

FAURÉ

Cello Sonata No. 1

CROSSE

Wavesongs

RAVEL

Violin Sonata No. 1

(arr. for cello and piano)

Alexander Baillie *cello*

Nigel Yandell *piano*

Gabriel FAURÉ (1845–1924)

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 1 in D minor, Op. 109 (1917) **[19:03]**

- 1 I. Allegro [5:22]
- 2 II. Andante [7:34]
- 3 III. Finale: Allegro comodo [5:59]

Gordon CROSSE (1937–2021)

Wavesongs (1983, edited 2022 by Naomi Yandell) **[24:35]**

- 4 Introduction: Deep Sea [6:33]
- 5 Sea Shanty; a memory surfacing [1:24]
- 6 Troubled Waves [1:49]
- 7 Storm [0:45]
- 8 Cruel Sea [1:47]
- 9 Aria [3:33]
- 10 Tempest [2:01]
- 11 Lost at Sea [1:38]
- 12 Homeward Bound [2:33]
- 13 Peace and Enlightenment [2:33]

Maurice RAVEL (1875–1937)

- 14 Violin Sonata No. 1 in A minor, Op. posth., M.12 (1897) **[16:35]**
(arr. for cello and piano by Christian Proske)

Total Timing: [60:26]

Alexander Baillie *cello*

Nigel Yandell *piano*

Publishers:

Crosse Wavesongs: © 1983 Oxford University Press

Ravel (arr. C. Proske) *Violin Sonata, Op. posth.*: © 2012 Edition Kunzelmann GmbH

Recorded at Alpheton New Maltings, Alpheton, Suffolk, UK, 12-14 November 2022

Recorded, edited and produced by **Oscar Torres**

24bit, 192kHz high resolution recording, editing and mastering

Photos:

Album cover image by **Knot. P. Saengma**, under licence from Shutterstock.com

Page 4 Fauré in 1905 by **Pierre Petit**

Page 6 Crosse in 1973 by **Edward Morgan**

Page 8 Ravel in c. 1907 by **Pierre Petit**

Page 9 by **Oscar Torres**, taken during the recording session

Page 10 by **Max Baillie**

Page 11 by **Anne-Lise Bertrand Yandell**

Page 13 by **Alex Yandell**

Artwork **David Murphy** (FHR)

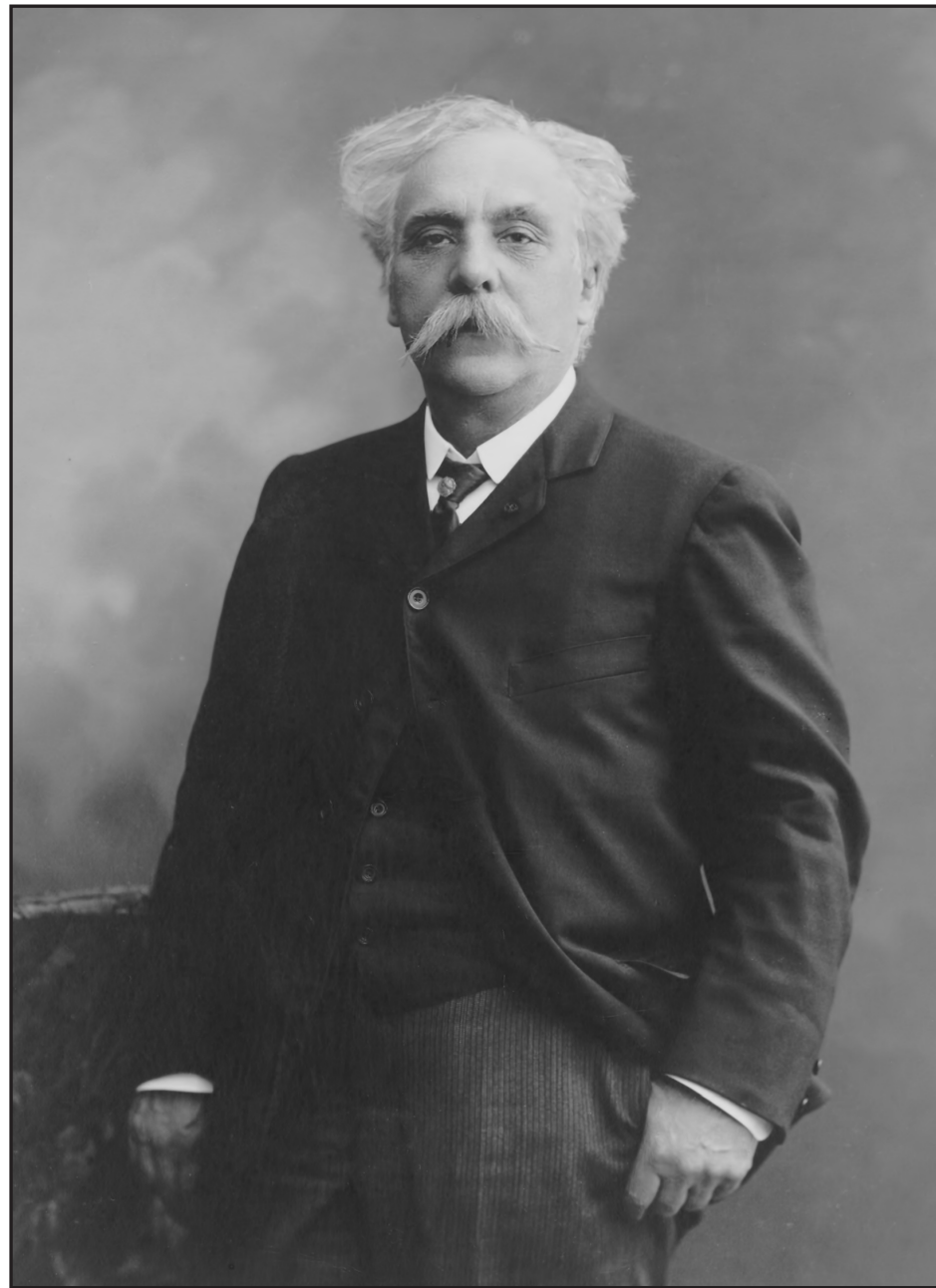
FHR thanks Peter Bromley

FAURÉ • CROSSE • RAVEL

This album brings together three works for cello and piano – the first of them a cornerstone of the repertoire for this medium, the second a modern masterpiece as surely warrants inclusion in this repertoire, and the third a transcription of an early, uncharacteristic yet appealing work.

Gabriel Fauré's cello sonatas are both from his final decade. The first of these was composed in 1917 and was premièred in Paris, at a concert of the Société Nationale de Musique, with cellist Gérard Hekking and pianist Alfred Cortot. The piece is dedicated to cellist Louis Hasselmans, who gave the second hearing at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées the following year. The formal plan is taut and economical while the expressive manner is ambivalent and reserved. Its tonal trajectory is fluid, though with a tangible progression from D minor, via G minor, to D major.

The opening *Allegro* begins with a restless theme for cello over a halting accompaniment on piano, to which a calmer and more expressive melody affords contrast. A return of the initial impetus persists through a tense development then into a reprise which continues to elaborate both themes intensively, before the coda steers this movement through to its forceful ending. The second movement *Andante* centres upon a ruminative melody stated by cello over limpid figurations on piano. This 'song without words' (a genre that the composer made his own in his chamber and piano music across more



than half a century) unfolds towards an eloquent culmination suffused with a fatalistic poise, then subsides with palpable regret to its wistful conclusion. The final *Allegro comodo* immediately strikes a note of greater resolve with a main theme which brings cello and piano into close-knit accord, and in which subsidiary ideas are drawn into a formal continuity that ensures an ongoing development of the initial motifs. Eventually it arrives at a tonal and expressive resolution that provides a decisive end to the work overall.

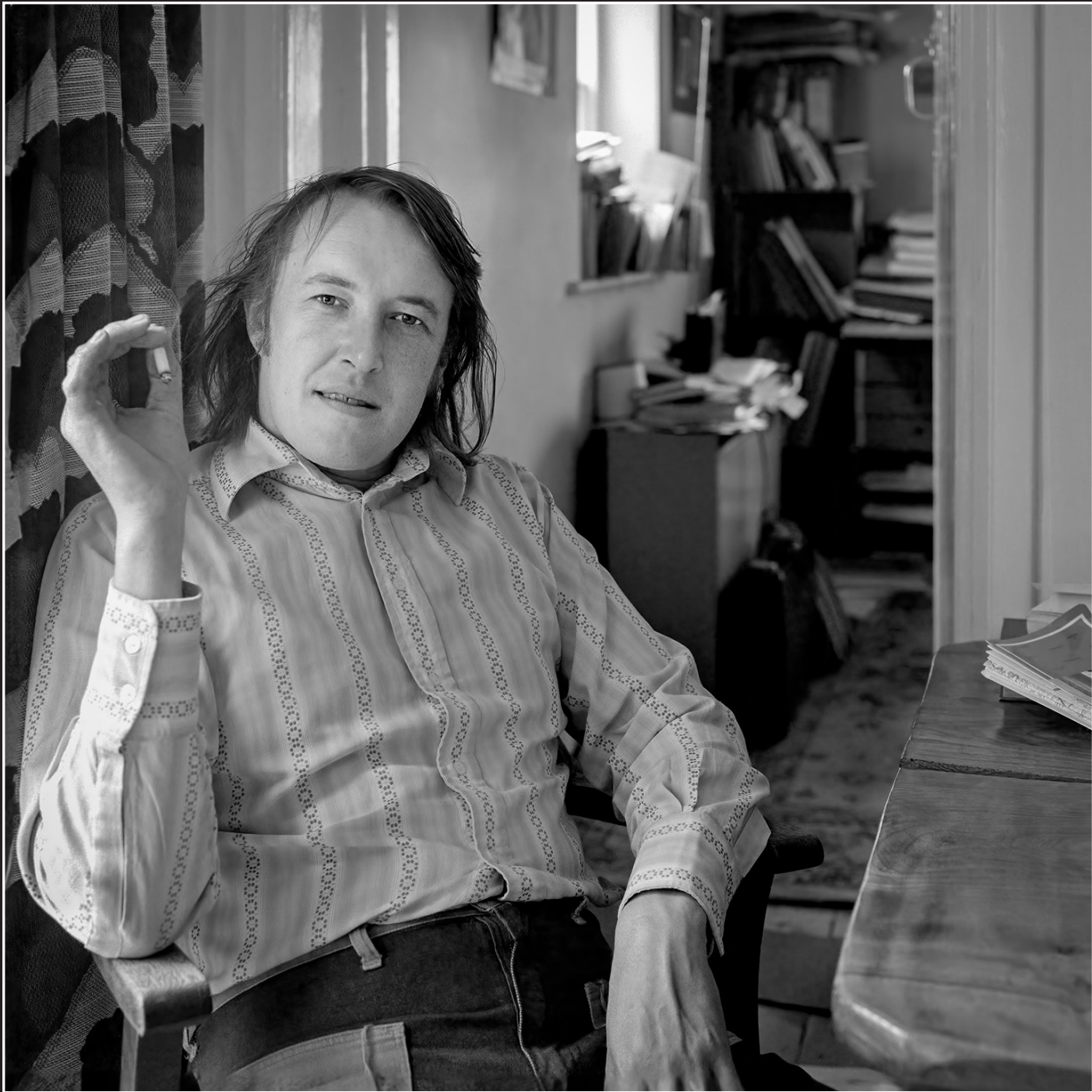
His name might not currently be familiar to younger generations, but Gordon Crosse enjoyed considerable success in the 1960s and 1970s with such works as the cantata *Changes* for the 1966 Three Choirs Festival (subsequently televised) and his evening-length opera *The Story of Vasco* premièred in London by Sadler's Wells in 1974, along with a notable succession of orchestral, chamber and vocal pieces. Following his 50th birthday in 1987, he all but ceased composition to focus on computer programming and music technology – resuming some two decades later with major works that include four more symphonies (Nos. 3–6) and four more string quartets (Nos. 2–5). Having long resided near Blythburgh in Suffolk, Crosse spent his final years on Papa Westray in the Orkney Islands where he died just before his 84th birthday.

A creative life spent in proximity to the sea was bound to inform his music – as is nowhere more evident than in *Wavesongs*, composed in 1983 and previously recorded

by Alexander Baillie with the late pianist Andrew Ball in a miscellany of that name comprising modern British works for cello and piano (NMC). This new recording hence represents the cellist's reassessment of a piece which ranks among Crosse's most personal inspirations, as well as being an impressive composition in its own right. Baillie recollects how this came about:

'Wavesongs was a commission from the Arts Council of Great Britain. At the start of writing I remember Gordon saying he was thinking of a much shorter piece, but the music seemed to demand a much bigger scope. Gordon wanted it to be programmed at the end of a concert so that nothing would disturb the impact left on the listener. I warned him that might not always be possible since the second half of a cello-and-piano recital traditionally ended with a well-known sonata, but Gordon thought that it was up to us performers to change those traditions.

'There was little contact between us while he was writing it, except that he kept telling me it was growing steadily! When I started learning it, I was alarmed that the opening section was so long. Later I began to understand why it had to be this way, and so we play the music as he conceived it. To help listeners navigate through the work, we have included the names of the individual sections or movements, though these run seamlessly into one another. Gordon had himself approved these headings, but they somehow remained omitted from his original score.



'*Wavesongs* takes us in search of a buried childhood memory, with a tiny fragment of melody lodged deep within the subconscious. The waves are not merely those of the sea but are also shapes of rhythmic complexity – images, colours and spaces such as challenge each listener's imagination by evoking forces of danger, violence and power but also mystery and tenderness.

'In the initial *Deep Sea* (track 4) the listener is surrounded by empty, inky blackness. Lost and alone, there are few signs of life or connections to anything familiar. Tangible ideas take time to materialise, while submerged forms only gradually take shape. *Sea Shanty* (track 5) emerges over a deep and rolling pulse, introduced by a repeated rhythmic figure in the lowest range of the piano. A haunting shanty is stated by the cello which also reveals the main thematic material, but presented with no clear tonal centre in a rhythm that seems to ignore the piano.

'With *Troubled Waves* (track 6) the mighty power of the sea becomes evident, the cello now heard in a high register crying out the shanty theme. Then in *Storm* (track 7) and *Cruel Sea* (track 8) we are made helpless by the overwhelming force of the waves, but release from this punishing energy latterly comes in the guise of a soothing *Aria* (track 9). This song allows our minds to catch up.

At the end of this lengthy passage, there follows an extraordinary hiatus when the music seems to stand still in a moment of peaceful contemplation. This turns out to be the calm before an explosion from the piano announces the *Tempest* (track 10), where we are dashed mercilessly on the rocks. *Lost at Sea* (track 11) is the cathartic turning point towards which the whole drama has gradually been building. The cello desperately sings the shanty again as the piano begins to fragment and disintegrate, but still the journey continues.

'In *Homeward Bound* (track 12) we move with new urgency towards the end via incisive if unsettled rhythmic dialogue. Triumphant E flat major chords interrupt this energetic interplay, declaring the struggle as over, then revelation comes in *Peace and Enlightenment* (track 13) where tension and conflict are no more. The fragile fragment of melody is heard in its initial form for what proves a deeply satisfying conclusion of release, reconciliation and simplicity.

This revival of the piece was intended to have been for Gordon's 80th birthday in 2017, but the events around Coronavirus and Lockdown caused the project to be postponed on several occasions. Then Gordon died at the age of 83. This performance is dedicated to his memory.'

Sometimes referred to as *Sonate posthume*, Maurice Ravel's [First] *Violin Sonata* is among his earliest extant works. Written in April 1897, in his second stint at the Paris Conservatoire where he was studying counterpoint with André Gedalge and composition with Fauré, it was likely première'd at this time – whether by fellow-student George Enescu or his contemporary Paul Oberdoerffer is unclear – but went unheard for nearly eight decades and was published as late as 1975. The arrangement heard here, by Christian Proske, is available from Kunzelmann.

The work opens with a thoughtful melody for cello over a hesitant accompaniment on piano, quickly gaining in ardour towards a brief climax before heading into the second main theme, whose more restive though sustained manner opens out the formal dimensions accordingly. The exposition is repeated, then a development draws on both these themes while it builds to the work's emotional climax. The reprise finds both themes substantially altered, their greater length offset by a succinct coda which recalls the opening gesture prior to its whimsical close.

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with thanks to Alexander Baillie





Alexander Baillie is internationally known as one of the foremost cellists and teachers of his generation. He began playing the cello aged twelve inspired by the BBC film about Jacqueline du Pré. He studied at London's Royal College of Music and then in Vienna with André Navarra, and later with du Pré.

Following his studies, Baillie played extensively as soloist with all the BBC orchestras and as a recitalist and chamber musician.

As a member of the London Sinfonietta and Peter Maxwell-Davies' group The Fires of London, he was involved with many first performances of contemporary music.

Baillie has appeared regularly at the BBC Proms and premièred cello concertos by Colin Matthews, Hans Werner Henze, Tōru Takemitsu, in addition to standard repertoire by composers such as Schumann, Delius and Beethoven.

Since 2018 Baillie has been part of the team building the successful new Cello Dynamo school based in Warwick, England. He begins a new chapter, returning to the UK following the end of his tenure as Professor of Cello at the Hochschule für Musik in Bremen, Germany.

alexanderbaillie.com



Nigel Yandell is an experienced solo and collaborative pianist based in Cambridge, England. He has performed widely both in the UK and Europe and has a particular specialisation working with string players and singers. After studying music at the University of York, he gained a scholarship to Wadham College, Oxford, where he followed a programme of research into 18th and early-19th century keyboard music, uncovering much little-known and lost material from Russia and Eastern Europe.

A one-time Trustee of the London Sinfonietta, Yandell has had a particular interest in contemporary music; it was through his musical partnership with cellist Alexander Baillie that the project to realise a new performing edition of Gordon Crosse's *Wavesongs*, used for the first time in this recording, was formulated. The initiative was supported by Hughes Hall, a graduate College of the University of Cambridge, where Yandell is currently Director of Music and Director of Studies in Music.

In addition to his teaching at the University's Faculty of Music, Yandell is a Director of the Stradivari Trust which for many years has been helping some of Britain's most talented musicians to acquire fine stringed instruments. Working regularly with many of these artists, as well as with others, Yandell has established a reputation for his knowledge and experience across a range of specialist repertoire, including the lost works of composers persecuted under the Third Reich and music of the former Soviet Union.



This project, which included the preparation of a new performing edition of *Wavesongs*, has been generously supported by Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge. The artists would like to thank Hughes Hall Music, Peter Longworth and Naomi Yandell for their enthusiasm throughout, for recognising the importance of the work within the contemporary repertoire for cello and piano, and in helping bring it to a wider audience.



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