It seems incredible that forty years have passed since the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams on 26th of August, 1958. At the time, and despite his age of 85, he had seemed invincible. He was seen often in London, at the Royal Festival Hall and at the opera, always with Ursula Vaughan Williams at his side. He had married Ursula just five years earlier, and had enjoyed travelling abroad, including a memorable trip to America. He continued to be a major source of encouragement to younger musicians, to whom he was always Uncle Ralph. And, most importantly, he was composing music of quality and originality. His Ninth Symphony had only just received its world premiere: a work of unusual sonorities, and a glowing, luminous, occasionally elegiac tone which rewards more after each listening. The announcement of his death, therefore, came as a shock. Many close friends had been telephoned early in the morning by Ursula or others to soften the impact.

In this edition of the Journal, we reproduce a number of the newspaper articles which followed VW's death forty years ago.

Unfinished works

Sadly, there was much left unfinished. He was working on a new opera - Thomas the Rhymer - which Michael Kennedy tells us was complete in piano and vocal score. There was also a cello concerto, begun in 1942-43 and written for Casals. This was in three movements. Listening to the slow movement of the Tuba Concerto arranged for cello, reminds us of what we are missing as a result of VW's death before this work was completed.

Westminster Abbey

It was entirely fitting that a composer of Vaughan Williams's stature should have had a commemorative service in Westminster Abbey. We reproduce in this edition extracts from the Funeral Service, and we are deeply grateful to Michael Kennedy and Simona Pakenham for providing us with their memories of this occasion.

VW's reputation

Forty years on, Vaughan Williams's reputation continues to grow. His discography runs to over 75 pages. A new recording of The Pilgrim's Progress has been released on the Chandos label. The Vision of Albion opera festival reminded everyone of the glories of the operas. Yet we still have no recording of The Poisoned Kiss, there are not enough performances of his music and parts of Europe seem a no-go area for the composer. Hopefully, when we mark the fiftieth anniversary of his death, the lyricism, the vision, the rugged strength and integrity of the music will be even more widely appreciated.

See also:
- RVW's Funeral
  by Simona Pakenham
  - page 2
- Obituary
  by Sir Gilmour Jenkins
  - page 7
- The Death of Vaughan Williams
  by Michael Kennedy
  - page 19
On August Bank Holiday, 1958, my husband, Noel IIiff, and I bicycled across London to have tea at Hanover Terrace with Ralph and Ursula. It was a glorious day and Regent's Park was full of people sunbathing or boating on the lake. Our visit was not entirely a social event, we had gone to discuss the progress of the Nativity Play The First Nowell which I had talked Ralph into preparing with me for a charity matinee at Drury Lane. The vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields had persuaded the management to lend their stage for one afternoon in aid of the Ockendon Venture. We had got to the point when all the words (which I had chosen from medieval plays) had been put together and Ralph was making the final selection of English carols to accompany them. There was little left to do but the orchestration. Noel was involved in his capacity of director.

We spent a profitable afternoon in discussion, followed by a pleasant interlude when Ursula came in bringing tea. When the time to leave had come I went to Ralph’s armchair for the pleasant interlude when Ursula rang us, considerably before breakfast, to tell us he had died in the night. She spent, I learnt afterwards, several hours in discussion, followed by a promise to try to conform, typed (by Ursula) in red:

I did not get this letter until the morning after Ursula rang us, considerably before breakfast, to tell us he had died in the night. She spent, I learnt afterwards, several hours on the telephone at dawn to break the news to as many of his friends as she had time to reach to save us the shock of hearing it on the early morning BBC bulletins - a valiant effort that must have cost much distress. Noel answered the phone and brought the message to me, with her added request that we should not let St. Martin’s assume the orchestration was near enough complete and that any deficiencies could be made good by the orchestra. He had shown himself so adaptable to the limits involved in writing for films. Nevertheless, the more he worked on arranging the carols the more instrument he felt he needed. We both thought the other was being unreasonable. His last letter, with heavy underlinings, began ‘very much against my will –’ and ended with a promise to try to conform, typed (by Ursula) in red:

The gap between August 26th, when Ralph had died, and the funeral on 19th September seemed interminable. All his friends were shaken as well as full of grief. When he was alive I had thought of him as old - his snow white hair, which stood out in a crowd like a Persil advertisement, so you could tell at a glance whether he was in a concert audience, was enough to remind you of that fact. But one’s immediate reaction to the news was – ‘How could he have died so young?’ There was almost a feeling of annoyance - he had no right to leave us so suddenly and when he seemed in such a creative mood. For me, life came to a standstill, for nothing could be done about The First Nowell until the funeral had taken place. London became intolerable so I took myself off to France for a week to clear my mind. I went to see my childhood music mistress and was surprised and delighted to find how well she knew RVW’s music and how much she, and her musical friends shared our sense of shock.

The front page of the Funeral Service booklet (from the estate of Robin Ivson)

My most vivid memory of the actual funeral is of Ursula’s deportment. In a simple dress of charcoal grey, hatless and white hair, which stood out in a crowd like a Persil advertisement, so you could tell at a glance whether he was in a concert audience, was enough to remind you of that fact. But one’s immediate reaction to the news was – ‘How could he have died so young?’ There was almost a feeling of annoyance - he had no right to leave us so suddenly and when he seemed in such a creative mood. For me, life came to a standstill, for nothing could be done about The First Nowell until the funeral had taken place. London became intolerable so I took myself off to France for a week to clear my mind. I went to see my childhood music mistress and was surprised and delighted to find how well she knew RVW’s music and how much she, and her musical friends shared our sense of shock.

Of the funeral itself I have subdued and misty recollections. The day was grey and drizzly, the interior of the Abbey sombre. Almost everybody had dressed in black which did not seem appropriate for Ralph. Before the service proper we had the Commemoration, a concert of music by RVW and his favourite composer, Bach. Who else but Sir Adrian Boult could possibly have conducted? After nearly three weeks we thought we had composed ourselves and would be calm and stoical. I do not know who had decided to open the proceedings with the Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus. The opening bars of that lovely and so English tune were enough to undo all our resolutions of dignity and a good many of us, despite our resolutions, dissolved into tears. I have a persistent memory of the Tallis Fantasia following, but it is not included in the Order of Service. Can I have dreamt it?
THE FUNERAL SERVICE

Then, all round, the Sentences following shall be sung by the Choir to the music of William Croft (1657-1727):

ALL, the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whatsoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

St. John xvi, 25, 26

I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

Job xix, 25, 26, 27

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.

1 Timothy vii, 1. Job i, 21

Then shall be sung the Psalms following:

Psalm 104, 1-24

PRAISE the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art clothed with majesty and honour.

Thou deckest thyself with light as with a garment: and, as it were, with the clouds, thou spreadest out thy writing upon the wings of the wind.

Thou makest the heavens, and they are full of thy thú. 

And thou hast appointed for the moon her place upon the earth, which thou hast made to keep constant seasons, and to give light to all flesh, and to keep thy commandments, and to perform all thy works through all generations of men.

He maketh darkness that it may be night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do move, the birds make their nests, and the fir-trees are full of sap; even the cedars are full of leaves.

He maketh the wings of the air to fly, that they may be without fear; for he covereth them with his clouds, and his eyes behold them.

Thou makest darkness that it may be night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do move.

Thou hast appointed for the moon her place upon the earth, which thou hast made to keep constant seasons, and to give light to all flesh, and to keep thy commandments, and to perform all thy works through all generations of men.

The Lord is king; he is clothed with glory and honour; the Lord is clothed with strength.

Thou dost cover it with the deep like as with a garment: the waters stand in the hills.

At thy rebuke they flee: at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.

They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath: even unto the place which thou hast appointed for them.

He setteth the springs into the rivers: which run among the hills.

All beasts of the field drink thereof: and the wild asses quench their thirst.

Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation: and sing among the branches.

He watereth the hills from above: the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.

He bringeth forth grass for the cattle: and green herbs for the service of man.

He maketh the strong grass for the cattle: and wine that maketh glad the heart of man: and oil to make his food cheerful, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

The trees of the Lord also are full of sap: even the cedars which he hath planted; wherein the birds make their nests: and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork.

The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats: and so are the stony rocks for the conies.

He appointeth the moon for certain seasons: and the sun knoweth his going down.

Thou maketh darkness that it may be night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do move.

The heavens also are thy handiwork: even all the stars in the field are they thine.

Mankind goeth forth to his work, and to his labour: until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Lord Marlingston (1735-1781)

Extract from the Funeral Service booklet

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uplifting arrangement of The Old Hundredth which he had persuaded the Archbishop to allow in that same ceremony in order that the congregation could get to their feet and add their voices to those of the choir. That was precisely what was needed to send us out more happily into the grey afternoon.

Simona Pakenham 
Chipping Norton

once looking at the floor. The choir sung O Taste And See which RW had written only five years earlier for the same Abbey but a very different occasion - the Coronation. Then, when the small procession had returned, we ended with the marvellously

Spoken to a Bronze Head

by Ursula Vaughan Williams

Bronze, where my curious fingers run, matching each muscle and each metal feature with life's austere structure of the bone, each living plane and contour so well known, you will endure beyond the span of nature, be as you are now when our lives are done.

On unborn generations you will stare with the same hollow eyes I touch and see, look on a world in which no memories share the living likeness of the face you wear, keep, in unchanged serenity all that time gave him in your guardian care.

His name is yours to keep, so will his glory be, who are his only, his inheriting son: and when the hand that writes so ardently the sound of unknown sound reaches finality, the music captured, all the work well done, stand in his place and bravely wear his immortality.

(Re-printed from The Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams, Albion Music Ltd, p. 88)

Ursula Vaughan Williams, July 1958
Tributes to Vaughan Williams

The following tributes to Ralph Vaughan Williams are reproduced, with permission, from The Musical Times of October, 1958.

DR. RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, O.M., died at his home in London on 26 August at the age of eighty-five. The world of music mourns his passing, yet one is glad and grateful that he was able to live so long and so full a life; one, moreover, that was so rich in achievement.

He was a Gloucestershire man, born at Down Ampney on 12 October 1872, and all his life he had the look and the manner of a countryman. His utterance was downright, his views were robust. In his music he expressed the essential spirit of England as perhaps no other composer has ever done before. He was never one to inhabit an ivory tower; he took an active part in rehearsals with the R.C.M. Orchestra, led at that time by Sam Grimston of the distinguished Grimston family. In those days we could attend comparatively few orchestral concerts, and there were no gramophone records.

Our group were together frequently and discussed music voraciously. We showed each other our compositions with much mutual criticism. We used to frequent a teashop in High Street, Kensington, then known as Wilkin's, where we could sit for hours in animated discussions. At that time, though Vaughan Williams was by some years the eldest of us, he had not developed his later love of paradox; he was, in fact, just 'one of us', as the saying goes. There was no question among us of which was the greatest. We were all humble-minded students eager to learn from Stanford and from each other. We formed a debating society with regular meetings when one or other of us would read a prepared discourse followed by mutual arguments. These were not confined to music, I recollect that Vaughan Williams delivered a discourse on Hardy's Jude the Obscure, at that time considered rather a daring, if not shocking, work. These were not confined to music, arguments. These were not confined to music.

John Ireland

In the concluding years of the 'nineties Vaughan Williams was a student with Stanford during the period when I also had that privilege. Among our fellow-students were Holst and Dunhill, and a little group or coterie resulted, which included the pianist Evlyn Howard-Jones, also a student. We were much together, attending regularly Stanford's bi-weekly orchestral rehearsals with the R.C.M. Orchestra, led at that time by Sam Grimston of the distinguished Grimston family. In those days we could attend comparatively few orchestral concerts, and there were no gramophone records.

Our group were together frequently and discussed music voraciously. We showed each other our compositions with much mutual criticism. We used to frequent a teashop in High Street, Kensington, then known as Wilkin's, where we could sit for hours in animated discussions. At that time, though Vaughan Williams was by some years the eldest of us, he had not developed his later love of paradox; he was, in fact, just 'one of us', as the saying goes. There was no question among us of which was the greatest. We were all humble-minded students eager to learn from Stanford and from each other. We formed a debating society with regular meetings when one or other of us would read a prepared discourse followed by mutual arguments. These were not confined to music, I recollect that Vaughan Williams delivered a discourse on Hardy's Jude the Obscure, at that time considered rather a daring, if not shocking, work.

When V.W. first married and went to Germany to study with Max Bruch, he was organist of the Church of St. Barnabas, South Lambeth. He per­formed very a lot and undertook his position for the period of his six months' projected absence. Even in those early days his activities were pro­digious, for, in addition to the normal work of a church organist and choirmaster, he ran a choral society and an orchestral society in connection with the church. I instructed me to prepare and produce performances of Mendelssohn's *Lauda Sion* and Stanford's *Revenge*. This was no easy task for a lad still in his 'teens and quite inexperienced.

On his return from Germany, V.W. bought or leased what he described as 'a small, cheap house' on Chelsea Embankment. The house, a beautiful one, was at the eastern corner of the fine terrace of houses, one of which, Queen's House, was at one time the residence of D. G. Rossetti, the great pre-Raphaelite painter and poet. The house, always painted white, still stands where it did, though the principal books I have read on Chelsea do not disclose the fact that it was once the residence of England's greatest and famous composer. For many years during Vaughan Williams' subsequent life in Chelsea, he and I remained friends, and continued our musical companionship and mutual advice and criticism.

In conclusion I have an anecdote which perhaps throws some light on the character of this great figure. In 1908, when I was writing my first Sonata for violin and piano, I showed him the smooth movement, then in manuscript. When we reconvened the central theme in E flat minor (in Dorian mode) he stopped me and was silent for a minute or two. Then he said, 'Play that theme again'. After another pause he said, 'Well, that's odd. I have used practically the same theme in a song.' I was rather taken aback and asked him what we should do about this curious coincidence of a musical idea. After a moment's thought V.W. said, 'Well, we must both have cribbed it from something else, so we had better both leave it as it is - nobody will notice it.' And so far as I know, nobody ever has!

Sir Adrian Boult

We are often told that early memories are especially vivid, and I can certainly agree that my early memories of Ralph Vaughan Williams are as fresh as anything I can think of. Rather strictly brought up as I had been on a diet mainly of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, it was a great experience as a youngster to be thrown into a chorus, directed by Hugh Allen, singing The Unknown Region and, soon after, the Sea Symphony. The impact of Vaughan Williams, this magnificent-looking young man, and his fresh and vital music were unforgettable.

A few years later he came to my room in a distant outcrop of the War Office and sat among the samples of boots, which then occupied most of my time, and made some cuts in the score of the London Symphony, ready for its third performance in 1918. Many of us regretted the cuts at that time, but we now see that he was right. That score was partly in Edward Dent's writing, partly in George Butterworth's, for the original had been in Germany when the 1914 war broke out, and several friends lent a hand with its reconstruction from the parts, which were, mercifully, still in England.

Another early memory was concerned with the beginnings of the Pastoral Symphony. It was actually first heard at a rehearsal of the Royal College of Music's Students' Orchestra a week or two before the first performance in Queen's Hall. Vaughan Williams, like Brahms (who never allowed a score to go through the press until he had heard it at least once), always liked to make sure of his orchestration, and I think he made some slight amendments after that rehearsal, as well as a few more after the work was printed. The Royal College of Music performance took place after the Royal Philharmonic Concert, of course, but at the College a young clarinet scholar dealt with the soprano cadenzas (which are cued in, in case a singer is not available) so beautifully that the composer said he must play them at the concert, it was not worth while to look for a student soprano. The scholar's name was Frederick Thurston, whose work is still well remembered. The part was equally beautifully sung by Flora Mann at Queen's Hall.

The next Symphony, the F minor, came later, but it is specially to be remembered as it brought many of us straight up against the spectacle of war, and the ghastly possibility of it. A prophet, like other great men, he foresaw the whole thing (this was in 1933), and surely there is no more moving and moving conclusion of all music than that final open fifth when the composer seems to rid himself of the whole hideous idea, and, as we know, began soon after to think of the serene beauty of the D major, and what the post-war world could be if men could have more sense.

A great creator, who has done for the reputation of our country something that can be measured by the debt that we owe to William Shakespeare.

Sir John Barbirolli

Early on the morning of 26 August there passed from us one of the greatest and most beloved figures in British musical history. I have been privileged to have had his intimate musical and personal friendship for many years; years that were to become more and more precious as they passed. He was one of the most 'complete' (if I may use the word) men I have ever known. He loved life, he loved work, and his interest in all music was unquenchable and insatiable. Only a few weeks ago in Cheltenham at the Festival of British Contemporary Music, he was in his place at ten o'clock every morning to hear us rehearse the efforts of his youngest, sometimes even obscure, contemporaries, and we all marvelled at him.

It is given to few men to touch the hearts and minds of their fellows in such degree as he has done; and only to the anointed is given the genius that can span such opposite as the lovely little Linden Lee and the tremendous Fourth Symphony.

Dear Ralph: we shall always honour, admire and be grateful to you; but above all we shall always feel blessed that we walked the same earth with you.
He was a man greatly revered, and with reason. Among his acts were countless kindnesses, known only to himself and the persons concerned. He gave continuous advice and encouragement to younger men. He had the dignified humility of a great man, and was utterly unself-seeking. Our sorrow that he has gone is mingled with gratitude for all that he has left us.

Sir Stuart Wilson

I knew R.V.W. personally and continuously for close on fifty years - he did more than anyone else to encourage and to help me as a singer. I met his music and himself when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge, he offered me a room in his house, 13 Cheyne Walk, when the 1914-18 war was over, and now the fifty years have ended. I am competent only to say what the character and the devotion of the man meant to me, for I am not competent to assess his music as eternity will see it - "private affection beares us of judgement".

There was no day passed when he did not work at something - no sitting down. I am not surprised that I used to play it just like that. Everything had to be done by himself and no duty was too menial or trivial. In the first war he was in the R.A.M.C. Before he could return to England to give his commission in the R.G.A. he spent months in a transit camp in Salonica, where his chief task was to separate solids from liquids in their primitive sewage arrangements. "After that," he said, "I learned to call nothing common or unclean." If he undertook to be President or Patron of any society or committee, he meant to work with them, and attendance at their functions was a first charge on his time. A small musical society in Gloucestershire registered in Somerset House in 1872.

Sir Arthur Bliss

Vaughan Williams has been the great name in our music for many years. Thousands have sung or played his music, and millions, perhaps, know one side or other of his great and varied output. He has left his influence on every branch of music from grand opera to hymn tunes. He is now part of our inheritance.

There is a rock-like strength in his musical personality that is exceedingly uncommon in the history of music. His music is a real affirmation of life. When Epstein was moulding in clay the bust of Vaughan Williams he was reported as saying that looking at this head gave him strength. Many listeners to his music must have felt the same.

Vaughan Williams took great subjects for his music, and brought his personal vision to bear on them: the sea, London, the English countryside, the book of Job, Shakespeare, Bunyan. The opera and the symphony inspired by The Pilgrim's Progress could not have been written by anybody else. In both, a national outlook is combined with a very personal style.

Vaughan Williams was always a searcher, an explorer. It was so characteristic of him to start his career with a work called Toward the Unknown Region and to write in his old age a symphony commemorating 'Scott of the Antarctic'.

(continued overleaf)
Sir George Dyson

V.W.'s supreme rank in the creative music of our time needs no emphasis. I will write rather of his day-to-day generosity and friendliness. He was at one time a member of the Council of the Royal College of Music, but as our statutes debar members of the council from being members of the professorial staff, he at once resigned when Sir Hugh Allen asked him to take some part in composition, and he taught for many years. Then, in 1939, when the war reduced our numbers by half, he immediately offered
his class to colleagues whose work was most seriously depleted.

He was instantly ready to support from his own purse the many appeals, professional or otherwise, that came to him. Indeed it was sometimes difficult to persuade him that some causes were more deserving than others. His instinct was to help first and judge later, a trait of character occasionally too optimistic, but always generous. He would go far to assist a promising talent or an enterprising programme.

His modesty could be embarrassing. I had great difficulty in persuading him to sit for Sir Gerald Kelly's magnificent portrait, now in the College council-room. He took the whimsical attitude that if you want a good portrait the subject of it is immaterial. If you want a good likeness, why not a photograph? Luckily we got both.

One last reminiscence. Not long ago he wrote to me describing a most vivid dream in which he heard some unknown music. He was told, in the dream, that I had written it, and he actually copied out a musical quotation from it! I could not recognize it, but I am more than content to have been given that fleeting moment in a unique imagination.

Frank Howes

Apart from his compositions - if indeed the man, his music and his social connections can be kept apart - Ralph Vaughan Williams contributed incalculable services to music and through music to our national life. One thinks first, naturally, of folk-song, a national heritage which he helped to preserve, but the mind goes back over the years and recalls his practical music-making with his village choirs at Leith Hill and with his more sophisticated London Bach Choir, his editorial work on the English Hymnal and the Oxford Carol Book, not to mention his volumes for the Purcell Society, his assiduous attendance at obscure concerts where new works by younger composers were having their first performance, his fierce letters to The Times whenever he scented an injustice done or about to be done, his forthright speeches from diverse platforms on musical occasions, at annual general meetings or even, though he was not fond of them, public dinners.

Of his compositions this is not the place to speak, and in any case they belong to us all, nor of his importance for our national history, which is surely great. What embrace all these things was the forceful personality of a great man - for force and probity of character combined with musical genius he can only be likened to Byrd and Bach. He was truly a great Englishman who for two generations has been increasingly an inspiration to all who came within the orbit of music.

Norman Demuth

Among Vaughan Williams’s most loveable characteristics were his fund of human kindness and his humility. He had the knack of making even the most inexperienced young composer feel at ease, as if he were talking to an equal. He had a prodigious memory for small details. On the occasion of a party in honour of his eighty-fifth birthday, he said to me when I shook hands with him, ‘I owe you and your wife a letter of thanks.’ He must have by then forgotten, for I knew not yet reached ours.

I shall always remember being able to hear the first performance of his Fifth Symphony while I was in the Army. The experience overwhelmed me and I felt that I had to write and tell him about it. This I did with some diffidence and hoped that he would not think it condescending on my part. The answer, arriving almost by return of post, was characteristic: ‘You should not waste time listening to my music when you have so little in which to write your own.’ The postscript was even more typical: ‘Don’t think I am one of those who don’t like praise. I love it.’

Even to look at Vaughan Williams was an inspiration. He had the face of a visionary - and how he would have hated it if anyone had told him so.

There is no doubt that when he crossed over ‘the trumpets sounded for him on the other side’.

Alun Hoddinott

The music of Vaughan Williams has always had, for me, a particular appeal and significance, and the conviction has grown steadily in me that it has that extra indefinable quality that will ensure its survival.

One often forms a mental image of an artist through his work and is often disappointed on meeting him. The reverse was the case with Vaughan Williams. Here, obviously, was a wonderful man and personality, I was fortunate enough to have the privilege of meeting him several times over the last few years - mostly at concerts where new works were being played.

The last time I saw Vaughan Williams was at this year’s Cheltenham Festival, where he attended both the rehearsals of the new works and the evening concerts. I had the opportunity of speaking to him, and I confess I waited, with some trepidation, for his remarks about my Harp Concerto, which was performed for the first time. He was very kind, however, and ended by saying, ‘I’m old-fashioned enough to like a tune.’

I was particularly glad to have been present at the performance of the London Symphony on the last night but one of the Festival. The performance and the spontaneous ovation which greeted Vaughan Williams at the end showed the depth of affection and esteem in which he was held; it will remain one of my most moving experiences and memories.

Michael Kennedy

Since early childhood I have passionately admired the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams: it came to me as naturally as the power of speech. During the war, while I was overseas, I was overcome by homesickness and the effects of going too long without music. On the spur of the moment I wrote to V.W. and told him what his music meant to me, never expecting an answer to such an impertinence. On returning to post weeks later I found a warm-hearted reply awaiting me which had been despatched by return post.

Thereafter we corresponded regularly, and eventually we met and there began a close friendship which will ever remain the most moving experience of my life. It was impossible to realize that fifty years separated our ages: so young and vital a mind as his seemed to thrive in the company of his juniors. His sympathies and interests were as wide as the ground he covered in his music. His greatness stemmed from his unsurpassing honesty and genuine, most touching, humility. No one ever left his company without feeling that they had been strengthened and enriched. I enjoyed every aspect of life: how he loved parties and laughter! In our letters we discussed the books we were reading, his music and other music we had recently heard, poetry we liked, the events of the day, our gardens. I even have an account (which must be unique) of when he played cricket as a boy. To sit in his beautiful study at Hanover Terrace while he worked at the piano was to sense the serenity of his genius, and, at the same time, the mysticism and massive strength of the composer of the Fourth Symphony, Job and Hodie.

The last years of his full and complete life were gloriously happy. His energy was unabated to the last day. It was a great satisfaction to him that in recent years he heard splendid performances of some of his lesser-known and underrated works. Sancta Civitas, Sir John in Love, The Poisoned Kiss and Pilgrims’ Progress, but I am sure his greatest pleasure was in his Bach Passion performances at Dorking. The contact of these two mighty minds was an unforgettable experience.

What a rich harvest this wonderful man has left us, a musical testament of beauty of a breadth unrivalled in English music. He is part of the fabric of our nation, with Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Hardy and Elgar. The other day he told me he had never lost his love of Whitman, and it is a line from Whitman, marvelously set to music in the Sea Symphony, which has haunted me since 26 August: ‘Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death’.
Obituary by Sir Gilmour Jenkins of the English Dance and Song Society

- A Tribute To Ralph Vaughan Williams

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The Chairman's Tribute to Ralph Vaughan Williams

We have had the great privilege to have among us, taking an active interest in our work, a man whose name and music will, I believe, live as long as music lives: a name that will rank with that of the great musicians of all time. Many of us have known him well, have enjoyed his gaiety as well as his profundity, have heard his lively comments on men and things as well as the magnificent outpourings of his genius, and have known the warmth of his heart as well as the gentleness of his mind. To-day I propose to say a few words only on certain aspects of his thought which are of special interest to us here.

The first is that he regarded English folk dances and their tunes and English folk songs and carols, as being a priceless possession, worthy of every effort to collect and preserve, not because of their academic interest to the scholar or the historian but because of their own intrinsic merits as things of beauty, and of their capacity to form the roots from which could spring a great new tree of English music. He left to others the learned approach of the folklore enthusiast; his enthusiasm was for the beauty of the songs, delicate or robust, grave or gay, and for the loveliness of the dance tunes from which, for him, much of the beauty of the dances derived. He used the tunes sometimes in his operas and other works, and he arranged them with loving care for voices and instruments, always in some miraculous way letting them speak for themselves and never obscuring their own special beauty and individuality. But, far more important, he absorbed them into his very spirit, and found in them the soil in which his genius could grow and flower. Not that his works have any trace of the "folkiness" that young men think it clever to sneer at. The Sixth Symphony no more resembles a folk song than the oak resembles the acorn, but it had its roots there. The tunes of his own country handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation, released in him the mighty torrent of music which is, and will remain, one of the glories of our country.

The second point is that he regarded English folk dances and their tunes and English folk songs and carols, as being a priceless possession, worthy of every effort to collect and preserve, not because of their academic interest to the scholar or the historian but because of their own intrinsic merits as things of beauty, and of their capacity to form the roots from which could spring a great new tree of English music. He left to others the learned approach of the folklore enthusiast; his enthusiasm was for the beauty of the songs, delicate or robust, grave or gay, and for the loveliness of the dance tunes from which, for him, much of the beauty of the dances derived. He used the tunes sometimes in his operas and other works, and he arranged them with loving care for voices and instruments, always in some miraculous way letting them speak for themselves and never obscuring their own special beauty and individuality. But, far more important, he absorbed them into his very spirit, and found in them the soil in which his genius could grow and flower. Not that his works have any trace of the "folkiness" that young men think it clever to sneer at. The Sixth Symphony no more resembles a folk song than the oak resembles the acorn, but it had its roots there. The tunes of his own country handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation, released in him the mighty torrent of music which is, and will remain, one of the glories of our country.

This is one aspect, without mentioning it specifically. He profoundly believed that no man could produce anything worthwhile or of any real satisfaction to himself or of value to the world until he had learned his job. Divine inspiration, brilliant ideas, profound intuitions, could be properly used and turned into something of value only by someone who had learned to use them and could translate them into things of tangible beauty. This he applied to the interpretation as much as to the creation of works of art. As you know, he was not only a great composer, but also a profound interpreter who expected and exacted subtleties in singing and playing. But first of all he insisted that the notes should be right, and his not infrequent and rather terrifying explosions at rehearsals were more often caused by inaccuracies or slovenliness than by failures in the higher flights of interpretation. He believed that unless the foundation was right the structure would give little satisfaction to the builder or the occupier of a house. He had no use for the slip-shod or the superficial; he knew that nothing worthwhile could be done without hard work in learning how to do it.

Lastly, part of his greatness lay in refusing to allow himself to be put on a pedestal. His genius was fertilised by being among people and by taking an active part in the musical life of his time. He wanted always to be a man-to-man, to discuss and chat and exchange jokes on equal terms; and he was accessible to all who wanted his help or advice. These are some of the qualities that made him universally beloved and that enabled him to go on growing until the end.

He was a truly great man in mind and in heart and he was also a merry one. We who have known him have very much to be thankful for.

Gilmour Jenkins

(Re-printed from English Dance and Song, vol. XXIII, No. 1, January 1959)

Record Reviews

Dona Nobis Pacem

Dona Nobis Pacem. Carmen Pelton (soprano), Nathan Gunn (baritone), Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Robert Shaw, on Telarc CD 80479. (Coupled with Barber Prayers of Kierkegaard and Bartok Cantata Profana). Full price, 71 minutes. Only available at this stage in the USA.

Dona Nobis Pacem has done well on record. Vaughan Williams conducts the 1936 broadcast recording, now on Pearl (GEMM CD 9342), a passionate, illuminating reading with Renee Flynn and Roy Henderson who both sang in the first performance on 2nd October, 1935. This is a recording of immense historical importance even if the sound is limited at times. Of more modern recordings, many of us will have learned this work from Abravanel's pioneering recording on Vanguard. The baritone soloist let things down in that issue. Our prayers were answered in 1973 when Sheila Armstrong, John Carol Case, the London Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult recorded it following a Royal Festival Hall concert on Sunday 8th of April, 1973. Versions by Bryden Thomson (Chandos 8590), Matthew Best (Hyperion CDA 66655) and Richard Hickox (EMI CDC 754788 2) followed between 1988 and 1993.

This latest American recording conducted by Robert Shaw has fine orchestral and choral contributions as one might expect from this source. However, the baritone Nathan Gunn, simply cannot compete with the likes of Bryn Terfel (on EMI) or Thomas Allen (on Hyperion). Comparing the newer versions in the tender Reconciliation confirms this point. Nathan Gunn is subdued, the diction muffled and he is curiously lacking in expressiveness. Bryn Terfel is at the other extreme: every word is underlined and the diction is superb. Thomas Allen and Bryan Raynor Cook (on Chandos), are also excellent. Bryan Raynor Cook in particular sings with beautiful tone and a fine sense of line. He faithfully observes VW's 'p and daecce markings.

It is a pity that the new Telarc recording has this limitation since there is much to admire elsewhere. The couplings are also unusual. Barber's work is striking, quite different in mood to Knoxville: Summer of 1915 discussed elsewhere in the edition (see page 20). Overall, stick to Hickox on EMI.

Stephen Connock Colchester

PAGE 7
Obituary

A composer in a great "English tradition"

ART OF DR VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Ralph Vaughan Williams (whose death is announced on page one) was born in 1872 at Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, where his father was rector. He was at Charterhouse School for three years and in 1889 entered the Royal College of Music. Two years later he went to Cambridge, where he took the degree of Mus.B. in 1894. He left the following year for some further training at the Royal College.

For three years he was the organist of a London church, and while still holding this appointment he found time to study his first orchestral composition under Max Bruch in Berlin. Afterwards for a little time he came, more strangely, under the influence of Ravel in Paris.

The Germanic education he had been of a cosmopolitan order—he soon found that he could not be a bore by English composer. It brought him the esteem of the people. It brought him the esteem of the world. He soon found that he could not be a bore by English composer. It brought him the esteem of the world. He soon found that he could not be a bore by English composer. It brought him the esteem of the world.

In 1900 he took an eminently visible in the mustard colour of his violin, and the conclusion of the first work in it, which is a masterpiece of the world. It brought him the esteem of the people. It brought him the esteem of the world. It brought him the esteem of the people. It brought him the esteem of the world.

Recording of Ninth

He pursued the same trend in the Ninth Symphony. His last important work, first performed at a concert of the Royal Philharmonic Society in April, was yesterday to have been present at the first recording of this work being made for an American company by Sir Adrian Boult and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

This impressive but given only the sketchiest idea of Vaughan Williams' recent work. His was essentially eclectic in almost every work, even to the point of quoting his own compositions. The recording of the work, which has been received with mixed success, was made by several orchestras, and the999 other important orchestras

of other important orchestral

quartets and chamber music

fifths, followed by many major choral works and many minor works, "unanswerable pope" and half, a full-length score written during the forties. In addition Vaughan Williams also edited the music of the Tchaikovsky (1840) was part of the

HALLE TRIBUTE AT THE "PROMS"

Barbirolli conducts the Tallis Fantasia

As a tribute last night to Vaughan Williams' memory Sir John Barbirolli came to give the Promenade concert at the Royal Albert Hall. The Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis. In reverence there was no applause before or after the performance, and Sir John, in a short spoken tribute, referred to Vaughan Williams' work as "the greatest British composer of our time and of the century."

But his work, though not spectacular as an elegy, was felt to be more truly eloquent than the Tallis Fantasia. Sir John said that when he first heard it, he felt that it was an essential quality in art that it should make itself felt as long as possible. It made himself known in its effectiveness. Its profundity lies rather in its relationship to the music of the past. It is a very personal music, and it was such a personal music that it is not possible to compare it with the music of other times.

The intensity of the Hall's audience for Sir John's shout showed how under the apparently tranquillity of the music, it contains a power of moving. It is a great piece of music, and it is a great piece of music.

"Pastoral" Symphony

After the war the beautiful "Pastoral" Symphony, inspired by the composer's songs of country scenes and animals, took the stage at the Royal Festival Hall. Its second movement, "Field of the Month," has been described as "a masterpiece of English music." It was performed last night by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. The work was well received, and the audience was enthusiastic. The final movement, "Final Symphony," was received with great interest, and the audience was enthusiastic. The final movement, "Final Symphony," was received with great interest, and the audience was enthusiastic. The final movement, "Final Symphony," was received with great interest, and the audience was enthusiastic.

An external event of Dr Vaughan Williams' career was his appointment as Director of the British Museum, which he held from 1930 to 1938. His first important work was his "Ode to Joy," which was performed at the Festival of Britain. Vaughan Williams' music has been much admired, and his influence has been very great on the development of English music.

"Lauda Sion" Mass

A perennial best-seller of Dr Vaughan Williams', the "Lauda Sion" Mass, was performed last night. It has been performed at many important events, and it has been well received. The work was well received, and the audience was enthusiastic. The final movement, "Final Symphony," was received with great interest, and the audience was enthusiastic. The final movement, "Final Symphony," was received with great interest, and the audience was enthusiastic. The final movement, "Final Symphony," was received with great interest, and the audience was enthusiastic.

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Continued from previous column

Obituaries from the national press

From Manchester Guardian, Wednesday August 27th 1958
DEATH OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

His last day spent working

Dr Ralph Vaughan Williams died at his home in Hanover Terrace, London, yesterday, aged 88—the morning on which he was to have attended a recording of his Ninth Symphony with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

He had spent a full day working on Monday. A friend of the family said that he went out in the morning and worked after lunch. Later he had a young composer to see him. He seemed absolutely normal, but a little anxious that the world should know that the death of Vaughan Williams must have felt the news of his very sudden death as a shock and his loss as almost a personal grief. One expresses regret for the passing of a great artist with a distant respect that is not inappropriate for being achieved, but in his case one also felt keenly that the world has become poorer by the passing of an entirely genuine and generous man.

Such qualities are by no means necessary to art; if they were, how miserably rare great music would be. But when they are present in a composer, one need not be afraid or ashamed to take a warm pleasure in them, even though one may sometimes suspect oneself of being just a little unfairly biased in his favour by emotional responses one tries to take for aesthetic perception. Can anyone who loves Verdi more than Wagner, for instance, be said to be judging them altogether by the quality of their music and not at all by his personality?

Indefinitely loyal, to the point of some hesitancy in giving in his art, inspired such loyalty in many that they were quite willing to accept him as the man who had written it in anything he wrote. Not that he was of a kind of superman who had to do nothing and could do anything; he was capable of feeling deeply and valuing hatred and instinct with something that is neither easeful of hatred nor of instinc.

Loyal to the end, he had a way of living in music—deaf, silent and withdrawn, which Vaughan Williams had in his nature, and above all he loved his fellows. Sir Adrian Boult, Sir Adrian's secretary, was completed in November and published in 1935. Born the son of a wealthy man, Vaughan Williams was educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he attended the Royal College of Music.

Vaughan Williams was anything but precocious, and among his generation—which was exceptional in every way—he was not at first expected to attain pre-eminence.

Not hard-pressed for money, he went abroad for experience. He was in Germany in 1910 when he acquired the habit of knowing him through the effect music on his life. The Leeds Festival in 1917, by his novel "Toward the Unknown Unknown World." In the 1914-18 War Vaughan Williams served in the R.A.M.C. as a doctor and later gained a commission in the Royal Artillery. Before he joined the Army he had been a pupil under Sir John Stanford at the Royal College of Music.

His first wife, formerly Miss Ada Atkinson, died in 1916; three years later he married Mrs. Dorothy Wood, a widow, who survives him.

OBITUARY

Dr. R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, O.M.

FAME AT 35 AFTER LEEDS FESTIVAL

Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, the composer, who has died aged 88, received the Order of Merit in 1935. But the son of a clergyman, at Down Ampney, Glos., he was educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge, before he attended the Royal College of Music.

His development was anything but precocious, and among his generation—which was exceptional in every way—Vaughan Williams was not at first expected to attain pre-eminence.

Not hard-pressed for money, he went abroad for experience. He was in Germany in 1910 when he acquired the habit of knowing him through the effect music on his life. The Leeds Festival in 1917, by his novel "Toward the Unknown Unknown World." In the 1914-18 War Vaughan Williams served in the R.A.M.C. as a doctor and later gained a commission in the Royal Artillery. Before he joined the Army he had been a pupil under Sir John Stanford at the Royal College of Music.

His first wife, formerly Miss Ada Atkinson, died in 1916; three years later he married Mrs. Dorothy Wood, a widow, who survives him.
Vaughan Williams wrote *A Sea Symphony* over a period of seven years. The process of composition was laborious and involved the rejection of a substantial amount of material. This is recorded in a series of sketchbooks which, aside from a single privately owned book, are held in the British Library. There is, of course, no guarantee that others have not been lost or destroyed, but in those that survive, the final movement, 'The Explorers', is subject to the most substantial and far-reaching revision.

There are two serious problems to be overcome before the music itself can be effectively evaluated. Both are a consequence of Vaughan Williams's idiosyncratic working methods: his handwriting is frequently difficult to read and, more crucially, it is impossible to be certain of a chronology. In a similar study concerning the *Ninth Symphony*, Alain Frogley wrote:

> It cannot always be assumed that all entries were written in a linear sequence from the front to the back of a book. Vaughan Williams almost certainly had a number of different notebooks on his desk at any one time, and at times used them haphazardly.¹

In the absence of any real external evidence, the present study is bound to concentrate on internal evidence gathered from the sketches themselves. This, however, is a risky business and relies on a number of assumptions, particularly regarding determinations of what constitutes logical development. For the most part, it is necessary to promulgate a sliding scale in which those sketches least like the final result were written furthest from it in time whilst those most like the final result were written nearest to it in time. However, such rigidity does not allow for second thoughts, retraced steps, or any other form of deviation from the predetermined evolutionary pattern.

Even so, without some kind of (potentially arbitrary) ordering, it is not possible to further this discussion. Taking these problems into account, Table 1 presents, with some trepidation, a chronological ordering of the preliminary material for 'The Explorers'.² Each of the three principal vocal score drafts is preceded by a less carefully notated preliminary draft as well as a number of shorter sketches. As might be expected, certain passages caused a disproportionate amount of trouble and were repeatedly revised, while others were conceived in a form which required very little alteration in the final version. Early sketches indicate that Vaughan Williams worked on the movement in two separate parts. It is difficult to ascertain when these were joined, even if it is assumed that they were always intended to be. There is no doubt that draft Y is a direct continuation of draft B and thus constitutes a complete version of the movement. It is also possible that draft X is similarly a continuation of draft A and preliminary draft Y is a continuation of preliminary draft B:

In the final result, part I (bars 1-239) consists of three main sections. The first two begin with the following text: 'O vast Rondure' (bar 1) and 'Down from the gardens of Asia' (bar 44). The third is less easily defined, partly because it includes no new thematic material and partly because it begins mid-way through a line of text. However, the most pronounced point of recapitulation occurs at bar 177 with the word 'poet': '(Finally shall come the) poet worthy that name'. As an overall concept, part I is constructed in an arch-form (A, B, A') with the following principal themes:

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Ex. 1a
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Ex. 1b
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Ex. 1c
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Ex. 1d
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²The term 'preliminary material' refers to any music pre-dating the first proofs of the 1909 vocal score.
Section I, even in its least mature form, is never very far from the final result. The first draft (preliminary draft A) is similar in thematic and structural terms. There are only two significant differences: it begins in D major and the final passage incorporates a phrase based on the principal theme of the first movement.

Ex. 2

In draft A the thematic cross-reference is removed and the whole section is transposed into E♭ major. Both of these revisions weaken its relationship with the first movement. The section is then subject to only minor alteration in the subsequent drafts.

Section 2 was far more problematic and received comprehensive revision several times. Vaughan Williams initially conceived three themes, each associated with different textual material: 'Down from the gardens', 'Yet soul be sure' and 'Wherefore unsatisfied soul'.

Ex. 3a

Ex. 3b

Ex. 3c

It seems that the second theme was originally intended as a countersubject for the first theme. There are frequent further attempts in the sketches to combine these themes, but the third is always treated separately. Nevertheless, in draft A section 2 is dominated by a large fugue based on the material derived only from the first theme.

The fugue begins in modal F major, contributing towards an appropriate atmosphere for the text: 'Down from the gardens of Asia descending. Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them'.

Ex. 4a

However, as Whitman’s poetry increases in urgency, describing humanity’s ‘wandering, yearning, with restless explorations’, the harmonic tension is correspondingly increased and the music becomes increasingly chromatic. This is followed by a developmental passage which incorporates a series of middle entries based on an intervallically altered version of the theme.

Ex. 4b

The rather mechanically derived middle section is interrupted by an unprepared and suddenly dramatic orchestral outburst, overriding the carefully contrived fugal workings with an impulsive convulsion.

Ex. 4c

Although there is no attempt to incorporate the second theme within the fugue, the third theme, 'Wherefore unsatisfied soul', makes an appearance. It is stated a number of times in alternation with isolated statements of the first theme.
Gradually, the tension winds down and the fugue ends with a bar of silence. Then at last, the draft then continues with the second theme, 'Yet soul be sure'. Here the fugue subject makes a further appearance, again but once again it is used in a non-contrapuntal context.

Ex. 4e

It seems that Vaughan Williams was somewhat constricted by the formal requirements of the fugue. He was clearly torn between giving vent to impulses and trying to interweave and superimpose the various thematic strands. The result was unsatisfactory and he began further experimental, mostly using fresh material.

The new theme for 'Down from the gardens of Asia' presents a pointed contrast with its predecessor. Having abandoned the previous fugal version Vaughan Williams turns to an unambiguously homophonic setting of an unambiguously diatonic theme.

Ex. 5a

This style is retained even when the text is most suggestive of instability as 'with restless explorations'.

Ex. 5b

The replacement theme for 'Wherefore unsatisfied soul' is subsequently incorporated without alteration in the final result. 'Yet soul be sure' was sketched twice, although only the second version was used in the draft. It is now just seven bars in length.

Ex. 5c

This is overshadowed by a substantial sequential passage which prepares for the next section. Thus the proportions of section 2 are altered and the importance of 'Yet soul be sure' is diminished in draft B.
Draft C takes a slightly different form. It consists of substantial revisions of unsatisfactory passages in draft B. These were bound together with the previous draft in Add. MS. 50363. Section 2 is now very similar to the final result. Both ‘Down from the gardens of Asia’ and ‘Yet soul be sure’ now share the same thematic material, as in the printed score. This symbolic connection does not seem particularly logical. The two passages of text represent different ideas: the first is concerned with the past wanderings of humanity, whilst the second invokes optimism as to its future. However, in purely musical terms, the reiterated thematic material helps to give part I a more balanced arch-like structure. It seems that musical needs took precedence over textual needs.

Vaughan Williams commenced work on section 3 only after the previous two sections had reached an advanced stage. The seeds are contained in a sketch of ‘Yet soul be sure’ written after preliminary draft A in 50361D. This ends with a short passage, headed ‘finally’, which recapitulates the principal theme of section 1. It first appears modified to fit the 3/4 time signature, but the original version in 4/4 is subsequently used to herald a triplet passage, ‘singing’.

A second sketch in 50363 (ff. 95r-95v) is heavily based on these ideas, but the triplet passage is omitted. Instead, the principal themes of both section 1 and section 2 are neatly superimposed to provide a majestic setting of ‘shall come the poet worthy that name’.

Although the music bears little specific relation to the final result, the essential recapitulatory feeling is similar.

Draft B stands by the same principal of construction, but the result is rather different. The new ‘Down from the gardens of Asia’ theme is incorporated and combined with theme 1a in resolute G major.

The music then moves into E♭ major for a slightly shortened version of the triplet passage. As there is no sign of the orchestral passage which divides part I and part 2 in the final result, section 3 is followed directly by section 5, ‘O we can wait no longer’.

In draft C, the thematic material and underlying structure of section 1 are now consistent with the final result. Nevertheless, it is still considerably shorter and less developed. For the first time section 4 is included, albeit again in a very compact version. Both sections were subsequently given more weight in order to function as the climactic passages of part I.

Although there are fewer sketches for section 3 than section 2, in many ways they share similar problems. Vaughan Williams is clearly anxious to combine the various thematic ideas, and always keeps in mind a strong sense of their function within the larger structure. He lacked either the will or the confidence to trust in less controlled free-flowing thoughts. This would matter little if it were not for the occasional sense in the sketches that this self-restraint was not productive. At times the response to Whitman’s poetry seems forced in order that the demands of predetermined musical structures or development techniques be given precedence.
Part 2, in its final version, seems to be a more unfettered response to the poetry. It is less formally contrived and encompasses a greater degree of melodic freedom. There are five main sections, dominated by the following themes:

section 5 (240-335) Ex. 7a

section 6 (336-401) Ex. 7b

section 7 (402-443) Ex. 7c

section 8 (444-521) based on ex. 7a

section 9 (522-570) based on ex. 7a

These received varying degrees of revision in the preliminary sketches. For example, the concluding passage in section 5, ‘Bathe me O God in thee’, is associated with no fewer than five different chunks of thematic material. On the other hand, section 9 is not greatly different to the final result, even in its earliest version.

The first sketches for part 2 set out two themes which constitute the basis of sections 5 and 6.

Ex. 8a and 8b

Most of the rest of the manuscript book is devoted to experimentation on section 6. There are three main versions, each combining the themes in different ways and each illustrating a move towards a more explicitly contrapuntal setting.

Ex. 9a

Ex. 9b
As far as section 5 is concerned there is little evidence of sketching prior to draft X (50362 ff. 2r-8v). Even then, most of the thematic material is already in place and, other than some large scale harmonic uncertainties, the section is similar to the version used in the final result. Only 'Bathe me O God in thee' caused real difficulty. This had already been sketched once previously.

Here in draft X the passage is revised twice; the second time is labelled, 'or this way'.

Still not content, Vaughan Williams altered this once again in draft Y. The hymn-like atmosphere common to previous versions is eschewed in favour of a more dynamic coupling of the 'O we can wait no longer' theme and a theme taken from the first movement ('See, the steamers' b.17).
In the final result this cyclic cross-reference is removed and the 'O we can wait no longer' theme is stated alone. A familiar landmark amongst an outpouring of thematic material, the reintroduction of this theme strengthens the overall structure of part 2. It is ironic that the process of moving away from controlled form illustrated in part 1 is reversed here with a solution that is both simple and accessible.

The genesis of section 6 is more complicated. The first substantial version is set out in draft X. It is closely related to the second of the sketches in 50361G (ff. 7r). Although the opening theme is not used in the final result, the theme which takes its place is stated after several bars.

This is followed by a passage which is unfamiliar both musically and textually. In the final result, section 6 uses the following text:

O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them.

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O Soul, thou actual me,
And Io, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swell est full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O Soul thou journeyest forth;

Here in draft X the whole of the second and third verses are replaced by just two lines, although as the draft is incomplete, it is impossible to be certain how much more text might have been included.

O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them.

Thou pulse - thou motive of the stars, suns systems,
That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious...

The music is based upon the principal theme of section 5, now treated in a more declamatory manner.
In preliminary draft Y, section 6 is different yet again. The text used previously is replaced in its entirety by the following colourful lines.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth;
Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far flights?
O soul, voyagest thou indeed on voyages like those?
Then have thy bent unleash’d.

Musically, the new version is based on an extension of the first passage in draft X. The theme is used sequentially and in imitative counterpoint without restraint.

This is repeated almost exactly in draft Y. The version incorporated in the 1909 vocal score, which begins with a direct quotation from the principal theme of the first movement, is only reached in draft Z. Even then, Vaughan Williams was not fully happy with the passage. In the revised 1918 vocal score he included an optional cut of all but ten bars of the section. This was one of the most problematic areas of the symphony, although it is difficult to be certain why. It is true that the subject matter - transcendence - places a heavy weight on the composer. Vaughan Williams seems uncertain whether to concentrate on the lyrical ‘O we can wait no longer’ theme or the typically fugue subject-like ‘O Thou transcendent’ theme. Perhaps he sensed that the earth-bound harmonics employed in all the various versions were not ideal. The solution to a similar problem in a previous piece, Toward the Unknown Region, takes the form of an unequivocally diatonic Edwardian march.

However, Vaughan Williams is unwilling to do likewise in ‘The Explorers’, but equally unable to find a satisfactory replacement. His musical palette, perhaps, was not yet varied enough.

The remaining three sections of the final result were not even sketched until after the completion of draft X. Among the incipient notes is a sketch entitled, ‘part of reckless O soul’, (i.e. section 8). Here, once again, the principal theme of the first movement is set out. It is treated sequentially and builds up to a phrase utilising a distant ancestor of the folk-like theme used in section 7 of the final result. These ideas are further elaborated in 50362H. Here, section 8 begins to look more familiar. A sketch entitled ‘Sail Forth’ sets out two versions, the second written directly on top of the first. Consequently it is difficult to disentangle them, but nevertheless it is apparent that the folk-like theme is no longer included. The second version is similar to the final result, but the first makes use of different thematic material.

The first real sketch of section 7 is seen in 50361H (ff. 8v-12v). Although the actual thematic material is different from the final result, its vigorous character is clearly established.
These ideas are put together for the first time in preliminary draft Y (50362K). The previous version of section 7 (50361H ft, 8v-12v) is rewritten in vocal score and then followed by section 8. This is maintained in all subsequent drafts prior to the first proofs (50364). Only then is the thematic material of section 7 altered to include the theme used in the final result.

It seems, therefore, that Vaughan Williams initially intended to follow section 6 with material derived from the first movement. The decision to remove this is in line with a number of other revisions designed to exclude cyclical references. In the final result, the only such reference allowed to remain is the orchestral passage which divides part 1 and part 2 (section 4: bb. 213-239).

By now it should be clear that the vast amount of sketching entailed a Herculean effort on Vaughan Williams’s part. The scope of this study is limited to an examination only of those passages which were subject to most radical revision. A more comprehensive examination of the preliminary material is impossible and inappropriate here. As previously noted, the difficulties inherent in this type of study make it imperative that any inferences be treated with hesitancy. Nevertheless it is possible to draw several general conclusions about Vaughan Williams’s method of revision.

Initially he seems to have been thinking in terms of a cyclic symphony. The outer movements were both to begin in the same key (D major) and there was to be a substantial amount of shared thematic material. It may even be that he was thinking specifically of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony, which begins similarly with a fanfare motif and makes some use of thematic cross-referencing between movements. However, as the sketching progressed Vaughan Williams backed away from this. The thematic cross-references are gradually exorcised and the music gradually moves away from conventional formal procedures.

In one sense he encountered opposite problems in each part of the movement. In the first part he struggled to fit the musical material into predetermined formal structures. Perhaps finding this increasingly limiting, he is more concerned in the second part with enlarging musical ideas to create more free-flowing musical thought. At the simplest level it seems that he considered two possible models. The academically respectable fuge and other tradition methods of thematic transformation demonstrated in many sketches would have been very familiar to contemporary English choral festival audiences. Conversely, there are clearly also attempts to develop music embed with Wagnerian ideals of a more free structure dictated by constant melody. In a way, the final result ended up as both of these simultaneously, possibly one of the reasons for subsequent criticism.

Although great care is needed, it is also possible to hazard more personal conclusions about the composer himself. The work is an ambitious undertaking, the first completely choral symphony ever written, and over an hour in length to boot. In addition, the text is thought-provoking. Lines such as, ‘Finally shall come the poet worthy that name, The true son of God shall come singing his songs’ have particular resonance. Clearly Vaughan Williams was concerned to make a grand gesture. The sketches indicate that he was continually searching for ways of extending thematic material in order to support the huge structure and allow the scope of his ambition to be realised. They also seem to reflect the different demands he placed upon himself.

On the one hand A Sea Symphony seems to be a bid for recognition; it was designed to appeal to his tutors, particularly Stanford, and other elder members of the musical establishment. On the other, it is a bid for leadership which depended on a more tricky blend of originality and popular stylistic reference: thus, in part, the Wagnerian touches. The conflict between these elements is repeatedly glimpsed in the preliminary material: a fascinating struggle between genuine impulse, technical difficulty and political maneuvering.

### Table (A)

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Andrew Herbert – University of Birmingham

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3 Witness also ‘A Song for all seas, all ships’ where much of the fuge ‘Token of all brave captains’ is directly lifted from the communion scene towards the end of Act I of Parsifal.
My newspaper work in Manchester in 1958 involved my working until the early hours of the morning. So I was asleep at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday 26 August when a friend telephoned to tell me, on Ursula’s behalf, that Ralph Vaughan Williams was dead. I can still feel the shock and disbelief. He was, I had to remind myself, nearing 86 and telephoned to tell me, on Ursula’s behalf, had all been together at Cheltenham in July and had a wonderful late night dinner party at the Barbrollis’ hotel in the hills outside the town when Ralph was in tremendous health and space and death’.

The opening of the music to be played and sung at the funeral service for Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams in Westminster Abbey on September 19 were announced yesterday by the Chapter Office of the Abbey. Dr. Vaughan Williams has been cremated and his ashes are to lie in the north aisle of the Abbey.

The music has been planned in accordance with his known desires. He had often expressed the wish that at his funeral the anthem might be the setting of ‘Lord, let me know mine end’ by Maurice Greene (1669-1735), organist of the Chapel Royal and St. Paul’s Cathedral, that Psalm 104 should be sung to the chant by Lord Mornington and that the organ voluntary might be the Bach Fugue in E flat.

These works will all be included with three of Dr. Vaughan Williams’s own compositions—the hymn “Come down, O love divine.” from the English Hymnal (of which he was musical editor) sung to the tune “Down Ampney”; the short anthem “O taste and see,” composed for the Coronation service in 1953; and the Coronation version of the “Old Hundredth.” The Abbey choir, directed by Sir William McKie, will sing the church parts.

Before the service there will be a “commemoration in music.” Bach’s concertos for two violins (soloists, Frederick Grinke and David Martin) and “The Pavane of the Sons of the Morning,” from Job will be played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

At the end of the service the orchestra will also play the “Old Hundredth,” in which they will be accompanied by trumpeters from the Royal Military School of Music, Finchley, under their director of music, Lieutenant-Colonel David McNair.

The following telegram has been received by the Secretary for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. from officers of the Union of Soviet Composers: “We are deeply grieved to hear of the death of this outstanding representative of modern music and great English composer, Vaughan Williams, and we extend our sympathy to his family.” It is signed by Khrennikov, chairman; Shostakovich, chabakov, Kabalevsky, Naxvav, Shapurin, and Aksyuk.

(An article from early September, 1958)
irritating, especially after On the Beach at Night Alone, but indicative of huge enjoyment and appreciation. Appropriately the proceeds went to the RNLI.

Simon Coombs
Swindon

MASS IN G MINOR

On Saturday 31st January the South West Chamber Choir gave a concert at St. Germans Church Cornwall. The two principal works of the concert were VW’s Mass in G Minor and Rutter’s Requiem.

The church at St. Germans is situated on a hillside leading down to the broad estuary of the River Lynher (a tributary of the Tamar). This proved to be yet another example of ‘The Cornish’ selecting an atmospheric location at which to play VW (last year’s example being The Pilgrim’s Progress at St. Endellion).

The Church itself is situated on the site of Cornwall’s first cathedral which was established here in Saxon times and considerably pre-dates Truro cathedral which wasn’t built until the 1870’s.

The concert began with a series of short opening pieces by Glinka, Arensky, Tchaikovsky, Strainskiy and Rachmaninov followed by an organ work by Karg-Elert.

The choir - which numbers only 32 - launched into the VW with considerable gusto. With vigorous directing from Michael Johnson they gave a crisp and energetic account of the Mass which was enhanced by the church’s clear and precise acoustic. The Gloria in particular made a considerable impression as the choir attacked the more boisterous passages with considerable aplomb. The quieter sections too made an impression and from time to time as the soloists reached for the skies - as it were - I could feel, a double sensation; the back of my neck began to tingle as did my feet.

Now, I have to admit that the Rutter Requiem was given a particularly sympathetic performance and during this the tingle in my feet increased considerably. However, I must report that this was not so much due to the music as the lack of heating in the church on a chill January night. Indeed by the end of the concert the rousing applause might be attributed not only to the music but to the audience making a desperate attempt to bring the circulation back to their freezing fingers.

In conclusion - any hypothermia apart - the South West Chamber Choir made a fine impression particularly in the realms of clarity and accuracy. I’ll look forward to seeing them again in May when they are due - amongst other pieces - to play Three Shakespeare Songs at the Wharf in Tavistock, which boasts the added luxury of a heating system.

Rob Furneaux
Yelverton, Devon

A Recital of English Song
“A Little Set of Gems”

A Recital of English Song presented by Nora Sirbaugh, mezzo-soprano and Roger Buckley, piano, was a true delight. The concert hall in the Music building of the College of New Jersey provided an ideal setting for the recital, 21 February 1998.

Nora Sirbaugh and Roger Buckley worked very well together with an excellent sense of balance and ensemble that made for a solid and completely satisfying performance. Ms Sirbaugh’s beautiful voice is well suited to this music and her comments preceding the works were both enlightening and entertaining. Mr Buckley played effortlessly through a varied range of accompaniment styles, and was always solid and appropriately strong where the music required.

The music was all very beautiful, and arranged into a programme that was engaging. Works by Butterworth, Delius, Quilter and RVW were featured. The Delius works Four Posthumous Songs and Shakuntala were captivating and a surprise as they are not “obviously” Delian, as in the style of his more popular works.

Four Last Songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams on poems by Ursula Vaughan Williams is a wonderful collection of songs. They include: Procris, Tired, Hands, Eyes, and Heart, and Mendelas. These feature RVW’s great melodic gifts and his ability to set words so naturally and effectively, making the English language really sing. He matches the beauty and lyricism of the words in a touching way, making these songs a little set of gems.

It was a real treat to hear such wonderful, yet uncommon, works of the repertoire performed so beautifully. It made one wonder why they are not heard more often and to hope that these works will be discovered and re-discovered. By the enthusiastic reaction of the audience I feel that Ms Sirbaugh and Mr Buckley have done their part, quite admirably, to make this come to pass.

Frank James Staneck
Collingswood, New Jersey, USA
24 April 1998

Knoxville: Summer of 1915 by Samuel Barber

Barber had already shown his lyrical qualities when composing Dover Beach (1931), the poignant Adagio for strings (1937) and the warmly romantic Violin Concerto (1939). In 1947 the American soprano, Eleanor Steber, asked the composer for a work for voice and orchestra. In response, Barber turned to a text by the writer and critic, James Agee (1909-55) called Knoxville: Summer of 1915. This prose-poem describes Agee’s childhood in Knoxville, Tennessee. “The text moved me very much” wrote Barber on 15 April, 1947:

“It expresses a child’s feeling of loneliness, wonder, and lack of identity in that marginal world between twilight and sleep”.

Barber described his work as a ‘lyric rhapsody’. He composed it in a few days – his musical response to the poem was “immediate and intense”, and Barber’s obvious identification with the spirit and mood of the poem is clear.

The work was first performed by Eleanor Steber, with Koussevitzky conducting, on 9th of April, 1948. It is in one movement. The work is dominated by a memorable, lifting melody heard at the opening to the words:

It has become that time of evening when people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently……

It is a wonderfully tender opening, especially when the strings pick up the wistful refrain. A streetcar racial by provides Barber with an opportunity for a more agitated section before the gentle mood returns. The poem, and music, becomes more nostalgic as the child considers the people around him:

(continued from previous page)
I first came to know VW’s music, like many others, through the Greensleeves Fantasia. I was 11 in August 1958 when I heard the news of his death on the radio, but it was another six years before the radio brought me the first real revelation of his music, a performance of the Sea Symphony which I recorded on tape and replayed over and over again.

After that, there was no stopping me. All the symphonies were explored and then new discoveries like the New World were made on me as a choirboy in Tonbridge Parish Church. I “did” RVW’s Fantasia on Christmas Carols for O-level, and sang the alto part in the school concert because my voice was resolutely refusing to break at 16. After reading physics at Durham, I realised that the Nobel prize was not for me, so pursued a financial career. While qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in Newcastle, I was organist and choirmaster at a little church in Durham. I am probably the only organist never to have got round to playing Rhapsymede. The vicar’s wife preferred a guitar accompaniment, and the day job just went on getting better.

Returning South with my wife, Jane (a linguist), I carried on singing tenor until forced to start an accountancy practice of my own. The firm has expanded over the last ten years, and I am particularly proud of the professional association with City of London Sinfonia, a significant audit client. Entirely predictable obsessions with cheerful ties, pastiche hymns and daft limericks have not prevented the production of two beautiful daughters and a hamster who helps mum care for me in Lamberhurst.

Thanks to the likes of Brian Couzens and Ted Perry, we now have access to more than a third of VW’s output. Thanks to the efforts of Stephen Connock, the list of recorded works looks set to grow over the next few years. The enthusiastic audiences for the Vision of Albion series last year clearly showed that there is an appetite for far more VW than is as yet on offer, but Richard Hickox is only one of several champions who can be relied upon to push back the frontiers.

I can’t living for thirteen years with British Telecom and for fourteen as a Member of Parliament, and am now helping to establish the new Institute of Customer Service. Music has been interwoven with every aspect of my life (CD players in the car and most rooms of the house and as many concerts as the budget will allow) and acts as the necessary counter-poise to the storms and shot of politics. We are all of us fortunate to be living at a time when more music than ever is more readily available than ever before – here’s to yet more!

My recommended recording of Knoxville: Summer of 1915 is by Roberta Alexander with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra on Ectetra KTC 1145. This CD also includes another radiant setting by Barber of a James Agee poem Sure on this shining night. It is quite beautiful. As the Americans might say: Enjoy.

Stephen Connock
Colchester

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Stephen Connock
Colchester

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1998 AGM at Charterhouse

The RVW Society’s next Annual General Meeting will be held at Charterhouse School, near Godalming, on Sunday, 11th October, 1998.

As a result of many requests from members, the AGM will be preceded by a conducted tour led by Graham Muncey of the Vaughan Williams heritage trail in and around Dorking. After the AGM itself, Robin Wells, Head of Music at Charterhouse, and a Trustee of the Society, will speak on VW and Charterhouse.

This promises to be a memorable occasion, and all members are urged to attend. The full programme is as follows:

12.00 Depart from Charterhouse School for the VW Heritage Trail
15.00 Tea at Charterhouse
15.30 Annual General Meeting
16.15 Vaughan Williams and Charterhouse. An illustrated talk by Robin Wells with musical examples
17.15 Conclusion and light refreshments

There will be a charge of £12.50 for the Heritage Trail, which will include transport and lunch.

The 1997-98 Annual Report, together with the accounts, will be sent to members directly in early September.

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I have recently joined the RVW Society, and I have read the latest issues of the Journal with some coverage in future of two matters:

1. RVW's early orchestral works, including Harnham Down, Boldre Wood, the Norfolk Rhapsodies 2 & 3, The Solent and the Heroic Elegy and Triumphal Epilogue. Are these works extant, what are they like and what are the chances of hearing them recorded?

2. The influence of Stanford on RVW. It seems to me that Stanford's importance both as a composer and as the teacher of most of the distinguished composers of the next generation is not fully appreciated even now.

I do hope you will be able to deal with these questions in future issues of the journal.

Tony Hutt
London

(These are good ideas, and will all be incorporated in future issues of the Journal – Editor)

Extraordinary

Is it not extraordinary that the programme for this year's Three Choirs Festival includes not a single work by Vaughan Williams?

Is it not equally extraordinary that the Delius, Elgar, Bantock, Finzi and Gurney Societies are all holding receptions at the Festival but the Vaughan Williams Society is not?

Stephen Friar
Sherborne

The Chairman replies:

I was saddened by your letter of 13th March.

As you know, the RVW Society has just completed the Vision of Albion Festival which included professional performances of all five of Vaughan Williams's operas, including the LSO in The Poisoned Kiss and in A Costwold Romance, and the forces of the Royal Opera in Pilgrim's Progress. We planned the event, marketed it throughout the UK, wrote the programme notes and contacted individually over 100 newspapers. The Festival received some excellent press coverage. We also raised over £100,000 to enable the operas to be performed.

We have also concentrated on recordings of VW, and are proud of the Chandos recording of The Pilgrim's Progress due out in the Spring. We had to raise another £20,000 for this, which we did with only hours to go before the recording deadline. We have also been behind recordings of A Costwold Romance, The Death of Tintagiles, Household Music, works for violin and piano as well as the Hymns and Carols on Carlton.

Your implied criticism suggests this national activity is not enough for you. There are few of us, and we have jobs to do and lives to lead. Perhaps you will seek election as a Trustee and then be able to offer practical help. In any event, I will publish your letter and my reply in the next issue of the Journal and invite all members to comment on our past and future priorities.

Stephen Connock
Colchester

Composers and children

Like Stephen Banfield (RVWSJ 10) I have often wondered why RVW and Adeline never had children. It was once said of Haydn that, of all the great composers, he would have made the best father but sadly (in his case due to his unsatisfactory marriage) this did not occur. I should imagine that RVW would also have been a natural as a father, unlike many great composers.

It is odd that of the 7 major 20th-century English composers (I would add Tippett to those – Elgar, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Walton and Britten – whom Michael Kennedy in his anniversary tribute placed in the "first team") none have surviving descendants – unless Tasmin Little's Florida quest for African-American Deliusse is confirmed! Two of the seven were gay; all the others married. Elgar and Holst had one daughter each, but no progeny from them.

Tony Noakes
Stannmore

Hymn of Jesus

I read with interest the two articles assessing the work of Gustav Holst in issue 11 of the Journal, but was surprised to find no mention at all of what I consider to be one of this composer's finest works, the Hymn of Jesus.

I discovered this piece by chance when I borrowed the LP from the local record library. I soon got my own copy and for some time it was seldom off the turntable.

It was Hymn of Jesus that had a dramatic effect on our cat Toby (sadly long deceased). He was snoozing peacefully in front of one of the speakers during the quiet plainsong at the start of the work. As you may be aware, this section ends with a loud orchestral tutti. At the sound of this, poor Toby was startled out of his slumber, woke up, and shot out of the room!

On the slender pretext that RVW was also a cat lover, I can reveal that the selfsame moggy fell asleep in front of the TV during a western film, only to awake suddenly to find a herd of buffalo charging towards him. The effect was even more dramatic than that of the Hymn of Jesus!

Michael Gainsford
Barbage, Leics.

Lack of Patriotism

I am enclosing for your attention a copy of a letter that I recently sent to the editor of BBC Music Magazine relating to another correspondent who referred to the lack of patriotism displayed during the presentation concert for the European Broadcasting Union Celebrations on Radio 3 recently. While other countries offered their own music apparently the BBC offered Mahler!

As I am becoming totally fed up with those who prepare our concert schedules and particularly those who organise the Promenade Concerts these days and so I felt moved to reply in the attached terms. I feel pretty sure that you would agree with my sentiments.

I anticipate that the editor will not publish my outburst, but you never know!

Best wishes in all your efforts to further the performances of Vaughan Williams's works in the immediate future.

Incidentally you may be interested to know that I first saw RVW when he conducted the Double Partita at the Promenade Concert of 29th July 1948, and last saw him when my then fiancée and I saw Sir John in Love at Sadler's Wells on 29th July 1958. We were also at the RFH for the appalling first performance of the Ninth Symphony. Earlier I had been able to procure a ticket for the 80th birthday celebrations for RVW at the Festival Hall in 1952. Surely it was not surprising therefore that at a later date we both became parents for the first time on October 12th 1966!!

John Tebbit
Slough

Lack of British music

I am thankful that Martin Yates of Retford felt moved to write last month concerning the failure of many of our concert promoters to feature British music. During the twentieth century the composers of Britain have proved themselves at least the equal of others, and yet the attitudes generally adopted by those who organise concerts and international events display little in the way of patriotism. Take the case of the Symphonies of Vaughan Williams for instance. The current record catalogues offer two complete cycles by Sir Adrian Boult, and one each by Leonard Slatkin, André Previn, Vernon Handley and...
Andrew Davis and Bernard Haitink, Andre Previn again and Kees Bakels are gradually adding further complete recordings. A new complete cycle from Richard Hickox is reported to be on its way and I believe that this will surprisingly put RVW ahead in the complete symphonic survey of Bruckner, Mahler, Sibelius, Dvorak, Shostakovich, Schubert and Nielsen in the field of recording. Sadly this enthusiasm is not transformed into the concert hall where the music of Vaughan Williams makes only a fairly rare appearance in the programmes of our leading orchestras despite the fact that his works in general are best sellers in the record shops throughout Britain. Internationally too he has become highly regarded as the list of interpreters shown above would seem to confirm.

During recent times the Promenade Concert schedules have seen a reduction in the performances of great works by British composers with the possible exception perhaps of Elgar and Britten. Only one symphony by Vaughan Williams, No 6, was performed in 1997, how different from those days when there would be at least two or three during the season before William Glock arrived on the scene!

In championing other British music the ‘Proms’ could, for instance, provide the ideal venue for a performance of Bax’s Second Symphony, something that would make an admirable foil for Saint Saens’s Third as both works require piano and organ. Sadly I have never heard the magnificent Bax 2 performed live in my lifetime. Another fine symphony that would suit the RAH organ is Stanfords Fifth. Similarly the chances of this being performed under the current regime must be considered remote.

During my youth when attending the ‘Proms’ we could expect performances of the Ireland Piano Concerto, Lord Berners Triumph of Neptune, Holst’s Hymn of Jesus, the piano concertos of concertos of Alan Rawsthorne, Peter Racine Fricker’s symphonies and Lambert’s Rio Grande as well as many other works by British composers.

The BBC Promenade Concerts are considered the greatest of all music festivals by those who prepare the programmes and so surely it is time for the organisers to create greater sense of pride in native music by increasing the proportion of performances of works by home grown composers.

The ridiculous statement ‘Das land ohne musik’ related to Victorian times and not the twentieth century so now it’s time for an urgent reassessment of the situation by those who organise our musical experiences in this country.

John Tebbit
Stough

Sir Gilmour Jenkins

Finding myself with occasion to write you on behalf of the Essex Journal, it occurred to me that I might send you a short tale which may or may not be unknown to the Vaughan Williams Society. I heard it as fairly authoritative office gossip, but you might have received it from the ‘horse’s mouth’.

In the mid 1950’s I was working in the Ministry of Transport, and the then Permanent Secretary was Sir Gilmour Jenkins, an informed enthusiast for folk songs and country dancing and, we understood, a close friend of RVW. A Christmas concert was arranged, and one event was to be a take-off of Jenkins, with someone dressed like him cavorting round with others to the music of Sullivan’s Ho, Jolly Jenkins. Sir Gilmour heard of this and - though normally by no means a pompous or self-important man - saw fit to insist that it be deleted from the entertainment. But as a quid pro quo he obtained from Vaughan Williams a short piece of music, which was played by the Department’s makeshift orchestra.

Michael Beale Chelmsford

(see the obituary of RVW by Sir Gilmour Jenkins on page 7).

Spirits refreshed

The recent arrival of your excellent Journal has reminded me that I had meant to share the following experience with you, as I thought it might be of some small interest.

At the beginning of December last year my wife and I took a detour on our way home from a weekend in the Cotswolds to see Down Ampney, our long-awaited first visit to the birthplace of the great composer. It was dark and misty, even in the middle of the day, and pouring with rain. Consequently, the journey to this remote spot was through the rather featureless, though attractive, countryside seemed endless, and it was welcoming to see the new road-sign (as pictured on the back of your last Journal).

However, we arrived eventually to find a scene of great peace and tranquillity, where the only sound was that of the falling rain. We let ourselves into the empty church and it was delightful to appreciate it in peace and quiet and at our leisure. By then the light was just adequate enough to make out the small collection of RVW memorabilia situated near the altar, which was most interesting to look at. I was also more than delighted to find from the church record book that that day, 1st December, which also happened to be my own 50th birthday, was the 125th anniversary of RVW’s baptism in that church. That made me feel very close to him and as the light faded, with his music flooding our minds, we let ourselves out into the late autumn afternoon with spirits refreshed.

Richard Boyd
London
• The new Chandos recording of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is now available on Chandos 9625-2.

• *A Cotswold Romance* and the *Death of Tintagiles*, recorded for Chandos by Richard Hickox and the LSO, will be distributed in August 1998.

• Funding is urgently sought for a new recording of *Sir John in Love*, using the same forces as that heard at the Barbican in the recent *Vision of Albion* Festival. More details will be provided in the October edition of the Journal.

• The Prelude and Fugue in C minor will be one of the couplings to the new recording by the LSO/Hickox of the Fifth Symphony. This will be only the second recording of the orchestral version of this work.

• Richard Hickox has also recorded, at the request of the RVW Society, world premiere recordings of The Twenty-third Psalm and The Pilgrim's Pavement, coupled with Valiant-for-Truth.

• Five Mystical Songs will be performed at Henleaze United Reformed Church on 11th July at 7.30 p.m. For details, contact 01454 776503.

The October 1998 edition of the RVWS Journal will be devoted to folk-song. Any member who wishes to contribute - on a particular folk-song or on the impact of folk music on VW's style for example - should submit an article by August 20th.

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**New RVW Society rates agreed at 1997 AGM**

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**Next Edition: October 1998**

**VW and Folk-song**

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