

The medium of the orchestral song-cycle is one that much attracted Britten. His concept of an anthology of sometimes diverse texts, unified by a common literary or poetic theme was a favourite device to which he returned several times. The very early yet astonishingly mature *Quatre Chansons Françaises* and the still relatively unknown *Our Hunting Fathers* are coupled on this first volume with one of Britten's great masterpieces, *Les Illuminations* which still startles in its vivid pictorial strokes and aching sensuality. Many composers had passed over Rimbaud's poems considering them too surrealist for lyrical settings. Britten, however, relished the opportunity to respond to their visionary, violent and sexual images. The vocal line closely follows the diversity of the text, by turns starkly declamatory, lyrical and heated.

Benjamin
BRITTEN
(1913-1976)

Orchestral Song-Cycles • 1

1-4	Quatre Chansons Françaises, Op. posth (1928) *	12:08
5-9	Our Hunting Fathers, Op. 8 (1936)	28:07
10-19	Les Illuminations, Op. 18 (1939) *	22:21

Felicity Lott * and Phyllis Bryn-Julson, Sopranos
English Chamber Orchestra • Steuart Bedford

Recorded at Abbey Road Studios in June / July 1990 (Tracks 5-9) and Henry Wood Hall, London, UK in July 1994 (Tracks 1-4, 10-19) • Producer: John H. West • Engineers: Mike Hatch & Simon Rhodes (Tracks 5-9) • Booklet Notes: Lloyd Moore • Originally released by Collins Classics in 1994
Please see page 16 of the booklet for a complete track list • Publishers: Faber Music Ltd. (Tracks 1-4) and Boosey & Hawkes Ltd. (Tracks 5-19) • Cover Picture: *Rimbaud at Harar, 1963* by Sir Sidney Nolan (1917-92) (Private Collection / Bridgeman Art Library / Agnew's, London, UK)



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8.557206

Playing Time
62:38

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