

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS SOCIETY JOURNAL

WIDENING THE KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF THE MUSIC OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

ISSUE NO 52 OCTOBER 2011



F 1947

www.rvwsociety.com

From the Editor

When the subject of Ralph Vaughan Williams and religion is raised, as it not infrequently is, one question seems to recur. If he had no religious belief, why did he set to music so many sacred texts? One possible answer was provided some months ago by a correspondent in the “Proms” edition of the *BBC Music Magazine*. It would appear that Ursula, when asked the question one day, replied, “with a twinkle in her eye”, that since these texts were out of copyright there were no royalties to pay. Let us leave aside this bit of mischief and remind ourselves that Vaughan Williams was a highly cultured man, with a profound love for and understanding of language and literature, and was a particular admirer of the sound, rhythm and richness of the language contained in the Authorised Version of the Bible.

The earliest vocal music listed in Michael Kennedy’s *Works* is *Three Elizabethan Songs*, “composed probably between 1891 and 1896”. The texts are by George Herbert and William Shakespeare. The latest vocal work in the list, composed in the year he died, is *Ten Blake Songs*. Looking through his catalogue of vocal and choral music, from his earliest years to the end of his life, we encounter a selection of literature in English of quite extraordinary variety and richness, a veritable “Golden Treasury”.

He did not hesitate to set even the finest verse, invariably finding just the tone needed to accompany, complement and sometimes enhance the words. I draw attention elsewhere in this issue to the remarkable musical solution he found for the opening words of the *Five Mystical Songs*, so simple, yet so right. The Blake songs were composed for voice and oboe. With such limited forces there is nowhere for the composer to hide: his response to the words is naked and unadorned.

Vaughan Williams clearly sought out texts suitable for musical setting, but above all he loved literature for its own sake. Both in

childhood, and in later years with Ursula, reading aloud was a favourite occupation. If Shakespeare, Bunyan and Whitman form the backbone of the Vaughan Williams Treasury, other names represented demonstrate his discerning taste. He did not approve of everything. Justifying his decision to omit some passages from Housman in *On Wenlock Edge* he is reported to have said “I...feel that a poet should be grateful to anyone who fails to perpetuate such lines as ‘The goal stands up, the keeper/Stand up to keep the goal.’” And about Blake, and the settings requested toward the end of his life, he laid down the condition that he would not set “that horrible little lamb – a poem I hate.” He did though, and beautifully too.

In the last issue of the *Journal*, tucked away on page 23, there was a short feature entitled “English Literature set to music by Ralph Vaughan Williams”. Here is the second instalment of what is to be a regular series, though it would be better called “Literature in English”. There is no reason at all why I should always be the one to choose the texts for this series, so if you have a particular favourite, please let me know. There will only be one column in each issue, and to get him out of the way – I am speaking personally – it’s Whitman this time. To Michael Kennedy, in the last month of his life, Vaughan Williams said of Whitman “I’ve never got over him, I’m glad to say.” I, for one, wish that he had, but here he is, in homage to the composer’s prodigious literary taste.

A reminder that contributions on Scott and the Antarctic expedition will be particularly welcome for the February 2012 issue. Then, on slightly dangerous ground myself regarding Whitman, and in view of one or two rather robust opinions expressed elsewhere in this issue, it seems to be the moment to remind members once again that the *Journal* is your forum, but the fact that your views appear in these pages does not necessarily mean that I agree with them.

William Hedley

English literature set to music by Ralph Vaughan Williams

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearningly flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and frolicsome under the sun,
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

Walt Whitman
from *Leaves of Grass* (1855)



Thirteen original tunes by Ralph Vaughan Williams for *The English Hymnal and Songs of Praise*

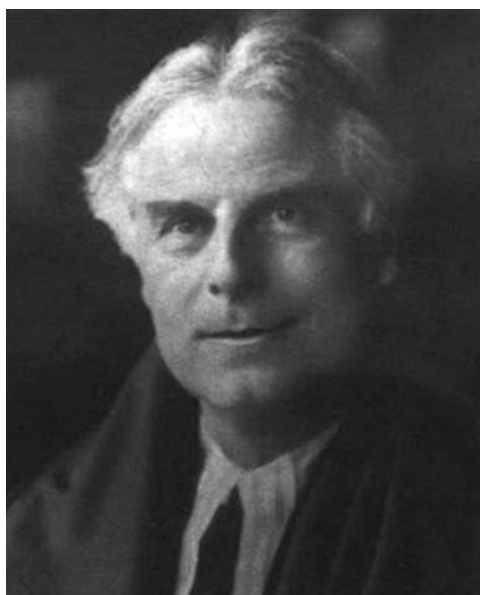
Hugh Benham

Ralph Vaughan Williams was reluctant to become music editor of *The English Hymnal (EH)* when approached in 1904. However, once engaged he became fully involved and did much to raise standards of public worship. In the Preface (p. xi) he explained that his insistence on music “which is beautiful and noble” was “...a moral rather than a musical issue... it ought no longer to be true anywhere that the most exalted moments of a church-goer’s week are associated with music that would not be tolerated in any place of secular entertainment.”

Work on *EH* and *Songs of Praise (SP)* included the composition of thirteen original tunes. (These were recorded as part of a collection of twenty-two hymns, by the Cardiff Festival Choir and Owain Arwel Hughes. The CD was reissued on the Griffin label.) The musical styles of these tunes are varied. At the conservative end, there is “Randolph” (1906), with harmony (including dissonance treatment and part writing) based firmly on contemporary English “common practice”: how many people would identify this as the work of Vaughan Williams if they did not already know? The modal writing of “Mantegna” (1931) on the other hand is unmistakable. There is no single straightforward chronological line of stylistic development. What unites everything is the high degree of skill and craftsmanship.

The texts chosen, some abbreviated, edited, or in unusual or unique metres, fall into three categories:

1. Nineteenth and twentieth-century hymns in English: (a) Widely-known Victorian texts: “For all the saints” (Bishop W.W. How); “Saviour, again to thy dear name we raise” (J. Ellerton); “At the name of Jesus” (C.M. Noel); “Fierce raged the tempest” (G. Thring). (b) American: “God be with you till we meet again” (J.E. Rankin), without the refrain. (c) “Servants of the great adventure” (P. Dearmer, words editor for *EH* and *SP*). For (a) and (b), Vaughan Williams’ intention was to provide new tunes in place of Victorian ones that he considered poor.



Percy Dearmer

2. Translations of religious texts: “Hail thee, Festival Day!” [three texts from the Latin, two of them by Bishop Venantius Fortunatus (530–609)]; “Come down, O Love divine” (Italian: B. da Siena, d. 1434).
3. Poems not designed for use in worship: “The night is come” (T. Browne, 1643); “England, arise!” (E. Carpenter, 1888); “Servants of God, or sons” (M. Arnold, 1857); “I vow to thee, my country” (C. Spring-Rice, 1918); “Into the woods” (S. Lanier, 1880).

Some items, including “Down Ampney”, are hymn tunes as most commonly understood in the first years of the twentieth century, with four-part vocal harmony (the three lower parts supporting the melody rather than showing a high level of independence) doubled by organ, and strophic (the same music for each verse). Other pieces, also strophic, are in unison (the one vocal line supported by keyboard accompaniment). “Abinger” and “Guildford” are presumably among the “cansons” referred to in the Preface to *SP* (1925): “Among these [new tunes] are a few congregational songs, to which the name of ‘cansons’ has been applied: some of these are suitable...for special services in church, others for use in schools, at lectures, and at the best kind of public meeting, which will, we hope, be increasingly graced by corporate singing.”

Vaughan Williams set words with a sensitivity to mood and rhythm developed from experience of composing other larger types of vocal music. This sometimes extended to providing alternative rhythms for verses whose accentuation and syllable counts differed from those of the opening verse: for example in “Sine nomine”, line 3 of verse 2 begins with a minim and two crotchets (“THOU in the”) where verse 1 had a crotchet upbeat and two minims (“Thy NAME, O”). Even when not setting texts with rare metres Vaughan Williams often sought interesting musical phrase structures, with a subtle handling of repetition, instead of sticking to the regular two or four-bar phrases customary in Victorian hymn tunes.

The melodies of all tunes apart from “Mantegna” rely to some degree on pentatonic scales, which have five different notes (e.g. D E F sharp A B) where “ordinary” major and minor scales have seven (e.g. D E F sharp G A B C sharp.) Pentatonic scales attracted Vaughan Williams at least partly because some British folk melodies are built on them. In some of the *SP* tunes other “ancient” scales were influential too, notably the Aeolian mode, which resembles the harmonic minor scale except for an unraised seventh degree. For example, E minor Aeolian consists of E F sharp G A B C D *natural* (not D *sharp*).

Tunes for The English Hymnal			
Name	No.	Opening words	Metre
Down Ampney	152	Come down, O Love divine	6 6. 11. D[ouble].
Randolph	524	God be with you	9 8. 8 9.
Salve festa dies	624, 628, 630	Hail thee, Festival Day!	Irreg[ular].
Sine nomine	641	For all the Saints	10 10. 10 4.

These were attributed to “R. Vaughan-Williams” [*sic*] in the first (1906) edition (corrected in the 1933 edition).

“DOWN AMPNEY”, named after the composer’s native Gloucestershire village, is a small masterpiece. Its supple four-part harmony and varied chord choice stand in marked contrast to the stiff “block-chord” writing of most Victorian tunes; there may be a debt to the purposeful part writing of Bach’s chorale harmonisations. Two features may faintly echo admired sixteenth-century styles: chord IV appears *after* chord V in bar 2, and between lines 4 and 5 C sharp and C natural appear successively in different voice-parts in a manner later disapproved of as “false relation”.

The unique metre of “Down Ampney” provoked an interesting response: musically the eleven-syllable lines are only slightly longer than the six-syllable lines, which last for three (or two and a half) bars, not for the conventional two or four bars. The first eleven-syllable line (line 3) has special momentum because it begins half a bar earlier than one might expect, given that lines 1 and 2 had both begun on the *first* beat of a bar (Ex. 1); such “ellipsis” (or telescoping) is found in several other tunes. The two halves (lines 1–3 and 4–6) balance so well partly because lines 3 and 6 have similar endings and other features in common. Further, the melody of line 4 begins as a free inversion of line 1, the falling D C sharp B A replacing the rising D E F sharp A.

Ex. 1: “Down Ampney” melody

The melody is most clearly pentatonic in line 1 (D E F sharp A B A). The concluding three-note pattern A B A, in various rhythms, is a strong unifying factor: note for example how line 2 immediately takes it up, and how it heads line 3.

“RANDOLPH” was Vaughan Williams’ nickname for his cousin Ralph Wedgwood. Each stanza of the text begins and ends with the line “God be with you till we meet again”. The composer

matched this with musical repetition, and intensified the effect by making both lines 1 and 4 unison (their slightly different accompaniments include the “secondary dominant” (C natural in line 4). The melody of lines 1 and 4 is pentatonic except for the passing G; there is nothing particularly characteristic in lines 2 and 3, although the music is well shaped, with the melody of line 2 consistently rising before line 3 falls.

“SINE NOMINE” has a unison setting for verses 1–3 and 7–8, but there is four-part harmony in the middle verses, with 4 and 6 for choir only. *Sine nomine* is Latin for “without name”, but there is nothing anonymous about this exceptionally fine piece. The uplifting character of the melody, which is initially pentatonic, and the purposeful crotchet tread of the bass in the unison verses, so suitable in procession, easily explain its lasting popularity.

Line 1 begins with four notes descending through a perfect fifth (D B A G) – a figure associated with “jubilation throughout Vaughan Williams’s life” (M. Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams (WRVW)* (OUP, 1964), p. 85); this figure reappears in D major to *end* the second four-bar phrase. The melody of the first Alleluia, which circles round D, the dominant of G major, is essentially an extension and transposition of the “Down Ampney” A B A motif (Ex. 2).

Ex. 2: “Sine nomine” melody of verse 1

As in “Down Ampney” Vaughan Williams had to set lines of very different lengths; again he chose to make their musical settings broadly similar in length. In “Sine nomine” the shortest line (“Alleluia”) comes last, with its single word repeated in order to extend the phrase. Note the “ellipsis” – the word “blest” has only a minim, and we are propelled into the last line slightly earlier than might have been expected.

“Sine nomine” would normally have been accompanied by organ with pedals. However performance on manuals only (or even on piano) is possible in the unison verses if the player omits the small notes in bars 9–12 and takes the bass line with the left hand (compare the optional small notes in “Salve festa dies”). The harmony verses are closely based on the unison version, but with a less active bass, and some harmonic changes especially in bars 5 and 14–15.

Vaughan Williams probably had in mind two previous tunes for the hymn “For all the saints”. F.E.W. Hulton’s tune from *Hymns Ancient and Modern (AM)* (1889 edition), named “For all the saints”, had a more elaborate scheme than “Sine nomine”, with a short organ introduction, a unison setting of verses 1, 2, 7 and 8 (except for harmony at “Alleluia”) and a different melody for the other verses (harmony, ending with a unison “Alleluia”). Unfortunately actual musical interest was comparatively limited. Sir Charles Villiers Stanford’s “Engelberg” (*AM*, 1904), a first-class piece, was a cross between a hymn tune and an anthem, with

different accompaniments and reduced vocal forces in some unison verses and a harmony setting for verse 4 in which the tune migrated from alto to tenor to soprano. Vaughan Williams may have been less ambitious than Hulton or Stanford, but he achieved a more *practical* solution than either.

The title “**SALVE FESTA DIES**” was borrowed from the identical first lines of three ancient processional hymns (for Easter, Ascension and Whit Sunday) in the original Latin. All three of these hymns are long, even when some starred verses are omitted, and so Vaughan Williams’ provision of two different and alternating verse settings in addition to the refrain made excellent sense. The ancient plainsong melody (for which “*Salve festa dies*” was a “modern” alternative) had the same music for every verse. Liturgical sequences such as *EH* 238 and 317, on the other hand, did vary the music between verses – so it is possible that Vaughan Williams was thinking of items such as these when he composed “*Salve festa dies*”.

“*Salve festa dies*” begins with a refrain labelled “[verse] 1”. This was for the choir men (“*Clerks*”), to be repeated “in Chorus”, presumably with trebles as well. The two verse settings were for “*Clerks only*”, the refrain that followed each verse being “in chorus”. No congregational singing was apparently expected, and everything was in unison – convenient in procession and perhaps considered fitting in an alternative to plainsong. However, the alternation of clerks and chorus was dropped in *SP*; Dearmer’s shorter text “*Welcome, Day of the Lord*”, headed “*For any Sunday. (Not necessarily Processional.)*”, was apparently for all present, choir and congregation. Probably with this in mind Vaughan Williams “ironed out” two syncopations, changing the rhythm quaver-crotchet-quaver to crotchet-quaver-quaver in bar 3 of the refrain and bar 7 of the first verse setting.

There are relatively few Vaughan Williams fingerprints in “*Salve festa dies*”. For example, the only unambiguously pentatonic passage comes at the end of the refrain, where the pitch pattern D E D B A G G suggests an embellished form of the initial D B A G figure from “*Sine nomine*”. The verse settings provide effective contrast to the outgoing and vigorous refrain: the first is mostly in A minor (the supertonic minor); the second, which moves through C major and E minor, provides clear rhythmic contrast, with triplets at the start and in the middle.

Tunes for Songs of Praise (1925 edition)			
Name	No.	Opening words	Metre
Magda*	37 (53)†	Saviour, again	10 10. 10 10.
Oakley*	41 (58)	The night is come	8 8. 8 8. 7 7. 7 7.
Cumnor	123 (213)	Servants of God, or sons	7 7. 7 7. 7 7. Irreg.
Guildford	185 (316)	England, arise!	11 10. 11 10. 5. 5. 10
King’s Weston	443 (392)	At the name of Jesus	6 5. 6 5. D.

*It is unclear why these names were chosen.

†Bracketed numbers from enlarged edition (1931).

In *EH* (1906) Vaughan Williams had felt obliged to include “*Ellers*” by E.H. Hopkins as the only tune for the Evening hymn “*Saviour, again*” – and in its original rather plodding version, not with Sir Arthur Sullivan’s more accomplished harmonisation (for which see *The New English Hymnal* of 1986). For *SP* he provided the lovely new tune “**MAGDA**”. This is broadly similar in melodic and harmonic style to “*Down Ampney*”, and is one of

only three tunes (with “*Down Ampney*” and “*Oakley*”) that are in four-part harmony throughout.

Ex. 3: “*Magda*” melody of verse 1

In contrast to the rather four-square settings by Hopkins and J.B. Dykes (whose “*Pax Dei*” appeared in *AM* in 1904), “*Magda*” has *five-bar* phrases in triple time, a logical response to the metre of the text. Each phrase of the melody (Ex. 3) is identical in rhythm until, in response to changed accentuation, the elision of lines 3 and 4.

The melody begins with a striking pentatonic outline, initially rising then descending through a whole octave. The first three notes are extended in line 2 into a four-note outline of interlocking fourths rising to E, a shape later exploited (coincidentally) in the first movement of the *Eighth Symphony*. In line 4 Vaughan Williams began by freely reworking line 1; perhaps this was a subtle non-text-related form of the “start = end” repetition found in “*Randolph*”. Both first and last lines forsake the pentatonic scale as they progress, their Gs providing some gentle melodic and harmonic tension as cadences are approached. The key is D major, with line 2 modulating conventionally to A major, but the harmony of line 3 is somewhat ambiguous, poised between E minor and D major.

In the other tunes from *SP* (1925) tonality is further blurred, particularly by modal writing. All end and/or begin in the minor key (whereas the *EH* tunes and “*Magda*” are in the major), but as in many folk melodies minor does not mean sad or gloomy.

“**OAKLEY**” was composed for lines from a poem about sleep by Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682). The original from *Religio Medici*, available in *Sir Thomas Browne: The Major Works* (Penguin Classics, 1977), was edited (presumably by Dearmer) to create an evening hymn of unique metre, each stanza having four iambic lines of eight syllables and four trochaic lines of seven syllables. The former are set in 4/4 time with a crotchet upbeat, the latter in 3/4 with lilting minim-plus-crotchet rhythms.

The two sections, although so different, combine to make a convincing whole. The melody of the first is wholly pentatonic. The notes G A B D E suggest G major – or E minor Aeolian if rearranged as E G A B D, an ambiguity that the composer fully exploited in his harmonisation. Lines 1 and 4 are almost identical melodically, with line 2 similar except at the end, and only line 3 providing contrast. Vaughan Williams had already used this kind of “A A B A” shape in such tunes as “*Forest Green*”, “*Gosterwood*” and “*Kingsfold*”, arranged from English traditional melodies.

The overall shape of the trochaic section is A B C A. The melody is not pentatonic, and notes not previously heard feature prominently – G sharp, C sharp, and above all C natural. Except for the final twentieth-century-style modal cadence, with chords of D major and E major, this whole section has a late sixteenth-century atmosphere: compare in particular the “Frog Galliard” by John Dowland (1563–1626) which was the basis for *SP* 461 (arranged by Martin Shaw, Vaughan Williams’ fellow music editor). No liberties are taken with the centuries-old rules of part-writing in this second part of “Oakley”, whereas there had been modernist consecutive fifths in bar 8 and unisons in bar 2.

“CUMNOR” was composed for lines from *Rugby Chapel: November 1857*, a poem by Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) in memory of his father Thomas Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby School. It was named after a village near Oxford, and/or the Cumnor Hills, with which Matthew Arnold had associations. It is in unison, but an SATB setting was published separately (by OUP: *WRVW*, pp. 508–509).

Arnold’s lines were grouped into five non-rhyming six-line stanzas to create a hymn on “The Communion of Saints: The Church Triumphant”: the “Servants of God” in line 1 are great men and women now dead who, like Arnold’s father, encourage and sustain those still on the “march...to the City of God”. The enlarged *SP* (1931) reclassified the hymn under “Apostles and Prophets”. Use of triple time for seven-syllable lines (often including two dactylic feet) makes for regular three-bar phrases. The melody is based largely on the pentatonic set C E flat F G B flat, which signifies C minor Aeolian at the beginning and E flat major at the end. The perfect cadences in lines 2 and 4 are both Aeolian with unraised leading notes (B flat in C minor and F natural in G minor).

“KING’S WESTON” is named after the eighteenth-century Bristol home of Philip Napier Miles, minor composer, patron of music and philanthropist. Vaughan Williams “spent many happy week-ends” at King’s Weston (*WRVW*, p. 188).

The tune is in the Processional section, and in unison, although it was published separately for SATB with organ in 1927 (*WRVW*, pp. 508–509). The left hand part must be doubled in octaves, which indicates performance on the piano (it was envisaged that *SP* could be used in schools); in church an organist would play the bass line on the pedals with 16-foot tone as a matter of course. Surprisingly the texture often has only three parts; although this works well with bass octaves on the piano, it is surprising that there are no optional “small notes” for the organist as in “Sine nomine” and “Salve festa dies”.

The metre, which is not uncommon, generates regular two-bar phrasing in 3/2 time, except that the final line has an added upbeat, the penultimate phrase having been cut short correspondingly (another example of ellipsis). The music is unified by the recurrence of two rising crotchets at the start of every phrase but one, and by the bass progression B D E in the first, third, fifth and last phrases. The tonality is mostly E minor Aeolian, with the subdominant A minor Aeolian half way through. The cadences are modal too, except for the “ordinary” D major perfect cadence in line 6. The music is vigorous and outgoing, with a beautifully shaped melody whose eight lines in turn reach the following high points:

G A B A B D E B

Together these notes make up the pentatonic set that (with some decoration) underlies most of the melody.

“GUILDFORD” was perhaps so called because the writer of the words, Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), lived there in the 1920s. Carpenter, who was involved in the foundation of the Fabian Society and of the Independent Labour Party, published his twelve-stanza poem “England, arise!” in *Sketches from Life in Town and Country, and some verses* (London, George Allen and Sons, 1908), pp. 257–260. The message of this impassioned cry on behalf of the labouring masses is particularly clear in the fourth stanza, one of nine not included in *SP*:

By all your workshops where men sweat and sicken,
Foredone to death, in toil and hope deferred,
Where cheeks are flushed and pulses start and quicken,
Not with glad life but by dark hatred stirred;
From each bench and forge
A sound comes like a surge:
Arise, O England, for the day is here.

The words editor, the Rev. Percy Dearmer, a lifelong socialist, clearly considered the selected stanzas appropriate for the “Social Service: National” section, despite lack of direct Christian reference. Vaughan Williams, who was agnostic and with political sympathies that were left, rather than right leaning, obviously agreed.

Ex. 4: “Guildford” verse 1, lines 1 and 2

“Guildford” (Ex. 4) is for unison singing. Even though the score is almost entirely in four parts, no SATB harmony was provided either in *SP* or when the tune was published separately (by OUP: *WRVW*, pp. 508–509). The key is A minor Aeolian with some pentatonic outlines based on A C D E G. Melodic unity is provided by motifs *a* (the rhythm dotted crotchet plus quaver), *b* (the notes G A C) and *c* (three triplet crotchets descending by step).

The rising profile of line 1 matches the words “England, arise”. Line 2 builds on this, reaching top D. Line 3 goes to the dominant, E minor Aeolian, with the pattern G A G C probably derived from motif *b*, while line 4 returns to A minor Aeolian with an air of finality, for the text here is the same as for the last line of the verse. Lines 5 and 6, each with five syllables, rise steadily, with motif *b* reaching top D (“...the answer swells”) and motif *a* now placed on *strong* beats. To provide additional tonal variety, these lines briefly visit F major (the only touch of major) and D minor Aeolian. Line 7 is a reworking of line 4, a climactic top E being finally attained. Both lines include a 3/2 bar, as a change from 2/2 and regular four-bar structures.

Vaughan Williams moves further from traditional common practice harmony than in previous tunes. No cadence is typical of pre-twentieth-century music, and there is more dissonance, some of it showing a new freedom, for example at the start of bar 7 with the unprepared and unresolved C. There is considerable parallel movement, some of it very characteristic of the composer, as in bars 7 and 11.

Tunes for Songs of Praise (1925 edition)			
Name	No.	Opening words	Metre
Mantegna	126	Into the woods my master went	8 6. 8 6. 8 8 8. 7
Marathon	302	Servants of the great adventure	8 7. 8. 7. D.
Abinger	319	I vow to thee, my country	13. 13. 13. 13. 13. 13.
White Gates	489	Fierce raged the tempest	8 8. 8. 3

(Note: “Famous Men” (432), composed in 1923 as the unison song “Let us now praise famous men” is described in *SP* as a “canticle”. With prose text, it falls outside the scope of this article.)

“WHITE GATES” was named after the house at Dorking to which Ralph and Adeline Vaughan Williams moved in 1929. It was composed for “Fierce raged the tempest”, to replace Dykes’s “St Aëlred”, which still featured in *EH* (1906). The metre is unique, with a very short final line. The music for this, as for each other line, lasts for two full bars of 4/4: one syllable has four quavers, while the other two have long notes (Ex. 5 below).

Ex. 5: “White Gates” verse 1, lines 1 and 4

line 1

Fierce raged the tem - pest o'er the deep,

line 4

Calm and still.

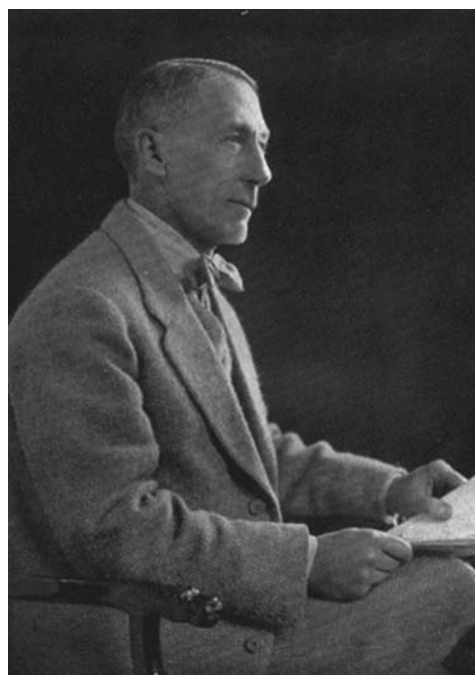
At first the melody is in C minor Aeolian, with prominent B flats. However, the B flat major chord at the end of bar 3 swings the music round to E flat major, a favourite move from “ordinary” C minor in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead of a decisive perfect cadence, however, there is an “open” imperfect cadence, which propels us forward, especially as the five-note rising run that ends line 2 is repeated one step higher at the start of line 3. C minor Aeolian, soon restored, is abandoned in line 4, which can be heard either as an eighteenth or nineteenth-century-style perfect cadence in “ordinary” C minor with B natural and final major chord (tierce de picardie) or as a cadence in C major. The theory matters little, but the “bright” ending is a perfect match for “Calm and still” (and for “Peace, be still” in verses 2 and 4). The final long C, preceded by the shift to unison singing, gives a suitable sense of repose.

“White Gates” (Ex. 5) is an intriguing mixture of old and new, with modal writing and some pentatonic elements alongside

conventional tonal writing in line 4. The texture is strangely spare at the end of line 1, with soprano and alto (briefly joined by tenor) moving in unison in a manner foreign to pre-twentieth-century four-part writing – this is possibly to reinforce the descent to middle C (“the deep”).

“MARATHON” was composed for “Servants of the great adventure” by Percy Dearmer. First printed in *Songs of Praise for Boys and Girls* (OUP, 1929), it was included in the “Service Oversea” section of *SP* in 1931. The text asserts the supreme claims of the Christian religion (“Christ, the crown of every creed”) in terms of the social and educational challenges of overseas work, without any hint of triumphalism.

“Marathon” is an appropriately outgoing and confident unison song, very readily accessible to young singers in its “moderate



Martin Shaw

march time”, with a crotchet bass somewhat in the manner of “Sine nomine” (Ex. 6), regular two-bar phrasing and the rhythm dotted crotchet, quaver, crotchet at the start of almost every line. The tune had previously formed part of the incidental music (1909) to Aristophanes’ *The Wasps* (no. 12 “Parabasis”). The name “Marathon” refers to the celebrated victory of the Athenians over the Persians in 490 BC, to which parts of the “Parabasis” text allude.

Ex. 6: “Marathon” verse 1, lines 1 and 2

Ser - vants of the great ad - ven - ture, Pa - triots of God's fa - ther - land.

con 8va.

The melody is largely pentatonic, but the C sharp in line 4 lies outside the basic set and is part of a B minor Aeolian cadence.

Lines 2 and 6 have modal cadences in E minor and A minor: a completely unambiguous assertion of G major is deliberately delayed until the final very traditional II⁷b–V–I cadence.

“**ABINGER**” is the second tune for Cecil Spring Rice’s poem “The Two Fatherlands”, which appears in the “Social Service: National” section of *SP*. The first is Gustav Holst’s “Thaxted”, which had been the only tune in *SP* (1925). Presumably Vaughan Williams now included his own tune to try to relieve Holst’s concern about the union of Rice’s text and music from “Jupiter, the bringer of jollity” (*The Planets*); nevertheless “Thaxted” has always remained the firm favourite.

Named after a village in a part of Surrey where Vaughan Williams lived for many years, “Abinger” is a fine unison song, straightforward and accessible. The accompaniment, set out for piano with low bass octaves throughout, begins with a brief introduction that serves also as interlude between verses and as postlude. Each line lasts for four bars of 3/4 time, with two two-bar phrases, but for variety and to ensure comfortable word setting the first strong beat of a phrase may be preceded by one, two or three quavers. Lines 1, 3 and 5 begin very similarly and span the octave E flat to E flat (tonic to tonic), while lines 2 and 4 move lower to provide balance and relaxation. Line 6 quickly reaches a climactic F before a measured descent to lower E flat. Lines 1, 4 and 5 all cadence in C minor: this emphasis, quite uncharacteristic of “ordinary” old-fashioned E flat major, is probably connected with the melody’s underlying pentatonic shape.

“**MANTEGNA**” was named after the Italian painter Andrea Mantegna (c.1431–1506), to “denote inspiration from Mantegna’s painting of the *Agony in the Garden*” (*WRVW*, p. 188). The text is “Into the woods my master went”, an elusive two-stanza poem on the Passion in an irregular metre by the American poet Sidney Lanier (1842–1881). Written in 1880, it appeared in *Poems of Sidney Lanier* (New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912), p. 141 as “A Ballad of Trees and the Master”.

In mood and style, “Mantegna” is highly original for a hymn tune, not least because it employs the rare Phrygian mode which, with its flattened second scale-degree, is darker than the Aeolian minor. At first the home note is D, but line 4 cadences on A, with a Phrygian B flat as part of the penultimate chord: such a move to the dominant half way is an interesting acknowledgement of traditional key relationships. Likewise lines 5 and 6 both cadence on the subdominant (G, with A flats.)

In harmonising the melody Vaughan Williams occasionally steps outside the Phrygian scale. In lines 1 and 2, the D flats arise from the juxtaposition of two minor chords a major third apart (D minor and B flat minor), an important Vaughan Williams fingerprint. Also intensely characteristic are the successive C minor and B flat minor chords in line 2 (see Ex. 7 below, penultimate bar); the wholly parallel movement here is quite contrary to the preference of common practice harmony for movement in opposite directions, especially between outside parts. These parallel chords (which recur in line 7) are second inversions, traditionally regarded as too unstable, but now enjoyed for their distinctive sonority. Note also the parallel octave movement between melody and bass in bar 2 (B flat A F).

Ex. 7: “Mantegna”: lines 1 and 2



“Mantegna” is in unison (although the music is largely in four parts and arrangement for SATB would have been possible). The time signature is 4/4, with phrases beginning and ending at different points within the bar and ranging from about one and a half bars to just over two.

Lines 1 and 8 have much in common, although the latter ends in a more weighty fashion with doubled note values. The musical equivalence of these two lines emphasises the similarity of their texts. Lines 5 and 6 successively peak at C and D, part of a long-term ascent to the climactic E flat of line 7. A three-note stepwise *descending* figure is however at the heart of the whole melody: it heads lines 1 and 3 and concludes lines 1, 5, 6 (in ornamented form), 7 and 8. Related to it are steeper descents – B flat A F in lines 1 and 8, and at the end of line 2 the plunging C B flat D (a response to “forspent” in verse 1), with its echo in line 4 (E flat D A).

Epilogue

The hymn tunes “Little Cloister” (1935) and “St Margaret” (1948) are not part of this present study, having been fully discussed by John Barr in “Two Obscure Hymn Tunes of Ralph Vaughan Williams” in the *Journal*, February 2004, page 14. Together with the original tunes from *EH* and *SP* they show uniquely well that even in his shortest pieces Vaughan Williams exercised the same artistry as in the large-scale genres for which he is better known.

As a composer his interest in hymns did of course extend beyond writing short tunes. For example, some instrumental pieces were based on existing hymn tunes, notably the organ prelude “Rhosymedre” (1920), and there were larger-scale original pieces including “Three Choral Hymns” for male voice, SATB and orchestra (1929).

A footnote

John Bawden’s “Vaughan Williams and the hymnals – a new perspective”, in the *Journal*, February 2004, page 2, provides valuable information on editorial policy in *EH* and *SP*. See also *Songs of Praise Discussed* by P. Dearmer and A. Jacob (OUP, 1933), especially on the technique of “ellipsis” (e.g. p. 110).

For the 1909 version of the tune “Marathon”, see R. Vaughan Williams, *The Music to The Wasps of Aristophanes* (vocal score), Cambridge, published for the Greek Play Committee, 1909. The accompaniment in *SP* is similar to the piano part of the first vocal arrangement there (p. 67), but several changes have, for example, helped to provide a more purposeful bass line at the start. ♪

Ralph Vaughan Williams and *Songs of Praise*

Frank McManus

Ralph Vaughan Williams' contribution to hymnody is well known through use in churches and schools. In the 1970s I taught at a London comprehensive school for girls. The pupils generally offered somewhat ineffective renderings of hymns at assembly, but on 1 November they would sing zestfully all eight verses of "For all the saints" to Vaughan Williams' tune "Sine Nomine", one of the seven by him in the *English Hymnal* (1906 and 1933) which have made his name a byword "in Quires and Places where they sing", and which are identified by bracketed numbers below.

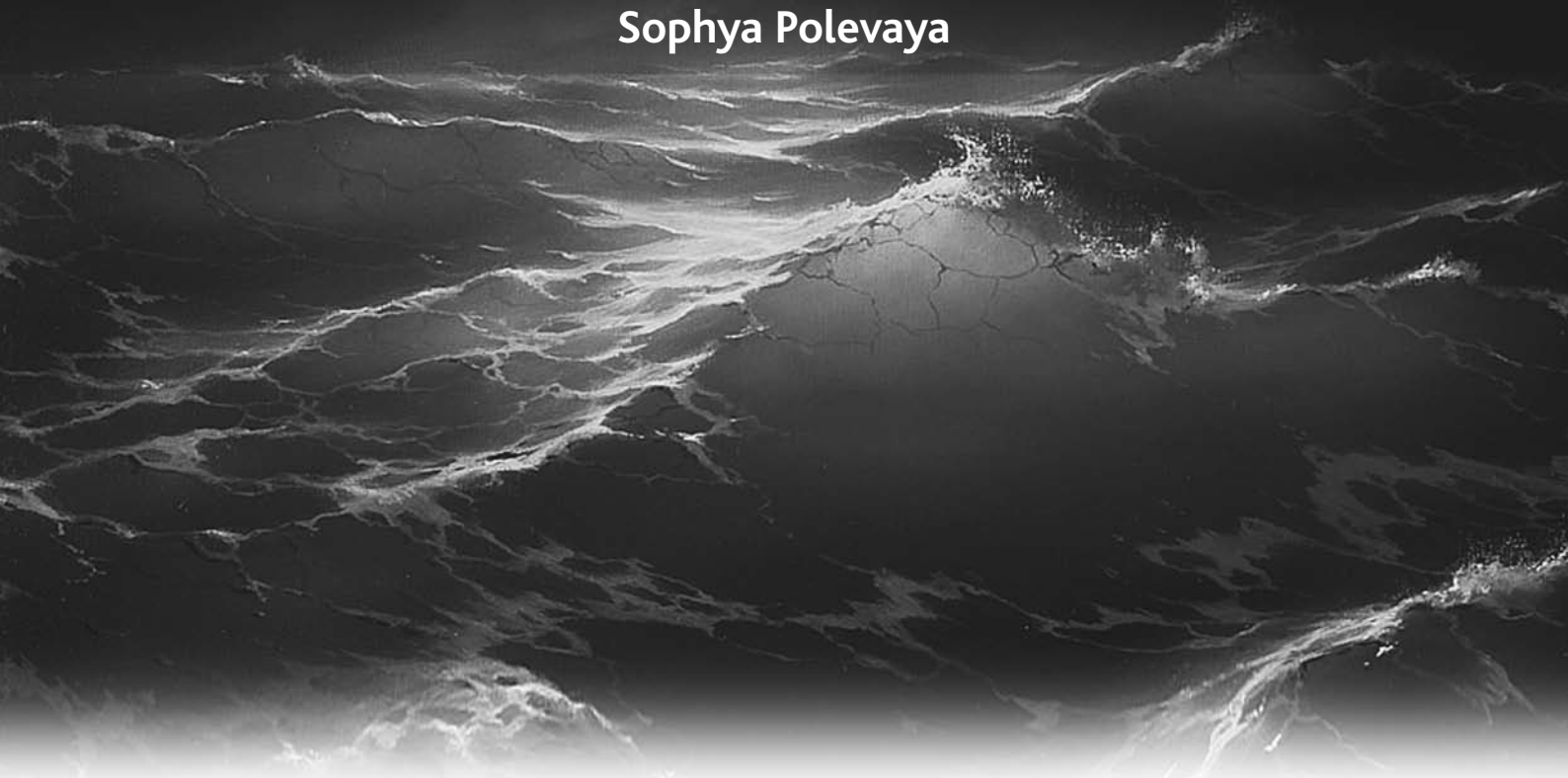
His joint musical editorship with Martin Shaw of its sister volume, *Songs of Praise*, is somewhat less celebrated. Its extended 1931 edition, of which Percy Dearmer was sole words editor of its more widely ranging contents, includes a further ten items by Vaughan Williams, making seventeen in total.

HYMN NUMBER	TUNE	FIRST LINE	AUTHOR
53 (EH 273)	MAGDA	Saviour, again to thy dear name we raise	John ELLERTON (1826-93)
58	OAKLEY	The night is come like to the day	Sir Thomas BROWNE (1605-82)
65 (descant)	HELMSLEY	Lo! he comes with clouds descending	Charles WESLEY (1707-88) et. al.
87 (v. 3 descant)	CRÜGER	Hail to the Lord's Anointed!	James MONTGOMERY (1771-1854)
126	MANTEGNA	Into the woods my master went	Sidney LANIER (1842-81)
177 (EH 152)	DOWN AMPNEY	Come down, O Love divine	Bianco da Siena (d. 1434), trans. R.F. LITTLEDALE
202 (EH 641)	SINE NOMINE	For all the saints who from their labours rest	William Walsham HOW (1823-97)
213	CUMNOR	Servants of God, or sons	Matthew ARNOLD (1822-88)
302	MARATHON	Servants of the great adventure	Percy DEARMER (1867-1936)
316	GUILDFORD	England arise! the long, long night is over	Edward CARPENTER (1844-1929)
319 (2nd tune)	ABINGER	I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above	Sir Cecil SPRING RICE (1859-1918)
334 (EH 524)	RANDOLPH	God be with you till we meet again	Jeremiah RANKIN (1828-1904)
390 (EH 624)	SALVE FESTE DIES	Welcome, Day of the Lord, the first and the best of the seven	Percy DEARMER
392 (EH 368)	KING'S WESTON	At the name of Jesus	Caroline M. NOEL (1817-77) et. al
432	FAMOUS MEN	Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us	Ecclesiasticus 44
437 (v. 3 descant)	EVENTIDE	Abide with me; fast falls the eventide	Henry Francis LYTE (1793-1847)
489 (EH 541)	WHITE GATES	Fierce raged the tempest o'er the deep	Godfrey THRING (1823-1903)

A Sea Symphony:

The role of the Scherzo and its relationship to the other movements

Sophya Polevaya



The *Musical Times* of 1 July 1911 included a commentary on the performance of *A Sea Symphony* that took place on 6 June 1911 at Guildhall, Cambridge.

The University Musical Society has given two very successful concerts during the past term... On June 6 the Society was responsible for an excellent performance of Vaughan Williams's fine "Sea Symphony". This is a work calculated to try the powers of any body of vocalists, and the result was extremely satisfactory. The composer, who conducted, has introduced various alterations in the work since its production at Leeds. The most important of these is the allotment of the Scherzo to the orchestra alone, and this movement was so played for the first time at this concert.

There is uncertainty in whether such a version of the "Scherzo – The Waves" was produced for the concert. Many musicologists suspect that the movement was entirely omitted instead.ⁱ Nevertheless, this concert may have prompted music critics such as Michael Kennedy to say that the Scherzo is "the one movement in which no philosophical reflections occur and is the only one which could successfully be detached from the work."ⁱⁱ If we look more closely at the score of the symphony and analyse its content, we could be persuaded to disagree with this opinion.

Writing music inspired by the character of the sea was a very popular concept, in particular with composers who favoured Romanticism: Mendelssohn (*Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt*), Elgar (*Sea Pictures*), Wagner (*The Flying Dutchman*) and composers of the twentieth century: Debussy (*La Mer*) and Sibelius (*The Oceanides*). The popularity of the subject

influenced Vaughan Williams to create his first major symphonic composition: *A Sea Symphony*, which made him to be recognised amongst the leading composers of the twentieth century. The symphony "definitely places a new figure in the first rank of our English composers. It is unique in several ways... It is also in scope much the finest piece of sea music that we, a seafaring folk above everything, possess." (Samuel Langford writing in the *Manchester Guardian*.)ⁱⁱⁱ

From 1903 to 1909, Vaughan Williams worked on *A Sea Symphony*. He produced his own text from a selection of extracts of poems by Walt Whitman: *Song of the Exposition* (beginning of mov.1), *Sea Drift* (movts 1-3) and *Passage to India* (mov.4), which he preferred for their emotive power and philosophical visualizations. During these six years, the score gradually emerged from Vaughan Williams' original idea of a composition in five movements called *Songs of the Sea* into a symphonic work entitled *The Ocean*, and which later became *A Sea Symphony*.

A Sea Symphony was first performed at the Leeds Festival 1910 on 12 October, conducted by the composer on his thirty-eighth birthday. According to the *Times*, *A Sea Symphony* was "warmly received" and "it will not be surprising if the Festival of 1910 is remembered in the future as the 'Festival of the Sea Symphony'..." The *Yorkshire Post*'s critic Herbert Thompson described the performance as "a wonderfully good one".^{iv}

The symphony as a genre is a large-scale work with a diverse scope of character, emotion, dramatic effect and contrast. These elements are expounded in a series of movements through

thematic, tonal and structural choices. Symphonies had been traditionally written in a four-movement form including an opening sonata allegro, a slow movement, a minuet and trio (scherzo) and a final sonata allegro or rondo movement. The tonal outline of symphonies would circulate around closely related keys such as the dominant or the relative minor of the principal tonality. Within the movements, motifs are introduced and transformed by thematic development. This type of development is a very important aspect in symphonic works since it ensures that there is coherence between all the movements through variants or echoes of a melody.

In a choral symphony, the text opens a new dimension for the audience – they can relate personal reflections to the music and the words. Composers achieve a clear communication of the major concepts by manipulating the text, repeating words or phrases several times, using soloists to narrate certain verses or writing homophonic passages in the choir part.

From the Romantic period onwards, composers were opting for freer structural designs: for example, Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830) contains five movements and Sibelius’ *Symphony No.7* (1924) is in one movement. The tonal plans became more adventurous from the inclusion of movements with unrelated tonal centres, modal idioms and tonal features that create instability in tonality (such as tonal progressions or changing modes).

It is apparent that *A Sea Symphony* is a broad representation of the classical four-movement form, comprising four movements with modern structures and features of traditional harmonic progressions as well as contemporary tonal concepts. Many of the inner sections of the movements mirror each other in style and role or recall the musical material from previous episodes. We can pinpoint at least two musical themes that extend through the four movements: the harmonic progression of “Behold, the sea itself” and the melodic phrase first heard as “And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships”.^v The symphony represents the psychological maturity of an aspiring sailor with additional poetic content to portray his emotions. The first two movements illustrate the sailor’s dream of sailing the oceans and to be united with others under one flag. Through the stimulating experience depicted in the Scherzo, he has overcome certain obstacles and is now ready to sail further to the deep waters depicted in the fourth movement.

The first movement, “A Song for all Seas, all Ships”, recalls “unnamed heroes in the ships and (above all) of the universal bravery that links all nations into one...”^{vi} in a series of episodes contained within a structure that is based on the principal elements of the sonata form: exposition of subjects, development and recapitulation of the subjects. It introduces the main rhythmical, melodic and harmonic features of the symphony that are developed in the other movements.

In the first subject, the listener hears a substantial number of melodies, which are later on expanded in the Scherzo. The opening fanfare of the horns and trumpets within this subject (Figure 1A) is an important motif from “A Song for All Seas, All Ships” that was used to create variants for the third movement. Even though the three versions of the motif in the Scherzo do not have the same rhythm as the original motif, they all have its stately character and similar functions as the other appearances in “A Song for all Seas, all Ships”.

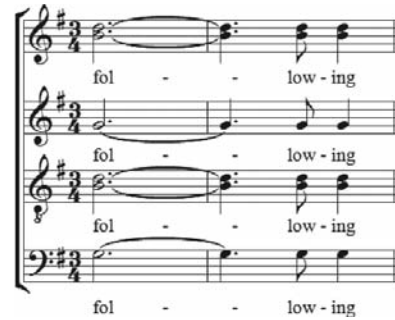
Figure 1A



Figure 1B



Figure 1C



The first variant of the motif (Figure 1B) reminds the listener of the musical characteristics from first movement and confirms the principal tonal centre (G) of the Scherzo. The second variant played by the horns, occurs at the recapitulation (*Tempo del principio*) of the first theme of the Scherzo (“After the sea-ship”) echoing the first variant. At the end of the Scherzo, the third variant (Figure 1C) heard in the choir parts, creates a definite ending on the major tonic (G major).

Another important melodic stimulus that is progressively developed in the Scherzo derives from the first subject (Figure 1D). From the beginning of the Scherzo, we encounter melodic and rhythmical expansions based on the general melodic movement of this triplet. These developments are most noted in the brass section of the orchestra and the choir parts (Figures 1E & 1F).

Figure 1D



Figure 1E



Figure 1F



The transition at *molto tranquillo* starts in D major, the principal key of the movement, but progresses into the Mixolydian mode (mode in G), announcing the fast and rhythmical theme of the second subject. The passage successfully characterizes the boisterous nature of the sea in a style of a shanty, while the

baritone soloist introduces the contrasting motifs of this section, which are imitated by the choir. Vaughan Williams however decides to continue the subject with a new passage leading to a culmination (“...whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay”) that confirms C minor as the starting tonality of the development.

The development section commences with a reprise of the fanfare from the first subject and the introduction of the soprano soloist. The serious message of this section (the spiritual bond that unites nations together and the importance of honouring the many sailors and captains who died “doing their duty”) causes the listener to remember maritime tragedies such as the sinking of the *Titanic* or the unexplainable disappearance of the crew of the *Marie Celeste* which was discovered abandoned on 5 December 1872 in the Atlantic Ocean.

The recapitulation of the first subject is evident by the prominent return of the melodic phrase “And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships”, which now has been refitted to the phrase “One flag above all the rest” in the principal key of D major. The orchestral part produces an intense harmonic progression and a texture that progresses independently to the development of the melodic lines in the vocal section. The choir and the soprano soloist then sing the theme “Behold, the sea itself” while the strings produce a tense accompaniment on a C minor chord in second inversion while the woodwind parts play short passages in another tonality (G major harmonic) which recall “And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships”. From this episode, the listener anticipates the music to be established in G major harmonic. Vaughan Williams eliminates this expectation by employing new unexpected bass (F sharp) and dividing the chorus into eight parts, forming a delicate, polyphonic passage with the soprano gliding quietly above repeating the melodic phrase “Behold, the sea itself”. Four bars before the end, Vaughan Williams provides the movement with a clear ending in the primary key of D major.

The second movement, “On the Beach at Night alone”, is a reflective song in ternary form (ABA), encompassing a sailor’s thoughts of how all nations and identities will span “the clefs of the universe” for eternity. Its tonal centre (E) makes the movement quite free from the tonal design of the symphony since it does not form typical relationships between the tonal centres of the rest of the movements. Nevertheless, Vaughan Williams balances its independence by including many resemblances and developments originating from the first movement and he incorporates the musical qualities of “On the Beach at Night alone” within later episodes in the symphony.

The movement opens with an ostinato motif circulating between the chords of C minor and E major played by instruments with full, dark registers such as the bassoons and cellos (Figure 2A). This harmonic progression allows Vaughan Williams to keep the movement’s progress unpredictable. The use of these instruments for the orchestration of this motif produces a sombre ambience, which flows comfortably into the baritone’s plaintive vocal line marked *misterioso*. The frequently occurring triplet rhythm in this section within the vocal lines and orchestral parts creates a clear image of the shore and the motion of the waves. The contrasting section reminds the listener of the *andante* passage in the second subject of the first movement. This section functions as a continuous escalation from E flat major to the movement’s climax in C while the choir repeats the verses of the baritone. At *Tempo*

del principio a variant of the first section occurs to end the movement – the baritone has a shorter narration and the orchestra takes the role of conveying the rest of this theme.

Figure 2A



The “Scherzo – The Waves” successfully depicts a ship’s journey and the changeable nature of the sea from the abundance of drama and powerful contrast in the music. For the listener, the Scherzo’s lively spirit and fast metre act as a stimulating transformation from the last two movements and an excellent preparation for the finale ahead. The structure of the movement is not related to the form of the traditional scherzo since it has components of the sonata form – there are two contrasting subjects that are developed and recapitulated.

The first subject begins with the reappearance of the brass motif of the first movement and continues to weave the triplet rhythm from “On the Beach at Night alone”. Through the use of contrasting dynamics, polyphonic writing in the orchestra and chromaticism, the audience is transported into the storm with “myriad waves”. This thrilling section is followed by a tense transition with a similar orchestral texture from the development section of the first movement, to move to the second subject. There is an immediate change in atmosphere with the ceremonious choral themes in unison or homophony and fanfares for the brass instruments. However after the short repeat of the themes of “After the sea-ship” and “liquid, uneven, emulous waves”, the tension is amplified again by the next transition, which is filled with patterns of harmonic developments such as sequences, whole tone scales, and instability in tonality. At *Tempo del principio* the two subjects are recapitulated and are followed by a coda to finish the movement in G major with a jubilant cry on “following”.

The fourth movement, “The Explorers”, is a “rhapsody” containing two large sections and a coda. These two sections cover the extensive development of two similar motifs in many tonalities and episodes. They also include frequent fragments or resemblances of melodies from the previous movements such as “And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships”, which are placed within the orchestral parts. The spirit of the Scherzo and the second subject of “A Song for all Seas, all Ships” are occasionally revisited in “The Explorers” to provide light relief from the movement’s solemn character.

The first passage commences with the exposition of the central theme of the movement (Figure 3A) in the flattened submediant of the final tonality of the Scherzo (E flat major). Immediately micro intonations of this theme appear in the orchestral parts and the choir commences its development, keeping to the general outline of the theme. Within this episode, the vocal texture gradually becomes a resemblance of the *Molto tranquillo* passage from the first movement’s development section.

The next episode, *Andante con moto*, employs many of the musical features of “On the Beach at Night alone” – such as a reappearance of the ostinato motif from the beginning of the

second movement, now between the chords of F minor and A major – and progresses with a new motif (Figure 3B heard in the oboe and clarinet parts) that originated from the phrase “At night alone” (1st section, second movement). In addition, this episode contains many resemblances of the vocal melodic outlines from the Scherzo – for example at *Animato*, the repetition of the word “finally” reminds us of the Scherzo’s final choral passage in the coda. At *Largamente* the principal theme of the section (Figure 3A) returns and develops into a climax. The next transition *Allegro Animato* progresses into a development episode and exposes a new theme (Figure 3C) that has similar shape as the melody “And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships”.

Figure 3A

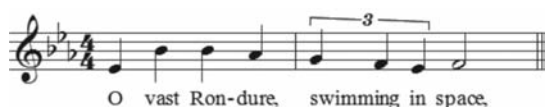


Figure 3B



Figure 3C



At *Appassionato* the soprano and baritone soloists together express in various tonalities their restless desire to sail the seas. This episode uses reflections of melodies from the second theme of the Scherzo as its main stimulus (Figures 3D & E), together with melodic concepts from the second subject of the first movement, to create a stately atmosphere. At *Piu Lento* the choir returns to recall with the soloists the *Allegro animato* theme in a new pair of changing modes (C major – C minor). From the *dolce* marking in the entry of the baritone soloist, we return to the primary key of E flat major, and Vaughan Williams uses melodies derived from the *Allegro animato* theme. The next *Allegro* episode is a transitional passage, which marks the return of the melodic shape of the first section’s principal theme. The vivacious character of the Scherzo is revived in this episode by the polyphonic vocal texture and the orchestral accompaniment based on the musical idiom of the second subject of “A Song for all Seas, all Ships”. The music progresses through several unrelated tonalities to reach the episode’s climax at “steer for the deep waters only”.

Figure 3D

From Scherzo *Largamente*



Figure 3E



Once the choir disperses from the *Molto Adagio* coda, the orchestra shows uncertainty in tonality with the changing modes between the primary key and its relative minor (C minor). Vaughan Williams confirms his intention of ending the movement in C minor but in an unusual way – by means of a second inversion chord in that tonality with an allusion to the root, which was declared in the previous chord (Figure 3F). Even though such a chord creates an unsettling ending, this choice of unconventional harmony demonstrates to the listener that there is a relevant tonal connection between the Scherzo and this movement – the G major tonality ending the Scherzo acts as the dominant major to C minor.

Figure 3F



From this analysis we have discovered that *A Sea Symphony* includes movements that are strongly bonded to each other by Vaughan Williams’ careful choice of text, the constant development of the principal musical features of the symphony and the overall plan of the symphony. The work is a philosophical art form – it establishes a unique musical connection between each individual from the arrangement of various poetic and compositional techniques, together with the audience’s recollections of their own seafaring experiences. The musical qualities of the Scherzo assure us that this movement is the symphony’s focal point. The Scherzo comprises themes based on reflections of motifs from the other movements for its main thematic outline, and has important tonal relationships with the other movements. If a performance of *A Sea Symphony* excluded the Scherzo, the audience would sense an abrupt advancement of compositional development in the fourth movement and a break in the emotional experience the symphony generates.

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ⁱ A.E.F. Dickinson in his biography of Vaughan Williams explains that he could find no trace of the purely orchestral version, whilst Michael Kennedy states that the Scherzo was omitted altogether. The subject was raised in respect of other performances too. For example, before the performance of the symphony in Bristol (26 April 1911), letters passed between Vaughan Williams and Arnold Barter (conductor of the Bristol Philharmonic Society) discussing whether an orchestral arrangement of the Scherzo should be made or whether it should be performed at all.

ⁱⁱ *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Second Edition* by Michael Kennedy (Oxford University Press, London 1980) p.128

ⁱⁱⁱ Kennedy p.99

^{iv} Kennedy pp. 98-99

^v Programme note: The Bach Choir and Queen’s Hall Orchestra, conducted by Hugh P. Allen at Queen’s Hall, London, 4 February 1913. (*Vaughan Williams On Music* edited by David Manning, p.335)

^{vi} *Leeds Festival Novelties* by Sydney Grew, from *The Musical Opinion & Music Trade Review*, October 1910 p.18

A Worcester Portrait



I'm grateful to Juliette Holtom of the Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir for contacting the *Journal* about a new portrait of Ralph Vaughan Williams that was unveiled earlier this year at a special anniversary concert featuring one of his most famous works.

Five Mystical Songs was performed during this year's Three Choirs Festival week, almost exactly a hundred years after its premiere, conducted by the composer himself on 14 September 1911, also at a Worcester Three Choirs event. The centenary performance was given by the Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir. The conductor was the choir's Music Director, Stephen Shellard, who founded the group in December 1998. The choir, made up of some thirty singers from in and around the Diocese of Worcester, occasionally sings for Sunday Eucharist Services in the Cathedral, but more frequently for Evensong, as well as performing concerts and singing services in the Diocese and beyond.

The performance of the *Five Mystical Songs* launches the choir's latest CD, *Rise Heart*. The recording, a follow-up to the choir's previous CD, *Hodie – Advent to Christmas Day*, includes the Vaughan Williams work alongside music by other Three Choirs favourites Charles Stanford, Hubert Parry and Edward Elgar.

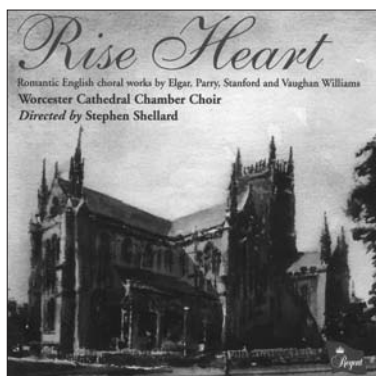
The CD booklet features the new portrait of Vaughan Williams, along with those of other composers on the disc, as well as new representations of Worcester Cathedral. All were commissioned by Stephen Shellard from Craig Letourneau, a watercolour artist who



Musical Director Stephen Shellard (left) with Craig Letourneau

was born in America but has been based in Worcester for a number of years. His studio is at his Kestrel Gallery in Sidbury, Worcester.

Festival goers were able to view the originals in an exhibition of the artist's work that took place on the day of the concert, 11 August. Stephen Shellard was enthusiastic: "It's been good to promote a local artist and the end results are fantastic," he said. "Craig has captured the essence of all the composers in their portraits."



Rise Heart

Ralph Vaughan Williams: *Five Mystical Songs*

with *O Salutaris Hostia* (three settings), *Memorial Ode for Queen Alexandra*, extracts from *The Light of Life* and *The Apostles* (Elgar); *The Blue Bird* (Stanford); *Chorale Prelude on "Martyrdom"*, *Chorale Prelude on "Croft's 136th"*, *My soul, there is a country*, *Hear my words, ye people* (Parry)

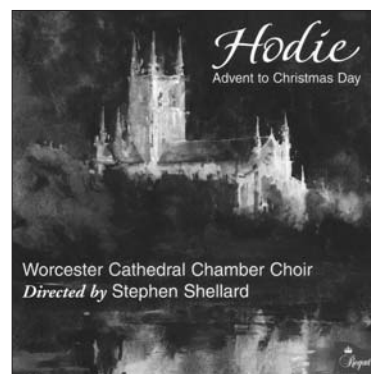
Recorded January and March 2011

REGENT REGCD369

Of the four CDs currently available from the Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir, the two most recent are very fine indeed. Your reaction to the opening of the latest, "Rise Heart", will probably depend on how you feel about early Elgar. *The Light of Life* was composed for the 1896 Three Choirs Festival, and it's an indication of how well he understood his own progress as a composer when, only four years later, he quoted Ruskin – "This is the best of me" – on the manuscript of *The Dream of Gerontius*. This chorus, though, is very pleasing. It is followed by a curiosity, a work from the composer's relatively fallow final years. Both words, by the Poet Laureate, John Masefield, and music (by the Master of the King's Music) are, as the booklet notes quite proclaim, "very much of their time", but the work is again a pleasing one, and of great interest to anyone seeking a full knowledge and understanding of the composer. I'd never heard the work before, nor did I know that Elgar had made as many as three settings of the words "O salutaris hostia". All three date from before the turn of the century, and were written for the choir of St George's Church, Worcester, where Elgar was first assistant organist (to his father), becoming organist in 1885. The extract from *The Apostles* is, of course, a later work, and its reflective atmosphere, with much unison writing, is welcome here.

The difference between the atmosphere of Elgar's sacred music and that of Vaughan Williams' response to the words of George Herbert in the *Five Mystical Songs* is dramatic and striking, underlined here when one listens to the disc straight through. The solution Vaughan Williams found to the challenge of the words "Rise Heart, thy Lord is risen" is very special indeed, and the work is surely one of the pinnacles of the composer's output. It's a particular pleasure to hear Ben Cooper in these songs, and there is more about him in the following review. Let us make no mistake, this is no John Shirley-Quirk, but his singing is technically accomplished, with very fine intonation and enunciation. But what makes his singing special is his honesty and engagement with the words and the music. This is a very moving performance, from choir and organist too, and one that made this particular expatriate long for that very special atmosphere, the sound, sight and smell, of an English cathedral.

The performances of the remaining pieces in the programme are well up to this standard, and there can be little doubt that this disc will bring much pleasure, especially to lovers of the English choral music tradition.



Hodie

Ralph Vaughan Williams: *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*

With *A Ceremony of Carols* (Britten); *Chorale Prelude "Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen"* (Brahms); *Resonemus Laudibus* (arr. Willcocks); *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree* (Elizabeth Poston); *Rose Carol* (arr. Harrison Oxley); *A Tender Shoot* (Otto Goldschmidt); *Carol and O Tree!* (Steven Kings); *O come all ye faithful*; *Away in a Manger*; *I wonder as I wander* (Carl Rütli); *Hark! the herald angels sing*

Recorded June and July 2009

REGENT REGCD330

This CD was particularly well received in the musical press, and no wonder. It is the fourth CD from the Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir. The first, entitled "Sing! Choirs of Angels", is no longer available, and the following two seem to have been recorded privately. This CD, on the other hand, like *Rise Heart*, has been issued on the highly respected Regent label, and represents a significant step forward on all counts. It is, as to be expected, a collection of Christmas music, and opens with Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* in the version for organ and solo cello. Baritone soloist Ben Cooper is a member of the choir, and as an amateur choral conductor myself I can do no more than fervently wish he would come and sing in my choir instead of this one in Worcester! His voice is very attractive indeed, admirably clear and with a most pleasingly simple and direct singing style and excellent words. It gives me pleasure to report that these virtues are also present in the choral singing. The conductor's reading of the work is just right, unfussy and direct, and this is certainly a performance that, whilst retaining its amateur status, will give easily as much pleasure as the finest professional performances. The rest of the disc could well qualify for a place in our "Music You Might Like" column. Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* follows, complete with Procession and Recession, with hearty and spirited singing from the ladies of the choir and outstanding accompaniment from harpist Catherine White. If the exuberance of the opening "Wolcum" is a mite overdone, the rest is a model of good taste and fine singing. There is some excellent solo singing from Sarah Kings (Parry's "Blue Bird" on the latest disc) and Sarah Williams, as well as Imogen Tomlinson and Eileen Roberts for "In Freezing Winter Night". This is given here in a performance for four soloists rather than the whole choir, which is

a pity, I think, especially given that the closing bars feature a solo voice in any case, an effect inevitably lost in this performance.

The rest of the programme is a very satisfying mix of favourites and little known – sometimes virtually unknown – items. Organist George Castle, who excels himself in the accompanied pieces, provides a lovely interlude in the form of a Brahms chorale prelude. This is followed by Elizabeth Poston's adorable *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*. Deserving of singular mention are two pieces by Stephen Kings, a living composer who writes a short introduction to his works in the booklet. The music is well crafted for choir, its piano accompaniment is played by baritone soloist Ben Cooper, and it will have been as satisfying to learn and sing as it is to listen to. The setting of *I wonder as I wander* is also of considerable interest, as it is by Swiss composer Carl Rütli, whose *Requiem* has been recorded by Naxos and is a highly individual work deserving of the attention of every Vaughan Williams enthusiast.



Midnight Mass



Worcester Cathedral

Jerusalem: Favourite Hymns and Anthems including *Jerusalem* and *Hear my words, ye people* (Parry), *Come down, O Love divine* (Vaughan Williams) and *Locus Iste* (Bruckner) Recorded 2004

A Worcester Evensong including *O Taste and See* (Vaughan Williams), *Magnificat and Nunc dimittis* (*Collegium Regale*) (Howells) and *Responses* (Kenneth Leighton) Recorded 2006

Two earlier discs are perhaps less compelling, if only because the choral singing is inevitably less accomplished than it is today. The CD entitled "Jerusalem" is enjoyable nonetheless. It is a collection of "Favourite Hymns and Anthems", and many of them will be members' favourites too. A certain forthright heartiness, particularly in the men's voices, and an occasional hesitant attack on quiet high notes, betray the fact that this is indeed an amateur choir, but nothing can take away the ardour and commitment of the singing. The disc opens and closes with Parry, *Jerusalem* of course, and, at the end, a spirited performance of his extended anthem *Hear my words, ye people*. This work is an Anglican step too far for this listener, I'm afraid, but many will not agree, and the choir clearly enjoy themselves enormously throughout, and especially with Parry's setting of the words "O praise ye the Lord" with which the work closes. I would guess that this piece really is one of the conductor's favourites, as it also closes the latest disc, "Rise Heart", and comparing the two performances will confirm the enormous

progress the choir has made in the intervening years. Congregational hymns include "Praise my Soul the King of Heaven" and a rather sleepy performance of Vaughan Williams' "Come down, O Love divine", sung, of course, to the tune "Down Ampney" and with a second verse arranged by Stephen Shellard. As to the anthems, the layering in Byrd's *Ave verum corpus* is attractively done, and Bruckner's famous *Locus iste*, so often taken at a funereal pace, is here kept moving, refreshingly so. The gentler pieces come off best in general. Gibbons' *Peace, perfect peace* is given a lovely performance, whereas Stanford's A major *Magnificat* is a bit too hearty for my liking. Mozart's famous "Laudate Dominum" (from his *Vespers*, K.332) goes well too, with Sheila Davies an accomplished soloist. If there is a basic criticism to be made, it might be that certain of these performances could be more dynamic. Brahms *Geistliches Lied* can be reverent, but here sounds a little tired too.

"A Worcester Evensong" opens well with Bairstow's organ voluntary, a toccata on the hymn tune "Pange Lingua", which is followed by the exquisite *O Taste and See*, so short, but always welcome. Good to hear, too, are the Responses written by Kenneth Leighton. The hymns, as always when sung by a choir rather than a congregation, sound too "correct", usually just at those points one wants to belt them out. The chants, readings and prayers will not really stand repeated listening, though they do, of course, add to the very real atmosphere of Anglican evensong. A certain rawness of tone in the men's voices is still apparent in Elgar's anthem *Great is the Lord*, but this is clearly in the process of being mastered in the two years since the earlier recording. A beautifully calm and poised performance of Arvo Pärt's *Beatitudes* that closes the disc shows the true potential of this choir at that time. Finally, mention should be made of the closing organ voluntary, a very fine and effective "Toccat" (from *Triptych for Organ*) by Ian Hare, a name new to me, splendidly played, as is all the organ music on the disc, by Michael Waldron.

The presentation of all these discs is excellent, the two more recent issues well up to the professional standards expected from Regent. Listening to them has been a great pleasure, and I'm very happy to commend them to members. All the participants deserve praise and encouragement, and I apologise to any individuals I may have forgotten to name. It only remains for me to say that the two recent discs are available from your usual CD supplier, or from the choir's website, www.worcestercathedralchamberchoir.co.uk, where you will also be able to purchase the earlier two if you so wish. And a final word of thanks to Juliette Holtom, from whom all further information can be had on 01905 22709 or 07967 755879.

William Hedley

Ursula on the Ninth

Jeffrey Davis writes:

The July 2011 issue of *BBC Music Magazine* included as its cover CD a performance of Vaughan Williams' *Symphony No. 9* conducted by Andrew Davis. This prompted me to send in a copy of a letter I had received from Ursula Vaughan Williams in July 1999, in which she made some very interesting comments about the symphony. Her writing is very difficult to read, but I have tentatively deciphered it as follows:

I remember Ralph said that he was burying all his dead comrades during the Ninth

Earlier on in the same letter, Ursula had referred to the *Ninth* as:

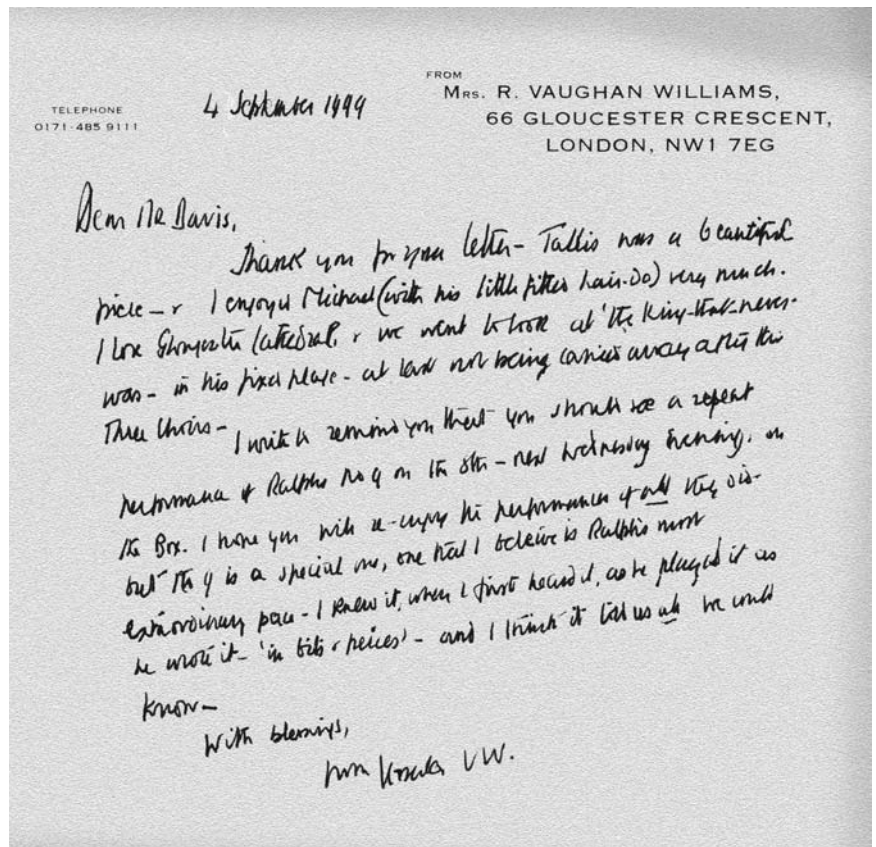
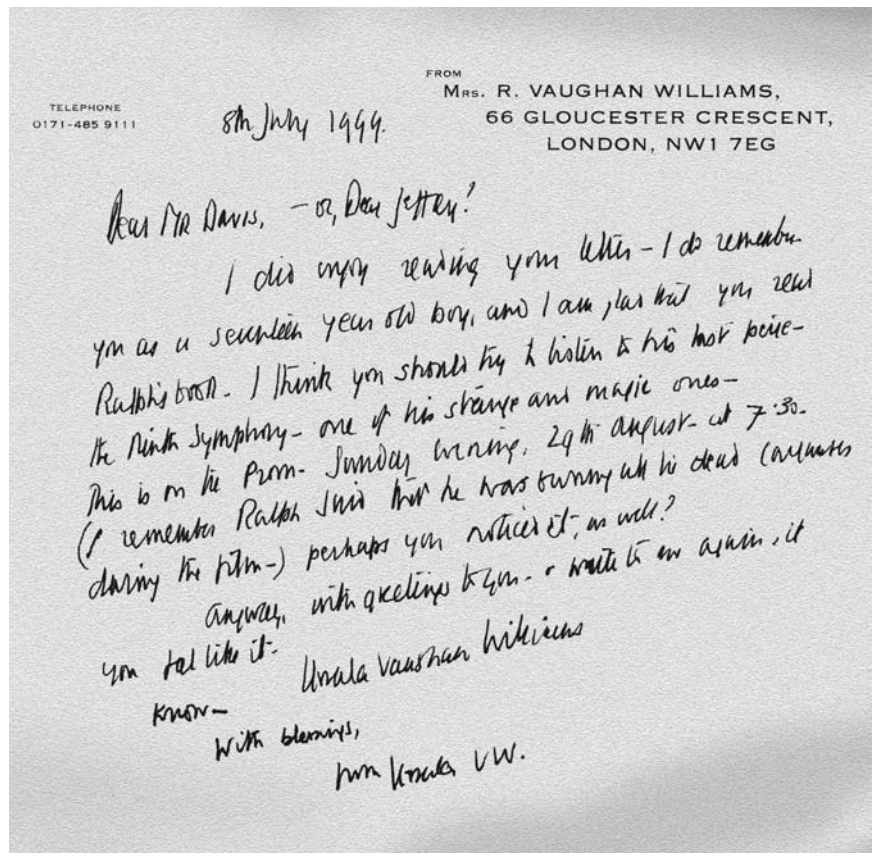
One of his strange and magic ones

In September 1999 I received another letter from her, in which she again referred to the *Ninth Symphony*, in the following terms:

...no 9 is a special one, one that I believe is Ralph's most extraordinary piece – I knew it, when I first heard it, as he played it as he wrote it – "in bits & pieces" – and I think that it tells us all we could know...

I thought that readers of the *Journal* might be interested in these fascinating insights, especially the "dead comrades" remark (though it is far from certain that that is what she actually wrote!). Vaughan Williams himself was of course very reticent about discussing possible "meanings" in his work.

Interestingly, there was a further letter in the September issue of the magazine in which it was suggested that one of the "dead comrades" might well have been Gerald Finzi, who had died in 1956 whilst Vaughan Williams was on holiday in Majorca working on the *Ninth Symphony*, and whom, it was claimed, Vaughan Williams had regarded as his musical heir (although surely Edmund Rubbra was similarly regarded.)



Ralph Vaughan Williams and the French

Marie-Béatrice Jeanjean

[This article gives a tentative answer to the question “How well known is Vaughan Williams in France?” It was first published in French in the June 2011 edition of the Journal, and now appears in an English translation.]

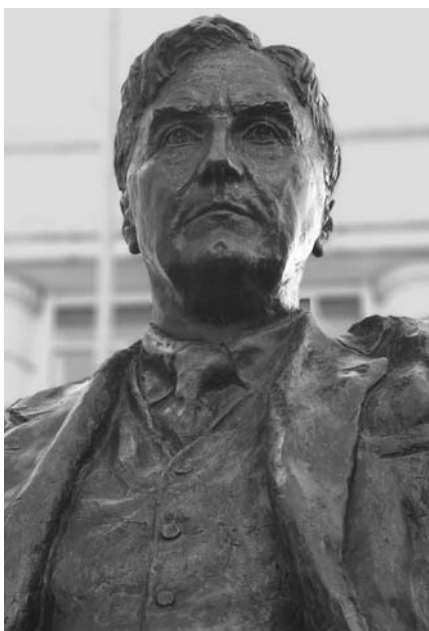
On the occasion of the 51st edition of the *Journal of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society*, I wanted to know how the French feel about the famous English composer whose fame seems inadequate to us.

As a choral singer for almost twenty years, I have had the opportunity to sing and enjoy three of the composer’s works: *Five Mystical Songs*, *O Taste and See* and *Valiant-for-Truth*. These were as thrilling for me as they were for the audience that came to listen to them during annual concerts here in the South of France. Nonetheless, the idea occurred to me that this composer was insufficiently performed in France and probably under-recognised.

In an attempt to clarify and justify this impression, an investigation seemed a good idea. To begin with, the thirteen members of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society living in France, thirteen other people working in the world of music (choral conductors, singers, instrumentalists and so on) and thirteen people selected at random, were asked by email to fill in a simple questionnaire. Only eleven questions were asked, so as not to take up too much of the respondents’ time.

After a month and a couple of reminders, the response rate to the questionnaire came close to 74%. Six members of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, eight French musicians and thirteen people from the “general public” replied. However, two responses proved barely usable as only a general comment was included, with the questionnaire itself not filled in.

The result was disappointing overall. Of the thirteen people selected at random among my acquaintances, not one had heard of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Of the eight French people working in the world of music, two – a professional singer and an instrumentalist – did not



know him at all. The six French members of the Society, on the other hand, were of course perfectly familiar with the composer.

The replies of people working in the music world provide interesting clues about the appreciation of the composer’s music by the French.

Of the six works by Vaughan Williams cited in the first question – *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, *Fantasia on “Greensleeves,”* *A Sea Symphony*, *The Lark Ascending*, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and *Serenade to Music* – one person was familiar with *Fantasia on “Greensleeves”*; another knew the *Tallis Fantasia*; a third *The Lark Ascending* and *Serenade to Music*; a fourth “*Greensleeves*”, *Tallis* and *The Lark*; a fifth knew all six works and one person didn’t know any of them.

Asked to name additional works they knew, one person cited *Three Shakespeare Songs*; a second the *Mass in G minor*; a third *Lord, Thou hast been our Refuge* and *Valiant-for-Truth*; a fourth *Three Shakespeare Songs* and the *Pastoral Symphony*; a fifth the *English Folk Song Suite*, *Norfolk Rhapsody*, the “*Wasps*” *Overture* and *Five Variants of “Dives and Lazarus”*. A final person was unable to evoke any other titles.

With regard to naming a favourite work, one person gave the *Tallis Fantasia*, two others gave the *Serenade to Music* and the remaining three had no particular preference.

As to having performed music by Vaughan Williams, two members of this particular group had never done so, whereas the others had taken part variously in performances of the *Serenade to Music*, *Three Shakespeare Songs*, *O Taste and See* and the *Mass in G minor*.

Did they own CDs of Vaughan Williams' music? Four of them did not, and the remaining two had a single disc each.

The replies of the members of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society were more affirmative, unsurprising, in my view, since we are dealing with supporters of the cause!

Of the six works listed in the questionnaire, as cited above, the six respondents claimed to know them all!

Regarding titles of additional works known, one person mentioned *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *The House of Life*, *Songs of Travel*, *Sinfonia Antartica* and "many others"; a second *Sir John in Love*, *Sancta Civitas*, *A Pastoral Symphony*, *Toward The Unknown Region*, *Willow-Wood*, *Four Hymns* "and so on"; a third *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *Sinfonia Antartica*, *The Wasps*, *The Poisoned Kiss*, *Job*, *Scott of the Antarctic*, *Hugh the Drover*, *49th Parallel* and the *Symphony No. 5*. The last three people assured me that they knew all those Vaughan Williams works that have appeared on disc.

With regard to a favourite work, one person mentioned *A Pastoral Symphony*; a second *The Pilgrim's Progress*; a third equally between the *Tallis Fantasia* and *Symphony No. 5*; a fourth had different preferences "depending on what day it is", between the *Symphony No. 5*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the *London Symphony*, *Job* and *Five Tudor Portraits*; the last two people confessed a weakness for the *Symphony No. 5*. It was certainly the *Fifth Symphony* that received the most votes.

With regard to having performed a work of Vaughan Williams, two people had never done so, but one had sung *The Water Mill*, another "Love-Sight" from *The House of Life*, another *Five Mystical Songs*, *O Taste and See* and *Valiant-for-Truth*, and the last played "his musical settings of traditional songs and hymn tunes."

On the subject of CD collections, all six members of the Society owned "more than twenty", which was the maximum figure suggested in the questionnaire. Some even specified: "over 50", "72", "227" or "almost all".

Although this investigation, by the modest number of people contacted and even more modest number of responses, is imperfect and its statistical reliability only limited, it is nevertheless an interesting indicator of how little Vaughan Williams' music is known by the French. As such, it will have at least served the purpose of establishing that his reputation is low across the Channel, and with no offence to Her Majesty's

subjects! 80% of respondents who had themselves heard of the composer in France considered him to be "little known", and 20% described him as "unknown". For 100% of the "general public" it was total ignorance. We should therefore make every effort to promote better knowledge of this great English composer amongst our countrymen, particularly since 90% of musicians and singers who know of the composer "would like to perform his works more often", and because 70% have never been able to "go to a concert where one of his works was given" (only 30% had been able to do so). It would appear that the French would like to know and understand this artist better. To use a "marketing" expression, the demand is there but the supply is not.

Attempting to explain the reasons for the lack of success of Vaughan Williams' music here, a French singer interviewed commented: "In France, English music is Purcell, Handel (by adoption) and Britten. The rest is unknown." For another singer, Ralph Vaughan Williams certainly is "little known, little understood and rarely performed" in our country, but it is also the case for other notable British composers "such as Elgar and Holst". A member of the Society finds regrettable the fact that Vaughan Williams is "underestimated", but suggests that our frustration might be alleviated by the knowledge that "Vincent d'Indy, Ernest Chausson, Albéric Magnard and many other French musicians of great value are also underestimated in their own country." A final member put forward the idea that "France has a problem with the sacred and folklore. Her idea of music called "contemporary" is too intellectual. However...in Vaughan Williams...his music corresponds to a view of English culture based on traditional sources...Consequently, Vaughan Williams is not known, nor, I think, really understood in France, like other masters such as Parry and Stanford, for example."

By way of conclusion, let me say that all this does not simply suggest that the French are ignorant or demonstrate that they are uneducated about the English music! But, to paraphrase the response of a French member of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, "the character of his music may be so British that it does not meet the expectations of the French."

[One member of the Society took the opportunity of the survey to let us know about the forthcoming publication of his book. *Leos Janacek (1854-1928), Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) et Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958): un cheminement commun vers les sources* by James Lyon is to be published by Éditions Beauchesne in Paris. This may very well act as a new means of increasing knowledge of the composer on this side of the Channel.] ~

Howells on Vaughan Williams

This tribute to Ralph Vaughan Williams on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday was written by Herbert Howells and published in the Radio Times on 10 October 1947.

Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams was born on October 12 1872. It is therefore required of us that we think of the acknowledged Chief Musician of our nation as a man of seventy-five. We can but try.

There is an easy flaw in our anniversary habits as touching creative minds. A man may be, in the ordinary meaning, seventy-five, as Dr. Vaughan Williams is. But we might more wisely regard him as a forty-years-old composer. We could certainly do worse than date him from the year in which a sufficient number of discerning and experienced musicians were for the first time made aware that a new composer had arrived.

By that reckoning the essential year would be 1907 – not 1872; the place, Leeds Town Hall – not the quiet parsonage of Down Ampney in Gloucestershire; the birth certificate, not a Somerset House document signed by a humble member of our Civil Service, but the score of a work bearing the names of Walt Whitman and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

The work was called *Toward the Unknown Region*: a choral work, of course.

Let those two words, “of course”, stand. For a composer destined to become an authentic voice in the long progress of English music must – almost as a matter of course – early conquer his fellow-countrymen with a work in which voices are essential or even paramount. That test is as old as William Byrd. Purcell met it. Stanford, Parry and Elgar were witnesses to the fact. Walton and Britten have not denied it. We are primarily and traditionally a “choral” nation. In a more than theoretic sense Vaughan Williams is a “national” composer.

Of what logical account are our anniversary calculations in respect of a man so described? A national composer is as old as his native hills. The springs of national character are as old as they, and that character must in part be his. In such a man roots are deep, inheritance far-reaching and

cumulative. The accents of his speech will be simple, sometime colloquial, its origins immemorial. Much, therefore, must have happened before the Leeds “birth”.

The young man who had been to school at Charterhouse, then to the Royal College of Music and Cambridge University had, in fact, broken bounds. More precisely, he had enlarged them. He had gone to the country. In and about Norfolk he had found, heard, and set down folk songs. In some other type of man such an activity might have been a temporary excursion to satisfy mere curiosity. For Vaughan Williams it was a compelling necessity.

The results were decisive.

Through it he found the “raw material” of his idiom: and when idiom is found, the springs of inspiration are released. He found also, modal inflections – the peculiar properties of tunes set down in terms of scales older and more varied than our modern “major” and “minor” modes. A third result was his finding the means of direct contact with the ordinary practitioners of music. It was the earliest of his many links with the broad masses of people who make music – singing, playing, dancing – for the sheer love of it: the amateur, in the clean meaning of that despoiled word.

In and about the time of the “London” Symphony (1914) and the “Pastoral” Symphony (1922) much critical nonsense was uttered against the composer’s predilection for folk music. It was solemnly declared that its influence was in the nature of a mental strait-jacket. There could be no healthy development, no expansion, no wide-ranging “fling”, or power, or sweep: only a deadening short-windedness in melody and a narrowed and mannered harmony; only a smooth placid area of vocal and instrumental expression. By such a reckoning (we were assured) there might be short-measured perfection and beauty – in “Linden Lea”, the “Songs of Travel”, “Silent Noon”, the arrangements of “Greensleeves” or “The Turtle-Dove”. Size, drive, brilliance, temper, variety – all these would be reduced.

Such were the puny contentions of a few, and for a while. But they overlooked the circumstance that genius will feed itself how and where it pleases.

The dusty critical lances are long since broken. The works remain. The “London” Symphony still stands – the song of a great city. The “Pastoral” is a subtle, revealing estimate of the quietude and quality that lie at the heart of our English countryside. The Fourth and forthright Symphony in F minor is the most powerful light yet thrown upon the strain and stress that troubled the European creative mind in those years that lay between two convulsive wars. The Fifth – “for Sibelius” – carries an honourable dedication to a renowned contemporary, but is in all essentials a unique self-dedication – a review of its composer’s first principles and abiding convictions. And there is a Sixth Symphony, finished, but as yet known only to a few.

At this anniversary – no matter by what numeral we define it – a vast body of our people will turn gratefully towards Ralph Vaughan Williams. He has become an essential part of our musical existence, and of our better vision. *Job* has clarified Blake. The *Tallis Fantasy* is the outstanding commentary upon the Tudor composers. *Flos Campi* is the work of a seer. *Sancta Civitas* brings apocalyptic subjects nearer to our grasp. The *Benedicite* has made a fine poem of its text. *Hugh the Drover* will excite ordinary men almost to the point of laying odds on the outcome of a fight on the operatic stage. *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* has rediscovered a common ground between Stage and Church. And all these form but a part of a far-from-completed achievement.

When Elgar was given the Order of Merit one of his famous contemporaries remarked “That is surely right. He has touched the hearts of millions.”

The like honour has gone to Dr. Vaughan Williams: the same verdict goes with it.

In the giving of thanks we are a shy people. But he knows that. 🐦

Music You Might Like

Rikky Rooksby

In my recent personal exploration of twentieth-century tonal music I have been delighted occasionally to come across music which touches the part of me that has always loved Vaughan Williams. Often these are no more than brief reminiscences, but I'm glad I found them all the same, and perhaps other members of the Society will enjoy them too. All the examples are from non-British composers. (It seems to me that listening to string works by, for example, Finzi and Moeran, it is to be expected that one will hear similarities.)

**Bohuslav Martinů, *Memorial to Lidice* (1943)
The Philadelphia Orchestra/Christoph Eschenbach (Ondine)**

The music of Czech composer Martinů has been very much on the rise in the past ten years, with several cycles of the six symphonies issued and many of the concertos and chamber works. This short piece is an elegy for the village of Lidice which was the subject of a Nazi atrocity in June 1942. It has several moments in which chords are layered against each other to form tense but beautiful sounds. The opening pits two minor chords a semitone apart against each other (C minor and Db minor) in a way which will evoke the E minor/F minor opening of Vaughan Williams' *Ninth Symphony* (and perhaps also evoke the sound-world of the *Sixth*). The music also layers C and Db minor and C and F# major. The effect is wonderfully expressive, and this disc has the added bonus of being a hybrid SACD.

**Thomas Canning, *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune* (composed during World War 2)
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra/Raymond Leppard,
on "American Dreams" (Decca)**

Of all the works cited here, this is the one which would be characterised by many as an out-and-out pastiche of the *Tallis Fantasia*. Scored for double string quartet and string orchestra, Canning takes a hymn tune by Justin Morgan and starts his piece with essentially the same four orchestration gestures as Vaughan Williams used: an opening of wide-spaced slow-moving chords in contrary motion; a passage of pizzicato bass notes; a statement of the tune with tremolando upper strings; a fuller impassioned statement. (The Decca disc is difficult to find, but the work is also available on "American Adagios" on the Telarc label.)

**Randall Thompson, "Lento Tranquillo" from *Symphony No. 3* (1947-49)
New Zealand Symphony Orchestra/Andrew Schenk (Koch)**

Randall Thompson was an American composer from New England chiefly remembered for his choral music. This movement has grave and lyrical string writing, with many suspensions and the occasional melodic phrase reminiscent of "I vow to thee, my country". If you're fond of the "Romanza" from Vaughan Williams' *Fifth Symphony* this will appeal. (Again, the disc is currently difficult to get hold of but is available as a download.)

**Eduard Tubin, *Sinfonia Lirica* (No. 4) (1943)
Estonian National Symphony Orchestra/Arvo Volmer (Alba)
Bergen Philharmonic/Neeme Järvi (BIS)**

Eduard Tubin is one of the most famous Estonian composers and wrote ten symphonies. Perhaps the most approachable is the fourth, entitled *Sinfonia Lirica*. The opening movement has a cool panoramic openness that reminds one of the general effect of the first movement of Vaughan Williams' *Fifth*. It is fascinating that it was written roughly around the same time. The recording on Alba has slightly better sound, but is difficult to find; the BIS is a concert recording with more atmosphere and the odd cough. I wouldn't want to be without either.

**Samuel Barber, *Toccata Festiva* (1960)
Gillian Weir, English Chamber Orchestra/Raymond
Leppard (Linn)**

The popularity of the *Adagio for Strings* has led to a neglect of much of Barber's other music. Within the opening thirty seconds of the *Toccata Festiva* a melodic theme with two short phrases is heard which consists of the notes A-G-A-B-G-E and A-G-A-G-F#-E. This theme has a strong modal flavour and is reminiscent of Vaughan Williams. Barber treats this theme in many ways and finds different harmonisations to colour it. It features in a lovely passage for strings before being heard on solo organ. This is a piece which deserves to be heard more often in concert.



**Arthur Meulemans, "Andante" from *Symphony No. 3* (1933)
Moscow Symphony Orchestra/Frederic Devreese (Marco
Polo, currently available only as a download)**

I had not heard of this Flemish composer (1884-1966) [pictured above] before buying this CD on a whim in Brussels. Anyone who likes Ravel will enjoy this CD, especially the romantic *May Night*, which has an unforgettable main theme. But I've included the disc here because of the slow movement of the *Third Symphony*. Vaughan Williams enthusiasts will be captivated by a striking passage that could have come directly from the *Pastoral Symphony*, with its magic shifts of triads, and a slowly-built final chord of E minor with a prominent note C added to it with a B in close proximity, reminding one once again of the semitonal colour of the superimposed E minor and F minor triads in the first movement of Vaughan Williams' *Ninth*. 🐾

From the Publicity Officer

THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL: HEREFORD, 21-28 JULY 2012

The Society plans to have a presence at next year's Three Choirs Festival and an event for members is planned for Monday 23 July. *A Sea Symphony* is to be performed that evening, and Roderick Williams will sing *Songs of Travel* on Thursday 26 July. Both concerts are likely to sell out quickly once booking opens in April. The preliminary programme can be found at www.3choirs.org.

RECIPROCAL MEMBERSHIP

A reminder that the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society has a reciprocal arrangement with two other composer societies, the Delius Society and the Arthur Bliss Society, whereby members can benefit from reduced membership for the first year. More information can be found on the associated websites as follows:

The Arthur Bliss Society: www.arthurbliss.org
First year membership offer: Single £7.50 (normally £15.00); Double £10.00 (normally £20.00)

The Delius Society: www.delius.org.uk
First year membership offer: £14.00 (normally £28.00). 2012 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Delius.

SELECTED FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

1 NOVEMBER

London, Royal Albert Hall

A Sea Symphony

with Elgar

Jacques Imbrailo (baritone), Goldsmiths Choral Union, Guildford Choral Society, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Brian Wright

9, 10 & 13 NOVEMBER

Manchester, Bridgewater Hall

Symphony No. 5

with Dvořák and Elgar

Hallé Orchestra/Sir Mark Elder

11-20 NOVEMBER

London, Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate Village

Hugh the Drover

World premiere of a chamber version of the opera, arranged for small orchestra with the permission and support of the Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust.

Hampstead Garden Opera
www.hgo.org.uk/next.htm

12 NOVEMBER

Berkhamsted, Civic Centre

String Quartet No. 2 in A minor

with Schubert, Piazzolla, Mendelssohn
Brodowski Quartet

19 NOVEMBER

Hadleigh, Suffolk, St Mary's Church

A Cotswold Romance (arr. Jacobson)

Toward the Unknown Region

with Elgar

Hadleigh Choral Society, Colchester Symphony Orchestra/Christopher Phelps

19 NOVEMBER

Colchester, St Botolph's Church

Hodie

with Alan Bullard: *Dance of the Universe*

Colchester Choral Society, Colchester Sinfonia

20 NOVEMBER

Bristol, Colston Hall

Sinfonia Antartica

with Britten, Elgar

Elizabeth Atherton (soprano); women's voices of the Bristol Choral Society, BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Adrian Partington

22 NOVEMBER

Stratford-upon-Avon, Civic Hall

Violin Concerto; The Lark Ascending

with Elgar & Ireland

Tamsin Waley-Cohen (violin), Orchestra of the Swan/David Curtis
(and on 23 November at 2.30 pm, at the Town Hall, Birmingham)

26 NOVEMBER

Clifton, Bristol, Victoria Rooms

A London Symphony

with Elgar

Pre-concert talk at 6.45 pm

New Bristol Sinfonia/James Lowe

26 NOVEMBER

Folkestone, Kent, Leas Cliff Hall

Serenade to Music (choral version)

with Borodin, Parry, Wagner, Rachmaninov
Freddy Kempf (piano), Folkestone Choral Society, Folkestone & Hythe Orchestra

27 NOVEMBER

Northampton, Royal & Derngate

Symphony No. 5

with Delius, Elgar

Julian Lloyd Webber (cello), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Barry Wordsworth

30 NOVEMBER (1.15 pm)

Clifton, Bristol, Victoria Rooms

Mass in G minor

Bristol University Singers

Admission free, retiring collection

3 DECEMBER

Poole, Dorset, the Lighthouse

The Lark Ascending

with Delius, Elgar, Grainger, Holst, Balfour Gardiner

Alina Ibragimova (violin), Sir David Attenborough (Guest Host), Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra/Sir John Eliot Gardiner

10 DECEMBER

Lymington, St Thomas's Church

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

with Charpentier, Handel, Mozart, Bruckner,
Douglas Coombes

Lymington Choral Society, Lymington Classical Players/Michael Goldthorpe

7, 8 and 11 DECEMBER 7

Manchester, Bridgewater Hall

Oboe Concerto

with Schubert, Mozart
Stéphane Rancourt (oboe), Hallé Orchestra/Andrew Manze

17 DECEMBER

Dorchester Abbey

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

with Britten, Finzi

Orchestra and Voices of St. John's/John Lubbock
(also 23 December, King's Place, London)

29 JANUARY 2012

London, Royal Festival Hall

The Lark Ascending

with Delius, Elgar

Zsolt-Tihamer Visontay (violin), Julian Lloyd Webber (cello), Philharmonia Orchestra/Sir Andrew Davis

3 FEBRUARY – 3 MARCH 2012

Scott of the Antarctic Centenary Concert Tour

In partnership with the Scott Polar Research Institute, and supported by Arts Council, England, the Colwinstone Trust, the RVW Trust and the Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust, this five-concert tour will be given by the City of London Sinfonia.

Ralph Vaughan Williams: *Sinfonia Antartica* and extracts from *Scott of the Antarctic* with Cecilia McDowall: *Seventy Degrees Below Zero* (world premiere)

Ben Fogle (narrator), Robert Murray (tenor), Stephen Layton (conductor)

The programme retraces in music, words and pictures, the steps of Captain Scott's expedition to the South Pole. Vaughan Williams' film score is interwoven with extracts from Scott's diary read by TV star and explorer, Ben Fogle. Cecilia McDowall's new work sets to music words from Scott's final letter, which he headed "To my widow".

Dates currently announced are:

3 February, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

4 February, Corn Exchange, Cambridge

7 February, St David's Hall, Cardiff

8 February, Town Hall, Cheltenham

3 March, Cadogan Hall, London

See www.cityoflondonsonfonia.co.uk/whatson

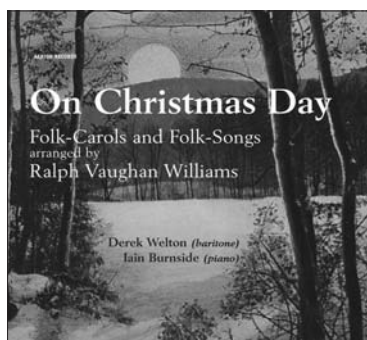
Selected forthcoming concerts in the UK and abroad are listed on the Society's website.

As always, do check details before making a special journey. Concert information should be sent to rvwinformation@hotmail.com.

Karen Fletcher

Albion – an Update

Albion Records has enjoyed remarkable success with *The Garden of Proserpine*. We secured excellent national reviews in the *Times* and the *Guardian* and the October *Gramophone* concludes with “Don’t miss this fascinating release.” Such glowing reviews propelled this CD into the UK Classical Top Ten as well as the Classic FM Top Forty. Hadley’s *Fen and Flood*, as arranged by Vaughan Williams, was widely praised as a real discovery. With a superb *In the Fen Country* (perhaps the best yet recorded), this has been a very successful release for the Society.



features the world premiere of the *Prelude on Three Welsh Hymn Tunes*. Members will be pleased to know that we are also including a free bonus CD of Vaughan Williams talking about Bach, from a broadcast of 28 July 1950.

All being well, we then want to concentrate on recordings of early Vaughan Williams, including *The Solent*, *Burley Heath* and *Harnham Down*. Depending on how difficult it will be to edit these unpublished works, we will need financial help from our members

and a further appeal will be launched in the February *Journal*. This disc will also include, at Roger Savage’s suggestion, the *Four Hymns* in the version for tenor and strings.

This September sees the arrival of *On Christmas Day* (ALBCD 013), a collection of folk-carols and folk-songs, including the world premiere recording of the *Twelve Traditional Carols from Herefordshire*. These were arranged by Vaughan Williams with Ella Mary Leather. Members might recall the two articles on Mrs Leather, in *Journals* June 1997 and October 1998, by Simona Pakenham and Richard Birt. It is a fascinating story and their arrangements of such carols as *Joseph and Mary* or *The Seven Virgins* are quite lovely, ideal for listening to over the Christmas break, when the kids are asleep – hopefully. Derek Welton (baritone) is accompanied by Iain Burnside (piano). He is a young Australian singer with a lyrical baritone wholly suited to these evocative carols. The CD is available from Mark Hammett for £10 plus postage and packing.

We are also planning a recording of *Job* in the arrangement for solo piano by Vally Lasker, along with Vaughan Williams’ own arrangements for piano of his *In the Fen Country* and the *Prelude to the 49th Parallel*.

Albion Records is always keen to hear from members with ideas for future recordings, of either new or reissued music. Please do not hesitate to contact me on albionslc@aol.com with your ideas.

There are many exciting projects in the pipeline. The Spring of 2012 sees the release of our first Albion Archive disc, featuring Alexander Young (tenor) in *On Wenlock Edge* as well as *Merciless Beauty*. *Five Tudor Portraits* is conducted by William Steinberg from an old and rare Capitol release of the 1950s and the disc also

Having now taken responsibility for **Albion Music**, the book publishing company (with John Francis), we are keen to commission new books on English composers as well as rescuing from oblivion rare and valuable books long out of print. Again, your ideas on what might be included would be most welcome. Keep an eye out for the new Albion Music website, www.albionmusic.com, which should be fully functioning by the end of October of this year.

Stephen Connock

ALBION MUSIC

BOOKS

- Let Beauty Awake: Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Literature £10.00 + £3.80 (ed. Julian Rushton)
- The Complete Poems + Fall of Leaf (Ursula Vaughan Williams) £15.00 + £3.80
- There was a time – a Pictorial Collection £20.00 + £3.50
- Paradise Remembered (Ursula Vaughan Williams) £20.00 + £2.30
- Vaughan Williams in Perspective (ed. Lewis Foreman) £20.00 + £3.30
- Ralph’s People: The Ingrave Secret (Frank Dineen) £15.00 + £1.70

Available from:

John Francis, Treasurer, The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, North House, 198, High Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1BE.
email: john@lffuk.com
Cheques for books to be made payable to *Albion Music Ltd.*

ALBION RECORDS

CDs

- The Sky Shall Be Our Roof £10.00 + £1.80
- Kissing Her Hair £10.00 + £1.80
- Music in the Heart £10.00 + £1.80
- Where Hope is Shining £10.00 + £1.80
- Folk Songs of the Four Seasons £10.00 + £1.80
- Symphony No. 6 for two pianos, + Ireland £10.00 + £1.80
- The Garden of Proserpine £10.00 + £1.80
- On Christmas Day £10.00 + £1.80



Available from:

Mark Hammett, 7, Endsleigh Road, Merstham, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 3LX.
email: albionmrh@btinternet.com
Cheques for CDs to be made payable to *Albion Records Ltd.*
Also available as downloads at www.albionrecords.org

Letters

LONDON

A couple of letters concerning the original version of *A London Symphony* in the last issue of the *Journal* prompted me to write. One of the things that struck me when the late Richard Hickox' recording came out was how significantly Vaughan Williams had tightened the structure of the work by the cuts made in his revisions. I was particularly surprised at how the seemingly inevitable climax of the second movement doesn't seem nearly as inevitable in the original version, the grand sweep of the final version having been improved by substantial cuts. Even though Vaughan Williams got rid of some extremely beautiful music, I strongly prefer the 1933 version.

I think I am right in saying that when the recording was made, there were to be no public performances, then after about another five years performances were sanctioned. I don't know if anyone other than Richard Hickox has conducted the reconstructed original version but I feel very strongly that any question over which version is to be regarded as "standard" should never arise. It is stated quite clearly in the score of the 1933 version that this version supersedes all previous ones.

Publication and performances in recent years of Vaughan Williams' early works are very exciting. These are of great interest to lovers of Vaughan Williams' music but nobody is claiming them to be the pinnacle of his art. But if, in the case of *A London Symphony* – the composer's favourite among his symphonies – the reconstructed original is performed or played on the radio, to the extent that it challenges the rightful position of the 1933 revised version, then I believe Vaughan Williams will have been done a disservice. We know that he frequently revised his works and how strongly self-critical he was. I am very glad to have the CD of the reconstructed original but it would be wrong to see it as definitive. I am just as keen as any Vaughan Williams lover to hear as much of his music as I can, but the revisions are a part of the compositional process and I believe they should be respected.

What then of the various versions of Bruckner's symphonies or of Stravinsky's ballets? Well, I am speaking only about Vaughan Williams and if one considers how irritated he was by those who tried to attach overly prescriptive programmes to his symphonies I wonder what kind of mood he would be in about this...

Francis Harte

Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland

LONDON, BRITTEN

While the current correspondence regarding the merits of the original version of the *London Symphony* against the revised version is fascinating, it is actually academic. Vaughan Williams withdrew the original version in 1920, revising it a number of times until 1936. He therefore could have reinstated it at any time over the thirty-eight years after its withdrawal, or indeed the last twenty-two years of his life after publication of his final version. That he did not means that we can be fairly certain that what he left to us was what he wanted us to have. Vaughan Williams did not pander to others' whims, was always true to himself, and would certainly have restored the original to use had he wished to.

In addition, I recall reading that the *London Symphony* was his favourite, and I believe that was a comment made in his old age, so I think that confirms that he was very happy with his revisions.

Let us treasure the Hickox recording as a fascinating reference document, as I do, and, doubtless, there will be the occasional performance of the original, but there should surely be no question of its being treated as the equal or even superior of its (in parts) distant cousin, nor its being treated as some sort of *Symphony No. 2a* to be added to the canon.

On another symphony, I have just listened, for the first time in quite a while, to the *Fourth*, which I have tended to avoid, in part because of its uncompromising modernity. Returning to it, not in the composer's own recording, nor one of the most celebrated versions, but the faithful Vernon Handley performance with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, I was totally overwhelmed by its power. I now believe it to be not only one of his very greatest works, but that it may rank alongside anything written in the twentieth century, even if, like the great man himself, I am still not sure if I like it!

The sneering critics who dismissed Vaughan Williams' music, and still do, as "cowpat" music might reflect that five of his nine symphonies, the *Fourth* and the *Sixth* onwards, are very much of the twentieth century and are every bit as challenging as those of Shostakovich and Prokofiev and the other leading symphonists from the 1930s onwards. (I think the *Second*, *Third* and *Fifth* are masterpieces as well, for different reasons.)

Turning now to a rather lesser figure, Benjamin Britten, I think that it is telling that he fled to the USA in 1939, only returning when Britain was safe from invasion in 1942, and making doubly sure of his own personal safety by registering as a conscientious objector. Vaughan Williams, though he hated war as strongly as anyone, joined up for the First War when well into his forties, and saw service in Northern France, remembered in his haunting *Pastoral Symphony*, a war requiem from personal experience, and though well beyond military service in the 1939-45 war, did all he could, both practically and through his music, to support the British war effort.

That tells us everything we need to know about them as men.

Nigel Blore

Billericay, Essex, UK

BEN-HAIM, BRITTEN

When I read Cecil Bloom's interesting article about the Israeli composer Paul Ben-Haim in the June issue of the *Journal*, I was surprised to find no mention of an extremely important connection between Ben-Haim and Vaughan Williams that would surely be of interest to the *Journal's* readers and provide an explanation for the article's presence in the *Journal* beyond making us aware of music we "might like". I recalled that on the final page of Ursula Vaughan Williams' biography of her husband she describes how on the final day of his life he entertained Ben-Haim at his home and that the two spent the afternoon happily poring over and discussing some

of Ben-Haim's scores that he had brought with him for Vaughan Williams' perusal. A further puzzle then presented itself. When I turned to the biography for confirmation of this, I discovered that the details were as I had remembered them except that Ursula refers to Vaughan Williams' composer visitor as *Alexander Ben-Haim*. Now I can find no trace of any composer named Alexander Ben-Haim, but I can certainly confirm the existence of an Israeli composer named Alexander Haim, born in 1915 and apparently still alive. Both Alexander Haim and Paul Ben-Haim went to Israel in the 1930s as refugees from Hitler's Germany, and both played prominent roles – as composers and teachers – in the musical culture of their adopted country. Although Paul Ben-Haim seems to have had somewhat more international prominence, both composers have entries in the *New Grove*. Ben-Haim was sixty at the time of Vaughan Williams' death, and Haim was forty-two, so either could have been his visitor in the August of 1958. I had previously suspected that Ursula had erred in her reference, having meant to refer to Paul Ben-Haim, but it now seems at least as likely that the visitor was Alexander Haim. It's a bit of a mystery. Is there anyone out there who can clear it up?

On another matter, it seems that some of my fellow Vaughan Williams devotees have gotten their noses out of joint because it appears that Benjamin Britten did not care overmuch for the music of Vaughan Williams. One reader even tries to put Britten in his place by declaring that while Vaughan Williams, Elgar, and Stanford all have societies supporting their work, Britten does not, therefore implying that this somehow makes Britten an inferior, or at least a less popular, composer than the other three. Surely this is absurd. Britten didn't care for the music of Brahms either, but Brahms is doing just fine without Britten's approbation, whether or not he has a society of his own. Britten, like Brahms, is now a composer of widely acknowledged international stature, and, also like Brahms, is hardly in need of a society to promote the promulgation of his music. Whether we like it or not, Vaughan Williams still has a way to go to attain the comparable stature that we believe he deserves. We in the Society still have our work cut out for us, and it won't be achieved by denigrating Britten, a major composer in his own right.

We should also remember that whether or not he liked Vaughan Williams' music as much as we do, Britten took the trouble to write a rather remarkable letter of condolence to Ursula in which he not only mourned the older composer's death but proclaimed him "a very great man" and hailed "his wonderful uncompromising courage in fighting for all those things he believed in – things which I personally believe to be some of the most important things in life." Neither should it be forgotten that Britten together with the incomparable Peter Pears – also unfairly reviled in the June issue – performed and made one of the first and best recordings of *On Wenlock Edge*. As far as I know, Britten never played or recorded Brahms!

Michael Greenwald
Philadelphia, USA

SONGS FROM NORTH OF THE BORDER

I can but bow the knee before Julian Onderdonk's mighty three-part checklist of Vaughan Williams' arrangements of dances and songs of England and her neighbours. I am interested in his tentative naming of Maddie Scott as collector of *Loch Lomond*, for works of reference say the splendid poignant words are

attributed to Lady John Douglas Scott (1810-1900). The *Oxford Companion to Music* states that "the tune also may be by her", and adds that the air of *Annie Laurie* is hers. (She and various others altered the poem by William Douglas who was the real-life heroine's rejected lover.) Please can readers provide any further information about Maddie Scott?

The listing of Robert Burns – also with a question mark – as collector of *Ca' the Yowes* (item 31, immediately preceding *Loch Lomond*) can perhaps be clarified, for it seems established that he provided further verses to an existing poem by Isabel Pagan. This and *Loch Lomond* are clear cases of composed songs passing into the oral tradition to become "something akin to folk songs in their own right".

Frank McManus

Todmorden, West Yorkshire, UK

HAPPY TALK

In response to the Editor's call for "all that makes us happy about Vaughan Williams", I'd like to share a couple of experiences with other members.

On three occasions during the 1960s I heard music that made a deep impression on me. I still remember my reaction. On each of these occasions I knew neither the title of the music nor the name of the composer.

In 1961, I listened to a piece of music on CBC Radio. It had a sense of menace and drama – a wind machine and a solemn narrator were heard. I listened to it intently. At the end of the piece I heard the word "Antartica". Then, in 1965, just before joining the transmission of the BBC coverage of the funeral of Winston Churchill, CBC Television played a short musical interlude – the music gave a sense of nobility and was quite moving. In 1969, CBC Radio played music that I started to record with a tape recorder. Afterwards I would listen to the tape. It had a mysterious sound with a soloist singing of an angel who "took up a millstone". I was fond of fast-forwarding to a section where I could hear a violin playing a hauntingly beautiful melody.

In 1972, I "officially discovered" Vaughan Williams and his music when I heard the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. The exploration of Vaughan Williams' music started. Very quickly I learned that what I had heard in 1961 was the *Sinfonia Antartica*. Not long afterwards I discovered that the musical interlude played before Winston Churchill's funeral was the "Saraband of the Sons of God" from *Job*. But what had I heard in 1969? Could it have also been a work by Vaughan Williams? Was that too much of a coincidence?

Thirty-six years passed. The tape had long since disappeared. Then the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society provided a clue in the *Selected Discography*. In 2005, I noticed a reference to *Sancta Civitas*, a piece I was not familiar with, in which a passage with a violin was described as "one of the most magical and rapturous in all music". Could that have been what I heard? A CD was ordered and the puzzle was solved. What I had heard in 1969 was indeed *Sancta Civitas* and the passage with the violin was from "And I see a new heaven and a new earth". Thirty-six years later I was able to hear the violin passage again.

Following on from this, during the hot summer in Toronto I read a book called *Mozart in the Jungle – Sex, Drugs, and Classical Music*. The author, Blair Tindall, an oboist, details the personal and financial problems that beset herself and others in the world of classical music.

In reading the book, I noted with interest three references to works by Ralph Vaughan Williams. In one reference the author has a joyful emotional experience that certainly raises her spirits. She describes a performance of *Ten Blake Songs* at Carnegie Recital Hall. She played oboe and Robert White was the tenor. The passage, somewhat condensed by me, reads as follows:

“The text used poet William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Once onstage, Bobby and I arranged our music quickly and began. From the moment he began singing, I felt as though I’d been transported to a higher level of musicianship. Bobby and I started the second song, “Eternity”, a work that had a surprisingly moving effect on the listener, given the composition’s simplicity.

He who binds to himself a joy
Doth the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity’s sunrise.

I was still frightened to be onstage but, at the same time, filled with joy and enthusiasm. I felt a physical sensation that I’d only experienced a few times before when everything was going right.”

For myself, I found the passage deeply moving to read, quite uplifting and unexpected since it was so different from the rest of the book.

Doug Woodger
Toronto, Canada

PROSERPINE

Once again the people at Albion Records have excelled themselves with their latest CD.

The Garden of Proserpine seems to me to have Brahmsian echoes (*Song of the Fates*?) but parts show intimations of the composer’s mature style. I found it rather ironic for such gloomy words to be sung by the Joyful Company of Singers, but they can clearly temporarily become a mournful company when this is called for.

The performance of *In the Fen Country*, with its pre-echoes of the *Pastoral Symphony*, is the most atmospheric I have heard, and *Fen and Flood* is a real ear-opener. I found myself playing this over and over again.

It seems from the sleeve notes that less than four per cent of the Society’s membership contributed to the cost of producing this disc. I am sure that, should Albion appeal again for help with further premiere recordings, we could do much better than this. It is unlikely that the larger record companies will do anything to bring these hidden gems to light, although I hear that Somm plans to release the early *Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra* later this year.

Michael J Gainsford
Burbage, Leicestershire, UK

MORE...

The sleeve note for the Albion Records release of *The Garden of Proserpine* refers to Vaughan Williams achieving something characteristic of later works in the final section. I would like to go further and point out a direct link between the octave A’s on the horns at the end of the work and those very near the beginning of his next one for full chorus and orchestra, *Toward the Unknown Region*. I’ve only heard the broadcast of the Swinburne piece but it sounded to me as if the rhythm as well as the notes of the two passages are at least partly the same. Given this similarity it strikes me that the two works could profitably be performed one after another without a break, with the transcendental optimism of Whitman’s verse superseding the somewhat nihilistic pessimism of Swinburne’s.

Robert Allan
Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK

DR VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Now that the 1911 Census is beginning to appear, I had a look at Ralph Vaughan Williams’ entry for Gunter Grove. Nice handwriting, list of servants and so on, and he describes himself as “Doctor of Music”. Go to the typed transcription, and what do we find? “Doctor of Medicine”! Vaughan Williams’ handwriting is clear enough, but the transcriber had presumably never heard there was such a title. I wonder what the composer would have thought?

I also checked up on John Ireland, and the terse entry simply gives his age and “Organist”.

John Wilson Smith
North Walsham, Norfolk, UK

PARRY AND THE PRINCE

On 27 May, BBC4 presented a ninety-minute programme entitled *The Prince and the Composer*, in which HRH Prince Charles extolled the virtues of the music of Sir Hubert Parry. This followed only a few days after the broadcast of the royal wedding, which proved to be somewhat of a “Parryfest” musically.

The Prince of Wales is clearly an enthusiast of Parry’s music, and his sincerity came over very clearly. I was much impressed by the contents of this programme and the Prince’s part in it. Both musical illustrations and spoken contributions were excellent – the latter including a recording of comments by Vaughan Williams. It struck me that Vaughan Williams and Parry were quite similar in outlook and character.

There was no padding at all in the programme, and it was a relief that the Oldham Fire Brigade was conspicuous by its absence. It came as little surprise to see in the final credits that the producer and director was none other than John Bridcut. The musical illustrations were superb, and included several surprises.

If this programme comes around again, or a DVD becomes available, don’t miss it!

Michael J Gainsford
Burbage, Leicestershire, UK

Concert Reviews

OXFORD in SOUTHPORT

Situated on the sand dunes of the Sefton coast, between the timeless grace of Blackpool Tower and the tourist candy floss of Antony Gormley's 'iron men', Southport is north-west England's answer to Bournemouth or Scarborough. Though its Winter Gardens are long gone, and the empty Arts Centre on Lord Street is clad in billowing polythene during its restoration – as if someone were making a comment on the recession – the town's cultural life is healthy, based on amateur music-making and theatre. The two came together on June 11 for the Southport Bach Choir's final concert of its 2010-11 season.

The Southport Bach Choir was formed in 1965 and consists today of around sixty voices. For this concert their forces were augmented by as many singers from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir. A common link is Ian Tracey, who is Chorus Master to the Philharmonic Society, and has also accompanied the Bach Choir in many of their concerts. Members will recall Dr Tracey's invaluable contributions to Vernon Handley's cherished set of Vaughan Williams recordings made in Liverpool. The June concert included Pergolesi, Bach, Holst and Vaughan Williams, with Ian Tracey conducting the first two composers and Ian Wells the English pieces. Wells is the Bach Choir's current conductor, and he has been responsible for programming a number of British pieces into their concerts – alongside the inevitable bums-on-seats *Messiah* and Requiems – since his appointment three years ago. Like fellow organist Ian Tracey, he has had close connections with Liverpool Cathedral for thirty years, and is a fine recitalist.

Wells' programming of Holst's *Hymn of Jesus* and Vaughan Williams' *An Oxford Elegy* was an ambitious gamble, but it seemed to pay off. Though severely tested, by the Holst in particular, the choir, conductors and soloists performed superbly at Holy Trinity Church, one of the town's largest places of worship, and which is blessed with a music-loving minister, Reverend Rod Garner.

The performances of a Bach motet and Pergolesi's *Magnificat* under Ian Tracey were particularly good, with a trio of pleasing soloists and Martyn Noble taking organ duty. Holst's *The Hymn of Jesus* is a thrilling piece, and hearing it live anywhere is particularly rewarding. This of course comes with the benefit of enjoying a good look at the choir's division into two choruses and semi-chorus, but also it is good to *hear* Holst's peculiar spatial effects, particularly in the hypnotic *Amens* of the semi-chorus, outside the confines of a disc. In the organ and piano reduction used the piece lost almost nothing from its usual orchestral clothing, and if anything gained a brighter, harder edge that brought the composer's later work immediately to mind.

The difference between the two available recordings of *An Oxford Elegy* illustrates just what can happen when the choice of speaker is not given quite enough thought. Allowing a compromise invites disaster. To that end, and without a lavish budget (wouldn't Sir Ian McKellen be good?), the Southport Bach Choir, kindly sponsored by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, engaged a



Chris Barnes

professional actor. Chris Barnes, who had a contact in the town, and travelled up from Brighton, was a superb choice, and I thoroughly recommend him to anyone programming the work in future. He even *looks* like a scholar gypsy. His performance differed entirely from EMI's benchmark John Westbrook, who (though it feels like heresy to say so) is not ideal: to my ears, he declaims without quite interpreting enough. That said, he's far superior to Jack May on *Nimbus*, whose voice will be familiar to those members whose memories of *The Archers* go back quite a few years. In studying the Arnold poems thoroughly, Barnes drew out an authentic sense of yearning, and gave drive where it was needed rather than wallowing in nostalgia. Such was his involvement that it was possible to hear a genuine emotional break in his voice at the end. I was astonished to discover during the after-concert party that he had actually attended Vaughan Williams' funeral, not as a mourner, but as a Westminster Abbey choirboy. Though the piano and organ reduction worked well, the volume of the choir came perilously close to swamping the valiant speaker. In a piece that craves intimacy, a choir of over a hundred is simply too much of a good thing. It may have been a baffling experience for the capacity audience, who had no texts, but if so they didn't admit it and gave a warm response at the end.

Rolf Jordan

CALIFORNIAN "PASTORALS" WITH A MAN DESCENDING

On 22 June 2011, Vaughan Williams' *Pastoral Symphony* was performed at the Carmel Bach Festival, a short mile from the Pacific coastline. The Bach Festival, an annual event since the 1930s, draws on the resources and venues of California's Monterey Peninsula. The new conductor and music director is Paul Goodwin (Surrey), and the Festival concertmaster is Peter Hanson of London. Over these two weeks, the Festival has produced local premieres of works by everyone from Henry VIII

to Vaughan Williams, including Byrd, Britten, Walton, Tallis, Turnage and Purcell.

The presentation of Vaughan Williams' *Pastoral* involved three surprises: placing it on the same bill as Beethoven's *Pastoral*, replacing the soprano with an off-stage clarinet, and inserting Turnage's piece, *A Man Descending*, (complete with tenor saxophone) between movements three and four. Paul Goodwin wrote in the programme book "The Vaughan Williams symphony has a great deal in common with *The Lark Ascending* and has similar pastoral lines. The final movement starts with a solo vocalise which can also be played on the clarinet. I therefore thought that it would be very special to put *A Man Descending* just before this movement, to complement and contrast with the Vaughan Williams symphony. It is of course an experiment in concert programming, but I hope an interesting one."

Allowing the listener to compare the two "pastoral" symphonies is a wonderful idea. Beethoven is trying to depict nature itself – birdcalls, folk tunes, drunken musicians and so on – while Vaughan Williams is trying to depict an observer of nature (or, in nature). Beethoven is lively and engaged with his surroundings, while Vaughan Williams (with the exception of his third movement, some of which, as Michael Kennedy writes in the notes to Haitink's recording on EMI, "was conceived as a setting of the scene of Falstaff and the fairies in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*"), is looking for something very different. What this is, depends upon what you think his fourth movement is about. I regarded this symphony as music of late afternoon (or near twilight) long before learning that the timing of a de facto truce once dictated the movements of an ambulance. Certain Amerindian tribes called this time "the crack between worlds". Substituting a clarinet for the soprano worked quite well. Inserting Turnage's work at the crucial moment in Vaughan Williams, on the other hand, seemed to leave the American audience restless and disconcerted. They had enjoyed Vaughan Williams very much. The orchestral Turnage, while interesting, was fifteen minutes long and the whole symphony is only thirty-five. The saxophone, whatever my personal feelings about saxophones, seemed to be having technical difficulties of its own, and hissing and wheezing. In any case, my congratulations to Paul Goodwin and the Festival Orchestra for near-perfect performances of both symphonies.

George Ihlefeldt

GERVASE ELWES IN MEMORIAM

On 3 July the Musicians Benevolent Fund presented a concert at St Andrew's Church, Great Billing, Northampton, as part of their celebrations of the Fund's ninetieth anniversary, and also to commemorate the untimely death of Gervase Elwes.

Gervase Elwes was born into a Roman Catholic family (his brother became the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham) at Great Billing Hall, near Northampton, on 15 November 1866. He died in January 1921, when he fell under a train in Boston, during a tour of the U.S.A.

Gervase Elwes was one of the greatest tenors of his time. Trained as a lawyer he only took up singing professionally in his thirties. He became famous worldwide. He was the "definitive" Gerontius, and his interpretation of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*

was much acclaimed. He gave the first performances of several Vaughan Williams works, and notably made the first recording of *On Wenlock Edge*, in 1917. Roger Quilter wrote many of his songs for Elwes.

Not only did he possess a wonderful and distinctive tenor voice, but he was of a kindly and generous disposition. He did much to encourage local (and other) musicians. He was much loved in the musical world and his death was a tremendous shock. Indeed, his death so affected his musical colleagues that a group of them, including Elgar, Quilter and Vaughan Williams, set up in his memory the charity that later became the Musicians' Benevolent Fund.

The concert was presented in the beautiful, small church of St Andrew in Great Billing. This lovely village used to be well separated from Northampton, but is now swallowed up in that town's ever growing sprawl. The approach to the church is via a narrow lane, one vehicle wide, between ancient buildings of Northamptonshire ironstone. This suddenly opens up into a wide green area with the church at the far end. Great Billing Hall, of considerable antiquity, used to stand nearby until it was demolished in 1956. But the graves of many of the Elwes family, including that of Gervase, lie in the churchyard, and that despite their Roman Catholic faith. Sadly many of the graves need some care and attention. One wonders whether Vaughan Williams attended the funeral and interment. Ursula's biography makes no mention of it.



Gervase Elwes

The concert was given by the Northampton Bach Chorale, a group of about twenty strong, a third of them men, under the direction of Tim Dolan. The tenor soloist was Stephen George, the organist Stephen Moore, and readings of Housman poems were by Michael Woodward. The church was about three quarters full, and several members of the Elwes family were in attendance.

The concert commenced with a vigorous rendition of Parry's *I was glad*; but it soon became clear that the balance between organ and choir was not right. The organ was well played but it was somewhat obtrusive. The whole thing was very loud in such a tiny church. It resembled at times a battle between choir and

organist. Then followed what is for some reason a relatively obscure piece of Vaughan Williams, the seldom heard *Let us now Praise Famous Men*. It was a joy to hear this stirring piece performed live.

After a poetry reading the tenor soloist Stephen George sang *Sanctus Fortis*, from *The Dream of Gerontius*, which used to be an Elwes speciality. (Incidentally not only did Elwes know Elgar, he was also acquainted with Cardinal Newman). I cannot praise too highly Mr George's singing. He has a powerful and expressive voice with excellent diction. *In tears of grief*, from the *St Matthew Passion* was for me the least successful item on the programme, seemingly lacking the necessary pathos.

For the next item Stephen George ascended the pulpit – where, to the amusement of the audience, he found a copy of the *Sun* – to sing the solo part in Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*. Once again his diction was superb, and he had no difficulty singing those parts in this work towards the lower end of a tenor's range. Accompaniment was by organ (again rather too loud to my mind). I can find no mention in Michael Kennedy's *Catalogue* of an arrangement for organ.

After more poetry readings we had the choir singing Sullivan's *The Long Day Closes*. Thankfully this Victorian syrup was swept away by Stanford's invigorating *Te Deum in B flat* to round off a most enjoyable event.

But more was to come. In his interval talk, David Sulkin, the chief executive of the MBF, had not only spoken eloquently on the history of the Fund, and its work, with a plea for contributions, but he announced that he had a box of CDs with him. Each CD contained about half of the extant recordings by Elwes. These were offered nominally free, but with a request for an appropriate donation. Hoping for the best I was first in the queue to discover, to my joy, that the very first item on the CD was that first ever recording of *On Wenlock Edge*, dating from 1917. A historical recording indeed! Notably Elwes takes just under eighteen minutes, whereas all my other versions vary between about twenty and twenty-three. Upon further investigation it is clear that this is because Elwes omits verses 3 & 4 of *Bredon Hill*, presumably so that the performance would fit onto 78 rpm records. This is the recording that allegedly horrified Housman, and perhaps the omission of two more verses added to his disapproval! One wonders whether Vaughan Williams authorised this omission. The rest of the CD comprises a selection of songs by other composers, many by Elwes' friend Roger Quilter, in all, a generous seventy-seven minutes. I can thoroughly recommend this CD.

Society members may wish to contact MBF to see if this CD is still available. In any case I would encourage members to make a donation to the Fund in the setting up of which Vaughan Williams played an important role. The address is: Musicians Benevolent Fund, 7-11 Britannia Street, London WC1X 9JS; telephone 020 7239 9100; www.helpmusicians.org.uk.

Michael J. Gainsford

THE "BEST OF BRITISH" IN CHESTER

On 16 July the final concert of the Chester Summer Music Festival was given in Chester Cathedral by the Royal Liverpool

Philharmonic Orchestra and Chester Festival Chorus, under conductor John Wilson.

The concert was entitled "The Best of British" and comprised works by Parry, Walton, Delius, Elgar and, to close, a rare performance of *Five Tudor Portraits*.

A week before this event I had attended the first concert of the Lichfield Music Festival, where the same conductor directed the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, again in a concert of music by English composers, starting with *The Wasps*, and ending with *Belshazzar's Feast*. It was interesting to compare the two orchestras under the same conductor, especially as one piece was common to both concerts, Elgar's *Alassio*. This is not a work I particularly like. The middle part is very loud and always appears rather confused to me. But this perception is probably my failing. Anyway I consider that the RLPO won that particular battle. Liverpool 1, Birmingham 0.

Chester Cathedral was full for the concert, which commenced with a rousing performance of *I Was Glad*. I cannot seem to be able to avoid this work, which featured in the televised Royal Wedding, Bridcut's programme on Parry, and at the Elwes memorial concert on 3 July. But as yet it has not paled with repeated hearings. Even more rousing was the second item, Walton's *Crown Imperial*, complete with organ. This is sometimes called "God is an Englishman" music, but none the worse for that. It nearly brought the (ancient and holy) house down.

Then followed some Delius. He is not one of my favourite composers. At Lichfield the previous week they played *Summer Night on the River* which, frankly, bored me. But at Chester the piece was *A Walk to the Paradise Garden*, played exquisitely. I have never heard it played better and I was nearly converted. *Alassio* rounded off the first half.

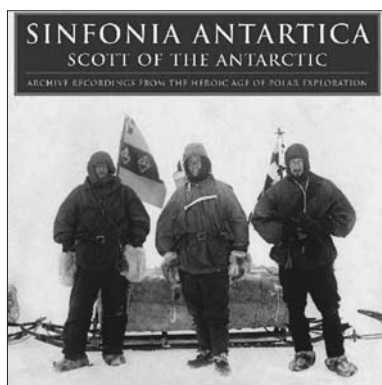
The whole of the second part was taken up by the Vaughan Williams work, and what a delight it was to hear this live, and in such a superb performance! It cannot be very familiar, either to the orchestra or indeed the public, but the audience seemed to love it, applauding loudly between movements. Normally this is something I deplore, particularly between movements of a symphony, but in these circumstances I forgive them. I distinctly felt that a blow was being struck for the Vaughan Williams cause, and in the battle to convince people that the composer is not just a purveyor of musical cow pats.

The soloists were Kathryn Rudge and Christopher Purves. Both performed well, particularly the latter. My only quibble is that Ms Rudge made a far too refined Drunken Alice. She was far better as Jane Scroop. Also deserving of high praise was the cello soloist in the "Jane Scroop" movement. I believe this was Jonathan Aasgaard. Christopher Purves' rendition of Jolly Rutterkin brought proceedings to a tremendous conclusion with rapturous applause. And I must not forget the hundred-strong Chester Festival Chorus, splendidly coached in this unfamiliar work by chorus master Frances Cooke.

John Wilson's rendering was several minutes shorter than the old Willcocks recording, but there was no sense of anything being hurried. This was a most enjoyable evening indeed.

Michael J Gainsford

CD and DVD Reviews



Ralph Vaughan Williams: *Sinfonia Antartica*; *Scott of the Antarctic*

with historic sound recordings from the “heroic age” of British Antarctic exploration. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, with Sir John Gielgud (narrator) and Margaret Ritchie (soprano); Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Ernest Irving, with Margaret Ritchie (soprano)
CD41-024

This is an interesting and unusual release – part classical CD and part audio-book which appears to be issued to commemorate the centenary of Captain Scott’s ill-fated expedition to the South Pole.

The CD is bookended by two versions of the same patriotic song, commemorating the heroism of Captain Scott, ‘*Tis A Story That Shall Live for Ever*, sung by Stanley Kirkby and Robert Carr. As James Hayward’s informative booklet notes tell us, Kirkby was a popular and versatile baritone who made many hundreds of recordings. The tragic death of Scott and his companions on their return from the South Pole and the contemporaneous 1912 Titanic disaster, featuring similar acts of self sacrifice as that of Captain Oates on the Scott expedition, served as encouragement to a whole generation of young men to seek martyrdom shortly afterwards on the Western Front. The inclusion of the two versions of the same patriotic song certainly adds an authentic historical context, but I am doubtful as to their potential for repeated listening.

There appear to be no archive recordings of the voice of Captain Scott, but what we do have here are two short recordings of Scott’s arch-rival, Sir Ernest Shackleton – a far greater explorer in the views of some –

recounting aspects of his 1907-1909 expedition to Antarctica. Although Shackleton had a reputation as a fine public speaker these extracts will, I suspect, only be of interest to those interested in the history of polar exploration. Shackleton speaks with the upper-class accent of his time (as did Vaughan Williams).

The heroic reputation of Captain Scott continued down to Roland Huntford’s biographical hatchet job, *Scott and Amundsen* (1979), which compared Scott’s bungling incompetence to the ruthless efficiency of the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen’s rival expedition, which beat Scott to the South Pole at the end of 1911. Since then, following lively debate, we now tend towards a more balanced picture in which Scott’s undoubted bravery is seen alongside the shortcomings of the planning for his South Polar Expedition.

The Ealing film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) largely adopted the traditional “heroic” view of Scott, although even Vaughan Williams was shocked by the amateurishness of some of the planning. The musical soundtrack is generally seen as Vaughan Williams’ finest contribution to the cinema and of course the composer later used it as the basis of his *Sinfonia Antartica*. The great thing about this CD is that it is the only one I am aware of which features both the film music and the complete symphony. It is fascinating to hear the way in which Vaughan Williams incorporated the film score into the symphony. For example, the symphony opens with the music representing “Climbing the Glacier” in the film, and the juxtaposition of the film music with the symphony allows one to compare the very different endings. The movie itself ends on an upbeat note associated with the memorial cross left to Scott and his companions, on which appear words from Tennyson’s *Ulysses*, “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”. *Sinfonia Antartica*, on the other hand, ends in the deepest gloom with the wind machine representing the final blizzard that defeated Scott and the remnants of his party eleven miles from their food depot.

Boult’s recording of *Sinfonia Antartica*, made in the presence of the composer, is a classic, and listening to it again for this review, I realised just how fine it is. Sir John Barbirolli made a very good premiere recording with the Hallé Orchestra, but I think that Boult’s more objective way really suits the music, creating a more terrifying spectacle with greater sense of

rhythmic urgency. It is chilling in every sense of the word. The organ entry is spectacularly intimidating, especially considering the age of the recording. This version comes complete with the spoken superscriptions, read eloquently before each movement by Sir John Gielgud. Boult made a later recording for EMI without the spoken introductions. I rather like them, as they create a sense of context, although some think that they break up the narrative of the music.

As for the recording, I did not notice any appreciable difference between this release of *Sinfonia Antartica* and earlier ones of the same recording on Belart and Decca, though a more recent release of extracts from the film music on Dutton, entitled *From Vaughan Williams’ Attic* is a marginally better transfer. The accompanying notes by James Murray are first-rate and there are some excellent illustrations in the booklet, including a photograph of a husky dog with an old gramophone from Scott’s expedition, a great colour panoramic photograph of an Antarctic landscape and a cover photo featuring Scott, Shackleton and Wilson together on an earlier expedition. Unfortunately, there are no separate tracks on the CD for either *Sinfonia Antartica* or for the eight minutes of music from the film soundtrack (conducted by Ernest Irving, the dedicatee of the symphony).

Of course, there are numerous recordings of *Sinfonia Antartica*, including a fine modern version by Bernard Haitink. The complete film music is also available on an excellent release in the Chandos Film Music series, conducted by Rumon Gamba. Nevertheless this curious commemorative release does claim our attention.

Jeffrey Davis

In the Bleak Midwinter, Tony Palmer’s film about Gustav Holst, broadcast by the BBC on Easter Sunday, has now been issued as a DVD. Here, two members give their views on the film based on watching the television broadcast.

From Robert Allan...

This is an impressive film in some ways, with many relevant musical extracts, and which can only increase interest in Holst. I am worried, though, by several factual

errors, and also that it gives a somewhat lop-sided view of the composer and his output.



Among the errors I spotted: first, Holst went to Algeria in 1908, not 1903. Then John York stated that St Paul's Girls' School opened in 1904, ten years before Holst started teaching there. In fact, he went there in 1905. The *Lyric Movement* for viola was not "a last work, a farewell perhaps", as Holst went on to write an orchestral *Scherzo* early in his last year, completing it in hospital and intending it as part of a symphony. When he wrote the *Lyric Movement* he might have feared it would be his last work, but the impression should not have been given that it was. Then just because Holst attended lectures by G.B. Shaw in his youth I doubt that it would be accurate to describe him as a friend. I have never read anything about either man that suggested that. And a comment about Holst and Vaughan Williams not much caring for their walks should never have been included, as Holst was a great walker for most of his life, and Vaughan Williams only became a figure of bulk well after the First World War.

The film lives up to its title in its depiction of Holst, but how accurate was this? Imogen Holst wrote that "his enjoyment of life was one of the things about him that his friends remember most clearly". This hardly came across, nor did his notable sense of humour or large circle of friends. The impression given was also misleading with regard to politics. His daughter wrote that his socialism "was never very active", and at the time of the General Strike Holst himself wrote that he was "prepared to sit on the fence for as long as possible". It is a pity that no opportunity was taken to make use of Holst's letters or writings, with his very individual outlook on life so often expressed. Predictably there was plenty about Conrad Noel of Thaxted Church, but nothing about Bishop Bell, who was arguably as important a figure for the later years and was instrumental in Holst's ashes going to Chichester Cathedral. Also predictably, reference was made only to that side of Holst's family that had come originally from Germany: we were

not told that his mother was the daughter of a Cirencester solicitor.

The way the music was depicted was generally attractive, but was it really necessary to "sex-up" *Beni Mora* or accompany "Saturn" with film of concentration camp victims? They were too extreme in the context of the rest of the film. Why, also, was it not made clear that the slow movement of the *Cotswolds Symphony* was an elegy in memory of William Morris rather than a bleak depiction of the countryside? *Egdon Heath* was depicted with inappropriate mountainous scenes.

The other way the film was lop-sided was in almost ignoring the operas – surely something from *Savitri* could have been included? – and also the later, more substantial choral works apart from the *Ode to Death*. It was extraordinary that in a film of this length there was no mention of *The Hymn of Jesus* (dedicated, of course, "to R.V.W."). This was, after all, Holst's greatest critical and public success after *The Planets*, and while he may not have enjoyed the experience of becoming well known it should have been set against his feelings of failure at other times. He also felt that the 1927 Holst Festival in Cheltenham was the most overwhelming event in his life, but this was not mentioned either.

Finally, I don't think we were given the whole story with regards to *I vow to thee, my country*. Amongst the archive recordings that recently came to light was one by Herbert Howells. He stated that one of the last times he met Holst they listened to a broadcast of *The Planets* from the Proms and heard the audience sing those words. Instead of making the composer angry it reduced him to tears, which suggests that his attitude to the use of his music for the hymn had softened by then.

I accept that many of those contributing to the film are experts on Holst, but can't help wondering if, having seen the final work, some of them might have chosen to balance some of their remarks (and so much depends, of course, on the editing). At least there was plenty by Imogen Holst, whose own vitality shone through across the years, and Stephen Johnson had many interesting points to make about *The Planets*, though I think these largely repeated ones he had made in previous radio programmes.

It seems that films by Tony Palmer are often controversial, and, though well intentioned, this one was no exception! (I also find it hard to forgive his use of the slow movement of Vaughan Williams' *Fifth Symphony* as music to be talked over in his documentary on André Previn broadcast back in March).

...and from Michael Gainsford...

Recalling my reaction to Tony Palmer's 2008 film about Vaughan Williams, *O Thou Transcendent*, I approached his latest with trepidation. It began badly, with an extract from "Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age" illustrated by images from a Nazi concentration camp. This was gratuitous, and thoughtless in the extreme, bearing in mind that the majority of the unfortunate prisoners were never destined to reach old age. Similar images were used in *O Thou Transcendent*, and one wonders at Palmer's purpose in including them. The next ten minutes or so were devoted to a number of renderings of *I vow to thee, my country*, each one worse than the one before. But I persisted, and found that the film was more logically arranged than *O Thou Transcendent*, and generally superior, though it had all the anticipated padding and inappropriate illustrations. Once more we had extracts from Mitchell and Kenyon's old films of the industrial North, including the Oldham fire engine! I presume these were included to set the scene chronologically, but they went on too long and occurred too frequently.

It was good to see that Vaughan Williams got several mentions. Imogen's contribution was welcome and informative, as was the input from St Paul's Girls' School. Stephen Johnson's musical analyses were extremely interesting, as were the accounts of the goings-on at Thaxted Church with its extreme left wing vicar Conrad Noel. I was interested to learn that in Holst's day, Cheltenham was the curry capital of Britain, thanks to the large number of retired Indian Army officers there, but I doubt if this had anything to do with the composer's later interest in Hindu culture. And there were two compositions with which I was unfamiliar: the beautiful song *Love on my heart*, and the equally beautiful *Lyric Movement for viola*.

Most of the performances were good, though Barbara Dickson put in her seemingly inevitable appearance to murder *In the bleak midwinter*. But why illustrate *Egdon Heath* with shots of what looked like the Scottish Highlands, and *The Perfect Fool* with Varanasi and the Ganges? The fact that whilst in Algeria Holst stayed in the "Street of the Ouled Naïls" (dancing girls) was all the excuse Palmer needed to accompany *Beni Mora* with women gyrating in the nude, something Arab dancing girls would never do. And with all the astronomical images available it is a mystery why "Neptune" was accompanied by almost everything in the solar system apart from the planet in question.

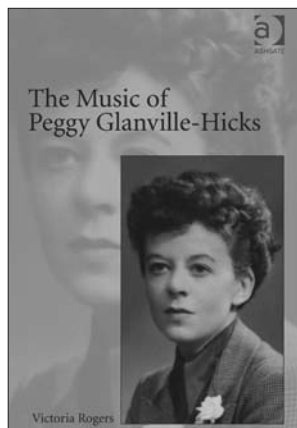
My overall impression was of a very good documentary spoiled by gimmickry and inappropriate illustrations, missing an opportunity to produce something fitting to celebrate this underrated composer. ☹️

Book Reviews

The Music of Peggy Glanville-Hicks

Victoria Rogers

Ashgate ISBN 978-0-7546-6635-6 (hardback)



Not everyone knows that Ralph Vaughan Williams' pupils at the Royal College of Music included a remarkable young Australian – Peggy Glanville-Hicks (1912-1990). Her four years at the RCM were made possible by the award of the Carlotta Rowe scholarship, designed especially to give support to women composers. Vaughan Williams remained a friend for life and she used to mention wryly that he used one of her themes in his *Fourth Symphony*.

Victoria Rogers' valuable book, *The Music of Peggy Glanville-Hicks*, traces the development of her compositions interlaced with just enough biographical background to give context. It is a splendid evaluation of her work, both through her musical explorations and her personal battle to survive economically. Her marriage to Stanley Bate, disastrous personally, left her with an ongoing admiration for his music, and a hallmark of her life was the support she gave to other composers – Paul Bowles, Colin McPhee, George Antheil and Lou Harrison amongst them. She herself produced over seventy finished works.

Springing from an artistic and literary Melbourne family – her father, a journalist and poet and her mother, a singer and pianist of accomplishment – Peggy left Melbourne for Europe in 1932 after a concentrated musical training, not least in vocal composition and word setting, from the émigré composer Fritz Hart (1874-1949), director of Melbourne's Albert Street Conservatorium. Vocal music – songs, choral works and operas – were to be amongst her major compositions.

A number of her works can be heard on disc, both from earlier recordings for MGM, Columbia and others, and more recently, from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Although Deborah Hayes' detailed bio-bibliography *Peggy Glanville-Hicks* (Greenwood Press, New York 1990) traces, mostly accurately, her activities as a composer and subsequent performances and recordings of her music, as far as I am aware, Dr Rogers' book is the first volume to cover the Glanville-Hicks oeuvre in analytical style and to do so in a logical biographical sequence.

Certain themes emerge. Glanville-Hicks spent time in India and during her time in New York as critic on the *Herald Tribune*, she was active with Yehudi Menuhin in presenting concerts of Indian music. The influence, as Rogers illustrates, permeates several of Glanville-Hicks' works – her opera *The Transposed Heads* and her spirited *Etruscan Concerto* for piano and chamber orchestra, for example. As she pondered future directions in music, the "melody-rhythm principle" of musical construction came to be, for her, the way forward. Rogers' chapter "The New Musical Philosophy in Practice" explores the range of works exemplifying her conclusions, such as the *Sonata for Piano and Percussion*.

Perhaps the most significant period of Glanville-Hicks' compositional life was her sojourn in Greece (1959-75), where she had gone, supported by two Guggenheim Fellowships, to write what she described as "the big works". She enjoyed a huge success at the Athens Festival in 1961 with her opera, *Nausicaa*, in which her explorations into Aegean demotic music made their mark. Rogers gives a particularly detailed analysis of this work as an illustration of her compositional methods and the inspiration she drew from the principles of Greek drama. The book continues with mention of the subsequent commissioned opera *Sappho* (which, I hear from the Australian Music Centre in Sydney, is to be produced in 2012 in Germany, in celebration of the Glanville-Hicks centenary.)

Peggy's return to Australia in 1975, still affected by her illness following the removal of a brain tumour, was not quite the triumph it might have been. She was initially hailed by musicians such as Peter Sculthorpe and those founding the new Australian Music Centre. Some of her works were performed. Rogers mentions *Concerto Romantico*, *The Glittering Gate* and *The Transposed Heads*, but not the 1980 Australian premiere of the *Etruscan Concerto* in the Tasmanian ABC series, for which I was engaged as soloist. That assignment, leading to other performances in London and New York, brought me into personal touch with the composer, who asked me to supply a short cadenza for the work. On two occasions I had long and fascinating conversations with her, and wholly agree with Rogers' evaluation of her as a remarkable, and much underestimated, figure in Australian music. Her works contain fresh ideas (the melody-rhythm principle) and a distinctive and often heart-touching style. And Glanville-Hicks' long experience as a New York music critic as well as an active composer and promoter of new music gives her own conclusions added weight.

The book has a tendency to reiterate the composer's indebtedness to the "English pastoral style", something which in Australian musical circles first predominated with the Empire and was later widely deplored as part of an over-Anglicised past. Glanville-Hicks was simply a product of her generation, and if her melodies tend towards folkly modality, that is surely a matter of personal taste rather than musical morality. She understood the voice, and even her early songs, such as her setting of John Fletcher's *Come Sleep* have the power to move, as her melodies continue to do.

Victoria Rogers has done us all a service in producing this first detailed discussion of the music of Peggy Glanville-Hicks, set against the background of her subject's often difficult and

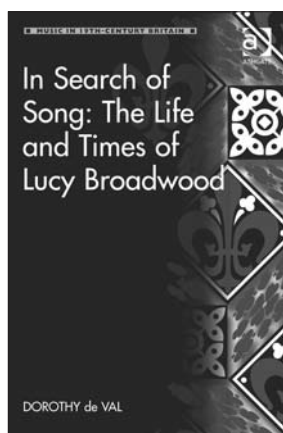
troubled life. Her book, handsomely produced by Ashgate, offers a strong case for many more performances of a composer whose work awaits, and deserves, a wider discovery.

Penelope Thwaites

In Search of Song: The Life and Times of Lucy Broadwood

Dorothy de Val

Ashgate ISBN 978-0-7546-5408-7 (hardback)



The latest in Ashgate's "Music in 19th-century Britain" series is a study of a figure whose name will be familiar to most students of Ralph Vaughan Williams' life, as it is indelibly linked to the founding of the folk song collecting movement. This, the first book devoted to the life of Lucy Broadwood, makes amends for a considerable period of neglect. There have been several re-evaluations in papers or articles over the years, mainly in *Folk Music Journal* and its earlier incarnations, but the most significant one was by Dorothy de Val, author of the present volume, in *Music and British Culture* (OUP, 2000). Crucially, the dedicatee of that symposium, Cyril Ehrlich, introduced de Val to Broadwood's diaries, which had recently been lodged in the Surrey History Centre. Naturally, the diaries have formed the prime source material for *In Search of Song*.

Lucy Broadwood (1858-1929) was born into the family of well-known piano manufacturers. The founder of Broadwood & Co., Lucy's great-grandfather John, was a Scottish cabinet maker who teamed up with a Swiss harpsichord maker called Burckhardt Tschudi. John Broadwood married Tschudi's daughter, and the family's wealth grew. By the time Lucy was born, domestic piano manufacturing was a big competitive business. Lucy and her sisters were essentially daughters of "the big house", with a lifestyle, de Val notes, pretty much akin to Austen's Bennet sisters in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Young Lucy's life was dominated by all the female intrigues and tragedies this comparison might suggest. She developed a voracious appetite for reading, took singing lessons and became well versed in art history. Yet being female meant she was barred from the university education that might have made her a more combative figure, something which would come to taint her dealings in later life. She abandoned an ambition to become a professional singer, not having a strong enough voice, and also being victim to nineteenth-century medical practice. Before she

was thirty, she had a disastrous bout of malaria, and it is uncomfortable to read that arsenic was used in her treatment, a "cure" that provoked depressions and fits of melancholy and affected her health for the rest of her life. (These were the days when cocaine was prescribed to treat hay fever.) Photographs show a strong-featured woman with an attractive smile and a hint of "foreign" colouring – yet she remained single all her life.

Lucy's diaries, which might have revealed something of her intimate relationships, do nothing of the sort. They are a problematic source which de Val has drawn from with great integrity. They were kept daily throughout her adult life to the day of her death, and detail a great many home visitors and correspondents. Wisely the author has decided not to bog the reader down with too many of these (often significant) personalities. The names of Grainger, Butterworth, Vaughan Williams and Sharp appear, but once again, the diary descriptions are tight-lipped. De Val is always clear when she has to conjecture, particularly in the case of Lucy's protégé, James McInnes, with whom she had a strong bond for many years. The diaries are of course a great source of information on musical life and movements, but frustratingly opaque in places. Likewise her surviving correspondence, from both sides, much of which must have gone into the fire when she moved from the flat in Westminster where her most active years were spent.

Rightly central to the book is Lucy's pioneering work on folk song. Her beloved uncle, the Reverend John Broadwood, had published in 1843 a prototype collection *Old English Songs, as Now Sung by the peasantry of the Weald of Surrey and Sussex*, and she set about updating the volume with her equally musical cousin, Herbert Birch-Reynardson, who published it as *Sussex Songs* under his own name in 1890. Though this perhaps stole her thunder, it did lead musician and influential critic Alec Fuller-Maitland to her door, and to their groundbreaking *English County Songs*. The first printing appears to consist of two otherwise identical editions: one with a red cover and light paper (ideal for singers), and a "quality" one with a far heavier dove-grey cover with finer paper to appeal to bibliophiles. This 1893 volume, more than any other, catalyzed the start of the collecting craze. The joint editors' intentions were laudable: to preserve in print for the first time songs that would soon be lost. In short, the publication attempted what its most distinguished predecessor William Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* did for printed song in 1859. Its Preface was a clarion call for the middle classes to go amongst the peasantry and capture their songs before it was too late. True, the motivations of these collectors and the uneasy socio-political aspect of their movement is still debated to this day, but that it preserved so much of real value is unquestionable. (See *The Imagined Village* by Georgina Boyes, 1993.)

Lucy Broadwood's role in the formation of the Folk Song Society in 1898-9, and its subsequent loss of impetus before Cecil Sharp came along a few years later is well covered. Sharp, and by association Vaughan Williams, are not let off lightly. De Val shows how both men roused the "moribund" Society out of what Vaughan Williams later called its "dilettante" state. Sharp operated in a somewhat bullying manner, with Lucy herself characterising him as "no gentleman" and a blatant self-publicist. In return, Vaughan Williams is shown posthumously damning her with faint praise, seemingly regarding her as something of an amateur, squirreling material away. From the start, it appears the movement was riddled with internal conflict. It was a new science

with time against it. These fresh and surprising conclusions – the author is rather tough on Vaughan Williams – are among the most stimulating sections of the book. Yet for all that, the Vaughan Williamses holidayed with Lucy in the twenties, and she was a supporter of everything Ralph did: a number of her tunes appear in *The English Hymnal*. It is interesting to note that they were distantly related through the Wedgwood family, and first met as early as 1887.

Galvanised by her dislike of Sharp, Lucy took on the role of Secretary to the Society, and published in 1908 what is seen as her masterwork – aside from her long-standing editorship of the Folk Song Society's Journal – *English Traditional Songs and Carols*.

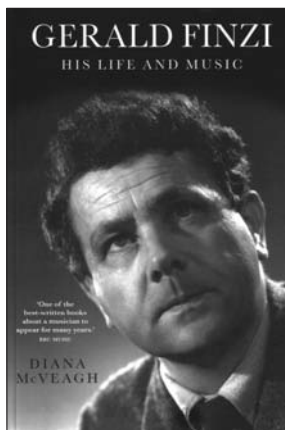
As Dorothy de Val says in her Epilogue, the biography is only the first step in assessing Lucy Broadwood's legacy. Gleaning the diaries is just a start. This book deserves a place on music lovers' shelves partly because it touches on so many familiar lives, but also because much of it is new material. If there is a fault in the book, it is only in the grammatical inconsistencies and factual repetitions, even within chapters, that an editor ought to have smoothed. This seems to have become a modern epidemic and shows a lamentable decline in editorial skills in publishing. Through sparing use of secondary material and well chosen, unfamiliar illustrations, we have an accurate portrayal of a reserved and courageous woman.

Rolf Jordan

Gerald Finzi: His Life and Music

Diana McVeagh

Boydell Press ISBN 978-1-84383-602-5 (paperback)



Diana McVeagh's biography of Gerald Finzi was published to considerable acclaim in 2005. I've been reading the paperback edition which appeared last year.

The book is arranged in bite-sized chunks, each one related to an event in the composer's life or to a particular work or group of works. This means that you can read it in small doses if, like me, you sometimes find biographies a mite indigestible. That said, in this particular case the author's style is very easy indeed, informal and communicative. The story is told chronologically and in a straightforward way. Discussion of the works is undertaken at the appropriate point in the narrative.

One can only begin to feel for Lizzie, Gerald's mother, as one by one each of her three elder sons was picked off, the last at the Front in 1918, leaving only her first born, Kate, and the youngest, Gerald. In old age she is portrayed as rather eccentric. One wonders, too, at the effect on Finzi as he grew. In later years he had little to do with his blood family, writing about his sister in 1951, "I at least learnt from her that the world can be divided into two types: those who care for the thing itself & those who care for the appearance of the thing. As she belongs to the latter category & I to the former I have not found it possible to be very interested in her activities."

McVeagh refers to this as a "chilling dismissal", and so it is, but in truth, it seems rather characteristic of the man. The author writes about her subject with affection – she refers to him as Gerald throughout – but reading the book I found him difficult to like. He certainly doesn't seem to have been much fun as a young man, unless turning village signposts the wrong way round after a Dolmetsch Festival he found "a trifle precious" can be described as fun. R.O. Morris's wife Edith recalled that he was "so wrapped up in himself" that he never laughed, though it has to be said that visits to the Morrises don't sound like a lot of fun either. He entered the nursery to greet his newly-born second son, Nigel, with the words "Good. Now no more babies. Let's get back to work." In the mid-1930s Finzi and his wife began researching what finally became their permanent home. "The children were growing, and Gerald needed a workroom shielded from the noise. (When they were babies, sometimes a pram mysteriously shifted – Gerald had pushed it out of ear-shot.) Also, there was only one walk...that didn't involve passing through the village. Acutely self-conscious, he thought of himself as ugly, and hated to be watched." More light-hearted, perhaps, is this final example. "On call as an emergency ambulance driver [during World War 2] Joy decided to simplify her life, and cut short the beautiful long hair that Gerald so loved. The household waited for the explosion. Gerald noticed nothing for about a week, then one night as they were preparing for bed, he asked 'I say, have you done something to your hair?'"

Before reading the book I was unaware of the sheer scope of the repertoire of the Newbury String Players, originally a group of amateur musicians Finzi conducted for many years. Nor did I know of the extent of his research and editorial work, particularly of eighteenth-century English composers. This is all carefully told, with just as much detail as the general reader wants and needs. Rather more searching is the account of the negotiations between composer and poet, Edmund Blunden, as the latter was writing the text for what became *For St Cecilia*. There is much wisdom here, and considerable insight into the requirements of a composer when faced with setting to music a literary text. Finzi's wide reading, and his life-long and profound admiration for the works of Thomas Hardy are brilliantly dealt with.

The relationship between Finzi and Ralph Vaughan Williams is a theme that runs through the book. The first concert of the Painswick Music Club, of whose formation Finzi was "the driving force", took place in October 1924 and featured *On Wenlock Edge*. The programme book carried the following judgement: "Vaughan Williams is now regarded as one of the greatest living composers." Later, when Finzi was undertaking war work as a civil servant in London he was invited to one of Vaughan Williams' "run-throughs", of the *Fifth Symphony*. Hubert Foss and Alan Richardson played the work on the piano, and apart from Finzi the only others present were the pianists' wives and

H.C. Colles, critic of *The Times*. Finzi's view was that the work was perhaps not up to the standard of the *Pastoral* or the *Fourth*. But he wrote afterwards that he found it "a more reasonable work than those other two & on that account [it] suffers from the defects of its virtues. After all, one can't say that the excessive contemplation of the *Pastoral*, or the Royal Fury of *No. 4*, make for reasonableness." He was by no means blindly uncritical of his mentor: *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for example, was singled out for detailed criticism, and he was brave enough to write in reply to Vaughan Williams' request for his opinion on the late *The Sons of Light* that the work was "not memorable in any way" – a view shared, incidentally, by the present writer. We read that he was rather shocked at what he saw as changes in Vaughan Williams after his marriage to Ursula. The older composer's comfortable financial situation and apparently endless holidays did not appeal to the rather puritanical Finzi. Nor, apparently, did a revelation concerning Howard Ferguson. The two came to know each other early on, and their relationship, as Diana McVeagh points out toward the end of the book, was similar to that of Vaughan William and Holst. But Finzi never quite came to terms with his feelings once he discovered that Ferguson was homosexual.

If Finzi revered Vaughan Williams – though not blindly – his comments about other composers could often be caustic. A work by Constant Lambert is dismissed in one letter as "balls", and another, by Lennox Berkeley, as "rather like a still-born turd". About Britten he once wrote "I think he has technically, a most brilliant flair, a gift for placing notes & bringing things off, but as a rule what he brings off isn't worth a rat's dropping." I was interested to find my own teacher, Stephen Dodgson, appearing in these pages. An early work of his was given by the Newbury String Players. "Interesting but rather ungrateful writing," was Finzi's view, "which no-one except the composer, a nice chap, enjoyed." Some of his blind spots are truly surprising. Berlioz' *Les nuits d'été* contained "little more than Sparkenbroke-ish romanticism", and the list of composers whose music did not appeal to him is impressive indeed.

Stephen Banfield's biography of Finzi was published by Faber in 1997. I haven't read it, but I am reliably informed by Finzi enthusiasts that it is also very fine indeed, but that considerable understanding of technical musical aspects is needed to get the most out of it. Any biography of a composer is worthless if there is no discussion of the works, but Diana McVeagh's solution seems close to the ideal. Whilst she stops short of full musical analysis she nonetheless goes further than purely descriptive writing, and some technical knowledge is required for full understanding. Having a recording to hand will certainly help, and if the score is also available, and the reader adept at using it, so much the better. I found the author's judgement on those works of Finzi that I know to be coherent and level-headed. She is as sensitive to Finzi's weaknesses and limitations as she is to his considerable strengths. (She also makes a brief but charming appearance in the narrative herself.)

A figure of crucial importance in Finzi's life was, of course, his wife, Joy. She created and maintained the conditions under which he could work, and was thus responsible in no small part for the surprisingly voluminous catalogue of compositions that appears as an appendix to the book. Diana McVeagh quotes frequently from the journal she kept over many years, and these passages, though they do not always make comfortable reading, reveal much about their life together. Their two sons, Christopher (Kiffer) and Nigel, do not feature much in the narrative as children, but appear rather more frequently as they grow into performing musicians themselves.

Finzi's illness and death is dealt with in the same matter of fact way that Joy herself dealt with it in her journal. Then, the final chapter of the book, headed "Epilogue", deals first with significant events since the composer's death, then with his very last works, and finally, most movingly but without a trace of indulgence, gathers in the different threads of the composer's life and personality.

William Hedley



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From the Chairman

Contemplation and consideration of the future of the Vaughan Williams Society has been a matter of priority for the officers and trustees over the past several months, as we have sought to examine what more we can do for Vaughan Williams and his music, how we can improve what we are currently doing and, indeed, what we are here for. We have almost fulfilled all the aims for which the Society was first established: Vaughan Williams' music is now regularly heard, both in the concert hall and on the radio; he is taken seriously, as a composer of major international importance; his music is almost all on disc and in print; we have even directly ensured that any important writings on him have been able to appear in print through the auspices of Albion; and are currently covering remaining unrecorded works, as well as valuable historical recordings and reissues, through Albion Records. Had we, we asked ourselves, completed all the major conditions which necessitated the establishment of the Society in the first place? Was it time to take a back seat and accept a role as a fan club rather than an organisation with a mission?

The answer came back: a resounding "no!" We have achieved a huge amount in the relatively short time we have been going, but there is still more to do, still works that need promotion, and areas for improvement. We have therefore devised a way forwards, a way to ensure that the Committee is working at full productivity, to spread the workload more amongst its members and to employ the skills of trustees to their fullest extent. Each trustee, therefore, will now have his own role, with the creation of a number of posts that will enable each to take up a specific sphere of interest and work on behalf of the Society. This will result in the entire Committee working even harder, and as a closer, more tightly-knit body. We hope also to recruit and encourage more regional representatives, so if you would like to get more involved please do let me know. We would love to welcome you on board!

Em Marshall-Luck

BELOW (a) Stephen Connock with Richard Hickox at "Let Beauty Awake". (b) Alan Rowlands and Adrian Sims perform the *Sixth Symphony* arranged for two pianos and later recorded by Albion Records. (c) "Let Beauty Awake" – Elgar / RVW Symposium. (d) Michael Kennedy receives the Society Medal of Honour. (e) Sir David Willcocks speaking before the premiere of *A Cambridge Mass*. (f) Sir Roger Norrington. (g) Down Ampney Exhibition. (h) Ursula Vaughan Williams' 90th birthday celebrations. (i) Em Marshall-Luck, Chairman. (j) Karen Fletcher with pianist Ashley Wass at the Naxos *Piano Concerto* launch.



Photographs by Tadeusz Kasa except (g) Robin Barber.

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Next edition: February 2012. Submissions by 31 December 2011.