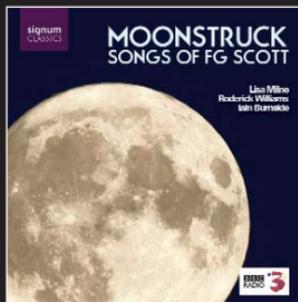
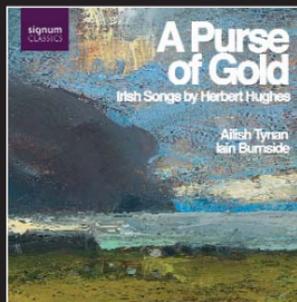


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Mark Padmore
Songs in
Time of War
Alec Roth / Vikram Seth

Philippe Honoré / Alison Nicholls / Morgan Szymanski

SONGS IN TIME OF WAR

ALEC ROTH VIKRAM SETH

Songs in Time of War

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Thoughts while Travelling at Night | [1.33] |
| 2. Grieving for the Young Prince | [4.06] |
| 3. The Visitor | [2.08] |
| 4. A Fine Lady | [5.21] |
| 5. Dreaming of Li Bai | [1.53] |
| 6. Moonlit Night | [3.05] |
| 7. An Autumn Meditation | [1.23] |
| 8. The Old Cypress Tree at the Temple of Zhu-ge Liang | [6.34] |
| 9. Spring Scene in Time of War | [1.28] |
| 10. To Wei Ba, who has Lived Away from the Court | [4.03] |
| 11. Ballad of the Army Carts | [5.33] |
| 12. Thoughts while Travelling at Night | [1.47] |
| 13. Canción de la Luna | [5.53] |
| 14. Danza de la Luna | [5.30] |

Chinese Gardens

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| 15. The Tarrying Garden | [3.03] |
| 16. The Master-of-Nets Garden | [3.00] |
| 17. The Gentle Waves Pavilion | [2.29] |
| 18. The Humble Administrator's Garden | [3.12] |

Total Timings [62.03]

MARK PADMORE TENOR · PHILIPPE HONORÉ VIOLIN
ALISON NICHOLLS HARP · MORGAN SZYMANSKI GUITAR

www.signumrecords.com

Songs in Time of War

for tenor, violin, harp and guitar

Words by Vikram Seth after the Chinese poet Du Fu, music by Alec Roth

Du Fu (712-770) was born into a noble family which had fallen into relative poverty. His great ambition to serve his country was frustrated by repeated failure in the civil service examinations. He finally attained a minor administrative post but almost immediately the country was plunged into civil war. The Emperor ("The Dragon", "Son of Heaven") was forced to flee the capital (Chang'an) and abdicate. Du Fu managed to get his family to safety but was himself captured by the rebels. He later escaped and joined the court in exile. The war dragged on for years and ruined the country - millions were killed or displaced.

Du Fu's precarious itinerant existence throughout the turmoil of these years provided the inspiration for some of his finest poetry. He wrote about what he saw and heard around him - the lives of his family, friends, neighbours and strangers - with great honesty and deep compassion. He is now regarded as one of China's finest poets, but received no recognition in his own lifetime.

In 765 Du Fu began a long journey down the Yangtze (the "Great River") towards his birthplace, which had recently been recaptured by Government forces. Progress was slow and he died before reaching his final destination.

Songs in Time of War is the first in a series of four major works commissioned jointly by the Salisbury, Chelsea and Lichfield Festivals, 2006-2009. The first performances were given by Mark Padmore (tenor), Philippe Honoré (violin), Alison Nicholls (harp) and Morgan Szymanski (guitar) at Wilton Church, 8 June 2006; St Luke's Church, Chelsea, 19 June 2006; and the Lady Chapel, Lichfield Cathedral, 6 July, 2006.

Canción de la Luna / Danza de la Luna

for solo guitar

These two pieces for solo guitar are part of an ongoing series of works by Alec Roth inspired by, written for and dedicated to the Mexican guitarist Morgan Szymanski, which includes *Cat Dances* (2002), *The Unicorn in the Garden* (2003) and a *Quintet for Guitar and String Quartet* (2006).

Canción de la Luna (Song of the Moon) was first performed at a Wigmore Hall recital on 8 February 2005; its companion piece, *Danza de la Luna*

(Dance of the Moon) was completed in 2006 and is heard for the first time on this recording.

Chinese Gardens

for voice and guitar

Words by Vikram Seth, music by Alec Roth

Chinese Gardens is a setting of poems by Vikram Seth which were inspired by visits to four of the famous Ming Dynasty gardens in the Chinese city of Suzhou.

Unlike Vikram, I have never been to mainland China, but during a visit to Vancouver in 1991 I was introduced to that city's remarkable Chinese garden. Completed in 1986, it was constructed by a team of over 50 artisans from China in authentic Ming Dynasty style, taking four of the original Suzhou gardens as models. By an astonishing coincidence, the four gardens chosen were exactly the same four that appear in the poems. I immediately fell in love with this magical place and spent several hours in the garden sketching musical ideas, but mostly just absorbing its exquisite calm and refined beauty. It was some years before I got around to completing the songs, but the memory of that afternoon remained fresh and inspiring, thus explaining my dedication of this work "to the Dr Sun Yat Sen Classical Garden, Vancouver".

The first song, *The Tarrying Garden*, introduces us to some of the main features of a classical Chinese garden: the covered walks, courtyards, rocks and pools, the poetic inscriptions on whitewashed walls and the characteristic zig-zag paths offering no long vistas, but constantly changing views and impressions. We are also instructed in how to enjoy our visit to the garden: "Meander, tarry, amble, pause, admire".

The second song is a nocturne evoking the atmosphere of the exquisite Master-of-Nets Garden on a moonlit night.

The third song records the somewhat whimsical observations of a visitor to the Garden of the Gentle Waves Pavilion.

The final song remembers Mr Wang, the self-styled Humble Administrator, who (somewhat mysteriously, considering his official income) managed to create one of Suzhou's most famous treasures. The cycle ends with a gentle walk around this, "the loveliest of all gardens".

The original version of *Chinese Gardens* was commissioned by the Chester Music Festival and first performed by Claire Bradshaw (mezzo-soprano) and Craig Ogden (guitar) at the Town

Hall, Chester, 13 July 1998. The revised version for tenor and guitar was made for Mark Padmore and Morgan Szymanski who perform it for the first time on this recording.

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TEXTS

1 - 12 *Songs in time of War*

Words by Vikram Seth after the Chinese poet Du Fu

1 *Thoughts while Travelling at Night*

Light breeze on the fine grass.
I stand alone at the mast.

Stars lean on the vast wild plain.
Moon bobs in the Great River's spate.

Letters have brought no fame.
Office? Too old to obtain.

Drifting, what am I like?
A gull between earth and sky.

2 *Grieving for the Young Prince*

From Changan walls white-headed crows took flight
And cawed upon the Western Gate at night -

Then on officials' roofs they pecked and cawed
To warn them to escape the barbarian horde.
The gold whips broke, so hard were they applied.
The exhausted horses galloped till they died.
The court fled, panicked - those they could not find
Of the imperial line were left behind.

Below his waist, blue coral, glints of jade -
I see a young prince, weeping and afraid
By the cross-roads. Although he won't confess
His name to me he begs in his distress
To be my slave. Thorn scrub he's hidden in
For months has left no untorn shred of skin -
But the imperial nose betrays his birth:
The Dragon's seed is not the seed of earth.

Wolves, jackals roam the city. In the wild
The Dragon and his court remain exiled.
Take care, dear Prince. I daren't speak long with you,
But for your sake will pause a breath or two.

Last night the east wind's blood-stench stained the air
And camels filled the former capital's square.
The Shuofang veterans, bright in their array,
How bold they seemed once, how inane today.
I hear the Son of Heaven has abdicated,
And in the North the Khan, it is related,
And each of his brave warriors slashed his face

- So moved were they by the imperial grace -
And swore to wipe this great dishonour out.
But we must mind our words, with spies about.
Alas, poor Prince, be careful. May the power
Of the Five Tombs protect you hour by hour.

3 The Visitor

South and north of my house lies springtime water,
And only flocks of gulls come every day.
The flower path's unswept: no guests. The gate
Is open: you're the first to come this way.
The market's far: my food is nothing special.
The wine, because we're poor, is an old brew -
But if you wish I'll call my ancient neighbour
Across the fence to drink it with us two.

4 A Fine Lady

There is a lady, matchless in her beauty.
An empty valley's where she dwells, obscure.
Her family, she says, was once a good one.
She lives with grass and trees now, spent and poor.

When lately there was chaos in the heartlands
And at the rebels' hands her brothers died,
Their high rank failed them, as did her entreaties:
Their flesh and bones remained unsanctified.

The busy world, as fickle as a lamp-flame,
Hates what has had its day or is decayed.
The faithless man to whom she once was married
Keeps a new woman, beautiful as jade.

Those trees whose leaves curl up at night
sense evening.
Without its mate a mandarin duck can't sleep.
He only sees the smile of his new woman.
How can he then hear his old woman weep?

Among the mountains, spring-fed streams run clearly.
Leaving the mountains, they are soiled with dross.
Her maid has sold her pearls and is returning.
To mend the thatch they drag the vines across.

Her hands are often full of bitter cypress.
The flowers she picks don't go to grace her hair.
She rests against tall bamboo trees at nightfall.
The weather's cold and her blue sleeves threadbare.

5 Dreaming of Li Bai

The pain of death's farewells grows dim.
The pain of life's farewells stays new.
Since you were exiled to Jiangnan
- Plague land - I've had no news of you.

Proving how much you're in my thoughts,
Old friend, you've come into my dreams.
I thought you still were in the law's
Tight net - but you've grown wings, it seems.

I fear yours is no living soul.
How could it make this distant flight?
You came: the maple woods were green.
You left: the pass was black with night.

The sinking moonlight floods my room.
Still hoping for your face, I stare.
The water's deep, the waves are wide.
Watch out for water-dragons there.

6 Moonlit Night

In Fuzhou, far away, my wife is watching
The moon alone tonight, and my thoughts fill
With sadness for my children, who can't think
Of me here in Changan; they're too young still.
Her cloud-soft hair is moist with fragrant mist.
In the clear light her white arms sense the chill.
When will we feel the moonlight dry our tears,
Leaning together on our window-sill?

7 An Autumn Meditation

I've heard it said Changan is like a chessboard, where
Failure and grief is all these hundred years have
brought.
Mansions of princes and high nobles have new lords.
New officers are capped and robed for camp
and court.

North on the passes gold drums thunder. To the west
Horses and chariots rush dispatches and reports.
Dragon and fish are still, the autumn river's cold.
My ancient land and times of peace come to
my thoughts.

8 The Old Cypress Tree at the Temple of Zhu-ge Liang

Before the temple stands an ancient cypress tree.
Its boughs are bronze, its roots like heavy boulders lie.
Its massive frosty girth of bark is washed by rain.
Its jet-black head rears up a mile to greet the sky.

Princes and ministers have paid their debt to time.
The people love the tree as they did long ago.
The cloud's breath joins it to the long mists of
Wu Gorge.
It shares the moon's chill with the high white
peaks of snow.

Last year the road wound east, past my old home,
near where

Both Zhu-ge Liang and his First Ruler shared
one shrine.

There too great cypresses stretched over the
ancient plain,
And through wrecked doors I glimpsed dim
paintwork and design.

But this lone tree, spread wide, root-coiled to
earth, has held

Its sky-high place round which fierce blasts
of wind are hurled.

Nothing but Providence could keep it here so long.
Its straightness marks the work of what once
made the world.

If a great hall collapsed, the oxen sent to drag
Rafters from this vast tree would turn round
in dismay.

It needs no craftsman's skills, this wonder of
the world.

Even if felled, who could haul such a load away?

Although its bitter heart is marred by swarms
of ants,
Among its scented leaves bright phoenixes collect.
Men of high aims, who live obscure, do
not despair.
The great are always paid in disuse and neglect.

9 Spring Scene in Time of War

The state lies ruined; hills and streams survive.
Spring in the city; grass and leaves now thrive.
Moved by the times the flowers shed their dew.
The birds seem startled; they hate parting too.
The steady beacon fires are three months old.
A word from home is worth a ton of gold.
I scratch my white hair, which has grown so thin
It soon won't let me stick my hatpin in.

10 To Wei Ba, who has Lived Away from the Court

Like stars that rise when the other has set,
For years we two friends have not met.
How rare it is then that tonight
We once more share the same lamplight.
Our youth has quickly slipped away
And both of us are turning grey.
Old friends have died, and with a start
We hear the sad news, sick at heart.
How could I, twenty years before,
Know that I'd be here at your door?
When last I left, so long ago,
You were unmarried. In a row
Suddenly now your children stand,
Welcome their father's friend, demand
To know his home, his town, his kin -
Till they're chased out to fetch wine in.

Spring chives are cut in the night rain
And steamed rice mixed with yellow grain.
To mark the occasion, we should drink
Ten cups of wine straight off, you think -
But even ten can't make me high,
So moved by your old love am I.
The mountains will divide our lives,
Each to his world, when day arrives.

11 Ballad of the Army Carts

Carts rattle and squeak,
Horses snort and neigh -
Bows and arrows at their waists, the conscripts
march away.
Fathers, mothers, children, wives run to
say goodbye.
The Xianyang Bridge in clouds of dust is hidden
from the eye.
They tug at them and stamp their feet, weep, and
obstruct their way.

The weeping rises to the sky.
Along the road a passer-by
Questions the conscripts. They reply:

They mobilize us constantly. Sent northwards
at fifteen
To guard the River, we were forced once more
to volunteer,

Though we are forty now, to man the western front
this year.

The headman tied our headcloths for us when we
first left here

We came back white-haired - to be sent again to
the frontier.

Those frontier posts could fill the sea with the
blood of those who've died,
But still the Martial Emperor's aims
remain unsatisfied.

In country after country to the east, Sir, don't
you know,

In village after village only thorns and
brambles grow.

Even if there's a sturdy wife to wield the plough
and hoe,

The borders of the fields have merged, you can't
tell east from west.

It's worse still for the men from Qin, as fighters
they're the best -

And so, like chickens or like dogs, they're driven to
and fro.

Though you are kind enough to ask,
Dare we complain about our task?
Take, Sir, this winter. In Guanxi
The troops have not yet been set free.
The district officers come to press
The land tax from us nonetheless.

But, Sir, how can we possibly pay?

Having a son's a curse today.

Far better to have daughters, get them married -

A son will lie lost in the grass, unburied.

Why, Sir, on distant Qinghai shore

The bleached ungathered bones lie year on year.

New ghosts complain, and those who died before

Weep in the wet grey sky and haunt the ear.

12 Thoughts while Travelling at Night

Light breeze on the fine grass.

I stand alone at the mast.

Stars lean on the vast wild plain.

Moon bobs in the Great River's spate.

Letters have brought no fame.

Office? Too old to obtain.

Drifting, what am I like?

A gull between earth and sky.

15 - 18 Chinese Gardens

Words by Vikram Seth

1 The Tarrying Garden

Here are no vistas. Piece by piece unfolds.

Stand by the rock. The lotus and the fish,

In still pale yellows, greens and fluid golds

Startle the rainy sky. Or if you wish

Stare at a single slab of cursive script

Sealed in the whitewash, passionate, bone strong,

Crafted, uncrafted, singular, and stripped

Of all superfluous charm. Or walk along

The covered walks, the courtyards and the pools,

The zigzags of embodied hesitation,

A strict game where, within the given rules

You may throw dice or follow inclination.

The Tarrying Garden, piecemeal or entire:

Meander, tarry, amble, pause, admire.

2 The Master-of-Nets Garden

Magnolia petals fall, pale, fragrant, brown,

Resting on moss within a square of white;

Courtyard of quietness, of intimate stone

And latticed shadow. Outside, low at night,

Three moons - of water, mirror, sky - define

Pine and old cypress struggling against the stars,

And jasmine and gardenia combine

Their scent with that of closed magnolias.

3 The Gentle Waves Pavilion

A pool as green as pea-soup. Four sleek fish,

Red as pimentos, push through bubbly scum.

A vagrant sparrow from a rocky niche

Looks critically on. Two lovers come

To gaze at fish and foreigner in the park

And talk and cuddle by the moss-trunked tree

And with a pen-knife hack their names through bark

For (if the tree survives) posterity.

4 The Humble Administrator's Garden

A plump gold carp nudges a lily pad

And shakes the raindrops off like mercury,

And Mr Wang walks round. "Not bad, not bad."

He eyes the Fragrant Chamber dreamily.

He eyes the Rainbow Bridge. He may have got

The means by somewhat dubious means, but now

This is the loveliest of all gardens. What

Do scruples know of beauty anyhow?

The Humble Administrator admires a bee

Poised on a lotus, walks through the bamboo wood,

Strips half a dozen loquats off a tree

And looks about and sees that it is good.

He leans against a willow with a dish

And throws a dumpling to a passing fish.

BIOGRAPHIES

MARK PADMORE TENOR

Mark Padmore was born in London and grew up in Canterbury. After beginning his musical studies on the clarinet he gained a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge and graduated with an honours degree in music.

He has established a flourishing career in opera, concert and recital. His performances in Bach's Passions have gained particular notice throughout the world. In the opera house he has worked with such theatrically-minded directors as Peter Brook, Katie Mitchell, Mark Morris and Deborah Warner. Recent work includes *Les Troyens* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris and Handel's *Jephtha* at WNO and ENO. He also played Peter Quint in an acclaimed BBC TV production of *Turn of the Screw*. Plans include Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress* at La Monnaie. He recently recorded the title role in *La Clemenza di Tito* with René Jacobs for Harmonia Mundi for which he received two Grammy nominations.

In concert he has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras including the Berlin,



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Vienna and New York Philharmonics, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the LSO and BBCSO. He makes regular appearances with the OAE with whom he conceived a project exploring Bach's *St John Passion* which took place in Aldeburgh and London in 2005 and given further performances on tour in 2008. In November 2007 he made his debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Rattle. He has recently toured with the Hallé Orchestra as

soloist in Britten's *Serenade* conducted by Mark Elder and in 2008 he will be appearing as soloist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra on their European tour.

He has given recitals in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Milan, Moscow, New York and Paris. He appears frequently at the Wigmore Hall in London where he performed the three Schubert song cycles in May 2008. As well as his regular collaborators Julius Drake, Roger Vignoles and Andrew West he works with many internationally renowned chamber musicians including Natalie Clein, Imogen Cooper, Till Fellner and Paul Lewis. He has made many recordings including the Bach Passions with Herreweghe and McCreech, Bach Cantatas with Gardiner and Herreweghe, Haydn Masses with Hickox, *Don Giovanni* with Harding and operas by Rameau and Charpentier with Christie. His first solo recording for Harmonia Mundi, a recital of Handel Arias with Andrew Manze and the English Concert was released in April 2007. Recent releases include Haydn's *Creation* on Deutsche Grammophon and a disc of Dowland Lute Songs with Elizabeth Kenny on Hyperion.

Further information can be found at
www.markpadmore.com

PHILIPPE HONORÉ VIOLIN

Philippe Honoré was born in France and has been a regular recitalist in France and the UK, broadcasting widely on French radio and television. He studied violin at the Paris Conservatoire with Pierre Doukan, and was awarded the Premier Prix both as a soloist and for chamber music. He continued his studies at the Royal Academy of Music with Gyorgy Pauk. In 1992 he became "laureat" of the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation of France. In 2001 he was made an Honorary Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

As a concerto soloist he has performed the Beethoven concerto, Mozart concerti, Bach concerti as well as Ravel's *Tzigane*. The Royal Academy of Music invited him to play the Beethoven violin concerto using the famous Rutson Stradivarius violin (1694). He regularly performs concertos in St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Philippe Honoré was a member of the English Chamber Orchestra (1994-2000), and appeared with them as soloist in performances of Bach and Vivaldi concertos. He is now a member and co-principal in the Philharmonia Orchestra. Philippe was also a member of the Vellinger Quartet and toured throughout Europe and the UK, broadcasting



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live on the BBC from the Wigmore Hall. As a member of the chamber music group Mobius, Philippe Honoré regularly performs at the Wigmore Hall, the Purcell Room, and St John's Smith Square.

In 2007 Philippe gave the premiere of Alec Roth's major work *Ponticelli* for solo violin at the

Salisbury, Chelsea and Lichfield Festivals. His performance was described as "magical" by The Times. Highlights for the 2007/2008 season include a debut recital in Moscow with Russian pianist Rustem Hairudinoff in collaboration with the Moscow conservatory, solo concerts at the Chelsea, Lichfield, and Salisbury Festivals and a Wigmore Hall concert with Mobius including new works commissioned from seven composers.

Philippe Honoré plays an Italian violin by Thomas Eberle (1786).

ALISON NICHOLLS HARP

Alison Nicholls performs as soloist, chamber musician and frequent guest with major orchestras in the UK and elsewhere. Widely regarded as one of the finest players of her generation, she has won many national and international awards. These include First Prize at the 1994 World Harp Festival Competition, where she was unanimously awarded the Zabaleta Prize and Special Salvi Award. As a soloist, she has performed for the UK Harp Association, the American Harp Society, the World Harp Congress, and at International Festivals throughout North America, Europe, and the Far East.

Born in Britain, Alison studied at London University and the Juilliard School, New York. Now based in Paris and London, she remains committed to making music accessible, through performance, outreach projects, recording, broadcasting and teaching.

Further information can be found at www.alisonnicholls.com



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MORGAN SZYMANSKI GUITAR

Born in Mexico City, Morgan Szymanski studied at the Royal College of Music and Conservatorium van Amsterdam graduating with first class honours. He immediately went on to become the first solo guitarist to be selected by YCAT and was the first guitarist to be awarded a Junior Fellowship at the RCM, where he completed his Masters with distinction.



© Susstie Ahlburg

Since winning first prize in the 2002 National Guitar Competition in Mexico Morgan has appeared as soloist in over fifteen different countries. Recent engagements include concertos with the Royal Philharmonic and Hallé Orchestras and performances with O Duo, Carlos Bonell and the Sacconi Quartet in the UK, Switzerland, Paris, Ireland and Mexico. In 2008 Morgan returns to the Wigmore Hall and appears at Mexico City Festival with Machaca, an international ensemble he founded in 2006, whose first recording was released at the South Bank in 2007 as part of the *La Linea* Latin American Festival. Future plans include duo concerts with trumpeter Alison Balsom and tenor Mark Padmore and debut concerts with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the CBSO Youth Orchestra.

Further information can be found at
www.morganszymanski.co.uk

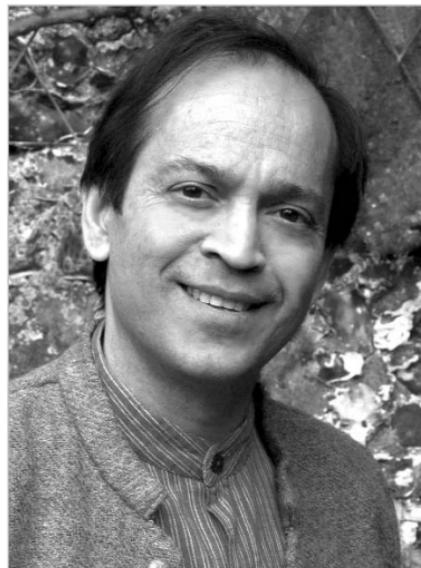
VIKRAM SETH WORDS

Born in Calcutta, India, Vikram Seth was educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Stanford University and Nanjing University. He has travelled widely and lived in Britain, California, India and China.

His first novel, *The Golden Gate: A Novel in Verse* (1986), describes the experiences of a group of friends living in California. His acclaimed epic of Indian life, *A Suitable Boy* (1993), won the W H Smith Literary Award and the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Overall Winner, Best Book). Set in India in the early 1950s, it is the story of a young girl, Lata, and her search for a husband. *An Equal Music* (1999) is the story of a violinist haunted by the memory of a former lover.

Vikram Seth is also the author of a travel book, *From Heaven Lake: Travels Through Sinkiang and Tibet* (1983), an account of a journey through Tibet, China and Nepal that won the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award, and *Arion and the Dolphin: A Libretto* (1994), commissioned by English National Opera, with music by Alec Roth.

His poetry includes *Mappings* (1980), *The Humble Administrator's Garden* (1985), winner of the Commonwealth Poetry Prize (Asia), and *All You*



© Camilla Panufnik

Who Sleep Tonight: Poems (1990). His children's book, *Beastly Tales from Here and There* (1992), consists of ten stories about animals told in verse. In a collection of poems, *Three Chinese Poets* (1992), Seth offered up an ambitious and daring translation of three poets of the T'ang Dynasty: Wang Wei, Li Bai and Du Fu. Vikram Seth's latest major work is *Two Lives* (2005), a memoir of the marriage of his great uncle and aunt.

ALEC ROTH MUSIC

Born in England of German/Irish descent, Alec Roth studied music at the University of Durham; conducting with Diego Masson (Dartington) and Rafael Kubelik (Lucerne); and gamelan at the Academy of Indonesian Performing Arts (ASKI) in Surakarta, Central Java. From 1986 to 1989 he was holder of the Collard Fellowship, and in 2000 received a major award to further his composition work from the Gulbenkian Foundation.

Posts he has held include Founder Artistic Director of the Royal Festival Hall Gamelan Programme and South Bank Gamelan Players; Music Director of the Baylis Programme, English National Opera; Composer in Association, Opera North; and Lecturer in Music, University of Edinburgh. He now works as a freelance composer.

Alec Roth's collaborations with writer Vikram Seth include the song cycles *Chinese Gardens* (Chester Festival commission 1998) and *Romantic Residues* (Bury St Edmunds Festival commission 2003) and *Earth and Sky* for children's chorus (BBC commission for the Proms 2000 season). Vikram Seth was also the librettist for *Arion and the Dolphin*, commissioned by English National Opera and premiered in the Royal Navy Dockyard, Plymouth in 1994.

Other works include a version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* with gamelan (Vancouver, 1989); *Gretel and Hansel* (ENO, 1988), an opera for young people, libretto by David Sulkin; *The Big Wash Cycle* (South Bank Centre, 1994), songs to words by Jo Shapcott; *All Summer in a Day* (Opera North, 1996), a musical drama for children to perform to adults, based on the story by Ray Bradbury and three commissions for the Academy of St Martin in the Fields: *Departure of the Queen of Sheba* (1999) for oboe, cor anglais and string orchestra, *Nocturne* (2000) for viola and string orchestra and *Concertino Piccolo* (2006) for string orchestra with two groups of young violinists.

He is currently working on a series of four major works over four years commissioned jointly by the Salisbury, Chelsea and Lichfield Festivals the first of which, *Songs in Time of War* was premiered in 2006.



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SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK

+44 (0) 20 897 4000 E-mail: info@signumrecords.com

www.signumrecords.com