PRESS RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

Pianist Clare Hammond releases a disc of solo piano music by British composer Robert Saxton

“Saxton's glistening, subtle Hortus Musicae (2013), inspired by the notion of a metaphysical garden.” The Observer

On 2 March 2018, Toccata Classics will release a disc of solo piano music by British composer Robert Saxton, performed by Clare Hammond. Featuring Robert's masterpiece, Hortus Musicae, a series of twelve movements written for Clare in 2013 and 2015, the disc includes three world premiere recordings and charts the development of Robert's compositional style over the past four decades.

Robert and Clare first met when she performed his Chacony for left hand, the imposing and, at times, strident work that opens this disc. They began an artistic collaboration that has spanned the past six years, during which time Robert has written two books of the Hortus Musicae for Clare. Inspired by the idea of a metaphysical garden, this music is characterised by bell-like sonorities, clear textures and a sense of ritual. The Sonata for piano, an early work, is incisive and lean while the Lullaby for Rosa, written after the birth of Clare’s first child, glows with rare tenderness.

Robert was born in London and started composing at the age of six. Guidance in early years from Benjamin Britten, and lessons with Elisabeth Lutyens, was followed by periods of study at both Cambridge and Oxford Universities with Robin Holloway and Robert Sherlaw Johnson respectively, and also with Luciano Berio. He has written works for the BBC (TV, Proms and Radio), LSO, LPO, ECO, London Sinfonietta and the Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, City of London and Three Choirs Festivals. While his style has changed considerably over time, a fascination with the relationship between mathematical and musical principles and a flair for rich and complex textures have remained constant.
Described as a “star interpreter of contemporary music” by *The Observer*, Clare Hammond has built a reputation as an authority on contemporary music in recent years. In 2016, she won the Royal Philharmonic Society’s ‘Young Artist Award’ in recognition of outstanding achievements and has recently performed with the Philharmonia at the Royal Festival Hall, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. She says of this disc that “it has been a wonderful opportunity to explore the wide emotional range and wealth of reference in this music. It is an honour to have had such significant pieces written for me by a composer as prodigiously gifted as Robert Saxton.”

**Notes to Editors**


The disc has been supported by the RVW Trust.

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**Toccata Classics, TOC 0458**

Release date: 2 March 2018  
Total playing time: 55’44

Distributed in the UK by Select Music.

More information online at:

- [https://www.uymp.co.uk/composers/robert-saxton](https://www.uymp.co.uk/composers/robert-saxton)
- [https://toccataclassics.com/](https://toccataclassics.com/)

**Robert Saxton**

*Chacony for Piano Left Hand* (1988)

*Sonata for Piano* (1981)

*Hortus Musicae, Book 1* (2013)*

i. Hortus Somniorum
ii. Hortus Temporis
iii. Hortus Cantus
iv. Hortus Infinitatis
v. Saltatio Hortensis

*Hortus Musicae, Book 2* (2015)*

i. The Flowers appear on the Earth
ii. Light on the Water Garden
iii. The Garden of Changing Perspective
iv. Beech Bank (à la recherche…)
v. Light on the Hedgerows
vi. The Garden at Dusk
vii. Hortus Animae Alis Fugacis

*Lullaby for Rosa* (2016)*

*With three world premiere recordings.*