CHANDOS 2 FOR 1

BAX · DYSON · VEALE · BLISS

VIOLIN CONCERTOS

Lydia Mordkovitch violin

London Philharmonic Orchestra • City of London Sinfonia

BBC Symphony Orchestra • BBC National Orchestra of Wales

Richard Hickox · Bryden Thomson

LYDIA MORDKOVITCH TRIBUTE

1944 - 2014

Nick Johnston

Lydia Mordkovitch (1944 – 2014)

British Violin Concertos

COMPACT DISC ONE

Sir Arnold Bax (1883 – 1953)

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*

35:15

1	I	Overture, Ballade and Scherzo. Allegro risoluto – Allegro moderato – Poco largamente	14:47
2	II	Adagio	11:41
3	III	Allegro – Slow valse tempo – Andante con moto	8:45

Sir George Dyson (1883 – 1964)

Violin Concerto†

43:14

4	I	Molto moderato	20:14
5	II	Vivace	5:08
6	III	Poco andante	10:39
7	IV	Allegro ma non troppo	7:06

TT 78:39

COMPACT DISC TWO

Sir Arthur Bliss (1891 – 1975)

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra‡ 41:48

To Alfredo Campoli

1	I	Allegro ma non troppo – Più animato – L'istesso tempo – Più agitato – Tempo I – Tranquillo – Più animato – Tempo I – Più animato – Molto tranquillo – Moderato – Tempo I – Più mosso – Animato	15:43
2	II	Vivo – Tranquillo – Vivo – Meno mosso – Animando – Vivo	8:49
3	III	Introduzione. Andante sostenuto – Allegro deciso in modo zingaro – Più mosso (scherzando) – Subito largamente – Cadenza – Andante molto tranquillo – Animato – Ancora più vivo	17:10

John Veale (1922 – 2006)

		Violin Concerto§	**35:38**
4	I	Moderato – Allegro – Tempo I – Allegro	15:55
5	II	Lament. Largo	11:47
6	III	Vivace – Andantino – Tempo I – Andantino – Tempo I – Andantino – Tempo I	7:53
			TT 77:36

Lydia Mordkovitch violin
London Philharmonic Orchestra*
City of London Sinfonia†
BBC National Orchestra of Wales‡
Lesley Hatfield leader
BBC Symphony Orchestra§
Stephen Bryant leader
Bryden Thomson*
Richard Hickox†‡§

British Violin Concertos

Bax: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra

Sir Arnold Bax's (1883 – 1953) career as an orchestral composer started in 1905 with the symphonic poem *Cathaleen ni Hoolihan*, but he did not write in the long-established large-scale forms of concerto and symphony for many years. His first concerto came in 1920 when he wrote his *Phantasy* for Viola and Orchestra (at first actually called 'Concerto') and followed it in 1932 with his Cello Concerto. Bax also wrote several works for piano and orchestra but none was a concerto in the proper sense of the word. His cycle of seven symphonies also started early in the 1920s, and between 1921 and 1938 they dominated his output and were the foundation of his reputation up to the Second World War.

All this activity was behind him when he came to write his Violin Concerto in 1937, completing it in March 1938. That was immediately before he started work on the Seventh Symphony, though it was one of his last extended scores to appear before the public when it was first performed over five years later. Bax wrote this concerto for Heifetz (as the dedication 'For Firenze' on the manuscript testifies) but according to William Walton, Heifetz found the music disappointing. Presumably it was not sufficiently virtuosic. Bax did not even acknowledge its existence until, during the war, he received a commission for a new work for St. Cecilia's Day, 1943 and produced the concerto for the violinist Eda Kersey to play, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood. It was the last time Sir Henry championed a new work by Bax, a composer whom he had first conducted at the 1910 season of London's Promenade Concerts. The concerto was a considerable success though its early promotion was interrupted by the tragic death of the violinist in the summer of 1944, soon after her fortieth birthday.

Certainly the work marks a new approach for Bax: comparatively lightly scored, it is charming and romantic in contrast to the *Sturm und Drang* of the symphonies. When asked to describe it, he remarked 'Well I suppose it's rather like Raff', possibly referring to the Raff of the *Cavatina* rather than the symphonies. Perhaps the world of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto is a better

parallel. In his first movement Bax develops the concept of a three-movements-in-one form that had been first used in the last movement of the Sixth Symphony in 1934, referring to the opening music as an Overture, and following this with a Ballad and Scherzo.

The opening idea of the slow movement alludes to the Elgar Violin Concerto, though the shape of the music might also be construed as a reference to his friend Benjamin Dale's Piano Sonata of 1905. Later in the movement appears a passage which is in fact orchestrated from a curious piano sonata that Bax wrote the same year: among Bax's papers there survives a manuscript in his own hand of a four movement Sonata in B flat which he called *Salzburg*, noting on the score 'Paris (conjectured) circa 1788' and 'author unknown'. However it is clear the music is by Bax and the *Lento espressivo* second movement yields the decorated 'Mozartian' second subject idea heard in the slow movement of the Violin Concerto that might be compared to ideas in the post-Second World War concertos of Richard Strauss. For those with the violin and piano score, note at letter Q the addition of a forty-second cadenza-like passage in double stopping that Bax deleted before publication.

In the final rondo the vigorous opening idea is contrasted with a delicious slow waltz. A fast section follows and again in this movement we have reinstated (at ten bars after S) a wonderful passage of gossamer running semiquavers reminiscent of the fairy dancing in his tone poem *In the Faery Hills*, before another passage in waltz time leads to a trumpet solo and the return of the opening idea presaging the rush to the close.

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Dyson: Violin Concerto

In a generation when many of the leading composers came from well-off backgrounds, and not a few had private incomes, it is good to remember that Sir George Dyson (1883 – 1964), doyen of public school music and the first director of the Royal College of Music to have been a student there, in fact came from a humble northern working-class background and was entirely a self-made man.

It has still not been explained why Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, during his long tenure as professor of composition at the Royal College of Music, should have produced so many composers of stature, all with highly personal and individual styles, when his method appears to have been one that should have produced clones of his own approach. Perhaps he exacerbated

the students' natural rebelliousness! Dyson is no exception to this generation and his personality is evident in a forthright tunefulness, in certain characteristic twists of harmony and orchestration, and an eschewing of the more advanced tendencies of his day.

In his autobiography Dyson remembered playing the organ for church services at the age of thirteen and was a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists at just sixteen. Thus he became an open scholar at the RCM, coming to London in 1900. He studied there for four years and then won the Mendelssohn scholarship which allowed him to travel on the continent. On Stanford's advice he chose Italy where he encountered the leading Italian orchestral composers of their day: Buonamici, Sgambati and Martucci. He also spent some time in Vienna, Berlin and Dresden. He thus met many of the leading musicians of the day – including Richard Strauss, and Joachim, and later, in London, Nikisch played his early Straussian symphonic poem which he called *Siena*.

He returned to London in 1907. Thus this working class boy from industrial Halifax had, by the age of twenty-four, acquired an enviable musical technique, and a patina of the genteel man-about-Europe. But he needed to earn his living, and Sir Hubert Parry recommended him to be music master at the Royal Naval College at Osborne, and from there it was but a step to Marlborough College, and after three years to Rugby.

Finding himself in the infantry at the outbreak of war, he wrote a 'Manual of Grenade Fighting' later widely circulated as 'Grenade Warfare'. Shell-shocked in 1916 he convalesced for some time. Eventually he found himself working in the Air Ministry where he helped establish RAF bands, and he also partly composed the *RAF March Past* that Sir Walford Davies had sketched in short score. In 1920 Dyson's Three Rhapsodies for string quartet, composed soon after his return from the continent before the war were chosen for publication under the Carnegie Publication scheme. To crown his achievement and the return to normality, he was appointed to Wellington College, and also became a professor at the Royal College of Music. It was at this time that he wrote his celebrated book *The New Music* published in 1924, and widely admired in its day for its learning and apparently common-sense view. (In a footnote he says: 'my difficulty is that I cannot find a logical definition of atonality'.)

The most productive part of Dyson's life as a composer came while he was director of music at Winchester College, an appointment he held from 1924 to 1937, only leaving to

become Director of the Royal College of Music. Here not only was he organist, but he had a choir and orchestra for concerts as well as an adult choral society. If one said that he composed as a hobby, one would give quite the wrong idea. Yet this was a spare time activity in a busy professional life, teaching, lecturing (later broadcasting) and performing. He first achieved his most characteristic voice with choral music, of a tuneful vigorous cast. Choral societies responded from the first, and *In Honour of the City* (1928) and particularly *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (1930), taking a whole evening to perform and undoubtedly his masterpiece, established him as a vibrant musical personality of some stature. Three Choirs commissions followed: *St Paul's Voyage to Melita* in 1933 and *Nebuchadnezzar* in 1935.

His Symphony in G (1937) established that he was not just a choral composer, in spite of Sir Adrian Boult's dislike of the work. Other choral works followed, including the extended *Quo Vadis* (1937, 1948) for the Three Choirs and later *Sweet Thames Run Softly*, a mellifluous setting for baritone, chorus and orchestra of words by Spencer. Finally came the brilliant choral *Agincourt* and the short *A Christmas Garland*. Lesser composers have established themselves with fewer works.

Dyson's Violin Concerto dates from the Second World War and was completed in 1941. Albert Sammons championed the new work and recommended it to Sir Adrian Boult in September 1941. Dyson remarked that he 'had expected to put it in a drawer till better days'; but Boult accepted the concerto and Sammons gave its first performance with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian on 16 February 1942.

A modern concerto in four movements is comparatively unusual, and gives the music a quasi-symphonic scale. After an arresting but solemn opening *tutti*, almost tragic in tone, the double basses play, *pizzicato*, a phrase of five notes later to become the first notes of the soloist's second subject. The violin's opening entry is unlike that of any other concerto, quietly musing over a theme which is extended over some eighteen bars. A long passage of more vigorous music during which the soloist does not play extends to ten pages of score before the violin returns with a short *cadenza*. But the brooding elegiac character of the movement is sustained and it ends with the soloist presenting the opening theme accompanied as before by the double basses, as the mists close.

The *scherzo* is launched with the notes of the motto motif of Dyson's *The Canterbury*

Pilgrims ('Now let us ride'). It is a fast jig or reel, the bright soloist rushing on in endless triplets. Dyson was a master of this sort of constantly evolving passage work, but eventually a second idea arises in the strings, the rhythm now a leaping crochet-quaver. The soloist soon makes this a wide-spanning tune, though the dance continues headlong.

The slow movement calls for only muted strings and is based on the thirty-two bar 2 / 4 theme played by the strings at the outset. The soloist enters in 3 / 4 and decorates the theme in semiquavers and in a second variation moves into a lilting 6 / 8 followed by a waltz-like section. Back to 2 / 4 and the violinist singing sweetly before the theme is presented in full now by the soloist, before the meditation fades.

The *finale* is vigorous, one commentator wondering whether it took its origin in 'thoughts of the sunny south'. Certainly the music's frequently dance-like character suggests a celebration. With a passing echo of the variations theme the music reaches the coda, *andante*, *molto moderato*, and a backward glance at the double bass figure from the first movement. But we leave the work with a feeling of good humour and high spirits.

The concerto was written too early in the war to be celebrating optimistic hopes for world events and it is perhaps more a personal celebration. Between the wars there were few British violin concertos, though many for the piano. During the war, however, Walton's and Bax's concertos were first heard in the UK and Moeran produced a notably atmospheric essay in the medium. So, Dyson was in good company, a company which he surely shares as an equal.

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Bliss: Violin Concerto

The Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, the 'trouvaille', as James had termed it, was a 'great player', the British / Italian violinist Alfredo Campoli (1906 – 1991). The concerto was commissioned by the BBC in 1953 and composed over the following two years, Bliss (1891 – 1975) and Campoli working closely together. In his autobiography Bliss recalled:

> I learnt a lot about violin technique from him... If a passage seemed to him ineffective, he would exaggerate its difficulty, distorting his face in anguish. He would suggest an alteration, and then play it through again, murmuring 'beautiful, beautiful'! I was always amused by this play-acting, but the result of his persuasive cajoling was that, whether the concerto be liked or not, it certainly is apt for the instrument.

The premiere took place at the Royal Festival Hall, London on 11 May 1955, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Soon after, Campoli recorded the work, with Bliss himself conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

The concerto, Bliss wrote in an article for *The Musical Times*, 'conspicuously displays the soloist as protagonist throughout', and it exploits the qualities for which Campoli was renowned, the beauty of his tone (which was likened to *bel canto*) and his phrasing. It begins with an orchestral 'motto' theme which returns at significant structural points in the first movement. The soloist then introduces three distinct ideas which form a thematic first subject group: in turn they are a melody of a romantic cast, a crisp fanfare-like figure, and a theme marked by wide expressive intervals.

An orchestral passage leads to the lyrical second subject, played by the solo violin. The motto is recalled to launch the development section which exploits the potential of the first subject group, particularly the fanfare like figure, heard in a highly rhythmic, almost jazzy section. A further orchestral outburst and a final appearance of the motto lead to a short accompanied cadenza, which opens with a magical passage of exquisite beauty, the solo violin soaring above harp and tremolo strings. The emphasis in the cadenza on the 'romantic' first-subject theme also suggests a quality of recapitulation, which is confirmed by the subsequent return of the second subject, played now by the orchestra. The coda, based on the 'fanfare' idea, drives the movement to a dramatic close.

The second movement is a complete contrast, a fleet, vivacious scherzo, Bliss having had Berlioz's 'Queen Mab' scherzo from *Roméo et Juliette* in mind whilst he wrote it. From its nimble, airy main theme played by the soloist, it gallops along in dance-like rhythms, the first part offset by a more sustained section although the capricious ideas of the scherzo keep lurking in the background. The movement builds to an orchestral climax and a helter-skelter coda that leaves the soloist with the last word.

Composing the last movement gave Bliss considerable trouble. He was conscious that the concerto demanded a slow movement which would balance the character of the first two movements, but also that it must have a brilliant finish, and that the soloist should occupy the spotlight in a substantial unaccompanied cadenza. His solution to this dilemma, as revealed in his article in *The Musical Times*, relates again to his Jamesian 'donnée':

> I began rehearsing the first two movements with my soloist, while deeply considering the third. I let myself be swayed by the style of playing of my chosen soloist, just as a playwright might be influenced by a great actor in his leading role.

Bliss solved the problem of a slow movement by beginning the finale with a weighty, *Andante sostenuto* Introduction. This starts with a solemn brass chorale, after which a rhapsodic passage for the soloist leads to a tender, expressive theme followed by a single variation. The pace quickens and a theme having a distinct gypsy quality, a tribute to Campoli's 'Latin' temperament, establishes the *Allegro deciso in modo zingaro*. Here Bliss's writing for the violin exploits another aspect of the playing of Campoli, his 'wonderful command of spiccato'. A bridge passage leads to a second idea, playful in character, and the main unaccompanied Cadenza. The theme and its variation from the Introduction are restated before a coda on the second main theme brings an exhilarating conclusion.

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Veale: Violin Concerto

John Veale (1922 – 2006) was born in Kent and was a student at Oxford during the early years of the war. He studied music with Egon Wellesz at much the same time, later returning to him after wartime army service. During the latter period he wrote incidental music for the Oxford University Dramatic Society, including Anthony Besch's 1947 production of *Love's Labour's Lost* featuring fellow students Kenneth Tynan and Lindsay Anderson. Veale reports that he got on very well with Wellesz on a personal level but was completely out of sympathy with him as a composer. Perhaps more important in Veale's early days was William Walton's enthusiastic encouragement: 'I did not study with Walton,' underlined the composer, 'I don't think he had any students, but he was very helpful'.

In 1949 a Fellowship allowed him to study in the USA where he opted for the American composer Roger Sessions. However, when, after a year, he was able to renew the scholarship, Veale chose Roy Harris and thus became possibly Harris's only English pupil, a unique influence felt briefly in Veale's works of the time.

In 1947 Veale had worked for the Crown Film Unit writing mood music and in the 1950s he became a leading composer for the cinema, writing for such films as *The Purple Plain*, *The Spanish Gardener*, *No Road Back* and *Portrait of Alison*. In those days film scores

did not have the independent critical cachet they do now, and when, years later, his film company asked Veale to send them the scores he did so. 'I was naive,' admits the composer with a rueful laugh, 'I just sent them, although they were unique manuscripts, and the film company promptly destroyed them. That's the only reason they wanted them!' Thus, although he was, fleetingly, a leading name in 1950s film music, Veale could not readily respond to the later vogue for film music on CD.

Veale originally sketched his First Symphony in 1944, while he was in the army, and it reflects the period when doodle-bugs began to fall across England. The symphony was completed in 1947, and was performed in Cheltenham by Sir John Barbirolli and The Hallé Orchestra in 1952. Veale had a growing pattern of early successes. These included the evocative portrait of San Francisco, the Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge, which he called *Panorama*, introduced by Sir Adrian Boult and the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1951 and at the BBC Promenade Concerts in 1955; the concert overture *Metropolis* at London's Royal Festival Hall by the London Symphony Orchestra with Charles Groves, also in 1955; and the Clarinet Concerto the year before. An Elegy for flute, harp and strings (1952) was written in memory of his first daughter who had died at the age of four, and there was also a String Quartet (1952) and a setting of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* (1959). All these works received prestigious performances by leading musicians of the day, signalling a vigorous young composer emerging with a significant career apparently in prospect.

However, like many another young British composer working in a tonal idiom at that time, Veale became persona non grata almost overnight as a consequence of the avant-garde revolution engendered by William Glock's appointment as Director of Music at the BBC. There followed a long period in which he nearly gave up composition and his music was unheard. His most recent orchestral score at that time was the four-movement Second Symphony, completed in 1965, and when I first telephoned him out of the blue in the early 1980s to enquire about his (then two) symphonies I asked, rather tentatively, 'Is that John Veale – the composer?' and his response was an explosive, but not unfriendly: 'Good God!' – no one had asked that question for many years!

It was the Violin Concerto on this recording which, by a lucky chance, was introduced to the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester when the orchestra had a gap in its schedule, and it was quickly broadcast in 1986. The

composer seemed to find new inspiration and returned to composition with a succession of orchestral and other works, including the *Demos Variations* of 1986, *Apocalypse* for chorus and orchestra, *Triune* for Oboe, Cor anglais and Orchestra (1993) and a Third Symphony (1996 – 7), still in condensed score. The Violin Concerto is romantic in aspiration and effect, the composer making no bones about its autobiographical inspiration (see below). After a brief portentous orchestral flourish, a motif which is expanded later, the solo violin rises from its low G sharp, as if to remind us that it is the soloist whose story is to be told. The orchestra returns, at first threatening, and introduces the first theme which is given an epic character by fanfaring trumpets. It is soon followed by a contrastingly romantic theme for the strings which is launched with an upward portamento, as if to underline its expressive intent, and includes a chromatically descending triplet which recurs at moments of passion. The soloist's constant romantic ascending portamenti – written in the score – and the chromatic movements and ambiguities of the singing line create a personal and lyrical outpouring very much in the manner of Veale's favourites, William Walton and Samuel Barber. There are two conflicting emotions in this bittersweet music: a reflective lyricism of shifting semitones and chromatic ambiguities, and the frenetic running passage-work crowned by bounding brass of the *Allegro* which follows. The wide-spanning vein of the opening passage returns and the horns sing out the first theme against the running semiquavers of the *Allegro* before we reach the soloist's brooding cadenza. The orchestra returns and we soon hear again the opening motif, now increasingly triumphant. The momentum is maintained as the soloist emphatically reiterates the opening theme in crunching double-stops before racing vigorously to the end.

The composer tells us that the slow movement is love music, but he writes a wistful lament rather than an ecstatic hymn to passion: an evocation of troubled love very much recollected in tranquillity. This is a shadowed landscape, evoked from the first by the strings and softly sounding brass, both of which are muted in the substantial outer sections, creating a velvet backdrop for the soloist's soaring reflective flight. Is the composer here remembering his young daughter, thirty-five years on? At the opening the constant pulsing triplets of the harp add to the magical ambience, triplets that are eventually taken up by the soloist. Before the violin's flight sinks to

earth, the triplets presage a welling climax in the horns and trumpets, as all remove their mutes and we move into the faster though still reflective middle section. Now on the G string the soloist takes a more robust view, the theme constantly accented before romantic, ascending portamenti lead it again into the upper register. A chain of exquisite, descending semiquaver octaves brings us to a climax, the violin gradually becoming more passionate and agitated until a great crash on the tam-tam, after which the strings replace their mutes and the opening music returns – centred on D rising to E (it had been G to A at the opening).

The soloist's flight is now more deeply felt as the violin is muted, the mute lending an ethereal, silvery quality. With its constant double-stopping the solo line conflates elements of the two previous themes and ends on D nearly two octaves above the stave. The unmuted violin then muses in its middle register, touching in fragile harmonics, before soaring again in the final bars, underlined by the slowly pulsing harp and fading on a long held, magical high G, two octaves above the stave.

Whatever troubles he has been recalling, the composer now seems to be reconciled, all passion spent, as the light fades. For the listener new to this concerto the vigorous, balletic orchestral opening of the finale with its dancing 3/8 in a three–three–two–four pulse, emphasised by the hard-edged sound of the xylophone, immediately brings to mind Constant Lambert's ballet music, though the composer is emphatic that he had not been aware of the allusion. It certainly places Veale in a British tradition of energetically outgoing orchestral writing. This opening is followed by the soloist's nervous rhythmic motif, quickly building into headlong running passage-work which, after an extended statement, gives way to another spacious, romantic theme. This, with its chromatically descending triplets and constant semitonal changes, returns us to the world of the first movement. These three elements alternate: the finale is effectively a modified rondo, and the effect of two fast themes and a constantly recurring slow one is to tell of the would-be extrovert, the reveller beset by introspection and unable to keep himself from constantly returning to the lyrical chromatic inflections of the first movement. Each time he shakes it off he finds himself again overtaken by the dream. Ultimately the composer gives the game away by quoting the main theme of the first movement, extended by a motif from the middle section of the slow movement.

Even when we think we are in the final peroration, all boozy brass and knockabout

fun, the slow, reflective mood obstinately if briefly returns before the exuberant, throwaway close, as if to say 'what the hell, no use worrying about the past'. The burlesque has triumphed, but it is the haunted dreamer we remember, not the swaggering would-be-one-of-the-boys.

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The violinist **Lydia Mordkovitch** (1944 – 2014) took a wealth of musical experience from the former Soviet Union via Israel to Britain, which she made her home for the second half of her life. A strong, charismatic performer, she was a faithful interpreter of a composer's wishes and made more than sixty recordings for Chandos. Her native and adopted countries are strongly represented in a wide repertoire, shown particularly effectively in the four-part *Tribute* released in 2015.

Lydia Mordkovitch was born in Russia and studied at the Odessa Conservatory, then at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, where she was master pupil of, and assistant to, David Oistrakh. She emigrated to Israel in 1974 and from 1980 lived in Britain, appearing regularly with the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, The Hallé, BBC Philharmonic, and English Chamber Orchestra. She worked with such distinguished conductors as Sir Georg Solti, Riccardo Muti, Vassily Sinaisky, Neeme Järvi, Richard Hickox, Hugh Wolff, Jan Latham-Koenig, Vernon Handley, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, and Stanisław Skrowaczewski. An impressive discography reflects her comprehensive catalogue, and encompasses music from the complete works for solo violin by Bach to the concertos of Shostakovich, her recording of which for Chandos won a *Gramophone* Award and a Diapason d'Or. In addition to her award nominations, *Gramophone* seven times made a disc of hers a Critics' Choice and her last recordings won major nominations and prizes across Europe.

Lydia Mordkovitch was several times named 'Woman of the Year' by the American Biographical Institute, and also 'Outstanding Woman of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries'. She was a Professor and Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music in London. As a founding artist for Chandos Records she will be very much missed.

Born in Scotland, **Bryden Thomson** studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and in Europe with Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt and Igor Markevitch. He worked with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

as assistant to Ian Whyte after whose death he undertook some 250 engagements in two years. He was Principal Conductor of the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra from 1968 to 1973, Principal Conductor and Music Director of the Ulster Orchestra from 1977 to 1985, and undertook guest conducting engagements with orchestras such as the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Scottish National and Scottish Chamber orchestras. His work in the operatic field included posts with Norwegian Opera and Scottish Opera. Bryden Thomson died in 1991.

At the time of his untimely death at the age of sixty in November 2008, **Richard Hickox** CBE, one of the most gifted and versatile British conductors of his generation, was Music Director of Opera Australia, having served as Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales from 2000 until 2006 when he became Conductor Emeritus. He founded the City of London Sinfonia, of which he was Music Director, in 1971. He was also Associate Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, Conductor Emeritus of the Northern Sinfonia, and co-founder of Collegium Musicum 90.

He regularly conducted the major orchestras in the UK and appeared many times at the BBC Proms and at the Aldeburgh, Bath, and Cheltenham festivals, among others. With the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican Centre he conducted a number of semi-staged operas, including *Billy Budd*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, and *Salome*. With the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra he gave the first ever complete cycle of Vaughan Williams's symphonies in London. In the course of an ongoing relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra he conducted Elgar, Walton, and Britten festivals at the South Bank and a semi-staged performance of *Gloriana* at the Aldeburgh Festival.

Apart from his activities at the Sydney Opera House, he enjoyed recent engagements with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Vienna State Opera, and Washington Opera, among others. He guest conducted such world-renowned orchestras as the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and New York Philharmonic.

His phenomenal success in the recording studio resulted in more than 280 recordings, including most recently cycles of orchestral works by Sir Lennox and Michael Berkeley and Frank Bridge with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the symphonies by Vaughan Williams with the London Symphony Orchestra, and a series of operas by

Britten with the City of London Sinfonia. He received a Grammy (for *Peter Grimes*) and five *Gramophone* Awards. Richard Hickox was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Jubilee Honours List in 2002, and was the recipient of many other awards, including two Music Awards of the Royal Philharmonic Society, the first ever Sir Charles Groves Award, the *Evening Standard* Opera Award, and the Award of the Association of British Orchestras.

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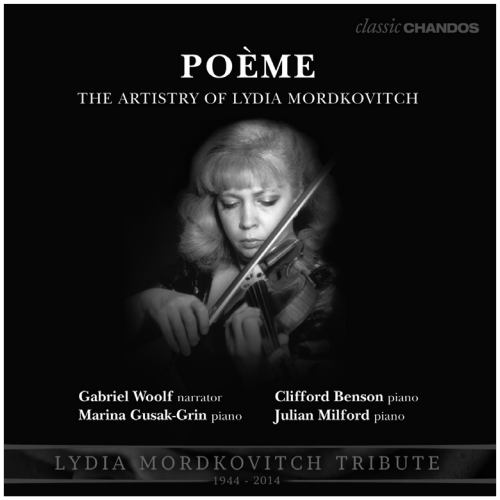

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The recording of Bax's Violin Concerto was made in association with the Sir Arnold Bax Trust.

The recording of Dyson's Violin Concerto was dedicated to the memory of Christopher Palmer (1946–1995), in recognition of his invaluable contribution to the music of British composers recorded by Chandos over the years.

The recording of Bliss's Violin Concerto was made with financial support from The Bliss Trust.

Recording producers Tim Oldham (Bax), Ralph Couzens (Dyson), and Brian Couzens (Veale, Bliss)
Sound engineers Richard Lee (Bax), Ben Connellan (Dyson), and Ralph Couzens (Veale, Bliss)
Assistant engineers Peter Sheldon (Bax), Richard Smoker (Dyson), Christopher Brooke (Veale), and Michael Common (Bliss)
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CHANDOS DIGITAL 2-disc set CHAN 241-53

British Violin Concertos

COMPACT DISC ONE

Sir Arnold Bax (1883–1953)

1 - 3 Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* 35:15

Sir George Dyson (1883–1964)

4 - 7 Violin Concerto† 43:14

TT 78:39

COMPACT DISC TWO

Sir Arthur Bliss (1891–1975)

1 - 3 Concerto for Violin and Orchestra‡ 41:48

John Veale (1922–2006)

4 - 6 Violin Concerto§ 35:38

TT 77:36

Lydia Mordkovitch violin
London Philharmonic Orchestra*
City of London Sinfonia†
BBC National Orchestra of Wales‡
Lesley Hatfield leader
BBC Symphony Orchestra§
Stephen Bryant leader
Bryden Thomson*
Richard Hickox†‡§

BRITISH VIOLIN CONCERTOS – Mordkovitch/Thomson/Hickox

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