

THE LIGHT GARDEN trilogy

Sadie Harrison

traditional Afghan music

Ensemble Bakhtar

METIER



THE LIGHT GARDEN trilogy

LONTANO - Odaline de la Martinez

The Tate Ensemble

Peter Sheppard Skærved Andrew Sparling

with traditional Afghan music

ENSEMBLE BAKHTAR

1. **Naghma-ye kashâl Bairami** 6:17
John Baily (rubâb) Matthaïos Tsaourides (pontic lyra) Veronica Doubleday (harmonium)
Ustad Asif Mahmood (tabla) (Ensemble Bakhtar)
2. **SADIE HARRISON The Light Garden** for mixed Quintet 14:56
The Tate Ensemble
3. **Bibi Gol Afruz (Shining Flower Lady)** 6:56
Matthaïos Tsaourides (pontic lyra) Ustad Asif Mahmood (tabla) (Ensemble Bakhtar)
4. **SADIE HARRISON The Fourteenth Terrace** for solo clarinet and ensemble 14:01
Lontano - Andrew Sparling (solo clarinet) Odaline de la Martinez (conductor)
5. **Allah Hu (This is God)** 6:48
Veronica Doubleday (voice) (Ensemble Bakhtar)
6. **SADIE HARRISON Bavad Khair Baqi!** for solo violin 10:28
Peter Sheppard Skærved
7. **Siah Cheshm-e Khumari (Your captivating black eyes)** 8:24
John Baily (rubâb) Matthaïos Tsaourides (pontic lyra) Veronica Doubleday (voice / harmonium)
Ustad Asif Mahmood (tabla) (Ensemble Bakhtar)

This recording was made at Christ's Hospital, Horsham on 4 January 2003 (tracks 2 & 4), Holy Trinity Church, Weston on 27 January 2003 (tracks 1, 3, 5 & 7), and St John's Church, Loughton on 6 March 2003 (track 6).

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SADIE HARRISON

THE LIGHT GARDEN trilogy with traditional Afghan music

Naghma-ye kashâl Bairami

Ensemble Bakhtar

The *naghma-ye kashâl* is an extended instrumental piece, a genre of art music specific to Afghanistan. It can be performed as a solo piece on plucked lutes such as *rubâb*, *tanbur* and *dutâr* or as a group instrumental piece by a typical urban band (singer accompanied by harmonium, *rubâb*, *tabla* with other chordophones). The *naghma-ye kashâl* is played at the start of an evening's performance of music at a wedding party or Ramazân concert. The *Bairami* mode is the most popular mode and can be played at any time of day or night. This performance is played by *rubâb*, Pontic *lyra*, harmonium and *tabla*.

SADIE HARRISON The Light Garden (2001) for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano The Tate Ensemble

'ONLY THIS PLACE OF BEAUTY, THIS TEMPLE OF NOBILITY, CONSTRUCTED FOR THE PRAYER OF SAINTS AND THE EPIPHANY OF CHERUBS, WAS FIT TO STAND IN SO VENERABLE A SANCTUARY AS THIS HIGHWAY OF ARCHANGELS, THIS THEATRE OF HEAVEN, THE LIGHT GARDEN OF THE GODFORGIVEN ANGEL KING WHOSE REST IS IN THE GARDEN OF HEAVEN, BABUR THE CONQUEROR.'

The Light Garden (an early name for Afghanistan) takes its title from this evocative 17th-century inscription found on the tomb of the warrior-poet Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur. Descended from Ghengis Khan and Tamerlane the Great, Babur was founder of the Mughal dynasty, ruling from 1483 to 1530. Although known principally for his warfaring, he was also an architect and designer responsible for constructing a number of fabulous gardens in Afghanistan and India. His autobiography, the *Baburnama*, is one of the outstanding pieces of Mughul literature.

The piece contrasts two types of music. The first is slow and gentle, a lament played by a solo viola, recalling the sound of a Pontic *lyra*. The second is fast, aggressive and highly virtuosic where motifs are thrown around the ensemble at increasing speed. The form of *The Light Garden* is based on an Afghan instrumental composition, the *naghma-ye kashâl*, and the music is written using a *râg* though the soundworld is clearly completely different from that of the original. The *râg* is processed out of the music subsumed below layers of systematic transformation – an appropriation and destruction of the initial source. The work ends with this scale heard clearly as a 'fluttering' and saccharine chord accompanying a crying Eb clarinet solo. At this point the contrast between the two moods is at its greatest,

the clarinet completely at odds with its context. Though suggesting peace this ending is in fact a false comfort; the soundworld, whilst being immediately attractive and unalienating is itself alienated from the work's Afghan source and thus darkly ironic.

The Light Garden is extremely difficult to perform not least because the players are required to call out texts as they play. They speak the name of the piece in Afghan Persian (*Bagh-e-Nur*), also calling out the pitch names in *Sargam* (*Sa Re Ga Ma Pe De Na Sa*) used in the transmission of music from master to student.

The work was commissioned by The Tate Ensemble in 2002 with funds from The Holst Foundation. It received its first performance at Carnegie Hall, New York in June 2001.

Bibi Gol Afruz (Shining Flower Lady)

Ensemble Bakhtar

This is a traditional Herati lovesong performed as an instrumental improvisation by Pontic *lyra* and *tabla*. An introduction in free rhythm introduces the character of the mode which is traditionally used in both Greek and Afghan music. The *tabla* enters in the second half of the piece with increasingly decorative material and an accelerando towards the end.

'Shining flower lady, I will follow you day and night'.

SADIE HARRISON The Fourteenth Terrace (2002) for solo clarinet and ensemble Lontano

The Fourteenth Terrace is the second in a trilogy of works that take their inspiration from the life and works of the warrior-poet Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur. At his request, Babur was buried in one of his own gardens, now known as the Bagh-e-Babur. His tomb stands on the fourteenth terrace of the garden overlooking Kabul and its surrounding countryside. Typically Persian, the Bagh-e-Babur was once bordered by marble-edged streams, reservoirs and waterfalls, constructed within strict geometric patterns. It was said to be the first example of a Mughul 'paradise garden'. Until its destruction in 2001, the garden contained plane and mulberry trees planted by Babur's grandson, Shah Jahan, in 1640.

Superficially, *The Fourteenth Terrace* seems to share several characteristics with its predecessor; the use of the extreme register of the Eb clarinet which opens the work; the introductory nature of the solo; the build towards a passionate and explosive climax through the increasing complexity of the rhythmic material and contrapuntal lines (derived from the Afghan *âstâi du la*); the dissolve into a lyrical slow movement with a clear statement of the *râg*; the use of voices following the same pattern as in *The Light Garden*, from forced breath to hard syllabic attacks to text, and finally in this second work into

singing. However, the tone of this work is intended to be very different. The use of Afghan musical materials is abandoned in favour of pictorial and architectural sources taken primarily from Muhammad Amin Kazwini's *Pādshāhnāma* (a seventeenth-century account of Babur's life in which the gardens are described in great detail). In *The Light Garden* the *naghma-ye-kashāl* could be seen as a signifier for the whole country of Afghanistan, but in this work only its ghost remains. As the focus moves, here the structure of Babur's gardens provide the framework for the piece.

'The burial garden was 500 yards (gaz) long; its ground was in fifteen terraces, 30 yards apart. Babur's tomb is on the fourteenth terrace.... From the twelfth terrace running-water flows along the line (rasta) of the avenue..... and on the ninth terrace there was to be a reservoir 11x11 yards, bordered with Kabul marble, and on the tenth terrace one 15x15, and at the entrance to the garden another 15x15, also with a marble border...'

Extract from *Babur-Nama (Memoirs of Babur)* – Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi, translated by Annette Susannah Beveridge (London, 1921)

I constructed the work's proportions from the dimensions given in this description as if walking from the first terrace to the fifteenth. The arrival at the tomb is marked by the clarinettist's whispered recitation in Afghan Persian of an inscription from Babur's Mosque (the Babri Masjid) in Ajodhya (Oudh) in Uttar Pradesh near Faizabad. The work closes with a lullaby, inspired by music sung by Herati women to the accompaniment of the *dāireh* or frame-drum.

The work received its first performance and broadcast in 2002 performed by soloist, Andrew Sparling with Lontano, conducted by Odaline de la Martinez at the Purcell Room, South Bank.

Allāh Hu (This is God)

Ensemble Bakhtar

This is a type of lullaby which is improvised at the side of a rocking cradle to lull a child to sleep in the afternoon. The constant refrain, *Allāh Hu* is a Sufi incantation meaning 'This is God' and the piece is designed to bring blessings and peace to the child. The last lines of the text refer to stages in Sufi initiation.

'I say to God, may my child sleep happily and peacefully. I say to God, flower of the cherry, apple and apricot trees, the tree of my work has washed away. My child has fallen asleep.

I say to God, flower of the plum, there are three pigeons in the tower.

One is burnt, one is cooked, one is saying God's name in meditation.'

SADIE HARRISON *Bavad Khair Baqi!* (2002) for solo violin
Peter Sheppard Skærvæd

The final work in the trilogy *Bavad Khair Baqi!* (*May this goodness last forever*), shifts the perspective from the gardens to the tomb of Babur itself. Two inscriptions are used as source material for the piece. The first reuses the text from the Babri Masjid in Ajodhya, the second comes from the entrance to Babur's tomb. These beautiful texts can be likened to the gardens in which both are found. As the natural forms of the plants and water are controlled within the architect's geometric designs so these lyrical inscriptions have been constructed according to specific numerical values. For example, the title of the work, *Bavad Khair Baqi!* totals 935, this being the year (AH) that the mosque was finished. These three numbers, 9, 3 and 5 are used throughout the piece to create the work's proportions, and to some extent the rhythmic character of the music.

The use of numbers to create an architecture for the work is one of several aspects linking this piece to its companions. Much of the material from the earlier works is re-used, condensed and fractured to create a mosaic structure with highly contrasted and clearly delineated colours – the solo viola's lament returns, as does the climax from *The Light Garden*, the clear statement of the *râg* as the piece draws to a close, the use of consonant cadential trills, vocalisations, and at its most extreme moment, the violin is transformed into the screaming Eb clarinet from *The Fourteenth Terrace*. The end of the work is intended as a musical reconciliation of all the various elements which run through the trilogy. Towards the end the *râg* emerges from the pitches of the most violent music, in turn imbuing these pitches with its own consonant luminosity. But this reconciliation is hard won – the physicality of the music and the strain that it puts on the performer was integral to its composition. The work is meant to be a struggle – edgy, desperate, with suppressed aggression and exhausting.

Bavad Khair Baqi! was written for Peter Sheppard Skærvæd and first performed by him at the Glyptothek Museum in Munich in a gallery of ancient Greek sculptures. Afghanistan was invaded by Alexander the Great in c.332BC, the people of Nuristan in northern Afghanistan being direct descendants of Alexander's soldiers. The relationship between the two cultures is made more explicit through my attempt to recapture the sound of the *lyra* in the opening music.

On this CD, my three pieces are framed by traditional songs and instrumental music from Afghanistan, performed by British, Greek and Afghan musicians. Inevitably, references will be made between the soundworlds and structures of our musics. Through my notes I am inviting listeners to hear echoes of the *naghma-ye-kashâl*, the *râg*, and the Pontic *lyra* in

the trilogy. However, this juxtaposition is as much about celebrating the differences between the cultures as about finding commonality. At times there is a tension, but one that comes from the challenge of hearing such contrasting music side by side rather than through any cultural assertion of superiority.

All three works have dual dedications: firstly to the performers who gave the individual works their premieres – the Tate Ensemble; Andrew Sparling, Odaline de la Martinez and Lontano; Peter Sheppard Skærved – secondly, to Veronica Doubleday and John Baily, members of Ensemble Bakhtar. Without their knowledge and love of Afghanistan, its music and its musicians, this project would be much less than it has become. I am grateful to them for the insights they have given me into an extraordinary country, *'this highway of archangels, this theatre of heaven, the light garden of Afghanistan'*.

Siah Cheshm-e Khumari (Your captivating black eyes) **Ensemble Bakhtar**

This is a traditional Herati folksong addressed to a beloved with beautiful eyes. It is performed by singer accompanied by harmonium, *dutâr*, Pontic *lyra* and *tabla*.

'Your captivating black eyes, like a tulip you melt my heart.

You open your black eyes and make me like Majun the distracted lover.

Aren't you afraid of the Day of Judgement?

I'm burning and you just watch me.'

© 2003 Sadie Harrison (Harrison pieces)

© 2003 John Baily and Veronica Doubleday (Ensemble Bakhtar)

Sadie Harrison was born in Adelaide, Australia and moved to England in 1970. Performances of her music, many of them international, have been given by Lontano, London Chamber Symphony, Music Projects/London, Ixion, Bournemouth Sinfonietta, Gemini, also the Kreutzer Quartet, Double Image, Endymion Ensemble, Capricorn, the Tate Ensemble, the Cambridge New Music Players and the Composers Ensemble.

Her music has recently been released on Sargasso, BML, METIER and Clarinet Classics, broadcast on BBC Radio 3, in Eastern Europe, Canada, Japan, Australia, America and The Netherlands, and selected for several festival performances, most notably *No Title Required* was the only work chosen to represent Australia at the ISCM World Music Days in 2002.

In addition to her compositional work, Sadie has recently been commissioned to write a book on Alexander Scriabin for the Life and Times series, Haus Publications for November 2004. She has also contributed articles for MGG 2003 Barenreiter Press. Sadie's music is published by UYMP and is represented by the Australian Music Centre.

Sadie was Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths College, London until 2002 and now teaches composition at Bath Spa University. She is married, lives in Wiltshire and has a daughter, Freya.



Veronica Doubleday, Sadie Harrison, Matthaios Tsahourides, John Baily & Ustad Arif Mahmood. Photograph © David Lefebvre

Ensemble Bakhtar is one of the principal groups specialising in the performance of traditional music from Afghanistan. The Ensemble's members have studied with master musicians, most notably, Zainab Herawi, Herat's leading professional singer, Ustad Mahmood and Ustad Mohammad Omar, respectively the *tabla* and *rubab* masters in Kabul. Members of Ensemble Bakhtar have recently performed at the Albert Hall, the Teatro Massimo Palermo for UNESCO, and for His Majesty Zahir Shah in Kabul.

Veronica Doubleday and John Baily are British ethnomusicologists and performers who spent over two years studying in Herat. Although both have written extensively on the music and the social situation of musicians in Afghanistan, their research extends to the music of Nepal, Iran, Pakistan and the South-Asian communities of Britain.

Matthaios Tsahourides was born in Greece, though his grandfather and teacher, a famous *lyra* player, originated from the Black Sea region of Turkey (Pontos). Matthaios's main instrument, the Pontic *lyra*, also originates from this region. He also plays the violin, the Greek lute and the *oud*.

Ustad Arif Mahmood comes from a celebrated family of musicians in Kabul. He is the youngest of three *tabla*-playing brothers, sons of Ustad Mahmood. His ancestor was one of a number of performers brought over from India as court musicians in the 1860s. These families have maintained the tradition of Indian music up to the present day. Ustad Arif plays in the Punjabi *tabla* style.



Since its foundation in 1976, **Lontano** has established itself as one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of twentieth-century music. Lontano's work includes themed seasons in London, opera and music-theatre productions, workshop and educational projects, concerts and tours throughout the UK and abroad, and most recently, regular recordings on its own LORELT record label. Lontano has a very high reputation abroad and the group's foreign tours have taken them to Europe, the USA, Canada and both South and Central America. Lontano's programmes are widely regarded for providing a platform to under-represented composers from Europe to South America.

Caroline Balding (violin I) Matthew Truscott (violin II) Marina Ascherson (viola) James Potter ('cello)
Corrado Canonici (double bass) Richard Benjafield (percussion) Dominic Sanders (piano)

The Tate Ensemble is a London-based ensemble playing music covering three centuries. Individual members are all soloists in their own right and share between them an abundance of awards and prizes. As an ensemble they were finalists in the Royal Overseas League Chamber Music Competition.

The ensemble have performed at the Newbury and Aldeburgh festivals, the Pump Room, Bath; St. Paul's Arts Festival, New York and in June 2002, with an award from the Holst Foundation, they made their debut to critical acclaim in the Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York.

Vicky Wright (clarinet) Ruth Rogers (violin)
Gils Kramer (viola) Jonathan Ayling ('cello)
Sarah Nicolls (piano)





Peter Sheppard Skærved is one of very few violinists who tour internationally with an enormous unaccompanied repertoire – from the Gobi Desert to Sarajevo, from Kiev to New York. Too many composers to list have written for Peter. His recording on METIER Records of works by McCabe and Rawsthorne (MSV CD92029) was nominated for a Gramophone Award in 2002. In August 2003, Peter released the first complete recording of George Rochberg's 95-minute Caprice Variations (METIER: MSV CD92065), in celebration of the composer's 85th birthday.

Peter plays the 1699 'Angelina Crespi' Stradivarius.

Andrew Sparling (clarinet) played with Lontano first in 1987. He is also a member of Apartment House, Ensemble Exposé and Double Image. He is principal clarinetist of Almeida Opera and The Old Mahogany Bar Band – the orchestra of Broomhill Opera at Wilton's Music Hall – and has played guest principal clarinet with many orchestras including the Philharmonia, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta.

Solo performances have included festivals in London, Huddersfield, New York and Belfast, and recordings for BBC Radio 3 and Danish Radio. His solo debut at the Royal Festival Hall was in May 2000 with the Philharmonia Orchestra. He has two recording projects due for release during 2004: a disc of new solo works on METIER (MSV CD92080) and one of recent solo and chamber music on NMC. He has appeared on BBC 1, BBC4 and Channel 4 TV, and in 2003 he made his television acting debut as clarinetist Anton Stadler in the BBC's "The Genius of Mozart".



Odaline de la Martinez was born in Cuba and educated in the United States, finally settling in London where she studied at the Royal Academy of Music. She founded Lontano in 1976 and is also responsible for the founding of the London Chamber Symphony, the European Women's Orchestra, and in 1992 LORELT (Lontano Records). One of the liveliest and most enterprising musical personalities on the contemporary scene, Martinez became the first woman to conduct an entire programme at the Proms in 1984 and she continues to champion the cause of women musicians, Latin-American music and contemporary music. She has worked with all the BBC orchestras, many other leading orchestras in Great Britain, and abroad in North and South America, Europe, Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

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On this terrace not one leaf of the roses shall survive
In the bitter breaths of autumn.
Let them be glad of a few days of peace in my garden
When the nightingales yell and tear their breasts.
When those lamentations are silent
The dignity and glory of this garden do not survive.

KHUSHAL KHAN, b.1613. Translated by Peter Levi.

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