

PORTRAITS OF ENGLAND

RAYBOULD-ARNOLD-VAUGHAN WILLIAMS-IRELAND-FINZI-HOROVITZ



E237HR



JONATHAN PARKIN, *clarinet* SEBASTIAN STANLEY, *piano*

CLARENCE RAYBOULD, (1886-1972)

1. THE WISFUL SHEPHERD.....	4:26
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MALCOLM ARNOLD, (1921-2006)

SONATINA Op.26

2. <i>Allegro con brio</i>	2:42
3. <i>Andantino</i>	2:45
4. <i>Furioso</i>	2:17

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, (1872-1958)

SIX STUDIES IN ENGLISH FOLK-SONG

5. <i>Lovely on the water</i>	1:43
6. <i>Spurn Point</i>	1:17
7. <i>Van Diemen's Land</i>	1:44
8. <i>She borrowed some of her mother's gold</i>	1:44
9. <i>The Lady and the Dragon</i>	1:50
10. <i>As I walked over London Bridge</i>	0:51

JOHN IRELAND, (1879-1962)

11. FANTASY-SONATA.....	14:22
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GERALD FINZI, (1901-1956)
FIVE BAGATELLES Op.23

12. <i>Prelude</i>	3:50
13. <i>Romance</i>	4:50
14. <i>Carol</i>	2:10
15. <i>Forlana</i>	2:57
16. <i>Fughetta</i>	2:05

JOSEPH HOROVITZ, (1926-2022)
SONATINA

17. <i>Allegro calmato</i>	4:52
18. <i>Lento, quasi andante</i>	4:34
19. <i>Con brio</i>	3:41

T.T.:64:48

JONATHAN PARKIN, *clarinet*
SEBASTIAN STANLEY, *piano*





Born in 1886, **Clarence Raybould** studied music at Birmingham University, where he graduated in 1912. Though an accomplished composer and pianist, he was perhaps better known as a conductor, conducting works ranging from operetta and musical comedy to standard classical repertoire and championing new works by contemporary British composers. Assistant conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra between 1936-1945, Raybould led a successful career as a conductor of various British orchestras. Amongst his own compositions is the opera *The Sumida River*, premiered in Birmingham in 1916.

The Wistful Shepherd represents the only lesser-known work on our CD. A hidden gem of lighter English music for the clarinet and piano duo, it was first recorded by Reginald Kell and the BBC Salon Orchestra in 1942, in a version for clarinet and orchestra. Along with Frederick Thurston, Kell was one of the major influences on British clarinet playing during the 20th century.

As the opening track of our album, *The Wistful Shepherd* provides the perfect introduction to *Portraits of England*, immediately wooing the listener with its pensive melody. The deep-hued tone of the clarinet perfectly captures the sense of longing and yearning which the title suggests, nostalgically evoking images of the English countryside at its best, in all its beauty, peace and tranquility.

Malcolm Arnold was born in the English market town of Northampton. A rebellious teenager, he was attracted to the creative freedom of jazz and, after hearing Louis Armstrong play at a concert in Bournemouth, he took up the trumpet at the age of 12. He began his professional career in the 1940s as a trumpeter in the London Philharmonic and BBC Symphony orchestras, having studied both composition and trumpet at the Royal College of Music. However, with his earliest works already in print, Arnold soon abandoned orchestral playing and, by the age of thirty, his life was devoted entirely to composition. His

natural melodic gift very quickly earned him a reputation as a composer of British Light Music and music for film.

Between 1946 and 1952, Arnold wrote a group of four sonatas for wind instruments and piano, all cleverly written to suit the individual characteristics of the instrument and the personality of the player for whom each one was composed. The clarinet *Sonatina* was written in 1951, in only one week, for the English clarinetist, Frederick Thurston, whose playing encouraged so many composers of the time to write new works for the instrument. Its first performance, however, was given by a young Colin Davis, before he became a pre-eminent conductor!

The work is in three very brief movements. The first is somewhat wild in character, featuring wide leaps in the clarinet and strong interjections from the piano. The catchy second theme hints at jazz rhythms and reappears in a ghostly pianissimo at the end of the movement. The second movement is a complete contrast, displaying Arnold's fondness of the gentle cantabile style, with hints of film music in the eerie middle section. Wonderful writing! The third movement, marked 'Furioso', is a breathless, wild dance, showing off the virtuosic brilliance of both players.

Ralph Vaughan Williams is arguably the most important English composer of his generation, largely due to his contribution to the twentieth century revival of British music. A composer of operas, ballets, film scores, church music, hymn tunes, symphonies, concerti and songs, chamber music plays a rather small part in his output.

The unfortunate result is that some real gems, like this simple set of folk songs, are often overshadowed by his core orchestral and choral works. *The Six Studies in English Folk-Song* is one of only a hand full of his chamber works. The studies were written for, and dedicated to, the cellist, May Mukle, who gave the first performance with her sister at The English

Folk Dance Society Festival in London, June 4th 1926. When they were published a year later, Vaughan Williams prepared alternative parts for violin, viola, and clarinet.

Vaughan Williams was passionate about collecting and preserving English folk songs. It was an important part in the development of his own unique voice. The six studies are all in a slow tempo and are somewhat pastoral in character, apart from the final vivace movement, which provides sharp contrast to the music that has gone before.

John Ireland studied composition with Sir Charles Stanford, who taught many of the English composers who emerged at the end of the 19th century. His music belongs to the school of 'English Impressionism' and is intensely personal in style.

Ireland's love and understanding of the clarinet came from his youth, on hearing the playing of Richard Mühlfeld, the clarinetist for whom Brahms wrote his clarinet works. However, it was not until April 1943, towards the end of his compositional life, that Ireland began work on the *Fantasy-Sonata*. It was indeed one of his last most important works and was, like the Arnold Sonata, dedicated to Frederick Thurston. It was first performed by Thurston and pianist Kendall Taylor in London's Wigmore Hall in 1944 and, soon after, broadcast with Ireland himself at the piano.

The work places high demands on both performers and is taxing on both technical and expressive levels. Certainly for the clarinetist, Ireland's writing requires from the player the most superb control in the high register. There is much interplay between the two instruments, which are skillfully interwoven. Although in one continuous movement, the work falls into three main sections, which are so convincingly integrated that the transition to and from each section is almost seamless. Much of the thematic material of the *Fantasy-Sonata* is derived from the initial clarinet phrase, at the heart of which is the interval of a perfect fifth. The second idea present within the Andante Moderato is introduced by the piano in a lengthy passage of legato chords

with figuration in the bass. When the clarinet joins, intensity is generated, a climax is reached and then the tension is released once more, preparing the music for the dreamy tranquillo section which follows. A short unaccompanied clarinet passage leads to the slow movement, *Piu lento*, whose theme begins in the piano. The music grows more impassioned and there are elaborate flourishes for both instruments. The third and final movement, the thick-textured *Giusto*, is marked by a relentless dancing rhythm over which the clarinet states an angular distorted version of the theme, with which it calmly began the work.

Gerald Finzi is perhaps best known as a composer of vocal works, having composed nine English song cycles, including some forty songs based on poems by Thomas Hardy, as well as larger choral works and English anthems. Apart from a clarinet concerto and these bagatelles, his best known instrumental works include a beautiful cello concerto and the orchestral works *New Year Music* and *The Fall of the Leaf*.

The *Five Bagatelles* represent a beautiful evocation of pastoral England. They speak of Finzi's love for English verse and his devotion to growing English apples. Like Mozart and Brahms, Finzi was attracted by the mellow and plaintive qualities of the clarinet and he exploits the instrument's range, colour and expressive qualities in these pieces. They were first performed by Pauline Juler, a clarinetist who abandoned her career after marrying in 1948. She was joined by pianist Howard Ferguson in a National Gallery concert in 1943, where the duo performed the set of (at that time) only four pieces! It was only after this premiere that it was suggested to Finzi that the work should end with a fast finale. The following summer, the *Fughetta* was added and the work then published in 1945 as *Five Bagatelles*, the initial print run selling out within a year! They remain a staple part of English clarinet repertoire to this day.

Like the clarinet concerto, the outer movements are extrovert in character. The *Prelude* opens with a busy allegro of ringing church bells. Finzi then takes us to a more peaceful countryside

setting in the central slower section, which also features that Finzi melodic finger print, the wistful falling minor 7th interval. The *Romance* typifies Finzi's favourite mood of quiet contemplation, the stunning stillness of the outer sections contrasted by a warm lyrical central section. Based on a song that Finzi wrote for Herbert Howells' four-year-old daughter, the *Carol* is marked by a simple and tender clarinet tune, free from tension or complexity. The gently lilting *Forlana*, a title also used by Bach and Ravel, is in 6/8 rhythm and the final Fughetta provides the lively ending which the set demands, complete with a charming throw-away ending.

Although born in Austria, **Joseph Horowitz** is considered a British composer, having emigrated to Great Britain in 1938. Considered a jazz neo-classic composer, he fuses elements of jazz and classical music to create a style of his own. His compositions include some 12 ballets, 3 operas, several concertos, chamber music, works for brass and wind bands, popular cantatas such as *Captain Noah* and his *Floating Zoo*, and music for TV and radio. After winning several prizes for his composition, Horowitz joined the professorial staff at the Royal College of Music in 1961, where he still teaches.

The *Sonatina* was composed in 1981 at the request of the great British clarinetist Gervase de Peyer and his duo pianist Gwenneth Pryor, who gave its first performance at London's Wigmore Hall the same year. It is one of four works written with de Peyer in mind, the others a concerto, a concertante with strings and the Two Majorcan Pieces, also with piano. The *Sonatina* has undoubtedly become the best known and most popular of these, Horowitz's writing displaying a true understanding of the flexible qualities of the clarinet, really bringing out the best of the instrument.

Despite its melodic and rhythmic influences of jazz and other popular music, the work remains faithful to the traditional form associated with sonatas: a fast-moving first movement in classical sonata form, a slow movement in ternary form and a rondo to end. The first movement largely concentrates on the lyrical qualities of the clarinet's middle register, against a rippling piano ac-

companiment, interspersed with more dramatic moments. In the second movement, Horovitz exploits the expressive and vocal qualities of the clarinet, in this smooth, relaxed and heart-felt song, supported by slow chordal accompaniment from the piano. The energetic rondo, at times leaning in the direction of Latin jazz, is made up of two themes which are alternated in equal proportions. The work calls for equal virtuosity from both players and is rewarding and fun to play.



Recorded by **Sean Murray**

24/192 recording.

Soundfield microphones. Photos by **Stephen Johns**.

Clarinet by **Luis Rossi**. *English model (Chile 2000)*

Bösendorfer piano.

