

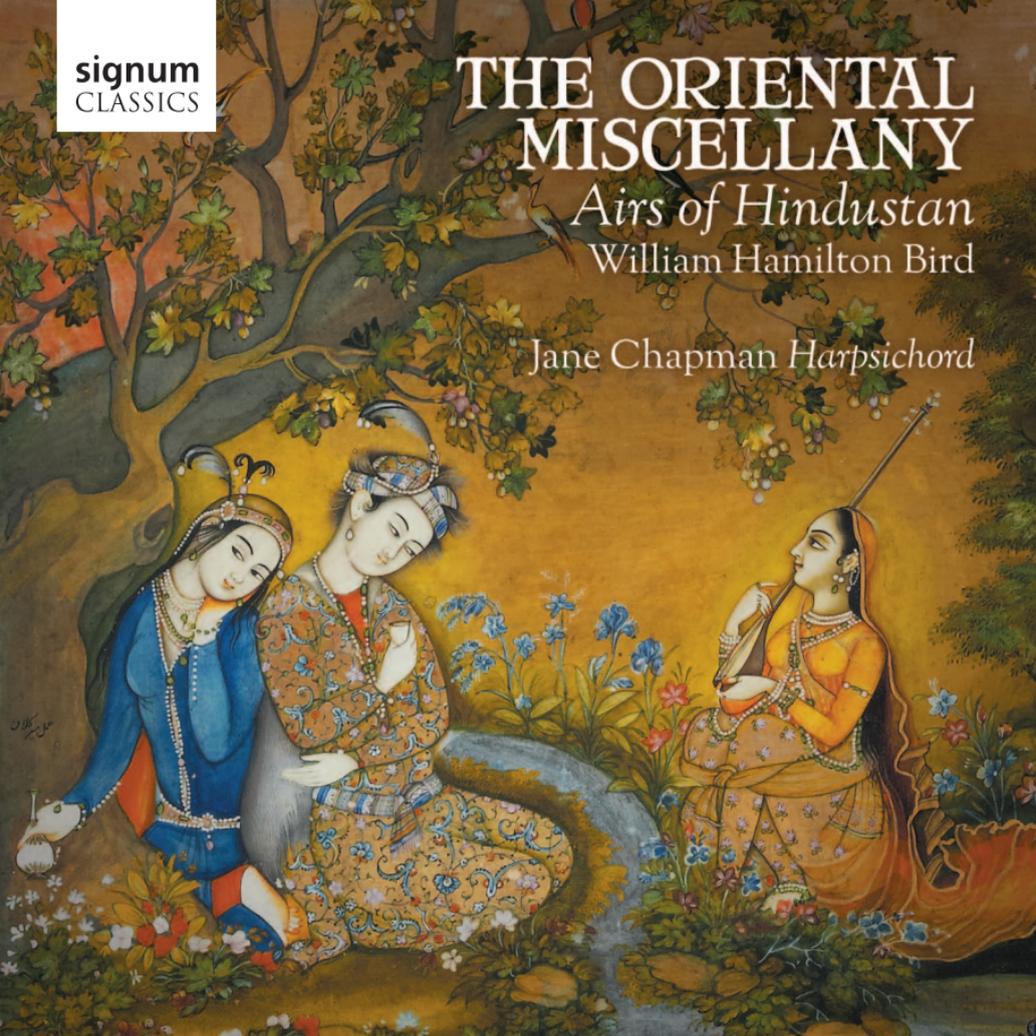
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CLASSICS

# THE ORIENTAL MISCELLANY

*Airs of Hindustan*

William Hamilton Bird

Jane Chapman Harpsichord



**THE ORIENTAL MISCELLANY**  
AIRS OF HINDUSTAN  
WILLIAM HAMILTON BIRD (c.1750 – c.1804)

1	IV.	Rekhtah: Mutru be khoosh nuwa bego	[2.19]
2	I.	Gat	[2.24]
3	II.	Rekhtah: Sakia! Fusul beharust	[3.04]
4	III.	Tuppah: Kia kam keea dil ne?	[2.33]
5	XXII.	Tuppah: Deem tere na?	[0.47]
6	V.	Tuppah: Ouwal keh mura buh isht razee kurdi	[1.54]
7	VI.	Rekhtah: Soonre mashukan! be wufa!	[2.50]
8	VII.	Rekhtah: Ky bashud! O ky bashud!	[1.17]
9	VIII.	Tuppah: Hi purri chehreh!	[1.56]
10	IX.	Terana: Autese boli, bundoo!	[1.11]
11	X.	Rekhtah: Gid a Shumba	[1.38]
12	XI.	Rekhtah: Susha myra bear	[5.07]
13	XII.	Tuppah: Dande kala	[2.28]
14	XIII.	Terana: Dandera vakee	[1.45]
15	XIV.	Tuppah: Toom ko sum shouta	[2.23]
16	XV.	Rekhtah: Mera peara ab ia re	[2.25]
17	XVI.	Tuppah: Kan ja kia	[2.00]
18	XVII.	Rekhtah: Quo e? fera que sutke	[2.13]
19	XVIII.	Rekhtah: Shisheh bur shrub	[1.31]
20	XIX.	Terana: Ya laum, ya laum	[1.40]
21	XX.	Rekhtah: Dil me danme lea re	[1.59]
22	XXI.	Rekhtah: Mera mutchelli!	[2.04]
23	XXIII.	Rekhtah: Hi bibbi mon karalla	[2.01]
24	XXIV.	Tuppah: O! yaar O!	[1.30]
25	XXV.	Rekhtah: Ley chila re	[1.21]
26	XXVI.	Tuppah: Piar mera soon	[3.13]

27	XXVII.	Raagney: Mun shuma	[4.10]
28	XXVIII.	Rekhtah: Dandie's song	[2.02]
29	XXIX.	Rekhtah: Mooni bibbi nochare	[1.03]
30	XXX.	Rekhtah: Rewannah kisty	[2.29]

**Sonata for Harpsichord & Flute**

**Yu-Wei Hu *baroque flute***

31	XXXIa.	Allegro Maestoso	[2.41]
32	XXXIb.	Affetuoso	[1.39]
33	XXXII.	Minuetto	[1.43]
34	XXXIII.	Jigg	[2.52]

Total timings: [74.14]

**JANE CHAPMAN HARPSICHORD**

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*"I have now the pleasure of enclosing you a Copy of some Indostaun Airs. You may be assured they are exact, and to me they are pretty. Norwithstanding this I cannot be quite clear that they will please you; for notes cannot express Style, and that of these airs is very peculiar and new. I have often made the Musicians tune their instruments to the harpsichord that I might join their little band. They always seemed delighted with the accompaniment of the harpsichord and sung with uncommon animation, and a pleasure to themselves, which was expressed in their faces ... The Governor's little Band from whom I took down these airs consisted of Three Singers; two performers with a kind of large guitar, and their usual accompaniment of drums ... The strings of the Guitar were all tuned in unison. Through the whole air they continue sweeping these strings which produces an uninterrupted Buz, resembling that of an insect which I have often met with."*

Accomplished harpsichordist Margaret Fowke an avid collector of Hindustani Airs writes enthusiastically to her father Joseph Fowke (Benares, 11 Jan 1785). Her family formed part of a wide musical circle that included William Hamilton Bird, and it seems likely that Margaret may have contributed some of the airs to the *Oriental Miscellany*, perhaps even those she had taken down from the Governor's little Band. Originally from Dublin, Bird is identified in the *Bengal Calendar and Register* for 1790 as a 'Conductor of public amusements'. Promoting concerts at venues such as the Old Court House, by composers such as Corelli, Giordani and Haydn, could be a risky business, and according to the *Calcutta Gazette*, 25 June 1789, Bird didn't attract the necessary 100 subscribers for a performance, and had to cover costs himself: "His wishes to amuse are (and always will be) much more predominant than those of emolument". The vogue for Hindustani Airs came at just the right moment. Bird's debts were mounting as can be seen from a notice in the *Calcutta Chronicle* in 1788 requesting the indebted, "immediately to make known the Nature and Amount of their respective Demands". Therefore this new publishing enterprise was timely.

*The Oriental Miscellany; being a collection of the most favourite airs of Hindoostan, compiled and adapted for the Harpsichord*, was first published in Calcutta in 1789, and later in Edinburgh (c.1805). Dedicated to the first Governor-General of India, Warren Hastings, it attracted over 250 subscribers including Earl Cornwallis, chief administrator of the East India Company in Bengal, and Sophia Plowden, a fellow harpsichordist, singer and good friend of Margaret Fowke, who compiled her own beautiful manuscript now housed at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. The first publication of the *Oriental Miscellany* contains 30 songs (most of which are also arranged for guitar), in different Indian vocal styles transcribed from live performance, with titles transliterated from the original Arabic script, though no actual verse. Bird's transliterations were highly criticised by the grammarian John Gilchrist, so we have included a revised table of contents. Bird also composed a Sonata for harpsichord with violin or flute accompaniment, which weaves 'select passages' from at least 8 of the airs into its various movements, creating a medley of tuneful fragments with titles that appear in the score, perhaps the first work of East-West fusion.

British presence in India was long established with the steady growth of the East India Company, its economic and political control and its private armies. Vast numbers of officers, traders and fortune-seekers flocked to India, followed by women with their chattels, harpsichords and fortepianos. Two such women were Margaret Fowke and Sophia Plowden, Margaret's brother Francis, a keen violinist, wrote a treatise *On the Vina or Indian Lyre*, published in 'Asiatick Researches' (1788), and the Orientalist, William Jones, friend of the family and author of *On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos*, a publication known to Haydn, assisted Margaret with the translation of song texts. Sophia travelled with her harpsichord from Calcutta up the river Ganges to the inland residencies at Lucknow, where she collected songs heard at *nautch* or dance parties performed at private houses or at court, often sung by renowned performers such as the famous Kashmiri singer known as Khanum Jan, who was reputedly painted by Zoffany and perhaps even buried in Sophia's garden. Transcriptions from live performance were made in domestic settings, with singers specifically invited for that purpose, as described in Margaret's letter to her father. Sophia performed these songs for the Newab

of Awadh, Asuf-ud-Daula (1775-1797), an inspired patron of the arts who may also have contributed to her collection. Back in Calcutta Sophia held a masquerade in which she recreated a *nautch* in costume, with friends from the East India Company joining in on Indian instruments. She writes to her sister Lucy (1783) that "As the singing and dancing Ladies who are in high stile also smoke and chew Beetle (betel) or Pawn (pan) with this we were also amply provided".

Sophia compiled a collection of Hindustani Airs in the late 1780s which is illustrated with detailed pictures of Indian musicians and singers, and most importantly includes Persian and Urdu poetry. The disc opens with Bird IV, identified by Katherine Butler Schofield in the Plowden MS as a famous *ghazal*. This song was popular in the Anglo-Indian community and was even mentioned in the *Calcutta Gazette*, probably because of the repeated catchy phrase 'taza ba taza no ba no' (Ever fresh and ever new). The Plowden transcription has a simple bass line, and less complex harmony, the second section being in unison. The rhythm is varied implying both 2/4 and 6/8, and the key signature (B flat and F natural) draws attention to the modality. The version in the *Oriental*

*Miscellany* is more obviously arranged for keyboard, so I have combined the two, playing the Plowden version as a variation.

Bird writes a fascinating introduction to the 1789 publication in which he lists four styles of 'music practice': *Rekhtahs*, *Teranas*, *Tuppahs*, and *Raagnies*. "The Rekhtahs are most admired, because they are comprehensible and exceed others in form and regularity". In her correlation between the Plowden MS and the *Oriental Miscellany*, Katherine Butler Schofield notes that several of the same songs that appear in both sources are given different genre titles (see table), and concludes that the Plowden MS is most likely to be accurate. There are however certain interesting observations that can be made regarding the Bird score. 'Chanam' ('a famous woman singer'), is only mentioned in the context of a rekhta, implying that some of these songs may only have been sung by women; 'Dillsook' ('a male singer, of great eminence'), appears next to several of the *tappā* – a form which Bird describes as being "Wild but pleasing when understood", originating from the folk songs of the camel drivers of Punjab and characterised by intricate ornamentation. There is little sign of this exuberance in the notated music:

however in Bird VI, there is a profusion of repeated ornaments in the third variation, which could be an attempt to capture the original style of this love song. Bird XXVI, another *tappā*, is also a virtuosic display for the harpsichord, with the third variation played rapidly in unison by both hands and marked 'A la Kankoon' (a type of zither). *Tāranā* are "performances of the Rohillas, and sung only be men". There are only three in the collection and they seem bold and athletic in nature, with a distinctive style, and no additional variations. Bird only includes one *rāgini* (Bird XXVII), which is not a specific vocal genre but a female species of *rāg*. He says that they are "so void of meaning, and any degree of regularity, it is impossible to bring them into form for performance, by any singers but those of their country". The melodic shape of this particular piece is certainly more interesting and perhaps captures the 'amorous flights' mentioned in the introduction.

Virtually every piece is given a specific tempo or expressive marking: *Andante*, *Affetuoso*, *Vivace*, *Largo*, *Amoroso*. Occasionally there is a change of tempo and time signature within a piece such as Bird IX, or pauses in the middle of sections at the ends of phrases (Bird IV)

allowing the singer to catch breath or express the lyrics. In Bird VI he invites the player to invent short cadenzas between variations. *Kathak* dance would have been central to the performance of many of these songs. Bird states that the songs of Bengal are "too lively to admit of much expression, and one, or more, may be danced to as cotillions; the minors having been added for that purpose". *Cotillions* (forerunner of the *quadrille*) were danced at balls and soirées, where Hindustani *Airs* performed on the harpsichord also formed part of the evening's entertainment, along with glee singing and the latest music arrived from Europe. The nature of the Kirckman harpsichord with its varied registrations suits the rapid changes in dynamics marked in the score, the machine stop being operated by a pedal, allowing contrasts in sound and volume, as can be heard in the *Gat* (Bird I). The *nag's head swell* creates almost ghost like dynamic in Bird XXI as another pedal raises and lowers a slim section of wood above the soundboard, similar to opening and closing a lid.

The West is always rediscovering and reinventing the East, and often fusing the two in ways that perhaps say more about the assimilator than the assimilated. Warren

Hastings, on receiving a book of Hindustani *Airs* from Margaret Fowke, writes, "I have had the Pleasure to hear them all played by a very able performer, and can attest that they are genuine Transcripts of the original music". William Bird states in the introduction to the *Oriental Miscellany* that he has "strictly adhered to the original compositions, though it has cost him great pains to bring them into any form as to TIME" and that "the greatest imperfection, however, in the music of India, is the total want of accompaniments, a third or fifth are additions". His harmonisations are deliberately simple. These pieces are in the gallant style, popular in the mid 18th century with song-like melodies and simple harmony, the accompaniment centering on the tonic and dominant. The pared-down style of this period lends itself in some respects to the nature of these songs which would have been accompanied by a drone like instrument such as the *tānpūrā* or early *sitār*, the vocal line followed by the *sārāngī* with *tablā* keeping the pulse, much as described by Margaret.

Harpsichord performance practice in the 18th century may well have required the player to add more to the notated music, such as making the chords richer at cadence points, varying

ornamentation and bass line figuration. I resisted the temptation to flesh out the harmony particularly as future versions of some of the same songs still popular in the 19th century became increasingly sophisticated. The ornamentation included in the score, adding to the energy and expressive nature of the melodic line, has been liberally interpreted. The songs are mainly in Da Capo form with the opening section (A) or what could be called the *sthāyī* in the case of a Indian composition, followed by a second part (B) the *antarā* or verse, and then a repetition of the chorus (A). Variations often follow composed by Bird, flowing naturally on to each other. The double manual Kirckman harpsichord with its nasal lute registration on the top manual lends itself to imitating a drone-like accompaniment. Before several of the pieces I create a prelude played loosely in the style of an Indian *ālāp* exploring the *rāg* on which the song may have been based. This kind of improvisation has parallels with the *préludes non mesurés* by Louis Couperin in the 17th century. In Bird IV and XI I have based my short improvisation on *rāg Āsāvri* (similar to the aeolian mode) with a tender, romantic, melancholic mood or *rāsa*; Bird II, XVI and XXIV on *rāg Desh*; XVII and XXVII on *rāg Pilu*;

and VI, VII and XXI on *Bilaval thāt* (which could be compared to the major scale).

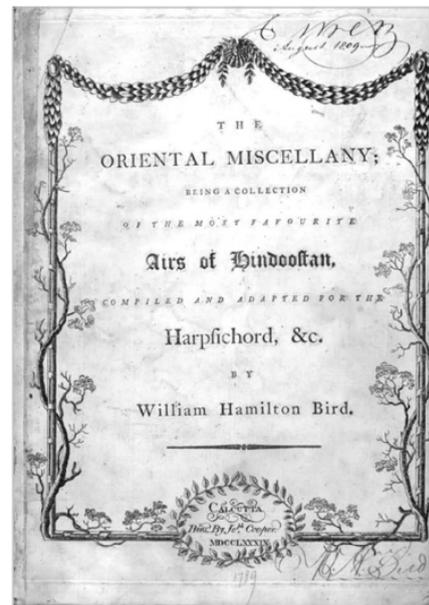
The *Miscellany* had to have a practical outcome, something tangible for the subscribers, reminding them of tuneful songs or dance accompaniments they had heard at *nautch* parties and other social gatherings. They needed to be musically satisfying and not too difficult to perform on a harpsichord, incorporating a simple rhythmical bass line and set of variations or repeated sections, extending the song in a way that was idiomatic to the harpsichord, and yet not totally at odds with the original vocal form. Thus the adaptations conformed to European musical taste and fashion of the late 18th century, whilst still retaining their original appeal. Margaret Fowke laments the problems of keeping a harpsichord in tune in the Indian climate: quite what the ‘Governor’s little Band’ would have made of it can only be guessed at.

*“I have nothing but bad news to tell of every sort and kind. I have just been touching my harpsichord, and to my infinite concern find it bewitched – It was tuned yesterday, and last night it was in perfect order – This morning just as I intended rattling off my cords, I found*

*the keys did not answer to my touch – it sounds as an old harpsichord does that has not been tuned for ten years – some of the keys have no sound - some have a dumb kind of tone – In short this charming instrument is quite ruined...*

*Very heavy rains have fallen for these two days, and last night the air was so damp that as I played upon the harpsichord, you would have imagined water had been thrown all over the keys.”*

Jane Chapman



Title page from William Hamilton Bird's *Oriental Miscellany*.

## THE ORIENTAL MISCELLANY

TRACK & TITLE	TRANSLITERATION
2 I. Gat	<i>Gat</i>
3 II. Sakia! Fusul beharust	<i>Saqī-ā! Fasli bahār ast</i>
4 III. Kia kam keea dil ne?	<i>Kyā kām kyā dil ne</i>
1 IV. Mutru be khoosh nuwa bego	<i>Mutrib-i khūshnavā begō/Tāza ba tāza nō ba nō</i>
6 V. Ouwal keh mura buh isht razee kurdi	<i>Awwal ke mārā ba 'ishq rāzī kardī</i>
7 VI. Soonre mashukan! be wufa!	<i>Sunrē ma'shuqā! bē-wafā!</i>
8 VII. Ky bashud! O ky bashud!	<i>Kī bāshad! O kī bāshad!</i>
9 VIII. Hi purri chehreh!	<i>Ā'ī parī-chihra</i>
10 IX. Autese boli, bundoo!	<i>Ā'ī sī bōl band ho</i>
11 X. Gid a Shumba	<i>Gīt ā shamba</i>
12 XI. Susha myra bear	<i>Shīsha mērā pyār</i>
13 XII. Dande kala	<i>Ḍaṇḍī kala</i>
14 XIII. Dandera vakee	<i>Dādar vā kī bundī ho baras</i>
15 XIV. Toom ko sum shouta	<i>Tum-ko samajhāo tā</i>
16 XV. Mera peara ab ia re	<i>Merā pyāra ab āyā re</i>
17 XVI. Kan ja kia	<i>Kahān jā kahī</i>

## TRANSLATION

Generic; short fixed composition for sitar/tabla/dancer without lyrics

“Oh cupbearer! It is the season of spring.” Persian ruba’i (Plowden 8)

“What did the heart do?” Urdu ghazal by Mirza Rafi ‘Sauda’ (1713-81) (Plowden 12)

“Sing, sweet-tongued musician, ever fresh and ever new!” Persian ghazal by Khwaja Shamsuddin Muhammad “Hafiz” (1310-79 (Plowden 1b)

“At first, you satisfied me in love.” Persian ruba’i (Plowden 9b)

“Listen, beloved! faithless one!” Hindi/Urdu khayal sung by snake charmers (Plowden 21)

“When may it be? Oh when may it be?!” Persian ruba’i (Plowden 9a)

“Oh fairy-faced one!” Persian ruba’i (Plowden 27b)

“Be silent as you come.” Hindi/Urdu khayal (Plowden 7b)

[Song – come – Saturday/Saturday’s day...] Hindi/Urdu

“Glass/mirror, my love...” Hindi/Urdu

“The boatman’s art (The ḍaṇḍī’s song).” Hindi/Urdu, probably a work song

“Frog! His drops are raining everywhere, memories of my lover are falling from the sky.” Purabi tappa (Plowden 3a)

“I explain to you...” Hindi/Urdu

“My beloved has now come, dear.” Hindi/Urdu

“Where you go, wherever...” Hindi/Urdu

TRACK & TITLE	TRANSLITERATION
18 XVII. Quo e? fera que sutke	<i>Ko't sahrā kṛ sidiqqṛ</i>
19 XVIII. Shisheh bur shrob	<i>Shīsha por sharāb</i>
20 XIX. Ya laum, ya laum	<i>e'alām e'alām</i>
21 XX. Dil me danme lea re	<i>Dil nadānt līyā re</i>
22 XXI. Mera mutchelli!	<i>Merṛ machālṛ (Macharṛ kṛ band yālṛ dṛ re)</i>
5 XXII. Deem tere na?	<i>Dīm dīm tera nā</i>
23 XXIII. Hi bibbi mon karalla	<i>Ā't bībṛ mon karela</i>
24 XXIV. O! yaar O!	<i>Ā't yār o</i>
25 XXV. Ley chila re	<i>Lecalṛ re</i>
26 XXVI. Piar mera soon	<i>Pyārā merā sun</i>
27 XXVII. Mun shuma	<i>Man shamā'</i>
28 XXVIII. Dandie's song	<i>Gṛt mallāhān</i>
29 XXIX. Mooni bibbi nochare	<i>munṛ bībṛ nācṛ re</i>
30 XXX. Rewannah kisty	<i>[Surwi] ruwān-i kistṛ</i>

Compiled by **Katherine Butler Schofield**, David Lunn, and Richard D Williams, 2013;  
with assistance from Lalita du Perron.  
Plowden Manuscript: MS 380, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

TRANSLATION
“What desert of truth/true friendship?” Hindi/Urdu
“Glass full of wine.” Persian or Hindi/Urdu
Proclaiming; possibly “Ya Allah”? Islamic devotional
“You took my innocent heart, dear.” Hindi/Urdu
“My innocent lover gave me slippery friendship like a fish’s.” Panjabi tappa (probably Plowden 15a) tarana (rhythmic vocables with esoteric meanings, may include a Persian/Urdu ruba’i)
“Hey, the woman took a vow of silence, and her lover finally obeyed.”. Purabi khayal (Plowden 29a)
“Oh [beloved] friend, oh!” Persian or Hindi/Urdu
“Take [it/me with you], dear.” Hindi/Urdu
“Listen, my beloved.” Hindi/Urdu
[I – candle...] Persian
“Dandies’ song/ Sailors’ song.” Hindi/Urdu, probably a work song
“My wife danced, dear.” Hindi/Urdu
“Who are you, beautiful cypress-like one?” Persian ghazal by or after Afzaluddin Badal “Khaqani” Sherwani (1122-90) (Plowden 11b)

## JANE CHAPMAN

Described in *The Independent* on Sunday as 'Britain's most progressive harpsichordist', Jane Chapman is at the forefront of creating, inspiring and discovering new music for harpsichord. She has premiered over 200 solo, chamber and electroacoustic works worldwide, and researched and recorded important musical sources from the 17th and 18th centuries on original instruments, such as the 'Lady's Banquet' and the 'Oriental Miscellany'.

Equally passionate about baroque and contemporary music, she has collaborated with ground-breaking composers, artists and dancers, working with musicians from the worlds of Indian music, jazz, and the avant-garde. She is a frequent partner in chamber ensembles, such as Trio Aporia, specialising in contemporary and baroque music on period instruments.

Her discs range from the 17th century 'Bauyn Manuscript' for Collins Classics, to WIRED, premiering electroacoustic works by British composers (NMC), to Berio's 'Rounds' (mode), on a revival instrument with 8 pedals, awarded the Preis der Deutschen Schallplatten Kritik. As an improviser she has recorded with electric



guitarist Mark Wingfield and sax player Iain Ballamy. Jane is professor of harpsichord at the Royal College of Music, London, Turner Sims Fellow at the University of Southampton and was artist in residence at King's College London, supported by the Leverhulme Trust. She is an Honorary Fellow of Dartington College of Arts.

## YU-WEI HU

Yu-Wei Hu trained as a modern flautist in Taiwan. Increasingly drawn to the unique colour and expressive qualities of the baroque flute she studied with Lisa Beznosiuk and Rachel Brown at the Royal College of Music, London, and was awarded Master of Music with Distinction and Artist Diploma. Yu-Wei performs with many renowned period ensembles, including Florilegium, International Baroque Players and The Hanover Band, frequently taking part in major festivals throughout the UK and Europe such as Brighton Early Music Festival, UK, Bachwoche Festival, Vienna, and Carinthischer Sommer Festival, Austria. She cofounded the baroque ensemble Les Nations Réunies, was winner of International Early Music Competition in Middleburg, Netherlands 2011, and presents recitals with her Swedish guitarist husband Johan Löfving, as Flauguissimo Duo.

Yu-Wei plays an one-key wooden flute replica made by Martin Wenner, after Carlo Palanca (c.1690-1783), an active bassoon player and wind instrument maker in Turin, around 1750.

## JACOB KIRCKMAN

*Harpsichord*

The Horniman Museum and Gardens' double manual harpsichord by Jacob Kirckman, London, 1772, is a fine example of the output of England's most prolific harpsichord maker. With its five octave compass, three sets of strings, lute and machine stops, it was the largest and most expensive model sold by the firm. Because of their mechanical complexities, and a widespread misunderstanding of their aesthetic ideal, late 18th-century English harpsichords are rarely found today in good playing order. This harpsichord has undergone restoration at various points in its history. The most recent, in 2013, by Christopher Nobbs and Ben Marks, returned it to playing condition and reinstated the lid swell (nag's head). Exhibited and played regularly in the Music Gallery's At Home With Music display, the instrument can be understood in its social and historical context.

R E K H T A H.

Mutra be khoofi nuwa bego —

Chanam.

Musical score for 'REKHTAH'. The score is written for piano and includes the following markings: *Andante*, *Fla.*, *Fin.*, *Fp*, *Fla.*, *Fec.*, *Fla.*, *Fec.*, and repeat signs with first and second endings.

Bird IV / Track [1] excerpt, from the original score of the *Oriental Miscellany*.

T U P P A H.

45

Kanj's kis,

Dillfook.

Musical score for 'TUPPAH'. The score is written for piano and includes the following markings: *Alftruofo.*, *Fla.*, *Fla.*, *Fla.*, *D. C.*, *Variation*, *R*, and *Volti ped*.

Bird XVI / Track [17] excerpt, from the original score of the *Oriental Miscellany*.

Dedicated to Gerry Farrell whose book 'Indian Music and the West' inspired this recording.

The research project leading to this CD was undertaken at King's College London and funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

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Horniman Museum and Gardens.

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Royal College of Music.

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Harpsichord tuned in Valotti temperament by Simon Neal and Oliver Sandig.

Producer, Recording Engineer & Editor – John Taylor

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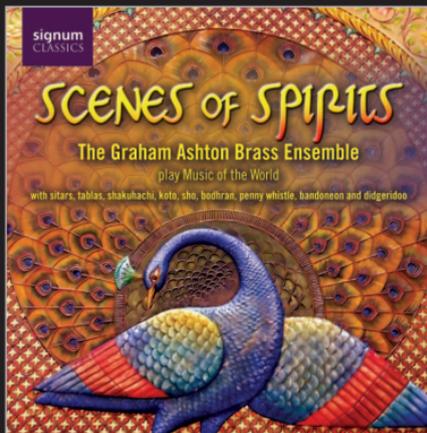


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