



# Pieces from Childhood

composed by  
Geoffrey Tozer

Lachlan Redd | piano

move



Geoffrey Tozer, age 6, 1960

Geoffrey Tozer's *Pieces From Childhood* allow us to glimpse, if only briefly, the adventures of the young genius into the world of classical music. Tozer's music – sometimes tumultuous, sometimes meditative – is ever the embodiment of a growing young artist. (Lachlan Redd)

# Pieces from Childhood

composed by Geoffrey Tozer

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## ***The Frank Bridge Suite:***

### ***6 Minatures (sic)***

- 1** Pastoral 0'46"
- 2** Quarrel 0'19"
- 3** Village Band 1'17"
- 4** Crooning 0'48"
- 5** (five) 0'14"
- 6** Entrance to 1965 0'46"

**7** Musical Box 1'24"

**8** Album Leaves 0'47"

**9** Variations on Greensleeves  
in Aolian Mode 1'19"

**10** Piano Frolic 0'50"

**11** Puck's Dance 0'26"

## ***Early Compositions***

- 12** Rondo Op. 13: No. 5 0'28"
- 13** Hommage to Bela Bartok 0'20"
- 14** Hornpipe 0'46"
- 15** Waltz in D 0'50"
- 16** Semiquaver 0'53"

**17** Minuet and Trio 1'36"

**18** Lamentation 1'51"

**19** Album Leaf: The Cuckoo 0'59"

**20** Fantasy on a Theme of  
Dr Floyd 2'39"

**21** The Old Mill 1'27"

**22** Snowing 1'35"

**23** Rain 0'40"

**24** Whirlwind 1'02"

## ***Les petits***

**25** Overture 1'41"

**26** Borree 2'09"

## ***Variations***

**27** Variation I: JSB 2'04"

**28** Variation II: WAM 1'19"

## ***Little Sweet***

**29** Cherry Ripe 1'12"

**30** Toblerone 1'17"

**31** Hazelnut 0'16"

**32** Mars Bar 0'44"

**33** Caramello 0'38"

## ***Suite No. 2 in F***

**34** Allemande 0'52"

**35** Courante 0'38"

**36** Sarabande 3'05"

**37** Gigue 0'58"

**38** Two Dances from the  
Elizabethan Age 3'32"

## Pamela Freeman discusses the Tozer scores published simultaneously with this CD

The compositions of Geoffrey Tozer were unknown and unpublished at the time of his death in 2009. Following the establishment of the Geoffrey Tozer Archive in 2009-2010, over 100 original, hand-written manuscripts were discovered. These pieces were then edited and prepared for publication and performance, resulting in five volumes published under the Tozart imprint, a name created by Tozer himself when he was eight. The pieces recorded on this disc are included in the volume *Pieces from Childhood* and were composed between 1961 and 1969 when Tozer was between the ages of seven and fourteen.

Some of Geoffrey Tozer's manuscripts are very detailed with composition dates, performance notes, expression marks and tempi indications. These were transcribed as accurately as possible from the original hand-written scores. In the book, a scanned image of the original manuscript is included with each individual piece for comparison. Performance markings and indications have been added with discretion, where the original scores were missing or were incomplete or obscure, based on knowledge of Tozer's general performance practice and comparison with his other works. Titles and occasional dedications have been given to a number of compositions by Tozer. However, where works were originally untitled, standard or meaningful titles have been created to provide a permanent identification of each work.

Having known the composer since his earliest days as a child prodigy, during his flying visits to Hobart for piano tuition with Eileen Ralf, it is now a privilege for me to be the first to transcribe and edit some of these works. By publishing the originals alongside these edited performance versions, you are invited to listen to, play, appreciate and reconstruct this body of his original work.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Lachlan Redd, who is the first pianist to perform these pieces. Lachlan worked diligently with me to ensure the transcriptions were as accurate as possible and in keeping with Tozer's original intentions.



Geoffrey Tozer, 1959



Geoffrey Tozer, 1960

Geoffrey Tozer's *Pieces From Childhood* are microcosms of his experience and his understanding of playing and performing the works of the great composers at a young age – reflections of his own humour and delight at 'writing in the style'.

After he performs Beethoven, we can recognise Geoffrey's homage, *Fantasy on a theme by Dr Floyd*, that is surely playing with an understanding of the Master. Similarly, Bach, Mozart and Schubert all merit his attention, and even suites in the style of the baroque specialists earn a tribute. Geoffrey demonstrates his affinity to these composers, delighting in creating works that echo his understanding of the various styles; music and playing that anticipates what we hear in his famous improvisations as an adult performer. The emotions he expresses – sometimes tumultuous, sometimes meditative – are ever the embodiment of a growing young artist.

These miniatures are a lens through which we glimpse, if only briefly, Geoffrey's adventures into the world of classical music at so young an age.



Geoffrey Tozer was an artist of the first rank, a consummate musician, a concert pianist and recitalist with few peers, possessing perfect pitch, a boundless musical memory, the ability to improvise, to transpose instantly into any key or to create on the piano a richly textured reduction of an orchestral score at sight. He was a superb accompanist and a generous collaborator in chamber music. He was also a composer.

Tozer composed from childhood and left more than 160 compositions several of which he performed publicly in Australia and overseas. His prodigious abilities were recognised early in his childhood and during a professional career that lasted for nearly fifty years he developed into a mature artist, fully realising his abilities and earning renown around the world with recitals and concerts on five continents. He made his first recording in 1963 and, as an exclusive artist of Chandos during his adult career, produced thirty-four recordings of distinction, six commercial recordings for several Australian record companies and hundreds of other recordings mainly for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, including complete concertos of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Medtner on film. Tozer won numerous awards during his career including the Winston Churchill Fellowship (twice, Australia), the Australian Creative Artists Fellowship (twice, Australia), the Rubinstein Medal (twice, Israel), the Alex de Vries Prize (Belgium), the Royal Overseas League (United Kingdom), the Diapason



Geoffrey Tozer, age 12, 1966

d'Or (France), the Liszt Centenary Medallion (Hungary) and a Grammy Nomination for Best Classical Performance (USA), becoming the only Australian pianist to achieve such distinction.

Geoffrey Tozer died on 21 August 2009 at the age of just fifty-four. After Tozer's untimely death, journalist James Campbell described him in the media as 'Australia's greatest and most recorded pianist'. Tozer's greatness is certainly evident in his recorded output and witnessed by his vast performance history which exceeds that of any other Australian pianist. Esteemed Australian pianists such as Eileen Joyce, Noel Mewton-Wood, Percy Grainger and Roger Woodward among those whom Tozer

admired, certainly achieved greatness, but few pianists anywhere can rival Tozer's repertoire or his output of recorded performances. The body of more than 600 recordings which Tozer produced between 1963 and 2009 fully justified Campbell's description. Today many of Tozer's recordings can be found in the ABC archives. They, along with other recordings by Tozer housed in the MBS radio archives in Melbourne and Sydney, the BBC archives in London and in archives in Israel, China, Hungary, Germany, Finland, Italy, Russia, Mexico, New Zealand, Japan and the United States, form an important part of Tozer's musical legacy; a gift of national and international importance in music.

Throughout his career Tozer resisted the frequent calls that he permanently re-locate to the northern hemisphere and sign with a major international agent. Whatever this cost him in career terms, he proved it was possible to achieve international renown as a pianist while based permanently in Australia. His overwhelming motivation was always to bring music to the people whether this meant playing for a local audience or piano students in regional China, giving a Master Class in Mexico City or performing for three weeks on a tour of country towns in South Australia. He was invariably motivated to use his talents to make music at every opportunity, and regarded this as a duty which was more important than whether the performances themselves took place in the Australian outback, the Sydney Opera House, the Royal Albert Hall, the Arts Centre in Gulangyu, China, or in Carnegie Hall. By



**Geoffrey Tozer, age 2, in India, 1956**

March 2009, when Tozer gave what proved to be his final concerts for large audiences (30,000 people) at the Sydney Entertainment Centre, he had performed in at least forty countries over a period of forty-six years with many of the world's major orchestras and conductors. As an exclusive artist of Chandos he had produced a series of recordings which had brought him acclaim as a 'grand master' of his instrument and which, in their quality and diversity, became a testament to his musical genius.

Tozer was conceived in Tasmania, but was born in India on 5 November 1954. He lived there with his mother Veronica and brother Peter until October 1958 when the family moved to Melbourne. Tozer's father was Geoffrey Conan-Davies, a brilliant scholar who had been educated at Bromsgrove and,

from the age of fifteen, at Keble College, Oxford University. Speaking in Berlin in 2001, Tozer recalled,

'I was born in the Indian Himalayas in a small town high above the winter snowline called Mussoorie. The first music I heard in my cot was my mother playing and teaching the piano, and Beethoven works played on the windup gramophone by Artur Schnabel.'

Veronica Tozer was herself a gifted musician and pianist. Recognising the prodigious gifts which her young son possessed, she decided to re-locate to the musical city of Melbourne. It was there, on 15 April 1963 that the eight year old Tozer gave his first public performances to be preserved on recording: a recital, organised by Marjorie McAlpin, for which Tozer played music of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Pergolesi

and Bartok. Later his mother wrote in her diary that the young pianist had performed well: 'Geoffrey showed his ability to work for perfection ... despite some laboured playing.' During the year Tozer made extremely rapid progress. On 27 August 1963, he gave his first broadcast recital on ABC radio, playing Bach *Preludes No 4 and No 5* and Beethoven's *Sonata Opus 49 No 2*. Several weeks later he performed Bach's *Concerto in F Minor* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra for an ABC television broadcast. On 13 April 1964 he performed the same concerto with the Astra Chamber Orchestra conducted by George Logie-Smith at the Nicholas Hall in Melbourne. Felix Werder, music critic for *The Age* wrote:

'An interesting feature of the concert was the debut of nine year old Geoffrey Tozer as

soloist. It was a performance of great charm that would have done credit to a seasoned campaigner, displaying fine musical talent and a natural instinct for a Bachian phrase, particularly beautifully realised in the *arioso*.

The previous summer, while on holidays in Tasmania, the young Tozer had met Eileen Ralf, the pianist whose teaching he later described as 'the greatest musical gift given to me'. To assist the young prodigy, Trans Australian Airlines gave Tozer unlimited free travel between Melbourne and Hobart so that Tozer could have weekly lessons with Eileen Ralf in Hobart. During the next five years, under the watchful eyes of Ralf and her husband Thomas Matthews, Tozer became an experienced, fledgling concert pianist, giving numerous recitals and more than forty concerts with the major orchestras in various Australian cities. He performed concertos of Bach and Grieg, the first movement of Brahms *Piano Concerto No. 1*, the five Beethoven concertos, Haydn's *Piano Concerto in D Hob XVIII* for a large audience at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, Melbourne in February 1965 when he was just ten years old and at least nine Mozart Concertos, including *Concerto 10 K 365* for two pianos which he performed with Eileen Ralf and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra conducted by Matthews on 19 May 1968. For these achievements he became the youngest recipient in the world of the Winston Churchill Fellowship when he was thirteen, moving to England to further his studies in 1969.

Tozer constantly composed during the

years of his early musical development. By the time he moved to London, he had produced more than 120 compositions and, at times, had contemplated a career as a composer, rather than as a performer. However, by the age of thirteen, his sheer brilliance on the piano and the constant, consuming impulse to perform meant that his career pathway was set. Although he would continue to compose from time to time, particularly during 1978 when he attained new heights of brilliance with several adult compositions, the majority of his compositional work took place during his years as a child prodigy.

Veronica Tozer's detailed, chronological diaries are replete with references to her young son's compositions. On 10 February 1963, Waldemar Seidel visited the Tozers at home to hear Geoffrey play. Decades earlier Seidel had taught the young Noel Mewton-Wood and he was 'amazed' by the young pianist who now sat before him. Veronica Tozer recorded that, 'It was a very nice evening – Geoffrey played his own compositions and wanted W. Seidel to see all of his composition books'. Most of the compositions were for piano, but sometimes the young Tozer would compose for other instruments, developing some of his manuscripts from improvisations. One Saturday morning, on 21 March 1963, his mother noted that 'Geoffrey was improvising in a masterly manner on his violin'. In October she wrote that, 'He has composed *Variations on Green Sleeves* written down only in a rough outline, but plays a complicated



**Geoffrey Tozer, age 15, 1969**

woven stream of legato that puzzled me at first for its vague familiarity – a very effective variation indeed which he likes playing. Another is in the style of a horn pipe!' On 10 November 1963, five days after Tozer's ninth birthday, his mother provided some rare insights into the form, meaning and value of Tozer's impulse to compose when she wrote, sic:

'It is a very long time since Geoffrey felt as free to improvise as he did last night. I think it is important for Geoffrey to think out his



Geoffrey Tozer, age 16, in London, 1970



feelings at the piano – he is experimenting all the time, and ideas flash into his mind and return to be developed, a turn of phrase will remind him of something he has heard or knows, and you see it grow only to laughingly hurtle into something else held together by brilliant scale and arpeggio passages – trills and single reiterated notes as if searching for the next opening. His performance was non stop and I eventually had to break the spell to get him unwound for sleep. He was exhausted. I feel happier about him.'

Between 1969 and 1971, Tozer lived in England earning considerable distinction in Britain and Europe. In 1969 he became the youngest ever semi-finalist in the Leeds Piano Competition, later winning First Prize in both the Alex de Vries Piano Competition in Belgium and the Royal Overseas League Competition in London. He made his international debut on 17 August 1970 in London at a Promenade Concert in the Royal Albert Hall playing Mozart's *Piano Concerto No 15, K 450* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Colin Davis. Important engagements followed with Tozer giving performances in Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, France and Britain, including invitations from Daniel Barenboim's English Chamber Orchestra and from Benjamin Britten to perform at the 1971 Aldeburgh Festival. Tozer distinguished himself at Aldeburgh both as a recitalist and as an accompanist for the great cellist Rostropovich. During the European tour a Belgian newspaper confidently predicted





**Geoffrey Tozer, age 48, 2002**

that, 'Geoffrey Tozer will become one of the greatest pianists in the world.' If greatness is measured by the quality of sound produced by an instrumentalist, by the ability to interpret music so as to move an audience through a gamut of emotions while demonstrating a unique sensibility and phenomenal piano technique, by a coverage of the repertoire that rivaled that of Sviatoslav Richter, by pianism of the highest standards for more than forty years and by a love of music that sustained an international career for four decades, performing on every continent while living mostly in Australia, then Tozer has an assured place among the great pianists.

By 5 November 1994, when Tozer

celebrated his fortieth birthday in Melbourne he had scaled the peaks of the repertoire, reaching the pinnacle many times and was riding a huge wave of success, unprecedented for an Australian pianist. Recent highlights had included the Australian premiere of the Medtner *Piano Concerto No 1 in C Minor Opus 33* with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (1992), the Medtner *Piano Concerto No 2* in Finland, a performance conducted by Leif Segerstrom and broadcast in Europe (1993), Tozer's first tour of China at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture, with recitals in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing and other cities (1993), the complete sonatas of Beethoven at the Melbourne International Festival (1994) and Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 21* in Japan (1994).

The wave of success continued internationally until 2004, but came to a premature end in Australia at the Sydney Opera House on April 12, 1996. That night Tozer gave one of the most astounding performances of his career when, in the first half of the concert program, he played Mozart's *Piano Concerto in D Major K 175* and followed this minutes later with Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No 3 in C Opus 26*. Few pianists in the world would dare to undertake such a feat, but Tozer gave superlative accounts of both concertos and they were broadcast on ABC radio on 19 April 1996. For reasons that have yet to be fully explained, Tozer was never again invited to perform with any of the major Australian orchestras. He quickly became aware of this and, in 1997, in a front-page newspaper story, pointed out that, 'It's

a waste to have someone like me here, not being used', thereby putting the Australian music industry on notice, in case they had missed the point. Fortunately, from 1997 for the next seven years, Tozer's schedule of international engagements was busier than ever and he scaled new heights of musical achievement, giving some of the finest performances of his career. These included Tozer's London premiere performance and recording of the Roberto Gerhard *Piano Concerto* (Gramophone Critics' Choice, 1998), his Berlin Festival performances of the Schabel *Sonata* and other Schnabel compositions (2001), and his performances in China, also broadcast live on Chinese national television, of the *Yellow River Concerto* (2001 and 2002).

Tozer's private funeral was held in the Windsor Convent Chapel which was filled to capacity with close friends and relatives. Four weeks later, in accordance with Tozer's wishes, his Memorial Service was held at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. During the service Rosamund Illing sang a moving rendition of Schubert's *Ave Maria*. Then the former Prime Minister of Australia Paul Keating who, since 1989 had been Tozer's greatest and most important patron, galvanised the congregation of more than four hundred people with his impassioned eulogy, lamenting the loss of such an irreplaceable artist.

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Concert pianist Lachlan Redd came to international attention when, aged just twenty, he won First Prize in the prestigious Virtuosi of the Year 2000 competition in St Petersburg. It was April 1995 and The Australian newspaper reported that Lachlan, 'an unknown young Australian has astonished the musical might of Russia by walking off with the country's premier prize for young pianists'. The prize brought Lachlan Redd to the attention of Geoffrey Tozer, although it would be some years before they worked together.

Twelve months later, at less than twenty-four hours notice and without rehearsal, Lachlan replaced Bruno Leonard Gelber, in two performances of Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 3* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Yan Pascal Tortelier at Hamer Hall. Tozer was performing in Sydney at the time, but was greatly impressed by Lachlan's performance when he later heard it broadcast live (also recorded) on ABC Radio National. In the same year, Lachlan won the Keyboard Final of the ABC Young Performer of the Year and received the University Medal as the top student at the Australian National University.

In 1997 he was awarded a scholarship by the Queen's Trust to study at the Manhattan School of Music. Two years later, he completed his Masters of Music there, under Philip Kawin. By then, Lachlan had recorded Richard Meale's demanding piece, *Coruscations*. His performance, greatly lauded by the composer, became Lachlan's first commercially released recording.

Since then Lachlan has played throughout

Australia both as a soloist and recitalist, appearing with most of the major orchestras, performing works such as Chopin's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 1*. The Australian critic wrote, 'Lachlan Redd is a superb pianist. In Beethoven's *First Piano Concerto*, the highlight of Sunday's concert, he demonstrated a maturity of conception and a breathtakingly impressive technique.' By 2007, Lachlan had twice won the Bach Prize at the Australian National Piano Awards and performed extensively in Australia, Belgium, England, Germany, Russia, Scotland and the United States with leading conductors including Nicholas Braithwaite, Janos Furst, Michael Halasz, Yan Pascal Tortelier and Vladimir Verbitsky, greatly enlarging his repertoire to include many new solo works, several Mozart concertos, Stravinsky's *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments* and Brahms' *Piano Concerto No. 2*.

In 2008 Lachlan received glowing reviews for his performance of Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2* in Melbourne. Tozer was present and congratulated Lachlan on the quality of his performance, offering to work with the young pianist when an opportunity arose. Soon afterwards, when Lachlan was engaged by the Australian Ballet as soloist to play Tchaikovsky's virtuosic *Piano Concerto No 2* for the revival of Balanchine's Ballet Imperial, he began to work with Tozer. Lachlan recalled that during his many hours with Tozer, 'Geoffrey solved every interpretive and technical problem'. The result was a triumph for Lachlan who gave sixteen

performances of the concerto under the baton of Nicolette Fraillon.

Thereafter, he began to divide his time between an increasingly busy schedule of international engagements, and continued to appear throughout Australia in the capital cities and on regional tours. Highlights during this period included Lachlan's special appearance as soloist with the Chamber Orchestra of St Pauls, playing Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 23* and the premiere of Geoffrey Tozer's composition *Arpeggionata* in Federation Hall, Melbourne, on 2 September 2011. Subsequently, the Tozer Estate offered Lachlan an exclusive contract to premiere a series of other Tozer compositions including the extraordinarily difficult *Fugue in C# Major*, the series *Pieces From Childhood* and the virtuosic *Piano Sonata in C* (1978).

In 2013 Lachlan completed a regional recital tour in eastern Australia, gave further recitals in Europe and performed Mozart's *Piano Concerto No 12 in A K.414* in the magnificent Melbourne Recital Centre, under the baton of the internationally respected English conductor and Baroque specialist, Peter G. Dyson. Soon afterwards, in August, Lachlan returned to London to perform Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 23* under Maestro Dyson, at St Martin in the Fields. Lachlan's recent engagements include performances of the Poulenc *Double Piano Concerto* and a recital tour of regional Australia.

Following the release of Geoffrey Tozer's *Pieces From Childhood*, Lachlan will give a series of special Tozer Commemorative Recitals.



**Pamela Freeman peruses the original Tozer scores with Lachlan Redd**

Recorded on 24 January 2014 in the James Forbes Academy at Scotch College, Melbourne  
Special thanks to John Ferguson, Director of Music, Scotch College, Melbourne

*Recording engineers:* Martin Wright and Vaughan McAlley

*Editing:* Vaughan McAlley

*Mastering:* Martin Wright

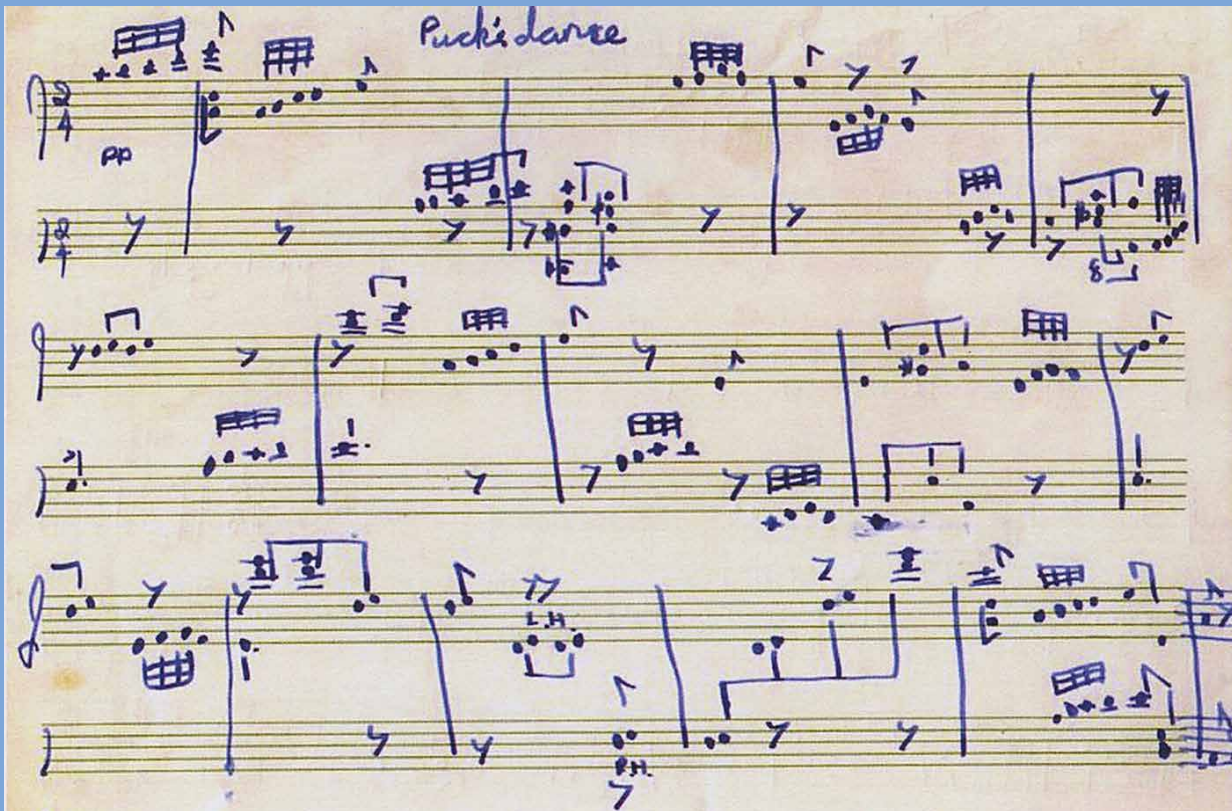
*Photographs:* Geoffrey Tozer archive

*Front cover photograph:* Geoffrey Tozer in 1973, age 19

Go to [move.com.au](http://move.com.au) for details of a new series of remastered Geoffrey Tozer archive concert recordings from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, available for the first time

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## 1961

Waltz in D  
Rondo  
Bartok  
Hornpipe  
Waltz  
Semiquaver

## 1963

Frank Bridge Suite  
Variations on Greensleeves  
Minuet and Trio

## 1964

Album Leaves  
Piano Frolic  
Lamentation  
Album Leaf: The Cuckoo  
Les petits Ouvrements and Borree  
Suite in F

## 1965

Little Sweet

## 1966

Musical Box  
The Old Mill

## 1967

Puck's Dance  
Fantasy on a theme of Dr Floyd  
Snowing  
Rain  
Whirlwind  
Two Dances from the Elizabethan Age

## 1969

Variations on JSB  
Variations on WAM