



MICHAEL TIPPETT

SONATA No. 3

JOHN McCABE

FANTASY ON A
THEME OF LISZT

PAUL PATTERSON

A TUNNEL OF TIME
OP 66

NIGEL CLARKE

SOLSTICE

PERFORMED BY



GRAHAM CASKIE

MICHAEL TIPPETT SONATA No. 3

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. ALLEGRO | 07:00 |
| 2. LENTO | 15:10 |
| 3. ALLEGRO ENERGICO | 05:53 |

FANTASY ON A THEME OF LISZT **JOHN McCABE**

4. LENTO - ALLEGRO VIVO - VIVO - ANDANTINO - PRESTO 11:49

PAUL PATTERSON A TUNNEL OF TIME OP 66

- | | |
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| 5. VIVACE - ADAGIO - MOLTO SOSTENUTO
- ALLEGRO MOLTO E SCHERZANDO | 10:55 |
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SOLSTICE **NIGEL CLARKE**

6. CON FUOCO - LARGO - CON FUOCO 08:29

TOTAL TIME 60:01

MSV CD92004
A digital recording

TIPPETT

SIR MICHAEL TIPPETT (b. 1905) is unquestionably the elder statesman of British music. After a lifetime of achievement, now no longer overshadowed by contemporaries such as Benjamin Britten, he is arguably the most important composer represented on this recording. If his influence on the two generations that have succeeded him is not as significant as that of some of his European colleagues, it is simply that he is a prophet in his own land, and few composers are prepared to submit to the psychological and intellectual quest for originality that has been at the core of Tippett's artistic life for over 70 years.

He has studied and assimilated the style of others only to recognise in himself that which is alien, and to liberate his music from the shackles of pastiche. It is this unrelenting journey to find his own voice that so marks him as a composer. With Tippett it is almost impossible to separate man from music. He has dabbled with politics (albeit in a less committed way than Alan Bush); he has investigated Jungian analysis, and in his knowledge and reading his scholarship extends far beyond music; and yet there has always been the dichotomy of the iconoclast and the conformist represented musically by the formal, unifying classical principle, opposing the need for free and individual harmonic expression. The resolution can be seen in numerous works where a Beethovenian sonata formula has been applied, expanded and adapted.

SONATA No 3

TIPPETT

In the **SONATA No. 3** (1972), Tippett distils and interpolates this principle and takes Beethoven's late works as intellectual rather than as formal models. The first movement sonata allegro is a closely worked argument between testy passion and lyricism. A rather ascerbic first subject in tight rhythmic canon suddenly gives way to the calmness of the second theme (a premonition of the slow movement?), which in its turn relents to a codetta. This return to a classical model has been of great significance to Tippett's later music. The lento which follows without a break, is a 'theme' (of 16 decorated chords) with four variations and is the spiritual heart of the sonata. Its scale belongs to the musical landscape of late Beethoven and is a personal statement of bittersweet romanticism. The variants each rise a minor third, completing an unbreakable circle of inevitability. They contain emotional contradictions between acceptance and denial, strength and fragility which, perhaps, suggests resignation to oncoming old age. The texture is thick and becomes more concentrated until at last it breaks the vessel which is asked to contain it and disappears into trills and single notes.

The finale is a fast-moving palindromic toccata (ABA) dominated by two-part writing which reflects the opening theme of the first movement. The widely spaced two-part writing is punctuated by aggressive chords which try in vain, until the very last moment, to usurp the hegemony of counterpoint.

SONATA No 3

McCABE

JOHN McCABE (b.1939) belongs to a grand and fast disappearing tradition of the composer/pianist. A prodigy as both composer and pianist, he studied piano with the legendary Gordon Greene, composition with the equally distinguished Thomas Pitfield at the Royal Manchester College of Music, and with Proctor Gregg at Manchester University. McCabe is much in demand as a solo and recital pianist and is also well known as a musical journalist. He has held a number of pedagogic appointments, notably at Cardiff University and as Director of the London College of Music. As a pianist he has a wide repertoire and amongst other things he has recorded the complete sonatas of Haydn and much 20th century music. The following notes on **FANTASY ON A THEME OF LISZT** were supplied by the composer.

Written in May 1967, and first performed at the Cheltenham Festival the same year, this piece is especially a tribute to three great pianist composers of the past, as well as the fulfilment of a long-held desire to write a piano piece based on the opening (12 note) theme of Liszt's Faust Symphony. The theme itself is never heard in its original shape during the music - instead, it acts as a kind of thematic reservoir. The form of the work was influenced by that of the Chopin Ballades, with a particular influence of the first in G minor, and some of the textures in the slower sections owe their style to the example of some of Schumann's etudes.

The work is really a modern example of a romantic type of concert piece in one movement, with contrasting sections leading to a virtuoso conclusion. The vague and indeterminate opening returns, much-decorated, towards the end, before the final section. The Fantasy is dedicated to a fellow Lisztian, the American composer and conductor Bernard Herrmann. © 1991 **JOHN McCABE**.

FANTASY ON A THEME OF LISZT

PATTERSON

PAUL PATTERSON (b. 1947) is one of the most versatile composers of his generation. Trained at the Royal Academy of Music under Richard Rodney Bennett, Patterson is a skilled craftsman, able to demonstrate his virtuosity in a range of styles and genres. He is an eclectic whose wide musical culture encompasses almost everything from orthodox serial techniques to electronics and the commercial scene. His music seems influenced by a number of composers, particularly Stravinsky and Hindemith, but he also utilises some avant garde techniques and notation. Keeping a watchful eye on the past, perhaps remembering Schönberg's assertion that many good tunes are still to be written in C major, Patterson hasn't completely distanced himself from the notion of 'key'. Continuing a long tradition, he is now Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

A TUNNEL OF TIME OP 66 is a piano transcription of an earlier piece, 'Spiders' op 48, originally written for harp. Cast in three movements, 'Tunnel of Time' opens with three hammered chords, a very brief prelude to a six note leitmotiv which forms a continuously unifying idée fixe. The first movement pays obvious homage to Stravinsky, particularly to the Piano Rag Music of 1919. The central movement, prefaced by a version of the opening six-note cell, is laden with Scriabinesque mysticism. The finale is a glittering Scarbo-like toccata allegro, full of shifting colours which again is heralded by the original leitmotiv. The whole work is an unashamed virtuoso showpiece and was written for and dedicated to pianist Frank Wibaut.

TUNNEL OF TIME OP 66

CLARKE

NIGEL CLARKE (b.1960) is the youngest of the four composers represented on this recording. Another product of the Royal Academy of Music, he studied composition with Paul Patterson. Like a number of distinguished past colleagues, Clarke switched to music from a career in the military. Whilst at the Academy, Clarke was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Excellence and the Manson Fellowship. An appointment as composer in residence at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts followed his studentship at the RAM. Since returning to the UK in 1988, Clarke has begun to consolidate his style and his reputation. He is now teaching composition at the Royal Academy of Music and is actively involved with YCAT (the Young Concert Artist's Trust). **SOLSTICE** was written in response to a commission from them.

SOLSTICE, as Clarke has written, 'evokes images of pagan rites which would have been (and indeed still are) witnessed at Stonehenge and other ancient sites'. Clarke makes a distinctive and personal statement to this much exploited theme, and during the three movements of 'Solstice' uses piano writing that is notable for its crude, elemental quality, using driving rhythms to simulate a kind of drumming. The opening theme is repeated at the beginning of the finale in a cyclical ABA form. Originally written in 1991 for Andrew West, the work underwent a number of revisions in collaboration with Graham Caskie, the most significant being a lengthening of the coda in order to provide a greater virtuosic and dramatic conclusion.

SOLSTICE

CASKIE

GRAHAM CASKIE, born in Darlington and educated in Devon, is now on the threshold of his professional career. Trained at the Birmingham School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music under Frank Wibaut, Caskie won all the major piano prizes of both institutions. On leaving the Academy in 1991, he was awarded the Dip. RAM and the Meaker Fellowship. An experienced concerto soloist, recital pianist and chamber musician, Caskie has also broadcast on Radio 3 and Classic FM. He is committed to the idea of bringing contemporary music to a wider audience and achieves this by including new pieces into traditional recital programmes. As part of his preparation for this recording, Caskie played and discussed the four works included on this CD with their composers - a unique and enviable opportunity for any young artist. Caskie is a member of the Park Lane Group and makes his Southbank debut for them in 1994. He is presently studying with Hamish Milne.



An informal performance by Graham Caskie of Sonata No 3 for Sir Michael Tippett at the composer's home.



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