

TRAVELLING LIGHT...



The music of Jim Parker
composer of popular TV music for
Foyle's War, Midsomer Murders,
The House of Elliott
and many more

TRAVELLING LIGHT

Music by Jim Parker (b. 1934)

A South American Journey

22:03

- | | | | |
|---|-----|------------------|------|
| 1 | I | Tango Cinco | 4:59 |
| 2 | II | Pueblo Tranquilo | 2:32 |
| 3 | III | Volando | 6:45 |
| 4 | IV | La Cometa | 3:58 |
| 5 | V | Rapido | 3:48 |

Bonjour M. Grappelli

22:35

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-------------------------|------|
| 6 | I | Bonjour M. Grappelli | 6:00 |
| 7 | II | Elegy | 5:50 |
| 8 | III | Hurdy Gurdy | 5:13 |
| 9 | IV | Au revoir, M. Grappelli | 5:29 |

Three Diversions

12:01

- | | | | |
|----|-----|----------------|------|
| 10 | I | Spring Dance | 3:56 |
| 11 | II | Paean | 5:01 |
| 12 | III | A Leave-Taking | 3:04 |

Hoofers

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|----------------------|------|-------|
| 13 | I | The Flying Scotsman | 3:18 | 13:59 |
| 14 | II | Banjolele | 2:10 | |
| 15 | III | The Lonely Ballerina | 4:09 | |
| 16 | IV | Hoofers | 4:15 | |

total duration

70:51

The Solem Quartet

(tracks 1-12)

John Turner (recorders)

Anna Christensen (harp)

Alex Jones (double bass)

(tracks 1-5, 10-12)

Richard Simpson (oboe)

Janet Simpson (piano)

(tracks 13-16)

THE MUSIC

This is a CD of recent music but in the tradition of such luminaries as Handel, Mozart and Irving Berlin I have occasionally rescued material written previously for a different project usually, in my case, television. A great deal of the music written for this medium inevitably tends to disappear with the programme itself but I have rescued a few waifs. I will indicate these in the programme notes.

A South American Journey

The distinguished composer Stephen Dodgson, who died recently, was a near neighbour of mine and I was asked by John Turner the virtuoso recorder player, to write some music for a concert celebrating his life, to be performed at the Royal Northern College of Music. The instrumentation was to be recorder and harpsichord. I decided to base the suite on an imaginary visit to South America. Why South America? Stephen never went there, neither did I and the recorder and harpsichord are not instruments which are particularly characteristic of the area but nevertheless I liked the idea. To add to the confusion there is, in the fourth movement, a section which is meant to imply mariachi music. This is Mexican in style, another anomaly, because Mexico is in North America. However it seemed a good idea at the time so I have retained it.

For this recording I have used the forces which we had available on the recording sessions and re-scored and developed the piece for recorder, harp and string quintet. I have given each movement a name in Spanish but the titles came after the music was written and are merely an indication of the pictures that they seemed to conjure up. Any apparent linguistic expertise on my part is illusory. I looked them up in a Spanish dictionary.

Bonjour M. Grappelli

While I was waiting to take a final bow behind the curtain at Covent Garden with various actors and singers who had given a charity performance, Stephane Grappelli was on the other side of the curtain improvising on one of his favourite pieces “Sweet Georgia Brown”. It is a simple song but in Stephane's hands it produced a moment of magic which left an indelible impression. This is my tribute to a great musician.

I have reworked three old themes during this quartet. In the first movement a blues tune appears briefly and does so again in the third movement as a counter melody. It then becomes the main theme of the last movement. It started its life with The Barrow Poets and still exists on vinyl under the title of *High Rise Blues*.

The second movement is dedicated to Celia Sheen, my theremin player in the Midsomer Murder TV series.

This melody started life as the theme tune of a television series called “Body and Soul” starring Kristin Scott Thomas. It was originally scored for oboe, harpsichord and string orchestra and Celia played the violin on the original version, hence the dedication.

The third movement, Hurdy Gurdy, started as a song with words by Cicely Herbert in a television musical for the BBC called “Petticoat Lane”. At the beginning and end of this movement the second violin plays a quarter tone flat. This is intentional and is not an aberration by the performer.

The quartet was commissioned by the Barnes Festival where it was first performed.

Three Diversions

This suite was first performed at the Royal Northern College of Music as part of a ceremony to celebrate the opening of The Ida Carroll Walkway. The first two movements are developments of themes which I wrote for a television series called "Parnell and the Englishwoman".

The last movement, "A Leave-Taking", which is an arrangement of the traditional song "The Leaving of Liverpool", is in memory of Antony Hopkins who in addition to being a distinguished composer, pianist and conductor presented a series called "Talking About Music" for thirty-two years on BBC radio which introduced a great many people, including myself, to classical and Twentieth Century music.

Hoofers: Four pieces for oboe and piano

The Flying Scotsman

One of my early passions was collecting train numbers. The nearest main line station was Darlington on the L.N.E.R. Line and the highlight of a visit to the station was The Flying Scotsman, a non-stop express running between London and Edinburgh. As we stood on the footbridge we could hear the faint sound of the approaching train getting louder until eventually it roared beneath our feet and disappeared in the distance. All over in a flash.

Banjolele

As its name implies the banjolele is a hybrid instrument using the relatively simple tuning of the ukelele with the percussive sound of the banjo. I was prompted to write this piece after reading a story by PG Wodehouse, *Thank You Jeeves*, in which Bertie Wooster is evicted from a series of lodgings because of his insistence on practising the banjolele. Eventually even Jeeves, his faithful manservant leaves. I hope our audience is more forgiving.

The Lonely Ballerina

This is a reworking of a theme which I used in the long-running TV series “Midsomer Murders”. In this version it depicts a retired dancer who is reminiscing about her career on stage and tries a few leisurely pirouettes around the room.

Hoofers

Some years ago Wally K Daly and myself were commissioned by Granada Television to write a musical about Margaret Kelly, better known as Miss Bluebell. At that time Bluebell was running the entertainment at The Lido, a famous Parisian nightclub. The main attraction at The Lido was a troupe of dancers called The Bluebell Girls and we were rigorous with our research into this aspect of the story. It was, as they say, tough, but someone had to do it. This piece is reminiscent of that time. “Hoofers”, as its name implies, is show business slang for dancers.

Jim Parker



THE COMPOSER

After graduating as a silver medalist at the Guildhall School of Music, Jim Parker was a professional oboist before concentrating on composing and conducting. He had early recording success with BANANA BLUSH and three subsequent albums in which he set to music the poems of the late British Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman; the recordings, spoken by the poet and conducted by the composer have achieved classic status. Television programmes include HOUSE OF CARDS, THE HOUSE OF ELIOTT, FOYLE'S WAR and MIDSOMER MURDERS.

Commissions include pieces written for The Nash Ensemble, The Barrow Poets, Philip Jones Brass, The Hilliard Ensemble, The Albion Ensemble, The Wallace Collection and Poems on the Underground. His published compositions include A LONDONER IN NEW YORK for ten brass, MISSISSIPPI FIVE for wind quintet, THE GOLDEN SECTION for brass quintet, BONJOUR M. GRAPPELLI for string quartet and a CLARINET CONCERTO. He is the recipient of an honorary degree from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has won the British Academy Award for best original Television Music four times.

THE PERFORMERS

John Turner (recorder) is one of the leading recorder players of today. Born in Stockport, he was Senior Scholar in Law at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge before pursuing a legal career, acting for many distinguished musicians and musical organisations (including the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain), alongside his many musical activities. These included numerous appearances and recordings with David Munrow's Early Music Consort of London, the Academy of Ancient Music, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and the English Baroque Soloists.

He now devotes his time to playing, writing, reviewing, publishing, composing and generally energising. He has played as recorder soloist with the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Manchester Camerata, and many other leading orchestras and ensembles. Concertos and works with orchestra have been written for him by Gordon Crosse, Anthony Gilbert, Peter Hope, Kenneth Leighton, Elis Pehkonen, Alan Bullard, John Casken, Philip Wood, and many other distinguished composers.

His recordings include no less than five sets of the Brandenburg Concertos, as well as the F Major version of Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 with Menuhin and George Malcolm, but lately he has made numerous acclaimed recordings of the recorder's contemporary concerto and chamber music repertoire, including four solo concerto discs, all of which have received critical acclaim. The most recent (both on the Divine Art label) are a recording of music by the novelist and composer (and fellow Mancunian) Anthony Burgess, music by English composer Peter Hope and a disc in memory of Alfred Deller (a good friend) with James Bowman and Robin Blaze, including music by Blow, Handel, Tippett and Fricker.

In the last few years he has played in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, France, New Zealand, Japan and the USA, and given many recitals on Radio 3 with pianist Peter

Lawson. In all, he has given the first performances of over 500 works for the recorder, with works by many non-British composers, including Leonard Bernstein, Ned Rorem, Peter Sculthorpe, Douglas Lilburn, Petr Eben and Ruth Zechlin. Many of the works he has premiered have now entered the standard repertoire, and these and his own recorder compositions are regularly set for festivals and examinations.

He edits series of recorder publications for both Forsyths and Peacock Press, and founded the periodical *Manchester Sounds*, in response to the perceived threat to music libraries in Great Britain. In addition he was responsible for the rediscovery of several works for his instrument, including the Rawsthorne Recorder Suite, Antony Hopkins' Pastiche Suite, Herbert Murrill's Sarabande, the Handel F Major Trio Sonata and John Parry's Nightingale Rondo (the only substantial known British nineteenth century work for a fipple flute).

He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Northern College of Music in 2002 for his services to British music, and is a Visiting Distinguished Scholar of Manchester University.

Harpist **Anna Christenson** has played for/with: Russell Watson, Katherine Jenkins, Hayley Westenra, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Timothy West & Prunella Scales, Rudolph Nureyev, Jose Carreras, Carl Davis, Paul McCartney (performing his *Liverpool Oratorio* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in France), Sarah Walker, Renee Fleming, Kiri Te Kanawa and Midge Ure, in front of Diana Princess of Wales, HRH Prince Charles, the Duchess of York, and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

She has performed at the Proms with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Halle and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. She has played for West End shows including *The Sound of Music* (with Christopher Cazenove), *The King and I* (with Susan Hampshire) and the nationwide tour of *Me and my Girl* (with Gary Wilmot). She enjoys playing for opera, ballets, and chamber music performances, and has worked with most orchestras and ballet companies in the UK, including English National Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Northern Ballet Theatre, Opera North and Sinfonia Viva.

Anna is one of the most versatile and adaptable harpists in the UK. After gaining a degree in music in her native New Zealand, she was the resident harpist in the Hotel Intercontinental in Bahrain. Completing her MA in music at the University of Wales,

she then returned to NZ for several years to work as Principal Harpist with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. She was also harpist in residence for New Zealand Government House where she played for receptions and guests including the Emir of Bahrain, the Governor-General of Fiji, and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

Anna enjoys playing for weddings and corporate functions, and has a wide range of music styles. Requests she has most enjoyed learning for previous clients have included *Match of the Day* theme (for the marriage of a professional footballer), and the theme from *Blackadder* as a groom's surprise to his friends. Her favourite musical memories include performing with the Band of the Royal Marines (no shortage of helpful and muscular young men to help move the harp) and playing Pachelbel's *Canon in D* as a duo with BBC Radio 4 presenter Kathy Clugston on ukulele.

Alex Jones is eighteen years old and lives in Stockport, England. He is this year finishing studies at Stockport Grammar School. Alex began studying piano with Manola Hatfield aged six and double bass with Gethin Griffith when he was seven and is currently studying double bass with Ronan Dunne, principal of the BBC Philharmonic. Alex successfully auditioned for a place in the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain (NCO) at age eleven and performed with NCO for three years until his retirement as principal bass at fourteen. During his time with NCO, Alex was thrilled to perform for the Queen and members of the Royal Family at Westminster Hall at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Lunch. Alex commenced his studies at Junior RNCM in 2012 and has been the recipient of the Yorke Trust Prize for Double Bass for the past two years. Also in 2012 ago he became one of the youngest players to gain places in both the Halle Youth Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (NYO). He has been appointed principal of the bass section in the NYO for the 2016 season. Alex has benefited from working with esteemed conductors including Sir Mark Elder, Vasily Petrenko, Paul Daniel, John Wilson, François-Xavier Roth, Peter Stark and Ilan Volkov and has enjoyed performing at some of the most prestigious concert venues in the country including the Barbican, Royal Festival Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Cadogan Hall, The Sage Gateshead and televised Proms with NYO at the Royal Albert Hall. In the past year, Alex has played in the Konzerthaus in Berlin, performed the premiere of two new solo double bass works, achieved a high distinction in the dipABRSM diploma and was a

winner in this year's BBC Inspire Young Composers' Competition and highly commended in last year's competition. Alex enjoys all aspects of music, including performance, composition, and conducting.

Richard Simpson hails from Yorkshire. After four years study at The Royal College of Music studying with the late Sydney Sutcliffe, he was appointed to the position of sub-principal oboe with the BBC Symphony Orchestra – a position he held for just one year, before being invited to join the Halle Orchestra as Principal Oboe. He spent eighteen years with that orchestra and during that time had the opportunity of performing concerti by Mozart, Strauss, Vaughan Williams, Martinů and Hummel with them. He was also a very active chamber musician in the North-West of England, performing many solo recitals and visiting festivals both in this country and abroad.

In 1991 he returned to the BBC Symphony Orchestra, this time as Principal Oboe, and with them has recorded the *Sinfonia Concertantes* of both Haydn and Mozart and appeared as soloist in Vaughan Williams' *Oboe Concerto*. He plays frequently as a guest with all the other London symphony orchestras and with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. He is again involved in various chamber music ensembles, and with his wife, Janet, is a member of the Syrinx Trio, with Michael Cox, Principal Flute of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

His other recordings include Benjamin Britten's *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid*, the *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* by Edmund Rubbra and a disc of Thomas Pitfield's music.

Janet Simpson studied with Cyril Smith at the Royal College of Music. Whilst there she won several prizes for accompaniment and chamber music including a Royal Overseas League award. Shortly after leaving college she was appointed principal keyboard player in the Halle Orchestra, a position she held for over 30 years. During that time she toured extensively and was involved in numerous recordings and broadcasts. She also appeared many times as a soloist with the orchestra.

Janet continues to perform regularly as a chamber music player and as an accompanist. She is a member of the Syrinx Trio.

Now living in London, she has become increasingly involved in contemporary music and has frequently performed in the Music of our Time series with players from the

Philharmonia Orchestra, as well as playing in many concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, playing works by composers as diverse as Pierre Boulez and Louie Andriessen.

Janet was delighted to accompany her husband Richard in the first performance of Peter Hope's *Oboe Sonata* in a concert to celebrate the life of Lady Barbirolli in Manchester's Bridgewater Hall in 2009.

The ***Solem Quartet*** were winners of the 2014 Royal Overseas League Ensemble Competition, and were brought together in 2011 by their studies at the University of Manchester, where they take their name from the University motto "arduus ad solem" meaning "striving towards the sun". Having moved on to study at the Royal Northern College of Music, the quartet enjoyed success in numerous competitions including the RNCM Nossek Prize, the RNCM Barbirolli Prize for String Quartets and the Britten Centenary Intercollegiate String Quartet Competition.

Continuing their relationship with the RNCM, the quartet are Junior Fellows in Chamber Music for the 2015/16 year. As part of the Fellowship they each give regular chamber coaching to undergraduate and postgraduate chamber ensembles as well as playing in a series of high profile concerts in the college throughout the year.

The Solem Quartet enjoy a busy concert schedule performing at venues across the UK including Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Holywell Music Room and the Edinburgh Festival as well as performing internationally in several European countries. They have also made an appearance on BBC Radio 3's programme 'In Tune' in September 2014. In 2015 they were on the concert platform over 40 times.

As an acknowledgement to their name, the quartet initially started learning the Haydn Op. 20 'Sun' Quartets. Now their repertoire expands widely from early Haydn through to living composers such as James Macmillan and Georg Friedrich Haas. They are exponents of New Music, involving themselves in collaborative projects with professional and student composers. As well as performing, the quartet offers coaching to young string quartets at the annual Aberystwyth MusicFest and has led specialist chamber music workshops in North Wales and Gloucestershire. They have also recently been selected for the well known outreach initiative 'Live Music Now'.

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