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NAXOS

BRITISH VIOLIN CONCERTOS

BBC
RADIO



Paul Patterson
Kenneth Leighton
Gordon Jacob

Clare Howick, Violin
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra
Grant Llewellyn

Paul Patterson (b. 1947): Violin Concerto No. 2 ('Serenade') (2013) 21:57

For Clare Howick

- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| 1 I. Toccata – | 5:15 |
| 2 II. Barcarolle – | 8:45 |
| 3 III. Valse-Scherzo | 7:57 |

**Kenneth Leighton (1929–1988):
Concerto for Violin and Small Orchestra, Op. 12 (1952) 24:10**

To Frederick Grinke

- | | |
|--|------|
| 4 I. Allegro con brio, molto ritmico | 7:49 |
| 5 II. Intermezzo – Moderato con moto, sempre dolce | 5:58 |
| 6 III. Scherzo – Allegro molto e nervoso | 3:26 |
| 7 IV. Epilogo – Lento, molto sostenuto ed intenso | 6:57 |

**Gordon Jacob (1895–1984):
Concerto for Violin and String Orchestra (1953) 21:37**

For Frederick Grinke

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 8 I. Allegro con brio | 6:05 |
| 9 II. Andante espressivo | 9:37 |
| 10 III. Allegro ma non troppo | 5:55 |

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British Violin Concertos

Paul Patterson · Kenneth Leighton · Gordon Jacob

Contrary to opulent violin concertos conceived on a grand scale by Edward Elgar and William Walton, for example, the three British violin concertos featured here adopt a more concise approach to the genre using chamber forces. Though not shunning the time-honoured elements of bravura display anticipated in concertante works, they cast the solo violinist as first among equals, engaging in telling dialogues with a responsive ensemble, rather than as an individual pitted against the mob.

Born in Chesterfield on 15 June 1947, Paul Patterson studied composition with Richard Stoker at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) and received private tuition from Richard Rodney Bennett and Elisabeth Lutyens. He returned to the RAM to become Head of Composition and Contemporary Music from 1985 until 1997, when he became Manson Professor of Composition.

His output includes orchestral works, music for brass and organ pieces. Among his most successful scores are *Spiders*, for solo harp, the choral work *Mass of the Sea*, and settings for narrator and orchestra of Roald Dahl's poems *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Three Little Pigs*.

Subtitled '*Serenade*', Patterson's *Second Violin Concerto* (2013) was written for soloist Clare Howick. She premiered it with the Kingston Philharmonia, who commissioned the work, under Levon Parikian at St John's, Smith Square, London on 6 April 2013. Though offering technical challenges, the overall mood of the piece is bright and high-spirited with relaxed and good-humoured interplay between the soloist and an orchestra consisting of double woodwind, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, harp and strings.

Cast in three unbroken movements, the concerto begins with a brisk *Toccata*. The main material contrasts bold, chordal writing for the soloist with dashing semiquavers. Shimmering upper strings herald the arrival of a lyrical secondary idea. In the second half of the movement the harp assumes a prominent role, becalming the music and delightfully taking centre stage in the closing bars.

Renouncing trumpets and timpani, the central *Barcarolle* is gentle and sustained. This songlike

movement is virtually monothematic in its close allegiance to a haunting and wistful refrain, which is constantly recast in fresh and varied guises. Once again, the harp comes to the fore as the music dies away.

Full orchestral forces are deployed in the sparkling *Allegro* finale. After a short introduction presenting tantalising wisps of thematic material, the solo violin has a brilliant cadenza. This forms a roguishly extended preamble to a lively *Valse-Scherzo* whose sly harmonic shifts and intoxicating melodic sweep rounds the concerto off in exuberantly urbane style.

Kenneth Leighton (1929–1988) was born in Wakefield, where he became a cathedral chorister. He studied classics and composition with Bernard Rose at Queen's College, Oxford, and in 1951 won the Mendelssohn Scholarship, enabling him to study in Rome with Goffredo Petrassi. Leighton's distinguished academic career culminated in his appointment in 1970 as the University of Edinburgh's Reid Professor of Music, a post which he held until his death.

He wrote over a hundred compositions. These include three symphonies, eight concertos, a considerable amount of church music and a wide variety of vocal, chamber and instrumental works, notably for organ.

Leighton's *Concerto for Violin and Small Orchestra, Op. 12* was written at white heat in a few weeks in the Spring of 1952, in Italy. The concerto is prefaced by some verses by the Italian poet Ada Negri, which translate as 'Today I seek you, and do not find you; you are neither in me nor near me, nor do I know what fault I have committed that you have punished me in the light of your presence.' While these verses characterise the essence of the concerto, they are most sensed in the emotional *Epilogo*. It was premiered in May the following year on the Third Programme by Frederick Grinke with the St Cecilia Orchestra under Trevor Harvey. The orchestral forces consist of double woodwind, two horns, two trombones, timpani, modest percussion and strings.

In the dark opening *Allegro con brio*, the orchestra announces the movement's main motif: a driving, ascending figure which immediately establishes a feeling

of urgency. This nervous energy is maintained by the busy solo writing. A yearning second subject for the soloist uses all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. At the expressive height of the development section, a substantial, bravura cadenza unfolds. This ends in a series of trills strikingly taken up by the orchestra as a bridge to the telescoped recapitulation in which the second subject is revisited before the first. The music acquires a decidedly martial character before ending trenchantly with a gruff restatement of the movement's principal motif.

In the following slow *Intermezzo*, the level of intensity decreases, though the movement's brooding main theme maintains the striving, upward progress characteristic of the whole work. The hushed opening is laced with woodwind solos, while brass and timpani intervene in the more dramatic central portion. Near the end, the music suddenly intensifies but the closing bars ebb away to nothing.

The tense and edgy *Scherzo* third movement returns to the rhythmic dynamism of the opening movement but with an extra dash of grim humour. A broader pulse heralds the arrival of the droll and insouciant central *Trio* section which is lightly and imaginatively scored. The scherzo material returns with a vengeance, increasing in ferocity in its final stages.

The closing *Epilogo* is the concerto's emotional climax. It has strong thematic links with the material of the opening movement. A graceful cantilena from the soloist is vaulted above solemnly reiterated drum strokes and fluent accompaniment from the whole orchestra. The movement follows an arch-like trajectory from a brooding start to an impassioned climax before finally retreating into a cloud of resigned despondency.

A review in *The Daily Telegraph* of a performance of the concerto at the Royal Albert Hall given on 1 September 1954 by Grinke with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sir Malcolm Sargent commented that 'the slow *Intermezzo* and lament-like *Epilogo* shared a lyrical intensity ... particularly well suited to the solo instrument'.

Gordon Jacob (1895–1984) was born in Upper Norwood, London and educated at Dulwich College. At the Royal College of Music (RCM) he studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Herbert Howells, and conducting with Adrian Boult. He

taught at Birkbeck and Morley colleges before joining the staff of the RCM where he instructed composers such as Elizabeth Maconchy, Malcolm Arnold, Ruth Gipps, Joseph Horowitz and Bernard Stevens in harmony, composition and orchestration. He was awarded a CBE in 1968.

Noted for his chamber music and pieces for wind band, Jacob also wrote many concertos, of which several, including those for flute, horn, organ, horn and piano, feature a string orchestra. This is also the case with his *Concerto for Violin and String Orchestra* which was completed in February 1953 and first performed the following August at a Promenade concert in the Royal Albert Hall by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Basil Cameron with the work's dedicatee, the Canadian-born violinist Frederick Grinke, as soloist.

The opening *Allegro con brio* is a taut sonata-form movement dominated by its vigorously assertive principal theme introduced immediately by the solo violin. Contrast is provided by a lyrical secondary idea. Instead of a dynamic development section, the heart of this movement confounds expectation with a slow and veiled central episode with eloquent writing for soloist and violas. Gradually the original tempo is restored and the main ideas are restated. An expansive solo cadenza leads into a final assertion of the movement's indomitable chief subject.

At the concerto's core lies an extended and impassioned slow movement. Its flowing, threnody-like themes for soloist unfold steadily in long-breathed paragraphs. The writing for accompanying strings is varied and poetic, from tremolo effects to chordal and pizzicato passages. A flexible, spontaneous quality in the melodic lines is reinforced by regular changes in pulse between triple and quadruple time.

In the spirited closing *Allegro ma non troppo*, which provides a successful foil to the central *Andante espressivo's* broad lyricism, the soloist introduces a fiery theme that pervades the movement. An expressive ancillary theme varies the mood and shadows are cast briefly over the music in the movement's middle section.

Not identified as such in the score, another fully-fledged cadenza precedes a brief, final presentation of the primary material before a parting flourish.

Paul Conway

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra



Photo: John Wood

Formed in 1935, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra is Scotland's national broadcasting orchestra and performs to audiences in venues throughout the country. It has been at the heart of the nation's cultural life for many years and has a well-earned reputation for its creative ambition, its pioneering spirit and diversity of repertoire. It maintains a busy schedule of broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Television and Online. Based at City Halls in Glasgow, the orchestra is Scotland's leading champion of new music, and has established strong links with local communities through its learning and outreach programme. It appears regularly at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh International Festival. In recent years the orchestra has toured to India, South America, China, Holland, Germany and Austria. The orchestra is a past recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Best Orchestra and its commercial recordings have received a number of prizes, including four *Gramophone* Awards. Thomas Dausgaard became chief conductor in September 2016.

For further information, please visit www.bbc.co.uk/bbcso

Grant Llewellyn



Photo: Nicholas Joubard

Music director of the North Carolina Symphony and Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne, Grant Llewellyn is renowned for his exceptional charisma, energy and easy authority in music of all styles and periods. Born in Tenby, South Wales, Llewellyn won a Conducting Fellowship to the Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts in 1985 where he worked with Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, Kurt Masur and André Previn. Previously music director of the Handel and Haydn Society, Llewellyn regularly guest conducts orchestras in North America, most notably the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Milwaukee, Montreal, Philadelphia and Toronto. In Europe he appears with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Helsinki Philharmonic, the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, among others. As an accomplished opera conductor, Llewellyn has appeared at English National Opera, Opera North, Rennes Opera and the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Deeply committed and passionate about engaging young people with music, Llewellyn regularly leads education and outreach projects.

Clare Howick



Photo: Guy Mayer

Clare Howick's interest in 20th-century British violin repertoire has resulted in a number of premieres and recordings. Her debut disc, *Cyril Scott: Sonata Lyrica and Other Works* for Dutton, was Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine. Subsequent discs for Naxos of violin works by *British Women Composers*, *Cyril Scott's Violin Sonatas Nos. 1-3*, and *British Music for Violin and Piano* have received Editor's Choice in *Classical Music* magazine, Recording of the Month on MusicWeb International, and Recommended Recording on BBC Radio 3 Record Review. Howick has an extensive concerto repertoire, including Patterson's *Violin Concerto No. 2 ('Serenade')* which was composed for her, and has performed with orchestras including the Philharmonia Orchestra. In addition to her solo and chamber performances, at venues including the Royal Festival Hall and Wigmore Hall, she has broadcast on the BBC, in the US, Canada and New Zealand. Clare Howick gratefully acknowledges the loan of the 'Maurin' Stradivarius 1718 from the Royal Academy of Music for this recording. This violin was played by Frederick Grinke, the dedicatee of the Leighton and Jacob concertos, for the premiere performances of these works in 1953.

www.clarehowick.co.uk

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WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

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BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra • Grant Llewellyn

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A detailed track list and recording details can be found inside the booklet.

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