

Maconchy, Lutyens & Wallen Works for Piano & Orchestra



Martin Jones, Rebeca Omordia
BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA
John Andrews conductor

Maconchy, Lutyens & Wallen

Works for Piano & Orchestra

Martin Jones *piano* tracks 1–6

Rebeca Omordia *piano* tracks 7–10

BBC Concert Orchestra

Charles Mutter *leader*

John Andrews *conductor*

Elizabeth Maconchy (1907–1994)

Dialogue for Piano and Orchestra

- | | |
|---------------------|--------|
| 1. Lento moderato | [4:55] |
| 2. Allegro moderato | [4:35] |
| 3. Sostenuto | [3:47] |
| 4. Presto | [3:13] |

Elisabeth Lutyens (1906–1983)

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 5. Eos for Small Orchestra, Op. 101 | [8:45] |
| 6. Music for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 59 | [10:10] |

Errollyn Wallen (b.1958)

Piano Concerto

- | | |
|------------------|---------|
| 7. Presto | [7:04] |
| 8. Languid blues | [11:26] |
| 9. Tender | [2:21] |
| 10. Joyful | [2:46] |

Total playing time [59:08]

All world premiere recordings

BBC

**Concert
Orchestra**

*Produced in association with the
BBC Concert Orchestra and BBC Radio 3*



Elizabeth Maconchy

Elizabeth Maconchy (1907–1994): Dialogue for Piano and Orchestra (1941)

A distinctive voice in British music of the twentieth century, Maconchy grew up in Ireland, came to London in 1923 to study with Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music, and in 1929 won a scholarship to pursue her studies in Prague. Here in 1930 her Concertino No. 1 for piano and chamber orchestra was premiered, and that year her orchestral suite *The Land* was played at the BBC Proms to great acclaim. Influenced by central European masters such as Bartók and Janáček, the composer is widely recognised for her striking and individual voice.

Maconchy is perhaps best known for her remarkable series of thirteen string quartets. Her work has been described as ‘an impassioned argument’. Whilst it can be fierce and concise, it is always expressive and lyrical. Her lyricism also finds expression in a range of vocal and choral works, as well as three one-act operas and the cantata *Héloïse and Abelard*. She was President of the Society for the Promotion of New Music, and was honoured as a DBE in 1987.

Maconchy’s **Dialogue** is a concise and striking work in four movements. The opening ‘Lento’ introduces rising and clashing minor thirds; from this seed grow all the subsequent

musical ideas of the whole work, however contrasting. This Lento makes clear that the music will bear out the title: the soloist and the orchestra exchange and share material, conversing, discussing, but not competing. The first movement is expressive and cantabile, its character accelerating into something more impassioned.

The second movement, ‘Allegro molto’, is a scherzo that begins with a quirky bassoon solo. The pianist picks up the *scherzando* motif and heightens it with brilliant octaves, as the motif passes swiftly through the orchestral texture.

Movement three, ‘Sostenuto’, is opened by the pianist with a sonorous Declamando that is gradually taken up by the *tutti*. A flowing central section, first in 5/4 and then in triple time, turns back to the weighty opening harmonies to close.

‘Presto’, the fourth movement, has lively music requiring great dexterity from the soloist. The dialogue sparkles between the pianist, wind soloists and the orchestral *tutti*. A virtuosic cadenza for the soloist leads to the coda: it begins with the full orchestra, brass to the fore, but rapidly diminishes to a pianissimo ending.

Dialogue was composed in 1941 and first

performed at a Promenade concert in the Royal Albert Hall in London in July 1942. Clifford Curzon was the soloist, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Basil Cameron.

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Elisabeth Lutyens (1906–1983): Eos (1975) & Music for Piano and Orchestra (1964)

One of five children of the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens and Lady Emily Bulwer-Lyon, Elisabeth Lutyens would become known as the ‘mother of British serialists.’ Studying in Paris aged only sixteen, the music of Debussy left an indelible impression on her, before she returned to four years at the Royal College of Music where she studied with Harold Darke. Alongside Elizabeth Maconchy, she quickly built a reputation as a composer to watch. Her early, ultimately unhappy, religious encounter with her mother’s theosophy ingrained in her a sense of alienation from her class and peers which became a driving force in her musical personality, seeming impervious to any success. Yet she was loved by her friends for her direct, acidic wit and she quickly won the admiration of Igor Stravinsky. Through her second husband, Edward Clarke, a former pupil of Schoenberg, she became acquainted with the ideas of the Second Viennese School through the 1930s, though it is debatable how

much of their music she could actually have heard, always claiming herself to have come at the idea of serialism from studying the equal interplay of parts in Purcell’s *Fantazias*. Her first major commission came in 1945 from William Walton, resulting in *The Pit*, and thereafter a string of commissions followed from the BBC over the 1940s and 1950s, successes which did little to erase the combative attitude towards the musical establishment that had hardened in her youth. This period coincided with her finally getting her alcoholism under control and her productivity soared. Alongside her concert works, she was also the first woman to compose for film, which she did with great success, supporting Clarke through a long period of unemployment with over forty film credits.

Distaining the ‘overblown’ textures of Mahler and the late-Romantics, her style, like her personality, was hard-edged, direct and uncompromising, famously dismissing her English predecessors as ‘cowpat music...with folkly-wolkly melodies on the cor anglais.’ Her son attributed this to her extreme emotional sensitivity and vulnerability, hiding just below the forbidding surface, and there is good reason to believe that she was attracted to the discipline of the twelve-tone approach because it offered a way to control and channel her overpowering

emotions. She went on to be a hugely-loved teacher, affectionate and supportive of her pupils and her children recalled her ‘large appetite for life’, her second daughter recalling that she was ‘cursed with a difficult and discontented temperament, but blessed with an acerbic wit and a great sense of fun.’

By the time Lutyens was commissioned to write *Eos* by the Contemporary Ensemble of London in 1975, she had relaxed her attitude to extra-musical sources of inspiration. *Eos* was the Ancient Greek personification of the dawn, described by Homer as Rhodydactolos (rosy-fingered). Sister of Helios (the Sun) and Selene (the Moon). Each morning she opens the doors of heaven and on her two-horse chariot guides her brother across the skies in her saffron mantle. Using three instrumental groups, Lutyens deftly characterises the first rays of morning light and the growing warmth of the rising sun, first rising and then beginning to fall as work concludes with a timeless hymn.

The *Music for Piano and Orchestra* by contrast, shows Lutyens at her most disciplined and rarified. Commissioned by her friend and noted exponent of Schoenberg, Katharina Wolpe, it was scheduled to premiered in 1964 with the Finnish Radio Orchestra, though there is some doubt as to whether this took place.

Lasting only ten minutes, Lutyens nevertheless makes time seemingly bend and stretch in all directions, alternating near-static passages of limpid pianistic colour, with coruscating allegros and dense, overlapping rhythmic patterns in violent conflict. The sparseness of the opening textures in particular, together with the thoroughness with which the possibilities of the tone rows are worked through shows both her great admiration for Anton Webern and her early love of Debussy, and the work ends in quiet spare refinement with a perfect inversion of the piece’s opening bars.

Errollyn Wallen (b.1958): Piano Concerto (2022)

Errollyn Wallen CBE is a multi award-winning Belize-born British composer. Her prolific output includes over twenty operas and a large catalogue of orchestral, chamber and vocal works, which are performed and broadcast throughout the world. She has composed for the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games 2012, for the Queen’s Golden and Diamond Jubilees, a specially commissioned song for COP 26, 2021, and a re-imagining of *Jerusalem* for the *Last Night of the Proms* 2020. BBC Radio 3 featured her music across the first week of 2022 for *Composer of the Week*, and she has made several radio documentaries including

Classical Commonwealth, nominated for the Prix Europa, which explored the impact of colonialism on classical music in the Commonwealth. Her critically acclaimed opera, *Dido's Ghost*, was premiered at the Barbican, London in June 2021, and two operas were premiered in April 2022, *The Paradis Files*, for Graeae Theatre Company at London's Southbank Centre, and *Quamino's Map*, for Chicago Opera Theater. She collaborated with artist Sonia Boyce on her installation, *Feeling Her Way*, for the British Pavilion at the 2022 Venice Biennale, which won the Golden Lion prize for Best National Participation. Errollyn Wallen composes in a Scottish lighthouse and her recordings have travelled 7.84 million kilometers in space, completing 186 orbits around the Earth on NASA's STS115 mission.

Wallen's **Piano Concerto** was commissioned by Julian Lloyd for Rebeca Omordia when he was Director of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. The original premiere scheduled for summer 2020 was delayed due to lockdown, so the work was first performed by Rebeca Omordia and the RBC Symphony Orchestra at The Bradshaw Hall on 4 November 2022. The orchestration is modelled on Ravel's Piano Concerto in G with the addition of a bass trombone. The four movements feature virtuoso and technically demanding passage work

for the soloist, drawing on a wide range of pianistic and musical styles.

The first movement is in loose sonata form featuring relentless semiquavers (an affectionate nod to the Paris of the early twentieth century) in the lower strings driving the music forward with ever-greater energy. The second movement pays homage to the blues. The third movement is a delicate and reflective conversation between the solo piano, harp, French horn and percussion, whilst the last movement is based on a Sârba: a dance form popular not only in Romania but also Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine and Hungary. This particular melody, though, is from Rebeca Omordia's home town.

The concerto is dedicated to three of Errollyn Wallen's piano teachers: Mrs Lepley, Mary G Pearse and Edith Vogel.

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Martin Jones (piano – Maconchy & Lutyens)

Martin Jones 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 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.

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.



Rebeca Omordia (piano – Wallen)

Hailed as an 'African classical music pioneer' (BBC *World Service*) and 'a classical music game changer' (*Classical Music*), London-based award-winning pianist Rebeca Omordia is an exciting virtuoso with a wide-ranging career as soloist, chamber musician and recording artist. She is artistic director and founder of the world's first ever African Concert Series in London, part of Wigmore Hall's Family of Partners.

Described by the Guardian as 'the pianist who cast a spell on Lagos', in recent seasons Rebeca has toured Nigeria where she has performed solo recitals together with concerts alongside MUSON Symphony Orchestra in Lagos and Abuja. She has worked with an array of international musicians, including a three-year partnership with world renowned British cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, a partnership with South African double bass virtuoso Leon Bosch consisting of several recordings for Meridian Records and collaborations with cellist Raphael Wallfisch and pianist Mark Bebbington.

Rebeca is also a talented arranger, her arrangement for cello and harp of the choral work *Seal Lullaby* by Eric Whitacre was released on Deutsche Grammophon with Julian Lloyd Webber and Catrin Finch.

Rebeca was born in Romania to a Romanian mother and a Nigerian father. Having begun to establish a profile in her native country, after graduating from National Music University in Bucharest, she continued her studies in the UK at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Trinity College of Music in London. She holds Doctor in Music degree from the National University of Music in Bucharest, Romania.



Photography: Katharine Andrews

John Andrews (conductor)

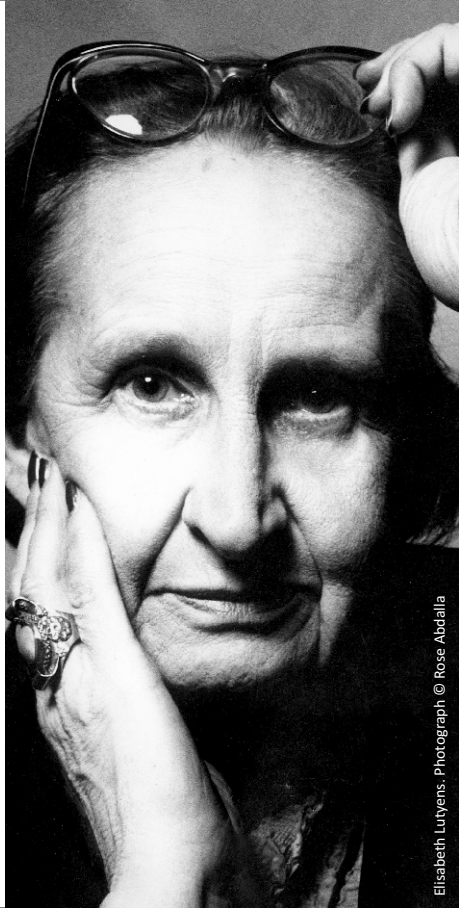
Born in Nairobi and brought up in Manchester, John Andrews graduated from Cambridge University with a doctorate in music and history. He won the Orchestra Prize at the Bela Bartok international Opera Conducting Competition and the Leonard Ingrams Memorial Prize from Garsington Opera. With a special affinity for Italian bel canto and English baroque, he has conducted over forty operas with companies including Garsington Opera, the Grange Festival, Buxton Festival, Opera Holland Park, English Touring Opera, Opera de Baugé and the Volkstheater Rostock in Germany. An exponent of

neglected English music, he is Artistic Director of Red Squirrel Opera. He has recorded works by Sir Arthur Sullivan including *The Light of the World* and *Haddon Hall*, *The Mountebanks* (Gilbert/Ceillier) and *The Judgement of Paris* (Arne) for Dutton Epoch, Arnold's *The Dancing Master* for Resonus Classics (which won the BBC Music Magazine Opera Recording Award 2021), Sherwood's Double Concerto and Cowen's Fifth Symphony for EM Records and orchestral works by Christopher Wright and Nicholas Barton with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra for Toccata Classics. He is Principal Guest Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra, and Conductor-in-Association with the English Symphony Orchestra.

BBC Concert Orchestra

The mission of the BBC Concert Orchestra is to bring inspiring musical experiences to everyone, everywhere, with the ensemble's versatility as the key. The orchestra can be heard on BBC Radio 2's *Sunday Night Is Music Night*, and for BBC Radio 3 it explores a wide selection of music, ranging from classical to contemporary. The orchestra has performed on many soundtracks, including *Blue Planet* and *Serengeti* for BBC One, as well as recording new music for BBC Sounds' *Music & Meditation* podcast and George the Poet's award-winning, *Have You Heard George's Podcast?*. It performs in BBC Radio 2's Piano Room Month for BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds, which featured over twenty collaborations with pop artists in 2022, including Ed Sheeran and Michael Bublé.

The orchestra appears annually at the BBC Proms, at London's Southbank Centre and at venues across the UK. It performs internationally and delivers enjoyable and innovative education and community activities, taking a leading role in Create Yarmouth – a three-year residency with Orchestras Live – BBC Ten Pieces, the BBC Young Composer competition and BBC Open Music programme.



Elisabeth Lutyens. Photograph © Rose Abdalla

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