



Journal of the RVW Society

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EDITOR

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(see address below)*

DRAWING NEAR TO RVW AT CHARTERHOUSE

The International Vaughan Williams Symposium held at Charterhouse, Godalming, Surrey (England) from 23-29 July had the atmosphere of a musical family gathering. The week was a wonderful balance of research reports by the RVW Fellows and guest lecturers, performances of RVW's music, and bus trips by which we could further trace the footsteps of VW's life. In addition the symposium community had the opportunity in informal settings to ask questions and share their knowledge and opinions about the composer's energetic life, sterling character, and great music. This event was cordially and efficiently managed by Robin Wells, Director of Music at Charterhouse, and Byron Adams, Professor of Composition and Musicology at the University of California at Riverside. Various other assistants unknown to me by name kept things running smoothly.

Lectures

All of these interesting and informative presentations were given either by American RVW Research Fellows or by distinguished British guests lecturers who were particularly close to various areas of RVW's life and work. The Fellows were recipients of grants awarded by "the Carthusian Trust, in recognition of help received from the RVW Trust (establishing) the RVW U.S Research Fellowship." (Robin Wells, *Journal of the RVW Society*, No. 6 June, 1996.) This gracious gesture to American RVW scholarship began in 1985 and continues through the present. The series of lectures began with the Keynote Address by Byron Adams who posed the question, "Why Vaughan Williams at this point in time here at Charterhouse?" After many interesting comments, he came back to the question and gave a personal answer, "...because I believe RVW is one of the greatest composers not only of the twentieth century, but of all time".

The series of eleven papers by the RVW Fellows were of high quality and were supplemented by illustrative hand-outs, overhead projections, films, and recorded musical examples. Since a list of presenters and their topics appeared with the previous journal (June, 2000), only changes in topics or personnel will be mentioned here plus other unlisted highlights. Byron Adams' topic, *RVW and Elgar* was replaced by his Keynote Address. Julian Onderdonk was unable to be present so Deborah Heckert spoke on *The Musical Past Perfect: Vaughan Williams, Nationalism and Nostalgia in the Masque*. (see page 4) Following this Robin Wells presented a recording of VW's *Masque* of Charterhouse, 1950. Another valuable event which followed Daniel Goldmark's paper was the showing of the 90 minute film, *The Loves of Joanna Godden*, 1947.

The guest lecturers had a unique quality usually because of the presenter's biographical proximity to their subject matter. Alain Frogley's topic was changed to *Vaughan Williams, German Music and the Hamburg Shakespeare Prize*. John Huntley's lively first hand account of VW's work as a film composer included the film, *Dim Little Island*, 1949 where the voice of RVW was heard by some of us for the first time!

Related to the above individual presentations were two panel discussions. The first on VW and Analysis consisted of panel members: Murray Dineen, Lionel Pike, Mark McFarland, and Andrew Herbert. The second, on Vaughan Williams, Culture and Society included Deborah Heckert, Renee Clark, Charles McGuire, and Duncan Kennel. Both sessions were moderated by Byron Adams. Questions, comments and lively discussions supplemented all the lectures and these two panels.

Excursions

Very enjoyable bus trips on Monday afternoon and Wednesday were led by Robin Wells and Byron Adams. On Monday we saw Leith Hill Place, Coldharbour Church, Dorking Halls, and the Surrey Performing Arts Library with its RVW collection of scores, books, recordings, and displays. On Wednesday we went to Down Ampney and saw the Old Vicarage, All Saints Church and then Cheltenham's Holst Birthplace and Museum. These gave us a magical sense of earlier times and places!

Performances

This week was rich in live performances ranging from "Ca' the yowes," to the Allegro from *Symphony No 6*. Thursday afternoon was graced by the warm and responsive presence of Ursula Vaughan Williams who joined our audience to hear Robin Moorish and the Chamber Orchestra play *The Lark Ascending*. Friday we heard the *Concerto Grosso* ably played by amateurs, the type of musicians for whom VW composed the work. The final choral and orchestral concert and event of the week was an all Vaughan Williams programme: *Flos Campi*, with Martin Outram violist, conducted by Ian Humphris; *Serenade to Music* conducted by John Huw Davies; and *Toward the Unknown Region* conducted by Robin Wells. This brought the week to an inspiring close followed by warm farewells!

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The AGM is on 8th October at
Charterhouse*

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The RVW Symposium at Charterhouse School

23rd to 29th July 2000

by Linda Haywood

This special event took place alongside the annual Charterhouse Summer Music School. The Summer School owes its being to the foresight of Vaughan Williams when he helped set up a Summer Music Course in collaboration with the Surrey County Music Advisor, Norman Askew, in 1945. The course moved to Charterhouse School in 1975, being renamed in the process. To celebrate the Silver Jubilee, the special Symposium on the works of Ralph Vaughan Williams came into being. Throughout the week there were lectures, concerts, outings, discussions, and a workshop dealing with certain areas of RVW's vast output.

About twenty people came to hear the Vaughan Williams Research Fellows read their paper as well as guest lecturers on a variety of subjects. General titles included Vaughan Williams and Opera, Vaughan Williams and Song, Vaughan Williams and Dance, Vaughan Williams and his Community. Within these general categories, the lecturers looked at specific areas of VW's music. Lectures on "Octatonicism and Riders to the Sea" – a look at the specific harmonies used in the opera, and "Stevenson, Vaughan Williams and their Songs of Travel" – a comparison of the texts used by VW and the harmonies used in the songs, were just two examples.

Lewis Foreman, one of the guest lecturers, spoke about performances of VW's music, which were conducted or supervised by him. The speaker played some intriguing recordings to illustrate his lecture. Other guest lecturers were Stephen Connock who spoke about Vaughan Williams's response to poetry, and Alain Frogley, giving an insight into the Hamburg Shakespeare Prize, which was awarded to Vaughan Williams in 1938. Hugh Cobbe gave us the latest report on his work with VW's letters, and John Huntley spoke about RVW's film music.

From time to time there were musical interludes to break up the lectures. We heard four of the *Ten Blake Songs* for oboe and voice, two of the *Four Last Songs*, *The Vagabond* from *Songs of Travel* and part of the *Six Studies in Folksong*, played on the cor anglais, as part of these interludes. The advantage of being alongside the Charterhouse Summer School was that there were musicians willing and able to demonstrate music. The Maggini String Quartet was able to give a workshop on the two String Quartets by Vaughan Williams. They demonstrated parts of the movements and talked about the structure of them. The similarities and differences between classical string quartet structure and those employed by Vaughan Williams were pointed out and explored. The first quartet, being written in 1908, tended to follow the normal structure even having a minuet and trio, but the final rondo was not typical. It had a fugue-like

passacaglia passage. The second quartet was written in 1944 and had unusual titles for each movement – prelude, romance, scherzo, and epilogue. The key structure was discussed as well as the fact that some of the film music from *49th Parallel* was used in the scherzo. From the players point of view this movement was considered "a wicked one" to play. However, both quartets were very satisfying to perform, as Vaughan Williams always demanded "a ravishing sound" from his strings. This session was concluded with a rare performance of the *Phantasy Quintet* which was written for two violins, two violas, and a cello, in 1912.

The concerts were interspersed with material by Vaughan Williams. In fact the first one, given on the day of arrival, in the old school where RVW played one of his compositions while still a schoolboy, was wholly a RVW work. The programme included *Two Romances*, one for violin and piano and the other for viola and piano. Other music was the *Suite de Ballet* for flute and piano, one of the *Three Vocalises* for soprano and clarinet, two songs from *Along the Field* and three movements from the *Charterhouse Suite* which was arranged for wind ensemble and played by the Aurora Wind Quintet. All the musicians were tutors from the Summer School. The Maggini String Quartet gave a performance of *On Wenlock Edge* at their concert, when the tenor was Wynford Evans. The programme included music by Schubert and Haydn's *String Quartet No 2* in E flat major. Later in the week, the Summer School musicians gave performances. These included the first movement of the *Concerto Grosso*, the first movement of the *Oboe Concerto*, *The Lark Ascending*, the first movement of the *6th Symphony in E minor* and

a performance of the *Three Shakespeare Songs*. The final concert took place in chapel involving choirs and orchestra. The programme consisted of *Flos Campi*, *Serenade to Music* and *Towards the Unknown Region*. At the beginning of the concert there was an extra item which was a short organ work by J.S. Bach whose death had occurred 250 years previously at the exact time that the concert was due to start. This concert was very special, being the culmination of all the hard work of the students on the course, and a fitting end to the week. Singing members of the symposium were invited to attend the rehearsals and take part in this final concert. A number of the students and professors did so.

There were two outings – an RVW heritage trail ending up at the new home of the Performing Arts Library in Dorking, and a visit to Down Ampney and the Holst Birthplace Museum in Cheltenham. The vicar met us in Down Ampney and spoke about the Old Vicarage where RVW was born. We then went to the church where he told us about its history. We had an impromptu sing of *Come Down O Love Divine* to RVW's famous tune *Down Ampney* complete with organ accompaniment. I found this very moving, as it was completely unexpected. We then went on to a guided tour of Holst's birthplace.

A special occasion was the visit of Ursula Vaughan Williams on Thursday afternoon, when she attended a concert and met those on the symposium.

For me, the week was absolutely wonderful. Being in "RVW land" and for a whole week was an experience to be savoured! I enjoyed all of it, particularly the opportunity of hearing so much of his music, listening to lectures, making friends and discussing the day's events with them. I found that it only served to make me love RVW's music more. It gave me a deeper understanding of it, and I made notes to listen to certain works with fresh ears. The only problem is WHERE WERE YOU! You missed a real treat! I hope there will be another one sometime – please.....



Participants at Charterhouse, including Ursula Vaughan Williams and Byron Adams (front row)

Uncle Ralph's Matthew

As a postscript to the last Journal's focus on VW and J.S. Bach, Sir Roger Norrington reviews Vaughan Williams's interpretation of the *St Matthew Passion* now reissued on CD (Pearl GEMS 0079)



Sir Roger Norrington

This is a fascinating record of Vaughan Williams's last Dorking *Matthew Passion*. I feel strangely connected with this kind of performance, because it's exactly what I used to hear in Oxford as a boy. I never attended the Dorking series, but my wife was singing in the Ripieno Chorus. She says she was in tears all through the second half. When I was a student I sang and played the piece under Sir Thomas Armstrong, who conducted the Dorking

performance one week earlier. I also met Vaughan Williams several times and I knew all the soloists who took part.

It's amazing to hear it all again even though now of course it's rather a period piece. The feeling of the 'Conservative Party at Prayer' (perhaps I am being rather hard on the socialist Vaughan Williams), the genteel accents of the soloists, the giant rumble of the audience standing for the chorales and sitting again afterwards, the execrable coughing of a sick child, all give this performance an amazing life-like feel.

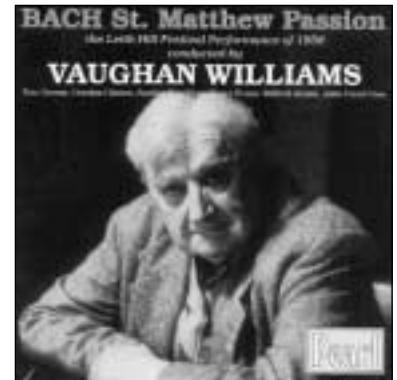
The emotional sincerity is overwhelming. And yet of course this heavily egged, subjective style was exactly what set me off on my quest for historical information and objectivity at almost the same moment as this recording was taped. What seems so strange now is not the savage cuts (only a handful of arias survive) the unprepared trills, the missing upwards appoggiaturas, and the screwball piano continue. Rather it's the extremely awkward tempo changes and the 'romanticisation' which make one's jaw drop. Because of course Bach's music is so extraordinarily romantic already that anything much extra simply overwhelms it.

This question of subjectivity versus objectivity is a constant consideration for performers. Of course the performance wants to be expressive

but if we are not careful we hear more about the performer than about the composer. We have all heard dreary, uninflected Bach. Vaughan Williams could never be called this, - not in a million miles. It is infinitely preferable to much Bach that we hear even today.

If I like my Bach a little cooler and a little more dancing than Vaughan Williams did, I can learn one crucial thing from this performance; that Vaughan Williams's own music should clearly be as passionate, and as pictorial, and as subjective as it can be. The man is writ large in this treasurable disk. It made me long to perform the Matthew again.

by Sir Roger Norrington



Early encounters with RVW

It is one of my lifelong regrets that I never actually met RVW; in fact I actually saw him only once. That was at Camden Town Hall, where a young and enthusiastic *ad hoc* company under (Sir) Colin Davis was putting on a programme that included Holst's *Savitri*, which I am sure was what drew him to the performance, with Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor* and Menotti's *The Telephone*. Characteristically, RVW was the centre of attraction during the intervals for a bevy of comely young women and was clearly enjoying the experience as well as the music - well, *Savitri*, anyway.

But in a more real sense, I had met him when I was about four or five years of age and encountered him on a number of other occasions after that. My father was a regular soldier and it was at an Armistice Day service in the Garrison Church at Woolwich that I first heard 'Sine Nomine'. There was something about the tune that inspired a different and much more powerful reaction from that engendered by any other music I had ever heard. After countless other hearings, some of them very sad personal associations, it still evokes that 'holy spectral shiver'. So does 'Down Ampney', which came later.

The LCC elementary school that gave me my first grounding in music was notable for an inspired and inspiring music teacher who was a Cecil Sharp/RVW enthusiast. On Friday afternoon we sang our way through all the old favourites: 'O, No John!', 'The Lawyer',

'High Barbary' and so on. But there was one tune that haunted me then and still does. It was 'I will give my Love an Apple'. The tune was collected, I found out much later, in my native county of Dorset by H E D Hammond and the arranger was - RVW.

At Christ's Hospital, too, we were fortunate to have two successive RVW enthusiasts as Directors of Music: C S ('Robin') Lang and Cecil Cochrane. It was with Lang that we studied the *Benedictus* from the set of canticles that RVW, unprompted, wrote specially for the school. We practised it for weeks on end, as we later did the *Te Deum* from the same set under Cochrane. Needless to say, 'Linden Lea' and the Famous Five Folk-songs featured in the repertoire of the school choir, through I didn't remember the Housey orchestra ever tackling anything more ambitious than the *English Folk Song Suite*. (One of our clarinet-playing masters had the nickname of 'Horse' and the finale was irreverently dubbed 'Concerto for Horse and Orchestra' by one of my friends.)

But it was in the army and at university that the real depth and power of RVW's music really took hold. The broadcast of the maiden performance of the Sixth Symphony was a revelation, even on a NAAFI wireless, while the opportunity to experience performances of *Sancta Civitas*, *Five Tudor Portraits* and above all, *The Pilgrim's Progress* established an unshakeable conviction that here was a composer who was not just for England, not just for the twentieth century, but for the world

and for all time. With very few exceptions, whether as listener or player, every work of his that I have encountered since, especially the symphonies and the operas, has simply reinforced that thrill first experienced as an impressionable child. Serge Koussevitzky was surely right when he told the London Philharmonic Orchestra not long after World War II: 'Vaughan Williams, he is really great. He will live.'

by James Day



'A Typically English Institution'

A Context for Vaughan Williams's Masques

by Deborah Heckert

The "masque" designation in the title of *Job*, a masque for dancing, is in many ways a puzzling one. The fact that the word appears in the title of the piece would suggest that Vaughan Williams felt it was an important aspect of the composition, but why this is so is not readily obvious either in the scenario, the form, or the music of this unique and idiosyncratic work. The generic term 'masque' is one which usually brings to mind 16th and 17th century court masques, such as those that entertained Elizabeth I on her many progresses around her kingdom, or others which potently combined intense symbolism and miraculous stage effects in productions crafted by the duo of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones at the courts of James I and Charles I. And there are, of course, the well-known masques from the semi-operas of Henry Purcell and John Dryden. Who could forget the marvelous Frost Scene masque in *King Alfred*? Though there are probably more differences than similarities among these works which, after all, span over 100 years of developing English music and drama, most masques from the 16th and 17th centuries consistently feature a mixture of spoken text, both solo and choral singing, miming and dancing, and include as well a hefty measure of spectacular scenery design and special effects provided by elaborate stage machinery. Most of these characteristics, excepting the miming and dancing of course, are not a feature of Vaughan Williams's *Job*, a masque for dancing. So, for clues to why Vaughan Williams gave the work this generic designation, we must look to ideology rather than to a formal historic precedent, to the future as well as to the past.

A hint of this ideology is contained in the following note scribbled on the margins of some sketches for the composer's ninth symphony.

'The masque is a typically English institution. We have never taken kindly to grand opera, delightful as an importation brought to the country by young noblemen on the Grand Tour and set up with all the [pomp] of Italian music and Italian composers and their sopranos and prima donnas as a fashionable entertainment. It has never and, I believe, never will endear itself to the heart of the people. They much prefer the ballad opera which is in a language they could understand...For masques the great poets of the land were pressed into service—witness Milton's *Comus* and Ben Jonson's *Pan's Anniversary*--- and the finest musicians'.

In this note, written some twenty-five years after the composition of *Job*, Vaughan Williams sets out some of the appeal the masque genre held for him. First, he emphasizes that the masque is an intrinsically English musical-dramatic form with roots in the so-called Tudor period, England's 'Golden Age'. For a composer who throughout his life encouraged English composers to seek to ground their work in the nationalistic bedrock, this was of the utmost importance. Second, Vaughan Williams characterizes the genre as one which typically combined the best in both music and poetry, perhaps an historical, English Gesamtkunstwerk, for Vaughan Williams was early on a Wagnerian, and Wagner's writings as well as his music had a profound impact on the developing young composer. Characteristically, Vaughan Williams moves beyond the simple historical facts to reach out to an almost universal social and moral obligation. He believes that this is what the English people characteristically want, not the

superficial lure of foreign entertainment, as with the introduction of Italian opera seria, but rather, comprehensible English words and music for an English people.

Despite the late date of this note, these were not new ideas for Vaughan Williams. Throughout his life, the masque was for him an ideologically-loaded genre, one among several. He returned to the masque, as well as to the related pageant, many times, most often working to provide a populist kind of musical experience for amateurs, but one that demeans neither the performers, the audience, nor national music. Over time, however, the genre also served as an outlet for his developing ideas about a national musical-dramatic dance form that had its roots in history and yet had the possibility for relevance in the modern world.

To understand Vaughan Williams' special



Cousins at Cambridge: Ralph ('Randolph') Wedgewood and RVW

relationship to the masque genre, it is necessary to understand the masque's recent past, to sketch a background against which the composer's masques stand out in relief. For despite our current view of the masque as a 16th and 17th century phenomenon, the masque was hardly a dead genre during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Masques continued to be written in the 1800's, both occasional masques celebrating various royal occasions - George Macfarren's *Freyra's Gift*, for example, written to celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1863 - and professional theatrical productions with romantic, historical subjects, such as Arthur Sullivan's *Kenilworth*. For Vaughan Williams and others of his generation the important change during the 19th century is the evolution of the overall connotation of the masque from being a current, up-to-date genre, to a genre that is historic, and often nostalgic, appropriate for occasions and subject matter where the connection to the past is to be emphasized.

It is hard to know to what extent Vaughan Williams knew of any of these 19th c. masques; probably none specifically. However, right around the time that Vaughan Williams was writing the music for his first masque, *Pan's Anniversary* in 1905, there was an explosion of interest in the masque, both in the rediscovery of its history and in new masque composition, currents of which the young composer could hardly be unaware and which offer a partial explanation for his clear knowledge of the genre early in his compositional career. The first stage in this masque revival were several productions of 17th c. masques, particularly of Purcell's masques organized as part of the tricentenary celebrations of Purcell's death in 1895, some of which we know, from Ursula Vaughan Williams' account, her husband either participated in or attended. These, coupled with writings and lectures by his RCM teacher Hubert Parry, must have early on sparked Vaughan Williams' interest in the masque genre. As well, despite important, earlier precedents, a more widespread access to the music of England's past became increasingly available during the years straddling the turn of the century. The first volumes of Arkwright's *Old English Editions* were masques - Milton and Lawes's *Comus* and Arne's *King Alfred*. And the context for much of this music began to be explored by music and literary historians, with several histories available to the public by the first years of the 20th century. These books debated two somewhat contradictory masque traditions - the masque as a Renaissance court entertainment, with its roots in the Italian intermedio and French ballet, or the masque as a folk tradition developing out of various kinds of disguisings and mummings and therefore much more intrinsically English. The Italian and French influence, given the evidence of descriptions and texts themselves, could not be denied, and this indeed is what is stressed in texts from the late 19th c. and beginning again in the 1930's. But almost all of the texts from the early years of the century discussing the masque contain large sections describing the folk traditions and

their connections to medieval and early Tudor entertainments, as the roots of the masque and as a rationale for its specifically English nature. This is probably the precedent for Vaughan Williams' belief that the masque was a specific English genre and that it somehow reflected a lost folk tradition, the two aspects of the masque upon which his ideological program for the masque, as for so many of his aspirations for a national music, seem to rest.

This scholarly attention on the genre is reflected in the large number of masques written in the first half of the 20th c. Most of these masques draw on a folk-type tradition, a rather vague concept whose only tangible and consistent aspect was some kind of a costumed procession, than on Elizabethan, Stuart, or Purcellian models that are much more specific in their form and content. These 20th century masques fall into several overlapping categories, defined by topic rather than form, some of which were already part of the masque tradition by the last years of the previous century, but in nowhere near such large numbers. These include patriotic masques, which by the first years of the 20th c. were becoming increasingly imperialistic, reflecting Britain's widespread overseas dominion through processions of conquered lands and people represented either through stereotypical or allegorical characters. One of the most commercially popular was Edward Elgar's *Crown of India*, whose professional production at the London Coliseum in 1912 made huge amounts of money for all concerned. There were masques that reflected the fairy tales and myths of the English countryside - elves, flower fairies, English-style nymphs, possibly hinting at Milton's *Comus*. These were often allied to pastoral subjects not concerned with the supernatural. Maydays, the advent of Spring, the turn of the seasons were all popular topics. These could be presented as some kind of timeless present, or could be specific evocations of England's "Golden Age", most usually the England of Elizabeth I, but occasionally a more distant, medieval past. The masques could present historical events or characters explicitly, in a kind of procession of history, and could include the pastimes of the common people thrown in for good measure. Sometimes a foreshadowing of England's imperial destiny was present as well. All of these categories or topics became increasingly linked in the rhetoric of the masque, and it becomes more and more difficult to separate out the independent threads as the masque movement gets underway. Instead there is the tapestry of all that England believed about herself during the first two decades of the 20th century.

It is difficult to extract a set of consistent characteristics for all of these varieties of masques, but a few very broad generalisations can be made. First, most of the masques presented a series of somewhat discrete tableaux organized around a change of scenery or a new central character around which the action for that tableau revolves. These tableaux

would involve a sequence of speeches, songs, and then one or two dances. Many of these masques had music mostly arranged from other sources, whether historical, folk, or popular, though many masques also had music newly-composed. And most depend on well-known symbolic, traditional or historical material, common knowledge for most of its audience. Not surprisingly, Vaughan Williams's masques differ from those of his contemporaries, reflecting the composer's much more focused program for the masque as one of the foundational genres of the new, English musical renaissance. First, and perhaps most importantly, all of his masques belong to the literary-historical axis of topics of the period, avoiding the markedly imperialistic rhetoric so strong in many masques and even avoiding any overt displays of patriotism or nationalist fervour. He also avoids any of the "twee" elements, flower fairies and the like, or the condescending type of moralising which appears in masques for both adults and children. Instead his masques more subtly evoke an Englishness through their content, both narrative and musical, rather than through any strong links to the subject matter which formed the bulk of early 20th century masques.



Stanley Judson as Elihu against the Blake-inspired décor

He began the exploration of the masque in 1905 with his first work for the stage, a setting of Ben Jonson's *Pan's Anniversary*, written with the collaboration of Gustave Holst for the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford-on-Avon. Vaughan Williams returned to the genre during the 1920's and 30's, with *On Christmas Night* (1926), *Job* (1930), *English Folk Dance Society Masque* (1935) and *Bridal Day* (1938). These five masques essentially divide themselves into two categories. The first group, works like *Pan's Anniversary* and the *EFDS Masque*, is allied to the composer's other offerings for amateur music making, especially pageants like the *London Pageant* (1911) and the *Pageant of*

Abinger (1934). Many of these were written for production by the English Folk Dance Society, some for their annual Christmas show. These grow out of his firmly-held beliefs that an artist needs to provide accessible works of art for the local and national community. This view is perhaps best expressed in his 1912 essay "Who wants the English Composer", where he writes "the composer must not shut himself up and think about art, he must live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community...." In this philosophy Vaughan Williams was reflecting the aims and goals of many of his friends and fellow workers in such organisations as the English Folk Dance Society, in their emphasis on the need for a social renewal of the English people through an encounter with their national roots via participation in various folk arts. These were all ideas that were intrinsically part of the educational outreach aspect of the EFDS with which the composer obviously sympathized. The masque as both an English art form and one which developed out of various folk traditions such as disguisings and mummer's plays was a natural candidate for amateur folksong and dance productions.

In the second category of masques, the works *Bridal Day*, the ballet masque *Old King Cole*, and *Job*, a masque for dancing, Vaughan Williams reached beyond the merely artistically functional and accessible to something more visionary and ideological, in line with his dreams and aspirations for a truly national English music. These too were ideas that the composer held in common with friends and fellow members of the EFDS, especially Cecil Sharpe. In 1919, both Sharpe and VW had contributed to an issue of the journal *The Music Student* devoted to folk dance. In their articles, both men expressed their wish that the public's fascination with continental ballet, as exemplified in all its decadent extremes by Diaghilev's *Ballets-Russes*, would be replaced by a love of English folk dancing. For both men, several aspects of folk dancing held obvious appeal – its national character, its ties with England's past, its use of natural movement (both men loathed the en pointe dancing of the prima ballerina), and its communal nature symbolized by the various non-hierarchical yet synchronized patterns of the folk dances themselves. Sharpe goes on to advocate that these aspects of folk dancing could valuably be extended to form a particularly English form of art dancing on stage, beyond strictly folk dancing.

Their aim, which, it must be confessed, is an ambitious one, is to rescue the Dance from the slough into which it has fallen in the course of the last two centuries and re-instate it as one of the fine arts; and the way in which they propose to effect this reformation is to do for the Dance what the Florentine reformers in similar circumstances did for Music 300 years ago, viz., to revert to the art of the folk and build afresh...

Ten years later, in the preface to his own



Blake's drawing of the Three Comforters, whose arm movements are closely reproduced in de Valois' choreography for Job.

Midsummer Night's Dream, he cites Vaughan Williams' *Old King Cole* as a first move in this direction.

The ideological aspects, then, that encouraged Vaughan Williams to make *Job* a masque rather than a ballet or other modernist dance work, are tied to just these principles, and offer an explanation for why the composer was so relieved that Diaghilev turned down his proposed dance work as "too English". It would have been a profound subversion of many deeply-held beliefs about dance, beyond just "overly-developed calf muscles" and his sour grapes joke about "seeing God at the Ballet-Russe". His beliefs about dance fundamentally influenced several key aspects of *Job*.

So we return to the question of what, for Vaughan Williams, is masque-like about *Job*. Several basic connections are to the subject matter of the masque. First, the source, topic and scenario of his dance work must have held associations for the composer that resonated with what he believed about the relationship between poet and composer in the masques of the past. The link here is the status of his sources, the Authorized Version of the Bible, and the paintings representing the peculiar English visionary character of William Blake. Second, because Keynes and Raverat's scenario was based on a pictorial source, Blake's illustrations, as much as on a textual one, *Job* proceeds in tableau-like units that were characteristic of both historical and contemporary masques. Other connections relate to the status of the dance in the masque. Dance was always the crucial component of the 17th century masque, and from a certain perspective the other aspects of a masque in many ways exist to justify the presence of dance in the narrative. Taking into account what I have described above about Vaughan

Williams' visionary goals for his dance work, this underlying history of validating English dance forms within the masque would hold obvious attraction. The composer connects with this dance aspect of the masque through the inclusion of the pseudo-Baroque dances, the Minuet of the Sons of Job and their Wives, and the Pavane and Galliard of the Sons of Morning.

Finally, most masques, either those of the past or of Vaughan Williams' own lifetime, contained some kind of exhortation or moral instruction through allegorical, symbolic or downright blatantly direct means, and his designation of *Job* as a masque is meant to emphasize the similar, high moral purposes in his own work. Foremost of these, obviously, are the messages contained in Blake's system of beliefs which are reflected in his illustrations and were mediated on several levels by the Keynes and Raverat scenarios and the composer's own interpretative strategies. But others of these purposes draw on the genre of the masque itself within a context both present and past. As *Job* reveals, Vaughan Williams obviously feels the masque genre is suited for the renovation of dance in Britain, but through neither a rigidly historical model nor contemporary models available during the first decades of the 20th century. I think it is typical that the composer does not adopt the formal characteristics of the genre from the past, despite his love of English renaissance forms. Instead he transforms it in a way that still allows it to resonate as traditional, but an invented "traditional" which rests upon a nostalgia for England of the past and a vision for the England of the future. This is really the key to Vaughan Williams' cultural nationalism, a link of associations and a synthesis of old and new which links the present to the past in a subtle and powerful way.

by Deborah Heckert

Job

The stage directions scene by scene

Keith Otis Edwards relates the stage directions for each scene of *Job* to the Naxos recording (CD 8.553955) conducted by David Lloyd-Jones, enabling RVW Society members to follow the stage directions in detail.

Although now classified as a ballet, this music is based on a much older tradition. In the Middle Ages, before printing, when there was not many books and very few people could read, people were taught the stories of the Holy Bible by roving bands of minstrels and actors who would act out the scenes from the Old Testament and the Gospels. The play would be preceded by music and dancing to get the rowdy audience's attention. Then an actor taking the part of Lot or Noah or Judas would appear as a narrator described the scene.

This modern version was written by Ralph Vaughan-Williams in 1928-30, but still relies much less on the European ballet tradition than it does the old tradition of mime. Along with the customs of Biblical spectacle and masques are the court dances which were popular in England in the 1600s: the *Saraband*, the *Pavane*, the *Minuet* and the *Galliard*. Vaughan Williams has composed modern versions of them in this work.

The scenes which comprise *Job* are based on a set of engravings illustrating the Book of Job made in 1823-26 by the English poet, artist and mystic, William Blake. Vaughan Williams thought these illustrations so important to what he had in mind that the stage directions for each scene which he included in the score refer to the appropriate Blake illustration. (Incidentally, the picture on the front of the insert with your CD is not one of Blake's engravings, but is a later work – *Satan smiting Job With Boils* – done in tempera.)

The score of *Job* is dedicated to the late Sir Adrian Boult who did much to get it published, then performed it regularly throughout Europe and the United States. In his memoirs, Sir Adrian notes:

When I conducted it at the Salzburg Festival, Bruno Walter came to me afterwards with tears in his eyes and said it was the most beautiful music he had ever heard Then, when I was in Chicago, I conducted it in the open air during the summer concert series, and somebody had the unusual idea of copying the appropriate Blake engravings ... to that the audience could see what was going on in the music – I suppose for those who couldn't hear Satan, though he's rather difficult to miss.

To help you "see" what is going on in the music, you have here the composers' stage directions from the published orchestral score. As you will note, what at first appear to be simply musical climaxes and effects actually correspond directly to what is to be occurring in the story on stage. By following the track number on your CD player and then the minutes and seconds as they occur in these notes, you can image the stage scene that the music was composed for.

The copy you have has the track numbers and timings for the performance by the English Northern Philharmonic conducted by David Lloyd-Jones, recorded on NAXOS CD 8.553955. The notes will not work with other recordings as the times and tracks here will not correspond. On the left of the page is the track number followed by the three digits of time: the minutes followed by the two digits for seconds. If you get lost, just start the track again.

SCENE ONE

Track #1 Job's theme (soft strings)

- 0:30 The curtain rises. Job with his wife and a few servants sitting.
- 0:45 Shepherds and farmers cross the stage and wave to Job. (clarinet & oboe)
- 0:56 Here the background lights up showing a distant landscape with flocks and herds. (soft winds)
- 1:23 Here Job's children enter and group themselves around him. (violins enter with Job's theme while winds continue pastoral music)
- 2:16 The dance of Job's sons and daughters. First, the women dance alone. (soft flute solo)
- 2:35 Here the men dance. (bassoon takes the melody while flute continues)
- 2:56 Here the women group themselves in the middle and the men move slowly around them. (oboe solo)

- 3:16 The dance becomes general. (flute returns with original dance, while strings play the oboe's theme)
- 3:29 Job stands up and blesses his children, saying "...it may be my children have sinned!" (Loud, disturbing violins suddenly enter.) But they continue their dance.
- 3:58 Everyone kneels. Angels appear at the side of the stage. (Tableau staged as in Blake engraving I.)
- 4:08 The group breaks up. All go off stage except Job and his wife who are left in meditation at the rear of the stage. The angels, however remain. (The dance tune fades away with an unusual instrument, the Bass Flute – very breathy sound)
- 4:40 ENTER SATAN ! – sneaking in from the side of the stage.
- 5:01 SATAN in all his evil, raises his arms and appeals to Heaven (loud trumpets and cymbal)
- 5:09 (soft strings, harp and brass – alternate with flute & woodwinds) Heaven gradually appears and displays God sitting in His majesty, surrounded by angels. The line of angels stretches from Heaven to Earth. (Corresponds to Blake engraving 11)
- 5:51 SARABAND Of The SONS OF GOD (mellow full strings)
- 6:36 All bow down in adoration. (woodwinds)
- 6:59 God rises in His majesty and beckons to Satan. (brass & winds play chords at first softly, then much louder)
- 7:10 SATAN steps forward at God's command! (angry harsh brass)
- 7:27 (suddenly soft) A light falls on Job. God regards him with affection and says to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" (Job theme plays softly on muted strings.)
- 7:56 (harsh, angry brass) Satan says, "Put forth thy hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face."
- 8:20 God says, "All that he hath is in thy power." (loud strings) Satan departs, scheming. (Blake scene V)
- 8:41 The dance of worship to The Lord begins again. (full orchestra) The beauty of Heaven is shown.
- 9:32 God leaves His throne as the stage darkens. (music swells from loud to soft in diminishing waves)

{Blackout. End of Scene One}

SCENE TWO

"So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord"

Track 2 SATAN'S DANCE of TRIUMPH

**Stage gradually lightens. (buzzing, hellish strings; harsh winds play big awkward leaps)
Heaven is empty, and God's Throne is vacant!**

- 0:13 Light falls on Satan. He is standing alone on stage, at the bottom of the steps to heaven. (Loud trumpets and horns. Low strings and the tuba play a different series of repeated fast notes. The music seems to fly.)
- 0:19 Here Satan's dance begins (Xylophone comes in)
- 1:37 Satan dances mocking God's majesty. (Tuba and trombones followed by heavy brass. Marked "con bravura")
- 2:51 (harsh strings leap over buzzing low winds) SATAN climbs up to God's throne!
- 3:02 Satan kneels in mock adoration before God's throne. (Nasal brasses play the chant "Gloria in excelsis Deo" in a blasphemous manner as if they were holding their noses) (Then, the music becomes briefly fast again.)
- 3:13 The hosts of Hell enter running like rats, and kneel before SATAN who has risen and stands before God's throne facing the audience in all his evil glory.
- 3:21 SATAN, with a grand gesture, seats himself on God's throne!

{End of Scene Two – the black curtain falls}

SCENE THREE

"Then came a great wind and smote the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young men and they are dead"

Track 3 MINUET OF THE SONS OF JOB AND THEIR WIVES

The stage gradually lights up. (Oboe solo and harp alternate with flute)

0:15 Enter Job's sons and their wives and dance. They hold golden wine goblets in their left hands which they clash together with the sound effect in the orchestra of softly sliding the cymbals together. The dance is formal and statuesque, but also slightly voluptuous.

0:50 (Here the black curtain rises showing an interior as in Blake plate 111.) (the oboe is joined by a solo Viola playing a soulful melody)

2:25-2:44 Tension from some unseen disturbance slowly mounts.

2:45 SATAN suddenly appears above. (Harsh brass fanfare.)
The dance suddenly stops

2:56 The dancers all fall dead (tremendous noise from full orchestra)
Lights fade and black curtain slowly falls.

3:40 (music fades as well, ending with three short notes sounded by the Contra-bassoon, the lowest instrument in the orch.)

{end of Scene Three}

SCENE FOUR

"In thoughts from the visions of the night fear came upon me and trembling,"

Track 4 JOB'S DREAM

(The theme of Job's suffering is played softly by the violas.)

1:08 The black curtain rises and stage gradually lights up.
(Violins take up them.)

1:30-1:40 The theme gradually swells then fades away.

2:00 Job moves uneasily in his sleep.
(Music begins a fast tempo with deep, short notes from the tuba. A restless theme begins in the strings and woodwinds.)

2:17 ENTER SATAN. (Loud clash from full orchestra)
Satan stands over Job and calls up terrifying Visions of Plague, Pestilence, Famine, Battle, Murder and Sudden Death who all dance around Job, foreboding his tribulations to come. Each of these should be represented by a group of dancers. The dance should be wild and full of movement, and the stage should finally be completely full.

2:30 Enter Plague, Enter Pestilence

2:36 Enter Famine

2:54 Enter Battle, et al. (Wild rollicking music with xylophone)

3:16 The dancers, headed by Satan, make a ring around Job and raise their hands three times.

3:46 Horrible anguished chord from full orchestra with drums beating. The vision gradually fades dim as the stage empties

{End of Scene Four}

SCENE FIVE

Track 5 DANCE OF THE THREE MESSENGERS

(oboe solo) Job awakens from his sleep and perceives three messengers who arrive one after the other, telling him that all his wealth is destroyed and that his sons and daughters are all dead. (Blake plate IV) (oboe solo follows by bass clarinet solo followed by bassoon)

1:11 A sad procession passes across the back of the stage....
(winds play a sad melody over a softly beating drum)
....culminating in the funeral cortege of Job's sons and their wives.

3:40 Theme of Job's suffering. Job still blesses God:
The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

SCENE SIX

"Behold. Happy is the man whom God correcteth."

Track 6 -- The DANCE OF JOB'S COMFORTERS

Satan introduces in turn, Job's Three Comforters – all wily hypocrites. Their dance is at first one of pretended sympathy, but then turns to anger and reproach. (Greasy saxophone alternates with plucked strings.)

0:11 Enter second comforter

2:03 Enter third comforter
The comforters do a long dance sequence.
Their dance is at first one of pretended sympathy, but then turns to anger and reproach.

2:05 Here the comforters return to their gestures of pretended sympathy.
(more slimy saxophone)

2:50 Job stands and curses God: "LET THE DAY PERISH WHEREIN I WAS BORN!" (loud crash from full orchestra)
Job invokes his vision of God and

3:09 Heaven gradually becomes visible, showing mysterious veiled sinister figures, moving in a sort of parody of the Sons of God in Scene One.
(music becomes progressively louder & louder)

3:46 Heaven is now lit up. The figures throw off their veils and display themselves as SATAN enthroned and surrounded by the Hosts of Hell!
(Crash of large gong, followed by tremendous crash from full orchestra with added pipe organ all playing horrible mockery of the 'Saraband of the Sons of God!')
SATAN laughs in Evil Triumph and spreads his bat-like wings.

4:08 SATAN stands. Job and his friends cower in terror
The vision gradually fades away. Blackout.

SCENE SEVEN

"Ye are old and I am very young"

Track 7 ELIHU'S DANCE OF YOUTH AND BEAUTY. (lengthy violin solo Key of D Major

4:09 PAVANE Of The SONS OF THE MORNING
Heaven gradually shines behind the stars. Dim figures are seen dancing a solemn dance. As Heaven grows lighter, they are seen to be the Sons of the Morning. (High violins alternate with winds playing the PAVANE dance. Music builds to a joyous climax. Very high violins at end)

SCENE EIGHT

"All the Sons of God shouted for Joy"

Track 8 ENTER SATAN. He claims victory over Job.

0:23 God pronounces sentence of banishment on Satan.
(High passionate strings)
(Blake plates V and XVI)

0:41 GALLIARD of the SONS OF THE MORNING
The Sons of the Morning gradually drive Satan down.
(Strings and trumpet together play the Galliard dance)

2:06 Here Satan falls out of Heaven
Black out and curtain (Dance music continues)

ALTER DANCE

2:27 The curtain again rises. Enter (on Earth) young men and women playing on instruments; others bring stones and build an altar. Then they decorate the altar with flowers. (Blake plate XX1)
(the ancient-sounding dance tune is played by the oboe, then the clarinet, then the flutes)

2:53 Job enters, but he must not play an instrument himself.
(Job theme in strings while winds continue alter dance.)

HEAVENLY PAVANE

3:16 The Heavenly dance begins again, while the dance on earth continues.
(Interplay of three different melodic lines.)

4:25 Tableau and gradual black out.

SCENE NINE

"So the Lord Blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning".

Track 9 EPILOGUE

0:12 Stage gradually lights up again showing same as Scene One.
Job, an old and humbled man sits with his wife. (Blake XIX)
His friends come up one by one and give him presents.
(original Job theme in low violins)

0:42 Job stands and gazes at the distant cornfields.

1:00 Enter one by one Job's three daughters. They sit at his feet. He stands and blesses them. Very slow curtain. Music fades into "niente" = nothing.

THE END

JOB – A MASQUE FOR DANCING

An introduction and CD review by William Hedley

JOB

Most admirers of Elgar's music will probably have started with the "Enigma" Variations or the Cello Concerto, graduating only later to *Falstaff*. By the same token, I wonder how many of us have yet to encounter *Job*? I hope this article will encourage readers to do so: it's a work of extraordinary richness, yet one which gives up its secrets only slowly. The listener's effort is greatly repaid.

In 1909, the twenty year-old Adrian Boult gave an address to the Oriana Society in Oxford.¹ "The men who are alive at the inception of a great work of art can only assimilate a small portion of its greatness" he said. Performances become "more and more perfect as the work gets older." On the interpretation of new music he made three points. "1. They must give the hearer the impression that they are being played exactly as the composer wished." Composers, he said, are the best interpreters of their own works, only poor conducting technique standing in their way. "2. The reading must be clear." He was referring to structure: the aim should be that "whole work seems held together by the balance of its keys and movements." "3. The work must sound easy." He meant technique, of course, but also that profound understanding of the piece which allows every note to find its true place in relation to the whole.

No-one who knows Boult's subsequent work will be surprised by any of this, but it is remarkable all the same that his theories arrive fully formed so early in his career. Listening to his five recordings of *Job* these three virtues shine out, and searching for them in the work of other conductors is very interesting. And we should not forget that the one "alive at the inception" of this great work of art was Boult himself.

I'll be considering twelve recordings of *Job*, many of which are no longer available. Others surely exist, perhaps in the vaults of the BBC or elsewhere. How wonderful if a *Job* conducted by Barbirolli were to surface! And is it possible, on some dusty archive disc in crackly monophonic sound, that a recording exists of Vaughan Williams conducting it?

As recordings are issued, deleted and reissued in other forms, the discs I discuss may be different in detail from those in the reader's collection. They are listed below in chronological order by recording and those which seem not to be currently available are indicated. It's a curious list in many respects. Boult recorded *Job* four times before any other conductor took it into the studio. Not a single foreign conductor features on the list. And if an enthusiast wants to have Boult's first recorded thoughts on *Job* his only hope is the secondhand dealers' lists. The 1946 recording is an important historical document which should always be available. Vaughan Williams is certainly not the only twentieth century composer to suffer in this way.

Boult, 1946, BBC Symphony Orchestra (Dutton, nca)

Boult, 1954, London Philharmonic Orchestra (Belart)
Boult, 1958, London Philharmonic Orchestra, (Everest)
Boult, 1970, London Symphony Orchestra (EMI)
Boult, 1972, London Philharmonic Orchestra (Intaglio, nca)
Vernon Handley, 1976, BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra (BBC Radio Classics, nca)
Vernon Handley, 1983, London Philharmonic Orchestra (EMI Classics for Pleasure, nca)
Barry Wordsworth, 1989, Philharmonia (Collins, nca)
Richard Hickox, 1991, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (EMI, nca)
Andrew Davis, 1995, BBC Symphony Orchestra (Teldec)
David Lloyd-Jones, 1995, English Northern Philharmonia (Naxos)
Douglas Bostock, 1998, Munich Symphony Orchestra (Classico)

The origins of *Job* are well recounted in Kennedy² and can be quickly reviewed here. One of the more interesting aspects of the story is that the original idea came not from Vaughan Williams but from Geoffrey Keynes, the William Blake scholar, who wanted to mark the one hundredth anniversary of Blake's death in 1927 with, of all things, a ballet. Not just any kind of ballet though, but one "of a kind which would be new to the English stage"². He wanted it to be based on Blake's *Illustrations of the Book of Job*, and believed that ideas for stage designs and even choreography could be drawn directly from Blake's work.

He further refined his ideas and produced a scenario and stage designs in collaboration with his wife's sister, the artist Gwendoline Raverat. And since the two ladies numbered amongst their cousins Ralph Vaughan Williams it is perhaps not surprising that he was approached about composing the music. Nor should we be surprised, given his love of the Authorised Version of the Bible that he was immediately enthusiastic about the project. Even so, he characteristically laid down two conditions to his acceptance: that there should be no dancing on the points of the toes and that the work be called not a ballet at all, but a masque.

Kennedy tells us that Vaughan Williams "detested" dancing sur les pointes, and suggests that he was uncomfortable with ballet's "modern associations with artificiality, smartness and impresarios"². Is this why he resisted even the word ballet, or did he really see in the story of *Job*, or

in Blake, the opportunity to create a twentieth century masque? In other words, was "masque" a conscious choice or simply a convenient way of reacting against "ballet"? (see article on page 4 - ed.)

Whatever the reasons, discussions took place with Diaghilev about staging the work, but he rejected the idea as too English and too old-fashioned. We may wonder why Diaghilev of all people was approached, given the composer's reluctance to be associated with "ballet", but in any case Vaughan Williams made no attempt to disguise his relief at the failure of this proposed collaboration in a letter to Mrs. Raverat in which he made pointed reference to the Russian Ballet and "their over-developed calves"².

Even if progress towards a staging of *Job* was slow the music was being written anyway. As the work evolved the links with Blake became more explicit. Vaughan Williams even marked in his score the numbers of the plates to which the music corresponded, along with the rather different scenario he was also now developing himself. He seems to have allowed for *Job* a separate life as a concert piece from the outset, and therefore didn't hesitate to employ a larger orchestra than could be accommodated in most theatre pits.



It was during 1929 that he showed the score to Holst for the first time, and the part played by Holst in the creation of *Job* is movingly recounted in *A Musical Autobiography*³. "I should be alarmed to say how many 'Field Days' we spent over it" Vaughan Williams wrote, referring to the regular sessions where the two composers showed and shared their work in progress. He states also that his "inferiority complex" regularly led him to cover his "nakedness with an apron of orchestration", in other words, to overscore. Holst implored him to reduce the percussion in *Job*, and this from a composer whose orchestra "could be naked and unadorned". We may agree with these sentiments even if we would not go so far as Vaughan Williams characteristically does. All the same, it's very interesting that certain passages in *Job* inhabit a similar sound world to the orchestral music of Holst.

Job was first performed at the Norwich Festival on October 23rd 1930. The composer conducted. It was given again in February 1931, but only in July of that year was it seen as a ballet for the first time, in London, as part of the Camargo Society season. Choreography was by Ninette de Valois and the score was given in a reduced version by Constant Lambert. Subsequent letters seem to show that even if Vaughan Williams was not interested in ballet as such he had clear ideas about how he wanted his piece to look on stage, and he was not totally satisfied with this first staging. It was left to Adrian Boult and the newly formed BBC Symphony Orchestra to promote *Job* in the concert hall.

Scene 1: Introduction

Job opens in pastoral calm. In a modal G minor the violas and flutes play a rising melody which is to be very important throughout the work. A three-note phrase and triplets in the winds suggest "the far off sound of flocks and herds"⁴. The opening melody reappears in octaves on the violins as Job's children enter and group themselves around him. In the Blake illustration we see Job and his family seated in front of a church on the one hand and his beasts on the other. Thus both his spiritual and material wealth are represented. The passage subsides to a rising three-note phrase which, through various transformations becomes, amongst other things, the music of Job's Dream and that to which he gives his blessing at the close of the work. Almost all the themes in *Job* are related in this way: to cite them all would require an article in itself. Job's children now dance, his daughters first, then his sons before "the dance becomes general." Job stands and blesses his children to music of extraordinary passion: a descending scale in the violins which immediately passes to a further statement of the opening theme. The music then calms as the dancers leave Job and his wife in meditation.

A new sound world is established at the arrival of Satan. His music is one of wide, expanding leaps and harsh dissonances. Rising fourths in the bass and austere wind chords herald the opening of heaven, with God seated at the centre of the Sons of God. This striking passage is another which reappears at significant moments in the narrative. Blake shows God as a huge bearded figure resembling Job himself, with Satan virile and attractive beneath him. The rising fourths in the bass become the accompaniment to the Saraband of the Sons of God. "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" asks God of Satan, and the affection in which he holds Job is reflected in five bars of the opening theme, beautifully developed. Satan replies that Job's faith is only shallow, that by a simple test he could easily be made to curse God. To music which is akin to Job's blessing, God entrusts Job to Satan's power before leaving his throne as the dance recommences.

Scene 2: Satan's Dance of Triumph

Satan is a symbol of evil or the darker side of man's nature. He is triumphant now because God has allowed him to show how easily a good man may be influenced for evil. His dance is the only extended solo in the work. The principal theme is in a fast three in a bar, played by the winds and xylophone. The music then changes to a march-like passage which is altogether different, more obviously evil, and after the return of the main theme, to music which is literally brazen, "Satan kneels in mock adoration before God's throne". The enormous chords which close the dance leave us in no doubt as the malign influence he has on events.

Scene 3: Minuet of the Sons of Job and their Wives

"And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and drink with them"⁵. Job's

family dances to a minuet, though "it should not be a minuet as far as the choreography is concerned"⁴. Harp and solo cello support wind solos; the music, as required by the stage direction, is "statuesque". The dancers touch the cups from which they are drinking, and each touch is marked by a cymbal clash, *ppp*. In most of the more recent performances the player "brushes" the cymbals together rather than clashing them, producing what is sometimes a very long note, and whilst undeniably beautiful in effect, the link with the stage action is diminished. The music passes into four in a bar and becomes rather more animated, then the opening theme returns. But dissonances tell of the arrival of Satan. To music of unprecedented horror, based on the chord of the tritone, he strikes Job's family dead. (We note that the Bible does not tell us that Job's daughters are killed, which explains their reappearance at the end.)

Scene 4: Job's Dream

Job lies asleep. Contrapuntal, canonic development of the earlier three-note motif perfectly represents this, a wonderful piece of writing for strings. Then a change as "Job moves uneasily in his sleep", and to a crash of percussion Satan appears. In the Bible he strikes Job with boils, but here he brings him nightmare visions of plague and pestilence; famine; and battle, murder and sudden death. The music is suitably ferocious, with martial, off-beat side-drum strokes for battle. "The dancers headed by Satan make a ring round Job and raise their hands three times" to music of wild abandon.

Scene 5: Dance of the Three Messengers

A solo oboe plays the same, despondent, rising phrase three times. The second oboe and cor anglais join in, then the inconsolable bassoon. This because three messengers have come to tell Job that all he had is destroyed and his family dead. Then a funeral procession: drum beats support a trio of flutes alternating with muted strings. This music is white, numb with shock: Holst's shade inhabits it. Yet Job says "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" and as he does so the music of the Dream returns, richer and fuller than before. The composer authorised a cut here should the stage require it, but it should never be done: we want to hear every note of this beautiful passage.

Scene 6: Dance of Job's Comforters

Three friends try to console Job in his tribulations. The expression "Job's comforter" has come to mean someone whose efforts to bring comfort only add to distress. Reading in the Bible what the comforters have to say takes perseverance and patience, and we are perhaps not surprised that, in spite of their good intentions, they drive Job finally to curse God. In Blake and Vaughan Williams the comforters are hypocrites who succeed in their aim of destroying Job's faith. The first of them is represented by a solo alto saxophone. Vaughan Williams was also drawn to the sound of the saxophone in the sixth and ninth symphonies, but here it is surely employed for theatrical reasons. The second comforter is represented by a falling syncopated figure on the winds, and the third by a rhythmic phrase played in octaves by the bassoons. We hear all three in turn as "anger and reproach" increases, then the first returns accompanied by a cello. Job's patience gives way and he curses God as the full orchestra delivers a thunderous passage based on the first three notes of the Saraband.

An ominous four note phrase is repeated over and over, rising in intensity, as Heaven gradually becomes visible. At the climax we see Satan seated on God's throne, surrounded by his acolytes. An organ is added here, and the score allows that if the instrument has very powerful reeds certain bars may be played by organ and timpani only. Many conductors take this option. A pause; then, to a tremendous crash, Satan stands and "Job and his friends cower in terror."

Scene 7: Elihu's Dance of Youth and Beauty

Another person now enters the story. "I am young and ye are very old" says Elihu. Angry with Job "because he was righteous in his own eyes", he is also angry with the comforters, "because they had found no answer and yet had condemned Job"⁵. This is one of the most beautiful passages in a beautiful score. Elihu is represented by a solo violin, and we are inevitably reminded of *The Lark Ascending*. This is unhelpful, however: Elihu's music evokes human youth and beauty in both a sensuous and a

sensual way; the distance, the otherness of the Lark is quite absent. Of Elihu's anger or arguments, on the other hand, there is nothing, but apparently he convinces Job, as the music gives way to the Pavane of the Sons of the Morning, a moment of brightness and optimism. The music of the Pavane is quite properly stately, cool and formal in style, but the orchestral violins play a cantilena infused with the human spirit of Elihu. The transformation of one music into another is remarkable.

Scene 8: Galliard of the Sons of the Morning

To his own harsh chords full of the colour of brass, Satan claims victory over Job. But to the same music with which he had previously entrusted Job into Satan's power, God banishes Satan from Heaven. Job's faith has prevailed. There then begins - historically correct after a pavane - a galliard in which "the Sons of the morning gradually drive Satan down." This is marked *pesante*, heavy, and the melody is led off by all the violins and two trumpets. A pause and a tremendous crash of cymbals marks the moment that Satan falls from Heaven. The rest is pure triumph.

The scene changes. On earth, young men and women play musical instruments and build an altar with stones to music reminiscent of the very first dance of Job's children. As Job blesses the altar we hear the music of his dream, and then, in heaven, the Pavane begins again. These three elements are all present as the music rises to a climax and to a remarkable passage where the stage action is suspended and the music representing Christ in his majesty is heard for the last time.

Scene 9: Epilogue

The final scene begins like the first, with Job at home in pastoral tranquillity. He is now "an old and humbled man"⁴ brought to new wisdom by his trials. "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning"⁵. His former wealth is increased. The music of the first scene returns relatively unchanged except with dynamics evoking even greater serenity now than before. His daughters appear and sit at his feet, and to a marvellously inevitable transformation/extension of the three-note phrase we have heard so often throughout the piece, Job raises his hands and makes a simple but deeply moving gesture of blessing.

There is no doubt that a new harshness, a new ferocity is heard here, the seeds of which were sown in *Sancta Civitas* and came to fruition in the Fourth Symphony. The more reflective moments are vintage Vaughan Williams. No-one else would have evoked in quite the same way the tranquillity of Job's life before and after his trials; no-one else would have given us the music to which Job sleeps. The great moments of drama are magnificently realised too, to music of terrifying power.

The way in which *Job* functions as a stage work is more problematic.

We can understand why Vaughan Williams should be interested in reviving the masque. A masque was a seventeenth century entertainment in which drama, costume, poetry, singing and dancing were combined, and his interest in the music of this period is as well known as is his aversion to modern ballet and its associations. But does *The Book of Job* lend itself naturally to this treatment? Or indeed to dance at all? Why would the Sons of the Morning dance to a Saraband? There is minuet, but the score expressly forbids a minuet on stage at that point. The pavane seems more appropriate, perhaps thanks to the continued presence of Elihu in the music, but the galliard (one of my favourite passages) would work just as well in an English folk song suite and is, to my ears, quite unsuited to driving Satan from Heaven. It is also quite long: how do they manage to drive him down for such a long time?

And then there are the comforters. The saxophone, especially when accompanied by the cello at the end of the scene, brings to my mind some sleazy mid-century German night club rather than "pretended sympathy". How could Vaughan Williams hope to portray in music such disparate but very particular elements as famine, plague and sudden death? And how, especially given the short time in which to do it, can such things be represented by dancers? The dance of Job's children should be "formal, statuesque and slightly voluptuous" and indeed the music, which is cool and detached, reflects this very well. But why did Vaughan Williams want to present the scene like this? They are nothing more, after all, than a group of young people enjoying each other's company. Passages in Satan's Dance can sound positively jaunty, a huge challenge to conductors, and one to which many of them are not able to rise.

I have never seen *Job* on stage. Perhaps these issues will be resolved when I do. In any case what is not in doubt is that the music itself is of remarkable quality. The orchestral writing is masterly. Who can forget the majestic chords representing God in his majesty, the wonderful writing for the strings as Job sleeps, the heartbreaking chill of the trio of flutes representing the funeral procession of his children?

Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects of the work, and one which, according to Wilfrid Mellers⁶ sets Job on a higher plain of achievement than the Fourth Symphony is the philosophical and musical balance of the forces of good and evil. Satan's acts are powerfully portrayed in music, and the tension and eventual resolution between this and Job's endurance is remarkably convincing.

I wrote earlier that *Job* is a work which gives up its secrets only slowly. It is clear that for the present writer not all the secrets have yet been revealed. Continuing the search provides enormous satisfaction.

JOB ON RECORD

BOULT 1946

Job was dedicated to Boult, so it is fitting that he conducted the first recorded performance. This version makes a logical starting point for our survey and a natural point of reference and comparison when discussing the others.

In spite of the date of recording the CD sound is remarkable. It was taken from 78rpm discs, but there is surprisingly little background noise and the ear quickly adjusts. Loud, open textures have terrific impact; quieter passages work surprisingly well too, but when the scoring is congested, so is the sound.

The lower strings are heavy and unclear at the outset, the phrasing of the parallel fifths rather prosaic and literal. There is not much pastoral atmosphere.

Satan's Dance goes at a cracking pace, the syncopations very marked. Everything is delivered at white heat, reminding us that this music was still new in 1946. The passage marked Presto brings a reminder of the witches in Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*.

The Minuet is cool and clear. The cymbals are properly clashed as the dancers touch the cups from which they are drinking. The death of Job's children at Satan's hands is conveyed with a horror rarely rivalled in other versions. The absence of sonic luxury contributes to this, as does the superbly graded diminuendo which follows.

Job's Dream does not readily convey the idea of a man asleep. The strings respect the composer's phrasing to the letter, but the result is neither truly legato nor pianissimo. The Visions are horribly conveyed, however, the violins very marcato and the tempo again very rapid, especially at the point where the dancers raise their hands three times where a true spirit of the dance is conveyed.

The funeral procession of Job's children is desperately sad, with superbly graded dynamics and balance and a wonderfully eloquent solo bassoon. How like Holst this passage sounds! The strings (and therefore Job himself) are surprisingly passionate at "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away."

The solo saxophone is very oily indeed in the Comforters' Dance. And later, very much in the spirit of the interpretation as a whole, accents and rhythms are given to full effect. Real anger, real reproach is generated here, and, when Job finally curses God, real despair. I cannot hear an organ as Satan is revealed seated on God's throne, but the effect is stupendous.

In Elihu's Dance, the solo violin is recorded well forward, like a concerto. The playing is very poised and expressive, rhythmically quite free, immaculate in intonation and with a beautiful tone. There follows a slow and stately Pavane, and then a very earthy Galliard as the Sons of the Morning drive Satan out of Heaven.

The final scene replicates the atmosphere of the opening, and Boult scrupulously respects the accents in the string parts of the closing bars. This final blessing is therefore quite marked, even insistent, in character.

In this first recording of Job one is struck by the vehemence with which the conductor brings out the violence and bitterness of the score. We can only assume that the composer was in agreement with this view.

BOULT 1954

By 1954 recording technology had advanced enormously. The sound is richer and more full-bodied. The swish of the 78rpm record has given way to a slight tape hiss.

There is an extra clarity at the start where the harp is much more in evidence, yet avoiding the trap of "making everything into a harp concerto"⁷. The extra weight of the recorded sound combined with Boult's very passionate view - listen to Job blessing his family for the first time - combine to make this a very satisfying reading indeed.

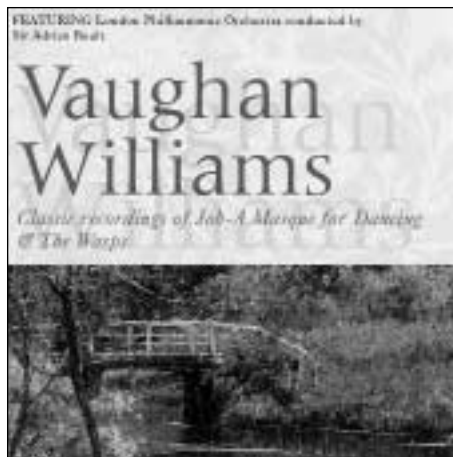
Satan's Dance and Job's Visions are less incisive than before, less rhythmically taut, and lively passages in general are less rapid now. The attack is stunning, all the same. Everything is audible, the two extremes of the orchestra, piccolo and tuba, for example, in Satan's Dance. The orchestral playing is excellent, even if certain of the woodwind solos are less distinctive than their BBC counterparts. Elihu's dance is beautifully played, the solo violin better balanced against the orchestra, and a calmer atmosphere is created for Job's Dream by more natural playing and perhaps greater familiarity with the music. Satan sits on God's throne accompanied this time by organ and timpani as sanctioned in the score.

The violence, the shock of the new, is a little less evident in this reading, but there is more repose in the gentler passages.

BOULT 1958

Boult recorded Job again only four years later, the work's first stereo recording. The sound is very much of its period: unnaturally analytical, with solo instruments well forward. The stereo spread is very wide, giving the curious impression that everything is either to right or left with nothing in the middle. There is little dynamic contrast, pianissimos are in short supply, and louder passages, particularly from the brass, can be harsh. But don't be put off, as again the ear adjusts, and in any case the overall is one of enormous presence and punch. And the performance is superb, very much along the lines of the previous version but rather more dance-like than before. This is immediately noticeable near the start as Job's children dance, and especially in Elihu's Dance where the solo violinist, Henry Datyner, moves the music on for once. Other striking passages include a superb solo oboe in the Minuet, a solo saxophonist in the Comforters' Dance who takes more liberties with intonation and rhythm than any I've heard and organ and orchestra as Satan is revealed seated on God's throne.

Boult surprises us by taking the final scene more slowly than he does the first. The result is certainly very moving, and the final blessing is more overtly expressive than before.



BOULT 1970

With Boult's final commercial recording there is no need to make any allowances for the recorded sound. Indeed, the very beauty of the sound might sometimes be thought to detract from the impact of the more violent passages. It's not the recording, though, which gives the flutes too upholstered a sound, with too much vibrato, truly to convey the numbed sadness of the funeral procession.



The opening scene moves on rather more than in earlier versions, even more passionate in expression, and Job blesses his children with a quite remarkable outpouring of fatherly love. Touches of rubato here and there give a romantic feel to the Sarabande.

The end of Satan's Dance is superbly strong, and Satan's music on the whole is marked by great vehemence. The orchestral playing is of the highest virtuosity throughout.

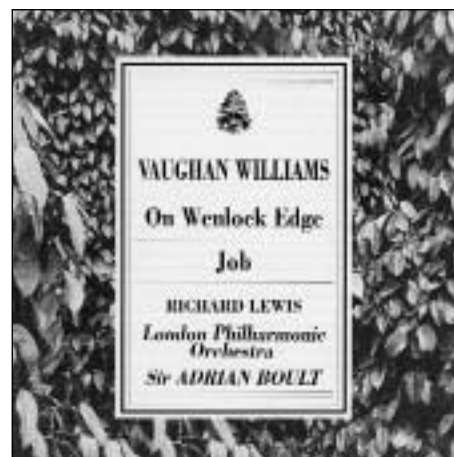
The solo saxophone manages better than most to convey the insinuating side of the comforters, and the solo cello's participation succeeds very well too, using portamento and bending the pitch to sound hypocritical rather than lachrymose. Job's curse is all the more strong, more heartbreaking than ever after this.

Elihu's Dance is ravishing, even if, as so often, it doesn't really sound like music to dance to. The Pavane is very stately, a real pavane in atmosphere, but the Galliard is more controlled than before though just as triumphant.

The close of the work is again slower than the opening, marginally so this time, but beautifully played and very moving.

BOULT 1972

Boult's fifth recording of Job is different from the others in that it was made at a concert given at the Royal Festival Hall in London in October 1972. We might have hoped for that extra something that comes from a live performance, but that is not the case, I think. The performance starts very well, particularly calm and wise and with rather more freedom of pulse than before. But from Job's blessing onwards the emotional temperature seems low. This may partly be due to a recording which lacks impact. Satan's Dance lacks energy, the presto is far from that. The Minuet is rather quicker than before, more like a real minuet but the end can often seem perfunctory and it certainly does here. The solo saxophone plays it quite straight, and the Royal Festival Hall organ as recorded here sounds feeble. The solo violin is very assertive, almost like a concerto. The beginning of the Galliard is tentative. All the same the piece is well played and there are only a few very small mishaps. The final scene is once again a little slower than the opening, and Boult slows further as Job's daughters sit at his feet. One peculiarity: of the three identical phrases given to the oboe as the messengers appear, the second is played more quickly than the others. The last time he allowed that on record was in 1946!



This performance undoubtedly gave much pleasure in the concert hall, but one needs more for repeated listening.

HANDLEY 1983

Thirteen years were to pass between Sir Adrian Boult's final commercial recording of *Job* and the first by another conductor. Vernon Handley has made many outstanding recordings of Vaughan Williams, and his *Job* is superbly convincing.

He takes 4½ minutes more over *Job* than Boult did in 1946. The opening is slow, smooth, more overtly expressive than Sir Adrian and with more sustained pianos. The blessing, however, seems suddenly very loud, and indeed this is a reading of extreme contrasts. Satan's Dance is properly diabolic, and the end is very strong indeed, but the Minuet which follows is very slow, not at all a minuet, not at all Andante con moto. The cymbal "brushes" are now very long indeed. The death of Job's children is quite remarkably horrible and shocking.

Job's Dream is extremely beautiful, pianissimo and legato superbly sustained. The Visions are positively orgiastic, recalling Boult in 1946, especially at the end where one can almost see the dancers in the mind's eye. There is rather too much "interpretation" in the Funeral Procession which renders it less moving. The solo saxophone plays beautifully without conveying much of character. Handley opts for the organ solo, which is as impressive as it ever is, and a stupendous vision of Satan on God's throne follows.

Elihu's Dance is very still and calm, beautifully played by David Nolan who reminds us that only the opening is marked *cadenza*: the rest is clearly in three-time and meant to be danced to. The Pavane is extremely beautiful, and the interpretation as a whole is very beautiful purely as sound: Handley positively revels in the marvellous orchestration. In the Galliard he makes a dramatic and very effective tenuto at the moment of Satan's Fall. There is real triumph in the music which follows.

Handley ends with a very pensive Epilogue, and a final cadence in which, even more than Sir Adrian, he respects the composer's indication that the music never rise above piano.

Vernon Handley is more romantic, less controlled than Boult. At times the music is louder than the score demands, and he emphasises contrasts, too much, perhaps, for those who prefer to draw their own conclusions rather than have the important points underlined for them. The London Philharmonic Orchestra plays superbly and the recording is magnificent.

HANDLEY 1976

When Vernon Handley recorded *Job* in 1983 he had already conducted the piece at concerts. One such occasion, in Manchester's Free Trade Hall with what is now the BBC Philharmonic, was recorded for radio and eventually issued on disc in 1996. Anyone who bought it then acquired a quite remarkable bargain. From the Dance of Job's children onwards Handley never loses sight of the fact that this is ballet music. Tempos are often substantially quicker - the Sarabande, the Comforters, the Galliard - and there is real anger, real despair. I can't hear an organ, but the effect is stupendous. The solo violinist plays with a most beautiful tone. He puts in a pair of notes too many in bar 4, a slip, quite endearing really, though a few sour notes later on are less so. The opening of the work is tentative, as if the players took a minute or two to get going, and the end lacks repose as we hear the triplets in the wind rather too strongly in relation to the strings. The Altar Dance seems plain and lacking conviction, but otherwise this is an excellent performance full of character, quite different from Boult and different even from Handley's other performance.

WORDSWORTH 1989

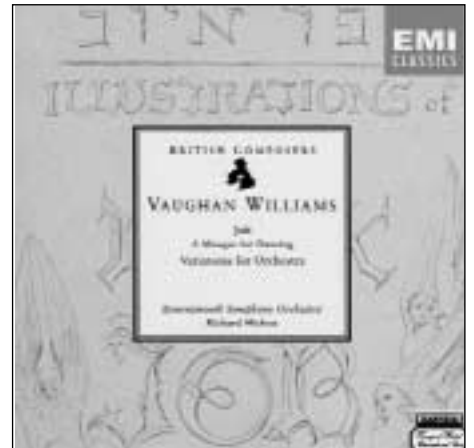
Barry Wordworth conducts a highly dramatic reading of *Job* which is also one of the longest. Only in the Minuet, however, like Handley in his studio version, does the tempo seem too slow. The opening and close of the work are slow too, but very beautiful all the same; the simplicity of expression here well conveys the serenity and contentment of Job's family life. The more violent sections are particularly well done, and the recording is spectacular, the timpani and bass drum positively thunderous. Surprisingly, though an organist is credited, the instrument is

not particularly audible, but this does not detract from the effectiveness of the passage. Job's Dream is wonderfully calm, and the nightmares which follow particularly violent and disturbing. Among many other notable points there is James Clark's magnificent violin playing in Elihu's Dance. No other version in my view comes as close to the ideal as this: youth and beauty are both very much present in the music. In the Galliard Wordsworth respects the indication *pesante* (heavy) more than most, and only at "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away" does he seem to go too far in expressiveness, making the music more like Rachmaninov than Vaughan Williams.

With its particular emphasis on the dramatic nature of the work but with the more reflective and tender aspects by no means neglected, this is an excellent version of *Job* from a perhaps underrated conductor. The Philharmonia Orchestra plays superbly.

HICKOX 1991

Richard Hickox has recorded much Vaughan Williams, most recently for Chandos. His *Job* is a formidable affair. It is superbly prepared: no other conductor brings out more detail, nor brings more to life such short linking passages as the four bars before Satan's appearance. The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra plays extremely well, with particularly distinguished wind soloists. If Brendan O'Brien is plainer than some as Elihu, James O'Donnell's playing of the Westminster Cathedral organ, transported by magic into the Poole Arts Centre, is spectacular.



If this is not my favourite version of *Job* it's frequently because of the tempi. At over 49 minutes, this is the longest version under consideration, and it sometimes seems it. Slow tempos do not in themselves have a negative effect - Klemperer in Beethoven, for instance - but in places Hickox's choice of tempo seems actually to impede the forward flow of the music. The opening strikes me in this way, and the whole of Scene 5, even the funeral procession. Add to this Hickox's liberal addition of rubato and the music sometimes almost grinds to a halt, as in "The Lord gave..."

The Comforters are the slowest I've heard, though characteristically Hickox respects to the letter the *changes* of tempo indicated in the score. The characters seem properly obsequious, and Job's Curse comes as no surprise as we are all exasperated with them.

The Galliard, on the other hand, is quick, a real one in a bar, and uniquely on record Hickox begins the final scene significantly quicker than the first, though he slows down greatly towards the end, too studied an effect, not simple enough to be as moving at the final blessing as it could be and often is.

DAVIS 1995

Andrew Davis directs the same orchestra which first recorded *Job* in 1946, and one wonders if any of the original musicians were present. The playing is well up to standard, and the recording, with one exception, is magnificent. Davis seems to see the work more as a concert piece than as a ballet, as there are passages where the spirit of the dance seems remote, the Dance of Job's Children for example. And if the following Sarabande seems a little flat and lacking in tension, this is a result of Davis' habitual refusal to exaggerate. Everything is in its place, the score's indications respected to the letter. The result is straightforward in a way that I find convincing but which may not appeal to everybody.

Job's Dream is a particular success, with tempo and dynamics perfectly judged. The Visions are vehement, even grotesque. The Funeral

procession is superb, thanks to a perfectly judged tempo, but also to careful control of instrumental timbre to avoid richness. "The Lord gave..." is beautifully understated. An excellent saxophone solo gives way to the other comforters who are extremely insistent.

The conductor himself plays the organ of King's College, Cambridge. It's an attractive idea, but the combination of an obvious change of acoustic plus Davis' urgent, almost jaunty execution renders the moment, for me at least, almost comical. Michael Davis plays Elihu's Dance beautifully, though little of the character comes across. The Galliard is very heavy, respecting the score's demand, but lacking perhaps the last ounce of triumph at the end. The close of the work is slow and rather dry-eyed.

DAVID LLOYD-JONES 1995

David Lloyd-Jones and the English Northern Philharmonia give an account of *Job* which more than deserves the praise it has received. This is a reading characterised by scrupulous attention to the score and above all perfectly judged tempi, both qualities heard at the opening. The violins are rather backwardly balanced here and throughout, perhaps the result of a smaller number of strings than in other groups. The advantage to this is the total absence of overripeness.



In fact there is a refreshing simplicity about the reading which is never merely ordinary. Compared to Boult, Wordsworth and Hickox the violent passages may lack a little impact, but taken on its own terms this version lacks for nothing in that respect.

Time and again we admire the conductor's choice of tempo: the Minuet, the Dream. Only the reprise of the saraband, as God leaves his throne, does the music broaden into something too monumental, though it is less so than with Hickox where the effect is positively marmoreal.

The solo violinist, unnamed, but presumably David Greed, is excellent, very free and rhapsodic, but once again the character of Elihu is elusive. The following Pavane is superbly integrated into this scene, and the violins' contribution is enormously meaningful, staying pianissimo until a crescendo is marked in the score. The related Altar Dance also goes particularly well, for the same reasons. The unnamed saxophonist is quite the most convincing I have heard: little portamentos, impeccable control of intonation and again, a perfectly judged tempo and refusal to linger all contribute to this. The cellist joins in with a blanched tone almost managing to obscure the whiff of the night club which mars this passage for me. Lloyd-Jones moves the music on as Satan seats himself on God's throne, and the result, with organ and orchestra, is deeply impressive. Davis is more successful in the funeral procession however, where Lloyd-Jones doesn't quite capture the numbness of the music.

The Epilogue begins at a near identical tempo to the beginning, and Lloyd-Jones refuses to slow too much, too soon, closing the work with a simple, deeply moving gesture of blessing.

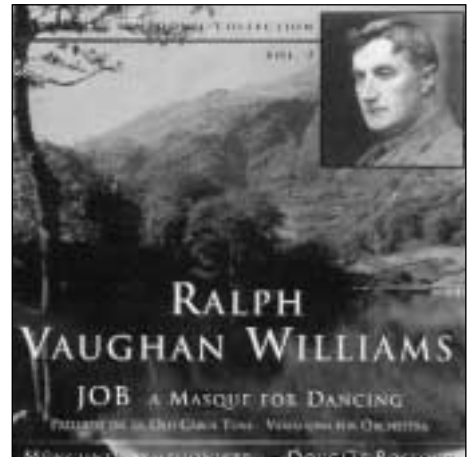
BOSTOCK 1998

Taken on its own terms, Douglas Bostock's recording might do, but in comparison with the others, and heard immediately after Lloyd-Jones, it seems sadly inadequate. This is the only version which does not live up to Boult's third requirement, that the work seem easy. Indeed, all too often the Munich Symphony Orchestra is taxed to the limit. Not that there are obvious errors or flaws, but the more virtuoso passages lack perfection in ensemble and intonation. Other groups sound more

beautiful too. Violent passages fatally lack tension and punch, the beginning of Satan's Dance in particular. The tempo for the minuet is very well judged, but at the four in a bar section Bostock moves the music eagerly on, inappropriate and ineffective. The saxophone solo is well played, but the accompanying chords on bass clarinet and bassoons lack meaning. The leader is not credited. He plays well enough, but there are moments of imperfection and the playing is not distinctive. Bostock plays the Galliard staccato (*marcato* in the score) which increases the folk-like feel and diminishes what little menace I hear in the music. At Satan's Fall the performance suddenly catches fire, yet only seconds later the Altar Dance leads off in remarkably leaden fashion.

CONCLUSIONS

Job has been lucky on record, and with the exception of Bostock's recording, none of these discs would disappoint. The 1946 sound probably rules out Boult's earliest version as a first or only choice, and his live performance operates at a lower temperature than the others. I find Hickox, and perhaps even Handley in the studio, self indulgent. But only the quite artificial exercise of directly comparing one to another reveals what one might presumptuously call weaknesses.



Having lived with this marvellous score and these performances for several weeks I feel that for fidelity to the composer's wishes, for overall attention to structure, and for technical brilliance - the three aspects of musical performance evoked by Boult in his 1909 lecture - no-one succeeds better than Boult himself conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in 1970, a reading of authority and stunning power. But seek out David Lloyd-Jones as well: it is deeply impressive, yielding little to Boult and adding just a touch more theatre to the work. I'm not sure I don't even prefer it.

"After this Job lived an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations."⁵ After this, Vaughan Williams lived for another twenty-eight years. Rather than children, he left us a whole series of masterpieces. His music increasingly posed difficult and disturbing questions, yet it was ultimately life-enhancing and filled increasingly with the wisdom of benign old age. *Job* was neither the first nor the last of Vaughan Williams' works to close with an old man's blessing

¹ Adrian Boult's address is reproduced in full in Jerrold Northrop Moore(ed.), *Music and Friends: Letters to Adrian Boult*, Hamish Hamilton, 1979.

² Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, OUP, 1980

³ *A Musical Autobiography*, in *Ralph Vaughan Williams, National Music and other Essays*, OUP, 1987

⁴ This and later quotes from the scenario of *Job* as printed in the OUP score

⁵ *The Book of Job*, Authorised Version

⁶ Alec Harman and Wilfrid Mellers, *Man and his Music*, Barrie & Rockliff, 1962

⁷ RVW writing to Cedric Glover, quoted in Ursula Vaughan Williams, *RVW, A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, OUP, 1964

VAUGHAN WILLIAM'S JOB

by Michael Kennedy

The origin of Vaughan Williams's *Job. A Masque for Dancing* was the centenary in 1927 of the death of William Blake. Dr Geoffrey Keynes, the distinguished Blake scholar, who had long known the famous set of engravings illustrating the Book of Job, was convinced that they contained the them for a unique English ballet. He worked out a scenario and commissioned the settings from Mrs Gwendolen Raverat. At the same time Vaughan Williams was asked for the music – thus completing a Cambridge trio of protagonists. For the choreography, an invitation was sent to Diaghilev who (not, I should have thought unexpectedly) rejected the scheme as being too insular and old-fashioned. Eventually Ninette de Valois provided the movements which seem to flow so naturally from the music and the engravings; but Diaghilev's refusal seemed at the time to put an end to the ballet project. Vaughan Williams was by this time at work on the music, for the subject deeply attracted him. He completed *Job* as a concert suite and conducted it at the Norwich Festival in October, 1930. Less than a year later the Camargo Society, from which the Sadler's Wells Ballet has grown, was founded to promote British ballet, and *Job* was given as a stage work, in a reduced score made by Constant Lambert, at the Cambridge Theatre, London, in July 1931.

A masque strictly should contain songs and the spoken word, but it is an apposite term for *Job*, for the composer has taken his titles from the masque period-pavane, galliard, saraband-and Blake's work has a symbolism such as the masques usually employed. My personal opinion, which I should stress comes from one to whom ballet is the least attractive of the arts associated with music, is that Vaughan Williams's music is far greater than the enterprise which called it into existence and that its greatness is inescapably linked with Blake's drawings. The work is not solely dependent on association with the stage action for its power of illustration; but its spirit reflects so faithfully the spirit of the engravings that no to know them both is to halve one's pleasure in the other. Although neither Frank Howes nor the late Hubert Foss, two of the most distinguished commentators on Vaughan Williams's work, share my view, I feel that in *Job* the imagination is set free on a course to which stage representation can only approximate. The drama is innate in the music. And music, being the most imaginative of the arts, demands the utmost imaginative sensitivity from its listeners. This is its secret and its glory.

Job is in nine scenes of eloquent self-sufficiency. The introduction is all pastoral peace, consecutive triads on flute, violas and harps depicting Job surrounded by his family and his flocks and herds. A descending theme illustrating Job's spiritual estate will be heard again in various metamorphoses. After a while a violent syncopated figure in the bass ushers in Satan. Brass now dominates the score as the Heavens open and reveal the Sons of God grouped round the Almighty's throne. This is matched by Vaughan Williams with a characteristically simple yet majestic saraband. God calls on Satan who tells him: "put forth Thy had now and touch all that he (Job) hath and he will curse Thee to Thy face". Satan is then bidden, in music of broad omnipotence, to tempt Job. In Scene II Satan is alone before the Throne of God. He begins a fiendish dance, spiky and rhythmical and "cribbed deliberately" from Beethoven's last quartet, accordingly to the composer. This is followed by a march section anticipatory of the F minor symphony, and finally, as Satan mounts God's throne, by the plainsong Gloria in Excelsis distorted and parodied by the brass. Vaughan Williams has not given the devil all the best tunes; it is interesting also, to note the contrast between the fierce parody here employed and malicious but humorous parody of a church office in the Burlesca in No. III (John Jayberd) of the *Five Tudor Portraits*.

Scene III shows Job's children dancing and feasting. This is a formal minuet, with something of the oriental flavour discernible also in *Flos Campi*. The composer directs that the dance shall be "slightly voluptuous". It is possible to trace Ravel's influence in the scoring here, as in the Scherzo of the fifth symphony; and, throughout the whole work, the economical straightforwardness derived with individual adjustment, from admiration for Holst. Satan appears (fortissimo brass) and the dancers fall dead. Job is asleep in Scene IV, but "in thoughts from the visions of the night...fear came upon me trembling". At first we see, or imagine, him at peace. This passage could have been written by no one but Vaughan Williams. As the violas gently weave their pattern of melody round our hearts, it seems that the world holds its breath and that past and future mingle in a timeless present, as they seem to do on a summer afternoon in a Cotswold village church. This short episode is comparable in its effect to the great moment in the composer's *Pilgrim's Progress* when Pilgrim stands on the threshold of the Celestial City and the alleluias strike into our souls like the piercing light of truth. Job's sleep is soon disturbed as Satan crouches over him and evokes dreams of plague, pestilence and famine. These visions fade and as woodwind play over a sustained pedal three messengers tell Job that his wealth is destroyed and that his children are dead. Their cortege passes, but Job blesses God: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away".

Scene VI introduces Job's comforters, whom the composer calls "three wily hypocrites". In the Bible these three, although they exhausted Job's patience, are portrayed as sincere people, but Blake calls them "Satan's trinity of accusers". In the ballet Satan introduces them to Job: part of the symbolism of the work, in which God and Satan represent the higher and lower aspects of Job's nature and the comforters his pride. A fragment of Satan's theme precedes their entry. Their hypocrisy is superbly characterised by a drooping, insinuating tune-clashing major and minor thirds-aply given to the saxophone. A more agile section seems to have a chiding truculence but soon the whining returns until Job can stand it no longer and, in a great outburst on full orchestra, curses God: "Let the day perish wherein I was born." The tragic nobility of Vaughan Williams's music at this point reminds one irresistibly of the fateful significance of that same quotation in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, another work of peculiarly English yet universal significance. Hell's forces now parody the Dance of the Heavenly Host and the music merges without a break into Scene VII, Elihu's Dance of Youth and Beauty, a rhapsodical violin solo which is the essence of Vaughan Williams's gift for imparting a vocal quality to his instrumental solos. After this heart-easing passage, to quote the stage directions, "as heaven grows lighter, (dim figures) are seen to be the Sons of the Morning dancing before God's throne". A stately pavane is followed by the ageless music of the galliard. Satan claims his victory but in 12 swift, compelling bars is sentenced to banishment. There is a pause, and the galliard continues and changes to an Alter Dance. Various themes now combine, of which the most prominent is the sleep theme from Scene IV, a sign of returning peace for Job. Great chords emphasise the majesty of God; and the epilogue showing Job again surrounded by his family, brings his masterpiece of religious art to a tranquil end.

Job represents Vaughan Williams's ripe maturity. The scoring is bold and strong, mainly in "black and white", for exotic tone-colour would be out of place. For all its lofty character, the music is fundamentally simple and direct. It is by this power of illuminating with his art those aspirations and truths that men keep cloistered in their hearts that Vaughan Williams has had so abiding an influence on so many of his follow-countrymen. He sweeps aside dogma and ornament and goes to the eternal verities. His work has the humanity without which art is left merely as technique: the greatness of the man pervades *Job's* deep-rooted vision. He has said: "The object of art is to stretch out to the ultimate realities through the medium of beauty". The picturesque quality of *Job* is secondary to its dramatic, spiritual light, drawing the listener's mind to the ultimate realities, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy".

(reproduced from *Halle Magazine*, April 1955 with kind permission of the 'Halle' Concerts Society)

The Origins of Job

by Sir Geoffrey Keynes

The original idea for *Job* came from Geoffrey Keynes. In his book *The Gates of Memory* (1983), Keynes describes the background to the work and the choice of Vaughan Williams as composer.

In 1927 my balletomania and admiration for the works of William Blake suddenly coalesced. I had recently acquired a fine copy of Blake's *Illustrations of the Book of Job*, a series of twenty-one engraved plates published in 1825 when he was an old man, yet constituting a masterpiece of creative art unique in England. The designs were commonly regarded as actual illustrations of the Bible story, but in 1920 Joseph Wicksteed, with whom I had long been closely associated through our common interest in Blake, published a study of his *Job* in which he revealed that the engraving really constituted a spiritual drama based on the Bible story, though telling Blake's own version of a man subjected to a series of severe trials by a malignant Satan, with the acquiescence of a pitying Jehovah, and ultimately brought to a realization of his worthlessness and his true position in the universe. Wicksteed's study revealed innumerable beauties of detail in the designs, as well as explaining why they seem so pregnant with meaning although the observer has been unable to take in all that they convey. Looking at the designs in 1926 it came to me that the groupings and gestures of the figures were asking to be put into actual motion on stage and, accompanied by dramatic music, could be fashioned into a new kind of symbolic ballet. It would not be easy to organize, however: stage design, choreographer, and composer had to be brought to a common understanding and enthusiasm for Blake's purpose and a theatre manager had to be found willing to risk the financial undertaking.

My first appeal was to an artist, my sister-in-law, Gwen Raverat. She took my point and together we sat down to hammer out episodes and groupings to form a scenario covering enough of the series to suggest Blake's meaning to an audience unfamiliar with his eccentric designs. Several of them, such as "Behemoth and Leviathan", representing war by land and sea and "Jehovah answering Job out of a Whirlwind", could not be shown on a stage and had to be omitted, though the majority were amenable.

We had a long discussion on the most suitable composer and finally chose Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, who we felt would be likely to have sympathy with Blake's symbolism and individuality, and who – perhaps most important of all – was the much-loved cousin of the Darwins and Wedgwoods, and therefore easily accessible. Gwen had made watercolour drop-scenes and small figures for assembling on the stage of a toy theatre, so that we could show him the actual scenes we had devised. He was immediately struck with the possibilities, and was soon so fired with enthusiasm that he became rather difficult to control. He wished to introduce features having no connexion whatever with the designs, whereas it was my determination that the entire conception should be unadulterated Blake. No compromise was possible. Ralph was a formidable, but generous, opponent and gave way with good grace. At one point he wrote a letter to Gwen telling her that I had made my objections to his proposals "in sorrow rather than in anger", so that he had to agree with me. He started immediately to compose music of a grandeur befitting the subject. He expressed, however, a great dislike of dancing "on points", an essential feature of classical ballet, which made him feel ill. We agreed there should be none of this, and to his calling the production "A Masque for Dancing" instead of a ballet.

The next move was to find a choreographer, and a company to stage the ballet. My first idea was to put it before Diaghilev. Gwen translated our scenario into French and I sent this with a set of reproductions of Blake's plates through Lydia to Big Serge in the hope that the novelty of the idea might attract him. I assumed that he would know and admire the quality of Ralph's music. The answer came back that the Masque was "too English and too old-fashioned". He kept the reproductions and I could see distinct traces of Blake's influence in another biblical ballet, "The Prodigal Son", produced by Diaghilev in his next London season.

I thought Diaghilev's criticism was quite unjust and lacking in perception. Nothing like our Masque had ever been done anywhere. But after this rebuff it seemed unlikely that the Masque would ever reach the stage, and Ralph, assuming that his music would probably be performed as a concert piece, orchestrated it for some eighty instruments. The piece was finished early in 1930 and was first performed on 23 October, by the Queen's Hall Orchestra conducted by the composer, at the thirty-third Norfolk and Norwich Triennial Music Festival.

I have never listened to the Vaughan Williams music without feeling the same thrill as when I first heard it. The most moving rendering for me was conducted by Sir Adrian Boult in Westminster Abbey for Ralph's memorial service in 1958. I was sitting in the choir stalls and while listening to the music in praise, as it were, of William Blake, was gazing over to poets' Corner where I could see Epstein's bronze head of Blake. I had unveiled this in 1957, as deputy for Ralph when he happened to be too unwell to officiate himself, and went afterwards to the artist's studio where I saw plaster casts of a multitude of his creations, including the huge figure of Lucifer now fixed

on the outside of Coventry Cathedral. Epstein's conception of Blake was based on the life mask now in the National Portrait Gallery. He chose, with some justification, to exaggerate Blake's visionary faculties so that his eyes seem to be popping out of his head as if in astonishment at what he was able to see – nevertheless a worthwhile image of the artist.

Vaughan Williams's piece, when first performed in 1930, had been received with enthusiasm by *The Times* critic, who demanded that it should be heard in conjunction with the Masque for which it was intended. A second performance of the piece, which was broadcast from Savoy Hill on 13 February 1931, revived our hopes of staging the Masque. Before this date the settings on the toy stage had been shown to Ninette de Valois and Lilian Baylis, who came together to our house to see them, and had won their approval. Ninette agreed to do the choreography, and I provided her with all the available reproductions of the whole range of Blake's designs to that she could steep herself in Blake's own atmosphere. Diaghilev having died in 1928, it was feared that the art of ballet might decay in Great Britain and disappear. To prevent this the Camargo Society had been formed in 1930, and it was under its auspices that the Job Masque was finally produced the next year at the Cambridge Theatre in London. With the help of my father and Sir Thomas Dunhill I made myself responsible for the initial expenses. Gwen Raverat herself painted most of the scenery in the rat-infested vaults of Sadler's Wells Theatre.



Lydia Lopokova at Gordon Square, 1956
Photograph by Cecil Beaton

Our plan in the Masque had been to preserve the essential characters and situations of Blake's *Vision of the Book of Job*, as Wicksteed called it. The symmetry, so characteristic a feature of Blake's design, was there. Job is seen at the beginning seated in the sunset of material prosperity; he is tried and tormented and descends into the pit of affliction; the truth is revealed to him and he repents; he is seen at the end of the sunrise of a new spiritual life. A dramatic climax is provided in the centre of the performance when Job summons his vision of

the Godhead, and, to his horror, Satan is revealed upon the throne. The ending startles the audience when Satan, his claims rejected by Jehovah, rolls down the flight of steps apparently unaware of any pain he may suffer.

An effective contrast is made between the static characters of Job and Jehovah, his spiritual self, and the volcanic exuberance of Satan, Job's material and physical counterpart; another contrast is made between the double-faced contortions of the Comforters and the purity of the young and beautiful Elihu, with a broader one between the dark horror of Satan's enthronement and the severe beauty of the scene when the Godhead is restored to His place by Job's enlightenment. Variety in the stage effects is introduced by the use of two levels, Jehovah's throne being set on a platform with steps leading up to it. The earthly characters move only on the stage level, while movements can be carried out by the heavenly beings around the throne and on the steps.

We were at first uneasy lest there might be trouble over introducing a representation of the Deity on to the stage, but were reassured by finding out that the Lord Chamberlain's licence did not have to be sought since no words were used in the performance. The only risk was that of prosecution by the police under the blasphemy laws. We thought this risk might be taken if we provided a mask for Jehovah, so as to make the presentation quite impersonal. The mask, rather larger than life-size, was made by Hedley Briggs after a large drawing by Blake of a 'Head of Job', which I had bought in 1918 after the great Linnell collection sale.

The first performance of 'Job: A Masque for Dancing' was given on 5 and 6 July 1931 with the Vaughan Williams music re-scored for a smaller orchestra by Constant Lambert, who conducted. Satan and Elihu were created by Anton Dolin and Stanley Judson, neither of whom has ever been surpassed in the parts.



Stanley Judson as Elihu in *Job A Masque for Dancing*, 1932

According to historians of the ballet the *Job Masque* helped to save British ballet by providing Ninette de Valois with her first major success in choreography. (In addition, it led her to using another pictured series on a moral subject in 'The Rake's Progress', from Hogarth's paintings.)

The further history of 'Job' has been one of continual success. It has been performed sixty-five times, mainly at the Opera House, Covent Garden. I watched the performances myself as often as I could, but missed a great many. One I can never forget was, I think, at the Cambridge Theatre during the Second World War, when German bombers were over London. A large bomb fell near by and the whole building seemed to jump, but the *Job Masque* went on as if nothing had happened.

In the 1930s Maynard prevailed upon Sir David Webster, the Director of the Opera House, to allow me free use of the royal box whenever it was not engaged, an opportunity of which I often took advantage with my friends. Some of my dressers at Bart's will probably not have forgotten the occasion when I took the whole firm to see 'Job' from this box, with supper in the annexe.

During the 1930s too I was frequently a member of the audience at the small Mercury Theatre in Notting Hill Gate, where the Ballet Rambert acted as nursery for so many dancers and choreographers who later served the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden. Marie Rambert became a firm friend, of irrepressible vitality and fun, and I got to know all her dancers, from Freddie Ashton and Maude Lloyd to the youngest stars such as Sally Gilmour and Baronova. After one performance of 'Job' we invited the entire company to a midnight garden party at our house in Hampstead. A coachload was delivered at the house and they enjoyed themselves into the small hours, with Marie Rambert doing cartwheels on the tennis lawn. In March 1978, when I had just turned ninety and she was nearing the same age, she wrote to me:

Dearest Geoffrey,

How happy I was to read your letter, thank you so very much for troubling to write. I always thought that you were much younger than I.

I go on practising my ballet exercises – even on Sunday I cannot resist the desire to move, to try and attain the best line and do the best movement I can. I am so happy to know that you too are feeling well.

Come and dance with me.

*Much love,
MIM*

From the *Gates of Memory* (1983)
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Dr Milo Keynes and the Oxford University Press.
(Forwarded to the Journal by Dr R Newman)

SIR GEOFFREY KEYNES AND THE BALLET JOB

by Frank W.D. Ries

Job (1931) is a crucial work in the history of English ballet during the twentieth century. Presented by the Camargo Society only two years after Diaghilev's death, it showed that an English composer, designer, choreographer and librettist could produce a dance that was as innovative and interesting as some of Diaghilev's finest works. Diaghilev had originally rejected the ballet for his own company. The author of the scenario was Sir Geoffrey Keynes, who also conceived the original idea for the ballet. He died in 1982, at the age of 95.

Keynes was a highly respected medical practitioner, a bibliophile and a recognized expert on William Blake (1757-1827), whose works were not fully appreciated 50 years ago. (Sir Geoffrey himself did much to change and inform attitudes towards Blake through his own publications and by founding the Blake Trust in 1948.) Job was inspired by Blake's 'Illustrations to the Book of Job' (1804-25).

Both Sir Geoffrey and his brother, the economist John Maynard Keynes (who was married to the ballerina Lydia Lopokova), were very interested in dance, and Maynard Keynes and Lopokova served on the Camargo Society committee which later assisted with the production of the first performance of Job. The original sets and costumes were designed by Gwendolen Raverat, sister of Sir Geoffrey's wife, Margaret Darwin Keynes; remarkably, Ralph Vaughan Williams, the ballet's composer, was also a relation, being the cousin of the two sisters.

Although Sir Geoffrey had written a brief essay about the staging of Job in 1949¹, he had never previously quoted from or included any of the source materials from his own archives, or agreed to be interviewed about the history of the work. Sir Geoffrey Keynes was interviewed at his home in Brinkley, near Cambridge in the spring of 1978; a brief interview having been given in 1976. He allowed access to many documents, letters and papers connected with Job which remained in his collection. Some of this material is transcribed below.

The Job illustrations awakened my interest in Blake. Two engravings from Blake's Job were the first things I saw - in a shop window in Cambridge, in 1907. I soon came to regard the entire series as one of Blake's masterpieces and then, during the 1920's, it seemed to me that the pictures were asking for the chance to be put into motion. In all the engravings, Blake's attitude was so characteristic and so striking; they seemed to want to move from the page and on to the stage. The difficulty was to reduce them to a form that would work on the stage, many of the designs for Job were quite impossible unless they were rethought - they were ready for the stage, but they had to be rethought. The Satan drawing, the Jehovah, and some of Job himself could not do as they stood; they had to be pared down. The Behemoth had to be eliminated. I worked with my sister-in-law [Gwendolen Raverat] who was going to make the designs: together we worked out what could be put on stage. We finished this work in about 1926: it took me the next five years to get it on the stage.

The scenario was translated into French by Gwen Raverat and submitted to Diaghilev.² Diaghilev sent a note through his secretary, Boris Kochno, telling me the scenario was too English and too old fashioned.³ He thought it was too English. Well, it was. Quite true. I sent him a portfolio of the Blake engravings to look at, along with the scenario - he kept the portfolio! We did not send him the score. All the information came through Kochno, not Diaghilev, so I am not even sure Diaghilev saw the Job material. I didn't know, then, how protective Kochno was of Diaghilev or that he might have wanted to write Job himself. Lydia [Lopokova] told me later that Boris was jealous of other people suggesting ballets to Diaghilev. Kochno could not have written it; he didn't know the first thing about Blake. I saw things from my Blake concept coming out in *Prodigal Son*. I often wondered about that. [The *Ballets Russes* production of *Prodigal Son* which Kochno wrote was staged a year after Keynes sent his Job material to Diaghilev.]

Meanwhile we were trying to decide whom to ask to do the music. It finally came down to Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. It would have been good with Holst, I think; but it was easier to get

Williams because he was a cousin of Gwen Raverat. She made a painting for the backdrops, and made a little theatre for them; and we made stick figures to represent the groups of performers and we showed that to Ralph Vaughan Williams. He immediately became excited and composed the music, but we practically gave up hope when Diaghilev said it was too English and old fashioned. Williams also gave up hope and performed the music as a concert piece at Norwich, scored for 80 instruments, a rather large orchestra. He wanted the English Folk Dance Society to produce it [in the grounds of Warwick Castle]; but I knew it would be wrong if they did, so I convinced him to wait. You see, he did not like ballet; he said dancing on pointe made him sick, and I think he was even rather happy when Diaghilev rejected it. He wrote to Gwen and said they would have made a holy mess of it with their over developed calves. And he would not call it a ballet; though the concert version was called a 'Pageant for Dancing', it was changed to 'A Masque for Dancing' before any stage performances were produced.

I asked Ninette de Valois and Lillian Baylis to come and see it that is, I showed the whole thing on the Little Theatre. Gwen and I moved all the figures around and talked through each scene. Miss Baylis became very much interested and so did Ninette, so I then brought them together to meet Ralph again; I had to engineer that meeting since he was still afraid it would become a 'ballet'. Ralph liked them, so that was the first hurdle, but then there were problems from Ninette's end...

Letter from Ninette de Valois to Geoffrey Keynes

January 1931?

Dear Mr Keynes

Please forgive me...I got back from Dublin last Saturday week to be confronted with every imaginable sort of thing to cope with and haven't had much time to answer letters. Miss Baylis is distracted looking for eight thousand pounds. She can't even get out contracts because she doesn't know what theatre she will have by the autumn. An incomplete Sadler's Wells is much worse than no Sadler's Wells to worry about at all. Anyway the idea of putting this [Job] on now (a month before suggested production time) was only to be if there was no second theatre on the horizon at all. The point is if there were two theatres running it would be only a matter of weeks at any time and the two theatres must be running sooner or later. I know how wearing this must be for you and also for me although I am so used to it, even after this three year old scheme of a small ballet company at the Sadler's Wells - which must now be put off for another ten months or so, is an example of the present chaos.

Your ballet is one of the few things I mean to push down someone's throat. She [Lilian Baylis] is keen enough I know, but nothing but 'business first' at the moment and it would do no good worrying her. In the meanwhile I am sandwiched between theatres half built and not built at all, to a point of distraction. I don't know whether I am going to die a pauper or a millionaire. Yes, in the meanwhile as far as I am concerned it is a matter of patience.

Yours sincerely,

Ninette de Valois

6a Roland Houses
Roland Park, South Kensington
The Academy of Choreographic Arts

Vaughan Williams had to re-score his music for a smaller orchestra and Constant Lambert helped him to do that; he was also the first conductor of the ballet. Then later it was conducted by Adrian Boult, who said it

was one of his favourite things; he loved doing it more than anything else and Ralph dedicated the score to him. We were also working on changes in the scenario itself to make it more adaptable to the stage- even if we were not sure which stage it was to be. I wrote to Ralph with some ideas and then Gwen did the same.

Letter from Gwen Raverat to Ralph Vaughan Williams

August 23 1930
Haughton nr. Cambridge

Dear Ralph

My scene will be like this – Job and Mrs. J. sitting completely under their house. Enter messengers separately, at intervals, each with a solo dance which would use more of the music. After each one Job becomes more distressed. He finally lies groaning on the ground. Enter Satan who does a cursing dance and, if you like, the symbolic figures come out and curse him personally; I don't care about them. Satan goes away, leaving Job in complete despair. Enter comforters and from these are all the same [as in original scenario]. I realise this will mean altering the order of your music. My chief concern is lucidity. I think a ballet ought to be clear to any audience without explaining, just as a dumb show ought to be. But do just as Ninette and you have settled between you and I will do any new dresses that are necessary. If the Old Vic can provide the extra actors I suppose the procession would be practicable. What I do think, though, is it ought to come after the messengers and not before.⁴

Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote back from The Whitegate, Westcott Road, Dorking:

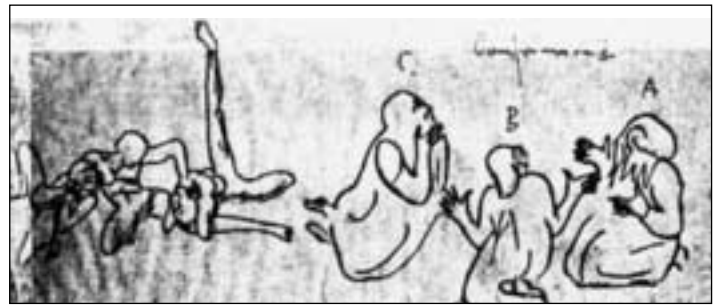
Dear Gwen

I have been carefully thinking over your situation and I don't mind trying your alterations in the order of the scenes, say at the Old Vic, AS AN EXPERIMENT. It will only involve, again if we consider it experimentally, a little alteration in the opening and closing bars of the music. But in that case, indeed in any case, in the *dance* there must be radical changes. It must be a *dance* at Job and not at the audience and it must be *terrifying* and not comic. I think we should have a fuller effect and Satan should dance in it, but it should start with the realisation that Satan is on stage, with his torch.....

Vaughan Williams wanted to make a number of changes away from Blake – different dances especially, such as the minuet for the sons of Job and their wives. Adjustments had to be made for the stage: in my original scenario we indicated one of the characters as God, but there were problems or, I should say, possible controversy, about presenting God on stage, so I changed the name to 'Job's Spiritual Self', which we all felt worked very well. Gwen was designing masks for some characters so this spiritual self could look like Job, but in a more majestic way – I thought her designs worked very well. Hedley Briggs made the masks and wigs; they were just right.

I provided Ninette de Valois with all the available reproductions of the whole range of Blake's designs; she said she wanted to see everything he did for inspiration, since she had 48 minutes of music to fill! I know the very static figures of Job and his Spiritual Self bothered her, but she dealt with that very well and, I think, found that it was a balance, a contrast, to the more energetic Satan. We got into contact with the Camargo Society and they were actually the first to produce it in 1931. I helped on the initial expenses with assistance from my family and Sir Thomas Dunhill and I felt elated when they could finally announce the performances to the press. I gave Ninette the Blake books while she was composing her choreography, so she was thoroughly soaked in Blake and she got an idea about the whole of Blake's range about movement, naturally. I had nothing to do with the choreography; I lent Ninette the books on Blake and talked with her about his style, that's all. Her choreography was straight from Blake. There were some problems about certain things Ralph had wanted on the stage, but which proved impossible to do. I think he understood and made the changes Ninette wanted.

I know he liked some of the folk dance ideas Ninette used but I think he was rather nervous the whole thing would become 'too theatrical'. Gwen worked very hard on the costume settings, and the designs, and we all stayed in close communication.



A drawing for Job by Ninette de Valois (Clarke - Crisp Collection)



Job (Photograph by J.W. Debenham; Royal Opera House Archives).

At the first performance [at the Cambridge Theatre, London on 5 July 1931] Satan was danced by Anton Dolin and Elihu was Stanley Judson. The ballet was performed three weeks later at Oxford, with the same cast, as part of a music festival. I didn't see that performance but Lydia did and though she wrote to me afterwards I could tell she did not like it.

Letter from Lydia Lopokova to Sir Geoffrey Keynes

7 August 1931
Tilton, Sussex

Dear Geoffrey

I went to Oxford to see Job and was much impressed, much more than on the wireless, when I thought the music was a noble, but a *dreary* way to spend an hour. But it had much more grandeur with scenes, costumes, and morning creatures. Job was truly a thing for the theatre, which I used to doubt. I congratulate you on your obstinate efforts without which Job would never be performed. I could see how your eyes gleamed when the curtain came down.⁵ My chief pleasure was that it differed from the Russian Ballet tradition- the most important merit of Job. Pat [Anton Dolin] surpassed himself – so perfectly devilish. Ninette had the most difficult task for, except for Satan, the music is not dancing- but her name, since Job, is quoted by managers (*sic*). With more time and rehearsals it will stand up better.

[Ralph Vaughan] Williams bowed and looked a nice bear- all in all Camargo [Society] is delighted with the work and so you must be very happy with such great success. You must like to hear what was said at the Committee: 'With Job', Edward Evans orated, 'Camargo stepped on to the map of Europe'. But, truly, we are grateful to you.

We [Maynard and Lydia] liked America and Americans very much but not the heat wave. Tilton looks nice now that we are home.

Lydia⁶

The reviews were quite nice, there were some quibbles, but in general they were very good. I think they were surprised. I think they were expecting a *ballet* in the Ballets Russes way and were surprised with what they did see. Naturally I wanted to see the work continue, but I realized the difficulties. However, it did do rather well. It went to Oxford three weeks after that, and then it was only a little while before Ninette de Valois took it into the Vic-Wells Ballet.⁷

My brother complained to me about the absence of traditional dance styles like *pointe* work and *pas de deux*. He thought the whole thing was too static! The role of Satan cannot be considered static; that was Anton Dolin's favourite part- at least that is what he told me. In fact, he asked

me if I could do another ballet like that for him, but I couldn't. Pat was far the best interpreter of the part. He was so demonic and he could twist his body into such poses that really were Blake's. It was marvellous. Bobby [Robert Helpmann] was entirely different as the devil. Very good, but he wasn't nearly as wicked somehow. Of the later Satans I always thought Kerrison Cooke was the best but there was still something missing. Pat just seemed to soak in Blake's ideas and bring them out through the dancing. I don't know how he did it but it was always there in the performances I saw.



Anton Dolin as Satan, 1931 (Photograph by Morter)

Elihu is a difficult part; Blake gives him flowing hair with a twisting body; there is muscularity in the arms, which contrasts with his delicate features. But Elihu is still male, 'young and beautiful'. I thought Stanley Judson, the original, was the best; he had just the right balance, and it was such a perfect contrast to Pat's arrogant Satan. Recently I thought Donald Macleary was excellent- the arms were so right- but still not like the first.

Job was and is a *succes d'estime*, not a box-office success. I am sure this last revival [1972] was quite a papered house. But I know many dance lovers come over to England and would like to see it- there is an interest in it- perhaps, now, an historical interest! I think it also surprised even Ninette and the others that there was foreign interest in the ballet, even early on. They took it to Copenhagen, you know, in 1932 [September 25].



Job, Scene III; Harold Turner as Satan, Set by Gwendolen Raverat, c. 1935. (Photograph by J.W. Debenham; Clarke - Crisp Collection)

I think *Job* gave Ninette de Valois confidence to tackle English subject matter since *Job* was one of her first successes; she did *Rake's Progress* after the success of *Job*.

[The ballet continued to be performed during the late 1930s and the war years but was revised, reworked and redesigned, by John Piper, in 1948 for the move to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.]

Of course Ninette had to enlarge the production for Covent Garden and I think that worked very well...the choreography, that is. But I liked Gwen Raverat's designs better than Piper's because she stuck to Blake; it was very simple, sheer Blake. Piper 'piperized' it and spoilt it entirely. The sets were getting worn and Ninette was tired of them and asked Piper for new designs. When I talked to him I asked him if he liked Blake and he said 'Oh, yes'; he said he greatly admired him and would study his designs and work, and then he did something Blake would have hated and used black masking and all the outlining was gone. It lost all the stark simplicity of Blake. I loathed it. Some people liked it, though.



Job, set by John Piper (Clarke - Crisp Collection)

I remember at the revival of *Job* in June 1948 a number of critics and writers assuming that much of the story was worked out by me and Gwen Raverat with Ninette de Valois, and that it was not close to the Bible. Of course not, it was inspired by Blake's variations on the theme of the biblical story. That was our intention and it was obvious some of them had never read Blake or understood him. I even wrote a letter to *The Times* about that when their critic thought the opening and closing scenes were evasive.

Letter to *The Times* from Geoffrey Keynes

8 June 1948

... It was Blake himself who 'helped to make good the dramatic evasion' by introducing his own variations on the theme of the bible story. Blake's *Job* is seen at the beginning with his family in the sunset of material prosperity and complacency. He is seen at the end starting a new life in the sunrise of spiritual regeneration.

I know that *Job* is not performed that often, but when it is there seems to be interest in the piece - and each decade the critics seem to change their mind. I remember some reviews in the late fifties, when a critic or two dismissed Blake and the ballet. *Job* wasn't performed for a long time after that, but when it was revived in 1970 everyone highly praised it and welcomed it back to the repertory.



Job, Scene I as revived by the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, set by John Piper (Houston Rogers; Royal Opera House Archives).

I think it is fair to call *Job* the first English ballet of the twentieth century; some histories of ballet state that *Job* saved the English ballet. It just bridged the gap between the death of Diaghilev and the emergence of Ninette de Valois. I think it gave the people who wanted British ballet confidence, even if they did not like the piece, because there was this searching for some stability after the Ballet Russes disappeared. I am sure now that it was best that Diaghilev did not produce it. I did not attempt another dance scenario after that because I am not a writer for the stage. It's not my job. I had one good idea. I couldn't repeat it!

APPENDIX 1

*The original scenario by Geoffrey Keynes as dictated to Gwen Raverat*⁸

Characters: Job, his wife, three daughters, his sons, their wives, three messengers, three friends, Elihu, Jehovah, children of Jehovah, sons of Morning, Satan.

The stage is divided into parts. The back half is raised one or [two]⁹ steps above the part in front and represents heaven. The scene shows a night sky with stars. The drop scenes which represent Earth, Hell, [and half way forward] can hide the raised part of the stage. In five acts with one interval.

Act One: Earth, Sunset, pastoral scene.

Act Two: Heaven [Night sky], Curtain, Interval.

Act Three: Earth, Night before Job's house.

Act Four: Heaven [Night sky].

Act Five: Earth, Sunrise, pastoral scene [with ripe corn]

Act I: Earth

The front part of the stage is only seen. Sunset. The scene represents hilly country where many flocks of sheep are feeding. Job and his whole family are sitting under a tree in the middle of the stage. They are rich and prosperous shepherds- a complaisant materialism reigns all about them. Job's children perform a *Pastoral Dance*. Satan comes in softly to spy and dances amongst them. After the dance Job and his children sit down to feast in two groups on each side of the front stage. Satan leaps into the middle of the stage behind them and appeals to Jehovah to show himself.

The drop scene rises to reveal *Act II, Heaven*. The back part of the stage is raised two steps above the front part. Night sky and stars.¹⁰ Jehovah is seated on his throne and his children are dancing before him- *Dance of Jehovah's Children*. Satan addresses Jehovah and accuses Job of the sin of materialism, pointing to him [as he sits] feasting in voluptuous contentment in the front part of the stage. Jehovah authorises Satan to tempt Job. He descends from his throne [with gesture which permits Satan to do what he can and offers Satan his throne] and allows Satan to take his place. He goes out, followed by his children. Heaven darkens. After a while Satan leaps on to the throne-*Dance of Triumph*-thunder and lightning.

[Drop scene returns] Job and his wife bid farewell to his sons and daughters and his sons' wives. They leave [Job and his wife].

They go out and the feast of the shepherds grows more riotous. They begin a *wild and drunken dance*. After gloating over them for a while with pleasure Satan springs among them and destroys them all. They fall dead in heaps. Triumph of Satan. CURTAIN. INTERVAL.

Act III: Earth. Before Job's House at night. Job and his wife are sitting [before his house] at their door in peaceful happiness. Three messengers enter [one after the other bearing news]. They bring the news of the death of Job's sons and the destruction of all his wealth. Job mourns and rends his clothes and sits naked on a dung hill. Satan enters and torments Job in many ways and smites him with boils. Job is quite overcome and becomes desperate, but he does not curse Jehovah. His three friends enter - they perform a *Dance of Sympathy* which gradually becomes a *Dance of a Pious Complaisancy and Self-Esteem* - they accuse Job of sin. Job justifies himself and summons his vision of the deity. They all assume attitudes of devotion and expectancy. The drop scenes rises to reveal *Act IV: Heaven*. But Satan is on Jehovah's throne instead of Jehovah- horror, terror, and despair of all; they cower and hide their faces. Elihu enters and rebukes Job for his materialism. ['You are Old and I am Very Young' expressed in a dance of youth and beauty. Job understands how he has sinned. As the dancer enters Jehovah in majesty and drives Satan from his throne - followed by his children and he mounts it up in glory.]

A Dance of Youth and Beauty. Job understands how he has sinned and has a true vision of deity. Jehovah enters in Majesty followed by his children. He drives Satan from his throne and takes his place upon it in glory. Job and the other mortals worship. Job's daughters return, he embraces them. Shepherds enter then, all together, fetch stones and build one altar for Jehovah. *Altar Building Dance*. They sacrifice and dance and play musical instruments while the Sons of Morning dance in heaven. (Two dances of glory: a heavenly and an earthly one.)

Act V. During this last dance the last drop scene falls [hiding heaven] blotting out heaven and leaving [only] the mortals. The backcloth represents the same hills as in Scene one and now it is sunrise and instead of the sheep there are fields of ripe corn. The shepherds repeat their pastoral dance while Job and his wife sit under the tree (enter Satan to spy again?). CURTAIN.

APPENDIX II

*The Final Synopsis for Job*¹¹

Scene 1. Job is sitting in the sunset of material prosperity, with his wife surrounded by his seven sons and three daughters. They all join in a pastoral dance. When they have dispersed, leaving Job and his wife alone, Satan enters unperceived. He appeals to Heaven, which opens, revealing the Godhead (Job's Spiritual Self) enthroned within. Job's Spiritual Self consents that his mortal nature be tried in the furnace of temptation.

Scene II. Satan, after a triumphal dance, usurps the throne.

Scene III. Job's sons and daughters are feasting and dancing, when Satan appears and destroys them.

Scene IV. Job's sleep is disturbed by Satan with terrifying visions of War, Pestilence and Famine.

Scene V. Messengers come to Job with tidings of the destruction of all his possessions and the death of his sons and daughters.

Scene VI. Satan introduces Job's comforters, three wily hypocrites. Their dance at first stimulates compassion, but this gradually changes to rebuke and anger. Job rebels: 'Let the day perish wherein I was born.' He invokes his vision of the Godhead, but the opening Heaven reveals Satan upon the throne.

Scene VII. The young and beautiful Elihu enters, and by his dance shows Job his true relation to the Universe. Job realizes his sin of complacent materialism. The Heavens then open, revealing Job's Spiritual Self again enthroned as a glorified vision of the Godhead.

Scene VIII. Satan again appeals to Job's Godhead, claiming the victory, but is repelled and driven down by the Sons of the Morning. Job and his household worship, while the heavenly dance continues.

Scene IX. Job sits, a humbled man, in the sunset of spiritual prosperity, surrounded by his family, upon whom he bestows his blessing.

NOTES

The author expresses his deepest thanks to Dr Milo Keynes, who introduced him to his father, and who was so supportive of this research into the family archives.

The editor of Dance Research is grateful to Dame Ninette de Valois and to Dr Milo Keynes for reading Dr Ries' article and for suggesting some small modifications to the text.

¹ *Job and The Rake's Progress*. (London: Sadler's Wells Ballet Books, No.2, 1949.

Sir Geoffrey later made some changes in his text for this book and included it as Chapter 24, 'Blake's *Job* on the stage', in *Blake Studies*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, pp. 187-94. His autobiography was published in 1980 as *The Gates of Memory*, Oxford University Press.

² See Appendix 1.

³ Keynes was nearly sure that Gwenolen Raverat had destroyed Kochno's note because she was so infuriated with the impresario's dismissal of the ballet.

⁴ The procession never proved practicable and was later cut.

⁵ According to Sir Geoffrey his sister-in-law must have meant. 'I could imagine how your eyes gleamed when the curtain came down.' Lydia Lopokova could not have seen her brother-in-law's opening night since she and Maynard were in America at that time, as mentioned in the last paragraph of the letter.

⁶ Sir Frederick Ashton more recently quoted Lopokova as saying: 'Wonderful ritual: wonderful score. Good dancing parts. It should come back as a landmark, since it is so much a sort of conception of ballet of that time.' (Sir Frederick Ashton. 'Lydia, the Enchantress' in *Lydia Lopokova* edited by Milo Keynes, London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1983, p. 121.) Lopokova might have changed her mind about the piece;

or she may even then have been able to separate her own likes and dislikes from what was important and innovative.

⁷ *Job* entered the repertory of the Vic-Wells Ballet on September 22, 1931.

⁸ This original draft scenario, which Sir Geoffrey worked out with Gwendolen Raverat, was written out in Mrs. Raverat's own hand, but the copy that was sent to Diaghilev was never returned.

⁹ Material in square brackets is deleted in the MS.

¹⁰ This Scene does not agree with the

description of the stage area at the beginning of this draft scenario. This was corrected before the polished version was sent to Diaghilev. See Appendix II.

¹¹ Some early programmes list scenes V and VI as one, thus making the total eight scenes. Vaughan Williams divided the score into eight scenes and an epilogue – this last section contains the music for scene IX. This explains some of the confusion in the early reviews about the number of scenes in the ballet as compared to the concert version of the score.

The original draft scenario (Appendix I) was

rewritten a number of times before being shown to Vaughan Williams. According to Sir Geoffrey the scenic structure, as shown above, replaced the original five act division (with interval) as seen in the draft, before the scenario was handed over to Williams or sent to Diaghilev.

(reproduced from *Dance Research*, The Journal of the Society for Dance Research, Volume II, Number I, Spring 1984, with kind permission of Frank W. D. Ries. This excellent article was brought to our attention by Dr. Milo Keynes).

Gwen Raverat – her role in *JOB*

Once Geoffrey Keynes had prepared his detailed scenario for a stage production of *Job*, as discussed in his book *The Gates of Memory* (see page 6), he persuaded his sister-in-law Gwendolen Raverat to design backcloths based on Blake's drawings and to colour small cut-out figures to represent the leading characters in the main scenes. Prepared for a toy theatre, Gwen Raverat was able to illustrate clearly the climaxes of the action as they would eventually appear in the ballet. Geoffrey Keynes and Gwen Raverat used the models and the toy theatre to persuade Ninette de Valois and Lilian Baylis to back the Old Vic/Sadler's Wells production of *Job – A Masque for Dancing*.

Gwen Raverat was the daughter of Sir George Darwin and Maud Du Puy. The great Charles Darwin was her grandfather. As such, she was a cousin to Ralph Vaughan Williams. She was a very talented artist, engraver and writer.

In her book *Period Piece* (1960), she tells of 'overhearing scraps of conversation about 'that foolish young man Ralph Vaughan Williams' who would go on working on music when 'he was so hopelessly bad at it!' Gwen Raverat relates that this memory is confirmed by a letter of Aunt Etty (Henrietta Litchfield nee Darwin 1843-1927): "He has been playing all his life, and for six months hard, and yet he can't play the simplest thing

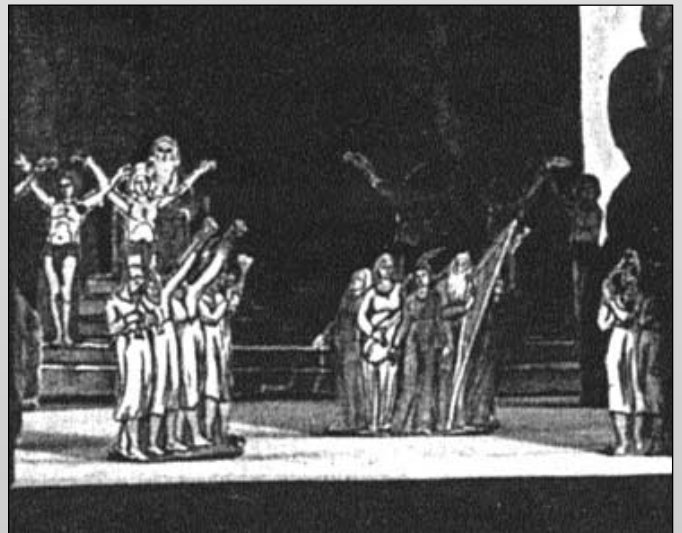
decently. They say it will simply break his heart if he is told that he is too bad to hope to make anything of it."

(Reprinted with the kind permission of Dr. Milo Keynes and Faber and Faber)

Margaret Keynes, Gwen's younger sister and Geoffrey Keynes' wife, wrote in her book *A House by the River* (1976) about Gwen Raverat. She says:

"While in London she had valuable experience in designing sets and costumes for the ballet, or 'Masque for Dancing', devised by my husband, Geoffrey Keynes, and herself from Blake's engraved *Illustrations of the Book of Job*; this was first performed by the Camargo Society at the Cambridge Theatre in London on 5 July 1931 with choreography by Ninette de Valois and music by our cousin Ralph Vaughan Williams. Gwen had even painted the first of the back scenes herself almost unaided in the Old Vic workshops. The ballet, known as *Job*, has been part of the repertory of the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden Opera House until the present time; Gwen's designs being used until 1940 when they become dilapidated and were replaced by revised sets and costumes by John Piper. Her original watercolours are now preserved in the Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum."

Stephen Connock



Job - The Sadler's Wells dimension



Some of the key players in Job relaxing at rehearsal



Dame Ninette de Valois OM, CH, DBE



Constant Lambert

OLD VIC & SADLER'S WELLS THEATRES

Lane at Stage - - - LIME HOUSE, E.C., E.M. (No. 1)

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

OLD VIC.
Friday, March 24, at 8 p.m.
Saturday, March 25, at 2.30 p.m.
Sunday, March 26, at 8 p.m.
Monday, Mar. 27, at 8 p.m.
Wednesday, March 29, at 8 p.m.

Sadler's Wells.
Monday, March 26, at 8 p.m.
Tuesday, March 27, at 8 p.m.
Friday, March 30, at 8 p.m.
Wed. Mar. 31, at 2.30 p.m.
Saturday, March 31, at 8 p.m.

Season Commencing
Friday, March 24, 1932.

The Vic-Wells Ballet

(Under the Direction of **NINETTE DE VALOIS**)

ANTON DOLIN

ALICIA MARKOVA
URSULA MORSTON
FREDA MCCARTHY
FREDA BAMPFORD
JOY NEWTON

STANLEY JUDSON
KEITH LESTER
TRAVIS KEENE
ANTONY TUDOR
(in costume of JOHN BARNES and Company).

NINETTE DE VALOIS
MARIE WILSON
AILEEN PHILLIPS
Reception APPLEYARD
Madame NEWBROOK

The following ballets will be given during the season:-

Job	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Vaughan Williams
Spectre De La Rose (1st Part)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Walter
Newbury Ballet (1st Part)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Hager
Les Symplices (1st Part)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clayton
Les Symplices (2nd Part)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clayton
The Bookman's Story (1st Part)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clayton
Captain and Princess	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clayton
Fete Polonoise	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clayton
The Jackdaw and the Pigeons	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Hugh Bedford
Regina	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clayton
Montage Aux Ballets Viennoises	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Hugh Bedford
Ballet of Dances	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clayton
"Scene De Ballet" from "Fanny"	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	L.S. Brock
Mardi Gras and Balloons	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clayton
Scène	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Arthur Hone

There will be (with additions to the above list)

Choreographers - **NINETTE DE VALOIS, FREDERICK ARNOLD, RUPERT DOONE**
Musical Director - **CONSTANT LAMBERT**

* These ballets are given by arrangement with THE CANADIAN SOCIETY.
S.A.D. 1932 - Approved Ballets: 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th.

Preliminary notice of the 1932 performance of Job

OLD VIC & SADLER'S WELLS

Lane at Stage - - - LIME HOUSE, E.C., E.M. (No. 1)

The Vic-Wells Ballet

(Under the Direction of **NINETTE DE VALOIS**)

Saturday, October 24th, at 2.15 prompt

AT THE OLD VIC

OWING TO GREAT SUCCESS
REPETITION OF
JOB

A MASQUE FOR DANCING
by **VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**
Choreography by **NINETTE DE VALOIS**

ANTON DOLIN

By kind permission of **JACK BURNHAM** and **MRS. GILLIARD**

SATAN

SADLER'S WELLS. Nov. 6th at 7.45
THE OLD VIC. Nov. 13th at 7.45 Nov. 14th at 2.30

DIDO AND AENEAS (Paralle)

In Production by the Vic-Wells Company
FOLLOWED BY

CEPHALUS AND PROCRIS
A Ballet in 2 scenes with music by **GRETY**
On November 6th, special appearance of
LYDIA LOPOKOVA

PROCRIS

Medical Director - **CONSTANT LAMBERT**
S.A.D. 1932 - Approved Ballets: 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th.

Notice of a repeat performance of Job on October 24, 1932

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Concert Reviews

Disappointing Royal Albert Hall Concert

In a Prom season singularly short on English music, the concert on 21 July by the BBC Philharmonic should have stood out as a shining beacon. Expectations were to be disappointed, however, for a number of reasons, some all too predictable.

Firstly, the Royal Albert Hall's resemblance to a large Turkish bath, after only two hot days in London, is really no longer acceptable – the man sitting next but one to me must have lost half a stone in weight, and all he did was cough!

Are the British getting sicker by the year? This audience punctuated *The Lark Ascending* to the point of total turn off. It could have been asthmatic coughs brought on by high humidity; or else summer colds are more rampant than ever before.

I wonder how many RVW Society members have ever sat in the back row of Choir Stalls West – it gave a once in a lifetime chance to watch the organist join in the last of the *Enigma Variations*, but was a lot less than ideal for listening to the music.

Still, one had a goodish view of Yan Pascal Tortelier down there, even though he frequently looked like a synchronised swimmer. His marionette-like conducting style jarred the visual scene, nevertheless Tasmin Little fought the coughers to give what should be a performance worth watching on television.

We began with Britten's *Sea Interludes*, well enough played even if the storm was somewhat imprecise here and there, and finished with an *Enigma* rather lacking in grandeur. The centrepiece of the evening was the London premiere of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Seventh Symphony* – at 50 minutes almost half the concert, it outstayed its welcome, despite an enthusiastic performance conducted by the composer. Faces in the audience bespoke amusement at times, and dislike at others, but boredom took over for many. There have been eighty Proms performances of the *Enigma*, but only one symphony of Maxwell Davies has ever had a second Proms performance. In a season where only one VW work is programmed, it seems a shame to devote half of one concert to a work whose main virtue, as one person put it, is that it is new. BBC TV recorded the concert but will not show the *Symphony* – indeed their compere, Nigel Havers, did not stay to listen to it.

All in all, a disappointment for a large proportion of an almost full house – when is London going to see a world class concert hall? Oh yes and another question – why have there been only eight performances of *The Lark Ascending* in eighty years? We deserve more and better.

Simon Coombs

Expressive Fifth Symphony

**RVW at St. Cyprian's Glentworth Street,
London, Friday 17 June 2000**
Bloomsbury Chamber Orchestra
Holst: *A Fugal Overture*
Holst: *Scherzo*
RVW: *Serenade to Music*
(Interval)
RVW: *Symphony no.5 in D*

Sadly, this was one of those occasions when the audience size matches the orchestra's. This was a pity because this was a wonderful evening of music. The first half commenced with the two Holst pieces, both of which were lively and full of energy. *The Fugal Overture* has some fine passages embellished with percussion that gives a bright, ringing sound. The *Scherzo* worked surprisingly well on its own (it was to be part of a symphony which Holst did not live to complete).

As a newcomer to the wider world of RVW I have still to get to know the *Serenade to Music*. The 16 soloists stood close to the audience and all – musicians and singers alike – gave a fine rendition of this piece which is full of lyricism. Enhancing the singers' output with a couple of strategically-placed microphones (as is done in some theatres) would have helped the balance between singers and orchestra and brought out some of his musical fingerprints in unexpectedly contrasted places. The *Serenade* has a passage where a major and minor chord a semi-tone apart are juxtaposed (as in the 4th movement of the *Sixth Symphony*).

After the interval came the *Fifth Symphony*. Along with the *Seventh* and the *Tallis* this incredible work was my entrance into the music of RVW but I had never heard it played before.. I think it is safe to say that if one is already familiar with it through recordings then the first live performance is unforgettable. Hearing it on disc is one thing but hearing it live is another, so first opportunity you get, go hear it! It seemed doubly appropriate that this deeply spiritual music was rising from the orchestra into beautiful gold and stained glass interior of St. Cyprian's.

Conductor Michael Turner took the 1st movement at an unhurried tempo, allowing the full majesty of the movement to gradually cohere around the E major section and to shine out with splendour at the climax. The 2nd was slower than normally heard (understandable given its difficulties) but players did a commendable job at reproducing what has been called the 'feathery orchestration'. With longer acquaintance this brief section reveals itself as full of musical delights and by no means inferior to the other movements.

What can one say about the 'Romanza'? This music is so unspeakably lovely that almost any performance will be moving because the dots on the page are all full-proof. However as the players built slowly but inexorably toward the second climax one could really feel the passionate involvement of all. This was wonderfully expressive. Turner's measured approach paid off in the last movement to, with its powerful lyricism brought out, the music rising in arches of sound to its sublime conclusion.

Rikky Rooksby

Simultaneous Sea Symphonies

The National Federation of Music Societies was formed in 1935 to develop a greater rapport between the professional and amateur musician, and over the last 65 years its members have become the largest concert promoters in the United Kingdom. As well as Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales there are ten English Regions and the West Midlands has in recent years been one of the liveliest.

To celebrate the Federation's Diamond Jubilee in 1995, extremely successful simultaneous performances of Verdi's *Requiem* were given by NFMS forces in Coventry and, as a celebration of the Millennium, the West Midland Regional committee decided to put on a similar series of concerts. The big decision was which 20th century work to choose? Britten's War Requiem, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* all had strong supporters, but in the end the vote went to Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony*.

The foundation of the project lay in the fact that the region has three excellent orchestras which have given performances of a standard which could amaze those prejudiced listeners who think that there are only bad amateur orchestras! The Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra has had Guy Woolfenden as its conductor for some 28 years and the Birmingham Philharmonic and Chandos Symphony Orchestras are lucky enough to share the services of Michael Lloyd, who is Senior Resident Conductor with the English National Opera. He is one of the many dedicated professionals who spend hours travelling to rehearse and give concerts with their amateur forces. On this occasion Michael Lloyd chose to conduct Chandos Symphony Orchestra, but the region is lucky to have the versatile Paul Spicer (conductor of the Finzi Singers and Birmingham Bach Choir) living in Lichfield, where he also directs the International Festival and the nearby prestigious Abbotsholme Arts Society, and he readily agreed to conduct the Lichfield performance.

The choruses were drawn from the 70 NFMS member choirs in the region and the forces involved totalled over 800 performers. There were six rehearsals for the choruses taken by each conductor (though Michael Lloyd did have a deputy for two nights when he was conducting *Madame Butterfly* at the Coliseum) and, although this was ideally not enough for the many inexperienced singers who had not performed the work before, the standard of the performance was amazingly high.

Members of the VW Society do not have to be told what a marvellous work *A Sea Symphony* is, but, not having heard the work live for many years, this listener found the way Vaughan Williams tackles an epic subject in epic vein a moving experience. No one hearing the opening brass fanfare, followed by the chorus's proud cry of 'Behold the sea' can fail to be drawn into this visionary work. The acoustics of the three cathedrals where performances took place are so different that a comparison between the three was impossible, but for one who managed to get to the rehearsal with the full orchestra in Coventry on the Friday night, the dress rehearsal in Lichfield and the

performance in Worcester on 20th May, it was fascinating to hear this diffuse symphony in such different surroundings.

Coventry Cathedral is famed for its vast open spaces and over-reverberant acoustics, whereas Lichfield has a narrow nave and the physical impact of the music was quite thrilling. Worcester probably was the best performing space and here the balance between orchestra, choir and soloists was very good. The soloists were chosen by the conductors and, though the fee offered was the same for all singers, no one turned the date down! Emma Bell, William Dazeley, Henry Herford and Helen Williams all gave fine performances but the thrilling singing of Julie Kennard in Lichfield and the magnificent projection of Ashley Holland in Worcester have to be singled out. As a celebration the concert had two other essential ingredients. Firstly, NFMS these days is a very forward looking body, and today's generation of composers was represented by the inclusion of Jonathan Dove's sparkling orchestral fanfare *The Ringing Isle* and Colin Matthews exuberant *Toccata Meccania*. The second ingredient was the involvement of the younger generation, and for this the Bournville Children's Choir, the Coventry Cathedral Choristers (boys and girls), and the Worcester Cathedral Choristers all performed for fifteen minutes in the first half.

But it is Vaughan Williams's visionary work that we shall remember.

Jim Page

All RVW Program in Washington, D.C.

The lofty interior of the Washington (D.C.) National Cathedral was the site of an all Vaughan Williams concert on May 14, 2000. The program included the *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1 in E Minor, Toward the Unknown Region* and *A Sea Symphony*, and was part of the 1999-2000 concert series of the Cathedral Choral Society, the resident chorus of this inspiring edifice in the U.S. capital city. In the opening remarks before the program began, Dr. J. Reilly Lewis, Music Director of the Society, indicated with some amazement that the concert marked the first time that any of the three works had been performed in the long history of musical performances at the Cathedral.

Complementing the Choral Society was a full symphony orchestra, members of the Children's Chorus of Washington, Baritone Gordon Hawkins and Soprano Susan Crowder. The program notes reflected the fact that the Foundation Stone of the Washington National Cathedral had been laid on September 29, 1907, and that eleven days later *Toward the Unknown Region* received its premier at the Leeds Festival in England. Further enhancing the England-United States relationship is the fact that the texts for both *Toward the Unknown Region* and *A Sea Symphony* are taken from the writings of the American poet Walt Whitman.

Dr. Lewis has a long and distinguished musical history, and has served as the Music Director of

the Cathedral Choral Society for more than fifteen years. In this light, it was especially thrilling to observe the effect of Vaughan Williams's music on this seasoned conductor. Twice Dr. Lewis brought the opening of *A Sea Symphony* to an abrupt halt. After the second incident, a hushed and startled stillness settled over the packed Cathedral. Finally, Dr. Lewis turned to the audience and conceded that he had been so deeply anticipating the performance of this tremendous work that he had become overwhelmed with emotion. The third time was indeed a charm, and the powerful and lovely strains of the symphony flowed over the rapt audience to its conclusion.

As a long-time resident of the Washington D.C. area, and an ardent proponent of the music of Vaughan Williams, it was very gratifying to observe the warmth with which the master's music was received at this concert. With this city's National Symphony led by Leonard Slatkin, an acknowledged Vaughan Williams advocate who is about to become Music Director of the BBC Symphony, one hopes for an ever stronger bond between our musical tastes and the music of RVW. And with that, an ever-increasing number of performances of the works of the man defined in the concert program notes as "the preeminent English composer of the twentieth century."

Dennis Siebert
Arlington, VA, U.S.A.

Letters

We are always pleased to receive contributions for this page

New Military Band CD

I expect those members of the *RVW Society*, who, like me, trawl the pages of each month's Gramophone for details of new VW recordings, will already know this. Those who don't may like to hear of an interesting military band CD recently released, which includes fifteen RVW pieces, at least one of these (all 37 seconds) being a premier recording. Many of the others are arrangements which I cannot find mentioned in Michael Kennedy's second edition of *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*.

The band is that of the Grenadier Guards (a fine group indeed). The label is Band Emblem, and the number EMBL 8001.

The premier recording is of the *Flourish for Three Trumpets*. In the accompanying booklet it says this was written for the RMSM, Kneller Hall; but the only reference in the *Catalogue* is to a work of the same name written for the Staffordshire Schools in 1951. Can anyone throw any light on this?

Other military band arrangements not

mentioned in the *Catalogue*, are of *Linden Lea*, *Greensleeves*, *The Wasps Overture*, and *March Past of the Kitchen Utensils*, *The Old Hundredth*, *Rhosymedre*, and, to my mind the one that works the best of all, *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1*.

All in all, a CD well worth purchasing.

And whilst on the subject of *Norfolk Rhapsodies*, I understand that the second of these is complete but for two missing pages. Has anyone thought of completing it for performance? Elgar's 3rd Symphony was 'realised' in a very convincing fashion with much less material to go on.

M J Gainsford

(this CD will be reviewed in the February Journal - ed.)

Progress at Down Ampney

I received the June number of the Journal this morning and there are three issues arising from the perusal of it which I would like to raise.

Firstly I note that the Society is, for the second time, going to sponsor a new recording of a Vaughan Williams opera when there is already an adequate recording in existence and when one of VW's operas has never been recorded at all. I refer to *The Poisoned Kiss*. At VW's centenary in 1972, the BBC broadcast a performance although, as I recall, there was a technical problem which led to it being broadcast in mono rather than stereo. Nevertheless, can I urge the Society to enquire about the possibility of reissuing this performance commercially, as a stopgap, if there is no chance of a new recording being made in the foreseeable future?

Secondly, I note the objectives of the Garland Appeal. These do not seem to encompass, and presumably would not permit, a contribution to the V-W memorial which, some years ago, was proposed in this Journal as a millennium project for installation in the church at Down Ampney. I would value a progress report on this project - is it still being pursued, and with what vigour?

Finally, in his review of Simon Heffer's new book Barry Forshaw describes "many areas in which [R V-W] was a very different Englishman from Elgar. While the latter lamented the loss of horses rather than men in the First World War, Vaughan Williams saw active service (despite his age)" This is an outrageous use of selective quotation in pursuit of a disreputable thesis (and Forshaw later accuses Heffer of being tendentious!). In 1914 Elgar was 57 (V-W was 15 years younger). On 6th August he wrote from Scotland to Alice Stuart-Wortley 'I wish I could go to the front but they may find an occupation for a worthless person.' and, immediately he returned home he joined the special constabulary and became a staff inspector. It was in a letter to one of his many friends of German ancestry, Frank Schuster that he wrote, on 25th August 1914, the much quoted letter including 'Concerning the war I say nothing - the only thing that wrings my heart and soul is the thought of the horses - oh! my beloved animals - the men and women can go to hell - but my horses -'

This was before the slaughter in the trenches had started and from a man only just getting to the agonising realisation that the country outside Britain where he first received international recognition, and in which lived so many of his friends, was now the enemy. None of this, or what Elgar later said or did during the

war deserves Barry Forshaw's implied slur. For those of us who love the music of both Elgar and Vaughan Williams the question of which is the greater is of no importance. Each has his own place in our hearts and happily, we don't have to choose between them.

D. McBrien

Chairman's Reply to David McBrien

Many thanks indeed for your letter of 1st June. I was pleased with your letter in that it gives me the opportunity to reply in full and, with your agreement, to reproduce both your letter and my response in the October issue of the journal.

The first point you raise is the sponsorship for *Sir John in Love*. I accept that there is already a very adequate recording in existence. You would prefer us to concentrate on *The Poisoned Kiss*. I would love to sponsor a recording of *The Poisoned Kiss* but the cost would be between £120,000 and £150,000, unless the recording could be linked to a concert performance and the soloists could be persuaded to donate, or reduce, their fees. In the case of *Sir John in Love*, this was fully rehearsed and performed as part of the *Vision of Albion Festival* and therefore rehearsal costs can be kept to a minimum. Orchestral and artists' fees have been massively reduced. This new recording is costing us around £30,000 rather than £120,000 which would normally be the case. If the Society did not take this opportunity to record *Sir John in Love* at this low level cost, a future recording would involve higher figures. We decided to take this opportunity and I hope the results justify our decision. As to the Richard Hickox recording of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a modern recording does add a new dimension and Richard Hickox will be including music in *Sir John in Love* which has not previously been recorded. Referring to the BBC broadcast, we will enquire whether this may be available, although our top priority for fund raising now remains *The Poisoned Kiss*.

Secondly, you asked about The Garland Appeal's contributions to the Vaughan Williams memorial. This is not possible under the Articles of Association of The Garland Appeal, although the RVW Society itself does have some money aside for the RVW memorial in the church. This project is being pursued with some vigour and is being jointly managed by Robin Barber and Simon Coombs, two of our Trustees. We hope to have preliminary plans drawn up, and an estimate of the cost, by October in order to update members, at the AGM, of our progress.

Finally, you referred to Simon Heffer's book. I think your answer speaks for itself and I know our members will be interested to read your detailed comments.

Stephen Connock

Scott - clarification

From my letter in the RVW Journal No.18, June 2000, the reference to a confrontation between Scott and Shackleton reads incorrectly and is misleading. My fault. At the appropriate place it should read 'Scott did not reply'.

The reply "Right, you're the worst bloody fool of the lot..." is attributable to Shackleton. This of course does not change the animosity which arose between the expedition leader and a stronger personality. The mis-spelling of Lashly is my typo.

David Tolley

Advice to Producers

When looking through a record catalogue I cannot help but smile with satisfaction at the increase in the number of recordings of the works of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Yes, I prefer some over others, but, perhaps it is my fondness for the music, I have yet to hear a recording not worth listening to. This is not, of course, to say that the recording producers of Vaughan Williams's music could not be improved, as some disciples of the late Sir Adrian may hold, and it seems to me that the recording producers are trammelled by an attitude of, "Yes, well, this is the way we've always done it." Perhaps technology will soon make radical changes in the recordings possible, but I have here a trio of modest suggestions which could easily be implemented and, with the second, even applied to existing recordings.

The first suggestion comes as a result of purchasing the recording of the *Sinfonia Antarctica* as performed by Bernard Haitink conducting the London Philharmonic (EMI CD 47516). I regret to say that I am in complete disagreement with the recommendation of this disc by Stephen Connock in his Selective Discography, as for me it is ruined a mere three minutes into the first movement by not one, but two ghastly occurrences. The first is that the passage featuring the soprano voice -- which represents something in the manner of The Eternal, Seductive-but-Deadly and Ethereal Spirit of the Alien Land that Man Was Never Meant to Know (with Sheila Armstrong here in the title role) -- is close-miked and sung in a manner more appropriate to *Salome* or *Tristan*, thus shattering any ethereal effect and plummeting it into the realm of "Good Old-Fashioned Wagnerian Bawling" -- to use the words of Gustav Holst. And as if this weren't enough disappointment, it is immediately followed by the non-effect of the wind machine (also close-miked), which sounds not so much like an icy, life-threatening polar blast, as it sounds exactly like a drum of fabric being rotated over wooden staves (and in this case the fabric sounds like polyester).

The recording by Kees Bakles conducting the Bournemouth Symphony (NAXOS 8550737) fares much better because during the recording the soprano was ostensibly restrained from getting too close to the microphone and the wind machine was apparently placed in the building across the street. My suggestion, then, is to dispense with the wind machine entirely. Leave it in the theatre's cellar along with the slapstick and the mechanical swan. Instead, why not contribute to the effect Vaughan Williams was obviously seeking by dubbing-in an actual recording, preferably digitally recorded, of natural wind - ideally howling wind recorded in a polar region. The score calls for a wind machine only because that was the best wind sound the technology of the time could provide. Britain is notorious for its

partisans of the period instruments, but I can't conceive of any benefit or historical interest inherent in a wind machine. After all, there is certainly no current recording which uses a gramophone and wax cylinder to reproduce the song of the nightingale at the end of Respighi's *The Pines of the Janiculum*. If Respighi deserves a digital nightingale, why must Vaughan Williams, a far greater composer, be forever condemned to an antiquated piece of theatrical claptrap?

My second suggestion concerns *JOB: a Masque for Dancing*. (And may the Good Lord deliver me from the pedants who wish to quibble over the fact that a masque already includes dancing). I imagine that future generations will be able to enjoy DVD-videos of a stage performance (perhaps inter-cur with views of Blake's engravings), but as of now the best means of obtaining full appreciation of this remarkable work is, of course, to see it performed live. Alas, living as I do in the ghetto called America, it seems certain that such a pleasure will elude me in this lifetime. Fortunately, I own the next best thing: OUP's reasonably priced study score, which contains as many marvels as a recording. (One can, for example, stare in endless disbelief at the impossibly high leaps the tuba is asked to make in scene two). Every recording of *JOB* should come equipped with a score. (See article on page 7).

My final suggestion is an obvious one. With all the current releases aimed at the children's market (e.g., *Bach for Bathtime* or *Brain Your Child with Mozart*), there should certainly be a recording of the ballet music *Old King Cole* available, ideally paired on a CD with Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. The record company that would issue these works on an interactive CD-ROM that a child could play with would have a profitable product indeed. That no such product has appeared I attribute to the short-sightedness of the industry which seems content to invest only in sex music for adolescents, and which assumes that listeners of classical music will all be pleased with periodic repackagings of a company's back catalogue.

Keith Otis Edwards

Obituary

It is with great sadness that we record the death of John Bishop, who with Stephen Connock and Robin Barber, founded the RVW Society in 1994.

He died of cancer on Tuesday 6th September, 2000.

An appreciation will be included in the February journal.

Music you might like

Durufle's Requiem

Maurice Duruflé, who died in 1986, produced only a slim catalogue of works limited almost entirely to sacred choral and organ music. For much of his adult life he was organist of the church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont in Paris, so it's perhaps not surprising that his career as a composer took this path, though more important, I think, was his profound religious faith.

It's important to hear his *Requiem* as a believer's attempt to complement with music one of the great sacred texts. The words struggle to express an essentially incomprehensible and inexpressible idea: eternity. The measure of Duruflé's achievement lies in whether or not he finds a musical metaphor to match this. The best example occurs at the end of the work, in the *In Paradisum*, where, for the first time, we speak directly to the dead, wishing them eternal rest. The final chord cannot represent a simple resolution, because Duruflé adds notes to it, producing a gentle dissonance which denies us the full close we expect, and which, with the simplest of musical means, offers a glimpse of eternity in a way no words ever could.

Another reading of this final, unstable chord is that it represents traces of doubt lurking in the composer's apparently unshakeable faith. Perhaps it does. Vaughan Williams responded in an equally perceptive way to sacred texts, and he, it seems, was not a believer at all. (This is a fascinating subject.) He wrote a Mass but no Requiem. Was the idea of eternal rest within eternal life uncongenial to him?

Duruflé's *Requiem* seems to me to inhabit pretty much the same world as a number of RVW's works. The mystical side of things, the searching for the truth, makes me think of *Flos Campi*. The serenity puts me in mind of the *5th Symphony*. These are obvious examples. Less so is very Frenchness of the music- it's not easy to find music more French than this- which reminds me of passages in the *Pastoral Symphony*, and even *On Wenlock Edge*.

Much of Duruflé's music is inspired by, or directly based on, Gregorian chant. This is certainly true in the case of the *Requiem*, as it also is in the exquisite *Four Motets* on *Gregorian Themes*. The austerity of plainchant is almost absent, however. The spirituality is there though, and with it a powerful humanity which seems to come directly from the composer. And it's this duality, rather than any purely music parallel, which leads me to think that those who love the music of Vaughan Williams might well come to love Duruflé's too.

There are a number of excellent recordings available of this masterpiece, and the choice is complicated by the fact that the work exists in three forms: the original version for full orchestra, a second with organ accompaniment, and a third for small orchestra which, like many people, I prefer. The version by the Corydon Singers conducted by Matthew Best on Hyperion is beautifully sung and played, and comes with Fauré's *Requiem* as a generous and perhaps irresistible coupling. But my favourite costs much less than this, and if the tuning of the choir is not always so impeccable it's a small price to pay for the most remarkable Frenchness of the performance. The mezzo, Béatrice Uria-Monzon, sings the Pie Jesu with exquisite poise, and the whole is conducted with much understanding by

Michael Piquemal. As well as the Requiem this Naxos disc gives us the Motets mentioned above, a couple of organ pieces, and Duruflé's very last published work, only ninety seconds long: hope, generous love and human goodness, RVW qualities again; his setting of the Lord's Prayer.

by William Hedley

American Dreams by Robin Wells

American Dreams—Barber's Adagio and other American Romantic Masterpieces
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Raymond Leppard
Decca 458 157-2

This is one of the most interesting and enjoyable discs that has come my way during the past year. As fellow RVW member Byron Adams remarks in his informative sleeve-note. 'While America has nurtured a host of musical pioneers such as Cowell, Ruggles and Cage, there is another, quieter but no less valuable tradition in American music, that of composers who have looked towards Europe for technique, aesthetic sustenance and inspiration.

This disc offers representative performances of these composers which bear interesting comparison with the work of the English musical renaissance from Parry onwards. The Barber Adagio was perhaps included to give a certain authority to this collection, but nevertheless each composer has something to say and there is much here to hold the listener's attention.

The first track is *Noel* by George Chadwick (1854-1931). It is a movement from his Four Symphonic Sketches which I found immediately arresting with its lingering suspensions and sliding chromaticisms. There is a spiritual quality to this music which clearly shows the influence of the German romantics. Pizzicato and Adagietto by Arthur Foote (1853-1937) is born out of Dvorak and Tchaikovsky, while Delius enthusiasts will be interested to hear the orchestral tone-poem *Sea Drift* by John Carpenter (1876-1951). This is based on the same Whitman poem and owes something to Ravel in its colourful scoring. Two of America's greatest song-writers feature with *Lullaby* for strings by Gershwin and *Prayer and Cathedral Vision* by Hoagy Carmichael (1899-1981).

But perhaps the most interesting piece is the *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune* by Thomas Canning (1911-1989). Byron Adams refers to the affinity with VW's "Tallis" in its 'expert writing for strings and mood of rapt contemplation'. Scored for double string quartet and string orchestra there are many similarities to *Tallis* with Canning's sure handling of the divided string textures and pizzicato basses. I have played the disc many times over the holiday period and many who have heard it without knowing have asked what it is. Be bold and go out and buy it, you will not be disappointed.

Robin Wells

Member Services

Copies of VW performances

John Birkhead was very kindly offered to record for members performances of Vaughan Williams in his personal collection of 'off-air' recordings. The full list of performances is shown below. Members interested should contact John Birkhead direct at 270A High Street, Orpington, Kent, BR6 0NB. Prices will be Between £5 and £10 a disc.

CONCERTO FOR TUBA & ORCHESTRA:
THURSDAY 13/11/97.RLPO/HANDLEY.

FANTASIA ON A THEME BY THOMAS TALLIS:
BBCWSO/HUGHES. 80's.
SUNDAY 22/9/96. BBCPO/TORTELIER.
MONDAY 30/6/97.BBCPO/TORTELIER.
THURSDAY 5/11/98.BBCPO/Y.P.TORTELIER.

FIVE VARIATIONS ON "DIVES & LAZARUS":
LIVE PROM, SATURDAY 10/9/94.BBCSO/A.DAVIS.

FLOS CAMPI:
M'DAY 27/3/95. P.DUKES (VLA),
CHORUS, N.SINFONIA/HICKOX.

FOLK SONGS
FRIDAY 29/3/93(ORIGINALLY 1958).

LARK ASCENDING:
SUNDAY 24/9/95.J.CARNEY (V) B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.
WEDNESDAY 3/4/96.J.CARNEY (V) BBCPO/HICKOX.
THURSDAY 23/10/97.M.LOVEDAY (V) BBC.CO/HANDLEY.
TUESDAY 2/12/97.M.DAVIS (V) BBCSO/SLATKIN.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS:
MONDAY 3/11/97.SOLOISTS,
CHORUS & ORCHESTRA ROH/HICKOX.

THE POISONED KISS (EXC):
M'DAY 27/10/97.SOLOISTS, LSO C & O/HICKOX.

RIDERS TO THE SEA:
M'DAY 27/3/95. SOLOISTS, N.SINFONIA/HICKOX.
W'DAY 22/10/97.SOLOISTS, CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY CITY OF LONDON SONFONIA/HICKOX.

SERENADE TO MUSIC:
LIVE FROM BARBICAN, MONDAY 9/10/95.
16 SOLOISTS, B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.

SYMPHONIES:
No.1 "A SEA SYMPHONY":
LIVE PROM, SATURDAY 18/7/92. J.RODGERS (S),
S.KEENLYSIDE (B'TONE), BRIGHTON FESTIVAL
CHORUS, LONDON CHORAL SOCIETY,
RPO/HANDLEY.LIVE FROM RFH,
W'DAY 23/2/94. A.ROOCROFT (S), T.HAMPSON
(B'TONE), BBCSCHORUS, TRINITY COLLEGE
OF MUSIC CHAMBER CHOIR. BBCSO/A.DAVIS.
SUNDAY 17/9/95.J.RODGERS (S), S.KEENLYSIDE
(B'TONE) LSO CHORUS, B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.

No2 "A LONDON SYMPHONY":
LIVE FROM CHELTENHAM TOWN HALL,
F'DAY 10/7/92. BBCSO/A.DAVIS. TUESDAY 21/9/93.
BBCNOW/HICKOX. LIVE FROM BARBICAN,
M'DAY 9/10/95. B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.
TUESDAY 31/12/96.BBCNOW/HUGHES.
TUESDAY 15/7/97.BBCNOW/SEAMAN.
LIVE FROM ROYAL CONCERT HALL,

GLASGOW, AND W'DAY NYOGB/SEAMAN.
WEDNESDAY 8/4/98.BBCSO/A.DAVIS.

No.3 "PASTORAL":
TUESDAY 5/10/93.BBCPO/HANDLEY.
SUNDAY 24/9/95.B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.
LIVE FROM RFH, TUESDAY 27/3/96.BBCSO/A.DAVIS.
LIVE PROM, TUESDAY 21/7/98.BBCSO/A.DAVIS.
THURSDAY 28/1/99.BBCSO/HICKOX.

No.4 IN F MINOR:
W'DAY 7/9/94.ULSTER O/HANDLEY.
THURSDAY 5/10/95.B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.
THURSDAY 13/11/97.RLPO/HANDLEY

No.5 IN D:
SUNDAY 26/6/94.BBCSO/A.DAVIS.
LIVE PROM, W'DAY 10/8/94.BBCSO/HANDLEY.
LIVE FROM RFH, THURSDAY 15/12/94.LP/HAITINK.
LIVE FROM SYMHONY HALL B'HAM,
W'DAY 8/3/95. CBSO/RATTLE.
THURSDAY 5/10/95.B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.
SUNDAY 5/5/96.BBCPO/WORDSWORTH.
LIVE PROM, F'DAY 30/8/96.LP/NORRINGTON.
M'DAY 27/10/97.LSO/HICKOX.
M'DAY 3/8/98.BBCSSO/J.MAKSYMIUK.
THURSDAY 5/11/98.BBCPO/HICKOX.
F'DAY 5/5/00. BBCNOW/WORDSWORTH.

No.6 IN E MINOR:
LIVE FROM WARWICK ARTS CENTRE,
M'DAY 26/9/94. BBCSO/A.DAVIS.
LIVE PROM, SATURDAY 22/7/95.BBCCO/HANDLEY
M'DAY 8/7/96.BBCSO/A.DAVIS.
LIVE PROM, SATURDAY 9/8/97.NYOGB/C.DAVIS.
TUESDAY 21/4/98.BBCSO/A.DAVIS.
THURSDAY 8/4/99.BBCSSO/OSMO VANSKA.

No.7 "SINFONIA ANTARTICA":
LIVE PROM, F'DAY 5/8/94.S.GRITTON (S),WOMENS'
VOICES OF HALLE CHOIR, HALLE O/NAGANO.
SUNDAY 17/9/95.J.RODGERS (S), WOMENS' VOICES
OF LSO CHORUS, B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.
LIVE FROM ABERDEEN MUSIC HALL,
F'DAY 5/5/00. V.KERR (S), LADIES VOICES
OF ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC &
DRAMA CHAMBER CHOIR, BBCSSO/BRABBINS.

No.8 IN D MINOR:
SUNDAY 21/5/95.BBCPO/HICKOX.
THURSDAY 5/10/95.B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.
LIVE FRIDAY 9/4/99.ULSTER O/J.CAREWE.

No.9 IN E MINOR:
LIVE FROM BARBICAN,
M'DAY 9/10/95. B'MOUTH SO/HICKOX.
F'DAY 29/3/96.RPO/SARGENT
(B'CAST OF ORIGINAL 1st.PERFORMANCE 2/4/58).

TEN BLAKE SONGS:
F'DAY 29/3/96(ORIGINALLY 1958).

THE WASPS-INCIDENTAL MUSIC:
W'DAY 30/11/94.BBCSO/LAZAREV.
TUESDAY 2/12/97.BBCSO/LAZAREV.

OVERTURE:
THURSDAY 23/10/97.BBCCO/HANDLEY.
THURSDAY 20/8/98.BBCPO/ROZHDESTVENSKY.

a Garland for Linda at Deal

On Friday 4th August 2000, the Deal Summer Festival - a performance of *a Garland for Linda* which was given as a Gala Charity Concert in aid of The Garland Appeal. The Joyful Company of Singers performed it in St. George's Church, Deal.

The concert began with a piece of music by David Matthews, composed in honour of the Queen Mother, called *Fanfare for the Queen Mother*. This was a short wordless fanfare originally written for her 90th birthday. The first half of the concert continued with a beautiful rendering of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Silence and Music* which was written to words by Ursula Vaughan Williams and was part of *A Garland for the Queen* in 1953, and *Bushes and Briars*, the famous folk song RVW collected in 1903. This was followed by John Tavener's atmospheric *Two Hymns to the Mother of God*. It was written 1985, in memory of the composer's mother. The solemn pace of the music and distinct harmonies coupled with the use of a divided chorus sounded timeless within the atmosphere of the church. Vaughan Williams's *Three Shakespeare Songs* followed with texts from *Midsummer Night's Dream* for numbers one and three and from *The Tempest* for the second song. The singers gave a faultless performance that brought out the harmonies and combination of words and music very well. The first half was rounded off with a light hearted performance of four Lennon and McCartney songs, *For No One, And I Love Her, Here, there and everywhere* and *Good Day Sunshine*, arranged by the choir's conductor Peter Broadbent, under the title *Four Songs for Chorus*.

The second half of the concert consisted entirely of *a Garland for Linda*, but in the pre concert talk the audience were able to gain an insight into the way the piece was approached and came into being. They learnt the reason for its composition and about The Garland Appeal. David

Matthews and Judith Bingham explained how they went about composing their contributions to it. David told us that he had been given the Pima Indian poem by a friend, which he used as his text. Judith told us that she wanted to set some words of hope to music as her contribution. She wrote her own poem called "Water Lillies", after seeing them in a lake and realizing that during winter they froze and appeared dead but that in the spring they revived. Both composers said that because of the different styles of all nine composers they were not sure, at first, whether the piece would work as a whole. It did. They thought this was due to everyone's commitment and the order in which each movement was placed. The conductor of The Joyful Company of Singers, Peter Broadbent, did this. The performance of *a Garland for Linda* took place minus the Giles Swayne's movement - *the flight of the swan* - because it required a cellist, and the musician who was to have played was indisposed. In the third movement by John Rutter, Gill Kenchington, a local player, played the solo flute. The performance of the Garland was magical and the audience was entirely captivated by their mastery of it. Their singing was so clear with regards to articulation of the words, and their tuning superb. At all times they captured the mood of each link in the Garland and in so doing gave the whole an aura of beauty, therefore making it a special remembrance to Linda McCartney.

It was a memorable occasion, and the comments I overheard afterwards were all favourable. However there was a missed opportunity of providing CDs of it, which I am sure, would have had many buyers if they had been available. There was an opportunity to contribute extra funds to The Garland Appeal and I hope it fared well.

Linda Hayward
Dover

a Garland for Linda in New York

The American Premiere of *a Garland for Linda* in New York city was an enormous success. The performance was held at the Riverside Church on 3 June 2000. The following are some personal highlights of the evening. First, prior to the performance, members of the RVW Society met for dinner. The members included Frank and Dawn Staneck from New Jersey, and Stephen and Luci Nash from Long Island, New York. Also joining us was Kelly Wise from Vienna, Virginia. This was an enjoyable opportunity to get to know them as well as learn more about RVW's music. Following dinner, we took a cab to the Cathedral Church of St. John The Divine. This huge church includes the Pilgrim's Pavement, which was dedicated through a Vaughan Williams' work of the same name.

The Garland was performed by the Riverside Festival Singers. They were equal to the task with their voices blending beautifully. If there were defects in the performances, I could not detect them. The *Garland* was performed following an intermission. Prior to the intermission, the concert included Sir John Tavener's *Two hymns to the Mother of God*, four works of Vaughan Williams (*Silence and Music, Bushes and Briars, The Turtle dove, and Greensleeves*) and "Beatle" songs by Lennon and McCartney arranged by Peter Broadbent. The singers, performing a cappella, handled these works with great skill. The Beatle songs were wonderfully arranged and performed. My only criticism was that they were too short.

Near the end of the intermission, Sir Paul McCartney walked from the front of the chapel to his seat. It was an electrifying experience with the audience all trying to catch a glimpse of him and taking pictures.

The Garland was expertly performed. My favourites include *Musica Dei donum* by John Rutter and *A Good-Night* by Sir Richard Rodney Bennett.

At the conclusion of the performance, Sir Paul thanked the composers and performers. He looked youthful and sounded just like himself.

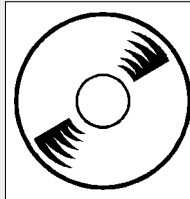
Stephen Connock deserves immense thanks for putting The Garland Appeal and concerts together. As a measure of the influence of the New York concert, it is noteworthy that it was broadcast live throughout the United States on National Public Radio. Stephen's tireless energy and direction have served the RVW Society well since its inception and hopefully will continue to do so for many years to come.

Alan Aldous
Beaverton, Oregon
USA

Solution:

8. Amaryllus, 9. All Hall, 10. Saucy, 13. Maria, 14. Viola.
Down: 1. Aethiopia, 2. Lover, 3. Niton, 5. Old King (Cole), 6. Adieu,
15. Claribel, 16. Lady, 17. Cole, 18. Lazarus.
Across: 1. Adeline, 4. Holy, 6. Aida, 7. Hereford, 11. Bean, 12. Lean,

Record Review



Along the field and the Ten Blake Songs

The English Tenor Repertoire – Volume Three

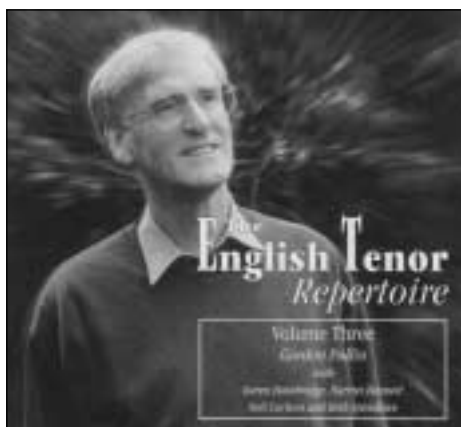
Gordon Pullin (tenor),
Neil Carlson (oboe),
Beth Spendlove (violin).
Stewart Orr Sound Services (SOSS CD 294).
Available from Amphion Records or from
Prior's Croft Barn, Withersdale, Harleston,
Norfolk. IP20 OTG (Tel: 01379 854458,
Fax: 01379 854459)

This is only the fourth recording of *Along the field* that I am aware of and the first to use a tenor. Gordon Pullin reminds us in the adjoining article that the work may have been influenced by Holst's *Four Songs* of 1916/17. These sparse and austere settings of Housman may also have been part of Vaughan Williams's reaction to the horrors of the First World War, including his experiences on Vimy Ridge. We know he carried Housman's poetry with him at Neuville St. Vaast in 1916. The bitterness and irony of Housman's verse is to the fore in these haunting settings. Gordon Pullin has a rounded tone, clear enunciation and a lively intelligence which brings out new meanings in this neglected cycle. Overall, however, Ruth Golden on Koch 3-7168-2819, brings out the poignancy of the songs with greater expressiveness.

The *Ten Blakes Songs* has fared better on record with excellent versions on CD by both Ian Partridge and Robert Tear. Vaughan Williams responded more to William Blake's illustrations than he did his poetry which he found often obscure. Here he sets some of the greatest poems, although he detested *The Lamb* and initially refused to include it until he awoke at 3 am one morning with the music in his head. Gordon Pullin's intelligence and warm tone are again in evidence even if this recording does not replace either of the two versions mentioned above.

The CD includes other works by John Jeffreys, Holst, Rebecca Clarke, Richard Rodney Bennett and a Thomas Hardy *Soliloquy* by Philip Wilby.

Stephen Connock



VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: 'Along the Field' and 'Ten Blake Songs'

By Gordon Pullin

Those who would like a detailed analysis of the two Vaughan Williams's song-cycles '*Along the Field*' and '*Ten Blake Songs*' are advised to stop reading now and go in the first instance to A.E.F Dickinson's biography of the composer, and in the second to Wilfrid Mellers's '*Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion*'.

Vaughan Williams had been taught by two extremely accomplished composers of songs, Stanford and Parry. He was one of a number born in the 1870's who were to contribute to the renaissance of English song, following a path clearly laid out for them by Parry's '*English Lyrics*', a collection still not really appreciated today. Parry it was who had inculcated in Vaughan Williams the idea that any composition required that little extra something if it was to add to the listener's experience in any musical genre. Do read the short attribution to Parry at the head of Vaughan Williams's '*Our Father in the Heavens*' for proof of this.

Most of Vaughan Williams's songs were written before 1930. Whether one prefers the folk-song-cum-art-song of '*Linden Lea*', or Schubertian '*Water Mill*', or the youthful, 'outdoor' spirit of '*The Songs of Travel*', in which he came the nearest of any English composer to capturing the 'Wanderer' tradition, or the Shove songs of his 'Georgian' period, or the spirituality of the '*Five Mystical Songs*' and the '*Four Hymns*', or indeed '*Wenlock Edge*', one cannot ignore the fact that he was concerned to enlarge the boundaries of what came under the title of 'song'. As Stephen Banfield says, (his book '*Sensibility and English Song*' is a *sine qua non* for anyone interested in this subject) covers the whole range of emotion, from mindless gregariousness and the highly personal to visionary aspiration.

'Wenlock Edge' used a medium that was original in English music, though it had already been used by Ravel and Chausson. Opinions were sharply divided on Vaughan Williams's settings of Housman. While Edwin Evans wrote a glowing report in the *Musical Times*, Ernest Newman was quite scathing. Vaughan Williams's approach to Housman was exactly the opposite of Butterworth's. While the latter scaled down his music to the bare essentials, thus leaving room for the occasional touch of colour or sentiment, Vaughan Williams went for the large, dramatic gesture. And though Housman may seem to anyone looking at the poems to be a 'miniaturist', that is in fact by no means the case, as his subjects are universal and of major interest. Housman himself, of course, as we know, never forgave Vaughan Williams for leaving out a verse of '*Is my tea ploughing*', but on the whole his attitude was that having

one's poems set to music might help them to become 'immortal'. And while he certainly was rather cynical, as one can see from his remark that composers 'regard the author merely as a peg to hang things on' (to which A.V Butcher added, 'Omit the word "merely")', I am sure that he must have been secretly pleased that his poems figured so largely in this awareness of literature, and above all, contemporary literature, among composers. After '*Wenlock Edge*' Vaughan Williams began to move away from the song, except for experiments with voice and instruments other than the piano – including songs with optional accompaniments (how many take the 'optional' string quartet in '*Wenlock Edge*' seriously?) Perhaps Newman's word had affected Vaughan Williams, because when he came to set nine further poems (this time including five from Housman's '*Last Poems*'), he pared down his style considerably. Setting songs for voice accompanied by only a solo violin was an experiment that had already been tried by Holst (*Four Songs*, of 1916/17, which are settings of four mediaeval religious lyrics), and by Rebecca Clarke (*Three English Songs*, 1925). Bliss praised Holst's idea, while C.W.Orr called it a 'hideous combination'. It was ten years after the Holst work that Vaughan Williams produced '*Along the Field*', and one of the original songs, '*The Soldier*' was soon dropped, and indeed destroyed. Exactly which poem this was a setting of is not known. In 1927, when the work was first written, only seven of the songs were performed. It was not until 1954 that the cycle was finally revised and published.

In '*Along the Field*' Vaughan Williams allows the poems to come much more to the fore than in '*Wenlock Edge*'. Holst had used the violin sparingly in his songs. In Rebecca Clarke's case, in spite of Havergal Brian's comments about her extreme economy of method, the violin certainly has its own character (perhaps even going a little over the top with the introduction of Chopin into '*The Tailor and the Mouse*'). While Vaughan Williams gives the violin a different character in each of the songs, it does not overplay the drama, but acts as a partner to the voice. In '*We'll to the woods no more*' its falling, arabesque-like figures, based on the opening six notes in the voice-part, provide a sympathetic echo to the words. In '*Along the Field*' the violin, perhaps acting as the voice of the aspen, in addition to providing a drone on the key note, thus giving the song what has been called a ghostly, hurdy-gurdy effect, exchanges melodies with the voice in the two verses. In '*The Half-moon Westers Low*' it is chromatically at odds with the vocal line, emphasising the '*wide-apart lie we*'. In '*In The Morning*' the violin seems to be watching the lovers, and when the simple, folk-like vocal melody is finished, it has a passionate postlude, summing up all that can be felt in that simple phrase '*And they looked away*'. In '*The Sigh That Heaves The Grasses*' the violin is the '*Sighing heaving grasses*'. '*Good-bye*' has a jaunty, folk-like accompaniment, which makes it one of the words, with which the young man tries to woo the maid – unsuccessfully. In '*Fancy's Knell*', perhaps somewhat perversely, the violin becomes a flute, with its own playful ritornello. The last song is very reminiscent of the first, with the violin having the first and last say of a melody shared with the voice, which has a wonderfully expressive rising sixth or seventh.

While the songs certainly work individually, and while there is a cyclic sense thanks to the first and last ones, those in the middle of the work tend to make it move slowly. Then suddenly there are two quick songs before it finishes. As with modern performances of 'Winterreise', perhaps the accepted order is not necessarily the best one. And one should remember that Vaughan Williams did not call this a song-cycle, but 'Eight Housman Songs'.

The same argument might well apply to the 'Ten Blake Songs'. Vaughan Williams came late to Blake, at least as regards setting him to music (though there are many who consider the non-vocal 'Job' one of his best works), and the trouble he had with finding a melody for that 'd.... little lamb' is well-known. Blake has been a favourite poet for many twentieth century composers – Bantock, Boughton, Britten, Dyson, Gibbs, Gurney, Holst, Howells, Ireland, Quilter, Somervell, to mention about half of those of which I myself am aware.

Vaughan Williams would have been well acquainted with the talents of Wilfred Brown and Janet Craxton for whom the Blake Songs were written, not least through the Leith Hill Festival, where both were frequent soloists. Perhaps Bill Brown's recitals and recordings of folk-songs with John Williams were also in his mind, as three of the songs are unaccompanied, which was one of the features of those recitals.

Obviously the oboe, as a single note instrument cannot be used to quite the same atmospheric effect as the violin. In the Blake Songs, however Vaughan Williams uses it as a totally equal partner. It often has its own counter-melody. This is true in 'Infant Joy', with which the songs start, and where it seems to be portraying the second person in the dialogue in the poem. It portrays anger in 'A Poison Tree',

rising to a climax two octaves above the voice. It is interesting that Vaughan Williams puts dynamics and expression marks fairly frequently in the oboe part, but hardly at all in the voice part, in any of the songs. The melodies of voice and instrument are much more similar in 'The Piper'. For 'London', one of Blake's 'dark, satanic poems, the oboe is given a rest while the voice sings, unaccompanied and 'in free time', quite a chromatic melody in which three of the verses end with a 'flowing' motif, first appearing at the mention of the Thames. The melody which the composer eventually found for 'The Lamb' is in f minor, and by no means the simplest of the oboe parts. As in the first song the oboe has its own melody, often used between lines or verses, with variations on it while the voice is singing making the whole song very much a duet. Perhaps because of that key the following song, 'The Shepherd', is unaccompanied and the simplest one of the set, taking its cue from the lamb's 'innocence' mentioned in the poem. 'Ah! Sun-flower' is a fairly free dialogue between voice and instrument, while 'Cruelty has a human heart' is quite fiercely chromatic, to portray cruelty, jealousy, terror etc. As a total contrast after this comes the third accompanied song, 'The Divine Image', simply set, the music all inter-related, as befits a poem about mercy, pity, peace and love. The final song, 'Eternity', has the oboe weaving a non-stop line around the voice. As in most of the songs, it is the instrument that has the final say.

There are two practical reasons why both 'Along the Field' and the 'Ten Blake Songs' are not performed more often. One is the problem of programming – that is, what does the rest of the programme contain? Music clubs may balk at the expense of a third party (assuming one has a pianist as well); even if not, they may not think that a programme such as, for example,

the Blake Songs, items for voice and piano, for oboe and piano, perhaps the Britten 'Metamorphoses', and a Bach aria (with apologies to the School of Authenticity) to bring all three together, is not necessarily going to attract their members. (Personally I would hope it would!)

The other practical difficulty is in the hands of the singer. Both these works are said to be set for 'tenor', but in fact they are very low-lying. They seem to have in mind the sort of singer that many composers were writing for in the 1920's and thereabouts – John Goss is the obvious example, as one can see from the songs written for him by such as Warlock and Foss (especially the latter's Hardy settings) – who is something between a high baritone and a tenor. (The 'Four Hymns' are different: they are definitely for tenor.)

Ideally one would hope that there could be an occasional recital entirely of Vaughan Williams, given by a tenor and pianist (songs with piano), plus a viola for the 'Four Hymns', a Violin for 'Along the Field' and an oboe for the 'Ten Blake Songs'. But that may be expecting too much, even with the revival of interest in Vaughan Williams's music.

Gordon Pullin

(Gordon Pullin has embarked on a recording project called 'The English Tenor Repertoire', of which volumes 1,2 and 3 are now available from Amphion Records, with Volume 4 (of songs by mainly American composers) expected in the Autumn. Volume 1 contains 'The Water Mill', and Volume 3 contains both 'Along the Field' and 'Ten Blake Songs', as well as two of the Holst songs with violin and one of those by Rebecca Clarke. He has also recorded 'Buonaparty' on a CD about Hubert Foss.)

Two CD set from Richard Hickox

Bradley Creswick (violin),
Roger Winfield (oboe),
Stephen Roberts (baritone),
Sinfonia Chorus and Northern Sinfonia,
Richard Hickox on EMI CZS 5 73986
2 (USA ZBZB 73986) (medium price)

These recordings date from 1984-88 and it is good to welcome them onto CD. *Old King Cole*, in particular, is most appealing and this reissue should win new converts to this underrated work. There are other highlights: the *Prelude to 49th Parallel* is inspiring and the *Prelude on an old Carol Tune* quite beautiful – way ahead of the only rival version by Douglas Bostock and the Munich Philharmonic on ClassCD 244. Listening to Richard Hickox's version of the overture to *The Poisoned Kiss* reminds us of what we are missing with no recording of the full opera. His phrasing of the section Blue larkspur in the garden is quite magical. Expressiveness, too, in the orchestral versions of the *Serenade to Music*, although this only made me want to hear the vocal contributions. Elsewhere, as in *The Lark Ascending* and the *Five Mystical Songs*, the performances are disappointing, these gorgeous works failing for me to take wing. Overall, strongly recommended especially for *Old King Cole*.

Stephen Connock

A Choral Portrait

A Vaughan Williams Portrait including *O Clap your hands*, *O taste and see*, *Mass in G minor*, *Te Deum in G*, *Valiant-for-truth* and *Antiphon*.

Rochester Cathedral Choir, Roger Sayer. Sean Farrell (organ) on Lantern Productions LPCD 4. Available from 3, St. Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent ME1 1TU. Special price of £9.99 for RVW Society. For discount available to RVW Society members quote reference LANT/RVWSOC.

The list of works included in this Choral Portrait is certainly appealing. Two excerpts from the *Five Mystical Songs*, the *Song of the Tree of Life* from the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *O taste and see*, *The Blessed Son of God* from *Hodie* and much more all raise expectations for this CD. The Rochester Cathedral Choir consists of three tenors, three bass singers and 20 boy choristers. Under Roger Sayer they are clearly a very accomplished choir and Sean Farrell, the Assistant Organist, adds the solo *Prelude on Rhosymedre* as well as supporting the choir.

The opening work - *O Clap your Hands* – is bright and fresh, an ideal opening to the Portrait. It is lovely to hear the *Song of the Tree of Life* in this arrangement and the

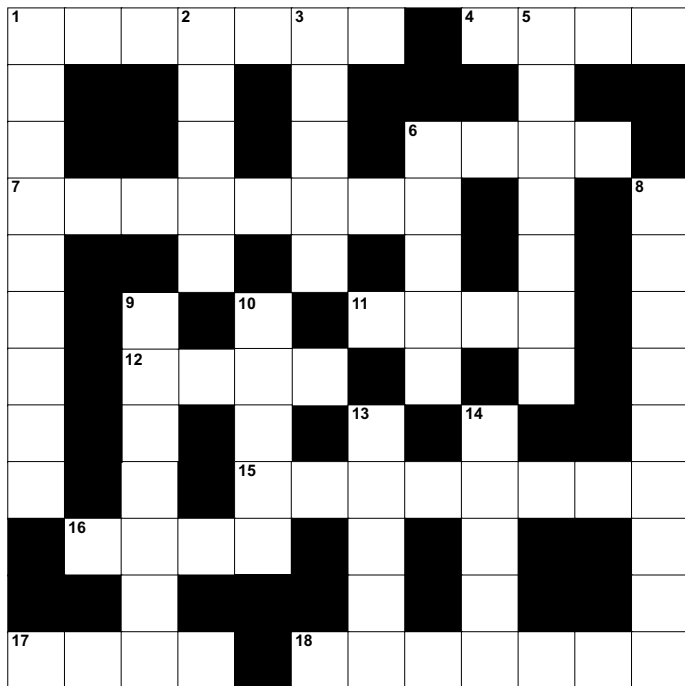
carols including the gorgeous *This is the truth sent from above* are quite delightful. It was a pity the organ introduction to *O taste and see* was not included although the *Prelude on Rhosymedre* is here. The performance of *Valiant-for-Truth* confirms this as one of VW's greatest works and an early George Herbert setting *Sweet Day* (another Herbert work that got away from our survey in the February 2000 Journal) is well worth hearing.

My problem is the inclusion of the *Mass in G minor*. It is understandable that in a Choral Portrait of Vaughan Williams, this work should be included but the strangely anonymous and withdrawn nature of this work over-balances the whole CD. By track 14, the *Agnus Dei* of the Mass, the tone seemed to become unvarying and I lost concentration. The same thing happened on repeated listening. Those members keen on this collection, and I am one of these, should perhaps avoid listening to the CD all in one go. The part-songs on one occasion and the *Mass in G minor*, on another.

The RVW Society are grateful to Sean Farrell for offering members the chance to purchase this disc at a discounted price.

Stephen Connock

RVW Crossword No. 5 by Michael Gainsford



Across:

1. RVW'S first wife (7)
4. The well was this in two settings made of the carol in 1920 (4)
6. Verdi opera first performed in the year before RVW's birth (4)
7. County of carol in 4 across (8)
11. This Hugh recorded the Lark in 1967 (4)
12. The apple tree do this down low in Linden Lea (4)
15. *Bill Crea* (anag) song written by RVW in 1899 (8)
16. A lost one was found in *Folk Songs of the Eastern Counties* of 1908 (4)
17. See 5 down (4)
18. Dives sent his hungry dogs to drive him from the gate in RVW's favourite folk song (7)

Down:

1. Salutes the colours in sketch for song of 1908 (9)
2. Accompanied his lass in 1922 part song (5)
3. Sounds like the village in Powys mentioned in the last song of *On Wenlock Edge*, but this one is in IoW (5)
5. (with 17 across) Ballet of 1923 (3,4,4)
6. German folk song arranged in 1903 (5)
8. Leading man of *The Poisoned Kiss* (9)
9. The first two words of hymn set by Shrubsole to *Miles Lane*, much appreciated by RVW (3,4)
10. The bold robber in the folk song collected by RVW at Kings Lynn in 1905 was also this (5)
13. This Marten met her end in the Red Barn in another folk song collected by RVW (5)
14. Instrument of RVW, Dvorak, and Mozart among others, but still the butt of orchestral jokes. (5)

News and Notes

- Vaughan Williams *Tallis Fantasia* is receiving many performances including:
Cambridge Festival - 11 November (01223 357851)
BBCSO under Andrew Davis on BBC Radio 3 - 28th July
Canberra Symphony under Andrew Robinson on 30th and 31st August in Canberra
- *A Pastoral Symphony* is being performed at St. John Smith's Square in London on 24th November, conducted by Guy Hopkins
- Bernard Haitink has completed his cycle of VW Symphonies with the recording of nos 8 and 9. They will be coupled together and released early next year
- Michael Gainsford tells us that the CBSO Prospectus for 2000/2001 includes five performances of VW:
Towards the Unkown Region (26 and 28 October)
The Lark Ascending (14 December)
Symphony No. 4 (21 February)
Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Talis (3 April)

*Next
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February
2001*

**Scott of the
Antarctic**

**Answers
on Page
29**

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Papers**

The June 2001 edition of the Journal will focus on RVW in the Second World War

The deadline for contributions is March 31st, 2001

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