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CLASSICS

Concertino for Flute and Small Orchestra
Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra
Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra

CHRISTOPHER GUNNING

Catherine Handley *flute* | Michael Whight *clarinet* | Craig Ogden *guitar*
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Christopher Gunning *conductor*

CONCERTINO FOR FLUTE AND SMALL ORCHESTRA
CONCERTO FOR CLARINET AND STRING ORCHESTRA
CONCERTO FOR GUITAR AND ORCHESTRA
CHRISTOPHER GUNNING

Concertino for Flute and Small Orchestra

- | | | |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | I. Bright but steady | [8.04] |
| | <i>Time you enjoy wasting, is not wasted</i> | |
| 2 | II. Slow and thoughtful | [8.28] |
| | <i>And time stood still ...</i> | |
| 3 | III. Lively | [5.08] |
| | <i>Time flies ...</i> | |
| | Catherine Handley <i>flute</i> | |

Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------|
| 4 | I. Moderately quick | [7.48] |
| 5 | II. Very slow | [5.02] |
| 6 | III. Animated | [5.52] |
| | Michael Whight <i>clarinet</i> | |

Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra

Requeros do Mallorca

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---------|
| 7 | I. Moderately | [10.03] |
| 8 | II. Slowly, but with movement | [6.35] |
| 9 | III. Lively | [9.57] |
| | Craig Ogden <i>guitar</i> | |
| | Total timings: | [66.57] |

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
CHRISTOPHER GUNNING CONDUCTOR

Some of my concert pieces, such as the 3rd, 5th and 7th symphonies, are quite intense and weighty, but there's another, more immediate and melodic, strand in my work, illustrated by the three concertos here. In each case my aim has been to provide the soloist with something enjoyable yet technically challenging to play, and to bring out those characteristics of the solo instrument I find the most appealing.

When composing anything, it's always good to know who is likely to play it; several of my pieces have been for friends and acquaintances. To some extent I think my concertos reflect the personalities of the characters involved, or how I feel about them. Back in 1997, when I wrote *On Hungerford Bridge*, a concerto for soprano saxophone and orchestra, I had John Harle in mind. Later, in 2004 I wrote my Concerto for Oboe and Strings for my daughter Verity.

I met Catherine Handley when she was married to Vernon ("Tod") Handley, the conductor; he was recording my *Yorkshire Glory* back in 1989. It was only when our paths crossed again in 2010 that I learned what a gifted flautist she is. I told her I'd started a flute concerto but hadn't got very far with it. The prospect that she might play something of mine was all I needed to get cracking

again; the first movement was completed partly using sketches I already had, and I wanted to find a subtitle which said something about the piece. Because it is essentially light-hearted, I settled on 'Time you enjoy wasting, is not wasted', which has been attributed to various authors from Marthe Trolie-Curtin in 1912 to George Bernard Shaw or even John Lennon.

Then, when I visited Catherine in Abergavenny, and we went walking in the hills together, I began to know what the second, slow movement should be like. I love the Welsh mountains and valleys and wanted to write something expressing the timelessness and stillness which mercifully one can still find in those parts; hence the subtitle: 'And time stood still'.

Then came the last movement, where I just had to write something florid for Catherine that expressed pure unadulterated fun—she has a quietly wicked sense of humour! The subtitle 'Time flies...' seemed appropriate; with Catherine, that tends to be what happens.

Things took a slightly different course with my Clarinet Concerto. I composed it in 2005. It received its first performance in my then local church of St Mary, Ealing, at a charity concert

given by Andrew Lyle and a locally assembled orchestra. Shortly after, I got to know Michael Whight, the marvellously energetic and altogether brilliant principal clarinettist in the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. “Have you written anything for the clarinet?” he asked. I quickly realised he would be the perfect person to tackle it, so I sent him my concerto and he enthused about it. We set about arranging for the RPO to record it straightaway.

The concerto has three movements, fast, slow and fast; the first movement, although moderately energetic, is the longest and explores the lyrical personality of clarinet and artist, while the second is rather elegiac. The last movement has some jazzy overtones and is predominantly witty.

Craig Ogden and I worked together on many episodes of a TV series, and later, during a recording session in 2010 with the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester, I suggested to Craig that I'd like to write him a concerto. To my delight he immediately said “yes!” and although there was then no performance in view, I immediately set to work and found the music flowing quite freely. I concentrated on those things I feel the guitar does best; carry expressive melodic lines, play sonorous chords, and be rhythmically alive. I also found

myself remembering a delightful holiday with family and friends in northern Mallorca; perhaps that's why a holiday atmosphere pervades the outer movements and it's certainly why I called it *Requerdos do Mallorca*.

With an instrument as inherently quiet and intimate as the guitar there are obvious issues of balance when setting it with an orchestra, and although it must be discretely amplified in a concert hall, I didn't want to feel that the soloist would be engaged in some kind of losing battle to make themselves heard; I therefore kept the orchestration light, but at the same time I wanted the orchestra to do much more than simply accompany the soloist.

The first movement grows out of repeated E's, from which the guitar plays some short phrases which constitute the first theme. A more jagged idea then takes over, followed by a third with a stately but jaunty rhythm. The rest of the movement then consists of a discussion of these three themes, which become more and more varied; after growing in intensity the music settles back into something very similar to the opening.

The second movement is a kind of slow aria, with a constantly repeated four bar motif – over this the

guitar weaves a steadily evolving melody. After a slightly more dramatic middle section, the guitar plays an unaccompanied cadenza before returning to the first idea.

In the last movement I allowed myself to be more influenced by the guitar's Spanish roots. It is mostly up-tempo, but with two slow interludes, and the soloist has a chance to display some very fast finger-work as well as beauty of tone.

CHRISTOPHER GUNNING

Christopher Gunning has composed twelve symphonies, as well as concertos for the piano, violin, cello, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, and guitar; many of these have now been recorded. He has also composed many scores for films and television dramas, including Agatha Christie's *Poirot*, *La Vie en Rose*, *Middlemarch*, *Cold Lazarus*, *Rebecca*, *Under Suspicion*, *Firelight*, *The Big Battalions*, *Wild Africa*, *When the Whales Came* and *Porterhouse Blue*. With a career spanning 50 years, he has won 4 BAFTA and 3 Ivor Novello Awards, and BASCA's prestigious Gold Badge Award.



Christopher studied composition with Edmund Rubbra and Sir Richard Rodney Bennett at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. After a hugely successful career writing for the big and small screen he is now focussed on his classical work and releases.

Stephen Pritchard, reviewing a disc of his violin and cello concerti says *“You could never accuse Christopher Gunning of low output: twelve symphonies, chamber music, award-winning film and TV scores and concerti for piano, flute, oboe, clarinet and saxophone, now joined by*

works for violin and cello. Harriet Mackenzie's expressive playing makes Gunning's sinuous solo line sing like a bird in his unashamedly lyrical celebration of the landscape in the Brecon Beacons. It's instantly accessible, warmly melodic yet never trite or cloying (the first movement is a gem, built around a single chord). The cello concerto is grittier, exploring dark themes of ageing and loss".

Ivan March, reviewing the *Symphony No 5* disc for Gramophone made it his 'Choice' saying "If you want reassurance that the current post-atonal renaissance is in full swing, this is just the CD to convince you," and Robert Matthew-Walker at International Record Review said Gunning is "a genuine composer" and continues, "Gunning's serious works are written in a musical language that is not immediately 'populist' in the manner of Malcolm Arnold or Rod McKuen but which naturally inhabits a mode of expression that one would expect from a pupil of Edmund Rubbra and Richard Rodney Bennett – we are talking 'serious music'. Gunning's serious music deserves study – of that I am convinced – and I strongly urge those to whom fashion in art means little when compared to what is being conveyed by the creator, to investigate this disc".

christopher-gunning.co.uk

CRAIG OGDEN

Described by BBC Music Magazine as 'A worthy successor to Julian Bream', the Australian-born guitarist Craig Ogden is one of the most exciting artists of his generation. He studied guitar from the age of seven and percussion from the age of thirteen. In 2004, he became the youngest instrumentalist to receive a Fellowship Award from the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. He has performed concertos with many of the world's leading orchestras and numerous composers have written works specially for him. In 2017, he gave the world première of



© Ivan Gonzalez

Andy Scott's Guitar Concerto with the Northern Chamber Orchestra, followed by the Australian première in Perth. In the summer of 2019, he gave the world première of *// Filo* with Miloš Milivojević, a double concerto for guitar and accordion by David Gordon. Craig will be giving the world première of a concerto written for him by David Knotts in March 2022 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London with the BBC Concert Orchestra which will be recorded for BBC Radio 3.

Craig Ogden regularly appears as soloist and chamber musician at major venues, collaborating with top UK artists such as the Nash Ensemble, Carducci String Quartet and the London Tango Quintet, of which he is a regular member. He performed in the concert series devoted to Sir Michael Tippett at the Wigmore Hall and has given several concerts at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music. One of the UK's most recorded guitarists, he has accumulated an acclaimed discography for Chandos, Virgin/EMI, Nimbus, Hyperion, Sony and six chart-topping albums for Classic FM. His most recent recordings are a solo recital disc for Chandos, *Craig Ogden in Concert* and a new arrangement of the *Goldberg Variations* by J.S. Bach with violinist David Juritz and cellist Tim Hugh for Nimbus Records. He frequently records for film and has presented programmes

for BBC Radio 3, BBC Northern Ireland, and ABC Classic FM in Australia.

Craig Ogden is Director of Guitar at the Royal Northern College of Music, Adjunct Fellow of the University of Western Australia, Associate Artist at The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and Director of the Dean & Chadlington Summer Music Festival. Craig Ogden plays a 2011 Greg Smallman guitar and strings made by D'Addario.

MICHAEL WHIGHT

Michael Whight has a varied career as an orchestral player, soloist, chamber musician, engineer and producer, videographer, conductor and teacher.

A former Principal Clarinetist with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, he has also played guest Principal with all the London orchestras as well as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, working with conductors such as Giulini, Maazel, Abbado, Levine, Ashkenazy, Sawallich, Sinopoli, Salonen, Sanderling, Svetlanov, and Harnoncourt. Alongside some 200 orchestral recordings are Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto* with Robert Craft



and the Philharmonia Orchestra, the concerto by Christopher Gunning (of Poirot fame) and the Mozart Concerto which he directed from the basset clarinet with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. This was voted 'the top of current offerings' by International Record Review. He also collaborated with John Adams in performances of his concerto Gnarly Buttons in San Francisco conducted by Kent Nagano. As a session player he has appeared on the soundtracks for films such as Lord of the Rings and the Harry Potter Series and can regularly be heard on TV series such as Father Brown and Granchester. Michael is also the clarinetist on the theme tune for Coronation Street.

In chamber music Michael has worked with Gidon Kremer and friends, the Lindsay Quartet, the Medici String Quartet, the Schidlof String Quartet, the Razumovsky Ensemble, the Nash Ensemble, Robert Cohen and Barry Douglas as well as recording the complete chamber music of Richard Strauss with London Winds for Hyperion and with the Wind Soloists of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe for Teldec.

Michael was the first British winner of the International Clarinet Congress Competition and won the woodwind prize at the Royal Overseas League. He was invited by Valery Gergiev to play in the World Orchestra for Peace, playing in Moscow and St Petersburg. As a conductor he has given concerts with Northern Sinfonia, and the Royal Philharmonic and Pohang Symphony Orchestras. Michael also has an growing career as a recording engineer, videographer and producer. He has recorded and produced for the Naxos, Toccata Classics and Somm labels and mixed a soundtrack for BFI/Miramax, in conjunction with the Library of Congress, Washington. Michael has also produced two soundtracks for wildlife films, one for Austrian TV/Schlamberger and the other for Netflix/Silverback Productions. He has filmed concerts for the City of London Sinfonia, English National Ballet Philharmonic, Benjamin Grosvenor and friends,

Roderick Williams, Brighton Festival. This year will see the launch of his own recording label, Marlie. Michael is Professor of Clarinet at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London.

CATHERINE HANDLEY

For over 30 years Catherine has been privileged to experience the effect of music through teaching, projects with children of all ages, playing to general audiences and performing in care homes and hospitals.

Her freelance orchestral and chamber career includes flute and harp duos, a variety of ensembles and working for the charity Music in Hospitals and Care. Recent orchestral work includes the English Symphony Orchestra and Ensemble Cambria. Catherine has been a score-reader for televised concerts for 20 years mostly for BBC Classical Music productions including the Proms and Cardiff Singer of the World.

She teaches flute at the Junior Conservatoire of the RWCMD and Cardiff University, and enjoys a variety of woodwind coaching including the National Children's Orchestra, ESO Youth Orchestra, National Wind Orchestra of Wales, and Hertfordshire County Youth Orchestra.



Her solo recordings include; *Ariel*, flute and piano music by members of The Composers of Wales; *Isca* and *Mearc* by Ian Lawson; and *A Journey*, folk music old and new.

In her spare time she enjoys coastal and hill walking anywhere from the beautiful Welsh country-side where she lives, to the Alps and the outer Hebrides.

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

For more than seven decades the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) has been at the forefront of music-making in the UK. Its home base since 2004 at London's Cadogan Hall serves as a springboard for seven principal residencies as well as more than forty-five concerts per year in long-term partnership venues across the country, often in areas where access to live orchestral music is very

limited. With a wider reach than any other UK large ensemble, the RPO has truly become Britain's national orchestra.

Throughout the regional programme, plus regular performances at Cadogan Hall, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall and a hugely popular series at the Royal Albert Hall, and international touring engagements, the RPO remains committed to working with the finest conductors. In July 2018, the RPO announced Vasily Petrenko as the Orchestra's new Music Director, assuming the



title of Music Director Designate in August 2020 prior to commencing the full role in August 2021. He joins the RPO's roster of titled conductors, which includes Pinchas Zukerman (Principal Guest Conductor), Alexander Shelley (Principal Associate Conductor) and Grzegorz Nowak (Permanent Associate Conductor).

In 2018, RPO Resound, the Orchestra's community and education programme, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Throughout its history it has thrived on taking music into the heart of the regions that the Orchestra serves, working with a variety of participants in a range of settings including working with young people, the homeless and recovering stroke patients. Although the RPO embraces twenty-first-century opportunities, including appearances with pop stars and on video game, film and television soundtracks, its artistic priority remains paramount: the making of great music at the highest level for the widest possible audience. As the RPO proudly looks to its future, its versatility and high standards mark it out as one of today's most open-minded, forward-thinking symphony orchestras.

For more information, please visit rpo.co.uk

Guitar Concerto and Clarinet Concerto recorded in Abbey Road Studios, UK on 14th and 15th May 2012.

Flute Concerto recorded at Air Lyndhurst Studios, UK on 9th June 2011.

Producers – Christopher Gunning, Gavin Greenaway and Christopher Dibble
Recording Engineer – Christopher Dibble
Recording Assistant (Abbey Road) – John Barrett
Recording Assisnat (Air Lyndhurst) – Chris Barrett

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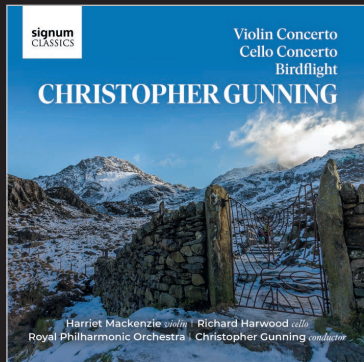
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CHRISTOPHER GUNNING

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Requeros do Mallorca
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- Total timings: [66.57]

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