

Grace Williams - Carillons for Oboe and Orchestra (Piano Reduction)

Programme notes for Oboe Classics (CC2321), Sarah Roper, September 2025



1. I Moderato con moto (3:46)
2. II Allegretto alla Pavana (1:53)
3. III Lento rapsodico/Allegro scherzoso, rubato -
IV Allegro scherzando (5:04)

Total Time 10:43

This is a recording of the piano reduction of *Carillons* for Oboe and Orchestra (1965, revised 1973) by Grace Mary Williams (1906-1977). The first edition of the score and oboe part for *Carillons for Oboe and Orchestra* was published by *Curiad* in 2022. The edition of *Carillons* for oboe and piano was later published in the same year and is a direct copy of the

original reduction, handwritten by the composer herself. The publisher, *Curiad*, believes that Grace Williams did not write the piano reduction with general publication in mind and therefore advises the pianist to adapt the score as they see fit, since it is clear that there are many moments in the piano part where it is extremely difficult, if not impossible to play all the notes indicated.

Grace Mary Williams (1906-1977) - *Carillons* for Oboe and Orchestra (1965, revised 1973)

Composer's note (from the 1973 manuscript), included in the published score:

"The work is called Carillons because the chiming of bells seems to have influenced the accentuation, and, to a certain extent the character of the music.

There are four movements: the first is lyrical, the second is in the style of a Pavane, and the third is a thinly accompanied Cadenza, leading to the Scherzo Finale"

Carillons was commissioned by the Welsh Home Service of the BBC for its programme 'Auditorium', requesting "something light-weight and entertaining". She wrote *Carillons* in 1965 and it was premiered in Llandaff, Cardiff, Wales on March 1, 1967 by the BBC Welsh Orchestra and Philip Jones, its Principal oboe, conducted by Rae Jenkins.

Scored for solo oboe, 2 french horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, percussion, harp, and strings, *Carillons* was originally perceived as a three movement work. However in 1973 Williams revised the work and added an extra movement, providing a rhapsodic and cadenza-like bridge between the second and fourth movements.

The writer Malcolm Boyd compares the added "accompanied cadenza" to that of the *Oboe Concerto* by Strauss, written in 1945 - it is possible that she may have been influenced by this concerto - and mentions that *Carillons* "...occupies a unique place among Grace Williams' compositions. Its appeal is direct and uncomplicated, but it results from the utmost subtlety and refinement."

In the reduction for oboe and piano, particularly in the Allegretto alla Pavana, one can hear the bell-like sounds (scored for high pitched percussion and tubular bells in the orchestra) which inspired the title of the work.

We hope that through hearing this new recording, people may become more aware of this wonderful piece and that oboists (and pianists) may be inspired to learn *Carillons*, perform it as a piece in its own right and also use the edition to prepare for the original oboe and orchestra version.

More detailed information and articles about Grace Williams and *Carillons* can be found at <http://sarahroperoboe.blogspot.com/>



**Grace Williams - Carillons for Oboe and Orchestra (Piano Reduction)
Oboe Classics CC2321**

Sarah Roper, oboe, <https://www.sarahroperoboe.com/>
Ignacio Torner, piano <http://www.ignaciotorner.com/>

Recorded at the Espacio Turina concert hall in Sevilla, Spain, February 12, 2025

Audio and visual recording engineer: Jaime Tuñón

Editing: Ignacio Torner.

Final editing and engineering: Andrés Torres López

Oboe: Howarth of London LXV

Piano: Steinway & Sons D

Publishers: Cyhoeddiadau Curiad

The piano reduction score of *Carillons*, as well as the full score and orchestral parts are available at *Curiad* (<https://curiad.co.uk/en/>)

Grateful Acknowledgement goes to the Vaughan Williams Foundation and Howarth of London for their financial support. We also thank Oboe Classics, Cyhoeddiadau Curiad (Publishers) and ICAS (Seville Town Hall) for their help in bringing this project to life.



**VAUGHAN
WILLIAMS
FOUNDATION**



Oboe
classics

