



“For Him Our Yearly Wakes and Feasts We Hold,” from Thornton, *Pastorals of Virgil* (1821).
Metropolitan Museum, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1931. Accession number 31.87.25.

A R T I C L E

Blake and Music, 2019

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1 2019 was something of an *annus mirabilis* in terms of settings of Blake to music, in the form of either direct adaptations of his poems or original songs based on his life and

work. While the previous listing recorded nine releases from 2018, the list of new works below includes twenty-three from 2019 (with an additional four from 2018 and one from 2017). One significant reason for the proliferation of Blake recordings (as with other forms of music) is that in the past two years it has become increasingly easy for independent or solo artists to release their music via streaming services such as *Apple Music*, *Amazon Music*, and *Spotify*. Indeed, for the majority of entries this year the format indicated is streaming, meaning that they are not available in physical formats such as vinyl or CD.

- 2 Among the highlights of 2019, perhaps the most significant was the world premiere in April of Allan Bevan's *Ancient of Days* by the Edmonton Metropolitan Chorus and Concordia Symphony Orchestra. A large number of albums were devoted entirely to Blake's work, including those by Michael Emmanuel, Fearful Symmetry, William Mac Davis, Nailah Nombeko, Mick and Kate Stannard, Strange Mystery Flower, and Steven Taylor, the former member of the Fugs, whose CD contains arrangements of Blake's *Songs* set to music by him and Allen Ginsberg. Of other releases with incidental settings of Blake's works, two particular favorites were Astralingua's space-folk rendition of "A Poison Tree" and Nerina Pallot's extremely affecting version of "Jerusalem."
- 3 As in previous years, this list omits tracks that use only a single quotation or allusion to Blake, although it does con-

tain some releases of works—most notably by Britten and Vaughan Williams—that have been recorded previously. Wherever possible, the country of the artist is listed, as well as the work's instrumentation, duration, publisher, copyright date, genre, and format. Most entries also include at least one link to a recording, usually *Amazon*, *Apple*, or *Spotify*.

Anarchy17 — Russia

From *Серая лента*; for voice, keyboards, percussion.
00:29:33. Koronator, © 2019. Electronic/dance. Streaming.
Contents: 8. Love's Secret.
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

Astralingua — USA

From *Safe Passage*; for voice, mandolin, flute, violin, cello.
00:45:04. Joseph Andrew Thompson, © 2019. Folk/country. CD.
Contents: 8. A Poison Tree.
Links: *Apple*, *Spotify*, *YouTube*.

Bevan, Allan, Edmonton Metropolitan Chorus, and Concordia Symphony Orchestra — Canada

Ancient of Days; for chorus, orchestra, vocal soloists, actors.
© 2019. Classical. Manuscript/score.
Contents: Ancient of Days (original composition).
Note: The world-premiere performance of this original piece took place at the Winspear Centre for Music, Edmonton, Alberta, on 15 April 2019.

Bevan, Mary, and William Vann — UK

From *Time and Space*; for voice, piano.
01:15:54. Albion, © 2019. Classical. CD.
Contents: 17. Blake's Cradle Song.
Note: This album is a compilation of settings by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst, including Vaughan Williams's version of "A Cradle Song."
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

Ceely, Robert — USA

From *So Far*; for voices.
00:41:00. Vivace Records, © 2019. Classical. Streaming.
Contents: 5. Five Contemplative Pieces: II. Eternity by William Blake.
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

Dyrud, Torbjørn, Nina T. Karlsen, and Ensemble 96 — Norway

From *So Is My Love*; for voices.
00:43:18. Lindberg Lyd, © 2017. Choral. CD.
Contents: 9. Laughing Song.
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

Emmanuel, Michael — USA

Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Vol. II; for voice, guitar, percussion.
01:10:00. Michael Koch Music, © 2019. Folk/country. CD.
Contents: 1. Piping down the Valleys Wild; 2. The Shepherd; 3. The Little Black Boy; 4. Laughing Song; 5. Holy Thursday (*Innocence*); 6. The School Boy; 7. Nurse's Song (*Innocence*); 8. Infant Joy; 9. On Another's Sorrow; 10. The Angel; 11. Introduction/Earth's Answer; 12. Nurse's Song (*Experience*); 13. Garden of Love; 14. London; 15. Infant Sorrow; 16. To Tirzah; 17. Poison Tree; 18. Little Boy Lost (*Experience*); 19. [A] Little Girl Lost (*Experience*); 20. Night; 21. Voice of the Ancient Bard.
Link: *Amazon*.

Fearful Symmetry — UK

Louder Than Words; for voice, keyboard, guitars, drums.
00:40:20. 1422246 Records DK, © 2019. Rock/pop. CD.
Contents: 1. Louder Than Words; 2. Form and Substance; 3. Innocence; 4. Ceaseless Strife; 5. Rule of Reason; 6. Damn, Braces: Bless Relaxes; 7. Orc and Luvah; 8. City of Art.
Note: The debut album by prog rock band Fearful Symmetry comprises a series of original compositions based on Blake's works, rather than settings of his poetry to music.
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

The FloodShark — USA

From *Another William Blake*; for voice, keyboards.
01:09:21. Floodplain Productions, © 2018. New age. Streaming.
Contents: 5. The Clod and the Pebble; 11. The Sick Rose.
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

G-Flat — Russia/Netherlands

From *All Too Human?*; for voice, guitar.
00:38:06. 1524427 Records DK, © 2019. Folk/country. Streaming.
Contents: 9. Little Boy Lost (feat. William Blake).
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

**Hirst, Grayson, Kenneth Klein, and New York Virtuosi
Chamber Symphony — USA**

From *Benjamin Britten: Essential Works*; for voice, chamber orchestra.
02:21:38. Menuetto Classics, © 2019. Classical. Streaming.
Contents: 9. Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings, Op. 31: IV. Elegy. Andante appassionato (A Setting of “The Sick Rose” by William Blake).
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

**Mac Davis, William, Lynda Poston-Smith, and Robert
Carl Smith — USA**

From *Fearful Symmetry: The Songs of William Mac Davis*; for voice, piano.
00:59:33. Centaur Records, © 2019. Classical. CD.
Contents: 1. Fearful Symmetry: No. 1, Hear the Voice of the Bard; 2. Fearful Symmetry: No. 2, The Shepherd; 3. Fearful Symmetry: No. 3, The Sick Rose; 4. Fearful Symmetry: No. 4, The Fly; 5. Fearful Symmetry: No. 5, A Cradle Song; 6. Fearful Symmetry: No. 6, The Tyger; 7. Fearful Symmetry: No. 7, The Lamb; 8. Fearful Symmetry: No. 8, Piping down the Valleys Wild.
Links: *AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Midas — Italy

William Blake; for voice, keyboards, percussion.
00:02:33. Capillare Diffusione Musicale, © 2018. Electronic/dance. Streaming.
Contents: 1. William Blake.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

The Mighty Ur — UK

From *Light Mind Rising*; for voice, keyboard, guitars, percussion.
00:35:15. Andrew Clark-Monks, © 2018 (released 2019). Rock/pop. Streaming.
Contents: 6. Fourfold City.
Note: While Blake informs the themes of much of the album, it is on track 6, “Fourfold City” (taking its inspiration from *Milton*), that he is most directly invoked.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Msngrs — USA

From *Psychopomp & Circumstance*; for voice, guitars, keyboards, percussion.
00:33:25. Vulcanic Studioz Entertainment, © 2019. Rap/hip hop. Streaming.
Contents: 4. Tyger.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

**Nombeko, Nailah, Sarah Comfort Reed, Michelle
Horsley, Sara Paar, and Marcia Eckert — USA**

Short Songs to the Poetry of William Blake; for voice, piano.
00:07:09. Nailah Nombeko, © 2019. Classical. Streaming.
Contents: 1. The Lilly; 2. The Garden of Love; 3. The Divine Image; 4. My Pretty Rose Tree; 5. The Sick Rose.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Pallot, Nerina — UK

From *English/Jerusalem*; for voice, piano, guitar.
00:06:43. Idaho Records, © 2019. Folk/country. Streaming.
Contents: 2. Jerusalem.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

PAX — Italy

From *Humans Failed*; for voice, keyboards, percussion.
00:32:36. Pax, © 2018. Electronic/rap. Streaming.
Contents: 1. William Blake (feat. Solo Ap).
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Pereny, George — USA

From *George: Poems, Songs & Raps*; for voice, guitar.
00:32:35. Pompton Turtle Productions, © 2018. Folk/country. Streaming.
Contents: 8. Rock & Roll Waters—William Blake.
Link: *Amazon*.

**Rands, Bernard — UK/USA; Shelton, Lucy, and Boston
Modern Orchestra Project — USA**

From *Canti Lunatici*; for voice, chamber ensemble.
00:33:00. BMOP, © 2019. Classical. Streaming.
Contents: 6. The Moon (William Blake).
Note: The inspiration for this track is Blake’s illustration “I want! I want!” from *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

**Schurmann, Gerard — Java/UK/USA; Bills, Randall,
and Mark Robson — USA**

From *Chamber and Instrumental Music and Songs, Vol. 4*; for voice, piano.
01:17:04. Toccata Classics, © 2019. Classical. CD.
Contents: 16. 6 Songs of William Blake: No. 1, Augury; 17. 6 Songs of William Blake: No. 2, Ah, Sun-Flower; 18. 6 Songs of William Blake: No. 3, I Laid Me Down upon a Bank; 19. 6 Songs of William Blake: No. 4, Eternity; 20. 6 Songs of William Blake: No. 5, The Sick Rose; 21. 6 Songs of William Blake: No. 6, To the Evening Star.
Note: This is a new release rather than a new work; see

Schurmann in Donald Fitch, “*Blake Set to Music: Supplement 2001*,” *Blake* 35.2 (fall 2001): 57.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Stannard, Mick, and Kate Stannard — UK

Visions of William Blake; for voice, variously accompanied.
00:51:21. Cherry Tree Music, © 2019. Folk/country.
Streaming.
Contents: 1. The Garden of Love; 2. A Poison Tree;
3. Auguries of Innocence; 4. The Tyger; 5. The Echoing
Green; 6. The Sick Rose; 7. The Lamb; 8. Earth’s Answer;
9. Holy Thursday; 10. The Door of Death; 11. The Angel;
12. Jerusalem.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Strange Mystery Flower — Spain

Strange Mystery Flower Sing William Blake; for voice,
guitars, percussion, harmonica.
00:23:54. Strange Mystery Flower, © 2019. Folk/country.
Streaming.
Contents: 1. Song First by a Shepherd; 2. Spring; 3. Miss
Gittipin’s Second Song; 4. Night; 5. Holy Thursday; 6. On
Another’s Sorrow; 7. Nurse’s Song; 8. The Little Vagabond;
9. A Little Girl Lost; 10. Ah Sunflower.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Taylor, Steven — USA

William Blake’s Songs of Innocence and of Experience; for
voice, guitars, bass, keyboards, piano, mellotron, drums.
01:12:09. Ace Records, © 2019. Rock/pop. CD.
Contents: *Songs of Innocence*: 1. Introduction; 2. The
Shepherd; 3. The Echoing Green; 4. The Lamb; 5. The
Little Black Boy; 6. The Blossom; 7. The Chimney
Sweeper; 8. The Little Boy Lost & The Little Boy Found;
9. Laughing Song; 10. A Cradle Song; 11. The Divine
Image; 12. Holy Thursday; 13. Night; 14. Spring;
15. Nurse’s Song; 16. Infant Joy; 17. A Dream; 18. On
Another’s Sorrow. *Songs of Experience*: 19. Introduction;
20. Earth’s Answer; 21. Holy Thursday; 22. Nurse’s Song;
23. The Sick Rose; 24. The Fly; 25. The Angel; 26. My
Pretty Rose-Tree; 27. Ah! Sun-Flower; 28. The Garden of
Love; 29. London.
Note: Taylor worked for a number of years with Allen
Ginsberg, and this CD includes his arrangements of many
of the songs he recorded with Ginsberg.
Link: *Amazon*.

Turner, Frank — UK

From *No Man’s Land*; for voice, guitars, strings, drums,
keyboards.
00:49:39. Polydor, © 2019. Rock/pop. Vinyl.
Contents: 3. I Believed You, William Blake.
Note: The track “I Believed You, William Blake” is an
original piece sung as though from the perspective of
Catherine Blake.
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

van Wissem, Jozef, and Jim Jarmusch — USA

From *An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil*; for voice, guitar,
lute.
00:38:03. Sacred Bones Records, © 2019. Avant garde.
Vinyl.
Contents: 7. When the Sun Rises Do You Not See a Round
Disc of Fire.
Links: *AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Vox Poesis — USA

From *Un quehacer en el abismo (or Translations in the
Void)*; for voice, keyboards, percussion.
00:56:07. Vox Poesis Music, © 2019. New age. Streaming.
Contents: 5. El humano abstracto (William Blake, trans.
Espada).
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

Vox Poesis — USA

From *Rhapsodies: The Journey Begins*; for voice, guitar,
keyboard, percussion.
01:39:31. Vox Poesis Music, © 2019. New age. Streaming.
Contents: 15. Earth’s Answer (William Blake).
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.