

Chandos

CHAN 8403



By Music minds unequal temper known:
Not will too high nor sink too low;
HARMONY and SENTIMENT
"Warriors who fight with animated ardour,"
"Pour balm into the bleeding warrior's wound."

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Londoners were more fortunate than their opposite numbers in the main European capitals where entertainment music of quality was concerned. In London there were Pleasure Gardens in Marylebone, Ranelagh and Vauxhall, where the public could stroll in pleasant surroundings, eat, drink and be apparently meritorious. In each there was an orchestra and the musical fare included a great variety of music, much of which was composed for the occasion. In the Provinces there were active Music Clubs, equally demanding so far as a constant supply of new and entertaining music was concerned.

In 1745 Thomas Arne was appointed official composer to the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, and they almost immediately became the most popular venue in the Capital.

Arne's setting of *God Save the King* had been sung every night at Drury Lane Theatre by the 'Gentlemen of that House' during the danger brought about through the Young Pretender's Rebellion in 1745, establishing the tune as a National Anthem. He was already the most popular English composer of the time, especially since Handel's fame had climaxed with *Messiah* in 1742, and the German-born composer's health seriously declined in the last years of his life.

Thomas Augustine Arne had forced his father to allow him to work at music despite his parent's wish to apprentice the boy to an attorney, after he completed his education at Eton College. The boy had smuggled a spinet into his bedroom and smothered the sound by covering the strings with a handkerchief, which enabled him to practice during the night.

Around the same time young Thomas Arne borrowed the livery of a servant in order to gain access to the gallery of the Italian Opera. It is probably there that he met Michael Festing, a violinist in the orchestra, who had been a pupil of Francesco Geminiani, himself a pupil of Corelli. Geminiani's teaching methods revolutionised the playing of the violin in England, where he had settled about 1714, his *Art of Playing on the Violin* being one of the first of its kind. Festing was able to pass on his knowledge to Arne, and, even more important, it was probably Festing who persuaded Arne senior that his son had a great future career as a musician. It is probable, too, that this followed an occasion when the elder Arne accidentally found his son leading a chamber ensemble in a friend's home. The result was of immediate benefit to the household, for Thomas began to teach his brother and sister to sing, and in April 1732 the three younger Arnes presented Handel's *Acis and Galatea* at the Haymarket Theatre, their father being the impresario! Charles Burney, the great music historian, himself at one time an apprentice to Arne, commented that this production was possibly "the origin of Handel's oratorios in still life". Its success led to the formation of a group whose intention was to bring about an English opera, although in the Italian Style, and soon the brother, Richard, and sister,

Susanna Maria, were performing their brother's setting of Addison's *Rosamund*. Susanna, incidentally, was to marry Theophilus Cibber and achieve great personal fame as the actress Mrs. Cibber. Thomas, never one to avoid confrontation if necessary, fell in love with Cecilia Young, a singer with a good reputation, but whose father objected to her marrying a Roman Catholic. Needless to say, the pair did marry, and Thomas seems to have celebrated the fact by his brilliant masque setting of Milton's *Comus*, which was produced at Drury Lane Theatre on 4 March 1738.

Arne's reputation grew steadily, with regular appearances in both London and Dublin, at many of which he also introduced the music of Handel. After the popular acclaim of *God Save the King*, however, his fame was enormous, and the appointment to the Vauxhall Gardens in 1745 was the beginning of a twenty-year era when Arne's music was eagerly sought after by every musical organisation in London. Every year he published a song collection, with flowery titles, such as *The Agreeable Musical Choice* and *Lyric Harmony*.

Throughout these two decades Arne had been busy producing oratorios and music for the stage, adding to his considerable reputation so well that he was invited to become a member of two important musical societies, the Madrigal Society and the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club. Arne was now writing a good deal of instrumental music with the accent on entertainment. In May 1767 he put on a concert of catches and glees which he called "the first entertainment of the kind exhibited in this, or any other kingdom."

On the other hand, Arne's reputation as a serious composer had to be maintained, and it is possible that he wished to extend this beyond the media of the opera house and oratorio society to the public who listened to the Soho subscription concerts run by Bach's youngest son, Johann Christian, and his friend the harpsichord and viola da gamba player Carl Friedrich Abel, both of whom had settled in London. At these concerts the audience could hear music by both these composers, together with the cream of the music being published by other Europeans, and it is understandable that Thomas Arne should decide to join these illustrious ranks. In 1767, therefore, the London publisher John Johnston brought out Arne's *Four Symphonies*, "Calculated for Public or Private CONCERTS", as printed on the title page.

With his wide knowledge and appreciation of the musical scene Arne always kept abreast of changing fashions. One of the most important developments during his lifetime had been the emergence of the *sinfonia* as a work in its own right apart from the *Italian sinfonia*, in the fast-slow-fast format which had started life as an *Overture* to be played before the start of an opera. These could be quite extended in both content and development. In 1751 Arne had published *Eight Overtures*, six of which had been in the traditional *French Overture* style, with a

slow introduction and a fugal *allegro*, while the other two had moved to the *Italian* style. Much had happened to the form between 1751 and 1767, including the publication in London by the firm of Robert Bremner, in 1763, of examples of the symphonies being composed at the Electoral Court of Mannheim by a group of composers led by Johann Stamitz. These brought drama into the symphony, with special scoring of dynamic contrast, juxtaposing loud with soft through *Crescendo* and *Diminuendo*. Johann Christian Bach had arrived in London in 1762 and his work on the symphony was also making interesting new facets of a form which Haydn was already bringing to the forefront of musical expression in Germany. All these influences were felt by Arne, who desired to develop an *English Symphony*. These four are the only works which have been found in the form, and, somewhat surprisingly, were virtually forgotten until recent times, when Oxford University Press published Johnston's 1767 edition, in 1973. The title page of Johnston's edition states that there are "Eight and Ten parts for Violins, Tenors, Oboes, Horns, Flutes etc." tenors being violas. In fact there are ten parts, but these do not include any flutes, perhaps because the custom was for flutes to share the oboe parts, often having the same player. In this recording flute parts have been incorporated into the Fourth Symphony, deduced from the original manuscript.

Symphony No. 1 in C major

Allegro – Andante – Presto

The First Symphony opens with a tense *allegro* which makes good use of dynamic contrasts as well as tonal confrontations between major and minor. The central *andante* is as wryly wistful as the final *presto* is infectiously gay.

Symphony No. 2 in F major

Presto – Andantino – Moderato allegro

In character the first movement of the Second Symphony leans towards the Baroque tradition, but the *andantino* would be equally at home as one of Arne's ravishing operatic arias.

Symphony No. 3 in E flat major

Andante e più – Larghetto – Tempo di minuetto

The outer movements of the Third Symphony are the only times Arne employs the timpani, but the personality of the work is always stronger and more elegant than the first two. Perhaps Arne's study of J.C. Bach's works have borne fruit in the elegant woodwind scoring, the charm of the music reaching new beauties in the central *larghetto*, the finale again harking to the grace of the minuet.

Symphony No. 4 in C minor

Moderato – Larghetto – Vivace

Arne's confidence in symphonic writing here reaches a peak in a work which is conceived on the largest scale of the set, the first movement indulging in instrumental complexities, driven on by a strong pulse, making good use of *sforzando* dramatic punctuation and taking full advantage of the inner passion inherent in a minor key. It is followed by a deeply emotional and extended *larghetto*, itself leading to the lively, yet equally elegant final *vivace*.

Cantilena was formed in 1970 by Adrian Shepherd and worked for two years without giving public concerts to achieve an understanding, a style and a quality of sound that would be both individual and ideally suited to the Baroque and Renaissance music in which the group specialises. The basic 16 members of the ensemble are drawn from the Scottish National Orchestra, and wherever possible they play seated in a circle with the audience all round. This provides an excellent rapport between the players and gives the audience a unique sense of sharing in the music-making. In this recording, however, they are seated in the conventional formation.

Cantilena has played in London and Vienna, at the Aldeburgh, Cheltenham and Edinburgh Festivals, and gives a regular series of concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. In addition to appearing at music clubs throughout Britain, the ensemble has become well-known for its many radio broadcasts and BBC television appearances, and in July 1980 completed its first highly successful tour of South America.

Adrian Shepherd was born in Essex and studied under the great cello teacher William Pleeth for 10 years. He graduated from the Guildhall School of Music in London and joined the Scottish National Orchestra and later the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, later returning to the SNO as principal cello in 1966. His musical activities include a strong commitment to chamber music—Orpheus Trio and New Music Group of Scotland—plus many solo recital and concerto performances.

He founded Cantilena in 1970 and has remained its Director through the ensemble's meteoric rise to fame. He is well known as a broadcaster and teacher and has held numerous appointments in the inspirational and tutorial fields; in 1985 he was appointed Director of Orchestral Studies at the Welsh College of Music and Drama. He was awarded the MBE in the 1983 New Years Honours.

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Sound Engineer: Ralph Couzens.

Assistant Engineer: Philip Couzens.

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Front cover painting: Detail from *La Tasse de Chocolat* by Nicholas Lancret, reproduced by courtesy of the National Gallery, London.

Thomas Arne etching after Franco Bartolozzi, reproduced by courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

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Art Direction: Janet Osborn.

Chandos

CHAN 8403

THOMAS AUGUSTINE ARNE (1710-1778)

Four Symphonies

Original editions edited by Cantilena



Solo Violins: Angus Anderson
Andrew Morris
ADRIAN SHEPHERD Conductor

Symphony No. 1 in C major (8:31)

- 1 I — Allegro (3:02)
- 2 II — Andante (2:15)
- 3 III — Presto (3:11)

Symphony No. 4 in C minor (14:11)

- 4 I — Moderato (4:46)
- 5 II — Larghetto (4:53)
- 9 III — Vivace (4:29)

Symphony No. 2 in F major (9:25)

- 7 I — Presto (2:54)
- 8 II — Andantino (3:11)
- 9 III — Moderato allegro (3:16)

Symphony No. 3 in E flat major (11:17)

- 10 I — Andante e più (4:57)
- 11 II — Larghetto (3:10)
- 12 III — Tempo di minuetto (3:06)

TT = 43:45 DDD

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