

SOMMCD 0653

Chamber Ensemble of London, Peter Fisher<sup>a</sup> *violin, director*  
 Margaret Fingerhut<sup>b</sup> *piano*, Gabriella Dall'Olio<sup>c</sup> *harp*  
 Peter Cigleris<sup>d</sup> *clarinet*, Judith Hall<sup>e</sup> *flute*, Michael Stowe<sup>f</sup> *oboe*

Clive Jenkins (b.1938)

*Three Pieces for Oboe and Strings* \*<sup>f</sup> [9:09]

[1] I Pastorale. Andante 2:44

[2] II Air. Adagio 3:36

[3] III Scherzo. Giocoso 2:49

[4] Gerald Finzi (1901-56) *Eclogue*, Op.10<sup>b</sup> 11:01

Don Shearman (b.1932)

[5] *Venice in the Rain* \*<sup>bc</sup> 2:32

(Eine Kleine Leichtmusik)

Alan Ridout (1934-96)

*Concertino for Flute and Strings* \*<sup>e</sup> [7:45]

[6] Movement 1 2:49

[7] Movement 2 1:26

[8] Movement 3 3:30

William Lloyd Webber (1914-82)

[9] *Frensham Pond* (arr. Peter Cigleris) \*<sup>d</sup> 2:56[10] Ronald Binge (1910-79) *The Watermill* <sup>f</sup> 3:41

[11] Elias Parish Alvars (1808-49)

*Romance from Concertino for  
Harp and Orchestra*, Op.34 \*<sup>c</sup> 4:57[12] Cecilia McDowall (b.1951) *Y Deryn Pur* \*<sup>d</sup> 8:10

Don Shearman

[13] *Seventeen Going On Eighteen* \*<sup>ac</sup> 3:20

(Eine Kleine Leichtmusik)

[14] Joseph Horowitz (1926-2022)

*Concertante* \*<sup>d</sup> 8:10

[15] Robin Milford (1903-59)

*Mr John Peel Passes By* <sup>e</sup> 1:58Clive Jenkins *Piano Concertino* \*<sup>b</sup> [12:05]

[16] I Allegro 3:44

[17] II Moderato 4:16

[18] III Allegro 4:05

\*First recordings

Total Duration: 74:54

Recorded at Henry Wood Hall, London, September 9, 2020; Kingston University,  
 December 1, 2009 [4, 16-18]; December 6, 2015 [9, 12]

Recorded by Michael Ponder Recording Engineers: Adaq Khan; Michael  
 Ponder [4, 9, 12, 16-18] Front Cover: *Painting Impression III* (Concert, 1913)  
 (detail) Wassily Kandinsky, Lenbachhaus Gallery, Munich. © Azoor Collection/Alamy  
 Design: Andrew Giles Booklet Editor: Michael Quinn

Visit [www.somm-recordings.com](http://www.somm-recordings.com) for further information

© &amp; © 2022 SOMM RECORDINGS · THAMES DITTON · SURREY · ENGLAND · Made in EU

British  
Chamber  
Music

Gerald Finzi

Cecilia McDowall

William Lloyd Webber

Clive Jenkins *et al*

Chamber Ensemble of London  
 Peter Fisher *violin, director*

Nine First  
 Recordings

## British Music for solo instruments and string orchestra

Whilst virtually all the music in this collection is by contemporary or relatively recent British composers, just one work – the slow movement from the Harp Concertino by the legendary English-born harpist Elias Parish-Alvars – dates from the 19th century. Parish-Alvars was born in Devon in 1808 and went on to enjoy a wholly remarkable career as the leading harpist of his day, but he was also a noted composer, as we shall see. Most appropriately, however, for our programme of British music for solo instrument and strings, it is music by **Clive Jenkins** (born in Devon in 1938) that opens and closes our programme, which begins with his **Three Pieces for Oboe and Strings**, a very recent work based on material originally utilised for an earlier concerto for the same combination.

Playing for just under 10 minutes, Jenkins' Three Pieces form an enchanting set of character studies. The three movements' individual titles – Pastorale, Air and Scherzo – equally reflect the nature of each, the composer's natural musicianship displaying an unforced natural lyricism that fits the character of the solo instrument admirably. The work was written in 2021 for our soloist, Michael Stowe.

The sudden death of **Gerald Finzi** in 1956, at the age of 55, removed from British music one of its most individual composers, a creative figure whose work – though he was never a prolific composer – was invariably finely crafted. Earlier in his creative life, Finzi drafted a number of works that never fully came to fruition, including a piano concerto. Much of this work was either abandoned or reworked into the *Grand Fantasia and Toccata* for piano and orchestra, but the second movement, which was virtually complete, was only first heard after Finzi's death.

This very beautiful piece was named **Eclogue** by Finzi's great friend, the composer and pianist Howard Ferguson: the title Ferguson chose (with the approval of Finzi's family) reflects the classical pastoral style of poetry and undoubtedly the nature of the music admirably. Since *Eclogue* was first heard in 1957, it has become arguably the best-known of Finzi's shorter orchestral works. The piano writing is consistently lyrical and deeply expressive.

The veteran British musician **Don Shearman** has long enjoyed a distinguished career in light music, and as Clive Jenkins has written of the two pieces by Shearman in our collection: "[They] are from the suite *Eine Kleine Leichtmusik*, composed for Peter Fisher. **Venice in the Rain** is a love song to Shearman's favourite holiday destination. This little barcarolle glides smoothly along. It is only raining gently. It is not age but time-signature mathematics that account for the title **Seventeen Going On Eighteen**: 17/8 followed by 6/4 divided into triplet quavers".

**Alan Ridout**, born in the outskirts of south London in 1934, was part of that generation of British composers of whom many were strongly influenced by post-Second World War Continental aesthetic movements. Although Ridout himself retained a belief in tonality and more traditional structures, he was not averse to occasional experimentalism in his music. However, his series of eight concertinos for solo instrument and string orchestra (1974-79) are mainly cast in familiar forms, especially this **Concertino for Flute and Strings**, which was written in 1978. The work brilliantly shoehorns into its playing time of less than eight minutes a relatively wide range of expressive content, with the Scherzo movement placed second before deftly returning to more traditional turns of phrase for the soloist in the finale.

**Frensham Pond** by William Lloyd Webber is a very good example of this natural composer's unforced lyrical qualities. Today, we are more likely to first think of his two exceptionally gifted sons – the cellist Julian and his younger composer-brother Andrew – but their father was a genuinely gifted composer in his own right. Frensham pond adjoins the village of Frensham, near Farnham in Surrey and the River Wey. Administered now by the National Trust, this stretch of water is a particularly beautiful and evocative lake, famous for its idyllic and contemplative aspects which clearly inspired the composer to paint this sound picture, which originally appeared in his suite of six *Country Impressions*. Each movement is for a solo woodwind instrument and piano – *Frensham Pond* is for clarinet, and has been very effectively transcribed for string orchestral accompaniment by our gifted soloist, Peter Cigleris.

Ronald Binge also enjoyed a distinguished career in British light orchestral music, especially during the decades before, during and after the Second World War when such music was often broadcast. Binge's most famous composition during this era was the *Elizabethan Serenade*, composed in 1951; his slightly later piece, from 1955, ***The Watermill***, in which running water was clearly the inspiration, equally achieved fame on being used as the title music for a BBC television adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel *The Secret Garden*.

We began our comments by mentioning the one British composer not from the 20th century – **Elias Parish-Alvars** – who was arguably the greatest, and certainly one of the most significant, classical harpists of his day. He was known to and admired by both Berlioz and Liszt, and did so much to convince serious composers of the validity of the expressive qualities of the instrument.

Parish-Alvars composed much for the harp himself, including two concertos and an equally-admired Concertino with orchestra. It is from the last-named work, published in Paris in 1847 – with Berlioz's enthusiastic endorsement – that we hear the effortlessly-beautiful central **Romance**.

**Cecilia MacDowell**, born in London in 1951, has long established herself as one of the leading British composers of her generation, her music for voices in particular forming a large part of her significant output. The impressionistic study ***Y Deryn Pur*** ('The Gentle Dove'), was written to a commission from the 2007 Presteigne Festival for oboe quartet (oboe, violin, viola and cello); the music displays the composer's effortless expressive line in admirable fashion.

Following the previously-mentioned *Seventeen Going On Eighteen* by Don Shearman, we have **Joseph Horowitz's Concertante** for clarinet and strings. Horowitz was born in Vienna in 1926; his family emigrated to Britain following the Anschluss in 1938, since when he became a much-admired composer and teacher. Horowitz followed no 'school' of composition, his interests and output ranging widely over various styles and media. Among his extensive output are several works featuring the clarinet – often written for the great Gervase de Peyer – in which group we find this work, the first of Horowitz's orchestral pieces that he acknowledged. It dates from 1948, and exhibits the composer's admirable ability to communicate effectively with his audience with ease and without being at all simplistic.

**Robin Milford** was born in 1903 and thus comes from the generation of William Walton, Michael Tippett, Alan Rawsthorne, Constant Lambert and Gerald Finzi. But unlike almost all of his illustrious contemporaries, his character and personality were

less outwardly gregarious and although earlier in his career he composed several large-scaled works, their failure to remain in the repertoire led him to concentrate upon smaller forms, in which his natural character is more readily found.

Milford's **Mr John Peel Passes By** is one of Two Orchestral Interludes, published circa 1930; in turn, they are orchestrations from a set of piano duets, in which Milford's gently evocative creativity is admirably expressed. The composer's threading of the famous folk-song into his musical fabric reveals a creative master's hand, and the orchestration is appropriately deft.

Our programme concludes with Clive Jenkins' **Piano Concertino**, played by the artist – Margaret Fingerhut – for whom it was composed in 2018. The composer has written of the work:

"The first movement, like the third, is in sonata form. The second is ternary in three-four time but its introduction suggests two-in-bar. The work was premièred at a concert to celebrate the composer's 80th birthday in the Great Hall at Dartington."

As with the very recent opening work in our programme by Jenkins, his slightly earlier Concertino reveals the hand of a genuine composer, unafraid in the teeming world of contemporary art to write music that communicates directly to the attentive listener, a beguiling score from a musician who expresses himself clearly and directly in language that all can understand and enjoy.

Robert Matthew-Walker © 2022



#### Violin 1

Peter Fisher (director)<sup>abc</sup>  
 Eri Konii<sup>abc</sup>  
 Sophie Langdon<sup>a</sup>  
 Anne Wilson<sup>abc</sup>  
 Richard Milone<sup>a</sup>  
 Judith Kelly<sup>b</sup>

#### Violin 2

Judith Kelly<sup>ac</sup>  
 Richard Smith<sup>abc</sup>  
 Julian Trafford<sup>a</sup>  
 Susan Bowran<sup>c</sup>  
 Julia McDonough<sup>bc</sup>

#### Viola

Levine Andrade<sup>a</sup>  
 Suzanne Evans<sup>abc</sup>  
 David Wyn Lloyd<sup>bc</sup>

#### Cello

Peter Adams<sup>c</sup>  
 Michael Mace<sup>ab</sup>  
 Rowena Calvert<sup>a</sup>  
 Vicky Walker<sup>b</sup>

#### Double Bass

Chris West<sup>bc</sup>  
 Leon Bosch<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Tracks 9, 12

<sup>b</sup> Tracks 4, 16-18

<sup>c</sup> Tracks 1-3, 5-8, 10-11, 13-15



**PETER FISHER** is versatile violinist (baroque to jazz). At the Royal College of Music, the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart and Indiana University USA, he studied with masters from three great schools of playing (Bohemian, Carl Flesch and American) enabling him to capture the spirit of virtually any Western musical tradition. His success in the Alexander Glazunov Violin Competition in Paris confirmed his place amongst the leading British violinists of his generation.

For 30 years he worked regularly with the Dankworth family, performing on several occasions for Royal Gala Evenings together with pianist Avril Dankworth. Sir John Dankworth composed his piece *Mariposas* for Peter's Wigmore Hall

debut in 1996, which he performed later at the Royal Albert Hall at Sir John's and Dame Cleo Laine's Golden Jubilee concert. After this *The Times* hailed him as one in a "handful of the world's finest musicians".

Peter established the **CHAMBER ENSEMBLE OF LONDON** in 1997, consisting of handpicked players from the leading London-based orchestras and chamber music ensembles.

The Ensemble, from eight to 14 players, has given dozens of performances in St Martin-in-the-Fields, the Banqueting House, the Victoria & Albert Museum, County Hall (for the London Film Museum), Kings Place, the Purcell Room, Cadogan Hall and St James's Piccadilly, as well as for festivals and music societies outside London.

Many programmes are 'specials' devised, composed and arranged by Clive Jenkins, the Ensemble's associate composer. They cover a wide variety of subjects – food, sport, film, the Georgians, the royal family, London and the Thames. Back in 2012, he put together a children's programme for Kensington & Chelsea Music Society.

The Chamber Ensemble's CDs have received many broadcasts – particularly on Classic FM.

peterfisherviolin.com  
chamberensembleoflondon.co.uk

---

**PETER CIGLERIS** studied at both the Birmingham Conservatoire and Royal College of Music. Whilst at the Conservatoire, Peter won the prestigious John Ireland Chamber Music Award. During his postgraduate studies, he was awarded the Prix de Fossat and was invited to Cahors, France to present a recital for Her Majesty the Queen of Denmark at a private reception.

Peter has played on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* programme with the Tippett Quartet and performed live for a Radio 3 lunchtime recital with the pianist Duncan Honeybourne.



He has worked with Martin Cousin, Mark Bebbington, Julian Lloyd Webber performing for music clubs and festivals around the UK, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, France, the US, Romania and Mexico. He gave the Mexican première of Malcolm Arnold's Second Clarinet Concerto.

Peter has championed the English clarinet repertoire, premièring concertos and chamber music by Gipps, Benjamin and Spain-Dunk as well as contemporaries such as Lloyd Moore and Peter Seabourne. His recording of Clive Jenkins' Five Pieces for Clarinet with the pianist Antony Gray has had many broadcasts.

On a recent Cala Signum CD, *Rediscovered*, Peter is the soloist with the BBC National

Orchestra of Wales featuring four British clarinet concertos, of which three are world premiere recordings. Peter has featured on discs for Cala Records, Heritage Records, Toccata Classics and SOMM Recordings.

[petercigleris.com](http://petercigleris.com)

**GABRIELLA DALL'OLIO** (harp) has given recitals and concerts throughout Europe, USA, the Far and Middle East. Her early studies were in Italy, France and Germany.

Her critically acclaimed recordings span solo, chamber and orchestral works on Claves, Naxos, Toccata, Koch, Stradivarius, EM, Dal Segno and Ambitus labels, and she has made live recordings for French, German, Italian and Swiss Radio. She has premiered, commissioned and recorded several contemporary works and has worked regularly with UK and European orchestras: Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House.

Gabriella is Head of Harp at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London and gives masterclasses and harp courses as well as orchestral courses worldwide. She has also been a jury member in national and international competitions.

Gabriella is involved in community music projects, some for small babies, some for elderly people and others for hospitals and special needs schools. Gabriella collaborates with dancers and choreographers exploring the relationships between movement, sounds and shapes.



Outside the classical world, Gabriella has played with Tina Turner, Sting, Phil Collins, Elton John at the Royal Albert Hall, Kazabian, the Pet Shop Boys, Faith SFX and 3X world champion DJ Switch.

---

**MARGARET FINGERHUT**, described by *Gramophone* as a pianist of “consummate skill and thrilling conviction”, has travelled all over the world and is particularly known for her innovative recital programmes.

As a concerto soloist she has appeared with all the UK’s major orchestras, and she is frequently heard on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM and many radio stations worldwide.

Her extensive discography on the Chandos label has received much critical acclaim. Her recordings explore lesser-known repertoire, including works by Bax, Lennox and Michael Berkeley, Bloch,



Photograph: Andy Tyler

Dukas, Elgar, Falla, Grieg, Howells, Leighton, Novák, Stanford, Suk and Tansman, as well as several pioneering collections of 19th-century Russian and early-20th-century French piano music.

Two of her Bax recordings were nominated for *Gramophone* awards, and her disc of solo piano music by the Polish/French composer Alexandre Tansman was awarded the accolade of *Diapason d'Or* in France. Her disc of encores, *Endless Song*, was Featured Album of the Week on Classic FM and selected as a *Pianist* magazine Editor's Choice. She was the soloist in the première recording of Elgar's sketches for his Piano Concerto slow movement, and she also made the first recording of a rediscovered student piece by Rachmaninoff. Her recent recording for SOMM with Peter Fisher, *Malcolm Arnold, A Centenary Celebration*, has had many broadcasts.

In 2019 Margaret toured a special programme of words and music called *Far from the Home I Love* to 32 venues across the UK to raise money for refugees. A gala livestream concert during lockdown in 2020 saw her reach her goal of raising £88,000, which is £1,000 for every piano key. She was presented with a 'Champion of Sanctuary' award by City of Sanctuary UK in recognition of her work.

[margaretfingerhut.co.uk](http://margaretfingerhut.co.uk)

---

**JUDITH HALL** was described in *Gramophone* as “a truly magic flute”. She has had outstanding success with her many recordings, particularly Mozart’s Flute Quartets, first choice in the BBC’s ‘Building a Library’ and for a time fifth-best-selling CD in Britain. CDs of concertos by Vivaldi and Mozart have been given top ratings in reviews and CD guides. The BBC has recorded much of the flute solo and chamber music with Judith, and broadcast recitals from St David’s Hall, Cardiff and major music festivals.

As a soloist she has played throughout Europe, Australia and the Far East, some tours sponsored by the British Council.

Judith began her career as principal flute with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and has played as guest principal with orchestras such as London Symphony, English Chamber and English National Opera, also recording solo with The Philharmonia and BBC Concert Orchestra.

Among her musical partners are guitarist Craig Ogden and the wind ensemble Skylark



Quintet/Quartet. Amongst many other groups, she has played with the Koenig Ensemble, Divertimento and the Ensemble Contemporain de Strasbourg.

[judithhall.co.uk](http://judithhall.co.uk)

---

**MICHAEL STOWE** leads a busy career as a freelance oboist working with orchestras, as a soloist and as a chamber musician in London and across the UK. He has recorded with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Royal Northern Sinfonia.

Michael began learning the oboe at the age of 10. In his teens, he became a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and went on to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he graduated with a first class honours degree, concert recital diploma and the Guildhall oboe prize.

