

## **BRYDEN THOMSON**

David C F Wright, DMus



The death of Bryden Thomson on 14 November 1991 was a painful blow to music. He was 63.

Undoubtedly, one of the most able conductors of his time, he possessed many qualities which, because of his inherent modesty, may not be fully recognised. He always spoke of getting to know the music, which statement belied his evident understanding of it; he believed that he was the servant of the music never suggesting that he could add anything that was not already implicit.

Indeed, he was not concerned with his personal advancement – only to realise faithfully each composer's wishes. Into his conducting he brought his conviction that the correct tempo was the key to a worthy performance and this made for one of his greatest qualities, namely the ability to ensure the most perfect clarity of orchestral texture, a phenomenal gift that is rare to the point of uniqueness. Among his other many splendid attributes was that he was probably the best orchestral accompanist Britain has ever

produced. This was fostered by his conducting of the Royal Ballet on tour for 18 months in the early 1960s and his natural gift for identifying with other performers which was another part of the fundamental goodness of his character.

Born in Ayr on 26 July 1928, he took up the violin and the cello. At the age of 15 he won a piano scholarship to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music in Glasgow and won almost every prize. But after six weeks there, he was called up for National Service in the Highland Light Infantry and he was the pianist in their band. He also taught himself the clarinet by reading a clarinet tutor. Back at the Academy, he played the cello in the orchestra.

He furthered his studies in Hamburg studying conducting with Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt and Igor Markevitch.

On his return to Scotland, he taught music in schools and then became deputy to Ian Whyte, conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. He was now thirty years old. Four years later, he was conductor to the Norwegian Opera and developed his interest in the Scandinavian repertoire. In 1966, he was appointed associate conductor of the Scottish National Orchestra.

Two years later, he was appointed principal conductor of the BBC Northern Orchestra and it was he who so built up the orchestra as to establish its claim to a new title, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. Clearly under his five-year conductorship, the orchestra widened both its repertoire and ability. From 1977 to 1985, he was music director of the Ulster Orchestra, an orchestra then almost completely unknown. As with the orchestra in Manchester, he built up this body into the highly professional and universally recognised orchestra it now is. For a year he was with the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra and between 1984 and 1987 conducted the Radio Telefis Eirann Symphony Orchestra in Dublin. It is entirely due to 'Jack' Thomson that this orchestra too became such a magnificent group of players. He introduced to Dublin all the symphonies of Beethoven, Sibelius, Bruckner, Nielsen and Dvorak. He also performed works by Irish composers such as Gerard Victory, Aloys Fleischmann and James Wilson; when in Cardiff he had similarly given works by such composers as David Wynne, Alun

Hoddinott and a memorable cycle of all the symphonies by Daniel Jones.

He broadcast all the Dvorak symphonies for the BBC and there was a possibility that he might record them for Chandos. In his marvellous performances, he brought out detail and made the works fresh. He had a natural feel for this music. With the BBC Welsh Orchestra and Chorus he gave an exemplary performance of Dvorak's Te Deum in Cardiff in 1990.

Another Czech composer that he championed was Martinu and he recorded all of his six symphonies and brilliantly. The scherzo of the First Symphony is astonishing and, in fact, his understanding of the music is obvious as it was in Smetana's Symphonic Poems.

He conducted works by Grace Williams and Alun Hoddinott including premieres. He also worked on scores by Graham Whettham and once conducted the Halle Orchestra and Johann Strauss!

I saw him at rehearsals and concerts and he was so thorough and direct. He knew every player by name and was always encouraging and gave praise freely without being mawkish.

He was a splendid conductor. David Ellis called him 'a very good technician who knew exactly what he wanted and how to achieve it. He did not waste time, not his own or the orchestras. He knew every score and there was no flannelling'.

Someone called him the conductor of rare expertise.

It is his legacy of recordings for Chandos which will enable people to value the work of this superlative conductor. He recorded all the Bax symphonies with the London Philharmonic, apart from No. 4 which he recorded with the Ulster Orchestra. With this now highly-polished Belfast orchestra he recorded the works of Hamilton Harty. With the LSO, he recorded the nine symphonies of Vaughan Williams which have deservedly won critical acclaim. His Elgar recordings have caused Elgar-haters to listen with interest; his Walton performances are as good as one could ever expect.

He was the finest orchestral conductor and soloists loved him. There is the famous story of the pianist Shura Cherkassy who was unpredictable in his playing always trying to outdo his conductor. "Following Shura was like trying to catch a rice pudding in a tennis racket," explained Jack.

For several years he was the conductor in the finals of the Young Musician of the Year and the finalists I have spoke to all agree that he was not only a fine conductor and instilled confidence in them.

As a conductor, he believed that he had to realise as near as possible what the composer wrote. When he was conducting a ballet in Scandinavia he had verbal clashes with Nureyev who complained about Thomson's tempi. Eventually Thomson replied, 'That is how the music is written, and if you can't dance to it you shouldn't be dancing.'

Jack developed a passion for golf. If there was a choice of concerts for him to conduct he would choose the venue nearest a golf course. It was at one such freelance venue that he met Brian Couzens, managing director of Chandos and which led to many recordings for that label. This was probably in 1977 when Chandos were concentrating on brass band recordings and Jack was the guest conductor of the Grimethorpe Colliery Band.

The BBC Welsh Orchestra was under treat of being axed and Bryden was appointed to that orchestra in 1979, the orchestra being saved by a rescue with the Welsh Arts Council. The orchestra expanded into 88 members and Jack planned the programmes and did not follow a set of preordained programmes. The Welsh loved him. He was a man of economic gestures and he was not verbose. The orchestra saw in him a conductor of unsullied professionalism. He was also a man of sincerity and honesty.

From 1984 to 1986 he was in Dublin with the RTE Orchestra and found a friend in Gerard Victory a splendid musician and one time director of RTE, from 1967 to his retirement. In fact, they were both in the same hospital at one time.

By 1988 Jack was back in Scotland as director of the Scottish National Orchestra now called the Royal Scottish Orchestra. He also built this orchestra up into a first class ensemble.

One of his many endearing features was that at the end of each performance he would invariably acclaim the orchestra first and if there was a soloist honour that performer before taking a bow himself.

When he was greeted with enthusiastic applause he would sometimes hold up the score before the audience which reminded the audience of the person most worthy of that applause.

He was a humble man. In fact, it is true to say that he care more about music than he did himself.

Jack knew what he wanted from orchestras. This occasionally brought him into conflict with some individuals and administrators, earning him a reputation for being peppery. But all this was worth while, as can be measured by the results. His recordings of the Nielsen and Martinu symphonies have opened a new and exciting world for so many, and that, in itself, is evidence of the debt of gratitude we all owe this devoted servant of music.

Daniel Jones's had all his symphonies conducted by Jack and Jones wrote, " He gave every detail, honoured every phrase, every crescendo and diminuendo, every accent and staccato. No one could have been more attentive or give as good performances as he did.'

Gerard Victory, composer and director of music at RTE, " Bryden never gave just an adequate performance and was incapable of a poor one. His performances were always the very best. He had a wonderful ear. When he was conducting you could always hear the second trumpet and the violas. His performances of my work were always of a superlative standard.'

This statement stems from one incident that troubled Bryden. He was asked to premiere James Wilson's Music for Castletown but the performance was brought forward a week and there was a lack of rehearsal time. Jack wanted to withdraw the performance but he was over ruled. The performance was good but could have been better.

He gave the first British performance of Myaskovsky's Symphony no 1 in C minor and this was broadcast.

I recall Sir Arthur Bliss talking to me about a new orchestral work of his. He said that he did not mind who premiered it as long as it was not Barbirolli but, if he had the choice, it would be Bryden Thomson.

Jack did have some difficulty with music administrators who did not understand the putting together of any concert and some administrators and executives were not musicians but stated that they knew best.

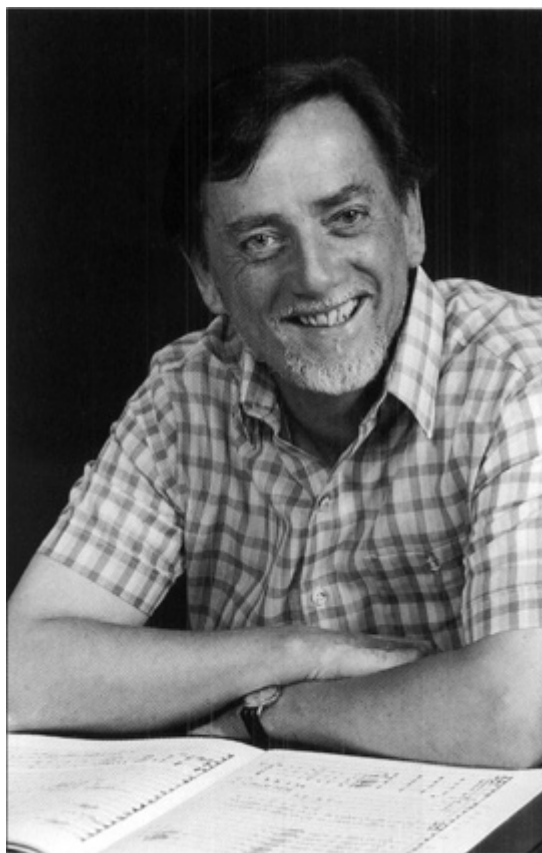
Thomson wanted to perform John Veale's Symphony no. 2 and the BBC Controller of Music, William Glock, happily gave the go ahead but was over ruled by his bosses. See my articles on Glock.

Soloists who worked with Jack speak well of him but these soloists do not have the same praise for some other conductors. Lydia Mordkovitch recorded many concertos with him and said he was always positive, helpful and also understood the solo line and soloists's needs.

With the BBC Welsh Symphony he performed the Vagn Holmboe symphonies and I sent copies of

the recordings to the composer in Denmark. He was on the telephone to me straightaway absolutely delighted with the performances and, as a thank you, sent me a score of his brilliant Symphony no. 5.

At the opening of the new concert hall in Glasgow, Jack premiered Thomas Wilson's Carillon and when the composer walked on to the stage you could see his approval. Wilson wrote to me, 'Could not have been better. He is the finest of our conductors.'



The premiere of Christopher Steel's Fifth Symphony was given to Jack Thomson and its many difficulties presented no problems to this conductor. One could tell many factual stories of conductors who demanded composers change parts in their respective scores because the conductor was inadequate.

Mahler's Tenth Symphony was said to be completed by Deryck Cooke. What is not known is that Thomson contributed substantially to this project as did David and Colin Matthews and Berthold Goldschmidt who premiered it at a Prom in 1964. Thomson conducted it with the BBC Northern Orchestra in January 1975.

There were some who said that his performances were very slightly on the slow side, but you could hear every part and every detail. This observation loses its significance when you hear Thomson conducting Dvorak's Carnival Overture. The excitement is almost too much.

Jack was not a blotting paper conductor. He did not copy others or remain in the usual rut of the accepted performance of any work. Take Sibelius's Finlandia and how well he realised it. No wallowing sentiment but an accurate reading of the score and, consequently, the work emerges not as a hackneyed classic but as a fresh work of tremendous conviction. He conducted the LSO, the LPO and many orchestras all over the world.

Colin Scott-Sutherland is the expert on Bax.

He has most recordings of Bax's works and has heard all performances by the various conductors with the scores before him. He writes, 'Thomson's performances are definitive. He adhere to the scores and take no liberties or indulges in any licence. No other performances comes anywhere near his.'

In the last months of his life Jack was set to complete his recordings of Walton's works working on the Violin Concerto. He was also studying Ravel's La Valse. Even a few days before his death he was working hard but it was clear that he was very ill with cancer. He died on 14 November 1991.

His widow, Mary Ellison Thomson set up the Bryden Thomson Trust in September 2008 opportunities for young conductors. The National Library of Ireland in Dublin have his scores with his notes which will greatly help young conductors and other interested parties. Mrs Thomson donated these in 2003.

It is strange that on the day after his death the BBC had scheduled his recording of Bax's Cortège. It was poignant and many of us shed a tear, unashamedly.

He was the best. His like will not be seen again.

## Recent Reviews

"Every time Bryden Thomson conducts, one is surprised at the control he is able to exercise and the storms he unleashes by a quiet, unruffled direction. He plunged the symphony into a sweeping fury, gave yearning shape to the answering consolatory woodwind episode, invested the intense gravity of the adagio with pleading eloquence, and brought the work to a shattering conclusion, with Nielsen's great descending tune, symbolic of human triumph, forcing its way through the battling antiphonal drums".

*Nielsen Symphony No. 4*  
BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra / St David's Hall,  
Cardiff

"Rare expertise"

1991 / *Walton, Elgar, Rachmaninov* /  
London Philharmonic Orchestra  
DAILY TELEGRAPH

"Bryden Thomson's meticulous direction communicated forcibly the taut structure of Mahler's 'Symphony of a Thousand' and ensured that the massive forces gelled with thrilling results."

1990 / *Royal Scottish Orchestra*  
DAILY TELEGRAPH

"From the first note on, you could hear that typical English string sound. Conductor Bryden Thomson reached the ideal combination of calmness and pulsation which gave much tension until the end."

1989 / *Netherlands Symphony Orchestra*  
UTRECHTS NIEUWSBLAD

"His qualities include clarity of direction, an outstanding sensitivity to orchestral balance and an unequalled long-range view of the structure of a piece of music."

1985 / *Berlioz, Walton, Dvorak*  
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra  
GLASGOW HERALD

"Bryden Thomson is the most accomplished conductor I have encountered for a very long time."

1990 / *Melbourne Symphony Orchestra*  
THE AGE

"Thomson has more than musicianship. He has a mode of expression which can reel you in as a listener and, it seems by the apparent enthusiasm on stage, as a performer."

1990 / *Melbourne Symphony Orchestra*  
THE AUSTRALIAN

"This was a performance of measured tempos and precise control which built up to a triumphant conclusion. Crowning all this was a finale which gripped the attention from start to finish and held its disparate elements together in a marvellous sweeping tapestry of sound."

1990 / *Brahms Symphony No. 1*  
Sydney Symphony Orchestra  
THE AUSTRALIAN

"Bryden Thomson's carefully prepared work reaches to the very corners of the score." 1988

POLITIKEN (DENMARK)

"This performance had not just a conductor but a superb musician at the helm, with the entire orchestra responding accordingly."

1987 / *Elgar Symphony No 1*  
London Philharmonic Orchestra  
SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

"The Wasps Overture was enough to remind London audiences of the qualities of this conductor: lucid, quick thinking, unfussy communication, and the obvious signs of having privately dissected, assimilated and fused together a work in his mind and ear before getting anywhere near his orchestra."

1987 / *Vaughan Williams*  
London Philharmonic Orchestra  
THE TIMES

"A triumphant interpretation."

1988 / *Prokofiev Symphony No 5*  
Royal Scottish Orchestra  
THE TIMES

"He showed his mastery of the composer's intentions, a performance that will surely rank as one of the finest here of any symphony in 1991. This was a monumental account of this fine work."

1991 / *Bruckner Symphony No 4*  
Royal Scottish Orchestra  
BELFAST TELEGRAPH

Orquestra Ciutat de Barcelona

Director Bryden Thomson

Dia 30 de Novembre de 1990

Local Palau de la Musica

"En cuanto a las 'Danzas sinfónicas', de *Rachmaninov*, la versión constituyó un vibrante ejercicio porque el sonido de la orquesta quedó más compacto y el ritmo impuesto por el director muy adecuado.

De todas maneras, la precisión del conjunto está todavía lejos de alcanzar la perfección exigible a una formación de su nivel."

"In the performance of 'A Sea Symphony' that Bryden Thomson conducted with the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, the pictorial elements of Vaughan Williams's music have seldom sounded so vivid."

1989 / *London Symphony Orchestra*  
THE TIMES

"Bryden Thomson's reading of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony with the RTESO (NCH, 10 October) was eloquent, sympathetic and noble in conception. The mighty edifice, meticulously controlled, unfolded spaciouly, growing in richness and in power. Sensitively judged climaxes emphasised the architectural splendour. The RTESO played with a concentrated singleness of purpose, born of the co-operative experiences shared between players and conductor over the last three years. Despite the abnormal duration of the work, audience concentration was intense and the symphony concluded to thunderous acclamation." 1987

MUSIC IRELAND

"This was 30 minutes of music-making which reminded us that Thomson is quite one of the best conductors in these islands: the tempo for the Andantino was wonderfully poised, and Thomson handled the difficult trajectory of the Scherzo-cum finale third movement with unerring sureness. This performance was a memorable experience, one of the very best things in this year's Proms to date."

1985 / *Sibelius's Third Symphony*  
Ulster Orchestra - London Prom Début

"Bryden Thomson sul podio direttoriale, ha mantenuto un self-control, tutto "made in England" ottenendo una stupenda serie di piani sonori levigati, a sostegno di un fraseggio elegantissimo e di grande gentilezza aristocratica."

1984 / *BBC Philharmonic Orchestra Tour in Italy*

# Chandos Recordings

Composer	Repertoire	Artists	Prefix
<b>Arnold</b>	Dances: Scottish, Irish, Cornish, English Sarabande and Polka from the Ballet "Solitaire"	Philharmonia Thomson	CHAN 8866 ABTD 1482
<b>Bax</b>	Complete Symphonies: Symphonies 1-7	LPO / Ulster Orch / Thomson	CHAN 8906-10
<b>Bax</b>	Symphony No. 1 in E flat major Christmas Eve	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8480 ABTD 1192
<b>Bax</b>	Symphony No. 2 in E minor and C Nympholept	LPO Thomson	CHAN 84 93 ABTD 1203
<b>Bax</b>	Symphony No. 3 Paean / Dance of Wild Irravel	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8454 ABTD 1165
<b>Bax</b>	Symphony No. 4 Tintagel	Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 8312 ABTD1091
<b>Bax</b>	Symphony No. 5 Russian Suite	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8669 ABTD1356
<b>Bax</b>	Symphony No. 6 Festival Overture	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8586 ABTD 1278
<b>Bax</b>	Symphony No. 7 Four Songs	Hill / LPO Thomson	CHAN 8628 ARBD 1317 ABTD1317
<b>Bax</b>	Tone Poems: Volume 1, November Woods, The Happy Forest, Summer Music, The Garden of Fand	Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 8307 ABTD 1066
<b>Bax</b>	Tone Poems: Volume 2, The Tale the Pine-Trees Knew, Into the Twilight, In the Faery Hills, Roscatha	Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 8367 ABTD 1133
<b>Bax</b>	The Truth About the Russian Dancers / From Dusk till Dawn	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8863 ABTD 1478
<b>Bax</b>	Symphonic Variations Morning Song (Maytime in Sussex)	Fingerhut LPO Thomson	CHAN 8516 ARBD 1226 ABTD 1226
<b>Bax</b>	Winter Legends Saga Fragment	Fingerhut LPO Thomson	CHAN 8484 ARBD 1195 ABTD 1195
<b>Bax</b>	Cello Concerto Northern Ballet No. 3, Cortège / Mediterranean / Overture to a Picaresque Comedy	Wallfisch LPO Thomson	CHAN 8494 ABTD 1204
<b>Brahms</b>	Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor Op. 15	Margalit LSO	CHAN 8724 ABTD 1364
<b>Mendelssohn</b>	Capriccio Brillant in B minor Op. 22	Thomson	
<b>Britten</b>	Les Illuminations Op. 18 Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings / Quatre Chansons Françaises	Lott / Rolfe Johnson Thomson RSO / Thomson	CHAN 8657 ARBD 1343 ABTD 1343
<b>Elgar</b>	Symphony No. 1 in A flat major Op. 55	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8451 ABTD1161
<b>Elgar</b>	Symphony No. 2 in E flat major Op. 63	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8452 ARBD 1162 ABTD 1162
<b>Elgar</b>	'Enigma' Variations The Sanguine Fan / Music from 'Grania and Diarmid'	Miller LPO Thomson	CHAN 8610 ARBD 1298 ABTD 1298
<b>Elgar</b>	Wand of Youth Suites 1 and 2 Nursery Suites	Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 8318 ARBD 1079 ABTD 1079
<b>Harty</b>	An Irish Symphony A Comedy Overture	Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 8314 ABTD 1027
<b>Harty</b>	A John Field Suite Londonderry Air / Suite from Handel's Water Music	Ulster Orch Thomson	CBT 1005

<b>Composer</b>	<b>Repertoire</b>	<b>Artists</b>	<b>Prefix</b>
<b>Harty</b>	Collected Works of Hamilton Harty	Holmes Harper / Binns Ulster Orch Thomson	DBRD 4002 DBTD 4002
<b>Harty</b>	Piano Concerto in B minor / In Ireland / With the Wild Geese	Binns Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 8321 ABTD 1084
<b>Harty</b>	Violin Concerto in D minor / Variations on a Dublin Air	Holmes Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 8386 ABT 1044
<b>Harty</b>	The Children of Lir Ode to a Nightingale	Harper Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 8387 ARBT 1051 ABTD 1174
<b>Hoddinott</b>	Symphony No. 6 Op 116 Lanterne des Morts	Watson BBC Welsh Orch	CHAN 8762 ABTD 1400
<b>Hummel</b>	Piano Concerto in A minor Op. 85 and in B minor Op.89	Hough ECO Thomson	CHAN 8507 CHAN D 8507 ABTD 1217
<b>Ireland</b>	Piano Concertos in E flat major / Legend for Piano and Orchestra / Mai-Dun. Symphonic Rhapsody	Parkin LPO Thomson	CHAN 8461 ARBD 1174 ABTD 1174
<b>Kabalevsky Khachaturian Glazunov</b>	Cello Concerto No. 2 Cello Concerto Chant du Ménéstrel	Wallfisch LPO Thomson	CHAN 8579 ABTD 1273
<b>Leighton</b>	Cello Concerto Op.31 Symphony No. 3 'Laudes Musicae' Op.90	Wallfisch Mackie RSO / Thomson	CHAN 8741 ARBD 1524 ABTD 1380
<b>Martini</b>	Symphonies 2 and 6	RSO Thomson	CHAN 8916 ABTD 1524
<b>Martini</b>	Symphonies 3 and 4	RSO Thomson	CHAN 8917 ABTD1525
<b>Rachmaninov</b>	Piano Concertos 1 - 4 / Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini	Shelley RSO Thomson	CHAN 8882 / 3 DBTD 2025
<b>Saint-Saëns Schumann</b>	Piano Concerto No. 2 Piano Concerto Op. 54	Margalit LPO Thomson	CHAN 8546 ARBD 1254 ABTD 1254
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 2 'A London Symphony' Concerto Grosso	LSO Thomson	CHAN 8629 ABTD 1318
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 3 'Pastoral' Oboe Concerto in A minor	Kenny Theodore LSO / Thomson	CHAN 8594 ABTD 1289
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 4 in F minor Violin Concerto in D minor	Sillito LSO Thomson	CHAN 8633 ABRD 1322
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 5 in D major The Lark Ascending	Davis LSO Thomson	CHAN 8554 CHAN D 8554 ABRD 1260 ABTD 1260
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 6 in E minor Tuba Concerto in F minor	Harrild LSO / Thomson	CHAN 8740 ABTD 1379
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 7 'Sinfonia Antartica' / Toward the Unknown Region	Bott LSO and Chorus Thomson	CHAN 8796 ABTD 1428
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 8 in D minor Hymn-Tune Preludes Fantasia on 'Greensleeves' Partita for Double String Orch	LSO Thomson	CHAN 8828 ABRD 1453 ABTD 1453
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 9 in E minor Piano Concerto in C major	Shelley LSO / Thomson	CHAN 8941 ABTD 1537
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1 In the Fen Country Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus'	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8502 ABTD 1212
<b>Vaughan Williams</b>	Symphony No. 1 A Sea Symphony	Kenny Rayner Cook LSO & Chorus/Thomson	CHAN 8764 ABTD 1402

Composer	Repertoire	Artists	Prefix
Vaughan Williams	Dona Nobis Pacem Five Mystical Songs	Wiens Rayner Cook LPO and Choir Thomson	CHAN 8590 ABRD 1297 ABTD 1297
Walton	Symphony No. 1 Varii Capricci	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8862 ABTD 1477
Walton	Symphony No. 2 Troilus and Cressida Symphonic Suite	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8772 ABTD 1410
Walton	The Quest (Complete Ballet) The Wise Virgins (Ballet Suite)	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8871 ABTD 1486
Walton	Cello Concerto / Partita / Improvisations on an Impromptu of Britten / Passacaglia	Wallfisch LPO Thomson	CHAN 8959 ABTD 1551
Wilson	Piano Concerto Introit	Wilde / RSO Thomson	CHAN 8626 ARBD 1315 ABTD 1315
Various	An Irish Rhapsody	Ulster Orch Thomson	CHAN 6525 MBTD 6525
Various	Seascapes	RSO / Gibson Ulster Orch Handley / LPO Thomson	CHAN 6538

## Latest Releases

Martinů	Symphony No. 1 Symphony No. 5	RSO Thomson	CHAN 8915 ABTD 1523
Walton	Scapino Johannesburg Festival Overture Capriccio Burlesco The First Shoot Music for Children Portsmouth Point Prelude for Orchestra (Granada) Prologo e Fantasia Galop Final	LPO Thomson	CHAN 8968 ABTD 1560
Nielsen	Symphony No. 1 Symphony No. 2	RSO Thomson	CHAN 8880 ABTD 1493
Nielsen	Symphony No. 4 Symphony No. 6	RSO Thomson	CHAN 8880 ABTD 1493
Nielsen	Symphony No. 3 Symphony No. 5	RSO Thomson	CHAN 8880 ABTD 1493
Elgar	Sea Pictures The Music Makers	LPO and Choir Finnie Thomson	CHAN 9022
Bax	Violin Concerto A Legend Romantic Overture Golden Eagle	LPO Mordkovitch Thomson	CHAN 9003
Vaughan Williams	Complete Symphonies Symphonies 1 to 9	LSO Thomson	CHAN 9087-91
Martinů	Complete Symphonies Symphonies 1 - 6	RSO Thomson	CHAN 9103-5

## Further Recordings

*EMI*

Mozart	Piano Concerto in E flat K 271 Piano Concerto in C K 467	Hallé Stephen Hough Thomson	CD CFP 9016 LP CFP 4531 TC CFP 4531
Johann Strauss II	Waltzes	Hallé Thomson	CD CFP 9015 LP CFP 4528 TC CFP 4528

*DENON*

Tchaikovsky	Violin Concerto in D Op.35 Stravinsky Concerto in D	LPO/Thomson Jean-Jaques Kantorow	CD CO 73325
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# Recent Recording Reviews

"Another performance of truly symphonic stature is that of Thomson and the LSO on Chandos, and it's this recording that has become my personal preference.

This is beautifully crafted and more wholly symphonic in breadth than either Previn or Haitink, and his phrasing both here and in other performances in the cycle is a constant source of delight."

"This must rank as one of the most successful of Thomson's VW cycle. Thomson succeeds more than the other conductors who have recorded this work in penetrating the symphony's enigma."

1991 / Vaughan Williams "London Symphony", London Symphony Orchestra.

GRAMOPHONE

1991 / Walton *Symphony No. 1*, London Symphony Orchestra

"This is Bryden Thomson's finest contribution yet to the Chandos Walton series. His is warmer, more idiomatically Waltonian view of the work than even Mackerras's which was my top digital choice."

GRAMOPHONE

"Bryden Thomson's is a marvellously rich and impassioned performance."

CLASSIC CD

"A blistering performance that unfetters Walton's symphonic demon with turbulent ferocity."

CD REVIEW

"There are two fine performances available in CD form - the LPO/Boult and LSO/Previn - now joined by this third one, which, all things considered, may just be the finest of them all.

This recording is a block-buster - about the best I've heard from Chandos. Thomson's achievement in putting all this together so remarkably well must not be underestimated. There is a level of concentration and intensity here, an autumnal warmth and compassion, a sheer depth of feeling, that the others don't quite achieve. One must conclude that Thomson's new offering is best of all."

1990 / Vaughan Williams *Symphony No. 1*, London Symphony Orchestra

AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

"Thomson conducts with utter conviction and obtains a glowing performance from all sections of the LPO."

1989 / Bax *Symphony No. 5*, London Philharmonic Orchestra

GRAMOPHONE

"Thomson's reading of the symphony carries complete conviction."

1990 / Walton *Symphony No. 2* / London Philharmonic Orchestra

GRAMOPHONE

1987 *Elgar Symphonies*, London Philharmonic Orchestra

"Thomson takes a new look at Elgar's symphonies to astonishing effect. Previous conductors, including Adrian Boult, Vernon Handley, and even Georg Solti, took a cue from the composer's own performances and minimised the opulent side of Elgar's complex orchestral personality. The results have sounded authoritative but ultimately inhibited.

Thomson is the first to give these elements their

unbridled due and the music has never sounded fresher. Thomson deserves credit for reminding us of Elgar's stature as a symphonist and for showing us what we've been missing."

MUSICAL AMERICA

"The best performances and recordings in my experience have been by British conductors, Boult and Barbirolli especially. Now Bryden Thomson joins their ranks, though in performances strikingly unlike either's. His interpretations are so loving, noble, and thoroughly captivating, his grip and control so firm, his ability to sustain his chosen tempos so absolute as to seem almost miraculous. Thomson is one of today's finest British conductors."

OPUS MAGAZINE USA

"Given sympathetic readings such as the ones they receive from the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Bryden Thomson, the two Elgar symphonies appear convincing and sincere. Thomson's flexible interpretations respond with ease to the myriad tempo changes and dynamic inflections and he tempers the late-Romantic fervour with just the right touch of English reserve and propriety."

NEW YORK TIMES

"I must not forget the last of the Chandos cycle of Bax symphonies which brings the Fifth in a superbly recorded performance by the LPO under Bryden Thomson: it has given me enormous pleasure."

1989 / *Critic's Choice* - Robert Layton

GRAMOPHONE

"It is rare in these cynical days to hear an orchestra eating out of a conductor's hand but I think Bryden Thomson may have this communicative gift."

1990 / Walton *Symphony No. 2* / London Philharmonic Orchestra

THE AGE (Melbourne)

"So we really are to have complete cycles of the Vaughan Williams symphonies from both Bryden Thomson for Chandos and Haitink for EMI. It is an inviting prospect and if Thomson's continues as well as it has begun with this splendid performance of No. 5, then we are in for revelations."

1988 / London Symphony Orchestra

GRAMOPHONE

"Spectacularly recorded, Thomson is very sympathetic, particularly in the Scherzo (indeed, his Martinu scherzos are consistently more sharply characterised than anyone else's)."

*Symphonies No 1; No 5* / Royal Scottish Orchestra

CLASSIC CD

1992 / Nielsen / *Symphonies Nos 1 & 2* / Royal Scottish Orchestra

"They are quite honestly, to my ears (with confirmation from study scores) some of the most committed, rhythmically perfect and simply outstanding performances of the first two Symphonies you are likely to hear anywhere."

CD REVIEW

1992 / Elgar / *Sea Pictures, Op. 37 The Music Makers, Op. 69* / Royal Scottish Orchestra

"He attends lovingly to every detail of one of Elgar's most subtly orchestrated and sensuous scores, pacing it as unerringly, and in the same tradition, as Barbirolli. He is supported by the LPO in excellent form and a spacious yet perfectly focused recording."

GRAMOPHONE