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BRITISH TREASURES

Sonatas for Violin and Piano by

EUGÈNE GOOSSENS • WILLIAM HURLSTONE

PERCY TURNBULL

MADELEINE MITCHELL Violin ANDREW BALL Piano

Eugène Goossens (1893 - 1962)

Sonata No.1 in E minor op. 21

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------|
| 1 | Allegro con anima | 9:52 |
| 2 | Molto adagio | 7:31 |
| 3 | Con brio | 6:09 |
| | | (23:40) |

William Hurlstone (1876 - 1906)

* Sonata in D minor

- | | | |
|---|---------|------|
| 4 | Allegro | 8:08 |
|---|---------|------|

William Hurlstone (contd.)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| 5 | Andante moderato | 5:28 |
| 6 | Allegro scherzando | 6:33 |
| | | (20:19) |

Percy Turnbull (1902 - 1976)

* Sonata in E minor

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| 7 | Allegro | 6:42 |
| 8 | Andante moderato | 6:14 |
| 9 | Allegro scherzando | 5:48 |
| | | (18:54) |

Total duration 63:10

The above individual timings will normally each include two pauses, one before the beginning and one after the end of each movement or work.

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Recording Producer : Siva Oke Recording Engineer: Ben Connellan

Front Cover : Photograph of Madeleine Mitchell & Andrew Ball in front of the Royal College of Music

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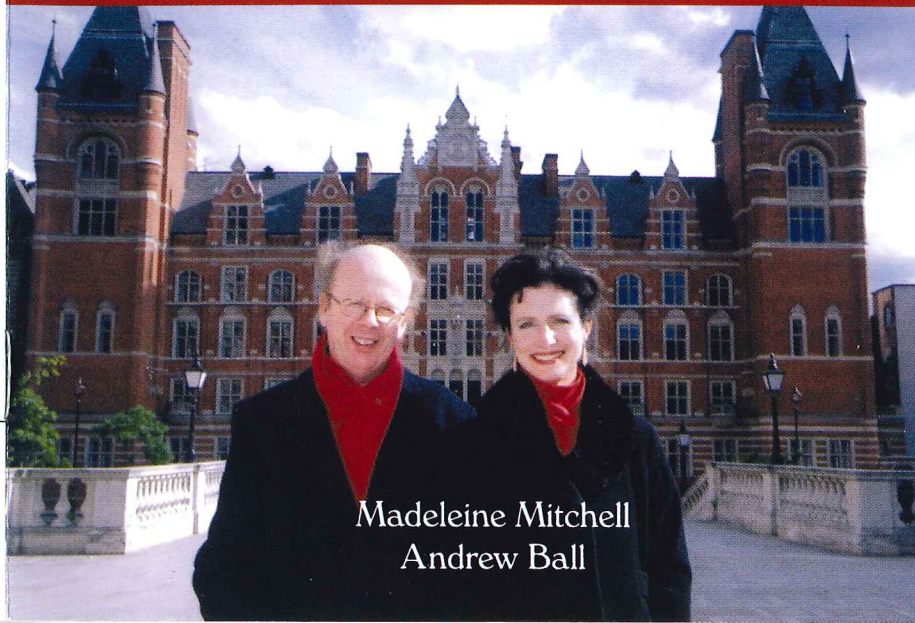
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BRITISH TREASURES

Violin Sonatas by

Goossens, Hurlstone, Turnbull



Madeleine Mitchell
Andrew Ball

It would probably be true to say that the repertoire of the English violin sonata is most readily represented by a small number of works. Elgar's late effusion of 1918 is often performed; Walton's sonata of 1949, written for Yehudi Menuhin and Louis Kentner, still enjoys some currency, Ralph Holmes and Tasmin Little have promoted the works of Delius, and Ireland's arresting Violin Sonata of 1917 has been given the occasional airing. But on the whole a genre which was the creative focus of a broad catalogue of indigenous composers between 1870 and 1940 is now given scant attention even though many of the works exhibit a high standard of workmanship and fertile invention. At the Royal College of Music the genre was thoroughly encouraged by both Parry and Stanford (themselves authors of several works each) both as a subject for composition pupils and for performers, and new works were often heard as part of the RCM's weekly chamber concerts. The generations that followed Parry and Stanford favoured the violin sonata with conspicuous alacrity. Ireland produced two works of great merit, and there were impressive essays by Vaughan Williams, Bridge, Bliss, Moeran, Howells and Dunhill.

Of the prodigious generation that blossomed under Stanford during the 1890s (which included Coleridge-Taylor, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Ireland and Fritz Hart) perhaps the most promising of all was **William Yeates Hurlstone** (1876-1906). During his four years at the RCM Hurlstone developed rapidly as a pianist and composer. As a highly precocious student he produced three substantial orchestral works – *Five Dances for Orchestra* (1895), a Piano Concerto (1895) which was also given at the St. James's Hall under Stanford, and the *Variations on an Original Theme* (1896) – and numerous chamber pieces including a Piano Sonata (1894), a Violin Sonata (1896-7), a Quintet for Piano and Wind (1897) and a Piano Quartet (c. 1898). He also collaborated with Fritz Hart on a short two-act comic opera in 1895 though this work was never performed. After leaving the RCM his already mature style, albeit thoroughly influenced by the classical discipline and organic intellectualism of Brahms, began to establish a personal voice of its own particularly in terms of its harmonic language. This is evident in a number of the later works, notably the *Variations on a Swedish Air* (1904) and the eccentric *Phantasie Quartet in E minor* with which he won the Cobbett Prize in 1905. Afflicted with poor health, Hurlstone eked out a meagre living in south London, supplementing his income with a few hours of weekly teaching at the RCM where he was appointed a professor of counterpoint in 1905. Serious illness always threatened however, and in May 1906 he died after catching a chill. His former teachers and his many admiring colleagues, including his lifelong friend, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, mourned his loss.

Hurlstone's *Violin Sonata in D minor*, which was published by Augener, was dedicated to his friend, student contemporary and accomplished violinist, William J. Read. First performed at the RCM on 3 February 1897, the work was also given at St. James's Hall as part of the series of British Chamber

Concerts on 23 November the same year. Confident in technique and idiom, the sonata confirmed Hurlstone's promising gifts. There is an assured fluidity in the self-developing melodic material of the first movement where the composer's fingerprints are embryonically discernible in the modal inflection of the opening theme and the 'added sixth' harmony of the second subject. The handling of harmony also foreshadows the striking amalgam of diatonicism and (often bold) chromaticism that characterises the later chamber and orchestral works. The juxtaposition of sustained lyricism and livelier 'dance' material – effectively an elision of slow movement and scherzo – constitutes the central movement, a subtle rondo structure in which Hurlstone incorporates elements of variation and tonal development. Humour forms a major part of the sprightly finale, a mood epitomised by the oblique tonal behaviour of the opening bars, the irregular phraseology, the quirky harmonic progressions and the inability of the music to cadence unequivocally, though Hurlstone introduces a more spiritual foil in the guise of a chorale which acts as the second subject in a beautifully wrought sonata design.

While Hurlstone received Stanford's unbridled endorsement, **Eugene Goossens** (1893-1962), who studied composition with Stanford at the RCM between 1910 and 1912, was not infrequently castigated for his overt admiration of Richard Strauss and Debussy. 'He was irritated,' Goossens recounted in his autobiographical *Overture and Beginners*, 'when I told him [Stanford] of being present at the *Elektra* performance earlier in the year [1910], and I considered it thrilling and masterful. He said frankly that were I to hear much more of that 'pornographic rubbish' he'd give me up as a lost soul. So when I saw that the première of Strauss's *Salome* was announced for the end of the year at Covent Garden, I was all the more determined to go.' Though Stanford's corrective blue pencil was much in evidence in Goossens' student works, some of it provoked by assimilation of new modernist tendencies, there was much that the pupil learned from the master both in the classroom, as a violinist in the RCM orchestra, and as a conductor of the same orchestra in his op. 1, the *Variations on a Chinese Theme* (1912). Three years before taking up composition lessons with Stanford, the fourteen-year-old Goossens had won a Liverpool Scholarship to the RCM to study the violin with Achille Rivarde, and for some years after leaving the college he made his living from the instrument playing in the Haymarket Theatre Band (under Norman O'Neill), in the Queen's Hall Orchestra, and in two professional string quartets. Playing the violin gradually gave way to conducting for which he became best known in later life. Composition continued, however, to occupy his time and chamber music, in which he had gained a great deal of experience as a young man, formed a substantial part of his creative output.

Goossens' thoroughly romantic *First Violin Sonata in E minor* op. 21, reflecting his enthusiasm for Strauss, Debussy and Ravel, was written in 1918 and first performed at the Wigmore Hall by the violinist

Albert Sammons (its dedicatee) and the pianist William Murdoch on 1 May 1920 (in a programme that included three other sonatas by Leku, McEwen and Strauss). Goossens, who had known Sammons for many years as a fellow performer, admired this partnership enormously believing that 'there [would] never again be on any platform, anywhere, a more perfectly matched team, or one that reached artistry and depth of feeling in performance than did those unassuming, modest players.' Sammons and Murdoch were famous for their championship of contemporary British music notably works by Elgar, Goossens, McEwen, Bantock, Bax, Scott, Holbrooke, Delius, Howells and Rubbra, and Sammons himself was renowned for his performances of concertos by Elgar and Delius and later by Dyson and Moeran. The première of the Sonata was, according to Goossens, a great artistic success. 'They played it *con amore*', Goossens remarked, and the interpretation of the slow movement, with its folk-tune, was so beautiful to the composer's ears that he '[despaired] of ever hearing it played that way again.' This movement, which evidently retained a special affection for the composer was recorded by him and the violinist André Mangeot in the 1920s on 78rpm. It was Sammons and Murdoch who also gave the première of Goossens' *Second Violin Sonata* op. 50 (completed in August 1930) at the Bradford Festival on 20 January 1931. The second Sonata, published the same year by Chester, was dedicated to the Polish violinist who commissioned it.

Kaleidoscopic harmonic colour, rhythmic complexity and a neo-classical wiriness characterise much of Goossens' later style between the two world wars, and his more advanced language, which hovers on the cusp of atonality, shows an affinity for the chromatic parlance of Bax, Szymanowski, and, perhaps most of all, Koechlin. If this is not so apparent in the powerful First Sonata, there are nevertheless hints of irony contrasting with the strongly emotional content and strikingly chromatic language of much of the writing. The large-scale outer movements frame the lyrical *Molto adagio*, described by one contemporary as 'the most single-minded piece of tone poetry the composer has written.'

Goossens' accomplished prowess as a violinist was matched if not exceeded by the pianistic abilities of **Percy Turnbull** (1902-1976) who, having already obtained his LRAM and ARCM diplomas in 1922, won an Open Scholarship to the RCM in 1923. At the College he studied composition with Holst, Vaughan Williams and John Ireland besides attending classes with Dunhill, Dyson, and R.O. Morris. Among his student contemporaries, many of whom were to excel in the music profession in later years, were Thomas Armstrong, Edward Clark, Keith Falkner, Elizabeth Maconchy, David Moule-Evans, Michael Mullinar, Edmund Rubbra, Kendall Taylor, Michael Tippett, Leslie Woodgate and Kenneth Wright; but it was Turnbull, as winner of the Mendelssohn Scholarship and Arthur Sullivan Prize, who won the approbation of his teachers. His accolades were principally in recognition of his ability as a

composer, but he was also highly regarded as a pianist which allowed him to find work as a recitalist at the RCM and Wigmore Hall, and as accompanist for 2LO (forerunner of the BBC) and the BBC.

After composing two sets of variations, one on an original theme for string quartet (1923) and one on a theme of Purcell for cello and piano (1924), Turnbull produced his one and only extended instrumental work, the *Violin Sonata in E minor*, in 1925. It was given its first hearing at the RCM on 24 June 1924 played by the violinist Marie Wilson with the composer at the piano. The surviving autograph manuscript bears the address '22, Litchfield Way, Onslow Village, Guildford, Surrey' on the title page. This was where the composer took lodgings in 1927 (from his fellow RCM student, Frederick Bontoft) which may suggest that the manuscript may be a revised copy of the 1925 version. It is unclear whether the work received further performances after this date, but it remained unpublished during the composer's lifetime and was only revived in 1983 by Ann Hooley and Robin Bowman at the University of Southampton. Since then the work has been published by Thames Music Publishing in Association with the Turnbull Memorial Trust.

Written in a predominantly lyrical style, Turnbull's sonata is full of extended melodic lines and broad climaxes underpinned by a rich harmonic language and sonority redolent of Debussy and Ravel (composers he greatly admired) and, at times, of his teacher John Ireland. The fluent first movement contrasts a somewhat sombre Dorian melody (replete with ostinato bass), low in the violin's compass, with a more energetic, dance-like second subject. Both ideas are developed fully within the somewhat classical proportions of the sonata design, though it is the first idea that prevails in the coda. A more brooding melancholy is reserved for the slow movement in C sharp minor where the sustained lyrical powers of the violin are fully exploited. In the spirited finale Turnbull's admiration for Ravel is in greatest evidence, particularly in the effective writing for the piano, though perhaps the most memorable material is reserved for the violin, whose central 'song' (supported by luxuriant harmonies in the piano) is a moving testimony to Turnbull's creative gifts.

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Madeleine Mitchell has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in over 40 countries in major festivals and venues. Described by The Times as 'an uncommonly intelligent and accomplished musician' she is particularly known for her recitals in a wide repertoire and for imaginative programming. She broadcasts frequently for TV and radio internationally and for BBC Radio 3, including the Proms. She

represented Britain in the festival UKin NY with a recital at Lincoln Center, has given recitals at Sydney Opera House, Seoul Center for the Arts, toured extensively for the British Council and frequently performed in London. She worked closely with Sir Peter Maxwell Davies as the violinist in the Fires of London and many other composers have written works for her including MacMillan, Nyman and Harvey, premiered in festivals including Bath, Spitalfields and Brighton. Madeleine has performed concertos with orchestras such as the Czech and Polish Radio Symphonies – ISCM Masters of C20 Music in Warsaw, Wurttemberg and Munich Chamber, London orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic, and for the BBC. Her recordings include Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* in the group she formed with Joanna MacGregor, which is the widely recommended version. She has also performed with Kathryn Stott, Peter Donohoe, Paul Watkins, Robert Cohen and Norbert Brainin – for his 80th birthday concert at the Wigmore Hall. Madeleine Mitchell is a Professor at the Royal College of Music, where as a scholar she won the Tagore Gold Medal. As Fulbright/ITT Fellow she gained a master's degree in New York at the Eastman and Juilliard schools.

Andrew Ball studied with Kendall Taylor at the Royal College of Music, and read music at Queen's College, Oxford. Regarded as one of the foremost British pianists of his generation, a busy career has taken him all over the world. He has a reputation for innovative and imaginative programmes, and chamber music and contemporary music have always played a large part in his repertoire. He has given countless premieres (including the first British performance of Sofia Gubaidulina's Piano Sonata at the Bath Festival), made his Proms debut playing Messiaen and studied Tippett's sonatas with the composer. Ives and Busoni are also special interests. He has played with the Nash Ensemble, London Sinfonietta, Villiers Piano Quartet and Gemini. Many acclaimed CDs range from the complete Tippett song-cycles to Billy Mayerl's works for piano and orchestra. In 2001 he played in Stravinsky's 'Les Noces' for the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, gave a series of chamber concerts at Symphony Hall, Birmingham with the Bell'Arte Ensemble and appeared at the Aldeburgh Festival playing Two-Piano music with Rolf Hind. Formerly a sought-after teacher at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Andrew Ball became Head of Keyboard at the Royal College of Music in 1999. He regularly gives masterclasses, most recently in Berlin, Singapore, Malaysia and Japan.

Madeleine Mitchell and Andrew Ball have performed as a duo since their acclaimed recital for the Huddersfield Festival in 1992, with numerous recitals for festivals, for BBC Radio 3 including many sonatas of the same period as those on this CD, and the Franck sonata for Television.

This recording has been made with support from the Turnbull Memorial Trust and the Royal College of Music.

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