



**John
JOUBERT**

The Instant Moment

Temps Perdu

Sinfonietta

Henry Herford, Baritone

English String Orchestra

William Boughton



John Joubert (b. 1927)

The Instant Moment • Temps Perdu • Sinfonietta

Temps Perdu:

Variations for String Orchestra, Op. 99 (1984)

As its name implies, this work was inspired by Marcel Proust, whose great sequence of novels *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* has recently been re-issued in a refurbished English translation. At about the time when I received the commission to compose a work for the English String Orchestra I had just re-read and been greatly moved by the first novel in the sequence – *Swann's Way* – which deals with the narrator's childhood and adolescence, and I wondered whether the process of memory could be made to work for music as it had obviously done for literature in the hands of Proust. Not that I wanted to re-create Proust in terms of music; if memory was to provide the theme then it must be my memory, not Proust's, which became the subject matter of my work. As it happens I still have in my possession a considerable body of my own juvenilia, among which I found two short pieces – for string orchestra, appropriately enough – composed during my late teens. The second of these, suitably revised and extended, provided the material for what was to become a set of *Variations*, each of which sets out to explore some aspect of the memories evoked by the original.

Worked into the score is a theme from Saint-Saëns' *Violin Sonata in D minor*, identified by Proust's biographer, George D. Painter, as the original of the "little phrase" which in the novel symbolises Swann's love for Odette. The phrase first appears in its original form in the middle section of the first *Variation*. Thereafter it is quoted by cellos and basses in the *Valse*, and finally at the beginning of the *Envoi* on two solo violins. By a happy accident I had quite unconsciously used it (in inverted form) as part of the new material I added to the theme before I had decided to incorporate it into the *Variations* – indeed the theme itself is related by interval to it – so in one way or another the "little phrase" of Vinteuil (the composer in the novel who is a composite portrait of

various contemporaries of both Proust and Saint-Saëns) could be said to haunt and permeate the whole work.

The work is scored for thirteen solo strings, though it can be played by a larger body if each section is doubled proportionately. It was commissioned by the English String Orchestra (with the aid of funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain and Mitsubishi Ltd.) and received its first performance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, on 1st October, 1984.

Sinfonietta, Op. 38 (1962)

My *Sinfonietta* was commissioned in 1962 by Orchestra da Camera and first performed in April of that year at a concert given in Birmingham Art Gallery conducted by Brian Priestman. It is scored for a classical chamber ensemble of two oboes, two bassoons, two horns and strings.

There are two movements. The first is a concise symphonic *allegro* with two main subjects, the first on woodwind accompanied by scalic string patterns, the second a florid melisma first heard on the oboe. The second movement is in two parts: an extended slow introduction leading into a lively tarantella. The introduction – almost a movement in itself – features the woodwind in cadenza-like passages which, after an expressive melody on strings, are repeated in combination. A transition based on the expressive string melody follows, gathering momentum until the tempo of the tarantella is reached. This develops scalic material related to the first movement and brings the work to its conclusion.

The Instant Moment: Song-cycle for Baritone and String Orchestra to words by D.H. Lawrence, Op. 110 (1987)

The five poems which constitute the text of this cycle are all taken from the collection *Look! We Have Come Through!*, published by D.H. Lawrence in 1917. They are

mainly concerned with the development of his deepening relationship with Frieda, the wife of Professor Ernest Weekley of Nottingham University. Lawrence and Frieda had eloped in 1912 and for a time were to live a nomadic life together, mainly on the Continent, until their marriage in 1914. *Look! We Have Come Through!* was written during this period.

I have selected the poems in order to express in musical terms five highly contrasted reactions to the experience of love. The title of the work is a quotation from Lawrence's introduction to an American edition of his poems in which he characterises the kind of verse he was writing as "the insurgent naked throb of the instant moment".

In the declamatory nature of the vocal line and the descriptiveness of the instrumental writing I have attempted to capture in musical terms some of the immediacy of emotion contained in Lawrence's poetry, while at the same time preserving its very real sense of organic structure. The work was commissioned by the English String Orchestra (with funds provided by West Midlands Arts) and first performed by them with Henry Herford on 21st March, 1987, at the Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham at a concert to mark my sixtieth birthday. It is dedicated to the late Sir Laurens van der Post.

1. Bei Hennef

Hennef, on the River Sieg in the Rhineland, provides the twilight backdrop to this intimate soliloquy on the bliss of newly realised love. The music attempts to convey the "twittering" of the little river culminating in the avowal "you are the call and I am the answer" to more impassioned phrases in the orchestra. The song ends on a note of uncertainty, however – "Strange, how we suffer in spite of this!"

2. Loggerheads

The faster tempo, minor tonality and histrionic vocal part together convey a defiant assertion of identity separate from, and independent of that of the beloved. The poem seems to prefigure some of Lawrence's and Frieda's notorious rows.

3. "And oh – That the man I am might cease to be –"

The title of this poem is a quotation from Tennyson's monodrama *Maud*, whose male protagonist Lawrence seems to have identified with to some degree. It describes a mood of black despair and a longing for a state of unconsciousness which is neither sleep nor death, "but heavy, sealing darkness, silence, all immovable". The music reflecting this employs opaque *divisi* string chords, and ends with a cry of pain from the soloist which inverts the "avowal" motif from the first song.

4. December Night

An invitation to love with more than a passing nod to Tristan in the rising chromatic phrases of the opening. As the mood becomes more impassioned the "avowal" motif reappears to conclude the song ecstatically. The strings are muted throughout, however, to suggest the enclosed warmth of a firelit room in winter.

5. Moonrise

A visionary poem which sees true love as everlasting, as "a thing beyond the grave", and the moon itself as something that will "dim sooner than our full consummation here will tarnish or pass away". The music, ascending from the depths, suggests the rising of the moon whose "lambent beauty shakes towards us". After a climax and a pause the ascent begins again, this time in a rich D flat major tonality which, rising to a second climax, affirms the immanence of love before subsiding to a serene conclusion.

The origins of this recording go back to a one-day festival of music organised by William Boughton to celebrate my sixtieth birthday. This took place at the Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham, on 21st March, 1987, and included performances of my piano music (played by John McCabe), my *Chamber Music for Brass Quintet* (played by Fine Arts Brass), as well as the *Sinfonietta* and *The Instant Moment* (played by the English String Orchestra, with Henry Herford as soloist in *The Instant*

Moment). The latter work was especially commissioned for the occasion and was receiving its first performance. The English String Orchestra had already commissioned and premiered *Temps Perdu*, and it had always been William Boughton's intention to bring together the two ESO commissions on a single disc. This recording brings that wish to fruition. It also celebrates my close

association with the orchestra ever since its foundation in 1980, a closeness reinforced by the inclusion of both my son and daughter within its ranks. It is a matter of particular satisfaction to me that they both took part in the making of this première recording.

John Joubert, 1996

Henry Herford



Photo: Lindsay Herford

Born in Edinburgh, Henry Herford read Classics and English at Cambridge before training at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he won the Gold Medal for Singing. His operatic career began at Glyndebourne with the Forester in *The Cunning Little Vixen* under Simon Rattle, and he has since performed around eighty rôles with opera companies throughout Britain and Europe, including Covent Garden, Glyndebourne and Scottish Opera. Recordings include Demetrius in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and multiple rôles in Maxwell Davies's *Resurrection* (Naxos 8.660359-60), as well as television productions of Maxwell Davies's *The Lighthouse* and Osborne's *The Electrification of the Soviet Union*. Other recordings range from from baroque opera to twentieth-century English and American song, including a two-CD set of the songs of Charles Ives which won the Music Retailers' Record of the Year award. In oratorio he has sung under leading conductors in Europe, the Americas and Hong Kong, and has twice appeared as soloist at The Last Night of the Proms. As a recitalist he has won international awards in Britain, Holland and America and has made frequent broadcasts and recordings with the Nash Ensemble, the Songmakers' Almanac, the Endymion and Koenig Ensembles, Lontano, the Lindsay Quartet and Ensemble Modern. He teaches at the Royal Northern College of Music and the Birmingham Conservatoire.

English String Orchestra



Photo: Benjamin S. Ortega

The Worcestershire-based ESO was founded by conductor William Boughton as the English String Orchestra in 1978. It soon earned an international reputation for performances of English music, made over fifty recordings and began touring regularly in Europe. Over time the orchestra's repertoire expanded to include the full breadth of orchestral music, and the ESO grew to become the English Symphony Orchestra. Conductor Vernon "Tod" Handley succeeded Boughton in 2007 and led the orchestra until his death in 2008. Over the years the ESO has worked with a distinguished list of instrumentalists, composers and conductors, including Nigel Kennedy, Stephen Isserlis, Daniel Hope, Michael Tippett, Nicholas Maw and Yehudi Menuhin, who was appointed the ESO's Principal Guest Conductor in 1991 and led the orchestra on a number of international tours. Kenneth Woods was appointed as the ESO's third Principal Conductor in 2013. Philip Sawyers succeeded John McCabe as the orchestra's Composer-in-Association in 2015. www.eso.co.uk

William Boughton

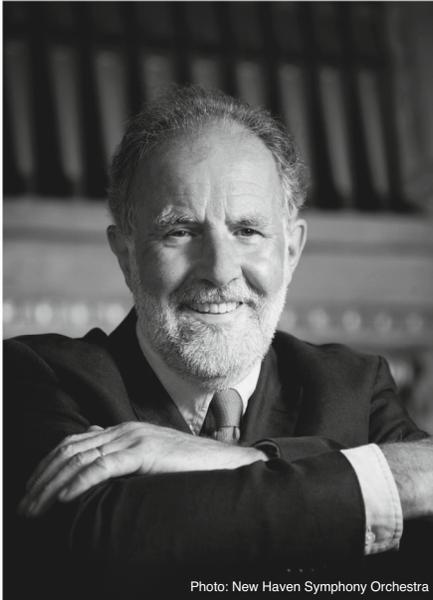


Photo: New Haven Symphony Orchestra

Born into a musical family, grandson of Rutland Boughton and son of a viola-player father and a singer mother, William Boughton studied at the New England Conservatory (Boston), the Guildhall School of Music (London) and the Prague Academy as a cellist, before entering the profession in London playing with the Royal Philharmonic, BBC and London Sinfonietta Orchestras. He went on to study conducting with George Hurst and then Sir Colin Davis, and in 1980 formed the English String Orchestra initially focusing on early twentieth-century English repertoire, extended to the contemporary, with a number of commissions. With the ESO he built a significant discography of internationally acclaimed recordings with Nimbus Records – predominantly of English music, a number of which reached the Top Ten in the US Billboard charts. Between 1986 and 1993 he was also Artistic and Music Director of the Jyväskylä Sinfonia in Finland and guest conducted with leading orchestras and soloists. In 1996 William Boughton commenced a second term as Artistic Director of the Malvern Festival and, after a final year with the ESO, in 2007 became the tenth Music Director of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra.

The Instant Moment

① 1. Bei Hennef

The little river twittering in the twilight,
The wan wondering look of the pale sky,
This is almost bliss.

And everything shut up and gone to sleep,
All the troubles and anxieties and pain
Gone under the twilight.

Only, the twilight now,
and the soft "Sh!" of the river
That will last for ever.

And at last I know my love for you is here:
I can see it all, it is whole like the twilight,
It is large, so large, I could not see it before,
Because of the little lights and flickers and interruptions
Troubles, anxieties and pains.

You are the call and I am the answer,
You are the wish, and I the fulfilment
You are the night, and I the day.
What else? it is perfect enough.
It is perfectly complete,
You and I,
What more – ?

Strange, how we suffer in spite of this!

② 2. Loggerheads

Please yourself how you have it,
Take my words, and fling
Them down on the counter roundly;
See if they ring.

Sift my looks and expressions,
And see what proportion there is
Of sand in my doubtful sugar
Of verities.

Have a real stock-taking
Of my manly breast;
Find out if I'm sound or bankrupt,
Or a poor thing at best.

For I am quite indifferent
To your dubious state, interruptions,
As to whether you've found a fortune
In me, or a flea-bitten fate.

Make a good investigation
Of all that is there,
And then, if it's worth it, be grateful –
If not, then despair.

If despair is our portion
Then let us despair.
Let us make for the weeping willow.
I don't care.

③ 3. "And oh – That the man I am might cease to be –"

No, now I wish the sunshine would stop,
and the white shining houses, and the gay red
flowers on the balconies
and the bluish mountains beyond, would be
crushed out between two valves of darkness;
the darkness falling, the darkness rising,
with muffled sound obliterating everything.

I wish that whatever props up the walls of light
would fall and darkness would come hurling heavily down,
and it would be thick black dark for ever.
Not steep, which is grey with dreams,
not death, which quivers with birth,
but heavy, sealing darkness,
silence all immovable.

What is sleep?
It goes over me, like a shadow over a hill,
but it does not alter me, nor help me.
And death would ache still, I am sure;
it would be lambent, uneasy.

I wish it would be completely dark everywhere,
inside me, and out, heavily dark utterly.

☞ 4. **December night**

Take off your cloak and your hat
And your shoes, and draw up at my hearth
Where never woman sat.

I have made the fire up bright;
Let us leave the rest in the dark
And sit by firelight

The wine is warm in the hearth;
The flickers come and go.
I will warm your limbs with kisses
Until they glow.

☞ 5. **Moonrise**

And who has seen the moon, who has not seen
Her rise from out of the chamber of the deep,
Flushed and grand and naked, as from the chamber
Of finished bridegroom, seen her rise and throw
Confession of delight upon the wave,
Littering the waves with her own superscription
Of bliss, till all her lambent beauty shakes towards us
Spread out and known at last and we are sure
That beauty is a thing beyond the grave,
That perfect bright experience never falls
To nothingness, and time will dim the moon
Sooner than our full consummation here
In this odd life will tarnish or pass away.

D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930)



The **British Music Society** (Registered Charity No. 1043838), founded in 1979, brings together professional and amateur musicians, students and scholars, and music enthusiasts young and old from around the globe to promote, preserve and celebrate British music, pre-dominantly from the Twentieth century, both at home and abroad. Its extensive discography is now being re-issued by Naxos, bringing to a wider audience many highly-acclaimed performances, often world premières, of neglected British works. The Society's Historic label includes a number of famous vintage recordings by artists such as Noel Mewton-Wood and Walter Goehr.

In addition the Society produces a Journal, *British Music*, packed full of scholarly articles and reviews, as well as a regular e-newsletter for members. Our website lists forthcoming BMS events as well as performances of British music, and also provides a forum for discussion and debate.

www.britishmusicsociety.com

Born in Cape Town, John Joubert won a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London, his successful career as a university lecturer and composer keeping him in England thereafter. Based on a short piece composed during the composer's late teens and inspired by Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way* (from *Remembrance of Things Past*), *Temps Perdu* is an inventive set of variations 'each of which sets out to explore some aspect of the memories evoked by the original'. The finely crafted *Sinfonietta* is notable for the imaginative writing for solo woodwinds, while the song-cycle *The Instant Moment* indelibly expresses widely contrasting reactions to the experience of love.



John
JOUBERT
(b. 1927)

**Temps Perdu: Variations for String
Orchestra, Op. 99 (1984) 19:23**

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|----------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Thème | 3:32 |
| 2 | Variation 1: Espièglerie | 2:28 |
| 3 | Variation 2: Elégie | 4:37 |
| 4 | Variation 3: Valse | 2:43 |
| 5 | Variation 4: Envoi | 6:03 |

Sinfonietta, Op. 38 (1962) 17:38

- | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 6 | Allegro con spirito | 5:33 |
| 7 | Molto moderato – | 6:33 |
| 8 | Allegro | 5:32 |

**The Instant Moment: Song-cycle
for Baritone and String Orchestra
to words by D.H. Lawrence,
Op. 110 (1987) 26:07**

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|-----------|--|-------------|
| 9 | 1. Bei Hennef | 6:05 |
| 10 | 2. Loggerheads | 2:37 |
| 11 | 3. “And oh – That the man I am
might cease to be –” | 6:10 |
| 12 | 4. December Night | 4:21 |
| 13 | 5. Moonrise | 6:54 |

Christopher Hiron and Pierre Joubert, Solo Violins 1-5

Paul Arden-Taylor and Anna Evans, Oboes 6-8

Keith Rubach and Christine Predota, Bassoons 6-8

Stephen Roberts and James Buck, French Horns 6-8

Henry Herford, Baritone 9-13

English String Orchestra • William Boughton

Previously released on BMS

The sung texts are included in the booklet, and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/571368.htm

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