

Thomas Adès - Life Story (1997)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Catch, op.4*
for clarinet, piano, violin & cello, Op. 4
2. *Darknesse visible*
for piano
3. *Still Sorrowing, Op. 7*
for piano
4. *Under Hamelin Hill, Op. 6*
for chamber organ
 - I. *Preambulum (2 hands)*
 - II. *Fuga (2-6 hands)*
 - III. *Arietta (2 hands)*
5. *Five Eliot Landscapes, Op. 1*
for soprano & piano
 - I. *New Hampshire*
 - II. *Virginia*
 - III. *Usk* [play](#)
 - IV. *Rannoch, by Glencoe*
 - V. *Cape Ann*
6. *Traced Overhead, Op. 15*
for piano
 - I. *Sursum*
 - II. *Aetheria* [play](#)
 - III. *Chori*
7. *Life Story, Op. 8*
for soprano, 2 bass clarinets & double bass

Thomas Adès, piano, chamber organ

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Valdine Anderson & Mary Carewe, sopranos
Lynsey Marsh, clarinet
Anthony Marwood, violin
Louise Hopkins, cello
David Goode & Stephen Farr, chamber organs

Originally issued in May 1997 and one of the clear successes of EMI's Debut series, this disc was a major contributory factor to Adès' success. It is still difficult to believe that Adès was born as recently as 1971, such is the sureness of the compositional hand at work in these pieces. Since then awards and commissions have followed each other in bullet-like succession (he was the youngest ever recipient of the Grawemeyer Prize for his orchestral work *Asyla*, Op. 17, for example). He has acted as the Hallé's Composer-in-Residence (which in fact resulted in *Asyla*, as well as *The Origin of the Harp*) and he has produced an opera, *Powder her Face*, of international significance. In addition, he has let his talents as pianist and conductor develop (his solo piano disc on CDC5 57051-2 is an impressive achievement). Being in possession of such enviable pianistic gifts makes Adès the ideal interpreter of his own piano music. He makes the complexities of *Traced Overhead* (1996) seem easy (other pianists performances reveal this clearly not to be the case). *Darknesse Visible*, a 'recomposing' of Dowland's *In darknesse let me dwell*, likewise exhibits an astonishing variety of textures. In short, there is plenty to provoke thought here, and much to make one wonder in which direction this composer will travel in the future.---Colin Clarke

This debut CD of Thomas Ades is wonderful introduction to this composer. I'm not sure if I'm looking to deeply but I sense in all the pieces on this disk a dark edge beneath all the multicoloured orcestration. 'Catch' I feel is rather frightening in the way the ensemble on stage lures the clarinet to take a seet with them. As you will hear, the final bars of the piece are not dipicting a very happy clarinetist as the entrapping ensemble make one final swipe at them! 'Darkness Visible' might be my favourit piece. It really has the sence of hearing the song through a pool of water or through ages past. All the pieces have real depth and it is quite amazing.

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