

NEW RELEASE NMC D135

Howard Skempton: Ben Somewhen

(b1947)



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Artists: Birmingham Contemporary Music Group
EXAUDI
James Weeks conductor

Cat No.: NMC D135

RRP: Full-price

Total Duration: 76'57

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- 1-4 Chamber Concerto; 5-7 Clarinet Quintet; 8 The Bridge of Fire**
9 The Voice of the Spirits; 10-15 Suite from Delicate; 16 Roundels of the Year
17-20 Rise up, my Love; 21 Ben Somewhen

Howard Skempton at 60

Astoundingly, this is Howard Skempton's first full-length disc for NMC — his CD single, the deceptively simple orchestral study *Lento* (NMC D005), was one of NMC's first releases in 1992 and has been one of our best sellers ever since.

Howard Skempton will celebrate his 60th birthday on 31 October 2007. We hope the career of one of Britain's best loved composers will be recognised and celebrated through performances of his works and this recording on NMC.

This disc contrasts Skempton's choral works—including the dancing, evocative setting of Shelley's *The Voice of the Spirits* and the spiritual *Rise up, my love*—with chamber music ranging from solo cello (the Suite from 'Delicate') to the exuberant, yet very English, Chamber Concerto.

Ben Somewhen, a commissioned piece from BCMG for solo double bass and ensemble, received its premiere in April 2005. The work is inspired by the matchstick drawings of Ben Hartley depicting rural life; an example of his work appears on the front cover of this disc.

"Howard's music is elegant, British, civilised, with a touch of anarchy. I see him as a gentleman in a bowler hat, a briefcase — and sandals." *BBC Music Magazine*

