

James Gilchrist *tenor* · Nathan Williamson *piano*

**William Alwyn (1905-85) *A Leave-Taking*** [25:43]

- 1 The Pilgrim Cranes 3:00
- 2 Daffodils 2:17
- 3 The Ocean Wood 3:42
- 4 Fortune's Wheel 1:16
- 5 Study of a Spider 5:22
- 6 The Two Old Kings 4:15
- 7 A Leave-Taking 5:51

**Alan Bush (1900-95) and Alan Rawsthorne (1905-71)**

***Prison Cycle*** [9:44]

- 8 I Andante lentamente (Bush) 1:30
- 9 II Andantino piacevole (Bush) 2:52
- 10 III Poco gravamente (Rawsthorne) 1:38
- 11 IV Andante (Rawsthorne) 1:49
- 12 V Grave (Bush) 1:55

**Alan Rawsthorne (1905-71)**

***Two Songs to Poems of John Fletcher***

- 13 Away, Delights 3:20
- 14 God Lyaeus 0:55

**Elizabeth Maconchy (1907-94)**

***Three Donne Songs\**** [12:28]

- 15 A Hymn to God the Father 3:23
- 16 A Hymn to Christ 5:39
- 17 The Sun Rising 3:26

**Doreen Carwithen (1922-2003)**

- 18 Serenade\* 1:21
- 19 Noon\* 2:03
- 20 Echo (Seven Sweet Notes)\* 2:10
- 21 The Ride-by-Nights\* 1:30
- 22 Clear Had the Day Been\* 1:45
- 23 Slow Spring\* 2:41
- 24 Echo (Who Called?)\* 2:08

**Total duration: 63:37**

\*First recordings

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Nathan Williamson  
*piano*

James Gilchrist  
*tenor*

Alan Rawsthorne · Alan Bush · William Alwyn  
Doreen Carwithen\* · Elisabeth Maconchy\*

\*First Recordings

This second of three volumes of British song composed over the last 100 or so years features composers whose careers were, broadly speaking, centred on the decades either side of the Second World War.

In my notes accompanying Volume I, I observed how sung music was at the centre of the British music 'Renaissance' – the development of a distinctive British style by native composers in the late-19th and early-20th centuries – in such diverse forms as Elgar's oratorios, Parry and Stanford's liturgical music, parlour songs, Gilbert and Sullivan and a revival of interest in folksong and Tudor composers.

However, the five composers represented here cut their teeth primarily on symphonic and chamber instrumental forms, Elizabeth Maconchy and William Alwyn, in particular, only turning seriously to vocal work in the final third of their careers. Whereas composers starting out pre-1914 had seemed overawed by then dominant German and French composers of instrumental repertoire, the post-1914 generation were happy to follow European modernists in uprooting this tradition completely and making it their own.

While the First World War was more obviously 'the end of an era' in historical terms, from the musician's perspective the 1930s displayed a more fundamental shift of compositional and musical attitudes in Britain. Elgar, the elder statesman of British music, died in 1934, an unfinished Third Symphony the only significant output during the last 15 years of his life.

At the same time, 1920s' *enfant terrible* William Walton was at an impasse over his own First Symphony, a work so eagerly anticipated it was even performed incomplete. While its full premiere in late 1935 was hailed by the elder generation as a monumental achievement – "With this work you have established yourself as the most vital and original genius in Europe", gushed John Ireland – younger composers viewed Walton's post-romantic style as already out of date: Ireland's most brilliant pupil, a 22-year old Benjamin Britten, described the work as "reactionary and dull in the extreme".

The decades straddling the Second World War also saw major changes in the fabric of musical life and opportunities for composers. Even a brief comparison of this disc with its predecessor reveals the shift from the informal atmosphere of plush Edwardian living rooms to the more 'serious' and concentrated concert environment, free of domestic distractions. Alwyn, Doreen Carwithen and Alan Rawsthorne (along with many others) enjoyed lucrative success in the novel world of film music. The BBC became an increasingly potent ally of new music as composers demanded to be formally recognised collectively – witnessed by the formation of the Society for the Promotion of New Music in 1943 and the Composers' Guild in 1944, which in turn founded the British Music Information Centre in 1967. Alwyn, Bush, Carwithen and Maconchy were all to play active roles in the administration of these bodies.

William Alwyn's compositional star has been in the ascendancy for the last three decades and he is now established as a central figure in 20th-century British music. His enormous output contains work for myriad genres and instrumental combinations as well as some 200 film scores. Following his 'retirement' in 1961, he focussed increasingly on vocal works, including two large-scale operas – *Juan* or *The Libertine* (1965-71) and *Miss Julie* (1973) – and five substantial song cycles, the finest of which, **A Leave-Taking** (1978) is recorded here.

Taking their cue from the German Romantics in the observance of nature as a basis for self-reflection, the poems by Lord de Tabley are unremitting in their sense of loneliness and loss. The second song, **Daffodils**, appears initially as an exception, speaking of the return of spring, but even its final line – "I cannot think she never will be won" – resolves in minor mode, reinforcing the fact that the lover's hope, however strong, is in fact forlorn. Alwyn employs an exceptionally dense, chromatic language throughout the work, its extreme dissonance only emphasised by the general underpinning of triadic (if not conventionally tonal) harmony. An eerie, whole-tone mode represents the bleak landscape of **The Pilgrim Cranes**, something approaching a twelve-tone row is heard

at the outset of *Study of a Spider*, and even the boisterous folk-style of *Fortune's Wheel* is gradually saturated with chromaticism. Clusters of chromatically descending tritones depict waves, wind and snow throughout the songs.

But Alwyn's masterstroke (something he can perhaps be said to have only learned by this stage of his career) is to counter-balance this heightened romanticism with music of real simplicity, such as the second verse, "Calm rests the wave", of *The Ocean Wood*, or the opening distant bugle calls of *The Two Old Kings*. The final song, *A Leave-Taking*, with its softly repeated triads, is almost McCartney-esque in its ability to combine simplicity and pathos, providing a genuinely moving conclusion to what is undoubtedly one of Alwyn's finest compositional achievements.

Alan Bush (1900-95) and Alan Rawsthorne (1905-71) studied at the Royal Academy and the Royal Manchester School respectively and, both being superb pianists, undertook further studies on the instrument in Europe – Bush with Artur Schnabel in Berlin and Rawsthorne with Egon Petri in Warsaw. Bush also studied philosophy and musicology at the Friedrich-Wilhelm University. His stay in Germany during the unstable years following the 1929 Wall Street Crash profoundly influenced his politics, which were in turn to play a major role on his musical activities throughout his long and exceptionally creative life.

Bush enjoyed success in the late 1920s and early 1930s at home and on the continent, but his challenging musical language and staunch political views meant his works never secured a place in the repertoire. His support of Communism alienated him from many – his music was actually banned by the BBC at one point, officially only for a short time but in practice for 15 years. Even a relatively accessible work such as *Prison Cycle* was only published in 2002. He maintained close ties with East Germany, where his three fully-fledged operas all received productions during his lifetime, whilst only one, *Wat Tyler*, has ever been performed in Britain (at Sadler's Wells in 1974).

Both Bush and Rawsthorne's language can be loosely classified as Neo-Classical – or perhaps 'Neo-Anything', given their eclectic appropriation of styles. Note the imitation, almost parody, of Schumann and Brahms in Movement II of *Prison Cycle* and Rawsthorne's delicate Sicilienne in Movement IV. By contrast, Rawsthorne's *Away, Delights* can be seen as a re-imagining of Elizabethan counterpoint, whereas his *God Lyaeus* – unusual in works of this era in its willingness to inject humour into music – takes us into the pub or music hall.

Bush and Rawsthorne's collaborative *Prison Cycle* was composed at the request of the Free German League of Culture, a body founded in London in 1939 by German refugees. The poet is the socialist Ernst Toller, imprisoned by the Nazis following his involvement in the Bavarian Workers' Republic and who committed suicide in May 1939. The songs were first performed by Anne Wood with Bush at the piano in the Conway Hall, London in December of that year. The manuscript was then mislaid for over 35 years until revived by Graham Titus with Erik Levi at London's Purcell Room in 1977. I can provide no better general outline of the songs than that found in the preface to the score, published by Forsyths:

"The first and last song (by Bush), and the third song (by Rawsthorne) act as a sort of ritornello depicting the poet pacing up and down his cell. In the second song (Bush) the poet considers the apparent increasing friendliness, induced by familiarity, of various everyday objects about the cell, the table, the bars, even the midges. In the fourth song (Rawsthorne) the poet contemplates a pair of swallows that nested on the window-sill until they were shot by the prison-guards."

I had never heard of Elizabeth Maconchy when a young string quartet performed her Fifth Quartet in the 2012 Southwold Concert Series. Since then her music has provided an unending sense of wonder and discovery, and it is with enormous pleasure that we bring her *Three Donne Songs* to disc here for the first time.

Maconchy was born in 1907 and attended the Royal College of Music, where she studied with Charles Wood and, “like turning on a light”, with Ralph Vaughan Williams. Yet unlike many of her peers she owed no stylistic debt to RVW and her student works of the 1920s, such as the powerful First Violin Sonata, display a true modernist voice. She enjoyed considerable international success before the war, with Proms performances, frequent BBC broadcasts and regular performances across Europe, and composed prolifically well into the 1980s, receiving high-profile commissions. She was made a DBE in 1987.

From 1957, beginning with a commission from the New Opera Group, she began adding to her magnificent symphonic and chamber repertoire increasing amounts of vocal music, identified by her youngest daughter, the composer Nicola LeFanu, as a key turning point towards a more melodic, sensuous and dramatic musical language. It is within this new musical furrow that the *Three Donne Songs* are found – Maconchy’s exquisite, hand-written score is dated March 1964.

The three verses are directed to three ‘Gods’ or, in some sense, ‘celestial’ beings: God the Father, Christ, and the rising sun. In the first two, Donne chides himself, seeking acceptance from God, in the third he chides the sun as a “busy old fool”. The full-blooded vocal lines encompass the rhythms of Donne’s beautiful verse without ever becoming predictable. The word-painting takes a broad view rather than focussing on minutiae – the rocking of the “torn ship” in the second song, or the rhythms of a rustic (or pagan?) spring dance in the final song, for example. The harmonic conflict and resolution in the first two numbers perfectly reflects Donne’s inner conflict and resolution and as he wrestles with his own failings. The results are substantial, ambitious songs, imbued with a genuine sense of drama by an assured composer at the height of her powers.

Doreen Carwithen was born in Haddenham in 1922 and entered the Royal Academy to study cello, piano and composition in 1941. She enjoyed early successes with her

rousing overture *One Damn Thing After Another*, premiered by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult in 1947, receipt of the Cobbett Award for her Second String Quartet, and performance in 1952 of her Piano Concerto at the Proms. But failing to secure a publisher, her music became increasingly seldom performed and it was only in writing film scores that she achieved any sense of professional continuity.

In 1961 she moved to Suffolk with her former teacher, William Alwyn (they married only in 1975) by which point, despite Alwyn’s encouragement, she had more or less given up composing – her only piece written after 1952 is the light-hearted *Suffolk Suite*. She devoted herself instead to supporting Alwyn’s work and then acting as his foremost champion following his death. The William Alwyn Foundation, which she established in 1990, has promoted her own legacy alongside Alwyn’s and all her concert works have now (with the issue of this disc) been published and recorded.

Carwithen’s complete song repertoire is represented here (her only other vocal work, undated, is *The Silver Penny*, a partsong for children’s voices). The songs are among her earliest surviving works and, slightly surprisingly, it is those written first which display the most imaginative and creative writing – perhaps in the later, more formative songs such as *Serenade* and *The Ride-by-Nights* Carwithen was seeking a broader appeal by writing in more a conventional style. Her trademark restless harmony and ambiguous swirling accompanimental rhythms, with even some experimental aleatoric writing, are found in *Echo (Who Called?)*. Calmer, more pastoral sounds and exquisite shades of piano writing abound in *Noon, Slow Spring* and *Echo (Seven Sweet Notes)*, and *Clear Had the Day Been* displays a more quirky, even slightly jazzy, harmonic palette and several unexpected twists and turns. These songs are real gems, revealing the seeds of a truly imaginative and expressive musical personality – one that sadly never had the opportunity to flourish and gain the confidence needed to survive and thrive.

## WILLIAM ALWYN (1905-85): A Leave-Taking

(Lord de Tabley, 1835-95)

### 1 *The Pilgrim Cranes*

The pilgrim cranes are moving to their south,  
The clouds are herded pale and rolling slow.  
One flower is withered in the warm wind's mouth,  
Whereby the gentle waters always flow.

The cloud-fire wanes beyond the lighted trees.  
The sudden glory leaves the mountain dome.  
Sleep into night, old anguish mine, and cease  
To listen for a step that will not come.

### 2 *Daffodils*

I question with the amber daffodils,  
Sheeting the floors of April, how she fares;  
Where king-cup buds gleam out between the rills,  
And celandine in wide gold beadlets glares.

By pastured brows and swelling hedge-row bowers,  
From crumpled leaves the primrose bunches slip,  
My hot face rolled in their faint-scented flowers,  
I dream her rich cheek rests against my lip.

All weird sensations of the fervent prime  
Are like great harmonies, whose touch can move  
The glow of gracious impulse; thought and time  
Renew my love with life, my life with love.

When this old world new-born puts glories on,  
I cannot think she never will be won.

### 3 *The Ocean Wood*

Gray woods within whose silent shade  
The ocean voice is dimly known:  
Where undisturbed the violets fade,  
And roses perish overblown.

Calm rests the wave against the beach  
Calm rocks the wave-bird on its tide,  
And calmer in their heaven than each,  
The gleaming bands of sunset ride.

Soon will the ripple move again:  
Soon will the shore-lark flute its song:  
And in sweet emphasis of pain  
The rock-dove mourn the cliffs along.

Sweet shall resound the curlew's wail  
New sails come sweeping up the sea.  
But all the ships that ever sail  
Will bring no comfort home to me.

#### 4 *Fortune's Wheel*

I had a true love, none so dear,  
And a friend both real and tried.  
I had a cask of good old beer,  
And a gallant horse to ride.

A little while did fortune smile  
On him and her and me.  
We sang along the road of life  
Like birds upon a tree.

My lady fell to shame and hell,  
And with her took my friend.  
My cask ran sour, my horse went lame,  
So alone in the cold I end.

#### 5 *Study of a Spider*

From holy flower to holy flower  
Thou weavest thine unhallowed bower.  
The harmless dewdrops, beaded thin,  
Ripple along thy ropes of sin.  
Thy house a grave, a gulf thy throne  
Affright the fairies every one.  
Thy winding sheets are gray and fell,  
Imprisoning with nets of hell  
The lovely births that winnow by,  
Winged sisters of the rainbow sky,

Elf-darlings, fluffy, bee-bright things,  
And owl-white moths with mealy wings,  
And tiny flies, as gauzy thin  
As e'er were shut electrum in.  
These were your death spoils, insect ghoul,  
With their dear life your fangs are foul.  
Thou felon anchorite of pain  
Who sittest in a world of slain.  
Hermit, who tunest song unsweet  
To heaving wing and writhing feet.

A glutton of creation's sighs,  
Miser of many miseries.  
Toper, whose lonely feasting chair  
Sways in inhospitable air.  
The board is bare, the bloated host  
Drinks to himself toast after toast.  
His lips require no goblet brink  
But like a weasel must he drink.  
The vintage is as old as time  
And bright as sunset, pressed and prime.

Ah, venom mouth and shaggy thighs  
And paunch grown sleek with sacrifice,  
Thy dolphin back and shoulders round  
Coarse-hairy, as some goblin hound  
Whom a hag rides to sabbath on,  
While shuddering stars in fear grow wan.  
Thou palace priest of treachery,  
Thou type of selfish lechery,  
I break the toils around thy head  
And from their gibbets take thy dead.

#### 6 *The Two Old Kings*

In ruling well what guerdon\*? Life runs low,  
As yonder lamp upon the hour-glass lies,  
Waning and wasted. We are great and wise,  
But Love is gone; and Silence seems to grow  
Along the misty road where we must go.  
From summits near the morning star's uprise,  
Death comes, a shadow from the northern skies,  
As, when all leaves are down, thence comes the snow.

Brother and king, we hold our last carouse.  
One loving cup we drain and then farewell.  
The night is spent. The crystal morning ray  
Calls us, as soldiers laurelled on our brows,  
To march undaunted, while the clarions swell,  
Heroic hearts, upon our lonely way.

\* Reward

## 7 *A Leave-Taking*

Kneel not and leave me: mirth is in its grave.  
True friend, sweet words were ours, sweet words decay;  
Believe, the perfume once this violet gave  
Lives – lives no more, though mute tears answer nay.  
Break off delay!

Dead, Love is dead! Ay, cancelled all his due.  
We say he mocks repose – we cannot tell –  
Close up his eyes and crown his head with rue,  
Say in his ear, sweet Love, farewell! farewell!  
A last low knell.

Forbear to move him. Peace, why should we stay?  
Go back no more to listen for his tread.  
Resume our old calm face of every day:  
Not all our kneeling turns that sacred head  
Long dear, Long Dead!

## ALAN BUSH (1900-95) and ALAN RAWSTHORNE (1905-71)

### Prison Cycle

(Ernst Toller, 1893-1939 Trans. Edith Wilson)

|   |                           |                   |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 8 | <i>Sechs Schritte her</i> | Six steps forward |
|   | <i>Sechs Schritte hin</i> | Six steps back    |
|   | <i>Ohne Sinn</i>          | Without purpose   |
|   | <i>Ohne Sinn</i>          | Without purpose   |

- 9 *Die Dinge, die erst feindlich zu dir schauen,  
Als wären sie in Späherdienst gezwängte Schergen,  
Sie laden dich zur Fahrt ein gleich guten Fergen,  
Und hegen dich wie schwesterliche Frauen.*

The objects which at first look at you in a hostile way,  
As if they were hired traitors forced into spying,  
They invite you to journeys like good ferrymen,  
And tend to you like sisterly women.

*Es nähern sich dir all die kargen Dinge:*

*Die schmale Pritsche kommt, die blauen Wasserkrüge,*

*Der Schemel flüstert dass er gern dich trüge,*

*Die Wintermücken wiegen sich wie kleine Schmetterlinge.*

They approach you, all the bare objects  
The narrow plank-bed, the blue water-jugs.  
The foot-stool whispers that it would gladly carry you,  
The winter midges are swaying like small butterflies.

*Und auch das Gitterfenster kommt, das du verloren,*

*Mit augen, die sich an den schwarzen Stäben stachen,*

*Anstarrtest, während deine Arme hilflos brachen,*

The barred window also comes, the one you have lost,  
With eyes which burnt on its black bars  
Which you have stared at, while your arms broke helplessly.

*Und köpfe der Erschossnen wuchsen aus versperren Toren.*

*Das Gitterfenster ruft: Nun Lieber, schau, schau,*

*Wie ich aus Wolken dir ein Paradies erbaue.*

And heads of those shot dead grew from locked gates.  
The barred window calls out: Now, my dear, look, look,  
How I am building a paradise for you from clouds.

## 10 As Track 8

11 Über mir... über mir,

*Auf den Holzrahmen des halbgeöffneten Gitterfensters,*

*das in meine Zelle sich neigt in erstarrter*

*Steife, So als ob es sich betrunken hätte*

*und im Torkelgebannt ward von einem*

*hypnotischen Blick*

*Sitzt*

*Ein*

*Schwalbenpärchen.*

*Sitzt,*

*Wiegt sich! wiegt sich!*

*Tanz! Tanz! Tanz!*

Above me... above me,

On the wooden frame of the half-opened window

Which is leaning rigidly into my prison cell

So as if it were drunk

And in reeling had been spellbound by a

Hypnotic glance

There sits

A

Little pair of swallows

Sits

Sways to and fro! Sways to and fro!

Dances! Dances! Dances!

**ALAN RAWSTHORNE (1905-71)**  
**Two Songs to Poems of John Fletcher (1579-1625)**

13 *Away, delights!*

Away, delights! go seek some other dwelling,  
For I must die.  
Farewell, false love! thy tongue is ever telling  
Lie after lie.  
For ever let me rest now from thy smarts;  
Alas, for pity go  
And fire their hearts  
That have been hard to thee! Mine was not so.  
Never again deluding love shall know me,  
For I will die;  
And all those griefs that think to overgrow me  
Shall be as I:  
For ever will I sleep, while poor maids cry –  
"Alas, for pity stay,  
And let us die  
With thee! Men cannot mock us in the clay."

14 *God Lyaeus*

God Lyaeus, ever young,  
Ever honour'd, ever sung,  
Stain'd with blood of lusty grapes,  
In a thousand lusty shapes  
Dance upon the mazer's\* brim,  
In the crimson liquor swim;  
From thy plenteous hand divine  
Let a river run with wine:  
God of youth, let this day here  
Enter neither care nor fear.

**ELIZABETH MACONCHY (1907-94)**  
**Three Donne Songs**

(John Donne, 1572-1631)

15 *A Hymn to God the Father*

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,  
Which is my sin, though it were done before?  
Wilt thou forgive those sins, through which I run,  
And do run still: though still I do deplore?  
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,  
For I have more.

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

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun  
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore:  
Swear by thyself, that at my death thy Sun  
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;  
And having done that, Thou hast done,  
I fear no more.

## 16 *A Hymn to Christ*

In what torn ship soever I embark,  
That ship shall be my emblem of thy Ark;  
What sea soever swallow me, that flood  
Shall be to me an emblem of thy blood.  
Though thou with clouds of anger do disguise  
Thy face, yet through that mark I know those eyes,  
Which, though they turn away sometimes,  
They never will despise.

I sacrifice this island unto thee,  
And all whom I loved there, and who lov'd me;  
When I have put our seas twixt them and me,  
Put thou thy sea betwixt my sins and thee.  
As the trees sap doth seek the root below  
In winter, in my winter now I go,  
Where none but thee, th'Eternal root  
Of true Love I may know.

Nor thou nor thy religion dost control,  
The amorousness of an harmonious soul,  
But thou would'st have that love thy self.  
As thou Art jealous, Lord, so I am jealous now,  
Thou lov'st not, till from loving more, thou free  
My soul: Who ever gives, takes liberty:  
O, if thou car'st not whom I love  
Alas, thou lov'st not me.

Seal thou this bill of my divorce from all,  
On whom those fainter beams of love did fall.  
Marry those loves, which in youth scattered be  
On Fame, Wit, Hopes (false mistresses) to thee.  
Churches are best for prayer, that have least light:  
To see God only, I go out of sight:  
And to scape stormy dayes, I choose  
An Everlasting night.

## 17 *A Hymn to Christ*

Busy old fool, unruly Sun,  
Why dost thou thus,

Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?  
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?

Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide

Late school-boys, and sour prentices,

Go tell court-huntsmen that the King will ride,

Call country ants to harvest offices:

Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,

Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams so reverent and strong

Why should'st thou think?

I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,  
But that I would not lose her sight so long.

If her eyes have not blinded thine,

Look, and to-morrow, late, tell me,

Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine

Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me.

Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,

And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She is all states, and all princes I;

Nothing else is;

Princes do but play us; compared to this,

All honour's mimic; all wealth alchemy.

Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,

In that the world's contracted thus;

Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be

To warm the world, That's done in warming us.

Shine here on us, and thou art everywhere;

This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere.

## DOREEN CARWITHEN (1922-2003)

### 18 *Serenade*

(Sir Philip Sidney, 1554-1586)

My true love hath my heart and I have his,

By just exchange, one for another given.

I hold his dear and mine he cannot miss;

There never was a better bargain driven.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one;

My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:

He loves my heart, for once it was his own;

I cherish his because it in me bides.

## Three Songs to Poems by Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

### 19 *Noon*

Few and faint a bird's small notes

Stirred on the air and died away

Among the wind enticing trees,

And everywhere the crimson may

Lapped in the sunsweet silence bloomed

And lost in lonely reverie.

A mirrored swan upon a pool

Floated beneath a willow tree.

### 20 *Echo (Seven Sweet Notes)*

Seven Sweet Notes

In the moonlight pale

Warbled a leaf-hidden

Nightingale:

And Echo hiding

By an old green wall

Under the willows

Sighed back them all.

21 *The Ride-by-Nights*

Up on their brooms the witches stream,  
Crooked and black in the crescent's gleam;  
One foot high, and one foot low,  
Bearded, cloaked, and cowled, they go,  
'Neath Charlie Wain they twitter and tweet,  
And away they swarm 'neath the dragon's feet,  
With a whoop and a flutter they swing and sway

And surge pell-mell down the milky way.  
Between the legs of the glittering chair  
They hover and squeak in the empty air,  
Then round they swoop past the glimmering lion  
To where Sirius barks behind huge Orion;  
Up, then, and over to wheel amain,  
Under the silver, and home again.

22 *Clear Had the Day Been*

(Michael Drayton, 1563-1631)

Clear had the day been from the dawn,  
All chequer'd was the sky,  
Thin clouds, like scarfs of cobweb lawn,  
Veil'd heavn's most glorious eye.

The wind had no more strength than this,  
That leisurely it blew,  
To make one leaf the next to kiss  
That closely by it grew.

The rills, that on the pebbles play'd,  
Might now be heard at will;  
This world they only music made,  
Else everything was still.

23 *Slow Spring*

(Katharine Tynan, 1859-1931)

O year, grow slowly. Exquisite, holy,  
The days go on  
With almonds showing the pink stars blowing  
And birds in the dawn.

Grow slowly, year, like a child that is dear,  
Or a lamb that is mild,  
By little steps, and by little skips,  
Like a lamb or a child.

24 *Echo (Who Called?)*

((Walter de la Mare, 1873-1956

"Who called?" I said, and the words  
Through the whispering glades,  
Hither, thither, baffled the birds –  
"Who called? Who called?"

The leafy boughs on high  
Hissed in the sun;  
The dark air carried my cry  
Faintly on:

Eyes in the green, in the shade,  
In the motionless brake,  
Voices that said what I said,  
For mockery's sake:

Who cares?" I bawled through my tears;  
The wind fell low:  
In the silence, "Who cares? who cares?"  
Wailed to and fro.



Photograph: Patrick Allen

Tenor **JAMES GILCHRIST** began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time music career in 1996. His musical interest was fired at a young age, singing first as a chorister in the choir of New College, Oxford and later as a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge.

His extensive concert repertoire has seen him perform in major concert halls throughout the world with renowned conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Roger Norrington, Harry Bicket, Harry Christophers and the late Richard Hickox. He is considered a master of English music, and equally at home in Baroque repertoire – Bach's *St John* and *St Matthew Passions* feature prominently in his schedule.

Highlights have included singing the role of Rev. Adams in Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Bergen Philharmonic and Edward Gardner in performances at the Edinburgh International Festival, Royal Festival Hall, Grieghallen and Den Norske Opera, as well as Haydn's *Creation* for a staged production with Garsington Opera and Ballet Rambert, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with Gothenburg Symphony and Masaaki Suzuki, and a return to King's College, Cambridge to perform *St Matthew Passion* as part of Stephen Cleobury's final Easter week as Director of Music.

James' impressive discography includes recordings of *Albert Herring* (title role), Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel*, and solo disc *Solitude* with pianist and long-time collaborator Anna Tilbrook, including a new work by Jonathan Dove, all for Chandos Records. For Linn Records, *St John Passion* with the AAM, Vaughan Williams *On Wenlock Edge*, and Britten's *Winter Words*, and his critically-acclaimed recordings of Schubert's song cycles for Orchid Classics.

For SOMM Recordings he has sung Hubert Parry's *English Lyrics* and songs by Penelope Thwaites.

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Photograph: Mark Witter

**NATHAN WILLIAMSON** is a pianist, composer, and artistic director. He has recently performed at many leading venues including Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw, Barbican Centre, and the Aldeburgh, Lucerne and Bolzano festivals. He celebrated Beethoven's 250th anniversary with a cycle of the complete Piano Concertos with the Prometheus Orchestra in Aldeburgh. During lockdown he gave several online recitals for City Music Live, as well as streaming live music into local schools.

Nathan has developed a close relationship with SOMM Recordings. Their first CD, *Great American Sonatas* (2017), was hailed by *Musical Opinion* as "a landmark in recordings of American piano music" and *Colour and Light* (2019), of British 20th-century piano repertoire, was chosen as Album of the Month in *International Piano Quarterly*: "No praise could be high enough for Williamson's performances... he unearths musical treasure beyond price".

Recent compositions include a major song cycle for tenor James Gilchrist (to be featured on Volume III of *100 Years of British Song*), a Cello Sonata for Charles Watt, and a children's opera for the Mahogany Opera Group's ground-breaking Snappy Operas project. Nathan has also been commissioned by Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra, Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra, Bury St Edmund's Cathedral and his work has been recorded by NOW Ensemble (New Amsterdam) and Piotr Szewczyk (Navona Records).

Nathan lives in Southwold, on the Suffolk coast, where he founded and directs the Southwold Music Trust, which seeks to make music a central part of the local community. In 2020 he founded 'The Art of British Song', of which the present CDs are the first major venture, to celebrate and showcase British song, its legacy and its future.

[www.nathanwilliamson.co.uk](http://www.nathanwilliamson.co.uk)

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 YouTube Nathan Williamson Pianist Composer