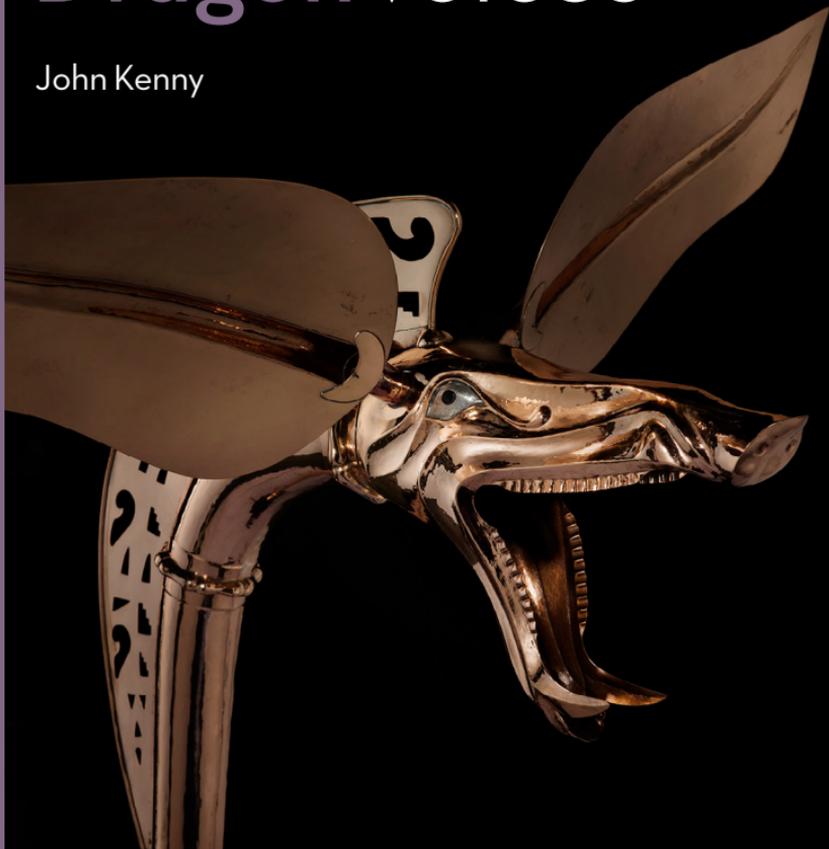


THE GIANT CELTIC HORNS OF ANCIENT EUROPE

Dragon Voices

John Kenny

DELPHIAN



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Tintignac carnyx

By Jean Boisserie, commissioned by EMAP,
after a 1st-c. BC original found at Tintignac, Corrèze, France

Deskford carnyx

By John Creed, after a 1st-c. BC to 1st-c. AD
original found in 1816 at Leitchestown, Deskford, Scotland

Loughnashade horn

By John Creed, commissioned by EMAP
after a 1st-c. BC original found in 1794 in Co Armagh, Ireland

All instruments played by John Kenny; multitracked in the studio

Recorded on 18-20 November 2015
in the University of Huddersfield
Recording Studios
Producers: John Kenny & Rupert Till
Engineer: Rupert Till
24-bit digital editing: Paul Baxter
24-bit digital mastering: Paul Baxter

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- 1 **Liadain and Cuirithir** *Loughnashade & Deskford duo* [3:00]
- 2 **Dance of Herne** *Loughnashade duo* [2:20]
- 3 **Forest Camp** *Loughnashade & Tintignac duo* [3:01]
- 4 **The Hunt** *Loughnashade solo* [1:07]
- 5 **After the Hunt** *Loughnashade trio* [6:42]
- 6 **Calanais** *Deskford trio, with skylark and waves* [2:26]
- 7 **The Shaman** *Tintignac solo* [1:56]
- 8 **Ships in the Night** *Tintignac solo with crotales* [3:11]
- 9 **Shaman 2** *conch solo* [3:19]
- 10 **Cú Chulainn** *Tintignac solo* [2:21]
- 11 **Ocean Stone** *Deskford solo* [6:58]
- 12 **Invocation** *Loughnashade solo* [2:48]
- 13 **Shaman 3** *shamanic drum* [1:22]
- 14 **Gaels & Gauls** *Tintignac duo, Loughnashade duo, shamanic drum* [2:20]
- 15 **Dragon Voices** *Tintignac quintet with crotales* [3:35]
- 16 **Tintignac Lament** *Tintignac solo* [3:47]
- 17 **Danse sacrale** *Loughnashade solo* [2:08]
- 18 **Cailleachan** *Deskford solo with seed and pod shakers* [3:30]
- 19 **Cave of Shells** *conch quartet* [2:12]
- 20 **Mór-ríoghain** *Loughnashade trio with solo Deskford* [3:13]
- 21 **Loughnashade Lament** *Loughnashade solo* [5:17]

Total playing time

[66:42]

Historical background & instruments

Around 1990, John Purser – composer, musicologist, poet, playwright, broadcaster and passionate scholar of Scotland’s music – initiated a project to reconstruct the so-called Deskford carnyx, which was discovered in a peat bog at Leitchestown farm in Deskford, in the former Scottish county of Banffshire, in 1816. Only the boar’s-head bell survives, apparently placed in a shallow lake as a ritual deposit. It was donated to Banff Museum, and is now on loan from Aberdeenshire Museums Service to the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. In addition to John Purser as musicologist, the team for the reconstruction comprised the archaeologist Fraser Hunter, silversmith John Creed, acoustic physicist Murray Campbell, and myself as performer. The reconstructed instrument was unveiled in April 1993, when I became the first person to play a carnyx for two thousand years.

By any measure, the Deskford project was a success. It demanded the collaboration of specialists in the arts, sciences and humanities, and taught us a vast amount about the technological capabilities of an ancient people shrouded in mystery and misconception. The educational reach of the project has been enormous; and furthermore it was literally sensational, attracting huge popular as well as professional interest internationally. It also opened up far more questions than it answered – and

thus became a vital standard-bearer for the rapidly developing new discipline of music archaeology.

What is music archaeology, and why is it so important? Like every other branch of archaeology it involves the study of physical objects which are both fascinating in themselves and help us to understand our past. All of the accepted implications of archaeological artefacts are studied: material culture, trade, technology, social structures, war and peace, ritual and religion, life and death. Reconstruction is an essential part of all branches of archaeology, but music is fundamentally different in one important way. If we reconstruct a temple or round house, we will not use it to live or worship in, we won’t regularly cook our meals in Iron Age cauldrons, and no matter how many wonderful chariots we build, none of us are going to work in them on a daily basis. Only a homicidal maniac might use a sword or spear for its original purpose.

Our lives have moved on – but music is uniquely timeless. A vulture bone flute copied from a Palaeolithic original, a harp reconstructed from a stone relief in Brittany, or a bronze horn discovered in a northern peat bog are not only wonderful to see and handle; if we can learn how to play them, the sounds we produce make that thing we call music, and the desire, indeed the *need* to make music is

a defining characteristic of humanity across all cultures everywhere on the planet since our species became identifiable. Anthropologists speculate that some form of organised sound almost certainly preceded human speech. And so music archaeology has a unique role to play in our understanding of what we are and where we come from. The sounds of these instruments, and the things we can do with them, have contemporary relevance.

The instruments

The carnyx is a long Celtic trumpet made of beaten bronze, surmounted by the stylised head of a wild boar. The word appears in various classical texts: carnyces are described in accounts of the Celtic attack on Delphi in 279BC, as well as Julius Caesar’s campaign in Gaul and Claudius’ invasion of Britain. The instrument was known through much of Europe from about 200BC to 200AD, and was widely depicted – notably on the Gundestrup cauldron (the most important example of Celtic Iron Age silver work, probably of Thracian origin but discovered in Denmark), which shows three carnyces held in a vertical playing posture so that the sound would have travelled from more than three metres above the ground.

The head of the **Deskford carnyx** is a fabulous work of proto-Pictish art, comprising a ridged soft palette, resonating chamber corresponding to the brain cavity, a wooden tongue mounted

in the throat on a bronze leaf-spring, and a hinged lower jaw. However, because only the head was discovered in 1816, the downward tubes and mouthpiece were speculative, based on the Gundestrup relief. One of the most difficult questions faced was that of the mouthpiece – models were produced based both on mediaeval and Renaissance brass instruments and on surviving related instruments from the ancient world, all of which used some form of cup shape. None of these activated the carnyx satisfactorily. The solution adopted was a simple bronze ‘cushion’ approximately the diameter of the terminal tube, which prevents the player’s lips from being cut but directs lip vibration directly into the tube with no impedance. This enables an enormous range of pitch, dynamic and tone colour.

As a participant in EMAP (the European Music Archaeology Project), it has been my privilege to help to bring to fruition the reconstruction of the magnificent **Tintignac carnyx**, and since autumn 2014 I have given performances and lecture recitals on it throughout Europe. Until 2004, fragments of only five carnyces had been preserved – from modern Scotland, France, Germany, Romania and Switzerland – but in November of that year archaeologists discovered a first-century BC deposit of seven more of these extraordinary instruments under a Gallo-Roman *fanum* at Tintignac, in the Corrèze region of southern France.

Historical background & instruments

Although all are ritually dismembered, one was almost complete. Six of these carnyces have boar's heads, but the seventh is a serpent-like fantasy beast. The find appears to represent a ritual deposit from soon after the Roman conquest of Gaul.

The Tintignac finds enabled some fragments found at Trentino, in northern Italy, decades before to be identified in 2012 as being part of a carnyx. This 'Sanzeno carnyx' has also been reconstructed through EMAP by the scholar and craftsman Alessandro Ervas. The Tintignac instrument was reconstructed by Jean Boisserie, based upon the research of a team of scientists in Toulouse led by the archaeologist Christophe Maniquet, and is made entirely of hand-hammered bronze. It is a vibrant, living musical instrument. This album represents the first CD recordings of my attempts to give the Tintignac carnyx a voice.

It is clear from our work in Scotland, France and Italy that people of Celtic culture all over ancient Europe were fascinated by lip reed instruments, and made great horns and trumpets in many forms. The lower parts of the Deskford carnyx were modelled upon the images of the Gundestrup cauldron, where we see three men playing the instrument vertically. The structure of the Deskford head makes this interpretation logical – but the Tintignac carnyx is clearly a different beast. The lower tubes are completely

straight, terminating in a fixed, integral mouthpiece. This makes it impossible to play vertically; thus, although its head looks similar to the Gundestrup instruments, it must have been played at an angle closer to horizontal. The magnificent head of the Tintignac features gaping jaws and huge, delicate ears – and yet the structure is far less complex than the Deskford head, with its hinged jaw, sprung tongue, soft palette and brain cavity. It is, indeed, more like the bell of a contemporary trumpet, whilst the huge ears ring in sympathy on certain frequencies.

One fascinating aspect of the Tintignac discovery is that a mouthpiece was discovered with the most complete carnyx, and its form is almost exactly that predicted, and adopted, by the Deskford reconstruction team. This mouthpiece form is unique to the carnyx family – all other ancient lip reed mouthpieces are cup- or cauldron-shaped.

Ireland is richer by far in surviving musical instruments from the Bronze and Iron Ages than any other European nation. The **Loughnashade horn** played on this recording is a reconstruction of one of four discovered in 1794 during the draining of a peat bog in Armagh. That bog was once the lake of Loughnashade, a short distance from Navan Fort, or Emain Macha, one of the ancient royal sites of Iron Age Ireland. The horns were part

of a hoard which also included a collection of human skulls. Sadly, only one of the horns survived, dating from the first century BC. It is crafted from riveted sheets of hammered bronze, and has four main components: the two long cylindrical tubes with a narrow aperture to take a mouthpiece at one end and a wider bell section on the other end; a biconical ring to hold the two pieces together; and the final and most exquisite piece, a decorated disc attached to the wider end of the horn.

The decoration of the bell disc is by far the most eye-catching aspect of the Loughnashade horn. Hammered in high relief and mirrored on each quadrant of the ring, it features long, curving tendrils ending in spiral motifs based on a classical lotus-bud design, and is a testament to the impressive skill of Iron Age craftsmen. It is a magnificent example of so-called La Tène decoration, a style that would dominate the Celtic world for many centuries to come. Acoustic testing as well as live performance have demonstrated that this bell disc has both an amplifying and focusing effect on the tone of the instrument.

The pioneer of this wonderful instrument, and of the reconstruction and performance of all Ireland's Bronze and Iron Age lip reed instruments, is the great scholar-musician Simon O'Dwyer, who commissioned John Creed to make the first modern reconstruction

for performance. Since we have no surviving name from antiquity, Simon denotes this instrument by the Irish name *trumpa créda*, and his publications and many fine recordings can be found at the Ancient Music Ireland website www.ancientmusicireland.com. The instrument played on the present recording was also made by John Creed, commissioned by EMAP. As no mouthpiece was discovered in 1794, and as the terminal tube aperture is almost identical in diameter to that of the carnyx, Simon O'Dwyer and I have both adopted the form of mouthpiece developed for the Deskford carnyx. The original instrument can be seen, with the first modern reconstruction, at the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin.

Something to think about ...

The overall length of the reconstructed Deskford carnyx was speculative, determined by a combination of acoustic physics and rough comparison of the three Gundestrup cauldron players to average male height. Both the Loughnashade horn and the Tintignac carnyx are modelled on surviving instruments. The mouthpiece discovered at Tintignac confirms the structure we adopted for Deskford and Loughnashade – it appears that we got the tube length pretty well correct, since all three instruments have the same fundamental (lowest) note, which is more or less a modern E flat. This means that it is possible to play

Historical background & instruments

these three Iron Age instruments, made by people separated by huge distances, 'harmoniously'. And it prompts the question: did people of Celtic culture share not only common language and religious ties, but some form of pitch standardisation?

Furthermore, that fundamental pitch also happens to be the note sounded by the sea as it ebbs and flows on the shingle beaches of the Moray Firth, where the river that ran out of Deskford's sacrificial lake empties into the sea ... A coincidence?

Additional instruments

Conch shell: When human beings first walked out of Africa we hugged the courses of rivers and the margins of the sea. We were hunter-gatherers, and shellfish were always a vital part of our diet. Shells have a natural beauty which we seem always to have appreciated: even today we value them for that reason, and shells were adopted early on as a currency of exchange. They have also been adopted as musical instruments in all cultures where they grow large enough to be blown, or to be used as amplifying and distorting devices for the voice. Such shells were exported and exchanged over vast distances in the ancient world. The one I play on this recording is of the genus *Lobatus gigas*, commonly known as the queen conch. It is the archetype of the whole lip reed family of instruments.

Bronze crotales: Many metals and many techniques have been used to make bells from prehistoric times to the present day, but bronze seems to have been the preferred material of many cultures for sacred or ritual bells. Crotales from Ireland in the shape of bulls' testicles, containing a nugget of hardened clay, give a delightful jingling and are associated with the Irish Bronze Age horns. The crotales played here, however, are Tibetan Buddhist temple bells.

Seed and pod shakers: Shakers and rattles are ubiquitous in all agrarian cultures from the period in which humans domesticated cereal crops onwards. Employed in fertility rituals and frequently to ward off evil spirits, they are associated on this album with the Corn Dolly.

Shamanic drum: Frame drums with animal skins appear in every culture where agrarian society sits in uneasy companionship with the nomad or hunter-gatherer. Associated with animal energy and life force, the pulse of the drum is literally the music of blood. The instrument played here is a Sami reindeer shamanic drum from northern Finland.

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John Kenny playing the Deskford carnyx by the Firth of Forth, Scotland.
Photo © Hugh Beauchamp

John Kenny plays
the Tintignac carnyx
on the shore of the
Tyrrhenian Sea,
Tarquinia, Italy.
Photo © Francesco
Marano



Jean Boisserie in
his workshop, and
the reconstructed
Tintignac carnyx in
sections.
Photos © Atelier
Boisserie





John Kenny plays the Loughnashade horn in the Hall of Frescoes, Tarquinia, Italy.
Photo © Guido Fuà



John Creed in his workshop.
Photo © Abigail Howkins



Reconstructed Loughnashade horn in sections.
Photo © Abigail Howkins

Rear of booklet. Loughnashade bell disc, with La Tène decoration. Photo © Francesco Marano

Inlay, under disc. John Kenny with the Deskford carnyx. Photo © Hugh Beauchamp

Notes on the music

No notated music from the time of the carnyx exists, and so we can never say with any certainty what sounds, let alone what 'music', people made on them. The carnyx is conventionally described as an instrument of war, and we know for certain that it was used in battles and sieges. We have no historical description of the Loughnashade horn, though Irish myth and legend is rich in musical references. However, my own feeling – shared by Simon O'Dwyer, who like me has worked with this family of instruments for nearly thirty years – is that to confine our imagination of their use to the tumult of battle is far too narrow and restrictive.

For a start, they are such delicate and magnificent instruments that clearly great artistic sensibility was employed in their concept and making. Surely people of such deep visual sensibility would also have sought to create sound-worlds of corresponding depth and complexity. Secondly, all of these instruments are associated with sacrificial deposition, and the most important intact Celtic representation of the carnyx – the Gundestrup cauldron – also represents a ritual, not a battle. This again seems to imply a more subtle use of the instrument.

As to the playing techniques employed, the differences between ourselves and the ancient world are entirely cultural, not physiological; in other words, anything I can do, he could do too. Cultural context and imagination are the only differences – and clearly these people were not short of imagination, and lived in a deep-rooted, ancient culture.

Some notes and explanations of the individual tracks and their titles follow.

- 1 Liadain and Cuirithir** – Liadain of Corkaguiney was an Irish poetess on a tour into Connacht when she met Cuirithir mac Doborchu, a poet native to that area. They fell in love and shared one night of carnal bliss before Liadain resumed her tour, promising to return – but instead she converted to Christianity and became a nun. In grief, Cuirithir also becomes a monk: a classic Irish tale of unrequited love and loss.
- 2-5 Dance of Herne / Forest Camp / The Hunt / After the Hunt** – Herne the Hunter, or the Gaulish deity Cernunnos, is depicted on the Gundestrup Cauldron in the same ritual sequence as the three famous carnyx players. Both names are derived from the same Indo-European root, *ker-n-*, meaning 'bone' or 'horn', which is probably also the root of 'carnyx'. Thus, the carnyx is indelibly associated with the Celtic horn-headed god of the wild hunt. Tracks 2–5 are a suite of pieces inspired by this association.

6 Calanais – In May 2015 I was involved in an EMAP film shoot at the mysterious and beautiful Callanish stone circle on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. This trio of Deskford carnyces was filmed moving through the standing stones, with the sound of the Atlantic in the distance and a skylark rising.

7-9 A suite of pieces inspired by shamanic images:

The Shaman – The mystical beliefs of the Celts revolved around nature worship, and it is highly likely that Druidic power rested partly in reaching altered states of consciousness in order to perceive and interact with a spirit world and channel these transcendental energies into this world. Sound – and in particular the use of percussion, controlled breathing and chanting – remains a vital feature of shamanism to this day.

Ships in the Night – The ship passing in the night is a symbol of transient souls.

Shaman 2 – The spirit of the sea, given voice by the most ancient instrument of the family.

- 10 Cú Chulainn** – Cú Chulainn is the Irish Hercules, a mythological hero who appears in the stories of the Ulster Cycle, as well as in Scottish and Manx folklore. He is an incarnation of the god Lugh, who is also his father, the greatest of all warriors, but transformed into a monster in his battle fury, destroying friend and foe alike.
- 11 Ocean Stone** – A study of loneliness and isolation at the edge of the world, inspired by the wilderness of Cape Wrath at the northwest tip of Scotland.

12 Invocation – Celtic culture throughout Europe was a warrior culture. Whether at war or in peace, the strength and craft of the warrior permeates life, art and ritual; this is an imaginary invocation to the gods for strength and speed in battle.

13 A shamanic introduction to:

14 Gaels & Gauls – A ritual encounter between the Gauls of France and the Gaels of Ireland.

15 Dragon Voices – The Tintignac carnyx was discovered at a Celtic sacred site which became a Gallo-Roman temple, beside an ancient road which leads all the way from the Mediterranean to the English Channel route to Cornwall – the major European source of tin, one of the most valuable commodities of the ancient world because it is essential to the making of bronze. Clearly this carnyx had ritual significance, and this is an imaginary ritual of bronze voices from the sanctuary of Tintignac. Although the Tintignac carnyx head is that of a wild boar, most people today immediately think it is a dragon – and it is easy to see how the totemic boar of the Celts may have metamorphosed into the mythical dragons of the Christianised Welsh, Scots, Irish and Anglo-Saxons.

16 Tintignac Lament – The Tintignac has a pure harmonic series, a giant bugle with a fearsome head. There is more than a little of the Last Post in this.

17 Danse sacrée – The religious and mystical beliefs of the Celtic peoples are the subject

Notes on the music

of wild romanticism and speculation. We do know, however, that they frequently severed and displayed the heads of their enemies, and that at various times human sacrifice was practised. The bodies discovered in Irish and Scandinavian peat bogs prove that ritual killing formed part of complex ceremonies – perhaps involving willing victims?

- 18 **Cailleachan** – On the west coast of Scotland, the *cailleach* ushers in winter by washing her great plaid in the Gulf of Corryvreckan, one of the greatest whirlpools in the north. This process is said to take three days, during which the roar of the coming tempest is heard as far away as twenty miles inland. When she is finished, her plaid is pure white and snow covers the land. The *cailleachan* are mysterious female spirits associated with the end of autumn and power of winter, and preservation of the harvest.

In Scotland and Ireland, the first farmer to finish the grain harvest made a corn dolly, representing the *cailleach*, from the last sheaf of the crop. The figure would then be tossed into the field of a neighbour who had not yet finished bringing in their grain. The last farmer to finish had the responsibility to take in and care for the corn dolly for the next year, with the implication that they would have to feed and house the *cailleach* all winter. Competition was fierce to avoid having to take in the Old Woman.

- 19 **Cave of Shells** – Manannán mac Lir is the ancient Irish god of the sea. He was revered by both the Tuatha Dé Danann and their mortal

enemies the Fomorians as the guardian of the Otherworld, one who ferries souls to the afterlife, and sea caves were portals to that Otherworld. This is a ritual of shells for Manannán.

- 20 **Mór-rioghain** – The Morrígan ('phantom queen') is primarily associated with fate, especially with foretelling doom and death in battle. She appears as a crow, flying above the battlefield, and is often also described as a trio of individuals, all sisters, called 'the three Morrígna'. This trio of Irish horns invokes the Morrígna, with one Deskford carnyx in the heat of battle.
- 21 **Loughnashade Lament** – The Loughnashade horns, Tintignac and Deskford carnyx were all sacrificial offerings. The Irish and Scottish instruments were deposited in sacred lakes which gradually disappeared and became peat bogs. There they slumbered for two thousand years, symbolic of the disappearance of a once great pan-European culture – until now. The great horns of the Celts have reawakened, and their ancient voices demand to be heard ...

© 2016 John Kenny

I dedicate this album to Dr John Purser, in gratitude for his friendship and inspiration, and to Dr Peter Holmes, whose unique research and understanding of the lip reeds of ancient Europe are the foundation stone of everything we have achieved.

Biography



John Kenny has performed and broadcast as a soloist in over 60 nations as an interpreter of contemporary, jazz and early music, and is active as a trombonist, composer and actor. Since 1983 he has been musical director of the TNT Theatre Company and American Drama Group Europe, composing and directing music for productions which have toured every continent except Antarctica in a long-term collaboration with director and playwright Paul Stebbings.

In 1993 he became the first person for 2,000 years to play the great Celtic war horn known as the Deskford carnyx, developing a repertoire for this rediscovered voice that can be heard on eight CDs. He now lectures and performs on the carnyx internationally in the concert hall and on radio, television and film. In March 2003 he performed his composition *The Voice of the Carnyx* to an audience of 65,000 in the Stade de France, Paris. In 2009 he undertook a month-long lecture recital tour of the USA which included the world premiere of his composition *Wild Stone* for alto flute and carnyx.

John Kenny is a professor at both the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and is regularly invited to give masterclasses and

lectures at conservatoires and universities throughout Europe, the USA and Asia. As a founder member of the European Music Archaeology Project he has collaborated on the reconstruction of many lip reed instruments of antiquity, including the magnificent Tintignac carnyx heard on the present recording, and the Etruscan litus and cornu.

The European Music Archaeology Project (EMAP) is a five-year collaborative project funded by the EU Culture Programme. Aiming to explore our common European musical heritage by studying the music and sounds of the ancient past, the project involves the reconstruction of ancient instruments, a programme of lectures and musical performances, and the creation of an international touring exhibition.

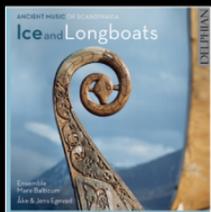
As a co-organising partner in the project, Dr Rupert Till and the University of Huddersfield are working with Delphian Records to create five CDs. Vols 1 & 2, released in mid-2016 (see overleaf), are followed by the present release and by *The Edge of Time: Palaeolithic bone flutes from France and Germany* (EMAP Vol 4), with Anna Friederike Potengowski on bone flutes and Georg Wieland Wagner on percussion. A fifth and final volume – dedicated to ancient Greek and Roman instruments including the aulos, tibia, and water organ – is scheduled for 2017.

Also available on Delphian



Spellweaving: ancient music from the Highlands of Scotland
Barnaby Brown, Clare Salaman, Bill Taylor
DCD34171 (EMAP Vol 1)

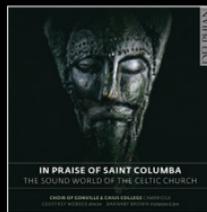
The patronage of elite Highland pipers collapsed after the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Worried that the classical music of the Gaels would fade away, the English-speaking gentry offered prize money for scientific notations. By 1797, Colin Campbell had written 377 pages in a unique notation based on the vocables of Hebridean 'mouth music', but – unintelligible to the judges in Edinburgh – Campbell's extraordinary work of preservation has remained overlooked or misunderstood until now. Barnaby Brown's realisations for a variety of drone-based instruments bring the musical craftsmanship of a remote culture vividly to life, and refocus attention on music whose trance-inducing long spans and elaborate formal patterning echo the knots and spells of Celtic culture.



Ice and Longboats: ancient music of Scandinavia
Ensemble Mare Balticum; Åke & Jens Egevad
DCD34181 (EMAP Vol 2)

Scandinavia's archaeologically known prehistory encompasses around twelve thousand years, culminating in the Viking period (c.800–1050AD). Standard archaeological practice places the boundary between prehistoric and medieval times for southern Scandinavia around six hundred years later than the continental European Middle Ages – a late development due to the long period in which ice still covered Europe's northern parts. Volume 2 in Delphian Records' groundbreaking collaboration with the European Music Archaeology Project features music improvised on Viking instruments, and then tells the story of the gradual introduction of Christianity to Scandinavia.

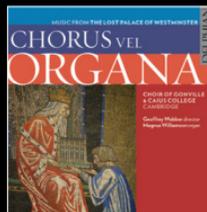
New in July 2016



In Praise of Saint Columba: The Sound-world of the Celtic Church
Barnaby Brown *triplepipes & lyre*, Simon O'Dwyer *medieval Irish horn*,
Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge / Geoffrey Webber
DCD34137

Just as the influence of Irish monks extended not only across Scotland but also to mainland Europe, so we imagine our way back down the centuries into 7th-century hermits' cells, 10th-century Celtic foundations in Switzerland, and the 14th-century world of Inchcolm Abbey. Silent footprints of musical activity – the evidence of early notation but also of stone carvings, manuscript illuminations, and documents of the early Church – have guided both vocal and instrumental approaches in the choir's work with scholar and piper Barnaby Brown.

'performances of grace ... musical conviction and beauty of tone'
— BBC Music Magazine, September 2014, CHORAL & SONG CHOICE



Chorus vel Organa: Music from the lost Palace of Westminster
Magnus Williamson *organ*,
Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge / Geoffrey Webber
DCD34158

The UK's modern Houses of Parliament conceal a lost royal foundation: the chapel of St Stephen, begun by Edward I and raised into a college by his grandson Edward III. This recording reflects the musical life of the college in its final years under Henry VIII, and reconstructs both the wide range of singing practices in the great chapels and cathedrals and the hitherto largely unexplored place of organ music in the pre-Reformation period, allowing us to hear organ music not just in alternation with chant (as was the common practice at this time) but also with sung polyphony.

New in May 2016

