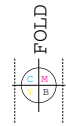


HEAD



Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G major, BWV 1049	
3 I Allegro	7'27
4 II Andante	4'08
5 III Presto	5'12

English Chamber Orchestra
Benjamin Britten

BYRD · OLDHAM · TIPPETT · BERKELEY · BRITTEN · SEARLE · WALTON

Sellinger's Round (Variations on an Elizabethan Theme)	
6 I BYRD: Theme	1'31
7 II OLDHAM: Variation No. 1: Allegro non troppo	1'00
8 III TIPPETT: Variation No. 2: Lament	3'50
9 IV BERKELEY: Variation No. 3: Andante	1'38
10 V BRITTEN: Variation No. 4: Quick & Gay	1'57
11 VI SEARLE: Variation No. 5: Nocturne	2'13
12 VII WALTON: Variation No. 6: Finale – Presto giocoso	2'58

The Aldeburgh Festival Orchestra
(leader: Olive Zorian)
Benjamin Britten

THOMAS ARNE (1710-1778)

13 Ode in honour of Great Britain: Rule Britannia (Alfred)	5'17
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Sir Peter Pears, tenor
Aldeburgh Festival Chorus
The Aldeburgh Festival Orchestra
Imogen Holst

14 Now the air shall ring (The Fairy Prince)	3'59
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Arda Mandikian, soprano
Gladys Whitred, soprano
Aldeburgh Festival Chorus
The Aldeburgh Festival Orchestra
Imogen Holst

version of 1740, when it formed the triumphant climax of *Alfred*, a patriotic Masque with music by Arne and a libretto by James Thomson. The song was an immediate success at its royal first performance, and it has been sung ever since, though it has suffered many changes during the two hundred years of its life, and it is seldom heard with the bright exuberance of its original orchestration.

PURCELL:

'O Lord, Grant the Queen a Long Life' *

O Lord, grant the Queen a long life, that her years may endure throughout all generations. Amen. She shall dwell before God for ever. O prepare Thy loving mercy and faithfulness that they may preserve her. As for her enemies, clothe them all with shame, but upon herself let her crown flourish. Amen.

A little-known work that remained unpublished until the early nineteenth century and has not been reprinted. The wonderful blend of joy and solemnity which Purcell so often achieves in his music can be recognised in the repeated Amens of the chorus, punctuating each line of the prayer, in the tenderness of the sudden change to the minor at 'O prepare Thy loving mercy', and in the characteristic dance at 'let her crown flourish', where Purcell borrows the rhythm he so often

uses for an Alleluia.

* In Purcell's original setting the title was 'O Lord, Grant the King a Long Life'.

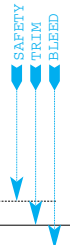
ARNE: 'Now all the Air shall Ring'

*Now all the air shall ring
And every trembling sing
With every varied voice
In union sweet rejoice
To sound and sing:
God Save The Queen*

This duet is taken from *The Fairy Prince*, an adaptation of Ben Johnson's *Masque of Oberon*, which Arne set to music in 1771. The work is almost unknown, although some of its tunes are among the best the composer ever wrote.

No full score is available: a rare copy of the vocal score, in the possession of Hubert Langley, has been used for this performance, which is possibly the first revival since the eighteenth century. The duet is appropriate as a token of homage in the coronation program, for the sopranos' flourishes in thirds and sixths are graceful in their sparkling vitality and the chorus' heartfelt repetition of the word 'save' with its sudden quietening to *piano*, is never for an instant in danger of sounding perfunctory.

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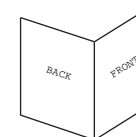


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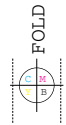


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Round or The Beginning of the World, a dance tune which was already well-known when Queen Elizabeth I played it on the virginals in the setting by William Byrd.

The Theme is played with Byrd's harmonies transcribed for strings.

Variation I. Allegro non troppo (Arthur Oldham): A brief, energetic assertion, alternating with a violin solo that soars up to the heights and then rushes downhill to pause on a question-mark.

Variation II. Lament (Michael Tippett): The music is founded on the first slow Air on a Ground in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, which Tippett happened to be rehearsing at the time he wrote the variation. The muted strings embroider each expressive phrase in flowing demisemiquavers which add to the tragic beauty of the underlying harmonies.

Variation III. Andante (Lennox Berkeley): The Elizabethan theme is clearly recognisable in an elegant six-four that steps outside the fetters of its key with delicate precision.

Variation IV. Quick & gay (Benjamin Britten): A lively dance in a rhythm which suggests a hornpipe. The quiet opening, over repeated pizzicato chords, mounts in excitement until it

reaches an energetic fortissimo. Then, to add to the excitement, there is a quotation from *Gloriana*; the closely-packed crescendo of the trills bursts into an exuberant gesture of welcome, while the sweeping marcato crochets bring a recollection of the crowd's triumphant homage to the Queen. After this, the dance unwinds itself, and ends as quietly as it began.

Variation V. Nocturne (Humphrey Searle): The hushed tremolo weaves a fragile texture of sound, while a haunting variant of the theme rises and falls in a melancholy Adagio.

Variation VI. Finale: Presto giocoso (William Walton): A cheerful fugue in a rapid six-eight, with staccato quavers fluttering their way through an inverted *Sellenger's Round*. After the counterpoint has worked up to a bustling climax the original version of the theme is heard in a two-four augmentation, a device that follows the Elizabethan tradition of the 'capers' in a Morris Dance. The brief return to the staccato six-eight quavers brings the fugue to its final energetic statement, and provides a fitting end to the set of variations.

ARNE: Rule Britannia

This 'Ode in honour of Great Britain' is the famous song 'Rule Britannia' in its original

HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)

15 O Lord, Grant the Queen a Long Life 7'00
[Purcell's original: O Lord, Grant the King a Long Life]

Alfred Deller, counter tenor
Sir Peter Pears, tenor
Norman Lumsden, bass
Aldeburgh Festival Chorus
The Aldeburgh Festival Orchestra
Imogen Holst

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

16 Air (Suite No. 3 in D major, BWV 1068) 5'13
17 Sheep may safely graze 5'28
(Cantata BWV 208: Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd)
arranged by Sir Granville Bantock

Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
Sir Adrian Boult

ANON. arr. Britten

18 God Save the Queen 2'39

London Symphony Chorus
London Symphony Orchestra
Benjamin Britten

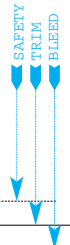
JEREMIAH CLARKE (1674-1707)

19 Trumpet Voluntary 2'47

Trumpeters of Kneller Hall Royal Military School of Music
Kenneth Alwyn, director
London Symphony Orchestra
Benjamin Britten

Total timing: 151'02

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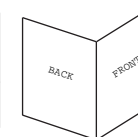
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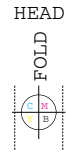
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J.S. BACH: Brandenburg Concertos

Bach came into contact with and played for Margrave Christian Ludwig of Brandenburg at the time when he was Kapellmeister of the court at Cöthen. The Margrave requested him to send some more of his compositions, but several years were to elapse before he was able to oblige this potential patron. The set of six concertos which Bach eventually submitted on 29 March 1721 was written during one of the happiest and most productive periods of his life: he enjoyed a cordial relationship with his employer, Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, and the band of eighteen trained musicians placed at his disposal meant that his working conditions were favourable indeed.

The Brandenburg Concertos constitute an extremely varied group of works, both stylistically and structurally – they reveal the influence of the Italian concertos of Vivaldi and Corelli, but also of the *Ouvertures* and dance suites of the French school – and in the rich diversity of orchestral colour displayed in the set as a whole. When other composers issued concertos in sets, these were generally intended for a unified orchestral group with the same solo instrument featured in each, and Bach's abundance of different instrumental groupings accentuates the

'presentation' aspect of the Brandenburgs.

In terms of layout, the Concerto No. 1 in F major is the most unusual of the six, and in the opening movement there is considerable experimentation and interplay between the concertino group of oboes and horns and the ripieno of strings and continuo. The solo line of the succeeding Adagio is shared between the first oboe and the 'violino piccolo'. The second Allegro features some exuberant horn writing and the concerto ends with a sequence of dances in contrasting tempi and for varied instrumental groups.

The concertino group of the Concerto No. 2 (also in F major) consists of trumpet, flute, oboe and violin. All soloists participate equally in the jaunty first movement; the trumpet is silent in the eloquently expressive slow movement, but reasserts itself brilliantly in the concluding fugal Allegro.

The Concerto No. 3 in G major was composed for a homogenous instrumental group of strings and continuo. Both fast movements are characterised by their regular, throbbing rhythmic patterns; instead of a fully written-out central movement, Bach simply indicated two chords marked Adagio, and it is almost certain he intended a short cadenza at this point.

The concertino group of the Concerto No. 4 in G major consists of two flutes and a solo violin. The first movement is a very lively affair, with the violin constantly striving to outdo the other instruments in virtuosity, while in the pastoral slow movement the violin again comes to the fore, and the music gathers momentum as long passages of violinistic figuration compete for attention with fugal entries in flutes and ripieno.

The Concerto No. 5 in D major is the most forward-looking of all the six Brandenburgs, and the elaborate harpsichord part (which includes a spectacular extended cadenza in the first movement) has assured the work a place in the history of the keyboard concerto. Flute and violin make up the other two instruments of the concertino, and the middle movement belongs to the soloists alone, whose parts here interweave with a gracefulness and transparency characteristic of much French music of the time. The dancing theme of the finale is introduced fugally by the soloists, with the ripieno strings later contributing equally in passages of great poise and beauty.

The Concerto No. 6 in B flat is the most intimate composition of the set. Scored for strings and continuo only (without violins), it

is consequently dark in colouring and, like No. 3 in G, dispenses with the conventional concertino-ripieno distinction. The texture is reduced in the slow movement to that of a trio sonata for two violas and cello, and the third movement is a carefree jig whose syncopated rhythm imparts a delightful bounce to the music.

Sellinger's Round (Variations on an Elizabethan Theme)

This is the first performance of a set of variations specifically written for the Sixth Aldeburgh Festival of Music and the Arts by six English composers. Together with the Arne and Purcell items on this collection, it was recorded at the Festival's opening concert on 20 June 1953.

When Benjamin Britten wrote to ask the composers to contribute to the work, Sir William Walton suggested that the audience should be invited to guess who had written each variation. He also suggested that each composer might introduce a short quotation from one of his own works. The competition for the names of the composers was held during the Festival, but the search for the quotations still goes on.

The variations are on the tune of *Sellinger's*



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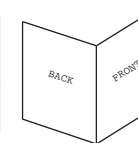


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