

TIPPETT

Sonata No. 2

SACKMAN Sonata
SAXTON Chacony for Left Hand
CONNOLLY Sonatina

Steven Neugarten - piano



20th Century British Piano Music Series

STEVEN NEUGARTEN – PIANO

MICHAEL TIPPETT: PIANO SONATA No. 2 12:15

(in one continuous movement)

1	I	1:06
2	II	1:05
3	III	3:10
4	IV	1:06
5	V	0:54
6	VI	0:51
7	VII	0:54
8	VIII	3:17

NICHOLAS SACKMAN: PIANO SONATA

9	I	Crisp	8:40
10	II	Interlude – molto legato, espressione, rubato	6:03
11	III	Very strong	7:14

ROBERT SAXTON: CHACONY FOR LEFT HAND

12	sustained, mysterious – dancing, lively – martella con forza – intense, sonorous	5:11
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JUSTIN CONNOLLY: SONATINA IN FIVE STUDIES, OP. I

13	I	Vernal	1:32
14	II	Martial	0:53
15	III	Memorial: Chaconne	3:22
16	IV	Mercurial	2:06
16	V	Recessional	4:45

Total duration 53:12

Tippett - Sonata No.2 (1962)

Tippett's Second Sonata was written in 1962, straight after his second opera, King Priam. Like the opera it manifests the dramatic change of the composer's style at that time, from a generous, abundant lyricism to hard-hitting abrasiveness. This change arose from the need to play up the heroic and barbaric element in the episodes from Homer's Iliad which formed the basis of the opera. And indeed, two short quotations from the orchestral piano part of King Priam are quoted and developed into whole sections in the sonata.

The form of the music is unusual in that it is a mosaic of separate statements, all at carefully designated tempi, that are juxtaposed, extended, shortened and recapitulated but never developed in a classic Beethovenian sense.

The sonata begins as it will end - with a great chordal crash, answered by a rhetorical phrase; this gesture is extended (along with the intervening silences) in the final section of the piece.

The first five musical motifs are stated in sequence at the start; then the process of juxtaposition and addition of new bits of music etc. begins. The 'map' on the next page outlines Tippett's mosaic scheme.

Overall, the listener can discern eight main sections to the sonata, in which the third (C) and fifth (E) focus for quite some time on (in turn) a slow motif and a fast one. In the final section, the various elements of the mosaic are fragmented until the return of the opening music provides a firm ending.

Structural Division	Musical material with associated Tempo indications	Number of bars
A (Track 1)	Tempo 1 (Lento = c.100)	4
	Tempo 2 (Allegro = c.112)	3
	Tempo 3 (Molto piu mosso = c.200)	7
	Tempo 4 (Pochiss. meno mosso = c.138)	7
	Tempo 5 (Adagio = c.54)	8
B (2)	4	12
	5	4
	4	15
	2	8
C (3)	Tempo 6 (Andante = c.58)	67
D (4)	3	7
	4	5
	3	7
	4	8
	5	12
E (5)	Tempo 7 (Allegro = c.132)	33
F (6)	4	18
	2	8
	3	7
G (7)	Tempo 8 (Lento = c.40)	9
H (8)	2	9
	3	7
	4	2
	6	2
	7	3
	6	2

Structural Division	Musical material with associated Tempo indications	Number of bars
H continued...	7	1
	6	1
	4	4
	7	2
	6	2
	7	2
	6	2
	3	4
	8	2
	7	4
	3	3
	1	16

Tippett's Second Piano Sonata is dedicated to and was first performed by Margaret Kitchin at the Edinburgh Festival in September 1962.

Michael Finnissy on Tippett's Piano Sonatas

Tippett's music doesn't hold back - it has ever-abundant wealth and diversity of invention, surging forth rather than minding its *Ps* and *Qs*. It can, and **should**, beguile and charm - but equally it can and **should** confuse and irritate. Heaven or hell, pleasant or unpleasant - it confronts, excites and engages you. It is **total** rather than partial. It is generous - **including** rather than **excluding**. It displays that most essential creative attribute of conjuring the most richly fertile ideas: sonorities, lines and textures, from the dry earth of pitch and rhythm, of having the will to create light amidst darkness.

Tippett has the philosophical wherewithal to address Sonata-principle with new-born intellectual and emotional zeal: perceiving the roots, and grasping them with conviction - rather than toadying to tradition and drooling, overawed by its surface-glamour or wafer-thin respectability. The dynamism of the 'principle', whereby contrasting types of musical-material **ignite** in a ritual-dance (be it combative or amorous), is differently articulated in each Sonata. Issues of balance and structural divisions become - crucially - part of a living process, growing, learning, demanding - as full of questions as discovering any answers. Aren't **we** like that - alive and kicking?

Sackman - Sonata (1984)

The structure is tripartite - fast, slow, fast - but with many anticipations of material to come, and equally as many reflections on material already heard, so that the broad outlines are never entirely clear-cut.

The first movement has the character of a toccata, with leaping octaves in the right hand and stabbing chords in the left. The score is marked, *initially rather like a five-finger exercise, but with steadily encroaching flights of fantasy*. The octaves, initially pitched on F, rise at each reappearance so that by the end of the movement they are pitched on C.

This climactic ending collapses into the slow middle movement wherein a sinuous, long-breathed melody is heard in the piano's middle register, gently decorated by 'clinging' chords above.

The final movement breaks into an impressionistic atmosphere by announcing what appears to be a fugal subject. The polyphony grows ever more dense and obsessive - a technical *tour de force* for any pianist - but there are moments of repose and reflection before the final eruption of compositional fury (which also returns the listener to the leaping octaves of the opening). The last peaceful moments of the sonata are created out of two chords which were the initial compositional idea of the work.

Saxton - Chacony (1988)

The title, an Anglicized variant of the French 'chaconne' used by both Purcell and Britten, describes the basic idea of the music. An ascending whole-tone scale, with the second degree omitted and beginning on the note D, falls at each repetition of a minor third. The fourth descending transposition therefore brings the 'ground' back to the original pitch, D.

The piece begins slowly, the 'ground' being assembled audibly and gradually. At the first descent of a minor third a second part enters at the original pitch level, so that the 'ground' harmonizes itself. By the time the complete process described begins again, the music has speeded up and is now in a low register. It ascends quickly and breaks into a dance, the 'ground' appearing in various registers. Eventually this arrives at a deep pounding passage which ascends once again and resolves into a slow, sustained coda. The piece ends as the 'ground' reaches D in ringing octaves with the notes F sharp and G sharp. The final three pitches are the first three that were heard, but where the opening was tentative the end is now assertive and bright.

Chacony was commissioned by the Aldeburgh Foundation with funds provided by the Arts Council of England. It is dedicated to Leon Fleisher who gave the first performance in The Maltings, Snape on Monday 20th June 1988 as part of the 41st Aldeburgh Festival.

Connolly - Sonatina Op.1 (1962/83)

In the 19th century, the word 'sonatina' implied a small work in an abbreviated sonata form, intended for players of modest ability. However, in the hands of Ferruccio Busoni, (1866-1924), one of the greatest pianists of his age, and a remarkable composer in his own right, the title Sonatina came to stand for a work combining an individual formal shape with a singular unity of content. Of his six Sonatinas, only one is a teaching piece; several are quite imposing structures, and the last is a work of great concentration and power, a Fantasy on Bizet's *Carmen*.

Busoni's highly idiosyncratic example served as a point of departure for my own Sonatina in Five Studies. Since the studies have material in common, they are scarcely separable, but imply a relationship closer to the idea of the sonata, rather than to that of a suite or a set of variations. In fact, this was the first piece in which I found myself able to articulate, however imperfectly, some real relationship between what I wanted to express musically and the manner of its expression. Although my structure pays tribute to Busoni, the music is not really very much under the influence of his personal idiom, nor did I intend it to be.

In its original version of 1962, the Sonatina was intended to reflect aspects of the playing of a friend and fellow student, Arthur Tomson, a remarkably gifted musician, who later in life became a distinguished scholar of oriental languages. After his death in 1981, at the age of only 45, I revised and extended the work as a memorial tribute. The

circumstances under which the second version was prepared naturally affected the balance of emotional emphasis within the music, which now ends quite differently. There were also changes to the internal relationships within the studies themselves, and I added titles to them to indicate something of their affective character in relation to the work as a whole.

I Vernal

The mood of the music is bracing, even slightly abrasive, with snatches of music coming and going, as if on the cold breeze of early spring, when the pale green of new leaves unfolds against a sullen sky. The various *ostinati* and cross-rhythms resemble the ever-changing patterns of bird-calls as they interrupt each other.

II Martial

A study for the left hand whose elliptical and lopsided rhythm ventures further into the idea of different musics in competition. It is a march of sorts, whose origin lay in a joke between Arthur and myself about the rigours of military life as experienced by the left-handed, a matter of which we both had some knowledge.

III Memorial

This is a chaconne, in which a persistent figure is challenged and obliterated by other gestures. The elegiac tone of the music is interrupted by a threatening version of the first study, unexpectedly thunderous and intrusive: the chaconne resumes only to die away in an enigmatic, questioning mood.

IV Mercurial

The left hand plays a supporting and punctuating role familiar from the étude-literature of the 19th century, while the right unfolds a continuous flow which seems never quite to repeat itself. It is a study in competing accents, which create a counterpoint of shapes within the moving line.

V Recessional

A new movement, replacing the original study, but related to its use of bell-like sounds surrounding a cantus firmus in very long notes. Elements from elsewhere attempt to take over, but hardly establish themselves before they falter, and the music retreats into into silence.

Publishers:

Tippett	Schott & Co. Ltd., 48 Great Marlborough Street, London. W1V 2BN
Sackman	Schott & Co. Ltd., 48 Great Marlborough Street, London. W1V 2BN
Saxton	Chester Music Ltd., 8/9 Frith Street, London. W1V 5TZ
Connolly	Novello & Co. Ltd., 8/9 Frith Street, London. W1V 5TZ

Steven Neugarten

Steven Neugarten was born in London in 1960. He studied physics at Bristol University, and stayed on doing research after graduating in 1982. In 1986, after 10 years without piano lessons, he began studying the piano with James Gibb, both privately and later at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he also studied with Edith Vogel. He was awarded the Concert Recital Diploma (Premier Prix) in 1989. Subsequently he studied with Gyorgy Kurtag in Hungary and London.

Since his professional debut in 1988 Steven has won prizes in several prestigious national and international piano competitions, also performing throughout the UK and in France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Norway and Israel.

Steven's repertoire ranges from Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven through to Carter, Messiaen, Tippett and Ligeti.

In addition to his work as a soloist, he is very active as a chamber musician, and is increasingly in demand as a song accompanist.

Steven has broadcast on BBC Radio Three, Classic FM and Radio Vaticano.



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TIPPETT: SONATA No.2 (1962)
SACKMAN: SONATA (1983-4)
SAXTON: CHACONY (1988)
CONNOLLY: SONATINA Op.1 (1962/83)

Steven Neugarten - piano

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