

divine art

Thomas Pitfield
His Friends & Contemporaries
Music for Soprano, Recorder, Oboe, Strings & Harp



Thomas Pitfield: His Friends & Contemporaries

Part 1

Thomas Pitfield (1903-1999)

Divertimento, for oboe and string trio

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|------|
| 1. | I. Toccata | 2:22 |
| 2. | II. Pastorale | 4:34 |
| 3. | III. Intermezzo | 6:30 |
| 4. | IV. Finale | 4:41 |
- Richard Simpson (oboe), Benedict Holland (violin), Heather Wallington (viola), Jennifer Langridge (cello)*

John Joubert (1927-2019)

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 5. | Remember: Scena for soprano, recorder and string quartet, Op. 184 | 7:50 |
|----|--|------|
- Lesley-Jane Rogers (soprano), John Turner (recorder), Victoria String Quartet*

E. J. Moeran (1894-1950)

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 6. | Fantasy Quartet, for oboe and string trio | 14:19 |
|----|--|-------|
- Richard Simpson (oboe), Benedict Holland (violin), Heather Wallington (viola), Jennifer Langridge (cello)*

Ernst Hermann Meyer (1905-1988)

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 7. | Now, Voyager: Ode for voice and string quartet | 12:48 |
|----|---|-------|
- Lesley-Jane Rogers (soprano), Victoria String Quartet*

Thomas Pitfield, arr. John McCabe (1939-2015)

Three Nautical Sketches, for recorder and string quartet

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|------|
| 8. | I. Quodlibet | 1:55 |
| 9. | II. Meditation on Tom Bowling | 2:23 |
| 10. | III. The Keel Reel | 1:44 |
- John Turner (recorder), Victoria String Quartet*

Total playing time 59:42

Part 2

- Robin Walker (b.1953)
1. **Parrottry, for recorder and string quartet** 3:57
John Turner (recorder), Victoria String Quartet
- Jeremy Pike (b. 1955)
2. **Spring, for recorder, harp and string quartet** 4:32
John Turner (recorder), Lauren Scott (harp), Victoria String Quartet
- Three Short Songs by friends of Pitfield for soprano and recorder:**
- Nicholas Marshall (b.1942)
3. **To A Child Dancing in the Wind** (words by W. B. Yeats) 1:29
Lesley-Jane Rogers (soprano), John Turner (recorder)
- Anthony Gilbert (1934-2023)
4. **A Breath for Life** (words by “Anthonymus 2023”) 2:38
Lesley-Jane Rogers (soprano), John Turner (recorder)
- John Turner (b.1943)
5. **Spring** (words by William Blake) 1:44
Lesley-Jane Rogers (soprano), John Turner (recorder)
- Richard Pantcheff (b.1959)
- Spring Suite, for recorder and string quartet**
6. I. Bourrée 2:03
 7. II. Siciliano 2:41
 8. III. Air 2:48
 9. IV. Minuet 2:00
 10. V. Gigue 2:22
- John Turner (recorder), Victoria String Quartet*

Stuart Scott (b.1949)

Three Blake Songs

- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| 11. I. Ah! Sunflower | 1:46 |
| 12. II. The Lilly | 1:11 |
| 13. III. Infant Joy | 1:16 |
- Lesley-Jane Rogers (soprano), John Turner (recorder)*

Geoffrey Poole (b.1949)

Seasons of Mist, for recorder and string quintet

- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| 14. I. November Dawn | 3:37 |
| 15. II. Bonfire Night | 3:06 |
| 16. III. Autumn Leaves | 5:17 |
- John Turner (recorder), Victoria String Quartet, Alex Jones (double bass)*

Two Lullabies:

Thomas Pitfield

- | | |
|--|------|
| 17. Carol Lullaby, for soprano, recorder and harp | 1:43 |
|--|------|
- Lesley-Jane Rogers (soprano), John Turner (recorder), Lauren Scott (harp)*

Gordon Crosse (1937-2021)

- | | |
|--|------|
| 18. Lullaby (TBP his goodnight), for soprano, recorder and violin | 1:54 |
|--|------|
- Lesley-Jane Rogers (soprano), John Turner (recorder), Benedict Holland (violin)*

Christopher Cotton (b.1947)

- | | |
|---|------|
| 19. Overture for St. Paul's, for recorder, oboe and string quartet | 4:59 |
|---|------|
- John Turner (recorder), Richard Simpson (oboe), Victoria String Quartet*

Total playing time 52:30

Thomas Baron Pitfield (5 April 1903 – 11 November 1999)

Bolton-born Thomas Baron Pitfield (1903-1999) was a genuine Renaissance man, a prolific largely self-taught composer, much loved teacher, admired artist and engraver, sometime poet, writer, skilled furniture maker and enthusiastic ornithologist. In an earlier age he would have enjoyed celebrity as a gifted amateur 'all-rounder', but there was so much more to his life and work and much still to be discovered. During his long tenure as composition teacher at the Royal Manchester College of Music from 1947, he was responsible for nurturing the gifts of composers including John McCabe, David Ellis and the band specialist John Golland, who became a close personal friend. His work as both composer and teacher has been somewhat overshadowed by the other, modernist 'Manchester School', centred around his exact contemporary and Manchester colleague Richard Hall (1903 – 1982), whose pupils included two future Knights of the realm – Sir Harrison Birtwistle and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies – a Cambridge professor, Alexander Goehr, a world famous pianist in John Ogdon and the distinguished conductor/composer Elgar Howarth.

Where their music charted a new course in 20th century composition, Pitfield was content to occupy the middle ground, in music full of charm, wit and memorable inventiveness, as a current revival of interest in his music amply demonstrates. Tommy Pitfield was a modest man, shy and unassuming but immensely gifted and selflessly encouraging to all his pupils, as the selection of chamber and instrumental works by his friends, colleagues and contemporaries bears testimony.

Part 1

(1-4) Divertimento, for oboe and string trio

Thomas Pitfield (1903-1999)

Toccatina; Pastorale; Intermezzo; Finale

Leon Goossens admired the music of Thomas Pitfield, who composed this unpretentious yet inventive Divertimento in 1966 and 1967 for concerts to celebrate his seventieth birthday. The first performance was given by Goossens in Cambridge in 1968 with the Carter String Trio.

Pitfield prefaced the score with a few poetic lines, presumably written by himself:

*He pipes his pastoral way -
Now seventy summers gone
Down music's avenues
With avian revenues,
And every goose a swan.*

Pitfield had already composed *Rondo Lirico* for Goossens, and his recorded performance has been broadcast on many occasions. He also performed an oboe sonata, which Pitfield dedicated to another oboist Evelyn Rothwell, a friend and wife of Sir John Barbirolli. Apparently Goossens was jealous of this dedication and this Divertimento may have been composed to make amends! The composer provided a programme note in his typical understated style: "Toccatina - as its title suggests, it is short and very light in texture. Pastorale - built mainly on a slightly folkish tune, except that it is in sevens throughout. Intermezzo - an expressive major motif, which moves through transformations - inversions, and, finally, minor, though with an unrelated semple section between. Finale - a lively chattering kind of theme alternates with a lyrical one quoted from my *Rondo Lirico*, a previous work composed for Leon Goossens."

**(5) Remember: Scena for soprano, recorder and string quartet, Op. 184
John Joubert (1927-2019)**

The name John Joubert may be known to most as the writer of a Christmas carol - *Torches*, composed in 1951 when he was 24. He arrived in the UK from his native South Africa at the age of 19 to study at the Royal Academy of Music and had just started his first academic post at Hull University. Joubert went on to have a distinguished and productive career as a composer on a broad canvas and of classical forms: symphony (3), concerto (4), opera (5), oratorio/passion (4), plus a substantial body of choral, chamber and instrumental work. His was a substantial and highly personal language, born of his admiration for the great masters - Beethoven, Brahms, Bach - and from the 20th century Stravinsky, Shostakovich and Britten in particular. He also composed many songs, revealing a lyrical sensibility and love of literature.

This poignant setting of Rossetti's *Remember* was his last major work, composed as a tribute to the artistry of John Turner and his indefatigable support of generations of English composers, Pitfield among them. Joubert writes:

“Christina Rossetti’s Poem Remember is a sonnet in which the dying poet charges her still surviving loved one to remember her as she was in life rather than in her future state of ‘darkness and corruption’. The first twelve lines of the sonnet are organised into three quatrains with the concluding couplet summing up the poem’s central message. I have tried to preserve the poetic structure of the sonnet in the musical structure of my setting so that the first three quatrains are strophic in character with the second and third quatrains appearing as variants of the first. With the last two lines the mood changes to emphasise the theme of ‘forget and smile’ in contrast to the gloomier ‘remember and be sad’ when she has gone ‘into the silent land’. In commissioning the work from me John expressed the wish that it should be dedicated to his late mother, May Turner, herself an accomplished pianist and accompanist to her recorder-playing son. John’s choice of instrumentation also influenced my choice of text with the recorder representing the already half-disembodied voice of the dying speaker while the string quartet reflects the reality and presence of the living person she is addressing. I have given the completed work the subtitle of *Scena* to emphasise its dramatic character and exemplify its main theme – that of love.”

The first performance was given in Holy Trinity Church, Blythburgh, on 3rd October 2018 by Rachel Spiers (soprano), John Turner (recorder) and the Villiers Quartet. The work employs tenor, treble, descant and soprano recorders.

(6) Fantasy Quartet, for oboe and string trio
E. J. Moeran (1894-1950)

Thomas Pitfield knew Ernest John 'Jack' Moeran well. They shared a love of folk songs, whose content and style distinguishes their rather different styles. Whilst staying at the at New Inn at Rockland St. Mary (Norfolk) in 1946, E.J. Moeran composed one of his last major pieces, a Fantasy Quartet for oboe and string trio, following a request for an oboe work from the great oboist Leon Goossens (1897-1988), whose playing he and Pitfield greatly admired.

The work is built around the tune with which the oboe is announced. Moods and tempi follow an unpredictable course, from genial folksong inspiration to more strident, at times brusque volatility, with twenty-one tempo changes in the work This emotional rollercoaster is contained within an episodic 'phantasy' form devised by Walter Wilson Cobbett at the turn of the 20th century originally for chamber music competitions to encourage the rising generation of British composers. Out of that has emerged a substantial legacy of compact concert works designed to be programmed alongside the classics. Moeran's personal contribution comes at the end of a long line of composers who contributed to this particularly English concept, including Frank Bridge, Gustav Holst, Moeran's teacher John Ireland and Vaughan Williams.

(7) Now, Voyager: Ode for voice and string quartet
Ernst Hermann Meyer (1905-1988)

Ernst Meyer and Thomas Pitfield are near contemporaries but never met. Meyer was born in Berlin but emigrated to England in 1933 to escape the Nazi regime. However, they were both committed socialists in outlook. Pitfield's expression was typically quiet but determined. Meyer was public in his activities. Whilst in England, where he was befriended by fellow Communist Alan Bush, he lectured at Bedford College (London University) and became a Visiting Professor at Kings College Cambridge. He conducted the Labour Choral Union, and distinguished performers of his music included James Blades, Phil Cardew, Arnold Goldsbrough, Alan Bush, Sigmund

Nissel, Norbert Brainin, and Maria Lidka.

As a musicologist, he wrote a distinguished book on early English chamber music. Whilst in this country he also wrote what was probably the first British concert work for the recorder, a short *Fantasia* for solo recorder, composed for and performed by the recorder player Edgar Hunt. Other works written in England include a clarinet quintet, songs to English texts, and much film music.

He returned to Germany via Switzerland in 1948, where his career flourished. He climbed high in the musical world in East Germany, espousing both in his music and his career Marxist-Leninist ideals. *Now, Voyager*, written in Switzerland in 1946, was his only substantial serious piece published in England, under the Cramer imprint (1947). A powerfully elegiac setting of words by Walt Whitman (?and others), it was written for the Rationalist Press Association Ltd., and first performed at the Conway Hall, London, on October 10th 1946, in a memorial service for Charles A. Watts.

(8-10) Three Nautical Sketches, for recorder and string quartet

Thomas Pitfield, arr. John McCabe (1939-2015)

Quodlibet; Meditation on Tom Bowling; The Keel Reel

The original version of these Sketches, with piano, was first performed on 14 October 1982 in the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, in a programme of “sea music”, by John Turner and Alan Cuckston. A version with string orchestra has been recorded with the Royal Ballet Sinfonia (Naxos 8.572503). In 2003 this version with string quartet was made by Pitfield’s pupil John McCabe as a contribution to celebrations of Pitfield’s centenary year, “The Pitfield Orbit”. The first performance was given at the Royal Northern College of Music on 19 November 2003 by John Turner with the Camerata Ensemble.

All three movements quote extensively from sea shanties. The first is a quodlibet on “The Three Mariners” and “Donkey Riding”. The second is a meditation on the well-known tune of “Tom Bowling”, and the finale translates the Northumbrian folk tune “The Keel Row” into a wild “Keel Reel.”

Part 2

(1) Parrottry, for recorder and string quartet

Robin Walker (born 1953)

Born in York, Robin Walker was Head Chorister at York Minster, and attended schools attached to the Minster for ten years. He continued his musical studies at Durham University and the Royal College of Music in London. Having continued in a university setting as a music lecturer in London and Manchester, he left academia in 1987 in order, as he describes, “to investigate the instinctual basis of musical tradition, unhindered by the intellect and its secular mythology”.

The title *Parrottry* is a characteristic play on words, as the composer explains. “The dictionary definition of Parrottry (one 't') is, "servile imitation and repetition", which description could never be applied to the work of the composer Ian Parrott (1916-2012) - for whose ninetieth birthday I wrote this tribute - but which the present piece comes perilously close to illustrating. How much repetition is too much? Literal repetition rapidly wears thin (*vide* Minimalism), but varied repetition is the essence of extended symphonic composition. The instruments play out a mixture of the two until - to avoid things getting out of hand, and the likely onset of parrottry - it is time, as it were, to place a cloth over the parrot's cage.”

The work was first performed at the Tenby Arts Festival on 23rd September 2006 by John Turner and the Manchester Camerata Ensemble.

(2) Spring, for recorder, harp and string quartet

Jeremy Pike (born 1955)

A student at various times of eminent composer-teachers Bryan Kelly, Lennox Berkeley, Gordon Crosse, Paul Patterson, and Henryk Gorecki, Jeremy Pike has followed a similar path as composer, teacher and pianist. He directed the electro-acoustic music studios at the Royal Academy of Music and the University of Warwick and is now Head of Composition at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. His extensive list of compositions includes orchestral, vocal and instrumental music, among them six string quartets and a number of works composed for his daughter, violinist Jennifer Pike.

Spring was composed to celebrate the eightieth birthday of John Turner. The composer tells us that “the letters contained in John’s name are used to create a theme that reflects the various sounds of the season. The music alludes to the conflicting emotions stirred in the months of March and April.” It was first performed in St. Paul’s Church, Heaton Moor, on 1st April 2023, by John Turner with the Victoria String Quartet and Flora White (harp).

Three Short Songs by friends of Pitfield, for soprano and recorder:

(3) To a Child Dancing in the Wind (words by W. B. Yeats)

Nicholas Marshall (born 1942)

(4) A breath for Life (words by “Anthony mus 2023”)

Anthony Gilbert (1934-2023)

(5) Spring (words by Blake)

John Turner (born 1943)

The songs by Nicholas Marshall and Anthony Gilbert (his final work) were both first performed by the present artists in St. Paul’s Church, Heaton Moor, Stockport, on 1st April 2023. That by John Turner (composed in 1968 but lightly revised in 2023) is here receiving its first performance. Nicholas Marshall wrote: When planning the concert John asked me if I would like to write a very short piece for voice and recorder. Yeats’ poem came to mind, which seemed particularly well suited to this combination - and it lasts just under one minute! Anthony Gilbert wrote: Ever since 1959, when on joining the staff of Schott & Co. Ltd London I first heard the daily sound of the recorder, played by a colleague as she tested whole batches of the instrument before their export, the instrument has fascinated me. I had a few ‘after-hours’ lessons on the instrument with the distinguished Edgar Hunt, and since then have played it occasionally, and written quite a few recorder pieces for John Turner, including a concerto issued on the NMC label. This song is a brief but intense eightieth-birthday tribute to John, who came into my life in 1973 as part of the team running the contemporary group New Music Forum, which I was invited to direct shortly after arrival in the North. He brought breath into my life in two personal ways whilst still working as a solicitor, and then again as a recorderist by expanding the breadth of my musical horizons by means of a range of commissions for the instrument. This little song is a setting of my own words celebrating the importance of ‘breath’, not just to keep one alive but also to enhance the lives

of others who hear John's breath when converted into the clear, beautiful sound of recorder of whatever pitch range, or indeed into the equally entrancing sound of a singing voice; and for me its metaphorical importance for bringing in, thanks to John, a far wider range of musical experiences. I've chosen the tenor recorder for its singing quality, and the way it matches the sound of Lesley-Jane Rogers's warm, clear voice.

(6-10) Spring Suite, for recorder and string quartet

Richard Pantcheff (born 1959)

Bourée; Siciliano; Air; Minuet; Gigue

Richard Pantcheff has established an international platform particularly for his evocative, beautifully voiced choral and liturgical music, which is performed and broadcast from college chapels, cathedrals and concert halls in the UK across Europe, in the USA and South Africa. He studied music at Christ Church, Oxford, under Simon Preston and Francis Grier, and was mentored in composition by Benjamin Britten in the last years of Britten's life. His orchestral and instrumental music is notable for its clarity of line, rhythm and often polytonal language.

Following on from their first collaboration in March 2022 (a short work entitled '*...the space immense of the azure sky...*' for recorder and pianoforte), John Turner suggested that he might write a more substantial work for recorder, which could be performed with pianoforte or string quartet accompaniment. Unlike his earlier compositions bearing the title Suite, as a collection of movements, the new *Spring Suite* is designed to embody the rhythmic variety and demeanour of early English and European dance suites, conveying an impression of lightness, space, and movement, as well as opportunities for instrumental virtuosity from the soloist and strings. The dance-rhythms are clearly identifiable, even though the composer has employed a polytonal language. The work was written in July 2022.

(11-13) Three Blake Songs

Stuart Scott (born 1949)

Ah, Sunflower; The Lilly; Infant Joy

Another three short songs by a close friend of Pitfield, who like Nicholas Marshall, was a pupil of Lennox Berkeley, as well as being a flautist and musicologist.

(14-16) Season of Mists, for recorder and string quintet

Geoffrey Poole (born 1949)

November Dawn; Bonfire Night; Autumn Leaves

Geoffrey Poole's fascination with the process of composition emerged in his teens through improvisation at the piano. Studying with Alexander Goehr and Jonathan Harvey at Southampton University broadened his creative outlook and sharpened his 'tools'. His broadly based compositional activity has always gone alongside university teaching, first at Leeds, then Manchester, Nairobi and Bristol. *Season of Mists* is among the most recent of a century of compositions, which include many major commissions from the UK and further afield.,

The composer wrote as follows: "Poets from Basho to Keats have dwelt on the peculiar beauties of Autumn. The poignancy of transience blended with the promise of renewal, seems to become more intense with each passing year. During 2021 the repressions of the Covid era had entirely silenced my musical imagination – until November 9th when, for several days, waking in the early hours, I was presented with clear musical ideas that I scrambled to notate before they evaporated. The unconscious mind had managed what the conscious mind could not – imaging the new piece that my resourceful friend John Turner had invited for his planned concert and recording."

The first performance was given in St. Paul's Church, Heaton Moor, on 31st March 2023, by John Turner with the Victoria String Quartet and Leon Bosch.

Two Lullabies:

(17) Carol-Lullaby, for soprano, recorder and harp

Thomas Pitfield

Pitfield wrote both words and music of this short and touching song as a present to John Turner. The manuscript is undated.

(18) Lullaby (TBP his goodnight), for soprano, recorder and violin

Gordon Crosse (1937 -2021)

Originally composed as part of the incidental music for Michael Elliott's Manchester Royal Exchange production of the Greek tragedy *Philoctetes*, by Sophocles, this piece was adapted for the present forces by the composer for Thomas Pitfield's eightieth birthday album, published by Forsyths.

(19) Overture for St. Paul's, for recorder, oboe and string quartet

Christopher Cotton (born 1947)

Christopher Cotton was born in Sale, and is a graduate of the Royal Manchester College of Music, where he studied under Clifton Helliwell. As a pianist, he has performed for many years with solo singers, instrumentalists and choirs, a number of which he has also conducted. He is also a regular church organist. A number of his compositions have been published. *Overture for St. Paul's* was written for the launch of the Stockport Heatons concert series "Music on the Moor", instigated and directed by John Turner.

Notes by Paul Hindmarsh.

Texts

NOW, VOYAGER (Walt Whitman)

Now, voyager, depart,
Much for thee is still in store.
Often enough hast thou adventured o'er the
seas,
Cautiously cruising, studying the charts,
Duly to port and hawser's tie returning.
But now obey thy cherished secret wish,
Embrace thy friends, leave all in order
To port and hawser's tie no more returning!
Depart upon thy endless cruise.
Ah, to me the dead mar not.
They fit well in nature;
They fit very well in the landscape
Under the trees and the grass,
And along the edge of the sky
In the horizon's far margin.
Nor do I forget you, departed, nor in my lost
ones
But most in the open air,
As now when my soul is rapt and at peace,
Like pleasing phantoms,
Your memories rising glide silently by me.
Nor yield we mournfully, majestic brothers,
We who have grandly filled our time
With Nature's calm content and tacit huge
delight.
We welcome what we wrought for the past,
And leave the field for them.

REMEMBER (Christina Rossetti)

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you plann'd:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

TO A CHILD DANCING IN THE WIND (W. B. Yeats)

Dance there upon the shore;
What need have you to care
For wind or water's roar?
And tumble out your hair
That the salt drops have wet;
Being young you have not known
The fool's triumph, nor yet
Love lost as soon as won,
Nor the best labourer dead
And all the sheaves to bind.
What need have you to dread
The monstrous crying of wind?

A BREATH FOR LIFE (“Anonymus”)

Take in thine own breath,
Deep into both lungs, for it
Enlivens thy whole body
From face to feet, with a
Deepest sense of life.

Now take in the *sound of another’s* breath,
Deep into both ears, whether it
Comes via tongue and teeth, or
Tube, for it
Enlivens thy whole mind, from
Thoughts to dreams, with a
Deepest sense of wonder, and of
Ecstasy, for life.

SPRING (William Blake)

Sound the flute!
Now it’s mute.
Birds delight
Day and Night;
Nightingale
In the dale,
Lark in sky,
Merrily,
Merrily, merrily to welcome in the year.

Little boy
Full of joy;
Little girl,
Sweet and small;
Cock does crow,

So do you;
Merry voice,
Infant noise,
Merrily, merrily, to welcome in the year.

Little lamb,
Here I am;
Come and lick
My white neck;
Let me pull
Your soft wool;
Let me kiss
Your soft face:
Merrily, merrily, we welcome in the year.

AH! SUNFLOWER (William Blake)

Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime,
Where the traveller’s journey is done;

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

THE LILY (William Blake)

The modest Rose puts forth a thorn,
The humble sheep a threat’ning horn;
While the Lily shall in love delight,
Nor a thorn, nor a threat, stain her beauty
bright.

INFANT JOY (William Blake)

"I have no name:
I am but two days old."
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name."
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty Joy!
Sweet Joy, but two days old.
Sweet Joy I call thee
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee!

LULLABY (TBP: HIS GOODNIGHT)

Come sleep, Oh Lord of healing, come we pray.

CAROL-LULLABY (Thomas Pitfield)

Lullaby, lullaby
Angels in the starry air
With their voices velvet soft
Sing for you a wordless prayer.

Over your coroned head,
With their folded wings they bend,
Cherubim and seraphim
At your call attend.

And their tender hosannas echo
Through the ages far and high,
In antiphony unending.
Lullaby, lullaby.

Biographies

LESLEY-JANE ROGERS is heralded as one of the most versatile soloists of today, and is renowned for her captivating and evocative performances. An established concert soloist, she specialises in oratorio, “vocal concertos”, solo cantatas, recitals and contemporary music, and has a vast repertoire of several hundred works. She studied singing and piano at the **Royal Academy of Music** where she won several prizes, and has since been made an ‘Associate’ in recognition of her eminence in the profession. A keen exponent of contemporary music, Lesley-Jane has given nearly 200 premières, and is honoured to be the dedicatee of various songs and song cycles. Large-scale works include Joseph Phibbs’ *Tenebrae*, and Michael Finnis’s *Favourite Poets*, but it is perhaps for her numerous chamber music recitals that Lesley-Jane is best known, particularly with the recorder player John Turner.

An engaging performer, Lesley-Jane has worked with many leading conductors and orchestras, and her discography numbers some 40 CDs, including several new-music releases for the specialist label Metier, as well as discs for the Divine Art, Prima Facie, Toccata Classics, Campion/Cameo, Hyperion and Carma labels.

JOHN TURNER is one of the leading recorder players of today. Born in Stockport, he was Senior Scholar in Law at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge before pursuing a legal career, acting for many distinguished musicians and musical organisations (including the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain), alongside his many musical activities. These included numerous appearances and recordings with David Munrow’s Early Music Consort of London, the Academy of Ancient Music, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and the English Baroque Soloists. He now devotes his time to playing, writing, reviewing, publishing, composing and generally energising. He has played as recorder soloist with the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Manchester Camerata, the English Baroque Soloists, the English Chamber Orchestra, and many other leading orchestras and ensembles. Concertos and works with orchestra have been written for him by Gordon Crosse, Anthony Gilbert, Peter Hope, Kenneth Leighton, Elis

Pehkonen, Alan Bullard, John Casken, and many other distinguished composers. His recordings include no less than five sets of the Brandenburg Concertos, but lately he has made numerous acclaimed recordings of the recorder's contemporary concerto and chamber music repertoire, including four solo concerto discs, all of which have received critical acclaim. Recent recordings include music by the novelist and composer (and fellow Mancunian) Anthony Burgess, Peter Hope, Jim Parker, Roy Heaton Smith, and also a disc in memory of Alfred Deller (a good friend) with James Bowman and Robin Blaze, showcasing music by Blow, Handel, Tippett and Fricker. In all, he has given the first performances of over 500 works for the recorder, with works by many non-British composers, including Leonard Bernstein, Ned Rorem, Peter Sculthorpe, Douglas Lilburn, Petr Eben and Ruth Zechlin. Many of the works he has premiered have now entered the standard repertoire, and these and his own recorder compositions are regularly set for festivals and examinations. He founded the periodical *Manchester Sounds*, in response to the perceived threat to music libraries in Great Britain. In addition he was responsible for the rediscovery of several works for his instrument, including the Rawsthorne Recorder Suite, Antony Hopkins' Pastiche Suite, Herbert Murrill's Sarabande, the Handel F Major Trio Sonata and John Parry's Nightingale Rondo (the only substantial known British nineteenth century work for a fipple flute). He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Northern College of Music in 2002 for his services to British music, and is a Visiting Distinguished Scholar of Manchester University.

RICHARD SIMPSON studied at The Royal College of Music with the late Sydney Sutcliffe. Upon leaving, he was appointed by Pierre Boulez to the position of sub-principal oboe with the BBC Symphony Orchestra – and one year later was invited to join the Hallé Orchestra as Principal Oboe. In his eighteen years with that orchestra he had the opportunity of performing concerti by Mozart, Strauss, Vaughan Williams, Martinu and Hummel to critical acclaim. In 1991 he returned to the BBC Symphony Orchestra, this time as Principal Oboe, a position he held for 27 years. He is now enjoying being involved in various chamber music activities and solo work. He was a professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama for 25 years. His recordings include the oboe music of Thomas Pitfield, Benjamin Britten's *Metamorphoses after Ovid*, the Rubbra oboe sonata, and Sir John Manduell's *Double Concerto for oboe and cor anglais*.

The VICTORIA STRING QUARTET

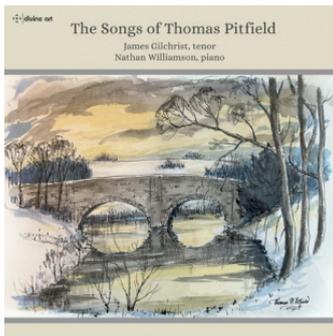
In demand since its formation in 2017, the Victoria String Quartet has gone on to perform for chamber music societies and festivals throughout the UK and has been hailed as an ensemble 'brim full with pedigree and wide experience' (Buxton International Festival), performing at venues including Kendal (Lake District Summer Music), Pinner and Buxton Festivals, London, Manchester (Bridgewater, RNCM and Stoller halls), north Norfolk, north and west Wales and the Scottish Borders. In addition to gathering return invitations to chamber music societies and festivals, the Victorias are curating an ongoing programme of creative projects: a collection of short chamber works about (and by) Sir John Manduell (Divine Arts), a recording of the Weber, Cooke and Brahms clarinet quintets, and a CD of string chamber music by Richard Pantcheff (to be released 2024 Prima Facie), with BBC Radio 3 presenter Tom McKinney. A recent autumn residency at Marchmont House in the Scottish Borders saw the Quartet performing and recording a collection of string chamber works by Scottish composer Helen Leach. Enthusiasts for lost and undiscovered works, in 2022 the Quartet gave the first public performances of Elgar's Six Fragments for String Quartet and are looking forward to recording them in 2024. Since its inception, the Quartet has also enjoyed sharing the concert platform with eminent colleagues such as the quartet, Quatuor Danel, Peter Hewitt and Irina Andrievsky (piano), Leo Poplewell (cello), Richard Simpson (oboe) and John Bradbury, (Clarinet).

ALEXANDER JONES is Assistant Principal of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and a member of O/Modern. Born in Manchester, Alexander began learning the double bass with Gethin Griffith at the age of seven, and has since studied with Ronan Dunne, Tom Goodman, Graham Mitchell, Chi-chi Nwanoku CBE, Dominic Seldis, and has partaken in masterclasses with Edicson Ruiz, Sławomir Grenda, Jiří Hudec and Božo Paradžik. He undertook his undergraduate studies at the University of Cambridge and his postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music, where he was generously supported by the Christopher Hogwood Scholarship and a Munster Trust Derek Butler Award. Alexander has appeared as Guest Principal of the Philharmonia, BBC Scottish Symphony, Ulster and Royal Scottish National orchestras, and, a keen advocate for historically informed performance, has also appeared as Guest Principal with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Dunedin Consort, and The English Concert. As a soloist, he has performed at the Grafenegg Festival, recorded for Divine Art, and has premiered works by David Matthews, Robin

Stevens, Jane Wells, and Robin Holloway. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with a number of ensembles and has performed at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, and the BBC Proms. Away from the double bass, Alexander is a keen composer and academic. Following his success as BBC Young Composer of the Year in 2016, his music has been performed at the BBC Proms by members of the Aurora and BBC Symphony orchestras, and broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

LAUREN SCOTT fell in love with the harp aged four after seeing a historic lever harp in a museum in Australia. After two years of pestering her parents she began harp lessons aged six when her family moved back to England. Lauren studied harp at Trinity College of Music and has a busy portfolio musical career. As an established and in demand freelance player, she plays guest principal harp with many of the UK's leading orchestras and chamber groups as well as pursuing her own projects. Her harp playing has led her to performing in venues across the UK from the Royal Albert Hall to West End shows to commercial recordings to live broadcasts on radio and TV. A lifelong passion for the lever harp has led her to composing music that is influenced by her diverse experiences in the music industry. Her music has received praise from harpists and harp societies worldwide, used as set pieces on grade syllabuses and has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Scala Radio and included on BBC Introducing & Apple Music playlists.

Also available from Divine Art

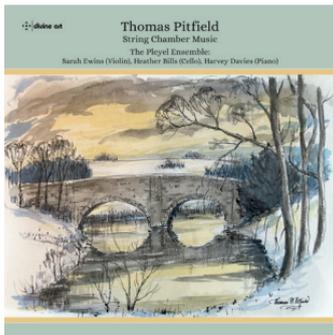


The Songs of Thomas Pitfield

The collection stands as a testament to Pitfield's legacy with evocative interpretations of his songs by acclaimed tenor James Gilchrist, accompanied by the virtuosic pianist Nathan Williamson.

James Gilchrist, tenor
Nathan Williamson, piano

DDX 21119



Thomas Pitfield: String Chamber Music

A remarkable collection of 5 compositions for strings by Thomas Pitfield, performed with thoughtful skill by members of the Pleyel Ensemble.

DDX 21137

Recorded at St. Paul's Church, Heaton Moor, Stockport 22nd/23rd June and 11th October 2023
Engineered and produced by Phil Hardman

Pitfield: Divertimento published by Kevin Mayhew
Joubert: Remember, Op. 184 published by Novello
Moeran: Fantasy Quartet published by Novello
Meyer: Now Voyager published by Cramer
Pitfield: 3 Nautical Sketches published by Piper Publications
Turner: Spring published by Foryths
All other works Copyright Control

Funded by the Pitfield Trust.

Cover and Booklet design: James Cardell-Oliver, Divine Art

Cover painting - Weaver Bridge at Church Minshull, Cheshire, from the garden of Weaver Cottage, by Thomas Pitfield. Reproduced by kind permission John Turner.

© & © 2024 Divine Art Ltd

All text, images and devices are copyright, all rights reserved.

DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP



Over 700 titles, with full track details, reviews, artist profiles and audio samples, can be browsed on our website. Available at any good dealer or direct from our online store in CD, 24-bit HD, FLAC and MP3 digital download formats.

Divine Art Ltd. email: sales@divineartrecords.com

www.divineartrecords.com

find us on facebook, youtube, twitter & instagram

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1, Upper James Street, London, W1R 3HG.

