

Alison Teale
plays *cor anglais*

cor!

cor!

Alison Teale cor anglais
Elizabeth Burley piano

recorded July 2010
Wyastone Concert Hall
Monmouth, UK

produced and engineered
by **Alexander Van Ingen**,
edited by **Stephen Frost**,
mixed and mastered
by **Alexander Van Ingen**,
all for **Six Music Productions**
(www.sixmp.net)

Manuel De Falla (1876-1946)

El amor brujo

- 1 *Ritual fire dance* 3:37
- 2 *Pantomime* 3:33

Robert Valentine (1680-1735)

Sonata no.10 in C

- 3 *Adagio* 2:07
- 4 *Allegro* 0:53
- 5 *Adagio* 2:10
- 6 *Giga Allegro* 1:47

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

- 7 *Vocalise* 4:47

Michael Berkeley (b.1948)

- 8 *Snake* 4:46

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Piano concerto in G major

- 9 *Second movement* 6:25

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

- 10 *Nightclub 1960* 5:34

Edmund Rubbra (1901-1986)

11 Duo (op. 156) 4:32

Alessandro Lucchetti (b.1958)

12 Rock song no.3 5:26

Eugène Bozza (1905-1991)

13 Divertissement (op. 39) 6:14

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Sonata for cor anglais

14 *Langsam* 2:57

15 *Allegro pesante* 1:21

16 *Moderato* 2:00

17 *Scherzo* 0:45

18 *Moderato* 2:33

19 *Allegro pesante* 1:31

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

20 The swan 3:02

Antonio Pasculli (1842-1924)

21 Amelia: un pensiero del ballo in maschera 6:13

David Gordon (b.1965)

22 Bebop tango 4:16

I love the cor anglais. To me, it's one of the most wonderful instruments in the orchestra. My mission is to expand its repertoire, to encourage more people to explore its hidden qualities and gain as much pleasure from playing it as I do.

I've chosen a mix of music to illustrate the astonishing versatility of the cor anglais: not only its rich and beautiful melodic tones, but also its power and extraordinary agility. Some pieces, such as Lucchetti's Rock song, push the boundaries of technique. Others, like Piazzolla's Nightclub 1960, reveal the glorious upper register. And some, such as Bebop tango, are just plain fun.

I have not included extensive programme notes: I simply want to communicate how each piece of music resonates with me and my instrument.

■ Tracks 1 – 2

Falla *El amor brujo (Love, the magician)*

Falla collaborated with gypsy flamenco singer and dancer Pastro Imperioto on a stage work called El amor brujo. It tells of a young widow, haunted by her dead husband, who dances passionately around a campfire until the flames consume his evil spirit. The production was not a success, but the music was later reworked into a collection of short pieces for orchestra and voice. I love the exoticism and energy of the Fire Dance, and find it extremely satisfying to play. By contrast, with its rocking piano accompaniment and long languid melody, the Pantomime is like a lazy summer's day, suffused with effortless pleasure.



■ Tracks 3 – 6

R. Valentine Sonata no.10 in C

I enjoy playing baroque music – it's like eating a wholesome meal of brown rice and vegetables: cleansing and pure – and I wish there were more readily available cor anglais music from this period. Like so many of Valentine's sonatas, this was originally scored for recorder, probably for himself. But he was a talented oboist and I'm sure he would be sympathetic to my cause and not object to the transcription.

■ Track 7

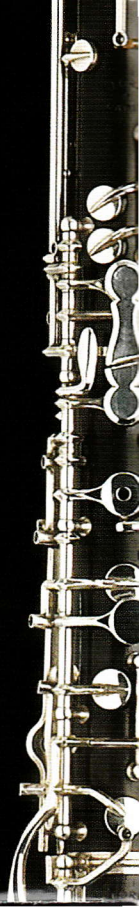
Messiaen Vocalise

The first time I heard this, I was taken aback; I'd associated Messiaen's orchestral music with rapid flourishes, blocks of colour and musical themes passing between instruments – but this piece is haunting, still, pure, and simply exquisite. Written for voice and piano in 1935, it was not used again until 1990, when Messiaen began work on Concert à Quatre, a concerto for piano, flute, oboe and cello. He died before finishing the work, but the second movement – an orchestrated version of Vocalise – was completed. When I heard it, I couldn't help but smile. Somehow he uses his magical colours to create an aural 3-D Technicolor edition of his original idea.

■ Track 8

M. Berkeley Snake

I have a love/hate relationship with this piece, but I like the way it shows how the cor can stand alone, revealing its tonal colours and wide dynamic range. In orchestral music, many cor anglais solos have little or no accompaniment. They often herald death and disaster, or – as in this piece – regret. Inspired partly by a D.H. Lawrence poem, it tells of a boy who happens upon a snake.



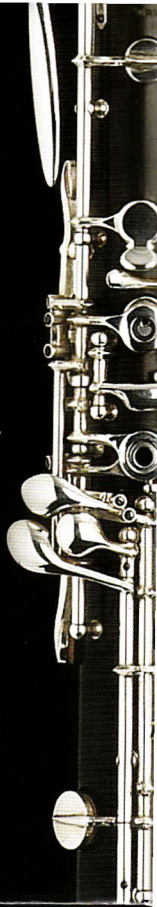
Although he has been brought up to attack snakes, *its beauty transfixes him. But then, afraid that someone may be watching, he throws a stone at it. He misses; the snake turns, appears to sneer at him, and then slips away, leaving him feeling regretful and ashamed.*

■ Track 9

Ravel *Piano concerto in G major, second movement*
For me, this movement in its original format is perfection – though I sometimes wonder if it would have the same appeal if it wasn't the cor anglais playing the recapitulation of the beautiful melody. Each time I perform this work with an orchestra, I feel an overwhelming responsibility – it would be so easy to inadvertently undo the atmosphere created by the pianist by making a silly mistake during the solo – but this is countered by the joy I feel at being a part of the tremendous musical line. Being a cor player can be a scary and, at times, a lonely business, but the payback is that some of the best melodies in the orchestral repertoire are written for my instrument.

■ Track 10

Piazzolla *Nightclub 1960*
In Hong Kong, of all places, I became addicted to salsa, and subsequently developed a passion for dance – especially Argentinian tango, with its sultry rhythms, crisp movements and leg flicks. Performing Piazzolla's music is the closest I can get to dancing the tango. He grew up playing the bandoneon in Argentinean nightclubs, and his music has a traditional feel, but he drew on his experience of jazz and his training in classical formal composition to create the 'nuevo tango'. This piece, originally written for flute and guitar, is one of four which make up L'historie de tango, the story of tango at 30-year intervals.




'When an artist of the calibre of Alison Teale dedicates herself to the cor anglais as well as the oboe, it quickly becomes one of the most beguiling and magical instruments you can hear. The repertoire on this simply gorgeous disc is so enjoyable and so beautifully played that I will donate one to my student's collection in my studio in Germany to show them how it should be done! Essential listening.'

Nicholas Daniel oboist, conductor

■ Track 11

Rubbra Duo

Rubbra may not be as well known as other British composers, but to me his music is equal to that of Vaughn Williams, Holst and Elgar, and oboists are lucky to have two pieces composed by him. The Duo was commissioned by Peter Bree, a Dutch oboist who studied and settled in Holland. Although rather melancholic, it allows the beauty of the cor anglais to shine. Rubbra composed without the constraints of formal structure and allowed melody to guide him. I admire the way he creates tension – for example, in the middle of this piece when a fragment of a phrase is repeated, inverted and extended, leading you towards the climax. The melody then winds down like a slow release of breath.



■ Track 12

Lucchetti *Rock song no.3*

Italian-born Lucchetti draws on rock, jazz and other cultural styles and fuses them together. He is also a pianist, and a very fine one. This technically demanding piece is the last of a collection of three rock songs written for Omar Zoboli in 1986. The opening rhythmic section leads into a wild, frenzied passage, pushing the extremes of the cor and piano. Crashing wild piano chords are followed by intricate runs, the cor screaming in the upper register, adding to the bedlam. As the storm and chaos subside, calm nudges through, with just a few interjections from the cor as a reminder of the previous unrest.

■ Track 13

Bozza *Divertissement*

Bozza is probably best known by wind and brass players for his technically demanding and light-hearted music. He was trained as a violinist, conductor and composer, winning first prize in each skill at the Paris Conservatoire in the 1920s. I greatly admire his writing: he seems to know each instrument well enough to find the right balance between the difficult and the attainable.

■ Tracks 14 – 19

Hindemith *Sonata for cor anglais*

In the 1930s, Hindemith's music was banned in his home country of Germany as 'cultural bolshevism'. He moved to Switzerland in 1938 and then, in 1940, to exile in the USA – only to find himself designated a citizen of an enemy state, with all the hardships that entailed, when America entered the war in 1941. The cor anglais sonata was written in that year and, unsurprisingly, its mood is dark and unsettled, reflecting Hindemith's own predicament.

■ Track 20

Saint-Saëns *The swan*

This was originally the fabulous cello solo from the Carnival of the animals, and it was the first piece I performed on the cor anglais when I was 16. It reminds me of a lady I knew, who maintained her elegance and poise regardless of any pain she endured through a serious illness. I thought of her when I heard of Anna Pavlova's interpretation as a short ballet entitled The dying swan: each movement and gesture a symbol of someone trying to escape death and refusing to accept it. I find it hard to imagine a swan being anything but graceful even in its dying moments.

■ Track 21

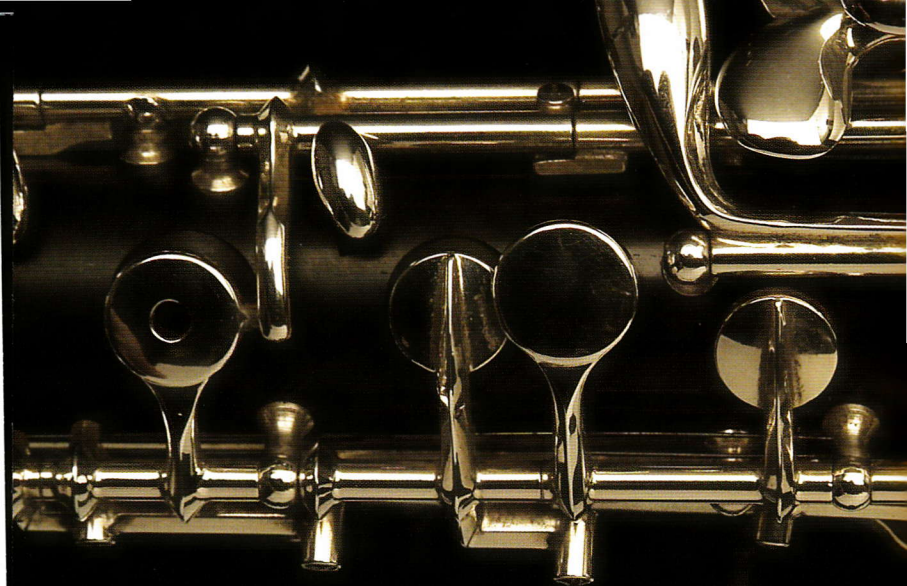
Pasculli *Amelia: un pensiero del ballo in maschera*

This piece is based on the aria Ma dall' arido stelo divulsa from Verdi's Un ballo in maschera, in which Amelia admits that she has fallen in love with her husband's friend Ricardo. The opera ends tragically, with the death of Ricardo – but I wonder if Pasculli put a different slant on the story, as the close of these variations is wonderfully joyous. I'd like to imagine Amelia and Ricardo running away together: for once, an opera with a happy ending.

■ Track 22

D. Gordon *Bebop tango*

I heard this piece by David Gordon on his CD Angel feet. I loved the crazy speed from the pianist and the slow cheeky tango on the bass, so I contacted David to see if he would arrange it for me. Here's the result.



Alison Teale is the principal cor anglais player with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. While studying at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Alison was appointed co-principal oboe with the Hong Kong Philharmonic orchestra. In 2003 she moved to Cardiff to become the principal cor anglais player for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. In 2001, Alison won the Isle of Wight International Oboe Competition, which led to her Purcell Room debut. She has performed numerous concertos for BBC Radio 3, notably *Quiet city* with Alison Balsam. She enjoys giving regular masterclasses, performing solo and chamber music recitals, and the additional variety that comes from freelance work. Alison is an oboe professor at the Guildhall school of music and drama.



Pianist **Elizabeth Burley** performs, records and broadcasts widely in several different roles: chamber musician, orchestral pianist, soloist and accompanist. She has worked with some of the world's leading soloists, ensembles and orchestras – notably the BBC Symphony Orchestra, where she has collaborated with many of the most influential modern composers, including Boulez, Berio, Knussen, Adams and Maxwell-Davies. Elizabeth is a professor at the Royal College of Music.

Copies of the sheet music are available from specialist stores:

Berkeley Snake, published by Oxford University Press.

Rubbra Duo, published by Lengnick.

Bozza Divertissement, published by Andraud Wind Music Library.

Hindemith Sonata, published by Schott.

Saint-Saëns The swan from solos for the English horn player,
published by Schirmer.

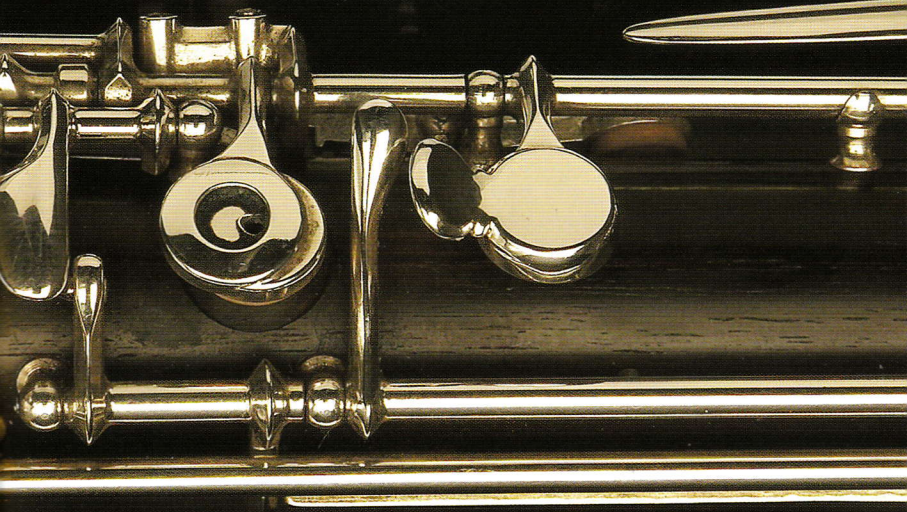
Pasculli Amelia, published by Universal Edition.

Lucchetti Rock song no.3 is a hand written score and
the **Gordon Bebop tango** was a commission;
neither is, as yet, published.

The **Falla, Valentine, Messiaen, Ravel, Piazzolla** are
my own arrangements; for more information please go to
www.alisonteale.com

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Alison plays on a Lorée Royal 125 oboe and a Royal cor anglais.





Alison Teale photographed by David Hare, in Le Rocher, Champagnac-la-Rivière, France

www.alisonteale.com