



Sir Arthur
BLISS

Checkmate
Margaret Fuller

Melée
Fantasque

Royal Scottish
National
Orchestra

David
Lloyd-Jones

Bliss Checkmate; Melée Fantasque

RSNO/David Lloyd-Jones

British composer Arthur Bliss wrote his first ballet *Melée Fantasque* in 1921 and it's a cocksure affair, very obviously indebted to Stravinsky. By the time Bliss composed his chess-based ballet *Checkmate* 15 years later, his language had evolved into English pastoralism with a rugged edge. At 50-plus minutes, the complete score doesn't stand up without the stage action, but there are some thrilling moments nonetheless; the demented music of the finale is breathtaking in these potent performances.

★★★★☆

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Philip Clark