

Journal of the RVW Society

No. 6 June 1996

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plus news and reviews

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REGIONAL CHAIRMEN NOW SOUGHT FOR SOCIETY'S CONTINUED GROWTH

With the RVW Society's membership progressing towards its target of 1,000 in 1997/98, the time is now right for the introduction of a regional organisation both in the UK, and overseas.

Nominations are sought for up to nine *Regional Chairman* positions for the UK covering Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and, in England, the North, Midlands, South-West, South-East, London and East Anglia.

Overseas, up to four Chairmen will be sought for each region in which we have significant membership: (i) U.S.A., (ii) Canada, (iii) Europe and (iv) Australia.

Regional Chairmen will be welcome to attend meetings of the Trustees and stand for one year terms (renewable) in the first instance. Elections will be held if there is more than one candidate for each region.

Role of Regional Chairman

Regional Chairmen will co-ordinate activities on behalf of the Society within their area. They will act as the focal point for furthering appreciation of the life and music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Meetings of members on a regional basis will be encouraged, and such networks will in turn organise talks, concerts, sponsorship and other events. Recruitment of new members will also be a priority.

High Standards

The RVW Society seeks to maintain the highest possible standards of professionalism in support of its aims. Regional Chairmen must be prepared to maintain these high standards, and to act at all times within the rules of the Society.

Nominations should be sent to Robin Barber in good time for formal consideration at the AGM on 5th October 1996.

Full Details of the AGM on page 2



Photograph © Gerry Murray

The RNCM's production of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Igor Kennaway's article appears on page 10.

AGM Details in full

All Members should reserve Saturday, 5th October, 1996 in their diary for the Society's second AGM followed by an evening concert. The AGM and concert will be held at the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, adjacent to the Barbican Concert Hall. Our Guest-of-Honour this year is Professor Wilfrid Mellers who will discuss the operas of Vaughan Williams. The concert includes *On Wenlock Edge* and folk songs such as the poignant *Captain's Apprentice*.

The detailed programme is as shown in the adjacent box:

The performers will be Martyn Hill (tenor), with the Quartet of the City of London Sinfonia and Susan Tomes (piano).

Attendance at the AGM is free. Members will be required to pay £10 each for the concert. Those members requiring a ticket should fill in the leaflet enclosed in the Journal and send it with a cheque and SAE to Robin Barber. The same form should be used to indicate whether refreshments, at £5 per person, are required. Alternatively, tickets will be available at the door on the day. **Members are urged to support the AGM and concert.** Papers and resolutions for the AGM will be sent to members direct.

15.30	Coffee
16.00	Annual General Meeting
17.00	Formal launch of <i>Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams</i>
17.15	Guest-of-Honour: Professor Wilfrid Mellers
18.15	Refreshments
19.30	Evening Concert:
	Six Studies in English Folk Song (arranged for cello and piano)
	Folk Songs from East Anglia:
	Captain's Apprentice
	Geordie
	On board a '98
	Four Hymns for tenor, viola and piano

INTERVAL

Greensleeves (arranged for violin and piano)
Three songs from Songs of Travel:
The Vagabond
Let beauty awake
The Roadside Fire
On Wenlock Edge

The concert will end at approximately 21.15

A Very Special Recording...

Lydia Mordkovitch and Julian Milford's recording of Vaughan Williams' works for violin and piano, including *The Lark Ascending*, is the first CD of VW's music directly inspired by the RVW Society.

Lydia Mordkovitch is well known to lovers of British music for her recordings on Chandos. The Dyson and Moeran Concertos are highlights, as are Ireland's chamber works and the Alwyn *Violin Concerto*. The VW recordings were made in May 1995 at Forde Abbey near Chard in Somerset. It was the first time Lydia had recorded Vaughan Williams. She found the music "very

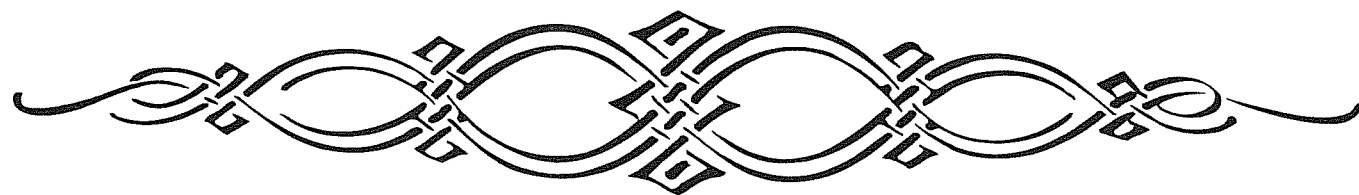


special", and told Stephen Connock that she was in tears at the end of the

recording of *The Lark Ascending*. "I found such beauty in this music, especially the lyrical 6 *Studies in English Folk Song*. Yet there was another side of Vaughan Williams' character revealed in the *Violin Sonata*. Most memorable of all was *The Lark Ascending*. I performed it at the Wigmore Hall where the reaction of the audience was remarkable. It is a beautiful but also, to me, a poignant work. I would love to play it in Russia, my home country, where I feel sure it would make a great impact".

Let us hope that Lydia records the orchestral version of *The Lark Ascending* as well as the *Violin Concerto*.

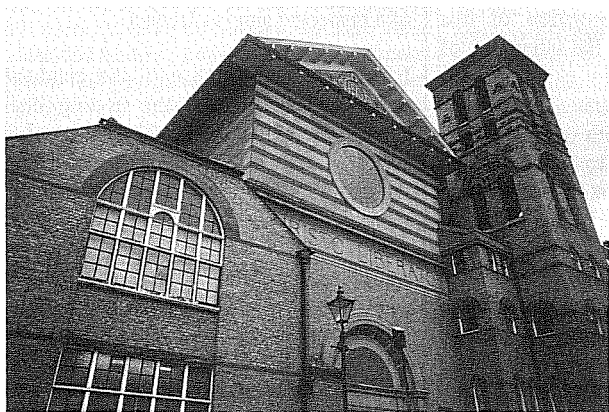
A Celebration for Ursula



A special concert has been organised to celebrate both Ursula Vaughan Williams' 85th birthday year and the publication by the RVW Society of her *Collected Poems*.

The celebration concert on 14th November 1996, is part of the Clerkenwell Music Series 1996 held at the Church of Our Most Holy Redeemer, Exmouth Market in Clerkenwell, London. The annual Festival began in 1994, and is planned by the composer Roger Steptoe, who is a close friend of Ursula Vaughan Williams. In 1994, the Festival included Vaughan Williams' *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* (reviewed by Stephen Connock in RVWS Journal No. 1). This year, VW's *String Quartet No. 2 in A minor* is programmed for 4th November, whilst *Tallis and Silence and Music* are included in the celebration on the 14th. Full details are shown in the adjacent box. For further information contact:

Oswald Guerra y Vilar
Administrator, 1996 Clerkenwell Music Series
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Sussex
PO19 1PR



Church of our Most Holy Redeemer,
Exmouth Market, Clerkenwell, London, EC1

THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 1996

7.30 PM

**A concert in honour of the 85th birthday year of
Ursula Vaughan Williams**
in association with the RVW Society

**Musica Ficta, Copenhagen
New London Orchestra
Bo Holten conductor**

**Madrigals from Denmark and England
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)**
Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

Bo Holten (born 1948) Tallis Variations
for chorus and nine solo strings (UK premiere)

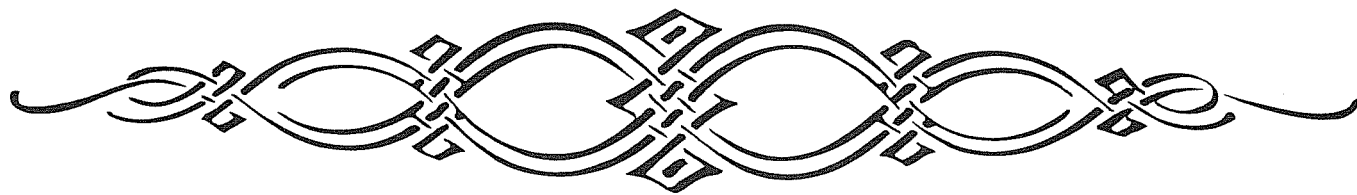
Ralph Vaughan Williams *Silence and Music*
for unaccompanied chorus (to words by
Ursula Vaughan Williams)

Thomas Tallis (1505-1585) Choral music
Niels Gade (1817-1890) *Two Novellettes*
for strings

This concert honours the eighty-fifth birthday year of poet, biographer, librettist and novelist, Ursula Vaughan Williams, whose late husband's music is featured in this special Clerkenwell Music Series tribute.

The concert also celebrates the launching of *The Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams*, as well as bringing together for the first time works by RVW and Bo Holten; both pieces being inspired by the music of the great sixteenth-century English composer, Thomas Tallis.

A number of poems by Ursula Vaughan Williams were set to music by her husband, and as a small token, the Danish chamber choir, Musica Ficta, include *Silence and Music* in their birthday tribute.



Concert Reviews

Pastoral at the RFH

Andrew Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra have reached *A Pastoral Symphony* in their performance and recording of the complete VW symphonies. The Royal Festival Hall on 26 March 1996 had a reasonable turnout for a concert which also included Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 27 in B flat major K 595* and Takemitsu's *Toward the Sea 11*.

The *Pastoral* can be a difficult work to perform, the one slight disappointment in Richard Hickox's recent cycle at the Barbican. No reservations about this performance, however. Despite a few moments of insecurity from the orchestra, for example from the first horn, the BBCSO was in impressive form for its principal conductor with beautifully controlled string playing in particular. The off-stage natural trumpet solo was superbly performed by Gareth Bimson in the second movement and there was a most delicate, scurrying *coda* to the third movement.

It is the *lento* final movement which brought the most satisfying interpretation. Quintessential VW, it is music which can be unbearably poignant as Vaughan Williams' response to war, and the pity of war, is fully realised. Patricia Rozario was a moving soloist, located in the Grand Tier, above most of the audience, beyond sight. This gave an even more ethereal feel to this haunting solo. The subsequent woodwind and string passages were gloriously expressive.

Recordings do not always match the quality of the performance, as Haitink's *Fifth Symphony* demonstrates. Let us hope Andrew Davis can repeat, in the studio, what he achieved this night.

Stephen Connock

The Sixth Symphony of Vaughan Williams in Brussels

The concert of 26th October 1995, held in the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, was a major event. The second part of the programme was the *Sixth Symphony* of Vaughan Williams, interpreted by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Liège, conducted by Jonathan Darlington. It was an event because, to my knowledge, it was the first time that this symphony was played in the Belgian capital. It was also an event because those who were lucky to attend the concert will certainly never forget it.

The Philharmonic orchestra of Liège is undoubtedly the best in Belgium. The in-depth work carried out by its manager, Pierre Bartholomée (who is also a composer), has raised the orchestra to the highest level, which is acknowledged by a recent recording, the world creation of the *Sixth Symphony* of Tournemire. The features of this orchestra are panache and precision (as the very successful Mahler concerts prove it).

In the first part, the Overture of the *Gazza ladra* by Rossini and the *first concerto for piano* by Chopin (soloist: Abdel Rahman El Bacha) have scored no more than a good average. The guest conductor, Jonathan Darlington, seemed to conduct the orchestra rather casually. The introduction in the programme shows that this young conductor has a diploma from the University of Durham and from the Royal Academy of Music of London. At the piano he started his career by accompanying singers like Peter Pears and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. He worked for Radio-France and the Opera of Nancy, he worked with Boulez, Messiaen and Riccardo Muti. Assistant to Myung-Whun Chung at the Opera Bastille in Paris, he was appointed in 1991 musical co-ordinator at the Opera Garnier. He regularly conducts in the festival of Aldeburgh, at the English Touring Opera and at the Opera of Lausanne.

In Vaughan Williams, Darlington was obviously performing in familiar grounds. He gave to the *Sixth Symphony* of Vaughan Williams an irresistible impetus and impulse. Aware of the rhythm, the colour and the balance of the musical masses, he gave an impressive interpretation of this work by enhancing clearly the intentions of the composer and mainly by enabling each instrument required by the musical score to give the full measure of its qualities. The *Sixth Symphony* conducted by him has taken an extraordinary dimension, a precise and vibrant relief. The impact of the work on the public was revealing: no doubt many listeners who were not familiar with the music of Vaughan Williams, so unknown in Belgium, will have discovered one of the major composers of our century.

**Jean Lacroix
Brussels**

A Sea Symphony in Chester Cathedral

4th May 1996 (with Bax *Tintagel* and Finzi *Requiem da Camera*) - Liverpool Sinfonietta, Chester Choral Society, Stephen

Roberts baritone, Julie Kennard soprano, Conductor: Graham Gordon Ellis

Chester is a queer place - perched on the very brink of Wales and boasting of being the soft underbelly of the north, its strong musical tradition (Boult was born here) draws on both the choral tradition of Wales and the "by 'eck" brass of the north-west. This concert typified these strengths. The Liverpool Sinfonietta, an ad hoc semi-professional small orchestra may lack discipline in its strings, but the reeds, trumpets and trombones are first class. Similarly the male voices of the Chester Choral Society, modest and unassuming, are superb - their female colleagues tonally sure, if a little less confident in their timing.

Chester Cathedral has a reverberation problem, fortuitously covering the thin string sound, and the conductor Graham Gordon Ellis made use of the power of the huge sandstone spaces to great effect in the *tutti* - the brass sending shivers up many an unsuspecting spine.

Tintagel, a busy piece, became unfocussed by the acoustic, and the Finzi *Requiem* was let down by a wobbly horn, but *A Sea Symphony* was excellent. I could listen to Stephen Roberts all day - his exquisitely sensitive phrasing in both the Finzi solo 'August 1914' and in 'On the beach at night alone' (my personal favourite among the RVW canon) were deeply moving - he is a singer who knows how to use vibrato as ornamentation, and never allowed it to cloy the sense or meaning of the words - a rare quality nowadays.

The excellent brass and percussion pointed the climaxes of the first section. The chorus handled the complex chords of *winds piping and blowing* with ease and the soprano Julie Kennard deftly slid down the full range in a *pennant universal* with the technical mastery of a respected singing teacher.

I can only take issue with the conducting over one small point: the ironing out of some dotted rhythms in the *vast similitude* section - otherwise Mr. Ellis seemed totally in control, and conducted with a well marked-out beat that enabled the choir to make light work of the *scherzo* - a notoriously difficult piece.

I have always found the last section with its false endings a little too long - in this, the performance fared as well as any I've seen, the fortissimos towards the end bringing life back to those numbed by hard cathedral seats.

Judging by the concert the Chester Choral Society, who are celebrating 50 years of singing, have a future assured - and Mr. Roberts an unabashed fan.

Simon Crutchley

A Voyage of Discovery

by John Birkhead

I cannot remember when I first knew that I liked the music of Vaughan Williams. I can remember taking part in *A Sea Symphony* when I was at Trinity College of Music in 1971 and I seem to recollect that I have known and loved the *Tallis Fantasia* even longer. Later on I discovered that the more I heard of his music, the more I wanted to hear and so I began on a very exciting voyage of discovery, and even now I have not heard all his music, and I am still finding things new in the works that I already know and love.

What is it about Vaughan Williams that sets his music apart and makes it so very different from any other composer, English or otherwise? Speaking for myself, I find in his music a quality of mysticism and spirituality that I find in no other composer, not even Beethoven. As these are my own opinions I am hoping that readers may be stimulated to reply. I find that far from being peculiarly English, Elgar is really in the main-stream of 19th century romantic music, very much in the R Strauss mould. Of course he wrote wonderful music, but how much of it can you really call "English"? I think only the great viola tune in the *Introduction and Allegro* could be called "English", or even perhaps "Welsh"! I don't even think the slow movements of the symphonies, wonderful as they are, are particularly "English" in feeling. I put the *Cello Concerto* in a separate class as it seems to me to be the most personal of all Elgar's works. As for Britten, he is also not particularly English either, though I like his early music very much. However, both composers seem to lack this visionary aspect in their music that is so conspicuously present in Vaughan Williams' music. I think you can best hear this by listening to the slow movement of Elgar's *First Symphony*, surely one of the greatest slow movements, but in the tradition of Beethoven, and then listening to the slow movement of Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony* or the slow movement of the *Fifth*. You are immediately transported to a totally different world, a different time almost. This really is music at one and the same time ancient and modern. I think it reaches back even beyond Tallis to something that appeals to the English peoples' subconscious, as something that we have known from the very beginning. I don't know if this makes sense, and it may be impossible to put into words exactly what I mean, but I am sure that all of us who love Vaughan Williams' music know what I am trying to say. You can hear a similar effect in Gregorian chant, in the slow movement of Schubert's wonderful and sublime *String Quintet in C*; in Beethoven's last string quartets and parts of the *Ninth Symphony* and the *Missa Solemnis* and surprisingly perhaps, in the wonderful *Vespers* of Rachmaninov. However, I think that Vaughan Williams was a true visionary and as such is unique in music. I don't mean that he was a religious composer, although he used Biblical texts quite a lot, but that he was a spiritual composer in the way that Verdi was and Beethoven too. (All three seem to have been agnostics but that didn't seem to stop them producing some of the greatest religious music ever written. I think they saw the truth beyond religion).

"Fifth is his greatest work"

I find it very difficult to say which of Vaughan Williams' works I like the best. Amongst the symphonies I love the *London* the most, but I think the *Fifth* is possibly, or probably, his greatest work. The *Pastoral* I think is his most original work and the *Sixth* the most enigmatic. I love the *Eighth Symphony* which shows a side of Vaughan Williams he rarely displayed. I believe the *Fourth* to be untypical of him, just as the *Seventh Symphony* of Dvorak is untypical of him. But both are great works. However, the more I listen to *Job*, the more I incline to the belief that this is his masterpiece. It seems to combine the ferocity of the *Fourth Symphony* and the other-worldliness of the *Fifth* and to be one of the great works of the 20th century, indeed of any century. As for the shorter works, they are among my all-time favourites. I have just discovered the *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* and what a work this is! Absolutely sublime, and, of course, I have known and loved the *Serenade to Music* for years. This work seems to me to be the greatest setting of Shakespeare by any composer. I could go on about *In the Fen Country*, the *Norfolk Rhapsody* etc, etc but I am sure I am talking to the converted!

Antiphonal style

There is one aspect of recorded Vaughan Williams I find very difficult to live with. I like to follow the music I am listening to with a score, and it is so obvious that modern recordings do a disservice to Vaughan Williams by having all the violins on the left hand side. If you follow *A London Symphony* you will see that the first and second violins are often written in an antiphonal style as it were, which is totally lost by having them side by side. (In the same way the last movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique Symphony* never sounds right. It may not be too well-known that he scored the main subject of this movement to be split NOTE FOR NOTE between the first and second violins. You can hear what it should sound like if you listen to a recording made by Pletnev). In the same way, if you have any of the recordings made by Sir Adrian Boult, or the newish recording made by Barry Wordsworth and the New Queen's Hall Orchestra, you will hear what I mean. This may seem a trivial point, but I think it has a lot of bearing on his music, especially in the light of the fact that he is often accused of being a poor orchestrator. I wonder what other readers and members of the Society think? Another thought occurs to me. Have you noticed just how many composers played the viola? Bach, Mozart (who adored the instrument), Beethoven, Schubert, Dvorak and Vaughan Williams. I wonder why? Of course, you cannot help but notice just how "right" the sound of the viola is in the solos he allots it, in the *Norfolk Rhapsody* and *A London Symphony*. And when it comes to "original" tunes, surely one of the very greatest is the tune in the overture to *The Wasps*?

Recordings

As far as recorded versions go, how lovely to see so much of his music now on CD. At least 7

symphony cycles, 3 *Jobs* etc, etc. My choice of the symphonies would be for Handley, but I rate the early Previn cycle with the LSO, made between 1968-72 as very good also, especially in the slow movements, with wonderful pianissimo playing. I think the best *Sea Symphony* is

Haitink's, though none of the soprano soloists on any of the sets seems to me to have enough power, perhaps an Eva Turner is called for? It is a shame that the Boult/EMI cycle is not available as the fill-ups (*The Lark Ascending*, etc) are probably the best versions recorded. I have put my address at the end of this article as I do have a very large library of "live" recorded music, all on reel-reel, including the complete cycle given by Hickox in the Barbican last year. I have 4 other versions of the *Fifth Symphony*, including what is, to me, one of the very greatest I have heard, given by Rattle last year. I also have *On Wenlock Edge* and *Job* on a CD (nla) with Richard Lewis and the LPO/Boult given in the RFH on 12/10/72. I also have on video the performances that Andrew Davis gave during the Proms of 1994, of the *Serenade to Music* and *Dives and Lazarus*. The last in particular, despite a balloon bursting, is absolutely ravishing. I have given a copy of all my Vaughan Williams recordings to the Vaughan Williams Society library, but if anybody wants to get in touch with me to see what I have got and what other music I have, they are more than welcome.

Like Beethoven

To sum up my feelings for the music of this extraordinary man (who seems to me to be very like Beethoven in his outlook) I find in it a quality of spirituality not found in any other composer. Of music at once timeless and modern. He once said that a composer (or anybody) had to be true to themselves. Of all the composers I know (with the exception of Beethoven) surely he was above all true to himself.

John Birkhead
19 Nevill Lodge, Fendale Close
Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 3RP

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URSULA VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Our interest in Ursula Vaughan Williams continues with a listing of her work which has been set to music, a brief autobiographical note written by Ursula for the Society, two more unpublished poems and one of her very finest poems - *Penelope*.

An Autobiographical Note

I started writing as a child. After marriage I began to publish poems which were accepted by The Adelphi, Everybody's, Time and Tide, the Spectator and other papers. I sent a collection to Basil Blackwood and he published my first book in 1941, and subsequently two others in 1943 and 1948. This was followed by "Wandering Pilgrimage" No. X of Poems in Pamphlet.

In 1958 I was introduced to a partner in Hutchinsons and he said he would like to do a volume of my work, but under the name of Vaughan Williams. I pointed out that my work always had Michael's name - Wood - and that I had a small but known name. He did not defer and I did not feel that I could protest further at that time of Ralph's death. So I agreed - very unhappily. My book sold about 500 copies in the first year and when I asked if they were going to sell any more they said "Oh, they were destroyed during our move"! I asked for another book to replace the first one and they refused.

I had done two works - a libretto for the schools music - Sons of Light - and one for the Queen's coronation - a part song and a song for Lechery in "Pilgrim" for Vaughan Williams. After that, Elizabeth Maconchy asked for a libretto for a one act opera and following that, other composers asked me to do libretti. I had a busy time writing Ralph's biography - it was finished in 1963 and published in 1964. Then a composer suggested that I should write a novel. He dared me to do it and I did, followed by another. Both were published by Duckworth. Because I was so busy writing libretti, songs for various composers, and was also involved in many other things, including committee meetings, I did not write another book until John Bishop asked me to write one and then another publisher asked for a new novel. Both were published in 1984.

I have worked for 32 composers - some stage works, some for short songs - some came back and asked for more and others discovered works in print. So that is a summary of my work and I have enjoyed doing it. I have read my works in England, Portugal and America and have found it an interesting job.

Sent to the RVW Society on 5 February 1996

DREAMS - (unpublished)

i. The Rose Hedge

I saw the growing hedge
a myth of rose and thorn,
one side shone with sunlit day
where we had been for ever.
When the leaves parted
for my unwilling way
you stayed shadowless, alone,
as I returned to night
holding this shred of memory
like grassblade or a flower.

iii. Landscape

Bastions of rock were certainly a city
unlit and distant on the cliffs of night,
clouds, defined by movement, blowing
above a plain of lesser stones and boulders
where fear should have inhabited with space and silence.
I was alone, clothed in exhalation
as if all wishes and all hopes were found
as if, in that wide darkness, I was light.

ii. The Weeping Man

The weeping man I could not comfort
might not tell his grief.
Because I held him in my arms
my sorrow found relief.

THE ECHO - (unpublished)

When you were young
you would not love me.
I was your danger,
hawk to your songbird,
hound to your hare,
heron when you swam, silver as water,
changing disguises you could not lose me.

Now, when you choose me,
claiming allegiance
wrapped in your age,
flesh fails beauty,
disguise completed
pursuit defeated,
I cannot answer,
nor will I speak of love to a stranger.

WORK WITH COMPOSERS

Ursula Vaughan Williams has kindly provided this list of compositions which set her words to music

(USA)	Byron Adams	Nocturne St Cecilia The Changed Landscape
(USA)	Ronald Arnath Howard Boatwright David Barlow (One Act Opera) Charles Camillici (One Act Opera) Gerald Finzi Helen Glatz	From Joy to Fire David & Bethsheba Melita Muses and Graces Trees - and others
(USA)	Francis Heilbat Alun Hodinott	Street Scene Lady & Unicorn The Silver Hound Ode to St Cecilia Stars and Shadows Spring Cantata Variations Autumnal The Sofa Break to be built A Winter Bath Pastimes Cenotaph King Frost Jacob and the Angel Vision & Echo Canterbury Morning The Silver Hound Aspects (several poems) Ainsi le bon temps regretton The Inheritor - with tenor & quartet Echoes Insect Play (Greenwood & Paradise (Seasons & Loves Toussaint l'Overture Serenade The Old Women/Julia & Simonetta Aspects The Inheritor The Looking Glass Five Rondels King of Macedon Compassion From Joy to Fire Lady and Unicorn The Voyager? Man's Music is the Music of the Seasons For Music Sons of Light Silence and Music Four Last Songs (2 pieces in Hodie) Lord Lechery (Pilgrim) For Music The Icy Mirror The Brilliant & the Dark
	Herbert Howells Brian Hughes (One Act Opera) Terence James Elizabeth Lutyens	
	Elizabeth Maconchy (One Act Opera) Anthony Milner Ralph Nicholson	
	Tony Noakes Alan Ridout (translation) (incorporating Umbrian Text - St Francis)	
	Betty Roe (One Act Opera)	
	Patric Standford	
	Ronald Senator (Children's opera) (after Capek: Opera) (With original French medieval poems and translation)	
	Anthony Scott (One Act Opera)	
	Roger Steptoe	
(USA)	Phyllis Tate Laurence Taylor	(Opera)
	Roy Teed	
	RVW	
	Malcolm Williamson (Choral Symphony) (Opera - Pageant)	

I think there are a few others who did approach me, but I heard no more.

Ursula Vaughan Williams

(Editor's Note: One of the composers featured above - Tony Noakes - has contributed the article on VW and Delius on page 20).

PENELOPE

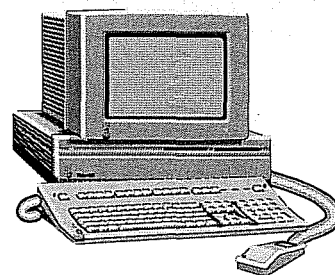
Certain parting does not wait its hour
for separation; too soon the shadow lies
upon the heart and chokes the voice, its power
drives on the minutes, it implies
tomorrow while today's still here.

They sat by firelight and his shadow fell
for the last time, she thought, black patterning gold
sharp on the firelit wall. So, to compel
the evening to outlast the morning's cold
dawn by the quayside and the unshed tears,

she took a charred twig from the hearth and drew
the outline of his shadow on the wall.
'These were his features, this the hand I knew.'
She heard her voice saying the words through all
the future days of solitude and fear.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

NET PAGE



Information on Vaughan Williams is appearing on the Internet, including a 'Vaughan Williams Home Page'. The following article by Stephen Schwartz, and reprinted here with his permission, is a typical example of information available to those able to search the Internet.

SYMPHONY No. 5 in D

A Guide

Introduction

This symphony consists largely of fragments from VW's then-unfinished opera, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In his late 60s and early 70s when he began the *Fifth*, VW was to some extent impelled by the possibility that he might not finish the opera and hated to waste good ideas. I'll try to point out the symphony's musical connections to the opera (I'll undoubtedly miss some), where it seems relevant. In general, however, the symphony's musical themes bear only a very abstract relation to the opera. One can't say that the symphony has a specific program, although VW once affixed a quote (later removed) from Bunyan himself to the opening of the slow third movement.

The symphony is in the "usual" four movements: a "Preludio" first movement; Scherzo; a "Romanza" slow movement; a "Passacaglia" finale. These correspond (sort of) to a sonata-allegro first movement, scherzo, song-form slow movement, and rondo finale of the classical symphony. We will of course find differences which provide insight into some of VW's symphonic methods.

Note: To provide further help, I will give timings indicating where the large pieces begin. I use the Boult recording on EMI.

First Movement: Preludio

I think we can instructively compare the structure of the first movement of this symphony to the sonata-allegro of a classical symphony.

Classical:

1. Statement (exposition) of the first subject group
2. Exposition of the second subject group
3. Development
4. Recapitulation and optional coda

VW follows this model as closely as he ever did:

1. Exposition of the first subject group
2. Exposition of the second subject group
3. Shortened development of one theme from 1st group and one sort of from the 2nd
4. Recap of the first subject group
5. Extended recap of the second subject group
6. Coda

Most of the departures come from the fact that you distinguish the parts of a sonata-allegro through key changes. The problem is that modern music changes key (or "modulates") far more often than the classical model. How then does one perceive the structural parts?

VW, from the opening measures, puts key and structure into doubt. Long stretches of this symphony are simultaneously in two keys - C and D. The bass line is in C, the opening horn call in D. (He wrote in more than one key in other works as well; see "Flos Campi," from the 20s). Is the bass a dissonance to the horns (a flatted 7th, for you aficionados) or the horns to the bass (an augmented 4th, or "tritone")? For a considerable time, VW himself could not decide the movement's key (he settled for D). Indeed, an examination of the score reveals lots more dissonances than the average 18th- or 19th-century symphony, something that you'd probably expect anyway. Yet the movement, for the most part, sounds serene, with a sinister undertone that barely breaks the surface. Much of this softening comes from VW's orchestration: he tends to work in distinct "planes" of sound. In the opening measures, for example, the low cellos and basses are separated from the higher horns in range and sound color.

The opening is magic. It's as if the symphony doesn't begin: we merely happen upon a continual song. Contrast this with the definite start of Beethoven's "Eroica." From the very beginning, the outlines of VW's forms are hazier.

Even more important to the sound of the movement is VW's fondness for modal, mainly pentatonic (the black notes of the piano played as a scale) themes. I could go into technical reasons why such devices weaken the sense of tonality (for a good discussion of this, see Charles Rosen's introduction to *The Classical Style*), but I'd prefer to concentrate on what you hear. For now, just accept it as a fact, or read Rosen.

Given the weak tonality, how does VW make the movement cohere? One answer is through motivic and rhythmic contrast. A roadmap to the movement follows:

Exposition of the first subject group (0:00):

- a. A horn call with a distinctive dotted rhythm, associated in the opera with the Celestial City
- b. A rising answer on the high strings
- c. A cadential figure beginning and ending on C in the cellos and basses (0:19)
- d. Slightly later (0:41), a descending theme on the violins.

All these themes are combined, often in canon. The rhythm of the horn call hardly ever leaves the texture. In fact, this symphony shows great contrapuntal resource throughout, although not as flashy as in the *Fourth Symphony*. The exposition is repeated and varied (1:12). In the course of this section VW modulates to some rather distant keys, and yet the harmonies feel almost stable. This I believe due to the isolation of the texture into separate planes of sound, mentioned earlier.

The horn call leads to a radiant E major and the second subject group (3:19):

- e. A chorale theme (VW's hymn tune "Sine Nomine" disguised), from the "House Beautiful" scene (accompanying the Interpreter's "An open door shall be set before thee and no man may shut it")
- f. A subordinate "Dresden Amen" (C D F E D C) figure
- g. A descending minor 3rd (Eb Db C), associated with the words

(continued overleaf)

"Beelzebub" in the opera. It appears at the very end of the second exposition.

This is a more, song-like section, with a stronger sense of closure. Toward the end, the music darkens with a slightly sinister version of the horn call (a) (4:34) in the bassoons. This leads to the "Beelzebub" 3rd (g) (4:50).

Motive (c) leads to an extended quick section (5:10) based on (c), (g), and a moto perpetuo scurrying in the strings (sinister mice) based on (d). This section, fairly short, takes the place of the classical development.

Around 7:05, it winds down to the horn call and the first subject group for a last extended go-round leading to a glorious outburst of the "Sine Nomine" and "Dresden Amen" (8:13). VW plays with the second group longer than at first, and the section winds down with (d) (9:22). The "Beelzebub" theme starts (9:45), but gets cut to a semitone, thus showing an unexpected relationship with the horn call - its dark reflection.

At 10:21, the horn call returns, and we are into the coda, which works mainly with (a) and (d), until the movement fades into the distance. It hasn't ended so much as simply left us behind.

Second Movement - 'Scherzo

Music history books will tell you that the Beethoven scherzo took over from the minuet and trio movement of the classical symphony. This is true enough, but not really the whole story. At any rate, both the scherzo and the minuet work by playing off two main sets of ideas. In addition, Haydn works a variation by having a minuet with *two* trios. So now you know that a trio is a section that contrasts to the minuet or scherzo. Why is it called a trio? Originally, the contrasting section was written in three parts, fewer than the minuet or scherzo itself, frequently (in Lully, for example) for two oboes and bassoon. You can find a really good, well-known example of this in the last movement of the Bach *First Brandenburg Concerto*. Anyway, the section usually supplied a lighter contrast, but by the modern period this was simply generalised to "the contrasting section." It didn't have to be more lightly scored. Certainly, this is not the case with VW's movement. In fact, the climax of the movement occurs in a trio.

The classical composer laid out the scherzo with 2 trios in the following way:

- Scherzo (usually in triple time, by the way)
- Trio 1 (sometimes in duple time)
- Scherzo

- Trio 2
- Scherzo

This is known schematically as A B A C (or B') A. VW elides this to A B A (truncated) C B'.

Again, the movement seems to start from nowhere out of rising 4ths. These lead to a rollicking theme (0:20), which tends to insist on a minor 3rd and which you actually get slightly earlier in a subordinate part (0:14). The passage dissolves into the rising 4ths again (0:40), treated imitatively. At 0:50, VW repeats the section.

At 1:01, you'll hear what might be described as a woodwind raspberry or, more politely, as bagpipe skirls. These will serve in the movement much like the rising 4ths as heralds of a new section. In this case, however, the skirls give way to the rising 4ths (1:48) which announce the first trio.

Out of a transitional minor-3rd theme comes a chordal, chorale-like motive (1:57). VW elaborates on this for a while. The passage dissolves into rising 4ths, again treated imitatively (3:05), which mark the return of the rollicking scherzo (3:23).

The scherzo gets cut short after about 10 seconds, with the intrusion of the bagpipe skirls (3:35), introducing a duple-time second trio, with attempts to re-establish triple time (3:55, 4:07) along the way. Eventually, the trio dies to embers, leading to variants of the chorale and the rising 4ths (4:23). Triple time finally gets re-established (4:46) with flickering rising 4ths, but these lead to nothing new, finally ending in a quiet poof.

VW reveals himself in this movement a master orchestrator. In general, he contrasts a transparent, even wispy texture with great forward drive, at rather low volume. The low volume itself challenges players. One doesn't often hear a true pianissimo in live concert, although standards have certainly risen in my lifetime. That the Louisiana Philharmonic is a good, but not first-rank orchestra, often does speak volumes. Strings play largely at the unison or octave, and winds are usually reduced to solos or duets. When the winds get heavy, the strings drop out (more of these contrasting planes of sound). How anyone could think of this as clunky orchestration is beyond me, but one reviewer certainly did. It was "not music demanding great finesse or delicacy of tone" (*Daily Telegraph*, 1957). What in heaven's name was he listening to?

Third Movement: Romanza

The romanza is a short, lyrical instrumental composition "of an idyllic character," according to the Harvard Dictionary of Music. This movement more than lives up to its billing. Many slow movements are in

the form A B A (known as song form): that is, they consist of an opening section, a contrasting middle section, and a return to the opening section again. The sections are seldom equal in length or weight. Berlin's "Puttin' on the Ritz," if you know it, shows this form in little, as does Lennon-McCartney's "Michelle." In the Romanza, VW contrasts an idyllic mood (music from *The Pilgrim's Progress* Act 1, Scene ii, "The House Beautiful") with great agitation (from Act 1, Scene i; Pilgrim sings, "Save me, Lord! My burden is greater than I can bear").

The opening section plays with three ideas:

- A theme given to the cor anglais
- Rising 4ths, used mainly as transition (see the 2nd movement as well)
- A broad tune, which has the family look of the Alleluias from "Sine Nomine," although it never actually declares its lineage

A gorgeous chord progression announces a melody in the cor anglais (the opening is, as far as I can tell, note for note from the introduction to the House Beautiful scene). At 0:47, rising 4ths lead to a broad tune in the strings (0:50) which subsides into the flute, oboe, cor anglais and clarinet playing the rising 4ths once more (1:48). This leads to a repeat of the opening section (2:09). Now the cor anglais theme sounds in the strings (low register of the violins), and we get a bigger statement of the broad tune.

Just as the primarily transitional rising 4ths in the scherzo blossomed into an extended passage, so they do here (3:59), led by the oboe and joined by all the winds in a remarkable passage of "free-for-all" conversation. Of course, it takes a master contrapuntist to make this bit sound as casual as it does. VW works in much the same idiom in the opening to his "*Flos Campi*."

At any rate, this leads to the agitated passage in the strings (the B section), against rising 4ths and chromatic runs in the winds. It begins to die down, as the brass, led by the horn (5:43), takes up the cor anglais tune.

Rising 4ths fortissimo in the strings (6:22) lead to a return to the opening music (6:38) and more agitation. At 7:26, the broad tune sings again, this time in extended treatment. Here is the climax to the movement.

At 9:15, the opening chords sound for the last time. The movement begins to wind down. A violin introduces his solo with rising 4ths (9:30). Against shimmering strings (9:55), the cor anglais tune comes back in the horn, and the movement ends (10:12) with fragments of the broad tune.

(continued on page 9)

Fourth Movement: Passacaglia

A passacaglia is a musical form which repeats a bass line (usually in triple time) throughout. Against the fixed bass, it varies the upper parts. The last movement of Brahms's Symphony No. 4 in E is a passacaglia, though that work also uses a harmonic progression as a fixed point.

VW's passacaglia resembles more Purcell's "chaconies." It depends less on harmony than does the Brahms. The jargon calls it more "horizontal." In fact, it's not, strictly speaking, a passacaglia at all, although it follows the form in its opening.

The passacaglia theme begins, as usual, in the bass - a descending line. A bit in, a rising counter-melody sneaks in through the upper parts (0:12). It will have tremendous consequences in the movement. This reaches a small climax after about 5 repetitions, at which point the bass fragments into pizzicato. Three more repetitions follow, rising to a fanfare motive (1:51). This fanfare motive is related to the finale of VW's *Dona Nobis Pacem* - the vision of Isaiah: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation" and "Open to me the

gates of righteousness" - and to the scene of the Arming of the Pilgrim from the opera. This plays against the passacaglia's counter-melody (hereafter referred to as the counter-melody).

At this point (2:17), VW gives up the passacaglia, with about seven more minutes left in the movement. We get an imitative section on the passacaglia theme (referred to from now on as "the passacaglia"), which again leads to the fanfare (2:40). The fanfare combines with the passacaglia and the counter-melody.

The fanfare reaches a climax which quickly deflates to an agitated version of the passacaglia on clarinet (3:39) and other winds. This is (sort of) a B section. The rumblings grow to three outcries of this version at 4:52, 5:11 and 5:18. We hear a disturbed version of the counter-melody, leading to a large climax on the passacaglia (5:41).

This breaks into music from the first movement - the Preludio (6:03) - like waves against a rock. We are coming to the end, although I hesitate calling this a coda. It's a necessary outgrowth of the movement itself.

Wisps of themes from the first movement float around, including (I.d) (6:34 and 6:44), the opening horn call (I.a) (6:55) and (I.b) (7:05).

The reminiscence of the symphony's opening leads to a quiet extended fantasia (7:13) on the counter-melody, fanfare, and fragments of the passacaglia. The movement ends with the high strings taking off into the æther.

Such an unusual musical structure which comes off with such success shows a composer who has mastered form to such an extent, it's in his blood. He dictates the form, rather than allowing the form to dictate the music.

Stephen Schwartz

Comments may be made direct to the author through the Internet at:

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A Reigate Summer Music Symposium Day ~ Monday 22 July

RVW

Heir & Rebel, a Man in his Time

10.00am
RGS
Concert Hall

Vaughan Williams Symposium
Lewis Foreman introduces seven eminent scholars who discuss the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams

10.15am

1.15-1.45pm
St Mary's Church

Stanford, Parry and Vaughan Williams: the Creation of Tradition
Jeremy Dibble (University of Durham)
Articulating a vision: the Sea Symphony sketches
Andrew Herbert (University of Birmingham)
A London Symphony: revisions & recordings
Stephen Lloyd (Author of H Balfour Gardiner)
Vaughan Williams' Piano Concerto: the first 70 years
Duncan Hinnells (University of Oxford)

2.00pm
RGS
Concert Hall

Lunchtime Recital
Philip Salmon sings the song-cycle *On Wenlock Edge*
Vaughan Williams and Gerald Finzi
Stephen Banfield (University of Birmingham)
Working for Her Own Salvation: Vaughan Williams as teacher of Elizabeth Maconchy, Grace Williams and Ina Boyle
Jenny Doctor (New Grove Dictionary of Music)
Vaughan Williams and British Music: beyond pastoral
Anthony Payne (Composer and Critic)

7.00pm

RGS Music Room

Pre-Concert Lecture

A pre-concert talk by Lewis Foreman

8.00pm
St Mary's Church

Symphony Concert
Grant Llewellyn, Conductor
Associate Conductor, Boston Symphony Orchestra

As a climax to the RVW Symposium Day, an all-RVW concert demonstrating three clearly differentiated moods.

Ralph Vaughan Williams:
The Lark Ascending
Piano Concerto
London Symphony
Andrew West, piano
RSM International Youth Orchestra

(Editor's note: See also Newsbriefs on page 24).

Day Pass £40 for attendance at all events + coffee and tea
For Tickets And A Festival Diary Telephone: 01737 244407

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

by Igor Kennaway

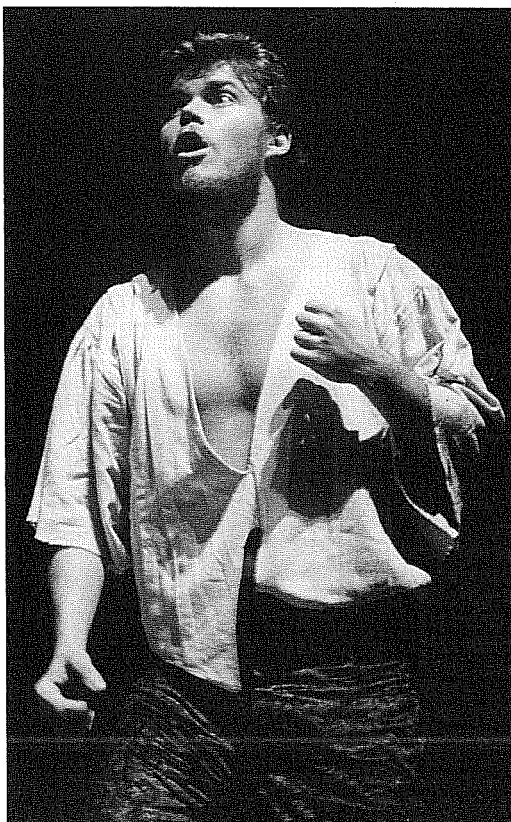
«Prelude»

In the late summer of 1991, Joseph Ward, then Head of Opera and the School of Vocal Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, invited me to conduct his forthcoming production of Vaughan Williams' neglected opera *The Pilgrim's Progress* planned for March 1992. I had long had a close affinity with much of RVW's music, with an especial bond, significantly as it happened, with the *Fifth Symphony*. This invitation seemed a curiously personal way in which to return to conduct opera in England after twelve years doing so in Germany, for having completed my studies at the RAM in the summer of 1976, my first professional engagement had been a recital with John Shirley-Quirk on Radio 3, in which RVW's *Songs of Travel* had formed part of the programme. Two days later, I had left England to take up my first appointment at a German opera house. Since I felt that I was embarking on my professional life abroad, in an unknown environment and in what I (rightly) felt was to prove a form of personal and indeed professional exile, the poignancy of the words and music of *Whither must I wander* was not lost on me. Enabled to study at the Royal Academy of Music (after graduating from Cambridge) with the assistance of a bursary from the RVW Trust, the offer to make my operatic return with *The Pilgrim's Progress* presented both a private and a professional opportunity to continue my bond with RVW.

Joseph Ward also possessed a combination of professional and personal reasons for conceiving this mammoth project, for he had not only sung the role of Lord Lechery in the recording with Sir Adrian Boult (with whom I had also studied), but also, like me, enjoyed the loving friendship of Ursula Vaughan Williams, who, as Ursula Wood, had written the text for Lord Lechery's song in the *Vanity Fair* scene. Furthermore, Joseph Ward greatly desired to rescue RVW's opera from the sidelines of forty years of undeserved neglect by our national opera companies. We were therefore united in our own search for the essential artistic veracity which was contained in *Pilgrim*. We were also all too keenly aware of the awesome responsibility we had towards the work and to the immense financial costs involved. Because of its unfairly acquired reputation as "unoperatic", we knew that if we failed, we would consign the work to the cul-de-sac of further neglect. It was to be a

gamble, one which in fact was to succeed triumphantly. We were about to embark on our own artistic "Pilgrim's Progress."

Our first meeting to discuss the work took place at Ursula Vaughan Williams' house, where we were all agreed that our main concern was to reveal the work in its innate *operatic* light to dispel the widespread misconceptions which had accrued since the disastrous production at Covent Garden in 1951. Joseph Ward's starting point for his



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overall conception was based on the first words which Bunyan sings in the Prologue: "So I awoke-and behold-it was a dream". A little further on, Bunyan sings: "*The pilgrim's progress from this world to that which is to come in the similitude of a dream.*" Our joint overall conception was therefore to explore the visionary nature of the music drama and this remained our lodestar throughout the period of personal study in preparation for the many weeks of intense rehearsals which were to start in January 1992.

«Introduction»

On conducting opera

Having spent the majority of my professional life conducting opera, I have never made a distinction between the visual

and the musical elements which contribute towards, what ideally, should be a dramatic entity. I have worked with many directors, some of whom wished to impose their own unrelated and often perverse ideas on a work as written, often ignoring the music and the issues which face those who perform it. The rare practitioners of the art of direction concern themselves with revealing the material at hand and are not only aware of the plot and the text, but also of the music which gives life to the drama. Such directors go beyond a purely visual staging. Conversely, there are also conductors who concern themselves with nothing but the music, ignorant of the textual and dramaturgical centre of an opera and intolerant of the many problems of creating a production, for whom conducting only consists of realising the musical score while unaware of or unconcerned with the dramatic content.

My involvement with music-theatre has allowed me to immerse myself in a continual dialogue with all aspects of the theatre: the visual, the musical and above all, the dramatic content. In Joseph Ward, I encountered a director who possesses a rare combination of visual inventiveness and musicianship. Conversely, I brought to the role of opera conductor an intense commitment to "music-theatre" and the dramatic content of the music, and an awareness that "on the night", when the director has done his work and has stepped aside, the unfolding of the opera lies in the dramatic tempo of the music and that the conductor, in this sense, takes over the role of directing not only the musical but also the dramaturgical structure and flow of the whole work. A musical tempo must be caused by a dramatic situation, and conversely, a musical tempo will either create or destroy the dramatic development of a work. Central to my thinking is the concern to discover a unified pacing of opera as a musical and dramatic entity.

Consequently I like to collaborate very closely with the stage director and have always undertaken the preparation of the singers myself, discussing and rehearsing vocal colour and inflexion, deciding on where to breathe, working on diction and textual characterisation, dynamics and tempo, all of which build up the delineation and realisation of a role. I attend almost all production rehearsals, concerning myself with the process of finding the core of a scene here or a line there, and thus, brick by brick, construct the entire edifice. Very

often, the function of a particular scene can only be interpreted in terms of its place in the overall concept of the work; conversely, the interpretative "over-view" may depend on how the individual components of a work interact with each other. And this brings us to one of the major challenges of performing *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for it had acquired the undeserved reputation of being "unoperatic" in both its content and its structure. The subtitle which RVW gave to the work of "a morality" gave credence to its so-called non-operatic nature, giving the impression of a *didactic* rather than a *theatrical* composition, in which its critics saw merely a series of unrelated tableaux.

«Adagio tranquillo e furioso» The preparation

The score did not reveal its treasures immediately and I immersed myself, as is my custom, in reading and re-reading the text, allowing the work to exert its influence on me rather than imposing my interpretation on it. In this instance, I began by absorbing the original Bunyan text as well as the "libretto" and concluded that RVW had made a potent and concise précis of the work. I found little substance in the notion that RVW did not possess a sense of theatre or that this work belonged more to the world of oratorio. I could hardly imagine anything less suited to the reverential ambience or the reverberant acoustics of a cathedral than the transition from *The arming of the Pilgrim* in

Siegfried's battle with the dragon are equally unbelievable, *were any of these scenes to be taken as "virtual reality"*. What concerns us here, as in many of the greatest operas, is not the *presentation of literal realism*, but *symbolic metaphors realised through musical dramatisation*.

RVW possessed a keen sense of theatre, both in terms of the content of *Pilgrim* and as shown by his modest pragmatism in composing the beautiful and reflective Nocturne merely to allow an important scene change to take place on stage. Should one still require further evidence to refute the charge against the composer that this work was unsuited for the operatic stage, one need look no further than the great *Vanity Fair* scene. This is a veritable musical Piccadilly Circus, vibrating with sexuality, avarice, animal energy, demanding vast forces and flamboyance. This is no oratorio exiled to take up an uneasy and unnatural residence in an opera house. Nor is it an illegal immigrant.

There were two other major contributory factors which sustained my conviction that I should reveal the innate *drama* of the work.

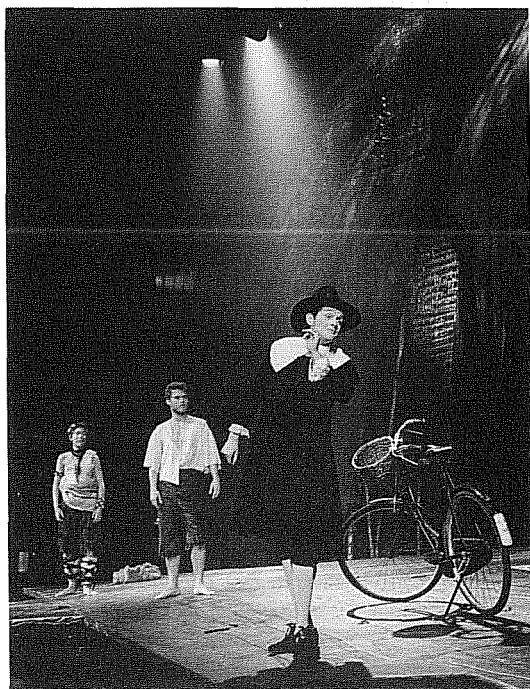
The first contributory factor arose from my own professional experience of having conducted much of the central operatic repertoire during my many years at several German opera houses. I was able to bring to my conducting of *Pilgrim* a first-hand knowledge of the major operatic literature, and was therefore placed in the fortunate position of seeing *Pilgrim* in the wider context of its European operatic genesis. Having conducted much of the major operatic repertoire from Gluck, Beethoven, Mozart via Wagner, Verdi, Puccini to Strauss and Stravinsky, plus many of the operettas of Johann Strauss and Lehar, I was able to explore and use all *that* experience to bring about a certain fluidity of line and a sense of *tempo rubato* in the overall shaping of the work's pacing. This would have been more difficult had I not been aware of such things and had I not encountered them, for example, in the many years I had spent working at Bayreuth. Of inestimable value was my experience of working with Daniel Barenboim on the *Ring* at Bayreuth and in learning how to shape such vast musical proportions. Indeed, I would not envy anyone undertaking to conduct *Pilgrim* who



Photograph © Gerry Murray

had not conducted either Wagner (for the awareness of finding where and how to make the transition from one major tempo to another), or Puccini, Johann Strauss and Lehar (for the indispensable sense of tempo flexibility).

The second contributory factor arose, perversely enough, from the very neglect from which the work had suffered. This liberated me from the need to conform to an inherited legacy of performing traditions. Apart from the Boulton studio recording, there was nothing to follow. Indeed, I did not even listen to *that* recording until I had immersed myself in many weeks of coaching the singers and attending the staging rehearsals, by which time I had discovered and shaped the indispensable continuity of the work's innate dramatic flow. From the outset, I had in the forefront of my mind two *negative* guiding criteria: the rejection of any reverential nuance of what I called the "Anglican-Choral-Evensong-School of singing and declamation", so often rather precious and sentimental, and the abolition of the tyranny of the bar-line. The score is littered with double-bar lines, which, if taken at their face value, would result in a static or episodic interpretation. I also found that many of the metronomic markings required a judicious scrutiny and modification. In this I was confirmed by conversations with Ursula Vaughan Williams as well as Leonard Hancock, who had conducted the premiere at Covent Garden in 1951. I was therefore uniquely placed to link with those who had known RVW's thoughts about his opera. The greatest challenge lay in the adoption of some broad choice of tempi, without allowing the forward flow of the music to suffer, while knowing how and when to modify the metronomic markings where they were in danger of being either too solidly

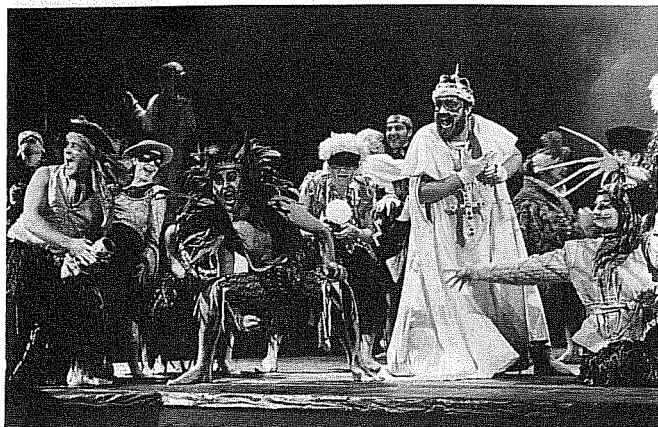


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Act II Scene 1 to *The Pilgrim meets Apollyon* in Act II Scene 2, or indeed the violence of the ensuing struggle. If the fight with Apollyon were found laughably naive, I would suggest that the Wolf's Glen in *Der Freischütz*, Tamino's fight with the snake at the opening of *The Magic Flute* and

the many years I had spent working at Bayreuth. Of inestimable value was my experience of working with Daniel Barenboim on the *Ring* at Bayreuth and in learning how to shape such vast musical proportions. Indeed, I would not envy anyone undertaking to conduct *Pilgrim* who

static or too abrupt and apparent. The feel for tempo required an awareness of an organic entity. The other two bench-marks were to bring out the naturalness with which RVW had set the text and the unfolding dramatic pace which became apparent as the production rehearsals progressed.



Photograph © Gerry Murray

I was also entirely convinced that the work possessed and demanded a passionate involvement from me as the conductor in order to produce passionate singing and passionate playing. I was able to discover a personal empathy with the text and the music and was aware that my mission to rescue this work from the chasm of oblivion had developed into a deeply personal commitment, for I too was facing doubts and despondency about my career and had begun to identify intensely with the work's message: indeed I knew that I was, in a sense, the defence counsel. And from the well of my own life's drama, I was able to draw up resources of my own creative energy. The power of the music was beginning to affect me in a way that many associate with the intoxication of conducting Wagner, for its echo lingered with me long after I had closed the score and left the theatre.

Taking the words of the Prologue "in the similitude of a dream", as my guide, I concentrated on the visionary and non-consequential nature of dreams, in which ideas and emotions call forth related pictures, which although linked, do not necessarily conform to a logicity. This was to unlock the problematical aspects encountered in the episodic structure of the work which had called forth adverse criticism in 1951. One should consider that the world of dreams belongs to the creative sphere of the subconscious, in which tranquillity and beauty can, and often do, give way to turmoil and violent passions in kaleidoscopic sequences. The human psyche possesses all manner of emotional and behavioural complexity in the face of deceit, adversity, immorality and untruthfulness. The spiritual seesaw of hope and despair, energy and apathy, triumph and defeat are all within the human experience. The polarisation of the individual and the group,

whereby the majority excludes, alienates and destroys the individual, is an aspect of the history of mankind, and as such, has been the concern of religion, ethics, psychology, literature, poetry, as well as the visual and musical arts. The alienation, trials and questings of the individual, whether in terms

of religious striving, artistic creativity, or social and sexual politics have been the central concerns of many of the greatest operas. *The Magic Flute*, *Figaro*, *Fidelio*, *Tannhäuser*, *Parsifal*, *Wozzeck*, *Mathis der Maler*, *Peter Grimes* and *Billy Budd*, to name but a few, could all have carried RVW's subtitle "a morality".

Indeed the whole of *The Ring* could have been similarly subtitled "a morality". Such a sobriquet does not necessarily imply that the subject matter is innately "unoperatic". Indeed, Goethe considered that the theatre is the appropriate arena for the presentation of moral issues. As to the charge that the very wordiness of *Pilgrim* should prevent it from really being an opera, I would call as my first defence witness many of the lengthy scenes of Wagner's *Ring* or indeed *Parsifal* in which monologue or even dialogue dominates and often excludes theatrical action on stage, often to the point of extinction. I was certain that *Pilgrim* belonged in the wider context of European opera, and that I should avoid the dangers of puritan evangelicalism which the text might contain.

Both Joseph Ward and I were aware of the challenge which lay before us and that it was our mission and responsibility to restore to its rightful place this outpouring of RVW's lifelong creativity. The performances were received with rapturous enthusiasm by audiences which attracted the British musical establishment and the national media. The reaction of the national and professional press was unanimous in its praise for what had been achieved. Joseph Ward had worked for many weeks, bringing his concept to realisation and investing his vision and energy in long and meticulous production rehearsals, most of which I attended, despite coaching every one of the 41 soloists, together with the double-cast and covers, and taking many of the chorus rehearsals together with our marvellous

Chorus Master, Brian Hughes. I was also most fortunate in having John Woods as my Musical Assistant. His musicianship and close attention to all the musical details of the coaching sessions ensured an invaluable continuity when I was absent from the production rehearsals conducting the full orchestral and sectional rehearsals. In a career which has taken me to some of Europe's most prestigious opera houses, the close collaboration of the team-work on this production was one of the most fruitful I have ever enjoyed.

For me as the conductor, the technical problems of controlling such vast forces were complicated by the stage-set, for with a cat-walk built between the orchestral-pit and the auditorium, I had chorus and soloists swirling all around me, on stage, to each side of me, and *behind me*, moving along the cat-walk and in and out of the auditorium. The final *Alleluia* chorus, which for me belongs to the greatest examples of English music, was performed antiphonally, with one half of the chorus stretched across the stage and the other half out in the auditorium, divided into two separate processional lines down each of the gangways.

«Allegro energico e con fuoco» The performances

I am firmly convinced that the opera conductor fulfils three major functions, for one is not only the trainer (during rehearsals)



Photograph © Gerry Murray

but also the jockey, riding the animal during the great race we call the performance. It is there, in the pit, that one must perform the double-act of standing back to allow all that has been rehearsed to evolve, while at the same time being involved in the very soul of the work. It is as if the conductor, like an actor, must exploit both his technical craft and the depths of his own psychological make-up in order to reveal the interpretative insights into a work. And "on the night", it is the conductor who acts as the cox of a rowing eight, from whom the singers and orchestral musicians not only take their cues and tempi, but from whom they must draw the required inspiration and energy to go

beyond the purely technical and reach a state of being "in the performance". Of course one does not need to have murdered one's mother in order to play Hamlet (although it might help), but one's performing craft should give the audience the impression that one has assumed the character of the composer, put on his emotional garments and become completely united and involved with whatever one is performing. I believe this to be as true for actors as for musicians and conductors. And this is exactly what happened as can be heard on the CDs taken from those

live performances in Manchester, for having "screwed in the light bulbs" during the many weeks of rehearsals, I was able to "switch them on" during the performances, and could feel the power and beauty of the words and the music flowing through me, as if I too, were making my own "Pilgrim's Progress" as RVW's ambassador.

The many weeks of intense and meticulous rehearsals allowed me the freedom to be spontaneous, sure in the knowledge that the performers were totally secure in knowing exactly what they had been coached to do. I was therefore able to combine two diametrically opposed functions of the "conductor in performance", on the one hand acting as the guiding architect, and on the other as being a source of energy, freely responding to the emotional atmosphere of the work as it released its musical and dramatic effect upon the performers and audiences alike. The intensity of the performers was mirrored by that of the audience, so that the energy level recharged itself like a dynamo. What was astonishing was that this had been achieved with what were, ostensibly, "student forces".

«Intermezzo con brio e molto giocosu»

The critics' response

The press reviews of the original performances in Manchester were unanimous in their praise. More than one critic thought that this was a major point in the history of the work, with *The Independent on Sunday* going so far as to write that "It is opera history in the making. And, I think, the turning." Many critics considered that my interpretation was more dramatic and operatic than the famous Boult recording.

Indeed, there were several reasons for saying that these performances and CDs were of



Photograph © Gerry Murray

more than just a passing significance. First, because the work had been so neglected for forty years. Secondly, because the production had shown in all the brilliant and meticulous theatricality of Joseph Ward's achievement, just how much this work belonged on the operatic stage. Thirdly, because my own convictions (that the music was a glorious outpouring of the composer's sense of drama and theatre) had been vindicated in public by the audience and press response to what were essentially *operatic* performances. Last, but certainly not least, these were "student" performances, although Joseph Ward and I had never approached the performers and the orchestral musicians with anything but the highest professional expectations, demanding the last ounce of their energies, concentration and artistic talents. And we were generously rewarded.

The glowing critical acclaim which followed would have pleased any one of our national opera companies. The fact that the performances were subsequently released on

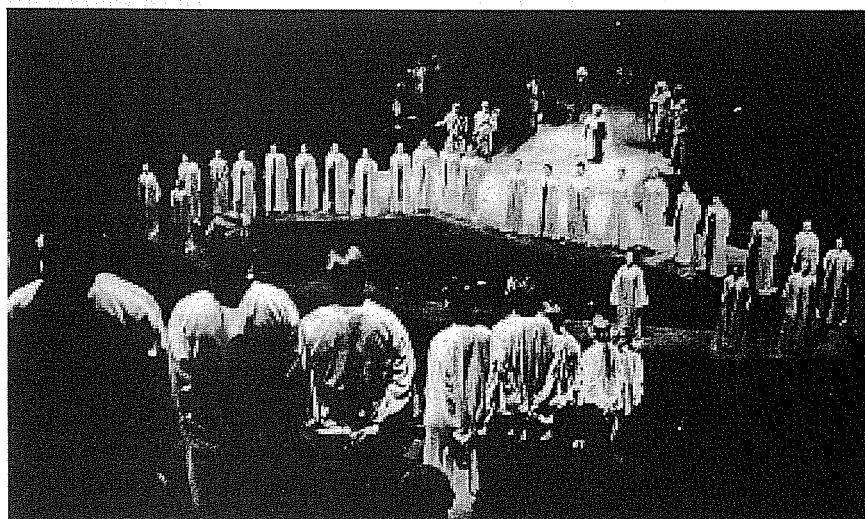
CD confirmed just how unique the achievements had been. The only major regret is that these CDs *are still not available on general release*. This should be rectified, for there is every reason to believe that these recordings would find a "warm market", especially if the critical response of the press is indicative. (Editor's note: See Richard Mason's review of the CDs in RVW Journal No. 3).

«Postlude»

Joseph Ward and I had done it all for the sake of the music, as a homage to RVW, and as a very personal act of dedication to Ursula. It was a unique series of events, which no other performances will be fortunate enough to repeat.

I shall always remember and treasure Ursula Vaughan Williams saying to me immediately after the first night: "I have waited forty years to hear it like this. My only regret is that Ralph wasn't here." To which I replied: "But he was. And we all heard him."

Igor Kennaway
London



Photograph © Gerry Murray

Vaughan Williams at Charterhouse

In the second part of our major feature on Vaughan Williams at Charterhouse, Robin Wells, Director of Music at the school, explores the period from 1952 to the present day.

In 1952 VW wrote an article for the school magazine entitled 'Carthusian Music in the 'Eighties'. This gives a valuable insight into the state of public school music a hundred years ago. He recalls studying the piano and the violin, later switching to the viola and playing in the school orchestra. 'One of my first practical lessons in orchestration came from playing the viola part in the slow movement of Beethoven's *First Symphony*, when I was excited to find that my repeated notes on the viola were enriched by a long holding note from Mr. Becker's horn'. He speaks fondly of the valuable experience gained from having had the opportunity to play chamber music on Sunday afternoons with Mr. Girdlestone - a Housemaster and keen amateur musician. He also played the organ and sang in the school choir and recalls singing in a performance of *Judas Maccabaeus*.

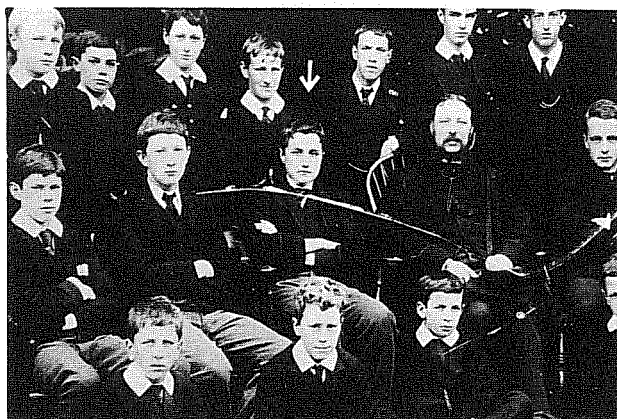
The strong chapel singing which produced the thrill mentioned above has for long been a tradition at Charterhouse, and this is still so today. VW certainly had the ability to write a fine hymn-tune; indeed he has probably produced more memorable tunes this century than any other composer. The broad melodic lines lend themselves to strong congregational singing and today the school particularly enjoy singing *For all the Saints*, *Come down O love divine*, *Hail Thee Festival Day*, and every school year ends with the singing of *God be with you till we meet again*.

Regular feature

Beyond the chapel orbit VW's music still continues to feature regularly in our concerts. The centenary year gave the school the opportunity to sing the *Sea Symphony*, to give a lunch-time performance of many of his hymns at

Westminster Abbey in the series 'Come and Sing', to mount an exhibition of RVW - his life and work in pictures, to give a concert at Down Ampney Church, and to make a recording of the Masque music.

But perhaps the most significant event for the school in 1972 was the fully staged performance of *Pilgrim's Progress*. This was not only an ambitious undertaking to say the least, but a successful integration of amateur and professional resources. Together



Vaughan Williams at Charterhouse 1889. To the right is the Housemaster G H Robinson who was also the school organist.

with other professional singers John Noble played the part of Pilgrim, and John Barrow played Bunyan. The opera lends itself ideally to a school situation because there are so many small singing parts which could easily be managed by the boys. There is plenty for the chorus to sing and collaboration with the local operatic society provided further local talent. The whole production was wonderfully welded together by Conductor and Director of Music - William Llewellyn and Producer Geoffrey Ford providing a most memorable musical experience for all involved.

Intensive music-making

In 1945 VW together with the Surrey County Music Advisor, Norman Askew, established a Summer Music Course for young musicians in Surrey. This Summer School settled for many years at Gypsy Hill College Kingston until in 1975 it moved to Charterhouse where it

is now established as the Charterhouse Summer School of Music. Each July a week of intensive music-making, embracing orchestral playing, chamber music, singing and solo performance, attracts students from far and wide.

The generous help and interest in the school shown by the RVW Trust must be acknowledged, and it was in 1976 that the first RVW Composer-in-Residence, Roger Steptoe, was appointed to the school. A scholarship provided by the Trust together with accommodation and many musical opportunities provided by the school offered a chance for a young composer to develop his career for a couple of years from a secure base, while at the same time encouraging composers within the school. The scheme still operates although it is now wholly funded by the school, and has so far seen six Composers-in-Residence.

"...Rather Elizabethan, I think!"

The interest of the RVW Trust continued further with funding towards the RVW Music Centre which was opened by Mrs. Ursula Vaughan Williams in 1984, it should, perhaps, be recorded that when the Foundation Stone was laid at an earlier ceremony by the composer's widow, there was great embarrassment to note that the composer's name had been spelt VAGHAN. Her comment "... rather Elizabethan, I think!" The builder, apologising profusely, assured us that the correct inscription would be carved on the reverse side of the same stone. Perhaps at some point in the distant future the error will be brought to light and will give amusement to the discoverer. This building although fulfilling a desperate need for more teaching and practising accommodation, is a living, thriving musical environment which commemorates not only the name of Ralph Vaughan Williams but English Music in its widest sense. The building houses a small semi-permanent
(continued on page 18 last column)

Symphony No. 5, Norfolk Rhapsody
No. 1, The Lark Ascending
Sarah Chang, The London
Philharmonic, Bernard Haitink
EMI 5 55487 2 (68' 17" full price)

Bernard Haitink has been established at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Music Director for some indefinite period of time (memory fails me) whilst engaged principally upon a full cycle of Wagner's *Ring*. Alongside making his home in England during this work, he has also been launching out upon a project to record the symphonies of Vaughan Williams, and has now reached the *Fifth Symphony*.

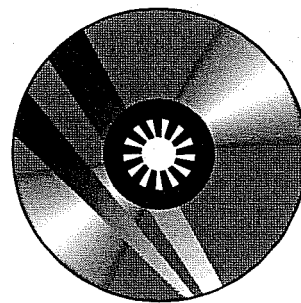
This symphony has always seemed to appear as a problematic work amongst the nine; more difficult to grasp and much easier to "write off" as superficial in character than its near neighbours: the violent *Fourth*, and the enigmatic and rough *Sixth*. This is partly due to the quieter temperament of the number five. Where four is a "modern" work, full of dissonance, anger and tension and where six also poses hard to resolve questions as part of its symphonic argument, five by contrast has often been seen to pose no serious symphonic questions at all, moving as it does in a world of apparent calmness and utter reflection. The dynamics of sonata form architecture, with a demand for contrast, tension and fierce development, here seems to be absent. Add to this the associations of the Heavenly Music at the end of his opera *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the symphony can appear on the surface to be inwardly concerned with a holy vision, to the exclusion of the listener left to eavesdrop on quiet ruminations.

A difficult work

It is certainly a difficult work to "bring off" either on the record or in the concert hall - not that it figures in such a context very often. The magnificent performance under Richard Hickox at the Barbican last September is still very resonant in my mind, and I must confess at the outset of this review, that any recorded performance faces a tough battle with a memory that cherishes a first live performance to my ears!

A symphony then that is already hard to decipher, and a European conductor in unfamiliar territory. So how does he fare with the London Philharmonic? Does this turn out to be just yet another anodyne performance, the equivalent of aural wallpaper when it comes to beauty of sound, but otherwise uninteresting? Haitink does at least bring with him a few advantages in tackling this territory, compared to say, American conductors. He is already renowned as a conductor for example of Bruckner and Mahler. These may not be composers easy to immediately associate

Record Reviews



with Vaughan Williams, but a few links come readily to mind however. In Bruckner we are always aware of a very personal conception of tempo and structure, that stands apart from normal symphonic traditions yet speaking with a clear and resonant personality. Though Vaughan Williams does not write symphonies on the same scale, he is not afraid to write a symphony such as the *Pastoral*, with its sequence of slow movements that still comprise a valid symphonic experience. Mahler by contrast was often obsessed with orchestral detail in his search for clarity of textures. Vaughan Williams is not renowned for cluttering his scores with acres of footnotes, yet as a professional and practising musician, he took great pains to ensure that what was written should be exactly that which sounds. Note for example his insistence on the correct use of flugel horns and natural trumpets in some works, and the accurate instructions regarding doubling of instruments in most scores. For a very long time I felt that Vaughan Williams was what I could only call a "muddy" composer, with thick textures in most of his works, with a tendency to over score. Thankfully my ears have gradually been opened by performances under conductors who fully understand the idiom of his writing: Handley, Thomson and Hickox have all revealed a new beauty of sound. Faith has been restored in the originality of this composer, and in his skilful use of a vast orchestral palette. As a final advantage, Haitink is already familiar with some masterpieces of English musical literature - I think with joy of his underrated performances of the Elgar symphonies, and of course of his especially successful recording of the *Sinfonia Antartica*.

Divided opinion

Critical opinion already published for this recording in The Gramophone and the BBC Music Magazine seems already to have reached mixed opinions. A straw poll amongst a few members over the past few weeks has also reached a roughly 50/50 split in view upon this recording. I am not ashamed to say that in my own mind also this is a problematic performance: not

clearly a runaway success, but certainly not a plodding disaster either.

At first hearing I thought Haitink to be slow and rather on the sluggish side as regards general tempi, though his sense of inner forward momentum is rather more convincing once each movement is firmly under way. I would quibble whether the presto misterioso is really performed presto - short by a few andantes I would think, but others may disagree. His overall timing of almost 40 minutes is well within the range of many recordings currently available, though still a long shot over the specified 35 minutes in the published score. Though his timing is indeed on the generous side, I am not too eager to complain though, when the orchestral sound is fairly shimmering with beauty and radiance. The Gramophone team actually lauded the quality of the recording, coming from studio 1 of Abbey Road, though in places I do think that it is a little too "distant" for my taste; the romanza for example could be a little warmer and nearer. Technically though there is very little to quibble over, (apart for tempi).

Reservations? Not many - I think that Boult is more persuasive in the *Romanza*, but I suspect that his familiarity with the real music from *The Pilgrim's Progress* will have counted a great deal in the realisation of his performances. Haitink seems a little cooler, not quite the chill air of Sibelius (to whom the symphony was "dedicated without permission") but neither has he brought the truly reflective quality of a Bruckner to his reading. Haitink does read the work in the context of central European traditions however; this is the key to his success and failure in this recording.

Success: a consistent view of beauty, with a firm (albeit slow) sense of inner flow, an evenness of spirit and a matchlessly clear ensemble. Failure: if anything is missing, it is that intangible sense of profound intensity and absorption that is the essence of this style in Vaughan Williams. Perhaps only the true and willing pilgrim can bring this to the work. Without such contemplation, the work can seem sterile, though beautiful. Every person will have his own view about where the fundamental pivots lie in the

(continued overleaf)

strange architecture of this many sided and complex symphony, but for me one of the key moments is the climax 4 bars before figure 13 *Tutta Forza* in movement one: a grand statement of longing and sighing, that seems strangely lifeless in Haitink. Boult is more rhapsodic, Previn more dynamic. For such lapses (is there another word?) this would be enough to make me hesitate to recommend this as a first choice, if profundity and intensity is desired.

Turning very briefly to the other two works on this disc. *The Lark Ascending* is performed by the astonishingly capable 14 year old Sarah Chang, and it is certainly a creditable performance that will not disappoint any expectations from listeners. If I was listening for any other reason however than just to guess the age of the performer, I am afraid that I would still long for the pure sounds of Hugh Bean.

The *Norfolk Rhapsody* however is quite another matter and is rather in the vein of unexpected treasure. Here at last you sense that Haitink is on firm ground, he performs with an intensity and sense of vision that almost convinces you that here is a long lost symphonic poem by Richard Strauss, suddenly rediscovered, and I would urge members to give this an ear if the disc should ever come their way. This is a flowing and magnificent account, coherent, ravishing and attractive.

Richard Mason

Over hill, over dale, Part-songs, folksongs and Shakespeare settings by Vaughan Williams

Holst Singers with Ian Bostridge (tenor) and Michael George (baritone) conducted by Stephen Layton.

Hyperion CDA66777 (73'53" full price)

A useful and generous collection this, of a capella VW song settings. What really marks this recording out for me is the wonderful singing of Ian Bostridge which is shown to great effect in the haunting song *Ca' the yowes* (after Burns) surely one of RVW's most beautiful creations. Similarly, his voice shines through in that great folksong, *Bushes and Briars* and the ravishing *The Winter is gone* whilst also giving fresh interest to an old favourite, *Greensleeves*. A rising star, of whom I am sure we will hear much of in the future, particularly perhaps, in the repertoire that Peter Pears once made his own and in this form he would make an ideal soloist for *On Wenlock Edge*.

As to the rest of the disc, the Holst Singers sing beautifully in the Three Shakespeare songs, especially *The Cloud-Capp'd Towers* where time seems suspended. Elsewhere,

good performances but the sound is at times somewhat recessed, Michael George provides a mellow baritone, most pleasingly in *The Turtle Dove*.

All in all, a warm recommendation for this collection which contains some excellent pieces which some members will never have heard before and will certainly enrich their appreciation of the composer, I count myself among them.

Robin Barber

Previn's Student Winner

Symphony No. 5 in D, Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis (coupled with Previn's Reflections). Symphony Orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music, Previn. EMI CDC 55371 (USA only at this stage)

I well remember my excitement at the announcement in 1967 that André Previn would be recording the complete Vaughan Williams symphonies. He had already impressed with the Nielsen *First Symphony* and - memorably - with the Walton *First. The Antartica* duly appeared in 1968 and made a striking impact, despite the inclusion of Sir Ralph Richardson's spoken superscriptions. *A Sea Symphony* (1970) disappointed, not a match for Boult's two recordings. Then came the *Fifth* in 1972. What radiance in that majestic first movement! What a moving and eloquent *Romanza*! This recording convinced me then, and convinces me now, that Previn is a great VW conductor. (It is currently available on RCA GD90506).

Now, in his third recording of the *Fifth*, he conducts the Orchestra of the Curtis Institute from Philadelphia. He performed both the symphony and the *Tallis Fantasia* on February 6th, 1995 in the Academy of Music at the Curtis Institute. Bill Marsh tells me that this was one of the finest orchestral concerts he had ever heard anywhere. The Curtis Institute was founded in 1924 to train gifted young musicians for careers as performing artists. The orchestra is composed of 100 students aged 13 to 26.

On the evidence of this recording, the standard of playing is remarkably high. The *pianissimos* achieved by the strings are breathtaking, and the orchestra is certainly the equal of the LSO or RPO (the orchestra on Previn's second recording on Telarc). Previn's feel for tempo, structure, balance and the texture of each movement is completely convincing. He finds, too, more depth in the *Scherzo* than hitherto without

any loss of impact elsewhere. Overall this new interpretation is deeply satisfying - one of the finest of Previn's Vaughan Williams recordings. *Tallis* is intelligently performed and beautifully played but lacks Barbirolli's intensity and involvement.

For good measure, EMI add Previn's 1981 *Reflections*. This is at times a haunting work, whose beginning reminds me of Warlock's *The Curlew*. Elsewhere the music has rhythmic passages and bursts of a more dissonant style which sit uncomfortably with the tranquil Vaughan Williams works. An odd coupling, then, but this should not deter anyone outside the USA from buying a return ticket to New York just to purchase this CD. Those members lucky enough to live in the States should not hesitate.

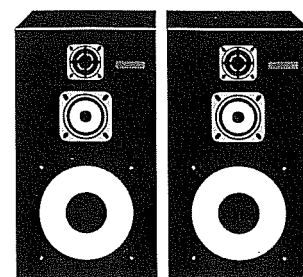
Stephen Connock

**Symphonies: A Pastoral Symphony, and No. 6 in E Minor
BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boult, Valerie Hill (soprano)
BBC Radio Classics 15656 91642 (69'52" bargain price)**

This disc is, in my view, self-recommending. Members will not need to be reminded by me that Boult conducted the world premieres of both of these works. Given his close association with the composer there can be no doubt that he has a unique authority in the interpretation of arguably the two greatest works in the RVW symphonic canon. To my mind there can be no doubt now that these two symphonies are the composer's response to the Second and First World Wars respectively and they rank with Shostakovich's best, as amongst the greatest symphonic statements of this troubled, 20th century.

The *Sixth* is a recording of a live performance from the 1972 Proms and the *Pastoral* is taken from a concert broadcast made in the Maida Vale studios in 1966. Apart from a few audience coughs both the performances and recording are excellent.

Robin Barber



The Trustees Visit Down Ampney



Illustration 'A' - the front of the Old Vicarage

A Spring weekend seemed an ideal time to visit the birthplace of Ralph Vaughan Williams in Down Ampney near Cirencester. So the Trustees met the Reverend John Calvert and Sheila Burgess, one of the church-wardens, on 20-21st April 1996. It proved to be a memorable occasion, and has given the Society another clear objective. Stephen Connock describes the events and launches an appeal for help from all members.

The Birthplace

The house dates from early Victorian times. As the illustrations show, 'The Old Vicarage' is an imposing building which was split into two houses in 1963. The 'front' of the house is approached through a fine tree-lined drive, (see illustration A). Strangely, the front is now less prominent than 'the back' which is situated on the main road and has an inscription "*Ralph Vaughan Williams was born here 12 October 1872*" above the 'back door'. Both wings remain large, the 'back' having the private chapel clearly seen to the right of illustration B. Many fine features remain, including superb oak-panelling in the front room - see illustration C. This is largely unchanged from the days the two year old Ralph would have used the staircase.

Not surprisingly as Ralph only lived in the house for a few years, nothing has been inherited by the current owners nor any stories passed on.

The Church

More tangible evidence of Vaughan Williams history is to be found in nearby Down Ampney church, (see illustration D). There is the entry on page 10 of the Register of Baptism, the baptism being held on December 1st 1872.

More poignant is the sudden ending of

the baptisms signed by Arthur Vaughan Williams, the last being on December 13th 1874. Ralph's father died on 9th February 1875. Outside, surrounded by daffodils is Arthur's grave with the simple inscription: "*In memory of Arthur Vaughan Williams Vicar of Down Ampney died February 9 1875 Aged 40 years*". Inside the church, the organ was built in 1874 - is it fanciful to imagine how pleased Arthur Vaughan Williams must have been with this new instrument? The Vaughan Williams exhibition, however was a major disappointment. "What we offer needs to be improved" says the current vicar. "It does not bear comparison with the Elgar and Holst museums nearby, and does not do justice to the memory of a great composer". The Trustees agreed, and we resolved to help if we could. The Vicar and Sheila Burgess showed us a large room at the back of the church which they were prepared to devote to a permanent Vaughan Williams display. This is a marvellous concept, which when finished would provide a fitting tribute to Vaughan Williams' memory. We resolved to launch an appeal for funds to support the 'Down Ampney Exhibition' for completion by July 1997. More details in the October Journal.

Despite the disappointing exhibition,

(continued overleaf)



Illustration 'B' - the back of the Old Vicarage



Illustration 'C' - inside the old house

the Visitors' Book contained many appreciative comments from admirers of Vaughan Williams including:

"At last we've made our pilgrimage to VW's birthplace"

"Lovely memorabilia of Vaughan Williams"

"Marvellous to get a bit closer to Vaughan Williams"

"From this idyllic place came England's musical glory".

Alongside Vaughan Williams, there are memories of the Second World War in the church. The RAF 1st and 6th Airborne divisions launched their operation to Arnhem in 1944-45 from Down Ampney.

Concerts continue to be performed in the church - the next being on 5th July 1996 which includes Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C Major*.

It was music which will linger longest in the memory for us from this fascinating visit. On Sunday morning, Vaughan Williams' noble hymns *Down Ampney* (Come down, O Love divine) and *Sine Nomine* (For all the Saints) formed part of the service. The Vicar thanked God for the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Trustees, and all the congregation quietly murmured 'Amen'.

display of RVW and English Music, his desk and a large collection of scores, books, CDs and LPs of his music, which is constantly being added to. While the school music is at the centre of things the building also serves the wider community who use it for rehearsals, concerts, meetings and other musical activities.

The VW/Charterhouse link will be strengthened further this year when the school will be host to the Leith Hill Music Festival. The Festival was co-founded in 1904 by his sister Margaret Vaughan Williams and VW was invited to conduct the first Festival in 1905. He continued to serve as conductor until 1953, while more recently William Llewlyn (Director of Music, Charterhouse 1965-87) was Festival Conductor from 1981 until his retirement last year. This year competitions and performances will take place at Charterhouse on March 17th and April 11th-13th, under the new Festival Conductor - Brian Kay.

In 1985 the Carthusian Trust, in recognition of the help received from the RVW Trust, established the RVW US Research Fellowship. This award funds an American post-graduate to come over and live at Charterhouse for a period during the summer, and to carry out research into the works of VW. Appropriately enough, the first Fellow, Dr. Byron Adams came from Cornell University where VW had spent time as visiting professor 1954. Dr. Adams researches into 'The Stages of Revision of the *Sixth Symphony*' were subsequently published in The Musical Quarterly Vol. 73 No. 3. To date there have been eleven Fellows, and their areas of study have included the *Symphonies*, *Job*, *Riders to the Sea*, *Songs of Travel* and the Keyboard Music.

Ralph Vaughan Williams is one of our greatest Old Boys. His contribution to English music over the past century as a composer, arranger, conductor, teacher, lecturer, researcher and his encouragement to fellow musicians, is probably unsurpassed. We are justly proud of his achievements; we are very conscious of our heritage and take every opportunity to perpetuate the name of a great Englishman.

Robin Wells



Illustration 'D' - interior of Down Ampney Church

'I AM FROM THE PLANET ZARG....' or

How I first came to RVW's music:

by Rob Furneaux

The musical life of Ralph Vaughan Williams was dedicated toward reaching for the heights. Every so often his music appears to lift above the mere human plane and take on a mystical aura the inspiration for which seems to come from unknown regions beyond human experience.

This may go some way to explain the manner in which I was introduced to the music of RVW. Casting my mind back I can remember the occasion with crystal clarity: it was a cold wintry day in 1958. I had muffled myself in a thick coat and had set out on a brisk walk over the high tors of Dartmoor. Just as I climbed to the craggy summit of Black Tor I heard music; I didn't know much about VW's music then, but all at once I realised it was *The Lark Ascending*.

I climbed to the summit of the tor and surveyed the frosted landscape beneath; there was no sign of life. The music persisted. Suddenly I looked up; my incredulous gaze was met by a grey saucer shaped craft descending from the heavens. It hovered a mere ten feet away, a portal opened and a small unearthly creature with one eye in the centre of its forehead appeared and made its way clumsily down a ramp towards me. Unable to move in sheer terror I was rooted to the spot.

Suddenly the creature spoke: I am from the planet Zarg. We have been picking up the music of your Vaughan Williams for some time. We now come to earth frequently; we have two missions. One: to convert all the unconverted of Earth to RVW's music. Two: to persuade individuals to repair our spaceships.

I was not unnaturally taken aback by this. At first I wanted to reject his demands - I'd been a fan of Smetana and Dvorak until then - and besides, I couldn't tell a big end from an elbow. The alien shone a beam of intense green light at my forehead; I was forced to comply. He told me they would return the following Monday by which time my conversion to VW would be complete. They also left a small space buggy for me to repair and gave me a manual.

The following Monday found me again standing on the wintry ridge. I turned once to watch while thick the snow flakes fell. The craft returned; the alien alighted and again spoke: "So what d'you think of VW's music now then?"

'Superb', I replied, detecting the dulcet tones of *Serenade to Music* wafting from the ship.

'Good - another convert to the cause', said the alien, breaking into a satisfied smile. 'Oh, and by the way, is the space buggy ready?'

In the long tradition of all earth bound garage mechanics I replied, "It'll be ready Thursday".

So that's the story of how I got hooked - well, not really. I wrote the above in order to make my conversion to RVW sound dynamic - when in fact like many others conversion was a slow process. To tell the truth I have to admit that I have no real revelations to impart regarding my conversion to VW's music. I'm just one of an increasing army of non-technical, non-R.C.M. trained ordinary people who have stumbled into VW's music. I have since found a home in a vast landscape inhabited

by the precipitous dark cliffs of *Dona Nobis Pacem* and the rolling hills of *Hugh*.

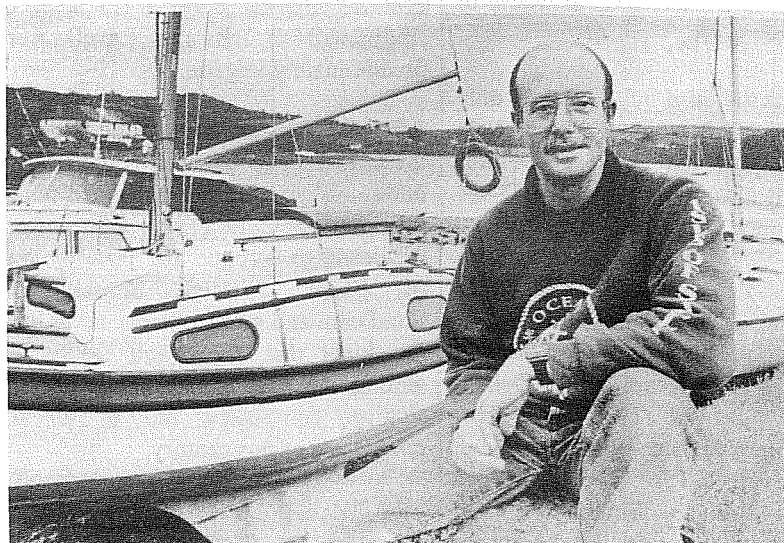
Unlike Robin Ivison the first contributor to the 'How I first came to RVW's music', I cannot boast any first performances under my belt, nor did I experience the thrill of seeing the old man conduct (I'm green with envy, Robin). It wasn't that I was unwilling to make the effort you understand, there was another inhibiting factor - I was just three years old in 1958. I can't even say that I rattled my rattle to the first broadcast performance of the *Ninth*. But what I can say is that like many others I slowly got to know the man and his music over a number of years.

At first in my teens I liked the 'tunes'; and I'm now embarrassed to say I only really liked *Greensleeves*, *Tallis* and *The Wasps*. But slowly sometime in my early twenties a mysterious curtain was slowly drawn aside permitting access to the deeper recesses of VW's vision. The *Sixth Symphony* suddenly became crystal clear in all its stark and grotesque impressiveness; so too did such contrasting works as *An Oxford Elegy* and the wistful tones of the superb John Westbrook recording. Other works like the *Ninth* remain enigmatic masterpieces; for me it remains perennially fresh; each listening is like the first; there are always uncharted regions waiting for the mind to explore.

Robin Barber has dubbed me 'Our West Country Correspondent', and I'm flattered that I have been given responsibility of reporting RVW events in the back of beyond (Devon and Cornwall). I continue to be an avid concert-goer; although from my first piece for the journal you might recall that not a lot goes on down here. Occasionally however, a VW symphony appears amongst a suffocatingly predictable repertoire of Beethoven's *Fifth*, *1812's* and Haydn's *Symphony No 48,000*.

These days I work as a tutor in Plymouth and am slowly establishing myself as a writer on West Country subjects. But there's still nothing I look forward to more than switching off the word processor in the late afternoon and relaxing with a cup of tea and RVW.

Rob Furneaux
Yelverton, Devon



'Our West Country Correspondent... Rob Furneaux'

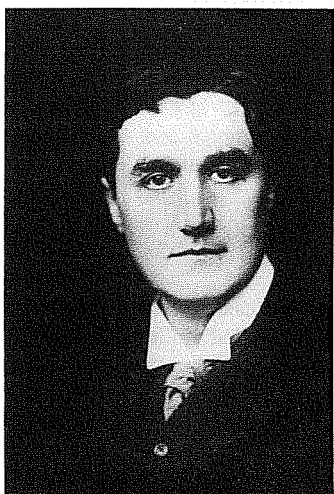
BY
TONY NOAKES

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
AND DELIUS**

Around 1950, when I was 15, the world of music suddenly opened to me, and I fell under the spell of the two grand old men who had long dominated the English musical scene, RVW and Beecham. As they had very little in common, I learned different things from each of them. In the brand new Festival Hall, Beecham delighted me with Handel, Haydn, Berlioz, Sibelius - and Delius, to whose music my mother was already addicted. The Festival Hall was also the memorable scene of RVW's 80th birthday concert and the London premieres of his last 3 symphonies, all gloriously festive occasions. Singing lessons introduced me to *The Watermill* and *The Woodcutter's Song*, as well as *Silent Noon* and *Linden Lea*. In 1961 I joined the Alexandra Choral Society because of their concert including the *Five Mystical Songs*, *In Windsor Forest* and *Sons of Light*. Next I moved to the Royal Choral Society for *A Mass of Life* (Sargent), and later to the London Philharmonic Choir, where highlights were the recordings of *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Boult). More recently, in the English Chamber Choir, our repertoire has included *The Shakespeare Songs*. *The Cloud-Capp'd Towers* is for me one of the most perfect of unaccompanied part-songs. Getting to know these great works from the inside has been a continuing joy.

With this background, it is not surprising that Michael Kennedy's article in Journal No. 4 on the RVW *Piano Concerto*, with its comparisons with Delius' *Concerto*, set me thinking about the many parallels and differences between the two 20th century English composers whom I value most highly. Clearly they had little use for each other's music. They are sometimes bracketed under the "English Pastoral"

label, which, since it is so often used to berate 20th century English music for not sounding like Stravinsky or Schoenberg, may be more of a nuisance than a help. In any case, it can only properly be applied to a small proportion of the music of either composer: *Brigg Fair* and *The First*



Cuckoo may perhaps in this context be compared with the *Norfolk Rhapsody*, *In the Fen Country* and *The Lark Ascending*, as all having rural and folk music associations.

The most striking parallel is between *Paris* and *A London Symphony* - both wonderful kaleidoscopic impressions of the two cities these composers loved best - and both described, in whole or part, as Nocturnes.

Whitman is the third link. It is not only significant that 3 major works of both composers involve settings of his poetry, but also curious that they were both writing them during similar periods. *Sea Drift* (1903) just predates the inception of *Towards the Unknown Region* and *A Sea Symphony*. Apart from RVW's Whitman songs, there was a gap of over 20 years before Delius' *Songs of Farewell* (1930) and *Idyll* (1932) and Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* (1936). The composers responded both to Whitman's grand scene-painting and to his poignant expressions of lost love and death.

Their treatment in these works is however strongly contrasted, and might justify detailed comparative study.

Both composers were original and skilled in orchestration and choral writing, each with a quite distinctive - and very different - orchestral palette.

They are further apart still in their harmony - the one highly chromatic, the other making extensive use of the older modes.

They were probably not very far apart in their religious, social and political views: it may seem strange that, while Delius totally scorned "religious" music, the agnostic RVW wrote so much of it. Was it because of his concern for popular music-making, where church music was a major

opening for many amateur musicians? It was arguably this concern for popularising music that eventually helped make him part of the British musical "establishment", from which Delius utterly withdrew, preferring France and the company of painters and writers. But also, as a cosmopolitan, Delius' influences were mainly Scandinavian, American, German and French, whereas RVW's (in spite of study with Bruch and Ravel) were predominately English.

After 45 years my love of the music of these two most original composers is undiminished, for all the other music that has delighted me since, from mediaeval to baroque and jazz, by way of Fauré, Nielsen, Shostakovich, Sondheim and many others. I still have no doubt that RVW and Delius are among the very greatest, not only of English composers, but of all the composers of this century.

*Tony Noakes
Stanmore, Middlesex.*

RVW Society Publications

The RVW Society now has available two publications:

A Bibliography

Graham Muncy, Senior Librarian at Surrey Performing Arts Library, Dorking and Robin Barber, RVW Society Secretary, have combined to produce a 20 page bibliography. The contents are based on the Vaughan Williams Special Collection at the Surrey Performing Arts Library supplemented by additional information from members of the Society. Price is £5.00 plus postage, and can be obtained from Robin Barber.

- HOWES, FRANK **THE MUSIC OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Oxford University Press
1954
reprinted Greenwood Press 1976
0 8371 8064 3

(Incorporates two previous publications in the Musical Pilgrim Series)

Long-time music critic of *The Times*, Frank Howes was, from his youth a great admirer of and commentator on RVW's music. It was he, above all who incurred the composer's wrath by suggesting "meanings" in some of the most important works, notably the great central trilogy of symphonies. "In No. 4 the prophet sees the nature of naked violence triumphant in Europe, and in No. 6 there is similarly a prophetic warning of what will happen to mankind if it persists in its foolish, wicked wars." Sympathy with Howes' views on these works is very understandable. He nevertheless, remained close to the composer and even served on the "committees" that RVW called to comment on draft compositions in his later years.

- HURD, MICHAEL **VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Faber & Faber
1970
0 571 08414 1

(The Great Composers series)

A straightforward introduction to RVW's life and music, well illustrated with photographs, reproduced posters and programmes and with musical illustrations arranged for keyboards.

- KENNEDY, MICHAEL **THE WORKS OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Oxford University Press
1964
0 19 816330 4

(see below, but contains Michael Kennedy's exhaustive works listing, later published separately).

- KENNEDY, MICHAEL **THE WORKS OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Oxford University Press
1980
new (second) edition
0 19 315453 6 hb.
0 19 315454 4 pb.

(Contains only a select works listing as his main listing is published separately as A CATALOGUE OF THE WORKS OF RVW - see section C).

The companion work to Ursula Vaughan Williams' biography and the authoritative work on RVW's music. Every composition is documented, the scholarship is faultless and the detail prolific. Quite honestly no serious RVW devotee can be unaware of or even without this essential book.

Extract from A Bibliography (page 7)

A Discography

This 70 page discography by Stephen Connock, RVW Society Chairman, lists all known recordings of RVW's music from 78rpm to CD. The compilation is in alphabetical order of title. Price is £10.00 plus postage, and can be obtained from Stephen Connock.

(Editor's note: As the extract below makes clear, dates of recordings are not yet included in this discography).

Alister McAlpine's Lament (1912)

Scottish Air arranged for mixed voices. Words by Robert Allan.

Quirk Vocal Ensemble
Holst Singers, Layton

Fidelio 8821 (U.S.A.)
Hyperion CDA 66777

Along the Field (1927)

Eight Songs for voice and violin, words by A. E. Housman.

L. Winter (s), J. Langstaff (b),
M. Morgerstern (vl).

Peerless PRCM 200
Desto DC 6482 (U.S.A.)
Musical Heritage Society
MHS 1976 (U.S.A.)
Koch 3-7168-2 H1

C. Malfitano (s), J. Malfitano (vl).

R. Golden (s), N. Bean (vl).

Benedicite (1929)

For soprano solo, mixed choir and orchestra, words by John Austin.

H. Harper (s), King's College Choir, Cambridge,
Bach Choir, LSO, Willcocks

EMI HMV ASD 2422
re: HMV SLS 5082
re: CDC 7 49023 2
re: CDM 7 64722 2

L. Russell (s), Waynflete Singers, Winchester
Cathedral Choir, BSO, Hill

Argo 436 120 - 2ZH

Blackwore by the Stour (1902)

'A Dorset folk song' for voice and piano.

P. Savidge (b), R. Steptoe (pf).

Phoenix DGS 1005
re: TRX CD 116

Bryn Calfaria

See Three Preludes on Welsh Hymn Tunes.

Charterhouse Suite (1920)

Arranged by James Brown, in collaboration with RVW, for string orchestra from the suite of six short pieces for piano.

Israel Chamber Orchestra, Atlas

Stradivari - K-Tel
SCD 8011

Extract from A Discography (page 1)

YOUR LETTERS

We are always pleased to receive contributions for this page



VW's religious beliefs

There is a reference to the religious music of RVW in a classical music reference book prepared by one of the reviewers for the magazine 'Classics CDs'.

It raised, of course, the question of RVW's religious beliefs and outlook. As a keen Christian myself, and as someone who finds his music inspiring, uplifting and often 'heavenly', I certainly disagree with the reviewer's assessment either of RVW's use of church liturgy and, as far as I understand it, his faith position.

I would appreciate an in-depth article regarding the relationship between RVW's overtly 'religious' works - *Job*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Magnificat*, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *The Old Hundredth*, etc, etc - and his own religious beliefs. To what extent, for example, were the words that he set music to significant to himself?

I guess Ursula or Michael Kennedy would be the people best suited for such a challenge because of their intimate contacts with him over many years.

I look forward to further discussion and debate on this matter and to hear from other members whose faith has been enhanced, challenged or even started because of the music of RVW.

If RVW, whatever his unorthodox views on traditional Christianity, is not at rest with God assisting the angelic choirs, I will be mightily surprised and disappointed!

John Waterstone
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

(Editor's Note:

We will commission an article on RVW's religious beliefs for a future Journal. This subject is referred to in John Birkhead's article *A Voyage of Discovery* on page 5).

On A Cloud

In issue No. 5 of the Journal (February) appears an extract from a review in the *New York Times* of a concert at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center during which Andrew Davis conducted the New York Philharmonic in RVW's *Oboe Concerto* as well as the *Tallis Fantasia*. The review seems to damn the concerto, piece and performance, with faint praise. I attended an earlier performance than the *Times*' reviewer - a "rehearsal" open to the public and beloved by impecunious music lovers - and can say that on that occasion at least, when the concerto was performed in toto, there was a coming-together of conductor, soloist, orchestra and

composition/composer that resulted in an inspired performance such as I have seldom, if ever, encountered before in all my forty-odd years of constant concertgoing. After considering myself highly fortunate to be present at such a rare performance of a great piece of music, you can imagine my delight to partake in the supremely beneficent effect that the music had in the act of performance, and I emerged from the hall directly afterwards as if on a cloud and as if having suddenly rediscovered what had attracted me to RVW's music in the first place many years ago.

Incidentally, what is the point of publishing letters, as you did in the February issue, without mention of their origins? Thus we had one correspondent's mention of a performance of the *London Symphony* "in our town hall" whilst being denied the potentially interesting statistic of where that might have been. Another correspondent bemoans the fact that because he doesn't live in England, he is unable to attend the various functions promoted by the RVW Society, but his address having been lopped off, we might find it difficult to sympathise. (At the same time, the article on the facing page, like several others in the issue, carries bylines at both beginning and end!)

While I'm in a carping mood - though I always greatly look forward to your publication and enjoy it even more than that - the Journal seems in desperate need of a proof-reader to keep the *Sinfonia Antartica* from being spelt *Anatrctica* (p. 14) when the spelling *Antarctica* (pp. 15 and 20) is bad enough.

Martin Mitchell
New York City

(Editor's Note:

We try very hard to achieve 100% accuracy, and regret any errors or omissions. We will add the home town of our correspondents in future letters).

Apologies

I didn't see a proof of my essay on *Sir John in Love*: which may explain why a large number of misprints have crept into it. Most of them are trivial, affecting punctuation; but a few I'd like to correct, since they render the text meaningless.

On page 4, second column, seven lines from top, the word 'about' should be 'above'. Page 5, second column, twenty lines from top, the word standing as 'empathic', should be 'empathetic'. Page 6, line four, Ben Jonson, not Johnson! Page 7, first column, eleven lines from bottom, the word

'observed' should be 'absurd'; while in the second column sixteen lines from top the word 'partially' should be 'potently'.

Professor Wilfrid Mellers
York

RVW on film

In nearly 25 years of following the life and work of RVW I can only recall 3 small appearances of the great man on film.

1 - A short sequence of him playing tennis, I think this was at the same event as the photograph on page 60 of the *Pictorial Biography* by John Lunn and Ursula Vaughan Williams. The film was said to be the only known film of RVW and was shown on a BBC documentary commemorating the 100th anniversary of his birth in 1972. I have not seen it since.

2 - Film of Sir Henry Wood conducting the recording of the *Serenade to Music*. If you look carefully to the right of the conductor's rostrum a figure that can only be RVW is sitting on the rostrum steps following the score. This film has been used several times, the latest was during last year's Proms for an interval feature about Sir Henry Wood and his life and work.

3 - A short sequence of 5 seconds as part of a film made in 1929 recording the arrivals at the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester. The film was from the Huntley Archive. This film appeared in the BBC broadcast of the concert commemorating the 300th anniversary of the death of Purcell broadcast on 21 November 1995, it was used to introduce an Elgar arrangement of Purcell. There was very much more of Elgar than RVW on the film.

I have items 2 and 3 on video.

The only other film I have is *Dim Little Island* which was on Channel 4 some years ago, with RVW's voice on the sound track.

Did you know *England of Elizabeth* is now commercially available on VHS video on Beulah RT199?

Michael Goatcher
Thaxted, Essex

(Editor's Note: *The Beulah video of England of Elizabeth has now been deleted*).

and again...

In issue No. 5 of the Journal, Alastair Brown asks whether there are any clips of RVW on film. There is at least one that I know of, I believe it was in 1972 that BBC TV (I think) showed a short clip of RVW actually playing tennis. He must have been in his 60s or 70s when it was shot and it was an awe-inspiring sight! Sadly I did not have a video recorder at the time.

I am fairly sure that this was an extract from a privately owned film.

Michael Gainsford
Burbage, Leics.

(continued overleaf)

VW on film and disc

Please note that *England of Elizabeth* is in the current Beulah catalogue which should please Alastair Brown (see letters, RVW Journal No. 5). I've been trying to get them to follow this with *The Vision of William Blake* but no luck so far. A supportive letter from you on RVW notepaper might help. May I also suggest that the Society get Dutton or Beulah to put out several early VW recordings which have yet to be done on CD. I can think of a couple of recordings of *On Wenlock Edge* which deserve to be done - indeed three! I refer to Wilson/Pears - Britten/Maran. All three on one disc would be ideal but I don't think Michael Dutton or Barry Coward of Beulah would agree! Anyhow it would be good to have these in one form or other on CD.

How pleased I was to note that Ursula's poetry is to be done in a collected edition. She is a good friend of mine and I have long wanted such an edition. Might I suggest that the Journal publish a list of Libretti she has done for British composers. I think she said it was 29 in all but that was two or three years ago! I suspect it will be 30 by now! Anyhow she will provide the list I'm sure.

Raymond Monk
Leicester

(Editor's Note:

We took up Raymond Monk's idea on a list of Ursula's libretti, and this is reproduced on page 6. We have also written to Beulah on the Vision of William Blake)

RVW on the Internet

I recently went "on line", and for a week or so I read the various discussions on

the Classical Music News Group without joining in. Then I made a tentative enquiry whether there were any other lovers of RVW's music out there. Readers may be interested to hear that there has been a large and mainly positive, even enthusiastic, response. In the two weeks since then I lost count after there had been about 25 contributions, and the discussions are still continuing.

It is interesting that quite a high proportion of the postings have come from outside the UK, and include people from Austria, Germany, Australia and the USA.

Needless to say I gave the name and address of the Secretary of the RVW Society for those who had not yet heard of it.

Dr. John Hamilton
Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria

Newsbriefs (continued)

July (continued)

- 27 Plymouth Pavilions - RVW's *Greensleeves Fantasia* and British Light Music - BSO/Field 7:30pm, (details: 01752 229922).

August

- 2 Harrogate Festival - RVW's 3 *Shakespeare Songs* (with Howells' *Scribe* and songs by Finzi) - Finzi Singers, St. Wilfrid's Church 8:30pm, (details: 01423 565757).

- 3 Harrogate Festival - RVW's Silent Noon in Young Musician's concert with Finzi's *Exhaltation Cycle* and Bridge Songs) Soloist Jeffrey Lloyd Webber. 11am Christ Church.

- 21 Worcester Cathedral - RVW's *Lark* in French programme 2:30pm.

- 23 Worcester Cathedral - RVW's *Oxford Elegy*/English programme including Finzi's *Clarinet Concerto* 11am Bournemouth Sinfonietta/ Studt/ Hunt, (details: 01905 23555/21911).

September

- 5 Bournemouth Winter Gardens - RVW's *Symphonies 7 & 8* BSO/Bakels.
- 7 Farleigh House, Basingstoke (similar programme to 29 June, vide supra).

- 11 Bournemouth Winter Gardens - RVW's *Symphonies 5 & 9* BSO/Bakels.

- 20 Barbican Centre London - weekend of Elgar Oratorios (*Gerontius*, *Apostles and Kingdom*) BSO.

- 29 Barbican Centre London - LSO - Dyson *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (very rare outing).

October

- 10 RFH London - RVW's *Symphony 2* LPO/Norrington.

- 11 + 18 RFH London - RVW's *Symphony 5* and *Wasps* LPO/Norrington, (also in Hastings 19). Prior to *Symphonies 2 & 5*, recording for Decca in October (LPO also recording *Symphonies 3 & 4* for EMI with Haitink in December).

- 15 RFH London - RVW's *Symphony 4* LPO/Norrington.

- 30 + 31 Liverpool Philharmonic Hall - RVW's *London Symphony* RLPO with Vernon Handley.

- And finally FREE TICKETS for a BBC Invitation Concert in Glasgow on Dec. 5th. Ring (in August) 0141 338 2916.

Bliss *Things to come*/Lambert *Aubade*/songs by Finzi, Stanford, Parry and Gurney; possibly other songs (by RVW) to be added.

A Note from the Secretary

In the last edition of the RVWSJ I announced my intention to publish a full list of members of the Society but quite a few members have already indicated that they do not wish details of their names and addresses published, which is fair enough. The idea has now been shelved and will not now be pursued.

It is however my intention to keep members' details permanently on a computer database and we therefore have had to comply with the Data Protection Act of 1984 (U.K.). We are bound by the Act to ask formally whether any existing members object to having their names and addresses kept on a computer. If anyone does, please write to me and I will keep the details on a manual record.

Robin Barber

Newsbriefs

- Bryn Terfel and Malcolm Martineau will be performing the *Songs of Travel* in the Usher Hall as part of the Edinburgh Festival on 15 August 1996, (details: 0131 225 5756, or (+44) 131 225 5756 if calling from overseas).
 - The BBC Record Archive have informed us that they intend to issue both the *Fifth Symphony* and the *Serenade to Music* in performances conducted by the composer. The *Serenade to Music* dates from 1951. The Archive has over 250 Vaughan Williams items in total, many conducted by Boult. The BBC are in discussion with potential distributors once the Carlton Classics series is completed this year. We have given the BBC a list of desirable recordings for re-issue including Wilfred Brown's performance of the *Ten Blake Songs* from 1958. Other ideas from Members should be sent to the Editor for passing onto the BBC.
 - The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra include *A London Symphony* in their concert on Wednesday 30 October 1996 in the Symphony Hall, Birmingham. The conductor is Christopher Seaman, (details: CBSO on 0121 236 1555).
 - The University of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra are performing *A London Symphony* on Thursday 13 June at the University Great Hall. (Tickets from 0121 414 7333).
 - This year's Three Choirs Festival at Worcester from 17-24 August includes *A Sea Symphony*, (details: 01905 616211).
 - Thorpe Music Publishing Company and Theodore Presser Company, sole distributor, announce that the full score and orchestral parts for Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, previously available only on rental, may now be purchased. The eight-minute work, based on old English carols, may also be performed with just strings and organ. Further information may be obtained from Theodore Presser Company, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-3490, USA.
 - André Previn will be performing the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* in Carnegie Hall, New York City, on December 16 1996. He conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's.
 - The Royal Northern College of Music's Wind Ensemble plays RVW's *Toccata Marziale* in a programme also featuring Holst's *Hammersmith* on 12 June at the Snape Maltings in Suffolk 8pm, (details: 01728 453534).
 - On 6 July at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, the Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra, conducted by Adrian Brown include RVW's *Wasps Overture* (and Elgar's 2nd) 7.45pm.
 - Chester Cathedral - on 21 July has Thomas Allen in a programme of RVW Songs and Folksongs. Highlight of an excellent programme for the ever impressive Chester Festival which includes the Tallis Scholars, Gabrielli Consort, Tasmin Little, Lesley Garrett and new music supported by the RVW Trust. Highly recommended. Festival runs 12-27 July, (details: 8 Abbey Sq., CH1 2HU. 01244 320700).
- (Editor's Note: The Chester Music Circle recently performed *A Sea Symphony*, and support RVW, (details: 01244 383750).
- Ten Day Residential Course for musicians aged 15 - 25, Oberwesel-am-Rhein. RVW's *Fifth Symphony* to be studied and played. Commences 27 July, (details: Malcolm Goodman 01934 512380).
 - RVW performances at the RAH:
 - Tallis Fantasia* - BBC Symphony Orchestra Cond. Matthias Bamert 7.30pm on 14 August.
 - Fifth Symphony*. London Philharmonic Orchestra Cond. Roger Norrington, 7.30pm on 30 August.
 - This year's Reigate Summer Music Festival from Saturday 13 July to Sunday 28 July has a very high RVW content. Pride of place goes to the Symposium Day on Monday 22 July (see box, page 9). The following events should also be noted:
 - Tallis Fantasia* on 20 July (with Beethoven, Parry and R Strauss).
 - Tony Kendall on a *Bicycle Ride with Vaughan Williams* on 24 July at 10.15am.
 - O clap your hands* and the *Mass in G Minor* on 24 July.
 - A Sea Symphony* on 27 July at 7.30pm in Priory Park.

- Sinfonia Antartica* on 25 July, preceded by a showing of the film *Scott of the Antarctic* at 14.30 and a morning talk by John Huntley on *RVW The Film Composer*.
- Leslie Olive is the Festival Conductor. (Ticket Hotline: 01737 244407).

Additional listings:

June

- 8 Winchester Cathedral - RVW's *Tallis Fantasia* and *A Lark Ascending* (with Elgar's *Enigma* and Delius' *Requiem*) Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by R Hickox 7.30pm, (details: 01962 87797).
- 8 Boxgrove Priory - RVW's *Oboe Concerto* (with Boyce *Symphony 8* and Warlock *Capriol Suite*) Bournemouth Sinfonietta/ Richard Studt 7.30pm, (details: 01243 536240).
- 9 Barbican Centre London - RVW's *Dives and Lazarus* - London Choral Society's 'Come and Sing' evening. With 45 minutes of rehearsal for this, Mozart's *Requiem* and Fauré's *Cantique*, it may be closer to 57 varieties than 5 variants. Concert at 8pm. All singers welcome, (details: 0171 638 8891).
- 14 Bournemouth Winter Gardens - BSO - All Finzi programme 7pm.
- 28 Lyndhurst St. Michael's Church - RVW's *Tallis Fantasia* (with Britten, Elgar, Finzi, Leighton and Warlock) Bournemouth Sinfonietta/Moldoveanu, (details: 01703 282154).
- 29 Trent Park - RVW's *Folk Songs Suite* (including Handel's *Firework Music* with fireworks) Foundation SO, (details: 0181 807 6680).

July

- 3 London St. Paul's Cathedral - Delius' *Mass* BSO, (details: 0171 638 8891).
- 12 Lichfield Festival - RVW's *On Wenlock Edge* sung by Ian Partridge with the Lindsay Quartet 7.45pm in the Cathedral, (details: 01543 257298).

(Newsbriefs are continued on page 23)

Next Edition:

*Recollection of VW
by Roy Henderson
(published in late-October)*