

# Edward Cowie

Where the Wood Thrush Forever Sings

Anna Hashimoto, clarinet  
Roderick Chadwick, piano

## Disc 1

<b>BOOK 1</b>	1. American Fish Crow	4:30
	2. Wood Thrush	3:03
	3. Eastern Meadowlark	4:05
	4. Common Loon	4:25
	5. Belted Kingfisher	3:15
	6. American Winter Wren	3:54
<b>BOOK 2</b>	7. Broad tailed and Blue throated Hummingbirds	3:11
	8. White winged Dove	3:50
	9. Common Nighthawk	4:39
	10. Greater Roadrunner	2:09
	11. Least Bittern	3:48
	12. Great Horned Owl	2:38

*Total playing time 43:42*

## Disc 2

BOOK 3	1. Blue Jay	2:28
	2. Mockingbird	3:55
	3. Yellow Crowned Night Heron	3:46
	4. Northern Goshawk	3:11
	5. Say's Phoebe	4:09
	6. Red Winged Blackbird	3:23

BOOK 4	7. Northern Cardinal	5:22
	8. Virginia Rail	3:00
	9. Turkey Vultures	4:20
	10. Yellow breasted Chat	3:25
	11. Horned Lark	5:53
	12. Bald Eagle	5:31

*Total playing time 45:33*

## Where the Wood Thrush Forever Sings

Early in the 1850s, one Henry David Thoreau ‘borrowed’ some land close to Walden Lake near Concord Massachusetts. The land was owned by the great essayist, teacher, philosopher and abolitionist, Ralph Waldo Emerson. On this land, with water on one side and dense and brooding woods on the other, Thoreau built a crude log cabin and moved into it in an act rather akin to the Columbian hermit monks, who chose isolation in wild places to activate and nourish a ‘soul’ in need of the transcendent. Thoreau was to remain in that cabin for two years, two months and two days exactly. He kept a journal of his sojourns with nature- rather as Gilbert White had done in Selborne in England much earlier.

Much has been written about the reasons for Thoreau’s decision to isolate and contemplate in this way. Leo Marx, the eminent historian and writer on the history and philosophy of science, once wrote (about Thoreau’s *Walden* episode), as an act enabling a ‘*report on experiments in transcendental pastoralism*’. Others talk of Thoreau’s need to escape urbanism and to rediscover a lost ‘*primal state of consciousness*’. Whatever the reasons, he published the results of his time at Walden in a book that has gone down in history as one of the greatest pieces of writing on Natural History of all time. *Walden - or a Life in the Woods* was published in 1854. This was the year in which the Republican Party of the United States was founded; Sherlock Holmes first appeared in print and the onset of the Crimean War commenced.

I have written elsewhere, several times and in film interviews (see *Edward Cowie in Conversation* series on You Tube), about my own first experiences of a *wild wood* when my family moved from Birmingham England, to a remote and isolated cottage in East Anglia (Suffolk), when I was just over 4 years old. Such was (and still is), the brooding, seductive, menacing, mystifying and subtle magic of such places that I have the memory of my first nervous and sometimes stumbling walk in one as though it was yesterday!

Woodland such as that is a habitat of tremendous mood-changes. A wood under dappled sunlight is to be a dance-floor of scintillating and flickering light and colour. Wild-sounds are lush, complex, kaleidoscopic and somehow beautifully integrated and connected. But at night and from within the darkness- the sounds of strange insects- the haunting cries of owls and the myriad distortions of moonstruck ancient tree trunks and branches- the wood becomes forbidding and ominously remote. But those early years of wild discovery were to shape and condition my imagination throughout my entire life. My hunger to experience new habitats- new wild sounds and new sensations of colour and form in the natural world is as great as ever.

I first visited the United States in 1977 when I was 34 years old. It was my first experience of what I consider to have been a *New World*. Driving down the Shenandoah Highway, along the peak of the Blue Ridge Mountains was a continuous revelation of new kinds of forest and new forms of avian choral music at the same time. My two daughters have an American mother and now live there with their own children in Alabama and Tennessee. Both of those states have very distinctive habitats and some birds unique to that part of the world. Frequent trips to them: to Florida where I have twice been a visiting professor in the Northern parts; to New England; to California as well as the Deep South, have enabled me to fill a good number of note and sketchbooks with responses to different kinds of American habitats and bird-scapes.

That definite newness: strange new voices; new vegetation; new geological environments have given me the musical and creative 'substance' that has fuelled and propelled this sequence of American Bird Portraits. During the 12 months of writing it, these words from Thoreau's *Walden* have helped me to keep focus on my 'in-field' experiences- '*I long for wildness, a nature which I cannot put my foot through, woods where the Wood Thrush forever sings*'. I find all birds to be charismatic- some not for their voices but for the way they fly, display and use their coloured plumage in their ritual dances. It did not take me long to select three species of clarinet as the 'bird-carrying' instruments. Somehow, and always during actual visits to the USA the music of its native Indians has played and flowed

somewhere in the back of my acoustic sensitivity. But so has the music of jazz! Both forms of human music are threaded into the streams of portraits by means of the use of certain kinds of characteristic rhythms and motifs. At times, and especially in episodes of 'hymn-like' chorales in the piano- the harmony of jazz unfolds and flickers through the texture and substance of the bird songs and places of wildness.

These are pieces inspired by sometimes **huge and vast spaces**. Like Australia and the African cycle (the latter now also complete and awaiting recording in the autumn of this year), this is music that combines close-detail with an unhindered macrocosmos of natural sounds and forms. Like all of these bird portrait cycles, it is both contemplative and processional. In some strange way, I like to imagine this music as the music of and for deep American Indian Caves- something primal and primeval. Birds have long been part of human archetypal consciousness. They have become muses and even gods: carriers of wisdom and threat: harbingers of seasonal changes and an approaching tsunami. Part of the human brain is *bird brain* and part of human speech and song is *birdsong*.

I fear that Thoreau's use of the word 'forever' is however vulnerable to a new reality for the natural world. In the past 40 years, the UK has lost around 80% of its bird population. The figures are not likely to be that much better in Australia, the USA and Africa. This cycle should stand as a wonder, but also warning. We need birds far more than they need us.....

**Edward Cowie**  
**Cumbria England. March, 2023.**

## The Opposite of Chamber Music?

Vast open spaces. As the countries/landmasses of Edward's bird cycles have increased in size, he has found a way to convey this musically. In cycles 1 and 2 – Great Britain and Australia – although the latter, *Where Song was Born*, is shorter on disc, the key difference is how the music tends to progress. The former takes a contoured route through landscape of the type Walter Benjamin described as 'belvederes, clearings, prospects'; the latter is more inexorable, sometimes hazy, hallucinatory even; or it is the difference between a song and a frieze, a difference of type. This time, although the size of the latest two countries is closer than I formerly thought (USA minus Alaska and Hawaii is very close in area to mainland Australia), each portrait is as 'XL' as a miniature can feel. The retail metaphor might seem crass, but some of these American birds might be encountered by a mall, trailer park or freeway as much as a prairie, everglade or lake.

They will be outdoors, nevertheless – the opposite of the 'chamber' - and there the conditions for musical interaction change. The hyper-regular structures of Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli are one way to address this, but it's not Edward's way – here each constituent sound resounds freely but often irregularly, with a sense of space around it, even when the two instruments are forming intricate rhythmic combinations. It's as if the environment itself has been meditating. I am reminded of Sir András Schiff's performances of *The Well-Tempered Klavier* at the 2017 and 2018 BBC Proms, where fugal entries and highlighted voices never seemed crowded out.

How to convey this when recording?

Playing the cycle with Anna was a particular pleasure. When she was an undergraduate at the Royal Academy I taught her on several courses, and she was one of the students who made me realise that the ideals I held weren't in vain. The classes sometimes known as 'kamikaze aural' (officially Structural Listening and Advanced Musicianship, or SLAM: being good at musical detail and the big

picture) included performing three musical lines at once – a melody and two rhythms – and Anna was renowned for her ability to do these often without fault. This, allied with her questing mind when it came to exploring new repertoire and new sounds, and her generosity, focus and calm in the recording studio, made her an ideal partner for setting down this latest 24. Paul and Edward's canny interventions from the booth completed the picture.

It was no surprise that, at the first rehearsal, our 'inner metronomes' were well in sync. If anything it became a matter of loosening the laces of the ensemble because, as Ted Hughes put it in 'Pibroch': This is neither a bad variant nor a tryout. Nature doesn't rehearse.

***Roderick Chadwick 2023***

It is lovely to look back on the journey of preparing and recording these bird pieces. The clarinet is a versatile instrument suited to chamber music, and within the clarinet family, the bass clarinet is often favoured by composers for its range and extended techniques. However, I have a special place for the Eflat clarinet, which I believe is an underused instrument, and it works particularly well whenever it's used in some of these American bird pieces! Although I am a city girl, having lived in London my whole life, it's always a nice change to travel to the countryside and it felt especially apt to record these pieces in the beautiful landscape of the North Yorkshire moors. I happened to be working in Leeds and Harrogate in the period leading up to this recording, and in the following week, was working in Blackpool, so these pieces feel connected to the north of England for me now. At the end of these 24 pieces based on different birds' voices (and the way they fly and display), I ended-up actually losing my own voice for 5 days. This felt aptly symbolic of course! However, I am fighting fit again now. A huge thanks to Edward, Roderick, Paul, and everyone at Ayriel studios for enabling this project to happen!

***Anna Hashimoto 2023***



## The Musicians

**Anna Hashimoto** (ARAM)'s career encompasses appearances as a soloist and orchestral musician alongside a commitment to education.

After winning the Young Clarinetists Competition in Tokyo in 2003, she made her London concerto debut at the age of fifteen with the English Chamber Orchestra at the Barbican Centre, and went on to win international clarinet competitions in Carlino, Italy in 2009 and Kortrijk, Belgium in 2010. Following this, her solo career took her to major venues across Europe and Japan, performing concertos with orchestras such as the Brussels Philharmonic, Filharmonie Hradec Kralove in the Dvořák Hall in Prague, Japan Philharmonic, New Japan Philharmonic, Tokyo City Philharmonic Orchestras, working with conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Myung-Whun Chung and Martyn Brabbins. She released three solo CD albums which all received high praise, and has been broadcast on NHK TV and FM, Tokyo FM, ABC Radio and BBC Radio 3, including numerous appearances in Radio 3's 'In Tune', NHK-FM's 'Best of Classic', and NHK TV's 'Classic Club'. She is a founding member of the Atéa Quintet, who is Associate Ensemble in Residence at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

She has appeared as guest principal clarinet with orchestras such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Japan Chamber Orchestra, and the Flanders Symphony Orchestra. She is a clarinet tutor at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, clarinet consultant at the Wells Cathedral School, and chamber music coach at the Royal College of Music Junior Department. She regularly gives masterclasses and has adjudicated numerous competitions such as Japan Clarinet Society's Young Clarinetists Competition, Cardiff Clarinet Convention and the Jacques Lancelot International Clarinet Competition. Since 2020 she has been one of the clarinet tutors for the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

Anna is represented by Nippon Artist Management Inc. and is a Vandoren-UK artist. She plays Peter Eaton International model clarinets and basset clarinet.

**Roderick Chadwick** is a pianist, teacher and writer on music. He has performed some of the most challenging works for the instrument, including Lachenmann's Serynade at the inaugural London Contemporary Music Festival, Messiaen's Catalogue d'oiseaux, Stockhausen's Mantra with Mark Knoop and Newton Armstrong (including a highly regarded recording on the Hathut label), and John McGuire's 48 Variations, also with Knoop. Other recordings include works by Gloria Coates, Maurice Duruflé, Sadie Harrison, Hans Werner Henze and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – several of these with violinist Peter Sheppard Skaerved.

Roderick is a member of ensembles Chroma and Plus-Minus, performing with them at festivals such as Huddersfield, Ultima (Oslo) and the 2019 Warsaw Autumn Festival. His first performance on BBC Radio 3 was at the age of 14 (the Britten Gemini Variations live from the Aldeburgh Festival), and broadcasts since have included solo works by Laurence Crane, Richard Barrett and Will Gregory.

In 2018 Roderick published Messiaen's '*Catalogue d'oiseaux*', From Conception to Performance (CUP), co-authored with Peter Hill. In 2008 he was artistic advisor to the Royal Academy of Music for their Messiaen centenary celebrations. 2023 saw Divine Art release his second volume in a series, entitled '*Souvenirs d'oiseaux*' which presents Books 2 through 5 of Messiaen's "*Catalogue d'oiseaux*" coupled with works which are linked either in style or subject matter. This follows the well-received issue in October 2020 of the first volume, entitled '*La Mer Bleue*' which included Book 1 of the Catalogue.

He attended Chetham's School in Manchester in the 1980s, studying with Heather Slade-Lipkin, and later with Hamish Milne. He lives in South London and is Associate Professor at the Royal Academy of Music.

"The redoubtable Roderick Chadwick" (The Strad)

"Possessor of devastating musicality and technique" (Sunday Times)



Anna Hashimoto



Roderick Chadwick

## The Composer

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 Hobbs 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), (just 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 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)





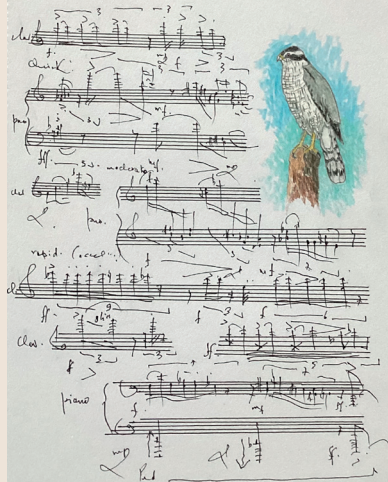
*The composer with State Ranger at Fort Cooper in North Florida.*

*The composer making field drawings and notation studies for Where the Wood Thrush...Fort Cooper, North Florida.*





(33) Northern Goshawk.



## Preparatory Drawing – Northern Goshawk

(22) Great Horned Owl.



Preparatory Drawing – Great Horned Owl



# Acknowledgments

Anna Hashimoto, clarinet  
Roderick Chadwick, piano  
Recorded at Ayriel Studios, Whitby  
Engineered & produced by Paul Bailly  
Cover & Booklet design - James Cardell-Oliver, Divine Art  
Cover painting 'Square moves in Green' by Heather Cowie  
Edward Cowie by Heather Cowie  
Art work on pages 16 and 20 by Edward Cowie  
Inlay painting "The woods within me" - oil on canvas by Edward Cowie  
Photo of Roderick Chadwick - Claire Shovelton  
Photo of Anna Hashimoto - Miri Saito

© & © 2023 Divine Art Ltd

All text and images are copyright and used with permission. All rights reserved.  
All tracks published by United Music Publishing Ltd

## DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP

Over 650 titles, with full track details, reviews, artist profiles and audio samples, can be browsed on our website. Available at any good dealer or direct from our online store in CD, 24-bit HD, FLAC and MP3 digital download formats.

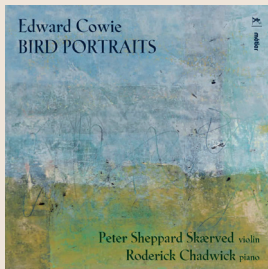
Divine Art Ltd. email: [sales@divineartrecords.com](mailto:sales@divineartrecords.com)

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

**find us on facebook, youtube, twitter & instagram**

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.

# Bird Portraits Cycles by Edward Cowie



## Bird Portraits

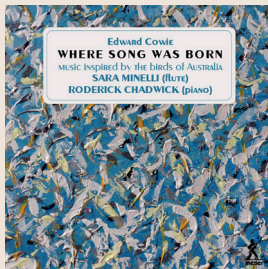
A cycle of 24 'sonic portraits' of different British birds from 4 distinctive habitats. After much study and extensive field-work, Cowie has drawn even closer to composing music that not so much imitates nature, but understands and portrays the birds, how they sing and their environment.

Peter Sheppard Skærved violin  
Roderick Chadwick, piano

**MSV 28619**

"Cowie strives to depict the birdsongs as they really are, and they do often stand out with remarkable clarity"

– British Music Society



## Where Song was Born – 24 Australian Bird Portraits

The second of the 'Bird Portraits' cycles featuring 24 of Australia's remarkable birds. Following British *Bird Portraits* (Métier MSV 28619), it contains new music with highly original treatments of the relationships between the bird singers and where and how they sing.

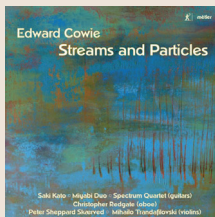
Sara Minelli, flute  
Roderick Chadwick, piano

**MSV 28620**

"Cowie has created a stunning sonic tapestry"

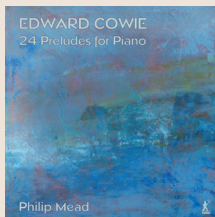
– Fanfare

## Further Recordings from Edward Cowie



**Streams and Particles**

MSV 28612



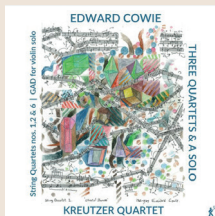
**24 Preludes for Piano**

MSV 28625



**Orchestral Works**

MSV 92108



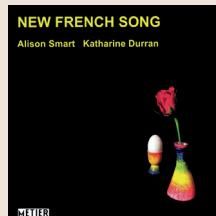
**Three Quartets and a Solo**

MSV 28603



**New Music for Oboe Vol. 2**

MSV 28531



**New French Song**

MSV 92100

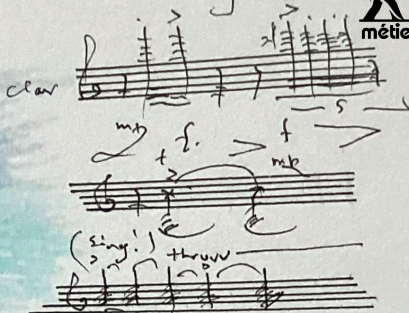
All titles available on CD and HD download from  
[www.divineartrecords.com](http://www.divineartrecords.com)

(31)

Broad-tailed and Blue-throated Hummingbird.



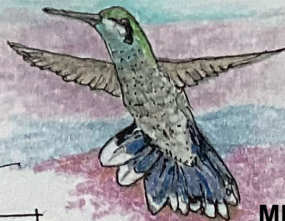
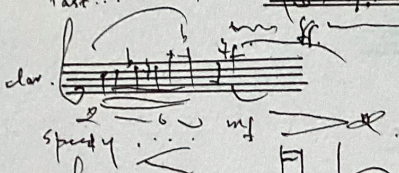
all close to  
ultrasonic!!



fast...

piano.

> Very Quick!



MEX 77104

809730710421

LC 15631