
TOCCATA
CLASSICS
Robin STEVENS
ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME THREE
MOURNING INTO DANCING
VIOLA CONCERTO
CONCERT RONDO
Katherine Bryan, flute
Paul Silverthorne, viola
Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Paul Mann
FIRST RECORDINGS

ROBIN STEVENS, 1958–2026: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

by Paul Mann

My long association with Martin Anderson and the unique creation of his that is Toccata Classics has yielded some extraordinary musical discoveries, and a number of personal associations and friendships with composers that I have valued no less highly. The most recent of these, Robin Stevens, came into my life sometime in the summer of 2024, and the first thing I learned about him – apart from his prodigious output of almost 180 works – was that he did not have long to live. The cancer that eventually claimed him on 16 February 2026 was already well advanced, and throughout our ensuing project the clock was ticking loudly in the foreground.

As is somehow often the case in such situations, everything fell into place quickly. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra miraculously found space in its crowded schedule for nine days of recording sessions spread over two periods in the summer of 2025, and I spent much of the intervening time editing the ten scores we were due to record – over three hours of music - and producing entirely new performance material. Robin, meanwhile, kept the illness at bay for long enough to be present at all of the sessions. Even though he was easily tired – and the strain was increasingly evident – he remained actively involved in the editing process, and everything that can be heard on these albums was approved by him. It is a tribute to the whole team that Robin lived long enough to hold at least the first two volumes in his own hands.

His stature as a composer immediately became clear as we began working together. The attentive listener, even without access to the scores, will immediately perceive the manner in which a rigorous intellect and an urgent need to communicate are held in balance. There are rarely two adjacent bars with the same time-signature, and frequent thorny polymetric puzzles to solve, such as in the scherzo of the Cello Concerto in which different parts of the orchestra are playing simultaneously in $\frac{7}{8}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$, but with all the barlines coinciding. Then there is the charming miniature, the listener-friendly *Oceanic Lullaby*, which requires players to divide bars of $\frac{2}{4}$ into groups of

3 and 5, and bars of $\frac{3}{4}$ into groups of 4 and 7. Needless to say, this kind of thing requires a virtuoso orchestra, and the RSNO dealt with it all magnificently and entirely unfazed.

Robin throws such party games into the mix merely as a necessary component of what he has to say. The range of emotional expression in his music is a close reflection of his own nature – not necessarily a universal quality in composers, whose personalities sometimes seem to rest uneasily with their work. He was often lively, exuberant, even irrepressible, and one felt at times that he was helpless in the face of the rate at which ideas flowed out of him. But he was also intensely reflective, and his profoundly held (but never forcefully proffered) Christian faith was ever-present. Some of the most impressive moments in these orchestral works are in the slow movements, in which he had Britten's gift of hitting upon a tiny fragment of melody or motif that can quietly get under the skin and disturb sleep. Perhaps above all, he had an innate but well-honed sense of musical structure. The considerable scale on which his larger works unfold – for example, the three concertos, for bassoon, cello and viola respectively – is never mere prolixity, and was complemented by his talents as a miniaturist.

It is sometimes the case that the conductor, assuming he is well-enough prepared, can become frustrated by a composer who doesn't seem to know what he has written. But not with Robin. I've rarely met a composer with such an ear for his own music, with so clear an idea of what he expected to hear. He could therefore be demanding, but was never slow to show his warm appreciation when he felt we'd got it right. The dedication to me of his last symphonic work, *Into the Deep* (punningly and touchingly gifted 'with deep appreciation') was made when he realised just how much I loved the piece. He also sent me, shortly before he died, a couple of short choral works, which arrived just as one might more usually receive a Christmas card.

So I can only hope, as I always do with such projects, that we have given these pieces the best possible start and that Robin Stevens' music will find its audience. Robin himself will be remembered with admiration and affection by all who knew him and – as I had occasion to tell him myself – I can only hope that, should life see fit to throw at me the same things it threw at him, I will be able to handle them with a fraction of his dignity and courage.

THE EMERGENCE OF A COMPOSER

by Robin Stevens

It has been well said that composers are born, not made. True, appropriate guidance and encouragement from tutors and peers can hasten the flowering of a budding talent, helping a young composer to acquire the technique to say, clearly and effectively, what he or she has to say. But actually having something to say... that, surely, is a gift from above.

Key influences in my early years included hearing my mother (the pianist and lecturer Gillian Butterworth) practising the piano when I was very small; apparently, I used to sing myself to sleep, aged three or four, with tasteful selections from the works of Chopin, Schumann and Brahms. My preoccupation with harmony I put down to two causes: playing the cello in a youth orchestra during my teens, and singing alto in a church choir once my voice broke, when I was twelve. My early taste in music was refined, but rather narrow; the music of the First Viennese School (Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven) dominated my listening for the first two decades of my life.

I was a late developer as a composer, though through my teens I became adept at imitating Mozart's style, and as an undergraduate (with first-study cello rather than composition) I relished the harmony and counterpoint exercises which, in the late 1970s, were still an indispensable component of a *bona fide* music degree. My main difficulty with those exercises was not being able strictly to keep to the rules of whichever style I was meant to be imitating – instinct, and the urge to express myself individually, simply would kick in, a fault many composers apparently share. Nevertheless, I believe the exercises provided a worthwhile technical grounding that, in the long term, proved beneficial, even if, in the short term, the conservative stylistic parameters of the exercises fettered my musical imagination.

A serious difficulty for me as I entered my twenties was that I didn't like modern music very much! In my undergraduate days serialism and the Darmstadt School

still held sway, in academia at least, and I found most of that music soulless, and too clever for its own good. I still do. But some twentieth-century, if not genuinely modern, pieces lit my fire, most notably Walton's First Symphony, Bloch's *Schelomo,* Bartók's First Piano Concerto, Lutosławski's Concerto for Orchestra and Vaughan Williams' *Flos Campi.* Vaughan Williams' folk-inspired modality still, to a degree, colours my melodic and harmonic style. I am also indebted to the lecturer and composer Geoffrey Poole, who, discerning that my earliest attempts at composition tended towards squareness and predictability, nudged me in the direction of plainsong: the rhythmic freedom of plainsong, and its absence of conventional underpinning harmony, unlocked my melodic imagination, and set me on a more personal and purposeful musical journey.

For five years in my late twenties I worked on the staff of an Anglican Church in York, writing a large quantity of choral and congregational music in a consciously approachable idiom. Two stylistic legacies of that time on my classical compositions have been an unabashed love of melody, and a willingness to wear my heart on my sleeve – speaking unambiguously, where required, rather than hiding behind a mask of ironic sophistication.

In my early thirties my creative development was hamstrung by a debilitating post-viral fatigue, which frustratingly hung on for a full seventeen years, during which time I wrote no major compositions. However, I did find the strength to write a series of shorter pieces, a stylistic laboratory for the large-scale works which were to follow. I find that the miniature is an excellent context in which to take risks and experiment: if a particular avenue of thought proves a dead-end, a few days have been 'wasted' (though still, often, learned from), whereas an unsuccessful major piece might mean several months of seemingly fruitless toil.

I am especially grateful that I have never been in the position of having to live from commissions, with all the associated pressures of deadlines and contractual obligations. Being free from time-constraints, I can allow a piece to unfold naturally and unhurriedly, and that definitely works best for me. My compositional process is a paradoxical amalgam: a spontaneous overflow of the soul, working in combination with cool, considered calculation. Since I began recording my major works in 2020,

I have valued the opportunity to revisit and revise my earlier compositions, allowing my calculating side perhaps more sway. The changes I have made have never, I believe, compromised the expressive essence of a particular piece: however, the skills I have acquired over the years – and the improved ability dispassionately to assess the worth of a composition after the passage of time – have, I hope, enabled each of my large-scale pieces, in their revised versions, to say what they have to say more clearly and concisely.

Writing now in my late sixties, I am more convinced than ever that the primary shaper of my musical style and aesthetic is Beethoven. I need music to make logical sense, to develop, to progress, to go somewhere and get somewhere. I need it to have heart, to speak to the depths of who I am, and to have a definite spiritual dimension.

Although I enjoy music which is colourful and makes skilful use of texture and sonority, those are not, for me, the primary musical elements, and I am distrustful of music which is principally a succession of sonic effects rather than a coherent progression of ideas. And minimalism and world musics (from outside Europe) have had little impact on my musical language, though the syncopations and 'blue' notes of jazz *are* recurring threads in my output. Chorales appear regularly, thanks more to Bruckner and Messiaen than to Bach, and the rich complexity of Messiaen's harmonic language has been a considerable spur in helping me forge a personal compositional style. The additive rhythms and asymmetrical bar-metres of eastern-European folk-music abound in my scores, and from Elliot Carter I learned both polyrhythms, and also the sonic gambit of pitting a loud, *staccato* foreground against a quiet, sustained background. Of contemporary British composers James MacMillan is the figure I most easily identify with, for his courage in daring to juxtapose simplicity and complexity, and for his willingness to be his true self, regardless of the transient musical fashions of the day.

Mourning into Dancing, a tone-poem for medium-sized symphony orchestra with augmented percussion section, was my first major orchestral work. It was composed in 2011, when I was in my mid-fifties, towards the end of six years of study for a Ph.D. in Composition at Manchester University, and is an unbroken, thirteen-minute musical span in four main sections: Lament, Processional, Scherzo, and Jig and Chorale. The

Robin Stevens: Major Works in Chronological Order

String Quintet in C minor, for two violins, two violas and cello (1980–81)
Fantasy Sonata for violin and piano (1985)
Sonata Tempesta for violin and piano (1986)
Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello (1987)
Suite for Unaccompanied Cello (1988–89)
Three Character Pieces for cello and piano (2004)
Say Yes to Life for violin and piano; alternative version for cello and piano (2005)
String Quartet No. 1 (2008)
Fantasy Trio for flute, guitar and cello (2009)
Romantic Fantasy for flute, clarinet, harp and string quartet (2010)
String Quartet No. 2, *Three Portraits* (2011)
Mourning into Dancing for orchestra (2011)
Brass Odyssey for brass band and eight percussionists (2012–13)
Te Deum for choir and orchestra (2013)
Sonata for Three Bassoons (2014)
Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra (2014–16)
Sonata Romantica for cello and piano (2019)
Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet (2019–20)
Concerto for Cello and Orchestra (2018–20)
Concerto for Viola and Orchestra (2022–23)

work begins with a short, swift, strident introduction, which is a call to attention and a foil for the mainly slow music of the first two sections of the piece. Throughout the introduction [1], *Mourning into Dancing* is in search of a key, but, immediately A minor is established, a solo oboe begins the brief, heartfelt Lament [2].

As the Lament draws to a close, high flutes and low clarinets intone a mysterious four-note chorale. Then the two bassoons, playing in thirds, effect the transition into

the Processional [3], which, evoking the melancholy tread of a funeral march, contains the most searching music in the entire work. The Processional consists of two lengthy crescendos, the first of which climaxes in a very loud, widely spaced B minor chord – stark in its simplicity, after so much preceding dissonance – which collapses into an acidic combination of G minor and C sharp minor in the middle range of the orchestra. After a probing clarinet solo, the marching tread resumes, though soon seeming more to resemble the ominous ticking of a giant clock. Upper wind extend the chorale, heard at the end of the Lament, into a two-phrase theme, and then a brief fanfare leads into a weighty sustained melody on piccolo and unison strings. The section reaches its apogee with an amplified restatement of the earlier climax, a widely spaced minor chord again collapsing into a harsh bitonal discord. Over a tremolo accompaniment, a solo bassoon sings out an impassioned recitative, leading directly into the Scherzo.

After the dramatic close of the Processional, the Scherzo [4], as if shell-shocked, begins warily in near silence, *col legno* and *pizzicato* strings articulating a continuous quaver pulse. The mood lightens as the woodwind, playing in rhythmic unison, introduce the jazzy, four-phrase theme upon which the whole section is founded. I consciously chose to treat this theme in a colourist, nineteenth-century Russian manner, as displayed, for example, in the finale of Tchaikovsky's Second Symphony; consequently, there is no motivic development, interest centring instead upon the fresh instrumentation which clothes each new appearance of the theme. Cohesion is achieved by the use of a seminal four-note chord, consisting of the pitches C, D, F sharp and G, which are shuffled and transposed into a host of permutations to provide the harmonic building blocks of much of the section. The fledgling chorale of the first two sections makes a single appearance in the Scherzo, now shorn of mystery and transformed into a bold, three-phrase melody, played by the strings, and replete with wildly swooping *glissandi*. An emphatic last rendering of the main jazzy theme of the Scherzo subsides into a cadenza for two bassoons, and the final section has arrived.

Although the Scherzo is predominantly in simple time, the Jig and Chorale [5] are in compound time throughout. The Jig is in fact a 'slip jig' – $\frac{9}{8}$ time rather than $\frac{6}{8}$ – and shyly emerges on solo clarinet against a teasing, disorientating, polyrhythmic accompaniment:

continuous quavers in the piccolo and flute (and, soon, violins) combining with violas playing a *staccato* note every six quavers, and cellos repeatedly playing five notes evenly spaced over eighteen quavers. The chorale, which has featured briefly in all the preceding sections of the work, is heard three times in the final section: first, early on, delicate and restrained in the wind and brass; second, mid-section, sensually in the strings; and third, near the end, triumphantly on flutes, trumpets and strings, pitted against a heroic horn counter-melody. The Jig and Chorale section is largely a high-spirited romp, but a degree of seriousness is provided by two more lyrical episodes, the first featuring solo cello and the second, solo viola. In the coda the polyrhythms of the start of the section return, and, amidst virtuosic interjections from a shrill E flat clarinet, the music builds inexorably to a life-affirming climax, horns and violas boldly taking centre-stage with joyful augmentations of the main slip-jig theme.

The *Concert Rondo*, for solo flute and chamber orchestra 6, exists, like a considerable number of my shorter pieces, in several versions. Originally written (in 2016) for treble recorder and piano, and also extant in a version for oboe and piano (also from 2016), I chose the flute as my preferred solo instrument for this orchestral arrangement because of its wider range and carrying power. The *Concert Rondo* is typical of my ventures into lighter music: tuneful and diatonic, but with, I trust, enough dissonant grit to avoid sentimentality and keep the listeners on their toes – the 'grit' here mainly consisting of occasional quartal and bitonal harmonies, and frequent false relations.

My Viola Concerto was written a couple of years after my Cello Concerto,[1] between April 2022 and February 2023, and like the earlier work it is an ambitious four-movement composition. The opening movement 7 begins quietly with the solo viola introducing two important ideas: a lyrical 'motto' theme, distinguished by expressive upward leaps; and a four-note phrase in contrary motion, played in double-stopping (echoed by *pizzicato* strings), the upper voice of which consists of three intervals of a falling third. Dissonant block harmony on the brass also makes a brief, tentative appearance; this feature will assume much more significance later in the piece.

[1] Recorded on Toccata Classics TOCC 0758.

The main body of the first movement is set in motion by an assertive, angular viola melody, accompanied by spiky interjections in the woodwind. This energetic opening paragraph eventually gives way to a second subject in which an arpeggio accompaniment of dovetailing clarinets imitates the regular, swinging trajectory of a pendulum. Against this backcloth, the viola – less confident now – sings out a smooth, four-square melody. A solo oboe soon takes over the lyrical role, the phrases become asymmetrical, and the accompaniment changes to a polyrhythmic opposition of quintuplets in the flutes and triplets in the viola, with a resulting increase in tension. After the briefest of climaxes, the music reaches rather calmer waters with two predominantly melodic passages: the first based upon the interval of a major sixth, the second based upon a major third.

The viola starts the development section by introducing some sprightly dance rhythms in double-stopping, over a sustained chord in cellos and double basses. Almost immediately another new idea is heard, a rapid sequence of five ornamented chords on the wind, with a trilling oboe to the fore. Winds are again centre-stage for a derivation of the four-note falling thirds motif from the start of the movement, now extended into a theme of three phrases, linked by short, animated interjections from the viola. These new ideas and derivations form the substance of the majority of the development section, with rapid, 'cinematic' switching from one theme (and one orchestral texture) to another.

Such a plethora of directional shifts can only be sustained for so long, and in time a series of dissonant orchestral conglomerations – each followed by an accompanied viola recitative – lead into the recapitulation. It begins with a loud restatement of the first subject, now on full orchestra rather than solo viola, with horns and trumpets in the ascendant. The 'pendulum' melody and the sixths and thirds passages are reprised, complete with fresh instrumentation and additional contrapuntal strands, and the music ebbs away almost to nothing. But that is not nearly the end of the movement! Over a four-chord ostinato on plucked strings, the viola introduces a completely new theme, which soon switches from one section of the orchestra to another. This theme dissipates, and the musical interest becomes largely rhythmic and textural rather than melodic, but the underlying harmony persists, building to a big climax, which is succeeded by

quiet, fleeting reminders of the motto theme and the contrary-motion phrase from the slow introduction. Finally, the assertive first-subject material returns to the viola, but now at a much slower tempo, and completely drained of its former vitality: the emotional turbulence of the preceding section has taken its toll, and the movement ends in indecision and uncertainty.

The scherzo [8] is first cousin to the parallel movement in my Cello Concerto. Both scherzi are placed second within a four-movement structure, and both make a virtue of brevity, acting as a foil for the expansive sweep of their surrounding movements. The scherzo of the Viola Concerto begins with a short micro-tonal phrase, played by the violins in major thirds, and then passed between the different string sections. The introductory phrase is briefly stretched and then, in compressed form, becomes an accompanying ostinato to the main scherzo theme, played in double-stopping by the viola: this theme, three phrases long, is marked by the continual alternation of duple and triple rhythms. The other significant ideas in this movement are a rapid, ascending, chromatic viola figure, answered by a descending cascade in the wind; an accompanying pattern based upon a monotone, played by the soloist using the technique known as *bariolage* (the fast alternation between an open string and a stopped note on a different string, often, as here, at the same pitch); and an ethereal chordal theme introduced by muted strings (accompanied by the aforementioned *bariolage*), which towards the end of the movement is taken up by the solo viola playing in fourths, imitated in inversion by two solo violins. After a brief, menacing climax the scherzo beats a hasty retreat, and all is quietness once more.

The slow movement, *Poco adagio* [9], begins in an atmosphere of suspense. Over a sustained bass pedal and violin *tremolandi* the viola plays a variant of the motto theme. Paired woodwind answer the viola, playing in thirds dissonant derivatives of the contrary-motion phrase from the first movement. With *tremolandi* persisting in the strings, the viola introduces a new melody, given an other-worldly character through its numerous micro-tonal inflections. Several more subsidiary ideas follow; then an unusual passage in which a timpani ostinato, short fanfares on paired wind and brass and dissonant double-stops on the viola suggest a solemn procession, even a

death-march. Next, over an oscillating string accompaniment, a solo oboe, imitated by the viola, sings an impassioned lament which grows to a brief, acerbic climax. An air of mystery returns through a two-voice *pizzicato* counterpoint on solo viola, accompanied by orchestral string harmonics, and is sustained through the bowed, largely double-stopped viola theme (again flavoured by micro-tones) which concludes the first half of the movement.

The mid-point of the slow movement is marked by two blazes of orchestral colour, both of which are succeeded by reminders of the motto theme from the soloist, echoed by flute and piccolo. Then, after a short viola cadenza and equally brief transition, the second half of the movement embarks on a varied reprise of the first. The pattern of embellished restatement is temporarily broken, however, on the reappearance of the lament, formerly given to the oboe and now transferred to the viola, imitated by the bassoon: this passage continues to build until the dramatic reintroduction, on the brass, *fortissimo*, of the dissonant block harmony from the introductory bars of the first movement, now extended to form a shattering climax – the emotional apex of the entire concerto. Very gradually, in the wake of such a catastrophic outburst, a measure of calm is restored, and consolatory music from earlier in the movement returns. There is a last sting in the tail as trumpets and timpani abrasively recall the dead-march rhythmic ostinato, but finally the music dies away in the lower reaches of the orchestra.

The Finale 10 at once seeks to dispel all vestiges of gloom and melancholy. Brief wind fanfares and scurrying viola passage-work rapidly lead into the principal idea of the movement, a rhythmic pattern of either six or nine quavers (played *staccato* by the brass, complete with off-beat accents), alternating with two or three crotchets (played by wind and strings, *tenuto*), all played at a very loud dynamic. Strings alone take over this idea (*arco* for the quavers, *pizzicato* for the crotchets) at a more restrained dynamic, enabling the viola to add a lyrical counterpoint to the musical texture. The wistful second subject is a chorale introduced by the strings, accompanied by bubbling quavers in the bassoons. Then follows the first episode, an eccentric 'stream of consciousness' section which switches unpredictably from cooing flutes to squawking oboes to an earnest, double-stopped viola, the last trying desperately hard to restore a sense of decorum, but

to no avail. All at once the music has reached a reprise of the main idea of the movement, but with the rhythmic pattern initially reversed (that is, crotchets followed by quavers, rather than vice versa). The chorale is heard again, the oboe carrying the top line, echoed by the trumpet. Then, after a short reminder of the cooing flutes, the second episode has arrived. Against a spare string accompaniment, the oboe sings a jaunty, dance-like melody, soon taken up by the viola, then the bassoon, and then again by the viola, this last rendering with imitation counterpoint in the flute.

Once more the principal idea returns, wind rather than brass now alternating with strings so that a new viola counter-melody can be heard, but the music soon moves into a more extensive working-out of the chorale, given fresh orchestral garb, but also compressed, stretched and transformed into music of urgency and intensity. Without warning, the climactic final reprise of the principal idea is heard, complete with a soaring counterpoint on flute, piccolo and viola. Dramatic altercations between a quiet, pleading soloist, and the full orchestra, *fortissimo*, lead to an extensive viola cadenza, which draws upon material from both the finale and the first movement.

The cadenza segues seamlessly into the reflective coda, in which several of the melodic strands running through the concerto are poignantly woven together to form a regretful leave-taking. Trumpets, with a brief heavenward glance, herald reminiscences on the viola of the motto theme with which the work began. Finally, within the lingering ambiguities of the closing bars, an unexpected peace is revealed.

Robin Stevens' Orchestral Music on Toccata Classics

TOCC 0758

TOCC 0764

Two comments on Volume One:

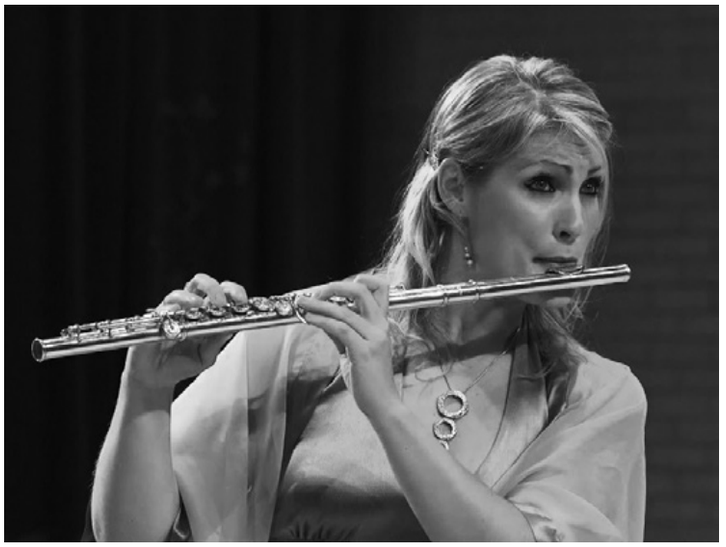
'a composer of considerable accomplishment [….]
I was so glad to have made his acquaintance'

—Dominic Hartley, *Fanfare*

'superbly recorded and presented'

—Paul R.W. Jackson, MusicWeb International

Katherine Bryan, flute, made her concerto debut at the age of fifteen, and has since performed as soloist with orchestras around the world. She had a stellar apprenticeship: she won a full scholarship to study flute at the Juilliard School, was a prize-winner at the Royal Overseas League Competition in London and the Young Concert Artists Competition in New York and was a finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year for three consecutive competitions. She was also awarded the Julius Isserlis Scholarship by the Royal Philharmonic Society.



Her debut recording, of concertos by Huë, Liebermann, Nielsen and Poulenc, was released by Linn Records in 2010. A second concerto album, with the Ibert and Rouse concertos, came out in 2013, also on Linn. Her third, *Silver Bow*, a collection of violin transcriptions for flute and orchestra, was released, again by Linn, in 2015. A recording of opera transcriptions, *Silver Voice*, was released by Chandos in 2017. In 2024 Linn, again, brought out an album with concertos written for her by Martin Suckling and Jay Capperauld – which she had premiered – alongside works by Anna Clyne, Sir James MacMillan and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.

Katherine Bryan has been Principal Flute with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra since she was 21, also playing as Guest Principal flute with orchestras throughout the UK and across the world. She is in much demand as a teacher and tutor (she has run her own flute course on the banks of Loch Lomond) and often performs live on radio and TV. In 2019, she was named by *BBC Music Magazine* as one of the top six international flute-players of all time.

Paul Silverthorne, viola, has combined a prolific solo career with the principal position in two of the most prestigious ensembles in London: the London Symphony Orchestra (from 1990 to 2015) and the London Sinfonietta since 1988. He has been a frequent visitor to the USA for solo performances at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and with orchestras across the country. He has also given master-classes at the Juilliard and Manhattan schools and many US universities as well as conservatoires and universities in Europe and Asia.

His solo performances have also taken him to Australia, China, Japan, Russia, Ukraine and Africa as well as closer to home in the UK and Europe. After a performance at the BBC Proms in London, *The Times* described him as 'a virtuoso in sensitivity and technique'. He is particularly

renowned for his interpretation of new music, and his commitment to this activity has led to close relationships with some of the leading composers of the day, many of whom have been inspired to write for him. His recordings cover a wide range of repertoire for leading labels and have received widespread acclaim.

He has taught at the Royal Academy of Music in London for nearly three decades and many of his former students, coming from all corners of the globe, now hold prominent positions in orchestras around the world.
www.paulsilverthorne.com

Paul Mann is a regular guest-conductor with many orchestras throughout Europe, the USA, Australia and the Far East. His work as chief conductor of the Odense Symphony Orchestra in Denmark achieved considerable critical success, particularly in the symphonies of Beethoven, Elgar, Mahler, Schumann and Shostakovich; with it he made numerous recordings of a wide range of repertoire, for such labels as Bridge, DaCapo and EMI.

He first came to international attention as winner of the 1998 Donatella Flick Conducting Competition, as a result of which he was also appointed assistant conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. He made his LSO debut shortly afterwards, and subsequently collaborated frequently with the Orchestra, in both the concert-hall and the recording studio. Special projects with the LSO included the Duke Ellington Centenary Concert at the Barbican Hall with Wynton Marsalis, and a famous collaboration with the legendary rock group Deep Purple in two widely acclaimed performances of Jon Lord's *Concerto for Group and Orchestra* at the Royal Albert Hall, the live DVD and CD of which remain international bestsellers. Among his most prominent recordings are the first-ever studio account of Lord's Concerto, with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, in collaboration with Jon Lord himself and a star-studded

cast of soloists, and the live recording of *Celebrating Jon Lord*, a special concert which took place at the Royal Albert Hall in April 2014 with an all-star cast paying tribute to the late composer.

This is his 33rd recording for Toccata Classics, furnishing a discography that spans a wide range of music, both new and forgotten. His first album for Toccata Classics was of orchestral works of Leif Solberg, closely followed by three-disc surveys of the complete orchestral music of the Scottish Romantic Charles O'Brien and of the Victorian English composer Henry Cotter Nixon, both series including works in his own orchestrations and reconstructions. He has recently been closely associated with a revival of interest in the music of the Swiss composer Richard Flury, recording the complete cycle of symphonies and other orchestral works with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, together with three of the composer's four operas, and many other shorter symphonic pieces, also including rarities in his own orchestrations. As often with his recordings, they were all made from his own specially created editions.

He has also established himself as a champion of contemporary British symphonists, recording the Ninth (TOCC 0393), Tenth and Thirteenth (TOCC 0452) and Fifteenth (TOCC 0456) Symphonies of David Hackbridge Johnson and the Third by Steve Elcock (TOCC 0400), each accompanied by smaller works, as well as the Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4 and tone-poem *Distant Nebulae* by Rodney Newton (TOCC 0459), together with explorations of other living British composers, including Rob Keeley and Arnold Griller and four volumes of music by Derek B. Scott. Latterly, an album (TOCC 0450) of Robin Holloway's orchestrations – of the Brahms Piano Quintet, Op. 34, as a Symphony in F minor, the Op. 23 *Variations on a Theme of Schumann* and Schumann's *Canonical Studies*, Op. 56 – has been particularly well received.

Paul Mann is curating, as well as conducting, a series of new works for string orchestra, *Music for My Love*, all written in memory of Yodit Tekle, the partner of Martin Anderson, founder of Toccata Classics. The first volume (TOCC 0333) featured music by Brahms (arranged by Ragnar Söderlind), Maddalena Casulana (arr. Colin Matthews), Brett Dean, Steve Elcock, Andrew Ford, Robin Holloway, Mihkel Kerem, Jon Lord (arr. Paul Mann), John Pickard, Poul Ruders and Ragnar Söderlind himself. The second volume presented music by Nicolas Bacri, Ronald Corp, Wim Hautekiet, Sean Hickey, John Kinsella, David Matthews, Phillip Ramey, Gregory Rose, Gerard Schurmann, José Serebrier, Robin Walker and Richard Whilds (TOCC 0370), and the third volume (TOCC 0504) brought music by Michael Csányi-Wills, David Braid, Martin Georgiev, Adam Gorb, Raymond Head, Ian Hobson, David Hackbridge Johnson, Robert Matthew-Walker, Lloyd Moore, Rodney Newton and Dana Paul Perna. Further volumes are in preparation.

Formed in 1891, the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** (RSNO) is one of Europe's leading symphony orchestras. Awarded royal patronage by Her Late Majesty The Queen in 1977, its special status in UK cultural life was cemented in 2007 when it was recognised as one of Scotland's five National Performing Companies, supported by the Scottish Government.

Led by its Music Director, Thomas Søndergård, the Orchestra performs across Scotland, including concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness, and appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival and the BBC Proms. It also tours internationally, most recently visiting the USA, China and Europe.

The RSNO has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving a 2020 *Gramophone* Classical Music Award for the Chopin Piano Concertos (soloist: Benjamin Grosvenor), conducted by Elim Chan, two Diapason d'Or awards (Denève/Roussel, 2007; Denève/Debussy, 2012) and eight Grammy Award nominations. In recent years, the RSNO has increasingly recorded soundtracks for film, television and video games, with notable titles including *Horizon: An American Saga* (Warner Bros.), *Life on Our Planet* (Netflix), *Star Wars Outlaws* (Ubisoft) and *The Woman King* (Sony Pictures). The Orchestra records at its bespoke in-house facility, Scotland's Studio, in Glasgow.

The RSNO believes that music can enrich lives and aims to inspire, educate and entertain people throughout Scotland and beyond with its performances, recordings and engagement programmes. Supporting schools, families, young professionals and wider communities, the RSNO delivers high-quality initiatives for all ages and abilities. Recent additions to RSNO engagement offerings have included an expansion of its singing strand to encompass Chorus Academies in Dundee and Glasgow, a lunchtime Workplace Choir and a Buggy Choir, in addition to the established and highly respected RSNO Youth Choruses and RSNO Chorus. The community choruses are designed with the benefits of group singing for health and wellbeing at their core and are open to all.

First Violins
Lena Zeliszewska, Associate Leader (Concerto)
David Adams, Guest Leader (other works)
Tamás Fejes, Assistant Leader (other works)
Patrick Curlett
Eleanor Wilkinson
Susannah Lowdon
Alan Manson
Liam Lynch
Caroline Parry
Liu-Yi Retallick
Ursula Heidecker Allen
Lorna Rough

Elizabeth Bamping
Helena Rose
Sharon Haslam
Joe Hodson
Veronica Marziano
Sian Holding

Second Violins
Marion Wilson, Associate Principal
Jacqueline Speirs
Colin McKee
Kirstin Drew
Robin Wilson
Nigel Mason
Sophie Lang
Harriet Hunter
Paul Medd
Tom Greed
Laura Embry
Seona Glen
Harry Kerr
John Robinson

Violas
Tom Dunn, Principal
Felix Tanner
Asher Zaccardelli
Francesca Hunt
Claire Dunn
Nicola McWhirter
Maria Trittinger
Beth Woodford
Katherine Wren
Lisa Rourke

Cellos
Pei-Jee Ng, Principal
Betsy Taylor
Kennedy Leitch
Rachael Lee
Sarah Digger
Robert Anderson
Niamh Molloy
Gunda Baranauskaitė
Susan Dance

Double-Basses
Nikita Naumov, Principal
Michael Rae
Moray Jones
Alexandre Cruz dos Santos
Yehor Podkolzin
Cole Morrison

Flutes
Jack Welch, Guest Principal
Frederico Paixão
Adam Richardson, piccolo

Oboes
Stéphane Rancourt, Guest Principal
Peter Dykes
Henry Clay, Principal Cor Anglais

Clarinets
Timothy Orpen, Principal
William Knight
Duncan Swindells, Principal Bass Clarinet

Bassoons
David Hubbard, Principal
Grant McKay
Paolo Dutto, Principal Contrabassoon

Horns
Benji Hartnell-Booth, Principal
Alison Murray
Martin Murphy

Trumpets
Christopher Hart, Principal
Katie Smith

Trombones
Dávur Juul Magnussen, Principal
Joshua Parkhill
Alastair Sinclair, Principal Bass Trombone

Tuba
Andy Duncan, Guest Principal

Timpani
Paul Philbert, Principal

Percussion
Simon Lowdon, Principal
Colin Hyson
David Kerr
Philip Hague
Peter Murch

Harp
Pippa Tunnell

Piano
Lynda Cochrane

Recorded on 16–18 June (Viola Concerto) and 7 and 8 August 2025 (other works)
in the New Auditorium, RSNO Centre, Glasgow
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Producer: Michael Ponder

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ROBIN STEVENS Orchestral Music, Volume Three

Mourning into Dancing (2011, rev. 2013)	**14:47**
1 Introduction: *Allegro con spirito, drammatico* –	0:46
2 Lament: *Adagio lamentoso* –	0:55
3 Processional: *Adagio con moto* –	4:41
4 Scherzo: *Allegro con spirito, ma non troppo* –	2:49
5 Jig and Chorale: *Allegro vivo*	5:35
***Concert Rondo* for Solo Flute and Small Orchestra** (2016)	**4:11**
6 *Allegro con spirito*, with sparkling vivacity	
Viola Concerto (2022–23)	**46:45**
7 I *Adagio con moto – Risoluto* (*Allegro non troppo*)	16:30
8 II Scherzo: *Allegro moderato*	4:00
9 III *Poco adagio*	15:00
10 IV Finale: *Allegro molto – Poco meno mosso*	11:15
	TT **65:44**

Katherine Bryan, flute 6
Paul Silverthorne, viola 7–10
Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Paul Mann

FIRST RECORDINGS,
MADE IN THE PRESENCE
OF THE COMPOSER