

# RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS SOCIETY JOURNAL

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

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THE LATE SECRETARY  
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Keeler

# From the Editor

Members accustomed to a page of philosophical meditation here will be disappointed – or perhaps relieved – this time, as there are practical matters to attend to. First, some apologies. The last issue of the Journal featured an article by Adam Harvey that, in providing a fascinating checklist of folk songs collected and used by Vaughan Williams, continued the groundbreaking work of Julian Onderdonk in earlier issues. It certainly wasn't the author who, in error, duplicated a musical example, and on balance it seems most likely that I did. Luckily, my shoulders are broad enough to support this! I apologise to Adam, and am happy to correct the error here. Example 4 on page 8 should have appeared as follows:



On that same page I announced an article in this issue on the history of Vaughan Williams's relationship with his main publisher, Oxford University Press. That article will now only appear in the February issue. As if that weren't enough, in my article on page 18 I implied that OUP is the publisher of *A Cambridge Mass*. This is incorrect: the score of this fascinating new discovery is published by Stainer and Bell. (Members might also like to scrutinise the title of that essay, where another error passed the eagle eyes of designer Tadeusz Kasa and two expert and meticulous proofreaders, Martin Murray and Simon Coombs. This is, however, an appropriate moment to thank these three publicly for the remarkable work they do on the Journal.)

Now, a gripe and hardly a new one. One of the Vaughan Williams events of the year was the Prom concert in which Andrew Manze conducted the central triptych of symphonies. John Francis writes on page 33 that "the Journal will no doubt be full of enthusiastic reviews". Not a bit of it, as his was the only article on the subject that came in. I do find the reluctance of members – there are around a thousand of you – to contribute both surprising and discouraging. So once again, I encourage you to share your thoughts and views with us all. Trained musicians, musicologists and straightforward lovers of Vaughan Williams's music, there is room for all of these in these pages.

After fifteen years' hard work, David Betts will retire from the post of Membership Officer at the AGM on 21 October. We are grateful to him for all that he has done, and will have more to say, with reports of the AGM, in the February issue. Meanwhile, Mark Hammett is adding this role to his work in Albion Records distribution. All questions relating to membership matters should now be sent to him, and as a first step he has asked me to return to the question of email addresses. Whilst it is our intention to keep the volume of emails we send to members to a minimum – we all have enough "spam" in our diet – it is a very useful way of keeping in touch for subscriptions, forthcoming events and so on. But our email list is far from complete and in many cases out of date, and we would appreciate your help in ensuring that the information we have is current. Put simply, if you have not received any emails from us in the last year please assume that we do not have a working email address for you, and send a short message to Mark at [albionmrh@btinternet.com](mailto:albionmrh@btinternet.com) so that we can update our database.

William Hedley

## Ralph Vaughan Williams and literature in English

### A Poison Tree

I was angry with my friend;  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe:  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears,  
Night and morning with my tears:  
And I sunned it with smiles,  
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night.  
Till it bore an apple bright.  
And my foe beheld it shine,  
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,  
When the night had veil'd the pole;  
In the morning glad I see;  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

William Blake  
(from *Songs of Experience*, 1794)

# Music for solo organ by Ralph Vaughan Williams

Hugh Benham

Music for solo organ is a small part of Ralph Vaughan Williams's work, and not widely known apart from the hymn-tune prelude *Rhosymedre*. In particular the fine Prelude and Fugue in C minor and the attractive miniature *A Wedding Tune for Ann* deserve more frequent performance.

Vaughan Williams worked as an organist from 1895 to 1899 only, at St Barnabas, Lambeth. He found the experience unsympathetic, which may help to explain why he apparently wrote no music for organ in those years. He had at one time envisaged a career as an organist (see for example his *Musical Autobiography*, 1950), although his teachers did not regard him as a star pupil. His own statement that he "never could play the organ" should not be taken literally, however, not least because he held the prestigious diploma of Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (1898).

The following table shows the works for organ. There follows brief descriptions of and comments on the published pieces. (There remains scope for study of their reception and performance history, and for investigation of the unpublished pieces.)

Organ Overture	1890	student exercise, unpublished
Three Preludes founded on Welsh Hymn Tunes Bryn Calfaria (tune by W. Owen, 1813–1893) Rhosymedre (or "Lovely") (J.D. Edwards, 1805–1885) Hyfrydol (R.H. Prichard, 1811–1887)	1920	Stainer & Bell Ltd. "Bryn Calfaria" is in The English Hymnal [EH] 319; "Rhosymedre" ("Lovely") is EH 303 and "Hyfrydol" EH 301
Prelude and Fugue in C minor	1921	OUP, 1930; currently available in Archive Print
Passacaglia on B–G–C	1933	unpublished
A Wedding Tune for Ann	1943	No. 1 in A Vaughan Williams Organ Album (OUP, 1964), ed. Christopher Morris
Two Organ Preludes: founded on Welsh Folk-songs Romanza "The White Rock" Toccata "St David's Day"	1956	Nos. 5 and 3 in the above publication; previously available separately (1956) from OUP as "Two organ preludes: founded on Welsh folk-songs"

The published pieces, apart from the *Wedding Tune* are available on CD. Please consult the discography prepared by Jonathan Pearson (visit <http://www.rvwsociety.com/aboutsociety.html> and then click on "Resources").

## Three Preludes founded on Welsh Hymn Tunes

Vaughan Williams dedicated "Three Preludes" to his former organ teacher Alan Gray. As he wrote in his *Musical Autobiography*, "our friendship survived his despair at my playing".

According to the 1920 edition "these three Preludes are intended to be played as a Series, but they can also be performed separately." They do indeed make an effective group in recitals, with relatively loud and rapid movements separated by the more reflective "Rhosymedre", but "Rhosymedre" (the finest) makes an excellent voluntary before a service, while "Bryn Calfaria" or "Hyfrydol" can work well afterwards.

The "Three Preludes" are to some extent twentieth-century British counterparts of J.S. Bach's chorale preludes (organ pieces based on German hymn melodies or chorales), although they are very different in musical style. However, as Bach normally did, Vaughan Williams kept to the principle of borrowing only melodic material, without reference to the original composers' harmony or his own harmonisations in *EH* (1906).

## Bryn Calfaria

Owen's title "Bryn Calfaria" means "Hill of Calvary", and the original text was "Gwaed y groes" ("The blood of the Cross"), all of which prompted use of the minor key throughout. (Incidentally, in *EH* Vaughan Williams had transposed Owen's tune from A minor to the lower and "darker" key of G minor, and provided more varied and effective harmonies.)

### Ex. 1 'Bryn Calfaria' as in EH 319

The musical notation shows five phrases of the melody in G minor. Phrase 1 starts on a D4 (3rd line), phrase 2 continues on D4 and E4 (4th line), phrase 3 starts on a G4 (5th line), phrase 4 continues on G4 and A4 (5th line), and phrase 5 starts on a D5 (6th line). An annotation indicates that phrases 1 and 2 are repeated.

In the prelude the openings of the second and last phrases are altered, so that both begin with a 5th instead of a 3rd. This is more striking, and both recalls the rising fourth (D–D–G) of the first phrase and anticipates its "tonal answer" G–G–D in the middle section.

Ex. 2: *Bryn Calfaría*, phase 2



Vaughan Williams halved the note values of *EH* (and Owen’s original), making the music look less ponderous on the page, but necessitating demisemiquavers in the *senza misura* passages. *EH*, following Owen, has the melody starting on the first (strong) beat of the bar, whereas in the prelude Vaughan Williams usually begins on the third (weak) beat, as in Ex. 2, although “weight marks” on the opening quavers give some emphasis to the upbeat. Some statements of line 1 do however start on the first or second beat of a bar. This attractive freedom was perhaps suggested by Owen’s starting his final line with an upbeat – a change of rhythmic emphasis that Vaughan Williams would have admired, judging from rhythmic “irregularities” in some of his own hymn tunes (see Issue 52 of the Journal, October 2011).

The melody is treated line-by-line in the prelude rather than played through continuously. Overall there is a three-part structure: outer sections alternate chordal passages with *senza misura* flourishes from which the melody is absent, while the middle section is contrapuntal. The structure may invite comparison with Baroque toccata-type structures, as in Bach’s celebrated Toccata in D minor (BWV 565) where contrapuntal writing is sandwiched between more varied and more showy music.

Owen’s harmonisation is in the same key throughout, with every note belonging to the harmonic minor scale. In *EH* Vaughan Williams broadly follows suit, but with a bar or two in the relative major. In the prelude, however, he favours the modal writing of which he was so fond. Almost everything is modal minor, with much in the Dorian mode transposed to G, usually with E and F naturals in place of the E flat and F sharp of the harmonic minor scale, as in Ex. 3.

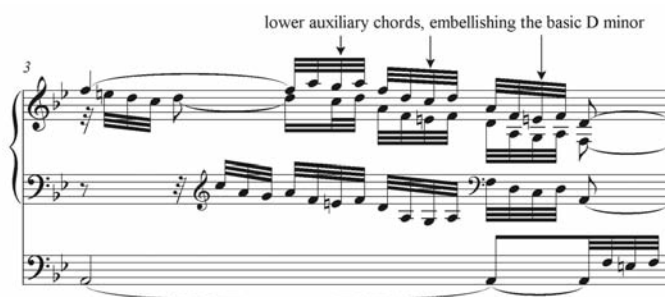
Ex. 3: *Bryn Calfaría*, phase 1



In bar 11 (Ex. 2) an E flat in the pedals is immediately followed by an E natural in the left hand, a pleasingly ambiguous effect widely exploited by Vaughan Williams. Significantly, such false relations were characteristic of much of the Tudor and Jacobean music that he so much loved.

Each *senza misura* flourish provides an element of display, but is also harmonically important as the embellishment of a single chord. For example, the first flourish, part of which is shown in Ex. 4, is based on a D minor chord (mostly with A in the bass to avoid too “grounded” an effect) to provide dominant preparation for the G modal minor of Ex. 3. The *senza misura* passages are full of parallel movement involving whole three-note chords in first or second inversion or occasionally root position. Such parallelism, which can include parallel 5ths (banned as “consecutive 5ths” by most earlier composers) was prominent in much of Vaughan Williams’s music, and very powerfully so in the early 1920s, as in the *Pastoral Symphony*, ‘Hyfrydol’ and the Prelude and Fugue in C minor.

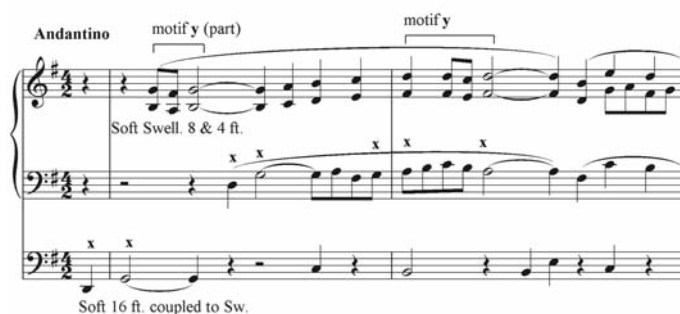
Ex. 4: *Bryn Calfaría*, from first *senza misura* passage



## Rhosymedre

The introduction of this delightful prelude has hints of the hymn tune in the left hand (Ex. 5), under a flowing melody partly based on the motif “y” and doubled in 6ths for extra sonority. The opening music is reused as the start of verse 1, but with the tune quoted exactly; it recurs in its original form to conclude the piece.

Ex. 5: *Rhosymedre*, opening



The borrowed melody is stated twice in full, first in the left hand, solo to let it stand out clearly (“verse 1”), then in the right (“verse 2”), followed by a repeat of the opening phrase in the left. The opening F sharp of Edwards’ final phrase is altered to D, perhaps to widen the melodic range towards the end or to recall the start of the first phrase.

In *EH* “Rhosymedre” is in G major throughout, with no accidentals. The introduction and verse 1 of the prelude follow suit, an unusual restraint in a twentieth-century piece. Harmonic interest arises partly from a decidedly untraditional freedom in

handling passing notes and dissonance. Parallel fifths occur between outer parts as important cadences are approached, probably as a form of emphasis. The tonal restraint of verse 1 would test even Vaughan Williams's resourcefulness if prolonged indefinitely. Accordingly in verse 2 there are touches of (non-modal) E minor and A minor. The C sharp in bar 37 creates an almost Tudor-style cross relation with the preceding C natural.

The texture has limited variety, being regularly in four parts except where cadences are reinforced with a fifth part. Pedals are used throughout, but in the introduction and verse 1 many notes are followed by short rests, the effect sometimes recalling pizzicato basses in orchestral writing.

### Hyfrydol

Vaughan Williams places the borrowed melody at the top of the texture throughout, a perfect fifth higher than in *EH* to help lift the range of the right-hand part generally. The first two phrases are repeated as in the hymn, but more loudly and with different harmony and fuller texture.

Phrases 3–6 also are presented twice, for additional weight and to create an overall structure similar to classical binary ("A B") form. Phrases 3–6 and their repeat differ in harmony, texture and dynamics as phrases 1–2 and their repeat had done, but the restatement of phrase 6 is also broader (*Largamente*) and louder with six notes at a time as the piece begins to build to its grand ending. A short coda is louder still, with seven notes simultaneously and a final eight-note chord.

Even in these very full textures there are usually only three genuine parts, because melodic lines are often doubled in 3rds or 6ths, as in Ex. 6, or doubled more heavily to create streams of parallel chords.

Ex. 6: *Hyfrydol*, parallelism

The supporting strands, like the melody itself, generally move by step. They frequently clash with the given melody, sometimes quite strongly, and the effect can seem rough, even arbitrary. When compared to parallel-chord passages in the Prelude and Fugue, there is a lack of colour (with scarcely any chromatic notes or cross relations, and almost everything derived from the scale of C major). The melody of "Hyfrydol" is firmly in 3/2 time, but opposing rhythms in the accompanying parts produce some quite strenuous syncopation at the start of each principal section (bars 1–2 and 17–18).

### Two Organ Preludes founded on Welsh Folk-songs

The Two Organ Preludes, which appeared in 1956 without dedications, are of less musical interest than the earlier set.

Although based on secular melodies, they could be played as voluntaries (the first before a service, the second afterwards), but a more obvious use is in recitals.

### Romanza "The White Rock"

The title "Romanza" was something of a favourite with Vaughan Williams for lyrical instrumental movements. The borrowed melody, often known as "David of the White Rock" ("Dafydd y Garreg Wen"), was probably originally the work of the early eighteenth-century harpist David Owen. It is heard twice, first in the right hand and then in the left.

Vaughan Williams introduced a few small changes. In the first verse phrases 4 and 5 have been elided (Ex. 7), so that E minor continues and the obvious G major cadence is avoided. At the same point in verse 2, the cadential G is retained, but shortened; a G major cadence is again avoided, and quavers E and F sharp are added to strengthen the E minor flavour.

Ex. 7: *The White Rock*, part of melody

The short introduction, which does not quote the borrowed melody directly, is in Aeolian E minor, with D naturals instead of D sharps. However, D sharps from the melody are retained in both verses, and create actual or near cross relations with D naturals in accompanying parts. There is a rather audacious clash in bar 20 (Ex. 8): this may not appeal to every ear, especially in such a spare texture. D sharps are the only accidentals in "The White Rock" other than the concluding G sharp, which provides a serene final chord of E major.

Ex. 8: *The White Rock*, D# and D's

### Toccata 'St David's Day'

Vaughan Williams's toccata is fast, but not as showy as some pieces with this title. It is named after the melody shown in Ex. 9 below ("St David's Day" or "Dydd Gwyl Dewi", as given in *The Celtic Song Book*, ed. A.P. Graves, [London], Ernest Benn Limited, 1928, p. 228).

Ex. 9: *St David's Day* ('Dydd Gwyl Dewi')

English words by Henry Davies  
Welsh words by Ceiriog

When King Cad-wall - on\_ famed of old, Mid\_ tu - muls and a - larms, With\_ 'Roedd  
Pan\_ oedd Cad-wall - on\_ gynt yn dal Gwi - al - en Fryd - ain Fawr, 'Roedd

5  
daunt - less heart and\_ cour - age bold Led\_ on the Bri - tish arms; He  
gan y Sae - son\_ fil - wr tal O'r\_ en - w "Ed - win Gawr." 'Roedd

9  
bade his men ne'er\_ fret\_ nor\_ grieve, Nor doubt the com - ing fray; For  
Ed - win Gawr yn\_ cab - lu'r\_ saint, Ac en - wau pawb o'u plant: Ond

13  
well he knew it\_ was\_ the\_ eve Of great St. Da - vid's Day\_ \_\_\_\_  
lladd-wyd Ed - win\_ er\_ ei\_ faint, Ar Ddy - gwyl De - wi Sant\_ \_\_\_\_

Vaughan Williams appears to have used only the last part of the tune. This is heard twice at the beginning (in different keys), is repeated transposed in bars 25–32, and comes back at the end, partly in doubled note values. The annotations on the music example below point to the subtle rhythmic and melodic construction of the opening paragraph.

Ex. 10: *St David's Day*, beginning (right hand)

Allegro (minim = 112)  
cf. folksong, bars 12–15

parts of x, rising each time, and shorter so that main stress falls in different parts of bar each time

cf. beginning, but 4th higher

high point of paragraph | contrast C natural in bar 1

variants of x, transposed lower this time, with different phrasing, and from bar 11 contracted with rests omitted

“St David’s Day” gives the impression of having been composed quickly rather than worked at intensively; to a critical ear some key shifts may seem a little perfunctory, the occasional parallelism less than convincing, and the bare octave textures unsatisfying. The ending on A (the dominant of D major?) is strangely inconclusive, but so is the ending of the borrowed melody itself (Ex. 9).

A Wedding Tune for Ann

*A Wedding Tune for Ann* was composed in 1943 for the wedding of Miss Ann Pain to Mr Anthony Wilson at St James’s Church, Shere, Surrey (M. Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London, 1964), p.573). It is not clear who played it, or at what point. It is quiet and in 3/4 time rather than in the

traditional bridal or wedding march manner. As with a number of pieces, including the Coronation anthem *O taste and see*, Vaughan Williams lays aside complexity, length and grandeur in favour of a very eloquent simplicity and brevity.

In *A Vaughan Williams Organ Album* (OUP, 1964), Christopher Morris transcribed the piece (previously unpublished) onto three staves, allocating the lowest part to the pedals in the outer sections. The composer had notated it on two staves (perhaps expecting performance on manuals only), leaving selection of stops to the player, but specifying tempo markings, dynamics and phrasing.

The piece is in a very simple ternary (A B A) form, with the second A section an exact repeat of the first, except that its start is dovetailed into the ending of the B section. Ex. 11 shows the first two phrases of the A section melody, which is basically pentatonic (E flat F G B flat C) but with some scalic descents of four quavers.

Ex. 11: *A Wedding Tune for Ann*, beginning of melody

Andante con moto  
Gt. or Ch.

The A sections begin and end in E flat major. There are no accidentals, but some tonal and harmonic interest is provided by the cadence in C minor Aeolian in the second phrase. Groups of falling quavers in the accompaniment (suggested by those in the melody) help maintain rhythmic flow. The contrasting B section, *poco animato*, begins in G minor Aeolian. Half way through, a canon at the octave is handled with so light a touch that this “learned” device fits perfectly in such a relaxed setting.

Ex. 12: *A Wedding Tune for Ann*, canon

Sw. mp

in canon with top part

Prelude and Fugue in C minor

The Prelude and Fugue in C minor is easily Vaughan Williams’s most significant and challenging contribution to organ literature. He may have had in mind Bach’s Prelude and Fugue in the same key (BWV 546): both preludes open in stern, dissonant fashion, and then have contrasting contrapuntal textures. Further, see A.E.F. Dickinson’s comments in *Vaughan Williams* (London, 1963), pp. 472–473.

The prelude is dated “Sept. 2nd 1921”. The fugue was finished earlier (“Aug. 23rd 1921”). Both movements were revised in

1923 (prelude on 29 July, fugue on 30 July). Further revisions of both, probably coinciding with the making of an orchestral version, are dated “March 6th 1930”. The work was dedicated to a long-standing friend Henry Ley, organist at Christ Church cathedral, Oxford, from 1909 to 1926.

The prelude has five sections. Sections 1, 3 and 5 employ parallel chords in the manuals, often moving in opposite directions to the pedals. They are forceful and sometimes fiery – *Allegro con fuoco*. Sections 2 and 4 provide contrast, with lighter and quieter contrapuntal textures that to some extent anticipate the technique of the fugue. There is now relatively little parallelism and more diatonic writing involving fewer cross relations; the music moves considerably more quickly, with semiquavers almost continuously in one or more accompanying parts.

The use of parallelism is varied and resourceful. At first both hands, an octave apart, have the same minor first-inversion chords (together making a six-note strand) over the pedal part: see Ex. 13. In bars 5–7 there are *major* chords in *second* inversion, with some cross relations adding piquancy. Later the left hand imitates the right (in a texture of *three* strands including pedals), and major chords are mixed with minor. Near the end of the section, over a sustained pedal E flat, there is a most colourful flurry of quaver second-inversion chords, all major with numerous cross relations. Ex. 13 demonstrates also some of the *rhythmic* subtlety of the opening section: for example, although the time signature is 4/4 throughout, bars 6 (beat 2) to 7 (beat 3) sound like two bars of 3/4 time.

Ex. 13: Prelude, opening

Sections 1 and 2 both begin and end in modal C minor. At the end of the former a pentatonic melody (C B flat G F D C) provides a foretaste of the pentatonic writing in Section 4 and in the main subject of the fugue. Section 3 has more tonal contrast: it begins in C minor, and moves to A modal major (Mixolydian) before ending ambiguously with a first-inversion chord of F major (A, C natural, F). Section 4, the longest, begins in modal A minor, with the entire texture built on the pentatonic set A B D E G. Modal E minor (a fifth higher, and again often pentatonic) soon leads to B minor, a fifth higher again. The note B is soon

succeeded by its enharmonic equivalent C flat – the first stage in a return from sharp keys to C minor.

Section 5, very loud throughout, begins by combining the melody of Ex. 13 with the fugal theme from Section 2 (Ex. 14, top part). The latter, in double note values and doubled with parallel second-inversion chords in both hands, brings the movement to a most imposing end.

There are three main sections in the fugue, the first and second based on different fugue subjects, the third eventually combining both and including some massive parallelism of the type much used in the prelude. The third section begins at bar 86 out of 139, and in representing about 38% of the total length corresponds to the shorter segment of the “golden section”, something that almost certainly resulted from the intuition of a master craftsman rather than from deliberate design (sections 1 and 2 together make up the longer segment, about 62%).<sup>1</sup>

The pentatonic first fugue subject is contemplative and pastoral with legato crotchet triplets and an undulating profile.

Ex. 14: Fugue, subject of first section

Bars 1–17 are a fugal exposition in four parts, with a “real” answer in G minor. The fourth (“soprano”) entry comes in before the third (“bass”) is complete – the first of fairly numerous examples of *stretto* (overlapping of entries) in the fugue, some of which are based on parts of the subject only.

The exposition centres on modal C minor with modal G minor as a secondary key, the only altered notes being A naturals and E naturals. When A natural and E natural come together with C in bar 32, there is a magical shift of tonality to A minor. Movement from keys with flats to those with sharps is more extensive than in the prelude, accelerating through a circle of rising fifths as far as A sharp modal minor (bar 45). An enharmonic change (sharps to equivalent flats) accompanies the final move to E flat modal major, one of few departures from the minor. Traditionally E flat major was the closest relative of C minor and was easily reached; here it is gained by a wonderfully circuitous route.

At bar 56 a new fugue subject (Ex. 15) provides fresh interest. The texture of the new section is three-part for manuals throughout, with a reduction in volume but an increase in rhythmic activity owing to many triplets in the accompanying parts. Perhaps not surprisingly in a work where tonality is so overwhelmingly minor, E flat major Mixolydian (for the first entry) gives way to minor second and third entries (B flat and E flat). Listeners with really sharp ears may hear an incomplete inverted entry in bar 77 (it descends where Ex. 16 ascends): there is a more systematic use of the same device in the prelude, where Section 4 reverses the direction of the Section 2 theme.

Ex. 15: Fugue, subject of second section



There is as far-reaching a tonal journey in the second section of the fugue (to bar 85) as in the first, but in the reverse direction with loss of sharps and gain of flats. The major seventh chord on A flat in bar 86 brings us within range of the original C minor.

In bars 86–97 the opening motif from the first subject is heard again, combined with elements from the second. The first subject returns in full and *ff* at bar 98. Its first four notes, beginning on G, are heard simultaneously three times in the pedals, leading to a long dominant pedal and a descent by step to

bottom C (tonic pedal) above which the second subject is reintroduced. Eventually both subjects are heard together at a massive *fff*: the first is reinforced with parallel triads in the right hand, the second is low and very powerful in the pedals. A third strand in parallel second-inversion triads moves in the same rhythm as the pedals and is perhaps a free inversion of the second subject.

At this culminating moment we hear a *major* triad on C, a foretaste of the prolonged C major chord that marks the triumphant ending.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the observations of Allan W. Atlas in his article “On the Proportions of the Passacaglia (Fourth Movement) of Vaughan Williams’s Fifth Symphony”, *Musical Times*, clii (1916), Autumn 2011, p. 19 and the same author’s “On the Structure and Proportions of Vaughan Williams’s *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*”, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, cxxxv, Part 1, 2010, p.115. 🎵

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## Vaughan Williams's (unknown) orchestral setting of "The Spanish Ladies"

Simon Polson

A Ralph Vaughan Williams autograph manuscript (#86-09358) has been found in the Rare Books collection of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music Library. It is an authentic, original setting for full orchestra and soloist of the English folk song "The Spanish Ladies," with which the composer had a long association. The papers consist of a five page conductor's score, orchestral parts in the hands of Vaughan Williams and at least one other copyist, and an envelope connecting the manuscript with key contemporaries of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Evidence of Vaughan Williams's authorship consists of verified handwriting analysis and investigation of correspondence with the contemporaries to whom the manuscript was addressed and possibly intended. As the only known manuscript of Vaughan Williams in the southern hemisphere, this article explores the question of how the document came to be in Sydney, Australia.

The folk songs of England are threaded throughout the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. In a presentation for the BBC in 1940, Vaughan Williams commented that there is "nothing precious" about folk songs but rather, they are "tunes with real blood in their veins and real muscles in their limbs." Keenly aware that, at the turn of the twentieth century, the oral tradition that had previously preserved these melodies was dying, Vaughan Williams undertook to collect and thus ensure the preservation of hundreds of English folk songs before they were lost to posterity. The collector would then become the composer: Vaughan Williams sketched and eventually published arrangements of many of those folk songs throughout his life and would constantly return to the folk melodies, in which the composer found his own voice. Such is true of the ballad "The Spanish Ladies", of which Vaughan Williams made two arrangements, for piano and solo voice and then for soloist and mixed voices. Now, the 2011 discovery of a manuscript in Vaughan Williams's autograph suggests that he made a third and hitherto unknown arrangement of that Royal Navy song for voice and orchestra.

Midway through the film *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*, a film made from two books by Patrick O'Brien, there is a scene on the quarterdeck in which the top-men sing:

*Farewell and adieu to you Spanish ladies  
Farewell and adieu to you ladies of Spain*

Their song is interrupted by an older midshipman whose fine voice "soars effortlessly over theirs, hijacking their roistering ballad, converting it to something much more poignant":

*For we've received orders to sail for Old England  
And we hope in a short time to see you again.*

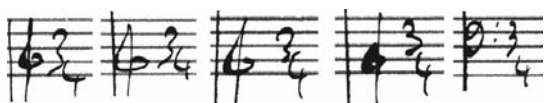
This may seem a flippant digression but it is not without meaning: O'Brien's series of novels is set during the Napoleonic wars at the turn of the nineteenth century and the folk song "The Spanish Ladies" likely has its origins in that period, when England and Spain were allies in the first coalition against revolutionary France. The verses of what is described as a "Royal Navy Song" likely evolved from sailing directions for the English Channel as every notable point from Ushant to the North Foreland is mentioned.

Vaughan Williams first encountered this song in 1905 at the Union Workhouse in King's Lynn, Norfolk. (It was at this time that he composed the three *Norfolk Rhapsodies*, which are the first examples of the composer's deliberate quotation of English folk melody). Alongside the transcription of the melody published by Vaughan Williams in the *Journal of the Folk Song Society* (now the English Folk Dance and Song Society), he records that it was sung by Mr. [Robert] Leatherday on 11 January, 1905; on the same visit to King's Lynn, Vaughan Williams also heard "The Spanish Ladies" sung by Charles Crisp, a sailor, and Thomas Donger, a sail-maker. An arrangement of the folk song for piano and voice was published by the composer in 1912 and a further arrangement for unison and mixed voices appeared in the *Motherland Song Book* of sea songs (Stainer & Bell) in 1919, of which the composer served as editor. Although the folk song was transcribed by Vaughan Williams in *G Aeolian* it is transposed a tone higher in each arrangement, presumably to avoid flattened notes in the key signature.

It has been hitherto understood that Vaughan Williams's association with "The Spanish Ladies" ended with the unison and mixed voices arrangement of 1919; but the 2011 discovery at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music of a third arrangement shows that it continued for at least another decade after 1919.

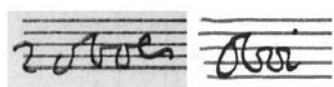
Beyond its accession number no details were recorded for Manuscript #86-09358 (“the Sydney manuscript”) so nothing about its provenance can be gleaned from library records. The collection consists of the autograph orchestral conductor’s score for “The Spanish Ladies”, with parts in both the composer’s hand and that of an anonymous copyist.

There are peculiarities of handwriting throughout the score that invite comparison with other manuscripts known to be in Vaughan Williams’s hand: prominent amongst these idiosyncrasies is the composer’s “diagonal alignment” of time signatures. This same alignment has been consistent in each of the Vaughan Williams autograph manuscripts provided to me for study (among them, *Sancta Civitas* (1923-5), the *Solemn Music for the Masque of Charterhouse (Final Scene)* (1950) and the score to the 1948 film *Scott of the Antarctic*).



Example of the diagonal alignment in the Sydney MS, page 3.

Characteristic of this “diagonal alignment” of the time signature is that the upper number, indicating beats per bar, is to the left of centre of the lower number, the beat unit. This is consistent with the clefs given in the conductor’s score of the Sydney manuscript. This idiosyncratic alignment also allows us to see that some of the orchestral parts are almost certainly the work of an unidentified copyist, since they lack this diagonal aspect. The shapes of clefs in the Sydney manuscript, too, are consistent with those across other Vaughan Williams manuscripts. Similar treble, alto and bass clefs can be found in the *Scott of the Antarctic* autograph. In addition there are similarities between the handwriting given on the first pages of each manuscript: consider, for example, the appearance of the word “oboe” given in *Scott of the Antarctic* and the *Charterhouse Masque* alongside “oboi” in the Sydney manuscript:



Comparison of the word “oboe” from the *Charterhouse Masque* (left) autograph and the word “oboi” from the Sydney manuscript (right).

Authorship of the Sydney manuscript can also be determined by its musical nature in addition to the nature of its handwriting: as a means of proving Vaughan Williams’s autograph as well as inviting comparison, it is worthwhile noting that, harmonically and structurally, the Sydney manuscript is an almost identical match for his 1912 and 1919 arrangements of “The Spanish Ladies”. Vaughan Williams preserved the melody in each of the three arrangements of the folk song exactly as he notated it in 1905, albeit a tone higher – later changes to the melodic line in the Sydney manuscript will be discussed below – and from the earliest sketches of the arrangement the harmonic treatment of the melody has remained almost entirely unaltered. That said, there are features of the Sydney manuscript’s arrangement that bear fruit

for discussion. The Sydney manuscript is orchestrated for piccolo, flute, two oboes, two clarinets in A, two bassoons, four horns in F, two trumpets in B flat, strings and percussion (timpani in A and E, side drum, cymbals and bass drum). To this, apparently later, was added two trombones and two bass trombones, but it appears almost certainly as an afterthought: it is out of place in the hierarchy of instrumentation and does not appear on every page of the manuscript, whereas the cymbals and bass drum are still listed even if the entire staff on that page is blank.

The evidence supporting the assertion that the Sydney manuscript is in Vaughan Williams’s autograph is substantive and at the present time, the autograph has been verified (to the extent that is possible after studying a digital reproduction of the manuscript’s first page) by Dr. Nicolas Bell, Hugh Cobbe, and Robin Wells as representatives of the British Library (home of the Vaughan Williams collection), the Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust and the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, respectively. I am grateful to them. Its authorship having now been determined, the Sydney manuscript offers something of a glimpse into Vaughan Williams’s method of orchestrating his own music for piano.

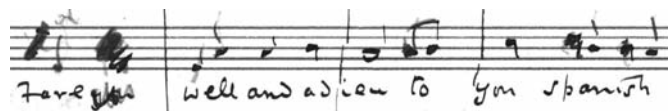
Vaughan Williams, in his orchestration, exploits the extensive ranges and percussive qualities of the instrumentation to render the music more vigorous and exciting than was possible on the piano. All arrangements are in the Aeolian mode on A and are marked *Allegro risoluto* but whilst the fundamental structure of the piece is unchanged, the introduction is altered by way of rhythmic diminution. In the 1912 and 1919 arrangements, a quaver-triplet figure rises from the dominant to tonic to emphasise the downbeat (a minim on tonic A); this is replaced by a semiquaver triplet and a staccato quaver A on the downbeat. This occurs on either side of the octave surrounding middle C in the 1912 and 1919 arrangements but sounds two octaves higher in the Sydney manuscript.

Prior to the entry of the vocal line, the forte accented arpeggiation of the tonic chord is replaced by a pizzicato, *pianissimo* in the strings, doubled by the lower woodwind and brass. To this introduction is also added a side drum emphasising the second beat of each bar. At the brief interlude between each chorus and the subsequent verse, the first quaver triplet in the 1912 and 1919 arrangements is replaced by a semiquaver ascent of the Aeolian scale, which is then followed by the two semiquaver triplet figures which announced the first verse. The same scale motif also heralds the arrival of each chorus with a crescendo in the orchestral score. There is no such comparable motif to be found in the earlier arrangements which simply continue the arpeggiation of the tonic chord, marked crescendo and accented. Again at this point the side drum is employed and emphasises each beat of the chorus with the same grace note figure that was prominent in the introduction of the orchestration.

With the exception of the rising triplet figure which doubles the vocal line at the second statement of “Fare you well and adieu” (at bar 7 of the 1912 arrangement, for example), the strings have remained pizzicato until the final line of the verse (“And I hope in a short time to see you again”) where they play with the bow in a more elaborate arpeggiation of the harmony to accompany the chorus than is given in the earlier arrangements. A sextuplet rapidly ascends the scale in the piccolo and first violins at the second phrase of the chorus which has no basis in the 1912 or 1919 arrangements. The same ascending motif also occurs again in a slightly modified fashion (straight semiquavers with no

sixtuplet and on the downbeat) towards the latter third of the chorus under the text “Channel of old England”.

An example of subtle changes that have been made in pencil to the melodic line and the orchestration of the folk song throughout the Sydney manuscript can be seen below. Consider, for example, the opening line of the vocal part in the Sydney manuscript:

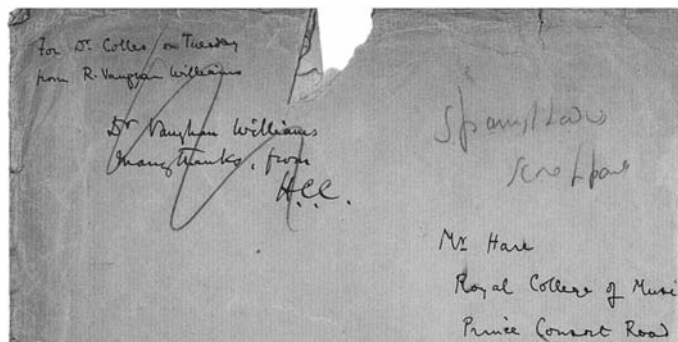


The vocal line of the Sydney manuscript showing pencil alteration.

Note that the text of each lyric aligns with the original note (as in the case of “Spanish” above). Changes were also made to the violin part alongside the changes made to the melodic line. It is unclear whether or not the changes were made by Vaughan Williams himself; however these changes are reflected in the orchestral parts (the master copies are likely in Vaughan Williams’s hand and subsequent copies in an anonymous hand. Certainly, in the case of the copyist’s version of the first violin part it seems likely that pencil marks made to the part are in Vaughan Williams’s hand, so it can be determined that he knew and approved of these changes.

The most significant pencil markings to the orchestral parts concern the coda that is written in each part but then crossed out, with the work ending instead on a single chord. This is one of the more significant departures from the arrangements of 1912 and 1919, which both feature a coda of four bars’ duration. Structurally, the orchestration in Vaughan Williams’s autograph follows the number of verses given in his 1912 arrangement (which matches with the number of verses he annotated in Norfolk in 1905). However, changes have been made in pencil to the manuscript to imply four repeats instead of two (and therefore five verses instead of three), thus matching the structure of the 1919 arrangement for unison and mixed voices. (Only the text for the first verse is written in full in the Sydney manuscript.) This is certainly Vaughan Williams’s intention: markings on the orchestral parts to “play five times” are almost certainly in his hand. Whereas the coda has been crossed out in each of the orchestral parts, the final page of the orchestral manuscript has simply been removed and a new ending pasted over the final bars of the preceding page. These examples are only a glimpse of the intricacies of orchestration given the melody by Vaughan Williams; a comparison of the 1912 arrangement and the Sydney manuscript gives us an insight to the means by which the composer gave colour and texture to the musical material.

There is much more that can be said about what can be gleaned from even the most subtle of markings on the Sydney manuscript and the accompanying orchestral parts; however attention must now turn to the envelope with which they were discovered and the important, and problematic, question of a date. Unfortunately, the entire right quarter of the front of the envelope, traditionally reserved for stamps and postage marks, has not survived (presumably the stamp has been removed for collection) so that direct means of dating the document is unavailable; however, there are other clues that will help in dating the collection.



Detail from the upper-left corner of the envelope containing the Sydney manuscript.

The annotations to the envelope are written in ink (unless otherwise noted) and read:

“For Dr. Colles on Tuesday  
from R. Vaughan Williams”  
“Dr. Vaughan Williams  
Many thanks, from  
H.C.C.” [all this crossed out in pencil]  
“Spanish Ladies score + parts” [written in pencil]  
“Mr Hare  
Royal College of Music  
Prince Consort Road  
London  
S.W.7”

In the opinion of both Dr. Nicolas Bell and Hugh Cobbe, the envelope discovered alongside the Sydney manuscript which is addressed to “Dr. Colles on Tuesday” is likely to be in Adeline Vaughan Williams’s hand, with the pencil annotation “Spanish Ladies score + parts” written by Vaughan Williams himself. “Dr. Colles” is probably Henry Cope Colles (1879-1943), then lecturer of Musical History, Analysis, and Appreciation at the Royal College of Music. Vaughan Williams was appointed professor of composition at that same institution in 1919, the same year as Colles, and the two remained colleagues until Colles’ retirement in the early 1940s. Already this suggests that the orchestration of “The Spanish Ladies” postdates the two published editions, but further clues suggest that it is likely to have been written some decades after those arrangements. Henry Cope Colles is addressed by Adeline Vaughan Williams as “Dr.” but did not receive his honorary doctorate of Music from Oxford University until 1932; therefore the work is more likely to be a product of the decade 1932-1941. This can be corroborated by Vaughan Williams’s correspondence that indicates that he sought Colles’ opinion of his work at least towards the latter end of that period: in a letter to Adrian Boult dated 26 October 1940, Vaughan Williams attaches samples of a patriotic song and notes, “Would you please pass this copy letter on to Walford for his criticism – I am also sending copies to Colles & Foss for suggestions.”

Although it can be assumed that Colles and Vaughan Williams enjoyed a relationship founded on mutual respect for one another’s opinions beyond having simply been colleagues, it is worthwhile noting that it is only the fact of the manuscript’s discovery alongside the envelope which leads to the suggestion that it was the manuscript itself left for “Dr. Colles on Tuesday” and then returned to Vaughan Williams. The chronology implied by the annotations made to the envelope (see illustration) do suggest that

it was labelled “*Spanish Ladies score + parts*” by Vaughan Williams *after* the correspondence with Colles, and certainly there does exist the possibility that Vaughan Williams sent something entirely unrelated to Colles, which was then returned, and the envelope simply recycled by the composer to protect the manuscript of his arrangement. (I am grateful to Dr Rupert Ridgewell of the British Library for his thoughts on this matter.)

It is only possible at the present time to offer an entire decade in place of a specific date of composition; proposing a date of premiere is even more difficult and nothing of certainty has yet been determined. However, the work does seem to have been performed, or at the very least rehearsed: the Sydney manuscript shows signs of physical wear particularly to the bottom right corners as would be the result of a conductor having turned the page. Furthermore, to the orchestral parts and to the conductor’s score have been added rehearsal markings A and B: ‘A’ before the final phrase of the verse and ‘B’ before the final phrase of the chorus. Additionally, there appear to be other markings on various orchestral parts that may not be in Vaughan Williams’s autograph that would indicate a live performance.

There are two nouns in this article’s title – The Sydney Manuscript – but so far, attention has only been focused on the latter. However, the very fact of the manuscript’s existence in Sydney is a research topic in itself: across all of my contact with Vaughan Williams experts around the world, all have expressed amazement that the manuscript should have ended up in the library of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in Australia. The Sydney manuscript is, in fact, likely to be the only Vaughan Williams autograph manuscript in the southern hemisphere. The only certain link between the document and Australia is Henry Cope Colles, who participated in an examination tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1939 and returned in January of 1940. It is tempting to suggest that the manuscript may have been in Colles’ possession during the time of his tour – perhaps as a teaching aid – and although the chronology implied by annotations made to

the envelope suggest that Colles returned the manuscript to Vaughan Williams, it is worthy of inclusion if only in the absence of a more concrete hypothesis. There exist other possibilities which at the time of writing continue to be researched: certainly during Vaughan Williams’s lifetime many of the directors of the Sydney Conservatorium, then the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music, were distinguished Englishmen with considerable ties to the Royal College of Music in London, and possibly to Vaughan Williams himself. Even in subsequent years as the Australian political landscape caused attention to drift from the Palace to Parliament House, significant staff appointments continued to connect the Conservatorium with the Royal College and again, research into the “Sydney” aspect of the Sydney manuscript remains ongoing.

With this concluding paragraph, I have left many questions that arise as a result of the discovery of the Sydney manuscript unanswered. This is, for better or worse, the very nature of any historical inquiry. Nevertheless, such unanswered questions should not overshadow what is now known: the Sydney manuscript is a hitherto unknown orchestral arrangement of “The Spanish Ladies” in Vaughan Williams’s autograph; it appears to be the only such arrangement he made for solo voice and orchestra; it is the only known manuscript of Vaughan Williams in Australia and one of only a handful outside the United Kingdom; and it is a rare, if brief, opportunity to study the composer’s method of orchestration. There are many questions left to be answered but for the time being, there is one more piece of music to be enjoyed.

(Simon Polson is a student in musicology at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Australia. This article, which was first published in *Fontes Artis Musicae*, 59:2 (2012), has been lightly edited for publication in the *Ralph Vaughan Williams Society Journal*. In particular, a number of endnotes giving supplementary specialist information have been excised. Simon may be contacted at [spol2741@uni.sydney.edu.au](mailto:spol2741@uni.sydney.edu.au).)

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**John Francis, at 198 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1BE.**

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# A Bigger Splash

A lecture given at Hereford Three Choirs Festival, 23 July 2012

Rolf Jordan

I want during this talk to take you briefly away from Hereford and its musical landscapes – which are those of the Severn, May Hill, Hergest Ridge, Mordiford and not so far off, the Welsh mountains. The North of England has, I'm afraid, a great claim on the symphony we will hear tonight. I hardly need remind you that it was partly conceived in Yorkshire – where I am not from – by the remote and towering cliffs in the Whitby area, which was surely chosen by Vaughan Williams as a retreat for its incomparable sea views. And it was of course first performed at Leeds, by voices from all over the county.



Leeds Chorus badge, approximately 2cm wide. Silver, with blue enamel, hallmarked Birmingham 1910. Author's collection.

Michael Kennedy's words just now have reminded us that the *Sea Symphony* took some seven years of labour before coming to a performance. I don't intend to recycle facts either from his book or from Ursula Vaughan Williams's, both of which you have had nearly fifty years to catch up with.

It is useful to remember where Vaughan Williams was in his public career in that breakthrough year, 1910. His most recent piece was the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, which had equally impressed and baffled the audience at this festival's equivalent in Gloucester. During 1909, he had brought off three

John Bridcut's film *The Passions of Vaughan Williams* was repeated on BBC4 shortly before this lecture was given at the Three Choirs Festival. In the section on the *Sea Symphony*, Michael Kennedy had given one of Bridcut's signature "listener reaction" shots, and it gave me the idea to write to him and see if he had anything to add. This is his response:

**I envy you all in being about to hear Rolf Jordan on the *Sea Symphony*. It is a pivotal work in Vaughan Williams's growth as a composer because it began modestly in 1903, before he had completed the *Songs of Travel*, and he worked fitfully on it while he composed a variety of pieces up to and including the important lessons with Ravel in 1908. He finished it in 1909. I have grown rather tired of the constant references to the symphony as being a prentice work full of influences by Parry and Stanford. No doubt they are there but I don't care. I think it is as personal a work as he ever wrote. It brings him before my eyes still. I can hear his voice, never mind Whitman's. "Behold the man himself."**

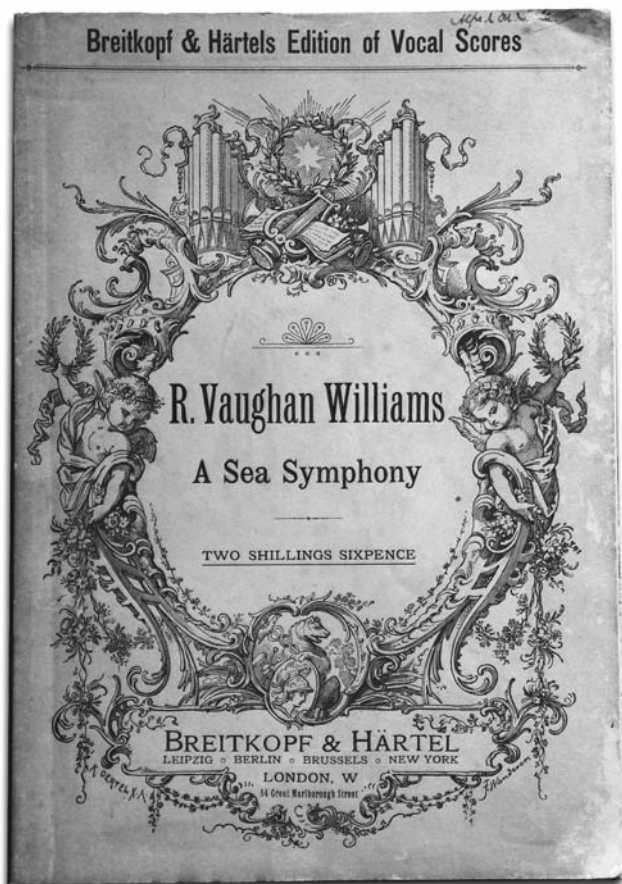
At the end of his letter, he added "I love the piece, and at eighty-six I love it more each time." The following transcript is almost identical to the lecture as delivered on the day. I have made one minor correction, and omitted references to three short audio extracts, which only existed to provide breaks. I have deliberately not added footnotes here: sources will be given in the expanded version when it is eventually published as a book chapter.

notable pieces, *On Wenlock Edge*, *The Wasps* and a quartet. In 1907 there was the symphony's prototype, *Toward the Unknown Region*. The highly popular sets comprising *Songs of Travel* also appeared during 1907. In 1906 the huge *English Hymnal* project came to fruition. This glossing-over is not to forget his other works, particularly in song and other small forms, and the crucial, overarching promotion of folk song.

It is due to the efforts of his old teacher Sir Charles Stanford that the *Sea Symphony* was first heard, for it was he, in his typically combative role as Chief Conductor of the triennial Leeds Musical Festival who argued for its inclusion. Apparently when it was accepted for performance, British publishers refused to touch the work, due to the expense of engraving it. So our composer sold seven years' worth of work to the London office of Breitkopf & Härtel – which was, of course, German – for the knockdown price of five pounds, on the understanding that it might at least become available to the world. After the vocal score was printed in 1909, he was still playing about with

the orchestral parts, which were played from manuscript in Leeds.

The Leeds Musical Festival, 12-15 October 1910, was held at Leeds Town Hall, or more precisely at Victoria Hall within the Town Hall. Chief Festival Conductor, as mentioned before, was Stanford, the chorus master was Herbert Fricker, and the organist was Edward Bairstow. The Festival Chorus of 348 was chosen from singers in Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Batley, Morley, Wakefield, Heckmanwike, Holmfirth, Cleckheaton, Harrogate and other parts of the West Riding. They



First edition vocal score, printed by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1909. Dark grey ink on light turquoise paper. This copy was unfortunately never marked up for performance. Author's collection.

were divided into 104 sopranos, ninety-two altos, seventy-two tenors and eighty basses. The orchestra consisted of players from the London and Leeds Symphony Orchestras, and the Hallé, with Frank Bridge and William Reed among them.

Madame Clara Butt, a real “bums on seats” star, was brought in at great expense to entice subscribers (she sang Elgar’s *Sea Pictures* during the Festival) and in due course an announcement was made that practically all the 1,500 subscription seats in the Victoria Hall had been sold. These subscribers paid six pounds for all eight concerts, and you could have got into the *Sea Symphony* for fifteen shillings.

Among subscribers were many worthies: the Archbishop of York; the Bishops of Ripon, Lichfield and Wakefield; the Earl and Countess of Harewood; the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, and those with a performer’s interest in the festival such as Walford Davies, Henry Newbolt, Hubert Parry, Rachmaninov and Vaughan Williams. They were not all exclusive seats: the Festival committee allocated space in the rear of the hall to inmates from the Leeds and York Blind Institutes, which were beneficiaries of the festival.

We should be grateful that the press turned out in force, for their extensive reports are valuable in many ways, telling us about the audience, for example. As typical of musical audiences then, women outnumbered men by ten to one. It was noted by one observer that these ladies had “consented, it would seem with one

accord, to remove their hats during the morning concerts [so that] attention is not continually distracted by feathers and flowers waving in or out of time with the music.” Crowds of locals gathered to watch the festival visitors arrive at the Town Hall every day. One paper observed that “The comments of the crowd as they watched the ladies struggling to keep their hats on in the forty-mile wind were highly diverting. ‘Sither! she’s bahn to fly,’ yelled one be-shawled woman who was intensely interested in the manoeuvres of a young lady in a hobble skirt and twenty-seven inch diameter hat.”

These hobble skirts, which made the wearers ascend the Town Hall steps more or less sideways, seem to have attracted a great deal of interest. One woman correspondent said

A rather unpleasant incident occurred during the luncheon interval. A young lady in an up-to-date dark fur hobble dress and a huge velvety feathery hat to match was walking along Park Lane in company with a gentleman visitor to the Festival, when a number of young mill girls spied them and set up a very audible giggle. “Did you ever see such a straight up and down thing?”...“I’m sure it will topple over”. The...young lady was obviously somewhat disconcerted by this marked attention, but passed along Park Row to lunch without deigning to take any notice.

Curiosity was aroused by a lady driver, who not only had taken over from her chauffeur, but had declined to wear goggles. A stream of magnificently upholstered motor cars now had dominion over the horse drawn carriages. It was reported that several of the vehicles seen pulling into the allocated dropping-off area were worth over £1,200 each.

With the single exception of the St Leger week at Doncaster, no such magnificent show of motor-cars has ever been seen in this part of the country. Some had come from as far away as London, Bristol and Birmingham. Three or four cars from the North and East Ridings are returning after the morning concerts, and coming back again with their precious loads for the evening concerts. [Some of these cars] can easily put on forty or fifty miles an hour, and out of the towns the drivers let them go. Indeed, they could not very well stick to the legal twenty miles an hour or the occupants might be late.

And:

“By gum,” said a male looker-on, “but aren’t they strapping young women.” This fact seemed to impress everyone. No more beautiful women have ever been seen in Leeds than those who are attending this year...even old folks reluctantly admit that the young aristocratic hockey-playing, hunting, golfing ladies of today are superior to the young ladies of thirty years ago.

Further amusement was had at the expense of an elderly organ grinder, with his instrument strung across his back. The poor old man had unwittingly wandered past the barriers into the area where the horses and chauffeurs were depositing their burdens, and someone shouted “Look out chaps, there’s one of the bandsmen!”

One official said he could

...never remember seeing so many clergymen as on this occasion. The number of tight-stockinged arch-deacons, sombre-coated priests and clergymen, and ministers of all denominations this morning was certainly most noticeable. It speaks well for their artistic taste that

they should treat themselves – many of them at great sacrifice – to such a soul-inspiring luxury.

Whereas the visitors were largely women, the spectators were nearly all men, no doubt there to enjoy the glamour of it all. One is reported to have said “I have never seen such fine women in my life...a lady attended yesterday morning’s concert with five daughters – and I am sure not one of them was less than five feet nine inches high.” The same writer noted that the ladies appeared to have complete charge over their male escorts “who have obvious difficulty in getting a word in edgeways.”

Clothing fashions were widely reported: bright dresses described in detail; turban hats with ostrich feathers fastened with large ornaments; silk waist bands, coiled hair, stoles. These mainly respectable, frequently colourful visitors thronged the elegant corridors of the Town Hall during meal breaks, some ate from hampers, and others tucked into sandwiches. More polite diners ate in the crypt. Outside, traffic was strictly controlled by

score to guide his ear. You may like to know that Vaughan Williams was paid £21 to conduct, which is ten shillings less than his soloists earned. Compare this to Rachmaninov who got £105 for his two concerts, and poor forgotten Hubert Bath who got five pounds and five shillings for his *Wedding of Shon MacLean*, rail fares inclusive. Clara Butt earned £275!

There were nearly 2000 people in the audience for the Festival’s opening performance of the (even then) old warhorse, *Elijah*. The first part of the evening concert was the *Sea Symphony*, and after the interval, Rachmaninov was to play his Piano Concerto No 2 in C minor, which was followed by Richard Strauss’s tone poem *Don Juan*.

It is often mentioned that it was Vaughan William’s thirty-eighth birthday, and so too is the story of how a pale and nervous Vaughan Williams had gone into the orchestra room with the timpanist before the concert, who tried to comfort him with “Don’t you worry, give us a good, square four in the bar and we’ll



The Chorus – Sopranos

mounted police – chauffeurs were forbidden to sound their horns in the vicinity – and there were ranks of cabs, which were ordered to point their horses’ heads towards their intended escape route.

This then, was the Society audience the Festival drew. With them came Vaughan Williams’s entire family, all his musical friends, and the sharpened pencils of the best musical journalists in Britain. It is no wonder that he was quaking in his boots before the performance.

Rehearsals for the *Sea Symphony* had begun a week earlier in London. At the run through in Leeds, Stanford was still sagely offering corrections to the orchestration, using only his vocal

do the rest.” He had barely slept or eaten for days. His long-trusted colleague, and baritone of choice, Jim Campbell McInnes, not normally nervous, said at the last minute, “I say – I say – If I stop you’ll go on, won’t you?” It is not surprising that this enfeebled state resulted in the famous line from Ursula’s biography “He said that when the orchestra played the opening chords and the chorus came in, fortissimo, ‘Behold the sea itself’, he was nearly blown off the rostrum by the noise.”

The audience rewarded him with enthusiastic applause at the end of every movement, but Vaughan Williams couldn’t overcome his modesty until the third one was over, when he finally felt able to turn and acknowledge it.

Herbert Thompson, who was critic of the *Yorkshire Post*, and programme writer for the Leeds and Three Choirs Festivals, sat there with a stopwatch and made timings:

Movement I: 19 minutes

Movement II: 13½ minutes (slower than the average recording)

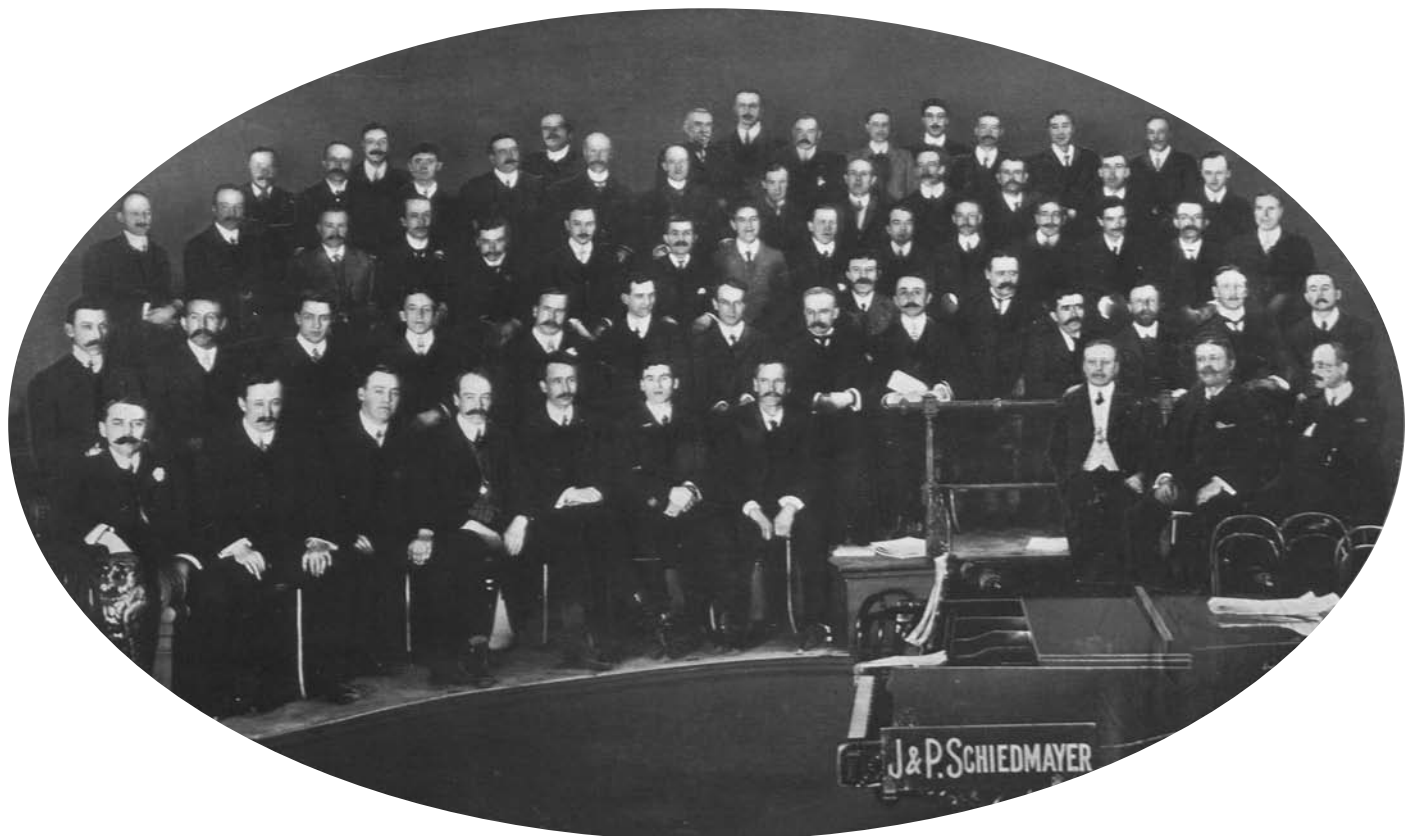
Movement III: 7½ minutes

Movement IV: 27½ minutes (faster than average)

Overall, 1 hour and 7½ minutes. The interval was for fifteen minutes, though the applause went on long after the orchestra and chorus had gone for the break. The chorus themselves vigorously

This aside is one that gives credence to the critics, who commonly felt confident in saying that the work was over scored, particularly in the brass. The composer must have agreed, though, for he went around to Lucy Broadwood's house the following week with the manuscript under his arm to seek corroboration from someone he trusted.

Herbert Thompson, who had rushed back to his office after the performance wrote in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* that "To give a finished and practically faultless performance of such an intricate work as this is a feat of choral virtuosity which I should imagine to be almost unprecedented."



The Chorus – Tenors

cheered the composer in the corridors backstage. I'm sure Vaughan Williams then had the best interval drink he had ever taken in his life. I will skip over the remainder of the concert – but imagine, Rachmaninov and Vaughan Williams, for fifteen shillings! After playing his concerto, Rachmaninov was recalled four times, and there was at least one cheer of "Good old Racky!"

Some reviews of the *Sea Symphony* give us a vivid picture of what it was like to be there. Ernest Newman grouched that the critics were given poor seats on the floor of the hall, within a few paces of the platform.

One does not like to anticipate trouble, but it really looks as if we shall have a number of works spoiled for us in consequence. When the full forces were turned on this morning, I could hear nothing but the chorus, trumpets and trombones. The rest of the orchestra could safely have played anything or nothing. To try to hear the seventy-six strings was as futile as to try to catch the vibrations of the fishes' tails in a storm.

He describes the uneven rhythms – we forget now how "modern" it was to them – "awkward progressions and key changes that [make it] difficult to determine even which key the singers are singing in." Mr Pickard, the chorus pianist, told him that

...in the whole of his many years' experience he had never had such a really difficult work to play as this Symphony; and to read the music can be likened to nothing more than a walk in pitch dark through a wood bristling with jagged tree stumps to trip and throw the unwary.

Stanford told Thomson he thought it an "extraordinary performance. I am sure the composer himself did." On the whole, the critics were fascinated, and even when not in sympathy, they had interesting things to say. From the *Daily Telegraph*:

In its incessant vigour, its immensely broad lights, and its nobility of conception and imagination, A Sea Symphony easily overtops its composer's previous compositions, and at once places him among those who count in our native musical creative world.

Ernest Newman gave a very long write up for the *Birmingham Post*.

It is a work of honest intention, but not of much success in the achievement, though there is some fine writing here and there. Whitman's words are perhaps not sufficiently varied in scope for a musical treatment. This may account in part for the failure of the composer to hold our interest all the while. But it is his imagination that is chiefly at fault. In Mr Delius's wonderful setting of Whitman's "Sea Drift", the whole colour and sound and surge and mystery of the sea are caught at once by an intuition of genius. Only the big men see their subjects in a flash with this swift synthetic imagination. Dr Vaughan Williams's mind does not work at this white heat. He builds with the reason, slowly piecing his picture together, bit by bit, out of remembered emotions of his own, and what he has read of other men's emotions of the sea. So the canvas is alive only in patches, with great tracts of conscious and laboured mechanism between.

One of the most thoughtful critiques was in the *Yorkshire Observer*, by an unsigned writer.

It is evident that what appealed to [Vaughan Williams] chiefly was the sentiment of the poet, his sympathy with the ocean as the field of heroism, as the most democratic institution in the world, and as the harbinger and symbol of a yet greater immensity and nobler idealism. Some day, perhaps, literature will produce a great poem on mankind's commerce with the air, and there will be new worlds for the composer to conquer. At present the sea is the greatest thing, at once visible, tangible, and mysterious, which we know. In that sense Whitman has written of it, and in full sympathy with that large conception Dr Williams has set his lines to music...these are triumphs of tone-painting, and no less so is the fascinating close, whereby the ship of man's destiny seems to recede into the ocean of silence until it becomes a speck on the horizon.

And this from *The Spectator*:

The last two movements contain some fine moments sandwiched in between a great deal of frankly detestable and deliberate cacophony.

The remainder of the festival, which the critics correctly predicted would be remembered as that of the *Sea Symphony*, had other noteworthy moments. On the Thursday Rachmaninov conducted his Symphony No 2 in E minor, and in the evening Harry Plunket Greene sang Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet* for the first time. I can't resist sharing what the *Musical Standard* said of Plunket Greene's singing of them, as it is one of the worst notices I have ever read of a famous singer:

As a last resort we honestly would have rejoiced for that opportunity of contentment in merely imagining the solos in these five numbers than undergo the painful ordeal [Plunket Greene] administered to the audience by his woefully bad intonation. It was an unhappy twenty-five minutes never again desired, and credit was with the [mixed] choral forces for rebutting such a baneful influence.

Newman thought the Festival lacked English music "of the first quality", wondering why there was so little Elgar, no Delius and no Bantock. He looked forward most of all to the Bach *St Matthew Passion* on Saturday with Gervase Elwes as the Narrator, Campbell McInnes as Jesus and Walford Davies playing piano continuo. Herbert Thompson gives a good description of Stanford the conductor, in the *Passion*:

During some of the long recitatives he would lounge back with his left hand just touching his pocket, and would keep time going by the slightest movements of the fingers of his outstretched right hand. At other times, when band and chorus were musically interpreting "thunders and lightening", his head, body, and two arms were in full tilt. Occasionally, he would obtain still further emphasis by executing high spiral movements with his baton. Notices had been hung around the hall forbidding applause, but at the end a few were unable to restrain themselves and began to clap. Stanford instantly and vigorously repressed this with an uplifted hand and "hush".

Despite the rapturous support of the audience, there was a hostile critical reaction to the curious performance of the Passion chorales, which were sung almost without expression by the choir. Newman's reaction in particular caused a scandal.

[The choir] sang revoltingly at times – there is no other word for it; but the fault was not theirs...They, no doubt, sang as they were taught; but who taught them to look at Bach's Passion in this foolish way? Who is answerable for their jiggling tempo in the opening chorus, and for the overwhelming din they made there and in the final chorus of the work?...Was it really the "Matthew Passion" we were at, or the Mafficking Passion?

"Attack on the Festival Conductor" was the headline in the *Yorkshire Post*. Herbert Thompson said Stanford probably thought that a modern emotional reading was not in keeping with a devotional and eminently serious work, and in his desire to avoid all suspicion of sentimentality went to the opposite extreme. Herbert Fricker, frustrated by false blame said

My position is simply this: I trained the chorus according to the edition of the work prepared for this Festival, published by Stainer & Bell, and edited by Sir Charles Stanford. I am only concerned to defend the chorus, and they sang according to the expression marks in the score.

To return to the *Sea Symphony*: when Vaughan Williams said it had been given a "rather doubtful" reception, he was partially right. A brief survey of the work's early performances shows that it took about ten years to get the exposure he must have wanted for it. The second performance, arranged instantly by one of Oxford's top musicians, Hugh Allen, was just five months later, in March, 1911, at Oxford Town Hall. It was the first item in one of the University Musical Club's public concerts, with Beethoven's Ninth in the second half. Vaughan Williams once again conducted, no doubt in order to try out personally the revisions. The critics, who knew about them, noted how "A good deal of the choral writing in the finale has been clarified and strengthened, and orchestral passages...advantageously altered." The crowded audience gave it an enthusiastic reception. Even so, the heaviness of the scoring was still commented upon, and no doubt resulted in further pruning.

The third performance was a month later at Bristol Victoria Rooms under Arnold Barter, but the composer wasn't able to attend: perhaps he knew that further revisions would be in place for the next performance, which was at Cambridge, in June. One critic made the mistake of thinking the removal of the choral parts from the third movement was a permanent adjustment, but this was entirely down to a foreseen lack of rehearsal time. Rather than omit the movement, an orchestral version was prepared, an experiment never repeated.

Four performances in its first year, then, with gradual tweaking. The work then waited almost two years for another hearing. This time, it was for the all-important first London outing. It was held at Queen's Hall, with the Bach Choir, under Hugh Allen. The first half was given to a Bach motet which was unfortunately derailed by Campbell McInnes who, possibly due to the affluence of inchohol, sang a beat in front of the other soloists for two pages, which flustered Allen enough to knock his score off the stand. The *Sea Symphony* was apparently not given a particularly good performance either, not helped by insufficient orchestral rehearsals and a suitably chastened Campbell McInnes, though the audience was as ever appreciative, calling the composer to the platform.

After London, the symphony was heard in Glasgow, Sheffield and Bristol, but it really came into its own during the Great War, helped of course by the embargo upon German works which helped to push British composers a little nearer to the public ear. In 1916, Allen once more conducted the symphony at a patriotic "Britain rules the waves" sort of concert in Queen's Hall, which commemorated the officers and men of his Majesty's fleet and the mercantile marine officers lost during the war. Parry's new *Chivalry of the Sea* had its first hearing at that concert.

Herbert Fricker, who you will remember was choirmaster at the first performance, was in charge of the three big choral societies of Leeds, Bradford and Halifax. He programmed the symphony in three almost identical concerts during the 1916-7 season, to allow interchange of men's voices, which of course had been



The Town Hall, Leeds in the 1900s.

severely depleted by the war effort. Though I am slightly getting ahead of myself, it is worth mentioning that Fricker left England soon afterwards, as he was offered a prestigious job in Toronto. His intimate knowledge of the *Sea Symphony* led to the bold programming of its first overseas performance, with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, in 1920, initially delayed due to the difficulty of getting the score out of Germany.

Campbell McInnes had also emigrated by this time, having been badly affected by the war, and was giving song recitals full of Vaughan Williams. Part of the press notice for the symphony is worth repeating.



No trading with the enemy: detail from the title page of the first vocal score of *Toward the Unknown Region* with Breitkopf's name struck out with blue pencil, as it was on the cover. This score will have been one of those delivered to Adeline Vaughan Williams, who sent them to Stainer & Bell. Author's collection.

The advent of Ralph Vaughan Williams to the consciousness of the musical public of Canada, as one of the great men of the time, has been the most important happening of the past season... Torontonians may...boast of being better acquainted with the music of the great Welshman than any other public on this side of the Atlantic.

In 1918, Stainer & Bell had applied to the Comptroller of Patents for a licence to take the copyright of both *Toward the Unknown Region* and the *Sea Symphony* from Breitkopf and Härtel. This was granted under the Trading with the Enemy (Copyright) Act, 1916. Stainers said that when Breitkopf's distributing house was wound up after the outbreak of war, their stock had been put up for auction, and all copies of Vaughan Williams's scores sent to Adeline Vaughan Williams. The composer, who was at the Front, asked her to send them off to Stainers. By the start of 1918, all these copies had been sold, and there was still a demand. He must have revised the proofs of the vocal score while in uniform, and it is tempting to imagine him reflecting on the comfortable and heady days of its first inspiration fifteen years earlier, and wondering where the time had gone.

Vaughan Williams came home from the war in February 1919. In June he went to Oxford where he was conferred honorary Doctor of Music, the first since Richard Strauss in 1914. The *Sea Symphony* was performed at the Sheldonian in his honour, and Hugh Allen conducted a chorus from the university and the town. The undergraduates, said the clearly moved *Musical Times* reviewer, sang not with "the school-boy voices of pre-war days, but the voices of men who know what the sea means, having gone across it and returned." In the middle of the final rehearsal, Allen had ordered "all books closed" and the choir sang to the end of the work from memory. ♪

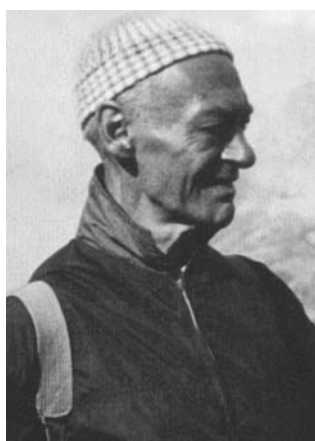
# C. H. H. Parry and R. Vaughan Williams – II

James Lyon

The death of Hubert Parry, on 7 October 1918, profoundly marked Vaughan Williams. He lost a teacher and friend, and a philosopher of music with whom there could be no further exchanges. He would never cease, for the rest of his life, to refer back to Parry's thoughts and musical works.

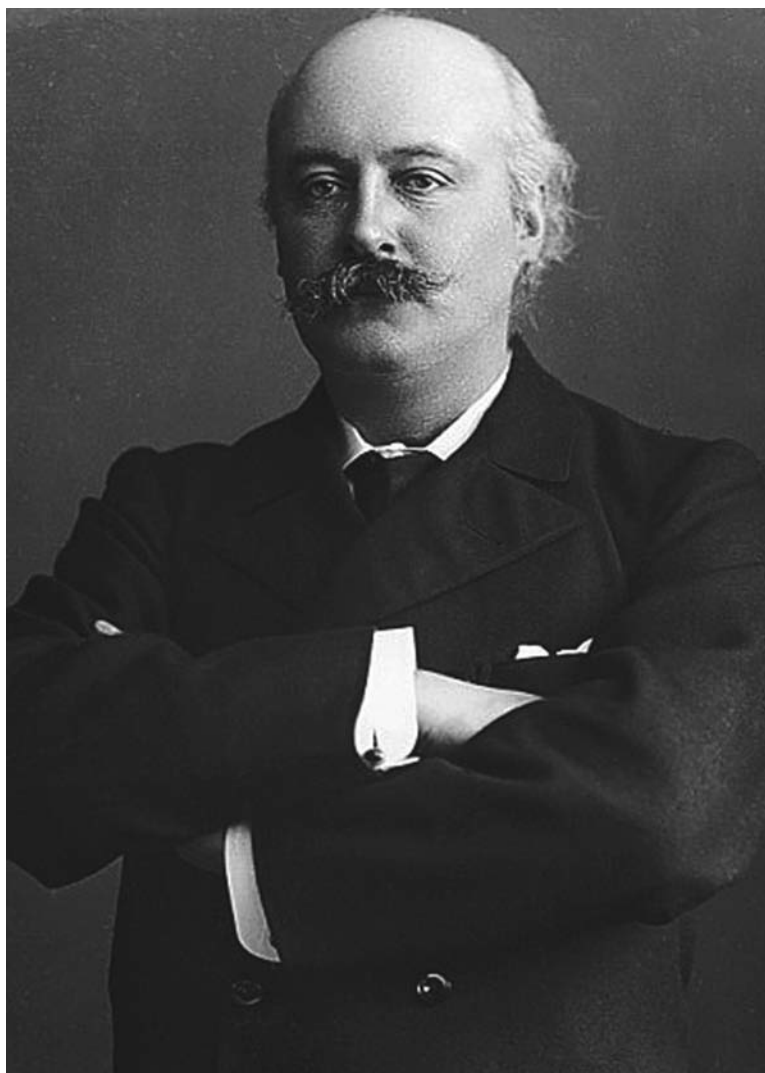
He often made reference to Parry in his writings, in particular as regards the important questions on the evolution of musical language and folk song. These subjects constitute the spiritual and artistic inheritance of Parry such as Vaughan Williams valued it. Thus "...there is no difference in kind but only in degree between Beethoven and the humblest singer of a folk-song."<sup>i</sup>

In this precise domain, Parry was a precursor, uniting philosophy of art, criticism and psychology. He anticipated the work of the Austrian psychologist Paul Diel (1893-1972) on the subject of art.<sup>ii</sup> He was both the music theorist and the composer who thinks and embodies development. Regrettably, his works no longer seem to arouse much interest.



Paul Diel

The musical thought of Johann Sebastian Bach was a common reference for both Parry and Vaughan Williams, who, on 7 March 1923, wrote a programme note for the *St Matthew Passion*. He ended by quoting the recommendations of his master who, in 1909, had published an important book, *Johann Sebastian Bach: the Story of the Development of a Great Personality* which was certainly a source of inspiration for Vaughan Williams's essay that appeared in 1950, *Bach, the Great Bourgeois*.



Sir Hubert Parry

Concerning the question of musical evolution already evoked, Vaughan Williams refers to it, in 1929, in an article on folk song intended for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

Any art if it is to have life must be able to trace its origin to a fundamental human need. Such needs must prompt expression among people even in their most primitive and uncultivated state. To this rule the art of music is no exception; Parry has pointed out that the universal law of evolution demands that we should be able to trace even the most elaborate compositions of Beethoven or Wagner back to some primitive germ.

On 23 October 1930, *Job* received its first performance, in concert version, at the Norwich Festival. The composer conducted the

Queen's Hall Orchestra. It is very interesting to compare it with Parry's oratorio (1891/92) on the same subject. The disciple profoundly admired the music of his teacher. The mythical figure of Job is one of great complexity. The common approach of both composers is of a philosophical, even psychological nature, and not theological. Both shared the same ideas on religion. They understood the biblical text as essentially a source of wisdom and reflection. The listener is touched by a music not only original but also and especially of a great sincerity as regards faith in human beings. Vaughan Williams made reference to the vision of William Blake (1757-1827), the genius whose poetry received such noble treatment by Parry in his *Jerusalem* (1916). The pastoral tone is common to both works, as can be heard in the song of the Shepherd Boy, in confident G major – *The flocks of my master* – at the beginning of Scene II of Parry's *Job*. This sound world is somewhat similar to the conclusion of Vaughan Williams's *Masque*, the humble and mysterious Epilogue:



In 1934, Vaughan Williams restored the honour of Parry, which had been often and unjustly damaged in the criticism of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950). Indeed, the caustic Shaw was an admirer of Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934) to the detriment of the other British composers.

Three years later, Vaughan Williams dedicated a long article<sup>iii</sup> to the great folk music collector Cecil James Sharp (1859-1924), in which he asserts once again that

Hubert Parry had in 1893 published his *Art of Music*, in which he applied the theory of evolution to music and showed the line of succession from the simplest of folk-tunes to the most elaborate symphony.

The American musicologist Warren Dwight Allen (1885-1964) has summarised very well the quality of Parry's thought in this domain:

Parry's method was to trace the evolution of musical forms as objective manifestations of spiritual activity.<sup>iv</sup>

In 1948, Vaughan Williams celebrated the centenary of the birth of Parry by composing the moving motet for mixed chorus *a cappella* – *Prayer to the Father of Heaven* – on a beautiful and simple text of the Tudor poet and satirist John Skelton (ca 1460-1529). The text of the dedication is particularly touching:

To the memory of my master Hubert Parry, not as an attempt palely to reflect his incomparable art, but in the hope that he would have found in this motet (to use his own words) "something characteristic".

John Skelton was educated at the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and Louvain. He had a certain success by the quality of his translations of ancient writers, Greek and Roman. In 1488,

he was poet to the Court of Henry VII. Later, Skelton participated in the education of the future Henry VIII. From 1498 onwards, he took orders; then, in 1502, with Henry as heir to the throne, he was appointed rector of Diss, Norfolk, a position he occupied until his death. He was also the King's honest and trusted advisor, both through his poems and by his interventions in religious matters.

In the case of this particular work, the choice of John Skelton's poetry is certainly not insignificant. Vaughan Williams's intelligence and sensibility paid tribute to Parry, one of the most demanding personalities in the history of English music.



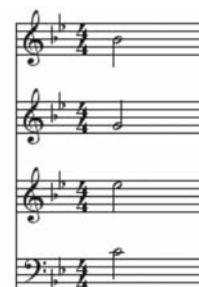
John Skelton, Poet Laureate to King Henry VIII.

Skelton's poetry is of a high symbolic quality appropriate to satisfy nevertheless the harmony between faith and reason according to Parry and Vaughan Williams.

O radiant Luminary of light interminable, Celestial Father, potential God of might. Of heaven and earth, O Lord incomparable, Of all perfections the Essential most Perfite! O Maker, that formed day and night, Whose power comprehendeth every place! Mine heart, my mind, my thought, my whole delight Is, after this life, to see Thy glorious Face, to see Thy glorious Face. Whose magnificence is incomprehensible, All arguments of reason which far doth exceed, Whose Deity doubtless is indivisible, From whom all goodness and virtue doth proceed, Of Thy support all creatures have need; Assist me, grant me thy pleasure in word, thought and deed, And, after this life, to see Thy glorious Face, to see Thy glorious Face, to see Thy glorious Face, to see Thy Face, Thy glorious Face.

Some "characteristic" passages deserve to be emphasised.

The first chord is astonishing:





# A Note about a forthcoming Vaughan Williams Bibliography

Allan W. Atlas  
Paulina Piedzia Colón  
Devora Geller

During the Spring 2012 academic semester, the PhD/DMA Program in Music at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York offered a seminar on Vaughan Williams. More specifically, the seminar, which was directed by Allan Atlas (and enjoyed visits from Rufus Hallmark, Julian Onderdonk, and Alain Frogley), appeared under the rubric “Ralph Vaughan Williams: The ‘Early Years’ (to World War I)”. There were ten students in the class, with a just-right mix of musicologists, performers, and one composer.

For a semester-long project, the eight students who were taking the class for credit (the other two were auditing) had a choice: either they could write a research paper on some aspect of Vaughan Williams’s “early years” or they could participate in team-like fashion and help compile a bibliography of the literature on Vaughan Williams from 1996 to the present day (see below about the starting date). Seven of the eight students chose to work on the bibliography, which, thanks to everyone’s timely contribution, is now well under way. In fact, we hope to complete our work by the end of 2012 or the beginning of 2013, and then make the bibliography available to everyone in the form of a PDF file on the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society website.

Before describing some of the whys and wherefores of the bibliography, the compilers deserve to be cited: Paulina Piedzia Colón, Devora Geller, Danya Katok, Imani Mosley, Austin Shaddock, Maksim Shtrykov, and Serena Wang, with Paulina and Devora having assumed the post-semester task of editing the document.

We chose to begin the bibliography as of 1996 for two reasons: (1) in order to avoid duplicating material that had already appeared in two other bibliographies, Neil Butterworth’s comprehensive (564 entries) *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A guide to research*. Garland Composer Resource Manuals 21 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990) and Graham Muncy and Robin Barber’s more modest *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A bibliography* (1995); and (2) it was in 1996 that Alain Frogley’s *Vaughan Williams studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), a collection of nine essays (see below), turned what had been a gentle stream of new-wave Vaughan Williams scholarship into something of a river, not only in terms of volume and scholarly rigor – the latter especially with respect to analysis and source studies – but also with respect to its place of origin, as the United States became an important source of Vaughan Williams research. And it is with the “scholarly” literature on Vaughan Williams that our own bibliography is concerned.

Readers should also know that the bibliography is selective, and we have omitted items that might be described either as “anecdotal” or very much of the “program-note” kind. As a guideline, we asked ourselves: would this item be required reading for anyone who was going to write a comprehensive book about Vaughan Williams? We think it is a criterion that has served us well.

As work proceeded another condition imposed itself upon the bibliography in terms of just how far we could cast our net in search of entries: the fourteen-week time constraint imposed by the academic calendar. Although we have searched as widely as possible, we relied heavily on *RILM Abstracts*, both for the entries themselves and for the annotations that accompany them. Briefly, *RILM Abstracts* (founded in 1967) has as its mission the indexing and abstracting of musicological literature on a world-wide scale. It is published by the Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale under the auspices of the International Musicological Society and the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres, and resides beneath the “umbrella” of the Barry S. Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York ([www.rilm.org](http://www.rilm.org)). In all, though we are satisfied that we have collected the most important literature on Vaughan Williams from 1996 to 2011, we cannot claim that we have included everything.

The bibliography is organized in nine sections, one of which is itself subdivided into eleven sub-sections:

- A. Publications of Music
- B. Collections of Writings on Music
- C. Bibliographies/Discographies
- D. Collections of Correspondence
- E. Iconography
- F. Biography/Life-and-Works Surveys
- G. Collections of Essays
- H. Analysis/Criticism of Individual Works and Genres
  - a. Folk Song
  - b. Hymnody
  - c. Opera/Other Stage Works
  - d. Choral Music
  - e. Songs
  - f. Symphonies
  - g. Concertos
  - h. Other Orchestral Music
  - i. Band Music
  - j. Film Music
  - k. Chamber Music and Music for Solo Piano
  - l. Contextual/Sociological Studies

Within each section (whether main or “sub”) the entries are organized in chronological order beginning in 1996, with multiple entries for a single year arranged alphabetically by author’s surname. Each entry is followed by a brief annotation that describes the contents of the item and, where applicable, by a list of reviews. If an item seemed to fit equally well in more than one section, it appears in each of the relevant sections with the necessary cross-references.

The four entries that follow offer an idea of the range of entries, and thus what the bibliography will look like. The first item is the main entry for Alain Frogley’s *Vaughan Williams studies*:

## G. Collections of Essays

### 1996

1. *Vaughan Williams studies*. Ed. Alain Frogley. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Includes the following articles (all of which are listed separately in the locations cross-referenced): **Adams**, Byron, “Scripture, church, and culture: Biblical texts in the works of Ralph Vaughan Williams” (I.00); **Cobbe**, Hugh, “Vaughan Williams, Germany, and the German tradition: A view from the letters” (I.00); **Frogley**, Alain, “Constructing Englishness in music: National character and the reception of Ralph Vaughan Williams” (I.00); **Neighbour**, Oliver Wray, “The place of the eighth among Vaughan Williams’s symphonies” (H.f.0); **Onderdonk**, Julian, “Vaughan Williams’s folksong transcriptions: A case of idealization?” (H.a.0); **Pike**, Lionel, “Rhythm in the symphonies: A preliminary investigation” (H.f.0); **Pople**, Anthony, “Vaughan Williams, Tallis, and the phantasy principle” (H.h.0); **Richards**, Jeffrey, “Vaughan Williams and British wartime cinema” (H.j.0); **Vaillancourt**, Michael, “Coming of age: The earliest orchestral music of Ralph Vaughan Williams” (H.h.0); **Whittall**, Arnold, “Symphony in D major: Models and mutations” (H.f.0).

Reviews: **Barfoot**, Terry: *BBC music magazine* 5/10 (1997): 19; **Everett**, William A.: *College music symposium* 38 (1998): 150-52; **Foreman**, Lewis: *Music and letters* 80/4 (1999): 647-49; **Hinnells**, Duncan: *Music and letters* 79/1 (1998): 139-44; **Judkins**, Jennifer: *The British journal of aesthetics* 38/1 (1997): 101-3; **Macan**, Edward: *Current musicology* 63 (1997):102-15; **Mellers**, Wilfrid: *The musical times* 138/1853 (1997): 35-36; **Riessauw**, Anne Marie: *Revue belge de musicologie/Belgische tijdschrift voor muziek-wetenschap* 53 (1999): 259-60; **Thomason**, Geoffrey E.: *Notes* 54/4 (1999): 927-30; **Tuchowski**, Andrzej: *Muzyka [PL]* 44/3 (1999): 140-44.

Note that each author/essay in the collection is followed by a cross-reference that guides the reader to the entry for that particular article. (The many zeros simply indicate that at this point the entries in categories ‘H’ and ‘I’ have yet to be numbered, a task to be carried out only when we are confident that we have in fact collected all the entries for the category in question.)

The second item is the entry for the brilliant article by Anthony Pople that appears in the Frogley collection; note that it includes a cross-reference back to the main entry for the collection as a whole:

## I. Analysis/Criticism of Individual Works and Genres

### 1996

Pople, Anthony. “Vaughan Williams, Tallis, and the phantasy principle.” In *Vaughan Williams studies*. Ed. Alain Frogley. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 47-80 (G.1). Analyzes the

*Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis* and the properties that relate it to the “phantasy” principle, an early twentieth-century piece that breaks away from sonata form and that was cultivated in England; compares the original score of 1910 with the revisions of 1913 and 1919.

The third item shows a typical entry for a single-author book (it appears in category “H.a”).

### 2006

Cubbin, Sue. “*That precious legacy*”: *Ralph Vaughan Williams and Essex folksong*. Chelmsford: Essex Records Office, 2006. Provides a list of the songs that Vaughan Williams collected in Essex early in the twentieth century, as well as transcriptions of thirty of them; describes the Records Office’s holdings that pertain to Vaughan Williams.

Review: **Palmer**, Roy: *English dance and song* 69/2 (2007): 42-43.

Finally, an entry for an article in a journal, one that, given its appearance in a journal that is rather far off the beaten-Vaughan Williams track, could easily escape notice (again, the entry belongs to the category on single works and genres):

### 2011

Atlas, Allan W. “I.J. Belmont’s ‘color-music expressions’ (Pt. I): Vaughan Williams on canvas,” *Music in Art* 36/1-2 (2011): 327-45. Deals with two paintings – *An expression from Vaughan Williams’ Fantasia on a theme of [sic] Thomas Tallis* and *An expression from Vaughan Williams’ “Greensleeves,”* – by the Lithuanian-born American painter Ira J. Belmont (1885-1964), who, as a proponent of synaesthesia, produced at least 120 paintings based on pieces of music; includes a list of the paintings [Author].

Note that the reference to ‘author’ at the end of the annotation means that the author of the item in question either wrote, edited, or at least reviewed what the annotation has to say. In fact, once the bibliography nears completion, we will be sending it out for review to a number of the authors cited and, in the process, inviting them to edit the annotations for their work or compose them anew.

For the record – and with the intention of whetting appetites – we can say that as of the time we write (1 June 2012) the bibliography includes 175 items (not including reviews of books). We should also note that there will be an appendix that lists all the authors represented in the bibliography, with cross-references to the entries by which they are represented; at this point there are 163 authors (now including reviewers of books).

Finally, there is an important advantage to having such a bibliography online. We intend to keep it up to date, adding new entries at the end of each year. There is also a chance that we will eventually work backwards chronologically, as well as expand the coverage by listing papers read at conferences, both those that are and are not devoted exclusively to Vaughan Williams. How valuable would this latter feature be? Consider the following: this year’s meeting of the North American British Music Studies Association at the University of Illinois (27-29 July 2012) includes no fewer than *five* papers on Vaughan Williams, with the time lag from presentation to publication being unpredictable. In the end, we hope that what has become a labor of love will represent a valuable contribution to research on Vaughan Williams. ☺

# Vaughan Williams turns up in Somerset, then returns to Cheyne Walk as Job comes to Albion

Until recently I had been aware of only three busts of Vaughan Williams. The composer, though reluctant, was persuaded to sit for Sir Jacob Epstein (1950) and David McFall (1956). Bronze casts of both busts are in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Copies of the Epstein are on display at The Barbican Centre, London and the City Art Gallery, Southampton. The McFall is on display in the Royal Festival Hall and the British Library, London.

Rolf Jordan, a founder member of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, created a small bust of the composer modelled from photographs. This was sold to members in a limited edition.

I found another bust of the composer on eBay and will leave readers to make their own judgment of it from the pictures I have taken. It is a plaster cast, 12cm tall and quite heavy at 1.4kg. The artist's signature on the back is P. Zadwill, but I know nothing more of him or her.

I would be delighted to hear from any member who has any knowledge of the sculptor.

*Robin Barber*



The bust purchased by Robin Barber on eBay

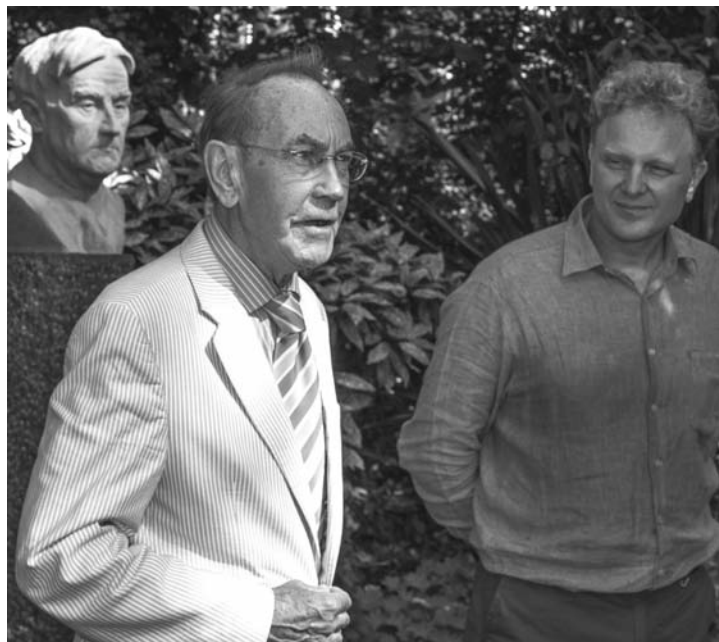
Wednesday, 5 September 2012 was a big day for the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society. It saw the unveiling of a statue of the composer in the morning, and the launch of a new CD of his music in the evening. Both events were well attended by members and others, and the sun shone, literally and figuratively, on our activities.

The statue is in fact a bust of the composer on a plinth – it stands in Chelsea Embankment Gardens, close to the southern end of Flood Street, a stone's throw from Vaughan Williams's former home at 13, Cheyne Walk. It is visible from a car travelling along the Embankment, but it is well worth a proper visit!

This fine memorial is the brain-child, not to say the long-term dream, of Peter Bull, who is one of that diminishing number of people who met Vaughan Williams. Peter had an ambition to be a sculptor himself, and wrote to the famous composer asking for permission to "do his head". The response was an invitation to tea at Hanover Terrace, and a long discussion about music. There was no other outcome to the meeting, however, and fifty years elapsed before Peter returned to the idea, and began trying to persuade the local council and other relevant bodies to grant approval for a statue near Cheyne Walk. There was plenty of initial resistance to the concept, but eventually, Peter was able to commission the sculptor, Marcus Cornish, who is perhaps best known for his life-size bronze statue of Paddington Bear, which is to be found in the station of that name.

So it was that on a fine September morning, an audience of more than fifty gathered to pay tribute to Peter Bull for his tenacity and vision. The Society was represented by most of its officers and the RVW Trust by Lord Armstrong and Nicholas Williams. The statue was unveiled by John Gilhooly, the Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society and Director of the Wigmore Hall, and other distinguished guests included Julian Lloyd Webber, Anthony Payne and David Lloyd-Jones. The Chelsea Society and Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council were also well represented.

Although Peter Bull lives nearby, and has promised to keep an eye on the statue, the officers would be grateful if any members of



**Top row, left to right: Vice-Chairman Simon Coombs with Vaughan Williams, Peter Bull with sculptor Marcus Cornish  
Bottom row, left to right: Lewis Foreman with Anthony Payne, Iain Burnside, Em Marshall-Luck, Donald McCleod and Stephen Connock**

the Society who visit the area would report on the condition of the bust and plinth, so that any maintenance needed can be carried out swiftly.

That same evening saw another memorable event, this time at the Royal College of Music, where fifty members and friends gathered to assist in the launch of the latest CD from Albion Records. *The Sons of the Morning* (ALBCD 015) is a recording of music for solo piano, played by Iain Burnside. This is Iain's first solo disc, although he has featured as accompanist on three previous Albion CD's. Stephen Connock, in welcoming the audience, revealed that it had taken five bottles of wine to persuade Iain to make a solo disc. Some of us wondered whether this might be an exaggeration, but others suspected an under-estimate!

The programme centres around the first recording of *Job, A Masque for Dancing* in the piano arrangement by Vally Lasker. This was made originally as an aid for rehearsals of the ballet in 1931, but it now emerges as a significant work in its own right. The CD also features *The Lake in the Mountains* and the *Hymn Tune Prelude on 'Song 13'* by Orlando Gibbons, and is rounded off by *Five Preludes*

and *Chorale Prelude on 'Rockingham'* by Ivor Gurney, a valuable addition to Gurney's much more restricted discography.

The evening featured an interview of Iain Burnside by Donald Macleod, who presents Composer of the Week on BBC Radio 3. They discussed the music and the pianist's approach to it, and this was followed by questions from the audience, led by Trustee John Treadway. More glasses of wine were then consumed by the attendees, who did not appear to mind missing *Nixon in China* at the Prom just across the road!

The following day the mail order company, Europadisc, announced that *The Sons of the Morning* was its CD of the week; sales are already looking promising.

5 September was a very special day for Peter Bull, and also for the Society. Thanks to the excellent photographs taken by John Francis, our Treasurer, all members can now share the spirit of these two enjoyable events.

*Simon Coombs*

# Music you might like

## Simon Coombs

How many composers are there whose names begin with the letter A? I went to my own database and found twenty-eight, including that medieval superstar, Anon. Then, however, I tried the database of composers recorded by Naxos, and came away with a list of 301 names. So the following is a personal choice, with the thought in mind that any likeness, however remote, to the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams is a good basis for the selection.

So the likes of Albinoni (*Adagio*), Allegri (*Miserere*) and Arne (*Rule Britannia*) get an honourable mention, but don't figure in the top ten. Similarly, Adams, Aho, Aaltoila, Antheil and Arriaga don't make it onto the list – their music doesn't stick in my mind after I've listened to it.

The top ten contains nine European composers and one American – let's start with him. Leroy Anderson studied with Georges Enescu and Walter Piston and then went on to write some of the best light music of the last century. Start with his *Sleigh Ride* performed by the Eastman-Rochester Pops Orchestra under Frederick Fennell on Mercury 432 013-2 and enjoy a selection of hummable tunes.

The first British composer in the list is John Ansell, whose lively overtures *The Windjammers* and *Plymouth Hoe* appear on a disc from Somm Records with Elgar's *Fringes of the Fleet*. SOMMCD 243 is worth a listen for several reasons, and gets Ansell a place in the list ahead of Richard Arnell and Sir Thomas Armstrong, just for being cheerful.

Eyvind Alnaes was a Norwegian composer, who wrote some fine songs, and also two symphonies. Each has a scherzo which combines energy with charm – you can find them on Sterling CDS 1084-2. Alnaes' Piano Concerto is in the Hyperion Romantic Piano Concerto series (No 42). His other claim to fame is that he was born in 1872.

Anton Arensky was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov and a teacher of Rachmaninov. His own music is over-shadowed by theirs, but has plenty of Slavic intensity. Try his Piano Trios on Chandos 10184X (bargain price), played by the Borodin Trio. Arensky is another composer who wrote a Piano Concerto recorded by Hyperion (No 4 in the RPC series).

The second English composer in the list is William Alwyn, who some believe is the best symphonist this country produced in the second half of the last century. Of the five symphonies he wrote, the most striking is No 4 – try the third movement on Chandos 8902, with the late, great Richard Hickox conducting the London Symphony Orchestra.

Isaac Albeniz is famous principally for his piano work, *Iberia*. His most remarkable work, however, is his opera, *Merlin*, which was intended to be the first of a trilogy based on the *Morte d'Arthur* of Thomas Malory. The libretto is appalling, but the music is dramatic and often inspired. Try the last scene of Act 1, on Decca 467 096-2.

Hugo Alfvén is another composer born in 1872. He wrote five symphonies and the well-known Swedish Rhapsodies, but he was at his most tuneful in lighter music. On BIS CD-455, you find the atmospheric Third Rhapsody, the Third Symphony and, best of all, the ballet suite, *The Prodigal Son*, written when he was a youthful eighty-five, and based on folk tunes. He also wrote film music – for those who like Grieg, the suite *Synnove of Solbakken* on Naxos 8.557828 will be a delightful discovery.

Malcolm Arnold will not be new to any reader of the Journal, of course, but he could not be left out of this list. His symphonies have many admirers, but perhaps his most likeable music is in a lighter vein. My personal favourites are on Chandos 8867, especially the third and fourth of the first set of *English Dances* and the beautiful "Sarabande" from the ballet *Solitaire*.

Richard Addinsell is justly famous for his *Warsaw Concerto* from the film *Dangerous Moonlight*. If you buy it on Chandos 10046, however, you will find still more beautiful pieces, particularly the Finale from *Goodbye, Mr Chips*, the Overture *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and my particular choice, the theme from *The Black Rose*, which is barely audible in the 1950 film, but which will stop you in your tracks, I promise.



Kurt Atterberg

Kurt Atterberg would not be top of many people's list, I suppose, but he is so badly under-rated that I put him at the top of mine to make a point! He wrote a series of well-constructed and elegantly attractive symphonies which should be better known than they are. How many times have you heard Atterberg at the Proms? The answer is not once, because not a single note of his has ever been played there. Try his Third and Fourth Symphonies, on the CPO label, (999 640-2 and 999 639-2) and tell me they don't belong in your collection!

There are 576 composers beginning with B on that Naxos list. Short-listing has begun! 🐾

# A Century On *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*

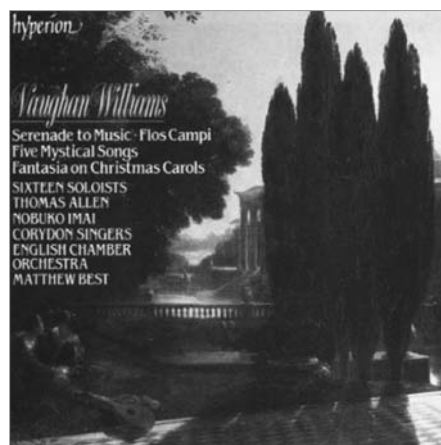
Simon Coombs

By 1912, Vaughan Williams had become a regular contributor to the Three Choirs Festival, which that year was held in Hereford. Appropriately, the new work, *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, which was given its first performance on 12 September in the Cathedral, was based on two carols from Herefordshire, as well as others from Somerset and Sussex. There are also hints of “The First Nowell”, “The Virgin Unspotted”, and “The Wassail Bough”. Of the two Herefordshire carols, “The Truth Sent From Above” is now available on Albion Records (ALBCD13), sung by the baritone Derek Welton, accompanied by Iain Burnside.

At the first performance, the soloist was Campbell McInnes, who had also given the premieres of the *Sea Symphony* (1910) and the *Five Mystical Songs* (1912). The Festival Chorus and the London Symphony Orchestra were conducted by the composer, who also directed the first London performance in March 1913 at the Queen’s Hall.

This beautiful work has never been the subject of a full article in the Journal, but a trawl of the Index on our excellent website reveals some interesting facts. Among those who have sung the *Fantasia* are Benjamin Britten (as a schoolboy under the composer’s baton), our Treasurer, John Francis, as an alto whose voice refused to break, and our Membership Officer, David Betts, with the Oxford Bach Choir. The present writer occasionally hums parts of it in the bath!

Not surprisingly, currently available versions of the *Fantasia* come from Hyperion, Chandos, EMI and Naxos. Sir Thomas Allen’s recording with the Corydon Singers and the English Chamber Orchestra under Matthew Best is outstanding, especially considering its coupling with *Serenade to Music*, *Five*



*Mystical Songs* and *Flos Campi*. Chandos have Roderick Williams with the London Sinfonia Chorus and Orchestra conducted by the late Richard Hickox, coupled with two less familiar works, *The First Nowell* and *On Christmas Night*. EMI have John Barrow and the Guildford Cathedral Choir under Barry Rose – this and the Hickox use the version for organ and strings. Finally, Naxos have Stephen Gadd as baritone soloist, again with the Guildford Cathedral Choir and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra directed by Hilary Davan Wetton.

As always, the choice for anyone who doesn’t have a recording of this magical work might have to depend upon couplings. Naxos offer *Hodie*, the EMI now comes in a comprehensive box-set, and the other two couplings are as described above. The Chandos is a lovely disc, but my Desert Island would not be complete without Sir Thomas.

## Fancy having *The Solent* on CD?

You can help make it happen.

Albion Records is planning a very exciting disc of rare Vaughan Williams. The disc will include *The Solent* from 1902/3 along with *Burley Heath* (1903), *Harnham Down* (1904), the Incidental Music to *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1951) and the *Four Hymns*, in the version for tenor and strings (1914). Wow!

All are world premiere recordings. *The Solent* contains a haunting melody that Vaughan Williams used in both his *Sea Symphony* and in the Ninth Symphony. It clearly had a special, almost mystical, meaning for the composer.

Albion has raised some funds with the very kind help of the Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust, but we need another £3,000 to enable us to complete the recording. Paul Daniel will conduct the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and we are keen to have the new CD in the shops by Christmas 2013.

Can you help realise this dream recording? If so, please send an expression of interest to Stephen Connock at albionslc@aol.com. We are aiming for £100 per member (gift aided from UK members if possible) and sponsors will receive a copy of the CD and your name in the booklet. Dedications to another person are possible.

I look forward to hearing from you

Stephen Connock

# The Chairman Reports

## Stainer & Bell

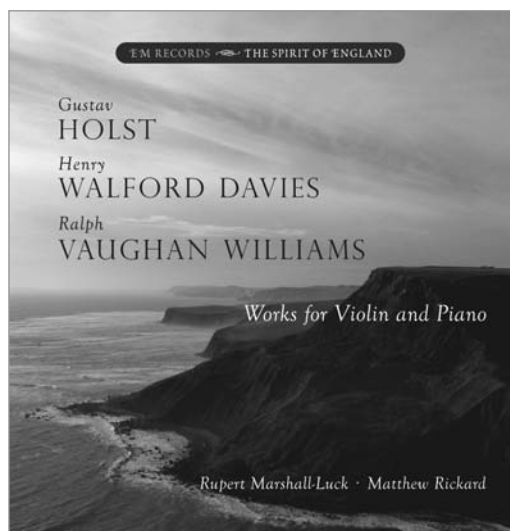
Two noteworthy new publications have been issued by Stainer & Bell. To mark the Jubilee year, the ten short works that comprise *A Garland for the Queen*, commissioned by an enlightened Arts Council for the Queen's Coronation in 1953, have been reissued in the original single-volume format after years of being unavailable as a complete edition. As well as Vaughan Williams's *Silence and Music*, the set of part-songs includes works by Finzi, Howells, Bliss, Bax and Ireland, amongst others. In this handsome reissued edition we also find printed separately from the music the words of each of the poems set by the composers – a nice touch. At £9.95, this must surely be warmly welcomed.



The second Stainer & Bell issue to note is that of a new edition of the 12 Traditional Carols for unaccompanied, mixed chorus or voice(s) and piano, collected and arranged by E.M. Leather and Vaughan Williams, and edited by Roy Palmer. Attractively presented, this publication includes an extensive preface setting the carols in their historical context, informative and detailed notes on each carol, as well as a bibliography. The price is £7.50.

## English Music Festival publications

Members of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society may be interested to hear that the sixth release on EM Records (the recording arm of the English Music Festival) couples Vaughan Williams's intense and powerful Violin Sonata with the world premiere recordings of Holst's Five Pieces and Walford Davies's Sonata no.1 in E flat major. These works are performed by Rupert Marshall-Luck and Matthew Rickard, whose previous discs for EM Records received glowing critical acclaim in the music press. This disc has also been warmly welcomed, with Daniel Jaffe awarding it a double four-star rating in the *BBC Music Magazine*.



EM Records is offering copies of this disc exclusively to Vaughan Williams Society members at a discounted price of £10 (normal price £14.99). To take advantage of this offer please send a cheque for £12.50 (£10 plus £2.50 p&p) to Em Marshall-Luck (see address on back page) quoting "RVW Society Offer".



EM Publishing, the newly established publishing arm of the English Music Festival, has issued a *Musical Map of the British Isles*. This striking piece of artwork features the landmasses of Great Britain and Ireland formed out of composers' names in beautiful and colourful calligraphy, and of course prominently includes Vaughan Williams. Designed by Geoff Sawers, whose *Literary Map* has sold thousands of copies, and compiled by Em Marshall-Luck, it would make a fitting addition to any music enthusiast's home, and would be a focus for lively discussion and exciting discovery. It is supplied unframed and measures 420mm by 594mm. It may be obtained, at a cost of £10.00 (plus £5 p&p), from [www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk](http://www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk) or by post from Em Marshall-Luck, enclosing a cheque for £15.00, made payable to EMF Endeavours.

# From the Publicity Officer

## THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Perhaps the major Vaughan Williams event of the year is the new production of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at the English National Opera in November. This production is mounted in association with The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust and is supported by the Society, ENO's English Opera Group and the Friends of ENO. The director is Yoshi Oida, and the choreographer Carolyn Choa. The cast is headed by Roland Wood as Pilgrim and John Bunyan. The opera will be conducted by Martyn Brabbins. Performance dates are 5, 9, 16, 20, 22, 28 November at 7.30pm, and 24 November at 6.30pm.

In celebration of this important new production, the Society would like to invite those members attending the final performance on 28 November to meet together in the Coliseum Room for drinks from 6.30pm, and during the interval. Space is limited, so places will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis. Please email me if you would like to come. Alternatively, write to the Treasurer: John Francis (see back page for addresses).

## RECENT CONCERTS

Works by Vaughan Williams have included Mark Bebbington performing the premiere of the *Fantasia* for Piano and Orchestra, and Iain Burnside performing the piano arrangement of *Job*, both at the English Music Festival in Dorchester Abbey.

The all-Vaughan Williams Prom featuring symphonies 4, 5 and 6 with Andrew Manze and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra was well received by a packed and concentrated audience at the Royal Albert Hall.

At the Three Choirs Festival the Society hosted a talk about the *Sea Symphony*, given by Rolf Jordan prior to the evening performance of the work. Rolf's talk attracted around a hundred guests. Those unable to be present can read a transcript elsewhere in this edition of the Journal.

The Society hosted a launch for the new Albion Records recording of Vaughan Williams and Gurney piano music which was held at the Royal College of Music on 5 September. Joining Society members and guests were pianist Iain Burn-

side who was interviewed by BBC Radio 3 presenter, Donald Macleod.

## STUDY SCORE

*A Cambridge Mass* is now available from Stainer & Bell.

New and corrected editions of the following works are newly available from Oxford University Press:

*Sinfonia Antartica*

*Bucolic Suite*

*Fantasia* for piano and orchestra

*Serenade* in A minor (1898)

Symphony No. 6

And to come: Concerto for Tuba

## RECENT CD RELEASE

From Dutton Vocalion (reviewed in this issue):

Vaughan Williams: Early and Late Works – World Premiere Recordings CDLX 7289

*Folk Songs of the Four Seasons* – Suite (1949) edited by Roy Douglas (1952); *Bucolic Suite* (1900 rev. 1901) edited from the manuscript by Julian Rushton (2011); *Dark Pastoral* for cello & orchestra (1942-43) completed and orchestrated by David Matthews; *Serenade* in A minor (1898) edited from the manuscript by Julian Rushton.

Guy Johnston (cello), Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Martin Yates (conductor).

World premiere recordings.

*The Oboe Concerto* features at the 10th International Oboe Competition of Japan 2012 in Karuizawa.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Join RVW Society members and enthusiasts on Facebook and Twitter where there is always an interesting topic of conversation.

## RESIDENTIAL COURSE

The Sun Moves Always West Friday 9 – Sunday 11 November, Dewsall Court, Callow, Hereford HR2 8DA

A weekend that will focus on the lives and work of British composers who were touched by the Great War. Vaughan Williams will naturally feature prominently. The weekend will be led by Stephen Johnson, with Professor John Cox, Stuart Jackson, Ben Hancox and Anna Tillbrook. Dewsall Court is a remote country house hotel, not far south of Hereford, with a chapel in the grounds

where the evening concert on the Saturday will be given. Delegates can attend either as residents, with a two-night package (£340/£375), or as non-residents (£135).

The Musical Brain, Arts, Science and the Mind. Enquiries and booking: tel: 01432 276 724, [www.themusicalbrain.org](http://www.themusicalbrain.org), email: [pughmj@btinternet.com](mailto:pughmj@btinternet.com).

## FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

23 OCTOBER

**Wigmore Hall, London**

*Quintet in D*

Endymion

25 OCTOBER

**City Halls, Candleriggs, Glasgow**

*A Pastoral Symphony*

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/

Andrew Manze

(also at Perth Concert Hall, 26 October)

27 OCTOBER

**Wigmore Hall, London**

*On Wenlock Edge*

John Mark Ainsley, tenor

Nash Ensemble

27 OCTOBER

**St Michael and All Angels**

**Church, Chiswick, London**

*Songs of Travel*

Philip Lancaster, baritone; Andrew

Plant, piano

An English Music Festival concert

28 OCTOBER

**Meany Hall, University of**

**Washington, Seattle**

*Toccata Marziale, 49th Parallel:*

*Prelude, Old King Cole*

Seattle Philharmonic/Adam Stern

9 NOVEMBER

**Ulster Hall**

*Fantasia on a theme by Thomas*

*Tallis*

Ulster Orchestra/James MacMillan

10 NOVEMBER

**Hoylelake Chapel**

*Fantasia on a theme by Thomas*

*Tallis, The House of Life*

(new orchestral version by Alexander Thomas)

Louis Hurst, baritone

Wirral Symphony Orchestra

15 NOVEMBER

**Palais des Beaux-Arts, Henri le**

**Boeuf Concert Hall, Brussels**

*A London Symphony*

Royal Flemish Philharmonic

Orchestra/Martyn Brabbins

17 NOVEMBER

**Liverpool Philharmonic Hall**

*A London Symphony*

German, Delius, Elgar

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Or-

chestra /John Wilson

17 NOVEMBER

**Langley Park School for Boys,**

**Beckenham**

*A London Symphony*

Bromley Symphony Orchestra/

Adrian Brown

21 NOVEMBER

**Tonhalle, Zürich**

*Fantasia on a theme by Thomas*

*Tallis*

Zürich Chamber Orchestra /Sir

Roger Norrington

29 NOVEMBER

**Cadogan Hall, London**

*Fantasia on a theme by Thomas*

*Tallis*

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/

Rory Macdonald

9 DECEMBER

**Philharmonie, Berlin**

*A London Symphony*

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester,

Berlin/Sir Roger Norrington

20 JANUARY 2013

**Royal Festival Hall, London**

*Fantasia on a theme by Thomas*

*Tallis*

Philharmonia Orchestra /

John Wilson

## ADVANCE NOTICE

**Leith Hill Musical Festival 2013**

The festival will feature works by founding conductor, Ralph Vaughan Williams at all three of the main Festival concerts. The opening concert on 11 April will see a performance of *The New Commonwealth*, originally the Prelude from the music for the film *49th Parallel*. This will be only its second outing at the Festival. To mark the Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, the *Festival Te Deum* will be performed on Friday 12th April. And *Linden Lea* will be performed by the ensembles of Division 2 on the final night of the Festival.

Booking opens to Friends & Patrons on 10th November 2012 and for general sale on 24th November. ([www.lhmf.co.uk](http://www.lhmf.co.uk) for more information.)

*Karen Fletcher*

# Letters

## RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS COMPLETE EDITION?

I was very interested to read the Vice-Chairman's column in the June 2012 issue, where members were invited to express their view on the question of how many of Vaughan Williams's works should be recorded.

On reputation, it seems to me a key issue is how recordings of "lesser" works are released. The risk to reputation would come if a work was billed as an undiscovered masterpiece, when in fact it did not stand up to this claim. Vaughan Williams's reputation is secure on the basis of his most successful mature works. The important thing would be to package "minor" works in an appropriate way. Other composers have had their complete works recorded, so this challenge has been met before.

One alternative to commercial recording is non-commercial release. For example, some music college students might be brought together to make a recording to be posted on YouTube. There would still be some cost, of course, and that probably would have to be met from charitable sources. It might provide an interesting alternative now that "free to access" online platforms for releasing recordings are well established. On the other hand a CD and MP3 commercial release might generate greater interest and so reach a wider audience.

In addition to recordings, I would also highlight the importance of publishing scores, and I think it is remarkable how many Vaughan Williams scores have been published in the last ten years or so. I still hope that one day we might see a published study score of the original version of *A London Symphony*.

Of course the easy bit is making suggestions. The difficult bit is doing it and the accumulated achievements of the Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust, the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, Albion Records and their numerous supporters, are very significant indeed.

**David Manning**

*London, UK*

## MORE...

As early as Journal No. 2 (January 1995), under the heading "Embarrassingly feeble...", Roy Douglas strongly opposed any notion of a complete recorded edition of Vaughan Williams's music. "I feel strongly," he wrote, "that it would be unkind to RVW, and possibly damaging to his reputation, to revive works which he himself had obviously decided to consign to oblivion because of their amateurishness." I respectfully disagree. Although we may lament the fact that performances of this great man's music are still woefully sparse beyond – and even to some extent within – the English-speaking world, only a few lingering remnants of, say, the Darmstadt School would reject the fact that, more than a half century after his death, Vaughan Williams remains firmly ensconced as one of the outstanding composers of the first half of the last century. If anything, his reputation steadily continues to grow. Comparisons with other composers are tricky, but to choose just one major genre, it is arguable that the nine symphonies comprise one of the most remarkable

symphonic cycles of their time, at least on a par with the Sibelius and Shostakovich cycles, even, one might dare suggest, superior to them: more varied and heterogeneous than that of the Finn, more consistent in quality than that of the Russian.

Assuming, then, that there is general agreement concerning Vaughan Williams's stature as a major composer, I find it difficult to accept the argument that publications and recordings of his juvenilia or other works considered unworthy by him or others could damage a reputation so firmly established. Now mine might be a minority opinion, since I speak as a music historian, but as an historian I am always curious to try to untangle and identify the various strands of a composer's musical roots and in the end wish to hear every scrap of music, because each scrap sheds a tiny ray of light on the bigger picture. Such is the mystery of "genius" (if I am allowed to use such a term in this postmodernist climate) that we are anxious to examine every chip from the workbench in an attempt to unravel the enigma. I would argue that releasing Vaughan Williams's "banished" works to an unsuspecting world, far from undermining his reputation, would in fact enhance it. That many of these rejected works are, I would assume from various accounts I have read, clumsy, amateurish, and probably eminently forgettable, actually places the miraculous flowering of "our" composer's muse in the early years of the last century in an even more dazzling light as we marvel at the long and uneven journey from a childish four-bar little piece from 1878 by "Mr R. Williams" to *In the Fen Country*, *Songs of Travel*, and of course the iconic "Tallis Fantasia", by way of such works as the recently recorded *Heroic Elegy and Triumphal Epilogue*, the *Fantasia* for piano and orchestra, *Willow-Wood*, and the Piano Quintet of 1903/05, not to speak of a number of endearing early songs. Let us not forget that the C minor Quintet, with its broad Brahmsian gestures, was officially withdrawn by the composer; is there a single member of our Society who does not revel in the fine performance of it by the Nash Ensemble? To be sure, not all the works awaiting resurrection will be up to that standard; but we are still curious. We need to remind ourselves that even the mighty Beethoven had a few questionable outings from time to time. A reputation at risk of being tarnished? I think not. It is far too late for that.

**Dr. Alan Gillmor**

*Professor Emeritus, Music Program,  
School for Studies in Art and Culture,  
Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada*

## MORE...

I have found the recordings of early works highly illuminating, revealing, as they do, a composer who already had a solid technique (and that in itself is worth establishing, as a riposte to some of his critics) and a vivid imagination; that they still show influences that Vaughan Williams was later to grow away from is forgivable, and instructive in its own way. Secondly, I have no fear that recordings of inferior works would harm a reputation which is surely now secured, as long as the presentation of those works is in an appropriate context. For example, I cannot say that *Flourish for a Coronation* is a work that I regard as anything approaching a masterpiece, but, taken as an occasional work, one

can appreciate its fitness for that occasion, in the same light as the welcome odes by Purcell or Britten, say.

On the other hand, the recording of unfinished works seems an unnecessary and rather unfulfilling exercise, unless such fragments contain themes reused in completed pieces, or relate to them in other ways, and are presented along with those works to give them additional context. I cannot see this having much future as a commercial enterprise, however. The attempted completion of such works is a very dangerous exercise: Anthony Payne's work on Elgar's Third Symphony is, to me at least, a great success, but he in no way claims to have arrived at the same conclusions as Elgar himself would have done. Recent completions of Elgar's Piano Concerto and Moeran's Second Symphony have convinced me far less, though I stress that this is a personal reaction, not intended as a reflection on the efforts of those involved in the reconstructions. To take a prime example, who would not wish that Vaughan Williams had completed his Cello Concerto, and the amount of material he left is tantalisingly large. But if even Roy Douglas, who must know the processes of Vaughan Williams as a composer almost as well as the composer himself, says that the task is impossible, then surely impossible it must be. Fortunately David Matthews has allowed us to hear one significant fragment as the starting point for his own *Dark Pastoral*, but it would seem prudent that is as far as one should go.

Recordings are undoubtedly a vital tool in any attempt to bring a composer's work before a wider audience. To take one of Vaughan Williams's contemporaries, if the only means of hearing the music of Havergal Brian was through concert performance, virtually none of his works would be known at all. I am all for promoting live performance, but among Vaughan Williams's output there are works which are unlikely to appear in concert with any frequency, and it would be a shame if they were not available in some form to those who wish to hear them.

**Charles Paterson**

*Asfordby, Leicestershire*

**MORE...**

As the Vice-Chairman points out, achieving the objective of recording every one of Vaughan Williams's works will depend on finance being available. As far as this Society is concerned, I believe the response to Albion's appeals for contributions toward recording projects has been rather disappointing considering that we have about 1000 members. Putting it bluntly, if there's no money the objective will never be achieved.

Although the recent recordings of unpublished and early works show that many of these are not in the composer's mature style, they have shown how this style developed and as such are valuable. In general I have enjoyed them all (perhaps the Piano *Fantasia* being the one I like the least) and they have all been well worth recording. The composer's reputation has not been damaged one iota. And it's worth while remembering that there are about fifty *published* works yet to be recorded. If they were published then someone somewhere must have believed them to have musical merit. But I would draw the line at any attempt to complete the Cello Concerto or *Thomas the Rhymer*.

Mention was made of the reputation of Sibelius. I have heard but few of his earliest works, but have to admit that they do not

measure up to his later compositions, but I cannot imagine that his reputation has been damaged. Many of Mozart's early works, although written by a child prodigy, are clearly inferior to later masterpieces. Mozart's reputation remains intact.

As far as Elgar's Third is concerned, Anthony Payne did such a good job on this that I have to admit to its being my favourite Elgar symphony.

I look forward to the unearthing of further Vaughan Williams treasures. Since hearing *A Cambridge Mass* live last October I have been very disappointed that it still has yet to appear on CD.

**Michael J. Gainsford**

*Burbage, Leicestershire, UK*

**MORE...**

I believe BIS provides us with a good model: the release of Sibelius's lesser works or first thoughts has not damaged his reputation. Why would it?

To presume that the finest work just happens in any sphere of life is clearly not the case. If we consider the work of a painter, we generally have the opportunity to see and study works from all periods of his life, some good, some ordinary and some outstanding, but the early works and the lesser works help us understand and appreciate those of outstanding merit even more.

We have had the opportunity to hear early works of Vaughan Williams and I hope that we will in due course have the opportunity to hear and study more, even those works which he set to one side incomplete, just as we are able to do in other spheres of the arts.

Recently I proposed the performance of the "Heroic Elegy" at a concert at St Mary's Church, Monkseaton by the New Tyneside Orchestra under Stephen Pettitt. The work was unknown to the orchestra and the audience but appreciated by both. Without the work of the Society and others in publishing and recording this and other early works they would languish in an archive unknown and unheard.

I would like to see the Society's objective to be the recording of every one of Vaughan Williams's works, and to apply funds accordingly.

**David Lax**

*Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, UK*

**MORE...**

Besides Vaughan Williams and much other classical music, I am a jazz fan and have several hundred CDs cluttering the house as I look for the perfect exponent of a particular instrument or form of jazz. I don't believe this process is ever really successful, and critics and amateur listeners alike find it is the *crème de la crème* amongst recordings and compositions that rise to the surface and bring the most most pleasure.

So while applauding labels such as Naxos for recording some unfamiliar pieces, I would personally prefer to allocate limited funds to records that will gain higher sales/popularity. I remember

for instance, a very fine CD by Ian Bostridge titled *The English Songbook*. Now could anyone persuade Ian to record a selection exclusively of Vaughan Williams songs ?

For those closer to completist ambitions, maybe there could be an online database of competent MP3 recordings made available for a modest subscription?

**Chris Horne**

*Caterham, Surrey, UK*

#### **MORE...**

Unfinished works and fragments would need a "fair copy" for performance. Presumably these would be transcribed using a computer programme. (Does anyone do it otherwise nowadays?) For those of us unable to hear a work by reading the score, would a midi version be of value? Howls of derision and screams of protest are already building at the back of my brain!

**Andy Bewick**

*Holmfirth, West Yorkshire, UK*

#### **EASY TO ADMIRE, DIFFICULT TO LOVE**

I was pleased to read Michael Gainsford's letter saying that his previous indifference to the *Sinfonia Antartica* has been challenged by a concert performance. I have always considered this as one of Vaughan Williams's greatest works, having known it since buying the Decca Boult performance on an Eclipse LP in the early 1970s, and this view was reinforced by hearing it live, first with Boult again conducting, and then Haitink, while he was recording the symphony cycle.

I like to think of the *Scott of the Antarctic* film score, marvellous as it is, as being a dry run for the full symphony, rather like the "satellite" works, as Michael Kennedy calls some lesser works written while Vaughan Williams was building up for a major composition, and I do not subscribe to the view expressed by some Vaughan Williams admirers that the symphony lacks

symphonic cohesion and is too episodic. I think that the Haitink performance in the concert hall, which I still have on tape, and presumably reproduced in the studio, brought out the symphonic unity more than any other performance I have heard, although Boult's Decca performance is perhaps the most dramatic and sonically exciting.

However, I now have to confess to my own indifference to a much admired Vaughan Williams work, the *Sea Symphony*, which I find rather overblown, although admittedly exciting, and stylistically inconsistent, with parts sounding like a mid-Victorian oratorio, rather than the more familiar Vaughan Williams that appears in the parts which were presumably written after his visit to Ravel. I can understand why it is in the repertoire of the major choirs, but for me, it is the weakest of the nine, and the one that I listen to the least.

Music is, of course, very much a matter of personal taste. I remember my astonishment when Stephen Connock wrote some years ago that the *Mass in G minor*, one of the most sublime religious works I have ever heard, even if composed by an agnostic, did nothing for him.

I wonder what major Vaughan Williams works other members of the Society find difficult to admire?

**Nigel Blore**

*Billericay, Essex, UK*

#### **A RECURRENT COMPLAINT**

As I write, the Leeds orchestral programmes for 2012/13 have just been announced. Sadly there is only one Vaughan Williams work being performed. It is the *Tallis Fantasia*, to be given on Saturday 6 October by the St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra. Isn't it sad that the many British orchestras playing through the season are ignoring the composer's work?

**Cecil Bloom**

*Leeds, UK*



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# Concert Reviews

## THREE SYMPHONIES AT THE PROMS

16 August was a great occasion, when Andrew Manze brought the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to the Proms to play symphonies 4, 5 and 6 in succession. Many members were present, and the Journal will no doubt be full of enthusiastic reviews. I had a seat in the choir, with a great view of the conductor and the whole orchestra, and excellent (if somewhat percussive) sound. The early reviews concentrated on the speed with which the three symphonies were taken; while I don't generally worry much about that kind of thing, I thought comparisons might be interesting on this occasion, so I made a list of all the Fourths, Fifths and Sixths in my small collection and compiled a table. This is a mixture of live recordings and CDs, and it includes not only the recent Promenade concert, but also Andrew Manze's live broadcasts from Glasgow on Radio 3 earlier this year. The differences are startling.

In the table, timings are in minutes and decimal minutes, since driving Excel in base 60 has its limitations, and you should note that the live broadcasts are trimmed of audience noise between movements and of applause whenever possible, so comparisons with CDs are fairly valid.

The first thing you notice is that Manze has speeded up to a remarkable extent (more than 7% in total) on coming south; perhaps this was an effect of the Olympics, then just concluded. So, a gold medal for Scotland? Not quite! Let's start with the Fourth: Manze's performance is slower than Stokowski's early 1940s recording, but claims a clear silver for the Prom. That's just a bit quicker than the Berglund recording which recently took Radio 3's "Building a Library" crown. In Scotland, he was slower than Haitink, Handley and Hickox, but faster than both Previn and the slowest, Boult's 1959 Decca LPO recording.

For the Fifth, there's a bigger gap between Max and Min. Again, in Glasgow, Manze was over forty minutes, which is above average. Astonishingly, Boult has now moved from slowest to quickest, leaving Manze's Prom taking silver again.

I have a wonderful memory of seeing Boult conduct the Sixth Symphony, but am unable to say whether this was Prom 26 on 16 August 1972 (precisely forty years earlier, and it would be nice to think that this influenced this year's programming) or Prom 52 on 12 September 1973, since Boult conducted the Sixth on both occasions. But it was electrifying then and so it was again under Manze; the years seemed to roll back as the scherzo built up to its terrifying climax.

But was the music so very similar? Probably not. Boult's 1949 reading with the LSO was a bit quicker than the average, but ten years later, he made the slowest recording that I have. In Scotland, Manze was on the slow side, but a lot quicker at the Prom. He



Andrew Manze conducting the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at this year's BBC Proms

was faster than Previn's powerful recording, but not as quick as the gold medallist in this category, Andrew Davis's highly thought of recording with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. So it's silver for the third time, and the bronze goes to Alan Rowlands and Adrian Sims playing two pianos on our own Albion label.

The good news is that none of this matters a jot. In Andrew Manze we have a great conductor with a pretty good Team GB championing the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Roll on the Great British Music Festival!

*John Francis*

	4	5	6
Berglund	31.18		36.45
Boult, LPO	34.33	37.07	38.68
Boult, LSO			34.15
Davis		39.12	32.17
Gibson		39.55	
Haitink	32.98	43.13	33.15
Handley	31.55	39.27	33.63
Hickox	31.87	39.68	
Manze, Prom	30.82	37.92	32.52
Manze, Scotland	33.13	40.05	35.87
Menuhin		39.13	
Previn	34.03	42.05	34.48
Rowlands & Sims			32.75
Stokowski	30.08		
<b>Average</b>	<b>32.22</b>	<b>39.70</b>	<b>34.39</b>
<b>Max</b>	<b>34.33</b>	<b>43.13</b>	<b>38.68</b>
<b>Min</b>	<b>30.08</b>	<b>37.07</b>	<b>32.17</b>

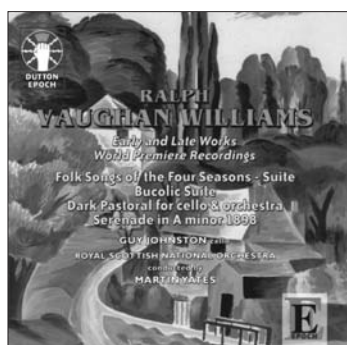
# CD and Book Reviews

## Vaughan Williams: Early and Late Works

Guy Johnston, cello; Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Martin Yates

DUTTON EPOCH CDLX7289

A disc of over seventy-one minutes of previously unrecorded Vaughan Williams orchestral music is self-recommending to members of the Society, but what a richly rewarding compilation has been assembled here by Dutton!



There are two items that may be known already to some degree. *Dark Pastoral*, for cello and orchestra, which was performed at the Proms in 2011, is a completion by David Matthews of the middle (slow) movement from Vaughan Williams's unfinished Cello Concerto, a piece that he was working on in the early 1940s with a view to its being played by Casals. Although only the first four minutes or so are genuine Vaughan Williams, being an orchestration by Matthews of music that Vaughan Williams left in short score, the work as a whole maintains stylistic integrity. Vaughan Williams himself would, I feel, have been well pleased by the remainder of this eleven minute piece, which, after a rhapsodic diversion away from the opening material, reverts to a meditation on the initial material that closes with a touching ascent to heaven on the solo cello accompanied by *pianissimo* strings, which makes a magical ending.

The second piece, that will be familiar in some measure to those who have acquired Albion Records' recent recording of the full cantata version, is an orchestral suite compiled from *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons* by Roy Douglas, who acted as musical assistant in the last phase of Vaughan Williams's life (and is, of course, one of the Society's Vice Presidents). This is a charming compilation of material from the choral version and is a worthwhile discovery in its own right. The songs are presented as a sequence, rather than being extensively reworked or developed, and create a tableau of the composer's favourite tunes,

many of which will already be known to listeners from other works such as the *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1* or the *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. The scoring is light and airy and this is thirteen minutes of pure enjoyment.

The other works on this disc are realisations of two early pieces that have remained tantalisingly unavailable until now. The *Bucolic Suite*, written in 1900 and revised in 1901, and the even earlier *Serenade* in A minor, dating from 1898, have been edited from the manuscripts by Julian Rushton. Both are substantial works, at around nineteen minutes and twenty-six minutes respectively.

The *Bucolic Suite* is in four movements and shows Vaughan Williams's absorption in folk song, even if it predates his active fieldwork in collecting them. It can be seen as a transitional work in terms of its style, still bearing the influence of late nineteenth-century forebears such as Dvořák, while also containing some hints of the more mature works that were to follow. The second theme in the third movement "Intermezzo" made a reappearance (in slightly modified form) as the middle section of the "March Past of the Kitchen Utensils" in the *Wasps Suite*, which suggests that Vaughan Williams had already assumed by 1909, when he composed *The Wasps*, that the *Bucolic Suite* would not be published or performed again. While it contains attractive music and has a particularly jolly ending, the Suite strikes me as less memorable overall than the *Serenade*. If the later Vaughan Williams had envisaged its being published and performed, one imagines he might first have tightened it up a bit, as he did with some of his other early works such as *In the Fen Country*.

The *Serenade* is a most attractive suite that Vaughan Williams originally conceived in four movements, but for which he later composed a replacement third movement. It is played here with both versions of that movement, with the "Romance" following the "Intermezzo & Trio" for which it was a substitute; this does not seem to me to detract from its shape, since the two are completely different in nature. As with some other early pieces by Vaughan Williams that have now been edited and performed, especially the exactly contemporaneous Quintet for clarinet, horn, violin, cello & piano and *Cambridge Mass*, the *Serenade* shows what a natural melodist Vaughan Williams already was at this stage of his career. After a solemn and beautiful "Prelude" (so named by Michael Kennedy, according to Lewis Foreman's informative sleeve notes), there is a real sense of ebullience in Vaughan Williams showing off his ability to write a good tune,

absorbing influences such as Schumann, Brahms and Mendelssohn along the way. There are some particularly lovely woodwind parts in the heartfelt "Romance".

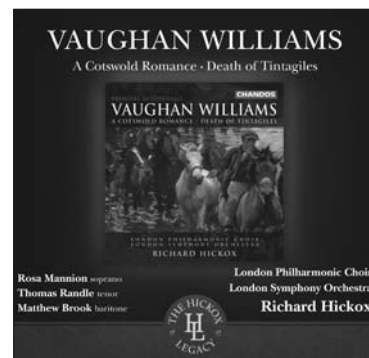
All the music on this disc is impeccably played by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra under Martin Yates, with Guy Johnston as the sensitive cello soloist in *Dark Pastoral*, and the recording quality is superb. In short, this is a must-buy for all Vaughan Williams enthusiasts.

Martin Murray

## Vaughan Williams: *A Cotswold Romance*; *The Death of Tintagiles*

Rosa Mannion, soprano; Thomas Randle, tenor; Matthew Brook, baritone; London Philharmonic Choir; London Symphony Orchestra/Richard Hickox

Chandos CHAN10728X



Digitally remastered from the 1997 premiere recordings of these works, this disc is one of the Hickox Legacy series that Chandos has recently embarked on, repackaging some of the over 280 CDs that the late Richard Hickox recorded for the label. Hickox's devotion to British music is well enough known to need no further comment, so this series will undoubtedly please British music aficionados.

In the present case the major work is the concert cantata that Vaughan Williams adapted from his first opera *Hugh the Drover*. At a century's remove it is perhaps difficult to imagine what a brave step it was for him to contemplate in 1910 the idea of a rustic opera founded in folk song. Ideas about transmuting folk material into high art forms were scarcely a decade old in England, but works like *The Bartered Bride* or *Carmen* had at least showed what was possible.

As is usual with concert adaptations of opera, much is lost and some little gained. Those who know the opera will miss pieces like Aunt

Jane's song ("Life must be full of care") or Mary's "I'm to be married"; and the ending in particular suffers as the chorus sings "Farewell" but once, instead of the otherworldly effect attained by the offstage chorus in the opera, which gives such a sudden and memorable twist to the finale.

In compensation, the chorus is used much more fully in the cantata. Occasionally this means the soloist has to compete with them, as in Hugh's "Song of the Road", but Vaughan Williams constructed simple but highly effective material for them to accompany Mary's "In the night time". Some of the writing (for example the ending of "Mary's Escape") reminds one of the quire rather than the opera house, but as material from the fight scene is included, there is rustic muscularity to counterbalance the focus on the love relationship (as the title implies).

Inevitably sampling bits and pieces of an opera leaves a disjointedness about proceedings ("Sweet Little Linnet" sounds distinctly odd sandwiched between two vigorous chorus

numbers) and dedicated Vaughan Williamsites will not find it any substitute for the complete opera, but there is still much to enjoy. Thomas Randle is a suitably romantic Hugh (providing sentiment without sentimentality), Rosa Mannion a somewhat less ardent Mary, Matthew Brook handles the character baritone work with style, and the London Philharmonic Choir make a well-disciplined townspeople – no provincial coarseness here.

*The Death of Tintagiles* is a real curiosity – few would associate Vaughan Williams with the idea of music for a Maeterlinck play, but in 1912-13 he was writing music for a clutch of plays for the Stratford season. "Tintagiles" in fact suffered a rather disastrous private performance in London which turned Vaughan Williams away from writing for such things for life. What remains musically is a set of seven pieces which show him matching the brooding, symbolic world of Maeterlinck in a style many miles away from the bucolic "Hugh".

While "Hugh's" music lies firmly in "Wasps" territory, "Tintagiles" has portents of later

works such as the *London Symphony*, *Job*, and *Riders to the Sea*. In stark contrast to *A Cotswold Romance*, the scoring is sparse, tempi slow, and textures much stiller. Haunting oboe and viola solos are thumbprint Vaughan Williams. As incidental music, many of these pieces are short, often tailing out as they are obviously scene-setting and therefore not musically complete, but overall there is a consistency of mood and atmosphere that shows a very different side to Vaughan Williams's work from the folk song enthusiast.

With quality digitalisation of the sound, a booklet including Stephen Connock's notes in English, French and German and the libretto of *A Cotswold Romance*, Chandos are serving the memory of Richard Hickox and the cause of British music well indeed.

Paul Sarcich

[This review was first appeared on the Music and Vision Daily website ([www.dailyclassicalmusic.com](http://www.dailyclassicalmusic.com)) and is reprinted by permission of the Editor.]

### ***Music in the Landscape: How the British Countryside Inspired Our Greatest Composers***

Em Marshall-Luck

Robert Hale, hardback, 272 pages

ISBN 978-0-7090-8468-6

This is a finely researched and well written book, which should prove of interest to every member of the Society. Our Chairman has put an enormous amount of effort into compiling a detailed but highly readable analysis of the impact of landscape on many of England's leading composers of the last 150 years.

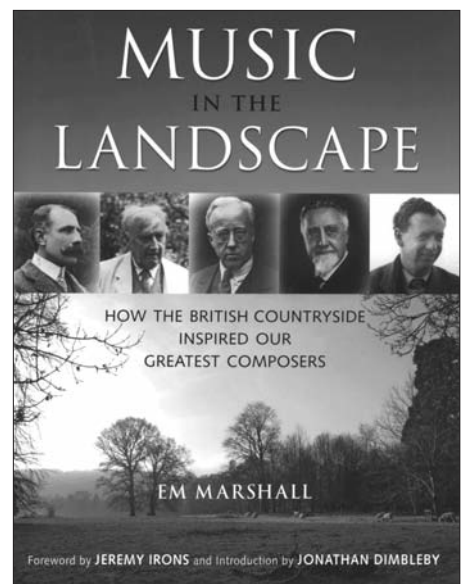
The book consists firstly of a series of brief biographies of fourteen composers, in the order of their dates of birth, from Elgar to Britten, with the emphasis on the inspiration which they drew from the places where they lived and worked. The last two dozen pages then sketch much more briefly the lives of a further thirty composers whose dependence on landscape was less pronounced. One might guess at the author's sympathies from the fact that Vaughan Williams and Elgar have by far the longest chapters devoted to them.

Many fascinating details emerge, and there is much intertwining of their different stories, by virtue of the many friendships and close working relationships shared by our leading composers of the last century. In the days before the motor car became ubiquitous, the importance of walking and bicycling, both as recreation and as sources of inspiration, is a constant theme of the book. For example, Vaughan Williams joined a walking group, the Sunday Tramps, who would catch a train twenty miles or more out of London and then

walk back. Imagine the conversation between such men as John Buchan, John Maynard Keynes and Lord Haldane! Readers will find a wealth of detail about many parts of the British Isles, from the west of Ireland (Bax and Moeran), Severnside (Elgar, Gurney and Howells), the Home Counties (Holst and Elgar) and Guernsey (Ireland). All these areas, and plenty more, have been carefully explored, and beautifully photographed, by the author, who time and again reveals her own love of both these locations and the music which they have inspired.

The brevity of the coverage of the many composers in the last twenty-four pages of *Music in the Landscape* is unfortunate – it suggests that there has been substantial editing, or simply cutting of the text, as a result of which the book has an unbalanced feel. The absence of women composers is surprising – Dame Ethel Smyth (Cornwall) and Doreen Carwithen (Suffolk) are two who spring to mind who were strongly influenced by landscape. Significant figures such as Sir William Walton and Malcolm Arnold are dealt with summarily, in five lines apiece, and Delius's denial of a chapter to himself is justified on the grounds that he "chose to live almost all his life abroad" even though he was as much influenced by landscape as anyone.

Further evidence of a failure of editorial control is the substantial number of errors to be found throughout the book; these may be typographical, grammatical or factual. Amongst the more obvious are the Welsh mountain, Moclwyn Mawr (page 61) and the French town, Fontainebleu (page 264). "Vaughan Williams conducted his own music, along with that of



Holst's" should have been picked up by the proof-reader. When Elgar moved from the outskirts of Worcester to Stratford-on-Avon, he moved east, not west (page 45) and Balfour Gardiner's "Shepherd's Fennel Dance" should be *Shepherd Fennel's Dance* (pages 264 and 268).

These criticisms, however, should not discourage anybody from reading the book. It is written with style and elegance, and will enlarge the knowledge and whet the appetite of its readers to explore more of this country's most beautiful music, and of the landscape which inspired it.

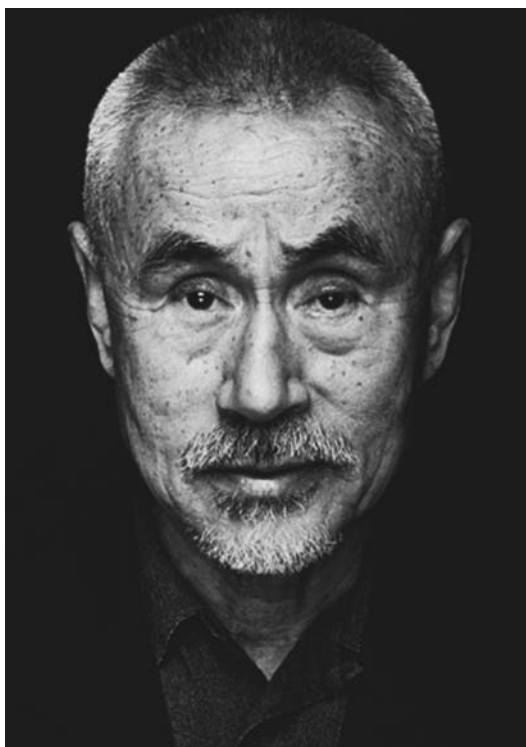
Simon Coombs

## From the Chairman

Looking back over the year with a view to formulating my verbal Chairman's report at the AGM, I am yet again gratified and almost amazed at the leaps and bounds which our cherished composer's music is taking. Scholarship and research continue to reveal new insights, facts and theories, or to collate and present information in valuable and useful formats, not least in the pages of this very Journal (Adam Harvey's excellent article on folk song in the last edition is a case in point). Then there are the concerts, most notably (amongst many others) the three symphonies in one BBC Promenade concert this year, and, at long last, the performances of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at the English National Opera. The latter is an immensely exciting event: we all know how much of himself Vaughan Williams ploughed and poured into "Pilgrim", how much of his thought and creative output the piece took up, and for what extended periods during his life. The ENO production, we are assured, will be strikingly powerful, in a very personal vision from the director, Yoshi Oida. New recordings of Vaughan Williams's music continue to be released – not least our wonderful Albion discs, including the latest, superb, *The Sons of the Morning* CD of piano music by Gurney and Vaughan Williams (*Job* on piano intrigues!) and my own EM Records disc including the Violin Sonata, the recording sessions of which were some of the most intensive I have ever been involved in! The recently unveiled bust of Vaughan Williams at Chelsea is a long-overdue mark of recognition of the great man, and is a wonderful reminder of his connections to that lovely part of London. Last, but not least, premieres, both in recorded format and in live performance, continue to delight and astonish: we have some extremely exciting recordings coming up (including more major Albion proposals), whilst I was delighted to be able to put on yet another world premiere performance at this year's English Music Festival. The *Fantasia* for Piano and Orchestra is a virtuosic and compelling work and the BBC Concert Orchestra, Martin Yates and pianist Mark Bebbington gave it their all. The audiences at this year's Festival were thrilled with it.

So, whilst I would never advocate resting on our laurels, I think we can nevertheless be proud of the Society's and Albion's continued achievements in facilitating – directly, and indirectly through raising the Vaughan Williams profile – so many varied activities and commendations; and we can look forward to ever-increasing exposure of the man and his glorious music.

*Em Marshall-Luck*



Yoshi Oida will be directing the ENO production of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in November 2012 .

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