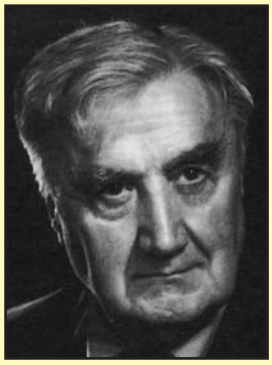

Journal of the
RVW
Society

No.32 February 2005

EDITOR
William Hedley
(details on page 28)

Honour for Michael Kennedy

As the highlight of the RVW Society's tenth anniversary celebrations, Michael Kennedy was presented with our International Medal of Honour for his remarkable contribution to Vaughan Williams's music over more than 50 years.

The ceremony took place at the Royal College of Music on 10th October 2004, following our AGM. Stephen Connock, presenting the Award – a bronze relief of the composer by David McFall- said:

> *"Michael's unique insight into Vaughan Williams's music is shown in his wonderful 1964 book The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams. He writes with absolute objectivity, but also with love for the man and his music".*

Stephen Connock went on to describe Michael's other notable achievements of worth for English music, including his books on Elgar, Walton, Sir Adrian Boult and Sir John Barbirolli. His was a unique contribution – no one was more worthy of our Award.

Michael Kennedy was clearly moved by the presentation and warmly thanked everyone in the Society for the Award. Earlier, as our keynote speaker at the AGM, he had generously praised the Society for achieving its 1,000th member and for stimulating a superb range of new recordings of Vaughan Williams's music. He issued a fresh challenge to the Society as we look forward to 2008:

> *"My message to you is that somehow the Society must direct its efforts to persuading the managements and conductors of our major orchestras to perform the symphonies, choral works and concertos of Vaughan Williams. I don't know how you will do it, but a Society which has achieved so much in a decade will surely find a way."*

The complete text of Michael Kennedy's speech is reproduced inside.(see page 3)

Healthy Finances
Earlier in the AGM itself, David Betts had shown that our membership in the year had grown to 709. John Francis reported on our healthy financial position and suggested the time might be right for the Society to launch a dedicated fund for a special project. High up on the list of ideas to be explored was creating our own record company, perhaps using Albion as the brand name. The Trustees would be considering such ideas during 2005.

Towards 2008
With the 50th anniversary of Vaughan Williams's death approaching in 2008, the Society will be concentrating its efforts on this milestone. We will be contacting orchestras, choral societies, chamber groups and operatic companies to ensure everyone makes a worthy contribution to the celebrations throughout 2008.

In this issue...

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Stephen Connock presented the RVW Society's International Medal of Honour to Michael Kennedy

Joyce Kennedy wasn't forgotten

Members enjoyed a superb recital by Stephen Varcoe and Julius Drake

Stephen Varcoe greets Ursula after the concert

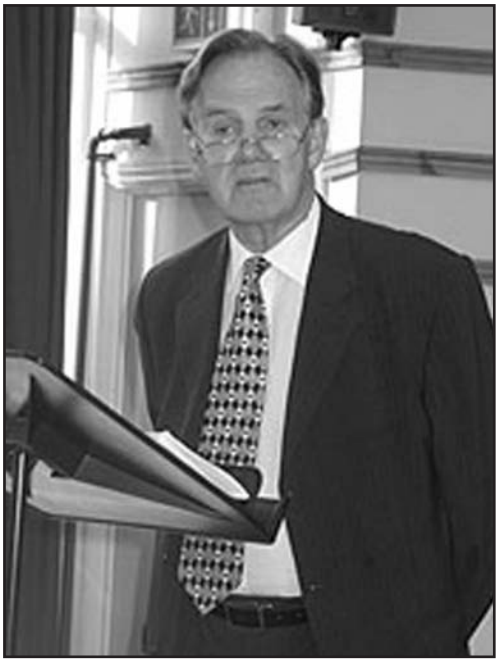
Ursula and Michael Kennedy

Robin Barber, Ursula, Cynthia Cooper, Stephen Connock

The keynote speaker at the 10th Anniversary AGM was

MICHAEL KENNEDY

The full text of his address is reproduced here.



May I first congratulate the Society on its tenth anniversary. It is an honour to be its vice-president. So well established is the Society that it seems to have been with us much longer than ten years. We all owe an immense debt to Stephen Connock and his closest colleagues for the amount of time, energy, inspiration and sheer hard work they have put into the Society. In particular we should thank them for the splendid series of recordings which have appeared under Society auspices, most notably the excellent CDs of the opera *The Poisoned Kiss* and the original version of *A London Symphony*. And there are more to come. Then there have been the books – Ursula Vaughan Williams's *Collected Poems*, her autobiography and the book of pictures of Vaughan Williams. These are permanent and invaluable contributions to all who share an interest in the life and associations of the great composer to whose memory the Society is dedicated. There have also been social gatherings and exhibitions which enriched us all with good fellowship and ineffaceable memories.

I must also congratulate the Society on achieving its 1000th membership. That is good going, especially when one remembers that the Elgar Society, which has been going for 53 years, has a membership of only 2,000-plus. But here I must interject a sour note. What is it about the British that they don't join societies? When you think that *The Poisoned Kiss* recording has sold over 3,000 copies, why has this Society only 1,000 members? When you think of the number of Elgar performances and recordings, why do only 2,000-odd people join the Elgar Society? I don't know the answer, but it is a puzzle and somehow I don't think we should be satisfied until both Societies have 10,000 members.

The time is rapidly approaching, too, when virtually all Vaughan Williams's music will be available on disc. What will the Society find to do then in its declared aim of promoting understanding and appreciation of his works? Somehow, it seems to me, we have to spread the gospel of his music to more of today's performers. Members of my generation were very lucky. We had the composer himself as a focal-point. We had conductors like Boult, Barbirolli, Sargent, Raybould, Groves, Meredith Davies, David Willcocks and others who all believed in his music and put it in their programmes in Britain and abroad.

There is nothing like that today. We have Richard Hickox, of course, and long may he flourish. Sir Andrew Davis works mainly outside Britain and in the opera house. Sir Colin Davis is not a Vaughan Williams man. Most of our orchestras have non-British conductors, an exception being the Hallé. But Mark Elder is not a V.W. devotee – at least, not yet. I'm working on that. The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic has an American conductor, just as the BBC Symphony Orchestra has. The BBC Philharmonic has a Russian conductor and chief guest conductor. So has the BBC Scottish. At Birmingham the Finnish conductor does show some interest in Vaughan Williams. The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra has an American conductor. There seem to be very few British conductors willing to fly V.W.'s flag. I don't think you will find Sir Simon Rattle performing Vaughan Williams symphonies with the Berlin Philharmonic. In fact I doubt if they have played a note of his music since Barbirolli's decade as a guest conductor in the 1960s. How much V.W. does Daniel Harding know? The London Philharmonic's and the Philharmonia Orchestra's conductors are not British, so there is little British music in their programmes. Nor do the Proms set the sort of example that these concerts followed in the days of Henry Wood and Malcolm Sargent. Looking at the big international names, I ask if Mariss Jansons knows any of Vaughan Williams's music. Does Riccardo Chailly? Does Valery Gergiev? V.W. lacks a champion abroad of the quality of Leopold Stokowski, whose recently issued 1958 performance of the *Ninth Symphony* is indispensable.

Yes, I know the symphonies have been recorded by André Previn. Does he include them in concert programmes? They have been all recorded by Bernard Haitink. Will he programme them in Dresden? In both cases, I fear the answer will be no, or not very often. I don't altogether blame the conductors. It is the concert administrators who are timid – and, of course, they will plead public apathy and economic considerations. Preparing this talk, I asked Oxford University Press for figures of Vaughan Williams performances at home and abroad in 1994, when the Society was formed, and 2003. There were 442 performances overseas in 1994 compared with 375 in 2003. The 442 comprised 308 in the United States, 66 in Europe and 68 elsewhere. In the UK and Ireland, the 1994 figure was 329 compared with 293 in 2003. The combined totals were 771 in 1994 and 668 in 2003. OUP points out that it may be that 2003 was low compared with the eight years 1995-2002 for which complete figures are not obtainable. And OUP do not publish works such as the *Tallis Fantasia*, *Sea* and *London Symphonies*, *On Wenlock Edge*, and many songs and hymns which may well increase substantially the figures given above. OUP's figures are of works available on hire and do not take account of performances that used material available on sale. So the picture that emerges could well be of an increase in the last ten years.

On the whole we can't complain about Radio 3. Well, I do complain about Radio 3, especially its dumbed-down style of presentation, but it does broadcast quite a lot of Vaughan Williams and so does Classic FM, although the latter, of course, relies wholly on recordings. The down-grading, or dumbing-down, of the BBC began in Vaughan Williams's lifetime. Together with Michael Tippett, Laurence Olivier and T. S. Eliot, he was part of a delegation that pleaded with the Corporation not to dismantle the Third Programme. But they failed and it became first Network 3, then the Music Programme and now Radio 3, with a little bit more of high culture chipped away at each transformation.

Some years ago there was a very stimulating talk or lecture by the composer Alexander Goehr when he was still Cambridge Professor of Music. He put forward a theory that the audience for music would be divided into two groups – the concert-hall audience who listened mainly, and perhaps only, to the established classics; and the audience at home who would be much more adventurous and exploratory but would listen almost exclusively to recordings. The inevitable consequence of this situation would be that there would be a whole swathe of composers whose music would exist only on recordings for their discriminating admirers. We have already seen this happening with some British composers. How often do you hear a Bax symphony in the concert-hall? Yet there is more than one recorded cycle of his seven symphonies. The same could be said of Moeran, Rawsthorne and several others. This is all very well in its way, and it is far better, of course, than total neglect, but music is written to be performed to a live audience in a concert-hall. I do not want Vaughan Williams to be a listen-at-home composer. It is grand to listen to *A Sea Symphony* in one's sitting-room, but it is as nothing compared with sitting in, say, Leeds Town Hall with hundreds of other folk and being swept up in this communal experience.

My message to you, therefore, is that somehow the Society must direct its efforts to persuading the managements and conductors of our major orchestras to perform the symphonies and choral works and concertos of Vaughan Williams. I don't know how you will do it, but a society which has achieved so much in a decade will surely find the way. The Society's Journal has maintained a very high and scholarly standard, but I do sometimes feel that all those in-depth articles, splendid as they are, are preaching to the converted. Somehow you must, through its pages, make more converts. Perhaps you might have to link with other journals, not just in this country, to get the message across. I don't know how it must be done but I do know it must be done somehow.

Mention of the BBC prompts me to wonder how many performances of Vaughan Williams's music conducted by the composer survive in its archives or in private collections. Somewhere, one prays, there might be *A London Symphony*, a *Tallis Fantasia* (his interpretation really was something special), the first performance of *Hodie*, and the *Sixth Symphony* which I heard broadcast from (I think) a Gloucester Festival in about 1950 when his tempo for the start of the first movement was as startling as the tempi in his famous HMV recording of the *Fourth*. There is a recording of the *Fifth Symphony* said to be conducted by V.W., but doubts have been cast on its authenticity. Then there are his broadcast talks on Bach, Holst, Elgar, film music, and other topics. If these are preserved – and surely they must have been, for one occasionally hears brief extracts – perhaps the BBC and the Society could collaborate on a CD.

In his introductory remarks at this meeting, Mr Connock mentioned the 50th anniversary of V.W.'s death in 2008. This made me reflect that there are not many people still alive who could claim to have known him well – Ursula, of course, Roy Douglas, Simona Pakenham, Robert Armstrong, David Willcocks, Eva Hornstein and myself. Speaking for myself, I could never think of him as an old man. True, in his last years he was white-haired, a bit unsteady on his feet and deaf, but his blue eyes were bright, his conversation lively and full of humour and gossip and he was keenly interested in all the issues of the day, not only musical. He and Ursula went to plays, films, concerts, operas and exhibitions in a schedule that would wear out the rest of us. Whether or not he liked a new piece of music, he went to hear it. His encouragement of young composers just by the fact of his presence at a performance was immense and a wonderful example for them to follow. The letters he wrote to me, some of which are published, show how young in heart and spirit he remained to the end.

Friendly and hospitable as he was, one was in awe of him. Staying with him at Hanover Terrace, as he poured a liqueur over one's ice-cream saying "This makes it much better", one suddenly thought: "This is the man who wrote the *Tallis Fantasia* and *A Sea Symphony* and here he is pouring kirsch on my sweet!" But he would have laughed at such an attitude. He referred to the *Tallis* as "that old thing"! Yet, sitting in the drawing-room with him later, one was conscious that there were moments when he withdrew into his own kingdom of the imagination. I suspect there was always music going on in his mind. I remember waking early one morning and hearing him playing the piano. This was just after the first performance of the *Ninth Symphony*. At breakfast I asked him what he had been playing. "Oh, just doodling", he replied. "I dreamed that I'd got a new tune which would fit into the symphony, but I couldn't get it when I woke up so it was probably no good". A few weeks later we went to *Sir John in Love* at Sadler's Wells and in the taxi going back to Hanover Terrace, he looked very serious and withdrawn. Had he not liked the performance, I wondered? "Oh no, it was excellent. I was just thinking that I don't think I need to revise it again". On another occasion at Sadler's Wells we went to Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, which was then not as often performed as it is today. He claimed never to have seen it. My first wife sat next to him and after Tatyana's Letter Song, he said to her: "So that's the famous Letter Song. Too long." He was very fond of eating at a certain steak house and we were finishing our meal when a group of music students came in who recognised him and said "Good evening". He asked where they had been. "Oh, only to *Madame Butterfly*", was the reply The "only" riled him. "I'm not much of a Puccini man", he said, "but let me say that when you can write an opera as effective, moving and well constructed as Butterfly, then you can say 'only'". But he said it without pomposity. After all, this was the man who had a tradition that before conducting the *St Matthew Passion* at the Leith Hill Festival each year, he and the tenor Eric Greene should tell each other a new bawdy story.

At a Cheltenham Festival, in the Town Hall club where everyone gathered for drinks and talk after the concert, he met an old friend who had been an actor in Sir Frank Benson's Shakespeare company at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1913 when V.W. wrote incidental music for the plays. I wish I could remember the tales they told that evening, but I know it ended with them singing music-hall songs together. I often wonder what he would have thought of me for writing a book on Mahler. He may not have liked Mahler's music, but I think he knew more of it than he would admit. He once asked his publisher, Alan Frank, to send him a score of the *Resurrection Symphony*. "You'll not find much 'wrong-note' music in that", Alan said. "No", V.W. replied, "I suspect there'll be all too many right notes".

The other day I was looking through some old papers and came across a poem I had copied from, I think, Punch in September 1958, a month after V.W. died. I thought Society members might like it. I don't know who wrote it, perhaps Bernard Hollowood. Here it is:

When for Vaughan Williams on the day he died
The trumpets sounded on the other side,
The older masters waiting for him frowned
To hear them blow an unfamiliar sound.
A sound exciting and sublime to hear
Yet falling strangely on the classic ear.
"What's this new music that the heavenly choir",
They asked, "is adding to its repertoire?"
Then Henry Purcell lifted up his voice.
"Now", said he, "we have reason to rejoice.
Once more we welcome after all too long
The glorious strains of native English song".

(Some of this talk was delivered from notes, and I have reconstructed it for the Journal as accurately as I can recall. It also would seem that there are more overseas performance of Vaughan Williams's music today than I suggested, but still not nearly enough and I want to see it taken up more widely by foreign conductors. M.K.)

Three Glorious Johns

by Roger Savage

If you had a friend Simon who was a bit slow on the uptake, I'm sure you'd be tempted to call him Simple Simon. If you had a friend Peter who was prone to melancholy, you'd find it hard not to think of him as Blue Peter. If your friend Luke managed to pull something off with great sangfroid, he'd pretty soon be Cool-Hand Luke. The nicknames are out there ready-made; you only have to borrow them.

It was the same with Vaughan Williams and John Barbirolli. Wanting to show his admiration for the conductor, R.V.W. dubbed him Glorious John. It was a nickname lurking at the back of his mind, waiting to be applied. I suspect, though, that not many folk at the time realised this, and that still fewer do now, unless they've done a bit of sleuthing in search of previous Glorious Johns.

John Dryden by Godfrey Kneller

Sleuthing starts best, as so often, with a clue dropped by Ursula Vaughan Williams in her life of her husband. R.V.W., she says, called Barbirolli Glorious John because 'there was no one more worthy to inherit Dryden's adjective'. Dryden's adjective? Dryden was the poet, playwright and critic who dominated the London literary scene in the later seventeenth century; but as far as I know, he didn't call any John his acquaintance 'glorious', and although his own Christian name was John, he was too much of a gentleman to apply the adjective to himself. Still, one of Dryden's admirers did write an elegy after his death which prophesied a 'glorious reward' in the afterlife for his 'glorious acts'; and that gets us a bit closer. Who later would have known about, and maybe drawn on, a tribute like that? Well, for one, the editor of the complete Dryden in 18 volumes that came out in 1808, Sir Walter Scott. Scott quoted from Dryden admiringly all his life; so he may well have remembered the adjective in question every now and then. And this is probably how it was that a 'glorious' John Dryden gets into the conversation so often in *The Pirate*, Scott's 'Waverley' novel of 1821.

Set around 1690 in Orkney and Shetland (Shetland mainly), *The Pirate* thrives on opposites: well-made plot and romantic atmosphere; things local and things from over the water; glamorous Nordic folklore (laid on quite thick) and an up-to-date rationalism that's keen to question it. A minor character who straddles these opposites is Claud Halcro, a garrulous old fellow who is fiddler, poet, singer, in fact an all-purpose Shetland bard. Though the amiable Halcro is very much part of the island community, he thinks his greatest claim to fame is that he once spent some time far away south in London, where he played his fiddle in a theatre band, scribbled verses, made it with his friend Tim Thimblethwaite to the fringes of the inner circle of city wits, and on one famous occasion at the wits' favourite coffee-house was actually introduced to John Dryden! The great man made a polite remark about some poems of Halcro's he'd been shown, and for ever after he was 'Glorious John' to Halcro: quoted on every possible occasion and recalled ramblingly whenever the conversation allowed. As here, for instance. This is part of a big set-piece scene at a Midsummer Eve party on Shetland. Halcro is about to give a young friend of his a history (doubtless highly inconsequential) of the London coffee-houses; but the friend, who has reasons of his own for wanting to keep the conversation going, is determined to draw him back to what they both know is the kernel of the matter:

'Nay, but, my dear Master Halcro,' said his hearer, somewhat impatiently, 'I am desirous to hear of your meeting with Dryden.' 'What, with glorious John? – true – ay — where was I? At the Wits' Coffeehouse – Well, in at the door we got – the waiters, and so forth, staring at me; for as to Thimblethwaite, honest fellow, his was a well-known face. – I can tell you a story about that' –'Nay, but John Dryden,' said Mordaunt, in a tone that deprecated further digression. 'Ay, ay, glorious John – where was I? – Well as we stood close by the bar, where one fellow sat grinding of coffee, and another putting up tobacco into penny parcels – a pipe and a dish cost just one penny then — and there it was I had my first peep of him…

There, then, is 'Dryden's adjective', fixed and waiting to be 'inherited'.

Vaughan Williams knew Scott's novels, literally from his mother's knee: she used to read them aloud to her children in the nursery. And he didn't lose his taste for them. (Holidaying on Ischia almost eighty years later for instance, he read from one of them to his wife while they sat by the fire and she sewed.) Did he have a special fondness among them for *The Pirate*? It's possible he did. On one level, the evocation of life in a remote island community that is central to the novel may have appealed especially to the composer of *Riders to the Sea*. On quite a different one, the last two chapters of the book reveal (rather creakingly) that fully four of its seven principal characters have, or are just about to acquire, a name that's not even hinted at in the previous forty chapters; and the name is 'Vaughan'… But, soft spot or no, Ursula Vaughan Williams's clue makes it clear that Claud Halcro from *The Pirate* was in the frame when her husband first called Barbirolli Glorious John.

John Murray the Second by H. W. Pickersgill

Those exact words apart, however, the fit between Halcro-on-Dryden and Vaughan-Williams-on-Barbirolli isn't a particularly good one, which suggests that there may have been an intervening Glorious John in the case. Enter on cue George Borrow, a young Norfolk writer who in the 1820s was trying desperately to set himself up in London as a metropolitan man of letters. Like thousands of other people in Britain and elsewhere, Borrow at this time was reading and relishing the 'Waverley' novels. (It was an age when Scott's presence could be felt all the way from large operas like *Lucia di Lammermoor* to small dogs like the *Dandie Dinmont*.) Borrow loathed Scott's politics but considered him quite as fine a storyteller as Homer, believed that he was the only novelist

of the age whose books could bear a second reading, and had an eye for lesser writers' 'pilferings' from him. And this turns out to be relevant to the succession of Glorious Johns.

Doubtless Borrow read *The Pirate*, which came out when he was eighteen. Did he know it, and especially our Claud Halcro, especially well? It's likely, I think. In the novel, Halcro is involved in several atmospheric scenes which show that he's poetically bilingual in Old Norse and English; and Borrow could well have been struck by him as something of a role-model, since one of Borrow's big projects in the '20s was to find a major London publisher who would take his own English versions of traditional Danish ballads, and of things from Old Welsh too. He tried many London publishing houses, among them that of Lord Byron's publisher, the celebrated John Murray the Second. 25 years later, when Borrow had found his literary feet and Murray had indeed published two books of his, he looked back to that earlier time, and his tribute to his own particular publishing John sounds distinctly Halcro-esque:

> I had often heard of one Glorious John, who lived at the western end of the town; on consulting Taggart, he told me that it was possible that Glorious John would publish my ballads and Ab Gwilym, that is, said he, taking a pinch of snuff, provided you can see him; so I went to the house where Glorious John resided, and a glorious house it was, but I could not see Glorious John. I called a dozen times, but I never could see Glorious John. Twenty years after, by the greatest chance in the world, I saw Glorious John, and sure enough Glorious John published my books. But they were different books from the first; I never offered my ballads or Ab Gwilym to Glorious John.
> Glorious John was no snuff-taker. He asked me to dinner, and treated me with superb Rhenish wine. Glorious John is now gone to his rest, but what was I going to say? the world will never forget Glorious John.

The little irrelevancies, the repetition of 'Glorious John', the 'What was I going to say?' echoing Halcro's catch-phrase of 'Where was I?': Borrow shows that he too can pilfer effectively from Scott.

Vaughan Williams of course would call such pilfering 'cribbing' and thoroughly approve of it; and it's pretty clear than his own Glorious John is cribbed as a nick- name as much from Borrow as from Scott. For one thing, the 'fit' is better: Borrow is singing the praises of the publisher who disseminated his works in the best possible way, R.V.W. of the conductor who did the same. For another thing, Borrow's lines in praise of Murray come from a book that we know meant a great deal to Vaughan Williams: his *Lavengro* of 1851, which together with its continuation *The Romany Rye* makes up an extensive, eccentric, semi-autobiographical novel of life in Britain (especially life on its country roads) on the eve of the Railway Age. R.V.W. loved Borrow in this mode. While working before World War I on *Hugh the Drover* (itself a decidedly Borrovian piece in some ways), he told his librettist Harold Child that he wanted their next opera to be based on *Lavengro*. It never happened, but the composer did of course go on to write a *Pilgrim's Progress* opera, and he liked to point out that the characters the pilgrim meets on the road in Bunyan are often much like the characters the narrator encounters in Borrow. And the early enthusiasm for Borrow remained, like the enthusiasm for Scott. Indeed, *Lavengro* was another book the 85-year-old R.V.W. was reading to his wife on that Ischian holiday: 'Ralph's favourite novel', she called it. In his way, you could say that Glorious John Murray the publisher of Borrow had given the composer almost as much pleasure as Glorious John Barbirolli.

Postscript for readers in a hurry

To get the full sense of Claud Halcro's Dryden-obsession, you need to read the whole of *The Pirate*; but if you can only dip into it, his telling the tale of meeting the great man is in Chapters 12 and 14. The paragraph in praise of John Murray II in Borrow's *Lavengro* comes in Chapter 43. Other parts of *Lavengro* that seem to me specially relevant to Vaughan Williams are Chapters 25-26 (in which our hero experiences philosophical doubt and Non-Conformist piety, talks with a Gypsy about the sweetness of life and the allure of death, and encounters the Gypsy again after seeing an open air boxing match in rural Norfolk); Chapters 52-54 (in which our hero, now Big-City-based, crosses London Bridge and wanders out to Greenwich Park and Blackheath where there is all the louche fun of a fair, and where he almost succumbs to the temptation of joining a Gypsy clan); Chapters 60 - 61 (in which our footloose hero prostrates himself at dawn before Stonehenge, talks there with a thoughtful shepherd, drinks ewe's milk and takes direction from the shepherd so that he can bathe in the Avon, explore ancient earthworks and make his way to Salisbury); and Chapter 85 (in which our roving hero, having set up camp idyllically in a Staffordshire dingle, is disturbed there by a notorious bruiser, 'the Flaming Tinman', but trounces him in an epic bout of fisticuffs). It's a world close to that of the *Songs of Travel*, *On Wenlock Edge* and *Hugh the Drover*, of parts of the *Second* and *Ninth Symphonies*, and of *The Pilgrim's Progress* too.

Front Cover of The Gramophone magazine January 1963

Sir John Barbirolli conducting at rehearsals

Ralph Vaughan Williams

a memoir by Sir John Barbirolli from 1958

I shall not attempt in this brief article to appraise in detail the music of that great and lovable genius Ralph Vaughan Williams, but to re-kindle memories and impressions of him.

The first big orchestral work of his that I conducted was the *London Symphony*. As fate would have it, it was also the last I conducted in his presence-at Cheltenham last July when I was with the Scottish Orchestra 1 conducted *Job* from the manuscript, and anybody who has been privileged to gaze on V.W.'s writing will realise the feat involved!

Liked Slower Tempo

My first real meeting with him, which led to a deep, intimate and precious friendship, was when he came to hear me rehearse his *Symphony No.6* in the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford. He was obviously very impressed with the performance of the *Scherzo* and confessed he had some uncertainty about this movement: whether it was the orchestration or the actual form that produced this unsatisfactory impressionan impression which, he said, disappeared that afternoon - was not quite clear. But he decided that it was my slightly slower tempo that clarified it, and he paid the great compliment of altering the metronome mark accordingly.

Our meetings became more frequent, and I noticed there was something he wanted to say, though he seemed to find it difficult. This is an adorable example of his shyness and sweetness. It turned out that he had completed the *Sinfonia Antartica* and wanted to show it to me with a view to the Halle's giving the first performance. Yet he was loath to show it me, for he feared I might not like it, and wanted to spare me the embarrassment of saying so!

"A Lovely Noise"

Needless to say I was greatly excited by it, and I feel sure that time will prove me right and that this is a far greater work than has yet been realised. Critics have concentrated on its breathtaking sonorities and have missed the salient fact that these sonorities are allied to music. I can think of only two critics who seem to feel as I do about this work - Neville Cardus and Michael Kennedy.

Then came a really moving moment for me, when the *Symphony No.8* was complete and was to be "For Glorious John", as he loved to call me for some reason best known to him in connection with Dryden.

The symphony was an immediate success and must have had more performances in its first year than any other symphony in recent years. Some of our critics seemed upset by the use of the vibraphone. V.W.'s attitude was: "It makes such a lovely noise." I note that some of those hasty judgments have had to be revised.

After performances in Manchester we used to give him parties with just a few chosen friends, which he enjoyed unreservedly. He loved work, he loved life, and he loved good food and wine. From all these qualities, perhaps, stemmed his great humanity and "completeness."

Rehearsal Concentration

He astonished us all by his physical resilience, for he had begun the day at rehearsal, and attendance at rehearsal for him was a matter of great concentration and heavy criticism. He never hesitated to re-touch a passage if it was not exactly what he intended. It was amazing how unerring his instinct was.

One particular instance, for example, nullifies a pretended technical ignorance which I think it amused him to assume. Towards the end of the first movement of the *Symphony No.6* he has a wonderful lyrical passage for strings where he directs the first violins to play the tune on the G-string and the seconds to play it at the same octave on the D-string.

The effect of this is absolutely magical, for the D-string doubling of the G-string gives the G-string sound an opulence and clarity which I have never before heard. I asked him how, when he pretended not to know much about these things, he had discovered this extraordinary effect.

Playing Raff's *Cavatina*

"Well, John," he said, "many years ago I used to play the fiddle, and when I was playing Raff's *Cavatina* to myself one day, scaling the heights on the G-string, I found that some of the top notes got a bit wolfie, and I wondered whether the merger of the two sounds might not obviate this." Of course he was quite right! To me the loveliest part of this story is the picture of V.W. standing alone in his room playing Raff's *Cavatina* - if only we had a record of that performance!

Vaughan Williams at rehearsal with (centre) his wife and Sir John Barbirolli. *"Re-hearsal for him", says Barbirolli in the memoir on this page, "was a matter of great concentration and heavy criticism He was always available to advise conductors about his own works.*

Another little quirk that always used to amuse me, and with which I had a little sympathy, was "I always hate that damned. A Clarinet I have never got on with it, and I have still got to count the transpositions on my fingers."

Snobbery, cant and any form of exhibitionism or insincerity he had no time for, and he could be as ruthless in their presence as he was kindly at other times. I remember him saying to me one day "All this stuff-and-nonsense talk about whether you should or should not compose at the piano! I once asked Ravel about this at the time when I was studying, and Ravel said 'Of course you must compose at the piano, otherwise how can you find the harmonies?'"

Kreisler in his Orchestra

An incident which I shall always remember was when I invited him to conduct the *Sea Symphony* at Sheffield. In the afternoon we were a 'cello short, so I deputised. I had not thought of playing in the evening, for I did not want it to have the appearance of any kind of stunt.

But after the rehearsal V.W. said "Would you play tonight for me?" I said I would, and he went on, "I will tell you why exactly. I once conducted an orchestra with Kreisler playing in it, and I would like to boast that 1 conducted an orchestra with Barbirolli playing in it."

In 1911, when he was conducting one of his works at the Three Choirs Festival, he looked up and saw Kreisler at the back of the first fiddles. He said he was already sufficiently terrified, and afterwards asked Kreisler what he was doing there. "He replied that he was playing immediately after my item," V.W. said, "and as there was no means of warming up his fiddle in the Cathedral, he thought the best thing to do was to play in the orchestra."

At Cheltenham last July be came to all the rehearsals of the young men's works, went nightly to the Festival Club, and we had our last party together.

But I saw him once more, the day after he died. That great and noble head looked like the medieval effigy of a saint, and the composer of *Sancta Civitas* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* was transfigured in serenity.

Reviews of Two Vaughan Williams Premieres

First Performance of Sinfonia Antartica
Sir John Barbirolli and the Halle

Manchester, Jan 14
The *Sinfonia Antartica* was performed for the first time to-night by the Halle Orchestra under Sir John Barbirolli, who brings it to London next week. Sir John Barbirolli is a master of sonority and tonal values, and because these elements are more important in this than in the other symphonies the performance had a vividness and authority that conveyed unmistakably the composer's intentions in this latest instance of his uncompromising originality and endless fertility.

All Vaughan Williams's symphonies have a programme sometimes unavowed, sometimes no more than hinted in a title, sometimes elucidated with a motto. They have not, however, until now been symphonic poems in a formal mould. The new *Sinfonia Antartica* is more specifically programme music than Beethoven's *Pastoral* or Mendelssohn's *Scottish* symphonies.

The symphony is in five movements, each of which bears a superscription. It is thus a universalization of what in the film was particular and episodic. The *Prelude*, which opens with majestic progression, bears a quotation from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* beginning with the line "To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite," and heroism is one main theme of the work. The other is Nature not Nature the kindly nurse of mankind but brute nature, impersonal and implacable. The middle movement is the main embodiment of this idea, though it recurs in the *Epilogue*, where humanity goes down in defeat before it. This central iceberg of a movement is flanked on either side by a *Scherzo* and *Intermezzo*, in which animate beings intrude upon the eternal winter, whales and penguins in the one, human companionship in the other. This is really all there is of contrast: over all there is a vast similitude. This is not much more than the composer's usual practice in every one of his symphonies except the *London*. This is indeed an Antarctic symphony: the landscape of the Pole is not varied except by peaks.

Yet by a paradox the colour resources employed in it are larger and more varied than in any other of his works whatsoever. A vibraphone is added to the percussion, a piano puts an edge on the chords of wind and strings, the organ has a solo, a wind machine provides a touch of icy realism, and, strangest of all, the ultimate desolation is portrayed by a female chorus and the solo voice of Miss Margaret Ritchie. Vaughan Williams at 80 has broken new ground, not in the fact that he uses a larger orchestra but that he has found in sheer sonority devoid of thematic significance a means of conveying his vision and placing it within a symphonic scheme. In feeling it is unlike anything else in his output except the epilogue of the sixth symphony, because here the prophetic eye uses its penetrating powers to look not so much into the heart of man as into the heartlessness qf climate and geology.

141st SEASON — FOURTH CONCERT

Programme

National Anthem
Overture, " Egmont " — *Beethoven*
Sinfonia Antartica — *Vaughan Williams*
(First performance in London)

INTERVAL

Symphony in D major, No. 6 (" Le Matin ") — *Haydn*
Sinfonische Metamorphosen (on Weber themes) — *Hindemith*

THE HALLE ORCHESTRA
(Leader : Laurance Turner)
Soloist - MARGARET RITCHIE
A Section of the Croydon Philharmonic Choir
(Conductor : A. J. Kirby)
SIR JOHN BARBIROLLI

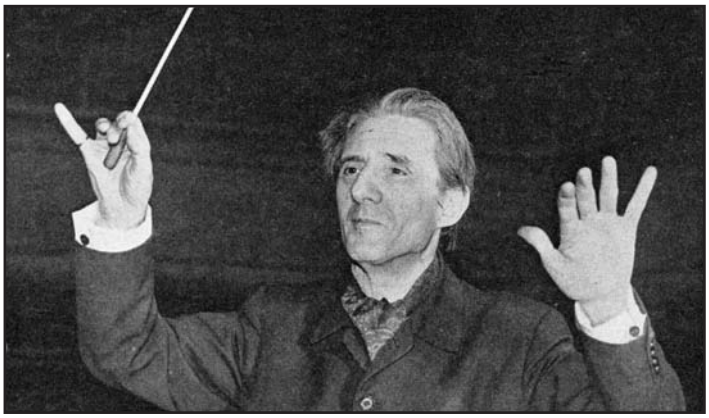
Halle Orchestra and the *Sinfonia Antartica*
Sir John Barbirolli, Performance at Royal Festival Hall (London premiere) By Neville Cardus

The Halle Orchestra came to the Royal Festival Hall last night bringing with them to London the *Sinfonia Antartica* of Vaughan Williams. A crowded audience vociferously greeted the work, the composer, Sir John Barbirolli, and the players seldom is a London audience as uninhibited as this. The playing of the Halle Orchestra was enough of itself to cause unusual applause. The new symphony what's in a name was given as though Sir John and every in strumentalist had known the music by heart for years. For easy mastery of technique and for spontaneous blend of vivid and often beautiful tone, this was orchestral art of an order quite exceptional in this, country, or anywhere else.

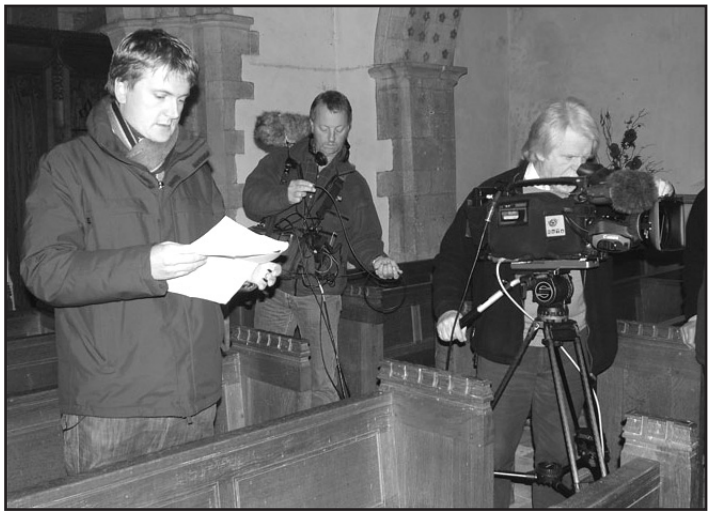
On closer acquaintance the *Sinfonia Antartica* seems to me the most. powerfully imaginative of all the composer's works; It is certainly the most conslstently ignited, if I may use this word In a description of a musical composition. We need not dwell over much, not more than the composer himself has dwelton the illustrative and "programme" aspects of it all: they amount to no more here than they do in the *Pastoral* Symphony of Beethoven. This is another instance of "mehr Empfindung als Malerei": more feeling than painting. Even the whistling of the wind-machine is drawn by musical imagination, as a sort of instrumental overtone, into the symphonic scheme. The closeness of the musical thinking is indeed remarkable.

Vaughan Williams, like every great composer in ripeness of age and craftsmanship, is able to dispense with the familiar crutches of supports of "form," the arbitrary recapitulations, bridge-passages, and the rest. The symphony moves on its own fulcrum, phrase by phrase. When the tragic main theme returns in the *Epilogue* it does so almost as though by an arbitrary if dramatic device to put an end to music which always sounds well beyond the divisions of time and space. It is necessary for us to go back to the last quartets of Beethoven and to the *Siegfried Idyll* of Wagner to find an example of music as organically shaped, with the form created continuously out of each sentence, the end foreseen in the beginning, as in this masterpiece of an octogenarian.

The orchestral technique is astonishing. As a rule Vaughan Williams has not exactly wrltten for the orchestra in virtuoso vein. In the Sinfonia Antartica the nobility of the theme, the elemental grandeur and pathos, prevent in a description of the art employed the use of any word which might suggest conscious display. But for sheer brilliance, vividness, and spontaneity in the moulding and releasing of tone, in a swift imaginative blending of instrumental colours, everything serving the composer's inner vision, Vaughan Williams has never equalled this latest of his scores. 'The art is cunningly concealed. The obvious "descriptive" parts will attract most attention for a while The abiding qualities. as I feel them and have explored them, are a truly symphonic conception and development: a use of the materials of music definitely contemporary without abuse of a fundamental bred-in-the-bone tonality: and. best of all, the omnipresence of the nature and wisdom of a poet and a great man.



RVW and Down Ampney



Aled Jones working on Songs of Praise in Down Ampney Church

It must have been thirty years ago when I first glimpsed Down Ampney church. Like many of you, I turned off the A419 Cirencester-Swindon road to embark on a pilgrimage to see the birthplace of RVW.

It was whilst studying the *Tallis Fantasia* for 'O Level' Music in the early '60's that I became entranced by this music. I loved the ethereal sound of the strings and the "lofty grandeur of the Gloucester Cathedral acoustic" as the LP sleeve described it. I became absorbed in the score and discovered the delights of the structure – uncomplicated though it was. Next, an acquisition of the *9th Symphony* for 7/6d from the library of a deceased record collector. My music master had somehow obtained this collection of long playing records (still a bit of a novelty for me!) and brought them in to school. Up to that time I knew little about Vaughan Williams. I do, however remember listening to his funeral on the radio from Westminster Abbey one lunchtime, realising he was a very special person, and leaving for school again with the trumpets of *All people that on earth do dwell* ringing in my ears.

Those early experiences led to a greater love of the music. I was in my thirties when I traversed the road by Down Ampney and, on a whim, took a shortcut to pay homage to the man and his birthplace. I now know that I was not alone in doing that.

Oh, how one's life pans out! I would never have dreamed, when sitting writing that 'O' Level paper, that one day I would be Down Ampney's Vicar. Yet here I am, by a strange and roundabout way, playing host to hundreds of pilgrims, who arrive by coach or in family groups or alone, to experience the magic that is All Saint's Church – and maybe sing the hymn tune *Come down, O love divine* in that atmospheric setting.

Arthur Vaughan Williams, the Vicar of the village from 1868-75, was much loved. He had married Margaret Wedgwood in the year he accepted the living and the Vicarage was their first home. Hervey, their eldest child was born back at Leith Hill Place but Meggie and Ralph were brought into the world at the Vicarage. There is a somewhat apocryphal story that Ralph was dropped by the priest at the Baptism ceremony and was caught by the edge of his Christening robe, just in time, before he reached the stone slabs that could have damaged that creative mind for good. Well, it's a good story – most recently recounted by Aled Jones in an introduction to the singing of *Come down* in an edition of *Songs of Praise* to be broadcast early this year. Aled visits some Cotswold villages around Cirencester in a Morgan sports car and just happens to 'drop in' on Down Ampney!

Back to Ralph's father's story. His stay in Down Ampney was brief but memorable for the village. His visits to the village school, to teach both scripture and English, were recorded in the school's log book. The entry for April 21st 1874 is typical: 'This morning and the following morning the Revd. A. V. Williams came to the school and took the first class in Scripture and Catechism in preparation for the Diocesan Inspection, which was to take place on May 7th.'

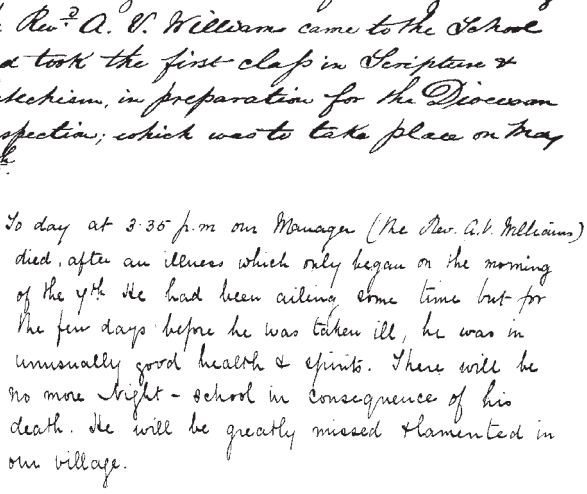
But the entry for February 9th the following year brings a lump to the throat and altered the course of Ralph's life. 'April 9th: Today at 3.35pm our Manager (the Rev A. V. Williams) died, after an illness which only began on the morning of the 7th. He had been ailing some time but for the few days before he was taken ill, he was in unusually good health and spirits. There will be no more night school as a consequence of his death. He will be greatly missed and lamented in our village.' He is buried in the churchyard a few yards before you reach the door of the church, on your right.

Not much of the original interior of the Vicarage is left. The main staircase, entrance hall and drawing room still reflect the Victorian residence that it once was, but the rest has been greatly altered. The Old Vicarage, as it is now called, can be viewed from the main road. It is on your left as you approach the centre of the village from the A419. There is a little inscription to RVW above the door and the building to the right was once a small private chapel.

The church interior, too, has changed greatly since Arthur Vaughan Williams was Vicar. In his time the church would have had a Georgian interior with straight backed pews. At around the turn of the century, with the rise of the Oxford Movement (John Keble was Vicar just a few miles away) an extensive reordering of the interior took place. The reredos and beautifully carved screen you see today are products of this time. Being of somewhat puritan descent, Ralph was never very keen on this 'vandalising' of the church of his infancy, although his interest in the music of pre-reformation times belies this attitude.

But - we have a problem today. The church fabric is under threat as the leaflet you should receive with this copy of the Journal explains. We need help to raise the large amount needed to keep this church in good order for the many pilgrims that visit each year. I hope you feel moved to lend your support - we owe it to future pilgrims and to RVW himself.

Revd John Calvert,
Vicar of Down Ampney.



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A
"DESERT ISLAND"
List From Simona Pakenham

Symphony No. 4 in F minor

That's what started me off – and I'll stick with it. RVW's own conducting, of course.

Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus

Jane Scroop's Lament for Philip Sparrow from Five Tudor Portraits

I'd have liked to have Janet Baker, who sang it exquisitely early in her career and then decided it was no longer her "cup of tea"! She sang Elinor Rumming beautifully, too.

Elihu's Dance of Youth and Beauty leading to the Pavane for the Song of the Morning from Job

The Pastoral Symphony

Conducted by André Previn

Concerto for Oboe and Strings

Leon Goossens

Dona Nobis Pacem

Especially for the Dirge for Two Veterans

The Pilgrim's Progress

The scene in prison

The Prologue and Epilogue to The 49th Parallel

Symphony No 8 in D minor

My special symphony because it was announced after I had my book accepted and I had to persuade Macmillans to delay publication so that I could include it. I appealed to RVW for help and he invited me to rehearsals. What I had not expected was to find myself seated at his side and required to turn the pages of a totally unknown score – I who could barely read music! I managed better than I expected, but we both got hopelessly lost in the last movement because we could not take our eyes off the lady percussion-player doing glissandos with both hands on the tubular bells.

I still love this symphony and wish it could have been heard by all those superior critics who accused RVW of being "lumpy and stodgy" in the period between the wars.

"IN LONDON TOWN"

A recent publication from Elgar Editions (linked to the Elgar Society) is entitled *Cockaigne: Essays on Elgar "In London Town"*. Edited by Kevin D Mitchell, it is a collection of lectures given over a period of several years to the London Branch of the Elgar Society. The choice of subjects is wide and tries to avoid those already dealt with in the Elgar literature. Many eminent names feature in the list of contributors, including that of Michael Kennedy and the late Michael Oliver.

A review of the book will appear in the next issue of the RVW Society Journal, but members interested in acquiring it now should contact Elgar Editions at 20, High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts., WD3 1ER, telephone 01923 775882, email editions@elgar.org

Painting The VAUGHAN WILLIAMS SYMPHONIES

Listening to the nine symphonies of Vaughan Williams is like being taken on a series of aural journeys. He leads the listener by the hand to extraordinary places. Sometimes we are introduced to very beautiful terrain as in his elegiac *Pastoral Symphony*. At other times we are led, like Dante, through terrifying landscapes as in his confrontational *Fourth* and *Sixth* symphonies. My paintings of course can't achieve quite the same effects. Yet I wanted to respond to the unique sound world that Vaughan Williams offers us in these major works.

Initially, my intention was to make only nine large paintings, one representing each of the symphonies. But the more I listened, it became obvious that each movement had great potential for paintings. Then the daunting thought dawned on me: I was going to have to produce thirty-seven paintings, one for every movement! This would occupy me for the best part of the year.

I was familiar with some of the symphonies but others were completely new to me. So I listened to different recordings and was amazed to find significant differences in interpretation. I also attended concerts to gain a better insight into the music. Since I am not a musician, I don't understand all of the formal, analytical studies written about the music. However, I did learn a great deal from background reading; layers began to be peeled away and new insights were revealed. I began to ask myself, what colours are suggested by *A Sea Symphony*, or *A Pastoral Symphony* or *Sinfonia Antartica*? I realised that these symphonies were, at the very least, going to be concerned with the colours blue, green and white, respectively. Some of the non-named symphonies also suggested colours. How can one not "hear" scarlet or blood-curdling crimson in the opening bars of the *Fourth Symphony*? This kind of simplistic synaesthesia only took me so far. What colour for example is the *Fifth* or the *Ninth Symphony*?

Being an abstract painter, I do not reproduce visual reality or draw what I see before me. Figurative painting can limit the viewer's response to a work of art. It is easy to be sidetracked by merely admiring the quality of drawing in a figurative work. Music is intrinsically abstract and without specific meaning. It parallels emotion, experience and thought; it is ever-changing and is like a journey or an experience. Abstraction is closer to a musical experience than figurative painting can ever be. I felt that Vaughan Williams' symphonies were compatible enough with my abstract sensibility to be translated into visual equivalents.

A Sea Symphony

This is a choral symphony with a text, so images immediately presented themselves. I worked on the paintings during the summer, in Italy, near Ravenna. From my window I had a view out to the sea. It is remarkable how it changed colour every few minutes – sometimes shimmering silver, sometimes gunmetal grey. I listened to the symphony repeatedly while working, as I did with all the paintings. On top of this, I explored miles of unspoiled beach. On one occasion, I had an experience that helped me understand some of what Vaughan Williams was aiming at. It provided the inspiration for the four *Sea Symphony* paintings.

The second movement is entitled, *On the Beach at Night Alone*. While working on this, I made frequent nocturnal visits to the shore and stood looking at the sea. Once, at about two o'clock in the morning, the sea was as calm and still as I have ever seen it. There was no sound of waves or wind - not even a ripple on the glittering surface. I went swimming among the stars reflected in the sea. It was an astonishing phenomenon to see stars simultaneously in the sky and on the surface of the water so that the horizon seemed to have completely disappeared. It was a very sobering moment with the entire universe seemingly within my grasp, and nothing man-made in my peripheral vision to diminish the overwhelming scale of it all. Whitman's words, used in the second movement of *A Sea Symphony*, deal with such ideas:

As I watch the bright stars shining,
I think a thought of the clef of the universes and of the future.
A vast similitude interlocks all,
All distances of space however wide,
All distances of time,
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different,
All nations, all identities that have ever existed or may exist,
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,
This vast interlude spans them, and always has spanned,
And shall for ever span them and shall compactly hold and enclose them.

A London Symphony

A London Symphony posed certain problems. Of course it evokes the Thames. But I did not want to fall into the trap of painting the shape of the river à-la-East-Enders! Moreover, drawing the Houses of Parliament was out of the question. I spent time in the National Gallery looking at the work of other artists. Painters such as Turner often painted the Thames. There are also the great blue paintings of the Thames, from the early 1870s, by Whistler. These two artists provided clues for me in terms of texture and mood.

I was having problems locating appropriate imagery initially, primarily because I had been imagining the London of today. Of course this has nothing to do with the symphony that Vaughan Williams composed. There is, at times, a pronounced impressionistic quality of dissolved sound; it is full of half-heard distant, yet familiar sounds. An out-of-focus quality emerged in the compositions - a mysterious and evocative sense of place rather than appearance of it. In 1912, when Vaughan Williams began writing the symphony, London was beset with pea-soupers. The surface textures therefore dissolve and diffuse the forms. The paintings evolved into foggy, purple images. The lavender-seller's call in the second movement was also immediately helpful, as a suggestion of colour. There are hints of both river and water beneath the monochromatic surfaces.

A Pastoral Symphony

When I first heard this symphony I was stuck by its poignancy and delicate texture, like warm summer air rising and hovering against chalky cliffs and shadows of clouds rolling across fresh-cut fields. After repeated listening the music becomes more tenacious and tougher, underpinned with a sense of quiet but unyielding tension. I understand that this symphony was conceived in France and has associations with the Great War – as Michael Kennedy says, it acts as a kind of war requiem. However, for me this is the quintessential green symphony! It would be perverse not to associate that colour with this work – it is the colour of landscape. In Renaissance painting, the symbolic value of green was associated with springtime, regeneration, resurrection and new birth. Perhaps some of these qualities can be heard in the music.

When dealing with landscape painting it is almost impossible to resist the temptation of a horizon line. It's a formal device that satisfactorily divides up the composition, injecting a sense of calm, often present in the summer shimmer of this particular sound world. The use of the golden

section further increases harmonious proportions of such a composition. Like the music, I wanted to be right in the heart of this landscape rather than depicting one that had been observed. The last movement, *Lento*, with the distant sound of the soprano (the incomparable Margaret Price!), is evocative of early evening. It recalls that twilight moment hovering somewhere in between night and day. Hardy speaks of such a moment in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*:

> *…that moment of evening when the light and the darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other.*

Symphony No. 4

There is a debate about this work as to whether or not it is concerned with war. In some ways it doesn't really matter which interpretation is right; the soundscape tells us what the work is concerned with. It is dynamic and violent and as far from the idyllic English countryside as can be. The opening bars are scalding in their intensity. I can't help feeling that Vaughan Williams consciously attempted to create the maximum possible contrast between the last bars of *A Pastoral Symphony* and the opening bars of the *Fourth Symphony*. This kind of contrast works wonders. In *Die Zauberflöte*, Mozart juxtaposes an aria for the stratospheric coloratura voice of the *Queen of the Night* against an aria full of inky black gravitas for the bass voice of Sarastro.

This is a red symphony, full of scorching cacophony and "musical lava" (James Day) and all this is achieved through very controlled and exacting means. Even the slow movement *Andante moderato* has a persistent and unyielding anxiety not far from the surface. In the painting of the first movement *Allegro*, I wanted to suggest some sort of machine-like image of destruction with a pronounced and overwhelming physical presence. Perhaps it is a mechanised instrument of torture or an accoutrement of war and devastation?

Symphony No 5

This music hovers and suspends itself in space like vapour. The muted horns and plangent cor anglais leave a shimmering image in the mind's eye. The colour that comes to mind is a very light, hazy blue; the pictorial incidents and dramatic gestures are minimal and spare. I tried to encapsulate in the paintings a sense of drifting tranquillity. After many false starts and much trial and error, I found myself returning to light, Turneresque washes and delicate textures, interrupted only by spare punctuations and pictographic gestures. I wanted to capture the ethereal fragility of the symphony as well as the melancholic loneliness of the sound world.

Symphony No. 6

This is a terrifying symphony, in the sense that it really is full of dread and nightmarish horrors. I am always amazed that Vaughan Williams could locate such wide-ranging material; there is an astonishing variety of emotion and colour in the symphonies. I had two main objectives while working on this symphony. The first was to try and capture some of the dissonant qualities in the earlier passages of the music. This I hope was achieved through emphatic painted gestures and aggressive applications of the pigment. The second objective was to create a visual equivalent to the pianissimo landscape of the *Epilogue* finale. This is one of those magical moments when the composer takes the listener to a completely surprising place; it is unexpected and unforeseen. A really tenacious and quite brilliant work; I just hope that I captured in some small way, something of its spirit.

Sinfonia Antartica

This is the only five-movement symphony and so I had to supply an extra image. This proved somewhat irksome when hanging the exhibition as it upset the balanced layout of the paintings along the wall! There is radiance to the scoring which is immediately noticeable. Of all the compositions I had to work on, these five were the most satisfying. The paintings painted themselves; I simply edited them as they came to me. Sometimes I have to work a painting very hard, destroying the image, painting over forms, obliterating layer after layer until I arrive something acceptable and satisfactory. Not so with this set. I worked directly without any preconceived notions while listening to the music, feeling my way as I listened. It seems strange to think that perishing snow and ice are at the core of this work and I was painting it in Italy in sweltering summer heat. It is a white symphony (for obvious reasons) and, while repeatedly painting layers of textured surfaces, I kept running out of titanium white. Annoyingly, I had to make several forays into Ravenna for more paint!

Unlike Captain Scott, I haven't been to the Antarctic and I had little intention of representing immense glaciers or ice crevasses. In the first movement, *Prelude*, there is a merciless plodding and an awesome sense of weariness in the music. Somehow I wanted to pin that down onto the surface of all five paintings. Above all I was thinking of the marks of skis in soft snow, of tracks, and footprints made by indomitable travellers, each step further and further from home and closer and closer to a doomed destination. I translated this idea into a vertical trail of motifs and this runs through all five compositions. I thought of marks left behind by other travellers such as Hansel and Gretel's trail of breadcrumbs in the forest or Arne Sacknussen's chalked arrows on his journey to the centre of the earth and of course Frankenstein's monster striding across the snowy wastes. I tried to create a featureless landscape, punctuated by man-made marks soon to be covered over by silent and relentless snow.

Symphony No. 8

This is a tougher work than one first imagines; it is full of surprise twists and subtle turnings, brightly coloured sections here - and quite sinister passages there. My plan, before I started painting, was to try and capture some of the quixotic quality of this endlessly inventive work. Easier said than done! There are passages of rage, stillness, glittering firework displays and sonorous string passages. It seemed important to create a visual equivalent of this extremely rich texture, building up layers of paint and expressive colourful impasto.

Symphony No 9

This symphony was difficult to paint. It is both a very unsettling and disturbing work and yet somehow resolved and tranquil. It is full of contrasting and contradictory qualities. There are very delicate moments set against massed orchestral forces. It is certainly one of the more difficult symphonies. On first encountering the work I felt that landscape was at the heart of it. I was gratified to find out that others agreed with me. Rather than painting abstract individual motifs paralleling musical themes, I wanted to work up surfaces, creating general, overall effects. So layer after endless layer of colour was applied and built up over a period of time. The painting of the Maestoso first movement had something like twenty different coloured layers worked on to the surface of the painting; each one was laboriously sanded down and then built up again. I suppose I was attempting to find an equivalent of the thick orchestral textures that Vaughan Williams achieves. My aim was to produce a finished work where the resulting surface allowed all the previous pictorial decisions to breathe through, in the way that instrumental details are audible through the overall orchestral sound.

It should be emphasized that paintings must stand or fall on their own merits. Despite being derived directly from Vaughan Williams's epic music, paradoxically I hope that mine justify themselves in abstract terms, without the need to know their origin. To put it another way, it would be ridiculous to suggest that it is necessary to understand fully the economic, social and religious contexts of seventeenth century Holland in order to appreciate the formal aspects of Vermeer's painting. There are, after all, no wrong reasons for liking a work of art and people have very strong opinions about this. On a personal level, I hope that something new has emerged regarding my own development as a painter during this project. Finally, I hope that something of Vaughan Williams' extraordinary musical journeys revealed itself in some small way.

Gerard Hastings

A Day in Gloucester, August 8th 2004

Wander away from the Cathedral and there can be few less inspiring places on a wet and humid Sunday afternoon than Gloucester. I apologise to you Gloucester members who are even now penning your letters of resignation in protest, but it was just such a very wet, very hot and very sticky afternoon in Gloucester on 8 August that nevertheless saw a very heartening turnout of over a hundred people at the (non-air-conditioned) New County Hotel. This brave band of masochists is easily explained by the twin presences of an RVW Society Tea and Mr Stephen Hogger of Chandos Records, the fruits of whose editorial labours were to be enjoyed later that evening in a rare performance of the original 1913 version of *A London Symphony*, given as part of the Three Choirs Festival.

In his talk, Mr Hogger, who is Chandos's resident musicologist and editor, explained how, in 2000, the Company had scheduled a recording of the standard 1936 published score, with Richard Hickox and the LSO, to take place the week before Christmas. However, at very short notice, word had reached his boss, Brian Couzens, that Ursula Vaughan Williams had given permission for a recording of the original 1913 score, on the strict condition that it was to be a 'one-off' and that no live performances would be allowed, now or in the future.

Now, some feasts may be moveable, but recording schedules are not among them and Stephen Hogger had just a few precious days to produce a performing edition and parts from the original score in the British Library. On many pages he had to penetrate beneath layers of later annotation and revision in order to retrieve the original notes. Sometimes the only way was to hold the manuscript up to the light to read what lay behind a later pasting, and always there was VW's notorious handwriting to decipher. But at last, with literally only a few hours to spare, all was ready. Then, in a nail-biting finish, a vehicle breakdown caused him to miss the beginning of the session. Fortunately, the orchestra was able to work on the first movement (which had never been revised) from the published parts, until Mr Hogger and his precious cargo arrived by taxi. We were treated to extracts from this recording to illustrate the restored cuts. Some of these passages are very quiet, and it was a measure of the audience's dedication that they were willing to sacrifice the single noisy fan in an unpleasantly sticky room, in order to hear the music properly.
In the questions which followed, several speakers commented on the ethics and legitimacy of ignoring the final wishes of a creative artist. A composer in the audience understandably came down on the side of caution, but the majority favoured limited access to a composer's first thoughts for those who were interested. Mr Hogger and Chandos appeared to be of the latter opinion, swayed perhaps by the fact that this recording was their biggest-selling disc ever and had won an enviable clutch of awards around the world, not least the prestigious Gramophone 'Record of the Year' for 2001. We are indeed fortunate that this success encouraged Ursula to relent somewhat and to allow an occasional public performance of the 1913 score.

Earlier that afternoon, my wife and I had wandered into the Cathedral out of the rain. The nave was closed to visitors, transformed into a concert hall for the duration of the festival, but we entered through the quaintly named 'Pilgrims' Door' and into the south transept. Tourists of assorted nationalities were scattered among the tight rows of chairs. They were all looking at a large video monitor on which we could see the figure of Richard Hickox as he conducted rehearsals for *A London Symphony*. The pictures were being transmitted but the sounds we heard were unadulterated, if somewhat veiled by the natural reverberation of centuries-old space. Then, gently wafting over the choir stalls beyond our sight, came the soaring strains of a solo violin. Our gaze turned aloft, as if irresistibly drawn by those beguiling notes, which gently floated up and up, over and beyond the unique and slender arches in the crossing, until they faded away into the shadows of the fourteenth-century vault above. Voices at the door all too quickly recalled us to reality, but just for a moment, if a slightly dishevelled Edwardian in ill-fitting tweeds had wandered up the south aisle to join us, we should scarcely have been surprised.

Seven-thirty, and my wife and I were in our seats high up at the west end, the majestic ranks of serried Romanesque pillars leading the eye along the nave to the Philharmonia Orchestra ranged across a raised platform below the organ. The large audience was hushed and Mr Hickox came on to conduct *Choral* by Oliver Knussen. Written in 1970-72, this is a short work, ten minutes or so, 'whose title,' writes the composer, 'refers both to the employment of the large wind orchestra in discrete choirs (which shift as the piece progresses), and also to the chorale which…is, in essence, the decoration of a single, immensely slow sequence of four chords.' These gradually transform, one to another, 'culminating in a simultaneous statement of all four chords in one massive dissonance.' As I listened to it, I could not avoid the irreverent thought that, by contrast, VW's concerns over the 'horrid modern music' he said he had excised from *the London Symphony*, need not trouble us unduly tonight.

Tasmin Little's appearance on the platform, in a cowl-necked dress of pearlescent pink (says my wife), to play Delius's *Violin Concerto*, was balm to eyes and ears alike. This work, written in 1916, and first performed some three years later by the great Albert Sammons, is vintage rhapsodic Delius. Those stolid Norman pillars, weighed down by the gravitational attraction of the Knussen, suddenly seemed a lot less massive. We were treated to a stupendous performance, for which the audience showed its approval in full measure.

After the interval, during which we seized the opportunity to admire the beautiful cloisters with their exquisite fan-vaulting (there was a bar there as well), Stephen Connock accompanied Richard Hickox on to the platform to present him with a very special VW Society award. This, our Chairman explained, was to honour a man who, during the ten years of the Society's existence, through concerts and recordings, had made a very significant contribution to the widening of knowledge of Vaughan Williams and his music.

The award took the form of a large bronze medallion by the late David McFall, whose subjects also included Winston Churchill, and who created the wonderful bronze plaque to Vaughan Williams to be seen in the lobby of the Dorking Halls. The Society is extremely grateful to his widow for permission to make this special casting.

Richard Hickox replied that it was a great honour and particularly moving to be receiving it here, in this place where the *Tallis Fantasia* had first been heard all those years ago. And so the applause was hushed, the baton raised, and we settled back (in what must be the most comfortable seats ever to grace a cathedral) to hear only the second live performance of the original version of *A London Symphony* to be given since 1918. And what a performance it proved to be.

Barely perceptible, the divided cellos and basses of the Philharmonia gave us a real triple pianissimo. Those first four notes (a kind of inversion of the *Sine Nomine* theme), closely followed by an early intimation of incipient mystery from alternating semitones in the clarinets and violas, ushered in a beautifully controlled lento introduction, building up, layer on layer, with upper strings, then with woodwind and finally with the addition of horns, trombones, trumpets, until we reached that dramatic half-bar rest. A triple forte crash from full orchestra filled the cathedral . . . and died slowly away to its furthest recesses, to reveal 'the noise and hurry of London', as VW called it, already going about its business.

It is easy, after the event, to read into the slow movement the impending

doom of world events. Three-quarters of the way through, two sudden surges of sound erupt from the underlying calm, like fate rushing towards us. What fate, what doom? Who can tell? Similar eruptions at the very end of the *Ninth Symphony* were to suggest the fate of Hardy's Tess. This is one of the passages VW cut out, and its inclusion is part of the reason why this version gives the impression, in totality, of an altogether darker animus.

The scherzo lightens the tension for a while, but then, in another of the passages later excised, the mood darkens again, a reminder that this movement is subtitled 'Nocturne'. There are more surges of sound and then a brief violin solo leads us back to the peaceful ending we recognise from the revised version. Richard Hickox judged the speeds beautifully to balance a lightness of touch with the need to preserve as much detail as possible within a difficult ambience. The Philharmonia played with accomplished dexterity.

Is the great cry of anguish with which the finale opens one of foreboding or lament? It is balanced by a falling motif of regret, followed by a marching tune of stoical acceptance. Whatever interpretation we are tempted to attach, the music never fails to arouse the emotions. This impressive movement is rounded off - the whole symphony is summed up - in an *Epilogue* of quiet grandeur. Although Vaughan Williams insisted that we should listen to his music as absolute music, at the end of his life he confided to Michael Kennedy that a clue to his thoughts lay in H. G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay*. Published in 1909, just before VW began work on this symphony, it is a remarkable novel. A critic at the time described it as 'one of the sincerest and most unflinching analyses of the dangers and perils of our contemporary life that any writer has had the courage to submit to his own generation'. Ostensibly, the book charts the progress of its narrator, George, and his uncle, who together market a quack medicine to a gullible public. A fortune is made and lost. But David Lodge has argued that the central character is really England itself. Arnold Bennett called it 'the enormous and confusing complexity of a nation's racial existence' and Wells himself, 'the broad slow decay of the great organism of England'.

In the last chapter, George, who now designs warships (no accident in the context of Dreadnought rivalry), is standing on the bridge of a new destroyer as it slowly makes its way down the Thames. He is musing on his life and the future, on a 'hope that finds no promise in this Empire or in any of the great things of our time. . . . To run down the Thames so is to run one's hand over the pages in the book of England from end to end.' As he passes each landmark, images are conjured up. It is not difficult to see how Wells's description resonated with Vaughan Williams. He mentions Cheyne Walk, where VW had lived since 1905, he likens the 'the houses crowding closelier, the multiplying succession of church towers . . .the successive bridges' to a 'long slow crescendo' and the different areas he passes as like movements 'in the London symphony'. As he reaches the sea, George becomes positively Whitmanesque: '…the tall slow ships . . . stand out bound on strange missions of life and death . . . and I and my destroyer tear out to the unknown across a great grey space. . . . Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways.' We, our bodies safely confined in our festival seats, took wing with George and Ralph, and 'fell . . . into doubts and dreams that have no words . . . on and on through the windy starlight, over the long black waves'. We listened, wrapt, as this remarkable music gently receded from our grasp, until Richard stood with baton suspended in the air for that exquisite moment before the applause breaks the spell.

So, were we right to have been listening to this version of the symphony? Vaughan Williams evidently would have thought not. The 1913 score was never published (neither is Stephen Hogger's edition) and the Note at the beginning of the 1936 score is printed in bold type: This revised edition supersedes the Original Version which should no longer be used.

Perhaps the final verdict comes down to the arguments between 'pure' music and 'programme' music. The earliest sketches of what is now *A London Symphony* were originally intended for a symphonic poem about London. But when they were developed for the more ambitious work, VW did not shirk from sprinkling its pages with jingling harness, Westminster Chimes or Lavender seller's cry. Later, he appeared to regret any undue emphasis of these details and insisted we should interpret the work in the terms of its own musical language. In the years between the First and Second World Wars, the old values of the Victorian and Edwardian era seemed increasingly alien. Meandering art nouveau gave way to the angular concision of art deco and symphonies, like hair and hemlines, tended to get shorter. *A London Symphony* became shorter and leaner by fifteen minutes or more. The purists were satisfied. but, tellingly, the jangling harness, Westminster chimes and accordion still lurked below the sleeker surface.

Vaughan Williams always said this was his favourite among his symphonies. But which version did he mean? The professional musician in him insisted on the more taut, revised version, but I cannot help feeling that the private VW might have just occasionally felt a secret hankering for the lost London of his youth and the original score that reflects that more leisured world. Those of us lucky enough to have been in Gloucester this Sunday night will know why.

Jonathan Pearson

Leith Hill Festival

The "Vaughan Williams Festival" (as it was known in the musical fraternity until fairly recently) celebrates its centenary this year. It was founded by RVW's sister Margaret and Lady Evangeline Farrer in 1905 to bring choral music to the villagers of Surrey, and the first competitions took place on the morning of May 10th 1905. Seven choirs competed and in the afternoon combined to rehearse for the evening concert. By 1912 there were twelve choirs and two "divisions" (all villages) and in 1922 towns joined and the three day festival has been proceeding along the same lines ever since. There were twenty-six choirs at its height and currently there are thirteen. Each choir has its own conductor and a life of its own and the "Festival Season" starts in earnest in January when rehearsals take place for the *St Matthew* or *St John Passions*, culminating in a performance – this year on March 6th at 7pm in the Dorking Halls. Each division learns different music: a main work, a madrigal, a part song, songs for men's and women's voices, an ensemble and an item of the group's own choice, all of which are adjudicated as the morning proceeds. Tension is high as choirs await their marks and great is the rejoicing in the choir which has the highest aggregate of marks at the end. Trophies and banners are awarded to winners during the concert by a different special guest each evening, this year the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Mrs. Sarah Goad, Sir David Willcocks (our president) and Michael Kennedy. A book to celebrate the hundred years has been produced and will be available by post and at the Festival itself 14th – 16th -16th April.

Further information is available on the internet at www.lhmf.supanet.com, by email at maytime59-epa@talk.com or by telephone on 01737 243931

Deirdre Hicks

LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

Two years ago *The Lark Ascending* was given 2nd place (after Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto*) in listeners' to ABC Classic FM's choice of their favourite music. Two performances were given on 15 and 16 October 2004 at Perth's 2000-seat concert hall by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO - which sounds rather like a French bird). The conductor, James Judd, is English and has had an international career. The violinist, Tajikistan-born Daniel Volkof, at 27 has been the leader of the WASO for 3 years. For his farewell appearance here, he played *The Lark Ascending* superbly. It seemed slower than usual (the performance was later broadcast – I timed it at 18 minutes) but there was no feeling of dragging or wallowing; The Lark soared and floated free. A short and gently gracious farewell speech was followed by an appropriate encore, Danny Boy, first played straight, then with unusual but effective double stopping. The concert, which had begun with Knussen's short *Flourish with Fireworks*, concluded with a splendid and full-blooded rendering of Elgar's *2nd Symphony*, for which Volkov rejoined the orchestra as leader. I hope that listeners in other countries will have the chance to hear Vaughan Williams' music performed by Judd and/or Volkov. Even the usually hard-to-please critic of The West Australian was entirely complimentary, and confirmation of Judd's interpretation of English and Australian music has just come in a broadcast of Delius' *In a Summer Garden* and several works by Percy Grainger.

Bryn Terfel's Perth Festival recital of English songs in February 2004, with Welsh and other folk songs, was a widely acclaimed sell-out but *Songs of Travel* in a large concert hall with just piano? Every note, every word, every nuance was heard by all – a truly magnificent performance.

Our four months in England in 2004 culminated musically in the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival. I had already heard a broadcast of the original version of *the London Symphony*, but it was good to hear it live. A revelation was the early *String Quartet* – not much indication of what was to come, but what an assured and enjoyable work – I left the church humming the tune of the final variations. Remarkable that this predates (1898) *Enigma* and Delius' *Paris*, the first famous heralds of the English musical renaissance. Thank you, Ursula, for letting us hear this work! For me, the other Festival highlights were the Glagolitic Mass, Tasmin Little in Delius' *Violin Concerto* and Roderick Williams' recital of English songs – this fine bass-baritone is approaching the Terfel league. A late Finzi cycle on Hardy songs was new to me, and was particularly memorable.

We returned to Perth to find the RVW Society Journals 30 and 31 awaiting us – more good reading. These have prompted four questions:

1 What was the subject or thesis of RVW's Mus. Doc?

2 When was The White Gates demolished? Did anyone try to stop it? Could a future Journal give us as many pictures as possible of this house? (The particular interest, perhaps, of a retired architect!)

3 I too would like to know more of what music RVW listened to? (Journal 30, page 25)

4 My CD of *Sinfonia Antartica* is from Boult's boxed set (1-8) with Gielgud reading the superscriptions between the movements. I find this disruptive. What do other members think? More to the point, what did the composer think of this practice?

Tony Noakes

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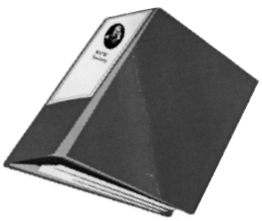


Crossword Solutions:

Across:

1. Rhosymedre, 4. Unquiet, 7. Hate, 8. Dim, 9. Lea, 11. Magda, 12. Grave, 14. Ale, 15. Age, 16. Herb, 18. Lechery, 20. Magnificat.

Down:

1. Running Set, 2. Opus, 3. Re, 5. Team, 6. St Margaret, 7. Hugh, 10. Lamb, 13. Earl, 17. Chic, 19. La.

Concert Reviews

An Oxford Elegy in St. Albans
Chris Bramwell (Speaker) Rebecca Outram (Soprano)
St Albans Bach Choir
City of London Sinfonia conducted by Andrew Lucas
St Albans Cathedral – 13 November 2004

What is it about *An Oxford Elegy* that can reduce me to tears? This can happen at the end of *Pilgrim* or even (poor romantic fool am I) in the aria *Alone and friendless* from *Hugh the Drover*. Yet it is in *An Oxford Elegy* that the emotional impact can be greatest. Matthew Arnold's words certainly contribute to the prevailing mood of nostalgia and RVW's selection further emphasises the themes of loss and pensive sadness:

But Thyrsis of his own will went away,
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

The beautiful descriptions of the countryside around Oxford can, too, create a powerful emotional reaction. Perhaps much like George Orwell's *Coming up for Air*, it captures something of our youth spent in sly fields with tall grasses and with anemones in flower till May. It is the wanderer in all of us.

While these factors contribute to the heartfelt effect of the piece, it is less the nostalgic much more the work, nobility and uplifting hopefulness that creates such a powerful effect.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here.
Sole in these fields; yet will I not despair:
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
That lonely tree against the western sky
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May
Know him a wanderer still.
Then let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear.

We, with Arnold and Vaughan Williams, see the light, and it is shining still.

These musings were prompted by a rare performance of *An Oxford Elegy*, in St Albans Cathedral on 13 November 2004. The City of London Sinfonia, under Andrew Lucas and the St Albans Bach Choir, were on good form with the choir capturing well all the live murmurs of a summer day. The speaker, Chris Bramwell, delivered the lovely words with thoughtfulness and clarity without quite penetrating the emotional depths of the music. The problem was his inability to heighten the dramatic impact of the passages from 'Despair I will not'. The speaker needs to give these words a heightened sense of nobility as he speaks with the choir singing through closed lips, pp followed by a ppp marking at 'Roam on'. Perhaps we have been spoilt by John Westbrook on the classic EMI disc who delivers these words to perfection. Sir Steuart Wilson seems too, to have produced a similar effect. Ursula remembers him speaking these lines with tears streaming down his face at the Three Choirs in the early 1950s.

It was still wonderful to hear the works again. It only failed to reach John Westbrook's noble heights – but who is there who can match this speaker today?

The concert opened with another rarity, Dyson's *Hierusalem*. Dyson may have wished all his life for the spark from heaven and this work, despite a beautiful opening, failed to live up to expectations. Nevertheless it is worth hearing performed here by the excellent Rebecca Outram.

Stephen Connock

A Sea Symphony in Cambridge

The Cambridge University Musical Society's concert in King's College Chapel on 1 December last was bliss for any RVW lover. To hear *A Sea Symphony* reverberating round that incomparable vault would have been exhilarating enough to attract pretty well a full house, but to have it preceded by *The Hymn of Jesus* was icing on the cake that constituted an act of inspired programme planning. (I know that's hardly the freshest or most apt of images, but it will have to do: after all, the concert was also in celebration of Sir David Willcocks' 85th birthday.)

Sir David conducted the Holst. To hear (and watch) him drawing such splendid singing from the 200 plus young voices of the CUMS chorus proved that he has lost none of his magic touch with a large choir. A clean, sonorous, but never stodgy choral sound, precise attack, subtle variations of tone in the more mystical passages, spot-on intonation and a splendidly maintained, radiant intensity throughout the whole work indicated that he was in full control. Like RVW after the first performance, one felt impelled to go out and get drunk and embrace everybody. (Coward that I am, I didn't do either but I'm sure nobody would have minded.). The CUMS orchestra, too, gave little evidence of being a student body: the brass sounded resplendently bright; and the soft-grained woodwind contributed well to the otherworldly atmosphere of the work. King's is not kind to string tone, but the large CUMS string section were on excellent form, playing with rhythmic bite and bright tone.

Stephen Cleobury took over for the *Sea Symphony*. Over a long period of concert going I have heard quite a number of performances of this masterpiece in King's, and this was one of the most convincing. Mr Cleobury emphasised the symphony's drama and passion right from the electrifying opening on the splendid CUMS brass that bade fair to rattle the stained glass to the hushed, solemn, reflective end. The resonant acoustic of the chapel swamped some of the inner detail in the orchestra, but the impetus of the music was magnificently maintained. The chorus rose to the occasion with enthusiasm in the louder passages and a remarkable tonal and dynamic control in the softer ones, notably excelling in the rapt hush of 'On the beach at night, alone' and in the exuberant Elgarian central section of the scherzo. Their crisp articulation, too, of 'After the sea-ship', with its thicket of unvoiced consonants, came across surprisingly well. Usually one has to settle for only the notes – or most of them – and the vowels. Mr Cleobury drove the faster parts of the finale pretty hard, but it opened and closed with the appropriate solemn breadth; and Catherine Bott and Richard Lloyd Morgan made an impessive pair of soloists, clear, well-balanced and, when need be, appropriately ecstatic.

The concert opened with the maiden performance of *Cambridge Quarters*, a new piece by the promising undergraduate composer Rowland Moseley, based on the familiar chimes of Great St Mary's and taking its thematic and formal cue from traditional English change-ringing (another tribute to a Cambridge musician, this time town, not gown). It sounded to me as if a bit more rehearsal might have made some things clearer, but there could be no doubt about Mr Moseley's skill in exploiting both instrumental colour and motivic variety. I hope to hear more of him.

James Day

Symphony No. 5 in Birmingham
Brahms – Hungarian Dances 2, 6, 3 and 1
Brahms – Violin Concerto
Vaughan Williams – Fifth Symphony
City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, with Janine Jansen (violin), conducted by Joseph Swenson
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, 13 October, 2004

The Brahms items in the first half of this concert were, I thought, adequately played. Joseph Swenson, who trained as a violinist with the Juilliard School, is currently the principal conductor of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and they have recorded this work for Linn, with Swenson directing from the violin. He took a very general approach to conducting the concerto with the CBSO – it is hard to recall an instance of him supporting an individual player or group of players. The orchestra wasn't bullet proof, there were a number of split notes from the woodwind and the brass, particularly the horns. Well, it happens. Writing it down like this makes it seem worse than it was. The soloist, Janine Jansen, who performed *The Lark Ascending* at the 2003 Proms and has a recording of that work to her credit on a compilation disc recently produced for Decca, is one of a generation of young artists which is being seriously marketed at present and I was reminded of this by her use of gesture. She tried hard for a rapport with the orchestra but got a better one with the audience.

The second half was completely different. This was one of the most cogent and distinctive accounts of the Vaughan Williams *Fifth Symphony* that I have ever heard. The conductor and players were much more together, both in ideas and execution. They enabled the score to say something vital about itself. One felt VW might have said, 'Yes! That's what I meant!' (He wouldn't, he never did). Its unfair to single out any particular section because they were all marvellous but the wonderful string writing at the end of the second movement was quite magnificently accomplished. The solo violin passages were ravishing. Maybe the tranquillo section at the end of the *Passacaglia* could have been presented more as though it had emerged organically from the preceding conflict, more a benediction after Pilgrim's treacherous journey, than something simply contiguous. Anyway, that's carping a bit. This performance should have been recorded. It was a revelatory, spiritually significant experience.

Mike Cooper

TALLIS FANTASIA in LONDON
The Rodolphus Choir, The Orchestra of the City, conducted by Benjamin Bayl. St George's Cathedral, Lambeth, Sept. 23 2004

St. George's Cathedral, Lambeth, was the setting on 23rd September 2004 for a memorable concert where RVW's *Tallis Fantasia* was performed alongside Sir John Tavener's *Lament for Jerusalem* in its first London concert. The young performers of the Rodolfus Choir and the Orchestra of the City, conducted by Benjamin Bayl, rose to the challenge magnificently and delivered an inspiring evening's music. This amateur orchestra, founded in 2003 and composed of young professional people, plays with the assurance and maturity of a much longer established ensemble.

This was the programme in full, including two pieces by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt.

Thomas Tallis	Thou wast, O God
Ralph Vaughan Williams	Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis
Thomas Tallis	Sancte Deus
Arvo Pärt	…which was the son of…
Arvo Pärt	Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten
Sir John Tavener	Lament for Jerusalem

The first piece was Tallis's melody which had originally inspired RVW, with words by John Mason. It was sung unaccompanied from the side aisles by the Rodolfus Choir and it led simply and beautifully into RVW's *Tallis Fantasia*. It was a thrill for me to witness the *Tallis Fantasia* performed in a cathedral just as it had been at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester in 1910. It was my first hearing of the piece played live – here, at last, before my eyes were the musicians who were to produce that sound. From my vantage point in the front row there seemed to be an ocean of stringed instruments almost surrounding me, and there behind the main orchestra was the second orchestra of double quartet and bass, lined up in a row, in a slightly elevated position. As the music unfolded I could see the dance of the instruments' interaction, the solo violins, the second orchestra answering the first, the progressive wave of sound which enveloped the orchestra as the crescendo progressed. My only regret was that perhaps sitting in the front row was too close to appreciate fully the cathedral's acoustics.

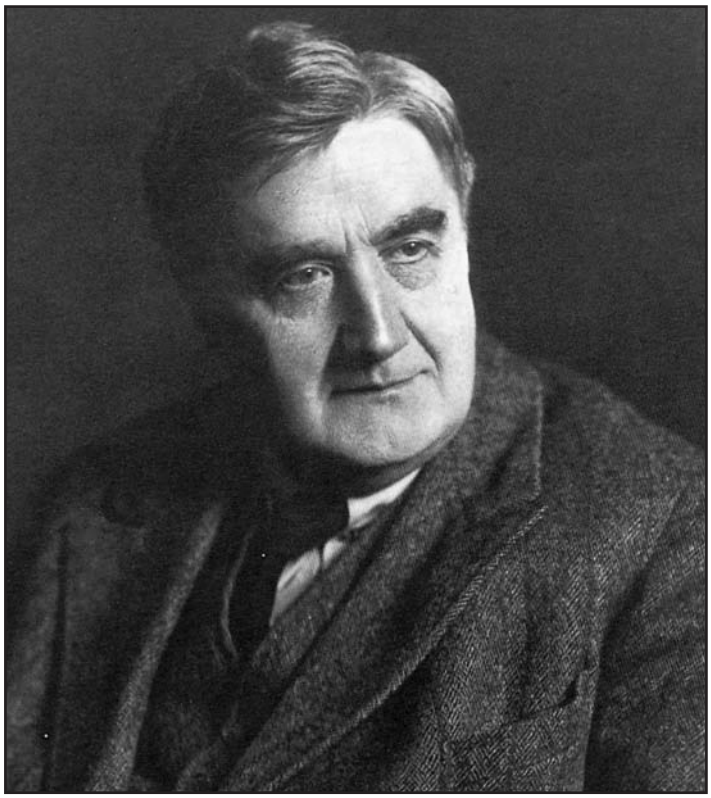
Tavener's *Lament for Jerusalem* was monumental and melancholy, much of it sung in Greek from the New Testament. If the choir's singing seemed to evoke the stark beauty and menace of the Judaean desert, then the voice of soprano Patricia Rozario singing "Alleluia" was like a sparkling stream in that desert, with its purity and clarity. Tavener himself describes this new work as a mystical love song, and says, "I offer this love song to all who seek God, from whatever tradition they come." Judaic and Islamic texts are included in the work alongside Christian ones. These sentiments would surely have resonated with RVW.

My impression of the pieces in this concert is that each one represents, in its own way, an intensely felt spiritual impulse by its composer. The different works complemented each other brilliantly to give a balanced programme.

Any gripes? Only my seat – I like being at the front but next time I would like more than one foot's distance between me and the violinists, for their sake as well as mine!

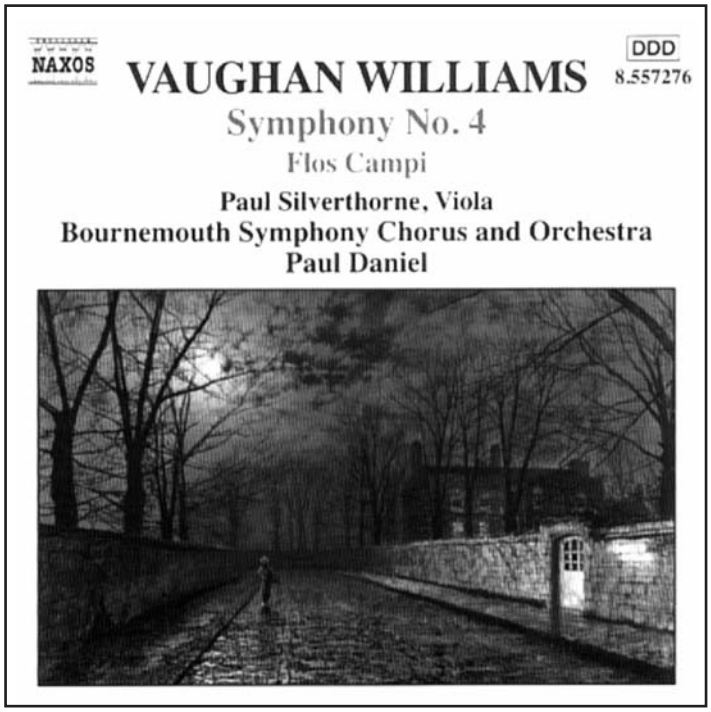
At the risk of paraphrasing Fyfe Robertson talking about art, I know nothing about music, but I know what I like. It was truly a privilege to be present at this concert and I hope it won't be too long before I again have the chance to hear and see the Tallis Fantasia performed in its natural environment, in a cathedral.

Robert Shave



CD Reviews

Vaughan Williams
Symphony No. 4, Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1, Flos Campi
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra & Chorus,
conducted by Paul Daniel, with Paul Silverthorne (viola)
Naxos 8.557276



Paul Daniel's recording of the *Fourth* heralds the completion of the Vaughan Williams symphonies on the Naxos label. This is an excellent version of what is one of Vaughan Williams' most chilling works with its explosive raw power, wild desolation and ferocious glowering, and is accompanied on this disc by outstanding renditions of the *First Norfolk Rhapsody* and *Flos Campi*.

From the very opening note, Daniel's gripping version is full of passion, frenzied broilings and a fevered desperation, akin to Del Mar (a BBC Music Magazine disc) and Boult's (EMI, also on Decca) stormy, fierce, tempestuous and deeply menacing performances. Like Boult, Daniel takes the work at a good pace, pushing it along – better than Stokowski (Cala) and Handley's (EMI) wallowing and rambling speeds that tend to lose momentum and therefore clout. Daniel's sound is a little on the thin side, which works well for the coda and for the second movement, but is a bit disappointing at the opening, particularly in the slightly lack-lustre second subject, which really requires a more ardently luxuriating touch.

The second movement, like the first movement coda, is beautifully detached, desolate, and ethereal. Daniel achieves a suitably bleak and most effective otherworldly sound in this almost visionary, sparse movement. If anything, he could be just slightly more ghostly and remote, however, as in Boult and Del Mar's amazing recordings. I prefer Daniel's Andante (along with Previn's (Red Seal) and Haitink (EMI)) to that in Handley's EMI version, which isn't quite introvert and distant enough. Yet the version one has to turn to for the definitive reading, I feel, is Vaughan Williams' own (on Dutton), with his harsher, thinner, more tenuous sound and his propelling pace.

Daniel's scherzo is full of drive and catches the restlessness of the movement well (as, incidentally, does Stokowski) – not as tempestuous or rushing as Vaughan Williams, nor as chilling or powerful as Boult, but certainly closer to the mark than Del Mar, who lacks vim in a slower, more gentle, flowing, and lyrical rendition, similar to Handley's.

Vaughan Williams' racing Finale, with its malignant menace (particularly efficacious when the composer leans on the held notes at the opening of the movement), is again the version I would turn to, yet Daniel's is another brilliant option. He really gets into his stride here, and his energetic rendition is quite terrifying.

Overall, Daniel's would be excellent choice, particularly given the budget price. It is a trustworthy interpretation, given a vigorous and striking performance. The playing of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is deeply impressive, and the sound is good and clean. (Bear in mind that other top options - particularly Vaughan Williams', Boult's (EMI) and Handley's - have fairly intrusive background noises, including a loud cough in Boult's first movement, and lots of page-turning noises in Handley's Finale). We may need to turn to RVW's own recording to get to the real heart of this work, but Paul Daniel succeeds in dramatically bringing this stunning work to life. Other good versions not yet mentioned include Slatkin on RCA Victor, Andrew Davis on Warner, Norrington on Decca and Hickox and Bryden Thomson both on Chandos, but I would probably place this performance above those also.

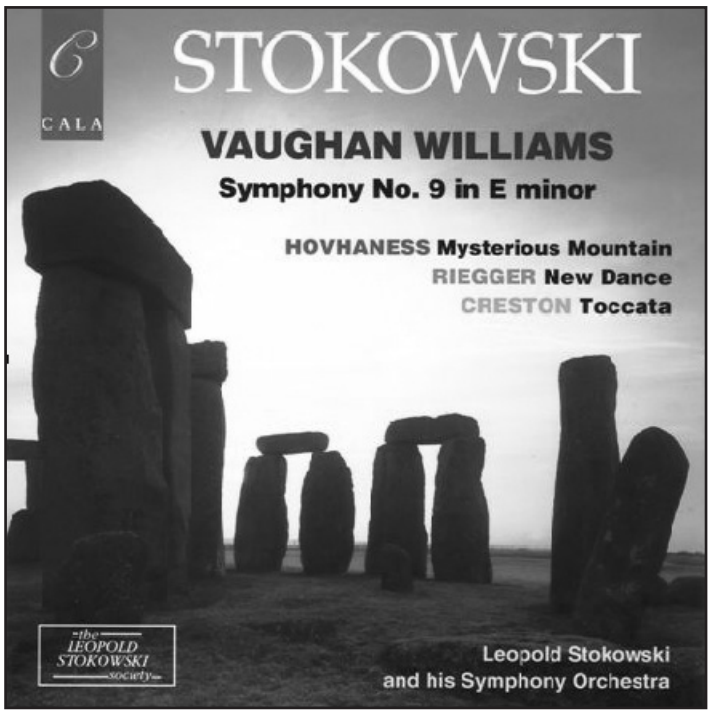
An evocative and sensitive performance of the *First Norfolk Rhapsody* ensues, with lively and accomplished playing, followed by one of the best versions of *Flos Campi* I've encountered. It is immediately apparent that Paul Silverthorne knows exactly what he's doing and is utterly in tune with the work. Passages of wild desolation lead to impassioned climaxes, lyrical flowing sections at once shimmer and lull, and the Moderato alla Marcia is alive and dances with snappy rhythms before opening out into the expansive and radiant Andante quasi lento. Silverthorne creates a gorgeously rich and wistful tone throughout that, combined with the sensitivity of the BSO and the sheer beauty of the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, makes this performance almost unbearably beautiful.

Em Marshall

Vaughan Williams Symphony no. 9 in E minor
Alan Hovhaness Mysterious Mountain (Symphony No. 2)
Wallingford Riegger New Dance, Op. 18b
Paul Creston Toccata, Op. 68
Leopold Stokowski conducting his 'hand-picked' Symphony Orchestra, Live performance at Carnegie Hall in new York on 25th September 1958 Cala CACD 0539

As RVW9 is possibly the least well known of his symphonies, let me begin by indicating a few useful references that readers may wish to be reminded of. Robin Barber, the Society's Vice-Chairman, has expressed the view that it is 'one of his greatest works, a towering masterpiece that has been misunderstood and neglected since its first performance in 1958's. It is still not often programmed live, although I much enjoyed a recent (20 November 2004) performance by the Salisbury Symphony Orchestra under David Halls. I dare say that many in the well-attended audience were unfamiliar with the work but it was enthusiastically received. Salisbury is, of course, understood to be a key location in RVW's inspiration, together with Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles and the Wessex countryside generally, including Stonehenge (appropriately featured on the CD cover). Robin Barber's RVW Journal articles[1,2] on RVW (and references included therein) and that of Edward Johnson[3] on Stokowski and Vaughan Williams are all highly relevant. Also, more

recently, the books by Lionel Pike[4] on all nine RVW symphonies and by Alain Frogley[5] exclusively on RVW have many illuminating things to say.



This review should be regarded as an addendum to Robin's excellent comprehensive review[1] of the nine recordings available in October 2002. His three leading recommendations were Boult/LPO (1958, Everest EVC 9001), Previn/LSO (1971, RCA Victor Gold Seal GD90508) and Haitink/LPO (2001, EMI CDC 7243-5-57086-2-5), of which I know the Boult and Haitink best and I share his high opinion in particular of the most recent of these. The Boult was the premier recording and has an introductory track on which Boult says that RVW would have been present during the recording had he not died just seven hours before the work had begun. I have now listened to the Stokowski a number of times and I believe that as an interpretation it stands up very well in that company. Unlike the other three, it is a live recording, from a concert on 25th September 1958, only now released on a Cala CD. I find the whole symphony very movingly performed by Stokowski and his 'hand-picked' orchestra assembled for an important concert celebrating his 50 years of conducting. Originally the programme had been intended to include Shostakovich's eleventh symphony but when Stokowski heard that Vaughan Williams had died on the 26th August, he substituted that composer's ninth. Stokowski knew RVW from much earlier times at the Royal College of Music, and went on to record many of his symphonies.[3]

As a live performance there are inevitably a couple of recording glitches, one near the opening, and some audience sounds. But these are not too troublesome and the sound is generally good although in densely-orchestrated forte passages there is some loss of detail. The overall timing is 35.58 (not 38.58 as the back cover incorrectly states), which places it between the faster Boult and the slower Previn and half a minute faster than Haitink.

The first movement (10.12 timing) begins in fine style with the same E minor chord as Bach's St Matthew Passion, followed by a somewhat similar rising theme. This reference surely relates to RVW's lifelong admiration of that work but it may also relate to a Salisbury occasion[6] in the dark empty cathedral one evening in 1938 when RVW heard passages from Bach played on the organ by Walter Alcock. Anyway, Stokowski gives the whole movement exactly the right sequence of darkish mood changes it requires.

The opening of the second movement (8.09 timing), with the solo flügelhorn beautifully played, is somewhat marred by distant coughs from the audience. And the more densely orchestrated sections probably sound rather harsher than they did in the concert hall. Still, Stokowski gives a lovely account of a movement with, apparently[1], links to Tess and to Stonehenge.

The third movement is very energetically played, a little jazzier and a shade faster, at 5.12, than either Boult or Haitink. The saxophones come through well and, as Lionel Pike says[4], the style has a feeling of 'witches Sabbath' about it, very well brought out here.

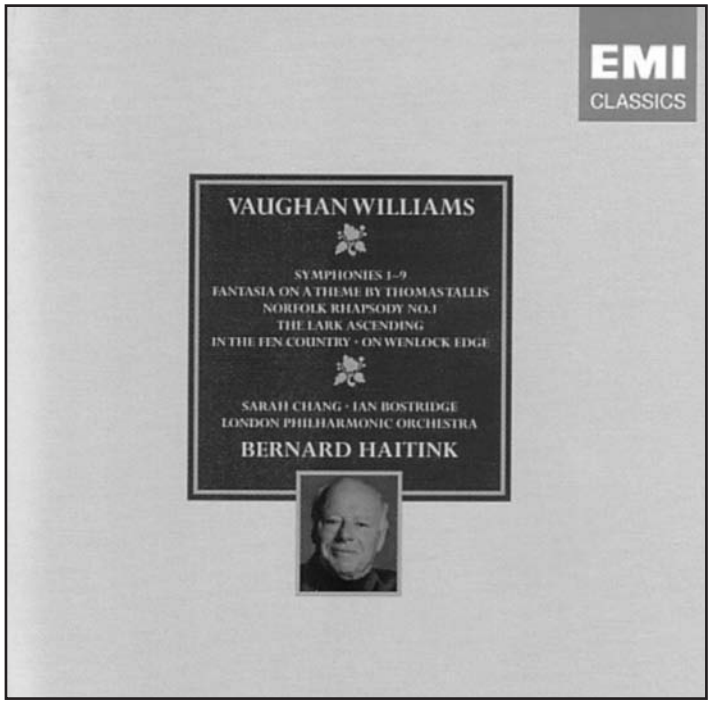
The final and longest movement (timing 12.25) is wonderfully performed, with Stokowski seeming to be in total control of the forces needed to express the profundity and complexity of this last of RVW's symphonic utterances. One is swept along by Stokowski's interpretative mastery.

In short, I strongly recommend this CD for the RVW alone. But there is more, importantly including Hovhaness' *Mysterious Mountain* (Symphony no. 2). My other recording of this (Schwarz with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra on Delos DE 3157) introduced this work to me and I still have a very soft spot for it. Stokowski was an advocate for Hovhaness generally and he works wonders with this symphony. There are also two fillers, by Creston and Riegger.

1 Robin Barber, Journal of the RVW Society No. 25 (October 2002), 14-17.
2 Robin Barber, Journal of the RVW Society No. 24 (June 2002), 8-9.
3 Edward Johnson, Journal of the RVW Society No. 24 (June 2002), 12-17.
4 Lionel Pike, Vaughan Williams and the Symphony (Toccata Press 2003).
5 Alain Frogley, Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony (OUP 2001).
6 Ursula Vaughan Williams, RVW – A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams (OUP 1964, reprinted 2000, p222-223).

David Betts

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Symphonies 1 – 9 etc.
London Philharmonic Orchestra
Bernard Haitink Recorded 1984 – 2000
EMI CLASSICS (7 CDs) 5 86026 2



Bernard Haitink's recorded cycle of the symphonies appeared steadily over a period of thirteen years, beginning with the Sinfonia Antartica in 1984. The seven discs are collected together here in a box for which I paid a little over £18 by mail order, a quite extraordinary bargain. One might almost stop there, since this release is obviously self-recommending, but perhaps a little more detail is in order.

Haitink's performance of A Sea Symphony was rapturously received on its first release by most of the respected Vaughan Williams commentators, and I'm happy to concur with their view. I had not heard this performance before acquiring the set, and so have not had much time to live with it, but it is clear that many of this conductor's characteristics – in Vaughan Williams – are present here as they are in the later symphonies. There are two major features to listen out for: the ability to place the music in an international context, and a remarkable way of bringing out the purely symphonic quality of the writing. Never has the structure of *the Sea Symphony* been more convincingly exposed than it is here, becoming almost – and here is a refrain to which we might frequently return – Brucknerian in nature. Felicity Lott and Jonathan Summers are both wonderful, the choir and orchestra superb, the recording outstanding. What more can we ask? It goes straight to the top of my list of favourite performances.

The performance of the *London Symphony* contains many small, rather surprising interpretative features. A rallentando here, a note held longer than we expect there, yet interestingly, most of these surprises arise directly from the score, and the composer's indications which Haitink is particularly careful to respect. Nonetheless, the result is that parts of the work, the first movement in particular, can seem unidiomatic. "Swagger" is a word often applied to this movement, and this is certainly in short supply in Haitink's reading, especially when set aside those of Barbirolli, Boult or Previn. Indeed, there is less of the picturesque in Haitink's view of the work than in almost any other performance, and this, too, will surprise some listeners. It is rather sober in tone overall, but superbly well played and recorded, with a symphonic grip second to none. It represents a different, perhaps equally valid, view of the piece than the one we are used to.

I'm devoted to Haitink's reading of the *Pastoral Symphony*, even if I share the view sometimes expressed that the more flowing tempi adopted by other conductors can lead, perhaps surprisingly, to a clearer expression of the profound sadness of this music. The sound picture Haitink creates, homogeneous and blended, also makes the music sound more comfortable than it might, a world apart from Roger Norrington's inspired reading, for example. All the same, listen to the final movement. It's difficult not to be convinced by the patient way the conductor unfolds this music before us, leading to a remarkably moving first climax to the main theme when it arrives on the strings.

Haitink's reading of the *Fourth Symphony* is a more mixed affair. The first two movements are outstandingly successful. Haitink manages brilliantly well the difficult chordal accompaniment to the first movement second subject and there is no lack of drama throughout the movement. The regular tread of the second movement evokes a strange, stately procession as well as establishing the links with Job. But there are tauter readings of the scherzo to be found elsewhere and the finale doesn't quite reach "boiling-point" (Michael Kennedy). Overall this is perhaps the only performance in the set which is not totally recommendable on its own terms.

When I listened to and reported on all the recorded interpretations of the *Fifth Symphony* for the October 2001 issue of the Journal I chose Haitink's reading as my favourite, though not without acknowledging that it was scarcely a "central" or conventional one. The reading is broad, with some surprisingly slow tempi, characteristic, once again, of Haitink's view of the whole cycle. Listening to it again now I am once again struck by the profound wisdom and conviction of this conductor in this work. He makes of it something unusually large in scale, building the work, note by note, with an extraordinary patience and sureness of tread. It is magnificently played and recorded.

The Sixth Symphony is another outstanding reading. This is perhaps the least "English" of the nine, but in any case the conductor once again places the work squarely in the international mainstream of symphonic writing of the last century. The power of the playing is awesome – listen in particular to the climactic points of the two middle movements – and the finale is as empty of expression as any conductor has realised, even if I retain an enormous admiration for Andrew Davis here.

Little did we know, when the Sinfonia Antartica appeared, of the riches to come. It was (and is) a revelatory performance, and even those – like me – who always return to Barbirolli's reading might admit that the symphonic argument is even more convincing here. Haitink tends to be a little unsmiling in those parts of the score where humour is called for, as indeed he was in the *London Symphony*, but this scarcely detracts from the success of this magnificent achievement.

The same mild criticism might be directed towards the performance of the *Eighth Symphony*, and Barbirolli certainly smiles more – one can almost see him at it – and realises more successfully the slightly knockabout humour of the work which was of course dedicated to him. The tenderness he coaxes from his string players is remarkable too, but none of this should lead us to think that Haitink's is an unsuccessful reading. He tends toward the serious-mindedness characteristic of his view of the cycle as a whole, and only direct comparison with Barbirolli reveals those elements which are, arguably, insufficiently brought out. There is room for both points of view.

The *Ninth Symphony* receives a reading of huge stature. This remains the least known symphony in the cycle, and as such is a huge loss to those who have not yet encountered it. All of Vaughan Williams is here, and the more one listens to and studies it the more it seems to be a kind of summation of the grandeur of the composer's life and work. And if we want evidence of Vaughan Williams' visionary qualities, the extraordinary closing pages will do very well. Both the grandeur and vision are magnificently realised by Haitink. I believe this to be the finest reading available, going even a little further, then, than Robin Barber writing in the Journal in June 2001.

As if the symphonies were not enough the discs have been reissued with their original couplings. Thus we have a remarkably passionate and committed performance of the *Norfolk Rhapsody No 1*, confirming the suspicion held by some of us, myself for instance, that Vaughan Williams rather overloads *The Captain's Apprentice* here. Haitink makes out as good a case for *In the Fen Country* as I've heard. Then there is Ian Bostridge, wonderfully communicative and moving in *On Wenlock Edge*, even if I may humbly depart from the composer's view by preferring Housman's "coloured counties" as evoked in the original version. Sarah Chang, who was no more than fourteen at the time, plays *The Lark Ascending* with impeccable intonation and remarkable purity of tone, unusually finding a certain unease, even something rather urgent at times, in the music. The performance of the *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis* has been widely praised, and magnificently played it is. Yet there is something about the ebb and flow of the work, management of tempi relative to each other, and a certain feeling of emotion held in check which mean that this reading doesn't quite work for this listener. Others will like it better. The seven discs are presented in a format which is space-saving without seeming at all cheaply done, and there are extended and typically authoritative booklet notes by Michael Kennedy.

Two complete cycles of the symphonies are reviewed in this issue of the Journal. I know which one better responds to my own view of Vaughan Williams, but it's clear that members who don't already have these performances have only one possible choice, and helpfully it's an inexpensive one. Buy both.

William Hedley

Vaughan Williams
Symphonies 1-9 etc.
London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Andre Previn, with Heather Harper, soprano, John Shirley-Quirk, baritone, James Buswell, violin, John Fletcher, tuba, Sir Ralph Richardson (narrator). RCA Complete Collections 82876-55708-2.

My own interest in the music of Vaughan Williams began around the time of the VW Centenary in 1972. I can well recall the great enthusiasm with which Andre Previn's RCA Vaughan Williams cycle (recorded between 1967-1972) was received. The boxed set of complete symphonies, on LP, was released (if my memory serves me correctly) in time for the Centenary celebrations. Personally, I remained loyal to the (simultaneously released) EMI Boult set, since it was Sir Adrian's

famous old Decca Eclipse LP of *Symphony 6*, which had first awakened my enthusiasm for Vaughan Williams, but I do recall that many leading critics preferred the Previn set.

By way of an introduction to this review, I thought that it would be of interest to quote, at some length, from Ralph Vaughan Williams OM 1872-1958, a booklet which accompanied the Centenary celebrations on 1972 and which, therefore, reflects Previn's views of VW at the time he recorded the symphonies for RCA.

Andre Previn's admiration for Vaughan Williams's music goes back to his student days in America. It was there that he first became acquainted with the symphonies – he was "bowled over by the *Sixth Symphony*" even, as he says,"under the palm trees of California"…"What attracts me – among many other things – to VW's music is a curious blend of naivete and sophistication. If you compare them with the more "glittery" pieces, they're not terribly cleverly orchestrated – the orchestra never makes a very glamorous sound. But I find the music so enormously sincerely written: I don't think there's a fake bar that ever existed in that man. Even the clumsy moments I find endearing. Because I did the *Fourth* and *Sixth* so much, the big, stormy symphonies, there are two others at the moment that I like better, the *Third* and the *Fifth*, which are the very, very reflective ones…the *Third Symphony* is a series of heartbreakingly beautiful moments.

When you think that the *Fourth Symphony*, with the stridency, which he almost never again tried for, came in between these two – that's an amazing man! He must have been extraordinary; I'm terribly sorry that I never had the privilege of meeting him….It is impossible to hear any four consecutive bars taken at random from any of his works without realising that you are listening to Vaughan Williams. He was that individual a composer! And, whether he is your cup of tea or not, it is an enormous accomplishment to be so constantly personal in your musical language. I think that the day when he belonged exclusively to England has gone; a great deal of pride can be taken by the English in the fact that he is English, but nevertheless he is as much of an international composer as, say, a Rachmaninov was, who was Russian in every note he wrote, but played everywhere and adored everywhere. I think that is happening to Vaughan Williams now and that it will continue to grow as the years go by…I don't think that there's a worry in the world that Vaughan Williams is a world figure."

Well, thirty-two years on, with numerous complete Vaughan Williams symphony cycles available on CD, Previn has clearly been vindicated in his views. Previn was the first, however, to record a complete Vaughan Williams symphony cycle with the same orchestra for a single record company (Everest, rather than Decca had recorded Boult's original no 9 and his later EMI set was split between two orchestras.)

In view of Previn's comments above it is, perhaps, unsurprising that his performances of A Pastoral Symphony and No. 5 are, together with *A London Symphony* (the last ones to be recorded in the cycle), generally considered to be the finest of his series. At the time some critics were disappointed with Previn's recordings of *symphonies 4* and *6* which (in view of the spectacular success of his contemporaneous RCA recording of Walton's *First Symphony*) were expected to be highpoints of the cycle. Personally I have never really shared this sense of disappointment. True, Previn's *No. 4* lacks some of the visceral excitement of the composer's own recording or that of Dimitri Mitropolous but it remains a thoughtful, eloquent performance and a valid alternative view. Likewise, although the Epilogue of *No. 6* is rather faster than desirable, the overall performance is strong. On balance, however, I would go for Boult (Dutton or Decca versions), Abravanel, Davis or Haitink in Vaughan Williams's greatest symphony.

Symphonies 3-6 were issued a few months back in a double CD set by RCA in their Artistes Repertoires and for compulsive collectors like myself it is irritating to have to duplicate them now! I reviewed this set in Issue 28 and would only add now that the Previn's recording of *A Pastoral Symphony* is the finest one that I have heard, a quite outstanding performance in every way.

I would like to focus the rest of my review on those symphonies which were not included in the earlier set.

The performance of *A Sea Symphony* is generally considered inferior to more recent versions by Haitink or older ones such as Boult's original Decca recording from the 1950s. Although the Previn version is beginning to show its age, making the imposing introduction less spectacular than in some other versions, it is still a powerful performance and I liked the vocal contributions of John Shirley Quirk and Heather Harper.

Previn's cycle is, in my view, worth having for the opening of *A London Symphony* alone. This is a marvellous performance, which opens with an utterly compelling sense of hushed expectation and intensity. This was, I think, the last symphony to be recorded (1972) and there is a beautiful mellow quality about the recording, which adds to the overall warmth of the performance. In this sense, Previn's version reminds me of Barbirolli in his two recordings on Pye/Dutton and EMI. Boult, in his latter EMI recording brings some extra gravitas to the solemn march of the finale but Previn's is an equally impressive performance and a definite high point in his cycle.

Previn's version of *Sinfonia Antartica* was famous (or infamous) for the croaky spoken superscriptions from Sir Ralph Richardson, guaranteed to set you heading off for the Veno's Cough Mixture. Personally I did not find this to be a problem and, anyway, you can always programme your CD player to dispense with them. This programmatic music does benefit from a more modern recording (the organ entry sounds rather puny) and whilst Previn's performance remains enjoyable I would either opt for the more recent version under Haitink or, paradoxically, Barbirolli's premiere recording, both of which convey more epic sweep.

The *Eighth Symphony* under Previn, however, remains a high point of the cycle and is, in my opinion, the greatest recording of this work since Barbirolli. In particular, the opening has never sounded more magical. It possesses a haunting, luminous quality that I have not detected elsewhere. The recording quality is excellent with Previn fully conveying both the poetry and humour of VW's most underrated symphony.

In an excellent article in Issue 25 (October 2002), Robin Barber described Previn's 1971 recording of the *Ninth Symphony* as "superb, quite unlike any of the others…in a class of its own". Certainly, it makes a very welcome return to the catalogue here. I have never been a subscriber to the view that there is no conscious leave-taking in this symphony. On the contrary, I have rarely heard a more obviously valedictory work. In view of his great age (not to mention the sombre connotations of the number 9 for symphonic composers!), I suspect that VW had a fair idea that this would be his final essay in the form. This is in no way to decry the originality of this epic score. In this symphony, I believe that Vaughan Williams was surveying his life's work whilst defiantly staring death in the face.

Previn's is a beautifully mellow performance which reminded me of Boult's contemporaneous EMI version (which, like Robin Barber, I grew up with). Personally, I prefer an interpretation which more fully conveys the resolute defiance of this score and, in this sense, I prefer the newly released Stokowski version (Cala) from 1958 or Bryden Thomson's Chandos recording. Nevertheless, this is one of the high points of the Previn cycle with the finale, from its beautifully phrased opening conveying more and more tension until the great monolith of those final chords loom up before us, like one of those extraordinary Mark Rothko paintings in the Tate Gallery. In my naivete, I like to think of the harp glissandos at the end as representing the soul of Vaughan Williams ascending to Heaven, but in view of the fact that early sketches for the last movement were apparently prefaced with the phrase "I will go unto the altar of God" (as revealed in Robin's article), maybe this is not as far-fetched as it might seem!

The RCA boxed set contains four other compositions by Vaughan Williams although none of them are major works. Most interesting, perhaps, is the CD debut of the late John Fletcher's recording of the late

Tuba Concerto (I recall Previn talking to John Fletcher about this work on a TV programme, many years ago). This work is not everyone's cup of tea; James Day, in his book on Vaughan Williams, describes it as "a slightly perverse work….the jokes fall flat." Personally, I rather like it, especially the nostalgic Romanza central movement, where the composer writes poetry for the most unlikely of instruments. The performance is worthy to stand alongside Philip Catilinet/Barbirolli version and the recording is much more recent. I have always found the *Violin Concerto* to be a rather anaemic score but it is effectively performed by James Oliver Buswell IV and no complaints either about Previn's lively traversal of *The Wasps Overture*.

Also included is *Three Portraits from "The England of Elizabeth"*, an attractive and atmospheric documentary film score, contemporaneous with and containing echoes of the *Ninth Symphony*. There is an alternative version on Marco Polo, not to mention the complete score recently recorded by Chandos but Previn's performance conveys a unique atmosphere and warmth and is, in my view, the highlight of the non-symphonic contents of this set.

On its initial release, the Previn RCA LP set only had Boult's EMI set as a serious modern rival but there are now several alternative surveys available on CD, the most recent being Haitink's on EMI.

On Radio 3's Record Review a few months ago, the presenter compared the Previn set with Vernon Handley's on EMI/CFP. Whilst admiring the qualities of the Previn recordings, the presenter came firmly down on the side of the Handley set. True, the Handley set is not only much cheaper than the Previn set (around £17 compared with £30) but it also contains some of VW's major non-symphonic works, including an absolutely first-rate performance of *Job*. Having said that, good as they undoubtedly are, I would not choose any of Handley's versions of the symphonies as my top choice, whereas Previn's versions of *A London Symphony*, *A Pastoral Symphony* and the *Eighth Symphony* are, in my view, second to none (and others would add Nos. *5* and *9* to that list).

The set is attractively boxed and contains six CD's. The anonymous booklet notes are informative and, unlike in some other sets, give detailed analyses of each symphony. Apart from a characteristic photograph of the composer in middle age and one of the youthful conductor, there is a nice photograph of the Victoria Embankment, undated but I would guess it is from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, to put you in the mood for listening to *A London Symphony*.

In conclusion, a very welcome return to the catalogue for Andre Previn's fine Vaughan Williams symphony cycle, which will continue to give many hours of listening pleasure.

Jeffrey Davis

FROM THE EDITOR

Stephen Connock's first issue as Editor of the RVW Society Journal was No. 5 which appeared in 1996. He took over as a temporary measure, but he was still there for No. 31! I've made clear to him that I hope to edit at least one more issue then he did, and we already have the date booked for our celebratory dinner to take place some time in 2013.

The Journal is part of the public face of the Society, and editing it is a great privilege. Members will see that the current issue follows closely the format of previous ones, for the simple reason that it is an excellent publication and there is no reason to change things simply for the sake of change. Future Journals will maintain regular features such as CD, book and concert reviews, and your letters on any subject relative to our great subject will be very welcome. The Journal has always been a forum both for scholarly articles from experts in the field of Vaughan Williams studies and those of more general interest and ambition from non-specialist Society members. This is a difficult balance to maintain, and I hope members will keep me informed as to what they think of the content. Please wait until his second issue, though, before coming down hard on the editor!

The next issue of the Journal will concentrate on RVW and religion. Why did a man who was by his own admission set so many sacred texts? And with such obvious love and devotion? Was it simply a the language he revered? Does childhood nostalgia play a part? Or was it, in Hardy's words, that he was "hoping it might be so"? Please let me have your thoughts on this huge subject.

The following issue will concentrate on a part of RVW's output which tends to be neglected, the concertos. It's not too early – it's never too early – to start thinking, writing and sending in your contributions.

Members will find my details on the back page and are welcome to contact me at any time. If you are planning a large piece you might think it worthwhile to get in touch before you start, just in case someone else has already thought of it. And contributions will be welcome in any form, so don't hesitate.

Letters

We are always pleased to receive contributions for this page

Thomas Canning

I am writing in response to an inquiry in a recent issue of the Journal of the RVW Society about the American composer Thomas Canning. As I happen to have written both CD liner notes and a program note about the late Professor Canning's *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune of Justin Morgan*, I am in a position to illuminate this dark area of American musical history.

Thomas Canning (1911-1989) was trained at the Oberlin College-Conservatory of Music and at the Eastman School in Rochester, New York. He was a careful composer, mostly of small pieces and organ works, as well as band pieces. He studied and later taught at the Eastman School of Music; disagreements with that institution's director, Howard Hanson, led to Canning's seeking and accepting a post at the University of West Virginia. He became virtually an official state composer, and was much honored by his adopted state; his son is a noted jazz pianist in Los Angeles.

Canning's best-known work is the *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune of Justin Morgan*, which evinces a strain of profound spirituality as well as an expert knowledge of American hymnody. Canning based this score – virtually his only work for orchestral forces – on the hymn tune *Amanda* by Justin Morgan, an early American composer who was also a traveling teacher and noted horse breeder. (Morgan wrote this pensive tune after the death of his wife, whose name was Amanda.) Canning composed this radiant score during the Second World War while teaching airplane mechanics on an isolated airbase in Nebraska. This work also shows Canning's deep reverence for the works of the great English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, and especially that English master's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

I hope that this information will intrigue your readers to investigate this lovely work!

Byron Adams
Professor and Chair,
University of California, Riverside

More

I can add some information to Colin Lees' very good overview of American composers in the October issue (no. 31).

Thomas Canning, whose *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune by Justin Morgan* is justly praised by Mr. Lees, was born in Pennsylvania in 1911. He was educated at Oberlin College in Ohio and at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, one of the leading music schools in the United States, and joined the Eastman faculty in 1947. He taught there until 1963, when he joined the faculty of West Virginia University in Morgantown (near the Pennsylvania border) and taught there until his retirement in 1977. He continued to live in Morgantown until his death in 1989. *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune by Justin Morgan* was composed in 1944. I don't know the circumstances of its creation, but imagine that Canning must have been dazzled (as have so many) by VW's *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis* and determined to compose an American counterpart. As Mr. Lees has noted, Canning followed VW's model very closely and anyone familiar with the *Fantasia* will immediately recognize it as the inspiration for Canning's beautiful piece. Justin Morgan (1747-1798) of Vermont, whose tune Amanda was Canning's source, wrote a number of hymn-tunes but is best remembered today as the breeder of the so-called "Morgan" horse.

Apart from Canning, the composer in Mr. Lees's piece whose music is closest in feeling to VW's is John Powell (1882-1963). As a young man he studied in Europe and became a good friend of the novelist Joseph Conrad. He was also an amateur astronomer and discovered a comet. Powell traveled around Virginia much as VW had done in England collecting folksongs; his collection, only partly catalogued, is now at the University of Virginia. He used a number of these folk songs (which are closely related to those collected by VW, Cecil Sharp, and others) when composing his *Symphony in A major (the Virginia Symphony)*. He also made piano and voice arrangements of a number of the folk songs he collected. (His views on race relations were unfortunately somewhat to the right of those of his namesake non-relative Enoch Powell, but it should be noted that he played a part in helping Jewish musicians to escape from Nazi Germany in the 1930s.)

Mr. Lees is correct in stating that none of the composers he discusses are well known in the United States, although Canning's *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune by Justin Morgan* and Alan Hovhaness's Mysterious Mountain are heard with some frequency on the radio. (Mr. Lees is also correct in his assessment of Hovhaness's output; his "symphonies," while pleasant to listen to, are little more than chords strung together.) The music of VW, Elgar, Holst, and even Gerald Finzi, on the other hand, is often heard both on American radio and – at least in the cases of VW and Elgar – in American concert halls. VW may not have been heard at the Proms this year, but the *Tallis Fantasia* was performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra (led by Mark Elder) at this year's Tanglewood Music Festival in Massachusetts (Elgar's Enigma Variations were also on the program), and I heard VW's *London Symphony* at Tanglewood last year, performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, led by Sir Neville Marriner. These concerts were broadcast as well.

David Meschutt, Cornwall, New York

David Bryan

I have been asked by Doreen Bryan, widow of David Bryan, to inform you of David Bryan's death almost a year ago on November 8th 2003. Having read the concert reviews in the journal we thought you might be interested in the concert of the music of Vaughan Williams that we gave as a tribute to David's life and work. Initially a whole concert of VW seemed rather daunting, considering our forces of a chamber choir with limited accompaniment opportunities (piano and organ - and a solo violin) but it soon became obvious that there was so much we could sing. We think we made a really representative choice. It was an extremely successful concert performed to a full church and very well received. As one Yorkshireman said, 'You did him proud'.

I have attached a document which gives what is really an account of the concert plus a short obituary notice. I am adding here a short 'blurb' about the choir taken from our current brochure.

The Aire Valley Singers

The Aire Valley Singers were founded in 1970 by David Bryan who was their conductor for thirty-three years. Originally about 16 voices, the Singers' numbers have now doubled, but they remain a chamber choir, singing mainly a capella music and occasionally pieces accompanied by organ or small orchestra. Their repertoire ranges from the Renaissance to the present day, and from the serious to lighter arrangements of popular music.

Through links with town 'twinning' the Aire Valley Singers have built a close relationship with musicians in Hamm, Germany which stretches back over 25 years. Other international contacts have led to successful visits to Belgium, Holland, Norway, France, Spain, Wales and the U.S.A. In 2002, the choir enjoyed a concert tour in the Lake Garda region of Italy which included an opportunity to sing in a Mass in St. Mark's Basilica in Venice.

Honours they have received include a first prize at the Rencontre Internationale de Chant Chorale at Tours in the Loire Valley, and an award for the Best Chamber Choir at the Royal Albert Hall. They have twice been runners-up in the BBC's 'Let the Peoples Sing' competition. Over the years they have raised thousands of pounds for charities, have appeared on radio and television at home and abroad and have made several commercial recordings.

I am Doreen Anderson, the Choir's new Director - having been associate Director for many years.

Music of Vaughan Williams

Concert given by The Aire Valley Singers, directed by Doreen Anderson, on October 9th 2004 at St. Paul's Church, Shipley, West Yorkshire.

This concert was a tribute to the life and work of David Bryan, founder and director of the Aire Valley Singers for more than 30 years. David was a member of the RVW Society. He died suddenly on November 8th 2003 after being taken ill during the final rehearsal for a concert.

David's love of the music of Vaughan Williams had been obvious throughout his life as a singer, teacher and conductor – we were never allowed to forget that he met 'the great man'. The choice of music reflected both the strengths of the chamber choir (30 voices) and David's favourite pieces.

The concert began with *Linden Lea* which had been the opening piece in the Aire Valley Singers' first concert in 1971.

Serenade to Music gave an opportunity for the Choir's soloists to shine as 15 individual voices were heard. Sally Robinson's solo violin added a lyrical brilliance.

David Bryan had a good baritone voice and enjoyed singing many of VW's songs, and so it was appropriate that during the course of the concert four different bass/baritone soloists sang *The Vagabond, The Roadside Fire*, *Whither must I wander*? and *Bright is the Ring of Words*.

Part Songs were represented by *O Mistress Mine* and *Sweet Day* from *Three Elizabethan Part Songs*.

For many people the highlight of the evening was the sensitive performance of the *Five Mystical Songs* with Andrew Clarke as soloist with Alan Horsey accompanying on the organ.

David had always enjoyed opportunities to involve the audience and so the obvious choice was VW's arrangement of *The Old Hundreth Psalm Tune*.

From the cantata *In Windsor Forest*, sopranos and altos sang *Sigh no more ladies* and the tenors and basses gave a spirited performance of *The Drinking Song* before joining together for one of David's favourites – *The Wedding Chorus* again with solo violin.

David was a Welshman who lived in exile in Yorkshire since the 1950s but he never lost his roots. Welsh was his mother tongue and he persuaded the choir to sing in Welsh. He was a staunch member of the Bradford and District Welsh Society, regularly playing the organ or conducting the Welsh Hymn singing.

Alan Horsey (organ) played the *Three Preludes on Welsh Hymn Tunes* and before each Prelude the choir sang, in Welsh, a verse of the hymn. *The Water Mill* was expressively sung by Gill Hepworth, a founder member of the choir and then another much loved song *The Turtle Dove* led the concert into the final section – taken from Five English Folk Songs – *The dark eyed sailor, The Springtime of the year* and *Just as the tide was flowing* – which ended the concert on bright and cheerful note. The choir's best tribute to David is to continue his good work in promoting excellence in Choral singing.

David Bryan - born April 1st 1925 – died November 8th 2003

David Bryan, the founder and conductor of the Aire Valley Singers was born in Caernarfon, North Wales, but spent most of his working life in West Yorkshire. For twenty-five years he was director of Music at the Salt Grammar School in Shipley where he established a mixed choir that reached competition standard and performed many of Vaughan Williams' songs and folk song arrangements.

He was a past Director of Music of Morley Musical Society, and for some time was Chorus Master of Bradford Festival Choral Society. He had long associations with first Queensbury Parish Church and then Shipley Parish Church as Organist and Choirmaster. For many years he lectured on music for the WEA and gave pre-concert talks for orchestral concerts at St. George's Hall in Bradford. Links with his homeland were maintained through his close connection with the Welsh Societies of Bradford and Yorkshire as organist and conductor.

Doreen Anderson

Help Wanted

In preparation of an educational project, I'm looking for a video with concert-orchestral performance from the *Sinfonia Antartica* by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Please can you take up this message in the next RVW-Journal. Thank you very much!

Gino Malfait,
Inspector of Music,
Ministry of Education,
Flanders,
Belgium.

My address:

Grote Dijk 11,
8600 DIKSMUIDE
gino.malfait@skynet.be

Armed with his Trombone: RVW on Holst

Memory can be misleading. Not only do I find myself forgetting: what I have written, where I have filed it, and what name did I give to that poem anyway?; I come across in searching for something else, a treasure.

Let me put this another way: when you went out to the last concert, did you remember to record the interval talk on the radio? No, I thought not.

These two things came together for me last Saturday. As part of the new drive towards online technology and wider access, the government launched a new project at the new British Library building (Euston Road, London). Named as The National Sound Archive.

www.bl.uk/collections/sound-archive/nsa.html

There is a good searchable catalogue, with the normal proviso, that to search for anything relating to Vaughan Williams, you must put Williams as the surname by itself, with Vaughan as a related name or search term.

Search: Vaughan Williams, speaker

These are the main tapes listed. I have omitted call reference numbers and most of the details to save space as full information appears on-line. There are a couple of extra items not listed below.

1. How to perform Bach?
   This is described as a BBC tape of a 1950 broadcast. "The composer Ralph Vaughan Williams made no secret if his distaste for placing Early Music in its historical context. He expressed his latterly controversial views in a talk recorded in July 1950 when he was seventy-seven years old."

2. Lecture on Stanford and Parry.
   This is described as incomplete, broadcast 7th March 1956, duration @ 14 minutes

3. Presentation of the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal to Walton. Described as broadcast 19th November 1947, duration @ 3 minutes

4. Speech congratulating The London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult following their recording of his Sixth symphony, recorded December 1953

5. The Yale Lecture, with other speakers, including folk song performances. Recorded December 1954

6. Armed with his trombone. BBC transcription of the RVW tribute to Gustav Holst.

Time being in relatively short supply (as I was researching another topic) I made a booking with the NSA to call in the following Saturday to listen in full to the Holst tribute.

Back to my opening little points: I arrived in good time in the light and airy new building. Nice modern facilities, but somehow I still miss the atmosphere of the old Music Reading Room in Russell Square. Punctually, I was shown to a small, soundproofed carrel, headphones in place I settled in place.

I was stunned to hear the radio announcer begin "Welcome to the Barbican, where Richard Hickox is ending his cycle of the RVW symphonies." Suddenly I remembered the whole evening as clear as day. After all, most if not all of the RVW Society was there, and the Holst tribute was the interval broadcast, so I guess we all missed it !

Well I was delighted to listen again in full to the *Serenade to Music*, *the London Symphony* (after the tribute) and a scorching performance of the *Ninth Symphony*. With amazing good fortune I even had the score of the *Ninth* with me, as I had bought it that very morning to pass on to a friend, so I had the luxury to follow along.

Readers losing their patience with me are advised to go and make a cup of tea about now.

Yes, I listened with wonder to a crystal–clear recording of the Grand Man, speaking in friendly and emotional tones of his friendship and fellowship with Gustav Holst. For about fifteen minutes I hung on every word. Though I have read the Holst essay (in National Music, and also in Heirs and Rebels if I recall correctly) several times, there is something magical in hearing the voice. I cannot begin to describe it.

I did ask if the tape could be reproduced for the RVW Society, as I am sure we would all love to hear this, and the Yale Lecture perhaps as well. There appears to be some strict copyright restriction, but perhaps the Chairman, with a letter of support from Mrs Vaughan Williams, could make some headway with the BBC to enable a very limited CD release for society members?

May I therefore encourage the Chairman to take this up? In the meantime I heartily urge anyone with internet access and easy travelling to the British Library to sign up for a Reader Pass, make the search, and go along for themselves for a genuine treat.

In passing, a small final remark: I notice there are a very small number of listings for Holst as a speaker as well. Perhaps someone else in the Society would like to check this out and report back?

Richard Mason, Oxford

The White Gates

Amid all the well-deserved congratulations to Ursula Vaughan Williams on her 93rd birthday, I wonder whether we could ask her to perform a favour for posterity?

Most people seem to agree that the biggest loss for Vaughan Williams enthusiasts is the big house The White Gates, where RVW and his first wife moved in 1929. It was there that Ursula frequently joined them as a houseguest and she must have known the house well.

The demolition of the house is all the more sad, now there is a booklet which gives a detailed trail of Dorking in the steps of RVW. It would have been so nice to be able to visit the old house. Sadly, there is no chance of rebuilding it, either on site or elsewhere. But these days modern technology is frequently bringing demolished buildings back to life – in virtual reality. It would not be difficult to reconstruct on the computer screen, how RVW's house looked, both inside and out.

There are several photos of the outside of the house, but few photos of the inside. Why not, then, arrange for someone to reconstruct the house on a computer, and then ask Ursula V-W to fill in the parts of the reconstruction which cannot be deduced from the photos? It should be a fascinating reconstruction of the place where the great man wrote some of his greatest works. The reconstruction might then be turned in a CD Rom – and one which I suspect many members would be interested in acquiring.

Many of us like to visit the many composers' house abroad which their nations have been sensible enough to preserve. If this proposal comes about, we could at least visit, in virtual reality, the house which RVW chose for himself. And would not the process of reconstructing the house make a marvellous TV programme!

Nicholas Reed, Folkestone

50th Anniversary

In the year 2008 we shall see the 50th anniversary of RVW's death. This seems a long way off, but I have a proposal. Should the Society commit itself now to lobbying in the media for a film to be made about some aspect of RVW's life or work, to be shown in that year, perhaps on BBC Four? The film could be a documentary or a drama. Its focus would have to be limited to keep it manageable, for example covering a particular period in RVW's life, or a theme in his work. I do not think it is premature to raise the question now, due to the long lead-time that would be involved in such a project. I would be very interested to hear members' views.

Robert Shave

(This is a very welcome idea and the time is certainly right to take it up as part of our planning for the 50th anniversary of RVW's death. It was discussed at the meeting of Trustees in January and members will be kept informed - Ed.)

The 49th Parallel Article

I have just received the October journal issue. Having begun to read the article on the film *The 49th Parallel*, I was brought up somewhat short by the characterization of the Lend-Lease Act (page 17, mid-first paragraph). Here, the article states that the Act "provided that the president of the U.S. could transfer weapons, food or equipment to any nation whose fight against the Axis aided the defeat of the U.S." Surely the author intended to say the defense of the US? This passage as printed seems to suggest FDR subscribing to self-defeating policies. It appears that a misprint of some sort has occurred, rendering this sentence nonsensical.

Also, did you notice an article in the Toronto Globe an Mail about the Toronto Symphony's new music director? It stated that Vaughan Williams in his favorite 20th century composer. Perhaps there may be, ultimately, an increase in Canadian performances of the RVW orchestral works!

Robert Weltzien

A NEW FREE TRIAL MEMBERSHIP SCHEME

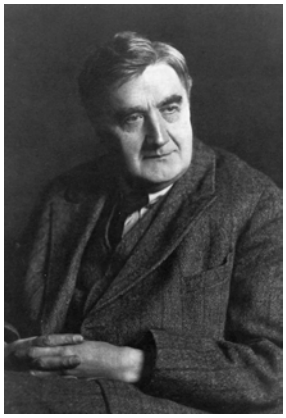
The Society naturally wants to see its membership growing, and the Trustees have generously decided to encourage nominees of existing members to join entirely free for a trial year. Obviously we hope that many who accept this offer will become regular subscribing members in the longer term after the expiry of the first year, but of course that will be for them to decide.

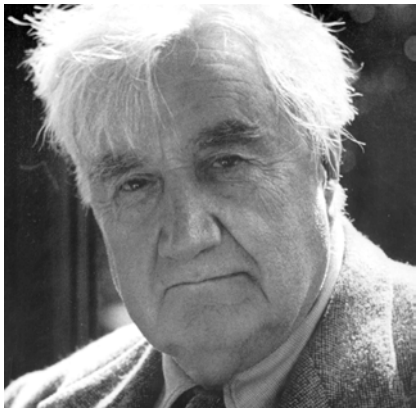
With this plan in mind, we have arranged that every existing member will find a flyer inserted into this issue of the Journal. All you need to do is to consider who among your friends or relations or colleagues seems likely to appreciate this offer. Then complete the contact details requested and return the flyer to me as the Membership Secretary, David Betts at Tudor Cottage, 30 Tivoli Road, Brighton, Sussex, BN1 5BH. Or contact me by e-mail davidbetts@tudorcottage.plus.com or telephone (UK)-(0)1273-501118.

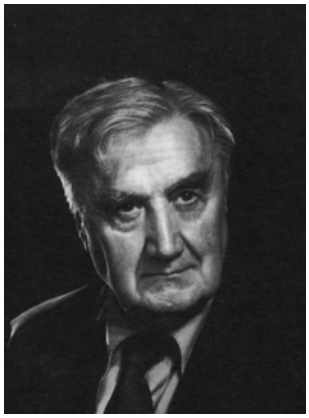
In exactly the same way as for new subscribers, your nominee will immediately be allocated a membership number and receive a 'welcome pack' including a copy of the current issue of the Journal. Two further Journals will be sent free, making a total of three for the period of one year. This scheme will cost you nothing, and might be very helpful to the Society.

I look forward to hearing from you, and do please contact me if you have any comments or queries about this idea.

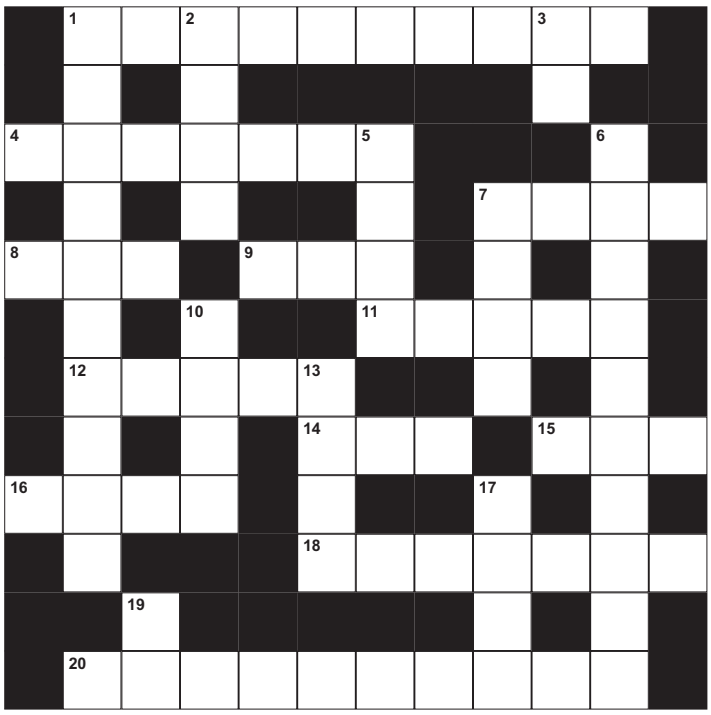
David Betts, January 2005







RVW Crossword No. 18 *by Michael Gainsford*



Across

1. Beautiful hymn tune prelude (10)
4. Eerie folk song (with 12 across) (7, 5)
7. Lord **** good (*Pilgrim's Progress*) (4)
8. Little Island of 1949 (3)
9. Linden *** (3)
11. Saviour, again to Thy dear name (5)
12. See 4 across (5)
14. Folk singers were plied with this to sing for RVW (3)
15. Number of years since birthday (3)
16. Food flavouring (4)
18. Another lord from *Pilgrim 's Progress* (7)
20. Choral work for Three Choirs Festival of 1932 (10)

Down

1. The 'Quodlibet of Folk Tunes' (7, 3)
2. Numbers not used for RVW works (4)
3. Second note of sol-fa scale (2)
5. Is mine ploughing? (*On Wenlock Edge*) (4)
6. RVW wrote a hymn for her in 1948 (2, 8)
7. The drover (4)
10. Subject of the fifth of the *Blake Songs* (4)
13. **** Brand (folk song) (4)
17. Elegantly dressed - very rarely if ever said of RVW! (4)
19. Sixth note of the sol-fa scale (2)

Answers Page 16

Next Edition: JUNE 2005

RVW and RELIGION

Deadline for contributions

April 10 2005

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Call for Papers

The October 2005 edition will concentrate on RVW's CONCERTOS

Deadline for contributions

August 10th 2005

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