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**ARNOLD BAX** (1883-1953)

DISC ONE

- 1 Folk-Tale (1918)\*\* (9'20")
- 2 **Sonata for Cello and Piano** (1923)\*\* (34'25")
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Movement: *Moderato*,  
*Tempo vacillando* (12'31")
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement: *Poco lento* (11'15")
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement: *Molto vivace*  
*ma non troppo* (10'39")
- 3 **Sonatina** (1933)\* (16'04")
- 4 1<sup>st</sup> Movement: *Allegro risoluto* (4'48")
- 5 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement: *Andante* (7'02")
- 6 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement: *Moderato* (4'14")

DISC TWO

- 1 **Legend-Sonata** (1943)\* (25'53")
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Movement: *Allegro risoluto* (9'21")
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement: *Lento espressivo* (8'53")
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement: *Rondo (Allegro)* (7'39")

**GORDON JACOB** (1895-1984)

- 1 **Divertimento for Solo Cello** (1955)\*\* (12'04")
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Movement: *Prelude* (1'41")
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement: *Improvisation* (5'04")
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement: *Minuet & Trio* (2'29")
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Movement: *Rondino* (2'50")
- 2 **Elegy for Cello and Piano** (1959)\*\* (7'41")

**Florence Hooton, cello**  
**Wilfred Parry, piano**

**BAX**

Legend-Sonata  
Cello Sonata  
Sonatina

**JACOB**

Divertimento for solo cello  
Elegy for cello and piano

**Florence Hooton, cello**  
**Wilfred Parry, piano**



The above individual timings will normally each include two pauses. One before the beginning of each movement or work, and one after the end

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There is a great quantity of chamber music by Arnold Bax, much of it incorporating the piano; apart from such things as the vast Piano Quintet and the short powerful Piano Quartet, the sonatas for melodic instrument and piano include three for violin, one for clarinet, one sonata and one extended Fantasy for viola, and several extended works with cello.

All these works bear the stamp of Bax's individual methods and personality, and it is interesting to note how he adapts these methods to the needs of each combination of instruments; for, whatever else may be said about him, he was a great master of instruments, and whatever forces are used, the music is beautifully and most expertly written for them. The three string quartets are pure quartet texture, spare, melodic, antiphonal, polyphonic; the piano parts in those chamber works incorporating the instrument are often extremely complex and difficult to play, but always the balance with the other instrument or instruments is perfectly maintained, and the duo or whatever it is respected and illumined. The chamber works show the same course of development common to all Bax's music; early works like the First Violin Sonata, are florid, full of arabesque, and sumptuous in texture, but a refining process is going on all the time, and the compositions become progressively tauter, simpler in texture, more economical in means. This holds generally true; but there is a period, roughly from 1918 to 1928, in which many of the works are most harsh, brutal, and tragic; ferocious rhythmic patterns of dissonant chords are a mark of this period, which includes the Piano Quintet (most typically), the Piano Quartet, the Second Violin Sonata, the Second String Quartet, November Woods, and the First and Second Symphonies. Most of the music for cello and piano is late; but the little *Folk-Tale* and the Sonata both belong to this period, though in style they seem to be of the later period that started roughly with the transition from the Third to the Fourth Symphonies. In this period Bax began slowly to shed his Keltic and Russian influences. The legendary, bardic aspect he never quite lost, but its self-consciously Irish aspects soon wore off. This bardic atmosphere was in many ways Nordic even in its Keltic stage, and as the Keltic influence dwindled the Englishman, fascinated by Sagas and the legendary north emerged. The influence of Sibelius, self-consciously adopted by a number of English composers between the wars, is not felt in Bax, in spite

Asked once about her move to teaching she said, "The concert platform is a great draw and you have no idea how much you miss it. Communication between you and your audience is something that feeds you as a musician. But once you can redirect that energy into teaching and begin to see results then you have all the compensation you need."

ROB BARNETT

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Cover: Portrait of Florence Hooton by Wilfred G. von Glehn RA, 1936, by permission of the Royal Academy of Music, London and Lebrecht Photo Library.

Recording dates: July & September 1958 (Bax); July & November 1958 (Jacob)

Recording location: The Music Room

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*Oration – Concerto Elegiaco* - a work that had been turned down by Felix Salmond and by Suggia. The composer was not prepared to make changes to it and then remembered Hooton. He had heard her giving a modern music concert which he attended with Benjamin Britten at Duke's Hall at the Academy. Bridge commented at the time: 'If that girl gets one more of those top notes spot-on I'm going round to ask if she'd like to give the first performance of my cello concerto.' After the premiere he wrote to her thanking her for 'the way you got above the technical considerations and found what I think is in the work'.

She was active in the recording studio during 1939 and 1940. For Decca she recorded John Ireland's Trio No.3 in E Minor with Grinke and the composer. This was a work of which she had given the first public performance with the same players on 20 June 1938 at Boosey & Hawkes' Music Room, Regent Street. The other entries in her Decca diary include both the Ireland and Bridge Phantasie Trios (Grinke Trio), the Webern Trio op. 21 (Kathleen Washbourne String Trio), and Stravinsky's *Suite Italienne* (with Gerald Moore). She was the cellist for a Saga LP of all three Ireland trios in December 1963 and played to the composer in a trio at his house during Ireland's last days.

She broadcast extensively for the BBC Third Programme including Richard Arnell's *Four Serious Pieces* with Wilfred Parry, Arnold Bax's Cello Concerto with John Hopkins conducting the BBC Northern, Gordon Jacob's Cello Concerto with Harvey Phillips and his orchestra, Jacob's Piano Trio with Loveridge and Martin, Leighton's Cello Concerto with Rudolf Schwarz and the BBCSO and Leighton's *Partita* with the composer – a work she had premiered with Wilfred Parry at the Wigmore Hall in February 1963. Two other broadcasts merit a mention: John B McEwen's *Improvisations Provençals* and the Cello Concerto of the now profoundly forgotten Briton, Ivor Walsworth's with Meredith Davies and the BBC Welsh Orchestra.

Her fixtures were by no means linked exclusively with the prominent names and orchestras. Her concert honours include ones in Cambridge in 1964 with the Albion Orchestra conducted by Cyril Bell, with Gordon Jacob as guest conductor, Gaze Cooper's Nottingham Symphony Orchestra and the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra with whom she played a Boccherini Cello Concerto and the Elgar.

of the two composers' mutual admiration, and Bax's dedication of his Fifth Symphony to his Finnish contemporary. Basically, in spite of Bax's more lush textures, the two men had too much in common for a direct influence to be felt by Bax.

But a striking simplicity of texture, developed in his later years, revealed the essential Englishman in Bax's last works; simple, sensuous and passionate, the Violin Concerto and the Legend-Sonata, not to mention *Morning Song*, belong in the true English tradition.

#### FOLK-TALE (1918)

A piece with legendary atmosphere, somewhat Keltic, somewhat Nordic in the manner of Sibelius's *En Saga*. The atmosphere of the opening is wistful, with some sad sounding chords on the piano, followed by a simple folksy tune for the cello, which develops and modifies its limbs typically. After a while the inevitable repeated-note theme is reached, and this is followed by a middle section of more varied and broken music. The main tune returns over a very deep thumping bass, and the reprise makes a climax that suddenly falls away into music marked *teneramente*, and then *melancholy* as the sad chords of the opening return; they are followed by the repeated chord theme in the cello, revealing their relationship, and the music moves sadly down into deep final G minor chords in the bass.

#### SONATA FOR CELLO AND PIANO (1923)

The first eight bars of the first movement are almost an anthology of Bax fingerprints; two bars of arpeggio, like a harp preamble, a group of dissonant chords in hammered rhythm, *feroce martellato*, a further quiet arpeggio culminating in a soft deep bass chord, and the cello entering dramatically on a theme that hovers round a single note—this time the dominant, B-flat, of the key, E-flat minor. A series of themes, or a loosely constructed thematic complex in a variety of fluctuating tempi, then follows until a double bar-line is reached and a change of key signature to G major, tempo to *Andante con moto*, and mood to one of straightforward diatonic lyricism, very plain, and standing where one might expect the second subject to be; so far the first subject complex

has been dominated by variants of the cello's opening rhythm. With the beginning of the development section this rhythm reasserts itself dramatically, but the music from here on slackens in tempo until first *Lento* is reached, with a much altered reprise of the first subject material, and then *Andante* for the second subject. The coda is free and improvisatory in tempo.

The slow movement is one of the loveliest Bax wrote, and all of a piece and a mood. The piano part is extremely complex, spilling over on to three staves for a lot of the time; it has two main features, glittering passage-work in the treble, and chords deep in the bass, supporting, some of the time, a singing middle register tune. After a few pizzicato chords the cello enters with a dreamy melody, and proceeds to sing unceasingly throughout the movement. The main tune returns in a climax that is at once lyrical and dynamic, and the logical climax of the cello's unending melody, and the music sinks into peace. The mood is that of the Mozartian 'Dream-adagio' common to some of his piano concertos.

The last movement opens with a rhythmic tune over a thumping bass; this tune proceeds to grow and develop as if alive, and give off a number of derivatives, in a fast running and fantastic movement that has some of the aspects of a set of variations. Before long, however, the tempo begins to slacken, and the goal comes in sight; a Baxian Epilogue, named as such, and in E-flat major, *Moderato tranquillo*. It begins with a peaceful transformation of the first limb of the first movement's first subject, which bears a suspicious resemblance to the main theme of this finale. This epilogue is a long, and in the main, peaceful one, making reference to much material from the sonata; after two full warm climaxes it sinks to rest, only to rise for a final assertion of the tonic major in its final bars.

#### SONATINA (1933)

The first movement is brisk and ardent, with a fiercely descending first subject; this subject enters transformed at the *Andante espressivo* passage that in Bax indicates the second subject, as that second subject. This must be one of the most extreme examples of Bax's expository economy in any of his works. There is the usual Bax development

worth remembering that she studied with Emanuel Feuermann in Zurich. Feuermann made an enduring impression on her and she recalled many years later his vitality and enthusiasm as well as his profound technical skills. On one occasion he had played the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto to her without transposition.

Her debut recital came in 1934 at the Wigmore Hall. This led to her appearance in the Promenade season alongside Frederick Grinke and Dorothy Manley in the Beethoven Triple Concerto. She soon became much associated with the music of contemporary British composers: 1934 saw her giving the first performance of Gordon Jacob's *Divertimento for Unaccompanied Cello* which Jacob dedicated to her.

Hooton was a dedicated chamber music executant working as a member of the Grinke Trio including violinist, Frederic Grinke and pianist, Dorothy Manley. Manley had been her accompanist at Hooton's Wigmore Hall debut. From 1956 to 1976 she formed the Loveridge-Martin-Hooton Trio with pianist, Iris Loveridge and violinist, David Martin. She married David Martin in 1938 and they had two daughters. She also had the distinction of being the first cellist to put in an appearance on the nascent British television service in the studios at Alexandra Palace. There she played the Haydn D Major Concerto alongside two dancers whose names were then largely unknown; Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann.

She premiered cello concertos by Gordon Jacob and Kenneth Leighton and Alan Bush's Concert Suite. All three had been written for her. The Leighton was given at the Cheltenham Festival under Sir John Barbirolli. The first performance of the William Busch cello concerto was undertaken by her on 18 December 1941 with BWalton O'Donnell of the Oxbridge RAF Orchestra. Hooton played the Busch again shortly afterwards, this time with the BBCSO under Sir Adrian Boult. She also championed the work of the much neglected figure associated with the Ireland Piano Concerto, Helen Perkin. Hooton joined Harriet Cohen for the premiere of Arnold Bax's *Legend-Sonata* and continuing the Bax connection also performed the Cello Concerto and other works for cello although not the *Rhapsodic Ballad*.

At a public BBC Contemporary Music concert on 18 January 1936 at Broadcasting House with the BBC Symphony Orchestra she premiered Frank Bridge's

**ELEGY FOR VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO** (1959) tells us by its inscription ‘for Florence Hooton. In memoriam S.W.J.’ that this is a genuine elegy, not a piece with a perfunctory title. It bears out the adjective ‘elegiac’ singled out as descriptive of the deep, sombre character of the cello, slow-speaking and contemplative, charged with emotion. Over the *adagio* piano chords of the opening the cello declares its theme of a dignity and beauty reminiscent of the grave Fantasia writing of earlier centuries. The long sustained melody grows naturally into a *Poco piu mosso* in which the piano has high throbbing chords *pianissimo* with which the cello continues its threnody in its plangent upper register, a lightening of tempo and tone colour which become *Tranquillo* before a brief return to the opening theme brings this poignant music to its close.

ELIZABETH POSTON

### Florence Hooton

Florence Hooton, OBE died on 14 May 1988 when her reputation was firmly established as a cello teacher. She became a professor at the Royal Academy of Music in 1964 but also gave private lessons in Suffolk and Sheffield. Her role as a teacher was in fact only the most recent aspect of her life. In the 1930s and 1940s she had been extremely active as a performer and only retired from concert-giving in 1978.

Hooton was born in Scarborough where her first lessons were given by her father, himself a professional cellist who had been a student of Warwick Evans, a member of the London String Quartet. She then studied with Douglas Cameron at the London Violoncello School (1927–9) and this continued after she had gained a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music (1929–34). The Academy’s collection includes a striking portrait of her by Wilfred G. von Glehn RA, 1936. Her concert and academic life is bridged by Gordon Jacob’s four movement *Cello Octet* which was commissioned by her in 1981 for her students at the Academy where memory is also marked by the annual David Martin/Florence Hooton Concerto Prize.

Given that her activities tended to be restricted to the British Isles it is also

section plus modified recapitulation, and the short movement, after a lyrical passage at the reprise of the second subject ends brilliantly and dramatically.

The slow movement is a three-part song of considerable melodic beauty. Opening over a swaying accompaniment on the piano, the cello has a long singing theme, *cant, con malincolia*. There is a central section of more broken music, with a passage, *poco piu vivo* and a return to the tune of the opening section, an octave lower, and with a more elaborate accompaniment. There is a coda based on the middle section material.

The finale is a set of variations. The theme centres round A and D with a swinging motion typical of our composer; it is marked *Moderato*. The first variation is a *Poco piu Lento* in which the cello enters half way through; the sound of the tune is little changed. The second variation is gay and impudent, and is marked by a chattering rhythmic variant of the theme high in the piano; it leads through another double bar-line to an elaborate finale, working up first to a *Largamente*, with both instruments together, then a brief *Vivace*, and a final quiet *Poco lento* with a loud final chord. The work, which began by hinting at D minor, and which has a slow movement in the remote key of G-sharp minor, ends in D major—the coda of the last movement having hinted at G minor.

### LEGEND-SONATA (1943)

Light open chords in 4/4 time give the key of B minor, and against this background the cello enters with a theme that many will recognise as a first cousin to that of the first movement of Elgar’s Cello Concerto; it has a rhythmic pendant in the bass, but enters again, very lightly accompanied, and proceeds to develop, lengthening and changing in outline. The second subject centres round F-sharp minor, and these two themes dominate the subsequent action. It is not until the beginning of the development section that the first subject appears on the piano. At the climax of the development section a rhythmic theme appears, and, after the modified recapitulation, this theme is used, shorn of its dramatic urgency, in a long and gentle coda.

The second movement, *Lento espressivo*, opens with a theme on the cello, whose rhythmic twist haunts the movement. It is short, only six bars; and it is followed by a deeply expressive and lengthy singing passage for the piano, *Longano*, which provides

most of the other material in long paragraphs of lyrical beauty. In one form or another these two themes alternate, but it is the first of them that ends the movement.

The last movement, unequivocally called *Rondo*, which is exceptional for Bax, has for its rondo theme a tune built up of a flick of semiquavers ending on the melody note on the strong beat of two-four. It is a typical rondo, and in its way an uncomplex one; there is one lyrical interlude near the beginning (*Poco meno mosso*) which recurs several times, giving the appearance of a sonata-rondo. The coda shows the flick of a diabolical tail in the rondo subject. Bax may have had his own reasons for calling this work *Legend-Sonata*, but it has an aspect of absolute music, is formally satisfying, and belongs to those late works of the composer which seem to have little content but a certain rich creative contentment.

PETER J. PIRIE.

**GORDON JACOB** was born in 1895, the youngest of ten children of a family distinguished in the Indian Civil Service and the Army. Several of his brothers were musical and could play instruments, so he heard and played music early, starting piano lessons when he was eight and almost simultaneously beginning to compose. At Dulwich College he played in the school orchestra and had his first experience of military band. In 1914 he left school to enlist in the ranks. His next intensive experience of the orchestra came after he had served three years in France and gained his commission, when he was taken prisoner in 1917 and ran and arranged the music in a German P.O.W. camp. When the war ended he entered the Royal College of Music on a government grant. There he studied with Stanford, Vaughan Williams and Boult, and proved himself such a distinguished student that he was soon invited back on the staff. During these years, until he became known, he continued to study the hard way in the necessity of earning a living, and copied band parts and scores of all kinds, counting no drudgery too boring so long as it taught him more of the practical side of music. From his first appearance as composer-conductor at a Promenade Concert in 1926 he made his name as a composer in practically every

field of music. No form was so big as to daunt him, nor too small to arouse his interest. He enjoyed composing, an enjoyment which communicates itself in his music, for he thought music should be enjoyed, felt as an experience, not treated as a solemn exercise nor allowed to become abstruse and incomprehensible. He was an authority on the orchestra and had an inspired feeling for instruments, a true understanding of the musical 'personality' of each, a gift that went hand in hand with his instinct and knowledge of how to write for it to the maximum effect—a characteristic that endeared him to the player. His style is lucid, establishing direct contact with the listener; diatonic, melodic, founded in classical forms, using dissonance as a spice rather than as an end in itself. Thus, the freedom and natural feeling of his music give as much pleasure in his bigger works—his Ballet scores, his concertos and larger choral works—as in his richly varied chamber music and smaller works. And the brilliantly witty musical fun of his famous wartime 'Itma' pieces, his propaganda music commissioned for the BBC's transmissions to the Occupied Countries 1939-45, and his contribution to the inimitable Hoffnung collection remain unsurpassed. In the year of the Festival of Britain (1951) he had three London premiers but, beginning with the promotion of the avant garde by the BBC in 1959, the music of his generation began to fall into disrepute and is only now being rediscovered. His output of some four hundred works comprises instrumental, vocal, choral and chamber music for every conceivable combination of instruments and voices.

**DIVERTIMENTO FOR SOLO CELLO** (1955) dedicated to Florence Hooton, lives up to its name, holding us continually diverted by the composer's invention for the solo instrument in four contrasted movements which epitomize fascinatingly the diverse technical resources of both cello and player. Here again, these beget the music which grows from them. In the pleasure of listening, much can be learned of what a cello can do and how a fine player plays it. Prelude, *Allegro vivace*, is a lively study in line; Improvisation, *Adagio*, lives up to its name and explores the resonances of double stopping and pizzicato; Minuet and Trio are attractive tunes with an original turn of treatment; Rondino is a sparkling *Molto allegro con brio*.

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