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Cover image: The Rapture (© Benjamin Haas / Dreamstime.com)
Peter Dickinson (b. 1934)

Lullaby from ‘The Unicorns’ • Mass of the Apocalypse • Larkin’s Jazz
Five Forgeries • Five Early Pieces for Piano • Air • Metamorphosis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lullaby from ‘The Unicorns’</td>
<td>3:24</td>
<td>arranged by the composer for flute and piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanctus and Benedictus</td>
<td>3:32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnus Dei</td>
<td>5:08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>4:04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et Incarnata est</td>
<td>6:19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larkin’s Jazz (1989)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude to ‘Reasons for attendance’</td>
<td>1:25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem: ‘Reasons for attendance’</td>
<td>1:56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary on ‘Reasons for attendance’</td>
<td>1:41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude to ‘For Sidney Bechet’</td>
<td>1:18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem: ‘For Sidney Bechet’</td>
<td>1:55</td>
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<td>Commentary on ‘For Sidney Bechet’</td>
<td>1:19</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Poem: ‘Love songs in age’</td>
<td>4:34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem: ‘Love songs in age’</td>
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<td>Prelude to ‘Reference back’</td>
<td>2:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poem: ‘Reference back’ and conclusion</td>
<td>4:04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five Early Pieces for solo piano (1955-56)</td>
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<td>1. Contemplation I</td>
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<td>2. Invention I</td>
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<td>3. Contemplation II</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Invention II</td>
<td>2:09</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5. Contemplation III</td>
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<td>Air for solo flute (1959)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metamorphosis for solo flute (1955/71)</td>
<td>3:42</td>
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We should like to acknowledge the generous support of the Vaughan Williams Trust and the John Ireland Trust.

Cover by Harold Lewis 1964, courtesy of Novello & Co. Ltd.

Philip Larkin
Photo courtesy of the Philip Larkin Estate

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musical background with more elaborate commentaries on either side. I went through all the poems to find jazz references and finally chose recordings of Bechet’s ‘Blue Horizon’ (1944) and King Oliver’s ‘Riverside Blues’ (1923). I transcribed these tracks and, in one form or another, they gave me the material for the entire piece.

Then I chose the four poems. ‘thank you’ is laid out in eleven sections. Each poem has a prelude; then the poem itself is spoken to a minimal musical background; and that is followed by an instrumental commentary. These purely instrumental sections involve the speaker/baritone as a singer but without words. The first poem, ‘Reasons for attendance’ from The Less Deceived (1953), provides ‘The trumpet’s voice, loud and authoritative’ as the poet watches the dance in progress through the window from outside. In the Prelude to ‘Reasons for Attendance’ the trumpet is offstage in the distance. In the commentary, after the poem, Bechet’s blues becomes a kind of popular song, first in clarinet and then alto saxophone. Then there are three poems from The Whimsian Weddings (1964). At the end of the poem ‘For Sidney Bechet’, spoken to a background of the alto flute, Larkin celebrates jazz as opposed to the serious music scene, which he describes as ‘long-haired grief and scored pity’. On either side of this, in the Prelude and Commentary, there are two snappy numbers for all the players. ‘thank you’ is followed by an instrumental commentary. These purely instrumental sections involve the speaker/baritone as a singer but without words.

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  Requiem • Take Him, Earth, Far Cherishing and other choral works
  Choir of St John's College, Cambridge
  Christopher Robinson • Iain Fergusson, Organ
  8.554659

- **Havergal BIAN**
  Symphony No. 4 ‘Das Siegeslied’ (Psalm of Victory)
  Jana Valášková, Soprano • Slovak Choirs
  Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra • Adrian Leaper
  8.570308

- **James MacMillan**
  Seven Last Words from the Cross
  The Dmitri Ensemble
  Graham Ross
  8.570719

- **Peter DICKINSON**
  Complete Solo Organ Works
  Jennifer Bate
  Organs of St John's Duncan Terrace
  St James's Muswell Hill
  St Dominic's Priory
  London
  8.572169
Peter Dickinson weaves together musical styles popular and classical, past and present, using a technique of ‘style modulation’. In his Mass of the Apocalypse the Book of Revelations’ visions of a new heaven and earth interact with the liturgical text. The music of Sidney Bechet and Bix Beiderbecke played at Philip Larkin’s memorial service suggested the means for him to set the words of the great British poet, himself a jazz critic. His Five Forgeries spoof the styles of famous composers, while the other works showcase different aspects of his many-sided talent. Jennifer Bate’s recording of Dickinson’s complete solo organ works is available on Naxos 8.572169.