

## CD REVIEW 135

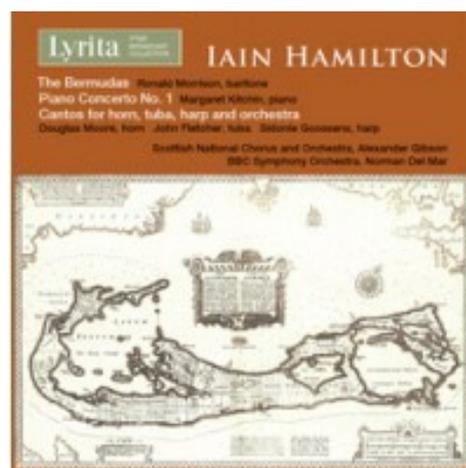
### Iain Hamilton

The Bermudas for baritone, chorus and orchestra. Ronald Morrison, Scottish National Chorus and Orchestra, Alexander Gibson, Broadcast 22 April 1973.

Piano Concerto no 1, Margaret Kitchin, Scottish National Orchestra Alexander Gibson Broadcast 27 March 1961 from Glasgow premiere in February of that year.

Cantos for horn, tuba, harp and orchestra, Douglas Moore, John Fletcher, Sidonie Goossens, BBC Symphony Orchestre Norman Del Mar. Premiere Prom Concert 4 August 1964.

LYRITA REAM 1126 mono (ADD) (65 46)



Another welcome CD of BBC broadcasts and as Paul Conway writes in his admirable sleeve notes this CD makes up a set of three, highlighting three very great composers namely Humphrey Searle, Peter Racine Fricker and Iain Hamilton.

The musicweb review of this Hamilton CD is unfortunate as it is hostile to the Piano Concerto.

Margaret Kitchin was a phenomenal pianist and was probably the only one who initially had the skill to play this work. Can you imagine Imogen Cooper playing it?

When Margaret played the Roger Sessions concerto in the Maida Vale studio, she and the work was booed. If someone booed Elgar that would have been unacceptable.

The Bermudas is a splendid work based on Andrew Marvel's poem of 1654. The opening movement is a choral describing some Caribbean islands. The choral harmonies are gorgeous and the baritone quasi recitative is choice. The orchestra picks up the sunshine and mystery with consummate skill. An Allegro furioso follows which is an orchestral interlude, wonderfully scored. The middle movement begins Lento and has some striking choral writing and, later, a fine baritone solo. The fish, mammals and the fruits of the island, its trees and pearls are mentioned. The chorus triumphant sings Bermuda, Trinidad, Honduras and Havana. The next movement is a slow orchestral interlude and the final movement extols the beauty of Bermuda, Trinidad, Honduras and Havana. The music is somewhat moving and deeply satisfying. Someone has described it as a seascape while others compare it with Ernest Toch's Geographical Fugue

The Piano Concerto no 1 has been savaged. The MusicWeb writer refers to it as part of the composer's serial period as if that were a disease. People are prejudiced against Schoenberg, Berg and Webern and the serial technique itself which is a discipline that calls for great skill that very few composers have.

An honest composer, William Walton, tried his hand at writing serial music and said it was too difficult to write in this style. There are masterpieces written in the serial method of which the most famous is Berg's Violin Concerto.

As mentioned before, shallow people want music with tunes in it but when you consider the centuries of music with tunes in it during all those centuries to write a totally original tune now is impossible. And the majority accept this because it is true. Piano concertos with traditional features,

musical gymnastics and sumptuous diatonic tunes are in the past although we will still love Liszt and Rachmaninov.

Hamilton's Concerto is in five sections with various orchestral groups. As Paul Conway explains the form is ingenious. The work has seven cadenzas and that speaks for itself. Only a very great pianist could play this and, no wonder, Hamilton dedicated this work to Margaret Kitchin. Someone has said that Hamilton is the modern day Liszt.

The Concerto was composed in 1960 and revised in 1967.

Cantos is, as all music must be, original and as one critic said shows the composer's mastery of the orchestra. Movements two and four are nocturnes and with the soloists there is a wealth of contrast. There is no predictable sameness here. The work was well received.

The mono sound is good. The full text of The Bermudas is in Paul Conway's helpful notes.

Another welcome CD.

(628)

---

© COPYRIGHT David C F Wright 2016. This article or any part of it, however small, must not be copied, quoted, reproduced, downloaded or altered in any way whatsoever nor stored in any retrieval system. Failure to comply is in breach of International Copyright Law and will render any offender liable to action at law.

If anyone in the UK particularly has difficulty obtaining any CDs will they please contact [Record Corner](#), Godalming, Surrey, telephone 01483 422006 and ask for Tom Briggs or his staff.