



Journal of the  
**RVW**  
Society

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## From the Chairman

In April this year, *The Lark Ascending* was, for the third year running, voted the best-loved piece of classical music in the listeners' poll on Classic FM. We lovers of Vaughan Williams' whole output may shudder at the frequency of its Classic FM appearances. We may not necessarily be Classic FM listeners ourselves – dreading those awful commercials – and we may fear lest this great work become too hackneyed and familiar (think of what Hamlet cigars did to poor old Bach's supreme *Air on a G string!*) It is an important acclamation, though, as it highlights the ability of Vaughan Williams' music to reach out and appeal to everyone.

Such public approbation is precisely what we need. By encouraging people to get to know and love Vaughan Williams' more familiar music, we can exhort them to discover more of his extensive and diverse output. The fact that the *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* came third in the poll perhaps bears testimony to this, tying in well with forthcoming celebrations for the work's centenary in 2010, including a performance at the Three Choirs Festival, where it was premiered, as well as a Radio 4 programme, currently being made, about the work and its life-enhancing capabilities.

In my role as Director of the English Music Festival, I witness at first hand the powerful impact that Vaughan Williams' music can have upon audiences. The third Festival, which took place over the second May bank holiday weekend, featured *Willow-Wood*, with David Lloyd-Jones conducting the BBC Concert Orchestra and Jeremy Huw Williams as soloist, *Silence and Music*, beautifully performed by Vox Musica, *Sun, Moon, Stars and Man* and the *Mass in G minor*, which concluded the Festival. It was the latter (with Hilary Davan Wetton and the City of London Choir) that had the most profound effect upon people. Amongst comments I received were those proclaiming this work as surely the greatest piece of liturgical music ever composed. And if, as I suspect, other members of the audience were as choked as I was by the end of the performance then the tremendous power of Vaughan Williams' masterly ability to move and uplift cannot possibly be doubted. The other EMF performance that reduced me to gulping back a flow of tears was Oxford Liedertafel performing the work that first sparked my love of English music when an infant, *Linden Lea*. And it is perhaps in such music as this that Vaughan Williams' gift is most remarkable, for although he composed music of great complexity, both in musical technique and also in emotion, some of his greatest pieces are efficacious for the very opposite reason, for their utter simplicity, a simplicity which allows exquisite beauty and poignancy to shine out unencumbered.

But back to *The Lark Ascending*. A plaque is to be unveiled at mid-day on 26 August at Shirehampton Hall in Bristol, where the work received its premiere with Marie Hall in December, 1920. There will then be an evening concert of English music, including the *Lark*, performed by Roger Huckle and the Emerald Ensemble. I do hope to see you there!

*Em Marshall*

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# From the Editor



## Journal of the RVW Society

I have written before that one of the pleasures of editing the *Journal* is being able to pick subjects that interest me and invite members to write about them. This remains true, but it can bring with it a headache or two. The theme announced for this issue of the *Journal* was “Vaughan Williams and London”. Only one piece came in which could comfortably be slotted into a section on this theme, Robin Barber’s interesting piece following up his earlier one about Vaughan Williams and census entries. This was, however, submitted quite independently of any announced theme. “Vaughan Williams and London”, then, has not sent members rushing to their writing desks.

The theme for the forthcoming issue, October 2009, is wider in scope and is, of course, of major importance to Vaughan Williams studies. But folksong has already featured as a theme for the *Journal*, albeit several years ago, and many shorter pieces dealing with it have been published in subsequent issues. Will members be more, or less, inspired by this subject? When that October 2009 edition of the *Journal* lands with a satisfying thump on members’ mats, they will notice a number of changes. We are slightly modifying the way we produce the *Journal*, first of all, which should allow it to appear at the beginning of the month on the cover. Then, a facelift is planned, but don’t worry, you won’t mistake the *Journal* for *Hello!* or one of the colour supplements. The outside will certainly look different, but the inside pages will simply be cleaner, clearer and easier to read. If, like me, you find the majority of magazines, even some classical music magazines, garish and over-designed, I think you will appreciate the sober appearance of our *Journal*.

What the *Journal* looks like, however, must take second place to what it offers members to read. A commercial magazine might send out a printed reader survey at this stage, with questions like “How many people, apart from yourself, read your *Journal*?” (Answer: far too many to count. Immediate and extended family.) Or they might ask “What happens to your *Journal* when you have finished reading it?” (Answer: I place it in one of the excellent Society binders, then store it in a bank deposit box for my children.) Well, there’ll be no printed questionnaire, but I would like to invite members to let me have their views on a few matters. How much of the *Journal* do you read, for example? And in respect of the content of the *Journal*, is the balance right? These two questions are related because although many of the Society’s members are trained and experienced musicians, others, perhaps the majority, would probably describe themselves as enthusiastic amateurs. I’d like to think that, whichever kind of member you are, you read the entire *Journal* from cover to cover, but if that is simply not possible, at least I want to keep to a minimum the

number of articles that any one member wouldn’t bother to read, or wouldn’t understand even if he read it. Are there enough articles of general interest to balance those which require something of specialist musical knowledge?

I’m also wondering if the idea of a theme for each issue of the *Journal* has not reached the end of its natural life. Curiously, with so rich a basic subject as Ralph Vaughan Williams, choosing a theme three times a year is increasingly difficult, not least because, arriving now at issue 45, so many important topics have been covered already. But perhaps the idea has run its course. What do members think? And if you like the idea of a theme, please help the Editor by suggesting new ones.

The *Journal* is, of course, written by the Society’s members, but this is a curiously seasonal affair. When I open almost any serious magazine, I often go to the letters pages first. There were nearly four pages of letters from members in the last issue of the *Journal*. Religion and the two films about the composer released in the anniversary year provoked a lot of correspondence, but letters cover a wide range of subjects, so it’s surprising to find so few this time. Letters are one thing, articles are another, and I think perhaps I should be more active in searching out – or to use a big, professional word, commissioning – articles from members. This question is, of course, tied in with whether or not the *Journal* is organised around a theme. To bring the matter to a close, please send in for the next issue your thoughts, letters, articles, reviews, pictures and anything else which inspires you on the subject of “Vaughan Williams and Folk Song”. Please send them in by the due date. And please take the trouble to read *Short Notes for Contributors* which appears elsewhere in this issue: the Editor, like all the trustees, does this in his spare time, and the job would be much more quickly done if everyone respected these simple suggestions.

There will be no theme for the following issue. Instead, and starting immediately, please help me with the process of reflection outlined above. Try and think what kind of *Journal* you would like to see, especially in terms of its content. Address yourselves particularly to the questions I am asking here. I’m not necessarily soliciting material for publication in requesting this, but if you want your contribution to appear, don’t hesitate to say so. Be frank, even brutal if you wish: I’m very thick-skinned. The *Journal* is the most tangible part of your membership of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, so it’s natural that I should want to get it just right for you.

*William Hedley*

# Vaughan Williams, Cheyne Walk, and the 1911 Census

by Robin Barber



*View of the Embankment from Vaughan Williams' house, 2009 (photo: Tadeusz Kasa)*

In issue 37 of the Journal (October 2006) I described the entry for the 1901 census and we found that Ralph Vaughan Williams was living at 10, Barton Street in London. Also there were Gustav Holst and Lily Diamond, a servant, but there was no mention of Adeline. The 1911 Census is now available and ten years later we find he is living at 13, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, along with Adeline and four others. The census records those who spent the night of Sunday April 2, 1911 at the residence named and the original shows details of the six people living at 13 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea London SW at that date. It is clearly in Vaughan Williams' hand and is surprisingly legible. The main details are transcribed at the bottom of the page.

As in the 1901 census Vaughan Williams gives Down Ampney as in Wiltshire and not Gloucestershire. I wonder if there was a boundary change later in the century?

## LIFE AT 13, CHEYNE WALK, 1905-28

Vaughan Williams moved with Adeline to the house on 1 November 1905, a six-storey property on Chelsea Embankment. They finally left in 1928 to take up residence in Dorking. His top-floor study overlooking the Thames was the source of his first three symphonies, *Sea*, *London* and *Pastoral*, the opera *Sir John in Love* as well as his two most popular pieces today, *The Lark Ascending* and the *Tallis Fantasia*.

Maurice Ravel stayed there in 1909 and afterwards wrote to Adeline "I needed the warm and sensitive welcome waiting for me at Cheyne Walk to make me feel at home in new surroundings,

and give me a taste of the charm and magnificence of London almost as if I were a Londoner." For a time the house was shared with Adeline's sister Emmie and her husband, the composer and teacher R. O. Morris. In his book *As I remember*, Arthur Bliss recalls a time between 1921-23 when he stayed at 13 Cheyne Walk, a time when he was composing his *Colour Symphony*: "There was a wonderful atmosphere of quiet sustained work in that house. Vaughan Williams lived on the top floor, then below came R. O. Morris's study, whilst I had the room on the ground floor...At times I heard slow moving chords that seeped into my room from above; I think at that time VW was making one of his periodic revisions of his *London Symphony* – I loved working there in so sympathetic and creative an atmosphere." Ursula's book has some lovely reminiscences of some of the others in the Census entry. "The household was looked after by a devoted couple, Mr. and Mrs. Mott, who lived in the basement, and whose little girl Ralph attempted to teach music...Holst was a regular visitor; he used to come in dead tired after a day of teaching and have a sleep on the sofa: Mrs. Mott knew that when Mr. Holst came it was to be boiled eggs for everyone for Adeline firmly believed in the reviving power of boiled eggs for tea." Another visitor to the house was unexpected. Ivor Gurney, who had escaped from an asylum in Kent, had made his way to London to seek refuge with his former teacher and, as Ursula recalls, "Ralph felt like a murderer when he telephoned to say Gurney was with him." When the 1921 census is released it is likely to show Ralph and Adeline domiciled here still, unless they were away at the time. It will be interesting to see who else was residing there at the same time.



*No. 13, Cheyne Walk at the turn of the century (right) and the house which now stands on the spot, no. 14 (left) (photo: Tadeusz Kasa)*

Name	Relationship to head	Marital Status	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
Ralph Vaughan Williams	Head	Married	38	Doctor of Music	Down Ampney Wilts
Adeline Vaughan Williams	Wife	Married	40		London S Kensington
Lawrence Mahan Mott	Servant	Married	53		London Lambeth
Annie Maria Mott	Servant	Married	39		High Wycombe Bucks
Florence Annie Mott	Daughter L M Mott		6		London Southwark
Grace Highmore	Servant	Single	17		Compton Devonshire

# My Great Uncle Knew VW

by Tom Kelly

Reading the header above, you might be expecting great shafts of new light on Vaughan Williams from a contemporary observer. Alas, it is not quite so. My great uncle and godfather Edward Kelly did indeed know Vaughan Williams in the Great War and told tales of him in the late 1960s. But I can only remember two of his anecdotes not having had, at the time, the foresight – or awareness of the composer’s importance – to note down what I had been told as a teenager.

Edward – or Ed as we all knew him – had enlisted as a Private in the London Artists’ Rifles in 1915. He saw action in the trenches from April 1916 and was promoted to Second Lieutenant in the field in November 1916 and then full Lieutenant. At some point he was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (though he never told anyone that he served with them) and suffered a shrapnel wound in the arm in July 1917. He returned to France for the final months of the war. It seems likely that he met the composer in London sometime in the summer of 1917 during the period when Vaughan Williams was training as an officer. Ed told of a lively party in London at which a loud sing-song was accompanied by Vaughan Williams at the piano. As it was a warm evening, the windows had been flung open. This incurred the wrath of a policeman who ordered them to make less noise and to close the windows and curtains for fear of a German air raid. Was this party perhaps hosted by Vaughan Williams himself at Cheyne Walk?

Ed was no musician and knew nothing of Vaughan Williams’ pre-war music. To him, Ralph was just a good comrade with whom to enjoy a period of peace away from the trenches. The second anecdote I recall is of a chance encounter in France. Ed told of the officer “comfort” stations in France where drink and female company could be had behind the lines. (He always looked over his shoulder to see where my great aunt Josie was before getting into his wartime stories). Ed had been amazed to find how much better the quality of drink and company was for officers than for non-commissioned ranks. He told of joining a queue to enter one place reserved for officers but being hailed by Vaughan Williams to join him and others at a table well-endowed with drink but, he hastened to add on the unexpected reappearance of my great aunt, short of female company. The story was broken off at that point, and I never did hear the rest of it. Using our family history contacts, my wife Maureen and I tried to find out just how and when the paths of Ralph Vaughan Williams and my uncle might have crossed. We obtained copies of their service records but these confirm only the possibility (and nothing stronger) of these encounters occurring in the summer of 1917 in London and in 1918 somewhere in France.

We hoped also that the service record might cast some light on Vaughan Williams’ military service. Popular biographers have tended to focus on his self-sacrificial service as a non-commissioned orderly in the Royal Medical Corps earlier in

the war in France and Salonika, rather than his time as an officer with the Royal Garrison Artillery in 1918. But why did he apply to be an officer in the regular army, and specifically to serve in the artillery, as his signed application of 27 March 1917 shows that he did? There may have been unrecorded pressure to do so. The casualty rate among subalterns in France was horrendous as front line officers were expected to lead by example (in other words, expose themselves to fire) and German snipers had instructions to pick out officers as targets. So well-educated Privates, particularly those in the London Artists’ Rifles, were “encouraged” to apply to join the officer ranks as much needed replacements. On pages 124 to 132 of her biography “*R/VW*”, Ursula Vaughan Williams records her husband’s later recollections of discontent with what he was asked to do in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Salonika, and of his looking after the horse transports for a battery of heavy guns in 1918. But the transfer from medical orderly to artillery officer was a large leap which still seems rather inadequately explained. Ursula says only that “somewhere, someone in authority arranged for him to be sent back to England to train for a commission”.



Vaughan Williams was never an enthusiast for military bull. In October 1916 he was admonished and fined 2d. for losing his cap badge “by neglect”. After the war, in 1920, he applied for and was refused retrospective promotion to full Lieutenant. This would have enhanced his war pension before giving up his commission. The service record shows how the War Office tracked down his former superior officer for advice on the application. It took the military bureaucrats some time to work out that Vaughan Williams had served with 141 Heavy Battery (rather than 141 Siege Battery as they had first thought). Ursula recorded his frustration with the inefficiencies of the Army – he had complained that “having been trained as a 6” Howitzer man I’ve been bunged into a 60 pdr!” Although similar in calibre and weight of shell, these artillery pieces were quite different to operate and to transport. Sixty-pounder guns had a flatter trajectory of fire and were mainly used to suppress enemy artillery rather than to blast trenches and infantry.

Vaughan Williams’ commanding officer, a Major Stanley Smith, wrote on 19 October 1920 that “2nd Lieutenant R. V Williams, RGA...was attached to the Battery under my command from February to August, 1918. During this period I found him to be a most reliable and energetic officer. His age is very much against him, and therefore he is not as smart as might be expected. I also particularly noticed that he was most untidy in his ways and dress. I cannot say that I can recommend him for promotion to higher rank.” To add to the injury of not getting an enhanced war pension, Vaughan Williams had the insult of seeing his commanding officer’s letter which the War Office officiously attached to their own letter of 13 November 1920 confirming refusal of the promotion. It can hardly have warmed the chill winter at Sheringham for him to see the offhand excuse of age and scruffiness for the refusal of better recognition for his war service.

# The Alchemy of Music and Landscape in Vaughan Williams' *Joanna Godden*

by John Morris

*I am only a novice at this art of film music and some of my more practised colleagues assure me that when I have had all of their experience my youthful exuberance will disappear, and I shall look upon film composing not as an art but as a business. At present I still feel a morning blush which has not yet paled into the light of common day. I still believe that the film contains potentialities for the combination of all the arts such as Wagner never dreamt of.*<sup>1</sup>

Vaughan Williams' familiar words were broadcast four years after his first film score, to *49th Parallel* (1941). But in his famous post-war work on British film music, John Huntley argued that the standard of music in British films was "as high, if not higher, than in any other country." Whilst acknowledging advanced American technique, the "brilliant" management of music on Hollywood soundtracks, and the ability of American composers to write music "with a precise care and appreciation of the dramatic significance of each turn of the story," as well as the advantages of technological innovation in creating images and sound, Huntley was adamant that the average British score was of a higher quality.

In Huntley's analysis, British films benefited from the efforts of Muir Mathieson and composers such as Vaughan Williams. The latter also encouraged Bax, Bliss, Walton and others to make film music "worthy of a real composer".<sup>2</sup> This statement is highly revealing of Vaughan Williams' approach toward film scoring. To add the music on after filming, in his view, was much like adding "architecture" to an incomplete building: "Surely, the author, director, photographer, and composer should work together from the beginning," he wrote, "most of the work being done before the photographs are taken."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the actors themselves, he suggested, should hear the music before rehearsals!

Vaughan Williams considered there to be two kinds of film music. The first was the standard in Hollywood at the time and is exemplified in the scores of Max Steiner, composer of the score to *King Kong* (1933) and *Gone*

*with the Wind* (1939) among many others, where "every action, word, gesture or incident is punctuated in sound".<sup>4</sup> Vaughan Williams favoured the second method, "to ignore the details and to intensify the spirit of the whole situation by a continuous stream of music," as he claimed to be "incapable" of the former. He looked forward to the day when "a great film will be built up on the basis of music". Though acknowledging that what he was suggesting might "sound like the uninstructed grouse of an ignorant tyro,"<sup>5</sup> he remained a serious composer, interested in the art of film rather than the box office success of the films for which he wrote. He believed that if the music was written in tandem with the filmmaking process, film music could be worthy of its status as an art form: "Only when this is achieved [will] the film come into its own as one of the finest of the fine arts."<sup>6</sup>

While composing for *Scott of the Antarctic* in 1947 Vaughan Williams felt that he was writing something that could be greater than mere incidental music that is "tied by the short time-lengths of the episodes of a moving picture."<sup>7</sup> The critic Hans Keller, recognising the quality of this "noble and, in parts, grandiose score", believed that it was "immeasurably better than the present film itself" and Vaughan Williams, realising that he wanted complete freedom to express some of its ideas – such as the theme of the English heroic spirit – set about writing a more serious work in which he could paint a broader canvas that was not tied to the moving image. The resulting *Sinfonia Antartica* was ultimately premiered in 1953, the prelude to the work incorporating the film's title music, with other themes appearing throughout the symphony.

In his book on British national identity and cinema Jeffrey Richards writes that "Vaughan Williams' principal definition of Englishness in his films as elsewhere in his work lay in the pastoral and in the visionary," the composer's great achievement being "to unite the two".<sup>8</sup> If the prime example of the visionary is Vaughan Williams' music for *Scott of the Antarctic*, it is a lesser known score in which he achieved unity with the pastoral.

Starring Googie Withers, *The Loves of Joanna Godden* (1947) is set on turn-of-the-century Romney Marsh, its establishing shot and opening caption setting the rural scene: "The world, according to the best geographers, is divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Romney Marsh lonely now but lonelier still in 1905." Director Charles Frend presents a rural idyll, and though at the film's heart there is a strong element of romantic melodrama, he "recreates the rhythms of farming life" "changes of the season" and, in particular, "the haunting beauty of the landscape," elements that Vaughan Williams "responds to and sees as quintessentially English".<sup>9</sup> The film's musical episodes are often very short; what Jeffrey Richards has called "snatches of atmosphere."<sup>10</sup>

At the beginning of the film, for example, the opening titles already hint at the atmosphere of the countryside with another brief theme accompanying four travellers inside a carriage driving



Googie  
Withers

home from a funeral: three siblings including Joanna (Googie Withers), and her fiancé Arthur (John McCallum), though there is doubt about this impending marriage. Joanna's father, a sheep farmer, has left a will and complications. Joanna is determined to run the farm herself but Arthur is not amused, and leaves her. Looking out onto a broad sweeping scene of the Marsh, we share Joanna's point of view as she is revived by what she sees, a short leitmotiv-like phrase in music helping us to feel her elation.

In celebration of the record sheep-shearing season, a country dance is held, complete with piano and violin. The tune is very much a style with which Vaughan Williams would have been familiar; indeed at the time of the film's setting he had already embarked upon his folk-song project. A brief theme which refers to the romantic possibilities between Arthur and Joanna's younger sister Ellen (Jean Kent) follows. Joanna's plan to cross-breed her pedigree flock fails dismally as the tragedy of a field of dying ewes and dead lambs testify, the scene underscored by the first of several tragic musical episodes. The tone of the flute theme resembles the desolation famously present in the Sixth Symphony, which Vaughan Williams was writing at the same time. But Joanna's fortunes do return and music provides the triumphant expression required to highlight the success of her new project to put pasture under plough. Not all the farming fraternity is pleased, the music's minor key registering their disapproval. Music is at the heart of this important sequence, and provides the film with a kernel of synaesthesia between music and landscape. Joanna's new (and third) love interest, Martin Trevor (Derek Bond) has come to inspect Joanna's successes, but he is distracted. Music draws down to a single violin theme as Martin, a long-time resident of the area and intimately familiar with it, speaks:

Martin: I was looking at the light on the marsh.  
 Joanna: What light?  
 Martin: Over there; don't you see it? – the light over the sea.  
 Joanna: Oh, that! That's just the sky over Dungeness – I've seen it plenty of times.  
 Martin: Have you? You know, it's only on the marsh that you get it. I think it's the most beautiful light in the world.  
 Joanna: Don't see much beauty in the marsh. Just a lot of flat fields and a lot of old ditches.  
 Martin: Don't you? That's because you've seen it so often. Try looking at it again, through my eyes; listen to it, too.

There is a cut from Joanna to the open field, a broad canvas of sky and land. The theme changes as the couple looks out and Vaughan Williams' music over the marsh scene now dominates: a swan in flight, a view of the sea, of a lone tree, of wheat and haystacks in a merging of sound and image, woodwind, brass, a clarinet, oboe and violins all taking their turn as the images change. Jeffrey Richards describes the scene: "Director Charles Frend gives us a passage of pure visual beauty, a lone bird skimming through the marsh sky, the waving grain, a solitary tree etched against the horizon, the pebble beach at Dungeness, the light over the sea, and Vaughan Williams responds to this with shimmering music through which a dark haunting melody runs."<sup>11</sup> In this sequence, Peter Ackroyd's alchemy of musical timelessness, together with a rapturous vision of the English landscape are expressed by Martin, who reveals his feelings for Joanna: "Things look very different when you have someone to share them with," he says, tender strings marking the moment they kiss.

Several episodes in the film are marked with the tragic – as well as the melodramatic – and following Martin's death in a drowning

accident, Joanna is comforted by Martin's father Harry (Henry Mollison): "Don't forget what Shakespeare said. 'Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, And summer's lease hath all too short a date.'<sup>12</sup> Reviving as her first love Arthur (John MacCallum) passes her in the road, she is reminded of her would-be father-in-law's words as the music underscores the anticipation she feels for a new life. Arthur's subsequent arrival at her cottage is for the hand of Ellen (Jean Kent), however, and Joanna barely manages to conceal her disappointment. Ellen and Arthur agree to marry, but Ellen is quickly bored. A bright musical reference to the land at dawn is followed by a change in tone as the weather closes in and, with it, Ellen's mood as the music underscores her discontent. Repeated short cuts to marsh scenes with a few bars of exuberant strings accompany Ellen out riding with Harry Trevor, the suggestion of a growing attachment between them signified by romantic strings. On her arrival home, Arthur brings news of foot-and-mouth disease and the destruction of his entire flock. The following sequences depicting the painful actions that need to be taken – trenches dug, "keep out" signs erected – are accompanied entirely by Vaughan Williams' ominous music, written in heavy tones where timpani are much in evidence. (Of this scene, he remarked that surely no-one had been called upon before to depict foot-and-mouth disease in music.) Meanwhile, Ellen has eloped with Harry Trevor, and while the music provides tone colour for the continuing destruction of the livestock, Joanna and Arthur are reunited as their love for one another – in adversity – triumphs over their misfortunes. A light orchestral theme heralds their reconciliation – and love – as the film draws to a close with a final view of the marsh as the rural theme returns. A "finale" ends the film proper as the titles roll with the music, in a minor key, ending on a triumphant *tierce de Picardie*, an "effect of archaism,"<sup>13</sup> which Vaughan Williams uses to underline the film's final looking back to the rural idyll.

Vaughan Williams wrote a suite of the music from *Joanna Godden*. The music shares similarities with the Sixth Symphony, which was first performed early in 1948, but originally completed by the composer in 1946 and revised during the following year. There is also a theme in the film that is used in the Ninth Symphony, first performed as late as 1958, the year of the composer's death, and the use of a wordless female chorus foreshadows the *Sinfonia Antartica*. Thus the music to *The Loves of Joanna Godden*, which was composed between March and December 1945, can be said to provide a pivot on which many creative projects turned for the composer, ideas which were to occupy him for the rest of his life. The score to *Joanna Godden* consisted of 25 episodes from which Vaughan Williams later authorised the release of a selection of ten episodes on a gramophone recording in 1948. A "characteristic" score, it was written before the film was completed and, testimony to the method used by the composer, reads more like a tone poem rather than a series of musical episodes. The film did, however, provide Vaughan Williams with "the nearest example of a straightforward romantic drama that he was to score," writes Jan Swynnoe, and "in it he demonstrated not only an ability to use themes to good dramatic effect, but also to score primary dialogue."

But it is the synaesthetic qualities of music and landscape which I think provide the most noteworthy aspects of the film. Technically referring to the merging of colour and individually sounded notes, synaesthesia has occupied many composers – with Russian composer Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) actually writing a part for colour keyboard in some of his later works – as well as film makers: "In many of his writings – and, in particular, his discussions of synaesthesia – [Sergei] Eisenstein reveals how he

sees and structures his films musically” writes Kay Dickinson. But as we have seen there is also a synaesthetic connection between music and landscape. Vaughan Williams had already experimented with these ideas in *49th Parallel* (1941) which coincided happily with a similar preoccupation held by directors Powell and Pressburger. The broad opening theme in that film was also written in the tradition of Vaughan Williams’ pastoral: “the documentary nature of the film continues with a brief scenic tour of Canada, depicting mountains, wheat fields, a city, and lakes. Vaughan Williams illustrates their changing scenes in the score, portraying them by high glacial string chords, a calm rustic melody on the oboe, energetic chords in the brass, and a stately melody on upper strings,” writes Jan Swynnoe in her 2002 survey of British film music. The films of Powell and Pressburger are noted for a particular fondness for the English countryside, for example in the Shropshire of *Gone to Earth* (1950), which also uses landscape as an analogy for passion, a technique developed and used most effectively in *Black Narcissus* (1947). Both films also feature hunting sequences which celebrate the excitement of the chase. This is a Hardy-like quality that Powell’s films also share with D.H. Lawrence. As Mark Duguid comments: “One of the distinctive features in the films of Michael Powell is the attention paid to landscape and geography. Powell grew up in rural Kent, and he retained a passionate love of Britain’s countryside which flavoured his approach to filmmaking. Powell’s expressive use of natural imagery harks back to a romantic literary tradition – whose notable exponents include Thomas Hardy and Emily Brontë” – in which nature in its wildness both reflects and determines the emotional life of the protagonists”.<sup>14</sup>

In *A Canterbury Tale* (1944), Powell lovingly depicts a different part of the Kent countryside in a film which follows a journey taken by three friends “to rediscover their – and Britain’s – lost spiritual heritage,” continues Duguid, but the representation of the pastoral and landscape also provides a useful “analogue” for passion. The depiction of romantic love in nature with the aid of sound effects and music, is a recurring feature in the melodramas of Powell and Pressburger and, as we have seen, Vaughan Williams’ score to *The Loves of Joanna Godden* makes it clear that “the film’s concentration on landscape has released the music in him.”<sup>15</sup>

This music is rooted in a love of English landscape, as well as in the folk music collected by the composer and which is drawn from the simplest interaction with the land itself, its very rhythms and seasons, its essence. This was nothing new for Vaughan Williams, of course.

His 1914 romance *The Lark Ascending* takes its title (and the score inscribed) with words from George Meredith’s poem “Joys of the Earth”: “He drops the silver chain of sound, of many links without a break.” This unbroken chain, writes Peter Ackroyd in his book on the origins of the English imagination, “is that of English music itself.” The connection between landscape, time and music seems to pervade the work of Vaughan Williams. In particular, Ackroyd continues, Vaughan Williams’ *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* embraces “present and past time,” a reference to T.S. Eliot’s 1935 poem “Burnt Norton,” in a musical expression of English antiquarianism, “a form of alchemy [which] engenders a strange timelessness.” Ian Christie also refers to “Burnt Norton” in his essay on Powell and Pressburger’s *A Canterbury Tale* (1944) made at a time when the idea of England preoccupied filmmakers and composers alike. Eliot takes up the same theme, writes Christie, in the last of his *Four Quartets*, “Little Gidding”:

A people without history  
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern  
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails  
On a winter’s afternoon, in a secluded chapel  
History is now and England.

“Here,” Christie writes, “we are again close to that sense of the past made urgent by the present,” and the alchemy Peter Ackroyd refers to in English antiquarianism I believe not only engenders timelessness but also stirs the imagination to tacitly “hear” the English landscape and to “see” it in Vaughan Williams’ music in a kind of synaesthesia. This elusive idea begins to emerge in his film music and becomes explicit in the score to *The Loves of Joanna Godden*, which Denham Studios’ music director Ernest Irving considered the best music the studio had ever had.

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## Notes

- 1 Vaughan Williams, 1996: 162
- 2 Swynnoe, 2002: 35
- 3 Vaughan Williams, 1996: 163
- 4 Ibid., 161
- 5 Ibid., 165
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Notes from the 1967 RCA recording of the Sinfonia Antartica, conducted by Andre Previn (BMG)
- 8 Richards, 1997: 289
- 9 Ibid., 311
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Richards, 1997: 311
- 12 The words are from *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*, one of the most celebrated sonnets in which Joanna Godden screenwriter H.E. Bates found inspiration for his novel *The Darling Buds of May*, which was published in 1958.
- 13 Jacobs, 1976: 313
- 14 Mark Duguid, at Screenonline (BFI), accessed January 2007
- 15 Michael Kennedy in the accompanying booklet to the 2006 Chandos premiere recording of a suite of the film’s score edited by Stephen Hogger (CHAN10368).

# Where *The Lark* Does Not Ascend

by Allan W. Atlas

This brief note addresses a glaring inconsistency in the reception of Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*. Although *The Lark* enjoys enormous popularity with those who listen to classical music on the radio in both the UK and the USA (here limited to New York City), and though it has certainly received its due on CDs, the work has been virtually ignored both by the New York Philharmonic and by major symphony orchestras that visit New York, as it has in the UK by, for example, the London Symphony Orchestra, which has paid it little more than lip service. What follows, then, examines and tries to account for this inconsistency.

That *The Lark Ascending* is a favourite with radio audiences seems clear enough: (1) when, in 2007, 2008 and 2009, the British commercial radio station Classic FM invited its listeners to nominate their favourite piece of classical music for "The Classic FM Hall of Fame", *The Lark Ascending* was the winner three years in succession; and (2) when the New York classical music station WQXR conducted a similar poll as part of its 2008-2009 "Classical Countdown", *The Lark* finished a perfectly respectable thirty-fifth in a contest in which Beethoven swept all four top spots (with the Ninth Symphony finishing in first place).<sup>1</sup>

Two other pieces of evidence, from outside the world of radio, further testify to *The Lark's* popularity. According to the nearly exhaustive lists of CDs at ArkivMusic.com, *The Lark* is available on seventy-three CDs, and thus stands in third place among Vaughan Williams' works, trailing only the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and the *Fantasia on Greensleeves*, which appear on seventy-eight and 132 CDs respectively. Finally, *The Lark's* popularity is such that Alvin Ailey choreographed it in 1972, since which time it has become a staple of his American Dance Theater and other companies (NYT 1972).

Now, given the popularity of *The Lark* with radio listeners, CD companies, and dance ensembles, we might think that the work would also do well with major American and British symphony orchestras. In fact, *it hasn't!* Although the New York Philharmonic has treated Vaughan Williams rather generously since Albert Coates conducted *A London Symphony* with the New York Symphony Society Orchestra on 30 December 1920 (this orchestra merged with the Philharmonic in 1928, and I treat them here as a single entity), *The Lark* has appeared on a Philharmonic program only twice: (1) Malcolm Sargent and Ruggiero Ricci at a "Romantic Promenade" on 15-16 June 1965 (thus outside the regular subscription season), and (2) David Robertson and Karen Gomyo at the annual Memorial Day concert at the Church of St John the Divine on 25 May 2009 (again, outside the subscription season and with tickets free of charge).<sup>2</sup> Beyond this, I can account for only one other New York appearance of the work on a program by a major orchestra: the visiting Houston Symphony performed it with John Barbirolli and the British violinist Ralph Holmes on 31 March 1966 (NYT 1966). In both instances, then, *The Lark* arrived in New York on the batons of conductors who enjoyed long and friendly associations with Vaughan Williams himself (and though Robertson is American-born, he studied at the

Royal College of Music). And that *The Lark* was not a frequent visitor to New York concert halls already caught the attention of two New York music critics as far back as the 1960s: in 1965, Raymond Ericson wrote that the work was performed "infrequently" (NYT 1965), while less than one year later Howard Klein referred to it as "seldom-heard" (NYT 1966).



As it happens, *The Lark* has not fared that much better with one of England's major ensembles, the London Symphony Orchestra. It was given on 1 April 1942 at the Cambridge Theatre, London, at a concert in aid of the RAF Benevolent Fund. Albert Heinig conducted and the soloist was Frederick Grinke, to whom Vaughan Williams dedicated his Violin Sonata in A minor and who premiered the work on a BBC broadcast on 12 October 1954. The work's next appearance was at the Barbican on 23 April 1986, with Elizabeth Parry as soloist and Maurice Hanford conducting. Then to December 2003, also at the Barbican, with Hilary Hahn and Colin Davis, who recorded the work for Deutsche Grammophon the following year. Davis conducted the work twice more, in Pisa in September 2008 and in Swansea the following month, both times with Andrew Haveron as soloist. (I am grateful to Ms. Libby Rice, Archivist, London Symphony Orchestra Archive, for providing this information.)

To return to the USA: perhaps two other concerts that hold a significant place in Vaughan Williams' reception in the United States are relevant in this respect, for they show *The Lark* taking a backseat to the *Tallis Fantasia* on both occasions. Thus when Vaughan Williams conducted the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra on 9 November 1954 in a concert of four of his own works during his residency at Cornell University (Ithaca, New York), it was *Tallis* that he chose to include (NYT 1954), and it was with *Tallis* that Ernest MacMillan and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Orchestra chose to represent Vaughan Williams at the concert that celebrated the sixteenth anniversary of the United Nations on 24 October 1961 (NYT 1961). This program also included music by Brahms and two twentieth-century composers: the Canadian Godfrey Ridout and the German Werner Egk.

Little wonder, then, that in eulogizing Vaughan Williams in 1958, Harold C. Schonberg, the long-time chief music critic for the NYT, noted that, with the exception of the well-known *Tallis Fantasia*, Vaughan Williams' music "is not too frequently played in America" (NYT 1958), an assessment that, in part, echoes a slightly earlier one by the English critic Ernest Newman: "He is mostly known abroad by his symphonies and specially [by] the grave and noble *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*" (NYT 1952). To call the question, then: why has *The Lark Ascending*, with its unarguable popularity on classical music radio stations and CDs, been virtually neglected by such major orchestras as the New York Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra? I will suggest three possible answers, each as speculative as the others, and none likely to stand as the sole reason by itself.

First, *The Lark* causes a programming problem in that it requires a solo violinist but fails to provide him or her with either the opportunity for Paganini-like technical fireworks or, since it runs no more than about fifteen minutes, even enough time on stage.<sup>3</sup> This has been solved by having the soloist perform another piece – Sargent and Ricci preceded *The Lark* with Chausson's *Poeme*, for example, while Barbirolli and Holmes paired it with Ravel's *Tzigane* – though it is a solution that some understandably find clumsy.

Second, perhaps *The Lark* just doesn't travel well. To draw on Ernest Newman again: "In the main, it is the English element in him that gives him such power over the minds of us English we get nowhere else in music the brooding beauty of the quiet English countryside. I can conceive his "Pastoral Symphony" and "The Lark Ascending" and "The Serenade to Music" and the "Fifth Symphony" and "The Pilgrim's Progress" speaking to the heart of men of other races; but I cannot conceive them flooding their souls with the same complex of emotions as they set up in the souls of us. Here, decidedly, we become conscious of frontiers facing the universal art." (NYT 1952)

To be sure, although Newman has been selective (in a very careful kind of way), he probably has a point: all of the works cited are characterized by a greater or lesser degree of the "pastorale" (and surely *The Lark* resides toward the greater end of the continuum), a style and an aesthetic idea that suffused so much English music of the early twentieth century (Perkins 1958, Frogley 1992, Saylor 2009). And with its added element of nationalism – it was, after all, English hills, dales, and (*pace* Mellers) New Jerusalems that constitutes the subject matter – this music was most at home *at home!*<sup>4</sup> Perhaps we can fathom just how Britain-bound the work's appeal is when we examine how *The Lark Ascending* and the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (with its own but very different nationalistic roots) fare in terms of being recorded by British and non-British orchestras and conductors. The difference is dramatic: whereas the all-British recordings of *The Lark* outnumber those with at least some non-British element 78% - 22%, the *Tallis Fantasia* is a 50% - 50% affair in that respect. We cannot, therefore, dismiss the notion that *The Lark's* nostalgic invocation of the English countryside may well make it a hard sell elsewhere. Indeed, the proverbial pond can sometimes be as wide as an ocean.

Finally, there is a third reason that might lead major orchestras to shy away from *The Lark*, its "easy-listening" associations. Together with the *Fantasia on "Greensleeves"* (as adapted by Ralph Greaves from Vaughan Williams' opera *Sir John in Love*), *The Lark Ascending* seems to have gained a reputation as musical "fluff", not quite worthy, perhaps, of being programmed together with the likes of Beethoven or other heavyweights from the predominantly Austro-German canon that has long formed the backbone of most orchestras' repertoires.<sup>5</sup> Signs of this lightweight status abound, perhaps most notably in the way *The Lark* is often marketed on CDs. Thus we have CDs with such titles as *Vaughan Williams Weekend* (part of a series called "Weekend Classics", Decca, 1992), *For A Rainy Day* (Decca, 2001, one of ten CDs by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields on which the work is included), and *Heavenly Adagios*, where it appears alongside the likes of Massenet's "Meditation" from *Thaïs* and Saint-Saëns' "The Swan" from *Carnival of the Animals*, that is, the kind of works that violinists and cellists, respectively, might use as encores, which, of course, major symphony orchestras do not customarily offer.

This impression is bolstered by *The Lark's* contest-winning status with Classic FM listeners. According to a blurb entitled "Our Value and Purpose" on the radio station's own website: "An extensive piece of research involving thousands of in-depth interviews, commissioned by Classic FM, identified that much of the success of Classic FM has come from a growing trend to seek environments that help cope with the stress of modern life. Classic FM seeks to improve the mood of the listener by providing an environment to relax, find balance and stir emotions. It's a mental breath of fresh air, restoring mind, body and spirit."

The point should be clear: if *The Lark* conjures up soothing, stress-relieving images of the grassy-green English countryside, it has also come to calm our spirits as we stand at our kitchen counter and prepare some green and grassy stuff in our salad bowl. Not for nothing was *The Lark's* only appearance at the New York Philharmonic part of a summertime "Romantic Promenade".

In the end, *The Lark* will no doubt remain one of Vaughan Williams' most popular pieces (it is certainly one of my favourites); but we should keep in mind that it does not ascend everywhere. In fact, there are some venues in which this particular *Lark* barely gets off the ground.

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## Notes

- 1 Launched in September 1992, Classic FM claims to be the most listened-to classical music radio station in the world. After finishing in tenth place in 2007, the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* came in third in 2008, just behind the Rachmaninov Concerto No. 2.

For those unfamiliar with WQXR, the radio station of *The New York Times* (NYT), the following provides a snapshot of a typical month's worth of programming. During the period 2 March – 30 March, Vaughan Williams was programmed 18 times. To put that into perspective, we might compare his representation with that of four contemporaries: Ravel (27 times), Sibelius (19), Respighi (19), and Schoenberg (1). As for the "Three Bs": Bach (63), Beethoven (78), and Brahms (38).

- 2 I am grateful to Mr. Richard Wandel, Associate Archivist, Archives of the New York Philharmonic, Lincoln Center, New York, for all data concerning past performances by the New York Philharmonic. I am likewise grateful to Mr. Matias Tarnopolsky, Vice-President of Artistic Planning, and Mr. Daniel Boico of that same department, for providing me with advance notice of the performance on 29 May 2009.

Over the years, the New York Philharmonic has treated Vaughan Williams rather well, with performances of 25 of his works on 99 separate programs, and with the most frequently programmed work being the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (27 times), followed by the Second and Fourth Symphonies (16 times each). Once again, we might put these numbers into perspective by comparing them with those for the same four contemporaries of Vaughan Williams (see note 1). Though Vaughan Williams stands up well against Respighi (21 works on 102 programs) and Schoenberg (22/80), he pales in comparison to both Sibelius (32/269, with the Violin Concerto in D minor appearing 40 times) and Ravel (34/497, with *La Valse* and *Boléro* appearing 77 and 45 times, respectively). Still another statistic of interest: in a survey of repertoires presented by 620 American orchestras (thus small regional and amateur orchestra in addition to the "majors") during the 1969-1970 season, Vaughan Williams finished a very impressive seventeenth (with some 150 performances) in terms of most performances of music by twentieth-century composers (Prokofiev led the way with about 475); see Gilmore 1993, p. 230 (my thanks to Adam Krims, University of Nottingham, for calling my attention to this article). I take closer look at these numbers in an in-progress study entitled "Vaughan Williams's *Tallis Fantasy*: Three 'New World' Adventures".

- 3 We might compare *The Lark* in this respect with such standard-fare violin concertos as those by Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Bruch: Nathan Milstein takes 39:08 and 36:11 for Beethoven and Brahms, respectively (with William Steinberg and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, EMI 67584 [2001]); Joshua Bell gets through Mendelssohn and Bruch in 29:10 and 25:38, respectively (with Neville Marriner and the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London 421 145-2 [1998]). Clearly, that *The Lark* offers the soloist only about fifteen, less-than-dazzling minutes on stage not only steals some of his or her thunder, but also effects the orchestra in its pocketbook: less "bang for the buck" (or the pound sterling).
- 4 As is well known, Vaughan Williams based the work on the eponymous poem by George Meredith. Note that the published score of *The Lark* (Oxford University Press, 1925) provides only twelve of Meredith's 122 lines: 1-4, 65-70, and 121-122. The poem was originally published in Edmund Clarence Stedman, *A Victorian Anthology, 1837-1895: Selections Illustrating the Editor's Critical Review of British Poetry in the Reign of Victoria* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1895; reprinted New York: Bartleby, 2001); the anthology is available online at <http://www.books.google.com/books?id=4fcrAAAAYAAJ&printersec=frontcover&dq=A+victoria+nanthology,+1837-1895#PPA374m1>.
- 5 A survey of New York Philharmonic programs for four seasons chosen entirely at random – 1942-1943, 1954-1955, 1961-1962, and 1970-1971 – shows that the Austro-German repertory from Bach through the Second Viennese School constituted 49% of the pieces performed (Shanet 1975, pp. 499-503, 588-92, 642-46, 729-31); four decades later it constitutes exactly the same percentage for the 2009-2010 season (at least according to pre-season announcements). As for compositions for violin and orchestra, the 1942-1943, 1954-1955, 1961-1962, and 1970-1971 seasons featured concertos by Bartók (2 times), Beethoven (3), Brahms (3), Bruch No. 1 (2) Dvořák, Kreisler, Mendelssohn (2), Mozart Nos. 3 and 5, Prokofiev No. 2 (2), Sibelius, and Tchaikovsky (2), in addition to which there were single performances of Bartók's *Rhapsody*, Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*, and Ravel's *Tzigane*. Finally, those same seasons included Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (6, 8-9 April 1943, 29 August 1943, 1-2, 4 March 1962), Symphony No. 4 (6, 8 January 1943, 5 September 1955). Vaughan Williams went unrepresented in 1970-1971; nor has anything by him been announced for 2009-2010.

## Crossword Solutions:

**Across:** 1. Juliette, 4. Fen, 6. Dos, 7. Willow, 8. Davies, 9. VR, 13. Ye, 14. Boldre, 17. Jarred, 18. Hoe, 19. Boy, 20. Reznicek.

**Down:** 1. John Dory, 2. Easter, 3. Town (*Scarborough Town, Little Town Boy, Orton Town*), 4. Full, 5. New, 6. Devil, 10. Roderick, 11. Judge, 12. Pochin, 15. Army, 16. Idle, 17. Job

# The Joy of Playing the Music of Vaughan Williams

*by Linda Hayward*

As a member of a local orchestra I enjoy making music on a regular basis. The orchestra endeavours to play concerts three times a year and tries to raise money for local charities.

Like other musicians we wanted to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Vaughan Williams' death in 2008 and two works were chosen. These were *The Wasps Overture* and *Symphony No 5 in D*.

Playing 2nd clarinet can be great fun, but one rarely gets the tune, because if there are any woodwind solos the principal players – 1st flute, 1st oboe, 1st clarinet and 1st bassoon – usually get them. The job of a 2nd clarinet is usually to support the 1st clarinet and the woodwind section in harmony, rhythm, or timbre adding to the general orchestral sound.

Because the clarinet was not invented until roughly the classical period of musical history, Haydn and Mozart are the earliest symphonic composers an orchestral clarinetist is likely to play. Composers of this period tend to use the instrument to bolster the overall sound with chords and long notes, although Mozart used the instrument more in his chamber music. Use of the clarinet becomes more interesting as music progresses through the rest of the nineteenth century. The symphonies of Brahms contain more use of clarinet within the orchestra and Dvořák is a composer who makes sure that everyone has something interesting to play. Russian composers like the extreme upper notes and fluidity of the instrument, which makes playing interesting and a challenge.

When it comes to playing any twentieth-century music it is usually more complicated and extremely challenging technically. In the past we have played some works of Elgar, with success. The *Enigma Variations*, *Sea Pictures* and the *Concerto for Cello in E minor* being particularly pleasing to play, as well as the *Cockaigne Overture* and *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*.

We had played some music by Vaughan Williams in the past, mainly the *English Folksong Suite*, *The Lark Ascending*, and *A London Symphony*. The *Folksong Suite* is great fun, the *Lark* does not give the 2nd clarinet much to play, but what is played must sound wonderful. The symphony was a challenge technically, involving high notes and very fluent fingers, especially in the *Scherzo* as it is very fast in tempo. However not all members of the orchestra were part of it at the time we played these pieces, so it was going to be a learning curve for most of us.

*The Wasps* looked straightforward at first glance and soon we were getting to grips with rhythm and notes. As there are two main tunes in the overture it was interesting to see which instruments were given them at different times throughout the piece. After the initial introduction of buzzing sounds, the first tune in quavers and semi-quavers is given to the 1st clarinet and bassoon. The 2nd clarinet is then given the tune for two bars before the oboes, bassoons, and 1st clarinet join in again. In this respect Vaughan Williams is very generous to the orchestral players who play "supporting roles". Later he gives the 2nd clarinet important interplay of the tune between other members of the orchestra instead of giving them the same rhythm as the 1st clarinet or supporting chords or long notes. There are a few tricky and

exposed parts for the 2nd clarinet player within the overture. One of these is when instruments need to dovetail a tune between each other. The bassoon starts playing the tune, which is passed on to the 2nd clarinet, and in turn, to the 1st clarinet, 1st oboe, and flutes gradually going up the range of each instrument from the low sound of the bassoons to the high sound of the flutes. This must be seamless, so that the audience is not aware of how many players are taking part, only aware of the tune rising from the depths to the heights. This is one of the hardest things for players to accomplish as it requires complete confidence in one's own part and fitting it together with one's fellow musicians'. Another place in the piece, which is important for the 2nd clarinet player, is the three bars before the orchestra reprises the very beginning of the work. The tempo has become slower and the three bars in question involve only 1st and 2nd clarinets, 1st bassoon and harps. The rhythms are not difficult but there are a number of accidentals. It is also marked to be played very quietly. The challenge is one of tuning and beauty of tone, which in this case must be ravishing, thus giving the music its magical quality.

The *Symphony No. 5*, being a bigger and mature work was going to be a different matter. However we tackled it, once more working at the rhythm, notes, and changes of key. Unlike the *London Symphony*, the range of notes used in the clarinet parts were not "up in the gods" but accidentals and changes of key kept one's brain working, just as one got used to being in a certain key it would change to another. As the clarinet is a transposing instrument it had stranger key signatures than most of the orchestra. As we got to know the symphony better we found how different it was from the overture in that it was so multi-layered. Within the woodwind section the 2nd clarinet could be playing the same rhythm as the 2nd oboe, 1st bassoon and 1st flute, but not necessarily the 1st clarinet, as one would expect in most pieces of music the orchestra played. One also found that the 2nd clarinet could be playing with the cellos, violas or even the violins at a vital point, so nothing could be taken for granted.

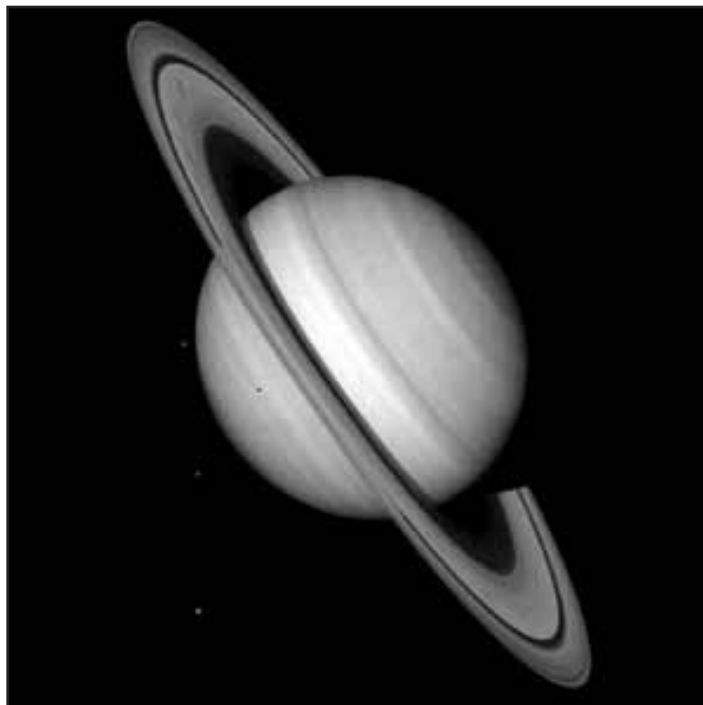
The changes of tempo within each movement as well as the use of dynamics, loud, soft, and all the graduations in between produced the moods needed at any given time, and the relationship between all the movements to each other showed the architecture of the piece. Having worked at the technicalities of one's own part and knowing how that part fitted in with the rest of the orchestra, I and my fellow musicians got a good working knowledge of the symphony, but this is not all that is needed for a performance.

Even if one is sure of the technicalities and does everything that is printed on the page of music, it is not enough. One has to engage imagination and emotions and by some miracle when everyone in the orchestra does the same this telepathy translates into a musical and magical outpouring of the composer's work and can cause the audience to be moved. When this occurs the satisfaction one gets is better than any drug in the world. Being in the middle of an orchestra surrounded by the music and orchestral sound is a wonderful experience. It is different from listening to music as part of an audience. The music is known from the inside, which gives one a better understanding of the composer's art.

So what makes playing Vaughan Williams' music such a joy? About half of the orchestra had never played a symphony of his, nor indeed any of his music before, and it was interesting how individual attitudes to the music changed as we worked at the pieces. At first the sight-reading and technical demands were likely to make some members wonder what the orchestra had taken on, but as we continued, comments about how beautiful the slow movement was, and how exciting the *Scherzo* was, were heard.

Of course those who knew Vaughan Williams' music were thrilled at the chance of being able to play the *Fifth Symphony*. I thought I *knew* it, but I didn't. The real joy comes from the participation with other musicians in a marvellous piece of music written by my favourite composer. Playing it gives one an understanding of the music at a much deeper level, so that when one hears it played again the enjoyment is even greater.

So what are we doing this summer? *The Planets*, by a certain Gustav Holst, is on the programme. Another opportunity to play a special piece of music but this time the sky is the limit or are we reaching for the stars?



## Short Notes for Contributors

**Editing the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society Journal is a privilege and a pleasure, but the time required is not always easy to find in a busy life. Please help by reading and respecting these simple guidelines.**

- 1 All submissions, however presented, are welcome and receive equal attention, but email or disc is preferred. Hard copy, typed or handwritten, always requires retyping which takes time and can lead to mistakes.
- 2 Please try to submit your piece as early as possible, especially if it is in hard copy.
- 3 Keep the layout simple. Leave a clear line between paragraphs, but let me decide what should be in smaller or larger type and so on. Please keep the margins constant throughout the piece.
- 4 Try to avoid footnotes. Supplementary information is better incorporated into the text. If you want to cite sources of information a list of sources at the end is better for the purposes of our Journal than a footnote after each quote.
- 5 Please refer to Vaughan Williams by his name rather than by his initials.
- 6 If you are planning a big piece, get in touch first to make sure no one else is preparing something similar.
- 7 Whether contributing an article, review or a letter, please include your address and, where applicable, your email address.

# A Century On

by *Simon Coombs*

Under this title, the *Journal* will be publishing brief accounts of the works of Vaughan Williams as they reach the centenaries of their first performances. Three important pieces were first heard during November 1909 and we introduce two of these in this edition of the *Journal*.

## *String Quartet No. 1*

A private performance of the quartet took place at a meeting of the Society of British Composers on 8 November 1909; this was followed a week later by the work's first public performance, at the Aeolian Hall in New Bond Street, London. The Schwiller Quartet were the artists on both occasions. The work was revised in 1921 and first performed in this version in March 1922.

The quartet was written during 1908, immediately after Vaughan

Williams' three-month period of study with Ravel in Paris. Those who wish to search for traces of the French fever to which the composer later referred (and some have claimed to hear the influence of Debussy as well) can choose from recordings by the Medici Quartet on Nimbus, the Maggini Quartet on Naxos and the English Quartet on Unicorn Kanchana. The Maggini are probably the first choice, both in terms of value for money, and for an insightful performance in good quality recording.



**Maggini  
Quartet**

## *On Wenlock Edge*

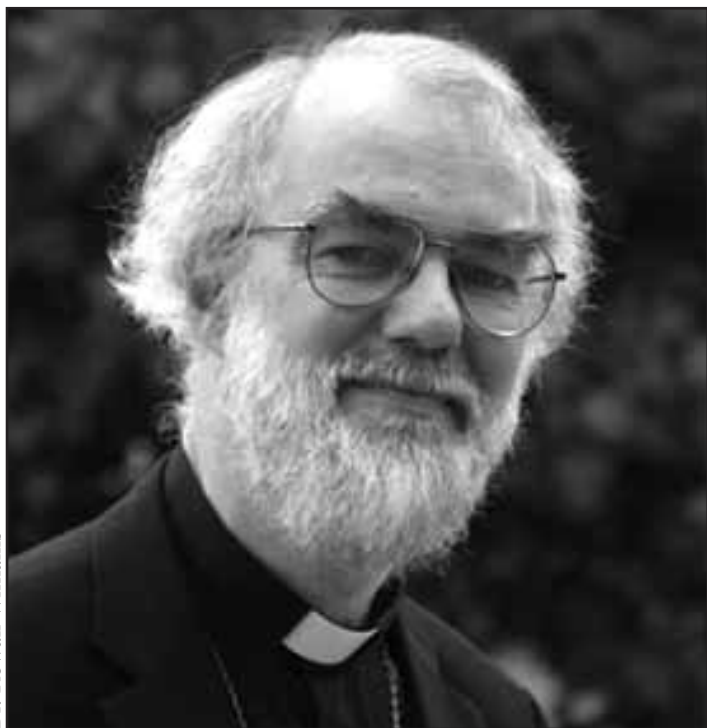
The same concert at the Aeolian Hall on 15 November 1909 was the occasion of the first performance of this wonderful song-cycle, setting six poems of A. E. Housman. The tenor was Gervase Elwes and the pianist was Frederick Kiddle, together with the Schwiller Quartet. The audience would surely have recognised that this was authentically English music, no matter how much Vaughan Williams had absorbed of "French polish" in the past.

There are a number of excellent recordings of *On Wenlock Edge*. If readers of the *Journal* prefer the orchestral version of the cycle, which the composer made after the First World War, they cannot go wrong with Ian Bostridge, accompanied by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Haitink, on a CD which also contains a fine reading of the Sixth Symphony. For the 1909 score, Ian Partridge with the Music Group of London on EMI is hard to beat; this British Composers series CD also offers the *Four Hymns* of 1920 and the *Ten Blake Songs*.



Ian Partridge

**On 8 October 2008, in Canterbury Cathedral, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, delivered a sermon in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams. This is the text of what he said.**



Dr. Rowan Williams

In 1943, the Dean and Chapter of one of the English cathedrals, which had better be nameless for these purposes, proposed to abolish the singing of the canticles at evening prayer in the cathedral. As you can imagine there was a certain amount of uproar, not only from musicians, but from some clergy. The organist in question wrote a letter to the most distinguished musician of the day in the United Kingdom, Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams. And Vaughan Williams replied: “I hope very much that you will win your fight with the Dean and Chapter. I hasten to add I am not attempting to stir up sedition in this cathedral. These people do not seem to realise that music has also its nobilities and its indecencies.

Yet they permit and even encourage such indecencies in music for the sake of bringing people to church. We must beat this ecclesiastical totalitarianism somehow, but we can only do so by confining ourselves to what is really noble in our cathedral repertory. You know, of course, as well as I do that many of our canticles and anthems are vicious, theatrical, mechanical or intolerably smug. Unless we can root these out of our services, we shall give the enemy cause to blaspheme. Please make any use you like of this letter.”

One thing that remarkable letter makes abundantly clear is that Vaughan Williams took the church seriously: he took its music seriously and he took its people seriously. It is the basis on which he had worked ever since he had collaborated with Percy Dearmer in the production of the *English Hymnal*, so many years before in 1905. There he had worked on the assumption – which he fully shared with the other editors of that great collection – that Christian people deserved the best in their musical experience because *people* did deserve the best. It was all of a piece with the commitment which again Vaughan Williams shared with the other editors of the *English Hymnal*, the commitment to enrich the experience of ordinary people as part of a programme of social renewal and justice for this nation. It is an extraordinarily ambitious programme for a hymn book, and yet that is what its

editors believed. And Vaughan Williams believed all this although his own relation to the Christian faith was at best a little vague. His wife Ursula in her wonderful biography of Ralph said that at school and at university he had been a convinced atheist but later drifted into a “cheerful agnosticism”. And yet that doesn’t seem to be the whole story. Ralph Vaughan Williams’ doctrinal commitments would not have borne very close scrutiny, undoubtedly. But as you listen to the *Mass in G minor* or the *Five Mystical Songs*, or the great *Tallis Fantasia*, “cheerful agnosticism” seems to miss out something. It misses out the *seriousness* of the composer. He wanted to do justice to the humanity gathered in a church or a cathedral, even if he wasn’t very sure about the divinity.

He wanted to recognise that to worship in church is to enter a larger world, to inhabit a mysterious, challenging and almost unbelievably exhilarating as well as sobering environment, from which you emerge with a sense of yourself and your environment transfigured. That is what he believed church ought to be like – he, a cheerful agnostic.

In other words, he had higher expectations and higher hopes of church worship than a great many cheerful, or not so cheerful, believers. And perhaps that is one of the words which his life and his work address to us this morning as we give such hearty thanks for the wonderful contribution he made to the imaginative and the spiritual life of countless people, believers and unbelievers.

He believed that the best could be drawn from all kinds of sources. In the *English Hymnal* he pursued that wonderfully fruitful policy of finding the most haunting and beautiful of English folk tunes to set to familiar and unfamiliar words. He believed that there was a kind of musical wisdom in people’s ordinary lives, which would lead them to connect what was beautiful in their experience, what was haunting and deep, with the words of faith. And if we now sing hymns that perhaps we rather take for granted, to tunes that we take for granted, it is easy to forget how revolutionary, just over a century ago, it was to pursue this programme of fitting words (not always words of great excellence, but words of faith at least) to the familiar tunes of the English, and Welsh and Irish and Scottish countryside. “I heard the voice of Jesus say” is not in every way a hugely distinguished hymn, yet set to Vaughan Williams’ tune, *Kingsfold*, drawn from his favourite folk song, it is completely unforgettable and devastating to the emotions (to speak personally for a moment.)

So what is going on when a “cheerful agnostic” so quarries the depths of the human soul and so opens up lives to God? I wonder if this morning’s gospel gives us a clue about that. The king gives a wedding banquet for his son and he sends his slaves to issue the invitations. And all across the world where the slaves go to deliver the invitations, they are met with indifference. This banquet is not really worth disturbing our ordinary lives for. This invitation is not really important enough for us to stir out of our habits. We remain at our ordinary level of boredom and more or less satisfaction. We don’t recognise, in other words, that to attend the king’s banquet is to accept the offer of a humanity and a divine welcome, unimaginable to day-to-day life.

They made light of it and went away, one to his farm and another to his business. The king’s response is dramatic. Those who refused the invitation are attacked and killed and their city is burned. The king then looks around at his slaves and says, “Now let’s start again” and sends people out into the highways and byways of the city, to issue the invitation again, this time to those

who are hungry enough and needy enough to know that change for them would be a welcome thing. And they come, they flood in, and the king, the eagle-eyed and rather disagreeable king, notices one there without a wedding garment – someone who has come without the signs of joy and gratitude about him. And he says, “What are you doing here? Do you understand what you are coming to?” “And he was speechless.” It is a brutal parable. Like so many of Jesus’ parables, the last thing it is, is what you might call “cuddly” in its impact. It is Jesus saying to us as sharply as he possibly could that the invitation to grace and love and healing really, really matters. And if you say “I don’t want grace and love and healing”, well, think of the consequences.

But I am fascinated by the man without a wedding garment. He turns up, as it were, saying “Whatever. I might as well...” and he doesn’t carry with him the signs of joy and celebration. And I think it is possible that someone like Vaughan Williams with all his doctrinal uncertainty, his cheerful or not so cheerful agnosticism, would at least have turned up wearing a wedding garment. He knew that it mattered, and he knew a little of why it mattered. He knew that it mattered for human beings to accept the invitation to celebrate, to be joyful, and to be transfigured by beauty. And he knew that human beings would never be the human beings they were meant to be unless they were able to say, “Yes”, to that

invitation and to recognise how they would never be themselves without the beauty of love and holiness.

He knew about wedding garments. He knew *that* it mattered even if he wasn’t quite sure *why* it mattered. Most of us insiders in the church probably think we know why it matters but sometimes we don’t give the impression that we know *that* it matters. Hence, the challenge to us today. In the sublimity, the joy, the overflowing abundance of Vaughan Williams’ genius, perhaps God is saying to us something of what our Lord says in that parable – this matters. Your future is potentially more glorious, more joyful and more demanding than you could believe. The beauty of what happens when we gather together for worship is a sign, just one sign but an important sign of this. Say yes to that and you will say yes to life. Say no to that and you will say no to life.

So, as we celebrate our cheerful agnostic ally this morning, that man who so effectively in the letter that I quoted at the beginning, resists an ecclesiastical totalitarianism which wants to make church boring, as we give thanks for him, let us pray that God will continue to stimulate and needle us into the acknowledgement of how much we need beauty, breathless excitement and vision in our worship and in our lives. Let us remember that it matters, as well as why it matters.

## RVW, Email and the Internet

Thanks are due to those members who have responded positively to the request to provide email addresses. Email is a cheap and convenient way of communicating and the Society invites members to pass their email addresses on to the Membership Officer, David Betts, whose contact details are to be found on the front page. All information pertaining to members is of course held in strict confidence and is used only by the Society.

Please don’t forget the Society’s website which received a positive write-up in *The Times* recently. Type ‘Vaughan Williams’ into the best known internet search engine and our site is the first result to come up. It is a high quality site with far too many features to mention here. Members are urged to visit and see for themselves.

[www.rvwsociety.com](http://www.rvwsociety.com)



## STYLISH BINDERS NOW AVAILABLE

As members of the RVW Society we are justly proud of our Journal. Specially commissioned for RVW’s fiftieth anniversary year, our handsome binders are custom made for the Society in black with the Journal logo in gold on the spine. Each one holds 12 issues (*four years’ worth*) with easy-to-use elasticated cords.

The price is unchanged at £12.50 each, incl. p&p.


Please send your order to: Binder Offer, The RVW Society, c/o 24 Birdcroft Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6EQ, UK. Cheques should be made payable to The RVW Society.




# Albion Records announces the release of *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons*

Stephen Connock informs us that the new recording of *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons* will be released on 27 July, 2009. It will be available to members from Mark Hammett (albionmrh@btinternet.com) for £10.00 plus p and p from 1 August, 2009. Stephen added that this recording would not have been possible without the support of almost sixty members who generously donated nearly £10,000 towards the cost of the recording. He sends these members his sincere thanks. On the recording, the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge and the Dmitri Ensemble are conducted by Sir David Willcocks. The recording is being issued to mark the 90th birthday of Sir David in December of this year. The coupling is the version for women's chorus of *In Windsor Forest*. Both works are world premiere recordings.

new release




ALBION RECORDS



Albion Records wishes  
**Sir David Willcocks**  
a very happy 90th birthday on 30 December, 2009





To mark the occasion, Albion is proud to release a new CD of Sir David conducting the world premiere recordings of two major works by Vaughan Williams: *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons* and the arrangement of *In Windsor Forest* for women's choir.



**Choir of Clare College, Cambridge with Dmitri Ensemble**  
conducted by  
**Sir David Willcocks**

ALBCD010

Also available on Albion Records:

 <p>Rare Songs from the Operas ALB001 <i>Editors' Choice, Gramophone, March 2008</i></p>	 <p>Twenty early songs on ALB002 <i>'An hour's worth of pretty much unbridled pleasure' Gramophone, September, 2008</i></p>	 <p>RVW conducts his Serenade to Music on ALB009 <i>'exquisite' BBC Music Magazine, September 2008</i></p>	 <p>Songs for mixed chorus on ALB006 <i>'eminently appealing' Gramophone, April 2009</i></p>
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## REMINDERS

We try to keep our list of members' e-mail addresses as accurate as possible, so if you have cancelled or changed yours in the last year or so, please send an email to the Membership Officer, David Betts, at davidbetts@tudorcottage.plus.com with your updated address. We sometimes e-mail members with last-minute details of concerts, amongst other matters of interest, that miss inclusion in the Journal, but we can only include you if we have your correct address. You can be assured that we are very careful about privacy issues and do not pass on your contact details to third parties. Thank you.

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We would like to remind members that details of forthcoming concerts are listed on the Society's website: [www.rvwsociety.com](http://www.rvwsociety.com) in the very useful "Concerts" section.

# Letters

*We are always pleased to receive contributions for this page*

## **RVW in St. Petersburg**

We can thank Vaughan Williams for the idea of a British Music Festival in St Petersburg. But not really for the right reason!

My collaborator, Rudi Eastwood, the Festival Director, was studying conducting at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire five years ago and was shocked to realise none of his fellow students had heard of Vaughan Williams. You need to go to this beautiful city to understand the reason for this. Audiences are fixated on Tchaikovsky and the Russian greats. They literally do not hear much other music except from rare visiting players.

I spent over a month, in late 2007, overseeing the first Festival. The winter arrived while I was there. The Nevsky river froze during an afternoon concert! Snow fell and melted before remaining hard on the ground. It is a magical time of the year; the city, largely free of tourists that attract thieves in their hundreds, is left to enjoy a full season of concerts, operas and ballets.

Rudi and I had met on a Sibelius project in London some years earlier, and when he contacted me out of the blue from St. Petersburg I readily agreed to help launch this Festival. Musical ideas were not in short supply. Money, as always, was. The Festival contained twelve concerts. Rudi had the mad idea of conducting the *Sinfonia Antartica* with the Capella Orchestra in their hall near to the Hermitage Museum. I say mad, but I should say inspired. It would not have been my first choice of a Vaughan Williams symphony for the Festival but when I heard those sonorous opening chords at the first rehearsal I knew he had been right.

Russian orchestras still sound different to those we are used to in the flesh or on CD. The strings retain a dark sound and the brass still wobbles delightfully. The point of the Festival was to persuade Russians to play British (mainly English) music in front of their audiences as they so rarely do. Why is this? Only the Elgar Cello Concerto is heard regularly because soloists have such a limited repertoire.

Perhaps the main reason is that parts/scores of British music are hard to obtain in Russia. International publishers discovered to their cost many years ago that parts sent to Russia often never returned. Rudi and I took all the parts for three orchestral concerts and counted them back! It cost a fortune in excess baggage but it was (and is) the only way.

The Festival contained music by twelve living composers, six of whom attended. Recordings for home consumption were made of many of the concerts including the Vaughan Williams symphony, which was coupled with music by John Ireland and Peter Maxwell Davies.

In November 2009, for the second Festival of nine concerts, we include, in our string concert, the wonderful *Tallis Fantasia* (my mother was a Tallis so it is a no-brainer!), for me the most glorious music by an Englishman alongside *Spem in alium*, which we also include in an *a capella* concert together with a Festival

commission of a new 40-part motet by a British composer living in St Petersburg, Marcus Tristan Heathcock. There will be three more world premieres and the music of ten living composers keeping company with Britten, Elgar, Tippett, Arnold, Alwyn, Walton, Simpson, Hurlstone and Holst.

Vaughan Williams was a great encourager of younger composers and I would like to think we are keeping alive his aspirations and heritage in a foreign land.

[Further details can be found on [www.britishmusicfest.co.uk](http://www.britishmusicfest.co.uk) or by e-mail from the author, [ainola@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ainola@blueyonder.co.uk)]

*Edward Clark (Festival Producer),  
London.*

## **News Items**

I thought members might be interested in the following news items.

First, a small archive of photographs belonging to the family of Vally Lasker has been donated to the Holst Birthplace Museum by her great nephew Philip, in memory of his father Norman Oliver-Frisch. Among them is a previously unknown photograph of Holst and performers at the first of his Whitsun Festivals at Thaxted in 1916.

Philip and his wife Annie have also contributed a memoir, to which an appendix has been added listing twenty-one works by Holst and Vaughan Williams in which Miss Lasker was involved, whether as arranger, co-arranger or amanuensis. Seventeen of her arrangements were published, including Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony*, the *Piano Concerto*, *Job* and (with Helen Bidder) *The Running Set*. Later this year, the Museum will include the photographs in an exhibition of recent acquisitions.

Second, in the course of the Birmingham Royal Ballet's two-week tour of China, the Royal Ballet Sinfonia took time off to give two concerts, one on 16 January at the new concert hall in Beijing, the other on 22 January in Shanghai. At both, *The Lark Ascending* was performed, with Robert Gibbs as soloist. Back in 1941, on 12 March, Robert's mother Vivienne and her sister, violinist Thirza Whysall, played the same piece at a Royal College of Music students' concert with the composer present. Vivienne's copy has suggestions pencilled in her piano reduction by Vaughan Williams, who afterwards showed his gratitude by putting his arms round the girls and referring to them as "Billy Reed's sisters"!

*Alan Gibbs  
Twickenham, UK*

## **RVW Tributes**

Members will surely be interested to know that a rare opportunity has arisen to acquire a remarkable collection of tributes to Vaughan Williams which has up till now been fairly difficult to come by. The publication is entitled *Tributes to Vaughan Williams – 50 years on*, and is a reprint of the Royal College of Music Magazine, Easter Term, 1959 (vol. LV/1). It is described as follows: "This volume reprints the Royal College of Music Magazine from Easter 1959, which gathered together tributes to Ralph Vaughan Williams from people who had known him

throughout his life – not only a host of well-known personalities but also family members, school friends and army colleagues, and even his grateful cook. Their combined insights paint a truly fascinating picture of one of British music’s most endearing personalities.” Contributors include Genia Hornstein, Henry Stegges (A WW1 army colleague) and Vaughan Williams’ cook, Edna Harling; a great array of professional colleagues such as Adrian Boult, Roy Douglas, Keith Faulkner, Imogen Holst, Jean Stewart and Grace Williams; and relatives such as his cousin, Lady Diana Montgomery-Massingberd; and, of course, Ursula.

It is a splendid collection of informal, generous and sincere anecdotal material, some much quoted in later writings and a constant source of fascination for anyone interested in the composer and his music. The magazine is reproduced in A4 format with a stout cover. There are sixty pages, as well as an additional preface by the RCM Director, Colin Lawson, and with notes on contributors.

This collection is available at £5.00 + postage from Pamela Thompson, Chief Librarian, Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BS. Telephone [44] 20 7591 4323, fax [44] 20 7591 4326 or email.

Graham Muncy,  
Wokingham,  
Berkshire, U.K.

#### Ol’ Blue Eyes

I found the following information concerning Vaughan Williams’ popularity in a biography of Frank Sinatra by Charles L Granata. On page 93 he writes “His [Frank Sinatra] all time favourite, though, was Ralph Vaughan Williams, who he would often listen to late in the evening, on his rare off hours.” I thought this was extremely interesting, and wanted to share it with members of the Society.

Linda Hayward,  
Dover, U.K.

#### New RVW Work Published

The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust has authorized the publication by Promethean Editions in New Zealand of the hitherto unpublished incidental music written by Vaughan Williams for the pageant based on *Pilgrim’s Progress*. It has now been published and is I gather available through United Music Publishers. This music contains some seeds of the later opera and I would imagine RVW Society members would be interested to know of its availability.

Hugh Cobbe  
Director, The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust  
Newbury, Berkshire, U.K.

#### A French Member Writes

I was more than happy to attend the first of four stage performances of *Riders to the Sea* in Paris, produced by Christian Gangneron, with the Orchestre du Grand Théâtre de Reims conducted by Jean-Luc Tingaud. France has not done very much so far to play our composer's main works, so this initiative must be greeted as an event. The production travelled to many places in France, before landing for four performances in the beautiful Théâtre de l’Athénée-Louis Jovet in Paris, whose director, Patrice Martinet, is very keen to have rare chamber operas perfectly fitted for the place.

As an overture, Gangneron chose *Songs of Travel*, beautifully sung by Patrice Verdelet, in front of the curtain, where words, in English and French, were projected. With no interval, the opera followed, with a production the reviews (very enthusiastic) described as “Bergman-like”.

Jacqueline Mayeur was a wonderful Maurya, with the great intensity of this major part, perfectly seconded by the sisters (Elsa Levy and Sevan Manoukian), and the women's voices of Choeur Thibaud de Champagne. The theatre was fully booked for the premiere, and hopefully again for the last three performances.

Patrice Chevy,  
Garches, France.

## Concert Reviews

#### A Birmingham Serenade

On Sunday afternoon, March 8th, Vaughan Williams’ *Serenade to Music* was included in a concert given in the Birmingham Town Hall by the English Concert Singers, English Concert Chorus, and English Concert Orchestra, conducted by their founder, Dr. Roy Wales. This was by way of a twentieth anniversary celebration for the Singers and Chorus. The Orchestra is twenty years older. The concert commenced with Mendelssohn’s *Hebrides* Overture, and concluded with the mighty Brahms *German Requiem*.

The Mendelssohn was included to celebrate the composer’s centenary year, and also to remind us that he conducted the first performance of *Elijah* in this same hall, just a year before his death. I must be a glutton for punishment, as this was the third

time I had attended a performance of the *Serenade* by amateur/semi-professional forces in the last year.

I have been unable to find much on the Internet about this orchestra, but it seems to be something entirely separate from the English Concert, which performs Baroque music under Trevor Pinnock and others. However, I was most impressed at how professional the orchestra sounded throughout the concert.

After the Mendelssohn, a procession of additional brass instruments appeared on the stage. I was unaware until then of how small an orchestra Mendelssohn called for – no trombones, for a start.

The version of the *Serenade* given was the one the composer authorised for chorus only. A solo soprano voice appears for a few bars, and very well the unnamed lady did too. The balance was good, and both orchestra and choir performed superbly, the strings just before “soft stillness” being particularly moving. To my mind the work loses a great deal without the soloists, but perhaps this is to be expected, as it was originally composed with sixteen specific vocalists in mind. But it is understandable that Vaughan Williams authorised alternative versions, otherwise performances of this beautiful work would be very rare indeed.

The performance did not flag. At fourteen minutes it was rather on the quick side, and it was most enthusiastically received by the audience. The hall was about eighty per cent full. It seems that Vaughan Williams doesn't frighten people off any more. Incidentally, this was the first piece the orchestra and choir performed together, in 1989 in Lichfield.

After the interval we had a breathtaking performance of the *German Requiem*, a piece I love but had never heard live. What an experience! But I'll say no more as these columns are dedicated to Vaughan Williams' works.

In closing I feel I must say something about the restored Town Hall. It is a beautiful building, now done out in Wedgwood blue and cream inside, and absolutely reeking with musical history. There have been so many first performances here since it was opened in the 1840s – Mendelssohn, Elgar and Dvorak being amongst those closely associated with this historic venue.

As a postscript, I would add that in my revue in the February issue of the *Dona Nobis Pacem* performance in Leicester I seem to have omitted the name of the Romanesque venue. It was the Church of St. James the Greater, London Road, a popular concert venue in the city.

*Michael J Gainsford*

### ***Riders in Paris and London***

It was in Paris in 1897 that J. M. Synge first met Yeats and Maud Gonne. At a meeting in her apartment on the subject of the Irish League, Yeats suggest that Synge should visit the Aran Islands. Synge took this advice in the spring of 1898 and immediately fell under the spell of this wild and beautiful landscape. He was particularly drawn to the people of the islands; for their resilience, intensity, independence and “divine simplicity”, qualities that he characterised as “the artistic beauty of medieval life.” Synge showed remarkable empathy for the islanders humanity and struggle and it was during his third visit to Aran in 1899 that he witnessed the incident that he would later adapt as the story for *Riders to the Sea*:

*Now a man has been washed ashore in Donegal with one pampooty on him, and a striped shirt with a purse in one of the pockets, and a box for tobacco. For three days the people here have been trying to fix his identity. Some think it is a man from the island, others think that the man from the south answers the description more exactly. Tonight as we were returning from the slip, we met the mother of the man who was drowned from this island, still weeping and looking out over the sea...*

Just as Synge's imagination had been fired by the interchange of landscape and human disaster on the Aran Islands, so too was Vaughan Williams moved by the powerful story of a mother's loss

of all her sons to the sea. He had already explored the relationship between humanity and the sea, albeit in Whitman's more generalised metaphors, in *A Sea Symphony* of 1910. Much later, he would return to the theme of man and implacable nature in his music for *Scott of the Antarctic*. The parallel between the disaster of the Great War, as mothers in every street in every village and town mourned the loss of their sons, with Synge's stark story would not have escaped Vaughan Williams. Both Synge and Vaughan Williams express universal emotions in Maurya's loss and in her stoic acceptance of her fate for “no man at all can be living forever, and we must be satisfied.”

Having attended rehearsals of *Riders to the Sea* at the English National Opera in London in mid-November 2008, I was aware of how keenly Richard Hickox felt the symbolism of Maurya's family's fate with that of the fate of so many mothers in the First World War. He approached the music with the same intensity that he brought to Vaughan Williams' other great war requiem, *A Pastoral Symphony*. In the performance of the opera on 28 November, 2008, Richard Hickox was also gone, leaving his mother, Jean, to mourn. Edward Gardner now conducted, most impressively in the circumstances, even if I missed the moments of repose and extra expressiveness which Richard Hickox had brought to the score in rehearsals. Patricia Bardon as Maurya was very commanding, singing with urgency and then with pathos. Both Kate Valentine and Claire Booth, as Cathleen and Nora respectively, responded superbly to their speech-rhythms.

The opera was directed by Fiona Shaw with designs by Dorothy Cross and Tom Pye. It was the Irish actress's operatic debut and she brought great realism and atmosphere to the staging. An outline of an Aran cottage, a stark Aran cliff face and very imaginative use of video imagery of the sea, were all compelling and appropriate.

When I first became involved in the production in 2007, Fiona Shaw was clear that *Riders* should not be coupled with any other opera (I had wanted *Savitri*) because another opera would detract from the power of Synge's and Vaughan Williams' vision in *Riders*. Instead, John McMurray, ENO's Head of Casting, came up with the novel idea of using Sibelius' tone-poem *Luonnotar* as a prologue to the opera. Thus we had Susan Gritton suspended in an upturned boat-coffin, singing brilliantly in this most exposed soprano part. The transition from Sibelius to *Riders* was well managed by an interlude of sea-music specially composed by John Woolrich. It worked very well and overall this was a memorable evening, one both uplifting and sad as we reflected, too, on the loss of Richard Hickox. It was certainly a fitting climax to the commemorations in 2008.

I had not expected another production of *Riders to the Sea* for some years, so it was a pleasant surprise to journey to Paris for a performance on 8 April, 2009 at the Athénée Théâtre Louis-Jouvet, just near to l'Opéra. Here the coupling was the orchestral arrangement of the lovely *Songs of Travel*. The soloist stood in front of the deep red stage curtain on which floated (there is no other word to describe it) the Stevenson text, in English and French. Occasionally evocative images would appear to complement the poems, most memorably a vista of stars for *The Infinite Shining Heavens*.

It was technically impressive and imaginative throughout. The transition to *Riders*, however, was less well managed compared to London. Here, Nora ran onto the stage shouting “Where is she” even as the last ruminative bars of *I have trod the upward and the*

*downward slope* were playing. Too stark, especially given the remarkable contrast in mood and texture from the Vaughan Williams of 1904 compared to that of 1925. Yet, even as this contrast was not well handled there was another imaginative stroke: the same curtain that had been used for the floating words became a fishing net and was mended by Cathleen as the action began. Later, it became a shroud for the body of Bartley – amazing what you can do with the stage curtain!

The production by Christian Gangneron was simpler than in London, with an area, right stage, sloping upward to the sea, invisible behind. Left stage was a stark cottage wall. This was enough for the drama of the opera to unfold effectively. The evening belonged to Jacqueline Mayeur as Maurya who sang

with complete identification for this demanding role. She was noble, dignified, poignant and, in her closing pages, unforgettable. The production had other imaginative touches. Maurya, for example, lay down next to the body of the dead Bartley as the Aran women donned dark red shawls. The Orchestre du Grand Théâtre de Reims was chamber-size and the conductor, Jean-Luc Tingaud, was able to bring out the delicate but complex strands of this astonishingly modern score. With a full house on the night I attended, all involved in this wonderful production deserve our congratulations. When will they give us *Pilgrim*?

Stephen Connock

## CD Reviews

### From Vaughan Williams' Attic

*The Wasps - Overture*

*Old King Cole*

Aeolian Orchestra conducted by Ralph Vaughan Williams, recorded Autumn 1925

*A Flourish for the Coronation*

Philharmonic Choir; London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, recorded on acetate discs, Queen's Hall, 1 April 1937

*Serenade to Music*

Sixteen original soloists; BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood, recorded Studio No.1, Abbey Road, London, 15 October 1938

*Thanksgiving for Victory (A Song of Thanksgiving)*

Elsie Suddaby, soprano; Valentine Dyll, speaker; BBC Chorus; Choir of children from the Thomas Coram Schools; BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, recorded 5 November 1944, first broadcast 13 May 1945

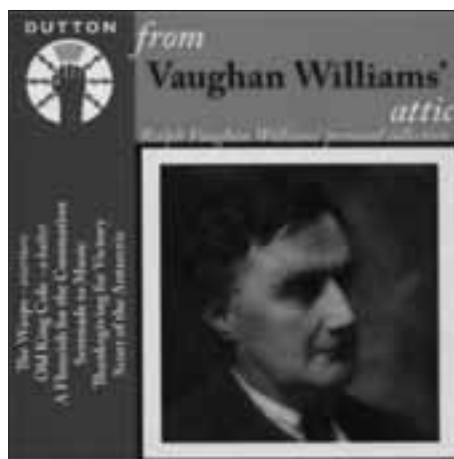
*Scott of the Antarctic (7 extracts)*

Margaret Ritchie; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Ernest Irving, recorded 20 December 1948

**DUTTON CDBP 9790**

Always expect the unexpected! I was casually browsing through the Vaughan Williams section at HMV Oxford Street when this CD made the eyes pop. I had been trying to get hold of the Pearl CD including the *Wasps Overture* and *Old King Cole* (Pearl GEMMCD9468) for some time, so this new Dutton release, also containing four further significant recordings, came along just at the right

time. Once again, we must be thankful to Lewis Foreman for presumably putting this programme together, providing the excellent notes and photographs and to Michael Dutton for re-mastering the recordings.



As to the recordings included, I think that I'm right in saying that the recordings of *A Flourish for the Coronation* and *Thanksgiving for Victory* are newly available on CD. I have always considered that the two pieces with Vaughan Williams conducting to be very special, even though recorded in the pre-electric era and with the usual reinforcement of the bass with extra brass. The Pearl recording always worried me slightly – the speed at which the overture was taken sounded rushed (even allowing for Vaughan Williams' generally fast tempos) and with a timing of about seven and a half minutes left all other conductors standing! This Dutton, as well as cleaning the sound up considerably,

presents a more believable performance at just over eight minutes and poses a question on playing or recording speeds!

Recordings and performances of all the other items on this disc apart from *Serenade to Music* are very rare occurrences. It would be good to get more performances of *Old King Cole*, perhaps as an occasional alternative to the *English Folk Song Suite*, as it is a fine and skilful working of traditional tunes. The new transcription of *Serenade to Music* further demonstrates the qualities of Henry Wood's original recording.

We are probably all fairly familiar with the various Beecham stories concerning Vaughan Williams but it must be remembered that Beecham did perform much Vaughan Williams over his career as conductor, including the premiere of *In the Fen Country* in 1909, but recordings are rare. *A Flourish for the Coronation* is a real "occasional piece" full of the expected fanfares and sturdy choral writing. The choral sound in this live take sounds, not unexpectedly, a little congested, but the recording comes over with a real sense of occasion, as if we are stealing a glimpse into history. What a treasure!

Unlike the *Flourish*, *Thanksgiving for Victory*, otherwise known as *A Song of Thanksgiving*, deserves a better currency, even with the need for a speaker and children's choir. Many will be aware of the later Boult commercial recording (1952, Parlophone 10" PEM1003) but it is

fascinating to hear the original BBC Transcription performance, recorded in anticipation of a victorious end to the conflict. A skilfully constructed “anthology” work, the composer's sincerity shines through, expressing his hope for a better future.

Reaching 1948, we have the most recent music and recording, seven excerpts from the film score from *Scott of the Antarctic*. The film first being screened in the November, this recording was made just before the first public showing, perhaps as an early commercial tie-in. And a fine performance and recording it is, with vintage Philharmonia sound, the desolate vocal supplied by Margaret Ritchie and directed by the film's musical director, Ernest Irving. The earlier CD version of the original recording (British Film Music from the 1940s & 1950s - EMI 7243 8 28844 2) contains only five excerpts, omitting *The Return* and *Blizzard*. This Dutton transcription presents a fuller orchestral range, particularly in the brass.

This CD is a must for any serious Vaughan Williams collector.

Graham Muncy

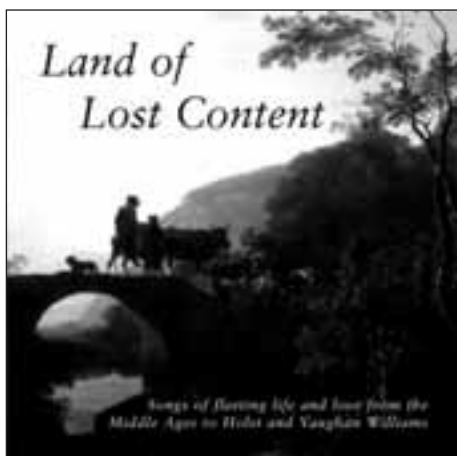
### Land of Lost Content

Fleeting life and love in English song from the Middle Ages to Holst and Vaughan Williams

Jeni Melia (soprano, violin); Lindsay Braga (violin); Christopher Goodwin (lute, renaissance guitar; baritone)

Includes Ralph Vaughan Williams: *Along the Field*; *Searching for Lambs*; *The Lawyer*; *My true love once he courted me*; *Take, O take those lips away*; Gustav Holst: *Four Mediaeval Songs* for voice and violin, op. 35; Arthur Bliss: *Sea Love*

**JENI RECORDS JREC 004**



The booklet accompanying this disc, which arrived for review directly from the

artists, features a thoughtful essay by Christopher Goodwin. “This recording,” he writes, “explores the fleeting nature of love, and of life itself, and the attendant feelings of longing, and nostalgia, as expressed in the English songs of Vaughan Williams, Holst and Bliss, and the poetry of Housman...” I can do no better than to say that the programme has been expertly compiled to fulfil these aims.

Jeni Melia possesses a voice of the utmost purity and beauty. Her diction and intonation are impeccable. She is recorded very close, and every breath is audible. When singing quietly, which is very often, she adopts an intimate kind of delivery, sometimes almost whispering. This is very affecting, but I did find myself wishing once or twice during this recital that she would simply sing out more. Her performance of *Along the Field* will surprise members accustomed to existing recorded versions. She employs her own, very characteristic style of delivery, with much use of the half voice as mentioned above. She allows some rhythmic freedom, too, as she also does with held notes at the ends of phrases and breathing points. All this serves to underline the very real atmosphere of folk song which permeates much of this music, almost as if the singer is improvising. Telling the tale is all-important. It brings with it, too, and curiously, something of the atmosphere of early music, a field in which Jeni Melia has much experience. I urge members very strongly, then, to hear this performance. I know it well now, having listened to it many times, each time with increasing admiration and pleasure.

Lindsay Braga is an excellent violinist and an equal partner both here and elsewhere in the programme. Playing with restrained vibrato, she achieves the necessary balance between forthrightness and restraint that these songs require. She has also found the same improvisatory quality as her singer, complementing her perfectly.

These artists have chosen a slight modification of the published order of the songs, taking the first song, *We'll to the woods no more*, and placing it just before the last one. I imagine they decided on this modification because they found the contrast between the (apparent) high spirits of *Fancy's Knell*, the seventh song, and *With rue my heart is laden*, the eighth, too great. I can see the point, but *Fancy's Knell* ends firmly in D minor, the key in which the following song begins, and for this reason, as well as others, I prefer the original order. This is of little importance,

however, and in any event those who are bothered by it will be able to programme their machine to play the tracks in any order they like.

The lute-accompanied folk song arrangements which follow, including *The Lawyer* and *Searching for Lambs*, are straighter, but this might just be an impression since a certain freedom is a normal, even a required element of performing these pieces. Christopher Goodwin sings *Silent Worship*, an aria by Handel to which Arthur Somervell added words of his own. He is a most communicative and pleasing singer and there is something pleasing, too, about imagining him accompanying himself on the lute.

Vaughan Williams' arrangement of *My true love once he courted me* is included. Members may know this as *The brisk young sailor* or even as the hymn-tune *Danby* to the words “'Tis winter now; the fallen snow”. There is also his setting of Shakespeare's *Take, O take those lips away*. In addition there is William Cornysh's *Ah Robin, gentle Robin*, and a song by Bliss, *Sea Love*, to a typically pessimistic poem by Charlotte Mew. There is some plainsong, and the programme is completed by a beautiful performance of Holst's serene and austere *Four Mediaeval Songs* for voice and violin.

William Hedley

[To order a copy of this CD, members should send a cheque for £11 payable to Christopher Goodwin, to Chris Goodwin, Jeni Records, Southside Cottage, Brook Hill, Albury, Guildford, GU5 9DJ. Alternatively, make a Paypal payment for £11 to or to pay by credit card, call 01483 202159]

Vaughan Williams: *Romance* for viola, orch. Roger Chase

Stanley Bate: Concerto for viola and orchestra

William Henry Bell: *Rosa Mystica*, concerto for viola and orchestra

Roger Chase (viola), BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by Stephen Bell

**DUTTON EPOCH CDLX 7216**

Dutton Epoch have released a CD of little-known viola works, including an orchestrated version of the *Romance* for viola and piano.

In Michael Kennedy's Catalogue, this work is included in the list of undatable compositions. Thought to have been composed for Lionel Tertis, a tentative date for its composition would be some time in the 1930s. It was published posthumously in 1962.



The original version has been available on CD for some time. I have two, by Peter Coletti and Leslie Howard (1993) and by Marianne Thorson and Ian Brown, of the Nash Ensemble (2002), both on Hyperion. Now we have an orchestral version, coupled with two little-known viola concertos, one a real find. The disc is a

welcome addition to the recorded repertoire of this neglected instrument.

The soloist on the CD is Roger Chase, who also made the arrangement for small orchestra of the *Romance*. And very well it sounds too in this arrangement. If there is doubt about its date of composition, in its orchestral guise it sounds like a work from the late 1930s or 1940s. Incidentally, the Nash ensemble CD gives the date as 1914. I think this is a misprint.

I was prompted to purchase the CD after hearing the *Romance* on Radio 3's breakfast programme. But this work, at around six minutes, forms but a small part of the CD. The rest comprises two full-length viola concertos by British composers I had never heard of. On this evidence they have been unjustly neglected.

Stanley Bate (1911-1959) studied with Vaughan Williams, Hindemith, and Nadia Boulanger. His first wife was Peggy Glanville-Hicks. Amongst his works are symphonies and concertos. He died young, possibly from alcohol abuse, and did his cause little good by spending the war years in USA, where this viola concerto was

composed between 1944 and 1946. It is a very approachable work (perhaps a little overlong) in four movements, the opening clearly showing the influence of Vaughan Williams' teaching.

The other concerto on the disc is by William Henry Bell, a near contemporary of Vaughan Williams, who emigrated to South Africa. This concerto has a name: *Rosa Mystica*. It was composed in 1916 and given its first performance in South Africa. It is in three movements, and considerably shorter than the other concerto on this disc. The first movement is quite simply beautiful. I thought I could hear echoes of Stanford, Bell's teacher. In this movement and in the coda I also heard pre-echoes of a theme from *Flos Campi*. Surely a coincidence! This piece deserves to be heard more frequently. Bell was quite prominent in South Africa, but virtually unknown over here, which is a great pity.

Go out and buy this disc, not only for the *Romance*, but also for Bell's wonderful concerto!

Michael Gainsford

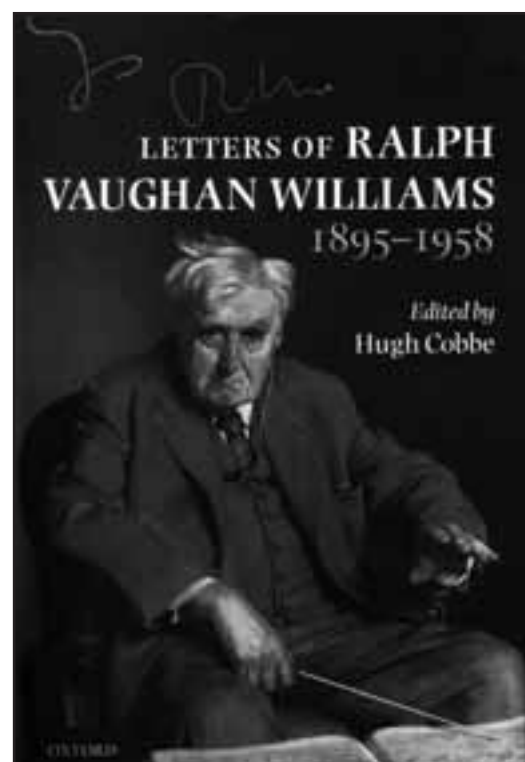
# Book Reviews

## Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958

Edited by Hugh Cobbe Oxford University Press (hardback, 704 pages, ISBN 978-0-19-925797-3, £95.00)

It has been a good year, on the whole, for Ralph Vaughan Williams. The fiftieth anniversary of his death has generated the usual surge of interest, with the Proms doing him proud – may we hope one day for Andrew Davis's radiant Ninth Symphony with the BBC Symphony Orchestra as a commercial DVD? – and Richard Hickox's performances of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at Sadler's Wells evidently moving all those fortunate enough to be present. Of course there were, and always will be, egregious dissenters: odd, isn't it, how unreconstructed modernists can sometimes be deaf to other voices. Maybe the doubters should be given this long-awaited selection of VW's *Letters* in their Christmas stocking. It might not change their minds about the quality and substance of the music. It will certainly offer conclusive proof, were it needed, that we are dealing here with a very great man indeed: liberal, generous, open-minded, brave, outspoken, profoundly engaged in much else over and above music. He was a true humanitarian. Nobility is a little out of fashion but noble he surely was.

Oxford University Press was VW's principal publisher in his lifetime and it has here done him proud. A sequence of over 750 letters is presented chronologically, each supplied with the necessary minimum of annotation



immediately beneath: a terse line or two at most, to explain identities or allusions. There are no photographs or pictures, but there is a comprehensive and invaluable index. Method has somehow been introduced into VW's disorder and lack of system, and the editor Hugh Cobbe deserves all congratulations for the massive amount of unobtrusive detective work that has resulted in such clarity on the printed page. This has clearly been a labour of love. He tells us that there are over 3,300 known VW letters, and probably more waiting to be located – a great many of them undated or with entirely vague superscriptions, and all of them in VW's notoriously appalling handwriting: virtually unpunctuated, too! Uncertainties inevitably remain, and these are not concealed. Yet these are minor inconveniences when set against the compelling portrait that emerges from these pages. Cobbe's Preface, and his brief introductions to the six chronological divisions he introduces, are models of their kind, setting the letters generally in the wider context of VW's career and even of world events.

We learn, copiously and invaluable, of VW's views of other composers from all periods, even when it is necessarily just from an incidental comment. The list is a long one; here is one example only, from 1898 (though he did not entirely mellow over the next 60 years): "modern composing is done by sandwiching an occasional national tune – not your own invention – between lumps of 2d-the-pound stuff – which seems to be Dvořák's latest method". Ouf!

Among his contemporaries, Holst was of course his closest friend, and that correspondence has already seen the light of day in Imogen Holst's and Ursula Vaughan Williams' *Heirs & Rebels* (OUP; 1959; many of the letters are reproduced in Cobbe). To Elgar, he writes a couple of respectful letters (one sending him some soft pencils!), while elsewhere speaking caustically of some of the music (e.g. *The Apostles* – "bombazine and bonnets").

There is no pen-portrait of Ravel, and one would have relished a first-hand account of their contact. We learn about many pupils with whom he kept in regular touch long after they had moved on, and to whom he offers unfailing encouragement: Elizabeth Maconchy was one such favourite, and his high opinion of the New Zealander Douglas Lilburn is also generously apparent. To Michael Tippett, he sends a fine letter (December 17th, 1941) respecting his position but making no bones about disagreeing with him. He later spoke in the younger man's defence when a prison sentence seemed likely, and Cobbe (exceptionally) prints an equally fine letter from Tippett once released.

VW's political attitudes are also laid bare elsewhere: seldom as a general statement, more often in terms of individual issues or personalities. One episode evidently causes him considerable distress: the General Strike of 1926. He goes so far as to set out his dilemmas in a kind of memorandum to himself (Letter 155) that is almost over-scrupulously balanced. He is not infallible but even his errors are instructive, historically: about the essential use

of the piano as a continuo instrument in the *St. Matthew Passion*, for instance, or about Monteverdi – "that dreary Monteverdi stuff".

The BBC is a target of severe rebuke, not once but many times: dumbing-down is clearly no new thing, while its attitudes to German music in the war, its harsh treatment of Alan Bush, even the lackadaisical commissioning of his own *Thanksgiving for Victory*, all rouse him to deep ire. He is not reticent over his own music, but when it surfaces in the *Letters* it is seldom if ever analysed or discussed: it is more questions of gestation, or agonies of self-doubt, or matters of performance that preoccupy him. Just how serious was his interest in folk-song is clear from the cascades of letters to or about the English Folk Dance and Song Society: this was transparently no passing phase but a deep and abiding obsession.

In among the practicalities of music and music-making there are also inevitably practicalities to do with daily living, arrangements that might be classed as trivia except that the trivial and domestic can often be touchingly revealing, too. Then, of course, the letters reflect the depth of his closest personal relationships: with his cousin Ralph Wedgwood, with Holst, and most of all with his two wives: first Adeline, to whom he is always loyal and loving in correspondence, then Ursula, who so transfigured his last two decades.

All this, and much more, can be revealed by diligent use of the aforementioned index: in itself a roll-call of British, even European artistic life. At the outset, Cobbe makes a disclaimer, warning that we should not expect from the composer dramatic revelations or confessions or insights into his creative life. Such was not VW's way: he was, Cobbe seems to imply, ultimately a very private man, even an enigma. The cumulative effect of these 757 letters, though, while not contradicting the editor's view, is still profoundly revelatory. By his own computation Cobbe has had space to include somewhere between only a fifth and a quarter of all VW's known correspondence: an entirely different selection would doubtless be just as interesting, personal, stimulating, provocative. Any one who in future listens to, or has to perform, the music of this great musician cannot fail to find stimulus from Cobbe's meticulous scholarship. Anyone who writes about VW's life or work will need this volume for essential reference. I would go further still: *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams* is essential for anyone interested in the wider cultural history of Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. It makes fascinating reading and OUP has done us all a service. (It could do an even greater one by promptly issuing it as a cheaper paperback.) It deserves to sell in hundreds of thousands.

Piers Burton-Page

[This review first appeared in the December 2008 edition of *International Record Review* and is reproduced here by their kind permission.]

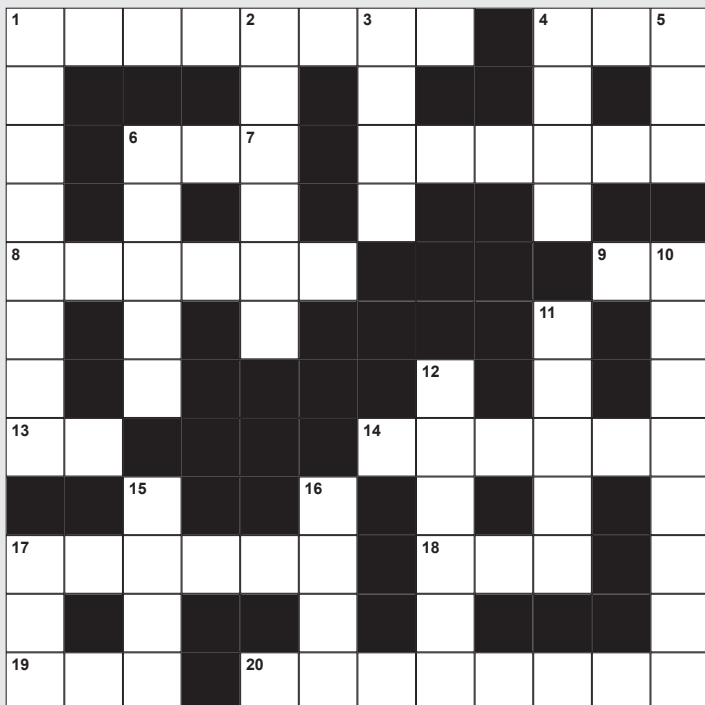
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## RVW Crossword No. 31 by Michael Gainsford Across



1. (with 12 down) Mezzo-soprano singer on Albion's first CD (8,6)
4. The country of the Symphonic Impression of 1904 (3)
6. Spanish two (3)
7. Whistle first performed in Hinckley in 1982 (the compiler was there!) (6)
8. Sir Henry Walford, one-time Master of the King's Music (6)
9. Inscription on pillar boxes when RVW was born (1,1)
13. \*\* Little Birds, vanished song of 1905 (2)
14. Another vanished work, the Wood of 1904 (6)
17. Mary who sang in the first performance of Serenade to Music (6)
18. Garden implement sounds like part of the title of Constant Lambert's book (3)
19. Johnny of 1903 (3)
20. Donna Diana man who conducted 14 across (8)

### Down

1. English folk song arranged by RVW in 1934 (4,4)
2. First of Five Mystical Songs (6)
3. Urban designation common to folk songs collected by RVW in Sheringham (1905), Herongate and Horsham (1907) (4)
4. \*\*\*\* Fathom Five of 1951 (6)
5. The Ghost of 1925 (3)
6. He had a party with Napoleon according to a song in Hugh the Drover (5)
10. First name of the baritone on Albion's first two CDs (8)
11. Brian who arranged The Woodcutter's Song for oboe or organ, although you may think he would be presiding in court (5)
12. See 1 across.
15. RVW joined this at the very end of 1914 (4)
16. The out - of - work Tears of 1903 (4)
17. Work - A Masque for Dancing (3)

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