

# Journal of the RVW Society

No.20 February 2001

## EDITOR

*Stephen Connock  
(see address below)*

## Go-ahead for Down Ampney Exhibition

A permanent exhibition of RVW's life and works will be opened in the summer. The venue for the exhibition is to be Down Ampney church, in Gloucestershire, where Ralph was christened and his father was vicar. This lovely church is situated close to The Old Vicarage, RVW's birthplace, and makes an ideal location for material devoted to the composer.

### Twenty four Tableaux

The exhibition will review RVW's life chronologically. It is split into four main Exhibits, 4ft. by 4ft., each consisting of six tableaux. Every one of the 24 tableaux includes a narrative and photographs which illuminate each period of Vaughan Williams' life. The four Exhibits sub-divide as follows:

1. Early life (1872 - 1914)
2. The Great War and its aftermath (1914 - 1929)
3. Years of achievement (1930 - 1946)
4. Uncle Ralph (1946 - 1958)

There will also be a central fifth Exhibit consisting of three well-known photographs of the composer which will catch the eye on the entrance to the collection. Simon Coombs, Project Manager, says:

*"The vicar of the church, John Calvert, and the parish authorities deserve our warm thanks for supporting this Exhibition. The bell-tower area makes an ideal location for our Exhibits. The narrative and photographs have been put together by Stephen Connock and will be discussed in detail with Ursula Vaughan Williams. I have now briefed the designers and expect that a final draft will be prepared by the Spring, in good time for the Summer opening event".*

### Gala opening

The Trustees are planning a special celebration to mark the opening of the Exhibition in the church at Down Ampney. The provisional date for this opening is Sunday 19 August 2001. This is the beginning of the Three Choirs' Festival which, fortuitously, is at Gloucester this year. All members will be welcome and we will be inviting a number of special guests. Refreshments will be provided and RVW's music will be performed in the church. More details and confirmation of the date and time will be included in the June journal.

## STOP PRESS

The original, 1913, version of *A London Symphony* was recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra, under Richard Hickox, at All Saints Church, Tooting, on 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> December 2000. Stephen Connock was present for the recording and said:  
*'This is a historic recording, with almost 20 minutes of new music of the highest quality. Thanks are due to Ursula Vaughan Williams and Michael Kennedy for their support in this wonderful recording'.*

## In this issue...

### Scott of the Antarctic Part 1

- The Last Unknown Region: Polar Ambition or Pilgrimage?

*by David Tolley . . . 7*

- The film music to Scott

*by Richard Young . . . 10*

- Scott - A Personal View

*by Michael Nelson . . . 21*

**And more .....**

### CHAIRMAN

Stephen Connock MBE  
65 Marathon House,  
200 Marylebone Road,  
London NW1 5PL  
(0836 567413)  
stephen.connock@dial.pipex.com

### TREASURER

John Francis  
Lindeyer Francis Ferguson,  
North House,  
198 High Street,  
Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1BE  
(01732 360200)

### SECRETARY

Dr. David Betts  
Tudor Cottage  
30, Tivoli Road  
Brighton  
East Sussex  
BN1 5BH  
(01273 501118)

# Job: Follow-up to the last Journal

Renée Stewart has kindly submitted this programme note and photograph of Job and his wife in the 1931 Cambridge Theatre production. Job's wife was Renée's sister Marjorie Stewart (wrongly spelt as Margery in the programme).

**THE CAMARGO SOCIETY  
FOURTH PRODUCTION**  
(By kind permission of Mr. B. A. Meyers)

**SUNDAY, 5TH JULY AT 8.30 P.M.  
MONDAY, 6TH JULY AT 2.30 P.M.**

**PROGRAMME**

**Prelude** ... .. *Fugal March* ... .. *Hugh Bradford*

**THE VIC-WELLS BALLET**  
(By kind permission of Miss LILLY BAYLES)

**THE JACKDAW and the PIGEONS**  
(*After*)  
**HUGH BRADFORD**  
Choreography by **NINETTE DE VALOIS**  
Scenery and Costumes designed by **WILLIAM CHAPPELL**

**ACTORS:**  
A Jackdaw, disappointed with his lot, wishes to leave his unprosperous and business a-plum. He discovers some pigeons' feathers, puts them on and goes off to join the pigeons. As he will not be long himself and sees "Come! Come!" whereupon the pigeons set upon him and drive him away. He tries to go back to the jackdaws but they will have nothing to do with him. Then, stricken and broken-hearted, he dies.

A Jackdaw ... .. **NINETTE DE VALOIS**  
Jackdaws **JOY NEWTON, BEATRICE APPELBYARD, JOAN DAY**  
Pigeons ... .. **SHEILA MCCARTHY, FREDA BAMPFORD, MADINA NEWHOUSE, DOREEN ADAMS, WENDY TOYE**

**INTERVAL**

**JOB**  
being *Milto's* *Thesen of the Book of Job*  
A *Musical* for *Director* invented by **GEORGE KIRBY**  
Music by **R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**  
Produced by **NINETTE DE VALOIS**  
Scenery and Costumes designed (after Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job) by **CONRAD ROBERT**  
Wigs and Make-up by **HENRY BROWN**

Job ... .. **JOHN MACNAIR**  
His wife ... .. **MARGERY STEWART**  
His three Daughters ... **MARIE NELSON, URSULA BORETON, DOREEN ADAMS**  
His seven Sons ... .. **WILLIAM CHAPPELL, HEDLEY BRIGGS, WALTER GORE, CLAUDE NEWMAN, ROBERT STUART, TRAVERS KEMP, STANLEY JUDSON**  
The three Messengers ... **ROBERT STUART, CLAUDE NEWMAN, TRAVERS KEMP**  
The three Comforters ... **WILLIAM CHAPPELL, WALTER GORE, HEDLEY BRIGGS**  
Wig, Postures and Posture **WILLIAM CHAPPELL, WALTER GORE, HEDLEY BRIGGS**  
Elihu ... .. **STANLEY JUDSON**  
Satan ... .. **ANTON DOLIN**  
The Children of God ... **BEATRICE APPELBYARD, FREDA BAMPFORD, JOY NEWTON, MADINA NEWHOUSE, PHYLLIS WORTHINGTON, JOAN DAY, WENDY TOYE, MARIE BELL**  
Some of the Ministers ... **JOY ROSSON, MONICA BATCLIFFE, KELLIE BROWN, ELIZABETH MILLER**  
Job's Spiritual Self ... .. **JOHN LOFTUS**  
The music, originally written for full symphony orchestra, has, for the purposes of this and subsequent stage productions, been re-arranged for Theatre Orchestra by **CONRAD ROBERT**  
Scenery invented by **ALICE JACOBSON** Costumes by **EVIL-HAAS**

**INTERVAL**



Renée Stewart provides the following information:

*"This photograph shows Job (John MacNair) and his wife (Marjorie Stewart) in the first staged production by the Camargo Society at the Cambridge Theatre in July 1931. Constant Lambert scored the music for theatre orchestra from the original symphony orchestra version. Lambert was conductor of the Vic-Wells ballet at the time and conducted the first performance.*

*My sister Majorie was a member of the Vic-Wells ballet and I was taken to see Job at the age of nearly 11. Anton Dolin certainly made a powerful impression, especially his sensational fall from the throne of God."*

# News from the Sixth AGM

The RVW Society held its Sixth AGM at Charterhouse School on 8 October 2000. A large and enthusiastic membership heard an excellent talk by Bernard Benoliel on *The Early Works* and then heard a superb performance by students of the RCM of the early *Piano Quintet*. The officers of the Society were all re-elected and Deirdre Hicks was also elected as a new Trustee. Members donated £428.00 towards the cost of the AGM - an excellent contribution for which the officers are very grateful. Our special thanks to Robin Wells for kindly arranging the refreshments at the AGM and for hosting the interesting tour of Parry's house at Haslemere.

We reproduce Bernard Benoliel's talk to the AGM for the interest of all members with Mr Benoliel's kind permission:

## RVW: The Early Works A Case Study

By Bernard Benoliel

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Connock, on behalf of RVW Ltd., for giving me the opportunity to introduce the early works of VW.

I thought it might be helpful for the Society if I explained the policy of the VW Estate towards the composer's early works and why we decided to revive the Piano Quintet in C minor.

There are no famous twentieth century composers where none of their major early compositions are available for performance. Our perception of Vaughan Williams before the age of thirty-five is limited to a selection of his songs, partsongs and two orchestral works, *In the Fen Country* and *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1* both revised later before publication.

### Why did this situation exist?

Shortly after VW's death, his widow Ursula gave the British Library almost all of the VW manuscripts in her possession, in effect the bulk of his output. Among them was a series of works that VW had withdrawn from public performance between the Wars.

Most of them had been written before the First World War and never published. On more than a dozen manuscripts Ursula wrote that VW did not wish further public performances to take place. This became the official policy of RVW Limited - without exceptions - from 1958.

Over the last decade several developments altered this position:

1. There were alarming reports to me personally from Faber Music and other VW publishers, that companies were attempting to publish some of these works illegally - on the Continent and in the US. At that time it was easy for any individual claiming to be a student or musicologist to obtain copies from the British Library. However the illegibility of the manuscripts and the enormous editorial problems involved, obviously stopped publication, though two orchestral works were illegally recorded in the US.
2. The second reason was the increasing interest shown by performers and scholars, in playing and hearing this music.
3. It also came to my attention that VW directly referred to his manuscripts in his will.
4. And finally I was always convinced that a knowledge of the Early Works was essential for understanding the young VW and how he developed as a composer.

### Extracts from RVW's Will

- To Sir Arthur Bliss of 15 Cottesmore Gardens W.8 and Dr. Charles Edmund Rubbra of Valley Cottages Speen Aylesbury Bucks TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS each in token of my friendship and I request that they will advise my wife on all musical matters arising after my death.
- If my said wife shall have predeceased me or shall die before the expiration of the said period of thirty days:  
I give and bequeath to my friends the said Sir Arthur Bliss and the said Dr. Rubbra all my manuscripts with the power to decide which shall be retained and which destroyed and to destroy such as they think fit and subject to such powers and the exercise thereof I DIRECT that the said Sir Arthur Bliss and Dr. Rubbra shall give such manuscripts to the Trustees of the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge or to such other museum or similar body as is willing to accept the same.

In his 1956 Will VW appointed Sir Arthur Bliss and Dr. Edmund Rubbra as musical advisers to his wife. In the event that she died before him they were to examine all the manuscripts and destroy what they felt was not worth preserving. According to Michael Kennedy, Bliss and Rubbra never agreed on anything musical, so this was perhaps an amusing ploy to ensure the survival of all the manuscripts, relieving VW of the final responsibility!

In this respect he was more like Berlioz than his beloved Brahms - so fortunately nothing was destroyed.

### A new policy

In the early nineteen nineties, the directors of RVW Ltd discussed these matters with Ursula Vaughan Williams. It was agreed that sooner or later these works would be published.

We all accepted that the worst possible scenario for VW's reputation would be for inaccurate, poorly printed editions to circulate throughout the world. The way this music is released will shape public opinion about VW the young composer.

We therefore decided to begin the process of preparing authentic editions of VW's early music. RVW Ltd chose Faber Music because we found them to be most enthusiastic, committed and painstaking of VW's publishers - the ones most interested in working closely with RVW Ltd.

We hope that over time the project will open a window on VW's formative years. By withdrawing all these early works, VW effectively screened off the real evolution of his creativity from 1894 to 1906. This may be why he could not bring himself to destroy them later.

As you all know, these were the formative years when he first befriended Gustav Holst, and came under the influence of Parry, whom he always revered, and Stanford, who conducted many of his early works. They were also the years of his marriage to Adeline Fisher, and his first involvement with English folk song.

## The Early Works

What do we mean by the Early Works? In essence everything written before 1908. Altogether VW withdrew about twenty major scores from this period.

### Choral and Vocal - Early Works

- Vexilla Regis Hymn for Soprano, Chorus, Strings, Organ 1894 (*B.Mus submission*)
- Peace Come Away for Voices and Small Orchestra 1895
- The Garden of Proserpine Soprano, Chorus, Orchestra 1899
- Mass for Mixed Double Chorus and Orchestra 1899 (*D.Mus submission*)
- Willow Wood Baritone or Mezzo Soprano, Orchestra 1903 (*Revised version added Female Chorus*) 1908/09
- Two Vocal Duets 1904 (*Soprano, Baritone, Piano, Violin Obligato, String Quartet*)
- The Wasps Tenor, Baritone, Male Chorus, Orchestra 1909 (*Complete incidental music to the Aristophanes play*)

Seven are choral or vocal. The two most important before *The Wasps* are *The Garden of Proserpine* by Swinburne and *Willow Wood*, a selection of Rossetti sonnets. This piece is effectively a companion to *The House of Life*.

*Proserpine* is strongly influenced by Parry, especially his magnificent setting of Tennyson's *The Lotus-Eaters* of 1892. *Willow Wood* is more problematic. After the 1909 performance VW wrote on his copy of the vocal score "complete flop".

*The Wasps* is not really an early work. It comes after *Towards the Unknown Region*, the *String Quartet* in G minor and is

contemporary with *On Wenlock Edge*. I was therefore surprised to discover two decades ago, that the complete music to *The Wasps* existed only in VW's manuscript.

While it is not quite illegible, it is in no condition for a professional performance, and none of the performing material survives to our knowledge. It was also clear that the score contains half an hour or more of vintage VW that is completely unknown.

In 1995 the Estate commissioned Mr. Igor Kennaway to prepare a new edition. RVW Ltd is arranging for a performance and CD première to take place in the 2001/2002 season. After that, score and parts will be on general hire from Faber Music.

### Orchestral - Early Works

- Serenade in A minor 1898
- Bucolic Suite for Orchestra 1900
- Heroic Elegy and Triumphal Epilogue 1901/02
- Fantasia for Pianoforte and Orchestra 1902/04
- Two Impressions for Orchestra In the New Forest 1903 (*No. 1 Burley Heath, incomplete, No.2 The Solent*)
- Impression for Orchestra Harnham Down 1904
- Norfolk Rhapsody No.2 in D Minor 1906

The first four works listed here were left complete but never published. In my opinion, the *Heroic Elegy* is the most important, while the *Fantasia* is the weakest.

The last three works are more mature in style, but more problematic for a modern edition. In one sense they are less important than the first three because VW explored this territory in many finer works throughout his life. However there is much lovely music here.

### Chamber Music - Early Works

- Piano Trio in C Major 1895
- String Quartet in C Minor 1898
- Quintet in D Major 1898
- Piano Quintet in C Minor with Double-Bass 1903/04/05
- Ballade and Scherzo for String Quartet 1904
- Nocturne and Scherzo for String Quartet 1906 (*Nocturne is a revision of the Ballade, Scherzo is new*)

The chamber music presents a different proposition. Two works, the *Quintet in D major* and the *Piano Quintet in C minor*, are composed for combinations VW never used again. More requests are made to the Estate about these two works, than all the others put together.

The music for string quintet is interesting because it uses material that later emerged in the *Phantasy Quintet* of 1912.

We decided the logical starting point was the *Piano Quintet*. It is the most ambitious and large scale of the chamber works and after today's performance I hope you will agree that is a delightful piece characterized by many of VW's stylistic hallmarks.

Our plan is to release all the chamber music. We have edited the *Nocturne* and the two *Scherzos* for *String Quintet* and are working on the *Quintet in D Major* - a fearful job because of illegibility and multiple manuscripts.

The music for string quintet will be performed at the British Library early next year (See Page 30) and the *Quintet in D Major* should follow soon afterwards. The next editing assignment will be the *String Quartet* and the *Piano Trio*.

## The Editing Process

How does the editing process work? First I have to give written permission to myself to have the manuscript copied by the British Library Reproduction Service, as paper copies. Copies are given to Elaine Gould at Faber Music and to the copyist. Depending on how rough VW's manuscript is, we make certain decisions before the copyist puts the score on computer.

Elaine and the copyist then make a list of queries about the manuscript, which often runs to several pages. Elaine and I discuss possibilities and come to a provisional conclusion. The copyist goes to the British Library to check the manuscript in case the photocopying left out or blurred details.

This is important with ambivalent passages or markings. Elaine and the copyist then prepare a provisional edition, usually after we have resolved some further queries. Faber's house style is generally adhered to, but exceptions are made when it obscures VW's intentions.

The edited score is sent to me to make decisions on the final queries - a great responsibility. Fortunately they are usually details.

The final phase is the advanced student performances when Mr. Martin Kingsbury of Faber Music and myself sort out any last minute corrections.

These will be arranged for each of the chamber works. RVW Ltd has chosen well-known professional players to give concert performances in conjunction with CD premiers. Starting date - we are aiming at 2002.

## The Piano Quintet in Context

I thought the Society might be interested to consider VW's Piano Quintet in its historical context.

<b>Solutions:</b>
<b>Across:</b>
2. It's a rum go, 7. La, 8. Cardiff, 11. Carol, 13. Ah, 14 Henley, 15. Medium, 17. Foe, 18. Rooms, 19. Dearmer, 22. Te, 23. Shepherds.
<b>Down:</b>
1. Along the Field, 3. Sea, 4. Riders, 5. MBF, 6. William Barnes, 9. Abinger, 10. Valiant, 11. Clear, 12. Leeds, 16. Fourth, 20. Eve, 21. Ear.

## The RVW Piano Quintet in historical context

### Repertoire Classics

Schubert 'Trout Quintet' 1819	(with double-bass)
Schumann	1842
Brahms	1864
Franck	1879
Dvorak	1887
Fauré (No.1)	1906

### Other 19th Century Piano Quintets

Hummel Lacy Spohr K. Grädener
Andrée Goetz Borodin Suk
Stanford Sibelius Coleridge-Taylor
H. Grädener Dohnányi Novák

### Contemporary with RVW

Scott	1900
Arensky	1900
Reger	1903
Bartók	1903/4
VaughanWilliams	1903/5 (with double bass)
Medtner	1904
Bridge	1905/6
Scott	1907
Schmitt	1902/8
Pfitzner	1908

The 19<sup>th</sup> century repertoire consists of about six works. Schumann's splendid *Quintet* became the model for the Brahms, Franck and Dvorák. The Schubert is early but it is the only *Quintet* in the repertoire to use a double-bass. This is why the VW holds a special interest for players of the *Trout Quintet*.

The *Piano Quintet* reached its zenith in the late romantic period and a number of famous composers wrote quintets in the 1880s and 90's.

I have also listed some Quintets that are contemporary with the VW. What is striking is that there are no repertoire classics here. None of these composers apart from Bartok has a reputation comparable to VW.

Like the VW, most of these quintets were written by the composers when they were young and still developing their style. VW was obviously dissatisfied with his own style because in December 1907 he sailed to France to study with Maurice Ravel.

Thank you all very much and I hope you enjoy discovering VW's *Piano Quintet*.

Bernard Benoliel  
8<sup>th</sup> October 2000





Students from the Royal College of Music acknowledge the applause from RVW Society members at the AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2000. From left to right: Tom Hankey (Violin) Martin Saving (Viola) David Warn (Piano) Charlotte Hooper-Greenhill (Double bass) Naomi Williams (Cello)

### Good news from Leith Hill Place

Ivor Greatrex, whilst walking the area during late August, talked to a National Trust worker re-building walls in the meadow below the house. He confirmed what Ivor saw, a full renovation of the south facing façade including windows and roof. Good news indeed, one hopes the N.T. will continue with keeping Leith Hill Place pleasing to the eye and not lapse into the sorry state of previous years.



Leith Hill Place today (Photo: Lewis Foreman)

# The Last Unknown Region: Polar Ambition or Pilgrimage?

by David Tolley

At the dawn of the 20th century the Earth's polar extremes presented an irresistible challenge to powerful nations in the Northern Hemisphere, whose territorial ambitions had not yet subsided, and for whom international prestige was still advanced by competitive achievements. Throughout the first two decades one expedition after another was directed to attain either Pole.

During the period of these epic expeditions Ralph Vaughan Williams produced a work that by its title might reflect this questing spirit, *Toward the Unknown Region*, a setting of Whitman's poem. This was perhaps the first of a number of works of visionary inspiration from the composer remarkable in Michael Kennedy's description: "Almost for the first time an English Festival choir was singing aspiring, liberating words which were not specifically religious:

*Darest thou now O soul, walk out with me towards that unknown region ... All is blank before us, all waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land'. (1)*

The purposes behind these polar enterprises and the circumstances of their progress fell far short of this ideal.

The attainment of the geographical North Pole was first disputed between Peary and Cook from 1908/9; although later credited to Peary the claims of both are now in serious doubt.

About the South Pole there is no dispute, yet its attainment created a British national legend later embodied in the film **Scott of the Antarctic**.

The Antarctic was the last great 'unknown region', the most remote and hostile place on earth - a place of physical and spiritual isolation. Following its drift into sub-zero latitudes the continent had remained inviolate although not devoid of life until the survey by Captain James Clark Ross RN (1841-2); from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it engaged the attention of several expeditions.

First to winter on the continent was Carsten Borchgrevink at 78°S in 1899. Several nations became concerned about the continent, particularly the British for whom the Royal Navy had represented the national interest since Captain Cook first crossed the Antarctic circle.

It was not surprising then that the first British expedition, although jointly proposed by the Royal Society and Royal Geographical Society, came under the command of an undistinguished RN officer, R.F. Scott, after its capable and experienced director Professor J.W. Gregory was obliged to resign.

In 1902 Scott went South in *Discovery* with Ernest Shackleton, the consequence of which aroused personal rivalry between them. This

was followed by Shackleton's high-risk attempt of 1908/9 which surpassed the *Discovery* expedition, coming within 100 miles of the Pole. His team were forced to turn back through lack of food and physical deterioration. How close that party came to share the subsequent fate of Scott, Wilson, Oates, Bowers and P.O. Evans is not generally appreciated.

It is important to understand that every British expedition of the period had crises affecting returning parties, who invariably developed symptoms of scurvy.

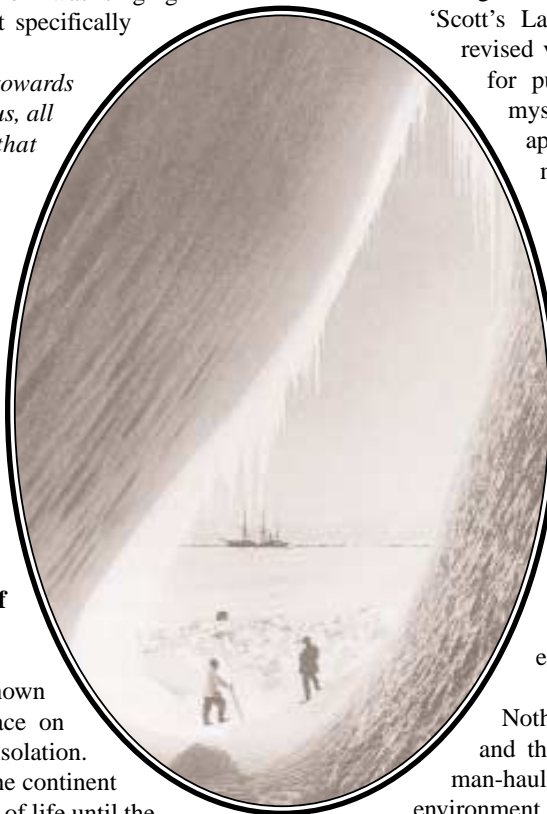
The film **Scott of the Antarctic** although distinguished by its photography and music is a superficial account, frequently misleading in its reinforcement of the popular view of 'Scott's Last Expedition' presumably based on the revised version of his own account, clearly written for public self-justification. The grandeur and mystic qualities of VW's music may appear appropriate to these events but they were not matched by them. Like Shackleton, who was driven by personal ambition, and the need to achieve recognition and its rewards, Scott involved himself in polar exploration in order to advance his career when burdened with financial obligations to his family. This preoccupation remained with Scott until his final Journal entry appeal "...*For God's Sake look after our people*".

The idealism was tarnished by such incidents as in 1908, when Shackleton launched his own expedition, Scott churlishly tried to exclude him from using the base area from the previous *Discovery* expedition.

Nothing can detract from the fact that both men and their colleagues undertook arduous tasks in man-hauling over great distances in a formidable environment, nor the endurance of their self-inflicted hardships, nor that Scott's expeditions undertook scientific observation. But the purpose and spirit of these expeditions reflected none of the qualities implied either in Whitman's poem or the epic grandeur of the music of the later Sinfonia.

As is well known, Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition of 1910 brought him to the South Pole area a month after Amundsen's party. (2) For Scott disappointment turned to disaster from which he achieved lasting fame compared with the Norwegian team which passed into relative obscurity.

It is surprising that VW chose an extract from Scott's final entry to preface the last movement of this work "... we took risks, *we knew we took them...*". This could equally have been written by Shackleton. But Scott possessed no flair for survival, and had not a measure of that luck of the Irish which served Shackleton, particularly in his failed 1914 Transantarctic expedition.





fodder for the ill-fated ponies being dragged to the store

Studios. Direction was assigned to Charles Frend who was fortunate in his films' music: he directed also *The Loves of Joanna Godden* for which VW also composed, and the much admired version of Montserrat's novel *The Cruel Sea* had a fine score by Alan Rawsthorne.

Unfortunately this was not equalled in the filmscript: Ealing Studios' presentation was perhaps better suited to the famous comedies than to historic drama, restricted to a formula of telling a story in a simplified uncontroversial way but with frequently banal dialogue.

The opening scenes of **Scott of the Antarctic** suffer from this although in extenuation it must be recognised that this is clearly designed to explain to unfamiliar audiences some basic facts about the expedition. Unfortunately some of this is simply fiction: as one example, Bowers is shown to invade the expedition office to plead for a place on the expedition. Bowers was a recommendation of the RGS Secretary, Sir Clements Markham, adopted without interview. The recruitment of Oates was similarly misrepresented, as was the persuasion of Wilson.

An exaggerated atmosphere of bonhomie and enthusiasm is maintained throughout until after the 'Christmas' party at Hut Point when the atmosphere becomes increasingly more convincing; there is an absurd lapse associated with the penguin music in which the penguins are told in a manner reminiscent of the Walrus and Carpenter's assurances to the Oysters that there is "*..nothing to worry about*".

Ursula Vaughan Williams tells us that Ralph was critical of Scott's organisation, a view which has taken many years to establish itself against promulgation of the myth by Scott's supporters, most particularly J.M. Barrie. It has never been widely understood that the inadequate organisation and methods were typical of all of the expeditions by Scott and Shackleton.

With some credit the film does not avoid the early incident in which Scott was advised by the explorer Nansen that he should consider using only dogs. The fact is that from his *Discovery* expedition he had not learned how to handle dogteams, a fatal error which may be attributable to Shackleton's inability to learn dog handling on that expedition. Worse, the dogs were not cared for properly and allowed to die uselessly. Neither had the British any understanding of the essential use of ski.

The film underlines the difficulties imposed by the expedition's scientific work undertaken partly to justify funding for the project. Such a programme was carried out, indeed, the film stresses that Scott's final party was delayed by its geological collecting on the critical return journey burdened with the weight of Dr Wilson's

specimens.

The film makes brief mention of a subsidiary scientific party under Campbell. In reality this, the Northern party, lived throughout a polar winter in the most appalling conditions of squalor until regaining the main base.

The near disaster of the midwinter expedition to Cape Crozier to collect the eggs of the Emperor penguin - an idea previously rejected by Shackleton on his expedition - is unmentioned.

Despite its depiction of the stoic decline of Scott's party many obvious and serious problems are avoided: such as the unseaworthiness of the *Terra Nova* which became flooded before even reaching Antarctica and the loss of one-third of the tractor equipment on unloading.

The failure of the tractors cannot be blamed on 'things coming out against' the party: not until the Fuchs-Hillary Commonwealth Transantarctic expedition (1958) was this method sufficiently developed for Antarctic travel. The ponies feature prominently in the film without giving any indication about their complete unsuitability for the conditions.

From the point at which the main polar expedition gets under way the film becomes increasingly worthy of its subject: from the killing of the ponies onwards it gains sobriety, the scenes of frozen wilderness, accompanied by Vaughan Williams' music, gradually imposes itself; the script restricts itself more closely to Journal accounts.

The film likewise avoids the most credible example of misfortune which might be cited in favour of Scott: from 5 December 1911 the outgoing teams were delayed for four days by a blizzard; on the return these days might have allowed them to reach One Ton Depot which they failed to achieve by 11 miles. Given their increasing subjection to scurvy, frostbite and supply shortage this is questionable.

The unfolding of the tragedy becomes more acute from the disengagement of the final supporting party, loosely based on Lieutenant Evans' account; (3) Scott and his companions vanish without sound over the horizon, appropriately without even music, never to be seen alive again.

This episode touches on a criticism attributed to VW of Scott's error in taking five men on the final stage with rations for only four. This is not confirmed by Scott's Journal, Bowers' diary entry for January 4, 1912 records: "*Packed up sledge with four weeks and three days' food for five men*". However the criticism is sustained in other ways, leaving aside that it would be difficult to reallocate the fuel ration pro rata, the advantage of an extra unit of manpower was nullified by the fact that it took on average 30 minutes per day longer to cook for five than for four, which Scott's Journal admits he had not allowed for.

Another consequence of this decision was that the returning support party was put at risk in having to undertake the entire journey with three man units. In the event the leader, Lt Evans, finally collapsed through scurvy. Lashly cared for him while Crean set out alone for Hut Point to fetch the dogs. This remarkable feat of heroism, dedication and endurance, recognised by the award of the Albert Medal, finds no mention in the film.

Scott's returning party had no choice but to endure the fate which gradually overtook them. This is strongly conveyed in the closing scenes: incarcerated in their tent, without fuel, suffering severe frostbite and (unmentioned) the effects of developing scurvy, Scott's party have nothing but their thoughts.





The Cairn of ice and cross of skis erected over the bodies of Scott, Bowers and Wilson

In a film portrait of the composer, the director Ken Russell commented on the unnecessary sound effects as compared to music. This is plainly wrong; in performance music itself is sound. In the final scenes the use of natural sound makes the appropriate statement.

The unyielding indifference of the elements is conveyed here not by music but by the wind and unending beating of the tent canvas – the last sounds Scott's party would hear in the world. This is a masterpiece of depiction.

Indeed, Vaughan Williams added a wind machine as a final peroration to the later *Sinfonia* which, if not approved by some on 'art' grounds, is a final reminder of our smallness and transitory existence compared with Nature.

Despite its deficiencies **Scott of the Antarctic** manages to convey something of this, sufficiently for viewers to reflect on the various

aspects of human folly, ambition and endurance. Its chief immediate impact is in the photography and Vaughan Williams' fine scoring which is developed still further in *Sinfonia Antartica*.

If the sense of visionary pilgrimage seems to be lacking from these undertakings, the elements and environment seem to have affected these men: at the extremity of his march in 1909, Shackleton was moved to read *The Merchant of Venice* to his team. In 1915 when crossing South Georgia to effect the rescue of his stranded men, Shackleton and his party imagined themselves accompanied by 'another being', later alluded to in T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*.

Scott, whose Journal is laden with pessimism, came close to a sense of pilgrimage when confined by a blizzard he reacts against the malevolence of Nature ... "miserable, utterly miserable. We have camped in the 'Slough of Despond'. The tempest rages with unabated violence".

Like much else in the Journal it is a piece of Romantic exposition written for Posterity; the truth is that Scott's party, unluckier than others, had succumbed to the consequences of heedless ignorance; that they achieved anything is a testimonial to their self-willed capacity to endure.

These human efforts translate into an artistic and imaginative dimension. It should be of no surprise that eventually one of these events should thus lead to the *Sinfonia Antartica*. Nor should it be when so much of Vaughan Williams' major work is a constant manifestation of visionary pilgrimage expressed through such works as *Pilgrim*, *Sancta Civitas*, or the conclusion of the *6th Symphony*.

1. The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Michael Kennedy (OUP p.112)
2. Without modern satellite technology it seems probable that Scott's party never actually attained the mathematical South Pole by a small distance and even Amundsen's party only 'boxed it' to within a few hundred yards. See Huntford. (The Last Place on Earth pp 517/8)
3. South with Scott, Admiral Sir Edward R.G.R. Evans, an account loyal to Scott, concealing the differences between them, although implicitly stating the problems arising from poor organisation and decision by Scott.

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

In an effort to increase the membership of the Society and to raise general awareness about performances of RVW's works, we are going to try to institute a system for gathering information about RVW performances and raising the Society's profile at them. To that end, we need the cooperation of members in two areas:

1. Notification of RVW performances that you become aware of.

This should be sent to:  
 Paul Sarcich  
 37a Spencer Hill Rd  
 London SW19 4EL (Tel & Fax) 0208 947 6062  
 E-mail: psarcich@onetel.net.uk

Major performances at major venues and festivals are easy to track, however many local performances, particularly of smaller works, will go unnoticed unless we can tap into local knowledge. We need details of the works being performed, dates of performance, venues and performing

groups; with, if possible, contact information for the organisations involved. This information will allow us to target RVW Society literature at both performers and audiences.

2. A willingness by members to exercise a little salesmanship.

Once details of a performance are known, we will approach both performing groups (in the case of choral & music societies etc.), venue managers and audiences with our propaganda. Paul will also contact local members to see if they are willing to spend a little time putting in a personal appearance to spread the word - this might be a 2 minute "pep talk" to a choir or a foyer appearance before/during the interval/after a concert.

Whatever the approach taken, the aim is to boost the Society and proselytise on behalf of RVW. At present the scheme only covers the UK - any overseas members who would be willing to start such a scheme for their own countries could let Stephen Connock know.

# Vaughan Williams and the "Scott of the Antarctic"

## Film Music

by Richard Young

Vaughan Williams was approached by Ernest Irving at the end of June 1947, musical director of Ealing Films Ltd, to compose music for the intended film "Scott of the Antarctic".

Irving had earlier written an article on "Music in Films" in "Music and Letters" in which he had criticised VW's music for the film "Coastal Command" as "not quite up to his best standard, neither was it particularly good music". In 1946 while working on "The Loves of Joanna Godden", he "literally went down on his knees and apologised for his former strictures", VW related, he had made a success of his music under Irving's guidance. The two men enjoyed a similar keen sense of humour and both had remarkable and original minds. VW wrote eleven film scores in total, the first for the World War II propaganda film "The 49th Parallel" dating from 1940-1. "Scott of the Antarctic" was his seventh and "Magnum Opus" contribution to this musical genre in which he took like a duck to water and was very successful.

### Ealing Studios and the "Scott of the Antarctic Film"

During the reign of the producer Michael Balcon at Ealing films based at Ealing. London over 100 films were made over the twenty years 1938-58. When the Ealing studios were sold in 1955 Balcon wrote the inscription for a plaque erected there; "Here during a quarter of a century many films were made projecting Britain and the British character". Balcon also recorded in his autobiography in 1939. "I put my thoughts on paper in the form of a memorandum which might have been called "How to put

film to work in the national interest" and sent it to the proper quarter". As might be expected its impact on stuffy bureaucratic Whitehall was nil, but Balcon went ahead at Ealing on his own account and waited for official thinking to catch up with him. In 1945 in a trade magazine, Balcon stated "clearly the need is for a projection of the true Briton to the rest of the World. The post war work at Ealing very much reflected this ideal and ethos.

The Ealing films project sought to reflect their maker's picture of Britain and the British character. Before television and other entertainments and media had taken over, cinema was the most popular mass medium after the radio in the immediate post war years with admissions at their highest. This meant that films made then if they were to be successful would have to do so by reflecting back to a wide audience something of itself, whether conscious or not a mood, conflict, need, aspiration of some kind, put into dramatic form. They stand as evidence at least of what the producers thought would mean something to the audience. At Ealing the instinct of Balcon and his colleagues for gauging the feelings of an audience was reliable enough to keep the studio buoyant into the 1950's - indeed, to be regarded by this time as something of a national institution.

But in what sense did Ealing capture the national spirit? The immediate post war years in Britain was a rare time, forged in the anvil and crucible of the war, of national unity, community spirit, e.g. egalitarianism and national unity. This was backed by the collectivist socialist politics of the 1945 Attlee Labour Government, elected by a landslide, such as the creation of the NHS,

Welfare state and nationalisation of key industries. There was nightly community song singing at the Festival of Britain, a carry-over from war time morale building. Michael Frayn in an essay on the "Festival of Britain" makes a distinction between two elements of our social and cultural life which he calls the "Herbivore" against the "Carnivore".

Festival Britain was the Britain of the radical middle-classes, the do-gooders, the readers of the News Chronicle, The Guardian, Observer, the signers of petitions, the backbone of the BBC, in short the herbivores or gentle ruminants. The "Festival of Britain" was the last and virtually the posthumous work of the "Herbivore Britain of the B.B.C. News, the Crown Film Unit, the sweet ration, Ealing Film comedies, Uncle Mac, Sylvia Peters ... all the great fixed stars by which my childhood were navigated."

For a decade sanctioned by the experiences of war and its aftermath, the herbivores had dominated the scene. This decade 1941-1951 was precisely the decade when the Ealing studios was at its zenith in synchrony with the national mood.

The Ealing studios were run with a "family atmosphere". On the walls was the slogan, "The Studio with the Team Spirit." The democratic, egalitarian spirit of Ealing was symbolised in the "Round Table" at which every week, producers, writers and directors consulted freely together. For most of the 20 years Balcon's staff remained substantially the same. The film making team was built up in the early stages of the 2nd World War. Both the broad policy and the operation of



C.H. Meares and Dimitri with their dog teams ready to start South. Nov 5<sup>th</sup> 1911. Two dog handlers and their team climbed above the Lower glacier depot, returning on Dec 11<sup>th</sup> to Cape Evans. When this picture was taken, Scott would have reached camp 3. Ponting wrote: "To drive over the frozen sea in the crisp polar air is one of the most exhilarating experiences imaginable. the yelping of the excited creatures as they are harnessed up; the mad stampede with which they get away, when the driver gives the word to go; the rush of the keen air into ones face; the swish of the sledge runners, and the sound of forty paws pat-a-pat-a-patting on the crackling snow is something that cannot be described"

the studio remained the same over the whole period. In a business notorious for size and instability Ealing kept itself small and stable. Ealing fought off a takeover by the giant Rank until a marriage of convenience was arranged. The company maintained its independence but gained financial backing from Rank which claimed the films as first features in Rank cinemas. This deal made in 1944 carried Ealing through the unstable post war decade allowing this "small is beautiful" "family business" to remain in the film business in its cottage like offices on a village green of a London suburb. Ealing was particularly famous for its comedies sometimes black, which included *Passport to Pimlico* (1949) *Whisky Galore* (1949) *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951) *The Titfield Thunderbolt* (1953), *The Ladykillers* (1955), *The Maggie* (1954). These were interwoven with more serious films such as "Scott of the Antarctic" (1948), "The Cruel Sea" (1953) and "Dunkirk" (1958).

How did the figure of Scott and his second ill-fated expedition match up to and fit in with the "Ealing Ethos?" Scott was an appropriate choice in three related ways.

First and foremost the story fitted in perfectly with Balcon's ambition (*Balcon*, 1945) to present "Britain as a questing explorer and adventurer;" indeed it is the only such film Ealing made.

Secondly, if more trivially, it can be seen as a continuation of a familiar Ealing theme transferred to the Antarctic. The recurring theme of the small community or traditional family firm pitting its wits against bureaucracy and cold officialdom ("*Passport to Pimlico*") or against a hostile take over bid from a large, ruthless, faceless, soulless corporate firm (usually urban based) as in the brewery's battle of "*Cheer Boys Cheer*" (1937). This could be translated into Scott's beleaguered party battling against the soulless, hostile world of the Antarctic.

Thirdly, the Scott story also carried on the tradition of its heroic World War II films such as "*Convoy*" (1940). "*Ships With Wings*" (1941) and the later famous excellent "*Dunkirk*" (1958). Scott would continue the patriotic, heroic manly, dashing stiff upper lip, officer type who stoically and uncomplainingly does his duty for King, Country and Empire under the most trying conditions with patience, good cheer and humour, fortitude and courage. Scott is played by John Mills in the film in this understated, sotto-voce way. John Mills thought this sanitised, somewhat anodyne portrait of Scott probably didn't entirely represent the true version of events. Scott could be moody and have a quick temper. The film tactfully avoids intruding into

personal feeling and is especially reluctant to portray tensions explicitly floating up to the surface. The respect for team spirit and harmony, avoiding unpleasant tension meant the ultimate sacrifice of creative tension. Women in the film and others are relegated to a background role and usually communicate with their husbands by postcard.

There is no doubt that Scott and the mythology surrounding the tragic end to the expedition fitted Ealing's commitment to a strong sense of duty in the British Empire, Victorian/Edwardian General Gordon of the Sudan heroic mould.

It is very difficult to believe that the expedition's tragic end would have made such a strong impression on the nation's and world's imagination if not for the strength, beauty, nobility and heart-rending pathos of



Meares and Oates at the blubber stove. May 26<sup>th</sup> 1911. Meares was on the Scientific Staff and in charge of the dogs, so Oates categorised him as a Scientist, but those that did not hold scientific degrees were called Gentlemen.

Scott's journal accounts and farewell letters to his wife Kathleen Scott and the public. Finding his tent without this his moving account of their last days or a more factual prosaic account would put a different construction altogether on Scott's legacy. Scott's beautifully crafted, simple yet elegant and telling writing is perhaps his most significant heritage and achievement. So persuasive was the effect they had that Amundsen's successful expedition seemed eclipsed by the heroic failure of Scott's.

In his farewell message to "The Public" Scott plays on the patriotic heart strings to great effect, putting the blame for failure on "providence" (i.e. appalling unlucky weather) and ending in a cadence of great beauty and patriotic appeal with strains of Shakespeare's famous Henry V Agincourt peroration.

"We took risks, we knew we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause for complaint,

but bow to the will of providence, determined still to do our best to the last. But if we have been willing to give our lives to this enterprise, which is for the honour of our country, I appeal to our countrymen to see that those who depend on us are properly cared for. Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance and courage of my companions which would have stirred the head of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale. Surely, a great rich country like ours will see that those who are dependent on us are provided for."

In his last letter to Kathleen Scott he writes about his great friend Bill Wilson "I should like you to know how splendid he was at the end everlastingly cheerful and ready to sacrifice himself for others, never a word of blame for leading him into this mess". In a farewell letter to Sir James Barrie he writes

"we are showing that Englishmen can still die with a bold spirit, fighting it out to the end. It will be known that we have accomplished our object in reaching the pole, and that we have done everything possible, even to sacrificing ourselves in order to save sick companions. I think this makes an example for Englishmen of the future".

Scott's last hopeless diary entry on Thursday March 29<sup>th</sup> 1912 says "Every day we have been ready to start for our depot 11 miles away, but outside the door of the tent remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far. It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more.

Last entry. For God's sake Look after our people."

Even if written by today's taste in a somewhat stilted British Empire, "Boys own



At the South Pole. Left to Right: Capt. Oates, Lieut. Bowers, Capt. Scott, Dr. Watson, P.O. Evans. Photo by Lieut. Bowers

paper/Bulldog Drummond", style who but the most hardened realist and cynic can fail to be moved by this generous and noble valediction written under the most despairing and trying conditions.

Ponting the expedition photographer in his review of 1921 writes about Scott's reaction and disappointment at the pole: "the tremendous effort of those 11 weeks that had passed which is felt in that one momentary cry to the Almighty: 'Great God, this is an awful place'. It is the cry of a strong man out of whose heart hope is crushed. But in such a heart as Scott's it was human endeavour that mattered not the ambition to succeed".

As Scott set off to return from the pole, facing 800 miles of solid dragging and good-bye to most of the day-dreams, it was a desperate struggle. Ponting comments that the pages of the journal contain "an account of the most heroic and self-sacrificing struggle in the history of polar exploration. "He begs his readers" to bear in mind that "not withstanding the infinite striving of each day - striving for dear life itself - and the gradual weakening of the party, the leader yet found time each night to record the day's doing fully". One of the most remarkable attestations on devotion to purpose and duty in the history of our race. It is all the more remarkable when we think of the simple beauty of the language used... and still more so when we remember that after all, this was only a diary - mere notes from which the leader had intended later, to write his book in comfort at home."

It is true that Scott had defects in his personality, temperament and leadership qualities and skills. He did make errors of judgement, strategic and in detailed practical matters. These of course are easy to evaluate with hindsight. The decision to take 5 men instead of 4 as

planned on the pole attempt meant less rations and fuel (cooking as noted in the film took longer for 5 men) where rations are at a premium anyway and there is no "living off the land".

Scott's main mistake seems to be his choice of transport. The use of ponies and unreliable primitive motor sledges meant his depot laying became behind schedule and he didn't reach as far south with his depots as intended. Scott's reluctance to use a dog team as Amundsen did and Nansen recommended meant that the polar party didn't make quick enough progress to get back to essential depots in between blizzards, manhauling its own sledges on skis and foot as it did.

Scott was understandably squeamish about having to beat and kick "man's best friend" when savagely fighting, and using dogs as walking food, killing off when expedient weaker dogs to feed to the other dogs or even to humans. Scott's animal welfare scruples didn't seem to extend to man's other faithful animal friend - the horse. His ponies were shot when no longer required and their meat fed to the dogs and added to the pemmican in the explorers Antarctic hoosh.

It must be acknowledged that to be an explorer as is stated in the film is "To make the first foot prints" to enter the "Unknown Region" at the limits of human knowledge, endurance and technical know-how and back-up. In the BBC book "Life in the Freezer" Alastair Fothergill says:

"Despite its perils Antarctica still lures scientists to make the journey across the South Ocean to the continent. A few even stay through the winter but they are trapped. Scientific bases built on the solid rock of the continent find themselves

surrounded by pack ice up to 3 metres thick. The enormous icebreakers that supply the base in the summer are forced to leave, and scientists and support staff are left to over-winter alone. Modern communication systems allow them to telephone or send a fax by satellite. But in the event of an emergency, a call for help could not be answered. No icebreaker could make its way through, and no pilot would risk flying in such unpredictable weather. Protected by its ice, Antarctica remains the last true wilderness and inhospitable place on earth."

This written with nearly a century of improvement in communications and transport which Scott helped pave the way for, perhaps puts Scott's failure in a better perspective.

### Vaughan Williams and the Scott Film Music

VW was at first reluctant to commit so much time to Irving's request for film music; but soon the strange world of ice and storm began to fascinate him. The film studio provided books, and "The Worst Journey in the World" joined "Jane Eyre" and "Far from the Madding Crowd" as general reading. Ursula Vaughan Williams says "Pictures of the Scott expedition lay about the house and work on the new film score was begun. Ralph became more and more upset as he read about the inefficiencies of the organisation and such things as allowing five to travel on rations for four filled him with fury. Apart from this he was excited by the demands which the setting of the film made on his invention, to find musical equivalents for the physical sensations of ice, of wind blowing over the great, uninhabited desolation, of stubborn and impassable ridges of black and ice-covered rock, and to suggest man's endeavour to overcome the rigours of this bleak land and to match mortal spirit against elements. For light relief there were the penguins and the whales. There was to be music not only for the polar journey but also for the two women, Kathleen Scott and Oriana Wilson (Dr Bill Wilson's wife) so he had scope for many different kinds of tune. On the practical side he had enough experience of work with the studios to make a number of provisos about the use of natural sounds and dialogue and how they were to be used in relation to his score".

It is clear that in this film score VW's intention wasn't to deify Scott as a great English hero, in fact on seeing the completed film VW was still fulminating against the "amateurish" organisation of the last stages of the expedition although pleased with his score.

The Scott story - puny mortal man pitted against the vast, bleak, inhospitable, unexplored wilderness of the Antarctic - must have deeply resonated with VW then in his 75th year, who was an explorer and pilgrim all his life, both in his personal life and music. This is particularly true of VW's magnificent cycle of 9 symphonies which investigate and comment on the human condition; its spiritual, psychological, emotional, even sociological elements in relationship to religion, philosophy, nature, war and socio-economic conditions. Much of the material and ideas from the Scott music were to be expanded into his 7th symphony *Sinfonia Antartica*.

At the time of writing the Scott music VW was showing a bleak nihilistic, existentialist side to his spiritual/psychological journey which seems to be ascribed, and varies between Christian faith through agnosticism to atheism. The Second World War had not long ended with its horrendous inhumanity including the Holocaust and the dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan. This is reflected in the stark, pianissimo end to his 6th symphony.

The Antarctic story could be used by VW as a specific but universalised symbol and metaphor for the human condition. The vast, inhospitable landscape representing the way man's own transitory brief, three score years and ten, lives are lived out against the vast immensity of the Universe and time. The story makes reference to the immensity of geological time, billions of years when fossils are found. Scott becomes "Everyman or woman, hero/anti-hero, player/protagonist living their own personal lives ending in the abyss and oblivion of death" as Scott did. But whilst there is still breath with indomitable spirit, courage and defiance trying to live a meaningful life and achieve something in work, family, relations and other areas.

The Scott film music is significantly dominated by what can be described as the Doom and Striving Theme and Toiling and Trudging under immense burden - Heavy - Sombre March-like themes. These at one level represent the explorers endurance and physical battle against ice, snow, wind, weight, cold, fatigue, frostbite in the unforgiving Antarctic environment. But this music operates at a more important implicit secondary level giving a much needed "window" into the inner storms, battles, turmoil, feats, anxieties, pain, burden, psychological, emotions of the explorers particularly as they return defeated from the pole. This enhances the under-stated matter-of-fact English sang-froid script and characterisation of the film

that avoids this glimpse into the personal thoughts, emotions and sufferings of the polar party. Scott says in the film "Among ourselves, we are unendingly cheerful, but what each man feels in his heart I can only guess". VW gives us some considerable insight into this in his heavy-hearted, wearisome doom-laden trudging themes. These themes located in the Antarctic "Landscape" showing the explorers inner "Mindscape" can be generalised to everyone's own personal inner psychological, spiritual, emotional "Mindscape" as we all experience life's storms, mysteries, contingencies, burdens and problems - Churchill's: "Blood, toil, tears and sweat as we pilgrimage on our own personal life's journey. This aspect of the film's music could easily be very effectively used for a film about a person's inner life and struggles in a completely modern urban setting. About half of the music is involved in effective Antarctic scene painting, what Michael Kennedy describes as "graphic pictorialism" and does not carry this second inner interpretation. VW had explored many of these ideas before in his life and works. Of course his most important Opera "Pilgrim's Progress" written 1921-1951 is all about a soul's journey, exploration and pilgrimage through life.

Exploration underpinned his setting of Walt Whitman's verse "Toward the Unknown Region" for chorus and orchestra (1907). No map there, nor guide, nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand, Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes are in that land ... All waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land." This was a preparation for VW's first choral symphony the "Sea Symphony". In it he asks philosophical questions about the meaning of human life and its place in the Universe. The slow movement "On the Beach at Night Alone" looks at the loss of religious faith and meaning. The finale "The Explorers" asks philosophical questions about human existence submerged in the vast ocean of the Universe and time "O Vast Rondure, swimming in space with inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention" and later "Wherefore unsatisfied soul? Whither O mocking life?" and at the end "Sail forth, steer for the deep waters only, for we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go, and we will risk ourselves and all".

In one of his Three Shakespeare Songs "The Cloud-Capp'd Towers", VW explores the ephemerality of brief human life setting the lines "And our little life is rounded with a sleep". He translated Horace's Ode II Verse 14 for the Abinger Pageant (1938). "Swiftly they pass, the flying years, no

prayer can stay their course, vainly we shun the battle's roar, the perilous sea, the fever-laden breezes, soon shall we reach our journey's end and trembling cross the narrow steam of death." In his 4th and 6th symphonies VW showed his inner psychological turmoil and disturbance to war and personal events. At the end of his last symphony number 9, the waters close over the pilgrim at the end of his life (just as the snow closed over and buried Scott's tent) to end in oblivion or perhaps Heaven's celestial city as at the end of "Pilgrim's Progress". VW strives and seeks to find meaning and nobility in the indomitable will and spirit of the human condition under all that life can throw at us, good or evil.

### Vaughan Williams and Writing the Film Music

Charles Frend was the director for the Ealing film "The Loves of Joanna Godden" (1947), in which some of the Scott music is presaged. Frend directed the Scott film and later the famous film "The Cruel Sea" (1953). The music for this was written by Alan Rawsthorne. His film music method was very different to that of VW. He wrote the music after the film was completely made and cut, responding emotionally and atmospherically to this fait accompli. He had the advantage over VW of knowing precise timings for scenes. VW would get more involved from the start, receiving parts of the script for particular scenes, using his imagination to fit appropriate music. Precisely timed sections could be extended or reduced by optional repeats: unlike Rawsthorne his aural creation didn't respond so directly to visual stimulation so his music had a life of its own, more coherent and of artistic merit in its own right. This "on the hoof" method of composing had its disadvantages, however. VW said openly that no bar of the music was sacred, but in fact the reduction was considerable. Of the 996 bars found in the autograph full score only 462 of VW's full score appear in the film. In the post production shooting script all of VW's music is marked "Background" as opposed to "Featured". In many places e.g. Kathleen Scott's sculpture scene it is indeed almost inaudible. In other places it is allowed to rise up to full dramatic power at crescendo level to fill the script's Antarctic aural void.

There is a clear need for the whole original score to be recorded and heard at full volume without mutilation. Some bits of music in the film are so "snipped out" of the score that they don't even appear in the post shoot film script music cue list. Some of the editing is done skillfully however, particularly the way real wind sounds



merge into the wordless chorus VW employs and VWs march-like sections are fitted to actual walking scenes.

A lively correspondence developed between VW and Irving as the music was being composed over both musical and practical issues, about marrying up and balancing the music against the films sound track-dialogue and other sound effects. This is always a problematic area for film composers. Irving was not even sure of VW's masterly, eerie atmospheric effect of a wordless soprano and chorus to personify the cold, impersonal detached, Antarctic wilderness. He even wrote back in verse form to show his doubts. Mabel Ritchie sang the wordless soprano part for the film track and also a similar part in the first performance of the Antarctic Symphony No. 7.

"Miss Mabel Ritchie's off-stage tune besides annoying Miss Lejeune would cover, blur, confine and fog our most expensive dialogue.

Failure they meet and ruin black who mix two voices on one track choose then a horn or cello, which have different timbres, weight and pitch.

(CA. Lejeune -  
Film Critic of "The Observer")

VW persisted however and it was Irving who persuaded the doubters.

The score calls for a very large orchestra, triple woodwind and a vast battery of percussion instruments. VW from this music on became an enthusiastic, novel and masterly experimenter and explorer of new sonorities, timbres and textures using various combinations of percussion instruments. He added very effectively the use of a vibraphone to the film score's percussion in his Antarctica Symphony and further explored percussion timbres in his 8th and 9th symphonies.

The percussion VW calls for in the film score includes: xylophone, glockenspiel, timpani, bass drum, side drum, a deep bell, bells, gong and cymbals clashed, rolled with a soft stick and struck. The percussion is used to create the glistening, spikey, shimmering, cold blue world of ice and snow and its beauty. It is also used for light-hearted whimsical effects to portray whales, seals, penguins and the pony march. The piano is used effectively as a percussion instrument. It often reinforces the harp and its hollow steely sound reinforces the steely determination of the explorers and the steely cold spikey world of ice and snow.

Woodwind plays an important role particularly the oboe and cor anglais. VW uses this orchestral colour for sweet pastoral scenes e.g. Kathleen Scott sculpture scene but mostly for their mournful, lonely, plangent tone quality with its nasal "bring a lump to the throat" quality. This is used for sad lonely scenes and for Scott's loneliness as leader in choosing the final polar party. VW seemed to prefer this woodwind instrument to the others having written an oboe concerto and an important duet between oboe and cor anglais in the Romanza section of his 5th Symphony. The bass clarinet plays an important role in the "Penguin" movement. The brass is pesante, leaden, door and angst-laden and often muted. It dominates the march-like trudging music under great burden and inner doom suffering.

There are three main elements or texture to the film music. These are:

- (1) Scene Painting - VW portrays the antarctic world and its creatures, ice floes, whales, penguins, the southern lights or aurora. percussion is used a lot in these sections.
- (2) VW uses a wordless soprano Soloist and a wordless small chorus of sopranos and altos to chilling effect to

paradoxically "personify" the cold, indifferent, disembodied, soulless vast, inhospitable Antarctic. "Following the bible dictum "He who is not for us is against us" this indifferent neutrality really crosses the line and becomes actively malignant and hostile like the capricious and angry Greek Gods thwarting the explorers for daring to set foot in their domain. The solo soprano takes on a genie or as Ponting called "Spirit of the Great White South" aspect VW used a wordless soprano before to portray the bleak empty void in both the French and English landscape left by the devastation of a generation of men in World War I, in his Pastoral Symphony No. 3.

The solo soprano is combined and almost pitted against a small wordless chorus of altos and sopranos. These chords that move in close block harmony echoing the Pastoral Symphony again. There is a more enticing, warm, romantic sound to the chorus than the cold soprano soloists. They given a siren-like quality singing beautifully and sweetly but in a cruel mocking style attracting explorers to their ultimate doom. Very similar music was composed by VW for his drowning scene in the film "The Loves of Joanna Godden". The chorus also has an eerie wind-like sound quality and is often very effectively merged and tapered into actual wind recordings on the film soundtrack. VW should have known of the effect of a wordless chorus from the "Neptune" movement from his friend Gustav Holst's "Planets Suite", Debussy's "Nocturnes", Ravel's "Daphnis and Chloe" Suite (for a brief period tutor to VW) and himself used such a device in his piece "Flos Campi" first performed 1925.

(3) The third element dominates about half or more of the score and depicts the trudging, marching, toil, outer and inner suffering of the explorers as they pass through the antarctic landscape. Often in the minor mode heavy bass and string writing move at slow march-like walking pace speed. Often off-beat stabbing effects on drums add to the heavy doom-laden despair of these sections.

Before the pole is reached they can depict steady progress being made albeit very slowly and still with great difficulty with a great human spirit of determination and resolution. After the shock of the pole experience and increasing hopelessness and difficulties that face the morale broken men, these march tunes often reappear in a distorted, broken-down sombre way to mirror the inner breakdown in morale of the explorer's minds.



A meal on the march

# Analysis of the Film Score

## 1. Main Title (116 Seconds)

VW opens with this upwardly striving theme that also opens the 7th Symphony.



It suggests great determination and resolution. "To strive, to seek ...etc. It seems to keep stopping as if stumbling under great weight in the snow and then gets up and moves on again. The piano adds a very effective hollow, steely effect. It is a bit faster on the film score than the Symphony and has tremolo strings (a cinematic cliché effect). It appears many times later in modified form. It reaches an appropriate crescendo climax to get the film off to a rousing start.

## 2. Prologue (74 Seconds)

This creates the vast unknown mysterious atmosphere of the Antarctic and the chilling soprano and siren chorus add to this bleak, mysterious effect. A glockenspiel bursts in to represent a sudden blizzard of snow.

## 3. Kathleen Scott Sculpture Scene (25 Seconds)

This is a tender and intimate scene. Kathleen is working on a sculpture of Scott who poses in full naval uniform. The music is very quiet in tender VW string, oboe pastoral mode.

## 4. Nansen (40 Seconds)

There is a muted mysterious quality to the music as Scott tries out his motor sledge but the music turns grim with sombre brass when Scott and Nansen disagree about the treatment of man's faithful friend - the sledge dog.

## 5. Ice Floes (66 Seconds)

Percussion, swirling, xylophone glissandi, oboe, celesta and menacing brass, interrupted by menacing gongs and upward moving, flute/piccolo runs evoke further the glistening, strange world of ice floes, whales, seals and porpoises as the Terra Nova sails through the pack ice. A brilliant piece of editing occurs: the music stops abruptly as the ship gets stuck in the ice, the telegraph indicator calls for reverse and the music immediately recommences as the ship moves backward again.

## 6. Ice Barrier (35 Seconds)

Menacing brass and timpani suggests an impenetrable wall of ice.

## 7. Penguins (44 Seconds)

This is one of the more humorous, tongue-in-cheek episodes. The penguins are fully xylophonated (not "pixilated" as with Russ Conway!) and xylophone, trumpet and bass clarinet take it in turn to depict the penguins scampering over the ice. The comment made that they had nothing to fear wasn't true in reality. The effect is very perky and found its place in the 7th Symphony.

## 8. The Ship Returns (22 Seconds)

Grim brass writing give this section and urgency as the polar party enthusiastically run to greet the returning ship their only contact with Britain and their homes.

## 9. Aurora (18 Seconds)

A swirling mystic atmosphere is created with trumpet, strings and woodwind to represent the beautiful "Southern Lights" electrical sky phenomenon.

## 10. Pony March (45 Seconds)

This is a frisky, light, jaunty jog trot with woodwind and xylophone that is similar in quality to the March of the kitchen utensils" from VWs "Wasps Suite".

## 11. Blizzard (44 Seconds and 49 Seconds)

Tremolo strings and ominous brass in a heavy march manner alternate with the siren small chorus that mingles with the actual wind sound to summon up the blizzard's deadly power. This theme appears played by brass and oboe backed by drums:-



It is much used in the film score and the 7th Symphony and has a dogged persistent quality.

## 12. Glacier Gateway (24 Seconds)

This is a particularly magical moment in the score. Brass and celesta give a sparkling, glistening, coruscating effect, for a moment we could be at the gates of the "Celestial City" of "Pilgrim's Progress".

## 13. Climbing the Glacier (83 Seconds and 167 Seconds)

This suggests the constant toil and difficulty of uphill walking in snow under weight. The strings give a heavy toiling theme punctuated by brass and a gong. Grim determination is suggested. There is an ominous sense of foreboding and entering the "Unknown Region". The opening striving theme returns, brass against tremolo strings, reaching a very powerful crescendo fortissimo climax, definitely not background music. There is an almost organ-like sonority and texture. VW later used a massive fortissimo organ passage to great effect in this 7th Symphony.

## 14. 9,000 Feet Up (37 Seconds)

This passage is reminiscent of the Coastal Command film music. The whirling, scintillating effect of glockenspiel and celesta create an up-beat exhilarating effect as the explorers enjoy the view at the summit of their uphill labours.

## 15. Sledging (61 Seconds)

This march-like piece with muted trumpet answered by strings suggests the heavy left/right march of the explorers.

## 16. Choosing (43 Seconds and 29 Seconds)

Scott has the lonely leader's choice and decision to make as to which men to take on the pole attempt with disappointment for some. This music is very quiet and background. The oboe against strings suggests pensive loneliness.

## 17. Amundsen (12 Seconds)

The explorers see the rival flag. This short piece is very effective. Sudden grim stabbing brass bursts in against woodwind and strings suggesting the party's heartrending surprise and disappointment.

## 18. Return From Pole (107 Seconds)

Again a despondent march-like piece with heavy strings and brass subverted by off-beat drums, there is an answering upward moving phrase trying to raise some good cheer and hope but giving the effect of vain "Whistling in the Wind".

## 19. Return from the Glacier (119 Seconds)

Again a grimly determined theme with menacing timpani rolls and the gong adding to heavy brass, string and woodwind.

## 20. Taffs Death (43 Seconds)

The opening "striving" theme is distorted and subdued with faltering and growling brass and woodwind as Taff breaks down altogether and dies in the snow.

## 21. Death of Oates (9 and 27 Seconds)

The opening striving theme and dogged-determination theme are used with the mocking chorus merging into the wind as Oates walks out to face his cold, lonely death.

## 22. Aurora (17 Seconds)

An oboe creates a gentle, peaceful, mystical atmosphere with shades of Holst in Neptune the mystic movement from "The Planets Suite".

## 23. Diary Map (49 and 23 Seconds)

Only 11 miles from One Ton Depot. The dogged-persistent theme against off beat strings. One last vain hope that One Ton Depot and salvation can be reached.

## 24. Second Blizzard (21 Seconds)

The cruel mocking chorus merges with the unrelenting sound of the blizzard wind and tent flapping as if to have the last final last wordless word "only 11 miles to food and stores of plenty!"

## 25. End Music (41 Seconds)

This is an upbeat grandiose march very similar to that at the end of the "Coastal Command" film music, ending the film on a triumphant note. VW wasn't pleased at this upbeat ending to the film.

## 26. End Titles (70 Seconds)

The inflated British Empire glorioso type music continues over the end titles.

There is an amusing compositional coda to the film music. The film opened to the public at the Odeon, Leicester Square on 30 December 1948 and VW went to see it. He was horrified by the incongruity of Grieg's *Homage March* played after the Film had ended by the Cinema's organist. So he wrote his own 32 piece coda based on a theme from the film. H.M.V. recorded some of the music on 30 December 1948.

Ernest Irving contributed to the musical score including "Scott draws a line of the graph" and his "Queens Birthday March" as well as arrangement of "Will ye no come back again" and Christmas Carols. His contributions have the honour of being marked "featured" in the musical cue sheet, post production shooting script.

### Recording:

As already mentioned a complete "foreground" recording of VWs atmosphere score without cuts and with today's clearer recording quality is much needed to hear the music as a coherent whole.

### Pearl CD GEM 0 107

Seven pieces from the H.M.V. recording made for H.M.V. are available on this disc conducted by Ernest Irving and the Philharmonic Orchestra. These are: Prologue, Pony March, Penguins, Climbing the Glacier, The Return, Blizzard and Final Music.

The Discs include other VW film music selections from Coastal Command, 49th Parallel, The Story of a Flemish Farm and "The Loves of Joanna Godden". There is also a performance of the 6th Symphony conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, London Symphony Orchestra.

(See the review on page 24)

# Scott of the Antarctic:

## John Mills, Kenneth More and the Ealing Studios

When Associated Talking Pictures was formed in 1929, a studio was required and a site was duly found at Ealing Green in the London Borough of Ealing. When Basil Dean, the found of ATP, left in 1938, Michael Balcon then working for MGM in London, took over and the production company was renamed Ealing Studios Ltd.

Balcon led the company wisely, maintaining a family atmosphere and a stable team of technicians and programme makers. Film making was modest in scale, turning out 4-7 films a year. Extra financial security was provided following a partnership with Rank in 1944. In all, over 100 films were made over the twenty years 1938-58.

The characteristic Ealing style was partly owing to financial limitations but also sought to capture elements of the British character: pragmatic, undemonstrative, humorous, self-deprecating, courageous and tenacious. Many of Ealing's leading players reflected these qualities – Alistair Sims, Jack Warner, Alex Guinness, Margaret Rutherford, John Mills and many others. The Second World War enabled the studio to develop images of national unity and compassion alongside these British characteristics. The *Foreman Went to France*, *Went the Day Well?*, *Convoy* and *Next of Kin* (a War Office commission) showed those qualities. Post war, wartime themes were continued and in *Scott of the Antarctic*, Michael Balcon sought to present 'Britain as a questing explorer and adventurer'.

The film was made in 1947 and released in December 1948. It was an expensive colour production with location shooting in Norway and Switzerland. It was chosen for the Royal Film Performance in 1949.

### John Mills – an introduction

John Mills was born on 22 February 1908 at Watts Naval Training School for Boys in Norfolk. His father was Headmaster of a school near Great Yarmouth. John Mills attended his father's school before moving on to Balham Grammar School and St John Leeman School in Beccles, Suffolk. As he left his mother to go to this school he said to himself 'Whatever else happens, I mustn't cry' showing early on one of the qualities which would come to the fore in *Scott of the Antarctic*. At Beccles he appeared as Puck in an amateur production of *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*. After applause, he said



"From that moment I was captured : I have started an affair that will last as long as I live. Somehow or other, sooner or later, I knew I would make it".

(from his autobiography *Up in the Clouds, Gentlemen Please*, 1980, p.10)



He began work initially as an office junior in the Ipswich Corn Exchange before moving to a sales job in London. This didn't work and he explored options in the theatre getting his first job at the London Hippodrome in 1929. He toured the Far East in different plays and met Noel Coward. His career gathered pace and he appeared in his first film in 1932. He joined the Royal Engineers in the Second World War and was invalidated out in 1942. In 1941 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. J Mills had married Mary Hayley Bell, a writer and friend since 1928. In 1942 he starred in *In Which We serve*, direct by Noel Coward and David Lean. The film did well and John Mills' career never looked back. *We Dive at Dawn* (1943) cast Mills this time as an officer, a master of understatement and controlled emotions. This *Happy Breed* (1944) and *The Way to the Stars* (1945) consolidated his reputation for professionalism, sensitivity, reticence, dignity, decency, honesty and personal charm. In recognition of these qualities, John Mills was chosen to play Captain Scott in Charles Frend's film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948). John Mills said it was a part he had always hoped to tackle and when the film was shown to the public, the *Sunday Dispatch* said 'John Mills' portrayal of Scott is the greatest thing he has ever done'.

#### John Mills on Scott of the Antarctic

John Mills dwelt at length on Scott in his 1980 biography *Up in the Clouds, Gentlemen Please*. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson). It is worth repeating his words:

*"Because of weather conditions the schedule of Scott was split into two parts. We filmed for ten days on the Jungfrau doing all the ice-climbing and some of the glacier sequences, all of which needed fair weather with blinding sun; then shooting stopped until October,*

*when the unit left for Norway for the blizzards and the final shots at the Pole.*

*Charles Frend, who was directing, had, with Sir Michael, taken enormous trouble to cast the film, with the result that all the principal characters bore a quite striking resemblance to the team that Scott had led on the expedition. The photograph of Harold Warrender as Dr Wilson, James Robertson Justice as Taff Evans, Derek Bond as Titus Oates, Reginald Beckwith as Birdie Bowers and myself as Scott, taken at the Pole, bears an uncanny resemblance to the famous original picture.*

*The great difficulty in shooting the exteriors in the snowfields and glaciers arose from the fact that it was not possible to rehearse with the sledge, because the vast stretches of virgin snow had to remain virgin. Footsteps and marks in sand can be obliterated with helicopter propellers, blasting the surfaces smooth, but this does not work with snow. All Charlie Frend could do was to point out to me marks ahead, a boulder, or a discolouration, which would give me a line on which to proceed. On one particular occasion he pointed to an ice-covered rock about fifty yards ahead and said, 'Johnnie, you lead off with your team' – at this time there were still eight men and two sledges on the expedition – 'and just before you reach that rock, stop, look into the distance, turn round and shout the line over your shoulder to the second team, who will be waiting behind you.' (The line was, 'All right chaps, follow me – this seems to be a good way up.') 'Then, if you have enough puff left, carry on hauling till I shout "Cut". I hoped I would have enough puff. We'd only arrived from England that morning, and here we were hauling sledges up the Jungfrau at a height of about 11,000 feet, and although we had all gone into strict training for weeks, we were already blowing like grampuses.*

*Action: I started hauling; reached the approximate spot; and after gazing into the distance, took a deep breath, turned as directed, and shouted over my shoulder, 'All right chaps, follow me – this seems to be a good way up.' I then took one step forward and completely disappeared from view. If my harness hadn't been securely fastened to the sledge and my three gallant companions hadn't dug their heels in, in all probability I should not be here at this moment. I had fallen through a snow bridge, which was not more than a few inches thick, into a crevasse, and as I hung swinging like a pendulum from side to side I looked down : beneath me the drop must have been at least 200 feet. It took them some time to haul me to safety, because of the risk of a possible collapse of snow at the end of the crater. Needless to say, for the rest of the location the word 'snow bridge' was written on our hats.*

*It was an unforgettable experience. The beauty of the Jungfrau in the late evening sun after the day's shooting, skiing down through the glacier with Willi Steuri, a famous Swiss guide, on powder snow to Grindelwald, hot steaming glühwein, then the mountain railway up to Scheidegg, our base camp.*

*On 1 October I sailed with the rest of Scott's expedition from Newcastle in a small Norwegian ship that did everything but capsize in a gale force eight storm on the crossing to Stavanger. Captain Scott and his gallant men were, without exception, violently sick. We went from Stavanger to Bergen, then by train to Finse, a small resort in the mountains with one hotel which was to be our homes for weeks. Finse had been chosen for the appalling weather conditions we needed on the glacier and plateaux. It didn't let us down. Every morning we left the hotel at six and climbed for one and a half hours up the glacier to the plateau. The cold was so intense it froze our packed lunches which we wore around our waists under several sweaters and anoraks. Before we could put on our skis it was necessary to light fires to thaw out the leather bindings which were*

frozen stiff. The conditions were quite unbelievable. Two of our cameramen were sent home with frostbite; the moment they took their gloves off the skin of their fingers stuck to the instrument. On the day we were supposed to shoot the ponies one of the explorers, Quintin Riley, who had been to the Pole and was acting as an adviser on the film, was heard to remark that 'On a day like this no self-respecting explorer would have been seen outside his tent.'

We had to learn to work with the huskies. These dogs, when they fought, became serious about it. No snapping and scuffling: they fought. Ears were bitten off, and in no time at all the snow was covered in blood. One of the reasons why Scott died in his gallant attempt was because he couldn't bear the sight of blood and the vicious kicking that was necessary to separate the dogs who were fighting.

While the production was being prepared (Mary worked on the script with Charles Frend and wrote some of the additional dialogue), I did a great deal of research on Scott. He was a fascinatingly complex character – a born leader, with tremendous physical stamina and courage. He had a quick temper, which he often found difficult to control. This I was never allowed to show, because of the possibility of upsetting relations still living. The picture had, I think, more influence on me than any I made before or since. Because of our beards, which had to grow progressively longer, we shot the film in continuity, which meant that I started as Scott did with a full complement of men for the expedition and five months later ended up in a tent, as he did, with only two of them left: Birdie Bowers and Wilson. It had a strange, chilling effect on me. No one knows how long Scott lived in that tent after Bowers and Wilson died. Several months later, when the rescue party found the tent buried under a mountain of snow and dug their way through and opened the flap, they were faced with the heartrending picture of Scott sitting upright with his eyes open and two large tears frozen on his cheeks. He had opened his anorak and his arms were round the shoulders of his two companions.

Mary joined us for the last two weeks' shooting. When the final shot was in the can we were told we could shave off our beards. A bunch of tough, weather-beaten, dirty, bearded he-men disappeared upstairs to their various bathrooms. An hour later we appeared in the bar looking like a group of very young French poofs, with baby-pink cheeks and scarlet lips. Our Norwegian guides, who had worked with us for weeks and been a tower of strength, roared with laughter, rushed at us and kissed us. The party went on, Norwegian-style, drinking under the table (I've never understood why) until dawn.

We returned to England and finished the remaining interior shots at Ealing Studios. A young actor whom I'd never seen before played Lieutenant Evans. It was not a large part – in fact if my memory serves me correctly he only had about one close-up, but he made such an impression in that short space of time I was sure that one day he must become a highly successful actor. His name was Kenneth More. I was also lucky to get to know a charming and fascinating man who paints and draws the wild birds that Scott saw on his trip to the Antarctic – Peter Scott, now Sir Peter, was extremely helpful to me at the time of making the picture, and although he was too young to have known his father, the cuttings and letters he put at my disposal were invaluable.

Scott of the Antarctic was chosen for the Royal Film Performance in 1949. It was a good film, well-made and well-acted under appalling conditions. But I feel that if we'd been allowed to delve more deeply into the characters of the men themselves, it could have been a great one".

Notes by Stephen Connock

## Kenneth More on Scott

The young Kenneth More had secured the part of Lieutenant Teddy Evans in Scott of the Antarctic. In his autobiography Happy Go Lucky (Robert Hale, 1959), Kenneth More said the following about the filming of Scott:

*"When Peace in Our Time folded, after only four months, I hurried down to Ealing. The critics wrote that Scott was a "box office classic", "worth seeing time and time again", "magnificent", "inspired" and so on. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the script wasn't right. Scott was a bad film – despite John Mills's magnificent performance – and certainly it was not the happiest to work on.*

*Troubles cropped up all along the way. When the location shots were made in Europe and the Antarctic, the unit slid about on glaciers, breathing was difficult at high altitudes, special heaters were needed to keep the cameras turning in temperatures as much as twenty degrees below freezing, the camera crews were in danger of frostbite because they had to work without gloves and, in Switzerland, the "railway lines" laid down for track shots collapsed when the snow was melted by the sun.*



*I was spared this misery. Noel's play kept me in London while my location shots were being done, and a stand-in had to be used. Conditions were tough in the studio, though, and at moments I was tempted to think that the perils of the genuine South Pole were less than the terror of Antarctica in Ealing, W.5.*

*The special effects boys had a whale of a time. They sprayed the sets with artificial fog which made us choke and cough. We had to suck hideous-tasting pellets so that our mouths would give off vapour and we'd seem to be out of doors in the cold. And the "sastrugi ice" consisted of hard jagged lumps of plaster which were darned painful when we stumbled and fell on them.*

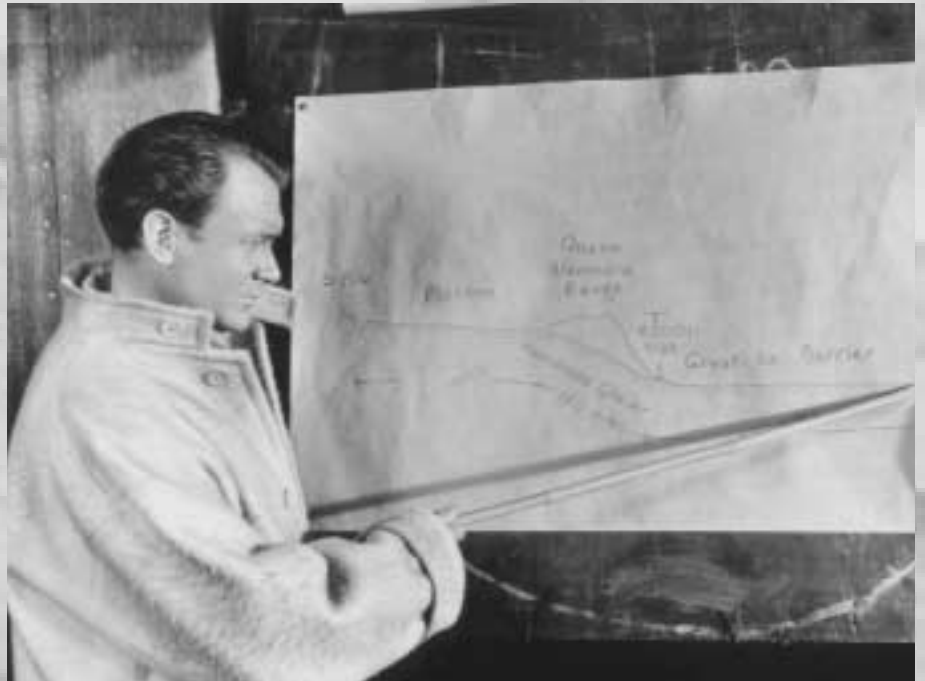
*The "snow" was a foamed urea-formaldehyde compound, carried into the studio in featherweight slabs, chewed up by machines and blown by a 22-foot diameter fan, wrapping us in a blizzard with visibility nil. The flakes got into our eyes and beards, and since we were supposed to be where man had never trodden before, time was wasted between each take while we sat, perspiring in furs up to our ears, and waited for our footprints to be obliterated. The tractors used in the studio kept breaking down, making everyone short-tempered, and to crown it all, the film was made on Technicolor Monopack. It had to go to Hollywood for processing. Days elapsed before anybody could be really sure that the right stuff was going into the can. I left Ealing thankfully".*





Oates (Dereck Bond) is suffering terribly from his frostbitten foot but jokingly tells his comrades that he used to be considered “a fine leg for a boot”.

After the depots have been laid, Scott (John Mills) explains to the expedition the details of the plan.



“Scott of the Antarctic,”  
This scene was taken on location in Switzerland.

EALING STUDIOS PRESENT

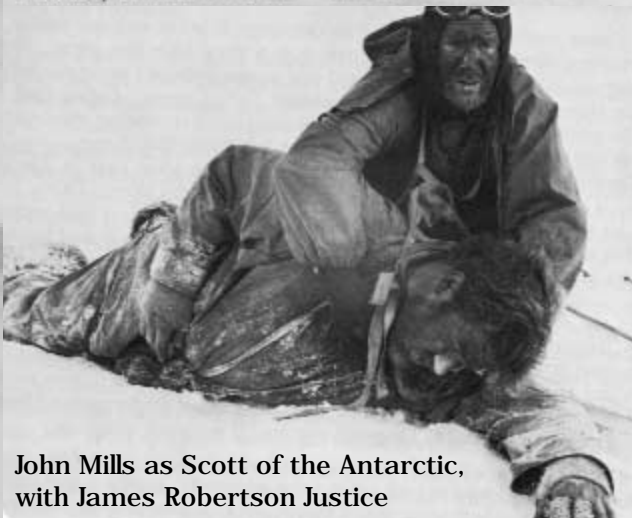
# Scott OF THE ANTARCTIC.

starring

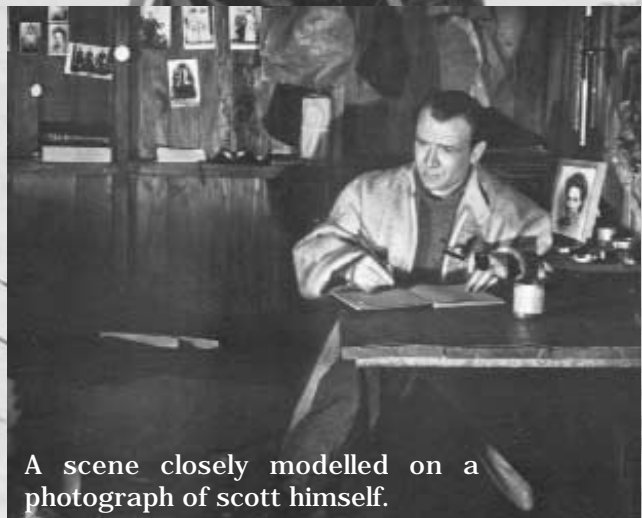
## JOHN MILLS

A MICHAEL BALCON PRODUCTION

Directed by CHARLES FREND Colour by TECHNICOLOR



John Mills as Scott of the Antarctic,  
with James Robertson Justice



A scene closely modelled on a  
photograph of scott himself.



# Scott of the Antarctic

## A Personal View

by Michael Nelson

Ealing Studios' *Scott of the Antarctic* is a film very much of its time - the late 1940s. (It was chosen from the 1948 Royal Film Performance - a sure sign of 'official acceptability'). The cynicism and iconoclasm of later decades were absent then; a sort of innocence prevailed. Heroic figures such as Scott and his comrades were treated respectfully, almost reverentially. Even if the heroes were not perfect and could make mistakes, they were far from being scorned. Nowadays, by contrast, the very concept of 'the hero' no longer seems viable - every figure who might be so described is liable to be shown as having feet of clay. The ideal judgement one suspects lies somewhere between the two.

John Mills, good actor that he is (and one of the few capable of playing both officers and other ranks with conviction) gets as much out of Scott's character as Walter Meade's and Ivor Montagu's script (1) and Charles Frend's direction permits him to do. That goes, more or less, for the other leading actors (Derek Bond, Harold Warrender, James Robertson Justice, Reginald Beckwith) (2). Sir John, in a televised interview several years ago, confessed that he would like to have made Scott a more vulnerable and so a more interesting human being. It was not to be. (To be fair, of course, one can only guess at the tensions that might have occurred between the five who finally reached the South Pole, only to perish on the return march.)

Although the early domestic scenes are curiously flat (with some downright poor art direction) the film as a whole may be summarised as a worthy, visually superb and ultimately moving tribute to a group of brave men whose failure paradoxically made them into national heroes (how very British that is!). But for contemporary viewing conditioned, as it were, by doubt it is the technicolour photography and, of course, the musical score that are the main points of interest. As to the former, it was the work of Jack Cardiff (later to become a director in his own right). Osmond Borradaile and Geoffrey Unsworth. Location scenes were actually shot in Norway and Switzerland, with additional footage, minus the actors, in Grahamland in Antarctica itself (3). As to the musical score, just as Prokofiev's score for Eisenstein's 1938 epic *Alexander Nevsky* spawned a major concert work so Vaughan Williams's contribution to the film was, as all members of the Society know, the genesis of his Seventh Symphony, *Sinfonia Antartica*, a substantial addition to the previous six. This has not attracted the esteem that the previous three symphonies enjoy but the film music, as such, is a magnificent achievement (as one might have expected, given the composer's breadth and depth of vision, let alone his musical genius (4). Most of the thematic material will be recognised by those familiar with the symphony and the overall impression left by the score is that it is a rare example of what is usually merely regarded as 'background music' being so integral to the physical and emotional ambience of a film that it assumes a quite exceptional importance. (It must be added that the sound effects also play their part.)

Not just Ralph Vaughan Williams but William Walton, Arthur Bliss, William Alwyn, Malcolm Arnold and others made outstanding contributions to the golden age of British film music, that lasted from the mid 1930s to the mid 1950s yet it is not hard to conclude that only RVW could have done justice to such an epic subject.

It is instructive to note what sort of rating the film is given by reference works. Halliwell's Film Guide (5) describes it as 'the stiff-upper-lip saga par excellence; inevitable knowledge of the end makes it pretty downbeat, and the actors can only be sincere; but the snowscapes, most of them artificial, are fine'; George Perry, in his invaluable guide to Ealing Studios, *Forever Ealing* (6), concludes; that the 'epic failure' was told 'with as much honesty and accuracy as could be mustered while some of the associates were still alive, and John Mills gives an exceptional performance'; David Quinlan, in *British Sound Films The Studio Years 1928-1959* (7), calls it 'honest but still inspiring'; while the *Time Out Film*

*Guide* (8) reflects a thoroughly contemporary view by dubbing it 'respectable' and stating that 'the movie says, with characteristic aplomb, well done chaps, at least you tried.' More significantly this last review refers to the musical score effectively upstaging the dialogue; and Perry also highlights this: 'The final touch to enhance the picture's prestige was the vibrant, atmospheric score by Ralph Vaughan Williams, one of the composer's rare and most successful forays into film music, and a triumph for Ealing's musical director, Ernest Irving'.

Michael Nelson

- (1) Additional dialogue was the work of Mary Hayley Bell, who is, of course, Lady Mills.
- (2) One of the secondary roles was taken by Kenneth More and a very minor one by Christopher Lee, both then little known. Although one scene features the Norwegian explorer Nansen neither his name nor that of the actor portraying him appears in the credits.
- (3) In addition some hazardous scenes were filmed at Ealing on a sound stage covered in 'fluff', a form of fake snow. The artificiality of these scenes, in contrast to the authentic ones, slightly detracts from the overall effect.
- (4) A six and a half minute sequence of extracts from the score (Prologue, Pony March, Penguins, Climbing the Glacier, Final music), played by The Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Ernest Irving and originally released in 1948, has been included in the compact disc *British Film Music from the 1940s and 1950s* (EMI 7243 8 28844 2 2).
- (5) *Halliwell's Film Guide*, 6th Edition, Leslie Halliwell (Paladin Grafton Books, 1988).
- (6) *Forever Ealing*, George Perry (Pavillion/Michael Joseph, 1981).
- (7) *British Sound Films, The Studio Years 1928-1959* David Quinlan (B T Batsford, 1984).
- (8) *Time Out Film Guide*, Seventh Edition 1999 (Penguin Books).



# Letters

We are always pleased to receive contributions for this page

## Mass in G minor

I am writing to take up with you, albeit with no wish to challenge your right to your own opinion, about the *Mass in G Minor* in the review of the Choral Portrait by Rochester Cathedral Choir (see Stephen Connock's review in the October issue).

You find the work "strangely anonymous and withdrawn" but I feel that it is one of Vaughan Williams' very greatest works. I can think of no other composer who could have written a piece that both looks back to the great Tudor masters, Tallis, Byrd and from the continent, Palestrina, while at the same time being unmistakably 20th Century,

Unfortunately, over the past 30 years, Church music has been dumbed down and a work which requires intense contemplation and concentration may appeal only to those in sympathy with the more traditional style of worship found in cathedrals and Oxbridge Chapels.

For me, the Mass is a deeply spiritual work and it is astonishing to think that it was composed by an agnostic and one-time atheist.

The *Agnus Dei*, which seemed to give you such difficulty has a profound beauty and its ending, though simple in construction is one of the most sublime endings in all music, not simply VW.

I urge any members who have not yet come to know and love this wonderful work to obtain a copy of a top recording, perhaps that on Hyperion, or better still, the spacious and ethereal account by Kings College Cambridge under Sir David Willcocks. This is a performance which is a worthy successor to their glorious performance of Allegri's *Miserere* and Tallis's *Spem in alium*. The other pieces on the CD under review are all very fine works, but the Mass is on an altogether higher plane. Perhaps Hyperion have the ideal coupling of works by Herbert Howells, who will appeal to those who are inspired by the Mass. Alternatively, why

not couple it with the *Pastoral Symphony*? Please forgive me for airing my disagreement so vigorously, but I would hate to see such a marvellous work forgotten.

On a more positive note, thank you for the fascinating articles on Job, another work known only to VW specialists.

I close with this thought: *The Mass in G Minor*; Job and the *Sinfonia Antartica* are almost unknown beyond the confines of admirers of VW's music, but amply illustrate his genius. They show inventiveness and technical mastery, as well as a range of expression that was surely unequalled in the 20th Century.

Nigel Blore  
Billericay

## Completion of VW's Unfinished Work

The recent mention of the desirability of restoring the missing page to VW's second Norfolk Rhapsody has jogged my memory, on another and wider issue of "completions". The idea of preparing "performing editions" of works left incomplete on the deaths of major composers has seldom lain dormant since the various editions of Mozart's Requiem were prepared and given to the public. Payne's version of Elgar's third is only the most recent in a long and (generally) honourable succession of such efforts, by dedicated admirers of the originators.

In a great number of such cases, the listening public has proven to appreciate such efforts. Often the original composer's heirs and families have accepted that it is better that such work be done by those who were familiar with the writers style and general intentions, - rather than leaving incomplete manuscripts open to more abusive and casual completions at later times. The passing of the years inevitably weakens the possibility of a "compatible completion", as styles of writing and even modes of thought evolve.

Worthwhile, respectful and successful performing editions have been produced of, e.g., Mahler's tenth (Cooke), Prince Igor (Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov), Taniev's second (Blok), Balakirev's second piano concerto (Liapunov), and Grieg's second quartet.

The "final" fugue of Bach's 'Art of Fugue' exists in at least three notional completions - any one of which must surely, to any musically-minded listener, seem more acceptable than the ghastly suspension in mid-air which was left to us by the grim reaper? It would be a hard-minded purist who would reject the pleasure and satisfaction which has been given to us by completions such as these: Even if they could never pretend to correspond exactly to what the composer would have written, had he been granted the time, a listenable and worthy piece of music is surely to be preferred to a nearly-complete collection of "indications", inaudible and/or disconnected, on manuscript paper? I, at least feel an undying sense of gratitude for the labours of the devoted rescuers of such works.

What then of VW's relictia? According to Kennedy, two works could be salvaged - the cello concerto, and Thomas the Rhymer. I have spoken to Michael Kennedy about these twice, and am aware of his opposition to any form of completion being attempted. This seems a very great shame, as it has lost the opportunity for a collaborative effort by the three musicians who would have been best equipped to provide us with worthy performable versions (Douglas, Cooper, and Kennedy himself).

However, better late than never. The Elgar family had the good sense to recognize that, if they did not approve a completion of Elgar's third by a dedicated, capable and committed lover of the sketches, some other hand would almost certainly make a "completion" after the situation had slipped beyond their control - mid the result might then be much less honourable to Elgar's memory. Those so far still in control of VW's affairs should equally consider what means may be best for getting the two posthumous works into respectable and useable forms, before time tears the control from their hands, and some cheapjack version is produced for the sake of personal glory or profit, rather than out of love and respect.

Ursula's views would of course be decisive on any proposed actions - but I would hope the Society might feel it right to seek out and propose some positive way forward with these two major "incomplete" works. What about it?

Angus J. Duke  
Stratford Upon Avon



## Sinfonic Antarctica in Sydney

No doubt you have already heard that RVW has been prominent in Australia.

The *Sinfonia Antarctica* was played in Sydney as part of the Olympic Arts Festival. The orchestra was the New Zealand Symphony under James Judd and the quotations were spoken by Sir Edmund Hillary. It was a bright idea on the part of the New Zealanders to use the conqueror of Everest in this role.

I am rather glad to recall that I played a small part in the very first performance of this symphony in Australia in 1953. Sir Eugene Goossens was the conductor of the Sydney Symphony and the soloist was the distinguished soprano Margaret Moore (who died last week). Margaret, an old friend, rang me in Brisbane to talk about the performance and mentioned that Goossens was not sure how to create the uncanny atmosphere surrounding the soprano solo passages.

I told her to ask Goossens to listen to the music of the film *Scott of the Antarctic* which would solve the problem. I had just imported from London a 78 rpm record of the film music and I sent it down to Sydney where Goossens and Margaret and the sound engineers listened carefully and learned from it. That first performance was immensely successful in spite of the acoustic peculiarities of the Sydney Town Hall. (These were pre-opera house days).

*D J Munro  
Queensland*

## More on Scott in Sydney

As part of a very wide-ranging Olympic Arts Festival running concurrently with the Olympic Games in Sydney, the visiting New Zealand Symphony Orchestra meticulously conducted by James Judd (who shares its musical directorship with that of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra) performed the *Sinfonia Antarctica* in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall on September 25. It was an excellent performance, but there were two special aspects which took it a long way out of normal concert routine.

The first was that the poetic introductions to each movement were spoken by Sir Edmund Hillary, the New Zealand

explorer and mountaineer who climbed Mt. Everest in 1953, the very year in which the symphony appeared (I heard it then from the Halle Orchestra under Sir John Barbirolli in Manchester). Sir Edmund is now 81 years old, a little slow and unsteady in his walk, but of formidable and rugged mien, not unlike RVW himself in his old age.

The second special feature was the cinematic projection onto a giant screen behind the orchestra of a film made in 1998, edited to fit the music score, by the television company Natural History New Zealand (N1-INZ) which is based in Dunedin on the south island and is one of the world's largest producers of wildlife and associated TV programs. The cameraman was Mike Single, and his film of landscapes, seascapes and animals (mainly seals and penguins) was interspersed with historic footage from much older films and stills from the Scott era. In itself this was a superb film, but at times it was something of a distraction to the music, especially as it often showed scudding clouds moving swiftly where the music itself moved slowly with its evocative intensity.

The whole performance was enthusiastically received, as had a performance before interval of a new work called *Hikoi* by New Zealand composer Gareth Farr (born 1968) which was actually a 30-minute concerto for percussion and orchestra, written specially for the soloist Evelyn Glennie whose almost incredible virtuosity amazed the large audience. But it was the RVW work, described by the program note as a "sound spectacular" which could become enthusiastically embraced by a new audience.

*Fred Blanks  
Sydney*

## The Eel's Foot

There have been two recent reissues of the 1949 recording of RVW's 6th Symphony played by the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult, on Dutton CDBP 9703 and Pearl GEM 0107. Both CDs have the original scherzo.

RVW was present at the recording sessions on 23 and 24 February. These are described by the documentary film maker Humphrey Jennings in his notes for a film

he was planning about the LSO. They are published in 'London Symphony - Portrait of an Orchestra' by Hubert Foss and Noel Goodwin, published in 1954 with a preface by RVW.

When RVW entered the studio at Abbey Road he received 'tremendous applause' having conducted the LSO in a performance of 'A London Symphony' the night before. Another lost opportunity for a recording. Humphrey Jennings also describes the rehearsal and performance in his notes published in 'London Symphony'. Perhaps these extracts could be printed in a future edition of the RVW Society Journal.

For anyone wishing to hear traditional singing from a Suffolk Pub a recently released CD may also be of interest to RVW Society members. 'Good Order! ladies and gentlemen please.' Traditional singing and music from The Eel's Foot, Eastbridge, Suffolk, CD number VT14OCD is issued by Veteran, 44 Old Street, Haughley, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 3NX, tel/fax 01449 673695. Web site: [www.veteran.co.uk](http://www.veteran.co.uk). (priced at £12.99 including postage)

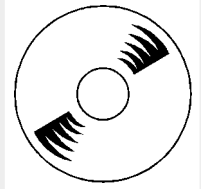
The recordings were made for the BBC in 1938/39 by A L Lloyd (who later collaborated with RVW in 'The Penguin book of English Folk Songs'), and later recordings made for the BBC by E J Moeran and used in a programme presented by him, 'East Anglia Sings'. Some of his commentary can be heard on this CD.

Not all the songs are folk songs, but it includes 'The Dark-eyed Sailor' which RVW collected elsewhere and arranged. Other songs of interest are the 'False Hearted Knight' sung by 'Jumbo' Brightwell who learned his songs from his father 'Velvet' Brightwell who sings 'The Princess Royal' and 'Pleasant and Delightful'. These are the kind of singers RVW would have encountered when collecting in Suffolk. The 'Foggy Dew' is also sung on this CD, recorded only a few miles from Aldeburgh!

*Michael Goatcher  
Thaxted, Essex*

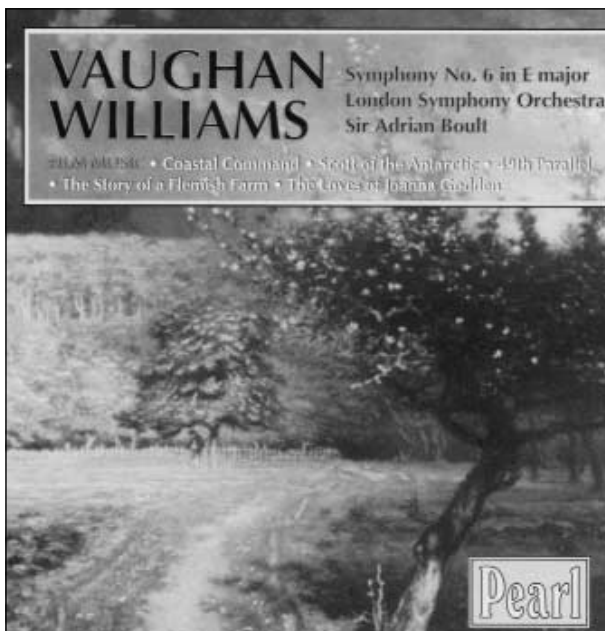


# Record Review



## Original music to Scott of the Antarctic

Music to Scott of the Antarctic, Philharmonic Orchestra, Ernest Irving, coupled with film music to Coastal Command (BBC Northern Orchestra, Mathieson), 49th Parallel (LSO, Mathieson) The Story of a Flemish Farm (BBC Northern Orchestra, Mathieson) The Loves of Joanna Godden (Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, Irving) and Symphony No. 6 (LSO, Boult) on Pearl GEM 0107



This is a timely re-issue. *The Scott of the Antarctic* excerpts are taken from HMV C3834 of 1949 with the Philharmonia conducted by Ernst Irving. This recording has appeared on CD before - most recently on an EMI disc *British Film Music from the 1940s and 1950s* (EMI 8 28844 22) although inexplicably *The Return and Blizzard* are omitted from the EMI re-issue. It is important to preserve this music not least because it gives us VW's first thoughts prior to the *Sinfonia Antarctica*. It also offers us a glimpse of Ernest Irving as conductor. Born in 1878 in Godalming, Irving began his career as a conductor on the road in pantomimes and variety shows. He was noted for his work conducting West End musicals and joined Ealing Studios in 1937. He remained with the studio until 1952. He composed as well as supervised film music, and his own credits as composer include *The Four Just Men* (1939) and *The Blue Lamp* (1949). His knowledge and enthusiasm were vital to Vaughan Williams, as was the other conductor of film music on this CD — Muir Mathieson. Mathieson (1911-1975) was involved as Musical Director in well over 600 film scores. He was trained at the RCM and joined London Films in 1932. He was running the wartime Ministry of Information film music work from 1940 in which capacity he became closer to Vaughan Williams. His conducting of the *Epilogue* from 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel is superb. This is a wonderful piece, different from the more well known *Prelude* and is worth the price of this CD alone.

This, with the evocative *Dawn Scene from the Story of a Flemish Farm* (1943) is taken from rare BBC discs. My warm congratulations to Pearl for making this lovely music available to us. Other than the film music, the CD has Boult's 1949 recording of the *Symphony* No. 6, with the original version of the scherzo. (The revised version was

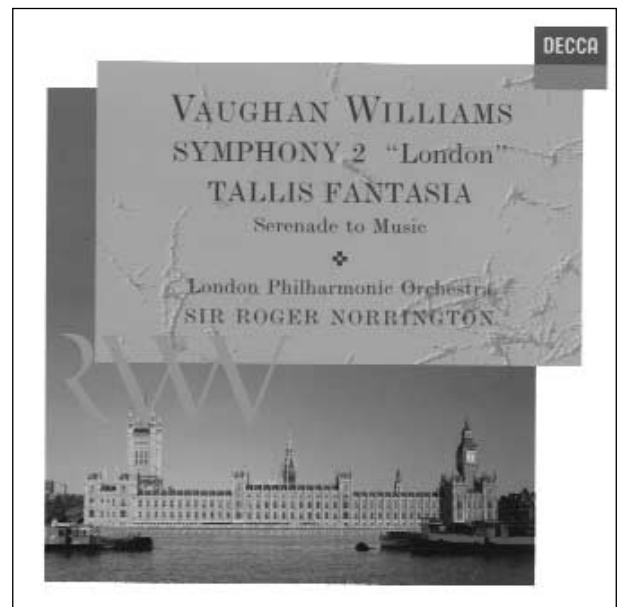
recorded on IS February 1950 and is included in a new Dutton CD to be reviewed in the June edition of the Journal). The energy and vitality of Boult's early recording is immediately apparent. The sound is remarkably clear for its age.

The front and back of the CD booklet refer to the *Sixth Symphony* as being in 'E major' - an inexplicable error. No matter. I strongly recommend this CD for the *Epilogue to 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* and the Scott music alone.

Stephen Connock

## Norrington cycle continues

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *A London Symphony* (No.2) / *Tallis Fantasia I Serenade to Music* LPO /16 Soloists/ Sir Roger Norrington Decca 458 357-2 (73".56)



Norrington continues his cycle of the symphonies on Decca in much the same style as the others. There is excellent orchestral playing and recorded sound which allow all the nuances of this most richly orchestrated symphony to be heard. The conductor's enormous attention to the detail of the score, unfortunately to my mind leads to a loss of passion in the overall performance. Compared with any of the two Barbirolli or Previn performances currently available on CD, this is relatively cool version of this kaleidoscopic symphony. The opening "dawn over the city" so reminiscent of Debussy's *La Mer*, is ponderous, tacking atmosphere and expectation, which is a pity since the rest of the movement is played with great clarity and ends with a thrilling climax. The beautiful second movement is played with great eloquence but with a restraint, that left me unmoved. The jaunty scherzo and the monumental finale fare better, the haunting epilogue played with a great sense of mystery.

This conductor is a fine exponent of RVW, the other recordings in the series, so far have been well received, and personally I regard his interpretation of *A Pastoral Symphony* as the best available (see review RVWSJ no.13). My reservations about the first two movements of his version of the *London* preclude it from the same endorsement. However it is good to know he is to conduct this

symphony in the concert hall and perhaps may change his interpretation, members may be interested to know that he will give three performances with the Berlin Philharmonic, no less, in 2001.

As to the other works on the disc, they are of course, amongst VW's most well known. The Tallis Fantasia is given a fine if rather austere performance and there is a glowing reading of the Serenade to Music given in the original version for 16 soloists and in this recording we are treated to a very distinguished gathering. There are excellent, thought provoking sleeve notes provided by one of our members, Byron Adams,

Robin Barber

## Singing of rare beauty

**Merciless Beauty, Two English Folk Songs, Ten Blake Songs, Along the field, On Wenlock Edge. John Mark Ainsley (tenor), Nash Ensemble on Hyperion CDA 67168**

This most welcome CD is distinguished by quite beautiful singing from John Mark Ainsley. His voice has considerable purity of tone. He sings with very clear enunciation and has the ability to characterise these songs in a vivid and expressive manner, thus avoiding monotony in works which can be difficult to bring off. In the settings of Chaucer, *Merciless Beauty*, he also demonstrates a sense of ecstasy which is so important in these Rondels.



The *Ten Blake Songs* and *Along the field* benefit most from Ainsley's clarity and beauty of tone. *Cruelty has a human heart* is striking in its expressiveness and *The Lamb* avoids all hint of sentiment. From the Houseman cycle, Ainsley extracts new meaning and finds new colours. *The sigh that heaves the grasses* is very moving, whilst the final song *With rue my heart is laden* captures the poignancy of VW's setting. For both these cycles, this Hyperion disc becomes first choice.



Competition is fiercer in *On Wenlock Edge* with Ian Bostridge outstanding in the orchestral version (EMI 5 56762 2) and Ian Partridge leading the field in the original chamber scoring (EMI CDM 5 65589 2). John Mark Ainsley's interpretation is deeply felt and beautifully sung and the Nash Ensemble's accompaniment is most expressive. However, neither *From far from eve and morning* or *Bredon Hill* are as moving as the recommended alternatives, although both songs are rewarding in the inward, reflective style Ainsley adopts.

Those members wishing to invest in *Along the field* or *The Ten Blake Songs* should make this CD their first choice.

Stephen Connock

## British Wind Band Classics

**Toccata marziale, Flourish for Wind Hand, English Folk Song Suite, Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra, Timothy Reynish, (coupled with Holst First and Second Suites, Fugue à la gigue, Morning Song, Hammersniith) on Chandos CHAN 9697.**



This Chandos recording is important in that it is the first recording of the *English Folk Song Suite* to include the *Sea Songs* as the second movement. The *Sea Songs* were included in the first performance in 1923 but were separated in the 1950s, probably at the behest of the publishers. It is fascinating to hear VW's original scheme again, especially in such a sympathetic recording as this. The work overall seems to become more substantial, and the *Intermezzo* even more elegant after the vitality of the *Sea Songs*.

Timothy Reynish, and the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra play with real affection and understanding of this music. Their performance of the Holst works also seems to me ideal, bringing out the nobility, lyricism and energy of these marvellous pieces. The Chandos sound is quite simply superb - just sample the delightful interpolation of *Greensleeves* into the third movement of Holst's *Second Suite* or the grandeur of VW's *Flourish for Wind Band*. Highly recommended even to those not normally keen on music for wind band.

Stephen Connock

# THE WIND MUSIC OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

An article by Tim Reynish to coincide with the issue of his recordings of the wind music of Vaughan Williams & Holst on Chandos CHAN 9697

This the eighth commercial recording by the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra was always going to be tough, challenging Frederick Fennell who recorded the Suite with both Eastman Wind Ensemble and the Cleveland Winds, also Denis Wick with London Winds, Dick Ridings with the Coldstream Guards and Eric Banks with the Central Band of the RAF.



Anyone performing Holst, Vaughan Williams and Grainger must spend hours with the scores and Fennell's masterly analyses from the Instrumentalist Magazine, since Fennell has been conducting and writing about these masterpieces for half a century. Fennell himself will be at the Royal Northern College of Music on Sunday 8th April at 2.30 pm, talking about his friendship with Vaughan Williams and Holst, and any member of the Society is welcome to attend and meet him.

The lack of real research into the music of Vaughan Williams is curious; Michael Kennedy, the music critic and author, suggests it is because VW did not bother to keep track of manuscripts, letters, papers and contracts, so that formal research is a nightmare, even discouraging our American colleagues. My own researches threw up a few questions which I hope readers might be able to answer.

I am extremely grateful for the research by Professor Gordon Turner into this March; the books jointly written by Gordon and his son Alwyn on British Military music and especially "The Trumpets will Sound", The Story of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, published by Parapress in 1996, are required reading by anyone interested in military music traditions and history.

Nobody seems sure when the premiere of *Sea Songs* took place. Kennedy and others suggest that it might have been at a Festival of Empire in 1923 and we have known for some time that it was included in a concert at Kneller Hall in the autumn of that year:

## Recapitulatory Concert

of New works and arrangements for Military Band  
WEDNESDAY, 3rd OCTOBER, 1923 COMMENCING  
AT 3,30 PM,

7. Suite Vaughan Williams
  - (a) Seventeen come Sunday
  - (b) Sea Songs
  - (c) My bonnie Boy
  - (d) Folk Songs from Somerset

The Composer's first work for military band  
Conductor: Student S.W. Webber, A.R.C.M

Earlier in the year, on the 4th July, as part of Commandant Colonel Somerville's plans to involve professional musicians in Kneller Hall, the Director of Music of the Royal College of Music, Sir Hugh Allen, conducted the Toccata and Fugue in C major by Bach. In addition, four world premieres (sent in response to the request for original compositions written direct for military band, and approved for performance by the Committee of Selection) were given, recorded in a hand-written programme in the Kneller Hall Programme Book, all of which would be "recapitulated" in October. As well as the Harrison and Keyser, the band played three movements from *The*

*Planets*, and the *Folk Song Suite*, including *Sea Songs* as the second movement. Why was it dropped, if in the first two documented performances, *Sea Songs* was played as the second movement of the *Folk Song Suite*?

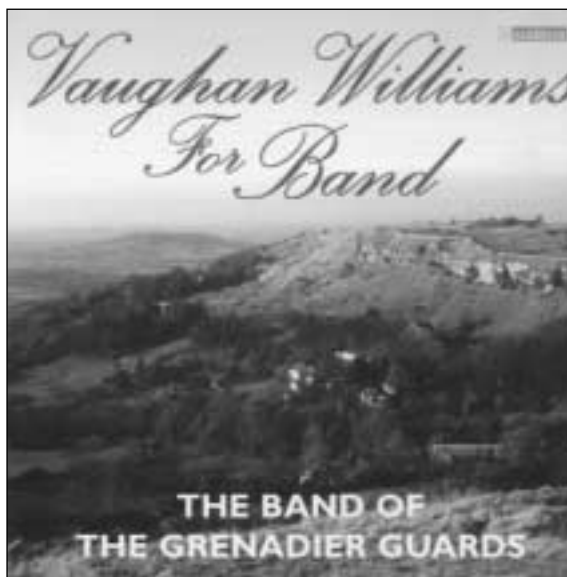
Much of the evidence suggests that VW's original concept was of a four-movement work. The key is the same, F minor. The orchestrations published by Boosey & Hawkes are largely the same. Gordon Turner says that the late David McBain, Director of Music at Kneller Hall 1954 -1961, suggested that the publishers felt the four movement work was too long and cumbersome for publication, and they presumably welcomed the chance of extracting a snappy March which could be published separately in the QMB series.

One final mystery remains; the original march card parts were issued with a piano conductor score, published like the Suite in 1924, but in 1991 Boosey & Hawkes issued a full score of a "Corrected Edition". This has a number of discrepancies, but was the basis for our recording for Chandos.

Tim Reynish  
Royal Northern College of Music

## VW with a Difference

Band music including arrangements of *Norfolk Rhapsody*. *Prelude: 49th Parallel* and *Linden Lea*. The Band of Grenadier Guards, Lt. Col. P.E. Hills on Emblem EMBL 8001.



Members of the Society will have conflicting views on VW for brass band, but this disc recorded by the Band of Grenadier Guards (EMBL 8001) should win plenty of converts. Under the baton of Lt. Col. Philip Hills, their director of music, the band plays several pieces originally composed for wind or brass band, as well as arrangements of other works by Rodney Bashford, Philip Hills and several others.

Inevitably, some pieces work better than others. *Greensleeves* sounds too bouncy. *Norfolk Rhapsody* lacks variety of tone colour, and *Rhosymedre* sounds almost comic to begin with. On the other hand *Linden Lea* benefits from a fine oboe solo and the *Prelude to 49th Parallel* sounds as good as the original.

The original works for brass and wind, including *Toccata Marziale*, written for the Wembley Exhibition of 1924, and two *Flourishes* are given stylish performances, with the band excelling itself in the *Sea Songs* of 1923.

Seventy-seven minutes constitutes a well-filled disc, and I hope that members will give this worthwhile enterprise a try – they will not be disappointed.

Simon Coombs

## THE DORKING BACH CHOIR

RVW's admiration of Bach is well-known and he conducted many performances of his works at the Leith Hill Musical Festival - notably the St Matthew Passion. What is less well-known is his formation of the Dorking Bach Choir to sing the St John Passion every year from 1947-53 in St Martins Church, Dorking. Information about them is not easy to find though they did make quite an impact locally and more widely (there are reviews of them in the London Press in 1953 and 1958). It has, however, been possible to establish some facts from former performers, their children, from handbills and from the diary of a tenor who sang in some performances, as did his sister, and whose mother was a 'founder-member'.

RVW's letter of introduction makes it clear that each of the 30-40 choir members must be useful: "All singers must be good musicians and have reasonably good voices. Please treat this as confidential as I do not want to receive applications from anybody unsuitable. Rehearsals were held at "The White Gates" and Celia Newbery's "Vaughan Williams in Dorking" contains recollections of these from former choir members.

The first performance was on 19 February 1947 (Ash Wednesday) and RVW's last on 15 February 1953, and it has been possible to find out the dates of all performances and many of the names of soloists. Well-known singers such as Arthur Cranmer, Gordon Clinton and Eric Greene took part with local soloists, some of them drawn from the choir. The orchestra of earlier performances did not include woodwind because of the pitch of the organ, but after its renovation and tuning to normal concert pitch (in the winter of 1951) woodwind and piano were used. Many of the instrumental soloists - including Eileen McCarthy, William Cole and Vera Kantrovich - also played in the Festival and St Matthew performances in the Dorking Halls. There were a few cuts including the alto solo "Chains of Bondage" and Joyce Hooper describes in "And Choirs Singing" how RVW said he was sorry she was "not in Act 1".

The choir had a bank account into which receipts from the collections at performances were paid, and when expenses were dealt with the Treasurer communicated the deficit to RVW who gave him a cheque to 'square things up'.

After the death of RVW Dr Cole (who was living at "The White Gates") conducted the performances from 1959-63 and thereafter until 1972 there were bi-annual ones under Eric Greene, Joyce Hooper and Julian Armitage-Smith. Now the St John and St Matthew Passions are sung alternate years by LHMF.

Renée Stewart

## JUST A THOUGHT

What's in a name. Well, quite a bit I would contend. A thought struck me the other day: What would VW's following be if his family name hadn't been double-barrelled? In other words, what if he was just called Ralph Williams? Even worse; what if his father had decided to call him Fred? There's little doubt that 'Fred Williams' hasn't got the ring to it that 'Ralph Vaughan Williams' has.

Although there is no quantifiable proof, I feel sure that composers such as Holst and Finzi suffered from their foreign-sounding names whilst Bliss and Birtwhistle suffer from names sounding rather trivial. Others have names that open themselves to puns; who was it, I wonder, who termed the phrase, 'Bax to the wall'?

But I suppose we should be grateful for small mercies: at least these composers have not names which can 'lose something' in the pronunciation. On the few occasions the Norwegian composer Fartein Valen's music has featured on Radio Three the poor announcer has invariably pronounced it as Farting Valen!

On the other side of the coin, could it be possible that a composer such as Britten would have benefited from the extra enthusiasm imparted by British patriots?

I wonder therefore if the name Vaughan Williams tangibly adds to the aura which seems to surround everything connected to the great man. It's certainly a name that would seem to be liked by the British ruling classes. And after all, classical music is not (I would sadly contend) listened to with much enthusiasm by those of the working class. They tend to listen more to what Keith Otis Edwards delightfully referred to in the October 2000 journal as 'adolescent sex music.' Indeed, looking at the issue from another angle the fact that he was not a member of the establishment is said to have blighted the career of Mr Elgar - who was not only a member of the wrong class, but also suffered from having a Spanish name (!)

Perhaps I should go no further before I get into deep sociological water.

Finally, I must say I like the name Vaughan Williams. After all, if it had been just 'Williams' I'm sure the VW Society would receive a constant stream of letters asking where a C.D of 'JAWS' might be obtained!

Rob Furneaux

## WILLIAMS ON WILLIAMS

It's surprising sometimes to come across references to VW where you don't expect them. I remember sometime back being pleasantly surprised when I heard on 'Desert Island Discs' that one of my favourite actors - Brian Blessed - thought VW to be one of the 'greats'. He went on to choose Sinfonia Antarctica as one of his seven discs.

More recently I was reading the published diaries of the actor-comedian Kenneth Williams. I was delighted to find that he was an ardent follower of classical music and he often comments on his love of Brahms and Schumann. Suddenly in his entry for January 4<sup>th</sup> 1972 I came across a reference to Vaughan Williams, but I must say that his comments were not quite as complimentary as those of Brian Blessed.

### **Kenneth Williams writes:**

*'I got a recording of Ian Partridge singing 'Wenlock Edge' songs and some songs of Blake. The setting of the Housman poems by Vaughan Williams is almost an essay of misunderstanding. Hardly any of the Housman poems even comes off as a song: the first impression is one of dirge-like intoning which is reminiscent of church singing, and the sheer editing or 'placing' of the words, and their musical emphasis, is atrocious. All this is redeemed by the fact that Partridge soars above this indifference with his sheer talent and lyrical ability.'*

### **On 11th January he goes on to write:**

*'Postman brought me a parcel which turned out to be Wenlock Edge!! Ian Partridge has sent me his recital of these songs as a gift! This is a charming gesture'.*

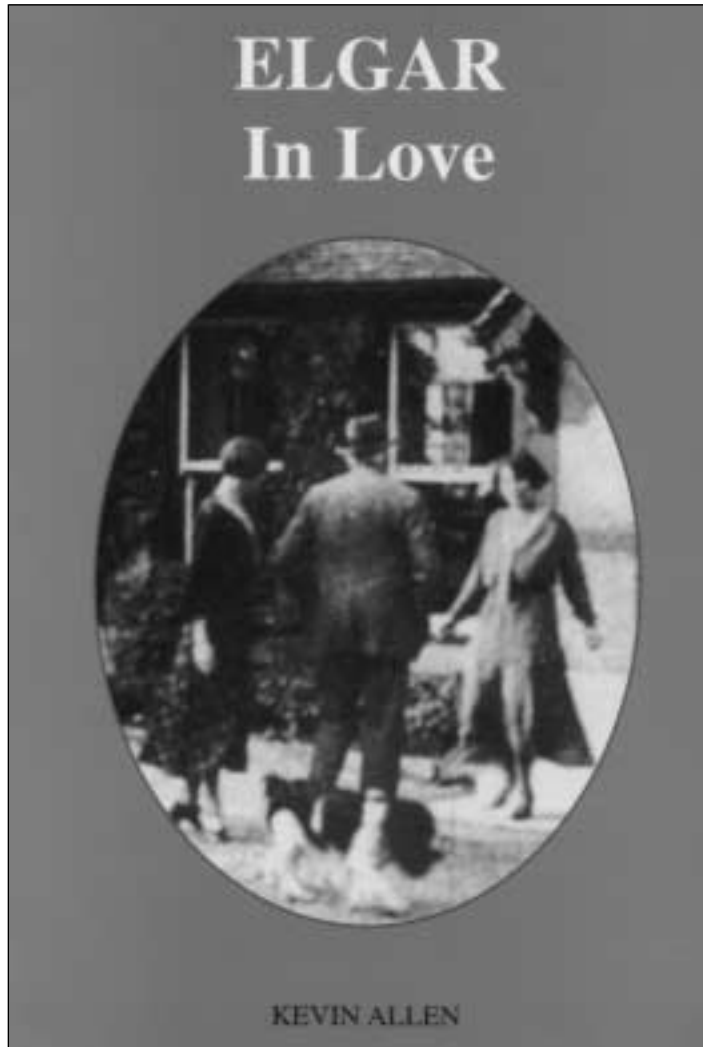
Who knows; perhaps after such a warm gesture - and after further listenings - Mr Williams changed his mind about Mr Williams.

Rob Furneaux

# BOOK REVIEW

**Elgar In Love** by Kevin Allen

Published by the author, July 2000. 148 pages £11.85 including p & p, from Kevin Allen, 23 Benbow Close, Malvern Wells, Worcs. WR14 4JJ. (Foreword by Michael Kennedy)



The title *Elgar in Love* might suggest at first glance a study of Elgar and the 'Eternal Feminine' throughout his life, including Helen Weaver and Julia Worthington, with Alice Elgar at the centre of the book. Instead this is a warm-hearted, well researched study of Elgar's relationship with Vera Hockman from 1931 to the composer's death in 1934. Vera Hockman may not be familiar to many admirers of Elgar's music. She is mentioned in Jerrold Northrop Moore's *Spirit of England* (page 49) but there is no reference to her at all in most other biographies, including *Elgar OM* (Percy Young) or *Edward Elgar* (Diana McVeagh)

Yet she was of vital importance in rekindling Elgar's musical creativity, in his last years, and her inspiration directly influenced the remarkable *Third Symphony*.

With Alice Elgar's death in 1920, Elgar became more lonely, even desperate. His creativity had deserted him. He became unpredictable and somewhat irrational. Kevin Allen describes Elgar at this time with sympathy and objectivity. By 1931 things were looking up – his friendship with George Bernard Shaw had

contributed to this – and Elgar agreed to conduct *Gerontius* in Croydon on 10 November 1931. At the first rehearsal on 7.11.31 he set eyes upon a dark haired and dark eyed lady in the violin section. She knew his music almost by heart and returned his gaze with a mixture of admiration and trepidation. So began what Allen calls 'one of the great love affairs, though discreet from the beginning'. Almost 40 years separated the two in age, she was married (albeit separated) and conventional wisdom did not allow – at least publicly – such affairs. At the centre of this enthralling book is Vera's own narrative of her meetings with Elgar. She writes in a refreshingly candid manner, breathless, humorous, perceptive, ardent and yet touchingly hesitant as she gets closer to the great man. She grows in confidence as they find they share a passion for poetry and music. Elgar in turn is touched by this pretty young woman who understands his music so well. Her description of Elgar at this time reveals so much more in a few lines than many other whole biographies. As Vera puts it, 'one moment he is so disillusioned and melancholic, the next moment so mystical and visionary'. The relationship deepens yet time is running out. As Elgar says to her 'but I am so old you know and time is so short'. Music flows again - and Elgar sends Vera sketches of his Third symphony, including 'First sketch of VH's own theme' - the lyrical second subject of the first movement. Poignantly, Elgar adds in his letter to Vera 'will never be finished?' A year later, Elgar was to die from cancer away from Vera who appears not to have seen him at the end or even to have attended his funeral.

It is a moving narrative. Vera emerges as a woman of great empathy close to Elgar's daughter Carice. She was friendly with Vaughan Williams and this book contains many fascinating insights into VW, including his work in the Second World War. There are also many superb photos, of Elgar, of Vera and of VW. I could not put the book down until finished and then immediately re-read it again to linger over fascinating details. I am left with a sense of what might have been if Elgar's life had not been ended by inoperable cancer just three years after he met Vera. I am left, too, with a sense of gratitude to Vera Hockman - that 'special presence and beauty' as Kevin Allen describes her, whose empathy with Elgar, as man and musician gave the composer happiness and zest for life at a time he might have given up hope of finding love again. This is a book to buy and cherish.

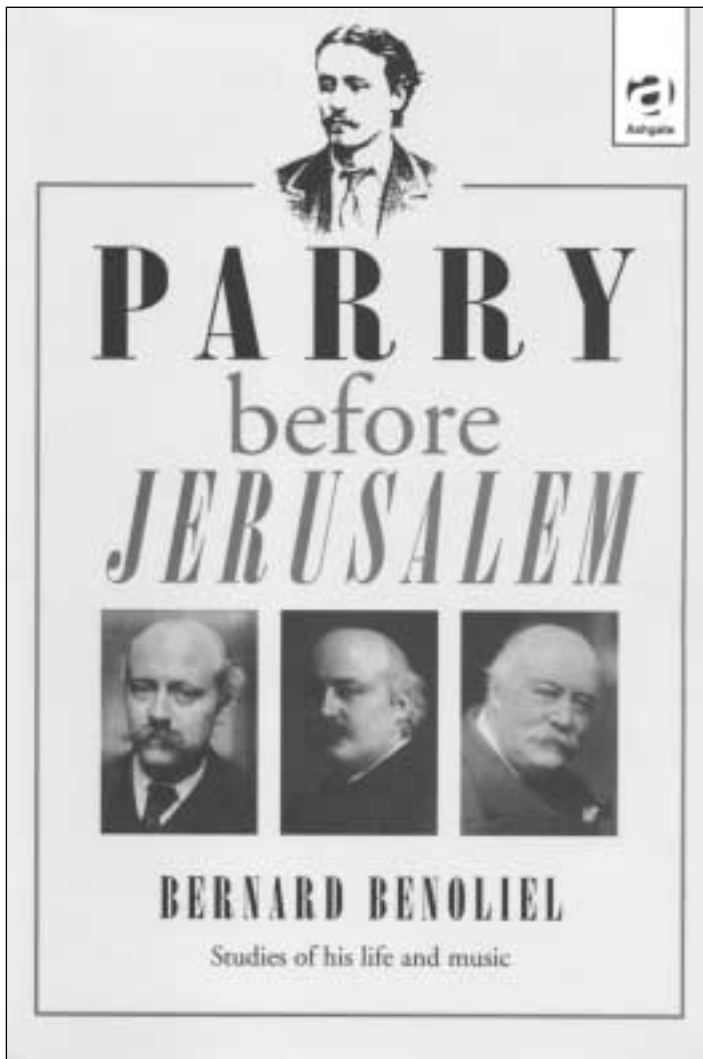
*Stephen Connock*

## **Parry before Jerusalem**

**Studies of his Life and Music with Excerpts from his Published Writings, by Bernard Benoliel. Ashgate Publishing Ltd., ISBN 0 85967 9276, 233 pages.**

Bernard Benoliel poses a question at the beginning of this thoughtful and well-researched book: did Parry write anything worthwhile before the late setting of *Jerusalem*? He then sets out a detailed reassessment of Parry's works placing these in the context of his life, particularly the formative early years. Benoliel is also interested in Parry's achievements as a writer and music historian, and devotes around a third of the book to these essays and books.

The author describes Parry's family in such detail that it will be a reference point for anyone wanting to understand Parry's complex background. His mother died just 12 days after his birth, and his stepmother was to have little time for him. His sister died young,



and his brother entered upon a path of ruinous decline. At least there was financial security - his father was a prosperous Gloucestershire landowner and art collector. Parry seems never to have risked the security of his family for his art. As Benoliel puts it: 'The price of safety was a life that never focussed around composition'. Excelling as an academic, public servant and teacher, such activity - indeed, hyper-activity - masked Parry's fundamental inability to put his creative life first. Why? Bernard Benoliel explores the emotional impact of the loss of his mother, his fragile self-confidence surprising in someone so outwardly extrovert, his fears of being alone and his inability to reflect. His health was another permanent worry - including palpitation and dizziness. He does seem to have prematurely aged although photos show him bright eyed and alert.

After an unsuccessful stint as a city underwriter, Parry did not turn to music for a profession until he was over 30. Benoliel charts Parry's musical career, including Director of the RCM in 1895 and his knighthood for this service in 1898. The failure of his opera *Guinevere* (1885-86) turned Parry towards oratorio, with mixed results. Shaw's damning review of *Job* is dealt with at length. Benoliel sees *The Lotus Eaters* as a genuine masterpiece and *Invocation to Music* as a seminal work in the English musical renaissance. The late songs are also highly regarded. The chapter devoted to the symphonies includes numerous insights and musical illustrations.

Bernard Benoliel has an astonishing grasp of the details of Parry's life and music. I better understand Parry's complex personality as a result of reading this book. If I cannot yet accept the author's

conclusion that Parry is a genuinely great composer, the fault is probably mine. At least this book will send me back to the symphonies and choral works with renewed interest.

Stephen Connock

**THE BEST OF ME;  
A GERONTIUS CENTENARY COMPANION**  
*Edited by Geoffrey Hodgkins*  
Elgar Editions, 1999 362 pp + index, £15.00 hardback.

Last October marked the centenary of the performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and to celebrate this the Elgar Society have collected thirty four essays and reviews, some culled from previous issues of *The Elgar Society Journal*, together with new material, to chart the history of this important choral work - Elgar's - masterpiece - since 1900.

The first section - "Before Elgar"- contains a useful short biography of Cardinal Newman, which helps to put the poem in context. The full text follows, which first, shows those sections of the poem not set by Elgar and second, the markings made by General Gordon in his copy, which were circulated after his death. The composition of *The Dream* is traced in articles that deal with the places which inspired the composer, the textual differences between Newman's poem and the words set by Elgar, the form and layout of the music, together with Dora Powell's memories of visiting Elgar in the summer of 1900, when he was immersed in composition.

The Birmingham premiere and other early performances are covered in the section "The Struggle for Survival" which is the most fascinating part of the book in that it reproduces some contemporary reviews and two accounts of the first performance, one from a member of the choir and one from Dora Powell. It is clear that despite an indifferent performance, the critics *did* recognise the work as a masterpiece. All the reasons for that poor premiere are set out here - the difficulty in learning Elgar's new music, the death of choir-master and his unsympathetic replacement, the heavy workload of the Birmingham Festival choir and Richter's underestimation of the work's complexities, (William Bennett, who sang in the choir, considered Elgar should have been appointed conductor) - but even if *The Dream* was not performed as Elgar intended, it was seen as 'a work of genius' and plans were soon made for subsequent performances.

Vaughan Williams attended the first performance and over fifty years later recalled for Michael Kennedy 'that the choir got hopelessly flat at the end of Part I, that Plunkett Greene lost his voice, that Marie Brema had none to lose, and that Edward Lloyd sang it like a Stainer anthem in the correct tenor attitude with one foot slightly withdrawn...'

This early history of the work is set out in exemplary detail in Lewis Foreman's article, which charts the work's performance history up to 1904 and contains detailed accounts of the two Dusseldorf performances, the American premiere in Chicago in 1903 and a performance in Sydney in December 1903. It also deals with the works publication history and the performance styles of its early performers: a superb piece of research which is essential reading.

The last sections deal with the critical re-evaluation of the work,



its recorded legacy and its present status.

Michael Kennedy's penultimate essay "After 100 Years" is full of significant insights, none more so than his view that today 'singers have lost the key to this music. They sing it, but they do not live it. There is a danger, after a hundred years, that *The Dream of Gerontius* is becoming just another choral work instead of a very special musical and spiritual experience...' He hopes these 'are pessimistic views' but they are given 'as perhaps worth consideration.'

This fine collection of essays, articles and reviews confirms the work's continuing appeal and its stature within the English choral tradition and performers, singers and listeners will find much to enjoy here. R.V.W. never lost his admiration for the work,

admitting that his study of the full score in the British Museum influenced his early compositions, including the *Sea Symphony*. He memorably conducted the work in Dorking in 1934 and wrote to the dying Elgar that 'it will be one of the great moments of my life when I stand with trembling baton to conduct it'. After him the greatest composer of the next generation, Benjamin Britten was also to conduct it and to this day the work continues to fascinate and enthrall all those who come within its unique spell.

The book is available to members of the Vaughan Williams Society at the discounted price of £15.00 plus postage of £1.70 from Elgar Editions, 20 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 1ER. An order form is enclosed.

K.D.Mitchell

## Future Concert

Hugh Cobbe has provided us with details of a concert of RVW Chamber music on 20 February 2001, which no member will want to miss! The concert, at the Conference Centre in the British Library, London is as follows:

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2001 18.15 - 19.50**

### RCM CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

#### *Vaughan Williams' Quintets*

Vaughan Williams: Quintet for clarinet, horn, violin, cello and piano in D (1898)  
*first modern performance*

Vaughan Williams: Phantasy Quintet (1912)

#### *Interval*

Vaughan Williams: Nocturne and Scherzo for String Quintet (1904)  
*first performance*

Vaughan Williams: Scherzo for String Quintet (1904)  
*first performance*

Vaughan Williams: Quintet in C minor for violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano (1903)

There will be a free pre-concert talk on the early music of Vaughan Williams by Bernard Benoliel at 17.15pm

£7.50, £6.00 concessions, £2.50 students and under 18s.

# Concert Reviews

## SIR JOHN IN LOVE

Friday 29th September 2000 City Hall Newcastle upon Tyne

I have loved this work since 1975 when it was last performed in the North East by the Palatine Opera Company in Durham. The conductor on that occasion was Alan Fearon, the founder and chorus master of the Northern Sinfonia Chorus who so ably supported this concert performance of the complete opera. Readers of the RVW Journal will know that this concert performance is a prelude to the whole work being recorded by Richard Hickox and his team of soloists together with the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra and Chorus in December 2000. The conductor, soloists and orchestra have performed the work before in the "Visions of Albion" season in 1997 at the Barbican in London. This was the first opportunity for supporters of the Northern Sinfonia in the North East to experience the work with the Sinfonia Chorus.

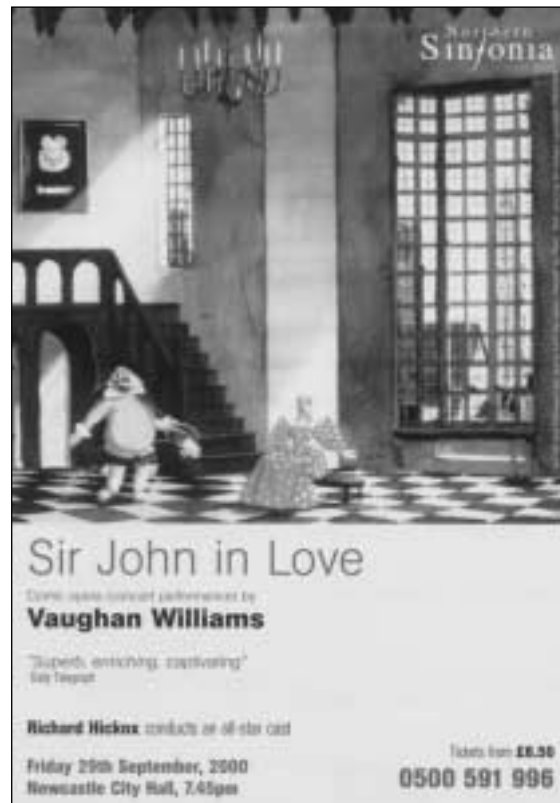
What a wonderful performance and experience it was. Richard Hickox led his team of seventeen soloists (some doubling up on minor parts) and the Orchestra and Chorus with conviction, sprightliness and sheer exuberance. Sir John was sung by Donald Maxwell who brought out both the humour and pathos of the writing - it was perfectly possible to appreciate Fords jealousy that his wife might indeed be in love with Sir John as Donald Maxwell did not present him as a grotesque caricature, but as a late middle aged man with an eye for the ladies. The women soloists were all excellent. Laura Claycomb and Pamela Helen Stephen were splendid as the Merry Wives and Ameral Gunson was delightful as Mistress Quickly. The opening scene of Act II in which the three ladies discover Falstaff's deception was one of the highlights of the evening.

Sophie Danetnan and Mark Padmore sang ravishly as the

young lovers - the opening scene of Act III which Vaughan Williams called an "interlude" was another highlight of the evening. In this scene as in all the others in which he appeared Christopher Purves brought real characterisation to the part of the Host of the Garter Inn. All of the soloists were quite splendid and coped with the considerable difficulties of movement on the City Hall stage. This was particularly true in the last scene, set in Windsor Forest, when Falstaff is mocked, the young lovers are married and the opera ends with general reconciliation.

I look forward most eagerly to the issue of the recording of Sir John in Love by this remarkable team of performers. Having seen such a performance as this concert version I cannot understand why the national opera companies do not mount a fully staged production of this glorious English music.

Canon Peter Strange



## 'Afternoon tea with Stephen Connock'

Three Choirs Festival. Hereford.  
21st. August 2000.

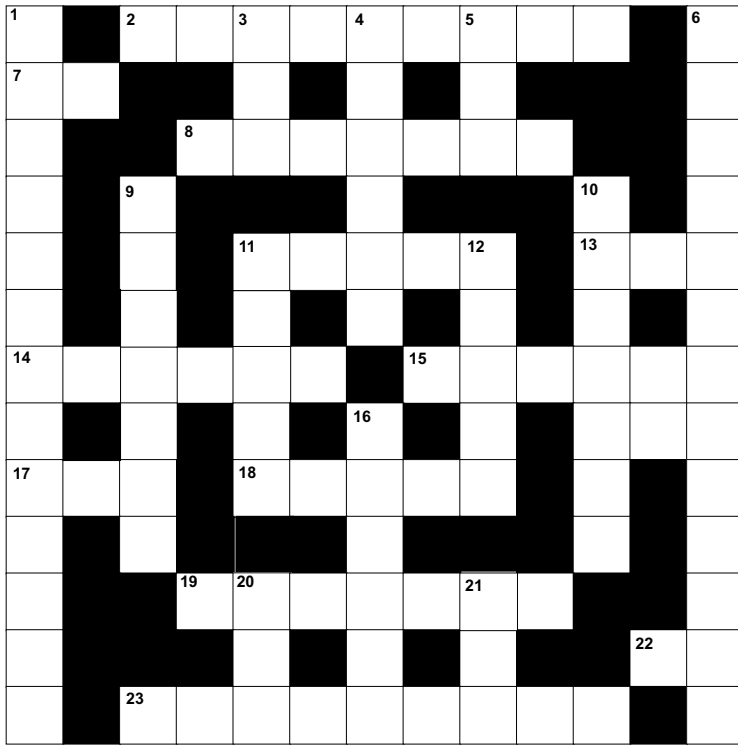
Stephen's talk 'RVW Remembered' at the Green Dragon Hotel on the Monday, before the evening concert in the Cathedral was full, with only spaces for the late arrivals from that afternoons concert remaining. Tickets had sold out 3 weeks previously. Stephen's talk was based around his tape recordings with RVW's friends and acquaintances. Over 'tea and buns', a hundred plus enthusiasts listened to RVW's voice on tape from the BBC library. Followed by a few funny

anecdotes, these broke the ice and the audience soon warmed to Stephen's talk. Voices from the past recalled RVW as an 'attractive bear with Wedgwood hands' (Simona Pakenham), 'the artists friend, a friend to everybody' (Roy Henderson), 'he made you feel an equal' (Ruth Dyson).

Stephen painted a picture of RVW with words and stories; such as during a run-through of the fugue for two pianos, stopping Phyllis Sellick, saying 'did I write that!' Similar stories certainly increased my understanding of RVW the man, I trust the same applied to the extremely attentive audience. Stephen closed with RVW reading part of Bunyon's Pilgrim's Progress. All over, alas, much too quickly, I was left wanting more!

Ivor Greatrex

## RVW Crossword No. 6 by Michael Gainsford



## News and Notes

- A rare performance of *Pilgrim's Journey* is taking place in Sheffield Cathedral with the Sheffield Oratorios Chorus Part 5. Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra on 10 February 2001.
- The *Oboe concerto* is being performed at the Wiltshire Music Centre on February 16. The orchestra is the City of London Sinfonia.
- *On Wenlock Edge* is being performed by the De Vaux String Quartet, with David Halls, (piano) at Salisbury Methodist Church on 23rd June, 2001. (Tickets from 01722 501802).
- RVW's *Fourth Symphony* is scheduled for 21 February with the CBSO at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

### Albion Music Limited

*Publications available by post:-*

<i>The collected poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams</i>	£15.00 plus £1.65
<i>Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion</i> by Wilfrid Mellers (370 pages; new edition)	£15.00 plus £2.55
<i>Vaughan Williams in perspective</i> (edited by Lewis Foreman)	£20.00 plus £1.75
125 <sup>th</sup> anniversary set of six cards with watercolour views of VWs houses by Bridget Duckfield (blank for own message)	£ 5.00 plus 50p
<i>Vision of Albion</i> poster, with Blake imagery (a superb memento of the 125 <sup>th</sup> anniversary) (measures 28" x 23")	£10.00 plus £2.00
<i>RVW - A full discography</i> by Stephen Connock (75 pages, 1995)	£10.00 plus 65p
<i>RVW: A Bibliography</i> by Graham Muncy and Robin Barber	£ 6.00 plus 50p

Back issues of the Journal are available at £2.00 each.

All cheques should be made out to Albion Music limited and sent to:  
Stephen Connock, 65 Marathon House, 200 Marylebone Road London, NW1 5 PL  
for immediate delivery.

### Across:

- RVW's comment on music in answer to an American reporter's question (3,1,3,2)
- 6th note of the sol-fa scale, also found in California (2)
- Four Hymns first performed here (7)
- The one composed in 1928 was Golden (5)
- Ravel, RVW's French friend (3)
- Wrote the words for *England my England* (1941) (6)
- One of three in *The Poisoned Kiss*, (really charwomen) (6)
- Shall not stay Pilgrims might (3)
- RVW had these at St Barnabas Villas, Lambeth, in 1895 (5)
- Rearrange the visionary's head to get a hymnbook - rearranging vicar (6)
- 7th note of the sol-fa scale - a drink without end ... (2)
- They live in the Delectable Mountains (9)

### Down:

- Do halt fleeing!* (anag).  
Housman settings from 1927 (5, 3, 5)
- See 4 down (3)
- Horsemen to the 3 down (opera) (6)
- Charity fund for musicians (1, I, 1)
- Wrote the words of *Linden Lea* (7, 6)
- Site of pageant in 1934 (7)
- \*\*\*\*\* for Truth (7)
- Midnight is this in the middle of three Whitman poems (set 1925) (5)
- A Sea Symphony* was first performed here, in 1910 (5)
- The F minor one (6)
- From far, from here and morning (*On Wenlock Edge*) (3)
- One would think a good one would be essential for a composer, but Beethoven made do without two in later life. Painters (eg Van Gogh) can do without one. (3)

*Next  
Edition:*

*June  
2001*

**Scott of the  
Antarctic  
Part 2**

**Answers  
on Page  
5**

**Call for  
Papers**

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

The deadline for contributions is 31st August 2001

**Where possible could contributors supply their article on disk, along with a printed copy. This makes the production of the Journal much easier, and reduces the number of errors, as it saves the re-typing of contributions.**