

Janet Craxton

20th Century music for oboe and strings, with
Perry Hart (violin), **Brian Hawkins** (viola), **Kenneth Heath/Charles Tunnell** (cello)

The memory of Janet Craxton (1929-81) remains vivid with many people, and this CD of music commissioned by her gives ample opportunity to see why. She is a performer who makes you listen, from the floating phrases of Francis Routh's *Quartet* to the ritualistic writing of Elisabeth Lutyens' powerful *Driving out the Death*.

Scherzos abound in this CD, as in the excitement of Richard Stoker's *Polemics*, and the sophistication of Elizabeth Maconchy's *Quartet*.

The magic of Janet Craxton's playing is evident throughout these fine BBC recordings, which also include Lennox Berkeley's *Quartet*, and Nicola LeFanu's *Variations*.



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The 24-page CD booklet contains an extended essay on Janet Craxton, this music and these recordings, and interviews with composers, the oboist Nicholas Daniel, and many photos.



"Craxton's impeccable technical address, naturalness of expression, recreative flair and subtlety of nuance are an absolute joy throughout: what a wonderfully eloquent, selfless performer she was! With its lavish presentation and excellent remasterings, this enterprising compilation should not be missed by any connoisseur of the instrument and deserves every possible success." *Andrew Achenbach, Gramophone*

"Craxton's playing is simply superb... The tone is remarkably rich and varied, the precision - especially in complex rhythms - not merely admirable but physically thrilling. But it's her expression that impressed me most of all. Far from having one expressive style which she applies to more or less everything, Craxton approaches each piece on its own terms: coaxing out poetry here, scooping deep into the notes and drawing up gold the next. This clearly affected the other players: the sense of absorption, whether in the spiny lyricism of Elisabeth Lutyens' *Driving out the Death* or in the surprisingly desolate finale of the [Lennox] Berkeley [Quartet], lingers long after the disc is over. Recommended."

Stephen Johnson, BBC Music Magazine