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**JEFFREY KHANER** 'British Flute Music' **Arnold** Flute Sonata, Op 121 **L Berkeley** Sonatina, Op 13 **Bowen** Flute Sonata, Op 120 **Hamilton** Spring Days **D Matthews** Duet Variations, Op 30 **Maw** Sonatina

Jeffrey Khanerfi Charles Abramovicpf **Avie** 0 **AV0016 (65 minutes: DDD)**

A well-varied, well-played and wholly absorbing chamber programme

Jeffrey Khaner's first recital for Avie, of American flute music, was well received, by me among others (6/02); this one is even better. The quality of the music is consistently high throughout, and apart from the fact that most 20th-century composers seem to assume a French accent when they write for the flute it is satisfyingly varied.

The York Bowen Sonata was new to me, and a real discovery. Yes, his rather Gallic lyricism, underpinned with ample, always interesting but far from easy keyboard writing — the keyboard writing of a fine pianist — must have seemed old-fashioned in the 1940s, hence Bowen's neglect until quite recently, but the neglect has been our loss. It is a strong and characterful piece, and if it does not soon become a standard work in the flute repertory I shall be astonished. Malcolm Arnold's Sonata is comparable, with some unexpectedly bold drama for a flute sonata but with elegant, singing lines and, in the catchy Latin finale, there is an apparent and delightfully entertaining homage to Louis Moreau Gottschalk.

Lennox Berkeley's Sonatina deserves its diminutive appellation only because it is quite short, but its slow movement says as much in three minutes of poised lyricism as many manage in six; the whole work is light in tone but not in substance. Nicholas Maw's Sonatina, a student work written while he was still investigating 12-note (though not serial) technique, despite that manages nimble good humour, gracious lyricism and delicate piano writing, even a jaunty hint of a jig. Iain Hamilton's miniatures are late distillations of poetic, flexible lyricism, while David Matthews's Variations, although a single movement, contain enough variety and enjoyable formal ingenuity for a sonata. All these pieces are played with ample beautiful tone and assured technique; Charles Abramovic is an accomplished, sympathetic partner; the recording is very clean. Flute recitals don't come much more absorbing.



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