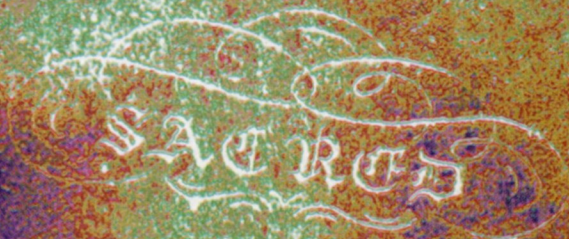
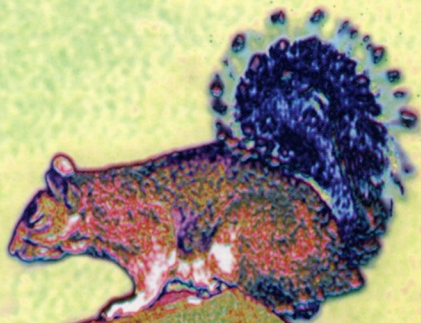


animal heaven

songs by

beamish
cresswell
harper
johnson
leighton
williams



METIER

EDWARD HARPER (b.1941)

LIGHTS OUT: four poems of Edward Thomas

Edward Thomas was 36 when, encouraged by Robert Frost, he wrote his first poems. The following year, 1915, he left his home in Steep, Hampshire, to serve in the war, enlisting in the Artists' Rifles; he was killed in action in France in April 1917. In this time, less than three years, he wrote 144 poems. His is a very private kind of language, expressing a deep sensitivity to nature and a very personal response to the Great War. *The Trumpet* and *Lights Out* are both responses to the trumpet calls that sounded throughout the day at Trowbridge Barracks in Wiltshire, where Thomas undertook some of his military training in 1916; "...The trumpet is cracked, but the 'Reveille' pleases me (more than it does most sleepers)", he wrote in a letter to Eleanor Farjeon. In this first song I have confined the voice mainly to simple D major and B-flat major arpeggios, setting these in varied harmonic and instrumental textures. *The Ash Grove* is a little fantasy on that folk tune, which appears at the end on the tenor recorder. The third song starts reflectively, but moves gradually to a mood of exaltation; it is scored for voice, recorder and cello only, and, in the final section, occupies high instrumental registers. *Lights Out* is a passacaglia, repetitions of the opening sequence of notes in the harpsichord forming the underlying structure. In another letter to Eleanor Farjeon, Thomas writes: "Now I have actually done another piece which I call *Lights Out*. It sums up what I have often thought at that call." The cycle was written in memory of Kenneth Leighton, and premièred in Wakefield Cathedral on 23rd October 1993. © Edward Harper

1. The Trumpet

Rise up, rise up,
And, as the trumpet blowing
Chases the dreams of men,
As the dawn glowing
The stars that left unlit
The land and water,
Rise up and scatter
The dew that covers
The print of last night's lovers –
Scatter it, scatter it!

While you are listening
To the clear horn,
Forget, men, everything
On this earth newborn,
Except that it is lovelier
Than any mysteries.
Open your eyes to the air
That has washed the eyes of the stars
Through the dewy night:
Up with the light,
To the old wars;
Arise, arise!

2. The Ash Grove

Half of the grove stood dead, and those that yet lived made
Little more than the dead ones made of shade.

If they led to a house, long before they had seen its fall:
But they welcomed me; I was glad without cause and delayed.

Scarce a hundred paces under the trees was the interval –
Paces each sweeter than sweetest miles – but nothing at all,
Not even the spirits of memory and fear with restless wing,
Could climb down in to molest me over the wall

That I passed through at either end without noticing.
And now an ash grove far from those hills can bring
The same tranquillity in which I wander a ghost
With a ghostly gladness, as if I heard a girl sing

The song of the Ash Grove soft as love uncrossed,
And then in a crowd or in distance it were lost,
But the moment unveiled something unwilling to die
And I had what most I desired, without search or desert or cost.

3. The Wind's Song

Dull-thoughted, walking among the nunneries
Of many a myriad anemones
In the close copses, I grew weary of Spring
Till I emerged and in my wandering
I climbed the down up to a lone pine clump
Of six, the tallest dead, one a mere stump.
On one long stem, branchless and flayed and prone
I sat in the sun listening to the wind alone,
Thinking there could be no old song so sad
As the wind's song; but later none so glad

Could I remember as that same wind's song
All the time blowing the pine boughs among.
My heart that had been still as the dead tree
Awakened by the West wind was made free.

4. Lights Out

I have come to the borders of sleep,
The unfathomable deep
Forest, where all must lose
Their way, however straight
Or winding, soon or late;
They cannot choose.

Many a road and track
That since the dawn's first crack
Up to the forest brink
Deceived the travellers,
Suddenly now blurs,
And in they sink.

Here love ends –
Despair, ambition ends;
All pleasure and all trouble,
Although most sweet or bitter,
Here ends, in sleep that is sweeter
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book
Or face of dearest look
That I would not turn from now
To go into the unknown
I must enter, and leave, alone,
I know not how.

The tall forest towers:
Its cloudy foliage lowers
Ahead, shelf above shelf:
Its silence I hear and obey
That I may lose my way
And myself.

LYELL CRESSWELL (b.1944) PRAYER TO APPEASE THE SPIRIT OF THE LAND

This translation from the Maori prayer is quoted in Arthur Saunders Thomson's *The Story of New Zealand* (1859). Thomson says that when "the Hawaiki fleet reached New Zealand ... the emigrants, like the survivors of a wreck, scattered themselves over the country. To appease the spirit of the land for their intrusion, humiliating prayers were said."

This song was written in memory of the soprano Tracey Chadwell.

© Lyell Cresswell

I arrive where an unknown earth is under my feet,
I arrive where a new sky is above me,
I arrive at this land

A resting place for me.
O spirit of the earth! the Stranger humbly
offers his heart as food for thee.

KENNETH LEIGHTON (1929-1988)

ANIMAL HEAVEN Op. 83

This diptych was composed at the request of John Turner and Keith Elcombe, and given its premiere on 24th July 1980 at the Manchester International Festival, with Honor Sheppard as the soprano soloist. There are two extended songs (almost scenas) to words by American poets, the first to a text by Walt Whitman (from *Song of Myself*), and the second to a poem (*The Heaven of Animals*) by the contemporary writer James Dickey. Both songs have as their themes the innocence of animals and their place in creation. The music of the songs is by turns ruminative and ecstatic.

1. I think I could turn and live with animals,
they are so placid and self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,

They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

So they show their relation to me and I accept them,
They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in their possession.
I wonder where they get these tokens,
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?

Myself moving forward then and now and forever,
Gathering and showing more always and with velocity,
Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these among them,
Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remembrancers,
Picking out here one that I love, and now go with him on brotherly terms.

Walt Whitman, from **Song of Myself**

2. Here they are. The soft eyes open.

If they have lived in a wood
It is a wood.

If they have lived on plains
It is grass rolling
Under their feet forever.

Having no souls, they have come,
Anyway, beyond their knowing.
Their instinct wholly bloom
Any they rise.
The soft eyes open

To match them, the landscape of flowers,
Outdoing desperately
Outdoing what is required:
The richest wood,
The deepest field.

For some of these,
It could not be the place
It is, without blood
These hunt, as they have done,
But with claws and teeth grown perfect.

More deadly than they can believe.
They stalk more silently,
And crouch on the limbs of trees,
And their descent
Upon the backs of their prey

May take years
In a sovereign floating of joy.
And those that are hunted
Know this as their life,
Their reward: to walk

Under such trees in full knowledge
Of what is in glory above them,
And to feel no fear,
But acceptance, compliance.
Fulfilling themselves without pain

At the cycle's center,
They tremble, they walk
Under the tree,
They fall they are torn,
They rise, they walk again.

James Dickey, **The Heaven of Animals**

SALLY BEAMISH (b.1956)

These songs were written as a tribute to Sir John Manduell (who was Principal of the RNCM when I was a student there) on his 70th birthday, to be performed by John Turner and Alison Wells at a celebratory concert in the Barbirolli Room at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester on 27th September 1998. I came across the poems in her village shop and was immediately inspired to set them. The poet, Donald Goodbrand Saunders, lives in the same village, and this initial encounter has led to further collaborations. The settings are simple and have strong Scottish overtones, including the imitated cries of seals on the bass recorder; the last song, however, is a Tarantella. Findrinny is an alloy of silver and gold.

FOUR FINDRINNY SONGS

© Sally Beamish

1. Short Heraldry

The wild
rosebush in autumn, red-
beaded, where
thorns in tangling wire
meet the white air.

2. Grey Seal

When a stone
flung into a pool
floated
it became the grey seal that bobs
out in the bay

and, apparently motionless,
impersonates in turn
a buoy, a dog-
headed puppet, a ball bearing,
a lone berg,
a reef of rubber,
a dot

or the whole black world, or one island
that has the stage of water all around.

Ripples wipe and
sleek slow minutes by,

balance the ball of the moment
nearer our nets.

3. Three Horizons

Between sky and skyline
the grey line of the pencil.

Between sky and skyline
the poem dimensionless.

Between sky and skyline
the sprig of rowan
thrust up from the frost-cracked rock.

4. Italia

Tonight the ripe grape
puts a pearl in my cup

A lit glass, the shell
soon for discarding.

Long after drinking,
feelings of lustre still:

It was a diving bell,
liquid in chiming,

A well that held hope
deep, drawn towards my lips.

These poems are published by "Dog and Bone" and are
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ROGER WILLIAMS (b.1943)

Oh! Mr Lear! was written for Alison Wells and John Turner and his ensemble in 1998. Of the four movements, three are settings of limericks from Edward Lear's 1846 *A Book of Nonsense* (numbers 1, 2 and 4), while the third sets an anonymous Scottish lullaby; the singer is required to play the gong at the beginning and end of this short piece. The combination of recorder, cello, voice and harpsichord is one which I welcomed for its melodic and timbral qualities; whereas the character of a continuo is never very far away from the harpsichord part, the varied resonances, including chords, trills and an ostinato (in the second movement, a scherzo), are designed to give changing perspectives to the other instruments. I have tried to capture some of the innocent delights of Lear's use of language while setting the poems within the context of the vivid imagination of a young child. A well-known tune, first hummed by the voice, underpins the melodic material, giving a particular perspective to the whole piece.

© Roger Williams

1. There was an old man in a tree
Who was horribly bored by a Bee;
When they said, "Does it buzz?"
He replied, "Yes, it does!"
"It's a regular brute of a bee!"

2. There was an Old Man of the Isles
Whose face was pervaded with smiles:
He sung high, dum diddle,
And played on the fiddle,
That amiable Man of the Isles.

Edward Lear

OH! MR LEAR!

3. A Scottish Lullaby

Lay doon yer wee heidie
In yer cosie cradle,
Shut yer eeries and close yer mouie
And sleep for siller tae buy a cooie,
My bonnie baby.

Anon.

4. There was an Old Man of Dundee
Who frequented the top of a tree;
When disturbed by the crows,

He abruptly arose,

And exclaimed, "I'll return to Dundee".

Edward Lear

(tam tarm played by Edward Harper)

DAVID JOHNSON (b.1942)

God, Man and the Animals was begun in 1983, and was intended as a present for John Turner and his ensemble, following their première of Kenneth Leighton's *Animal Heaven*. The idea amused me of writing a parallel work to Leighton's, exploring roughly the same subject from a completely different angle; and in the Grimm fairy-tale *Die Lebensdauer* ("The Duration of Life") I found exactly the material I wanted. The story gave the soprano five character parts and a connecting narration, and the instruments many exciting opportunities for dramatic effects. From the start it was clear that the style would be that of a bedtime story, witty, moral and with some disturbing undertones. (In 1983 I was in practice reading bedtime stories: my son was ten, and I was a single parent.) The piece was completed in 1988, and was first performed at the Edinburgh International Festival that year. It is dedicated to the composer's friend Dr Peter Davidson, whose golden retriever Tamsin pushed her wet nose irresistibly into the characterisation of the Dog in Part 3.

© David Johnson

1. When God created the world, it struck him, suddenly, that he would have to set a limit to every creature's life. If, as he planned (God was rather pleased with this idea), his creatures all had sex and produced offspring, and then the offspring also had sex and produced offspring, the world would soon, in no time at all, only a few thousand years, be impossibly cluttered with animals, shoulder to shoulder, knee deep, unbearable. So it would be necessary to appoint a time at which each one would die.

Thirty years, was his first thought. All animals the same. It was neat, fair, tidy. But then he paused. Maybe he should find out what the views of his creatures were, after all they, not he, had to live in this round, revolving world that he was making. He would begin by talking to the donkey.

2. "Thirty years?" said the donkey. "It's a long time. Ah, Lord, think of my drudgery! Carrying corn from the field to the farm, the farm to the mill, the mill to the town, all so that others may have the pleasure of eating; rewarded with nothing but kicks, blows, curses, complaints. Thirty years? Lord, relieve me of some of this weary time."

God was dismayed. Quickly, he shortened the donkey's life by eighteen years. And then he went to see the dog.

3. "Thirty years?" said the dog.

"O master, O great one, O omnipotent creator,
Think how dogs love to bark, to run, to jump, to bite, to chew.
But if I am to get old,
And my body start to decay, One bit after another,
With my voice cracked, joints stiff, teeth gone,
I shall be fit for nothing better than sitting in corners,
Growling, Uselessly Growling,
Pathetically Growling,
Powerlessly, miserably Growling.
It would surely be better for the end to come sooner,
O master, O great one, O omnipotent creator."

God was surprised. Regretfully, he reduced the dog's life by twelve years. And then he met the monkey.

4. "Thirty years?" said the monkey,
"Thirty, thirty, thirty years?
I'm not sure at all," said the monkey,
"It seems a bit too much,
Even a lot too much,
To be frank.

"People think monkeys have a lovely time.
They don't have to work, do they?
Just sit in a tree all day,
Scratching their backs,
Telling daft little stories,
Shitting on top of each other,
Nibbling snacks.

5. Finally, man appeared, vigorous, full of joy, God's finest handiwork. God spoke his mind:
"Listen, man, I'm having trouble; my animals all want their lives shortened. But surely you want to live long – isn't this a good world that I'm making?"

"Lord, yes!" said man. "In fact, thirty years isn't enough! What – just when I have grown up, am mature, skilled, and have gained a place in the world, a wife, children, and am really enjoying myself – must I so soon depart?"

"Well ..." said God, "I could add the eighteen years I took off the donkey."

"Not enough!" said man.

"And the twelve years I took off the dog."

"Still not enough!" said man.

"And the ten years I took off the monkey. But that's your lot."

"But that's not fair!" said man. "I want to live for ever!"

"I'm sorry", said God. "That's quite impossible."

"That's not good enough!" cried man. "I'm not satisfied!" And he walked away.

6. So man lives seventy years: thirty plus eighteen, plus twelve and then plus ten. The first thirty are his natural life, when he eats well, sleeps well, learns easily, makes friends and has lots of fun, and enjoys his work. These years go past all too soon.

Then come the donkey's eighteen years, when he must work from morning to night, carrying burdens for the profit of others, rewarded only with complaints; and after that come the twelve years the dog rejected, when his physical powers wane, his mind goes rigid, and he runs from one place to another, growling, toothless, wondering why no-one takes any notice of him; and when that time is over the monkey's ten years come as the end. Then man sits in a chair all day, nibbling tasteless snacks, re-telling pointless tales, and provides entertainment for children.

© David Johnson

"But the endless leisure of it drives us mad,
For it all gets pointless and it all goes bad.
The stories aren't funny –
The food tastes of nothing –
It's all a mask covering a huge yawn –
That's all.

"Thirty years?
I shall never last thirty years!
Take a bit off, God,
There's a good lad."

Hastily, God cut the monkey's life by ten years. He was suddenly weary.

SALLY BEAMISH was born in London in 1956. Although she has always been a composer first and foremost, her early career centred around the viola, particularly as a member of the Raphael Ensemble. In 1990 she moved to Scotland, and made the decision to concentrate on composition. Since then she has written for many groups, soloists and orchestras both in Britain and abroad, and is at present composer-in-residence with the Swedish and Scottish Chamber Orchestras.

LYELL CRESSWELL was born in Wellington, New Zealand. He studied in Wellington, Toronto, Aberdeen and Utrecht. After some teaching at Glasgow University he joined Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff as Music Organiser. From 1980-82 he was Forman Fellow in Composition at Edinburgh University, and from 1982-85 Cramb Fellow in Composition at Glasgow University; since 1985 he has been a full-time composer based in Edinburgh. In 1978 he won the Ian Whyte Award for the orchestral work *Salm* and in 1979 received the APRA Silver Scroll for his contribution to New Zealand's music. His works have been recommended by the UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers in 1979, 1981 and 1988. Cresswell has been featured composer at many festivals, including the London Proms in 1989 and 1995, for which his accordion concerto *Dragspil* was commissioned.

EDWARD HARPER was educated at King Edward VI Grammar School, Guildford, Christ Church, Oxford, and the Royal College of Music, London. Since 1964 he has been on the staff of the Faculty of Music at Edinburgh University, where he is a Reader. He has considerable experience as a conductor and pianist, and from 1973 to 1991 was the Director of the New Music Group of Scotland. He has written a large amount of chamber, orchestral and vocal music; his output includes five operas and two orchestral song cycles. Among his major works are *Bartók Games* (1972) for orchestra, *Fanny Robin* (1975) (available on METIER MSV CD92015), *Hedda Gabler* – a Scottish Opera commission for 1985 – and the orchestral song cycle *Homage to Thomas Hardy*, written for the 1990 Cheltenham Festival. Future works include a horn concerto commissioned for the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and its principal horn player David Flack.

DAVID JOHNSON was born in Edinburgh in 1942. His compositions cover a wide range of vocal, instrumental and theatrical genres; his largest pieces are the opera *Thomas the Rhymer*, produced in Edinburgh in 1976, and *Twelve Preludes and Fugues for Piano*, recorded by Ian Hobson on the American Zephyr label in 1998. In his spare time Johnson is a leading expert on historical Scottish music; he is currently editing a collection of eighteenth-century Scottish music (to be published by Glasgow University). He has recently completed a solo 'cello suite for Austrian cellist Martin Rummel, and an opera for students on the themes of urban pollution and renewal entitled *Sorry, False Alarm*.

KENNETH LEIGHTON was born in 1929 in Wakefield, where he was a chorister at Wakefield Cathedral. After reading Classics at The Queen's College, Oxford, where he also studied composition with Bernard Rose, he won the Mendelssohn Scholarship, and travelled to Rome to study further with Petrassi. He was appointed Lecturer in Music at the University of Edinburgh in 1956, and subsequently became Senior Lecturer and then Reader; following two years as a Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, he returned to Edinburgh as Reid Professor of Music. His music has been widely recorded. Kenneth Leighton died in 1988.

ROGER BEVAN WILLIAMS was born in Swansea, Wales, and received his first musical education in Yorkshire at the Huddersfield School of Music. After graduating from the University of Wales, Cardiff, he completed his studies in London and at King's College, Cambridge. Following some years in London as a conductor, organist, harpsichordist and composer, Williams took up an appointment at the University of Aberdeen, where he is now Musical Director and Organist. He has worked with most of the major musical groups in Scotland, and for five years was the Chorus Master of the Scottish National Orchestra. He has written works for organ, voice and orchestra, and is presently working on a composition for solo guitar. He has an active recording career, having appeared as a keyboard player on discs from Chandos, Hyperion, Alpha and Redbook Records.

ALISON WELLS was born in Yorkshire and originally trained as a pianist. After reading mathematics and music at London University, she spent a year at the Royal Academy of Music, before beginning her vocal studies. She made her South Bank debut with the Park Lane Group and took part in Elizabeth Schwarzkopf's masterclasses at the Wigmore Hall. Since then, she has appeared in all the major London halls and in many festivals both in the UK and abroad. Much of her work has been in contemporary music, with ensembles such as Matrix, Gemini, Psappha, Music Projects/London, Lontano, Composers Ensemble, the French ensemble 2e2m, and with ASKO and the Schoenberg Ensemble in Amsterdam. She broadcasts regularly as soloist on Radio 3 and in recital with her husband Martyn Parry. Recent engagements have included avant-garde Russian music of the 1920s in Turin, a tour with Richard Allston Dance company, two appearances at the 1999 Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, and an education project with the London Sinfonietta. She also teaches singing to choral exhibitors at Cambridge.

JOHN TURNER was Senior Scholar in Law at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge before pursuing a legal career, acting for many distinguished musicians and musical organisations, alongside his many musical activities. These included numerous appearances with David Munrow's pioneering Early Music Consort of London. He now devotes his time to playing, writing, reviewing, publishing, composing and "generally energising". He has played and broadcast as recorder soloist with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the Academy of Ancient Music, the English Chamber Orchestra and the English Baroque Soloists, amongst other leading chamber orchestras. His recordings include no less than five sets of the *Brandenburg Concertos*, but lately he has concentrated on contemporary music - recent and forthcoming CDs include music of Alan Rawsthorne, Richard Arnell, David Lumsdaine (*A Norfolk Songbook*), Anthony Gilbert (his recorder concerto *Igorochki*) and George Nicholson (METIER MSV CD92062). In the last year or two he has played in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, France, New Zealand and the USA, and given several recitals on Radio 3 with pianist Peter Lawson. In all, he has given first performances of some 300 works for the recorder, many of which have now entered the standard repertoire. His own recorder compositions are regularly set for festivals and examinations.

JONATHAN PRICE plays with a wide variety of chamber ensembles, performing music spanning four centuries. For ten years he was a member of the Matisse Piano Quartet, broadcasting most of the piano quartet repertoire for the BBC. In addition to his work with the Legrand Ensemble he also performs and broadcasts with the baroque group Musical Offering, and the Camerata Ensemble, whose members are principal players with the Manchester Camerata. He is also cello tutor at Manchester University. In addition to concerts throughout Europe and in North and South America, he has also played in Australia, Israel, the Azores, Hong Kong, Macau, and Hawaii.

KEITH ELCOMBE was Organ Scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge, and is now Senior Lecturer in Music and University Organist at Manchester University. He is also Conductor of the University Chorus, with whom he has recently performed Britten's *War Requiem* and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. He plays continuo with a number of chamber ensembles and orchestras, and specialises in performing keyboard music of the 16th and 17th centuries. His critical writings are well known and he is a frequent contributor to various scholarly publications.

Some recent METIER CD releases:

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Kreutzer Quartet

MSV CD92038 - *Fast Colours*: works by **Anthony Powers**
Psappha

MSV CD92041 - *Feasibility Studies*: works by **Thea Musgrave, Gordon McPherson, Edward McGuire** and **Django Bates**
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Animal Heaven

music for soprano, recorder, harpsichord and violoncello 5 019148 628613

Alison Wells, John Turner, Keith Elcombe and Jonathan Price

EDWARD HARPER

1 **Lights Out** - four songs after poems by Edward Thomas

Alison Wells - soprano, John Turner - recorder,
Keith Elcombe - harpsichord and Jonathan Price - 'cello

- 1. I **The Trumpet** 2:34
- 2. II **The Ash Grove** 5:01
- 3. III **The Wind's Song** 3:56
- 4. IV **Lights Out** 4:13

LYELL CRESSWELL

5 **Prayer to appease the Sprit of the Land** 2:09

Alison Wells - soprano, John Turner - recorder,

KENNETH LEIGHTON

6 **Animal Heaven**

Alison Wells - soprano, John Turner - recorder,
Keith Elcombe - harpsichord and Jonathan Price - 'cello

- 6. I **I think I could turn and live with animals** 7:06
- 7. II **Here they are.** 7:17

SALLY BEAMISH

8 **Four Findrinny Songs**

Alison Wells - soprano, John Turner - recorder,

- 8. I **Short Heraldry** 0:56
- 9. II **Grey Seal** 2:23
- 10. III **Three Horizons** 1:52
- 11. IV **Italia** 1:21

ROGER WILLIAMS

12 **Oh! Mr Lear!**

Alison Wells - soprano, John Turner - recorder,
Keith Elcombe - harpsichord and Jonathan Price - 'cello

- 12. I **There was an Old Man in a Tree** 1:10
- 13. II **There was an Old Man of the Isles** 0:45
- 14. III **A Scottish Lullaby** 0:56
- 15. **Scherzo** 0:16
- 16. IV **There was an Old Man of Dundee** 0:53

DAVID JOHNSON

17 **God, Man and the Animals**

Alison Wells - soprano, John Turner - recorder,
Keith Elcombe - harpsichord and Jonathan Price - 'cello

- 17. I 2:58
- 18. II 2:33
- 19. III 2:47
- 20. IV 2:17
- 21. V 3:32
- 22. VI 3:39

Total time 61:32



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