John McLeod

Piano Music

Murray McLachlan Rose McLachlan

The Complete Piano Works of John McLeod

set 1	(total du	ration 78:46)	
1 2	Four Im No. 1 No. 2	promptus (1960) Allegro energico Lento e tranquillo	1:47 2:38
3 4	No. 3 No. 4	Andante cantabile Allegro risoluto	2:35 2:19
	Hebride	an Dances (1981) *	
5	No. 1	Going West	1:11
6	No. 2	Dance to your Shadow	1:56
7	No. 3	The Harp of Dunvegan	0:47
8	Nos. 4&5	Barra Love Lilt & The Cockle Gatherer	1:44
	Twelve	Preludes (1984)	
9	No. 1	Con brio	0:46
10	No. 2	Con moto e pomposo	1:20
11	No. 3	Adagio quasi una chorale	1:39
12	No. 4	Allegro martellato	0:51
13	No. 5	Adagio – Notturno mistico	1:48
14	No. 6	Grazioso con moto	1:06
15	No. 7	Giocoso	1:06
16	No. 8	Maestoso e grandioso	1:45
17	No. 9	Allegro agitato	1:09
18		Adagio languido	2:18
19	No. 11	Allegro energico	1:22
20	No. 12	Lento sostenuto	2:52
		rotest Pieces (1992)	
21	No. 1	"The fox, in agony, surrenders his blood to the night"	3:54
22	No. 2	"A mountain stream, poisoned and choked by effluvium,	
23	No. 3	struggles to reach the sea" "The stag, its heart pierced by an arrow, disappears into the mist"	2:25 3:04
23			3.04
		terludes from "Another Time, Another Place" (1997)	
24	No. 1	Dolente semplice	1:55
25	No. 2	Andantino semplice	1:37
26	No. 3	Allegretto scherzando	1:35

	Haflidi's	s Pictures (2008) **	
27	No. 1	A Fish can Sing	2:09
28	No. 2	Snakes in the Garden	1:30
29	No. 3	A Holy Man with a Cross	3:08
30	No. 4	A Devil in a Cupboard	1:46
31	No. 5	Fragments from a Picture	2:32
32	No. 6	Tortured by Noise	2:29
33	No. 7	Silence	3:21
34		An Italian Huntsman	2:27
35 36		A Winter Landscape A Witch on a Pedestal	2:59 3:16
37		To the Heart of the Matter	2:06
38		A Musician on the Move	3:10
50	110. 12	A Musician on the Move	3.10
set 2	2 (total du	ration 81:01)	
1	Piano S	onata No. 1 (1978) in one movement	11:31
	Piano S	onata No. 2 (1984, 2017)	
2	l.	Adagio e quasi misura – Allegro vivo	7:52
3	II.	Adagietto	1:34
4	III.	Allegro energico	2:31
5	Piano S	onata No. 3 (1995) in one movement	18:50
	Piano S	onata No. 4 (2006)	
6	l.	Vivo e leggiero	6:11
7	II.	Tranquillo ed espressivo	3:22
8	III.	Vivo e capriccioso	4:56
9	Piano S	14:49	
10	Fantasy on Themes from Britten's opera "Gloriana" (2012)		

Murray McLachlan (piano)

^{*} Rose McLachlan (piano) ** John McLeod (narrator)

The music

As a student at the Royal Academy of Music, John McLeod studied with three of the greatest clarinettist of their day – Jack Brymer, Reginald Kell and Gervaise de Peyer. However, after winning a composition prize at the Academy, he went on to study composition with Sir Lennox Berkeley. This proved to be a watershed event, prompting a change of direction for his future career.

McLeod is not known as a pianist (his performing career was as a clarinettist and conductor), but his love of the piano began as a schoolboy growing up in Aberdeen, and this empathy with the instrument has resulted in a wealth of works for the piano, written over a period of more than 50 years.

CD/set 1

Four Impromptus (1960)

Amongst his earliest compositions, the Four Impromptus were written whilst McLeod was still a student and are dedicated to his teacher, Sir Lennox Berkeley. Already colour and contrasts in textures and moods are very much in evidence. The calm beauty of the second impromptu and dance-like grace of the third, are perfect foils for the vitality and rhythmic drive of the outer movements. All four impromptus are written in ABA form, the fourth rounded off with a brilliant coda.

Hebridean Dances (1981) - Rose McLachlan, piano

The *Hebridean Dances* were composed and dedicated to his wife, Margaret Murray McLeod, and performed by her on many occasions. Later the composer was commissioned by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra to arrange the suite for orchestra. The folk songs and tunes all come from the Western Isles. The first conjures up the picture of a ship riding the waves as it makes its way westward and the second suggests a lively dance. The beautiful *Harp of Dunvegan* is the heart of the work, while the last two, played without a break, evoke the merry scene of a ceilidh!

Twelve Preludes (1984)

The *Twelve Preludes* received their first performance in the Purcell Room, London, by the pianist Richard Orlando Thompson who commissioned the work.

The entire group is brought directly into line with the traditional concept of sets of preludes like those of Bach, Chopin and Scriabin where keyboard techniques are presented in a creative and imaginative way. However, the key (or tonal centre) system here is rather different. Bach employed an ascending chromatic sequence beginning on C: Chopin used the system of rising fifths with their relative minors in his twenty-four preludes and Hindemith, in his *Ludus Tonalis*, evolved a diminishing circle of intervals.

Like all the others, the McLeod Preludes begin on C but on moving to $F\sharp$, they then follow with tonal centres that proceed from $D\flat$ (five flats) and B (five sharps) discarding accidentals until arriving on F (one flat) and G (one sharp). The final prelude is again original as it employs the twelve tonal centres in the given order as a tone row, beginning on F \sharp and resolving on C to complete the cycle.

Three Protest Pieces (1992)

Of this impassioned work the composer writes: "The Three Protest Pieces occur as piano interludes in my song-cycle, Chansons de la Nuit et Brouillard, set to poems by the French poet and novelist Jean Cayrol." In his writings, Cayroll often depicts the damage that mankind has inflicted on the world, and McLeod explains that "these piano interludes attempt to explore and highlight the universal themes of animal cruelty and environmental pollution."

Three Interludes from "Another Time, Another Place" (1997)

Another Time, Another Place is a 1983 British drama film directed by Michael Radford, the screenplay based on the novel by Jessie Kesson. Set in wartime Scotland, it tells the story of a love affair between the young wife of an older man and an Italian prisoner-of-war sent to work on their farm. McLeod wrote a wonderfully evocative score for the film and later went on to create these three piano pieces in collaboration with pianist, Geoffrey Atkinson.

The first Interlude depicts the bleakness of both the countryside and the life of the heroine, Janie; the second represents the ill-fated love that grows between the homesick Italian and Janie, while the third describes the scene of children playing.

Haflidi's Pictures (2008) – 12 aphorisms for piano from drawings by Haflidi Hallgrimsson preceded by 12 epigrams with words written and narrated by the composer

The work was commissioned by Mark Tanner and first performed by him with the composer himself as narrator, at London's Wigmore Hall in 2008. The composer writes: "I have long admired the drawings and paintings of my composer colleague, Haflidi Hallgrimsson, and his pithy, surrealistic and succinct comments on certain unusual scenes and situations became the starting point of this work. I have tried to extend the experience by attempting a musical, and in the epigrams, a verbal impression of each picture – hopefully not to be taken too seriously!"

CD/set2

Five Sonatas for Piano

It is interesting to note that the composition of the sonatas was spaced out over many years. The first was written in 1978 and the last thirty-five years later in 2013. As a result, they can be seen as markers along the way, demonstrating the development and diversity of the composer's style and technique.

Piano Sonata No.1 (1978)

Piano Sonata No.1 was written for pianist Peter Evans who gave its first performance during the Edinburgh Festival of 1978. It is loosely based on Liszt's great B minor sonata which compresses three movements, fast — slow — fast, into one massive structure. Like the Liszt, McLeod's sonata even includes a fugal passage in the final section. Both works are full of drama and contrasting moods, but there the similarity ends, for the harmonic language is quite different. The outer movements contrast poetic thoughts with tumultuous outbursts while the central section is soulful and plaintive with an ostinato figure that is a precursor of one of the twelve preludes, composed six years later.

Piano Sonata No.2 (1984 and 2017)

A mystery and a tragedy surround *Piano Sonata No.2*. The original work was commissioned by Bryn Turley who gave its first performance at the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, in 1984. Sadly, Bryn died in tragic circumstances a few years later, and the manuscript of the sonata disappeared. McLeod did not have the heart to try to rewrite the work, and it was more than twenty years before he decided to resuscitate the sonata by using material from a very early work, his *Harpsichord Sonatina*.

The sonata is in three short movements. The first opens with a mainly slow, expressive introduction before settling into a jaunty *Allegro vivo*. The central movement is only eighteen bars in length, but carries a wealth of emotions, from the thoughtful, to questioning and finally protest. In contrast the finale, rondo-like in form, is full of vitality and joie de vivre.

Piano Sonata No.3 (1995)

Piano Sonata No.3 was commissioned by the University of Aberdeen as part of its quincentenary celebrations in 1995, along with other works by composers who were either born or live there. The first performance was given by Murray McLachlan who is also an Aberdonian.

The sonata is in one continuous movement, although its three-movement outline of ABA plus Coda can be heard clearly. A slow introduction introduces a double dotted note figure that becomes an important motif throughout the work. This leads to an Allegro agitato subject which features contrasts between frenetic semiquavers, some slower interjections and the double dotted note figures. In way of a second subject, a dancing quasi Tarantella takes centre stage until all the themes and motifs undergo development.

In the slow middle section, McLeod introduces a theme by the Scottish Renaissance composer, Robert Carver.... *Dona Nobis Pacem* from *Missa l'homme Arme*. Carver was born c.1495, just five years before the University of Aberdeen was founded. In the concluding section all the themes are discussed and tossed about in growing excitement until at the height of the action it suddenly breaks off and the Carver theme, now *Adagio mistico*, brings the sonata to a quiet and reverent end.

Piano Sonata No.4 (2006)

Piano Sonata No.4 was commissioned and first performed by Sam Haywood in Marischal College, Aberdeen, as part of the Sound Festival 2006. The three-movement work has more in common with classical sonata form than the other piano sonatas. However, the astringent harmonic language and frequent changes of metre that create a restless energy are very much McLeod fingerprints. The first movement (Vivo e leggiero) begins with a quirky theme that lifts and dives in a light-hearted manner, only restrained from time to time by a censorial C pedal note. The second subject is more lyrical in nature, but is short-lived, its drooping figures soon making way for a spirited development section. The recapitulation follows in the traditional order and the movement is rounded off by a calm coda, here anchored by a D♯ pedal. The second movement is a Nocturne, its character soothing and reflective. Rather like a lullaby, the mood is briefly disturbed in the middle section but soon returns to its peaceful state. The last movement follows without a break, its leit-motif E♭ and B♭ creating both the thematic and rhythmic drive for this virtuosic Rondo.

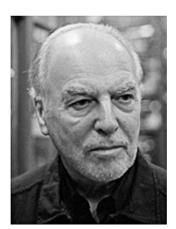
Piano Sonata No. 5 (2013)

Piano Sonata No.5 was commissioned by Murray McLachlan and given its first performance at the International Summer School for Pianists, held at Chetham's School of Music in 2014. He then went on to perform the work some forty times throughout the world. The sonata is cyclic in form, and like the first and third sonatas it is in one continuous movement enfolding within it three contrasting sections. The jagged opening theme is Puck-like in character, darting about and appearing in many different guises throughout the two fast movements....sometimes inverted, in augmentation or fragmented. In contrast the second subject is dance-like and more amiable. However, it is the central movement, Adagio espressione, which portrays the deepest emotions, giving respite to the antics that surround it. The last section introduces a new theme (Vivo con energico), but it suffers several interruptions from the impish principal subject, and the dance-like theme from the first section can only make a fleeting appearance before the sombre pronouncements of the Adagio bring order and completion to the work.

Fantasy on Themes from Britten's 'Gloriana' for guitar (2012) transcribed by Murray McLachlan (2016)

It was not until 2010 that McLeod decided to tackle writing for guitar, and never one to be daunted, his first work was a concerto for the instrument. The first performance was given by the young guitarist, Ian Watt who went on to commission the *Fantasy*. The choice of themes from Britten's opera *Gloriana*, was inspired by Britten's centenary and the Queen's Jubilee in 2012. The pianist Murray McLachlan, a great champion of McLeod's music, decided to transcribe the *Fantasy* for piano, and the result is a brilliantly virtuosic show-piece.

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The composer

'Music with colour and energy, both imaginative and idiomatic' - The Times



Scottish born **John McLeod's** increasingly acclaimed music bears all the hallmarks of exuberant colour and precisely imagined fantasy that his earlier associations with Sir Lennox Berkeley (with whom he studied at the Royal Academy of Music) and Witold Lutoslawski (who later became his mentor) would lead one to expect. He is now one of Scotland's foremost composers and amongst the UK's busiest and most prolific.

McLeod has won many awards for his work including a Fellowship from the RAM, the Gold Badge of the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA) and in June 2016 was appointed CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

His first success was in 1979 when he won the Guinness Prize for British composers with the symphonic song-cycle 'Lieder der Jugend' which was premiered by tenor Raimund Gilvan and the RSNO and subsequently featured by many orchestras in the UK and in Europe.

Since then works have been commissioned, performed and recorded by orchestras including the Philharmonia, Hallé, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland as well as orchestras in Poland, Germany and the USA and by many international ensembles and soloists including Colin Currie, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Peter Donohoe and Murray McLachlan.

In the past few years McLeod's output has increased dramatically and has included major performances at the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh Festival, Edinburgh International Festival and the City of London Festival, as well new works for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the pianist Murray McLachlan who performed his new Piano Sonata No.5 over 40 times throughout the world in 2014. A critically acclaimed recording of John's chamber music, by the outstanding Red Note Ensemble, was released in 2015 by the award-winning label Delphian and a new recording of four orchestral works, featuring the RSNO and Dame Evelyn Glennie, will be released in 2018 along with this present album of his entire music for solo piano performed by Murray McLachlan.

Recent commissions have included a new percussion work for Dame Evelyn Glennie's 50th birthday, a choral work for Heriot-Watt University, a song-cycle for Live Music Now and 'Out of the Silence' for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. A new Viola Concerto for the SCO and Jane Atkins is to be premiered in the autumn of 2018.

www.johnmcleod.uk.com

The performers

"Murray McLachlan is a pianist with a virtuoso technique and a sure sense of line. His timing and phrasing are impeccable, and his tone-full but unforced in the powerful passages, gentle and restrained in the more lyrical- is a perpetual delight" (BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE)

Since making his professional debut in 1986 at the age of 21 under the baton of Sir Alexander Gibson, Murray McLachlan has consistently received outstanding critical acclaim. Educated at Chetham's School of Music and Cambridge University, his mentors included Ronald Stevenson, David Hartigan, Ryszard Bakst, Peter Katin and Norma Fisher. His recording career began in 1988 and immediately attracted international attention. Recordings of contemporary music have won numerous accolades, including full star ratings, as well as 'rosette' and 'key recording' status in the Penguin Guide to CDs, and 'Disc of the month' and 'Record of the month in 'Music on the web' and 'The Herald'

McLachlan's discography now includes over forty commercial recordings, including the complete sonatas of Beethoven, Myaskovsky and Prokofiev, the six concertos of Alexander Tcherepnin, the 24 Preludes and Fugues of Rodion Shchedrin, Ronald Stevenson's 'Passacaglia on DSCH' the major works of Kabalevsky, Khatchaturian and the complete solo piano music of Erik Chisholm.

McLachlan's repertoire includes over 40 concertos and 25 recital programmes. He has performed the complete Beethoven piano sonata cycle six times, as well as the complete piano music of Brahms. He has given first performances of works by many composers, including Martin Butler, Ronald Stevenson, Charles Camilleri, Michael Parkin and even Beethoven! He has appeared as soloist with most of the leading UK orchestras. His recognition has been far-reaching, bringing invitations to perform on all five continents. At the same time he continues to give numerous concerts and master classes in the UK.



McLachlan teaches at the Royal Northern College of Music and at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester where he has been Head of Keyboard since 1997. He is the founder of the Manchester International Concerto competition for young pianists as well as the Founder/Artistic Director of the world famous Chetham's International Summer school and festival for Pianists, Europe's largest summer school devoted exclusively to the piano. As a teacher McLachlan continues to be very busy and in demand. Many of his students have won prizes in competitions and continued with their own successful careers as performers.

Murray McLachlan is Chair of the both the executive council and the UK section of the European Piano Teachers' Association (EPTA UK). As well as performing and teaching, he is well known internationally for his numerous articles on Piano technique and repertoire. This includes extended columns which have appeared in 'International Piano' 'Pianist' and 'Piano' Magazines. He was editor of 'Piano Professional' Magazine from 2007-14. He is currently editor of Piano Journal. His books for Faber, 'Foundations of Piano Technique' and 'Piano Technique in Practice', were issued in 2014 and 2015 to wide acclaim.

In 2012 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Dundee for outstanding services to music and education. This follows on from a knighthood awarded in 1997 by the Order of St John of Jerusalem in recognition of his services to music in Malta. Murray McLachlan is artistic director of the Camel House Concerts in Lanzarote, Vice President of the North East of Scotland Music School and a patron of the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe and the Grampian Region Youth Orchestra.

www.murraymclachlan.com

Rose McLachlan was born in 2002 and began piano lessons with her father Murray in 2008. She entered Chethams School of Music in 2010 as a chorister at Manchester Cathedral.

Rose is now (2018) a pianist studying with Helen Krizos, studying organ with Chris Stokes and having singing lessons with Helen Francis. In 2012, she passed Grade 8 piano with 144/150 – distinction and in 2017 was awarded the LtCL performers diploma with distinction. Rose was the overall winner of junior and senior classes of the 2016 Scottish Youth Prize at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She also won the Sir David Wilcocks Organ Scholarship 2014/15.

She has performed Beethoven's second concerto five times as well as solo recitals in Lanzarote, Portsmouth, Wilmslow, and various lunchtime concerts at Chethams. As an overall winner of the Chetham's concerto competition in February 2018, Rose was selected to perform the Ravel G major concerto with the Chetham's symphony orchestra during the 2018-19 season. Also scheduled for 2019 are performances of all Chopin's Waltzes and Nocturnes for Sir Ernest Hall in his Camel Concerts series of recitals in Lanzarote.



Rose McLachlan



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The composer, pianist and producers gratefully acknowledge the support of the following in making this recording possible:

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Murray McLachlan with Kathryn Page at the recording session

Recorded at four live concerts given in the Stoller Hall, Manchester as part of the 17th
Chetham's International Summer School and Festival for Pianists in August 2017
Recording engineer and producer: Ben Sharpe (Mill Productions)
Booklet and packaging design: Stephen Sutton (Divine Art)
Front cover photo: Andy McLeod
Photo of John McLeod on page 10: Wojtak Kutyla
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