

signum  
CLASSICS

Sir Michael Tippett  
**REMEMBER**  
*your lovers*

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# REMEMBER YOUR LOVERS

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Tippett's songs are few in number, but dazzling in quality. We contrast them here with one of Tippett's sources of inspiration - Henry Purcell.

This CD is the first in a series of co-productions between SignumClassics and BBC Radio 3's "Voices" programme. Presented by Iain Burnside, "Voices" explores every aspect of the voice across all genres. "Voices" is on BBC Radio 3 every Tuesday 16.00 - 17.00. (90.2 - 92.4 FM and digital radio.)

JOHN MARK AINSLEY      IAIN BURNSIDE

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# REMEMBER YOUR LOVERS

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It is hard not to feel wistful when you look at the songs of Michael Tippett. The man chose quality over quantity. Damn it, why not both? Not for him Britten's or Finzi's stream of song writing trickling down through the decades, gradually unfolding autobiographical insight. Instead, Tippett gives us two bursts of greatness and then - some tantalising occasional pieces aside - calls it a day. Good news for opera companies, solo pianists and string quartets. Bad news for the world of song.

To whinge, though, would be churlish. Let us instead offer up thanks for two entirely different masterpieces. **The Heart's Assurance** is that rarest of creations: a Second World War songcycle. While both the Boer War and the Flanders trenches left poignant legacies in words and music, different creative impulses were set in motion by the horrors of World War II. In song, Tippett's cycle stands alone in stature. **Boyhood's End** breaks other moulds, exploring the cusp between adolescence and adulthood. Tippett sculpts an unlikely slab of prose into something even more unlikely - a bold, invigorating Purcellian cantata.

**The Heart's Assurance** remembers one lover in particular, and commemorates a very particular sort of love. In 1945 Tippett's great friend Francesca Allinson committed suicide, her despair at the war compounded by deep personal unhappiness; Tippett's sexuality made

him unable to reciprocate her passion. Devastated by her death, he took five years to turn his emotions into music. For his texts Tippett turned to two young poets killed in the Second World War: Sidney Keyes was 20 and Alun Lewis only 19 when they died. As befits a composer who served time in Wormwood Scrubs for his pacifist convictions, he chose five poems where not a shot is fired. War, here, is the backdrop, not stage centre. Indeed, you will look in vain for details or locations specific to the Second World War. The landscape of the songs is universal, and would have been recognisable to any of the great war song composers: Mahler, Butterworth, Ives.

Tippett wrote the cycle "to commemorate all those who lost their lives and loves in the brutality of battle. I thought of the song-cycle as having a subtitle: 'Love under the shadow of Death.'" Not for nothing is a poem called **Compassion** the centrepiece of the cycle. And an unashamedly sexual centrepiece it is too, the tenor mounting to a phallic top B to invoke *the god-faced centaur*.

All the songs show blazing personal commitment. Tippett wrestles his poems to the ground. He repeats lines fast, he repeats them slow; he splits words into great melismatic howls; he throws metre out the window. The simplest and most memorable vocal effect of all comes in

**Remember your lovers**, where each verse begins with an unaccompanied refrain: recitative morphed into bugle call.

The voice he was writing for was Peter Pears. Who else would have been game enough to take it on? There is quiet homage on the last page of **Song**, where Tippett sits his tenor on a high E, famously Pears's favourite note; it is a cross reference, too, to the monologue *Now the Great Bear and Pleiades* in Britten's **Peter Grimes**. Tippett's piano writing sat less comfortably with Britten's fingers; after giving the premiere of **The Heart's Assurance** he never played it again, resenting the level of practice it demanded. All five songs have markedly original textures. The intensity of the slow songs owes much to the contrast between long, sustained vocal lines and constant pianistic activity. Even when Tippett's harmony moves slowly there is subterranean movement. So many scales for the left hand! Had Tippett been leafing through his **Fitzwilliam Virginal Book**? The passagework feels like John Bull or Orlando Gibbons.

The composer who leans over Tippett's shoulder throughout this disc, though, is Henry Purcell. It was Francesca Allinson who first alerted Tippett to Purcell's vitality and originality, but his moment of epiphany came after an air-raid in 1940, in the bombed out rubble of London's Morley College. Tippett, soon to become the College's Music Director, stumbled on some Purcell in the debris. He opened the books, was gripped by what he saw and started programming Purcell in his innovative College concerts. The consequences were far-reaching.

In casting around for a tenor soloist he came across a young man called Peter Pears, while a shared enthusiasm for Purcell led Tippett in turn to Pears's partner Benjamin Britten.

The Purcell realisations on this disc were made by Tippett in tandem with his choral director at Morley College, Walter Bergmann. Tippett and Bergmann shared with Britten the urge to bring these songs out of the library and into the concert hall. What strikes me most, half a century on, is how stylish these realisations are. While Britten's dense pianistic approach now jars on ears that have undergone the Early Music revolution, Tippett and Bergmann stay light on their feet. Their touch is deft; composer ego is kept to a characteristic minimum; the spotlight stays firmly on Purcell himself.

Another product of bomb-struck Morley College was Tippett's cantata **Boyhood's End**, written for Pears and Britten in 1943. Tippett's model here was Purcell's **Blessed Virgin's Expostulation**, a work he adored, with its mixture of recitative and arioso, its quicksilver changes of mood. Where, though, did Tippett get the idea to apply this model not to a poem, but to an extract from WH Hudson's autobiography **Far Away and Long Ago**? Suddenly, instead of war-torn Lambeth, we are in the Argentine in the middle of the 19th century, surrounded by exotic plants and fabulous birds. We are poised on the brink of adulthood, awareness intensified by jangling hormones, asking the raw questions: *What, then, did I want? What did I ask to have?* The originality of Tippett's choice of text is

brehtaking. There has been nothing like it in English song before or since.

As with the later **Heart's Assurance**, Tippett did not spare his soon-to-be-famous performers. The cantata provided a formidable workout for both. His tenor is called on to combine Baroque coloratura with a scat jazz vibe, and to deliver a Monteverdian *trillo* on the word *ecstasy*. He must be high and dramatic one moment, high and floaty the next - most cruelly on the sublime, larynx-splittingly difficult last page. The pianist meanwhile has his own split personalities: Lisztian octaves sit cheek by jowl with spikey harpsichordisms; a-gallop, a-gallop across the pampas turns in a matter of seconds into the serenity of floating blue skies.

Some four years later Britten wrote a companion piece to **Boyhood's End** - a Purcellian cantata of his own, **Canticle 1**. Like Tippett, Britten gives us four connected sections, combines recitative and *arioso* and enjoys melismatic vocal effects. Unlike Tippett, he goes back to the 17th century for his text, to the Renaissance poet Francis Quarles. Drawing heavily on **The Song of Solomon**, Quarles intertwines the spiritual with the homoerotic. Listeners and performers alike can be forgiven if, by the time they reach Britten's final section, the spiritual dimension has fallen by the wayside. This coda is surely the glory of the work: a dotted rhythm repeated hypnotically under teasingly angular vocal caresses; Purcellian Scotch snap tranquillised into a gay lullaby.

Two occasional works complete our selection. **Music** can be sung solo or chorally, in unison. Startlingly, this florid Shelley setting was written for the amateur forces of the East Sussex and West Kent Choral Festival in 1960. Either the choir was formidable or their rehearsals were gruelling: **Music** is far from simple. **Songs for Ariel** mark Tippett's entry into the ranks of Shakespearean composers: they are part of his incidental music for the Old Vic **Tempest** in 1961. The outer songs are full of Baroque echoes, though radically pared down in texture from the exuberance of the earlier songs. **Full Fathom Five** is an exercise in starkness, its telling austerity underlining the miraculous modulation on *sea-change*. It is the last of Tippett's claims to greatness as a songwriter. Here, to paraphrase Shostakovich, there may not be many notes; but there is a lot of music.

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May 2005

#### **The Heart's Assurance** Sir Michael Tippett

**Song**  
**Text: Alun Lewis**

Oh journeyman, Oh journeyman  
before this endless belt began  
its cruel revolutions, you and she  
naked in Eden, shook the apple tree.

Oh soldier lad, oh soldier lad,  
before the soul of things turned bad  
she offered you so modestly  
a shining apple from the tree.

Oh lonely wife, oh lonely wife,  
before your lover left this life  
he took you in his gentle arms.  
How trivial then were life's alarms.

And though death taps down every street  
familiar as the postman on his beat  
Remember this, remember this,  
that life has trembled in a kiss  
from genesis to genesis  
and what's transfigured will live on  
long after death has come and gone.

**The Heart's Assurance**  
**Text: Sidney Keyes**

O never trust the heart's assurance  
Trust only the heart's fear,  
And what I'm saying is, Go back, my lovely  
Though you will never hear.

O never trust your pride of movement  
Trust only pride's distress.

The holy limbs are the broken fingers  
Still raised to praise and bless.

For the careless heart is bound in chains  
And terribly cast down:  
The beast of pride is hunted our  
And baited throughout the town.

**Compassion**  
**Text: Alun Lewis**

She in the hurling night  
With lucid simple hands,  
Stoked away his fright  
Loosed his blood-soaked bands.

And seriously aware  
Of the terror she caressed  
Drew his matted hair  
Gladly to her breast.

And he who babbled Death  
Shivered and drew still  
In the meadows of her breath,  
Restoring his dark will.

Nor did she ever stir  
In the storm's calm centre  
To feel the tail, hooves, fur  
Of the god-faced centaur.

### The Dancer

**Text: Alun Lewis**

'He's in his grave and on his head  
I dance,' the lovely dancer said,  
'My feet like fireflies illumine  
The choking blackness of his tomb.'

'Had he not died we would have wed,  
And still I'd dance,' the dancer said,  
'To keep the creeping sterile doom  
Out of the darkness of my womb.'

'Our love was always ringed with dread  
Of death,' the lovely dancer said'  
'And so I danced for his delight  
And scorched the blackened core of night  
With passion bright,' the dancer said –

'And now I dance to earn my bread.'

### Remember your lovers

**Text: Sidney Keyes**

Young men walking the open streets  
Of death's republic, remember your lovers.

When you foresaw with vision prescient  
The planet pain rising across your sky  
We fused your sight in our soft burning beauty:  
We laid you down in meadows drunk with cowslips  
And led you in the ways of our bright city.

Young men who wander death's vague meadows,  
Remember your lovers who gave you more than flowers.

When you woke grave-chilled at midnight  
To pace the pavement of your bitter dream  
We brought you back to bed and brought you home

From the dark antechamber of desire  
Into our lust as bright as candle-flame.

Young men who lie in the carved beds of death,  
Remember your lovers who gave you more than dreams.

From the sun sheltering your careless head  
Or from the painted devil your quick eye.  
We led you out of terror tenderly  
And fooled you into peace with our soft words  
And gave you all we had and let you die.

Young men drunk with death's unquenchable wisdom,  
Remember your lovers who gave you more than love.

### If music be the food of Love

**Henry Purcell (Tippett / Bergmann)**

**Text: William Shakespeare / Colonel Henry  
Heveningham from Gentleman's Journal, June 1692**

If music be the food of love,  
Sing on till I am fill'd with joy;  
For then my list'ning soul you move  
To pleasures that can never cloy.  
Your eyes, your mien, your tongue declare  
That you are music ev'rywhere.  
Pleasures invade both eye and ear,  
So fierce the transports are, they wound,  
And all my senses feasted are,  
Tho' yet the treat is only sound,  
Sure I must perish by your charms,  
Unless you save me in your arms.

### Music

**Sir Michael Tippett**

**Text: Percy Bysshe Shelley**

I pant for the music which is divine,  
My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;  
Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,  
Loosen the notes in a silver shower;  
Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,  
I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,  
More, oh more,—I am thirsting yet;  
It loosens the serpent which care has bound  
Upon my heart to stifle it;  
The dissolving strain, through every vein,  
Passes into my heart and brain.

### Music for a while

**Henry Purcell (Tippett / Bergmann)**

**Text: John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee from incidental  
music to Oedipus**

Music for a while  
Shall all your cares beguile:  
Wond'ring how your pains were eas'd  
And disdaining to be pleas'd  
Till Alecto free the dead  
From their eternal bands,  
Till the snakes drop from her head,  
And the whip from out her hands.

### Boyhood's End

**Sir Michael Tippett**

**Text: William Henry Hudson**

What, then, did I want? What did I ask to have? If the question had  
been put to me then, and if I had been capable of expressing what  
was in me, I should have replied: I want only to keep what I have;

to rise each morning and look out on the sky and the grassy dew-  
wet earth from day to day, from year to year. To watch each June and  
July for spring, to feel the same old sweet surprise and delight at  
the appearance of each familiar flower, every new-born insect, every  
bird returned once more from the north. To listen in a trance of  
delight to the wild notes of the golden plover coming once more to  
the great plain, flying, flying south, flock succeeding flock the  
whole day long. Oh, those wild beautiful cries of the golden plover!  
I could exclaim with Hafiz, with but one word changed: "If after a  
thousand years that sound should float o'er my tomb, my bones  
uprising in their gladness would dance in the sepulchre!"

To climb trees and put my hand down in the deep hot nest  
of the Biente-veo and feel the hot eggs - the five long pointed  
cream-coloured eggs with chocolate spots and splashes at the  
larger end. To lie on a grassy bank with the blue water between me  
and beds of tall bulrushes, listening to the mysterious sounds of  
the wind and of hidden rails and coots and courlans conversing  
together in strange human-like tones; to let my sight dwell and  
feast on the *camalote* flower amid its floating masses of moist  
vivid green leaves – the large alamanda-like flower of a purest  
divine yellow that when plucked, leaves you with nothing but a  
green stem in your hand.

To ride at noon on the hottest days, when the whole earth  
is a-glitter with illusory water, and see the cattle and horses in  
thousands, covering the plain at their watering-places; to visit  
some haunt of large birds at that still, hot hour and see storks,  
ibises, grey herons, egrets of a dazzling whiteness, and rose-  
coloured spoonbills and flamingoes, standing in the shallow water  
in which their motionless forms are reflected.

To lie on my back on the rust-brown grass in January and gaze up  
at the wide hot whitey-blue sky, peopled with millions and myriads  
of glistening balls of thistle-down, ever, ever floating by; to gaze  
and gaze until they are to me living things and I, in an ecstasy, am  
with them, floating in that immense shining void!

### **Sweeter than roses**

**Henry Purcell (Tippett / Bergmann)**

**Text:** Anon from incidental music to Pausanius, the Betrayer of his Country

Sweeter than roses, or cool evening breeze  
On a warm flowery shore, was the dear kiss,  
First trembling made me freeze,  
Then shot like fire all o'er.  
What magic has victorious love!  
For all I touch or see since that dear kiss,  
I hourly prove, all is love to me.

### **An evening hymn**

**Henry Purcell (Tippett / Bergmann)**

**Text:** Dr. William Fuller

Now, now that the sun hath veill'd his light  
And bid the world goodnight;  
To the soft bed my body I dispose,  
But where shall my soul repose?  
Dear, dear God, even in Thy arms,  
And can there be any so sweet security!  
Then to thy rest, O my soul!  
And singing, praise the mercy  
That prolongs thy days.

Hallelujah!

### **Canticle 1**

**Benjamin Britten**

**Text:** Francis Quarles

Ev'n like two little bank-divided brooks,  
That wash the pebbles with their wanton streams,  
And having rang'd and search'd a thousand nooks,  
Meet both at length in silver-breasted Thames,  
Where in a greater current they conjoyn:  
So I my best-beloved's am; so he is mine.

Ev'n so we met; and after long pursuit,  
Ev'n so we joy'n'd; we both became entire;  
No need for either to renew a suit,  
For I was flax and he was flames of fire:  
Our firm-united souls did more than twine;  
So I my best-beloved's am; so he is mine.

If all those glitt'ring Monarchs that command  
The servile quarters of this earthly ball,  
Should tender, in exchange, their shares of land,  
I would not change my fortunes for them all:  
Their wealth is but a counter to my coin:  
The world's but theirs; but my beloved's mine.

Nor Time, nor Place, nor Chance, nor Death can bow  
My least desires unto the least remove;  
He's firmly mine by oath; I his by vow;  
He's mine by faith; and I am his by love;  
He's mine by water; I am his by wine;  
Thus I my best-beloved's am; thus he is mine.

He is my Altar; I his Holy Place,  
I am his guest; and he, my living food;  
I'm his by penitence; he mine by grace;  
I'm his by purchase; he is mine by blood;  
He's my supporting elm; and I his vine:  
Thus I my best-beloved's am; thus he is mine.

He gives me wealth, I give him all my vows:  
I give him songs; he gives me length of dayes.  
With wreaths of grace he crowns my longing brows:  
And I his Temples with a crown of Praise,  
Which he accepts as an ev'r'lasting signe,  
That I my best-beloved's am; that he is mine.

### **An Epithalamium**

**Henry Purcell (Tippett / Bergmann)**

**Text:** Elkanah Settle from incidental music to The Indian Queen

Thrice happy lovers, may you be for ever free  
From the tormenting devil jealousy,  
From all the anxious cares and strife  
That attends a married life.

Be to one another true,  
Kind to her as she's to you.  
And since the errors of the night are past,  
May he be ever constant, she be ever chaste.

### **What shall I do?**

**Henry Purcell (Tippett / Bergmann)**

**Text:** Thomas Betterton from incidental music to Dioclesian

What shall I do to show how much I love her ?  
How many million of sighs can suffice?  
That which winds other hearts never can move her;  
those common methods of love she'll despise,  
I will love more than man e'er lov'd before me,  
gaze on her all the day and melt all the night;  
till for her own sake at last she'll implore me,  
to love her less no preserve our delight.

### **'Twas within a furlong of Edinburgh Town**

**Henry Purcell**

**(Tippett / Bergmann)**

**Song written by Mr. D'Urfey**

'Twas within a Furlong of Edinburgh Town,  
In the rosey time of Year when the Grass was down,  
Bonny Jocky blith and gay  
Said to Jenny, making Hay,  
Let us sit a little, Dear, and prattle,

'Tis a souly day.

He long had courted the black brown Maid;  
But Jocky was a Wag and wou'd ne're consent to wed:  
Which made her pish and phoo,  
And cry it will not do;  
I cannot, cannot, cannot, wonnot, wonnot buckle to.

He told her, Marriage was grown a meer Joke,  
And that no one wedded now, but the Scoundrel Folk:  
Yet, my Dear, thou should'st prevail,  
But I know not what I ail;  
I shall dream of Clogs and silly Dogs  
With Bottles at their Tail.  
But I'll give thee Gloves and a Bongrace to wear,  
And a pretty Filly foal, to ride out and take the Air,  
If thou ne're wilt pish and phoo,  
And cry it ne're shall do,  
I cannot, cannot, cannot, wonnot, wonnot, buckle to.

That you'll give me Trinkets, cry'd she, I believe;  
But ah, what in return must your poor Jenny give?  
When my Maiden Treasure's gone,  
I must gang to London Town;  
And roar and rant, and patch and paint,  
And kiss for half a Crown;  
Each drunken Bully oblige for pay,  
And earn a hated Living an odious fulsome way.  
No, no, no, it ne're shall do;  
For a Wife I'll be to you.  
Or I cannot, cannot, cannot, wonnot, wonnot, buckle to.

### **A Hymn to God the Father**

**Pelham Humfrey (Tippett / Bergmann)**

**Text:** John Donne

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,  
Which is my sin, though it were done before?  
Wilt Thou forgive those sins through which I run,  
And do run still, though still I do deplore?

When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;  
For I have more.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won  
Others to sin, and made my sins their door?  
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun  
A year or two, but wallow'd in a score?  
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;  
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun  
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;  
But swear by ThyselF that at my death Thy Son  
Shall shine as He shines now and heretofore:  
And having done that, Thou hast done;  
I fear no more.

**Ah! How Sweet it is to Love**  
**Henry Purcell**  
(Tippett / Bergmann)  
Text: John Dryden

Ah, how sweet it is to love!  
Ah, how gay is young Desire!  
And what pleasing pain we prove  
When first we feel our Love's fire!  
Pains of love are sweeter far  
Than all other pleasures are.

**I attempt from love's sickness**  
**Henry Purcell**  
(Tippett / Bergmann)  
**Solo (Zempoalla): I attempt from Love's sickness -**  
**From The Indian Queen**

I attempt from Love's sickness to fly in vain,  
Since I am myself my own fever and pain.  
No more now, fond heart, with pride no more swell,  
Thou canst not raise forces enough to rebel.

For Love has more pow'r and less mercy than fate  
To make us seek ruin and love those that hate.

**Songs for Ariel**  
**Sir Michael Tippett**  
Text: William Shakespeare

**Come unto these yellow sands**

Come unto these yellow sands,  
And then take hands:  
Curtisied when you have and kissed,  
The wild waves whist:  
Foot it feately here and there;  
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.

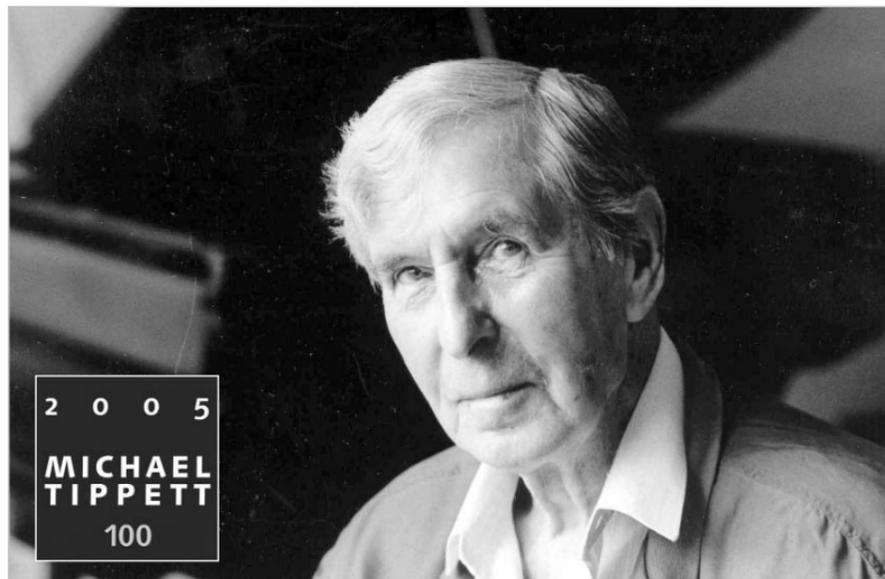
Hark, hark!  
Bow-wow.  
The watch dogs bark;  
Bow-wow.  
Hark, hark!  
I hear the strain of strutting chanticleer  
Cry, Cock-a-diddle dow.

**Full fathom five**

Full fathom five thy father lies,  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes:  
Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.  
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:  
Ding-dong.  
Hark! now I hear them, - ding-dong bell.

**Where the bee sucks**

Where the bee sucks there suck I:  
In a cow-slip's bell I lie;  
There I couch when owls do cry.  
On a bat's back I do fly  
after summer merrily,  
Merrily, merrily do I live now  
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.



## BIOGRAPHIES

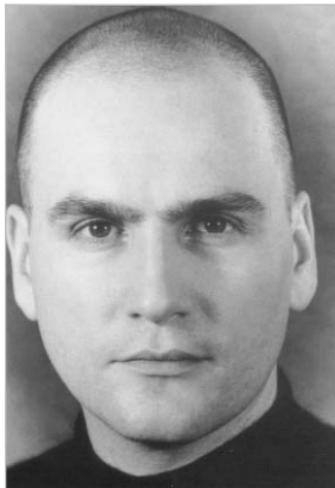
### JOHN MARK AINSLEY – TENOR

John Mark Ainsley works with the London Symphony under Davis, Rostropovich and Previn, Les Musiciens du Louvre under Minkowski, Concert d'Astrée under Haim, Philharmonia Baroque under McGegan, Berlin Philharmonic under Haitink, Kraemer and Rattle, New York Philharmonic under Masur, Boston Symphony under Ozawa, San Francisco Symphony under Tate, Vienna Philharmonic under Sir Roger Norrington, Trevor Pinnock and Welser-Moest, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Rattle, Cleveland Orchestra under Welser-Moest and both the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and the Orchestre de Paris under Giulini.

His discography includes the Evangelist in the **St. Matthew Passion** under Ozawa, Rameau's **Dardanus** with Minkowski, the Britten **Spring** Symphony with Gardiner and **L'Heure Espagnol** with Previn. His song repertoire includes Schubert, Vaughan Williams, Purcell, Fauré, Mozart, Warlock, Quilter and Ireland for Hyperion records.

He has sung Don Ottavio at the festivals of Aix-en-Provence, directed by Brook and conducted by Abbado, and Glyndebourne, directed by Warner and conducted by Rattle, with the San Francisco Opera, Dresden Opera, and Royal Opera House Covent Garden under Mackerras. He

has appeared in Sydney as Tito and Idomeneo, in Amsterdam as Handel's **Samson**, in Salzburg as Handel's **Solomon** and Der Daemon in the world premiere of Henze's **L'Upupa** and in Munich as Jonathan in **Saul**, Oronte in **Alcina** and Orfeo, which won the Munich Festival Prize.



### IAIN BURNSIDE – PIANO

Iain Burnside has performed with artists including Dame Margaret Price, Susan Chilcott, Galina Gorchakova, Yvonne Kenny, John Mark Ainsley, Mark Padmore, Bryn Terfel, Lisa Milne, Sally Matthews, and Jonathan Lemalu. Chamber music collaborations have featured the Britten-Pears Ensemble and the Brodsky, Delmé and Vanbrugh Quartets.

As a broadcaster Iain has recently won a Sony Radio Award. He presents BBC Radio 3's **Voices** programme, and has combined his roles as pianist and presenter in a number of series: **From Where I'm Sitting** on Radio 3, and **The Music Party** for BBC World Service. His television involvement includes Cardiff Singer of the World, Leeds International Piano Competition and BBC Young Musician of the Year.



Iain has devised concert series for the Bath Festival and The Crucible, Sheffield; the International Song Recital Series at the South Bank Centre and the Finzi Friends' triennial festival of English Song in Ludlow. He also teaches master-classes at the GSMD, the Juilliard School, New York; and the Banff Centre, Canada.



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Recorded at The Warehouse, London, England,  
29 & 31 March and 1 April 2005  
Producer - John H West  
Engineers - Mike Hatch  
Editor - John H West  
Front Cover Image - Creatas  
Sir Michael Tippett photographs - Jane Bown  
Booklet Notes - Iain Burnside  
Artwork and design - Woven Design

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