

Program Notes by Chris Darwin. Please use freely for non-commercial purposes.

**Elisabeth Lutyens (1906-1983) Oboe Quartet Op 81, 'Driving Out the Death' (1971)**  
*Carrying out of Winter – Pantomimos - Carrying out of Summer – Euché - Driving out the Death - Dithyrambos*

Financially, Elisabeth Lutyens' most successful music was her film scores for Hammer Horror and its rival Amicus; known as the 'Horror Queen', she was said to sport green finger nails. Forced into such commercial composing by the need to support children and a husband without a secure income, she was also extremely efficient at producing music for documentaries and plays. Her apophthegm '*Do you want it good, or do you want it Wednesday?*' describes how she felt about this side of her musical personality. Her musical heart lay in the expressive rigours of her own brand of Schoenbergian serialism about which she was uncompromising. Widespread recognition of her serious music was slow in coming. In the 1970's, as the musical avant-garde moved on from the Schoenberg revolution, her style mellowed somewhat allowing her lyrical talents to be more fully expressed.

Shortly before writing this oboe quartet, Lutyens had composed the opera 'Isis and Osiris'. Like that opera, the oboe quartet is concerned with the seasonal ritual of life and death from Greek legend. The six sections are played continuously, each based on an oboe motif. The central section Euché (prayer) is very still; the final section is a hymn to Dionysus.