



# Journal of the RVW Society

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## plus news and reviews

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## INTO THE 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY YEAR!

As we enter 1997, the RVW Society is stepping up its preparations for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams on the 12th of October. On the anniversary date, there will be a performance of *Sir John in Love* at London's Barbican Hall. Other highlights of the Festival of Opera in the Autumn of 1997 are rare performances of *A Cotswold Romance* and excerpts from *The Poisoned Kiss*. In Cambridge, *Riders to the Sea* will be coupled with Holst's *Savitri*.

### Pilgrim's Progress

The celebrations will be led by two performances of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden conducted by Richard Hickox, on 3rd November in London and 30th November in the Symphony Hall, Birmingham. These will be the first performances of this opera by forces of the Royal Opera since the première at Covent Garden in 1951. The principal roles in 1997 will be cast as follows:

Pilgrim	Gerald Finley
Bunyan	Gwynne Howell
Evangelist	Jeremy White
Apollyon	Gidon Saks
Bird	Susan Gritton
Mrs Wanton	Janice Watson
Mrs Bubble	Pamela Helen Stephen
Lord Lechery	Adrian Thompson
Watchful	Roderick Williams

The RVW Society is preparing all the programme notes for these events, and will co-ordinate the marketing of the Festival. Full details will be included in the June edition of the RVW Society Journal.

### New Regional Chairman

The Society's regional organisation is being developed which will help with activities associated with the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. In post now are the following Chairmen:

Australasian Region: John Waterhouse  
North American Region: Frank Staneck  
Scandinavian Region: Hendrick Lindahl  
UK-North West Region: Rolf Jordan  
UK-South West Region: Ron Bleach

The meeting of the Trustees in November 1996 agreed the terms of reference of Regional Chairman and these will be communicated directly to post-holders. More volunteers are needed, especially for the U.K. Anyone interested should contact Stephen Connock or Robin Barber.

Biographical details and contact addresses will be included in the June edition of the Journal.

*John Waterhouse reports from Australia on page 21.*



**Frank Staneck, the Society's new Chairman in the USA.**

## LEITH HILL - AND OTHER MEMORIES

by TONY NOAKES

I first heard the name Vaughan Williams in 1944 when I was 9, and my parents and I camped in a little clearing in the woods below the Leith Hill Hotel. The lovely nearby village of Coldharbour, the highest in South East England, in whose church RVW's parents were married, is fixed in my memory of that year as being where I saw the planes flying towards Normandy for the D-Day landings. The following year as RVW had sold the land where we camped, as well as Leith Hill Place, to the National Trust, and camping was no longer allowed, we moved our pitch to the land of a farm a little further down the hill. We continued to camp there, eventually with a small caravan, for a further 25 years. So, when young, I got to know and love the landscape - Mosses Wood, Leith Hill with its tower, Friday Street - that RVW had also known at a similar age. Most beautiful of all, in May, were what we always called the "Vaughan Williams rhododendron woods", with its 40 foot high columns of crimson and purple, below the over-arching oak trees, and with a foreground of more delicate azaleas (12 years ago it seemed right that I should scatter my father's ashes there). I share the hopes of other members that some way may be found of marking RVW's association with Leith Hill Place, especially as, sadly, his later home near Dorking no longer stands.

It could not have been long after this that I connected the VW name with the music. I was lucky that my parents and their friends used regularly to sing around our piano - a wide range of music, from Lieder to Victorian ballads, by way of Gilbert and Sullivan and "Modern English Songs", such as *Linden Lea*, *Silent Noon* and Hugh's *Song of the Road*. At Highgate School, I was much influenced by my teacher Ronald Sylvester, an RVW pupil and a promising composer, who sadly died in his 30s; he encouraged my early attempts at composition.

I saw RVW at several performances in the 1950s. I shall never forget the excitement and the spontaneous standing ovations at the first London performances of *Symphonies 7* and *8*, when that big shaggy bear-like figure stomped down onto the platform. For the *9th*, he stayed in the royal box. My last sight of him that night at The Festival Hall was as he disappeared into a private room for the post-concert celebrations.

I still remember my feeling of loss on seeing his death in the headlines of someone's paper while travelling home on the tube. Once home, we all listened to the special

performance of the *Tallis Fantasia* from the Proms as a memorial tribute. This was followed by a recorded excerpt from *Job*.

Also in the 50s; I twice enjoyed the double bill at Sadler's Wells of *Riders to the Sea* and *Hugh the Drover*, and so appreciated Wilfrid Mellers's supplement *VW's Tambourine Man*, about *Hugh*. (In the recent broadcasts on the jubilee of Radio 3, I was much irritated by the repeated descriptions of *Hugh the Drover* as "boring and provincial" by one Harman Crisewood, an early controller of the third programme: Glockwise tendencies thus seem to have predated Glock!). I look forward to hearing these operas again before too long, as well as to *Sir John in Love* and *Pilgrim's Progress* next year.

Getting to know the music from the inside as an amateur choral-singer has been a continuing joy over the past 35 years. I mentioned some examples in my article on RVW and Delius in RVWS Journal number 6. Others have included *Flos Campi* with the English Chamber Choir - where I was much struck by the orchestration of the march episode with bassoons and clarinets in 4th, but the bassoons on top - one of his many original and effective touches.

I joined the Quaker Festival Choir, which, with its orchestra, was founded in 1985 to perform a peace oratorio *The Gates of Greenham* by Tony Biggin, a young Yorkshire composer - RVW being one of the influences on his original and imaginative score. The amateur group comes together every few years to perform a newly commissioned work. The last, in April 1996 in Birmingham's new Symphony Hall, was Francis Grier's *Embracing the Tiger*, another success. The programme also included *Serenade to Music* and *Blest Pair of Sirens*. I have a much-played original cast recording of *The Serenade* - singing in it helped me to understand better how RVW wrought this miracle. It was also my first time of singing in *Blest Pair of Sirens*. I am still astonished at RVW rating this as the finest English choral work - to my mind at least a dozen of his own are better - and I like some of Parry's other works that have come to light recently, like the *English Suite*.

Small groups from the Quaker Choir and Orchestra meet most years at the mediæval Charney Manor in Oxfordshire for weekend workshops. At one of these, we learned (very appropriately) *An Oxford Elegy* - our performance, without audience, was not perfect, but it was a memorable experience; I look forward to taking part in a public performance with the Stanmore Choral Society on 8th March 1997; the programme also includes RVW's *Benedicite*.

One last question: did RVW's deafness in his old age have any effect on his music -

either its scoring, or its emotional content? I have in mind the very deafness which led Smetana to the cries of anguish in *From my Life*, and, by contrast, how the same fate led both Beethoven and Fauré to music of a wonderful inward serenity.

Tony Noakes  
Stanmore, Middlesex

## SAVED FROM AN AFTERNOON SNOOZE by Roger Covell

Sydney Symphony Orchestra  
Opera House - 26th September

Two events rescued the latest programme of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra from afternoon somnolence. One was an inspiringly powerful performance of Vaughan Williams's *Fourth Symphony*, stark and gleaming by turns, under the direction of Vernon Handley.

Handley, always a welcome visitor here, was crisply efficient in supervising the orchestral partnership in the concerto and roused the SSO to heights of forceful commitment in the great F minor symphony, a downright and even truculent symphonic document, in which Vaughan Williams confounded those listeners who had assumed he was confined to moods of visionary nobility and caressing optimism.

Even today the blunt violence of the work is calculated to affront those people who have an afternoon-tea appetite for music (all bland snacks and cultivated sips). But the mastery of its planning lies precisely in the composer's control of relative degrees of dissonance, a control which helps to maintain the work's momentum and sense of direction. The effect is rather like a succession of images contrasted with the help of a zoom lens, sometimes thrusting us into the blazing core of a furnace and at other times judiciously allowing us a middle-distance view of the symphonic process.

The brass playing was at the orchestra's highest level of confidence, accuracy and balance. Every section contributed to the exhilarating thrust of a symphony which deserves to be placed among the most representative and cogent examples of 20th-century musical art.

Roger Covell  
Sydney

# Proposed Exhibition at Down Ampney Parish Church

- an update by Richard Mason

The Trustees of the RVW Society are now in a position to report upon the plans for the proposed installation of an exhibition at Down Ampney Parish Church, to honour the life and music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Time has been taken to consult architects, exhibition specialists, graphic designers and ecclesiastical authorities: in all cases, the Society has received the "green light" and approval to proceed with this installation. Questions remain to be answered though in several respects, it is our intention to answer some of the more obvious points, in this short note.

## Why Down Ampney?

Vaughan Williams does not have a birthplace museum in his honour, as does Elgar, neither is there a town exhibit such as the Holst museum in Cheltenham. Of his homes, Leith Hill Place is in the hands of the National Trust and is closed to the public. Hanover Terrace, London, is also in private hands, White Gates Dorking and the house at Cheyne Walk are neither of them in existence, and Charterhouse and the Royal College of Music are working institutions not easily accessible to the visiting public.

As Stephen Connock reported in RVW Society Journal No. 6, Vaughan Williams was born in the Vicarage at Down Ampney, in a substantial house that is now divided into two large dwellings in private hands and closed to the public. Visitors often find their way however to the small church at Down Ampney, where Ralph was baptised (the entry can still be seen in the parish register, if requested of the Vicar) and the grave of his father lies just outside the door to the church. His famous hymn *Come*

*Down, O Love Divine* is named after this little parish, and is famous the world over. This is the natural site for a permanent exhibit, and the many visitors who comment in the guest book at the church, frequently lament the absence of any real memorial to the great musician.

## What is the nature of the exhibit?

In the first instance, the exhibit will be a static display, on laminated boards illuminated from above, detailing the long life of Vaughan Williams, in words and pictures. The design of the photographic contents will be agreed by Ursula Vaughan Williams, the composer's widow, using material from her own photographic archive, and Ursula has kindly agreed to write the text herself, on behalf of the Society. At a later stage, funding permitting, it is hoped to add an audio element to the display, so a short item of music by the composer, could be integrated into the display.

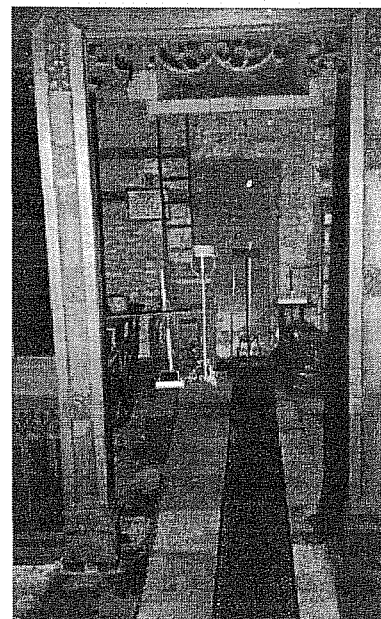
## Where exactly will the exhibit be sited?

By the kind consent of the parish council of Down Ampney Church, with the blessing of the Vicar, the Rev. John Calvert, and with the legal permission of the Diocese of Gloucester (pending planning approval of our design) we have been given the opportunity to use the tower area at the rear of the church. At present, this is a dark and jumbled area, full of various items of equipment that are rarely used.

## The proposal

It is intended to tidy up this whole area, removing some of the fixtures and fittings to the vestry area of the church. The walls will be rendered and covered with a lighter material, a proper floor will be installed, an artificial ceiling will be fixed into place, with recessed lighting for the display area. Storage heaters will be wired into the display zone, to add background warmth to the new room, the exhibit itself will be laminated onto large boards free standing around

three open corners of the large room. To close off the area from the body of the church, new doors will be fitted, adding security as well to the area.



*The area inside the church which is to be refurbished  
(photograph by Robin Ivison)*

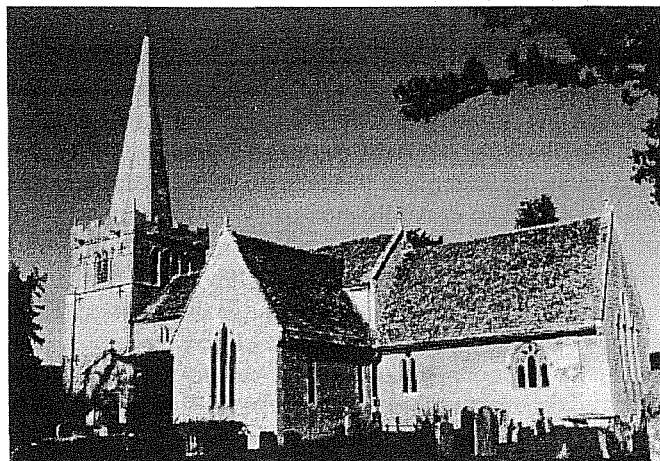
## The Arnhem Veterans

A "side" issue to the proposed exhibit for the RVW Society, is to create a display area to the side of the church, for the Arnhem veterans, who served in World War II in Holland. The veterans have a very strong link with the parish, as is attested by the memorials visible in the church. In taking over the space in the tower, some Arnhem mementoes may have to be moved, and it is not our wish to disrupt the life of the parish, for the sake of a static exhibition. The cost of installing a screen to the side of the church, is not large, when taken into consideration with the total work involved. Ralph Vaughan Williams himself, was a volunteer in the Great War, 1914 - 1918, so it seems appropriate to include this extra renovation within our scheme.

## What will all this cost?

The proposed cost of the above, which it is felt is the minimum required to achieve a fully professional and attractive exhibit, that will last for many years, is in the order of £40,000 to £50,000.

*(continued on page 19)*



*Delightful Down Ampney Church  
(photograph by Robin Ivison)*

## ***The Poisoned Kiss* as a parable of Redemption**

by Wilfrid Mellers

In two essays I contributed to these pages on Vaughan Williams's first two ballad operas I indicated how the pieces dealt with the relation between the old agrarian order and our post-industrial present: in *Hugh the Drover* on the whole from the negative aspect of what's been lost, but in *Sir John in Love* from a Shakespeareanly positive angle. In *Sir John*, Vaughan Williams, boldly using Shakespeare's text from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, juxtaposes Falstaff as a seedily reprobate Old English Gentleman with Ford as a Modern Elizabethan who is us *in potentia*. In this context, Falstaff is a dreamer who dreams outrageous truths, while Ford is an irrational modern rationalist prone to nightmares. In its last act, Vaughan Williams's opera, like Shakespeare's play, abandons verisimilitude for fantasy, since it verges on prophecy rather than fact. Indeed, *Sir John* might be construed as the highpoint of those visionary works of VW's middle phase, wherein he celebrates a potential English Eden. His third opera, *The Poisoned Kiss*, continues in this direction, exploring a genre that is purely fantastical in a spirit that is irresponsible, yet at the same time aware.

Ideas for the piece were first gestated around the time of *Sir John in Love*, in 1927. Yet the opera wasn't completed until 1936, only three years before the Second World War that seemed likely to deliver a final blow to Old England. VW was far from impervious to that threat, and produced in the thirties a series of tough masterpieces, beginning in 1930 with the Blakean and apocalyptically Old Testament *Job*, and proceeding to the weirdly powerful *Piano Concerto* and the bellicose *Fourth Symphony*; even Vaughan Williams's contribution to his 'English Edens' at this time - the choral and orchestral *Five Tudor Portraits*, to poems by the rascal John Skelton - exhibited that visionary world in uncouth potency, warts and all. Under such pressures, VW may have felt a need for relaxation, such as might accrue from a comic opera not merely (like *Sir John*) obstreperously funny, but also generically an operetta, a 'musical comedy' in the tradition of Gilbert and Sullivan, with spoken dialogue blossoming into 'numbers' in song and dance. Apparently, he embarked on the project for the fun or hell of it, with no clear idea as to when and where it might be performed. He sought the assistance of Cecil Sharp's sister Evelyn, to embark on a libretto based on a story by Richard Garnett, from his collection with the mythically Wagnerian title of *Twilight of the Gods*. Moreover, the story chosen was closely related to an extraordinary fable from Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, dealing with a Mad Scientist whose super-natural powers control the lives and deaths of the flora and fauna in his Secret Garden, and enthrall his beautiful daughter Beatrice who becomes herself, by contagion, an agent as well as angel of death. The gallant youth - or fairy prince - who, in falling in love with Beatrice, might have rescued her from the Scientist's poisonous coils, fails utterly: her only release is in death, imbibed in an antidote to the poison.

Clearly, this grim tale offered scant material for a very light opera. Even so, its shadow haunted Vaughan Williams throughout the project; and Evelyn Sharp too seems to have been affected by it more than she had bargained for. Certainly, when she took up hints from the fables of both Garnett and Hawthorne she concocted a very Tall Tale that VW relished the more for its tallness. She didn't so much efface the horror latent in the fable as reverse its meaning, so that Love Conquers All. Interestingly, Vaughan Williams wasn't sure that he liked this cheery mutation, though we may suspect that, needing a Happy Ending for an English Eden, he approved in principle while still recognizing the coexistence of good and evil. He was still under thrall to Blake who believed that 'without Contraries there can be no Progression': which is what the music reveals, as the opera unfolds. Since Evelyn Sharp's natural talents were for frothily Gilbertian rhyme-schemes, puns, and comic reversals, it was inevitable that book and music should pull in *contrary* directions. That VW nonetheless accepted the libretto, engaging in copious and often critical correspondence about it with Evelyn, suggests that it may have been precisely its prankish, end-of-term frivolity that turned the composer on. He wrote the piece to lighten our darkness, knowing that this wouldn't mean much unless he also darkened our light. On the whole, the original critics liked or loved the music but found the libretto an embarrassment. I myself, when still a student at Cambridge, witnessed the first performance at the then-new Arts Theatre, in 1936. My cronies and I accommodated the very English private jokes, and thought that the talented and enthusiastic student performers struck the right compromise between amateurism and professionalism. Today, sixty years on, I'm inclined to think that, whether or no *The Poisoned Kiss* started as a 'mere' *jeu d'esprit*, it becomes in the second and third acts one of the richest and most powerful of VW's English Edens, so that the quality, and indeed the grandeur, of some of the music calls for professional realization. Although the libretto probably couldn't weather the conditions of the commercial theatre, there are substantial stretches of the score that ought to be established repertory pieces - like the several bits of his major opera *The Pilgrim's Progress* which he extracted, since the work was so many years in gestation, to transform into concert works. The love-celebrations in the last act of *The Poisoned Kiss* are paralleled - rivalled - only by the *Serenade to Music*, which followed close on the heels of the *Kiss*, in 1938.

Evelyn Sharp's libretto extends the Mad Scientist theme by giving many of the characters botanical names, making them specimens on which the magician Dipsacus may, like Hawthorne's direr Rapaccini, conduct his experiments. Sharp's Dipsacus, however, is really a comic villain who, thinking he has been jilted in youth by the beautiful Empress Persicaria, plans a dastardly (and crazy) revenge by bringing up Tormentilla (his daughter by a later marriage to a woman now dead) on a diet of poisons. His cunning plot has reached the point at which Tormentilla is about to meet, through his magical hocus-pocus, the Empress's son Amaryllus (also by a marriage to a mate now dead), the dramatic denouement being that Amaryllus will expire when he kisses tainted Tormentilla. But the Empress, Dipsacus's one-time betrothed, is a heroine rather than a villainess; it was her parents, not she herself, who had banned the marriage; and although she had picked up some magical lore from

Dipsacus during their lovesick youth, she has remained an intuitive woman, not a scientific intellect. As Dipsacus testily points out, she'll never be more than an amateur magician, prone to error: though his own professionalism is suspect, since he thinks he's an Endangered Species, the last magician to be NOT state-controlled, as mad scientists are superseded by modern technology. In any case the Empress's feminine intuition seems to be cleverer, and certainly more prophetic, than Dipsacus's intellect, for she has brought up her son on antidotes to poison, so that the Plot will be foiled. The foiling proves to be also an act of redemption.

The Overture opens with a grim little march in the traditionally 'obscure' key of A minor. When the curtain rises, we'll see-hear that the march is an evocation of the Night in which Dipsacus and his three minions, Hob, Gob and Lob, work their spooky tricks. But the Overture soon turns into a preview of the opera's hit-tunes, in the style of a real musical comedy; characteristically, VW appends a note encouraging the audience to chatter in the still-illuminated auditorium, lest they should have heard all the best tunes before the show begins. Nevertheless, the Overture is not *merely* show-business, for although it begins in 'obscure' A minor, it ends with a hornpipe in traditionally 'blessed' G major, the key of the jubilant last act finale.

Roughly speaking, the three acts of the opera outline three stages in the redemptive process. In the pre-redemptive first act the protagonists are presented as creatures in a fairy tale. Dipsacus is a somewhat tawdry end-of-seaside-pier wizard; and the creatures of the night (owls, bats, cats, etc.) that serenade him are more comic than scary. Moreover the hymn to Night, sung by male chorus, is immediately countered, in a feminist gesture, by a hymn to the rising sun, sung by female voices, so that we know that the powers of darkness are not omnipotent. The Dark chorus is in a muddy kind of C minor over an A flat pedal; the Light chorus is inevitably in 'white' C major. Such schematic key-symbolisms are adopted throughout the three acts: of which I'll not attempt to give a blow by blow account, but will comment on a few crucial stages in the allegory, as the redemptive process deepens.

That the first act is pre-redemptive is manifest not so much in the trumpery hocus-pocus of the Mad Scientist as in the genuinely magical moment when the Young Lovers, Amaryllus and Tormentilla, fall in love 'at first sight'. They sing a fragrant duet in dulcet A flat major (interestingly, the key of the pedal note to the murky C minor of the Night Scene). The duet has only one fleeting chromatic passing note to disturb its diatonic purity. Its tonal blandness and lyrical suavity deny the fact that the words are absolute 'Contraries', since Amaryllus, antidote-reared, carols of 'blue larkspur in a garden', while Tormentilla, nurtured on foul poisons, invokes 'black henbane in a thicket, the slime on a serpent's trail'. (She's especially partial to snakes; the lullaby she sings - in G major at that - to her pet cobra, unwittingly injured by Amaryllus, is a moment of exquisite tenderness). In the larkspur-henbane duet both lovers sing exactly the *same* diatonic tune, and although Vaughan Williams directs them to sing 'very sentimentally', the radiance of the melody is inviolable, maybe proving that one person's honey is another's vitriol:

Ex. 1

Ex. 1 is a musical score for a duet between Tormentilla (Tor.) and Amaryllus (Amar.). The lyrics are: "Black henbane in a thick-er. The slime of the Blue larkspur in a gar-den, White clouds in som-mer ser-pent's trail, A head-ed co-bra up-reared. The skis. A sea-gull pass-ing wing-stretch't, The love in a". The score is in A-flat major and 4/4 time, with a tempo of "Andante".

One might hazard that the bland bliss in which the lovers find themselves in this duet is a synonym for the lunacy of love at first sight, while the fact that the Kiss has to be poisoned is a metaphor for learning by experience. But while the poison-musics in the jokey first act poke fun at the love-potion in *Tristan*, the overt parody of the dawn-music from *Götterdämmerung* in the second act heralds a real dawn, in which the first act's comic charades are subtly but inevitably humanized.

The Empress, being a merely amateur magician, is not beyond human compassion and it is significant that it is her minions, the Three Mediums - apostles of modern, Mme, Blavatsky-like spiritualism rather than of Blakean spirituality - who, in their fallibility, initiate the process of humanization. Their little trio has a wittily Gilbertian text with ingenious internal rhymes: 'If you want to escape from the tedium of this modern material age, You need only insert An attractive advert Describing yourself as a Medium'. The key-words are echoed in refrain, in the manner of Sullivan; yet the tonality is 'suffering' B minor, in a gentle march pulse interspersing minor triads with soupy chromatics:

Ex. 2

Ex. 2 is a musical score for a duet between the Three Mediums (1st Medium, 2nd Medium, 3rd Medium). The lyrics are: "If you want to escape from the te-dium Of this modern mate-ri-al age, You need". The score is in B minor and 4/4 time, with a tempo of "Andante".

(continued overleaf)



The effect, if comic, is also deeply pathetic; and it's significant that at the end of the ditty Tormentilla is summoned in slightly grand F major and minor triads in false relation. The alternation bears on her comic-pathetic plight: 'Oh who would be unhappy me', she pentatonically croons, 'brought up on prussic acid? What chance is there for me to be A maiden calm and placid?' And she sings an even more touching duet with her servant Angelica, who complains that she has spent more than enough time preparing delectable poisons, rather than going to the movies. Such pathos prepares the way for the 'real' love-music, as distinct from the tranced irreality of the larkspur-henbane duet. For the two girls are now joined by Amaryllus and the chorus who woo Tormentilla in sweetly seductive music faintly reminiscent of Schubert's magical *Musical Moment in F minor*. 'Contraries' are still active, for Dipsacus's Hobgoblins join in the serenade, thinking that the consequence of the Kiss will be death for Tormentilla. This is the crucial turning-point: for Amaryllus, tremulously loitering on the stairs leading to Tormentilla's bedroom, sings in his lyric tenor the loveliest tune in the opera: a waltz in 'blessed' G major, telling her and us that, 'for good or ill', their magic moment of meeting and mating approaches:

Ex. 3

Why this little tune, as compared with the larkspur-henbane duet, sounds so grown-up, even annealed, in its vernality and virginity is one of those questions that prompt one to fall back on the notion of 'sheer' genius: though it has something to do with transparency of texture, simplicity of metre, and euphony of harmony, faintly disturbed by dissonant appoggiaturas. Interestingly, this number, unlike the larkspur-henbane duet, does modulate - and to 'celestial' E major, the lower mediant - albeit only fleetingly.

The opera's, not merely that act's, climax comes in the ensuing ensemble. The lovers, encouraged by the chorus and the hobgoblins, approach their Kiss: which the Hobgoblins think will be lethal though Amaryllus and Tormentilla may know in their heart of hearts that it is their ultimate bliss. Both lyrically and harmonically the music grows more urgent, far from the world of *opera bouffe* and of G and S:

Ex. 4

The relative turbulence leads to a modulation into 'white' C major, in the openness of which Amaryllus chants an expanded version of his G major serenade, joined by Tormentilla, who, although still half believing or fearing that the kiss will be death, rises to ecstatic rapture with her lover, now a young *heldentenor* comparable with Hugh the Drover, if not with Tristan:

Ex. 5

(Ex. 5 continued overleaf)



The chorus and hobgoblins briskly round off the scene with yells of delight or screeches of vindictive triumph, the Contraries still vigorously battling. The ensemble stops, rather than ends, on Neapolitan D flats (in a kind of C minor); and the act concludes with an expansive double ensemble of the lovers and their friends in desperate if puzzled *ecstasis*, unsure whether they're dead or alive, while the Hobgoblins chant an ironically solemn threnody, in 'heavenly' E major, over their presumptive corpses.

Although nobody is certain what has happened, the young lovers' destinies have been triumphantly sealed. This gradually emerges during the third act, which is centrally devoted to sorting out the fates of the previous generation, righting the wrongs for which the Mad Scientist, and possibly the Proud Empress, were responsible. The act opens with a seductively fetching tango for the twenties-ish Three Mediums, who had played a regenerative role in the second act. They're still complaining about the tedium of their household duties, and still bemused by the effect of the Poisoned Kiss. A little light dawns, however, when Dipsacus returns to the Empress's palace in Golden Town, intending to tie up his knavish tricks, but revealing that Amarylus, though he has fainted with the inexpressible joy of the Kiss, is tiresomely not dead, but ready to be as lively as Tormentilla is lovely when once she's restored to him. Some of these early episodes in the third act return to the bantering playfulness of the first: though not so far as to weaken the positive burden of the second act finale. Significantly, the climax to the third act belongs neither to the villainous Wizard nor to the virtuous Hero, but to the women, Tormentilla and the Empress, who in a truly sublime duet demonstrate, through a swinging 3 2 pulse in heroic E flat major, buoyantly modulating to the dominant, how love both makes and breaks all rules, spoiling the 'little games' of us blinkered mortals:

Tor. *Impresso*  
 be \_\_\_\_\_ till \_\_\_\_\_ lov - - ers all are dead! \_\_\_\_\_  
 So will it be till lov - - - ers all are dead!  
 Emp. \_\_\_\_\_  
 So will it be till lov - - ers all, \_\_\_\_\_ till lov. er  
 So will it be till lovers all \_\_\_\_\_  
 all \_\_\_\_\_ are dead! \_\_\_\_\_  
 all \_\_\_\_\_ are dead! \_\_\_\_\_  
*f* \_\_\_\_\_ *pp* *lunga* \_\_\_\_\_ *riente*

Here the women are positive forces almost as impressive as Leonora and Marzelline in Beethoven's *Fidelio*; and although Vaughan Williams's grandeur is not Beethovenian, it is certainly grand. The Empress relents, accepting, even blessing, the young people's marriage; and Dipsacus, already a back-number, is accorded a mini-redemption, rueful in tone. The sextet in which the airy Mediums are married off to the mundane Hobgoblins makes no attempt at transcendence, but it makes us laugh, which should be a blessing, though hardly a sublimation.

The ultimate finale has, however, no need of irony: for after the servants Angelica and Gallanthus have proclaimed, in a dotted-rhythmed ditty in the tricksy key of B flat minor, that 'Marriage is the proper thing to do' - thereby reconciling a sacrament with Gilbertian social propriety - the commonweal is healed in a final choric hornpipe. First hinted at in the overture, deeply related to the noble duet in which Tormentilla and the Empress had claimed that Love Conquers All, this chorus is now manifest in communal, rather than individualized, terms. It isn't merely the words that tell us that Wrong is Righted, for enactment takes place in the complex, yet lucid and seemingly inevitable counterpoint, in the exuberantly flowing lines, and in the startling vivacity of the hornpipe's 'contrarious' hemiola metres:

*(continued overleaf)*





# BOOK REVIEW

## A MASTERPIECE...

by Richard Mason

A new masterpiece has arrived in the Oxford University Press bookshop: the long awaited revised *Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*.

The release date was 24th October, the price is £25.00. Society members can have this at a small discount of 10% (no postage to pay) if orders are placed with Richard Mason at 144 Campbell Road, Oxford OX4 3NT. Please send a cheque for £22.50 payable to The RVW Society.

I have been reading this volume with great pleasure. Every work is listed, sometimes at length, and there are a large number of music examples in the text. For each work a brief musical history of the composition is attached, a full listing with reference numbers for the location of the original manuscripts, plus details of the publication of scores.

Extra appendices include an extensive bibliography of the literary writings of Ralph Vaughan Williams, compiled by Peter Starbuck (some of these treasures will be excavated and reprinted by the Society), and also a long essay with full annotations of the manuscript collection of folk songs collected by Vaughan Williams. This is a fascinating study, full of riches too deep to explore in such a brief review.

In places where Vaughan Williams provided programme notes, whether in the form of a musical analysis, or more loosely as just comments, no matter how brief, in letters to friends, these are all included. These can be very illuminating, and also very hilarious in places. Take for example, the composer's comments on the *Ninth Symphony*:

"The usual symphony orchestra is used, with the addition of three saxophones and flügel horn. This delightful and neglected instrument is not usually allowed in the select circles of the orchestra and has been banished to the brass band, where it is allowed to indulge in the bad habit of vibrato to its heart's content. While in the orchestra it will be obliged to sit up and play straight. The saxophones, also, are not expected, except possibly in one place in the scherzo, to behave like demented cats, but are allowed to be their own romantic selves. Otherwise the orchestration is normal, and is, the composer hopes, sound in wind and strings."

I was astonished to discover works in the catalogue that were not only unknown to my ear (sadly, works such as *The Poisoned Kiss* is not in the record shops) but also were previously totally unknown to me even as names. One such delightful discovery is listed under 1955:- Diabelleries ~described

as variations by various composers for 11 instruments on the theme "Oh! Where's my little basket gone?" The full score and parts are apparently in the British Library and the work is unpublished, but the list of composers' names given by Michael Kennedy certainly makes even a small chip such as this from the master's workbench sound intriguing, just reading this list makes my mouth water: Howard Ferguson, Alan Bush, Alan Rawsthorne, Elizabeth Lutyens, Elizabeth Maconchy, Gerald Finzi, Grace Williams and Gordon Jacob (not forgetting RVW of course).

There are, alas, no musical examples given for *Thomas the Rhymer*, though a few snatches of the unfinished *Cello Concerto* appears, as does an interesting reference to a deleted passage in *A London Symphony*. I was fascinated also to find reference to a proposed work for vibraphone amongst the final projects list. Clearly, right to the very end of his long and active life, Ralph Vaughan Williams was buzzing with new creative and experimental ideas.

This volume cannot be recommended strongly enough for members enthusiastic to grasp more of the man, as well as of his music. In the notes, the humour and good natured rustic character of Vaughan Williams shines through in many (often unexpected) places. As an aide to study and appreciation of, his glorious music, this will be an invaluable tome. I find myself wishing that it could be distributed freely to every student of music, as an incentive for further investigation. Quick! Buy it today!

**Richard Mason**  
Oxford

### *Birthday Greetings from Vaughan Williams*

by Graham Parlett

In the spring of 1951 Samuel Barber invited twenty-three composers to harmonise variations on 'Happy Birthday to You', the famous song by Mildred and Patty Smith Hill, as a tribute to Mary Zimbalist (née Curtis Bok), the founder of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, on her seventy-fifth birthday. According to Barbara Heyman's biography of Barber (OUP, 1992), p. 315, the composers were invited to produce their variations in 'any shape, style or variant which might amuse', and the scores were bound in an album with a contents page in musical notation signed by Barber and headed 'Happy Birthday to Mary'. As well as a piece by Barber himself, the album contains tributes from Bax, Bloch, Chávez, Copland, Dohnányi, Harris, Hindemith, Honegger, Martinu,

Menotti, Milhaud, Piston, Pizzetti, Poulenc, Rosario Scalero (Barber's composition teacher), Schuman, Sibelius, Stravinsky, Thomson, Vaughan Williams, Villa-Lobos, Walton and the dedicatee's husband, Efreim Zimbalist.

In view of the many distinguished composers involved in this exercise (however trivial it may be), it is surprising that the collection is not better known. I have certainly not come across any reference to it in the literature about Vaughan Williams, and readers of this Journal might be interested in a description of his very brief contribution. It is written out on one side of a sheet of eight-staff music paper and consists of two melodic lines on a single two-staff system, the tune in the bass with a counter-melody in the treble. At the end of the ten-bar score the composer has written: 'With kind regards from | R Vaughan Williams | Aug. 6<sup>th</sup> 1951'. The date was originally 'June 20<sup>th</sup>' (if I have deciphered the handwriting correctly), but this has been crossed through and replaced with the date of Mary Zimbalist's birthday.

Attempts to trace the original manuscript have proved unsuccessful so far - the most likely repository has not replied to my two written enquiries - but there is a negative photostat in the Library of Congress in Washington, and I am grateful to Charles Sens of the Music Division there for kindly providing me with a copy of Vaughan Williams's score. According to Mr Sens, the photostat was received as a copyright deposit on 13 December 1951 with the registration number EU258823. The claimant was Mrs Curtis Zimbalist, but the certificate was issued to a firm of solicitors which no longer exists. Mr Sens also sent me a copy of Arnold Bax's nine-bar setting for unaccompanied SATB, and I am grateful to Dr Stewart Craggs for letting me see a copy of Walton's tribute, which consists of a single melodic line beginning with 'The Star-spangled Banner' and ending with 'Happy Birthday to You'.

**Graham Parlett**  
London

How to obtain  
*THE COLLECTED POEMS OF - URSULA VAUGHAN WILLIAMS*

*O Western Wind...*

*An anniversary*

This was our world's end day, dear love  
an end of time but not of tears,  
the end of touch, the silenced word,  
the first day of our separate years.  
When will time end for me, dear love,  
or end for both in darkest night,  
or shall I find, in that unknown  
your hand is mine, and mine your own?



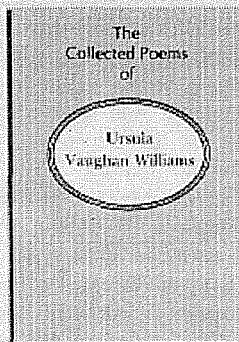
*The Collected Poems*  
of

# Ursula Vaughan Williams

This is a book to keep near at hand; you can pick it up at any time of the day or night and find a poem to suit your mood. The poetry of Ursula Vaughan Williams is moving, profound, evocative and lyrical. She has that rare and enviable talent of being able to write in a way that makes the reader think "that's it, that's exactly how it is!". From 'Mountaineer', one of the first poems in this collection

and written when she was just 16 years old, to 'Time Being', the last piece in the book, we make the acquaintance of a poet with a love of nature, a concern for humanity and a keen sense of humour.

The Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams is published by Albion Music Ltd.  
A division of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society.

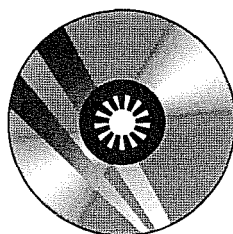


Ursula Vaughan Williams was born in Malta in 1911 and began writing poetry at the age of 10. Her first collection was published in 1941 under the title *No Other Choice*. Further collections were published in 1943 and 1948. Following the death of her first husband in 1942, her friendship with the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams deepened and they married in 1953. Many of her poems have been set to music by her late husband and other eminent musicians such as Malcolm Williamson, Elizabeth Lutyens and Roger Steptoe.

For further information please contact Stephen Connock,  
Willow House, 3 Burywoods,  
Bakers Lane, Braiswick, Colchester CO4 5AW

**Price to members: £16.50 (including postage and packing)**  
**Cheques to be made payable to Albion Music Ltd.**  
**Cheques should be sent to Stephen Connock for immediate delivery.**

# Record Reviews



## A Vaughan Williams Hymnal

Twenty one hymns and Three organ preludes on Welsh Hymn-Tunes

The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge,  
Richard Marlow

Conifer Classics 75605 51249 2 (76.15 full price)

When the Rev. Percy Dearmer called on Ralph Vaughan Williams at his home in Burton Street, Westminster in 1904 and asked him to become musical editor of a new hymn-book, the idea was to produce a 150-hymn supplement to *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. Dearmer said the endeavour would take two months. In fact it took two years until *English Hymnal* appeared in 1906. VW went on to jointly edit *Songs of Praise* in 1925 and arranged his last hymn-tune as late as 1950.

Back in 1904, the choice of the 32 year old composer with only a handful of compositions to his credit was nothing short of inspired. Percy Dearmer wanted to create a recognisably *English* hymn-book, and VW had been active in the collection of English folk song many of which Vaughan Williams knew could be incorporated into the *Hymnal*. In this present collection, for example, we find *I heard the voice of Jesus say* to the beautiful *Dives and Lazarus* tune. The choice of Vaughan Williams as musical editor was also a practical one: he had been organist at St. Barnabas in Lambeth from 1895 to 1897. Whatever he thought of the organ, he gained first-hand experience of church music and its importance as a continuing tradition. He discovered that the music was often unworthy, and the *Hymnal* gave him a chance to remedy this state of affairs.

As this collection so clearly shows, Vaughan Williams sought hymns which were beautiful and noble. He avoided the 'specially composed' tune as far as possible, but did write fourteen tunes including the joyous *Sine Nomine* and the wonderful *Come down, O Love Divine (Down Ampney)*. Both are included here together with *Magda*. The other hymns are his own arrangements or other arrangements which he included in his published collections. The *Old 104th* and the *Old 100th* are here, and the collection is given variety by the inclusion of the *Three organ preludes on Welsh hymn-tunes*.

This is a fine CD. The choir of Trinity College, Cambridge sing throughout with clarity and the ability to vary and colour their tone which avoids any hint of monotony or congregational bellowing. For those who love the hymn-tunes of Vaughan Williams, or for those who want to experience the music which had such a formative influence on the development of Vaughan Williams as a composer, this CD is highly recommended.

Stephen Connock  
Colchester

(Editor's note: The CD of all VW's original hymns still awaits technical clearance from Carlton Classics).

A Suite from the *Incidental Music to The Pilgrim's Progress* (1943), *Job - A Masque for dancing*.

Delyth Jones (soprano), Elsa Kendall (contralto), Robin Leggate (tenor), BBC Northern Singers, BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra, Groves and Handley (in *Job*)

BBC Radio Classics, 15656 91662 (68.25 bargain price)

This is a rare and extremely welcome release of Vaughan Williams's music for the 1943 radio broadcast of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is taken from a studio recording of October 1975 when Sir John Gielgud returned to the part he had first taken in 1943.

Vaughan Williams composed 38 sections of incidental music for the radio production, which is reduced to around twenty-five minutes of music in this Suite. Howard Ferguson tells me that he was first asked by Edward Sackville-West to write the music for the play in 1942. After a short period when Dr. Ferguson tried to compose the opening bars, he realised it was not right for him. He was aware of Vaughan Williams's long association with *Pilgrim* and with typical modesty, suggested to Sackville-West that Vaughan Williams be asked to write the incidental music.

We should be grateful to Howard Ferguson, for there is much of nobility and beauty in this Suite. The opening *Prelude* uses the wonderful *York* theme, but the music soon

departs from its more familiar final version to make much more use of passages from the sublime *Tallis Fantasia*. Members who own the Christopher Palmer adaptation of music from the 1942 radio version will be familiar with the way that Vaughan Williams integrated the *Tallis* music into the score (Hyperion CDA 66511). The Apollyon music is immediately recognisable, but develops in different ways to the *Morality*. The entry of the chorus for the *Alleluia* section is particularly moving as is the evocative opening of the section *Welcome to the Delectable Mountains*. Sir Charles Groves infuses the closing bars with great nobility which makes me wish he had recorded the full *Morality*.

Even if you have the Hyperion *Bunyan Sequence* and the opera, this CD is worth the £5.99 asking price. For your money, you also get a fine recording of *Job* conducted by Handley.

Stephen Connock  
Colchester

## Compulsory purchase

Five Mystical Songs, O Clap your Hands (with Holst A Choral Fantasia, Psalm 86 and Finzi Dies Natalis)

John Shirley-Quirk (baritone), Choir of King's College, Cambridge, English Chamber Orchestra, Willcocks

EMI CDM 5 65588 2 (71.29 medium price)

In the RVW Society *Selective Discography*, I recommended this EMI recording of the *Five Mystical Songs* above all others. I said it might be difficult to obtain, and therefore it is excellent news that EMI have re-issued it in the medium-priced British Composers series.

What adds to the attractions of this disc are the couplings. Wilfred Brown's recording of Finzi's *Dies Natalis* is unlikely ever to be surpassed. The tenor is warmly expressive with superb diction, and the accompaniment of the ECO under Christopher Finzi is equal to the occasion. Add to this the austere but memorable Holst pieces, and this CD is indeed a compulsory purchase.

Stephen Connock  
Colchester

(Editor's note: Rolf Jordan will review the new Collins CD of VW's songs in the June edition).

Additional contributors are required for CD reviews in the Journal. Please contact Stephen Connock.

# CHAIN OF DESTINY

by Frank Dineen

When 55-year-old Kate Bryan complained about a lecturer in English Literature at an evening class at her girls' school in Brentwood, in December, 1902, she had no idea of the extraordinary chain of events she was about to set in motion. Kate was Secretary to the newly organised Oxford University Extension Lecture Committee and headmistress of the Montpelier House School for Girls, a school she founded and built on the corner of Queens Road and Rose Valley in 1879. It was eventually to be taken over by Essex County Council in 1913 to become the Brentwood County High School for Girls.

Kate Bryan was one of those extraordinary, strong-willed Victorian spinsters, who dedicated their lives to causes. With Kate the cause was the raising of the status of women through the expansion of their educational opportunities.

As a result of Kate's complaint, 33-year-old John Marriott (later to become Sir John, a prominent historian and author), Organiser of the Extension Lecture Committee at Oxford University, selected the young Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams to give a course of six fortnightly lectures from January until April, 1903. It did not matter that Vaughan Williams's subject was music, what was important was his ability to lecture. Before the age of cinema, radio and TV, these lectures helped satisfy the demand from an increasingly well educated public for knowledge that was both stimulating and entertaining.



*The Rectory at Ingrave, now known as Heatleys, visited by RVW  
(photograph courtesy of Frank Dineen)*

30-year-old Vaughan Williams was already composing, but did not feel at home with the English music of his day. He was searching for a musical form that resonated with his deep feelings for England, something born out of being English. He was alienated by the pervasive German influence in the English music of the time.

Since he was a student ten years earlier Vaughan Williams had been attracted to the

traditional music and song of the common people. He was one of the first to use the term Folk Song. The music lectures he gave at the Queen's Road School examined every aspect of Folk Song, its history, its national and international influence, its use in religion and at work and play.

On Kate Bryan's School committee organising the lectures was 40-year-old spinster, Loxey (Georgina) Heatley, youngest daughter of the Rev. Henry Heatley, who had been Rector of St. Nicholas's Church, Ingrave since 1867. Her meeting with Vaughan Williams was a decisive link in the chain of events that was to reshape Vaughan Williams's creative destiny and give a new direction to English music.

As if to prepare the ground for future seed, many years earlier 4-year-old Loxey Heatley was sent to stay with a family at Stambourne, on the Essex-Suffolk border. There, an old woman sang the old songs of the countryside to her. It was an experience she never forgot and must have made her unusually receptive to the lectures of Vaughan Williams. At his fifth lecture she gave Vaughan Williams a note with a fragment of a song she remembered the old woman singing.

Encouraged by Vaughan Williams's response she began to collect songs herself, starting with the Rectory servants. She wrote down songs sung by Emma Turner, housemaid, and Mrs Turner (her mother). Then she went to Ingrave Church school (now the church hall) and collected songs from a teacher, Alice Horsnell and the Ingrave children. At Vaughan Williams's last lecture she handed him the songs she had collected.

At this stage there is a puzzling reluctance on the part of Vaughan Williams to follow up this extraordinary evidence of a living local folk song tradition. He had convinced himself that real folk song was dead and a thing of the past. He was also working hard to improve his musical capabilities and jealous of anything that might divert him from this main purpose of his life.

However, he must have had doubts when less than six months later, in September, 1903, Cecil Sharp, staying with his friend, the Vicar of Hambridge, Somerset, heard an old gardener, John English, sing *Seeds of Love*, while mowing the Vicarage lawn. Sharp was so impressed with this unexpected discovery of a musical gem he

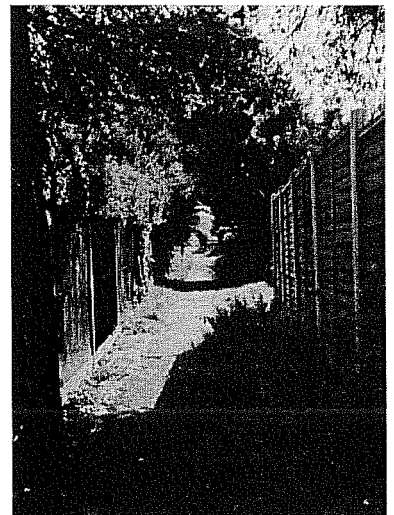
began collecting then and there. Sharp went on to collect thousands of songs and was credited with starting the English folk song revival.

## The Rectory Tea Party

Loxey and her older sister Florence were still fired with enthusiasm by Vaughan Williams's lectures. They were well aware of the survival of a folk song tradition in Ingrave, especially among the older people. They decided to invite Vaughan Williams to a Rectory tea party for the older parishioners on Thursday, 3 December, 1903.

The venue of the lecture at which the invitation, and another link in the chain of destiny, was made, is not known. Vaughan Williams's second wife, Ursula, in her biography *R.V.W.* wrote:

Yet another of his courses of lectures on folk song took Ralph to Brentwood in Essex during the autumn (1903). After one talk two middle-aged ladies told him that their father, the vicar of Ingrave, was giving a tea-party for old people of the village and some of them possibly might know country songs...



*Glow-worm or Kissing-gate Alley, off Rectory Lane, Ingrave  
(photograph courtesy of Frank Dineen)*

Although no documents exist, when an event to be detailed later is taken into account, it seems likely that the lecture was held at Brentwood School, and must have taken place in November, 1903 or before. There is no evidence that the Rectory Tea Party was an annual event. It had been specially organised, probably by the Heatley sisters for the explicit purpose of involving Vaughan Williams. The public invitation from his two well-known lady supporters put him on the spot and it would have been an ungallant gesture to decline.

The reluctance already shown to investigate the songs Loxey had handed to him at the last lecture in Montpelier House had not



dissipated. His attitude is clear from his letter in the *Morning Post*, published on 2 December, 1903, on the eve of the tea party, when he supported Cecil Sharp's "suggestion that the county councils should undertake the work of collecting and committing to writing these fast disappearing traditional songs."

Despite his misgivings, Vaughan Williams went to the Rectory Tea Party only to find that nobody would sing because the rectory setting was not at all like that of the Harvest Suppers where Loxey and her sisters had previously heard the old songs. The old parishioners were well aware of the past tragedy that had led to the hard attitude of the 83-year-old Rector, then a widower of 33 years. He had lost his 41-year-old wife following the birth of their eighth child. The baby died soon after and some months later his eldest daughter died, aged 14. Parishioners believed that he had responded to these bereavements by making his children promise never to marry.

But Vaughan Williams did meet Charles Pottipher, forging the final link in the extraordinary chain of events begun unwittingly by Kate Bryan. Pottipher had been expected to be the star performer at the tea party. The tall, quiet 75-year-old man with a good voice, in his Sunday best dark suit and starched white wing-collar shirt, impressed Vaughan Williams, but he refused all requests to sing, no matter how much he was coaxed. Pottipher was only too conscious that the best of the old songs were about young love, a taboo subject in the oppressive Victorian atmosphere of the Rectory. Maybe seeing the disappointment on Vaughan Williams's face he offered to sing to him next day at his home a quarter-

of-a-mile up Rectory Lane.

### *Bushes and Briars*

On Friday, 4 December, 1903, Vaughan Williams visited Pottipher's cottage in the alley off Rectory Lane, Ingrave (now 43 Middle Road). As he walked up the path he found the old man leaning against the timber door frame, wearing his smock. Pottipher launched into his favourite *Bushes and Briars*. Vaughan Williams was overwhelmed by the beauty of this poignant country love song. The thought that such songs could be lost forever turned him instantly into an enthusiastic collector. Leaving their collection to the county councils was forgotten. Vaughan Williams himself, and all biographies of him, considered this moment to be the most influential in his early musical career.

Pottipher could not write and had to sing the song several times before the melody and words were noted. He sang at least five more songs before Vaughan Williams went to listen to the singing of Alice Horsnell, her mother and Emma Turner, the Rectory maid. Among the songs were those previously collected by Loxey Heatley. The singing probably took place at the Church School, only a short walk from Pottipher's cottage. The school-children sang a game-song, and Jim Bloomfield, a well-known local singer and character, who still has many descendants living in the area, also sang.

The first composition completed by Vaughan Williams in 1904, a few weeks after his Ingrave visit, was *In the Fen Country*, a symphonic impression for orchestra that shows him under the spell of folk music, particularly *Bushes and Briars*, snatches of which clearly surface in different parts of the work. Later that year when he was commissioned to revise *The English Hymnal* he used the tune of *The Sheffield Apprentice*, sung by Pottipher, for Hymn No. 607, and the tune of *In Jessie's City*, sung by Emma Turner, for Hymn No. 597. Vaughan Williams collected around 100 folk songs from Ingrave and nearby villages, 800 in the country as a whole. He used the tunes of 35 folk songs for hymns.

In the following months and years Vaughan Williams returned to Ingrave and Herongate many times. In April, 1904 he spent 10 days cycling around the district taking in East Horndon, Little Burstead, Billericay and other areas, often meeting singers in pubs, such as 'The Cricketers' (now Herongate village stores) and 'The Old Dog'.

The meeting with Charles Pottipher and his singing of *Bushes and Briars*, marked a turning point in Vaughan Williams's life. It is hard to appreciate in these democratic days what a near-miraculous event that was in the rigidly stratified society that was England in the Edwardian days before World War I. Here was the grandson of a high court judge, whose mother was the daughter of Josiah Wedgwood III of the pottery dynasty and niece of Charles Darwin, sitting at the feet of an illiterate country labourer listening intently to every sound he made.

Pottipher died in 1909, never knowing the extraordinary contribution he had made to English music. He is buried in an unmarked grave in Ingrave Churchyard.



*RVW Choir Festival - Moulsham Hall, Chelmsford, 1920+(?)*  
(photograph courtesy of Frank Dineen)

### **Vaughan Williams Remembers Brentwood**

Out of the blue, in February, 1955, 82-year-old Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, nearing the end of his long life and at the height of his fame, remembered Brentwood. He phoned the late Dr. Edgar Brice, then Music Director of Brentwood School, seeking an invitation to visit. Vaughan Williams gave Dr. Brice the impression it was a kind of 50th anniversary commemoration. The arrangement to visit with his wife, Ursula, and lecture at the school was confirmed in his letter to Dr. Brice, dated 20 February, 1955, the only piece of documentary evidence linking Vaughan Williams to Brentwood School. He wrote "The last time I lectured in Brentwood must have been in 1905!"

On Saturday morning, 21 May, 1955, Vaughan Williams with his wife Ursula were met by Dr. Brice when they arrived at Brentwood School. Dr. Brice thought he appeared familiar with the layout of the

(continued overleaf)

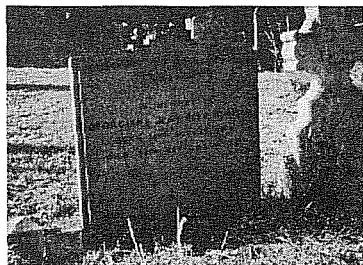


*Charles Pottipher's cottage  
Bushes and Briars sung here, 4/12/1903*  
(photograph courtesy of Frank Dineen)



(continued from previous page)

school buildings when he remarked on the new hall (Memorial Hall) built since his previous visit. Introduced to the assembled boys by Dr. Brice, Vaughan Williams talked about his folk song collecting at Ingrave and played songs on a record player, including *Bushes and Briars* which he said he collected from an old shepherd at Ingrave. Pottipher's name was not mentioned. He remarked on the number of songs connected with the sea even though it was some distance from the village.



*Loxey Heatley's grave,  
St Nicholas's Churchyard, Ingrave  
(photograph courtesy of Frank Dineen)*

He dined with the School Governors, one of whom was at Cambridge with him. Vaughan Williams wore a hearing aid in his later years, and Dr. Brice recalled how he prevailed on one of the Governors, also with an aid, to exchange with him to compare performance. No school record of the visit, or report in the *BRENTWOOD GAZETTE* has been traced.

The visit may be seen as an acknowledgement of the part played in the composer's early life by the district and its singers. He wanted to mark what he thought was the 50th anniversary by returning to the scene of an important phase in his career. His apparent familiarity with the layout of the School pointed to an earlier visit, but his letter suggested a degree of vagueness about the date, 1905. It seems likely he was a couple of years out, and the lecture he remembered was actually the crucial one in 1903 when he was invited to the Rectory Tea Party by the Heatley sisters. A little over three years later Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams died at his London home, on 26 August, 1958, aged 85.

### Ralph's People

To add to the strange chain of events that confronted Vaughan Williams with his destiny, there is the curious connection that the name Ingrave reveals. Vaughan Williams insisted that the pronunciation of his first name was R-A-F-E, not Ralph. Any other pronunciation angered him. The name Ingrave is derived from Old English ING-RAFE (Ralph), meaning RAFE'S PEOPLE, or RAFE'S PLACE. It was surely fitting that Ralph Vaughan Williams found his destiny among Ralph's people.

*Frank Dineen  
Ingrave, Essex*

## How I first came to RVW's music...

(2 more articles in our series)

### Article #1

by Andrea Preston

Thirteen may be unlucky for some but not for me as this was the age at which I discovered Vaughan Williams's music. The work was *Linden Lea* and was sung by the school madrigal group at a concert in 1969. I have always been addicted to harmony and I liked the song for this reason, although the composer's name in the programme meant nothing to me then; I was still steeped in Chopin and Tchaikovsky up to the eyebrows.

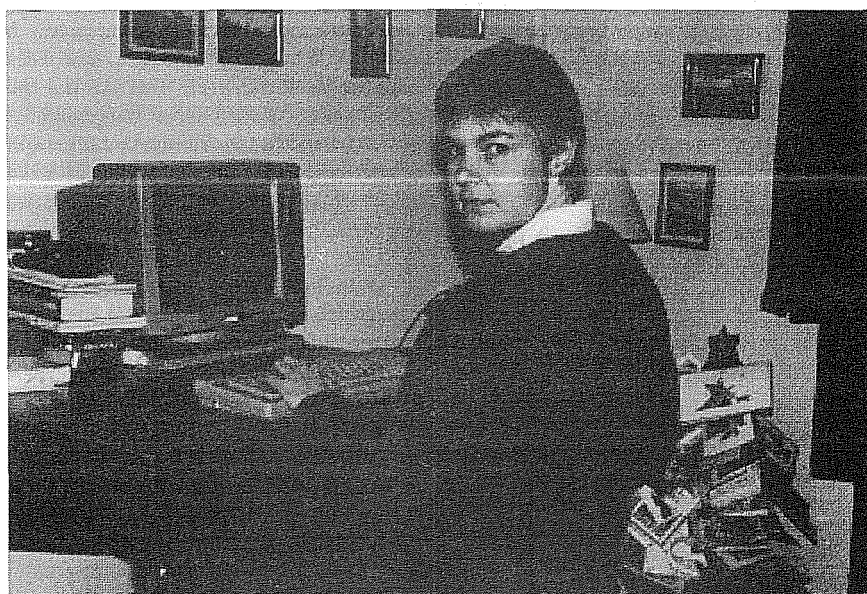
My awareness of RVW's music developed very gradually. A record entitled *A Tribute to Sir Malcolm Sargent* drove me to pester my cousin to play it constantly so that I could hear *For unto Us a Child is Born* but soon I noticed *The Wasps*. Next came a work which has remained one of my favourites - the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. The end of my schooldays was marked by the discovery of the *Sixth Symphony* and - another lifelong favourite - *The Lark Ascending* which was as puzzling as it was wonderful; I had not until then met the paradox that something could be so beautiful, listening to it actually hurt.

living daylights out of me; in keeping with my philosophy of 'Feel the fear and do it anyway' I was not deterred and have subsequently blessed my courage!

The next treasure I uncovered was the *Fifth Symphony*, courtesy of Radio 3's 'Building a Library' one Saturday morning while I was carrying out my weekly room-tidying exercise. I liked what I heard, very much, so although I had listened to only short passages I acquired a recording as soon as I could. I played it to extinction.

After this, I became more methodical in my quest for the music of the man who had by now become my favourite composer. I worked my way through all the symphonies, having the same difficulty with *A Sea Symphony* as I did with *Sinfonia Antartica* but becoming more and more fascinated by the others. The *Fifth* remains my favourite.

I now enjoy - and have recordings of - much of RVW's choral output; some vocal works do appeal to me, the sacred rather than the secular, the exception being the *Serenade to Music*. (I found the spoken version quite strange when I saw *The Merchant of Venice* on stage). I will never forget a Sunday morning in Canterbury Cathedral in 1986



*Andrea Preston in her study at home*

For the next few years my acquaintance with RVW's music was haphazard. I tried the *Sinfonia Antartica* but we were uneasy bedfellows; I am not a great lover of the human voice. I was happier with *A London Symphony*, heard on record two years later. My introduction to *Job* was somewhat hair-raising as the saxophone solo scared the

when the *Mass in G minor* was sung throughout the service; I had seen *Vaughan Williams in G* printed on the order of service sheet but somehow not connected it with THAT mass. By the end of the service the hair on the back of my neck was standing on end and my flesh was goose pimped. Last year I heard *Dona Nobis Pacem* for the first

time and it inspired me to try more of the choral works; I feel as if I have opened a treasure chest.

Of the shorter orchestral works I particularly love the *Oboe Concerto*, the *Piano Concerto*, the *Partita for Double String Orchestra* and the *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus*.

Through expanding my knowledge of RVW's output I have also broadened my experience of other composers, among them Holst. He is also one of my favourites but he is not a rival of RVW. I regard them as joint favourites. I think they would both be quite happy with that.

Andrea Preston  
Stafford

## Article #2

by Michael Gainsford

In common with other contributors to this column, I came to the music of RVW (or the music came to me!) somewhat stealthily; at least until I began to borrow recordings of the great man's symphonies from the record library in 1968. Since that time I have not looked back.

But to begin at the beginning, I should thank my late father for my love of music. I never had a proper music lesson in my life, but grew up in a musical environment. My earliest memories are of the war years, when I would go to sleep at night with the sound of dad's violin in my ears. He was a very competent violinist, but it was only for his own amusement. But from the age of four or five I grew to recognise and like the music of Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Schumann, not to mention Gounod and Ambroise Thomas.

I was taken to see Disney's *Fantasia* at Blackpool on its first release. This resulted in a fascination with dinosaurs 50 years before *Jurassic Park*. To this day I still prefer the *Rite of Spring* to any other Stravinsky work. A visit to the film *The Great Waltz* shortly afterwards convinced me that Johann Strauss was the greatest composer ever. Dad put me right, though. In his view the accolade went to Beethoven.

I was also taken to symphony concerts at the New Victoria Cinema in Preston, where I saw Sir Malcolm Sargent in action. I even visited the opera, when I was taken to see Carl Rosa's production of Gounod's *Faust*, at the age of about 8. I enjoyed it, especially Mephistopheles. Luckily the experience did not have the same effect on me as a visit to *Parsifal* did on my father at a similar age. He told me that he hated it, and it turned him off Wagner for life!

My father's tastes were strictly 'First Viennese School', together with Berlioz, whom he much admired. So it was up to me to progress (if that's the correct word) beyond 1850. It took another 25 years or so to reach Vaughan Williams, via Brahms, Dvorak, Elgar and Sibelius.

It's time I mentioned the Great Man. I seem to have known and loved *Greensleeves* and *Linden Lea* from early childhood. My favourite hymn at morning assembly once I'd started at grammar school was undoubtedly *Sine Nomine*. But these pieces were not at that time associated with one composer, and I knew little of other works by RVW. There was not a great deal of opportunity in those pre-LP days of exploring what was then non-mainstream repertoire. But I did hear the *Wasps Overture* used as incidental music to a radio play (I think it was 'The Count of Monte Cristo'), and found out whom it was by. That later became the very first RVW 78 record I bought.

My schoolfriend, Neil Williams (if you're reading this Neil, please get in touch!) played me the *Tallis Fantasia* on his wind-up gramophone, but I far preferred his record of the Prelude to Act III of *Lohengrin*.

In 1950 we moved to the Midlands and I was bought a little radio of my own. With this I trawled European stations, especially Hilversum 404, for broadcasts of rare Dvorak symphonies, and Mahler and Bruckner. At that time the latter were not played at all in Britain. I had read of them, but never heard them. For what it's worth, my impression was that Mahler was rather strange and somewhat vulgar; and Bruckner deadly boring and even incompetent. My views have changed little since then.

At that time I was a convinced 'Brahmin', but became obsessed with Sibelius after hearing Beecham do the *First Symphony* at Leicester's de Montfort Hall. The only RVW I can remember from that period was when the music teacher at school played extracts of the *Fourth* and *Fifth* symphonies to illustrate 'war' and 'peace'. I was not particularly overwhelmed then, but they did stick in my mind, to be resurrected fifteen years later.

That was 1968, when I heard a broadcast of *Symphony No. 4*. The 'flood gates' were about to be breached. I joined the local record library, and starting with *Nos. 4* and *5*, worked my way through all the symphonies. They were the old Boulton Decca recordings.

Oddly, I found *A Sea Symphony* difficult to get hold of. The *London* I quite liked, but that's all. Then one fateful day I borrowed *No. 6*, and things were never the same again. To say I was 'knocked out' would be an

understatement. It was time to buy a proper record player to replace the venerable 'Dansette', and to start collecting LPs for myself, especially RVW ones.

The next revelation was *Flos Campi*, on the reverse side of the Abravanel record bought for the *Tallis Fantasia*. As with the *Sixth Symphony*, I just could not stop playing it. Incidentally, those who had this disc may recollect that the sleeve bore a reproduction of Albrecht Dürer's *The Men's Washroom*. My nine-year old daughter called this picture 'Bare Men in a Pub', and *Flos Campi* has privately gone by that name ever since. A change from orchestral players' 'Camp Flossie' or 'Flo's Scampi'...

In 1972 my daughter and I went to Down Ampney for the centenary celebrations, and I heard *Dona Nobis Pacem* performed by amateur forces in the parish church. That was the first time I had been 'knocked out' by a live performance. Though a flawed work according to some critics, it remains one of my favourite RVW pieces.

So, for 30 years or so I have been amassing Vaughan Williams recordings and going to occasional concerts of his works. I have tried unsuccessfully to analyse why I adore his music. Its 'Englishness' has something to do with it - I am a confirmed 'cowpatophile'. It has a timelessness, incorporating influences deeply embedded in English consciousness. It is honest, echoing the character of the composer himself. Reading about him only serves to reinforce my love of the music. I think that the emotional range of the cycle of symphonies is tremendous - to my mind greater than Sibelius's symphonies, another remarkable cycle.

Every month I eagerly scan the new CD issues for gaps in the RVW oeuvre. What hidden delights remain unrecorded? Recently, we have had *Household Music*, a real gem. What others like that await the light of day? I only hope I survive long enough to add things like *Willow Wood*, *The Poisoned Kiss*, *The First Nowell* and all those choral works written during the forties, to my collection on the sagging record shelves.

Michael Gainsford

(Editor's Note: We are in discussion with Sir David Willcocks about recording *The First Nowell*. £2,500 has been raised, but more money is needed. We also still await a reply from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts for a grant to enable a recording to be made of *The Poisoned Kiss*, conducted by Richard Hickox).

# The Poisoned Kiss - a revelation.

by Richard Mason

Following Professor Mellers's article, Richard Mason also enthuses over *The Poisoned Kiss*.

And then a stroke of good fortune - I was able at last to acquire a vocal score of *The Poisoned Kiss*. True, I would have preferred to find a recording, but in the lamentable absence of such an item, the score will have to suffice for the time being. With delight and unabated enthusiasm, I made a cup of tea, put on *The Wasps Suite* for good company, and began avidly to turn the pages. I cannot comment upon the music in detail, following a score is one thing, and decent musical analysis is another and there are others more competent than I in this regard, amongst the Society membership. Many of us are voyagers into the unknown however with this rarely heard work. Precious few members will have had the pleasure of hearing of this joyful opera, and it is a sore point indeed that the work remains so far unrecorded. Mindful of all this, I shall attempt to provide a brief tour through the score, for the interest of other members.

The title page declares *The Poisoned Kiss* based on incidents in "The Poison Maid" a story by Richard Garnett, music by Ralph Vaughan Williams, lyrics by Evelyn Sharp, linking dialogue by Ursula Vaughan Williams. I am quite unfamiliar with the original story (and the author) so at first sight it is quite difficult to ascertain just how much of an adaptation was made from the source book, though it is easy enough to spot the dialogue material provided by Ursula Vaughan Williams, of course.

The plot is simple enough:

"Once upon a time a young Magician and a young Empress hoped to marry but her parents forbade the match. Both young people married others. But the Magician, Dipsacus, hot for revenge against the Empress whom he wrongly blamed brought up his only daughter, Tormentilla, on poisons, so that the first man she kissed would die. He knew the Empress had a son and he planned that his daughter should be the cause of her son's death.

The Empress, cleverer than he, knew of this, and brought up her son, Amaryllus, on antidotes. So that when fate brought the young people together and inevitably made them fall in love, the first kiss was not fatal, though at first it seemed so, for Amaryllus

fainted from pure joy. When he was brought home he did nearly die from the pain of being separated from his love.

Eventually, the Empress relented and allowed Tormentilla to see him. Amaryllus's happiness was so great that his mother was touched to the heart. She summoned Dipsacus - long a widower as she had been a widow - and all differences were healed. Not only did he and the Empress marry but also her ladies in waiting married his attendant hobgoblins. The prince, of course, married Tormentilla, while her faithful companion, Angelica, married his friend and squire, Gallanthus. And they all lived happily ever after."

Such is the full description given by Ursula Vaughan Williams in the first page of the score.

It is immediately clear that we are in the realm of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - a world of enchantment, a land of humorous and peculiar beings, closer to Gilbert and Sullivan in tone (*Iolanthe* springs to mind) than Wagner's *Ring*; take the cast list for example: Tormentilla, Dipsacus and Amaryllus have already been mentioned, but in the course of the opera we will meet mediums, a chorus of Day and Night Voices, Milliners and witches, forest creatures and messenger boys, and three magician's servants rather charmingly named as Hob, Gob and Lob.

The *Overture* is the only part of the work recorded and known, bustling with happy and merry tunes. The orchestra are instructed to play with the house lights still up, and there is an amusing instruction at the head of the page:

"The audience is requested not to refrain from talking during the *Overture*. Otherwise they will know all the best tunes before the opera begins".

A brisk *Alla Marzia* leads off swiftly to a flowing *Andante Waltz*, a swifter more polka-like theme follows, the whole rounded off with a vigorous and merry hornpipe.

Act I opens in darkness, with night voices intoning an ode in praise of the dark. So successful is this praise of the night, that the Sun rises, or rather pops up, and instantly hides again (with a resounding thump in the score upon setting again) a couple of times until Dipsacus finally summons the Sun to

appear in full dawn. A flowing cantilena theme, so typical of Vaughan Williams in other contexts such as *Flos Campi* is sung out quietly, though the words Angelica finally sings may come as a bit of a surprise:

"Some with early worms may dally - o  
but the sun is up beyond the valley  
and I've no time to shilly shally, shilly shally - o"

Cinderella-like, Angelica complains that she has to concoct poisons all day, rather than going to the pictures, plus, there is no chance of being courted by a dashing fellow, in the depths of the forest. Cue the appearance of Gallanthus, and his rather unusual love song:

"It's really time I did begin to make a wild endeavour

A pretty little wife to win, provided she's not clever.

Give me a simple village girl (she must however, cook well)

Who's far removed from fashion's whirl (though she must always look well)"

They soon find a mutual delight in each other, in cheerful and light music. Their pleasures however are soon disrupted by the hobgoblins, who arrive with a distinctly heavy gait:

"Here we come, galumphing along  
Hob, Gob and Lob"

Dipsacus arrives, complete with flashes of lightning - a rather English Wotan's storm though no majestic scene of Gothic depth unfolds from this darkness, but rather, the more prosaic comment:

"I'm a sorcerer bold  
In me you behold  
the last of the wizards who's NOT state-controlled"

The love duet continues, but with witty undertones of a certain famous list in a certain Mozart opera, regarding the large number of previous lovers and acquaintances known to have been on the scene. The whole scenario though is light, charming and affectionate.

Tormentilla appears, singing a soft lullaby to a pert cobra, and asking for a soothing drink of cyanide. A merry fuss over poisons ensues, poisons which in this case do not kill. One cannot help but feel that this is a sly and humorous inversion of the situation as found in *Tristan und Isolde*; in this case, the kiss cures even though it should have killed. The plot of the whole opera is declaimed in spoken dialogue between Angelica and Tormentilla, they are left lamenting the absence of their loves and Tormentilla sings a charming Waltz melody, but to the most unexpected and amazing words. The audacity of the rhymes (the

individual reader will have to decide for his or herself whether it is actually good poetry) is quite striking, and I could not conceive of any other composer than Sullivan daring to attach such lines to music (I must confess here, that the melody is pleasant, but the words had me in hysterics at first reading):

"Cocaine and lead agree with me, and poison inorganic;  
such as e.g. antimony, and gas hydrocyanic.  
A poison maid in me you see, with choral saturated;  
a wicked spell caused me to be Nitroacidulated"

A rub of the philosopher's stone, a cry of "O Vogue, O Harper's" and clothes are delivered out of thin air by milliners and messenger boys. All is ready for the Act I finale, Dipsacus invokes the magic to work out his evil spell, in riot of Rossini-like scamperings and wild tongue twisters for the massing chorus:

"Hi-cock-o-lorum abracadabra - bounce  
Fe-fi-fo-fum, higgledy-piggledy-quit!"

A swelling theme transcends all, rising out to a crescendo and a presto dancing close.

Act II opens in Golden Town, a week later. We are inside Tormentilla's apartment. The prelude or introduction has an uncanny resemblance (though much shorter) to the Dawn Music in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. Again, one remembers that Vaughan Williams delighted in Wagner, during his study years in Berlin, though he quickly found his own music voice, free of the musical influence of the German master.

The first singing comes from approaching flowergirls bringing more bunches into the room, listing many floral names, and scornfully muttering that they hate the job, and hate Tormentilla. Angelica delights in all the attentions that they have been receiving, this number is another of the many surprises that we find in the score: her song is in a winning waltz metre, and flows easily, and also has within it a florid cadenza for a brilliant voice ~ again, this is far removed from the social realism of *Riders to the Sea* or the more folksy *Hugh the Drover*. My edition of the score is strangely marked through here at the end of the scene, whether this indicates that the scene was amended, or if there is an alternative version is unclear.

The three hobgoblins again appear on the scene, to intone a rather cheerless ode of doom upon success in love. Angelica and Gallanthus are however getting along like the proverbial house on fire, and little distractions like these will not distract them.

The Empress's mediums make a gloomy appearance, in a morbid little number that seems to have been misplaced from a work

by Kurt Weill: a lugubrious and sombre air that yet remains funny and witty:

"If you want to escape from the tedium of this modern industrial age you need only insert an attractive advert describing yourself as a medium in this way you'll extort from your clients an exorbitant fee for a wage."

Tormentilla reappears with an attendant chorus of wailing lovers, all lamenting their unfulfilled desires. Bedtime looms for Tormentilla and Angelica, and they both sing of lost youthful love and praise "marrying". This is a wistful and tender part of the opera, if my clumsy finger playing of the score convinces me truly of the melody. Amaryllus is duly summoned by magic spells, and at the foot of the stairs, sings what is possibly the most enchanting song in the opera. Here is undeniable warmth and tenderness, here also is a full expression of romantic folksong, here is nobility, and sweet affection shaped into a perfect melody that catches the heart instantaneously with its inner beauty. It is so frustrating not to be able to hear this glorious part of the score in performance.

A very brief chorus urges the fatal Kiss to be enacted, with a swift close of the curtain. Again, my edition seems to suggest two musical endings for the collapse of Amaryllus.

Act III opens in the boudoir of the Empress Persicaria, in her palace at the heart of Golden Town. A light waltz fills the air, and for a moment *Rosenkavalier* seems to be the opera of the day, until a sudden jolt announces a tango for the 3 mediums, however the Empress chooses to renounce the crystal ball, with all its evil powers. She remembers with sad affection, her love of Dipsacus. In a slow  $\frac{6}{4}$  of noble breadth, she sings a moving ballad:

"When I was young and life was strange,  
It wasn't amusing, there wasn't much change,  
the whole of my day I let them arrange  
because I was born to be Empress."

Tormentilla is summoned, who explains at length (spoken) the truth of the situation regarding Amaryllus. A glorious and magnificent duet ensues for the Empress and Tormentilla ~ this is a scene of grandeur and beauty indeed. Deep and powerful music, inspiring and eloquent, it baffles me why this has not been recorded. Here is a revelation of a subtle and wise composer, writing as it were: with his heart on his sleeve, and for his own pleasure, yet the music has indeed a life of its own, beyond the strange libretto; the familiar overture barely touches in fact the musical strengths and virtues of this interesting opera.

With hustle and bustle, Tormentilla summons with spells the appearance of Dipsacus. A quartet follows as love is celebrated in wonderfully radiant music. Kisses are triumphant in encouraging a further reconciliation between the Empress and Dipsacus: a rather sad little song shows them both ruefully regretting the wasted years of early love that was not fulfilled:

"Why, oh why, remember the way the years have fled?  
In very truth, we're done with youth, let's wed instead!"

Time then at last for a very Gilbert and Sullivan style summary, a veritable madrigal singing the advantage so of becoming well married. Even the hobgoblins are tidily arranged to be married off to the mediums, with their own jovial little scherzando. In conclusion, basically everybody agrees to get married:

"It's the proper thing to do"

is the general consensus.

The vast finale is a bustling and rousing hornpipe for full cast and everybody on stage. One cannot help but think that the influence of masque and folk dance is not far below the surface. The infectious and merry hornpipe carries everything before it, though dominating the texture is a singing and magnificent theme that rises above all the hustle and bustle: the central issue, the very rationale for the composition itself, is cheerfully declared:

"Love has conquered, wrong is righted.  
Do not tarry, love and marry!"

The giant of English music here smiles in a manner that would be a revelation to us all of a side to his character that has rarely peeked out in other works. There can be no doubt that this was very much a labour of love, and true, this may not be a major masterpiece when set beside say, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The music though, seems to sing out from the heart, there is a simplicity and a genuinely heartfelt sincerity here that truly deserves to be heard.

I noticed with some sadness an advertisement in *The Gramophone*. It was for a conference to be held in Cologne, Germany. One topic for consideration and discussion was the theme: "Receding Repertoire: What next for recording?" I expect that all members of the RVW Society would be delighted to see a complete edition of a certain English composer's works laid down to compact disc. The Trustees have applied for funding to have this particular work recorded. In the meantime, if anybody knows of a generous millionaire...

Richard Mason  
Oxford

# YOUR LETTERS

*We are always pleased to  
receive contributions for this page*



## Ambiguous

Your October issue has just arrived, and I am enjoying its rich store of viewpoints and information. I didn't get very far with the Mastermind quiz, but can point out that Question 18 does not have an unambiguous answer. It reads "who was the subject of the work left unfinished at the time of Vaughan Williams's death in 1958?" The answer given is *Thomas the Rhymer*; but RVW also left unfinished *The First Nowell*, so that "the Magi" can be proposed in reply; - not to mention "Jesus Christ".

Alas the printer's devil has got at my "Book of Days" extract which I'm delighted that you published on page 21. I therefore ask your readers to reach for their bottles of Tipp-Ex, remove the name to whom "the most sensational comment on a classical work which I have ever heard" is attributed, and substitute the initial "B" of a lady of whom I was, and am, very fond!

*Frank McManus  
Todmorden*

## RVW in the Olympics...

Although I know it was the wee hours of the morning in the U.K., did you happen to hear the selections of music that accompanied the Olympic athletes into the stadium during the opening ceremonies? At one point the March from RVW's *English Folk Songs Suite* could be heard over the babble of the TV announcers. I commend the Atlanta Olympic Committee on their good taste - it fitted quite well into the scenario.

Regarding the subject of RVW on film, may I point out that in Jerrold Northrop Moore's pictorial biography, a series of pictures on pages 110 and 111 showing RVW conducting, is credited as being "film stills" from a rehearsal of the students' orchestra at Cornell University in 1954. If the film from which those stills were taken still exists, it would be a most wonderful discovery for the Society and its members. Doubly so if it included dialogue!!

I think it would be worth investigating.

*Mark Landwehr  
Perrysburg, OH, USA*

## Recollection of civility...

Recently acquired in a second-hand shop - November 26th 1924, Haslingden Subscription concert including Beatrice and Margaret Harrison with a band and chorus of 120 performers. Highlights included cello solos by Herbert Hughes, Rimsky-Korsakov, Popper, Lalo and Eccles-Salmon (?).

What made this a fascinating period piece was the following statement:

"The 'Motor Bus' will leave the Public Hall after the Concert at 10.15 p.m. and through the courtesy of the L. M. & S. Railway Co., the 10.10 p.m. train to Manchester will be detained at Haslingden Station until 10.15p.m."

What chance now such genteel civility with the Citizens' Charter!

*R Rush  
London*

## Letter from a music critic

When attending a performance of RVW's *Symphony in F minor* by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vernon Handley recently, I found a membership invitation for the RVW Society lying on my seat, and promptly became a member. I had long been a keen admirer of the RVW output, and have in fact written annotations for some of the works for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation which, though written in 1973, are still being used.

My love for RVW's music goes back at least to the early 1950s when I was living near Blackpool (catching up on developments in plastics manufacture at ICI with a view to introducing them in Australia) and regularly going by train to concerts in Manchester and Liverpool. The great man occasionally attended these concerts when his own music was programmed, and sometimes conducted, for example the *Tallis Fantasia* in June 1953. Later, when I became a music critic for the Sydney Morning Herald, I often had the opportunity of reviewing RVW performances, and trust that my personal love for the music did not cause undue favouritism in my reviews.

I also collected RVW recordings, and would like to draw attention in particular to Argo RG20, which must be one of the earliest RVW LPs, and which I still treasure; it contains *On Wenlock Edge*, and *Seven Songs from The Pilgrim's Progress*. In both performances the pianist was Gordon Watson, who is still with us but who unfortunately suffered a serious stroke a few years ago, affecting his speech and movement, and who is now a resident of Lynvale Nursing Home, Lynvale Close, Lane Cove, NSW 2066.

Finally, I might mention that I have kept a record of every piece of music heard in live performances since 1945 (unfortunately not computerised) and enclose a copy of the pages referring to RVW. These list every RVW performance I have heard in half a century of concert going, mostly as an active music critic, in Sydney and overseas. My most surprising performance? Something programmed as *Four Folk Airs for Flute and Harpsichord* (1913), performed as "the first performance in the United States of America" at the Grand Canyon Music Festival, in the village of Grand Canyon, Arizona, on 3 September 1988.

I am happy to have become a member of the Society.

*Fred R Blanks  
Greenwich, NSW*

(Editor's note: I can provide a copy of Fred Blanks's fascinating list to any member wanting it).

## Handley's magnificent organ...

I'd like to add something to Rob Furneaux's article on the *Sinfonia Antartica* in Journal 7. Vernon Handley's version is for me one of the strongest on disc thanks to the impressive organ sound, the same to distinguish his recording of *Job*. Seeing the same team - the RLPO and Handley - perform this in Liverpool shortly after the Richard Hickox / BSO performance at the Barbican backed this up. The BSO organ sounded quite tame in comparison, and the same weakness shows in Hickox's recorded *Job*. Only a minor quibble, I know, but one that needs to be rectified before Hickox records his VW cycle.

Vernon Handley and the RLPO also performed *A London Symphony* in 1996, part of an all-British concert that included Holst's *Hammersmith*, for comparison, and a toe-tapping *St. Paul's Suite* which even the players seemed to enjoy!

Vernon Handley remained committed to the symphonies most of all, in both cases acknowledging the score as well as the orchestra during the applause, a nice touch! I'd like to mention an excellent recital Thomas Allen and Malcolm Martineau gave



during the Chester 1996 Music Festival. Included were three songs from *Songs of Travel* and the best Butterworth *Shropshire Lad* I've ever heard. It was interesting to compare the *Travel* songs with Bryn Terfel's recorded interpretation, who Martineau also accompanied. Two noticeably different, yet equally beautiful performances.

A final note; since top five disc lists are being requested, here is mine. I intend discs 'as a whole' of course...

*Phantasy Qt, Six Studies* etc. MGL/Bean EMI  
*Tallis Fantasia, Sym 2.* Boulton EMI  
*Serenade/Lark* etc. Boulton EMI  
*Flos Campi/Viola Suite* etc. Del Mar Chandos  
*Sym 4, 6.* Boulton Belart

**Rolf Jordan**  
**Irby, Wirral**

## Leith Hill Music Festival

The Leith Hill Musical Festival of 1996 was a memorable occasion held at Charterhouse while the Dorking Halls were closed. We were given a warm welcome and everything made as easy as possible for us; the reaction was "If we have to be away from Dorking, this is the place to be." Some went further and asked if we could make it our regular venue. Robin Ivison, Vice Chairman of the RVW Society came to present the awards won in the morning competitions on the final day and Robin Wells, Director of Music at Charterhouse played the magnificent Chapel organ for the *Festival Te Deum* which VW composed for the 1937 Coronation.

We fervently hope that we shall be back at the Dorking Halls for the Festival, 10th, 11th, 12th April but the *St. Matthew Passion* performance will be at the Leatherhead Leisure Centre on 9th March. Brian Kay will conduct all the concerts and information is on 01737 243931.

**Deirdre Hicks**  
**Chairman LHMf**

## VW Concert in Brentwood

I know that I'm rather late in writing, but I wanted to say how much we enjoyed a Ralph Vaughan Williams concert that was held in Brentwood Cathedral last June to celebrate the 5th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral Church of St. Mary and St. Helen in Brentwood. Dr. Miles Vaughan Williams and his family were present and the concert was performed by the Aurelian Ensemble, Brentwood Cathedral Choir and Singers; the soloists were Jeremy Huw Williams, baritone, Sarah Miles, soprano, Yvette Cummings, contralto and Mark Guerin, tenor; the concert was directed by Andrew Wright.

An exultant opening with *O, Clap your Hands* was followed by a great performance of *Fantasia on Greensleeves* and *Serenade to Music*. We were then treated to *In the Fen Country* and a lively performance of the *English Folk Songs Suite*. After the interval, the orchestra gave a lovely rendering of *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*; this was followed by the beautiful *Five Mystical Songs*, *The Turtle Dove* and *The Hundredth Psalm*. Finally, we heard *Bushes and Briars*, which interestingly, Vaughan Williams wrote after hearing the folk song sung by an old shepherd on a visit to Brentwood in 1903. Apparently, as part of a university scheme for adult education, RVW was giving a lecture in Brentwood on the subject of folk song. He was to return to the town again in 1955, shortly before his death, when he visited Brentwood School.

As you can see by the programme, we certainly enjoyed a great variety of RVW's music, excellently performed in a wonderful, joyful atmosphere; a marvellous evening.

**Susan Allen**  
**Ongar**

(Editor's note: Frank Dineen, on pages 12 to 14, traces the link between VW and Brentwood).

## Secretary writes to The Daily Telegraph...

### Sound team

SIR - I wholeheartedly support Norman Lebrecht's view that Sir Simon Rattle's choice of repertoire to represent the 20th century's achievement in classical music is inadequate (article, Sept. 25).

Sir Simon is, I suspect, only guilty of indulging his own tastes; it is just unfortunate that from the viewpoint of the approaching millennium they are so hopelessly out of touch.

Lebrecht's First XI is not bad, but I wonder whether he has taken the cricketing analogy too far. Whereas on current form no English cricketers would make a world team, some 20th-century English composers will surely be ranked with the greatest.

I would open with Mahler and Strauss, and see no problems with a middle order of Debussy, Ravel and Sibelius. But at No. 6 let us have Vaughan Williams, a great all-rounder with nine symphonies to his credit. For wicket-keeper the dependable Elgar, followed by Britten as the class off-spinner and Stravinsky as an unpredictable but highly effective leg-spinner.

Pace attack provided by short bursts of melodic Prokofiev and lengthy spells of symphonic Shostakovich. With Walton as

12th man, this would be quite a side. A shame Sir Simon is chairman of selectors.

**Dr. Robin Barber**  
**Ilminster, Somerset**  
**September 28 1996**

## Down Ampney Parish Church Appeal (continued from page 3)

At first sight this seems high, but the details of the various components soon makes this figure justifiable. A full breakdown is being prepared for the meeting of the Trustees in March 1997.

### Funding

Application will be made to the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the National Lottery Board and the Trustees do feel hopeful that some, if not all of our funding requirements may indeed be met. However, to start the building process off, for plans to be accurately drawn up for official approval, and building contractors engaged, the Society needs a reasonable fund for immediate payment of building materials etc.

We appeal to members for help in this historic work. If every member donated £30, we would have over £12,000! The exhibition will list the names of all those giving a donation.

### Timing

This is the crucial part: it is hoped to have this exhibit open by a certain date in October 1997... and it would be very encouraging indeed if the faith of the Trustees in voting for this exhibit, could be vindicated by a building fund of £16,000 or more by the end of February 1997. If sufficient funds are raised to cover half the costs of this venture, we would surely all feel entitled to a sense of pride, in our new Society leaving such a tangible mark of honour to the memory of Ralph Vaughan Williams, for future generations of visitors to Down Ampney.

### Payment details

All payments should be made to the Treasurer of the RVW Society, at my address shown on the front of the Journal. Cheques should be made in the name of: ALBION MUSIC LTD and should be clearly marked as being for the Down Ampney Display Fund; please indicate style of name to be recorded for the display tablet, or if you wish your gift to be recorded simply as anonymous. ALL gifts received will be acknowledged.

**Richard Mason**  
**Oxford**

# Concert Reviews

## Ursula's 85th birthday concert launches the *Collected Poems*

On Thursday 14th November, Ursula Vaughan Williams celebrated her 85th birthday with a concert as part of the Clerkenwell Music Festival. At a reception before the concert, the *Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams* was also officially launched by the RVW Society to a large and appreciative gathering of Ursula's friends.

The concert itself was an unusual one, with works by Nielsen, Grainger, Tallis and Bo Holten alongside *Silence and Music* and the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* by Vaughan Williams. For me, the highlight of the concert was a performance of Tallis's hymn *When, rising from the bed of death*, the theme of which inspired VW's *Tallis Fantasia*. I had never heard this moving hymn juxtaposed with the VW masterpiece. It was an inspired piece of programme planning in an evening which otherwise lacked a major work to balance the series of shorter works.

At the end, Ursula and the conductor, Bo Holten, received a standing ovation and the celebratory atmosphere continued into the reception afterwards. A fitting occasion for Ursula to cherish.

Stephen Connock

## A superb *Sir John in Love*

Members of the British Youth Opera with Oxford University Chamber Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Timothy Dean, performed *Sir John in Love* in Oxford and London on the 7th and 9th of November 1996.

In a few opening remarks to the large audience at St. John's Smith Square, the conductor said that the opera was seriously neglected and that all the performers had been thoroughly engaged by it. This was apparent from the enthusiastic and fresh performance from the British Youth Opera forces.

What particularly helped was a commanding performance by Andrew Shore in the title role. His acting, even with the limitations of a concert performance, was most impressive, mocking, pompous and sad by turn.

Such radiant and lyrical music! This uplifting performance served to remind us of the glories of this opera which will be

performed again at the Barbican on October 12th 1997.

Stephen Connock

## Ralph Vaughan Williams *Sir John in Love*

British Youth Opera

Oxford University  
Chamber Orchestra & Chorus

Principal Patron: Oxford University Press



Photo: Greg Ginnett

Conductor: Timothy Dean

Guest Artist  
**Andrew Shore**  
as Falstaff

7 November 1996  
Sheldonian Theatre  
Oxford  
7.30pm

9 November 1996  
St John's, Smith Square  
London  
7.00pm

Principal Sponsor: South Bank University



A mini RVW festival at the Royal Festival  
Hall 10 - 18 October 1996 - LPO -  
Roger Norrington

10 October 1996 A London Symphony

It was apt programming for RVW's *London Symphony* to be preceded by a flowing performance of Haydn's *Symphony No. 104* - his *London*.

The *lento* opening of RVW's first movement was full of latent mystery before a great burst of energy heralded the *allegro*. Thereafter, a firm underlying pulse sustained the music's development whilst allowing breathing space for some lovely phrasing: the build up to the ending was truly exciting.

The slow movement was beautifully played with restrained emotion and a powerful passionate climax.

I was less taken by the interpretation of the *scherzo* and *finale*.

The *scherzo's* deliberate pace, while assisting clear articulation and added weight, resulted in a loss of "perkiness" although this was not lacking in a delightful *trio*. At its end the flickering ghostly shadows sounded almost Mahlerian.

Although VW's *London* encompasses a whole gamut of emotions, for a moment I wondered if I was listening to Mahler's *11th* for the performance of the *finale* to my mind exaggerated VW's vision. After a great cry of anguish, the march was almost too perky and the shattering climax sounded overblown before sanity was restored by the *epilogue*.

**11 October 1996**  
*Symphony No. 5 in D*

On 30th August this year I heard Norrington and the LPO's Prom performance of the *Fifth Symphony*. It was beautifully played but I was left feeling emotionally uninvolved. Several members of our Society who had listened over the radio considered the performance a fine

one so I wondered if the distancing acoustics of a seat in the Albert Hall stalls had been responsible for my reaction.

I was therefore eager to hear it again in the clear acoustics of the Festival Hall.

While the *Preludio* was beautifully measured I again found it emotionally reticent. It didn't take off: there was no uplift at the magical change to E major and only the ultimate visionary climax was persuasive.

As with *A London Symphony*, the *scherzo* was taken at a deliberate pace and although smoothly articulated both the humour and the hobgoblins were understated.

The *Romanza* was cool without engendering that feeling of the rapt transcendentalism encompassed by the greatest performances.

The last movement came off best with strong momentum, a visionary climax and a lovely *epilogue*. The symphony was repeated on 18th October.

# **15 October 1996 *Symphony No. 4 in F minor***

Roger Norrington seemed to be most in sympathy with the *F minor*. This was a magnificent performance with profound tension maintained throughout, yet with expressive playing in its quieter moments of reflection.

The continually searching slow movement was beautifully balanced and there was a shattering final climax before the plaintive flute brought its close.

The *scherzo* had tremendous bite and humour in the *trio*.

Back in the late 1940s a Prom programme writer commented that no one would leave whistling tunes from the *F minor*. How wrong he was! The *finale* was exultant and the playing of the LPO exhilarating and they maintained the tension throughout the magnificent *epilogue* and the return to the grinding dissonance of the work's opening bars.

As I have indicated, the LPO played superbly throughout these concerts with strings, woodwind and brass blending as one and it was good to see such large audiences. These three symphonies are to be recorded by these artists and it will be fascinating to hear the results in due course.

**Robin Ivison  
London**

## **MUSIC YOU MIGHT LIKE**

**In the second edition in our continuing series, Stephen Connock explores Finzi's *In terra pax*.**

In this 'Christmas Scene' Gerald Finzi sets words from Robert Bridges's poem *Noël: Christmas Eve, 1913* juxtaposed with a description of the Nativity from St. Luke's Gospel. The Bridges poem is one of the finest of the early 20th Century. It begins thus:

*A frosty Christmas Eve  
when the stars were shining  
fared I forth alone  
where westward falls the hill,  
and from many a village  
in the water'd valley  
distant music reach'd me  
peals of bells a-ringing;  
the constellated sounds  
ran sprinkling on earth's floor,  
as the dark vault above  
with stars was spangled o'er*

Finzi's experience as a bell-ringer at the Church at the top of 'Chosen Hill' near Gloucester is remembered in the superbly evocative writing for baritone soloist and orchestra in these opening bars. Finzi is at his best in music which is contemplative and expressive. In these passages, he seems to capture the essence of the Christmas scene, the words moving him to a lyrical and moving response. Finzi achieved similar heights in *Dies Natalis*, in parts of the

*Intimations of Immortality* and in *Fear no more the heat o' the sun* from *Let us garlands bring*. Yet in this Christmas music, Finzi achieves a limpid beauty which makes *In terra pax*, for me, his finest work.

The music was composed in 1954 and first performed in a chamber version in February 1955. The full version was first performed in September 1956 and was the last music that Finzi conducted before his death. Indeed, Finzi knew he was dying when he wrote this music. This knowledge seems to have heightened Finzi's magical response to Bridges's words, including these concluding lines:

*the old words came to me  
by the riches of time,  
mellow'd and transfigured  
as I stood on the hill  
Heark'ning in the aspect  
of the eternal silence*

As to preferred recording, there is only one contender - Richard Hickox's recording on Decca with John Shirley-Quirk - the perfect baritone soloist. Unfortunately, their CD is currently deleted. Write and complain to Decca!

**Stephen Connock**

*(Editor's Note: Members of the Society are considering visiting Chosen Hill in 1997. Anyone interested in joining this trip which will focus on the area known to Vaughan Williams and Finzi, should contact me at the address shown on the front of the Journal).*

*(Next edition: Hadley's The trees so high by Rolf Jordan).*

## **REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA**

In September of this year RVW Society members in and near Sydney had the opportunity to meet together and to attend a performance of RVW's *Symphony No. 4* at the Sydney Opera House presented by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. In the end, only a small band of devotees (6) was able to gather on Thursday 26th September to attend the rehearsal in the morning under Vernon Handley, share lunch, listen to a preliminary talk on the symphony and attend the afternoon performance (see review included on page 2). It was a wonderful opportunity to share our passion and to enjoy a very powerful performance of the *Fourth Symphony*. A number of those

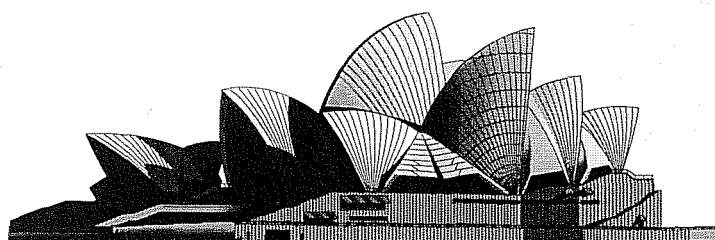
present came for a second hearing, and a further 5 members were able to attend other performances and introduce themselves.

The Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also kindly allowed us to mount a display on RVW and the Society in the foyer of the Opera House and over 100 RVW Society pamphlets were taken, leading to at least 10 new members, including a number of 'leading lights' in the music world here.

All in all, it was a wonderful opportunity to encourage further hearings of his music. His *Tallis Fantasia* is already scheduled for

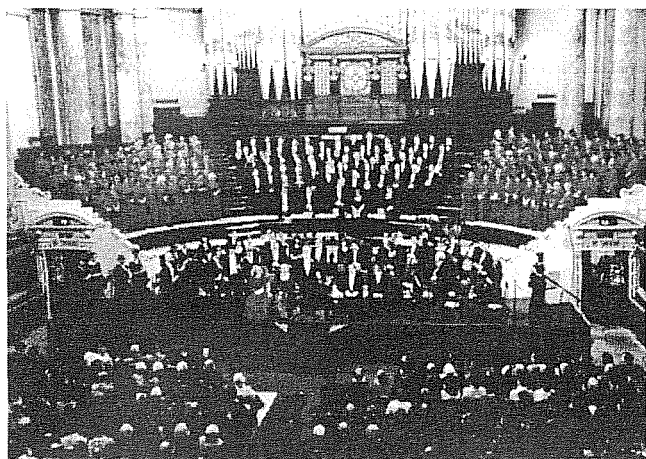
next year, and his *London Symphony* will be presented in Melbourne in May 1997 by Christopher Seaman. Members in and near Melbourne will have an opportunity to meet each other in January 1997, and Paul Sarcich at the Victorian College of the Arts (see his article in the October Journal) is hoping to organise a number of free lunchtime concerts during 1997 with various student ensembles at the college.

**John Waterhouse  
Regional Chairman**



# RVW IN LEEDS TOWN HALL

## by Michael Nelson



*A Leeds Philharmonic Society concert in the Victoria Hall of Leeds Town Hall, conducted by the late Sir Charles Groves (photograph courtesy of Jeanne Greenwood)*

One afternoon in the late 1940s I attended my first symphony concert. It was a concert for schoolchildren, it was given by the recently-formed Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra and it was held in the Victoria Hall of Leeds Town Hall. I was thrilled by the music and, being a teenager and therefore impressionable, I was also entranced by a young, dark-haired beauty in the string section. I can only remember three of the pieces that were played but one of them, crucially, was Vaughan Williams' Overture to *The Wasps*. That was my 'live' introduction to RVW's music and it was the start of a lifetime's devotion to it.

One evening a year or two later, having left school and waiting to do my National Service, I again found myself listening to RVW's music in the Town Hall. This time the work was *Sancta Civitas* but I am sorry to say my interest in it was somewhat overshadowed by the minor triumph of getting my programme autographed by one of the soloists, Harold Williams. Such are the priorities of youth!

As no doubt most devotees of RVW's music know the first performances of two of his earliest choral works were held at this venue: *Toward The Unknown Region* at the 1907 Leeds Triennial Festival and, even more importantly, *A Sea Symphony* at the 1910 Festival, conducted by the composer.<sup>i</sup> The latter performance took place on 12th October, RVW's

38th birthday. Both works are, of course, settings of texts by the fine American poet Walt Whitman, whom RVW greatly admired. Indeed, in extreme old age, he once said that he had 'never got over him, I am glad to say'.

I am indebted to Jeanne Greenwood, a former member of the Leeds Philharmonic Society, for the loan of a little book<sup>ii</sup> which fascinatingly chronicles the history of the Leeds Musical Festivals from

1858 (when the first Festival commemorated the opening of the Town Hall) to 1958, the year of the Centenary Festival. RVW's works were featured in every Festival from 1925 to 1953. *A Sea Symphony* was repeated in 1925 and 1947 and *Toward The Unknown Region*, in 1931, conducted by Sir (then plain Dr) Malcolm Sargent<sup>iii</sup>. *A Pastoral Symphony* appeared in 1928, *Benedicite* in 1934 and in 1937, Sargent was again the conductor when *Dona Nobis Pacem* was given. In 1950 the ill-fated Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra played the *Sixth Symphony* under its Principal Conductor Maurice Miles. Then in 1953 the opening concert, attended by RVW, included two works: the *Tallis Fantasia* and *Sancta Civitas*, with the Leeds Philharmonic Society providing the chorus. The conductor was Josef Krips, not a name one associates with the composer.

Jeanne Greenwood has kindly researched performances of RVW's works by the Society since 1958. Four works have been programmed in its Town Hall concerts: the



*Leeds Town Hall today*

two 'premiere' works, *Five Mystical Songs* and *Sancta Civitas*.

The Town Hall itself is a typically robust and confident example of 19th century North Country municipal enterprise. Designed by Cuthbert Brodrick, a young architect from Hull, it was opened by Queen Victoria on 7 September 1858 and the Great Hall shown in Brodrick's drawings was dedicated to her, hence its name. (In recent years the Final of the Leeds International Piano Competition has been regularly televised from it).

But what of RVW and the Town Hall today, when the standing of the composer's music has surely never been higher? Shamefully the current (1996/97) Leeds International Concert Season in the Hall features not a single one of the composer's works. All is not lost, however: the English Northern Philharmonia, the splendid orchestra of the Leeds-based Opera North, is now in the throes of a major recording contract in which 20th century British music is being extensively featured. RVW's works are naturally included and *Job* (which I believe to be one of his very greatest compositions) and *The Lark Ascending* (surely the most serenely beautiful among his shorter works) have been recorded in the Hall, with David Lloyd-Jones as the conductor.

I cannot help thinking as I sit in the Hall these days what it must have been like when that tremendous opening of *A Sea Symphony* was heard for the very first time. Mighty echoes indeed!

**Michael Nelson**  
*Leeds*

<sup>i</sup> *A Sea Symphony* occupied the first half of the concert. The principal work in the second half was Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor*, with the composer as soloist. One wonders what each composer thought of the other's work and what passed between them when they presumably met in the Artists' Room.

<sup>ii</sup> 'Leeds Musical Festivals' by J Sprittles (Reprinted from the Publications of the Thoresby Society, Miscellany, Vol. 13, Part 2). According to the author, RVW conducted the first performance of *Toward The Unknown Region* but James Day's *Vaughan Williams* (The Master Musician Series) refers to Stanford as the conductor.

<sup>iii</sup> This was, of course, the year of another great Leeds première, that of Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*.

# Listings

Simon Crutchley provides details of future Vaughan Williams concerts, and includes some performances of English music which might be of interest to members.

Comprehensive listings are available on World Wide Web page - <http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~snc/listings.htm>

## February

- 1 Manchester Bridgewater Hall - Lambert *Rio Grande* Hallé Orch/ Wordsworth 0161 907 9000
- 1 Netherlands Utrecht - Elgar *Gerontius* Netherlands Radio Phil/Radio Ch/De Waart + 31 20 671 83 45
- 1 Belgium Rochefort Koningin Elisabethzaal - Holloway *Ode, Serenata* Notturmo Royal Flanders Phil/Llewellyn + 32 3 231 3737
- 4 RFH London - Elgar *Symphony 2* Philharmonia/Slatkin 19.30
- 5, 6, 7, 8 USA NY Avery Fisher Hall - Britten *Requiem* NY Phil/Hampson/ Masur 20.00 + 1 212 721 6500
- 6 RFH London - Elgar *Cello Concerto* Philharmonia/Slatkin/Isserlis 19.30
- 6 St Andrew's Younger Hall - Bliss *Cello Cto*/Cohen/BBC Scottish SO/Talmi 19.45 01334 474610
- 6 Denmark Aarhus Musikhuset - Britten *Les Illuminations* Aarhus SO/Schmidt/ Chilcott +45 89 318 280
- 6 Czech Republic Prague Rudolfinium - Britten *Sinfonia da Requiem* CPO/Shallon +42 2 24893 352
- 7 Hove Town Hall - Finzi *Clarinet Concerto* Guildhall String Ensemble/ Emma Johnson 19.45 01273 709709
- 7 Ayr Town Hall - (as 6th BBC) 19.30 01292 611222
- 10 St John's Smith Sq. - Holst *Ave Maria/Rig Veda Hymns* Elgar *Sospiri/Intro & Allegro* Newstead Girls' School & Orch. 19.30
- 12 Australia Melbourne Sidney Myer Music Bowl - Britten *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* Melbourne SO/Brown +6 12 3 9685 2444
- 12, 13, 16 Manchester Bridgewater Hall - RVW *A London Symphony* Delius *Brigg Fair* Elgar *Cello Cto* Hallé Orch/ Hughes
- 13 Bedford School - McCabe (new Comm.) Raphael Qt 19.45
- 13 Glasgow City Hall - Britten *Sinf Req.* McMillan *Tuireadh* BBC Scottish SO/Vanska 19.30 0141 227 5511
- 14 Aberdeen Music Hall - (as 13th BBC) 19.30 01224 641122
- 15 Brighton Dome - Grainger Songs C Lon Sinf/Hickox 19.30 01273 709709
- 16 Netherlands Amsterdam Concertgebouw - Britten *Rescue of Penelope* Netherlands Radio Phil/ Rozhdestvensky +31 20 671 83 45
- 19 Australia Perth Concert Hall - Taverner *The Protecting Veil, Agraphon*

Western Australia SO/Friend/Wallfisch +61 9 220 2555

- 21 Germany Munich Herkulesaal - Coates *Sym 7* Bav RSO/Henzold +49 89 54 81 81 81
- 21 USA Minneapolis Orchestra Hall - Tippett *Rose Lake* Minneapolis SO/ Davis +1 612 371 5656 (concert repeated morning & evening)
- 21 Glasgow City Hall and
- 22 Edinburgh Queen's Hall - MacMillan New Comm. SCO/Swensen
- 22 Brighton Sallis Benney Theatre - Holst Singers (programme tba)
- 22 USA St. Paul Ordway Music Theatre - repeat of Minneapolis concert of 21st +1 612 371 5656
- 22 Netherlands Rotterdam (venue unspec'd) - Holst *Ave Maria* Netherlands Radio Phil/Ollila +31 20 671 83 45
- 23 Australia Univ. of West Australia - Taverner *Let's Begin Again* Western Australia SO/Friend/Campbell +61 9 220 2555
- 24 Manchester RNCM - Maxwell Davies *Dowland* Taverner *Dances*, Martland Lennon Crumb New Work New Ens/Rundell 19.30 0161 273 4504
- 25 Wigmore Hall - RVW *10 Blake Songs*, var. Songs Howells Songs Warlock Songs Stanford Songs James Bowman (ct) 17.00
- 27 Cardiff St David's Hall - Holst *Planets* Welsh Coll Mus & Drama Orch/Esswood 13.05 01222 878543
- 27 Wigmore Hall - Bax *Elegaic Trio* Bridge 3 *Songs* Eastwood 7 *Japanese Songs* Various 19.30
- 28 Nottingham Royal Concert Hall - Elgar *Sym 2* Walton *Crown Imperial* Bournemouth SO/Litton 19.30 0115 948 2626
- 28 USA Pittsburgh Heinz Hall - Elgar *Enigma* Pittsburgh SO/Marriner +1 412 392 4900

## March

- 1, 2 USA Pittsburgh Heinz Hall - (repeat of concert of 28th Feb.)
- 2 Birmingham Symphony Hall - Britten *Three Church Parables* C of B Touring Opera/Contemporary Music Group/ Hasley 16.30 - 21.15
- 3 St John's Smith Sq. - Birtwistle *Machaut à la Manière* Muldowney *Cto for 4 violins & Orch.* Britten *Illuminations* St John's Orch./Harding 19.30 0171 222 2168

- 5 Poole Arts Centre - Elgar *Sym 2, Cockaigne* Bournemouth SO/Litton 19.30 01203 524524
- 5, 6, 7 Huddersfield Lawrence Batley Theatre - Britten *Albert Herring* (NB pls check times)
- 5, 7, 8 USA San Francisco Davies Symphony Hall - Walton *Sonata for Violin & Orch.* San Francisco SO/ Saraste/Kobler +1 415 864 6000
- 5, 6, 7 USA Minneapolis Orchestra Hall - Britten *Sinfonia da Requiem* Minneapolis Orch./Wigglesworth +1 612 371 5656
- 6 Manchester Bridgewater Hall - Tippett *Rose Lake* Hallé Orch/Howarth
- 6 Manchester Town Hall - Sargent *Impressions on a Windy Day* Barbirolli *Elizabethan Suite* 12.45 0161 224 4001
- 6, 7, 8, 9 USA Cleveland Severance Hall - RVW *Flos Campi* Walton *Belshazzar's Feast* Cleveland Orch.& Ch./ Morrell +1 800 686 1141
- 6 Netherlands Tilburg (venue unspec'd) - Elgar *Enigma* Limburg SO/ Hirokami
- 6 Netherlands Amsterdam (venue unspec'd) - RVW *London Sym* Royal Flanders Phil/Llewellyn
- 7 Wigmore Hall - Rawsthorne *Trio* Rubbra *Trio* Rodrigi Trio 19.30
- 7 Belgium Antwerp Koningin Elisabethzaal - RVW *London Sym* Royal Flanders Phil/Llewellyn +32 3 231 3737
- 7 Netherlands Maastricht Theater an het Vrijthof - as 6th +31 43 350 55 55
- 8 Warwick Arts Centre - Elgar *Cockaigne, Cello Cto, Sym 2* BSO/ Litton 19.30
- 8 Birmingham Symphony Hall - Britten *Req.* CBSO & Ch./Rattle 19.00
- 8 Corby Festival Hall - Bliss *Gorbals Suite* Delius *Florida Suite* Bridge *Dance Rhapsody* 01527 787573
- 8 Huddersfield (venue unspec'd) - Weir *Forest* Hallé Orch/Edwards
- 8 Netherlands Venlo (venue unspec'd) - as 6th
- 11 Barbican - Walton *Prologue & Fantasia* LSO/Rostropovich 19.30
- 13, 15, 18, 21 Manchester RNCM - Britten *Albert Herring* 19.15 0161 273 4504
- 13 Denmark Aarhus Musikhuset - Walton *Cello Cto* Holst *Planets* Aarhus SO/Loughran/Blondal
- 14 Glasgow BBC Broadcasting House - (free) Bryars *The Sinking of the Titanic, East Coast* Turnage *Dispelling the Fears* BBC Scottish SO/Francis 19.30
- 14 Cardiff St David's Hall - Britten *War Requiem* CBSO/Rattle 19.30
- 17 Cardiff St David's Hall - Britten *Purcell Variations* Elgar *Cello Cto* Tippett *Child of our Time* Univ Cardiff Orch & Ch./Taylor 19.30
- 20 Bedford School - Howells *Q* Holywell Ensemble 19.45

(continued on back page)



# Newsbriefs

- One of the busts by Sir Jacob Epstein of Vaughan Williams came under the hammer at Christies. It went for £8,000. The details from the catalogue are listed below:



**SIR JACOB EPSTEIN (1880 - 1959)**

Portrait of Ralph Vaughan Williams, O.M.

signed 'Epstein' (on the back)  
bronze with dark green patina  
14 in. (35.5 cm.) high excluding black  
marble base.  
Conceived and cast in 1949

**PROVENANCE:**  
Leicester Galleries, London

**LITERATURE:**  
J. Epstein, *An Autobiography*, London, 1955,  
p.234 (another cast illustrated).  
R Buckle, *Jacob Epstein Sculptor*, London,  
1963, pp. 334-35, pls. 519-20 (another cast  
illustrated).  
E. Silber, *The Sculpture of Epstein*, Oxford,  
1986, no. 416, pl.36 (another cast illustrated).

Epstein was commissioned by the composer  
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) to  
sculpt this portrait and began work in  
February 1949.

£7,000-10,000      US\$11,000-16,000

- The Times* of December 4th reported that John McLaren, Director of Corporate Finance at Morgan Grenfell "lives in a stunning house in central London, once occupied by composer Vaughan Williams".
- We regret to record the death of Tony Tresman of Stockport on 10th September. He was one of our Founder Members and was very encouraging to the Society. We pass on our condolences to his family.

## Listings

(continued from page 23)

- 21 Birmingham Symphony Hall - Rawsthorne *Overture* Walton *Violin Concerto* Elgar *Symphony 1* ENP/ Daniel/Little 20.00
- 21 Sweden Stockholm Berwald Hall - Britten *Sinfonia da Requiem* Swedish RSO/Wigglesworth +46 8 784 1800
- 22 Liverpool Philharmonic Hall - Walton *Sym 1* RLPO/Leaper 19.30
- 27 Glasgow BBC Broadcasting House - (free) Dorward *Sym 2* BBC Scottish SO/Francis 19.30

### April

- 4, 5 Australia Perth Concert Hall - RVW *Sym 4, Dives & Lazarus* Elgar *Cockaigne* Western Australia SO/ Handley +61 9 220 2555
- 4 Glasgow BBC Broadcasting House - (free) Elgar *Sym 1* BBC Scottish SO/ Maksymiuk 19.30
- 5 Leeds (venue unspec'd) - Delius *Brigg Fair* Elgar *Cello Cto*, *Enigma Vars* Hallé Orch/Hughes/Wallfisch
- 5, 6, 7 USA Houston Jones Hall - Elgar *Enigma* Houston SO/Stein +1 713 224 7575
- 8 USA Boston - Britten *Illuminations* BSO/Ozawa/McNair +1 617 266 1200
- 10, 11, 12 USA Pittsburgh Heinz Hall - Holst *Planets* Pittsburgh SO/Williams +1 412 392 4900
- 11 Glasgow City Hall - Handel *Allegro, Penseroso, Cecelia Ode* SCO/Rizzi
- 11 Sheffield (venue unspec'd) - Elgar *Enigma* Hallé Orch/Leppard
- 11 France Paris Salle Pleyl - Britten *Sea Interludes* Radio France Phil/Janowski +33 1 45 61 53 00
- 17 Manchester Bridgewater Hall - Taverner *The Protecting Veil* RVW *Flos Campi, Sym 8* Hallé Orch/ Loughran/ Wallfisch
- 17 Norway Oslo Konserthus Elgar *Enigma* Oslo Phil/Engeset +47 2283 45 10
- 18 Aberdeen Town Hall - Britten *Sea Interludes* BBC Scottish SO/Vanska 19.30
- 19 Guildford Philharmonic Hall - Film Music by Waxman, Walton & Korngold Guildford Phil/Brigg Korngold talk at 18.15 concert at 19.30
- 20 Netherlands Amsterdam Elgar *Cello Cto* Zurich Tonhalle O/Zinman/Yo Yo Ma +31 1 206 34 34
- 24 Denmark Aalborg Symfonien - RVW *Overture The Wasps* Britten *Serenade for Tenor, Horn & Strings* Aalborg SO/Braithwaite
- 24 Norway Trondheim Olav Hall - Walton *Viola Cto* Trondheim SO/ Shallon/Zimmerman +47 73 53 40 50

- 24, 25 France Strasbourg Palais de Musique et de Congres - Elgar *Cello Cto* Strasbourg Phil/Soudant +33 88 15 0909
- 25 Plymouth Pavilions - Elgar Bach *Fantasia Enigma* BSO/Moldoveanu 19.30 01752 229922
- 26 Stockport Town Hall - Britten *Simple Sym* 0161 926 9633
- 30 Manchester Bridgewater Hall - RVW *The Wasps* Hallé Orch/Yuasa

### May

- 1 Manchester Bridgewater Hall - RVW *The Wasps* Hallé Orch/Yuasa
- 1, 2 Germany Munich Herkulesaal - Elgar *In the South* Walton *Cello Cto* Bav RSO/Zinman/Harrelt +49 89 54 81 81 81
- 1, 2, 3 Australia Melbourne Concert Hall - RVW *London Sym* Melbourne SO/Seaman +6 12 3 9685 2444
- 1, 6 Birmingham Symphony Hall - Britten *Spring Symphony*, Delius *First Cuckoo* CBSO/Rattle 19.30
- 2 Blackburn (venue unspec'd) - Delius *Brigg Fair* Elgar *Enigma* Hallé Orch/ Hughes
- 3 Llandudno (venue unspec'd) - Delius *Brigg Fair* Elgar *Enigma* Hallé Orch/ Hughes
- 10 Halifax (venue unspec'd) - RVW *The Wasps* Hallé Orch/Nagano
- 11 Manchester Bridgewater Hall - (repeat of 10th Halifax concert)

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**Next Edition:**  
**June 1997**

**Dr Jeremy Dibble on**  
**Parry and VW**