substantial of them for the concert hall.

In 1951, Freeman staged a production of *The Firstborn* (1946) by Christopher Fry (1907-2005). Set in Egypt, in the summer of 1200BC, its theme is the conflict between Moses and Aaron. Heaton contributed a setting for unaccompanied voice of a love song, *O Fortune*, which he writes in free metre without bar lines. Aware that this departure from the norm might cause problems for an amateur singer, he enclosed this note to Arnold Freeman with the manuscript: "...You will notice that the bars are of different lengths and I haven't used time signatures at all... I have endeavoured to follow the inflexion and rhythm of the spoken line and the song being an unaccompanied one lends itself to this treatment." It is beautifully executed, demonstrating the fluency and freedom with which Heaton adopts the Lydian mode, with the astringency of tritone C sharp to G adding a personal touch.

The second love song, *The Chief Glory*, is drawn from a collection of vocal lines Heaton contributed to a production of *El Mágico Prodigioso (The Mighty Magician)* by Pedro Calderon de la Barca (1600-1681) in a translation by Denis McCarthy. This 1637 Faustian story explores themes of redemption, theodicy, and the power of faith over magic. Heaton dramatises its love song for female and male voices in a masterclass of meaningful simplicity. As he most likely improvised an accompaniment, I have ventured one of my own, adding what I hope is an appropriate Spanish flavour.

Piano Sonata

The long awaited first performance of Heaton's monumental Piano Sonata took place on 15 August 2025, in Stoller Hall, Manchester, over 70 years after its composition. Having prepared the performing edition, I thought I knew what to expect. However, I was not anticipating a work of such visceral impact, harmonic complexity and emotional depth that Murray McLachlan lifted from the pages in his powerfully committed performance. This studio recording was made in Stoller Hall a few days afterwards.

Precisely when Heaton worked on the sonata is not known. It was almost certainly begun in the wake of his consultations with Seiber, whose approach to thematic development is evident in Heaton's mature composing method. The sonata is in fact a radical re-working of the orchestral Suite (1950), which he also rescored as *Partita for Band* in 1983. Transforming the orchestral canvas of the *Scherzo* and *Rondo* into virtuoso piano music demanded major surgery. With freshly minted first and third movements, the result is an experimental opus, compositionally complex and formidably challenging to play. Like *Variations for Band* from the end of his life, Heaton left it tantalizingly almost finished. A pencil score is complete in draft, though lacking some dynamic and articulation markings. A fair copy comes to an end three quarters of the way through the finale. Only the new third movement, marked *Lento*, is complete in every detail.

Why Heaton laid it aside is unclear. He may have regarded it purely as an experiment, although it is also possible that he intended to submit it to the SPNM, since Seiber was one of its leading lights in the 1950s. Perhaps it turned out to be too long or too hard for that purpose, so he gave up on it. I wish I'd known about the work in the 1990s. I could have asked the composer why he abandoned it so close to the finish line.

Heaton was a fine pianist. I'm told by some of those he accompanied that he could have enjoyed a professional career as a collaborative artist; so, he would have been aware that his sonata presents a formidable challenge. The first and fourth movements are the most compact of the four – dissonant, muscular, full of energy and rhythmic vitality. The sonata is rooted on C minor and major but begins with bell-like polytonal clamour – dissonance that commands our attention. The writing in the first movement contrasts passages of

searching counterpoint with high-energy sprung rhythms and massive chord sequences – rather like Bartok’s Piano Sonata or Prokofiev’s Sonata No. 7 “on steroids”. It appears to flow rhapsodically ‘in the moment’. However, Heaton conceived it as a disciplined, mirror sonata form. Precisely halfway through the development section, the music becomes suddenly more animated and starts to unwind with episodes of the same length in reverse order, while, miraculously, the music continues to build towards the final climax – looking back and forward at the same time.

The *Scherzo* is also symphonically conceived, with biting syncopations inspired by the second movement of William Walton’s Symphony No. 1. Reimagining an orchestral landscape for solo piano involved extensive adjustment, including a time signature changes from 3/4 to 3/8. Heaton disguises the most obvious Walton-influenced surface features with layers of bi-tonal texture, more Bartok-like pounding chords and pianistic passage work for both hands.

The new slow movement, marked *Lento*, begins with a simple chorale-like theme, flavoured – typically for Heaton at this time – with augmented fourths and ambiguous major and minor thirds. It is emotionally fraught, building through a series of ever-darker variations towards a tumultuous bitonal climax, before a magical apotheosis lets the light in. The middle episodes are followed by brooding recitative like passages marked *mesto* – sad. The emotions conveyed are stark and raw, perhaps indicative of the struggles Heaton was experiencing at the time.

After all that angst, the finale is a light-hearted, virtuoso tour-de-force. In later life Heaton was very critical of the orchestral *Rondo* upon which it is based. He regarded it as “too tub-thumping”, which he does his best to avoid in the piano version by adding elaborate passage work and piquant dissonance. It is much shorter than the original. By excising the central episode entirely, the design is transformed from rondo to sonatina (a short sonata without a development episode). Of all the movements this is the one where the fingers really fly requiring maximum agility. The work winds up to an extraordinary contrary motion coda, ending with resolute confidence on a triumphant C major.

Pilgrim Reflections

In February 1953, Heaton’s sister Hilda (by then a Captain in the Salvation Army) was appointed to the SA’s Officer Training School in Johannesburg, South Africa. At some point during her three-year posting, she persuaded her brother to provide the music for a staged adaptation of John Bunyan’s allegory *Pilgrim’s Progress*. The result is *Pilgrim’s Song*, a mystery play with a substantial music score. Both the complete manuscript score and an unattributed script were discovered among Hilda Heaton’s effects after her death in 2012.

Such is the close connection between music and text, it seems at least possible that the adaptation could also be by Heaton himself. The subject of a pilgrim's journey through life towards the light of the Celestial City is one that would have appealed to him. He also had the experience of Little Theatre productions to inspire him.

Pilgrim's Song is Heaton's simplest, yet most diverse mature score – a demonstration of the range of technical and stylistic resources at his command. There are 20 music cues of varying lengths and styles embedded into the drama, each skilfully tailored for singers and players of mixed ability. Instrumental items are shared between a small brass band and solo piano. The pianist, who was probably Hilda when the play was staged, is given the most complex music.

I have devised three concert suites from *Pilgrim's Song*, one for brass band with narrator, a set of *Pilgrim's Song Variations* focusing on the brass music and *Pilgrim Reflections*, which includes all but one of the longer piano cues. Since each miniature movement is derived from the folk tune *Monk's Gate* (as collected and harmonised by Ralph Vaughan Williams), the concert suites take the form of variations on the familiar tune which we never hear complete.

Pilgrim Reflections comprises nine short variations, beginning with Heaton's piano introduction. The second variation captures the fevered anguish of the pilgrim's nightmare vision of fire and destruction as a strident bitonal march. The hushed tones of "He who would valiant be" follow, symbolising the simplicity of Christian's faith. This leads to a hesitant improvisation on the Pilgrim theme as he waits to pass through the wicket gate.

There are fewer opportunities for musical commentary in the faster moving action of the middle of the drama, but the music comes into its own in the closing scenes. Christian's encounter with the Shepherds on The Delectable Mountains is complemented by a luminous piano interlude, gently lilting in pastoral style. This leads to one of the most haunting melodies Heaton has left us. Adapted from the brass scoring, it is the Pilgrim's prayer of thanksgiving as The Celestial City comes into view. A noble fanfare underscores the Pilgrim's escape from the Dungeon of Despair determined to "Walk in the Strength of the Lord". *Pilgrim Reflections* concludes with a blessing from the Shepherds, as Pilgrim walks towards the light to the strains of a concluding hymn, *Bright, Radiant, Best*, transformed here into a majestic climax. The curtain slowly descends to a reprise of Pilgrim's theme.

Three Pieces for Piano (1954)

By the time James Gibb performed the *Three Pieces for Piano* in London in September 1954, Heaton's well of inspiration was already beginning to run dry. That said, he submitted six

and a half minutes of his most radical music to the SPNM. Each piece is founded on one key aspect of his mature language: [I] free-flowing melodic invention, [II] bitonal textural layering and [III] fragmentary, rhythmically unstable cross-questioning. The first and last pieces are connected by tonality (B flat minor and major) and thematic content. *Tempestuoso* is a fiery two-part invention. While the left-hand unfolds a continuous, wide-ranging melodic line that, Bach-like, harmonises itself as it were, the right hand follows an independent and unbroken line of *moto perpetuo* triplets, whose adjacent and often clashing semitones disguise the underlying tonality.

There is fantasy in the air at the start of the *Andante tempo rubato* in C sharp major. Echoes of Stravinsky's trickster puppet *Petrushka* hint at some kind of hidden narrative. The 'clowning' around of bitonal separation between left and right hands adds a sinister undercurrent that is fully exposed in the volatile drama of the brief central section. Once order is restored, the opening bars are reviewed in tranquillity, with the coolest of perfect cadences in C sharp major – is it "Amen" or "...and breathe"?

Time for rest is brief, however, as the mood is broken by the onslaught of clashing ninths, bold rhythmic contrasts and virtuoso games in a *Vivo* finale packed with enough invention for a piece three times its length. For its thematic fragments, Heaton transforms the content and shapes of the first piece. The impact of the precipitous climax is viscerally direct – like the power and energy of the coda of the Piano Sonata concentrated into six shattering bars – after which a simple 'throwaway' final bar (in B flat major), settles the tonal argument that began some six minutes earlier in the minor key. The individuality of the invention and consummate technique on display in *Three Pieces* for piano is evidence of so much unrealised promise. Heaton did not write for solo piano again.

Little Suite (1955)

Heaton inscribed *Little Suite* for recorder or flute and piano, 'for Philip Rodgers'. Rodgers was an accomplished musician, who before losing his sight in the early 1960s, was one of the foremost recorder players of the era. Heaton and Rodgers knew each other through their involvement in the Sheffield Educational Settlement in the early 1950s. Whether *Little Suite* was composed on spec or to a personal request is uncertain. Either way there is no record of a performance by Philip Rodgers or anyone else.

The musical world was unaware of *Little Suite* until 2 October 2001, when John Turner (recorder) and Keith Swallow (piano) gave the first documented performance at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. Since then, *Little Suite* has proved to be one of

Heaton's most versatile creations. He made three further versions of different instrumental groups. *Little Suite* and its 'offspring' present a second snapshot of the language he had been searching for, distilled into five cameos drawing on the spirit of the baroque dance suite, of which J.S. Bach was the master. Heaton's contemporary exemplar is most likely to have been Paul Hindemith's epic collection of piano preludes and fugues, *Ludus Tonalis* (1942), which includes a neo-baroque dance suite interleaved as interludes.

Although Heaton resisted adding descriptive or generic titles, vestiges of the French baroque dance suite are present in the character and the underlying pulse of each item. A brief opening prelude alternates two themes – slow and fast – that provide the source material for the whole work. The bouncing triple time pulse of the second movement echoes the running and jumping steps of the French baroque *Courante*. The precision of each gesture is a delight, not least the pianist's vain attempts to interrupt the flow with stabbing off-beat chords. The elegant filigree of the final bars ends the dance with a cheeky smile.

Smiles disappear at the start of the third piece, however, which adopts the stately pulse of *Pavanne*. An impression of muffled drums establishes a sombre mood. Meanwhile the flute soars mellifluously above in a typically expansive *cantilena*. In the wake of a sonorous Hindemith-like climax, the opening phrases return, leaving us in a tonal 'no man's land', somewhere between A major and minor. The fourth movement dances like a spritely *pas de bourée*. Off-beat missteps in the central sequence and the delicate touch of its 'throwaway' ending reveal Heaton's invention at its wittiest.

At first hearing, the lively, rhythmically complex character of the finale sounds like fresh inspiration. On closer inspection it is closely aligned structurally and thematically to the first, which is testimony to Heaton's consummate powers of transformation. The question and answer design of the prelude is replicated, with gestures reimagined and elaborated, leading to an imperious *senza misura* cadenza. *Little Suite* begins brightly, full of anticipation, only to peter out in whispered remembrance – a fade-out ending symbolic, perhaps, of the premature end, at 36, to any ambitions of a future as professional composer. It was over a decade before he composed or released anything on a comparable scale.

Welcome for me

By the mid-1950s, Heaton's life and work was taking a different course. The brass instrument business was proving unprofitable, and he had begun working as a professional horn player to support in his growing family. In 1963 the Heaton family moved to Harrogate, where Wilfred took up a full-time teaching post with the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council. He

closed the workshop the following year. Over the next twenty years, Heaton became a much-respected teacher and influential inspirer of young musicians throughout the Yorkshire Dales. Between 1962 and 1969 he was Musical Director of the Leeds Symphony Orchestra and also Artistic Director. He was also the Artistic Director of the professional Yorkshire Concert Orchestra for six seasons. In 1972 he spent several months as a resident Musical Director of the famous Black Dyke Mills Band. Eventually, in retirement the creative impulse proved too strong to be completely denied. From time to time, he turned to what he termed his “unregarded corner”, and became adept at repurposing or reimagining earlier work, “with an alter-ego left behind in the 1940s”, as he described the process.

In October 1970, a new Heaton song, *Welcome for Me*, appeared on ‘The Soloist’s Page’ of the SA publication *The Musical Salvationist*. It is no coincidence that it dates from the time when he was allowed to return as a dedicated member of The Salvation Army. *Welcome for Me* is one of the lesser-known songs by the blind American gospel poet Fanny Crosby (1820-1915), the writer of *Blesséd Assurance* and *Jesus is tenderly calling you home*. *Welcome for Me* speaks of joy and delight in the assurance of a welcome ‘home’ for the ‘soul’ who, ‘Like a bird on the deep, far away from its nest’ has ‘wandered my Saviour from Thee’. Heaton responds with an undulating rise and fall of a melody that connects symbiotically to the lyric. The piano plays a supportive role with a nuanced palette of sevenths and ninths. The economy and precision of means and ends is a world away from the elaborate, impressionistic wash that accompanies the youthful Gallic-cum-jazz inspiration of *With Empty Hands*.

Three West Indian Melodies

In his teens, Heaton was frequently invited to other SA centres particularly in the north and midlands of England to play piano and cornet solos. His sister Hilda used to accompany the solos, and they would also play piano duets. Items from Walton’s *Façade* were part of their small repertoire. Much later, Hilda could not recall ever playing these *Façade*-inspired arrangements. The SA did not permit unpublished music to be played without permission.

Of Jamaican or Barbadian origin, the three songs became popular as children’s action choruses in Evangelical churches. Heaton gives them straightforward harmonic variation treatments. The tune of the first, ‘I’ve touch’d my finger on the Golden Pen’, is basic (and that is generous!), but contains enough ear worm content to create a memorable, light-hearted parody. The second tune is given a slow, languid treatment reminiscent of the chromatic style of the Swedish-American band arranger and composer Erik Leidzén. The third song, ‘If Jesus keeps me polished, I will outshine the sun’, becomes an express-paced and joyful march.

Four Vignettes

At the end of the Christmas term in 1949 at the Sheffield Educational Settlement's Little Theatre, Freeman staged a double bill of W.B. Yeats's play *The King's Threshold* (1904), alongside a short Christmas mystery play, *The Mother*, by Marjorie Ecclestone, for which Heaton provided a slow, lilting folk dance in the Dorian mode for recorder. Whether it was intended to be played solo or with accompaniment (improvised at the piano by the composer) is not known. I have fashioned a piano part to enable its inclusion as the third of *Four Vignettes* for clarinet and piano.

The opening unaccompanied vignette is drawn from Freeman's production of *The Firstborn*. Heaton's short prelude for solo recorder evokes the location and period with a sinuous cantilena, coloured with whole tones. This leads without a break to an adaptation of one of his most beautiful melodies, which he composed for a mystery play based adapted possibly by Heaton himself from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* entitled *Pilgrim's Song*.

Providing a 'home' for the fourth piece, a short *Berceuse Elegiaque*, was the reason for compiling the vignettes. Heaton penned a gently lilting tune in the 1990s for his granddaughter Emma Stobart, who was learning the clarinet. Intended as a theme for a set of variations that were never completed, it is dedicated to the memory of her sister Charlotte, who died tragically young in 1991.

(Adapted from Hindmarsh: *Wilfred Heaton: His Life – His Music*, PHM Publishing (2025), available from worldofbrass.com)

Texts

The Dove's Answer

One morning, oh! so early, my beloved, my beloved,
All the birds were singing blithely, as if never they would cease;
'Twas a thrush sang in my garden, 'Hear the story, hear the story!'
And the lark sang, 'Give us glory!'
And the dove said, 'Give us peace!'

Then I hearkened, oh! so early, my beloved, my beloved,
To that murmur from the woodland of the dove, my dear, the dove;
When the nightingale came after, 'Give us fame to sweeten duty!'
When the wren sang, 'Give us beauty!'
She made answer, 'Give us love!'

Poems of Love and Childhood, JEAN INGELOW
[1820 -1897]

Hay Harvest

I met a man mowing
A meadow of hay;
So smoothly and flowing
His swathes fell away,
At break of the day
Up Hambleton way;
A yellow-eyed collie
Was guarding his coat —
Loose-limbed and lob-lolly,
But wise and remote.

The morning came leaping —
'Twas five o' the clock,
The world was still sleeping
At Hambleton Lock —
As sound as a rock
Slept village and Lock;
" Fine morning! " the man says,
And I says: " Fine day! "
Then I to my fancies
And he to his hay!

And lovely and quiet
And lonely and chill,
Lay river and eyot,
And meadow and mill;
I think of them still —
Mead, river, and mill;
For wasn't it jolly

With only us three —
The yellow-eyed collie,
The mower and me?

PATRICK R. CHALMERS [1872-1942]

With Empty Hands

It is a gift, bring not thy price for purchase,
Though rich thy treasures from a thousand lands.
What price of thine could but eternal favour,
It is a gift, come thou with empty hands.

*With empty hands confess thy need to Jesus,
Come claim the gift for which God's promise
stands.
Since His great love is writ in blood on Calv'ry,
The gift is Thine, O come with empty hands.*

It is a gift, O come thy hands outstretching.
God stoops to meet on Calv'ry thy demands,
There Jesus shed rich blood to seal his ransom;
He bids thee take the gift with empty hands.

Wilt thou refuse this gift of priceless merit,
And scorn the giver who before thee stands?
His hands are torn and broken with his off'ring,
He bids thee take the gift with empty hands.

ALBERT E. MINGAY [1908-2003]

O Fortune

Why should there be two
Where one will do,
Step over this shadow and tell me
And my heart will make a ring
Singing in a circle.
And my hands will beckon and bring
The maiden fortune who befell me.
O fortune, fortune.

Why do we breathe and wait
So separate?
The whirl in the shell and the sand
Is time going home to time
Kissing to a darkness.
So shall we go, so shall we seem
In the gardens, hand in hand.
O fortune, fortune.

The Firstborn, CHRISTOPHER FRY
[1907-2005],
Oxford University Press, 1952.

The Chief Glory

What is the glory far above all else that life can give?
Love, love, love.

No creature lives on which loves flame
Has not impressed its burning seal.
The man feels more who love doth feel,
Than when love's breath first warmed his frame.
Love owns one universal claim,
To Love, it only needs TO BE,
Whether a bird, a flower, a tree;
Then the chief glory far above all else in life must be
Love, love, love.

Fancy, flatt'rer that thou art,
Though thou should be so sad today.
When did I to thee impart
In this strange and sudden way,
What thus makes my pulses move?
What strange fire is I prove,
Which each moment doth increase?
Ah, this pain that ends my peace, this sweet unrest, ah, what?
Love, love, love.

El Mágico Prodigioso, PEDRO CALDERON de la BARCA [1600-1637]
Translated by Denis McCarthy (as *The Mighty Magician*)

Welcome for Me

Like a bird on the deep, far away from its nest,
I had wander'd my Saviour, from Thee;
But Thy kind loving voice call'd me home to Thy breast,
And I knew there was welcome for me!

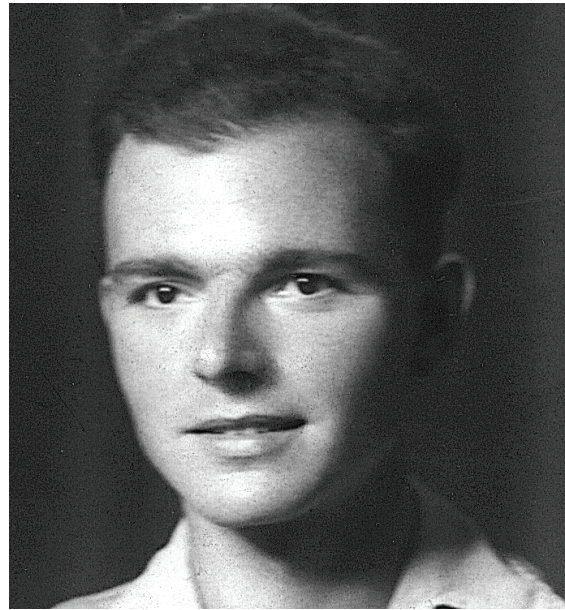
*Welcome for me, Saviour from Thee!
A welcome, glad welcome for me!
Now, like a dove, I rest in Thy love,
And find a sweet refuge in Thee.*

I am safe in the Ark; I have folded my wings
On the bosom of mercy divine;
I am filled with delight by Thy presence so bright,
And the joy that will ever be mine.

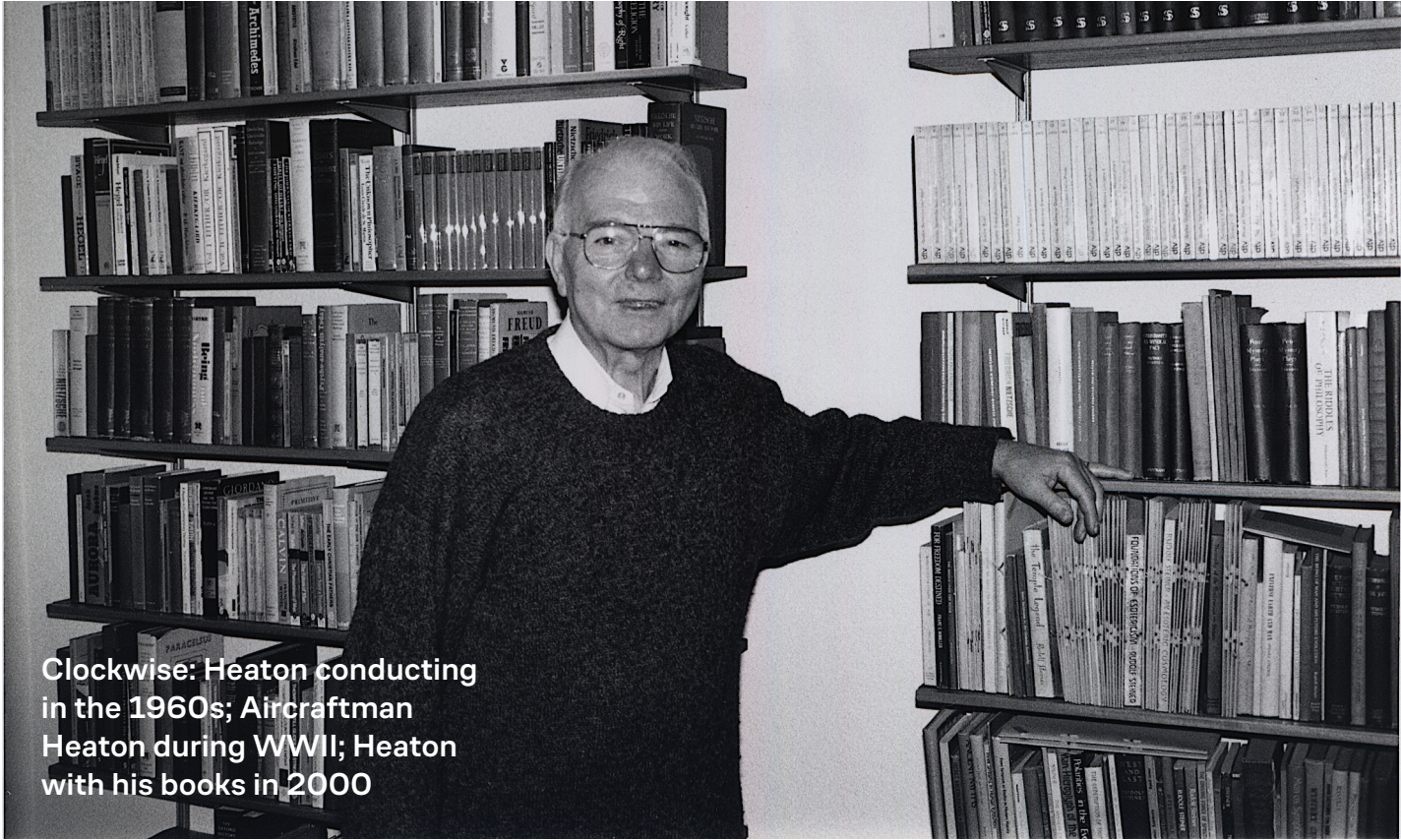
Now in Jesus I rest, and I dread not the storm,
Though around me the surges may roll;
I will look to the skies, where the day never dies,
I will sing of the joy in my soul.

FANNY CROSBY [1820-1915]

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© Brass Band World

Clockwise: Heaton conducting in the 1960s; Aircraftman Heaton during WWII; Heaton with his books in 2000



Murray McLachlan, piano with Alex Jakeman, flute at the Stoller Hall recording sessions.



Murray McLachlan, with producer Paul Hindmarsh recording the Sonata.

Artist Biographies

Murray McLachlan made his professional debut at the age of 21 in 1986 under the baton of Sr Alexander Gibson. Educated at Chetham's School of Music and Cambridge University, his mentors included Ronald Stevenson, David Hartigan, Ryszard Bakst, Peter Katin and Norma Fisher.

Murray's recording career began in 1988. His discography comprises over fifty recordings, including the complete sonatas of Myaskovsky and Prokofiev, the six concertos of Alexander Tcherepnin, the 24 Preludes and Fugues of Rodion Shchedrin, Ronald Stevenson's monumental *Passacaglia on DSCH* and the complete solo piano music of Scottish composer Erik Chisholm. His most recent releases feature British Music: the complete piano music of Edward Gregson (Naxos, 2020) and the Ruth Gipps Piano Concerto with the RLPO (SOMM, 2019).

Murray's repertoire encompasses over 40 concertos and 25 recital programmes, which he has performed internationally to great acclaim. He has performed the complete Beethoven piano sonata cycle seven times, as well as the complete piano music of Brahms. He has given first performances of works by many composers, including Martin Butler, Ronald Stevenson, Charles Camilleri, Michael Parkin and even Beethoven!

Murray teaches at the Royal Northern College of Music and at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester where he has been Head of Keyboard since 1997. He is the founder of the Manchester International Concerto competition for young pianists as well as the Founder/Artistic Director of the world famous Chetham's International Summer school and festival for Pianists, Europe's largest summer school devoted exclusively to the piano.

Having been chair of the European Piano Teachers' Association since 2007, in 2021 he was made Vice President. In 2013 the University of Dundee awarded him an honorary doctorate for outstanding services to music. As well as performing and teaching, he is an established author and pedagogue. He has published three books on piano playing, *Foundations of Technique*, *Piano Technique in Practice* and *The Psychology of Piano Technique* (Faber Music).

Tenor **James Gilchrist** began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time music career in 1996. His musical interest was fired at a young age, singing first as a chorister in the choir of New College, Oxford and later as a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge. His extensive concert repertoire has seen him perform in major concert halls throughout the world with renowned conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Roger Norrington, Bernard Labadie, Harry Christophers, Harry Bicket, Masaaki Suzuki and Richard Hickox.

A master of English music, James has performed Britten's *Church Parables* in St Petersburg, London and at the Aldeburgh Festival, Nocturne with the NHK Symphony in Tokyo and *War Requiem* with the San Francisco Symphony. Recent highlights have included the role of Rev. Adams in Deborah Warner's award-winning production of Britten's *Peter Grimes* at the Opéra National de Paris, the Teatro Real in Madrid and at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Equally at home in the baroque repertoire, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *St John* and *St Matthew Passion* feature prominently in James' schedule. Indeed, he is celebrated as perhaps the finest Evangelist of his generation; as one review noted, "he hasn't become a one-man Evangelist industry by chance".

James' impressive discography includes recordings of *Albert Herring* (title role) and *St John Passion* with the Academy of Ancient Music, the Finzi song cycle *Oh Fair To See*, and critically-acclaimed recordings of Schubert's song cycles for Orchid Classics. More recently he has released *Solitude* and *Songs of Travel* for Chandos Records, both alongside Anna Tilbrook, and *100 Years of British Song*, a three-part recording project focussing on 'The Art of British Song' in collaboration with pianist Nathan Williamson for Somm Recordings. His album, *Inn Stetter Hut*, is a recording of 16th Century viol music recorded in collaboration with the Linarol Consort for Inventa Records. His most recent release is a collection of songs by Thomas Pitfield with Nathan Williamson (piano), for Divine Art.

Flautist **Alex Jakeman** was awarded a full scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London. After graduating she went on to hold positions with both the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra before taking up her current position as principal flute with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in 2018.

Alex has enjoyed performing with many orchestras and chamber groups across the UK, including Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, London Chamber Orchestra, Manchester Collective, Aurora Orchestra and as part of the Halle Orchestra's chamber music series. She has toured extensively throughout Europe, Canada, the US, Mexico, Australia, Russia, India and the Far East and can be heard on several Hollywood soundtracks such as *Cinderella* and *The Shape Of Water*. She is frequently heard as a soloist on Radio 3 with the BBC Philharmonic. Alex lives in Saddleworth and 'likes' to get lost walking in the hills!

Born into a family of musicians in Cheshire, **Rose McLachlan** began piano lessons with her father, Murray McLachlan, aged 7. Shortly after she entered Chetham's School of Music, initially as a chorister. Her piano teacher was Helen Krizos with whom she continued her studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. Rose is continuing her post-graduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. In 2022, Rose was awarded the Kirklees Young Musician Award, won first prize in the Christopher Duke International Piano Competition and the Young Artists Concerto Competition at the Piano Texas International Festival and Academy. In November 2022, she was awarded a Musician's Company Silver Medal.

She has been a recording artist since 2018, when she recorded *Five Hebridean Dances* by John McLeod for Divine Art. In January 2020, Rose recorded piano duets by Edward Gregson with her father for Naxos. Rose has broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and performed throughout the UK, including The Barber Institute of Fine Arts (University of Birmingham), The Stoller Hall (Manchester), St James Piccadilly and St Martin-in-the-Fields (London). Rose works regularly with singers and received a full bursary to study with Mary Bevan (soprano) and Joseph Middleton (piano) on the Dartington Summer Festival.

Professor Linda Merrick CBE is Principal of the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, and an internationally renowned clarinet soloist, recording artist and clinician. Specialising in contemporary repertoire, she has commissioned more than 40 works by British composers for her instrument. Her catalogue of over 25 solo CD recordings includes concertos for clarinet and concert band by Nigel Clarke, Martin Ellerby, Kit Turnbull and Guy Woolfenden (Polyphonic), Philip Sparke (Anglo Records) and Stephen McNeff (Campion), plus concertos for clarinet and orchestra by John McLeod (Chandos), Edwin Roxburgh (NMC) and Philip Spratley (Toccatà).

Linda's output of premiere recordings includes new clarinet quintets with the Navarra Quartet (Naxos), clarinet quintets by John McCabe, Wilfred Joseph and Robert Crawford as well as chamber works by Malcolm Arnold, John Ireland and Martin Ellerby. Linda has broadcast as a solo artist for BBC Radio 3, Radio France, DRS1, Switzerland, CKWR (Canada) and Arte TV (South Korea) and performed as a concerto soloist across America, Asia, Australia, Europe, South America, the UAE and throughout the UK.

As a founder member of the contemporary ensemble Sounds Positive, she has premiered over 70 works by British composers. She was awarded a CBE for services to music in higher education in the 2023 King's New Year Honours.

Recording curator and producer **Paul Hindmarsh** has spent much of the past half century working in the fields of British 20th century music and brass bands. His varied professional career has embraced singing, production, editing and research. In 1985, following a short career as a professional tenor, Paul joined BBC Radio 3 in Manchester as a live music producer. Since leaving the BBC in 2006, he has produced orchestral, chamber and band recordings for Albion, ASV, Chandos, Doyen, Divine Art, Metier and NMC.

Through the BBC and the Brass Band Heritage Trust, which he established in 1996, Paul commissioned over 40 works for brass band. His 1982 book *Frank Bridge – A Thematic Catalogue* (revised 2016 as *The Complete Works*) is acknowledged as the definitive bibliographical study of this composer. Between 2001 and 2024, with the support of the Heaton family, Paul edited the complete unpublished works of Wilfred Heaton in *The Wilfred Heaton Edition* (Studio Music). His critically acclaimed in-depth study of Heaton's life and music was published in January 2025.

Paul was awarded the Iles Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in 2005, a Lifetime Achievement Award from Brass Bands England (2020), the 2024 BUMA International Award (The Netherlands) and an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Northern College of Music (FRNCM) in 2022.

Production Credits:

Curator and producer: Paul Hindmarsh

Audio Engineer and Editor: James Cardell-Oliver

Cover and booklet design: James Cardell-Oliver, Divine Art.

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Producer Paul Hindmarsh with pianist Murray McLachlan
in the Stoller Hall recording sessions