



Journal of the  
**RVW**  
 Society

No.21 June 2001

**EDITOR**

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# Dorking Celebrates VW

A striking new statue of Vaughan Williams, located outside Dorking Halls, was unveiled on Thursday 19th April 2001. Ursula Vaughan Williams was the Guest of Honour and she was accompanied by the sculptor, William Fawke. The ceremony was attended by over a hundred people. Uniquely, Brian Kay conducted the gathering in the street in a memorable rendering of VW's *Song for a Spring Festival* to words by Ursula Wood.

## Leith Hill Music Festival

Councillor Peter Seabrook referred to RVW's long connection with Dorking. As a child he had lived at Leith Hill Place and he returned to live near Dorking from 1929 to 1953. He was conductor of the Leith Hill Music Festival from 1905 to 1953, an astonishing 48 years, and returned after 1953 to conduct performances of the *St Matthew Passion* until 1958. RVW had also supported the building of the Dorking Halls, so the placing of the statue outside the Halls was entirely right. Finally, Councillor Seabrook paid tribute to the sculptor, William Fawke, and to Adrian White CBE whose financial support for the project had been vital.



## Recognition

It is welcome news that Surrey County Council commissioned this lifelike sculpture to add further recognition to Vaughan Williams' remarkable contribution to English music in general and to Dorking in particular. Our thanks to John Tiffney, of Mole Valley District Council, Adrian White, William Fawke and all those associated with this generous commemoration.

## Happy Birthday Ursula

Ursula Vaughan Williams was 90 on March 21st. Our warm best wishes to her on this special birthday



*Ursula Vaughan Williams  
 with sculptor William  
 Fawke at Dorking*

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# Gwen Raverat

## An Introduction to her life

by *Elizabeth Hambro*

**G**wen Darwin, born August 1885, daughter of George Darwin and Maud Dupuy, was related through the Wedgwood family (Emma Wedgwood, wife of Charles Darwin)

She was always passionately interested in painting and drawing and studied privately with Miss Greene. In 1908 at 23 years old she joined the Slade School of Art, and was joined there in 1910 by her future husband, Jacques Raverat, a Frenchman. They had met in Cambridge through a common friend, Rupert Brooke, when participating in theatrical performances. Together they had a wide circle of friends, including Virginia Woolf, and the Bloomsbury Circle, as well as eminent Cambridge figures and later French ones, such as André Gide and Paul Valéry.

She and Jacques Raverat married in 1911 and lived mostly in England. She was already practising the art of the woodcut from 1909.

All the war years were spent in England as in 1914 J.P.R.'s multiple sclerosis was finally diagnosed. He became gradually more and more of an invalid but they still both comforted themselves by working very hard at their Art.

In 1916 and 1919 Gwen gave birth to two daughters.

Gwen gradually gained a reputation as an artist and wood engraver. 92 of her prints were on show at the Little Art Rooms, Adelphi, and in 1920 she was asked by Who's Who for biographical details.

The same year she and Jacques and their two daughters moved to France, settling in Vence (A.M.) and apart from Jacques' illness loved living there and both produced some of their best works.

In 1925 after Jacques' death, Gwen moved back to England, but always regretted Vence.

Later she became very well known for her book illustrations, and articles in *Time and Tide*, her collaboration in producing *Job*, and finally her autobiographical book *Period Piece* (which is still available).

A biography of her will be coming out in 2001, by Frances Spalding.

*(The Editor is grateful to Gwen's daughter, Elizabeth Hambro, for this Introduction and for the two rare pictures)*



# Sinfonia Antartica

## Introduction and CD Review

by Jonathan Pearson

If, at some future date, a genealogist should be leafing through the letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams, his eye might alight on the following. With an excited start he reads it again...

28 [?] May 1952

Dear Roy,

You said you would be ready to wash Aunt Tartyca's face at the end of May[.] Will you let [me] know when you wd like her?

Yrs  
RVW

Knowing something of Vaughan Williams' reputation for helping others, his excitement mounts. He convinces himself that he may have discovered a hitherto unknown member of the old composer's family. On closer inspection, however, this supposedly helpless invalid will stand revealed as none other than VW's Seventh Symphony, the *Sinfonia Antartica*. Roy is Roy Douglas,<sup>1</sup> the indefatigable musician who, from the early 1940s until Vaughan Williams's death in 1958, succeeded in making the latter's scores readable by 'washing their faces'. How the old lady travelled from Dorking to Manchester by way of the South Pole and Ealing Studios is the subject of this essay.

### Ealing Films commission music for Scott of the Antarctic

*Sinfonia Antartica*, first performed in 1953, grew from the music which Vaughan Williams had written for the Ealing film, *Scott of the Antarctic*. And there, as we shall see, lies the central problem that critics have wrestled with ever since: Is *Sinfonia Antartica* a symphony or is it something else? To answer this we must go back to 1947.

In June of that year, Ernest Irving, the musical director of Ealing Films, wrote to Vaughan Williams, inviting him to write a score for their forthcoming production, *Scott of the Antarctic*. Although later, when composing *Sinfonia Antartica*, VW would privately express doubts about how he thought his symphony might be received by the critics, he never wavered in his belief in the subject, for in reply to Irving's letter, he stressed he had 'very definite ideas and if they do not agree with [the director's] it might be rather difficult.'<sup>2</sup> Irving calmed his fears and Vaughan Williams embarked on his seventh film score.

A couple of years earlier, in an essay called *Composing for the Films* Vaughan Williams lamented the fact that film music was all too often the last part of the production, an afterthought almost. Would a film not be a much better work

of art if all parties—author, director, cinematographer, composer—could 'work together *from the beginning*'<sup>3</sup> In the case of *Scott*, Vaughan Williams' involvement began before the film had been shot. He had only a few photographs ('taken in Norway' according to Howes)<sup>4</sup> to go on. However, as we have seen in his reply to Irving, he already knew the kind of music he wanted and his imagination was fired by the story of Captain Scott's ill-fated expedition, even if privately he believed the final push to the Pole had been badly planned.

Even while working on the film music, Vaughan Williams realised he wanted to make something more permanent from it—something weightier than a mere suite such as had been made from the music for *Coastal Command* or *The Story of a Flemish Farm*. This task was the more viable given his preferred working methods for the celluloid medium. In *Composing for the Films* he writes:

*There are two ways of writing film music. One is that in which every action, word, gesture or incident is punctuated in sound. This requires great skill...and imagination, but often leads to a mere scrappy succession of sounds of no musical value in itself...The other method of writing film music, which personally I favour, partly because I am quite incapable of doing the first, is to ignore the details and to intensify the spirit of the whole situation by a continuous stream of music. This stream can be modified (often at rehearsal!) by points of colour superimposed on the flow.*<sup>5</sup>

This method allows the 'points of colour' to be the icing, and not the cake, and in the event, the 'continuous stream of music' worked very well. Irving wrote later, 'I have often recounted my amazement on finding that the Main Title Music, written out of the blue, exactly fitted the glacier climb.'<sup>6</sup>

The film was premièred at the Empire, Leicester Square, on 29 November 1948. It was also selected as the Royal Film Performance for that year.<sup>7</sup> The first public showing was at the Odeon, Leicester Square, on 30 December. Ursula Vaughan Williams tells us that Ralph did not go to the first showing, but went one afternoon a day or two later; it was exciting, after having seen so many of the stills, seen some of the action without dialogue, and heard some of the music in all its stages, to see the whole film. Ralph still fulminated against the amateurish organization of the last stages of the expedition but he was pleased with his score. Directly the film ended, the cinema organ began to play as the lights went up—no break of silence was allowed, and the organist's choice of music was as inappropriate as it could be. The next day Ralph sent him a page of music, carrying on from the film, so as to

allow the audience to recover without having another musical idiom hurled at them.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Sinfonia Antartica* takes shape**

As early as June 1949 Vaughan Williams wrote to Irving, asking him to return the film music scores and sketches, and referring to his projected '*Sinfonia Antarctica*' [sic].<sup>9</sup> However, he wrote again, not long after, to say he could not 'get on at all with the Scott symphony so it will have to wait a bit I expect.'

Roy Douglas, in his highly entertaining and informative book, describes in great detail his close involvement with *Sinfonia Antartica*. In January 1952, he played the *Sinfonia* through on the piano, first at Dorking, to Vaughan Williams and Ursula, and then to VW and assembled friends (including Bliss and Finzi) at the offices of Oxford University Press. Vaughan Williams then made some alterations to be incorporated in the score. Douglas writes:

*I found myself confronted with a copy decorated with several strips of music paper, each containing half a page, a line, or even a couple of bars, stuck on (slightly askew) with thick yellow sticky tape, and an odd bit here and there—just a bar or so—added in some corner of a page with an arrow pointing to where it should be inserted.*<sup>11</sup>

It would seem that, cosmetically-speaking, Aunt Tartyca must have looked more in need of a face lift than a face wash.

After eighteen weeks, from June to October 1952, the score and parts were ready for printing. Sir John Barbirolli was to give the first performance, and on 24 November, Roy Douglas travelled to Manchester with RVW and Ursula. They attended the Hallé rehearsal the following day. Douglas recalls:

*This was certainly an experience to be remembered: we listened to a three-hour rehearsal by the wind-players only, from ten till one; then three hours of the strings only, from two till five; finishing up with three hours of the full orchestra, from six till nine, all taking place in a rehearsal room just large enough to accommodate the orchestra, the conductor, and the three listeners.*<sup>12</sup>

Vaughan Williams' by now advanced deafness meant that he was constantly asking Douglas,

"Does the tune come through?" After nine hours' concentration 'it is not surprising that I finished the day something of an exhausted and bewildered wreck, whereas R.V.W. seemed to be still remarkably fresh and lively in mind.' This may have been due, however, to the fact that the old man had nodded off briefly during the rehearsal!<sup>13</sup>

On 13 January 1953, RVW and Ursula were at Covent Garden, where Barbirolli was conducting *Tristan*. Ursula Vaughan Williams tells us that this was the evening when Ralph proposed to her. They travelled up to Manchester the next morning 'in a confusing whirl made up of last night's music, our decision to marry...and the excitement and apprehension that belonged to all first performances.'<sup>14</sup> Vaughan Williams was indeed more than usually nervous on this occasion, as he was anticipating objections to the whole concept of presenting this music as a symphony. In his own







Vaughan Williams, as we have seen, anticipated criticism. The reviews of the early performances were for the most part favourable, but inevitably much critical ink was, and still is, expended on whether or not the work is a *symphony*.

### Analysis

*Sinfonia Antartica* has five movements—the only one in the canon to depart from the traditional four. Each is headed in the score by a quotation, and although, as we shall see, these have sometimes been read out aloud on recordings, there is no direction to this effect. Indeed such a reading would destroy the segue between movements III and IV.

#### I. Prelude

The first movement is prefaced by some lines from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*:

To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite,  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night,

To defy power which seems omnipotent,  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent:  
This...is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free,  
This is alone life, joy, empire and victory.<sup>22</sup>

They seem to sum up the spirit of Man pitting himself against Nature—'strifeful aspiration', Wilfrid Mellers calls it.<sup>23</sup>

The movement falls into three sections. The first opens with a slow marching theme—a motto which will return both in its original and in modified tempo. It combines major and minor in a spirit of 'heroic adventure'.<sup>24</sup> Hugh Ottaway calls it 'a synthesis of the harmonic feeling of the Sixth and the melodic aspiration of the Fifth [symphonies].'<sup>25</sup>

The second section is in total contrast to the first and can be characterised as the spirit of the Antarctic, portrayed by means of a scintillating array of voice and percussion. To Howes, the wordless soprano solo represents the howling wilderness, the vibraphone 'glaciation'. A sinuous theme suggests, he says, the enveloping fog or cold.<sup>26</sup> Suddenly, a deep bell is heard, another motto, some warning, perhaps, to the human element introduced in the third part by a flourish on trumpet.

Professor Dickinson sees the Prelude as 'experimental' in its 'pursuit of fresh timbres', but also 'remarkably episodic'. He

mind he knew it was what he wanted—indeed, Roy Douglas had tentatively suggested 'call[ing] the work a "Symphonic Suite", but he did not like the idea at all'.<sup>15</sup> He had kept the score from Barbirolli until the last minute, the conductor saying later that the composer 'was loath to show it to me, for he feared I might not like it and wanted to spare me the embarrassment of saying so.'<sup>16</sup>

In the event, the concert was a glittering success. Poor Roy Douglas missed it because he had 'flu, but Peter Scott, son of the great explorer, and his wife were there, and so was Ernest Irving, by now in rapidly declining ill health. Furthermore, despite his fears, Vaughan Williams 'received one of the great ovations of his long career'. He was relieved enough to call it his 'first flawless first performance', and, in grateful recognition, he jokingly dubbed Barbirolli 'Glorious John' in the dressing room afterwards.<sup>18</sup>

Irving, to whom VW had dedicated the work, wrote to him later that 'The symphony is a noble work in its own right, full of musical skill and orchestral virtuosity...'<sup>19</sup> Larry Adler (for whom Ralph had written his *Romance for Harmonica* the previous year) and his wife sent a telegram which read:

Dear Uncle Ralph, our love and best wishes for tonight we will be there of course trust this work can be adapted for harmonica—Eileen and Larry.<sup>20</sup>

finds the wind machine hard to accept - '[T]he confusion of the actual and the imaginative strains the bounds of art.'<sup>27</sup>

Indeed the wind machine and its positioning, in the orchestra or off-stage, was the subject of much experimentation at the rehearsals and early performances. After the première, Irving wrote to Vaughan Williams, 'The wind machine was badly played. It should be geared so that the player can increase its speed suddenly so that it whistles. Now it only rattles. It is a small matter but has caused much talk.'<sup>28</sup> Various alternatives were tried, including getting the horn players to whistle or sing falsetto through their instruments. Vaughan Williams himself was never very happy, although one wonders how much his deafness might have coloured his judgement. In the end, he concluded, '...I know that the wind-machine must remain. I know it's not a musical sound, but nor is the side-drum, and no one objects to that.'<sup>29</sup>

## II. Scherzo

The superscription to the movement comes from Psalm 104:

*There go the ships  
and there is that Leviathan  
whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein.*<sup>30</sup>

'On a radiant morning at sea, Nature and man may for the moment love one another.'<sup>31</sup> Here is a pictorial break from the serious issues raised by the Prelude. A fanfare-like theme recalls sea music of forty years earlier—'After the sea-ship' in the scherzo of *A Sea Symphony*. This is followed by a theme representing whales in the film ('that Leviathan' here), and a comical, angular tune depicting penguins which reminds James Day of the aria 'Könnten Tränen meiner Wangen' in the *St Matthew Passion*.<sup>32</sup> However, 'the rootless whole-tone non-progressions' and the 'fragmented oscillations of thirds and tritones' transform the penguins from 'anthropomorphic figures of fun back into denizens of the wilderness'.<sup>33</sup> This brings us to:

## III. Landscape

This 'rhapsody in ice-blue'<sup>34</sup> is the emotional—one might almost say geological<sup>35</sup> - hub of the symphony. It begins pianissimo with a soft roll on symbol and timpani, accompanied by soft but rapid harp glissandi. Still quiet, the flutes combine in crushing and unearthly seconds, soon to be joined by similar menacing chords from the xylophone. A horn theme

takes us straight to the pitiless wastes that possess the epilogue of the Sixth symphony. But here is a soundworld beyond even that work, bleaker still than the tragic keening in *Riders to the Sea*. Twice, these elemental forces grind slowly and inexorably to a climax even more terrible than Satan's occupation of God's throne in *Job*. Here, Man meets Nature head on and comes to an abrupt stop as the full orchestra collides with unyielding force against the adamant barrier of full organ.

Perhaps the superscription, dramatic as it is, falls short of the ultimate horror and desolation depicted by the music:

*Ye ice falls! Ye that from the mountain's brow  
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—  
Torrents methinks, that heard a mighty voice,  
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!  
Motionless torrents! Silent cataracts!*

Dickinson dislikes it, describing these 'five lines scraped from Coleridge's *Hymn before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouni*' as a

...pretentious and derivative religious poem on the lines of Job 38; not at all a text for the challenge of the ruthless cycle of the ice-barrier, except by complete dissociation of the quoted lines from their later significance. Shelley's *Mont Blanc*, in the same field, would have been more apt, with its pattern of "unknown omnipotence".<sup>36</sup>

However, it seems to me that a certain amount of dissociation is still required— *Mont Blanc* is describing an Alpine scene no more terrible and no less picturesque than are Coleridge's lines.



#### IV. Intermezzo

A poignant oboe theme brings a brief touch of balm to the icy wastes. In the film, Dr Wilson muses on his wife at home. Here, it can be generalised perhaps, as Wilfrid Mellers suggests, to represent ‘human retaliation’ in this ‘non-human landscape’, ‘a retrospect of a human past, perhaps in childhood or youth.’ Donne’s words reflect this mood well:

Love, all alike, no season knows, nor clime,  
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.<sup>37</sup>

But the moment of repose is quickly interrupted by the tolling bell theme, recalling Oates’s lonely death in the film. There is no development of these themes, merely juxtaposition, and commentators tend to cite this movement as the weakest point in the structure as a whole. Ottaway finds that it is ‘here most of all that the sympathetic listener is likely to detect some uncertainty of aim’. Dickinson finds it ‘a most conglomerate movement...too moody to leave more than an impression of restlessness.’ Howes, however, is satisfied that the ‘emotional congruence’ of the themes ‘is so clear that juxtaposition is enough.’

#### V. Epilogue

The final movement, bearing one of Vaughan Williams’ favourite titles, is prefaced by a quotation from the *Message to the Public*, found with Scott’s papers and journal:

I do not regret this journey; we took risks, we knew we took them, things have come out against us, therefore we have no cause for complaint.

‘[A] magnificent tremolo for the whole orchestra, with pianoforte’,<sup>38</sup> heralds a march based on the opening theme of the symphony, but with a quicker, more insistent tempo. A heavy triplet figure accompanies the blizzard music from *Scott of the Antarctic* in developed form, recalling the last hours of the explorer and his companions as their tent is ultimately engulfed by the pitiless snow. It is interesting to note that VW originally chose verse 14 from Ecclesiasticus 44 to head the movement: ‘Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.’ The wind machine and the deep tolling bell return, soon followed by the voices, and as the music dies away, nothing but the howling Antarctic gale remains.

#### So is *Sinfonia Antartica* a symphony?

The critics and commentators have had a field day when they come to consider this question. Dickinson, predictably, approaches it from the conventional standpoint, desperately tries to fit it into the mould, and inevitably finds it wanting.

While there is not much borrowing from the purely descriptive film music—the penguin motive is the chief—the divertissement touch is apparent and embarrassing both to symphonically inclined ears and to listeners who recognize the film allusions. “*Sinfonia Antartica*” hardly warns the listener to expect a symphonic poem. The strength of the true symphony lies in its power to absorb incidents and encounters...<sup>39</sup>

Ottaway, too, admits that ‘what most reduces the symphonic

structure is the blunt juxtaposing of ideas already “fixed” in the film score’.<sup>40</sup>

Dickinson finds the superscriptions a hindrance. They ‘relate the whole work to the inflexible spirit of Scott’s last journey, and particular movements to a medley of poetic evocations’,<sup>41</sup> and ‘the harnessing of each of the five movements to these divergent scraps of verse is more provocative than directive.’<sup>42</sup> Do the movements need them? he asks. If so, then ‘the symphonic impact is somewhat weakened’. But if the music is capable of standing on its own, without the quotations, then what is the ‘dubious relation between text and music, in so far as the basic film-music is not now common experience’? However, he *does* like the marching motto theme - ‘an intelligible and inevitable aural aid of the crucial advance of the glacier, even if its key and content remain fixed.’<sup>43</sup> He is also impressed by the great organ chords in the third movement, although they are ‘utterly episodic or non-generative by nature.’<sup>44</sup> He concludes that while it is only ‘potentially’ a symphony, ‘the standard of the earlier symphonies forbids the classification of this *Sinfonia* on the same level of sustained musicianship.’<sup>45</sup>

Ernest Irving considered the work a symphonic poem, and we have already seen how Roy Douglas had suggested calling the work a ‘Symphonic Suite’. Oliver Neighbour, writing recently in the excellent *Vaughan Williams Studies* volume, proposes the idea that nowadays it might be called an ‘anti-symphony’:

‘In refashioning his music for the film Scott of the Antarctic so as to turn story into building he largely rejected symphonic development in favour of blocks of material which might relate to one another in various ways: through near-identity, thematic transformation, or more general characteristics. Such correspondences occur as often between movements as within them, so that the central idea of man’s will to challenge the immutability of his lot, here symbolized by nature, and his inevitable defeat, is implicit throughout, even though the opposition comes to the fore only at certain points.’<sup>46</sup>

Some writers, in their final analysis, are prepared to overlook the problems. Wilfrid Mellers sees the *Sinfonia Antartica* as a ‘hybrid’, but this is ‘not enough to militate against the work’s impressive originality.’<sup>47</sup> It should be related ‘to his supreme masterpieces—its position is perhaps comparable with that of the Fourth Symphony...Without it, the final phase would have been impossible.’ Howes would like it both ways. While acknowledging that its origins in film music should put it ‘outside the symphonic canon’,<sup>48</sup> he concludes that in fact ‘the five separate movements show that the raw material of the film has been completely assimilated to the form and nature of a symphony.’<sup>49</sup>

James Day makes a virtue of necessity:

‘This work is every bit as symphonic as its predecessors. What is new is not so much an abandonment of symphonic structural techniques as a paring of the connective tissue to the absolute minimum.’<sup>51</sup>

But perhaps, after all, we should not worry overmuch about a work which ultimately defies classification. ‘What’s in a name?’ asks Michael Kennedy. ‘That it is programme-music is self-evident; but its nature is symphonic, and its nobility and musical quality outweigh the purely descriptive elements which at first attract attention.’<sup>51</sup>

## Key Notes

<sup>1</sup> Born in 1907, Roy Douglas was, for ten years, from 1934, pianist, organist, celesta-player, librarian and fourth percussion in the London Symphony Orchestra. He has also worked as an orchestrator and as a composer in his own right of chamber music and of incidental music for television and films. He orchestrated the music of Chopin for the ballet, *Les Sylphides*. His first professional encounter with the music of RVW came in 1942, '[making] the scores [of the *Coastal Command* film music] more readable' for the recording sessions, as the usual copyists, having struggled desperately the previous year with *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, had refused to have anything to do with them! His association with the composer lasted until the latter's death in 1958, but as an editor and expert on the VW's scores he has continued to be involved with editing and with new editions of the music. (Described by Michael Kennedy as 'a brilliant musician' in *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London 1964, **2nd edition 1980**) [Works], p.286.)

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Works*, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> *Composing for the Films* (1945) by R. Vaughan Williams, reprinted in *National Music and Other Essays* (OUP, 1963. **2nd edition 1987**), p.163.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Howes, *The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (Oxford University Press, **1954**) [Howes], p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Composing for the Films*, op. cit., p. 161.

<sup>6</sup> One of the two original (1949) 78s of extracts from the *Scott of the Antarctic* music, played by the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Sir Ernest Irving, has recently been reissued on CD. It can be found (all 8 minutes of it!) on the Pearl label, either GEM 0100 (coupled with other British film music of the period by Brian Easdale, Bax, Ireland, Bliss, Lord Berners and Charles Williams) or GEM 0107 (coupled with contemporary extracts from *Coastal Command*, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, *The Story of a Flemish Farm* and *The Loves of Joanna Godden*, together with Boulton's first recording (1949) of the Sixth Symphony, with the original version of the Scherzo). Listen to 'Blizzard', of which only a few phrases are carried over, but especially to 'Pony March', 'The Return' and 'Final Music' (with its tragic but heart-warming nobility), none of which made it into the symphony.

<sup>7</sup> This was only the third Royal Film Performance, the first having been Powell and Pressburger's *A Matter of Life and Death* in 1946.

<sup>8</sup> Ursula Vaughan Williams, *RVW: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (OUP, 1964) [UVW], p. 287.

<sup>9</sup> He had chosen to call the work by the Italian title *Sinfonia* rather than *Symphony*, perhaps because he felt that its origins set it apart from the other six. He preferred, too, the familiar spelling Antarctica (with a c), and, according to Frank Howes, it was so spelled at the first three concerts, in January 1953. However, those who insisted on the word *Antartica* won the day, pointing out that although the word is derived from the Greek  $\alpha\kappa\tau\omicron$  [= the Great Bear, i.e. the North], the Italian spelling lacks the c. He reluctantly acceded.

<sup>10</sup> Roy Douglas, *Working with Vaughan Williams: the Correspondence of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Roy Douglas* (The British Library, 1988). [Douglas] This book is an expanded version of *Working with R.V.W.* (Oxford University Press, 1972). Some passages originated in an article Douglas wrote for the R.C.M. Magazine, Easter Term 1959, Vol. LV, No. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Douglas*, p. 36. He further complains, 'One of R.V.W.'s less endearing habits was that, when he wanted to erase something from an ink-written score, he would take a brutal pocket-knife and scrape the notes away, and with them some of the surface of the paper; he would then write in ink on top of this rough surface, with results that can be surmised', and ruefully comments, 'How I would have loved to get my hands on that knife and bury it full fathom five!' [p.76]

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *UVW*, p. 328.

<sup>15</sup> *Douglas*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>16</sup> *Works*, p. 319n.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323. Vaughan Williams later composed *Flourish for Glorious John*, for the opening of the Hallé's 100<sup>th</sup> Season on 16 October 1957, conducted by Barbirolli. This unpublished curiosity has been recorded by Leonard Slatkin and the Philharmonia on RCA, 09026 61196 2. Despite its length of only 1½ minutes, it is scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 1 cor anglais, 2 clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tuba, timpani, percussion (side-drum, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, tubular bells), harp, organ, pianoforte and strings! (See Michael Kennedy, *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, Oxford University Press, **Revised Edition 1996** [Catalogue], pp. 230-31)

<sup>19</sup> *Works*, p. 323-4.

<sup>20</sup> *UVW*, p. 329. Incidentally, the *Romance in D flat for Harmonica* (1951),

written for Larry Adler, is itself a product of this last phase of Vaughan Williams' life when he was experimenting with new instruments and sonorities.

<sup>21</sup> Following the first performance of *Sinfonia Antartica* at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on 14 January 1953 with the Hallé Orchestra, Margaret Ritchie (soprano) and women of the Hallé Choir, conducted by Sir John Barbirolli, the first London performance was at a Royal Philharmonic Society concert on 21 January with the same artists. (*Catalogue*, p. 211.) There was also a broadcast of the work on 22 January.

<sup>22</sup> Act IV, 570ff. Michael Kennedy points out that Vaughan Williams had already set these very lines to music as No. 4 of the *Six Choral Songs to be sung in Time of War* (1940). *Catalogue*, p. 210n.

<sup>23</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, *Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion* (Barrie & Jenkins, 1989, 2nd edition, Albion Music 1997) [Mellers], p. 286.

<sup>24</sup> *Howes*, p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> Hugh Ottaway, *Vaughan Williams Symphonies* (BBC, BBC Music Guides, 1972) [Ottaway], p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> *Howes*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>27</sup> A.E.F. Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams* (Faber, 1963) [Dickinson], pp. 385-6.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in *Works*, p. 323.

<sup>29</sup> In a letter to Michael Kennedy, 20 April 1953, quoted in *Works*, p. 382.

<sup>30</sup> Psalm 104, v.26 (in the Prayer Book, i.e. Coverdale's 'Great Bible', version of 1539).

<sup>31</sup> *Mellers*, p. 289.

<sup>32</sup> James Day, *Vaughan Williams* (J. M. Dent, The Master Musicians series, 1961; **3rd edition, OUP, 1998**) [Day], p. 215.

<sup>33</sup> *Mellers*, p. 289.

<sup>34</sup> *Works*, p. 361.

<sup>35</sup> See Howes's reference to his being reminded of Jacquetta Hawkes's *A Land* (1951), in which she 'intermingles time and matter to make a history of Britain.' Howes, p. 76

<sup>36</sup> *Dickinson*, p. 383. The phrase he refers to is contained in these lines from Shelley's *Mont Blanc* (described at the head of the poem, incidentally, also as 'lines written in the Vale of Chamouni):

...I look on high;  
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled  
The veil of life and death? or do I lie  
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep  
Spread far and round and inaccessibly  
Its circles? For the very spirit fails,  
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep  
That vanishes among the viewless gales!  
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,  
Mont Blanc appears,—still snowy and serene—  
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms  
Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between  
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,  
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread  
And wind among the accumulated steeps[.]

<sup>37</sup> John Donne (1573-1631), *The Sun Rising*, ll. 9-10.

<sup>38</sup> *Works*, p. 362.

<sup>39</sup> *Dickinson*, p. 382.

<sup>40</sup> *Ottaway*, p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> *Dickinson*, p. 381.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 382.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389. Incidentally, Roy Douglas once drew Vaughan Williams' attention to 'a rather incomprehensible article' on the composer by A.E.F. Dickinson, to which VW replied, 'I have not seen Dickinson's article—I usually feel about him what Whistler said "I don't mind his blame but I cannot endure his praise".' Quoted in *Douglas*, pp.38-9.

<sup>45</sup> *Dickinson*, pp. 381, 389.

<sup>46</sup> Oliver Neighbour, *The place of the Eighth among Vaughan Williams' symphonies in Vaughan Williams Studies*, edited by Alain Frogley (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 225.

<sup>47</sup> *Mellers*, p. 286.

<sup>48</sup> *Howes*, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>50</sup> *Day*, p. 217.

<sup>51</sup> *Works*, p. 360.



# Sinfonia Antartica

## CD review

I shall consider, briefly, eleven recordings of *Sinfonia Antartica*. They are all DDD, stereo, unless otherwise marked. They are, in chronological order:

Cond. **Sir John Barbirolli**

**Hallé Orchestra and Choir, Margaret Ritchie** (soprano)

[EMI *British Composers Series*, 7243 5 66543 2 7] Recorded in Free Trade Hall, Manchester, 15 & 16 June 1953

(2-disc set with other Barbirolli recordings 1949-55 of music by RVW and Elgar)

**ADD, Mono**

Cond. **Sir Adrian Boult**

**LPO and LP Choir, Margaret Ritchie** (soprano), *Superscriptions spoken by Sir John Gielgud*

[Belart 461 442-2] Recorded 1953 (shortly after the Barbirolli)

(5-disc set of Symphonies 1-8)

**ADD, Mono**

Cond. **André Previn**.

**LSO and The Ambrosian Singers, Heather Harper** (soprano),

*Superscriptions spoken by Sir Ralph Richardson*

[RCA Victor Gold Seal 2RG 60590] Released 1967

**ADD**

Cond. **Sir Adrian Boult**

**LPO and LP Choir, Norma Burrowes** (soprano)

[EMI *British Composers Series*, CDM 7 64020 2] Released 1970

**ADD**

Cond. **Bernard Haitink**

**LPO and LP Choir, Sheila Armstrong** (soprano)

[EMI CDC 7 47516 2] Recorded 1985

Cond. **Bryden Thomson**

**LSO and Chorus, Catherine Bott** (soprano)

[Chandos, CHAN 8796] Recorded in St Jude's Church, London NW11, 21 & 22 June 1989

Cond. **Vernon Handley**

**Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir,**

**Alison Hargan** (soprano)

[EMI *Eminence* CD-EMX 2173] Recorded in Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, April 1990

Cond. **Leonard Slatkin**

**Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, Linda Hohenfeld** (soprano)

[RCA Victor Red Seal 09026 61195 2] Recorded in Abbey Road Studio No.1, London, 3 June and 28 & 29 November 1991

Cond. **Raymond Leppard**

**Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and Choir, Dominique Labelle**

(soprano); Narrator, *Roger Allam*

[KOSS Classics KC-2214] Recorded in The Indianapolis Circle Theater, 1 & 2 March 1992

Cond. **Andrew Davis**

**BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Patricia Rozario** (soprano)

[Teldec 0630-13139-2] Recorded in St Augustine's Church, London, 28 & 29 March 1996

Cond. **Kees Bakels**

**Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Waynflete Singers, Lynda**

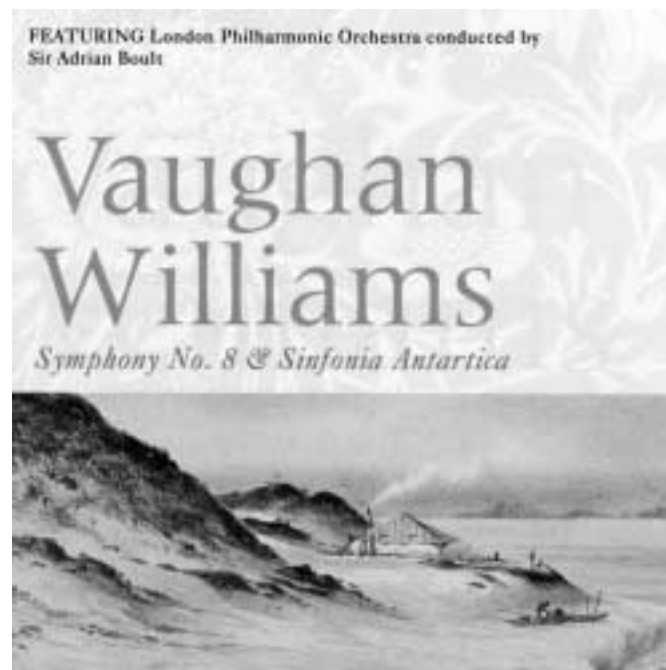
**Russell** (soprano),

*Superscriptions spoken by David Timson*

[Naxos 8.550737] Recorded in Wessex Hall, Poole Arts Centre, Dorset, 6 & 7 September 1996

Barbirolli and the Hallé, with Margaret Ritchie, made this

recording just five months after they had delighted Vaughan Williams so much at the première. It is the first and still one of the best accounts available. The mono sound is well transferred to disc, the playing spirited and committed, and Barbirolli's performance has an integrity which is missing from all too many later recordings. To be successful, *Antartica* must be presented as more than just the sum of its parts.



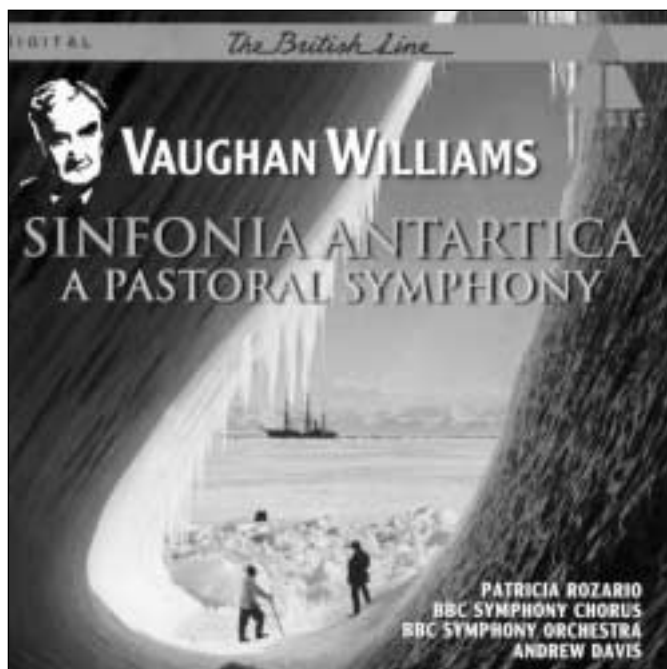
Margaret Ritchie sings again for Sir Adrian Boult in his first recording, with the LPO, made shortly after Barbirolli's. This too, benefited from the composer's presence in its preparation. Boult's account is also persuasive, particularly in the Prelude, but Barbirolli's penguins have more of a spring in their lurch, and I prefer the latter's (Barbirolli's, not the penguins') slightly faster, more intense Epilogue. The superscriptions, though beautifully read by Gielgud, destroy the flow and tension of the music and belong in the booklet or programme. There is no official indication that they should be read out at all.

The first stereo recording is Previn's, from 1967. His superscriptions are read by Sir Ralph Richardson, who apparently had a bad cold at the time. At least on this disc they can be edited out, although this still leaves an awkward hiatus between Landscape and Intermezzo where none should exist. Previn's outer movements fare best, but the Scherzo is a little dull and his penguins, to borrow a phrase, sound as though they have been having tea with Adrian Boult.

Which brings us to that conductor's second recording of *Sinfonia Antartica*. Sonically, this scores over his earlier one with its wide stereo image and biting brass. No readings this time, either. Tempos are generally a little quicker all round. These penguins are fitter than their parents, and I prefer the way he now keeps the motto march moving on when it returns in the Epilogue. But somehow that overall integrity remains elusive.

It was fifteen years before another recording of *Antartica* appeared in our record shops, but the wait was worth it. Interestingly, it took the fresh judgement of a Dutchman to remind us, perhaps for the first time since Barbirolli, that this music need not be limited by any programme. Never has it

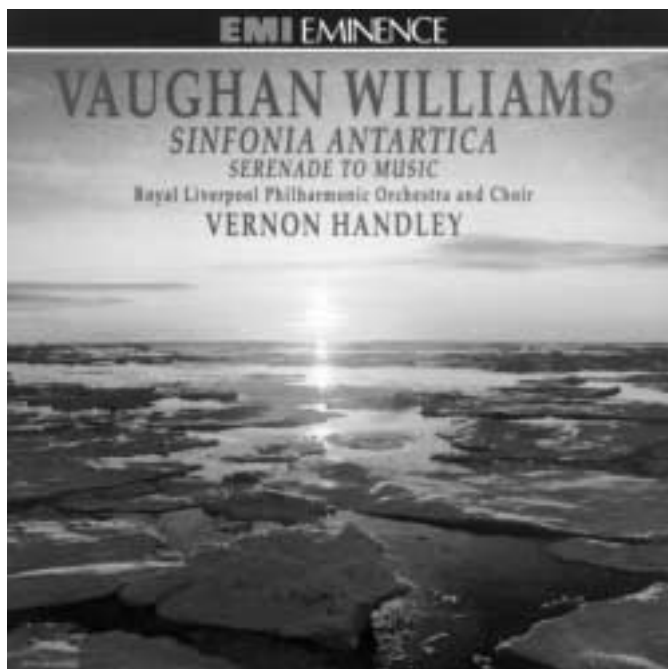
seemed, well, so symphonic. The playing from the LPO is superb, and technically, the recording is a marvel. The organ part has never sounded so powerful as it does here. You may need to take out extra insurance and buy the neighbours a present.



The organ in Bryden Thomson's account, however, sounds as though it is next door, which is a pity because it means that the climactic heart of the work is thrown away. Otherwise, the LSO enjoys a wide and spacious Chandos acoustic. The Prelude lacks tension, and only in the Epilogue does Thomson seem to get to grips with the drama. Perhaps the Intermezzo, the least Antarctic part of the symphony, comes off best.

Handley's Pastoral and Fifth are legendary, but the magic is definitely lacking as we begin to listen to the Prelude here. It seems uninvolved at first, and the trumpet fanfare, which opens the third section of the movement, is altogether too jaunty for my taste. After this, things get a lot better—the Scherzo is lively, the opening of Landscape beautifully atmospheric, helped by a clean, detailed recording.

Leonard Slatkin and Andrew Davis also enjoy technical recordings of the highest order. But here too their choice of tempos irks. Slatkin's Prelude begins too fast and his trumpet figure can in no way be described as *maestoso*. He certainly makes the contrast with the final *Largamente* section at 15, but at what expense? His approach is just right, though, for the sparkling Scherzo. Davis, despite his professed admiration for Vaughan Williams, seems curiously out of sympathy in this performance. All too often it is lugubrious rather than weighty. This is fatal in the Scherzo—his penguins are positively comatose—and even in Landscape I find myself neither shaken nor stirred.



I have not forgotten Leppard and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, but this is a special case. The notes tell us that he once discussed with VW himself the possibility of replacing some of the more generalised poetic superscriptions with specifically polar ones and that the composer was sympathetic to the idea. What would have been a very good performance is interrupted—several times in the Prelude alone, for example—by readings of up to two minutes in length. At two places the orchestra is left holding its breath on a held note, and I just can't believe that Vaughan Williams would have sanctioned a lengthy treatise on Adélie penguins in the middle of the Scherzo. Here it is, though; ideal for the completist's Christmas stocking. (Why did I buy one?)

The eleventh and final recording to date comes from another Dutchman, Kees Bakels, with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. This may lack the last ounce of refinement that comes with Haitink's reading but there is no denying that Bakels, perhaps even more than his compatriot, takes us back to Barbirolli's masterly vision. There is pathos, there is excitement, there is just a shade more flexibility than Haitink, and it comes off precisely because the overall grasp of the work is there. (The superscriptions are recorded, but placed together at the end to allow the music to speak for itself.)

Bakels, on Naxos, has to be a bargain. Excellent sound and one of the best performances on disc. Barbirolli, who set such a high standard from the very beginning, has only appeared on disc in the last couple of years. Snap it up while you can, and enjoy at the same time other classic performances on this double disc, including the Oboe Concerto, played by



Barbirolli's wife, Evelyn Rothwell, and the Tuba Concerto featuring the work's first exponent, Philip Catelinet. But listen to Haitink if you can. It is his fine reading which reveals the true stature of Vaughan Williams' vision. *Sinfonia Antartica*, writes Lewis Foreman, does not need the prop of its Captain Scott origins to function, indeed it is in a sense belittled by it. For in that great work Vaughan

Williams' treatment of his forces is nothing less than inspired—taking great blocks of sound to invoke an elemental world, at once celebrating the human spirit and returning us again to that beach at night alone, that tide's edge from which Man confronts Eternity.

by Jonathan Pearson

## The Music for 'Scott of the Antarctic' by Christopher J. Parker

Ever since Saint-Saëns was commissioned to write a score for the Parisian film company Le Film d'Art in 1908, the art of the film composer has tended to be rated in low esteem by professional musicians and scholars alike. Even Constant Lambert was caused to write on one occasion that 'film music should not be despised because it is inevitably more ephemeral and less important than symphonic and operatic music.'<sup>1</sup> VW seems to have regarded film music as something more than merely ephemeral. He protested vehemently against the habit of many directors of only thinking of the music after the film had been shot, arguing that the various arts involved in making a film should come together from the beginning. Indeed, one senses from his writings on the subject, that he thoroughly enjoyed the challenges that this genre placed on him as a composer, he observing:

film composing is a splendid discipline, and I recommend a course of it to all composition teachers whose pupils are apt to be dawdling in their ideas, or whose every bar is sacred and must not be cut or altered.<sup>2</sup>

VW noted perceptively that film music could be written in two ways:

...one in which every action, wish, gesture or incident is punctuated in sound. This requires great skill and orchestral knowledge and a vivid specialized imagination but often leads to a more scrappy succession of sounds of no musical value in itself ...the other method ...is to ignore the details and to intensify the spirit of the whole situation by a continuous stream of music.<sup>3</sup>

Hollywood composers were often compelled to work by the first method, running through the rough-cut of the picture in its entirety, and then reel by reel, agreeing cues with the director. They would then rapidly write the music down, often for someone else to orchestrate. In contrast, VW would receive a script and a set of cues and work on the score, often without reference to the visuals of the film and before it was even finished. He composed juxtaposed sections, precisely timed and yet extendable or compressible by means of a system of optional repeats, not unlike the method adopted by Satie in the 1920s. He would leave it to the director to make the music fit the pictures, making adjustments in his score as required. Indeed, because VW rarely composed to direct visual stimuli, his music tended to run parallel to the movie and be freer in expression, giving it

an independent, more coherent, self-contained quality and placing it on a higher artistic plane than that of his American contemporaries.

It may come as a surprise to many that VW wrote eleven film scores, the earliest, *Forty-Ninth Parallel*, dating from 1940-1 and the last, *The Vision of William Blake*, composed a year before his death. *Scott of the Antarctic* was his seventh and undoubtedly finest contribution to the genre. Written for Ealing Studios in 1947/8 following an approach to compose the music at the end of June 1947 from Ernest Irving, musical director of Ealing Films Ltd, it portrays Robert Falcon Scott's fatal expedition to the South Pole in 1911/2. Irving had worked at Ealing since 1935 and VW had collaborated previously with him on the score for *The Loves of Joanna Godden* (1944). VW's reply to the request shows him well aware of the potential complexities of the project:

As regards the Scott film, I think before finally deciding I should like to have a conference with you [Irving] and the producer, or director, whichever it is - I never knew which is which - and see whether your, his and my ideas agree as to the sort of music required. I have very definite ideas and if they do not agree with his, it might be rather difficult.<sup>4</sup>

Much of VW's score was ready before Christmas 1947, before any of the movie was filmed, he drawing his inspiration from a copy of Apsley Cherry-Garrad's *The Worst Journey in the World* (London, Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1922), as well as pictures from the Scott Expedition. It is apparent that he became totally absorbed by the subject matter; the story overtaking him, engulfing him with sensations and images that fired his imagination and inspired this music.

The soundtrack recording sessions were underway by February 1948 and the film was ready in rough cut by June, VW having completed the full score by April. The film was produced by Michael Balcon and directed by Charles Frend and was first shown at the Royal Film Performance at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, on 29 November 1948, and in public at the Odeon Theatre, Leicester Square, on 30 December 1948, the soundtrack recorded by The Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Ernest Irving, with Mabel Ritchie performing the wordless soprano solo. When the movie went on general release, it proved not to be a box office success, due to its bias towards the documentary rather than the tragic and its lack of a customary happy ending. However, the music held its own and made a

The film score remains unpublished and the four principal source manuscripts exist in the British Library, London: BL Add. MSS 50431 (sketches), 52289A (piano reduction), 52289B (copy full score) and 59537 (autograph full score). VW wrote more music than was included in the film, music existing in full score for the following scenes:

**Key:-**

\* indicates a reworking of VW's music by another hand. [ ] brackets are editorial additions based on the apparent position of the music in the film.

Music for the film 'Scott of the Antarctic'

Movt. Title	Score	Movt. No.	Film Scene No.
1. Titles, 'Heroism'.		1	1, 32b
2. Antarctic Prologue.		2	2, [44b]
3. Oriana (Wilson's wife).		3	
4. Doom (Oriana's first meeting with Scott).		4	
5. Sculpture Scene (Kathleen Scott and her husband, 'Kathleen I').		7	7
6. Kathleen II.		8	
7. Nansen.		11	11, 26
8. Scott and Oates.		12	
9. Office.		13	13
10. Departure of Ship.		16	[18c]
11. Amundsen.		17	22
12. Ice Floes.		18A	18a
13. Iceberg.	(Version I)	18B	
	(Version II*)	18C	18b
14. Penguins.		19	19
15. Ross Island.		21	
16. Aurora.		24	24
17. Pony March (Baltic Fleet).		25	25
18. Pony March and Parhelion.		27	[45b]
19. Pony March II.		28	28
20. Blizzard.		29	29, [46]
21. Distant Glacier.		30	30
22. Climbing Glacier.		31	31, 32, 32a, [41a]
23. Scott comes out.		33	33
24. Snowy Plain – Scott's Decision.		34	34
25. Kathleen [III].		35	
26. Polar party moves off.	(Version I)	36	36, [41b], [44a], [45a]
	(Version II*)	35A	
27. No. 101 March.		36A	
28. Amundsen III (Black Flag).		37	37
29. Base Camp.		38	
30. The Return.		39/40	39/40
31. Death of Evans.		42	42
32. Death of Oates.		44	44, [44c]
33. Aurora II.		45	45
34. Only Eleven Miles.		46	
35. End Music.		51/52	51/52

valuable contribution to the history of the cinema. Indeed, it won several awards, including first prize at the Prague Film Festival in 1949.

This table encompasses several movements not identified in Kennedy's *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 184) nor Dickinsons' *Vaughan Williams* (London, Faber and Faber, 1963, p. 449), namely 'Kathleen II', 'Nansen', 'Scott and Oates', 'Office', 'Amundsen', 'Kathleen [III]', No. 101 March', 'Base Camp' and 'Aurora II'. Four of these movements occur in the final cut of the film. Moreover, both authors list movements 5 & 6 as 'Scott leaves Oriana', which was the original intention according to two of the manuscript sources. However, VW did not write any new music for these scenes, the initial plan being to reuse some music from no. 4 for scene no. 5 and some from no. 3 for scene no. 6. Later, music from scene no. 3 was set for

both scenes 5 & 6. In the final cut, there is no music in these scenes.

By the time the film company was ready to copy VW's autograph, it is clear that Irving and the production team had already made some conscious decisions about how some of the music was to be used in the movie. Movement No. 14: 'Office II' (a partial repeat of No. 13), No. 35: 'Kathleen (III)' and No. 38: 'Base Camp' had already been abandoned, as they were not copied out from VW's autograph into the duplicate full score.<sup>5</sup> Several other movements had already been partially pruned back to fit the images - No. 4: 'Doom, Scott leaves Oriana',<sup>6</sup> No. 13: 'Office', No. 19: 'Penguins', No. 28: 'Pony March II' and No. 30: 'Distant Glacier'. It would appear that most of the movements were recorded as found in the copy full score and were then further edited in the studio, as many of the cuts found in the film are not marked in this score. Indeed, there are very



few timing indications (surprising in a film score) and only a small number of direct markings of how the music relates to the scenes.

The process of transferring VW's carefully conceived music into the final soundtrack resulted in a butchering of his score into a patchwork of soundbites to fit the images and dialogue. Of the 996 bars found in the autograph full score,<sup>7</sup> only 462, less than half<sup>8</sup> of VW's full score actually appear in the film, though a number of bars are used more than once. Despite this, some of the editing was superb, and the music evokes and illustrates the scenes wonderfully. However, the carving up of the score by taking a few bars from one part of a movement and pasting several bars from another into a fragmented patchwork, hardly gives one a true impression of VW's grand design. His score is used primarily to underpin dramatic moments and to fill an aural void when there is no significant dialogue. Despite these shortcomings in the final soundtrack, a clear cohesiveness of thought survives in the music, giving 'Scott of the Antarctic' the unity that was essential to its success. This was achieved by VW's process of constructing the movements symphonically, rather than as a suite of short, diverse movements. Many of these are directly or indirectly derived from the 'doom' motif which first appears in the main titles (D, E, F sharp, G, F sharp, E flat), and those that are not, still seem to have an underlying sense of foreboding intensified by the prevalence of the minor key.

The period following the end of the Second World War marks a

watershed in VW's musical development. Significant in his output of this time is the Sixth Symphony (1944-7), a work with a nihilistic vision that is the antithesis of its predecessor, the Fifth. This work represents a spiritual crisis in VW's psyche. In a sense, the arrival of the 'Scott' commission shortly afterwards allowed VW a further outlet into which he could release these inner tensions and it perhaps explains his complete absorption in the 'Scott' subject matter. Indeed, the final demise of our 'hero' and his companions presents the abyss as the ultimate reality. Of course, the 'Scott' film demanded other types of music to depict heroism: aspiration, love, sadness, and the compassion of the individual human being. Yet in reality a lot of the music is underpinned by a feeling of impending doom.

VW's score is full of pictorial and programmatic effects that are wonderfully scored and generate a sense of genuine tragedy and heroism. He creates a whole new sound world and expands his orchestral palette to encompass an array of pitched and unpitched percussion not previously exploited. The piano is a rare addition to his orchestra where it fulfils a primarily percussive role. There is also a notable presence of menacing brass, often muted, which adds an ominous tone to what is already predominantly a dark-hued score. Yet VW is noticeably restrained in his scoring, reserving the truly *fortissimo* passages for the few really climatic moments in the movie. Ottaway and Kennedy both trace similarities with earlier VW works and I cannot hear this score without being reminded of the cosmic



imagination of Holst's *The Planets* translated by VW into his icy Antarctic world.

With the possible exception of Scott himself, VW does not seem to have set out to characterise any of the individuals in the story in his score. Though there are movements that describe specific persons, such as 'Oriana', 'Kathleen', 'Amundsen' and 'Nansen', he never treats the material as a *leitmotif*. Kathleen's music was intended to recur a couple of times and Nansen's does do so, but this hardly constitutes adherence to any Wagnerian tradition. One could also suggest that Amundsen's and Nansen's music have a disturbing side, as though they are the foreign villains of the peace, though I doubt that VW would have intended such a xenophobic interpretation. Amundsen's intimidating music could just represent the threat that his competition would have on the ultimate outcome of Scott's journey. Nansen's menacing music is simply a warning message that Scott has not considered the inherent problems of mechanised transport and ponies in Antarctic conditions. However, it is possible to equate Scott with the 'doom' motif. Its various transformations throughout the score could be seen as a characterisation of Scott as his destiny is gradually determined. If this were the case, one could surmise that it was Scott's flawed character that became almost an obsession for VW and this was the driving force behind the composition of his powerful score. For a Socialist like VW to concentrate on one character may seem surprising, but if his ultimate aim was to highlight the irresponsible behaviour of the individual to the detriment of the many, then I would suggest that he succeeded. It is also possible to read the 'doom' motif's mutations as representing the fateful journey of the whole expedition party, which is perhaps more in keeping with VW's political ideology. The decision by the film company to portray Scott as the hero figure at the end of the film must have incensed VW, as he clearly thought otherwise. However, a commission is a commission, and one occasionally has to submit to something one disagrees with. Such is the case here. This frustration, however, may well have been the driving force behind VW's subsequent *Sinfonia Antartica*, where he could fervently express his own views on Scott in musical terms.

Despite VW's reworking of some of the elements of the 'Scott' film into the later symphony, there is much worthy material, as yet, unperformed as VW intended it. This score is surely long overdue a new complete rendition.

<sup>1</sup> Foreman, L., *Ralph Vaughan Williams - Film Music*, programme note to Marco Polo CD, 8.223665, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Prendergast, R., *Film Music: A Neglected Art*, New York, W.W. Norton & Co, 1992, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Vaughan Williams, R., *Beethoven's Choral Symphony and other Writings*, London, Oxford University Press, 1953, 109.

<sup>4</sup> Kennedy, M., *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, London, Oxford University Press, 1964, 297.

<sup>5</sup> Copy full scores of No. 3: 'Oriana', No. 8: 'Kathleen [II]' and No. 45: 'Aurora II' exist in BL Add. MS 50431.

<sup>6</sup> This movement was eventually abandoned completely.

<sup>7</sup> Several autograph folios are located in BL Add. MSS 50431 and 52289B and I have included these bars in my final figure.

<sup>8</sup> 46% to be more exact.



Captain Scott  
in 1911

Solution:  
Across:  
1. Dispacus, 7. Blake, 9. Solo, 10. Tallis, 13. Carnal,  
14. Acre, 16. Milton, 18. Falstaff.  
Down:  
2. Paradis, 3. Adler, 4. USA, 5. Aunt Jane, 6. Apollyon,  
8. Down, 11. Lark, 12. Partita, 15. Dives, 17. Sea.

# The Times, *The Times*, and The Fourth Symphony

by Geoff Brown

Let Ursula Vaughan Williams begin the tale.

His own story of the genesis of his Fourth Symphony was that he had read an account of one of the 'Freak Festivals' in which a symphony, he couldn't remember who had written it, was described in some detail. Like the myth of Beethoven and *Fidelio*, his breakfast time reaction was an immediate '*il faut que je compose cela*'. So, without any philosophical, prophetic, or political germ, No.4 took its life from a paragraph in *The Times*.

Other books beside Ursula Vaughan Williams' *R. V. W.* recount similar versions of the same incident, though no commentator to my knowledge had ever tried to test the story, locate the paragraph, and discover which abrasive modern symphony had if not inspired then at least encouraged VW to produce one of his own.

Since I was preparing a short comparative review of the available recordings of VW's Fourth for *The Times* (VW's own 1937 recording came out on top), I decided to take the opportunity to play detective.

My starting point was the year 1931. By the end of that year, as we know, VW was "battling" (Ursula's word) with his new symphony; he showed the manuscript to Holst when Holst visited Dorking on New Year's Day. Thought of 'Freak Festivals' of that period immediately brought to mind the International Society of Contemporary Music. During that summer, as it happened, the ISCM's ninth annual festival had been held in England from July 21 to 28, chiefly in Oxford, but with some concerts in London, and with the considerable support of the BBC.

This suggested fertile hunting ground, especially as VW attended the festival several times, once when *Job* was staged at the New Theatre, Oxford, by the

Camargo Society on July 24, with Constant Lambert conducting. The programme also contained Lambert's Pomona, and the Mileva Mayerova Dance Group of Czechoslovakia writhing to the sounds of Erwin Schulhoff's abstract dance piece *La Somnambule*. *Job*, at least, enjoyed a warm reception.

"The audience," *The Times* reported on July 25, "received the work with profound interest and burst into enthusiastic calls for the composer at the close, which were at last responded to by Dr Vaughan Williams joining the company on the stage."

Another VW work was performed in London, the *Benedicite*, with Elsie Suddaby as soprano soloist, included in a Queen's Hall concert on July 28, and broadcast live on the BBC. What weird bedfellows that had: *Three Symphonic Pieces* by the Argentine composer and conductor Juan José Castro; *Three Symphonic Movements* by the Belgian Fernand Quinet; Szymanowski's *Polish Songs*; *Song of the Wolves* by the Hungarian Ferenc Szabo; two studies for orchestra by Vladimir Vogel; and Roussel's *Psalm 80*. Not a programme one could repeat today.

Whether VW attended his *Benedicite* in person or not, he clearly had reason to follow any ISCM reports that he found in his morning newspaper. They appeared in *The Times* almost daily, unsigned, but presumably by H. C. Colles, the newspaper's esteemed music critic. On July 25, among other general comments, the writer hinted at the festival's circumscribed social life:

Even 'atonality' may become a matter of human interest when it is discussed over a long drink. That aspect of the Continental festival is, alas!, not reproducible in this country. The doors of New College, which offers shelter to the majority of the male visitors, close

irrevocably at 11, and woe to those who stand without and knock."

Did he speak from experience? Probably the talk and long drinks flowed more freely in London, where another extraordinarily diverse concert was presented at the Queen's Hall on July 27 - possibly the only occasion in the world where Webern's Symphony has shared the programme with *An American in Paris*. Four other works completed the bill: Roman Palester's *Symphonic Music*, Lambert's *Music for Orchestra*, a rhapsody by a minor Italian, Virgilio Mortari and the Second Symphony of the cosmopolitan Russian Vladimir Dukelsky, better known in the popular music sphere as Vernon Duke. For this concert, VW was certainly present: and he was wriggling, apparently, during the Webern. "I could make neither head nor tail of the music," wrote the reporter from *The Star*, "but as Dr Vaughan Williams was also restless I did not mind" (quoted in Jennifer Doctor's recent study *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922-1936*, which devotes several pages to the 1931 Festival).

Perhaps among all these symphonies, symphonic studies and movements there lay the solution to my VW riddle. Annoyingly, no review of a specific composition in *The Times* fitted the bill. But the last *Times* report of all, "The New Music Festival: A Retrospect", published on August 1, appeared to give me my answer. Looking back on the festival, Colles observed with implied relief that most of the music was "not as new as we had expected it to be". Only Webern's Symphony, he thought, blazed a trail into the future. The rest had stuck to old principles, with variations, and some change in nomenclature. Thirty years into the new century, it seemed clear that no composer now wanted to designate his creations as symphonic poems, or suggest even a whiff of the programmatic. Let the *Times* music critic

of 1931 take over:

"Practically all the orchestral works of this programme were called 'symphony' or symphonic something or other, anything, in fact, except 'symphonic poem.' A composer no longer writes a piece called, let us say, 'In the Farmyard,' with a note to the effect that it is to be listened to as abstract music. If he was thinking of a farmyard when he wrote it he makes no confession; he hides the shameful fact behind some formal label, but on the whole he writes very much the same kind of music as was written in the heyday of the farmyard period.

'We have been given this week Roman Palester's *Symphonic Music*, Virgilio Mortari's *Rhapsody for Orchestra* (this came so near to being a 'Symphonic Poem' that a note had to be put in to say that it was not one, though it was allowed to be 'Italian in spirit'), Dukelsky's *Second Symphony*, Castro's 'Three Symphonic Pieces,' and Quinet's 'Three Symphonic Movements.' All of them are lavish with the kind of effect which began to be accepted as within the bounds of music in connection with some quasi-dramatic scheme such as Strauss's 'Don Quixote,' or Elgar's 'Falstaff,' 20 or 30 years ago. One may do it with more sense of novelty than another, a keener inventiveness; or a greater display of extravagance, but they all rely on the same order of stimuli. The hearer is prodded into activity by dissonance, soothed by sentiment, overwhelmed by the power of a battering climax. The appeal is primarily sensuous, even though the composer makes play with formal processes of thematic development, such as *fugato*, *basso ostinato*, or variations.

"The much boasted return to abstract music as a reaction from programme music is largely a matter of name, or the absence of one. In none of these works is the composer inspired by any original principle of design. Perhaps there is no new principle to be discovered, and the only thing to do is to make good music on an old principle. We should be the last to deny that proposition..."

Surely, this is the article that made VW sit up at breakfast - not an account of one particular modern symphony, but an account of trends in modern symphonic writing. "Prodded into activity by

dissonance, soothed by sentiment, overwhelmed by the power of a battering climax." If that does not describe the Fourth Symphony to come, nothing does. The next sentence also carries strong reverberations, with its talk of the composer playing with "formal processes of thematic development such as *fugato*, *basso ostinato*, or variations." The F minor symphony's thematic development is famously tight, and a fugue, of course, is one of its most prominent formal processes.

It would be wrong to make too much of this. Indeed, it might be wrong to make anything of this. VW would surely have written his Symphony in F minor if he had never read *The Times* at all: the very most the article could have done would have been to lend support to an already existing notion for a symphony containing dissonant battering. You can hear the F minor symphony forming some years before in the newly rebarbative sound world of the Piano Concerto, composed in part in 1926, or Satan's music in *Job*, completed in 1930. In any case much of the symphony's tautness and muscle derives from the past, not the present. Beethoven's example looms large, from the close thematic development, the grim humour and the movement from conflict to (partial) resolution, to the linkage of scherzo and finale, as in Beethoven's Fifth.

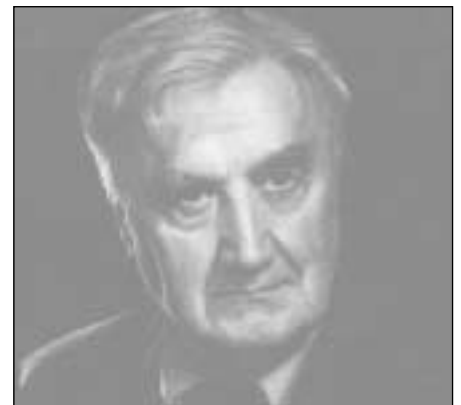
VW himself, writing the note for the symphony's first performance, kept wholly to thematic analysis, and never encouraged others to see the symphony - as some did, and still do - as a direct response to the decade's political turmoil and the shadows of war. This is not programme music (did not the ISCM concerts proclaim the breed dead?) It is a modern Beethovenian symphony, no more, no less, written when it was understandable for anyone to have dark thoughts.

Before we put *The Times'* ISCM reports to rest, it may be worth airing one tangential matter. Who exactly were these composers, these Quinets and Mortans, who surrounded VW at this festival, and what happened to their music? In most cases, not much. The *Symphonic Movements* of the Belgian Quintet pupil of d'Indy, and a cellist in the Pro Arte

Quartet have disappeared leaving little trace beyond a passing mention in the *New Grove* of its impressionist harmonies. Quinet's own composing activities subsequently petered out. Castro's *Symphonic Pieces*, also called *Allegro lento e vivace*, proved to be his international calling card, and received an ISCM award, not enough, though, to stop his composing career also declining as conducting jobs took priority. Roman Palester's *Symphonic Music*, which received its premiere, would appear to be an important early piece from a composer at the forefront in Poland during the 1930s but its life too was brief - the manuscript was destroyed during the Second World War. Mortari, a pupil of Pizzetti in his late 20s, wrote his *Rhapsody* in a neo-romantic style; a lengthy career in academia followed.

Another long lost item, Dukelsky's *Symphony*, fielded to the ISCM committee by Prokofiev, was rewarded with some thunderously bad reviews, according to his autobiography *Passport to Paris*. The *Daily Mail's* man apparently called it "shockingly noisy, tasteless" - he didn't much like *An American in Paris* either. Fear of similar bad reviews had been partly responsible for keeping Webern from visiting Britain for the ISCM concerts; understandable, perhaps, when his *Symphony* had already been called at its New York premiere the "fractional sounds uttered at night by the sleeping inhabitants of a zoo".

The Webern, like the Gershwin, has since secured its own firm niche in history, but the ISCM's other symphonic whatnots all became dwarfed quite properly, by the startling, belligerent symphony already churning somewhere inside VW's head as he spooned out the marmalade and picked up his *Times* on August 1, 1931.



# Music You Might Like

## The music of Kurt Atterberg (1887-1974) by Charles Long



*Kurt Atterberg*

At first sight, a gathering of senior railway executives from around the world might not seem a particularly propitious setting for what proved to be one of the most memorable musical encounters of my life. In 1979, as the then editor of the magazine *Modern Railways*, I was in Stockholm to observe the proceedings of the International Railway Congress, hosted that year by Swedish State Railways. During the course of the elaborate opening ceremony, there was a 'Welcome to Sweden' interlude, in which a soft-focus, freeze-frame visual presentation of the country's landscapes and castles was accompanied by a live performance - by the Stockholm Sinfonietta, directed by Jan-Olav Wedin - of Kurt Atterberg's ravishing Suite No 3, for violin, viola and string orchestra, dating from 1917. Certainly this was music I had never knowingly heard before - and yet, as I recall in the case of my first childhood exposure to the Tallis Fantasia (see *RVW Journal* No 10), here was something that I seemed to know instinctively, and which effortlessly wove its own dreamlike magic spell. My attention was caught from the very start of the piece, with poignant, soaring violin and viola melodies weaving around each other in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the Largo from J S Bach's double violin concerto - though in an unashamedly romantic language.

A very acceptable account of this music (in the company of other seductive 'pastoral' pieces by various early/mid-20th-century Swedish composers), performed by the Swedish Chamber Orchestra directed by Petter Sundkvist, can be found on a bargain Naxos CD: *Swedish Orchestral Favourites, Vol 2* (8.553715). However, of the three other recordings of the Atterberg suite currently available, my own favourite is a particularly haunting performance from the mid-1960s by the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, under Stig Westerberg on a Swedish Society Discofil CD (SCI) 1006, where it forms a filler for the same composer's rather more muscular - but immediately approachable - Symphony No 2 of 1912. (Extracts from the symphony appeared in 1996 on a rather curious compilation EMI CD, promoted by Patrick Moore, under the title *The Planets, Vol 2: Other Worlds -Premier CDC 5 56151-2.*)

Recordings of all but the last of Atterberg's (admittedly, somewhat uneven) nine symphonies, and his piano, violin, and horn concertos, are available on various Swedish

labels, while his cello concerto, coupled with a cello sonata, has been issued on a Koch Schwann CD. There are also two Marco Polo discs devoted to his chamber music. For those who - like me - are bitten by the Atterberg bug, I would draw attention to the fact that, last year, the German CPO company embarked on what promises to be a richly rewarding survey of the complete symphonic cycle. The initial CD (999 639-2), recorded by the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra conducted by (yet another) rising Finnish star, Ari Rasilainen, couples the large-scale Symphony No 1 with the frankly lightweight No 4, *Sinfonia piccola*. The former work, dating from 1909/10, seems to me to be astonishingly self-assured for a largely self-taught musician in his early twenties: it has a genuine sense of purpose, and is brimful of 'good tunes' and striking orchestral colour. The original score - together with that of another early work - accompanied Atterberg's application to be admitted as a composition student at the Stockholm Music Conservatory. Indeed, at the time he was working on this music, Atterberg was studying at Stockholm's Technological Institute for an engineering diploma while, after he had qualified, he found practically lifelong employment by the Royal Swedish Patent Office (eventually having to be persuaded to retire at the age of 81) besides coming to play a central and very active role in his nation's musical life.

Unquestionably, the best-known (or, perhaps one should say, the most notorious) of the Atterberg symphonies is No 6, which gained the sobriquet 'The Dollar Symphony' after it was awarded the \$10,000 Schubert Prize, offered by what was then known as the Columbia Graphophone Co in 1928, the centenary year of Schubert's death. At that time, of course, \$10,000 was worth many times the same nominal sum today and, after the event, Atterberg was accused of plagiarising the work of other composers - ranging from Elgar to Stravinsky - likely to appeal to the international jury panel, chaired by Alexander Glazunov. (No mean feat, one feels, had it been true and had he managed to pull off such a trick.) In fact, it appears that he had completed much of the score of the new work before he learnt of changes in the competition rules that allowed him to enter it. Originally - until the music world protested en masse - it had been intended to offer the prize to the 'best

completion' of Schubert's 'Unfinished Symphony'.

The original 1928 recording of the Sixth Symphony, with Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the Royal Philharmonic Society Orchestra (Columbia's first recording of a symphony by a living composer), has been digitally remastered for CD on the Dutton label (CDLX 7026). Despite its rather thick textures, this has come up remarkably well - although one does get the feeling that Beecham's heart was not really in the enterprise. There is, however, a good modern digital recording by the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jun'ichi Hirokami on the BIS label (BIS CD 553). The brooding mood of the second movement in this much more atmospheric interpretation always puts me in mind of RVW's *In the Fen Country*, while, in the folk-melody-based *Varmlandsrapsodi* (one of the filler pieces), the elusive, wistful quality of the beginning and ending, framing a more assertive central section, has much in common, I feel, with the Norfolk Rhapsody No 1. A third, rather more rugged, performance of the Sixth Symphony - coupled with the highly impressionistic third, which carries the title *Vastkustbilder* (West Coast Pictures) - forms the second instalment of CPO's Atterberg cycle (999 640-2), with Ari Rasilainen conducting the North German Radio Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1943, when Britain and Finland were technically at war, Kurt Atterberg acted as a neutral post office when Sir Adrian Boult took it upon himself ('without permission') to inform Jean Sibelius of the precise wording of the dedication to him of RVW's fifth symphony. In his reply - again via Atterberg - Sibelius (who had heard a broadcast performance from Stockholm) asked that his appreciation of 'this wonderful work' should be passed on to the composer. 'Dr Williams has no idea what pleasure he has given me,' he wrote.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Long  
*Leatherhead*

(See *Overleaf*)

<sup>1</sup> Atterberg's subsequent letter to Sir Adrian is quoted in *Music and Friends: Seven decades of letters to Adrian Boult*, Jerrold Northrop Moore (ed), Hamish Hamilton, 1979. See also letter by the present writer in *RVW Journal* No 11.

# Atterberg, Sibelius and RVW's Fifth Symphony

Letter translated for the RVW Society

29 December 1943

To the composer Jean Sibelius  
Jarvenpaa  
Helsinki

In wishing you a Happy New Year I first want to thank you for your heartening comments in the telegram to the Association of Swedish Composers on the occasion of its 25th Jubilee and also for the part you played in the high Finnish honour I have just received.

Yesterday I received a letter from Sir Adrian Boult at the B.B.C. in London, who wrote to me as follows:

*"Recently, when I was conducting Sibelius' fifth symphony in E flat major, I wondered whether I could possibly ask you to send him a message, with my greetings, telling him that we have again had the experience and pleasure of performing his outstanding symphony, and that I very much hope that 1944 will see the re-establishment of the friendly contacts we all appreciated so much before 1939."*

Personally I concur with Boult's sentiments with all sincerity and warmth.

Boult goes on to say:

*"I wonder whether Sibelius knows that Dr. Vaughan Williams has dedicated his latest, most beautiful symphony to him with the following words: "Dedicated (without permission and with sincerest flattery) to Jean Sibelius, whose great example is worthy of imitation."*

In my opinion, you can be pleased with that dedication. Williams' symphony was played last autumn here under Malcolm Sargent and I wrote the following on this subject on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September in Stockholms-Tidningen: <sup>1</sup>

*"The intermission was followed by Symphony No. 5 in D major by the Englishman, Ralph Vaughan Williams. This composition, which was performed in London on 24 June of this year, was now being performed for the second time. And what a beautiful performance. Williams has already written a "Pastoral Symphony", but when you hear the work which has now been played you may well say that he has written two symphonies worthy of that*

*name. The new work gave enormous pleasure. It is certainly a little risky using superlatives when making comparisons, but I think it may well be said that this Williams symphony is not only the very best we have heard in English music but is also among the most consummate new works we have heard in a very long time. The music gives an extremely pure, not to say purified, impression. No speculation, no strange features, but it is nevertheless interesting and captivating.*

*After hearing the symphony you have a strange feeling that there is not a single modulation in it. Of course there are periodic changes of key, but once Williams has begun in one key he often continues for quite a while in that key, then suddenly begins in another. This impression contributes greatly to lending the work its pastoral mood. In the programme it states that the composer dedicated this symphony to Sibelius "without permission, but with the greatest admiration". One can very well understand this because there is no doubt that there is a feeling of Sibelius' mood in it without being able to point to any direct similarities.*

*The first movement conveys a sunny impression, the second - a presto - a nocturnal mood. According to the composer's motto for it, the third movement was supposed to be a tragic affair, but even here you have the feeling of a natural painting - with beautiful motifs and exquisite, discrete tonal quality. The longer you follow the symphony with increasing admiration you are increasingly captivated by what you hear. The final movement, a passacaglia, is also a very noble affair, but it is too much in the style of the previous movements, and with the third in particular, with the result that it does not give the inspiration it could have if it had been heard in a more contrasting context. Nevertheless a strong overall impression of the work was obtained, as already mentioned. The exquisite performance of the new work by Sargent, conducting the orchestra which played excellently, contributed to this. Moreover, the public appeared to be extremely enthusiastic and gave him a long, warm ovation."*

I am writing at the same time to Boult and I have told him that I have fulfilled my commission.

Yours sincerely,  
Kurt Atterberg

<sup>1</sup> Atterberg was music critic for this newspaper from 1919 to 1957.

To the composer W. Kurt Atterberg,  
Stockholm

Thank you most sincerely for your kind letter of 29 December, and for your good wishes for the festive season. I also wish you a prosperous Happy New Year.

What Sir Adrian Boult and you have said about my fifth symphony gave me great pleasure, and I concur wholeheartedly with Sir Adrian's hopes for 1944.

I heard Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams' new symphony from Stockholm in Malcolm Sargent's excellent performance. This symphony is a wonderful work. There is life throughout - in the words of the poet - you feel that its creator had passed on the purest of attributes. Through our newspapers we learned about the dedication, which made me proud and deeply grateful. Dr. Williams has no idea what pleasure he has given me. The wording of the dedication did not appear in our newspapers, which is why I only got to know about it through you. I consider your criticism, which - in abbreviated form - was also published in our newspapers, to be true and appropriate. I would be very grateful if you would give Sir Adrian Boult my warmest regards and through him, Dr. Vaughan Williams.

With sincere regards and best wishes,  
Yours truly,  
Jean Sibelius

Charles Long received copies of both letters (in Swedish) from the Musikmuseet, Stockholm, to whom we are greatly indebted. Translated for the RVW Society by Link Up Mitaka Limited





# Letters

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

## **RVW and Frank Sinatra**

On the theme of coming across references to VW where you don't expect them (Journal No. 20, February 2001) I was recently alerted to the fact that he is mentioned in 'ALL THE WAY', Michael Freedland's biography of Frank Sinatra (Weidenfeld & Nicholson). Having obtained a copy I found that there are two references (indexed under Williams, Ralph Vaughan).

The first relates to a song ('Lonely Town') eventually left out of the finished film version of 'On the Town', much to the disappointment of Sinatra and Betty Comden who told Freedland: 'It's a very emotional song and he did it completely differently from the way it had been done before. Frank really believed in that song. He sweated over the arrangement for a very long time. We (she and Adolph Green) loved the musicality of his performances, which I think were influenced by the way he had studied the work of Vaughan Williams.'

The second reference occurs in the discussion of Sinatra's collaboration with Nelson Riddle. Freedland writes: 'The astounding thing about Sinatra was his interest in music way beyond his own field. He may or may not have been influenced by Fritz Kreisler, but he told Riddle of his love for the music of Vaughan Williams and got the conductor "all excited" about the British composer, too.'

It would be interesting to know more, for instance about which particular works he studied, or liked best.

*Peter Field, Weybridge.*

## **The real world premiere of *O taste and see***

It is generally thought, and stated in all encyclopaedias and reference books, that the world premiere of RVW's brief motet *O taste and see* took place as part of the coronation service for Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey on June 2, 1953,

where William McKie (later knighted for his participation) conducted the coronation service choristers.

Wrong! Here, told perhaps for the first time by a surviving collaborator in the true world premiere, is the real story.

In the small Lancashire town of Chorley there was a musical society which gave a few concerts each year, performed by invited guest artists and by its own home-town choir of a dozen or so singers, the Chorley Music Group. Now Chorley is not far from Manchester and in April 1953, some 6 or 7 weeks before the coronation, the Manchester Guardian published the full score of *O taste and see* as a lift-out supplement – maybe the first music score ever printed as a daily newspaper supplement.

The Chorley Music Group was due to sing at a concert on April 25 1953, and its conductor decided to buy copies of the Guardian for every one of his singers, a couple of days before their scheduled concert, and they rehearsed frantically from that score. And thus on April 25 they gave the true world premiere of the RVW motet, an unprecedented instance of lese-majesty which in an earlier century might have landed them all on the block or in the Tower. Every singer held a copy of the newspaper supplement, a remarkable sight.

I can vouch for this story about preempting the coronation music because I played an unexpected part in it. At the time I lived in nearby Blackpool in connection with my work as a visiting Australian chemical engineer seconded to ICI, and as a music addict and reviewer for the Australian journal Canon I attended concerts by the Halle Orchestra under Glorious John, the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (not yet Royal) under Hugo Rignold, and various provincial music societies such as that in Chorley. Not only was I at the concert with the RVW world premiere, but the Mayor of Chorley, weighted down by heavy robes, gold chains and medals, moved a vote of thanks to the choir and then called on me, the Australian visitor, to second his vote of thanks. This I did, no doubt laying myself open to a charge of complicity in an almost Cromwellian anti-monarchist act. The local newspaper reporter interviewed me, but the royal watchdogs must have turned a blind eye, or deaf ear, and it did not stop the Musical Times from appointing me their Australian Correspondent when I returned home 18 months later – a task I

carried out for 37 years until Novellos sold the MT in 1992.

I actually reviewed the concert with the RVW premiere for my own purposes and still have that review, with the full program and the names of the singers. It was my 643rd concert in a list of what now, after more than half a century as a music critic (including 33 years with the Sydney Morning Herald) covers 10,216 music events containing 67,800 performances of 21,706 different works by 3,029 different composers.

The RVW motet ended the Chorley program in a group together with madrigals by Weelkes and Gibbons, plus the Brahms Wiegenglied. If any reader wants specific details, they should be on record in Chorley, but I can supply them if necessary.

*Fred R Blanks, AM  
Greenwich NSW, Australia*

## **What is class?**

So, according to Rob Furneaux, '...classical music is not listened to with much enthusiasm by those of the working class. They tend to listen more to what Keith Otis Edwards delightfully referred to as "adolescent sex music".'

My father and grandfather were cathedral lay-clerks; I was a chorister and, in the sixties, I sang in a successful folk band. I go to hear the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra whenever I can and I am a Friend of the Three Choirs Festival which I attend every year. Last year I was at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff for the hugely successful Manic Street Preachers concert, I have seen Bob Dylan twice in the past three years and I was recently at the Royal Festival Hall for an Eric Clapton concert.

To which class do I belong, Mr Furneaux? Your kind of musical snobbery does the RVW Society no favours.

*Stephen Friar  
Sherborne, Dorset*

## **Fond Memories**

The articles about "Antartica" in the February Journal brought back fond memories of my final schooldays in 1953.

Our sixth form was taken to the RAH not for the public performances, but the morning rehearsal by the LPO under the

baton of Sir Adrian Boult - if my memory serves me aright. Unaccustomed as we all were to hearing such avant-garde music, it was a difficult audition but at least there was some light relief when the wind machine came into play although I must confess that I have no clear recollection of a silent soprano! As a matter of interest, is a wind machine, by definition, a wind or percussion instrument?

I am unable to place a precise date on the rehearsal but it must have been spring or early summer of '53, because within a matter of weeks the "happiest days of my life" sadly were soon to be replaced by National Service square-bashing.

*Reg Hargrave  
Gloucestershire.*

### Correction to David Tolley's article

The following sentence in bold was mostly deleted from my article in the last Journal:

***The tragedy elevated Scott to the national pantheon of heroes, an epic drama clearly suitable for the cinema was undertaken by Ealing 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.*** (page 8 para 1).

I have copied the above directly from the original file submitted to your printer on disk.

*David Tolley,  
Warwickshire*

*Apologies from The Editor, The Doghouse,  
London.*

### BBC Archive and RVW

I presume that most of our members were tuned in to Radio 3 on December 3<sup>rd</sup> last to hear the *BBC Legends* programme devoted to historical recordings of works by RVW.

Anyone not tuned in missed a real treat from the BBC archives. The items broadcast included the composer conducting the first movement of the *Fifth Symphony*, in 1952, which was taken, interestingly, at a *very* slow tempo. I timed it at something like 14 minutes! This compares with just over 12 minutes taken by Hickox in 1999 (and Hickox has a reputation for taking things at a leisurely

pace!) Barbirolli's 1944 recording takes about 11½ minutes, and Boult (1953) under 11 minutes!

Other items included were the first recording (1944) of *A Thanksgiving for Victory*, the first broadcast performance of two of the *Ten Blake Songs* (1958), and the first ever performance of the *Ninth Symphony* (April 1958). Wilfred Brown's performance of two of the songs was quite the best rendering I have ever heard, and I was really impressed by Sargent's reading of the symphony.

I was pleased to capture all of this on cassette, together with short talks by Boult and RVW himself. But one wonders what other treasures lurk in the BBC Archives, and when they may be released in a more accessible form.

For instance, Michael Kennedy's *Catalogue* states the number of pieces had their first performances broadcast by the BBC around the time of the Second World War. Does this mean they were also recorded at the time and that the recordings still exist? They include the following: *Six Choral Songs to be sung in Time of War* (10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1940) and *England, my England* (16<sup>th</sup> November 1941). Also listed are: *Nothing is Here for Tears* (1936), and *Mayor of Casterbridge* (Incidental Music) (1951).

As far as I am aware, none of these is currently available on disc. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Beeb could release these recordings, if they are still in existence?

*Michael Gainsford  
Burbage, Leics.*

### More on the BBC Archive and RVW

I'm sure you were a little more organised than I was, this would not be difficult! and heard the excellent BBC Legends programme about RVW broadcast before Christmas. You may also have noticed a small note in the Radio Times suggesting that a BBC Legends CD on RVW was forthcoming. I e-mailed the BBC regarding this and the recording of RVW conducting his *Fifth Symphony* played on the programme.

You were good enough to publish a previous letter of mine on the subject in the Journal.

Members I'm sure will be interested in the reply and probably disappointed. The CD reference was a mistake and the recording

will not be produced. The recording of the fifth played is not complete and five bars are missing from the third movement and it is very unlikely that it will be made available in consequence. I have made a plea to "auntie" to play the whole recording anyway with the small bit missing. A substantial if not complete bit is considerably better than no bit at all. Maybe other members feel the same. A few nudges to the BBC might persuade them.

I was returning home from work on the afternoon in question and turned on the car radio quite unaware of what was on. I can only describe the effect on me of hearing what was at the time a recording of the fifth by an unidentified conductor as electrifying. It was clearly an old recording and clearly not Boult. Don't ask me how I knew it but I formed the opinion as I listened that it was RVW himself conducting. (Mystic Meg has nothing on me!)

I thought the Sargent ninth was appalling. He conducted the notes but what an emotionless interpretation. I hope this personal opinion doesn't offend but I found it very disappointing. I am also kicking myself for not buying the recording of *Thanksgiving for Victory* when it was commercially available, apparently Intaglio recordings are not imported anymore and I don't know a supplier or if the recording is still commercially available.

*Kevin Hill  
Glasgow*

### A Lark Ascending is No. 1

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2001, our excellent non-commercial classical music radio station, Concert FM, devoted the day from 8am to 8pm to playing its listeners' top 50 favourite pieces of music, as established by a nation-wide poll. Members may be gratified to know that, here on the far side of the planet, New Zealand's No. 1 choice was RVW's *A Lark Ascending* ahead "by a wide mile" of the Bach *St Matthew Passion* (No.2), Rachmaninov's 2<sup>nd</sup> *Piano Concerto* (No. 3) and the *Four Last Songs* of Richard Strauss (No. 4). The recording chosen by Kate Mead, the station's production manager, incidentally, was her favourite by Hugh Bean.

*Ron Hoares,  
Auckland, New Zealand.*

## Potipher Way

In previous magazines the late Mr Frank Dineen wrote about Ralph Vaughan Williams' visit to Brentwood.

Through Georgina Heatley, who was a pupil at Montpelier House School, which became Brentwood County High School for Girls, I was a pupil at that school over 50 years ago, he learnt of folk songs being sung by villagers of Ingrave.

The Brentwood Borough Council have decided to recognise his visits which took place in 1903 and 1904 by naming the new roads on the estate of houses being built on the site of the Old Worley Hospital. (see extract from Brentwood Gazette and Herald - printed below)

Actually, Ralph Vaughan Williams visited Brentwood three

times, twice in the early 1900's to the girls' school and again in 1953 to Sir Anthony Browne's School for Boys, now known as Brentwood School.

As well he also visited Billericay Workhouse, which became St Andrews Hospital, but alas this is yet another estate of houses, whilst collecting more folk songs.

*Yours truly  
J Taylor (Mrs)*

*(Editor's Note: Albion Music Ltd is Publishing Frank Dineen's book on RVW at Ingrave, called Ralph's People in the Summer)*

# Composer up our Street

The new Development at Warley hospital site will have a melodic ring to it after Brentwood Council approved plans to use road names inspired by English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

The Work of Vaughan Williams was put forward as a theme after two local historians, Tony Kendall and the late Frank Dineen, wrote to the gazette suggesting the composer's association with the Brentwood area should be recognised. He collected the folk songs which inspired his work from the district, particularly Ingrave.

Councillors have now backed the names proposed by the Warley Site's developers, Countryside Properties and Crest Homes. Countryside's Helen Moore said; 'we felt this was a good idea to have names with a strong meaning within the locality.'

Those suggested include Greensleeves Drive, from Fantasia on Greensleeves, Linden Lea, from Folk Songs, Lark Avenue, from the Lark Ascending, and Bushes and Briars, from Folk Songs.

Charles Potipher, the labourer who became one of the most well known of the composer's folk song sources, is also to be remembered in the road name Potipher Way.

Council Leader Cllr David Gottesmann has argued a more appropriate theme for the Warley Hospital development might have been the area's long association with the army.

He said: "many people do not realise now that for more than a century Brentwood was a Barracks town and it would have been nice to see this reflected at the development." (from Brentwood Gazette)



ABOVE: The composer himself. His collection of Essex folk tunes led to some of his great works.

BELOW: The old rectory at Ingrave, now called Heatleys, where Vaughan Williams first met his inspiration, Charles Potipher.



# RVW letter discovered in a book

Tony Hurst recently bought a book in a secondhand bookshop and found to his delight a letter from RVW and a postcard from Sir William Walton to the then editor of the Northern Echo. RVW's letter is reproduced below - with warm thanks to Tony Hurst of Whitley Bay, Northumberland.

December 13th 1955.

R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS.  
10, HANOVER TERRACE,  
REGENTS PARK,  
LONDON, N.W.1.

We are living in an age of specialisation and music, like other activities, while it has gained something from this has also lost something. We should be grateful for the invention of the gramophone and wireless for enabling those who are only moderate performers themselves to hear really expert performances which they doubtless could not hear otherwise, and which set a standard for them to aim at, even if they cannot achieve it. But is there not a danger that all this knob pressing and disc-whirring will take the place of active participation in the great art which we serve? and lead to mere passive acceptance.

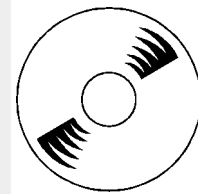
We should all take part as far as our skill allows in the performance of good music, however humble our efforts may be. This will not only give us the satisfaction which great music should bring, but it will also help us to appreciate the performances of famous musicians.

Let us therefore all try to make our own music. Not indeed, instead of the music of the well known performers, but as the preparation for the due appreciation of their skill, and of the true nature of work which we are trying to play or sing.

When I was a boy and I played the viola in our school orchestra. I remember particularly taking part in the slow movement of Beethoven's first symphony, and this experience gave me much more insight into the beauty of the work than listening in a gramophone record in an arm chair could have done.

R. Vaughan Williams

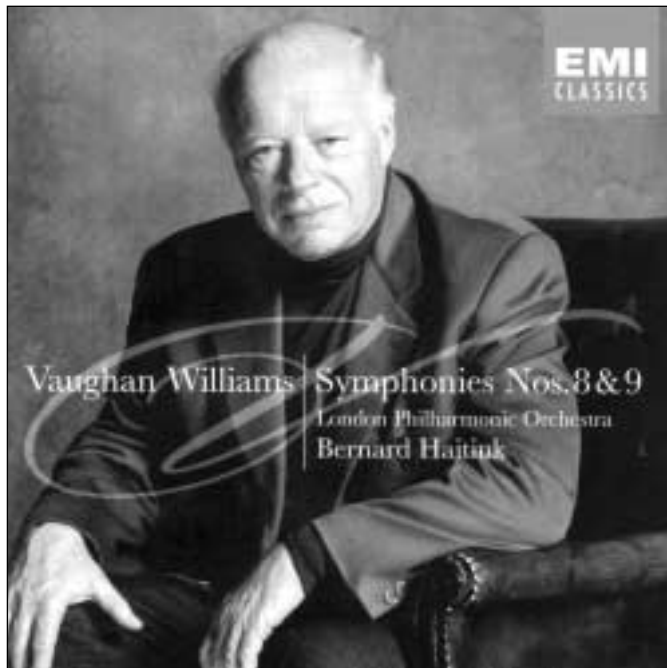
# Record Reviews



## Haitink completes VW cycle

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Symphonies Nos. 8 & 9**

London Philharmonic Orchestra / Bernard Haitink EMI Classics  
5 57086 2 (67 .13)



This CD brings Bernard Haitink's cycle of the symphonies to a close. Since the first issue, *Sinfonia Antartica* (No.7) in 1986 it has taken another 15 years to complete the 7 recordings that make up the set. So a very carefully considered approach from this great conductor, previous releases have been very well received, indeed three have won awards. The only disappointment in the series as far as I am concerned is No.3 A Pastoral where he completely misses the point.

His interpretation of these last two symphonies is straightforward allowing the music to speak for itself.

The opening movement of, the Eighth is played with clarity but unfortunately lacks the glistening excitement of for example, versions by Barbirolli, Previn and Stokowski. Faring better, the succinct scherzo sounds like a cross between Shostakovich and the *English Folk Song Suite* and most enjoyable it is for being so. The Cavatina is very beautifully played with all the gravitas of The Tallis, if this is nostalgic who cares, it is intensely moving. There is a wonderful open air feel to the last movement though perhaps the conductor reigns the orchestra back just a little too much at times. The battery of percussion instruments as ever ensure a thrilling climax to this sparkling symphony.

The E-minor Ninth symphony is given a very convincing and powerful performance. We know that this complex and philosophical work reflects VW's love of English Literature and landscape and in its shifting moods we hear music of great serenity contrasted by turn with passages of seeming brutality and remoteness. The timing of Haitink's interpretation is similar to the two recordings made by Sir Adrian Boult (1958 and 1970) but the music doesn't come across to me as either nostalgic or valedictory, more a journey into the unknown in which the

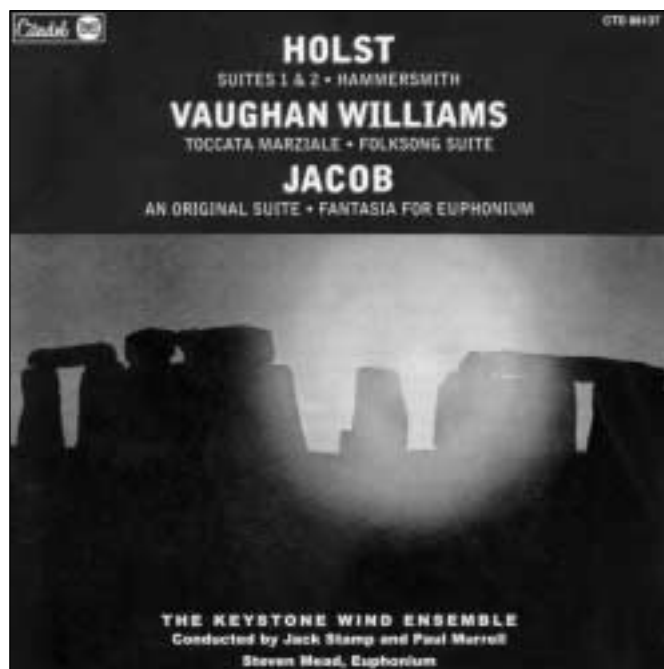
composer conjures a sound world quite different from what has gone before. Compared with other recordings this has to be one of the finest, I marginally prefer Andre Previn on RCA because it has a more foreboding tone which for me enhances the mysteriousness of the work, but the recording is not as good as this one. Let's hope Haitink's advocacy will lead to more performances of the Ninth in the concert hall where for most people it is a very profound experience.

Throughout the series the attention to detail, clear digital sound and excellent playing by the LPO have given me many new insights into these wonderfully contrasting symphonies, confirming the stature of their composer as one of the greatest symphonists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Robin Barber*

## Cornerstones

**Tocatta Marziale, Folk-Song Suite, Keystone Wind Ensemble, Jack Stamp and Paul Morrell. (Coupled with Holst Suites 1 and 2, Hammersmith and Gordon Jacob. An Original Suite, Fantasia for Euphonium and Band) on Citadel CTD 88137.**



This is the third CD to include VW band music to come my way in recent times, following the Chandos recording of VW and Holst on CHAN 9697 (see RVW Society Journal No. 20, p.25) and the arrangements of VW for band on Emblem EMOL 8001 (also reviewed in Journal No. 20). This new recording of the *Folk Song Suite* does not include the Sea Songs, the original second movement of the Suite which was reinstated in the Chandos recording referred to above. Both *Tocatta Marziale* and the *Folk Song Suite* receive fine, sympathetic interpretation from the Keystone Wind Ensemble under Jack Stamp and Capt. Paul Murrell respectively.

What makes this CD rather different is the inclusion of the two Gordon Jacob pieces. Jacob wrote over 400 works during his long life. He may be better remembered today as an orchestrator - for

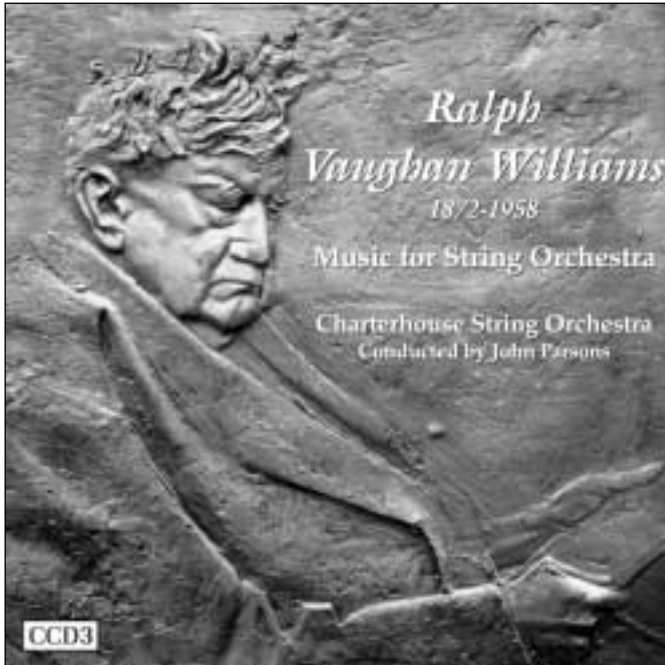


example in RVW's *English Folk-Song Suite* - but in the evidence of his *Original Suite* indicated here he deserves renewed interest in his many compositions. This work deserved inclusion in a CD entitled *Cornerstones*. An excellent performance and recording.

Stephen Connock

## Music for Strings

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Music for String Orchestra**  
Charterhouse String Orchestra conducted by John Parsons  
CCD3 Charterhouse Recording Society



Wow! I never could have believed a school orchestra could play this well, I believe their distinguished old boy would have enjoyed this CD as much as I did.

These are delightfully fresh performances, of course lacking the depth of a professional orchestra but full of enthusiasm. Slowish tempi are I guess, inevitable with such a young ensemble, but this allows the listener to relish the detail of these quintessential scores *Greensleeves* and the *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* are given quite magical performances, the two flautists are excellent and Victoria Davies is a most impressive harpist. Both the Concerto Grosso and the Charterhouse Suite suffer from a thinness of the string sound but there is no doubting the commitment of these young players.

The Tallis is preceded by a performance of the original Third Mode Melody that inspired it excellently sung by the Charterhouse Chamber Choir. The *Fantasia* itself is given the best performance you could imagine from a non-professional orchestra, no thinness here, a deeply resonant, spacious and satisfying reading.

The recording was made in the ample acoustic of Charterhouse Chapel and is exceptionally clear if at times a little forward. Given that three of the pieces on this CD were voted into the Classic FM Hall of Fame 2001, there ought to be a market for this CD

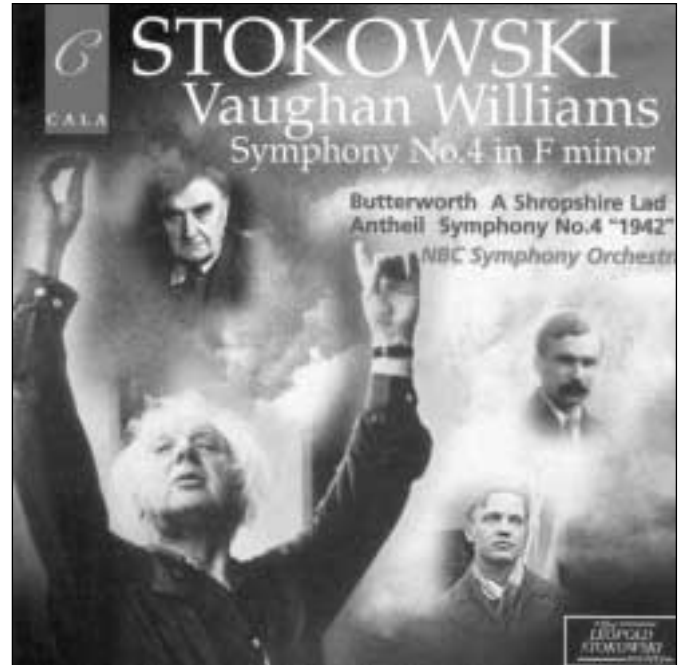
Robin Barber

## A Classic Recording of RVW's Fourth Symphony.

**Symphony No. 4, NBC Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski: (with Butterworth and Antheil) on CALA CACD 0528 (bargain price)**

This newly released recording of Vaughan Williams' *Symphony*

*No. 4*, conducted by Leopold Stokowski with the NBC Symphony Orchestra for a live broadcast in 1943, is on a single CD issued by Cala Records as CACD0528. It is one of a series entitled the 'Cala Stokowski Edition' and is produced in association with the Leopold Stokowski Society, others including for example Brahms, Schubert, Franck, Tchaikovsky and Strauss. This CD also contains Butterworth's 'A Shropshire Lad' and Antheil's Symphony no. 4 '1942', the generous total of music time being just over 74 minutes. It is advertised by for example The Music Group in *Gramophone* of January 2001 for £8.79 plus (UK) £0.90 for postage, so it is not expensive to buy.



It is worth saying a little about Leopold Stokowski. He is described in the *Grove Concise Dictionary of Music* as an American conductor of British birth and Polish parentage. His professional musical debut at the age of 18 was as an organist at St. James Church in London. His career was long and distinguished, particularly in America after 1915, and he was credited with raising the Philadelphia Orchestra to the highest standards during the quarter-century period until 1938. He then remained in America making music independently until 1951 before returning to Europe. Then, at the late age of 80 he founded the American Symphony Orchestra and toured extensively with it. He died at the age of 95 in 1977 (in Nether Wallop). Among cinéastes he is of course well-remembered for his appearance in Walt Disney's movie *Fantasia* made in 1940 and indeed the idea of this musical animation was originally suggested to Disney by Stokowski, and he was its musical advisor. He was involved with other Hollywood movies also, and actually co-starred with Deanna Durbin in *100 Men and a Girl* (1937). Perhaps this is all by the way for present purposes, but it does indicate the liveliness of the man.

Stokowski's name is linked on several occasions with Vaughan Williams and indeed he conducted the very first recording of *Symphony No. 6* in 1949. In a concert programme note he said of that work, that 'this music will take its place with the greatest creations of the masters'. He also took up *Symphony no. 8* in the 1950's.

The present recording of *Symphony No. 4* is apparently the only occasion that Stokowski conducted it in his career, but it comes over very powerfully. I feel sure that most of the Journal's readers know the symphony at least as well as I do, and will know that it has been recorded many times and by many distinguished musical forces (see for example Stephen Connock's full *Discography* and

his *Selective Discography* issue no. 4). One of these recordings was conducted by RVW himself in 1937 and is available on a Dutton label. This one has recently been compared very favourably with a wide range of competitors by Geoff Brown in *The Times* of 25th April 2000.

You might prefer a modern version, for example the excellent one by Slatkin with the Philharmonia, or Handley with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, but there is much to be said for listening to what Stokowski did with the NBC Orchestra when the music was still only eight years old and still fairly shocking. I think it is a terrific performance after listening to it several times. It is true that there are a few places, mainly in the quieter second movement which starts with an ugly pitch wobble, and in which the mechanics of the recording are somewhat intrusive if played at the same volume as the first movement (my guess is that Cala decided to turn up the volume of the original recording for this movement inevitably amplifying imperfections). More than any of RVW's symphonies, this fourth seems to me closer to some contemporary mainstream styles. For example the insistent 3 or 4-note motifs (for example F-E-Gflat-F) in the last two movements seem to me very reminiscent of Shostakovich, although Wilfrid Mellers sees Bach in them. Anyway, Stokowski has them hammered out in a way that somehow emphasises the date of the recording, in the depths of the Second World War. RVW himself denied that the symphony was about the state of the world, but I feel sure that Stokowski had it very much in mind. How could he not, with his Polish and British background?

I think Cala should be thanked for making this available. As a commercial undertaking it must be very marginal, but it is surely important to collectors to have access to the RVW. I am less sure about the inclusion of the Antheil symphony. The booklet with the CD indicates that the coupling of the symphonies by Cala was in fact the perceived war connection, intended by Antheil although denied in the case of RVW. But I'm not complaining - it is still excellent value.

David Betts

## VW Hymns

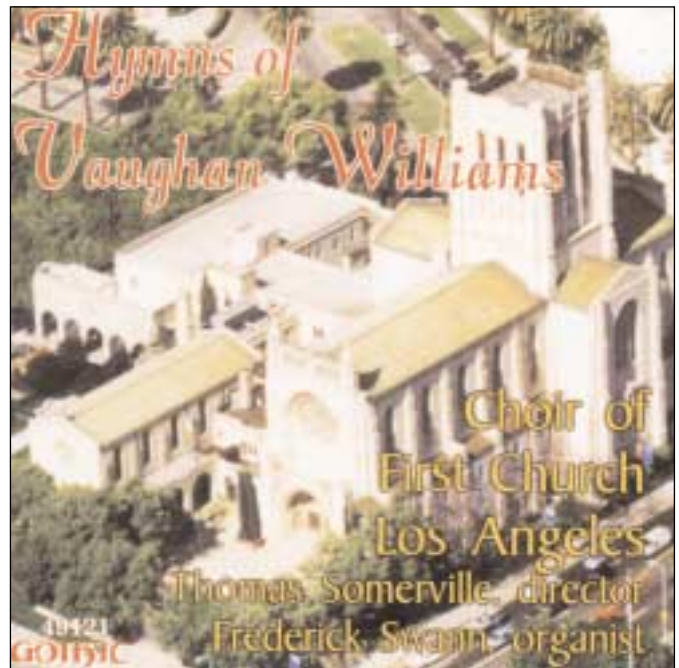
**The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune, Father We Praise Thee, The Golden Sun Lights Up the Sky, Come Down, O love Divine, Almighty Word, O Little Town of Bethlehem, On Christmas Night, 'I Come', The Great Redeemer Cries, At the Name of Jesus, By All Your Saints Still Striving, For all the Saints, Thou Who at Thy First Eucharist, He Who Would Valiant Be, O Jesus Crowned with all Renown, Christ the Fair Glory, Hail Thee, Festival Day! The Great Forerunner of the Morn, Come My Way, My Truth, My Life, God be with You Till we Meet Again, All Hail the Power.**

**Choir of First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, Thomas Somerville on Gothic G 49121 (full price, USA only). Available from Gothic Records Inc. P O Box 6406, Anabaim, CA 92816, USA. Email Gothicrec@aol.com**

Given the importance of hymn music to Vaughan Williams' development, there are relatively few CDs devoted to this genre. The RVW Society was behind two recordings conducted by Owain Arwel Hughes on Carlton Classics 3-36701222 and 01212. There is also a 'VW Hymnal' with the choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, under Richard Marlow on Conifer 75605 51247 2. Part of the problem with hymn-tune compilations is a lack of variety after 70 odd minutes of hymns. The Conifer recording tries to solve this difficulty with VW organ preludes interspersed between the hymns. No organ preludes in this latest collection

from America, although the hymns are sensibly placed for maximum contrast.

The opening *Old Hundredth Psalm Tune* is dramatic, and immediately the excellent diction of the Choir of First Church, Los Angeles, is heard to good effect. The lovely hymn which inspired VW to compose the *Tallis Fantasia* is here and there are many folk based hymns which members will recognise and appreciate. For example, *By All Your Saints Still Striving* will be familiar from its inclusion in the *Six Studies on English Folk-Song*. There is a well-known Christmas group including *On Christmas Night* and *The Truth sent from above*. The Call from the *Five Mystical Songs* is also included although this is spoilt by an absurdly slow tempo. Bunyan's *He Who Would Valiant Be* is much more vital and three of VW's original compositions, including *Down Ampney* are most welcome.



This CD concludes with *All Hail the Power* (Miles Lane) in the arrangement for choir and organ from 1938. At over seven minutes it is an impressive arrangement and brings this impressive CD to a rousing conclusion.

Stephen Connock

## Heritage and Legacy

***Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis* and works by Elgar, Austin, Mackenzie and Stanford. Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Douglas Bostock RLPO LWE RLCD 301.**

This enterprising disc brought out by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra on its own label contains three world premiere recordings and contrasts these with two established classics of English music. RVW's *Fantasia* although finely played with affection, is given a straight forward performance - this work needs more atmosphere, tension and drama to make it truly effective. Elgar's *Enigma Variations* is more successful. Bostock pays careful attention to the details of Elgar's orchestral mastery and this interpretation will not disappoint. However, the remaining three pieces are perhaps the *raison d'être* for this disc. The most interesting is the overture *The Sea Venturers* of 1934 by Frederick Austin - who is best known for his arrangement of *The Beggar's Opera*. Lewis Foreman's excellent notes tell us that he had the seaport of Liverpool in mind when writing this concert overture as much of his earlier life was spent there. It is a lively,

dramatic piece. To some ears - and this is not meant as a disparagement - it may sound like a mixture of Korngold and Bax! The work, surprisingly, had only been heard five times before this recording and it is to be hoped that this unjust neglect will now be rectified. Mackenzie's *Prelude to Colomba* dates from 1883 when his opera was produced at Covent Garden. This short piece sets out the opera's main themes and although they lack contrast it is good to have this example of Mackenzie's art on disc. Stanford's overture to his 1896 opera *Shamus O'Brien* is more successful - it is bright and cheerful in its incorporation of two folksongs and shows Stanford at his best. It achieved some

popularity before 1914, and was recorded - in a cut version - three times by the acoustic process before 1924, but fell from favour in later years. This is its first complete recording.

Lewis Foreman was instrumental in reviving these "unknown" works and his accompanying notes are detailed and fascinating. It is to be hoped that the RLPO will continue to explore and unearth unfamiliar works from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and which deserve to be considered afresh.

*K.D.Mitchell*

# Concert Reviews

## An Australian Riders

With the exception of the Tallis Fantasia, performances of RVW's works, professional or otherwise, in Australia are relatively rare. So it was with great pleasure that I found that my local Conservatorium was staging a performance of *Riders to the sea*, in a program with *Dido and Aeneas*.

Four performances were held from October 12-15, 2000 by the Faculty of Music at the University of Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia. All cast and orchestra members were students, and the faculty's opera specialist, Michael Evans, was responsible for the direction and set design.

One, of course, goes to such a performance with reduced expectations: it is not La Scala, Covent Garden or the Sydney Opera House, but a small group of inexperienced but enthusiastic students, limited in time, money and experience. The venue was a function room not designed for the purpose; the set was very basic, the budget being very small, and the orchestra of twenty-two, the consequence of the faculty being a relatively small one.

Despite these limitations, the overall result was quite excellent. The work flowed, the performers coped admirably with the at-times challenging music and the staging conveyed the melancholy feel of the work suitably. In the central role of Maurya, Emma Haining, a Masters student, sang beautifully, and her performance of the final aria of sadness and acceptance ('They are all gone now') required no excuses of inexperience or venue - it was truly moving as it should be. She was ably supported by Naomi von Senff and Katie Begg as the daughters, Cathleen and Nora, together with eight other singers in the minor roles.

I'm sure that even those members of the small audience - presumably a majority of family members - who did not know the work, were appreciative of the efforts and the quality of the afternoon's entertainment.

*David Barker*

## 'FROM ELGAR TO STOCKHAUSEN AND BACK AGAIN ; 20TH CENTURY MUSIC IN RETROSPECT' (24TH FEBRUARY, 2001)

This Day Course organised by The University of Bradford at The Tasmin Little Music Centre was conducted by Rupert Scott. He divided his survey into four sessions : The Romantic Heritage; New World, New Worlds : Experimentation, Jazz and American Music; War and Peace : Politics and Religious Music in the 20th Century; and a Summary of the subject as a whole. After quoting from the Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis to illustrate VW's use of modes (while Schoenberg and his followers were moving to atonality and serialism) it was heartening later on in the course when Mr Scott devoted the whole of one half of a session to the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Symphonies. His premise, obvious to members of the Society but not to those unfamiliar with the music, was that the Symphonies were composed in the 'wrong' order - the serenity and life-enhancing nature of the Fifth seeming to be more appropriate to the post-Second World War period and the violence and other harsh characteristics of the Fourth and Sixth properly belonging to the war years. But the tutor was clearly impressed with the breadth of VW's vision, describing the music as 'extraordinary' and 'under-rated'. To illustrate this he played recordings of the openings of all three Symphonies and part of the third movement of the Sixth. His other benchmark for this session was the Symphonies of Shostakovich, particularly the Seventh and Eighth, but to this listener it seemed that on the evidence of the extracts played VW's achievement was at least as great as that of the Russian master.

Speaking to another member of the group after the session I was disconcerted but perhaps not wholly surprised that she was quite unfamiliar with VW's major works. The need to spread the message remains a priority

*Michael Nelson*

# Our Seventh AGM

## 14<sup>th</sup> October 2001

**H**ugh Bean will be our guest speaker at this year's AGM, to be held at Charterhouse School, on Sunday 14 October. We have also arranged a performance of the Quintet in D major for horn, clarinet, violin, cello and piano of 1898. The proceedings begin with a tour of the Performing Arts Library, at Denbies Winery, near Dorking. The outline programme is as follows:

12.00	Members meet at Denbies
13.00	Lunch at Denbies
14.30	Tea at Charterhouse
15.00	Annual General Meeting
16.00	Hugh Bean on Playing VW Chamber Music
16.30	Horn Quintet in D major (Voluntary charge of £10.00)
17.00	Refreshments

All members are urged to attend what promises to be another excellent day.

### Three Choirs Festival

#### Brian Kay on 22 August 2001

**B**rian Kay is the RVW Society's speaker at the Three Choirs Festival, over lunch on Wednesday 22 August.

Tickets available from: The Ticket Office, Three Choirs Festival, 9 College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LX, price £10, or the Booking Office tel. 01452 312990





# Ralph Vaughan Williams & Alexander Constantinovich Glazunov

by Rob Furneaux



A good number of articles have, over the years, graced the Vaughan Williams journal comparing the great man with other composers such as Finzi and Holst. It seems, nevertheless, surprising to me that no article has yet been published, or indeed mention made of the striking similarities evident in the music and characters of Vaughan Williams and Glazunov. This article, then, is a modest and tentative attempt to put the record straight.

In the first instance both men are contemporaneous; VW being born in 1872 and Glazunov just a few years earlier in 1865 (although Glazunov was to die somewhat earlier than VW in 1936 - but in this aspect we see a connection with Holst who of course died in 1934.)

Surprisingly, there are a number of cross references between the lives of these seemingly 'chalk and cheese' composers. One, a Russian taught by Rimsky-Korsakov and friend of Tchaikovsky; the other, living more than a thousand miles away, who never visited Russia or the Soviet Union, and whose music seemingly had little affinity with the Russian Nationalists. Certainly at first sight the name Vaughan Williams does not seem to fit easily amongst the likes of Balakirev, Kalinnikov, Liadov and Shnlakov.

Appearances, though, can be deceptive. Glazunov for instance, knew well the likes of Parry and Stanford - he met both on a visit to London in 1907 and was very impressed by their organisational abilities. H. G. Wells was another. There is little doubt that his writings made a great impression on Vaughan Williams as evidenced by the closing passages of the Second Symphony which were, of course, much influenced by his novel 'Tono Bungay' (1909). H.G Wells saw Glazunov

in St. Petersburg (then re-named Petrograd) in September 1920. By this stage, with counter revolution at its height, Glazunov led a much impoverished life style and was forced to live in one room of previously lavish apartments. Wells wrote, 'I was deeply touched by my meeting with him.' Glazunov said to him, 'In England there will be no revolution no? I had many friends in England.'

Wells finishes his account by lamenting: 'I was loath to leave him and he was very loath to let me go.'

Both Vaughan Williams and Glazunov were born in a period when the influence of Brahms and Wagner was at its height. Both men hailed from nations which were eager to establish their own particular brand of music in the face of this onslaught of Germanic Romanticism. In the final analysis VW was able to break free and in doing so became a pivotal element of the English musical renaissance. Glazunov, conversely, decided to fight the German menace from the inside and for much of his career wrote music characterised by its Brahmsian - eclectic content; but, most importantly including an occasional disconcerting grace note in order to firmly establish his inner revolutionary Russianness. The fact that Stravinsky sometimes referred to him as 'Karl Philipp Emanuel Rimsky-Korsakov,' well illustrates the extent to which Glazunov went to obscure his inner revolutionary and nationalistic tendencies.

Glazunov was born in St. Petersburg in the heartland of the Russian composers' belt. Similarly Vaughan Williams, being born in Down Ampney, was also born into a territory rich in native English composers. Eventually, Glazunov was to flee westwards to Paris where he lived the last years of his life. Vaughan Williams also fled, but in his case eastwards to Dorking and thence to the metropolis.

Both Glazunov and Vaughan Williams were consummate and assured masters of orchestration (although Vaughan Williams would occasionally - no doubt on the grounds of modesty - deny this). Glazunov not only wrote superbly for the orchestra on his own behalf, but also orchestrated works by the likes of Mussorgsky and Borodin. Similarly, Roy Douglas went on to orchestrate some of Vaughan Williams works i.e. some of the songs of travel. And, had Elgar not orchestrated Parry's 'Jerusalem' there is no doubt that Douglas would have considered this too. We have no evidence, however, that amongst Glazunov's prodigious output extending to some 109 opus numbers were any re-orchestrations of English Hymns.

The monumental fecundity of each of these composers is also striking. Vaughan Williams, towards the end of a long productive life, continued to regularly compose symphonies right up until his final year. Glazunov's was also, of course, a consummate symphonist writing symphonies of considerable similarity in conception, shape and construction to those of Vaughan Williams. Most notably, almost all of Vaughan Williams symphonies were conceived within a four movement canvas, and interestingly, so too are Glazunov's; with the exception of Symphony Nine, that is, which remains a one movement work. This fact in itself cannot be considered the fault of Glazunov as he died before it could be finished. Fecundity is not necessarily a good thing however: Richard Strauss - no doubt envious at Glazunov's high speed compositional style - once said that, '... he produces music much as a cow produces milk.' I feel sure that none of the Vaughan Williams society members would dare to level such an accusation against VW.

Another striking, and often underestimated facet of nineteenth/twentieth century composers, which seems to have eluded the investigative powers of modern-day musicologists concerns an aspect of these composers which, although at first glance appearing peripheral, in many hermetical ways belies the depth of a given composer's character. Both of these men throughout their most productive compositional years demonstrate conclusively a predilection concerning the eating of desserts and puddings. It is well known that VW had a particular liking for hot puddings, often amply lubricated with custard. A recent study of Glazunov has revealed that he too was particularly partial to desserts, but in his case the leanings were decisively in the direction of trifles, cup cakes and Viennese whirls. No wonder then, that Glazunov's orchestration was inevitably considered masterly. He could, after all, play every instrument in the orchestra, and there is no doubt that the deft orchestration which so much characterises such works as 'The Seasons', 'Raymonda' and 'From the Middle Ages Suite', has its foundations deep within the man's psyche and markedly manifests itself in his predictions for the 'lighter' kind of desserts.

Vaughan Williams, conversely, possessing a stout and stocky frame, and having leanings for more substantial consumables could do little else, then, than to orchestrate in a much more evidently robust, even non-nonsense style largely eschewing the likes of glockenspiel, tambourine, and celeste, which, by contrast in Glazunov's case was meat and drink in his compositional style. And, even though Vaughan Williams

studied with Ravel in the early years of the century, the Ravellian style of orchestration made only modest in-roads into his orchestrational style. It can thus be logically asserted that it was Vaughan Williams' consuming habits which prevented a more thorough ingestion of Ravel's teachings. Unfortunately, my researches into the background of Ravel have failed to unearth his taste in desserts, but there seems little doubt that fairy cakes

must have crept into the great man's diet on regular occasions.

So there you have it; two great composers from two great nations, with, as you have seen, many notable similarities. Besides the likes of Glazunov, there are other composers who bear striking resemblance in output and lifestyle to VW. Recent researches have highlighted several other European composers whose lives seem to

parallel the life of the great man. In the next of my articles for the journal I will embark upon an exhaustive study of the obvious and striking similarities to be observed between Vaughan Williams and the great Danish composer Buxtehude.

Rob Furneaux

(article originally intended for publication on April 1st)

# Some Notes on A Pastoral Symphony

By Jeffrey Aldridge

James Day, in his thoughtful and sympathetic book on the composer, says this with reference to RVW's A Pastoral Symphony: "... it is precisely the classical dramatic symphonic 'contrast or sense of progression' that Vaughan Williams was eschewing here in favour of a quietly revolutionary attitude to form, harmony and symphonic ethos .... the themes unfold from one another in a kind of purposeful drift, changing function and relationship as they do so."

This is fair and just, but needs spelling out in order to appreciate more fully the extent of RVW's quiet revolution in this work. In this essay I intend to look solely at the composer's use of his thematic material and to show that the themes do more than "unfold from one another"; indeed, the same thematic material reappears in all four movements, sometimes with only minimal alterations. The effect of this is, of course, to unify and structure the work, to make it a true symphony and not just an impressionistic tone poem. Strangely, though, this has not been noticed or detailed by commentators. Indeed, Dickinson's earliest writings on the symphony state the opposite: "There is no thematic connection between the movements." (A.E.F. Dickinson *An Introduction to the Music of R Vaughan Williams* OUP 1928) Certainly his later essay (Vaughan Williams Faber and Faber 1963) stresses the pentatonic nature of the thematic material but still

stops short of linking it into a whole. Michael Kennedy, in his invaluable work (*The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* Clarendon Press, 2nd edition 1980) makes the following point that I wish to develop in the rest of this essay: "It is the achievement of Vaughan Williams that he developed for himself a symphonic style based not on tonic- and-dominant sonata form but on his hard-won flexibility in the handling of melody itself .. erecting large-scale musical structures without what VW once described as 'the common stock of musical device', in other words formal development sections, bridge passages and the like ... There are few examples of sequences or diminutions; instead there is a free evolution of one tune from another, a process of regeneration, like streams flowing into each other, coalescing and going on their way."

It is precisely this "handling of melody itself" that I wish to examine in this essay. What follows contains several musical examples; I find it impossible to present the argument without including them, though I try to confine myself to single lines throughout.

The work opens with an undulating figure on the woodwind, underneath which the cellos, basses and harp sing this figure using the notes GAD4 (here called **A1**):



Immediately this is answered by the solo violin with a melody (**A2**) which is practically the first half of **A1** reversed - GDED becomes DCDG.



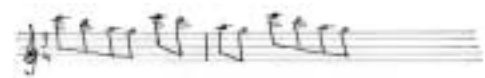
A little later it appears in an elaborated form but recognisably the same melodic idea:



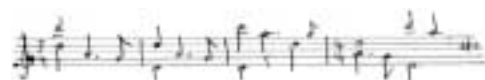
At one bar before E the notes (minus the G) become transmogrified thus (**A3**):



At this point, in order to demonstrate that this is no mere accidental repeat of the use of these notes, I want to move forward to near the end of the symphony where, three bars before M in the last movement, we find this figure using all four notes:



And one bar after letter P, this appears, no fewer than five times:



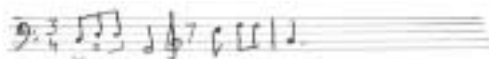
It might be argued here that this is a



case of the composer returning at the end of the work to the place he started (as RVW does in the 4th and 5th symphonies, for instance, and nearly does in the 9th) but it is not an obvious repeat of the opening phrase (GADED). Moreover, such an argument would not explain the appearance of the motif in the middle movements but appearance there certainly is. Here, for instance, is the horn melody (A4) that opens the slow movement. It uses the same four notes as the opening motif once more, but this time in the order 1243:



The third movement's opening motif again makes use of the opening material, but this time it is as a variant of the solo violin figure (A2), so that the notes DCDG of the first movement become CDDG here:

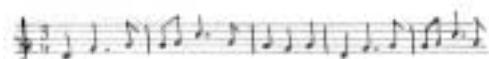


The examples are piling up. It is clear that motif A appears in various guises throughout the work. It would be startling, perhaps, if the same could be said for any other motifs. However, that is precisely what happens and it is this that casts a further light on the composer's method with this work.

Consider this tune that first appears at letter D in the first movement; note, in particular, the first five notes (B1):



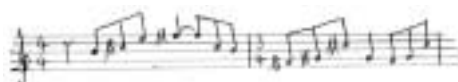
Compare this, the main tune from the last movement (B2), and note that, although it is rhythmically very different, the first five notes are identical:



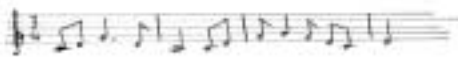
It is as if the composer were looking at the same landscape (if we are going to keep the 'pastoral' associations) with changed eyes. The slow processional of the fourth

movement, with its Holstian and Elgarian funeral-march echoes, demonstrates a very different mood from that of the first encounter with the melody. We can begin to see *how* the symphony is meant to work on us, not just *that* it does. John Hamilton, in a conversation, talked about the "real anguish" in this symphony. I think the transformation of this tune, from a mood of simple lyricism in the first movement to one of solemn lament in the last, is one of the gauges by which this anguish is detected.

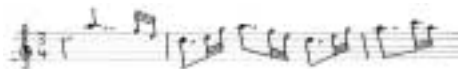
But it is not the only one. The links between the movements are not yet complete. Three bars after letter E in the first movement, the oboe plays this figure (C1). Again, note the opening notes:



Once again, compare this figure with the tune that appears in the second movement, two bars after letter B (C2); once again, the opening notes are the same:



Yet again, the flute figure that seems to appear in a rather inconsequential way in the third movement (four bars before letter C) is made of the same stuff (C3):

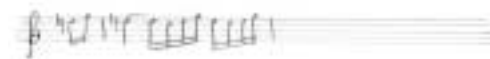


These three examples show very different manifestations arising from these four notes. I shall reserve consideration of their appearance in the final movement until later.

There is one further link, perhaps the most significant of all. The figure is also heard near the beginning of the fourth movement of the London Symphony though it slips by almost unnoticed at first. One bar after letter B in the first movement, this figure (D) appears, little more than a doodle, a Vaughan Williams-y cadence perhaps but no more:



There are echoes of it, though, a few bars later, four bars after letter C:



And again, one bar before the first appearance of A3:



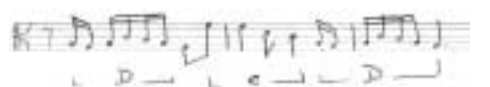
And similarly, two bars before letter F:



Incidentally, despite what Michael Kennedy says, I would argue that there is a development section at this point in the first movement, involving more than the violin variation on theme A; B and C also make appearances here in counterpoint with A. To return, however, to the motif to which I have ascribed the letter D. In the second movement, its function is the same as in the first; it is a link, a bridge between one episode and the next. So the famous trumpet solo is preceded by this:



The repeat of the trumpet 'Last Post' on the horn (combined, of course, with the original opening melody A4 now played on the clarinet) is similarly preceded by a slightly elaborated version of D. This figure is gaining in significance. What happens to it in the third movement though, is truly startling.



Note that what I have termed motif D is here immediately followed by motif C in its downward sequence. Because the music is so fast and delicate here, it is easy to miss this highly significant feature of the

symphony. Vaughan Williams underlines the link, however, by repeating C more slowly on the flute.

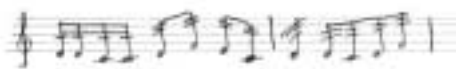


These are the themes that dominate this beautiful fleet-footed coda to the scherzo. When one hears this section, it is difficult not to be enchanted by it but it is possible also to be puzzled to understand what it is doing there, this *presto* scamper which commentator after commentator refers to as 'fairy-like'. James Day (op.cit.) does not like the association: "If this is a dance, it is surely a dance of the elements rather than the ballet of oafs and fairies from which it apparently evolved." Dickinson in his later book says: If this was a ballet once, it may be surmised that here one party, presumably the oaf group, was sent packing. "Two things interest me here: the origins of the section and its implications for the symphony. Indeed if this were taken from a would-be ballet, the *presto* section obviously is about the fairies. Is it therefore reasonable to assume that what Kennedy justifiably calls the movement's "folk-song-parody trio" is the music of the oafs? The heavy orchestration, the galumphing rhythm, the fact that this is the *only* tune in the symphony that could be taken for a folk song make this a gargantuan Mock Morris indeed. I have to confess myself baffled by Simon Heffer's comment on this tune (Vaughan Williams Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2000): "...it is a sophisticated, grand tune redolent of a Spanish dance that lifts the whole work." I cannot see this dance performed in the plazas of Seville.

The balletic origins – if so they be – do have another implication: the idea of the ballet must have preceded, or at least been contemporaneous with, the concept of the symphony. This gives an added insight into VW's composing technique, since it implies that figure **D** (plus **C**?) could well have formed itself into its 'fairy' guise before its 'cadence' role of the first two movements. This in turn adds to the motif's significance; it obviously meant something to the composer in the overall scheme of the symphony. In the absence of any

access to VW's papers and sketches, however, this can only remain a speculation.

Let us now look at the role of motif **D** in the fourth movement. After the soprano solo that opens the movement, the strings hint at what is to become the slow processional that is **B2**. The processional is played twice before there is a pause. Then this follows:



It is of course figure **D** this time *agitato* and *animato*, and this time used not as a cadence but as an introduction to what I will still (*pace* Kennedy) call the development section. Fragments of the soprano's melody alternate with fragments of the processional, screwing up the tension until, after another reference to **D**, brass and woodwind reintroduce motif **C**, leaving out the third note in the sequence when rising, but bringing it in when descending.



This leads directly into the great unison outburst of the soprano melody on woodwind and strings – *the* moment of real anguish in the symphony – which, as it calms, unites **A3** and the processional **B2** to lead us into the work's closing bars.

Those closing bars are notable especially for the unbarred soprano melody, of course. It is not insignificant that it shares a mood, certainly, and at times a similarity in outline with the trumpet's 'Last Post' of the second movement. They are complementary. That it is a woman's voice - left to mourn but also to accept - adds a hope of healing and renewal to the sense of loss.

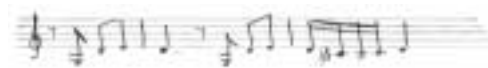
A symphony is a piece of music; it must work as a piece of music. Yet Vaughan Williams gave it a title, even though some argued against it, and we must assume that he had his reasons. We know that it means more than rolling about in a field or looking over a gate. In the same way that the sea in the first symphony

stands for more than just salt water, and London in the second stands for more than a large collection of streets and houses in the south-east of England, so 'Pastoral' is more than a Cotswold or Shropshire landscape (the two most common associations, it seems). The work's origins are now well-established; RVW was serving in Flanders when the symphony was stirring. The Great War and its consequences suffuse the work, giving it its notes of anguish and loss.

I began by making reference to James Day's excellent book on Vaughan Williams, and I return to him now. "The music *seems* to meander. In actual fact it does nothing of the kind. The pattern is balanced and satisfying; the themes evolve from the basic cells heard right at the start; and the course of the music is perfectly logical... The inner logic is felt rather than analytically perceived. Can it be analytically demonstrated? Does indeed it have to be?" (James Day op.cit. p259)

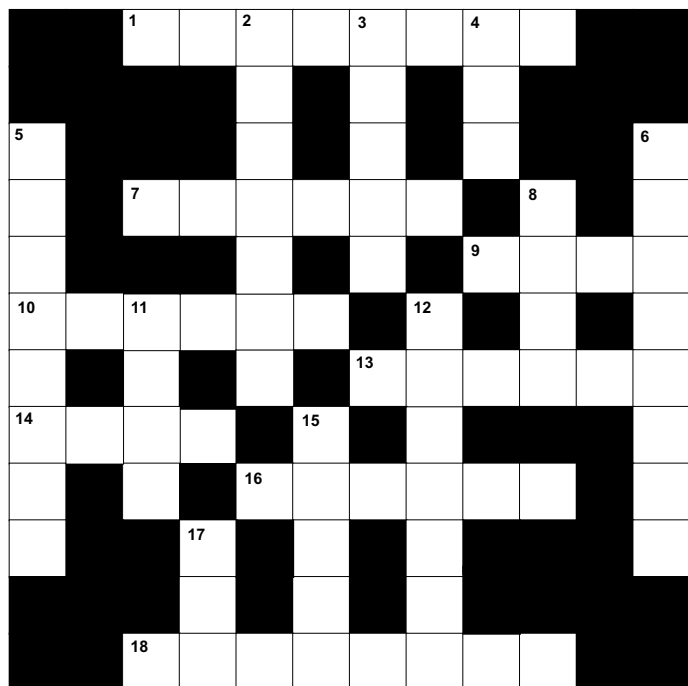
I hope that these notes have helped towards such a demonstration. In the paragraph following the one just quoted, Day refers to the analytical work of Hans Keller and to the analyses of the Fifth Symphony by Hugh Ottaway and the Sixth by Deryck Cooke, acknowledging that these works lend themselves to such scrutiny. I hope that what I have written begins to demonstrate that the same can be said of the Pastoral Symphony.

P. S. Two years after the first performance of the Pastoral Symphony, Vaughan Williams produced the Toccata Marziale (note the adjective) for Military Band. Is it significant that the work anticipates the 'war-like' Sixth Symphony and that its opening motif uses the same notes as the opening of the Pastoral? Here it is; I leave it to you to consider any ramifications.



Jeffrey Aldridge  
Midlothian

RVW Crossword No. 7 by Michael Gainsford



**The Society is on the Internet**

Those members with computers and access to the internet will be pleased to know that The RVW Society now has its own web site which can be accessed on [www.rvwsociety.com](http://www.rvwsociety.com)

The site is financed by the Society and has two main aims. Firstly, to publicise the Society and encourage new members. As well as details about the composer and the Society itself, there is an on-line membership application form which many, particularly those living abroad, should find more convenient. David Betts, the membership secretary has already identified this avenue as an important source of new members. Secondly, it provides up to date information about forthcoming VW concerts both in the U.K. and abroad and news about Society and other activities relating to the composer and his music.

The site was created and is maintained by member, Tad Kasa and myself.

I hope you will take the opportunity to look at the site and recommend it to others. Any suggestions or items of news for inclusion on the site can be E-mailed to me [robinbarber@doctors.org.uk](mailto:robinbarber@doctors.org.uk).

*Robin Barber, Vice Chairman*

Across:

1. Magician in The Poisoned Kiss (8)
7. Cradle Song set by RVW in 1928 (6)
9. Unaccompanied singer, as in Twilight People (4)
10. Fantasia was based on Why fumeth in spite? by this composer (6)
13. Seemingly fleshy companion to the Crane in the Miraculous Harvest of 1920 (6)
14. Just the much land in folk song noted by RVW in Coombe Bisset (4)
16. He wrote the words used in item 3 of Hodie (6)
18. Hero of Sir John in Love (8)

Down:

2. Le \*\*\*\*\*, French folk song arrangd in 1952 (7)
3. The eagle who gave the first performance of the D flat Romance, in 1954 (5)
4. Visited by RVW in 1954 (1,1,1)
5. The constable s sister in Hugh the Drover (4,4)
6. Disturbed loony pal who fought with Pilgrim in Act 1 Scene 2 of Pilgrim's Progress (8)
8. Direction to RVW s birthplace (4)
11. Alauda Avenis climbing (4)
12. Double trio become this in 1938 (7)
15. Rich man looks as if he plunges into the water in RVW s favourite folk song (5)
17. Behold this itself! (3)

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