

### **Blake: Diversions**

Howard Blake (b. 1938) is a highly listenable composer whose music is so straightforward and simple in texture that he has been able to transcribe it for various instruments without distorting it. For instance, the Cello Sonata was originally a violin sonata. Penillion was originally for violin and harp. The Enchantment of Venus was for basset clarinet. Walking in the Air was for boy soprano and chamber orchestra in the children's film *The Snowman*. Archangel's Lullaby was a present to cellist Stephen Isserlis and was originally for three cellos. The only compositions originally intended for cello and piano were the eight Diversions, and they also exist for cello and orchestra.

Blake and his cellist friend Kloeckner make a fine pair in this program. The music is not easy to play, and there are demands made and carried out with aplomb. Blake has written a surprising amount of music; his opus numbers are up in the 600s. Why haven't we heard more of him? He lists seven CDs made by various companies going back to 2003. I have one from 1993. ARG has reviewed five. This is a good one to start with, particularly if you are a cello fan. © 2015 American Record Guide

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