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# Robert SAXTON

(b. 1953)



Photo by Katie Vandyck

**Robert Saxton** was born in London in 1953 and started composing at the age of six. Guidance in early years from Benjamin Britten and lessons with Elisabeth Lutyens was followed by periods of study at both Cambridge (undergraduate) and Oxford (postgraduate) Universities with Robin Holloway and Robert Sherlaw Johnson respectively, and also with Luciano Berio. He won the Gaudeamus International Composers Prize in Holland at the age of twenty-one. In 1986 he was awarded the Fulbright Arts Fellowship to the USA, where he was in residence at Princeton. He became a DMus (Oxon) in 1992 and was elected an Hon Fellow of St Catharine's College, Cambridge in 2015.

He has written works for the BBC (TV, Proms and Radio), LSO, LPO, ECO, London Sinfonietta, Nash Ensemble, Northern Sinfonia and David Blake (conductor), Antara, Arditti and Chilingirian String Quartets, St Paul Chamber Orchestra (USA), Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival/Opera North, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, City of London, Three Choirs and Lichfield festivals, Stephen Darlington and the

choir of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford, the choir of Merton College Oxford, Susan Milan, Susan Bradshaw and Richard Rodney Bennett, Simon Desbruslais, Clare Hammond. Edward Wickham and The Clerks' Group, Teresa Cahill, Leon Fleisher, Tasmin Little, Steven Isserlis, Mstislav Rostropovich, John Wallace and the Raphael Wallfisch and John York duo.

He was Professor of Composition at Oxford University and tutorial fellow in music at Worcester College from 1999 until his retirement in 2021. He has been Composer-in Association at the Purcell School for Young Musicians since 2013 and was appointed Senior Research Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music in 2021. His music from 1972 until 1998 was published by Chester/Music Sales and, since then, by the University of York Music Press and Ricordi (Berlin). Recordings have appeared on the Sony Classical, Hyperion, Metier, EMI, NMC, Divine Art and Signum labels.

Recent works include the opera *The Wandering Jew*; a song cycle for baritone Roderick Williams, *Time and the Seasons* for the Oxford Lieder Festival in 2013; *Hortus Musicae* books 1 and 2, a piano cycle for pianist Clare Hammond; *The Resurrection of the Soldiers*, commissioned jointly by George Vass for the 2016 Presteigne Festival and the English Symphony Orchestra and Kenneth Woods; *Shakespeare Scenes*, commissioned by the Orchestra of the Swan and trumpeter Simon Desbruslais; his fourth string quartet, for the Kreutzer Quartet; *A Hymn to the Thames* for oboist James Turnbull and the St Paul's Sinfonia; and *Fantasy Pieces* for the Fidelio Trio. Jonathan Clinch will premiere *Tombeau* for

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HB for organ in autumn 2022; the English Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kenneth Woods will premiere *Scenes from the Epic of Gilgamesh* in Oxford in March 2023.

Recent recordings include a CD of piano music on Toccata Classics, *Shakespeare Scenes* on Signum; a portrait CD on Metier released in September 2022 and a CD of organ works released in October 2022.

Robert Saxton is married to the soprano Teresa Cahill.

## PRESS QUOTES

*Saxton's Sonata for Cello on a Theme of Sir William Walton, like much of his other work at the festival, is densely patterned and rigorously argued.*

Nigel Jarrett – Wales Art Review

*This was Saxton at his best: flexible, lyrical song-like lines mixing traditional elements and new striking piano textures. Saxton captured Spencer's sense of mystical fantasy in a piece full of invention and striking writing for strings.*

Peter Reynolds – Hereford Times

*Vibrant, attractive... splendid.*

Gramophone on *Shakespeare Scenes*

*'Saxton's glistening, subtle **Hortus Musicae** (2013), inspired by the notion of a metaphysical garden.'*

Fiona Maddocks – The Observer

*'The Maxwell Quartet... played Saxton's **String Quartet No. 3** (2011), capturing the contrasting character of each of the five movements with titles which as Winter Light and Dance. Ideas reveal and hide themselves in constant, delicate oscillation. In one (Sea Ground), he uses a passacaglia, mirroring the repeated yet changing action of the sea. This music, in this performance, had a mystery, delicacy and depth which made you want to hear it again immediately. What an exhilarating start to 2015.'*

Fiona Maddocks, 11 January 2015, *The Observer*

*'Drawing on a wide range of influences from his Jewish roots to the relationship between mathematical and music principles... his considerable technique and imagination make for writing of compelling melody (though not always in the conventional sense) and of richly organic background texture.'*

*The Observer*

## LIST OF WORKS OVERLEAF

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### ORCHESTRA

**A Hymn to the Thames (2020)** 17'  
for solo oboe and chamber orchestra  
first performance and CD launch: James Turnbull (oboe)  
and the St Paul's Sinfonia conducted by Andrew Morley,  
16 September 2022, St Alfege Church, Greenwich.  
ISMN M 57036 927 0 conducting score: £21.95  
ISMN M 57036 928 7 solo oboe part: £4.95  
ISMN M 57036 928 7 performance materials for hire

**Shakespeare Scenes (2013)** 15'  
for solo trumpet and string orchestra  
first performance: Simon Desbruslais and The Orchestra  
of the Swan, conducted by David Curtis Stratford Civic  
Hall, 24th May 2013.  
ISMN M 57036 435 0 conducting score: £31.95  
ISMN M 57036 442 8 study score: £26.95  
ISMN M 57036 446 6 solo trumpet part: £2.95  
performance materials for hire

**The Resurrection of the Soldiers (2016)** 12'  
for string orchestra  
commissioned by Presteigne Festival  
first performance: Presteigne Festival Orchestra, cond.  
George Vass, Presteigne Festival 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016  
ISMN M 57036 721 4 conducting score: £10.95  
ISMN M 57036 722 1 performance materials for hire

**Scenes from the Epic of Gilgamesh (2022)** 12'  
for orchestra (double winds)  
commissioned by Kenneth Woods  
first performance: English Symphony Orchestra,  
Oxford 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
ISMN M 57080 053 7 score: £39.95  
ISMN M 57080 053 4 conducting score: £28.95  
ISMN M 57080 055 1 performance materials for hire

### BRASS BAND

**Sonata for Brass Band on a Prelude of Orlando Gibbons (2014)** 9'  
for brass band  
Commissioned by Peter Bassano for the City of  
Cambridge Brass Band, with funds provided by the  
Golland Trust and the RVW Trust.  
first performance: City of Cambridge Brass Band cond.  
Peter Bassano, Girton College, Cambridge, 15<sup>th</sup>  
November 2014.  
ISMN M 57036 538 8 score: £15.95

### SMALL ENSEMBLE (4-7 PLAYERS)

**Little Prelude for John McCabe (2016)** 2'  
for treble recorder, clarinet in Bb, viola and piano  
ISMN M 57036 717 7 score: £6.95  
ISMN M 57036 718 4 parts: £14.95

**Praeludium on the name George Frideric Handel (2015)** 3'  
for string quartet  
ISMN M 57036 649 1 score: £8.95

**String Quartet No. 4 (2018)** 28'  
for string quartet  
ISMN M 57036 828 0 score: £20.95  
ISMN M 57036 829 7 parts: £36.95

### SOLOS, DUOS AND TRIOS

**Berceuse for a baby (2010)** 2'  
for solo organ  
first performance: Dr Jonathan Clinch, King's College  
Chapel, University of Aberdeen, 20th January 2020  
ISMN M 57036 929 4 score: £5.95

**Fantasy on the notes ACADE (2019)**  
for solo piano  
commissioned by Professor Philip Cashian, to  
celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the  
Royal Academy of Music, London.  
first performance: George Fu, '200 Pieces Project', Royal  
Academy of Music, 6th March 2020  
ISMN M 57036 911 9 score: £7.95

**Fantasy Pieces (2020)** 20'30"  
for piano trio  
first performance: Fidelio Trio - Darragh Morgan (violin),  
Tim Gill (cello) and Mary Dullea (piano) - at the online  
Winter Chamber Music Festival, broadcast from Dublin  
City University, 27th November 2020  
ISMN M 57036 941 6 score and parts: £28.95

**For Teresa (2016)** 2'30"  
for solo piano  
commissioned by Tim Suter for his wife Helen's 60<sup>th</sup>  
birthday, as part of William Howard's Love Songs  
Project and first performed in a private concert.  
first public performance: William Howard, Hoxton Hall,  
London, 26th April 2017  
ISMN M 57036 823 5 score: £6.95

**'...from a distant shore...' (2001)** 5'  
for solo oboe  
commissioned by Melinda Maxwell  
first performance: Dartington Summer School, August  
2001  
ISMN M 57020 190 7 score: £7.95

**Hortus Musicae (Book 1) (2013)** 15'  
 for solo piano  
 commissioned by Ian Ritchie for the 2013 City of London Festival with funds provided by the John S. Cohen Foundation  
 first performance: Clare Hammond, Church of St Mary le Bow, 24th June 2013  
 ISMN M 57036 445 9 score: £10.95

**Hortus Musicae (Book 2) (2016)** 35'  
 for solo piano  
 first performance: Clare Hammond, Presteigne Festival, 25th August 2016  
 ISMN M 57036 731 3 score: £14.95

**In Memoriam Oliver Knussen (2019)** 3'  
 for solo organ  
 dedicated to Jonathan Clinch  
 first performance: Jonathan Clinch, Westminster Cathedral, 7th April 2019  
 ISMN M 57036 951 5 score: £7.95

**Little Suite for Organ (2012)** 2'  
 for solo organ  
 commissioned by sound and the University of Aberdeen  
 first performance: Roger Williams, King's College Chapel, University of Aberdeen, 6 November 2012  
 ISMN M 57036 369 8 score: £7.95

**Lullaby for Rosa (2020)** 2'  
 for solo piano  
 first performance: Clare Hammond, TOCCATA CLASSICS CD 0458, 1st March 2018  
 ISMN M 57036 952 2 score: £5.95

**Miniature Dance for a Marionette Rabbi (1999)** 2'  
 for solo guitar  
 first performance: David Starobin, Wigmore Hall, December 1999  
 ISMN M 57020 187 7 score: £7.00

**Music for St. Catharine (1998)** 10'  
 for solo organ  
 commissioned by Lester Hillman  
 first performance: Max Pappenheim, St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, 25 September 1998  
 ISMN M 57020 186 0 score: £21.00

**Paraphrase on Adeste Fideles (2019)** 3'  
 for piano duet  
 commissioned by Matthew Schellhorn and first performed at Borough New Music, St George the Martyr Church, London, on 25th June 2019 by Matthew Schellhorn and Clare Simmonds.  
 ISMN M 57036 890 7 score: £7.95

**PASSACAGLIA on the name John McCabe (2015)** 6'  
 for solo organ  
 commissioned by George Vass for a concert in celebration of the life and work of John McCabe CBE.  
 ISMN M 57020 642 2 score: £7.95

**Sonata for Solo Cello on a Theme of Sir William Walton (1999)** 10'  
 for solo cello  
 commissioned by Steven Isserlis with funds from the John S Cohen Foundation  
 first performance: Steven Isserlis, Aldeburgh Festival, 10 June 2000  
 ISMN M 57020 188 4 score: £13.00

**Sonata - Reflections in Time (2023)** 20'  
 for solo violin  
 commissioned by Peter Sheppard Skaerved  
 first performance: Peter Sheppard Skaerved, Pharos Arts Foundation, Nicosia, Cyprus, 4 October 2023  
 ISMN M 57080 078 0 score: £8.95

**Song Without Words (2004)** 2'  
 for clarinet and piano  
 commissioned by Ian Mitchell for inclusion in the Associated Board's Spectrum Volume for Clarinet  
 ISMN M 57020 771 8 score and part: £10.00

**SUITE (2019)** 18'  
 for violin and piano  
 written for Madeleine Mitchell, who gave the first performance with Clare Hammond (piano), at the Three Choirs Festival, Gloucester, on 29th July 2019  
 ISMN M 57036 889 1 score and part: £19.95

**Suite for solo harp (2020)** ca. 12'  
 commissioned by Imogen Barford  
 first performance: Alexander Rider, Silk Street Music Hall, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, 17th June 2015  
 ISMN M 57036 943 0 score: £8.95

**The Legend of King Herla (2015)** 14'  
 tone poem for flute and harp  
 ISMN M 57036 636 1 score and part: £29.95

**There and Back (2006)**  
 for three variable instruments  
 part of 'On Track', UYMP's Grade 4-level Education Volume  
 ISMN M 57020 908 8 score and parts: £19.95

**The Reckoning of Time (2025)** 45'  
 for solo organ  
 written for Jonathan Clinch

**Tombeau for H.B. (2022)** 2'30''  
 for solo organ  
 to the memory of Sir Harrison Birtwistle (1934-2022)  
 ISMN M 57080 026 1 score and parts: £5.95

**Choral Prelude: The King of Love My Shepherd is (2022)** 2'  
for solo organ  
based on the hymn melody by JB Dykes  
ISMN M 57080 046 9 score: £

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## VOICE AND 1-3 INSTRUMENTS

**The beach in winter: Scratby [for Tess] (2007)** 2'30"  
for baritone voice and piano  
written for the 20th anniversary of NMC  
poem by Robert Saxton, 1998  
ISMN M 57036 018 5 score: £7.00

**Time and the Seasons (2013)**  
song cycle in seven parts for baritone voice and piano  
commissioned by the Oxford Lieder Festival 2013.  
first performance: Roderick Williams (bar.) and Andres West (pno.), Holywell Music Room, Oxford, Wednesday 16 October, 2013.  
ISMN M 57036 410 7 set of two performing scores: £24.95

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## CHORAL, ACCOMPANIED

**A BABE IS BORN (2011)** 3'40"  
for unison voices and organ  
A revision of a carol written in 1970 by Robert Saxton, to the words of a 'traditional' 15th century carol.  
Re-written and dedicated to Dr Ian Taylor and the choir of Downe House School.  
ISMN M 57036 327 8 choral score: £3.99

**Locus Iste (2004)** 3'  
for choir (SSATB) and organ  
commissioned by St Catharine's College Cambridge for the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of the chapel  
first performance: Dr Edward Wickham, Max Pappenheim (organ scholar) and the St Catharine's chapel choir, 25 November 2004  
ISMN M 57020 770 1 choral score: £2.25

**O Living Love (2006)** 5'  
for choir (SATB) and organ  
words by WH Auden  
commissioned by Dr Stephen Darlington, Christ Church Oxford  
first performed as part of a service celebrating the centenary (2007) of WH Auden  
ISMN M 57036 003 1 choral score: £5.99

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## CHORAL, UNACCOMPANIED

**Cantate Domino and Deus Misereatur (2002) 8'**  
for unaccompanied SSATB choir  
texts Psalm 98 and Psalm 67 — alternative canticles  
commissioned by Christ Church Cathedral Choir  
first performance: November 2002  
ISMN M 57020 703 9 choral score: £4.95

**The Dialogue of Zion and God (2000)** 5'  
for 8 solo voices  
texts in Hebrew by Eleazar ben Kallir  
commissioned by The Clerks' Group with funds from the Jerwood Foundation  
first performance: The Clerks' Group, Wigmore Hall, 31 May 2000  
ISMN M 57020 189 1 choral score: £3.50

**Five Motets (2003)** 15'  
for unaccompanied SSAATTBBB choir  
texts: Bible (Latin) and Saxton (English)  
commissioned by the BBC  
first performance: The Clerks' Group, BBC Henry Wood Prom, Royal Albert Hall, 5 September 2003  
ISMN M 57020 724 4 choral score: £8.95

**Our Father, Whose Creative Will (2018)** 2'  
for unaccompanied SATB choir  
text by W. H. Auden  
dedicated to Stephen Darlington  
first performance: Exeter College Chapel Choir, directed by Christopher Holman, 4 June 2021  
ISMN M 57036 838 9 choral score: £2.25

**WAS IT WINTER? (2011)** 2'30"  
for unaccompanied SATB choir  
text by Robert Saxton  
first performance: the choir of Worcester College, Oxford, cond. Thomas Allery.  
ISMN M 57036 326 1 choral score: £1.99

**Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (2010)** 7'  
for 2 trebles, alto, tenor and bass choir  
commissioned by Dr Stephen Darlington with funds provided by the Friends of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford  
ISMN M 57036 269 1 choral score: £3.00

**Vexilla Regis (2014)** 5'  
for SSAATTBB choir  
A setting of Venantius Fortunatus (530-609 CE)  
dedicated to Benjamin Nicholas and the choir of Merton College, Oxford, on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the foundation of the college.  
ISMN M 57036 507 4 choral score: £3.50

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## MUSIC FOR CHILDREN AND AMATEURS

**Song Without Words  
There and Back**

Solos, Duos and Trios  
Solos, Duos and Trios

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## SELECTED RECORDINGS



### **Psalm: Contemporary British Trumpet Concertos**

**Includes: Shakespeare Scenes**

Performed by Simon Desbruslais (trumpet); Orchestra of the Swan; David Curtis (conductor)

Label: Signum Classics, SIGCD403



### **A Yardstick to the Stars**

**Includes: Processions and Dances; Chacony; Fantazia; Invocation, Dance and Meditation; Eloge; Arias; A Yardstick to the Stars**

Performed by Teresa Cahill (soprano); John Constable, John McCabe and Ian Pace (piano), Paul Silverthorne (viola), Brunel Ensemble, Christopher Austin (conductor)

Label: NMC Recordings, NMC D065

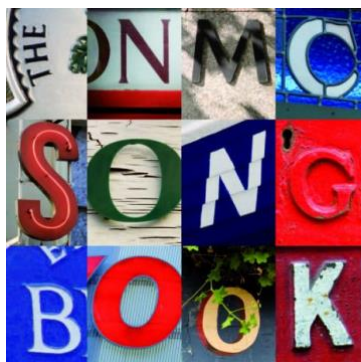


### **Music to Celebrate the Resurrection**

**Includes: I Will Awake the Dawn; Violin Concerto; In the Beginning; Caritas**

Performed by Tasmin Little (violin) and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Matthias Bamert. Soloists: English Northern Philharmonia, Diego Masson (conductor)

Label: NMC Recordings, NMC D102

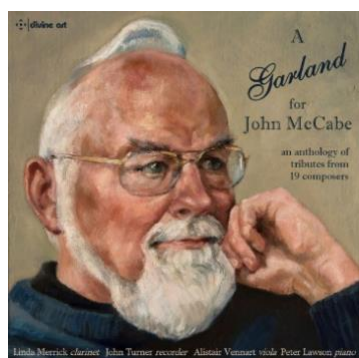


## The NMC Songbook

**Includes: The Beach in Winter, Scratby (For Tess)**

Performed by Stephen Loges, baritone, and Iain Burnside, piano.

Label: NMC Recordings, NMC D150



## A Garland for John McCabe

**Includes: Little Prelude for John McCabe**

Performed by Linda Merrick (clarinet), John Turner (recorder), Alistair Vennart (viola), Peter Lawson (piano)

Label: Divine Art Recordings, DDA25166

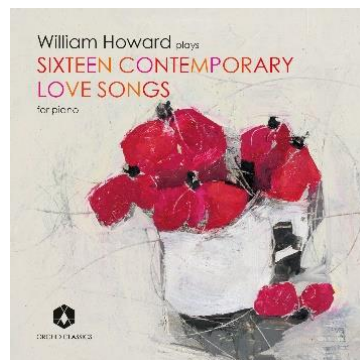


## Robert Saxton: Piano Music

**Includes: Hortus Musicae Book 1 and Hortus Musicae Book 2**

Performed by Clare Hammond

Label: Toccata Classics, TOCC0458

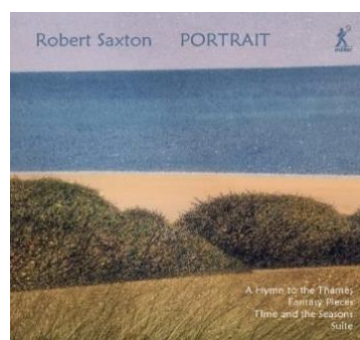


## Sixteen Contemporary Love Songs

**Includes: For Teresa**

Performed by William Howard

Label: Orchid Classics, ORC100083



## Robert Saxton: PORTRAIT

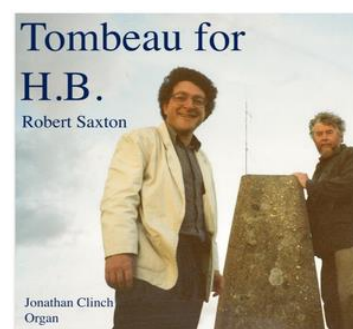
**Includes: A Hymn to the Thames,**

**Fantasy Pieces, Time and the Seasons,**

**Suite for violin and piano**

Performed by St Paul's Sinfonia, conducted by Andrew Morley. Andrew West (piano), Clare Hammond (piano), James Turnbull (oboe), Madeleine Mitchell (violin), Roderick Williams (baritone) Fidelio Trio

Label: Divine Art/Metier, MSV 28624



## Tombeau for H.B.

**Download**

Performed by Jonathan Clinch (organ)

Label: CD Baby



**Don't talk – just listen! : New works by  
Christopher Fox Gabriel Jackson, Antony Pitts,  
Robert Saxton**

**Includes: Five Motets**

Performed by The Clerks

Label: Signum Classics, SIGCD174