



ROBERT PLANE: **CONTRASTS**

IMPRESSIONS OF HUNGARY

ROBERT PLANE *clarinet*

LUCY GOULD *violin*

DAVID ADAMS *viola*

ALICE NEARY *cello*

ALEC FRANK-GEMMILL *horn*

BENJAMIN FRITH *piano*

Bartók | Rózsa | Serly | Kurtág | Weiner | Dohnányi

ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE
OF MUSIC & DRAMA
COLEG BRENHINOL
CERDD A DRAMA CYMRU

We are grateful to the
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama
for their generous support of this project.

I FOREWORD

The seed for this project was sown in the unlikeliest of circumstances. During the interval of a recital in Seaton, on the South Devon coast, I was chatting to a committee member who, it transpired, was in fact the distinguished clarinettist and saxophonist Chris Gradwell, whose playing in the London Saxophone Quartet I had listened to as a child. He told me of a copy of a manuscript he had at home, of which he had been due to give a first UK performance but which had never materialised. 'Would you like to have a look at it?', he dropped into the conversation. I had previously only come across Tibor Serly as the composer who completed Bartók's Viola Concerto. When 'Chamber Folk Music' arrived in the post I couldn't believe that such an atmospheric and infectiously witty piece had lain undiscovered for so long. It makes a fascinating companion piece to Bartók's own 'Contrasts', a masterpiece which lends its name, appropriately, to this highly spiced album, a collection of wildly varied Hungarian works featuring the clarinet. Clarinettists are forever indebted to Benny Goodman, whose prolific commissioning of many of the greatest composers of his time included 'Contrasts'. Bartók makes only the slightest concession to Goodman's jazz pedigree and to the music of his new home in America in this work. Serly, on the other hand, was much more comfortable embracing the spirit of Hollywood, albeit tongue-in-cheek. Miklós Rózsa went the whole hog, a triple-Oscar-winning film-score composer who, however, remained faithful to absolute concert music throughout his glittering career. From the opulence of Dohnányi's Sextet to the fragile beauty of Kurtág's *Hommage à R. Sch.*, from Weiner's earthy folk creations to Bartók's sophisticated assimilation of the music of his native land, this album serves as a snapshot of the music of an evocative land; a language that seems to suit the characteristics of the clarinet particularly well.



TRACK LISTING

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881–1945)

CONTRASTS

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | <i>i</i> Verbunkos 'Recruiting Dance' Moderato ben ritmato | 05'41 |
| 2 | <i>ii</i> Pihenő 'Relaxation': Lento | 04'44 |
| 3 | <i>iv</i> Sebes 'Fast Dance': Allegro vivace | 07'05 |
- Robert Plane *clarinet* Lucy Gould *violin* Benjamin Frith *piano*

MIKLÓS RÓZSA (1907–1995)

SONATINA FOR SOLO CLARINET Op.27

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-------|
| 4 | <i>i</i> Tema con variazioni | 06'33 |
| 5 | <i>ii</i> Vivo e giocoso | 03'40 |
- Robert Plane *clarinet*

TIBOR SERLY (1901–1978)

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 6 | CHAMBER FOLK MUSIC – world premiere recording | 11'27 |
|---|--|-------|
- Robert Plane *clarinet* Lucy Gould *violin* Benjamin Frith *piano*

GYÖRGY KURTÁG (b. 1926)

HOMMAGE À R. SCH. Op.15d

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 7 | <i>i</i> (Merkwürdige Pirouetten Des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler) – Vivo | 00'39 |
| 8 | <i>ii</i> (E.: Der Begrenzte Kreis...) – Molto Semplice, Piano e legato | 00'34 |
| 9 | <i>iii</i> (...Und Wieder Zuckt Es Schmerzlich F. Um Die Lippen...) – Feroce, Agitato | 00'34 |
| 10 | <i>iv</i> (Félhő Valék, Már Süt A Nap...)(Töredék – Töredék) – Calmo, Scorrevole | 00'23 |
| 11 | <i>v</i> In Der Nacht – Presto | 00'46 |
| 12 | <i>vi</i> Abschied (Meister Raro Entdeckt Guillaume De Machaut) – Adagio, Poco Andante | 06'27 |
- Robert Plane *clarinet and bass drum* David Adams *viola* Benjamin Frith *piano*

LEÓ WEINER (1885–1960)

KÉT TÉTEL (TWO MOVEMENTS)

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 13 | <i>i</i> Busulo Juhasz (Woeful Shepherd) | 02'06 |
| 14 | <i>ii</i> Csurdongolo (Barn Dance) | 02'57 |
- Robert Plane *clarinet* Benjamin Frith *piano*

ERNŐ DOHNÁNYI (1877–1960)

SEXTET IN C MAJOR Op.37

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 15 | <i>i</i> Allegro appassionato | 11'10 |
| 16 | <i>ii</i> Intermezzo (Adagio) | 05'55 |
| 17 | <i>iii</i> Allegro con sentimento – presto, quasi l'istesso tempo – meno mosso | 06'44 |
| 18 | <i>iv</i> Finale: Allegro vivace – giocoso | 05'40 |

Robert Plane *clarinet*
 Lucy Gould *violin*
 David Adams *viola*
 Alice Neary *cello*
 Alec Frank-Gemmill *horn*
 Benjamin Frith *piano*

Total time: **83'14**

Produced, engineered and edited by Patrick Allen
 Recorded 18th–19th April & 10th–11th May 2016 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK
 Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen
 Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: Joanna Wilson

We are so used to the gritty and astringent style of Béla Bartók (1881–1945) that it is often overlooked that he started from a musical and aesthetic background very similar to that of his apparent polar opposite, the precociously gifted but conventional Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960). Indeed, the two attended the same Catholic grammar school in Pozsony (now Bratislava in Slovakia), Dohnányi just four years ahead of Bartók, and both pupils played the organ at the church attached to the school. Bartók was very conscious of the early and spectacular success enjoyed by Dohnányi, whose piano quintet, written while still a student at the Budapest Academy of Music, so impressed Brahms that the German composer helped arrange for its premiere in Vienna; after graduating, Dohnányi became almost instantly an international success, performing Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto in London's Queen's Hall under the baton of Hans Richter. Bartók hoped to emulate this success, and while in his teens composed several Brahms-influenced works including a piano quintet written just two years after Dohnányi's. He also greatly admired Dohnányi's piano playing, and took lessons with him; their relationship was sufficiently cordial for Dohnányi to conduct several of Bartók's early works.

By the time Bartók came to compose his witty *Contrasts* in 1938, his music had been transformed by his encounter with and deep study of Hungarian folk music. Paradoxically, though Bartók had begun his adult life as a staunch nationalist – even before his encounter with authentic folk music – he had since become disgusted with the nationalist and anti-Semitic politics of late-1930s Hungary, and particularly with his country's increasing alignment with Hitler and the Nazis (a distaste shared by Dohnányi). At least as early as November 1937, Bartók had

been seriously considering emigration to the United States. Thus the commission from the Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti, who asked for a two-movement Rhapsody for clarinet, violin and piano to be performed by himself and the American jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman (who was to pay the commission), seemed most timely.

Szigeti had met Goodman at the Riviera in the summer of 1938, while the clarinetist was touring Europe, and Goodman had proposed that Bartók should write a work suitable for recording on a 12-inch 78rpm disc, each movement being just long enough to fit on one side. Szigeti further specified in his letter to Bartók: "If possible, the composition should consist of two independent parts (with the possibility of playing them separately – like the first rhapsody for violin) and of course we hope that it will also contain brilliant clarinet and violin cadenzas." Szigeti arranged that several of Goodman's jazz trio records were sent to Bartók so he should become familiar with the clarinetist's style. Bartók promptly fulfilled the commission, writing the completion date of 24 September 1938 at the end of the score. The work, at that time simply titled *Rhapsody*, then consisted of just two movements, as Szigeti had specified – that is, the first and third movements of the work in its final form – titled 'Verbunkos' and 'Sebes' (a fast dance). *Verbunkos* – derived from the German 'Werbung' (recruiting) – is the Hungarian dance, traditionally performed by gypsy bands, that was used by the Imperial Army's recruiting parties to entice young men to join their forces. Bartók's two-movement Rhapsody was first performed, in New York, on 9 January 1939 by Szigeti, Goodman and the pianist Endre Petri. Bartók added what is now the second movement, 'Pihenő' (Relaxation), and himself joined Szigeti and Goodman in New York to play

the piano part for the first complete performance and subsequent recording of *Contrasts* in April 1940. A curious feature of the third movement is that both clarinetist and violinist change instruments, the violinist initially playing an instrument tuned G sharp-D-A-E flat (creating a 'mistuned' effect) before taking up a violin with the usual tuning of G-D-A-E, while the clarinetist starts on a B flat instrument, alternating this with the A-pitched instrument used in other movements.

Miklós Rózsa (1907–95), born in Budapest, is now widely remembered as a major composer of film music, scoring *Ben-Hur* and Hitchcock's *Spellbound*; yet he was also a distinguished composer of concert music. Studying violin from the age of five, Rózsa's talent was recognised by a Reger pupil, Hermann Grabner, who persuaded Rózsa's father to allow him to attend the Leipzig Conservatory. Since childhood Rózsa had relished the folk music played by locals on his father's country estate in the county of Nógrád, situated at the foot of the Mátra mountains. As Rózsa recalled, "The whole area was inhabited by the Palóc, an indigenous Magyar people with their own dialect, customs and costumes (on Sundays the girls wore some 8-10 layers of skirts!)." The folk music performed by the Palóc, as he recalled, was often unaccompanied; it was with this style of music in mind that in 1957, when living and working in Hollywood, Rózsa composed his *Sonatina for Clarinet*. Its first movement, in the form of a theme and variations, is followed by a *Vivo e giocoso* that well demonstrates the clarinet's agility.

Tibor Serly (1901–78) was only four when his family moved from Hungary to New York, and he became a naturalised American citizen in 1911. Yet Serly affirmed his Hungarian roots by returning to Budapest to study at the Academy, where his

teachers included Bartók and Kodály, graduating in 1925. On returning to America he made his career both as a violist and a conductor. When Bartók emigrated to the United States, Serly became closely associated with the great composer, finishing the orchestration of Bartók's Third Piano Concerto and completing the Viola Concerto from the disordered sketches Bartók had left at his death. Given Serly's training and this association, it is no surprise to hear something of Bartók's style in his *Chamber Folk Music* (1949), which arranges several Hungarian folk songs from the Bartók-Kodály collection: one may hear this particularly in the opening, the shivering violin tremolos and piano figurations recalling the night-insect music typical of Bartók's work.

A leading composer in post-war Hungary, György Kurtág (b. 1926) moved to Budapest in 1946 out of admiration for Bartók and there studied at the Academy under several of the great composer's colleagues. Kurtág has declared: "My mother tongue is Bartók and Bartók's mother tongue was Beethoven." Kurtág's pithy and aphoristic style is well exemplified in his *Hommage à R. Sch.*. Composed for the same trio of instruments used in Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen*, the movements include the names of various characters from Schumann's world such as Kreisler, Florestan, Eusebius and Raro. Each of the first five movements lasts less than a minute, and they present powerful contrasts in terms of character and sonority; the work then ends with the eerie 'Abschied' (Farewell), a movement in the form of a *passacaglia* whose theme is first played on the piano.

One of Kurtág's teachers was Leó Weiner (1885–1960), a fellow-student of Bartók and Kodály's at the Academy of Music in Budapest, who himself became a legendary professor of chamber music at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music (as the Academy was renamed in 1925). Although he did not follow his colleagues into

folk song collecting, Weiner's music reflects something of their influence. One may hear the gentle pastoral style of Kodály in the first of his Two Movements for clarinet and piano, 'The Woeful Shepherd'; yet more folk-like with its Middle Eastern inflections is the lively second piece, 'Barn Dance'.

So we turn to Dohnányi, Hungary's reactionary yet benevolent leading musician of the early 20th century. His Sextet in C major, Op.37, written in 1935 (that is, just three years before Bartók began composing *Contrasts!*), was his final major chamber composition. Demanding considerable virtuosity from its players, it is very much in the post-Brahms style with which Dohnányi was most comfortable. Yet it is far from complacent in character. The opening *Allegro appassionato*, though in standard sonata form, launches with turbulent cello *arpeggios* above which a horn dolefully sounds a tritone-tinged motif, which is then taken up by the other instruments. The following 'Intermezzo' movement is no pastoral idyll, but harmonically unsettled and eerie in a manner which to English ears anticipates late Vaughan Williams – a stylistic echo all the more pronounced when a sinister march is then introduced. More straightforward in manner – initially at least – is the third movement, a Brahms-style theme (played by clarinet) and a set of variations. Even in this movement a sense of disquiet surfaces from time to time, though when music from the opening *Allegro appassionato* is recalled there is a sense that the turbulent sea has now calmed, even as the tritone motif reappears as a bridge to the finale. As if to celebrate the storm having passed, the final movement is a playful and good-natured romp. Towards the end, the horn recalls its very first theme, but now transformed into a triumphant fanfare with the tritone replaced with a clean-cut fourth.

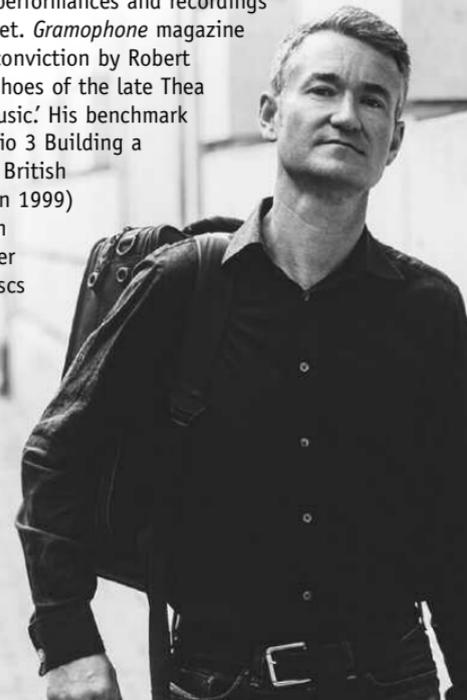
© Daniel Jaffé

I ROBERT PLANE *clarinet*

Robert Plane won the Royal Overseas League Music Competition in 1992. Since then his solo and chamber career has taken him to prestigious venues across Europe and beyond, performing Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in Madrid's Auditorio Nacional de Música with the City of London Sinfonia, on tour in the USA with the Virginia Symphony and throughout China with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, during which his performance at Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts was broadcast live to a TV audience of six million.

Robert has become particularly known for his performances and recordings of the magnificent English repertoire for clarinet. *Gramophone* magazine has praised playing of 'ravishing lyricism and conviction by Robert Plane, who has now surely fully occupied the shoes of the late Thea King in his championship of British clarinet music.' His benchmark recording of Finzi's Clarinet Concerto (BBC Radio 3 Building a Library recommendation and part of the Naxos British Music Series which won a Gramophone Award in 1999) is still a regular feature of the playlists of both Radio 3 and Classic FM nearly twenty years after its initial release. He subsequently recorded discs of music by Bax (a further Gramophone Award shortlisting), John Ireland, Howells, Alwyn, Holbrooke, Robin Milford and Stanford, including Stanford's Clarinet Concerto with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Robert made his solo debut at the BBC Proms in 2011 in Simon Holt's double concerto 'Centauromachy'. He gave the world premiere of Piers Hellawell's 'Agricolás', with subsequent performances and a CD recording



I LUCY GOULD *violin*

for Delphian with the Ulster Orchestra and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. Other notable premieres include the clarinet concerto by Diana Burrell, with performances with Royal Northern Sinfonia at the Huddersfield Contemporary Festival and at the Barbican, and Nicola LeFanu's *Concertino*. He gave the UK premiere of Christian Jost's 'Heart of Darkness' before taking it to the Dortmund Philharmonic during their season celebrating that composer's works. Other overseas engagements include Finzi in the Zurich Tonhalle with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Copland with the Malta Philharmonic in Valletta and a gala performance of the Bruch Double Concerto for clarinet and viola with the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka as part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Robert has formed close partnerships with a number of leading chamber ensembles. He has performed and recorded with the Gould Piano Trio for over twenty years, and their recording of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* was hailed by *BBC Music Magazine* as the 'finest modern version' of this monumental work. He also appears on the Gould Trio's recorded cycle of the complete trios of both Beethoven and Brahms. Together, they direct the Corbridge Chamber Music Festival in Northumberland. He has collaborated with the Maggini, Dante, Auer, Carducci, Sacconi, Cavalleri, Brodsky and Tippett quartets, and his performance of the Brahms Clarinet Quintet with the Škampa Quartet was broadcast live on Radio 3 on the opening night of that station's 'Brahms Experience'. Robert has given concerts with the Mandelring Quartet in Germany, the UK and on a West Coast USA tour and a series of recitals in Switzerland with the Swiss Piano Trio. He has performed with pianist Sophia Rahman since meeting as students at the Royal Academy of Music, for music clubs and festivals throughout the UK and on tour in South America, China, New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

Alongside his solo and chamber work Robert has held the position of principal clarinet with Royal Northern Sinfonia, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. He has played as a guest principal with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and in Aurora Orchestra's memorised performances of Brahms' First Symphony.

Lucy Gould is violinist of the Gould Piano Trio. Winner of the Melbourne, Florence and Charles Hennen International competitions, the Gould Trio are regular visitors to the Wigmore Hall, celebrating their 25th anniversary there with an all-Schubert recital and a complete Beethoven trio cycle in the 2017/18 season. ECHO 'Rising Stars' in their early days, the trio has performed in major European halls and at the Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall, New York. They regularly tour to the USA, the Washington Post claiming 'the only comparison that comes to mind is the old Beaux Arts Trio; the combination of jeweller-like precision and a musical fire that ignites from the first bar'. Their extensive discography includes complete trio cycles of Beethoven (recorded live at St. George's, Bristol), Brahms, Dvorak, Mendelssohn and Hummel.

Lucy has played as a guest of the Nash Ensemble, Ensemble 360, London Bridge Trio, and as a member of the Soloists of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Her disc of John Ireland Violin Sonatas was BBC Music Magazine Chamber Choice. In addition to her position as principal second violin of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Lucy has appeared as guest leader of the CBSO, Hallé, City of London Sinfonia, Britten Sinfonia, Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and the BBC Symphony, Philharmonic, Scottish Symphony and National Orchestra of Wales. She teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, where the Gould Piano Trio is also Ensemble in Residence and from where she received an Honorary Fellowship in 2015.



DAVID ADAMS *viola*

David Adams is leader of the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera and tutor in violin at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Having previously performed with the London Bridge Trio as guest violist, earlier this year David was invited to the trio as their new violinist. Passionate about chamber music, David has been a member of the Raphael Ensemble and Ovid Ensemble and is now delighted to be exploring the extraordinary piano trio repertoire with two such wonderful, distinguished musicians as Kate Gould and Daniel Tong.

With regular guest appearances, recordings and broadcasts on both violin and viola with the Nash Ensemble, Endellion String Quartet, Gould Piano Trio and Hebrides Ensemble, he has recently recorded the complete Brahms Piano quartets with the Gould Piano Trio and performed the complete Mozart String quintets with the Endellion String Quartet. He regularly attends the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove. This year also includes performances at the Winchester Festival, Leeds International Chamber Music Series, RWCMD Russian Festival, Corbridge Festival, and further concerts with the Nash Ensemble. David has also appeared as guest leader of many of the UK's symphony and chamber orchestras and recently enjoyed playing principal viola with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

In his role at WNO David has performed several concertos with the orchestra and enjoys directing concerts from the violin, most recently Mozart Symphony No.41, Beethoven Symphony No.1, Viennese concerts, and later this season performances of all Bach's Brandenburg concertos.

David belongs to a musical family, his father was principal viola of the Hallé Orchestra and he is married to the cellist Alice Neary. Alice and David are the artistic directors of the Penarth Chamber Music Festival, which takes place each July on Penarth Pier. He began his studies at the age of five with his father, continuing his training with Malcolm Layfield at Chetham's School of Music and the RNCM and then in the USA with Zvi Zeitlin and Daniel Phillips. His instruments are a Joannes Gagliano violin from 1800 and a Betts viola c.1840 previously played by his father.



ALICE NEARY *cello*

Alice enjoys a varied performing career as both chamber musician and soloist and has recently been appointed principal cellist of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. She has played concertos with many leading orchestras including Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, BBCNOW, Liverpool Philharmonic, Israel Symphony and Baltimore Symphony. Familiar to listeners of BBC Radio 3, she has performed at major festivals including Bath International, Santa Fe (USA) and Manchester International Cello Festival. Her discography includes the Mendelssohn cello sonatas and concertos by Howells and Tovey.

Alice studied with Ralph Kirshbaum at the Royal Northern College of Music and, as a Fulbright scholar, with Timothy Eddy at Stonybrook, USA. As winner of the 1998 Pierre Fournier Award, Alice made her début at the Wigmore Hall, launching her career in the UK and abroad. Other competition successes include the 2001 Leonard Rose (USA) and the 1997 Adam (NZ) International Cello Competitions, the Silver Medal in 1994 Shell/LSO competition and 1996 Royal Over-Seas League String prize.

Alice is a member of the Gould Piano Trio, which has remained at the forefront of the international chamber music scene for the past 20 years. Career highlights include the complete piano trios of Beethoven, Schubert and Dvorak at the Wigmore Hall, the commissioning of new works from Sir James MacMillan and Mark Simpson, regular tours of the USA and over 25 CD releases.

Alice collaborates with pianists Benjamin Frith and Daniel Tong and has appeared as guest cellist with the Nash Ensemble, Ensemble 360 and the Endellion, Elias, Heath, Sorrel, and Bingham quartets. She makes regular visits to the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove.

Much in demand as a teacher, Alice has been a cello tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music and Royal College of Music, and is now based in her home town of Cardiff at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, where she was awarded a Fellowship in 2015. She and her husband, David Adams, founded the Penarth Chamber Music Festival in 2014. Alice plays a cello by Alessandro Gagliano of 1710.



I ALEC FRANK-GEMMILL *horn*

Principal horn of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Alec Frank-Gemmill divides his time between concertos, recitals, chamber music and orchestral playing. He was Artist in Residence at the 2013 Lammermuir Festival and made his Wigmore Hall debut the same year. He has since gone on to perform as a soloist at numerous festivals including Spitalfields, Ryedale, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and St. Magnus.

Alec was a member of the BBC New Generation Artists scheme 2014–16, appearing as soloist with the BBC orchestras on numerous occasions, including performances of rarely-heard repertoire by Ethel Smyth, Malcolm Arnold and Charles Koechlin. With his own orchestra, the SCO, he has performed concertos by Mozart (on the natural horn) with Richard Egarr, Ligeti and Strauss with Robin Ticciati, Schumann with John Eliot Gardiner and MacMillan with Andrew Manze.

Often invited as a guest principal horn, Alec has frequently appeared with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra of Europe. As a soloist, he has long been keen to explore the solo repertoire of the baroque era and to champion the use of instruments from the 19th-century. A grant from Creative Scotland has also enabled Alec to develop his interest in historical performance. He appears regularly as part of period-instrument ensembles, most notably with Ensemble Marsyas. He is also the recipient of a Borletti-Buitoni Fellowship and in early 2017 released a recording of 19th Century works for horn and piano with Alasdair Beatson on the BIS label.

Alec was recently appointed Professor of Horn at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, having himself studied in Cambridge, London and Berlin with teachers including Hugh Seenan, Radovan Vlatković and Marie-Luise Neunecker.



I BENJAMIN FRITH *piano*



Life student of Dame Fanny Waterman, Benjamin Frith won the Dudley National Concerto Competition at age fourteen, performing Saint-Saëns 2nd Piano Concerto. His many awards culminated in joint top prize at the Busoni International Piano Competition in Bolzano, then in 1989, the Gold Medal at the Artur Schnabel Piano Master's Competition, where he was awarded the special prize for Chamber Music.

Many engagements with world-renowned orchestras followed, such as IPO (Mehta), Warsaw Philharmonic (Atzmon) and later the Hallé under John Wilson and Sir Mark Elder and recital tours from India, Kazakhstan, Israel and Egypt to the Far East and North America. He soon made recording contracts with ASV, then with Naxos, for whom he made a best-selling John Field Concerto Cycle with the Royal Northern Sinfonia. His solo recording of Schumann's highly personal *Dauidsbundler* Op.6 received the top recommendation on Radio Three's programme *Building a Library*.

During the latter half of his career there has been a concentration on the chamber repertoire, principally as pianist in the Gould Piano Trio, which has made regular tours to North America and gained high honours for its discography. He has also partnered the great Messiaen specialist, Peter Hill, in two pianos and four hands, formed the enterprising Frith Piano Quartet with cellist Richard Jenkinson and been the guest pianist of such illustrious ensembles as the Elias, Endellion, Chilingarian, Wihan and Dante quartets.

Recent releases include Stanford's 2nd Piano Concerto with BBCNOW coupled with his Dante Rhapsodies for solo piano, warmly received by *BBC Music Magazine* and chosen by the *Gramophone's* critic, Jeremy Dibble, as his 'Disc of the Year 2016'.

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MENDELSSOHN, HENSEL,
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BENJAMIN FRITH *piano*

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Fanfare