



CHANDOS
SUPER AUDIO CD

Vaughan Williams

Piano Concerto • Oboe Concerto
Serenade to Music • Flos Campi



Louis Lortie piano
Sarah Jeffrey oboe
Teng Li viola

Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Peter Oundjian



Ralph Vaughan Williams, c. 1936 - 37

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| [1] | <p>Serenade to Music (1938)*</p> <p>for Four Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra</p> <p>Words by Shakespeare</p> <p><i>(The Merchant of Venice)</i></p> <p>Dedicated to Sir Henry J. Wood on the occasion of his Jubilee,
in grateful recognition of his services to music</p> <p>Andante sostenuto – Poco animato – Tempo I – Poco animato –
Tempo I – Andante con moto – Tempo I ma poco animato –
Tempo I – Poco animato – Tempo I</p> | 14:29 |
| | <p>Concerto (1944)†</p> <p>in A minor • in a-Moll • en la mineur</p> <p>for Oboe and Strings</p> <p>To Léon Goossens</p> | 20:06 |
| [2] | <p>I Rondo Pastorale. Allegro moderato – Cadenza –
[Allegro moderato] – Cadenza – Tempo – Cadenza –
[Tempo] – Cadenza – Tempo</p> | 7:52 |
| [3] | <p>II Minuet and Musette. Allegro moderato – Musette – [Minuet]</p> | 2:39 |
| [4] | <p>III Finale (Scherzo). Presto – [Cadenza] – Doppio più lento – [Cadenza] –
Doppio più mosso – Lento – Presto</p> | 9:33 |

Flos Campi (1924 – 25)[‡]

21:01

(Flower of the Field)

Suite for Solo Viola, Small Chorus, and Small Orchestra

To Lionel Tertis

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|------|
| 5 | 1 | Lento (senza misura) – (Tempo) – | 2:46 |
| 6 | 2 | Andante con moto – [senza misura] – | 3:24 |
| 7 | 3 | Lento (senza misura) – [A tempo] – Allegro moderato (senza misura) –
Allegro moderato – Allargando – | 3:21 |
| 8 | 4 | Moderato alla marcia – | 1:59 |
| 9 | 5 | Andante quasi lento (Largamente) – Largamente –
A tempo (poco animato) – Largamente – Moderato tranquillo – | 3:20 |
| 10 | 6 | (Moderato tranquillo) – (Lento) (Tempo del principio) (senza misura) –
(A tempo) (Tranquillo) | 6:08 |

Concerto (1926 – 31)[§]

26:42

in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur

for Piano and Orchestra

To Harriet Cohen

- | | | | |
|-----------|----|--|------|
| 11 | I | Toccata. Allegro moderato – Poco animato – Tempo I – Poco animato –
Tempo I – Poco animato – Largamente – Cadenza – | 6:42 |
| 12 | II | Romanza. Lento – Poco più mosso – Poco animato – Tranquillo –
Tempo I – | 9:02 |

- 13 III Fuga chromatica, con Finale alla tedesca. Allegro –
Fuga – Cadenza –
Finale alla tedesca – Cadenza – Poco stringendo –
Cadenza – Lento – Largo sostenuto –
Andante sostenuto

10:58
TT 82:21

Carla Huhtanen soprano*
Emily D'Angelo mezzo-soprano*
Lawrence Wiliford tenor*
Tyler Duncan baritone*
Sarah Jeffrey oboe[†]
Teng Li viola[†]
Louis Lortie piano[§]
Elmer Iseler Singers*[‡]
Lydia Adams artistic director
Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Jonathan Crow concertmaster
Peter Oundjian

Elmer Iseler Singers

Lydia Adams conductor and artistic director

Jessie Iseler general manager

soprano

Jodie Alcorn

Anne Bornath

Amy Dodington

Gisele Kulak

Cathy Robinson

Alison Roy

alto

Claudia Lemcke

Victoria Marshall

Laura McAlpine

Lynn McMurray

tenor

Ben Jisoo Kim

Eric MacKeracher

Mitchell Pady

Will Reid

Michael Sawarna

bass

Alexander Jozefacki

Nelson Lohnes

Graham Robinson

Michael Thomas

Paul Winkelmanns

Victor Cheng (James T. Chestnutt Scholar,
2017/18)

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Peter Oundjian music director

Sir Andrew Davis conductor laureate

violin

Jonathan Crow, concertmaster

Tom Beck Concertmaster Chair

Mark Skazynetsky, associate concertmaster

Marc-André Savoie, assistant concertmaster

Etsuko Kimura, assistant concertmaster

Paul Meyer, principal second violin

Wendy Rose, associate principal second violin

Eri Kosaka, assistant principal second violin

Atis Bankas

Sydney Chun

Carol Lynn Fujino

Amanda Goodburn

Terry Holowach

Bridget Hunt

Amalia Joanou-Canzoneri

Mi Hyon Kim

Shane Kim

Leslie Dawn Knowles

Douglas Kwon

Sergei Nikonov

Hyung-Sun Paik

Young Dae Park

Semyon Pertsovsky

Clare Semes

Peter Seminovs

Jennifer Thompson

Angelique Toews

James Wallenberg

Virginia Chen Wells

Arkady Yanivker

viola

Teng Li, principal

Principal Viola funded by David and

Renette Berman

Theresa Rudolph, assistant principal

Daniel Blackman

Ivan Ivanovich

Gary Labovitz

Diane Leung

Charmain Louis

Mary Carol Nugent

Christopher Redfield

Kent Teeple

Ethan Filner*

Jesse Morrison*

cello

Joseph Johnson, principal

Principal Cello Chair funded by

Dr Armand Hammer

Emmanuelle Beaulieu Bergeron, associate
principal
Winona Zelenka, assistant principal
Alastair Eng
Igor Geffer
Marie Gelinias
Roberta Janzen
Britton Riley
Kirk Worthington

double-bass

Jeffrey Beecher, principal
Principal Double Bass Chair annually
funded by the Saunderson Family
Michael Chiarello, associate principal
Theodore Chan
Timothy Dawson
Chas Elliott
David Longenecker
Paul Rogers

flute

Kelly Zimba, principal
Toronto Symphony Volunteer Committee
Principal Flute Chair
Julie Ranti, associate principal
Leonie Wall
Camille Watts

piccolo

Camille Watts

oboe

Sarah Jeffrey, principal
Principal Oboe funded by Pam and
Chris Hodgson
Keith Atkinson, associate principal
Cary Ebli

English horn

Cary Ebli

clarinet

Joaquin Valdepeñas, principal
Sheryl L. and David W. Kerr Principal
Clarinet Chair
Miles Jaques
Joseph Orlowski

bass clarinet

Miles Jaques

bassoon

Michael Sweeney, principal
Samuel Banks
Fraser Jackson

contrabassoon

Fraser Jackson

horn

Neil Deland, principal
Dr Michael Braudo Principal Horn Chair

Christopher Gongs, associate principal
Audrey Good
Nicholas Hartman
Gabriel Radford

trumpet

Andrew McCandless, principal
Toronto Symphony Volunteer Committee
Principal Trumpet Chair
Steven Woomert, associate principal
James Gardiner
James Spragg

trombone

Gordon Wolfe, principal
Vanessa Fralick, associate principal

bass trombone

Jeffrey Hall

tuba

Mark Tetreault, principal

timpani

David Kent, principal

percussion

Charles Settle, principal
John Rudolph
Russell Hartenberger*
Bryn Lutek*

harp

Heidi Van Hoesen Gorton, principal
Principal Harp funded by Richard Rooney
and Laura Dinner

keyboard

Talisa Blackman*

librarians

Gary Corrin, principal
Principal Librarian funded by Bob and
Ann Corcoran
Kim Gilmore
Andrew Harper, interim librarian

personnel

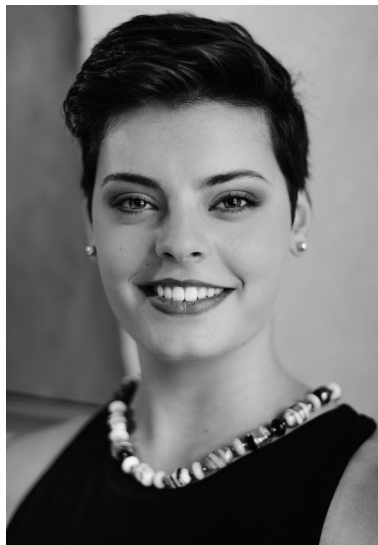
David Kent, manager

*guest musician



Carla Huhtanen

Tobin Grimshaw



Emily D'Angelo

SongFest Emerging Artist

Vaughan Williams:

Serenade to Music / Concertos / Flos Campi

Serenade to Music

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958) phoned Ursula Wood in the spring of 1938 to tell her about a request from Sir Henry Wood for a choral work to celebrate his fifty years as a conductor, adding: 'He wants something for sixteen singers.' Vaughan Williams quickly chose the episode involving Jessica and Lorenzo from Act V, Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice* as the text for the work. This romantic scene from his beloved Shakespeare, with lines such as 'With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear, / And draw her home with music', was personally apposite: Vaughan Williams had started a passionate love affair with the twenty-seven-year-old Ursula on 31 March 1938. Ursula said later that 'I think he was rather in love with me at that time; I think the *Serenade* was written for me'.

The work is certainly one of the most ravishing of all Vaughan Williams's compositions. It was Vaughan Williams who came up with the inspired idea to set the words for the sixteen voices as *soloists*, the individual vocal qualities of each singer shaping the phrasing and colour of each

part. The initials of each singer at the first performance were placed in the score to mark his or her individual entries. While Wood and Vaughan Williams were able to agree on the names of the sixteen singers, some leading soloists had to be omitted; perhaps the most disappointed was the bass-baritone Keith Falkner, a close friend of both conductor and composer.

The early rehearsals of the piece proved an emotional experience, Lady Jessie Wood writing that 'the singers were so moved that their lips seemed unable to articulate'. The soprano Isobel Baillie said that she had

the awesome task of leading the sixteen solo contributions; my phrase 'of sweet harmony' was very exposed and rose to a top A within two bars!

The successful first performance took place on 5 October 1938 in the Royal Albert Hall in London and the composer dedicated the work

to Sir Henry J. Wood on the occasion of his Jubilee, in grateful recognition of his services to music.

Vaughan Williams authorised performances of the work in several formats; it is the version for four soloists (S, A, T, B) with chorus and

orchestra that is heard on this recording. The hushed orchestral opening, for harp, strings, clarinet, and a violin solo, marked *Andante sostenuto*, sets a suitably rapt tone. A second theme, led by woodwind, is a little more animated before the voices enter, *tutti*, singing, 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!' After a few more bars for the singers combined, a soprano soloist soars to that top A, on 'sweet harmony', and the other soloists take turns to elaborate the two main musical ideas. The first of two *fortissimo* passages for the full vocal ensemble occurs at 'Such harmony is in immortal souls', the second, following a fanfare, at 'Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!' The earlier melodies are repeated, including the fanfare, and the words 'Soft stillness and the night' signal the end of the work, a soprano soloist, full ensemble, and solo violin recapturing those moments of sweet harmony.

Concerto in A minor for Oboe and Strings

The delightful and underrated Oboe Concerto was composed for Léon Goossens in 1943–44, at a time when London and southern England were under attack from flying bombs. Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony, first performed in 1943, contains music of tranquillity and repose which had provided hope to those enduring

almost four years of war. Something of the visionary quality of this symphony is also heard in the Oboe Concerto, particularly in the extraordinary *Lento* section of the third movement.

Léon was one of five children in the musically gifted Goossens family which included his brother, the conductor Eugene, and the harpists Marie and Sidonie. He inspired more than 100 compositions over his career, such as the Oboe Quintet (1922) of Sir Arnold Bax. A close friend of Vaughan Williams, he gave the first performance of the Oboe Concerto, on 30 September 1944, with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Léon Goossens said that 'This work showed the oboe in all its guises from piping shepherd to brilliant virtuoso'.

Vaughan Williams wrote the first two movements in 1943, then put the work to one side while he completed his Fifth Symphony. Using a discarded scherzo movement from this symphony as his inspiration, he opens the first movement with a pastoral rondo tune in A minor. The soloist plays almost continuously in this *Allegro moderato*, florid, rhythmic writing – 'merry-piping' – alternating with broader, *cantabile* themes; it is one of these lyrical passages that brings the movement to an end. In the short second

movement, the opening Minuet suggests an eighteenth-century stately dance, beginning brightly with *pizzicato* strings. The linked Musette contains a 'drone' (a sustained note) played by the oboe, evoking a rustic atmosphere. Technically challenging, the Finale also offers the deepest music, recalling themes from earlier movements. Opening with virtuoso writing for the soloist, this Scherzo has two trio sections, the first resembling a broad, lyrical waltz, the second marked *Doppio più lento*, or half the tempo of the preceding section. There is then a *Doppio più mosso* instruction. Vaughan Williams once asked Evelyn Barbirolli why oboists found this movement so difficult and her answer was to point at these frequent changes of tempo. The evocative *Lento* passage now follows, during which Vaughan Williams glimpses those Delectable Mountains, or perhaps the Elysian Fields, 'where hunger and thirst are satisfied at living fountains of water'. It is a deeply moving episode. All too quickly the vision fades and the shepherd's pipe takes the work in more exuberant style to its conclusion, although closing on a *pianissimo* high D.

Flos Campi

Vaughan Williams indicated in his programme note for a performance of *Flos Campi* in 1927

that the Latin title, translated as 'Flower of the Field', did not connote 'buttercups and daisies' but was the

Vulgate equivalent of 'Rose of Sharon' –

'I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valleys'.

The Vulgate is the late-fourth-century Latin translation of the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible, which was adopted by the Catholic Church as its official Latin Bible in the mid-sixteenth century. Contained in the Vulgate is the *Canticum Canticorum* or Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon, an ancient love-song expressed through the voices of two lovers. It is the woman who describes herself as the 'lily of the valleys' in Chapter II, verse 1. Some religious commentators have seen in the sensuous and mystical language of the Songs an allegory of the love of Christ for his Church, or of God for his people. However, Vaughan Williams disavows all such speculation by stating firmly that the music has no ecclesiastical basis – for him it is a celebration of the love between a man and a woman.

The work is in six linked movements, each headed by a Latin quotation, with an English translation, added later, from the Song of Solomon. Vaughan Williams began the work in 1924 and it was first performed by Lionel

Tertis (viola) with the Queen's Hall Orchestra and a chorus from the Royal College of Music conducted by Sir Henry Wood on 10 October 1925. From the restrained, lyrical opening bars, the work flows with a remarkable sense of ecstasy and rhapsodic longing; it is the most sensual of all Vaughan Williams's works. The *cantabile* viola solo in section 2 is quite beautiful, the wordless choir instructed to sing with 'half closed lips'. The instrumental fourth section, a march with oriental overtones, provides necessary contrast. Overall, *Flos Campi* is contemplative and at times passionate, the exchanges among the solo viola, wordless chorus, and small orchestra signifying desire and, from the end of the fifth section, satisfaction and fulfilment. Above all, *Flos Campi* is, as Hubert Foss once put it, 'An exquisite study in pure sound'.

Concerto in C major for Piano and Orchestra Vaughan Williams wrote that

The first two movements of this Concerto were sketched in 1926, and the third movement in 1930. The work is dedicated to Miss Harriet Cohen.

It was first performed by Cohen at the Queen's Hall, London on 1 February 1933, the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult. Harriet Cohen (1895 – 1967) wrote:

I naturally have a great affinity for the Piano Concerto which Vaughan Williams wrote for me. This is a work which I feel opened the way to his Fourth Symphony...

Vaughan Williams's writing for piano in this work is technically challenging and Harriet Cohen admitted that her fingers were 'fumbling with nervousness'. She found the third movement fugue 'specially frightening' – the stretches of enormous chords were beyond the span of her small hands. After the first few performances, Vaughan Williams accepted that Harriet would not be able to play the work again and was ultimately persuaded, in 1946, to rearrange it for two pianos. (For more information on the Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra see CHSA 5186.)

Ursula Vaughan Williams said that the composer had Busoni's transcriptions of Bach in mind while he wrote his Piano Concerto. This influence is most pronounced in the opening *Allegro moderato*, a Toccata that lives up to this label in its fast-moving virtuosity. The exuberance and percussive nature of the piano writing may surprise those used to Vaughan Williams in pastoral mode. After a succession of block chords for the soloist, Vaughan Williams does at least add a folk-like phrase for woodwind, then piano, as a contrasting idea to the drama that precedes it. A virtuoso *Largamente* section

leads to a short Cadenza, marked *senza misura*, and then to the second movement, a lyrical Romanza. Vaughan Williams reserves this description for many of his most deeply felt passages, including the slow movement of his Fifth Symphony, and this Romanza is no exception. Initially the music focuses on a single note played over gentle arpeggios; a dreamlike melody of melting, restrained beauty, initially for solo flute, follows, constituting the heart of the concerto. After a rapt climax the restrained melody returns in passages that recall discarded sections of the original version of *A London Symphony*. Then the solo oboe and violas hint at the main thematic material of the final movement. The brass, *fortissimo*, outline the theme of the fugue which opens the third movement, quickly introduced in full by the soloist. A powerful climax ensues before a lengthy Cadenza which provides a link to the frenetic rhythms of the *Finale alla tedesca*, written in the style of an eighteenth-century German dance. Another glittering Cadenza brings the movement back to the lyrical theme of the Romanza. Finally, in a section marked *Andante sostenuto*, the dance-like subject is played softly by *pizzicato* strings alongside calm piano chords. Vaughan Williams added this soft ending in 1946, when he was arranging the work for two pianos,

and it provides a moving and most satisfying conclusion to a brilliant work.

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Vice-President, RVW Society

(www.rvwsociety.com)

Author of *Toward the Sun Rising*:

Ralph Vaughan Williams Remembered,

Albion Music Ltd, 2018

The soprano **Carla Huhtanen** is in demand internationally for her soaring, translucent voice, winning stage presence, and diverse repertoire. Now living in the UK, she was last heard with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in Boulez's *Le Soleil des eaux* in Toronto and Vienna. She has recently made acclaimed appearances in Opera Atelier's production of *Armide* in Toronto and at Versailles, Bach's Mass in B minor with the Grand Philharmonic Choir, the Dora Award-winning production of *Rocking Horse Winner* with Tapestry New Opera Works, and Abigail Schulte-Richardson's *Alligator Pie*, also with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Elsewhere, she has sung Cunegonde (*Candide*) with the BBC Concert Orchestra in London and at the Valletta Festival in Malta, Lisetta (Rossini's *La gazzezza*) at Garsington Opera, Serpetta (Mozart's *La finta giardiniera*) at the Barbican Centre's Mostly Mozart series, and given

performances at Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Welsh National Opera, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in Lisbon, and with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Carla Huhtanen has participated in recordings of Herbert's *Babes in Toyland* with the London Sinfonietta and Vivaldi's *Griselda*, the JUNO Award-winning Mozart's *Magnificent Voyage*, and discs of sacred music and works by James Rolfe.

Described as having 'a voice hued like polished teak' by *The New York Times*, the Italian-Canadian mezzo-soprano **Emily D'Angelo** was born and raised in Toronto. She received her Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from the University of Toronto, and is a graduate of the Ensemble Studio at the Canadian Opera Company. A winner of the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Audition Finals, she was also a First Prize winner of the 2015 Canadian Opera Company Centre Stage Competition, the 2016 American National Opera Association Competition, the 2017 Gerda Lissner International Voice Competition, the 2017 Innsbruck International Cesti Competition for Baroque Opera, and the 2017 Canadian Opera Company Quilico Awards Competition; in October 2017 she won Second Prize at the 2017 Neue Stimmen International Competition. As a member of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan

Opera in 2017 – 18, Emily D'Angelo has appeared in concert performances of *Die Zauberflöte* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as the mezzo soloist in Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* with The Montclair Orchestra, and made her role début as Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) at The Glimmerglass Festival.

Lauded for his luminous projection, lyrical sensitivity, and brilliant coloratura, the American-Canadian tenor **Lawrence Wilford** is in high demand in concert, opera, and recital repertoire, and has performed in concert with the major symphony orchestras and early music groups in the US and Canada. He has recently appeared in performances of Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music* with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Mozart's Requiem with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and ProMusica Chamber Orchestra of Columbus, Bach's St John Passion with the Grand Philharmonic Choir, Handel's *Messiah* with the Phoenix Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, the Evangelist in the St Matthew Passion with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Métropolitain, and Toronto Bach

Consort, Bach's Mass in B minor with Music of the Baroque, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Mexico, Oregon Bach Festival, and Vancouver Chamber Choir, and Beethoven's Mass in C major and Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* with the Houston Symphony.

The British Columbia-born and America-based baritone **Tyler Duncan** enjoys international renown for bringing consummate musicianship, vocal beauty, and interpretative insight to recital, concert, and operatic literature. Educated at the University of British Columbia, Hochschule für Musik in Augsburg, and Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich, he is a founding member on the faculty of the Vancouver International Song Institute. His operatic roles have included Prince Yamadori (*Madama Butterfly*) and Fiorello (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) at The Metropolitan Opera, Friendly (*Flora*) and the Speaker (*Die Zauberflöte*) at the American Spoleto Festival, Dandini (*La cenerentola*) with Pacific Opera Victoria, Demetrius (Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) at the Princeton Festival, Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*) for Greensboro Opera, and roles in Lully's *Armide* with Houston's Mercury Baroque and Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and *King Arthur* with Early Music Vancouver. He has appeared in concert

with orchestras across Canada and the United States and beyond, in works such as Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Handel's *Messiah*, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, Mozart's Requiem, Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, and Bach's St Matthew Passion. Tyler Duncan is a popular guest at international festivals throughout North America and Europe, has won numerous prizes for his considerable gifts in the realm of art song, and can point to an expanding discography.

Hailed by critics for her 'exquisite solo work' (*The Globe and Mail*), 'luscious tone' (*Toronto Star*), and sensitive musicianship, **Sarah Jeffrey** is Principal Oboe of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A regular soloist with the Orchestra, she has also appeared as soloist with orchestras across Canada, performing works by Bach, Mozart, Vaughan Williams, Marcello, Haydn, and Marjan Mozetich. She is also an active recitalist and chamber musician, making frequent guest appearances with the Amici Chamber Ensemble, ARC Ensemble, and Trio Arkel. A devoted performer of new music, she has commissioned several chamber works, including Chaconne for Oboe, Horn, and Piano by Erik Ross, and Rhapsody by Ronald Royer.

She is a recipient of the Ontario Arts Council's Chalmers Award for Creativity and Excellence in the Arts. A passionate and devoted teacher, she is on the faculty of The Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory and of the University of Toronto, and spends her summers at the Orford Arts Centre and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. Sarah Jeffrey can be heard discussing the finer points of the oboe on CBC radio, both as a performer and as a guest on several podcasts.

Since joining the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 2004 as Principal Viola, **Teng Li** has established herself internationally as a diverse and dynamic performer. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, she has won numerous international competitions and currently serves on the faculty of the University of Toronto and The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists at The Royal Conservatory; she is also Artistic Director of the Morningside Music Bridge International Festival, a world-class training programme for young professionals. She has performed with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Münchener Kammerorchester, Shanghai Opera Orchestra, Canadian Sinfonietta, and Esprit Orchestra, among many others, her performances broadcast on CBC Radio 2, Classical 96.3 FM (Toronto), National Public Radio, WQXR

(New York), WHYY (Pennsylvania), WFMT (Chicago), and Bayerischer Rundfunk (Munich). An active recitalist and chamber musician, currently a member of Trio Arkel, she has participated in the Marlboro, Santa Fe, Mostly Mozart, Music from Angel Fire, Rome, and Moritzburg (Germany) festivals, as well as the Rising Stars Festival in Caramoor. Her début album, entitled *1939*, was released in June 2015 to great acclaim. Teng Li plays on a 1703 Amati viola donated generously to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra by Dr William Waters.

The French-Canadian pianist **Louis Lortie** has attracted critical acclaim throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States, not least for exploring his interpretative voice across a broad repertoire rather than choosing to specialise in a particular style. Describing his playing as 'ever immaculate, ever imaginative', *The Times* identified a 'combination of total spontaneity and meditated ripeness that only great pianists have'. He studied in Montreal with Yvonne Hubert, a pupil of Alfred Cortot, in Vienna with the Beethoven specialist Dieter Weber, and subsequently with the Schnabel disciple Leon Fleisher. He made his debut with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra at the age of thirteen, and his first appearance with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra three years later led to an historic tour of Japan and the People's

Republic of China. In 1984 he won First Prize in the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition and was also a prize winner at the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition.

Louis Lortie has made more than thirty recordings for Chandos, covering a repertoire from Mozart to Stravinsky. His recording of Beethoven's *Eroica* Variations won an Edison Award; his disc of works by Schumann (including *Bunte Blätter*) and Brahms was judged one of the best CDs of the year by the magazine *BBC Music*; the same magazine named his complete recording of Chopin's *Études* one of '50 Recordings by Superlative Pianists'; his interpretation of Liszt's complete works for piano and orchestra was an Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*, as was his complete set of Beethoven's sonatas; and his complete recording of the *Années de pèlerinage* by Liszt was rated 'Outstanding' by *International Record Review*. His Chandos discography also includes works by Franck, Fauré, d'Indy, Ravel, Szymanowski, Prokofiev, Gershwin, Poulenc, Rachmaninoff, and Lutoslawski.

In 1992 Louis Lortie was named Officer of the Order of Canada, and received both the Order of Quebec and an honorary doctorate from Laval University. He has lived in Berlin since 1997 but also keeps homes in Italy and Canada.

The **Elmer Iseler Singers**, conducted by their Artistic Director, Lydia Adams, for the past twenty years, are now in their thirty-ninth season. This twenty-voice fully professional choral ensemble, founded by the late Dr Elmer Iseler in 1979, has built an enviable reputation throughout Canada, the United States, and internationally through concerts, broadcasts, and recordings, performing a repertoire that, while focussing on Canadian composers, spans 500 years. The Singers present a five-concert series in Toronto each season, and are featured at concerts, workshops, and festivals throughout Canada. Touring is a major component of their activities, two multi-city tours taken in the 2016/17 season – one to western Canada and one to Atlantic Canada. Annually, the group sponsors choral workshops through its GET MUSIC! Educational Outreach Initiative for secondary school conductors and choirs, concluding with a joint public performance. While the Elmer Iseler Singers received a 2014 National Choral Award, Lydia Adams was the Artist Recipient of the 2013 Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts. In 2017, the Singers were nominated in the 'Classical Album of the Year: Vocal or Choral Performance' category of the JUNO Awards.

Founded in 1922, the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra** is one of Canada's major cultural

institutions, recognised internationally. Peter Oundjian, now in his fourteenth season as its Music Director, leads the Orchestra with a commitment to innovative programming and audience engagement through a broad range of performances that showcase its exceptional talents along with a roster of acclaimed guest artists and conductors. The Orchestra also serves the larger community with TSOUNDCHECK, the original under-thirty-five ticket programme; the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra; and music education programmes that reach tens of thousands of students annually. Under Oundjian's leadership, the Orchestra has distinguished itself as an active supporter of new Canadian and international works, predominantly through its annual New Creations Festival. Since 2008, it has released eight recordings under its self-produced label, tsolive, and two recordings with Chandos Records. Over the past decade, the Orchestra has toured regions in Canada and the United States, including regular excursions to Northern Ontario and two sold-out appearances at Carnegie Hall. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra gave a notable performance at Reykjavik's new concert hall, Harpa, in 2014, the first of any North American orchestra, and its first-ever performances in Israel in 2017; in 2017 it also held a residency at the Prague Spring International Music Festival.

A dynamic presence in the conducting world, the Toronto-born **Peter Oundjian** is renowned for his probing musicality, collaborative spirit, and engaging personality. His appointment as Music Director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 2004 reinvigorated the Orchestra with numerous recordings, tours, and acclaimed innovative programming, all of which resulted in extensive audience growth, thereby significantly strengthening the ensemble's presence in the world. He recently led the Orchestra on a tour of Europe, which included a sold-out performance at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam and the first performance by a North American orchestra at the Harpa concert hall in Reykjavik. In 2017 he conducted the Orchestra's first-ever performances in Israel, which were followed by a residency at the Prague Spring International Music Festival. He was appointed Music Director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in 2012. Under his baton, the Orchestra has enjoyed several successful tours, including one to China, and has continued its relationship with Chandos Records. In 2015, to great critical and audience acclaim, he and the Orchestra opened the Edinburgh International Festival with the innovative Harmonium Project.

Few conductors bring such musicianship and engagement to the world's great podiums – from Berlin, Amsterdam, and Tel

Aviv to New York, Chicago, and Sydney. He has also appeared at some of the great annual gatherings of music and music lovers: from the BBC Proms and the Prague Spring Festival to the Edinburgh Festival and the Mozart Festival of The Philadelphia Orchestra, where he was Artistic Director from 2003 to 2005. Peter Oundjian was Principal Guest

Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra from 2006 to 2010 and Artistic Director of the Caramoor International Music Festival in New York between 1997 and 2007. Since 1981, he has been a visiting professor at the Yale School of Music, awarded the Sanford Medal for distinguished service to music by Yale University in 2013.

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Louis Lortie performing Vaughan Williams's Piano Concerto with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Peter Oundjian



Lawrence Wiliford



Tyler Duncan

Vaughan Williams:

Serenade to Music / Solokonzerte / Flos Campi

Serenade to Music

Im Frühjahr 1938 bekam Ursula Wood einen Anruf von Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958) mit der Nachricht, dass ihm Sir Henry Wood die Komposition eines Chorwerks zur Feier seines fünfzigjährigen Dirigentenjubiläums angetragen hatte. Genauer gesagt: "Er will etwas für sechzehn Sänger." Bei der Vorlage entschied sich Vaughan Williams schnell für die erste Szene aus dem V. Akt von *Der Kaufmann von Venedig* mit Jessica und Lorenzo. Diese romantische Episode aus der Feder seines geliebten Shakespeare, mit Zeilen wie "With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear, / And draw her home with music", war von persönlicher Relevanz: Vaughan Williams war am 31. März 1938 in eine leidenschaftliche Liebesbeziehung mit der siebenundzwanzigjährigen Ursula eingetreten. Diese erklärte später: "Ich glaube, er war damals ziemlich in mich verliebt; ich glaube, die *Serenade* wurde für mich geschrieben."

Mit Sicherheit gehört das Werk zu den hinreißendsten Kompositionen von Vaughan Williams. Er war es, der die inspirierte Idee hatte, den Text für die sechzehn

Stimmen solistisch zu setzen und unter Berücksichtigung der stimmlichen Qualitäten der einzelnen Sänger in Phrasierung und Farbe maßgeschneidert zu vertonen. In der Partitur wurden die Partien der Uraufführungssolisten mit deren Initialen gekennzeichnet. Obwohl sich Wood und Vaughan Williams auf die Besetzung der sechzehn Stimmen einigen konnten, gelang dies nicht ohne den Verzicht auf einige große Namen – eine wohl besonders herbe Enttäuschung für den Bassbariton Keith Falkner, der sowohl mit dem Dirigenten als auch dem Komponisten eng befreundet war.

Die ersten Proben erwiesen sich als emotionales Erlebnis. Lady Jessie Wood schrieb, dass "die Sänger so tief ergriffen waren, dass ihnen die Lippen den Dienst versagten". Die Sopranistin Isobel Baillie hatte, wie sie sich erinnerte,

die großartige Aufgabe, mit dem ersten der sechzehn solistischen Beiträge hervorzutreten; meine Phrase "of sweet harmony" war stark exponiert und stieg innerhalb von zwei Takten auf ein hohes A!

Die erfolgreiche Uraufführung fand am 5. Oktober 1938 in der Londoner Royal

Albert Hall statt, und der Komponist widmete das Werk

Sir Henry J. Wood zu seinem Jubiläum und in Anerkennung seiner Verdienste um die Musik.

Vaughan Williams ließ die Aufführung der *Serenade* in verschiedenen Besetzungen zu; die vorliegende Aufnahme hält sich an die Fassung für vier Solisten (S, A, T, B), Chor und Orchester. Die gedämpfte Orchestereinleitung für Harfe, Streicher, Klarinette und ein Violinsolo unter der Bezeichnung *Andante sostenuto* setzt einen angemessen euphorischen Ton. Holzbläser führen ein zweites, etwas lebhafteres Thema zum *tutti* gehaltenen Einsatz der Sänger: "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!" Nach ein paar weiteren Takten für die vereinten Sänger beflügelt sich eine Sopransolistin zu den Worten "sweet harmony" auf ein hohes A, worauf die anderen Solisten im Wechsel die beiden musikalischen Hauptgedanken ausarbeiten. Die erste von zwei *Fortissimo*-Passagen für das vollständige Vokalensemble ergibt sich bei "Such harmony is in immortal souls", die zweite folgt, nach einer Fanfare, mit "Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!" Die vorausgegangenen Melodien, einschließlich der Fanfare, werden wiederholt, bevor die Worte "Soft stillness and the night" das Ende des Werkes signalisieren und eine

Sopransolistin, das vollständige Ensemble und eine Solovioline noch einmal an diese Klänge süßer Harmonie erinnern.

Konzert für Oboe und Streicher a-Moll

Das reizvolle und doch unterbewertete Oboenkonzert wurde 1943/44 für Léon Goossens komponiert – zu einer Zeit, als fliegende Bomben über London und Südengland einfielen. Die 1943 uraufgeführte Fünfte Sinfonie von Vaughan Williams strahlt eine Ruhe und Abgeklärtheit aus, die den Menschen nach dem Leid von fast vier Kriegsjahren Hoffnung gegeben hatte. Etwas von dem visionären Wesen dieser Sinfonie ist auch im Oboenkonzert zu vernehmen, insbesondere in dem außergewöhnlichen *Lento*-Abschnitt des dritten Satzes.

Léon Goossens entstammte einer musikalisch begabten Familie und hatte vier Geschwister: den Dirigenten Eugene, den Hornisten Adolphe und die Harfenistinnen Marie und Sidonie. Er selbst inspirierte im Laufe seiner langen Karriere mehr als einhundert Kompositionen, wie etwa das Oboenquintett (1922) von Sir Arnold Bax. Als enger Freund von Vaughan Williams gab er am 30. September 1944 die Uraufführung des Oboenkonzerts mit dem Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra unter der Leitung von Sir Malcolm Sargent. Für ihn war es "ein Werk,

das die Oboe in all ihren Formen zeigte, vom flötenden Hirten bis zum brillanten Virtuosen".

Vaughan Williams schrieb die ersten beiden Sätze im Jahr 1943 und legte dann das Werk zur Seite, um seine Fünfte Sinfonie zu vollenden. Mit einem verworfenen Scherzo aus dieser Sinfonie vor Augen eröffnet er den ersten Satz mit einer pastoralen Rondo-Melodie in a-Moll. Der Solist spielt in diesem *Allegro moderato* fast durchgängig in einem figuralen, rhythmischen Tonfall – "merry-piping" – im Wechsel mit breiteren, kantablen Themen; eine dieser lyrischen Passagen schließt den Satz. Im kurzen zweiten Satz suggeriert das einleitende Menuett einen würdevollen Tanz aus dem achtzehnten Jahrhundert, der heiter mit *Pizzicato*-Streichern beginnt. Die damit verbundene Musette entfaltet sich über einem von der Oboe gespielten Bordun (oder Halteton) und vermittelt eine rustikale Atmosphäre. Das technisch herausfordernde Finale enthält auch die tiefste Musik, die an Themen früherer Sätze erinnert. Dieses Scherzo, das für den Solisten virtuos beginnt, hat zwei Trio-Abschnitte, deren erster einem breiten, lyrischen Walzer ähnelt, während der zweite *Doppio più lento* zu spielen ist, also im halben Tempo des vorhergehenden Abschnitts, worauf die Anweisung *Doppio più mosso* folgt. Vaughan Williams fragte Evelyn Barbirolli

einmal, warum es Oboisten mit diesem Satz so schwer haben, und sie verwies auf diese häufigen Tempowechsel. In der ergreifenden *Lento*-Passage erblickt Vaughan Williams nun jene lieblichen Berge oder vielleicht die elysischen Felder, "wo Hunger und Durst an lebendigen Wasserbrunnen gestillt werden". Es ist eine tiefbewegende Episode. Allzu schnell verblasst die Vision, und die Hirtenflöte führt das Werk auf überschwänglichere Weise seinem Ende zu, wo es auf einem hohen D *pianissimo* ausklingt.

Flos Campi

Vaughan Williams wies in seiner Programmnote für eine Aufführung von *Flos Campi* im Jahre 1927 darauf hin, dass der lateinische Titel, wortwörtlich "Blume des Feldes", nichts mit "Butterblumen und Gänseblümchen" zu tun habe, sondern es sei

das Äquivalent der Vulgata für die "Rose von Sharon" – "Ich bin die Rose von Sharon und die Lilie der Täler".

Die Vulgata ist die lateinische Übersetzung der neununddreißig Bücher der hebräischen Bibel aus dem späten vierten Jahrhundert, die Mitte des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts von der katholischen Kirche als offizielle lateinische Bibel übernommen wurde. Die Vulgata enthält das *Canticum Canticorum* oder Lied der Lieder, auch bekannt als das Hohelied Salomos, ein

altes Liebeslied, in dem ein Mann und eine Frau abwechselnd ihre Liebe besingen. Es ist die Frau, die sich in Kapitel II, Vers 1, selbst als "Lilie der Täler" bezeichnet. Einige Theologen haben in der sinnlichen und mystischen Sprache der Lieder eine Allegorie der Liebe zwischen Christus und seiner Kirche oder der Liebe zwischen Gott und seinem Volk gesehen. Vaughan Williams jedoch distanziert sich von all diesen Spekulationen und stellt fest, dass die Musik keine kirchliche Grundlage hat – für ihn ist es eine Zelebration der Liebe zwischen einem Mann und einer Frau.

Das Werk besteht aus sechs miteinander verbundenen Sätzen, die jeweils unter einem lateinischen Zitat stehen, mit einer später aus dem Hohelied Salomos hinzugefügten englischen Übersetzung. Vaughan Williams begann das Werk im Jahr 1924, und es wurde am 10. Oktober 1925 von Lionel Tertis (Bratsche) mit dem Queen's Hall Orchestra und einem Chor des Royal College of Music unter der Leitung von Sir Henry Wood uraufgeführt. Von den zurückhaltenden, lyrischen Eröffnungstakten fließt die Musik mit einem bemerkenswerten Gefühl von Ekstase und rhapsodischer Sehnsucht – es ist das sinnlichste aller Werke von Vaughan Williams. Das *cantabile* bezeichnete Bratschensolo in Teil 2 ist ausgesprochen schön; dabei soll der

wortlose Chor mit "halb geschlossenen Lippen" singen. Der instrumentale vierte Teil, ein Marsch mit orientalischen Anklängen, sorgt für den nötigen Kontrast. Insgesamt ist *Flos Campi* kontemplativ und zuweilen leidenschaftlich; die Dialoge zwischen der Solobratsche, dem wortlosen Chor und dem kleinen Orchester bringen das Begehren zum Ausdruck und dann mit dem Ende des fünften Teils Zufriedenheit und Erfüllung. Vor allem ist *Flos Campi*, wie Hubert Foss es ausdrückte, "eine exquisite Studie über reinen Klang".

Konzert für Klavier und Orchester C-Dur

Vaughan Williams schrieb:

Die ersten beiden Sätze dieses Konzerts wurden 1926 skizziert und der dritte Satz 1930. Das Werk ist Miss Harriet Cohen gewidmet.

Die Uraufführung fand am 1. Februar 1933 in der Queen's Hall London statt. Es spielten die Widmungsträgerin und das BBC Symphony Orchestra unter der Leitung von Adrian Boult. Harriet Cohen (1895 – 1967) bekannte:

Ich habe natürlich eine große Affinität zu dem Klavierkonzert, das Vaughan Williams für mich geschrieben hat. Es ist ein Werk, das ihm meiner Meinung nach den Weg zu seiner Vierten Sinfonie erschlossen hat ...

Vaughan Williams stellte die Pianistin vor eine schwierige technische Aufgabe, und

Harriet Cohen gab zu, dass ihre Finger "vor Nervosität fummelten". Sie fand die Fuge im dritten Satz "besonders beängstigend" – die streckenweise enormen Akkorde überschritten die Spannweite ihrer kleinen Hände. Nach einigen wenigen Aufführungen akzeptierte Vaughan Williams, dass Harriet das Werk nicht wieder spielen konnte, und ließ sich schließlich 1946 dazu bewegen, es für zwei Klaviere umzuschreiben. (Weitere Informationen über das Konzert für zwei Klaviere und Orchester enthält das Beiheft zu CHSA 5186.)

Ursula Vaughan Williams zufolge dachte der Komponist an Busonis Bach-Transkriptionen, als er sein Klavierkonzert schrieb. Dieser Einfluss macht sich am deutlichsten im einleitenden *Allegro moderato* bemerkbar, einer Toccata, die ihrer Bezeichnung in schnelllebiger Virtuosität gerecht wird. Die Überschwänglichkeit und die perkussive Behandlung des Klaviers überraschen vielleicht, wenn man Vaughan Williams nur in pastoraler Stimmung kennt. Nach einer Reihe von Blockakkorden für den Solisten fügt Vaughan Williams zumindest eine folkloristische Phrase für Holzbläser und dann Klavier hinzu, um einen Kontrast zu dem vorausgegangenen Drama zu schaffen. Ein virtuoser *Largamente*-Abschnitt führt zu einer kurzen *Cadenza* unter der Anweisung

senza misura und dann zum zweiten Satz, einer lyrischen *Romanza*. Vaughan Williams behält diese Bezeichnung vielen seiner am tiefsten empfundenen Passagen vor, wie etwa dem langsamen Satz seiner Fünften Sinfonie, und diese *Romanza* ist keine Ausnahme. Anfangs konzentriert sich die Musik auf eine einzelne Note, die über sanften Arpeggios gespielt wird; es folgt – zunächst für die Soloflöte – eine träumerische Melodie von schmelzender, verhaltener Schönheit, die das Herzstück des Konzerts bildet. Nach einem entrückten Höhepunkt kehrt die verhaltene Melodie in Passagen zurück, die an verworfene Abschnitte der Originalfassung von *A London Symphony* erinnern. Dann verweisen die Solo-Oboe und Bratschen auf das thematische Hauptmaterial des Finalsatzes. Die Blechbläser umreißen *fortissimo* das Fugenthema, das den dritten Satz eröffnet und vom Solisten rasch in vollem Umfang vorgestellt wird. Einem kraftvollen Höhepunkt folgt eine lange *Cadenza*, die zu den frenetischen Rhythmen des *Finale alla tedesca* im Stil eines deutschen Tanzes aus dem achtzehnten Jahrhundert überleitet. Eine weitere glitzernde *Cadenza* leitet den Satz zurück zum lyrischen Thema der *Romanza*. Schließlich wird in einem mit *Andante sostenuto* markierten Abschnitt das tänzerische Thema von *Pizzicato*-Streichern und mit ruhigen Klavierakkorden weich

wiederholt. Vaughan Williams fügte dem Werk dieses entspannte Ende an, als er es im Jahr 1946 für zwei Klaviere bearbeitete. Das Ergebnis ist ein ergreifender und überaus befriedigender Abschluss für ein glänzendes Werk.

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Verfasser des Buches *Toward the Sun Rising*:

Ralph Vaughan Williams Remembered

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Louis Lortie



Elmer Iseler Singers

Vaughan Williams:

Serenade to Music / Concertos / Flos Campi

Serenade to Music

Au printemps 1938, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958) appela Ursula Wood pour lui dire que Sir Henry Wood lui avait demandé de composer une œuvre chorale pour la célébration de son jubilé de chef d'orchestre, et il ajouta: "Il voudrait une pièce pour seize chanteurs." Vaughan Williams choisit sans tarder de s'inspirer du texte de l'Acte V, Scène 1 de *The Merchant of Venice* dont les protagonistes sont Jessica et Lorenzo. Cette scène romantique de son cher Shakespeare avec des phrases telles: "With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear, / And draw her home with music" (Pénètre des accents les plus mélodieux l'oreille de ta maîtresse, / Et entraîne-la en musique vers sa demeure) avait une pertinence personnelle: Vaughan Williams avait commencé, le 31 mars 1938, une histoire d'amour passionnée avec Ursula qui avait alors vingt-sept ans. Ursula dit plus tard: "Je pense qu'il était assez amoureux de moi à cette époque; je crois que la *Serenade* fut écrite pour moi".

Cette œuvre est sans aucun doute l'une des plus séduisantes de Vaughan Williams. Et ce fut Vaughan Williams qui eut la brillante

idée de mettre le texte en musique pour seize voix *solistes*, les qualités vocales de chacun des interprètes ciselant le phrasé et donnant leur coloris à chaque partie. Pour la création de la pièce, les initiales des chanteurs furent reprises dans la partition afin d'indiquer chacune des entrées. Wood et Vaughan Williams parvinrent à se mettre d'accord sur les noms des seize interprètes, mais il fallut renoncer à engager certains solistes de renom; le plus déçu fut sans doute le baryton-basse Keith Falkner, un ami proche du chef d'orchestre et du compositeur.

Les premières répétitions de la pièce s'avérèrent une expérience pleine d'émotion, comme le décrit Lady Jessie Wood: "les interprètes étaient tellement émus que leurs lèvres semblaient incapables d'articuler." La soprano Isobel Baillie dit qu'elle avait

la difficile tâche d'être la première des seize solistes à devoir chanter; ma phrase "of sweet harmony" était très délicate à interpréter et s'envolait vers un la aigu en deux mesures!

La création de l'œuvre eut lieu le 5 octobre 1938 au Royal Albert Hall à Londres et fut une réussite. Le compositeur dédia la pièce

à Sir Henry J. Wood à l'occasion de son jubilé,
avec ma profonde reconnaissance pour les
services qu'il a rendus à la musique.

Vaughan Williams autorisa que l'œuvre soit exécutée sous différentes formes; c'est la version pour quatre voix solos (S, A, T, B) avec chœur et orchestre qui est reprise sur ce CD. L'introduction orchestrale feutrée pour harpe, cordes, clarinette et un violon solo, annotée *Andante sostenuto*, crée un climat extatique approprié. Le second thème, emmené par les bois, est un peu plus animé, puis les voix font leur entrée, *tutti*, chantant "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!" (Que la lueur de la lune sommeille doucement sur la rive!). Après quelques mesures encore pour l'ensemble des chanteurs, la voix d'une soprano s'élève jusqu'au la aigu évoqué plus haut sur les mots "sweet harmony", et les autres solistes développent tour à tour les deux idées musicales principales. Le premier de deux passages *fortissimo* pour l'ensemble vocal complet est chanté sur les mots "Such harmony is in immortal souls" (Pareille harmonie est au cœur des âmes immortelles), et le second, qui suit une fanfare, sur "Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!" (Allons, éveillons Diane au son d'un hymne!). Les mélodies qui précèdent sont répétées, y compris la fanfare, et les mots "Soft stillness and the night" (Douce quiétude et la nuit)

marquent la fin de l'œuvre, avec une soprano solo, l'ensemble vocal et le violon solo recréant ces moments de douce harmonie.

Concerto en la mineur pour hautbois et cordes

Le Concerto pour hautbois et cordes, une œuvre superbe et souvent sous-estimée, fut composé pour Léon Goossens en 1943 – 1944, à une époque où Londres et le sud de l'Angleterre étaient la cible de bombes volantes. La Cinquième Symphonie de Vaughan Williams, créée en 1943, contient des pages tout en tranquillité et sérénité, qui avaient été comme une lueur d'espoir pour ceux qui traversaient ces presque quatre années de guerre. Et les accents visionnaires de cette symphonie resurgissent en filigrane dans le Concerto pour hautbois, particulièrement dans l'extraordinaire section *Lento* du troisième mouvement.

Léon était l'un des cinq enfants de la famille Goossens, une famille très douée pour la musique, puisqu'outre son frère, Eugene, devenu chef d'orchestre, il y avait ses sœurs Marie et Sidonie, toutes deux harpistes. Il inspira plus de 100 compositions au cours de sa carrière, comme le Quintette avec hautbois (1922) de Sir Arnold Bax. Ami proche de Vaughan Williams, il créa le Concerto pour hautbois, le 30 septembre 1944, avec le

Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra dirigé par Sir Malcolm Sargent. Léon Goossens dit que "Cette œuvre montre toutes les facettes du hautbois, du berger jouant du pipeau au brillant virtuose".

Vaughan Williams écrit les deux premiers mouvements en 1943, puis mit l'œuvre de côté pour achever sa Cinquième Symphonie. Utilisant comme source d'inspiration un mouvement de cette symphonie qu'il avait abandonné, un scherzo, il entame le premier mouvement avec une mélodie en forme de rondo pastoral en la mineur. Le soliste joue presque sans arrêt dans cet *Allegro moderato* dont l'écriture est ornementée, rythmique – "merry-piping" –, alternant avec des thèmes *cantabile* plus amples; c'est un de ces passages lyriques qui conclut le mouvement. Dans le bref deuxième mouvement, le Menuet introductif évoque une danse majestueuse du dix-huitième siècle, commençant de manière brillante avec des cordes *pizzicato*. La Musette qui suit contient un "bourdon" (ou "drone", soit une note tenue) jouée par le hautbois, évoquant l'atmosphère de la campagne. Le Finale, un réel défi technique, est aussi tout en profondeur, rappelant des thèmes entendus dans les mouvements qui précèdent. Ce Scherzo qui commence avec un épisode de virtuosité pour le soliste comporte deux sections en trio; la première ressemble à une ample valse lyrique tandis que la seconde

est annotée *Doppio più lento*, son tempo étant réduit de moitié par rapport à la section précédente. Il y a alors une annotation *Doppio più mosso*. Vaughan Williams demanda un jour à Evelyn Barbirolli pourquoi les hautboïstes trouvaient ce mouvement si difficile et elle incrimina ces fréquents changements de tempo. Un passage *Lento* évocateur suit alors, au cours duquel Vaughan Williams aperçoit ces Delectable Mountains (les "Montagnes délectables", évoquées dans *The Pilgrim's Progress* / "Le Voyage du pèlerin" de John Bunyan), ou peut-être les Champs Élysées, "where hunger and thirst are satisfied at living fountains of water" (où la faim et la soif sont apaisées aux sources vivantes). C'est un épisode émouvant. Très vite l'image s'évanouit et le pipeau du berger emporte l'œuvre vers sa conclusion en un style plus exubérant, bien qu'elle se referme sur un ré aigu *pianissimo*.

Flos Campi

Vaughan Williams indiqua dans sa note de programme pour une exécution de *Flos Campi* en 1927 que le titre latin, traduit par "Flower of the field", n'évoquaient pas "boutons d'or et pâquerettes", mais était

l'équivalent de la "Rose du Sarone" dans la Vulgate – "Je suis la Rose du Sarone, le lis des vallées".

La Vulgate est la traduction latine des trente-neuf livres de la Bible hébraïque, faite à la fin du quatrième siècle et adoptée par l'Église catholique en tant que Bible latine officielle au milieu du seizième siècle. Dans la Vulgate se trouve le *Canticum Canticorum* ou Cantiques des cantiques, connu aussi sous le nom de Cantique de Salomon, un ancien hymne d'amour chanté par deux amants. C'est la femme qui se décrit comme "le lis des vallées" dans le Chapitre II, vers 1. Certains commentateurs religieux ont vu dans le langage sensuel et mystique des Cantiques une allégorie de l'amour du Christ pour son Église, ou de Dieu pour son peuple. Vaughan Williams rejette toutefois cette hypothèse et affirme que la musique n'a aucune base religieuse – pour lui, il s'agit de la célébration de l'amour entre un homme et une femme.

L'œuvre est en six mouvements reliés entre eux, ayant chacun en guise d'en-tête une citation latine, à laquelle s'est ajoutée plus tard une traduction anglaise venant du Cantique de Salomon. L'œuvre, commencée en 1924 par Vaughan Williams, fut créée par Lionel Tertis (alto), le 10 octobre 1925, avec le Queen's Hall Orchestra et un chœur du Royal College of Music sous la direction de Sir Henry Wood. Dès les premières mesures lyriques et retenues, l'œuvre s'épanche dans un remarquable climat d'extase et d'aspiration

rhapsodique; c'est la plus sensuelle de toutes les œuvres de Vaughan Williams. Le solo *cantabile* à l'alto dans la section 2 est très beau, le chœur muet devant chanter avec "les lèvres à demi fermées". La quatrième section, instrumentale, est une marche aux connotations orientales qui forme un contraste bienvenu. Dans l'ensemble, *Flos Campi* est contemplatif, parfois passionné, les échanges entre l'alto solo, le chœur muet et le petit orchestre exprimant le désir et, à partir de la fin de la cinquième section, la satisfaction et l'accomplissement. Avant tout, *Flos Campi* est, comme Hubert Foss l'a dit, "Une délicieuse étude de sonorité pure".

Concerto en ut majeur pour piano et orchestre

Vaughan Williams écrivit:

Les deux premiers mouvements de ce Concerto furent esquissés en 1926, et le troisième en 1930. L'œuvre est dédiée à Miss Harriet Cohen.

Elle fut créée par Harriet Cohen au Queen's Hall à Londres, le 1er février 1933, avec le BBC Symphony Orchestra sous la direction d'Adrian Boult. Harriet Cohen (1895 – 1967) nous dit:

Je suis naturellement très attachée au Concerto pour piano que Vaughan Williams a écrit pour moi. C'est une œuvre qui à

mon sens ouvre la voie à sa Quatrième
Symphonie...

L'écriture de Vaughan Williams pour le piano dans cette œuvre représente un défi technique, et Harriet Cohen admit que ses doigts "tremblaient de nervosité". Elle trouvait que la fugue du troisième mouvement était "particulièrement effrayante" –, les intervalles des accords dépassant l'empan de ses petites mains. Après les quelques premières exécutions, Vaughan Williams accepta l'idée qu'il était difficile pour Harriet de jouer l'œuvre et il se décida finalement, en 1946, à la remanier pour deux pianos. (Pour plus d'informations sur le Concerto pour deux pianos et orchestre, voir CHSA 5186.)

Ursula Vaughan Williams précise que le compositeur avait à l'esprit, en écrivant son Concerto pour piano, les transcriptions que Busoni avait faites de Bach. Cette influence est particulièrement prononcée dans l'*Allegro moderato* introductif, une Toccata qui mérite cette étiquette en raison de l'accélération qui imprègne sa virtuosité. L'exubérance et la nature percussive de ces pages pour piano peuvent surprendre ceux qui connaissent Vaughan Williams en mode pastoral. Après une succession d'accords plaqués pour le soliste, Vaughan Williams ajoute quand même une phrase d'inspiration folklorique pour les bois, puis le piano, une idée qui contraste

avec le climat dramatique qui précède. Une section *Largamente* tout en virtuosité mène à une courte Cadenza, annotée *senza misura*, puis au deuxième mouvement, une Romanza lyrique. Vaughan Williams réserve cette description à de nombreux épisodes parmi les plus profonds, y compris le mouvement lent de sa Cinquième Symphonie, et cette Romanza ne fait pas exception. Initialement la musique est centrée sur une seule note jouée sur des arpèges délicats; suit alors une mélodie de rêve, d'une beauté sublime et discrète, initialement pour la flûte seule, qui forme le cœur du concerto. Après un climax extatique, la discrète mélodie réapparaît dans des passages qui rappellent certaines sections de la version originale de *A London Symphony*, qui avaient été écartées. Puis le hautbois solo et les altos font allusion au matériau thématique principal du mouvement final. Les cuivres, *fortissimo*, esquissent le thème de la fugue qui marque le début du troisième mouvement, bientôt présenté dans son intégralité par le soliste. Un puissant climax lui succède avant une longue Cadenza qui sert de lien avec les rythmes frénétiques du *Finale alla tedesca*, dont le style rappelle celui d'une danse allemande du dix-huitième siècle. Une autre Cadenza étincelante ramène le mouvement au thème lyrique de la Romanza. Finalement, dans une section

annotée *Andante sostenuto*, le sujet à l'allure de danse est joué en douceur par des cordes *pizzicato* avec de paisibles accords au piano. Vaughan Williams ajouta cet épisode final serein en 1946, lorsqu'il arrangeait le concerto pour deux pianos, et c'est pour cette œuvre brillante une conclusion émouvante et extrêmement réussie.

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Vice-président de la RVW Society
(www.rvwsociety.com)

Auteur de *Toward the Sun Rising*:
Ralph Vaughan Williams Remembered,
Albion Music Ltd, 2018

Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs



Soloists, chorus, and orchestra performing Vaughan Williams's 'Serenade to Music'

Serenade to Music

1 How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Here will we sit and let the sound of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb that thou
behold'st

But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress'
ear,
And draw her home with music.

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.
The reason is, your spirits are attentive –
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet
sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.

Music! hark!

It is your music of the house.
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.
Silence bestows that virtue on it.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awak'd.

Soft stillness and
the night

Become the touches of sweet harmony.

from *The Merchant of Venice*, Act V, Scene 1
by William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

Flos Campi

(5) 1

Sicut Liliū inter spinas, sic amica mea
inter filias... Fulcite me floribus, stipate me
malis: quia amore langueo.

Canticum Canticorum Salomonis 2: 2, 5

(6) 2

Iam enim hiems transiit, imber abiit, et
recessit. Flores apparuerunt in terra nostra,
tempus putationis advenit: vox turturis
audita est in terra nostra.

Canticum Canticorum Salomonis 2: 11, 12

(7) 3

...quaesivi quem diligit anima mea: quaesivi
illum, et non inveni... "Adiuro vos, filiae
Hierusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum,
ut nuntietis ei quia amore langueo"...
"Quo abiit dilectus tuus, O pulcherrima
mulierum? quo declinavit dilectus tuus, et
quaeremus eum tecum?"

Canticum Canticorum Salomonis 3: 1; 5: 8, 17

Flower of the Field

1

As the lily among thorns, so is my love
among the daughters... Stay me with
flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am
sick of [faint with] love.

The Song of Solomon 2: 2, 5

2

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and
gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the
time of the singing of birds is come, and the
voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

The Song of Solomon 2: 11, 12

3

I sought him whom my soul loveth... but I
found him not... 'I charge you, O daughters of
Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell
him, that I am sick of love'... 'Whither is thy
beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?
whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we
may seek him with thee.'

The Song of Solomon 3: 1; 6: 1, 8, 17

(8) 4

En lectulum Salomonis sexaginta fortes
ambiunt... omnes tenentes gladios, et ad
bella doctissimi.

Canticum Canticorum Salomonis 3: 7, 8

(9) 5

Revertere, revertere Sulamitis: Revertere,
revertere ut intueamur te... Quam pulchri
sunt gressus tui in calceamentis, filia
principis.

Canticum Canticorum Salomonis 6: 12; 7: 1

(10) 6

Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum.

Canticum Canticorum Salomonis 8: 6

4

Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; three
score valiant men are about it... They all hold
swords, being expert in war.

The Song of Solomon 3: 7, 8

5

Return, return, O Shulamite [female
protagonist in Song of Solomon]; return,
return that we may look upon thee... How
beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's
daughter.

The Song of Solomon 6: 13; 7: 1

6

Set me as a seal upon thine heart.

The Song of Solomon 8: 6

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Teng Li performing Vaughan Williams's 'Flos Campi' with the Elmer Iseler Singers, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Peter Oundjian

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)



- | | | | |
|-------|---|----------|--|
| 1 | Serenade to Music (1938)*
for Four Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra
Words by Shakespeare
(<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>) | 14:29 | |
| 2 - 4 | Concerto (1944)†
in A minor • in a-Moll • en la mineur
for Oboe and Strings | 20:06 | Carla Huhtanen soprano*
Emily D'Angelo mezzo-soprano*
Lawrence Wiliford tenor* |
| 5-10 | Flos Campi (1924 – 25)‡
(Flower of the Field)
Suite for Solo Viola, Small Chorus,
and Small Orchestra | 21:01 | Tyler Duncan baritone*
Sarah Jeffrey oboe†
Teng Li viola‡
Louis Lortie piano\$ |
| 11-13 | Concerto (1926 – 31)\$
in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur
for Piano and Orchestra | 26:42 | Elmer Iseler Singers*‡
Lydia Adams artistic director
Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Jonathan Crow concertmaster |
| | | TT 82:21 | Peter Oundjian |

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