

with committed playing from Klangforum Wien. In this piece, I do find Dowling's uncompromising approach difficult: tuning of individual notes is left where her bassoon wants to play them, and tone quality lacks beauty or refinement. Contemporary music demands a whole range of tone colours and I find hers limited in this piece; the familiar uneven tuning of our cruel instrument is left unadorned. This is a very dark piece, containing references to Tchaikovsky's *Sixth Symphony*, and I would prefer to have finished my time listening to this CD without wanting to jump out of the nearest window.

To return to my opening sentence, this is a very fine piece of work indeed and should be in every bassoon enthusiast's collection.

Meyrick Alexander

Pavlova Presents...

Pavlova Wind Quintet

New arrangements for wind quintet

Christopher Britton, flute, Carolyn King, oboe, Barbara Stuart, clarinet, Jenny Morgan, horn, Simon Payne, bassoon.



No raspberries for this Pavlova!

I approached this CD with anticipation as I am a keen wind quintet player, always on the lookout for new pieces to perform.

I was also looking forward to hearing my former teacher Geoffrey Gambold's Heckel, now in the capable hands of Simon Payne.

The main purpose of this recording is to showcase arrangements, mostly by the group's flautist Christopher Britton, but there are also contributions from Lisa Portus, John Newhill and Lionel Sainsbury.

We quintet players are not lacking in short, lightweight fillers for concerts and, although these are all skilfully done, I was mostly interested in the longer pieces. When designing a programme for a recital, once we have considered Nielsen, Hindemith, Barber and Ligeti, we have to look hard for serious and challenging works for an educated audience, although there are excellent arrangements by David Walter and Gordon Davies amongst others.

The big success for me was Britton's arrangement of three pieces from *The Seasons* by Tchaikovsky. These are wonderful examples of this composer's work: June is highly reminiscent of *Eugene Onegin* and November and December would fit well into either of his two late ballets. Britton has captured Tchaikovsky's sonority and sound world admirably and, as together they run to around thirteen minutes, this represents a useful part of a recital. I shall be ordering this.

Britton's version of Grieg's attractive *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* avoids the pitfalls of some arrangers and composers for the medium, namely lacking weight in the texture and falling for a lightweight quality as all the high instruments do battle for supremacy. Here the middle parts are filled in well and, although some oboe players will find the low register writing a little thankless, it is in a good cause. Of his other arrangements presented here, Ivor Gurney's *Five Preludes* are all miniatures but caught my attention as being written in some very awkward keys, useful for those of us involved in the conservatoire sector; Caplet's *Reverie* is an addition to a large number of lightweight French pieces we already have, and the Gershwin *Preludes* cover some of the same territory as Jim Parker's *Mississippi Five*: the 'wind quintet playing the blues' joke can only be sustained for a certain amount of time.

Other works on the disc are Lionel Sainsbury's *Cuban Dances* and John Newhill's *Three Elgar Miniatures* – which both fall into a well populated part of the repertoire – and a beautiful arrangement by Lisa Portus of Butterworth's haunting *Banks of Green Willow* in which she reproduces the original scoring with remarkable accuracy. I look forward to performing the latter.

Pavlova Quintet (please excuse my headline, but what do you expect with a pudding based name?) plays with commitment and energy. This is an enjoyable disc.

Meyrick Alexander