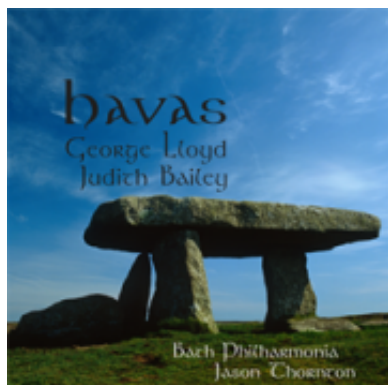


Le Pont du Gard & Havas



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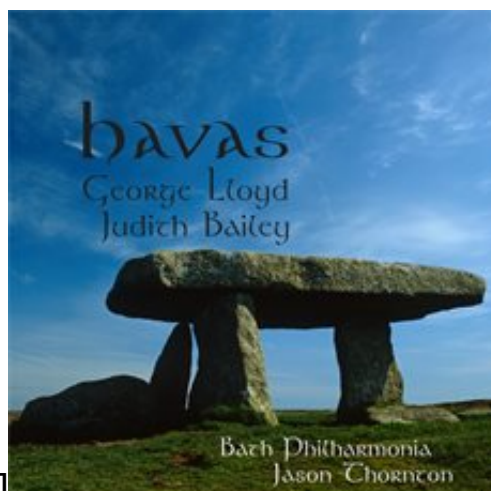
Short Description

George Lloyd and Judith Bailey

Bath Philharmonia conducted by Jason Thornton.

Description

Judith BAILEY (b. 1941)



Havas – a period of summer, op. 44 (1991) [18:12]

Concerto for orchestra, op. 55 (1996) [17:20]

George LLOYD (1913-1998)

The Serf – Prelude to Act II (1938) [5:44]

In Memoriam (1982) [5:51]

Le Pont du Gard (1990) [10:56]

HMS Trinidad March (1941, rev. 1945) [6:03]

Miriam Lowbury (cello) (concerto)
Jennie-Lee Keetley (cor anglais) (*Le Pont*)
Bath Philharmonia/Jason Thornton
rec. St Jude's Church, Hampstead Garden Suburb.
London, 7 April 2014

All world premiere recordings
EM RECORDS EMRCD026 [64:09]

In a varied programme, Baileys *Havas* (an old Cornish word meaning summertime) evokes Cornish landscapes whilst Lloyd's *Le Pont du Gard* depicts the famous Roman aqueduct in France. The disc also includes Lloyd's *In Memoriam* and the *Prelude to Act II of The Serf*, and Bailey's *Concerto for Orchestra*, and is rounded off by the orchestral version of *HMS Trinidad March*, which had its British premiere at the Last Night of the Proms in 2013. (The march was first played in Switzerland in 1947 by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, under Ansermet.)

Reviews:

This will undoubtedly make my *Recordings of the Year* - congratulations to all concerned. **David Barker**

...*Le Pont du Gard* is a fairly late work, a short tone poem inspired by the remarkable Roman aqueduct in France. It's an interesting piece, nicely scored for the orchestra and including a prominent part for solo cor anglais, here well played by Jennie-Lee Keetley....This is a most enjoyable programme. All the music, by both composers, is attractive and rewarding. Jason Thornton and the Bath Philharmonia give every piece fine advocacy and they've been recorded most sympathetically by producer Matthew Dilley and engineer Richard Bland. The documentation is comprehensive. **John Quinn**

Lloyd's **In Memoriam** was written in memory of the IRA outrage bombing in 1982 in Regent's Park. This killed four soldiers and seven horses of the Blues and Royals and left many soldiers and some eight civilians injured. It may be familiar in its brass band version which was recorded as part of *The Royal Parks* suite on Albany TROY 051-2. It is a dignified slow march of a piece with a private, introspective and unsentimental character. It's certainly not an all stops out exercise in grieving pomp and circumstance. At 5:21 a Finzian clarinet statement stands proud. The **Pont du Gard** is the 1st century roman aqueduct carrying water 160ft above the Gardon river in France. Lloyd wrote this orchestral sketch while on holiday there in 1990. In his superscription he mentions shepherd pipers. They can be heard in this short work which is less of a pretty postcard and more of an evocation of ancient times. In that sense it is a little like Ireland's *Forgotten Rite*. There's also a fleeting touch of Vaughan Williams' *The Wasps* overture. Something of the sunset has again seeped into the bones of this soft contemplative score that liberates the thoughts to wander. The occasional brass shudder and strutting march (5:05) might

be read as relating to the Roman legionaries but this piece deals in gentle pastels rather than glare and saturation. At almost 11 minutes it is the longest of these four orchestral essays. The disc is resoundingly rounded off by the *HMS Trinidad March*. This was first recorded in its brass band version. The orchestral score received its première at the [Last Night of the Proms in 2013](#). I can make no great claims for this piece but it is catchy and cracks along smartly enough. It was written in 1941 while Lloyd was serving aboard the newly commissioned convoy protection vessel that bears the march's name. It is rather accomplished and smooth light music with none of the rasp and tragedy associated with the later history of the vessel. The same can be said of the Fourth Symphony which marked Lloyd's emergence from a very dark psychological episode. Given HMS Trinidad's deployment in the Murmansk convoys it's intriguing that after the first few flourishes a cheery swinging Soviet-style marching ballad puts in an appearance ... and not for the last time. **Rob Barnett**

MUSIC WEB INTERNATIONAL REVIEW RECORDING OF THE MONTH

This is a very important recording for a number of reasons. Firstly, all six works are first recordings. Secondly, it shows the ambitions of EM Records, the publishing arm of the English Music Festival, to include works by living composers, and to extend its catalogue of orchestral music (*Over Hill, Over Dale*, a collection of works for strings - [EMRCD017](#) - and the Stanford & Milford violin concertos - [EMRCD023](#)). Thirdly, it highlights a regional English orchestra, the Bath Philharmonia, the very existence of which is pleasing in these times of straitened financial circumstances for orchestras around the world. Finally, and perhaps the most important of all: the music itself is excellent.

Judith Bailey and George Lloyd were both born in Cornwall, providing a rationale for their pairing on this disc. This website has a number of pages dedicated to Judith Bailey, including [biographical information](#) and [photographs from the recording sessions](#) for this disc. The only other recording featuring her compositions is a 2007 Metier release of instrumental and chamber works, [reviewed here](#).

Havas is a Cornish word meaning “a period of summer” and the three movements portray different Cornish locations. The music is skilfully written to depict these scenes: grandeur and gravitas for the Neolithic standing stones of Lanyon Quoit, delicate dance music for the stone circle of The Merry Maidens and the water’s ebb and flow for Gwavas Lake, a holy site on the

coastline. The work is very cinematic and brings to mind Malcolm Arnold, with the obvious dance and Cornish connections.

The concerto, commissioned for the principal cellist of the Southampton Orchestra where Judith Bailey was conductor (see note), features solo parts for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, trumpet, trombone and, of course, cello. The cello provides the links between the various sections of the single-movement work. It begins very busily and without much in the way of melody, relying on rhythmic interest and instrumental colour. The central slower section has much in common with the outer movements of *Havas*, in terms of melody and grandeur. The closing pages are full of vigour and interest, without resorting to immense percussion crescendos which seem to be the stock in trade for many contemporary composers.

Having been left somewhat underwhelmed by much of the earlier chamber music recording, I was not expecting to be so impressed by these two works. Certainly, Bailey's unrecorded three symphonies offer a tantalising prospect for an adventurous label (hint, hint).

George Lloyd is best known for his twelve symphonies. He was unfortunate to be born into an era where tonal and melodic art music was scorned, and was a victim of post-war BBC music programming. Given the loyal support of his music by the Albany label which has recorded all the symphonies and a number of other works (not forgetting [Lyrita](#)), I was surprised that each of these were first recordings. They are, as you would expect from this composer, well-crafted, conservative in nature – by which I mean tuneful – and certainly not deserving of such neglect. The highlight is *Le Pont du Gard*, written after a visit to the Roman viaduct in southern France. It has a distinct French impressionist imprint, and towards the end, a jaunty, very Vaughan Williams-like “march”. The *HMS Trinidad March* was written for the commissioning of the cruiser on which Lloyd served in the Royal Marines Band. It was performed at the 2013 Last Night of the Proms.

Presumably, the choice of the orchestra was partly based on financial grounds, but there is absolutely no sense of it being a bargain-basement option. It sounds well-rehearsed, absolutely together and committed to music that none of the performers would have ever seen or heard.

This will undoubtedly make my *Recordings of the Year* - congratulations to all concerned.

David Barker

A second review ...

What a good idea to programme the first recordings of a number of orchestral works by two Cornish composers on the same CD.

After years – indeed, decades – of neglect the music of George Lloyd finally came in from the cold in the 1970s, initially on disc and gradually in the concert hall. However, the music of Judith Bailey is less well known. I have heard one disc of her chamber music, which was made in 2007 ([review](#)) but until now that may be her sole representation on disc. The moving spirit behind that disc was my erstwhile MusicWeb colleague, Patrick Waller, and he's been heavily involved in this latest enterprise too. Not only is he one of the executive producers of this disc but he was responsible for the composition of Judith Bailey's *Concerto for Orchestra*, which he commissioned as a birthday gift for his wife in 1996.

That work was completed towards the end of the long period during which Judith Bailey was conductor of the Southampton Concert Orchestra. Patrick Waller's wife, Jean, was principal cellist of the orchestra and so, in a nice touch, the Concerto includes a prominent part for the first cello. Also well to the fore are the principal flute, oboe and clarinet players as well as their counterparts in the horn, trumpet and trombone sections. So far as I can tell the solo opportunities for these players, when they occur, are as part of two trios: wind and brass. The work is cast in one movement which is sub-divided into several sections, some of which are introduced by passages of cello recitative. At its core (5:51 – 11:10) lies a pensive slow section of no little beauty. That section is dominated at first by the principal cello, here splendidly played by Miriam Lowbury, and later the strings as a whole take up the argument. Near the start of the work we hear two themes associated with aspects of Mrs Waller's Zodiac sign, Cancer. From the composer's note it's clear that these themes play an important role in the piece. I must admit that I didn't find them terribly easy to pick up as the work unfolded; maybe that will come with greater

familiarity. There's a good deal of lively, busy writing for the orchestra either side of the central slow section and the work puts all the sections of the band through its paces - as a Concerto for Orchestra should do - though not in any outlandish ways. It seems to be to be well written for the modern orchestra and is an attractive and inventive score.

The Concerto for Orchestra is essentially an abstract work. The three movements of *Havas* are, I suppose, programmatic in that they depict three places in Cornwall. The first, *Lanyon Quoit*, is inspired by a Neolithic monument, a picture of which adorns the front of the booklet. This place inspires broad, impressive music from Judith Bailey. The second movement, *The Merry Maidens* is inspired by an old Cornish legend about some young girls who dodged a Sunday church service to dance in the open air. After a merry dance – nicely depicted in the orchestra – they were turned to stones – the Merry Maidens – for their temerity in disrespecting the Sabbath. This movement, nicely orchestrated, has a fresh open air feel to it. The longest movement, *Gwavas Lake*, is inspired by an area of coastal water which used to be an inland lake until, centuries ago, what we now know as coastal erosion claimed part of the surrounding land for the sea. This movement has a good deal of expansive, richly scored music – think *Tintagel*. I liked it very much. These three movements are attractive, accessible and well-imagined for the orchestra. With the benefit of a strong performance by Jason Thornton and his orchestra they certainly make their mark here.

I've always liked George Lloyd's music ever since I attended a couple of Manchester studio recordings by Sir Edward Downes and the BBC Philharmonic well over thirty years ago – the Fourth Symphony and *November Journeys* for brass. A little later the orchestra with which I played at the time (the Slaithwaite Philharmonic) performed his attractive Sixth Symphony. Ours was only the second performance of the work: the BBC Philharmonic gave the premiere just a few weeks earlier at the Proms. Lloyd was a charming man and took a great interest in our performance.

A good number of George Lloyd's scores, including all his symphonies, have since made it onto disc but some remain unrecorded so the Lloyd segment of this programme neatly fills some gaps. His opera *The Serf* was well received in 1938 but then fell into neglect and, despairing of a revival, the composer fashioned two orchestral

suites from it in the 1980s, as we learn from the comprehensive notes by William Lloyd. The first of these has been recorded but the second and this Act II prelude were not – George Lloyd died before he could record them. So this 2014 recording is probably the first time this Prelude has been heard since 1938. Since I don't know what action it introduces in the opera it's a little hard to judge it in its dramatic or illustrative sense save to say that it's an attractive piece containing pleasing melodies for the strings and the woodwinds.

Le Pont du Gard is a fairly late work, a short tone poem inspired by the remarkable Roman aqueduct in France. It's an interesting piece, nicely scored for the orchestra and including a prominent part for solo cor anglais, here well played by Jennie-Lee Keetley.

One of the many blows which George Lloyd suffered in life was his wartime experience when he was serving in the Arctic convoys on the cruiser, *HMS Trinidad*, which Lloyd joined as a bandsman in 1941 just before the ship was completed. The following year she was badly damaged when torpedoed *en route* to Russia and Lloyd was traumatised by seeing many of his comrades killed. He was evacuated off the ship in Russia and so was not on board when she was sunk on her way back to Britain for repairs. The march here recorded was composed for the ship at the request of the ship's bandmaster. For a time it seemed as if a rival march by a composer known to the ship's captain, one Ralph Vaughan Williams, might be adopted instead but Lloyd's march won through. The full story is related in the notes. It's a bright, confident and memorably melodic march; just right, I should think, for getting the toes of a ship's company tapping. After the war, while living in Switzerland Lloyd re-scored the piece for full orchestra – in which guise it was first broadcast, slightly surprisingly, by Ansermet and the Suisse Romande orchestra. This is the version that was played at the 2013 Last Night of the Proms and Jason Thornton and his musicians use it to make a rousing conclusion to their programme.

In Memoriam has a link with *HMS Trinidad*. In July 1982, in an IRA atrocity, a bomb went off in Hyde Park, killing several soldiers of the Blues and Royals and wounding many more. Lloyd lived just round the corner and was one of the first on the scene. Inevitably, the carnage triggered memories of the torpedoing of his ship in the war

and he was unable to compose for some time. Returning to composition, he wrote this piece, which is dedicated to those who lost their lives that day in Hyde Park. It strikes me as a deeply felt, dignified piece which impresses not least on account of its restraint. There's an Elgarian quality to the music, I find.

This is a most enjoyable programme. All the music, by both composers, is attractive and rewarding. Jason Thornton and the Bath Philharmonia give every piece fine advocacy and they've been recorded most sympathetically by producer Matthew Dilley and engineer Richard Bland. The documentation is comprehensive.

[John Quinn](#)

A third review ...

Here is another acutely judged and well played and recorded CD of British music from EM Records. This one bears high the flag of Cornwall's patron saint, St Piran. These two Cornish composers come from succeeding generations. Each is a practitioner of tonal music. Lloyd enjoyed attention early in his career, while something of a prodigy, but was completely and then by and large, neglected until the late 1970s. Concerts, recordings and commissions came along during his last two decades. Judith Bailey, who is well documented on this site, has had very modest attention but I hope that this CD will be the prelude to much more. There are for example a clarinet concerto, two numbered symphonies and *A Cliff Walk Symphony* all of which I would very much like to hear.

The two Bailey works from the 1990s are not at all severe. The three movement *Havas* - a sort of Cornish symphonic dances - is extremely approachable. The first signs-in with an easeful tolling like a slow motion dance. This becalming swing continues over into *The Merry Maidens*. This includes some rain-drenched storminess (4.10). There's certainly a chill in the air. *Gwavas Lake* has an intensely oceanic atmosphere swept by the great wash and swell of the sea which can also be heard here in regal finery redolent of the bass line in Bax's *Tintagel*.

The *Concerto for Orchestra* is modest in dimensions but is a shade more oblique than *Havas*. It required several hearings before

giving up some of its secrets. It's in a single continuous movement. We start (and end) with a raging flame of a dance in the woodwind. This is reminiscent of the wild possessed whirling in Mussorgsky's *Night on the Bare Mountain*. There's a passionate cello solo which reads as if calling the listener back from some City of Dreadful Night. This emerges again at 5.43 and heralds a long, contented, dreamlike expressionist section. Here there is some extremely beautiful high-lying string writing which sounds very clean and silvery. This then melts back into a further cello solo that, like a beatitude, induces healing calm. There are several extrovert episodes along the way including one recurrent idea (13:55) that carries echoes of the ruthless marching pages in Kurt Weill's First Symphony. One quibble: the piece ends with a conventional affirmative gesture; surprising given the subtle and imaginative flux of the rest.

Last year saw the centenary of [George Lloyd](#)'s birth as thirty years earlier had seen the Bax centenary. What a difference. The 'burden' of the Bax centenary was shouldered by the BBC in quantity and in style; no fewer than thirteen studio broadcast programmes. The substance of the Lloyd centenary was carried by the private sector. The [Fifth](#) and [Sixth](#) symphonies were heard by orchestras outside the big ten while it fell to [Surrey Opera](#) to revive *Iernin* one of Lloyd's three grand operas.

First we hear the gentle undulations of the **Prelude to Act II of *The Serf***, Lloyd's second opera. Unlike *Iernin* and *John Socman* we have nothing of *The Serf* on CD apart from an extended orchestral suite (cond. David Allan Miller, Albany TROY 458) which, as far as I can see, did not include this Act II prelude. It's a contrast with the rollicking dramatic Act I Prelude which I first heard in one of the late Leslie Head's Kensington SO concerts in 1980 at St John's Smith Square. This piece is a peaceful pastoral wash of prolonged evening sun without the disturbance of an overt climax: a continuum of sunset. This exercise in quasi-Delian sweet string tone is nicely drawn out and makes an atmospheric scene-setter. At 4:17 a sterner moment is redolent of the slow movement of Lloyd's Sixth Symphony.

Lloyd's **In Memoriam** was written in memory of the IRA outrage bombing in 1982 in Regent's Park. This killed four soldiers and seven horses of the Blues and Royals and left many soldiers and some eight civilians injured. It may be familiar in its brass band version which was recorded as part

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The English-only 22 pages of liner-note is by Judith Bailey and William Lloyd who has done so much to keep the Lloyd revival turning.

EM Records should pay a return visit to the excellent Bath Philharmonia under Jason Thornton if this programme is anything to judge by.

Rob Barnett

Note – support for this recording was provided by a former staff member and reviewer for MusicWeb International, Dr Patrick Waller, and his wife Jeanie, for whom the concerto was commissioned by her husband for her birthday.