

**signum**  
CLASSICS



# **PATHS OF SONG**

# **JOHN METCALF**

**ELEANOR TURNER** HARP  
**DAVID CAMPBELL** CLARINET

**NICOLA THOMAS** CELLO  
**PHILIPPA DAVIES** FLUTE

**THE SOLSTICE QUARTET**  
**THE SACCONI QUARTET**

# PATHS OF SONG

## JOHN METCALF

### Septet

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| 1. Semplice e liberamente              | [0.52]  |
| 2. Scherzo                             | [2.18]  |
| 3. Calmo                               | [5.51]  |
| 4. Largamente                          | [2.54]  |
| 5. Semplice e liberamente              | [1.18]  |
| 6. <b>Llwybrau Cân (Paths of Song)</b> | [19.17] |
| 7. <b>Castell Dolbadarn</b>            | [7.14]  |
| 8. <b>Mapping Wales</b>                | [17.05] |
| Total Timings                          | [56.51] |

ELEANOR TURNER HARP NICOLA THOMAS CELLO  
DAVID CAMPBELL CLARINET PHILIPPA DAVIES FLUTE  
THE SOLSTICE QUARTET  
THE SACCONI QUARTET

[www.signumrecords.com](http://www.signumrecords.com)

### COMPOSER'S NOTE

#### Septet for harp, flute, clarinet and strings

Eleanor Turner *Harp*

Philippa Davies *Flute*

David Campbell *Clarinet*

The Solstice Quartet

My *Septet* was written in response to a commission from Antony Griew for a work in honour of his parents. There was no specific brief, though I did talk with Antony about the family and the characteristics of his parents. He mentioned that he was fond of the flute; so it was decided that this instrument would be included, and shortly after, we agreed on the same ensemble as the famous *Introduction and Allegro* by Ravel. A first version of the piece was completed for a private performance for family and friends at Compton Verney, Warwickshire on 17 May 2008. I subsequently revised the work in November and December of the same year.

Because I didn't know David and Ann Griew personally, I decided that the best approach would be that the piece should honour parents in general, and I opted for a musical structure that would reflect this. A series of diatonic chords characterised by a consistent stepwise descending

movement are common to the work as a whole. They are, as it were, the DNA of the piece, and the variations that derive from them display the family likenesses. In the first version of the piece, the chords were not heard, but in the process of revision, I decided to include them. They are heard at the outset replacing a prelude (that was in the earlier version) and again at the end.

The opening statement of the chordal sequence is very short, chorale-like in nature. Much of the other music around the central Calmo is lively and very rhythmic and the harp part is virtuosic.

Many pieces of music have 'hidden' mottos built around letters and initials. The opportunity to 'encrypt' the initials of his Antony, his wife Dot and parents David and Ann Griew – an AG/DG motif in musical terms – seemed too good to miss. This tribute and simultaneous thanks to the commissioner can be heard at the end of the Largo movement. After a loud climax the music dies away to a series of quiet chords very high up on the string instruments. Immediately after, the motif can be heard on solo violin answered by the flute.

## Llwybrau Cân (Paths of Song)

The Sacconi Quartet

My interest in the idea of travelling (the concept not the actuality) has been long-lasting and much of my music reflects this, including the early opera *The Journey* and the music-theatre work *The Crossing* (which is set on an ocean liner). More specifically even, at the beginning of the 1990s I became fascinated by the idea of walking. This is also reflected in my work, in pieces like *Rest in Reason, Move in Passion* (1993) and *Transports* (2000) and the interest was further developed when I read Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines* and became familiar with the music of Kevin Volans and Peter Sculthorpe. In their work the journey is a spiritual as well as a physical exercise, a concept familiar from pilgrimages to 'walkabout'.

I have always been keen, however, that this exploration should happen in my own context. I knew directly from Canadian experience of the dangers of cultural expropriation from native traditions – cultures which many would say have retained richer and broader points of reference than contemporary western society. I was helped in this by the travels in Wales of the artist Catrin Webster who I worked with on *Transports* and

whose collection of paintings of the same name inspired my own *Mapping Wales*. It was also helpful that my music, though primarily melodic, is often driven by pulse. I had written one previous work built on a single tempo throughout – *Line Dance for String Orchestra* – and decided that I would take a similar approach with the present work.

The piece is built, appropriately, on a walking pulse. It is a brisk walk (crotchet = 116) and the pulse is clearly signalled at the outset by a long series of repeated chords. As the work progresses polyrhythms and varied textures mask it, but it is ever present. Indeed, I had intended that it would be very much to the foreground throughout as in, for example, Andriessen's *De Snelheid*. But the work evolved in a different and, for me, surprising direction.

There are five sections all, of course, in the same basic tempo but each having a clearly differentiated musical character: *Andante* : *Estatico* : *Calmo* : *Scherzevole* : *Cantabile*.

The opening *Andante* section is characterised by repeated chords. It soon broadens out and leads via a dramatic modulation to the *Estatico* section. Here there are proliferating 'songlines' for all the

players and the texture is very full. After a dramatic climax high on all four instruments the music slows for the *Calmo* section. This is clearly identified by a soaring melody on first violin. To this point in the piece all the music is very sustained and there are few rests. By contrast, there follows a *Scherzevole* section with broken texture, playful writing and rapid alternation between pizzicato and arco playing. This section effectively has two expositions of the same material, though the 'join' is masked. The final *Cantabile* refers back to the ideas of all the previous sections but, as it progresses an even broader melody – which seems to me to affirm once again the healing power of music – asserts itself, before the work comes to a light and airy conclusion.

What is surprising about this is that, having set out at the beginning of the work on a path of discovery to nowhere in particular, I find, at the end, that I have in effect written a single movement 'symphonic' work with identifiable opening and closing faster sections and in between a slow movement and a scherzo (albeit all in the same tempo). Maybe the old adage that all stories end in either a marriage or a death is also, after all, true.

## Castell Dolbadarn

Nicola Thomas *Cello*

Eleanor Turner *Harp*

At first sight the commission to write a short work for cello inspired by the painting of Dolbadarn Castle by JMW Turner seemed interesting and relatively straightforward. It certainly proved interesting, but the realisation of the work was not as easy as it first appeared it might be. In particular, I was keen to reflect the structure as well as the atmosphere of the painting. Turner is, of course, arguably the greatest of British landscape painters, but his work is already atmospheric and impressionistic. Although music can well amplify these qualities, I was keen to relate to the subject matter on an additional, more structural, level.

What this level might be was not immediately clear. The clue came, however, at an exhibition of another painter: a superbly curated exhibition of the work of Vuillard, which I was fortunate enough to see in Montreal. As well as preparatory drawings for paintings, there were sometimes two or three versions on the same subject. Although there is only one painting of Dolbadarn Castle by Turner, I decided to take this approach – drawn from the visual arts – in writing the music.

I began with a set of 36 chords, like a sketch or outline for the composition. Having divided the chords into three equal groups, I composed a study with the first 12 chords. I then replicated the exact rhythms, dynamics and all musical features of the first section using notes derived from the other two sets of chords to create three separate studies to be performed as a whole without a break. Though this sounds like quite a technical approach, the result will be, I believe, clear to the listener. Each section begins quietly in a low register, builds to a climax and dies away – like an image seen from dawn to dusk. Three pictures of the castle emerge, each with the same essential features but viewed, as it were, at different times and in different weather conditions. The beginning and ending of each of these images can be clearly perceived. The modal nature of the music also helps to define the qualities of both the piece and the painting – simultaneously sombre, tranquil and majestic. Because of the particular nature of the musical construction, I was very keen that the music for the two instruments be as dramatic and idiomatic as possible, and I am grateful to the two performers Elinor Bennett (harp) and Nicola Thomas (cello) for their help in the final editing of the piece.

*John Metcalf, 2009*

### Mapping Wales

Eleanor Turner *Harp*  
The Solstice Quartet

*Mapping Wales* (Endless Song) is a set of variations played continuously. The theme is the short original piano work entitled *Endless Song* (1999). Aspects of the theme are heard throughout the work and the song is first heard in entirety at the end of the piece.

The title refers to the journeyings and paintings of Welsh artist Catrin Webster and draws similar inspiration from the landscape of Wales and from metaphysical ideas connected with travelling. The piece is just under 20' minutes in length. Various works by John Metcalf – *Dances from Forgotten Places* for String Orchestra, for example – have explored aesthetic areas not commonly associated with contemporary art. Similarly, the mood of *Mapping Wales* is both tender and pastoral.

It was commissioned to mark the Millennium by Lampeter Music Club, the composer's local music society, with funds made available in part by the Arts Council of Wales and received its premiere on October 17th, 2000. The harpist Elinor Bennett who gave the premiere offered help and editorial suggestions with the preparation of the solo part.

The original version of the piece was scored for harp and string quartet. Following the premiere the composer made a version of the work for harp and string orchestra. The recording on this CD is the first of the original version

---

## BIOGRAPHIES

---

### JOHN METCALF

John was born in Swansea, Wales in 1946. A joint UK/Canadian citizen, he is one of the foremost composers working in Wales today. His composing career has already embraced a large variety of work including six operas, two to commission from Welsh National Opera. His fifth opera *Kafka's Chimp* was premiered to great acclaim in 1996 in Canada, received its European premiere in Sweden in 1999 and US premiere in Pittsburgh in 2004. His latest opera *A Chair in Love* premiered at Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea in 2005.

Since the early 1990's a definitive series of orchestral and chamber works have helped to enhance his reputation nationally and internationally. These include *Paradise Haunts*, *Dances From Forgotten Places* and *Mapping Wales*. In December 1999 a

collaboration with artist Catrin Webster on *Transports* was previewed at the Galeria Comunale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome. This production, which subsequently included performances of *Transports/Mobiles* and *Not The Stillness*, received five performances in New York in October 2001 as part of the UK with NY Festival. A commission from the English Symphony Orchestra led to the writing of *Cello Symphony* for Raphael Wallfisch – released by Nimbus records in May 2005. In January 2005 he was featured composer at the Waterford New Music Days in Ireland.

Performances in many countries around the world marked John's 60th birthday year in 2006. These included a special concert in Sofia, the North American premiere of *A Chair In Love* in Montreal,



a performance of *Three Mobiles* at the World Saxophone congress in Slovenia and a 'composer portrait' concert by Lontano in London. The BBC marked his anniversary year with the commissioning of *In Time Of Daffodils* – given its world premiere in St. David's Hall, Cardiff by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales with Jeremy Huw Williams (baritone), and Radio 3's Hear and Now programme broadcast two major works as part of a John Metcalf at 60 celebration. 2008 highlights included the remounting of *A Chair In Love* for performances at the Buxton Festival and a special project for Artes Mundi in collaboration with the artists of Sans Facon to create a series of 'sonic walks' for the City of Cardiff.

John Metcalf was both an Artistic Director and Associate Artistic Director at the Banff Centre, Canada for a period of nearly ten years and was Artistic Director of the Swansea Festival from 1996 – 2007. He is presently Artistic Director of the award-winning Vale of Glamorgan Festival. He has led creative music projects in more than one hundred schools throughout Wales, reflecting his belief in an active, participatory role for the composer in society.

He is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre, an Honorary Fellow of the University of Wales, Lampeter, of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and of University College Cardiff. In September 1995 he received the John Edwards Memorial Award awarded by the Guild for the Promotion of Welsh Music for his services to music in Wales. In 1999 his music was played during the signing, by Her Majesty the Queen, of the Act bringing into being Wales' first elected Assembly for 500 years. His music is recorded on the Lorelt, Sain, Cyfoes and Nimbus labels. Signum Classics have also released a disc of orchestral works titled *In Time of Daffodils*, performed by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

[www.johnmetcalf.com](http://www.johnmetcalf.com)

## ELEANOR TURNER - HARP

Eleanor Turner was born in 1982 and started learning the harp at the age of five. In 1993 she began her studies with Daphne Boden at the Royal College of Music Junior Department. She went on to study harp with Alison Nicholls for seven years and has participated in masterclasses with eminent harpists such as Catherine Michel and Erika Waardenburg.

Eleanor won Third Prize and the Peutz Audience Award at the Netherlands International Harp Competition 2010. In 2007 she won First Prize, a £20,000 concert harp by Salvi Harps, at the European Harp Competition 2007. In 2008 Eleanor received one of the Worshipful Company of Musicians' Maisie Lewis Awards which led to her solo Wigmore Hall debut in October 2008. Since then, Eleanor has enjoyed travelling Europe to give recitals in Italy, Spain, Ireland and The Netherlands, sponsored by Salvi Harps.

Eleanor is also a composer, arranger and teacher. She loves to travel and enjoys all the opportunities that being a musician presents!

[www.eleanorturner.com](http://www.eleanorturner.com)



## NICOLA THOMAS - CELLO

Nicola Thomas was a student at Chetham's School of Music and a pupil of William Pleeth. She won the Barbarolli cello prize and the Bach cello prize. Nicola lived and worked in London giving numerous chamber recitals in Britain and Europe as well as touring worldwide with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-fields. She now lives in Wales where she has established a highly acclaimed reputation as a dedicated chamber musician and teacher. Nicola has been a member of the Archduke Piano Trio of London since 1989 performing extensively for numerous concert societies. She completed a cycle of Beethoven's works for cello and piano in 2006. Nicola is passionate about the value of classical music in peoples' lives and inspires many people with her playing and teaching. She is also the founder musical director of The West Coast School of Chamber Music.

## PHILIPPA DAVIES - FLUTE

Since her celebrated performance of Mozart's *Concerto in D major* at the BBC Proms in 1988, Philippa Davies has gained an international reputation as one of the finest flautists currently performing. She plays and broadcasts throughout the world at international festivals, and performs concertos with such orchestras as the New Stockholm Chamber Orchestra, the BBC Symphony, BBC Philharmonic and BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the English Chamber Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, and the London Mozart Players.

Chamber music has always been a passion and Philippa is a member of the Nash Ensemble and London Winds, has a partnership with Maggie Cole, and performs with her group *Arpège*. Her schedule also includes many world premières and numerous distinguished composers have dedicated works specifically to her.

Her numerous recordings include Mozart's entire original concertos and quartets, a solo disc *The Romance of the Flute and Harp*, Bach flute sonatas with Maggie and a recent recording of William Alwyn's flute music.

## DAVID CAMPBELL - CLARINET

David Campbell is widely regarded as one of Britain's finest clarinetists. He has performed as a soloist with many leading orchestras including all the BBC orchestras, the RPO, LPO and the ECO. As a chamber musician David has played quintets with established string quartets including the Allegri, Alberni, Brodsky, Endellion, Delmé, Fine Arts (USA) as well as young ensembles such as the Sacconi and Solstice Quartets.

David Campbell is a champion of new music and over his career has commissioned a number of works from composers such as Graham Fitkin, Carl Davis, Keith Amos, Michael Stimpson, Gareth Churchill and Richard Blackford.

David's passion for music education is reflected in his teaching positions, regular masterclasses and courses for amateurs. Since 2001 he has been Artistic Director of Musicfest, a Summer School and Festival held every July in the University of Aberystwyth, where John Metcalf's Composition Course is a key event.

[www.campbelldavid.com](http://www.campbelldavid.com)

## THE SOLSTICE QUARTET

**Jamie Campbell (first violin)**  
**Nicholas Shardlow (second violin)**  
**Meghan Cassidy (viola)**  
**Gregor Riddell (cello)**

First prizewinners in the 2009 Royal Over-Seas League Competition, the Solstice String Quartet is quickly gaining a reputation as one of the finest young quartets in the country. Selected by both the Tillett Trust and Park Lane Group in 2008, the quartet made their debuts at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in 2009. Established whilst studying at Cambridge University in 2003, they held a Junior Fellowship at the International Institute of Chamber Music, Madrid, in 2008-9, where they studied every month with Prof Günter Pichler of the Alban Berg Quartet. They have been awarded the Leverhulme Chamber Music Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music from September 2009.

Alongside a passion for the classical quartet cannon, interest in new music is a motivating factor for the quartet. The quartet recently gave the premiere of a major new work by Joseph Phibbs for quartet and soprano. Looking further ahead, the quartet plans to premiere

Giles Swayne's Fourth Quartet, and to make a recording of his complete works for string quartet. Additionally, the ensemble plans to perform a work by cellist Gregor Riddell, who is also a composer.

[www.solsticestringquartet.com](http://www.solsticestringquartet.com)

## THE SACCONI QUARTET

**Ben Hancox (first violin)**

**Hannah Dawson (second violin)**

**Robin Ashwell (viola)**

**Cara Berridge (cello)**

Founded in 2001 at the Royal College of Music, the Sacconi Quartet continues to perform with its four founder members. Over the last decade they have forged a highly successful international career, and perform regularly in Europe and at London's major venues.

The Sacconi Chamber Music Festival in Folkestone continues to grow and bring new audiences to chamber music. Highlights of the Quartet's 2010 season include the completion of their Beethoven cycle at the Canterbury Festival and a focus on the great Czech works for string quartet. The Sacconi are returning to Kings Place to perform the great Piano Quintets over two years with

Simon Crawford-Phillips, and they will make their Cheltenham Festival debut, performing the première of pianist Gwilym Simcock's new Piano Quintet.

The Sacconi won First Prize at the Trondheim International String Quartet Competition and the Kurtág Prize at the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition in 2005, as well as First Prize in the Royal Over-Seas League Chamber Music Competition. The Quartet won Second Prize, the Sidney Griller Award and the Esterhazy Prize at the 2006 London International String Quartet Competition. In 2006 they were also awarded an Angel Award by The Herald newspaper for outstanding performances in the Edinburgh Festival and short-listed for a Royal Philharmonic Society Award.

[www.sacconi.com](http://www.sacconi.com)

John Metcalf's *Septet* was commissioned by Dot and Antony Griew in honour of Antony's parents, David and Ann.



This recording of *Llwybrau Cân* was generously supported by Fiona Martland and Tony Thompson

Many thanks to Rhos y Gilwen for providing the recording venue, accommodation and food for the artists.

*Septet, Castell Dolbadarn and Mapping Wales*

Recorded in Rhos y Gilwen, South Wales, on 24-25 February 2009

Engineered by Mike Hatch

*Llwybrau Cân (Paths of Song)*

Recorded at The Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex on 20 March 2008

Engineered by Alexander Van Ingen

Produced by Alexander Van Ingen

Edited by Dave Rowell

Cover Image - Shutterstock

Design and Artwork - Woven Design [www.wovendesign.co.uk](http://www.wovendesign.co.uk)

© 2010 The copyright in this recording is owned by Signum Records Ltd.

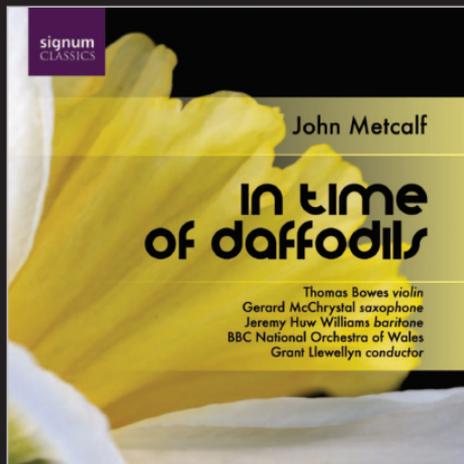
© 2010 The copyright in this CD booklet, notes and design is owned by Signum Records Ltd.

Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording of Signum Compact Discs constitutes an infringement of copyright and will render the infringer liable to an action by law. Licences for public performances or broadcasting may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from Signum Records Ltd.

SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK.

+44 (0) 20 8997 4000 E-mail: [info@signumrecords.com](mailto:info@signumrecords.com) [www.signumrecords.com](http://www.signumrecords.com)

# ALSO AVAILABLE ON SIGNUMCLASSICS



## **In Time of Daffodils**

**John Metcalf**

Thomas Bowes *violin*, Gerard McChrystal *saxophone*,  
Jeremy Huw Williams *baritone*,  
BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Grant Llewellyn *conductor*  
SIGCD103

*"The Welsh Orchestra was outstanding from the downbeat"*  
**Washington Post**

*"I have to concede it's difficult not to be charmed ... The strength of Metcalf's score lies in its horse-sure sense of shaping over an extended, one-movement span and his creative handling of the orchestra"*

**The Gramophone**

Available through most record stores and at [www.signumrecords.com](http://www.signumrecords.com) For more information call +44 (0) 20 8997 4000