



# Herbert HOWELLS

## Chamber Music

String Quartet  
'In Gloucestershire'  
Lady Audrey's Suite  
Piano Quartet

Dante Quartet  
Gould Piano Trio  
David Adams



**Herbert  
HOWELLS**  
(1892–1983)

	<b>String Quartet No. 3 'In Gloucestershire'</b> (1916–20, revised late 1930's)	<b>28:33</b>
<b>1</b>	I. With easy and flexible movement	9:20
<b>2</b>	II. Fairly quick, but always rhythmical	2:05
<b>3</b>	III. Slow in pace, with much feeling	8:27
<b>4</b>	IV. Allegro vivace: Assai ritmico	8:32
	<b>Lady Audrey's Suite, Op. 19</b> for string quartet (1915)*	<b>20:20</b>
<b>5</b>	I. The four sleepy golliwogs' dance	4:50
<b>6</b>	II. The little girl and the old shepherd	3:36
<b>7</b>	III. Prayer-time	8:26
<b>8</b>	IV. The old shepherd's tale	3:18
	<b>Piano Quartet in A minor, Op. 21</b> (1916, revised 1936)	<b>26:59</b>
<b>9</b>	I. Allegro moderato, tranquillo	10:50
<b>10</b>	II. Lento, molto tranquillo	8:28
<b>11</b>	III. Allegro molto, energico	7:35

**\*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

**Dante Quartet 1–8**

(Krysia Osostowicz, Violin I • Oscar Perks, Violin II • Yuko Inoue, Viola • Richard Jenkinson, Cello)

**Gould Piano Trio 9–11**

(Lucy Gould, Violin • Alice Neary, Cello • Benjamin Frith, Piano)

**David Adams, Viola 9–11**

## **Herbert HOWELLS (1892–1983)**

**String Quartet No. 3 'In Gloucestershire' • Lady Audrey's Suite, Op. 19  
Piano Quartet in A minor, Op. 21**

Herbert Howells (1892–1983) defined the sound of English cathedral music in the 20th century with a style which is immediately recognisable for its long melodic lines, rhapsodic nature, rich harmony and ecstatic climaxes. His earliest musical education came from his sister within the family home at Lydney, Gloucestershire. He also heard the organ played by his father in the Baptist chapel next door and then progressed to Lydney Parish Church, where he had his first experience of choral music. Herbert's headmaster encouraged him and a local squire funded more serious tuition with Herbert Brewer at Gloucester Cathedral, becoming an apprentice at the same time as Ivor Gurney and Ivor Novello. Crucially, the link with Gloucester also drew Howells into the world of the Three Choirs Festivals where he experienced not only the riches of the oratorio tradition but also some of the latest contemporary music. Howells' writing from this time shows him grappling with these influences, as well as a heady mixture of the German Romantics. When he won an open scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music in 1912, he changed overnight. The 'queer looking scrubby little creature' that Hubert Parry describes in his diary entry for the scholarship examination transformed himself into a charming, dapper gentleman. Likewise,

with the move to London, Howells jettisoned so much of his early musical style in favour of a far more refined writing where every note mattered. This was almost certainly the influence of Charles Wood and Charles Villiers Stanford.

The move to such a cosmopolitan city as London allowed Howells to soak up all of the latest music. Hubert Parry mentored him and he was frequently invited to salon recitals in the homes of the rich and famous in Kensington and beyond. The Royal College of Music itself hosted many of the earliest London performances of new music and it was the French school of Debussy and Ravel which had the greatest impact on Howells. Likewise, the wartime performances of Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* were unmissable for the young composer and he made particularly detailed study of Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*. A terminal diagnosis in 1916 of Graves' disease, a condition which caused Howells' heart to race and his eyes to visibly protrude from his face, meant that he was spared active service in the First World War and thanks to Parry's connections with the finest doctors in London, Howells became the first person in Britain to receive experimental radium treatment, supplemented with regular

prescriptions of arsenic. Ultimately, the treatment was successful but it did require him to spend long periods convalescing. In many ways this was a golden period for Howells, filling his time with composition and producing some of his most celebrated works including the *Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and String Orchestra* (1917), the three *Rhapsodies* for organ (1915–18), several fine songs such as *King David* (1919), the carol-anthem *A Spotless Rose* (1919), and the three chamber works on this release.

### **String Quartet No. 3 'In Gloucestershire'**

The revision of unpublished scores was a constant process for Howells: it was said that he could not copy a single bar of his own music out without changing some element. The *String Quartet No. 3 'In Gloucestershire'* was begun in the summer of 1916 but the first manuscript was left on a train and Howells subsequently revised it several times. Like all the works on this recording, the quartet's history was bound up with his friendships with Ivor Gurney and Marion Scott. The first performance took place at a private concert in March 1920 at Scott's London home. Howells and Gurney would go walking in the countryside around Gloucester, frequently disappearing for days at a time. The third quartet captures what Howells described as the 'real Gloucestershire'; '...I had the sort of heart-ache for Gloucestershire all the time, and chiefly when I think of Gloucestershire, of

the Cotswolds.' The opening seems to capture that sense of nostalgia with a folk song-like theme which would not have been out of place in Stanford's quartets, yet at the same time Howells' fluid treatment of it, his rich modal harmony and the finesse of his textures (especially in the short pizzicato *scherzo*), makes this one of the most overt English homages to the chamber music of Ravel. The opening music returns at the end of the quartet, dispelling the nervous dance-like energy of the final movement, and closing in complete tranquillity.

### **Lady Audrey's Suite, Op. 19**

Again, the folk-element of Howells' string writing is immediately audible in *Lady Audrey's Suite* of 1915. Finished on Christmas Day, it was a present for Marion Scott's young niece, Audrey, who was raised in the Scott's home following the death of her mother in childbirth. Howells was fond of writing character pieces for young listeners and the titles are clearly inspired by Debussy's *Children's Corner* suite. Howells' own programme note elaborates on the stories:

- I. The Golliwogs – poor stiff things! – hated dancing; and they *were* so sleepy. But some horrid, spiteful 'Mugician' goaded them with sharp words and a prickly fork. So they danced as best they could; bowed; and ran away.
- II. In the fields and woods the little girl had

little else to think of than the flowers, and the solitary old shepherd who, among his flocks close by, piped the only scraps of tune he cared for. She often pitied his loneliness.

- III. On Sundays this same little girl would go into the big, quiet Church, and hear the solemnest things sung by the Parson in a low up-and-down voice. And of these solemn words, and of coloured windows, she would think at Prayer-time each evening in the week. But thoughts would come, too, of the doings of each day – of a quiet, lonely Monday; a five-finger exercise Tuesday; a tale of Saints-and-Organs Wednesday; a dancing tea-party Thursday; a fairy-tale Friday; and a Sabbath-eve Saturday.
- IV. Once the old shepherd told her a tale – of himself years ago, and of his friends. He was not always slow-going and lonely.

### **Piano Quartet in A minor, Op. 21**

Written in 1916, Howells' *Piano Quartet in A minor* received significant attention when it won a Carnegie Trust award which secured its publication. Such was Stanford's respect for his 'son-in-music' that he had submitted the score on Howells' behalf and, in turn, Howells submitted Stanford's own winning entry, his opera *The Travelling Companion*. The *Piano Quartet* bears an unusual dedication: 'To the Hill at Chosen and Ivor Gurney who knows it.' Howells

and Gurney frequently climbed the vantage point outside Gloucester, with its magnificent views of the surrounding countryside. 'Chosen' (or Churchdown) was also the home of Howells' fiancé, Dorothy Dawe. 'When the first movement opens it is dawn, and the hill wind, pure externally free, and uplifting, is blowing... The second movement is the Hill upon a day of midsummer, and the thoughts are those which come as a man lies on the grass on his back gazing upward into the vast vault of sky... The Finale is the Hill in the month of March, with splendid winds of Spring rioting over it.' Howells revised the score in 1936, altering the second subject of the first movement; the result was a much darker work. Given the work's associations with Ivor Gurney (who by this time was severely ill and living in an asylum), it is hard not to hear these reworkings as a personal reference to that lost friendship.

**Jonathan Clinch**  
[www.jclinch.com](http://www.jclinch.com)

This recording was supported by the Herbert Howells Trust, the Herbert Howells Society, and The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

## Dante Quartet



The Dante Quartet was founded by Krysia Osostowicz in 1995, its name inspired by the idea of an epic journey. The Quartet has appeared at major UK festivals and concert societies, as well as in numerous European countries, and has a strong following in Japan. The recipient of multiple awards, including the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber Music, a Diapason d'Or and a *BBC Music Magazine* Award, the ensemble has recorded works by Kodály, Smetana, Janáček, Sibelius, Fauré, Debussy and Ravel, and is currently recording Stanford's complete quartets. Other current projects include the cycle of 15 Shostakovich string quartets and a series of performances of *Beethoven's Quartet Journey*, an innovative Beethoven cycle. The Quartet is also committed to teaching, and has a long-standing connection with King's College, Cambridge, as well as giving annual chamber music courses in England and France. The ensemble also runs its own thriving Dante Summer Festival in the Tamar Valley ([www.dantefestival.org](http://www.dantefestival.org)).

## The Gould Piano Trio



The Gould Piano Trio, directly compared to the great Beaux Arts Trio in the *Washington Post*, have remained at the forefront of the international chamber music scene for a quarter of a century. Launched by their First Prize at the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition and subsequently selected as Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) Artists, they made a highly successful debut at the Weill Recital Hall, New York, which was critically acclaimed by *The Strad* magazine. Their many appearances at Wigmore Hall in London have included the complete piano trios of Dvořák, Mendelssohn and Schubert, as well as a Beethoven cycle in the 2017–18 season to celebrate 25 years since their first appearance at the venue. The Trio's diverse discography also includes many neglected gems, often rediscovered through artistic collaborations, such as a rediscovery of late Romantic British repertoire with clarinettist Robert Plane. Commissioning has also been an important part of the Trio's focus, resulting in works by James MacMillan, Mark Simpson and Huw Watkins. The ensemble members find masterclasses and coaching a revitalising part of their schedule, particularly as artists-in-residence at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama where they hold fellowships.



## David Adams

David Adams is the leader of the Welsh National Opera Orchestra, regularly directing concerts from the violin and appearing as a soloist. He has been a member of the London Bridge Trio, with whom he has recently recorded the Schumann and Mendelssohn trios, since 2017. As a chamber musician, Adams makes regular guest appearances on both violin and viola with the Nash Ensemble, the Endellion String Quartet, the Hebrides Ensemble and the Gould Piano Trio, with whom he has recorded the complete Brahms *Piano Quartets*. He regularly attends the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove. From 2005 to 2009 Adams was the leader of the Ulster Orchestra, and has appeared as guest leader with many of the leading orchestras in the UK including the BBC Scottish Symphony, the BBC Symphony and the Royal Scottish National orchestras. Adams belongs to a musical family; his father was principal viola of the Hallé Orchestra, and he is married to cellist Alice Neary, with whom he runs the Penarth Chamber Music Festival. He teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.



Herbert Howells' style, immediately recognisable for its long melodic lines, rhapsodic nature and rich harmonies, defined the sound of English cathedral music in the 20th century. His studies in London imbued his works with sophistication and a French influence, which were intertwined with a nostalgic 'heart-ache' for the 'real Gloucestershire', as can be heard in *String Quartet No. 3*. The charming little character stories in *Lady Audrey's Suite* tell of countryside and church, while the *Piano Quartet in A minor* is dedicated 'To the Hill at Chosen and Ivor Gurney who knows it', portraying a favourite local vantage point at different seasons as well as poignantly remembering a lost friendship.

**Herbert  
HOWELLS**  
(1892–1983)

**Playing Time**  
**76:08**

**Chamber Music**

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|-------------|--|--------------|
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| <b>5–8</b>  | <b>Lady Audrey's Suite, Op. 19 (1915)</b>                                      | <b>20:20</b> |
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A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet

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