

OLIVER KNUSSEN

*Ophelia's
Last
Dance*

(Ophelia Dances, book 2)

FOR SOLO PIANO

Op. 32

(2009–10)

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A Fragment of Ophelia's Last Dance was written to celebrate
Paul Crossley's 60th birthday and was performed by him
at the Wigmore Hall, London, on May 18th 2004.

Ophelia's Last Dance was commissioned by the Gilmore International
Keyboard Festival for 2010 Gilmore Artist Kirill Gerstein,
with funds from the Russell L. Gabier Fund.

The first performance was given by Kirill Gerstein on May 3rd 2010
in Chenery Auditorium, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Ophelia's Last Dance is recorded by Kirill Gerstein
on Myrios Classics CD MYR005

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PROGRAMME NOTE

Ophelia's Last Dance is based on a melody dating from early 1974, which was among several ideas intended for – but ultimately excluded from – my Third Symphony (1973–79). Some of these evolved into the ensemble piece *Ophelia Dances, book 1* (1975), but not this one, which nonetheless continued to haunt me from time to time over the years. After the death of Sue Knussen in March 2003 it reminded me of happier times and eventually, on the occasion of Paul Crossley's 60th birthday recital in 2004, I decided to give it a tiny frame of its own so it could be shared with listeners other than the one in my head.

It still remained a fragment at that time, because although the melody will never find the form for which it was originally conceived, the new "frame" suggested some possibilities for continuing the dance in diverse ways. The present work – written at my home in Suffolk in 2009/10 – is the result. A number of other "homeless" dance-fragments – related more by personal history and by mood than anything more concrete – are bound together by means of variously wrought transitions to and from rondo-like recurrences of the original melody.

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O.K.

Duration approximately 10 minutes

12 **3/4** *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *p* **2/4** *calando*

(con ped. III)

15 *a tempo* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *ten.* **2/4** **3/4** **2/4** *ten.* *mf*

19 *mf* *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *pp* *p* **3/4** *allarg.* *a tempo*

23 *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp* **3/4** **5/8** **2/4** **3/4** *pochiss. calando* *a tempo* *Ped.*