

Oboe Archive

Léon Goossens (1897-1988) plays Arnold Cooke

Concerto for oboe and strings (1954)

- 1 I: *Allegro moderato* (6:07)
- 2 II: *Scherzo: Molto vivace* (3:06)
- 3 III: *Aria: Andante* (5:56)
- 4 IV: *Rondo: Allegro assai* (4:38)
with the Jacques String Orchestra
Conductor Reginald Jacques

Sonata No. 1 for oboe and piano (1957)

- 5 I: *Andante - Allegro vivace* (6:09)
- 6 II: *Andante* (6:00)
- 7 III: *Rondo: Allegro giocoso* (6:34)
with Clifton Helliwell (piano)

Total time 38:30

Cleaned and enhanced by Christopher Steward

Cover photo from a painting by Edward Halliday

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A gardening weekly
Introduced by Roy Hay
Professor R. H. Stoughton and Ben
Easey discuss organic gardening
Fred Streeter outlines the week's work

2.30 A CONCERT

Léon Goossens (oboe)
Jacques String Orchestra
(Leader, Emanuel Hurwitz)
Conductor, Reginald Jacques
Brandenburg Concerto No. 3.....Bach
Oboe Concerto in D minor.....Vivaldi
Concertino No. 3, in A
attrib. Pergolesi
Adagio for Strings.....Samuel Barber
Oboe Concerto.....Arnold Cooke
Variations on a theme of Tchaikovsky
Arensky
From Eynsham Parish Church,
Oxfordshire
Concert organised by the
Oxford International Centre

3.45 TALKING OF BOOKS
V. S. Pritchett
L. H. Myers's trilogy, *The Root and the Flower*, was published in 1935. In 1940 came a sequel, *The Pool of Vishnu*, and

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Radio Times magazine for 22 July 1956

2020 was a good one for the oboe compositions of Arnold Cooke (1906-2005). Two new recordings of his chamber music were issued, by Melinda Maxwell and Catherine Tanner Williams; then came this reissue of BBC recordings from the 1950s, showing the very best of the Goossens magic.

The **Concerto for oboe and strings** is apparently from the broadcast above. There was an audience, whose coughs have been eliminated or reduced from this off-air recording. A mangled tape meant that ten seconds of music are missing, only detectable if you are following the score.

It is a splendid, audience-pleasing work which surely deserves more performances. Recognisably English in style, the predominant mood is up-beat, but in Goossens' hands it can soften in an instant; the musical storytelling is a constant delight.

There is a helter-skelter Scherzo and then a deeply-felt slow movement, with Goossens caressing the phrases. A playful Rondo finishes the concerto in fine style.

The **Sonata No. 1 for oboe and piano** was written three years later, and this performance was broadcast in 1959. The recording quality, though mono, is excellent: there is an intimacy from both players, seeming to get to the heart of the music. Goossens takes a few liberties with the oboe part – surprising, since he edited it – yet his musical choices always come over as completely appropriate. His light sound is particularly suitable here, acting as a kind of obbligato to the grounded piano part. In the slow movement he sings, he keens – his control of mood, and of pianissimo, seems absolute. The third movement – another Rondo – is rustic. The main theme alternates with more unsettled sections, finally returning to the first movement and its oboe cadenza. This time, however, the cadenza is given to the piano, emphasizing the splendid contribution made by Clifton Helliwell to the success of this moving performance.

Notes by Jeremy Polmear