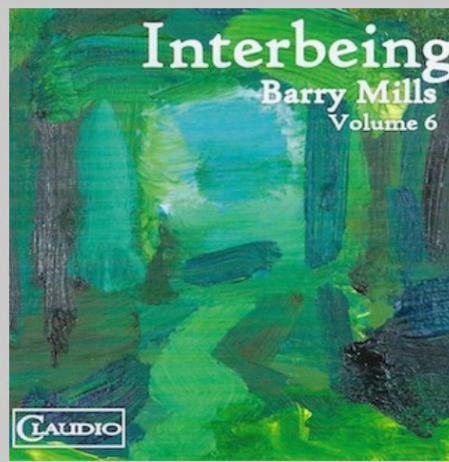


# INTERBEING

## Barry Mills Volume 6

CLAUDIO CC6044-2



Barry Mills (b. 1949) is described in the booklet that comes with the CD as being 'for the most part self-taught as a composer'. Would this stand him alongside English composers like Elgar or Havergal Brian?

From 1976 – 77, he did pursue an MA in Music at Sussex University, studying composition with Colin Matthews who in the 1970s was assistant to Benjamin Britten and a collaborator with Deryck Cooke on his performing version of Mahler's Tenth Symphony.

This CD contains six of Mills's compositions. Three of these have several movements making in all twenty-two different items. The overall title, 'Interbeing' is, according to the composer – 'a Buddhist term for a deep sense of interconnection with both animate and inanimate manifestations of nature'.

'Interbeing' is the very last composition on the CD. Its three movements, almost entirely for piano solo (there is a rainstick at one point), were composed in 2016 for pianist Nancy Cooley, one of the performers, and an important one throughout nearly all the music. There is a string quartet, a guitar duo and in one item, a folk singer, Charlotte Spong, along with a classically trained vocal quartet.

Although the music is rather diverse in style, there is one common thread that runs through all of it. Barry Mills's music paints pictures. The second of the seven movements of 'Mirrored Moments' scored for piano, violin, cello and clarinet is entitled 'A Dance for Ravel'. It suggests an impressionist style. Some of the piano writing in 'Interbeing' is not the same, yet not too far off Debussy, another composer whose music painted pictures.

The first work on the CD, 'All the Mornings in the World' is exactly that. It takes us on a tour across the world using morning related song themes from Argentina, USA, India, Japan, Mali, Greece, Norway and Ireland. There is a tribute to Webern and his love of the Austrian Alps and a children's lullaby.

Very different to all that is Mills's setting of the folksong 'Hard Times – Different Times' for folksinger and vocal quartet which he brings right up to the present day.

I preferred the music where Mills's own compositional voice shines through as in his 'Septet' (1989). It was selected by the Society for the Promotion of New Music's reading panel. I found it fascinating.

**ALAN COOPER**