

Chan 4549



FROM
SONNETS
TO
JAZZ

GRIMETHORPE

COLLIERY BAND

Major **PETER PARKES**
Conductor

CHANDOS
BRASS

SNELL

FLETCHER

WILSON

MCCABE

WILBY





Peter Parkes

Tony Carter

From Sonnets to Jazz

Percy Fletcher (1879–1932)

An Epic Symphony

16:07

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | I | Recitare: Allegro moderato e risoluto | 4:26 |
| 2 | II | Elegy: Larghetto | 6:00 |
| 3 | III | Heroic March: Allegro con spirito | 5:33 |

Philip Wilby (b. 1949)

Unholy Sonnets*

12:58

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|------|
| 4 | 1 | Time to admit my altar is a desk | 1:39 |
| 5 | 2 | Two forces rule the universe | 4:06 |
| 6 | 3 | There was a pious man | 1:32 |
| 7 | 4 | If God survives us, will his kingdom come? | 5:32 |

John McCabe (b. 1939)

Salamander

12:18

Moderato

Howard Snell

Fantasy for Cornet and Brass Band

8:33

Lento – Presto leggiero

Richard Marshall cornet

Thomas Wilson (b. 1927)

10 Refrains and Cadenzas 12:23
Allegro

Philip Wilby

Jazz 13:57
♩ = 110 –

- I Allegro pesante – 6:06
- 12** II Preciso – 2:50
- 13** III Cool: Allegro con moto – 2:11
- 14** IV Breathless: Più moto 2:49

TT 77:01

Martin Hindmarsh tenor*
Grimethorpe Colliery Band
Major Peter Parkes

Professional Music Director Peter Parkes
Resident Musical Director Gary Cutt
Band Manager Terry Webster

Soprano Cornet Peter Roberts
Principal Cornet Richard Marshall
Solo Cornets Duncan Byers
David Arnold

Repiano Cornet Shaun Randall
Second Cornets Mick Kennedy

Third Cornets Stuart Kennedy

Flugel Horn Stephen Peacock
Solo Tenor Horn Colin Brook
First Tenor Horn Mark Walters
Second Tenor Horn Melvyn Bathgate
First Baritone Ray Curry
Adrian Brooke
Robert Archer

Second Baritone Cliff Hopes
Solo Euphonium Mike Kilroy
Second Euphonium Mathew Grimes
Solo Tenor Trombone Jonathan Beatty
Second Tenor Trombone Andrew Hirst
Bass Trombone Adam Foy
E Flat Basses Paul Davies
Roy Bowater
B Flat Basses Roy Batty

Percussion Malcolm Clegg

Mark Arnold
David Hartland
Peter Mathews
Paul Wallis

From Sonnets to Jazz

From Sonnets to Jazz

In 1851 Prince Albert's Great Exhibition took place in a vast, new structure erected in London's Hyde Park especially for the occasion. Built entirely of glass and steel, it was itself one of the wonders of the age. After the exhibition it was moved to Sydenham where it became known as the Crystal Palace. The Exhibition was intended to show the world the pre-eminence of all aspects of the British way of life and of British Industry in particular. One of its side benefits was the great influence which it had on the development of the brass band. Bands consisting entirely of brass instruments were at last, with the perfection of the piston valve, becoming a practical proposition. Among the many exhibitors of musical instruments a Belgian, Adolphe Sax, had on show some eighty-five instruments of his own design including a complete family of piston operated saxhorns. A party of players from the Mossley Temperance Band ordered a set of twelve and, practising in some secrecy, spent the following two years perfecting their playing techniques. The first British Open Brass Band Championships took place in 1853 at Belle Vue, Manchester and the renamed Mossley Temperance Saxhorn Band took first

prize! The brass band had arrived. Able to play intricate chromatic music they were anxious to perform in public but they had no established repertoire. For quite a long time they managed pretty well by simply borrowing popular orchestral and operatic works. Operatic selections or orchestral transcriptions were in fact chosen as test pieces for every British Open from 1855 until 1924!

In 1900 the great John Henry Iles started his Crystal Palace National Championships and, continuing with Belle Vue's operatic tradition, chose *Beauties of Sullivan* as the test piece. Over the ensuing years Iles gradually became disenchanted with this system and in 1913 he announced that Percy Fletcher had been commissioned to write an original work. In *Labour of Love*, Fletcher wisely wrote in the familiar dramatic, operatic style which the bands loved, thus ensuring immediate success for the first original test piece. Iles's initiative was to have the most far-reaching effect: In the following years he was to commission works from the majority of the leading composers of his day. Elgar, Holst, Ireland, Bliss, Vaughan Williams and many others were persuaded to compose music for the National. Iles's good influence has lasted to the present time! This

disc consists entirely of original music written for the brass band and shows something of the tradition from Fletcher to Wilby and of the diversity of styles in which good brass players are expected to be proficient!

An Epic Symphony

Fletcher was commissioned by Iles to write *An Epic Symphony* as the 1926 National test piece. This dramatic music is written in a similar operatic style to that of his *Labour of Love*. The first movement is an instrumental recitative, in which solo passages, sometimes declamatory and sometimes reflective, are contrasted with vigorous tutti. The second movement, *Elegy*, opens with a solemn theme on the three horns followed by a contrasting theme which builds to a tremendous full band climax. The movement ends quietly with an extended version of the first theme. Movement three, *Heroic March*, begins with an elaborate fanfare leading through a strongly rhythmic passage to a great chorale. To quote the composer:

... all the themes bear some resemblance to each other – they are all derived from one germ idea. In this way the composer has sought to bind the work together and to establish it as a symphonic conception.

Unholy Sonnets

These sonnets were first performed in Manchester in 1996 as part of the BBC's

Festival of Brass. Philip Wilby gave a short introduction in which he said

If the band parts are too interesting to play perhaps the players will drown the voice – not in terms of the sound of the voice but the sound of the words, so there are some problems with that, equally there are great advantages particularly with the lush, lyrical background which a band like Grimethorpe can provide.

In fact the parts are so beautifully written that there are few problems of any sort – the parts are a delight to play! This is the first work of its type and I pray that it will be the first of many!

Salamander

Salamander was commissioned in 1994 by Michael Webber as part of the tenth birthday celebrations of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England. It was chosen as the test piece for the British Open Championships of 1995, the last to be held in Manchester's Free Trade Hall. The piece is in the form of a passacaglia – a set of variations on a ground bass. The ground-bass tune is heard in the opening section both rising, in the bass, and descending in a series of chords with the notes of the tune at the top. Contrasting sections follow, culminating in a vigorous fugal section whose tune is a variant of the main theme, and a final blazing statement of the original chordal version of the ground-bass theme.

Fantasy for Cornet and Brass Band

Howard Snell composed this Fantasy in 1988 in memory of his father. There are two main sections, the first, *Lento*, is often lyrical and very free in style. The second section is a very fast 6/8 marked *Presto leggiero*, and a real test for the soloist!

Refrains and Cadenzas

Commissioned by the Cheltenham Festival *Refrains and Cadenzas* was dedicated to Geoffrey Brand and the Black Dyke Mills Band. The first performance took place at the Cheltenham Festival of 1973 and it was later used as the test piece for the European Championships. *Refrains and Cadenzas* is typical of the work of the composer. There is no programme, the piece exists only as music. The title describes the work perfectly, the composer building the piece from a number of short, contrasting episodes, some elegiac, some dramatic and others solos. The cadenzas are slow lyrical passages featuring the euphonium of Mike Kilroy. Thomas Wilson celebrates his seventieth birthday in September 1997.

Jazz

In June 1996 Philip Wilby visited New York for the first time – it left a lasting impression

... I was captivated by the ceaseless energy of the metropolis, with its short active history, and

its intense but heartless glamour. In many ways, New York was born in the jazz age, and the sound of Big Band Jazz is like its musical alter ego. Where the Lincoln Center now stands were once the original apartment blocks which inspired *West Side Story*; and those other Symphonic Dances; my composition cannot help but take inspiration from the sound and style of Bernstein's masterpiece.

There are four dances, separated in the manner of 1930s dance-band medleys by solo links. The four dances represent to some degree the four movements of a classical symphony, and the links make extensive use of half-valve *glissandi* used as punctuation marks between the various sections.

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Born in Cambridge, **Martin Hindmarsh** studied music at the University of Birmingham and voice with John Cameron and Joseph Ward. He now combines lecturing in music at the University of Sheffield with a career as a tenor soloist.

Martin Hindmarsh has frequently been heard on Radio 3, both as a soloist with the BBC Northern Singers and with the Northern Sinfonia and the BBC Philharmonic. His performances in opera and oratorio have taken him across the world – from Gounod's *Faust* in Singapore to Mozart's Requiem in Geneva. He

has recorded Victorian and Edwardian songs, and songs by Alan Rawsthorne and was the tenor soloist in the first performance of Philip Wilby's *Unholy Sonnets*.

Grimethorpe Colliery Band was formed in 1917. Its headquarters are at the Acorn Centre in the heart of the village. In 1996 the band provided music for the feature film *Brassed Off* which tells the story of a colliery band's fight for survival when the pit to which it belongs is closed. The film's fictional band Grimley was in a situation not so very far removed from that which faced Grimethorpe in recent years. The real difference is that in the film a number of players accepted that the band would have to go, with Grimethorpe it was 'we don't know how we'll survive as a band, but survive we will!' The real breakthrough came in February with sponsorship from RJB Mining Plc. Major Peter Parkes took over as professional conductor in July 1995 and led the band to victory in the

Yorkshire Championships and second place at the National Championships in the Royal Albert Hall. Grimethorpe gives concerts almost weekly all over the country and will be touring through France, Germany and Switzerland in 1997.

Major Peter Parkes was appointed as the band's professional director in July 1995. He is the most successful brass band conductor of modern times having conducted winning performances at a total of twenty-one National, British Open and European Championships, and a record eight Scottish National and twenty-seven Area Championships. He was formerly director of many famous bands in the British Army, including HM Grenadier Guards and the Corps of Royal Engineers. He works as a conductor and adjudicator in the USA, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and throughout Europe. For the past fourteen years he has been President of the British Federation of Brass Bands.

Unholy Sonnets

4 1. Time to admit my altar is a desk

Time to admit my altar is a desk.
 Time to confess the cross I bear a pen.
 My soul, a little like a compact disc,
 Slides into place, a laser plays upon
 Its surface, and a sentimental mist,
 Freaked with the colors of church window glass,
 Rides down a shaft of light that smells of must
 As music adds a layer of high gloss.
 Time to say plainly when I am alone
 And waiting for the coming of the ghost
 Whose flame-tongue like a blow-torch, sharp and
 lean,
 Writes things that no one ever could have guessed,
 I give in to my habit and my vice
 And speak as soon as I can find a voice.

5 2. Two forces rule the universe

Two forces rule the universe of breath
 And one is gravity and one is light.
 And does their jurisdiction include death?
 Does nothingness exist in its own right?
 It's hard to say, lying awake at night,
 Full of an inner weight, a glaring dread,
 And feeling that Simone Weil must be right.
 Two forces rule the universe, she said,
 And they are light and gravity. And dead,
 She knows, as you and I do not, if death
 Is also ruled or if it rules instead,
 And if it matters, after your last breath.
 But she said truth was on the side of death
 And thought God's grace filled emptiness, like
 breath.

6 3. There was a pious man

There was a pious man upright as Job,
 In fact, more pious, more upright, who prayed
 The way most people thoughtlessly enjoy
 Their stream of consciousness. He concentrated
 On glorifying God, as some men let
 Their minds create and fondle curving shadows.
 And as he gained in bumper crops and cattle,
 He greeted each success with grave amens.

So he was shocked, returning from the bank,
 To see a flood bearing his farm away –
 His cows, his kids, his wife, and all his stuff.
 Swept off his feet, he cried out, 'Why?' and sank.
 And God grumped from his rain cloud, 'I can't say,
 Just something about you pisses me off.'

7 4. If God survives us, will his kingdom come?

If God survives us, will his kingdom come?
 But let's row out to sea and ship the oars
 And watch the planet drown in meteors.
 If God forgives us, surely he will come.
 Can we nail up a man and do the same
 To a child? Yes. And drive the spikes through tears.
 But let's row out to sea and watch the stars.
 No matter what we do, they are the same,
 Crossing the bleeding sky on shining feet,
 Walking on water toward us, and then sinking.
 Surely when he grew up, God must have known
 What sort of death was waiting for one thinking
 That with his coming history was complete.
 We'll greet him as the children would have done.

Mark Jarman
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Producer Ralph Couzens

Sound engineer & editor Jonathan Cooper

Assistant engineer Richard Smoker

Recording venue Dewsbury Town Hall; 31 May & 1 June 1997

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11 - 14 Jazz recorded in the presence of the composer 13:57

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Martin Hindmarsh tenor*
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