



Justin Connolly

# Night Thoughts

Anderson      Canonici  
Hodges      Ruffer  
Sparling      Warburton

**METIER**

**Sonatina No.2: Ennead** op.26 (2000) 21'52" [1] Nicolas Hodges: *piano*

**Nocturnal** op.33 (1991) 19'33" [2] Nancy Ruffer: *flutes*  
Nicolas Hodges: *piano*  
Corrado Canonici: *double bass*  
Julian Warburton: *percussion*

**Tesserae F: 'Domination in Black'** [3] Andrew Sparling: *bass clarinet*  
op.15f (1999) 11'49"

**Scardanelli Dreams** op.37 (1997-8) 19'41" [4] Sue Anderson: *mezzo-soprano*  
Nicolas Hodges: *piano*

Total Time 72'57"

*Recorded at St George's Brandon Hill, Bristol, UK  
on 31 January and 1 February (tracks 2-4)  
and 19 June (track 1) 2000  
produced by Nicolas Hodges and Justin Connolly  
engineered and edited by Paul Hodges, Cassland Recordings  
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*op.15f, op.26 and op.33 published by Novello*

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'Night Thoughts' is the title of a poem by Edward Young, first published in 1745, and illustrated in a later edition by William Blake. It is noteworthy as the first extended attempt at a poem exploring the idea of night as an analogue of the unconscious. Like my Sonatina no.2, it is in nine parts, an ennead; originally I had thought of giving my work the same title as Young's poem, but then recollected that Aaron Copland had beaten me to it in 1964. All the works on this disc are similarly explorations of images of darkness. *Nocturnal* is a set of sea-pictures in which the song of wind and wave is played out against a background of sea-sounds: the creaking of canvas and cordage, the mysterious calls of unseen birds. *Tesserae F* is another night-piece, whose subtitle, 'Domination of Black', comes from a poem by Wallace Stevens. While *Scardanelli Dreams* charts the motions of a great spirit, which, though affected by adversity and illness, is not dimmed, but rather illuminates the darkness in which it finds itself.

**Sonatina no.2: Ennead** Op.26 (2000)

*For solo piano*

To chose a particular title for a piece is to establish a frame of reference within which one wishes to be understood. The symbolism of the number nine is well known; the Greeks imagined nine Muses, the Egyptians worshipped the nine gods who formed the Ennead of Heliopolis. Such ensembles are very much concerned with contrasts and relationships within the group. The nine sections of my Sonatina no.2 are not direct variations of one another, but they are related in the same kind of way as members of a family; that is to say that resemblances of appearance and character between them are entirely the product of their common origin.

Because these nine short movements do not conform to the kind of varied stylisation implicit in the idea of a Suite, I chose the word Sonatina to express the ideas of concentration and interrelatedness which characterise this music. The models I had in mind were not, of course, the teaching pieces of Diabelli and others, so much as the Sonatinas of Alkan and Busoni which exemplify this concept of a *multum-in-parvo*.

Sonatina no.2 was first performed by Nicolas Hodges on June 1, 2000, at the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre, London.

**Nocturnal** Op.33 (1991)

*Quartet for flutes with piano, bass, and percussion*

*Nocturnal* was commissioned by the Martin Feinstein Quartet, with funds provided by the Holst Foundation, and they gave the first performance on January 21, 1992, at St. John's, Smith Square, London.

The work was designed as a tribute to the composer and music-printer Edward Shipley (1941–88), and is a sequence of movements whose overall tone is reflected in the epigraph from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* printed at the head of the score:

Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself: nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power: how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, and not I...

But it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky; and the air smells now, as if it blew from a far-away meadow; they have been making hay somewhere under the slopes of the Andes, Starbuck, and the mowers are sleeping among the new-mown hay. Sleeping? Aye, toil how we may, we all sleep at last on the field...

Ted had a strong understanding of the sea, a deep sense of the numinous, and an innate reverence for the unseen forces which shape life: the music attempts in its own terms to express some like perceptions.

The piece requires the flautist to play four different instruments: piccolo, concert flute, alto flute in G and bass flute in C. The music uses them in something of a solo role, supported by percussion, double bass and piano, so that, in a linear as well as an ensemble context, *Nocturnal* is a 'quartet for flutes'.

There are six sections:

- I. *Fuggevole, leggiero* – a study of wind and wave, featuring flute.
- II. *Lento espressivo* – an arioso for alto flute, with slow-moving but at times highly decorated textures.
- III. *Sognando* – a dreamlike, almost motionless meditation for flute.
- IV. *Spiritoso* – another study on the idea of ‘After the sea-ship, the whistling winds’ (Whitman). This is for piccolo, fast and agile.
- V. *Oscuro, misterioso* – Darkness, and the strange sound of the bass flute, like the call of some gigantic sea-bird.
- VI. *Quasi barcarola, teneramente* – a sea-lullaby, whose sound drifts on the wind, now nearer, now farther away.

**Tesserae F: ‘Domination of Black’ Op.15f (1999)**

*For solo bass clarinet*

*Tesserae F* is one of a group of pieces, which investigate the character of particular instruments. Its subtitle, ‘Domination of Black’, is taken from the poem of the same name by Wallace Stevens (1879-1955). My piece is not so much an instrumental setting of that text, so much as an exploration of musical images using a process of partial repetition and transformation similar to that found in the poem. Stevens comments in one of his letters that ‘Domination of Black’ has as its sole purpose the aim of filling the mind with sounds and images. My music has an identical intention and, like the poem itself, is in three verses.

**Scardanelli Dreams Op.37 (1997-8)**

*Cantata on texts of Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843), for mezzo-soprano and piano*

Hölderlin, Blake-like in his trenchant aphorisms, Wordsworthian in his nature-worship, is a visionary of the fragment, a seer of incompleteness. His drastic personal experiences led him to the abrogation of his previous existence, a repudiation resulting in the confinement, and even torture, which were the common lot of mental patients in his day. Making some sort of recovery, he passed more than half his life in the care of a carpenter in Tübingen, writing occasional poems in a style quite different from that of the great odes and hymns of his early maturity. Such poems,

written for the visitors who came to gape at the tamed 'madman', were composed in exchange for small gifts; money or tobacco was the bait used to extract these later works, which were often meditations on the seasons, doubtless a subject favoured by these patrons. However, he was accustomed to signing them with strange pseudonyms: Scaliger Rosa, Buonarroti, Scardanelli: expressions of the distance he kept from the poet he had formerly been.

I chose five texts which illustrate the range of this great poet, as well as the obsessive nature of his themes. First comes the opening of his ode 'Patmos', in which, like St. John himself, he senses the divine nature of his vocation. There follows a total contrast; a ruefully humorous yet touchingly erotic daydream, composed of a montage of apparently unrelated images. This poem is almost complete, but its central verse has come down to us only in the shape of a single word:



*fleissig*, 'busy'. The third text, though written before his breakdown, is prophetic of his ultimate fate: in it, he contemplates the indifference he will be capable of feeling towards those images which once excited him so unbearably. The fourth setting is of a not-quite-conventional poem about spring; like all his later work, it is in rhyme, a technique which never appears in his earlier poems. Finally, there is a powerful declamation taken from his play about the Greek philosopher Empedocles who, despairing of human existence, seeks transcendence by hurling himself into the crater of Etna.

My music attempts some reconciliation of these contrasted yet related themes of dissociation and contradiction, by making voice and piano largely independent of one another in both rhythm and gesture. The piano does not accompany the voice so much as provide a continuous commentary on *all* the texts; its ten sections change pace and direction without reference to the vocal settings. The title 'cantata' further underscores the nature of the piano part as an integral but separate obbligato, as in the solo contributions of instruments in the cantatas of Bach.

Scardanelli *Dreams* was commissioned by Sue Anderson, who gave its first performance (with Nicolas Hodges) on 29 January 1998, at St. Giles Cripplegate, London.

*Image: Hölderlin, pastel by Franz Karl Hiemer, 1792*

*The multiple layers of reference and meaning in Hölderlin's poetry defy exact translation. Accordingly I have ventured to paraphrase the texts in order to express something of my response to them, rather than to outline some objective account of their possible meaning. So many of the images have their root in the German language itself: for example in the third setting, the peacefulness of the deer park leads to an assonance between Ruh and Reh impossible in English, while at the same time, without his mentioning it, the poet reminds us by his image of another deer park, where the Buddha experiences his enlightenment too.*

(Each of the five texts are indexed as indicated below. The ten sections which make up the piano part are indexed thus: I: [1], II: [3], III: [4], IV: [6], V: [8], VI: [9], VII: [11], VIII: [12], IX: [14], X: [15])

[2] I: Fragmente des ‘Patmos’

Nah ist  
Und schwer zu fassen der Gott.  
Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst  
Das Rettende auch.  
Im Finstern wohnen  
Die Adler und furchtlos gehn  
Die Söhne der Alpen über den Abgrund weg  
Auf leichtgebauten Brücken.

O Fittige gieb uns, treuesten Sinns  
Hinüberzugehn und wiederzukehren.

So sprach ich, da entführte  
Mich schneller, denn ich vermuthet  
Und weit, wohin ich nimmer  
Zu kommen gedacht, ein Genius mich  
Vom eigenen Hauß.

Geheimnißvoll  
Im goldenen Rauche, blühte  
Schnellaufgewachsen,  
Mit Schritten der Sonne,  
Mit tausend Gipfeln duftend.  
Mir Asia auf, und geblendet sucht'  
Ich eines, das ich kennete.

aber im Lichte  
 Blüht hoch der silberne Schnee;  
 Und Zeug unsterblichen Lebens  
 An unzugangbaren Wänden  
 Uralt der Epheu wächst und getragen sind  
 Von lebenden Säulen, Cedern und Lorbeern  
 Die feierlichen,  
 Die göttlichgebauten Palläste.

Apprehension of the divinity which lies so close to us is hard, but where there is danger, there safety is also found. Eagles dwell in darkness, and the sons of the Alps cross the abyvss on lightly-built bridges.

Give us wings, in the truest sense, to pass over and return.

Thus I spoke: when suddenly, and quicker than I could have imagined, a Spirit caught me up, and carried me away far from my home.

Mysteriously, in a golden mist, with strides of the sun, and amid a thousand peaks, Asia appeared to me, and dazzled, I sought for something I could recognise.

In the light, the silver snow glowed, a pledge of eternity, upon unclimbable walls a primeval ivy flourished, supported by a living forest of pillars formed from cedars and laurels: I saw God-created palaces ...

## **5 II: Auf falbem Laube**

Auf falbem Laube ruhet  
Die Traube, des Weines Hoffnung, also ruhet auf der Wange  
Der Schatten von dem goldenen Schmuck, der hängt  
Am Ohre der Jungfrau

Und ledig soll ich bleiben  
Leicht fängt aber sich  
In der Kette, die  
Es abgerissen, das Kälblein.

...fleißig...

Es liebet aber der Sämann  
Zu sehen eine,  
Des Tages schlafend über  
Dem Strikstrumpf.

Nicht will wohllauten  
Der deutsche Mund  
Aber lieblich  
Am stechenden Bart rauschen  
Die Küsse.

## **7 III: Lebensalter**

Ihr Städte des Euphrats!  
Ihr Gassen von Palmyra!  
Ihr Säulenwälder in der Eb'ne der Wüste,  
Was seid ihr?  
Euch hat die Kronen,  
Dieweil ihr über die Gränze  
Der Othmenden seid gegangen,  
Von Himmlischen der Rauchdampf und  
Hinweg das Feuer genommen;  
Jetzt aber siz' ich unter Wolken, darin  
Ein jedes eine Ruh' hat eigen, unter  
Wohleingerichteten Eichen, auf  
Der Heide des Rehs, und fremd  
Erscheinen und gestorben mir  
Der Seligen Geister.

## **10 IV: Der Frühling**

Wenn aus der Tiefe kommt der Frühling in das  
Leben,  
Es wundert sich der Mensch, und neue Worte  
streben  
Aus Geistigkeit, die Freude kehret wieder  
Und festlich machen sich Gesang und Lieder.

Das Leben findet sich aus Harmonie der Zeiten,  
Daß immerdar den Sinn Natur und Geist geleiten,  
Und die Vollkommenheit ist Eines in dem Geiste,  
So findet vieles sich, und aus Natur das Meiste.

On the fallow leaf rests the grape, promise of wine;  
so the shadow of an earring outlines itself on a girl's  
cheek.

But I must remain single. How easily the little calf  
tangles himself up in the chain from which he has  
broken free.

...Busy...

The sower of seed likes to see a woman, fallen  
asleep in the middle of the day over a half-knitted  
stocking.

Although the German tongue can never be smooth,  
how sweetly the kisses fall upon the prickly beard.

Cities of Euphrates! Streets of Palmyra! Forests of  
pillars in the desert, what are you? Your crests,  
passing beyond the limit of human breath, were  
removed by the smoke and fire of heavenly powers.  
But now I sit beneath clouds, each with its own  
peacefulness, amid oak trees neatly planted in a deer  
park, and the spirits of the blessed seem quite  
strange to me, remote and dead.

When from the depths spring emerges into life,  
human beings wonder about themselves, and new  
words strive for spiritual expression: music and song  
resound everywhere.

Life finds itself in harmony with time, so that  
Nature and Spirit penetrate our being to create a  
unity in each of us. So everything comes to itself,  
and most of all through Nature.



### 13 V: Fragmente des 'Empedocles auf dem Ätna'

bin ich ganz allein?  
Und ist es Nacht hier außen auch am Tage?  
Der höhers, denn ein sterblich Auge, sah  
Der Blindgeschlagene tastet nun umher —  
Wo seid ihr, meine Götter?  
und wandeln soll  
Er nun so fort, der Langverwöhnte,  
Der selig oft mit allen Lebenden  
Ihr Leben, ach, in heiligschöner Zeit  
Sie, wie das Herz gefühlt von einer Welt,  
Und ihren königlichen Götterkräften,  
Verdammt in seiner Seele soll er so  
Da hingehn, ausgestoßen? freundlich er,  
Der Götterfreund?

Web! einsam! einsam! einsam!  
Und nimmer find ich  
Euch, meine Götter,  
Und nimmer kehr ich  
Zu deinem Leben, Natur!

Ist nirgend ein Rächer?  
Und muss ich denn allein  
Den Hohn und Fluch in  
Meine Seele sagen?  
Muss einsam Sein auch so?

Am I completely alone? Has night really replaced  
day? A mortal eye, which witnessed higher things, is  
now blinded, feeling its way. Where are you, my  
Gods?

He who long dwelt alive among the living is now  
condemned by you, who once filled his heart with a  
world and its divine power: condemned in his very  
soul to wander, an outcast. Shall he be friendless,  
who once was the friend of Gods?

I am alone, alone, alone, and never will I find you  
again, never turn towards your life, Nature!

Is there no avenger of such a fate? Must I alone bear  
the scorn, the curse in my own soul: alone even in this?

*Notes and Translation by Justin Connolly*

**Justin Connolly** was born in London in 1933 and educated at Westminster School. He studied law at the Middle Temple, and composition and conducting at the Royal College of Music (from 1958) with Peter Racine Fricker and Sir Adrian Boult respectively; simultaneously he had frequent informal contact with Roberto Gerhard. Whilst at the RCM he was awarded numerous prizes, including the Cobbett Prize. In 1963 he was awarded a Harkness Fellowship and studied at Yale University with Mel Powell for three years, staying for a further year to teach. He returned to Britain in 1967, in which year he won the Clements Memorial Prize. Since then he has divided his time between composition and teaching at the RCM (1966-1988) and RAM (1989-1996). In 1979-80 he was visiting lecturer in composition at UC Santa Barbara, and in 1982 he served in a similar capacity at the University of Melbourne; he held the John Clementi Collard Fellowship of the Worshipful Company of Musicians 1983-6.

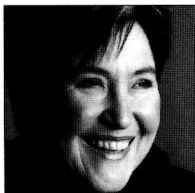
Connolly's music has been performed around the world by performers such as the BBCSO, Fires of London, John Alldis Choir, London Sinfonietta, Nash Ensemble, Philip Jones Brass Quintet, RPO, with the involvement of Pierre Boulez, Norman Del Mar, Sir Charles Groves, Ralph Kirschbaum, Jane Manning, Odaline de la Martinez, Dame Gillian Weir, and James Wood. His numerous commissions include several from the BBC, both for the Proms and otherwise. Many of Justin Connolly's works are published by Novello and Co. Ltd; all other works can be obtained via the British Music Information Centre (<http://www.bmic.co.uk>).

**For further information see <http://www.justinconnolly.demon.co.uk>**

Other CDs featuring music by Justin Connolly:

- Metier MSV CD92008: Sonatina in Five Studies, op.1, piano, 1962, rev.1983
- NMC D025: Poems of Wallace Stevens II, op.14, soprano, clarinet and piano, 1970

Photo Suzie Maeder



After reading music at St. Hugh's College, Oxford, **Sue Anderson** began her professional career as a solo pianist with a Wignmore Hall recital sponsored by the Incorporated Society of Musicians. However, since then she has worked principally as singer, in opera houses and concert halls throughout Britain and the rest of Europe, including Glyndebourne, Covent Garden, Antwerp and Brussels. Her particular interest in promoting the music of living composers has resulted in performances at the Almeida, Huddersfield and Orleans Festivals of contemporary music. She has given first (and second) performances of works by Judith Weir, Michael Finnis, Elisabeth Lutyens, Hugh Wood and Justin Connolly.

**Corrado Canonici** studied double bass with Bruno Tommaso at the Conservatory 'G. Rossini' in Pesaro (Italy) and attended master classes for double bass held by Franco Petracchi, Luigi Milani and Gary Karr. He has been awarded the 1993, 1997 and 1999 New York INMC Award, the Darmstadt Prize and the Xenakis Prize for Interpretation, Paris 1992. He has given concerts around Europe and the USA, and has held masterclasses at, amongst others, New York University, Harvard University, Boston University, Arnold Schönberg Institute (USC) and the Manhattan School of Music. His solo repertoire features more than 100 works, including pieces by Ferneyhough, Dillon, Donatoni, Xenakis, Cage and Scelsi, and he gave the world première (in October 1997) of the double bass version of *In Freundschaft* by Karlheinz Stockhausen.



Photo Piero Principi

Photo Martin Tobhill



**Nicolas Hodges** has built up a reputation as one of the leading pianists of his generation, much in demand as a recitalist and concerto soloist, and receiving great critical acclaim for his performances. His repertoire extends from the Baroque via the classics of the Avant-Garde (such as Stockhausen and Barraqué), to works from the first years of the 21st Century. He frequently works closely with composers such as Birtwistle, Boehmer, Carter, Clarke, Dillon, Finnis, Kagel, Lachenmann, Nørgård, Sciarrino and Stockhausen, and his many world premières include Bill Hopkins' extraordinary *Etudes en Série* (which he subsequently recorded to critical acclaim).

Nicolas Hodges has appeared at all the major UK festivals as well as throughout the continent. His orchestral engagements have included concertos with the BBC SO, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, Bamberger Symphoniker and the BBC Scottish SO. He broadcasts regularly for BBC Radio 3, and he has a busy CD recording schedule. Nicolas Hodges teaches at the biennial Darmstadt International Summer Course for New Music.

<http://www.nicolashodges.demon.co.uk>

Photo John Clark



**Nancy Ruffer** was born in Detroit and received a Masters of Music from The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She received a Fulbright-Hays Scholarship in 1976 to study at The Royal Academy of Music, London, and she has remained in London working as a freelance flautist specialising in contemporary music. Composers who have written for her include Michael Finnis, Chris Dench, John White, Christopher Fox, Ian Wilson and Graham Fitkin. In 1984 she was awarded the Kranichsteiner Prize for Performance at Darmstadt and she has recently been elected as an Associate of The Royal Academy of Music. Miss Ruffer is principal flute of the ensembles Music Projects/London, Matrix, the Almeida Ensemble and Topologies as well as performing with ensembles of the Royal National Theatre. In addition she records regularly for the BBC and performs in festivals and concert halls throughout Britain and abroad, and has recently recorded a solo CD for METIER, to be released in 2002.

Within a wide-ranging career as a solo, chamber and orchestral musician **Andrew Sparling** has gained a special reputation as an interpreter of living composers. He has appeared on BBC 1 and Channel 4 television, and has given many concerts and radio broadcasts with the ensembles Lontano, Apartment House, Ensemble Exposé, Music Projects/London, Première Crew and the London Sinfonietta. With the pianist Thalia Myers he has performed at the Tate and National Portrait Galleries, and in Bath, St. Helier and Ho Chi Minh City. He has given chamber concerts throughout Europe, and for the British Council in Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia and Sri Lanka; as a member of the chamber group Double Image he took part in the Arts Council's recent Year of the Artist scheme.

His solo performances have included contemporary music festivals in London (Almeida), Huddersfield, New York, Belfast, and on BBC Radio 3 and Radio Denmark. In May 2000 he made his solo debut at the Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

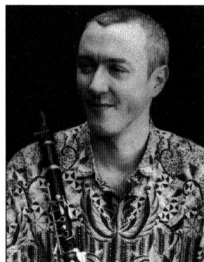


Photo Caroline Forbes

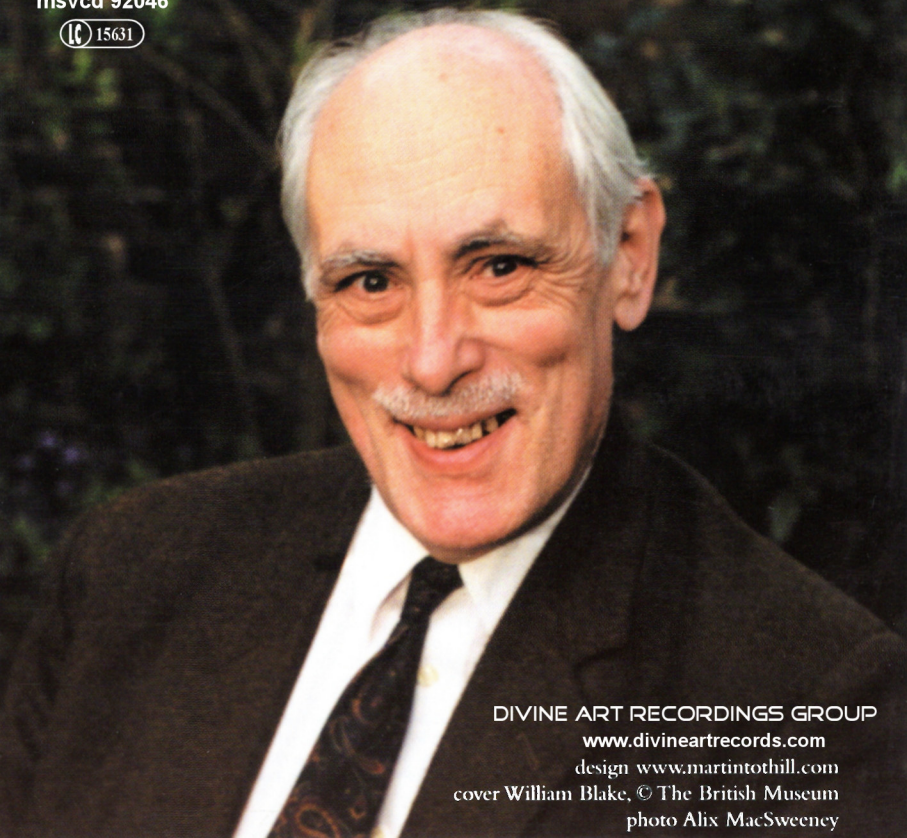
Photo Hanyu Chihala



At the forefront of a new generation of percussionists **Julian Warburton** is much sought after as a soloist, recitalist and ensemble player. Over the last year he has given a series of critically acclaimed recitals at the Wignmore Hall, Tabernacle (Notting Hill), Harewood House and Flanders Festival. In addition he has performed the world premiere of Joby Talbot's Percussion Concerto which was written especially for him and was later recorded by BBC Radio 3. Abroad he has given a series of duo recitals as the 'Percussion Duo, London' with Colin Currie in Switzerland and toured as a soloist throughout Brazil and India under the auspices of the British Council. He has also worked with the London Sinfonietta, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Endymion and Nash Ensembles, Icebreaker, Britten Sinfonia and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Born in Yorkshire, Julian Warburton studied percussion at Huddersfield University and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. In 1996 he was selected for representation by Young Concert Artists Trust, the first percussionist in their history.



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