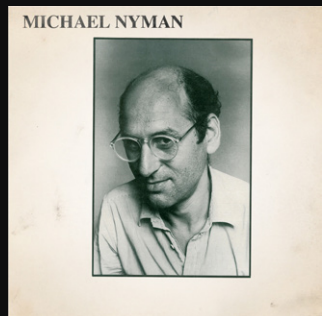
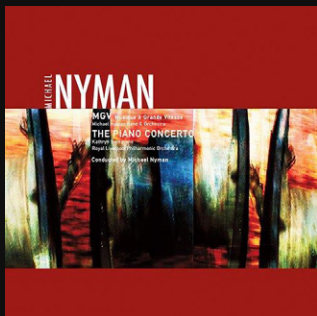
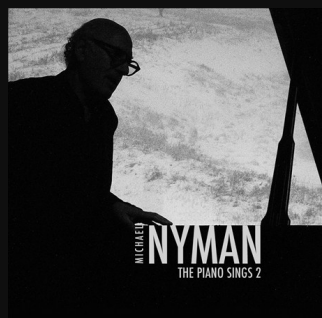
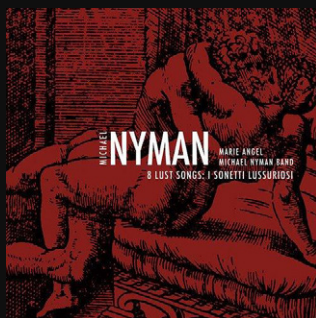
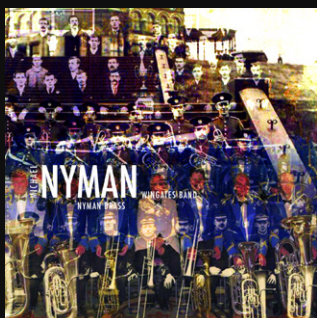
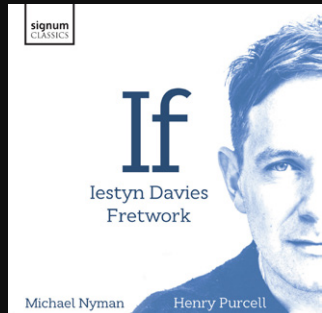


A black and white profile photograph of Michael Nyman, an older man with white hair and glasses perched on his head. He is wearing a dark, vertically striped button-down shirt and is holding a large stack of sheet music. The sheet music is the title page for 'The Goldberg Variations' by J.S. Bach, featuring handwritten notes and a signature. The background is plain white, and the entire image is framed by a thick black border.

# MICHAEL NYMAN

SELECTED WORKS





# MICHAEL NYMAN

## Profile by Pwyll ap Siôn

Described by composer Christopher Fox as a 'key figure in British musical life in the last thirty years', Michael Nyman's distinctive style is immediately recognisable and familiar to most listeners. Combining Western classical music with the high-octane energy and propulsion of rock and pulse-based minimalism, his music is appreciated for both its intellectual depth and ability to communicate directly with listeners from the get-go.



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OPERA

CHORUS



© David Gamble

Having first made an impression with his dynamic and assertive scores for arthouse director Peter Greenaway in the 1980s, this was followed by the enormous impact and success of the soundtrack to *The Piano* (1993). Nyman is thus seen by many as a composer for film and media. However, film music represents only the tip of the iceberg in a large and diverse output that encompasses operas and symphonies, song-cycles and string quartets.

In order to fully grasp Nyman's status as one of today's most important composers, it is necessary to undertake a journey beyond the familiar world of the film soundtracks down the less-travelled routes. The landmarks encountered along the way present more complex and challenging music when compared to the film scores, but nevertheless reveal important elements of the composer's musical character. Moving beyond the film music brings the listener closer to some of the core elements of Nyman's style, where more intellectual and cerebral qualities coexist alongside the physical and emotional.

In taking this journey, one is struck by the way in which Nyman takes material from all kinds of sources. Knowledge, research and information often provides Nyman with artistic sustenance, feeding his creative

imagination. Whether relating to music itself or to subjects from other disciplines, Nyman's interests range from medieval poetry to neurology, from innovations in early Soviet film to artworks and artistic movements, from photography to football. His voracious appetite for knowledge – and the many means used to focus these ideas – yields a remarkably rich, complex and fertile body of work. History becomes a repository of facts, figures, objects and artefacts for Nyman – a treasure-trove that can be harvested for new information, then repurposed to the creative needs of an upcoming project.

Where to start? Nyman's set of string quartets (which number seven to date) provide as good a pathway as any into a wonderfully vivid and colourful landscape. Composed in 1985, the powerful *String Quartet No. 1* sets its medium



in an almost symphonic context, imbuing the quartet sound with a visceral force that is reminiscent of Nyman's own classical-meets-rock ensemble, the Michael Nyman Band, for which he wrote extensively during the 1980s and 1990s. The first quartet is also unusual in the way it juxtaposes pre-existing material from a variety of seemingly unrelated sources: John Bull's *Walsingham Variations*, the fourth movement of Schoenberg's String Quartet No. 2, and perhaps most surprising of all, the Righteous Brothers' well-known pop hit 'Unchained Melody'.

Nyman's usual approach when using pre-existing ideas is draw from a single source or musical tradition. Originally composed for dancer Shobana Jeyasingh, the energetic, foot-tapping String Quartet No. 2 adheres to a rhythmic grid laid down across the work's six movements via South Indian Carnatic music. Composed in 1989 to mark the overthrow of Romanian leader and dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, the darkly introspective String Quartet No. 3 is based on Nyman's choral work *Out of the Ruins*. While the latter was originally composed for a BBC documentary tracing the consequences of a devastating earthquake that destroyed large parts of Armenia in 1988, the third quartet layers

Romanian folk melodies over material from *Out of the Ruins*. Both show how two compositions sharing the same elements can generate startlingly different results: deeply affecting and reflective in *Out of the Ruins*; tinged with anger and bitter regret in the String Quartet No. 3.

By way of contrast, the large-scale String Quartet No. 4 (1994/5) is a *tour-de-force* in musical recycling. Here, Nyman takes the twelve movements of his virtuosic solo violin piece *Yamamoto Perpetuo* (1993) then adds new lines to the remaining three quartet instruments. This process of musical appropriation – imagine Bach adding several instrumental lines to one of his solo violin Partitas in order to turn them into a concerto – adds depth and richness to the original music. The three string lines sometimes support, reinforce or expand on the first violin's polyphonic lines and textures. In the opening movement, new layers are added, taking the music in an entirely new direction. The sounding result is almost like that of a violin concerto with string accompaniment; and indeed some of the music from the fourth quartet found a new home in the five-movement *Strong on Oaks, Strong on the Causes of Oaks* (1997), for chamber orchestra, written for the English Sinfonia.



© Francesco Guidicini

Sixteen-years separate Nyman's String Quartets Nos. 4 and 5, and although the fifth does not directly draw on pre-existing material, the exuberant quality of its first and fifth movements vividly illustrate the composer's penchant for dance-like rhythms and patterns, while the lyrical, song-like second and sixth hint at themes found in his bittersweet soundtrack to Michael Winterbottom's 1999 film, *Wonderland*.

Saxophonist Jess Gillam's vivaciously insouciant rendition of Nyman's single-movement saxophone concerto *Where the Bee Dances* (1991) at the 2016 BBC Young Musician of the Year final has finally drawn attention to the composer's other contributions to this genre. The equally-popular *The Piano Concerto* (1993) has maintained a high profile, cleverly weaving together several themes from Nyman's hugely successful soundtrack to Jane Campion's award-winning film, but performances of his many other concertos are now surely long overdue. These include, amongst several others, concertos for Trombone, Harpsichord and Violin. Written for Christian Lindberg, the Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra (1995) sets up a dynamic narrative between soloist and orchestra through the use of dramatic contrasts, from the bright, lyrical solo trombone melody at the beginning to the boisterous, percussion-heavy

cacophony that gate-crashes the party later on. In-between the two, fleeting references to Purcell's *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* are added to impart a truly multi-dimensional quality.

Contrasts of a different nature are revealed in Nyman's Double Concerto for Saxophone, Cello and Orchestra (1997), where sudden gearshifts jolt the music away from what the composer has called 'cleanly diatonic' to more 'muddily chromatic' moments. The concerto's forward drive and propulsion is a nod towards Mazda Cars (UK), who commissioned the work. Written for Gidon Kremer, the Violin Concerto (2003) is the first in a projected cycle of five concertos for the instrument. It uses a framing device that slices up the work into eighteen short segments. With the shadow of Berg's Violin Concerto never far away, unusually for Nyman its sound sometimes hints at 1930s European jazz and the influence of Kurt Weill.

The edgier and wiry Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings (1995) was also written with a specific performer in mind: Elisabeth Chojnacka. Combining new material with rhythmic patterns and chord sequences from solo pieces such as *The Convertibility of Lute Strings* (1992) and *Tango for Tim* (1994), the Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings is an example of what Robert Worby has termed 'classic intertextuality'.





Nyman's ability to weave together forms and structures from a patchwork of pre-existing ideas is an important part of his aesthetic, one where compositions are often connected and related through a kind of family tree-type network of associations. Such familial interrelationships and connections are none more apparent than in the composer's sets of operas and symphonies.

Since its premiere at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, in 1986, Nyman's first opera *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, has received regular performances world-wide to warm critical acclaim. For three singers and chamber ensemble, the short story by neurologist Oliver Sacks centres on a retired professional singer's struggle to overcome the debilitating effects of brain impairment through song. It's a subject that has become increasingly relevant at a time when music is used to rekindle lost memories in people suffering from personal trauma or living with dementia. Other works present the operatic form in new and unusual contexts. *Love Counts* (2005) features an aging boxer who comes to terms with his own mental challenges by falling in love with a mathematics teacher, while the part-historical, part-biographical *Man and Boy: Dada* (2003) is based in London during the immediate

aftermath of the Second World War. One of its main characters is Dada artist Kurt Schwitters.

Arguably Nyman's most ambitious stage work to date is *Facing Goya* (2000). Described by the composer as an 'opera of ideas', it reconstructs a scenario wherein Spanish painter Francesco Goya's skull – gone missing when his remains are exhumed from the cemetery at La Chartreuse some sixty years after his death – is rediscovered, and its DNA extracted to clone the artist. Typical of Nyman, the opera's historical sweep is wide, ranging from 19th century craniometry to present-day Biotechnology and genetic engineering. Nyman's trademark propulsive rhythms feature strongly in the opera's opening scenes but are gradually replaced with more reflective moments, such as in the final, poignant aria 'Forgive Me', where the cloned Goya is left alone on his hands and knees, desperately trying to fit together the pieces of his broken skull...

The unusual and unorthodox scenarios presented in Nyman's operas often translate to his vocal works. The female voice in particular has formed an essential part of the composer's sound world since the early days of the Michael Nyman Band. Nyman often writes with the particular vocal qualities of specific singers in mind, which range from the





edgier rock and pop-based voices of Dagmar Krause and Ute Lemper to classically-trained singers such as Hilary Summers, Sarah Leonard and Marie Angel. The *Six Celan Songs* (1990), for voice and ensemble, was written for Ute Lemper's distinctive voice, with the song-cycle's settings of poems by Paul Celan marking a shift towards a more lyrical and expressive style.

Lemper also features in the one act television opera *Letters, Riddles and Writs* (1991). Written to mark the bicentenary of Mozart's death, a mock courtroom scene is staged at one point where Nyman is accused of 'blatant intellectual theft' by 'stealing' the music of other composers. Written for Marie Angel, *I Sonetti Lussuriosi* (2007), for voice and orchestra, is an especially restrained setting of erotic texts by Renaissance poet Pietro Aretino.

If Nyman's operas and song-cycles often present unlikely scenarios, his symphonic cycle 'archives' new, old and borrowed material from existing works – drawing upon, developing and reworking ideas so that they literally 'sound together'. Nyman thus evokes the symphony's original meaning, allowing him to expand on melodic themes, rhythmic patterns, and harmonic sequences that were perhaps only partially realized in earlier works. As Nyman states: 'I'm a composer who discovers something, writes something, makes something and then spends a lifetime making something else out of it.'

Having stated in 2014 that his aim was to compose a cycle of nineteen symphonies, Nyman is well on the way to completing this ambitious project. Among an already impressive set is the dark and brooding fifth, composed in 2013, and the more playful second, composed a year later. Recycling ideas from the fifteen-minute *A Dance He Little Thinks Of* (commissioned by the Yorkshire Orchestral Consortium), the sixth movement of the String Quartet No. 2, and music that was originally composed in 1989 for the audio-visual exhibition, *La Traversee de Paris*, the fifth symphony is a coat of many colours. Its first movement presents a complex series of interlocking lines over a repeating nine-note pattern, while the third's ominous-sounding chaconne bass, astrigent dissonances and

fatalistic tone is far-removed from typical Nyman. A rumbustious concluding movement provides a fitting close, exuding the kind of swagger one associates with the composer's earlier style.

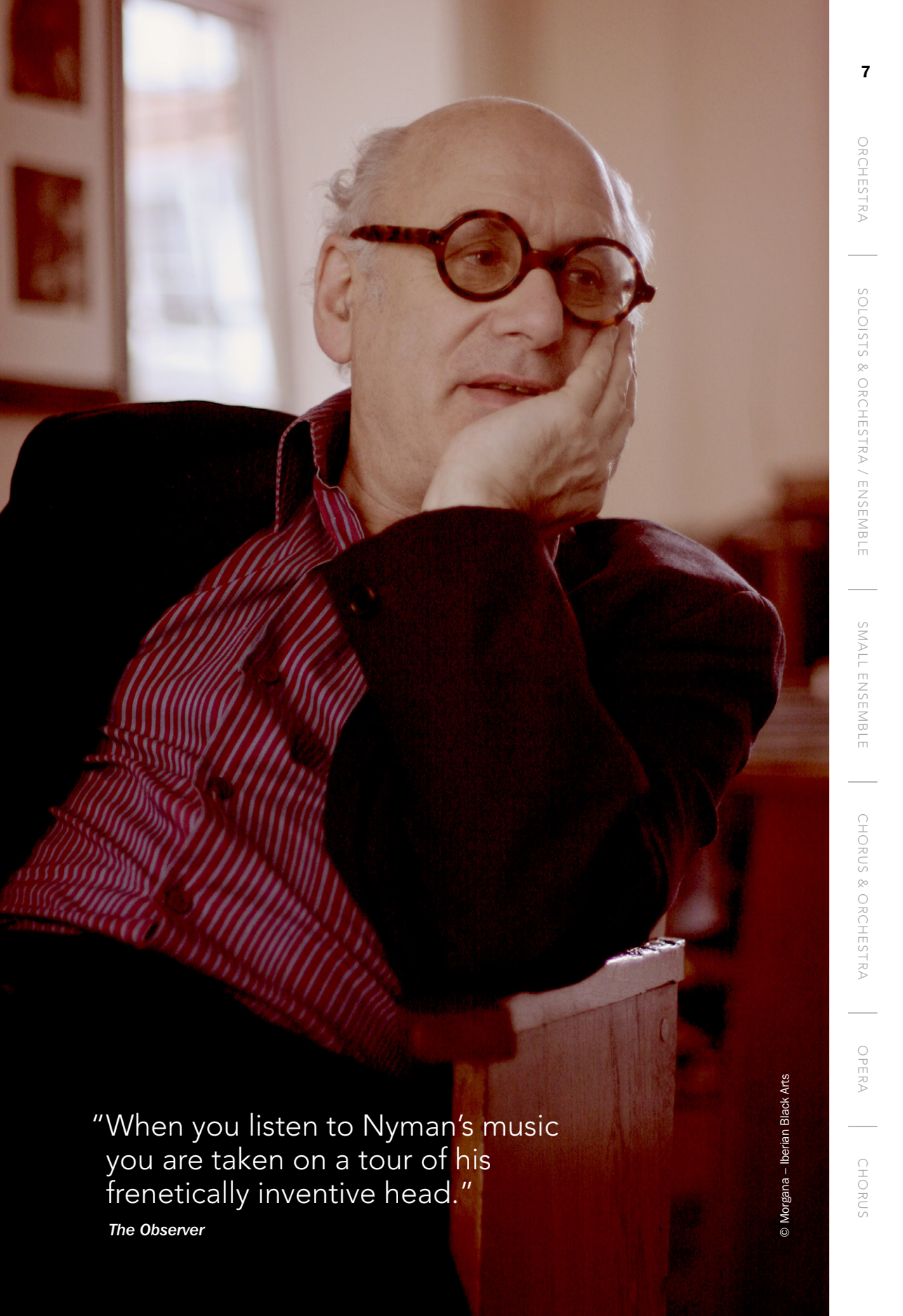
Based on *Pozcatek* – originally a soundtrack for the Michael Nyman Band that has also been turned into a piano trio – the Symphony No. 2 starts off by echoing the lyrical qualities heard in soundtracks such as *The End of the Affair*. A scherzo-like third eventually gives way to a rhythmically-propulsive finale, which encapsulates the symphony's shadows-and-light tone by reintroducing a dance-like melody that featured in the first movement.

Several symphonies have also been composed as personal tributes or reflections on tragic events. Nyman's Symphony No 3 (2014) was written as a homage to Polish composer Henryk Górecki, while the Symphony No. 11 ('Hillsborough Memorial') is an extraordinarily moving tribute to the ninety-six Liverpool supporters who died at Hillsborough football ground in April 1989. It ranks as one of the most significant contributions to the form in the 21st century.

As seen from this whistle-stop tour of Nyman's works list, there is much to explore that lies beyond the composer's film music. These also include projects that started as film music but evolved into concert-based works, such as the hour-long *Man with a Movie Camera* (2002), which provides music to Soviet film-maker Dziga Vertov's well-known 1929 silent film, and subsequent offshoot, *Nyman with a Movie Camera* (2010) – where Nyman overlays his own film to his music for Vertov's film – to other film projects such as *The Art of Fugue* (2012) and *Aztecs in Liverpool*, the latter created for the Liverpool Biennale in 2014.

Like a musical archaeologist, Nyman thus composes with his ear to the past and his eyes to the future – uncovering precious musical artefacts and chiselling fresh and vibrant sonic edifices out of them. ■

*Pwyll ap Siôn is a musicologist, composer and Professor of Music at Bangor University. >*



"When you listen to Nyman's music  
you are taken on a tour of his  
frenetically inventive head."

*The Observer*







# ORCHESTRA

## a dance he little thinks of



(2001) 15 MINS

*Commissioned by the Yorkshire Orchestral Consortium supported by Yorkshire Arts*

**3(2=pic2,3=pic1)33(2=E♭cl,3=bcl)2/432+btbn.1/timp.4perc/pf/str**

A commission from and for Yorkshire orchestras demands a Yorkshire hero – who better than York-born, Coxwold and Stillington resident Lawrence Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy* – a novel I have been trying to turn into an opera since 1981. After writing *THE ABBESS OF ANDOUILLETS*, *I’LL STAKE MY CREMONA TO A JEW’S TRUMP* and *NOSE-LIST SONG* in the 80s, it was a pleasure to have an excuse to return to Sterne’s novel with an orchestral work which, however, explodes the rather well-behaved, quasi 18th century feel of my earlier *Tristram Shandy* settings. And – as with *Cremona* – the subject is death (as it is in a considerable part of my output – for example, *SONGS FOR TONY*, *TANGO FOR TIM*, *MEMORIAL*, *TO MORROW* and so on) as it is conjured up by Sterne in Book VII, Chapter 1:

‘When DEATH himself knocked at my door – ye bad him come again; and in so gay a tone of careless indifference, did ye do it, that he doubted of his commission... then by heaven! I will lead him a dance he little thinks of...’

The work is in three movements of which the outer two are both fast and possibly dance-like. The third movement is linked to the second by a common augmented 4th bass part and to the first by the use of identical percussion rhythms (which refuse to conform to rhythmic straightjackets).

© Michael Nyman, May 2001

## The Man with a Movie Camera (video and orchestra)



(2007) 60 MINS

*Commissioned by the Dresden Philharmonic*

*Orchestration by Michael Nyman and Andy Keenan*

**2+pic.3(ca).2+bcl.3(cbn)/4.3.2+btbn.1/mba.vib/hp.pf/str**

A specially-written score to Dziga Vertov’s ground-breaking silent film *Man with a Movie Camera*. Vertov’s 1929 film is widely acknowledged as one of the landmark achievements of early modern cinema; its use of such radical effects as dissolves, split screens, slow motion, superimpositions and freeze frames have made for one of the most enduring representations of early 20th century city life.

# MGV

## (Musique à Grande Vitesse)



(1993) 29 MINS

*Commissioned by the 1993 Festival de Lille to celebrate the inauguration of the Paris-Lille TGV Service*

**3(3pic).3.3(3bcl).3/4.3.2+btbn.1/3perc/str; (small orchestra: 2ssx(asx).barsx(pic)/btbn/pf/2vn.vc/bgtr)**

MGV (Musique à Grand Vitesse – High-Speed Music) was commissioned by the Festival de Lille for the inauguration of the TGV North-European line and was first performed by the Michael Nyman Band and the Orchestre national de Lille under Jean-Claude Casadesus on 26 September 1993.

MGV runs continuously but was conceived as an abstract, imaginary journey; or rather five inter-connected journeys, each ending with a slow, mainly stepwise melody which is only heard in its 'genuine' form when the piece reaches its destination. The thematic 'transformation' is a key to MGV as a whole, where musical ideas- rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, motivic, textural – constantly change their identity as they pass through different musical 'environments'. For instance the opening bars establish both a recurrent rhythmic principle – 9, 11, or 13-beat rhythmic cycles heard against a regular 8 – and a harmonic process – chord sequences (mainly over C and E) which have the note E in common. (Coincidentally, MGV begins in C and ends in E). A later scalic, syncopated figure (again first heard over C, E and A) begins the second section, featuring brass, in D flat. And so on: the topography of MGV should be experienced without reference to planning, description or timetables.

Tempo changes, unpredictable slowings down, bear no logical relation to the high speed of the Paris-Lille journey, while the temptation to treat MGV as a concerto grosso, with the Michael Nyman band as the ripeno, was resisted: more suitably the Band (amplified in live performance) lays down the tracks on which MGV runs.

© Michael Nyman

“Cool mystery is the mood of Wheeldon’s plotless DGV, set to Michael Nyman’s dynamic score. The ballet is distinguished by its sense of novelty and journey, by its dazzling aqueous imagery, its vibrant, large ensemble (26 dancers in all) and its altered perception of time and space.”

*Debra Craine, The Times, 03/02/2009*

picc

fl 234 vms con vln 1 (arch) vms

ob 12 non leg 34 con vln 1 & vln 2 vms

clt 12 34 con vln 1 & vln 2 vms

b. clt 34 to GLTs

bsn 12 34

hn 13 con vln 1 (arch) & vln 2 vms

tp 1 34 con vln 1 vms

trb 1 2 3 p p p

trbc 71

vln 1 2 680

vlc 2 con vln 2 & vln 1 vms

vlc 2 con vln 1 & vln 2 vms

DB 2

vln 1 2 680

vln 2 2 con vln 1 & vln 2 vms

sop1 2 ymf

sop2 2 ymf

picc NB!

b. hb 2

b. gb 2

pmw

680

680

680

1. 2. 3. 4. vms

f

espress.

sim

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max

DRAG

MP

1. 2. 3. 4. vms

mf

mp

1. 2. 3. 4. vms

mf

mp

1. 2. 3. 4. vms

mf

mp

1. 2. 3. 4. vms

mf

mp

1. 2. 3. 4. vms

mf

mp

1. 2. 3. 4. vms

mf

mp

MD28 PANORAM SCORE SYSTEM

**Michael Nyman**  
**MGV**  
 (Musique à Grande Vitesse)  
 Full score  
**Chester Music**



## Strong on Oaks, Strong on the Causes of Oaks



**(1997) 17 MINS**

*Commissioned by the English Sinfonia*

**1+pic.2.2.2/2200/timp/str**

*Strong on Oaks, Strong on the Causes of Oaks* is a suite in five movements commissioned by the English Sinfonia to celebrate and commemorate their new residency in Stevenage. The title is derived from Sitheneace, the Saxon name for a small settlement in the area of Stevenage close the St Nicholas' Church. The modern translation of the Saxon title is 'Strong Oak'.

"This work takes its starting point from my String Quartet No 4 (1995) and the title derives from the old English origins of the name Stevenage, via Tony Blair.\*

It is dedicated to Simon Jeffes, friend and colleague, founder of the Penguin Café Orchestra, who died disgracefully young on 11th December 1997. When I heard of his death I was in the process of orchestrating the final page of the score: in his honour at this point the second violins play 4-note pizzicato chords in the style of the ukulele of which he was a master."

## Symphony No 2



**(2013) 26 MINS**

**2+pic.2+ca.2+bcl.2/4.2.2+btbn.1/3perc/hp.pf/str**

The series of 19 symphonies that I started writing in December 2012 as a 70th birthday present for myself in March 2014 is more or less half completed and might deserve as many words of explanation as there are notes. Suffice it to say that the symphonies are conceived in the form of an extended network that 'archives' and represents and re-presents new material, old material of mine and of other composers (such as Brahms' Symphony No. 1), ideas of mine that have already been presented in orchestral form, or by the Michael Nyman Band in proto-orchestral and even, as the opening movement of Symphony No. 5 the 6th movement of my String Quartet No. 2.

Symphony No. 2 began its life as Pozcatek, a 'Michael Nyman Band' 'soundtrack' that I wrote for the Michael Nyman Band to accompany a selection of sequences from post-war Polish films that I selected and edited in 2009. That work has already been networked a Pozcatek for piano trio (recorded by the Fidelio Trio for MN Records) and a song cycle 'Ex Votos Songs' with texts transcribed from Mexican Ex Votos, hence the possibly subtitle for this symphony: Ex Photos. The symphony consists of four interconnected movements.

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## Symphony No 3 ("Symphony of sexual songs")



(2014) 24 MINS

**3(pic).2+ca.2+bcl.2bn.asx/4.2.2.1/vib/hp.pf/str**

As is evident from the title, this symphony was composed as a homage to Henryk Mikołaj Górecki.

Górecki's Symphony No 3 (Symphony of Sorrowful Songs) adds a soprano voice to slow orchestral music while my slow 3rd symphony removes a soprano voice from my '*I sonetti lussuriosi*' for soprano and orchestra (2007), re-edits 5 of the 8 songs and repositions the vocal part orchestrally.

The texts were taken from a collection of erotic poetry by Pietro Aretino (1492-1556) and I really enjoy the irony of Górecki allowing a symphony as 'sacred' as No.3 to be constantly used as a film soundtrack, he stipulated that it could never be used in sex scenes. As a film composer myself, working with directors like Peter Greenaway, Patrice Leconte, Neil Jordan and Jane Campion it was always inevitable that my music would have to accompany sexual acts.

I first met Górecki at the Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1985 and after he had heard the Arditti Quartet play my 'String Quartet No.1'. I gave him a copy of my most recently-released album – 'The Kiss and Other Movements' – and some weeks later he wrote asking me to send him the score of 'The Kiss'. I have no idea what he did with it, but I do know that in the 38 years I have been writing music, no other composer has had the curiosity to want to look at any of my scores. And Chopin also brought us close together musically: 'Corona', the fourth of my 'Six Celan Songs' (1991) is based harmonically on the sequence from Chopin's 'Mazurka Op.17 No.4' that follows the passage that Górecki used in his 3rd Symphony.

My film 'The Art of Fugue' which consists of a single 28 minute sequence shot in May 2012 in Plaza Luis Cabrera, a square near my house in Colonia Roma, Mexico City, will be screened simultaneously with the symphony. Interestingly, the soundtrack for that film is taken from the recording that Marie Angel and the Michael Nyman Band made of '*I sonetti lussuriosi*'.

© Michael Nyman

## Symphony No 4: Faena



(2016) 20 MINS

**2+pic.2.2+bcl.2/2.2.2.1/vib.mba/pf/str**

Dedicated to the dreamers, the rebels and the people who make this a better world.

## Symphony No 7 ("Something Connected with Energy")



(2019) 20 MINS

**2+pic.2+ca.2+bcl.2/4.2.2+btbn.1/mba+vib/hp.pf/str**



# SOLOISTS & ORCHESTRA / ENSEMBLE

## I Sonetti Lussuriosi (voice and orchestra)



**(2007) 30 MINS**

Commissioned by the Venice Biennale

Text by Pietro Aretino (1492-1556)

**Soprano; 2(pic).2(ca).2(bcl).2/2.2.2.1/vib+mba.pf/str**

"*I Sonetti Lussuriosi* sets graphic erotic texts by the Renaissance poet and iconoclast Pietro Aretino...[The work] set the words in Nyman's straight-forward way for the equally down-to-earth soprano Marie Angel. The question was, what could the music add? In the end, it served to dissolve the male-female differences as Angel voiced both participants' demands and satisfactions with the same energy and delight. Composed around the same time as *50,000 Pairs of Feet...*, it did similar time-bending things although the emotional climate was more heated, achieving an exultant grandeur."

*Robert Maycock, The Independent, 11/12/2007*



# CONCERTO

for amplified harpsichord and strings

Michael Nyman  
(1994 / 1995)

$\text{♩} = 120 - 144$

Harpischord  
*f*

1-3  
Violins  
*fp cresc.*

4-6  
Violas  
*fp cresc.*

Violas  
1-4  
*fp cresc.*

Cellos  
1-4  
*fp cresc.*

Double Basses  
1-2  
*fp cresc.*

Hpschd.

1-3  
Vlns.  
*fp sub. cresc.*

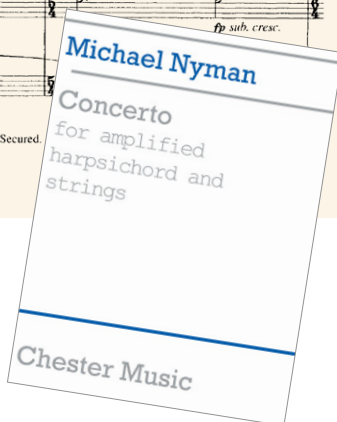
4-6  
Vlas.  
*fp sub. cresc.*

Vlas.  
1-4  
*fp sub. cresc.*

Cellos  
1-4  
*fp sub. cresc.*

D.B.  
1-2  
*fp sub. cresc.*

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# Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings



(1994/1995) 22 MINS

**Harpsichord (amplified), str**

This Concerto was composed during the winter of 1994/95 for Elisabeth Chojnacka, who gave the first performance with the Michael Nyman String Orchestra on 29th April 1995 in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. Its history is eccentric and cumulative. I had met Elisabeth in Paris about a year earlier while I was working on the soundtrack for Diane Kurys' film *A la Folie* (Six Days, Six Nights). I was attempting to persuade her to play my solo piece *The Convertibility of Lute Strings* (1992) but she expressed a passion only for tangos. As luck would have it, one of the cues of the Kurys score was what I fondly called a tango. Elisabeth showed interest in this and I subsequently turned it in to a harpsichord solo. Sadly, during the writing of the piece my friend the composer Tim Souster died tragically. Elisabeth's enthusiasm for *Tango for Tim* encouraged me to write the Concerto for her.

The Concerto is shaped as a very simple ABA form – the outer sections, derived from *The Convertibility for Lute Strings*, enfold an elaborated version of *Tango for Tim*. After the first performance, Elisabeth decreed that the true potential of the Concerto could only be fulfilled by the addition of a cadenza. This was duly composed in the summer of 1995 – a toccata derived from harmonies first heard in the immediate post-*Tango for Tim*, *Convertibility* material. (Elisabeth subsequently ordained that the cadenza could also have a life outside the Concerto as a concert piece if it had a few extensions added. Hence – inevitably, the title of the piece – *Elisabeth Gets Her Way*.)

© Michael Nyman

“Written for Elisabeth Chojnacka, it alternates increasingly elaborate solo figuration with string ritornelli, which recall Messiaen, Copland and Tippett by turn... the concerto seems a major work, as Nyman follows his twin tracks of fulfilling his own musical aspirations while keeping the punters happy.”

*Andrew Clements, The Guardian, 01/04/1995*

# Cello Concerto: A New Pavan for These Sad, Distracted Times



(2007) 29 MINS

**Cello; 2222/2220/vib/str**



NÄCHTLICH GESCHÜRZT

4/4

1  
2  
3  
vln

vla  
1  
2

b.gk  
B., cl.

Sop  
Sop

alto/flt

tpt

horn

Eupl

NÄCHTLICH GE-SCHÜRZT DIE LIP-PEN DER BLU-MEN GE-KREUZT UND VER-SCHRÄNKT

son vlk vms

## Six Celan Songs



(1990) 33 MINS

Text (German) by Paul Celan

**Contralto; cl(bcl).2ssx(2asx)barsx(fl,pic)[bsx(fl/pic)]/hn.tpt.btbn/pf/ebgtr/3vn.va.2vc**

This cycle of settings of poems by Paul Celan was written between May and July 1990 for Ute Lemper. The texts are taken from the following collections: 'Chanson einer Dame im Schatten' and 'Corona' from *Mohn und Gedachtnis* (1952), 'Nächtlich geschürzt' from *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (1955), 'Blume' from *Sprachgitter* (1959), and 'Es war Erde in ihnen' and 'Psalm' from *Die Niemandsrose* of 1963.

The settings of 'Corona' and 'Blume' both introduce an eight-bar chord sequence derived from Chopin's *Mazurka in A minor, Op.17 No.4* (the introduction to which was used by Gorecki in his *Symphony No.3*). During the writing of 'Blume', on 7th June 1990, my mother died, and the cycle is dedicated to her memory.

© Michael Nyman

# Concerto for Trombone



(1995) 22 MINS

Commissioned by BBC Symphony Orchestra

**Trombone; 4(pic).3+ca.3(E♭cl)+bcl.4/2221/3perc/pf/str**

Though the Trombone Concerto, written for Christian Lindberg between February and September 1995, is my fourth concerto, it is the first where it is possible to perceive the relationship between soloist and orchestra as a dramatic narrative.

The background to the concerto - apart from Christian Lindberg's virtuosity and welcome sense of showmanship - is a long essay by the Marxist historian, the late E.P. Thompson entitled 'Rough Music', which has been haunting me for some years and which the Trombone Concerto has partially helped to exorcise. Thompson defines Rough Music as 'the term which has been generally used in England since the end of the 17th century to denote a rude cacophony, with or without more elaborate ritual, which usually directed mockery against individuals who offended against certain community norms'. This cacophony was usually produced by 'a band of motley musicians, beating a fearsome tattoo on old buckets, frying pans, kettles and tin cans.'

The Concerto draws on the imagery of such practices in a confrontation of metal and wood versus metal and wood: the trombonist/offender has his constant support system of the brass and string sections which are persistently and vigorously opposed by metal percussion and woodwind, who always hunt in packs (apart from the rare occasions when the bassoons attempt to invade the trombonist's space). Initially the metal percussion are tuned and benign but become increasingly hostile and untuned. The work proceeds through a series of short musical cul-de-sacs in which the soloist may get trapped or from which he may escape (and which lay down thematic, rhythmic or harmonic 'trails' that are pursued erratically throughout the work) until the trombonist asserts his authority with a longer jig-like sequence (most keeping with the 'country' rather than 'city' context of Rough Music).

This Concerto was commissioned by the BBC for the 300th Anniversary of the death of Purcell. In homage to the composer whose music first found its way into my scores with The Draughtman's Contract in 1983, it seemed appropriate in a concerto for trombone to quote from Purcell's brass music. The five cadences from the Funeral Music for Queen Mary appear three times: first backed by gongs and tam-tams on pulsing woodwind 'attacking' a trombone solo; second, on trumpets and trombones which the pulsing woodwind attempt to (chromatically) annihilate, and finally as the backing to potent string scales over which the soloist is melodically triumphant. This mood of triumphalism is immediately broken by the three percussionists beating out a football-derived chant (QPR v Newcastle, 1994-95 season - "COME - ON - YOU - Rs") on metal filing cabinets. This pulse (usually at odds rhythmically from the rest of the orchestra) drives the final minutes of the Concerto till the trombonist finds himself in the same sentimental corner he was in at the beginning - a brief moment of respite before another session of pursuit perhaps... but the woodwind are still stalking, and the steel drums have infiltrated his tune...

© Michael Nyman

"In old English practice, apparently, folk bang on tin cans to mock those who offend them. Nyman's concerto represents this battle: soloist and supporters versus the rest. Woodwind confronts brass, Purcell blazes; pots and pans are struck. Trombonist Christian Lindberg, bobbing and weaving like a prizefighter, was impressively equal to the stylistic demands, from big band waa-waa to throbbing sentiment."

*Dermot Clinch, The Observer, 01/11/1995*

# Concerto for Violin and Orchestra



**(2003 REV. 2014) 25 MINS**

*Commissioned by Stiftung Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival*

**Violin; 2+pic.2.2+bcl.2+cbn/4.2(fig,pictpt).1+btbn.1/vib.mba/hp/str**

A possible title, or subtitle, for this Concerto would be, or could have been, 'Contact Sheet' ('Kontaktabzug'), since the image and structural principle of the sheet of (unprocessed, straight off the printer) frames on a photographic contact sheet was one of the starting points for the composition of this work. The limits of the frame are important – since the Violin Concerto is literally (but with one category of exceptions) a sequence of 'framed' sections, each precisely calculated to last one minute only. By eliminating the danger of the discursive, this tight formality allows me, on the one hand, to create and articulate a series of self-contained, generally unrelated, musical 'images', and on the other hand to observe the different ways of experiencing the same 'quantity' of passing time. (Following the principle of John Cage's 'Indeterminacy' lecture where the pace of his stories is adjusted to fill the time available).

Interpolated within this one-minute-one-movement layout is a recurrent refrain where the soloist articulates one of the basic harmonic foundations of a number of the one minute sections (six dominant 7ths – on E, F sharp, C, A, B, D) in an undisguised Bachian fashion. The slow arpeggios in the later variants of the refrain not unexpectedly find themselves sharing a bed with the opening of Berg's Violin Concerto. (Can an orchestration be considered to be a 'found object'? I have adopted Berg's orchestra, with two exceptions – I have omitted the alto sax, too often associated with my music but not with his, and replaced Berg's percussion section with marimba and vibraphone, mallet instruments which enjoy a particularly cosy relationship with the soloist in my Concerto). My initial compositional plan was the juxtaposition of the contradictory; but while I was orchestrating I found myself indulging in the process of, so to speak, 'hand tinting' my one minute 'frames' so as to create connections where initially there were none. And in the organising of these images I was aware of the fact that when taking photographs one generally takes a number of shots of the same subject before moving on to the next. That kind of 'bracketing' plays no part in the layout of my musical contact sheet although occasionally an 'early' image reappears as a 'late' image and tempi are sometimes bracketed as follows:

**1. Waltz 1: crotchet = 66**

[Refrain 3]

**2. crotchet = 52**

**10. crotchet = 120**

[Refrain 1]

**11. crotchet = 80**

**3. crotchet = 88**

**12. crotchet = 120**

**4. crotchet = 129**

**13. crotchet = 48**

**5. crotchet = 129**

**14. crotchet = 120 (= section 3)**

**(solo reference to section 4)**

[Refrain 4]

[Refrain 2]

**15. crotchet = 120 (= section 10)**

**6. crotchet = 139**

**16. crotchet = 108**

**7. crotchet = 144**

**17. crotchet = 156 (=section 8)**

**8. crotchet = 144**

**18. crotchet = 52 (= section 2)**

**9. Waltz 2: crotchet = 156**

Alban Berg's Violin Concerto was dedicated to "the memory of an angel", Manon Gropius. My Concerto is dedicated to the memory of Daniel Toscan du Plantier, a friend and neighbour – certainly no angel but a major figure in the recording and film industries. And, it goes without saying, that I thank Gidon Kremer for his inspirational playing and musicianship.





© Isabella de Maddalena

The Violin Concerto was commissioned by Stiftung Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival. It was first performed by Gidon Kremer (violin) and the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival Orchester conducted by Dennis Russell Davies at the Musikhalle, Hamburg, Germany on 29 August 2003.

© Michael Nyman

“This post-modern concerto fascinates because it seems, despite its patchwork character, to develop a common tonal denominator and a strict structure – the aforementioned “Contact Sheet,” which closes at the end with the resumption of the mystical beginning. The work becomes a violin concerto in a unique way. The full orchestra sounds sometimes dazzlingly direct, sometimes spherically enraptured, often pulsatingly jazzy or splendidly full-blooded, melodic and brassy. It grinds out a quite self-sufficient atmosphere, which in its self-reflexive gyrations reminds one distantly of minimalist music. The solo violin however takes up a hyper-nervous active position – active but only within the oblique soundworld. Throughout the 25-minute span of the work, Gidon Kremer on his smoking Stradivari strings performs a miracle of differentiation within a solo part. The violin’s improvisational style, which moves convulsively in all directions, is seen by Kremer himself as one of the most difficult tasks of his career.”

*Kieler Nachrichten, 01/09/2003*



# Where the Bee Dances



**(1991) 21 MINS**

*Commissioned by Bourmemouth Sinfonietta*

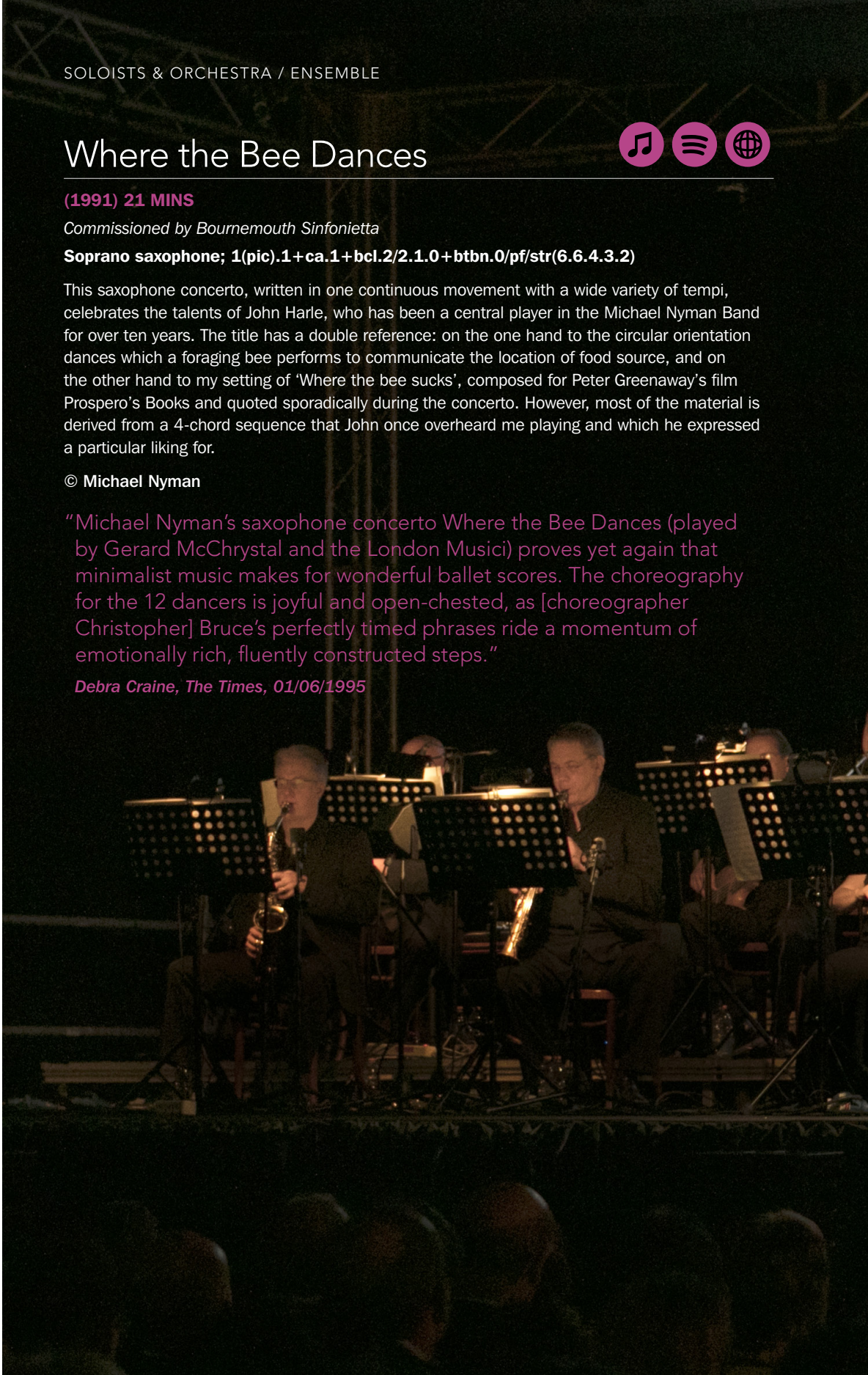
**Soprano saxophone; 1(pic).1+ca.1+bcl.2/2.1.0+btbn.0/pf/str(6.6.4.3.2)**

This saxophone concerto, written in one continuous movement with a wide variety of tempi, celebrates the talents of John Harle, who has been a central player in the Michael Nyman Band for over ten years. The title has a double reference: on the one hand to the circular orientation dances which a foraging bee performs to communicate the location of food source, and on the other hand to my setting of 'Where the bee sucks', composed for Peter Greenaway's film *Prospero's Books* and quoted sporadically during the concerto. However, most of the material is derived from a 4-chord sequence that John once overheard me playing and which he expressed a particular liking for.

© Michael Nyman

"Michael Nyman's saxophone concerto *Where the Bee Dances* (played by Gerard McChrystal and the London Musici) proves yet again that minimalist music makes for wonderful ballet scores. The choreography for the 12 dancers is joyful and open-chested, as [choreographer Christopher] Bruce's perfectly timed phrases ride a momentum of emotionally rich, fluently constructed steps."

*Debra Craine, The Times, 01/06/1995*







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# SMALL ENSEMBLE

## String Quartet No 3



(1990) 16 MINS

*Commissioned by Balanescu Quartet*

### String Quartet

In the summer of 1989 I composed a choral work, *Out of the Ruins*, for Agnieszka Piotrowska's BBC2 documentary which dealt with the physical and emotional responses of some inhabitants of Leninakhan to the earthquake which devastated Armenia the previous December. When he heard the recording of the work that I made with the Holy Echmiadzin Chorus under the fervent conducting of Khoren Meykhanejian, Alex Balanescu suggested turning *Out of the Ruins* into a string quartet. There seemed no reason or opportunity to do this until I felt the need to add to the intensity of my experiences in Armenia the no less profound experience of witnessing the images of the Romanian revolution on television during the later part of December 1989.

Just as the sectional structure of my Third String Quartet may connect it with the First, so they also share a debt to Thurston Dart (my professor at King's College, London, between 1961 and 1965). It was Dart who had the inspiration to send me to Romania in 1965, ostensibly to study folk music. The volumes of transcriptions that I brought back with me had remained unopened until, with this proposed 'celebratory' string quartet (though it is difficult to know quite what to celebrate in post-revolutionary Romania), an occasion arose where I could use this material in what seemed to me was a non-exploitative manner. The compositional procedure was as follows: to take *Out of the Ruins* as a template on which the Romanian vocal or instrumental music would be superimposed, quite often stretched into new intervallic shapes though the demands of the completely performed harmonic structure.

The quartets were written with amplification in mind, and it is my preference that they be performed as such.

String Quartet No.3 was written for and first performed by the Balanescu Quartet at a benefit concert for Romania on 16th February 1990 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London.

© Michael Nyman

## String Quartet No 5 ('Let's not make a song and dance out of it')



(2011) 15 MINS

*Commissioned by Commande Arts 276 – Festival Automne en Normandie*

### String Quartet

The subtitle of String Quartet No 5 – 'Let's not make a song and dance out of this' – derives from the fact that the piece presents movements that could either be songs or dances. The first movement is a dance, the second a song, the third a song, the fourth a dance (a tango), the fifth movement a dance that would be dangerous to dance to, and the six movement reverts to both second and first movements.

© Michael Nyman

STRING QUARTET No. 3 MICHAEL NYMAN

## Time Will Pronounce



(1992) 20 MINS

Commissioned by Trio of London

pf/vn.vc

The title *'ime Will Pronounce* is taken from the last lines of Joseph Brodsky's poem 'Bosnia Tune' which deals with the horror of the unnecessary, unacceptable daily deaths in Bosnia during 1992 (and still in 1993): 'Time, whose sharp blood-thirsty quill parts the killed from those who kill, will pronounce the latter tribe as your type'. The violin and cello are (generally) treated as a unit independent of the piano. The form (generally) alternates slow and fast tempi, without motivation. The musical ideas are (generally) carried over from section to section. (Generally) the harmonic, melodic and textual materials features third and semitones derived (generally) from the movement of the bass part in the opening bars.

© Michael Nyman

# CHORUS & ORCHESTRA

## Symphony No 11: Hillsborough Memorial



(2014) 42 MINS

**Soprano, SA children's choir; 3333/4331/timp.2perc/str**

In early 1985 I was commissioned by the Festival de l'Été in Rouen to write an hour-long work for the soprano Sarah Leonard and the Michael Nyman Band to be performed in a 'deconsecrated' electricity generating station in Yainville in June 1985. I visited the venue (which, unlike Tate Modern Turbine Hall, had not had its turbines removed) and discovered that the reverberation time of the vast performance space was around 10 seconds.

Accordingly, the music I invented and 'found' for this work (the found music was the so-called 'Cold Music' from Purcell's 'King Arthur') needed to be harmonically slow, so that the acoustic would not confuse fast harmonic changes. I could have reverted to the overlapping harmonic practices of the multi-piano 1-100, of 1976 (which features in my 'Aztecs in Liverpool', my two-screen film commission from the Biennale which is currently showing at the Walker Arts Gallery).

On 29 May 1985, whilst I was in the middle of writing 'Centrale Electrique' I sat down in front of a television to watch the Liverpool v Juventus Champions League match at the Heysel Stadium. In the days after the Heysel disaster I read not only about the deaths of 41 Juventus supporters but of the 'extended' effects these deaths had on the families of the dead. At that point 'Centrale Electrique' become 'Memorial', dedicated to the deaths of the Juventus fans.

Over the following few years Jayne Casey – who was then Director of Performing Arts at the Bluecoat Centre – and I failed to arrange a second performance of 'Memorial' in Liverpool. But since I felt that there was too much good music never to be played again I reluctantly decided to 'asset strip' the piece and to find new roles for some of the separate movements. One D major movement would become a song setting Rimbaud's poem 'L'Orgie Parisienne' in 'La Traversée de Paris', a large-scale work commissioned to celebrate the bicentenary of the French Revolution, while the Purcell-derived piece self-evidently found its way into Peter Greenaway's film 'The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover'. This has become well-known, confusingly, as 'Memorial' and some of the scenes it accompanies in the film have continued to embarrass me for the last 25 years.

On 15 April 1989, when I was recording the instrumental part of the Rimbaud song, I was constantly trying to catch radio reports on the two semi-finals being played that afternoon. For some reason I seemed never to be able to find out the score of the Liverpool v Nottingham Forest match during the recording breaks. Some hours after the recording ended I discovered why. For some years I felt partially 'responsible' for the Hillsborough disaster: during the first working of this musical material the Heysel tragedy occurred and on the very afternoon when I had taken the Heysel material 'out of the box' since the sole performance of 'Memorial' in Yainville, the 96 Liverpool fans died at Hillsborough.

On 29 May 1996 I started composing a piece called 'Hillsborough Memorial' in which the names of all the 96 were set as a new vocal line above the very same D major sequence from 'Memorial' that I started to record on 15 April 1989 and on 13 June 1996 Sarah Leonard and the Michael Nyman Band, as part of a Michael Nyman Band tour to coincide with Euro 96, performed Hillsborough Memorial on one occasion only, in Liverpool.





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On 5 July 2014 'Symphony No. 11: Hillsborough Memorial' is performed in Liverpool Cathedral on the opening weekend of the Liverpool Biennale. This symphony 'revisits' both 'Memorial' and 'Hillsborough Memorial' and adds new material to fill the physical space and the emotional space suitable for such an occasion.

The first movement is a new presentation of the names of the 96 dead fans in 'Hillsborough Memorial'. The second movement is a transformed version of a rejected aria, 'I now know you are my son', from my opera 'Facing Goya' (2000). The third movement uses numerical symbolism of '96': there are a number of accumulative repetitions of a 4 bar phrase, made up of 3 chords: the number of bars of the entire piece consist of 96 times 3 divided by 4. And the final movement is a new version of the piece that has come to be known simply as 'Memorial'.

And unspoken, unplayed, unsung, beneath the surface of this Symphony is the history of family pain and my personal anger with the corruption of the Thatcher government and her duplicitous police force.

© Michael Nyman

"...the orchestration shifted and eddied, sweeping in lovely descending and then ascending melodic motion. Nyman's music, with its signature insistent pulsing beat, can often carry on in one long, sweeping whole. [...] Nyman talks about numerical symbolism, but it seems more a *cri de coeur* than a cold calculation. The final movement, reclaimed from cinema's clutches, proved a fitting finale complete with a wonderful, shimmering wall of sound."

*Catherine Jones, Liverpool Echo, 05/07/2014*

# OPERA

## Facing Goya



**(2000 REV. 2002) 2 HRS, 30 MINS**

*Commissioned by Editorial Paraiso Music*

**Libretto in English by Victoria Hardie**

**2 sopranos, contralto, tenor, baritone; 1(afl).0.1(bcl).asx(ssx)+barsx(bcl).0/1.2.0+btbn.0/vib(mba)/pf/egtr+bgtr/str**

How do art, genetics, ethics and commercialism interact with each other? *Facing Goya* examines different aspects of this question from different historical and moral perspectives. The unifying focal point is the skull of the artist Goya, which was found to be missing when his coffin was opened a century after his death. The principal character, a modernday Art Banker, travels through different centuries examining the changes in attitude towards these issues.

“Dubbed “an opera of ideas” ever since its premiere, with theories rather than emotions filling Victoria Hardie’s libretto and Nyman’s kinetic score somehow holding it all in place, *Facing Goya* has found an entirely new level of resonance. ...soaring musical lines wedded to a propulsive rhythmic intensity.”

*Ken Smith, The Financial Times, 14/08/2014*

“Nyman’s score supports [Victoria Hardie’s] words wonderfully: it’s one of his finest achievements. The propulsive style, with its amplified orchestra and singers...is instantly recognizable, while his extraordinary skill at rediscovering the expressive power of the common chord, or reinventing the dramatic potency of a simple cadence, provides him with a rich variety of musical possibilities. There are some instantly memorable melodic lines...the soaring tune that dominates Beethoven’s third Leonora overture is recruited to announce the appearance of Goya in the final scene. It does the job superbly... It’s a fascinating work, and needs to be seen in Britain as soon as possible.”

*Andrew Clements, The Guardian, 01/08/2000*

## Letters, Riddles and Writs



**(1991) 30 MINS**

**Libretto in English by Jeremy Newson**

**Contralto, countertenor, bass; 3sx/1110/pf/bgtr/3vn.va.2vc**

Mozart’s interface with his father, as evidenced through his letters, was undoubtedly the composer’s single most difficult relationship. *Letters, Riddles and Writs* explores this and also the question of music ownership: his father, who schooled him, sought to control his every action, be it with work, money, or women. Nyman’s music is derived from Mozart and the song texts are taken from father-son correspondence and a set of riddles Mozart wrote for the Carnival in 1782.

# Love Counts



(2005) 40 MINS

Commissioned by Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, Germany

Libretto in English by Michael Hastings

Soprano, bass; cl.bcl.barsx/hn.tpt/pf.kbd/str

[NB: a second keyboard may be used instead of multiple strings]

“His score here is cast in the form of a series of “blocks” of music, each rich in cross-rhythms, based on a repeated figure, and keeping closely to the home key. Some blocks beat up the familiar Nyman frenzy, but others are grave and graceful. [...] Nyman now writes with real affection for the human voice. At those moments when Hastings’ libretto becomes Blakean in its tender simplicity, the score faithfully follows. This marriage of words and music is a nice place to inhabit.”

Michael Church, *The Independent*, 18/07/2007

## Love Counts

Libretto by Michael Hastings

### ACT ONE Scene 1

Michael Nyman

Large tree branch hangs down over the pavement. Plenty of leaves. A man is punching at the leaves. Leaves and twigs tumble down. He is Patsy Bear. Seems very fit. Casually dressed. Perhaps high laced ankle boots and tracksuit and various tops added to his frame. Something tired about his face. His fists are wrapped in tape. He shadow punches the leaves. Blocking and countering. Good footwork. Tends to breathe out on a punch.

Avril Ainger rides her bike past. She's so surprised. Almost loses balance. Has to dismount for a moment. Takes off her headguard. She watches Patsy punching the leaves. She has a certain controlled nature. A calmness about her that belies the truth. She could be a little older than Patsy. She finds it unusual, to say the least, to see a man fighting the tree.

After a while, Patsy takes a breather. Circles the large branch. He doesn't see Avril immediately.

Rehearsal Piano

Avril

Patsy

$\text{♩} = 180$

4



THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT

Oliver Sacks/  
Christopher Randelme/  
Michael Nyman

MICHAEL NYMAN

PROLOGUE

*♩ = 66 (or slower)*

PIANO

Dr. S.

*"Narcotony's favorite term is deficit"*

Dr. S.

Dr. S.

Dr. C.

Dr. S.

*"No faces to see."*

*\*this piano solo may be considerably embellished/extended*

Michael Nyman

The Man Who  
Mistook His Wife  
For A Hat  
chamber opera

vocal score

Chester Music

# The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat



(1986) 1 HR, 10 MINS

**Libretto in English, German and Russian by Christopher Rawlence, based on the case study by Oliver Sacks**

**Soprano, tenor, baritone; hp/2vn.va.2vc/pf**

An investigation into the world of a man (Dr P) with visual agnosia (or 'mental blindness' due to damage of the visual parts of the brain). Such patients 'see but do not see'. They see colours, lines, boundaries, simple shapes, patterns, movement – but they are unable to recognise, or find sense in, what they see. They cannot recognise people or places or common objects; their visual world is no longer meaningful or familiar, but strange, abstract, chaotic, mystifying. If a world cannot be organised visually, other organizing principles may be found and used. In the case of Dr P, a gifted performer, his exceptional musical ability allows him, in large measure, to return sense to the world by putting it and his actions into music.

## COMPOSER'S NOTE

The subject of *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Dr. P, requires music as a lifeline, cue, clue, cure.

Its treatment in the hands of Sacks, Christopher Rawlence, and Michael Morris invites a music which may exaggerate, suggest, narrate, dislocate, illustrate, allude, connect, schematicize, cite, express, analyse, structure, mechanise, differentiate, identify, compress, distance, abstract, represent, recreate, cross-refer, strip-down, denote, motivate, formalise...

My initial conception of the opera (strictly following Oliver Sacks' structure) was a series of diagnostic events (hat mistaking, rose describing, etc.) each self-contained, independent, yet accumulatively (rather than cumulatively) building an awareness of Dr. P's illness – evidence increasing as musical detail decreases. The case study progresses while standing still.

© Michael Nyman

"A chamber opera with the intriguing, Suess-like title *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* was the effective, unusual and major part of the College of Marin's current programme, "Winter Opera 2001" ...In Michael Nyman's hour-long chamber opera, based on...Oliver Sacks, a mysterious visual impairment is affecting Dr P's ability to make sense of the things he sees. Dr P cannot recognize ordinary objects, like a flower, a glove, or a photograph. His students' faces seem unfamiliar to him and recently he has tried to shake hands with a parking meter...Nyman created attractive, singable music, and librettist Christopher Rawlence fashioned believable roles for the soprano, tenor and baritone who comprise the cast. The romantic but resolutely minimalist instrumental score for strings and keyboards is essentially background music in support of the voices. Closely shadowing the singers, its sometimes swift or sudden shifts of harmony and texture underline changes of mood and expression in the drama onstage."

*Jules Langert, San Francisco Classical Voice, 01/01/2001*

# CHORUS

## Out of the Ruins



**(1989) 21 MINS**

*Text by Grigor Narekatsi*

**SATB and optional organ**

In the late summer of 1989, BBC director Agnieszka Piotrowska asked me to write a choral work to accompany her documentary about the way in which the Armenians were coming to terms with the effects of the earthquake which struck on 7th December 1988, killing over twenty-five thousand people. When I agreed, I could not possibly have predicted the profound effect the process of composing and recording would have on me; from Agnieszka's choice of text – lines from the Book of Lamentations by the 10th century Armenian poet, Grigor Narekatsi (which I have used in the odd-numbered sections of the five-section work), through to the recording which took place into the night in the 4th century Echmiadzin Church, an hour's drive from Yerevan. Out of homage to the fervour and expressiveness of the performance by the Holy Echmiadzin Choir, I have decided to reproduce in this edition all of the expression marks and tempi of Khoren Meykhanejian, to whom I express my gratitude.

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## Miserere (from *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*)



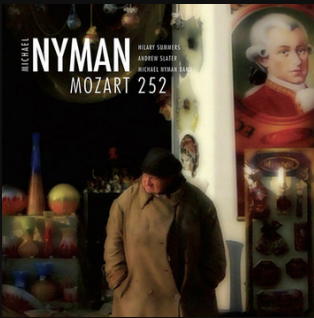
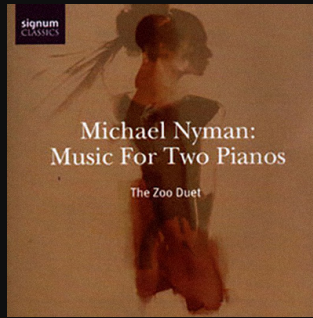
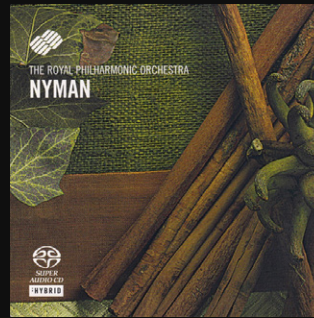
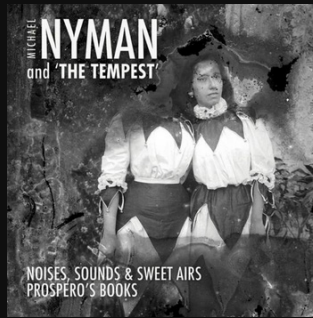
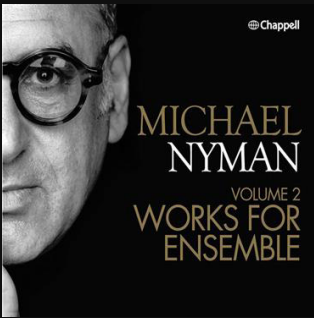
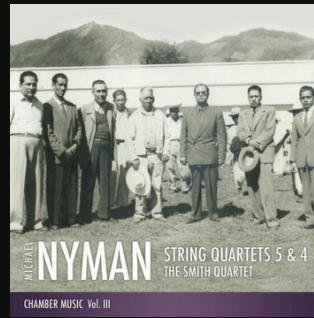
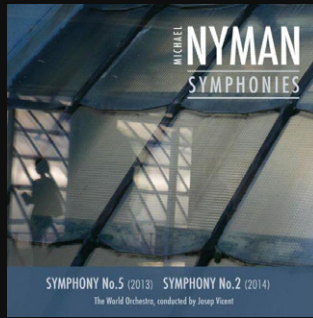
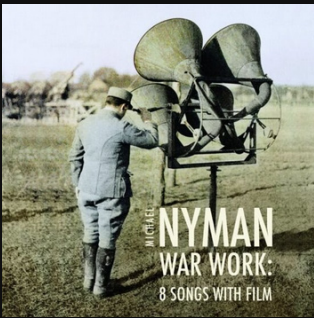
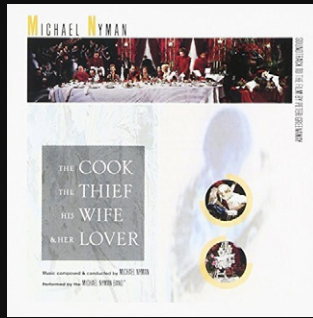
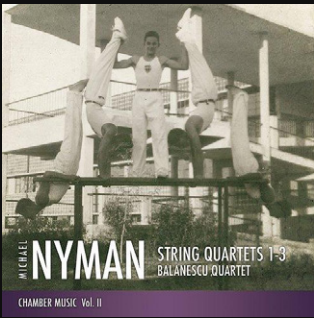
**(1989/1990) 12 MINS**

*Text from Psalm 51*

**Soprano solo, SATB chorus**

*Miserere* is a setting of Psalm 51, originally written for Peter Greenaway's film *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*. Penitence and pleasure are the ruling modes of expression. The first performance of *Miserere*, in a form for soprano solo, chorus and instruments, was given at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, in January 1990.







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