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NICHOLAS MAW (b.1935)

Sinfonia (1966) * (30'00")

- 1 1st Movement: *Molto sostenuto* (13'49")
- 2 2nd Movement: *Threnody* (9'30")
- 3 3rd Movement: *Variations* (10'33")

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Divertimento for Brass Quartet Op. 9 (1951) (8'17")

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(62'56")

* English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Norman Del Mar

Philip Jones Brass Ensemble

Philip Jones & Elgar Howarth, trumpets

Ifor James, horn John Iveson, trombone John Fletcher, tuba

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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MAW Sinfonia

English Chamber Orchestra, Norman Del Mar

Lyrta

GARDNER Theme & Variations **DODGSON** Sonata
ADDISON Divertimento Philip Jones Brass Ensemble



NICHOLAS MAW

Sinfonia

Born on 5 November 1935 in Grantham, Nicholas Maw studied at the Royal Academy of Music from 1955 to 1958 with Lennox Berkeley and Paul Steinitz, and in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and Max Deutsch. Despite the merits of such early works as *Nocturne* for mezzo-soprano and chamber orchestra (1958) or his Webernesque *Six Chinese songs* (1959), it was not until the première of his cantata for three women's voices and orchestra, *Scenes and Arias* at the Proms in 1962 that Maw first came to prominence. He continued to explore the expressive possibilities of its post-expressionist, post-Romantic language in subsequent compositions such as the chamber comic opera *One Man Show* (1964), String Quartet (1965), *Sonata for Strings and 2 Horns* (1967) and the Glyndebourne-commissioned three-act opera *The Rising of the Moon* (1967-1970). Cycles of works such as *Life Studies* for 15 solo strings (1973-6) and *Personae* for piano (1973-1986) are the result of an audacious treatment of texture and form. The culmination of his large-scale structural thinking is *Odyssey* for large orchestra (1973-1987), an ambitious masterpiece of formal logic, unfolding in a single, unbroken 96-minute span. *Sophie's Choice*, based on William Styron's novel, received its first performance at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle in a production by Trevor Nunn in December 2002. Maw's most recent scores include a Concerto for Cor Anglais, premièred by the Philadelphia Orchestra in April 2005 and two chamber works, String Quartet No.4, first performed by the Emerson Quartet in February 2006, and String Sextet (2007).

Sinfonia (1966) was the first substantial orchestral piece Maw composed after *Scenes and Arias* and it attempts to consolidate the new territory opened up by the previous work, refashioning and extending its vocabulary and expressive potential within a more formalised structure. It also builds on the integrative qualities of his one-movement String Quartet of 1965 in that its first movement is an intricately constructed amalgamation of sonata-form first movement and scherzo. The archaism of its title is reflected in the *Sinfonia's* neo-classical character and modest forces (2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling cor anglais), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns and strings). There are three movements, of which the first, conceived on a large scale, is the most complex in design. The opening clarinet duet presents key motifs and harmonic intervals integral to the rest of the work. A rocking string figure, which grows out of the

movement before its insouciant close. The high spirits of this vigorous, rhythmic last movement are representative of the composer, as is the formal balance and finely judged sonorities of the Sonata as a whole.

PAUL CONWAY

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The original analogue master recordings were made in association with the BRITISH COUNCIL. Maw's Sinfonia was first released in 1971 on Argo ZRG 676. The Addison, Gardner and Dodgson pieces were first released in 1975 on Argo ZRG 813.

Maw

Recording location and date: 12 October 1970, The Maltings, Snape

Gardner, Addison, Dodgson

Recording location and date: 3 December 1974, Decca Studio No.3, London

Recording Producer: Michael Bremner

Recording Engineer: Stanley Goodall

Digital Remastering Engineer: Simon Gibson

Other works by NICHOLAS MAW available on Lyrita:

Scenes & Arias

Jane Manning, Anne Howells, Norma Proctor

BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Norman Del Mar.....SRCD.267

Sonata for Strings and 2 Horns

Alan Civil & Ian Harper

English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Norman Del Mar.....SRCD.335

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the first piece of 20th century music ever broadcast by the then newly-formed quartet. Later Gardner pieces premièred by members of the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble include the *Sonata Secolare* for organ and brass quintet (1973) and *Sonatina Lirica*, for brass quintet (1983)

STEPHEN DODGSON

Sonata for Brass Quintet

Stephen Dodgson was born in London on 17 March 1924. After service in the Navy, he entered the Royal College of Music in 1947, studying composition with Patrick Hadley and R. O. Morris. From 1957 to 1982, Dodgson himself taught theory and composition at the college. For many decades, he has worked regularly for the BBC as a broadcaster, reviewer and writer of incidental music for several major radio drama productions. His compositions cover most genres, such as opera (*Margaret Catchpole*, 1979), chamber music (including seven string quartets), works for voice e.g. his sensitive setting for bass, clarinet and strings *Last of the Leaves* (1975) and orchestral music, most notably his series of *Essays*. Though his instrumental music includes seven piano sonatas and three piano trios (the most recent of which was completed in 2000), he has been notably successful in writing for guitar, harpsichord and recorder, with such challenging pieces as the *Duo Concertante*, for guitar and harpsichord (1968) and *Shine and Shade* for recorder and harpsichord. His wide range of music for guitar, including two concertos (1959, 1972), has won him an international reputation.

Dodgson's Sonata for brass quintet of 1963 is typical of his immediately communicative style, with its clearly defined ideas, fluent melodic invention and logical development expressed in uncluttered textures. It is more serious in mood than the other works for brass featured on this disc, as suggested by the designation 'sonata'. Scoring for brass quintet, with the inclusion of a tuba, allows the composer to enrich the tone colours, periodically darkening the timbres. All the material of the closely argued *Allegro moderato* first movement is derived from the two opening rising and falling phrases. A notably wide dynamic range is explored in the following eloquent *Poco adagio*, which subtly juxtaposes upper and lower instruments. A lively, blithe central scherzo-like movement precedes a more elusive, restless movement with shifting tempi, anticipating the arrival of the ensuing *Allegro* finale, which recalls material from the opening

introductory dialogue, develops into a recurring feature, reminiscent of the pervasive, lulling sleep motif from Britten's *Nocturne* for tenor solo, seven obbligato instruments and strings of 1958, though Britten's idea provides structural cohesion, often acting as a link between movements, whereas Maw's plays a more assertively interventionist role, frequently interrupting the musical argument. Beautifully extended melodic lines grace the exposition and development, constantly thwarted in their attempts to achieve a genuine climax by re-appearances of the rocking string figure and intermittent, delectable *liberamente* episodes. Thus, when the scherzo arrives, it is able to provide a real sense of momentum as a result of being, initially at least, unfettered by these restraining elements. An eloquent horn theme emerges as part of the trio section, before the movement's principal climax. The brief and varied recapitulation preserves elements of the preceding material, so that the sonata and scherzo remain tightly bound together right up to the closing bars.

The slow movement, entitled *Threnody*, is conceived in an arch form. A lyrical viola theme surfaces, related to the Sinfonia's opening clarinet material, whilst another fresh idea, on horns, anticipates the finale's variation theme, thereby linking the two movements. After a gradual build-up in tension, fuelled by increasingly florid, trill-laden textures, the movement's highly charged chordal climax is followed by a return of the viola melody, soaring in the solo first violin's vertiginous register, before the movement gradually ebbs away.

The finale consists of a set of nine continuous variations on a theme already foreshadowed on the horn in the preceding *threnody*. After a brief, introductory flourish, there are three quick variations, followed by two slower longer ones, which form the movement's still centre: of these, the fifth, nocturnal in mood, alludes to the first movement's rocking motif. The last four variations are all very swift, and inclined to review previous material. The ninth and final variation culminates in a *tour de force* as Maw brings all the work's melodic elements together in a freely organised quodlibet. A brief horn colloquy mirrors the work's opening clarinet duet and then, like the finale's short introduction, the equally curt coda ends firmly on the note F, a tonal centre that has only occasionally been alluded to previously. As such, it hardly provides the traditional 'resolution' common to more conventionally tonal works – a parting reminder that, though Maw has described the Sinfonia as his most 'neo-classical' work,

it is also not without forward-looking, progressive aspects. The Aspern Trust commissioned it for the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra, who gave the première under the direction of Michael Hall at the Rutherford College of Technology, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on 1 May 1966.

JOHN ADDISON

Divertimento for Brass Quintet

John Addison was born in Chobham, Surrey on 16 March 1920. At the age of 16 he entered the Royal College of Music, studying composition with Gordon Jacob, oboe with Leon Goosens and clarinet with Frederick Thurston. Unsurprisingly, in view of his college teachers, Addison showed a special aptitude for writing for wind, evident in his first significant work, the Woodwind Sextet of 1949, performed two years later at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Frankfurt. Among his orchestral works is a fine Trumpet Concerto (1949), a Sinfonietta (1956), written for the National Youth Orchestra and ballet music for *Carte Blanche*, commissioned by Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and premièred at the 1953 Edinburgh Festival; a five-movement suite derived from the score was later taken up by Sir Thomas Beecham. He also wrote much incidental music, notably for Royal Court Theatre productions, such as John Osborne's *The Entertainer* (1957). Addison is perhaps best known for his music for films, such as *Seven Days to Noon* (1950), *Private's Progress* (1956), *Reach for the Sky* (1956) and *A Taste of Honey* (1961). His score for *Tom Jones* (1963) won an Oscar, *Sleuth* (1972) an Oscar nomination and *A Bridge Too Far* (1977) a British Academy Award. From 1975 he was based in Los Angeles, working mostly for television, including the signature tune for the popular series *Murder, She Wrote* (1984-1996), for which he won an Emmy. His Bassoon Concertino (1998) was one of his last works to receive a first performance before his death on 7 December 1998 in Bennington, Vermont.

Direct and appealing, the *Divertimento for Brass Quartet* (1951) is the invention of a composer whose natural instinct is to entertain. A bright, imposing fanfare, whose central section contains echoes of hunting calls, is followed by a quirky waltz. After a brief and brisk central scherzo, there is a lullaby, consisting of a hushed trumpet theme over a gently rocking accompaniment. The *Divertimento* concludes with a dashing, waggish *galop*.

JOHN GARDNER

Theme and Variations for Brass Quartet

John Gardner was born in Manchester in 1917 and brought up in Ilfracombe, North Devon. He taught at Repton School (John Veale was one of his pupils), before serving in the R.A.F during World War II. Between 1946 and 1952, he was on the music staff at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. His international reputation as a composer was launched in 1951 when Sir John Barbirolli and the Hallé Orchestra premièred his impressive First Symphony (1947) at the Cheltenham Festival. This success led to further commissions: *Cantiones Sacrae* (1952) from the Three Choirs Festival, *Variations on a theme of Carl Nielsen* for orchestra from the Cheltenham Festival (another work premièred by Barbirolli and the Hallé) and the opera *The Moon and Sixpence* (1957) from Sadler's Wells. His output has been prolific (the Concerto for Bassoon and Strings, written in 2004 is designated Opus 249), embracing four operas, three symphonies, concertos for piano, trumpet, organ, oboe and flute and three string quartets. He has written extensively for voice and choir, including *Seven Songs* for chorus and small orchestra (1956), the carol *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day* (1965) and *A Burns Sequence*, for chorus and orchestra (1993). His light music includes two attractive overtures, *Half Holiday* (1962) and *Midsummer Ale* (1965).

In his *Theme and Variations for Brass Quartet* (1951), a measured, eloquent trombone theme of artless simplicity, involving rising scales and falling arpeggio-like figures, becomes the subject of eight sharply defined and well-contrasted variations. Though the trombone is silent for the gently flowing first variation, it takes the lead in the following, chromatically modified version of the theme. A light-hearted *scherzando* contrasts with the succeeding intensely rhythmic slow march. Good humour is restored in the ensuing characteristically witty quick march with its wryly mock-ostentatious trumpet flourishes and scrunching semitonal clashes. Unexpectedly, the sixth variation takes the form of an extended *Habênera* in which the horn provides the dance rhythm, whilst a wistful theme on first trumpet is punctuated by a languorous second trumpet and trombone idea, muted and jazzy. A dark, veiled episode pervaded by falling sevenths precedes a lively 6/8 fugal finale, whose bluff ebullience is dismissed by a deadpan, throwaway ending.

The Philip Jones Brass Quartet, for whom the *Theme and Variations* was written, gave the first performance on 22 April 1952 in a BBC broadcast, lending it the distinction of being

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