

= This England (album) =

This England is a classical music album by the Oregon Symphony under the artistic direction of Carlos Kalmar , released by Dutch record label PentaTone Classics in November 2012 . The album was recorded at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland , Oregon at five performances in February and May 2012 . It contains works by three English 20th @-@ century composers : Edward Elgar 's Cockaigne (In London Town) , Ralph Vaughan Williams ' Symphony No. 5 , and " Four Sea Interludes " and " Passacaglia " from Benjamin Britten 's opera Peter Grimes . The recording was the orchestra 's second under Kalmar 's leadership , following the highly successful Music for a Time of War (2011) , which also included works by Britten and Vaughan Williams and received Grammy Award nominations for Best Orchestral Performance and Best Engineered Album , Classical . This England received positive critical reception but failed to chart .

= = Background and composition = =

This England , released by the Dutch record label PentaTone Classics on November 13 , 2012 , contains compositions by three English 20th @-@ century composers : Cockaigne (In London Town) by Edward Elgar , Symphony No. 5 by Ralph Vaughan Williams , and " Four Sea Interludes " and " Passacaglia " from the opera Peter Grimes (1945) by Benjamin Britten . The album contains ten tracks , with works divided into separate tracks for each movement and interlude . The works were recorded live at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland , Oregon , at five performances in February and May 2012 . Symphony No. 5 and Cockaigne were performed February 18 and 19 as part of the program " Kahane Plays Mozart " ; the works by Britten were performed May 12 ? 14 as part of the program " Arnaldo Cohen Plays Tchaikovsky " . In his review of the February 18th live performance , The Oregonian 's James McQuillen noted disturbances from the audience , including coughing and the ringing of one attendant 's cell phone . McQuillen suggested the disturbances could be removed from the audio by engineers if the February 19th recording was not preferable .

The album was the second recorded during Kalmar 's tenure , following the highly successful Music for a Time of War (2011) , which also included works by Britten and Vaughan Williams and which received Grammy Award nominations for Best Orchestral Performance and Best Engineered Album , Classical . The recording is the second of four albums expected to be produced by the Symphony and PentaTone before the end of the 2014 ? 2015 season , all under Kalmar 's artistic leadership . Like Music for a Time of War , This England was recorded in hybrid multichannel (surround sound) Super Audio CD format . Blanton Alspaugh served as producer . Alspaugh and John Newton were the recording engineers , and mixing and mastering was conducted by Mark Donahue . In addition to recording the performances , the Boston @-@ based company Soundmirror edited , mixed and mastered the audio . Program notes for the recording were written by Steven Kruger . The album 's cover art was designed by David McLaughlin , art director for the Symphony .

The Symphony celebrated the recording by hosting a CD release party in late October .

= = = Works = = =

Elgar conducted the world premiere of Cockaigne (In London Town) at a Royal Philharmonic Society concert at Queen 's Hall in London in June 1901 . The work has been described as an " unashamedly populist portrait of ' old London town ' " and a musical description of the city at the turn of the century , with references to whistling boys , strolling lovers and marching bands . The Oregon Symphony last performed the overture in January 1990 , under Norman Leyden . The work , which is approximately 15 minutes in length , employs two flutes , piccolo , two oboes , two clarinets , two bassoons , one contrabassoon , four horns , two trumpets , two cornets , three trombones , tuba , timpani , five percussionists , strings .

Symphony No. 5 was composed during the period 1936 ? 1943 and premiered in June 1943 , with Vaughan Williams conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra at Royal Albert Hall in London . The widely performed work evokes serenity and pastoral settings ; despite being completed during

World War II , Vaughan Williams originally intended the work to be an opera when he began writing it before the war . The symphony , which is approximately 41 minutes in length , contains four movements (" Preludio " , " Scherzo " , " Romanza " and " Passacaglia ") and includes two flutes (second doubling piccolo) , oboe , English horn , two clarinets , two bassoons , two horns , two trumpets , three trombones , timpani and strings . The Oregon Symphony 's February 2012 performances were its first performances of Symphony No. 5 .

The recording continues with Britten 's " Four Sea Interludes " and " Passacaglia " . The four interludes (" Dawn " , " Sunday morning " , " Moonlight " and " Storm ") have been published separately as Opus 33a ; " Passacaglia " has also been published separately as Opus 33b . Peter Grimes premiered on June 7 , 1945 , at the Sadler 's Wells Theatre in London , conducted by Reginald Goodall . On June 13 , Britten conducted the four interludes with the London Philharmonic in Cheltenham ; Adrian Boult conducted " Passacaglia " with the BBC Symphony Orchestra on August 29 . Prior to 2012 , the Oregon Symphony 's most recent performance of " Four Sea Interludes " had been in 1993 under James DePreist ; the orchestra had never presented " Passacaglia " . The interludes and " Passacaglia " are approximately 16 minutes and 7 minutes , respectively , and include two flutes (both doubling piccolo) , two oboes , two clarinets , two bassoons , contrabassoon , four horns , three trumpets , three trombones , tuba , timpani , bass drum , bells , cymbals , gong , snare drum , tam tam , tambourine , tenor drum , xylophone , celeste , harp and strings . The percussion section added a 14 @-@ foot chime to produce bell sounds , which had to be stationed horizontally on stage .

= = Reception = =

This England received positive critical reception . David Patrick Stearns of Philadelphia Daily News awarded the album 3 @. @ 5 out of 4 stars and , also referring to the success of Music for a Time of War , wrote that the repertoire has " perfectly wide appeal , especially in vital , muscular performances such as these " . Stearns , who appreciated Kalmar 's balance of technicality and the music 's " exterior atmosphere " , called the performances " thoughtful " and " incisive " . He also noted the originality of the interludes and " Passacaglia " from Peter Grimes , claiming they " won 't be mistaken for anybody else 's . " In his review for The Huffington Post , Brian Horay wrote that the orchestra delivered " knockout " and " beefy @-@ yet @-@ restrained " performances of the Peter Grimes compositions . Referring to This England and its preceding album , which featured Sinfonia da Requiem , Horay said the recordings " showcase Kalmar and his band as supreme interpreters of Benjamin Britten 's amazingly colorful brand of orchestral anxiety , inviting the listener to delve ever deeper into painful , yet rewarding , symphonic ambivalence . " Classical CD Review 's Robert Benson called the Elgar performance " brilliant " and appreciated that " Passacaglia " was programmed before " The Storm " . Benson complimented Kalmar (calling him a " conductor to watch ") as well as the sound of the recording , describing it as " well @-@ balanced orchestral sound , with a wide dynamic range " . He noted the lack of audience interference with the sound and assured audiophiles that they would appreciate the quality . Steven Ritter of Audiophile Audition wrote that the Symphony performed " with a brilliance and verve equal to any on record " and were " entirely attuned to the ' English ' idiom " . Ritter complimented Kalmar and the orchestra for the performances , saying " Who knew Oregon could sound like this ? PentaTone should hold on to this bunch as long as they can , and explore as much repertory as they can handle . Great sound , performances , and production ! "

Several Oregon publications included This England on their lists highlighting local products . Portland Monthly included the album on their list of " November 's Best PDX Stuff " , which showcases Portland 's " coolest products and ideas " . The Oregonian included the album on their list of " 25 local gifts under \$ 25 " . Oregon ArtsWatch contributor Brett Campbell recommended the album on his list of Oregon classical music " stocking stuffers " . Campbell wrote that , despite the acoustic limitations of the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall , the live recordings " achieve admirable depth and clarity that bring out unexpected elements in both major 20th century English compositions " . He also complimented Kalmar and the orchestra for their " tightly wound

expressiveness " and " sharp " performances , and said their recording of Cockaigne can " proudly stand alongside other top versions by the likes of the London Symphony Orchestra " .

The Portland Mercury invited local music industry professionals to list " Portland 's Top Five Records of 2012 " ; the reviewer known as " Angry Symphony Guy " (Brian Horay) included This England at the top of his list . The CBC Radio 2 program " In Concert " designated the album as the Disc of the Week for the week of January 7 , 2013 . In her review , the CBC 's Denise Ball said of the recording , " the sound is vivid and fresh , and the orchestra plays with remarkable depth of colour and rhythmic drive . "

Portland classical music radio station KQAC offered the album as a thank you gift to donors during a 2012 fundraising campaign .

= = Track listing = =

" Cockaigne (In London Town) , Opus 40 " (Edward Elgar) ? 15 : 02

Symphony No. 5 in D major (Ralph Vaughan Williams)

" Preludio : Moderato " ? 11 : 57

" Scherzo : Presto misterioso " ? 5 : 12

" Romanza : Lento " ? 10 : 56

" Passacaglia : Moderato " ? 10 : 15

" Four Sea Interludes " and " Passacaglia " from Peter Grimes , Opus 33a and b (Benjamin Britten)

" Dawn : Lento e tranquillo " ? 3 : 50

" Sunday morning : Allegro spiritoso " ? 3 : 53

" Moonlight : Andante comodo e rubato " ? 4 : 54

" Passacaglia " ? 6 : 53

" Storm : Presto con fuoco " ? 4 : 30

Track listing adapted from the album 's liner notes .

= = Personnel = =

Credits adapted from AllMusic and the album 's liner notes .

= = = Orchestra roster = = =

Orchestra roster adapted from the album 's liner notes .

" * " designates acting orchestra members ; " * * " designates musicians on a leave of absence ; " * * * " designates guest musicians .