

# RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS SOCIETY JOURNAL

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

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## From the Editor

Members who have been around for a while will recall that for many years the *Journal* was a themed publication. Each issue centred around a particular idea related to Vaughan Williams, or around one of his works. In deciding to abandon the idea, I was guided by the members. The theme would be duly announced, but few members would respond to it. That kind of thing makes an editor think, and my thoughts were as follows. Do the members not want to be tied by a theme? Perhaps members would submit articles on other subjects, but are discouraged from doing so. Or was I just choosing boring themes?

This issue has a theme, the first for a long time. I invited you to mark the centenary of the first performance of the *London Symphony* in its original version. There weren't many submissions, but thank you to those who did respond. The "original versus revised" debate seems to interest many of you, and for once I'd like to join in. When I first heard the original version in Richard Hickox's Chandos recording I was struck by the extreme beauty of music I didn't know. It would have been a thousand pities to keep it hidden for ever. But the revised version is tauter and more symphonic. In aiming for a convincing work of art, I feel sure that Vaughan Williams was right to cut the work as he did.

Articles and letters from members are the ingredients that make up your *Journal*. Not everybody feels confident enough or qualified enough to write an article, but that is no reason to be discouraged. The Society is a group of people brought together by a common passion, the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams, and what each member has to say is of interest to all the others. I have said before that achieving the right balance is the most difficult part of editing the *Journal*. Some of the articles that are submitted are highly

technical, and will not appeal to everybody. All the more reason, then, for those with everyday stories, thoughts and suggestions to share them with us all.

You will find several mentions of Albion Records in this issue. An independent review on a later page proves that the latest orchestral release, featuring *The Solent*, has been well received in the professional music press. The disc has proved popular with the public too, and if you haven't already acquired it, now's the time. You will also find a short article by Stephen Connock presenting the latest Albion release, music Vaughan Williams composed for two Shakespeare plays in 1912 and 1913. The disc was recorded live at King Edward VI School in Stratford-upon-Avon and is performed by some illustrious names alongside the school's own orchestra and choir. Stephen's article explains the touching link between this music and the school.

Still on the subject of Albion Records, sincere thanks are due to Mikel Toms who has decided to move on after running the website since the adventure began. Taking over from him is Tadeusz Kasa. Clearly, the Society's own website and this *Journal* do not provide enough work for him.

I hope members enjoy "meeting the team". Trustee John Treadway has recently been appointed the Society's Concert Resources Officer. You will be able to find a clue as to what his responsibilities are by reading Simon Coombs's article on the back page, but to learn more about this new role you only have four months to wait, as John will feature in "Meet the Team" in the June 2014 issue.

William Hedley

### Ralph Vaughan Williams and literature in English

*So hath your beauty from your hertē chased  
Pity, that me ne availeth not to plain:  
For Daunger halt your mercy in his chain.  
Guiltless my death thus have ye me purchased;  
I say you sooth, me needeth not to feign:  
So hath your beauty from your hertē chased  
Pity, that me ne availeth not to plain.*

*Alas! that nature hath in you compassed  
So great beauty, that no man may attain  
To mercy, though he stervē for the pain!  
So hath your beauty from your hertē chased  
Pity, that me ne availeth not to plain:  
For Daunger halt your mercy in his chain.*

Geoffrey Chaucer



# Publishing Vaughan Williams

## The copyright owner's view

**Hugh Cobbe**

Director, The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust

In my article on The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust in the June 2012 issue of this *Journal* I described the role of the Trust and its responsibilities for the legacy of Vaughan Williams's music. One major aspect of this is ensuring that all those compositions that seem worthy of publication should see the light of day and that the performing material available from their publishers for the major works should be of a standard that doesn't discourage conductors and orchestras from performing them. In the second part of this article Simon Wright, of the Oxford University Press, will describe the publisher's function in both these activities. In this first part I should like to describe in greater detail than I was able to in the earlier article our approach to publishing the hitherto unpublished compositions.

The systematic publication of the early unpublished works was started by the Trust's predecessor, RVW Ltd. Calling them early works is in a sense misleading because the earliest of them was written when the composer was already twenty-six and the latest when he was thirty-five! No infant prodigy material here: it is fair to say that Vaughan Williams was a late developer. RVW Ltd. made a start with the collection of early chamber music published under an agreement with Faber Music in 2002 (and recorded by the Nash Ensemble the same year). Of the compositions in this group, the one that has received many performances since it came out is the Piano Quintet of 1903, written for the same combination of instruments as Schubert's "Trout" Quintet. Vaughan Williams was thirty-one when he wrote it but it must be seen as an early piece because it was written when he was still "finding his voice". At the time of its composition he had only written three pieces that were to become part of mainstream repertoire, the three songs *Linden Lea*, "Whither must I wander" (incorporated the following year into the cycle *Songs of Travel*) and "Silent Noon" (incorporated into the cycle *The House of Life*). Other works of his had certainly received performances, and would do so thereafter, but as we shall see they were eventually withdrawn by the composer. Nonetheless the quintet had an important position at the end of the composer's "immaturity", because it was not long after its completion that three things happened which perhaps did more than anything else to help Vaughan Williams finally find his voice. In December 1903 he started actively to collect folk songs, first of all in Essex, and the songs collected by him and others in the folk song revival, such as Cecil Sharp, helped map a road forward for him as he developed his own style. Then in the following year he took on a task that would have an equally profound effect on his development as a composer

(not to speak of its profound effect on the development of Anglican hymnody): his editing of *The English Hymnal* (1904-1906). In 1907 came the final ingredient he had been seeking: a course of lessons with Maurice Ravel in Paris. With these rites of passage behind him he started at last to write mainstream works which have remained in the repertoire ever since: *Toward the Unknown Region* (which was revised after the lessons), *On Wenlock Edge*, *The Wasps*, *A Sea Symphony*, and perhaps especially the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

It is clear that one effect of breaking through and establishing his own idiom was to devalue, in his own eyes, major works written beforehand. These included the String Quartet in C minor of 1897; the attractive Serenade in A minor and the Quintet for clarinet, horn, violin, cello and piano from 1898; from 1899 the setting for soprano solo, chorus and orchestra of Swinburne's poem *The Garden of Proserpine*; and a large undertaking in the form of his doctoral exercise at Cambridge – an unconventional mass, lacking Kyrie and Gloria, but with a purely orchestral Offertorium movement. From 1900 we have the *Bucolic Suite* in four movements and the *Heroic Elegy and Triumphal Epilogue* of 1901; the 1902 *Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra* was followed in 1903 by two orchestral "impressions", *The Solent* and *Burley Heath*, and in 1904 by a third, *Harnham Down*. Lastly there was the Piano Quintet, finally ready in 1905. Thereafter we are firmly in published territory.

Vaughan Williams seems to have felt that these early works were not his "true self" and sought neither publication nor, in general, performance. In effect he suppressed them. However he did not destroy them but kept them all carefully out of harm's way in a bottom drawer. Nor did he put these works from his comparative youth entirely out of his mind: he several times raided them for good ideas to incorporate into other, later works. He made use of the opening clarinet theme in *The Solent* not only in *A Sea Symphony* but also at the end of his life in the second movement of his Ninth Symphony, played on a flugelhorn. Another of the "impressions", *Harnham Down*, yielded an idea which Vaughan Williams later used in *An Oxford Elegy* of 1949. The Piano Quintet was also quarried: the theme of the variations in the last movement reappeared attached to a further set of variations in the composer's 1954 Violin Sonata in A minor.

After Vaughan Williams died in 1958 Ursula Vaughan Williams gave the manuscripts of his published works to the British Museum (now British Library). A little later, in 1971, she decided to give also the suppressed works from that bottom drawer. She had some misgivings about this and before handing them over, she, Michael Kennedy, and Vaughan Williams's close assistant, Roy Douglas, went through them very carefully, Roy playing them through for the others. As a result Ursula pasted fierce notices on the manuscripts that they were neither to be copied nor performed and were for study purposes only.

Then in 1996, when I was Head of Music at the British Library, I received the letter from Ursula, couched in rather formal terms, which unlocked that drawer:



Ursula Vaughan Williams

Dear Hugh,

After my late husband's death I deposited (by way of gift) manuscripts containing the following works in the British Library [hereafter followed a list of the early works I have mentioned].

It was – and remains – my wish that the Manuscripts should form a part of the Museum's archive and as such be preserved for posterity, being made available for scholarly research and consultation in accordance with the Museum's general policy regarding original manuscripts.

I have been advised that, for the sake of good order and clarity, I should draw it to your attention that the deposit of the Manuscripts in the Museum does not include a disposition of the copyright in the Works. I am the sole copyright owner in certain of my late husband's published compositions, and sole copyright owner of all his unpublished compositions, including the Works.

It is my intention that the Works should be published under the auspices of RVW Limited, the company to which I have licensed the copyrights in my late husband's works. To that end, I trust that you will provide the necessary access to the Manuscripts to RVW Limited when requested by them.

I revoke my handwritten injunction that these works not be performed. Because of the increased interest in these early works and the attempts by various persons to publish these works illegally I have given permission to RVW Ltd. to prepare and publish these works on my behalf.

Yours sincerely

Ursula Vaughan Williams

And so in this way were all those fierce prohibitions countermanded, though it is worth noting in this context that Ursula made a very explicit exception to this lifting of her embargo: she confirmed that the opera on which she and Ralph were working at the time of his death – *Thomas the Rhymer* – was still not to be in any way edited or performed. However this was a very late composition and lies outside the scope of this article.

With Ursula's active encouragement, there began a programme to bring all the early works to the public. As Vaughan Williams's stature as one of the greatest British composers of the twentieth century has become increasingly recognised so has interest grown in what he had written before his first masterpieces sprang on the world. Accordingly, starting with the Faber Music publications of 2002 I have referred to, all the works noted earlier have been published and, in most cases, performed with financial support from the Trust. Many of these publications arose from the need to create performing materials for premiere recordings. We are all therefore indebted to Stephen Connock and the programme of the Society's Albion label, as well as to the Dutton and Somm labels for setting these publications in motion, to those who have edited the works from the manuscript sources, and to the respective publishers (Faber Music, Stainer & Bell, Promethean Editions (NZ), and Oxford University Press) who have taken them on. Simon Wright, of OUP, adds his perspective as a publisher on the Trust's publishing activity in the second part of this article.

Here for reference is a list of the new works published since 2008.

*Heroic Elegy and Triumphal Epilogue*, edited by Alain Frogley, Faber Music 2008

*Scenes adapted from Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*, by Evelyn U. Oules with music composed and selected by Ralph Vaughan Williams, edited by Nathaniel G. Lew, Promethean Editions Ltd, New Zealand, 2008

*O My Dear Heart* – carol for women's voices, Oxford University Press, 2009

*The Mayor of Casterbridge: Incidental music for a radio dramatization of Thomas Hardy's novel*, edited by Nathaniel G. Lew, Promethean Editions Ltd., New Zealand 2011

*The Garden of Proserpine*, vocal score, edited by James Francis Brown, Stainer & Bell 2011

*A Cambridge Mass*, vocal and full scores, edited by Alan Tongue, Stainer & Bell 2011, 2012

*Serenade in A minor (1898)*, edited by Julian Rushton, Oxford University Press 2012

*Bucolic Suite*, edited by Julian Rushton, Oxford University Press 2012

*Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra*, full score and two-piano score, edited by Graham Parlett, Oxford University Press 2012

*Nocturne: Whispers of Heavenly Death*, full score, Faber Music 2013

*The Solent*, full score, edited by James Francis Brown, Oxford University Press 2013

*Burley Heath*, full score, edited by James Francis Brown, Oxford University Press 2013

*Harnham Down*, full score, edited by James Francis Brown, Oxford University Press 2013

## The music publisher's view

**Simon Wright**

Head of Rights & Contracts, Music,  
Oxford University Press

Hugh Cobbe has outlined the support that The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust has given, and continues to give, for the selective publication and performances of previously unpublished works by Vaughan Williams, and for new editions of his established compositions. I would now like to look at the same topic from the perspective of the music publisher.

That there may be issues or problems with the scores of Vaughan Williams already published and which have been used apparently satisfactorily for decades may seem surprising. It is, though, within the remit of a music publisher constantly to ensure that the presentation of scores under its control continues to be of the highest order, and that the texts are accurate, with corresponding performing material viable for modern use. It is from the performing materials, after all, that fine performances will spring. So, like recording companies constantly re-recording repertoire in line with modern technologies and performance practice, music publishers similarly renew their publications, and take new titles that enrich and broaden the catalogue.

The nine symphonies of Vaughan Williams, in themselves a significant peak of modern symphonic achievement, clearly form the core of his orchestral output. But the chronological span embracing their composition dates (1909-1957, with various revisions made to most at some stage), coupled with the multiple music publishers involved over those years (with their widely varying approaches to style, presentation, and maintenance) has meant that there has never been a coordinated or uniform approach to the texts. As the fiftieth anniversary of Vaughan Williams's death in 2008 approached, RVW Ltd. (the predecessor of The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust) and Oxford University Press determined that work should be done to prepare and publish new critical editions of the symphonies under OUP's control (Nos. 4-9); and RVW Ltd. undertook to work similarly with the publishers of the other three works.

In this programme, Oxford University Press has to date issued critical editions of Symphony No. 5 (edited by Peter Horton, 2008), No. 6 (David Lloyd-Jones, 2012), and *Sinfonia Antartica* (David Matthews, 2012); Nos. 4, 8, and 9 are in preparation. With a primary objective of estab-

lishing absolutely definitive musical texts the editors for each score were carefully chosen by The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust and OUP for appropriate scholarly background and, where necessary, practical performance experience of the music. The Trust has financially supported the editorial work, and has also contributed significantly to the publication costs.

There are three compatible strands to OUP's publication of critical editions of the symphonies: large-format hardbound full scores, including introductory essay, survey of the sources, and critical commentary, in addition to the full text of the music; study scores, with modest prefatory material; and new performing material on hire (full scores, orchestral parts).

The Prefaces and introductory essays are designed to set each work in the context of Vaughan Williams's life and output, and to give a broader account of reception history, textual issues, and the place of the work within the repertoire. In the edition of Symphony No. 6, for example, Michael Kennedy gives an account of the work's early performance and reception, while Lloyd-Jones examines the complex sources which he accessed and assessed in order to prepare the edition, including those in the archives of OUP. "For the present re-publication, the autograph full score, Roy Douglas's copy, the orchestral parts, and the revised published

**Sinfonia Antartica**  
I Prelude

Soprano Solo  
Chorus: S.S.A.

R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

**Andante maestoso** (♩ = 80)

\* Sing 'ah' throughout.

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study score have been carefully checked in order to produce what, it is hoped, will be a definitive text, one that has the further benefit of acting as the basis for the first computerised set of matching orchestral parts”, concludes Lloyd-Jones, neatly summarising the philosophy which lies behind these editions.

David Matthews, in his Preface to *Sinfonia Antartica*, makes reference to changes made by John Barbirolli at rehearsal and authorised by Vaughan Williams, but which did not find their way to publication. He also references other interpretations, from both paper and aural sources: Adrian Boult, Norman Del Mar. This symphony, of course, was “founded” (to appropriate a favoured Vaughan Williams term) on the music for the film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948), and the new OUP score includes an essay on the historical view and interpretation of Scott’s expedition as it changed through the twentieth century. The essay is by Max Jones, the editor of Scott’s journals in OUP’s Oxford World’s Classics series. The new critical edition of the symphony was thus made in the light of fifty years and more of publication, performance, critical, and interpretative history, presenting for the first time a considered, contextualised, and fully accurate text.

The preparation of modern performing material has, as Lloyd-Jones noted, been one of the major benefits of the programme. By 2000, for most of the OUP symphonies, the original orchestral part “printing masters” (facsimiles of hand copied parts) were deteriorating and at the end of their useful lives; and the processes required to print (dyeline and industrial-scale photocopying) were seeming to become obsolete. The rise in ubiquity of computerised music typesetting simultaneously resulted in orchestral players now, not unreasonably, expecting to play from pristine, typeset,

and uniformly designed parts, rather than from “manuscripts” of varying quality and readability in performance. The new editions have met both needs: modern digital printing masters, and complete legibility. Old materials from orchestras and the publisher’s agents around the world have been withdrawn, and replaced with state-of-the-art scores and parts. The new parts importantly provided the opportunity to correct longstanding errors, notably the infamous misplacing of a timpani entry in Symphony No. 5, put right for the first time in Horton’s edition. And the vocal material for *Sinfonia Antartica*, always unsatisfactory, has been overhauled for the new edition.

In parallel with the symphonies, other orchestral works have been similarly reissued: a newly engraved full score of *The Lark Ascending* in 2005, for example; and David Matthews’s 2012 edition of the Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra, which addressed the issues of different readings of the first movement cadenza, and of phrasing in the “Romanza”. In both cases changes to and decisions about the full score text were reflected in revised solo/piano reduction scores, and the orchestral parts. A new edition of *Flos Campi* is in preparation. Vaughan Williams’s other publishers have similarly issued new editions of works in their catalogues (*Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* in 2010, by Faber Music, for example). But the second major piece of OUP’s continuing Vaughan Williams publishing programme has been the issue of “first editions” of previously unpublished works by the composer. The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust, as Hugh Cobbe has explained, decides which works it deems suitable for publication (appearance must enhance and shed new light on the oeuvre, and the work must be of sufficient interest and quality to justify investment), and also to which publisher the work is

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RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

*The Lark Ascending*

**THE LARK  
ASCENDING**

*Romance for violin & orchestra*

Reduction for violin and piano

*The Lark Ascending*  
Composed for violin and piano in 1914, and reworked for violin and orchestra in 1920, *The Lark Ascending* is one of Vaughan Williams's most enduringly popular works.

A serene romance, the work takes its title from a poem by George Meredith. The violin's magical evocation of the lark's 'chirrup, whistle, slur and shake', as it soars above delicate orchestral textures, demonstrates the composer's mastery of the pastoral idiom.

This new edition of the version for violin and piano includes an introduction by Michael Kennedy and is produced with the support of RVW Ltd.

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Double Concerto for Violin and Viola  
Violin, viola, and piano reduction

*Clarke*  
Shorter Pieces for Violin and Piano

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offered. As part of this process, the Trust will offer scores not only to Vaughan Williams's established publishers, but occasionally to specialist organisations where that seems the most desirable route to the market (the incidental music to the radio dramatisation of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* came out, for example, in 2011 under the imprint of Promethean Editions for Massey University in New Zealand). On this basis OUP, with the support of The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust, has now published a number of previously unavailable works by Vaughan Williams, including the carol *O my dear heart* (published in 2009), *Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra* (edited by Graham Parlett, published 2012), *Serenade in A minor* (Julian Rushton, 2012), *Bucolic Suite* (Rushton, 2012). The early orchestral works recently issued by the Albion Records label (*Burley Heath*, *The Solent*, and *Harnham Down*, all edited by James Francis Brown) were published by OUP in 2013.

Bringing these scores to publication has required a broadly similar approach to that used in the editions of the symphonies: a specific expert editor; an assessment of all the sources (including in all cases the autograph manuscripts but there was not, of course, in any case, a previously published edition); careful production of an accurate text (in the case of *Burley Heath* the editor's work extended to the hypothetical completion of a small section missing from the autograph); and publication of a score with matching orchestral material. Publication of the *Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra* (a work dating from 1895-1904) has allowed a rare opportunity to see (and hear) an early incarnation of Vaughan Williams's entirely idiosyncratic piano style, and thus sheds new light on later works, such as the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*. Graham Parlett, in the Preface to his edition, describes the editorial approach, one which is typical of all of the editors of these newly published pieces.

The preparation of a full score for publication naturally involved going through the manuscript thoroughly, correcting obvious errors and in doubtful cases making editorial decisions. Despite the well-known illegibility of the composer's handwriting, the notes in the score are, on the whole, fairly easy to determine, with relatively few instances of ambiguity; but the manuscript contains many inaccuracies, such as wrong notes, missing accidentals, and ambiguous or contradictory dynamics, marks of articulation, and phrasing. Obvious slips, such as incorrect note values and beamings, have been silently amended, missing accidentals, slurs, and accents that may be reasonably inferred from other instrumental lines in the same passage have been added, and cautionary accidentals have been inserted where necessary for clarification.

Parlett also makes decisions on metronome marks, adds bar numbers and rehearsal letters, and takes a decision to replace the parts of (now obsolete) trumpets in F with transcriptions for

# Fantasia

## for piano and orchestra

Orchestral reduction  
by Graham Parlett

R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

**Moderato** ♩ = 108

The image shows two systems of musical notation. Each system includes a Piano part (treble and bass staves) and an Orchestral part (treble and bass staves). The Piano part features dynamics such as *ff*, *diminuendo*, and *p*. The Orchestral part includes markings for *Str.* (strings) and *Hn.* (horns). Tempo markings include *poco rall.* and *a tempo*. A rehearsal mark '5' is present at the start of the second system.

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modern instruments in B flat. Additionally, Parlett transcribed the orchestral part for a second piano, allowing OUP to publish separately the essential “rehearsal piano score” (piano solo and second piano).

In all these ways a work which had slumbered for more than one hundred years, first on Vaughan Williams's shelves (or, as Hugh says, in a bottom drawer), and then in the British Library, is brought to new life, allowing, in this case, a recording to be made (on 16 May 2011, on the Somm Recordings label, by Mark Bebbington and the Ulster Orchestra under George Vass). OUP provided the orchestral materials in advance of the score's publication, and the rehearsals allowed the correction and amendment of some minor points for the published score. The essence of all these publications (revised editions and first appearances) is practicality. New printed sources (with consequent recordings, broadcasts, and performances) allow the widest possible use and enjoyment of the music of Vaughan Williams, both his known and lesser-known works. In turn, the publication and usage provide a royalty income that allows The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust and the music publishers to continue their collaborative investment in and support of the composer's works. 🐾

# The Letter and the Spirit and Music in World War II

John Morris

There is without a doubt a general consensus that Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony represents a sort of central serenity in all his output, a spiritual high-point. And yet the work was written during the world's bloodiest conflict and first performed at the Proms in 1943. Vaughan Williams was famously agnostic and yet wrote some of the most profound liturgical music and several great hymn tunes. John Bunyan was a life-long source of inspiration (for his *Morality, The Pilgrim's Progress*, of course, and for the Fifth Symphony) and the *Tallis Fantasia* was written for Gloucester Cathedral – secular music for a sacred place, if you will. And his views on the greatest German composers remained constant, even during the war. Writing in 1940, Vaughan Williams presents his own view succinctly: "For eternity we turn to Beethoven, for humanity to Bach."<sup>1</sup> He was adamant that Beethoven belonged to the civilised peoples of the world, and calls to ban his music during the conflict were steadfastly ignored.

How do we explain these apparent paradoxes? There are few clues to Vaughan Williams's spiritual beliefs in his writing, but plenty, if you look for them, in his music. In his essay *The Letter and the Spirit*, written in 1920, Vaughan Williams gives us a rare insight to his approach to spirituality:

What the musical composer, in effect says to his performers is: "I desire to produce a certain spiritual result on certain people; I hope and believe that if you blow, and scrape, and hit in a particular manner this spiritual effect will result."

Now the word "spiritual" is culturally loaded, especially now, so we must be careful. What did Vaughan Williams mean by it? His essay tells us that he meant "what lies beyond sense and knowledge":

Before going any further may we take it that the object of an art is to obtain a partial revelation of that which is beyond human senses and human faculties – of that in fact, which is spiritual? And that the means which we employ to induce this revelation are those very senses and faculties themselves?<sup>2</sup>

Vaughan Williams called himself a Christian agnostic which, I venture, was possibly the only label available to him that would satisfy his intellectual peers and give some indication of the nature of his spirituality; the closest phrase he could find to express his view of the whole world of belief and spirituality. Is it the Tolstoyan idea – expressed in *Anna Karenina* – that Christianity was the only means of revelation available to him? Take the Fifth Symphony. Regarded by Michael Kennedy as "one of the high peaks of English romantic symphonic art", at the heart of the symphony's *Romanza* lie the Pilgrim's words "Save me Lord! My burden is greater than I can bear."<sup>3</sup> This, however, was not to be reserved as an exclusively Christian cry for salvation.

Vaughan Williams deliberately did not call the Pilgrim "Christian", the name given to the hero by Bunyan, in the later *Morality*. Rather, as he revealed in a letter, he wanted the opera, which occupied him for much of his life and which contains much thematic material from the symphony "to be universal and apply to any body [sic] who aims at the spiritual life whether he is Xtian, Jew, Buddhist, Shintoist or 5th [sic] day Adventist."<sup>4</sup> The symphony's first recording was organised "under the auspices" of the British Council – a wartime cultural propaganda programme – in line with "official" policy towards music, and in the process becomes the ultimate expression of an English, liberal, spirituality.

As the War began, Vaughan Williams was keen to "do his bit", and by 1940 was engrossed in writing for the Ministry of Information feature *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. Subsequently his music, like that of many contemporary composers, took a decidedly spiritual turn, and not just in his writing a number of new hymns and anthems. He began to draw ever more noticeably on Tudor polyphony and the so-called church modes to evoke a new kind of expressive spirituality – one that drew on ancient English music. The church modes, or ecclesiastical modes, foreshadow modern minor and major scales and refer especially to the scales prevalent in the middle ages, up to about 1600. They survive in folk song and plainsong and, latterly, in the music of twentieth-century composers of the English musical renaissance, to create an archaic affect. In the wartime Fifth Symphony this is most evident. It is a popular notion that musical compositions do not exist until they are heard. Indeed, popular science tells us that sound is perceived in the ear only. In other words, music needs a listener. Here is Vaughan Williams again, from the same article:

But in our imperfect existence what means have we of reaching out to that which is beyond the senses but through those very senses! When Plato praises the Dorian Mode as inspiring courage, does he mean the Dorian mode written out on paper?<sup>5</sup>

Vaughan Williams believed that the Tudor Era was a golden age for English music. Indeed, writes Peter Ackroyd in his recent history of the Tudors, Mary I "had a passion for music, just like her father and her siblings. Music is a key to the Tudor age. An image of Elizabeth survives, dining to the sound of twelve trumpets and two kettledrums together with fifes, cornets and side drums. Everybody sang in the streets or at their work, 'the mason at his wall, the shipboy at his oar, and the tiler on the housetop'. A lute was placed in many barber shops, for customers to while away the time."<sup>6</sup>

During the War, composers were encouraged to write music that could depict an England worth fighting for, but in a different way from what had gone before, especially during the First World War. Victor Hely-Hutchinson:

...whereas in the last war the thing to stress was the people who were fighting for England (the outlook of "The Spirit of England" is to a large extent military), it would be more in keeping with the spirit of these times to emphasise the England that is being fought for (i.e. the outlook should be rather pastoral and romantic.)<sup>7</sup>

"The Spirit of England" here refers to Elgar's Op.80 work of that name, written in 1916-17. Scored for orchestra and either contralto or soprano and tenor, the work consists of settings of three poems by Laurence Binyon and the phrase "Spirit of England" is drawn from the first number in the set, "The Fourth of August":

Now in thy splendour go before us,  
Spirit of England, ardent-eyed,  
Enkindle this dear earth that bore us,  
In the hour of peril purified...

Elgar had particular difficulty in setting the lines, from the final number of the set, "For the Fallen": "The barren creed of blood and iron, Vampires of Europe's wasted will." These lines connect to a later Nazified view of music, encapsulated in the words of Deputy Propaganda Minister, Eugen Hadamovsky, who wrote in 1933 that "Music exercises a deep influence upon the forces of the

Services Association) Music Advisory Council under Basil Dean was summoned by the Ministry of Information to take entire responsibility for the music required for a government-sponsored event to be staged at the Royal Albert Hall. "Salute to the Red Army," staged in 1943 (and repeated the following year a few weeks before D-Day) was not the first major event ENSA and Basil Dean had organised. "Cathedral Steps" had been successfully staged the previous year at St Paul's, and then repeated in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral, and Dean had no qualms about the "grand scale" of this new production:

The performance would be continuous, lasting about two hours, so as not to interrupt the mounting climax. Two narrators would be needed to describe the achievement of the Red Army; their narrations would be punctuated with Russian songs and music. By way of counterpoint, there would be British tributes, illustrated by British songs and music.<sup>11</sup>

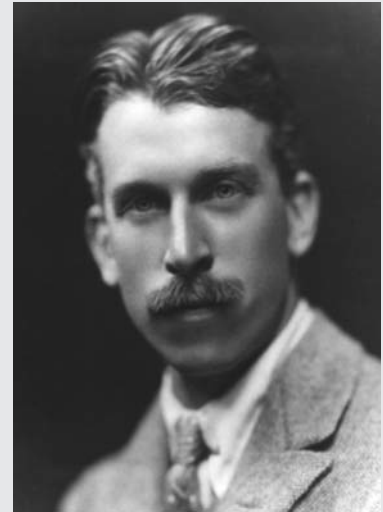
Dean commissioned a number of compositions for the event. William Walton and Arnold Bax wrote fanfares especially for the occasion. The programme also included Prokofiev's music from the film *Alexander Nevsky*, the first movement of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony (the *Leningrad*). British music included



Elgar had difficulty setting Binyon's words "The barren creed of blood and iron..."



Eugen Hadamovsky, who wrote in 1933 that "Music exercises a deep influence upon the forces of the race and blood, latent in the sub-conscious".



Arthur Bliss wrote "A sense of music is a primal thing in mankind, and a tremendous force either for good or evil".

race and blood, latent in the sub-conscious. Hence a great musical masterpiece will engender, accelerate or, conversely, inhibit the awakening development or degeneration of these forces."<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, the more reasoned voice of British official opinion can be found in Arthur Bliss's words, that "A sense of music is a primal thing in mankind, and a tremendous force either for good or evil",<sup>9</sup> and that music "is an ennobling spiritual force, which should influence the life of every listener."<sup>10</sup> British composers were consistently opposed to the "blood and soil" of German nationalism.

"To Women," the central number of the set, was performed during a wartime spectacular celebrating twenty-five years of the Soviet Union's armed forces. The ENSA (Entertainments National

Walton's *Spitfire Prelude and Fugue*, the final movement of Elgar's Second Symphony and the first movement of Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony*.

Basil Dean's memoir of ENSA, "The Theatre at War," published in 1956, contains a wealth of anecdotes about the organisation's involvement with music, not least the sometimes uneasy relationship with CEMA (the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts), of which Vaughan Williams was a significant member. By the time Dean had approached the Government in 1940 with his proposals for bringing classical music to munitions workers, "CEMA had already given some concerts of classical music under private arrangements with certain factories." Somewhat of an egoist, Dean credited himself with the idea first and it was the Ministry of Labour under Ernest Bevin to whom he

addressed his proposals. And although CEMA “had got in first,” Dean felt that it “had neither the staff nor the administrative experience to undertake the far-flung national programme which Bevin contemplated.” Throughout the war Bevin and Dean met regularly and were on “Christian-name terms” with each other: “It was during one of the first of these encounters that Ernie confided to me that he thought CEMA’s early efforts were ‘too ‘ighbrow!’”<sup>12</sup>

Dean prided himself on his war-work, not least for the efforts he made in bringing “classical” music to the masses. With this in mind, Dean proposed a more prominent place for classical music and the symphony orchestra. Acknowledging the need for someone with knowledge and authority, ENSA appointed Walter Legge, recording manager at the Gramophone Company (HMV), to fulfil the role of bringing the “finest music to millions of men and women in the Forces and the factories”.<sup>13</sup> ENSA’s programme began in October 1940 with a Sunday evening concert in Aldershot. Inevitably, some conflict arose. ENSA encountered “a strange difficulty,” for example, “caused by jealousy within the CEMA organization at what was regarded as our unwarranted intrusion upon its policy”.<sup>14</sup> Even with some cross-pollination, the work of ENSA, CEMA, the BBC and the British Council’s Music Advisory Committee was inevitable. “One aspect of our work,” writes Dean, “that aroused more argument than any other was the general standard of the performances.” The demographic mix of the audience was also a factor – age, experience, an increasing number of women, and level of education all had an influence on the types of entertainments provided. Dean finally accepted some way into the war “that the simplest entertainments were failing to meet the spiritual challenge of the hour,” with Ernest Bevin’s sanction about “‘ighbrow” music still in his mind:

It is strange that those to whom Music is an unknown world, which they cannot or will not explore, should so often feel an active resentment towards it. They imagine they are being got at in some way.<sup>15</sup>

He was, however, out of step with the call for a new “Spirit of England”, and there was some considerable rivalry between his organisation and CEMA. Further rivalry (and, perhaps, bitterness) between CEMA and ENSA is evident in Dean’s recollections:

Let me admit at once that the average CEMA party was of a higher standard than our average. But our parties came to be numbered by the dozen, whereas CEMA parties provided but few.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps it was a case of quantity over quality:

Out of that first contact there grew up a general impression that, whereas ENSA might be a large, perhaps over-large, purveyor to the lowest common denominator of taste, CEMA was synonymous only with the highest artistic integrity.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, achieving the highest artistic standards was also a guiding principle of BBC music policy during the War, so once again, Dean felt always to be on the back foot:

Maynard Keynes, the chairman of CEMA, did little to counteract the misapprehension. In fact, it suited his policy to encourage it, as subsequent events proved. The rivalry was a useful mental spur to our efforts, and the sections responsible for our factory parties were under constant fire from “upstairs” whenever cheap and nasty material made its appearance in their programmes. Nevertheless, it was irksome to find ourselves regarded as the chain-store of the concert

world while CEMA dealt only with the custom-built trade. We had our exclusive counters, too, for the display of the finest musical wares, but we did not waste time preening ourselves so much; we went out into the market-place, amidst the rough and tumble of common living, in search of converts to good spirits and the common weal.<sup>18</sup>

Towards the end of his volume, however, Dean concedes that despite the two organisations’ rivalry, the creation of the Arts Council, which grew out of the “CEMA infancy” represented “the most forward step in the advancement of British culture that a British Government has yet taken,” and its creation, without reference to the work of ENSA, represented “the British gift for political compromise” seen at its best, though “only the ungenerous would refuse to admit that, by its struggles before and immediately after the outbreak of war, and by the magnitude of its later operations, ENSA made a direct contribution to this achievement.”<sup>19</sup>

And of course it is Vaughan Williams himself who too can be credited with the establishment of the Arts Council. He was passionately involved in the “Battle for Music”, a conflict that not only fought for cultural superiority over Nazi ideology but also for the best standards in music composition and performance on the home front. And it is remarkable that British public opinion agreed with him on Beethoven, that quintessential German composer. George Bernard Shaw, no less, had been the first to say it, as early as 1920 (the same year as *The Letter and the Spirit*) in an article penned in German and printed in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on 15 December 1920 on the 150th anniversary of Beethoven’s death:

Three years ago the most unpatriotic word an Englishman could utter was the name of Beethoven ... during the War the patriots who described the German with his evil “mentality” derived from his Hun ancestry ... did so at the risk of somebody saying “For instance, Beethoven.” But nobody said it, because it would have given the coup de jarnac to our charging warriors...<sup>20</sup>

## NOTES

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- 3 Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992: 282.
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- 6 Peter Ackroyd, *The History of England Volume II: The Tudors*. London: Macmillan, 2012: p.169
- 7 Letter to Pamela Henn-Collins, secretary of the British Council’s Music Advisory Committee dated 29 May 1942 (The National Archives BW2/136).
- 8 Quoted from Eugene Hadamovsky, *Propaganda und Nationale Macht*. Oldenburg: Verlag Gerhard Stalling, 1933.
- 9 BBC Written Archives, WAC R27/241/1, Music Policy (first draft), 30 December 1941
- 10 BBC Written Archives, WAC R27/241/1, Music Policy (third draft), 1 April 1942
- 11 Basil Dean, *The Theatre at War*, London: George G Harrap & Co. Ltd, 1956: 305
- 12 *Ibid.*, 134
- 13 *Ibid.*, 214
- 14 *Ibid.*, 219
- 15 *Ibid.*, 213
- 16 *Ibid.*, 134
- 17 *Ibid.*, 135
- 18 *Ibid.*, 246
- 19 *Ibid.*, 530
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# To Record or Not to Record?

## Some thoughts on the performance and recording of Vaughan Williams's early music and what might follow

Colin Lees

Some of the issues raised in Simon Coombs's article "To Complete or Not to Complete" (Issue 58) led me to wonder what Vaughan Williams might have felt, had he known that his early music would one day be performed and recorded. Would it have angered him? After all, having heard most of these works, he had withdrawn them and clearly did not want them to be played again. He did not withdraw *A London Symphony*, of course, but he *did* make extensive revisions to it, and obviously intended that the final version should stand for all time.

That said, he must have known that there isn't much a composer can do to control what happens to his music after his death, and that there is but one way to ensure that unpublished and withdrawn works are never heard: follow the example of what Sibelius did with his Eighth Symphony and destroy them irrevocably. But Vaughan Williams did not burn them; he kept them among his papers, to be found after his death.

So, why did he keep these works? We know that he used material from these pieces in his later work, and perhaps he hoped that they might interest future musicologists. Maybe he just couldn't bring himself to destroy music upon which he had invested so much time, effort and emotion, work that must have meant so much to him at the time and which represented the achievement of his youth. Clearly, he knew them to be flawed, but sentiment, perhaps, prevented him from destroying them completely. It's possible, I suppose, that he saved these manuscripts in the (perhaps unconscious) hope that one day, years after his death, people might be curious enough to play them again. Personally, I think this unlikely, and on balance I can't help feeling that he would have strongly disapproved of the recent resurrection of his very early compositions.

But would his *post-mortem* disapproval have been straightforward and unequivocal? I imagine that any annoyance he felt about the revival of these early works might have softened had he seen how well received they have been and the interest they have generated. Assuming that all composers want their music to live on after their death, it is hard to believe that, after an initial grumpiness, Vaughan Williams would not have been gratified by the reception that pieces like *Willow-Wood*, *Serenade in A*, *The Solent* or the 1913 version of *A London Symphony* have received.

So how did we reach a point at which it was felt that the composer's wishes could be set aside? After all, figures as important as Roy Douglas and Michael Kennedy had strongly opposed any revival of the early works. Simon Coombs's article reminds us that Roy Douglas found them "embarrassingly feeble", "lacking originality" and wholly uncharacteristic of the mature Vaughan Williams. He went so far as to say that it would

be "unkind to RVW and possibly damaging to his reputation, to revive works which he himself had obviously decided to consign to oblivion." These are strong words and hard to ignore, coming as they do from one who worked so closely with Vaughan Williams and who knew the man and his music so well.

To me, the early works always sound interesting, sometimes rather original, and occasionally striking and beautiful, so why was Mr Douglas's opinion so uncompromisingly negative? Could it be that these early works sound better in performance than they look on paper? After all, in his remarks about the *Serenade in A*, Michael Kennedy, in *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, gave some faint praise to the scherzo, but he had nothing to say about the "Romance", the movement which, since its appearance on CD, is regarded as the "stand-out" movement of the work. Perhaps its charms reveal themselves more readily in performance than on the page.



Roy Douglas with Vaughan Williams in 1953

It is worth remembering that Mr Douglas's opinions were formed after studying the manuscripts in 1959, shortly after the composer's death. It was a time of uncertainty about the long-term future of Vaughan Williams's music. Roy Douglas would have known that a composer's reputation is fragile in the years immediately following his death – hence his concern for Vaughan Williams's reputation. He must have been conscious that the musical climate had changed: the Ninth Symphony (1957) had not been well received in some quarters, and he may have felt that, with Benjamin Britten's star in the ascendant and William Glock in control at the BBC, Vaughan Williams's Victorian apprentice-pieces were unlikely to find a sympathetic audience. Having formed the view that this music was best left unplayed, Roy Douglas expressed it trenchantly in the first edition of the

Society Journal. Time has passed, however; today Vaughan Williams's legacy looks secure, and we can now view his early work much more dispassionately and objectively than was possible half a century ago. Few would now argue that any perceived weakness in the juvenilia could in any way reduce the stature of the composer's mature work or his standing as England's greatest symphonist. This is perhaps what gave the producers of these recordings the confidence to set Vaughan Williams's wishes aside and go ahead with them.

Any lingering doubts about the wisdom of doing so should have been dispelled by the response these recordings have received. Richard Hickox's reading of the 1913 version of *A London Symphony* caused quite a sensation when it appeared, and won several awards. More recently, *Gramophone* reviews of the Dutton and Albion discs have been very positive, and all seven customer reviews on Amazon UK gave five stars to the recent "Early and Late Works" disc. Few of these pieces – except *A London Symphony*, of course – are likely to be performed much in the concert hall, but I believe that recording them has been a very interesting, worthwhile and rewarding project.

What of the future? What's left to do, now that so many of Vaughan Williams's surviving early works have been recorded? His doctoral thesis, now known as *A Cambridge Mass*, will soon appear on CD, as may some of the music he wrote for the Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon. Perhaps someone will give *Toccata Marziale* (and other works for band) a wider audience by orchestrating them. Maybe a concerted effort will be made to unearth the orchestral parts of *Norfolk Rhapsody No 3*. After all, the piece was performed several times by leading orchestras in the 1900s, so surely there's a chance that, even if the manuscript is lost, the parts still exist deep in some dusty archive, awaiting discovery. No modern recording exists of the full version with orchestra of the *Te Deum in F*, written in 1937 for the coronation of King George VI. This, surely, is a gap which needs filling. Simona Pakenham clearly loved it. In her book *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Discovery of his Music*, she describes its "heraldic splendour and simplicity" and expresses the hope that it might join Handel's *Zadok the Priest* and Parry's *I was Glad* as a permanent feature of future coronations. Vaughan Williams refrained from giving the work the slightly showy title *Coronation Te Deum*, but producers of a future recording need not share the composer's reserve. It is an impressive and eye-catching title, after all, and has done no harm whatever to William Walton's 1953 work of that name, of which there are several recordings.

I began by speculating on how Vaughan Williams might feel, could he know about the revival of his early music, and I drew the conclusion that it might well have irked him. If I'm right, what can be done to make amends? I have a few suggestions; others may have their own ideas.

It is well known that Vaughan Williams worked hard to promote the music of his younger colleagues, so perhaps attention could be turned to the work of composers who were associated with him but whose music remains neglected. Surely this would be a project of which he would heartily have approved.

Vaughan Williams's brother-in-law, R O Morris (1886-1948), was a learned academic and fine teacher at the Royal College of Music; he was also a composer. He wrote in a range of genres – including



Robin Milford



R O Morris

symphonies – and several years ago rumours circulated on internet message-boards that Toccata Classics had recorded some of his music. James Levine's name was mentioned but nothing came of these stories, perhaps because of Levine's ongoing health problems. Morris's music was published by Oxford University Press no less, and Grove's Dictionary singles out a piece for strings called *Canzoni ricercari*, which reflects Morris's interest in counterpoint. It also mentions a "striking" suite for cello and orchestra in the Lydian mode, in which the composer "seems to have allowed himself a greater freedom of expression than usual". Morris abandoned composition when he was fifty, possibly disappointed by the failure of his music, for Grove quotes his pupil Edmund Rubbra's remark that "even to mention them [Morris's compositions] was latterly the gravest of indelicacies."

Robin Milford studied under Morris at the RCM. Of independent means, and so able to devote himself to composition, he was a sensitive, emotionally fragile man, brought low by a series of personal tragedies, who took his own life in 1959. He made his first impact with a *Double Fugue* for orchestra (1927). It is good news that the *Violin Concerto in G minor* (1937) is to appear on EM Records, and shorter works have been recorded by Hyperion. However, much remains unrecorded and unpublished, including songs, choral music, and a symphony which Wikipedia claims Vaughan Williams admired. Anything done to give Milford's music a wider currency would surely have delighted him!

So, was it right to ignore Vaughan Williams's wishes about the future of his very early music? There is no simple or wholly convincing answer to that question in my view. But when thinking about it, one simple fact of history remains fixed in my mind: that no one, no matter how influential in his lifetime, can hope to control events after his death. Had Sibelius placed the completed manuscript of his Eighth Symphony into a locked casket bearing a large label saying "It is my express wish that this music *never* be performed", I suspect it would still have been premiered and recorded within six months of his death! For whatever reason, Vaughan Williams failed to put his early music beyond use and so the inevitable happened. After respecting his wishes for the better part of half a century, those charged with the care of his musical legacy finally relented and were persuaded that it was time to let the world hear the music young Ralph wrote before 1904. I, for one, am very grateful that they did, but I don't want to be on the same cloud when the composer catches up with them! 🐾

# Vaughan Williams “on the air” in the Coronation year

Peter Foster

What better place to start a survey of the broadcasting of Vaughan Williams music than with the “Coronation Number” of the *Radio Times*? The Coronation Service itself included *O Taste and See*, the “Sanctus” from the *Mass in G Minor* and Vaughan Williams’s arrangement of the *Old Hundredth Psalm Tune*, “All people that on earth do dwell”. On the Sunday before the Coronation, the BBC Home Service offered a programme of “Coronation Music” recorded by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, which included a Vaughan Williams Te Deum setting. The Vaughan Williams is the final work in the programme before the National Anthem. The years span 1559 to 1937, and among the other composers represented were Thomas Tomkins, Matthew Locke, Purcell, Jeremiah Clarke, William Boyce, Handel, William Croft, Thomas Attwood and Parry. The Light Programme included Vaughan Williams’s arrangement of “Bushes and Briars” in “Morning Song”, given by the Watford Grammar School Choir under conductor Frank Budden and the BBC Men’s Chorus, Chorus Master Leslie Woodgate. The Light Programme’s “Concert Hour”, at 12.55pm on Monday 1 June included *English Folk Songs* – Vaughan Williams arranged by Gordon Jacob. In the Light Programme’s “Concert Hour”, on Wednesday 3 June, *Fantasia on “Greensleeves”* was included in the BBC Scottish Orchestra’s programme of British music. The other pieces were the *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*, arranged by Sir Henry Wood, “La Calinda” from *Koanga*, by Delius, *Three Dances* from *Henry VIII* by Edward German and *Pineapple Poll* by Charles Mackerras, from the music of Sir Arthur Sullivan. On Thursday 4 June the BBC Third Programme broadcast *A Garland for The Queen*, recorded on the eve of the Coronation at the Royal Festival Hall. The work, commissioned by the Arts Council for the Coronation, featured settings by British composers of writings of contemporary British poets. Vaughan Williams set *Silence and Music* by Ursula Wood. The performance was given by The Golden Age Singers, and the Augmented Choir of The Cambridge University Madrigal Society conducted by Boris Ord, Director of Music at King’s College, Cambridge. On the evening of Friday 5 June, BBC



Coronation issue of the “Radio Times” designed by Eric Fraser

Television screened the first performance of Vaughan Williams’s masque *The Bridal Day*, adapted by Ursula Wood from Spenser’s *Epithalamion*. The narrator was Cecil Day-Lewis, the singer Denis Dowling, with chorus and The Wigmore Ensemble, Michael Mullinar, piano, conductor Stanford Robinson. The choreography was by David Paltenghi and the settings by John Clements. *Radio Times* readers were referred to “Dr. Vaughan Williams’ introduction to the piece” on page 8, where I read that *The Bridal Day* was originally devised around 1938 for the English Folk Dance and Song Society, but the war put an end to its progress.

Let’s go back earlier in 1953. On Monday 12 January the Home Service broadcast a programme of British piano music played by Manuel Frankell. Vaughan Williams was represented by *The Lake in the Mountains*. The other pieces were Delius: *Three Preludes*; Arnold Bax: *A Hill Tune*; Manuel Frankell: *A Sea Picture*; William Alwyn: *Green Hills* and Herbert Murrill: *Presto alla giga*. What delightful listening at nine in the morning! On the following Thursday, 15 January, the Third Programme carried a major outside broadcast from The Free Trade Hall in Manchester. Margaret Ritchie was the soloist in the *Sinfonia Antartica*, with a section of the Hallé Choir, and the Hallé Orchestra, leader Laurance Turner, conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. On page 5 of the *Radio Times* Neville Cardus wrote about the history of the Hallé Orchestra, and on the opposite page could be found a major feature on the symphony by Arthur Jacobs. The following week Barbirolli and the Hallé travelled to London for a further performance of the symphony, broadcast on the Home Service from the Royal Festival Hall with, this time, a section of the Croydon Philharmonic Choir. The concert opened with Beethoven’s *Egmont Overture*. Arthur Jacobs observed in his *Radio Times Music Diary* that it was appropriate that the concert was presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society, of which Vaughan Williams was a gold medallist. *Five Mystical Songs* made a late night appearance, at 11.40pm on the Third Programme on Tuesday 10 February, with Gordon Clinton as the baritone soloist and the Hirsch String Quartet, with Josephine Lee at the piano.

Turning to the Whitsun 1953 number of the *Radio Times*, which gave much detail of programmes related to the Coronation, Vaughan Williams first appears in the Light Programme's "Concert Hour". The London Light Concert Orchestra, leader Michael Spivakovsky, conducted by Michael Krein, gave the Overture and "March of The Kitchen Utensils" from *The Wasps*. The other works were *Aubade No.1* by Lalo; *Scherzino* by Raff; *Country Song* by Gustav Holst; "Air" and "Rigaudon" from Grieg's *Holberg Suite*, ending with "Entr'acte", "Scene" and "Dance and Finale" from Messager's ballet suite, *The Two Pigeons*. The major music broadcast of the week was the Coronation Concert, live from the Royal Festival Hall. *A Sea Symphony* occupied the first half, with Walton's Viola Concerto and Holst's ballet music from *The Perfect Fool* in the second. The *Radio Times* billing reads like a roll call of British music. For *A Sea Symphony*, Joan Hammond was the soprano, John Cameron the baritone, with the BBC Choral Society, chorus master Leslie Woodgate. William Primrose was the soloist in the Walton, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, leader Paul Beard, was conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent.

gave a performance of a work I'm not familiar with, the Suite from the film *The Flemish Farm*. The all-British concert opened with *At The Tabard Inn*, by George Dyson, followed by the Prelude to *Irmelin* and "La Calinda" from *Koanga* (Delius). The Vaughan Williams followed, and the concert ended with Elgar's *Three Bavarian Dances*. That evening the London Home Service broadcast a special concert reflecting the Coronation, which included Vaughan Williams's *Folk Song Suite*. Entitled "A Health Unto Her Majesty", the concert was given by the Band of H.M. Royal Marines, Portsmouth, conducted by Captain K.A. McLean.

You have to be of a certain age to remember the superb Alvar Lidell, who became famous during World War 2 for his reading of what became news bulletins of great historic importance. What may not be generally remembered was that he was also an accomplished singer. To end my 1953 survey of Vaughan Williams broadcasts I turn to the *Radio Times* for Friday 29 June, and a 9am recital on the Home Service, given by Alvar Lidell, baritone, and John Wolfe, oboe. The closing item was *Linden Lea*. Interesting to hear the accompaniment from an oboe, rather than a piano.

On Thursday of that week, in "Concert Hour", at noon, the BBC Northern Orchestra led by Fred Brough, conductor John Hopkins,

[With acknowledgements and thanks to the publishers of the *Radio Times*.] ♪

## "I will"

By 1896 Ralph Vaughan Williams had met and become engaged to Adeline Fisher, first cousin to Virginia Woolf and a talented cellist and pianist. They were married at All Saints Church, Hove, on 9 October 1897. The marriage certificate is reproduced below. The priest conducting the service was Canon W.A. Spooner, fellow of New College Oxford and remembered now as the father of the "spoonerism". "The Lord is a showing leopard" is a well known example, but he also concluded one wedding ceremony with "Is it kisstomary to cuss the bride?" Hopefully not on this occasion!

Robin Barber

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1897. Marriage solemnized at *The Parish Church* in the Parish of *Hove* in the County of *Sussex*

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
369	October 9 <sup>th</sup> 1897	Ralph Vaughan Williams Adeline Maria Fisher	24 24	Bachelor Spinster	Gentleman —	14th Hill Place, Hove 19th Street, Arundel.	Charles Arthur Vaughan Williams Subst. William Fisher	Canon J.P. Justice
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>W.A. Spooner</i> or after <i>Banns</i> by me.								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, { <i>Ralph Vaughan Williams</i> } in the Presence of us, { <i>Henry Fisher</i> } by <i>W.A. Spooner</i> Fellow of New College Oxford								
1897. Marriage solemnized at <i>The Parish Church</i> in the Parish of <i>Hove</i> in the County of <i>Sussex</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
370	October 10 <sup>th</sup> 1897	Alfred William Powell Eleanor Leonard	26 29	Bachelor Spinster	Builder —	7 Beach Cottages Le Beck Cottages	Alfred Powell Lewis Leonard	Farmer Labourer
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>W.A. Spooner</i> or after <i>Banns</i> by me.								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, { <i>Alfred William Powell</i> } in the Presence of us, { <i>E. Lewis Leonard</i> } by <i>W.A. Spooner</i> Canon								

# A London Symphony

Graham Muncy

“You have really done it this time” Gustav Holst.

## Vaughan Williams and London

At various times in his life Ralph Vaughan Williams lived in London. As a student at the Royal College of Music in the 1890s, he sometimes lodged in the city. Later he lived in Westminster and then in Chelsea, moving out to Surrey in the late 1920s. On his second marriage in 1953, he returned to live in Hanover Terrace, Regent’s Park, where he died in 1958. Vaughan Williams was thus a “Londoner” for much of his adult life. His memories of the late Victorian and Edwardian city were to play an important part in the music that eventually became *A London Symphony*.

## Genesis of a symphony

It is probable that Vaughan Williams sketched ideas for a piece about London early in his composing career, but it was only in 1909 that his friend, George Butterworth, suggested that he should write a symphony. Vaughan Williams said that he “threw” his early ideas into symphonic form, writing to Cecil Sharp in July 1911, “I am in the middle of a great work and unless I get stuck in it I don’t want to leave it.” According to the composer Armstrong Gibbs, Vaughan Williams was able to “beat out” the first two movements on the piano in 1912, but the symphony was apparently progressing with “infinite struggle.”

Towards the end of 1913, the *London Symphony* was nearing completion, with the chance for a premiere in the concert series sponsored by F.B. Ellis at the Queen’s Hall in March 1914. Although the work received a positive reception from friends and critics, Vaughan Williams felt that some form of revision was needed – not an unusual situation for this composer.

## A London Symphony / Symphony by a Londoner / Symphony No. 2?

Perhaps the real question about this symphony has always been – is this programme or absolute music? Will there ever be an answer to this?

The composer seems always to have been ambiguous on the matter. On the surface, the work may have derived from a symphonic poem about London, “thrown into symphonic form”. He writes “If listeners recognise suggestions of such things as the Westminster Chimes or the Lavender Cry they are asked to consider these as accidents, not as essentials to the music.” In his essay *Who Wants the English Composer?* Vaughan Williams wrote that a composer should take “the forms of musical expression” which are all about him and “purify and raise [them] to the level of great art...” However, Vaughan Williams did not hesitate to suggest pictorial titles for the movements – for the slow movement, he once suggested, Bloomsbury Square on a November afternoon and the Scherzo (Nocturne) is obviously a musical representation of London by night, with flaring gas lamps, music hall tunes and buskers.

It may be that like many great works of art, *A London Symphony* can work on many levels; the pictorial (with the river and the Houses of Parliament, almost a cliché beloved of record sleeve designers) – *A London Symphony*; or Vaughan Williams’s memories of a London that he knew as a young man which he “purified and raised” into abstract expression – the *Symphony by a Londoner*. This symphony seems to work on both of these levels and in the end the question of programme / absolute music really does not matter!

## H.G. Wells – *Tono-Bungay* / *A London Symphony*

Published in 1909, Vaughan Williams’s reading included *Tono-Bungay* by the radical writer, H.G. Wells, who like the composer, stood to the left of the establishment. In fact, Vaughan Williams told Michael Kennedy that the Epilogue that closes the symphony bore an exact relationship to an episode in the final chapter of that novel, Night and the open sea, where the narrator travels down the Thames on a destroyer:

We tear into the great spaces of the future... Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes down, England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass-pass. The river passes – London passes, England passes...

In fact, a couple of pages before, Wells actually writes, “The third movement begins, the last great movement in the London symphony, in which the trim scheme of the old order is altogether dwarfed and swallowed up.”

Vaughan Williams’s last movement is in fact the fourth, but like Wells’s novel, rings with tension and points to the unrest and conflict bubbling up in Edwardian society – women’s suffrage, the Sydney Street siege, industrial unrest and hunger marches.

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to detect in the last pages of the score, a presentiment for what was to befall Britain and Europe just a few weeks after the symphony was premiered?

## George Butterworth / Gustav Holst / Arnold Bax

George Butterworth (1885-1916), composer, collector of folk song, traditional dancer and close friend of Vaughan Williams, played a particularly significant role in the inspiration, creation and early life of *A London Symphony*, initially suggesting that Vaughan Williams ought to write an orchestral symphony, giving encouragement along the way, writing an article about it, assisting in preparations for the first performance when the composer was away and helping with the reconstruction of the full score following the loss of the original. Vaughan Williams trusted Butterworth’s opinions, which may have been the seed for some of the later revisions. Butterworth was killed on the Somme in August 1916, and Vaughan Williams dedicated *A London Symphony* to his memory.

Gustav Holst, (1874-1934), another very close friend of Vaughan Williams, and one whose opinion he greatly valued, was present through the rehearsal process, taking notes for Vaughan Williams and the conductor. He wrote to his friend after the concert, “You have really done it this time. Not only have you reached the heights, but you have taken your audience with you...”

Arnold Bax (1883-1953) got to know Vaughan Williams during rehearsals for *A London Symphony* as two of Bax’s orchestral songs were being premiered at the same concert. Vaughan Williams sought Bax’s advice on a particular passage: “One passage disappointed me...He (Bax) suggested the addition of a counter-melody on the oboe. Indeed he sat down at the pianoforte and improvised one. This actual passage was too obviously Baxian...But following his advice, I made up another which, though not nearly so good as his, was more in keeping with the rest of the movement.”

Bax later regretted that Vaughan Williams cut various episodes of the symphony after revisions.

### Original / Revised versions.

It would have been rare indeed if Vaughan Williams had never gone back and made some sort of revision to any of his major works. *A London Symphony* is perhaps one of the extreme examples of his revision processes where in its final version, between fifteen and twenty minutes of music had been dropped, “some horrible modern music – awful stuff” he once told the composer Bernard Hermann! Vaughan Williams always welcomed constructive criticism from trusted friends – whether he acted upon it was another matter – and although initial reaction to the work was positive, he probably felt that the 1913/14 score was still in need of further thought. His time in the army during the war gave no opportunity for practical musical activity and it was during a spell of leave in early 1918 when he was present at a performance conducted by Boult, that Vaughan Williams started the process of revision, making cuts for another Boult performance the following month.

With the world being a very different place in 1919, when Vaughan Williams finally left the army, from what it had been in 1914, his musical style was evolving into something leaner and more succinct, leaving behind the grand gestures and big structures of the pre-war sound world – Stravinsky was also experiencing this stylistic shift at about the same time.

Further revisions and deletions were made for a performance in 1920, conducted by Albert Coates and the first publication of full score and parts by Stainer and Bell in the “Carnegie Collection of British Music”.

Vaughan Williams made still further cuts and revisions in 1933/4, with the revised full score and parts appearing in 1936. This, finally, was the version of the symphony that the composer was happy with and it became his own favourite among his symphonies.

With a major re-evaluation of Vaughan Williams works and reputation in the final decade of the twentieth century, many of his earlier, previously forgotten works were emerging into the light with performances and publication and it was in this spirit of discovery that the composer’s widow, Ursula, gave permission for Richard Hickox to record the original 1913 score of *A London Symphony* in 2000. Hickox was then given the go-ahead to

perform the work on several occasions, including a Prom, before his premature death in 2008.

As is the case with the early Stravinsky ballet scores – *Firebird* and *Petrouchka*, we have the good fortune to have both original and revised versions of *A London Symphony* available to us – the former with its full expressive intensity and the latter with its tighter forms and structures.

We should relish both! 🎶

## A LONDON SYMPHONY – TIMELINE

<b>1910</b>	Butterworth urges Vaughan Williams to compose symphony
<b>1911</b>	Mention of symphony in letter to Cecil Sharp
<b>1912</b>	Vaughan Williams plays part of symphony to Armstrong Gibbs
<b>1913</b>	First draft of London Symphony completed
<b>1914</b>	Butterworth and friends make short score – last minute changes – while Vaughan Williams is in Italy
	First performance, 27 March, Queen’s Hall, London, conducted by Geoffrey Toye
	Second performance, 12 August, Harrogate
	Full score posted to Germany!
	Butterworth, Dent, Toye and Vaughan Williams reconstruct full score from orchestral parts
<b>1915</b>	Performance in Bournemouth conducted by Dan Godfrey
<b>1918</b>	Boult conducts performance with composer present, 18 February
	Vaughan Williams makes cuts for next performance, 18 March
<b>1920</b>	Further revisions and cuts for a performance conducted by Albert Coates, May
	Score and parts of latest version published by Stainer & Bell
<b>1922</b>	Piano arrangement by Vally Lasker published
<b>1933/4</b>	Still more cuts and revisions
<b>1936</b>	Revised full score and parts published (Stainer & Bell)
	First recording, New Queen’s Hall Orchestra conducted by Henry Wood
<b>1941</b>	Recording conducted by Goossens using 1920 parts (still in circulation in USA)
<b>1952</b>	First Boult LP recording
<b>1954</b>	Vaughan Williams conducts London Symphony in Buffalo, USA
<b>1956</b>	First Barbirolli LP recording
<b>1971</b>	Recorded in stereo by London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Boult as part of complete cycle of symphonies completed in 1972
<b>1972</b>	Vaughan Williams centenary. New edition of full score published (ed. Michael Kennedy)
	Recorded by London Symphony Orchestra conducted by André Previn as part of another complete cycle
<b>2000</b>	Ursula Vaughan Williams gives permission for 1913 score to be edited and recorded
	Recording takes place in December, London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Richard Hickox
<b>2005</b>	Hickox performs 1913 version at the Proms and at later performances

# A London Symphony: Some Remarks on Development

Mike Cooper

The *London Symphony* is a very significant work in the development of Vaughan Williams as a musician and as a person. The symphony was revised in 1918, 1920 and 1934, and it is interesting to hear him voicing his idea that progression through development was what was important:

I agree with you that the last movement & possibly the scherzo of my *Symph* are too long – but it is re-writing they want – I do not think that mechanical cutting – however skilfully done wd. be satisfactory.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the version of the symphony extant in 1918 was not a complete and satisfying entity, but a step on the way toward a conclusion yet to be reached. Review and emendation of existing work is always a crucial element in creative development.

Michael Kennedy usefully summarises Vaughan Williams's relationship to this symphony, when he says:

In the *London Symphony* Vaughan Williams said what he wanted to say exactly as he wanted to say it ... It is clear that his reason for liking *A London Symphony* all his life was that he felt that, in its pages, he had done what he had set out to do ... It is significant that this symphony and *Hugh the Drover* were the most frequently and drastically revised of all his works.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly, review and emendation of existing work is a crucial element in creative development. Vaughan Williams's pupillage with Maurice Ravel (1907-8) was a factor here and Kennedy remarks in an introduction that:

... immediately after his return from Ravel, he began to compose or revise music that we now recognize as mature Vaughan Williams.<sup>3</sup>

Vaughan Williams had consistently felt the need for the guidance of established composers: "... in about the year 1900 I took my courage in both hands and wrote to Elgar asking him to give me lessons". This request, was not successful, however.<sup>4</sup> He continued to seek developmental guidance from other composers, including Arnold Bax, about a passage in the *London Symphony*. Bax suggested an alternative but it was, according to Vaughan Williams "too obviously Baxian ... But, following his advice, I made up another".<sup>5</sup> Neither were his revisions purely textual. In 1953, during rehearsal of the *London Symphony*, he asked the second violins to play a passage *f* instead of its marked *p*, remarking that "I've changed my ideas in forty years."<sup>6</sup>

Amongst Vaughan Williams's motivations for revising his scores were those pertaining to social and cultural pressures. For example, "A long and varied life has shown me that politically the world lacks a fresh vision of its own unity and that it is often for the artist to try to show the way."<sup>7</sup> Also, Wilfred Mellers makes a revealing remark pertaining to the revision of this symphony:



... the *London Symphony* went much further than *A Sea Symphony* in purging Vaughan Williams's language of the vestiges of Victorianism and Edwardianism that were incompatible with its nature.<sup>8</sup>

The primacy of the developmental process should be understood and respected, not overlooked. Vaughan Williams

was no mere gentleman amateur, and ... stands revealed as an anxious, even restless, perfectionist ever striving for greater clarity and concision. Following the process of revision of the *Sixth Symphony* illuminates Vaughan Williams's artistic integrity and complete professionalism, but beyond this, shows a composer unable to rest until his vision was completely realized.<sup>9</sup>

So, whilst it is interesting and important to value the individual stages of the *London Symphony* through which the composer progressed, those stages are not alternative versions, but are evolutionary and elemental components which combined to produce what Vaughan Williams wanted. They must, if we are to understand him, be acknowledged as such.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Letter to Adrian Boult, 3 March, 1918, in Jerrold Northrop Moore, ed., *Music and Friends: Letters to Sir Adrian Boult* (Hamish Hamilton, 1979) p.28
- <sup>2</sup> Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* 2nd edn. (Oxford University Press, 2002) p.p.140-1
- <sup>3</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *National Music and Other Essays* 2nd edn. (Oxford University Press, 1987) p.vii
- <sup>4</sup> *National Music* p.188
- <sup>5</sup> *National Music* p.243
- <sup>6</sup> Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W. A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (Clarendon Press, 1992) p.337
- <sup>7</sup> *R.V.W. A Biography* p.361
- <sup>8</sup> Wilfred Mellers, *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion* (Albion Music, 1997) p.124
- <sup>9</sup> Byron Adams "The Stages of Revision of Vaughan Williams's *Sixth Symphony*" in Byron Adams and Robin Wells, eds., *Vaughan Williams Essays* (Ashgate Publishing, 2003) p.15. 🐦

# A Century On

## Simon Coombs

In this occasional series of articles commemorating the centenaries of works by Ralph Vaughan Williams, we come now to one which has received only a handful of performances. This is, of course, *A London Symphony* in its original form. The composer revised it substantially through the six years following the first performance, and minor alterations continued to be made as late as 1936. The original manuscript was sent to the conductor Fritz Busch in Aachen in July 1914, but was lost when Busch enlisted at the outbreak of World War I.

In the meantime, the first performance had taken place in the Queen's Hall on 27 March 1914, with the Queen's Hall Orchestra conducted by Geoffrey Toye. The score was subsequently reconstructed from the instrumental parts by the composer, assisted by George Butterworth (to whom the work was posthumously dedicated), E.J. Dent (who later became Professor of Music at Cambridge University), and Geoffrey Toye. This reconstruction was first performed on 11 February 1915 by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra under

Dan Godfrey. A further performance took place in February 1918, conducted by Adrian Boult, after which the composer began his process of major revision, most significantly affecting the second and last movements and reducing the symphony's overall length by about fifteen minutes.



Vaughan Williams made it very clear that he did not wish the original version to be played and it was not until 2000 that Ursula Vaughan Williams gave permission for a recording of the work to be made. This was entrusted to the late Richard Hickox and the London Symphony Orchestra, and the CD was released in 2001 by Chandos Records. The coupling, Butterworth's *The Banks of Green Willow*, is poignant and wholly appropriate. The question of which version of the symphony is preferable provokes much discussion within the Society and in the world at large, but, to my mind, both are valuable, and comparison of the two tells us much about Vaughan Williams's development as a composer. In the absence of any alternative recording, as yet, the Chandos recording is highly recommendable. 🐦



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# Music You Might Like

## Simon Coombs

Readers of the *Journal* will not be surprised that finding recommendable composers whose names begin with E is not easy – they are somewhat thin on the ground! I managed to find a total of eleven names in my own CD collection, but even the Naxos catalogue musters only 149. Thus this article combines the Es with the Fs, where the ground is rather more fertile. The in-house catalogue has eighteen names beginning with F, while Naxos has recorded 265.

One of the Es stands out from the rest, and we shall come to Sir Edward much later. Among the remainder, **Einar Englund**, who wrote the music for the Finnish horror film *The White Reindeer* (BIS-CD-575), and **August Enna**, whose opera *The Little Match Girl* (CPO 999 595-2) is a delightful discovery, are both worth exploring, while the Bassoon Concerto of **Sophie Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatte** (BIS-CD-698), who was a pupil of d'Indy at the Paris Conservatoire, is an extraordinary piece considering its relatively recent date of composition, 1950. Incidentally, I very much welcome contributions from members on the subject of their likes and dislikes, and I am grateful to Dennis Siebert for writing in support of **Einar Englund**, mentioned above. At Dennis's suggestion, I have explored some more of his music, including two of his seven symphonies, and although I have not myself become a fan, I recognise that his music is powerful and may well find more supporters among *Journal* readers.

At ten in the chart, however, is **George Enescu**. His splendid *Romanian Rhapsody No. 1* can be found on two different Chandos CDs, coupled with either the powerful Symphony No 3. (CHAN 9633) or the *Second Rhapsody* and similar works by Bartók and Weiner (CHAN 7083). I have to confess that I have yet to discover any other music of Enescu that I can recommend with any great enthusiasm.

Next on the list is the English composer, **Frédéric d'Erlanger**. His mother was American, his father was German, he was born in Paris and he spent most of his life in London. He was something of an amateur composer, but his concertante works, on a Dutton Epoch disc (CDLX 7300), are well worth exploring. Try the two works for cello and orchestra first. His Violin Concerto is on Hyperion (CDA 67838), and his opera *Tess* (of the d'Urbervilles), with an Italian libretto by Luigi Illica, must be keenly awaited by all lovers of the curious!

At eight, we have the English composer, **John Foulds**. I personally find much of his music rather uninspired, or even ungrateful to the ear, but there is also music of great beauty. Try the Lament from his *Keltic Suite* and *April – England*, both on Warner 2564 62999-2.

Next we have **César Franck**, who may well be the only Belgian composer to appear in any of these articles – we shall see. I grew up with 78s of his Symphony, and, to my mind, it remains a work apart. It is rarely heard in the concert hall nowadays (only six Proms performances in the last fifty years), but a highly recommendable performance is available on a Brilliant Classics CD (94079) played by the Orchestre de Paris under Barenboim; this also contains one of Franck's tone poems, *Psyché*, which is a piece of great charm and beauty.

**Manuel de Falla** is at six, a composer who, to my mind, never quite realised his talent to the full. Nevertheless, he wrote plenty of tuneful and sometimes exciting music, the best of which can be found on a Double Decca (4661282); this includes *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, two excerpts from his opera *La vida breve*, and the two ballets, *Love, the Magician* and *The Three-Cornered Hat*.

**Zdeněk Fibich** is one of those Czech composers who have been inevitably over-shadowed by Dvořák. His three symphonies are available

on Chandos (CHAN 9682) from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Neeme Järvi, or from the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra with Karel Sejna on Supraphon (SU 36182), and are worth exploring. His opera *Šárka* is also of interest, if rather harder listening – it's on Orfeo (C5410020H), with Eva Urbanová in the lead role.

At four, we have **Gerald Finzi**. I imagine that most *Journal* readers will know much if not all of his smallish output, and I should be surprised if any reader was without Wilfred Brown's *Dies natalis*, coupled with Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs* from John Shirley-Quirk. Among other Finzi CDs to treasure is a Decca release (468 807-2) which includes *In Terra Pax*, *For St Cecilia*, *Let Us Garlands Bring* and *Magnificat*. A more recent disc is from Chandos (CHAN 9888), with orchestrations of poems by Thomas Hardy, Edward Thomas and James Elroy Flecker, and the early Violin Concerto. Then there's the Lyrita disc (SRCD 236) of the Cello and Clarinet Concertos with Yo Yo Ma and John Denman as the soloists. It's hard to know when to stop!

Readers of these articles will know how highly I rate the music of French composers. It surprises me when I read that English music is largely unplayed and unknown in France – music is an international language, and its country of origin should be irrelevant in assessing its worth. Xenophobia has no place in the musical world, and you won't find it here! No events in and around Gibraltar will affect my love of **Albéniz**, **Falla** or **Rodrigo**, and the loss of Calais does not stop **Gabriel Fauré** from claiming third place in this list!

Fauré is probably best known for his beautiful *Requiem*, but his music is worth exploring much more deeply. He wrote a great deal of incidental music, amongst which the *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Masques et Bergamasques Suites* are outstanding – they and much more are on an EMI 'twofer' (Gemini 3977222). His chamber music is sublime, especially the Piano Quartets and Quintets – the Hyperion discs from Domus are unsurpassed (CDA 66166 and 66766). Also on Hyperion (CDA 66320) is a Janet Baker song recital which is not to be missed.

And so we come to **Sir Edward**! I began as a boy with Campoli's Violin Concerto on 78s and then went on to Tortelier's Cello Concerto and the (then) two symphonies. Along the way, *Chanson de Matin* seemed the best of the lighter pieces, and *Gerontius* the pinnacle of the English choral tradition. The CD, and particularly Chandos CDs, opened up hitherto unexplored areas of his music, many other choral works and the chamber music, and from EMI, the wonderful *Sea Pictures* (Janet Baker again). The only recommendation I dare make is for the two recent Somm CDs (243 and 247), which bring some lesser known works such as *The Fringes of the Fleet* and the gorgeous *Polonia* into the light of day.

My reason for keeping Elgar at number two is simply to be able to highlight the music of another largely unknown composer. In the last *Journal*, a letter from Rob Furneaux enthusiastically recommended the Portuguese composer, **Luis de Freitas Branco**, and I absolutely share his enthusiasm! Naxos has, over the last five years, issued four CDs of his orchestral works, from which I would single out the first two symphonies, the first *Suite Alentejana* and *Artificial Paradises* – these are on 8.570765 and 8.572059 and are worth their weight in gold, let alone the price of two budget CDs! Once again, needless to say, not a note of his music has ever been heard at the Proms, but this must not deter intrepid *Journal* readers!

The Russians will be well represented when we come to a full house of the Gs. After that, it will be the turn of the English! 🍷

# AGM 2013

The nineteenth Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in the Performing Arts Library, Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking on Sunday, 13 October 2013 starting at 3.00 p.m. About fifty members were present, including the Officers and most of the Trustees.

Under her Chairman's report, Em Marshall-Luck commented on various positive developments that would be of interest to members of the Society, including recent and forthcoming releases of previously unrecorded music by Vaughan Williams on the Albion and Dutton Epoch labels. Highlights of the year to 31 March 2013 had included the series of performances of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at the English National Opera, the unveiling of a bust of Vaughan Williams on the Thames Embankment and the Society's event at the Three Choirs Festival. The Society's *Journal* and website had continued to provide members with high quality information. Leith Hill Place (LHP) had been opened by the National Trust to the public during part of 2013 and two concerts had taken place in

He explained the impact of recent and forthcoming Albion releases on the Society's finances and thanked Trevor Lane, the Independent Examiner of the Society's Accounts, for his help and support. There being no questions on the Accounts, the Meeting resolved that they be approved and adopted.

At John's invitation, Stephen Connock gave a more detailed description of Albion's plans for three forthcoming releases, together with the negotiations that were currently taking place with a view to Albion being permitted to publish the New Queen's Hall Orchestra's recording of *A Cambridge Mass*.

John then commented on the proposal referred to in the Notice of AGM to reconstitute the Society as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) under the Charities Act 2006 with a target effective date of 1 April 2014 (subject to the Charities Commission clearing this in time). This would be in lieu of the proposal that had been approved at last year's AGM to reconstitute the Society



Martin Murray



Valerie and David Betts with Laura Holiday



Deirdre Hicks

conjunction with the Society during its first season. Albion's most recent CD, *The Solent*, had been particularly well received and sales of it were strong. At Em's invitation, Gabrielle Gale of the National Trust then gave a more detailed report on LHP, including plans for next year.

The Membership Officer, Mark Hammett, presented a report on membership of the Society, which currently stood at a gross figure of 999 active members plus one application just received. The net figure was, however, lower after factoring in the "JStop" category, who comprised some 10% of the gross number. Quite a significant number of this latter category were located in the USA. He outlined the three-step process by which members who were delinquent with their subscriptions were eventually culled. The Society now had members in 22 countries, but with 77% in the UK.

The Society's Treasurer, John Francis, commented on the main features of the Society's Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013. The Society's financial position was stable and there were no immediate plans to increase current annual subscription levels.

as a company limited by guarantee, which had not been implemented, and he explained the reasons for this change of plan. He, together with Martin Murray, would be working on the constitution of the CIO and it would be placed on the Society's website in due course. The Meeting approved this proposal and authorised the Officers to proceed with its implementation.

The Officers, Trustees and Independent Examiner were all re-elected to their positions for a further year.

Under other business, Em Marshall-Luck said that the date and venue for the next AGM were still being finalised and would be advised to members in due course. She then invited questions or comments from the floor. Among the matters raised were the following:

– various suggestions were made about possible additional forms of Society merchandise (in addition to the Society mugs, which had been launched at today's AGM), including badges, ties, desk diaries or a calendar. If these were produced, it might be possible to sell them at LHP

– the Society should seek to think of ways to encourage younger members to join. John Francis replied to this suggestion by describing the concessionary subscription rates that were currently available to such members

– in reply to a question about the prospects for the Royal Ballet to perform *Job*, Em said that Karen Fletcher was working on this, but that cost considerations remained a problem

– Stephen Connock reported that, regrettably, the ENO’s production of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in 2012 had not been recorded for DVD.

After Em had thanked everyone for attending, her fellow officers for their support during the year, and Roy Bexon and Peter Baxter for their help in organising this year’s AGM, the formal business ended at 3.50 p.m. It was followed by an illustrated talk by Stephen Connock on Vaughan Williams’s early orchestral works, which we hope to be able to persuade Stephen to document for inclusion in a future *Journal*.

Martin Murray 🍷



Stephen Connock spoke about the influences on Vaughan Williams’s early orchestral works



Robin Wells and Gabrielle Gale



Em Marshall-Luck with Mark Hammett (above) and Simon Coombs



A happy crowd



Linda Hayward

## Meet the Team

Members who are unable to attend the AGM probably have only the foggiest impression of the people who run the Society. To put that right, the last edition of the *Journal* carried a profile of Chairman, Em Marshall-Luck. Here are two more.



**Simon Coombs, Vice-Chairman**

My awareness of Vaughan Williams only began when I heard the news of his death in 1958 – I was eleven years old. At that time, he was no more to me than the composer of the *Fantasia on "Greensleeves"*. My collection of LPs was begun the following year, but limited funds meant a strictly limited exploration of Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák and, most importantly, Sibelius. The one English composer represented was Holst, and he only by *The Planets*.

At the age of sixteen, however, things started to change. A concert broadcast on the Third Programme introduced me to Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, with the second half given over to *A Sea Symphony*. There followed a rapid expansion of the catalogue of composers whom I discovered and loved. By the time I met Stephen Connock, at a Lord's test match in 1996, my still fairly modest collection of LPs had been supplemented by a much larger number of CDs including forty-six of Vaughan Williams's music. So, when Steve, after having known me for about half an hour, asked me if I liked Vaughan Williams's music, I was able to answer in the affirmative! At his invitation, I attended a concert at St Giles, Cripplegate in October 1996 which was something of a landmark both for me and for the Society, and the following year he asked me to become Vice-Chairman in place of Robin Ivison who had sadly died.

Sixteen years have passed, and I am still Vice-Chairman! In the meantime, Stephen Connock has been succeeded as chairman by Em Marshall-Luck, and I continue to help out wherever and whenever I can. The advent of email has meant that I have been able to do 95% of the work even though I have been spending five or six months of every year in Malta for the past ten years. This, however, is to be my last winter abroad, so I hope to be able to up the work rate from now on!

My problem as an officer of a music society is that I am not a musician. I do not play an instrument, I read music slowly, and I sing only in private. On the other hand, I love music, listen to it almost all the time, and have built up a large and eclectic collection of CDs, whose highlights I am now trying to share with readers of the *Journal*. I am a relentless and shameless devotee of music that is pleasant to the ear, and although I will try anything once (or more than once if there is a hint of something worthwhile), I resist the kind of modern "music" which merits the word "interesting" to disguise its dreariness or reliance on mere noise.

The huge growth in the popularity of Vaughan Williams's music in the last few years has been extremely gratifying for us all, and it is clear that the efforts of the Society have contributed in no small measure to this upsurge of public interest. I hope that the steady increase in the number of his compositions on CD can be continued – there are still quite a few works which need to be recorded, and also heard in the concert hall both in the UK and overseas. Nor should we forget the role of Classic FM in raising the composer's profile – it would be wonderful to see a work like the *Romance* from the *Serenade in A* joining *The Lark Ascending* and the *Tallis Fantasia* in the top ten of their Hall of Fame. Let us all support Albion Records and the English Music Festival as they work to increase awareness of lesser-known works like *The Solent* and *The Garden of Proserpine*. It is a pleasure and an honour for me to be a small part of this great adventure.

*Simon Coombs*



**John Francis, Treasurer**

Fifteen years on, I've deferred thoughts of retirement, and plan to carry on as treasurer for a few years beyond standing down next spring as a partner in my chartered accountancy firm in Tonbridge, Kent.

I first came under the Vaughan Williams spell as a schoolboy, well over forty years ago, but it was twenty years later that opera entered my bloodstream. Predictably, I now carry the flag for the five Vaughan Williams operas, and travel many miles to see them when opportunity permits. Opera is largely about passion, happily in plentiful supply here. Performances grew in frequency as the 2008 anniversary drew near, but the momentum has not been maintained. More work still needs to be done to get the operas more widely known; this must be a significant part of our Society's mission.

As treasurer, there is some involvement in almost everything that goes on, and the huge volume of email demonstrates just how much work is put in (both for the Society and Albion Records) by fellow officers and trustees; it's great to have them as friends and colleagues.

Home is now The Vicarage, Groombridge, Diocese of Chichester, where my wife Sharon is Vicar. So music plays a part in domestic life as a choir member and occasional organist. A Last Night of The Proms party in the church last year this was great fun; cheaper than the Albert Hall, and you're allowed to take glasses

and crisps in provided you Hoover up afterwards.

Less musically, I continue as a Parish Councillor (and Responsible Financial Officer) in Lamberhurst; accountants are not allowed to quit until they finally lose their balance. If there's any spare time I spend it ripping and occasionally actually listening to recordings, and reading books including too many detective novels. My favourite authors have a love of the English language. Try Kinky Friedman if you want something a bit off the wall. Don't miss the late Reginald Hill, some of whose whodunnits are modelled on Jane Austen and P. G. Wodehouse.

Current musical recommendations: try Philip Stopford's *Come Down O Love Divine*; no comparison with *Down Ampney*, but an extraordinary combination of energy and beauty. Also treat yourself to a Hyperion download of David Briggs' *Mass for Notre Dame*, which shows that wonderful music is still being created. Top venue: Highgate Village for any opera production by Hampstead Garden Opera.

John Francis



## O For a Muse of Fire... King Henry V and King Richard II Incidental music by Ralph Vaughan Williams

This is a CD of great specialist interest. Every track is a world premiere. Performed by the orchestra and Chorus of King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon with Tim Piggot-Smith (Chorus), Jeremy Franklin (speaker), Andrew Henderson (conductor). For more information about O for a Muse of Fire... visit the Albion Records website at: [www.albionrecords.org](http://www.albionrecords.org)

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## From the Publicity Officer

### CD LAUNCH

We are planning to organise another CD launch with Naxos in London for Society members in the near future, which will include some live music. Because the *Journal* only appears three times a year, it is not always possible to include details of these events, so if you would like an invitation, please ensure that I have your email address. If you do not use email, please inform me of your interest in this launch by post, at Archery Promotions, P O Box 75 London TW13 7SA

### THE SOCIETY'S SECOND RECITAL AT LEITH HILL PLACE

On 14 September 2013 the Society, in association with the National Trust, held a second recital at Leith Hill Place. A near-capacity audience came to hear the young Nigerian-Romanian pianist Rebeca Omordia in a programme that included extracts from *Job* in the arrangement by Vally Lasker, *The Lake in the Mountains* and "Greensleeves", together with works by Bliss, Ireland, William Lloyd Webber, and ending with Ravel's masterly *Gaspard de la nuit*. The recital caught the attention of the local media with a half-page story in the *Dorking Advertiser*.



Rebeca Omordia

### VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S WAR

If you know of a commemorative Great War concert or event which is including works by or themes about Vaughan Williams, please let us know, as we are collating information which will be shared with Society members. We are also preparing an information leaflet to help with research.

### LATEST PUBLICATIONS FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Study scores are now available for *Harnham Down*, *The Solent* and *Burley Heath*. *Four Last Songs* has been orchestrated by Anthony Payne. Score and parts are available on hire.

### UNCUT

Vaughan Williams featured briefly in the December issue of *Uncut*, the serious classical and contemporary rock and pop magazine, where one of pop's greatest songwriters, Jimmy Webb, chose *The Lark Ascending* as his favourite classical piece. He said "I have a Vaughan Williams autograph on my wall. The piece conjures up Britain – it's a very romantic place for me."

### FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

This is just a small selection from many concerts featuring Vaughan Williams over the coming months. Please check details before making a special journey, as errors can creep in and changes made. And please send details of forthcoming Vaughan Williams concerts to [rvwinformation@hotmail.com](mailto:rvwinformation@hotmail.com)

FRIDAY 11 APRIL, 19:30  
**Dorking Halls, Dorking**  
Leith Hill Musical Festival Choirs  
Brian Kay, conductor  
Petite Messe Solennelle (Rossini),  
with Vaughan Williams: "The Willow Song"  
from *Three Elizabethan Songs*,  
and music by Pilkington, Benjamin, Ireland,  
Handel

SATURDAY 12 APRIL, 19:30  
**Dorking Halls, Dorking**  
Leith Hill Musical Festival Choirs  
English Festival Orchestra  
Brian Kay, conductor  
Requiem (Durufé)  
with Vaughan Williams: *Dirge for Fidele*  
and music by Rutter, Weelkes, Chilcott,  
Mozart, Moeran

FRIDAY 2 MAY, 19:30  
**St. James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London**  
Midori Komachi and the Dupont Ensemble  
Vaughan Williams: *Nocturne and Scherzo* for  
String Quintet,  
with music by Moeran, Delius, Grieg  
Concert supported by the Vaughan Williams  
Charitable Trust

FRIDAY 23 MAY, 19:30  
**Dorchester Abbey**  
English Music Festival  
Vaughan Williams: *Burley Heath; Harnham Down*  
(world premiere performances)  
with music by Parry, Boughton (world  
premiere), Moeran, Bax  
BBC Concert Orchestra  
Rupert Marshall-Luck, violin  
Martin Yates, conductor

SATURDAY 24 MAY, 19:00  
**Dorchester Abbey**  
English Music Festival  
Vaughan Williams: *Five Variants of "Dives and Lazarus"*  
with music by Elgar, O'Neill, Butterworth,  
Gurney, Coles, Parry, Holst, Finzi  
City of London Choir  
The Holst Orchestra  
Hilary Davan Wetton, conductor

SUNDAY 25 MAY, 14:15  
**All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire**  
English Music Festival  
Vaughan Williams: String Quartet no.1 in G  
minor  
with music by Pickard, Elgar  
Brodowski Quartet

THURSDAY 29 MAY, 19:30  
**Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York**  
Vaughan Williams: *Harnham Down*;  
Serenade in A Minor  
(U.S. premieres)  
with music by Walton, Britten  
Chamber Orchestra of New York  
Salvatore Di Vittorio, conductor

SATURDAY 7 JUNE, 19:30  
**St Peter's Church, 90 Kensington Park Road, London W11**  
Vaughan Williams: Fantasia for Piano and  
Orchestra  
with music by Finzi, Brahms  
Mark Bebbington, piano  
Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra  
Cathal Garvey, conductor

26 JULY – 2 AUGUST  
**Three Choirs Festival, Worcester,**  
The confirmed programme includes the Mass  
in G minor on the morning of 28 July, *The Lark Ascending* in the Cathedral on the  
evening of 31 July, and *Five Variants of "Dives and Lazarus"* in the last night concert  
on 2 August

Karen Fletcher

# Letters

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## WHICH LONDON?

I feel that I should remind Graham Muncy (issue 58) that Vaughan Williams himself stipulated quite clearly that the 1936 edition of the *London Symphony* superseded the original version, which should no longer be performed. I am as pleased as any of the composer's followers that we can hear the original version in Richard Hickox's wonderful recording, but I feel that this is as far as it should go.

It is quite clear that Vaughan Williams never changed his mind about the original version, or I am sure that we would have heard from him in the thirty-eight years following the first performance of the 1920 version up to his death, or from Roy Douglas, Michael Kennedy or Ursula, who will all have known his true views.

Other than Ursula permitting the recording and a special performance, we have heard nothing, so I believe that we must leave the 1913 version for an occasional airing on CD. Certainly, there can be no question of the original version being performed as an alternative to the final 1936 edition, and the Society should strongly oppose any attempt to circumvent the composer's clear wishes. That said, perhaps one more performance or series of performances across the UK could perhaps be held to celebrate the centenary of its first performance, but that should be that for the foreseeable future.

In any event, while the original version is interesting as a stepping stone towards the version we know and love, and contains some beautiful episodes, it is much looser than the final version, which has far greater intensity. In my opinion, and that of many reviewers, Vaughan Williams was right to revise it, producing a much tauter and more symphonic whole, which can hold its own as one of the great twentieth-century symphonies.

A final comment, possibly slightly tongue-in-cheek, after my recent letter about the *Sea Symphony*. Perhaps Vaughan Williams could have pruned that a little in the same way, and I might then find it easier to take!

**Nigel Blore**  
Essex, UK

## MORE...

I attended and was delighted by the superb performance of the *London Symphony* by the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Andrew Davis in February 2013. Nonetheless, I feel strongly that the original version as recorded for Chandos by the late Richard Hickox deserves to be heard more often. It has extended passages of what could be called a mysterious atmosphere, almost other-worldly, giving a further dimension to a work already rich in contrasting moods and orchestral colour. I will never forget the BBC Prom concert in which Hickox conducted the original version during the week of the July bombings in 2007. In such circumstances the work had greater power to move than ever, and the conductor maintained the palpable atmosphere to the last second. For me it stands as a tribute to Vaughan Williams's vision,

Hickox's total command of the score, and a great city's continuing capacity to endure the worst of adversity. It would be wonderful to hear it performed again.

**Eric Cobb**  
Hertfordshire, UK

## MORE...

With the subject of the *London Symphony* original version again receiving attention, may I take the liberty of reiterating an earlier letter to the *Journal* (June 2011) and raising a couple more points. In 2008 I attended a concert of the *London Symphony* which turned out, unexpectedly for me, to be the original version. This spoiled the concert somewhat for me as I prefer the revised version. The climax of the second movement, for example, is so different in the two versions that they can almost be regarded as two completely separate pieces of music. I have not been to a *London Symphony* concert since. So the first issue is this: if we go to a performance of the symphony, which version will we hear?

Another issue concerns education and public awareness. When the word "original" is used, there is often a connotation of authenticity and purity, subtly implying that this is the "true" version. But we know that, as far as the *London Symphony* is concerned, to Vaughan Williams this was a preliminary version which was later updated, and, to his mind, improved.

Many people will prefer the original version, and I respect that. Most concert-goers will perhaps not mind which version of the symphony they hear. But I would like to suggest, firstly, that performances of the original version should be clearly advertised as such. Secondly it should be made clear in the programme notes for the concert that Vaughan Williams did not want this version performed.

Let us not forget Michael Kennedy's CD notes to the recording of the original version: "... the present recording was made by permission of Mrs. Vaughan Williams, permission given for a recording *only*" (my italics), and "There can be no question of the original version supplanting the revision. The 1936 score represents the symphony as Vaughan Williams wanted it to exist for posterity."

Would our perception of the two pieces be different, I wonder, if they were called the Preliminary and Final versions?

**Robert Shave**  
West Sussex, UK

## MORE...AND COMPLETIONS

I have a couple of comments arising from issue 58.

Regarding Graham Muncy's take on the *London Symphony*, I am all for the original version, which I prefer to the later revision.

The “official version”, though more concise, is, I feel, less atmospheric. The early version has a totally different feel and is almost a different symphony.

Regarding Simon Coombs’s discussion on completion, I am a confirmed completist. I don’t think the early works that have been recorded have damaged Vaughan Williams’s reputation in my mind. Of course, they *are* early, and not up to his later standard, but they are still worthy pieces in their own right. I doubt there’s a single composer (or author) whose works are of completely uniform quality. The *Heroic Elegy and Triumphal Epilogue* has become a favorite of mine. I think the recent completions of Elgar’s Third Symphony (Anthony Payne), Moeran’s Second (Martin Yates), and Arnell’s Seventh (also Martin Yates) have shown that uncompleted works can be realized and give us, if not the composer’s final intentions, at least a glimpse of his musical vision – and provide us with enjoyable, worthwhile pieces.

I would be in favor of a Vaughan Williams “Complete Edition”. Perhaps Albion Records could favor us with a new recording of the *Fantasia on the Old 104th*, the previous recording of which has always sounded muddy to me. The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir could be matched with one of the outstanding British pianists. And surely there are some other rare bits and pieces to make a full disk?

Something to be particularly desired would be for a composer to orchestrate the Cello Concerto, and reconstruct the *Norfolk Rhapsody No.3* so it could be paired with Nos. 1 and 2. And what about the various sketches in the British Library for further symphonies?

**Andrew Seddon**  
Montana, USA

## COMPLETIONS

I read with interest Simon Coombs’s article on the completion of the recording of the Vaughan Williams oeuvre, in the October *Journal*.

I think that any attempt to complete *Thomas the Rhymer*, and the missing *Norfolk Rhapsody* would be inadvisable. Any “reconstruction” of the latter using the scant evidence available should never be passed off as a work by Vaughan Williams, no matter how well done. As far as the former is concerned, together with works like the Cello Concerto, why not just record the bits available, as has been done with the Sibelius Eighth?

In the meantime, by my reckoning (using the *Kennedy Catalogue*) there are forty-four published and forty-seven unpublished works with complete manuscripts available and still unrecorded. Most of these are vocal or choral and thus likely to be less expensive to record. Surely that’s enough to be going on with!

**Michael Gainsford**  
Leicestershire, UK

## VAUGHAN WILLIAMS IN SHAKESPEARIAN MODE

The release by Albion Records of the enterprising recording of the 1913 *Henry V* music by Vaughan Williams is most welcome. I attended this concert at King Edward VI School in Stratford, and reported on the event for the June 2013 *Journal*.

I felt at the time that I must have missed a great deal, and the CD has borne this out, also revealing several errors in identification. This allows me to give a more balanced personal assessment, together with a few comments on the coincidences with the *Henry V* music by Sir William Walton for the 1944 film.

Firstly, apologies for my misidentification of *Reveillee vous Picards* as *l’Homme armé*. The former also figures in the Walton battle music (with modified rhythm) as well as in Vaughan Williams’s *Henry V* Overture. A vocal arrangement by Vaughan Williams was published in 1903.

More apologies are due for my overestimating the amount of original music. The majority seems to comprise arrangements of traditional tunes, tunes from the fifteenth century, and at least three rather bizarre choices by the composer. I mentioned “The Gallant Arethusa” previously, but even more bizarrely the song “As duly, but not as truly”, sung by the Boy before Harfleur (Act 3, Scene 2) is set to a snippet of Parry’s hymn tune *Repton* (“Dear Lord and father of mankind”)! Near the start of the music occurs a version of the Christmas carol “The Angel Gabriel”. All three seem out of place.

There are at least three French chansons. On track 7 is a rather beautiful arrangement of what I think is “Vrai Dieu d’amours”. This reappears on track 10. It also appears, sung by Dr Caius early in *Sir John in Love*.

The Provençal song “Magali” is also used. Again this appears in Vaughan Williams’s brass band overture *Henry V*.

The other French chanson is “J’aimons les filles”, appearing as a French march, (in Act III Scene 6), before Agincourt.

The pre-battle music on lower strings reminds me of Walton’s. Walton also used a French folk song, from the Auvergne. Both composers used the “Agincourt Carol”, as would be expected. But why did they both hit on Byrd’s *Earl of Oxford March*? The 11th Earl of Oxford was at Agincourt, in charge of the archers. Byrd’s piece was written much later. It appears in Byrd’s collection of pieces for virginals “My Ladye Nevells Booke”, and is also known as “The March Before the Battle”. Was there already a Shakespearean connection with this tune? It is also used in Vaughan Williams’s brass band overture. The march appears at completely different parts of the two *Henry Vs*.

As incidental music that of Walton is more apposite, and wins hands down. This is not to say that this latest CD is not a welcome addition to the recorded Vaughan Williams oeuvre. It repays repeated listening, and we must thank Albion again for throwing light on yet more early Vaughan Williams works.

**Michael Gainsford**  
Leicestershire, UK

## VAUGHAN WILLIAMS IN PHILADELPHIA

I was grateful to learn from Edward Johnson in issue 58 about the YouTube video of the October 1972 performance of the *Pastoral Symphony*, conducted by Eugene Ormandy in Philadelphia. I was there, the beneficiary of a one dollar student ticket. I’d only recently discovered Vaughan Williams, and it was the first time I heard one of his symphonies in a live performance.

As many readers will know, Ormandy's orchestra was famous for its lush strings, which made the work all the more wonderful as I sat transfixed in the "peanut gallery" of the Academy of Music.

Although Vaughan Williams has not been performed very often in Philadelphia, in April 2005 Sir Roger Norrington conducted *A London Symphony* in Verizon Hall, the new home of the Philadelphia Orchestra. I was less impressed on that occasion, but it was still worth the long trip into the city. My home is not close to any major center for music, so it's rare for me to have opportunities to hear the Vaughan Williams symphonies. So far, I've managed to hear only the first four. Ormandy's performance was probably the best of the lot.

**Ted Davis**

*Pennsylvania, USA*

**SIR ADRIAN SPEAKS**

Like Em Marshall-Luck (issue 58) I respond to all the music of Vaughan Williams and probably, like her, to what I have last listened to (and this is probably true of most other composers as well.) I was particularly interested in the concert review of the Ninth in the last issue, as this is a symphony which is particularly special to me. Let me say straight away that if others do not respond in the same way it simply means they are not me!

When I was young (several centuries ago now) I tackled Adrian Boult head on about this symphony during one of our quarterly lunches in the John Lewis restaurant just around the corner from the Boult "office" at 138 Wigmore Street in London. I told him that I thought the symphony a perfect summation of Vaughan Williams's symphonic creations (and I still believe that) and put forward my "thesis" that so much of it reminded me of all the other symphonies that I thought it was a composer looking back over a lifetime of musical creation.

Perhaps Boult indulged me, but after a fairly long pause he said, "I don't think I am going to disagree with you too much on this. Like you I am reminded of past achievements pulled together. It is noticeable in movement 1 where the opening may not be someone bugling but there are phrases. Of course you could equally say that any composer has favourite phrases, their signature if you want, and there are definitely signatures throughout this symphony. Four and Six markedly and in movement 2 there's a bar or two of *Antartica* as well, harp and bell, and a bit of *London*, too, for the strings. I don't know whether it was looking back or whether they were simply favourite phrases."

Sir Adrian might have been teasing, but he added, "It also of course has the 'phones and 'spiels of the Eighth which he did not use a lot symphonically. There are several other phrases you haven't mentioned but which you might find in this work that relate to other works of his. Do you know where you might find them?"

This totally floored me.

So he went on: "You could relate *Dives and Lazarus* to some of this score, but the two most important you have left out in terms of favourite phrases are *Job* – have a look at the closing moments of this symphony – and I'm afraid you have left out *Five Tudor Portraits*."

I don't have a favourite Vaughan Williams symphony, but whenever I play the Ninth I get most of the rest of his music as well – just an opinion – so if I had to choose one it would be this one.

**Alan M. Watkins**

*Essex, UK*

**SERGEI SPEAKS**

In the October issue, Jeffrey Davis expressed a less than enthusiastic view of the original version of the *Serenade to Music*. It may be brave to reveal this to a Society of believers, but I am sure that this is an honest expression and, if a little extreme, is to be respected. Within music groups it is normal to find a wide diversity of likes and dislikes which divides between music periods, composers within that period, and, as in this case, a particular composer's output.

I cannot find that the music is at all "self-congratulatory". It is "congratulatory" in that it was composed to congratulate Sir Henry Wood on the fiftieth anniversary of his career as a conductor. The first performance took place at a Gala Concert in October 1938, conducted by Sir Henry, with all receipts going to a fund to endow hospital beds for sick musicians.

The event was planned for November, but Sergei Rachmaninov offered to play in the concert; he could only attend in October, however, hence the new date. Vaughan Williams composed the work with sixteen particular soloists in mind, and a week after the concert the original group made a recording. I find the Dutton reissue of this to be magical, seeming to again catch the sense of a special occasion. There is a fine modern recording on Hyperion, with notes by Christopher Palmer, who offsets Jeffrey's views:

"One of its greatest admirers on the occasion of that memorable first performance was Rachmaninov who, having played his Second Concerto in the first half of the concert, joined Lady Wood and other guests in her box for the second half, where he heard the *Serenade*. The conductor Felix Weingartner (also in the box) recalled that Rachmaninov sat at the back, his eyes filled with tears; later, Rachmaninov told Sir Henry (in a letter Wood later passed to Vaughan Williams: where is it now, one wonders?) that he had never before been so moved by music. Knowing the kind of man Rachmaninov was, and the music that he composed himself and liked to hear and play, there is no reason to suppose that he was being insincere."

Incidentally, the Rachmaninov authority Geoffrey Norris informed me that this letter is "in the RVW Archive".

**Charles McAllister**

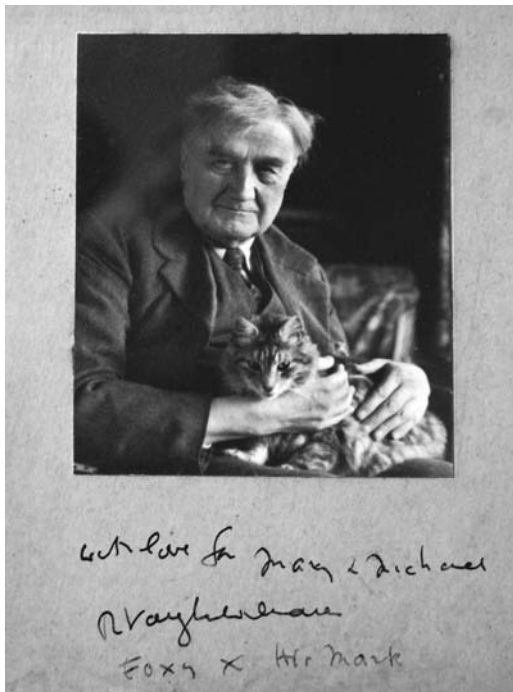
*Cheshire, UK*

**MARY MULLINAR**

It seems fitting to note the death, on 25 November, of Mary Mullinar at the age of 103.

Mary was married to the late Michael Mullinar, the pianist and musician mentored by Ralph Vaughan Williams from pupil to the distinction of receiving the dedication of the Sixth Symphony. Not the least of his contributions was the rare talent – perhaps genius – of being one of the great man's copyists!

Highlighting his generosity as a friend, Mary was ever grateful to “Uncle Ralph”, as he was affectionately known, after he made it possible for the family to move from Hereford to London a few years after the end of the Second World War. Following Vaughan Williams’s death in 1958, Mary remained friends, and for many years shared occasional correspondence, with Ursula Vaughan Williams. Mary’s death, more than half a century later, might be marked as a sign of the passing of generations that spanned three of the most incredible centuries that the world has seen.



Foxy’s mark

At the end, among the family pictures at her bedside, Mary held a special place for the gentle photograph of Vaughan Williams and his beloved cat, signed “With love to Mary and Michael, R Vaughan Williams” and the added words “Foxy – x – his mark”.

**Keith, Rod and John Mullinar**  
USA, Australia and England

### A FORGOTTEN COMPOSER

Do you remember that epic television series *I Claudius*, starring Derek Jacobi, recently repeated by the BBC? One of its most notable features was the tremendously atmospheric and evocative theme music written by Wilfred Josephs. A prolific composer of film and television music in the 1970s and 80s, for reasons that are hard to fathom, his name has all but disappeared from the media and the concert hall.

Josephs was born in Newcastle 1927. He was originally a dentist who also took part-time lessons at the Guildhall School of Music. Following an approach from director Claude Whatham, who wanted music for his forthcoming series about the Boer War, commissions began to flood in and Josephs was able to give up dentistry and support himself as a freelance composer.

As well as music for film and television, Josephs composed no fewer than twelve symphonies, twenty-two concertos, and a Requiem that won the City of Milan Composition Competition and was recorded

on the Unicorn Kanchana label. His style in many of these works can be described as the use of melody with a post 12-tone sensibility.

There is no doubt that Josephs was considerably influenced by Vaughan Williams. This is particularly evident in his Great War Music where he creates a bleak and terrifying musical landscape that has much in common with the first movement of Vaughan Williams’s Fourth Symphony. Another connection between the two is their adoption of what can only be described as the “windmill” method of conducting. In fact on one occasion when Josephs was conducting he noticed that one violinist – Neville Marriner, no less – was looking at the floor as he played. Josephs stopped the players and politely enquired, “Why are you not following my baton?” “To be honest,” Marriner replied, “your foot is a much more reliable tempo guide than your baton.”

In the 1980s, as his professional contacts retired or died, as well as the increased use of synthesised music, commissions began to dry up. Josephs died in relative obscurity in 1997, a sad end for a composer of such interesting music. A Wilfred Josephs society was established in 1994, but little headway has been made. Performances of his works are rare, and as for recordings, a Clarinet Sonata and a Violin Sonata are available on CD, as is his Symphony for Brass. The lovely Symphony No.5, “Pastoral”, that I recall hearing on Radio 3 some time ago, is not recorded, nor are Nos. 7, “Winter” and 8, “The Elements”.

Josephs may not be a great composer, but the fruits of his craftsmanship and invention do not deserve the obscurity into which they have fallen.

**Rob Furneaux**  
Devon, UK

### READING MATTER

I recently took advantage of a special offer of a free copy of *International Record Review* and very much enjoyed it when it came. It was interesting to contrast it with *Gramophone*, which is possibly more widely read among our membership.

First, it is still published by an independent company, run by people who know and care about music. Second, it did not have pages of pointless interviews with musicians; if I was interested in what they generally have to say I’d have become a travel agent. Third, the autobiographical article at the back was relevant to the recording business, in contrast to the usual self-indulgent ramblings of a randomly chosen nonentity celebrity. On the downside, there were no reviews of audio hardware to titillate my inner geek, so I don’t see my *Gramophone* subscription running out any time soon. Best of all, there was a distinguished panel of reviewers – including the Editor of our own august *Journal* – and they were given more space per review than you generally find elsewhere, so the reviews were that bit more informative and interesting. It made me want to buy all sorts of rather out of the way stuff.

I’ve bought a year’s subscription (£44 for the UK; sadly rather more if you’re overseas) and commend *IRR* to any RVW Society members looking to broaden their recorded music collection. See [recordreview.co.uk](http://recordreview.co.uk).

**John Francis,**  
Kent, UK

# Concert Reviews

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## A GLASGOW THING

Glasgow was the place to be for the Vaughan Williams aficionado between Thursday 7 November and Sunday 10, with Andrew Manze and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra continuing their tour of the symphonies and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra getting in on the act too!

First was the *Sinfonia Antartica* on 7 November, with the BBC Scottish S O in an enterprising programme that also featured Tippett's *Divertimento on "Sellinger's Round"* and Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20, soloist Shai Wosner.

The *Sinfonia Antartica* is very rarely performed north of the Border. I think this was its first public hearing in Glasgow since the 1970s. It was this state of affairs that led me two years ago to journey to Cheltenham to hear it in the flesh for the very first time, performed as part of the "Scott of the Antarctic Centenary Tour". In the first half, alongside a specially commissioned piece by Cecilia McDowall, Hugh Bonneville read extracts from Scott's diaries, these interspersed with extracts from Vaughan Williams's music from the film *Scott of the Antarctic*. This was very effective, but only five musical segments were offered, and we know there is much more. The second half was the *Sinfonia Antartica*. It was exhilarating to hear, at last, this great music striding forth from the pages of the score. There was much that was good, but the performance was accompanied by the screening of some of Herbert Ponting's photographs from the ill-fated expedition. Ponting did not accompany the expedition to the Pole, so his photographs, some fascinating, some more mundane, do not fit well as a pictorial accompaniment to the symphony, which does, after all, span the full tragedy. Thus, we were treated to pictures of the interior of Scott's hut and the preparation of the ponies alongside the great "Landscape" movement. Also, no attempt was made to synchronise the photos to the pulse of the music. The overall effect was not good and I shut my eyes and simply listened to Vaughan Williams. That worked, but I was greatly disappointed not to hear the great organ passage, surprising because the hall in Cheltenham had an organ and the programme notes made great play of this being the piece's masterstroke. Imagine then my further irritation when I later learned that the organ had not been employed because the screen on which Ponting's photos were shown obscured the sightline twixt organist and conductor!

The organ *was* present in Glasgow – but, alas, it was an electric instrument, its register falling far short of what I still hope to hear live. Otherwise, the BBC Scottish and Manze delivered a spine-tingling, powerful account of this great score. Manze wrote in the programme that the work is, for him, the "most haunting" in the cycle. Special mention must be made of the soprano, Katherine Broderick, and the women of the Glasgow Chamber Choir who were all superb. The concert was broadcast live.

Three days later we all packed back into the Glasgow City Halls for Symphony No. 8, delivered by Manze and the BBC Scottish as part of Radio 3's "Discovering Music" series. I like all the Vaughan Williams symphonies, but No. 8 appeals to me the least. Genial, amusing, full of great melodies and all those percussive effects, and with a truly beautiful third-movement "Cavatina" for strings, it nonetheless seems like four separate movements rather than a coherent whole. That said, it is wonderful to hear it live. (I think, more than any, it benefits from the live experience.) Manze, an excellent and enthusiastic speaker, spent the first half talking about not just this symphony but several other Vaughan Williams works, with examples illustrated by the orchestra in the manner well known to listeners of the "Discovering Music" series.



Rumon Gamba

In between, on the evening of Saturday 9 November, the RSNO conducted by Rumon Gamba devoted an entire concert to the peerless Fifth Symphony. This was part of its "Naked Classics" series, and for this the presenter was Paul Rissmann. And now my confession – I was not there. That night, I had four concerts to choose from – there's a lot going on in Glasgow! – and I had booked for another. But four friends *were* able to go, and they loved it. The audience was asked to clap according to whether they thought Elgar, Vaughan Williams or Britten was the greatest British composer. I am happy to say that all three received their due – it's a Glasgow thing!

*Jim McGrath*

## AN UNKNOWN REGION OF COVENTRY...

On 9 November 2013, *Toward the Unknown Region* was the opening work in a choral and orchestral concert at Coventry Cathedral. The others were the Third Symphony of Saint-Saëns and Elgar's *The Music Makers*. The choral forces comprised Studiosi Cantande of Berlin, and St Michael's Singers from the cathedral. The orchestra was the Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra, based in Leamington Spa.

Because of their shared history of devastating bombing raids in the last war, Coventry has close ties with several German cities. In 2012 the St Michael's Singers performed Britten's *War Requiem* in Berlin in conjunction with Studiosi Cantande, and this was a return visit. It was on 14 November 1940 that the massive air raid on Coventry occurred, resulting in the destruction of the old cathedral, along with most other mediaeval buildings in the city.

The present cathedral is a huge building, very open, with extra thin columns that have no structural purpose. Consequently there is an overwhelming echo, which tends to obscure the words being sung, a problem noticeable in the Vaughan Williams. I have always liked this work, but this is the first time I have heard it live. It shows the influence of Parry, and rises to a thrilling climax producing goose bumps in at least one member of the audience. Despite the orchestra tending to overpower the choir in the quiet start to the work, it was a good performance which I hope the 700-strong audience appreciated.

This was the second time in two years that I had heard Saint-Saëns's so-called *Organ Symphony*, both times by amateur forces. The difficult opening was a little ragged until the conductor Paul Leddington Wright pulled things together, after which a very good performance was achieved. This performance had a definite advantage over the 2011 performance I heard at De Montfort Hall in Leicester in that the cathedral organ (organist Kerry Beaumont) is far more powerful, and the whole building shook. This won the orchestra prolonged and enthusiastic applause.

The concert concluded with *The Music Makers*. Arthur O'Shaughnessy's words have their moments, but there are also passages of near-doggerel. It's a beautiful work, nonetheless, and one in which the composer quotes from some of his other pieces. It was beautifully sung, with a special mention for mezzo-soprano soloist, Margaret McDonald.

This was a most enjoyable concert, rounded off nicely on finding that the City Council's car parking charge was only 50p! And to complete the Vaughan Williams weekend, the following day the choir of St Catherine's, Burbage, sang *Let us now Praise Famous Men* as part of the Remembrance Sunday service.

Michael Gainsford

### ...AND ANOTHER ONE IN THE LAKES

Performances of Vaughan Williams's shorter choral pieces are fairly frequent in the South Lakes area as several are firm favourites with local choral directors. On 7 December 2013, however, Kendal audiences were treated to a performance of the composer's first choral work for chorus and orchestra, *Toward the Unknown Region*. This was probably the first time that the work had been heard in Kendal. The occasion was the opening of the Westmorland Orchestra's 69th season, when the enterprising committee of this enthusiastic and capable amateur orchestra invited a local choir to sing a programme of works by three British composers alongside Berlioz's dramatic *Symphonie fantastique*.

The combined forces of the Westmorland Orchestra and Kendal South Choir, directed by Ian Thompson, gave a commendable

performance of the Vaughan Williams in Kendal's Westmorland Hall. *Toward the Unknown Region* is scored for large orchestra and chorus and contains passages that are challenging for singers and instrumentalists. In this performance, the orchestra effectively set the scene for the chorus's first entry. The singers had clearly been well prepared and captured perfectly the mood of the climax, "Then we burst forth". The high tessitura of Vaughan Williams's soprano lines taxed the sopranos occasionally. Frequently, tenors are in short supply in local choral societies and often sound strained, but the tenors in this performance produced some lovely tone and were confident in their entries. Some of the orchestral fanfares lacked precision, but overall both choir and orchestra captured the essence of this fine, imaginative Whitman setting.

The rest of the programme was conducted by the orchestra's regular conductor, Richard Howarth. If Walton's difficult coronation march, *Orb and Sceptre*, was the least successful work in the programme, under his careful direction Elgar's playful *Wand of Youth Suite No. 2*, based on tunes the composer wrote in childhood, was given a delightful performance. Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, which followed, is a huge challenge for amateurs, but all the orchestra members impressed by their ability to rise to it. Indeed, there were moments when, with eyes closed, one could imagine that this was a professional orchestra. The strings produced a firm tone without any sign of nervousness; the woodwind principals were outstanding in their many solo passages; the brass added weight to the climaxes, while the large percussion section provided the atmosphere and colour required to bring this exciting score to life.

The enterprising and ambitious programme was well received by the audience. Other amateur orchestras and choral societies might consider combining to present a similar programme.

Clive Walkley

### THE PASTORAL IN BERLIN

On 8 December 2013 Sir Roger Norrington conducted the Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin in Vaughan Williams's *Pastoral Symphony*, the third concert of his projected series of all nine symphonies to be performed in the Philharmonie. On this occasion the Vaughan Williams symphony was coupled with Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* and Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27. The two British works provided the main theme for the evening, since both in their very different ways are responses to the inhumanity and destruction of war. In short, they are both orchestral war requiems.

Although Britten dedicated his *Sinfonia da Requiem* to the memory of his parents, it is also an expression of his pacifism in the face of renewed warfare between old enemies. Norrington directed a magnificent performance of this thrilling and concise piece. The first movement, "Lacrymosa", conveys quiet menace and then explodes into violence and death. The "Dies Irae", a wild dance of death, eventually disintegrates into what sounds like a broken down fugue, a chaotic series of fragmentary whirling phrases and discordant notes tossed about the orchestra. The third movement brings relief and calm, with soaring string passages reminiscent of Mahler, the work then being crowned with a quiet and moving conclusion of great beauty. "Requiem aeternam" was hardly a prospect in 1940, but it is in this

movement above all that the composer was thinking of his beloved parents.

Mozart's final *Piano Concerto K595*, composed in his last year, 1791, was a graceful and sunlit foil to the heavyweight British works heard before and after it. The young Swiss pianist Francesco Piemontesi, a recent BBC New Generation Artist, gave a sparkling performance. This was intimate music making, due in no small measure to the positioning of the musicians on the platform. The piano was placed in the middle of the orchestra, with the soloist's back to the audience. Norrington took up a position at the opposite end of the piano, facing the soloist and, beyond him, the audience. From this position Norrington shaped the phrasing and dynamics of the orchestra's contribution, and remained in direct contact with the happily undaunted soloist. All went well, and the result was a most satisfying and elegant performance with everyone working together as a team.



The Philharmonie, Berlin

The combination of exquisite beauty and sadness in Vaughan Williams's third symphony, completed in 1921, derives from the twofold character of the music. On the one hand it represents a pastoral idyll, as at the work's opening, with its gently rocking woodwind phrases answered by string tunes of cellos and basses and then solo violin. On the other hand, the music constitutes an elegy for the loss of human life in the First World War, the work being initially conceived by the composer when serving in France in 1916. That slaughter took place in the same landscape that the composer had also observed as a scene of beauty and tranquillity accounts for the interplay of idyll and elegy in the music. The countryside bathed in the glowing colours of sunset had reminded the composer of the paintings of Camille Corot. In this landscape Vaughan Williams would on one day be playing cards or singing with men he knew and liked, and on the next, as a medical orderly, he would stretch them from the battlefield, severely or fatally wounded. This terrifying experience lies at the heart of the *Pastoral Symphony*, and yet only in the final movement does Vaughan Williams come near to expressing this terror in direct, forceful terms.

It was a joy for me to hear my first live performance of the *Pastoral Symphony*. What impressed me most was the way the performance built towards the work's climax, the final movement. I was almost overcome with emotion as the Finnish soprano Anu

Komsi sang her wordless *cantilena* at the beginning, followed by the lovely, yet immensely sad response introduced by the strings. One of the highlights of the final movement is the outburst of pain and protest by unison strings and woodwind, adopting the soprano's theme. Here the composer's witness to inhumanity is immediate and unambiguous. Norrington paid special attention to the triple forte *appassionato* marking at this point and urged his players to produce ever more tone so as to convey the most fervent outpouring of feeling. After the soprano had repeated her *cantilena* at the end, noticeably softer and more distant than earlier, there was a sense of a towering masterpiece having unfolded before us. A long silence was followed by loud applause. The audience had been deeply moved by the music and understood its composer's humanity and integrity.

Norrington's direction of the symphony had features familiar from his earlier Berlin performances of the *London Symphony* and the *Sea Symphony*. The lack of string vibrato was not as convincing as in Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem*, perhaps because of the slow and lyrical quality of much of this music. Happily the violin, viola, and cello soloists delivered their beautiful contributions with vibrato. Norrington chose relatively brisk tempi, another familiar feature of his Vaughan Williams performances, but this time I felt it did not work so well. The first movement was too fast to my ears; this limited the expressiveness of the music and the violin solos sounded rushed. However, in the third movement I loved the way the trumpets, backed by trombones, articulated their folk-like tune in the central section. Here their brisk tempo was most effective.

Perhaps the relatively brisk tempi constituted one of the reasons for the occasional lack of textural clarity, again especially in the first movement. Some sections of the orchestra were too loud, especially the horns. Despite the antiphonal placing of violins and brass instruments, the overall balance was not always successful. The first horn aroused my wrath in the second movement by playing his beautiful solos too loud and with, would you believe, a trace of vibrato! The trumpet solo was magnificent, however. Played off-stage, it lent a haunting quality to the stillness of the landscape scene evoked by the muted string accompaniment.

Despite my the reservations, this was a concert I will never forget. I am very grateful to Norrington for his unstinting commitment to this music and his service to the cause of Vaughan Williams's music in Germany. With each concert the audience has grown larger and more enthusiastic, and the local critics have given them a great press too. The *Pastoral* has been reinstated as my favourite Vaughan Williams symphony. It is quintessential Vaughan Williams, especially for someone like me who prefers the third and fifth symphonies to the equally great, but so different fourth and sixth. Yet I think that Symphony No. 4 might suit the non-sense approach of Norrington even better than the *Pastoral*, so we look forward with eager anticipation to the next instalment of Norrington's and the DSO's journey through the nine.

One final observation. As I listened to the second movement I became aware of how much another favourite composer of mine, E. J. Moeran, and in particular his *Lonely Waters* of 1931, owes to the *Pastoral Symphony*. The music of Vaughan Williams foreshadows the harmonic and emotional sound world of Moeran's great piece.

Tony Williams

## O for a Muse of Fire...

# Albion Records releases the incidental music from Henry V and Richard II

Stephen Connock

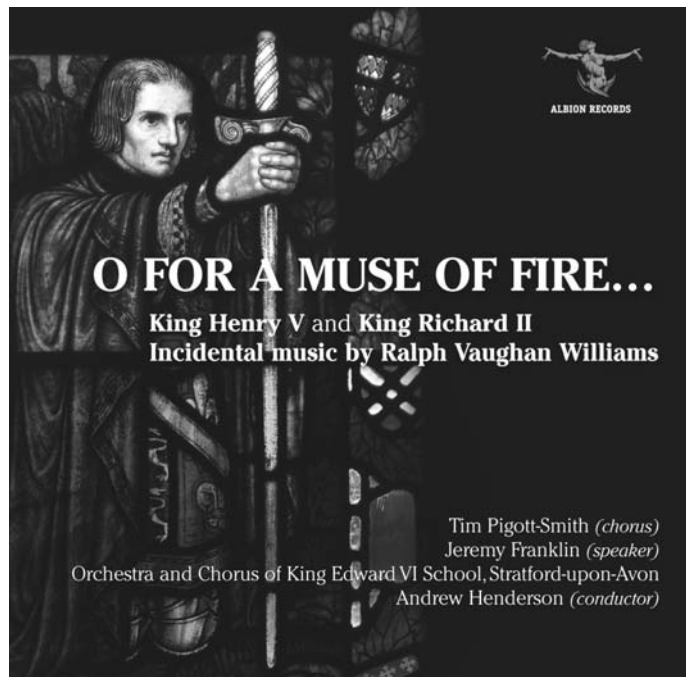
When Archibald Flower called on Vaughan Williams in early 1912 asking him to work with Frank Benson for two seasons at Stratford-upon-Avon, the composer was delighted. He had always loved Shakespeare and, as he was already two years into writing his first opera *Hugh the Drover*, he welcomed the chance to gain first hand theatrical experience. Benson had been managing the Stratford Shakespearean Festival since 1886 and would continue up to 1916, staging all the plays bar two.



Frank Benson as Henry V

The engaging and charismatic actor-manager needed a musician capable of both arranging incidental music and conducting the small orchestra. Ralph and Adeline took rooms in Stratford for the opening of the season on 7 August 1912. He quickly became involved in all aspects of production, becoming very excited by the magic of live theatre. The composer was given a fairly free hand in preparing the music for *Henry V* and *Richard II*. In the case of *Henry V*, the production was given by the students of King Edward VI School from Stratford on 7 May 1913. All the boys taking part were later involved in the First World War and seven of the cast were killed in combat.

Albion was fortunate to be able to record the performances given 100 years later in 2013 in Stratford. The music on the disc, edited and conducted by Andrew Henderson, Music Director at the School, was taken from Vaughan Williams's 1913 set with some additional hymns, folk songs and – of course – the “Agincourt Carol”. The



The cover features the Jennings window, King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon

part of the King was taken by a former pupil, Jeremy Franklin, and the Chorus was Tim Pigott-Smith, also a former pupil of King Edward VI School.

Members are urged to purchase this disc of music never before recorded. The style of the music for *Henry V*, in particular, is remarkable for its restraint. There are passages of considerable tenderness and poignancy, often in contrast to the more bombastic stage action. Whilst Benson seems to have been unimpressed with this concept – he dropped the music for future productions – Vaughan Williams created beautiful music which underlines, in a visionary way, the human sacrifice and hardship of war.

The Benson years proved valuable to the emerging composer of opera and he never forgot, as Ursula put it, ‘the thrill of being part of two worlds – Shakespeare and the players’. Something of this directness of experience will be found on Albion’s new disc

[*O for a Muse of Fire... Incidental Music to Henry V and Richard II* (ALBCD 017) is available from Mark Hammett or from the Albion Records website: [www.albionrecords.org](http://www.albionrecords.org)., priced £8-99 inclusive of postage and packaging to anywhere in the world. Full details on page 23.]

# CD Reviews

## Vaughan Williams: Symphonies 5 and 7

Sheila Armstrong, soprano

London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir/Bernard Haitink

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA LPO 0072 (two discs)



A review of these live recordings finds me in distinguished company, since the liner notes are by Andrew Neill, and you will find Stephen Connock's review of the 1994 Fifth Symphony concert in *Journal* number 2. "Quite simply, it was the best performance of the two final movements I have ever heard, with Haitink finding depths in the music which elude most conductors." A few days later, a recording was made in Maida Vale studios; this is included in Haitink's wonderful 2004 symphonic box set. So, the obvious comparison: is this late live release justified?

Focusing briefly on the third and fourth movements which so impressed Stephen, the live "Romanza" at 12:57 would be the slowest known to me were it not for the studio recording which extends it to 13:30 (compare Vaughan Williams himself at 10:13, Hickox at 12:05 and Boult at 10:55). Conversely, the final "Passacaglia" was half a minute longer in the live performance, and is the longest in my collection. So it's not a straightforward comparison; the live recording is half a minute slower overall, and Haitink is generally more spacious than other conductors. Boult and the composer are about 14% quicker, with Barbirolli and Previn (two more superb recordings) somewhere in between.

The new disc brings background noise, and audience sniffles, especially at the beginning of movements, but this settles down and the recorded sound is pretty good. Andrew Achenbach, in Gramophone, found "an extra expressive charge and elusive tingle of spontaneity that Haitink didn't quite manage to replicate in the studio". Hopping from one version to another in short sections for this review loses that, but I have listened to the complete disc two or three times and found an emotional intensity that becomes apparent in this most beautiful of all symphonies.

The *Antartica* is a different kettle of fish. Haitink is quicker than many others, though again the live performance is half a minute longer than his studio recording. Hall and audience are both better behaved, and the sound is first class. Ostensibly, this is rather a chilly symphony, but there is powerful music within it, not least in the Prelude, *andante maestoso*, and there is majesty indeed in this account. The expressiveness of the strings 1:27 into the "Intermezzo" is a beautiful contrast. The "Epilogue" must be among Vaughan Williams's most complex movements, a bit jazzy at the beginning but dying away with voices and the wind machine at the end; brought off to perfection here, with more realistic wind noise than they managed in the studio, faded out just a little too abruptly.

I am pleased to number this disc among my sixteen recordings of the Fifth and seven of the Seventh. Treat yourself.

John Francis

## Vaughan Williams: *On Wenlock Edge*; *Ten Blake Songs*

Jonathan Dove: *The End*; Peter Warlock: *The Curlew*

Mark Padmore (tenor), Nicholas Daniel (oboe and English horn), Huw Watkins (piano), Britten Sinfonia

HARMONIA MUNDI HMU807566



When did you last hear a *Wenlock Edge* you didn't like? If there was one, it was because you didn't like the singer – since tenors divide people. But it doesn't make reviewing easy! This excellent new recording from Mark Padmore with a piano quintet drawn from the Britten Sinfonia follows Padmore's own 2008 Chandos account with the Schubert Ensemble – which is a little steadier, but with a brighter recording and a more delicate accompaniment. In truth, there is little to choose between the two; if the new disc has an expressive edge, it is by the tiniest of margins. Recordings by James Gilchrist and Andrew Kennedy each have much to commend them. The Kennedy recording puts you right in the front row, and the Dante Quartet articulate the accompaniment to perfection, while the Gilchrist disc has a softer grain, with gentler accompaniment from the Fitzwilliam Quartet.

Ian Partridge's 1971 recording will never be surpassed for its warmth and emotional depth; if you love the music then you need that and at least one modern version. Other excellent earlier versions include Alexander Young on our Albion Archive disc.

Fifty years on, *Ten Blake Songs* enters a less crowded field. Counter-tenor James Bowman's 1988 recording is fascinating, but simply defies comparison, leaving Ian Partridge again and John Mark Ainsley as the main contenders. Partridge is the warmer of the two. Listening to Padmore is an entirely different experience: while Partridge sings, Padmore tells you the story, thus taking the performance to an altogether different level. Perhaps Vaughan Williams would have preferred the former; I very much like the latter – and it is this recording that justifies the new disc. Ideally, you need both Partridge and Padmore.

Warlock's atmospheric *The Curlew* for tenor, cor anglais or oboe, flute and string quartet is almost as much an instrumental piece as it is a song cycle. All of the tenors mentioned here have recorded it, so choose Partridge plus any other, Padmore's impassioned account being at least as good as any.

Jonathan Dove's nine-minute piece *The End* was written for Mark

Padmore and the same instrumentation as *The Curlew*. The “minimalist” accompaniment is intended to invoke the rocking motion of a ship slipping into darkness, and does so very successfully. However, there are “tunes” both in the accompaniment and in the gentle tenor part. This is beautiful; try it.

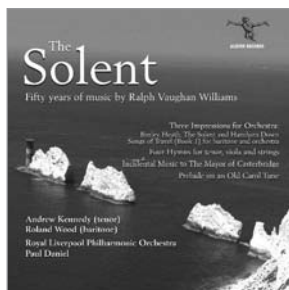
This release, with works separated by more than a century, attempts to address the quest for a British national identity. Whether it answers the question or not, there is wonderful music here. I commend it to you.

John Francis

**Vaughan Williams: Three Impressions for Orchestra; Three Songs of Travel (orch. composer) (a); Four Hymns (b); The Mayor of Casterbridge – Incidental Music; Prelude on an Old Carol Tune**

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra/Paul Daniel with (b) Andrew Kennedy (tenor); (a) Roland Wood (baritone); (b) Nicholas Bootiman (viola).

ALBION MUSIC ALBCD016



The past decade has seen the gradual rehabilitation (on disc) of numerous early pieces that Vaughan Williams discarded during his lifetime, enabling a more complete overview of his evolution than would until recently have been considered possible. This release continues the process – comprising a miscellany from across 50 years of the composer’s career and featuring three orchestral pieces that, taken in conjunction with the *Heroic Elegy and Triumphal Epilogue*, and *Serenade* and *Bucolic Suite* (both on Dutton), and the *Fantasy* for piano and orchestra (Somm), rounds out almost the entire picture of Vaughan Williams’s orchestral output prior to his embarking on *A Sea Symphony*.

Although presented here (and effective enough) as a self-contained group, the *Three Impressions* were actually conceived as two separate works: the first two were written during 1902-03 as part of a projected series of four pieces entitled *In the New Forest*, with the third begun in 1904 but seemingly not completed until 1907 as the first of two further descriptive pieces (the second of which, ‘Boldre Wood’, has vanished). What remains is a 25-minute sequence that confirms an innate identity with landscape and an ability to fuse this with more subjective emotion. ‘Burley Heath’ is an intermezzo recalling Sibelius’s lighter music, its whimsical central section framed by music of more ominous cast (the latter breaks off before the close and has been sensitively completed by James Francis Brown, who edited all three works for publication), while ‘Harnham Down’ – which saw performance in November 1907 under Emil von Reznicek – is an elegy whose uneasy interplay of modal and chromatic elements underlines the impasse at which the composer found himself around this time.

Most significant, though, is ‘The Solent’ – of which VW aficionados have been aware for many years, its initial clarinet reappearing on flugelhorn at the opening of the Ninth Symphony’s second movement

some 54 years later. As Stephen Connock points out in his extensive booklet note, the piece is prefaced with a quotation from the short-lived poet Philip Marston – suggesting this is music as much about resignation in the face of the unknowable as it is an evocation of the place in question. Certainly the initial alternation of clarinet and muted strings is as inspired as anything in its composer’s earlier output, while the restive central seascape and inward recollection of the opening maintain the quality of what is arguably his finest and certainly most personal orchestral work prior to the *Tallis Fantasia*. Unlike the pieces mentioned above, moreover, it warrants more than occasional revival and will hopefully take its place alongside *In the Fen Country* and *First Norfolk Rhapsody* as a composition by which Vaughan Williams is known to a wider concert-going audience.

The remainder of this disc is largely devoted to more familiar fare. What is described as ‘Book 1’ of the *Songs of Travel* (1904) is the first, third and eighth of the cycle – these being the only songs that were orchestrated by the composer (his amanuensis Roy Douglas orchestrating the rest after his death). The *Four Hymns* (1914) is likewise an arrangement of a set for voice, viola and piano – this latter being replaced by strings, the writing for which finds Vaughan Williams at his most imaginative. Roland Wood and Andrew Kennedy respectively do justice to some of the most appealing among his secular and sacred songs, the *Hymns* evincing an emotional fervency redolent of his choral works from the post-war era.

Wood also contributes a roistering account of the folk song *Weyhill Fair*, deployed here in the incidental music to a radio adaptation of Thomas Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1951), which is also receiving its first recording. Although too fragmentary as a concert proposition, the three short pieces (the last being a sequence of brief entr’actes) are nothing if not evocative of the novel and the composer was right to recycle them as the *Prelude on an Old Carol Tune* (1952) which enjoys occasional revival as one of his most arresting forays into lighter music; while not concealing that deeper and more ambivalent expression which makes this piece a pendant, indeed harbinger, of the deceptively ‘light’ Eighth Symphony.

Paul Daniel (whose VW credentials were established via his recordings of the First and Fourth Symphonies for Naxos) secures responsive and idiomatic playing from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, which is heard to advantage in spacious and wideranging sound. The comparisons above remain desirable (not least Richard Hickox’s account of the *Prelude* on an invaluable two-disc set of the composer’s shorter works), but the present disc is still a mandatory purchase for the *Three Impressions* and ‘The Solent’ in particular. It is a pity that the contemporaneous *Rhapsody* could not have been included here, leaving one to hope this will yet see the light of day on a future release from Albion Records.

Richard Whitehouse

*This review first appeared in the November 2013 edition of International Record Review and is reproduced here with their kind permission.*

I N T E R N A T I O N A L  
**RECORD REVIEW**

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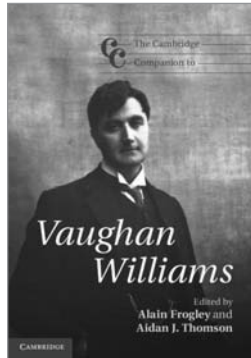
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# Book Reviews

## *The Cambridge Companion to Vaughan Williams*

Edited by Alain Frogley and Aidan J. Thomson.

Cambridge University Press, 2013, paperback, £19.99.



This book follows a similar format to *Vaughan Williams Studies* (C.U.P., 1996) but is much more inclusive. There are fourteen essays by acknowledged experts on the composer. Some of these also contributed to the previous volume, but on different topics so repetition is avoided. The book is divided into three parts.

Part 1 concentrates on Vaughan Williams's background, his education, beliefs, early musical development and his slow, almost accidental emergence as the foremost British composer of his time. I particularly enjoyed Byron Adams's contribution entitled "Vaughan Williams's musical apprenticeship". There are, perhaps, no new insights into the already well described periods of study with Parry and Stanford, and we know Vaughan Williams acknowledged later that he was unteachable. The six months with Max Bruch might have been a waste of time. Like Stanford, Bruch was a reactionary and quarrelsome, but a more genial teacher. He detested the use of parallel fifths and flattened sevenths, which the young composer so enjoyed. (Would we have had *The Lark Ascending* if Vaughan Williams had listened to his German mentor?) The period of study with Maurice Ravel was crucial, and Adams rightly highlights the importance of Ravel's influence on a composer who was at that time unsure of himself and his future. Adams is convinced that Ravel's most important contribution to Vaughan Williams's development was introducing him to the use of the octatonic series or scale, which, if I have got it right, involves using eight pitches in the octave, this, being one more than usual, allowing for innovation both in melody and in harmony. It was a method much used by Russian composers, Mussorgsky, Rimsky Korsakov, Borodin and others. The scale is used for moments of heightened emotion, which Ravel latched on to and introduced to Vaughan Williams. Adams gives several examples from the music both of Ravel and of Vaughan Williams to illustrate his point.

Part 2 collects seven essays under the umbrella of "Works by Genre", which together cover all the composer's major works. There are two chapters on the symphonies, with others on folk songs, hymns and sacred music, chamber music, concerti and choral works. Sophie Fuller's contribution, "The songs and shorter secular choral works", is interesting. She speculates that Vaughan Williams must have written for and participated in the Victorian and Edwardian drawing room and salon culture, and that this aspect of his art is often overshadowed by his later, large scale orchestral achievements. The early songs *Linden Lea* and *Silent Noon* are widely performed and recorded today, and there is an inference here that with their sensitive piano accompaniments they and other songs have a strong feminine

influence. The point is made that Vaughan Williams grew up in a largely female household and received his early musical education from his Aunt Sophy. One could perhaps take issue with the author's rather sweeping statement that "in his preference for the violin over the piano, he was, of course, moving away from the dangerously female world of piano playing." It is nevertheless a plausible theory, though he did persist with the piano in more "masculine" works such as the *Songs of Travel*. All the main songs and song cycles are discussed in an informative and well-researched piece.

Part 3 covers Vaughan Williams's writings, his activism as a public figure and his legacy. Jenny Doctor gives a fascinating history of the composer's love/hate relationship with the BBC, and the influence of his great friend and champion, Sir Adrian Boult, so vital in getting first performances and broadcasts of the composer's music. Michael Kennedy gives a detailed overview of the fluctuating critical reaction to Vaughan Williams's music from the turn of the century until his death. An often mixed reception, with the public and critical response to the Sixth Symphony being, in the author's opinion, "the zenith of his whole career". The chapter has numerous quotes from the major critics of the times, including the withering critique by Donald Mitchell in 1955 which dismissed Vaughan Williams's music as passé and poorly composed. We are reminded also that the most constant and severe critic was the composer himself. With hindsight, Kennedy shows that Mitchell was wrong and "the immense surge in interest in his music in 2008" attests to the composer's lasting international appeal. In the final chapter co-editor Thompson separately interviews four British composers, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Anthony Payne, Nicola LeFanu and Piers Hellawell. Each is given the same set of questions. Their replies are very interesting, and all in their own way pay homage to their great predecessor. Certainly, to judge from the answers given, this generation of British composers ranks Vaughan Williams amongst the greatest of twentieth-century composers.

In summary, although this book flows well, my feeling is that as with any "Companion", many will want to dip into individual chapters over time. It is an excellent reference tool for the Vaughan Williams enthusiast, but not perhaps an introduction to those unfamiliar with the composer, which I doubt was the editors' intention.

*Robin Barber*

[Editor's note: I'd like to take the opportunity of adding three points to Robin Barber's excellent review.

First, members might remember the ill-fated quiz, aired in *Journal* No. 56. One of the Vaughan Williams-related quotes came from Mahler and Britten authority, Donald Mitchell. The quote was dated 1965, but reading Robin's review makes it clear that Mitchell's opinion of Vaughan Williams's music had already been formulated ten years earlier.

Second, writing in the Introduction to this book about the upsurge in scholarly publications about and performances of Vaughan Williams's music, the joint editors make the following gratifying observation: "The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, founded in 1994, has been a vital agent of activism and fund-raising for a number of these projects, some of which have appeared on disc under its Albion Records imprint (the Society also publishes a lively journal)."

Third, *The Cambridge Companion to Vaughan Williams* is dedicated to the memory of Ursula Vaughan Williams and Richard Hickox.]

## From the Vice-Chairman

I am standing in for the Chairman because she is expecting her first child in February. I cannot tell you whether it will be a boy or a girl. I cannot tell you whether it will be a founder of festivals or a performer of sonatas and concertos. Most importantly, I cannot foresee what Rupert and Em, the owners of dogs named Aethelwulf and Krishna, will elect to call their first-born. What I can predict is that all readers of the *Journal* will join me in wishing them well at this exciting time.

In the meantime, the Society goes from strength to strength in almost every respect. The music of Ralph Vaughan Williams is, I believe, more loved and more widely known than at any time in the last fifty years. The Classic FM audience have consistently placed his music in the upper reaches of their pantheon of greatness, orchestras are programming the symphonies and British conductors are taking them abroad on a regular basis.

Our own efforts are bearing fruit. Albion Records garners consistently good reviews for CDs which have unearthed hitherto unrecorded gems. Companies such as Dutton, Somm and Naxos have brought forward early and late works for premiere recordings – pride of place must surely go to the Dutton disc which includes the *Serenade in A* and *Dark Pastoral*. The English Music Festival, directed by our Chairman, continues to feature Vaughan Williams works unperformed for far too long, if at all. Our website is widely regarded as one of the best amongst those of the composer societies, and our regular email newsletters keep members informed. Our newly appointed Concert Resources Officer will be encouraging music societies, festivals and music schools to bring English music to ever wider audiences. Our *Journal* is a source of both scholarship and practical guidance on many aspects of English music in general and Vaughan Williams in particular. Our relationship with the newly re-opened National Trust property, Leith Hill Place, is flourishing; Vaughan Williams's boyhood home is already attracting large numbers of visitors. Our team of officers provides answers to the many questions which members and others continually fire at us.

I hinted earlier at the existence of a problem. Our membership is not growing at the rate which we should like to see. It has been hovering around the 1000 mark for some time, and does not reflect the growing interest in Vaughan Williams's music which other evidence clearly shows. New applications for membership only keep pace with losses from various causes. We shall be mounting recruitment drives in the coming months, but in the meantime, *Journal* readers could assist by encouraging their friends and families to join. The cost of membership is excellent value, and will help us to maintain our many activities, particularly the *Journal* and Albion Records.

Looking ahead to the next few months, we can anticipate further releases from Albion Records. Although Vaughan Williams's major works are all now available on CD, there are still a number of shorter works which we are planning to put on disc. The next release will feature violin and piano versions of *The Lark Ascending* and the Violin Concerto, while a disc of organ music can be expected before too long. It is too early to say whether it will be possible to record the complete works, but we are making steady progress towards that end.

May I wish all readers of the *Journal* a happy and musically rewarding 2014.

*Simon Coombs*

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