

# Airs from another planet

♩ 63: Strong, forthright

flute *p sempre*

oboe *p sempre*

\* *Bb* clarinet *p sempre*

bassoon *p sempre*

horn *sf sempre*

piano *(rit) sf legato sempre*

*(hb) sf en talle senza sempre*

*No Pedal-cast where indicated*

*\* written at sounding pitch*

Hebrides Ensemble Ailish Tynan

CHAMBER MUSIC AND SONGS BY JUDITH WEIR

## AIRS FROM ANOTHER PLANET: CHAMBER MUSIC AND SONGS BY JUDITH WEIR (b. 1954)

Hebrides Ensemble | Ailish Tynan *soprano* (tracks 1–4, 13–15)

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<b>Nuits d’Afrique</b> (2015)	
1 Berceuse	[3:43]
2 Le tam-tam	[3:07]
3 Crocodile	[4:30]
4 Le village	[4:15]

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<b>Three Chorales</b> (2015–16)	
5 ‘Angels bending near the earth’	[3:26]
6 ‘In death’s dark vale’	[4:51]
7 ‘O Sapientia’	[6:12]

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8 <b>O Viridissima</b> (2015)	[4:19]
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<b>The Bagpiper’s String Trio</b> (1985)	
9 Salute	[2:37]
10 Nocturne	[1:35]
11 Lament, over the sea	[2:41]

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12 <b>Day Break Shadows Flee</b> (2014)	[8:39]
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Tracks 1–4, 8 and 12–15 are premiere recordings

Charlotte Ashton <i>flute/piccolo</i> (tracks 1–4, 16–19)	Gabriella Dall’Olio <i>harp</i> (track 15)
John Roberts <i>oboe</i> (tracks 16–19)	James Willshire <i>piano</i> (tracks 1–8, 12, 16–19)
Yann Ghire <i>clarinet</i> (tracks 13–19)	Zoë Beyers <i>violin</i> (tracks 8–11)
Ursula Leveaux <i>bassoon</i> (tracks 16–19)	Scott Dickinson <i>viola</i> (tracks 9–11, 13–15)
Stephen Stirling <i>horn</i> (tracks 16–19)	William Conway <i>cello</i> (tracks 1–11) & <i>artistic director</i>

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<b>Really?</b> (2002)	
13 Incidents in Traffic	[2:20]
14 The Expansion of Porridge	[4:20]
15 What is Eternity?	[3:55]

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<b>Airs from another Planet</b> (1986) <i>Traditional music from outer space</i>	
16 I Strathspey & Reel	[3:19]
17 II Traditional Air	[3:33]
18 III Jig	[2:34]
19 IV Bagpipe Air, with Drones	[3:06]

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Total playing time	[73:13]
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This recording was made possible with generous support from The National Lottery through Creative Scotland, from Kimie Trust and from the McGlashan Charitable Trust.



Kimie Trust was established through a bequest by Kimie Okada (1929–2008), who loved music all her life, moved from Tokyo to Edinburgh in 1993 and was always keen to support music in the country that she had made her home. She regularly attended concerts by Hebrides Ensemble.

Music from elsewhere, temporally or geographically, has long featured in Judith Weir's work. The past, on occasion, is another country, as in her evocations of her Scottish heritage or the hymns of the medieval Rhenish saint, poet and composer Hildegard of Bingen. Yet dialogue is always important, be it between different cultures or the instruments of an ensemble. When voices are involved, it becomes clear that Weir conceives of instrumental music as carrying meaning much in the same way as texts. It is rare in the pieces featured here for there to be homophonic passages, where everyone plays together; instead, the emphasis is on maintaining independent lines of thought. That conversational, contrapuntal quality gives this music much of its energy and dramatic flair.

Communication between generations, continents, and women lies at the heart of **Nuits d'Afrique**, conceived as a companion piece to Maurice Ravel's *Chansons madécasses* (1926) and sharing its scoring for soprano, flute, cello and piano. Ravel had set poems published at the turn of the

nineteenth century by Évariste de Parry, which supposedly were drawn from folk traditions, responding to the Madagascan scenario with exotic harmonies and energetic rhythms. Weir responds along similar lines to her selections from Irène Assiba d'Almeida's *A Rain of Words*, a collection of French-language poetry by African women, though her music is never as aggressive as Ravel's central song 'Aoua' (which prompted political protests at the premiere of *Chansons madécasses*). Instead, there is a childlike aspect to the texts of *Nuits d'Afrique* and a gentle humour to their musical settings, with their meandering melodies and metrical play. The refrain of 'Berceuse' ('Lullaby') is kept in the native Senegalese of the poet Fatou Ndiaye Sow (1937–2004), suggesting perhaps that the mother tongue is the best way to cajole the child to sleep. Rhythm comes to the forefront in the second Ndiaye Sow setting, 'Le tam-tam' ('The Drum'), the low register of the piano and plucked cello building up a percussive framework for the vocal entry: a mystical and melismatic take on the significance of the drum, whose secret only the forest knows.

The crocodile described in the poem of that name by Véronique Tadjó (b. 1955), from Côte d'Ivoire, is an unusual specimen – a blood-fearing vegetarian, no less – destined to be attacked when he only wants to make friends. Congolese poet Marie-Léontine Tsiminda (also b. 1955) emphasises the continuities of life in 'The Village': the river that keeps flowing; the songs the children sing over and over; the sun that will rise again. Again, the instrumental parts take on a descriptive function, suggesting the children's chattering song and, at the end, as the flute melody is left hanging in the air, embodying the poem's final message that tomorrow is indeed another day. *Nuits d'Afrique* is dedicated to Ailish Tynan, who gave the premiere of the cycle at Wigmore Hall in 2017.

The passing of time is approached from a religious perspective in **Three Chorales**, the first of two recent chamber works here whose titles suggest that – despite their scoring for instruments alone – Weir is still thinking in terms of meanings beyond the purely musical. The opening piece, 'Angels bending near the earth' – the title taken from Edmund Sears's 'It came upon the midnight clear' – suggests the seraphic harps of gold through the piano's arpeggios, which flicker around the cello's long looping lines. The instruments' roles are initially reversed in the second piece, 'In Death's Dark Vale' (a paraphrase

of Psalm 23, taken from a Scottish hymnal), with the cello's rumbling motif the quicker-moving part to the piano's chordal interjections until they exchange material, perhaps to face together the valley of the shadow of death. Hildegard of Bingen's hymn 'O virtus sapientiae' ('O strength of wisdom') is the subject of a set of contemplative variations in the third chorale, 'O sapientia'.

**O Viridissima** ('O greenest branch') again draws on Hildegard of Bingen, recomposing for piano trio her monodic hymn celebrating Mary's fertility. Hildegard's melody, lightly embellished, is shared between the instruments. Although the text is absent from the music, it informs Weir's realisation, as she calls it. For example, the surprising 'dark remark' in the penultimate line, 'Eve rejected these things', plunges the music into the bass register of cello and piano, lingering like a nagging doubt beneath the violin's melody, while the conclusion, 'Now let there be praise to the highest', floats upwards. What is more, the music attains a simple tonal resolution, which is an unusual harmonic ending both for Bingen's melody – composed before the diatonic system – and for Weir, who has mostly inhabited a post-tonal world.

The defeat of the Jacobites at the Battle of Culloden in 1786 left a peculiar legacy for music history: it resulted in the classification

## Notes on the music

of the bagpipe as a weapon (a status which was not reversed until 1996). At his trial, the captured piper James Reid had argued his innocence because he was unarmed; all he had done was play music. However, the judges ruled that because a Highland regiment never went into battle without a piper at its head, the bagpipe was an instrument of war – and so Reid was sentenced to be hung and quartered. His tragic tale formed the basis of Weir's 'very short instrumental opera', *Sketches from a Bagpiper's Album*, originally written for clarinet and piano in 1984 and then arranged the following year as **The Bagpiper's String Trio**. It is in three movements. 'Salute' begins 'bold and heroic', the chordal writing mimicking the wheezing of a bagpipe and the faster tunes tracing the characteristic contours and rhythmic vitality of Scottish pipe music. A nervy 'Nocturne' leads into 'Lament, over the sea', in which the cello's keening melody floats on the undulating textures of violin and viola.

Storytelling also lies at the heart of **Really?**, for soprano, clarinet, viola and harp. The texts are drawn from early nineteenth-century collections by German writers Johann Peter Hebel and the Brothers Grimm but they are presented in English, with Weir's own titles. The first two tales seem to be about misunderstanding a situation and the complicated relationships between parents

and children. In John Hibberd's translation of Hebel (which Weir calls 'Incidents in Traffic'), a man and his son receive unhelpful advice from passers-by as they ride their donkey; in 'The Expansion of Porridge', the first of the two Brothers Grimm tales, a mother tries to use her daughter's magic cooking pot without anticipating the consequences. Finally, in 'What is Eternity?' a King is outwitted by a shepherd boy.

Weir explores the ways in which music might help or hinder the narrative; the words are sometimes spoken, sometimes in heightened speech or *Sprechstimme*, sometimes sung. In 'Incidents in Traffic' the music supports the voice's declamation and conveys the lurching rhythms of the ill-fated journey, as well as illustrating the final, farcical attempt of the men to carry the donkey. The magical porridge-producing pot of the second song has its own music, which runs out of control when the mother tries to command it. A more consistent lyricism in the vocal part, supported by the harp, in 'What is Eternity?' inflates the absurdity of the King's riddles. Music, in these songs, can be trusted to tell the truth, unlike the words.

**Day Break Shadows Flee** was written for the pianist Benjamin Grosvenor, who gave the premiere in a BBC Proms chamber concert in 2014. Weir has described it as a two-part

invention, with the two hands – treble and bass – pursuing separate paths. A second meaning of invention, as fantasy, also comes into play, again through the presence of two contrasting elements: what Weir describes as 'bright, upwards-arching phrases', evoking light at daybreak, are set over against 'veiled, mysterious scurrings, suggesting the stranger, more nervous life lived at night'. The nocturnal aspect is perhaps not as fantastical as that description suggests, though, for the piece's title echoes the Song of Solomon: 'Before the day breaks and shadows flee, turn to me, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains.' The contrasting characters of *Day Break Shadows Flee*, along with its exploration of different registers and poetic allusions, suggest continuities with earlier chamber works by Weir.

Indeed, fantasy also played an important role in Weir's early work. In **Airs from another Planet** – composed in 1986 for the Nash Ensemble – she imagines the music that would be played by a human colony marooned for generations on a Scottish island, having been sent there to prepare for life on Mars. The title may teasingly doff a hat to the 'air from another planet' famously ushered in by Arnold Schoenberg's Second String Quartet, but Weir's airs are more lively – and less determinedly atonal. Vestiges of past traditions remain in the half-remembered

melodies of 'The Leys of Luncarty' (played by the horn in the first movement, 'Strathspey & Reel'), 'Ettrick Banks' (heard from the clarinet in 'Traditional Air') and 'Miss Margaret Graham of Gartmore's Favourite' (everyone in 'Jig'). The piano's repeated upper-register figures at the start of 'Bagpipe Air, with Drones' are instructed to be played 'with as much noise from the key mechanism as possible', and thus sound rather like a trapped ghost (the expression marking, fittingly, is 'spectral; misterioso'). This is not, though, music about the past but a fantasy music of the future, and the most striking aspect of the score is its emphasis on instrumental colour and metrical playfulness. On its American premiere, *The New York Times* described *Airs from another Planet* as a blend of 'traditional Scottish inspirations with otherworldly weirdness. Weirdness wins' – in a good way, the critic concluded, stating: 'Weir is a true original.'

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*Laura Tunbridge is a professor of music at the University of Oxford. Alongside her research interests in German Romanticism she has written about the operas of Bernhard Lang and Thomas Adès, and booklet essays for several record labels.*

## Nuits d'Afrique

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### 1 Berceuse

*Eye sama néné touty*  
Si tu sèches tes larmes  
Je te ferai un berceau  
Des merveilles de l'Univers  
*Eye sama néné*  
Si tu sèches tes larmes  
Je te porterai dans un pagne  
Tissé de rayons de soleil  
*Eye sama néné*  
Si tu sèches tes larmes  
Je t'offrirai un bouquet d'étoiles  
Pour retrouver ton sourire aurore  
*Eye sama néné*  
*Ayo béyo béyo*  
Ayo...

Fatou Ndiaye Sow [Senegal]

*[Hush my little baby]*  
*If you dry your tears*  
*I will sing you a song*  
*Of the wonders of the Universe*

*If you dry your tears*  
*I will carry you in a pagne*  
*Woven out of sun rays*

*If you dry your tears*  
*I will give you a bouquet of stars*  
*To find again your smile at dawn*

### 2 Le tam-tam

Connais-tu le langage du tam-tam ?  
Le tam-tam du jour de fête,  
Le tam-tam qui appelle les génies,  
Le tam-tam du lutteur ruisselant de sueur,  
Le tam-tam de la mort.  
Connais-tu le langage du tam-tam ?  
C'est le secret de la forêt.

Fatou Ndiaye Sow

*Do you know the language of the drum?*  
*The drum of the day of celebration,*  
*The drum that calls the spirits,*  
*The drum of the wrestler dripping with sweat,*  
*The drum of death.*  
*Do you know the language of the drum?*  
*It is the secret of the forest.*

### 3 Crocodile

Ce n'est pas facile d'être un crocodile  
Surtout si on n'a pas envie  
D'être un crocodile  
Celui que vous voyez  
N'est pas bien  
Dans sa peau  
De croco  
Il aurait aimé  
Etre différent  
Il aurait aimé  
Attirer  
Les enfants  
Jouer  
Avec eux  
Converser  
Avec les parents  
Se balader  
Dans  
Le village  
Mais, mais, mais

Quand il sort  
De l'eau  
Les pêcheurs  
Lancent des sagaies  
Les gamins  
Détaient  
Les jeunes filles  
Abandonnent leurs canaris

*It's not easy to be a crocodile*  
*Especially if you don't want*  
*To be a crocodile*  
*The one you see*  
*Is not happy*  
*In his croc's*  
*Skin*  
*He would have liked*  
*To be different*  
*He would have liked*  
*To attract*  
*Children*  
*Play*  
*With them*  
*Talk*  
*With their parents*  
*Walk around*  
*In*  
*The village*  
*But, but, but*  
  
*When he comes out*  
*Of the water*  
*Fishermen*  
*Throw spears*  
*Children*  
*Take off*  
*Young girls*  
*Abandon their water jugs*

Sa vie	<i>His life</i>
Est une vie	<i>Is a life</i>
De solitude	<i>Of solitude</i>
Et de tristesse	<i>And sadness</i>
Sans ami	<i>Without friends</i>
Sans caresse	<i>Without affection</i>
Nulle part	<i>Nowhere</i>
Où aller	<i>To go</i>
Partout	<i>Everywhere</i>
Etranger	<i>A stranger</i>
Un crocodile	<i>A crocodile</i>
Crocodile	<i>Vegetarian</i>
Végétarien	<i>Crocodile</i>
Et bon à rien	<i>And good for nothing</i>
Qui a	<i>Who has</i>
Une sainte horreur	<i>A holy horror</i>
Du sang	<i>Of blood</i>
S'il vous plaît	<i>Please</i>
Ecrivez	<i>Write</i>
Ecrivez à :	<i>Write to:</i>
Gentil Crocodile	<i>Nice Crocodile</i>
Baie N° 3	<i>Bay No 3</i>
Fleuve Niger.	<i>Niger River.</i>

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#### 4 Le village

Peut-on jamais oublier le village ?  
Peut-on jamais oublier ses rives  
d'où monte le soir le clapotis de l'eau ?

Peut-on jamais oublier ses sources ?  
Peut-on jamais oublier ses feuilles de  
bananiers

qui bruissent dans les ténèbres ?  
Ecoute ce chant qui passe :  
c'est un chœur d'enfants dans la pirogue  
qui glisse dans la rivière

Sens-tu vibrer l'air du jour  
et sens-tu frémir la terre grasse  
quand l'ardeur du train bouscule le silence  
des montaignes ?

Regarde le soleil qui s'endort  
comme lui étale ta natte et dors  
car demain est un autre jour.

Marie-Léontine Tsibinda [Congo]

*Can you ever forget the village?  
Can you ever forget its shore  
from where the splashing of water rises in the  
evening?*

*Can you ever forget its springs?  
Can you ever forget its banana leaves  
that rustle in the darkness?*

*Listen to the song that unfolds:  
it is a chorus of children in the pirogue  
that glides on the river.*

*Can you feel the air of the day vibrate  
and can you feel the rich soil tremble  
when the fire of a train pushes through the  
silence of the mountains?*

*Look at the sun falling asleep;  
like him unfold your mat and sleep  
for tomorrow is another day.*

English translations by Janis A. Mayes

## Really?

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### 13 Incidents in Traffic (J.P. Hebel)

A man was riding home on his donkey with his son walking beside on foot.

A passer-by came up and said: 'That's not right, you shouldn't be riding and making your son walk; your legs are stronger than his.' So he got off the donkey and let his son ride.

Now another passer-by came up and said: 'That's not right, young fellow, you shouldn't be riding and making your father walk; your legs are younger than his.' So they both sat on the donkey and rode for a little while.

Now a third passer-by came up and said: 'What nonsense is this? Two men on a frail animal? I've a good mind to take a stick to you both, and knock you off its back.' So the two of them got down, and all three of them went on foot, father and son to right and left, the donkey in the middle.

Now a fourth passer-by came up and said: 'What a trio you make! Must all of you tire yourselves out walking? Surely it's easier if one of you saves his legs?' So the father tied the donkey's two front legs together, and the son tied its back legs and they found a strong branch by the roadside and carried the donkey home slung between their shoulders.

And that's what can happen if you try to please everybody.

'A Strange Walk and Ride' from Johann Peter Hebel, *The Treasure Chest*; translation by John Hibberd

### 14 The Expansion of Porridge (The Brothers Grimm)

There was a poor but good little girl who lived alone with her mother, and they had nothing to eat. So the child went into the forest and there an aged woman met her who was aware of her sorrow and gave her a small cooking pot, and when she said: 'Cook little pot, cook,' it cooked good, sweet porridge and when she said: 'Stop little pot,' it ceased to cook.

The girl took the pot home to her mother and now they were freed from hunger and ate sweet porridge as often as they chose.

Once upon a time, when the girl had gone out, her mother said: 'Cook little pot, cook,' and it did cook, and she ate till she was satisfied, and then she wanted the pot to stop cooking, but did not know the word. So it went on cooking and the porridge ran over the edge and still it cooked on until the kitchen and the whole house were full and then the next house and then the whole street, just as if it wanted to satisfy the hunger of the whole world, and there was great distress, but no one knew how to stop it.

At last, when only one single house remained, the child came home and just said: 'Stop little pot.' And it stopped and gave up cooking and whosoever wished to return to the town had to eat his way home.

### 15 What is Eternity? (The Brothers Grimm)

The King asked the shepherd boy: 'How many drops of water in the ocean?'

'Lord King, have the rivers dammed so that not a single drop flows to the sea; then I will count the drops in the sea.'

'Now I must ask you how many stars has the sky?'

'Bring me a sheet of white paper and count the points on it; there are as many stars in the sky as points on the paper, but no one can see them. Count them yourself, count them yourself.'

The King asked the shepherd boy: 'How many seconds of time are there in eternity?'

'In Pomerania is the Diamond Mountain which is two miles high, two miles wide, two miles deep. Every hundred years a little bird comes and sharpens its beak on it. When the whole mountain is worn away by the beak, then the first second of eternity will be over.'

## Biographies

With programmes that are diverse, imaginative and inspiring, **Hebrides Ensemble** has established itself as one of the foremost chamber music collectives in the UK.

Co-founded and led by its artistic director, the cellist and conductor William Conway, the Ensemble is renowned for its fresh and intelligent approach to programming, which places contemporary music at the heart of a diverse range of repertoire.

The Ensemble's flexibility is its strength; it draws its performers from a pool of the most outstanding musicians in the UK and beyond, ensuring the exceptional performance standards for which it has become renowned. This is an international ensemble with its roots in Scottish culture, a collective which performs regularly at venues and festivals throughout the UK and Europe and is regularly featured in broadcasts for BBC Radio 3.

In recent years, Hebrides Ensemble has given premieres at the Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, King's Place and Wigmore Hall, London, at the Aldeburgh Festival and at Edinburgh International Festival, while summer 2018 marked the Ensemble's debut appearance

at the BBC Proms. Hebrides Academy supports the next generation of performers, composers, artistic directors and cultural leaders through its mentoring programme, and Hebrides Digital allows audiences around the world to be part of every performance the Ensemble gives, using live streaming, Twitter feeds and cutting-edge digital technology.

February 2019 saw the release of *Sensations of Travel: chamber music by Nigel Osborne* (DCD34198), the third in a critically acclaimed series of composer portraits which Hebrides Ensemble has released in partnership with Delphian Records. The first – a recording of James MacMillan's *Since it was the day of Preparation ...* (DCD34168), commissioned by Hebrides Ensemble and dedicated to its director William Conway – went straight to No 1 in the Specialist Classical Chart upon release in July 2016, and was followed in August 2017 by *The Last Island: chamber music by Peter Maxwell Davies* (DCD34178), which won the EVM Award for New Music Recording of the Year at the 2018 Scottish Awards for New Music.



Irish soprano **Ailish Tynan** won the Rosenblatt Recital Song Prize at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in 2003. She was a member of the prestigious Vilar Young Artist Programme at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and a BBC New Generation Artist, recording and performing prolifically with the BBC orchestras and in recital.

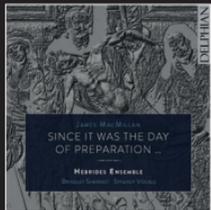
Ailish established herself with operatic roles including Gretel *Hänsel und Gretel* (The Royal Opera, Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera); Madame Cortese *Il viaggio a Reims*, Marzelline *Fidelio* and Madame Podtoshina's Daughter *The Nose* (The Royal Opera); Vixen *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Grange Park Opera); Tigrane *Radamisto* (English National Opera); Papagena *Die Zauberflöte* (Teatro alla Scala and The Royal Opera); Despina *Così fan tutte* (Théâtre du Capitole); Héro *Béatrice et Bénédict* (Houston Grand Opera and Opéra Comique); Sophie *Der Rosenkavalier*, Nannetta *Falstaff* and Atalanta *Xerxes* (Royal Swedish Opera); and Miss Wordsworth *Albert Herring* (Opéra Comique and Opéra de Rouen).

Among her notable concert appearances are Mahler Symphonies No 2 (Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra), No 4 (Prague Symphony Orchestra and the Hallé) and No 8 (Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Dresdner Philharmonie and Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra); Handel *Messiah* (Academy of Ancient Music); and Haydn *The Creation* (City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra). She has also appeared regularly at the BBC Proms.

A passionate recitalist, Ailish performs internationally with pianists including Iain Burnside, James Baillieu, Graham Johnson and Simon Lepper. Her numerous recordings include *Schubert: Nacht und Träume* (Delphian DCD34165 – see back pages of this booklet), *Fauré: Melodies* (Opus Arte), *An Irish Songbook* (Signum) and *Mahler: Symphony No 8* (LSO Live).

Ailish was delighted that Judith Weir dedicated *Nuits d'Afrique* to her, and to have the opportunity to make this recording with Hebrides Ensemble.

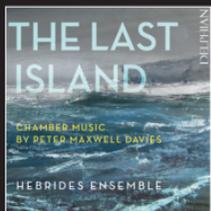
Also available on Delphian



**James MacMillan: Since it was the day of Preparation ...**  
Brindley Sherratt *bass*, Synergy Vocals, Hebrides Ensemble  
DCD34168

The first disc in a new recording partnership between Hebrides Ensemble and Delphian Records presents Sir James MacMillan's extraordinary setting – by turns intimate and dramatic – of the Resurrection story as told in St John's Gospel. As at the work's premiere at the 2012 Edinburgh International Festival, the Ensemble and its director William Conway (the work's dedicatee) are joined by bass Brindley Sherratt in the role of Christ, and by a pristine quartet of singers from Synergy Vocals.

'extraordinarily affecting ... It broaches enduring universal issues and, in this wonderfully committed recording, already feels like a modern masterpiece' — BBC Music Magazine, July 2016



**The Last Island: chamber music by Peter Maxwell Davies**  
Hebrides Ensemble  
DCD34178

Peter Maxwell Davies's later music powerfully evokes the isolated majesty of his Orkney island home, yet it also bears witness to his talent for friendship – to his associations, both personal and musical, with friends and supporters in Scotland and further afield. Among the warmest was with William Conway, whom Davies first encountered as principal cellist of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and for whom he created the demanding solo part of his second *Strathclyde Concerto*. And it was for Hebrides Ensemble, founded by Conway in 1991, that Davies composed several of the most impressive and personal works to arise from his late engagement with chamber music – a genre in which he had previously worked rarely, here revealed as the 'last island' of this remarkable and prolific composer's output.

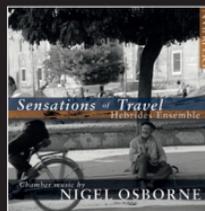
'Beguiling, even transfigured ... vivid performances'  
— Sunday Times, August 2017



**Nacht und Träume: Schubert Lieder**  
Ailish Tynan, Iain Burnside  
DCD34165

This selection of songs could carry the subtitle 'Women in Love'. 'L'Education sentimentale', perhaps. Ailish Tynan and Iain Burnside have assembled a portrait gallery: a whole bevy of Schubert's women pursuing different sorts of love, nurturing different Biedermeier dreams. Goethe's Gretchen finds an intriguing counterpart in Schiller's Amalia. Ellen gazes out over Loch Katrine, while Serafina looks down affectionately at her fortepiano and a young nun welcomes her destiny as the bride of Christ.

'Impetuous vulnerability ... a pure, beautiful line'  
— BBC Music Magazine, January 2016



**Sensations of Travel: chamber music by Nigel Osborne**  
Hebrides Ensemble  
DCD34198

This third release from Hebrides Ensemble's acclaimed recording partnership with Delphian pays tribute to the remarkable musical and human achievements of Edinburgh-based composer Nigel Osborne with a collection of solo and ensemble works. *Adagio for Vedran Smailović* – performed here by the Ensemble's director, cellist William Conway – was written in Sarajevo in the winter of 1992–3; Osborne visited the city several times during the Bosnian war, a period recalled in the 2001 Hebrides Ensemble commission *Balkan Dances and Laments*. Music's ability to cross boundaries – to bridge nations and continents, to bear witness and to heal – lies at the heart of this album, on which Hebrides Ensemble's eloquent advocacy is supplemented by soundscapes and sung interludes featuring the voice of the composer himself.

'This outstanding album brims with atmosphere and imagination'  
— BBC Music Magazine, April 2019

Also available on Delphian



### Judith Weir: Choral Music

Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge / Geoffrey Webber  
DCD34095

This first recording devoted entirely to Judith Weir's choral music comprises her complete works to date for unaccompanied choir or choir with one instrument (trombone and marimba as well as the more usual organ). Tracking her evolving relationship with the medium from her earliest liturgical commission to the most recent, premiered in 2009, it also includes several secular pieces and her two solo organ works, which are now established classics of the repertoire.

'The freshness and precision of Weir's writing is perfectly matched by the well-tuned, clearly articulated singing'  
—BBC Music Magazine, December 2011, CHORAL & SONG CHOICE



### After the Tryst: new music for saxophone and piano

McKenzie Sawers Duo  
DCD34201

Sue McKenzie and Ingrid Sawers, leading advocates of the rapidly growing repertoire for soprano saxophone and piano, make their second Delphian outing with a survey of some of its recent British highlights. James MacMillan's poignant lyricism gives way to contained ecstasy, then increasingly unfettered vitality, in a pair of seminal works by Michael Nyman. In evocative miniature dramas by Sally Beamish and Judith Weir the instrument gives voice respectively to the half-human, half-spirit nature of Shakespeare's Caliban and to the life and death of a condemned Scottish bagpiper.

Includes Judith Weir's *Sketches from a Bagpiper's Album* (1984), on which *The Bagpiper's String Trio* is based.

'faultless technical control ... astute and sensitive accompaniment ... Vividly though never airlessly recorded'  
—Gramophone, April 2018



### The Cold Dancer: contemporary string quartets from Scotland

Clapperton / Dempster / Sweeney / Weir  
Edinburgh Quartet  
DCD34038

Rich and personal contributions to the quartet tradition from four contemporary Scottish voices, ranging from the lyrical profundity of Kenneth Dempster's meditation on a George Mackay Brown poem to a characteristically idiosyncratic and yet songful work by Judith Weir.

'On this outstanding CD, driven by scorchingly focused performances from the Edinburgh Quartet, the impact of the four pieces is colossal ... Each of the composers is at his and her peak, and the Edinburgh Quartet has never played better. It's nothing less than a landmark'  
—The Herald, February 2007



### The Piano Tuner: contemporary piano trios from Scotland

Beamish / Osborne / Weir  
Fidelio Trio; Alexander McCall Smith narrator  
DCD34084

Storytelling takes centre stage in the Fidelio Trio's second recording for Delphian, in which they are joined by Alexander McCall Smith, who narrates Sally Beamish's evocative *The Seafarer Trio* with a mingled intimacy and plangency. The comparatively abstract sounds of Nigel Osborne's *The Piano Tuner* track a journey into the dark heart of nineteenth-century Burma, while the stories told in Judith Weir's Zen-inspired Piano Trio Two include that of 'How grass and trees become enlightened'.

'as bracing as a splash of water from a Highland stream ... This kind of music is food and drink to the Fidelio Trio and it gives sure-footed, rhythmically alive, directly communicative performances of all three works'  
—International Record Review, December 2010

