

NAXOS

**W.H.
SQUIRE**

**Miniatures for
Cello and Piano**

Oliver Gledhill, Cello

Tadashi Imai, Piano



W.H. Squire (1871-1963)

Miniatures for cello and piano

William Henry Squire, known as W.H. Squire, was considered Britain's leading cellist between the late 1890s and the late 1920s. He made some 200 recordings for The Gramophone Company (1898-1914) and then Columbia (1914-1929) and played, as Henry Wood said, with an all too scarce nobility of tone.

W.H. Squire was born at Ross-on-Wye near Hereford on 8th August 1871 and died in London on 17th March 1963. A Foundation Scholar at the Royal College of Music from 1883, aged just 11, Squire studied the cello with Edward Howell and, from 1887, for his last two years there, composition with Hubert Parry.

After Howell died in 1898, Squire replaced him as a teacher at the RCM (until 1919) and he also taught at the Guildhall School of Music from 1911 (to 1917) on Landon Ronald's new Professional course there. Squire was Principal Cello both at Covent Garden in the mid 1890s and then in the Queen's Hall Orchestra, which played for the Promenade Concerts under Henry Wood, from 1897-1901.

Most of W.H. Squire's compositions are for the cello, or are Ballad Songs (popular songs on 'homely' themes). What both string playing and singing have in common, is the ability to create emotion and expression through the description of an audible slide connecting two notes, a kind of musical 'joining the dots' to help a 'picture' take shape. This *carrying* of the sound from one note to another is known as *portamento*. Controlling the subtle variables of slide speed, bow pressure and melody timing (*rubato*), as well as the colour (or 'timbre') of the string selected, is largely what makes string playing expressive.

In his cello miniatures Squire shows himself to be a master of emotional gesture conveyed particularly through his strategically placed use of *portamento*.

The musical 'meaning' of upwards slides is not as clear-cut as with downwards ones (which invariably represent a sigh, cry or moan): sliding upwards may represent heroic or optimistic leaps, but equally quite the opposite – a sense of struggling upwards. String methods since that of violinist Louis Spohr in 1832 advise that an

upwards slide from one finger to a different one be played by the finger used to sound the *first* of the two notes being joined. This is problematic because it makes a disconnect between the end of the beginning finger's slide 'journey' and putting down the new finger – a barrier perhaps to fully expressive connections. This almost universally accepted method was eventually labelled by Carl Flesch in 1923 as *B-portamento*, the 'B' standing for beginning finger. There were only a few exceptional circumstances in which suggested understandings of good taste allowed a slide on the finger used for the second note being joined – a technique known as *L-portamento* ('L' standing for last finger).

Not only does Squire make frequent use of these 'exceptional' allowable circumstances to incorporate *L-portamento* (such as when sliding to a harmonic or to a different string), but the time at which he was composing was significant, since from about 1890 *L-portamento* use became more widespread, particularly in the violin playing of Sarasate, Ysaÿe and later Kreisler and Heifetz. By c.1930 *portamento* of any type was going out of fashion, replaced by a new aesthetic preference for a 'cleaner' more clinical sound, popularized by cellist Pablo Casals, using stretches and fewer slides. Also, *vibrato* as an expressive device supplanted *portamento*, shifting the focus to the beauty of individual notes rather, perhaps, than their relationships to one another.

Thankfully, Squire's cello miniatures, largely composed between the ages of 18 and 33, sit comfortably within this window of opportunity for *portamento* expression and *L-portamento* in particular.

This recording brings together for the first time twenty of W.H. Squire's finest cello miniatures. Many were written with three contemporary audiences in mind: the Associated Board cello grade examinations, the Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall and the Bechstein (now Wigmore) Hall.

Just as 1890 proved to be the start of a brief era of *L-portamento* popularity, so too was it the beginning of

music examinations started by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music. Twelve of Squire's original cello miniatures have been AB syllabus selections over the years, including eight recorded here: *Romance*, *Minuet*, *Gondoliera*, *Danse rustique*, *Tarantella*, *Tzig-Tzig*, *Bourrée* and *Humoresque*. These were all chosen after Squire himself examined for the Board between 1900 and 1919.

W.H. Squire made 40 solo appearances at the Promenade Concerts (1897-1902). He usually played a 'set' of two pieces during the 'miscellany' of concert items at the Proms, on fourteen occasions playing his own pieces, four of which are recorded here: *Sérénade*, *Tzig-Tzig*, *Chansonnette* and *L'Adieu*. Solo items with piano were useful to conductor Henry Wood as they filled some programme time and eased the pressure on rehearsal, only nine hours being available for six concerts per week. After 1904, the date of the last cello miniature on this recording, Promenade programmes changed to incorporate longer concerto works, making programme fillers such as Squire's less important.

W.H. Squire introduced three of the pieces at Bechstein Hall: *Bourrée* in 1902 and *Canzonetta* and *Harlequinade* in 1903. He played nineteen times at Bechstein Hall (1901-13) and once more after it reopened as Wigmore Hall, often 'assisting' in a vocal recital with instrumental contrast, or playing cello *obbligato* during the songs themselves, as was fashionable.

Romance, Op. 5, No. 1, W.H. Squire's first original cello miniature, written when he was just 18 years old in 1890, chooses the cello's 'blank canvas' key of C major.

Gavotte humoristique, Op. 6 was composed in 1890. *The Strad* magazine of February 1913 reported that 'The truth is that as a student Mr. Squire found it difficult to master harmonics satisfactorily, and he wrote this little piece to enable himself to practise them in a convenient form.'

Scène de Bal, Op. 8, also from 1890, was recorded on an early Russian Gramophone disc by S.Y. Morozov as *Scène de ballet* in 1901.

Sérénade, Op. 15, from 1892, became Squire's 'signature tune':



W.H. Squire album leaf of *Sérénade*, courtesy of Oliver Gledhill, © Stainer & Bell Ltd, London, England, www.stainer.co.uk, reproduced with permission

It was the piece which Squire played for his first solo at the Proms in 1897, and on his first recording for the new Gramophone Company made on 19th October 1898. Other cellists including Joseph Hollmann also played it. This album leaf of *Sérénade*'s opening bars was written in 1895 to W.H. Eyres, a Principal Second Violin of the day – at this time in the Philharmonic Society – when he and Squire played in a String Quartet at Eastbourne. The piece is dedicated to Charles J. Ross of Exeter who was a next door neighbour of Squire and a 'tailor and outfitter'.

Minuet, Op. 19, No. 3, from 1893, has been a regular Associated Board selection since 1923.

Mazurka, Op. 19, No. 4, also from the 1893 set, has never previously been recorded or set for graded examination.

Gondoliera, Op. 20, No. 2, from 1895, was a popular Associated Board choice from 1931-52. Fingering-implied

slides are used effectively here to illustrate the pushing of the boat through the water.

Danse rustique, Op. 20, No. 5, also from the 1895 set, has been the second most popular Associated Board examination selection by Squire since it was first listed in the 1920 syllabus.

Chansonnette, Op. 22, from 1896, is of particular historical significance as an enigmatic tribute to Dvořák and his new *Cello Concerto, Op. 104* just after this Concerto was first performed with the Philharmonic Society and cellist Leo Stern on 19th March 1896. The miniature pays homage to Dvořák's larger work in its use of two melody fragments taken from the second subject of the first movement. It is dedicated to 'A.D.', most likely standing cryptically for Antonin Dvořák. W.H. Squire played *Chansonnette* three times at the Promenade Concerts, including for his second appearance there on 10th September 1897.

Tarantella, Op. 23, also from 1896, has been the most popular Associated Board examination selection of W.H. Squire since first chosen in 1928.

L'Adieu was introduced at a London Ballad Concert at Queen's Hall in December 1896. Subtitled 'Romance', it is dedicated to Marian Warren, whom Squire would marry in 1899. It is notable for being the first original miniature to contain a slide indicated by the word *gliss* (*glissando*) and not simply by fingering alone. The piece also marks a move away from Augener to a new publisher, Boosey.

Tzig-Tzig, from 1898, is a Hungarian Dance rather in the manner of Popper's *Hungarian Rhapsody, Op. 68* of four years earlier. *Tzig-Tzig* was performed four times by Squire at the Proms and was first introduced there on 13th October 1898.

Bourrée, Op. 24, was completed on 10th December 1901. It was performed by Squire on 14th May 1902 at Bechstein Hall, together with his *Sérénade*, as items in a vocal recital. It is dedicated to Joseph Hollmann and marks Squire's return to the publisher Augener after Boosey, Ascherberg and Bosworth.

Humoresque, Op. 26, also published in 1902, with its fast *sautillé* bow bounces, took until 1997 before being selected as an Associated Board syllabus choice.

Canzonetta is the first in a set of *Six Morceaux Mélodiques*, published by Keith Prowse & Co. in 1903. *Canzonetta* was first performed by W.H. Squire at Bechstein Hall on 8th June 1903, appropriately, as its 'little song' title suggests, within a vocal recital. It is dedicated to his wife Marian.

Danse orientale, also from 1903, is dedicated to Hamilton Harty, Squire's most frequent accompanist for his recordings, who went on to become conductor of the Hallé Orchestra and whom Squire later described in a BBC tribute to Harty in October 1951, as 'a Prince of Accompanists', perhaps in tacit acknowledgement of Columbia's billing of Squire himself as 'Britain's King of Cellists'.

Elégie, the third of the 1903 *Morceaux*, is dedicated to J.F. [John Frederick] Carrodus, the son of violinist J.T. [John Tiplady] Carrodus, the distinguished violinist who had been Henry Wood's first choice of leader for the orchestra of the Queen's Hall Promenades, but who had died on 13th July 1895, just a few weeks before the season opened. Squire may well have been recalling the father's sad loss when he composed this *Elégie*.

Madrigal, the fourth of the 1903 set, is dedicated to B. [Bertie] Patterson Parker who had been W.H. Squire's sub-Principal in the Queen's Hall cello section from the very first Promenade in which Squire was Principal back in August 1897. Patterson Parker became Principal Cello of the newly formed London Symphony Orchestra in 1904. *Madrigal* was recorded by Cedric Sharpe, W.H. Squire's foremost pupil, in 1920 for The Gramophone Company.

Harlequinade, with its clown-like mock virtuosity, was the last of the 1903 *Six Morceaux* and is dedicated to the twenty-year-old [Arnold] Földesy, who had first performed in England in 1902, and would later become Solo Cellist of the Berlin Philharmonic for the 1915-16 Season. He was known for his outstanding yet nonchalant technical prowess. W.H. Squire played this *Harlequinade*, along with *Canzonetta*, at Bechstein Hall on 8th June 1903.

In *Prière*, from 1904, at the height of his powers as both a cellist and a composer, W.H. Squire provides a masterclass of *L-portamento* use. *Prière* was recorded by Cedric Sharpe for The Gramophone Company in 1916.

Of the twenty miniatures presented on this recording, W.H. Squire himself recorded eight: *Sérénade* (1898, 1901, 1906, 1911 and again in 1916), *Tzig-Tzig* (1901 and 1921), *Chansonnette* and *Tarantella* together (1914), *Harlequinade* (1917), *Danse rustique* (1917), *Prière* (1920 and 1923) and *Danse orientale* (1924).

Five of the miniatures – *Mazurka*, *Gondoliera*, *L'Adieu*, *Canzonetta* and *Elégie* – are recorded here for the first time.

Dr Oliver Gledhill

Oliver Gledhill



The cellist Oliver Gledhill was a scholar at the Guildhall School of Music and won numerous awards including the ISTE/Redditch Music Society Competition. He studied with many eminent cellists including William Pleeth, Edmund Kurtz and André Navarra, and has given acclaimed recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in London, including three in the Kirkman Concert Society Series. Festival appearances have included solo performances in England, France, Italy, Mallorca and the Czech Republic. He has recorded nine CDs, including the complete works for cello by Léon Boëllmann, which was awarded five stars for performance by *BBC Music Magazine*, and has been played on ABC Classic FM (Australian Radio) and RTBF musiq3 (Belgian Radio). Oliver Gledhill is Professor of Cello at the Junior Guildhall School of Music, in London, and also teaches at Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School, Elstree, Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls and Mill Hill School. He has edited music for Peters Edition and Durand. His published writings include articles and reviews for *The Strad* magazine and the *British Journal of Music Education*. He is an examiner for Trinity College London, for whom he has selected repertoire and revised the Cello Diploma and Grade Syllabuses. He also composed fifteen graded studies for the TCL Cello Scales technical work book from 2016. As an adjudicator for the British and International Federation of Festivals, he has adjudicated at over one hundred festivals. He completed his doctoral thesis at the Royal Academy of Music/University of London on

'W.H. Squire, his cello miniatures and the *portamento*' in 2013. During the course of his research he discovered a family connection with W.H. Squire: when Squire taught on the new Professional course at the Guildhall School of Music from January 1911 to the summer of 1917, throughout these six years one of his pupils was the adopted son of Oliver Gledhill's maternal grandfather Boris Spivakowsky, who was himself a concert cellist. The boy was called Henry Spivakowsky (aka Henry Calvé) and he performed solos as W.H. Squire's pupil on more occasions than any other student – nine in all. Starting at the Guildhall aged just eleven, Henry was the same age as Squire had been when Squire first went to the Royal College of Music in 1883. Henry had been brought to England with his dying mother Angelina Calvé from Italy after Boris, on his way through Europe from Odessa in Russia, had had a period playing in the Orchestra of the Opera at La Scala, Milan, where Angelina had been a singer.



W.H. Squire photograph (?1906) courtesy of the Wigmore Hall Trust
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Photograph of Oliver Gledhill by Ellen Baumring-Gledhill

Tadashi Imai



The pianist Tadashi Imai combines a career as concert soloist, chamber musician and sought-after accompanist. He studied at the Toho Gakuen College of Music in Tokyo with Hiroshi Tajika, Hidemitsu Hayashi and Shuku Iwasaki, as a scholar at Texas Christian University with Tamás Ungár and at the Royal Academy of Music with Christopher Elton, Michael Dussek and Clifford Benson. He has won several international competitions and performed throughout Europe, the United States and Asia, in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall and Wigmore Hall. Concerto performances have included appearances with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in Texas, the Osaka Symphoniker and the State of Sibiu Philharmonic in Romania. Tadashi Imai was a Junior Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music for four years and was appointed an ARAM in 2008. He has been accompanist for György Pauk's violin class at the Royal Academy of Music for several years as well as official accompanist for many international competitions and master-class series, notably the Menuhin International Violin Competition, the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition and the London Masterclasses. Leading string players with whom he has collaborated in recital include Maurice Haddon and the late Lydia Mordkovich.



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William Henry Squire was Britain's leading cellist from the late 1890s to the late 1920s and a prolific artist in the early recording era. He composed a series of exquisite miniatures for the instrument, the finest of which are collected here for the first time. They were written largely between the ages of 18 and 33, often with specific audiences in mind – whether Promenade Concerts, recital platform or grade examinations – and include his signature piece, *Sérénade, Op. 15* and his enigmatic tribute to Dvořák, the *Chansonnette, Op. 22*. Five of the twenty have never before been recorded.



W.H.
SQUIRE
(1871-1963)

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|--|-------------|---|-------------|
| 1 Romance, Op. 5, No. 1 (1890) | 2:56 | 10 Tarantella, Op. 23 (1896) | 3:48 |
| 2 Gavotte humoristique, Op. 6 (1890) | 3:30 | 11 L'Adieu (Romance) (1896)* | 4:05 |
| 3 Scène de Bal, Op. 8 (1890) | 3:43 | 12 Tzig-Tzig (Danse magyare) (1898) | 4:18 |
| 4 Sérénade, Op. 15 (1892) | 3:32 | 13 Bourrée, Op. 24 (1902) | 3:45 |
| 5 Minuet, Op. 19, No. 3 (1893) | 2:02 | 14 Humoresque, Op. 26 (1902) | 2:31 |
| 6 Mazurka, Op. 19, No. 4 (1893)* | 2:54 | 15 Canzonetta (1903)* | 2:40 |
| 7 Gondoliera, Op. 20, No. 2 (1895)* | 3:38 | 16 Danse orientale (1903) | 3:05 |
| 8 Danse rustique, Op. 20, No. 5 (1895) | 3:04 | 17 Elégie (1903)* | 3:36 |
| 9 Chansonnette, Op. 22 (1896) | 3:06 | 18 Madrigal (1903) | 3:20 |
| | | 19 Harlequinade (1903) | 2:26 |
| | | 20 Prière (1904) | 4:40 |

***WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS**

Oliver Gledhill, Cello • Tadashi Imai, Piano

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Booklet notes: Oliver Gledhill • Cover: *W.H. Squire in the later years of his career (?after 1913)*

Photograph courtesy of University of Glasgow, Special Collections