



ELISABETH LUTYENS
PIANO WORKS
VOLUME 2

MARTIN JONES
PIANO

Elisabeth Lutyens (1906–1983)

Piano Works, Volume 2

Martin Jones *piano*

About Martin Jones:

'Though Lutyens's music was often dismissed in her lifetime, it has been quite scandalously overlooked since her death in 1983 at the age of 76 [...] But Martin Jones's survey of the piano music – in meticulous, clearly affectionate performances – should fill at least one of the yawning gaps.'

The Guardian

'A British virtuoso with ideas and an enterprising repertoire.'

Financial Times

The Check Book *

1. Air	[1:00]
2. Ballet	[0:45]
3. Country Dance	[0:40]
4. Musette	[1:01]
5. The Musical Box	[0:44]
6. Recitation	[0:43]
7. Legend	[0:49]
8. Bagatelle	[0:58]
9. March	[0:53]
10. Funambulist	[1:28]
11. Plainte	[1:02]
12. Burla	[0:48]

Three Improvisations

13. Adumbration	[1:36]
14. Obfuscation	[1:00]
15. Peroration	[1:41]

Five Intermezzi, Op. 9

16. Allegro moderato	[1:27]
17. Allegro, ma non troppo, ma agitato	[0:48]
18. Allegretto capriccioso	[0:45]
19. Adagio	[1:18]
20. Poco allegro e con moto	[0:50]

Five Bagatelles, Op. 49

21. Bagatelle I	[1:24]
22. Bagatelle II	[1:01]
23. Bagatelle III	[1:43]
24. Bagatelle IV	[1:13]
25. Bagatelle V	[1:11]

26. Piano e Forte, Op. 43 *

[11:44]

27. The Ring of Bone, Op. 106

[11:26]

28. Maybe – Encore, Op. 159 *

[7:20]

29. Sonata Movement (Allegro molto) *

[5:07]

Total playing time

[62:40]

* world premiere recordings

**Elisabeth Lutyens (1906–1983):
Piano Works, Volume 2**

Elisabeth Lutyens's earliest compositions go back to 1921, and a number survive from her years as a student at the Royal College of Music (1926–31), but it was only in the late 1930s that her music started to appear in print. **The Check Book**, subtitled '12 children's pieces for piano', was composed in 1937–8 and published in 1939 by Augener. Similar in character to Bartók's music for young pianists, these short pieces range from the lyrical simplicity of the opening 'Air' and the attractively lopsided 'Country Dance' (in 5/4) to more vigorous numbers such as the 'Ballet' and the ingenious 'Bagatelle' with its tender central section contrasting with the rapid figurations of the main *Presto*. One of the most charming pieces is 'Funambulist', depicting a tightrope walker. Lutyens's unabashed use of tonal language in *The Check Book* may come as a surprise, and the debt to Bartók is clear in several of the pieces. A review (signed 'E.R.') appeared in the April 1940 edition of *Music & Letters*, noting that the pieces introduced young players 'to a world where tunes and harmonies are in the habit of assuming curious and unexpected shapes'.

Lutyens's **Five Intermezzi Op. 9** were

composed in 1941–2 and published by Lengnick in 1947. These beautifully crafted miniatures, written in Lutyens's more familiar twelve-tone language, were first broadcast on the BBC Third Programme on 16 November 1947, played by the Czech pianist Liza Fuchsova, though they may also have been played at a concert in Paris the previous year. Marked by Lutyens's characteristic restraint, the pieces range from the relatively expansive first and fifth pieces, to the dark, quietly obsessive sound-world of the *Adagio* fourth intermezzo. The composer Michael Finnissy who knew Lutyens well, wrote that her music 'includes violence, darkness and pain as much as it does delicacy and fluidity. Liz honed away at her sounds, sculpting, polishing them rather than covering them with varnish.' This is a particularly apt description for these pieces from her early maturity.

The **Three Improvisations** have no opus number, but they were published by Lengnick in 1948 and dedicated to Constant Lambert who also chose the titles: 'Adumbration', 'Obfuscation' and 'Peroration'. Though the brevity of the pieces recalls the musical economy of the *Intermezzi*, 'Adumbration' uses more extreme registers, 'Obfuscation' has a nervous, edgy quality, and 'Peroration' is notable for passages in bare octaves, something rarely found in

Lutyens's music. It is not known when these pieces were first performed, but it is likely that they were played – in private at least – by Lutyens's brilliantly gifted protégé, Richard Rodney Bennett. Lutyens – always a querulous personality – later fell out with Bennett (perhaps motivated by jealousy at his astonishing early success), but he described her as 'certainly the English composer who has influenced me the most.'

Piano e Forte Op. 43 was composed in 1958 (the final page is dated 'Blackheath, Feb/March 1958') and first performed by Wilfred Parry. It dates from the same period as some of Lutyens's most important compositions, including *De Amore* (1957) and *Quincunx* (1959–60), and it marks a new phase in her writing for solo piano. Published in 1965 by Mills Music, it is cast in six continuous sections which form a continuous whole, resembling a kind of fantasia – Lutyens also suggests several possible orders for the sections leaving a variety of lengths open for the performer. Writing about the work for *The Musical Times* in 1966, Frank Dawes noted that it was 'the most substantial composition for solo piano to have come from Miss Lutyens's pen so far, a work bigger in every way than then finely chiselled miniatures that comprise the earlier *Intermezzi* and the more recent

Bagatelles.' He went on to describe its design and technique:

As the title implies, it is (on one level at least) an essay in the exploitation of the great dynamic range possible on the modern instrument. Constructed on the lines of a fantasia, there is a certain amount of interquotation between its short sections tending to make them cohere into an indivisible whole. One or two passages recall the delicate workmanship of the early *Intermezzi*, but there is now an added dimension – an impressively strong dramatic quality – as well, of course, as a more sustained and highly developed argument. The rondo-finale affords an interesting comment on serial approaches to classical forms. The reappearances of the rondo 'theme' are in fact reappearances of the basis series in the same order, though with all the other features (rhythmic, melodic, dynamic) much altered.

Though firmly serial in its harmonic language, the piano textures and colours explored in **Piano e Forte** recall Lutyens's lifelong enthusiasm for Debussy. Lutyens herself was not a good pianist: Malcolm Williamson recalled that she would 'hold down an open fifth in the left hand as a

kind of drone rhythm and pick out the rest as best she could with the right', while another friend, the pianist Joyce Rathbone, described one of Lutyens's more atmospheric improvisations: 'down went the damper pedal and out came these wistful, watery sounds, rather like marbling only in wishy-washy colours ... like somebody who didn't know how to play the piano pretending to play Debussy – very lovely and evocative of something.' In spite of the obvious shortcomings of her own piano playing, in *Piano e Forte* Lutyens explored the possibilities of the instrument in a way she had never attempted before.

The **Five Bagatelles Op. 49** were composed in 1962 for the pianist Katharina Wolpe who gave the first performance in Liverpool on 10 October 1963. They were published by Schott in 1965. As with *Piano e Forte*, these pieces drew an enthusiastic response from Frank Dawes in *The Musical Times*:

To compare Elisabeth Lutyens's new Bagatelles with her earlier Five Intermezzi (1942), a work of roughly comparable length and scope, is to realise that our pioneer dodecaphonist has certainly moved with the times. In the earlier work series were organised with a regard for melodic line [while] in the last of the Bagatelles

the series is thrown about all over the keyboard with an average interval between consecutive notes of well over two octaves. This is an extreme case, for the other Bagatelles represent a compromise between such extreme fragmentation and the closer-knit textures of the earlier set.

The bolder range of the Bagatelles is matched by a more sophisticated overall structure: as a whole, the set is arch-like, with the final bagatelle reflecting the expressive character of the first, contrasting with the more turbulent second and fourth. The third bagatelle is itself in three distinct sections, the outer parts hushed (marked to be played *sotto voce*) and a central section that is more animated, reaching a climatic *fff* before subsiding again.

The Ring of Bone Op. 106 was completed in October 1975 and first performed by Peter Lawson in a Manchester New Music Forum concert on 12 May 1976 in honour of Lutyens's seventieth birthday at the Royal Northern College of Music and broadcast live by BBC Radio Manchester (and later by Radio 3). At the premiere, twelve voices recited fragments of speech over sections of the piece, but for a Wigmore Hall performance in 1977, Lutyens changed this to a single reciter. On this recording, the work is played without the optional spoken texts. The title,

The Ring of Bone, is taken from a poem by Samuel Beckett who was described by the composer in 1981 as 'the greatest living writer'. Notated very freely (and without barlines), in her introduction to the published score, Lutyens wrote that the work 'consists of an interplay between two types of material: *quasi voce* (as in singing); *quasi strumeti* (as instrumental). These two elements are mostly antiphonal but, sometimes, combined.'

Maybe—Encore Op. 159 is Lutyens's last work for piano. It was composed in 1982 and first performed at the Wigmore Hall on 7 March 1983 by Thalia Myers. In her preface to the score, Lutyens wrote:

This piece is in two sections. 'Maybe', by far the longest, should be played first. I would like a long gap ... before the brief 'Encore' is played. The work can therefore be considered in two ways: it is either an Introduction and a brief Encore to a piece that is not yet written, or this is the piece. I go for the latter interpretation but take your choice.

An undated manuscript in the Lutyens Collection in the British Library is headed **Allegro molto**. This is apparently all that survives of a planned piano sonata, possibly composed as early as the 1930s. Dominated by dotted rhythms, Lutyens provides contrast by easing the tempo in

several places, but the overall impression is one of rather Berg-like intensity and carefully controlled energy, building to a brief climax before reaching a quiet and uncertain close full of the kind of ambiguity that was so typical of her later music.

© 2022 Nigel Simeone

Martin Jones (piano)

Martin Jones was a chorister at Magdalene College School and studied at the Royal Academy of Music. He has been one of Britain's most highly regarded solo pianists since first coming to international attention in 1968 when he received the Dame Myra Hess Award. The same year he made his London debut at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and his New York debut at Carnegie Hall, and ever since has been in demand for recitals and concerto performances on both sides of the Atlantic.

He is a prolific recording artist and his many discs for Nimbus Records include the complete solo piano works of Mendelssohn, Brahms, Debussy, Grainger, Szymanowski (voted Best Instrumental Recording of 1996 by the Spanish magazine *CD Compact*) Stravinsky, Korngold and the sonatas of Alun Hoddinott. He has recorded several Spanish piano masters and Volume 2 of this series received the 2000 Classical Indie Award from the Association for Independent Music in the USA. The soundtrack of the film *Howards End* features Martin Jones performing Grainger's *Bridal Lullaby* and *Mock Morris*. He has also recorded Grainger's *Tribute to Foster* conducted by John Eliot Gardiner for Philips, Richard Addinsell's *Warsaw*

Concerto for ASV, a recital disc with horn player, David Pyatt, for Erato Disques, and Reger's Clarinet Sonatas with Anthony Pike. Four albums featuring Richard Rodney Bennett's piano music have been released on the Metronome label. Some recent Nimbus releases include Gershwin transcriptions by Earl Wild, Czerny Sonatas, major piano works by Hans Gal and the complete piano works of Guastavino, Ernesto Halffter, Joachim Nin, Reizenstein and Alun Richardson. Jones has released a set of four discs of unpublished works by Daniel Jones on Lyrita, and a three-disc set of Brazilian music for Nimbus Records will be released in the near future.

Martin Jones has performed as concerto soloist with many of the leading British orchestras, as well as in the USA and Russia, and toured Canada as soloist with the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra. Performances include Shostakovich's Concerto No. 1 in Central and South America with the London Festival Orchestra, a regional tour playing Rachmaninov's *Paganini Rhapsody* and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Hallé Orchestra, the Britten Piano Concerto in St Petersburg, the Schoenberg Piano Concerto with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Scharwenka's Piano Concerto No. 1 in the USA, Brahms Concerto No. 1 with the Oman Symphony Orchestra, Mozart's K491 with the London Festival Orchestra, and

Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

His performance repertoire, as well as encompassing most of the standard works for piano, also includes unusual concertos such as the Busoni Concerto, which he performed with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Norman Del Mar. He has also championed the music of British composers and has performed concertos by Britten, Benjamin, Mathias, McCabe and Lambert. He gave the first performance of the revised version of Alun Hoddinott's Third Concerto at the 1974 BBC Promenade Concerts, and recorded Hoddinott's Second Concerto with Andrew Davis and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for Decca.

Martin Jones has given recitals throughout Great Britain, and as well as regular broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, he has given recitals for Brussels Radio, RTE in Dublin, DeutschlandRadio in Berlin and ABC in Australia. In the USA he has served as jury member on a number of international piano competitions, and performed in New York, Washington, Florida, Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin and California. In Los Angeles he gave a recital as part of the 1994 UK/LA Celebration of British Arts, which was broadcast live on KUSC Radio.

He gave the world premiere of Ravelled Threads by American composer, Wendy Carlos in New York, and in 1996 he became the first major British artist to give a solo recital in Ekaterinburg, Russia. Other recital appearances include the Adelaide Festival, a programme of Percy Grainger at the Eifeler Musiktage in Germany, and the complete Iberia of Albéniz at London's Southbank Centre.



Photograph: Malcolm Growthers

More titles from Resonus Classics



Elisabeth Lutyens Piano Works Volume 1
Martin Jones (piano)
RES10291

'[...] it is tribute to his expressive intelligence and natural (selfeffacing?) pianism that it is Lutyens that one hears throughout, not Jones, which is exactly as it should be.'
Gramophone



Francis Poulenc: Piano Concerto & Concert champêtre
Mark Bebbington, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra,
Jan Latham-Koenig
RES10256

'What a wonderful Poulenc journey pianist Mark Bebbington takes us on, always with a sense of passion and purpose'
Gramophone, Editor's Choice

© 2022 Resonus Limited
© 2022 Resonus Limited
Recorded in Wyastone Concert Hall, Monouath on 28 April 2022
Producer, engineer & editor: Adam Binks
Recorded at 24-bit/96kHz resolution
Cover image by Art Furnace (shutterstock.com)

RESONUS LIMITED – UK

Ambache
CHARITABLE TRUST

info@resonusclassics.com
www.resonusclassics.com

RVWTrust

