

Classical

BSO/Alsop Lighthouse, Poole

★★★★★

The purpose of the Encore project, a joint initiative between BBC Radio 3 and the Royal Philharmonic Society, is to rehabilitate important but neglected orchestral works by living British composers. The latest piece to get a helping hand is Jonathan Lloyd's Symphony No 4, first performed at a Prom in 1988 but never heard in a concert hall again until it was conducted by Marin Alsop at the end of this Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra programme.

It is hard to understand why Lloyd's works are heard so rarely now. His music has the precious quality of unexpectedness, though its diversions are always supported by logic. The half-hour long Fourth Symphony grows in a single organic sweep from the simplest of beginnings – a gradually extended upward scale, which moves in and out of focus as it is repeated, eventually propelling the music into much more exotic musical regions. Then the huge orchestra, including four saxophones, banjo, guitar and a huge range of percussion, is unleashed and the music dances in a way that seems entirely natural, and makes references to a range of other styles in a totally unselfconscious way.

The whole concert consisted of music by living composers based in the southwest of England. It followed the reliable new-music plan of including a revival (the Lloyd), a contemporary classic and a brand new work. The "classic" was John Tavener's *The Protecting Veil*, sounding as interminably sanctimonious as ever, though the fine solo cellist Maria Kiegel generated the right kind of reverential intensity.

The new work came from Stephen McNeff, the Bournemouth orchestra's resident composer: *Secret Destinations* is a tribute to the poet Charles Causley, who died in 2003. The three movements are inspired by Causley's poems and his travels; if some of the music seems a bit close to a film score, then something more personal emerges in the quieter, more reflective moments.

Andrew Clements

Broadcast on Radio 3 tonight at 7.30 pm.