

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS SOCIETY JOURNAL

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

ISSUE NO 56 FEBRUARY 2013



www.rvwsociety.com

From the Editor

This page has frequently been used to encourage members to become active participants in the *Journal*. Contributions, as I have stated many times, are welcome from all members, and are not to be seen as the exclusive property of Vaughan Williams “specialists”. Let me say once again that the most taxing problem when compiling the *Journal* is finding the right balance, constructing each issue in the hope that, at the very least, *most* members will want to read *most* of it. The last issue carried yet another *cri de coeur*, following my surprise that no member of the Society had thought to write in with a reaction to the remarkable Prom concert in which no fewer than three Vaughan Williams symphonies had been performed. Such appeals have, in the past, provoked little, sometime no, reaction, but my goodness, this time the response was stunning! One correspondent called it an “avalanche”, which is quite an appropriate image. This issue, then, runs to forty pages, not quite the thickest yet, but fairly generous all the same. The forty-page limit has brought with it two consequences. First, some submissions have been held over until the June issue, a rare experience for me; and second, some contributors to this issue will find that the editor’s red pen has been working overtime in order to condense articles to fit the space available. I apologise to all these members. The danger is, of course, that those who are still ruminating will take this news to mean that their thoughts are no longer required. Nothing could be further from the truth: the *Journal* is, and always will be, yours to read and yours to write.

A feature of each issue of the *Journal* over several years was a “Vaughan Williams Crossword” compiled by regular contributor Mike Gainsford. When we decided that this had run its course and

it was time to give it a rest, nothing took its place. Reading a rather moving quotation about Vaughan Williams recently gave me the idea of resurrecting something to provide members with a bit of gentle amusement, so here is the first in what I hope will be a series of competitions about our favourite composer. I’m penniless, so the only prize will be the honour of being named in the *Journal* if your solution is among the first three to reach me. It would be a mistake to limit the competition to a single format or a single contributor, so although I’m starting the ball rolling myself with a competition entitled “Who wrote this?”, I’m also inviting members to send in their own concoction, in any format they wish. Only one will appear in each issue, though! Here goes. Who wrote this, and where?

- 1 He was indubitably a great – and good – man, a composer of powerful personality and a major voice in our musical culture. But his *art*, I think, though it made history, was also defeated by it, and will, if I have to hazard a guess, prove to be minor.
- 2 Yesterday a great moment – like a caress from a sunnier world. Heard the symphony that Vaughan Williams has dedicated to me...Civilized and humane! Am deeply grateful.
- 3 Young conductors please note: Vaughan Williams is a fine example of how a conductor should approach an orchestra. Calm and collected, he wastes no time but gets on good terms with the orchestra in about three words. Granted, this is easy for him because of the profound admiration the orchestra has for him both as man and musician.

William Hedley

Ralph Vaughan Williams and literature in English

Along the field as we came by
A year ago, my love and I,
The aspen over stile and stone
Was talking to itself alone.
“Oh who are these that kiss and pass?
A country lover and his lass;
Two lovers looking to be wed;
And time shall put them both to bed,
But she shall lie with earth above,
And he beside another love.”

And sure enough beneath the tree
There walks another love with me,
And overhead the aspen heaves
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;
And I spell nothing in their stir,
But now perhaps they speak to her,
And plain for her to understand
They talk about a time at hand
When I shall sleep with clover clad,
And she beside another lad.

A E Housman
(from *A Shropshire Lad*, 1896)

Vaughan Williams and Oxford University Press

Simon Wright

In his article “The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust” in the June 2012 edition of the *Journal*, Hugh Cobbe outlined the business and legal structures which underpin the history and the management of the estates of Ralph and Ursula Vaughan Williams. The current article picks up a slightly different aspect of this “business thread”, and examines the relationship between Vaughan Williams and his major music publisher, Oxford University Press. While analysis and criticism of Vaughan Williams’s music, aspects of his life and his relationships, and reviews of performances and recordings have all featured in the *Journal*’s fifty-five issues to date, there has been no real consideration of the nuts-and-bolts work of a music publisher in bringing Vaughan Williams’s music before the public. It is hoped that a piece which shines some light on this aspect of Vaughan Williams and his music will be of interest to Society members.

Oxford University Press: historical structure and music publishing

In order to understand Vaughan Williams’s relationship with Oxford University Press it is necessary to sketch an account of the Press as it stood at around 1900, and then onwards through the twentieth century. The story is complex and can only be outlined here in the briefest of terms: for fuller details the reader is directed to *The Oxford University Press: An Informal History* by Peter Sutcliffe.¹

Oxford University Press is the printing and publishing operation of the University of Oxford, with roots dating back to the invention of printing. It is a constituent part of the University. In 1900, OUP comprised three main United Kingdom businesses. Firstly, the University Printing House (often known as the University Press, Oxford), situated in Oxford’s Walton Street, and controlled by the Printer to the University; this also embraced an ink manufactory, and a paper mill at Wolvercote (home of the famous Oxford India paper). Then, the publishing imprint of the Clarendon Press, signifying scholarly books published at Oxford. And, thirdly, there was “Oxford University Press”, based in London, under the charge of the Publisher to the University, and responsible for the Press’s vast output of trade books. Both the Printer and the Publisher reported to the Secretary to the Delegates (the term, still in use, for the head of all the Press’s operations and answerable to those delegated by the University of Oxford to oversee the affairs of the business), and the Printing House printed for both the Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press. It is the third business which concerns us here, and this will be variously referred to as “Oxford University Press”, “OUP”, “London”, “the London Business”, or occasionally “the Press”. The overall tripartite structure remained in place until the mid-1970s when, following a review instituted by the University itself,² the Press’s various operations were

consolidated, over the next ten or so years, at Oxford (and with a new distribution warehouse in Corby eventually replacing an obsolete function at Neasden). This was followed by the closure of the Printing House in 1989, and the paper mill in 1998, leaving OUP primarily as a publishing and distribution business, with almost all of its manufacturing operations outsourced.

The London headquarters of Oxford University Press from 1924 until 1966 was the elegant Amen House in Warwick Square, in the shadow of St. Paul’s Cathedral, the business having been forced to move into this more spacious accommodation when its cramped former premises at nearby Amen Corner became inadequate (figure 1). The London business and its various lists, together with publications imported from OUP’s overseas branches and titles from other houses distributed by OUP, had been, since 1913, under the charge of Humphrey Milford (1877-1952) (figure 2). Milford had worked as the Assistant to the Secretary in Oxford since 1900, but was moved to London and then succeeded Henry Frowde as OUP’s London Publisher in 1913. Between 1919 and 1921 he was president of the Publishers Association.



Figure 1: Amen House, Warwick Square, London EC4, the headquarters of OUP’s London business from 1924 to 1966. OUP Archives, by permission of The Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press.

The Press’s General Catalogue for 1920 (the first to be published following the War) shows the astonishing scope and variety of titles published under Milford (as Publisher to the University, his name always appeared in a “personal imprint” in the London publications): adventure stories and gift books for children sit alongside medical abstracts and reviews, books on the Empire jostle for position with those on contemporary philosophy, and



Figure 2: Sir Humphrey Milford (1877-1952), Publisher to the University of Oxford, 1913 to 1945

there are vast lists of poetry, Shakespeare, and Marlowe titles (some printed on Oxford India paper), and even longer recitals of Bibles in a bewildering array of fonts and binding styles. The Catalogue also lists books about music (published both at London and Oxford) and, surprisingly, some items of “sheet music”. Almost all the printed music items listed relate to the Press’s Bible and Prayer Book publishing: the publications of the Church Music Society (distributed by London), psalters, chant books, and items such as J.A. Fuller-Maitland’s *The Bells of Paradise (Vesper Hymn for Festivals in Time of War)* (1916). There were also large numbers of hymnals, including *The English Hymnal* (1906). In 1920 OUP was acting as distributor for the publications of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: in the following year Milford agreed to start publication of the magisterial and pioneering Tudor Church Music series for the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, under the editorship of, amongst others, Edmund Fellowes, the first of the eventual ten volumes appearing in 1922. Thus, by the early 1920s, OUP by default had built a small and focussed printed music list, but in no way had it yet proclaimed itself as a music publisher.

The British serious music publishing landscape, seen through the clearing smoke at the close of the Great War, reveals four or five major companies active, some traditionalists, others specialists, and a host of smaller “jobbing” publishers playing their part in putting out the aspirational efforts of the day. Prior to the War, some British composers had looked to Germany or Austria for publishing (in particular Frederick Delius, who published with Harmonie Verlag in Berlin, Tischer & Jagenburg in Cologne, and Universal Edition in Vienna): with the conflict, that option ceased to exist. Of the “majors”, Novello & Co., Stainer & Bell, J. Curwen & Sons, and J. & W. Chester were, at 1920, taking the lead in promulgating the new works of British composers. Boosey & Co., whose strength (and main income) lay in the popular ballad, had not yet allied itself with the military band publisher and instrument maker Hawkes & Co. (once the companies merged, in 1930, a formidable and eventually world-wide serious publishing operation came into being). Edward Elgar’s publishing relationship with Novello & Co. is amongst the most celebrated and well documented in music history, but in reality that publisher’s fortune was founded as much on the mass production of vocal scores of classic oratorios and other choral works as it was on “contemporary music”. By 1920, the company’s policies,

steered by Harold Littleton Brooke, had become conservative. “He was a man with definite blind spots where modern music was concerned”, wrote Arthur Bliss of Brooke, “and it was no use trying to convince him when he sat listening to it, bored or irritated”.ⁱⁱⁱ Vaughan Williams had placed a few songs with Boosey (including those originally issued in *The Vocalist*, which Boosey acquired), and some folk song collections with Novello, but neither resulted in a lasting affiliation. More significant for Vaughan Williams was Stainer & Bell, a company founded by a consortium of composers and teachers in 1907. Stainer & Bell owned five hundred titles by 1911, and its catalogue embraced works by Harold Darke, Gustav Holst, and Charles Villiers Stanford. With Stainer & Bell Vaughan Williams published significant early works, either directly, or transferred from another German publisher, Breitkopf & Härtel: *Sea Symphony*, *Phantasy Quintet*, *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. There were parallels with OUP’s activities: at the end of the War, Stainer & Bell issued Edmund Fellowes’ editions of English madrigals and, as publisher at the time for the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust’s series of contemporary British works, Vaughan Williams’s *A London Symphony* and William Walton’s Piano Quartet.^{iv} Although Vaughan Williams moved from Stainer & Bell briefly to Curwen, and eventually to OUP, he never forgot the relationship with his first main publisher. In a later dispute over copyright between Stainer & Bell and OUP, Vaughan Williams wrote to OUP’s Norman Peterkin, “I owe a lot to Stainer & Bell who published big works of mine when I was comparatively unknown long before the O.U.P. as music publishers existed”.^v J. & W. Chester, an older firm reconstituted in 1915, signed contracts with Granville Bantock and Arnold Bax, but also worked internationally, securing directly some works by Francis Poulenc and Igor Stravinsky. It is clear that, at the opening of the century’s third decade, there was space, and a need for, one further serious British music publisher to serve the needs of a burgeoning group of composers and an eager public, all anxious to shake off the nation’s image as “the land without music”.

The various strands of Oxford University Press’s “music publishing” from the early years of the twentieth century were leading naturally to a position whereby the London Business might evolve into that additional serious music publisher, the examples to date seeming naturally to fit in with what Milford’s business was doing. With the space and opportunity for a new music publisher clearly evident, all that was required was someone to lead it. The busy, literarily inclined Milford was not himself the person, but saw in one of his young educational sales representatives, Hubert Foss (1899-1953), a person with the energy, the skills, and the inclination to do so (figure 3). In July 1923, from an office still at Amen Corner, Oxford University Press began to issue sheet music in its own name, the series of leaflets entitled “Oxford Choral Songs”, and (with a formidable subsequent schedule of acquisitions and publications) within a very short space of time became known as a major voice in the British music publishing arena, as well as being publisher of a solid and substantial music book list. Hubert Foss, equally talented as a composer, pianist, writer, broadcaster, and typographer, but who principally threw his energies into music publishing, was appointed as first Manager (sometimes recorded as Managing Editor) of what became known as OUP’s “Music Department”, a position he held until his resignation in 1941.

Foss built the OUP music list with astonishing speed, sweep, and energy. Choral, instrumental, orchestral music and songs,



Figure 3: Hubert Foss (1899-1953), musician, writer, broadcaster, typographer, music publisher, and founding manager of Oxford University Press's Music Department. Author's collection, reproduced by courtesy of Diana Sparkes (née Foss).

educational materials, books on music, anthologies and operas all formed part of his plans. By 1930, the music catalogue contained thousands of titles, and there was hardly any serious living British composer from whom Foss had not published at least one work; the young William Walton had been signed up exclusively. Foss acquired the copyrights of the Anglo-French Music Company in 1925 and, for good measure, their 95 Wimpole Street premises too. Wimpole Street became a music depot and showroom, but this was moved in short order, first to the Aeolian Hall, and then to 36 Soho Square. Amen House remained the official headquarters for music, despite these "outstations", and became a venue for celebrated musical sherry parties, and also the place where, with Foss and on the publisher's grand piano, Vaughan Williams would eventually hear his compositions "played over" in the company of trusted friends. Norman Peterkin took over from Foss in 1941, and managed what was by now called "The Music Department" through the war years. He was succeeded by Alan Frank, who oversaw the move of the entire department from Amen House and Soho Square to 44 Conduit Street in March of 1950.

Vaughan Williams and Oxford University Press

Vaughan Williams's first association with Oxford University Press was as Music Editor of *The English Hymnal*, but the relationship then was an oblique one. The hymnal's editor, Percy Dearmer, had, following a recommendation, commissioned Vaughan Williams's work on the book personally and on behalf of his editorial committee. There is no evidence surviving which suggests that Vaughan Williams had any direct communication with OUP over the hymnal's preparation and publication. Everything went through Dearmer and Henry Frowde. Nonetheless, the (in succession) controversial, influential, ubiquitous, and venerable *English Hymnal* remains the first Oxford University Press publication to carry Vaughan Williams's name, and characteristically it contains his own arrangements, his original compositions, and his prose writings, a pattern that would continue on a broader scale when, nineteen years later, Vaughan Williams joined with OUP as his music publisher.

Vaughan Williams recalled that the first work he offered to Oxford University Press and which was accepted was *The*

Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains.^{vi} But, the first score actually to be published by OUP to carry the name of "R. Vaughan Williams" was a transcription for string orchestra of Bach's so-called "Giant Fugue" (BWV 680), which he made jointly with Arnold Foster. One of the red velvet-bound ledgers into which details of every OUP music publication were, at the time, entered records that this work was allocated the number "O6" in the new Oxford Orchestral Series.^{vii} The series was started under the editorship of W. Gillies Whittaker early in 1925, with Warlock's *Serenade for Strings* (O1), and already included Edgar Bainton's *Pavane, Idyll, and Bacchanal* (O2), and a Concerto for Strings by Vivaldi edited by A. Mistowski (O4). Stock for the "Giant Fugue" was delivered to Amen House on 17 September 1925 (354 full scores, and 350 of each string part), and the work was published on 8 October 1925 (figure 4). Full scores were priced at 2s. 6d. and parts individually at 4d. This title evidently sold well and, importantly, began to earn rights income almost immediately. The ledger records "broadcast royalties" accruing as early as March 1926, and that a further 200 copies of the full score were reprinted on 31 March 1929, with other periodic reprints of the string parts.

No. 06

J. S. Bach, THE "GIANT" FUGUE

Transcribed for String Orchestra by
R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS and ARNOLD FOSTER

VIOLIN I
VIOLIN II
VIOLA
CELLI
CONTRABASSI

Allegro

simile

Copyright in U.S.A. and all countries, 1925, by the Oxford University Press, London.
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, AMEN HOUSE, WARWICK SQUARE, E.C.4.

Figure 4: Full score of Bach's "Giant Fugue", transcribed by Arnold Foster and Vaughan Williams (Oxford University Press, 1925)

On 12 November 1925, just over one month after the publication of the "Giant Fugue", the first OUP score to bear Vaughan Williams's sole name as composer appeared: *Three Poems by Walt Whitman*, in the Oxford Solo Songs series. The cover price was 3s. 6d. and 1004 copies were printed; a reprint of the same quantity was required by March 1926. Then, on 17 December 1925, in the same series and with the same price and print quantity, came *Four Poems by Fredegond Shove*.^{viii} A pattern had

been set for Vaughan Williams: frequent publication, and generous print runs. The ledger entries, in their records of reprint quantities and royalties arising and paid for OUP's early Vaughan Williams publications (particularly broadcast royalties which, in general, were substantial, and which now give hard evidence of the immediate importance of sound broadcasting to music publishing) show that take up in sales and performance of these works was immediate and widespread.

Vaughan Williams's implication that *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* had been his first OUP publication probably arose because this title had been included in a general composite contract dated 26 May 1925, pre-dating the appearance of the "Giant Fugue", and which also embraced *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1* and *The Lark Ascending*. As it turned out, all of these works were published the following year, after the Bach transcription and the early sets of songs: the full score of *The Lark Ascending* was published on 28 January 1926 (350 copies printed); the vocal score of *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* appeared on 29 April 1926 (986 copies), and the full score on 30 September 1926 (250 copies); and the score of *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1* was published on 23 September 1926 (250 copies).^{ix} Confusingly, the published scores of all these works bear copyright dates of "1925", presumably because that is when they were contracted. The composite contract made provision for payment of royalties to Vaughan Williams on the sale of printed copies of the music and (significantly, given the emerging technologies) for those arising from "gramophone records or any other mechanical reproductions", and from "the hire of any of the scores or the parts". Performance royalties *per se* were not covered: these were only finalised a decade or more later, following Oxford University Press signing as a member of the Performing Rights Society in 1936.

Thus began the publishing relationship between Vaughan Williams and the Press, and from that point onwards Vaughan Williams offered, and the Press accepted for publication, almost every musical work that he composed, from smallest part song to large scale opera. Vaughan Williams reprised his role with Percy Dearmer for the Press too, as editor for more substantial anthologies and publications: *Songs of Praise* (1925, 1931) and *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928), now in direct association with the Press. Unlike William Walton, with whom Foss initiated a "retainer agreement" arrangement (which continued in various forms until the end of Walton's life), there was never any formal, written agreement between Vaughan Williams and OUP regarding publication: each work was offered and contracted on its own merits, and the general agreement "to publish" was simply a "gentlemen's agreement". But it was an arrangement which evidently worked well on both sides and which was to last. At Vaughan Williams's eightieth birthday in 1952, OUP felt able to place an advertisement in the musical press which claimed that "it is hard to imagine a happier relationship between composer, or author, and publisher than that which exists between Vaughan Williams and Oxford University Press".^x

Foss, with seemingly inexhaustible energy, was personally involved with the publication of the works of all his composers, and with some the professional publishing relationships became blurred with friendship (William Walton and Foss, for example, exchanged Christmas presents and enjoyed travelling and drinking together). But, with Vaughan Williams, things were more restrained. The extensive surviving correspondence between the

Press and Vaughan Williams deals almost solely with professional and business matters and there is little evidence that Vaughan Williams and Foss (or Peterkin and Frank after him) ever enjoyed social time together, although the relationships were clearly warm ones. Neither do the letters which survive indicate that Vaughan Williams ever bared his soul, or shared with his publisher his inmost thoughts as a composer, as did, say, Edward Elgar with August Jaeger of Novello, or Edvard Grieg with Max Abraham and Henri Hinrichsen at Edition Peters. Unsurprisingly for Vaughan Williams, the letters speak of efficiency, of getting a job done, and of mutual respect and trust: to Foss in 1928, urging OUP to publish urgently the new *Te Deum* to be performed at the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury;^{xi} Vaughan Williams commenting to Foss on 12 November 1933 about Ralph Greaves' "official" arrangement of what became the *Fantasia on "Greensleeves"*;^{xii} ideas for a cover design for *Five Tudor Portraits*;^{xiii} and to Frank in 1946, about the details of payments for the piano reduction of the Concerto for Oboe, and the iniquity of PRS rules around performing fees for arrangements in general.^{xiv} These were all, in fact, standard publishing matters. Only very rarely did Vaughan Williams need to challenge OUP, or complain: he reluctantly wrote to Frank on 25 October 1956, for example, pointing out errors in the most recent edition of his works catalogue: but the letter is neither angry nor animated.^{xv} Occasionally Vaughan Williams corresponded directly with Milford, particularly if the matter was sensitive and would seem to affect his relationship with the Press. An invitation in 1942 to become Musical Adviser to *The BBC Hymn Book* (the Press was publishing on behalf of the Corporation, but the war year difficulties meant that the book did not appear until 1951) prompted Vaughan Williams to write immediately to Milford: "I said at once that as editor of the English Hymnal and Songs of Praise I could not consider it without your approval...I could not be an impartial judge having ties of affection and interest both to E.H. and to S. of P."^{xvi}

Foss's resignation in 1941 prompted probably the most heart-felt of Vaughan Williams's OUP letters, but this was a personal communication and did not touch the humdrum of publishing. "I did not realize how much I counted on you... Well, the next lot of people who get the advantage of your energy & insight will be lucky and though your official relations with music & musicians may cease I know that you will continue to keep a fatherly eye on even those of us who are really old enough to be *your* father."^{xvii} Vaughan Williams and Foss indeed maintained friendly relations until the end of Foss's life: shortly before he died, Foss published a major study of the composer's music written with, as it were, the first-hand experience of having published a good deal of it himself. OUP, too, called regularly on Foss after his resignation for advice on matters connected with Vaughan Williams's music.

Notwithstanding the unofficial agreement that OUP published everything offered by Vaughan Williams, the Press never became contractually involved in the music that Vaughan Williams wrote for cinema films. He contracted directly with the film companies concerned, but there is plenty of evidence that Vaughan Williams sought OUP's advice on the terms. An annotated copy of part of Vaughan Williams's contract with Ealing Film Studios for the music for *The Loves of Joanna Godden* survives in OUP's files, for example.^{xviii} Vaughan Williams's film contracts also occasionally allowed OUP to issue excerpts from the film scores as concert items (the 1945 suite from the *Flemish Farm* score of the previous year is the most substantial example); and, in the case of his score

for *Scott of the Antarctic*, Vaughan Williams completely refashioned and reconceived the film music as *Sinfonia Antartica*, for which he contracted directly with OUP. The original recording session orchestral parts (some in Vaughan Williams's own hand) for *Coastal Command* survive in OUP's archive: presumably they were left with the Press for safe keeping.

Vaughan Williams met with Foss's successor, Norman Peterkin, at Soho Square in April 1942, clearly to consolidate the way of working, post-Foss. Peterkin reported to Milford, "Vaughan Williams spent some considerable time with me, looking more like an ancient Briton than ever, but perceptibly aged since I met him last... I do not think Foss's departure has made any difference at all to Vaughan Williams' feelings about the O.U.P. or his relations with us. I am sure he has not the least intention of going to any other publisher even if he were approached which I gather has not been the case. Indeed he assured me of this himself".^{xix} The meeting report then went on to cover routine matters discussed, such as the deposit of manuscripts for safe keeping, wartime paper quotas, the quality of orchestral parts, and a chance encounter with William Walton, who had happened to be at 36 Soho Square on the same day. Vaughan Williams indeed "stayed" with OUP, and his relationships with Peterkin, and then with Frank continued in the same even tenor as that of the years Vaughan Williams had enjoyed with Foss.

Vaughan Williams's published scores and the Oxford University Press house style

What did the first scores of Vaughan Williams's music published by Oxford University Press look like? The Press published, and continues to publish, hundreds of works by the composer, and of most of these, some for nearly ninety years, there have been countless hundreds of reprints, new impressions, revisions, re-designs, format changes, and re-issues: noting the various and changing design policies and every single variant arising would require an extensive study in its own right, and here there is only room to generalise. Patterns regarding format, design, layout, and printing were soon established under Hubert Foss, and now is the moment to glance at these in the context of OUP's early Vaughan Williams publications.

Almost as soon as Foss was in charge of music publishing, he formed an alliance with Henderson & Spalding Ltd. (a printer in Sylvan Grove, Camberwell) for the design, engraving, and printing of OUP's scores, and placed with them the production of the majority of the Music Department's sheet music for the next eighteen years. Henderson & Spalding, originally, was a high-quality book and jobbing printer, which had a small speciality in music; the company printed posters for London Transport after its formation in July 1933.

Hubert Foss, who was an expert typographer and wrote extensively on the subject of music design, both employed and influenced Henderson & Spalding: his, and thus OUP's, relationship with the company was a special one, and was modelled, in a sense, on that between Humphrey Milford and the Printer to the University at Oxford (Foss rarely chose to print music at Oxford, although books under his supervision were generally produced there). In 1924 Foss had proclaimed dismally that "the last fifty years' history of music printing is typographically a waste",^{xx} and in his capacity as Henderson &

Spalding's (possibly self-appointed) typographical adviser, laid down dashing new standards, embodied in a beautifully printed style manual, *A Book of Instructions about Printing, intended to define the Style of the House of Henderson & Spalding*.^{xxi} In a corresponding public prospectus, *Some Practical Considerations about Good Printing*, styles, typefaces and setting, borders, ornaments, good and bad design were all given consideration, the book itself acting as exemplar.^{xxii} Foss, quite simply, laid down the law: "There are four central problems to which Henderson and Spalding claim to have paid an uncommon attention – the shape of the note, the spacing of the staves, the lie of the type page on the paper page, and the shape of the letters for words of songs, directions, etc".^{xxiii} As well as music scores, Foss's attention and imagination were also ranging to music examples within text books, his future work at OUP if not planned out, certainly in mind. The appearance of music examples on page was, he said, so often "either a huge blot or a pale hiatus in a page of type", and Henderson & Spalding was addressing this problem.^{xxiv} Foss also allowed himself some understandable post-War triumphalism in making a point that the music engraving and printing industry's focus had now shifted firmly from "Germany, or...immigrant Germans in other countries" to "Englishmen". "There is no doubt", he said (possibly a little prematurely), "that, apart from the convenience of having your printers by you, English music printing is quite as good as any that Germany has ever produced."^{xxv}

The full scores produced by Henderson & Spalding for OUP, in particular, set new standards of clarity and legibility in music printed in Britain, and in the minds of aficionados are typified by the early Vaughan Williams and Walton scores. One example, the full score of *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* (1925), crystallises the features that became the hallmarks of hundreds of scores published by the Press in the 1920s and 1930s (the origination in which continued to be used for those scores which remained in print beyond those dates). The score pages were engraved on pewter plates, using Henderson & Spalding's own distinctive music and text punches, and engraving tools for staves, slurs, and phrasing, and then printed lithographically.^{xxvi} The score's title recto contains simply the work title, composer's name, publisher's name and (oddly) the price, all set high on the page, with nothing but white space below. The title verso lists instrumentation and cast information, centred on the page, with ample white-space borders. The music pages (again with generous borders) uniquely, to this date, omit full bar rests (the bars are simply left blank), and this alone gives all pages a light, airy, and uncluttered quality never before seen in printed music. The only left-hand braces used are those to group First and Second Violins (and occasionally other divided strings): the braces, usual in full scores, grouping, for example, all the wind instruments, are omitted, with simply one single brace grouping each system. There is no use of italic typeface (except in duplet and triplet figures, and the traditional use bold in dynamics: *pp*, for example), and tempo indications are not set bold. Rehearsal numbers are placed cleanly within circles, and positioned only at top and bottom of systems, and not repeated in the middle of the systems. The publisher's imprint is set bold at the foot of the first page of music (with the copyright line set smaller immediately above), and the name OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS repeated bottom right on the final page of music, to signify the end of the sequence of plates for this work. Plate number sequences, common in European music printing, were not used by Henderson & Spalding, again reducing the on-page matter, thereby enhancing clarity. The Henderson & Spalding imprint is not given in *The*

Shepherds and other early Music Department scores: when introduced, it always sat bottom left of the final music page. The paper of *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* is creamy and off-white (importantly reducing the possibility of lighting glare in performance) and, crucially for music, there is no show-through. Facing the last page of music is a blank page, and the final page bears an advertisement for “Chamber Music in the Oxford Edition”, the panel surrounded by a decorative but simple border. The consistent use of all of these features in all scores produced by Henderson & Spalding established a strong Oxford University Press house style, and composers (Vaughan Williams, for one) repeatedly thanked the Press for the crispness of their scores. The same features were taken over into orchestral parts, songs, and chamber and instrumental music (except for the omission of full bar rests which, of course, would have been fatally confusing in these contexts), ensuring a consistency across the product range and, again, an immediately recognisable “Oxford style”, which became celebrated.

Allied with Foss’s strict control of the typography and layout was the care he applied to cover design. “Finally, with regard to the covers of your music, Henderson and Spalding think they can be of assistance. Their service includes the provision of ideas, the work of the best artists, the true reproduction of their pictures”, wrote Foss in the public Henderson & Spalding prospectus, OUP’s (that is, Foss’s) own publications implicit in “your music”.^{xxvii} Music printing’s “typographical waste” might also have extended to the wrappers. While publishers of popular songs and pianoforte music in both Britain and elsewhere had a long and distinguished tradition of handsome, artistic folio cover designs, serious and “classical” publishers tended much more to depend on plain typographical panels, often dropped into a template border: the familiar vocal score covers of Novello & Co. (designed by the Dalziel brothers) and the covers of the publications of Edition Peters are clear examples. Furthermore, French and Italian music publishers, in particular, were addicted to crowding their back and inside back covers with tightly packed lists of related publications, printed in eye-straining telephone directory style.

Foss’s view was that the music’s cover formed an integral part of the product, a lead in to it, and should therefore be treated with the same kindness as the music pages themselves. The covers commissioned by Foss reflect both his vision, a man working on a clean slate, and also the light-headedness of a new enterprise posited in a nation, a culture, freshly emerged from war. There was no written OUP policy, but themes emerged. For his contemporary composers, Foss determined a cover style for each, subtly and often subliminally suggestive of the composers’ characters and social milieu. For William Walton, Foss launched a distinctive black and green border of floral and musical symbols designed by the Italian Futurist artist Gino Severini, pleasingly suggestive of the gardens and music spaces that Walton was later to create at his home in Ischia. Constant Lambert’s covers each carried a distinguished line drawing from John Banting (1902-72), celebrated for his Shell Oil Company and other posters; and, for the enigmatic Bernard Van Dieren a misty grey cover showing a sculpted Greco-Roman bust, complete with laurel wreath, is appropriate: all text appears as if carved in stone. For Vaughan Williams, a restrained buff wrapper (often using a subtly marbled paper), with a tiny pink Tudor rose separating title and composer from publisher name (where occasionally agency details were included too) somehow projected an archetypal image of the composer, and almost all Vaughan Williams’s scores published by OUP from the mid-1920s until the early 1950s were

issued using this design or slight variants of it (figure 5). Frequently, the reverse of the cover would carry tastefully laid out advertising material, either for Vaughan Williams’s works themselves, or for items in series relating to a particular genre (figure 6).

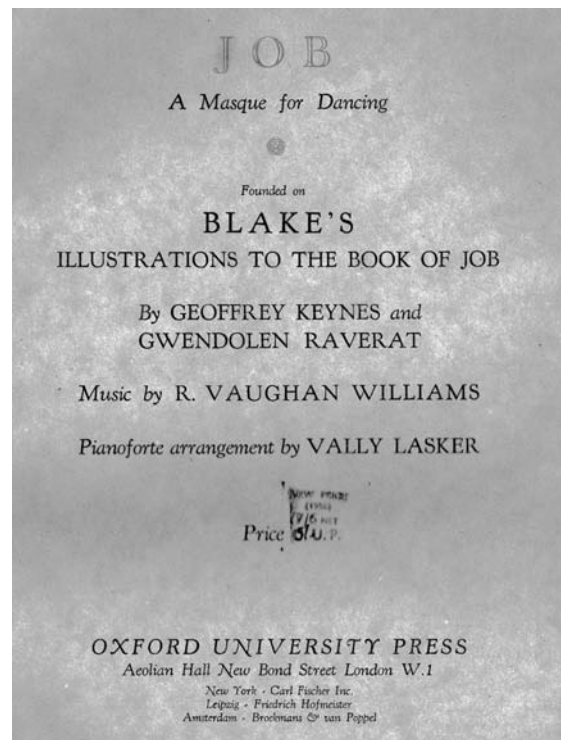


Figure 5: The original standard OUP cover design for: *Job – A Masque for Dancing* (piano reduction by Vally Lasker) (Oxford University Press, 1931). This example shows a price increase for 1956, demonstrating that the first print run remained in stock for many years.

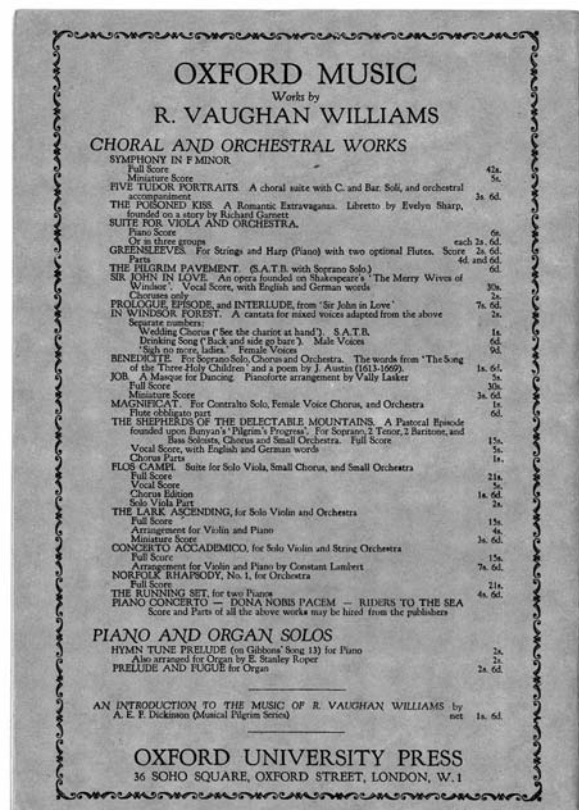


Figure 6: Advertising matter on the rear cover of the vocal score of *Flourish for a Coronation* (Oxford University Press, 1937)

Some of the printing decisions made by the Music Department in its early days would be considered surprising, or even unwise, today, particularly for works not yet established in the repertoire, or which were clearly “difficult” or would have an intrinsically limited market: very large print runs resulting in excess stock being carried for years (Vally Lasker’s piano reduction of *Job – A Masque for Dancing*, published in 1931 and with a lavish frontispiece which photographically reproduced one of Blake’s *Job* illustrations resulting in higher than usual production costs, had an initial print run of 300 copies, some of which remain in stock within OUP’s Hire Library to this day!), or items published in unusually extravagant formats (the full score of Vaughan Williams’s *Symphony No. 4*, for example, was issued in 1935 in a conducting-size format, selling at two guineas, as well as in photographically reduced study score format, with a price of five shillings, both in large print runs).^{xxviii} Such maverick decisions happily reflected Foss’s unbounded enthusiasm and optimism both as a new music publisher, and as a publisher of new music, and also his confidence in his composer, but also demonstrated the scant regard for the economics of publishing which was to lead him eventually into troubled waters with Humphrey Milford.

The multiplicity of addresses which appear on OUP’s scores printed in the 1920s and 1930s often causes confusion. Addresses appeared in two locations on OUP’s printed music: on the front cover, and at the foot of the first page of music (often referred to as “the imprint”). Many variants and usage styles appeared over the years, but the basic rule was that the Music Department’s own operational address or addresses (for example, the Aeolian Hall, or 36 Soho Square) would appear on the covers, while the head office of the London Business (Amen House) would form part of the imprint information. The *Job* piano reduction cover in figure 5, for example, shows “Aeolian Hall New Bond Street London W.1” on the cover (and title recto), but “Amen House, Warwick Square, E.C.4.” appears on the first page of music. After the move to Conduit Street, the citation of “Amen House” was quickly dropped in favour of the sole use of “44 Conduit Street, London W.1”.

With the coming of war, again, in 1939, and the resignation of Foss shortly thereafter, the high production standards set by OUP inevitably fell away somewhat during the 1940s. A small history of the Music Department published in 1959 recalled that “...most of the staff went into the forces, so that Norman Peterkin had to run the Department almost single-handed; paper was scarce; printers were busy or in ruins; and large stocks of books were destroyed”.^{xxix} The London Metropolitan Archive’s copies of the LCC Bomb Damage maps show that Henderson & Spalding’s works were eventually damaged beyond repair, following German bombing during 1940-1.^{xxx} Many of the original plates and reference materials for OUP’s publications were lost. But, after the conflict, OUP proudly announced that, during the war years, it had been able to publish 530 new music titles: of these around twenty-five were by Vaughan Williams, and the Music Department also prepared scores and hire materials for titles which were first performed during the war years, but not then published on sale, such as the *Concerto for Oboe and Symphony No. 5* – complex tasks exacerbated by wartime conditions.

During and after the war, cover designs of all OUP’s publications began to deviate from Foss’s carefully planned and executed styles and formats: both economics and changing tastes dictated this. For Vaughan Williams, in some cases, the old “buff and pink” image was retained, but without the Tudor rose and with a

less elegant typographical deployment (for example, the vocal score of *Epithalamion*, published in 1957), and in others randomly chosen colours for the wrapper’s paper began to appear (the same light blue for both the first impression of the vocal score of *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons*, 1950, and a reprint of the fourth symphony in that year). Increasingly for Vaughan Williams’s choral works, reproductions of classic works of art relevant to the particular musical work were used: “Angels and Shepherds” from a French Book of Hours at the Bodleian Library appeared on the vocal score of *The First Nowell* (1959), for example. Eventually, reprints of all Vaughan Williams’s major choral works carried illustrated covers. The *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons* vocal score, in subsequent reprints, carried eighteenth-century woodcuts on the cover, but with a light blue band as background to the title making a referential gesture to the first edition. The original and minimalist cover design of *In the Fen Country* (premiered in 1909 but first published as a study score in 1969) is suggestive of the grasses and airy skies of East Anglia. From the 1970s, the study scores of the symphonies were “colour coded” in such a bold manner that even today it is difficult to think of OUP’s edition of the fourth without thinking of a rich pillar-box red, or of that of the fifth without imagining the heavenly blue of a summer sky.

Writings about and by Vaughan Williams published by Oxford University Press during his lifetime

One of Oxford University Press’s first achievements as a new music publisher, emerging in the immediate post-First World War years, was to engage with and forcibly to promulgate “music appreciation”, which the Press was rapidly to turn from “concept” into “movement”. The Press’s Music Department, the British Broadcasting Company (from 1927 “Corporation”), and the magazine *Gramophone* were all founded within months of each other: the outpouring of music into the homes of ordinary people made possible by the emerging and rapidly developing technologies of sound recording, piano-roll, and broadcasting provided a publishing opportunity, seized upon by Hubert Foss and his writers as the moment to develop a list of popular books about serious music, vehicles for self-help and home study (as opposed to academic books on music, which the Press also continued to publish) and companions to an ever-broadening and easily available musical repertoire. In this Foss was, of course, meeting OUP’s educational remit as a university press.

Chief amongst Foss’s writers was Percy Scholes (1877-1958), who had first developed his skills in the delivery of “music appreciation” at the University of Manchester, and then with troops during the 1914-18 war. Scholes provided guides to recorded and broadcast music, and ran, during the 1920s, appreciation courses and day-schools at OUP’s Aeolian Hall and Amen House premises, including, for example, a “Field Day for Music Educationists British and American” on 7 July 1928 (the closing dinner, for which “Morning Dress” was specified, was at Verrey’s Restaurant, Regent Street).^{xxxi} Scholes wrote prolifically and, by 1928, Foss had already issued a complete catalogue of “The Percy Scholes Books”. Scholes’s work was to culminate in the one-volume reference book *The Oxford Companion to Music* of 1938 which, in its eventual ten editions, was to become one of the most successful and influential books on music ever published in English. Opinionated and individualistic in his prose as in his selection of material, the prejudices and predilections of Scholes

in *The Oxford Companion to Music* were to shape the musical likes and dislikes of a generation in Britain: the Second Viennese School and Bartók received scant treatment, for example, while the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan enjoyed full synopses and coverage. The distinctive “at home” composer portraits by Oswald Barrett (“Batt”) which adorned the volume were hugely popular and many readers claimed to have “learned their music” through the detail in these pictures, rather than listening to the notes written by their subjects.

As younger men Scholes and Vaughan Williams, it seems, would meet in London: they continued to correspond occasionally and inevitably would have met at OUP’s various London offices, which they both visited regularly. And, perhaps, over modernity in music, they saw eye to eye: “I find more & more that modern music means nothing to me – (I hope it means something to the younger generation – if so then it is all right – but does it?)” – thus Vaughan Williams to Scholes in 1940.^{xxxii} Vaughan Williams received a moderate-sized entry (one column) in the *Companion*’s first edition,^{xxxiii} doubling in length by the ninth (1955),^{xxxiv} the last produced under Scholes’s direct supervision. In the entry’s 1955 version Scholes called the Sixth Symphony “one of the greatest works not only in the composer’s output but in the international repertory”, and his 1938 remarks about some of Vaughan Williams’s music being “so remote and mystical that only a finely balanced performance can justify it, and even then it remains as antipathetic to some temperaments as it becomes attractive to others” were quietly dropped. However, Vaughan Williams was admonished by Scholes in both first and ninth editions for “balking at no means of expressive treatment, even though it may involve the total ignoring of the code of prohibitions (as for instance of “consecutives”; see *Harmony* 22) which was evolved as, from the fifteenth century onwards, music gradually standardized its system”. Scholes slipped up in 1955, though, by mentioning “the popular *Three Norfolk Rhapsodies*”, the second and third of which, by that date, were lost and unknown. Scholes and Vaughan Williams, each regularly accorded by OUP the honour of special leaflets, listings, and catalogues of their own works, in their industry and influence effectively became the dual mainstays of the Press’s music lists in the 1940s and 1950s, one as writer, the other as composer. In the summer of 1958 they died within three weeks of one another.

For the assiduously cultivated “general but informed” readership market, Foss launched a popular series of composer guides, “The Musical Pilgrim”, initially under the general editorship of Arthur Somervell (1863-1937). Published in pocket-sized (foolscap 8^{vo}) format, and containing typeset (as opposed to engraved) musical examples of the sort that Foss abhorred, the books provided work-by-work background to core repertoire for concert goers and gramophone listeners. Neither patronising nor over-technical, the series at first covered standard classical works (for example, the Bach Passions, in two volumes, by C. S. Terry), but soon included volumes on living composers: Elgar, Ravel, Stravinsky, and, in 1928, Vaughan Williams (whom, of course, “Musical Pilgrim” might aptly have described).

The “Pilgrim” volume *An Introduction to the Music of R. Vaughan Williams* by A. E. F. Dickinson is the first serious published survey of the composer’s music – at least of that composed up to the mid-1920s. The book was, stated Dickinson in the Introduction and referring to the already considerable achievements of Scholes and the Press, for readers expecting “in an age of organized appreciation, some sort of preliminary pamphlet on the writer of *A London Symphony*, whose name commands wide respect but hardly an appreciable public”. The book was, however, more than a pamphlet-style gloss on the works so far produced:

It is an attempt to present, first and foremost, the facts about Vaughan Williams’s music, in so far as they are unable to speak for themselves to people not yet made congenial by temperament or training; an attempt, also, to present the facts in relation and in proportion; to single out the essential characteristics from the occasional mannerisms, and thus exhibit the gradual fusion of individual works into one musical personality.^{xxxv}

Throughout the book Dickinson consistently and presciently uncovered Vaughan Williams’s “determination to go to the root of the matter” and, in words eerily pre-echoing the composer’s own famous and wryly self-revealing turn of phrase, noted that “by...unflinching acceptance of his artistic responsibility Vaughan Williams has seldom turned from those feelings which do us credit. That is why his music never fails to be impressive, whether you like it or not”.^{xxxvi}

Dickinson’s book contained chapters on the three symphonies, *On Wenlock Edge*, *Hugh the Drover*, the Mass in G minor, and one of the major works thus far published by Oxford University Press, *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*. There was a “List of Gramophone Recordings”, but no complete work list: this instead was published separately in the July 1928 edition of Foss’s short-lived Music Department house journal, *The Dominant*.^{xxxvii} In due course, OUP was to add two further volumes on Vaughan Williams to the “Musical Pilgrim”: *The Dramatic Works* (1937) and *The Later Works* (1937), both by Frank Howes (figure 7). “All the works here under review are published and controlled by the Oxford University

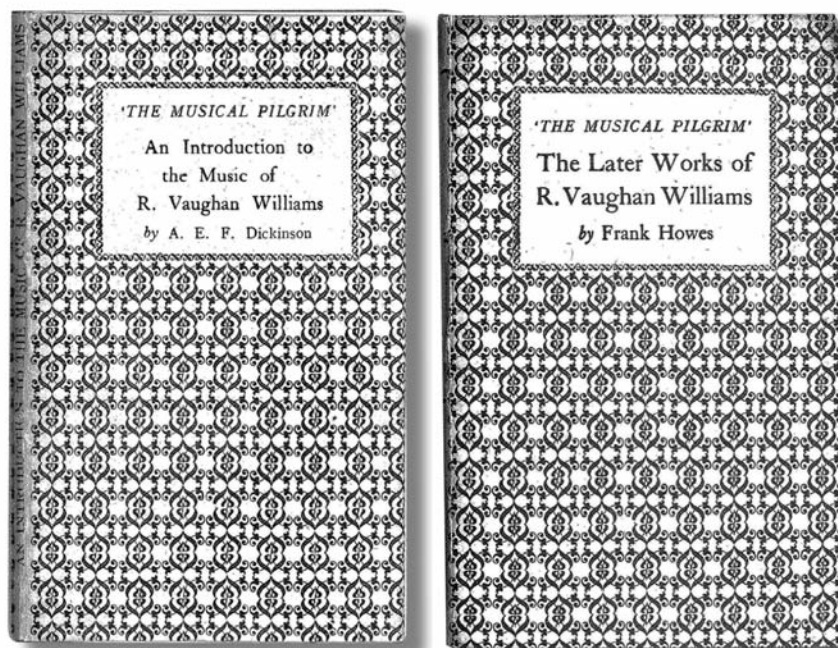


Figure 7: Front covers of “Musical Pilgrim” volumes on Vaughan Williams (Oxford University Press, 1928 and 1937)

Press”, Howes wrote in his introductory note to the second of these. By the year of Vaughan Williams’s death, the annual “Oxford Books on Music” catalogue shows that none of the “Pilgrim” titles remained in print, but instead were replaced, as we shall see, with a single volume by Howes, *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams*.

Vaughan Williams was a rarity in OUP’s list in that he appeared both as a composer and author (although he was not unique in this respect: Donald Tovey, for example, wrote for OUP the best-selling *Essays in Musical Analysis* and also had his Concerto for Cello, and original cadenzas for various classical concertos published by the Press). The first “prose” by Vaughan Williams published by OUP was, of course, his musical preface to *The English Hymnal*, a piece already demonstrating an individual writing style, and an ability to communicate trenchant and firmly held views in an accessible, lucid, and (where needed) amusing manner. In 1934 Humphrey Milford decided to publish the texts of the lectures Vaughan Williams had delivered at Bryn Mawr College in 1932 as part of the Mary Flexner Lectures on the Humanities series, and these appeared in 1934 as *National Music*, and in 1953 OUP published a series of previously uncollected essays and articles, *Some Thoughts on Beethoven’s Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects* (this included “A Minim’s Rest”, which had been written for a special collection of essays issued by the Press in honour of Milford after his retirement). London’s regular bulletin *The Periodical*, on a page spread which included entries for books on the musical instruments of the native races of South Africa, archaeological researches in Mexico, and voluntary sterilisation, wrote that *National Music* “...presents and discusses the theme that style is ultimately national, and while ‘national music’ cannot be ‘made out of’ the folk-song, yet [*sic*] the latter must become the common property of the people before a soil is produced in which the former can flourish”.^{xxxviii}

Vaughan Williams and Oxford University Press Inc.

While Vaughan Williams’s primary publishing relationship with Oxford University Press was conducted through its London offices, during the last nine years of his life a newly founded Music Department at Oxford University Press Inc. (OUP’s New York business, in 1949 at 114 Fifth Avenue) saw to it that the composer’s interests in the United States of America were looked after directly and actively, rather than in the “arm’s length” nature which necessarily prevailed during the 1930s and 1940s.

Oxford University Press Inc. had been established in New York in 1896, primarily in order to provide a North American outlet for the Press’s bible publishing. It was the first of OUP’s eventual worldwide network of branch offices and overseas companies. Like the London Business, the New York office commenced music publishing during the 1920s, but with no match for London’s energy or eventual volume of output. Choral music by the Anglo-Canadian composer Healey Willan (1880-1968) formed a speciality, but the best-seller was the multi-volume Oxford Piano Course (c.1928 onwards), a fine piano method tailored specifically to the US markets, bravely taking on other publishers’ established series on their own pitch. The New York office was also, in the late-1920s, acting in its own right as US agent for certain British music publishers: Paterson’s Publications, and for the works of Arnold Bax published by Murdoch Murdoch & Co. However, Hubert Foss urgently required a fully developed publishing infrastructure in North America, to handle there the distribution, interests, and (importantly) the rights of the burgeoning London list: the small

sheet music activity of New York did not, in his view, meet that need. Instead, Foss engineered an agency deal with one of the leading US publishers active in his markets, Carl Fischer Inc. Under the arrangements brokered by Foss, Fischer was granted exclusive US distribution rights for London sheet music publications (non-exclusive for hymn books and books about music), and acted as a rights representative and rental agent; Fischer was also granted similar rights for the much smaller US list. The contract, signed on 1 October 1930, ran on in various incarnations until 1949 when, the relationship with Fischer having deteriorated, it was decided to establish a Music Department proper at New York, primarily to act as a “mirror” for London’s music business.^{xli}

The New York department’s first manager was an educationalist, Lyle Dowling. From the outset Dowling worked closely with Alan Frank over London’s interests while enthusiastically renewing and driving forward the domestic publishing programme which, since 1930, had virtually lapsed. All OUP’s United Kingdom composers benefited from a new office that was in touch with US conductors, orchestras, opera houses, recording companies, and broadcasters; routine publishing responsibilities such as licensing, rental, and handling commissions for new works became straightforward; and statistics, data, and information were available at first hand. Dowling particularly embraced the interests of the two highest-profile London composers, Walton and Vaughan Williams, and as early as 1953 he was reporting to Alan Frank that of numbers of US performances of works by living non-US composers in the last season, “Vaughan Williams ranked number 4”.^{xlii} Vaughan Williams and Dowling rarely found the need to correspond, but the composer’s trip to the United States with Ursula in the “fall” of 1954 presented Dowling with his biggest challenge yet as OUP’s publishing representative there for the London Business’s most senior composer.

From the outset, it had been made clear that Vaughan Williams was travelling to America as a “visiting lecturer” at Cornell University, with all his arrangements there being “under our [the University’s] control between 25 September and 28 November”.^{xliii} As well as lectures at Cornell his schedule was planned also to take in events in Toronto, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Bloomington, and Los Angeles.^{xliii} After Vaughan Williams’s lecturing and possible conducting commitments were over, the University expressed “no [further] wishes to control his activities”,^{xliii} but Vaughan Williams had already made clear his intention of spending his remaining time in New York, as holiday for himself and Ursula, with no further professional engagements. Dowling, already in May being flooded by enquiries and proposals (word was out that America’s fourth-most popular living non-US composer was to arrive in the land in September), wrote to Vaughan Williams with some none-too-gentle arm-twisting:

You will be (as we can already tell) deluged with all sorts of offers – everything from tea-parties to commissions for film music, banquets, and all that. I cannot put my hand on my heart and swear that I disagree with your efforts to avoid “all that” – but, at the same time, must draw your attention to the very real disappointment your many true admirers will feel if, somehow, they cannot hear or at least see you.^{xliii}

In the same letter, Dowling went on to suggest to Vaughan Williams that he be present at a gala performance of *Serenade to Music* under Dmitri Mitropoulos (and, in the same concert, to conduct himself a short work of his own choosing), attend a dinner given in his honour by the League of Composers, appear in a “telecast” interview in a series that had already featured Bertrand

Russell, Wanda Landowska, and Albert Einstein – and much else besides. “All such matters as hotel in New York, getting you comfortably to and from places where you want to go, protection of Mrs. Vaughan Williams and yourself against unwanted visitors and telephone calls – all this we would gladly arrange.”^{xvii}

Dowling was, of course, simply doing his job, but probably had not quite got the measure of the priorities of a successful man in his ninth decade, who, understandably, saw little need for intensive press interviews and party-going. Vaughan Williams politely but firmly pushed back in his reply, written from 10 Hanover Terrace, London, on 6 June:

Dear Mr Dowling

Thank you for your kind and comprehensive letter. Two things stand out:

1. As you say, from September 25th – November 28th I am entirely in the hands of Cornell, and cannot accept any engagement without their leave. As a matter of fact I think they have arranged quite as much as I want to do during that time. I always explained to them that I was coming chiefly for a holiday, with just sufficient fees to pay my wife's and my expenses while in America. We also stipulated for a fortnight's complete holiday in the middle, to go and see Grand Canyons [*sic*] and such things – not to see people or go to parties.
2. After November 28th I hope to spend a few days in New York seeing friends. But it is a serious matter leaving my work for so long, and the latest boat I can catch, is December 4th. Our passages are already booked. (Please don't murmur “air” because I can't face it.) The next fast ship home is on Dec. 15th and too late for our English commitments.

Now some trouble arises: Josef Krips^{xviii} has done me the honour to ask me to conduct a piece of mine in New York on December 5th. This you see, I have had to refuse, and I am afraid he is rather offended about it. You will therefore see that I cannot possibly accept any dates to conduct in New York just before that.

Now as regards the rest of your letter: you talk about tea-parties and banquets. I believe that the League of Composers proposed to give me a dinner on my birthday, October 12th, on which date I am booked to give a lecture at Ann Arbor. And as for my time in New York, we have many friends there, and I want to spend my time visiting them and showing my wife some of the sights and not going to parties.

As regards Press interviews: I have always refused these in England and I can see no reason why I should change my rule in America.

I fear I am being difficult, but we do want to enjoy ourselves in America, and that we definitely shall not do, our natures being what they are, if we are besieged by invitations to dinners and teas and concerts. And I want my time which is not occupied by my duties at Cornell to be peaceful and quiet in order to see whether America will not stimulate me with new ideas.

Press interviewing, of course, includes Television interviewing. But I would consent to a short talk (NOT AN INTERVIEW) if it will not take up much time or energy. Please remember that I shall be eighty two on October 12th.

Yours sincerely

R. Vaughan Williams^{xlix}

In the event, Dowling offered and gave much support to Vaughan Williams and Ursula during their visit: obtaining consular assistance to ensure a swift passage through customs upon their arrival on 25 September; fending off the really unwanted enquiries and callers; calling in advice from the US tax authorities; obtaining tickets for the Cole Porter musical *Can-Can* (showing on Broadway¹ – Vaughan Williams seemed far more interested in this than attending *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera); and holding a tea-party in Dowling's own house at which the influential critic Olin Downes was present.ⁱⁱ Strangely, though, Dowling was unable to attend the welcome reception held in Vaughan Williams's honour at the Cornell Residential Club: indeed he neglected to reply to the invitation until after the event.ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite the adulation which clearly covered Vaughan Williams before and during his visit and the considerable energy he expended in undertaking it, Dowling continued to feel disappointed by the number of engagements turned down by his charge: “Actually, the real record of Dr. Vaughan Williams' visit here would be a long list of things he has not done”, he wrote to Alan Frank.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Frank's reply was tart: “...I think I did warn you in the first place that he was treating the thing primarily as a holiday and would not be persuaded into doing anything that he didn't want to do. When you and I get to his age, maybe we'll feel the same.”^{iv} Reflecting in the New Year, however, Dowling remembered above all “the fact of his extraordinary character – and the pleasure, not unmixed, of dealing for a change with a celebrity who is 100 per cent un-commercial; a rare event in my life, I can assure you”.^{lv} For his part, Vaughan Williams (who, upon his return, met with Alan Frank in London on 15 December 1954) asked Frank to pass on to Dowling “how very helpful you were over several matters connected with his visit. He seemed particularly relieved that you took the burden of income tax away from him”.^{lvi}

During Vaughan Williams's lifetime Oxford University Press Inc. issued various publicity items and listings of his music (these were generally the UK office's editions, printed in England, but modified with US prices or the phrase “import to order”, and with the New York office address inserted) but was never the first publisher of an original composition by him (figure 8). However, over the years from its foundation to eventual closure in 2010, the New York department published many derivative editions of Vaughan Williams's works, always under licence from OUP in the UK. Single movements from the large choral works and collections were routinely issued as offprints (often required as set items at US choral conventions and workshops), and occasionally the original UK edition of a complete work was re-set, re-designed, and reissued. *Nine Carols for Male Voices*, for example, which had originally been published in separate numbers by OUP in London in 1942 was issued as a single work in a New York edition in 1993 (figure 9). Works in new arrangements particularly suited to specifically US markets were also published by New York: the anthem *O How Amiable* (published by OUP in London in 1940), for example, appeared in 2000 with an arrangement of the accompaniment for brass ensemble, percussion, and organ made by Jerry Brubaker, former Chief Composer and Arranger of the United States Navy Band. New York's editions quite frequently deviated from the strict house style “R. Vaughan Williams” cover and title page attribution rule, the composer's name appearing with “Ralph” instead of the standard “R.”. The New York Music Department always liked to show a little autonomy.

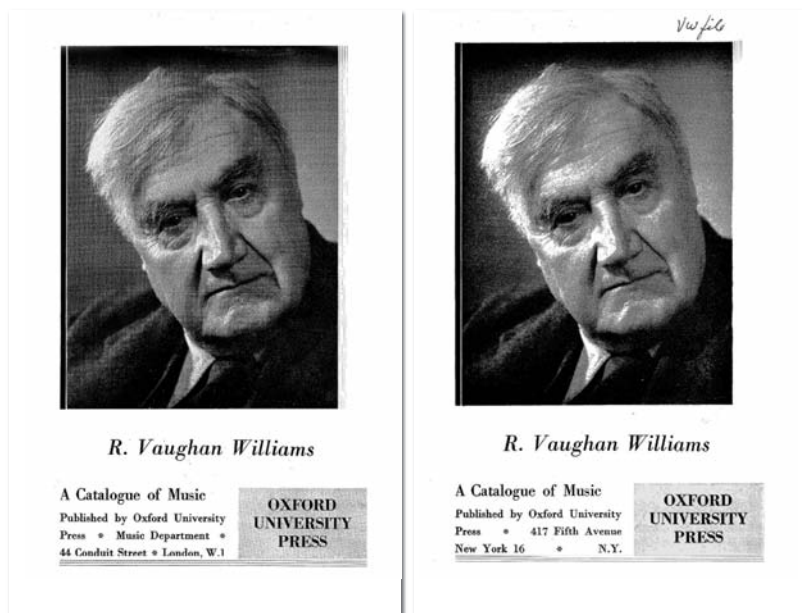


Figure 8: UK and US editions of the mid-1950s Oxford University Press Vaughan Williams catalogue

conclusion, Oxford University Press set the scene for the almost relentless evaluation and re-evaluation that Vaughan Williams and his music would enjoy in the years to come:

Which of his works will last, and which will perish with the passing of time, no one can tell. But we may be sure that *some* will survive. For Vaughan Williams's music expresses something which is not expressed by the music of any other composer, and uniqueness of this sort is imperishable.^{lvii}

Vaughan Williams had continued to compose until the very end of his life, and therefore complete and reasoned listings and assessments of his entire oeuvre only became possible from the early 1960s onwards. In 1962 Oxford University Press took the initiative to publish a “comprehensive list giving full details of all works now available, together with a complete discography”. In familiar and redolent terms, OUP issued this catalogue “on behalf of the music publishers represented within”, which were: Edwin Ashdown Ltd., Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., Bosworth & Co., J. Curwen & Sons Ltd., Novello & Co. Ltd., Stainer & Bell Ltd., Joseph Williams Ltd., and, of course, OUP itself.

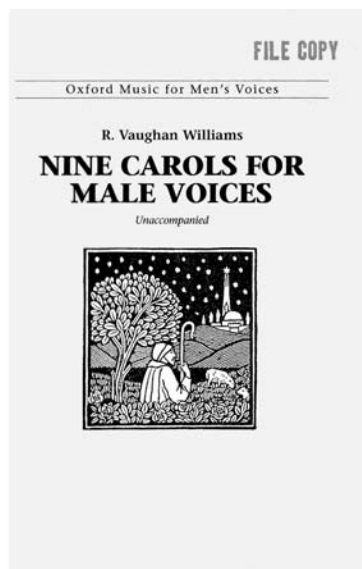


Figure 9: Cover design for Oxford University Press Inc.'s 1993 edition of *Nine Carols for Male Voices*

Evidently regarded as something more than ephemera (it was on sale for two shillings and sixpence) the catalogue, entitled just *R. Vaughan Williams*, was both an important first attempt at listing the majority of the works (how many more appeared here than in the *Dominant* list of 1928!) and, simply, a tribute to the composer from all of his publishers. It was elegantly produced in “landscape” format, printed on creamy art paper, and with the characteristic and benign portrait photograph by Douglas Glass pasted in by hand to each copy. The cover, in buff and brown, was suggestive both of OUP's 1920s cover design for the composer's works, and the “Musical Pilgrim” volumes' “Fell type” ornamentation (figure 10). The musical listing was carefully classified and arranged, and the thirty-two page publication also included details of books by and about Vaughan Williams, as well as a comprehensive discography of both “Microgroove” and “78 R.P.M.” recordings of Vaughan Williams's works, compiled by F. F. Clough and G. J. Cumming.

Posthumous listings, catalogues, and biographies of Vaughan Williams published by Oxford University Press

Amidst the plethora of obituaries and tributes which appeared following Vaughan Williams's sudden death on 26 August 1958, the tenor of Oxford University Press's own press release seemed strangely muted: leaving to the newspapers, gramophone companies, and radio programmes the heaping of praise, OUP focussed instead on the publisher's own relationship with the composer. This “association”, as the writer called it, spanned the years from *The English Hymnal* and the publications of the mid-1920s to the ninth symphony, “which is not due to appear until next month”. That the Press's informal agreement to publish any work offered by Vaughan Williams had held good for over thirty years was, the press release noted, “perhaps a measure of what was for us an entirely happy, as well as a stimulating, relationship”. In

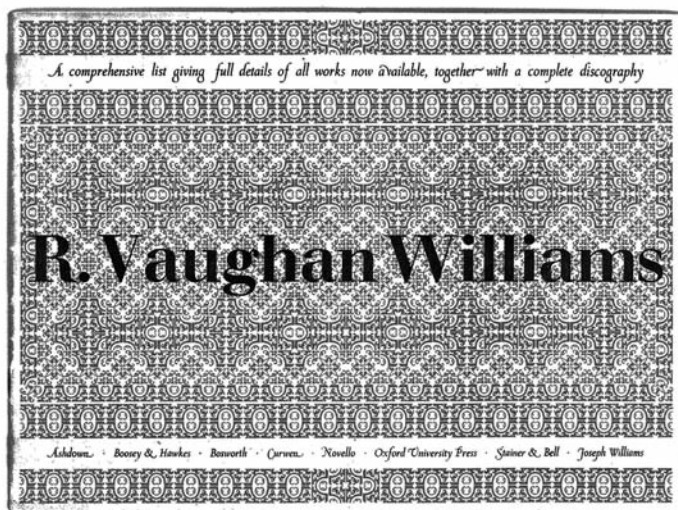


Figure 10: R. Vaughan Williams (commemorative multi-publisher catalogue issued by Oxford University Press in 1962)

The question of an official “study”, marshalling all the facts concerning Vaughan Williams’s life and works, came up well before his death, OUP feeling both that such a book was required, and that it should in any case be the publisher. It was a question of timing, but Vaughan Williams’s eightieth birthday in 1952 had early in that year brought the subject to the attention of the Publisher, Geoffrey Cumberlege. Cumberlege took the unusual step of writing to his predecessor, Sir Humphrey Milford (now living in retirement in Drayton St. Leonard, Oxfordshire, but to die just nine months later), asking for his opinion on suitable authors. Although Cumberlege realised that Vaughan Williams would have to approve the choice, what he really had in mind was “something that would appear a year or two after V.W.’s death”.^{lviii} Various names came up as author, including Patrick Hadley (rejected outright by Alan Frank), and Hubert Foss who, however, had already “shot his bolt” (Cumberlege) by publishing a book on Vaughan Williams with George G. Harrap & Co., a situation further complicated by the fact that two portions of it, “My Musical Autobiography” and “Who wants the English Composer?”, had been written by the composer himself – this, and the fact that Foss was Vaughan Williams’s friend and former music publisher, meant that in no way could the Harrap book be viewed objective and definitive, or its author unbiased. Foss himself died in 1953, and so was unable in any case ever to write the definitive volume; his Harrap book, incidentally, was not listed in OUP’s souvenir catalogue *R. Vaughan Williams*.

Eventually the music critic and scholar Frank Howes was nominated as the most suitable writer, but rather than a new book at this stage, a single-volume update, extension, and replacement for his and Dickinson’s earlier “Musical Pilgrim” texts was proposed. “The new book he [Howes] is preparing”, wrote Frank to Cumberlege, “will, in some ways, be a stop-gap volume. I raised the more important point which you made, namely, that an official large-scale book on Vaughan Williams, dealing with biography and music, will be needed as soon after his death as possible.”^{lix} In 1952 it seemed that Howes indeed might eventually be the writer of that book, and his “stop-gap volume” preparation for it. His *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* appeared in 1954, its purpose billed as being “to help the reader to understand and appreciate the works of Dr. Vaughan Williams rather than to present any personal opinions as to their importance.”^{lx}

As things turned out, Vaughan Williams resolved the question of the definitive work himself, stipulating in his will the wish for a single book, with Ursula writing on “the life” and his new young friend Michael Kennedy on “the works”, although whether a biographical account by the composer’s second wife could be any more objective or unbiased than a piece by Foss remained an open question, and one which exercised the Press in the initial planning stages of the book, first discussed with Ursula and Kennedy at a meeting in January of 1959. There was also the question of balance: to both Frank and, earlier, Cumberlege, the works far outweighed the life in intrinsic interest (a view that, much later, came to be challenged by scholars), and at the time this aspect was an important one as the Press planned the publication.

In order to assist the authors OUP, in May 1959, sent out a letter to all national newspapers and music journals, asking any of their readers “who would be willing to loan letters or relevant documents” to contact the Press: those editors that responded seemed more interested in securing serialisation rights for their papers than assisting in the writing of the book. Very soon it

became clear that here were two books, rather than the one envisaged by Vaughan Williams and initially planned. Both Ursula and Kennedy delivered their manuscripts in time for publication of the two volumes simultaneously at the end of 1964. The size and binding style was uniform, and both used the same entertaining caricatures of the composer as endpapers. Ursula’s volume, *R.V.W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, was personal, reflective, and elegiac in tone and indeed drew upon the reminiscences and documents of many, while Kennedy’s, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, provided a solid and comprehensive survey of the music, some personal notes, and the fullest list of works yet to appear, together with a bibliography, a list of folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams, and an updated version of the discography from *R. Vaughan Williams*. The two new books complemented each other perfectly, but Kennedy’s, long at 775 pages, eventually took on a life of its own, with OUP deciding to issue music survey and catalogue as separate components: Kennedy’s study of the music (but still under the title of the composite original) appeared in paperback in 1971 and in a new edition in 1980, and *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* came out separately in 1982. The single definitive study envisaged by Cumberlege thus, thirty years on, finally became three books. The *Catalogue* itself then went its own way, with a further revision appearing as its second edition in 1996. The books by Ursula and Kennedy answer themselves the questions of balance which worried the Press at the outset of the project: the life and the works were, in fact, one entity. “If we would know him”, Kennedy closed his final chapter, “it can only be through his music, for into it he put all that he knew.”^{lxi}

A special centenary edition of Oxford University Press’s own regularly updated and gratis Vaughan Williams work list came out in 1972, and this noted also Michael Kennedy’s study in paperback, and a forthcoming memoir by Roy Douglas, *Working with R.V.W.* Ursula’s own *R.V.W.* was lightly illustrated, but the emergence of John Lunn’s important photographic collection, and the sorting of Ursula’s own picture archive, resulted in a further OUP book, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: a Pictorial Biography* (1971), complementing in images Ursula’s own account of her husband’s life: Kennedy, Ursula, and Vaughan Williams are shown together on page 119, in a photograph taken at the Cheltenham Festival just weeks before the composer died. In the book’s final image, alongside the composer’s own translation of Horace (“Swiftly they pass, the flying years, / no prayer can stay their course...”), Vaughan Williams is seen closing a door, as if to shut out the light in which his face is bathed. Or is he, we sometimes wonder, knocking at the door, asking to come in?

Renewing the catalogue: editions and works published after Vaughan Williams’s death

The relationship between a publisher and a composer does not end when a composer dies: generally, and depending on the particular contracts and arrangements in place, it simply enters a new phase. In the United Kingdom and Europe, copyright laws ensure that musical works are “protected” not only during the composer’s lifetime, but for seventy years after death; similar provision now prevails in the United States, although protection for works published prior to 2002 may be subject to different rules. But in certain countries, a fifty year post mortem rule is in place: the majority of Vaughan Williams’s works are now in the public domain in Canada, for example.

So, for the works of Vaughan Williams published during his lifetime, copyright in the UK and Europe will prevail until 31 December 2028. For Oxford University Press and for The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust this means not only a continuing income from royalties on these works, but a commensurate requirement and responsibility to collaborate and to do those things which ensure such income, such as promoting works in the catalogue and ensuring availability, reprinting scores in new editions in the light of recent scholarship or discoveries (a new edition of *Sinfonia Antartica*, edited by David Matthews and with an introductory essay by Max Jones on the Antarctic connections was, for example, published in 2012, as was a new edition of the Concerto for Tuba, reinstating the original first movement cadenza), and to ensure that for works with orchestral parts on hire these parts are presented in new and clear editions (many of the orchestral parts for Vaughan Williams's works written in the 1940s and 1950s were produced from hand-copied originals, and over the past ten years, with the ubiquity of computerised "engraving", OUP has been undertaking, in collaboration with the Trust, a renewal programme). There is now also a programme at OUP to issue (again in collaboration with The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust) first editions of previously unpublished orchestral works. *Serenade in A minor* (1898), *Bucolic Suite* (1900-1), and the *Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra* (1904) were all published in 2012 by OUP in study score format, with orchestral material on hire. Selection of such early works for publication is carefully made to ensure that Vaughan Williams's reputation is upheld, and not merely to satisfy curiosity, or in response to a feeling that the works should be published simply because they are there. The restrained and uniform cover design of all of these new publications and reissues glances back and pays tribute to the classic Vaughan Williams covers of the 1930s.

As befitting Oxford University Press's longstanding role as custodian not only of Vaughan Williams's musical legacy, but of the literary too, the most significant recent achievement of the Press (in collaboration with, in her lifetime, Ursula, and the predecessor of the Trust, R.V.W Ltd.) was the publication, in 2008, of both a comprehensive edition of Vaughan Williams's writings, edited by David Manning (*Vaughan Williams on Music*), and *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, a collection of more than seven hundred of the most significant surviving letters of Vaughan Williams, under the meticulous editorship of Hugh Cobbe, who dedicated the volume to the memory of Ursula Vaughan Williams, in the knowledge that it was her wish to see such a collection published. Cobbe's edition of Vaughan Williams's letters throws a fresh light on the man, as musician, friend, mentor, and as cultural commentator – and a good number of these are written to Hubert Foss and Alan Frank in their capacity as his music publishers, etching the detail of many of the matters considered in this article.

From *The English Hymnal* to collected letters and writings, and new and renewed editions, the relationship between composer and publisher now spans well over one hundred years. "Vaughan Williams arrived on the English scene at the right moment", once wrote Hubert Foss.^{lxvii} What he might also have added was that, for Vaughan Williams, Foss's own music publishing department at the Oxford University Press had done so too.

Material from the Archive of Oxford University Press is reproduced by permission of the Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press. Quotations and illustrations from scores and materials published by OUP are reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press.

- ⁱ Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- ⁱⁱ See "Report of the Committee on the University Press", supplement no. 7 to the *University Gazette*, vol. c, May 1970.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Quoted in Michael Hurd, *Vincent Novello – and Company* (St. Albans and London: Granada Publishing, 1981), p. 114.
- ^{iv} See *One More Step: the Continuing Story of Stainer & Bell* (London: Stainer & Bell, c.2009).
- ^v Vaughan Williams to Norman Peterkin, 9 August 1945, in Hugh Cobbe (ed.), *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), letter 389. Cobbe's edition of the letters is henceforth cited as "Cobbe, Letters".
- ^{vi} Vaughan Williams to Robert F. McEwen, 10 May 1925, Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 153.
- ^{vii} OUP Music Department ledger MUSIC SERIES: 3 (Oxford Orchestral Series subsection), OUP Archive.
- ^{viii} OUP Music Department ledger MUSIC SERIES: 3 (Oxford Solo Songs subsection), OUP Archive.
- ^{ix} OUP Music Department ledger R-Z, OUP Archive.
- ^x For example, in *Music and Musicians*, vol. 1 no. 2, October 1952, inside back cover.
- ^{xi} Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 169.
- ^{xii} Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 239.
- ^{xiii} Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 268.
- ^{xiv} Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 466.
- ^{xv} Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 702.
- ^{xvi} Vaughan Williams to Humphrey Milford, 11 March 1942, OUP file "BBC Hymn Book 1, 2 & 3" File 1, BD/ED/000096, OUP Archive.
- ^{xvii} Vaughan Williams to Foss, 6 November 1941, Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 369.
- ^{xviii} OUP Music Department Contracts files, Vaughan Williams A-O.
- ^{xix} OUP internal memorandum, Peterkin to Milford, 24 April 1942, Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 382.
- ^{xx} Hubert Foss, "Modern Styles of Music Printing in England", *The Fleuron*, 3, 1924, reprinted in F. Meynell and H. Simon (eds.), *Fleuron Anthology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 119-131.
- ^{xxi} London: Henderson & Spalding, 1926.
- ^{xxii} London: Henderson & Spalding, nd but c.1926.
- ^{xxiii} *Ibid.* p.44.
- ^{xxiv} *Ibid.* p.45. Many music books subsequently published by the Press under Foss, however, contain music examples set from the standard music type held at Oxford, in the "jigsaw puzzle" manner which he deplored for sheet music.
- ^{xxv} *Ibid.* pp. 43-4.
- ^{xxvi} All the proofs of Henderson & Spalding scores surviving in the OUP Archives were drawn straight from inked plates, sometimes reversed out using green ink.
- ^{xxvii} *Some Practical Considerations*, p. 45.
- ^{xxviii} The proofs of the large format Symphony No. 4 score survive in OUP's Archive and show that they were also used for conducting the initial performances.
- ^{xxix} *Oxford Music 1659 -1959* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 7.
- ^{xxx} Information from *Kelly's Directory (1939)* and the London Metropolitan Archive's map collection kindly supplied by Robin Woolven.
- ^{xxxi} Advertisement in *The Dominant*, vol. 1 no. 9, July 1928, inside back cover.
- ^{xxxii} Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 354.
- ^{xxxiii} Percy Scholes, *The Oxford Companion to Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1st edition, 1938), p. 979.
- ^{xxxiv} Percy Scholes, *The Oxford Companion to Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 9th edition, 1955), pp. 1076-7.
- ^{xxxv} A. E. F. Dickinson, *An Introduction to the Music of R. Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 5.
- ^{xxxvi} *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- ^{xxxvii} A. E. F. Dickinson, "A Bibliography of Works by R. Vaughan Williams", *The Dominant*, vol. 1 no. 9, July 1928, pp.36-8; on the story of the journal itself see Simon Wright, "The Dominant: a note on a short-lived periodical", *Brio*, vol. 41. no. 2, Autumn/Winter 2004, pp. 36-9.
- ^{xxxviii} *The Periodical*, vol. xx, no. 178, February 1935, p. 12F.
- ^{xxxix} See *Oxford Publishing Since 1478* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.18.
- ^{xl} Vaughan Williams to Guthrie Foote, 1 July 1955, OUP file "English Hymnal Jubilee", OUP/PUB/30/317, OUP Archive.
- ^{xli} Contract and notes in Miscellaneous Contracts & Agreements file passed from Oxford University Press Inc. to UK Music Department, April 2010, OUP Archive.
- ^{xlii} Lyle Dowling to Alan Frank, 14 August 1953, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1952-53", OUP Archive; the three composers ahead of Vaughan Williams were Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and Hindemith.
- ^{xliii} Keith Falkner (Cornell University) to Dowling, 27 May 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{xliv} See details in Dowling's internal memorandum reproduced in Cobbe, *Letters*, letter 635.
- ^{xlv} Falkner to Dowling, 27 May 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{xlvi} Dowling to Vaughan Williams, 28 May 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{xlvii} Dowling to Vaughan Williams, 28 May 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{xlviii} Josef Krips (1902-1974), Austrian conductor and violinist. In 1954 he left his post as principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, and became music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.
- ^{xlix} Vaughan Williams to Dowling, 6 June 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^l © The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust and reproduced by kind permission.
- ^{li} *Can-Can* opened at the Shubert Theater on 7 May 1953 and ran until 25 June 1955.
- ^{lii} When Downes died in August of 1955, Dowling wrote personally to Ursula Vaughan Williams to inform her; Dowling to Ursula Vaughan Williams, 23 August 1955, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{liii} Dowling to The Friends of Music at Cornell, 13 October 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{liiii} Dowling to Alan Frank, 17 November 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{liv} Frank to Dowling, 13 December 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{lv} Dowling to Frank, 4 January 1955, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{lvi} Frank to Dowling, 16 December 1954, OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1954-57", OUP Archive.
- ^{lvii} Oxford University Press press release, August 1958; copy in OUP Inc. file "Vaughan Williams 1958-1972", OUP Archive.
- ^{lviii} Geoffrey Cumberlege to Humphrey Milford, 15 January 1952, OUP file PB/ED/019165 "[Vaughan] Williams: The Life of Ralph Vaughan Williams", OUP Archive.
- ^{lix} Alan Frank to Cumberlege, 25 January 1952, OUP file PB/ED/019165 "[Vaughan] Williams: The Life of Ralph Vaughan Williams", OUP Archive.
- ^{lx} *Oxford Books on Music – Complete 1958 Catalogue* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.19. Similar surgery took place with Frank Howes' two "Musical Pilgrim" volumes on William Walton (1942, 1943), which became a single book, *The Music of William Walton*, in 1965.
- ^{lxi} Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 373
- ^{lxii} "Ralph Vaughan Williams, O.M.", in programme booklet for Vaughan Williams's 80th birthday concert, London Philharmonic Orchestra/Sir Adrian Boult, Royal Albert Hall, 25 September 1952. 🐾

The Pilgrim's Progress

An undoubted highlight of 2012, a particularly Vaughan Williams-rich year, was the English National Opera production of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in November. Here, in a note prepared for English National Opera, former Society Chairman **Stephen Connock** outlines the work's performance history. Society Treasurer **John Francis** then reviews the performances. Two Society members give their verdicts in the Concert Review pages.

The Pilgrim's Progress in Performance Stephen Connock

In the Autumn of 1949, Vaughan Williams met David Webster and Karl Rankl, respectively the General Administrator and Music Director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, for a play-through of the almost-completed opera *The Pilgrim's Progress*. According to Vaughan Williams, they made "a few perfunctory remarks like 'very interesting' and I heard no more for about two months". He came to the conclusion that the Royal Opera House was not interested and began discussions with the Arts Theatre in Cambridge for the world premiere. However, the board of Covent Garden was interested and, in conjunction with the Arts Council, who had first considered the opera in 1948, it was proposed that the work should form part of the Festival of Britain in 1951. David Webster went to see the composer again in late 1949 in his home in Dorking, accompanied this time by John Denison, Music Director of the Arts Council. John Denison later recalled:

Vaughan Williams kept saying that the opera was about Bunyan's great moral impact on Everyman. He was adamant that it had to be performed in an opera house. He wanted the Vanity Fair sequence to be done with no holds barred, with strippers and all. In those days, this was quite contentious for Covent Garden. He said: "You cannot do Vanity Fair in a church!"

With the board of the Royal Opera House agreeing to go ahead with the production, a decision had to be made on the conductor and on the producer. On the musical staff at Covent Garden was Leonard Hancock who had been a student of R.O. Morris at the Royal College of Music in 1946/7. He had met Vaughan Williams at the RCM and it was the composer who pushed for Hancock to conduct, saying he wanted "an English conductor to do it, preferably someone young who was not an established figure". Leonard Hancock told me in 1997 that he felt this was a "wonderful opportunity" and duly went down to Dorking for tea with Vaughan Williams. There, the composer outlined his ideas for the production:

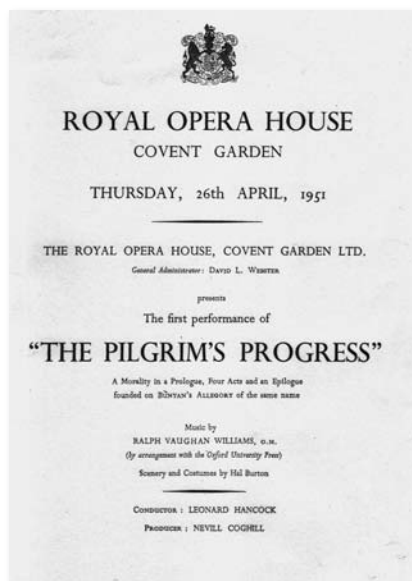
Vaughan Williams wanted the subject to be very dramatic. He very much focused on the visual impact of the story. He wanted visual drama as well as musical drama. He asked that his friends E.J. Dent (Professor of Music at Cambridge) and Clive Carey (Director of the Opera School at the RCM) be involved in the rehearsals and both made many suggestions on the piece.

With the production taking shape in 1950, there was still no producer. Eventually Patrick Terry, the Manager/Secretary to Karl Rankl at the Royal Opera House, suggested Nevill Coghill, Professor of English Literature at Oxford University. He was steeped in English Literature and had directed a number of University Dramatic Society productions, but had, however, no operatic experience. Coghill brought in Hal Burton as the designer. Leonard Hancock remembered in my 1997 interview how things went:

Coghill's conception was not brilliant enough. Vanity Fair needed more colour – he did not cotton on to this aspect of the piece. The production did not have enough contrast and lacked excitement. Because of Coghill's lack of operatic experience, he could not match the visual images to the sound. It was disappointing to me but I was not established enough to influence things. However, I felt very happy with the music. Vaughan Williams' philosophy of drama was very much based on his own pastoral feelings about English music. The atmosphere is in the score.

The first performance on 26 April 1951, with the Australian baritone Arnold Matters as

Pilgrim, confirmed Leonard Hancock's views. The music was very well received, with E.J. Dent calling it "the greatest and most deeply moving contribution of modern times to the building-up of a national repertory of musical drama". The production, though, was not liked. Michael Kennedy says, "The worst aspects of the production were the appalling costumes and the unimaginative lighting." One critic, writing in *Opera* magazine, said, "The delineation of lust and frivolity in the Vanity Fair scene was enough to send one to the nearest convent in the hope of a gayer time." Vaughan Williams was deeply disappointed, telling Ursula Vaughan Williams in typically trenchant terms, "They don't like



Programme cover for the first performance of *Pilgrim* in 1951



The House Beautiful, Act 1, Covent Garden 1951

it, and they won't like it, and perhaps they never will like it because it hasn't got a love story or any big duets and it's not like the operas they are used to, but it's the sort of opera I wanted to write, and there it is."

The Royal Opera House performed the *Morality* ten times, including 30 April, 14 and 21 June, and 12 February 1952. A revised version – lengthening the *Vanity Fair* scene in Act 3 – was given on this 12 February performance. It received one performance outside London, at Leeds on 12 July 1951 and the Royal Opera did not return to the work again until 1997.

The opera was next performed, to Vaughan Williams's great pleasure, by the Cambridge University Musical Society on Tuesday to Saturday, 23 to 27 February 1954. The producer and conductor were Dennis Arundell and Boris Ord, both long friends of the composer. Arundell's pageant-like production was described by the *Cambridge Evening News* on 24 February 1954 as "masterly and highly imaginative". Eric Blom, reviewing the first performance, said, "Musically, the performance conducted by Boris Ord, was astonishingly good." *Pilgrim* was sung for the first time by the young baritone John Noble, who was studying Geography at Fitzwilliam College. It was Boris Ord who spotted his talent and asked him to sing the lead role. John Noble was to make the role of *Pilgrim* his own for the next thirty years. His was a touching and dignified interpretation.



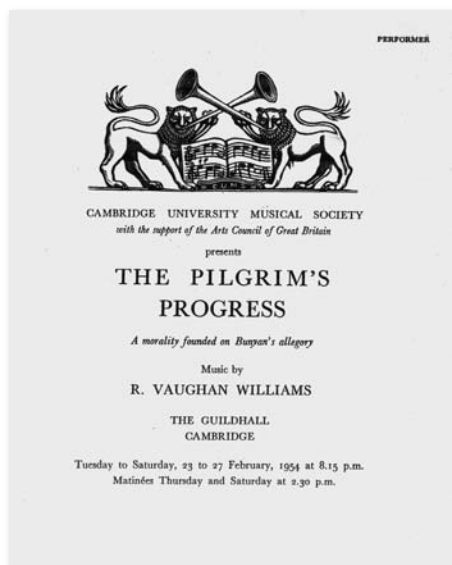
John Noble as Pilgrim in the 1954 Cambridge production

Vaughan Williams was delighted and wrote a letter of thanks to John Noble after the second Cambridge performance when he said, "I have often in my mental vision a picture of a noble figure with sword drawn in full armour." John Noble told me in 1997 that, when performing *Pilgrim*, "I cried every night with the sheer warmth of the music."

There followed, after many years of neglect, a few concert hall performances, for example in Manchester in May 1970, conducted by Maurice Handford, and in the Royal Festival Hall in London on 3 November 1970, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. This latter performance, again with John Noble, was a run-through prior to the EMI recording.

The opera had to wait until the composer's centenary, in 1972, for a major UK staged production, this time at Charterhouse, Vaughan Williams's school from 1887 to 1890. The four Charterhouse performances, from 25 to 28 October 1972, were conducted by William Llewellyn and produced by Geoffrey Ford. John Noble was widely praised for his singing of the central role. As one reviewer put it, "His presence raised the occasion to a remarkably high standard and, indeed, he was a cornerstone of the success

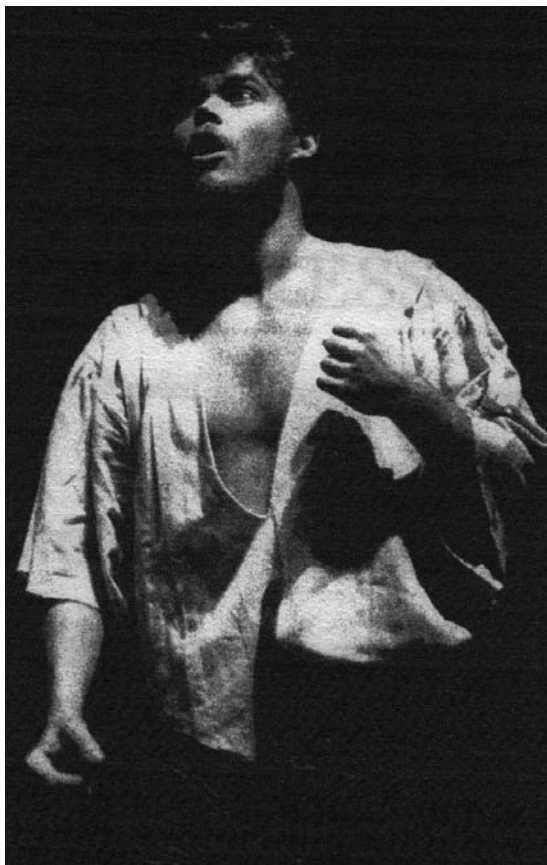
of the revival." The open-plan stage setting, with a minimum of scenery, had the chorus seated outside the action, commenting as appropriate but, movingly, rising up as *Pilgrim* reached the *Celestial City*, rejoicing in his achievement.



Programme cover for the Cambridge University production in 1954

The next notable performance of the opera was that produced by the Royal Northern College of Music in 1992. Joseph Ward was the producer and, as an actor as well as singer, he saw the stage action from the perspective of Bunyan's lines "So I awoke, and behold it was a dream." As Ursula Vaughan Williams put it:

As a dream the opera took in all the people who had saved Pilgrim and frightened him. The menace of Apollyon and the dangers of Vanity Fair were vividly exciting – and the Alleluias were sung as marvellously as they could be.



Richard Whitehouse as Pilgrim in the Royal Northern College of Music production in 1992.

Richard Whitehouse sang Pilgrim and the orchestra was conducted by Igor Kennaway. This staging was a genuinely theatrical experience, which seemed to justify Vaughan Williams's faith in his opera as a work for the theatre not the Cathedral. Ursula Vaughan Williams said to Igor Kennaway immediately after the first night, "I have waited forty years to hear it like this. My only regret is that Ralph wasn't here," to which Igor Kennaway replied, "But he was and we all heard him."

Joseph Ward also directed the Australian premiere of the opera as part of the Brisbane Festival in 2002. As barely a year had passed since the awful tragedy of 9/11, Ward and Michael Holt, the designer, turned Bunyan's City of Destruction into the ruins of Ground Zero. As Michael Holt put it, "The opera opened as a New York fireman watched a great piece of shattered building hoisted away, revealing a dust covered man clutching a briefcase. This was our Pilgrim." The conductor was Michael Fulcher. Remarkably, the opera was attended by Ursula Vaughan Williams, then aged ninety-one.

Aside from a production by the Bristol Phoenix Choir, conducted by Leslie Bunt, in Clifton Cathedral on 10 November 2001, more recent times have witnessed three semi-staged productions of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, all conducted by the late and much-missed Richard Hickox. He was devoted to the work, and recorded it for Chandos Records in 1998. The first of Hickox's productions, to mark the 125th anniversary of the composer's birth, was undertaken at the 39th St. Endellion Festival on 3 and 4 August 1997. Although used by Richard Hickox as a run-through for the performances in London and Birmingham later that year, it was a remarkable occasion in its own right. The intimacy of the small church in St. Endellion and the complete conviction of the artists involved, with Roderick Williams as Pilgrim, led to an overwhelming spiritual experience.

Next came two performances under the auspices of The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and performed at the Barbican (on 3 November 1997) and in Symphony Hall, Birmingham (on 30 November 1997) as part of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society's *Vision of Albion* opera festival. This time, Gerald Finley sang Pilgrim and Joseph Ward returned as the director. As Anthony Payne put it in the Independent on 5 November 1997:

Richard Hickox's fine performance went a long way towards re-establishing the work's nobility and sturdiness, and the lyric intensity of the climactic solo and choral textures achieved true incandescence...Gerald Finley achieved an ideal combination of earthiness and spiritual honesty, no mere symbolic figure but a man to sympathise with and admire.

Finally, Richard Hickox's third set of performances of the opera were on 20 and 22 June 2008 at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. The Philharmonia Orchestra promoted a series of concerts, as part of the fiftieth anniversary of Vaughan Williams's death, of which the most ambitious was the semi-staging of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. David Edwards was the director and Pilgrim was memorably sung by Roderick Williams, reprising his role over ten years after the St. Endellion semi-staged version. The performances were dedicated to the memory of Ursula Vaughan Williams, who had died in 2007, and who would have cherished these two performances of an opera she always said fully captured Vaughan Williams's inspiration. She knew well that *The Pilgrim's Progress* represented the essence of Vaughan Williams, the musician and the man.

Notwithstanding the Brisbane performance mentioned above, the *Morality* has been rarely given outside of the United Kingdom. The North American premiere had to wait until 28 April 1968, when it was performed by the Brigham Young University Opera Workshop, directed by Max C. Golightly. Brigham Young, based in Provo, Utah, is now America's largest religious university, with Mitt Romney a distinguished past student – he graduated in 1971. Trinity Lyric Opera in San Francisco performed the work in 2006, with Jason Detwiler as Pilgrim and John Kendall Bailey as conductor. A remarkably colourful production took place at the Nucleo Universitario de Opera in Brazil – there is a fascinating excerpt on *You Tube*. Finally, Richard Hickox gave another deeply committed concert performance of the *Morality* for Opera Australia on 27 March 2008, with Alan Opie as Pilgrim, described by one critic as “beautiful music-making”.

All lovers of Vaughan Williams's music will hope that the ENO fully-staged production in November 2012 in London will lead to many more performances, both in the UK and overseas.

DISCOGRAPHY

Complete Morality

John Noble, Raimund Herinx, John Carol Case, Sheila Armstrong, Robert Lloyd
London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult
EMI CMS 7 64212 or EMI 29126

Gerald Finley, Peter Coleman-Wright, Jeremy White, Pamela Helen Stephen, Gidon Saks
Orchestra and Chorus of the Royal Opera House conducted by Richard Hickox
Chandos 9625 (2)

Incidental Music

The Pilgrim's Progress – A Bunyan Sequence
Sir John Gielgud, Richard Pasco, Ursula Howells, Corydon Singers, City of London Sinfonia conducted by Matthew Best
Hyperion CDA 66511

A Suite from the Incidental Music
Delyth Jones, Elsa Kendal, Robin Leggate
BBC Northern Singers and BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Groves
Carlton Classics 15656 91662

The Pilgrim's Journey (arranged by Roy Douglas)
Louis Boyd, Clifford Scott, John Peck
Plymouth Choir, Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn
Albion Records ALBCD 009

Songs from the Opera

Seven Songs from The Pilgrim's Progress
Sarah Fox, Roderick Williams, Iain Burnside
Albion Records ALBCD 001

Members might like to note that Albion Records intends releasing the original 1943 broadcast performance of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, with incidental music by Vaughan Williams. John Gielgud is Pilgrim and the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus are conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

This article originally appeared in the booklet for the ENO production of The Pilgrim's Progress in November, 2012. It is reproduced here with the kind permission of English National Opera. ■

Come hither, I will show thee excellent things: *The Pilgrim's Progress* at ENO, November 2012

John Francis

I went to see it for the fourth time and – finally – the last scene made sense. Let me explain. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a much shortened version of Bunyan's original, which continues *The Pilgrim's Progress From This World To That Which Is To Come*. Each life ends in death, and so it is here. Pilgrim is anointed with the funeral spices camphire, spikenard and saffron, frankincense, myrrh and aloes before facing the ordeal of the river, which Bunyan heads “Christian's conflict at the hour of death”. Vaughan Williams's stage directions call it “The River of Death”. The novel deals lightly with death, as Christian passes through the waters and finds ground to stand on, with shallow water. Yoshi Oida's production for English National Opera took a more literal approach, as the electric chair (first shown to us as Pilgrim is dragged off to prison and execution at the end of *Vanity Fair*) becomes the means of execution. At the moment of death, a blinding light is shone at the audience from a group of spotlights at the back of the stage.

A common reaction to this scene was shock. The chair is revealed; surely (we thought) they're not going to...but yes, they are and they do. For some, this detracted from the elation that should be felt as Pilgrim reaches the Celestial City. This was reflected in audience reactions, and in a number of press reviews. But I think we have to ask: how else do you deal with the death of Pilgrim on his way to the Golden Gates? We don't seem to have clear stage directions; indeed the moment of death seems to fall between Act 4, Scenes 2 and 3. Oida's solution will not be the only one; we hope for further productions, and of course there will be new ideas. But it was a valid solution, giving integrity to the production.

Let us go back to the beginning. Bunyan sits in his cell, explaining that it was all a dream. As he begins to tell the story, he puts a white jacket over the grey prison uniform and becomes Pilgrim. The decision to use one singer for both Bunyan and Pilgrim worried some of us before opening night, since Vaughan Williams wrote those parts for two singers with contrasting voices. Dramatically, the transition (at the beginning, and reversed at the end) was just so natural that the audience had no difficulty in accepting it. Those who know the opera really well would have preferred to retain the vocal contrast; I suspect that many others found that the opera gained a certain strength from having one singer take us right through from beginning to end, and Roland Wood grew in confidence and stature across the seven performances.

Tom Schenk's set comprised a series of prison cells on wheels. These were pushed about into a variety of configurations by stage hands and chorus members, and provided much of the choreography required to sustain a sense of movement through 130 minutes of music. Planning and execution were brilliant.

The downside was, perhaps, a lack of colour. ENO's Artistic Director, John Berry, suggested that this would be made up by clever lighting. Up to a point, I think they managed this, especially where the lighting played on the vertical bars above



The King's Highway from the English National Opera production, 2012

each prison cell. But the lighting was good without being stunning, and colour was used sparingly. There was no House Beautiful, no Delectable Mountains and no Celestial City. So the prison theme ruled throughout; the concept worked, but will not have pleased everybody.

Pilgrim's fight with Apollyon seemed to get better each time I saw it. Apollyon was dragged on stage in a huge heap, and hauled up on a pulley to become a twenty-foot monster made of rags and industrial scrap, manipulated by on-stage puppeteers with poles. As the armed Pilgrim dreamed on, a miniature Pilgrim model, also operated by on-stage puppeteers, did battle, was crushed, but rose again to deliver the decisive blow and Apollyon collapsed. Execution was stunningly good, and I found this scene very moving. (The choreographer, Carolyn Choa, has made similar use of a puppet in *Madame Butterfly* for ENO.)

Needless to say, Apollyon's rags were black, and the case could have been made for introducing a little colour here. Throughout his dream, Pilgrim's companions were his fellow prisoners, all in grey prison uniforms, thus reinforcing the consistent prison theme but not doing a lot for those who like their operas colourful. Generally, the prisoners added something white to the uniform when they were helping Pilgrim, or something black when they were being Doleful Creatures – but blazing eyeballs were noticeable by their absence.

Ninety per-cent of the costumes budget must have gone into *Vanity Fair*; here was humour and colour a-plenty! Vaughan Williams wanted it sleazy, even suggesting strippers. Naked opera singers are two-a-penny these days, and Oida sensibly decided to

suggest sleaze through costumes and choreography. There were plenty of fishnets, nipple tassels and even a (plastic) bare bottom. Colin Judson as Lord Lechery was unforgettable: make-up and costume divided vertically with top hat and tails on the left and a brothel "madam" to the right. I thought it was brilliant, though some commentators thought it could have been edgier. Pilgrim was treated savagely, particularly as the crowd cries "Come let us bind him, scourge him...stone him, hang him, burn him", accompanied by vicious slaps from devils' tails. Dramatically, this obviously looks back to "Crucify Him" on Maundy Thursday; musically, is it fanciful to see those repeated hammer blows looking forward to the fateful triplets in the scherzo of the Sixth Symphony?



Pilgrim with the burden on his back



Apollyon

The opera divided, not at the end of Act 2 (the usual place), but after Vanity Fair, which is Act 3, Scene 1. There is a logic to that, but it meant that the seventy-five minute first half had the two big dramatic scenes described above in it, while the fifty-five minute second half had less action, and a key transition between the raucous Vanity Fair scene and the contemplative Prison scene was lost. It has been suggested that the Delectable Mountains scene is too long for the stage, and I can see why the suggestion is made – but I'll fight anybody who wants to cut it!

Some of the visual space was filled by ritual, reflecting Oida's wish to encompass all religions – again, something that Vaughan Williams might well have applauded. That ritual included Watchful, joined by Pilgrim, going through a "cleansing by fire". This was a good example of Oida's imaginative re-thinking of the opera, as the original only has Watchful on the darkened stage at this point. Another thought-provoking action was the circle of salt poured on stage to protect Pilgrim during the fight with Apollyon; the demons and foul creatures were not able to cross it.

Most of the press reviews agreed that, musically, the evening was a triumph, under the baton of Martyn Brabbins. The orchestra played superbly, with some wonderfully tender string playing.

The brass and woodwind solo roles were all wonderfully taken; I was particularly enchanted by Mr By-Ends' tuba accompaniment. There was a consensus that Roland Wood acted and sang heroically, that Timothy Robinson "lights up every scene in which he appears" (the *Independent*) and that the chorus was marvellous. Timothy Robinson and Ann Murray were outstanding as Mr & Mrs By-Ends, and Kitty Whately was a lovely woodcutter's "boy". Like most of the cast, these singers carried a number of additional parts.

One performance was broadcast by Radio 3, and I picked up some disparity between the broadcast sound and what I heard in the theatre. The "howling" of the chorus in the Apollyon scene sounds terribly polite as broadcast, when you compare it with the savagery achieved in the old Boulton recording. Returning to the theatre, it sounded harsher. We must not fall into the trap of assuming that we can get studio quality sound from a live broadcast of a stage production.

After the first performance, Michael Kennedy, clearly moved, thanked Yoshi Oida and ENO for "rehabilitating a great English masterpiece", amidst an air of great celebration. The press response was more divided. The *Daily Telegraph* was typical of the positive reviews: "...the committed musical interpretation authoritatively conducted by Martyn Brabbins...a maturely sensitive and often gently beautiful production directed by Yoshi Oida and designed by Tom Schenk". But others expressed reservations about the final scene and about the graphic World War I film footage. This reference to the composer's wartime experience made the perfect backdrop to "Why hast thou forsaken me" in the prison scene, but was a distraction in the Delectable Mountains scene to which it added little. I suspect that ENO anticipated a varied press response, and will not have been unduly disappointed.

The production was accompanied by an excellent and well-illustrated programme, with an introduction to the opera and a performance history by Stephen Connock, and further essays by Simon Rees and Adrian Mourby.

The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust, The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society and many members supported this production financially in the hope of putting the opera on the musical map. Did we succeed? Time will tell, but it is at least possible. Was it the ideal production? There will never be any such thing, so let's not worry about it. Was it a great production? Finally, I came to believe that it was, but I express regret to those who, for legitimate reasons, will not feel able to agree with me.

(A footnote: In the early 1990s I was a trustee of an outfit modestly known as The Opera Company, and we engaged some jolly good singers when they were young. In our final season in 1995 we engaged Timothy Robinson and Colin Judson in *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto*. Seeing these two people playing no less than seven parts between them in *Pilgrim* made me feel – with little personal justification – very proud.) 🌸

“A Notoriously Reluctant Sitter”

Colin Lees

Asked to make a portrait of Ralph Vaughan Williams, most artists would probably have agreed with Juliet Pannett’s assessment that he was “a notoriously reluctant sitter”. This reluctance may go some way to explain why we have relatively few portraits of him. In her autobiography *My Colourful Life*, Juliet Pannett (1911-2005) describes how she surreptitiously made her first sketch of the composer:

By great good luck I happened to find myself near him and his wife while I was sketching Piatigorsky rehearsing the Walton cello concerto. I managed to draw Vaughan Williams as well as Piatigorsky and Mrs Williams was pleased with the portrait. So later I was allowed to draw him openly, listening to a rehearsal of his ninth symphony. When I asked him to sign my two drawings he said: “Hmm, I don’t look as if I’m enjoying my own music much, do I?” and signed them.

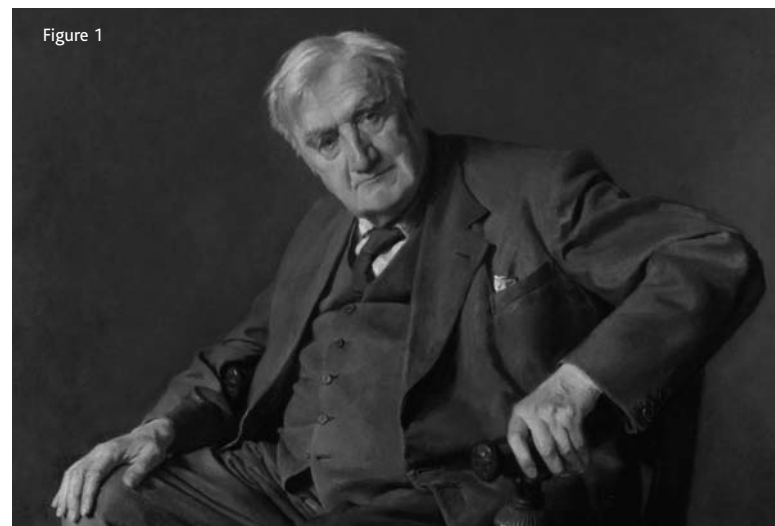


Juliet Pannett 1958

‘Vaughan Williams’ and by the artist below the score, ‘Juliet Pannett’. Undated.” The two other drawings Pannett made at that rehearsal in 1958 are in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery and can be seen on their website.

The Royal College of Music commissioned Sir Gerald Kelly (1879-1972) to make his first portrait of Vaughan Williams in 1952. In her biography of the composer, Ursula Vaughan Williams tells us that since he “could not think of any excuse for not being painted” he agreed to sit for Sir Gerald at his studio. She describes how he “nodded off to sleep, to Gerald’s amusement, and had to be woken up every now and then and rearranged in his original pose.” And what an uncomfortable pose it must have been! Vaughan Williams is shown wearing one of his best suits, leaning forward in his seat, his left hand gripping the arm of his chair, as if about to get up (Figure 1). Not the most relaxed pose to ask an eighty year-old man to hold for any length of time! Perhaps because it is now tucked away in the relative privacy of the RCM, Kelly’s 1952 painting has not become as well known as it deserves, though Ursula records that it “attracted a good deal of attention” at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1953; so much so that someone made a cartoon of it with a caption in which Vaughan Williams is saying “Why can’t we all go home?” Perhaps the cartoonist had noticed that Vaughan Williams appears to be getting up from his seat, as though eager to leave. It’s possible that

he was also aware that Vaughan Williams was “a notoriously reluctant sitter”. It would be very interesting to see this cartoon if someone knows of its whereabouts or has a copy.



Kelly’s second portrait was made just a few months before the composer’s death. Looking at photographs of Vaughan Williams taken at this time, one may feel that his appearance had changed. To my mind, some of the strength and vigour that had been a mark of his earlier old age was replaced by an ethereal quality, a new frailty, a certain vulnerability. Kelly’s artist’s eye spotted the change when he saw Vaughan Williams at rehearsals for the Ninth Symphony. He told Ursula, “He is much more beautiful than he was. I must paint him again.” The composer’s response was typical: “Oh dear, I can’t go and sit still again – and he doesn’t like any of my ties.” Ursula records that Ralph sat for Kelly just before setting out for a holiday in Italy and that Kelly, a little put out because his ever-reluctant sitter could not give him more time, insisted that Vaughan Williams left his suit and tie at his studio so that work could continue while the couple were away.

The 1958 portrait has become a very familiar image and has featured on books, record sleeves and CD booklets. Until recently, I thought there were two versions of the picture, one completed during the composer’s lifetime and one shortly after his death. The first version (Figure 2), in the National Portrait Gallery, shows him seated with a baton in his right hand, the tip of which rests on a score lying open in front of him. His left hand is raised a little, as if conducting or gesturing to emphasise a point about the music. In the second version (Figure 3), presented in 1959 to Glasgow Corporation by the Trustees of the Hamilton Bequest, he is shown with his left hand raised much higher, as though conducting, though he holds no baton and the open score has vanished.

There can be no question that Sir Gerald Kelly achieved a remarkable and penetrating likeness of the composer in these portraits but I wonder if I’m alone in finding them a little unsatisfactory in some other respects. To see the work “in the

flesh" is a powerful experience, but having admired the startlingly accurate likeness of the features, some viewers might feel that the pose in both pictures is rather awkward and ungainly, that the gesturing arms and hands, and the inelegant position of the legs, all distract the eye. For my taste the portrait might have been more pleasing had Kelly posed his subject differently, in repose, with his beautiful hands resting on a closed score, perhaps, or upon a bound copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Shortly after these words were written, I heard an item on BBC radio about the Public Catalogue Foundation, an organisation

beauty of the bronze captured the truth in strength and intimacy." After an eloquent description of Vaughan Williams's character and appearance, Michael Kennedy wrote, "Of all this, Epstein's bust reveals nothing, but David McFall's is a strikingly true portrait of the man as he really was, like Sir Gerald Kelly's painting." Later, by a happy coincidence, McFall made a stone memorial plaque to Sir Gerald Kelly for the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral.

One of Vaughan Williams's greatest friends was fellow composer Gerald Finzi, whose wife, Joy, was an accomplished artist. When, in 1947, Trinity College Cambridge, asked for a portrait of their

Figure 2

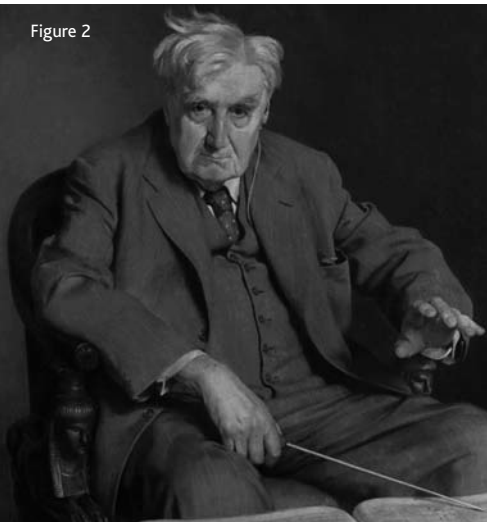


Figure 3

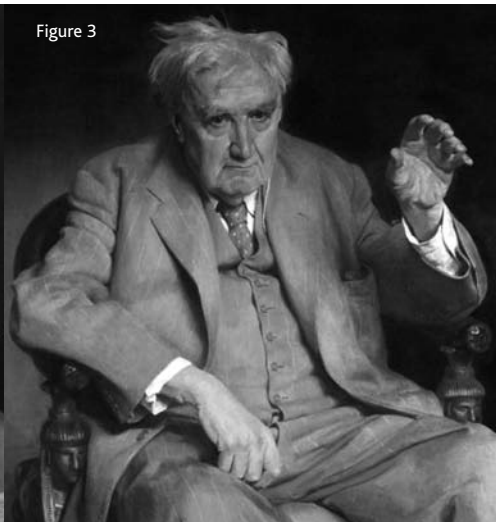
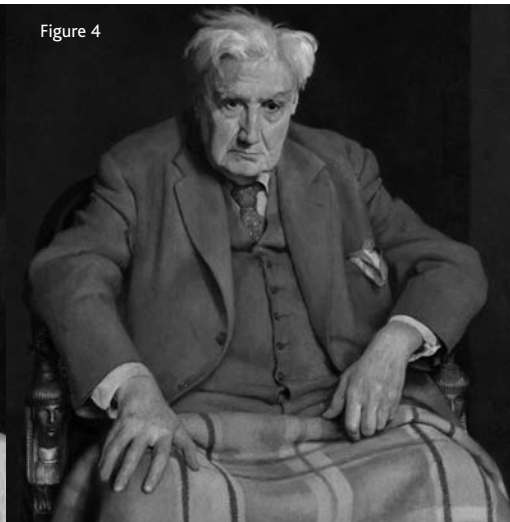


Figure 4



Four portraits by Sir Gerald Festus Kelly. Figure 1 was painted in 1952. Figures 1-3 were from studies made in 1958 just before the composer's death.

which has undertaken to photograph all the publicly owned oil paintings in the UK and put the pictures on line. The item said that the project was almost complete. and searching their website produced something of a surprise. It turns out that Kelly made a third version of his painting, which now resides in the collection of the Royal Academy (Figure 4). I was immediately struck by the fact that in this version Kelly had decided to portray Vaughan Williams in repose, his hands – beautifully painted – resting on his lap and his legs covered with a tartan blanket. For me, this is by far the most pleasing of the three paintings, partly because it lacks the distracting elements I mentioned earlier, and partly because Vaughan Williams's features are captured so beautifully.

A decade earlier, the renowned sculptor, Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) had been rather more fortunate than Sir Gerald Kelly, for he seems to have persuaded Vaughan Williams to give him as many as seven or eight sittings for a bust he wanted to make of the composer. But even with so much time, Sir Jacob did not achieve a good likeness, so it's fortunate that in 1956 a less celebrated sculptor was permitted to make a head in bronze. David McFall (1919-1998) was a friend of Cordelia Curle, sister of Adeline, the composer's first wife. Ursula records that "Cordelia was most anxious for her friend...to do a head of Ralph, who strenuously opposed the idea. Cordelia persisted, and eventually David was invited to come to the house. Ralph told him that he must do his work while he himself was working." McFall laboured for five days on the sculpture, during which time Vaughan Williams worked unusually hard, saying, "I mustn't let the young man see me slacking." Anyone who has seen the finished bronze in the National Portrait Gallery or the Festival Hall will know that McFall's study was an unqualified success, perhaps one of the sculptor's finest works. Ursula wrote, "David caught the private face...of Ralph absorbed in his work. The likeness is extraordinary: the grave



Joy Finzi 1947

former student, Vaughan Williams chose to be drawn by his friend. Finzi's biographer, Diana McVeagh, describes what happened:

Vaughan Williams had not enjoyed the traumatic experience of being drawn by William Rothenstein [in 1919] when he had to sit absolutely still without speaking, so he asked Joy. In December 1947, taking with them Ashmansworth honey and medlar jelly, the Finzis went to Dorking for two nights. In the morning, Vaughan Williams alarmed them by appearing wearing a tie and with brushed hair; but Gerald talked and laughed with him till he forgot he was being drawn.

Joy Finzi felt that she had "caught only his public aspect" for the Trinity picture, but later in the day the mood changed:

After supper, as they sat around the fire, Vaughan Williams slumped in his old armchair opposite his wife, Joy drew him without his knowing, the private man in repose. She gave that drawing to Gerald.

That second sketch is a beautiful drawing, and made an equally beautiful cover for the October 2011 issue of this *Journal*. Bequeathed to the National Portrait Gallery at Gerald Finzi's request, it is drawn in fine detail and shows Vaughan Williams in profile resembling some wise old philosopher of a distant age.

So far, this article has focused on portraits made in the last decade or so of the composer's life and necessarily so, since there are no significant portraits from earlier times. Whereas there are fine

portraits of Sibelius as a young man, for example, and a fine bronze bust and various paintings and drawings of the youthful Benjamin Britten, there are no equivalent images of Vaughan Williams. This is partly due, I suppose, to the fact that fame came comparatively late to Vaughan Williams, and the fact that he was a “notoriously reluctant sitter” wouldn’t have helped either! Though critics may debate his stature as a musician, few would dispute, surely, that any composer in the history of music was more handsome as a young man, more imposing and distinguished in middle age, or more strikingly noble and venerable in old age. In short, one would have expected artists to be hammering on his door, clamouring to immortalise him in their preferred medium. It’s odd, too, that his well-to-do family didn’t commission at least one portrait of him as a child.

There are a few delightful pictures from earlier in Vaughan Williams’s life, however: a deceptively simple but very perceptive caricature by Edmond Kapp (1890-1978), done in 1915, entitled, *Ralph Vaughan Williams listening to his own music*; a vigorous if rather sketchy oil painting of him conducting, executed, at the age of eleven, by his cousin Sir Robert Vere Darwin (1910-1974), who went on to become Principal of the Royal College of Art; and a pencil and watercolour sketch by Sibella Bonham-Carter (1899-2005) done from life at a concert in 1928.

There is one real missed opportunity, dating from the beginning of the 1920s, a drawing that might have been a very fine image of Vaughan Williams in middle age. The story of William Rothenstein’s



William Rothenstein 1922

drawing purports to depict the composer as he was in 1919, but it shows him wearing a wing-collar very like the one in the c1898 photograph. I’ve looked hard but I cannot find any photos of Vaughan Williams wearing a wing-collar after World War I, except on those special occasions when it was necessary to dress very formally. Second, though attempts have been made to age the features in the drawing by deepening the lines between the nose and the corners of the mouth and by adding creases to the forehead, the angle and shape of the head is precisely the same in both images, and details of the eyebrows, nose and mouth are all clearly taken from the photograph. Oddly, Rothenstein enlarged the eyes somewhat and showed them as pale, almost without tone, while the eyes in the photograph appear dark. Third, there’s the evidence of the hair. Because the young Vaughan Williams’s hair is lost in the deep shadows of the photograph, Rothenstein was forced to invent – and he invented badly! The hair to the front of the drawing looks fine, because the artist has been able to base it on what he could see in the photograph, but the hair further back, which is not clear in the photo, does not convince the eye. We all know that Vaughan Williams had unruly hair but Rothenstein’s representation of it is, to my eyes, quite bizarre.

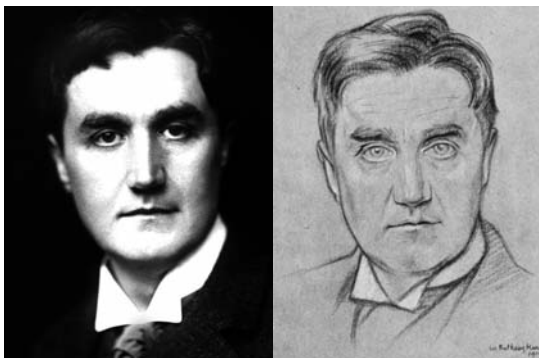
There is another drawing by Rothenstein, which Mrs Vaughan Williams does not mention in her husband’s biography and about which I have been able to find nothing at all. Signed “Wm Rothenstein 1922”, it shows a seated Vaughan Williams from the waist up. As with all Rothenstein’s pictures, the sketch has a distinctly Art Deco feel and presents a very singular image of the composer. He is dressed in a suit with a waistcoat, a tie with a large knot, and a *soft-collar* shirt! Some may like it; I don’t. Seeing how brilliantly Rothenstein depicted many of his other sitters makes one wonder what it was about Vaughan Williams’s features that defeated him – twice; and it’s impossible not to regret his failure.



David McFall 1958 (56)

Those who care for art as well as for music may lament the dearth of works depicting Vaughan Williams at different stages in his life. We have many excellent photographs, of course, but it’s sad that there are so few artworks, especially from his youth and middle age. I regret, also, that the National Portrait Gallery does not have the Kelly portrait more often on show. I’m aware that the gallery varies its displays from time to time and it’s good that the McFall bust is currently on view in Room 31, but the painting hasn’t been on show for some time, as far as I’m aware. I was disappointed, too, that in the anniversary year of 2008 the Gallery did nothing, as far as I know, to mark the occasion, and the Kelly picture remained in store.

Those interested in seeing many of the pictures mentioned here might like to view a short slide-show on YouTube. Just search “A Very Reluctant Sitter” to find it. Unfortunately, I put it together before I knew about the Royal Academy’s version of Gerald Kelly’s portrait. 🐣



Photograph of Vaughan Williams c1898
William Rothenstein 1919 from *Music and Letters*

portrait has intrigued me for some time and I’m still not sure that I understand what happened. Ursula Vaughan Williams describes how, in 1919, Rothenstein (1872-1945) had been commissioned to make a drawing of the composer for the recently founded magazine *Music and Letters*. Some time before that he had made a very stylish drawing of Elgar for the same publication, and if his study of Vaughan Williams had been as successful we would today have a very memorable image of the composer as he was at the end of the Great War. But disappointingly, Rothenstein’s picture was not a success. Ursula describes it as “rather soft and sentimentalized and not a good likeness”, and there is reason to believe that Rothenstein himself was disappointed with his work and felt he could not submit it for publication. I suspect that he decided to make another drawing but, realising that he wouldn’t get another appointment with our “notoriously reluctant sitter”, he set about adapting a photograph taken about twenty years earlier.

What evidence is there to suggest that a professional artist, skilled in working from life, would do something like this? First, the

Vaughan Williams returns to Chelsea

Peter Bull

The recent erection of a sculpture of Ralph Vaughan Williams in Chelsea Embankment Gardens stems from several things that have happened over the past hundred or so years. Vaughan Williams lived at the then No 13 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, (redeveloped in the 1970s) from 1905 until 1929, with the exception of the years spent in the Army in the First World War and some time spent in Norfolk after the War. For more than thirty years I have lived within a short walk from there and have for many years felt that Vaughan Williams should be commemorated nearby. As Ursula wrote in her biography:

His study on the top floor of the house with its views across to Battersea Park, of sunsets on the river, and of the river itself (for the plane trees had not yet obscured it from the windows), was the room where some of his most important work was done.

Indeed, during those years he wrote his first three symphonies, *The Lark Ascending*, the *Tallis Fantasia*, *On Wenlock Edge* and several other major works.

There are blue commemorative plaques on the front walls of many houses in Chelsea, to honour famous people who lived there. In Cheyne Walk itself there are plaques on houses where George Elliot, Rossetti and a number of other artists lived. Around the corner in Oakley Street there is one where Scott of the Antarctic lived until his sad death in 1912 – one wonders whether he and Vaughan Williams ever met – and within a short walk there are blue plaques to Oscar Wilde, Peter Warlock, John Ireland and Mark Twain, as well as memorials to Thomas More, Thomas Carlyle, Whistler, John Singer Sargent and Jacob Epstein. English Heritage, which now commissions plaques to go on houses in London where famous people have lived, has already placed one on the house in Hanover Terrace where Vaughan Williams died, but was unwilling to erect two for the same person, however famous. So how to commemorate this incredible man who lived and produced so many musical masterpieces in Chelsea?

My recognition of the greatness of Vaughan Williams's music took a little while to develop. A first love was of the music of Berlioz, with the energy and flamboyance to which, as a young man, I could relate, but that love soon came to be complemented by the more reflective music of Delius. I was lent a record of the prelude to *Irmelin* by a close friend when I was sixteen, and was spellbound by its beauty, and Delius became another route for escapism. Another close friend of those years, Robin Ivison, who was later to become one of the founders of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, did a lot to open my eyes to the breadth and depth of this remarkable man's music. I listened on the radio to the first performance of the Sixth Symphony, and having lived through most of the bombing of London I began to realise that

here was a prophet who expressed some anxiety about the future of mankind.

My initiative to put up a sculpture of Vaughan Williams in Chelsea Embankment Gardens, more or less across from where he had lived, started four years ago, which is when I first broached the idea with the Council of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, but it is more than fifty years since the idea of producing a sculptured head of the composer first took hold of me. At that time I was attending evening and weekend lessons in life drawing and the modelling of heads at the City and Guilds of London Arts School. The idea of making a bronze head of Vaughan Williams inspired me to write to him at The White Gates in Dorking and ask if I could visit him and take some photographs from which I could work. He responded immediately with a short letter inviting me to tea the following Sunday. When I knocked at the door Ursula answered; Vaughan Williams was asleep, lying on his back with his head buried in the back of a settle, bringing the figure of Falstaff to my mind. Ursula had to wake him and restore his body to a more upright position, and we then sat at a table with that masterpiece by Epstein behind him and had tea and a chat. He enquired about my interests in music and told me how as a younger man he had played his *Sea Symphony* to Delius on the piano, misguidedly hoping for some encouragement. And when I mentioned that I had recently listened to Prokofiev's Sixth Symphony he remarked that Prokofiev was a great composer.

On the topic of sculpture he said he didn't like sculptured heads in which the irises were left hollow. (I had in mind something like the head of the statue of Poseidon in the Athens Archaeological Museum, with its commanding hollow eyes. And in fact the sculptor Marcus Cornish has given his head of Vaughan Williams hollow irises!) We then went outside, where Vaughan Williams sat on a bench looking across to the White Downs, a view which always influences my thoughts when listening to the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, and reminds me of the early months of the Battle of Britain. I took a number of photographs and sent him copies of two that seemed to me to be the best, and I received back a short letter which read:

27th December, 1951

Dear Mr. Bull,

Thank you very much for the two photographs which I think are splendid, especially the more profile one; the other perhaps makes me look too much as though I was thinking great thoughts, a habit I am not at all addicted to.

I suppose it would not be possible for me to have the negative of the

one I like, so that I can order some more because I think it is one of the best that has been taken of me.

Your box of chocolates was most welcome and I thank you very much for them.

R. Vaughan Williams.

Of course I sent him the two negatives, but I have never seen either of those photos subsequently reproduced anywhere and have no idea what happened to them or to the negatives. However, I do have copies of some of the other photos. One of them can be seen below, and the other makes an imposing front cover. I am also the proud possessor of a photograph of Vaughan Williams which he gave me himself during that visit.

At that time I did, in fact, make some maquettes of the sort of sculpture that I would have liked to produce, but the demands of my career and the need to earn money obliged me to stop the sculpture lessons, and the dream of producing a Henry Moore-like head and body of this great composer came to nothing.



Ralph Vaughan Williams photographed in 1951 by Peter Bull.

Even though the music of Vaughan Williams was not my first love, as I matured I came to recognise him as one of the giants. In 1956 I wrote to the Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society to suggest that just as it had commissioned Beethoven's Ninth Symphony it should commission Vaughan Williams to write *his* Ninth. I received a letter dictated by the then Chairman, Myers Foggin, which said, "Your interesting suggestions have been considered by the Committee of the Society, and the matter will be considered at a later date." I never heard any more, but Myers Foggin was invited to be present at the first piano "run-through" of the Ninth Symphony at Hanover Terrace in November 1958. Ursula records that the Society had asked if they could give the first performance, so that may have prompted the dedication to the Royal Philharmonic Society, of which, incidentally, I am very happy to have served as Honorary Treasurer for some thirteen years. Both the RPS and the RVW Society have helped the achievement of my ambition.

There is however nothing that can be done sufficiently to honour the musical giant that was Vaughan Williams, and one can only hope that the erection of a sculptured head on a column in Chelsea Embankment Gardens near where he lived will help encourage people to take a greater interest in his music. I have lived long enough in Chelsea to remember the fogs of London and views of factories and warehouses up the river to the West that could have inspired parts of the *London Symphony*, and I frequently walk past where No 13 once stood. (The Society has issued a postcard of a watercolour showing the house before it was demolished, along with the then No 14.) It is not difficult therefore to imagine the composer walking in Embankment Gardens near where his statue is now erected, nor perhaps of his sitting on a bench there with Ravel in 1909, when the French composer stayed with him and Adeline for more than a week. I do find it difficult, however, to imagine what those two great men could have had in common, except where music is concerned.

What is there to add? The first maquette the sculptor produced was of Vaughan Williams sitting on a hillside, perhaps Bredon, looking out across the landscape and into the future. That was rejected by the Public Art Advisory Group of the Royal Borough for reasons not elaborated, but they subsequently agreed to a head and shoulders mounted on a column, and Marcus Cornish has produced such a work. I suggested it should portray the composer in middle age, when he lived in Cheyne Walk, and not like the many photos of him, including my own, when he was an older man.

I hope the sculpture does him justice, but the important point is that people who live in the neighbourhood and visitors to the area be reminded that Ralph Vaughan Williams lived there and wrote many masterpieces there. This might, perhaps, develop their interest in his music. 🍷

A thank you to David Betts...



David Betts and Valerie, pictured in front of the framed photograph of Vaughan Williams presented to David by the Society on the occasion of his retirement as Membership Officer.

At the Society's AGM in October, we presented David with a photograph of Vaughan Williams and a number of scores to thank him for fifteen years' stalwart service as Membership Officer.

David was born in Brighton in 1936. Some years were spent in London, and he remembers his father (an ARP warden) showing him London burning in the early part of the war. The London house was destroyed by a bomb and David returned to Brighton. But he continued to move around, and first sang the "Hallelujah" chorus in Southend High School. Later on, at Sandown Grammar School, David heard *Songs of Travel* and sang Vaughan Williams hymns in the local church choir. He heard the première of *Sinfonia Antartica* while hunched over the radio in 1953.

After a year as Head Boy at Sandown, David won a scholarship to read physics at Wadham College, Oxford, remaining there for a PhD on the properties of liquid helium close to absolute zero. During this time he took singing lessons with Norman Lilly and sang with the Oxford Bach Choir. The conductor, Sidney Watson, knew Vaughan Williams and performed many of his works. David even spotted Vaughan Williams in the audience on one occasion, though not for one of his own works!

David discovered and married Valerie, who was studying languages at Oxford, then returned to Brighton permanently to take up a teaching and research post at the University of Sussex, combined with a spell of research in Columbus, Ohio. This resulted in several academic books, a couple of which are still in print. David became Senior Proctor but took "an unmissable offer" of early retirement in 1993. Sussex University's loss was

the Society's gain, since David became a founder member, and volunteered to become Membership Officer in 1997.

Singing has remained an important part of David's life, and he was Founder Chairman of the Brighton Festival Chorus when it was formed in 1968, holding that post for five years and singing tenor with them until recently. In 1973, he sang with the Philharmonia Chorus in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* in the Roman Arena in Orange (Provence), with Karl Böhm conducting, and soloists including Birgit Nilsson and Jon Vickers. This led to further overseas trips with them in the 1970s, followed by nine years with Charles Spencer's new Pro Musica Chorus of London.

At the AGM, Chairman Em Marshall-Luck and Treasurer John Francis paid tribute together to David, noting that he is in large part responsible for the survival and development of the Society. The membership records needed shaking up in 1997, and he applied order to them as only a scientist could.

Every member knows David, and we will all miss him. He continues as a member, and we hope to see him and Valerie at Society events.

... and welcome to Mark Hammett



David Betts with Mark Hammett

Mark Hammett (already a trustee and continuing to deal with postal despatch of Albion Music CDs) has volunteered to take on the challenging role of Membership Officer. He and David worked closely together on the handover, so we still have a strong, organised and committed team. Mark is still in a full-time job, so we are trying to streamline procedures as much as possible as we continue to grow. Can you help? We do not have all the members' email addresses, having removed a number that are out of date. If you have not heard from us by email recently, please just drop Mark a line at albionmrh@btinternet.com so that we can save time and postage as we keep you up to date with news and events. Also, overseas members should pay online whenever possible, by credit or debit card (on our website) or by bank transfer. 🐣

How do you listen to Vaughan Williams?

Rob Furneaux

So, how do you listen to the music of the master? Do you listen on your iPod in your Adidas track suit whilst surfing the net in an internet café? Or perhaps you play original 78s on a wind-up gramophone whilst lounging on a chaise longue in your Noël Coward dressing gown?

Well, flippancy aside, it matters a great deal how and where you listen to Vaughan Williams and other more minor composers like Beethoven and Brahms. (Did I say flippancy aside?) I believe that it may be the case that some people who say they listen to Vaughan Williams don't listen at all!

Let me explain my impertinent assertion. There is, I believe, a world of difference between actually sitting and listening to the music and supposedly listening to the music whilst doing other things. After all, if you are concentrating on something else how can you be concentrating on the music?

It occurs to me that there are three distinct levels of listening. Top of the list is sitting down or reclining (ideally with headphones, but good quality speakers are also acceptable) and listening to an entire disc work with eyes closed to avoid any visual distractions. In this case the listener must avoid: a) one's thoughts drifting to other things – what's for tea, shall we go to Barcelona or Barnsley for this year's holiday? – or b) the cardinal sin of nodding off and eventually being roused by the final chord of the symphony or the telephone. (Incidentally, I have a disciplined approach to a ringing phone. If I'm being carried away in raptures by the likes of Symphony No 5, I simply do not answer it and let the message go to answer-phone.)

The second level of listening is whilst doing jobs around the house, such as making the beds, ironing, gardening, writing abusive letters to the Elgar Society etc. Cooking may also be added to the list, but in this scenario other problems may arise, such as the last floating notes of *Flos Campi* being joined by the sound of frying chips.

The third level is listening to the music whilst concentrating intently on other things, such as reading a book, a newspaper or back numbers of *Bunty*. In this case cognisance of any musical content must surely be very transitory. I once observed a friend reading the *Independent* whilst listening – supposedly – to *Serenade to Music*. Shockingly, he finished the article, put down the newspaper and switched off the CD in the middle of the final section! This third level is akin to heading to your nearest department store and travelling up in the lift just to listen to the music being played in it. Indeed if you are a third level listener I suggest you immediately trade in your Vaughan Williams CDs for a complete set of the works of James Last.

I would thus assert that there are undoubtedly a large body of people who, although purporting to be music listeners, are barely listeners at all. Having questioned a group of my friends and acquaintances, I found to my chagrin that the vast majority of

them listen whilst doing other things, including whilst driving horseless carriages. It would seem that I am in the minority. For me, there is only one way to listen: headphones on the sofa, eyes closed and concentrating on the music. Only that way can I experience the full detail of a wonderful Vaughan Williams score. Any other way is to sell the old man short, although I would concede that such activities as walking through woodland or sitting in a field of new-mown hay on a summer eve whilst listening to *An Oxford Elegy* is definitely as good.

Listening at a concert, I would contend, is a variable feast for the concentrating listener. I don't know about you, but I tend to find myself watching the orchestra intently with a fascination for how the music is actually produced, and this can take the edge off actually concentrating on the notes. Also, there are the inevitable distractions – the man with the tickly cough in the row behind you, or the woman in row eight, is that the nice young lady from the bistro? Or worse: I recall the experience of the critic Deryck Cooke at the first performance of the Sixth, where his eye was caught by a woman taking out a powder compact and lightly dusting her nose.

That said, I do remember a performance of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at the St Endellion Festival in Cornwall. The Church of St Endellion has a magical location perched near the towering cliffs of the north coast. As the final act began, a thunderstorm rolled in over the coast. The stained glass windows being lit by flashes of lightning was something I will never forget, and you certainly can't capture that on a CD! So for me the jury is out on concert attendance. It really depends on too many factors.

So my humble advice to you, dear Society member, is to make time to listen properly, if you don't already. I know that in our modern, dash-about world time is apparently so precious it can be difficult to "carve out" enough to sit and listen to Vaughan Williams without distractions, but the rewards are great. Many's the time, while listening with eyes shut to symphonies 5 or 9, that I have cast aside the mortal world and floated away on a carpet of azure mist into the world of Albion. ♪



Music You Might Like

Simon Coombs

Of the 576 composers on the useful Naxos recordings list whose names begin with B, some are already quite well enough known to need no attention in this article. So Bach and Beethoven, Brahms and Bruckner, Berlioz and Bruch can be left to one side, as can the likes of Babell, Baston and Byrd, although the Agnus Dei from Byrd's *Mass for Three Voices* nearly squeezed in!

The list is mainly drawn from the twentieth century, but we begin back in 1872. Everyone knows *Carmen*, and the duet from *The Pearl Fishers*, but Georges Bizet had a marvellous gift of melody which rarely deserted him. Eleven days before the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Paris saw the first performance of *L'Arlésienne*, a play by Alphonse Daudet for which Bizet wrote incidental music. If you don't know the "Farandole" from the Second Suite, you should. Either Plasson or Minkowski make a strong case for this exhilarating music.

Alexander Borodin gets onto the list ahead of Mily Balakirev, his mentor, though the latter's Symphony No 1 is worth a listen. Borodin's Second Symphony, however, is a great delight, up there with Tchaikovsky in the world of Slavic melody, and *In the Steppes of Central Asia* is a remarkable and evocative piece of nature painting. Decca's "Essential Borodin" two-disc set has both works and a great deal more to recommend it.

Béla Bartók is not everybody's cup of tea, but try one of his early works, *Two Portraits*, for violin and orchestra, especially conducted by Antal Doráti, if you can find it. The first Portrait is a serene piece of love music, written with a young lady violinist in mind!

Sir Granville Bantock heads the British contingent, and is probably well known to most *Journal* readers. For those to whom he's just a name, head for the glorious *Celtic Symphony* on Hyperion and the song cycle, *Sappho*, from the same label. "Hymn to Aphrodite" and "I Loved Thee Once, Atthis, Long Ago" are the vocal highlights of this beautiful work, with Susan Bickley outstanding under the baton of Vernon Handley.

In his centenary year, Benjamin Britten is an obvious choice, but the choice of work is more difficult. Among his less well-known works, I have a soft spot for the *Quatre Chansons Françaises* (Felicity Lott on Chandos) and the *Sinfonia da Requiem*, from Simon Rattle on EMI. Alas, there is no room here for Britten's teacher, Frank Bridge, and Rutland Boughton and Havergal Brian also have to miss out.

Not so, Sir Arnold Bax, whose seven symphonies are up there with the best written in the twentieth century. My personal preference is for No 6, written in Morar, his winter retreat in Scotland, and showing strongly the influence of Sibelius. Vernon Handley on Chandos leads the way, but David Lloyd-Jones on Naxos is not far behind.

George Butterworth would be next on the list, but his tragically truncated output is so well known that there really are no surprises to bring you. Instead, listen to the film music of Arthur Benjamin –

a recent Chandos release pairs him with Leighton Lucas. Try his suite from *The Ascent of Everest*: the end titles music is inspired and inspiring.

So to the top three. Salvador Bacarisse was a Spanish composer whose career was somewhat overshadowed by that of Joaquin Rodrigo. If you like Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, you should seek out the Guitar Concertino by Bacarisse, which has the same yearning quality in its slow movement. Narciso Yepes has recorded both works several times, and there is a more recent coupling by Karin Schaupp on ABC Classics.

Samuel Barber is regarded by many as America's most likeable composer if not the greatest. Works like the *Adagio for Strings* and the Violin Concerto need no introduction, but plenty of others are worth getting to know. Try the *First Essay for Orchestra* or the Four Songs, Op. 13, which are exactly contemporaneous with their more famous neighbours, and you will not be disappointed. The *Essay* is on Marin Alsop's excellent six disc traversal of Barber's orchestral music on Naxos, and Roberta Alexander on Etcetera is the essential interpreter of the songs, especially *Sure on this Shining Night*.

At the top of the B list is a composer who, like Atterberg, has suffered from the late twentieth century fixation with atonal or experimental music. You can hear plenty of the latter at the Proms, for example, but you will never hear a single note of Joly Braga Santos, who wrote six well-crafted and enjoyable symphonies. If you don't know them, try No 4 first, followed by Nos 2 and 6. All six of these Portuguese symphonies are available on Marco Polo, under the baton of Alvaro Cassuto.



José Manuel Joly Braga Santos

Thank you to those who have responded with interest to the "A-list". I hope that there will be some new discoveries amongst the Bs for many members. An initial trawl of the Cs has produced several gems! 🐦

From the Publicity Officer

SUMMER SCHOOL

3-10 AUGUST University of Oxford, The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. This course will trace Vaughan Williams's complex development as a composer and explore the whole range of a huge and varied output. www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses; email oussa@conted.ox.ac.uk; telephone 01865 270396

URSULA VAUGHAN WILLIAMS ON BBC RADIO 4

A programme about Ursula and her poetry will be broadcast on Radio 4 on 24 March at 4.30pm and again on 30 March at 3.30pm.

DISCOUNTED TICKET OFFER FOR SOCIETY MEMBERS

A reduction of 10% is offered to Society members for tickets to the following concerts at London's Royal Festival Hall. Contact the Philharmonia Box Office on freephone 0800 652 6717, Monday- Friday, 9.30am-5.30pm, quoting "RVWB".

THURSDAY 21 FEBRUARY
Britten: Suite, *Death in Venice*
Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 2;
Symphony No. 15
Conductor, Vladimir Ashkenazy

SUNDAY 24 FEBRUARY
Britten: *Quatre chansons françaises*
Mozart: Piano Concerto No 21
Mahler: Symphony No. 4
Conductor, Vladimir Ashkenazy

SUNDAY 9 MAY
Vaughan Williams: *A London Symphony*
Britten: *Young Apollo*
Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 9
Conductor: Sir Andrew Davis

NEW CD

A new CD, entitled "The Cranmer Legacy", includes the premiere recording of Vaughan Williams's Service in D minor, "Christ's Hospital", composed in 1938 for Dr C. S. Lang and his choir at Christ's Hospital in Horsham, West Sussex. Also featured on the disc is music by John Sanders and Paul Spicer, as well as *A Short Requiem* by Sir Henry Walford Davies.

The CD is released in celebration of the 350th anniversary of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Organist Benjamin Bloor accompanies the Choir of St Michael at the North Gate, City Church of Oxford.

The programme is conducted by Tom Hammond-Davies.

(A review of this excellent CD was to have appeared in this issue of the *Journal*, but has been held over until the June issue for reasons of space.)

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

24 FEBRUARY
Queen Elizabeth Hall, London
A Pastoral Symphony
BBC Concert Orchestra
Conductor, Charles Hazlewood

10 MARCH
Assembly Hall, Worthing, 2.45pm
Symphony No. 5
Worthing Symphony Orchestra
Conductor, John Gibbons

17 MARCH
Wigmore Hall, London
Quintet in D
Nash Ensemble

24 MARCH
Guildford
Overture, *The Wasps*
The Lark Ascending
Toward the Unknown Region
Guildford Choral Society
Southern Pro Musica
Conductor, Jonathan Willcocks

11-13 APRIL
Dorking Halls, Dorking, Surrey
Leith Hill Musical Festival

26 APRIL
Cheltenham Town Hall
Symphony No. 5
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Conductor, Barry Wordsworth

1 MAY
Royal Festival Hall, London
Symphony no 4
London Philharmonic Orchestra
Conductor, Ryan Wigglesworth

2 MAY
City Halls, Glasgow
Symphony No. 9
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra
Conductor, Andrew Manze

3 MAY
Barbican, London
Five Tudor Portraits
Rosie Aldridge, mezzo-soprano
Neal Davies, baritone
BBC Symphony Chorus
BBC Symphony Orchestra
Conductor, John Wilson

18 MAY
St Mary's Church, Woodbridge
Woodbridge Chamber Concerts,
Five Variants of "Dives and Lazarus"
Royal College of Music Strings,
augmented by advanced string
players of Farlingaye & Woodbridge
Schools
Conductor, Sean Riley

24 MAY
English Music Festival, Oxfordshire
The Solent; Serenade in A minor
(world premieres)
BBC Concert Orchestra
Conductor, Martin Yates

25 MAY
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
A London Symphony
BBC Philharmonic
Conductor, Sir Andrew Davis

If you are not already receiving publicity updates (which include many more forthcoming concerts) by email and would like to, please contact me at archerypromos@btinternet.com.

Karen Fletcher



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Letters

A VAUGHAN WILLIAMS YEAR

2012 has been a superlative year for the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. In February I went to a Scott centenary concert in Cardiff. The first part consisted of music from the film *Scott of the Antarctic*, with readings from Scott's diary read by Hugh Bonneville, and scenes from the film. The second part of the concert was a stunning performance of the *Sinfonia Antartica*. The hall was in darkness as slides from Scott's expedition were shown during the performance: the slides perfectly complemented the music.

In July I attended a performance of the *Sea Symphony* at Hereford Cathedral as part of the Three Choirs Festival. What a marvellous setting for this music of grandeur and contemplation! In August I was privileged to be at the Prom concert when the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Andrew Manze performed the symphonies, 4, 5 and 6. This concert was an overwhelming experience that left me drained. No 4 is, in my opinion, Vaughan Williams's greatest symphony, and this performance was thrilling, though not as helter skelter as the composer's own from 1937. Cowpat music it most certainly is not! No 5 is an emotional roller coaster. The "Romanza" is the most beautiful piece of music Vaughan Williams composed and always makes me cry, as does the end of the symphony. No 6 is a symphony I admire greatly but find difficult to love, but it is surely the equal of Shostakovich in its portrayal of the fundamental bleakness of the human condition. A full Albert Hall gave a well deserved, stupendous ovation at the conclusion of the concert. In November I heard the same orchestra's *Pastoral Symphony* in Glasgow, again under Manze, a very moving performance of Vaughan Williams's requiem for the lost generation of 1914-1918.

Finally, also in November, I was lucky to be at the Coliseum in London to attend the English National Opera production of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. What a richly rewarding evening, and although I felt some of the staging did not work, the music was glorious. The conductor, Martyn Brabbins, obviously loves this music and the orchestra and choir responded magnificently. The soloists were also very good, and the tumultuous ovation at the end convinced me that we won't have to wait another sixty years for the next performance. *The Poisoned Kiss* next?

My birthday present in December was a DVD of the Vaughan Williams centenary concert in the Royal Festival Hall in October 1972, played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult. There is a great performance of the Symphony No 8, but the jewel is a superb account of *Job*, Vaughan Williams's supreme achievement in my view. What a shame the performance of *On Wenlock Edge* is not included. I was there forty years ago and I will cherish the memory of a remarkable evening.

Robert J. Parry
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, UK

MORE...

We generally like to moan about the dear old BBC, mainly when Vaughan Williams does not get a fair crack at the whip at the Proms. It is perhaps worth noting that we seem to have a bit of a BBC/Vaughan Williams feast this year. I may be noticing this more because I am getting into the habit of capturing some broadcasts for personal use.

Earlier this year, Symphonies 4, 5 and 6, conducted by Andrew Manze, were broadcast from Scotland and of course those symphonies were broadcast again (more rapidly!) from the Proms. On 23 October Manze did the *Pastoral* from Glasgow, broadcast live. The next day he gave the same concert at Perth (again a bit faster) and the BBC recorded it for broadcast in November. They have also broadcast the Oboe Concerto, with Nicholas Daniel, recently – and remember that a lot of these concerts are repeated.

If the BBC's interest seems particularly Scottish at the moment, Manze is not their only conductor. They've just broadcast Vassily Sinaisky, again with the BBCSSO, doing the Fifth in Aberdeen. So if I have identified the right number of fingers that's two Thirds, two Fourths, three Fifths and two Sixths so far this year, just from bonny Scotland.

I hope there's more to come from Manze, since I think he's having a go at them all and I'd like to hear the rest. Unless you don't like haggis, I don't think we're doing so badly.

And "that opera" will be broadcast on 24 November.

John Francis
Tonbridge, Kent, UK

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS AND MIDI TECHNOLOGY

I would like to add my support for the Society's efforts to locate and record previously unrecorded Vaughan Williams. Some of the music which has already come to light has been very enjoyable. The "Epilogue" of the *Heroic Elegy and Triumphal Epilogue* is a case in point. The news that we will soon hear more of the early tone poems and theatre music is also very welcome. David Lax's citation of the BIS Sibelius edition as a "good model" is indeed relevant. But in addition to Albion recordings, Vaughan Williams definitely needs a new biography to make the case for his centrality in twentieth-century British music and the depth and range of his achievement beyond even the British context.

I was intrigued also by Andy Bewick's allusion to MIDI performances [October 2012, Letters]. This is an area of music technology which I've been involved with as a user for over ten years, and I have watched with deep admiration the way the

relevant systems have come on in leaps and bounds. It is now possible to link a computer notation system such as “Sibelius” to a variety of orchestral sample libraries which are saved on the hard drive. As a music manuscript is played, the notation system triggers the appropriate samples so you can hear it. For those unfamiliar with this technology, samples are not crude synthesised sounds, as was once the case with electronic keyboards. They are sounds played by musicians and recorded on a specially prepared sound-stage. The developers go to enormous lengths to capture a range of articulations such as would be generated by a stringed instrument.

One of the world leaders in this field is the Vienna Symphonic Library. On their website – <http://www.vsl.co.at> – there are a number of mp3 recordings which have been created by specialists to illustrate what can be done. Among them are six pieces by Vaughan Williams, including the *Tallis Fantasia* and the slow movement of the *London Symphony*. There is also a remarkable complete *Rite of Spring*.

No-one is suggesting that these are a replacement for real performances by real musicians, but their educational value is considerable, and this may, given the cost of making recordings, be a method by which some of Vaughan Williams’s music might be heard, or possibly encoded onto a multi-media “World of Vaughan Williams” along with text, pictures and notation examples.

Rikky Rooksby
Oxford, UK

UN-FAVOURITE WORKS?

The timing of my letter stating my relative indifference to the *Sea Symphony* could hardly have been worse, appearing in the same issue [October 2012] as the transcript of a lengthy lecture about the symphony. Even worse, the article included some words by Michael Kennedy, distinguished and indefatigable champion of Vaughan Williams, proclaiming his love for the work and directly addressing the points I made about its stylistic inconsistency, due to its spanning the period immediately before and after Vaughan Williams found his true voice following his discovery of folksong and his lessons with Ravel; and the Victorian feel of much of it. Mr Kennedy readily acknowledges the influences of Parry and Stanford but professes that they do not matter to him.

I have treasured my copy of Kennedy’s *Works* for forty years, and I am sure that the fault in not loving the symphony must be mine. I shall listen to it again, if possible, in a concert performance: it may well be that I will be converted! At the very least, I shall feel guilty if I still cannot bring myself to rank it somewhere near the other eight. My problem stems, perhaps, from hearing it in the first half of a concert conducted by Sir Adrian Boult in the early 1970s, which concluded with a stunning performance of the *Sinfonia Antartica*.

I shall let members know how I get on, and I should be interested to hear how others fare if they seek to get to know and admire works that they have hitherto shunned.

Nigel Blore
Billericay, Essex, UK

RESPECT!

I enjoyed the Christmas Day edition of “Great Lives” on Radio 4 about Vaughan Williams, with Stuart Maconie and our Chairman Em Marshall-Luck. Matthew Parris was annoyed that the composer’s first name was not spelt to match its pronunciation – “Rafe” rather than “Ralf”. During his lifetime, Vaughan Williams managed to avoid this problem by adopting the form “R. Vaughan Williams” on publications. Some writers seem to have gone along with this: I have a small book by Frank Howes published in 1937 entitled *The Later Works of R. Vaughan Williams*. I suspect, too, that in those more formal times, the BBC was unlikely to have used his full name when broadcasting his music, probably limiting itself to “Dr. Vaughan Williams”. Since the composer’s death his full name has become more familiar, but I fear many people will come across it in print and be bound to get to know him, in effect, by the wrong name. There is also a danger that when he is only referred to as “Vaughan Williams” it may seem that “Vaughan” is his first name. I have certainly come across reviews in a national newspaper where the critic, through ignorance or a need to save space, has annoyingly used only “Williams”. I suppose these are small matters, though, and the main thing is that the music itself is appreciated.

Robert Allan
Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK

MORE...

I was saddened to read a letter in the *Times* in December from nine surviving relatives of Ralph Vaughan Williams suggesting that the National Trust was neglecting Leith Hill Place, the composer’s former Surrey home. Then, hearing Mathew Parris on the Christmas Day “Great Lives” programme deliberately refer to Vaughan Williams as “Ralf” rather than “Rayf”, I felt his memory had been dealt a further blow of disrespect.

I wrote to Dame Fiona Reynolds, the Director-General of the National Trust, pointing out that Leith Hill Place was gifted by Vaughan Williams to the National Trust in 1944-45, and in accordance with his wishes the property and its “noticeable deterioration” – quoting the *Times* letter – should be respectfully restored. I also mentioned that the restored Leith Hill Place could be used as a museum to the memory of the composer, a tribute sadly lacking to date and an initiative which her successor, Dame Helen Ghosh, should take up.

With reference to “Great Lives”, I was glad to hear Em Marshall-Luck’s correct pronunciation of Vaughan Williams’s first name. Stuart Maconie was excellent. His description of “blocks of chords” in the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* struck a memory note of an essay I wrote many years ago where I described the relevant passages in this majestic composition as “great blocks of shifting chords”.

Vaughan Williams was one of Britain’s finest composers. His memory should be cherished and not casually disregarded.

E Anne Webb
Ealing, London, UK

Concert Reviews

THREE SYMPHONIES AT THE PROMS

In his editorial in the October issue of the *Journal*, William Hedley expressed surprise at the lack of enthusiastic reviews of this year's Prom comprising the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Symphonies. Perhaps members were saving their views for the February issue. I was, and here are my reactions, together with some musings about the Fourth, currently my favourite of the nine. I apologise in advance for the less than rapturous review. I hope this is not going to prompt vituperative correspondence.

I was not at the Royal Albert Hall, but listened on BBC4, and recorded the broadcast to DVD.

With apologies to Michael Kennedy, my conclusion is that to attempt the three symphonies in one programme was too ambitious. It must have been tiring for the audience, let alone the conductor and orchestra. My impression was that the quality of performance dropped off towards the end, and I found the epilogue of the Sixth rather disappointing. It seemed rather too loud and not sufficiently lacking in emotion or expression, as required by the composer.

But the Fourth! This I thought was a superb performance. It put me in mind of the composer's 1937 recording. Without prompting from me an acquaintance expressed the same view. Perhaps Andrew Manze had been studying the composer's own rendition.

Vaughan Williams's performance is timed at a staggering 29:13, and the conductor's "muck or nettles" approach generates tremendous excitement. Inspired by the article by John Francis in the *Journal*, I decided to look at the timings of other recordings. Perhaps speed of performance influenced my preferences?

I time Norman del Mar and the BBC Symphony Orchestra at 32:49, and the early Boult London Philharmonic performance at 32:33. (Perhaps this is a different recording from the one on John's list.) Boult's later disc with the New Philharmonia takes about a minute less, but I prefer the earlier one. Perhaps the harsh sound of an old recording suits this symphony!

A reading not on John's list, and of which I have a cassette recording, is Jan Pascal Tortelier's Prom performance of 2008 with the BBC Philharmonic. Without the two inter-movement pauses this is timed at a very rapid 31:00. It is a tremendously exciting performance that was rapturously received. And the conductor is a Frenchman.

A problem with all these timings is whether the pauses are included in the times given on the notes included with the LP or CD. My own view is that the pauses between movements are an integral part of the work. Which gives me an opportunity to aim a large swipe at the seemingly growing practice of the musical ignoramuses who applaud between movements. Happily the works in this Prom didn't suffer this insult.

All in all a very interesting but slightly disappointing concert.

Michael J. Gainsford

PILGRIM AT THE ENO

Is the journey of a pilgrim bleak and grey? In the English National Opera's version of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (November 2012) we were left in no doubt that it is. Director Yoshi Oida's uncompromising vision was set amongst the cells and bars of a prison, the predominant colour being grey. There was much about this production that was skilfully and imaginatively done. However did it match what Vaughan Williams set out to achieve?

Inevitably all reviewers who saw the 2008 version at Sadler's Wells will make comparisons. The contrast between the two was clear from the start. In 2008, Neal Davies, playing Bunyan, woke gently from his sleep to stand up and tell us about his book. In 2012, Roland Wood as Bunyan – and also playing Pilgrim – is dragged into a prison cell by guards in modern uniforms and flung to the floor. The rawness of this scene hits us between the eyes and stays with us for most of the production. The climax of Oida's interpretation, the death of Pilgrim, has him taken to an electric chair in the prison and executed. The River of Death is shown concurrently as a projected image. This transformation of the death, effectively into a murder, was one aspect of the presentation that I was uneasy about. Previously we had seen the chair, firstly hidden under a sheet, making a shape like a distant mountain, then being slowly revealed as the sheet was pulled away, cruelly exposing its true and brutal nature. Again I was uncomfortable with this. I expected a message of hope and peace. Similarly the three shepherds had been transmuted into a prison chaplain, doctor and lawyer. The makeover that the opera was receiving, though brilliantly done, did not seem to sit with Vaughan Williams's music and faith in humanity.

It was not all bleakness and hopelessness. Visually the production was striking, due in no small part to the lighting skills of Lutz Deppe. Some moments of magic: Evangelist walking forward in the centre of the stage carrying a flaming torch and lighting a cauldron; the imagery of light shining through prison bars; prison scenery gliding swiftly into position to reform as the straight path of the King's Highway. The scenery had been ingeniously designed in modules of small groups of prison cells with walkways on top reached by steps, which could be moved on castors like furniture. The monster Apollyon was a grotesque collage of pieces of fabric and what looked like vacuum cleaner parts, hauled upright by ropes to tower over a tiny puppet representing Pilgrim.

Vocally, the Shining Ones stood out, although all performances were good. The moment when the Shining Ones removed Pilgrim's burden from his back was supremely moving, as I suspect it would be in any production of this opera. Chloe Hinton, mezzo-soprano, did magnificently, standing in as the Third Shining One, then later as the Woodcutter's Boy, pushing a trolley around the prison and dishing out soup to the inmates. Her voice was bright and clear, its purity seeming to bring a promise of goodness to come. Roland Wood, baritone, as Bunyan/Pilgrim was powerful and commanding but I felt that he was not fully conveying the feeling of being on a spiritual journey. I also wondered if some audience members were confused with him

playing both Bunyan and Pilgrim, and whether it would work better dramatically to use different actors, as was the case in 2008.

Another example of how this production differed from the earlier one was the Vanity Fair scene. The 2012 version had colour and impact but there were so many actors on stage that you couldn't focus on the action. By contrast, in 2008 a choir was used, separate from the actors, which freed up the stage for the relatively small number of actors needed to tell the story.

To sum up, 2008 felt warm and uplifting, and featured a heartfelt performance by Roderick Williams as Pilgrim, where he really brought the role to life. In contrast, 2012 was colder, with just glimmers of light. To be fair, 2012 had good points – it was innovative, bold, watchable and never boring. But it lacked a message of hope and the excitement of striving towards a destination and reaching it. It is always good to see familiar things in a new light, and we must thank Yoshi Oida for what he has done. But in the quest for originality, did he go too far?

Robert Shave

MORE...

This is one of my favourite works, and I was excited at the prospect of hearing a professional performance, having many years ago heard a very good amateur production at the Queen's School in Chester.

The music was a joy to listen to. Martyn Brabbins guided his singers and orchestra through the intricacies of the score, and Roland Wood, who sang the parts of both Bunyan and Pilgrim, rose to the considerable demands of the part. We were treated to an amazing and convincing performance.

Yoshi Oida's production, however, I found grotesque. The Prologue in the earlier, necessarily simpler, production, had Bunyan sitting at a desk in his cell, and successfully made use of minimal staging to illustrate the story. Oida's production started with a full-blown prison scene, with the entire cast in convicts' or warders' outfits. Everything was a dark grey/khaki, and the stage was filled with steel constructions representing cells and walkways. These came in sections and were efficiently rearranged at various points in the drama. The prison uniforms persisted for most of the performance.

When Pilgrim was about to embark on his journey, Evangelist came to encourage him on his way. You could tell that Evangelist was a goodie, as he was wearing a white stole over his prison uniform. I still don't know why he needed to hold up a brown umbrella. As the journey moved on there were many more encounters with goodies in white stoles and baddies in black ones. The battle with Apollyon was disappointing – I felt that my four year-old grandson could have dreamed up a more convincing monster.

I had been wondering what Vanity Fair would be like in prison uniform, but in the event it turned into an explosion of colour. Vaughan Williams is said to have asked for Vanity Fair to be full of colour and obvious debauchery. This was given a very 2012 treatment with the brightest possible colours and glitter, fake breasts, bare buttocks and almost anything you could imagine

(and maybe a few things you couldn't). Pilgrim was left badly wounded, and with typical lack of subtlety, a couple of nurses in Red Cross uniforms turned up to tend him.

The shepherd boy was transmogrified into a female prison attendant, who dished out soup from her trolley to the inmates – I'm not sure why they were there at this stage of the narrative – and to Pilgrim. I felt that by far the most successful part of the staging was the interlude with Mr and Mrs By-Ends. This was executed with great humour, and I felt they were even wearing appropriate clothes. Later, Evangelist gave Pilgrim the brown umbrella as the "Staff of Righteousness".

I realise that the work presents many issues in performance, being in many ways as much an oratorio as an opera. However, I feel that Oida's response was too facile, tending to pick up on a few aspects and working them to death (especially the prison theme).

Having said all this, I am still really pleased to have attended, though for the music, not the staging. I am grateful to the ENO for tackling the work and the Society's financial contribution, which together have given me a chance to hear such a fine musical performance. At the end, I was more than happy to join the audience in rapturous applause, and went home with Vaughan Williams's glorious music running through my head.

Richard Hann

LONDON IN LIVERPOOL...

On 17 November I visited one of my favourite cities to hear a concert by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under John Wilson, entitled "Tasmin Little's Delius". But I was there primarily for the Vaughan Williams *A London Symphony*. John Wilson is currently part way through a project to conduct all nine.

The concert began with the lively, but seldom heard *Nell Gwyn* Overture, by Edward German, a representative of the lighter music for the presentation of which John Wilson has become rightly renowned. He has recently recorded this overture with the RLPO. It makes much use of the old English song *Early one morning*.

Next came the beautiful but also seldom heard Violin Concerto by Delius. I got to know this piece from the 1944 recording by its dedicatee, Albert Sammons, with the then not yet Royal, Liverpool Phil, under Sir Malcolm Sargent. Delius is not one of my favourite composers, but I do like this rhapsodic work, a seamless composition in one continuous movement. The main theme is redolent of film music from the thirties or forties, and I was put in mind of Korngold's Concerto. The Delius was beautifully played by Tasmin Little, resplendent in a silver-green gown. She was rewarded with at least five curtain calls.

According to the programme, this was where the interval occurred, and a large proportion of the audience departed to the foyer, to be greeted by a loud speaker announcement stating "This is not an interval". It certainly seemed like one! Some unfortunates did not regain their seats in time for the next item, Elgar's *Cockaigne* Overture, incidentally advertised on the RLPO website as the concluding piece, which seemed an odd place for it anyway. Wilson's rendering was tremendously exciting, the RLPO brass

excelling themselves. I am tempted to say that this was one of the best performances of this work I have ever heard.

Following what turned out to be the real interval we had *A London Symphony*. A marvellously hushed opening on cellos and double basses, then the Westminster chimes heralding the noise and bustle of the great city waking up. The movement was beautifully played throughout, although I thought I detected a wrong note emanating from the direction of the trombones and tuba. Perhaps I imagined it.

The second movement (Nocturne) was also performed marvelously with wonderful solo viola playing by, I assume, the first violist Catherine Marwood. But I could hardly hear the jingling harness bit, possibly because I now sometimes have difficulties hearing high notes. Sadly at the end of the rapt conclusion some misguided individual in the audience started clapping but happily nobody joined in. I presume it was the same person who clapped after the first and third movements. A pity he or she didn't stay in the foyer for the first "Interval".

The third movement was also most enjoyable, the orchestra and conductor depicting the mouth organs and passing tramcar delightfully.

The last movement of this symphony is the one I enjoy least, I'm afraid. Heresy! I think much of the first part rather bombastic with parts overstaying their welcome. But the second half, with its wonderful coda, is something else, and the RLPO did it full justice, and were rewarded by tumultuous applause from a Philharmonic Hall about 80% full. I am becoming more and more convinced that Vaughan Williams's time has now come, after the eclipse his music suffered in the decades after his death.

The last time I heard Tasmin Little was in the Leisure Centre at Whitwick, near Coalville, a far less illustrious venue than Philharmonic Hall. I have praised the Art Deco wonders of this Hall before, also the excellence of the fare in the *Rubato* restaurant. I'll now add my praises for the most excellent and informative programme notes, and the free cough sweets.

Michael J. Gainsford

...AND IN BERLIN

"Music is about having fun." Thus read the headline of an interview with Sir Roger Norrington in the newspaper of the Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin, the edition which appeared just before Norrington's concert with the orchestra in Berlin's Philharmonie on 9 December. The concert included a rare Berlin performance of Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony*. Judging from their facial expressions the musicians at this splendid concert were having fun, and the audience, silent and concentrated throughout the concert, enjoyed it immensely, as their enthusiastic ovation at the end indicated. The "London" theme ran through the programme: a suite from Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and Haydn's *Clock Symphony* as well as the Vaughan Williams.

Norrington has been a guest conductor with this orchestra for many years, and it showed, for he and the orchestra were of one

mind, with the result that the spirit of the music glowed, vital and infectious. The critic of the *Berliner Morgenpost*, at the beginning of his review, described Norrington not only as a much loved visiting conductor, but also as a "kauziger Brite" (an "oddball Englishman"). The musical aspects of this will become clear shortly, but Norrington certainly came across as a bit of a character. For the Vaughan Williams I've never seen a podium quite like it, long, two joined together in fact, extending deep into the orchestra with, at the end, a tall music stand, almost vertical. As a result the conductor's markings were legible to the audience in the front rows, principally red lines drawn between bars from the top to the bottom of pages. And Norrington was fond of teasing the audience, as when about to start the Vaughan Williams he appeared – like an elderly gentleman – to have lost his spectacles and feigned great relief when discovering them in one of his pockets. Or perhaps he had really forgotten where he had put them! All this was done with mime and gesture.

The Purcell suite of six movements, arranged by Norrington himself, contained delightful music, with a nice balance between movements dancing lightly along and those in a grander manner, noble and gracious, with trumpets and drums. The work proved to be an excellent aperitif for the weightier fare which followed.

For the Haydn symphony the layout of the orchestra was most unusual. Seated at the front of the platform, from left to right, were first violins, cellos, violas and second violins. Placed behind the strings in a semicircle, and standing, were wind and brass players, with flutes and oboes on the far left, horns and trumpets in the centre, and bassoons and clarinets on the far right. The double basses were divided into two separate groups amongst the wind and brass players in the centre left and centre right of the platform. The effect was that the wind instruments came across loud and clear through the string textures. My wife and I were sitting slightly right of centre and it was particularly fascinating to hear so clearly the interplay between the clarinets (used only for the third time by Haydn in his symphonies) and the bassoons, with their prominent part as the ticking clock in the second movement. The strings played without vibrato, which I find most fitting in Haydn, for this style of playing lends an appropriately "plain" sheen, yet also an edge, to the sound, particularly of the violins. The performance was an absolute delight, full of exuberance, joy, and humour, one to confirm my view of Haydn as a supreme symphonic composer.

In the Vaughan Williams the players assumed more conventional places in the orchestra, though the first and second violins were divided and positioned to the left and right of the conductor. But Norrington stuck to his guns with regard to string playing, in order to create what he called in the newspaper interview a "pure tone". I am sure that Vaughan Williams himself would have hated the idea of playing without vibrato, and I can well imagine the disappointment of many in Gloucester Cathedral for the centenary performance of the *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis*. However, in the context of a full symphony orchestra I thought the lack of vibrato worked quite well, just as it had in Norrington's performance of Elgar's First Symphony at the Proms a few years ago. To be honest I soon forgot about the issue in my enjoyment of the wonderful orchestral colours which were fully realised by the fine, young, and enthusiastic musicians of the DSO under Norrington's gentle promptings. I had to smile, however, during the leader's final solo, for he could not help himself indulging in some vibrato for his beautiful tune. As Sir Roger showed no sign

of displeasure, this aberration from the rigidly upheld norm of string playing must have been approved in rehearsal!

During the performance I was struck again and again by the wealth and splendour of the folk-influenced tunes. The comparison with Dvořák made in the concert programme note seemed entirely apt. And I was totally convinced by the work's combination of symphonic structure and argument on the one hand, and impressionistic tone painting on the other, with the latter, for example, forming a frame to the former at the beginning (London before dawn) and end of the symphony (the flowing Thames). Another combination which impressed was that of exquisite, delicately scored episodes, as in the Scherzo for example, and passages of blistering power, as shortly before the Epilogue. But even here heavy brass did not drown other sections of the orchestra, as everything was perfectly balanced and integrated. I had never previously appreciated so much the beautiful effect of the passage for string octet and harp emerging from the sound of the full orchestra in the middle of the first movement, a reminder that the composition of the symphony began only two years after the completion of the *Tallis Fantasia*.

In one or two points of interpretation I was not totally convinced by Norrington's approach. One of the second subject themes in the first movement was a little too steady for my liking and lacked the swagger that Vernon Handley, notwithstanding the *largamente* marking, brought to this music in his two recordings. Likewise the tempo for the opening of the Scherzo was rather ponderous, scarcely *allegro vivace*. The Trio section, however, was beautifully realised: the passage imitating mouth organ and accordion, played here with accented pairs of crescendos and diminuendos, and the gorgeous *cantabile* version of the main tune of the Trio, brought smiles to the musicians' faces. In the last movement the passage marked *con fuoco* in the *allegro* section following the solemn march had tremendous bite, all caution – as noted above – now thrown to the wind.

I got to know this symphony mainly from broadcasts and recordings, but to hear it live, in all its warmth and richness, and especially as played by a great German orchestra in the Philharmonie – nothing in London to touch its fine acoustic! – was an overwhelming experience. This was the first concert in what is to be a cycle of all nine symphonies by the DSO and Norrington. We have already booked for the *Sea Symphony* on 12 May, with Rebecca Evans, Simon Keenlyside and the great Berlin Radio Choir. What with the wonderful *Pilgrim's Progress* in London, these have been memorable weeks for itinerant lovers of Vaughan Williams!

Tony Williams

MORE...

A stream of intrepid concertgoers (I was among them) walked purposefully along what seemed to be a well-trodden path through the snow from the Potsdamer Platz U-bahn station to Herbert-Von-Karajan-Strasse and to their destination: the huge golden spaceship of the Berlin Philharmonie. Once inside the hall, there was a great sense of anticipation. It felt like a historic occasion: a performance of *A London Symphony* in the centre of Germanic musical culture. The music of Vaughan Williams, I think most people would agree, is intrinsically “unGerman” in idiom and style – intentionally so, as

it represented a deliberate attempt to break free of the then dominant German models. It is music which has historically been – and still is – under-appreciated in Germany, indeed hardly known at all. So it is not exaggerating too much to describe a performance of a Vaughan Williams symphony in Berlin as akin to a mission to the heathen. The orchestra taking on this task was the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin; the conductor, Sir Roger Norrington.

In many respects, Sir Roger Norrington must be accounted a Ralph Vaughan Williams Society hero. He has recorded five of the composer's symphonies for Decca with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The booklets of those CDs carry a passionate personal tribute by Sir Roger: “...a master...whose soul was ablaze with glory, pity and anger...this marvellous composer...the greatest man I am ever likely to meet.” In addition, Sir Roger has championed Vaughan Williams's music in many concerts in Germany as well as in England. He has conducted Symphonies 1-6 in Stuttgart, and others in various German cities. Now he is planning a cycle of all nine with the DSO in Berlin, with *A London Symphony* being the first instalment, to be followed by *A Sea Symphony* in May 2013. In the course of promoting these Berlin concerts, he has been singing the praises of Vaughan Williams, doing his very best to sell the music to German audiences – “Phantastische Musik!”, as he told his interviewer on the DSO website.

Yet there is a potential fly in the ointment – or, rather, a hobbyhorse on the horizon: Sir Roger's insistence that, where the repertoire demands it, orchestras, and particularly the string sections, should play without vibrato, deploying what he calls “pure tone”. I am sure that most members of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society are aware of this practice and the theory behind it, from performances by Sir Roger in the UK, recordings by him with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra, his published comments in concert programmes and his article “Bad Vibrations” in *The Guardian* in March 2003. In summary, Sir Roger believes that what he calls “continuous vibrato” (that is, the way orchestras normally play now) is a relatively modern aberration that set in spontaneously in the 1920s and 1930s, at different times in different orchestras, spreading across the world orchestral scene until, by the beginning of the Second World War, the old-style vibrato-less playing was completely extinguished. The last recording of the old style is, he says, Bruno Walter's 1938 performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, though in England the change was complete several years earlier. On this theory, Sir Roger has built a standard authenticist argument requiring works composed before the supposed change to be performed in accordance with the old vibrato-less style so as to have them performed as the composer would have expected to have heard them in performance. From Sir Roger's accounts, it seems that this theory was developed in 2002-3, after the start of his appointment in Stuttgart. It therefore does not affect his Decca Vaughan Williams recordings which were made in 1996 and 1997 and display the kind of use of vibrato he now inveighs against.

Again, I am sure that most Society members will have their own views on the validity of Sir Roger's ideas. For my part, I believe it has been demolished as a historical theory by a series of articles by David Hurwitz, the latest of which appears in Volume 93/1 of *Music & Letters*. Hurwitz argues that the change never actually happened. If anything, vibrato was reduced in the 1920s and 1930s from a previously higher level as part of a general movement away



Sir Roger Norrington

from what were seen as outmoded sentimental practices, a movement which also included the more-or-less complete abandonment of *portamento*. Sir Roger has not yet responded directly to those articles but, in what I read as an indirect response, he has taken to emphasising aesthetic rather than theoretico-historical reasons for his practice. For example, in the DSO website interview previously mentioned, he said: “Ich mache das nicht, weil es richtig ist, sondern weil es schön ist.” (“I do this not because it is right but because it is beautiful.”) Among other suggested benefits, Sir Roger claims that with “pure tone” the orchestral texture is more transparent so that it is easier to hear the separate instrumental parts. He says “You can hear right inside the sound.”

Vaughan Williams is a particularly interesting test case for Norrington’s theory. He straddles the supposed change more clearly than any other well-known composer. (Other composers, such as Stravinsky and Vaughan Williams’s close contemporary Arnold Schoenberg, also do, but the dramatic changes that their compositional styles underwent mid-career make the pure tone/continuous vibrato issue less relevant to their later works.) The chronology of his compositional life is such that the first two symphonies were written before the change, while symphonies from No 5 onwards were written after. The authenticist argument is therefore weak in relation to the later symphonies. In the DSO website interview, Sir Roger recognises this point but suggests that in his Berlin cycle the decision whether or not to deploy “pure tone” in the later symphonies will be decided on a case by case basis. He does not rule out using “pure tone” in some of the symphonies written after the supposed change. He admits that “pure tone” does not sound good with all post-1940 music but he claims that Vaughan Williams’s Fifth, for instance, gains from vibrato-less playing “because it is so spiritual”.

One of the weaknesses of the Norrington theory is that he seems unable to point to anybody who lived through the supposed change and who commented on it in a way that would show that it was noticed contemporaneously, still less noticed as a deleterious change. As for Vaughan Williams himself, as far as I am aware there are no recorded comments indicating that he noted any

significant change in orchestral playing practice as to vibrato, and particularly string vibrato, during the 1920s and 1930s.

Vaughan Williams *did* comment on the issue of vibrato – but in relation to brass instruments and, more specifically, in relation to the playing of brass bands. He regarded the standard vibrato applied by brass bands as excessive. In a note on the inside cover of the manuscript score of his concert overture for brass band *Henry V* (1933-4), for instance, he wrote that “the vulgar sentimental vibrato which disfigures most brass band music should be strictly avoided”. He referred humorously to the same problem in his programme note for the premiere of the Ninth Symphony, in relation to the flugelhorn: “This beautiful and neglected instrument is not usually allowed in the select circles of the orchestra and has been banished to the brass band, where it is allowed to indulge in the art of vibrato. While in the orchestra it is obliged to play with a pure and unwavering tone.” It may well be from this very passage that Sir Roger took the expression “pure tone”. I would suggest, however, that what Vaughan Williams is attacking here is *excessive* vibrato, not all and any vibrato. Furthermore, his words are focused on a particular brass instrument and cannot simply be applied to string playing as well. As David Hurwitz has pointed out, Gustav Holst used the expression “dead tone” (not “pure tone”) to refer to the vibrato-less string sound he wanted in “Neptune”, and this seems to indicate that elsewhere in *The Planets* Holst was expecting at least some vibrato to be used, although, like Vaughan Williams, Holst seems to have been opposed to what he regarded as excessive vibrato. Vaughan Williams’s “pure tone” would therefore mean tone purged of excessive vibrato not tone purged of all vibrato. Tone purged of all vibrato would be “dead tone”.

So much for the theory. What then of the practice? Is “pure tone” more beautiful than “continuous vibrato”? This is a more complex issue. It is part of Sir Roger’s rhetoric to present “continuous vibrato” as something dogmatic and relentless, applied throughout a piece whether appropriate or not. Yet the same is true of Sir Roger’s “continuous non-vibrato” which is a sort of anti-dogma dogma. Probably the truth is somewhere in-between



Philharmonie, Berlin

the two. Non-vibrato may be appropriate for certain pieces (e.g. “Neptune”) and types of music within a piece, but not for others. The Berlin concert provided a fascinating demonstration of this.

The hall was about three-quarters full. It would be interesting to see a demographic analysis comparing this audience to an audience at a typical Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra concert. Maybe I am betraying my prejudices in saying that I suspect it was on average younger and less affluent but more musically knowledgeable – more like a Proms audience. It certainly was attentive and concentrated on the music.

In the first half, Sir Roger was on relatively safe “period” ground with Purcell’s *The Faery Queen* Suite and Haydn’s “Clock” Symphony. Few people, I suppose, would complain about the lack of vibrato in these pieces. He conducted them without baton, podium or score. For the Haydn, the orchestra was set out in a semicircular arrangement with the woodwind and brass standing behind the strings. Sir Roger delighted the Berlin audience by often turning to look at them in the course of his conducting in a humorous manner, pulling faces and making comical gestures. His bald head, rubicund features and slightly corpulent figure coupled with his sense of mischievous fun made him appear like a cross between Falstaff and Puck. This was all in accordance with another Norrington theory – that humour assists music-making.

The quirkiness of the first half was abandoned for the Vaughan Williams. The large orchestra was set out in more or less conventional fashion. Sir Roger stood on a podium with a baton. A full score of the symphony was set on a stand raised to eye-level in front of the podium. The only jokey interaction between Sir Roger and the audience after the interval occurred before the start of the music when he indicated that the height of the stand was necessitated by his poor eyesight.

In general, in terms of tempos, tempo relations, long-term structure and moment-to-moment detailing, the Berlin performance followed the interpretation familiar from Sir Roger’s Decca recording. In

terms of orchestral sound, however, as might be expected from what I have said above, the two performances were very different.

The triple-*piano* opening of the symphony immediately exposed a problem with the “pure tone” approach. Normally, this passage insinuates itself subtly on the audience with a shimmering effect, largely the result of string vibrato. It seems highly likely that this was the effect intended by Vaughan Williams. In Berlin, without vibrato, the actual notes were clearer, but the music lacked atmosphere. It was dull, blunt, flat, plain; plopped down in front of the audience like a plate of raw meat. The *Allegro risoluto* main section of the first movement came off well, with Norrington and the DSO doing full justice to the drama and variety of the music. The grinding chordal sequence with which it begins had particular impact in this performance, possibly justifying Sir Roger’s claim that non-vibrato playing makes discords “more serious and astringent”.

The second movement brings another very quiet opening string passage but this one, unlike that of the first movement, seemed well suited to “pure tone”, the dullness of the string tone appropriate to the foggy November afternoon in London which the music portrays. From bar 9, Norrington brought out a detail which I had never noticed before: the harp accompaniment to the repeat of the opening chord sequence, now on woodwinds. Maybe this is an example of the clarity of orchestral texture which Norrington claims for “pure tone”, although the acoustics of the Philharmonie were probably also a contributory factor. In addition, as in his Decca recording, Norrington had the harp space out the strummed chords almost like an arpeggio. I have heard no other conductor in concert or on record do this and it is doubtful whether it is what the score prescribes, but it was a beautiful effect, expertly executed by the superb DSO harpist. As the movement progressed, without any string vibrato at all it began to seem too clinical, to lack pathos. The “Biblical” climax, instead of throbbing with passion as usual, was almost percussive in effect, the chords punched out like hammer blows, in its way an equally powerful effect, although somewhat unsettling to those who know the piece well. It still brought a tear to the eye.

The scherzo was brilliant. Lack of vibrato seemed to be no problem here. As for the final movement, the cry of pain which opens it was rendered as another of Norrington's "serious and astringent" dissonances and the main section of the last movement had plenty of power and excitement. Then, of course, came the cherished moment: the nine bars before letter R, the short *Lento* triple-*piano* passage before the Epilogue, when the DSO harpist again became the star of the show, sounding out the chimes of Big Ben over low strings. Possibly, most of the Berlin audience did not recognise the tune (even though it was identified in the concert programme note) but the location of the concert imbued it with more-than-usual significance for at least one Englishman present. After this, the Epilogue itself was a disappointment, repeating the problem of the opening of the first movement, although, mercifully, the DSO leader was allowed to play his concluding solo with a restrained vibrato. The final string chord failed to bloom and this gave a certain brusqueness to the ending.

From a Society perspective, it is troubling, to some extent, that the first ever complete cycle of Vaughan Williams symphonies in Germany is going to be Norrington's experimental one rather than something more mainstream. The worry is that Berlin could be put off Vaughan Williams by "pure tone" performances. Maybe these fears are baseless, however, because Norrington's performance was greeted enthusiastically by the Philharmonie audience, with several bravos and many people standing. This enthusiasm has been echoed in press notices of the concert. The mood seems to be summed up by Andreas Goebel, writing on the website of *kulturradio rbb*: "Eine echte Bereicherung des Orchesterrepertoires! Da darf man sich schon jetzt die anderen acht Sinfonien von Ralph Vaughan Williams mit dem DSO und Roger Norrington freuen." ("A real enrichment of the orchestral repertoire! One is already looking forward to hearing the other eight symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams with the DSO and

Roger Norrington.") Note that Andreas Goebel appears never to have heard the piece before and assumes that his readers will not have done so either.

I must say that, somewhat contrary to my expectations, Norrington's Berlin performance of *A London Symphony* has changed my view on the issue of string vibrato in orchestras. As I have indicated above, I do not accept Norrington's historical theory and nor, as a matter of practice, do I accept his blanket ban on orchestral vibrato. Nevertheless, there may be a good argument for saying that the standard use of string vibrato in modern orchestras is excessive. Returning to London concert life (and, even more, viewing concerts of the Berlin Philharmonic on the Digital Concert Hall) I have come to feel that there is force in Norrington's complaint that modern orchestras soak their audiences in "a warm bath of vibrato". Norrington's Berlin performance of the *London*, however misguided I found it in places, had the bracing effect of a cool, clear mountain stream. It remains in the memory as few concerts do – an austere beautiful approach to late romantic orchestral music, a brave and noble experiment.

A final word about the DSO. These are clearly top-notch players. Although they were playing unfamiliar music in an unfamiliar idiom and in an experimental style demanded by the conductor, their performance throughout was faultless. Every section distinguished itself. However one feels about Norrington's ideas, one can only admire the way they were executed by the orchestra.

In the interval of the concert, I had a thorough look in the Philharmonie CD shop. No CDs of music by Vaughan Williams were for sale.

Miles Croally 

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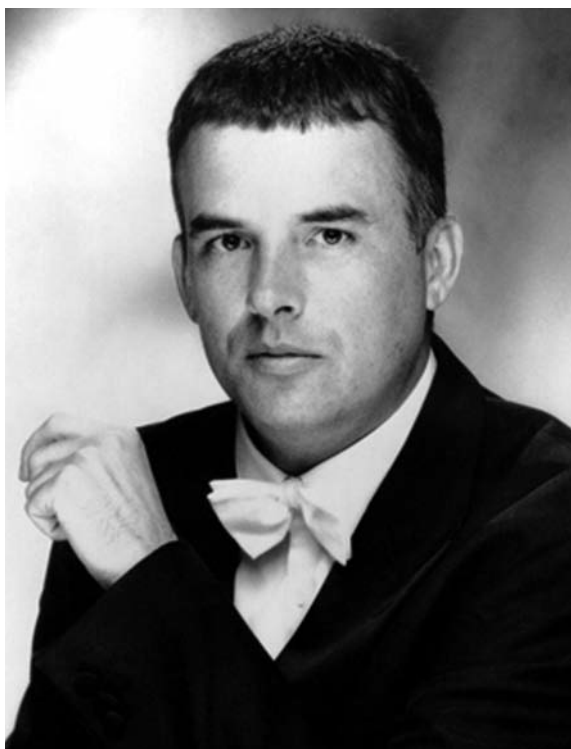
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From the Chairman

I have been lucky enough to have spent the past few months immersing myself in Vaughan Williams's music (amongst that of other composers, of course) with a view to both finalising the 2013 English Music Festival programme and choosing my desert island discs for the EMF magazine, *Spirited*. As always I find Vaughan Williams's masterly output comfortingly familiar, yet also so innovative that I always find something new; each work I listen to becomes a "favourite" and a "must-have" – I am sure members will have experienced the same issue! I am expected to be balanced in the EMF programming, otherwise the Festival would probably be predominantly Holst and Vaughan Williams, yet I believe we have a fine final programme for the forthcoming year, including, as it does, amongst several smaller works, two Vaughan Williams world premieres and the *Five Mystical Songs*. Of these, it is the gorgeous *Serenade in A minor* that I am most looking forward to hearing live, with Martin Yates and the BBC Concert Orchestra on the opening night of the Festival, 24 May. Although an early work (dating from 1898), it is gloriously evocative, with its broad romantic sweep, a rousing Scherzo, tender, poignant and noble Romance and slightly Mendelssohnian – and what's wrong with that? – finale. So, if you can, please do join us for what will certainly be a memorable occasion. If you're unable to reach Dorchester-on-Thames, fear not, as the concert is being recorded for later broadcast on Radio 3.



Martin Yates will conduct the premiere of Vaughan Williams's *Serenade in A minor*

On a different note entirely, members may have come across the article written by Marcus Binney in the *Times* regarding Leith Hill Place, and subsequent correspondence in the same publication, and even in this issue of the *Journal*. It is good news from our point of view that this matter has been resurrected, and so publicly, as it reopens the possibility of negotiating with the National Trust a future for the house that commemorates its association with Vaughan Williams. In this, the Society has the wholehearted support of the family. Discussions are currently in hand, with meetings planned at a high level. I will, of course, report back once any further developments or decisions have been made. We continue to keep our fingers crossed that the National Trust will realise and act on the importance of Leith Hill Place's connections.

In the meantime, I very much hope to see you at Dorchester-on-Thames in May, and that you will enjoy this glorious music one way or the other.

Em Marshall-Luck

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