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- 1 **W**HILE 2019 had been an incredibly productive year for settings of Blake to music and original pieces inspired by his poetry, my initial assumption was that, with all the difficulties caused by COVID, 2020 would be a much leaner year musically. Somewhat surprisingly, the past twelve months were incredibly rich in terms of musical adaptations, not only in the number of new releases, which surpassed 2019, but also because several took the form of whole albums dedicated to Blake's work. It is clear that some releases—those requiring full orchestras, for example—were the products of months of preparation prior to the pandemic, and thus it may be that 2021 is the point at which we see an interruption in the flow of new recordings. In other instances, it is evident that artists used the time during lockdown to make recordings that were released via streaming, and the trend toward this means of distribution was only accelerated during 2020.
  - 2 Of the twenty-five releases during 2020, some of the most significant are entire (or nearly entire) albums devoted to Blake, including John Sykes's *Fearful Symmetry*. While working as a teacher at Kingswood School in Bath during the 1930s, Sykes set nearly all of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* to music, yet did not seek to publish any during his lifetime. This album, published by Albion, is the first recording of these songs and an important contribution to the oeuvre of Blakean music. While not as extensive as Sykes's set of compositions, two very different pop and rock albums—Almost Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and Vespero's *The Four Zoas*—should receive honorable mentions, as should Francisco Chirinos's beautiful folk-style settings of the *Songs*.
  - 3 This list omits tracks that use only a single quotation or allusion to Blake, although it does contain new releases of works—most notably by Benjamin Britten and Roger Quilter—that have been recorded previously. It also includes some half dozen additions from previous years that have

not appeared in earlier lists. Wherever possible, the country of the artist is given, as well as the work's instrumentation, duration, publisher, copyright date, genre, and format. Most entries include at least one link to a recording, usually *Amazon*, *Apple*, or *Spotify*.

#### Almost Blake — Italy

From *Songs of Innocence*; for voice, guitars, drums.  
00:35:17. Materiali Sonori Edizioni Musicali, © 2020.  
Rock/pop. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. Introduction [*Innocence*]; 2. The Smile; 3. On Another's Sorrow; 4. A Cradle Song; 5. The Angel; 6. The Little Black Boy; 10. The Human Abstract.  
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

#### Billy Blake and the Vagabonds — USA

*Billy Blake and the Vagabonds*; for voices, guitars, keyboard, drums, accordion.  
00:41:26. Dame Lurch Enterprises, © 2013. Rock/pop. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. Introduction [*Innocence*]; 2. Ecchoing Green; 3. London; 4. A Cradle Song; 5. [The] Little Girl Lost; 6. Infant Sorrow; 7. Sick Rose; 8. Garden of Love; 9. The Fly; 10. Clod and Pebble; 11. Little Vagabond; 12. A Poison Tree; 13. The Tyger; 14. [The] Divine Image; 15. Chimney Sweep [*Experience*].  
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

#### Brings, Allen, and Mara Bonde — USA

From *Allen Brings: Music for Voices*; for voice, piano.  
00:59:46. Capstone Records, © 2004. Classical. CD.  
(Rereleased by Navona Records, © 2017, streaming.)  
Contents: 9. Three Songs of Blake and Donne: No. 1, A Cradle Song; 10. Three Songs of Blake and Donne: No. 2, Never Seek to Tell Thy Love.  
Note: A recording of several of Brings's compositions by various artists, with the composer accompanying Mara Bonde on his settings of *Three Songs of Blake and Donne*.  
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

#### Britten, Benjamin, Anna Prohaska, and Julius Drake—UK/Austria

From *Paradise Lost*; for voice, piano.  
01:04:00. Alpha Classics/Outhere Music, © 2020. Classical. CD.  
Contents: 12. Songs and Proverbs of William Blake, Op. 74: A Poison Tree.  
Links: *Amazon*, *Apple*, *Spotify*.

### **Chirinos, Francisco — Peru**

*A William Blake Album*; for voice, guitars, drums.

00:24:38. Vallejo Records, © 2020. Folk/country.

Streaming.

Contents: 1. Auguries of Innocence; 2. The Divine Image; 3. The Fly; 4. Merlin's Prophecy; 5. The Little Boy Lost & Found; 6. The Blossom; 7. Nurse's Song [*Experience*]; 8. The Wild Flower's Song; 9. The Angel; 10. Infant Sorrow; 11. The Little Boy Found.

Links: [Amazon](#), [Apple](#), [Spotify](#).

### **The Fervors — USA**

From *The Fervors EP*; for voice, guitars, drums.

00:12:38. Dooley Records, © 2020. Rock/pop. Streaming.

Contents: 1. William Blake, Pt. 1; 2. William Blake, Pt. 2; 3. William Blake, Pt. 3.

Note: Debut EP by this Utah psych rock band, with three tracks loosely based on Blakean themes in the style of Hawkwind.

Links: [Amazon](#), [Spotify](#).

### **Iamthemorning — Russia**

From *Counting the Ghosts*; for voice, guitar, keyboard.

00:14:02. Iamthemorning, © 2020. Rock/pop. Streaming.

Contents: 2. Cradle Song.

Note: This is not a setting of Blake's "A Cradle Song"; as vocalist Marjana Semkina has explained, "The lyrics are influenced by writings of William Blake and stylised after him."

Links: [Amazon](#), [Apple](#), [Spotify](#).

### **Jolliffe, Edmund, and Commotio [chamber choir] — UK**

From *The Oxford Book of Flexible Choral Songs*; for voices, piano.

1:01:04. Oxford University Press, © 2019. Choral.

Streaming.

Contents: 2. Spring (Sound the Flute).

Note: This is an album released to accompany the book of the same title.

Links: [Amazon](#), [Spotify](#).

### **Karfagen — Ukraine**

From *Birds of Passage*; for voice, guitars, keyboard, drums.

00:57:10. Caerllysi Music, © 2020. Rock/pop. CD.

Contents: 3. Spring (Birds Delight).

Links: [Amazon](#), [Apple](#), [Spotify](#).

### **Lancaster, Philip — UK**

*The Blake Lamentations*; for voices (SATB), organ.

00:15:00. Maker's Press, © 2020. Choral. Score.

Contents: 1. The Blake Lamentations.

Note: This is a series of Easter lamentations drawn from *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem*.

### **Lancaster, Philip — UK**

*Into the Tomb*; for voices (SATB).

00:03:30. Stainer & Bell, © 2019. Choral. Score.

Contents: 1. Into the Tomb.

Note: The text of this composition—an Easter hymn—is taken from Night the Eighth of *The Four Zoas*, where Los sees a vision of Christ crucified on the Tree of Mystery.

Link: [SoundCloud](#).

### **Leigh, Walter, Elizabeth Nash, and Sarah Down — UK**

From *Walter Leigh: Piano Music & Songs*; for voice, piano.

00:58:51. Tremula Records, © 2020. Classical. CD.

Contents: 14. How Sweet I Roamed.

Links: [Amazon](#), [Apple](#), [Spotify](#).

### **Lindberg, Kristian Ofstad — Norway**

*Of Innocence and Experience*; for piano.

01:15:00. 2L, © 2020. Classical. CD.

Note: Rather than settings of Blake's poetry to music, this release is a collection of recitals of Liszt, Schumann, and Beethoven. According to Lindberg's liner notes: "The title of this recording is inspired by the painter and poet William Blake's collection of poems, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. It is a title that lends itself well to the pieces presented here, exploring as they do themes of light and darkness, life and death, angelic purity and demonic passion."

Links: [Amazon](#), [Apple](#), [Spotify](#).

### **Orlov, Dmitry, Sunny Levi, and Göran Frölén — Russia/UK/Sweden**

*Symphonic Blake*; for voice, synthesized orchestra.

00:42:31. Music Garden, © 2014. Classical. Streaming.

Contents: 1. The Garden of Love; 2. Earth's Answer; 3. Holy Thursday [*Experience*]; 4. London; 5. The Angel; 6. The Fly; 7. A Cradle Song; 8. The Schoolboy; 9. The Human Abstract; 10. Ah Sunflower; 11. The Tiger.

Links: [Amazon](#), [Apple](#), [Spotify](#).

### Phaze Theory — UK

From *Live at Balabam*; for voice, guitar, drums, tuba.  
00:44:04. PTC, © 2020. Jazz/blues. Streaming.  
Contents: 2. The Little Girl Lost; 3. The Little Girl Found.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify, YouTube*.

### Quilter, Roger, Daniel Cabena, and Stephen Runge — UK/Canada

From *A Sanctuary in Song*; for voice, piano.  
01:16:00. Daniel Cabena and Stephen Runge, © 2020.  
Classical. Streaming.  
Contents: 13. Three Songs of William Blake, Op. 20:  
1. Dream Valley [“Memory, hither come”].  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

### Quilter, Roger, and David Keith Jones — UK

From *Crimson Petal*; for voice, keyboard.  
00:36:05. David Keith Jones, © 2020. Classical. Streaming.  
Contents: 14. Three Songs by William Blake, Op. 20: No. 1,  
Dream Valley.  
Note: A recording by tenor David Keith Jones of songs by  
Quilter, self-accompanied with synthesized orchestration  
and including Quilter’s setting of “Song: Memory, hither  
come.”  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

### Reindeer — South Korea

*William Blake*; for voice, guitars, drums.  
00:05:29. Reindeer, © 2020. Rock/pop. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. William Blake.  
Note: This is not a setting of Blake’s work to music, but  
rather a Korean pop song inspired by Blake.  
Link: *Spotify*.

### República Sonora — Spain

From *Fuego y Diésel*; for voice, guitars, drums.  
00:41:40. República Sonora, © 2020. Rock/pop. Streaming.  
Contents: 5. William Blake.  
Note: Another original song inspired by Blake, this time in  
Spanish, rather than a setting of his poetry to music.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

### Steve Tyson and the Train Rex — Australia

*Blues for William Blake*; for voice, guitars, drums.  
00:04:10. Steve Tyson, © 2020. Jazz/blues. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. Blues for William Blake.  
Note: This is a blues setting of “A Poison Tree.”  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

### Sykes, John, Rowan Pierce, Gareth Brynmor John, and William Vann — UK

From *Fearful Symmetry: Songs and Piano Music by John Sykes*; for voice, piano.  
01:22:00. Albion, © 2020. Classical. CD.  
Contents: 1. Piping down the Valleys Wild; 2. Hear the  
Voice of the Bard; 3. Earth’s Answer; 4. The Ecchoing  
Green; 5. The Garden of Love; 6. Holy Thursday  
[*Innocence*]; 7. Holy Thursday [*Experience*]; 8. The Divine  
Image; 9. The Human Abstract; 10. The Lamb; 11. The  
Tyger; 12. Infant Joy; 13. Infant Sorrow; 14. The Clod and  
the Pebble; 15. The Blossom; 16. A Poison Tree; 17. The  
Sick Rose; 18. The Fly; 19. On Another’s Sorrow; 20. The  
Schoolboy; 21. The Shepherd; 22. The Voice of the Ancient  
Bard; 29. London.  
Note: The first recording of Sykes’s *Songs of Innocence* and  
*Songs of Experience*, which were composed in the 1930s.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

### Terashima, Rikuya — Japan

*A Cradle Song*; for voices (SATB), piano.  
00:05:54. Oxford University Press, © 2009. Choral. Score.  
Contents: A Cradle Song.  
Note: The song was also performed by the Oxford Choir,  
conducted by Christopher Robinson, on the album  
*Christmas Choral Highlights 2009*.  
Link: *Spotify*.

### Três Tristes Tigres — Portugal

From *Mínima Luz*; for voice, guitar, keyboards.  
00:43:11. Branditmusic, © 2020. Rock/pop. Streaming.  
Contents: 6. Tigre.  
Note: This is a fairly free Portuguese translation of “The  
Tyger.”  
Links: *Apple, Spotify*.

### Van Vugt, Jean, and Virpi Räisänen — Netherlands/Finland

From *Trasparente*; for voice, violin.  
00:50:36. Alba, © 2020. Classical. CD.  
Contents: 3. Three William Blake Songs: No. 1, Infant Joy;  
4. Three William Blake Songs: No. 2, My Pretty Rose Tree;  
5. Three William Blake Songs: No. 3, The Fly.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

### Vaughan Williams, Ralph, Maddy Prior, and the Carnival Band — UK

From *Vaughan Williams: Carols, Songs and Hymns*; for  
voice, violin.

00:48:29. Park Records, © 2010. Folk/country. CD.  
Contents: 2. Blake's Cradle Song; 10. The Divine Image.  
Note: This collection of songs by Vaughan Williams, which includes two of his settings of Blake's poems, was an opportunity for Maddy Prior and the folk group the Carnival Band to reprise an association with the composer that goes back to their first album, *Tapestry of Carols*.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

#### **Vespero — Russia**

*The Four Zoas*; for guitars, keyboards, drums, violin.  
01:10:00. Tonzonen Records, © 2020. Rock/pop. Vinyl.  
Contents: 1. Urizen; 2. Tharmas; 3. Beulah; 4. Luvah; 5. Urthona; 6. Los; 7. The Emanation of the Giant Albion.  
Note: Psychedelic prog rock/space rock that takes its inspiration from *The Four Zoas*.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

#### **Wallen, Errollyn, Golda Schultz, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra — Belize/South Africa/UK**

*Jerusalem—Our Clouded Hills*; for voice, orchestra.  
00:04:03. BBC, © 2020. Classical. Streaming.  
Contents: Jerusalem.  
Note: This arrangement of Parry's hymn was premiered at the Last Night of the Proms, 12 September 2020.  
Link: *YouTube*.

#### **Wilson, Kenny — UK**

From *The Romantic Poets, Pt. 1*; for voice, accordion, clarinet.  
00:08:24. Kenny Wilson Records Ltd., © 2020. Folk/country. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. A Poison Tree (William Blake).  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

#### **Zippy Kid — Ukraine**

*London*; for voice, keyboards, drum machine.  
00:02:57. Ruslan Troknyuk, © 2020. Electronic/dance. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. London.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

#### **Zippy Kid — Ukraine**

*Love and Harmony*; for voice, keyboards, drum machine.  
00:01:53. Ruslan Troknyuk, © 2020. Electronic/dance. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. Love and Harmony.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

#### **Zippy Kid — Ukraine**

*Mad Song*; for voice, keyboards, drum machine.  
00:02:36. Ruslan Troknyuk, © 2020. Electronic/dance. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. Mad Song.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

#### **Zippy Kid — Ukraine**

*The Tyger*; for voice, keyboards, drum machine.  
00:03:03. Ruslan Troknyuk, © 2020. Electronic/dance. Streaming.  
Contents: 1. The Tyger.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple, Spotify*.

#### **Zorn, John — USA**

*In Lambeth—Visions from the Walled Garden of William Blake*; for guitar, harp, vibraphone, bells, synthesizer.  
00:43:00. Tzadik, © 2013. New age. CD.  
Contents: 1. Tiriël; 2. A Morning Light; 3. America, a Prophecy; 4. Through the Looking Glass; 5. The Ancient of Days; 6. Puck; 7. The Minotaur; 8. The Night of Enitharmon's Joy; 9. The Walled Garden.  
Note: An instrumental album that takes its inspiration primarily from Blake's images.  
Links: *Amazon, Apple*.