

# THE FABULOUS SIR JOHN



A tribute to the late Sir John Manduell  
music by William Alwyn | Michael Berkeley | Adam Gorb | Richard Stoker  
... and Sir John Manduell



Rachel Speirs | Linda Merrick | John Turner | Peter Lawson  
Victoria String Quartet

# THE FABULOUS SIR JOHN

A tribute to Sir John Manduell

	<b>Adam Gorb (b.1958)</b>	
1	Aria for Sir John <i>John Turner / Victoria String Quartet</i>	3:51
	<b>John Manduell (1928-2017)</b>	
2	Elegy <i>Victoria String Quartet</i>	8:13
3	Recitative and Aria <i>Benedict Holland / Kim Becker</i> Trois Chansons de la Renaissance	5:24
4	I. Mignonne, allons voir si la Rose	3:26
5	II. D'un vanneur de blé aux vents	2:51
6	III. A sa dame malade <i>Rachel Speirs / Peter Lawson</i>	1:44
7	Bell Birds from Nelson <i>John Turner</i>	2:45
8	Nocturne and Scherzo <i>Linda Merrick / Benedict Holland / Kim Becker / Jennifer Langridge</i>	11:23
9	Tom's Twinkle <i>John Turner / Peter Lawson</i>	1:38
	<b>Michael Berkeley (b.1948)</b>	
10	A Dark Waltz <i>John Turner / Victoria String Quartet</i>	4:44
	<b>William Alwyn (1905-1985)</b>	
	5 Songs from "Songs of Innocence"	
11	I. The Ecchoing Green	2:15
12	II. Spring	1:14
13	III. The Divine Image	3:46
14	IV. Laughing Song	0:59
15	V. Nurse's Song <i>Rachel Speirs / Victoria String Quartet</i>	4:09
	<b>Richard Stoker (1938-2021)</b>	
16	Memento Mary Magdalene, Op. 84 <i>John Turner / Victoria String Quartet</i>	6:04
<b>Total playing time</b>		<b>65:43</b>



# THE MUSIC

***Aria for Sir John***, for recorder and string quartet

**ADAM GORB**

The composer wrote: *Aria for John* should really be titled *Aria for a John x 2* as it was written in memory of Sir John Manduell but the first performance was given by John Turner on treble recorder with the Victoria String Quartet on 6th April 2019 in the Cosmo Rodewald Concert Hall in Manchester University. Initially I wanted to write a short piece reflecting both my own and John's love for the great English and South African game of test cricket, but that became subsumed in the intricacies of finding the right pitches (no pun intended!)

Professor Adam Gorb (born 1958) studied Music at Cambridge University and Composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London. His compositions include operas, orchestral, ensemble, chamber, solo and choral works, and have been performed, broadcast and recorded world-wide. In the UK his compositions have had performances at contemporary music festivals in Huddersfield, Cheltenham, Manchester, Hampstead and Highgate, Spitalfields and Canterbury, and he has had concerts entirely devoted to his music in the UK, the USA and Canada. His concert band works have won prizes in the UK and abroad including three British Composer Awards. Three CDs devoted to his work have been released in 2010, 2011 and 2016. His first opera *Anya 17* (2012) has been performed in the UK, Romania, Germany and the USA. His second opera *The Path to Heaven* was premiered in Leeds and Manchester in June 2018 and received two further productions in the USA in 2019 and 2020. A CD of 24 Preludes for piano played by Clare Hammond was released in March 2022. Adam Gorb is Head of School of Composition at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, UK. [www.adamgorb.co.uk](http://www.adamgorb.co.uk)

***Elegy***, for string quartet

**JOHN MANDUELL**

This short piece, in this its original version, was written in 2006 and was dedicated to Christopher Rowland, the distinguished first violin of the Fitzwilliam String Quartet and an admired teacher at the RNCM, "in affectionate admiration and enduring gratitude

for a lifetime of inspired dedication to chamber music". In this version it was first performed by the Navarra String Quartet at the RNCM on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017. One of Manduell's most admired earlier works was his String Quartet of 1970, which is only in two movements, and whilst writing this new piece he told me that he originally intended a much belated finale to that quartet. Indeed in the premiere both works were performed together as "Quartet Fulfilled". But he subsequently changed his mind and decided that it should stand independently and be called "Quartet Movement". At a later date Kent Nagano suggested the addition a double bass part and performed it with a string ensemble on 2nd July 2017 with Ensemble Magellan in Forest Hill, California. The work was then retitled "Elegy", which is appropriate not only for the tenor of the music but also as the work now stands in Christopher Rowlands' memory.

The composer's note on the piece is as follows: "I wrote this piece in its original version in 2006 in a hotel room in Leeds while accompanying my wife, pianist Renna Kellaway, who was serving on the jury of the renowned Leeds International Piano

Competition. As a composer, I don't go in for didactic expositions, especially of my own compositions, but I do believe in logical structure. It is a simple piece honouring a fine string player who argued fervently that the absolute purity of music was to be expressed and found in the medium of the string quartet. That may be so, but we composers have to find our own individual 'voice' to express and to communicate. A string quartet, by its very make-up, offers plenty of challenges such as melding the individual sound lines and compass of the different instruments into a cohesive whole, while bearing in mind the soloistic or supporting elements the layers themselves will feel, recognize or seek as they put the work together and blend it within their own characteristic quartet voice will probably admit to first approaching the string quartet in a spirit of nervous humility. My own first quartet dates back to 1970 at a time when I first felt sufficiently ready to explore and meet the challenges of the string quartet. It was written for entirely different reasons from the Elegy. For me, ideas and sounds come spontaneously and they are a gripping force coloured by absorbed influences which propel first sketches and their subsequent development."

Kent Nagano writes: "After hearing that Sir John was enduring health challenges, I visited him and Renna at their country home. Although he was physically limited, clearly his creative thinking and intellectual capacity were as fiery and sharp as ever. Spontaneously the idea came to commission a new work for the Magellan Ensemble, the resident ensemble of our annual chamber music festival based in San Francisco. After reflecting for a few weeks Sir John concluded that he would not be able to complete a new work but instead had the idea to adapt a work he had originally conceived for string quartet into a work for string orchestra. Sir John retitled the work "Elegy", and offered the world premiere to us. The Elegy's premiere in San Francisco was met with an astonishingly enthusiastic success and a spontaneous cheering was so prolonged we, the performers, were taken aback. Re-listening to the documentary video today, I found the work to be a masterpiece – one of Sir John's best. A work firmly anchored in the future yet written in a way that one hears the past – one recognises the universality of humanism."

***Recitative and Aria***, for violin and viola

**JOHN MANDUELL**

The composer wrote: "I was delighted to be asked to write this short work to honour the memory of Peter Crossley-Holland, who had been very kind to me in my student days, and whose friendship I had subsequently come to enjoy as a colleague at the BBC. Peter was the first established figure in British music I met when, as a somewhat bewildered student from South Africa, I arrived in England. Peter was already in charge of all music programming for the BBC's Third Programme when I nervously knocked on his door, armed only with a thoughtful letter from a distant relative of his who ran a garage in Zululand - by any reckoning a slightly unusual channel of introduction.

The piece takes as its starting point the two salient letters of Peters surname, the H being the German nomenclature for B natural. It's form is simplicity itself: a short recitative leading to an aria in 11/8 which I, at least, hear as evoking the character of a man who throughout his life was the personification of gentle generosity." The first performance was given by Richard Howarth (violin) and Tom Dunn (viola) in the Bridgewater Hall on 27th August 2002. There is a later version for violin and cello.

***Trois Chansons de la Renaissance***, for soprano and piano

**JOHN MANDUELL**

1. Mignonne, allons voir si la Rose
2. D'un vanneur de blé aux vents;
3. A sa dame malade

The composer wrote: "This set of three songs is one of my earliest surviving works. I wrote them as far back as 1956 at a time when I was still studying with the late Sir Lennox Berkeley as a postgraduate student at the Royal Academy of Music. Looking back with the wisdom of hindsight over half a century later, I wonder whether I was prompted to write these songs by some emulative instinct. Certainly, though I think I was unaware of it at the time, I was treading in Lennox's shadow in that his very first published work was a setting of the same du Bellay poem which he wrote back in 1925 when he was only 22 himself. Unconsciously then, perhaps I was seeking to prove that history really can repeat itself.

Nevertheless my choice of poems owed more to a long-standing love of French Renaissance verse rather than my teacher's example, although Lennox was all his life an enthusiastic Francophile. Selecting these three particular poems was I think both instinctive and evaluative in that on the one hand they form a wonderfully balanced and yet contrasted grouping and on the other that at least the first two are by arguably the greatest of France's Renaissance poets.

In the first, perhaps the most often quoted of all Ronsard's poems, the poet invites young Mignonne to come and look at the purple rose and to realise that her beauty like the rose's will fade all too soon. Du Bellay's poem is redolent of late summer heat and haze as the thresher of the title calmly pursues his work. The Marot is a brief exercise in courteous mockery as the poet chides his ailing lady upon her gastronomic self-indulgence and warns her of the inevitable consequences upon her figure."

The first performance of the cycle was given by Beverley Humphreys at the Royal Academy of Music in 1956.

***Bell Birds from Nelson***, for solo recorder

**JOHN MANDUELL**

This short piece, using treble and descant recorders, was written for a concert on 16th October 2004 at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, to celebrate the seventieth birthday of the composer Anthony Gilbert, who has had a long and distinguished career teaching many of the finest young composers to emerge from the RNCM. The dedication is "For Tony, who so loves the other end of the world." Tony had taught in and relished his teaching and holiday sojourns in Australia. Nelson, where John Manduell heard the bellbirds, is in New Zealand, the home country of one of Manduell's sisters and her clergyman husband.

***Nocturne and Scherzo***, for clarinet and string trio

**JOHN MANDUELL**

Composed in 1967 and dedicated to his friend Alun Hoddinott, this work was premiered at the Cardiff International Festival in 1968, with Jack Brymer as the clarinet soloist. The thematic material is derived from the notes A and H (B natural), being Hoddinott's initials. The Nocturne, with its overtones of Bartok night music, is marked *Molto Adagio*, and the frantic Scherzo, *Quasi una*

*cadenza*. The short coda reprises the opening mood. The music pays homage to some of the avant-garde effects then in vogue, with percussive effects from the strings, such as palm and knuckle slaps on the body of the instrument, col legno on the rims and on the metal music stands, as well as glissandi, quarter tones, and tongue slapping from the clarinet.

***Tom's Twinkle***, for recorder and piano

**JOHN MANDUELL**

This short jeu d'esprit was composed in memory of the composer, artist and craftsman Thomas Pitfield, who taught composition for many years at the Royal Manchester College of Music. It was first performed in a concert to honour Pitfield's memory at the Royal Northern College of music on 20th November 2000. The performers were John Turner and Jonathan Scott. It is in 11/8 throughout, perhaps in subtle homage to Pitfield's own use and love of such irregular time signatures.

***A Dark Waltz***, for recorder and string quartet

**MICHAEL BERKELEY**

The composer writes: *A Dark Waltz* began life for the London Music Masters pieces for young string players which is why it was dedicated to the memory of a great music educationalist, Sir John Manduell. When I came to extend the music, first for John Turner (recorder) and string quartet, and then for Nicholas Daniel (oboe) and Julius Drake (piano), the effects of the coronavirus were beginning to take hold and I lost a close friend. Consequently the 'Valse Triste' nature of the music, with its simple melody, became increasingly sad and, at the close, angry." The piece was originally composed in 2018, and the oboe version premiered by Nicholas Daniel and Julius Drake at a concert in London's Wigmore Hall in June 2020.

Michael Berkeley was born in 1948, the eldest son of Lennox Berkeley and a godson of Benjamin Britten. He was a chorister at Westminster Cathedral before going on to study at the Royal Academy of Music. He later studied under Richard Rodney Bennett and in 1977 won the Guinness Prize for Composition. Berkeley has worked as Composer in Association for both the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and was Artistic Director of the Cheltenham International Festival of Music 1995–2005. He was on the board of the Royal Opera House for several years and Chairman of the Governors of The Royal Ballet. Premieres of his works have been given by ensembles such as the London Symphony Orchestra, Nash Ensemble and the Carducci Quartet. Major commissions include three operas, music for dance and several new works for the BBC Proms as well as an anthem for the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2013 and the new Carol for King's College, Cambridge in 2016. Berkeley has just (summer 2022) completed a new work for the soprano, Carolyn Sampson, counter-tenor, Tim Mead and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Berkeley is the presenter of Radio 3's *Private Passions*. He was appointed a CBE in 2012 and in 2013 was made a non-party political member of the House of Lords.

***5 Songs from "Songs of Innocence"*** for soprano and string quartet

**WILLIAM ALWYN**

1.The Ecchoing Green | 2.Spring | 3.The Divine Image | 4.Laughing Song | 5.Nurse's Song

Andrew Knowles writes: The poetry of William Blake (1757-1827) seemingly captivated Alwyn's musical thought during the earlier part of his composing career, as during the 1930s he produced several songs with the poet's texts (some with piano accompaniment, others with string quartet), a large choral and orchestral work, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and a purely orchestral work entitled *The Innumerable Dance – An English Overture*.

On this recording you will hear five songs from the *Songs of Innocence* cycle (scored for voice and string quartet) in which Alwyn set twelve of Blake's original nineteen poems. These five songs were all composed during May 1931. Alwyn's love of Blake's texts is very apparent throughout all five of the songs, with his imaginative settings further enhancing Blake's beautiful and enchanting words. What is abundantly clear in these early songs is Alwyn's natural sense of melodic flow which exudes a charm and freshness that he was never quite able to recapture in the songs from his later years. It transpired that he would not write another song cycle until nearly forty years later when he composed *Mirages* (to poems of his own invention) in 1970 for baritone and piano.

A note of special thanks must go to composer David Matthews who has realised and elaborated (with a grant from the Ida Carroll Trust) Alwyn's original (and sometimes hard to read!) short score to enable performance and recording to take place.

John Manduell was a composition student of William Alwyn during his first two terms of study at the Royal Academy of Music, many years later producing for Alwyn's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (but Alwyn sadly died shortly before the broadcast), a set of variations for solo recorder based on the main theme from Alwyn's String Trio (1959). John Manduell has written "My regard for the music of Alwyn goes back to my student days. His qualities as a teacher reflected many of his considerable gifts as a composer."

***Memento Mary Magdalene, Op. 84*** for recorder and string quartet

**RICHARD STOKER**

When the composer took part as an actor in the filming of *The Da Vinci Code* in 2005, he was reminded of stories about Mary Magdalene told to him many years before by his grandfather, a Methodist lay preacher, and decided to write this piece as a lament for the ill-fated Mary. It is a single movement work, of profound feeling, marked *Religioso*. The work was first performed by John Turner, with the Adderbury Ensemble, at the Holywell Music Room Oxford on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2008.

**Richard Stoker** was born in 1938 in Castleford, Yorkshire and died in 2021. After studying with Harold Truscott at the Huddersfield School of Music, and privately with Eric Fenby (Delius's amanuensis), he became a pupil of Lennox Berkeley at the Royal Academy of Music, where he won numerous prestigious awards for his compositions. Subsequently he studied in Paris with the legendary Nadia Boulanger. As professor of composition at the Royal Academy he taught many of the leading composers of the next generation.

His compositions include the operas *Johnson Preserv'd* and *Thérèse Raquin*, the musical *Prospero's Magic Island*, two ballet scores, orchestral works including symphonies, a piano concerto, and the overtures *Antic Hay* and *Feast of Fools*, much chamber music

including three string quartets and three violin sonatas, numerous song-cycles and choral works, and a quantity of music for piano and the guitar. As well as being a composer, he was an author, poet, critic, painter, and actor, and also performed and recorded jazz and popular music.

Being a fellow Berkeley pupil, he was a friend of Sir John Manduell, and would have been delighted that his work is included in this collection.

# THE SONG TEXTS

*Manduell: Trois Chansons de la Renaissance*

**1. Mignonne, allons voir si la rose  
(Ronsard)**

Mignonne, allons voir si la rose  
Qui ce matin avoit desclose  
Sa robe de pourpre au soleil  
A point perdu ceste vesprée  
Les plis de sa robe pourprée  
Et son teint au vostre pareil

Las! Voyez comme en peu d'espace,  
Mignonne, elle a dessus la place.  
Las! Las! ses beautez laisse cheoir!  
O vrayment marastre nature,  
Puis qu'une telle fleur ne dure  
Que du matin jusques au soir!

Donc si vous me croyez, Mignonne,  
Tandis que vostre age fleuronne  
En sa plus verte nouveauté,  
Cueillez, Cueillez, vostre jeunesse:  
Comme a ceste fleur, la veillesse  
Fera ternir vostre beauté.

**2. D'un vanneur de blé aux vents  
(du Bellay)**

A vous troppe legère  
Qui d'aele passagère  
Par le monde volez,  
Et d'un sifflant murmure  
L'ombrageuse verdure  
Doulcement esbranlez.

J'offre ces violettes  
Ces lis et ces fleurettes,  
Et ces roses icy.  
Ces vermeillettes roses,  
Tout freschement écloses,  
Et ces oeilletz aussi.

De vostre doulce halaine  
Eventez ceste plaine  
Eventez ce séjour:  
Cependant que j'ahanne  
A mon blé que je vanne  
A la chaleur du jour.



**3. *A sa dame malade*  
(Marot)**

Ma mignonne  
Je vous donne  
Le bon jour.  
Le séjour,  
C'est prison.  
Guérison  
Recouvrez,  
Puis ouvrez  
Vostre porte  
Et qu'on sorte  
Vistement;  
Car Clément  
Le vous mande.  
Va, friande

***Alwyn: Songs of Innocence***

**1. *The Ecchoing Green***

The sun does arise,  
And make happy the skies;  
The merry bells ring  
To welcome the Spring;  
The skylark and thrush,  
The birds of the bush,  
Sing louder around  
To the bells' cheerful sound,  
While our sports shall be seen  
On the Ecchoing Green

Old John, with white hair,  
Does laugh away care,  
Sitting under the oak,  
Among the old folk.  
They laugh at our play,  
And soon they all say:

'Such, such were the joys  
When we all, girls and boys,  
In our youth time were seen  
On the Ecchoing Green.'

Till the little ones, weary,  
No more can be merry;  
The sun does descend,  
And our sports have an end.  
Round the laps of their mothers

De ta bouche,  
Qui se couche  
En danger  
Pour manger  
Cpnfitures;  
Si tu dures  
Trop malade,  
Couleur fade  
Tu prendras  
Et perdras  
L'embonpoint.  
Dieu te doint,  
Santé bonne,  
Ma mignonne

Many sisters and brothers,  
Like birds in their nest,  
Are ready for rest,  
And sport no more seen  
On the darkening Green.

**2. *Spring***

Sound the flute!  
Now it's mute.  
Birds delight  
Day and night;  
Nightingale  
In the dale,  
Lark in the sky,  
Merrily.  
Merrily, merrily, to welcome in the year.

Little boy,  
Full of joy;  
Little girl,  
Sweet and small;  
Cock does crow,  
So do you;  
Merry voice,  
Infant noise.  
Merrily, merrily, to welcome in the year.

Little lamb,  
Here I am;  
Come and lick

My white neck;  
Let me pull  
Your soft wool; Let me kiss  
Your soft face:  
Merrily, merrily, we welcome in the year.

### ***3. The Divine Image***

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,  
All pray in their distress,  
And to these virtues of delight  
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,  
Is God our Father dear;  
And Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love,  
Is man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart;  
Pity, a human face;  
And Love, the human form divine:  
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,  
That prays in his distress,  
Prays to the human form divine:  
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,  
In heathen, Turk, or Jew.  
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell,  
There God is dwelling too.

### ***4. Laughing Song***

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,  
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;  
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,  
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,  
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;  
When Mary and Susan and Emily  
With their sweet round mouths sing 'Ha ha he!'

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,  
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread:  
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,  
To sing the sweet chorus of 'Ha ha he!'

### ***5. Nurse's Song***

When the voices of children are heard on the green,  
And laughing is heard on the hill,  
My heart is at rest within my breast,  
And everything else is still.  
'Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,

And the dews of night arise;  
Come, come, leave off play, and let us away,  
Till the morning appears in the skies.'

'No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,  
And we cannot go to sleep;  
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,  
And the hills are all covered with sheep.'  
'Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,  
And then go home to bed.'  
The little ones leaped, and shouted, and laughed,  
And all the hills echoèd.

# RECOLLECTIONS OF SIR JOHN

*Kent Nagano* writes: Most would agree that Sir John Manduell was what one might refer to as a larger than life character. However, for many of us, Renaissance Man might be a more appropriate reference. The intrinsic fluency of his creative thinking combined with a natural gift for leadership faithfully served him throughout the many chapters of his colourful life. It led to success far beyond egocentrism into a greatness which would influence and benefit future generations.

Our collaboration grew from both his talent as a composer and his brilliant tenure as the founding director of the RNCM. Having been introduced to his compositional work through mutual friend and well known French composer, Gilbert Amy, I found his music poetic, lyrically fresh and original, reflecting a deep integrity. Little did I know at the time that these very words would apply to the panorama of Sir John Manduell's work, from composer, to the BBC, to festival director, to his conception and leadership of major educational institutions.

Over the years he accepted several commissions from me including: *Vistas*. for large orchestra, *Flute's* Concerto - for flute solo playing flute, piccolo, bass flute and alto flute , and large orchestra, and the *Elegy* for string quartet, in a version for string orchestra. Together they form a small part of an impressive legacy which guarantees that Sir John Manduell and his accomplishments will remain a vital part of music history.

*Linda Merrick*, the present Principal of the Royal Northern College of Music writes: It gives me great pleasure to have contributed to this recording, which forms part of the legacy to the Founding Principal of the RNCM, Sir John Manduell. Having known Sir John personally, I admire greatly the astute way he steered the College from its inception into the world-leading institution it is today. He was an inspirational figure who had a clear and compelling vision for the institution and helped to launch the careers of many young musicians who have subsequently gone on to achieve success at the highest levels across the music profession. I was fortunate to perform one of Sir

John's works for solo clarinet and narrator with him in his later years, which was a very moving and memorable experience. I will be forever grateful for the kindness and support he showed me in my initial years as Principal of the RNCM.

# BAILRIGG, BENTHAM AND MANCHESTER

**Bryan Fox** writes: Sir John Manduell's outstanding qualities, character and achievements are already well recorded in the many assessments made during his lifetime and in the many tributes that honour his memory. This personal reflection is offered in deep gratitude to the most remarkable man it has been my good fortune to meet.

For me, it all began in the Autumn of 1970 at the start of our final year at Lancaster University – his as Director of Music, mine as a student of French and Latin. As I recall, prior to my departure for a year in France, and John's arrival, apart from the excellent recitals of given by John Clegg who combined with equal distinction the roles of mathematics lecturer and pianist in residence, Bailrigg campus was a bit of a backwater for the music-lover.

The transformation that greeted me on my return was incredible and life-enhancing – an international subscription concert series in its second year of innovative and exciting programmes, a flourishing music department that welcomed all students intent on developing their musical skills and interests, and opportunities to participate in a wide range of projects that would have been the envy of many established institutions.

On completing my degree – more French and Latin with Music – I could not have believed that the real prize was an invitation to work as John's PA for six months as he began to plan the Northern College of Music (as it was known before the award of the title *Royal* in 1973) and to incorporate the two existing Manchester music colleges (RMCM and NSM), both with proud traditions. In the absence of suitable accommodation for the new headquarters, we were based in his lovely Yorkshire home in High Bentham where my office was the family dining room. During those early days, which, fuelled by excitement and enthusiasm, quite often lasted 14 or 15 hours, I saw at close hand some of the vision, strategy, resolve and precision of someone who was in the process of changing the model of conservatoire training in the UK. When, after some delays, and happily for me an extension to my temporary employment, the NCM opened its doors to students in January 1973, the problems awaiting the occupants of any new home were quickly addressed and mostly resolved without delay or drama. The esprit de corps that soon developed was almost tangible. The College had been established as a higher education institution. John believed that it should also make a contribution to cultural life and had devised an impressive programme of professional events to complement student performances. The atmosphere he created meant that several of us in 'day jobs' readily took on additional roles, and 'Bentham hours', to see the programme through.

His remarkable vision for what he was trying to bring about was matched by his attention to the detail that he felt was an essential part of it. For example, with all the demands placed on him as Principal of the fledgling institution, he took great care to engage with and to consult the student voice through the Student Liaison Committee which he established and always made time to chair. Several of us know from personal experience the great care and support he could offer in difficult times. Michelangelo is credited with saying, 'Genius is infinite painstaking'; and 'If people knew how hard I worked they would not consider me a genius.' Sir John was living proof that there was no implicit contradiction in these statements. His planning was meticulous; his work rate was

prodigious. He also seemed to understand others in a way that enabled him to anticipate what they may be capable of doing before they did. Accomplishing the apparently daunting task would consequently be surprising, satisfying and deeply affirming.

There is no way of adequately describing someone who superbly filled so many roles; any list would exhaust the available space before encompassing its brief. He was unique, and we are all deeply in his debt.

## THE MUSICIANS

Scottish soprano **Rachel Speirs** studied at the Royal Northern College of Music where she won the Betty Bannerman Award for French Song 2020, the Kennedy Strauss Award 2019 adjudicated by Simon Keenlyside, and was a finalist in the Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Prize 2020 adjudicated by Dame Ann Murray and Sarah Tynan. In 2019, Rachel sang works by Sir John Manduell and his contemporaries in a celebration concert at the University of Manchester with the Victoria String Quartet, guitarist Craig Ogden, pianist Peter Lawson, and recorder player John Turner. In her final year of study, Rachel sang Maria Betram in Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* at the RNCM and was due to join Grange Park Opera and Wexford Festival Opera for their Summer seasons. In July 2021 Rachel returned to the theatre post-COVID as Mrs Nordstrom in *A Little Night Music* for Buxton International Festival and then joined English Touring Opera in Spring 2022 singing Chorus and leading roles in their schools show suitable for specialist SEND schools.

Rachel has a particular interest in music-making in education and outreach contexts and became Co-Director of SoundUp Arts CIC, an organisation bringing music and creative arts to people living with dementia, in 2021. Rachel's work has included performances and projects with Opera North, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Random Opera, and Clonter Opera. Rachel has recorded the role of Lotty for Retrospect Opera's 2021 recording of G.A. MacFarren's *The Soldier's Legacy*, and performs regularly in concert and oratorio with British opera companies and choral societies.

**Professor Linda Merrick** is Principal of the Royal Northern College of Music and an internationally-renowned clarinet soloist, recording artist and pedagogue.

Her catalogue of over 40 solo recordings features new concertos she has commissioned by Gary Carpenter, Nigel Clarke, Martin Ellerby, John McLeod, Stephen McNeff, Edwin Roxburgh, Philip Sparke, Philip Spratley, Kit Turnbull and Guy Woolfenden for labels such as Naxos, Chandos, NMC, Guild and Métier.

She has also released premiere recordings of clarinet quintets with the Navarra and Kreutzer Quartets by composers including Simon Bainbridge, Nigel Clarke, Robert Crawford, Michael Finnissy, Wilfred Josephs, John McCabe and Edwin Roxburgh, with recordings of works by Edward Cowie, David Horne, Paul Patterson and Paul Pellay due to be released in 2022. In addition, Linda has commissioned and recorded over 20 works for clarinet and electronics, and released two albums featuring works with clarinet and harpsichord by Robert Keeley.

Linda has performed as a concerto soloist across America, Asia, Australia, Europe, South America, the UAE and the UK, and broadcast for BBC Radio 3, Radio France, DRS1 Switzerland, CKWR Canada and Arte TV South Korea. A founder member of the contemporary ensemble 'Sounds Positive', she has premiered over 80 chamber works for winds and piano by British composers, and released a further three CDs.

In addition to her position as Principal at the RNCM, Linda is Chair of Conservatoires UK and the UK representative for Howarth Clarinets.

**John Turner** is one of the leading recorder players of today. Born in Stockport, he was Senior Scholar in Law at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge before pursuing a legal career, acting for many distinguished musicians and musical organisations (including the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain), alongside his many musical activities. These included numerous appearances, broadcasts and recordings with David Munrow's Early Music Consort of London, the Academy of Ancient Music, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and the English Baroque Soloists.

He has featured as recorder soloist with the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Manchester Camerata, the English Baroque Soloists, the English Chamber Orchestra, and many other leading orchestras and ensembles. Concertos and works with orchestra have been written for him by Gordon Crosse, Anthony Gilbert, Peter Hope, Kenneth Leighton, Elis Pehkonen, Alan Bullard, John Casken, and many other distinguished composers. In all, he has given the first performances of over 500 works for the recorder, with works by many non-British composers, including Leonard Bernstein, Ned Rorem, Peter Sculthorpe, Douglas Lilburn, Petr Eben and Ruth Zechlin. Many of the works he has premiered have now entered the standard repertoire, and these and his own recorder compositions are regularly set for festivals and examinations.

Recent recordings on the Divine Art & Métier labels include music by the novelist and composer (and fellow Mancunian) Anthony Burgess, Peter Hope, Jim Parker, Roy Heaton Smith, an album in memory of Alfred Deller and the prequel to this recording, *Songs for Sir John*.

John now devotes his time to playing, writing, reviewing, publishing, composing and generally energising. He was responsible for the rediscovery of several works for his instrument, including Alan Rawsthorne's *Recorder Suite*, Antony Hopkins' *Pastiche Suite*,

Herbert Murrill's *Sarabande*, Handel's F Major Trio Sonata and John Parry's *Nightingale Rondo* (the only substantial known British nineteenth century work for a fipple flute). He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Northern College of Music in 2002 for his services to British music, and is a Visiting Distinguished Scholar of Manchester University.

**Peter Lawson** studied in Manchester with Derrick Wyndham and Sulamita Aronovsky and has since appeared as soloist with most British orchestras, playing concertos from Mozart to Richard Rodney Bennett. Frequently broadcasting for Radio 3, Peter has given recitals throughout the UK as well as playing in Holland, France, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, Luxembourg, Japan and Russia.

Peter's many commercial recordings include Satie (for EMI and subsequently awarded a Silver Disc), 2 CDs of American Sonatas for Virgin Classics following the award of a Churchill Fellowship to the USA and Michael Nyman's concerto (with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra). Peter also works with the Equivox Trio, Tango5 (recreating the tango quintets of Piazzolla) and the recorder player John Turner. Recent recording projects for Divine Art included a new piano version of Rawsthorne's *Practical Cats* and a collection of commemorative pieces for the composer John McCabe.

Peter taught at Chetham's School of Music for almost 40 years and has been an external examiner for many institutions including the Universities of Manchester, Sheffield, Edinburgh-Napier, Huddersfield, Birmingham Conservatoire and the ABRSM. He continues as tutor in piano at the RNCM.

The **Victoria String Quartet** began life in 2017 in a swimming pool, with a gala concert in aid of the historic Victoria Baths in Manchester's Hathersage Road. Since then they have moved on from pools to perform all over the country for music societies and festivals as far afield as North Norfolk and West Wales.

Bringing a wealth of chamber music experience to all their activities, they are a quartet of friends and colleagues of long standing who share a passion for chamber music-making at a high level and communicating this to their audiences.



**Benedict Holland and David Greed, violins**  
**Kim Becker, viola | Jennifer Langridge, 'cello**

**Benedict Holland** studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Manoug Parikian and was subsequently a prize winner at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he studied with Yossi Zivoni.

As a chamber musician, he was a founder member of the Matisse Piano Quartet and the Music Group of Manchester, broadcasting regularly for the BBC, recording, and undertaking British Council tours. He is also a member of the Victoria String Quartet whose acclaimed début concert took place in 2017. As an experienced orchestral leader, he has guest-led many of the UK's major orchestras, including the Hallé, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Northern Sinfonia, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Ensemble, Orchestra of Opera North and BBC Philharmonic and was also leader and Artistic Advisor of chamber orchestra, Sinfonia Viva from 2001-2019.

Ben has always been a champion of contemporary music and of working with living composers and has been the contemporary ensemble, Psappha's violinist since 2010. Highlights with Psappha include working with the late Peter Maxwell Davies and more recently, taking Klas Torstensson's Violin Concerto to a two-week residency at Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, premiering Mark Simpson's chamber opera Pleasure, and Mark-Anthony Turnage's Black Milk and a tour to Israel of Maxwell Davies' Eight Songs for a Mad King.

Ben has always put teaching at the heart of his work, at the RNCM where he was awarded a professorship in 2016. He also teaches a class of talented young violinists at the Junior RNCM gives consultative classes in orchestral and contemporary techniques at Birmingham and Trinity Laban Conservatoires and professional development classes for string teachers throughout the UK. Ben's violin is a rare Rogeri, c. 1710.

**David Greed** has been leader of the Orchestra of Opera North since 1978 – at that time the youngest leader in the country. His solo and concerto repertoire are extensive and he has appeared with most of the regions orchestras as concerto soloist.

He has also been engaged as guest leader with orchestras throughout the country – including the Philharmonia, Royal Opera, Halle, Royal Liverpool, CBSO, BBC Scottish and BBC Philharmonic orchestras.

David has been violin tutor for the National Youth Orchestra of GB, Chetham's School and European Union Youth Orchestra. He has recorded VW's 'The Lark Ascending' on the Naxos label with the Orchestra of Opera North and also the Elgar Concerto with Hertfordshire Youth Orchestra. He is Music Director of the Sinfonia of Leeds and the Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestra and a string advisor for Yorkshire Young Musicians.

David plays on a violin by J B Guadagnini (1757) owned by the Yorkshire Guadagnini Syndicate.



**Kim Becker** is a Manchester based violist who recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music. She was awarded the viola seat on the Halle Strings Leadership Scheme for 2019/20 and enjoys a busy schedule of both chamber music and orchestral work in various ensembles. Kim is a very keen chamber musician and has played with the Kirkman Quartet since 2016. They have received various awards and accolades including being this year's fellowship quartet at St. Peter's Church, Eaton Square. The quartet has appeared in a number of festivals including the Wye Valley chamber music festival and the HARMOS festival in Portugal. Kim also has a keen interest in contemporary music and has premiered Ed Nesbitt's 'Partita' for string quintet and trumpet, and Kareem Roustom's triple quartet 'a voice exclaiming'. She has also appeared with Psappha ensemble. Kim frequently appears with the Manchester Camerata, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and has toured to Romania and Abu Dhabi with Sinfonia Cymru. In 2013 she was given the opportunity to play with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in their recording of the BBC 10 Pieces. Kim has taken part in numerous festivals including the Pacific Music Festival in Japan. Kim's forthcoming engagements include a performance of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with the Orchestra of Square Chapel, and performances of Brahms' Clarinet Quintet and Mendelssohn's Octet with the Kirkman Quartet. Since September 2020, she is Junior Fellow in Viola at the RNCM.

**Jennifer Langridge** studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Eduardo Vassallo and went on to become a Junior Fellow at the RNCM as part of the Nossek String Quartet, which had a successful recital career for 10 years until 1999. Jen has been a member of Psappha Ensemble for 23 years, touring across Europe, North and South America, Australia, and most recently to Jerusalem. The group performs regularly on BBC Radio 3 and has made eight CD recordings. Jen has often performed as a soloist with Psappha, most notably at the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms in 2004, playing Maxwell Davies' 'Linguae Ignis' for solo cello and ensemble. Alongside her work with the Victoria Quartet and Psappha, Jen is a cello tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music, The University of Manchester and Chetham's School of Music. She plays on a Peter Walmsley cello 1729.





**Rachel Speirs**



**John Turner**

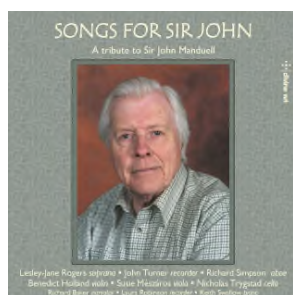


**Peter Lawson**



**Linda Merrick**

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Tracks 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 16, recorded at St. Paul's Church, Heaton Moor, Stockport. on 24 June 2021

Tracks 4-6, 9, recorded at St. Paul's Church on 13 July 2021

Tracks 8, 11-15, recorded at St. Thomas's Church, Stockport on 22 October 2021

Producer: Paul Hindmarsh

Recording Engineer and Editor: Phil Hardman

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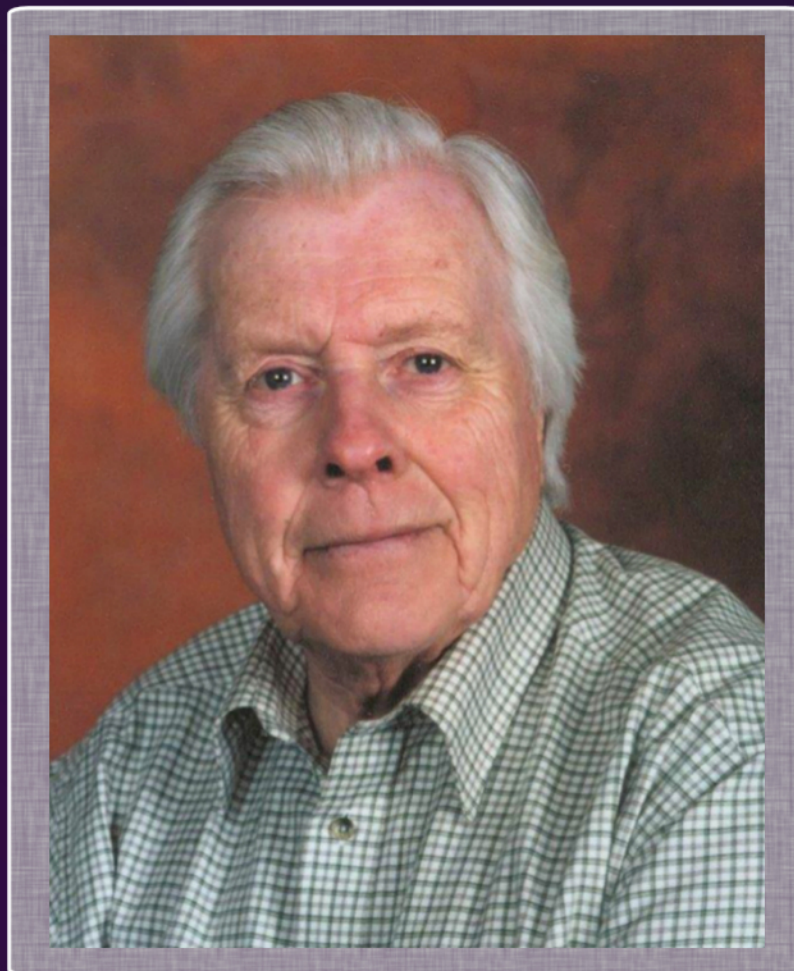
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Sir John Manduell (photo: Hanya Chlala)