

**The Scottish Flute Trio**  
*Feasibility Studies*

Django Bates

Edward McGuire

Gordon McPherson

Thea Musgrave

Flute<sup>3</sup>



with Tim Williams, percussion

**METIER**

This recording was made in Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh  
on 1-2 August, 1999

Recording producer / sound engineer / digital editor: David Lefeber

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**DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP**  
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**THEA MUSGRAVE** was born in Midlothian, Scotland and was a student at Edinburgh University before studying with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. Since 1972 she has lived in America, but perhaps her Scottish background accounts for her fascination with myths and legends, many of which have inspired her compositions. Titles such as *Narcissus* for solo flute and digital delay (Janet Larsson gave the British premiere for the Park Lane Group in 1988), *Orfeo I* (flute and tape) and *Orfeo II* (flute and strings) are typical.

***Voices from the Ancient World*** was commissioned by the Scottish Flute Trio in 1998 with support from the Scottish Arts Council National Lottery Fund.

*Voices from the Ancient World* draws on six myths familiar from Greek legend..

First comes EOS, Goddess of the Dawn, who travelled on the winds and sprinkled down dew upon the Earth. She is portrayed by hypnotic repetitions on the marimba and the steadily rising, overlapping chains of exotic scales of the flutes. These scales will form the basis for much of the work, reappearing in varying guises as the piece progresses.

The evocative cowbells and off-stage piccolo announces PAN, God of Shepherds and Animals. Like the other gods of the forest, Pan was dreaded by those who had to pass through the woods by night, hence our expression 'panic'. In this gentle, atmospheric and rather wistful sketch, Musgrave focuses on the less fearful characteristics of Pan.

## **Thea Musgrave**

### ***Voices from the Ancient World***



The pace quickens as the suspended cymbal, flute clusters and tom-toms depict BOREAS, God of the North Wind, famed for his two faces, one facing where he was going, the other looking back. Tambourine and seductive lilting rhythms introduce CIRCE, the enchantress who could change men into beasts.

PANDORA was the Woman created by the God Zeus to bless or to punish Man (according to which legend you choose to read). She was given a box to guard, but forbidden to open it. In time curiosity got the better of her and in this movement we hear her open the box, thereby releasing all the evils of the world. Pandora hastened to close the box and managed to prevent the escape of Hope (a degree of calm is restored to the music). Finally, the sounds of crotales and piccolo bring us to SELENE, Goddess of the Moon, who drives across the night sky in her chariot to visit the sleeping Endymion.

## Gordon McPherson

**GORDON MCPHERSON's** recent works include *Impersonal Stereo* for wind quintet, *Cash* for saxophone quartet, *Lame God* for free-bass accordion, and *On E* premiered by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in 1996. Other commissions include those from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Edinburgh Contemporary Arts Trust, Glasgow University, and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, where he is currently Composer in Residence.



**Three Minute Philosophy** was commissioned by the Scottish Flute Trio in 1997 with support from the Scottish Arts Council. On receiving the commission the composer set about *"to create a work where three flutes and percussion are treated almost as a single instrument"* The aim was to avoid any *"overtly pastoral references"*. For much of the piece the flutes/piccolos do indeed play as one instrument, driven for the most part by the momentum of their repeating patterns and the bite of the marimba writing.

### **Three Minute Philosophy**

**EDWARD MCGUIRE's** compositions often reflect his deep interest in Celtic culture and he continues to play flute with the Scottish folk group The Whistlebinkies. His large-scale works include the ballet *Peter Pan*, *A Glasgow Symphony*, the chamber opera *The Loving of Etain*, and a *Trombone Concerto*.

### **Edward McGuire**

**Celtic Knotwork** (1990) writes McGuire *"conjures up the graphic skills of an ancient past - but it is the human element that fascinates me, the bringing to life of abstract patterns. The atmosphere of the opening is one of early chant, one contemporary with the development of 'knotwork'. The gradual intertwining of the voices starts at a point - unison - and reaches a peak of cascading dialogue and dancing phrases before fading to a point, merging into unison once more. I intend to continue a series of works matching in music other 'knotwork' cultures, reflecting aspects of Chinese, African and Arabic art."*

### **Celtic Knotwork**



## Django Bates

**DJANGO BATES** first came to prominence as co-founder and leader of the huge jazz collective Loose Tubes, the first ever jazz orchestra to perform at the BBC Proms. He remains at the forefront of innovative jazz with his eighteen-piece band Delightful Precipice and his small group Human Chain. He has been commissioned by festivals, groups and orchestras around the world, including the London Sinfonietta, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, London Brass and Evelyn Glennie.

### *Bird Tableau*

***Bird Tableau*** was commissioned by the Scottish Flute Trio in 1998 with support from the Scottish Arts Council. Originally given a provocative draft title of *Feasibility Studies*, Django Bates settled on bird-song for his starting point. In the area in London where he lives there are plenty of street-wise cats, but the birds have disappeared and taken their songs with them. "I decided to try to tempt them back with *Bird Tableau*, a day in the life of a group of birds. *Bird Tableau* is one continuous piece depicting the birds' daytime life, twilight, sleep, and a particularly window-shattering dawn chorus. Towards the end there is also a tip of a wing at the other bird, the great jazz saxophonist Charlie Parker."

*Sleevenotes by Richard Shaw*



## THE SCOTTISH FLUTE TRIO

[ Laura Bailie, Janet Larsson and Ruth Morley ]

is the only ensemble of its kind working in the UK. The use of flutes, piccolos, alto flutes and the collaboration with other instrumentalists makes for a unique sound. The trio has toured extensively in the UK, and since 1996, with support from the Scottish Arts Council, has commissioned and premiered pieces from **Edward McGuire, Gordon McPherson, Roger Cann, Thea Musgrave, Django Bates, Kenneth Dempster** and **Robert Dick**.

**Tim Williams** studied timpani and percussion at the Royal Northern College of Music and is now a freelance musician regularly playing with the country's leading orchestras. In 1991 he formed the Manchester-based contemporary music ensemble, Psappha. Tim has performed various concertos and solo works including pieces by Martin Butler, Stockhausen, Anthony Gilbert and Panufnik. In 1995 he played in the première of Peter Maxwell Davies' *Stedman Doubles*. In 1996 Psappha commissioned *Moses* for solo percussion from Gordon McPherson which Tim has performed on many occasions including a performance at the St. Magnus Festival and for a CD recording.

## The Scottish Flute Trio

### Tim Williams



**The Scottish Flute Trio with Tim Williams *percussion***

*Feasibility Studies*

**Thea Musgrave**

*Voices from the Ancient World*

1	Eos	2:46
2	Pan	2:42
3	Boreas	2:21
4	Circe	2:18
5	Pandora	2:30
6	Selene	3:16

7 **Gordon McPherson** *Three Minute Philosophy* 12:58

8 **Edward McGuire** *Celtic Knotwork* 4:36

9 **Django Bates** *Bird Tableau* 14:07

**Total** 47:50

