

SOUVENIRS D'OISEAUX

RODERICK CHADWICK - PIANO

MESSIAEN CATALOGUE D'OISEAUX BOOKS 2-5

SADIE HARRISON

BETSY JOLAS

JULIAN ANDERSON

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

EDVARD GRIEG



CD 1

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Catalogue d'oiseaux Book 2:

1 Le Traquet Stapazin 14:12

Sadie Harrison (b.1965)

Lunae: Four Nocturnes:

2 I. Around and a round... 3:07

3 II. Love is the Silence in Which I Remember You and Repeat You 3:20

4 III. Of Stars and Nightingales 2:59

5 IV. Sufficit Lumen In Tenebris 2:17

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Catalogue d'oiseaux Book 3:

6 La Chouette Hulotte 7:33

7 L'Alouette Lulu 7:03

Julian Anderson (b.1967)

Sensation:

8 I. She Hears 5:03

9 II. Toucher 3:18

10 III. Sight Lines 1:51

11 IV. Nuits 1:05

12 V. Alba 9:21

13 VI. Coda 2:23

Total Time 63:32



CD 2

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Catalogue d'oiseaux Book 4:

1 La Rousserolle Effarvate 30:25

Betsy Jolas (b.1926)

2 Chanson d'Approche 8:37

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Catalogue d'oiseaux Book 5:

3 Alouette Calandrelle 5:26

4 La Bouscarle 11:35

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

5 Préludes Book 1 - No. 4 "Les sons et les parfums
tournent dans l'air du soir" 2:58

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

6 Lyric Pieces Book V, Op. 54 - No. 4 Notturmo 3:24

Total Time 62:25



In *Catalogue d'oiseaux* Messiaen finds numerous ways to play with time. Birdsong is stretched beyond its natural duration – but in proportion, maintaining rhythmic fidelity. Not only does this allow their melodies to be brought down to pitch levels that suit our instruments, it also helps pianists emulate what Messiaen perceived as the birds' unrivalled rhythmic precision.¹ Sometimes they are significantly stretched: memories of fieldwork dwelt upon in music that is 'like a photograph album from bygone times', according to the composer. The recollection of the spectacled warbler at the end of 'Le Traquet Stapazin', sounding less than an eighth of its regular speed – and exuding the warmth and stillness of a Mediterranean evening – is a notable example. Here Messiaen demands that the sustaining pedal, which creates a halo of E major around the bird's regular asides, is relinquished to create the 'souvenir' effect: suspended in memory, frozen in time.

The pieces also spell out times of the day. Sometimes – as in the case of the two nocturnal portraits in Book 3 – they illustrate specific times (midnight and 2am in this instance). Others chart the passing hours: chordal refrains convey the movement of the sun ('Le Traquet Stapazin', 'La Rousserolle Effarvatte'), or its implication courtesy of certain birds (blackbird in the morning, nightingale the evening). A key moment in 'La Rousserolle Effarvatte' is when the chorale that describes – with harmonies so quiet they almost lose their identity – how 'the red disc of the sun merges with its reflection and sinks below the waterline', gives way to the nightingale, so vivid that it seems superimposed on its surroundings. Around it, a 27-hour cycle (from midnight to 3am) unfolds through a plethora of timbres, tempi, motifs and attacks, from the Bernsteinian rhythms of the great reed warbler (CD2, Track 1, 12:08) to the stratospheric trilling of the grasshopper warbler (9:16). These contrasts magnify the fitful diversity of the title bird, which embarks on several solos (1:29 and subsequent) that, in Messiaen's words, sound like 'rasping – like a xylophone, a squeaking cork, pizzicati or a harp glissando'. His sketches for the piece



are even more imaginative: ‘wild, combative, Viking, a broken wire metronome, metallic gratings, short high cries [...] inner timbre, which resonates internally, is agitated iron rods, stroked and then stilled.’²

In contrast with the volatility of individual passages, the piece as a whole plays out with the inevitability of a passing day, the scene set by an opening that combines clockwork precision with vivid evocation of the marshes, ponds and reeds of the Sologne. Peter Hill captures the effect of the rhythm and pitch schemes proceeding in misaligned tandem (a similar technique to the first movement of the *Quartet for the End of Time*, ‘Liturgie de crystal’) when he says

Although the effect is intended to be mysterious, there is nothing vague about the music, which is precise, a rigorously organised ‘machine’ [...] The passage is extraordinarily difficult to catch in performance, partly, I think, because so many layers of meaning are interwoven. Not only is there the counterpoint between brittle sounds in the right hand and the gliding, circling harmonies in the left, but there is the mechanistic quality of the whole passage, with the cycle of repetitions bringing the hands back into alignment, rather like a clock at midnight. Too much rigour in performance and one loses the atmosphere; too much freedom and one loses the sense that the passage is a tiny microcosm of the whole, designed to set up a perspective for the vast and exuberantly varied piece which follows.³

¹ When discussing the accuracy of Messiaen’s birdsong, scholars tend to focus on pitch rather than rhythm, even though the composer described himself as ‘composer, rhythmician and ornithologist’.

² From Messiaen’s *Cahiers de notations des chants d’oiseaux* no. 23043, p. 28 (5 July 1956), available to view at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département de la Musique.

³ Hill, Peter ‘Piano Music II’ from *The Messiaen Companion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), p. 328



Thereafter, a succession of memorable sounds accumulate into a symmetrical arc formed with one that evolves; verisimilitude is achieved thanks to archetypal musical structures that evoke clock time, and the events that fill it. Musical direction is generated by vivid textures (for example the reed warbler duets that begin at 14:24), colour-infused harmonies (sunrise at 5:02 and sunset at 20:04), the excoriating outburst of the water rail (19:34 - 'like the sound of a pig having its throat cut' says Messiaen in the score) and, early on, indistinct 'sounds of the marshes' such as a chorus of frogs, and clusters that whiplash across the keyboard, evoking 'la nuit' itself (3:13). In the final pages closure is heralded by two devices: the return of the opening 'music of the ponds' with intervening silences that depict mist gathering above the water's surface; and the final say goes to a bittern, its booming tritone a final reminder of Messiaen's fondness for symmetry (it cuts an octave exactly in half).

The remaining pieces on this recording are configured with the aim of complementing this masterpiece at the heart of *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, and to enhance the sense of a day-night continuum that is established throughout the Catalogue's interior Livres.

'**Le Traquet Stapazin**' is a piece that gave Messiaen great satisfaction. Geographically it lies close to the last piece in Book 1, 'Le Merle bleu', featuring the same stretch of coast near the Spanish border but lying slightly inland. Bars 1 and 2 are a classic piece of landscape painting: a four-chord progression inherited from earlier, abstract works (*Neumes rythmiques*, *Cantéyodjayâ*) is strung out over several octaves, depicting terraced vineyards and Mediterranean warmth. This becomes the signpost of a strophic structure in which the two star turns are the titular black-eared wheatear, truculent and terse (which tallies with its visual impression: 'a black inverted T dividing the white of his tail, a mask of the deepest blue covering his eyes, face and throat. He might be a Spanish nobleman going to a masked ball' – Don Giovanni returning to Spain, perhaps)



and the affable spectacled warbler, whose appetite for circling round a glowing E major sonority is one of the most memorable features of the Catalogue (and source of the aforementioned ‘souvenir’ at 13:38).

The rich harmonic progressions that describe the rising and setting of the sun are both the backbone of the piece, and a counterpoint to its elaborate strophic form, perfectly reflecting the relationship between sight and sound. The crowning glory of the piece is an expansive coda which, as evening falls, has moved on from Messiaen’s generic ‘chords of transposed inversion’ to harmonised melodies that reference his ‘Tristan’ trilogy from the 1940s; Messiaen’s reflective, emotional side is more actively engaged now. The last three pieces in the Catalogue (‘Le Loriot’, ‘Le Merle bleu’ and ‘Le Traquet Stapazin’) have, after all, been firmly focussed on the radiant and optimistic keys of E major, A major and E again. With Book 3 things will soon take a darker turn.

Sadie Harrison’s *Lunae* explores similar themes to the Messiaen – most notably evocation of the natural world alongside music of the past – and foregrounds what is only a subliminal presence in many of Messiaen’s works from the 1950s: love in its various guises. The music explores broad swathes of time, whilst being deeply rooted and humane. Sadie’s scores have immaculate clarity of detail which means one should resist relying merely on first impression or instinctive response to convey this sensibility. The composer herself writes:

Lunae is a set of four pieces which share many of the characteristics of the nineteenth century piano nocturne popularised by composers such as Field and Chopin. It also draws on works written in the early twentieth century where ‘nocturnal sounds’ were incorporated into evocations of the night, most notably by Debussy and Bartók.



Around and a round... is a slow, midnight merry-go-round with a bass line that repeats with variations throughout the work. Marked 'gently expressive' it is inspired by Song, a beautiful piece by contemporary pianist and composer John Law (The Art of Sound, Volume 1.) The piece is dedicated to John, with thanks.

Lachrymae is based closely on John Dowland's Lachrymae Pavan for lute. Written as an 'In Memorium' the piece is slow and melancholy, being prefaced by a quote from Lithuanian poet Valdas Daskevicius: 'Love is the silence in which I remember you and repeat you'. The theme is heard in many guises, representing the sadness of loss, the hope of a remembered dream and a sad reawakening. It is dedicated to Pamela Parr, an epigraphist and adventuress who died in 2012. I met Pamela through my mother who read to her in her last years.

Of Stars and Nightingales is the longest and most virtuosic of the four pieces, inspired by fragments from Debussy's La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune and Messiaen's Regard de l'étoile. The piece alternates atmospheric washes of sound representing swathes of stars with a nightingale's song. This movement is dedicated to Duncan Honeybourne whose passion and enthusiasm brought these pieces to fruition.

Sufficit lumen in tenebris (One light suffices in the dark) was written as a gift for friends, Sarah and David Heyes in celebration of their 25th Wedding Anniversary in September 2012. The music is based on a medieval chant from the Worcester School dating from circa 1300 AD. This is heard in its most simple form at the opening, transformed three times as the music becomes more passionate. The use of the chant is particularly fitting in this context as the term 'nocturne' comes to us from the Medieval Latin, being used to describe the liturgical offices associated with night prayers.



Duncan Honeybourne premiered *Lunae* on 12 October 2012 at the Bournemouth Piano Festival.

‘**La Chouette Hulotte**’ contains some of the earliest birdsong that Messiaen collected for the *Catalogue*, that of the tawny owl. He subjects it to close scrutiny, reharmonising the two-note call numerous times, walking around it like a sculpture and providing various harmonic interpretations of its timbral character. Or – more mimetically – the owl moves around the wood, with the direction of its call frequently changing. Two extended atonal passages set the scene – ‘la nuit’ – the nerve-jangling unpredictability of the sounds deriving from a fixed scheme in which the lower a note is, the longer it sounds.

Interestingly for the ‘timeline’ on this album, the two nocturnes of Book 3 are in reverse temporal order – ‘La Chouette’ being set in the dead of night (2am), ‘**L’Alouette Lulu**’ the early hours of darkness (midnight, at an unspecified time of year, although the piece recalls a real episode the Messiaens experienced in the Forez, near Lyon, in summer 1956). The atmosphere in the latter is cooler, less febrile. The challenge for the performer is nevertheless to catch it convincingly, and the composer assists by advising that the high sounds – the woodlark’s two-by-twos – resemble ‘a voice that falls from the stars’, and the low ones (a chordal refrain) evoke ‘the mysterious colours that can just be perceived in the black of the night’. Thresholds of perception are one of Messiaen’s perennial concerns.

The birdlife in this, one of the earliest of the *Catalogue* to be written, is two very different but eloquent songsters: the woodlark – liquid, incessant, otherworldly; and another nightingale: clarion and varied. The ‘night’ chords work out the musical consequences of the whole tableau in wonderful ways, with the final phrases of the woodlark – upturned now, and static, like the edges of a pagoda – ‘mysterious, merging with the silence’ in a drawn-out moment that seems to anticipate Messiaen’s fascination with Japanese culture in the early 1960s.



Julian Anderson's cycle *Sensation* bears no relation to the 1997 Saatchi/Young British Artists exhibitions of the same name – though it does take a tour of the senses, with the first piece, 'She Hears', setting the tone by calling upon subtle but intense aural engagement. It also focuses upon contrasts of musical time – from intense hyperactivity to almost monumental stasis, with many degrees in between. After the première Pierre-Laurent Aimard remarked to the composer “*vous faites vibrer le temps!*” and it is this, as much as the many contrasts in texture and harmony, which renders the different ‘sensations’ of the title. It was commissioned by Aldeburgh Music and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and premiered by Pierre-Laurent Aimard at Snape in 2016, and Stephen Gosling at the St Francis Auditorium at the New Mexico Museum of Art (Santa Fe) the following year. The work begins as a relatively disparate set of pieces but coalesces in its latter half, where night turns to morning in a glorious celebration of dawn light. The composer comments:

She Hears (in memoriam Imogen Holst)

'*She Hears*' is a study in listening, inspired by an inscription Oskar Kokoschka placed on the back of a painting of King David he gave to Imogen Holst: 'For Imogen – she hears.' Listening is an underestimated activity. Everyone who knew Imogen Holst observed her special intensity when listening to music. This piece has a very focussed musical surface – a chord progression which unfolds gradually and continuously at low volume.

Toucher (to Pierre-Laurent Aimard)

'*Toucher*' explores musical colours found in different types of pianistic touch. These are summoned up in succession and varied combination, with particular emphasis on the French tradition of the *jeu perlé* – playing of great lightness, speed and clarity. Pierre-Laurent Aimard, to whom the piece is dedicated, is a brilliant exponent of multiple touches.



Sight Lines (for Sam Rigby)

This short, hyperactive work is a study in near chaos made from the most familiar material – the common triad. The entire piece is made from triads major or minor, but in orders, juxtapositions, combinations and polyrhythms which result in exceptionally dense and wild piano writing which nearly veers out of control.

Nuits (for Richard Causton)

The sounds and perfumes of the night... A fresh take on the most traditional of piano genres, the nocturne. A highly decorative pianistic style, almost overripe with ornamentation and filigree, is cultivated throughout; the pedal is 'discovered' half way through. Nocturnal birds, crickets, frogs, toads, cicadas etc. are rendered through micro-detailed piano figuration. The opening unaccompanied monody returns several times, more or less decorated. The music catapults abruptly into -

Alba (for Pierre Audi)

A celebration of the sounds and sensations of dawn and the return of sunlight in increasingly bright, radiant bell chords and resonances. These grow in intensity and resonance until they cover in every register of the piano. This follows without a break into -

Coda (for Lorenzo Tillyard)

A brief, intimate summary of the whole cycle.

Betsy Jolas was a member of Messiaen's class early in his teaching career (during the 1940s), and his assistant towards the end, from 1971 to 74. She succeeded him as Professor of Analysis at the Paris Conservatoire in 1975, and of Composition in 1978. Her creative longevity far exceeds this period, and she continues to produce new work: her piano concerto bTunes was premiered at the BBC Proms in September 2022, and London



was also the location for the first performance – by Laurence Allix – of her **Chanson d'Approche**, written 50 years earlier. Like Messiaen, Jolas is a melodist, albeit with a more fluid style, the spatial notation in this instance giving the pianist the freedom to mould the lines rhythmically within given pockets of time. In the opening seconds she appears to pay homage to her teacher, with an echo of one of the ‘Turangalila’ melodies that depict flowers in ‘La Rousserolle Effarvatte’ being heard in a natural vocal register. Found melodic objects are a regular stimulus for Jolas, although the succeeding music here has the feel of free invention, the lines weaving around each other. If an arrival point is reached, it is at 5:45, where plainsong-like lines are superimposed in a single register, sounding at different dynamic levels. Perhaps this is where the ‘approach’ gets consummated – at a melodic archetype – although there is little sense that a final destination has been reached, with the final sounds as open-ended as the bittern’s *beuglement* (lowing or mooing) that calls a halt to ‘La Rousserolle’.

Having spent her formative years in Paris at the height of the avant garde, and becoming part of it herself, Jolas here shows her counterparts that exploration of musical space need not be a pointillist, abstract experience. Her own bilingual description explains the more literal meaning of the title:

Je savais depuis longtemps qu'il me faudrait un jour écrire pour piano et que ce serait là un moment de vérité. Ce moment, je l'avais situé le plus tard possible ; vers la cinquantaine, âge de raison et maturité croyais-je.

Mais le piano, lui, n'attendit pas si longtemps pour s'insinuer dans mes préoccupations. Il le fit par des voies en quelques sortes détournées : l'orgue, le clavecin. Et c'est ainsi que dès 1972, je le rencontrai tout étourdie, toute intimidée, nullement préparée à la grande pièce adulte dont je rêvais, et que je composai l'année suivante: B for Sonata.



D'où tout d'abord, en guise d'esquisse, cette chanson... d'approche !

L'œuvre fut créée à Londres en janvier 1973 par la pianiste Laurence Allix

Chanson d'Approche (Approaching song) was written as an unexpected first step - hence the title - toward what finally became a large scale piano work: *B for Sonata*, written the following year.

Chanson d'Approche was given its first performance in London in January 1973.

Though slight, '**L'Alouette Calandrelle**' poses considerable challenges for the player, reflecting the intense heat of its Provençal location. The music is gentle yet intense, isolated utterances from its cast penetrating the stillness. It is a quirk of the Catalogue that even when the scene painting is this concise, more than one location may be depicted, and that is the case here, as the preface makes clear. The wide variety of colour chords nevertheless establishes a common atmosphere, rather than depicting specific scenes.

'**La Bouscarle**', though also from the middle phase of the *Catalogue's* composition, paints a contrasting scene: temperate, lush, springtime, lyrical, the dominant colours epitomised by the 'blue-green arrow' of the kingfisher's 'nuptial flight'. In colouristic terms this harks back to the much earlier song 'Paysage', from *Poemes pour Mi* (1936): 'Et la voilà verte et bleue comme le paysage'; the 'arrow' image is hinting at an earlier time, 'Les Flèches' being the collective moniker of Messiaen's students of the 1940s, Yvonne Loriod amongst their number. Both Messiaen's wives are thereby alluded to in one brilliant flash (Mi being Claire Delbos's pet name), such is the intensity of the music's imagery, and it also exploits one of the young Loriod's trademark skills: dashing off rapid successions of chords. The kingfisher flights return, expand and grow more ardent as the



piece progresses. Many of the remaining birds are commonly encountered in British gardens and parks: robin, blackcap, moorhen, blackbird, chaffinch, song thrush, wren, and the cetti's warbler itself. Meandering through the elegant form is a melody of chords that plots the course of the river Charenton, a tributary of the Charente, which achieves some of the most emotive climaxes in the cycle.

'La Bouscarle' is one of the most rounded and urbane of the *Catalogue's* thirteen pieces, the title character aside, whose call – the first to be heard – is 'brusque and violent'. The former qualities are summed up by the way in which the seamless river music quietly transforms into gentle evening sounds in the final pages: the kingfisher dive-bombs in the mid-distance; four colour chords (which Messiaen would later classify as: yellow, violet purple and lead grey; blueish green, violet and lead-grey; magenta, light pink and red-orange; and – most spectacularly – violet blue, light coffee tending to white, green and gold, and reddish brown); and a final complaint from the cetti's warbler.⁴

Throughout *Catalogue d'oiseaux* sound and colour come together in clear and obvious ways – to the extent that some birds' songs, such as the golden oriole (Book 1), are an 'emanation' of their plumage. Insight into Messiaen's synaesthetic mind is most comprehensively gained by consulting the 7th, final volume of his posthumous *Traité de rythme, couleur et d'ornithologie*, where he opens his 'Prologue sur la Couleur' with quotations from a variety of poets, writers and artists. Baudelaire's 'Correspondances' is important enough to be quoted twice (the last line of this quatrain is what's repeated):

⁴ Messiaen, Olivier *Traité de rythme, couleur et d'ornithologie* Tome 7, pp. 158-160.



*Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.*

Like long echos which from a distance fuse
In a dark and profound unity,
Vast as the night and as the radiance of day,
Perfumes, colours, and sounds respond to one another.

As is well known, Debussy affixed 'titles' to his piano Préludes below their final bars, so that they are suggestions of subject matter rather than governing concepts. '**Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir...**', the fourth Prélude of Book 1, is a line from Baudelaire's 'Harmonie du Soir', an encapsulation of the mingling of senses that pervades the poem. Two things can be said about its relationship to the music: although Debussy's title is an afterthought, Baudelaire's is echoed in the opening expressive marking 'harmonieux et souple', and the rhythmic feel (owing to the 3/4+2/4 time signature) is a kind of suspended waltz...

Secondly, given the reiterative structure of a pantoum, Debussy's chosen line (verse 1, line 3) would be the last line of an imaginary 'verse 0'; perhaps the Prélude itself is that imaginary verse.

Edvard Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*, by contrast, wear their titles proudly. '**Notturmo**', the fourth piece from his fifth set, brings this sequence to a close. Op. 54, written in the wake of a rejuvenating summer 1891 hiking tour in the Jotunheim mountains, north east of the composer's home city of Bergen, contains some of his most well-known miniatures: 'March of the Trolls', 'Notturmo' and the innovative 'Klokkeklang' ('Bell Ringing'). 'Notturmo' has echoes of Wagner, more than a hint of Delius (an erstwhile hiking



companion), and the central section is not dissimilar to that of Debussy's 'Clair de lune'. But most notable, in this context, are the features on the final page that show a coincidental resemblance to Messiaen's 'L'Alouette Lulu': the birdsong formed of 'two by twos', and harmonies that descend chromatically – more languorous in the Grieg perhaps, but similarly influential on the bird, whose final call drops down a half-step; as is often the case in *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, its song reflecting its surroundings.

Messiaen's dedication and prefaces

'The composition of *Catalogue d'oiseaux* began in October 1956 and was completed in September 1958. The travelling and repeated visits necessary for recording the songs of each bird often took place well in advance of the composition of each piece. The precision of the notation meant that memories dating back several hours or several years were easily awakened. The work is twice dedicated: to my winged models, and to the pianist Yvonne Loriod.'

BOOK 2

IV Le Traquet Stapazin (black-eared wheatear)

The end of June. Roussillon, the Côte Vermeille. Above Banyuls: Cap L'Abeille, Cap Rederis. The rocky cliffs, the mountains, the sea, the terraced vineyards. The vine leaves are still green. By the side of the road: a black-eared wheatear. Proud, noble, he stands on the stones in his handsome costume of orange silk and black velvet - a reversed black T dividing the white of his tail, a deep black mask covering the lower part of his eyes, his cheeks and his throat. One might say he was a Spanish grandee attending a masked ball. His strophe is loud, brusque and short. Not far away, in the vine, the ortolan bunting ecstatically projects its flute-like repeated notes with their melancholy ending. – Here



are the scrublands: a tangle of low, prickly vegetation, gorse, rosemary, cistus, kermes-oak. From within, the exquisite song of the invisible spectacled warbler. Flying high and far above the sea, the herring gulls issue their cruel howling, their dry and percussive sniggering. A trio of ravens flies over the rocky cliffs with their low, powerful cawing. A little goldfinch tinkles her bells...

Five o'clock in the morning. The red and gold disc of the sun rises from the sea and ascends to its zenith. At the top of the disc, the crown of gold expands until the moment when the sun is wholly golden yellow. It rises higher. A luminous band forms on the sea. Nine o'clock in the morning. In the light and the heat, other voices follow each other: flute-like beating on two notes from the orphean warbler, hidden in the cork-oak – the corn bunting's broken crystals, the peculiar gaiety of the rock bunting, the melodious warbler's volubility – exultant, crackling singing in flight, blending with the sharp cries of the thekla lark. Several black-eared wheatears respond.

Nine o'clock in the evening. Encircled in blood and gold, the sun sinks behind the mountains. The Albères mountains are covered in flames. The sea becomes dark. The sky changes from red to orange, then fills with a dreamy violet...the last strophes of the spectacled warbler. Three notes from the ortolan bunting, in the vines, shrouded by night. One more black-eared wheatear, far down the road. A dry, percussive herring gull, very far away on the black sea. Silence...ten o'clock in the evening. Complete darkness. Reminiscence of the spectacled warbler...



BOOK 3

V La Chouette Hulotte (tawny owl)

Plumage spotted with brown and russet, enormous facial discs, solemn gaze, stamped with mystery, wisdom and the supernatural. Still more than its appearance, the voice of this nocturnal bird provokes terror. I have often heard it in the dead of night, around two o'clock in the morning, in the woods of Orgeval, of Saint Germain en Laye, and on the road from Petichet to Cholonge (Isère). – Darkness, fear, the heart which beats too fast, mewings and yelpings of the little owl, cries of the long-eared owl: and then the tawny owl's call: sometimes gloomy and sad, sometimes vague and disturbing (with a strange trembling), sometimes with vociferous terror like the cry of a murdered child!... Silence. More distant hooting, like a bell from another world...

VI L'Alouette Lulu (wood lark)

From the Col du Grand Bois to Saint-Sauveur en Rue, in the Forez. Pine woods to the right of the road, meadow pastures to the left. From high in the dark sky, the wood lark picks out its two-by-twos: chromatic, liquid descents. Hidden in a bush, in a woodland clearing, a nightingale replies. Contrast between the mordant tremolos of the nightingale and this mysterious voice from the heights. Unseen, the lark approaches, then moves away. The trees and the fields are black and calm. It is midnight.



BOOK 4

VII La Rousserolle Effarvate (reed warbler)

The piece is one long, circular movement, from midnight to three in the morning, until the same period the next day, the events from afternoon until nightfall repeating in reverse order the events from night until morning. It is written for the reed warbler and, in general, to the glory of the birds of the reeds, the ponds and the marshes – and of some birds of the woods and fields who are their cousins.

The Sologne. Between Saint-Viâtre, Nouan-le-Fuzelier, Salbris and Marcilly-en-Gault: the ponds of Petit and Grand-Rancy, of Noues, the Briquerie, the Trois-Croix, of the Coups-de-Vent, the Rue-Verte, the Chapelières, the Vielle-Futaie, and many others...I name them more naïvely: ponds of the waterlilies, ponds of the reeds, irises, etc.

Midnight: the music of the ponds and the chorus of frogs. Three o'clock in the morning: the reed warbler, hidden in the reeds, emits a long, strumming solo, simultaneously evoking a xylophone, a squeaking cork, string pizzicati and a harp glissando, with something wild and insistent in the rhythm which exists only amongst the birds of the reeds. The night is as solemn as the resonance of a tam-tam. Six o'clock in the morning: sunrise, pink, orange, mauve, above the pond of the waterlilies. Joyous stanzas from the blackbird, twitterings of the red-backed shrike and the redstart. Eight o'clock in the morning, the yellow irises: raucous twofold cry of the pheasant, whistled glissando of the starling, burst of strange, supernatural laughter from the green woodpecker – the reed bunting, the great tit and the exquisite white wagtail (so distinguished in its costume of half-mourning) add some sounds.

Noon: the grasshopper warbler sustains its interminable insect chirping.



Five o'clock in the afternoon, the purple foxglove. Trilled crescendo of the sedge warbler; mighty, acidic and grating rhythms of the great reed warbler. Dry and flaccid croakings of a frog. The black-headed gull sets heads off on a chase. The waterlilies. A concert given by two reed warblers.

Six o'clock in the evening, the yellow irises and the grasshopper warbler. A coot (black, with white frontal shield), seems to knock against the stones and blow a small, pointed trumpet. A skylark soars and rejoices in the clear air, the frogs reply from the pond. A water rail, invisible, emits a series of terrifying cries – cries of a pig having its throat cut – a howling that subsides, diminuendos.

Nine o'clock in the evening: sunset, red, orange, violet, above the pond of the irises. The bittern booms – a trumpet sound, deep and a little terrifying. The sun is a disc of blood: the pond reflects it – the sun joins its reflection and sinks into the water. The sky is a sombre violet...

Midnight: night is installed, always solemn like the resonance of a tam-tam. The nightingale begins its mysterious, mordant strophes. A frog rustles some bones. Three o'clock in the morning: something new, a long solo from the reed warbler. And we end with a reminder of the music of the ponds, with the last boom of the bittern...

BOOK 5

VIII L'Alouette Calandrelle (short-toed lark)

Provence, the month of July: the short-toed lark. Two o'clock in the afternoon, les Baux, les Alpilles, arid rocks, broom and cypresses. Monotonous percussion of the cicadas, staccato alarm of the kestrel. The Route d'Entresson: the crested lark in two-part counterpoint with the short-toed lark, four o'clock in the afternoon, la Crau. Desert of



stones, intense light, torrid heat. Alone, the little phrase of the short-toed lark inhabits the silence. About six in the evening, a skylark soars into the sky and delivers its jubilant strophe. Amphimacer of the quail, reminiscence of the lark...

IX La Bouscarle (cetti's warbler)

Last days of April. Saint-Brice, la Trache, Bourg-Charente, the banks of the Charente and the banks of the Charenton (a small tributary). The green water reflects the willows and the poplars. All of a sudden, a voice bursts out with violence from the reeds or rushes: it's the cetti's warbler, an angry little bird, out of sight. The moorhen cackles. A blue-green arrow scintillates, skimming the water: the kingfisher flies past with a few sharp cries, colouring the landscape. The river is still. It is a beautiful morning of shade and light. The blackbird whistles, the song thrush joins its rhythmic incantations with the pearly cascades of the robin. The little wren's articulations and trills, the clear, flute-like refrain of the blackcap, the anapaest of the hoopoe, haloed accents (like a blend of harpsichord and gong), distant, lunar notes and incisive tropes of the nightingale. What is this strange noise! A saw, a scythe being sharpened, the scraping of a reaper! It's the corncrake which repeats its iambic rhythm in the meadow's tall grass... here again the chaffinch's victorious strophe and the shrill buzzing of the sand martin. Ash grey-blue head, breast yellow as a buttercup, the yellow wagtail strides elegantly along the river bank. The nuptial flight of the kingfisher who turns, exposing to the sun its beautiful colours of forget-me-not, sapphire and emerald. Silence...brutal punctuation of the morning: the cetti's warbler explodes for the last time!



Roderick Chadwick

Roderick Chadwick is a pianist, teacher and writer on music. In recent years he has performed some of the most challenging works for piano, including Lachenmann's *Serynade* at the inaugural London Contemporary Music Festival, Stockhausen's *Mantra* with Mark Knop and Newton Armstrong (a highly-regarded recording on the Hathut label), and John McGuire's *48 Variations*, also with Knop. Other recordings include works by Gloria Coates, Edward Cowie, Maurice Duruflé, Leopold Godowsky, Sadie Harrison, Hans Werner Henze and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – several of these with violinist Peter Sheppard Skaerved and the Kreutzer Quartet.

Roderick is a member of ensembles Chroma and Plus-Minus, appearing with them at festivals such as Huddersfield, Ultima (Oslo) and the Warsaw Autumn Festival. His first performance on BBC Radio 3 was at the age of 14 (the Britten Gemini Variations live from the Aldeburgh Festival), and broadcasts since have included solo works by Laurence Crane, Richard Barrett and Will Gregory. Duo partnerships with several violinists have taken him to venues such as Tokyo Opera City, Auditorium du Louvre, Wigmore Hall and Seoul Arts Centre.

In 2018 Roderick published Messiaen's 'Catalogue d'oiseaux', From Conception to Performance (CUP), co-authored with Peter Hill, and he was artistic advisor to the Royal Academy of Music for their Messiaen centenary celebrations in 2008. He first encountered Messiaen's music at Chetham's School, where he was taught piano by Heather Slade-Lipkin, before going on to study with Peter Pettinger and Hamish Milne at St Catharine's College, Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music. He is now an Associate Professor at the Academy, having been made Reader of the University of London in 2013.

"The redoubtable Roderick Chadwick" (The Strad)

"Possessor of devastating musicality and technique" (Sunday Times)



Roderick Chadwick

This instalment of the extended Catalogue d'oiseaux would not have come about without crucial assistance from the Royal Academy of Music and the Department of Performing Arts at City, University of London, and their advocacy of new and recent music in general. Thanks are also extended to David Wordsworth, and to Sam Rigby at Schott Music, London.

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La mer bleue

Roderick Chadwick - piano

The predecessor to *Souvenirs d'Olseaux*, *La mer bleue* begins the journey exploring Messiaen, birdsong and impressionism. First we have book 1 of Messiaen's Catalogue d'oiseaux, together with two newly written interludes and a postlude for two violins, transferring the song to the strings. Messiaen's work is a journey towards sunlight, colour and company, from mountain to coastline, together with three feathered songsters.

A hugely attractive CD. Roderick Chadwick is the ideal interpreter of this magical and unique sound world.

— Stuart Millson, *Quarterly Review*

DDA 25209

Edward Cowie - Bird Portraits

Roderick Chadwick - piano

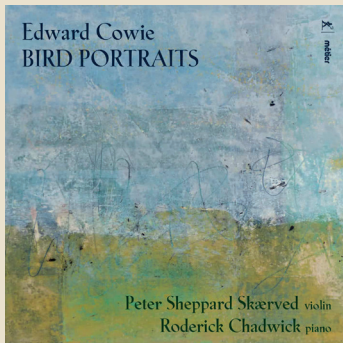
Peter Sheppard Skærved - violin

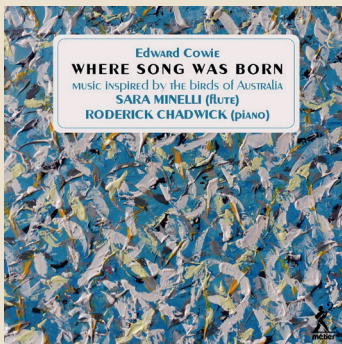
In this new cycle of 24 'sonic portraits' of different British birds from 4 distinctive habitats, Cowie has drawn even closer to composing music that not so much imitates nature, but that – after much study and extensive field-work – has led to new music with highly original treatments of the relationships between the bird singers and where and how they sing.

“Extraordinarily imaginative and diverse sequence of pieces ... A fantastically vivid musical illuminated bestiary, or aviary.”

— *Records International*

MSV 28619





Where Song Was Born

Roderick Chadwick - piano

Sara Minelli - flute

This is the second of the 'Bird Portraits' cycles and features 24 iconic birds of Australia. It follows the highly acclaimed set of British portraits (above) and again contains new music with highly original treatments of the relationships between the bird singers and where and how they sing. Two more sets are due to appear, featuring birds of Africa and the Americas.

"The sounds and music evoked will play strongly on the imagination... The performance by Sara Minelli (flute) and Roderick Chadwick (piano) is stunning, beautiful, revelatory, often moving and thoroughly committed, both in creativity and technique." —John France" - MusicWeb International

MSV 28620



Polychromy - Mihailo Trandafilovski

Various Artists

This album, featuring several of the UK's most accomplished performers, explores the Macedonian composer's search for 'chroma' (colour) in both harmonic and formal structures, traditional and experimental sonorities and in a need for deeply dedicated performances of physical directness.

"When I first saw this album was due to be released,, I knew I had to get my ears exploring"

- Ben Lunn, Morning Star

MSV 28629

Roderick Chadwick on more Divine Art Recordings

Diptych – music by Mihailo Trandafilovski – Métier MSV 28582

with Peter Sheppard Skærved, Longbow, Kreutzer Quartet

Grieg & Finnis Piano Quartets – Métier MSV 28541

with Kreutzer Quartet

The Great Violins 2 – An Ole Bull Salon Concert – Athene ATH 23205

with Peter Sheppard Skærved

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with Peter Sheppard Skærved, Neil Heyde, Kreutzer Quartet

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