

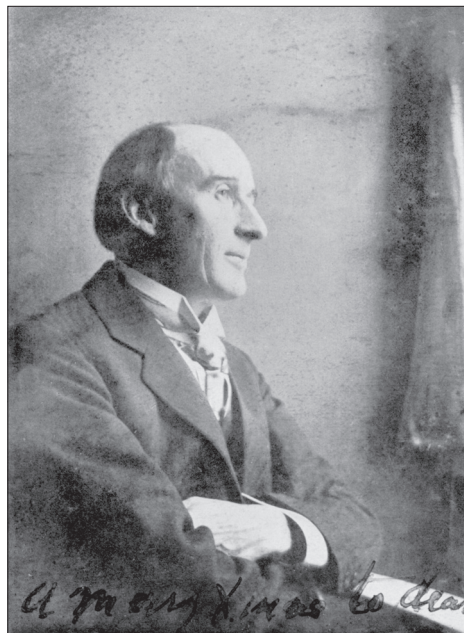


CHAN 241-37

**CHANDOS** FOR **21**

the essential *Delius*





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Frederick Delius

## Frederick Delius (1862–1934)

COMPACT DISC ONE

### Florida Suite\*

37:43

- |   |                                  |       |
|---|----------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I Daybreak – Dance               | 11:16 |
| 2 | II By the River                  | 6:41  |
| 3 | III Sunset – Near the Plantation | 10:36 |
| 4 | IV At Night                      | 8:56  |

### North Country Sketches\*

28:54

- |   |                        |      |
|---|------------------------|------|
| 5 | I Autumn               | 8:22 |
| 6 | II Winter Landscape    | 4:00 |
| 7 | III Dance              | 7:23 |
| 8 | IV The March of Spring | 8:52 |

### Air and Dance†

5:07

TT 72:07

### Ulster Orchestra\*

London Philharmonic Orchestra†

Vernon Handley



COMPACT DISC TWO

**Two Pieces for Small Orchestra**

13:58

- 1 1 On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring 6:41
- 2 2 Summer Night on the River 7:17

- 3 **A Song before Sunrise** 5:48  
for small orchestra

**Two Aquarelles** 4:36  
for string orchestra  
Arranged by Eric Fenby

- 4 1 Lento, ma non troppo 2:11
- 6 2 Gaily, but not quick 2:22

**From 'Hassan'** 4:27  
Arranged by Sir Thomas Beecham

- 6 Intermezzo 2:08
- 7 Serenade 2:17

- 8 **Prelude to 'Irmelin'** 5:21  
Lento

- 9 **Late Swallows** 9:28  
for string orchestra  
Arranged by Eric Fenby

- 10 **Intermezzo from 'Fennimore and Gerda'** 5:29  
Edited and arranged by Sir Thomas Beecham

**Bournemouth Sinfonietta**  
**Norman Del Mar**

- 11 **The Walk to the Paradise Garden** 10:05  
Lento

- 12 **In a Summer Garden** 15:35  
Andante – Animato

TT 75:44

**Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra**  
Brendan O' Brien leader  
Richard Hickox





## Delius: Orchestral Works

The childhood loves of Frederick Delius were the music of Chopin and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* by Byron – early hints that he would seek to escape from his native Bradford. His sister, Clare, was later to write that he 'spent whole days in the library poring over maps and books of travel', and **Florida Suite** and **North Country Sketches** commemorate two of his early refuges. It was more positive than that, however. Just as he went to Norway ostensibly to obtain orders for his father's wool manufacturing firm but in reality to drink in the mountain scenery and the melancholy of pre-industrial folksong, so he settled at Solano Grove, Florida, not to grow oranges but because it was exotic, and remote from Bradford. Delius can be seen against several backgrounds – British, French, Scandinavian – yet the American one tends to be forgotten. Solano was his first really productive stopping-place, where, with a local teacher, he began to work seriously at his art, and where he first could sense what he had in him to do. Crucial to this was the singing of Negroes on his plantation. Much later he said,

They showed a truly wonderful sense of musicianship and harmonic resource in

the instinctive way in which they treated a melody, and, hearing their singing in such romantic surroundings, it was then that I first felt the urge to express myself in music.

It was therefore apt that the sights and sounds of Florida should provide the subject matter for the first purely orchestral work that Delius was to write, *Florida Suite*. As such it is impressive, but it gives indications besides of some of his later preoccupations. Thus the opening theme of the first and last movements would reappear in his opera *The Magic Fountain* of 1893, as would the dance and climax of the third movement. Similarly, the second section of the first movement, another dance, was again to be employed in Act II of a further opera, *Koanga* (1895–97). Under the title *La Calinda*, this dance has long been familiar as an independent orchestral piece. A theme from the third movement's dance section also was to return in the 'Late Swallows' movement of his String Quartet (1916).

Bearing the subtitle 'Tropical Scenes for Orchestra', the manuscript of the *Florida Suite* is dated 1887, the year of Delius's twenty-fourth birthday. It was first played in 1888 at

a private rehearsal/performance conducted by Hans Sitt in a Leipzig restaurant, with an audience consisting of Grieg, Sinding and the composer. This was the first time that Delius heard an orchestral work of his own, and the following year he revised two movements, although of these revised versions only one, 'Sunset', survives. Delius was never able to hear the effect of these changes, however, as the *Florida Suite* was not performed again until 1937, three years after his death. This was by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham at the Queen's Hall, London, on the occasion of the Royal Philharmonic Society's Coronation Concert.

There are really six movements but, as four of these are linked in two pairs, the work's layout is as follows: I 'Daybreak – Dance', II 'By the River', III 'Sunset – Near the Plantation', IV 'At Night'. A complete day is thus portrayed and the music's pictorialism owes something to Grieg, although Delius's own Florida impressions predominate, some of them being quite specific. For example, the finale's theme for horn quartet suggests the distant singing of a spiritual. The opening, 'Daybreak', is notably prophetic, outlining a characteristic Delian mood even if the way in which it is conveyed is not yet entirely Delius's. 'By the River' includes what is as close to a romantic 'big tune' as this composer ever got, and although there are stylistic inconsistencies in

'Near the Plantation', the preceding 'Sunset' music is very beautiful, as is the final 'At Night', Delius's first nocturne.

Though a later work, *North Country Sketches* has its origin in a considerably earlier time than the *Florida Suite*. It refers to the Yorkshire Moors around Delius's birthplace, where Delius and his sister often took long walks. During these he showed himself particularly sensitive to birdsong, something that is echoed by much woodwind writing in the 'March of Spring' movement. It should be remembered that Delius once contemplated an opera based on *Wuthering Heights*, and the wild scenery of the Brontë country, as it was in his time, greatly impressed him. In fact, a love of the rural Yorkshire landscape remained with him all his life, and *North Country Sketches* is its finest expression. This work – in the same way as *A Song of the High Hills* (1911), *Eventyr* (1917) and several other pieces – is of distinctively northern inspiration; it is also Delius's sole purely orchestral score, apart from *Brigg Fair* (1907), to evoke specifically English scenes.

The first two movements were composed in 1913, the last two in 1914, and the whole was first performed at the Queen's Hall by Beecham and the London Symphony Orchestra in 1915. It was published in 1923. Each movement is a portrayal of a mood and a season, embodying a nature



mysticism that is only hinted at in the *Florida Suite*. An important aspect of this music's originality is the orchestral writing, which is especially characteristic throughout, typifying Delius's poetic and highly effective methods. The first movement, 'Autumn', is subtitled 'The Wind Soughs in the Trees', and so it does in long chromatic lines on the muted strings over drone-like basses. As a result the music seems both mobile and static at the same time, and a comparable effect of non-monotonous repetition is produced by the cool harp and woodwind motive in the next movement, 'Winter Landscape'. This is followed by 'Dance', which is not programmatic although, as Peter Warlock suggested, with its tentative opening and sudden end it possibly represents fireside musing during winter, a dream within a dream. The final 'March of Spring' is subtitled 'Woodlands, Meadows and Silent Moors', and has considerable impact after such vivid portrayals of the melancholy bustle of autumn and the settled gloom of winter. There is indeed a memorable suggestion of nature's gradual awakening, of the earth's yearly renewal.

© Max Harrison

**Air and Dance** was written in 1915 and dedicated to the National Institute for the

Blind. It is a confection based on the simplest of materials. Starting with a meandering theme given to the solo violin, in a moderate tempo, the *Air* builds up to a climax which immediately gives way to the *Dance*. Towards the end a solo cello recalls the opening, and a brief flourish from first violins brings the work to an end.

© Robert Anthony Briggs

**The Two Pieces for Small Orchestra** ('Summer Night on the River' of 1911 and 'On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring' of 1912) were first heard in Leipzig in October 1913. These exquisite miniatures are scored for two flutes (only one in the 'First Cuckoo'), an oboe, pairs of clarinets, bassoons and horns plus strings. The theme of the 'First Cuckoo' is taken from No. 14 of Grieg's *Nineteen Norwegian Folk-tunes*, Op. 66, called 'In Ola Valley, in Ola Lake', but Delius's use of orchestral colour and scoring completely belie the music's origins at the piano. The forward impulse of the piece (Delius's marking is 'with easy flowing movement') is maintained in the luminous chordal flow of the divided strings (in nine parts) with the woodwind adding their own distinct voice. Strangely, Delius only once mentions the word 'cuckoo' in the score (four bars after figure 8, when the clarinet plays

the same two-note motif ten times in five bars). In 'Summer Night on the River' it is the woodwind that dominate the tonal balance and dynamic shading, and the demands made upon the sensitivity and skill of the players make this one of Delius's most difficult scores to realise in performance. Certainly it is a remarkable work of musical scene painting. One can almost perceive the insects darting over the water and a mist hovering just above the overhanging trees on a late summer's evening; and the solo cello passage at figure 3 easily evokes the slow, languorous river moving along. The score's opening, marked 'very quietly', is amended at figure 7 to read, 'the melody becoming softer and softer as if dying away in the distance'.

Comparable in style and scoring is **A Song before Sunrise** which dates from 1918. The woodwind again contribute much to the mood of the work, which opens with the marking 'Freshly'. The rhythmic bite here is all-important. The piece is in ternary form, the opening theme returning at figure 7.

In his poignant book *Delius As I Knew Him*, Eric Fenby (1906–1997) recalls his painfully slow and exhausting sessions working with the blind and physically enfeebled composer during the years 1928–34. It is a story without parallel in music. Following Delius's death in 1934, Fenby made a number of arrangements of his fellow Yorkshireman's

music, two of which appear on this CD. The **Two Aquarelles** for string orchestra were arranged in 1938 from the two unaccompanied wordless partsongs *To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, dating from 1917. The first of these, marked *Lento, ma non troppo*, presents a slow melody which uses typical Delian harmonies, dying away at the end. The second, *Gaily, but not quick*, is brisker and more extrovert but it, too, comes to a peaceful, quiet conclusion.

*Hassan*, Delius's last work for the stage (1920–1923), is in many ways his most fascinating and evocative in this genre. The author of the play, James Elroy Flecker, had died in January 1915 aged thirty-one, and his widow had originally wanted Ravel to write the incidental music. At the time, the producer Basil Dean had just been introduced to the music of Delius through a revival of his opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (1899–1901). When, in 1920, Delius was eventually approached to write the incidental music, the play was still unpublished. However, after the composer had submitted his score, the existing economic situation delayed the production of the work still further, until June 1923. The play and Delius's score were much praised when the first London production opened in September 1923 and there were more than 250 performances at His Majesty's Theatre.



The **Intermezzo** is a short atmospheric piece whose main theme is heard at the opening, played by a solo cello. The scene in which the **Serenade** originates is described in the score as 'Moonlight. The Street of Felicity, by the fountain of the two pigeons, in front of the house'. Hassan, taking his lute from beneath his cloak, serenades Yasmin. The 'Serenade' is scored for solo violin (replacing the original wordless solo tenor part), strings and harp.

Delius's compositions include nine works for the stage, of which eight were completed. Among these are the operas *Irmelin* (1890–92) and *Fennimore and Gerda* (1908–10). *Irmelin* was not performed during the composer's lifetime, but in the last years of his life Delius composed a short **Prelude** based on two themes from the opera. This delicate pastoral-like miniature, marked 'Lento', is exquisitely scored with solo passages for bass clarinet, violin and flute.

In 1962 Eric Fenby made an arrangement for string orchestra of the third movement, **Late Swallows**, of Delius's only published string quartet (1916–17). Fenby's description of the piece cannot be bettered:

The third movement... is a beautiful Autumnal soliloquy in sound conjured up from thoughts of the swallows darting to and fro from the caves of the studios at Grez, now that Delius and his wife

had had to abandon their homes to the military authorities and flee from France in the first World War. 'When we were away from home, Fred missed the swallows most', Mrs Delius told, and I well remember his 'Tell me, lad, are the swallows late this year?'

*Fennimore and Gerda*, Delius's last opera, is based on episodes from the novel *Niels Lyhne* by the Danish author Jens Peter Jacobsen. The **Intermezzo** recorded here was arranged by Sir Thomas Beecham from the sections preceding Pictures (scenes) Nos 10 and 11. The first part, up to figure 4, is pastoral in character with passages for solo flute; the second part has solos for both flute and oboe.

© Malcolm Walker

Nature in all her manifestations, as well as the rhythmic vitality and variety of the dance, were two potent sources of inspiration for Delius. **The Walk to the Paradise Garden** portrays an imaginary landscape, the journey of a pair of lovers from the high summer of their dreams to the autumnal reality of their fate. It is one of Delius's most popular short works, and forms an orchestral interlude between the penultimate scenes of the opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, although the interlude was not added until 1907 prior to the opera's premiere. The opera describes

the tragedy of Sali and Vreli who fall in love, despite the rivalry between their feuding fathers which ruins both families. Penniless and homeless, the youngsters wander in pursuit of happiness, only to realise that their search is in vain. A mysterious character, the 'Dark Fiddler' (arguably a symbol of death), advises them to seek the Paradise Garden.

Their journey is depicted in music suffused with the longing of the lovers, their nostalgia for former happier times, and also the hopelessness of their situation. Having reached the Paradise Garden they decide that to die in the intensity of their love is preferable to poverty and wretchedness. The lovers climb into a barge; as they embrace it floats down-river and sinks. This passionate, sensual music surely epitomises Delius's belief that 'music is an outburst of the soul'.

The rhapsody **In a Summer Garden** is undoubtedly one of Delius's finest masterworks. Composed the same year as the *Dance Rhapsody No. 1* (1908), it was first performed under Thomas Beecham the same year; Delius subsequently revised it and the première of the final version was given in New York in 1912 under Josef Stansky. The Delius's garden, at their home in Grez-sur-Loing near Fontainebleau, was renowned for its luxuriance during summer as recalled by Eric Fenby:

The high stone walls of the garden sloped down beyond the orchard to the

river. In summer the white courtyard would blaze with myriad flowers, and nature rim the Delius's little world by the great trees at the water's edge. Indoors... paintings on the walls revealed colourful studies of the garden in a summer mood from the brush of his talented wife, Jelka. But the garden itself was her masterpiece, and the musical imagery it worked on her husband's mind was dedicated fittingly to her.

Delius himself described what he had in mind whilst composing the rhapsody,

Roses, lilies and a thousand sweet-scented flowers. Bright butterflies flitting from petal to petal, and gold brown bees murmuring in the warm, quivering summer air. Beneath the shade of the old tree flows a quiet river with water-lilies. In a boat, almost hidden, two people. A thrush is singing in the distance.

The music is like a sequence of rapidly changing impressions that vividly evoke Delius's images; indeed, one can almost see the riot of colour and smell the Gloire de Dijon roses that massed on the walls of the house. The tiny fragment heard on the oboe within seconds of the opening is a pervasive thread through the work, which has at its centre a magical interlude where the warm, sensuous melody of the violas and languid



woodwind ostinati suggest the lazy current of the river. When the climax is reached it is riven with ecstasy as well as sadness, with the knowledge that such beauty is fleeting and must fade. Above all, *In a Summer Garden* is a lovesong, enshrining all that Jelka meant to Delius as witnessed, too, in the lines of Christina Rossetti which prefaced the score:

All are my blooms, and all sweet blooms  
of love,  
To thee I gave while spring and summer  
sang.

© Andrew Burn

In 1998/99 the **Bournemouth Sinfonietta** celebrated thirty years of providing music of an international standard to the south and west of England. Performing in venues ranging from concert halls to community centres, the Bournemouth Sinfonietta maintained a commitment to the people of the region with a touring programme from Lands End to High Wycombe. The Sinfonietta was Resident Orchestra at the Hall for Cornwall in Truro following a successful concert series, and also gave concerts in Brazil. Under the baton of Principal Conductor Alexander Polianichko who was appointed in 1997, the ensemble toured both Normandy and Polianichko's home town of

St Petersburg. The Bournemouth Sinfonietta was disbanded in 2000.

Principal Conductors of the **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra** since its foundation in 1893 by Sir Dan Godfrey have included Rudolf Schwarz, Constantin Silvestri, Sir Charles Groves, Paavo Berglund, Andrew Litton and Yakov Kreizberg. Since her appointment in 2002, Marin Alsop has continued to raise the profile of the Orchestra, which performs orchestral music in concert venues across the south and west of Britain, has appeared at many festivals throughout the country, tours worldwide, and broadcasts nationally on BBC Radio 3 besides being committed to an active Education and Community programme. It performed the first ever complete cycle of the symphonies of Vaughan Williams at the Barbican Centre under Richard Hickox, and took part in a rare performance of Delius's *A Mass of Life* at St Paul's Cathedral. The latter work forms part of the Orchestra's extensive Delius discography for Chandos, for which the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under Richard Hickox has also recorded works by Britten and a comprehensive series devoted to the orchestral music of Sir Michael Tippett who, at the time of his death in 1998, was the Orchestra's President Emeritus. With its performances in the concert hall

and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and pioneering education work, the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** has long since earned a high reputation for versatility and artistic excellence. Kurt Masur, Principal Conductor since September 2000, and Vladimir Jurowski, Principal Guest Conductor since March 2003, extend the line of distinguished musicians who have held positions with the Orchestra since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham; these have included Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Franz Welsch-Möst. Resident symphony orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall since 1992, presenting its main series of concerts there between September and May each year, the London Philharmonic Orchestra has also been the resident symphony orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for more than forty years; it performs besides at venues around the UK, has made numerous tours across Europe, to America and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, Australia and South Africa.

Formed in 1966 and based in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the **Ulster Orchestra** is now one of the major orchestras in the United Kingdom and Ireland, with a main concert season in the Ulster and Waterfront

Halls, and additional performances across Northern Ireland. Orchestra in Residence for the Belfast Festival at Queen's University, it also accompanies opera and ballet productions at Belfast's Grand Opera House, while its outstanding education and outreach work has been recognised by an award from the Royal Philharmonic Society. Kenneth Montgomery is the Orchestra's new Principal Conductor, and numbers among his distinguished predecessors Thierry Fischer, Bryden Thomson, Vernon Handley, Dmitry Sitkovetsky and Yan Pascal Tortelier. The Ulster Orchestra has made more than sixty recordings and is an exclusive broadcast partner of the BBC, with many relays on BBC Radio 3, Radio Ulster and BBC TV. Tours of Europe, Asia and the United States have added to the Orchestra's reputation.

Born in 1919, **Norman Del Mar** was educated at Marlborough and the Royal College of Music. From his early successes as Sir Thomas Beecham's assistant, he became a notable conductor of Mozart, Janáček, Strauss and Schoenberg, amongst others. He worked with a range of British orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, as well as with orchestras in Europe, Russia, the Middle and Far East, and South America. He



was also a keen opera-lover and was invited, as guest conductor, to perform at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells, the Royal Stockholm Opera and Scottish Opera. He died in February 1994.

For forty years **Vernon Handley** CBE has pursued a career unique amongst those of front rank conductors in that he has championed British repertoire, and probably recorded, performed and broadcast more British music than any other conductor. Twice outright winner of the *Gramophone* 'Record of the Year', he tours Europe, Australia and Japan regularly and includes a British work in every concert.

Positions held include Associate Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Ulster Orchestra, Principal Conductor of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and Malmö Symphony Orchestra, and Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Whilst Professor of Conducting at the Royal College of Music, he was created Hon. R.C.M. & F.R.C.M. by Her Majesty the Queen Mother, and during this time he also regularly conducted the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the World Youth Orchestra.

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He was elected Honorary Fellow of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 1990 and of Balliol College, Oxford, in 1999. Vernon Handley is currently Conductor Emeritus of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and in September 2003 he was appointed Conductor Laureate of the Ulster Orchestra.

One of Britain's most gifted and versatile conductors, **Richard Hickox** CBE is Music Director of Opera Australia, and was Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales from 2000 until 2006 when he became Conductor Emeritus. He founded the City of London Sinfonia, of which he is Music Director, in 1971. He is also Associate Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, Conductor Emeritus of the Northern Sinfonia, and co-founder of Collegium Musicum 90.

He regularly conducts the major orchestras in the UK and has appeared many times at the BBC Proms and at the Aldeburgh, Bath and Cheltenham festivals among others. With the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican Centre he has conducted a number of semi-staged operas, including *Billy Budd*, *Hänsel und Gretel* and *Salome*. With the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra he gave the first ever complete cycle of Vaughan Williams's symphonies in London. In the course of an

ongoing relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra he has conducted Elgar, Walton and Britten festivals at the South Bank and a semi-staged performance of *Gloriana* at the Aldeburgh Festival.

Apart from his activities at the Sydney Opera House, he has enjoyed recent engagements with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Vienna State Opera and Washington Opera among others. He has guest conducted such world-renowned orchestras as the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and New York Philharmonic.

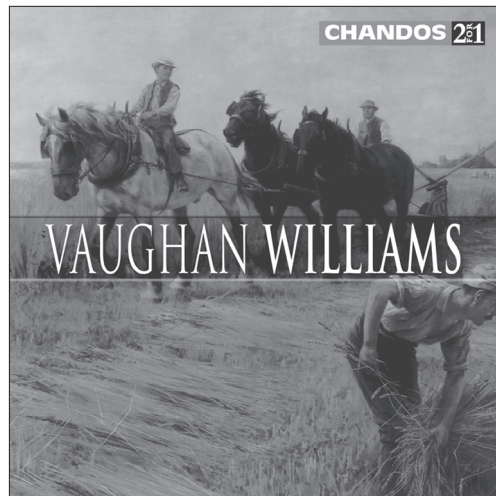
His phenomenal success in the recording studio has resulted in more than 280

recordings, including most recently cycles of orchestral works by Sir Lennox and Michael Berkeley and Frank Bridge with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the symphonies by Vaughan Williams with the London Symphony Orchestra, and a series of operas by Britten with the City of London Sinfonia. He has received a *Grammy* (for *Peter Grimes*) and five *Gramophone* Awards. Richard Hickox was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Jubilee Honours List in 2002, and has received many other awards, including two Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards, the first ever Sir Charles Groves Award, the *Evening Standard* Opera Award, and the Association of British Orchestras Award.

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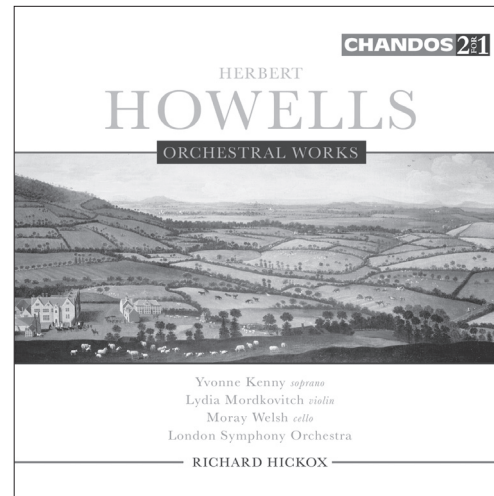


Also available



Vaughan Williams  
CHAN 241-9

Also available



Yvonne Kenny *soprano*  
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London Symphony Orchestra

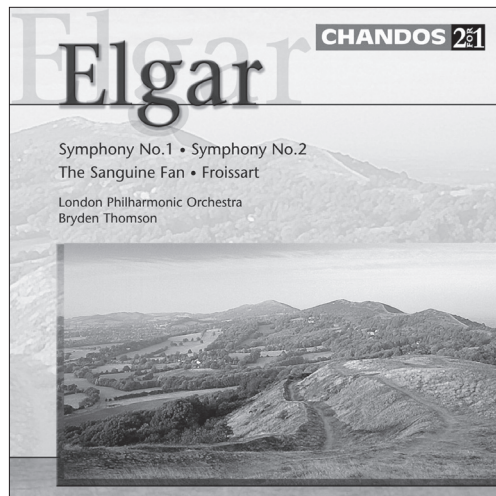
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CHAN 241-20





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**Sound engineer** Ralph Couzens (CD1 tracks 1-9, CD2 tracks 11&12), Brian Couzens (CD2 tracks 1-10)

**Assistant engineer** Philip Couzens (CD1 tracks 1-8), Bill Todd (CD1 track 9), Richard Smoker and Peter Newble (CD2 tracks 11&12)

**Editor** Tim Handley (CD1 tracks 1-8), Ralph Couzens (CD1 track 9) and Peter Newble (CD2 tracks 11&12)

**Remastering** Jonathan Cooper

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CHANDOS DIGITAL

2-disc set CHAN 241-37

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9	Air and Dance†	5:07
		TT 72:07

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 London Philharmonic Orchestra†  
 Vernon Handley

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