

Helen Habershon

FOUND IN WINTER

Helen Habershon
clarinet

John Anderson
oboe

Andrew Fuller
cello

John Lenehan
piano / arranger

London Primavera
conducted by
Anthony Halstead



Found in Winter

music by **Helen Habershon** arranged by **John Lenehan**

1	Winter Arrives	5:21
2	Far out in the Ocean	3:31
3	Farewell Ice	7:09
4	Requiem – Anna Akhmatova	10:50
5	Found in the Rain	2:40
	The Bronze Horseman	11:30
6	I. <i>Gently flowing</i>	5:55
7	II. <i>Andante</i>	2:47
8	III. <i>Appassionato</i>	2:47
9	Peace	5:10
10	Before Time Began	5:15
11	Day of Judgement	9:19
	Total playing time	60:49

Helen Habershon clarinet (tracks 2, 5-8, 10)

John Anderson oboe (tracks 9, 10)

Andrew Fuller cello (tracks 6-8,10)

John Lenehan piano (tracks 3, 6-8, 10)

London Primavera Orchestra (all tracks except 3, 6-8, 10)

Anthony Halstead conductor

The music

Helen Habershon's writing is instinctive and inspired. She is passionate about 'our incredible natural world' and it is the main source for her music. In her own words :

'I feel that both life and music can be thought of as a tapestry which gradually unfolds as it reveals a story. My ideas just come out of the ether, it's a bit like becoming aware of a distant dancer that begins to come closer until it becomes the dance, the music.'

'**Found in Winter**' expresses the many different faces of winter with its varied moods as the composer explains:

The first track, **Winter Arrives**, with its gradual, subtle, almost unconscious introduction into that cold place of starkness, prepares us for what is to come. There is an apprehensive but excited anticipation of winter arriving, heralded by the icy sound of the Mark tree (chime bars) and the immediate appeal of the bodhrán drum.

We then find ourselves on a wonderful journey travelling to many different parts of our imagination; far out in the sparkling ocean when the sun breaks through the mist, with its beautiful dancing rays of gold (**Far out in the Ocean**) ; the extreme conditions of the arctic with the alarming urgency of its rapidly melting ice, (**Farewell Ice** - a piece that Helen wrote last year for the polar explorer Jim McNeil Ice Warrior programme as Composer in Residence); the joy of the welcome rain as it nourishes all (**Found in the Rain**); that feeling of peace as the winter sunshine smiles hope on the bleakness of the season (**Peace**).

There is often a sense of timelessness in nature. When we step out of our normal concept of time (**Before Time Began**) we are aware of vast landscapes of infinite imagination. It is here that we gain access to this wonderful state of inspiration where purity and truth exist; beyond that place of logical thinking, censorship and critical agenda; rather a state of pre- thought, a place of knowing where we can follow our own inner guidance.

Two of the works, inspired by Russian poems, reflect the winter of mankind.

Requiem-Anna Akhmatova was directly inspired by the harrowing and immensely special poem 'Requiem' in which literary giant Anna Akhmatova describes the horrific happenings of the Russian revolution. Standing outside the prison in St Petersburg where her son had been incarcerated, (she was one of many other women also showing their solidarity to their menfolk in the prison), a woman with 'blue lips' recognised Anna and whispered "could you describe this?" She answered that she thought she could.

As I wrote this piece I felt hugely emotional, it was as though she was in the room with me. The loud chords were quite shocking as I wrote them but then I realised that they were the sound of the prison siren. Her reference to hope 'always hovering slightly in front,' is an important message for us all, the reassurance of its existence and its power to alleviate the surrounding darkness with its promise of light.

Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*, with the story of the river Neva breaking its banks, demonstrates how we cannot defy nature and bend it to our will. I was again writing music in my studio having read the poem and I suddenly realised that it was expressing the atmosphere in a musical version of the poem.

The solo clarinet at the beginning depicts the barren mud flats with just a few Finnish fishermen huts scattered about.

The second movement relates to when the protagonist Eugeny lies in his bed thinking about his sweetheart and is resolving to go to her in the morning to ask her to be his wife. While he sleeps, the river gets louder and louder as the driving rain continues relentlessly throughout the night. In the morning the river has burst its banks and his sweetheart has died in the floods.

The last movement is when he finally goes mad and in his crazy state he imagines he is being chased by the bronze sculpture of Peter the Great on his huge horse which has come to life and is chasing him.

The final track, Day of Judgement is a time of reckoning. We are reminded of the joys and delights all around us in our beautiful natural world. However, there is a foreboding which builds as we are left in no doubt that time is running out. There is hope but we must nurture and respect our beloved planet or suffer the dire consequences.

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This new release follows Helen's last two albums and she is delighted to be collaborating once again with John Lenehan as both pianist and arranger.

The writings below, reflecting the wonderment of nature with its many different atmospheres and profound beauty, are from Yesterday's Dreams, by William Saunders.

The Old Spirit

I listen to the wind howling
wrapping itself around the chimney
up there on the top of our roof
the night closes in from afar off,
the stars make an effort
to be seen between the racing low clouds.
In the spaces between the hills
up there on the high moor
where only the crow
clinging to his dark craggy perch
and the fox looping along
those age old nocturnal tracks
live their lives fully
there, in that wilderness.
The wild mournful wind
the racing clouds
and the night's dark face
revel in their comradeship
and together bring an old spirit
back into our uneasy present times.

I watched the sky

I watched the sky on fire
out on the Bude sea
where the horizon imbued
with mystery
held the sinking sun
for those ten seconds
of strange time
before bending down at
Nature's age old command
letting day slip away.
I watched the blue sea
darken, yet, still alive
with a million little movements
it too gave way to earth's rhythm
and eventually hid
behind a curtain of darkness
all around me inevitable night
calmed the daytime jangle,
life itself in all its aspects
quietened and grew peaceful.

The musicians

As a composer and clarinettist with a distinguished performance history, music has always been a part of Helen Habershon's life and at a young age she was already winning composition prizes at local music competitions.

Helen then focused on performance where she went on to establish a career as an international clarinettist until a twist of fate resulted in her going back to serious composition. Unable to play the clarinet for a couple of months due to two broken wrists she was allowed to play the piano. As a result she found herself hooked and the music began to flow from her pencil!

Her first two albums, *Found in the Rain* (2009) and *Found in the Sunlight* (2014) were immediately taken up by Classic FM in the UK as Album of the month and Album of the week respectively. They are played worldwide and have also enjoyed much success in the United States.

Helen studied the clarinet at the Royal College of Music with Sydney Fell and with Gervase de Peyer. After winning a scholarship to the IHEM in Switzerland she was appointed principal clarinet of the Gulbenkian Orchestra at the age of 22. Helen has performed as a soloist in prestigious venues in many countries in Europe, and a highlight was a concerto at the Lincoln Centre with the New York Chamber Symphony Orchestra under Gerald Schwarz. She has appeared on television (including Michael Parkinson) and radio on many occasions and has performed alongside icons such as Cliff Richard and Vanessa Redgrave.

Helen's late father, William Saunders (1926-2007) greatly encouraged Helen with her creativity and two of his writings are included above. As a writer himself he was also deeply inspired by nature and this can be easily recognised in his writings and much of Helen's music. When she was eight years old she remembers looking out of her bedroom onto a wood and hearing her first tune which she knows to this day.

Another example was in Brittany In 2003. Whilst swimming in the sea she noticed that all around her was sea, sky and a sandy beach and that it could have been a million years ago. In that moment she heard a tune which was to become 'A Million Years Ago.'

This has been a regular occurrence and she feels very blessed to be the recipient of what she feels can only be described as a magical source of inspiration. Helen cares deeply about 'our beautiful planet' and in 2016 she was appointed 'Composer in Residence' for the very exciting Ice Warrior program with polar explorer and keynote speaker Jim McNeill, with an invitation to join an expedition to the North Pole! They have recently collaborated in giving talks on the theme of music and nature which have been enthusiastically received.



Andrew Fuller



John Anderson



Anthony Halstead



John Lenehan



John Anderson is Professor of Oboe at the Royal College of Music. He has spent many decades as principal oboe with several London orchestras and now divides his time between free lance playing and teaching. As one of the most recorded oboists in the world he has recorded a wide variety of concerto and recital repertoire and he has given recital and concerto performances worldwide.

Andrew Fuller has a busy and varied career as a soloist, chamber musician, guest principal, session musician and teacher. He has made many appearances at leading venues at home and abroad and his duo partnership with pianist Michael Dussek has had great success. Several of their CDs on the Dutton Vocalion label were selected as Editor's Choice in Gramophone Magazine. A regular guest player with many leading chamber groups and orchestras he was Associate Principal with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for seven years before leaving in 1997 to concentrate on solo and chamber music. He is also a member of the Primrose Piano Quartet.

Praised by the New York Times for his "great flair and virtuosity" and the (London) Times – "a masterly recital", **John Lenehan** has appeared in concerts throughout the World from Abu Dhabi to Zurich and from Aberdeen to Zimbabwe. With more than 70 albums to his credit, reflecting an enormous variety of genres and styles, John Lenehan ranks as one of the most versatile pianists on the classical scene today.

As a soloist he has appeared with orchestras such as the London Symphony at the Barbican and the Royal Philharmonic in the Royal Albert Hall. John Lenehan has also collaborated with some of the leading instrumentalists of our time and is recognised as an outstanding and versatile chamber musician.

His many recordings include piano recitals and concertos as well as duo sonatas, chamber music and jazz. His four-disc survey of John Ireland's piano music received great critical acclaim including a Gramophone award. His other solo recordings include three discs for Sony Classical of minimalist piano works and a disc of Erik Satie (for Classic FM). Most recently he has recorded albums with Huw Wiggan, Tasmin Little and the Rossetti Ensemble as well as concertos by Mozart and Beethoven with the National Symphony Orchestra.

John Lenehan also composes, with works published by Faber, Novello and Schotts. His Fantasy on Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker has recently been recorded by the Budapest Symphony Orchestra. He has written and arranged for a long list of soloists and orchestras including Nigel Kennedy, Tasmin Little, Nicola Benedetti, Leonidas Kavakos and Yuja Wang, the BBC Concert Orchestra, RPO and Hong Kong Philharmonic.

Helen has worked with John Lenehan over many years and is delighted with these arrangements of her music, which she describes as 'wonderfully and imaginatively orchestrated.'

Anthony Halstead made his conducting début with the world premiere of Elisabeth Lutyens' music-theatre work 'One And The Same' with the Vesuvius Ensemble at the 1976 York Festival. He subsequently studied with Sir Charles Mackerras, Michael Rose and George Malcolm. His conducting career has taken him to Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland and the Netherlands, as well as the UK.

As a conductor or keyboard director he has made over 50 CDs, with orchestras that include the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, English Chamber Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Uppsala Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and The Hanover Band. With the latter, he most notably recorded the entire orchestral music of Johann Christian Bach, on 24 CDs, for the German company cpo.

Formed in 1986 by its lead violinist Paul Manley, **London Primavera** comprises a team of the crème de la crème of chamber musicians. As one of Britain's finest ensembles it has created an enduring reputation with an accolade of reviews at international festivals in Britain, including Brighton, Canterbury, Mayfield, Newbury, Perth, Winchester and also abroad, in the Netherlands, Italy, Malta, France and Slovenia.

Primavera has made many appearances on the South Bank premiering important new works, at St Johns Smith Square and the Wigmore Hall, and made two TV series entitled Music in Mansions for Meridian Television.

Their discography has featured Mendelssohn from the outset of their career with two highly praised CDs of Mendelssohn String symphonies, Russian String works, a French and English collection of string music and as a chamber ensemble, the Mendelssohn *Octet* and Second *String Quintet*, and most recently, this album of works by Helen Habershon. Tours abroad have included concerts throughout the United Kingdom, over much of France, the Almera Festival in the Netherlands, Vasto, Parma, Emilia Romagna, Sadurano Festivals in Italy, Malta and the Ljubljana Festival in Slovenia.

New commissions have included works by leading composers such as Paul Patterson, Patrick Gowers, Gavin Bryars, Malcolm Lipkin and Phillip Glass. Soloists and conductors have included James Bowman, Bruno Canino, Michael Chance, Robert Cohen, Anthony Halstead, Tasmin Little, Massimo Mercelli, Michala Petri, Jeremy Summerly, Robert Tear, Raphael Wallfisch, Roderick Williams, and Sir David Willcocks.



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