

A
Garland
for
John McCabe

an anthology of
tributes from
19 composers

Linda Merrick *clarinet* John Turner *recorder* Alistair Vennart *viola* Peter Lawson *piano*

A *Garland* for John McCabe

1	A Rag for McCabe (Peter Dickinson)	1:53
2	Exequy (John Joubert)	5:49
3	John's Farewell (Edward Gregson)	2:09
4	A Little Prelude for John McCabe (Robert Saxton)	2:09
5	Highland Song (Howard Skempton)	2:34
6	Lament for the Turtle-Dove (Elis Pehkonen)	6:19
7	And Will You Walk Beside Me Down the Lane? (Robin Walker)	5:03
8	In Memoriam John McCabe (Malcolm Lipkin)	2:56
9	Little Passacaglia (William Marshall)	4:46
10	Nocturnes and Dawn (Patterdale) (Martin Ellerby)	4:54
11	Elegy for John McCabe (Rob Keeley)	4:36
12	Evening Changes (James Francis Brown)	6:06
13	Memento (Gerard Schurmann)	3:27
14	The Flame has Ceased (Anthony Gilbert)	4:46
15	Danse des Fourmis (Christopher Gunning)	4:10
16	Chaconne (David Matthews)	4:00
17	In Nomine (Raymond Warren)	7:42
18	Outback (Emily Howard)	2:26
19	Edradour (Gary Carpenter)	2:35

Total playing time: 79:35

Linda Merrick *clarinet* John Turner *recorder*

Alistair Vennart *viola* Peter Lawson *piano*

A Garland for McCabe – Short pieces composed in John McCabe's memory

All his life my husband, John McCabe, was in love with music. This love began at the very start of his life and extended to the very end. His earliest memory was of creeping downstairs after he had been put to bed, and sitting on the bottom step when his parents listened to records, or to orchestral broadcasts on the 'wireless', as it was then known. He purchased copies of Haydn and Beethoven scores with his pocket money. As his life was drawing to its close, he was still fascinated to discover a Scottish early composer as yet unknown to him, Robert Carver, and I struggled to obtain more CDs for him to listen to, other than the one he had. John's love was for the art of music, and for his joy in the created sounds. It was not self-seeking, even though, as with any composer, he had an imperative drive to express himself in music. For this reason he was as happy to listen to the successful work of other composers as to succeed himself, and as a pianist he was able to take part in and promote the music of others.

Even outside the sphere of his own pianism he promoted the work of other composers, whether through the music club we set up in 2004, in our home town in Kent (where one of the tenets was that the programmes should always, as far as possible, include a work by a British composer – though seldom one of his own), or through his involvement with such organisations as the Composers' Guild (later the Association of Professional Composers), the British Music Society, the Rawsthorne and Robert Simpson Societies, the Incorporated Society of Musicians, the London College of Music, or other music clubs, such as Luton and Malvern. In all this he was assisted by the enormous breadth of his musical knowledge.

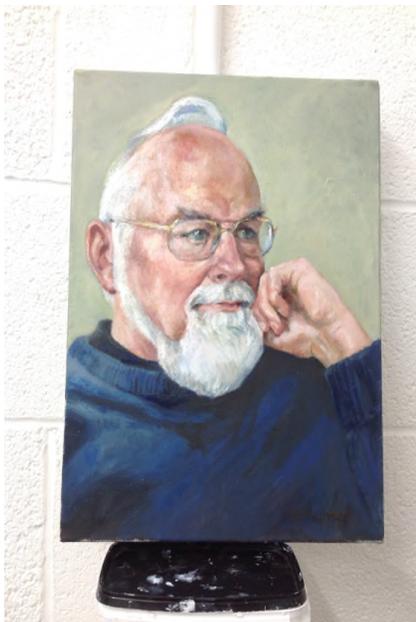
Above everything he fought to extend knowledge of the repertoire, especially among teachers, so that such wonderful music as Haydn's keyboard sonatas, and Nielsen's solo piano music did not lie neglected in dusty corners, for lack of a champion. In the case of Haydn he was particularly successful, and this composer's piano sonatas (as I will now call them) are these days regarded as part of the standard repertoire – though this was a phrase he hated, with its implied constriction of vision.

As a pianist John gave more first performances than I can name here, but not only first, but also second, third and fourth performances. Even when he was not given the privilege of the first performance of a work, he still promoted and played the music he believed in. (He more than once spoke disparagingly in my hearing of a world-famous performer who would not play a wonderful work because he had not been given the premiere.) And this love, which was so obviously inherent in both his playing, and in his writing about music, was what first attracted me to him, both by its passion and by its genuineness. In this way he promoted and performed works by Alun Hoddinott (John gave the first performance of his Third Piano Sonata, and loved to recount the excuses for the slow, late arrival of the various movements, one on the morning of the performance, in Hoddinott's Welsh accent – for John had a wonderful mimicry of accents); also William Mathias, and Richard Rodney Bennett (he gave the premiere of his piano masterpiece, *Noctuary*, and later recorded it; while he and Erich Gruenberg also gave the premiere of his Violin Sonata). He also promoted the piano works of Nicholas Maw and Michael Tippett – all of these giants sadly no longer with us. He played works by Anthony Gilbert, and Hugh Wood, who I'm glad to say still are.

John was able to appreciate music of many different styles of composition, and gave magnificent performances of Bax, while loving and appreciating Webern – and both of these composers he recorded. His 'English Recital', now on a Naxos CD, ranges from deeply-felt performances of Vaughan Williams and Warlock, to the joyous *Dance Suite* of John Joubert (whose work he also promoted). Nor did he neglect to support the work of rising generations, such as Emily Howard, James Francis Brown, Martin Ellerby and Matthew Taylor, who has recently written his Fourth Symphony in memory of John. And he always remembered the work of his composition teacher, Thomas Pitfield.

It is in recognition of this generous and wide-ranging devotion to the art of music that John Turner has so kindly gathered together this fascinating set of compositions in John's memory, composed in 2016, a tribute which he would have been touched and proud to have received. This set of pieces, ranging from solo instrumental to chamber works, is not the only set of tributes to have been written. George Vass, and the City of Canterbury Chamber Choir, of which John was for so long President, also compiled and performed a set of tributes, of choral and organ music, which sadly logistics would not allow to be included in this collection, but which I hope one day will be recorded, as they consist of fine works by Cecilia McDowall, David Matthews (again), Deborah Pritchard, Robert Saxton and Thomas Hyde. There was also a set of *Haydn Fantasies*, written in honour of John's 70th Birthday, by seven composers, some of whom are also represented here, including James Francis Brown, David Matthews, Hugh Wood, Peter Fribbins, John Hawkins, Alan Mills and Matthew Taylor. These pieces, premiered in Presteigne in 2009, by Huw Watkins, were performed again in 2017, by Clare Hammond, at the newly-formed Hertfordshire Music Festival, as a tribute to John. For all these kind acts of recognition from other composers, and from performers, I am both moved and grateful, and especially for the works recorded here, and for all the heartfelt commitment put into this venture by John Turner, and by the others artists involved.

© Monica McCabe 2017



The booklet front cover image is cropped from this original oil portrait of the composer by Angela Palmer

THE MUSIC

PETER DICKINSON (b. 1934)

1 **A Rag for McCabe**, for recorder, clarinet, viola and piano

Peter Dickinson writes: In 1981 John McCabe wrote his *Lamentation Rag* for piano to a BBC commission marking the 250th anniversary of the birth of Haydn the following year. My tribute quotes from the introduction to McCabe's rag, which I included in lecture-recitals in the US and Mexico in 1986. Then I created a conventional 16 bar rag strain to go with McCabe's introduction as a light-hearted celebration of his personality and remarkable achievements.

JOHN JOUBERT (b. 1927)

2 **Exequy**, for solo viola

John Joubert writes: The dictionary definition of *exequy* is 'funeral procession', and this work, composed in memory of John McCabe, begins with a descending double-dotted rhythmic figure suggestive of a ritual of mourning. This is interrupted first by the opening phrase of Kontakion, the traditional Russian chant for the dead, and the first of several appearances of a 6-note phrase based on the musical equivalents of letters from John McCabe's name. At each re-appearance of the phrase the notes are reshuffled to form new versions of itself. Midway through the piece the Kontakion melody reappears, first with a counter-melody below it, leading back to a climactic version of the melody incorporating the double-dotted rhythm of the opening. This gradually dies down to reach a quiet conclusion.

EDWARD GREGSON (b. 1945)

3 **John's Farewell**, for recorder and piano

Edward Gregson writes: My short tribute to John McCabe, scored for treble recorder and piano, is cast in the form of a *Sarabande*, and uses simple but direct means of expression. Repeated added-note harmonies heard at the outset on piano underpin a plaintive melody on the recorder, which rises and falls, both in dynamics and contour, until it eventually subsides with a final utterance of resignation and farewell.

ROBERT SAXTON (b. 1953)

4 **A Little Prelude for John McCabe**, for recorder, clarinet, viola and piano

Robert Saxton writes: This short piece is based on the upper-case letters joHn mcCABE (H being B natural in German notation), but transposed. This interval succession acts as a *cantus firmus* throughout.

HOWARD SKEMPTON (b. 1947)

5 Highland Song, for recorder, clarinet and viola

Howard Skempton writes: One learns to trust the element of surprise in one's music. *Highland Song* is as direct as the title suggests, but the strong Scottish flavour is difficult to explain. The tune is original, but perhaps there is some sort of subliminal connection to Haydn's Scottish Songs (and therefore to John)?

ELIS PEHKONEN (b.1942)

6 Lament for the Turtle-Dove, for clarinet and piano

Elis Pehkonen writes: This work is based on one of my favourite late medieval plainsong melodies, *Benedicamus Domino*. After the theme there are five short variations, followed by a lament, also based on the plainsong. The music is inspired by visual observation and aural stimuli of birds in and from my garden, as follows: the first cuckoo, bittern and swallow, robin and wren, the owls, blackbird and song-thrush.

The piece ends with a lament for the turtle-dove, which I have seen and heard up to 2014. The loss of this bird is a personal and ornithological tragedy, and the islands of Malta and Cyprus bear a huge responsibility for its loss.

ROBIN WALKER (b.1953)

7 And Will You Walk Beside Me Down The Lane?, for recorder, clarinet, viola and piano

Robin Walker writes: I have long known and admired Alan Murray's late-1930s song *I'll Walk Beside You* as recorded by the English tenor Webster Booth. Some would say the song was sentimental – not so: to me it replicates genuine emotional truth in a manner comparable to great art songs, and with a vigour and delicacy that has little to do with 'light' music. In the present piece *I'll Walk Beside You* reveals itself after a cumulative process of hard-driven dancing has run its course – looking for the respite and healing power of melody to calm its turbulent energy. It is as though a man has asked a woman the question that is the title of the piece: "And will you walk beside me down the lane?" – and that she, eventually, has responded with the title of the 1930s song: "I'll Walk Beside You."

MALCOLM LIPKIN (1932-2017)

8 In Memoriam John McCabe, for clarinet, viola, and piano

Malcolm Lipkin writes: Toward the end of my small tribute to John, there is a brief quotation, though not in its original key, from one of Haydn's piano sonatas, so very memorably recorded by John.

WILLIAM MARSHALL (b. 1992)**9 Little Passacaglia**, for recorder and piano

William Marshall writes: *Little Passacaglia* is based on the twelve-note series employed by John McCabe in his brilliant *Five Bagatelles* for piano (1964). As my title suggests, I have used McCabe's series as a melodic 'ground'; this is transposed up a major second with each successive repetition. As in McCabe's *Bagatelles*, much use is made of palindromic devices. For instance, the recorder's opening, unaccompanied statement of the 'ground' is followed immediately by its own mirror image; this is harmonised by the 'ground' proper with the entry of the piano. The music becomes increasingly agitated and, following a central climactic section, the 'mirror' form of the ground predominates in the work's quiet ending. *Little Passacaglia* is dedicated to John Turner.

MARTIN ELLERBY (b. 1957)**10 Nocturnes and Dawn (Patterdale)**, for viola and piano

Martin Ellerby writes: This piece is built around a musical cipher on the letters of John McCabe's name, HCCABE. The six note cell is stated at the outset on the piano and provides much of the impetus for the music's journey. The title is the English translation of one of John's most successful works, *Notturmi ed Alba*, and the subtitle Patterdale is a reference to a favourite place of his in the Lake District. I knew John well and attended several of his lectures at the LCM when he demonstrated various techniques and structures, all illustrated at the piano. Therefore the use of one such technique, palindrome, is prominent along with one based on the Minuet from Haydn's Symphony No. 47, though this is quite well hidden! Haydn was of course one of John's favourite composers, along with Rawsthorne and Hindemith, himself a noted violist.

ROB KEELEY (b. 1960)**11 Elegy for John McCabe**, for clarinet and piano

Rob Keeley writes: Apart from a typically stimulating piano lesson on a Haydn Sonata at Dartington in 2000, my contact with John McCabe has been as a sympathetic listener, both to his compositions and to his marvellous playing. Like (doubtless) many others, I have taken the 'musicalisable' letters of his name (M=E, C, C, A, B, E) as the starting point for this measured and austere four-minute elegy, which, however becomes more lyrical, even sumptuous towards the end.

JAMES FRANCIS BROWN (b. 1969)**12 Evening Changes**, for recorder, clarinet and viola

James Francis Brown writes: The recorder is one of those instruments whose character and timbre are instantly able to evoke other eras. From the Middle-Ages through to today, it appears, rather like Virginia Woolf's mysterious time-traveller, *Orlando*, dressed in the costume and manner of the day but always retaining its bright, pithy character. A peal of distant church-bells, technically

known as change-ringing, also has a great power to suggest the passing of centuries and, with a little imagination, these changes of pattern may be felt as signalling shifts in time. In this short piece, the instruments take turns representing the bells (as a sort of ground bass) and the 'time-traveller'.

Evening is yet another time when we experience a shift in feeling and imagination, so the 'changes' of the title represent both the literal pealing of bells and a more figurative sense of transformation. This work was written *In Memoriam* John McCabe and is dedicated to John Turner.

GERARD SCHURMANN (b. 1924)

13 Memento, for solo piano

Gerard Schurmann writes: John was a friend for many years, and the pianist in the first recording (1967) of my song-cycle *Chuench'i* with the American soprano Marni Nixon, who has herself recently died. I admired John's wide ranging musicianship and his insightful book about Alan Rawsthorne. Composed in a kind of quasi-minimalist form, "Memento" expresses a feeling of personal loss and sadness. The combined major/minor harmonic dissonance, a favourite of Rawsthorne, reaches a climax at three points, and is finally resolved on a chord of F sharp minor.

ANTHONY GILBERT (b. 1934)

14 The Flame has Ceased, for recorder, viola and piano

Anthony Gilbert writes: As a member of reading-panels, I had known John McCabe's music since about 1963. John himself I knew from about 1967, by which time he had already given superlative performances of my first piano Sonata. This gift-tribute is a reflection: partly on that long-standing friendship, and partly on John's evolution as a remarkably individual, non-fashion-driven composer. It begins with a viola solo which I realised, once sketched, had echoes of Andalusian flamenco. There are two possible reasons for this, both subconscious: at the time of writing it I was deeply immersed in the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca, whose own work had close connections with Flamenco culture: and secondly because, in parallel with Lorca's, John's early education and creative development were entirely at home due to serious injuries caused, in his case, by fire. Both, in their early years, spent much time listening to music and being creative.

The shape of this tribute also has a lot to do with reflection. Without in any way attempting to imitate the McCabe idiom, it parallels, in a simple metaphorical way, its development from basic extended tonality to the phased elaboration of that technical approach which characterises McCabe's evolution as a composer. So almost every new phrase picks up a characteristic or a little gesture from the preceding one and takes it in a new direction. There is only one interruption in this continuity when, about a third of the way through, after the first little climax, some new harmonic textures present themselves, to be developed alongside all else, ultimately supporting the main climax at the two-thirds point. An almost complete motivic circle is achieved – as with Lorca's

poetry, McCabe's music never quite lost touch with its origins – before arriving at the concluding A minor harmony, the tonic being quietly topped with a major ninth, B.

CHRISTOPHER GUNNING (b. 1944)

15 **Danse des Fourmis**, for recorder, clarinet and piano

Christopher Gunning writes: One of John McCabe's attributes was a delightful sense of humour which manifested itself at unexpected times in unexpected ways. It is that side of his personality which I wished to express in "Danse des Fourmis," although I have no idea whether or not John had any interest in ants, those common but curious creatures which rival human beings in their ability to organise themselves into communities, can live for thirty years, and exist on every continent except Antarctica.

John was a trusted colleague and friend for a great many years; we were both involved in the Association of Professional Composers and later as directors of the PRS. Among his many awards, I was honoured to present him with his Ivor Novello Award in 2014. His was a fantastic talent, whether as composer or pianist, and he is very much missed.

DAVID MATTHEWS (b. 1943)

16 **Chaconne**, for clarinet, viola and piano

David Matthews writes: This short Chaconne was written in memory of my friend John McCabe and is based on the letters of his surname, taking M as Mi – i.e. E. The writing is deliberately quite simple. The piece forms the last movement of a three-movement *Sonatina*, which was completed subsequently.

RAYMOND WARREN (b. 1928)

17 **In Nomine**, for recorder and piano

Raymond Warren writes: For me John McCabe was both a very good friend and a model for compositional excellence, so I was delighted as well as feeling honoured to have been asked to write a piece in tribute to him. One of my abiding memories of him is of when, a few years ago, he gave an absolutely scintillating performance of the solo part in the Ravel piano concerto and I thought it would be nice to write something with a hint of a French dimension. Using the musical letters of his name HC(c)ABE the In Nomine takes the form of a baroque French Overture. A slow first section with dotted rhythms leads into a fast fugue and then a final dance, in this case from outside the baroque period, a slow waltz.

EMILY HOWARD (b. 1979)

18 **Outback**, for recorder, clarinet, viola and piano

Emily Howard writes: I first met John McCabe at a composition masterclass he was giving at the University of Oxford in 2000 after which we became great friends. John was forever generous with his time and always willing to share his wealth of musical knowledge with me. In 2005, I composed a short solo piano work 'Sky and Water' for John and he gave it several performances as well as recording it on his final disc 'Farewell Recital' in 2010. I owe John a lot and I have happy memories of wonderful conversations with him and his wife Monica on their frequent visits to Manchester and the RNCM over the last 15 years.

I'm grateful to Monica McCabe for suggesting the title 'Outback' for this piece scored for recorder, clarinet, viola and piano. I was immediately drawn to its meaning 'Any remote or sparsely populated inland region' and its particular association with the Australian landscape that John was so fond of. In response to this definition, 'Outback' isolates musical ideas from my earlier work 'Sky and Water' and re-imagines them within a remote and sparsely populated musical landscape. *Outback* is dedicated to the memory of John McCabe.

GARY CARPENTER (b. 1951)

19 **Edradour**, for recorder, clarinet, viola and piano

Gary Carpenter writes: John loved single malt whiskies. Edradour is one of the very finest. The dedication is "In fondest memory of John McCabe".

THE MUSICIANS

JOHN TURNER is one of the leading recorder players of today. Born in Stockport, he was Senior Scholar in Law at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge before pursuing a legal career, acting for many distinguished musicians and musical organisations (including the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain), alongside his many musical activities. These included numerous appearances and recordings with David Munrow's Early Music Consort of London, the Academy of Ancient Music, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and the English Baroque Soloists. He now devotes his time to playing, writing, reviewing, publishing, composing and generally energising. He has played as recorder soloist with the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Manchester Camerata, the English Baroque Soloists, the English Chamber Orchestra, and many other leading orchestras and ensembles. Concertos and works with orchestra have been written for him by Gordon Crosse, Anthony Gilbert, Peter Hope, Kenneth Leighton, Elis Pehkonen, Alan Bullard, John Casken, and many other distinguished composers.

His recordings include no less than five sets of the Brandenburg Concertos, as well as the F Major version of Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 with Menuhin and George Malcolm, but lately he has made numerous acclaimed recordings of the recorder's contemporary concerto and chamber music repertoire, including four solo concerto discs, all of which have received critical acclaim. Recent recordings on the Divine Art label include music by the novelist and composer (and fellow Mancunian) Anthony Burgess, Peter Hope, Jim Parker, Roy Heaton Smith, and also a disc in memory of Alfred Deller (a good friend) with James Bowman and Robin Blaze, showcasing music by Blow, Handel, Tippett and Fricker. In the last few years he has played in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, France, New Zealand, Japan and the USA, and given many recitals on Radio 3 with pianist Peter Lawson. In all, he has given the first performances of over 500 works for the recorder, with works by many non-British composers, including Leonard Bernstein, Ned Rorem, Peter Sculthorpe, Douglas Lilburn, Petr Eben and Ruth Zechlin. Many of the works he has premiered have now entered the standard repertoire, and these and his own recorder compositions are regularly set for festivals and examinations. Two new works recently published are *Three Salutes* and *A Short Sprint*, the latter for the young Japanese recorder player Hidehiro Nakamura.

He edits series of recorder publications for both Forsyths and Peacock Press, and founded the periodical *Manchester Sounds*, in response to the perceived threat to music libraries in Great Britain. In addition he was responsible for the rediscovery of several works for his instrument, including the Rawsthorne Recorder Suite, Antony Hopkins' Pastiche Suite, Herbert Murrill's Sarabande, the Handel F Major Trio Sonata and John Parry's Nightingale Rondo (the only substantial known British nineteenth century work for a fipple flute). He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Northern College of Music in 2002 for his services to British music, and is a Visiting Distinguished Scholar of Manchester University.

LINDA MERRICK has established an international profile as a clarinet soloist, recording artist and clinician. Specialising in contemporary repertoire, she has commissioned more than 40 works for her instrument by British composers, including 10 concertos, 8 clarinet quintets, and a significant number of smaller scale chamber works and works with electronics.

Linda's catalogue of over 30 solo CD recordings includes new concertos for clarinet and concert band by Gary Carpenter, Nigel Clarke, Martin Ellerby, Kit Turnbull and Guy Woolfenden (Polyphonic), Philip Sparke (Anglo Records) and Stephen McNeff (Campion), plus concertos for clarinet and orchestra by John McLeod (Chandos), Edwin Roxburgh (NMC) and Philip Spratley (Toccata). Her chamber music output includes premiere recordings of four new clarinet quintets with the Navarra Quartet (Naxos), a clarinet quintet by John McCabe with the Kreutzer Quartet (Guild), Wilfred Joseph's Clarinet Quintet (Metier), Robert Crawford's Clarinet Quintet (Metier) and chamber works by Malcolm Arnold and John Ireland (Maestro), and by Martin Ellerby (ClassicPrint).

Linda has broadcast as a solo artist for BBC Radio 3, Radio France, DRS1, Switzerland, CKWR in Canada and Arte TV in South Korea, and performed as a concerto soloist across America, Asia, Australia, Europe, South America, the UAE, and throughout the UK. She is a founder member of the contemporary ensemble 'Sounds Positive', with whom she has premiered over 70 works by British composers, and released 3 CDs. Combining her performing career with work in music education, Linda currently holds the position of Principal and Professor at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, UK. She is also the UK representative for Howarth Clarinets.

PETER LAWSON has appeared as soloist with most British orchestras, playing concertos from Mozart to Richard Rodney Bennett. Frequently broadcasting for Radio 3, Peter has given recitals throughout the UK as well as playing in Holland, France, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, Luxembourg, Japan and Russia. With a repertoire stretching from the baroque to contemporary jazz, his many commercial recordings reflect a particular interest in more recent music and include Satie (EMI; awarded a Silver Disc), American Sonatas (2 CDs for Virgin Classics following a Churchill Fellowship to the USA) and Michael Nyman's concerto (with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra). Recent recordings include a new piano version of Rawsthorne's *Practical Cats* and this current collection. Other composers with whom he has worked include Oliver Knussen, Alexander Goehr, Anthony Gilbert, Hans Werner Henze and Elisabeth Lutyens.

Peter also works with the Equivox Trio (featuring Rob Buckland, saxophone and Simone Rebello, percussion), Tango5 (recreating the tango quintets of Piazzolla) and the recorder player John Turner with whom he has collaborated on many recordings of British music. Peter taught at Chetham's School of Music for 40 years and has been external examiner for many institutions including the Universities of Manchester, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Edinburgh-Napier and Birmingham Conservatoire. He continues as tutor in piano and tutor in contemporary piano at the RNCM, adjudicator and diploma examiner for the ABRSM.

ALISTAIR VENNART is from Hexham and started playing the Viola when he was 9 years old. He graduated from the University of Manchester in 2011 gaining several prizes including the Keith Elcombe Award for highest overall performance, and then went on to postgraduate study at the RNCM with generous support from the Seary Charitable Trust, the Headley Trust and the RNCM Friends. He was awarded the Thomas Barratt Memorial Prize for Viola in July 2013.

Alistair studied with Dr Louise Lansdown for 4 years at Manchester University and the RNCM, and with Contemporary Specialist Garth Knox from 2013-14. Alistair works professionally with the Hallé, Opera North, Manchester Camerata, Sinfonia Cymru, Northern Chamber Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic and the Royal Northern Sinfonia, and has played in principal position with some of these orchestras including sitting Co-Principal with Opera North for their Ring Cycle in 2016. He has appeared as a soloist in Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the UK, including performing Mozart Sinfonia Concertante with Manchester University Symphony Orchestra and Bach Brandenburg Concerto no. 6 with the Talich Quartet's Vladimir Bukac. Alistair is in demand as a versatile performer, playing a wide variety of musical genres, and as a tutor in Violin, Viola and Chamber Music, working for organisations such as Junior RNCM, Pro Corda and Yorkshire Young Musicians. He also has a side-profession in composition and arrangement, writing new music commissions for the Solem Quartet and fiddle trio Y Singhs, as well as creating new arrangements of existing music, notably for the BBC documentary *Dancing Cheek to Cheek: An Intimate History of Dance*.

Alistair is a founder member of the Solem Quartet, who were Winners of the 2014 Royal Overseas League Ensemble Competition. They were brought together in 2011 by their studies at the University of Manchester, where they take their name from the University motto "arduus ad solem", meaning "striving towards the sun". The quartet enjoys a busy concert schedule at venues across the UK including Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Kings Place, St John's, Smith Square, St Martin-in-the-fields and Holywell Music Room, as well as performing internationally in several European countries. As an acknowledgement to their name, the Solem Quartet began by learning Haydn's op 20 "Sun" Quartets. Now their repertoire expands widely from early Haydn to living composers such as Emily Howard, whose quartet *Afference* they recently performed in a BBC Proms Extra broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. They have recorded two CDs of 20th Century British music for Divine Art/Métier, are Park Lane Group Artists for 2016/17, and also play for Live Music Now!, a Nationwide Music Education Programme set up by Yehudi Menuhin.



Tracks 2, 3, 10, 13, 14, 16 & 19 were recorded at the Carole Nash Room at the Royal Northern College of Music on 21st April 2017.

Tracks 6 and 11 were recorded at the Carole Nash Hall, Chethams School of Music on 30th April 2017.

All other tracks were recorded at the Cosmo Rodewald Concert Hall, Manchester University, on 7th May 2017.

Recording engineer and Producer Richard Scott.

Booklet notes by Monica McCabe and the individual composers, as indicated above.

©© 2018 Divine Art Ltd. (Diversions, LLC in USA/Canada)

MUSIC PUBLISHERS:

Tracks 2, 13: Novello & Co.; track 4: University of York Music Press; track 6: Corinium Music Publications;

track 10: MEM Publications; track 12: Music Haven; track 15: Orchard Music Ltd. Track 16: Faber Music;

all other tracks unpublished (Copyright Control) as at date of production.

Cover image – oil painting of John McCabe by Angela Palmer

Photo of John McCabe (rear inlay) by John Turner;

Photo of John McCabe in garden (back cover) by Gary Smith

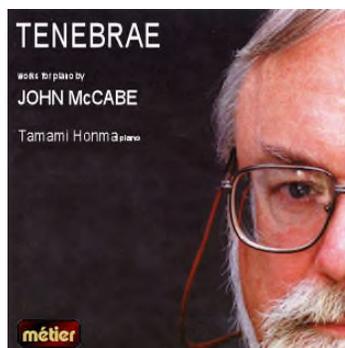
Photo of John Turner: Teresa Dietrich; photo of Linda Merrick: Victoria Haydn

Photos of Alistair Vennart and Peter Lawson courtesy of the subjects

This project and the associated recordings have relied on kind financial assistance from the Ida Carroll Trust, the Rawsthorne Trust, the Douglas Steele Foundation, the Golland Trust and the subscribers named below:

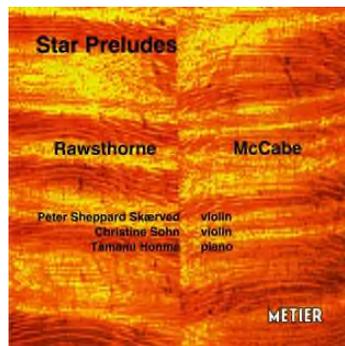
Dr. John S. Alabaster, Jonathan Alwyn, Michael and Miriam Ball, Colin and Rayna Baylis, Mark Bebbington, David Beck, Richard and Margaret Beith, David Bendix, Jackey Birch, Leon Bosch, Julia Seiber Boyd, James Bowman, Edward Breen, Geoffrey Bridge, Alan Bullard, Rita Burtch, Anthony Burton, Roger Carpenter, Prof. Stewart Craggs, Leon Crickmore, Graham and Jennifer Curtis, Patrick Deane, Colin Deane, Prof. Peter Dickinson, Peter and Lila Docx, Dr. Trevor Donald, Julia Earnshaw, Dr. Martin Ellerby, David Ellis, David Forshaw, Georgie and Nigel Foxcroft, Sarah Francis, Maggie Gibb, Alan Gibbs, Anthony Gilbert, Philip Grange, John Greenhalgh, Prof. Edward Gregson, Celeste Grindrod, Christopher Gunning, Bill Hackwell, Tony Halstead, Ian Henshall, Paul Hindmarsh, Clive Holland, Peter Hope, Michael Horwood, Garry Humphreys, John and Mary Joubert, Andrew Knowles, Peter Lawson, John LeGrove, Mrs. Jo Leighton, Stephen Lloyd, Kevin Malone, Sir John Manduell, John Beardwood Marsden, Monica McCabe, Prof. Linda Merrick, Sheila Milroy, Kathleen Morris, Graham Musto, Jim Parker, Elis and Pam Pehkonen, Tony Pickard, Dr. Andrew Plant, Michael Pollard, Geoffrey Poole, Richard Rastall, Michael Redhead, Timothy Reynish, Stuart Robinson, Howard Skempton, Audrey Slee, Michael Smith, Peter E. Spaul, Jeff and Pam Thurlow, Robin Walker, Raymond Warren, Jane Wells, Susan Wollenburg, Mrs. Percy Young.

Also from Divine Art:



'Tenebrae'
Piano music by John McCabe
Tamami Honma (piano)
Métier MSVCD 92071

"A splendid release. Make no mistake: Honma is a superb player. Very strongly recommended." – *Gramophone*
"An astounding work of breathtaking beauty. Fans of piano music will swoon at the sympathetic and responsive treatment that Honma gives to this magical piece by one of our foremost contemporary composers." – *Shropshire Star*



'Star Preludes' – works for violin by McCabe and Rawsthorne
Peter Sheppard Skærved & Christine Sohn (violins),
Tamami Honma (piano)
Métier MSVCD 92029

"Fine performances and a good recording... shows the toughness and sheer musicality of two fine British composers writing at full stretch." – *International Record Review*
"Exceptionally fine account by Peter Sheppard Skærved and Christine Sohn" – *Gramophone*

Browse our website for many other recordings by Linda Merrick, John Turner, Peter Lawson and Alistair Vennart



DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP

INNOVATIVE | ECLECTIC | FASCINATING | INSPIRATIONAL



A full list of over 500 titles, with full track details, reviews, artist profiles and audio samples, is on our website. Our recordings are available on disc or download at all good dealers or direct from us. Direct customers get discount vouchers and rapid shipment.

The Divine Art store offers all titles in lossless flac and high quality mp3; all new titles are also available in 24-bit studio HD quality.

Diversions LLC (Divine Art USA) email: sales@divineartrecords.com

Divine Art Ltd (UK) email: uksales@divineartrecords.com

www.divineartrecords.com

Most titles also available in digital download and streaming through Primephonic, Qobuz, iTunes, Amazon mp3, theclassicalshop.net, Spotify and Divine Art

Samples from every album can be accessed on the Divine Art Records YouTube channel



<https://www.facebook.com/DivineArtRecordingsGroup>



<https://www.youtube.com/divineartrecords>

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1, Upper James Street, London W1R 3HG.



John Turner



Linda Merrick



Alistair Vennart



Peter Lawson