

Oboe Fancies

Christine Griggs plays Classics & Curios for oboe and piano

The recordings were made in Cape Town over a period of eight years, with pianists Gordon Beasley [GB] and Albie van Schalkwyk [AS].

The oboe is by Hans Kreul of Tübingen, the cover photo is by KG Photography.

The figures in brackets indicate timings, and the approximate grade of difficulty.
Notes by Christine Griggs.

1. **Handel, Sonata in G minor** [6:36] AS

Larghetto [g7] - *Allegro* [2:07, g8] - *Adagio* [4:12, g6] - *Allegro* [5:14, g6]

George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) wrote a great number of sonatas and concertos, and this G minor Sonata is a favourite. Janet Craxton gave me a great deal of insight into how to add and perform ornaments in this Baroque Sonata.

2. **Marin Marais, Three Old French Dances** [6:57] GB

L'Agréable [g5] - *La Provençale* [2:25, g5] - *Le Basque* [4:53, g4]

Marin Marais (1656-1728) is known for his Folies D'Espagne, but these Three Old French Dances are full of character too. Freely transcribed by Janet Craxton and Alan Richardson, the melodies come from various parts of France.

3. **Field Nocturne** [3:47, g6] AS

John Field (1782-1837) was one of the earliest composers of the Romantic era, and wrote at least 18 Nocturnes, all for piano, creating the form later made famous by Chopin. Field was a concert pianist, born in Dublin, and spent many years performing and teaching in Russia. This Nocturne, an evocative melody, was transcribed by Evelyn Rothwell and has a piano accompaniment arranged by Gibilaro.

4. **Chandler, Three Dance Studies** [3:29] AS

Habanera [g2] - *Valse Sentimentale* [1:25, g4] - *Magyar* [2:54, g2]

Three Dance Studies are fun to play and not technically difficult. Mary Chandler (1911-1996) probably wrote them for her pupils. The first has syncopated rhythms, the second is in a flowing style, marked *Grazioso*, and the third, marked *Vivace*, is here given a gradual *accelerando* (not marked in the score) and culminates with a dashing finish.

5. **Butterworth, Kettlebury Hill** [3:02, g5] AS

Kettlebury Hill is near Rushmore in Surrey, in an area of heathland with sandy, infertile soil. Walking tracks and bridle paths take the visitor to a high point to be rewarded with lovely views. Composed by Neil Butterworth (born in 1934) for oboe and strings, this is a lilting, yet jaunty piece in triple time in D minor, with a more lyrical middle section which meanders harmonically around the key of D major in a very English mood.

6. **Hewson, Three Andalusian Songs** [5:52] AS

El nino y el mar [g4] - *Cante Hondo* [1:27, g6] - *Danza* [4:53, g5]

Richard Hewson (born in 1943) dedicated his Three Andalusian Songs to Robert. They are descriptive pieces: *El Nino y El Mar* is a Cradle Song, *Cante Hondo* is a soulful Song and *Danza* is a lively Dance with a swirling, arpeggiated melody.

7. **Grovez, Sarabande and Allegro** [5:39] AS
Sarabande [g8] - Allegro [3:11, g8]
Gabriel Grovez (1879-1944) who studied with Gabriel Faure, composed this Sarabande and Allegro in 1929, dedicating it "à mon ami Louis Bleuzet" who was the professor at the Conservatoire National de Musique de Paris.
8. **Satie, Three Gymnopedies** [6:59] AS
Lent et douloureux [g4] - Lente et Triste [2:40, g4] - Lent et Grave [4:50, g3]
The French composer Erik Satie (1866-1925) wrote these pieces for piano in 1888; the first and third were published later that year, and the second seven years later. The music seemed revolutionary, using major seventh chords in progressions which produce the melancholy effect intended by Satie's instructions: 'slow and painfully', 'sadly' and 'gravely'. Robin de Smet has arranged all three, setting solo melodic lines with gentle chordal accompaniment for the piano.
9. **Szalowski, Sonatine** [6:36] AS
Allegro non troppo [g8] - Adagio [1:55, g7] - Allegro [4:05, g8]
Antoni Szalowski (1907-1973) composed his Sonatine for Oboe and Piano in 1945-46, and it was performed in Amsterdam. In traditional three movement form, the music displays close major-minor tonality, though without being truly bi-tonal, and is full of inventiveness with lively rhythms and contrapuntal melodic patterns.
10. **Fauré, Berceuse Op 16** [3:21, g6] GB
Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) was one of the most influential of French composers of his generation. His Berceuse is an early work, Opus 16, and rarely heard. Originally written for violin and piano, and first performed in Paris by Ovide Musin (violin), it was dedicated to Helena Depret, and is in the romantic style.
11. **Siciliano** [2:23, g4] GB
In the private library of the King of Saxony there is an 18th century manuscript of a Sonata by an unknown composer. From this, freely arranged by Raina & Denis East, comes this movement of exquisite beauty.
12. **Britten, Two Insect Pieces** [4:33] AS
The Grasshopper [g8] - The Wasp [2:27, g8]
Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) composed the Two Insect Pieces in 1935, and it is believed that they were two of a planned five movement suite for oboe and piano, the others also having insect names, sketches of which were made but never completed. He dedicated these delightfully descriptive programme pieces to the oboist Sylvia Spencer. In 1979, Janet Craxton and Margot Wright performed them in Manchester as part of a memorial concert for Sylvia Spencer, and the music was published in 1980.
13. **Head, Rondo** [3:04, g7] GB
Michael Head (1900-1976) composed many songs, but this Rondo stands alone as an instrumental piece in D major, with a middle section in F sharp major. It was edited by Evelyn Rothwell, and may have some correlation with the more well known 'Three Pieces' for oboe and piano - Gavotte, Elegiac Dance, and Presto.
14. **Reizenstein, Con moto from the Sonatina Op 11** [3:32, g8] GB
Franz Reizenstein (1911-1968) dedicated his Sonatina for oboe and piano to Ernest Chapman, and considered it to be one of his finest compositions. This third and final movement starts in E flat major, but ends with an exciting, forte sempre section in C major, the oboe sounding out the main theme, continuing with chromaticism and trills and accompanied by fast and furious octaves for the piano. Born in Nuremberg, Reizenstein emigrated to England to escape the Nazis in 1934 and spent the rest of his life as a British composer, concert pianist and teacher.