

# SARAH WILLIAMSON clarinettist

The former BBC Young Musician finalist says that, if she has her way, a whole new repertoire is just waiting to be written

**FOR SOME CLARINETTISTS**, the instrument's relatively limited repertoire might be a source of frustration; for Sarah Williamson, addressing that shortfall is part of the fun. 'I am very active about commissioning new works,' says the 26 year-old from London. 'I'd love to get Kenneth Hesketh to write something for me, and I'd love to get a concerto out of Mark-Anthony Turnage.'

Williamson's name and face may well ring a bell. Back in 2002, she dazzled in Copland's Clarinet Concerto as a finalist of the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition, and a step up on to the big stage and into the bright lights seemed inevitable. She herself, however, decided on a more softly, softly approach: 'I was studying in Paris at the time. I wanted to make the most out of my time there. It's better to build a career up gradually, or it can so easily just fade away.'

That careful preparation has now brought its reward in the form of a debut CD, to be recorded this month with the Orchestra of the Swan on the Somm label. For her first venture into the studio, she'll be making a surprisingly rare reacquaintance with the Copland: 'While it's always been in my repertoire, I've played other concertos more. It's

quite difficult to do with an orchestra – you have to get a pianist and a harpist in, and say goodbye to the woodwind.'

Williamson has gone for an intriguing transatlantic coupling on the disc, with the American composer joined by a Brit, Gerald Finzi: 'Their concertos aren't alike at all. But that's good, because you need a contrast. The Finzi is very countryside, while the Copland is more inner-city, and full of Latin American themes.'

Copland also features in Williamson's appearance at

**'I'd love to get a concerto out of Mark-Anthony Turnage'**

London's Cadogan Hall on 28 October, when her love of the new will be in evidence, as she premieres a concerto by Joseph Phibbs, her second commission from the English composer: 'Last year, I got Joseph to write a piece for clarinet and piano called *Arc de Soleil* which I premiered at the Wigmore Hall. It was going to be *Clarinet Cocktails*, with each movement having a name like "B52" or "Sex on the Beach", but then we decided that the Wigmore audience might object! It was a wonderful work, though.'

*Interview by Jeremy Pound*

**IN WITH THE NEW:**  
'I'm very active about commissioning works'



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