



CHANDOS

RUTH GIPPS

ORCHESTRAL WORKS, VOLUME 4

Violin Concerto

Symphony No. 5

Leviathan

Charlie Lovell-Jones

violin

Bill Anderson

double-bassoon

Rumon Gamba

BBC *Philharmonie*



Ruth Gipps, early 1940s

Ruth Gipps (1921 – 1999)

Orchestral Works, Volume 4

première recordings

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| | Concerto, Op. 24 (1943)* | 27:14 |
| | in B flat major • in B-Dur • en si bémol majeur
for Violin and Orchestra
For Bryan Gipps | |
| 1 | I Moderato – Meno mosso – A Tempo – Meno mosso | 11:40 |
| 2 | II Andante – | 6:09 |
| 3 | III Allegro – Adagio (slower than Andante movement) –
Tempo di marcia – Meno mosso – L'istesso Tempo –
Allegro – Presto | 9:24 |
| 4 | Leviathan, Op. 59 (1969)† | 5:02 |
| | for Double-bassoon Solo and Chamber Orchestra
Andante lugubre – Più mosso – Allegro – Meno mosso –
Andante lugubre – Allegro | |

	Symphony No. 5, Op. 64 (1982)	37:16
	To Sir William Walton	
5	I Moderato maestoso – Allegro vivace – Andante – Allegro vivace – Andante – Maestoso – Poco più mosso – Meno mosso	12:03
6	II Andante	3:40
7	III Scherzo. Allegro – Trio. Meno mosso – Meno mosso – Scherzo da capo – Coda	8:06
	IV Missa brevis for Orchestra [13:25] 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' – Psalm CXXVII	
8	Kyrie eleison. Largo – Christe eleison – Kyrie eleison –	1:58
9	Gloria in excelsis Deo. Allegro – Meno mosso – Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis –	2:04
10	Credo in unum Deum –	2:14

11	Hosanna in excelsis. Allegro – Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Meno mosso – Da capo dal Hosanna –	2:25
12	Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Meno mosso – Dona nobis pacem. Largo –	1:51
13	Coda. Allegro moderato – Largo	2:51
		S.D.G.
		TT 69:32

Charlie Lovell-Jones violin*
Bill Anderson double-bassoon†
BBC Philharmonic
Yuri Torchinsky leader
Rumon Gamba



Frank Noon Photography

Charlie Lovell-Jones



S.A. Anderson

Bill Anderson

Ruth Gipps: Orchestral Works, Volume 4

Introduction

The rediscovery of the orchestral music of Ruth Gipps, who died in 1999, has gradually taken place since the 1980s and was signalled by the publication, in 2000, of Alan Poulton's catalogue of her works, which gave most of us the first true indication of the scale of her achievement. Our understanding has truly gained momentum as we have had opportunity once again to hear all five symphonies, as well as the many shorter orchestral works, the concertos, and a wide repertoire of chamber music. She was no friend of Schoenberg, Boulez, and the *avant-garde* that dominated 'classical' music from the mid-century onward. It was an antagonism that ultimately left her feeling that she had to leave her post teaching composition at the Royal College of Music, and that also explains why she failed to obtain performances of her works by the most prestigious orchestras of her day. It is probable that her important role has become more apparent to a wider audience as a consequence of recent initiatives to give women composers a significant airing.

A local prodigy child pianist, championed by an ambitious mother, Ruth Gipps was

born at Bexhill-on-Sea, in 1921, and achieved publication of a small piano piece, *The Fairy Shoemaker*, at the age of seven. She successfully applied to the Royal College of Music aged sixteen, winning a Caird Scholarship. A composition pupil of Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob, she also blossomed as a pianist, giving a noted student performance of Brahms's Second Piano Concerto at the College. When Sir Henry Wood conducted her tone poem *Knight in Armour* (which Gipps had completed on 1 April 1940) at the last night of the 1942 Proms, it seemed to augur the appearance of a talented new voice.

During the early years of the war, she produced a variety of works for college friends, notably a concerto for the oboist Marion Brough (CHAN 20161) and the Violin Concerto, recorded here for the first time, which she composed for her older brother, Bryan. Her five symphonies date from 1942, 1945, 1965, 1972, and 1982, the first two, while earning some success on their first hearing, languishing for many years before being revived; only now can these five works be assessed as a corpus and we

appreciate her symphonic mastery. When, in March 1945, George Weldon conducted the City of Birmingham Orchestra in the première performance of Ruth Gipps's First Symphony, composed three years earlier, she gave a remarkable demonstration of her versatility: she played cor anglais in the orchestra for the performance of her symphony and, in the same programme, was also the soloist in Glazunov's First Piano Concerto. Unfortunately, a hand injury would soon stand in the way of a parallel career as a concert pianist.

During the war, her life was focused on Birmingham where, in 1942, she married the clarinettist Robert Baker. While he was away on war service, she worked as a full-time orchestral musician (oboe / cor anglais) in the City of Birmingham Orchestra, also freelancing in orchestras nearby. When her husband eventually returned from wartime service, they moved to London, but found it a 'changed world'. Worse, as so many men were now seeking to resume musical work, it was not a good time for women in the profession, either as orchestral players or as composers. Developing a portfolio career, she embraced numerous musical activities, including university extra-mural lecturing, choral conducting, and musical journalism. She sought to establish herself by industry

and academic excellence. She had already been awarded an external Durham BMus, in 1941, and went on to earn a Doctorate, in 1948. For the latter, her composition exercise was the cantata *The Cat*, described by one conductor as 'great fun, full of vitality'.

For much of her career, she made her living as a conservatoire teacher and was warmly remembered by her students for her devotion to them. First appointed to Trinity College of Music (1959 – 66) to teach composition and harmony, in 1967 she moved to the Royal College of Music where she filled the vacancy left after the retirement of her composition teacher Gordon Jacob. Unhappy when the RCM moved to teach more adventurous styles of composition, she made her critical views on serial and *avant-garde* music known. Eventually, feeling that at the RCM, on this issue, her 'position had become impossible', she left, in the summer of 1977, and moved to the appointment of Senior Lecturer in Music at Kingston Polytechnic (now University).

In London in the 1950s, there was an enormous gap in the provision of routes for students and newly qualified players into the wider orchestral profession. This was only partly filled by the longstanding Modern Symphony Orchestra, which Arthur Dennington conducted at the Northern Polytechnic, in the Holloway Road, from 1931

to 1975. This orchestra continued to operate during the war and was the scene of the première of Gipps's Oboe Concerto, in June 1942, and Violin Concerto, in February 1944. Dennington's orchestra gave remarkable and prestigious premières and revivals, and it must surely have been the example that first encouraged Gipps to establish a rehearsal orchestra of her own, the One Rehearsal Orchestra. Later renamed London Repertoire Orchestra, it was given added impetus with the appearance on the London scene of two further semi-professional performing groups which gave regular concerts and explored less-played repertoire. These were the Kensington Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Leslie Head) and the Fulham Municipal Orchestra (directed by Joseph Vandernoot). All of them were, technically, evening classes run by London local authorities. With the LRO, Gipps provided an opportunity for students and good amateurs every week to work through an enormous span of repertoire, giving regular London concerts; it was an activity which she would continue for thirty-one years, her performances including new works as well as the classical repertoire. For many years, aspiring orchestral players first entering the profession were thus given an opportunity to acquire experience of a wide repertoire. With the LRO, Gipps also gave hopeful soloists an

opportunity to play the concerto repertoire, and many leading names first explored their concertos with her. Later she also founded and conducted the professional Chanticleer Orchestra, which presented many pioneering programmes. In November 1988, she and the Chanticleer Orchestra gave a concert at St John's, Smith Square, promoting the work of women composers, in which she programmed her Second Symphony as well as the Piano Concerto in D minor by Florence Price, performed by Selma Epstein – long before the present vogue for the music of Price. With the LRO, Gipps was able to give an initial hearing of her Third Symphony, in 1966, Fourth, in 1973, and Fifth, in 1983. Her many good works for the music profession in the UK were wide but went largely unsung; she was eventually recognised, however, by the award of an MBE.

Concerto for Violin in B flat major, Op. 24

Ruth Gipps conceived her Violin Concerto, Op. 24, written during 1943, for her brother Bryan, nineteen years her senior. It was first heard, on 5 February 1944, at the Northern Polytechnic, in the Holloway Road, London, where it was performed by the wartime Modern Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Dennington. It is a remarkably large-scale and assured piece for a

twenty-one-year-old composer, but, while it was championed by her brother, it did not establish itself in any wider repertoire and was not published.

The first movement launches us straight into a full orchestral *tutti*, but it is just seven bars before the violin enters, at which point the orchestra thins out notably; apart from several climaxes, this light touch in the accompaniment is a feature of the movement, one characteristic sound being a small group of woodwind interplaying with the soloist and receiving their own brief solo moments. The melodic line in the first movement is characterised by a remarkable number of triplets which drive the music on, giving it a pronounced momentum. This is a concerto movement on a large scale.

The lyrical *Andante* slow movement has the character of a pastoral interlude between the more robust outer movements. A rising orchestral climax takes just three bars before the soloist sings on. The end is heralded by another orchestral *tutti*, from the sustained concluding chord of which the soloist launches directly into the dancing *Allegro* of the finale.

This finale falls into three sections. The opening is rhythmically energetic; there follows a seven-bar lyrical *Adagio* interlude marked 'slower than Andante movement'

and clearly offering an emotional summation of the journey thus far; then a rhythm in the side drum carries the *Allegro* forward into a marching section which presents a new theme. In due course, Gipps builds slowly to a climax crowned by a crash on the gong (Gipps marks it *ffff*). The conclusion approaches as cellos and basses play a repeated pulse, and arrives with a long oboe solo in counterpoint to the solo violin; this is in turn followed by eleven bars of *Allegro*, at the end of which soloist and orchestra punch out a strident gesture of dismissal.

Leviathan, Op. 59

Ruth Gipps had a reputation for writing for a wide and very varied range of performing forces – her last work was a sonata for double-bass, and elsewhere she contributed movements for bass flute, cor anglais, and tenor trombone, as well as the more usual wind and strings. In writing for what she referred to as the double-bassoon, she had responded to an approach from Valentine Kennedy, bassoonist in the London Philharmonic Orchestra, for a piece for the contrabassoon.

Kennedy was born Waldemar Koch (the son of the once-celebrated bird mimic Ludwig Koch), in 1913, and escaped Nazi persecution in Germany by fleeing to England in 1937.



BBC Philharmonic, in the studio at MediaCityUK, Salford

In 1943 he changed his name to Valentine Kennedy.

The contrabassoon, or double-bassoon, is heard in Holst's suite *The Planets*, Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*, and Ravel's *Ma Mère l'Oye*, and notable for its striking brief appearance in the finale of Beethoven's 'Choral' Symphony, in which it underlines the swagger of the Janissary music that leads to the tenor's entry, 'Froh, froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen...':

Quite what Gipps meant by the title, *Leviathan*, implying a sea monster, we do not know, but in view of her use of Biblical quotations in several works, we may be persuaded that she is remembering Psalm 104, 'There go the ships: there is that Leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein', set by so many composers. One might suggest that she is evoking whales; others may hear sea snakes or nameless sea monsters, but probably nothing so dramatic as Tennyson's Kraken. Gipps's *Leviathan* slithers and slides chromatically and ends with a spectacular low soft B flat, way below the bottom bass clef staff line, which we also heard at the end of the instrument's opening statement.

The mood is set by the marking at the head of the score, *Andante lugubre*, the solo double-bassoon rising from the depths

and falling back repeatedly. The orchestra always provides contrast and before long, oscillating quavers march the music onward, soon building to a brief romantic outburst and the contrasting 5/8 *Allegro* middle section. For three bars the double-bassoon plays a falling figuration. Then we are back in *Andante lugubre* for ten bars, a brief orchestral outburst, and, against *tremolando* strings, the soloist sinks away as the flute, high above, plays birdsong triplets. Way below the staff, the soloist's low B flat fades to a final chord coloured by woodwind and muted horns.

Symphony No. 5, Op. 64

After it enjoyed some modest success and was championed by Sir Arthur Bliss, the Fourth Symphony was played by the London Repertoire Orchestra, in the Royal Festival Hall, in May 1973. It was broadcast by the BBC ten years later, conducted by Sir John Pritchard. The Fourth Symphony had been dedicated to Bliss and now Gipps inscribed the Fifth to Sir William Walton – the score says, 'by permission'. The Fifth was first performed by the London Repertoire Orchestra in a concert at the Guildhall School of Music, on 16 February 1986. But it would prove the cause of much stress to the composer because, when she submitted it, the symphony was rejected by the BBC for

broadcast. At this time, the BBC was the most significant avenue to performance for most composers, and Gipps did not react well to this rejection. She took to placing classified advertisements in the press, asking, 'Why no 5th?'. It was not a wise move and, unfortunately, it did nothing to ensure that the symphony reached a wider audience in her lifetime, for owing to the very large forces it requires, scheduling the work must have been an expensive proposition.

The music is, in fact, scored for the largest orchestra for which she ever wrote, demanding quadruple wind, six horns, two harps, and celesta, as well as an enormous percussion section: vibraphone, glockenspiel, xylophone, tam-tam, whip, and castanets, as well as the usual side drum, bass drum, and cymbals.

The first movement opens with a stately prelude, *Moderato maestoso*, in which a wash of harp tone (two players) and the scoring in blocks of orchestral colour confirm this to be a changed world from that of Gipps's previous symphonies. The *Allegro vivace* of the movement proper now races away, launched by a *staccato* rhythmic flute solo. An eleven-bar *Andante* episode intervenes before the fast music returns. Another episode provides striking contrast, being scored for harps, glockenspiel, and celeste.

The *Andante* returns with a bass clarinet solo in a rich texture, which this time develops into a complex triumphal statement, and the movement ends with the return of the opening harp figurations.

After the long first movement, the extremely brief *Andante* second movement provides a delightful contrast as cor anglais followed by oboe are heard over soft horn chords. The lower strings at first underpin the small-scale scoring, then a soaring violin line serves as the backdrop to a succession of wind solos. Momentum is sustained and at the end, the horns maintain a soft texture as a solo violin rises from the depth.

The third movement is a Scherzo complete with Trio and Scherzo *da capo* (i.e. the opening section is repeated after the contrasting Trio). The fast semi-quaver material is passed around the orchestra, in the process creating enormous musical energy, while the Trio offers contrast, featuring the distinctive timbre of the vibraphone.

The finale is styled 'Misa brevis for Orchestra' and is headed with words from Psalm 127: 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' Unusually, the component parts of the mass are identified in the score, which opens with short sections labelled: Kyrie eleison - Christe



Courtesy of the Ruth Gipps Collection

Ruth Gipps



Forbes Henderson, Courtesy of the Ruth Gipps Collection

Ruth Gipps, c. 1980

eleison – Kyrie eleison. Pay close attention, and it becomes possible to identify the unsung words or phrases of the mass with individual instrumental lines; details of the orchestration, too, reflect the spirit of the liturgical sections – six horns in the Kyrie, woodwind in the Christe. When we reach the Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gipps gives us an extended *Allegro*, which reminds this commentator of another Birmingham composer, Christopher Edmunds, who generated his glorious wartime Second Symphony from modifications of a plainsong Credo.

The movement quietens down for the Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis, the words surely on oboe, cor anglais, and, later, sung out *espressivo* by a muted horn. The Credo in unum Deum is given to solo trumpet, later solo violin with viola counterpoint; the mood is sustained for several pages. The *Allegro* of the Hosanna in excelsis is followed by a slower Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. The music of the Hosanna returns, and this time leads to the Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. A solo cor anglais takes us to the slow music of Dona nobis pacem, building to a solemn climax. Gipps ends powerfully with a fast Coda but the musical energy subsides over string chords as harp *glissandi* colour the fade-out.

This is not the only time that Ruth Gipps evokes Biblical words in her instrumental music. For example, in the *Threnody*, Op. 74 (CHAN 20290), she writes phrases from Psalm 121 into the instrumental texture.

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Since making his début at a sold-out Royal Festival Hall at the age of fifteen, **Charlie Lovell-Jones** has soloed with major orchestras internationally, broadcasting on radio and television. As leader of the multi-award-winning Sinfonia of London, he has performed at the BBC Proms and recorded several CDs, garnering critical acclaim from magazines such as *Classic FM* and *Gramophone*. He found success in the Sendai International Music Competition, Japan, in 2019, Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition in 2020, and Joseph Joachim Violin Competition, Hannover, in 2021. In 2020, he graduated from the University of Oxford with a Gibbs Prize in Music and received a Bicentenary Scholarship from the Royal Academy of Music, from which he graduated, in 2022, with the Strings Postgraduate Prize. He studied for over ten years with Rodney Friend MBE and, from 2022 to 2024, with Augustin Hadelich, at the Yale School of Music. Winner of a Hattori

Foundation Award, Harriet Cohen International Music Award, John Fussell Award for Young Musicians, Drake Calleja Trust award, and Countess of Munster Musical Trust award, he has enjoyed master-classes with Ida Haendel, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Vadim Repin, Menahem Pressler, Pinchas Zukerman, James Ehnes, Leonidas Kavakos, and, most recently, Ida Kavafian at the Lincoln Center. He is also a J&A Beare Violin Society Artist. He is in regular demand as a soloist across the UK and beyond and has performed at venues such as Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Snape Maltings, Smith Square Hall and Wigmore Hall, London, and Konzerthaus Berlin. He frequently tours and records with Sinfonia of London and also enjoys performing chamber music and acting as guest leader. Charlie Lovell-Jones plays a fine violin made by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini in 1777, generously loaned by a benefactor.

Born in East Yorkshire, **Bill Anderson** started playing the bassoon at the age of twelve and was fortunate to benefit from the advanced tuition scheme offered by the county council at the time to study with Julian Roberts. After reading Engineering at the Universities of Newcastle and Edinburgh, he received an entrance scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music where he studied

with Rachel Gough, John Orford, Gareth Newman, and David Chatterton. During his time at the Academy, he won several solo and chamber competitions, graduating with distinction. Whilst still a student at the Academy he was appointed to the post of Principal Contrabassoonist with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra where he remained for three years before returning to London. He then freelanced with most of the British orchestras until he was appointed to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. Since 2008 he has been a member of the BBC Philharmonic, based at MediaCityUK, in Salford. He is regularly heard on BBC Radio 3, in concert halls around the North of England, at the BBC Proms, and internationally when the orchestra is on tour. In his spare time, Bill Anderson can be found walking and cycling in the Yorkshire Dales with his family.

The **BBC Philharmonic** is reimagining the orchestral experience for a new generation – challenging perceptions, championing innovation, and taking a rich variety of music to the widest range of audiences. Alongside a flagship series of concerts at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, the orchestra broadcasts concerts on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Sounds from venues across the North of England, annually at the BBC Proms, and from its international

tours. It also records regularly for Chandos Records and has produced a catalogue of more than 300 discs and digital downloads. Championing new music, it has recently given world and UK premières of works by Anna Appleby, Gerald Barry, Erland Cooper, Tom Coult, Sebastian Fagerlund, Emily Howard, Robert Laidlow, James Lee III, Grace-Evangeline Mason, David Matthews, Outi Tarkiainen, and Anna Þorvaldsdóttir, the scope of its output extending far beyond standard repertoire. Its Chief Conductor is John Storgårds, with whom the orchestra has enjoyed a long association. The French conductor Ludovic Morlot is its Associate Artist, Anna Clyne, one of the most in-demand composers of the day, its Composer in Association.

In May 2023 the orchestra performed at the Eurovision Song Contest, both at a free concert with the previous Ukrainian winner, Jamala, and in the final itself with the Italian artist Mahmood for a rendition of John Lennon's *Imagine* during the Liverpool Songbook medley. The orchestra continues to deliver a programme of engagement with children and young people. At the end of 2023 it released *Musical Storyland*, a major new ten-part series featuring the musicians of the BBC Philharmonic, which brings famous stories from around the world to life using the power of music. This was the first time an orchestra

has been commissioned to make a series of films for UK network television. Through all its activities, the BBC Philharmonic is bringing life-changing musical experiences to audiences across Greater Manchester, the North of England, the UK, and around the world. www.bbc.co.uk/philharmonic

Chief Conductor of the Oulu Sinfonia since January 2022, the British maestro **Rumon Gamba** has previously served as Principal Conductor and Music Director of NorrlandsOperan (2008–15), Chief Conductor of Aalborg Symfoniorkester (2011–15), and Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra (2002–10). He regularly leads the BBC orchestras and has appeared at the BBC Proms on a number of occasions. A champion of new music, he has conducted several high profile premières, including the world premières of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*, at English National Opera, and Brett Dean's Viola Concerto, with the composer as soloist and the BBC Symphony Orchestra; the national premières of Poul Ruders's *Dancer in the Dark* and Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Blood on the Floor* and *Scherzoid*, with NorrlandsOperan; and the Australian première of the original version of Sibelius's Symphony No. 5, with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. To celebrate the status of Umeå as European Capital of

Culture, he conducted NorrlandsOperan in a critically acclaimed epic outdoor production of *Elektra*, with the Spanish theatrical group La Fura dels Baus. In 2016 he conducted Mats Larsson Gothe's *The African Prophetess* with the orchestra of NorrlandsOperan and Cape Town Opera Chorus as part of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra's Composer Week.

Rumon Gamba is a sought-after guest conductor by orchestras such as the Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest, Brussels Philharmonic, Helsingborgs Symfoniorkester, Romanian Radio National Orchestra, Göteborgs Symfoniker, Kristiansand Symfoniorkester, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Lahti Symphony Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, WDR Funkhausorchester Köln, and Münchner Rundfunkorchester. Most recently he has conducted a successful Stravinsky ballet double bill for Finnish National Opera and Ballet and a production of *Die Zauberflöte*

at Oulu City Theatre, for which, in 2026, he will conduct a new commission celebrating the European Year of Culture in Oulu. He has recorded exclusively for Chandos Records for over twenty years, his projects including a series devoted to orchestral works by d'Indy with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, the first of which was nominated for a Grammy Award. His Chandos discography also includes, as well as more than a dozen albums with the BBC Philharmonic, recordings of works by the Swedish composer Dag Wirén, British overtures and tone poems with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Finnish overtures with the Oulu Sinfonia, and works by Malcolm Williamson, Sir Malcolm Arnold, Miklós Rózsa, and Ruth Gipps. He is about to launch a new recording project with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. The Royal Academy of Music recognised his contribution to music by making Rumon Gamba an Associate, in 2002, and a Fellow, in 2017.

Also available



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Back cover Photograph of Rumon Gamba by Kati Leinonen

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Kati Leinonen

Rumon Gamba

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