



James Newby

Baritone

I WONDER AS I WANDER – BIS CD REVIEWS/2020-2021

Pianist: Joseph Middleton

"exquisite timbre: deep and dark, warm and glowing like a sunset, feathery, coquettish, moving, dramatic... Newby can do it all and does it with more finesse and maturity than you would expect from a twenty something"

De Standaard – Dec 2020

The physical and spiritual wanderer binds Newby's well-chosen programme, which opens with Britten's arrangement of the title track — Middleton memorable on the piano — and ends with three more English folk songs. The lieder are arranged round Beethoven's cycle of distant love, with two of Schubert's Wanderer Songs and a Mahler group that combines rare communicative zeal with nuanced insights, in a notable debut.

Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times – January 2021

.....British baritone James Newby's debut album for BIS brings a welcome freshness..... not least in its programming – a beautifully balanced mixture of Britten, Schubert, Beethoven and Mahler. And it starts most arrestingly, with an emotionally direct, open-hearted and affecting account of 'I wonder as I wander', the baritone's voice exposed and honest against Joseph Middleton's delicately etched piano interjections.....It's a performance that sets the tone, announcing Newby as an impressive artist – he has plenty of major prizes to his credit, including the 2016 Kathleen Ferrier Award. And in the Schubert selection, he shows he's able to create vividly dramatic worlds, too. The famous Wanderer of D489 veers between extremes, for example: internalised emotion occasionally bursting into frustration and tangible anguish, with the singer unafraid of unleashing almost operatic intensity.....this is rewarding, vivid Schubert, from an artist whose natural communicative gift shines through in every note. The Beethoven makes even more of a statement. Here 'Adelaide' concentrates on drama instead of mere prettiness, while *An die ferne Geliebte* starts to resemble a monodrama in its concentration and narrative impetus, where emotion and frustration are allowed to show alongside the moments of dewy *Innigkeit*. It's an unusually gripping performance of this beautiful cycle.....Throw in three more Britten folk songs, sung with natural eloquence, plus exemplary engineering from BIS, and this adds up to an impressive debut from a young singer to watch.

Hugo Shirley, The Gramophone Jan 2021

Entitled *I wonder as I wander*, the new recording is a wide-ranging programme of Lieder, performed with the experienced Joseph Middleton at the keyboard. The selection is both insightful and beautifully sung, highlighting Newby's immaculate legato and ability to draw on a hushed yet rounded tone, plus excellent diction.

Francis Muzzu, Opera Now January 2021

This is a fine release in every way

Classical CD Review, Jan 2021

Newby's voice has plenty of weight and richness but can be surprisingly light on its feet; he and Middleton together hold Schubert's *Abendstern* in rapt suspension, and in *Im Freien* Middleton's gently pulsing piano conjures up the vastness of the starry sky. In addition, they offer beautifully controlled versions of five of Britten's folksong arrangements to bookend the programme.

Erica Jeal, The Guardian, Jan 2021

This is a fine debut disc, its repertoire giving Newby ample chance to demonstrate his expressive and dramatic range, whether in the cold of the Britten song which gives the album its name – superbly accompanied throughout by Joseph Middleton, who brings understated life to Britten's still, pinched piano fragments – or the half-deranged Mahler 'Reveille', in which singer and piano drum relentlessly over the bloodied battlefield towards death.

Classical Music/BBC Music Magazine, February 2021

Newby's is a wonderfully even baritone voice, velvet-smooth and secure throughout the range with an unshakable technique.....this is a significant release and one not to be missed.

David Truslove, Opera Today March 2021

James Newby is not yet thirty, and he appears with his first CD in truly astonishing artistic fullness. Britten, Schubert, Mahler and Beethoven are served with charm and discretion, but above all with a singing art that wins out all resistance.....But what an admirable legato, what a delicious pronunciation, at the same time clear, precise and perfectly accentuated! The phrasing leads us on ridges of pleasure, in a program yet traversed by august predecessors

Mathieu Roc, Resmusica March 26 2021

....the album announces an important new talent, and BIS's fine Potton Hall sound shines a spotlight on his strengths.

James Manheim, AllMusic March 2021

Recital with Joseph Middleton (piano), Wigmore Hall

The twelve songs of Schumann's *Kerner Lieder* contain significant technical and expressive demands for the singer..... Strong themes unite the group of poems and the opening 'Lust der Sturmnacht' (Joy in a stormy night) was delivered with dramatic resonance by Newby, whose powerful and lyrical baritone was perfectly suited to the nuanced description of passionate love mirrored in a violent storm while safely sheltered indoors.....Newby's dramatic gifts are considerable, and Howells's 'King David' again showcased his talent for individual interpretation and imaginative use of dynamics. Humour was not lacking. Britten's 'Oliver Cromwell' concluded in sparky style and Newby's enticing 'Foggy, foggy dew' – another Britten arrangement – made a hugely appreciated encore.....Newby is only in his mid-twenties and already exhibits natural talent and thoughtful musicality in the *Lieder* repertoire: a young singer of much promise.

Amanda-Jane Doran, Classical Source, November 2019

BACH St Matthew Passion, Cincinnati May Festival

Baritone James Newby brought dignity to the role of Jesus and consistently sang with warmth and authority

Cincinnati Business Courier, May 2019

LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL RECITAL with Joseph Middleton (piano)

James Newby then delivered a remarkable insight into three wonderful songs by Henri Duparc – the calmness and resignation of *Extase*, the thrilling intensity of *La Vague et la Cloche* (The Wave and the Bell) and the sun drenched tenderness of *Phydile*. Vaughan Williams' *Nine Songs of Travel* are taken from poems by Robert Louis Stevenson. In mood and atmosphere they ranged from the bold swaggering confidence of *The Vagabond*, to the sighing beauty of *In Dreams*, and the nobility of *Bright is the Ring of Words*. Newby's genius for story telling brought these engaging songs to life. Singer and pianist rewarded the vociferous audience applause with an animated performance of *Wolsey Charles* and *Greatex Newman's The Green-eyed Dragon*

Geoffrey Mogridge, Ilkley Gazette April 29 2019

WOLF Italienisches Liederbuch (staged), Milton Court

Completing the quartet was James Newby, likeable from a dramatic perspective when playing a young idealistic lover and displaying a skilful control of dynamic when bringing his voice down to *pianissimo*.

Alexander Campbell, Classical Source, February 2019

Playing the jack-the-lad of the bunch, Newby's honeyed baritone worked a treat

Mark Allan, The Times, February 2019

Recital with Dame Sarah Connolly & Joseph Middleton (piano), Wigmore Hall

He has a tremendously versatile voice that's capable of astonishing power (as demonstrated with the magnificent blast of 'hélas' in Duparc's *La vague et la cloche*), an edgy warm solidity (that was to the fore in Debussy's *La Mer est plus belle*) and an intense *mezza voce* quality that he brought to Ravel's *Ronsard à son âme* and Duparc's *Extase* (where the hint of breathiness on '...mort parfumée ...' was completely delicious). [...] Newby has a winning platform manner and a glorious voice that will take him far.

Barry Creasy, MusicOMH, November 2018

[...] James Newby whose baritone brought richness of expression to Ravel and Duparc – utterly mesmerising in the latter's 'Extase' perfectly capturing its languor with half-whispered phrases and finely-judged release of harmonic tensions. [...] Throughout, Newby combined impeccable technique and musicianship with striking characterisation, heard again in the sole duet, Fauré's 'Pleurs d'or' (Tears of Gold), an agreeable encore.

David Truslove Classical Source, November 2018

MOZART Le nozze di Figaro (Count Almaviva), Nevill Holt Opera

As Count Almaviva, James Newby drew out his character's unpleasantness through smooth-toned and persuasive singing, continually exuding injured pride.

Jane Shuttleworth, Bachtrack, July 2018

This year the name on everyone's lips was that of Leicestershire-born baritone James Newby, 25, already the recipient of many prizes, making an outstanding debut as the Count in *Figaro*. He has a golden tone and he can act.

Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, June 2018

There is already a quiet buzz around 26-year-old James Newby, winner of the prestigious Kathleen Ferrier Award in 2016, and it will undoubtedly get louder as news spreads of his dashing confident performance as Count Almaviva. The blustering rage of 'Hai gia vinta la causa' held no fears for him, and there was something almost pathetically sincere about his final repentance. [...] Both [Anderson] and Newby are terrific.

Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph, June 2018

James Newby's powerful Count

Richard Morrison, The Times, June 2018

The fast-rising Newby was on fine form as Almaviva [...] Luxury casting indeed.

Mark Valenvia, WhatsOnStage, June 2018

Of the aristocratic couple, award-winning baritone James Newby's firmly delivered Count is regularly frustrated by the machinations of his underlings

George Hall, The Stage, June 2018

[Susanna] and James Newby's masterful Count — his commanding account of the Act III aria was a collector's item, tricky triplets and all — were the standouts.

Hugh Canning, The Times, June 2018

Count and Countess too were strong-willed characters, with multi prize-winning James Newby as an unusually young-looking Count, whose firm baritone added to his fine stage and vocal presence

MarkRonan.com, June 2018

From among the strong cast, James Newby stands out. With his firm baritone, he presents a Count who on the surface appears so young, dashing and upstanding that it is immensely disconcerting to see just how easily he can become sinister and brutish.

Sam Smith, Music OMH, June 2018

VERDI La Traviata, Glyndebourne Festival Opera

...and there is nice work from one of Glyndebourne's home-grown artists, James Newby, who stepped up as the Marchese on opening night and impressed with his few bars. That's a name to watch out for.

Claudia Pritchard, Culture Whisper, May 2017

Kathleen Ferrier Awards final 2016 (1st prize)

Newby's *Papageno's Aria* was intensely idiomatic, the sad clown incarnate, and he invested in *Erkönig* with dark dramatic force, while his account of Butterworth's *Is My Team Ploughing* was exquisitely nuanced.

Michael Church, The Independent, 3 May 2016 (5)*

Baritone James Newby[...]showed impressive maturity in a diverse programme. Newby demonstrated care, thoughtfulness and clarity in the shaping of Mozart's phrases [...] Schubert's *Erlkönig* was exciting: fast, vibrant and emotionally febrile and Newby embodied all four protagonists with striking directness. Massenet's *Danse macabre* revealed also a rich lower register and a telling way with the text.

Britten's *Look, through the port comes the moonshine astray* (Billy Budd) began with a flow of sensuous anticipation. Newby's free vocal line was beautifully lyrical and expertly phrased, with well-controlled breathing and dynamics, and a teasing pianissimo. As the aria developed, the tenor conveyed Billy's vigour forcefully, but the sentiments were never overstaged, as Newby sang with stylishness and vitality. The vocal lines had smoothness and continuity, the many and slight ritardandos were impressively negotiated, sustained high notes were vehement but not forced, and the coda was explosive but always controlled.

Claire Seymour, Opera Today, 2 May 2016

BACH St John Passion, Cheltenham Bach Choir & Corelli Orchestra, David Crown

Baritone James Newby and countertenor James Laing were also outstanding.

Tony Whelpton, Gloucestershire Echo, 14 March 2016

Recital programme – Perth Festival

Amir Farid at a Kawai grand, was in thrilling form as was baritone James Newby in other lieder and Saint Saens' *Danse Macabre*. And the aching sadness of Butterworth's setting of *A Shropshire Lad* was evoked to the nth degree.

Neville Cohn, The West Australian, March 1, 2016

