

Brian Inglis - Some reviews & comments:

Living Stones album review: Concerto for piano solo (Homage to Alkan), Piano Sonata, Four Piano Pieces

'wedding', inspired by a ciné film of the wedding of the composer's parents, is based on church bell changes, higher faster ringing for the right hand and slower lower for the left. 'kärleks-vals'... is relatively tuneful with more brittle percussive upper leaps for the right hand.

The 'piano sonata' is well described in the accompanying programme note. The first movement is 'a kaleidoscopic montage of different ideas before settling down into a more lyrical theme', in the second Inglis mentions 'a pointillistic development' very much so, with sprightly staccato playing and then in the finale 'a toccata-like quasi-cadenza' brings back the energetic spirit of the opening movement.

'living stones' sounds brittle and shiny like the jewels it describes before moving on to softer vaporous playing. 'passacaglia' marries together an early music form and its spirit along with unashamed modernism and a concentration on ornamentation.

The 'concerto for piano solo (homage to Alkan)' [demands] a virtuoso performer and in Gabriel Keen it certainly gets that. Inglis's tendency towards the idea of quick-change montage is here too and in the opening movement upper trills and then the cavernous rumblings of lower trills play an important role in the music. Remember of course that this is an 'homage' and not an imitation. The music is very modern and very much the composer's own. It would certainly be of interest for aspiring young pianists hoping to expand their abilities. (Alan Cooper, *British Music E-News*, February 2019)

Recorder Concerto

Het Concerto van Brian Inglis is een bijzonder stuk.... Veel aspecten van het blokfluitspel komen in dit modern stuk aan de orde, zoals het spelen van twee sopraanblokfluiten tegelijk, multiphonics, veel chromatiek, mini toonsafstanden, en glissandi, maar ook het spelen in de allerhoogste regionen op sopraanblokfluit. In dit technisch uitdagende stuk zijn ook oudere stijlkenmerken terug te horen, de meerstemmigheid in een melodische lijn zoals je die bijvoorbeeld bij Van Eyck of in de barokke figuren ook wel terug kunt vinden en uitersten in dynamiek uit de romantische periode. Voor zeer vergevorderde of professionele spelers een uitdaging om hier samen met een pianist eens de tanden in te zetten!

[The Concerto by Brian Inglis is a remarkable piece.... Many aspects of recorder playing are dealt with in this modern piece, such as playing two soprano recorders at once, multiphonics, a lot of chromaticism, microtonal intervals, and glissandi, as well as playing in the very highest register of the soprano recorder. In this technically challenging piece, older stylistic characteristics can also be heard, such as the kind of polyphony in a melodic line as found in Van Eyck or Baroque figures and extremes in dynamics from the Romantic period. For very advanced or professional players this is a challenge and together with a pianist something to get their teeth into!] (Bernadette Pollen, *blokfluitist*, September 2017)

Piano Trio

...there proved to be plenty of 'passion' in the work, generated by the rapid-fire juxtapositions, alternations and altercations of Inglis's score, as well as contrasts between syncopated propulsion, rhythmic hyper-tension and disturbing dissipation of movement.

Inglis's materials are eclectic and at times combative. He draws on gestures from diverse genres – jazz, the neo-baroque, Palm Court light music, to name but a few of the voices which jar against, superimpose upon, and fade into each other – and incorporates direct quotation (though I struggled to discern these on this single hearing), from piano trios by both Robert and Clara Schumann, Charles Alkan and Cécile Chamanade. (Perhaps the gender 'inclusiveness' might be thought to match the 'democracy' with which the varied styles and languages are treated ...).

The Aquinas Piano Trio gave a committed performance and seemed to enjoy the protean, acrobatic argumentativeness of the music. (Claire Seymour, *seenandheard-international.com*, 29.1.2018)

Burmese Pictures

'Brian Inglis's Burmese Pictures ... had a pleasantly tropical luxuriance.' (Ivan Hewett, *The Telegraph*, 18/1/2011)

'Along the same lines, Brian Inglis uses overblowing, multiphonics, key clicks and flutter-tonguing to create contrasting ritornellos against the traditional counterpoint and folksy chorale around which his work, Burmese Pictures, rotates.' (Garrett Schumann, *www.sequenza21.com*, 21/12/2010)

The Song of Margery Kempe

'The future of opera' (Charlotte Ray, *PRS Foundation*)

'The most accomplished piece was Brian Inglis's opera for solo voice, *The Song of Margery Kempe*, based on the 1430 autobiography of the medieval mystic.... The punchy Lore Lixenberg has a splendid dark mezzo voice and is adept at the vocal gymnastics needed.' (Clare Colvin, *The Express*, 8/8/2009)

'[Lore] Lixenberg's flexible soprano constantly stoked the dramatic fire with ecstatic visions, demonic outbursts and anguished meditations.' (Geoff Brown, *The Times*, 6/8/2009)

'The finale of the evening was by far the most impressive item, the concert premiere of Brian Inglis' opera *The Song of Margery Kempe*, based on the autobiography of a medieval housewife and visionary. It is written for a single, unaccompanied singer and opens quite simply with the plainchant hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, and that persistent little tune entwines its way through the entire piece. Life was far from unexciting in 15th century Norfolk, and Margery endures visions of demons as well as confronting a trial for heresy before her spiritual journey reaches inner peace and entry to paradise. An unaccompanied musical monologue imposes severe difficulties for the singer, but they were triumphantly surmounted by Loré Lixenberg.' (Serena Fenwick, www.musicalpointers.com, August 2008)

Without Loss

'I found this a moving piece and we were delighted to have sponsored it' (Stephen Connock, *Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust*, July 2008)

Sailing To Byzantium

'your extraordinary work...is excellent, offers a variety of ideas and sounds and is a real challenge for recorder players'. (Franz Müller-Busch, *Moeck Music*, Celle, 2005)

Jubilee Prayer

'Your fine composition for the Millennium Service for Wales has received unqualified praise. The combination of the Leviticus text and the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym was inspired, while the original music succeeded in lifting our hearts and spirits.... Undoubtedly, your "Jubilee Prayer" was a highpoint of the service, leading the Prince of Wales to remark that he'd particularly appreciated the musical content of the occasion.' (Revd. Gethin Abraham-Williams, General Secretary, *Churches Together in Wales*, January 2000)

Visions of Sorrow and Joy

'... the choir... worked heroically, and there were moments in the orchestra which provided a welcome contrast to the permeating dark, *Angst*-ridden mood.' (Roderick Dunnett, *Church Times* February 1999)

'Brian Inglis' exciting new work, *Visions of Sorrow and Joy*, heard for the first time, was a powerful experience for all concerned' (*Bath Chronicle* February 1999)

Flute Sonata

'We were highly impressed with your piece, and hope to programme it in a recital in the future.' (Dr Malcolm Galloway, judge, *Kathryn Thomas Flute Composition Competition* 1999)

Rondeau Chocuna

'A significant addition to the repertoire'. (Piers Hellowell, workshop with Lesley Hatfield, solo violin, *Sonorities Festival* 1997)