

NAXOS

Gordon
JACOB

Chamber Music with Recorder

Annabel Knight, Recorder

Robin Bigwood, Harpsichord and Piano

Maggini Quartet • Fontanella



INCLUDES WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

Gordon Jacob (1895–1984)

Chamber Music with Recorder

Suite for recorder and string quartet (1957)

1	Prelude	2:27
2	English Dance	1:12
3	Lament	4:29
4	Burlesca alla rumba	1:39
5	Pavane	3:08
6	Introduction and Cadenza	3:44
7	Tarantella	2:28

Sonatina for treble recorder and harpsichord (1985)

8	Allegro	2:42
9	Tempo di Menuetto	2:54
10	Adagio	1:56
11	Allegro vivace	2:02

Sonata for recorder and piano (1967)

12	Andantino semplice	3:01
13	Scherzo. Allegro vivace	4:31
14	Largo	2:16
15	Allegro molto	3:25

A Consort of Recorders (1972)

16	Fanfare and March	2:14
17	Nocturne	2:13

Gordon Jacob possessed a well-earned reputation for his musical craftsmanship and unerring ability to compose idiomatic instrumental music. This was no doubt what prompted recorder pioneer Carl Dolmetsch to request Jacob for a new work in 1957. The resulting *Suite* for recorder and string quartet not only provided the instrument with one of its most enduring pieces, but also led to a lasting friendship between the two men that generated further significant repertoire. In the early 1980s the *Suite* was taken up by the Danish recorder virtuoso Michala Petri, and her contact with Jacob as a result, inspired him to compose his *Sonatina* for her – a late flourishing, nevertheless attributable indirectly to the earlier *Suite*.

Jacob was born in London in 1895, the seventh son of the family (and hence named Gordon Percival Septimus).

18	Panpipes	0:57
19	Bells	1:11
20	Chorale	2:55
21	Adieu	0:31

Variations for treble recorder and piano (1962)

22	[Tema] Andante semplice	1:19
23	Variation I: Allegro	0:46
24	Variation II: Andante espressivo	1:20
25	Variation III: Alla marcia	0:48
26	Variation IV: Andante espressivo	1:33
27	Variation V: Molto vivace	0:46
28	Variation VI: Poco adagio, espressivo	1:17
29	Variation VII: Molto vivace	0:47
30	Variation VIII: Andante con moto	1:32
31	Variation IX: Lento	1:41
32	Variation X: Finale	1:02

Trifles, for treble recorder, violin, cello and harpsichord (1971)

33	Le Buffet: Largo	1:11
34	La Trifle au vin de Jerez: Allegro	2:14
35	La Trifle à l'ananas: Adagio molto	2:32
36	La Trifle à l'anglaise: Allegro	3:06

He was educated at Dulwich College, and during the years immediately after World War I studied at the Royal College of Music, where his teachers included C. V. Stanford and Herbert Howells. Following a period of teaching theory and composition at Morley College in London, he was himself appointed to the staff at the Royal College of Music in 1926 and taught there until his retirement in 1966. His pupils included Malcolm Arnold, Imogen Holst and Antony Hopkins. Malcolm Arnold, in particular, acknowledged a debt to Jacob's very practical teaching and encouragement. In addition to composition, his musical career embraced writing and teaching. His books, *Orchestral Technique* (1931), the very popular and practical *How to Read a Score* (1944), and his instructive *The Composer and his Art* (1960), have engaged readers of successive musical

generations. In 1948 he also undertook the editorship of Penguin scores. But it was in composition, mainly of orchestral and chamber music, that his gifts made themselves especially apparent. He developed a consummate craftsmanship and an unfailing ability to write consistently idiomatic instrumental music. As a result, his compositional output includes not only works for the more conventional instruments – piano, oboe, horn and flute, but also for trombone, cor anglais, tuba, harmonica and, indeed, recorder. This is very likely attributable to the practical steps he took to familiarise himself with the details of technique of the particular instrument for which he was composing. Ahead of starting work on his first piece for recorder, the *Suite* for recorder and string quartet, he arranged to meet its dedicatee and requested, “Please bring your recorder and some music to play. I shall want to see how it works at close quarters!” His rapid assimilation of the instrument’s characteristics is abundantly demonstrated in the completed work. Jacob was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Music in 1946 and awarded a CBE in 1968 for his services to music.

The recorder’s renaissance in the twentieth century grew out of the early music revival, but by the 1930s there was an increasing interest in the establishment of a contemporary repertoire for the instrument. Recorder pioneer Carl Dolmetsch (1911-1997), probably the first recorder virtuoso of the twentieth century (and whose father, Arnold, had been a pre-eminent figure in the early music revival), shared in this belief. He gave the première of Lennox Berkeley’s newly-composed *Sonatina* at London’s Wigmore Hall in November 1939, but the outbreak of World War II seriously interrupted this early initiative. Following the war, Dolmetsch re-established his Wigmore Hall recitals and invited a number of eminent British composers to write new works. These premières become an important feature of Dolmetsch’s recital programmes, which otherwise included music from the recorder’s past.

No doubt aware of Gordon Jacob’s skill as a composer for wind instruments, Dolmetsch approached him in 1957 and requested a new work for the following year’s Wigmore Hall recital. Dolmetsch was beginning to encourage composers to explore the recorder in a chamber music

context, and suggested a work for recorder and string quartet. The resulting *Suite* received immediate critical acclaim. The languid recorder line in the opening *Prelude*, its heartfelt expressivity in the *Lament* and *Pavane*, and exciting agility in the *English Dance*, *Burlesca alla rumba* and final *Tarantella* (preceded by a composed cadenza) capture the very essence of the instrument.

In 1963 Dolmetsch and his colleague of some sixty years, the harpsichordist Joseph Saxby (1910-1997), celebrated thirty years of their musical collaboration, for which Jacob was invited to compose a new piece. His response was the *Variations* for recorder and harpsichord (or piano). The straightforward theme in G major, or characteristic elements of it, are treated to a set of ten variations that include a march (Var. III), a *Siciliano* (Var. VIII), a free canon (Var. IX) and a presto *Finale* (Var. X) whose energetic 6/8 jig-like character is reminiscent of the concluding ‘Tarantella’ of the *Suite*, a feature that was to become a distinctive Jacob fingerprint.

In January 1967 Jacob informed Dolmetsch that Musica Rara (the publisher of the *Variations*) was also bringing out his *Sonata* for treble recorder and piano. The work is dedicated to Anthony Pringsheim, the publisher’s recorder player son. Nevertheless, the experience Jacob had acquired in composing for the recorder in the previous two works for Dolmetsch is very evident in its contrasted four movements.

Correspondence from the early 1970s reveals Jacob working on a suite for recorder quartet. The completed work, *A Consort of Recorders*, was given its London première at Dolmetsch’s 1973 Wigmore Hall recital. The six movements include *Fanfare and March* – that in his programme note the composer suggested could be pictured as being sounded by Peasblossom, Mustard-seed and their companions; *Bells* – cleverly incorporating the Westminster chimes; *Chorale* – founded on *Ein’ Feste Burg*, and *Adieu* – an almost throwaway conclusion in its brevity and figuration. The work has never been published, but fortunately the manuscript score and annotated parts remain in the Dolmetsch archives, from which it has been possible to prepare the performance on this recording.

At much the same time as *A Consort of Recorders*, Jacob

was also working on another work for recorder – *Trifles* for treble recorder, violin, cello and harpsichord. However, it did not receive its première until Dolmetsch's 1983 Wigmore Hall recital, at which '*Suite*' replaced the original title, and the delightfully whimsical, French movement titles were also omitted. On publication, the overall and original movement titles were restored, not least to avoid confusion with the earlier *Suite*. *Le Buffet* (without harpsichord) is a brief, very slow and elegant introduction; *La Trifle au vin de Jerez* has the character of a quick minuet and trio; *La Trifle à l'ananas – très douce* is again very slow, and especially 'douce'. *La Trifle à l'anglais* forms a lively finale of the type already encountered in the *Suite* and *Variations*. It is founded on the English folk-tune *The Keys of Canterbury* (hence the English trifle of its title). After a slender interlude the movement concludes in a whirlwind *Presto*.

Trifles was the last work Jacob composed for Dolmetsch, but not his last for recorder. In the early 1980s the

Extracts from Gordon Jacob's correspondence are included by kind permission of Margaret Jacob.

Recording Gordon Jacob's Music – A Personal Perspective

It is a sad but true fact that proponents of the popular 'avant-garde' recorder movement, which began in Germany and the Netherlands in the 1960s, have historically neglected the substantial body of English recorder music of the last half of the twentieth century. With some notable exceptions, professional recorder players have largely ignored any modern repertoire suspected of being too tonal, melodic or romantic, resulting in an almost indiscriminate rejection of music by English composers.

Fortunately, I first fell in love with and played Jacob's *Suite* as a teenager, long before I was aware of how any such musical fashions might sway my judgment or choice of repertoire. And happily, as a recorder student at the Royal College of Music in London (where Gordon Jacob himself had also been a teacher), I was given the complete support of my tutor, Ross Winters, when I started to explore the works of Jacob and others in some more depth.

Coming back to this repertoire again nearly twenty

Danish recorder virtuoso Michala Petri was including the *Suite* in her concert programmes and sought the composer's advice on performance. Jacob, inspired by her playing, composed and dedicated his *Sonatina* for treble recorder and harpsichord to her. The four movements are clearly intended to exploit Petri's formidable technique. The final *Jig*, although containing a calmer middle section, has all the energy and brilliance of the *Tarantella* finale of the *Suite*; it is as if Jacob's recorder writing had come full circle.

Following the successful première of his *Suite*, Jacob noted that he never imagined the work would arouse such enthusiasm, observing that he had "... treated the recorder as a perfectly normal musical instrument, which it is, and not in any way as a museum piece." Be that as it may, Jacob's ability to provide it with music of the utmost creativity and craftsmanship has ensured his works an enduring place in the recorder's now significant contemporary repertoire.

Andrew Mayes

years later, I was able to find compelling new layers of expression and communication in Jacob's musical language, especially as I discovered more about the personal tragedies which punctuated his life. In particular, the loss of his closest brother, Anstey, on the Somme in 1916 was a deep blow, and he himself was taken prisoner of war a year later. A chance visit of my own to some of the first world war battlefields during the making of this recording brought a very real perspective to my understanding of Jacob's music. His language is often sparse, desolate and disturbed, yet he is always ready to temper this with moments of tuneful wit, or to evoke a sense of nostalgia for England's landscape and heritage.

I am very grateful to Andrew Mayes for introducing me to Jacob's original manuscripts and for his invaluable assistance in the preparation of performance material for this recording.

Annabel Knight



Annabel Knight

Annabel Knight studied recorder and flute at the Royal College of Music in London, graduating in 1993. A founding member of the renowned baroque ensemble Passacaglia, she has performed for nearly twenty years as both recorder and baroque flautist in concerts, broadcasts and festivals across Europe and America. These include numerous BBC radio broadcasts as well as recitals at major London venues including the Wigmore Hall and South Bank. With the group she has made several highly acclaimed recordings, including music by the French baroque composer Louis-Antoine Dornel for Naxos, featuring guest artist Dan Laurin. Her interest in contemporary music has led to her commissioning a number of new works by British composers both for solo recorder and for the quintet Fontanella, of which she is a member. She is passionate about working with young musicians and is the director of the popular Woodhouse Recorder Week summer school for aspiring players. She teaches recorder at the Birmingham Conservatoire.



Robin Bigwood

Robin Bigwood studied harpsichord with Robert Woolley, and later with Jill Severs and Maggie Cole. He won the Broadwood Harpsichord Competition whilst a student, and became a member of Passacaglia in 1996. Since then his career has combined solo and ensemble performance (on harpsichord and piano) with a strong personal interest in recording and music technology. He plays continuo with Passacaglia, Feinstein Ensemble, Britten Sinfonia, Florilegium and several other ensembles, and as a soloist has a particular interest in English Virginalist and French repertoire. With Carolyn Gibley (Brook Street Band) he is one half of the two-harpsichord duo *Cembalo Doppio*. He writes a monthly column in the recording industry magazine *Sound on Sound*, and is an experienced classical sound recordist and producer. As well as playing on this recording of Jacob recorder works he also engineered and edited it, an exciting and rewarding challenge.



Maggini String Quartet

The Maggini Quartet is one of the finest British string quartets. Renowned for their championship of British repertoire, their acclaimed and ongoing contribution to the Naxos British Music Series has seen the Maggini's worldwide CD sales exceed 100,000. International awards include Gramophone Chamber Music CD of the Year, a Cannes Classical Award and a Diapason d'Or of the Year and they have been nominated twice for Grammy Awards. The Maggini's commitment to new music has led to important commissions including works by James MacMillan, Robert Simpson, Eleanor Alberga, Roxanna Panufnik and Ronald Corp. Their unique five-year collaboration with Sir Peter

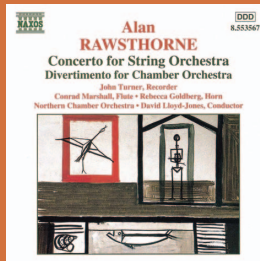
Maxwell Davies has seen them perform and record his Naxos Quartets, enthraling audiences and critics alike. The Quartet appear regularly in prestigious concert series at home and abroad, and are frequent media broadcasters. They have recently performed in France, Austria, Italy, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.



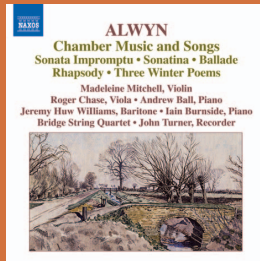
Fontanella

Featuring some of Britain's most talented and respected recorder players, the ensemble Fontanella is one of the country's most innovative recorder ensembles. The ensemble has appeared in concert all over the United Kingdom, and on radio and television networks across Britain and Europe, including festivals in Wells, Brighton, York and in concert in Iceland and Finland. Fontanella's musical interests are wide and encompass all periods of music from medieval through to contemporary music. As well as extensive research and performance of music of the renaissance, the ensemble is equally keen to increase the contemporary music repertoire for recorder quintet. This has resulted in commissions of new pieces by Tim Coker, Julian Argüelles and Peter McGarr, which have been successfully incorporated into their programmes. The ensemble is closely involved in educational work and has devised several major youth music projects for festivals and music services in Britain, including the Brighton Early Music Festival and the Turner Sims Hall in Southampton.

Also available:



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With some notable exceptions, professional recorder players have largely ignored modern repertoire regarded as being too tonal, melodic or romantic. Not so Annabel Knight, a former student at the Royal College of Music in London, where Gordon Jacob had also taught. On this disc she joins respected colleagues in presenting Jacob's music, its sometimes sparse and desolate musical language frequently tempered with tuneful wit and a sense of nostalgia for England's landscape and heritage. The result is an album presenting highly enjoyable music of superlative craftsmanship and heartfelt expressivity, including three world première recordings.

**Gordon
JACOB**
(1895–1984)

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|-------|--|-------|
| 1–7 | Suite for recorder and string quartet (1957) * | 19:22 |
| 8–11 | Sonatina for treble recorder and harpsichord (1985) | 9:38 |
| 12–15 | Sonata for recorder and piano (1967) † | 13:24 |
| 16–21 | A Consort of Recorders (1972) | 10:15 |
| 22–32 | Variations for treble recorder and piano (1962) | 12:55 |
| 33–36 | Trifles, for treble recorder, violin, cello and harpsichord (1971) † | 9:07 |

Full track details will be found in the booklet

* WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING WITH STRING QUARTET

† WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

Annabel Knight, Recorders • Robin Bigwood, Harpsichord & Piano 8-15, 22-32, 34-36
**Maggini String Quartet: Gina McCormack, Violin 1; David Angel, Violin 2;
 Martin Outram, Viola; Michal Kaznowski, Cello** 1-7
David Angel, violin; Michal Kaznowski, cello 33-36
**Fontanella: Annabel Knight, Katriina Boosey, Sarah Humphrys,
 Rebecca Austen-Brown, Recorders** 16-21

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 Producers: Robin Bigwood & Lindsay Kemp • Booklet notes: Andrew Mayes, Annabel Knight
 Publishers: Oxford University Press (tracks 1–7); Studio Music (8–11); Musica Rara / Breitkopf & Härtel
 (12–15, 22–32); Emerson Edition 355 (33–36); tracks 16–21 prepared from composer's manuscript
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Playing Time
75:10



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Booklet notes in English