

# Edward Cowie

## Streams and Particles

Saki Kato □ Miyabi Duo □ Spectrum Quartet (guitars)  
Christopher Redgate (oboe)  
Peter Sheppard Skærved □ Mihailo Trandafilovski (violins)

# Edward Cowie (b.1943): Streams and Particles

## Particle Partita

23:20

1	I.	The Democritus Question	2:37
2	II.	Mendeleev's Table	3:13
3	III.	Bequerel's Radioactivity	2:16
4	IV.	Rutherford's Nucleus and Thompson's Electron	2:13
5	V.	Positron to Muon	1:52
6	VI.	Meson to Lepton	2:29
7	VII.	November Revolution	3:42
8	VIII.	Higgs Boson and beyond...	4:55

Peter Sheppard Skærved and Mihailo Trandafilovski (violins)

## Basho Meditations

10:33

9	I.	Meditation No. 1	1:05
10	II.	Meditation No. 2	1:01
11	III.	Meditation No. 3	1:36
12	IV.	Meditation No. 4	1:09
13	V.	Meditation No. 5	1:01
14	VI.	Meditation No. 6	1:22
15	VII.	Meditation No. 7	0:44
16	VIII.	Meditation No. 8	2:31

Miyabi Duo: Hugh Millington and Saki Kato (guitars)

## Stream and Variations

22:49

17	I.	Theme	1:35
18	II.	Variation 1 – The 1 <sup>st</sup> Pool	0:27
19	III.	Variation 2 – The 1 <sup>st</sup> Run	1:44
20	IV.	Variation 3 – The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pool	1:20
21	V.	Variation 4 – The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Run	1:38
22	VI.	Variation 5 – The 3 <sup>rd</sup> Pool	2:38
23	VII.	Variation 6 – The 3 <sup>rd</sup> Run	4:25
24	VIII.	Variation 7 – The 4 <sup>th</sup> Pool	3:04
25	IX.	Variation 8 – The 4 <sup>th</sup> Run (Finale)	5:54

Saki Kato (guitar)

## Kandinsky

13:50

26	I.	Points	3:38
27	II.	Lines	4:54
28	III.	Planes	5:16

Spectrum Guitar Quartet: Hugh Millington (terz guitar),  
Saki Kato and James Girling (guitars), Bradley Johnson (bass guitar)

## Kandinsky's Oboe

11:30

29	I.	Points	2:06
30	II.	Lines	4:25
31	III.	Planes	4:58

Christopher Redgate (oboe)

Total playing time: 82:29

## Streams and Particles: the composer's notes

This album has several points of focus ranging through Particle Physics, the meditations of a classical Japanese mystic and poet, the flow and flux of a lovely stream in Wiltshire, England, and the painting and writings of one of the founders of 'Abstraction' in Fine Arts: Wassily Wassilyevich Kandinsky.

Three of the five works here are for guitar: a solo, a duo and a quartet of guitars. The other two works (which act like sonic *book-ends* for the guitar works), are for a pair of violins and for a solo oboe. Such a diversity of instrumentation and with four different inspiration roots, the core of the work is one born of a life-long interest in forms; how they behave and how they might connect. This collection also represents **three streams** (pun intended!) of preoccupations with theoretical physics, fine arts theory and practice, and the sensing and study of landscape.

On first thought, sub-atomic particles might be considered far too distant from an English stream let alone the paintings and thinking of the Russian-born painter, Kandinsky. And yet even the *Haiku* of Basho, which form the basis for the eight tiny movements of *Basho Meditations*, are 'atomic' in form and scale. All forms of matter and all matter of forms are subject to behaviours of 'mass' in time and space. The same can be said of the *Lines, Points and Planes* of Kandinsky's oeuvre. Look at the read-outs from the great Particle Accelerator at CERN, and you see something remarkably like a Kandinsky work. A pair of examples are on the facing page:



Sub-atomic particle collisions recorded at CERN



Drawing by Wassily Kandinsky (circa 1911)

This astounding example of **analogy** is but one model for a reality that **all forms connect**. During the few days that I walked the River Sem in Wiltshire, I became aware that the passage of water down that stream was rather like the passage of 'particles' inside a particle accelerator! At one point, and whilst making a series of pencil drawings of the river, I noticed that the turbulences that altered between still-pools and narrower 'runs' of water, were also looking and behaving rather like (very alike actually), the track and trace of sub-atomic particles in various states of excitation.

Music ought, of course, speak for itself. Many would argue that giving a work some kind of descriptive name might influence the way in which someone listens to the music. I think it was the inherent severance of any subjective personal interpretation that programme-titles would suggest that influenced Kandinsky in the naming of a great deal of his most important paintings as **compositions**. But in fact my use of titles **is** to try to at least give a listener some terms of reference for the music. There's not much point in calling a painting of a great sea-scape a *self-portrait*! Each of these titled pieces has a specific inspirational core. The evocations(s)



that these inspirational responses seek to share with a listener are intended to take the listener to either a sense-of-place or even something more personal and that's the stimulation of experiences the listener might already have of the phenomena that have inspired each of my pieces.

**Particle Partita** was commissioned by Experimental Physicist, Professor Brian Foster FRS of the University of Oxford. Funding was provided from that University and the Humboldt Foundation in Germany. The premiere was given by violinist Jack Leibeck and Brian Foster, who joined Jack as a duo in the eighth and final movement. Each movement is inspired by key and epic discoveries about atoms and parts-of-atoms (sub-atomic particles), from *The Heraclitus Question* postulated in the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century BC in Greece, and through to the postulate *Higgs' Boson and beyond*.

At the time I composed this 'atomic and sub-atomic suite' the Higgs' Boson had not yet been observed in a Particle Collider. But it **was** finally observed and proven in reactions monitored in the Collider at CERN in Switzerland. My finale-title has turned-out to be prophetic because it's now known that this discovery does not complete the *Standard Model* in Physics. Instead, rather like an atomic Pandora's Box, it creates further questions and mysteries, including the presence in the Universe of what are thought to be *Super-Particles*. This recording has the two players working in tandem: rather like the passing of a 'baton' in a race- each passing of the baton representing both the reception of prior knowledge and then adding that to ideas about a future knowledge. This is why each movement is interrupted by a second player before the first has finished. As time passes, these interruptions become closer and closer to the beginning of each new section (discovery) until the final and eighth movement is begun and played by the two violins together.

It's not necessary, of course, to have an understanding of physics to appreciate this piece. Such is the universal properties of matter:- that which curves through time and space- that spins and coils- that collides and refracts- that is sometimes simple as well as complex- that moves at different speeds and directions- that has different elemental substance- that is made from related as well as unrelated substances – that one has only to listen to these two great violinists 'sounding these behaviours and properties of forms' to get close to the music itself.

→ reading as much with Greek philosophical ideas as the mathematics

(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)

begin opening 'cell'? (b)

①

Calculation of flow/rupture/element

②

③

④

⑤

⑥

⑦

⑧

⑨

⑩

⑪

⑫

⑬

⑭

⑮

⑯

⑰

⑱

⑲

⑳

㉑

㉒

㉓

㉔

㉕

㉖

㉗

㉘

㉙

㉚

㉛

㉜

㉝

㉞

㉟

㊱

㊲

㊳

㊴

㊵

㊶

㊷

㊸

㊹

㊺

㊻

㊼

㊽

㊾

㊿

with quiet single field

low 'cluster' of pitches?

(notion 'one')

but with separation of lowest harmonic

changing lengths of pitch bc

imagine?

at 10

idea as location

black/white

Particle Partita, Pt. 1. 2nd Stage Sketch.

02. 2. 88. E. C.

2<sup>nd</sup> stage sketch for Part 1 of *Particle Partita*



**Basho Meditations** is written for a guitar duo. It was commissioned by the Miyabi Duo and Saki and Hugh are playing in this premiere recording. I can't remember how it began, but I've always been interested in Japanese culture. It probably started in London in the early '60s when I was able to study as a visiting student at The Slade at the same time as undertaking my undergraduate studies in Physics at Imperial College. The first work I ever had recorded by BBC Radio 3 was a setting of Japanese texts in a piece called *Shinkokinshu*, a collection of texts from the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. Here though is a set of eight very short pieces inspired by *Haiku* written by the 17<sup>th</sup> century poet and philosopher, *Basho*. The translated texts for these are included in this booklet. A quotation from Basho epitomises not only his way of thinking but the ongoing analogy between Nature and Music.

*The Temple Bell stops but I still hear the sound coming out of flowers...*

**Stream and Variations** was commissioned by the Julian Bream Trust. I was surprised to receive such a commission from Julian himself. It didn't seem to me that I might be the kind of composer that would be able to offer what he might want! The first three composers to be commissioned write very different kinds of music to me. When I asked Julian why he'd approached me his response was (and I quote), *'I'm an old man now, Ed, and I thought I'd like music that connects with a part of my life that has sustained and nourished me for decades – and that is my living in a beautiful house in Wiltshire, not far from the little River Sem, where my dog (Django) and me used to go so often on healing and soothing walks. I'd remembered some of your earlier landscape pieces and a close friend of mine confirmed that **you** were the ideal composer for the job'*.

I accepted the commission with one stipulation. This was that I could be allowed to be free of the 'guitarists' imperative' to write **real guitar music**. Julian always took a proactive and sometimes dominating role on the realisation of pieces commissioned by him for his guitar. Although I'd written several major guitar pieces before- the first for the great Gilbert Berberian and others for the equally brilliant Richard Hands, I was always mindful of what Segovia had once said ' *only good guitarists can write good guitar music*'. Because Julian was so obviously deeply attached to his local river and

because he often told me how fascinated he was by musical forms, I decided to have the River Sem as my inspiration; and like Britten before me, (in his *Nocturnal* for solo guitar), I would write something in the form of **theme and variations**.

Walking along the same pathways that Julian had, I noticed that there were **two** distinctive and different sates and conditions of moving water. On the one hand, there were **pools** of much slower and limpid water, sometimes gently twisting into groups of eddies or spirals, but often with scarcely any real and perceptible dynamic movement. But these were always preceded and succeeded by 'runs' of narrower stream in which the water tumbled, buckled; coiled and folded in rapid and ever-changing relationships with each other.



After the 'theme' is sounded then (rather like taking a first stance or look at something visited for the first time), the eight variations alternate between 'pool' and 'run'. I've often introduced performances of this work, (so far given by the wondrous Saki Kato who helped me to sift out imperfections in my guitar-technique whilst at the same time showing me ways that the 'oddities' of my guitar techniques could be turned to advantage, and who premiered the piece in her debut Wigmore Hall Recital in November, 2019), by suggesting that the listener might consider being 'cast adrift' on the surface of the 'stream of music' - rather as a falling leaf might do - and to allow the imagination to ebb and flow during the streaming passage of the music....



Study No. 1 for *Stream and Variations*

**Kandinsky** is the earliest work on this recording. It was commissioned by The English Guitar Quartet in 1995 and premiered by them at the Isle of Man Festival in 1996, and is performed here by the Spectrum Guitar Quartet. The great Russian-born painter Wassily Kandinsky is hailed as one of the founders of *Abstraction* in the visual Arts. He spent a considerable time teaching (and painting) at the famous *Bauhaus* in Germany between 1922 and 1933. In 1926, he published a book considered by many to be one of the most influential treatises on visual forms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on notes for his Bauhaus lectures, *Point and Line to Plane* outlines the three basic structural and dynamic paradigms of not only the Cosmos and Nature but also of music and the visual arts. Beginning as he does with **points**, he asserts that a simple point represents the *beginning of things and the essential nucleus of all creation*. **Lines** are presented as a continuum; the elemental progression of forms and structures through time and space in linear and multi-linear processes. **Planes** is the amalgam of both points and lines: a fusion of both origins and developments of all things in the cosmos.

**Kandinsky's Oboe** was written more than a decade after the guitar Quartet, and for the mercurial and virtuosic oboist Christopher Redgate who offers this astonishing performance. It follows precisely the same inspirational route and roots as the Guitar Quartet, namely a kind of triptych of forms: *Points/Lines/Planes*. It's an example of my sometimes desiring not to revise an earlier work, but to review and revisit its inspirational materials to see if I might have missed something the first time! But unlike the guitar quartet *Kandinsky*, this is for a solo instrument. And whilst it was fairly easy to deal with Kandinsky's ideas about *points* and *lines*, *planes* suggest, of course, a kind of amalgam of both points **and** lines in order to create a form that is saturated in texture and dynamic activity.

**All** of the players on this CD are virtuosos. In the last movement of the solo oboe work, the playing of Christopher Redgate almost denies credibility. How can someone play such a multiplicity of notes, rhythms, dynamic changes and alterations of timbre (colour) so fast and with so much verve and conviction? The answer lies, I am sure, in the tremendous focus and technical confidence of all the players involved in *Streams and Particles*! I owe them all a composer's gratitude, respect, awe and wonderment ...

*Edward Cowie, Cumbria, May 10, 2022.*

### **Basho Meditations: Haiku texts**

1

Autumn has come – visiting my ear – on a pillow of wind

2

Autumn passing now – through the slow drizzling of the rain – the shape of the moon

3

Daybreak in the lingering lavender – a (Japanese) cuckoo calls

4

A green willow – dripping down into the mud – at low tide

5

A wild sea – And stretching across to the Island of Sado – the galaxy

6

Hailstones mixed with large flakes of snow – finely patterned cloth

7

Every morning – practising to improve – a cricket

8

Dawn moon – close to the end of the year – pounding rice

## **‘Particle Partita’- a personal note**

Mihailo Trandafilovski and I gave the world premiere of this fantastic piece at Wilton’s Music Hall on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2016. The piece made a huge impression not only on us, but on the enthusiastic audience. One of them, the acclaimed cartoonist and children’s illustrator, Sally Kindberg, wrote on her blog the following day:

‘Fantastic concert last night at Wilton’s Music Hall, at another Peter Sheppard Skaerved event, not only an evening of Mozart but a world premiere of composer and artist Edward Cowie’s Particle Partita, some of which I attempted to draw on the back of my programme notes – I’d foolishly left my notebook behind. Particle Partita is for two violins, and one could imagine particles flying, electrons fizzing and blipping etc as Peter and Mihailo Trandafilovski played ... it was quite a physical performance!’

<https://www.sallykindberg.co.uk/notebook/2016/07/edward-cowies-particle-partita-at-wiltons-music-hall-london/>

The excited public response to this extraordinary piece was important to us, because, it was, yet again, a vindication of our belief that listeners can be enthralled and enthused by music which requires total commitment from both sides of the footlights. There is a timidity afoot, which suggests that music should not be ‘too much’, or should not ask too much, of you, or us.

Let us not beat about the bush: *Particle Partita* is difficult. It demands total virtuosity from the two violinists, pushing us to our physical and intellectual limits: some players demur at such requirements. But the rewards it offers are mysterious, unquantifiable, and we might argue about what they are. Right at this moment, Voyager 1, launched 45 years ago, is exiting the heliosphere, and scientists are arguing about what that means. What that might mean for us is harder to grasp: and yet we are excited by it, our imaginations run riot at the idea that Glenn Gould’s recording of Bach is beginning a journey into interstellar space.

The physics at the heart of Edward’s wonderful piece is beyond me: but somehow, the coruscating brilliance and overwhelming physicality of the music makes an opening into something of its importance; gives me the idea that I can, at the very least,

venture to reach out to the concepts at its heart. I find myself remembering how Alan of Lille (1128-1202) defined the divine, in *Maximae theologia*:

‘[...] an intelligible sphere, whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.’

Every time that this piece is played, it is different. The notes are adamant, and cannot be changed – nor can the rhythms, the dynamics, the articulations, or the timbres. But the relationship between the two players does change – it is up to each successive soloist as to when their individual caprice steps into the space where the other one is active. They do not interfere with each other, at least on paper, but of course, the sensitivities of the materials, the players, the listeners (whether audience or microphones) and spaces ensure that new relationships, reactions, reliefs, and intercommunications are seen, imagined, forged, and forgotten in the minds-ear of everyone involved. Music this sensitive, this wired, hair-triggered, is profoundly affected by being witnessed. It is uncertain. So there is no way of knowing how it will affect you, and how you have affected it already, although you may not have heard a note of it yet. You were always going to hear it, and that changed everything. I hope you love it as much as we do.

*Peter Sheppard Skærved*

### **Aspects of the works for guitar(s)**

*Stream and Variations* was commissioned by the Julian Bream Trust for my November 2019 Wigmore Hall recital. Since becoming a Bream Trust scholar in 2017, I regularly travelled to Julian Bream’s home in Wiltshire for guitar lessons. Bream was a pioneer of expanding the guitar’s repertoire, and it was in this spirit that he continued to commission new pieces into his retirement. It was a privilege to work with him, and he soon arranged for me to meet Edward Cowie, who was the latest composer to write a piece for the Trust. Edward’s immense solo work, which is just over twenty minutes in length, is a staggering addition to the guitar repertoire. Inspired by the River Sem in Wiltshire, where Bream would walk with his beloved dog Django, *Stream and Variations* begins with a theme which is followed by eight variations. Each of these

variations takes on a different perspective of the water's journey through the river, and these variations alternate between slower 'pools' and more fluid 'runs'. When preparing this piece, I worked for uncountable hours with the composer. This piece is like no other piece I've played. It observes and participates in the river's natural form, taking performer, listener, and instrument to new dimensions.

*Saki Kato*

When working on Julian Bream's commission, Edward Cowie clearly became immersed in the guitar and its sonic world. Whilst at the composer's house in Cumbria, a guitar sat conspicuously in the corner of his studio. It was captivating to see Edward convey musical ideas in so many different mediums: sketches, drawings, paintings, musical scores, and through the mimetic gestures that he would demonstrate whilst holding the instrument. The physicality of playing the guitar can be a stumbling block for composers; its particular logic seems to follow no rules that can easily be conveyed from player to composer. Edward has created his own gestural language for the instrument, which particularly shines through in the ensemble works on this recording.

*Basho Meditations* was written shortly after *Stream and Variations*, and takes as its inspiration eight haiku by the Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694). Each haiku's three lines have been inscribed into music, and these brief yet highly intricate forms contain a whole sonic world of gesture, space, and colour.

Edward's *Kandinsky* for guitar quartet was written in 1996 and revised in 2003. Inspired by Wassily Kandinsky's treatise *Point and Line to Plane*, Edward devotes a movement to each of these formal considerations. Edward's use of instrumentation expands the range of the quartet, by using a higher pitched guitar (here played on a *terz* guitar, tuned a minor third higher than a standard guitar), and an octave bass, with two regular classical guitars in the middle. This amplifies the range of colours available to the quartet, and adds to the experience of not only hearing the music, but perhaps also being able to visualise it, through the points, lines, and planes which are at the heart of its construction.

*Hugh Millington*



## Reflections upon 'Kandinsky's Oboe'

When I first listened to Edward discussing his solo oboe work and especially the idea of basing it upon Kandinsky's writings, I was fascinated and couldn't wait to see how he would represent in music those concepts – especially for a solo instrument. Points and lines are perhaps not too challenging in music, but planes?

In this work Edward has been able to pull together his two creative practices. He is writing music, using the ideas of one of the 20th century's great painters and yet, in a very real sense, he is painting in music; there are many times in the score where one can almost see the brush strokes, the highly nuanced mark making, the colour mixes and washes.

The challenge for the performer then is deciding how best to paint in sound, how to make musical sounds that draw out the wonderful painterly approach to the creation of this work.

I worked hard in my practice sessions, not only to learn the notes, dynamics etcetera but also to explore the work from a painter's point of view – asking myself how I should, in sound, best realise the brush strokes, marks, tonal nuances, etcetera?

Edward is of course a master composer who structures his ideas beautifully and so the basics were all there on the page waiting to be found. Listen, for example, to the first movement – staccato notes for points, yes of course, but there are also the 'splatter techniques', the 'drips' and the controlled marks which draw the ideas together.

In the second movement, I detect not only rigger brushes but also fan brushes, and canvases being tilted to enable the production of the lines while, in the third movement, such an array of colours sitting side by side, and on top of each other, with expansive washes making the sounds sing and vibrate – masterly composition and such wonderful fun to perform.

*Christopher Redgate*

# The Musicians

**Peter Sheppard Skærved** is known for his pioneering approach to the music of our own time and the past. Over 400 works have been written for him, by composers Laurie Bamon, Judith Bingham, Nigel Clarke, Robert Saxton, Edward Cowie, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Peter Dickinson, Michael Finnissy, Elena Firsova, David Gorton, Naji Hakim, Sadie Harrison, Hans Werner Henze, Sídika Ózdil, Rosalind Page, George Rochberg, Michael Alec Rose, Poul Ruders, Volodmyr Runchak, Evis Sammoutis, Elliott Schwartz, Peter Sculthorpe, Howard Skempton, Dmitri Smirnov, Jeremy Thurlow, Mihailo Trandafilovski, Judith Weir, Jörg Widmann, Ian Wilson, John Woolrich and Douglas Young.

Peter's pioneering work on music for violin alone has resulted in research, performances and recordings of cycles by Bach, de Bériot, Tartini, Telemann, and, most recently, his project, 'Preludes and Vollerteries', which brings together 200 unknown works from the seventeenth century, from composers including Colombi, Lonati, Marini and Matteis, with the Wren and Hawksmoor churches in London's Square Mile.

His work with museums has resulted in long-term projects at institutions including the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, the Metropolitan Museum, New York City, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum, Galeria Rufino Tamayo in Mexico City, and the exhibition 'Only Connect', which he curated at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Most recently his 'Tegner' commissioned by the Bergen International Festival, is a close collaboration with the major Norwegian abstract artist, Jan Groth, resulting in a set of solo Caprices, premiering at Kunsthallen, Bergen, and travelling to galleries in Denmark, the UK and even Svalbard/Spitzbergen. Peter is the only living violinist to have performed on the violins of Ole Bull, Joachim, Paganini and Viotti. As a writer, Peter has published a monograph on the Victorian artist/musician John Orlando Parry, many articles in journals worldwide, and most recently, *Practice: Walk*, for Routledge.

Peter is the founder and leader of the Kreutzer Quartet and the artistic director of the ensemble Longbow. Viotti Lecturer at the Royal Academy of Music, he was elected Fellow there in 2013. He is married to the Danish writer Malene Skærved and they live in Wapping.

**[www.peter-sheppard-skaerved.com](http://www.peter-sheppard-skaerved.com)**

Macedonian-born, London-based composer, violinist and educator **Mihailo Trandafilovski**'s latest recording for Métier (to be released in 2022 one month after this one) follows albums on Neuma (2021), Métier (2018), Innova (2015), Clarinet Classics (2013) and Lorelt (2011), featuring close collaborators Peter Sheppard Skærved, Neil Heyde, Roger Heaton, Roderick Chadwick, Linda Merrick, Saki Kato, Hugh Millington, Odaline de la Martinez, Lontano, Kreutzer Quartet and the New London Chamber Choir. These enduring creative relationships have been at the centre of his work as a composer and have allowed him to explore and stretch instrumental techniques in idiomatic and often uncompromising ways.

His music has been performed by leading contemporary music groups such as Quatuor Diotima (France), Reconsil Ensemble (Austria), Ensemble Horizonte (Germany), Icarus Ensemble (Italy), Ensemble Fractales (Belgium), Meitar Ensemble (Israel), Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble (Russia), the European Contemporary Composers Orchestra; and has been broadcast throughout Europe, America and Asia.

As a violinist, Mihailo has recorded and performed extensively, both as a member of the Kreutzer Quartet and in solo/duo settings; most recently, he released his solo album *Step(pe)s* (violin/computer) in 2021. He has an avid interest in the application of new music to pedagogy, and has led a number of shared projects among the arts promoting contemporary artistic creativity to a wider audience.

Mihailo's music is published by United Music Publishing.

**<https://trandafilovski.com>**

**Saki Kato** is a Japanese classical guitarist who specialises in the areas of new music performance and community music-making. In 2019 she gave her debut recital at the Wigmore Hall for the Julian Bream Trust, which included the world premiere of Edward Cowie's *Stream and Variations*. As a Julian Bream Trust scholar, Saki studied privately with Julian Bream from 2017–20.

Saki's extensive community music-making work includes leading musical workshops for participants of all ages. In 2020 she was awarded fellowships at Wigmore Hall Learning

and Open Academy (RAM) to develop these skills. She works regularly with Britten Pears Arts, Royal Academy of Music, and Wigmore Hall Learning.

Saki graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in 2020, having been awarded the Dove Award, the John McAslan Prize, the Timothy Gilson Guitar Prize, and the LRAM diploma.

**[www.sakikatoguitar.com](http://www.sakikatoguitar.com)**

**Hugh Millington** is a classical guitarist who works extensively in the areas of performance research, new music performance, and community and outreach work. His research particularly explores the guitar in the nineteenth century, utilising various period instruments. Hugh has given a number of lecture recitals on these topics, most notably at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art in Israel.

Hugh holds a master's degree from the University of Cambridge, where he was awarded the Waldmann Music Award at Sidney Sussex College. Prior to this, he graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with the John McAslan Prize, the Timothy Gilson Guitar Prize, and the LRAM diploma.

**[www.hughmillington.com](http://www.hughmillington.com)**

Hugh and Saki perform together as the **Miyabi Duo**, performing a variety of music for two guitars, ranging from new compositions to their own arrangements using both the classical guitar and the Shamisen, a traditional Japanese string instrument. The duo is particularly committed to performing and working in all areas of the wider community, and since performing for the Wigmore Hall Learning's 'For Crying Out Loud' series, they have performed in environments including hospitals, care homes, and dementia care settings. The duo is currently a fellowship ensemble on the Open Academy/Wigmore Hall Learning programme at the Wigmore Hall in London, and in 2020 the duo was recognised through the Waldmann Music Award at Sidney Sussex College Cambridge, in acknowledgement of their work both within the concert hall and the wider community.

**[www.miyabiduo.com](http://www.miyabiduo.com)**

**Christopher Redgate's** musical activities are wide ranging; he is an oboist specialising in solo and chamber music with an emphasis upon contemporary repertoire; he has redesigned the oboe with the oboe maker Howarth of London creating the Howarth-Redgate system oboe and is both a composer and improviser, enjoying composing new pieces on the spot in his concerts (usually with a highly virtuoso flavour). He also enjoys working in collaboration, not only with the many composers who have written for him, but also with dancers, the improvising abstract artist Mark Rowan-Hull and with musicians from other fields.

Chris has performed in most European countries; Scandinavia, Australia, America, Canada, Mexico and China, and worked with many ensembles including Quatuor Diotima, Ensemble Exposé, The Arditti Quartet, Suoraan, Ensemble Modern, Kreutzer Quartet, London Sinfonietta, The Coull Quartet, Lontano, Firebird Ensemble, Apartment House, Trio Krosta, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra.

Many composers have written for him including Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy, Richard Barrett, Sam Hayden, Roger Redgate, Edwin Roxburgh, Christopher Fox, James Clarke, Paul Archbold, Dorothy Ker, Michael Young, David Gorton, Joe Cutler, Edward Cowie and most recently Douglas Young.

For three years he held an Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music, and is now the honorary Evelyn Barbiroli Research Fellow. He was elected a Fellow (FRAM) in 2015. He has given many masterclasses for oboists, composition classes and improvisation seminars and is an experienced adjudicator and examiner.

His recordings have received substantial critical acclaim, and can be found on Oboe Classics, Métier and NMC, and he broadcasts regularly for BBC Radio 3.

Chris has contributed articles to professional journals and several chapters in multi-authored books. Chris is currently involved in a recording/composition project with the composer Douglas Young who is writing a CD's worth of music for all of the oboes (there are 5!) based upon the 'Jazz' series of cut-outs by Matisse.

# The Composer

*‘Considered by many to be the greatest living composer  
directly inspired by the Natural World’*

Edward Cowie’s first Prom commission was *Leviathan* – a large scale orchestral work premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1975. It marked the first major event in a career that was to gain him national and international recognition for a new kind of ‘voice’ in the music world. Its title, arising from a conjunction between the mighty whale and a book by Thomas Hobbes with the same name can be seen as a signal of a composer whose imagination is deeply embedded in and inspired by the forces of nature. Throughout the 1970s and beyond, a stream of works inspired by wild places on this planet flowed into being, works like his sumptuous *Gesangbuch* (1975/6), (recently released on Signum Classics), the *American Symphony* (1984), *Mount Keira Duets* (1985), and his powerful *Choral Symphony*, ‘*Symphonies of Rain, Steam and Speed*’. This immersion in the study of nature was born of a childhood spent in rural Suffolk and the Cotswolds and continues to form the core of his fertile imagination today.

But two further strands underpin and inspire Cowie’s musical practice and ideas. His undergraduate studies in Physics and practical studies in Painting have been integrated into a kind of ‘fusion-world’ of ideas where science, the visual arts and music coalesce in a kind of creative continuum. In recent years, he has increasingly worked towards his music by means of ‘*field studies*’, theoretical research and painting-drawing. Studies and collaborations with leading physicists, for example, have not only seen exhibitions of his pre-compositional drawings, but have added a body of new music that directly translates scientific theory and experiment into music. His monumental solo piano series *Rutherford’s Lights* was inspired by a study of the relationships between theories of light and colour, and his more recent *Particle Partita* for solo violin – with a sonic time-line of the history of particle physics.

These 'fusions' of disciplines, the bridges between study and practice are an essential part of the composer's quest for new ways of forming. Parallels can be found between the linear and pointillist textures, forms, and motifs in his music with the writings and paintings of Klee and Kandinsky. During his period as first Composer in Association with the BBC Singers (2002-5), Cowie produced a string of large and small-scale pieces that moved through landscapes and natural habitats all over the world. *Gaia*, *INhabitAT*, *Lyre Bird Motet*, and *Bell Bird Motet* are classic examples of a music that engages all of the senses with a profound respect for the power that nature has to move us.

Cowie was the first Granada Composer/Conductor with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra between 1982/4. This led to many conducting dates with other orchestras including the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra; the BBC Singers, ABC symphony orchestras of Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland and Tasmania and the Seymour Group and the Australia Ensemble. He was the first Composer in Association with the BBC Singers between 2003/5 and first Artist in Residence with The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) for the same period. His work for television has included a major film on Edward Lear for Granada TV and his acclaimed BBC2 TV film *Leonardo* of 1986. He has also written and presented major radio series commissioned by ABC FM Australia as well as for BBC Radio 3 and 4.

Major public lectures include the Gertrude Langer Memorial Lectures in Australia, and the Kate Springett Memorial Lecture in London as well as a Ruskin Lecture at Oxford. He has been invited to give keynote lectures and recitals all over the world. As a visual artist he has had over 40 one-man shows in important galleries in the UK, Germany, USA, Australia and New Zealand and his paintings and drawings are in public and private collections in 19 countries.

Other musical honours have included a Gulbenkian Award to study at The Royal Ballet; The Radcliffe International Composer's Prize and a Chopin Fellowship to study with Lutoslawski in Poland. Cowie acknowledges Alexander Goehr as a major influence (as Cowie's professor and teacher) on his life and work- an acknowledgement that continues in a warm and ongoing friendship.

As an academic, Cowie has held major professorships in two Australian and one British University as well as Visiting Professorships in Germany and the USA. He has two doctorates – a Ph.D which includes studies in physics, mathematics, music and fine arts and was awarded the first Doctorate in Music (D.Mus) from the University of Southampton for his work as a composer. He was awarded a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship for inspirational visits to Africa and California, both leading to major compositional outcomes concerned with bringing music to the world that *'warns of the dangers to the wild and living world through the continuing destruction of it at the hands of humanity'*.

Cowie's reputation continues to grow world-wide, and new recordings emerge with high praise and appreciation. His collaborations with major soloists and chamber groups are also enlarging and deepening. He still regards the human voice and the chamber-music mediums as the *'the most fabulously rich and varied palette of possibility in the expression of emotion and sensation'*.

He lives and works – harder than ever – in south Cumbria with his visual artist wife, Heather Cowie.



[www.edwardcowie.com](http://www.edwardcowie.com)

**Edward COWIE**



*Particle Partita* was recorded at St. Michaels, Highgate, London  
on 15 January 2019

Producer: Peter Sheppard Skærved

Engineer: Jonathan Haskell (Astounding Sounds)

The guitar works were recorded at the Silverdale Institute Hall, Silverdale, Lancashire  
on 10-12 August 2021

Producer/engineer: Paul Baily (ReSound UK)

*Kandinsky's Oboe* was recorded at St. John the Evangelist, Oxford  
on 16 February 2016

Producer/engineer: Andrew Post

Edited and mastered for CD by Paul Baily

Apple Digital Mastering by Adaq Khan

Booklet / packaging design: Stephen Sutton (Divine Art)

Cover image: "Stream Partita" by Heather Cowie (2020)

Photos of Edward Cowie by Heather Cowie

All musical works published by United Music Publishing

Texts, images and graphical devices are copyright: all rights reserved

© © 2022 Divine Art Ltd (Diversions LLC in USA/Canada)

**DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP**  
INNOVATIVE | ECLECTIC | FASCINATING | INSPIRATIONAL

**[www.divineartrecords.com](http://www.divineartrecords.com)**

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1, Upper James Street, London W1R 3HG.

# The Edward Cowie Collection



## Three Quartets and a Solo

*Peter Sheppard Skærvæd, violin*

*Kreutzer Quartet*

**Métier MSV 28603**

“Strong recommendation ... simply outstanding.” –

*Musical Opinion*

“Played with verve and true musical understanding” –  
*New Classics*

## Concerto for Orchestra / Clarinet Concerto No. 2

*Alan Hacker, clarinet*

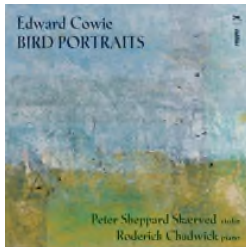
*Royal Liverpool Philharmonic*

*Howard Williams, conductor*

**Métier MSV 92108**

“Superb disc of two exhilarating concertos...  
magnificent, thrilling, hypnotic.” – *MusicWeb*

“An exciting whirlwind of a listen.” –  
*BBC Music Magazine*



## Bird Portraits

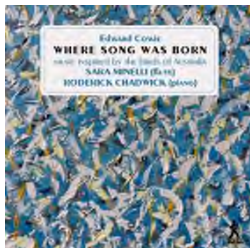
1: Birds of the United Kingdom

*Peter Sheppard Skærvæd, violin,*

*Roderick Chadwick, piano*

**Métier MSV 28619**

“A major composition that will take its place amongst  
the significant works for this duo medium. The playing  
by both partners of this violin/piano duo is revelatory.”  
– *MusicWeb*



## **Where Song Was Born**

Bird Portraits 2: Australia

*Sara Minelli, flute*

*Roderick Chadwick (piano)*

**Métier MSV 28620**

“Stunning, beautiful, revelatory, often moving and thoroughly committed, both in creativity and technique.” – *MusicWeb*

“Fascinating and creative.” – *The Art Music Lounge*

## **24 Preludes for Piano**

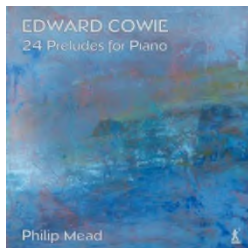
*Philip Mead (piano)*

**Métier MSV 28625**

“Pure Cowie, and extraordinary Cowie at that. This is first-rate music.” – *The Art Music Lounge*

“An outstanding recording.” – *International Piano*

“His imaginative gift is unparalleled... Philip Mead achieves technical brilliance.” – *British Music Society*  
 “a satisfying and rewarding experience.” – *MusicWeb*



Find many other recordings from Divine Art group labels by artists on this album:

<https://divineartrecords.com/artist/christopher-redgate/>

<https://divineartrecords.com/artist/peter-sheppard-skaerved/>

<https://divineartrecords.com/artist/mihailo-trandafilovski/>

