



WIND BAND CLASSICS



WILLIAM ALWYN
Film Music

Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra
Clark Rundell • Mark Heron



William
ALWYN
(1905-85)

1	The Crimson Pirate – Overture	7:59
	The History of Mr Polly – Suite	11:22
2	The Wedding and Funeral	2:27
3	Fire	2:13
4	Christabel	2:46
5	Punting Scene	1:32
6	Utopian Sunset	2:26
7	The Way Ahead – March	1:46
	State Secret – Suite	7:34
8	Main Titles and Grand Ball	1:59
9	Theatre Music	2:16
10	On the Barge	2:09
11	Finale	1:10
12	The Million Pound Note – Waltz	3:08
	Swiss Family Robinson – Suite	9:33
13	Main Titles	3:05
14	At Home	2:46
15	Ostriches and Waterslides	3:42
16	The True Glory – March	2:44
	Geordie – Suite	10:59
17	Main Titles	1:59
18	The Samson Way	2:47
19	Father and Son	2:39
20	Geordie and Jean	2:00
21	The Hammer Reel	1:34
	In Search of the Castaways – Suite	5:43
22	Ship's Waltz	3:03
23	Rumba	2:40
24	Desert Victory – Suite	8:56
	Prologue – Reinforcements Arrive – Training Sequence – March	

William Alwyn (1905-85)

Film Music arranged for Wind Band

William Alwyn was born in Northampton and died in Blythburgh. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music where, at the age of 21, he was appointed Professor of Composition, a position he held for nearly thirty years. Amongst his works are five symphonies, concertos for flute, oboe, violin, harp and two for piano, various descriptive orchestral pieces, four operas and much chamber, instrumental and vocal music. In addition to this Alwyn contributed nearly 200 scores for the cinema. He began his career in this medium in 1936 writing music for documentaries. In 1941 he wrote his first feature-length score for *Penn of Pennsylvania*. Other notable film scores include *Desert Victory*, *The Way Ahead*, *The True Glory*, *Odd Man Out*, *The History of Mr Polly*, *The Fallen Idol*, *The Rocking Horse Winner*, *The Crimson Pirate*, *The Million Pound Note*, *The Winslow Boy*, *The Card* and *A Night to Remember*. In recognition of his services to the medium of film he was made a Fellow of the British film Academy, the only composer until more recently to have received this honour. In 1978 he was awarded a CBE in recognition of his services to music.

I was commissioned by the William Alwyn Foundation to make these arrangements in order to further the music of Alwyn to performers and audiences currently not able to enjoy these, his lighter, contributions. The key principle, after selecting the most appropriate cues, was to remain true to the composer and not add or subtract any personal touches. All the transcriptions were made from material provided by the Foundation and I would like to thank personally Kit Turnbull for being my amanuensis on this project.

The Crimson Pirate – Overture (1952)

In the late eighteenth century, Captain Vallo (Burt Lancaster) and his crew of pirates roam the Caribbean searching for ships to plunder. This light-hearted action romp has all you would expect from a pirate film: scurvy men, a big pirate ship, sword fights and a pretty damsel in distress (Eva Bartok). Shot on location in the Mediterranean and directed by Robert Siodmak this delightfully upbeat film

was the template for the later *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Alwyn's music is presented in the form of a concert overture and captures both the action and romance of the picture.

The History of Mr Polly – Suite (1949)

The film is based on the novel *The History of Mr Polly* by H.G. Wells. Mr Polly (Sir John Mills) is a sensitive soul. Sacked from his job for daydreaming he despairs of ever finding another when his father's death suddenly brings him a large inheritance with which he embarks on a cycling adventure. On his travels he meets and falls in love with a young girl but the relationship turns sour. Spurned, he marries his cousin Miriam and settles in a small town where he opens a draper's shop. Fifteen years later with bad debt and a floundering marriage he reaches a crossroads where some major decisions must be made. He stages his 'suicide' by setting fire to the shop, rescues an old lady, has a little romance with Christabel, goes punting, all before settling down as a handyman at an inn. All the key scenes are portrayed in the five movement suite covering a miniature history of the film itself.

The Way Ahead – March (1944)

Alwyn's first score for director Carol Reed, *The Way Ahead* tells the story of a band of men who are called up for active duty in the second world war under commanding officer Lt. Jim Perry (David Niven). At first they are pretty hopeless but their rigorous training turns them into first-class soldiers. Alwyn's lively march is highly memorable, appearing towards the end of the film when the men make their final assault to face the enemy.

State Secret – Suite (1950)

Written and directed by Sidney Gilliat, *State Secret* is set in a Ruritanian country, Vosnia, where spies pursue the surgeon Dr Marlow (Douglas Fairbanks Jnr.), the only

man who knows that the dictator, Niva, is dead. The pieces presented here are the broad martial theme of the main titles, which sets the scene, followed by other sequences whose suggestive titles speak for themselves. Eventually after several adventures the music of the opening is heard again over the end credits.

The Million Pound Note – Waltz (1953)

Based on the story by Mark Twain, *The Million Pound Note* is set in Victorian times. Two wealthy brothers strike a cruel wager by drawing up a currency note worth a million pounds. One believes it would be quite useless for any poor but honest man to use. The other thinks that just by possessing the note and never cashing it in, a man could live like a lord. They choose a man (Gregory Peck) to find out who is right by giving him the note and watching his journey. Alwyn wrote a charming waltz as the main theme with an appropriately Victorian flavour.

Swiss Family Robinson – Suite (1960)

The screen version of the literary classic *The Swiss Family Robinson* is one of Disney's biggest and most fondly remembered hits. The film is full of breathtaking scenery, exotic animals and treacherous pirates. The various adventures of the shipwrecked Robinson family on their deserted island are captured in Alwyn's three movement suite.

The True Glory – March (1944-45)

The True Glory was a documentary production showing the campaign in Europe from D-Day to the fall of Berlin and directed by Carol Reed. The march has been constructed from fragments heard in the film but never as a complete whole.

Geordie – Suite (1955)

In *Geordie* tall and handsome Bill Travers plays opposite Norah Gorsen (Jean) and Alastair Sim (the Laird). This

charming love story is set in the highlands of Scotland and directed by Frank Launder. Geordie is a slight of frame gamekeeper's son who feels that the girl he loves is ignoring him because of his size. He takes a correspondence course in body-building and by the age of 21 becomes one of the tallest and strongest men in Scotland and an expert at throwing the hammer. His success story leads him to represent Britain in the 1956 Olympic Games in Australia. But will the new man that he is be able to charm Jean, his life-long sweetheart? The five movement suite makes use of several well-known Scottish melodies such as *Highland Laddie* and *Hearken My Love*.

In Search of the Castaways – Suite (1962)

In *In Search of the Castaways* nothing will stop feisty Mary Grant (Hayley Mills) from travelling to the four corners of the world to find her missing sea-captain father, although her only clue to his whereabouts is a message in a bottle. Directed by Robert Stevenson after the novel by Jules Verne, the film also starred Maurice Chevalier and was the third and last film that Alwyn scored for the Walt Disney Company. Here are presented a tuneful, lilting waltz and a lively rumba full of exotic percussion.

Desert Victory – Suite (1943)

Produced by the British Army Film Unit *Desert Victory* shows Montgomery's army pursuing the Axis forces through Tripoli during the Libyan Campaign. The suite runs as a continuous piece but is broken up into sections taken from various parts of the film, book-cased by music in march form.

Martin Ellerby and Andrew Knowles

Martin Ellerby studied with Joseph Horowitz at the Royal College of Music and later privately with Wilfred Josephs. He has written five symphonies and twelve concertos as well as music for brass and concert bands, chamber and choral combinations together with much educational music.

RNCM Wind Orchestra



Photo: Paul Cliff

The RNCM Wind Orchestra is one of several large scale ensembles that make up the wide diversity of music making at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, one of the world's leading music conservatoires. Bands, ensembles and orchestras from the college have been active for many years in giving concerts, both within the college, at venues in Great Britain and on international tours. These groups have also made an increasing number of commercial recordings for leading record companies.

Clark Rundell



Photo: Paul Cliff

Clark Rundell is currently Director of Contemporary Music at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. He studied at Northwestern University, Chicago, studying conducting with John Paynter and trombone with Frank Crisafulli of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He regularly conducts the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the contemporary group, Ensemble 10:10.

Mark Heron



Photo: Paul Cliff

Mark Heron studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the Royal Northern College of Music, where he is now a member of the staff conducting faculty. He is the Music Director of the Liverpool Mozart Orchestra and the Manchester University Symphony Orchestra. He has also worked with the London Symphony Orchestra and several orchestras overseas.

William ALWYN (1905-85)

Film Music arranged for Wind Band

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| 1 | The Crimson Pirate – Overture (1952) [†] | 7:59 |
| 2-6 | The History of Mr Polly – Suite (1949)* | 11:22 |
| 7 | The Way Ahead – March (1944)* | 1:46 |
| 8-11 | State Secret – Suite (1950)* | 7:34 |
| 12 | The Million Pound Note – Waltz (1953) [†] | 3:08 |
| 13-15 | Swiss Family Robinson – Suite (1960) [†] | 9:33 |
| 16 | The True Glory – March (1944-45) [†] | 2:44 |
| 17-21 | Geordie – Suite (1955)* | 10:59 |
| 22-23 | In Search of the Castaways – Suite (1962) [†] | 5:43 |
| 24 | Desert Victory – Suite (1943) [†] | 8:56 |

All arrangements by Martin Ellerby

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Wind Orchestra

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This recording was made with financial assistance from the William Alwyn Foundation
A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet
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Booklet notes: Martin Ellerby and Andrew Knowles
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William Alwyn was a consummate film composer, as capable of creating powerful marches as he was atmospheric waltzes. In these exciting arrangements by Martin Ellerby for wind band, the full variety of Alwyn's inspiration can be appreciated. There is the romantic allure of the overture to *The Crimson Pirate*, the compact, brilliant characterisation of *The History of Mr Polly* and the suite from *Geordie*, with its seductive use of familiar Scottish melodies. The scores for *The Way Ahead* and *Desert Victory* convey action with superb and stirring effectiveness.

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