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Eugène Bozza (1905-1991)

**Trois pièces pour une musique de nuit**

**6:18**

1	I.	<i>Andantino</i>	1:35
2	II.	<i>Allegro vivo</i>	2:36
3	III.	<i>Moderato</i>	1:54

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

**Divertimenti, H.189**

**16:30**

4	I.	Prelude	4:28
5	II.	Nocturne	5:12
6	III.	Scherzetto	3:39
7	IV.	Bagatelle	2:51

Jean Françaix (1912-1997)

**Quatuor**

**10:31**

8	I.	<i>Allegro</i>	2:57
9	II.	<i>Andante</i>	1:44
10	III.	<i>Allegro molto</i>	2:34
11	IV.	<i>Allegro vivo</i>	2:55

Richard Rodney Bennett (1936-2012)

**Travel Notes 2**

**5:27**

12	I.	In an air-balloon	1:27
13	II.	In a helicopter	1:10
14	III.	In a bath-chair	1:20
15	IV.	Car-chase	1:10

Jacques Ibert (1890-1962)

**Deux Mouvements – MCMXXII**

**6:51**

16	I.	<i>Allant</i>	3:57
17	II.	<i>Assez vif et rythmé</i>	2:46

Claude Arrieu (1903-1990)

**Suite en Quatre**

**9:06**

18	I.	<i>Andante cantabile</i>	3:26
19	II.	<i>Scherzando</i>	1:07
20	III.	<i>Adagio</i>	2:35
21	IV.	<i>Presto</i>	1:38

**Total playing time including pauses:**

**55:31**

# London Myriad – FOUR

With FOUR, we are thrilled to share with you a release that is dedicated to the wonderful repertoire existing for woodwind quartet. Recording this release has given us an insight into the versatile sound world that this little-recorded combination of instruments has to offer: the unique blend of colours, textures and timbres make the sound of the woodwind quartet truly exciting and distinctive. With the encouragement of Stephen Sutton at Métier, we have been privileged to have had the experience of recording this particular collection of quartets which includes works by both British and French composers of the twentieth century. We are also very pleased to bring to you the premiere recording of twentieth-century female composer Claude Arrieu's 'Suite en Quatre,' which was written in 1979.

FOUR is a project that represents the beginning of a longer journey for London Myriad. It is the first of an audio pair: one which champions existing music and one which carves out new repertoire for wind quartet. The second recording of the pair will be a commission of new works for the same combination and will be realised in the future as FOUR|2. The woodwind quartet in particular provides a unique opportunity for composers to closely explore the individual and very different characteristics, timbres and ranges of each of the four instruments, offering a diverse and evocative scope of compositional colours.

We hope you enjoy listening to this release with just as much enjoyment and excitement as we experienced while preparing and recording it!

# The music

Trois pièces pour une musique de nuit (Eugène Bozza)

I. Andantino; II. Allegro vivo; III. Moderato

Eugene Bozza was born in Nice in 1905 to a French mother and Italian father. Having excelled in his early studies on the violin and piano, he moved to Rome in 1915 with his musician father to further his musical education at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia as well as to avoid the upheaval of the First World War. He returned to France to enter the Paris Conservatoire as a violinist in 1922, winning the violin premier prix two years later and taking up a job as Concert Master of L'orchestre Pasdeloup. After only five years of touring Europe with the orchestra however, he returned to the Conservatoire, this time to study conducting. His wife later confided that he was 'haunted by stage fright' during his time as a violinist, which perhaps provides an explanation for this abrupt career change.

The high-achieving Bozza excelled at conducting, winning the premier prix in 1931 and taking up the Music Directorship of the Ballet Russes of Monte Carlo. He stayed there for only one year before returning to Paris to study composition and, continuing his successful streak, he won the Conservatoire's premier prix for composition as well as the Grand Prix de Rome in 1934. Following these accomplishments Bozza returned to Rome, living at the Villa de Medici for four years before tasking up a conducting role with the Opéra-Comique and returning to Paris in 1939. In 1950 he was offered the post of Director of the Ecole National de Musique in Valenciennes, a post he held for the next 25 years.

He seems to have finally found a permanent home in Valenciennes, remaining there until his death in 1991. This feeling of security seemed to have also had a positive effect on his work, and during this period he was incredibly prolific as a composer with *Trois pièces pour une musique de nuit*, the first of his woodwind

quartets, being composed in 1954. This compact piece made up of three short movements demonstrates Bozza's in-depth understanding of the characters of the wind instruments, beginning with a lullaby-style 'Andantino' movement, in which the bassoon plays a lilting accompaniment whilst the flute, oboe and clarinet trade the gentle melodic line between the voices. The second movement is an entertaining and energetic 'Scherzo' with a French character typical of Bozza's style. In the third movement, the four voices are balanced and blended with great skill to create a melodious and mesmerising chorale to finish.

### Divertimenti (Frank Bridge)

I. Prelude; II. Nocturne; III. Scherzetto; IV. Bagatelle

Frank Bridge (1879-1941) was born to working-class parents in Brighton. His father, the Music Director of the Empire Theatre, passed on his musical passion to the young Frank, who took up the violin aged 12 and began writing his own compositions at an early age. He was frequently known to try his hand at other instruments, filling in for musicians in the Brighton Theatre Orchestra when they were ill and, on occasion, standing in for his father on the conductor's podium.

This early musical immersion served Bridge well, and at the age of 17, he was offered a scholarship to study violin at the Royal College of Music. Here he also studied composition under the fearsome Charles Villiers Stanford, notorious for his oppressive methods which had destroyed the confidence and aspirations of many of his most talented pupils. Bridge seems to have survived the ordeal however, taking the traditional compositional skills which the fervently 'anti-modern' Stanford taught him and combining them with his own imaginative and creative flair. It is notable that Bridge's music became distinctly more avant-garde following Stanford's death in the 1920s, the presence of his formidable mentor perhaps still looming large over his earlier works.

Bridge's performing, compositional and conducting careers went from strength to strength following his departure from the RCM; a decision to convert to the

viola put him in great demand as a string quartet player, he received high honours in the Bologna composition competition and, following acclaim as a conductor at the Savoy Theatre and Covent Garden, was often called in by Henry Wood to deputise for him in rehearsals. His unparalleled score-reading skills put him in high-demand amongst concert promoters who had been let down by other more famous conductors and he soon earned the nickname 'the ambulance conductor' because he stepped in so many times! Despite some notable compositional success during this time (his orchestral suite *The Sea* being amongst them), many of his works of this period were written from financial necessity over-and-above musical inspiration and the songs and solo piano pieces he composed extensively during this time were intended for the most part as salon entertainment.

The Great War, as for many other composers of the era, marked a dynamic shift in Bridge's compositional style and consequently in his public perception during the 1920s. The horror of the war years and the loss of several of his friends and composition students changed his world vision and introduced a noticeable tone of pessimism to Bridge's previously bucolic style. At a time when other popular composers were reacting to the war years by incorporating the lively new jazz style into their works, this new 'downbeat' Bridge was not a great hit with audiences, and this was the start of his gradual decline into relative obscurity. His friendship with a new American patroness, Mrs Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, resulted in three successful US concert tours during this period, however his early pastoral works were the most often performed for these American audiences. Perhaps Bridge's most notable musical impact during these years was the impression that he made on a ten-year-old Benjamin Britten, who heard him conduct a performance of his suite *The Sea* at the Norwich Triennial Festival in 1924. Four years later Bridge began to teach Britten regularly, taking the young composer under his wing and fostering his budding talents. This was to be a lifelong friendship as well as a fruitful musical collaboration, with Bridge's musical influence clearly audible in much of Britten's work.

Bridge returned to the USA in 1932, touring whilst conducting and composing works infused with the influences of the second Viennese school and in particular the work

of Alban Berg. Although Bridge's music never lost its tonality or sense of English lyricism, a clear shift towards the avant-garde can be heard in his output from this time. Published in 1938, the *Divertimenti* were composed at a time of ill-health for Bridge. A near-fatal heart attack in 1936 left him unable to compose for a period, and it was only weekends at his home in Friston on the rural Sussex downs overlooking the sea that nursed him back to health enough to be able to compose again.

The *Divertimenti* is a work of great contrasts, introducing tonal and atonal material in direct opposition as well as playing with the contrasting timbres of the wind quartet, most notably by including two central duet movements. The first of these, 'Nocturne' was composed as part of a sketch for a set of oboe and flute *divertimenti* in 1934, and then revised as part of this larger work. The movement explores the sonorities of the instruments and the interplay between them, contrasting ethereal and haunting solo sections with rhythmic central passages. The third movement is a dancelike 'Scherzetto', featuring the bassoon and clarinet and likewise contrasting eerie sustained, modal passages with darkly humorous dotted sections. The outer two movements are both light-hearted in tone, but again with strong demarcations between various motivic ideas, and the end of the final 'Bagatelle' is almost entirely open-ended, emphasising the 'diverting' character of the piece – this is certainly not intended to be 'serious' music. Throughout the work, you can sense the composer's wit at play in the interweaving of lines and textures, and there is perhaps a suggestion that in his unusual choice of instrumentation, he was allowing himself some 'light relief' from the serious nature of string quartet composition (his fourth string quartet was published in 1937). Bridge's pride in the completed work is quite clear in a letter to Britten dated 1939: "They come off mightily well I'm glad to say. Which means I am quite pleased with them even if nobody else is!"

This is a somewhat bittersweet sentiment as, despite what now seem to be productive years for Bridge, his music indeed continued to steadily decrease in popularity amongst audiences and his death in 1941, at the age of 62, would have almost certainly gone unmarked if not for his old friend and lifelong supporter, Sir Henry Wood, who spearheaded and conducted a memorial concert for the BBC.

## Quatuor (Jean Françaix)

I. Allegro; II. Andante; III. Allegro molto; IV. Allegro vivo

Jean Françaix was born in 1912 to musical parents in Le Mans in France. In 1922 at the age of only 10, Françaix received his first lessons in harmony and counterpoint from the celebrated Nadia Boulanger. Testament to his early success is his first composition *Pour Jacqueline* which was written in the same year and published in 1924. Encouraged in his studies by Maurice Ravel, he soon took up a place at the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied piano alongside his compositional training, and graduated with the premier prix in his piano class at the age of 18.

His first international acclaim arrived with the premiere of his *Concertino for piano and orchestra* at the Baden-Baden Chamber Music Festival in 1936. In the coming years he had a flurry of compositional activity, publishing numerous works across an array of genres but always focusing intensively on chamber music, and in particular chamber music for wind instruments, which was to become his great passion. Although he closely associated with Francis Poulenc and other members of 'Les Six' (including Poulenc) and was greatly taken with the French Impressionist style as well as the Neoclassicism of Stravinsky, his music always retained a character all of its own: tonal, graceful and rhythmic.

Françaix wrote his *Quatuor for flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon* at the tender age of 21 for the woodwind professors of the Le Mans Conservatoire, where his father was director. He explained the unusual (for the time) choice of instruments for this work as follows: "As the horn tutor who was there at the time was never quite sure what sound would emerge from his instrument – his fame was as a specialist in the art of playing several notes at the same time – I had decided not to 'rouse the volcano,' and wrote a quartet without horn which would be less likely to produce disconcerting surprises." Despite being an early work, Françaix was rightly very pleased with the result, describing this humorous work as "a fusion of Machiavelli and magic".



## Travel Notes 2 (Richard Rodney Bennett)

I. In an air-balloon; II. In a helicopter; III. In a bath-chair; IV. Car-chase

The Kent-born Richard Rodney Bennett (1936-2012) is one of the most widely-renowned British composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. His prolific and eclectic and compositional output spanned not only chamber music and symphonies but also solo instrumental works, symphonic wind band compositions and a huge array of film music, for which he was three times Academy Award-nominated. He was also a prodigiously talented jazz pianist (an aptitude which perhaps came from his mother, the concert pianist Joan Esther Spink) and was a regular fixture, alongside singer Claire Martin, at such reputed London jazz venues as The Pheasantry and Ronnie Scott's.

These diverse musical influences, paired with the technical abilities honed by studies in Paris with his inspirational composition teacher, Pierre Boulez, and united by his innate musical wit, can all be clearly perceived in the almost 'Poulencian' writing of his two *Travel Notes* pieces. The first of these, Bennett composed for string quartet in 1975, expressing his film-music-panache and talent for descriptive writing by depicting various forms of transport (with movements entitled: 'A walking tune'; 'In a hearse'; 'On horseback'; 'In a pram' and 'Express train'). The series continued a year later with *Travel Notes 2* which exhibited Bennett's lifelong interest in composing for wind instruments. His comprehensive technical understanding of the diverse timbres and abilities of each of the instruments can clearly be heard throughout, with soaring melodies and complex jazz-inspired passage work abounding throughout the work.

No further description of the individual movements is necessary - the titles of each speak for themselves. This is supremely catchy, 'light' music for the listener, which nevertheless, in the careful handling of the various instrumental voices and material, clearly demonstrates the supreme talent and skill of its composer.

## Deux Mouvements – MCMXXII (Jacques Ibert)

I. Allant; II. Assez vif et rythmé

*Deux Mouvements* by Jacques Ibert (1890-1962) was originally scored for the unusual combination of two flutes, clarinet and bassoon. Ibert had won the Premier Grand Prix de Rome on his first attempt in 1919, despite a gap in his studies due to his service in the Great War, and the completion of this work in 1922 at the Villa Médici was during an intense creative period during which he also completed his celebrated orchestral work *Escales*. The work was dedicated to the Société des Instruments à Vent (Society of Music for Wind Instruments), a group established by the composer Taffanel in 1897 and dedicated to promoting the rebirth of French chamber music for woodwind instruments after the eighteenth century *Harmoniemusik*.

The lyrical and light first movement ('Allant') gives way to a bright and humorous 'Assez vif et rythmé' which uses the contrasting timbres of the instruments to set a conversational tone between ponderous, almost mournful passages instigated by the bassoon and light-hearted and mischievous answering sections led by the treble instruments.

## Suite en Quatre (Claude Arrieu)

I. Andante cantabile; II. Scherzando; III. Adagio; IV. Presto

In 1924, the young Louise Marie Simon entered the Paris Conservatoire to study piano with Marguerite Long. In 1926, and now focusing increasingly on her composition studies, she decided to adopt the pseudonym Claude Arrieu. Although she never publicly stated the reason for the change, it is certainly possible that it was to avoid any pre-judgement of her work based on her gender. Certainly, speaking in a 1982 interview, Arrieu spoke out against the marginalisation of the work of women composers, which she believed was caused by a "conspiracy of silence" within the music industry of the time.

At the Conservatoire, Arrieu studied composition under Georges Caussade, Noël Gallon and Paul Dukas, and her first public performance came as early as 1929, courtesy of another of her professors, Roger Ducasse, who introduced her to the influential conductor Walter Straram. His orchestra premiered her orchestral suite *Mascarades* and were also to premiere many of the works which followed her graduation (with the Conservatoire's Premier Prix) in 1932. These regular performances by *Orchestre Straram* as well as other renowned performers including Pierre Bemaç and Emile Inghelbrecht reflect the high regard in which she was held by her Parisian contemporaries.

Whilst working as a producer for the French Radio Broadcasting Program Service, she became interested in electronic music, becoming one of the first to experiment with *musique concrète* in collaboration with Pierre Schaeffer. Although she did not pursue electronic music within her work, Schaeffer was sufficiently impressed by her to write: "Claude Arrieu is part of her time by virtue of a presence, an instinct of efficiency, a bold fidelity. Whatever the means, concertos or songs, music for official events, concerts for the elite or for a crowd of spectators, she delivered emotion through an impeccable technique and a spiritual vigilance, finding the path to the heart."

Arrieu was one of the most prolific and versatile composers working in France during the second half of the twentieth century. Altogether she completed over four-hundred works across a staggering range of genres including operas and oratorios, symphonic works, piano music, songs, scores for radio, chamber music and several pedagogic texts for her piano students. It is in her chamber music output that she best demonstrates her love for melody, even when the melodic style of writing was becoming distinctly less fashionable. In her music for wind instruments she, similarly to Bridge, allowed herself still more freedom to express a playful and carefree character, whilst retaining the structural elements of her neoclassical style.

The *Suite en Quatre* was completed in November 1979 for the Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet. A gentle, melodic start to the first movement introduces the listener to the individual instrumental voices with a tentative solo theme played by each in turn. The parts then begin to interweave, the theme developing and moving first into a chorale with solos providing ornamentation and melodic interest, then a more characterful and lively section with a light and mischievous staccato theme. The second movement has a similarly playful accompaniment offset by a sinuous, folksong-like melodic line. This silky, chromatic style continues into the third movement but with a decidedly more mournful and reflective mood. The blend and interplay of the instrumental voices in this movement clearly demonstrates Arrieu's complete ease in balancing the varying instrumental timbres and textures of the quartet. In the lively finale, she utilises the extremes of pitch available in the woodwind quartet to striking effect, with the central distorted marching theme often doubled several octaves apart, adding to the somewhat frenzied feel of this closing movement.

Arrieu believed that equality for female composers should not be achieved by awarding them any special status or by judging their music by different aesthetic or critical criteria, but by allowing the quality of their work to speak for itself. We hope that, in recording this charming and under-performed piece alongside that of better-known male composers, we can contribute to the propagation of Arrieu's work to a wider audience, and in doing so, help to cement her in her rightful place alongside her prominent male contemporaries.

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# London Myriad

Flute – Julie Groves;

Oboe – Fiona Joyce Myall

Clarinet – Nadia Wilson;

Bassoon – Ashley Myall

London Myriad was formed in 2004 by a group of young musicians from the London colleges and fifteen years later its members all share a continued passion for chamber music. Working individually with orchestras such as the RPO, Hallé, Royal Opera House, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble 360 and the London Contemporary Music Group, Myriad members have steadfastly maintained a deep commitment for the work that they undertake together, whether in recital, recording or educational settings as part of London Myriad's very special collective.

London Myriad was formed as a diversifying ensemble with a wind quartet at its core and over the years the group has performed a broad range of repertoire ranging from duos to nonets with programmes which have also included strings, harp, piano and narrator in recitals and concerts both in the UK and abroad.

As International Music Competition first prize winners (the Israeli Music Competition), London Myriad consequently performed at the Purcell Room in the Southbank Centre and live on BBC Radio 3, also performing regularly at venues such as St. Martin-in-the-Fields, St. James's Piccadilly, the National Portrait Gallery, Wilton's Music Hall, for the British High Commissioner to the Seychelles in Mahé and in the State Drawing Room at 11 Downing Street to name but a few.

With a keen interest in new music and in expanding the repertoire in particular for woodwind chamber ensemble, London Myriad has given several world premiere and UK premiere performances. The ensemble also maintains a popular range of advanced chamber music courses in the UK and enjoys a wide range of music education opportunities both in their capacity as Concordia International Artists and as regular tutors at Benslow Music Trust, where their popular course 'Wind Ensembles with the London Myriads' has been running for ten years. You can read more about London Myriad at [www.londonmyriad.com](http://www.londonmyriad.com)

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Engineer: Samuel Rodgers

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Upper Row: Bridge; Ibert; Françaix. Lower Row: Arrieu; Bennett; Bozza

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