

PROLOGUE (1986)

PASCAL PONGY
CHARLES FULLBROOK
GAVIN BRYARS

FRENCH HORN
PERCUSSION (TUNED GONGS)
PERCUSSION (PLATE GONGS, BOWED
GLOCKENSPIEL, BOWED CROTALES)

ECM 1323
LP 829484-1
CD 829484-2

STRING QUARTET NO. 1 (1985)
(-BETWEEN THE NATIONAL
AND THE BRISTOL-)

ARDITTI QUARTET
IRVINE ARDITTI
ALEXANDER BALANESCU
LEVINE ANDRADE
ROHAN DE SARAH

VIOLIN
VIOLIN
VIOLA
CELLO

FIRST VIENNESE DANCE (1985-86)
(-M.H.-)

PASCAL PONGY
CHARLES FULLBROOK

FRENCH HORN
PERCUSSION (GLOCKENSPIEL, CROTALES,
MARIMBA, TUBULAR BELLS, TUNED GONGS,
PLATE GONGS, TAM-TAMS, CYMBALS,
WIND-CHIMES, SLEIGH BELLS,
MARK-TREE, BELL-TREE, ROTO-TOMS)

EPILOGUE (1986)

PASCAL PONGY
CHARLES FULLBROOK
GAVIN BRYARS

FRENCH HORN
PERCUSSION (TUNED GONGS)
PERCUSSION (PLATE GONGS, BOWED
GLOCKENSPIEL, BOWED CROTALES)

THREE VIENNESE DANCERS

DIGITAL RECORDING, FEBRUARY 1986
TONSTUDIO BAUER, LUDWIGSBURG
ENGINEER: MARTIN WIELAND
COVER DESIGN: BARBARA WOJIRSCH
PRODUCED BY MANFRED EICHER

AN ECM PRODUCTION

GAVIN BRYARS

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THREE VIENNESE DANCERS

ARDITTI STRING QUARTET

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② STRING QUARTET No. 1 (1985)
(»BETWEEN THE NATIONAL
AND THE BRISTOL«)

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IRVINE ARDITTI
ALEXANDER BALANESCU
LEVINE ANDRADE
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④ EPILOGUE (1986)

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Three Viennese Dancers

When I was doing research to find a text for an aria to be sung by Mata Hari for a scene from Robert Wilson's *Civil Wars* – a scene that was quickly abandoned because of its theatrical impracticability – I came across the tangential fact that, on one night in late 1906, the three most celebrated dancers of the day were staying in hotels in Vienna, each one ignorant of the others' presence. Mata Hari, who had danced that evening at the Vienna Secession Hall, stayed at the Hotel Bristol. Maud Allan was staying at the Hotel National. Isadora Duncan was in a hotel in between the two others. (Sam Waagenaar had not managed to identify exact location).

When this scene was dropped from the opera, I decided to use the accompaniment that I had already drafted for tuned percussion, for a concert aria for soprano voice, in the Javanese of pre-World War I – the language that Mata Hari claimed to speak. Although the text was interesting it did not suit the accompaniment, and so the piece was re-written for solo french horn and this piece became *First Viennese Dance* ("M.H.").

The tuned percussion is particularly rich in harmonics, due to use of resonant metallophones (tuned gongs, crotales, plate

gongs, glockenspiel, bells). These are reinforced by rolled chords on marimba and roto-toms, and the overtones are extended higher by bowed tones on cymbals, tam-tams, and crotales (there is also a version with string trio fulfilling this function). The overtones are focussed more clearly by the very long notes in the extremely slow horn melody. This horn part was written with Pascal Pongy in mind.

I had met Pascal when my opera *Medea* was produced at the Opéra de Lyon, where he is the horn soloist. I had a very good working relationship with the orchestra, which was highly motivated and the players cheerfully accepted the frequent adjustments to the score. Pascal typified this willingness. When I had to add 1½ minutes of music two hours before the dress rehearsal (because of an oversight regarding a costume change) I knew that the already over-worked horns would accept such an insert and sight-read it. I said to Pascal that I hoped it was playable and he replied that the moment music is written it is playable. For me he is one of the great horn players.

The *String Quartet No. 1* ("Between the National and the Bristol") was commissioned by the Vienna Festival for the Arditti Quartet to play in October 1985 at the suggestion of Edek Bartz. I had never considered writing a quartet partly because, although a string player myself, as a bassist I was outside the privacy of such an ensemble and could only

view its perfection from a distance. My original idea was to write a quartet in which each instrumental part would be a portrait of a composer associated with it as a player – the whole quartet would serve as a kind of imaginary seance bringing them together. (This scheme had Ysayë as first violin, Vieuxtemps as second violin, Hindemith or Kupkovič as viola, Schönberg as cello). In the event there was not enough time to develop this fully and I only allude to Ysayë, both as composer, virtuoso and quartet leader; and to his connection with Busoni, his occasional accompanist and butt of one of Ysayë's best practical jokes (in the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham).

A great deal of the music is in a high register and uses harmonics, both natural and artificial, extensively. At the end of the piece, knowing the extraordinary virtuosity of the Arditti Quartet, I wrote a coda for which each instrument detunes one pair of strings. The first violin detunes the top two strings to G sharp and D sharp (giving G, D, G sharp, D sharp). The second violin retunes the bottom two strings to F sharp and C sharp (giving F sharp, C sharp, A, E). The viola detunes the top pair of strings to C sharp and G sharp (giving C, G, C sharp, G sharp). The cello retunes the bottom pair to B and F sharp (giving B, F sharp, D, A). This is done as discreetly as possible and results, effectively, in two violins tuned a semitone apart, and the viola/cello tuned a semitone apart (with the octave difference). From this point on there are only har-

monics. The idea was to have natural harmonics on the "artificially" tuned string and artificial harmonics on the "naturally" tuned strings. Extended solos in natural harmonics are part of the bassist's solo repertoire and their inclusion here assimilates the bassist, a little, into the privileged company of the other strings.

After the performances in Austria I revised the piece slightly for the Arditti Quartet London series at the Almeida Theatre where they had use of Richard Armin's RAAD instruments for the first time. I extended this already difficult coda to exploit more the ease with which high harmonics can be produced on these electric instruments.

The quartet is dedicated to my sister, Hazel, who died while I was revising the piece for the London performance and for this record.

The *Prologue* and *Epilogue*, which are identical, were made in Ludwigsburg when we had just finished recording the *First Viennese Dance*. We discussed the possibility of adding a short coda in the spirit of the longer piece and this was improvised. After listening to playback it was decided to use this short piece to begin the record and to serve as a short *Epilogue* to the *First Viennese Dance*. This effectively gave us a piece for the third dancer, Maud Allan.

Note on the instruments

Although the quartet was not written initially with the RAAD instruments in mind, the special sound they create is particularly appropriate to this piece. Dick Armin's instruments combine acoustic and electric elements in a highly original way and given that acoustic and electric sound can be combined in any way, this flexibility of treatment makes them particularly useful in a recording context and results in a very interesting tone quality.

Paiste's percussion instruments are better known and the instruments for these sessions were supplied direct from the factory in Switzerland. The cymbals, gongs, tam-tams and crotales are the finest I know and the accuracy of tuning is astonishing. The plate gongs are particularly interesting giving a sound midway between a button gong and a tenor steel drum, but with the delay of a small tam-tam.

Gavin Bryars

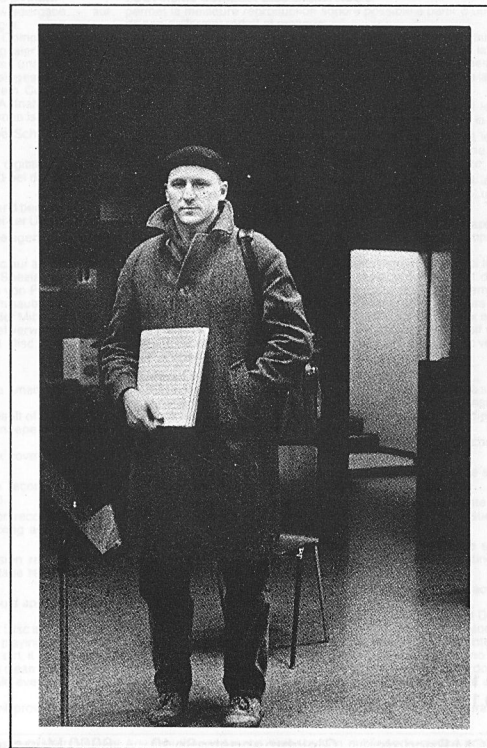


Photo: Signe Mähler

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DDD Utilisation d'un magnétophone numérique pendant les séances d'enregistrement, le mixage et/ou le montage et la gravure.

ADD Utilisation d'un magnétophone analogique pendant les séances d'enregistrement, utilisation d'un magnétophone numérique pendant le mixage et/ou le montage et la gravure.

AAD Utilisation d'un magnétophone analogique pendant les séances d'enregistrement et le mixage et/ou le montage, utilisation d'un magnétophone numérique pendant la gravure.

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Questa tecnica di registrazione è identificata sul retro della confezione da un codice di tre lettere:

DDD Si riferisce all'uso del registratore digitale durante le sedute di registrazione, mixing e/o editing, e masterizzazione.

ADD Sta ad indicare l'uso del registratore analogico durante le sedute di registrazione, e del registratore digitale per il successivo mixing e/o editing e per la masterizzazione.

AAD Riguarda l'uso del registratore analogico durante le sedute di registrazione e per il successivo mixing e/o editing, e del registratore digitale per la masterizzazione.

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Seguendo questi consigli, il Compact Disc fornirà, per la durata di una vita, il godimento del puro ascolto.

Gavin Bryars

Three Viennese Dancers

- ① **Prologue** (1986) 4:35
Pascal Pongy French Horn
Charles Fullbrook Percussion
Gavin Bryars Percussion
- ② **String Quartet No. 1** (1985) 20:03
 ("Between the National and the Bristol")
Arditti String Quartet:
Irvine Arditti Violin
Alexander Balanescu Violin
Levine Andrade Viola
Rohan de Saram Cello
- ③ **First Viennese Dance** (1985-86) 18:47
 ("M. H.")
Pascal Pongy French Horn
Charles Fullbrook Percussion
- ④ **Epilogue** (1986) 4:36
Pascal Pongy French Horn
Charles Fullbrook Percussion
Gavin Bryars Percussion

All compositions by Gavin Bryars

Digital Recording, February 1986 at Tonstudio Bauer, Ludwigsburg / Engineer: Martin Wieland
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