



## NEW RELEASE INFORMATION FOR PRESS/MEDIA



Artist(s):	John & Fiona York
Composer:	Gustav Holst/York Bowen
Repertoire:	The Planets; Suite in Three Movements; Suite No. 2 Four hands, One Piano
Catalogue No:	NI5871 [0710357587122]
Discs:	1CD (Standard Case)
UK Dealer:	£8.70
UK Release:	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2011

### Tracklisting

**Holst:** The Planets, Suite for Large Orchestra Op. 32 (1913) Version for four hands at one piano by the composer with Nora Day and Vally Lasker, edited by John York and Fiona York; **York Bowen:** Suite in Three Movements Op. 52 (1919); **York Bowen:** Suite No. 2 Op. 71 (1923)

Total Playing Time 70.28

### Product and Repertoire Information

#### Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

The generative threads of this music were spun at St. Paul's Girls' School on Brook Green in Hammersmith, west London, the elegant Edwardian buildings where Gustav Holst served as the school's first Director of Music from 1905 until his death in 1934.

He devised atonal and polytonal canons for the girls' aural training. There was a superb female choir on hand, and colleagues whom he trusted could work from his dictation and try out his new ideas. His bright, well-heated soundproof room was where he wrote and rehearsed *The Planets* before its auspicious public debut in 1918 at the Queen's Hall. In a cupboard in that same room John York found a leather-bound, engraved copy of the four-hands, one-piano version, carefully prepared by Holst and his contemporaries on the staff. It is signed by the composer and credited to his devoted colleagues and amanuenses, Nora Day and Vally Lasker. It is well known that he often dictated compositions to these respected teachers when the painful neuritis from which he suffered for many years precluded normal writing. Indeed, he often entrusted the more laborious aspects of his work (instrumentation, copying, arrangement, run-throughs) to them, knowing they would follow his instructions in every detail.



It was quite normal for large-scale chamber and orchestral works to be published in duet form. Since Beethoven's day all symphonies, quartets, even operas, were available for performance, domestic use and study, so the existence of this version of Holst's greatest work in this form came as no surprise. Nor was it surprising to discover that it was a successful version – the teamwork at the School was legendary. It had simply gone unnoticed and forgotten, ripe for serendipitous revival.

#### York Bowen (1884-1961)

Somehow or other the name York Bowen has always been known to music lovers, but it is more for his association with all the leading musicians of his time that his reputation lingers on, and less for his actual music of which there is a vast amount, much of it still unpublished, unknown and unrecorded.

A formidable keyboard technique coupled with a distinct refinement was the hallmark of both his playing and his music. In his compositions (symphonies, concertos, songs, sonatas and an enormous list of piano pieces etc.) it is always possible to find some justification for the oft-used label 'the English Rachmaninoff' - great virtuosity, richly coloured chromatic harmony and melody, Classical structures underpinned by a strong sense of tonality.

York2's four quite substantial duet choices, presented here for the first time, date from the period just after the First World War, contemporary with Holst's completion and first presentations of The Planets. They have an inimitable English wit and charm, playing around with the grand Russian gestures and sentiments of Rachmaninoff. Holst, too, would certainly have approved of the jiggling, modal Dance (no.2 in the First Suite) and the featherweight toccata of the Moto perpetuo with its quirky chromatic chinoiserie. The Russian-in-exile would have loved the sonorous bell sounds and Slavic grandeur of the Prelude and especially the Nocturne with its Debussy-like, polytonal opening cadenza and Borodinesque melody. This piece also incorporates a deeply felt central Sarabande in the dark key of E flat minor – homage perhaps to Bach's Prelude in that key in book 1 of 'The 48'.

#### Performer Information

York2 has a fine reputation as the 'duo with a difference', gained through John and Fiona's exploration of larger scale and contemporary scores alongside the rich and familiar duet repertoire. They have given concerts for societies and festivals in the UK and Australia, on BBC Radio 3, CBC TV, at the Salzburg Festival, concertos at the Barbican Centre and South Bank in London.

Fiona has taught in the junior departments of the Royal College, Trinity and Guildhall, she is at present at St. Paul's Girls' School and Eltham College, both in London.

John was Professor at Guildhall for 33 years and is Senior Music Head of Department at St. Paul's Girls' School. Independently and together Fiona and John have rounded, versatile careers that combine concerts (John working in particular with celebrated cellist Raphael Wallfisch), editing and reviewing, composing for major publishers, adjudicating, teaching and coaching.

More information can be found at [www.yorkpiano.co.uk](http://www.yorkpiano.co.uk)

#### Of Special Note

John and Fiona York perform all of these works regularly in concert. All three pieces are new recordings made at the Nimbus Foundation Concert Hall at Wyastone leys in 2010.

On Good Friday 2011 (22<sup>nd</sup> April), BBC TV will be broadcasting a new documentary about Holst from esteemed director Tony Palmer – and this contains interview footage with John and Fiona York.

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Issued on behalf of **Nimbus Records** (a division of Wyastone Estate Ltd trading as Nimbus Records) by **Music & Media Consulting Limited**, 3 Cypress Close, Doddington, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0LE  
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### Further information

The CD will be fully serviced to all UK classical music press and radio. Both artists are available for interview if required. Advertising will include major classical music magazines and publications.

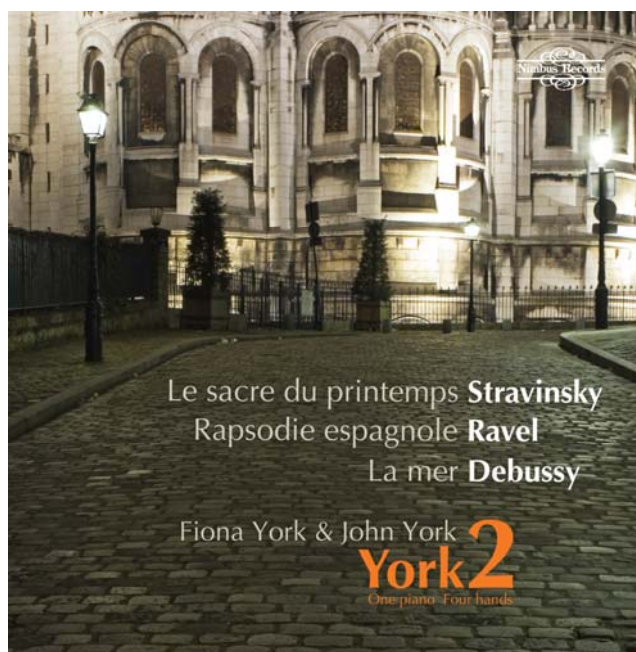
For more details, and to request a review sample, please contact John Cronin at Music & Media Consulting Limited. Both John and Fiona York are available for interview.

The full Nimbus/Nimbus Alliance catalogue can be viewed at [www.wyastone.co.uk](http://www.wyastone.co.uk)

### Previous Release

Attention is drawn to York2's Nimbus debut disc – released in the autumn of 2010

*"It's amazing. It's really amazing, what they do here. The four-hand transcriptions – not even two-piano! – do not sound derivative. They attain their own independent musical value. This is one of those performances that justify the existence of four-hand piano transcriptions of orchestral music."* Oleg Ledeniov - Musicweb-international.com



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