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CLASSICS

If

Iestyn Davies
Fretwork

Michael Nyman

Henry Purcell



IF

MICHAEL NYMAN | HENRY PURCELL

No Time in Eternity

Michael Nyman

1	To Music (I)	[2.14]
2	No Time in Eternity	[0.50]
3	Fortune	[1.03]
4	The Definition of Beauty	[0.55]
5	Things Mortal Still Mutable	[1.25]
6	The Watch	[1.57]
7	To Music (II)	[2.29]

8 Balancing the Books

Michael Nyman arr. Richard Boothby

[9.50]

From “The Diary of Anne Frank”

Michael Nyman, arr. Richard Boothby

9	If	[3.32]
10	Why	[4.20]

11 Music for a While, Z 583 No. 2

Henry Purcell, arr. Richard Boothby

[3.53]

12 Music after a While

Michael Nyman

[11.51]

13 Evening Hymn, Z 193

Henry Purcell, arr. Silas Wolston

[4.52]

14 The Self-Laudatory Hymn of Inanna and her Omnipotence

Michael Nyman

[13.17]

15 O Solitude, my Sweetest Choice, Z 406

Henry Purcell, arr. Richard Boothby

[5.21]

Total timings:

[67.51]

IESTYN DAVIES COUNTER-TENOR
FRETWORK

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MICHAEL NYMAN AT 75

Is there a contemporary composer whose music is more immediately recognisable than Michael Nyman? I can't think of one: the insistent ostinanti, the bold, yet simply conceived harmony, the driving rhythms, the aggressive instrumentation, the heavy bass-line; all have combined to make his music instantly recognisable. He has been endlessly imitated, particularly by composers for moving images - film, TV, adverts and so on; yet these are pale imitations, not the real thing.

While he might be known now more for the music he wrote for Jane Campion's award-winning film from 1993, *The Piano*, he initially shot to fame a decade earlier with the music for Peter Greenaway's film *The Draughtsman's Contract*, set in 17th-century England. This lurid tale was filmed with striking originality, and Nyman mirrored this with his music, most of it derived from one of England's greatest composers, Henry Purcell. Purcell's music was well known to Nyman, as he had studied under the great musicologist Thurston Dart at King's College in London in the 1960s, and had then produced the first modern edition of Purcell's Catches in 1967.

So it was a natural choice to combine Nyman and Purcell on this disc. Purcell never composed vocal music with an accompaniment of viols, but his magnificent set of Fantazias and In Nomines for viols demonstrated his interest in the instrument; so it was but a short step to realising Purcell's original bass line and completing the harmonies with parts for four or five viols. While all three on this disc are on ground basses - that is the same bass line repeated over and over again - each song presented different challenges.

O Solitude is a setting of the first and last stanzas (plus half of the third) of the poem *La Solitude* by Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant, translated by Katherine Philips, who was a remarkable literary figure in 17th-century Wales and England. Its ground bass is unvarying, yet Purcell's implied harmonies are exceptionally inventive.

The Evening Hymn is a setting of the poem by Bishop William Fuller, friend of the diarists Pepys and Evelyn. The arrangement for viols was made by Silas Wolston. The ground bass here moves to accommodate modulations to different keys, as does that of *Music for a While*, which is from the incidental music to

Dryden and Lee's translation of Sophocles's play *Oedipus*, revived in 1692. Aleto is one of the Greek furies, with snakes for hair, whose work is to castigate mortals for their moral crimes.

In 2017 Fretwork commissioned Michael Nyman (with funds generously donated by Mark Reed) to write a new instrumental work for them, and he responded with *Music After a While*, which is based upon Purcell's song, or more particularly upon its strikingly original bass-line, with its insidious rising chromatics. It was premiered in Milton Court, in London's Barbican Centre in May 2018, just before this disc was recorded.

Fretwork had previously commissioned Nyman in 1992 to write a work for James Bowman and us for the Spitalfields Festival. Nyman described the remarkable chance encounter that led to the choice of text:

The text of the Self-Laudatory Hymn came to light while I was browsing among the bookshelves of an Armenian acquaintance in February 1992. Opening, for no apparent reason, a fat anthology entitled Ancient Near-Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, edited by James B. Pritchard, I found S N Kramer's

translation of this Hymn. I was immediately taken with its tone of unashamed self-congratulation (very suitable, I thought, for James Bowman's voice) and its repetitive structure (very suitable for my music).

In conversation with another friend I learned that Inanna was not an obscure goddess known only to me and a few experts on Sumerian civilisation, but a central focus of that civilisation and a figure highly esteemed by feminists. In Kramer's works: 'Female deities were worshipped and adored all though Sumerian history...but the goddess who outweighed, overshadowed, and outlasted them all was a deity known to the Sumerians by the name of Inanna, 'Queen of Heaven', and to the Semites who lived in Sumer by the name of Ishtar. Inanna played a greater role in myth, epic, and hymn than any other deity, male or female.'

In the Self-Laudatory Hymn I have made no attempt to evoke Sumerian music (or music of any other period). The opportunity to work with the viols of Fretwork recalls my use of early instruments in the first Michael Nyman Band, which uses rebecs rather than viols; and also my studies in the 1960s with Thurston Dart

(and his memorable *Musica Britannica* edition of Jacobean consort music) and the finest book ever written on English music, English Chamber Music by E H Meyer.

Some time during the 2000s, I came across Nyman's song *If*, scored for piano and strings and thought it could work for viols - I made an arrangement and sent it to the composer, who approved. The calm simplicity of the harmonic pattern and melody makes for a compelling work, which expresses the child-like naïveté of the text. It was written, together with *Why*, to texts by Roger Pulvers as part of an animated film by Seiya Araki, *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

And then, having seen my arrangement, Nyman suggested I look at a work he had written for the Swingle Singers, *Balancing the Books*, a wordless vocal-work in 8 parts. I arranged this, but we didn't find an opportunity to perform it until Fretwork were invited to take part in the Minimalism Unwrapped festival at Kings Place in London in 2015.

No Time in Eternity was commissioned by the French counter-tenor Paulin Bündgen with Ensemble Celadon in 2016 and first performed by them in Lyon in March of that year. It is

a setting of several poems by the great 17th -century poet Robert Herrick: *To Music, No Time in Eternity, Fortune, The Definition of Beauty, Things mortal still mutable, The Watch, To Music*. All are from his *Hesperides*, published in 1648. His most famous verse is 'To the Virgins to make much of time', espousing the sentiment to seize the day, or *carpe diem*; and we see similar sentiments in these epigrammatical works that Nyman has chosen to set. He was highly sensitive to music and a close friend of the Lawes brothers, Henry & William.

Michael Nyman was born in Stratford, in the east end of London on 23rd March 1944. In addition to his current work as a composer, he is also a film maker, conductor, pianist, musicologist, writer & photographer. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music and, after his Ph.D studies with Thurston Dart, he went to Romania to collect folk music.

While working as music critic for The Spectator, he coined the term 'minimalism' in 1968. He also wrote for The New Statesman, The Listener and Studio International. His seminal work on new music - *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* - was published in 1974 and has recently been reprinted.

His preferred musical form is opera, and he has written several notable works in this form: *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, *Facing Goya* and *Many and Boy: Dada*.

More recently he has focused on composing soundtracks for silent films from the late 1920s: Jean Vigo's *A Propos de Nice*, Sergi Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* and new soundtracks for three Dziga Vertov films - *Man with a Movie Camera*, *The Eleventh Year* and *A Sixth Part of the World*.

Richard Boothby

TEXTS

No Time in Eternity

1 *To Music (i)*

Begin to Charm, and as thou strok'st mine ears
With thy enchantment, melt me into tears.
Then let thy active hand scud o'er thy lyre,
And make my spirits frantic with fire.
That done, sink down into a silvery strain,
And make me smooth as balm and oil again.

2 *Time in Eternity*

By hours we all live here; in Heaven is known
No spring of time or time's succession.

3 *Fortune*

Fortune's a blind profuse of her own,
Too much she gives to some, enough to none.

4 *The Definition of Beauty*

Beauty no other thing is than a beam
Flashed out between the middle and extreme.

5 *Things mortal still mutable*

Things are uncertain and the more we get,
The more on icy pavements we are set.

6 *The Watch*

Man is a watch, wound up at first,
but never wound up again:
once down, he's down for ever.
The watch once down all motions then do cease;
And man's pulse stopp'd all passions sleep in
peace.

7 *To Music (ii)*

Music, thou queen of heaven, care-charming spell,
That strik'st a stillness into hell:
Thou that tam'st tigers, and fierce storms that rise
With thy soul melting lullabies,
Fall down from those chiming spheres
To charm our souls, as thou enchant'st our ears.

Text by Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

9 **If**

If ... at the sound of wish
The summer sun would shine
And if ... just a smile would do
To brush all the clouds from the sky

If ... at the blink of an eye
The autumn leaves would whirl
And if ... you could sigh a deep sigh
To scatter them over the earth

*I'd blink my eyes
And wave my arms
I'd wish a wish
To stop all harm

If ... at the wave of a hand
The winter snows would start
And if ... you could just light a candle
To change people's feelings and hearts

I'd whisper love
In every land
To every child
Woman and man

That's what I'd do
If my wishes would come true
That's what I'd do
If my wishes could come true

Text by Hachiro Konno and Roger Pulvers

10 **Why**

We ask our father why
Why people can not love
Why people hate all day and night
Spoiling children's dreams

We ask our mother why
Why people can not live
Why they won't let the children be
Crushing their belief

Tell us why, Papa
Your children want to know
"Someday you'll find out"
Leaves us lonely and cold

Tell us why, Papa
Your children want to know
"You shouldn't ask such things"
Leaves no rooms to grow

We ask our parents Why
Why children can not grow
Don't look away from us
Don't lie ... please don't lie
Your children need to know

Tell me why, somebody
We children need an answer
Why adults fight over God
Why adults fight over colour
Why adults go to war

Text by Hachiro Konno and Roger Pulvers

11 Music for a While

Music for a while
Shall all your cares beguile.
Wond'ring how your pains were eas'd
And disdaining to be pleas'd
Till Alecto free the dead
From their eternal bands,
Till the snakes drop from her head,
And the whip from out her hands.

From *Oedipus, A Tragedy* by John Dryden (1631-1700)

13 An Evening Hymn

Now, now that the sun hath veil'd his light
And bid the world goodnight
To the soft bed, my body I dispose,
But where, where shall my soul repose?
Dear God, even in Thy arms,
And can there be any so sweet security!
Then-to-thy-rest, O my soul!
And singing, praise the mercy
That prolongs thy days.
Hallelujah!

Text by William Fuller (1608-1675)

**14 The Self-Laudatory Hymn of Inanna
and her Omnipotence**

My father gave me Heaven, gave me earth.
I the Queen of Heaven am I.
Is there one God who can vie with me?

Enlil gave me Heaven, gave me earth,
I the Queen of Heaven am I.

He has given me lordship,
He has given me queenship.
He has given me battle, given me combat
And he gave me flood and tempest.

He has placed Heaven as a crown.
He has tied the earth as a sandal.
He has fastened the holy me garment
About my body.

The Gods are my vassals:
I, a Queen am I.
The Anuna scurry about.

I, a life-giving wild cow am I,
The life-giving wild cow of father Enlil am I,
His life-giving wild cow that walks at the head.

When I enter the Ekur, the house of Enlil,
The gate-keeper puts not his hand against my
breast,
The vizier says not to me: stop!

Heaven is mine, earth is mine.

In Erech, the Eanna is mine,
In Zabalom, the Giguna is mine.

In Nippur, the Duranki is mine,
In Ur, the Edilman is mine.

In Girsu the Eshdam is mine,
In Adab, the Emdara is mine.

In Kish, the Hursag Kalama is mine,
In Dev, the Amashkuga is mine.

In Akshak, the Anzaka is mine,
In Agada, the Ulmash is mine.

Is there one god who can vie with me?

Ancient Sumerian hymn,
translation by Samuel Noah Kramer (1897-1990)

15 O Solitude, my Sweetest Choice

O solitude, my sweetest choice:
Places devoted to the night,
Remote from tumult and from noise,
How ye my restless thoughts delight!

O heav'ns, what content is mine,
To see those trees which have appear'd
From the nativity of time,
And, from which all ages have rever'd,
To look today as fresh and green,
As when their beauties first were seen.

O, how agreeable a sight
These hanging mountains do appear,
Which the unhappy would invite
To finish all their sorrows here,
When their hard fate makes them endure
Such woes as only death can cure.

O! how I solitude adore!
That element of noblest wit,
Where I have learnt Apollo's lore
Without the pains to study it.

For thy sake I in love am grown,
With what thy fancy does pursue;
But when I think upon my own,
I hate it for that reason too,

Because it needs must hinder me
From seeing, and from serving thee.

O solitude! O! how I solitude adore!

Original text by Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant (1594–1661),
translation by Katherine Philips (1631–1664)

IESTYN DAVIES

After graduating in Archaeology and Anthropology from St John's College, Cambridge, Iestyn Davies studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

An esteemed Handelian, he has astounded audiences globally with his vocal agility in roles such as Orlando, Rinaldo, Ottone/Agrippina and David/Saul. His intelligent and considered interpretations have led to fruitful collaborations with Thomas Adés, George Benjamin and Nico Muhly.

Iestyn received an Olivier Award nomination for singing the role of Farinelli in *Farinelli and the King* opposite Mark Rylance, a Globe Theatre production that had successful runs on the West End and Broadway.

On the opera stage, he has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera, New York; the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Teatro alla Scala Milan; the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; English National Opera; Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Welsh National Opera; Salzburg Festival and in Munich, Vienna and Zurich.

Concert engagements have included performances at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan with Dudamel, the Concertgebouw and Tonhalle with Koopman and at the Barbican, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Lincoln Centre and at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall with orchestras that include the New York Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, English Concert, Britten Sinfonia, Concerto Köln, Concerto Copenhagen, Ensemble Matheus, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music and Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

A committed recitalist, his repertoire ranges from Dowland to Clapton and he has performed at Carnegie Hall, New York and enjoys a successful relationship with the Wigmore Hall where he has curated residencies.



© Chris Sorensen

He has won a Grammy Award, 3 Gramophone Awards for recital recordings, the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist of the Year, and the 2013 Critics' Circle Awards for Exceptional Young Talent (Singer). In 2017 he was awarded an MBE by the Queen for his services to music.

FRETWORK

© Nick White



Asako Morikawa
Richard Boothby
Joanna Levine
Emily Ashton
Sam Stadlen

In 2016, Fretwork celebrated their 30th anniversary. In these last three decades, they have explored the core repertoire of great English consort music, from Taverner to Purcell, and made classic recordings against which others are judged. In addition to this, Fretwork have

become known as pioneers of contemporary music for viols, having commissioned over 40 new works. The list of composers is like a role call of the most prominent writers of our time: George Benjamin, Michael Nyman, Sir John Tavener, Gavin Bryars, Elvis Costello, Alexander Goehr, John Woolrich, Orlando Gough, Fabrice Fitch, Peter Sculthorpe, Sally Beamish, Tan Dun, Barry Guy, Andrew Keeling, Thea Musgrave, Simon Bainbridge, Poul Ruders, John Joubert, Duncan Druce and Nico Muhly. The group now frequently presents programmes consisting entirely of

contemporary music. In 2008, they recorded two tracks on Ryuichi Sakamoto's album *Out of Noise*.

They now tour the United States most years, and made their Carnegie Hall debut in February of 2010. In that year, they also curated a weeklong series of concerts at Kings Place, London. The culmination of this week was the world premier of *The World Encompassed* by Orlando Gough, a 70-minute piece describing in musical terms Drake's circumnavigation of the globe in 1577-80.

In 2011, The National Centre for Early Music, in collaboration with the BBC, hosted a competition for young composers to create a four-minute piece for Fretwork. They workshopped the shortlisted pieces at the NCEM in York in October, and then the winning entries were premiered in Kings Place in December that year.

The following year, they premiered *My Days* for The Hilliard Ensemble and Fretwork by one of today's most exciting young composers – Nico Muhly – in Wigmore Hall. While 2013 was their busiest year for a decade, they played no fewer than ten concerts in London's major chamber music halls: Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, Cadogan Hall and the Royal College of Music.

In 2014 they continued to concentrate on the music of John Dowland with a major tour of the UK with one of today's greatest tenors, Ian Bostridge. They also spent a week in the Britten Studio in Aldeburgh re-working Orlando Gough's *The World Encompassed*, to incorporate a spoken narrative drawn from contemporary accounts.

Another new work by Nico Muhly was premiered in 2015 at Kings Place, and they collaborated with celebrated actor Simon Callow in the revised version of *The World Encompassed* at the Dartington International Summer School – this version was subsequently recorded and released to critical acclaim on Signum in 2016.

They celebrated their 30th anniversary with a star-studded concert at Kings Place in June 2016, and recorded four new albums including *The World Encompassed*. They made their longest tour of America, taking in the USA, Canada & Colombia. They are looking forward to further tours of North America and concerts (as well as this album) celebrating Michael Nyman's 75th birthday in 2019.

SELF-LABOURING HYMN OF INANITA AND HER COMPOTENCE
for James Bowman and Fredrick

Michael Nyman

for James Brown and the J.B. Men

THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

KEY: Bb

INSTRUMENTS: VOICE, DRUMS, BASS, PIANO

LYRICS: I THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN AM I IS THERE ONE GOD WHO CAN VIE WITH

MELODY: The melody is written in a single line with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in a single line with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

DRUMS: The drum part is written in a single line with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The drum part is written in a single line with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

BASS: The bass part is written in a single line with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It starts with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The bass part is written in a single line with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It starts with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature.

PIANO: The piano part is written in a single line with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The piano part is written in a single line with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

If (from "The Diary of Anne Frank")

Composed by Michael Nyman

Words by Hachiro Konno and Roger Pulvers.

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Why? (from The Diary Of Anne Frank)

Composed by Michael Nyman

Words by Hachiro Konno and Roger Pulvers.

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SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK.

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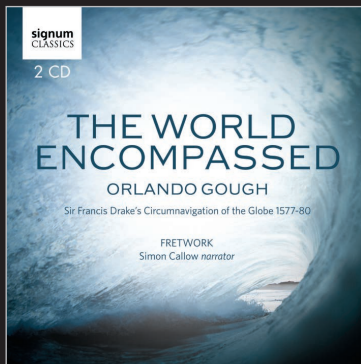
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Orlando Gough: The World Encompassed

Fretwork

Simon Callow narrator

SIGCD453

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IF

MICHAEL NYMAN | HENRY PURCELL

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