

IN TRIBUTE

THE MUSIC OF PHILIP WILBY

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| 1. | A BREATHLESS ALLELUIA® <i>Kirklees Music</i>
<i>Organ Philip Wilby</i> | 4.10 |
| 2. | PAGANINI VARIATIONS® <i>Novello Music</i> | 16.42 |
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Total CD Playing Time 65.48

Executive Producer: Trevor Caffull
Producers: Nicholas Childs and Richard Scott
Engineer and Post Production: Richard Scott
Assistant Engineer: Stephen Scott
Production Manager: Nicki Tonge
Project Coordinators: Neil Brownless and Alison Childs

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IN TRIBUTE

THE MUSIC OF PHILIP WILBY

Philip Wilby



BLACK DYKE BAND
MUSIC DIRECTOR DR NICHOLAS J. CHILDS





IN TRIBUTE

The memory of the first performance of Philip Wilby's brass band 'debut' *The New Jerusalem* in 1989, played by the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain under Roy Newsome, who had commissioned it following the advice of composer Michael Ball, remains a vivid one. Nothing of what I had heard of Philip's music previously had prepared me for the sound world of *The New Jerusalem*. As a composition tutor at the University of Leeds, Philip was, as he has described, 'a card carrying modernist'.

However, *The New Jerusalem* had a directness of engagement and appeal with the young players and the audience that I had not anticipated. Its foundations were rooted firmly in tonality; it was exciting, full of energy and so well realised for brass band, yet also remaining true to his creative ethos, especially in its Christian theme. Here was a 'natural' for the medium, I thought, and immediately added Philip onto my 'wish list' for a BBC Radio 3 commission.



BAND PERSONNEL

Principal Cornet	Richard Marshall	Solo Baritone	Katrina Marzella
Assistant Principal Cornet	Rob Westacott	2 nd Baritone	Ben Wright
Solo Cornets	Martin Irwin	Solo Trombone	Brett Baker
	James McCabe	Co-Principal Trombone	Paul Woodward
Soprano Cornet	Paul Duffy	2 nd Trombone	Garry Reed
Repiano Cornet	Lee Rigg	Bass Trombone	Adrian Hirst
2 nd Cornets	John O'Brien	Solo Eb Tuba	Joseph Cook
	Mark Bowater	Eb Tuba	Philip Goodwin
3 rd Cornets	Keith Britcliffe	Solo Bb Tuba	Matthew Routley
	David Smith	Bb Tuba	Matt Wade
Flugel	Zoe Hancock	Percussion	Andrea Price
Solo Horn	Sheona White		Rory Farrell
1 st Horn	Jonathan Bates		Kieran Johnson
2 nd Horn	Alison Childs		Matthew Whitfield
Solo Euphonium	Gary Curtin		Adie Smith
2 nd Euphonium	Ian Yates	Secretary	Mike Shenton
Euphonium	John French*	*Played on Revelation	

BLACK DYKE BAND

In 1816 Peter Wharton founded a brass and reed band in the Yorkshire village of Queenshead – later to become Queensbury. John Foster, apart from being the founder of Black Dyke Mills, played French Horn in this band. It has been said on many occasions that Black Dyke was formed from it; however this is not strictly true, as Peter Whartons band went out of existence through loss of members. In 1837 a new band was formed named ‘Queenshead Band’, which may well have contained players from the former band. It is reported that this Band reached its zenith from 1838 to 1843, at which time it consisted of 18 musicians.

On 15 September 2005 the band was proud to celebrate its 150th anniversary. Two of the many highlights were the publication of ‘150 Golden Years’, a book by Dr Roy Newsome, in words and photographs, describing the history and the progress of Black Dyke Band from 1855 to 2005. Also a unique ‘triple CD’ covering the recorded musical history of the band from the early days of 1903 to the present day.

In September 2006 at Symphony Hall Birmingham Black Dyke Band was declared British Open Champions for the second year running. Although they have not entered the contest every year, this was the 29th time the band were declared ‘British

Open Champion’. The band has also been National Champions of Great Britain on 22 occasions, most recently in October 2009. In 2009, and again in 2011 and June 2012, they became Champion Band at the English National Championships. In 2012 the band became European Champion Band for the twelfth time.

Black Dyke Band is the most recorded band in the world with over 350 recordings and the number growing every year. In August 2007 the Band was invited to take part in the BBC Promenade Concerts, at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

In 2006 as part of its initiative to sponsor the work of young people, Black Dyke Band, under the guidance of Dr Nicholas Childs assisted by qualified members, formed the Yorkshire Youth Brass Band. The purpose is to inspire and motivate young people aged 11 to 21 years to achieve their full potential as musicians, composers and citizens.

The band logo of the stag’s head and Latin quotation are taken from the armorial bearings granted in 1857 to John Foster, founder of the band. The quotation translates to

“ACT JUSTLY AND FEAR NOTHING”
www.blackdykeband.co.uk

From the first moment I turned the first page of *Paganini Variations* when the score arrived on my desk, it was abundantly clear that Philip would have a great say in the brass band medium. Since these two works entered the repertory, Philip’s music has been a major influence on the way brass bands approach the performance of test-pieces, in particular the way he has reached out to the brass band community of players and supporters by referencing familiar music and idioms as a starting point and then taking them on a musical journey in his own terms. He has created a fresh and substantial repertoire for all levels, from challenging test-pieces for the Open Championships and major concert pieces and concertos to more modest items for community and young bands to enjoy.

A BREATHLESS ALLELUIA

Throughout Philip’s journey with brass bands, Black Dyke Band has been a constant source of encouragement and advice. *Paganini Variations* would not sound as it does, had not Philip taken himself off to Queensbury to experience the sound and skills of the band first under the much missed James Watson and now under Nicholas Childs. Working so closely with Black Dyke has resulted in a collection of solo items and concertos that have become key works for their instruments. As a thank you to the band and to Nicholas Childs, Philip composed a brilliant miniature showpiece,

A Breathless Alleluia for band and organ (played by the composer himself) as a tribute to Nicholas, who is described by Philip as ‘a leader of tireless energy’. The music is full of appropriate sprung rhythms and driving energy and was elaborated from the more athletic parts of his National Children’s Band commission *Psalms and Alleluias*.

PAGANINI VARIATIONS

An opportunity for the BBC to commission Philip arose not long after the première of *The New Jerusalem*. Grimethorpe Colliery Band won the penultimate BBC Band of the Year title in 1990 and I was looking for a major new piece for the band to feature in a *Radio Goes to Town* concert which was to be given at the Assembly Rooms in Derby, May 1991. The piece went ‘down a storm’ with the band, conductor Frank Renton and the Derby audience. In the meantime I had received a call from Harry Mortimer to the effect that he was interested in it for the British Open Championships the following September. With the addition of a sequence of perilously exposed octaves on the cornets and solo horn to the cadenza-like introduction to the flugel horn melody – which are used here – *Paganini Variations* was ready for the ‘Open’.

Any composer contemplating a journey down so well-worn a path as a set of variations on Paganini’s 24th *Caprice* must be well aware of the danger of ‘re-inventing the wheel’. What

could Wilby offer that Brahms, Rachmaninov and Lutoslawski, among others, had not already done? Wilby was fortunate in that his were the first *Paganini Variations* for full brass band and given that the virtuoso tradition within the brass band culture can be traced back to the time of Paganini, Liszt and the great virtuoso composers, his choice was an apt one.

After the opening flourish, Paganini's theme is presented with disarming simplicity. The first three variations are also well within the comfort zone, but after that the level of virtuoso display is raised dramatically as Wilby, who was a professional violinist before assuming his University position, follows Paganini's example. Variations 4 -7 and the flamboyant comet *Bolero* (11) inhabit the demonic world of Paganini himself, and include a version of Paganini's own third variation. The solemn trombone variation (3) and the stately *Canon* (10) recall Brahms in Handelian mood. A solemn *Funeral March* incorporates an extended euphonium solo. The beautiful *Romance* which follows is for many a favourite moment in all Wilby. The sighing phrases and rich accompaniments remind us that romantic melody is still as much a part of the living tradition of brass band music as the final dynamic flourishes.

As Philip says in his own note on the work, 'The full flavour of Paganini's romantic heritage finds expression in a mixture of extravagant display and serene and passionate melody'.

MASQUERADE

Paganini Variations set a course for Philip Wilby's series of Open Championship tests that has been much copied over the past 20 years. After embracing the virtuosity of Paganini, he has taken on aspects of Mozart, Purcell and Verdi as anniversary tributes, beginning with Verdi's great final opera *Falstaff* for the 1993 'Open'. *Masquerade* was composed as a centenary homage to the last of Verdi's operas, *Falstaff*, first produced in 1893.

In embracing the spirit and melody of Verdi, Philip has in his mind the colourful overtures of Berlioz. His tribute is vividly coloured and replete with flamboyant, often extravagant layers of contrapuntally conceived textures. Some of the writing is on the edge of playability and perhaps that sense of valiant struggle was part of Wilby's intention. Shakespeare's *Falstaff* is, after all, a larger than life character, full of bravado and bluster. Parts of Wilby's 'drama' are noisy and busy, but there is a large dose of light-hearted comedy in the writing too. While Wilby bases his own response to Verdi's drama on some of the opera's main themes, he also weaves into his drama elaborations of the two famous set pieces, Nanetta's arietta and the final fugue. The former is the centre piece of the *Masquerade*, a delicately scored gem that was one of the favourite test-piece moments of

DR NICHOLAS J. CHILDS

Dr Nicholas Childs has achieved the highest international reputation as a performer, teacher/clinician, conductor, interpreter and advocate of new music, and producer of pacesetting recordings. Initial success came as a euphonium soloist and partner with his talented brother, Dr Robert Childs, who together have literally toured the world as The Childs Brothers, performing in many of the world's most famous concert halls with the most prestigious bands and orchestras.

Taking up the baton as a conductor, Nicholas has had phenomenal success with many bands, including highly acclaimed national championship successes. His current tenure as Principal Conductor and Director of Music of the famous Black Dyke Band has been marked not only with continued contest success, but with a series of innovative concerts and world premières of major works for brass band with a variety of soloists and musical combinations.

He serves as Senior Tutor in Brass Band Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he has taught for over 14 years. Further honours have come with his appointment as Associate Conductor of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, and as Trustee of the Brass Band Heritage Trust.

With his roots in the British brass band tradition, having first been trained in the Tredegar (Wales) Youth Band, Nicholas continues to give important emphasis to the development of the brass band movement. This comes through his commitment to the training of outstanding young musicians both at the collegiate level and within the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain. He has reached the pinnacle of success with four National Championships of Great Britain, with Black Dyke in 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2009.

In April 2005 as Music Director of Black Dyke he guided them to first place at the European Championship in Holland, and again in Holland in May 2012, and in September 2005 he was victorious with Black Dyke, winning the British Open Championship and again in 2006. He won his first English National Championship with Black Dyke in June 2009 and won again in June 2011 and June 2012.



PROFESSOR PHILIP WILBY

Encouraged to take up composition by Herbert Howells, Philip Wilby graduated from Keble College, Oxford, in 1970. After a year as a professional violinist, he was invited by Alexander Goehr, then professor of music at Leeds University, to join his staff. He has been the senior tutor in composition there since 1984. Having been awarded a Doctorate in Composition, he was made Professor in 2002. He is a recipient of the Iles Medal, a Dutch Government BUMA Award for innovation in brass band composition, and is a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music.

His long Association with Black Dyke Band began on 1 October 1990 and has continued for 23 years. During that time, he has contributed a large body of works to the brass bandsman's repertoire, not least a complete sequence of substantial solo pieces, and six test pieces for the British Open Contest.

Currently, he lives in Bristol, where his wife serves as Canon Precentor at the Cathedral.



the late Peter Parkes, the conductor of Williams Fairey Band in its memorable 1993 'Open' win.

Masquerade follows the last scene of the opera set in Windsor Great Park. It is approaching midnight and Falstaff is about to get his comeuppance by the ladies of the town disguised in Halloween masks. As the midnight bell tolls, Falstaff enters (portrayed by a portentous solo euphonium). At the height of the rout, an alarm bell sounds and Falstaff becomes the victim of an 'attack' of blind man's buff. Eventually he recognises his assailants and far from complaining, he and they join in the final fugue, which Wilby extravagantly elaborates: '...he who laughs best has the last laugh'.

The elements of quasi-operatic drama and symbolism are highly significant in all the test-pieces of Philip Wilby that derive their inspiration from great music of the past. His approach, which embraces traditional transcription, elaboration and free invention, has been a major influence on test-piece writing over the past 20 years.

REVELATION - SYMPHONY FOR DOUBLE BRASS

Revelation was Philip Wilby's third work to be given the label symphony. *Symphonia Sacra* (1983) for wind orchestra is subtitled *In Darkness Shine*. A decade later he composed an orchestral symphony with boys voices entitled *Voyaging* to a commission

from the BBC Philharmonic. For the 'Open' Championship of 1995, Philip Wilby produced his most ambitious brass band work, the Symphony for Double Brass, *Revelation*, as a tribute to the great English composer, Henry Purcell, on the 300th anniversary of his death. *Revelation* is a complex, multi-faceted work, dynamic and contemporary in its musical trajectory, but embracing elements of the baroque concerto and of variation form, and enriched by layers of symbolism. The title *Symphony* has less to do with the conventions of the classical symphony, as established by Joseph Haydn, than the Sinfonias that composers in the 17th century from Heinrich Schutz to Henry Purcell would write for performance in church or theatre.

After reading the score of John McCabe's *Cloudcatcher Fells*, Philip was taken with the idea of giving each member of the band a distinct part. By laying out the band in two choirs to the left and right of the timpani, with percussion behind and space in the front for various 'stand-up' solos and ensembles, Philip added a theatrical element to the writing that was new to the contesting stage. The concept of antiphonal brass goes back to the 16th Century and the music of the Giovanni Gabrieli, and, like his other symphonies, the 'geography' of the music is an integral part of Wilby's musical vision, the cruciform layout adding a symbolic dimension. Philip describes *Revelation* as 'a tribute to Purcell's music and the ornate and confident spirit of his age'.

The score uses features of the baroque Concerto Grosso, with the players emerging from their seated positions to play in a variety of virtuoso ensembles. The music is derived from Purcell's own brilliant sequence of variations over a repeating six-note bass figure, the *Fantasia: Three Parts on a Ground*. This original motif can be heard most clearly beneath the duet for cornet five and soprano at the beginning of the second section.

The music of Philip's *Symphony for Double Brass*, divides into five episodes:

1. *Prologue*: The principal themes upon which the work is founded gradually emerge "out of the depths", and are bounced across the two brass groups. The motif founded on a pair of rising fourths is particularly important.

2. *Variations on a ground bass (1)*: A question and answer from cornets and tuned percussion plunges into the first sequence of five variations over Purcell's ground - cornet duet; trombone solo; "crab-canon" for cornets; horns, euphoniums and trombones; percussion, leading to:

3. *Fugue*: An elaborate contrapuntal episode, in which the theme is passed between the two ensembles at lightening speed.

4. *Variations (2)*: The cornet and percussion question and answer leads to the second sequence

of variations - an expansive solo horn solo accompanied by xylophone; a tender flugel horn obligato overlaying a Purcell variation from choir two; an evocative euphonium duet, echoed by a distant cornet.

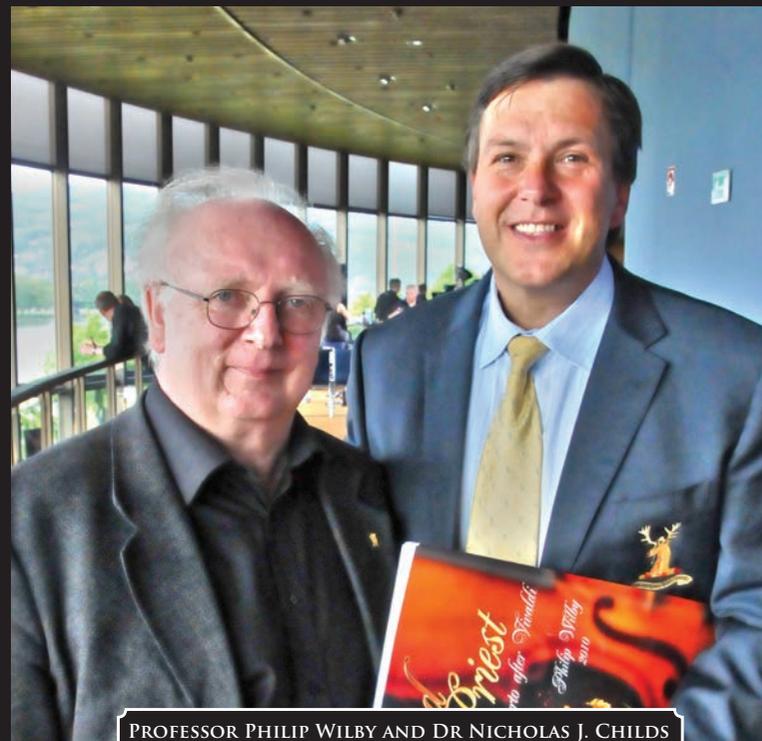
5. *Epilogue and Resurrection*: Purcell's melodies are given a nostalgic treatment by the euphonium soloists. The opening music returns to build towards exultant fanfares - a Wilby 'wall of sound' tribute to Purcell, who he describes as 'England's first composer of genius'.

The score is prefaced by lines from the 17th century poet John Donne. His *Holy Sonnett* paraphrases the Book of Revelation in which the dead are raised at the sounds of the last trumpet.

At the round Earth's imagined corners, blow your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise from death, you numberless infinities of souls, and to your scattered bodies go.....

Donne's apocalyptic trumpets are summoned up in the exultant fanfares heard at the close of the score, as Purcell's music re-enters in a lasting tribute to England's 'first composer of genius.'

Paul Hindmarsh



PROFESSOR PHILIP WILBY AND DR NICHOLAS J. CHILDS