

CC2020 - Orpheus Elegies and Three Bach Arias, arr. Birtwistle

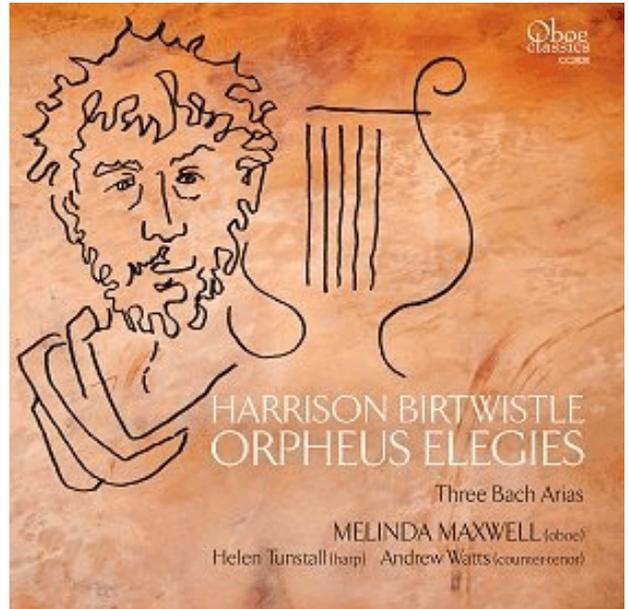
Melinda Maxwell (oboe)

Helen Tunstall (harp), Andrew Watts (counter-tenor)

with Claire Seaton (soprano), William Stafford and Tom Verity (clarinets/bass clarinets)
and Ben Fullbrook (marimba)

Sir Harrison Birtwistle has long been fascinated by the Orpheus legend, and he has described these Elegies as "like postcards with cryptic text" - the text being taken from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*. Each jewel-like Elegy is the composer's take on all or part of a Sonnet.

The idea of the Elegies originated in the 1980s, while Melinda Maxwell and Helen Tunstall were working with the composer at the National Theatre. The full set of 26 (several lasting less than a minute) was finally completed in 2004. Some of them include a counter-tenor voice singing all or part of a Sonnet.



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The 24-page CD booklet includes an introduction by Melinda to the work, and a new interview with Birtwistle. This recording coincides with the composer's 75th birthday (July 15th 2009), his RPS chamber music award, and his music-theatre work on the Orpheus myth, *The Corridor*.

"Everything is beautifully judged, and the range that Birtwistle draws from the two instruments, and from the voice, is enormous" *The Guardian*

"They are like enchanted preludes... Enchantingly performed here." *Sunday Times*

"What a stunning effort on everyone's part. The piece, the recorded quality and the wonderful playing of all involved are beyond praise. Melinda's true and above all, singing sound should be admired by all oboists of any persuasion."
Basil Reeve, USA [Basil Reeve was at the time Principal Oboe of the Minnesota Orchestra.]

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Oboe image courtesy Howarth of London

