



Awake O harp

Rachel Dent
Harp

with Ronald Frost - organ

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Concerto in B flat major, Op.4 No.6*

1	<i>Andante – Allegro</i>	G. F. Handel (1685-1759) <i>trans.</i> R. Dent	[3:23]
2	<i>Larghetto</i>		[4:32]
3	<i>Allegro moderato</i>		[2:51]
4	Etude de Concert: Au Matin	M. Tournier (1897-1951)	[4:17]
5	The Minstrel's Adieu to his Native Land	J. Thomas (1836-1913)	[9:01]
6	Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn (Watching the Wheat)	J. Thomas (1836-1913)	[3:46]
7	Aria in Classic Style*	M. Grandjany (1891-1975)	[5:54]
8	Fire Dance (from Petite Suite)	D. Watkins (b.1939)	[2:24]
9	Sarabande and Ground	W. Croft (1678-1727) ed. D. Watkins	[4:31]
10	Impromptu	R. Nichols (b. 1945)	[4:02]
11	Chaconne in C Major	G. F. Handel (1685-1759) <i>trans.</i> H. Boye	[6:12]
12	Prelude – Berceuse*	O. Ravanello (1871-1938)	[6:35]
	Santa Fe Suite	W. Mathias (1934-1992)	
13	<i>Landscape</i>		[2:49]
14	<i>Nocturne</i>		[5:23]
15	<i>Sun Dance</i>		[3:34]

Total playing time: 69:14

* Accompanied at the organ of St. Ann's Church, Manchester, by Ronald Frost.

The Music

Handel (transcribed Dent): Concerto in B flat Major Op.4 No.6

George Frederic Handel (1685-1759) was born into a non-musical family. His father saw his musical talent and grudgingly allowed him to receive lessons from the composer Frederick Wilhelm Zachow, who was organist and master of music in Handel's native town of Halle. Under Zachow's guidance, Handel became an accomplished organist and harpsichordist. He succeeded his teacher as cathedral organist in 1702. He moved to London in 1712, where he settled down to a long and prosperous career. It was not until much later that Handel began composing his Opus 4 concertos.

The *Concerto for Harp* is believed to have been composed for the triple harp, an instrument popular in the early 18th century, and for Welsh harpist, William Powell, although it was designated for 'Harpa o Organo'. It was first presented to a London audience in 1736 during a performance of the oratorio *Alexander's Feast*.

The concerto is in three movements: Andante-allegro; Larghetto; and Allegro moderato.

Tournier: Étude de Concert: Au Matin

Marcel Tournier (1897-1951) began his musical studies at the Paris Conservatoire under Martenot and Hasselmans. In 1899 he won the Premier Prix de Harpe and he succeeded Hasselmans as Professor of Harp from 1912-1948.

Au Matin, meaning "To The Morning", with its flowing arabesque-like arpeggios and buoyant lyricism, was composed in 1925. The composition of pieces similar to this made a huge contribution to the development of the modern pedal harp.

Thomas: The Minstrel's Adieu to his Native Land

John Thomas (1836-1913) was born in Bridgend, South Wales. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music and in 1872 became harpist to the Royal court of Queen Victoria. He composed and arranged many pieces for the harp with a particular interest in the folk music of Wales. *The Minstrel's Adieu to his Native Land* is an original melody with variations, each showing off the different capabilities of the harp.

It is prefaced with a poem by Moore:

When the light of my song is o'er,
Then take my harp to your ancient hall;
Hang it up at that friendly door,
Where weary travellers love to call.
Then if some bard, who roams forsaken,
Revive its soft notes in passing along,
Oh! let one thought of its master waken
Your warmest smile for the child of song.

Thomas: Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn

This is one of Thomas' arrangements of a Welsh folk song. Translated, the title reads 'Watching the Wheat'. The folk song describes the tragic love affair of Wil Hopcyn and Ann, the daughter of a wealthy farmer from Cefenydfa, Llangynwyd, South Wales.

Ann, betrothed through her parents, married the man of her choice. She later died of a broken heart as Wil, the farm hand, was her first true love.

Grandjany: Aria in Classic Style

Marcel Grandjany (1891-1975) made his professional début as a harpist at the age of seventeen having been awarded prizes in solfège, harp and harmony at the Paris Conservatoire. For a time he was Organist and Choirmaster at the Basilica of Sacré Coeur in Paris. In 1936 he emigrated to the USA where he founded the harp department at Montreal Conservatoire (Canada) and became the head of harp studies at both the Manhattan School of Music and the Julliard School in New York.

The *Aria in Classic Style for Harp and Organ* was written in 1937 and dedicated to the well-known music Patron Mrs Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. The melody of the Aria was first composed as a harmony exercise for Grandjany's students and is closely modelled after the Handel arias 'Trust in the Lord' and 'Ombra mai fu' from *Serse*. Grandjany liked the melody so much he arranged it for harp and organ, his two favourite instruments.

Watkins: Fire Dance

David Watkins (b. 1939) was educated at Oundle School and the Royal Academy of Music; a French Government Scholarship enabled him to continue his studies in Paris.

His 'Petite Suite' – from which the *Fire Dance* is the final movement – won first prize in an International Competition organised by the Northern California Harpists' Association in 1961.

The *Fire Dance* captures the exciting ritual dances of South America.

Croft: (edited Watkins): Sarabande & Ground

William Croft (1678-1727) was a chorister at the Chapel Royal before he became organist of Westminster Abbey. He composed a great number of songs and much instrumental music, although it is his sacred music which is most regularly heard now.

The *Sarabande and Ground* come from Croft's keyboard suites. There are several versions of the Ground which, at one time, was attributed to Purcell.

Nichols: Impromptu

Cheshire composer Roger Nichols (b.1945), wrote the *Impromptu for Harp* in 1972. It is a piece which combines rhythmical effect with a rather improvisational style. The *Allegro ritmico* opens with bright, lively chords, and arpeggio patterns. Then follows a sonorous *Adagio*, where the deep bass provides a 'pedal bass' to a broad, sparse melody. There is a return to the original tempo, and the ideas of the first section return. The piece comes to an end with a loud C major chord.

Handel (transcribed Boye): Chaconne in C Major

This Chaconne was originally written for harpsichord and, in that version, was much longer than in this transcription by Henryk Boye, which consists of 17 variations framed by a statement and re-statement of the eight-bar theme.

The rhythm of the theme (in 3/4 time) is that of a Sarabande with the accent characteristically on the second beat of the bar and the piece ranges from the tranquil opening through a series of increasingly lively variations until a simple statement of the theme brings the work to a peaceful conclusion.

The Musicians

Rachel Dent began studying the harp with Dorothy Gilbertson of Harrogate before accepting a place at the Royal Northern College of Music in 1997, studying with Eira Lynn Jones. She graduated with an honours degree in June 2001. In 1999 she received the Dearden Award for Achievement and the United Kingdom Harp Association Award.

As a soloist, Rachel has performed at St Ann's Church, Manchester, St Mary's Church, Nantwich, Flixton House, Hull University, Emmanuel Church, Didsbury, and she has played Handel's Harp Concerto with Sale Chamber Orchestra. She has also provided music for a scene in Granada Television's production of "A & E" and for BBC "Songs of Praise".

Rachel has given recitals as part of an organ and harp duo, performing in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral Summer Recital Series 2001, the Bridgewater Hall as part of the Royal College of Organists Performer of the Year 2000 and other churches in Manchester.

Her freelance orchestral career includes working with the Hallé Orchestra, Manchester Camerata and Sinfonia ViVa. As a member of Chiron Duo (flute and harp), Rachel has performed in Manchester Town Hall, the East Riding of Yorkshire Recital Series, and for music in Granada Television's "My Favourite Hymns" programme.

Ronald Frost, who accompanies Rachel in three of the pieces on this CD, has been Director of Music at the city centre church of St. Ann, Manchester since 1978, where to date he has given more than 780 organ recitals.

In 2001 he completed 50 years unbroken association with the Royal Manchester (now Royal Northern) College of Music as student and tutor. Ronald Frost is a double "Limpus" prize-winner of the Royal College of Organists, and was awarded the Royal Manchester Institution Medal for Organ Performance in 1954. His other qualifications and awards include BMus (Dunelm), FRMCM, FRCO, Hon. RSCM and Hon. FNMSM.

In November, 2003, he received an Honorary Fellowship from the Guild of Church Musicians for services to church music (see the insert). He has recorded six highly acclaimed CDs of organ music at St. Ann's on the Dunelm label (available from Divine Art).

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Rear cover: Rachel Dent

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Recording Assistant: Joyce Pattison

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Ronald Frost



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The inspiration for the title of this CD, *Awake O harp*, was obtained from Psalm 108 verse 2.

Front cover: A waterlily, Chatsworth, Derbyshire. Photograph: Jim Pattison

Rear cover photo: Rachel Dent

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