



### VIVE LA DIFFERENCE: MID-20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MUSIC FROM BRITAIN AND FRANCE

ANTHONY ROBB, FLUTE  
JEREMY POLMEAR, OBOE  
MICHAEL BELL, PIANO  
Oboe Classics © 2018

The opening of Damase's Trio, written in 1961, instantly demands attention at the start of this CD. Pithy, dissonant and strong, this music presents the wonderful timbral contrasts available from this trio of flute, oboe and piano, before quickly relaxing into a more convivial mood. Damase's music is full of changes of mood and character, and in this four movement work, a range of influences from different historical eras are brought together in a unique compositional voice.

Divided into two sections, one for French works and the other for English, this disc presents a range of works from important composers of the twentieth century. The programming is imaginative, including some well-known composers (as well as Damase, Ibert, Jacob and Delius all feature) as well as some perhaps less familiar surprises.

It is nice to see a female composer of the era celebrated on this recording too. Lili Boulanger's *D'un Matin de Printemps* was written in 1918, the last year of her short life. Here it is heard in a new arrangement for flute/piccolo, oboe/cor anglais and piano, which is highly convincing and uses the timbral contrasts between the instruments and their doublings to good effect.

The liner notes explain the differences in styles emerging from France and Britain at the time; France was moving away from German Romanticism into impressionism and neoclassicism, while the UK was developing its own distinctive voice through the emergence of the Pastoral style. Hearing the two in juxtaposition is an interesting experience; Delius's distinctive voice is immediately recognizable in the Intermezzo from *Fenimore and Gerda*, and after the playfulness of Ibert, has a sense of seriousness but with subtle hints of a French influence. This is a very effective programming choice which has a strong impact.

The playfulness returns in a new way with the dialogues that form the opening movement of Gordon Jacob's Trio of 1958. Neoclassical features pervade this work, which takes influence from earlier forms. The final movement features the piccolo, and a sense of light-hearted humour returns through an exploration of dynamics, some repeated dissonances, and some enjoyable staccato phrases.

Edward Naylor Woodall's music is one of the unexpected surprises of the disc; his 1954 Trio is a well-structured *pastorale*, providing opportunities for both woodwind instruments to demonstrate their lyrical qualities, supported by an undulating piano accompaniment.

The disc ends with the *Pastoral and Harlequinade* by Sir Eugene Aynsley Goossens, written in 1924. Here, the English style is combined with continental influences to produce an exhilarating and rich individual language.

The performers on this recording are well-matched and present an excellent sense of ensemble throughout. There are some wonderfully lyrical moments which contrast well with the more energetic moments in the music, and there is an enjoyable clarity and precision throughout. The repertoire is thoughtfully chosen and demonstrates the musical and expressive potential of this the flute, oboe and piano trio convincingly. This is a fascinating recording which contains some hidden gems of the repertoire. Recommended.

**CARLA REES**



### THE SILENT WISH

BILL MCBIRNIE  
WITH BERNIE SENESKY  
Extreme Flute © 2018

Compiled from his wife Sveta's favourite jazz songs, Bill McBirnie's latest release *The Silent Wish* showcases a range of Latin-jazz styles.

Overall, this album sounds how you would expect a traditional jazz flute album to sound. It makes for good easy-listening background music, but is also worth an active listen. A personal highlight for me is the double-tracked flutes in Track 3: *Saber Cair/Knowing How to Fall*. Piano on this record comes from McBirnie's long-time collaborator Bernie Senesky. Hear Bernie showcased on Track 5: *My Heart Belongs to Daddy*. This 'up swing' track shows real skill in keeping up with the changes, and the two players create excitement without the need for drums or bass.

Track 4: *Cabana Boy* has some really funky moments, while Track 6: *First Song (For Ruth)* is a beautiful ballad with some really sympathetic accompaniment from Senesky. Bill picks up the alto flute for Track 10: *Away from Home*, another slow number, this time penned by Bill himself with Bruce Jones.

If you don't like heavy vibrato this maybe isn't the album for you—but it is definitely one for the easy-listening pile, and a worthwhile source for jazz flute students seeking some solos to transcribe.

**DILJEET BHACHU**