



Journal of the RVW Society

No. 9 June 1997

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In this issue...

- **RVW Remembered**
by John Carol Case
- page 2
- **Parry and VW:
Ideas, Impressions
and Influences**
by Jeremy Dibble
- page 4
- **Simona Pakenham
on VW and
Ella Mary Leather**
- page 10
- **Interview with
Leonard Slatkin**
- page 12

plus news and reviews

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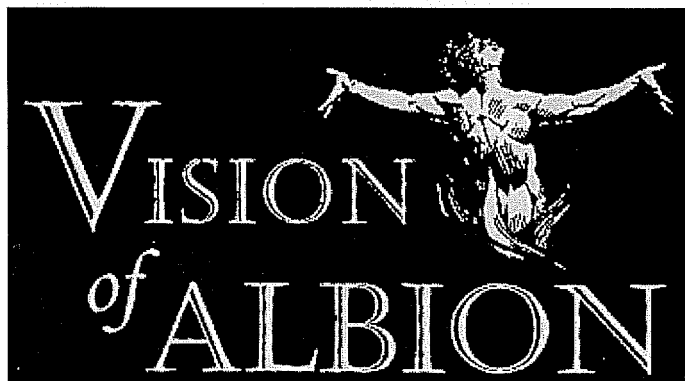
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In the largest event yet organised by the RVW Society, over a dozen concerts are planned as part of the celebrations for the 125th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams. The Festival is being held under the "Vision of Albion" strapline with its own specially designed logo.



The Opera Festival opens on 2nd October with a concert by the London Symphony Orchestra under Richard Hickox of the *Wasps Overture*, the rarely performed *A Cotswold Romance* (from *Hugh the Drover*) and *A London Symphony*. Soloists are Thomas Randle (tenor) and Rosa Mannion (soprano).

Even rarer is the performance of excerpts from *The Poisoned Kiss* at another LSO concert also at the Barbican on 26th October. Act 3 is to be included complete with extracts from Acts 1 and 2. After the well-known *Overture*, one of the highlights of the evening will be the beautiful duet *Blue Larkspur in a garden* from Act 1.

Forces of the Royal Opera House will perform *The Pilgrim's Progress* on 3rd November in London and 30th November in Birmingham. With the closure of the Covent Garden building for refurbishment, the Society agreed to performances at the Barbican and Symphony Hall, Birmingham as long as they were semi-staged, with the artists singing from memory.

AGM

Sir John in Love will be performed on 12th October - the anniversary date. Before the concert, from 12:00 p.m., the Society will hold its third AGM in the large lecture hall

of the Guildhall School of Music, next to the Barbican.

Holst and VW

Riders to the Sea is to be coupled with Holst's superb one-act opera *Savitri*. The concert opens with the atmospheric *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*. Holst specifies in the score of *Savitri* that one of these *Choral Hymns* could be used as a prelude to the opera. The performance is on 19th October in Cambridge.

Songs from the operas

The Festival is completed by three concerts in the Clerkenwell Music Series of songs from the operas and chamber music. On 4th November, the *Six Songs from Hugh the Drover* will be performed, and on the 15th November the *Seven Songs from The Pilgrim's Progress*. Other works to be performed include *On Wenlock Edge* and the *First String Quartet*.

The RVW Society is co-ordinating the marketing of the concerts from mid-year. Members are urged to attend some or all of these concerts, and to do everything they can to publicise the events. With enthusiastic and well-attended concerts, the RVW Society can persuade concert promoters to programme more of the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Full details on pages 19, 20 and 21.

RVW REMEMBERED

John Carol Case is interviewed by Stephen Connock.

SLC I would like to start, unusually perhaps, with your retirement from the concert platform in 1976. This came as a surprise and disappointment to many of us. Why did you retire at this time?

JCC I was becoming known as a singer only of Bach, Mozart and Haydn - for example, every year the BBC would ask me to sing a Haydn *Mass* in the penultimate night at the Proms - I felt I was becoming too specialised and that I had achieved all I could reasonably hope to do as a singer. Two years earlier I had been asked to give some Master-classes and found myself increasingly interested in, and involved with, teaching young singers. So I decided to devote myself to teaching and my last concert was *St Matthew Passion* at the RFH on Good Friday, 1976. This was fitting, as the *St Matthew* had been my first professional engagement.

SLC What have you been doing since 1976?

JCC I became a Professor at the Royal Academy, but I preferred teaching as a freelance coach where I could concentrate on my own style of teaching without worrying about the process of examinations. I thoroughly enjoyed the work, and I now get tremendous pleasure and satisfaction from hearing ex-pupils doing so well. I retired from teaching in 1989 and now sing in the village choir!

SLC Tell us a little about your early life.

JCC I was born in Salisbury. My father wanted me to sing, but I had no voice at all until it broke. Things then improved, and I became a King's College scholar in 1941-2. I was fortunate to return to Kings after service in the army, and I studied in Cambridge from 1945-47. I then got a job as Director of Music at King's College School in Wimbledon.

SLC Was this when you first met Vaughan Williams?

JCC Yes. A member of staff at the school was a personal friend of Vaughan Williams. At the end of 1948 I was asked to sing the solo part in the *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. I agreed, only to be told that VW himself was conducting! I met him at the rehearsal, when he walked in and said "has anyone got a stick? I've forgotten mine!" Everyone laughed and we all felt quickly at ease. VW borrowed a pencil from the first violin and conducted with that! He did not have a strong conducting technique, but he always got the result he wanted, because he looked at one so intensely that you knew instinctively, without him



John Carol Case today

saying anything, what was required.

After this, I often sang under VW, particularly in the *St Matthew Passion* at Dorking. These were highly personal interpretations, not authentic as we would now define it, but practical and above all dedicated to the essence of this great music. Vaughan Williams always insisted that the audience stand for the *Last Supper* section of the *Passion*. He would turn round and watch the audience, and would not go on unless everyone was standing. This always added to the sense of occasion which his performances generated.

Another memory of VW I have is that he treated us musicians as his equals. He would talk to us in a way that made us feel that we knew him. This increased our admiration for him enormously.

SLC What of your performances of Vaughan Williams's music?

JCC I gave the first performance of *I have Trod the Upward and the Downward Slope* of the *Songs of Travel*. Ursula discovered this after VW's death. The cycle had always seemed incomplete, ending as it used to with *Bright is the Ring of Words*. Now with this last song, the overall shape of the cycle is clear. Earlier, in the 1950s, I had once phoned Uncle Ralph to talk about the order of the *Songs of Travel*. He replied "I can't remember! Talk to Stuart Wilson."

Do you know the arrangement for baritone and piano of the *Song of the Road* from *Hugh the Drover*? I was bowled over by the beauty of the opera when I first heard it performed by Sadlers Wells, with James Johnston as Hugh. I asked VW if he would mind my singing Hugh's *Song of the Road* in the baritone key. "No - do what you like" he said, adding "there's no orchestra, though."

SLC I recall many a superb VW performance from you, including *Five Tudor Portraits*, *Five Mystical Songs* and in 1972 *Epithalamion*. Your style seemed right for the music. Was this something you consciously worked on?

JCC My father was an amateur tenor. He impressed on me the importance of clear diction. "I want to hear every comma," he would say. Denis Noble taught me the importance of line; the tone of my voice was luck. With good enunciation, a rounded tone and a clear sense of line I tried to add my own identification with the music. For example, when recording *A Sea Symphony*, I read Whitman extensively.

SLC You seemed to have a close empathy with Sir Adrian Boult especially in *A Sea Symphony*, but also in other performances and recordings like *Dona Nobis Pacem*.

JCC Yes. I was delighted when in RVW's Centenary Year (1972) Sir Adrian asked me to join him for the opening concert of that year's Edinburgh Festival in a performance

of *Dona Nobis Pacem*, but was saddened when, as we walked off the platform afterwards, he said to me that he would never again conduct a choir in public as he found it too exhausting; he was, after all, 83, although he gave no sign of being tired during the performance.

I regarded it a great compliment when Sir Adrian insisted he would not record Elgar's *The Apostles* unless I sang the part of Christ: during the recording, I remember our final take of the Ascension scene was followed by a moment of complete silence in the studio, then both choir and orchestra applauded. Sir Adrian, with one of his charming smiles said "I don't think we need do that again, do you?" Earlier in this session we had ground to a halt during a rehearsal, "I'm afraid we weren't together, Mr Case" he said. To which I replied, "But Sir Adrian, I was trying to follow your beat." His riposte was, "Mr Case, you have been working with me for long enough to know that I follow you, you don't follow me!" Much laughter from the orchestra!

It was one of his endearing habits to be very formal on the rehearsal platform where he would address me

as "Mr Case". Offstage, he always called me "John".

When I retired from performing, he sent me a hand-written letter saying he would miss my performances, and that perhaps I might like to know in all his long conducting career, two vocal performances stood out: one was Percy Heming singing Amfortas in *Parsifal*, the other was my performance as Christ in Elgar's *The Apostles*.

A few years later, when the BBC asked Sir Adrian to take part in a Desert Island Discs celebrating his 90th birthday, he telephoned me to say he wanted to include one of my recordings of Gerald Finzi's songs, and would I like to choose one for him.

SLC How did this close identification with Finzi's music come about?

JCC I was invited to sing at the 1951 Festival of Britain celebrations at the RFH in *Let us Garlands bring* with the CBSO under George Weldon. To my surprise Gerald and Joy Finzi and their two sons joined me after the concert and introduced themselves. Finzi said would I like to

study his songs with him. I agreed quickly! Subsequently, I went through all his songs with him at his home and recorded many. He had a special ability in word setting where the rhythm of the language would be closely reflected in the music. Once, when we were rehearsing *O Mistress Mine* from *Let us Garlands bring*, Finzi said to me "don't be too serious about this. Imagine you are outside a pub, leaning on the door and you see a good looking young woman. You say "how about it? Let's make the most of things while we can!" This is what Shakespeare is saying."

SLC You received a well-deserved OBE in the early 1990s how do you feel about this?

JCC I have been exceedingly lucky in my life. I have worked with wonderful composers such as Vaughan Williams and Finzi, with first-rate conductors like Boult and marvellous singers such as Janet Baker. What more can one ask?

John Carol Case talked to Stephen Connock at Thornton-le-Dale, Yorkshire on 7th April 1997.

GERALD FINZI 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

1 9 8 1



V.W. never got over the traumatic experience of being drawn by William Rothenstein in his middle age and avoided any further attempts. But he felt he could not refuse his old Cambridge College for the Trinity collection of drawings of Honorary Fellows by contemporary artists, and so he asked me.

I could never have achieved it without G.F. V.W. appeared with a tie on and brushed hair! We were both alarmed! But he was immensely relieved to be able to forget me in talking to G.F. who entertained him with such lively conversation that I tried to catch a public outward and often humorous aspect of him in a morning's work.

Later in the day, after the evening meal, we gathered round the fire. Aunt Ad sitting opposite - he slumped down in his chair with broken springs with a naked electric light bulb hanging between them - dozing and waking as the evening's talk went around. He being unaware that I was drawing him enabled me to observe this private aspect in repose.

I gave this drawing to G.F. and afterwards to the National Portrait Gallery. This superb photograph was taken by Alfred Carlebach (a refugee from Nazi Germany) who did all the Windsor Castle drawings before he retired.

We would like you to accept this from us all with our warm gratitude for all you have given of your experience, devotion and hard work to make the Song Award such a success. It has been a fascinating experience for us and we do thank you!

John Carol Case
Joy Finzi
Diana Milne
Edna. Tac
Richard Johnson
Libby Macdonald

S O N G A W A R D
 March 1981

(A letter sent by Joy Finzi to John Carol Case attached to the back of Joy Finzi's drawing of VW)

PARRY AND VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: IDEAS, IMPRESSIONS AND INFLUENCES

by Jeremy Dibble

PART I

On 7th October 1918, only weeks before Armistice, Sir Hubert Parry died at his seaside home in Rustington, Sussex from blood-poisoning hastened by the rampant flu epidemic of that winter. As a tribute to his master, the forty-six-year-old Vaughan Williams attempted to encapsulate something of his own personal devotion to the former RCM Director:

'Many years ago it was my good fortune to be for a short time his pupil. I still often go out of my way to pass his house in Kensington Square in order to experience again the thrill with which I used to approach his door on my lesson day.



Parry c. 1883

Walt Whitman says: "Why are there men and women that, while they are nigh me, sunlight expands my blood?" Parry was one of these.' You could not hear the sound of his voice or feel the touch of his hand without knowing that 'virtue had gone out of him'. It would not have mattered what we went to learn from him - it might have been mathematics or chemistry - his magic touch would have made it glow with life. Half-a-dozen of his enthusiastic eloquent words were worth a hundred learned

expositions.

Parry taught music as part of life. Was it necessary for life that every part should form an organic whole? So it must be in music: there must be no filling up, every part must have its relation to the whole, so that the whole may live. Can we trace in life a process of evolution from the germ to the complete organism? So must we read the story of music. Is a nation given over to frivolity and insincere vulgarity? We shall surely see it reflected in the music of that nation. There was no distinction for him between a moral and an artistic problem. To him it was morally wrong to muse musical colour for its own sake, or to cover up weak material with harmonic device. This is what Parry taught, and this is what he practised; later composers have followed after strange gods: they have gathered new sounds from Germany, bizarre rhythms from Russia and subtle harmonies from France. Into these paths Parry had not followed, not because he could not, but because he would not; he remained staunchly himself, and amidst all the outpourings of modern English music the work of Parry remains supreme."¹

This recognition of Parry's powerful legacy (on which he was to reflect further in his essay *A Musical Autobiography*, written for Hubert Foss's book *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study* of 1956) embodied Vaughan Williams's own first hand experiences: his encounter with Parry's writings and compositions as a teenager; his successful aspiration to study with Parry after leaving Charterhouse; his empathy with Parry's ideological concepts of musical citizenship, history, democracy, education and aesthetics; last, and perhaps most abstractly, his own assimilation of Parry's distinctive stylistic (and arguably national) traits.

From Vaughan Williams's own recollections of his days at Charterhouse (1887-90), we know that his introduction to Parry's recently published *Studies of Great Composers* (1887) by his cousin Stephen Massingberd was especially formative. Parry's first major musicological publication

articulated his interpretation and elaboration of Ruskin's artistic morality:

"In literature, fine language, clearness of expression, mastery of design and power of laying out an argument, craftsmanship, and even correctness, all count for a good deal; but in the long run the man who has the noblest thoughts takes the highest place. And so it is in music. Finished art, mastery of resource, clearness of expression, all go for something; they are in fact indispensable; but however remarkable in their way they cannot atone for levity and shallowness. The greatest composers are not those who merely entertain us and make us for a while forget boredom and worry in



VW in 1890

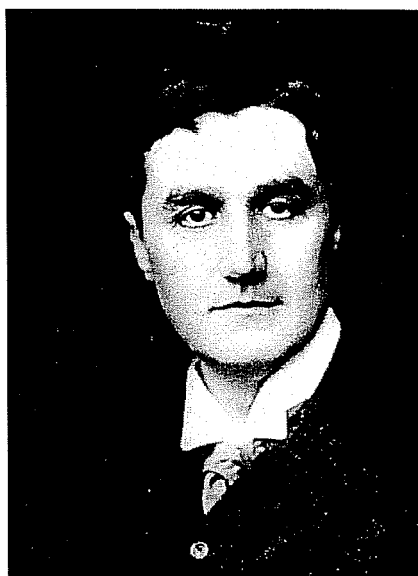
trivial distraction; but such as sound the deepest chords in our nature and lift us above ourselves; who purify and brace us in times of gladness, and strike no jarring note in the time of our deepest sorrow".²

It was this adherence to art as a vehicle for human amelioration, for edification, sincerity, nobility and the amplification of the intellect that appealed to the young Vaughan Williams, ideals which were effectively paraphrased in his cousin's comment 'this Parry.... declares that a composer must write music as his musical conscience demands'.³ Besides embracing

² C Hubert H Parry: *Studies of Great Composers* (London, 1887), 376.

³ R Vaughan Williams: *A Musical Autobiography*, *National Music and Other Essays* ed. Kennedy (Oxford, 1963, 2/1987), 180.

Ruskinian aesthetics, Parry's *Studies of Great Composers* also made allusion to the historiographical model of evolutionism gleaned essentially from Herbert Spencer, though it was in *The Art of Music* of 1893 (later revised as *The Evolution of the Art of Music* in 1896) that Parry's evolutionary notions were more comprehensively expressed. During his years at the RCM (1890-2 and 1895), Vaughan Williams came into contact with Parry's history lectures and was profoundly influenced by them as is evident from the obituary quoted above. One of the most significant factors of Parry's evolutionary precepts was his assessment (albeit now outdated) of the role of folk music as an important event in the progress of musical art,⁴ one that was affirmed in his inaugural address (as a member of the standing committee) at the first meeting of the Folk-song Society on 2nd February 1899.⁵ Moreover, Parry's evolutionary model gave full consideration to the possibility of ethnocentric differentiation in terms of musical design and expression. This gave rise to the hypothesis that music could embody distinctive national attributes which, for



VW c. 1900

As well as retaining an admiration for Parry's scholarly works, Vaughan Williams continued to venerate Parry as the archetype of the English choral tradition. 'I hereby solemnly declare,' he wrote, 'keeping steadily in view the works of Byrd, Purcell and Elgar, that *Blest Pair of Sirens* is my favourite piece of music written by an Englishman.'⁷ As a schoolboy, Vaughan Williams was introduced to Parry's music (then enjoying the first stages of its heyday) through the oratorio *Judith* which received its first performance at Birmingham in 1888. The potent impression left by *Judith* was reinforced by other works 'hot off the press', namely *De Profundis* (1891), *The Lotus-Eaters* (1892), *Job* (1892) and *King Saul* (1894). Other pieces of Parry predating his days at Charterhouse, most notably *The Glories of our Blood and State* (1883) and *Blest Pair of Sirens* (1887), he presumably also got to know at this time. Parry's monumental choral technique had an immediacy for Vaughan Williams not only in the imposing eloquence of its muscular diatonic language but also, and perhaps primarily, in the noble values it represented. Parry's dictum 'Write choral music as befits an English man and a democrat', which Vaughan Williams recalled many years later,⁸ epitomised his teacher's ideal of musical citizenship. To Parry, democracy was a precious commodity which emanated from his understanding of J S Mill's Utilitarian Rationalism. In his lecture 'Music and Democracy'⁹, he clearly

believed that music was 'the art in which every class must meet on an equality.... Moreover music is every man's property, and every man can make its finest products his own, if he will.'¹⁰ But more fundamentally, Parry believed that the source of pleasure in music was obtained, not through the unlimited cash resources of the wealthy, but through work, application and participation by infinite pains:

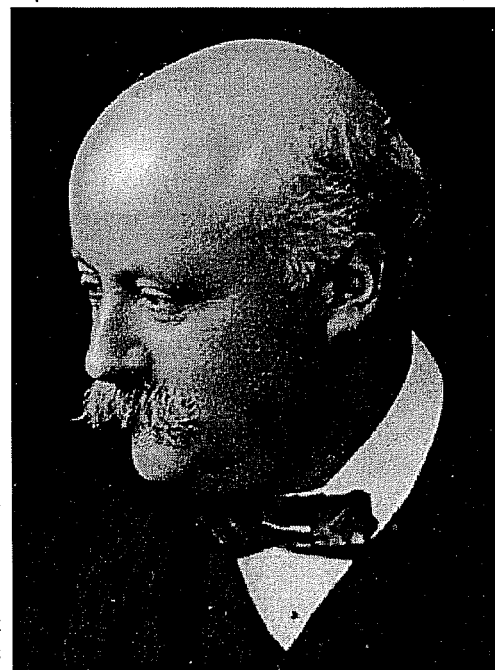
'The ease with which a thing is obtained, takes away the greater part of the interest; and what is got without pains, is kept without pleasure. I ask you, do you think the richest of men can ever buy such intensity of pleasure as you feel when you have achieved even a single sentence which embodies some idea you want enforce in the most absolutely compact form, with every word and every syllable in just the right place, emphatic, decisive, convincing[?] Those who have such experiences are indeed among the happiest of mortals, even if the response comes not from fellow men till the



Parry aged 45-50

Copyright of the Royal College of Music

Vaughan Williams and others, fuelled the pursuit of a national voice through the already prevalent heritage-gathering activities of folk-song collecting, the rediscovery of Purcell and the Tudor revival. Such sentiments are apparent from Vaughan Williams's lectures on nationalism and folk-music in which *The Evolution of the Art of Music* is quoted as a touchstone.⁶



Parry in 1898

ears of the achievers are for ever deaf to all things mundane. So it is with the makers of music; and even the man who has to content himself with other men's music, can feel a kindred pleasure in the mere realisation of some splendid passage which gradually reveals itself to him and which he makes his own by interpreting it - and how much more by expanding his nature in the process!'¹¹

(continued on page 14)

⁴ C Hubert H Parry: 'Folk-Music', *The Evolution of the Art of Music* (London, 1896), 47-81.

⁵ See *Musical Times* (1899), 168-9.

⁶ R Vaughan Williams *National Music and Other Essays* ed. Kennedy (Oxford, 1963, 2/1987), 6, 12, 40.

⁷ R Vaughan Williams: *A Musical Autobiography, National Music and Other Essays* ed. Kennedy (Oxford, 1963, 2/1987), 180.

⁸ Ibid. 182

⁹ It is unclear when this lecture was delivered, but it may have been given at a meeting of the Author's club in 1909 as is

suggested by a note at the head of the typescript (Shulbrede Priory).

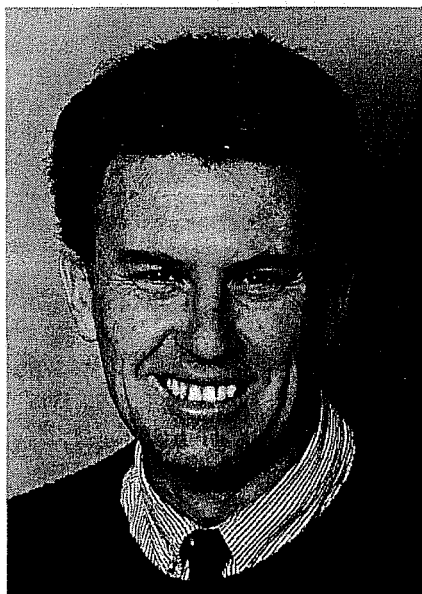
¹⁰ C Hubert H Parry: 'Music and Democracy' (unpublished), Shulbrede Priory, 5.

¹¹ Ibid. 6-7

MEET THE REGIONAL CHAIRMEN

John Waterhouse Australasia

I have come very belatedly in my life to both classical music and the music of RVW. After a brief stint attending Proms during my university years, I had little contact with classical music until the late 1980s when my second wife re-introduced me to the glories to be found there. In my inevitable way, I threw myself wholeheartedly into exploring this huge field of music, reading and hearing all I could as quickly as I could. The fact that this was a time when I could purchase many classical CDs for the price of a new rock music CD also encouraged this exploration.



John Waterhouse

One of the earliest classical CDs I purchased in 1989 - along with Sibelius's *Finlandia*, Dvorak's *New World Symphony* and Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (yes, my knowledge was that abysmal!) - was Decca's *The World of Vaughan Williams* to hear in its entirety *The Lark Ascending* which I had been introduced to some five years earlier at church - a piece that I had been 'bowled over' by and had never forgotten. It had also been used in the soundtrack of an Australian film *The Year My Voice Broke*. My only other connection with RVW at this stage was my awareness that his name cropped up a lot in the *Australian Hymnbook* - in fact, as I counted one day in church, his name was associated with 35 hymns, far more than any other composer, including Charles Wesley.

And so my exploration of his music tentatively began - and I found that the more

I heard the more I liked it above all others, the more I returned to it and the more I wanted to explore more of his works. Very quickly the *Tallis Fantasia*, *Symphony Nos. 3 and 5*, *Job*, *Serenade to Music*, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus*, etc. became favourite RVW works - and by the early 90s I was determined to become acquainted with all of his major works - as it turned out, a serendipitous moment to do so with the wealth of recordings becoming available. In the meantime I would troop off to the Melbourne Uni.'s Music Library every holiday to hear works that never turned up on the radio.

This growing love of his music, far more than any other composer I was exploring at the same time, inevitably led to a desire to know more about the man and the works themselves - and thankfully a wonderful second-hand music shop in Sydney, 'Da Capo', was able to provide me eventually with copies of all the significant biographies of RVW, including many long out of print.

Ironically, I wrote to the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 1994 enquiring about an RVW 'club', only to be informed that none existed - 'I even checked with Ursula'. I missed the Society's formation by a month or two and only came across it accidentally on the Internet in 1996 whilst searching yet again for a copy of Ken Russell's documentary on RVW - a copy of which did eventually arrive 'out of the blue' from LWT some two years after writing to them!

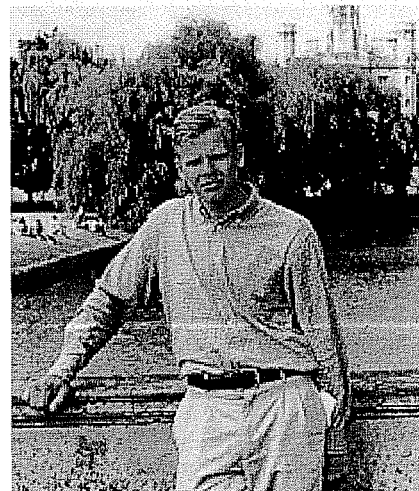
So, after this rapid apprenticeship into the music and life of RVW, I have still to hear much of his music live and that is my presiding aim at present. Favourite works now after 8 years of exploration? *Symphony No. 9*, I constantly return to - it is intriguing and fresh each hearing; *Dona Nobis Pacem* is still powerful; *The Pilgrim's Progress* I am still exploring; *Job* is always wonderful; many smaller works are real gems - *Six Studies of English Folksongs*, *Phantasy Quintet*, *Suite for Viola*, *Suite from A Flemish Farm*, etc. *Symphony Nos. 3 and 5* I still love; and many choral works including *Toward the Unknown Region*, *Lord, Thou Hast Been Our Refuge*, *Five Mystical Songs*, *Benedicite* and *Mass in G minor*. I have approached our local subscriber-based classical FM-radio station to present a two-hour special on RVW in October, so that will test my preferences and highlight my favourites!

Finally, as to the job itself, it is a real pleasure to share and discuss this common love of RVW's music with a wide range of similar admirers of his music, especially as most of them are far more knowledgeable than myself and have been enjoying his music far longer than myself. If my own enthusiasm leads them to explore the man and the background to his music even more, then I will be very pleased - and if I can alert younger people to his existence and introduce them to his music so that they don't have to wait as long as I have to enjoy it and be deeply rewarded by it, I will be doubly pleased.

John Waterhouse

Henrik Lindahl Scandinavia

I am 22 years old and live in Askim a few miles south of Gothenburg on the Swedish west coast. I am currently studying law at the university of Gothenburg. Music is my greatest personal interest and especially British music (not only RVW). I am a member of the British Music Society and the Bantock Society and in my spare time I am trying to do some research on the Scottish composer Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie.



Henrik Lindahl

By establishing a Scandinavian branch of the RVW Society I hope to be able to do something to further the reputation of RVW in the Nordic countries where his music is known far too little. It also gives the chance of making contact with other people with the same interest.

The Scandinavian branch is as yet in an embryonic state (7 members) and it will no doubt take time and effort to make it thrive. An important object must be to get more members through advertising in local music magazines and by way of contacts with record stores, etc. Also, we will have to try to influence local orchestras to give more concert performances of RVW's music (I will write to the Managing Director and

committee of the Gothenburg SO proposing a scheme of British music including RVW). Considering the far distance between members in Scandinavia, we are hoping to arrange discussions by way of correspondence or e-mail.

Henrik Lindahl

Rolf Jordan **North West Region**

I was born the morning after the original Snape Maltings burnt down - the only real link with music I can think of. I am a Monumental Mason (lettering and etching headstones!) and sometime freelance artist. I'm qualified in Art and Graphic design (but found myself disillusioned with 'The Industry' quite early on). My interest in music began with *Peter and the Wolf* and *The Planets*. Earliest musical memory is of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (which I only recently learned to say properly), as it was very popular when I was a youngster because of 2001.



Rolf Jordan

My interest in RVW came about in the most tenuous way.... I was trying to identify a piece of music I'd heard on a Betjeman documentary by raiding the local record library and discovered it was part of the *Pastoral Symphony*. I found that the music reflected perfectly the art of my favourite painter, Paul Nash, so I realised here was another artist after my own heart. Reading about RVW's life and beliefs, it seemed that I'd found someone close to my own philosophies.... (I didn't find out until much later that RVW visited the Nash retrospective at the Tate and owned a painting by his brother John Nash. Nash in turn, was friends with Bliss and admired Warlock's *Curlew*). I soon found that there's more to life than the visual arts: things 'got out of hand'; it seems funny to me now that five years ago I didn't know my Elgar from my elbow!

Rolf Jordan

Frank James Stanek **USA**

Frank James Stanek of Collingswood is a pianist, teacher, composer, lyricist, poet and editor. His first teacher was his father, who taught him to play the trumpet when he was in kindergarten. He began writing music soon after.



Frank James Stanek

Two of his original works have premiered recently before enthusiastic audiences. The Divertimenti String Quartet introduced *A Suite for Ursula* in November 1995 and the Greater South Jersey Chorus presented *Snow Song* as part of its holiday concert in December of that year.

Frank is able to make a living through music. He teaches piano, theory and composition at the Perkins Conservatory of Music in Moorestown to students aged 6 and up. He edits MUSICDATA INC., the Philadelphia publisher of the Music-in-Print series.

Of RVW, he says: "I loved the sound of his music the instant I first heard it and it has influenced me ever since."

Ron Bleach **South West Region**

As the South West Regional Chairman, Ron Bleach has been a Vaughan Williams devotee for many years. Now retired from commerce and local government, being from an age where one was expected to have a proper job - music was accepted as a hobby. Ron told the RVW Society Journal:

"I was certainly encouraged at an early age and can remember attending concerts which I realised at the time were wonderful opportunities to hear many first performances and conducted by the composer. Added to concert-going which was then a very serious business - were the collecting of recordings, which for many

years became almost an obsession, with a vast collection covering composers from all periods.

It was through recordings that I became involved in the Gramophone Society Movement - which when one thinks about it was something of a challenge, especially in the 78s days when the recordings were after truncated versions of many major works - which when heard in the concert hall were unrecognisable as Mozart or Beethoven.

Fortunately with the improvements in recording and the excellent Radio performances with the added pleasure of a live concert - my musical tastes broadened. From about the late 1940s, English music seemed to take a larger proportion of my interest, Vaughan Williams was one, along with Walton, Finzi and others. Then Elgar, Bantock and Delius quickly followed - it took me a long time to tackle Britten and all the other contemporary composers.

With the advent of long playing recordings which enabled complete works to be recorded, my horizons were expanded - with my usual zeal I started to collect the complete works of several composers including the early Adrian Boult ones of RVW which I still play although many are now available again in compact disc form.



Ron Bleach

I am now involved in music - inasmuch that I present recitals locally. Here in Bristol we have many opportunities to hear live music, the University, Colston Hall and other venues offer a tremendous range of repertoire.

I look forward to the challenge of making the South West area where Vaughan Williams had many associations, a branch to be reckoned with - in fact our first joint venture will be a meeting with the Elgar Society South West Branch - in Exeter on the 10th May - where I shall look forward to meeting as many members as possible."

Ron Bleach

YOUR LETTERS

We are always pleased to receive contributions for this page



Dorking Halls

I was in the audience for the opening concert of the 1997 Leith Hill Festival which also marked the opening of the refurbished Dorking Halls. It was a radiant occasion and a full House thoroughly enjoyed the event which attained a high standard of musical excellence. I was for several years a member of the Holmbury St. Mary choir but decided that I preferred listening to the music rather than taking part. Unusual I admit, but musically, I think, understandable.

The Chairman of the Mole Valley District Council made an eloquent speech, before presenting the Banners to the winning Choirs, in which she paid due respect to RVW and mentioned that a Wall Plaque of him in the Foyer had been left in position and carefully protected during the refurbishment of the Hall.

Now as to the question of a statue, I remain wedded to the concept of a full figure OUTSIDE the Halls. As to whether the Concept is worthwhile pursuing is up to the RVW Society. I feel that I have done all I can (or want) to do.

Any approach to the District Council, LHMF, Charterhouse, etc., must come from the Society itself. I personally would be happy to contribute the sum of £100 - to any appeal to the Public.

Richard Ward
Dorking

(Editor's note: Views on the idea of a statue of VW outside the Halls to me, please)

Potiphar it is

Because Charles Potiphar was unable to read or write, when RVW noted the music and words of *Bushes and Briars*, at Ingrave, in 1903, he had to write the old man's name phonetically, thus we get Pottiphar on RVW's manuscript. My original *Chain of Destiny* article used the name which appeared on church and civil records, but you changed the spelling to agree with that of RVW, perhaps out of a misplaced reverence for the work of the great man.

Unusual names are a gift to history research.

I am grateful that the need to correct your error gives me an opportunity to detail the extraordinary origins of the name Potiphar.

Those who are familiar with the Bible will know that the name originated in Egypt and meant 'belonging to the sun-god Ra'. In 16th century BC, Potiphar was the captain of Pharaoh's guard who bought Joseph, Jacob's favourite son, as a slave from a band of Midianites who had found him in a well. Potiphar's wife fell in love with Joseph and when he rejected her she complained to her husband that he had attempted to seduce her. For that, Potiphar put Joseph in prison.

How did the name come to Essex? Reaney's *Dictionary of British Surnames*, shows it was first recorded in 1777, as a corruption of Pettifer, which appears to have derived from Old French, *pedefer*, i.e. *pie de fer* 'iron foot'. That may have referred to a soldier who had lost a leg, or be the nickname of an insensitive person who was inclined to put his foot in it. The name goes back to the beginning of surnames in the 11th century and is probably of Norman origin.

Detailed research in the BT UK Phone Books in 1993 showed only 23 Potiphars and Potiphers listed and they were confined to the east of a westerly curving arc from The Wash to the Isle of Wight, the largest number being in Essex. Contact was made with all the Essex Potiphars and Potiphers. Unfortunately, none were related to Charles, but some were related to each other without apparently being aware of it, and nearly all could trace their origins to Romford.

Charles Potiphar's father was also born in Romford in 1797, a mere 20 years after the name was first recorded. The 80-year-old patriarch born in 1761, who headed the clan at Clements Wood Farm, at the time of the 1841 census, could be a son of the first Potiphar. It seems likely the name originated in the Romford area, when a local clergyman may have decided he had descendants of the Biblical Egyptian in his parish.

Before RVW's great-uncle, Charles Darwin, the history of the world had a very short timescale.

Frank Dineen
Ingrave

Brian on the idea of an RVW Society

"Of all English composers, Vaughan Williams is the most English of them all: he loves the countryside and the county town, which goes with families who have a foothold deep in the soil. For this reason, we shall never see him exercising the ritual of popularity, and I am sure that a proposal to found a Vaughan Williams Society would send him abroad to an unstated destination, leaving all the specially stamped gramophone records unsigned."

"On the other hand", by La Main Gauche [= Havergal Brian], *Musical Opinion*, January 1935, p. 301 (quoted in: Havergal Brian Society Newsletter no. 57, January-February 1985, p.8).

Johan Christiaan Snel
Utrecht, Netherlands

Rachmaninov and VW

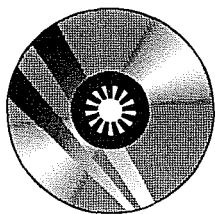
In Michael Nelson's footnote to his article on RVW in Leeds (RVWSJ 8), he wonders what passed between RVW and Rachmaninov, when *A Sea Symphony* received its first performance and Rachmaninov played the solo in his second concerto. We do, however, know of Rachmaninov's very enthusiastic reaction to the *Serenade to Music* at its first performance, 28 years later at Henry Wood's Jubilee Concert - when again he played the same concerto.

The reactions of great composers to each other's music are often more entertaining than enlightening. In this case, Rachmaninov's tribute is a significant one, coming from a composer from a very different tradition - and also one who, although a few months younger than RVW, belonged musically to an earlier generation. (I do not know what RVW thought of Rachmaninov's music).

Finally, a request rather than a whinge - could music examples in future RVWS J's be printed larger? I tried to sight read the examples in the article on *The Poisoned Kiss*, but, without a magnifying glass, this proved impossible. They are, no doubt, fine for the fortunate ones who can read a score, away from a piano, like a book, but I doubt if the majority of members are in this league.

Tony Noakes
Stanmore, Middlesex

Record Reviews



Vaughan Williams: *Symphony No. 9 in E Minor/Job - A Masque for Dancing*
BBC Symphony Orchestra/Andrew Davis
Teldec 4509 98463 2 (79'11" full price)

A very generously filled disc coupling two visionary masterpieces well played and recorded and I would recommend it to members.

The performance of the *Ninth Symphony* is, in my view, as good as any other recording; the timing at 34' 02" is close to the two recordings by Boult. In the first movement the clear digital recording allows the full effect of the complex string writing to be heard to good effect, particularly in the opening bars. The Flügelhorn is most beautifully played throughout the symphony and gives an appropriate air of remoteness and mystery. In the second movement, *andante sostenuto*, Davis adopts slowish tempi allowing this deeply moving music plenty of room to breathe. The demonic third movement is taken briskly, with the trio of saxophones and xylophone nicely to the front. The elaborate finale is very well played but perhaps just lacks a little of that elusive visionary quality that Previn, in particular, brings to his recording, but the ending with those great waves of sound fading into the unknown is as moving as ever.

The reading of *Job* is a symphonic one, I think this work has many similarities with Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloë* not the least being that though both originally ballet scores they are both now better known as pure orchestral pieces. Certainly, Davis does not linger in the cool pastoral music but in the big tunes the playing and sound are superb. This is a fine performance that perhaps just misses some of the rapture that Sir Adrian always conjured up in his four recordings of the work.

Robin Barber

**The English Song Series Volume 1:
Ralph Vaughan Williams.**

It was a Lover and his Lass/ The Lawyer/ The Splendour Falls/ The Water Mill/ Tired/ Silent Noon/ Searching for Lambs/ Nocturne/ Joy, Shipmate, Joy!/ Lord, Come Away/ Come Love, Come Lord/ Five Mystical Songs/ On Wenlock Edge/ Dirge for Fidele.

Anthony Rolfe Johnson
(tenor), **Simon Keenlyside**
(baritone), **Graham Johnson**
(piano), **The Duke Quartet.**
Collins Classics 14882

This is the first in Collins's English Song series, which will eventually run to thirty discs, each devoted to an individual composer; and

judging by this release that's good news for song devotees. I found this one enjoyable but flawed, which is something the generous running time perhaps made up for.

I'm not alone in finding Anthony Rolfe Johnson's *On Wenlock Edge* surprisingly weak in places - compare it with his *Songs of Travel*. Graham Johnson and the Duke Quartet have gone for the impressionistic approach here, with more sympathy to the original poetry than some readings show. Often, the bells on Bredon can sound a little *too* clearly, but Johnson keeps away from any such blatancy. This is 'remembered' poetry, after all.

Many will find this first recording of the piano and voice version of the *Five Mystical Songs* a strange choice for a representative disc, as there's no denying that the choral part we are all used to hearing is conspicuous in its absence: the mind's ear tends to fill in all the gaps like it or not! *I got me Flowers* and *the Call* sound as lovely as ever, though, and one is soon won over by Simon Keenlyside's powerful voice.

Keenlyside also does a star turn on the individual songs (many are rarities) and I could easily have sat through more, perhaps at the expense of *On Wenlock Edge*. It's a shame, for example, that all three Poems by Walt Whitman couldn't have been included rather than just two.

The two Shakespeare songs *It was a Lover and his Lass* and *Dirge for Fidele* are genuinely beautiful, a reminder of the composer's skill when writing duets. *The Splendour Falls* is earliest RVW, - just try to forget Britten's more famous setting! There's a real folksiness about the *Two English Folk Songs* for voice and violin, which surprisingly came as late as 1935.

It's a fair claim that the whole of Vaughan Williams's song writing life is here, albeit in a muddle. Could 1956's *Tired*, with touching words by Ursula, not have been placed last on the disc rather than immediately before *Silent Noon*?

Sleeve notes are by Michael Kennedy, and, apart from extraneous noise during the title track of *On Wenlock Edge*, sound production is excellent.

Rolf Jordan

Concert Reviews

The unusual St. Chad's church in Shrewsbury, with its circular nave was the St. George's Day venue for two VW rarities performed by the Shrewsbury Choral Society and Orchestra.

The first, the ten part cantata *A Cotswold Romance*, was adapted from 1924's *Hugh the Drover* as late as 1950 by Maurice Jacobson of Curwen's. (RVW was at the same time rescoring parts of *Hugh* with Roy Douglas). Nothing is radically changed from the opera. A few bars into the first song *The Men of Cotsall* and the audience was smiling. How did anything so infectiously tuneful get ignored for so long? The Shrewsbury folk were fine, but confessed under-rehearsal. I can't complain though, when everyone present got so much pleasure from *Hugh's Song of the Road* and *The Best Man in England*. Indeed, I found it difficult to shake off those 'horse hooves' whilst driving home... RNCM graduate Rachel Wilson and Birmingham conservatoire student David Watkin-Holmes sang *Hugh* and *Mary* - keep an eye out for them.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Hugh's Song of the Road

for high voice and piano

from the Romantic Ballad Opera
Hugh the Drover

£4.95



Other recently published material from Faber Music:

Hugh the Drover, Romantic Ballad Opera in 2 Acts - vocal score £15.95

Romance and Pastorale for violin and piano - £5.95

Mereless Beauty for high voice and string trio - vocal score £6.95

Faber Music Ltd, 3 Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AU
Tel: 0171 833 7929/Fax: 0171 278 3817

Conductor David Grundy, as well as composing another of the evening's works, a setting of *I will now remember the works of the Lord*, (Ch. 42, book of Ecclesiasticus) also contributed excellent programme notes.

The cantata *In Windsor Forest*, adapted from *Sir John in Love* completed the concert. Alas, no *Drinking Song*, but we were in church after all! Occasionally bettering Norman Del Mar's recording, the Choral Society really enjoyed themselves in *Falstaff* and *the Fairies*. Lots of brave little
(continued on page 23)

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS and ELLA MARY LEATHER

by Simona Pakenham

In the autumn of 1908 Ralph Vaughan Williams was in Herefordshire for the Three Choirs Festival. He took the opportunity of going to Weobley, fifteen miles to the north-east, to call on Mrs Ella Mary Leather. It was she who had asked for the meeting. She had formed a friendly relationship with the gypsies who came yearly to harvest the hops and she needed a trained musician to note the tunes of the songs they sang her.

Ella Mary Smith was born in 1874 into a family of 'gentleman farmers' about three miles from Weobley at Dilwyn. At nineteen, she married Frank Leather, the Weobley solicitor, and lived there in the Castle House for the rest of her short life. She died in her mid-forties to the distress of the whole community. At that time, a solicitor's wife would have been well-provided with domestic help - cook, maids, nannies for her three sons, etc., so she had the leisure to pursue her interests as she wished. From childhood, she had found these on her own doorstep in the study and recording of local traditions, customs and, as it turned out, songs. She quickly realised that all these things were in danger of being lost amid 20th Century 'progress' and she set about collecting for a book *The Folklore of Herefordshire*, illustrated by her own photographs, which was published in 1912. She got to know virtually the entire population of the little town, as well as of many of the villages around, and she would talk endlessly to anybody who would let her. Obviously she could charm the birds off the trees. Tributes from school-friends, servants and neighbours reveal her as a person who treated everybody alike, taking pains to put herself on their level, to the extent of learning to pick hops so that she could work among the gypsies. It was among them that she found the need for a musician to help her, as she could not write down a tune, so she wrote to RVW, as a leading light of the Folk Song Society. He was only too eager to oblige and he and his wife, Adeline, went to stay at Weobley in 1908. The three of them spent their days sitting on upturned buckets in gypsy encampments, Ralph noting down the music while Adeline and Ella wrote alternate lines of the verses. They made a second visit in 1912. The result was the launching on the musical world of such now-famous folk songs as *The Truth From Above*, *The Seven Virgins* and *The Unquiet Grave*. Ella died in 1924. Vaughan Williams made a pilgrimage to the scene of these events thirty years later, this time in the company of his second wife, Ursula, and their friends Gerald

and Joy Finzi.

The present vicar of Weobley, Richard Birt, is an enthusiast for folk music and an excellent singer, conductor and, when necessary, organist. Whilst looking after six other parishes he manages to find time to research the life of another local notability - Thomas Traherne - as well as the life of Ella Leather. On Sunday, October 27th, 1996, he staged an elaborate *Tribute to Ella* in his large and beautiful church. Ursula Vaughan Williams was invited as one of the guests of honour and I went along as companion and chauffeur (we set out from my home near Oxford on the eighty-seven mile journey) and also as an enthusiast for the same sort of music.

We had intended to go to Weobley in midsummer for a weekend of musical activities the vicar had organised but this plan had to be abandoned, to Ursula's disappointment, because she had broken her arm. She was, therefore, delighted when this other occasion for a visit to Weobley arose. She was anxious to meet Richard Birt and to go back to the little town where she had been with Ralph and the Finzis in 1956. Not yet totally recovered, she braved the train to Charlbury, my nearest station, and we set off the next morning on a ravishing autumn day of sun and golden leaves. Through Tewkesbury and Ledbury the roads were relatively peaceful, but the moment we crossed the Herefordshire border we seemed to be in a different country and to have gone back in time by half a century. Cars almost vanished. Occasionally lost in twisty lanes and anxious not to be late we enquired the way a couple of times and were ravished by the soft Herefordshire voices and the accent. This was Saturday. The Tribute was on Sunday, but Mr Birt had promised us another fascinating event if we could be in church by three - a gypsy wedding.

Though the service was conventional C. of E., the atmosphere could hardly have been less Anglican, made exotic by a church bursting at the seams full, almost entirely, of Romany folk. The friends and relations of the couple were there in force, dressed, for the most part, in formal, old-fashioned clothes and, in the case of the women, in large and splendid hats. Under those brims were some of the most strikingly beautiful faces I have seen. The men had fine features, shiny black hair and, in their ears, the big gold rings did not seem out of place. The quantities of smartly dressed children were, however, uncontrollably vocal,

leading to a plea from the vicar for their banishment. The bride wore a crinoline, which led us to speculate as to how on earth she was to fulfil the promise that she would ride away at the end of the ceremony on the beautiful black and white horse that we saw waiting outside. The feat was accomplished with the aid of a small step-ladder, and she departed, moreover, riding astride!

At the Tribute, on the afternoon of the next day, Ursula had, for fellow guests of honour, Minnie Davies, Ella's one surviving maid, and the ninety-five year old Lavender Jones, who wrote the only biography of Mrs Leather. Choirs from Weobley, Dilwyn and King's Pyon filled the stalls and chancel and, as far as I could see from our seats in the front row the church was again quite full.

With three good choirs to lead us, the congregation sang with commendable vigour. There were two of RVW's folk-song hymns, *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say* to the *Dives and Lazarus* tune and Bunyan's *To Be A Pilgrim*. Finally we joined in the 1953 setting for the coronation of *The Old Hundredth* in which two trumpets, one played by Richard Birt's young daughter, rang out from the back of the chancel, resounding triumphantly in the vaulting of the church.

Between the hymns we listened to a selection of solo and choral settings of Mrs Leather's discoveries, and to spoken tributes from people who remembered her or to whom she had been a childhood legend. The present occupant of Castle House, where her married life was spent, spoke of her influence in the town; ladies who had been 'in service' told reminiscences their predecessors had handed down; an obituary from 1924, the year of her death was read by Mrs Wilby of the Women's Institute, who prefaced this set piece by a personal tribute to Ursula recalling the excellence of the pageant she and Malcolm Williamson had composed for a huge meeting of the W.I. at the Royal Albert Hall - *The Brilliant and the Dark*. This gave Ursula much pleasure. John Pollard, who had been a child in Weobley for the last six years of Mrs Leather's life had travelled from Anglesey to add his memories and Percy Young, the music critic, had come from Wolverhampton to talk about RVW and his attitude to dance and religion. Solo songs included *All Under the Leaves* and *The Unquiet Grave* and two tiny girls, accompanied by flute and guitar, sang *The Salley Gardens* as a duet. What all

of us will remember I think, above all, was the contribution of Fred Jordan of Shropshire, who sat on a stool and sang, unaccompanied, the song which had first alerted Cecil Sharp to the whole subject - *I Sowed the Seeds of Love*, followed by *The Foggy, Foggy Dew*. With no apparent effort he filled the church with his deep voice, every syllable audible, a fact which gave much delight because his words, as befits a folk singer's were very slightly different from the ones printed in books, and the plot of the second song was subtly altered from the familiar Britten version (though it had no happier ending) in that the weaver at least got married to his girl! Alas, there was too little time, we could have listened to him all night.

When the King's Pyon Choir sang the most famous of Ella's finds, *The Truth From Above* (surely derived from plainsong) I was struck by the extraordinary quality of the Herefordshire folk. The girls were as beautiful as the gypsies had been, but quite unlike them - Grecian profiles, wide set eyes and, in most cases, straight flaxen hair. They sat relaxed, conveying an atmosphere of repose that seemed, like the country we had driven through the day before, to come from an earlier age. The Tribute ended *pianissimo* with the choirs, retreated to the back of the chancel, singing Blake's *Cradle Song*, RVW's setting from the *Oxford Book of Carols*, followed by a recording of the end of the *Passacaglia* from his *Fifth Symphony*, 'perhaps', as Percy Young had written, 'the most benedictory work in modern English music.'

My only criticism of Richard Birt's Tribute is of the subtitle to his printed essay, given out to the congregation with the programmes - 'The forgotten gatherer of folk lore'. It does not seem to me that Ella Mary Leather is in danger of being forgotten. Among the large community who joined heartily in the hymns were many who either remember her in the dim past or have been told of her by their parents. True, nine villagers who knew her in the flesh had died in the last twelve months, but to the people I heard talking over tea and buns in the church and later in the bar of the *Red Lion* she was clearly a legend. Aside from that, her name appears in countless editions of Herefordshire folk songs, in books of carols and in *The English Hymnal and Songs of Praise*. And every Christmas when anybody sings from a score of RVW's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* or performs *The First Nowell*, both of which start with what must surely have been his favourite carol - *The Truth from Above* - her name is remembered again.

Simona Pakenham
Chipping Norton

HERBERT HOWELLS AND RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

by Keith Douglas

A lot is known about the influence of Ralph Vaughan Williams on Gustav Holst, and vice versa. But what about the influence of Ralph Vaughan Williams on other composers and their works?

I refer particularly to Herbert Howells (1892-1983). Until recently, just another name to me; a writer of church music, wasn't he?

Richard Hickox's recent recording of his orchestral works changed all that. After reading the *Gramophone* review in which the critic referred to RVW's influence on Howells's *Pastoral Rhapsody*, I decided to buy the compact disc. What a revelation! I immediately took to Howells's works. *The Pastoral Rhapsody* and *Paradise Rondel* have an atmosphere about them which immediately reminds me of RVW's *Pastoral Symphony* and *Oboe Concerto*.

I decided to look at the RVW connection to see if there were any direct influences on Howells's writing. But where to look? My local library proved hopeless, as usual, but luckily, a visit to a city library furnished me with *Herbert Howells* by the late Christopher Palmer written in 1976. In this book Palmer interviews Howells about influences, and asks what the most determining factor was on his life. Hearing the *Tallis Fantasia* in 1910 in Gloucester Cathedral was his answer. He was only 18 when he and Ivor Gurney went to hear Elgar's *Gerontius*, but first RVW conducted the *Tallis Fantasia* then left the rostrum and came and sat next to Howells, much to his "gratification and embarrassment". RVW then followed the score of *Gerontius* with Howells. RVW gave Howells his autograph. After the concert Howells and Gurney were unable to sleep, so obsessed were they by the *Tallis Fantasia* they spent the night pacing the streets of Gloucester.

He met RVW again briefly when he studied at the RCM, but he says that after the First World War their acquaintance deepened into a firm and lasting friendship. He and RVW "reacted to things musically in a very similar way". If some of their works are similar it's due to "an intuitive affinity". They were both from Gloucestershire, both attracted by Tudor music, plainsong and the modes.

The Gloucestershire connection is important. As we know RVW was born at Down Ampney, Holst in Cheltenham, Howells was born in Lydney on the western bank of the Severn. He was gifted in music from an early age and he studied with Herbert Brewer in Gloucester from the age

of 16, then with Stanford at the RCM. But it was hearing the *Tallis Fantasia* in 1910 that was the inspirational spark that made him compose furiously throughout his teens and twenties. By 1917 he was good enough to be chosen to have works published by the Carnegie UK Trust alongside such established composers as RVW (*A London Symphony*), Rutland Boughton (*The Immortal Hour*) and Granville Bantock (*The Hebridean Symphony*).

The RVW influence is a recurring theme though. Howells was present at the first run-through of RVW's *Pastoral Symphony* under Adrian Boult and it made a big impression on him. He was especially affected by the symphony's complex mood, which was to become a hallmark of Howells's later style.



Herbert Howells in 1954

He wrote of it in 1922,... "he neither depicts nor describes. It is not his concern to make the universe his box of toys. He builds up a great mood, insistent to an unusual degree, but having in itself far more variety than a merely slight acquaintance with it would suggest. In matter and manner it is entirely personal.... You may not like the symphony's frame of mind; but there it is strong and courageous; it is the truth of the work; and out of it would naturally arise whatever risk it has run of being publicly cold-shouldered." [*Music and Letters* April 1922. From Paul Spicer's booklet notes].

As I have mentioned, both Howells's *Pastoral Rhapsody* written in 1923 and his *Paradise Rondel* written in 1925 have the *Pastoral Symphony* as their inspiration. Howells discarded the *Rhapsody* and Palmer speculates that the reason for this is the score's rather obvious indebtedness to RVW's third Symphony.

(Continued on page 22)

LEONARD SLATKIN IN LONDON

with

RICHARD MASON and EMMA MARSHALL

Gems can be found in the strangest places, and in the most unlikely locations. So, one Sunday morning in February, Emma Marshall, (possibly our youngest RVW Society member) guided me expertly to the darkest regions of Lewisham, in search of the American conductor, Leonard Slatkin, in rehearsal for a few London appearances. We duly arrived at Goldsmith College, and any doubts as to the location were soon dispersed, as we were greeted with the noble sounds of the Sibelius *Symphony 5*, flowing in rich harmony from the main hall, where it was fascinating to see very long "takes" in rehearsal - clearly the orchestra and conductor felt very much "at home" with each other.

As with most conductors, finding a slot in a packed schedule of concerts proved a difficult task, but Maestro Slatkin very kindly agreed to spare us some minutes for a chat during the lunch break of his rehearsal session.

Leonard Slatkin arrives with an already well established reputation as a specialist in English music, though his reach in composers is very wide. A quick survey of his concerts over the coming two years reveals an interesting spread of names ~ Bruckner, Berlioz, Mahler, Shostakovich, Copland, not so much Vaughan Williams, but he is in London this time to conduct the Elgar *Symphony 2*, having already successfully conducted the *1st* a few months earlier. (The concert a few nights later in the Royal Festival Hall, was magnificent). He has just been appointed Music Director of Washington's National Symphony Orchestra, following a long and successful tenure as Music Director and conductor of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.

Members will probably already have most of his recordings of the Vaughan Williams symphonies, but not so many may know just how pivotal an influence RVW had for Slatkin. The first symphony he recalls hearing was the *Fourth*:-

"On the radio, the orchestra of New York and Metropolis, in the 1950s. I'd never heard anything like this, I didn't know this sound existed. It's so compact, and so tightly knit. You couldn't help getting drawn into this world, and it was kind of like "Oh, get me out of it", and then when it was all over, it was over too soon. That kind of thing."

The *Sixth Symphony* was also a pivotal work in the career of Slatkin. In his first year with

the St Louis, working under Walter Susskind, whilst the RVW *Sixth* was being rehearsed, "Susskind suddenly stopped and said, "Leonard, I want to go out and listen. Would you do the opening for me?" But it was really a test, and he let me conduct the whole piece, and by the end of it, I suddenly had to learn every piece of English music that I could."

An enthusiasm that has since been proved many times, with recordings and concerts over a wide range of English repertoire, including Elgar and Vaughan Williams. Indeed, Slatkin has already been awarded the Elgar Medal by the Elgar Society, for services rendered to the composer (the RVW Society might have to start a similar scheme in the future).

"The plan this time is to do Elgar, or at least to have a major kind of Elgar work in each programme. Originally we were trying to do each programme with a piece that was contemporaneous with the main item. So actually we were planning Sibelius and Ravel to appear alongside the *Cello Concerto*, and alongside the *Second Symphony* I was hoping to place *Petrushka* (Stravinsky) or again, to try Schoenberg's *Chamber Symphony* with the *First*. Just as a basis of comparison, so we understood where to place Elgar ~ do we look at him as a visionary or as a reactionary? Probably in the context of most of his pieces, most people would say reactionary. Vaughan Williams is quite a contrast however; if you placed him in the context of the time his works were composed, in many cases he would be far ahead of any others. Much far. Much far.

"For me, Elgar really is the bridge back ~ it's the ~ Strauss concept. He got himself to a certain point harmonically, and he just couldn't take it any further. As a result of that, his works tend to reflect more Brahmsian and Wagnerian types of gestures. Whereas with Vaughan Williams, you never know from one piece to the next what you are going to get if you don't know the work. I found it intriguing early on in my time ~ it's just that one day, I listened through all my Vaughan Williams symphonies, in consecutive order. This was some years ago now, and the shock was that you could never predict what the next one was going to sound like.

"It was only when I got round to recording that the question of how they would be coupled came up. The record company would say "Well, are you going to put *Three*

and *Five* together, and *Four* and *Six*?" I said then, "Absolutely not ~ that actually plays against the point that you've come from *Three*, and you've got to go to *Four*, and from *Five* you've got to *Six*, to understand the complexity of the man, and his quirky nature. Whereas you go from one Elgar to the next and there's a more logical flow - the transitions from one piece to the next grow more like Bruckner than they do anything else."

"Vaughan Williams is very much like Copland in the sense that you have both schools in his music; by this I mean, a very, sort of, countryside style, works like *Three* and *Five*, but you also have the extreme urban end, in *Four* and *Six*. So in Copland you have *Appalachian Spring*, with works like *Visions of the West*, or *Mountain Spring*. But then you come to the *Third Symphony*, or the *Variations*, and all of a sudden you are in a world where the composer is still identifiable, but the whole style is different, and I do find the two composers quite similar in that sense."

Leonard Slatkin clearly sees Vaughan Williams as being more than just a Nationalistic composer, though there are unmistakably national elements audible in the music. Society members are all too well aware of the constant need to challenge the stereotype of Vaughan Williams as being just a provincial and predominately pastoral composer. It was fascinating to hear a defence and a parallel being made with ease from such a prominent and gifted musician.

"Every piece is influenced by where you grow up, where you live, even what you eat and where you breathe, but (long pause), if that were really the case, why shouldn't all composers sound very much the same? Why wouldn't Britten and Tippett sound the same? Or even Vaughan Williams and Walton, as they were more or less contemporaries. So there are varieties of national school, but I prefer to think of great composers that have moved away from the folk heritage and folk tradition, using direct folk elements of course, there's that, but it more reflects the language than the country.

"What makes Bartok so Hungarian is where the emphasis and accents occur which was contemporaneous with the language - the actual Hungarian language. I suspect it would be interesting if we applied a great linguist's perspective to composers from England, to see if the music does reflect the language as speech? For me, this would be a very interesting study, you know, like Noam Chomsky did in the States for a short while, which Leonard Bernstein used as a simple basis for analysis. But this is all linguistics of course.

(Here is a delightful sense of enthusiasm and pleasure in the actual nature of the music; this genial conductor is full of smiles and laughter, despite my rather nervous leading

questions about the nature of English music).

"There is another parallel however between the States and English music, which goes some way to explaining my continuing interest in British composers: we (USA) were one of the few countries, with England, at the turn of the century that preserved the tradition of the symphony. Our composers, MacDowell and Chadwick, Ives and others, and on this (British) side of the water, composers such as Bax and Vaughan Williams, were still producing substantial bodies of works in the symphonic tradition. This is certainly a meaningful point of contact. Another, deeper link, is that both countries were impacted musically in a singular way by the War, there is a degree where composers were trying to find ways to elevate the audiences, to move them into (pause) spiritual planes."

I asked about the experience and practice of putting together a cycle of all the symphonies; whether this sense of spirituality came through in the whole sequence.

"Recording all of the symphonies was inevitably, a fascinating experience, for a number of reasons. We did not record them in the correct order unfortunately, there is rarely the time for that, and we did not play all of them in concert.

"What was interesting was that neither of the two orchestras I was conducting at that time, in either Elgar or Vaughan Williams, really seemed to have a sense of a tradition within this music. I mean, only one player was left who had ever played during the time of Vaughan Williams's life. So, we came to the whole cycle, very fresh; that was the first thing. Then we did them all in two and a half years, which is pretty compact for a cycle like that, and of course there were other pieces we had to do.

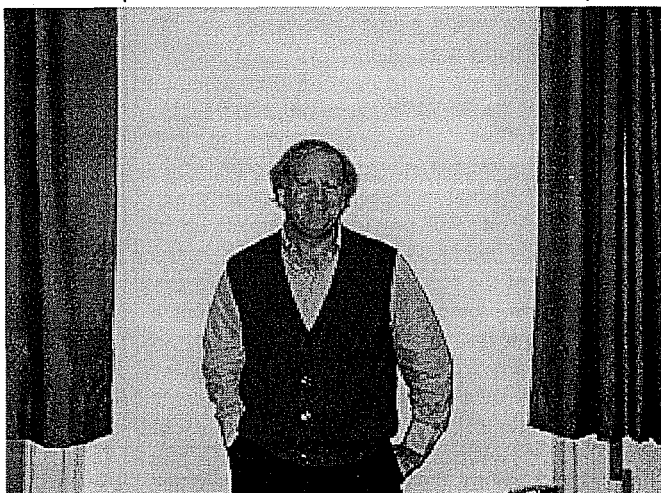
"What I came away with, was a sense of the composer as more of an individualist. I never thought of him, or of a single work, as being: "this is the work of an English composer," I just thought "it's VW." He's got his own voice, his own language, he just happens to be from here, but I wouldn't categorise it. He knew what he wanted to do. Not so nationalistic, as Elgar can be, but with this kind of rugged edge which intrigues and appeals."

But does RVW intrigue listeners and appeal to audiences overseas?

"With the right programming, yes." Leonard Slatkin reveals a humorous pastime of retaining special memories of appalling

concert programmes "I collect these things!"

"I remember a bizarre concert in Brighton prior to recording the RVW *Symphony 4*, the programme was *Candide* (Bernstein) Barber *Adagio*, MacDowell *Piano Concerto*. Interval followed by the Vaughan Williams *Fourth*, then the *1812 Overture*, with chorus, though with a huge cut in the Tchaikovsky. I just could not stand it, I really could not. I finished the Vaughan Williams, how can you actually conduct anything else when you've finished it? That half hour, you slam into that last F - it is like, like somebody took a stake and just punched a hole in a tyre, and as if all the air comes out at once. Like this (Slatkin blows out explosively, as hard as he can) and that's what it should sound like. And now we had to do the *1812* after that! You know that



Leonard Slatkin
Photograph by Emma Marshall

was the single worst combination of pieces I have ever done.

"I've seen other programmes though - there was one in Buffalo, New York, which began with the Gershwin *Piano Concerto* then the Bruckner *Number 5*. This is not great programming, then yet another with the *3rd Brandenburg*, the *Lincoln Portrait* (Copland), interval, then the *German Requiem*.

"I did *Job*, last year with the Philharmonic, which was a big success. Next time I go to Vienna they've asked me to play some Vaughan Williams, and I'm going to do the *5th* in Munich. Actually I was supposed to do that 2 years ago, but my wife was pregnant and I cancelled. Sadly, the conductor who took over from me chose not to do the same programme.

"This music has got to be played outside of England. That is really the key point. Ultimately, if the music is going to survive, it takes more people to do it outside of this country. It is not a question of (the music) not travelling, it's just that nobody does it! I do not see why more foreign conductors do not do this, it's not so technically complicated. I recall doing the *Pastoral* in

Vienna, and it was a great success. I mean they loved it. They really loved it. I just don't know why (the promoters) are scared of it. I think ultimately, maybe in the next 10 - 15 years, more people are going to come to the music. I think so. It is either going to be that, or we are going to hear exactly the same pieces every week and we'll lose our public."

To round up our chat, which I wish could have been longer and in a more comfortable venue than an empty schoolroom, I rather unforgivably asked the embarrassing question that we always want to know: which work is the favourite. It is, of course, a crass and childish question, but one always wishes a favourite conductor to opt for a cherished work; perhaps because we all long to be conductors ourselves, when listening to glorious music in the privacy of our own homes. In keeping with his ever-present good nature and genial manner, I received a fascinating and rewarding reply, after a very long pause for reflection.

"*Symphony 6* ~ a masterpiece ~ You have these four little mini tone poems going on, all connected by the fabric of the war, whether he said so or not, and it's true language, that, well, from the first bar no-one else could have written. There is not one bar that anyone else could have composed. I cannot say that about *4*. There are a couple of places in *4* where I feel some of his contemporaries creep in - there's a little bit of - something. But

I think in *6*, for instance, when we come to the end of the first movement and the tune comes back in the major, and all that, we do not harken to another composer. And we come to this bizarre world of the funeral march. I think in Vaughan Williams, *6* is the most personal, most individual, for me, though I don't know whether in public this is the one that should be started with. His face is there. Every bar, every note, but that's why it is great. Whether people really liked him or not does not matter. What matters with any composer is having his own identity, and he still has his own individual voice. Exactly like Copland - he's seen everything happen and this is reflected in his style. He moves from romanticism to academia.

"Vaughan Williams encompassed the 20th Century in the broad sense, and because of this, he never sounds old."

With thanks to:
Emma Marshall for transcript of interview and photograph
Julia Macbeth, Press Agent for Leonard Slatkin.

Richard Mason

INTRODUCTION TO THE VW 'NET'...

by Jaron Collis

You've probably heard of the Internet, (or Net as most users call it), although you may not know what it actually is. Basically, it's a set of computers which are linked together. Admittedly, this in itself is not very exciting. However, each machine on the network can be used as a repository of information, and together, these form what's known as the World Wide Web (or just Web to its friends). The Web is a vast collection of "pages", which are created by Internet users around the world. Anyone with a computer connected to the Internet network can read or "visit" these pages. "Home Pages" are areas of the Web devoted to a particular subject, and such is the diversity of the Internet, these can range from favourite cake recipes to film stars. And as a major pastime it comes as no surprise that music is well catered for on the Internet.

In early 1995 I had discovered that a few classical music fans had set up pages for their favourite composers. The pages existed to provide an information resource, so allowing visitors to find out more about a particular composer and his works. Currently about 20 major composers have Web pages devoted to them, although a year ago, only Prokofiev and Shostakovich had such support. So I thought setting up a Web resource page for RVW would be an excellent idea.

Here I'll digress for a bit of personal history. The first piece of RVW I heard was when I was still in school, 3rd Form to be precise. Our music teacher was introducing our class to some classical pieces. Possibly as an alternative to hearing our terrible recorder playing. I never queried her motives. One of the pieces she played on the tape recorder was the *Fantasia on Greensleeves*, at the time I thought it was quite pleasant, but I wasn't interested in classical music then. But that had changed by the time I had started university in Manchester. I had managed to pick up most of the terminology along the way, although I never learnt to play any instruments.

Greensleeves was eventually to turn up again when I bought my first CD, "The Classic Experience". But it was hearing the ending of the 1st movement of the *Sixth Symphony* on the sequel CD that really made an impact on me, Vaughan Williams became a name to look out for. As it happened, a few months later I bought "Classic

Experience 4", it had the *Tallis Fantasia*, and I was smitten. And the more I learnt about RVW the man, the more my interest grew. His humanist, meritocratic outlook in particular did him credit in my eyes. 18 months and a collection of his symphonies later and I was a confirmed RVW fan. Soon after I began a PhD in Computer Science. I suppose it was inevitable that two of my interests would merge - the result was the RVW home page.

Setting up the RVW pages was not though a solo effort. I'm very grateful to Rob Graham, then at university in London, who I "met" through a classical discussion group on the Net. Rob provided a complete list of RVW's works, which became the centre piece of the repository. I then added a few pictures, some background information, a chronology, a bibliography, a list of recommended recordings and a page of light-hearted RVW trivia. It took a couple of weeks of part-time work to create, there weren't really any problems; after all, you don't need a PhD in computing to use the Internet! The pages are currently stored on one of the computers at the Queen's University of Belfast, my place of study. Thanks are due to the academic powers that be for that.

The next major update arose when Steve Schwartz of New Orleans got in touch with me. He very generously offered to send me background information on most of RVW's works, along with some listening guides he'd written. I'm very grateful for what he provided, it instantly doubled the amount of information I could make available. It also made the page an interesting visit for those who already knew about RVW, as well as those who didn't. Naturally, I'm indebted to all those who have visited and offered suggestions and new snippets of information. I've done my best to respond to all those who have sent feedback messages and questions.

A year on, and the site has been accessed over 2400 times, currently at a rate of about 50 accesses a week. I've been pleasantly surprised by the interest the pages have generated. It's also interesting to note that the majority of visitors so far are American, I hadn't thought RVW was as popular across the Atlantic. To a certain extent, this also reflects the Internet demographics, most users live in the USA, many using home

computers. Visitors have actually come from as far afield as Mexico and the Antipodes.

The future? Well, the project is very much an on-going effort. I've recently finished adding more background information to the list of works, in particular, the lesser-known ones. Having an entry for every recorded RVW work is the goal. By my reckoning, I still have half of RVW's output to discover, and this is probably common for most RVW admirers. Some more biographical entries on RVW's education and working life would also be a nice addition. I'd also love to find out more about the unpublished and unrecorded RVW works, I've had quite a few questions sent to me asking about them. I'll keep reading the Journal for the answers!

So if you're on-line, you're welcome to drop in at:

<http://www.cs.qub.ac.uk/~J.Collis/RVW.html>

Or, if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to e-mail me at the following address:

j.collis@qub.ac.uk

*Jaron Collis
Belfast*

(Parry and VW continued from page 5)

Parry's optimism, driven by his sense of mission as Director of the RCM, also sustained his belief that democracy was 'not only beginning to realise its birthright, but to be taking possession very vigorously'.¹ Vaughan Williams also espoused this same spirit of democracy instilled in him by his teacher and also inherited a similar brand of heterodoxy in which agnosticism stood side by side with a profound sense of humanitarianism. For Parry this was expressed in his cycle of 'ethical oratorios' written between 1898 and 1908, the pinnacle of which was *The Vision of Life* (1907). Though the least successful of his choral works, Parry's ethical choral works nevertheless set a major precedent for Walford Davies (*Everyman*), Ireland (*These things shall be*) and Howells (*Hymnus Paradisi*), but it was Vaughan Williams above all others who continued the idealism in his Whitman essays, *Toward the Unknown Region* and *A Sea Symphony*, in *Sancta Civitas*, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *An Oxford Elegy* and, most introspectively, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In these works alone he confirmed himself as Parry's true heir.

Jeremy Dibble

(to be continued in the October edition)

¹ Ibid. 7.

Folklore in the Symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams

by Olga Borisovna Manulkina

It was reported as long ago as *Journal number 2* that a small pamphlet had come into the hands of our Chairman, Stephen Connock; a rather mysterious looking item as it was an abstract of a dissertation on the music of RVW, in Russian! It has taken some time for this booklet to be translated into English through a contact of Richard Mason at Oxford. The following is an even briefer summary of the contents.

This is believed to be the first attempt in Russian musicology to examine Vaughan Williams's symphonies in the context of his works as a whole and of British national culture: an attempt to study them through the prism of his ideas concerning folklore. The aim of the work is to reveal a very specific phenomenon - the nature of his view of folklore beneath its outwardly traditional cloak. The work itself, not seen by reviewer - translator, comprises an Introduction, three Chapters and a Conclusion, with a bibliography which contains 140 books and articles in Russian and English, with musical examples also.

Introduction

The most important composer of the twentieth century, the patriarch of the national school of composition, the incarnation of 'Englishness' in music (William W Austin). RVW left an enormous legacy: there was no musical genre whose history he did not make his own contribution. In the course of his long life he remained the true ideal of the new English renaissance - the period in which his artistic outlook and compositional craftsmanship were formed, and in which he found himself involved in almost every 'movement' of that epoch, historically important for English culture (the birth of the tradition of the old English school, the choral movement, the Bach movement). But above all his name is associated with the folklore movement. The topic of composer and folklore is an essential part of any survey of his œuvre and is indirectly responsible for the fate of his heritage, and largely determining the view taken of his personality. Central to this thesis are his ideals of national music, which he formulated with exceptional dogmatism in his theoretical pronouncements, but realised very flexibly in his œuvre.

Chapter 1: Folklore in Vaughan Williams's System of Outlook

Vaughan Williams's folklore activities took place at a time when composers stood in a

new kind of relation to their national music. Exploration for folklore becomes an almost obligatory part of the creative biography (Bartok, Kodály, Janáček, Sibelius, Arthur Farwell, Szymanowski, Falla). However, the intensity and duration of concern with folklore distinguishes Vaughan Williams from most contemporary composers with the exception of Bartok and Kodály. In 1903 - 13 he collects songs from the eastern and south-eastern counties; his collection numbers 810 songs; he publishes songs from his collection in the *Journal of the Folk Song Society*. He collaborates with other folklorists. On the basis of his material two posthumous collections are published. For many years he was an active member of the English Folk Song and Dance Society - from 1946 to his death he was its President. Folklore is the constant theme of his appearances in print, and on the radio, and is the main subject of his lectures.

At the time when Vaughan Williams joined in with the folklore collection movement, ethnomusicology had existed as a discipline for twenty years, and its methods of transcription and publication posed demands of exactness and completeness in the recording of materials. Yet his manner of working does not satisfy the most general criteria: he does not attempt to research a singer's entire repertoire, gives minimal information about the performers, disregards supplementary comment on the thought and function of the song. But - most amazingly of all - he pays no attention to the text. It is quite natural, against this background, that he should dislike the gramophone, in marked contrast to its use by Bartok and Percy Grainger.

Unlike Janáček, Szymanowski and Bartok, who were inspired by folk poetry, the playing of folk musicians, dance costumes and choreography, studying them minutely; Vaughan Williams was indifferent to all components of folk composition except melody. That is why he is relegated to the sidelines both by folklorists and by contemporary composers. He is in the highest degree distinguished by this melody centredness (Golovinsky) as is characteristic of nineteenth century composers. Undoubtedly, in Alekseev's classification, he belongs to the first "composerly" stage in the historical record of folk music, orientated towards the general musical value of folkloric material, while the folklorist bowed down before the beauty of folk melody. I compare in this chapter the working methods of Vaughan Williams and

his contemporary Percy Grainger, who represented the following stage, which transferred its concern to the exact recording of all the properties of the melody (the "transcriptional" type of notation). It is emphasised that Vaughan Williams undertook his expeditions in search of his melodic ideal, which had taken shape in advance; folkloric practice was called on to confirm it.

It is a paradox that Vaughan Williams's collection was not available to his compatriots at the start of the century, and in its full extent has not been known up to the present. There is a disproportion between the vast material amassed and that published. I conclude that he had two methods for dealing with folksongs. In the first (mainly in choral works) his recourse to stereotyped devices was the result of an inner prohibition on the introduction of the personal and subjective. In the other, the melody is accompanied, as a rule, by the 'lone voice of an instrument': Vaughan Williams's ideal setting for a folkloric composition.

Amongst the peculiarities of Vaughan Williams's biography in folklore is that his theoretical pronouncements outstrip practical experiment. His folklore activity proper begins with lectures on the folksong. Public appearances are the chief platform for RVW the folklorist, though this was a general mark of the age, similar lectures or courses were given by Sibelius, Bartok and Cecil Sharp. The only full general exposition of his views are the notes for one of his lecture tours, entitled *National Music*, delivered to American students in 1932. The aesthetic foundations of this work are the unity and mutual interchangeability of the concepts 'popular' (folk) and 'national'. RVW adopts the stance of a preacher, a teacher, an instructor and is radical, even aggressive in his efforts to form a nation's taste (for example his utopian plan for each nation to protect its music from foreign influences for five years)... RVW subordinates the history of European music to the idea of the national (and folklore as its basic substantiation) as demonstrating the phenomenon of tradition.

Chapter 2: The Folklore Complex

In Vaughan Williams's works, there takes shape and solidifies a determined means of expression associated with folklore. Some of these facets are borrowed immediately

(continued overleaf)

from folksong, others are synthesised by the composer. Together they comprise a system that forms the folklore complex, and through examination in detail of the harmonic, rhythmical and structural elements, the full difficulty of analysing into genres can be displayed.

Harmony

Vaughan Williams's deep and exact understanding of the fundamental properties of the pentatonic scale is explored to show the nature and genesis of pentatony in his works, leading to the conclusion that through his acquaintance with the music of Debussy and his Russian followers, he must have heard the pentatonic scale in English folksong not only as a specifically national device, but also as a more general and deeper layer of folklore, the foundation of musical taste; it was leading his music out to the broad plain of universality. This approach discloses one of the principles fundamental for Vaughan Williams: the mutual links and common roots of folksong and plainsong.

One may follow the evolution of his ear regarding the variability of tonalities in the heptatonic scale (as observed in collection by Grainger and Sharp, but not recorded in RVW: he bypassed the transcription stage and took it straight over into his compositions. In the early works the melodic formula of folksong - the upward movement to the mediant - is found only in the minor (the thematic family of the *First* and *Second Symphonies*). In his later works it appears with variable third degree (see the *Sixth Symphony*); the themes of the *Seventh* and *Eighth Symphonies* are based on this variability. The composer attains an unmistakable effect of change, of doubleness, the effect of the untempered folksong scale in conditions of tempered pitch, with the help of polytonal and polyharmonic combination - accompanying the melody with chords of a single type (sometimes in parallel motion).

Rhythm

Two folk song inspired principles are noted. The small range of phrase length expresses the "gently sloping" rhythmic profile of the English folksong, lacking such jerky formulae as the Scotch snap. Alternation of differently articulated groups (duplets, triplets, more rarely quintuplets and sextuplets), tied notes, leading to a "lubricated" pulse, even to the disappearance of barring, are all attempts by Vaughan Williams to express the peculiarities of folksong, to express its lively and instantaneous form. Percy Grainger had noted the presence in English folksong of all manner of irregularities. Once again, in the collections of Vaughan Williams, the irregularities are few and far between, in his compositions they are innumerable.

Structure

Olga says that in this section a study is made of Vaughan Williams's folk themes, with regard to distance from the sung strophe. Ways in which this strophe is disrupted are also suggested by certain folksongs that served him as models - such as in a detailed analysis of *Bushes and Briars*, which can be regarded as a classic example of transgress norms and the development of song form. Using the two conclusions of J. Day about the two methods of construction in accordance with the structural principles of folksong (i.e., germination of the melody from a seed and further construction from a series of key motifs), it is shown that two methods are inseparable in the music of Vaughan Williams. From folksong, Vaughan Williams derives not merely individual components, but whole blocks and the actual system of assembly, including the principles of constructing a form and extension of the musical fabric. It is characteristic that he is unsuccessful in rhapsodies and etudes on quoted themes, where he returns to traditional methods (motivic development or variation). His adopted principles bear fruit only in his own themes, his own monadic variations, all developing "on the idea" of a song.

Further study of genre has not been feasible as this is among the most inaccessible questions of English folklore; the lack of generic classification does not permit an analysis to be made of the reflection in his work of the specific qualities of the ballad, the carol, and the song *stricto sensu*. Hence one cannot discuss one of the most fruitful ways in which twentieth-century composers deal with folksong.

Selection

Vaughan Williams was very selective in his use of material: his folklore complex does not reflect the actual folklore of Great Britain, but results from a process of successive selection. First of all, Irish, Scottish and Welsh folksongs are marginalized, in contrast to English folksong, rarely used in art music.

Selection was governed also by modality. Whereas 13 out of 29 songs in Cecil Sharp's first collection are in the Ionian mode, only 10 out of 61 in Vaughan Williams's are. Sharp's collection bears out his later dictum that the majority of folksongs are in the major tonality or Ionian mode, and this is confirmed by the findings of other collectors. The major did not fit however into Vaughan Williams's auditory ideal, his modal melody distinct from the classical major/minor classification. His collection is therefore an exception to the general rule and avoids the most usual mode, standing on the other side of the line drawn by Percy Grainger between (undifferentiated) modal melodies and the major. Symptomatically, the first song Sharp took down, *The Seeds of Love*, is in the major, with emphasis on the

leading note; Vaughan Williams's first, *Bushes and Briars*, is Aeolian or minor, playing on the supertonic.

Thus the modality professed by Vaughan Williams is not directly linked to the folksong; his *a priori* ideal influences and refines reality. Consideration of the reasons for his selectivity results with the idea that his consciousness of sound was governed by a series of associations formed not by musical analysis but under the influence of nineteenth-century English literature and art.

Wilfrid Mellers has called him a "literary composer"; this epithet and its cognate "literate" indicate the significance that English poetry and prose had on his inspiration as a composer and his formation as a folklorist. What was so important for the composer was not so much poetry "in the national spirit", as "the earthly ecstasy" - the idealisation of rural England. The being carried away from village life, the land, the soil, to hymns of Nature. Parallels can be drawn with American transcendentalism and the music and philosophy of Charles Ives: - both exhibit in their lives the search for "musical communion", composition "on the bosom of nature": - Ives's 'camp meetings', Vaughan Williams's choral festivals, the role of hymn making and folksongs, but also the image of man at one with nature in Ives's *The Unanswered Question* and in Vaughan Williams's *London* and *Pastoral Symphonies*.

Vaughan Williams's 'landscape' works participate in a mystical communion with nature. His sense of the mystic governs his choice of poetic texts: - Bunyan, Blake, Housman with his ideal of the inscrutable, the 'mystic in literature' Dante Gabriel Rossetti. This sense also permeates his contacts with folksong (beginning with his first acquaintance with it, in which he himself emphasises the force of recognition and discovery), this determines the total seriousness of his relation with it, the absence of his normal irony. For him, there were always secret thoughts in folksong, an ancient creation, discarded, enigmatic and inaccessible, but concealing Truth.

Whilst advocating the view of folksong as 'vernacular' and presenting it as a guarantee that musical language was rooted in the soil and pertained to the local dialect, in his own works Vaughan Williams assigned it a completely different role: - to symbolise the most refined and abstract fusion of mystery, beauty and melancholy. It is this fusion that determines the colour put upon the folklore complex, the course of selection and makes possible its linking with various subtle and complicated themes: - that of earthly and spiritual love (*Five Mystical Songs*, *Flos Campi*) of innocence and experience (the settings of Housman, Blake and Job), of loss and mourning (the second movement of the *Pastoral Symphony*, the fourth movement of

Dona Nobis Pacem, the fourth movement of *Five Tudor Portraits*).

Chapter 3: The use of the Folk Idea in the Symphonies

It is the *Pastoral Symphony* of 1927 that makes the fullest use of the folklore complex, being the one symphony entirely devoted to folksong material, 'the pure experiment' of realising a folksong language, an encyclopædia of the composer's manner of working with folksong. As the fullest expression of Vaughan Williams's personal, 'imagined' folklore, the *Pastoral Symphony* discloses behind the images suggested by its programme, a second and third plane, not so closely linked with folklore. Confidently labelled by listeners as 'English rural', this symphony was conceived in France, during the First World War, and became Vaughan Williams's 'War Requiem' (Michael Kennedy), corresponding so to speak to Charles Ives's *In Flanders Fields*. In another dimension, it is also to be compared with the surrounding works such as *Flos Campi*: the biblical text anticipating the movements of the suite, expands the temporal expanse and underlines the presence in Vaughan Williams's work, noted at the outset of Antiquity and Eternity

Vaughan Williams's exclusive devotion to melody permitted him to compose an internally variegated symphony with slow *tempi* (from crotchet = 60 to crotchet = 80). Its specific quality is the idea of variation, running in a chain from beginning to end, so that the thematic process in the symphony is comparable with folksong phenomena. The folksong idea of disconnected, open form, is exploited in the symphony at all structural levels - theme, movement, the composition as a whole. By incorporating an opening theme at the end of a movement, Vaughan Williams leads on to a new twist of the endless circle or spiral. The variants of variation in the first, second and fourth movements are studies in detail, along with texture and harmony. The use of song material, which called for particular methods of development also leads Vaughan Williams to the dislocation of sonata form.

The *Fifth Symphony* (1943, rev. 1951) is also discussed at length. Like the *Pastoral*, it belongs to the category described by English writers as 'pastoral', 'modal'; this allows us to establish the relation between constants in variables in his symphonic conception, to demonstrate the evolution in his use of folklore complex. Whereas in the *Pastoral Symphony*, folksong was exploited in varied thematic sequence, in the *Fifth*, the accent is shifted, and folksong is represented by harmony. That is what relates relief to background; whereas in the *Pastoral Symphony* the modal was the folk melody, its genesis and varied development, in the *Fifth* the sense of folklore is conveyed at the start as the natural and durable foundation

on which the different tonalities are superimposed. Vaughan Williams uses the traditional nineteenth-century method of dramaturgic opposition of diatonic and chromatic, but not of 'diatonic simplicity' and 'chromatic complexity': in his system the intrusion of the semitone characteristic of chromaticism upon the complex organisation of the diatonic layer is intentionally straightforward, simplistic, and coarse. In contrast to the *Pastoral*, where tonal complications were gradually incorporated into the body of themes and dissipated into a homogeneous fabric, in the *Fifth*, the contrasting layers co-exist on different planes without interacting. Vaughan Williams does not bring the conflict to a head, but draws off, mediates, neutralises, as if protecting the world of folklore from invasion.

To the two layers, whose conflict he does not decide but removes, he adds a third: the choral. Two sections of *A Sea Symphony* (The First, 1909, rev. 1918, 1924) are examined. *The Scherzo (The Waves)* is the only case in Vaughan Williams's symphonies of an actual quotation from folksong, but this takes the work not nearer, but further from the folklore line, not being at all typical of his symphonies, and they are cast in a very different form from his chosen folksong modes. They function as a sign, but not of folklore; the musical footnote points to the extensive thematic group of sea songs as a part of the national credo: the sea, the monarchy (Rule Britannia), the English oratorio (it is the most 'Handelian' portion of the symphony).

A London Symphony (Second) (1913, rev. 1918, 1920, 1924). In the first movement, a juxtaposition of 'other people's folklore and one's own' is examined. With the exposition thickly populated by themes 'in the national spirit', an episode is contrasted (in place of development) with unhurried themes, resembling each other in the manner of variations, evolving in dialogue and a forward course; this is the first moment of 'sounding silence' and the first portent of the symphonic style definitely consolidated in the *Pastoral*. In the second movement, the listener is on Vaughan Williams's home ground, in his mystical landscape, presenting a unique fragment of the future *Pastoral* within another symphonic organism. Its theme exhibits one of the emotional leitmotifs of the folklore complex, inescapable yearning melancholy. The composer does everything to create the impression of an authentic folksong, and only one feature - melodic shift - reveals his correcting hand and bears witness that it is only a quasi-quotation. The authentic quotation in this movement, the Lavender cry, underlines the deceptiveness of the allusion: the quotation has no hint of the town, nothing of the genre about it: it uses the 'eternal' triad, the *Urmotiv* the central harmony of Vaughan Williams's œuvre.

The *trio* scherzo (third movement) is treated as a very rare example of reconstruction of popular music-making (in this case the sound of mouth organs and the mechanical pianola) as the incorporation of a new plane: the cutting of the documentary close-up of urban life into the impressionistic fabric of the second and third movements. It is in the *London Symphony* that Vaughan Williams presents the folkdance in its own bright and positive aspect for the first and last time; subsequently there is only the grotesque reflection in the even-numbered symphonies. In the *London Symphony* the folksong tonality gradually takes shape.

The *Fourth Symphony* (1934) and the *Sixth* (1947, rev. 1950) demonstrate the two poles of folklore interpretation: at one pole similar themes in the first movements continue the tradition of Romantic 'ideal' themes, at the other a new face of folklore, the folkdance, but now deliberately brought down to earth, debased, 'civilised' as a symbol of the primitive, of 'pseudoculture'. Elements of urban music are used in the same spirit as in Mahler's *First*: this is the folklore of street and square, corrupt, diabolical. The grotesque features link this image with an episode in the first movement of *Five Tudor Portraits*: the menace in it, which converts the dance to a march, allows us to draw parallels with the 'invasion themes' of Shostakovich, Honegger and Bartok. In the detail of the thesis an examination is made of the first sketch of the *trio* scherzo theme of the *Sixth Symphony*, to emphasise that in Vaughan Williams such themes have folksong basis: in this sketch, the opening 'natural' variant is an undemanding tune, subsequently covered by harmonic and rhythmic stratifications.

In the first movement of the *Sixth Symphony* the system of contrasting images, engendered on a folklore basis is analysed. It is noted that the dramaturgy of the movement is built on the collision of these faces of folklore. For the first time the folklore elements - in a distorted but recognisable form - help create a tragic image (the first subject); the basic line of dramatic development is the fate of the second subject, that closest to folksong.

In the *Eighth Symphony* the analysis shows that the opening of the first movement is a self quotation within the 'folklore line': the first subject may be ranked with similar themes in the *First*, *Third* and *Fifth Symphonies* demonstrating the regular exploitation of the idea of the symphony's generation from the sounds of nature: the natural pentatony, the symbolically natural timbres of trumpets and French horns. These common features disclose the peculiarity of the *Eighth Symphony* in its working of folksong material, which has a quality of remoteness, coldness and indifference expressed in the unprecedented

(continued overleaf)

MUSIC YOU MIGHT LIKE

**Tubin Symphony VI (1954)
Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra/
Neeme Järvi/ BIS CD 304**

Eduard Tubin may very well be an unfamiliar name to many readers, as perhaps the composer Atterberg was, mentioned in a previous article in this series. Both are Scandinavians of rare ability and power, composing cycles of symphonies through the twentieth century, and are well worth investigating. Atterberg is unfortunate in having barely a toehold upon the record catalogues, his slightly later contemporary Eduard Tubin fares better, with practically every note now available in a series on BIS, the enterprising Swedish label.

Eduard Tubin was born in Estonia in June 1905, and he lived there until 1944, when he had to flee to Sweden with his family as a consequence of the troubles of the Second World War. He died in Stockholm in 1982. His music encompasses 10 completed symphonies, a handful of operas (one uncannily similar in subject matter to *Peter Grimes*) piano music, a ballet and concerti for instruments as diverse as a double bass or balalaika.

How would I describe this music? Compact Bruckner would be as good a definition as any ~ in 35 minutes you meet a work of quite complex architecture. He speaks his own mind, shapes his musical architecture towards his own ends, and has a powerfully distinctive voice. This work overtly appears as a simple three movement symphony: the rhythmic complexities and harmonic clashes are welded into a work of immense drama, containing elements of mechanistic brutality, lyrical nobility and stunned reflection. The instrumentation contains a prominent part for saxophone, and keyboard also and there are moments in the first movement of almost jazz-like influence, but the overwhelming impact of this particular work is that of nervous tension rising to unbearable heights of destruction and exhilaration. This work is full of power and I would not recommend a new listener to hear it at full blast: it would shatter the windows and offend the neighbours, so choose your time carefully.

There are parallels with RVW, but only on the surface, with the syncopated rhythms, saxophone textures and hard, warlike atmosphere. Both Vaughan Williams and Tubin are known to have disclaimed such obvious programmes in their respective sixth symphonies, but the music seems to insist upon this message being hurled into the ears of the listener. In short, if you like

the 'fiery' side of Vaughan Williams, then I would urge you to seek this out.

The companion piece on the CD is the earlier (Estonian) *Symphony 2, The Legendary*, a much more traditional work but still with dark and gripping undertones, especially in a grim funeral march slow movement that hammers away, dismissing any time to grieve with relentlessly tolling timpani blows; only dispersed in a windy finale, with a reflective but all too short resolution. As far as I have been able to discover (from the composer's son) these works are still unheard in Britain at the present time.

**Richard Mason
Oxford**

(Editor's Note: Richard Mason has a limited number of the RVW Life in Photographs volume at the special discount price of only £16 incl. p+p. Cheque payable to The RVW Society brings delivery).

(Folklore continued from previous page)
equilibrium and impassivity of every note, hovering as it were without support. The timbres of xylophone and celeste add a hint of sorcery; the composer introduces the image of folklore into the cold world of intellectual play, of the cruel tale.

The *Sinfonia Antartica* (Seventh, 1952) and *Ninth Symphony* (1957, rev. 1958) continues and sums up their predecessors. In the *Ninth*, which closes the great cycle of symphonies and also his œuvre as a whole, the theme revives memories of his 'classic' folklore theme, like that of the first movement of the *Sixth Symphony*. The last two musical landscapes are also examined: references to the third movement of the *Seventh Symphony* and by contrast the second movement of the *Ninth*. The preserved programme for the latter indicates that it was written to fit the closing scene of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: attention is given to the symbolic image of Stonehenge. Two enigmas are brought together that troubled the composer's imagination all his life: Stonehenge and folklore.

Conclusion

A final accounting indicates that the role of the folklore idea was a persistent theme in Vaughan Williams's life as a composer - which was in itself unusual: he did not begin composing until he was 30, nor did he find his individual style until about 50: there is a tightly knit group of symphonies from his last years. Unlike his coevals, Charles Ives, Sibelius and Rachmaninov, he did not experience a crisis in his 20s, critical for so many artists. He is, so to speak, isolated from his generation: his life is skewed towards the twentieth century, while his æsthetic ideals and creative principles were

formed in the nineteenth, in the highly specific historical and geographic setting of Victorian England.

The *Pastoral Symphony*, which appeared at almost the same time as the manifesto compositions of the next generation of composers - Berg's *Wozzeck* and Stravinsky's *Octet* - is regarded as the composer's answer to the challenge of the twentieth century. Its conception is unique within the œuvre of a composer, who it would appear, never again doubted the vitality of the great symphonic genre. In Reti's opinion, Vaughan Williams proved to have been at the start of the movement away from tonality and thematic invention to something superior to them, avoiding the purgatory of atonality and athematicism.

A special mission lay before Vaughan Williams by predestination. English society at the *fin de siècle* was impatiently awaiting the appearance of 'Englishness' in music; Vaughan Williams was predisposed towards this mission and strove to realise it in all his activities. In accordance with his pronouncements, he sought the foundation of his style in the oldest and most reliable source, folksong.


Vaughan Williams's place among twentieth century artists involved to one degree in the folklore arena is determined by a few main characteristics. Allusions to folklore in any composition signified its connection to a realm of highly refined and complex associations, in their emotional and intellectual relation the polar opposites of the elementality, power and ritual of folklore revealed by this century. So distinctive is his marvellously non-conflictual, non-contradictory duality, the coexistence in relation to folklore of sententiousness and simplicity: on the one hand both refinement and depth, on the other, as if on different floors of his consciousness and different spheres of activity.

The social barrier that blocked the way to folk music in the nineteenth century still existed for Vaughan Williams in the twentieth century. Numerous arrangements of folksongs, made for mainly amateur performers, may well be regarded as an attempt to transcend this distance. As a veritable agent of the English Renaissance, he could envisage this service to his fellow countryman in this manner. The boundary between works composed with this practical aim, and those 'for oneself' runs in this last case along the lines of folksong. It is reflected in the stylistic relationship of his folksong arrangements with his other works:- at one pole there is the exposition in comprehensible language of his own folklore ideals, and at the other pole there is his 'own' 'imaginary' 'idealised' folklore.


Olga Borisovna Manulkina

The RVW Society has designed a poster to market the Vaughan Williams Opera Festival and this poster will be displayed throughout the country from July onwards.

The final draft of the poster is as follows:-




*To celebrate the 125th anniversary
of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams*



VISION *of* ALBION

Vaughan Williams Opera Festival 2 October ~ 30 November 1997



Barbican Concert Hall, London
0171 638 8891

2 October at 7.30pm London Symphony Orchestra
Overture: The Wasps
A Cotswold Romance (from Hugh the Drover)
A London Symphony

12 October at 3.30pm Northern Sinfonia
Sir John in Love

26 October at 7.30pm London Symphony Orchestra
Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis
Excerpts from The Poisoned Kiss
Symphony No. 5

3 November at 7.30pm The Royal Opera House
The Pilgrim's Progress

Corn Exchange, Cambridge
01223 357851

19 October at 7.30pm City of London Sinfonia
Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda (Holst)
Savitri (Holst)
Riders to the sea
(Part of the Year of the Opera in Eastern England - Sponsored by Lortia Singsop. plc)

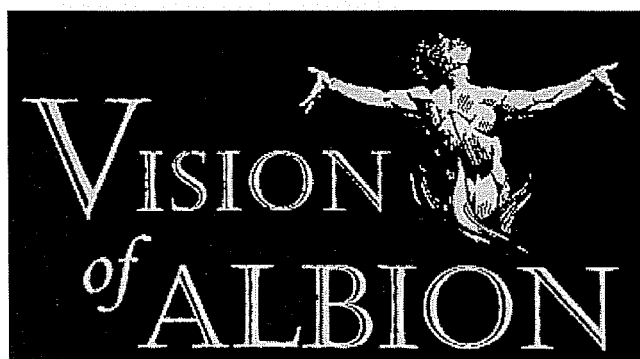
Symphony Hall, Birmingham
0121 212 3333

30 November The Royal Opera House
The Pilgrim's Progress

Clerkenwell Music Series, London
The Church of our Most Holy Redeemer, Exmouth Street
01929 422 100

4, 13 and 15 November at 7.30pm
*Three Concerts of songs from the operas, together
with chamber music of Vaughan Williams and Ravel*

Artistic Director Richard Hickox
In association with the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society
(Chairman Stephen Connock)



VISION OF ALBION ~ THE BARBICAN CONCERTS

Thursday 2nd October at 7.30pm

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
VISION OF ALBION
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Overture,*
The Wasps
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *A Cotswold*
Romance (adapted from *Hugh*
the Drover)
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No 2*
London
Richard Hickox conductor
Rosa Mannion soprano
Thomas Randle tenor
London Symphony Chorus

Special Event

Vaughan Williams
125th anniversary concert

Northern Sinfonia
Richard Hickox conductor

Sunday 12 October at 3:30pm
Rebecca Evans Anne Page
Susan Gritton Mrs Page
Pamela Helen Stephen Mrs Ford
Anne-Marie Owens Mrs Quickly
Mark Padmore Fenton
Adrian Thompson Dr Caius
Stephen Varcoe
Sir Hugh Evans
John Graham-Hall Slender
Donald Maxwell
Sir John Falstaff
Matthew Best Ford
Roderick Williams Page



Richard Hickox

Vaughan Williams
Sir John in Love
Concert performance

Sunday 26th October at 7.30pm

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
VISION OF ALBION
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Fantasia on a*
theme by Thomas Tallis
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Extracts from
The Poisoned Kiss
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No 5*
Richard Hickox conductor
London Symphony Chorus
Vocal soloists to be confirmed



Richard Hickox
Photograph by Nigel Luckhurst

The Poisoned Kiss ~ Staged Performance for October 1997

Members will be delighted to hear, I am sure, that a long overdue performance of *The Poisoned Kiss* will be staged at the Gardner Arts Centre, of the University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton. There will be four nights, October 1 - 4, 1997 inclusive. Tickets will not be available until the end of May, (the prices are not yet fixed).

Directions:

The Gardner Arts Centre is on the Sussex University Campus, situated on the A27 on the northern edge of Brighton (going towards Lewes). By car, turn left into the campus from the A27, left again and keep left, there is ample car parking.

By train, change at Brighton (if travelling from London) for the Lewes line, alight at Falmer. This only takes about 8 minutes from Brighton, then there is a pedestrian tunnel under the A27 onto the campus itself.

Phone number for The Gardner Arts Centre booking office:- 01273 685861

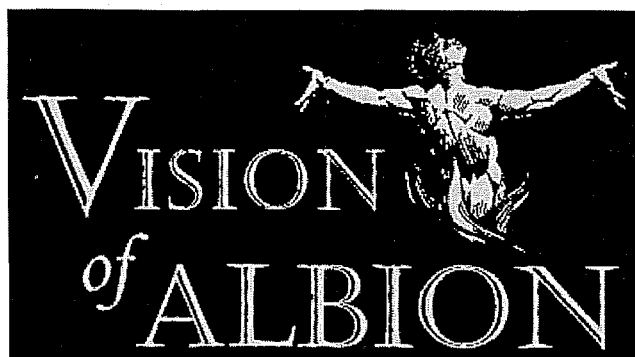
The Wandering Minstrels are the performers, experienced already in *Hugh the Drover* and with a firm love and admiration for the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Though there are many other festival events in our calendar for October, I am sure that members will be very keen to hear this unjustly neglected work. It may be your last chance for some while!

Budding reviewers able to attend this rare event, are invited to submit a short article to the editor, for publication in a future issue of the Journal.

Richard Mason

**Church of Our Most Holy Redeemer,
Clerkenwell, London EC1**
by kind permission of the
Reverend Father Paul Bagott
November 2 - 21, 1997

VISION OF ALBION -
CLERKENWELL MUSIC SERIES 1997 -
European Discoveries



Tuesday 4 November

Concert 1

Vaughan Williams and Ravel Chamber Concert I

City of London Sinfonia Chamber Ensemble
Varvara Tsambali (soprano) (Thessaloniki) UK debut
Mads Elung-Jensen (tenor) (Copenhagen) UK debut

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Introduction and Allegro for harp, flute, clarinet and string quartet

Cinq Mélodies populaires grecques for soprano and piano

Piano Trio in A minor

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

On Wenlock Edge for tenor, piano and string quartet

Six songs from the opera *Hugh the Drover*

Christos Samaras (born 1956) (Thessaloniki)

Egomion II for clarinet solo UK première

Emilios Riadis (contemporary of Ravel) (Thessaloniki)

Three Songs for Soprano and piano UK première

Monday 10 November

Concert 4

K2 - Luxembourg

Henri Foehr - cello

with Martine Schaak - piano

Vania Lecuit - violin

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Piano trio in D minor Op. 120

René Mertzig (1911-1986) (Luxembourg)

Piano trio

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Six Studies in English Folksong for cello and piano

Alexander Mullenbach (born 1949)

(Luxembourg)

New work

Thursday 13 November

Concert 6

Vaughan Williams and Ravel

Chamber Concert II

The New Hellenic Quartet (Greece)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

String Quartet No. 1 in G minor

Emilios Riadis (Thessaloniki - contemporary of Ravel)

Quartet No. 1 UK première

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Quartet in F

Friday 14 November

Concert 7

Choral Music

Musica Ficta Copenhagen

Bo Holten (director)

Choral music by **Carl Nielsen** (1865-1931),

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937),

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958),

Bo Holten (born 1948),

seventeenth century Danish and
Portuguese composers.

Saturday 15 November

Concert 8

Vaughan Williams and Ravel Chamber Concert III

Capela Quartet (Portugal)

Baritone (tba) (UK)

Soprano (tba) (UK)

Roger Steptoe (piano)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)

Phantasy Quintet for two violins, 2 violas and cello

Seven Songs from The Pilgrim's Progress

for soprano and baritone

String Quartet No. 2 in A minor

Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937)

Don Quichote à Dulcinée for baritone and piano

Luís de Freitas Branco (1890-1955)

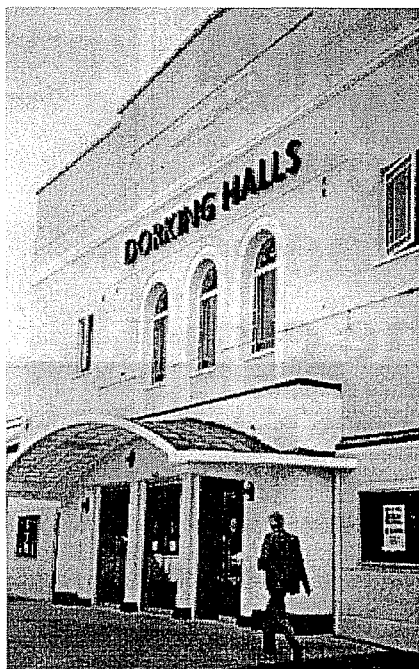
String Quartet (UK première)

VW Film Festival

Three special film
programmes to be held
at the Barbican on
12th & 26th October 1997.

*Please see enclosed
leaflet for details.*

DORKING HALLS OPENS



Dorking Advertiser April 17, 1997

After a multi-million pound refurbishment programme, the Dorking Halls opened again to the public in April.

The new Hall is indeed, most impressive seating 800 people. VW conducted the Leith Hill Music Festival in Dorking from 1905 to 1953 and his music was represented in the opening concert by *The Old Hundredth*. Leith Hill Music Festival Chairman Deidre Hicks told the Dorking Advertiser that it was "A most wonderful three days. It was lovely to be back in the Halls again following the refurbishment. It is a great improvement and a credit to the architect and all those involved. The technical crew were marvellous."

Pride of place on the left hand side of the entrance to the Hall is a copy of David McFall's bronze wall-plaque of Vaughan Williams (see right).

Editor's note: See the letter from Richard Ward on page 8.

(Howells and VW continued from page 11)

The première of Howells's *Second Piano Concerto* was marred by an outburst of disapproval from a member of the audience. This caused the overly sensitive Howells to cease composing for a number of years and it was only the death of his son in 1935 which caused him to take up composing seriously again. He had started composing the *Concerto for String Orchestra* to commemorate the recent death of Elgar. The work was completed in 1938. He describes his inspiration for the concerto as... "two supreme works, Vaughan Williams's *Tallis Fantasia* and Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro*."

Howells followed Holst as Director of Music at St. Paul's Girls school from 1936 to 1962 and was on the staff of the RCM

from 1920 until his death (he never retired and was still teaching in the late seventies).

From my reading so far it is obvious that Vaughan Williams was something of a hero to Howells, who was lucky enough to meet such an inspirational figure at the right time in his life. My own knowledge of Howells is limited to the Palmer biography and the excellent and exhaustive booklet notes provided by Lewis Foreman in the Chandos orchestral works, and by Paul Spicer in the Hyperion edition of Howells's *Second Piano Concerto*. But I look forward to listening to more of his music, and hopefully finding more out about the man in years to come.

**Keith Douglas
Bridgend**

David McFall's Bronze Unveiled

In a ceremony in the Vaughan Williams Music Centre at Charterhouse on the composer's 124th birthday (12th October 1996) a copy of the bronze bas relief of the composer by sculptor David McFall was unveiled. The ceremony was performed by Lord Wakeham, President of the Carthusian Society and through whose generosity the relief was purchased. The relief was originally commissioned in 1961 by the Leith Hill Music Festival and copies may be seen in the Dorking Halls and St Martin's Church, Dorking.



The photograph above shows the new acquisition. With Lord Wakeham is the Headmaster of Charterhouse the Revd. John Witheridge, together with the sculptor's widow, Mrs Alexandra McFall, and son Leo who is a music scholar at Charterhouse.

Watercolour Greetings Cards by Bridget Duckenfield

Blank for Own Message 15mm x 10mm cellophane packed with envelope.
Trade terms 50p per card for re-sale at between 70p and 90p

Musical Connections Ralph Vaughan Williams
The Parsonage, Down Ampney
Leith Hill Place, Dorking
The White Gates, Dorking
13 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea

Available from :
Bridget Duckenfield, 94 Station Avenue, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 9UG
Tel: 0181 393 5854 Fax: 0181 393 5854

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>

June

- 4th London Barbican - Vaughan Williams *Wasps* Walton *Façade* (excepts) City London Sinf/Hickox 19.30 0171 638 8891
- 6th USA California - Costa Mesa, Orange County Performing Arts Centre - Vaughan Williams *Sea Symphony* + James F Hopkins *From the Realm of the Sea* (World Première) Pacific SO & Chorale/Alexander 20.00 +1 714 662 2345
- 7th Lulworth Castle Lollipops including - Vaughan Williams *Greensleeves* Walton *Henry V*, *Crown Imperial*, Elgar *Pomp & C* Bournemouth Sinfonietta/Field 20.00 Outdoor Concert with fireworks 01202 669925
- 10th London St Mary Aldermary Church - Choral concert including RVW choral works 0171 354 5644 (No time given)
- 22nd Birmingham Symphony Hall - Vaughan Williams *Symph 2* Bardi Orch of Leicester/Constantine 14.30 0121 212 3333
- 24th Manchester Bridgewater Hall - Vaughan Williams *Songs of Travel* Bryn Terfel/Martineau 19.30 0161 907 9000
- 28th Stockport Town Hall - Vaughan Williams *Wasps* & *Lark* in all British programme 0161 926 9633 (No time given)

July

- 5th Bromley Ravensbourne School - Vaughan Williams *Sancta Civitas* (No time given)
- 5th Leamington Binswood Hall - Vaughan Williams *Oboe Concerto* & *Norfolk Rhapsody* 0178 926 9566 (No time given)
- 8th Birmingham Symphony Hall - Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Walton *Set me as a Seal*, *A Litany*, *Cantico del Sole*, Vaughan Williams *Lord, Thou Hast Been Our Refuge* Choirs of Ch.Ch. Oxford/Darlington St Johns Cambridge/Robinson Worcester Cath/Robinson 20.00 0121 212 3333

- 19th & 20th Cardiff St David's Hall - Elgar *Enigma* Walton *Balshazzar* Vaughan Williams *Tallis Fantasia* BBC Phil/? 19.30 01222 878444
- 17th Hereford Cathedral (3 Choirs Festival) - Vaughan Williams *Te Deum* Bournemouth SO/ Fest Ch/Massey 15.00 01432 265005
- 30th St Endellion Festival - Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* Festival Orch. & Chorus/ Hickox St Endellion Church, Cornwall 19.45 01208 850463
- 31st St Endellion Festival - Vaughan Williams *On Wenlock Edge* Festival Orch & Chorus/Hickox/Gilchrist St Endellion Church, Cornwall 19.45 01208 850463

August

- 3rd St Endellion Festival - All Vaughan Williams Service - Morning Eucharist St Endellion Church 01208 850463
- 3rd & 4th St Endellion Festival - Vaughan Williams *Pilgrim's Progress* Festival Orch & Chorus/Hickox St Endellion Church 19.45 01208 850463
- 9th London Albert Hall (Proms) Vaughan Williams *Symphony 6* National Youth Orchestra/Davis 19.30 (very disappointing Proms season this one - Kenyon needs sacking!)

October

- 1st - 4th Sussex University, Gardner Arts Centre - Vaughan Williams *The Poisoned Kiss* (Opera) - The Wandering Minstrels 01273 685861
- 2nd London Barbican - Symposium on Vaughan Williams with Michael Kennedy, Richard Hickox & Stephen Connock 18.00
- 2nd London Barbican - Vaughan Williams *A Cotswold Romance* (ex *Hugh the Drover*) *Symphony 2* LSO/Hickox 19.30 0171 638 8891
- 12th London Barbican - Vaughan Williams *Sir John in Love* Northern Sinfonia Orch/Hickox 16.00 0171 638 8891

- 19th Cambridge Corn Exchange - Vaughan Williams *Riders to the Sea* Holst *Savitri* City of London Sinfonia/Hickox 01223 357851

- 26th London Barbican - Vaughan Williams *The Poisoned Kiss* (extracts), *Symphony 5* LSO/Hickox 19.30 0171 638 8891

November

- 3rd London Barbican - Vaughan Williams *The Pilgrim's Progress* ROH, Covent Garden at the Barbican/Hickox 19.30 0171 638 8891
- 4th London Clerkenwell Music Festival - details tba provisional programme includes *On Wenlock Edge*, *6 Songs from Hugh the Drover*, *Phantasy Quintet*, *7 Songs from Pilgrim's Progress*, *String Ql Nos. 1 and 2*
- 30th Birmingham Symphony Hall - as 3rd ROH 0121 212 3333

February 1998

- 12th Glasgow Royal Concert Hall - Vaughan Williams *Symphony 5* RSNO/Judd 19.30 0131 529 6000
- 15th Edinburgh Festival Theatre - Vaughan Williams *Symphony 5* RSNO/Judd 19.30 0131 529 6000

(Concert Rev. continued from page 9)

solos stand out in my mind. Again, as with *A Cotswold Romance*, this work has a wealth of fine tunes and is a great taster for the full opera. What a great CD coupling these works would make...

One of the performers told me afterwards that it was all a great change from "all those Masses and Requiems." Telling words. Naturally, the Society must encourage small concerts like this - Uncle Ralph would certainly have approved of this one. Having sat in the 'gods' of a well-known concert-hall just a few days earlier and remained unmoved, this 'amateur' concert had for me quite the opposite effect.

Frank Stanek and I would like to thank David Jones for his hospitality during the evening.

*Rolf Jordan
Wirral*

Newsbriefs

- Classic FM magazine reports in the May edition that Ken Russell is planning a new music film entitled *Search of the English Folk-song*. He is touring Hampshire, Lincoln and London in July to find, as the magazine puts it "the essence of 'Englishness' in music". The film will be screened by Channel 4 later in the year.
- As first mentioned in the RVW Society Journal, the BBC have unearthed the tapes of VW conducting his *Fifth Symphony*. *The Independent* reported on 18th April that the BBC were making the recording ready for release.
- Tony Kendall writes to tell us that he is recording a further album of 12 more VW folk-songs by Essex Singers and is doing an album with the Essex Regiment which will include cameos using RVW's Collected Military songs.
- The book of *Vaughan Williams's Studies* has been published by Cambridge University Press at £37.50/\$59.95. It is edited by Alan Frogley and includes articles by Byron Adams on "scripture, church and culture" and Michael Vaillencourt.
- A pre-edit tape has come my way of the Chandos recording of *Five Tudor Portraits* and *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus*. The LSO and LSO Chorus with Richard Hickox sound in superb form. John Shirley-Quirk sounds as good as he did 30 years ago, and Jean Rigby sings the great lament to Philip Sparrow most movingly. Let's hope this is available for our Christmas stockings.

(See extract →)

MOSTLY MUSIC

Second-hand orchestral and vocal scores of operas, oratorios and songs by RVW and many other composers, for sale in Central London. Visits by appointment or postal service available.

Why not call? We may have that out-of-print work you have been looking for, for all these years...

Eva Hornstein

Tel/Fax:- 0171 723 1572

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS and DORKING

Dorking has good reason to remember RVW and particularly in 1998 which is the 40th anniversary year of his death. Believing as he did that a composer should not live in an ivory tower but should be involved in the community, it is not surprising to find that, in addition to being Conductor of Leith Hill Musical Festival (1905-53) and being actively involved in many other musical events in Surrey, he was Chairman (later President) of Dorking and District Preservation Society - writing, arranging and conducting music for the Society's pageant in 1938 (*England's Pleasant Land*) - he was an active member of the Dorking Committee to help refugees, he collected salvage for the war effort and arranged concerts at such venues as the Dorking British Restaurant and 'The White Horse'. All this and more he did locally and of course he had many wider commitments - when did he find time to compose?

Because of the many connections between RVW and Dorking a series of events is planned for the spring of 1998 to enjoy his music and to remember the close involvement of a great man and composer in the life of the town.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

3 April - 3 May 1998 mainly in the Dorking Halls and St Martin's Church.

3 April - Illustrated talk by John Huntley - well-known film archivist and historian - who worked as assistant to Muir Mathieson on the films for which RVW wrote the music. It is hoped to show

The Vision of William Blake and a feature film.

4 April - A concert by Surrey Philharmonic Orchestra including works by RVW - one of these will be the music to *Job - A Masque for Dancing*. It is hoped to display reproductions of Blake's engravings which form the basis of the stage designs.

5 April - A service in St Martin's Church, Dorking, with music by RVW. During the war many concerts were given in St Martin's and one of the 2 bronze plaques of the composer (by David McFall) is in the church porch (the other is in the foyer of the Dorking Halls).

16-18 April - Leith Hill Musical Festival (Conductor Brian Kay) - the programmes include *Three Choral Hymns* (written for the Festival and dedicated to it) and other works by RVW.

19 April - A lecture by Michael Kennedy - friend of the composer and author of *The Works of RVW* (the companion volume to Ursula Vaughan Williams's biography).

25 April - A heritage trail visiting (by coach and on foot) places in the district associated with RVW including lunch at 'The White Horse' (in the room where wartime recitals were given) and tea at the Dorking Halls (the scene of many musical events with RVW).

26 April - A concert by Surrey County Youth Orchestras and Choir of works by RVW and his English contemporaries.

2 May - A chamber concert with string quartets by RVW and Ravel (his one-time teacher) and the song cycles *On Wenlock Edge* and *Merciless Beauty*.

3 May - A festival service with hymns, canticles and anthems by RVW, given in St Martin's Church by the Royal School of Church Music.

3 April - 3 May - An exhibition will be shown at the two Dorking Libraries, the Museum and the Halls.

A detailed programme of all events will be published in October 1997.

Renée Stewart
Dorking

Extract from *Dives and Lazarus*

WANTED

Gervase Elwes in
On Wenlock Edge etc.
OPAL CD 9844.
Contact: Henrik Lindahl,
Askims Svartmosseväg 41,
436 39 Askim, Sweden

(Further wants to the Editor for
inclusion in the October Journal)

Next Edition:
October 1997

**Special Anniversary
Edition including
Coastal Command by
Richard Young**