

Notornis

Jeremy Cullen
Early Music Vol. 1
(1991-94)

Allegretto ($\text{♩} = \text{c.} 108$)

mf

mp

Inspirare

Novos Ventos Woodwind Quartet

Early Music Vol. 1 (1991-94)

Jeremy Cullen (b. 1976)

This album is the first in a projected series of recordings of my earliest music. Almost all of it was written while I was still a high school student boarding at St. Bede's College in Christchurch, New Zealand. I didn't love the school, so music – playing the piano and especially composition - became a welcome refuge from rugby and bullying.

Most of the pieces are performed exactly as they were written, however I have made minor improvements or re-arrangements to some with the benefit of 30 years experience (details below). All of the works on this album are premiere recordings.

1. Our Father (The Lord's Prayer) (1992, arr. 2020)

This setting of *The Lord's Prayer* (Matthew 6:9-13) was composed for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament choir in Christchurch, where I was organ scholar. (Sadly the cathedral was destroyed by the devastating 2011 Christchurch earthquake.)

Originally written for choir and strings, this *a cappella* version was arranged during lockdown in 2020 and subsequently recorded by Inspirare choir at Stella Maris Chapel, Seatoun, Wellington in November 2020, conducted by artistic director Mark Stamper.

2-4. Piano Sonata No. 1 (1992)

Although I'd already been composing for several years, I remember consciously trying a different approach with this Sonata - writing it in a short amount of time (three days), with no sketches or drafts. Hence the manuscript is very messy! But I was happy with the result, and still think it is my first decent piece.

5-7. Neapolitan Sonata – Wind Quintet Version (1992, arr. 2021)

This short piece was intended as a tribute to Domenico Scarlatti, who was born in Naples and spent his early career there. I have always loved playing his keyboard sonatas. It also shows the influence of Stravinsky, who I was just discovering around this time.

Originally for piano or harpsichord, this wind quintet arrangement was made in 2021.

8. Ballade for Solo Piano (1992)

This piece shows the influence of French and Romantic-era piano works that I had learnt for my Trinity College piano exams, and had also been playing for my own enjoyment.

9-13. Diversions for Wind Quintet (1992, arr. 2021)

This suite was originally written for the school woodwind quartet that I played clarinet in. It was never performed by that ensemble (two oboes, clarinet and bassoon). In 2021 I arranged *Diversions* for wind quintet and it was recorded by the Novos Ventos Woodwind Quintet in São Paulo, Brazil.

14-16. Three Dances for John Ritchie - for Solo Piano (1991)

In 1991 my father arranged for me to have several informal meetings at the house of Christchurch composer John Ritchie (1921-2014). He kindly critiqued and encouraged my 14 year-old compositional efforts, and they were by far the best composition lessons I have ever had. His enthusiasm for the music of Shostakovich and Stravinsky was particularly infectious. At our first meeting I brought along three piano pieces which were very much inspired by Rachmaninoff. He asked me to go home and write three more short "characteristic" piano pieces for him. When I returned and played him these three (very Shostakovichian) dances he was much more approving!

17-18. Two Bagatelles for Solo Piano (1992)

Dated 17 October 1992, these two short pieces were composed as birthday presents – the first for my mother, and the second for my sister Louisa.

19-38. Album for Sophie – Twenty Easy Pieces for Children (1992)

Composed between May and September of 1992 for my younger sister Sophie's 11th birthday, this album of easy piano music covers a range of character pieces (such as Ragtime, Arioso, Barcarolle) and miniaturised versions of classical forms (Sonatina, Prelude and Fugue, Variations). There are also musical portraits of our four cats (Holly, Tabby, Tigerlily and Gus).

39. Arioso (for Mother's Day 1992)

40. Cantilena (for Mother's Day 1994)

These two short piano pieces were Mother's Day gifts for my mother Rosalind Mary Cullen who sadly passed away in October 1994, a few months after *Cantilena* was composed. By this time I was studying piano and composition at Canterbury University, Christchurch.

41-43. Three Elegies for Solo Piano (1992-93)

The first and second of these three piano *Elegies* (*Threnody and Elegy*) were composed in memory of students at my high school who had died suddenly.

The third piece (*Eternal Rest*) refers to the well-known Catholic prayer *Requiem Aeternam*:

'Eternal rest shine upon them and may they rest in peace.'

All pieces recorded and performed by Jeremy Cullen (2019-21) except:

Track 1:

Performed by **Inspirare Choir, Wellington.**

Musical Director - Mark Stamper

Recorded at Stella Maris Chapel, Seatoun, Wellington.

Recording engineer - John Neill

Tracks 5-7, 9-13:

Performed by **Novos Ventos Woodwind Quintet.**

Flute - Marco André dos Santos

Oboe - Rafael Zacarias

Clarinet - Daniel Oliviera

Bassoon - Clarissa Oropallo

French Horn - Isaque Elias

Recorded at Jacaranda Audio, São Paulo, Brazil.

Recording team - Johann Ludwig, Rafael Cesario, Beto Gebhard