

Judith Buckle mezzo soprano
SONGS DISCOVERED

Thomas DUNHILL	How soft upon the ev'ning air (Irene Gass)
J Meredith TATTON	The Shepherdess (Alice Meynell)
Winifred BURY	Lullaby (Ida M Downing)
David WRIGHT	Two Carols op. 4: (Anon) A carol in April; The Moke's Carol
James BROWN	Swinging on a birch tree (Lucy Larcom)
Ivor GURNEY	Since Thou O fondest and truest (Bridges)
Ian VENABLES	Love lives beyond (John Clare)
Philip WOOD	If we must part (Dowson)
Frank HARVEY	A quoi bon dire (Charlotte Mew)
Frank HARVEY	The Stranger (Walter de la Mare)
Winifred BURY	There is a ladye (Thomas Ford)
Ivor GURNEY	Come away Death (Shakespeare)
Ian VENABLES	At the Court of the Poisoned Rose (Marion Angus)
Humphrey SEARLE	Golden Hair; I hear an army marching (Two songs from 'Chamber Music' by James Joyce*)
James BROWN	A Nocturne (W S Blunt)



* two Searle songs that would have been lost had David Wright not rescued them

Judith Buckle (mezzo); Peter Bailey (piano)

rec. 19 November and 3 December, 2008, Music Room Pizza Express, Maidstone

Private Issue

[timing details not given]

This disc is available in the UK for £7.50 plus £1.50 postage and packing from [Nymet Music](#), 4 Pitt Court, Nymet Rowland, Crediton Devon EX17 6AN.

With the first half dozen and more of these songs on this delightful recording we are in a world bequeathed to us by Hubert Parry. These songs are a genre all their own - contemporary only in that they are timeless - belonging to a generation one of whose joys was the gathering in the evening around the parlour piano ... awaiting, as I once said on another occasion "hot buttered crumpets to come". They belong to a tradition as English as that comestible yet are of as universal appeal as are such age-old favourites as 'Stonecracker John', 'Sea Fever' and 'Five Eyes'.

The disc is titled 'Songs Discovered' and while the majority of the poets may be 'kent faces' the songs are indeed 'discoveries' and are in fact world premiere recordings! This, for me, has thrown up some rare, unmissable experiences.

While all seventeen songs have an obvious unity there is a great variety of stylistic expression. These range from the simple love-song of Winifred Bury: about whom seemingly nothing is known! To the subtly conventional Thomas Dunhill. Then there's Ian Venables' evocative treatment of the enigmatic Sitwellian imagery of Marion Angus's 'The Court of the Poisoned Rose'. Not to mention the Gilbert & Sullivan-esque whimsy of 'Swinging on a Birch Tree' with its exciting accompaniment.

It is also surprising to find not one but two unrecorded songs of Gurney – although neither seems to me particularly characteristic. There are also darkneses in the mysterious world of de la Mare – and the Searle 'I hear an army marching' transcends the prevailing mood.

The whole conception is a generous Maeceanas-like effort on the part of Dr David Wright, composer and musicologist from the Isle of Wight – and here participating with two cheerful carols written in his schooldays. He has personally covered three-quarters of the cost 'pour encourager les autres'. I wish him success.

The technically assured and expressive voice of Judith Buckle, despite her involvement since the 1970s with oratorio, opera and theatrical work, is also a 'discovery', her enunciation bright and clear. This helps to overcome the absence of poetic text. The pianist, Peter Bailey, equally technically assured, is as fine an accompanist as I have ever heard. In the later pieces on the disc, in particular the songs of Ian Venables, he is truly a partner and not simply an accompanist.

The recording itself is crisp, the balance excellent – a very fine disc indeed.

Colin Scott-Sutherland