



PAMELA HARRISON  
Chamber Works

GOULD PIANO TRIO  
ROBERT PLANE clarinet

Pamela Harrison (1915–1990)

Chamber Works

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Lucy Gould *violin*  
David Adams *violin (clarinet quintet)*  
Gary Pomeroy *viola*  
Richard Lester *cello*  
Benjamin Frith *piano*  
Florence Plane *bassoon*  
Robert Plane *clarinet*  
Gould Piano Trio

*This recording is dedicated to the memory of Pamela Harrison's son,  
Timothy Phillips, a passionate advocate of his mother's music*

Pamela Harrison (1915–1990)

**Quintet for clarinet and strings**

- |                            |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| 1. Allegro moderato        | [3:51] |
| 2. Lento                   | [8:00] |
| 3. Allegro molto e agitato | [3:25] |

**4. Sonnet for cello and piano** [3:47]

**Sonatina for violin and piano**

- |                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 5. Allegro moderato   | [3:39] |
| 6. Andante affettuoso | [6:11] |
| 7. Presto con agilità | [3:16] |

**8. Faggot Dance for bassoon and piano** [1:23]

**Sonata for clarinet and piano**

- |                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| 9. Andante appassionata | [6:31] |
| 10. Lento espressivo    | [4:30] |
| 11. Allegro marcato     | [3:39] |

**12. Idle Dan for cello and piano** [2:39]

**Piano Trio**

- |                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| 13. Moderato         | [3:01] |
| 14. Lento espressivo | [8:34] |
| 15. Animato          | [3:43] |

**16. Drifting Away for clarinet and piano** [5:05]

Total playing time [71:23]

*All world premiere recordings*



### **Pamela Harrison: Chamber Works**

Pamela Harrison belongs to a generation of women composers whose star shone brightly in the aftermath of the second world war but who subsequently faded into obscurity as the establishment turned towards the European avant-garde. Like Ruth Gipps, six years her junior and whose clarinet concerto this disc's clarinetist, Robert Plane made the premiere recording of in 2019, Harrison struggled to be regarded as an equal in the male-dominated world of composition. Her husband Harvey Phillips, the eminent cellist of the Hirsch and Grinke Quartets, supported her career and gave many high-profile performances of her work, in particular with his own Harvey Phillips String Orchestra, but when the marriage dissolved in 1959 Harrison's career began to fall into decline.

Harrison was a composer swimming against the tide of the prejudice of her time. A review in *The Times* of a performance by Peter Pears of her Dowson settings declares that one particular poem, *Cynara*, 'is not for a woman to set'. Announcing the first broadcast performance of her Quintet for flute, oboe, violin, viola and cello, the *Radio Times* lists the composer as 'wife of Harvey Phillips', even though he was not involved in this particular performance. An entry in

the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* describes her as 'a slow writer', who has 'produced a small output characterised by femininity and clarity.' Nobody listening to the muscular, indeed abrasive writing of her Clarinet Sonata could ever describe it thus, and the eight world premiere recordings of Harrison's work offered here serve as an overview of her varied output, and as an opportunity to re-evaluate her legacy.

Pamela Harrison was born in Orpington, Kent, on 25 November 1915. Her exposure to music came from her father's side of the family, Alfred Paul Harrison becoming organist at the church in Crockham Hill, to where the family moved in 1933. Pamela's great uncle, William Gowland Harrison, was a talented violinist who bequeathed his two Stradivarius violins to the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music (RCM), to be loaned for use by outstanding students. It was at the RCM that Harrison furthered her studies in both composition and piano, with Gordon Jacob and Arthur Benjamin respectively. During this time, she regularly appeared as pianist in her own works, as well as partnering string colleagues in sonatas by Fauré and Delius, composers who exerted a strong influence on her early writing. Jacob was a firm believer in Harrison's creative talents, and remained so far

beyond her student years. Of her viola sonata, one of only two works of Harrison's to have been recorded before this release, Jacob wrote 'I want to tell you how beautiful your viola sonata is. This is not a biased judgement, but the plain truth. There is a beauty of sound about it all which is enthralling. You have, as I have told you before, real genius. The technical skill as well as the poetical imagination of the work is of the highest order.'

On leaving the RCM in 1936 Harrison taught music and Dalcroze Eurythmics, whilst continuing to compose. During the war years she wrote ten works, largely for strings, the most significant of which is the String Quartet of 1941, which featured several times in Myra Hess's National Gallery Concerts. This series became a lifeline to music-loving Londoners during the war, when many regular entertainment venues were closed, and did much to promote the music of women composers. The Fyvie Hall at the Polytechnic of London became another important outlet for Harrison's work, culminating in a performance of her Quintet for Flute, Oboe and Strings in 1944, given by Leonard Hirsch, violin, Max Gilbert, viola, Gareth Morrison, flute, Leonard Brain, oboe, and her now-husband, Harvey Phillips.

After their marriage, Harrison and Phillips

rented 'The Cearne' on the South slope of the North Downs near Limpsfield Chart, a house belonging to the Bloomsbury set author David Garnet. The beauty of these surroundings proved conducive to her creativity. The symphonic poem for string orchestra, *A Suite for Timothy* dates from this time, celebrating the first birthday of their first son. The eponymous Timothy has been instrumental in providing manuscripts and editions for this recording, as well as access to a fascinating and beautifully preserved collection of letters between his mother and luminaries of the artistic world, from Ralph Vaughan Williams and Herbert Howells to Gerard Hoffnung and the author Vita Sackville-West. This collection of letters, programmes, photographs and reviews formed the basis of a major exhibition celebrating Harrison's life and work at the 2022 Corbridge Chamber Music Festival, which is directed by the performers on this disc, Robert Plane and the Gould Piano Trio.

Such was Harrison's body of work over these five years that she was able to promote a whole evening of her own music at the Wigmore Hall on 15 October 1949. Violinist Winifred Small and pianist Esther Fisher opened this concert with the premier of the **Violin Sonatina**, the earliest work of Harrison's to feature on this Resonans

Classics survey. Whilst inherently melodious, Harrison confidently builds its three movements motivically, a hallmark of her compositional style. The second part of the main theme, with its characteristic interval of a fourth and its rising whole tone scale, is a melody to which Harrison returned in later works in order to more fully explore its potential, and reminiscences are to be heard in both her Piano Trio and the Clarinet Quintet. Harrison was at her most inspired though in her slow movements, and that of the Violin Sonatina sits at the very heart of the work, gloriously expansive in its expressive dialogue between the two instruments. The finale is a light-footed, toccata-like *moto perpetuo*, featuring a contrasting middle section whose swaying accompaniment conveys something of a Latin-American feel.

Close musical and personal friendships were central to Harrison's inspiration, and hers with clarinettist Jack Brymer was particularly fruitful, resulting in three works for the instrument. Brymer and Harvey Phillips met in the early 50s whilst teaching at the Royal College of Music, and Jack and his wife Joan were to become lifelong friends. The first and grittiest of the resulting works, the **Clarinet Sonata**, dates from 1953. Harrison revels in bitonality and semitonal dissonance in a dramatic opening

*Andante appassionato*, exploring a world of darkness which pulsates with rhythmic anxiety. The composer produces a radiant, *con affetto* slow movement, regretful and nostalgic in tone and deeply heartfelt. The finale is another highly-effective ostinato study, careering at break-neck speed towards emphatic repetition of the tri-tone fanfare figure which pervades much of the movement.

Three years later Harrison completed her second major work for Brymer, the **Quintet for clarinet and strings**. He broadcast this work twice on the BBC Third Programme, first in 1956 with the Hirsch Quartet (now with a totally new line up and without Harvey Phillips) and two years later with the Amici Quartet. Although the first movement sets off in a much more jovial manner than any of the music in the clarinet sonata, a repeated minor third figure, often in an ominous dotted rhythm, soon darkens proceedings. It subsequently develops into bitonal passages based on parallel diminished sevenths. Yet again Harrison excels in creating a slow movement of great emotional intensity, with yearning minor thirds once more playing their part. Most striking perhaps are the two passages where time seems to stand still and the clarinet explores a searching, ascending line built on rising thirds over static string harmony. The final



*Allegro molto e agitato* scurries furtively, incorporating fleeting motivic reminiscences and tripping the listener up rhythmically with unexpectedly shortened bars. The movement culminates in a canonic celebration of a new version of the fourths-based theme, alternating in bars of three and four time, and seeming to create the joyous effect of peeling bells.

Harrison's marriage to Harvey Phillips ended in 1959 and she moved from her beloved 'The Cearne' to an isolated cottage on Dartmoor. The loneliness proved too much for her though and she later moved to the Toll House near Castle Cary in 1964. Whilst there, in 1966, Harrison composed her **Piano Trio** for the Boise Trio, comprised of violinist Hugh Bean, cellist Eileen Croxford and pianist David Parkhouse. This ensemble subsequently broadcast the work for the BBC in 1970. Hugh Bean had been involved in a number of Harrison premieres already in his role as leader of the Jacques Orchestra. Although the composer recycles the first movement theme of the clarinet quintet in this opening *Moderato*, its use in canon, inversion and in irregular meters transforms it entirely. Violin and cello entwine in intense exchanges in an expansive slow movement, before parallel right-hand triads in the piano

strikingly herald the final *Animato*. This is another *moto perpetuo* affair in which cello and violin chase each other in thirds and sixths, often in the extreme upper register of the cello, to thrilling effect.

Pamela Harrison enjoyed composing short, occasional pieces, many languid and evocative, others pithy and full of good humour, and the large scale works on this disc are punctuated by four such character pieces. In **Idle Dan**, reminiscent of a Satie *Gymnopédie*, the cello muses innocently on a simple note pattern. Anything more taxing would clearly be asking too much of the shirking player! **Sonnet** is a wistful love song, tinged with regret and pastoral melancholy. In contrast, **Faggot Dance** vividly evokes the quirky character of this surprisingly agile instrument, largely sure-footed but tripping every once in a while on its own irregular meters. **Drifting Away** is one of Harrison's most poignant creations, first performed in 1975 by Jack Brymer and David Lloyd for Sherbourne School Concert Club and inspired by the W.B. Yeats line 'All that's beautiful drifts away Like the waters'. Fittingly, this was to be the work that Brymer performed at the Service of Thanksgiving for Pamela Harrison's life in December 1990, following her tragic death in a car accident on 28 August 1990.

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### Robert Plane (clarinet)

Robert's career is rich and varied. Concerto appearances have included performances of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in Madrid with City of London Sinfonia, Beijing with BBC National Orchestra of Wales and in the USA with the Virginia Symphony. Championing new music as well as the classics, Rob is equally at home performing Christian Jost's *Heart of Darkness* with the Dortmund Philharmoniker and Simon Holt's *Centauromachy* at the BBC Proms as playing Finzi with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Stanford with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Copland with the London Mozart Players.

Rob has tirelessly pursued a passion for British music, his *Gramophone* Award-winning account of Finzi's Concerto and *Gramophone* Award-shortlisted Bax Sonatas just two of a large collection of such recordings.

Rob has explored the clarinet quintet repertoire with a number of the finest string quartets, opening BBC Radio 3's *Brahms Experience* with a live broadcast of the Brahms Quintet with the Skampa Quartet. He enjoys a close relationship with the Elias Quartet, joining them at the Wigmore Hall in Brahms and Bliss Quintets. Rob is clarinetist of Ensemble 360 and Head of Woodwind Performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

### Lucy Gould (violin)

Lucy is best known as the violinist and founder member of the Gould Piano Trio, one of the UK's most respected ensembles. Several international awards, a busy schedule and an impressive discography of core repertoire, lesser known works and commissions are testament to Lucy's dedication to this genre since embarking on her career.

Lucy studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London and Indiana University, Bloomington with Gyorgy Pauk and Josef Gingold. She has performed sonatas with Benjamin Frith and Leon McCawley, clarinet trios with Robert Plane, horn trios with David Pyatt, Richard Watkins and Alec Frank-Gemmill and chamber music with many of the leading artists in this field at festivals in the UK and abroad.

Lucy is a regular guest leader of many UK orchestras and holds the position of principal second violin with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe (COE). Lucy lives in Cardiff and teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

### David Adams (violin)

David Adams is Concertmaster of the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, co-Artistic Director of the Penarth Chamber Music Festival and teaches violin at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. In his role at Welsh National Opera he also performs concertos with the orchestra and directs concerts from the violin. He has appeared as guest leader with most of the major orchestras in the UK, most recently the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Halle Orchestra, as well as principal viola with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Equally at home on violin and viola, David has made guest appearances, recordings and broadcasts with the Nash Ensemble, Endellion String Quartet, Gould Piano Trio and the Hebrides Ensemble, including recording the complete Brahms Piano Quartets and Beethoven String Quintets.

David was violinist of the London Bridge Trio, with whom he recorded two discs of the piano trios of the 'Leipzig Circle', featuring works by Clara and Robert Schumann as well as Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn.

### Gary Pomeroy (viola)

Gary started violin lessons aged five in Durban, South Africa. He took to the viola as a teenager and was lucky enough to become an ABRSM International Scholar at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, UK. There he enjoyed five years of guidance in solo and chamber music from Mark Knight, Chris Rowland and Thomas Riebl. He continued his chamber music development at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofia in Madrid.

Gary is member of the Heath Quartet, which has been awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist Award, recorded the complete string quartets of Michael Tippett, Bela Bartok and Tchaikovsky String Quartets numbers one and three, and a Berg, Webern and Schoenberg album, to critical acclaim. Gary has also recorded the Dvorak piano quartets with the London Bridge Trio.

Gary now lives in London and enjoys a range of education work, including coaching the Kuumba Youth Orchestra, coaching chamber music and the viola at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and workshops at Pro Corda.

### Richard Lester (cello)

Leading chamber-musician, solo-cellist, orchestral principal and renowned teacher, Richard Lester was a member of the award-winning Florestan Trio, a founder-member of the ensemble Domus and has been a member of Hausmusik and the London Haydn Quartet. He is now cellist of the Gould Piano Trio. Equally at home on both period instruments and 'modern', he was for many years, principal with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE). He has been principal cello with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe since 1989.

He has performed concertos under conductors such as Sandor Vegh, Claudio Abbado, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Paavo Berglund, Myung Whun Chung and Sir Roger Norrington and has also appeared as director and soloist with COE, OAE, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Aurora Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra, and Les Violons du Roy.

He has made over forty discs of chamber music, winning a host of accolades.

Richard Lester teaches at the Royal College of Music and the Guildhall School in London.

### Benjamin Frith (piano)

Life student of Dane Fanny Waterman, Benjamin Frith won the Dudley National Concerto Competition aged fourteen, subsequently making his recital debut at the Harrogate International Festival.

Engagements with world-renowned orchestras followed, such as Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Mehta), Warsaw Philharmonic (Atzmon) and later the Halle under John Wilson and Sir Mark Elder. He quickly secured recording contracts with ASV, then with Naxos, for whom he made a best-selling John Field Concerto Cycle with Royal Northern Sinfonia.

During the latter half of his career there has been a concentration on the chamber repertoire, principally as pianist in the Gould Piano Trio. He has formed the enterprising Frith Piano Quartet with cellist Richard Jenkinson and been guest pianist with such illustrious ensembles as the Elias, Emperor, Endellion, Chilingarian, Wihan and Dante quartets.

Recent releases include the second Piano Concerto of C. V. Stanford with BBC NOW coupled with his Dante Rhapsodies for solo piano, chosen by the *Gramophone* as one of the discs of the year 2016.

### Florence Plane (bassoon)

Florence Plane studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Jonathan Davies, Robin O'Neil and Amy Harman.

Flo is bassoonist of Lumas Winds, a dynamic young ensemble dedicated to the promotion of the wind quintet genre. Lumas were finalists at the 2022 Royal Overseas League Competition and recently recorded their debut album for Champs Hill Records. They were prize-winners of the 2022 Tunnell Trust and as a result will undertake an extensive tour of Scottish music clubs and societies. Festival appearances have included Winchester, Ironstone and Corbridge.

Flo was awarded a full scholarship by the Royal Academy of Music to support her studies, as well as receiving an award from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

Festivals appearances have included Winchester, Ironstone, Penarth and Corbridge.

A passionate chamber musician, Flo has performed alongside musicians such as Benjamin Frith, Malin Broman, Robert Plane and Alice Neary, and as a member of Music in the Round's 'Bridging the Gap' scheme enjoys taking wind chamber music to diverse communities in Sheffield.

### Gould Piano Trio

The Gould Piano Trio has remained at the forefront of the international chamber music scene for a quarter of a century. Launched by winning first prize at the International Melbourne Chamber Music Competition, they made a highly successful debut at New York's Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Their many appearances at London's Wigmore Hall have included the complete piano trios of Dvořák, Mendelssohn and Schubert as well as a Beethoven cycle to celebrate twenty-five years since their debut at this iconic venue.

The trio's passionate belief in the importance of developing new repertoire has resulted in commissioning works from many contemporary composers including Sir James Macmillan and Mark Simpson. They also maintain a lively relationship with promising young chamber players by giving masterclasses worldwide, particularly in association with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

Extensive tours of America, the Far East, Europe and New Zealand have been interspersed with their highly praised recordings of both the standard works and long neglected gems from late romantic British repertoire and more contemporary works.

## Acknowledgments

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