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DAVID BRUCE

GUMBOOTS

JOHANNES BRAHMS

CLARINET QUINTET

Julian Bliss | Carducci Quartet

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Gumboots

David Bruce (b.1970)

1	Part One	[11.36]
2	Dance I	[2.02]
3	Dance II	[1.28]
4	Dance III	[1.57]
5	Dance IV	[3.00]
6	Dance V	[2.52]

Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

7	I. Allegro	[11.57]
8	II. Adagio	[9.52]
9	III. Andantino	[4.26]
10	IV. Con moto	[8.48]

Total timings: [58.00]

JULIAN BLISS CLARINET
CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET

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PERFORMER'S NOTE

I am always on the lookout for new and exciting music, especially when it comes to chamber works. A year or so prior to recording this album a music festival asked me if I would play David Bruce's piece, *Gumboots*. When I listened to it I thought it was fantastic and exactly the sort of piece that really interests me – exciting, challenging and fun for the audience. David had managed to create such evocative music, inspired by Gumboot Dancing – a form of secret communication developed by miners, chained together while they worked in brutal conditions in the flooded gold mines of South Africa, under Apartheid. I got in touch with David and found out that we only lived a matter of minutes from each other, so we decided to meet at a local pub and talk through the piece. This was to be my first foray into the world of bass clarinet, something I'd always wanted to explore. After the first performance and after seeing the audience reaction I decided that I had to record this piece, not only because I wanted to, but because I thought everybody should hear it! Pairing it with Brahms's Quintet was quite a natural choice and one that David and I discussed quite a bit. Whilst they seem polar opposites,

they work really well together. I really liked the idea that people will be familiar with the Brahms, and will hopefully enjoy our rendition of such an iconic work, whilst also having the opportunity to discover what I believe is a great addition to the chamber repertoire.

Working with the Carducci Quartet was and always is an absolute pleasure. We get on well which helps when you're in a recording studio together for a few days! What has always struck me when I play with the Carduccis is their ability to make the quartet at times sound like one instrument, one voice. Their attention to detail is unlike any other.

So here we have it, something old and something new; something familiar and great, and something fresh and innovative. I hope you enjoy discovering *Gumboots* and end up loving it as much as I do. Thanks David for writing a corker!

Julian Bliss, 2016

GUMBOOTS

There is a paradox in music, and indeed all art – the fact that life-enriching art has been produced, even inspired by conditions of tragedy, brutality and oppression, a famous example being Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, written while he was in a prisoner of war camp. Gumboot Dancing bears this trait – it was born out of the brutal labour conditions in South Africa under Apartheid, in which black miners were chained together and wore Gumboots (wellington boots) while they worked in the flooded gold mines, because it was cheaper for the owners to supply the boots than to drain the floodwater from the mine. Apparently slapping the boots and chains was used by the workers as a form of communication which was otherwise banned in the mine, and this later developed into a form of dance. If the examples of Gumboot Dancing available online are anything to go by, it is characterised by a huge vitality and zest for life. So this for me is a striking example of how something beautiful and life-enhancing can come out of something far more negative. Of course this paradox has a far simpler explanation - the resilience of the human spirit.

My *Gumboots* is in two parts of roughly equal length, the first is tender and slow moving, at times 'yearning'; at times seemingly expressing a kind of tranquility and inner peace. The second is a complete contrast, consisting of five, ever-more-lively 'gumboot dances', often joyful and always vital.

However, although there are some African music influences in the music, I don't see the piece as being specifically 'about' the Gumboot dancers, if anything it could be seen as an abstract celebration of the rejuvenating power of dance, moving as it does from introspection through to celebration. I would like to think however, that the emotional journey of the piece, and specifically the complete contrast between the two halves will force the listener to conjecture some kind of external 'meaning' to the music – the tenderness of the first half should 'haunt' us as we enjoy the bustle of the second; that bustle itself should force us to question or reevaluate the tranquility of the first half. But to impose a meaning beyond that would be stepping on dangerous ground – the fact is you will choose your own meaning, and hear your own story, whether I want you to or not.

David Bruce, St Albans, Sept 2008



JULIAN BLISS

Julian Bliss is one of the world's finest clarinetists, excelling as a concerto soloist, chamber musician, jazz artist, masterclass leader and tireless musical explorer. He has inspired a generation of young players as guest lecturer and creator of his Leblanc Bliss range of affordable clarinets, and introduced a substantial new audience to his instrument.

Born in the U.K., Julian started playing the clarinet at the age of four, going on to study in the U.S. at the University of Indiana and in Germany under Sabine Meyer. The breadth and depth of his artistry are reflected in the diversity and distinction of his work. In recital and chamber music he has played at most of the world's leading festivals and venues including Gstaad, Mecklenburg Vorpommern, Verbier, Wigmore Hall (London) and Lincoln Center (New York). As a soloist, performances include concerts with the Sao Paulo Symphony, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Paris, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia and London Philharmonic. In 2012 he established the Julian Bliss Septet, creating programmes inspired by King of Swing, Benny Goodman, and Latin music

from Brazil and Cuba that have gone on to be performed to packed houses in festivals, Ronnie Scott's (London), the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam) and across the U.S. Recent album releases receiving rave reviews from critics, album of the week spots and media attention include his recording of Mozart and Nielsen's Concertos with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, a chamber disc featuring Schubert and Schumann with soprano Ailish Tynan and pianist Christopher Glynn and a recital album of Russian and French composers with American pianist, Bradley Moore. 2016 sees the premiere of a new concerto written by jazz legend, Wayne Shorter, and a recording of Steve Reich's *New York Counterpoint*.

www.julianbliss.com



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CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET

Matthew Denton and **Michelle Fleming** violins
Eoin Schmidt-Martin viola
Emma Denton cello

Winners of international competitions, including the Concert Artists Guild International Competition 2007 and Finland's Kuhmo International Chamber Music Competition, the Carducci Quartet has appeared at prestigious venues across the globe including the Wigmore Hall, London; National Concert Hall, Dublin; Tivoli Concert Hall, Copenhagen; Carnegie Hall, New York and Library of Congress and John F Kennedy Center, Washington D.C. 2015 saw them present the complete cycle of Shostakovich's 15 string quartets in Europe, South America and the USA, with a supporting disc released for Signum Classics. This is followed in 2017 with *Inspired by Beethoven*, celebrating 20 years of the Carducci Quartet.

Acclaimed for their interpretation of contemporary repertoire, the Carducci Quartet has premiered numerous works composed for them; quartets by composers including Huw Watkins, Huang Ruo, John McCabe and Adrian Williams;

quintets by Michael Berkeley, Sven-Ingo Koch, David Bruce and Anthony Gilbert.

In addition to their busy concert schedule, the quartet curates festivals in both Cheltenham, UK and Castagneto-Carducci, Italy: the town from which they took their name.

www.carducciquartet.com



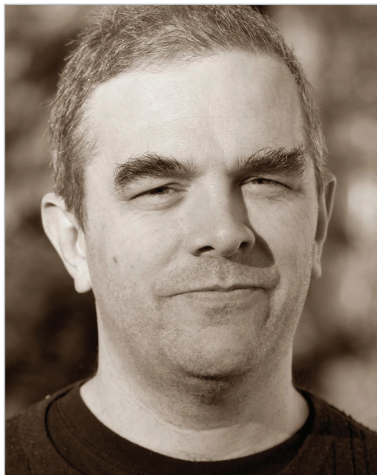
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DAVID BRUCE

Born in Connecticut, USA in 1970, composer David Bruce grew up in England and now enjoys a growing reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. In the 2013/14 season David was Associate Composer of the San Diego Symphony, for whom he wrote three pieces, *Night Parade* for the orchestra's highly successful Carnegie Hall debut in October 2013; the violin concerto *Fragile Light* for Gil Shaham; and *Cymbeline* for mandolin and string quartet for mandolin virtuoso and close collaborator Avi Avital. His fourth Carnegie Hall commission *That Time with You* (2013) for mezzo-soprano Kelley O'Connor follows *Steampunk* (2011), *Gumboots* (2008) and *Piosenki* (2006), which have all gone on to be widely performed by leading ensembles around the world. Bruce has also written works for the LPO, Daniel Hope, Dawn Upshaw and the Chamber Music Society of the Lincoln Center, as well as Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble (*Cut the Rug*, recorded on Sony). In the UK, David was 2012-13 Composer-in-Residence with the Royal Opera House, London and his large-scale opera *Nothing* (after the book by Janne Teller) co-commissioned by Glyndebourne and ROH, premiered in Glyndebourne in February 2016.

Bruce's chamber opera *The Firework Maker's Daughter* (after the Philip Pullman story) toured the UK and New York in 2013 and was shortlisted for both the British Composer Awards, and the 2014 Olivier Awards for Best New Opera Production. It returned to the ROH Lindbury Studios for a 27-performance run in December 2015.

www.davidbruce.net



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