

Music by **William Walton** (1902-83) and **Constant Lambert** (1905-51)

SOMMCD 0614

James Geer^a tenorAndrew West^b, Ronald Woodley^c piano**CONSTANT LAMBERT** *Trois pièces nègres pour les touches blanches* for piano duet^{bc}

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|---|---------------|------|
| 1 | I. Aubade | 2:33 |
| 2 | II. Siesta | 3:06 |
| 3 | III. Nocturne | 3:05 |

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|---|---------------------------------------|------|
| 4 | WALTON The Winds ^{ac} | 1:42 |
| 5 | WALTON Daphne ^{ac} | 2:53 |
| 6 | WALTON Tritons ^{ac} | 1:54 |

LAMBERT Four Poems by Li Po^{ac}

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|----|----------------------------|------|
| 7 | I. A Summer Day | 1:54 |
| 8 | II. Nocturne | 1:54 |
| 9 | III. With a Man of Leisure | 1:10 |
| 10 | IV. Lines | 3:00 |

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| 11 | WALTON Siesta for piano duet ^{bc} | 4:41 |
| 12 | WALTON Under the Greenwood Tree ^{ac} | 1:49 |
| 13 | WALTON arr. Christopher Palmer
<i>Beatriz's Song</i> ^{ac} | 2:47 |

LAMBERT Three Poems by Li Po^{ac}

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|----|---------------------------------|------|
| 14 | I. The Ruin of the Ku-Su Palace | 1:19 |
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| 15 | II. The Intruder | 1:14 |
| 16 | III. On the City Street | 1:49 |

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| 17 | LAMBERT The Long-Departed Lover ^{ac} | 3:26 |
|----|--|------|

WALTON arr. Constant Lambert*Façade Suite No.1* for piano duet^{bc}

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|----|----------------------|------|
| 18 | Polka | 1:24 |
| 19 | Valse | 3:27 |
| 20 | Swiss Jodelling Song | 2:32 |
| 21 | Tango – Pasodoblé | 2:00 |
| 22 | Tarantella Sevillana | 2:43 |

WALTON arr. Constant Lambert*Façade Suite No.2* for piano duet^{bc}

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|------|
| 23 | Fanfare | 0:39 |
| 24 | Scotch Rhapsody | 1:20 |
| 25 | Country Dance | 2:14 |
| 26 | Noche Espagnola | 2:50 |
| 27 | Popular Song | 2:19 |
| 28 | Fox-Trot | 1:57 |

Total duration: 63:56

William Walton & Constant Lambert



Recorded at Potton Hall, Suffolk on August 29-September 1, 2019

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Georges Barbier (1882-1932). © Bridgeman Images

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After Constant Lambert's death at the age of 45 in 1951, William Walton was effusive in his warmth towards his lifetime musical colleague, describing him as "one of my closest friends for nearly 30 years". Lambert, a remarkable, brilliant and multi-talented musician, writer and critic, is still astonishingly little regarded today, especially bearing in mind the white heat with which his star shone among his contemporaries in the first half of the 20th century. Respected by Ninette de Valois as the finest ballet conductor the country had ever seen, and by the economist John Maynard Keynes as one of the most brilliant men he had met, Lambert is still generally and perversely viewed as a one-trick pony: even the superb and wide-ranging biography of the composer by Stephen Lloyd, published in 2014, has to confront the inevitable in its subtitle: *Constant Lambert: Beyond The Rio Grande*. That said, it must be admitted that as a composer Lambert was patchy. At his best he can evoke a compelling *joie de vivre* with all the globally enriched harmonic and rhythmic resources at the disposal of an open-spirited musician of the inter-war years. He can also draw on a deep intelligence of Western European traditions – especially pre-classical repertoires, Russia, and the French post-Satie generation – to create thoughtful, emotionally centred but unburdened music, such as we can hear on the present disc in his Li Po songs.

His *Trois pièces nègres pour les touches blanches*, for piano duet, provide a beautifully concise demonstration of these characteristics within their brief span of under 10 minutes. Dating from 1949 – late in Lambert's too-short life – the pieces were written for the duo sisters Mary and Geraldine Peppin, and first performed by them in a BBC Third Programme broadcast concert of contemporary music on

May 17 that year, alongside the large-scale serial work of Humphrey Searle, *Gold Coast Customs* (which involved Lambert and Edith Sitwell as narrators), and works by Stravinsky and Wilfred Mellers. The title of the work may sit uncomfortably with us today, in spite of its historical currency: in this context "nègre" really encompasses Afro-Caribbean and Latin-American cultures, and Lambert is playing on the conceit that these 'black' pieces are composed entirely on the white keys of the piano.

The outer movements, especially, tap into the rhythms that had made *The Rio Grande* such a success 20 years previously (as well as, to more recent ears, connecting with Dave Brubeck and Arthur Benjamin in the final 5/4 *Nocturne*, marked "nonchalant, langoureux"), while the central *Siesta* seems to tip a (Panama?) hat towards Poulenc, and may reflect the fact that the work was written partly in Palermo, Sicily. We ought to acknowledge that some of the comments Lambert makes about the ethnic and racial contexts of jazz in his influential but contentious book *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline* (1934) do not entirely withstand the scrutiny of 21st-century criticism. Nonetheless, within this broadly jazz-inflected idiom, the *Trois pièces nègres* are something of a *tour de force* in their exploration of the potential of white-note-only harmonies, modes and textures, the self-imposed discipline seeming to release the imagination in ways that a lesser musical mind would have found simply too restrictive.

By a nice coincidence, the other short work for piano duet on this disc takes over its title from the middle movement of the *Trois pièces nègres*. Unlike Lambert's direct Sicilian connection, though, William Walton's eventual move to southern Italy was

many years in the future when he wrote his *Siesta*, originally for small orchestra, at the age of 24 in 1926. Arranged for piano duet by the composer himself in 1928, *Siesta* was originally dedicated to Stephen Tennant, the flamboyant and eccentric artist whose circle of “bright young things” and famously sybaritic country-house weekend parties had brought Walton and Lambert together in the company of the top echelon of artistic and aristocratic socialites of the age. Tennant himself said of Walton, “on the whole he was not very easy to talk to and had no conversational virtuosity; he was an Enigma, a Sphinx. He was devoted to me; & I to him”.

When the work was slightly revised many years later in the 1960s, the dedication was removed, though the reasons have never quite been explained. Described by Lambert as an “idyll”, *Siesta* is hardly ever performed today, in either its orchestral or duet form, or indeed as the *pas de deux* that was created in 1936 by Frederick Ashton for the Vic-Wells Ballet, with which Lambert was then energetically involved. The brief work is perhaps not quite as sultry and languorous as the title may imply. But its gently swaying, sarabande-like movement, with a more energetic middle section, is certainly infused with the clear light and open charm of Italy (so far removed from Walton’s dismal memories of his native Oldham) that had already bewitched the composer since his first visit to the country with the Sitwells in 1920, the year after being sent down from Oxford.

Lambert’s eight settings of poems by Li Po (701-62), remarkably for such a literary composer, form the sum total of his output for voice and piano. Li Po is generally regarded as one of the very finest poets of the Tang dynasty, and indeed of the whole of Chinese literature. Renowned for his virtuosity and fantasy in treating

subjects such as the celebration of friendship, solitude, food and (especially) wine, nostalgia for past glories, the transience of human existence, and the spiritual beauties of the natural world, he led a life at times fêted by emperors, at times wandering in exile, at times employed as senior court official – but always dazzling with his vast output of poetry, of which only a proportion survives. The long-standing legend that Li Po died from drowning while leaning out of a boat on the Yangtze River to embrace the moon’s reflection may be fanciful, but the longevity of the image in Chinese culture is witness to the continuing potency of the poet’s visionary work across the centuries.

Li Po’s poetry first came to the attention of European readers during the late 18th century through the French translations of the Jesuit missionary Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, followed by a number of English translations and studies by British sinologists in the later 19th century. In the early 20th century four of his poems made their way into Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde*, via multi-layered adaptations of the original Chinese texts into Hans Bethge’s 1907 anthology *Die chinesische Flöte* (‘The Chinese Flute’), and further adapted by Mahler himself. For the anglophone world, a crucial publication was the English version of over 100 of Li Po’s poems by the Japanese translator Shigeyoshi Obata, which first appeared in 1922 and which, although sometimes deviating significantly from both the literal meaning and the poetical traditions of the Chinese originals, was the direct source for Lambert’s settings.

The eight songs are exquisitely crafted, restrained and often enigmatic miniatures, whose elusive and allusive musical style – largely managing to avoid the stereotypical, tinkling *chinoiserie* of the period – occupies such a completely

different world from the *Trois pièces nègres* or *The Rio Grande* that one can hardly believe they issued from the same compositional imagination. Lambert published the songs in three stages: **Four Poems by Li Po** appeared first in 1927; then a further **Three Poems by Li Po** were published the following year; and finally the most extended setting, **The Long-Departed Lover**, appeared by itself in 1930. Lambert also later arranged the songs for voice and small instrumental ensemble.

All eight songs are dedicated to Anna May Wong (1905-61), a major American-Chinese film and stage actress who had achieved international stardom and iconic status by the 1920s, albeit mainly through clichéd Chinese female roles within a distinctly racist Hollywood culture that continued to dog her career for decades. Lambert had developed an unrequited obsession with the actress, mainly at a distance, probably following her appearance as a scantily-clad Mongol slave-girl in *The Thief of Bagdad* with Douglas Fairbanks in 1924. The composer's chosen text for the final song can hardly be a coincidence, even if transmuted into fantasy. The nearest he managed, it seems, to succeeding with the object of his desire was buying her dinner at the Savoy after Wong's temporary move to the UK and Europe. *The Long-Departed Lover* followed soon afterwards.

Unlike the Lambert Li Po settings, the selection of songs by Walton presented here is more heterogeneous, without common thread of poet or theme. **The Winds**, dating from 1918, when the composer was only 16, is an extraordinarily precocious setting of Swinburne, showing from an early age Walton's ability to convey energy and forward propulsion, evident later from works such as the First Symphony and *Belshazzar's Feast*. Another three settings of Swinburne, apparently a favourite poet of Walton's teenage years, were written at the same

time, though of these only *The Winds* was published by Curwen in 1921, along with another song, **Tritons**, composed the year before publication.

Stylistically, *Tritons* takes a wholly different tack, an early exploration of a much more angular, atonal and canonic mode of writing, which reflects Walton's fascination with what Lambert called, in his 1926 appreciation of Walton, the "savage intellectuality of the Central European School", though ending unapologetically in a blazing A major. **Daphne**, by contrast, is an intensely lyrical utterance, a retelling by Edith Sitwell of the Greek myth, and one of a group of three songs, along with *Through Gilded Trellises* and *Old Sir Faulk*, that Walton published in 1932 for voice and piano, adapted from earlier incarnations as part of the still-evolving *Façade* entertainment.

The remaining two Walton songs here involve a degree of Tudor pastiche on the composer's part. **Under the Greenwood Tree** evokes the image of a pastoral lute song, reconfigured for voice and piano, originally forming part of the incidental music in 1936 for the composer's first Shakespeare film, *As You Like It*. The film, which also introduced Walton to Laurence Olivier for the first time, had very mixed reviews, and this short song was eventually cut, but has remained in circulation as a self-standing piece.

The Olivier connection continued with Walton's music for Louis MacNeice's radio play *Christopher Columbus* in 1942, from which the brief but exquisite **Beatriz's Song** is taken. Written largely as a propagandist tribute to the United States entering the war, the play was a sequel to MacNeice's earlier BBC adaptation of *Alexander Nevsky*, using Prokofiev's music, broadcast coincidentally on the night

following the Pearl Harbour attack in December 1941. In the later play, Beatriz is Columbus's lover, bewailing his true attachment to the sea and the discoveries of the New World. Although obviously a female role, the song, in this arrangement for voice and piano by Christopher Palmer, is of such intrinsic musical beauty that, like so much earlier Lieder repertory, it easily transcends gender in performance.

Much of the music of Walton's *Façade* is now very well known to audiences. Probably less well known is the extent to which his "good pal" Constant Lambert was himself intimately involved in the history of the work, in various roles, right from its inception in the mid-1920s as a vehicle for the narration of Edith Sitwell's poetry in the form of a private 'Entertainment', through numerous reworkings, additions and subtractions, to its final forms heard today, for either narrator(s) and small ensemble or as two orchestral suites without poetic recitation.

When the Sitwells were initially conceiving the idea of presenting Edith's new, experimental poetry ("patterns in sound"), declaimed through a megaphone poking through a curtain painted with masks, Walton claims to have been less than keen to undertake the music: "I remember thinking it was not a very good idea, but when I said so, they simply told me that they'd get Constant to do it if I wouldn't – and of course I couldn't possibly let that occur".

The first, private performance at the Sitwells' house in Carlyle Square, London, on January 24, 1922, and then the first public performance of a revised, extended version the following year, both featured Edith Sitwell as the sole narrator. But it was not long before Lambert became involved as co-narrator with Edith, and for the second performance of a further revised version on June 29, 1926,

Lambert recited the whole work alone, with Walton conducting. Although Edith's very particular manner of declaiming her verse was of course idiosyncratically authentic, as can still be heard in the recording of selected numbers that she made with Lambert in 1929, it is generally accepted (including by Walton himself) that Lambert became the most accomplished reciter of the work ever.

Edith had always admitted that her lack of musical training hampered her ability to secure the necessary tautness of rhythmical coordination with the music. Lambert's expert musicality, though, combined with his literary flair and understanding of the genre, virtuosity of vocal inflection, and crispness of enunciation, made him ideally suited for the role, one that he resumed on many occasions in the UK and Europe through to the late 1940s. Indeed, in 1950 the BBC and Walton were preparing for a final, authoritative recording of the whole work, with Lambert as reciter, but the plans were cut short by Lambert's premature death in 1951, and the belated publication by OUP of the definitive full score that year carried a dedication to him as a mark of the composer's long-standing respect. Walton's biographer, Stephen Lloyd, notes that later in his life "Walton spoke of missing Constant Lambert more than anyone".

But Lambert's relationship with *Façade* was even more multi-faceted. Although we are very familiar with the two orchestral suites in the concert hall today – its 11 movements often re-ordered in different ways – in fact only the First Suite dates back to the years immediately following the early performances of the narrated version. This suite of five numbers was first performed in London on December 3, 1926 (as an interlude at the Ballets Russes), later choreographed in slightly

shortened form by Frederick Ashton for the ballet, conducted by Lambert, and eventually published by OUP in 1936. The Second Suite did not come together until 1938, at the instigation of Hubert Foss, the energetic first Musical Editor at OUP and Walton's close publishing associate. Not only was Lambert involved in helping decide which other movements of the full 'Entertainment' should be included in this Second Suite; he actually orchestrated four out of the six movements eventually chosen, with Walton responsible for scoring only *Noche Espagnola* ('Long Steel Grass') and *Fox-Trot* ('Old Sir Faulk'). It is not clear why Walton delegated this orchestration to Lambert, especially bearing in mind Walton's own exceptional skills of instrumentation. Perhaps it was simply a question of time constraints; but in any case it is fair to say that Lambert's direct contribution to the work in this regard is generally ignored today.

Furthermore, it is these two orchestral suites, some of whose music Walton had slightly rewritten and extended, that are the immediate source for Lambert's marvellous arrangement for piano duet. He was himself a fine pianist, unlike Walton, whose keyboard skills were quite rudimentary, as he admits in the engaging interviews recorded for Tony Palmer's wonderful 1981 film *At the Haunted End of the Day*. It is no surprise, therefore, that Lambert's often demanding piano duet version – rarely performed now but enormous fun to play – demonstrates an exceptional command of the medium, with its inherent complexities of balance, colour, and texture, as well as an intimate knowledge of the music itself, drawing on all his many years of close association with the work and its composer.

Ronald Woodley © 2020

4 William Walton: *The Winds*

Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837-1909

O weary fa' the east wind,
And weary fa' the west:
And gin I were under the wan waves wide
I wot weel wad I rest.

O weary fa' the north wind,
And weary fa' the south:
The sea went ower my good lord's head
Or ever he kissed my mouth.

Weary fa' the windward rocks,
And weary fa' the lee:
They might hae sunken sevenscore ships,
And let my love's gang free.

And weary fa' ye, mariners a',
And weary fa' the sea:
It might hae taken an hundred men,
And let my ae love be.

5 William Walton: *Daphne*

Edith Sitwell, 1887-1964

When green as a river was the barley,
Green as a river the rye,
I waded deep and began to parley
With a youth whom I heard sigh.
"I seek", said he, "a lovely lady,
A nymph as bright as a queen,
Like a tree that drips with pearls her shady
Locks of hair were seen;
And all the rivers became her flocks
Though their wool you cannot shear,

Because of the love of her flowing locks,
The kingly sun like a swain
Came strong, unheeding of her scorn,
Wading in deeps where she has lain,
Sleeping upon her river lawn
And chasing her starry satyr train.
She fled, and changed into a tree,
That lovely, fair-haired lady...
And now I seek through the sere summer
Where no trees are shady!"

6 William Walton: *Tritons*

William Drummond, 1585-1649

Tritons, which bounding dive
Through Neptune's liquid plain,
Whenas ye shall arrive
With tilting tides where silver Ora plays,
And to your king his wat'ry tribute pays,
Tell how I dying live
And burn in midst of all the coldest main.

Constant Lambert: Four Poems by Li Po

Trans. Shigeyoshi Obata, 1888-1971

7 A Summer Day

Naked I lie in the green forest of summer...
Too lazy to wave my white feathered fan.
I hang my cap on a crag,
And bare my head to the wind that comes
Blowing through the pine trees.

8 Nocturne

Blue water... a clear moon...
In the moonlight the white herons are flying.
Listen! Do you hear the girls who gather water-chestnuts?
They are going home in the night, singing.

9 With a Man of Leisure

Yonder the mountain flowers are out.
We drink together, you and I.
One more cup – one more cup – still one more cup!
Now I am drunk and drowsy, you had better go.
But come to-morrow morning, if you will, with the harp!

10 Lines

Cool is the autumn wind,
Clear the autumn moon,
The blown leaves heap up and scatter again;
A raven, cold-stricken, starts from his roost.
Where are you, beloved? – When shall I see you once more?
Ah, how my heart aches tonight – this hour!

12 William Walton: *Under the Greenwood Tree*

William Shakespeare, 1564-1616

Under the greenwood tree Who loves to lie with me, And turn his merry note Unto the sweet bird's throat, Come hither, [come] hither, come hither. Here shall he see No enemy But winter and rough weather.	Who doth ambition shun, And loves to live i' the sun, Seeking the food he eats, And pleas'd with what he gets Come hither, [come] hither, come hither. Here shall he see No enemy But winter and rough weather.
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13 William Walton: *Beatriz's Song*

Louis MacNeice, 1907-63

When will he return? Only to depart. Harrowed by the omen Of his restless heart; Bondsman of the Voice, Rival to [of] the Sun, Viceroy of the sunset Till his task be done.	Though he is my love He is not for me; What he loves is over Loveless miles of sea Haunted by the West, Eating out his heart – When will he return? Only to depart.
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Text in square brackets [] indicates a discrepancy between the published musical setting and the original poem.

Constant Lambert: Three Poems by Li Po

Trans. Shigeyoshi Obata, 1888-1971

14 The Ruin of the Ku-Su Palace

In the deserted garden among the crumbling walls
The willows show green again,
While the sweet notes of the water-nut song
Seem to lament the spring.
Nothing remains but the moon above the river –
The moon that once shone on the fair faces
That smiled in the king's palace of Wu.

15 The Intruder

The grass of Yen is growing green and long
While in Chin the leafy mulberry branches hang low.
Even now while my longing heart is breaking,
Are you thinking, my dear, of coming back to me?
O wind of spring, you are a stranger,
Why do you enter through the silken curtains of my bower?

16 On the City Street

They meet in the pink dust of the city street.
He raises his gold crop high in salute.
"Lady," says he, "where do you live?"
"There are ten thousand houses among the drooping willow trees."

17 Constant Lambert: *The Long-Departed Lover*

Trans. Shigeyoshi Obata, 1888-1971

Fair one, when you were here, I filled the house with flowers.

Fair one, now you are gone – only an empty couch is left.

On the couch the embroidered quilt is rolled up;

I cannot sleep.

It is three years since you went. The perfume you left behind haunts me still.

The perfume strays about me forever, but where are you, Beloved?

I sigh – the yellow leaves fall from the branch,

I weep – the dew twinkles white on the green mosses.

JAMES GEER was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, as Academical Clerk in the College choir. He continued his training at Trinity College of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) where he was a scholar on the opera course. James is a Samling Scholar and a Britten-Pears Young Artist. He has appeared as a soloist at many major UK venues, including the Royal Festival Hall, Usher Hall, Wigmore Hall, Snape Maltings, Royal Albert Hall, and St John's Smith Square. He has performed at the Edinburgh International, Aldeburgh and Three Choirs Festivals, and has sung with the London Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, Royal Scottish National, BBC Scottish Symphony and the Philharmonia Orchestras and the London Handel Players.

On the opera stage James has performed numerous lead and comprimario roles with Silent Opera, Britten-Pears Opera, Bury Court Opera, Bampton Opera, Caledonian Opera, and Haddo House Opera. He regularly covers roles for Glyndebourne, Glyndebourne on Tour, Scottish Opera and Music Theatre Wales. For the last 10 years James has been a member of the Glyndebourne Chorus. He is also a member of the Academy of Ancient Music and a regular guest performer with Capella Cracoviensis in Poland.

Together with Ronald Woodley, James has given over 40 recitals, performing works by, among others, Schubert, Schumann, Britten, Poulenc, Grieg and Sibelius. In 2019 they released a CD of songs by Holst, with première recordings of works by Joseph Holbrooke for EM Records; and in 2020 they will record a new disc of songs by 20th-century women composers including Rebecca Clarke, Elizabeth Maconchy, Phyllis Tate and Elizabeth Poston. James has also recorded Britten's *Sechs Hölderlin-Fragmente* with Malcolm Martineau (Onyx).



Photograph: David Myers

ANDREW WEST plays for many of today's leading singers, including Benjamin Appl, James Gilchrist, Susan Gritton, Robert Murray and Hilary Summers. He appears regularly with tenor Mark Padmore and baritone Roderick Williams. Concerts with Mark Padmore have included the 2013 world premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's song-cycle *Songs from the Same Earth*, subsequently programmed in Amsterdam, Cologne and Wigmore Hall; and the opening recital of the 2016-17 season at the Library of Congress in Washington DC. With Roderick Williams he has performed at many of the leading British music festivals, as well as the Nuremberg Chamber Music Festival where he has been Artistic Director since 2005. Andrew's other chamber music partners have included flautist Emily Beynon, violinist Sarah Chang and cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras.

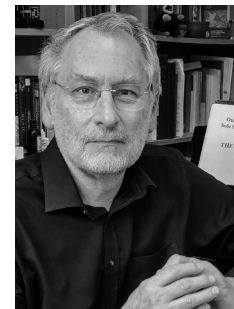


Photograph: Angela Cushway

CD recordings include Strauss Lieder with soprano Emma Bell; music by Les Six with Emily Beynon (Hyperion); and Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* with Robert Murray (Stone Records). He is also the pianist for the three-CD set of Parry's *English Lyrics* for SOMM Recordings, with whom he has recently recorded songs by Stanford with Roderick Williams.

Andrew is Chairman and Artistic Director of the Kirckman Concert Society, which for over 50 years has auditioned exceptional young musicians and offered debut recitals at major London venues. He read English at Clare College, Cambridge before studying under Christopher Elton and John Streets at the Royal Academy of Music. He was pianist-in-residence at Lancaster University from 1993-99, where he first collaborated with Ronald Woodley in numerous piano duo and clarinet recitals. Andrew is currently Professor of Chamber Music and Accompaniment at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and Royal Academy of Music, where he was recently made a Fellow.

RONALD WOODLEY enjoys a wide-ranging career as clarinettist, chamber pianist and musicologist, bringing the research experience of a distinguished academic portfolio to his varied performance projects. Appointed Professor of Music at the (now Royal) Birmingham Conservatoire in 2004, he was Director of Research there from 2010-15 and previously held academic positions at the Royal Northern College of Music, the Universities of Lancaster, Newcastle, Liverpool and Christ Church, Oxford. He is now Emeritus Professor of Music at the RBC, having retired in 2018 to concentrate on recording and research projects.



Photograph: Alex Woodley

As a performer Ron trained as clarinettist at the RNCM, before completing a doctorate in musicology at Keble College, Oxford. He is the dedicatee of many new works by Christopher Fox, Roger Marsh, Liz Johnson, Stephen Pratt, James Wishart and Steve Ingham, including an exciting series of bass clarinet duos in the 1990s in partnership with Roger Heaton. He has recorded works for bass clarinet by York Bowen and Josef Holbrooke with the Primrose Quartet (Meridian Records) and in 2017 premiered and recorded the newly commissioned *Sea-change* by Liz Johnson, for multiple clarinets and string quartet, with the Fitzwilliam Quartet (Métier).

As a musicologist he has an international reputation as a specialist in late medieval music theory, in particular the 15th-century musician Johannes Tinctoris. Other projects in 19th- and 20th-century musicology have included work on Ravel, Prokofiev, Steve Reich and, most recently, early recordings of Lieder and pianists in the circles of Brahms and Clara Schumann, especially Ilona Eibenschütz.

As both clarinettist and pianist, Ron enjoys long-standing partnerships with the tenor James Geer (with whom he has made several recordings) and pianist Andrew West.