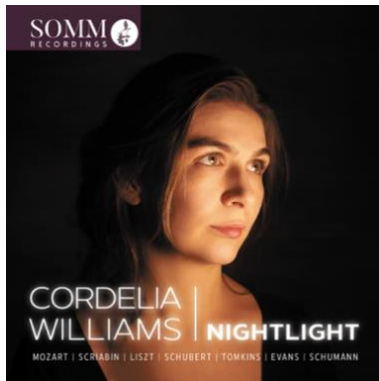


Inspired by her journey in parenthood, pianist Cordelia Williams releases *The Happy Music Play Book*, new album *Nightlight* and film *On being a pianist in Kenya*



20 August 2021

***Nightlight* CD**



6 September 2021

The Happy Music Play Book



6 August 2021

***On being a pianist in Kenya* online film release**

Following a year of lockdown and a 6-month stint in Kenya, pianist Cordelia Williams releases her *Nightlight* album, book and film inspired by her experiences in motherhood which came into sharp contrast seeing the opportunities available to children in Kenya eager to explore classical music with little formal, professional guidance.

The ***Nightlight*** album and ***The Happy Music Play Book*** explore two sides of the story: the lonely nights spent awake, and the busy days trying to entertain young children. Piano Winner of the 2006 BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition, Cordelia Williams was eager for her two young boys to engage and enjoy music with games rather than formal instrumental training. Facing the challenge of keeping children occupied in lockdowns and quarantines while concert halls remained closed, she wrote *The Happy Music Play Book* with over 100 musical ideas to introduce music at home during the pre-school years, with illustrations by Erin Keen which will be published in September.

At the start of the year, Cordelia Williams spent 6 months in Kenya with her family and created a film ***On being a pianist in Kenya*** about her experience of leading masterclasses with a number of young pianists and musicians and learning about the challenges they face in pursuing classical music professionally. With an RPS Enterprise award and a brief from her former alma mater the Guildhall School of Music, Williams scouted for talent through music charity Ghetto Classics in Nairobi and created a film about the aspirations of young Kenyan musicians keen to follow their dreams but hampered by a lack of opportunities. The young African musicians share their common passion for the piano and appreciation of the classical canon with Williams, supported by a Western musical education in sharp contrast to their own. *On being a pianist in Kenya* is released online on 6 August and can be seen at a special viewing on 5 September at Temple Lodge Club, Hammersmith.

In a new solo piano album to be released on 20 August 2021 with SOMM Recordings, ***Nightlight*** journeys from darkness to light, celebrating music's cathartic ability to bring peace and consolation in tumultuous times, acknowledging our moments of despair, yet also giving us a window of hope. The album gathers wide-ranging pieces from Thomas Tomkins's *Sad Pavan for these Distracted Times* – composed just two weeks after the execution of Charles I in 1649 – to Bill Evans' 1958 expansive improvisation, *Peace Piece*, via Liszt's *Two Consolations* and Scriabin's *Sonata no. 2*.

Many of the works chosen by Williams grapple with internal struggles, including Schubert's *Sonata in C minor*, written in the final months of his life and filled with outbursts of madness with moments of perfection. The recording opens with Mozart's *Fantasia No. 3 in D minor*, first played by Cordelia Williams as a child. Left unfinished by Mozart at his death, Williams completes the *Fantasia* with her own ending, recalling the sombre opening bars.



[Watch the trailer to *Nightlight* here](#)

The metaphorical journey through the disc culminates in Schumann's *Gesänge der Frühe*, 'Songs of Dawn', the inspiration for the disc. The five movements were among the last works written by the composer before his confinement in a psychiatric institution, yet they leave an uplifting and hopeful stance in watching towards the dawn after a dark night of the soul.

Cordelia Williams said:

"These pieces were my companions while I was sleepless in the dead of night nursing a newborn. Those quiet lonely moments in the early hours can bring a soulfulness and a detached tranquillity, but they can also be distressing for those in times of emotional darkness. But as with Schumann, there is peace to be found at the break of dawn or in the beauty of shimmering moonlight on the ocean."

"I recorded the album after a 2-week Covid quarantine stuck at home with the children before we departed for Kenya. This last year has brought unexpected solace and many new discoveries for me as a professional pianist and parent."

To be released on 6 September 2021, ***The Happy Music Play Book*** collects over 100 ideas for parents (whether musical or not) to share the joy of music with their young children (ages 0-5) in a fun and pressure-free way, with illustrations by Erin Keen. Fitting easily into the daily family routine, these miniature games and explorations encourage a natural instinct for music-making and lay the foundations for creativity and self-expression.



The games, activities and ideas for creative musical play are divided into chapters according to how parents would actually use them to help get through the busy, sometimes stressful days with young children. Every suggestion also nourishes a natural musicality and confident creativity, laying the ground for independent thinking and creative pursuits later on.

The *Play Book* draws on research in child development, psychology, neurology, mindfulness and different methods of music teaching, as well as Williams' own expertise as a performer, presenting the resulting games in a relaxed, approachable and humorous way.

Upcoming Dates

Friday 6 August 2021

Digital release on YouTube

On being a pianist in Kenya

Tuesday 10 August 2021

22 Mansfield St, London

On being a pianist in Kenya film viewing

Friday 13 August 2021

Garrick Club, London

Mozart *Fantasia No. 3 in D minor*
Scriabin *Sonata no. 2 (Sonata-Fantasy)*
Liszt *Two Consolations in E*
Schubert *Sonata in C minor D958*

Friday 20 August 2021

SOMM Recordings | SOMMCD 0639

Nightlight

Mozart *Fantasia No. 3 in D minor*
Scriabin *Sonata no. 2 (Sonata-Fantasy)*
Liszt *Two Consolations in E*
Schubert *Sonata in C minor D958*
Thomas Tomkins *A Sad Pavan for these Distracted Times*
Bill Evans *Peace Piece*
Schumann *Gesänge der Frühe*

Sunday 5 September 2021

Temple Lodge Club, Hammersmith

Works from *Nightlight*

On being a pianist in Kenya film viewing

Monday 6 September 2021

Arc Books

The Happy Music Play Book

With **Erin Keen** illustrations

Sunday 19 September 2021

Beaminster Festival

Schubert *17 Ländler (German Dances), D366*
Scriabin *Sonata no. 2 (Sonata-Fantasy)*
Rachmaninov *Daisies*
Kreisler (arr. Rachmaninov) *Liebesfreud*
Schumann *Gesänge der Frühe*
Schubert *Sonata in A major, D664*

Friday 1 October 2021

Two Moors Festival

Works from *Nightlight*

Cordelia Williams



Pianist Cordelia Williams has performed all over the world, including concertos with the English Chamber Orchestra (in Mexico City), City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (at Barbican Hall, London), as well as recitals at Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall and Beijing Concert Hall. In 2018 she was appointed as Piano and Chamber Music Coach, and Lecturer in Vocational Contexts, at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

At the core of Cordelia's musicality is a fascination with the artistic expression of human struggle and belief. She is drawn especially to the music of the late Classical and early Romantic periods: her debut CD featured Schubert's complete Impromptus and second

recording featured music by Schumann. Her most recent CD featured music by J.S. Bach and Arvo Pärt.

She is especially interested in forming unusual collaborations and creating innovative projects with other musicians and across disciplines. In partnership with award-winning poet Michael Symmons Roberts, former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Rowan Williams and artist Sophie Hacker, her year-long series of events and performances, *Between Heaven and the Clouds: Messiaen 2015*, explored the music, context and theology of Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*.

"impeccable technically, totally uninhibited, and brimming with joy and abandon"
Piano Journal

"The spontaneity of the performances, as well as the beauty of the piano tone, ... linger in the mind."
BBC Music Magazine

"commanding and sensitive"
Sunday Times

cordeliawilliams.net

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