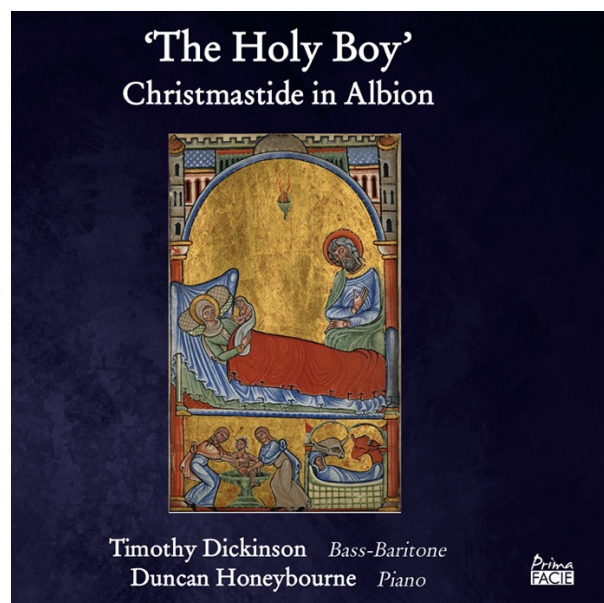


The Holy Boy (PFCD170)

Timothy Dickinson (bass-baritone) and Duncan Honeybourne (piano)



The idea for this programme of Christmas music was sparked by a handful of songs and a handful of singers. Having rather hurriedly gathered together repertoire for a Christmas concert in December 2020, after months of cancelled and postponed performances, it dawned on us that the few songs we had chosen (among them 'The Little Road To Bethlehem', 'The Holy Boy', 'The Oxen' and 'The Bayly Berith The Bell Away') belonged together and would sit very happily in an expanded programme of similar music. Little did we know how rich a seam we were to discover, and how much of this repertoire seems to have been sadly neglected.

While the Christmas songs of Peter Warlock could fill an entire disc (and have done), not all of the songs are well known, particularly in the versions for voice and piano. We have Warlock's friend Arnold Dowbiggin to thank for the revised version of his well-loved carol, 'Bethlehem Down', one of the very last acts of Warlock's tragically short life. Another fine singer to whom this programme owes a debt is Owen Brannigan, who is the dedicatee of both Michael Head's 'Carol of the Field Mice' and Malcolm Williamson's 'A Christmas Carol', composed some six years apart.

Two other singers deserve special recognition, namely Forbes Robinson (1926-87) and John Carol Case (1923-2012). It was 'Christmas With Forbes Robinson' (Tower LP 1973) that not only pointed us in the direction of Arnold Bax's 'Five Fantasies on Polish Carols' and Mark Hankey's delightful 'Lucy's Carol' (of which we are told that "the words...were extemporised to her doll by a four year old child whose name was Lucy") but also showed that a programme of Christmas songs for Bass-Baritone was not only plausible but genuinely commendable. As for John Carol Case, it was to his anthology 'Sing Solo Christmas' that we (as many others must have) turned for inspiration and stimulation, and it is hard to imagine a more varied and sensitively assembled collection of such music.

Track Listings

01. The Little Road To Bethlehem – Michael Head
02. Carol Of The Skiddaw Yowes – Ivor Gurney
03. The Monkey's Carol – Charles Stanford
04. Chrissesmas Day In The Morning – Gustav Holst
05. The Bayly Berith The Bell Away – Peter Warlock
06. Bethlehem Down – Peter Warlock
07. From Five Fantasies On Polish Christmas Carols I. God Is Born – Arnold Bax
08. From Five Fantasies On Polish Christmas Carols ii. Lullay, Dear Jesus – Arnold Bax
09. From Five Fantasies On Polish Christmas Carols iii. Merrily To Bethlehem – Arnold Bax
10. O Dame Get Up And Bake Your Pies (Variations on a North Country Christmas Carol) – Arnold Bax
11. The Oxen (from Hodie) – Ralph Vaughan Williams
12. Balulalow – Peter Warlock
13. Tyrley, Tyrlow – Peter Warlock
14. The Frostbound Wood – Peter Warlock
15. Corpus Christie Carol (from A Boy Was Born) – Benjamin Britten
16. The Sussex Mummers Christmas Carol – Percy Grainger
17. A Christmas Carol – Malcolm Williamson
18. Lucy's Carol – Mark Hankey
19. The Carol Of The Field Mice – Michael Head
20. Noel – H. Balfour Gardiner
21. Make We Merry – Norman Fultono
22. The Holy Boy – John Ireland

Total time: 65:49

We are immensely grateful to The Peter Warlock Society for their generous support.

This recording is dedicated to the memory of Birgitta Honeybourne, 1939-2021.

Recorded and Produced by Steve Plews on 9th May 2021 at Holy Trinity Church, Hereford.
Edited and Mastered by Phil Hardman.

Web: https://primafacie.ascrecords.com/holy_boy.html

Duncan Honeybourne



Duncan Honeybourne enjoys a diverse profile as a pianist and in music education. His concerto debut in 1998 at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, and the National Concert Hall, Dublin, was broadcast on radio and television, and recital debuts included London, Paris, and international festivals in Belgium and Switzerland. Duncan has toured extensively as soloist and chamber musician, broadcasting frequently for the BBC and radio networks worldwide. His many recordings reflect his interest in 20th and 21st century British piano music. He is a Tutor in Piano at the University of Southampton.

Timothy Dickinson



British Bass-Baritone [Timothy Dickinson](#) has been noted for his “wonderfully warm, round, powerful tone” (Early Music Today). His work ranges from recitals across the UK to Operatic roles at Glyndebourne, Scottish Opera, Longborough, Buxton and elsewhere. He has toured internationally with Silent Opera, in their groundbreaking production of ‘Vixen’, and has also been a regular guest at the St Endellion Festivals in Cornwall.

Timothy is also very active as an Oratorio soloist, embracing a broad repertoire including Bach’s Passions, the Requiems of Verdi, Faure and Duruflé, and Haydn’s ‘The Creation’. He has also sung with various ensembles, including The Sixteen, Dunedin Consort and La Nuova Musica, with whom he appears on ‘Sacrifices’ (Harmonia Mundi). Additionally, he has enjoyed a deeply rewarding association with the education department of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, performing with young people across the country in several newly-devised shows based around the music of Purcell and Mozart.

In recital, Tim enjoys a fruitful partnership with pianist Anyssa Neumann, with whom he has devised a recital of music and readings inspired by Don Quixote, which the pair have performed on numerous occasions throughout the UK. He has also recently formed a partnership with pianist Duncan Honeybourne.

Timothy was the recipient of the 2013 Wessex Glyndebourne Award, and is an Alumnus of the National Opera Studio, London. He now lives in Somerset with his wife and two children.