The English Music Festival

Spirited

The Gazette of the English Music Festival

Issue 1 Spring 2011

THE ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL 27-30 May 2011

Box office opens 1 April 2011. Visit http://www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk/booking.html or call 0300 030 3003.

Friday 27	Saturday 28	Sunday 29	Monday 30
	11.00am	**11.00am**	**11.00am**
	Dorchester Abbey Milford *Songs of Escape* Finzi *Seven Part-songs* Rawsthorne *Four Seasonal Songs* Haydn Wood *This Quiet Night; The Phynodderee* Holst *Four Part-songs* The Syred Consort, Ben Palmer	**Dorchester Abbey** Stanford *Quartet No. 3 in D minor* Norman O'Neill *Piano Quintet* Elgar *Piano Quintet* Bridge Quartet, Michael Dussek	**Dorchester Abbey** Howells *Sonata no. 2 in E flat major* (world première of new edition by Paul Spicer) Lionel Sainsbury *Mirage* Paul Carr *Sonatina* (world première) Gurney *Violin Sonata in E flat major* (world première) Rupert Luck, Matthew Rickard
	2.30pm	**2.30pm**	**2.30pm**
	Silk Hall, Radley College Elgar *Severn Suite* Britten *Russian Funeral Music* Britten *Fanfare for St Edmundsbury* Walton *Spitfire Prelude and Fugue* Bliss *Royal Fanfares* Wells Cathedral School brass dectet	**Silk Hall, Radley College** Bowen *Selection from Preludes in all Twenty-four Major and Minor Keys, Op 102* Bowen *Piano Sonata no 5 in F minor, Op 72* Dale *Sonata in D minor* Danny Driver	**All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay** "Soul of the Age" - Shakespeare settings by Macfarren, Hatton, Webbe, Stevens and Vaughan Williams, and sacred and secular music of the age by Tallis, Byrd, Wilbye, Mundy, Campian and Farmer
5.15pm	**5.15pm**	**5.15pm**	**5.15pm**
Abbey Guest House, Dorchester Walton, Lambert and the Sitwells - William Sitwell and Diana Sparkes, daughter of Hubert Foss, in conversation	**Abbey Guest House, Dorchester** 'An infinite variety of things': Elgar's Second Symphony: disappointment and triumph - Andrew Neill	**Abbey Guest House, Dorchester** Directions in English Music of the 1920s: Walton, Bliss, Bridge and others' - Fabian Huss	**PRIVATE CD launch**
7.30pm	**7.00pm**	**7.00pm**	**7.00pm**
Dorchester Abbey Parry *Jerusalem* Capel Bond *Trumpet Concerto in D* Warlock *Curlew* Lambert *Piano Concerto*	**Dorchester Abbey** *Delius On hearing the first cuckoo in spring* Delius *Summer Night on the River* Britten *Sword in the Stone* Pickard *Burning of the Leaves* Bainton *An English Idyll*	**Dorchester Abbey** Vaughan Williams *Festival Te Deum* Holst *When First we met, Sorrow and joy, Love on my Heart* Gardner *Sinfonia Piccola* Holst *Brook Green Suite, Nunc Dimittis, Two Psalms*	**Dorchester Abbey** Vaughan Williams *Five Variants on Dives and Lazarus* *Bowen Rhapsody for Cello and Orchestra*
INTERVAL	**INTERVAL**	**INTERVAL**	**INTERVAL**
Walton Facade Orchestra of St Paul's, Ben Palmer, David Owen Norris, David Webb, William Sitwell	Sullivan *Macbeth* English Symphony Orchestra, John Andrews, James Rutherford	Gardner *O Clap your Hands* *Howells English Mass* City of London Choir, the Holst Orchestra, Hilary Davan Wetton, Stephen Farr (organist)	Delius *Walk to the Paradise Garden* Holst *Egdon Heath* Vaughan Williams *Garden of Proserpine* (world première) Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Joyful Company of Singers, David Hill, Janice Watson,Raphael Wallfisch
	9.30pm	**9.30pm**	
	Dorchester Abbey Lullay Mi Childe - From instrumental dances to Middle English lullabies, Joglaresa presents a programme of English music from the 12th to the 15th centuries. Exploring the Middle English lyric they perform songs such as *Maid in the Moor Lay*, *Lullay Lullow* and *Worldes Blis Ne Last No Throwe* with voices, harps, fidel and percussion. Joglaresa Belinda Sykes: voice, bagpipes Ruth Fraser: voice, harp Jean Kelly: harp, fidel Tim Garside: percussion, voice	**Dorchester Abbey** Jazz improvisations on works by Finzi, Delius, Walton and Vaughan Williams Avalon Trio	

The Festival reserves the right to change the programme or artists without prior notice.

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Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of *Spirited*. This is an exciting new venture, representing as it does one of the key aims of the EMF: namely, to reach out beyond those who are able to attend the annual Festival in Dorchester-on-Thames to enthusiasts of English music everywhere.

We hope that you find much of fascination in this inaugural issue. Regular attendees of the Festival will be interested to read more of the background and ecclesiastical significance of Dorchester Abbey in Sue Dixon's illuminating article; whilst Philip Mitchell's account of the town sheds light on its industrial and military history, its decline during the Middle Ages and its more recent revival. English music and composers are, of course, also highlighted: Marjorie Cullerne's perspective on Haydn Wood's life and music; a description of York Bowen's works at concerts over the four Festivals by EMF Trustee Dr David Green; and an overview of Joseph Holbrooke's music on CD by Robin Sawyers. The lighter side of the English music tradition is celebrated, too, in Stuart Millson's glimpse into the world of Eric Coates, Ernest Tomlinson and Ronald Binge.

This is a free issue; but the costs of producing such a journal are high and, in the future, we may have to charge a subscription fee in order to cover these costs and to ensure the continued success of the project. As you may be aware, the Newsletter, *The Spirit of England*, will be mainly issued online and many of you have already kindly provided email addresses. Of course, Friends of the Festival will receive printed copies of both *Spirited* and *The Spirit of England* free of charge; and we will still send copies of the Newsletter by post to those of you for whom we do not have an email address – in such cases, any donations towards the costs of postage would be most gratefully received!

Finally, please write to us and let us know what you think of this first issue! We would also welcome submissions for the next edition; and, if any of you would like to take on the role of editor, we'd like to hear from you.

This year's Festival promises to be a thrilling event, with premières of important works by composers including Vaughan Williams, Howells and Gurney. We very much hope to see you there.

Em Marshall Founder-Director of The English Music Festival
Rupert Luck Editor

The English Music Festival: its origins and history

EM MARSHALL


Festival Director Em Marshall – with accompanying beverage

Although my connection with English music draws its origins from the misty days of infancy (my father singing Vaughan Williams's *Linden Lea* to me is among my earliest memories), and ran as a continuous thread through my later childhood and teenage years (my first hearing of Holst's *The Planets* and *St Paul's Suite*; subsequent attendance at St Paul's Girls' School and a youth spent in complete immersion in the music of Holst, Howells and Vaughan Williams), it was during my mid to late teens that the first seeds of thoughts of an English Music Festival took root. I was then working with John Bishop at Thames Publishing (the specialist publisher of books about and scores of English music). John, whom I had met through the newly-founded Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, had opened my eyes to further, previously unsampled, delights – those exquisitely crafted songs of Quilter, Delius's operas, early Frank Bridge, Elgar's chamber music, and Britten operas. Ever eager to explore these treasures further, I became frustrated that one could not hear the vast majority of works by British composers – of whom I discovered new and unjustly neglected names almost by the day – at the major concert halls. Yes, one could go and hear *The Planets*, or Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* or Britten's *Four Sea Interludes*. But what if you wanted to hear Moeran's Symphony? Or pieces by Ernest Farrar, Armstrong Gibbs, York Bowen or Joseph Holbrooke? This was simply impossible at any of the major London concert venues. As I became increasingly involved in British Composer Societies during these years, so my resentment that this music was inaccessible to the general public in terms of live performances increased. I worked at the Three Choirs and the Aldeburgh Festivals, but became aware that even these bastions of English music were gradually moving away from it and that one's chances of hearing rare English works at such events were diminishing.


Hilary Davan Wetton declaiming at the EMF Seminar in 2009

By the time I left Oxford (where I had been studying Greats), my desire to redress this imbalance and provide top-quality performances of English music to live audiences had become a blazing determination. My first port of call was Hilary Davan Wetton – who had been my Director of Music at St Paul's. In response to a letter I had penned, an unexpected phonecall provided the impetus that pushed plans into action: "My girl", Hilary's voice boomed down the phone, "Do you know how many people have tried to set up English Music festivals and failed? But if anyone is mad enough to try and brave and tenacious enough to succeed, it's you". The die was cast. Step two was to form a committee of like-minded individuals – including MPs with a proven interest in English music, conductors and musicians, and other professional individuals. We met, initially, in Portcullis House, and eventually a board of Trustees emerged out of the committee, ready to take the Festival on to the next stage.

A decision regarding location was the ensuing issue – I had wanted somewhere in the middle of England both for reasons of accessibility and on account of the rich composer associations. The remaining, vital, criteria were: that it should be somewhere rural (both reflecting the pastoral origins of a substantial amount of this music, and also so that, free from the anonymity of towns, we would all the more easily be able to form a community during the Festival, with audience members meeting in local hostelries, discussing the music, and forming friendships); that it should have at least reasonably-good transport links to London; that it should be a town or village without its own major Festival; and that it should have a venue able to hold both the size of audience and the number of musicians that I needed. After spending several months touring England from the Home Counties through to the borders of Shropshire, the only place that ticked all the boxes was Dorchester Abbey.


Festival President Boris Johnson addresses the audience


Julian Lloyd Webber and David Lloyd-Jones at the opening night of The English Music Festival

The aims of the Festival wrote themselves – to promote English music throughout the ages, with a strong focus on the early twentieth century. There would be a good range of events, from solo recitals through full orchestra and choral concerts; and, either side of the heavy emphasis on early twentieth century music, works from mediaeval times to the present day. Artists, whilst mainly top professionals, would also include both good local amateur groups, and, where possible, students. "English music" is a genre, like "English literature" or the English language – a recognizable sound-world – yet any composer born in the British Isles would be a legitimate choice for inclusion.


Festival Director Em Marshall with Jeremy Irons in the Abbey

From there, it took several years for the first Festival to get off the ground. David Green – one of the first people to realise the potential of this venture and support me in every possible way to facilitate achievement of its aims – and I collated shocking statistics highlighting the incredible and inexplicable neglect of this music in comparison to that by composers of other nationalities as far as concerts in this country were concerned, and I started recruiting supporters. I wrote to eminent public and musical figures – or, on several occasions, brazenly cornered them at events – including Jeremy Irons, the Marquess of Salisbury, Lord Armstrong of Ilminster, Patrick Stewart, Leonard Slatkin, Simon Jenkins and Julian Lloyd Webber – and these, amongst others, were appointed Vice-Presidents; Boris Johnson accepted the Presidency of the Festival; the EMF was formed as a Company; then secured Charitable status; initial programmes were drafted; artists approached and booked. I spoke to Roger Wright of BBC Radio 3 and persuaded him to broadcast the opening night, and so we got the BBC Concert Orchestra on board – a relationship which has continued. Vast, personalized, sponsorship mailings produced disheartening results as companies replied that they were either not interested in classical music as they wished to appeal to young people, or rejected linkage with an event of "English" image, claiming they wanted to be seen as international and global. Yet with the help of a fledging Friends' Scheme, several private donors, and a number of grant-making Trusts and Funds, we did it, and the first Festival took place in October 2006.

It was undoubtedly an artistic triumph, with events including Julian Lloyd Webber performing Bridge's intense *Oration*, Jeremy Irons narrating Vaughan Williams's *Oxford Elegy*, a complete performance of Britten's *Canticles*,

and James Gilchrist singing Finzi's *Intimations of Immortality*. And, although our paltry publicity and marketing budget had meant that we had been unable to reach the number of people we had hoped to interest as audience members – and flooding meant that at one point in time the Village Hall (housing our Arts and Crafts Fair) was totally cut off, the EMF had nonetheless made its mark on the national Festival calendar.

I didn't think I could organise another Festival within a year; and it was agreed that Spring might be a better time than Autumn for the Festival: so the Second EMF was held in May 2008, and thus commenced our tradition of holding the EMF on the second May Bank Holiday weekend. As an innovation, our Second Festival featured a New Commissions concert, completely comprising works written specifically for that particular event (by composers such as Paul Carr, Cecilia McDowall, Philip

James Bowman and Andrew Swait

Three composers: (left to right) Matthew Curtis, Paul Carr and Lionel Sainsbury

The EMF Seminar in 2009: (left to right) Em Marshall, Brian Kay, Hilary Davan Wetton, Andrew Plant, James Bowman

Philippe Graffin takes the stage with the BBC Concerto Orchestra in Cliffe's Violin Concerto

Lane, Ron Corp and Matthew Curtis) – almost all of which went on to be recorded and commercially released shortly afterwards. Other highlights that year included a performance of Bantock's *Celtic Symphony* with the BBC Concert Orchestra, Linley's *In Yonder Grove* and Arne's *Judgment of Paris* with a star cast and conducted by John Andrews, and the Carducci Quartet playing Vaughan Williams and Moeran.

The third year's novelty was a well-attended Seminar on the future of the British Choral tradition, chaired by Brian Kay, while for me the outstanding concerts were the Cliffe Violin Concerto with Philippe Graffin, world premières of works by Vaughan Williams and Delius (the latter's Hiawatha), the mediaeval group Joglaresa with their programme A Harp of Bones, and Oxford Liedertafel singing English folk-song settings.

Oxford Liedertafel in Radley College Chapel

The Bridge Quartet with pianist Michael Dussek in Radley College's Silk Hall

The Cannon Scholars in Radley College Chapel

Last year's Festival proved the continued popularity of the EMF and of this repertoire, with audience numbers reaching an all-time high, some sell-out concerts (as in previous years), good Press interest and reviews, and a consistently high standard of performance. The EMF has, as always intended, branched out – it is about more than an annual event in Oxfordshire. Concerts in London (such as at St John's, Smith Square last year) and in other parts of the country (such as Leeds in 2008), regular Friends' parties and events, and related educational activities are all important aspects of the EMF's work – as is the new record label. With a mixture of both of studio recordings and live recordings from the Festival, each EM Records disc released will contain at least one World Première recording, and I aim to ensure that no English work worthy of hearing is left unavailable to listeners. This magazine is the latest – but not the last – venture in a series of enterprises that I hope will continue to spread interest in and awareness of this, our glorious music heritage. ■

News

EM Records' Launch Countdown

EM Records is the recording arm of the English Music Festival and, as such, fulfils the EMF's aims of celebrating and preserving overlooked works by British composers. EM Records will release a mixture both of studio recordings and of live recordings from the Festival, giving listeners the chance to experience the fullest possible range of the Festival's work. In keeping with the unique spirit of the Festival, each disc released by EM Records will contain at least one World Première recording.

The label's mission is to ensure that no English works worthy of hearing are ever again left unavailable to listeners. It represents a ground-breaking enterprise, presenting repertoire that, though previously unrecorded, is vital, vivid and powerful; and through its commitment to this endeavour, complements the pioneering work of a leading and internationally-acclaimed Festival.

Our first release contains two World Première recordings together with an unjustly- neglected work. The Violin Sonatas by Arthur Bliss and Henry Walford Davies have languished in manuscript form for over one hundred years, and were performed at the 2010 English Music Festival to an enthralled audience by regular EMF artists Rupert Luck and Matthew Rickard. These works are presented alongside the opulent and darkly turbulent Violin Sonata by York Bowen. EM Records is delighted to present these passionate and heartfelt Sonatas as its first release.

Plans are already underway for future releases. These include the World Première recording of Gustav Holst's *The Coming of Christ* (which received its first contemporary performance in the 2010 EMF) performed by the City of London Choir under Hilary Davan Wetton; and a recording of Roger Quilter's piano music by David Owen Norris. Also forthcoming is a live recording, to be made at the 2011 Festival, of part-songs by Rawsthorne and Haydn Wood performed by the Syred Consort under their director, Ben Palmer.

Supporters of the Festival have been invited to subscribe to individual releases, thus ensuring the continued success of the label, and this has met with an extremely enthusiastic response.

The recordings will be manufactured and distributed by Nimbus Records. They will be on sale at all EMF events, as well available from all good record and online stores. They will also be accessible as digital downloads.

English Music Festival goes on record

PHILLIP SOMMERICH

The English Music Festival has launched its own label to fill what it describes as 'scandalous' omissions of major works in the recordings catalogue.

Em Marshall, founder-director of the English Music Festival, said there had already been 'an impressive response' within days of making an appeal for donations to fund EM Records. The appeal has gone out to several thousand people on the EMF mailing list.

The first release, due in March, will be of Bliss's violin sonata in A major and York Bowen's sonata, played by Rupert Luck and Matthew Rickard, and in April the City of London Choir under Hilary Davan Wetton will go into the studio to record Holst's *The Coming of Christ*.

Ms Marshall said there would be between three and five releases a year of recordings made in the studio and at concerts held during the festival, which has been held since 2006 in and around Dorchester, Oxfordshire. The label is a response to frequent inquiries from festival-goers about where they could find recordings of works presented, she said.

'It is scandalous that there are still works by major composers that are not yet available to the public in recorded format. I know there are other labels out there doing similar things, but we are unique in that each disc has to have one premiere recording.'

All releases would contain extensive liner notes. Ms Marshall agreed that other labels were showing increasing interest in English music and added: 'But what is amazing is that there are still things coming to light, and that is going to continue happening because people are actively looking for things and works are springing up in all sorts of surprising locations.'

The EMF will also launch a magazine, *Spirited*, to replace one of its newsletters. The magazine, containing article about and reviews of English music, will be offered to subscribers and sold during the festival.

'There are still things coming to light' – Em Marshall with violinist Rupert Luck

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Classical Music magazine's feature on EM Records

The Garden of Proserpine

Composed in 1899 for orchestra, chorus and soprano soloist, Vaughan Williams's setting of Swinburne's eponymous poem was his first large-scale piece. The première at the Fifth English Music Festival on 30 May 2011, performed by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under David Hill and with Janice Watson as soprano soloist, promises to be an unmissable occasion. Also in the same concert is the world première of York Bowen's *Rhapsody* for cello and orchestra, with Raphael Wallfisch as soloist.

Other premières

We are thrilled that the 2011 EMF will also see the world première of another important work: the Violin Sonata in E-flat by Ivor Gurney. This Sonata was composed during 1918 and 1919 and, with the kind permission of the Trustees of The Ivor Gurney Estate, has been transcribed from the manuscript and edited for performance by violinist Rupert Luck who, with the pianist Matthew Rickard, will perform the Sonata on 30 May. The duo's programme will also include the Violin Sonata no.2 of Herbert Howells in the first performance of the new edition prepared by Paul Spicer; and the world première of Paul Carr's *Sonatina*, which was written last year for Luck.

St George's Day Soirée

This very special event will be held 23 April 2011 at The Springs Hotel in Wallingford and all are invited to partake of drinks and canapés whilst enjoying a string quartet playing works by composers such as Elgar, Warlock, and Delius. The Hotel is offering special package rates for dinner and B&B to those who wish to sojourn overnight; also available are special room rates for EMF audience members for the duration of the Festival.

The EMF welcomes Robert Hardy CBE

New EMF VP Robert Hardy

We are delighted to announce that the award-winning actor Robert Hardy – so loved by many as Churchill in *The Wilderness Years* and Siegfried Farnon in *All Creatures Great and Small* – has accepted a Vice-Presidency of the English Music Festival. He has expressed an enthusiasm for narrating at a future Festival, and we very much hope to welcome him in this capacity.

The Yorkshire English Music Day

Following our successful English Music Day at Leeds University in March 2009, some of the Festival's supporters in Yorkshire are planning to put on another day of English music to raise publicity and funds for the EMF. It will take place on 1 October 2011 at Emmanuel Methodist Church in Barnsley, a modern building with excellent facilities. Emmanuel is well-known in South Yorkshire as a venue for classical

concerts, with the award-winning young chamber group Ensemble 360 using it as one of their bases.

2011 is the 75th anniversary of the death of A.E. Housman, and we hope to include some music with Housman connections. Baritone David Heathcote and pianist Gary Midgley will be presenting more treasures from the early twentieth-century song repertoire; and the popular vocal group Quintessential, who provided the delightful finale to the 2009 event, will again be taking part, performing another eclectic range of English music from the Renaissance to the present day. We expect some of the other artists who appeared last time to return and hope to welcome some rising stars, as we did before.

The recitals will begin after lunch, which we hope will make it easier for people who live further away to attend. The venue is two-and-a-half miles from Junction 37 and four-and-a-half miles from Junction 38 of the M1, and just under one mile from Barnsley railway station. If this is within reasonable travelling distance for you, please bookmark the date now. Further details will be available in due course.

This event will be a fundraiser and all profits will go to the EMF.

Home thoughts from abroad

The EMF is going international! We are planning to stage an EMF recital in Avon, near Fontainebleau, this Autumn. More details will follow in the post-Festival Newsletter.

Plea for help

The English Music Festival is unique. It is the only event dedicated exclusively to the music of British composers, and to the goal of bringing that vast corpus of amazing works back into the mainstream of the nation's culture.

Yet the EMF is still a small organisation, and we urgently require volunteers to help us achieve our aims. We need help at the Festival itself (stewarding and helping to man the box office and CD stalls), and the Director is also looking for people to work alongside her in an administrative capacity. The assistance of a Treasurer, meanwhile, would be treasured!

Furthermore, we desperately need people to help us spread the word – regional distributors to get our leaflets into local post offices, pubs, libraries and tourist information offices round the whole country. Can you help us by taking some leaflets – whether it is five to hand out to interested friends, or 500 to cover your local area?

Can you help? Would you either be able to spare a few hours of your time to aiding Em – or would you like to get more involved? If so, please contact Em at em.marshall@btinternet.com. ■

FRIENDS' SCHEME

The Friends' Scheme is flourishing and, as before, we have a full schedule of activity planned for 2011. Friends, of course, will be given free tickets to the St George's Day Soirée and we are planning further exclusive gatherings during the Festival.

The 2010 EMF Friends' Christmas Party was most generously hosted by Mr and Mrs D. Clasen in their beautiful Belgravia home. It was well attended and Friends enjoyed the opportunity to discuss English music amongst and with the EMF Trustees and Directors.

We are seeking to expand our Friends' groups, possibly to include the formation of autonomous organisations. If anyone living in the USA feels they would be able to oversee such a group and thereby help to promote the EMF in America, we would love to hear from you.

Dorchester Abbey: its history and significance

SUE DIXON

The architectural splendour of Dorchester Abbey represents the endeavours of men and women since the Middle Ages to create a Heaven on Earth for the pursuit of their Christian worship. The religious activities that take place in the Abbey – the Abbey Church of St Peter and St Paul – in the twenty-first century are the continuation of the activities which have taken place since the foundation of the first-known Christian church on this site in 635A.D.

As yet, no remains have been found of this Saxon church, though it is thought to have been situated on or near the site of the present church. Built in an area with no natural stone, we assume that this church would have been constructed of timber with a thatched roof and is likely to have been a small, dark building. Small of stature it might have been, but of huge importance it certainly was, for this was the first cathedral in the Saxon kingdom of Wessex. Founded by Bishop Birinus, who, according to Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, was dispatched to Britain by Pope Honorius I to take Christianity where no teacher had been before, the new cathedral was built on land gifted by Cynegils, the King of the West Saxons, after Birinus had baptised him and his court in the nearby River Thame. From this base, Birinus and his clerics spread their Roman tradition of Christianity through Wessex and the surrounding kingdoms and were responsible for consecrating many churches, including one at Winchester.

It is interesting to speculate why Birinus chose to base his ministry in Dorcic (Dorchester). Was it because of the welcome he received from Cynegils? Was it because he felt that there was a great need for his teaching in this area? Was it because there was a thriving community based on the influential Roman town and administrative centre? Ongoing archaeological excavations on the present allotments, have, over the last three years, established that Saxon huts were built on top of the Roman settlement. Was there a flourishing Christian community in Saxon Dorchester which welcomed Birinus? As yet, there is no evidence to support this last suggestion, but Roman missionaries were advised to link with existing Christian communities when possible – hence Augustine's arrival in Canterbury 37 years before Birinus' mission – or in former Roman towns.

There is no doubt that the area around Dorchester has been held as one of religious and spiritual significance since at least the Neolithic period. Aerial photographs show a henge monument, thought to be similar to Avebury, to the north of the village and a stretch of cursus, believed to be a ceremonial walkway, about two kilometres long, to the north-east. Unfortunately, gravel extraction, the building of a sewage treatment plant and the Dorchester by-pass have destroyed all but a short piece of the cursus. Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements were founded on and around Wittenham Clumps and an important late Iron Age settlement was fortified by what we now call the Dyke Hills on the edge of the present village. Birinus was certainly continuing the religious and spiritual heritage of this area, which had existed for at least 4000 years before his arrival.

By the time of his death in 650 Birinus's diocese covered approximately half of southern and central England. In the following decade a new see was created in Winchester and Dorchester lost its bishopric. Towards the end of the 7th century the bishopric was returned to Dorchester, then part of the kingdom of Mercia, but the see was moved for logistical reasons and divided between the bishops of Lindsey and Leicester. This move was reversed towards the end of the 9th century, when Viking raids and the establishment of the Danelaw reduced the power of Mercia. Dorchester thus became a cathedral centre for the third time, with a see which extended from the Thames, through the Midlands to the Humber, and a Bishop whose title was the Bishop of Dorchester, Leicester and Lincoln. This diocese continued to influence the course of ecclesiastical history until the arrival of the Normans and their decision to move bishoprics from villages. In 1072 the see was removed to Lincoln, with the first Norman, and last, Bishop of Dorchester, Remigius, becoming the first Bishop of Lincoln. Remigius, retaining the three dioceses in his title, was determined that the achievements at Dorchester should not be lost, and encouraged the continuation of the religious house by a college of secular canons.

The small, timber cathedral of 635 was gradually enlarged and replaced by stone buildings of increasing size, and it was from the last, stone-built Saxon Cathedral, with Norman additions, that the Arrouasian branch of the Augustinian Canons created the present-day Abbey church. Over a period of 200 years, from 1140 to 1350, and bridging the end of the Romanesque style of architecture, the Early English Gothic, the Decorated Gothic and drifting towards the Perpendicular style, the Canons built in response to changes to the Liturgy, patronage and the opportunities of pilgrimage.

The church they inherited in 1140 was a long, narrow, cruciform building with north and south transepts, and thick outer walls, identifying their origins. William of Malmesbury, writing around 1125, admired the "beauty and state" of the churches in Dorchester. One theory is that the Augustinians built their cloisters and domestic buildings on the north side of the Abbey church because of the existence of another church on the south side. The only remaining domestic building from the monastic period is the Guest House, which now houses the Museum and Tea Rooms.

Dorchester Abbey in Spring sunlight

The Abbey with the Guest House in the foreground

The Augustinian Canons were ordained priests whose ministry was to the people of Dorchester and to the parishes of the churches and chapels which had been part of the endowment of the earlier cathedrals. Because of these parochial responsibilities Dorchester Abbey possesses a fine lead font, dating from about 1170, one of only 30 remaining in England and possibly the only one to survive the Reformation.

By adding chapels to the east of the transepts on both the north and south sides of the nave the Canons began the transformation of the cruciform church. These chapels were later joined to their transepts, forming what we now

call the Birinus Chapel and the Shrine Area, and Early English arcading was created in the nave walls to link them to the main body of the church. Whether the addition of these side aisles took light away from the existing high altar or whether the sanctuary no longer met the liturgical requirements of the early fourteenth century, the decision to extend the east end resulted in one of the glories of the Abbey Church building. Built around 1330–1340, the exquisite skill of the carvers as seen in the tracery and the canopies above the sedilia, the creativity of the Jesse Window, with figures in both glass and stone, and the originality of the huge East Window, an attempt to create a wall of stained glass, are admired as ecclesiastical architectural work of national importance.

Unfortunately for the mediaeval craftsmen, extending the Abbey took the building off the gravel terrace which supports the rest of the building and on to made-up ground close to the River Thame. A central buttress, taking up one of the original seven glass panels, had to be inserted when the fabric of the building began to crack. Despite this, the surviving mediaeval glass in the third and fourth rows, the elegant carving of the reticular tracery and the stone figures, and the replacement Victorian glass offer an ongoing appreciation of the grandeur of this window.

Legend has it that in the late 12th century it was remembered that, some 50 years previously, a skeleton had been exhumed and visions seen and miracles performed. It was decided to repeat the operation and, although Bede records the removal of Birinus' remains to Winchester at the end of the 7th century, where he is still venerated today, it was decided that these were indeed the remains of the Saxon Bishop and the Canons received permission from the Pope to move them to "a more worthy place". The Canons had their own saint, as the founder of a church, and the Abbey became a place of pilgrimage.

The exact location of the original shrine of Saint Birinus is unknown but it is possible that the South Choir Aisle was designed with the shrine in mind. Pilgrimage to the Abbey was encouraged by the granting of indulgences, and in 1301 a 40-day reduction of time spent in purgatory was offered to those who visited Birinus's bones. The present shrine is a 1960s version, but incorporates vaulting from the mediaeval shrine which was hidden after it was demolished in 1536.

It is thought that pilgrims' donations contributed to the building of the Sanctuary, but the major part of the funding was given by nobles from the King's Court at Wallingford Castle, five miles from Dorchester. The remaining coats of arms, from over 60 that originally graced the windows, belong largely to those Lords who supported King Edward I in his defeat of William Wallace at Caerlaverock and of the King himself. This royal connection may account for the exquisite funerary sculpture of a knight in chain mail, twisting to draw his sword, which is thought to be one of the country's best examples of the genre from the 13th century. Positive identification still eludes, but it is thought that the effigy is of William de Valence the Younger who died in 1282 whilst fighting in Wales with Edward I. He was a half-nephew of King Henry III and his father was Chief Advisor to the King. His family spent much time at Wallingford Castle and were local landowners, and it is possible that the Abbey church provided a suitable resting place for such a well-connected knight. The sculpture is said to have inspired Henry Moore.

The final addition to the Abbey, in the mid-14th century, was the area we now call the People's Chapel, with its altar raised above the crypt and backed by a contemporary wall-painting. Opinion is divided as to the purpose of the latest chapel. Was it built in response to the residents' requests for a place to worship, or as a private chapel, or as a pilgrims' entrance to the shrine without intruding on the monastic church? The crypt also poses questions. It may have been a private vault; or, as some archaeologists speculate, the block of ashlar stone in the crypt may suggest that there was perhaps a pre-Christian temple on the site.

Reports of the Bishop's Visitations in the 15th century show that the monastic discipline was breaking down. There are complaints of younger Canons being led astray and taken into the ale houses in the town, and worse, of the Kitchener's hunting dogs and horses being better fed than the Canons, and reports of an unpopular Canon being set upon away from the Abbey, possibly with the knowledge of the Abbot. The general public were said to be free to wander the Cloisters as the Rule of St. Augustine gradually disintegrated. A female visitor to the Abbey a few years ago was tapped on the shoulder by a spectral cleric who claimed paternity for the infant whose skeleton was found where the Cloister gallery now stands.

When Henry VIII offered financial inducements for monastic establishments which volunteered for closure the Canons accepted and the monastery was closed in 1536, with either pensions or priesthoods being found for the small number of remaining Canons. A local benefactor, Richard Beauforest, a relative of one of the last Abbots, purchased the church from the Crown at a cost of £140, the value of the lead on the roof, and at his death bequeathed it to the village as the parish church. Today, the Abbey Church continues its work as parish church and centre of a Team Ministry, including some of the parishes which were part of the original see. Beauforest's generosity saved the fabric of the church from an uncertain fate during the Reformation but also provided a small village with a problem of upkeep, which for much of the time was way beyond their means.

The Abbey suffered a relatively small amount of damage from Puritan hands in the Cromwellian period but natural decay and neglect have been its greatest enemies. Several major restoration projects have ensured the Abbey's survival, and a lengthy Victorian programme under the auspices of the Oxford Architectural Society and principally involving William Butterworth and Sir George Gilbert Scott was responsible for returning the Abbey to its former glory and creating the building we see today. The Cloister Gallery was constructed in 2001, following the line of its mediaeval forebear, and provides a magnificent display area for mediaeval carved stones from the Abbey and the monastic buildings. The glass doors and copper canopy at the porch entrance were added in 2002, replacing a Victorian wooden draught lobby, and symbolise a welcome for all people and the continuation of the 1400 years of the Christian message being taken into the world from churches in Dorchester. ■

The Abbey by twilight

Group tours of the Abbey can be booked through the Parish Administrator by telephoning 01865 340007.

A Festival-Goer's Guide to Dorchester

PHILIP REWSE MITCHELL

Paul Hilton (PaulHilton@picturesofengland.com)

High Street

Dorchester-on-Thames is truly in a "time-warp", like those bypassed coaching villages on the Great North Road or Watling Street, full of quiet charm and picturesque alleyways. It is an extraordinary place to find just a mile or two from the unlovely suburbs of South Oxford and the relentless scrum of the Ring Road. Parked cars there are a-plenty, but no through traffic, courtesy of the gravel pits which blocked the through way northwards early in the last century. In truth, Dorchester is quite a challenge to find one's way into and out of, but none the worse for that. Once you've arrived, and located the ancient Abbey by the bridge and one of the three inns for refreshment, what a magnificent, atmospheric spot it is in which to hear the best of English music! Before we take our places in the equally challenging pews, however, let us discover a little more about this picture-book village and its amazing range of historical buildings. The key is the gravel.

Thanks to its proximity to Oxford and the interest shown by the city's University through its Department for External Studies[1], a great deal is known of the archaeology and early history of Dorchester and surrounding areas. Pre-historic man was attracted to this easy, gravelly crossing of the Thames and its tributary, the Thame, lying to the north of the natural boundary of the Chiltern Hills. Recent gravel extraction reveals, as it destroys, the evidence of New Stone Age settlement over eight thousand years ago. The Big Rings Henge was revealed first by crop marks and then extensively excavated for burials and implements, before being bulldozed for the bypass. A magnificent Bronze Age warrior shield was found a mile upstream, but the main physical remains of the labour of our ancestors are the Dyke Hills, a huge series of mounds constructed on the north side of the defensive rectangle formed by the two confluent rivers and their right-angled bends, like a giant moat. There is water all around you in Dorchester. Within the rectangle was a nationally important Iron Age fort, from which some of the best coinage finds in the country have been found. South of the river was a more traditional hillfort, Wittenham Clumps, glowering today over the flood plain.

Despoiliation of the landscape is not a new a phenomenon. The Oxford antiquary General Pitt-Rivers drew attention in 1870 to the gradual destruction of Dyke Hills by agriculture, the land being levelled for the plough[2]. This was mercifully curtailed and the intriguing remains can still just be discerned on private ground to the southwest of the village, an echo of ancient men and axes. And then came the Romans. The old forts were abandoned in favour of a new camp aligned with the Roman road constructed in the first century A.D., which ran north-south between Alcester and the large town of Silchester. Dorchester itself became a walled town of 13 acres. Silver spoons and glass cremation jars from this period have been found. Buildings with mosaic floors and tiled roofs apparently survived the departure of the legions in the fifth century, and the Abbey itself sits on top of a Roman building, possibly a temple. Then, as now, the area was prosperous and sought-after by veterans and civilians escaping from city life. The town walls may have survived until mediaeval times: and the course of the straight Roman road, now going nowhere, is followed by the modern High Street towards the gravel pits in the north.

[1] OUDES is the publisher of the excellent *Dorchester Through The Ages*, 1985, to which the present author is indebted for much of the material in this article, and which itself contains a full bibliography of the history and archaeology of the town. A copy is normally obtainable from the Abbey bookshop.

[2] A photograph of Dyke Hills as they were in 1872 appears on p.19 of *Dorchester Through The Ages*.

Romans roads don't speak to us directly except in the imagination of marching feet, but Roman altars do, and one was found locally in 1741. This was dedicated to Jupiter and the Emperor in the second century A.D. by one Marcus Varius Severus, an army officer responsible for supplies and the collection of tolls and taxes. It is now lost, but an engraving of it appeared in Camden's *Britannia*[3]; it may be regarded as the supplication of a soldier far from home, assailed through the fogs and mists by the local tribes. The comforting shrine and refuge of the Abbey was not for him, however, but for the Saxons who succeeded him, and in particular for St Birinus, who became the first bishop of the West Saxons and granted baptism to King Oswald of Northumbria in 635A.D. From this breathtakingly early date, Dorchester has been a major Christian settlement, acquiring, by the early Middle Ages, an importance greatly out of proportion to its small size. The bishopric at one time extended as far south as Salisbury and Sherborne, and later as far north as Lincoln.

Why Dorchester? Partly, perhaps, because it was on the northern frontier of Wessex and the southern frontier of Mercia, acting as a hinge between them; partly also because of its Roman parentage. It is not certain that the site of Birinius's church, possibly of timber, is the same as the later mediaeval stone Abbey, though the fact that the cloister quadrangle is to the north of the present building instead of to the south, where it would normally be placed, may imply that the earlier ruins are situated where is now the churchyard. Stroll around the grounds yourself and identify your own spirit of place in this tranquil spot.

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Dorchester Abbey from the south

Another contribution to this Gazette deals with the history of the Abbey so we may quickly pass from the ecclesiastical to the secular. Oxford and Wallingford, as settlements, overshadowed Dorchester in the 10th and 11th centuries, and during the later mediaeval period it declined in importance and settled down to a long stretch of backwater existence as a monastic establishment with its attendant lands and revenues. Other churches were built to serve the community and the Abbey might have perished with the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1540s, but was saved by local landowner Sir Richard Beauforest, although his generosity in buying the building in order to present it to the townsfolk backfired, as its maintenance became a major burden to them. Attempts were made to turn Dorchester into a marketplace but presumably the landing of goods was not as convenient as further upstream and in 1728 the settlement was described as "a poor town without any manner of trade nor likely much to improve"[4]. Yet it remained on a major north-south route and its inns offered shelter and refreshment to the traveller. By the early 18th century, too, a cluster of buildings – which still exist today – had given shape and outline to the village centre. Farming dominated the pattern of occupation in the village as it dominated the landscape.

Hazy photographs of Dorchester at the end of the 19th century show a sleepy, timeless hamlet with no passing traffic, shuttered windows and overhanging inn signs much like a modern Lacock or Shaftesbury, charming in

[3] *Dorchester Through The Ages*, p.21.

[4] *Dorchester Through The Ages*, p.51.

its obscurity and provincial in its architectural styles. Blacksmiths and wheelwrights, corn dealers and millers, as well as many more public houses than there are today (farm labourers were always thirsty folk), satisfied local retail demand. Its position on the London to Oxford road, with turnpike and toll-cottage, however, ensured that with 20th-century mobility a new generation of residents, including commuters, would arrive and transform the crumbling cottages and working farmhouses. The construction of a lock and weir, and a new bridge across the Thame, enhanced river traffic. Yet the survival of so many High Street buildings from the 17th and 18th centuries show there was little economic imperative for change – all that happened was that people passed through in greater numbers, leaving noise and grime on the fabric of the whitewashed facades. Peace was finally restored when the bypass was built in 1982. Dorchester today is resolutely recaptured by its past, intriguing and resonant, a place of delight and refuge for the discerning visitor. Well out of sight are the gravel pits and the disused airfield of Berinsfield, now an industrial estate. Oxford pulsates and roars, but distantly. Nature, and time, has reclaimed its own.

The rustic image can be overdone. Abbeys have always attracted centres of learning and Dorchester is no exception. The Abbey Guest House (now a museum) became the grammar school in 1652, with the Master's Lodge on the first floor. The pupils' small wooden drawers are still to be seen in the old downstairs schoolroom[5]. A separate Dorchester School was founded in 1801, a girls' and infants' school in 1836; and the two amalgamated in 1928. Now a lively primary school operates behind the Vicarage. A theological college for missionary students was founded in 1878, its imperial role ceasing only in 1942. The spacious grounds of Radley College are nearby – the Arts Centre being used for EMF recitals.

If you are coming to the English Music Festival, the Abbey, the Guest House, and the Village Hall will be your familiars. Leave your car at the north end of the village in the tree-lined recreation ground, and watch some cricket between concerts, or have a picnic. Tea at the White Hart is a treat, but mind your head: the low beams were built for smaller folk[6]. Come outside instead and admire the decorative brick nogging which replaced the wattle and daub in 1691. Brick and black-and-white combine, too, at the triple-storeyed overhang at 55 High Street, dating from 1610. The George Hotel, opposite the Abbey wychgate, has 16th-century origins and the galleried range in the rear courtyard reminds you of the George at Southwark, of Chaucer and pilgrims. The interior is perhaps less inviting than that of the White Hart. Look for Abbey Cottage and Rotten Row, and for thatch in Bridge End Close and Wittenham Lane. When you have framed a perfect photograph, another, better opportunity lies round the corner. Call in for a pint at the Fleur-de-Lys. Better still, become a Friend of the EMF and get yourself invited to a splendid garden party at the stately Manor House behind the Abbey, its lovely grounds running down to the river[7].

Paul Hilton (PaulHilton@picturesofengland.com)

The George Hotel

Finally, give some thought as to whether there is a better or more intimate place to celebrate home-grown musical offerings from past and present. But don't be late – the performance is about to begin! ■

[5] *Dorchester Abbey*, brochure, 2002. There is also a more extensive Abbey Guide.

[6] The White Hart also offers good accommodation but is, at the time of writing, fully booked out for the 2011 Festival period. The current EMF Newsletter is recommending The Springs at Wallingford. Oxford has many hotels including the Randolph and the Eastgate.

[7] Very kindly hosted in previous years by the owners, Mr and Mrs Broadbent.

To the Poem Tree

BRUCE LEWINGTON

In 1844 or 1845 Joseph Tubb of Warborough Green felt moved by the history and beauty of the Dorchester area to carve twenty lines of verse on the trunk of a beech tree, and it is there still – just.

Visitors to Dorchester will know Wittenham Clumps, those wondrous mounds on the horizon, just across the Thames, a distinctive landmark and a recurring element in the paintings of Paul Nash. The twin hills, Round Hill and Castle Hill, topped with small woodlands, both hold evidence of early man, Castle Hill with the remains of an Iron Age fort, its woodland being enclosed by the giant land sculpture of a substantial ditch and bank; and, in addition to this wonder, this clump holds a further delight for the visitor – the Poem Tree.

Of the tree, at the eastern end of the woodland, only the dead trunk remains standing and, although the tree'd area is securely fenced, apparently because of the danger of old trees falling, the Poem Tree is thoughtfully left outside the fence, thus allowing close inspection.

The Poem Tree

Unsurprisingly after 165 years, much of the wording is no longer legible but a few words can still be made out in the crocodilian bark and fitted to their relevant lines. Joseph Tubb's devoted endeavour is now an affecting piece of pleasing decay.

So do not delay: it cannot be too long before the tree falls and this rare piece of topographical verse crumbles to mould. The Clumps can be reached by road via Clifton Hampden, Long Wittenham and Little Wittenham, all three attractive villages, with a roadside car park on the Clumps' west side. Or, if time allows, a footpath wends south from Dorchester by Dyke Hills, leading to a footbridge over the Thames just below Day's Lock and then on to Little Wittenham where a footpath opposite the church brings you to Castle Hill: a walk of something between one and two miles through a delightsome landscape and which, on arrival, rewards one with wide views in all directions – including those other fine sculptural forms, Didcot Cooling Towers.

Herewith Joseph Tubb's lines in praise of "these fair plains"; the text is also recorded on a plaque by the tree and may also be found on the Internet. My grateful thanks are due to The Northmoor Trust, owners and managers of theWittenham Clumps Estate, for their enthusiasm and kind interest. ■

The inscription of the verse on the Poem Tree

As up the hill with lab'ring steps we tread
Where the twin Clumps their sheltering branches spread
The summit gain'd at ease reclining lay
And all around the widespread scene survey
Point out each object and instructive tell
The various changes that the land befell
Where the low bank the country wide surrounds
That ancient earthwork form'd old Murcias bounds
In misty distance see the barrow heave
There lies forgotten lonely Culchelm's grave
Around this hill the ruthless Danes intrenched
And these fair plains with gory slaughter drench'd
While at our feet where stands that stately tower
In days gone by uprose the Roman power
And yonder, there where Thames' smooth waters glide
In later days appeared monastic pride.
Within that field where lies the grazing herd
Huge walls were found, some coffins disinter'd
Such is the course of time, the wreck which fate
And awful doom award the earthly great.

York Bowen at The English Music Festival

DR DAVID GREEN

I first came across the music of the English composer York Bowen when I attended a concert at St John's, Smith Square, more than 10 years ago. This concert included a very rare performance of York Bowen's Viola Concerto which was given an outstanding performance by Martin Outram and, as I remember, the New London Orchestra conducted by Ronald Corp. What struck me most by both the performance and the work was the wonderful orchestration, the intensely lyrical nature of the music and the beauty and memorability of the tunes. I was most immediately struck by the slow movement and also by what appeared to be a very Elgarian passage in the middle of the third movement. The work seemed to have the expressiveness and grandeur of an Elgarian concerto, so it was interesting to find that the Bowen was actually written three years before Elgar's own Violin Concerto. Clearly this was a composer worth investigating.

My next encounter with York Bowen's music was at Blackheath Concert Halls a few years later, when the enterprising Endymion Ensemble played a selection of his chamber music. The choice of venue was most appropriate, as this was where York Bowen was a music student in the 1890s. The works performed included music for piano, horn and strings. It appeared from the programme notes that York Bowen was not only an excellent pianist (he made the first-ever recording of Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto) but also an accomplished viola and horn player. It was thus not surprising that he had produced such superb chamber music and an excellent and attractive Viola Concerto. Indeed, it is the immediate appeal which really attracts both new and experienced music lovers.

However, the work which really made the greatest impression on me was the Second Symphony in the pioneering première recording conducted by Douglas Bostock with the Royal Northern College of Music Symphony Orchestra. This was a revelation and I was astonished to realise that this work had been written in 1912: around the same time as Elgar's Second Symphony. The slow movement was particularly impressive and some of the orchestration in the third movement could easily have been by Malcolm Arnold, who was composing 40 years later: just listen to the martial side-drum passage in the last movement. I later learned that this work had not been performed in the concert hall for over 90 years!

It was not surprising, therefore, that when the English Music Festival (EMF) was founded in 2002, Festival Director Em Marshall decided that York Bowen and, in particular, his orchestral music would now begin to receive the attention it deserved. For the First EMF in 2006 we were extremely lucky to be able to engage Paul Silverthorne to perform the Viola Concerto. Paul is the principal violist not only of the London Symphony Orchestra but also of the London Sinfonietta and is seemingly equally at home with Elgar or Stockhausen! The audience was not to be disappointed, as the Concerto received a wonderfully warm and responsive performance from Silverthorne and the New London Orchestra under Ronald Corp. I can honestly say that I saw seasoned concertgoers come away from that performance with glowing expressions and even tears in their eyes. In that same first Festival year we were very fortunate to engage the Endymion Ensemble to perform his Piano Trio in E minor Opus 118. As I mentioned earlier, the Endymion had already built up an enviable reputation performing the music of York Bowen both in the concert hall and on CD.

Although we had intended to perform the Second Symphony at the Second English Music Festival in 2008, we encountered difficulties in obtaining the score; and it appeared that even Douglas Bostock, who is now resident in Germany, did not know what had happened to the score and the parts that he had used for the recording! York Bowen actually wrote four Symphonies, but the whereabouts of the last Symphony is not known – indeed, it is uncertain whether the score is still in existence. Em was still very keen that we should perform a Symphony by York Bowen at the EMF; and thus it was that we began to focus our attention on the First Symphony and scheduled a performance at the Fourth EMF. Very little seems to be known about the work. Indeed, according to Monica Watson's biography of the composer and as stated in many other sources, it appears to have received its first complete performance at a Royal Academy of Music (RAM) student concert at the Queen's Hall in 1901, conducted by the principal of the RAM, Sir Alexander Mackenzie. However, further research resulted in the finding that only the first movement was performed and it was very favourably reviewed in the *Musical Times*. We were thus able to announce with some conviction that the performance at the EMF of this Symphony in May 2010 with the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by Gavin Sutherland, was probably its first. What a great work it turned out to be and what a great accomplishment for so young a composer (it is worth recalling that Bowen began to write this Symphony when he was only 16 and completed it when he was just 17). Happily, we were able to listen to this superb performance again a few weeks later on BBC Radio 3.

At the same Fourth EMF we were privileged to hear a superb performance of the Violin Sonata by Rupert Luck and Matthew Rickard. Rupert had examined a score in the British Library and had found that the work was a significant one, with the music having emotional power and beauty. We were treated to an insightful and at times exhilarating performance which underpinned the excellence of the music and highlighted the totally unjustifiable neglect of the work. Bowen lovers will be delighted to hear that the Sonata has been recorded by Rupert and Matthew and has just been released on our own CD label.

It is not surprising that, at the beginning of the last century, York Bowen was considered to be one of the "great white hopes" of British music. Indeed, his first three Piano Concertos were performed at Henry Wood's Promenade Concerts before and just after the First World War. Needless to say, following that period, his music went into sharp decline and the last time he or his music appeared at the Proms was in a performance of his own 4th Piano Concerto in 1959, two years before his death. This was the first Prom performance of a major York Bowen work for more than 35 years and there has been none since.

The EMF considers it extremely important that York Bowen's chamber and orchestral music is performed live and by performers who are really capable of doing the music justice. It is impossible to appreciate, for example, the fabulous sounds that he extracts from the orchestra from just listening to a CD recording on one's stereo system at home. Let's hope that in future years the EMF will be able to stage performances of the Second Symphony and the Piano, Violin and Cello Concertos. Isn't it about time we heard his orchestral music performed in a London concert hall or at the Proms? ■

Spirited interviews EMF conductor Hilary Davan Wetton

Hilary Davan Wetton conducting the City of London Choir at the 2009 EMF

Q What first attracted you to the music of English composers? Has this genre always interested you?

A *My interest in English composers was undoubtedly triggered by my period of study with Sir Adrian Boult. It was a concert in which he conducted Butterworth's* Shropshire Lad Rhapsody *that I conceived a compulsive wish to study with him – I had never seen conducting with such command and insight before – and once I was in his class at the RCM it was impossible not to come to share his deep respect for English composers of the 20th century, most of whom he knew personally.*

Q Any particular English works or composers with which you specially identify?

A *I think it is fair to say that the 15 years I spent in the Holst Room at St Paul's Girls' School have given me a powerful sense of identity with his music in particular. I am also a genuine advocate for 19th-century composers: for example, Samuel Wesley and Cipriani Potter. They are even more neglected than their 20th-century successors.*

Q Does English music have a particular idiom which distinguished it from the European tradition – do you think one can define 'Englishness' in music, and, if so, how would you define it?

A *I think it does, but it is difficult to define. The pastoral landscape obviously affected many composers and the influence of Purcell is surprisingly pervasive – look at Tippett and Britten – but there is more to it than the flattened sevenths and compound time of much English folk music and I hesitate to try any more metaphysical definition.*

Q How did you come to be connected with the English Music Festival?

A *The blame for this rests squarely with Em. I remember a letter she sent me while still at Oxford where she told me of her plans. Although I warned her that they might be unworkable, she has proved me wrong, and I am delighted! It is a genuine pleasure to have appeared in every EMF since its inception and having so passionate an advocate of music I love among my ex-students is very good for my self-esteem.*

Q Do you consider the EMF an important event in musical life in this country? How far do you feel the EMF might have influenced what appears to be a current resurgence of interest in English Music?

A *It is certainly important in providing a unique focus for our national music and it must have increased people's interest in this repertoire. But it is also true that the audience is more ready now to recognise the merits of much neglected English repertoire. It is partly a reaction to the Glock regime at the BBC which excluded so much English music from the airwaves and partly an expression of the natural patriotism which is a British characteristic – despite our tendency to self-deprecation.*

Q Who would you consider to be the most under-rated English composer?

A *Well, Samuel Wesley, I think. But if you mean a 20th- century composer I think it is still Frank Bridge who is most undervalued.*

Q You have championed some of the rare scores of Gustav Holst – such as his old English ballad, *King Estimere*. Why do you feel that – apart from *The Planets* – the music of Holst is so rarely performed?

A *What a difficult question to answer – it is almost a mystery. Of course, the public has always been influenced by fashion and Holst does not wear his heart on his sleeve; but pieces like* Benimora *and* Egdon Heath *are truly original and arresting and it beats me why they are not played many times more often. The smaller-scale works, notably those stunning* Songs for Female Voices and String Orchestra *are as good as anything written in the 20th century for my money, but it would only be if we are powerful advocates for them that they will take their proper place in the repertoire. Holst was a subtle and multilayered talent and does not yield up his secrets easily; you have to work at it – and that is not very fashionable in contemporary life.*

Q How well do you think English music is served by the broadcasters – the BBC and Classic FM – and by the main British orchestras?

A *Quite well. I think Roger Wright has been an enormous force for good at the BBC; he knows a lot of English music and respects it and this does show in the richness of repertoire that Radio 3 produces. And though Classic FM sometimes appears to have a rather limited playlist it is the only station in the world that regularly plays my recordings of Wesley symphonies!*

Q Holst's *The Coming of Christ* is a work you are going to record for EM Records with the City of London Choir later this year. What is your approach to this piece?

A *My approach is the same as to any music: learn the score thoroughly and try to understand what the composer wanted. There are one or two very big moments in the piece and it is important that the audience can feel them coming.*

Q If you were to conduct the Last Night of the Proms, which one overlooked British work would you wish to include in the second half?

A *William Crotch's Overture in G: it's a fantastic romp and utterly unknown. The audience would be staggered to hear it.* ■

"Time's up!"

The Fourth English Music Festival: a personal perspective

EM MARSHALL

Every year, the English Music Festival seems to become increasingly successful, attracting larger audiences (and from farther afield – this year we had two audience members who had both travelled to us from Australia), and with ever-higher standards of performance. There was a real buzz about this year's Festival – an almost tangible atmosphere of excitement and anticipation, that was also evident from the animated discussions that took place in local hostelries and at the Box Office as audiences gathered for our events.

The Fourth EMF opened, unusually, on a Thursday evening, with a free concert – a piano recital of Rawsthorne's *Four Pieces*, Lennox Berkeley's *Six Interludes* and the substantial Ferguson Sonata. Radley's own Anthony Williams performed with virtuosity and aplomb in the Silk Hall.

The next day, Friday 28 May, we were yet again lucky with the weather for our Drinks Reception in the Manor House. EMF Friends were joined by artists, Press and Vice-Presidents and enjoyed champagne, canapés and conversation in the sun in the Broadbents' beautiful and extensive gardens.

Back in the Abbey, the main evening concert (our flagship event) featured the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by Gavin Sutherland. A warm introduction by Revd Sue Booys and few words of welcome from myself preceded Parry's *Jerusalem* (in accordance with EMF tradition!). The programme also included the first performance for over a century of Quilter's *Serenade*, Moeran's evocative *Lonely Waters*, and Montague Phillips's First Piano Concerto, played as effervescently as always by David Owen Norris. The highlight of the concert was the world première of York Bowen's First Symphony, written whilst the composer was still a student at the Royal Academy of Music. The audience response to this unaccountably overlooked work was overwhelming, and Festival audiences left exhilarated, and looking forward to the next day's music-making.

The Saturday morning recital, given by the violinist Rupert Luck and pianist Matthew Rickard, was especially exciting, including, as it did, the world premières of Violin Sonatas by Arthur Bliss and Henry Walford Davies, both of which have languished in manuscript form for almost one hundred years. The concert concluded with York Bowen's gorgeous Violin Sonata. The performance was outstanding, with Luck playing with searing passion and intensity, sympathetically accompanied by Rickard, and the large audience was tremendously impressed.

Over to Radley's Silk Hall for the afternoon concert, given by the skilful and dynamic Orchestra of St Paul's, conducted by Ben Palmer. The programme comprised Purcell's *Incidental Music to Abdelazar*, Armstrong Gibbs's *Threnody*, Elgar's *Elegy*, Warlock's *Capriol Suite* and the world première of Paul Carr's *A Gentle Music*, which I was extremely flattered to have dedicated to me.

Barry Marsh's ensuing talk on E.J. Moeran, back in the Abbey Guest House at Dorchester, was packed out – and rightly, too, as it was both a fascinating and a moving lecture.

The evening concert, in the Abbey, was given by the City of London Choir, conducted by Hilary Davan Wetton, and this staged a work which it has been a long-held ambition of mine to present: Holst's *The Coming of Christ*. The first half included choral works by Wood, Pearsall, Elgar, Stanford, Finzi and Bridge, and organ pieces by Howells and Britten. *The Coming of Christ*, in the second half, was an intriguing work, and well-received. This was followed by the first of our late-evening concerts, which are always highly atmospheric: there is something very special about the sense of warm enclosure that results from the contrast of the darkness outside and the gently-lit interior of the Abbey. Oxford Liedertafel excelled themselves this year, in a wonderfully varied programme of a *cappella* music, with composers ranging from Byrd to Vaughan Williams. Quite magical.

Sunday started at Radley College, with a concert by the Tippett Quartet of Tovey, Arnell and Britten String Quartets, and the launch of their new CD. We returned to The Church of All Saints at Sutton Courtney – a venue we've not been able to use for the past couple of years – for the afternoon concert, given by the Elysian Singers under their conductor, Sam Laughton. The concert was sold-out, and it was with difficulty that I found a small area of floor space to squeeze into! The programme included pieces by Britten, Elgar and Vaughan Williams, as well as Stanford's much-loved *Bluebird*, and Howells's *Requiem*. I found the latter – which combines a devotional directness of expression with an emotional punch – especially moving in that particular setting, with the sun pouring through the windows of the ancient and beautiful church, and the bird song drifting in to combine with the glorious Howells.

Back over to Dorchester for Neil Williams's talk on Holst, and the evening concert, again back in the Abbey. The first half was Delius's incidental music to the Flecker play, *Hassan*, with a précis specially written and read by Radio 3 presenter Paul Guinery. The bloodthirsty story rather shocked some members of the audience, but the music was superb under the assured directorship of George Vass. The second half consisted of a work that has intense significance for me, Holst's opera *Sāvitri* – this, again, is a piece that I have long had an ambition to present at the Festival. The performance (semi-staged) was a dramatic one, with atmospheric costumes and lighting, whilst the performers – Janice Watson, David Wilson-Johnson and Mark Chaundy – sang with staggering power and conviction, and did full justice to what is undoubtedly one of the greatest operas of the 20th century. A very different concert ensued, with the mediaeval band Joglaresa presenting traditional and early songs. It was a fascinating programme, with all works based around the supernatural, and, continuing the themes of love and death initiated in *Hassan* and *Sāvitri*, made the perfect conclusion to an emotional evening.

The final day was the most frantic, with rehearsals for the evening's 'Come and Sing' event interspersed with the concerts – all taking place in the Abbey. The first event featured the Syred Consort, directed by Ben Palmer. The group was in superb voice and their recital included such gems as Finzi's *Magnificat*, Ireland's Five Part-Songs and little-known works by Vaughan Williams.

A large crowd congregated for the afternoon concert by the Jaguar (Coventry) Band. This was a revelation to many, as it highlighted the expressive power of a medium with which not all of our audience members were familiar. Also evident was the skill of composers such as Holst, Vaughan Williams and Bantock in writing for these forces. Percy Fletcher's *Epic Symphony* is a fiendishly difficult work, and gave the band the opportunity for true showmanship. I was particularly thrilled to hear Holst's *Suites* for Brass Band live for the first time – especially in such a fantastic performance, and the Band appeared most gratified to perform in what they described as a "magnificent venue".

After Robin Wilson's insightful talk on Sullivan ("without Gilbert!"), the final concert of this year's EMF was the 'Come and Sing' event. EMF Vice-President Brian Kay conducted a choir comprising enthusiastic Festival-goers, and elicited a warm response. The programme opened with Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs*, with soloist David Wilson-Johnson, who then went on to perform Somervell's powerful song-cycle *Maud*, with pianist David Owen Norris. The second half was Elgar's memorably tuneful *Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands*, and the Festival concluded with kind words from EMF Vice-President Paul Guinery.

A party for Friends and helpers in the Abbey Guest House rounded off the triumphant Fourth English Music Festival, and left me with an aching hole not to be filled until next year's EMF! ■

Scenes from the 2010 Festival

Brian Kay rehearses the 'Come and Sing'-ers

The Elysian Singers in All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay

Conductor Gavin Sutherland and pianist David Owen Norris with the BBC Concert Orchestra on the opening night

The audience congregates in the sunshine outside All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay

The Jaguar (Coventry) Band with director Dave Lea

Paul Guinery narrates Delius's *Hassan*

David Wilson-Johnson and Mark Chaundy in rehearsal for Holst's Sāvitri

Joglaresa in their late-night concert in the Abbey

Ben Palmer and Paul Carr embrace after the première of *A Gentle Music*

Festival Director Em Marshall with violinist Rupert Luck

David Wilson-Johnson and George Vass after the performance of *Hassan*

Press Reviews of the 2010 EMF

English Music Festival
Conductor: Dave Lea
Dorchester Abbey
Dorchester on Thames
Monday 31st May

Jaguar (Coventry) Band

Christopher Thomas
Barsrest.com

Founded in 2006 by its Artistic Director Em Marshall, the English Music Festival was conceived as a showcase for neglected English music of the early twentieth century, the golden period of the 'English Renaissance'.

Enterprising

Within four years it has rapidly established itself as one of the most enterprising and pioneering annual music festivals around.

Set in and around the quintessentially English, dreamily beautiful surroundings of Dorchester-on-Thames in Oxfordshire and its magnificent Norman abbey, the event has attracted some of the country's finest musicians, including the BBC Concert Orchestra, Brian Kay, David Owen Norris, the Elysian Singers and actor Jeremy Irons, whose narration of Vaughan Williams's rarely heard *Oxford Elegy* at the inaugural festival helped to put the event firmly on the musical map.

Appropriate

For this year's festival, a brass band concert was a new, yet appropriate departure, given the quality of the repertoire that exists for the medium during the 'Golden Era' – including works from Holst, Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Howells and Ireland.

It is sometimes easy to forget how lucky we are to have them.

Culmination

For Dave Lea and the Jaguar (Coventry) Band, the event marked the culmination of a busy period of engagements and rehearsals, coming hot on the heels of the Grand Shield and the All England Masters the day before.

If the band's performance at the Masters was jaded, however, there was certainly no loss of focus or concentration evident in the magnificent Abbey as a demanding first half, comprising the two Holst Suites in E-flat and F and *A Moorside Suite* were combined with the towering Vaughan Williams *Variations for Brass Band* – a rarely heard masterpiece.

It set the scene for a programme that in many ways encapsulated all that the English Music Festival strives to promote.

Sonorous

The sonorous strains of the *Chaconne* that opens Holst's *Suite No.1 in E-flat* took on a glowing majesty in the Abbey, and although it took the band a little while to settle into the acoustic (it could hardly have been further removed from the extreme dryness experienced at Kettering's Lighthouse Theatre) the closing *March* was taken at a sensible tempo that allowed the detail to be heard with surprising clarity.

In the Second Suite in F, the popularity of the closing *Fantasia* of the *Dargason* clearly struck a chord with the audience, but it was in the touching, folk-song inspired slow movement "I'll Love my Love" that the band came into their own; the surroundings an appropriate setting for some wonderfully lyrical playing.

Holst's *A Moorside Suite* provided a touch of the bracing outdoors in its outer movements, with the opening *Scherzo* and final *March* recalling images of the composer's walking holidays with his great friend Vaughan Williams.

However, it was the deeply affecting *Nocturne*, laced with a fine solo contribution from the band's principal cornet Darren Lea, that left the most lingering impression.

Echoes

Written late in his life and being used as the National Championship Finals test piece in 1957, *Variations for Brass Band* is a work that makes its fair share of demands, but this is music that is the product of a lifetime of experience from its creator.

With its echoes of the *Sea Symphony* (something it shares with the Ninth Symphony, his last great symphonic utterance) and the score for *Scott of the Antarctic*, its variation form is masterfully constructed.

Although a degree of finer detail was lost in the Abbey, Dave Lea's intelligently constructed reading brought the score vividly to life.

The last time Jaguar (Coventry) played Granville Bantock's *The Frogs*, it was in winning the National Championships' First Section in 1995, then in the band's former life as Rolls Royce (Coventry).

The Frogs

Arguably it is not a work that shows Bantock at his best, yet amongst his brass works (which also include *Orion* and *Prometheus Unbound*) it remains his most enduring, with Dave Lea and the band making a strong case for its cause here.

The familiar strains of Vaughan Williams's ever popular *English Folk Song Suite* provided a lighter centre piece to the second half, before the band launched into a substantive performance of Percy Fletcher's *An Epic Symphony* to provide a fine climax to the concert.

A finely-wrought performance made the greatest impression on the ample audience, with its strongly Elgarian-coloured language captured in majestic fashion.

There were also bravura contributions from the band's trombone section in the recitatives of the first movement, a delicate wistfulness provided by the horn section in the *Elegy* and a contrasting musical heroism on a grand scale in the *Heroic March*.

Vocal appreciation

With choruses of vocal appreciation from the audience ringing around the Abbey's generous acoustic, it would be difficult to imagine a more uplifting (or deserving) conclusion to a band concert than this.

With ample repertoire still to explore, the beginning of what one would hope to be a fruitful relationship between the Festival and brass bands in future years could well have been started with Jaguar's fine contribution here.

For a Festival that deserves our support in putting British musical heritage to the fore, that relationship could just be a match made in heaven for all concerned. ■

English Music Festival 2010
Opening Concerts
Colin Anderson
Classical Source
28 May 2010

The fourth English Music Festival was launched here in the imposing setting of Dorchester Abbey, a dominant feature of the picture-postcard village that is Dorchester-on-Thames, an idyllic location (one pub, blissfully free of background music, has a 'Chirpy Hour' eccentrically lasting for two… yes, we did sample the local brew!) that is quintessentially 'England' and the ideal place for celebrating the highways and byways of British music in a Festival (founded by the indefatigable Em Marshall) that helps to put pieces fallen from grace back on the map.

This opening concert (which is not to forget Anthony Williams's free piano recital the evening before of music by Alan Rawsthorne, Lennox Berkeley and Howard Ferguson) was a generous affair, a satisfying mix of short and extended works, Hubert Parry's setting of William Blake's Jerusalem making a stirring opener, save that "setting" is here a misnomer. No choir! A suggestion that the audience would be spontaneous choristers proved unfounded. What we had was Parry's original orchestration (rather than Elgar's) carrying his glorious soul-reaching melody, but Gavin Sutherland could have expanded this wonderful piece still further, especially in this generous (but not blurring) acoustic.

The bustle of William Alwyn's *Derby Day* (1960, to William Frith's painting) then followed, music both rigorous and expectant, with just a witty hint of Malcolm Arnold (specifically the suspensions of *Beckus the Dandipratt*, 1943) in the background. Quite why Roger Quilter withdrew his *Serenade* (1907) is to the innocent ear difficult to comprehend; it lasted just two performances and this Dorchester account was the first for 103 years! This is outdoor music, the first movement lyrical and tightly organised, the second, not least for the way the oboe is used, has a Delian imprint. The finale is less successful in its invention, less engaging, so maybe Quilter found this a weakness detrimental to the whole. Greater vision is contained in *Shadow Dance* from Havergal Brian's opera *The Tigers* (1917–19), music of unsuspected harmonies and rhythms, nothing predictable, which is more than can ▶

be said of Montague Phillips's Piano Concerto No.1 (1907), a perfectly pleasant, inoffensive piece that is the epitome of the 'romantic piano concerto' without establishing any real personality across its three movements. From Moscheles to Grieg, via Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky, it was more a pleasure to hear David Owen Norris play the solo part with such easeful ability and without a hint of condescension.

After the interval, during which the perfect sunset aligned to a balmy summer breeze could be savoured in the grounds, the heart was touched by E.J. Moeran's *Lonely Waters*, deeply felt, nostalgic and poignant music that is a first-cousin to Ralph Vaughan Williams's (already composed) *A Pastoral Symphony* (amongst the very greatest music written at any time and in any place).

And then the surprise package of the evening, York Bowen's Symphony No.1, composed in 1901, its first movement played that year at a concert in the Royal Academy of Music (where Londoner Bowen, 1884–1961, was a student)… and on 28 May 2010 the symphony received what was probably its "world première by a fully professional symphony orchestra"! It was a pleasure to be present, for this three-movement piece proved beguiling, music innocent and confident, lyrical and ebullient, the slow movement graceful and balletic. As a reference to its style, it seems apt to mention the music of the Swedish composer Franz Berwald (1786–1868, two of whose symphonies, the E-flat and the *Sinfonie singulière* are masterpieces, and similarly were only first-played long after their composer's death and, indeed, after Bowen had composed his debut symphony) – there is a similar translucence in the sound and Bowen's music is also light on its feet, elves and pixies at play at times. This 'first performance' was a good one; if, despite the BBC Concert Orchestra's versatility and Sutherland's sympathy, throughout the concert there were moments of unfamiliarity and uncertainty in the BBCCO's response that another rehearsal may have benefited, but it scarcely mattered given the opportunity to hear these particular scores in this appropriate ambience and in the company of a dedicated audience.

Good news that Andrew Davis and the BBC Philharmonic are recording Bowen 1 for Chandos; good too that BBC Radio 3 is broadcasting "the majority of this concert on Friday 18th June at 14.00" (losing what though?), and the icing on the cake is that EMF is starting its own record label – that way it's not just 'the few' that will be able to get to know the numerous hidden delights of British music but 'the many', maybe creating a world-wide-web of enthusiasts. The current English Music Festival runs until 31 May. ■

The English Music Festival
Dorchester Abbey
Edward Clark
Musical Opinion
July/August 2010

As a long-time advocate for exploring and performing the highways and by-ways of English music I have only the greatest admiration for Miss Em Marshall and her team that organise the English Music Festival, now held annually, based around the beautiful Dorchester Abbey in Oxfordshire.

Most of the repertoire in each festival is permanently ignored by our professional orchestras and their chief funder, The English Arts Council. Why this should be is a mystery. The old complaint about such music not achieving sufficient ticket sales (why enjoy an Arts Council subsidy if not for the benefit of our national heritage?) simply does not stack up when most professional orchestras, now under mainly Russian maestros, perform Russian (often obscure) repertoire with the same level of ticket sales.

Enough, I say. Give Em Marshall her due, a gong and some funding. This is our music, for our pleasure in our country.

This year the festival continued its penchant for world premières, both orchestral and instrumental. But before we dive in and discuss the merits of the Violin Sonata in A Major by Walford Davies et al., may we put matters into some perspective?

Everything is relative. *The Sea Symphony* by Vaughan Williams (1909) was, for English music at least, astonishingly modern put against the giant of the age, Elgar. By the 1920s Vaughan Williams himself was being overtaken as the standard bearer of progress by such names as Bliss and Walton. They, in turn, were beginning to be displaced by Britten and Tippett in the 1930s. After the War, real modernism, in the form of serial music adherents, placed Britten into the coral of English conservatism (much to his chagrin). Today we can assess the merits, progress and prospects of this post-war movement, which was aided and abetted by several generations of BBC Radio Controllers. We can legitimately ask if there is a public appetite for Birtwistle? Likewise for Ferneyhough, Julian Anderson and Colin Matthews, to name but three more modern masters. I am not going to answer that question because it is deliberately contentious!

What I will say is that there has been an upswing of interest over the past 20 years for the English Romantic Movement (which we used to catagorise through Elgar, Vaughan Wiliams, Hoist, and Delius). Today heightened awareness of the size of this Movement has been achieved through imaginative record companies (Naxos, Dutton, Hyperion and Chandos being the major – but not only – names) releasing new recordings of an ever expanding catalogue of composers, whose names until very recently have been totally obscure to general music lovers.

Is this national (and international!) interest in music that is tuneful, lyrical, user-friendly and so on a response to the inability of the post-war modernist movement to satisfy the spiritual and philosophic demands of a huge number of ordinary music lovers? No, I promised not to go there!

Enter, among others, Em Marshall and her English Music Festival, the fourth of which I attended for all but the last day in May 2010. The choice of works played was very much from the first half of the 20th century. Britten was included up to his American period of the 1940s. Bliss, York Bowen and Brian had early works performed (in the case of the first two totally unrepresentative of their later achievements). Alwyn was probably the latest entrant with his Derby Day from 1960!

This choice, in fact, allowed the listener to receive a feast of vintage English Romantic Movement works by composers that are totally ignored by our professional orchestras throughout the country, apart from when they record the music!

The opening orchestral concert (broadcast by Radio 3 and given by an on-form BBC Concert Orchestra under the experienced Gavin Sutherland) set the tone with works by Parry (an unsung *Jerusalem*, a shame, given that the words were available), Alwyn, Quilter, Brian, Montague Phillips (his overtly Russian sounding Piano Concerto No.1 with David Owen Norris the suitably flamboyant soloist), Moeran and York Bowen, his astonishing First Symphony written at age 17 and displaying a fine knowledge of the orchestral music of Mendelssohn and Max Bruch (in 1901!).

Many concerts then followed, the first with interesting violin pieces by the 23-year-old Bliss (today the most grievously neglected of all the composers in this festival), a delectable sonata by Walford Davies and a somewhat astringent (or so it seemed in this company), mature sonata by York Bowen. It was played with not a little style and panache by Rupert Luck with Matthew Rickard, piano.

Next, at the fine new Music Hall at Radley School, Purcell got a look in with his *Abdelazar Suite* (taken by Britten for his *Young Person's Guide*), a sad narrative for strings by Armstrong Gibbs, the lively and mercifully brief *Capriol Suite* by Warlock, a new piece, *A Gentle Music*, by the only living composer in the whole festival, Paul Carr, and Elgar's solemn *Elegy for Strings*, all performed by the somewhat diminutive number of strings of the Orchestra of St Paul's conducted by Ben Palmer.

Two choral concerts, one by the City of London Choir under Hilary Davan Wetton, the other the Elysian Singers under Sam Laughton, both in good voice, allowed us to hear the many delights of part writing from early 20th century (mainly minor) masters such as Wood, Stanford, Holst, Finzi, Elgar, Bridge, Howells, Bantock and Vaughan Williams. Britten's inclusion merely showed what a dramatic change agent he became to English music even as a young man.

The Tippett String Quartet gave an exhilarating concert at Radley School, playing the surprise package of Richard Arnell's Third String Quartet (another early work from his extensive output), showing how, aka Malcolm Arnold (not alas included in this year's festival), to be a natural communicator. Unlike, I am afraid, the worthy but dull Donald Tovey, whose Brahmsian *Air and Variations* managed to include two fugues in its interminable length. The concert ended with Britten's early (again!) First Quartet which, with its quality of invention, placed the development of our

national music up to that time (1941) into perspective.

By showcasing such an array of lesser-known composers the festival pointed up one inescapable fact. All but the greatest composers from this period of our musical history (Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Delius and Holst) simply got stuck in the tramlines of a conservative idiom derived from early studies at our music colleges of, mainly, German music. Each composer may have arrived at a certain 'English' flavour in their maturity but none of them offered any real progression into an 'unknown region', of the kind we hear from our greatest composers.

The last concert I attended in the wonderful Dorchester Abbey, with the evening sun streaming through, touched the heart strings. Two genuine giants of English music, Delius and Holst, produced the real article: namely a defined musical personality offering sustenance, interest and spiritual comfort. George Vass and the Orchestra Nova/City of Canterbury Chamber choir provided an object lesson of Delian authenticity, with exquisite and heartfelt beauty of tone in the incidental music to Hassan with narrator Paul Guinery.

This was followed by a rare outing for Holst's opera *Sāvitri* with singers Janice Watson, Mark Chaundry and David Wilson- Johnson. What it made up in atmosphere it lost in detail; the words and the delicate accompaniment were obscured by the acoustic. But it is a simple (and short) story of love triumphing over death. Subdued throughout, in this religious setting, it seemed a precursor to Britten's *Church Parables*.

In summary Miss Marshall goes from strength to strength in her desire to bring music from the English Romantic Movement to our attention in live performances. Audiences were excellent in size and enthusiasm. ■

Sāvitri
English Music Festival
Dorchester Abbey
Oxfordshire
May 30 2010

John Allison, *Opera*, August 2010
(also appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph*)

in 2006 to champion several needy – plus a few lost – musical causes, the English Music Festival this year staged its first opera. Semi-staged, actually, though given the austere simplicity of Holst's *Sāvitri*, the pared-back dramatic presentation was more than enough. *Sāvitri* (1916) is one of the most remarkable Indian-inspired pieces in the whole of Western classical music. Taking his story from the *Mahabharata* and producing his own English libretto after studying the Sanskrit original, Holst absorbed Hindu philosophy without descending into musical tourism. There's not a note that sounds pseudo Indian, nor a note that could have been written by anyone other than Holst: this performance in the fading light at Oxfordshire's Dorchester Abbey was extraordinarily effective.

Lasting only half an hour, *Sāvitri* is an unusual opera of utmost economy. It begins with the unaccompanied voice of Death (bass-baritone David Wilson-Johnson, in potent yet lyrical voice as befits the here ultimately benign character) calling out for Sāvitri's ailing husband, the woodcutter Satyavan. But Death is soon tricked by Sāvitri (the soprano Janice Watson, who gave an impassioned, soaring performance) and Satyavan (the tenor Mark Chaundy, on ardent form) recovers. The conductor George Vass shaped mystical-sounding playing from just 12 musicians of the Orchestra Nova and a wordless female chorus drawn from the City of Canterbury Chamber Choir.

Sāvitri's originality was only emphasised by its being paired with Delius's rarely heard incidental music to *Hassa*n (1923), James Elroy Flecker's play telling the story of a portly, middle-aged Baghdad confectioner who unwisely becomes smitten with the voluptuous Yasmin. Written for a sumptuous production with choreography by Mikhail Fokine, the richly-scored music is in a class above much other incidental music of the time – but incidental it remains. By the time we reached the final and fatally protracted 'Road to Samarkand' chorus, its charms had worn off. n

English Music Festival and *Capriol*:
Orchestra of St. Paul's
Ben Palmer (conductor)

Concert at Silk Hall
Radley College, Oxfordshire
English Music Festival
29th May 2010

Michael Graves
Peter Warlock Society Newsletter
Autumn 2010

I confess, to my shame, that I had not heard of the English Music Festival until I came across some information about the EMF eBulletin scheme, which I included in PWS Newsletter 85 in the Autumn of 2009.

The English Music Festival was first created by Em Marshall who felt that English music was not celebrated in this country as well as it might. Her view is that our national characteristic compels us to be too reticent about embracing an essential part of our cultural make-up. In its fourth year the EMF continues to develop and this year, with its thirteen concerts and three talks spread across five days, it has established itself as a significant and important event for English music. The main venue for the Festival is the Abbey of Dorchester-on-Thames, with the Church of All Saints, Sutton Courtney, and the Silk Hall of Radley College also hosting some of the events. This is how Em started her post- Festival report:

"Every year, the English Music Festival seems to become increasingly successful, attracting larger audiences and ever-higher standards of performance. There was a real buzz about this year's Festival – an almost tangible atmosphere of excitement and anticipation, that was also evident from the animated discussions that took place in local hostelries and at the box office as audiences gathered for our events."

I can certainly testify to the warm and enthusiastic atmosphere surrounding the concerts, but the most invigorating aspect of the Festival was the sheer quantity and diversity of English music contained within the programmes. Better known pieces were balanced by lesser known works, and several of these were première performances. An excellent appetiser for what was to come was presented by Sean Rafferty on BBC R3's *In Tune* on 27 May. Em Marshall was his guest, together with Rupert Luck (violin) and Matthew Rickard (piano) who were to play three 'tasters' from the forthcoming Saturday morning concert, two of them world premières. Sean Rafferty introduced Em Marshall "who seeks out these rarities" and asked if there were still plenty to be discovered? "There are indeed masses out there waiting to be unearthed, resurrected and revived." Em went on to say how there appeared to be an increasing interest in English music and mentioned the many CDs that were being released by labels such as Chandos and Naxos. Indeed Naxos have, at the time of writing, at least twenty volumes of English Song (PW is Vol.4) and six volumes of English String Miniatures (PW is on Vols.2 & 6).

Inevitably the discussion developed into a consideration of English music and the landscape. Em agreed that pastorality was important, but, in her opinion, one of the reasons why English music had been overlooked in recent years was because it had been perceived as being purely pastoral, which was a complete misconception. Certainly the Walford Davies we had just heard on *In Tune* was, in Rafferty's words, "quite muscular" and Em went on to assert that many well known English works, for example VW's Symphony No.4, were not pure "cowpat", as they had been described at the time. Many of us will smile at this point, as it is probably our own PW who gave rise to some of this nomenclature. Robert Nichols has suggested that PW referred to VW's music as being "too much like a cow looking over a gate". This supposed quote is often used but seldom completed with the subsequent, "Nonetheless he is a very great composer and the more I hear the more I admire him." If PW did indeed express these sentiments, then he reportedly did so after hearing the *Pastoral Symphony* and certainly before the Fourth Symphony had been written. But I digress.

With my appetite whetted I made my way to Silk Hall for the Saturday afternoon concert, which was given by the Orchestra of St. Paul's under Ben Palmer. I had chosen this concert simply because it contained PW's *Capriol*, but was delighted to see that the programme contained another première performance. This was Paul Carr's *A Gentle Music*, which Carr jointly dedicated to his publishers and to Em Marshall.

The concert began with Purcell's *Incidental Music to Abdelazar*. The famous *Rondeau*, normally the second movement, was here played last, no doubt due to the ▶

familiarity of the piece, which all would have recognised as the basis for Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. The OSP consisted of three each of first and second violins, violas and cellos with a single double bass, so the forces were modest. However, they succeeded in putting some bite into the more forceful passages. Not that they would need to in Armstrong Gibbs's *Threnody for Walter de la Mare*, which was played with great sensitivity, as was Carr's A Gentle Music and Elgar's *Elegy for Strings*.

After three pieces of such 'gentle' music the rendering of *Capriol* was not only spirited and mischievous, but also very welcome. No matter how many times I hear *Capriol* I always appreciate how clever and witty it is. Although it is difficult to bring anything new to the suite, by the same token it is also quite difficult to keep it sounding fresh. Ben Palmer and the OSP didn't disappoint. Of particular delight was *Tordion*, which was tantalisingly impish and its conclusion brought smiles of delight and a tiny ripple of *sotto voce* appreciation from the audience.

The Orchestra of St. Paul's is based at the Actors Church in Covent Garden and reportedly brings together some of the finest young professional musicians in London. There were, to my ear, however, occasional tuning issues. Yet their playing on the whole was extremely competent, sensitive and spirited. I enjoyed it all immensely and it appeared to have been similarly appreciated and enjoyed by performers and audience alike. The atmosphere was wonderful and I look forward very much to attending more events at next year's *English Music Festival*. Put the dates in your diary now – 27 to 30 May 2011.

EMF eBulletin scheme and Spirit of England Newsletter

As a member of the Peter Warlock Society, you can receive the *English Music Festival* bi-monthly e-bulletin free-of-charge simply by e-mailing a request with your e-mail address to Em Marshall at the EMF at: **em.marshall@btinternet.com**. You must request this personally to meet with Data Protection Act regulations. You can also request to receive the free quarterly English Music Festival newsletter, *Spirit of England*, which has information about the next Festival and related news. If you would like to receive this, please send your name and address to Em Marshall at em.marshall@btinternet.com. ■

EMF opening night perfection
MS, *The Henley Standard*

The English Music Festival, which ran from May 27 to 30, takes place annually in Dorchester Abbey and selected nearby venues and specialises in giving little-known and rarely performed works a welcome airing.

Friday night's celebration concert in Dorchester Abbey featured the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Gavin Sutherland and pianist David Owen Norris. It opened with one of the best-known settings of any English prose, Parry's 1916 version of *Jerusalem*, followed by Alwyn's overture *Derby Day*, the composer's homage to the painting of the same name by William Frith.

Rarities among a satisfying range of superbly executed pieces included Roger Quilter's *Serenade* (being performed for the first time since November 1907), and Montague Phillips' Piano Concerto No.1 in F-sharp minor, which has not received a public performance for more than 95 years. In this performance, such was David Owen Norris's empathy with the composer that the music at times displayed an almost ethereal quality, the soloist taking extended passages unaccompanied in both the central movement and the finale.

The climax of the evening came with York Bowen's Symphony No.1 in G major, completed in early 1901 when Bowen was only 17 years old and still a student at the Royal Academy of Music. Musicologists have been unable to prove that Bowen's First Symphony has ever been performed in its entirety, so this performance may well have been the world première of this charming and romantic work. As the symphony developed through its three movements it was hard to believe that we were not experiencing the work of a much older and more experienced composer, even though this symphony is acknowledged to demonstrate less technical achievement than his Second Symphony.

The programme notes recall that Sir Henry Wood described York Bowen as "a British composer who has never taken the position he deserves", and this performance must have done something to redress the balance.

The English Music Festival, under the inspired leadership of its founder and artistic director Em Marshall, is surely doing all it can to ensure that English music takes the position it deserves in our cultural life, and long may it continue to do so. ■

English Music Festival:
Dorchester Abbey
Nicola Lisle
The Oxford Times Weekend
(Oxfordshire Limited Edition)

It may be unfashionable to celebrate anything exclusively English, but Em Marshall – founder and artistic director of the English Music Festival – clearly has no qualms, and for four years has been on a crusade to revive forgotten gems of the English music repertoire. Last Friday, in the decidedly English pastoral setting of Dorchester Abbey, the BBC Concert Orchestra launched the fourth festival with a concert that abounded with curiosities.

Among the shorter pieces, William Alwyn's *Derby Day*, described in the programme as being full of "lively hustle and bustle", at times seemed a bit too frantic and disjointed, and is perhaps a candidate for being mothballed again now we've had a chance to hear it. Ernest John Moeran's folk-inspired *Lonely Waters*, though, was a delightful miniature, its lyrical, haunting melancholy vividly evoking the spirit of Norfolk.

A highlight of the first half was Roger Quilter's three-movement *Serenade*, here being given its first public performance for just over 100 years. This, Quilter's only extended work, is a glorious piece, and conductor Gavin Sutherland ensured a stirring, upbeat realisation of its richly melodic score. The joyful outer movements contrast finely with a sublime *Andante*, notable for an exquisite oboe line that is taken up later by the horns.

Passion and drama were very much to the fore in Montague Phillips's Piano Concerto No.1, which was last performed in 1912. Soloist David Owen Norris was full of his customary energy and zeal, handling the extended cadenzas with power and authority, and finishing with a cheeky flourish. The most eagerly-anticipated piece, arguably, was York Bowen's Symphony No.1, written in 1901 and never before performed in its entirety. This was another magnificent piece, which the BBC Concert Orchestra delivered with a fine appreciation of its lyricism and vitality, bringing the concert to a thrilling conclusion. ■

Top of Form
Peter Groves
The Bliss Society Newsletter

The Bliss Violin Sonata would be a perfect accompaniment to a summer afternoon: blazing sunshine, dappled shadows, a gentle breeze stirring the trees. Alternatively, it serves as an antidote to a grey, rainy May morning in Dorchester-on-Thames, which is how it received its world première at the Fourth English Music Festival. Never published, it dates from about 1914 and the manuscript is held by Cambridge University Library. Three extensive passages in the manuscript have been struck through, but what appear to have been intended as replacements recently came to light, enabling the violinist and scholar Rupert Luck to realise the work as Bliss intended it – or as nearly as possible – and to perform it, with Matthew Rickard at the piano. It's in one movement, so calling it a sonata is Bliss's own choice. It is rather shorter than the other works on the programme at Dorchester (York Bowen's Violin Sonata in E minor and Walford Davies's in A major, another world première that owes its existence in performing form to Luck). The programme notes, written by the violinist, provide all the factual information one could want: the technicalities would sound unconvincing if I were to present them here, even if I felt able to plagiarise his work. I do however endorse his reference to "red-blooded, long-lined, finely-arched themes; an opulent, though never intrusive, texture; a strikingly imaginative harmonic landscape; and a poetically-intense treatment of material" – all typical Bliss virtues, surely, with a little jauntiness thrown in – although I note that he also found the Walford Davies "full-blooded" and at least a passage of the Bowen "red-blooded" too. Strong stuff!

The work itself, as well as the performance, captivated the audience. It wasn't one of those concerts where I find at some point I have switched off: all three works commanded my full attention, the Bliss more than the others. They have much in common, and my neighbour in the comfortable seats (not the pews) extolled as one virtue of the Festival the way it brought out the connections between the featured works. Bliss later travelled a long way from this early work, but here it could be appreciated in context. My neighbour was also full of praise for the players, who acquitted themselves brilliantly and with palpable and infectious enthusiasm. It felt as if they were truly engaged with ▶

the works, and they attacked them with gusto. How nice it would be to be able to revisit the performance in recorded form – one day, perhaps. ■

Delius: *Hassan* (incidental music)
Holst: *Sāvitri* (opera in one act)
Roger Buckley
Delius Society Journal

This concert was the highlight of the 2010 English Music Festival. The venue was once again the fine mediaeval abbey at Dorchester-on-Thames, where last year we heard the first public performance of *Hiawatha* in Robert Threlfall's completed version.

Hassan, produced in 1923 by Basil Dean at His Majesty's Theatre, London, enjoyed an instant and fashionable success. Among the audience on the first night on 20 September were J.M. Barrie, Arnold Bennett, Gladys Cooper, John Drinkwater, Helle Flecker (the poet's widow), John Galsworthy, Beatrice Harrison, Philip Heseltine, Compton Mackenzie, Gerald du Maurier, A.A. Milne and Ivor Novello. A galaxy of stars, undoubtedly, but May Harrison, recording Delius's reactions for *The Royal College of Music Magazine*, revealed that the distinguished audience had "talked loudly through all his music, and he could hardly hear a sound of it." Eugene Goossens, who had conducted, reported that Delius labelled them a "stupid first-night audience of scatter-brains." Nevertheless, the piece was in general judged most favourably and 280 further performances were to follow.

Delius would have approved of the well-behaved audience in Dorchester Abbey. But then, so much sounded so good in this spacious acoustic, from the first *Prelude* onwards, that there was plenty to attract the ear. Delius wrote nothing else like this score and, probably because it is at times uncharacteristic, it occasionally calls to mind the work of other composers. There is, for example, a Bizet-like episode (the opening of the *General Dance* from Act II) and some of this number's later passages, especially in the choral writing, are strongly reminiscent of another *Danse generale*: that with which Ravel concluded his *Daphnis et Chloe*. With the oriental-sounding upward whole-tone scale – or, rather, a diatonic scale with an augmented fourth – that appears a number of times in this score, Delius recalls a detail from his own *A Poem of Life and Love* of five years earlier. (It was this fragment and its falling sequel that he declared represented "a seagull gliding by" when in 1929 he and Fenby were re-working the score as *A Song of Summer.) The War Song of the Saracens* ("We are they who come faster than fate") from Act III could be said to pre-echo a certain genre of film music exemplified by Maurice Jarre's score for David Lean's epic *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Most of the incidental music was played on this occasion: the conductor estimated 90%. It was on the whole a very good performance, marred only by a few moments of discomfort from the chorus. The musical scenes were interspersed by readings from the play, delivered from the pulpit by Paul Guinery. A tale of passion, vile cruelty and unimaginable torment were relayed to us in the voice that we know so well, which normally epitomises the calm and order of Radio 3 at its very best.

Holst was responsible for both the libretto and the score of *Sāvitri*, his very fine one-act opera for three soloists, female chorus and chamber orchestra (two flutes, cor anglais, two string quartets and double bass). Based on an episode from the *Mahabharata*, it tells how Sāvitri cunningly outwits Death, who has come to claim her husband Satyavan. The music is never faux-oriental and not a note of it could have been written by anyone but Holst. Semi-staged on this occasion, with David Wilson-Johnson, shrouded in black as Death and stalking along the aisle with his lamp in the fading light of evening, it made a striking effect, with all three soloists excelling in their roles. ■

Gurney's Violin Sonata in E-flat: an historical and analytical overview

RUPERT LUCK

It was as the result of an invitation from Ian Venables, Chairman of the Ivor Gurney Trust, that I first made the acquaintance of Gurney's Violin Sonata in E-flat major. The work is one of six such that Gurney began but is the only one that he finished; and the manuscripts, along with Gurney's other papers, are deposited in the Gloucestershire Archives. There are numerous versions of the individual movements in various states of legibility and stages of completion and Philip Lancaster, who has made a special study of Gurney's music and poetry, very kindly agreed to sift through the extant material and to send me, by email, scanned copies of the manuscripts that appear to represent Gurney's final thoughts on the work. When it became clear that the Sonata could be satisfactorily transcribed and edited, despite the numerous challenges posed by the chirography, the Trust formally invited Philip and me to become joint editors for the project; and I was later delighted to receive permission from the Trust to give the World Première performance of the complete work at the 2011 English Music Festival.

The Sonata was composed and revised during 1918 and 1919; and was, therefore, begun in the shadow of the Gurney's mental illness that was at that time beginning to manifest itself. On 4 July 1918, Gurney travelled to Napsbury War Hospital in St Alban's, expressing, in a letter to Marion Scott of the day previously, his hope that "there may a Cathedral to look at through the window". His hope was realised: the earliest mention of the Sonata is on a picture postcard of St Alban's Abbey, again addressed to Scott and dated 24 August of the same year: "I have been hammering at a V[iolin] & P[iano] scherzo sitting in front of this"[1]; and it appears that the movement was complete by 7 September 1918[2]. The first movement, too, was begun at the War Hospital, having been started by 11 September 1918[3]. Both these movements were revised in 1919, the reworkings being stimulated, perhaps, by Gurney's feelings of buoyancy and hope that by then were evident; and more specifically by his return, later that year, to the Royal College of Music, where he renewed his composition studies with Ralph Vaughan Williams. The manuscript of the later version of the Scherzo is dated "Jan Feb [sic] 1919"; and the manuscript of the revised first movement bears the legend "Revised July 1919". The remaining two movements date from the same period: the finale was finished in May 1919 and the slow movement was evidently completed to Gurney's satisfaction in September of the same year.[4]

Movement	Date(s)of first version	Date of revised (final) version
Scherzo	24 Aug. 1918 – 7 Sept. 1918	Jan. or Feb. 1919
First movement	11 Sept. 1918 – ?	July 1919
Finale		May 1919
Slow movement		Sept. 1919

TABLE 1: The sequence and dates of composition of the individual movements of the Violin Sonata in E-flat

The Sonata is, by any standards, a large-scale work: cast in four movements, it has a dramatic breadth and sweep that still allows space for detailed characterisation and coloration. However, it also displays a high degree of internal unification. One of the clearest examples of this lies in the tonal relationships of the Sonata's individual movements: ▶

[1] *Ivor Gurney: Selected Letters* (ed. R.K.R. Thornton); The Mid Northumberland Arts Group & Carcanet Press, 1991; p.442.
[2] Thornton, 1991; p.452.
[3] Thornton, 1991: p.458.
[4] Thornton, 1991: p.489.

the work's given key of E-flat major is balanced by the central movements' tonalities which are positioned a third above and below:

Movement	Tonic Key
I. Più allegro	E-flat major
II. Scherzo: Andante con moto	G major
III. Lento	C minor
IV. [Lento] – Allegro	E-flat major

TABLE 2: The large-scale key-structure of the Sonata

Moreover, the tonic notes of the three keys involved, C, E-flat and G, outline a C minor triad, and this key persistently manifests itself on smaller scales within the work: it occurs, for instance, in the middle section of the Scherzo; and is hinted by the violin's prominent b-natural at its first entry:

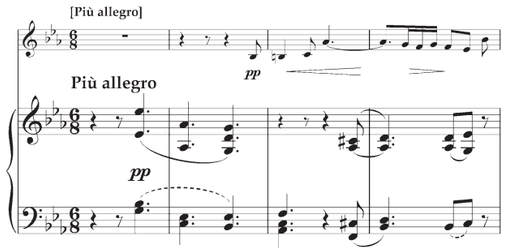


FIG. 1: 1st movement, bb.1–4: note the 6/3 chord of E-flat with which the piano part begins and the violin's prominent b-natural at b.3.

This suggestion of a shadowy C minor contributes to the Sonata's introspective, almost hesitant, opening: another crucial factor in this impression is the piano's first phrase, which, as can be seen in the above example, begins on the half-bar with a 6/3 chord. Again and again, throughout this opening paragraph, the music seems to gather momentum, only for the lines to tail off into sparser textures and, later, into silence. With the advent of a new motif, beginning in the tonic minor, however, the writing intensifies, its pace and density increasing inexorably, but without recourse to superfluity. Examine, for example, the way in which Gurney alters the 'orchestration' of these three melodically parallel bars. The melodic line is enhanced, in the second half of bars 17 and 18, by doubled thirds, the rhythmic leavening occasioned by the semiquavers serving to provide urgency and drive; but, although the addition of an extra 'voice' in bar 18 heightens the increased dynamic level, the composer eschews the temptation to thicken the texture still further with the *mf* of bar 19; instead, the melody is here doubled only at the octave, throwing greater emphasis onto the lyrical nature of the line which is consistent with the longer, two-bar, phrase that ensues.

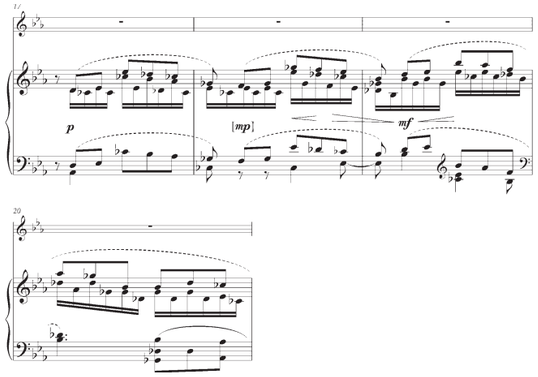


FIG. 2: 1st movement, bb.17–20, showing the doubled thirds in bb.17 and 18: compare this to the octave doubling of b.19.

A further fine example of 'orchestration' occurs in the Scherzo, in which an *ostinato* semiquaver figure in the violin, played *pizzicato* for an extra dab of colour, is set against a smoothly-coiling melody in the piano. It is not too fanciful to imagine this played by a wind ensemble, the *staccato* utterances being given by flutes and oboes, the *legato* line by clarinets with, perhaps, bassoons providing a mellowed gravitas to the opening quavers:

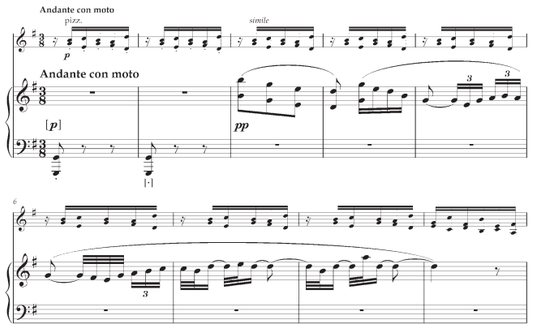


FIG. 3: Scherzo, bb.1–9

Interestingly, the opening of the original version of this movement is textually very similar to the later revision, but the instrumentation is substantially altered. In 1918, Gurney assigned the *ostinato* semiquavers to the piano, with the melodic line being taken by the violin. Although the quavers in the bass of the piano at bars 5 to 7 provide a counterpoint to the violin's melody, and thereby undoubtedly offer a different perspective to the phrase, the type of sound that results is arguably too disparate, too self-conscious, to enable the listener to call to mind a sound-world other than that inhabited by the instruments before him: it allows no room for fantasy.

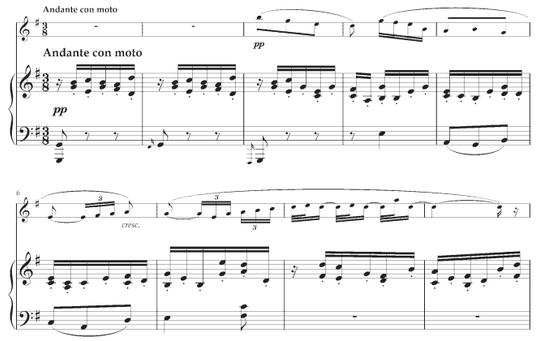


FIG. 4: The original (1918) version of the Scherzo, bb.1–9: note particularly the altered instrumentation with respect to FIG. 3.

Some of Gurney's amendments to the manuscript are especially fascinating in that they shed light on the meticulous attention he devoted to his scoring. For example, the opening of the first movement has certain notes in the piano chords crossed through: the final effect results in more translucency than was at first the case, a quality which is in keeping with the phrase's hesitancy mentioned earlier: its texture, therefore, complements its harmonic and metrical characteristics to a much greater extent.

With such a wealth of detail carried by the manuscript score; with every penstroke having implications for the work's interpretation in performance, it is clear that the Violin Sonata in E-flat is a work over which Gurney laboured intensively; yet, miraculously, the result is not intensively laboured. As a performer, the challenge in preparing such a composition lies in realising the composer's stated aims as accurately as possible without over-emphasis; in this case, however, the

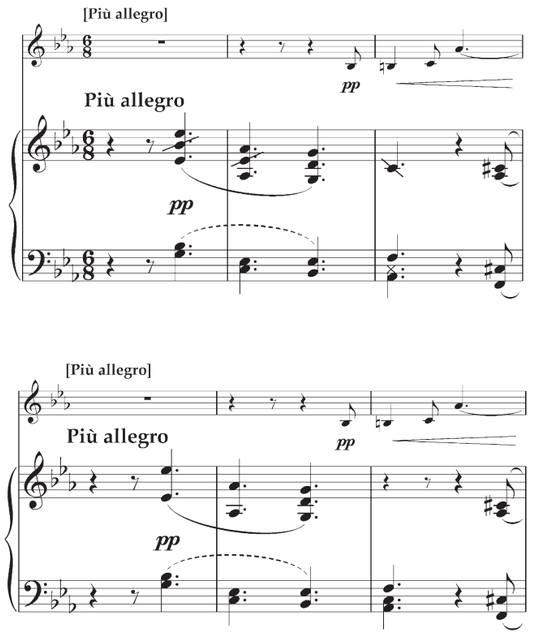


FIG. 5: 1st movement, bb.1–3, showing (top) the unamended version (the note shown with a cross-head is marked in pencil); and (bottom) the final version, with crossed-through notes removed.

Sonata's dramatic impetus and wide-ranging emotional impact; its vivid colours and strikingly-delineated characters; its masterly building and development of over-arching textures; its authoritative accumulation and dissipation of weights and densities – all these contribute towards the impact of a work that has lain unjustly neglected for too long. I am looking forward immensely to presenting it at the 2011 English Music Festival. ■

Clouds Hill and the Second Symphony:
Lawrence of Arabia's passion for Elgar

PHILIP REWSE MITCHELL

It is a far cry from Damascus and the Desert Revolt of 1916, where Colonel T.E. Lawrence became a legendary figure, to the Dorsetshire hut where Aircraftman T.E. Shaw lived out his last, reclusive years, confronting his demons and his reputation. Yet Clouds Hill became a sanctuary of books and music for this brilliant, crippled soul and his letters reveal a solace in Edward Elgar and a devotion in particular to the E-flat Symphony that illuminates both the character of the man and the mystique of the music. Moreover, through modern reissues of early recordings, we too have the opportunity to hear what Lawrence and his friends listened to time and again on his beloved gramophone – Elgar conducting his own compositions.

BovingdonTankMuseum@picturesofengland.com

Lawrence in uniform

After his Arab exertions Lawrence had retired, in his early thirties, from public life to work on a subscription edition of his masterwork, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. He had joined the Tank Corps in the ranks and assumed the name of T.E. Shaw (having been "outed" in the RAF, in which he had adopted the pseudonym of J.H. Ross, and forced to leave), being posted to Bovingdon Camp in Dorset where, in 1923, an opportunity arose to rent a dilapidated cottage nearby. Lawrence later rejoined the RAF and was posted to Cranwell and then to India, necessitating Clouds Hill to be let out to family and friends, but by the late 1920s he could use it part-time and it was purchased outright and remodelled. After his twelve-year enlistment ended in March 1935, Lawrence finally took up residence surrounded by his books and records. Six weeks later he was dead.

James Barr (JamesBarr@picturesofengland.com)

Cloud's Hill cottage

Clouds Hill is an atmospheric place now in the care of the National Trust, on the edge of Thomas Hardy's Egdon Heath and still close to a military camp where tank tracks scour the bare, scrubby countryside. This is not picturesque Dorset: it is bleak and remote – exactly what Lawrence sought as a refuge; exactly as Gustav Holst portrays it in his own overture *Egdon Heath*. The dip in the road where Lawrence smashed his skull on his Brough motorcycle is still evident. The meagreness of the cottage chosen by this great man bewilders visitors, yet the place is preserved as he left it and there are poignant reminders everywhere of his presence: the painting of his hero General Allenby; the mantelpiece candlesticks presented by RAF friends; and the gigantic Ginn gramophone from Soho Square on which Beethoven, Bach, Mozart – and Elgar – were played to exhaustion.

Lawrence was typically understated in his description of Clouds Hill in a letter (his second) to Elgar dated 22 December 1933: "You would laugh at my cottage, which has one room upstairs (gramophone and records) and one room downstairs (books); but there is also a bath, and we sleep anywhere we feel inclined. So it suits me. A one-man house, I think"[1]. How had the Arabist come to correspond with the composer in the first place? Despite his reclusiveness, Lawrence remained a towering figure and a respected man of letters, extending contacts with artists and writers such as John Buchan, Augustus John, Cecil Day Lewis, E.M. Forster, W.B. Yeats, Robert Graves and Thomas Hardy. He was an aesthete, stimulated by the arts and literary criticism, able himself to deploy majestic prose and biting analysis, and profoundly influential in cultural and political circles beyond his aircraftsman's status. The link to Elgar was through George Bernard Shaw. Shaw was a Worcestershire neighbour and unlikely champion of Elgar in the latter's later life; and Shaw's wife Charlotte became one of Lawrence's closest confidantes.

Establishing the connection

Lawrence's first letter to Elgar, dated 12 October 1932[2], had been written from Plymouth, where he was experimenting with speed boats for the RAF. Signed, as always afterwards, "T.E. Shaw", it recites a visit to Elgar in the company of the Shaws who by then had taken up his last residence in Worcester, Marl Bank (the Shaws lived at Malvern). "The chance of meeting you is just another of the benefits that have accrued to me from knowing G.B.S., who is a great adventure". It is clear that Lawrence, despite his own fame, was in awe of the veteran composer who represented genius in another field of artistic activity which Lawrence could appreciate but not emulate: "..it is a little difficult for an ordinary mortal to say the happy things when public monuments around him come suddenly to speech....Probably it feels quaint to you that the mere setting eyes upon you is a privilege: but by that standard I want to show you how good an afternoon it was for me, in your house". Yet we must assume that Elgar had an equal respect for Lawrence, who could be captivating company, since it was Elgar himself who had initiated the correspondence.

The two men did not meet again, but the second Lawrence letter mentioned above was written when Elgar was in his final illness, and no doubt was intended to cheer him up. It is written from Clouds Hill shortly before Elgar's death in 1934. "…we wanted to say "thank you" for the Symphony ever so long ago; but we were lazy, first; and then you were desperately ill, and even now we are afraid you are too ill, probably, to be thinking of anything except yourself: but we are hoping that you really are getting stronger and will soon be able to deal with people again". The "we" refers to Lawrence's two perennial weekend companions from the Services. Regular information about Elgar's declining health must have come either from his family or via the Shaws. The letter ends on an uplifting note, asking for the Third Symphony to be completed: "Imagine yourself girt about by a mob of young pelicans, asking for III; and please be generous to us, again!"

The Second Symphony

So what of the work that so aroused Lawrence's enthusiasm, about which he wrote "your 2nd symphony hits me between wind and water. It is exactly the mode I most desire, and so it moves me more than anything else – of music – that I have heard"? What emotional chord did it strike in this complex, world-weary warrior? The Second Symphony was premièred in May 1911, three years after the First. But the new work was nothing like as extrovert and rabble-rousing as its predecessor, and puzzled its audiences. Although Elgar himself repeated Ruskin's famous

[1] *Selected Letters of T.E. Lawrence*, ed. D. Garnett; Reprint Society, 1938; letter 224.

[2] Garnett, 1938: Letter 212.

autograph "this is the best of me" on the score, the Symphony, massive in scale and majestic in tone, betrays a personal story of doubt, insecurity and unease, so that no movement is quite what it seems. Whether Elgar was reflecting the darkening mood of pre-First World War Britain or his own professional disillusionment is a matter for debate. What is clear is that its unresolved mood of nostalgia and regret resonated with Lawrence and allowed him to identify closely with it.

"This Symphony," he says in his 1933 letter to the dying composer, "gets further under our skins than anything else in the record library at Clouds Hill. We have the Violin Concerto, too; so that says quite a lot. Generally we play the Symphony last of all, towards the middle of the night, because nothing comes very well after it. One seems to stop there." Yet this is a work that begins with the vigour and rhythmic forcefulness of the *Introduction and Allegro for Strings*, and ends with a spirited and genial finale. Something in between alters the mood. Perhaps it is the second movement's haunting elegy for the recently-dead King Edward VII; or the interrupted pastorale of the third movement which is transformed by the undercurrents still swirling from the opening *Allegro*. Whatever it is, Lawrence and his friends felt keenly the sense of loss, of noble failure, of discomfiture, that listening to the work engendered.

Lawrence indeed regarded his own existence as a noble failure. He wrote at the end of his life to Lady Astor, who proposed to use her influence with Churchill and others to secure a government appointment for him, "No: wild mares would not at present take me away from Clouds Hill… Also there is something broken in the works, as I told you: my will I think. In this mood I would not take on any job at all"[3]. *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and his other literary works were his self-acknowledged achievement. His involvement with the Arab cause was ultimately a failure, even a betrayal. Music seemed to express this, and solitude to provide an escape from it.

Which recording?

In the post-War years, as his composing decreased, Elgar enthusiastically embraced the technology of the recording studio. There were substantial fees to be earned as a conductor; and there was also the endless encouragement of Fred Gaisberg, the recording producer for The Gramophone Company (later HMV), who had to some extent taken the place of the late lamented August Jaeger as Elgar's professional musical inspiration. (His personal inspiration, Alice his wife, had died in 1920.) The problem was the limitations inherent in acoustic recording methods which persisted until the mid 1920s with the advent of electrical recording technology. Photographs of acoustic recording sessions featuring Elgar show what looks like an enormous ice cream cone extending into the orchestra with a small band of musicians clustered around like bees and the soloist practically disappearing into it. The sound was channelled directly through to a needle cutting onto a wax disc, without any electrical pickup or microphone. "Some instruments recorded batter than others. For example, while violins could be recorded with reasonable fidelity, the piano sounded like a muffled tin can and the French horn emerged as a muddy blur."[4]

Undeterred by these hazards, Elgar first conducted his Second Symphony on record in 1924; but, within three years and to mark his seventieth birthday in 1927, he re-recorded it with the London Symphony Orchestra in the concert hall environment of the Queen's Hall rather than in a studio, using microphones and achieving a fuller, more satisfying sound. This is the version that has come down to us today, courtesy of EMI Classics and Naxos (the latter coupling a 1928 recording of the Cello Concerto with Beatrice Harrison)[5]. It is tempting to

[3] Garnett, 1938: Letter 244.

[4] Mundy, Simon: *The Illustrated lives of the Great Composers: Elgar*; Omnibus Press, 1984.

[5] EMI Classics. The Elgar Edition, CDM5 672972, remastered 1992 and reissued 2000, ADD; Naxos Historical Label, Elgar conducts Elgar, 8.111260, transferred from HMV shellac discs, AAD. Both versions include the "outtake" rondo which was replaced because of background noise; the EMI version also includes a fragment of a rehearsal sequence, in which Elgar's own voice can be heard – this would not have been included in the set T.E. Lawrence had.

believe that this is the version on which Lawrence was commenting in his letters to the composer in 1932 and 1933. If, as the correspondence reveals, the Symphony was long a favourite of his, it is possible that the earlier recording found its way to Clouds Hill. But Lawrence took particular care of his records, and looked after his gramophone with the fanaticism of a modern hi-fi enthusiast. "To get the best results, he used only fibre needles, dusting his records with fine graphite powder to reduce surface noise. If a record became noticeably worn, he would replace it."[6] If the work was often played at the end of a Clouds Hill gramophone concert, it seems likely that the newer, more technically advanced, recording was substituted and Lawrence heard what we are able to hear today. Despite the digital "clean up", the sound is inevitably poor by comparison with modern recordings, with woodwind and brass muted and fluffy, the whole orchestra sounding shallow and lacking in dynamic range. But the performance itself is a revelation, with insights into Elgar's music-making which are often overlooked in contemporary concert halls where aural perfection is the main requirement.

Phil Jobson (PhilJobson@picturesofengland.com)

The upstairs music room

Into the Clouds Hill Music Room

Sitting in deep brown leather chairs with the horn of the gramophone perched up against the bare wooden wall near the low window, pipes lit, books brought up from downstairs, Lawrence and his friends begin to play the E-flat Symphony with the mist closing in over Egdon Heath. There are six 12-inch 78rpm records to be played; and the sides must be changed every four minutes. No opportunity for lazy reverie! It is surely no coincidence that the recording lasts exactly forty-eight minutes, timed as precisely as the digital soundtracks that slot into

[6] *T.E. Lawrence and Clouds Hill*, National Trust brochure, 2003.

predetermined times in modern radio broadcasts. Another record would have added eight minutes, and materially to the cost of production. The key to this performance, then, is the tremendous pace at which it proceeds. The orchestra positively hurtles through the opening bars, the brass barely able to keep up with the strings in the first tune, galloping headlong (*allegro vivace e nobilmente*) into the chase without any of the solemn introduction that characterises the First Symphony. Could Lawrence visualise himself charging across the desert with his irregular Arab horsemen, or even tearing across Southampton Water in the speedboats he was perfecting? The most noticeable feature of all Elgar's own conducting on record is the sheer speed of attack, clipped and urgent, taxing the orchestra to the limit (no wonder he sometimes thought them under-rehearsed), requiring intense concentration both from performer and listener to follow the musical argument. While this ensures that everything fits neatly onto disc, it plays havoc with the already-limited sound quality, even in modern reproduction. Elgar seems to have wanted it over and done quickly – the whole work being recorded in two long sessions on a single day, 1 April 1927.

The Symphony has been recorded many times since Elgar, and it is interesting to note that those conductors who professed to follow the original version as well as the score markings, such as Barenboim[7] and Solti[8], retain the same sense of pace and vigour, sometimes at the loss of spaciousness and nobility. Later interpretations have tended to slow the music down, gaining an impression of the overall sweep and architecture of the work, but perhaps sacrificing vitality. Vernon Handley's fine version falls into this category[9], while Bryden Thomson (taking a total of sixty-one minutes) generally proceeds at a funereal, halting pace[10]. Perhaps Sir Adrian Boult's versions (from Pye Golden Guinea on LP in the 1950s to HMV EMI in the 1980s[11]) strike the best balance, avoiding the extremes of slow and fast tempi and abrupt gear changes that come with, for example, Barbirolli's exuberant and passionate performance[12] of 1964. It was Boult who took up and popularised the Second Symphony with the BBCSO after the end of the First World War. Each listener will have his or her own personal preference, although current versions in the catalogue by Andrew and Colin Davis and Mark Elder satisfy most tastes. The recorded work seems to have become associated with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

What marks out Elgar's own performance, and is consistently evident in his other recordings of this "swan-song" period, is the nervous electricity which his beat generates, pulsating through the main themes but phrasing the longer, slower passages with great sensitivity and drawing extended bowing from the strings without any false sense of self-indulgence. The changes in tempo are achieved as part of the ebb and flow of the musical ideas themselves, and do not grate on the ear as with some more modern renditions. As one would expect, the swirling undercurrents of the work, the self-confessed "malign influence" of the cello melody which disturbs the energetic confidence of the first movement, the Spirit of Delight nostalgia which breaks up the dashing finale – all are unmistakeable.

Both Elgar and Lawrence loved the English countryside, felt their spirits to abide there, and believed that music could evoke a sense of time and place. Lawrence will have had his own quiet regrets, his recollection of momentous occasions, his sense of the Imperial ideal, his understanding of the ebb and flow of life, its essential sadness and lack of fulfilment, its heroic attempts. Elgar's great Symphony is the window on these joys and apprehensions; and the work's emotional expression evidently awoke an answering chord in Lawrence's soul. The two men, giants of their time, had much in common. Now they share it with us. ■

[7] Sony SMK 46682: LPO; Daniel Barenboim. Barenboim also conducted a less satisfying recording for CBS.

[8] Decca 436 150-2: LPO; Georg Solti.

[9] CfP CD-CFP 4544: LPO; Vernon Handley.

[10] Chandos Chan 8452: LPO; Bryden Thomson.

[11] EMI CDM7 64012-2: LPO; Sir Adrian Boult.

[12] EMI CDM7 64724-2: Hallé Orchestra; Sir John Barbirolli.

Arnold Bax and the Sea

SUE PARKER

If one thinks of the sea in connection with Arnold Bax, the works that come to mind will almost certainly be *The Garden of Fand* and *Tintagel*. These tone poems are certainly the best-known illustrations of the importance that the sea had for the composer, both in its physical presence and in its legendary and emotional associations, but they form only a small part of a much larger picture. This includes not only many of his musical compositions but also much of his writing: the plays, stories and poems on Irish themes that he wrote as a young man; and the letters that he wrote throughout his life.

Bax described himself as "instantly [becoming] a sort of honorary Irishman"[1] after discovering the poetry of W.B. Yeats in 1902 at the age of 18. An essential part of that identification concerned the Celtic mythology about which Yeats wrote, and the landscapes in which it was located; and, from the first, Bax was irresistibly drawn to the sea which is a persistent feature of both.

He made his first visit to Ireland that year, and for the next half-century, until his death there in 1953, he was a constant visitor, often staying for months at a time. He travelled extensively, particularly in the remote western coastal regions of County Donegal and Connemara. His favourite retreat for many years was Glencolumcille, a small village at the westernmost point of Donegal, which was reached only with the greatest difficulty. Much of his music had its origins there, and he wrote in great detail about his feelings for the place and its people in his autobiographical sketches published in 1943, *Farewell My Youth*. His descriptions of the sea are graphic; this

Sue Parker

Glencolumcille

[1] Bax, Arnold: *A Radio Self-Portrait*; no.3 in the BBC series *British Composers*, 1949; Symposium Records 1336, 2003.

Sue Parker

Renvyle

observation is typical: "At one end of the little Glen Bay was a wilderness of tumbled black rocks… and upon this grim escarpment the breakers thundered and crashed, flinging up, as from a volcano, towering clouds of dazzling foam."[2]

Another favourite haunt on the Atlantic coast was Renvyle House, an ancestral seat of the Blake family, one of the Tribes of Galway. Under the ownership of the formidable widow Caroline Blake, about whom Bax wrote with characteristic wit and relish, this decaying but beautiful old house in the remote north-west of Connemara had been turned into a hotel in 1883, the year of Bax's birth. He visited it often as a young man and spent part of his honeymoon there in 1911, as did Yeats a few years later. Described by Bax as "the strange old house on that sea-fretted edge of Europe"[3], it was a favourite destination for artists, writers, and politicians, and remains so to this day.

In Bax's mid forties the focus of his Atlantic retreats began to change from Ireland to Scotland, coinciding with the development in his music of a more austere, 'northern' sound. In the winter of 1928/29 he made his first visit to the tiny remote village of Morar, on the west coast of Inverness-shire. Thereafter he spent part of every winter until 1939/40 at the Station Hotel there, orchestrating the music that he had composed elsewhere earlier in the year.

During his twenties and early thirties Bax expressed himself as much in words as he did in music. His first visit to Ireland led to a lifelong love-affair with the country, and in the following decade or so he wrote plays, stories,

[2] Bax, Arnold: *Farewell, My Youth and other writings*, ed. Lewis Foreman; Scolar Press, 1992; p.4.

[3] Bax/Foreman, 1992; p.40.

and nearly 300 poems on Irish themes, inspired initially by Celtic legends and landscapes, and later by nationalist politics. In these writings, produced under the pseudonym Dermot O'Byrne, the sea is a constant presence, and the stories are located in real places that he knew well. Consider this, for example, from *Ancient Dominions*, a story set in Glencolumcille, and permeated by the presence of the sea:

"At the edge of the sea the drowsy waves broke in a long thin crest of foam, rising and subsiding rhythmically with the beat of the tide… Further out the Atlantic dreamed impenetrably, an enormous grey allurement, tender and terrible. Suddenly the full strangeness of this night's mood came upon me almost with the directness of a physical sensation. The sea, the moon… seemed to shadow forth some mystery soon to be revealed."[4]

This description not only sets the scene for a vividly written story about a pagan ritual taking place at midnight in a great sea-cave, but also tellingly reveals Bax's own feelings about the sea, which are further revealed in such music as *The Garden of Fand* and *Tintagel*. Two other stories, *Green Magic* and *The Sisters*, written in 1909 and 1910 respectively and published together in 1912, are also set in the far west of County Donegal. Both deal with the power of the sea over the lives of the local people: in the first, it is an object of such fascination to the heroine that she drowns herself in ecstasy; in the second, the child of a drowned man is born with a seagull's webbed foot in place of a hand. (In this context it is perhaps of some interest to note that Fand's first appearance in the mythological tale *The Sickbed of Cúchulainn* was as a seabird, and her eventual home is the sea itself, as the wife of the sea-god Manannán.)

The sea is important, too, in many of the poems; in one group, for example, entitled *Songs of the Western Seas*, seven of the eight poems have the word 'sea' in the title. Four of this group were written at Glencolumcille during one week in June 1907, when Bax was twenty-three. They have a linking theme in which the powerful attraction of the sea for the poet is at once desired and feared, and is opposed to the claims of ordinary love and life. This, from *The Sea's Singer*, gives a flavour:

"I have no time for drowsy love
Nor shining play of war,
I may not heed the stars above
Nor gay dreams on the shore;
I hear the voice of the sea, my king,
Curled lips of foam that bid me sing."[5]

Another poem from this group, *A Sea-Prayer*, is subtitled *The song of one who was tempted to leave wife and child and follow after wandering dreams*. Although in 1907 Bax had had no serious relationships with women, this is eerily prophetic of what happened to him a decade later, when he left his wife and children for the pianist Harriet Cohen, whom he described as "this wonderful stray creature from the faery hills."[6]

In his music, as in his writing, Bax took inspiration from the natural world – the sea, mountains, forests, storms – and from Celtic and northern myths; and he also found in these sources a reflection of his own experiences and emotional states. Thus *Tintagel* suggests in general terms the Cornish coastal landscape, the Atlantic, and the heroic deeds of Arthur and Tristan; but in specific terms the turmoil in Bax's own life at the time of its composition. He was on holiday with his family near Tintagel in September 1917, secretly writing to and occasionally meeting Harriet, who was staying in the village; a few months later he would make the decisive break with his wife and children. The broad second theme of the tone poem depicts the wide reaches of the

[4] Bax, Arnold: *Ancient Dominions*, in Farewell, My Youth; p.141.

[5] Bax, Arnold: *Ideala: Poems and some early love letters*, ed. Colin Scott-Sutherland; Fand Music Press, 2001; p.83.

[6] Bax, Arnold: Letter to Arthur Alexander, in Lewis Foreman: *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, 3rd edn; The Boydell Press, 2007; p.157.

Atlantic but is also surely a personal love song; the increasingly restless mood of the development, with its significant quotation from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, suggests not only a storm at sea and events from the legends of Arthur and Tristan, but also Bax's very particular emotional and sexual frustration.

In Morar the sea was again ever-present, to the extent that Bax openly acknowledged its inspiration in the Fourth Symphony. For example, the opening represents a rough sea at flood-tide on a sunny day. This work, apparently begun in Glencolumcille in the autumn of 1930, was otherwise composed and scored entirely at Morar during the following winter. That was the first time that his young lover Mary Gleaves had accompanied him on these working holidays, and she was to do so throughout the next decade. Their undemanding and fulfilling relationship provided him with some respite from the pressures of public musical life in England, to which he never became reconciled, as well as from the stress of the continuing affair with the difficult and possessive Harriet. The Symphony's happy, extrovert character is markedly different from the symphonies that preceded and followed it. All three movements carry the sound of the sea and, as in *Tintagel* of a dozen years previously, the music portrays the composer's feelings at the start of a new relationship, as well as the sea itself. But whereas the earlier work conveys some significant feelings of tension and conflict, the symphony is nearly all cheerfulness and exuberance.

In 1949 Bax commented on the presence of the sea in his music:

"Living as I did for many months through many years in places on the Atlantic coast, it is natural that the sea in its many varieties of mood entered very conspicuously into my work. Its surges may be heard not only in *Fand* but also in *Tintagel*, in which enormous rollers may be imagined crashing upon the cliffs of Cornwall. And in some of my piano music too, written at about the same time – *Winter Waters* and the Sonata for Two Pianos, for instance."[7]

Winter Waters (1915) is a dark-toned piece in which the sea's powerful undertow is suggested by an ominous ostinato figure in the bass, while the melodic line may illustrate the rising and falling of the waves on the surface. The Sonata for Two Pianos (1929) was overtly inspired by the natural world and Celtic legend. Rae Robertson, one of the pianists for whom it was written, supplied a 'programme' for the second movement which is not unlike that of *Fand*: faery music heard from afar across a calm sea, which grows more agitated in a succession of breaking waves, before the distant music returns and fades into silence.

The sea music that Bax refers to above does not, of course, constitute an exhaustive list. He could have mentioned *Nereid*, a piano piece from 1916 in which a nymph may be imagined swimming languidly in a gently rocking sea; *Mediterranean* (1920), a sunny, syncopated piece perhaps harking back to a holiday in Spain in 1913; and numerous other works. And because we know that the sea was important to him in many ways throughout his life, it is reasonable to expect to find that importance reflected, too, in some of the music for which he did not identify a specific influence.

For me, the second movement of the Second Symphony (1924–26) evokes the deep ocean, far from the shore, at first calm with a persistent swell but gradually becoming more turbulent and stormy. Bax acknowledged that he was "going through absolute hell"[8] when he wrote this, of all his symphonies the one where his feelings are most openly revealed. I hear it as another instance of music in which he has integrated inspiration from the natural world with the expression of his own emotional state. Similarly, the piano chords and arpeggios of the opening of the magnificent Piano Quintet (1914/15), marked 'Passionate and rebellious', have always suggested to me a succession of waves alternately crashing onto the shore and retreating, and thus established a physical context for the whole movement. In this respect I was interested to see that the notes for the new recording of

[7] Bax, Arnold: *A Radio Self-Portrait*; no.3 in the BBC series British Composers, 1949; Symposium Records 1336, 2003.

[8] Bax, Arnold: Letter to Richard Church; in Foreman, 2007; p.224.

Sue Parker

Kinsale

this work from Naxos (2010) suggest a similar connection; there is even a picture entitled *Irish Seascape* on the front of the booklet, making the association explicit.

Bax died in Ireland on 3rd October 1953, four days after hearing a performance of *The Garden of Fand* in Dublin, and a few hours after watching a spectacular sunset over the Atlantic at the Old Head of Kinsale, near Cork. He did not quite achieve the death that he had dreamed for himself a decade earlier, but we can hope that it was as near as possible to what he would have wished: "I like to fancy that on my deathbed my last vision in this life will be the scene from my window on the upper floor at Glencolumcille, of the still, brooding, dove-grey mystery of the Atlantic at twilight; the last glow of sunset behind Glen Head in the north..."[9] ■

[9] Bax/Foreman, 1992; p.44.

From Meadow to Mayfair

A glimpse into the world of England's light-music miniaturists

STUART MILLSON

The great tone-poems and landscape impressions of English music need little introduction: Bax's epic *Tintagel*; Delius's *A Song of Summer*; Holst's brooding *Egdon Heath*. We might add to the list depictions of urban England – Elgar's imperial, Cockney capital city, *Cockaigne*, and Vaughan Williams's more mysterious *A London Symphony*. But there is a body of work within our native musical tradition which, whilst not having the introspection, stature or timescale of the works just listed, nevertheless presents us with a faithful representation of the places, people, ▶

history and atmosphere of our country. For this is the English musical tradition, as developed by composers such as Eric Coates, Haydn Wood, Ernest Tomlinson and Ronald Binge – skilled miniaturists, capable of producing pen-portraits of scenes as diverse as Oxford Street, Knightsbridge, or a sleepy Arcadian stream flowing somewhere through the heart of the shires. Elgar and Vaughan Williams wrote, or set, memorable melodies which have become part of the national psyche – but surely the signature tunes to Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* (Coates) or *Down Your Way* (Haydn Wood) have also struck a chord with the nation!

Northamptonshire-born Eric Coates (1886–1955) is often referred to as the uncrowned king of light music. And it would surely be the case that if the lighter composers had their own private musical monarchy, Coates would reign above all. Today, this prolific writer of suites and marches is undergoing something of a revival, thanks in great part to the work of conductors such as John Wilson, Rumon Gamba and Gavin Sutherland – although we tend to forget how much he was championed in the 1960s and 70s by Sir Charles Groves and Sir Adrian Boult. Indeed, in 1975, Sir Adrian (usually at the helm of the London Philharmonic or the BBC Symphony Orchestras) conducted the much smaller BBC Concert Orchestra in a studio recording of Coates classics, such as the Overture *The Merrymakers*, the stirring *Three Elizabeths* Suite (with its first movement of swashbuckling 16th-century seafarers), and a song which today has been all but forgotten: the elegiac *Green Hills o' Somerset* – sung so touchingly by the well-loved and fondly-remembered bass-baritone, Ian Wallace.

It seems that there is hardly a London street, bridge or view which Coates has not immortalised in music, although the listener is occasionally transported to the countryside – as in the sentimental song of Somerset just referred to, or the suite *From Meadow to Mayfair*. But there was another composer who could also be considered as a musical laureate of London: Haydn Wood (1882–1959). His suite *London Landmarks* is every bit as atmospheric and jaunty as Coates's, especially the elegant little march *The Horseguards, Whitehall*, which ended BBC Radio's series of vignettes of local life, *Down Your Way*. Wood's music conjures a fond image of London and England – a time when every male, even at weekends, wore a suit, or at least a tweed or linen jacket; and a time long before Oyster cards, Norman Foster plate-glass monoliths, and the modern metropolitan cult of push and shove.

And nowhere on record has *Horseguards* been better served than in Vernon Handley's splendid and (in the final few moments) powerfully symphonic reading with the BBC Concert Orchestra – the work forming part of a collection of light-music gems, generally from the inter-war era. Wood, however, was not simply a writer of five-minute confections and popular tunes: he also composed a Violin Concerto, the Delius-like feel of which can be enjoyed on a recent recording by the ever-enterprising Dutton label. As with so many English composers, we have hardly begun to scratch the surface of their legacies.

Allow me to reach for Vernon Handley's disc of English classics once again for my final pair of light but, somehow, not lightweight composers – Ernest Tomlinson (b.1924) and Ronald Binge (1910–1979). Tomlinson shared something of Vaughan Williams's and Holst's passion for folk-song, and for weaving old country tunes or folk-like melodies into a well-crafted orchestral tapestry, such as in his outdoor-spirited *Concert Jig*. Older listeners may remember a vividly-recorded Decca record from many moons ago, which saw Sir Vivian Dunn conducting the Light Music Society Orchestra in Tomlinson's *Suite of English Folk Dances* – not to mention Grainger's *Country Gardens* and *Shepherd's Hey*, and with works by Balfour Gardiner and Armstrong Gibbs added for further rustic flavour.

It is only right that a mention of the music of Ronald Binge should conclude my look at the music of England's gentler age. His *Sailing By* allows us to drift away into a maritime world of lapping waves, West Country coves and the Radio 4 Shipping Forecast, whilst his poignant English idyll *The Watermill* (every note as well-crafted as Butterworth's *The Banks of Green Willow*) transports us to a riverbank where, perhaps, we may find Ratty and Mole messing about in boats, as the afternoon sunshine flickers through overhanging branches and sparkles on the clear English stream. ■

Holbrooke on CD

ROBIN SAWERS

Only a few years ago, this would have been a very short article. And before 1992, it couldn't have been written at all. That was when the years of almost complete neglect by the recording industry of the works of Joseph Holbrooke were ended with the issue of the first Marco Polo disc of his orchestral works, conducted by the indefatigable Adrian Leaper. At last it was possible to hear a selection of his colourful, dramatic scores in modern sound, including *The Raven*, the first of his series of Symphonic Poems, based, like nearly all of them, on a work by Edgar Allan Poe. Its première performance in 1900 under August Manns at the Crystal Palace was a great success and brought the young composer fame and a little much-needed fortune. I was delighted to see when the disc came out that it also included *The Bells* of 1903, the wonderful work which had first drawn my attention to the composer when I heard a broadcast performance; but, alas, it was only the *Prelude* that was included, although a choir was on hand for the recording of *Byron*, a setting of Keats' panegyric. It is greatly to be hoped that we will not have to wait too long for a complete recording of *The Bells*, and I see that Cameo Classics include it in their plans. It can certainly stand comparison with Rachmaninov's famous setting, which it preceded by several years.

The Leaper disc was completed with the *Poem for Orchestra* no. 4; *Ulalume*, one of Holbrooke's most immediately attractive scores; and the overture to *Bronwen*, the final part of his trilogy of operas based on Welsh mythology entitled *The Cauldron of Annwyn*. Throughout, the Bratislava Radio Orchestra copes well with the demands of the music and conveys its drama, although neither the playing nor the recording do full justice to the brilliance of the orchestration.

A similar verdict might be passed on the second Marco Polo CD which followed in 1995, featuring a Ukrainian orchestra conducted by Andrew Penny. This was, however, extremely valuable in bringing together the Overtures to the remaining parts of the Welsh trilogy, *The Children of Don* and *Dylan*, and *The Birds of Rhiannon*, a Symphonic Poem more lyrical in character which also tells a tale from the Welsh *Mabinogion* legends and uses themes from the operas. There had been an earlier Lyrita version of this, with the LPO conducted by Vernon Handley, and it has been reissued in a compilation with Bantock's *Overture to a Greek Tragedy* and Cyril Rootham's First Symphony. Both recordings were, I think, surpassed by the memorable performance at the second EMF under Barry Wordsworth.

A third and final Marco Polo disc brought together three fine chamber works, the String Sextet, Piano Quartet no.1 and the Symphonic Quartet, ably performed by Hungarian artists, and well recorded, so no reservations here. The language may not go far beyond Brahms or Grieg, but within this idiom the music is extremely accomplished and the invention always fresh, so it gives much pleasure and surely deserves a hearing in an EMF concert.

More chamber music followed in 2002 from Dutton, for whom the Rasumovsky Quartet played an attractive and varied selection. Neither of the two Quartets is in the traditional form, the First being one of the many one-movement Fantasy Quartets generated by the Cobbett competition; and the Second, subtitled "Impressions", has only two movements. These are interspersed with movements from the two Folksong Suites, and the disc keeps the best until last, with Richard Hosford as the assured soloist in the Clarinet Quintet. Some single works appear on compilation discs, the most substantial being the Violin Sonata no.3 ("Orientale") played by Jacqueline Roche and Robert Stevenson on Dutton (combined with Sonatas by Walford Davies and Cyril Rootham), while the *Fantasie-Sonate* for cello and piano is performed by Raphael Wallfisch with Raphael Terroni on the British Music Society label, with works by Wordsworth and Busch.

In 2000 Hyperion issued in their Romantic Piano Concertos series a disc including Holbrooke's Piano Concerto no.1. Subtitled "The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd", and called a Poem for Piano and Orchestra, it was the first of his ▶

works to be based on a Welsh legend as retold by T.E. Ellis. It follows the action closely, so can become somewhat episodic in character, but is bound together by the remarkably fluent and powerful piano part, while the unflagging invention keeps on coming up with ideas that enchant the ear and great dramatic gestures. Some potential listeners may be deterred by the detailed programme, but never fear: this work can be enjoyed to the full without any knowledge of it. Hamish Milne and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Martyn Brabbins faithfully capture its many moods, and they also give an excellent account of Haydn Wood's dramatic D minor Concerto.

2008 saw the 50th anniversary of Holbrooke's death, which started more recording activity. The EMF played a role in this, with the electrifying piano recital in Dorchester Abbey by Panagiotis Trochopoulos offering a foretaste of the recordings he was to make for Cameo Classics, of which a first volume has appeared. This includes the terrifying *Barrage*, a pianistic evocation of artillery, two of the Fantasie-Sonates, five Rhapsodie-Études, and three Nocturnes, all testifying to Holbrooke's powerful imagination and virtuosity. There have been some difficulties in supply, but the new website should remedy this (www.cameo-classics.com). As well as a second volume of piano music, this label has ambitious plans for the future, and has already included the remarkable and often hilarious *Variations on "The Girl I Left Behind Me"*, which are in the same vein as Ives's *Variations on "America"*.

Finally, we have had two orchestral discs of outstanding quality which begin to reveal Holbrooke's true stature. For Dutton, George Vass and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic played a very varied programme of later works, in which the *Cambrian Concerto* for cello and orchestra stands out, with Raphael Wallfisch the eloquent soloist. The Fourth Symphony, "Homage to Schubert", is a strange mixture, since the outer movements explore a theme by Schubert which is combined with some more modern material, but the end result is not unattractive. The composer's penchant for Edgar Allan Poe is shown at its most dramatic in *The Pit and the Pendulum*, with powerful brass and spooky woodwind and strings; and, in complete contrast, the selection ends with the sweetness of the dance *Pandora*.

For the finest realisation of Holbrooke's prowess as an orchestrator we have to turn to a German orchestra and a German record company. The 2009 cpo recording which brings together *Amontillado*, *The Viking*, *Variations on "Three Blind Mice"* and *Ulalume* is nothing short of a revelation. The Brandenburgisches Staatsorchester Frankfurt under Howard Griffiths plays with fire and commitment, but also great accuracy, and with delicacy where needed. The recording is crystal-clear, but also warm and with plenty of space round the sound. Let's look forward to more Holbrooke from this source.

I hope this brief survey shows how remarkably the situation regarding recordings of Holbrooke's works has changed in the last few years. Perhaps we can speak, at least tentatively, of a Holbrooke renaissance.

More as a footnote, I must mention the fascinating compilation of historic recordings put together by Symposium Records. This includes not only the Overtures to *The Children of Don* and *Bronwen* and the *Dylan* Prelude, but also mainly vocal excerpts from the operas which give a fascinating glimpse of their sound world. The singers include the great bass Norman Walker and the tenor John Coates, and the conductors are Arthur Hammond, Clarence Raybould and Claude Powell. We then have recordings of Holbrooke himself at the piano; unfortunately the solos are lightweight and undistinguished, but two movements from the G minor Piano Quartet are also included, albeit in a rather dim acoustic recording. A truncated version of the finale of the Third Symphony ("Ships") under Raybould ends the selection.

Summary

Marco Polo 8.223446: *Ulalume* op.35; *Bronwen Overture* op.75; Prelude to *The Bells* op.50; *The Raven* op.25; *Byron* op.39.

Slovak Philharmonic Choir, Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava) conducted by Adrian Leaper.

Marco Polo 8.223721: *The Children of Don Overture* op.56; *The Birds of Rhiannon* op.87; *Dylan Prelude* op.53.

National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine conducted by Andrew Penny.

Marco Polo 8.223736: String Sextet in D op.43; Piano Quartet no.1 in G minor op.21; Symphonic Quintet no.1 in G minor op.44.

New Haydn Quartet with Endre Hegedüs (piano), Sandor Papp (viola) and Janos Devich (cello)

All three Marco Polo CDs have been deleted, but are still available from some retailers such as Amazon, and for download in MP3 format.

Dutton CDLX 7124: String Quartet no.1 in D minor ("Fantasie") op.17b; *Song of the Bottle* (from Folksong Suite no.2 op.72); *Eileen Shona* for clarinet and strings; String Quartet no.2 *(Impressions)* op.59a; *The Last Rose of Summer* and *Mavourneen Deelish* (from Folksong Suite no.1 op.71); Clarinet Quintet in G op.27.

The Rasumovsky Quartet with Richard Hosford (clarinet).

Dutton CDLX 7219: Violin Sonata no.3 in F op.83 (with sonatas by Walford Davies, Rootham and Benjamin).

Jacqueline Roche (violin), Robert Stevenson (piano).

British Music Society BMS436CD: *Fantasie-Sonate* op.19 (with works for cello and piano by Wordsworth and Busch).

Raphael Wallfisch (cello), Raphael Terroni (piano).

Hyperion CDA67127: Piano Concerto no.1 *(The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd)* op.52 (with Haydn Wood: Piano Concerto in D minor).

Hamish Milne (piano), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Martyn Brabbins.

Cameo Classics CC9035CD: Music for Piano Vol. 1: Fantasie-Sonate no.1 *(The Haunted Palace)* op.124; Fantasie-Sonate no.2 *(Destiny)* op.128; Rhapsodie-Etudes nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10; Nocturnes nos. 1, 2, 4; Barrage; First Barcarolle op.17 no.6.

Panagiotis Trochopoulos (piano).

Cameo Classics CC9037CD: English Composers Première Collection Vol.1: *Variations on "The Girl I Left Behind Me"* op.37b (with Dorothy Howell: *Lamia*; and Maurice Blower: Symphony in C).

Karelia Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Marius Stravinsky.

Dutton CDLX 7251: *The Pit and the Pendulum* (Fantasie for Orchestra) op.126; Cello Concerto op.103 *(Cambrian)*; Symphony no.4 in B minor op.95 (*Homage to Schubert*); *Pandora*.

Raphael Wallfisch (cello), Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra/Royal Scottish National Orchestra conducted by George Vass.

cpo 777 442-2: *Amontillado* (Dramatic Overture) op.123; The Viking (Poem no.2 for Orchestra) op.32; *Three Blind Mice* (Symphonic Variations on an Old English Air) op.37 no.1; *Ulalume* (Poem no.3 for Orchestra) op.35.

Brandenburgisches Staatsorchester Frankfurt conducted by Howard Griffiths.

Symposium 1130: *The Children of Don* – Overture and Noden's Song; *Dylan* – Prelude and The Sea King's Song; *Bronwen* – Overture, Bran's Answer, The Bard's Song, Cradle Song, Taliessin's Song, and Funeral March; Piano Quartet in G minor (two movements); piano solos – The Enchanter, Wasps, Roumanian, Rangoon Rice Carriers; Finale from Symphony no.3 in E minor ("Ships").

Norman Walker (bass), John Coates (tenor), Doris Vane (soprano); conductors Arthur Hammond, Clarence Raybould, Joseph Holbrooke, Claude Powell

Joseph Holbrooke (piano), members of the Philharmonic Quartet.

Available from Symposium Records, 110 Derwent Avenue, East Barnet, Herts EN4 8LZ ■

Researching the Life and Music of Haydn Wood

The joys and travails of a music sleuth living on an island off the west coast of Canada

MARJORIE CULLERNE

Marjorie Cullerne is a violinist. She is a great-niece of Haydn Wood, and already had a Master's Degree in Music History and Violin before it dawned on her to inquire about the musicians in her own family tree. She and her partner Gilles Gouset have a website, www.haydnwoodmusic.com. Their Haydn Wood Music Archives and Library is growing by leaps and bounds in their home on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada. Haydn Wood's choral piece The Phynodderee will be performed at the English Music Festival 2011.

Several years ago, I read on my computer here in Parksville on Vancouver Island that a certain Em Marshall had included the work of a composer dear to my heart in her long list of compositions she would like to hear played at her brainchild, the English Music Festival. That composition was the *Fantasy-Concerto for String Orchestra*, and its composer was Haydn Wood (1882–1959), my great-uncle (my grandmother's brother). Even though the *Fantasy-Concerto* won't be included in the roster this May, I am thrilled that the Syred Consort, under its director Ben Palmer, will be singing *The Phynodderee*. It is one of Wood's pieces which I have never heard before, and which has possibly never been performed since its first performance in 1910.

The Lewisham Hotel, Slaithwaite, Yorkshire, birthplace of Haydn Wood in 1882, and of George Cullerne in 1897. George, Marjorie's father, is holidaying from Canada in 1965, visiting the hotel shortly before its closure.

Haydn Wood died in London in March 1959 – a mere two years before my first trip from my birthplace in Vancouver to England and the Isle of Man, where I first met my parents' relatives. Being a giddy teenager in 1961, and later in love and travelling with my Dutch fiancé in 1965, I didn't think to ask questions as to the whereabouts of some of the Wood family music manuscripts, diaries and photographs that I *now* know were still extant at that time in the possession of my dad's relatives. In 1969, the year I finished my Master's Degree in Music History and Violin, Haydn Wood's – and my dad's – birthplace, the Lewisham Hotel and pub in Slaithwaite, Yorkshire, was demolished. The pub had even displayed a few momentos in their 'Haydn Wood Memorial Room' until 1966, when the pub had closed for economic reasons. My attention was so riveted elsewhere that I cannot even remember my family lamenting the demise of this grand building, although I am sure they did. It was about 20 years later, when browsing through reference books at the University of British Columbia Music Library, that I was amazed to see in the BBC Music Catalogue that Haydn Wood had composed about 300 works! Later, I went on to learn that his almost 200 heart-warming songs were a soothing and uplifting force in the lives of millions of listeners throughout the first half of the 20th century.

In 1991, when I travelled from Canada to participate in a Baroque Music course at West Dean, in Chichester, West Sussex, I fortuitously met another participant, violinist Susan Marshall of Huddersfield. When I mentioned to her that my dad, and – oh, yes; by the way, my great-uncle Haydn Wood – were born near where she lived, Susan was so enthralled that she invited me to come visit her in Yorkshire, saying she would drive me wherever I needed to go. I was ready for the adventure! My research trip in Yorkshire the following year was so gratifying that I have since returned to England and the Isle of Man on several occasions.

One night in the 1990s, having missed my last late-night train connection to Huddersfield, I found myself having to stay overnight in a hotel near the train station where I was stranded. When I woke in the morning, the sunlight was streaming through a colourful piece of stained glass in the window above my bed. I found myself so emotionally touched by this surprising sight (it was dark when I had arrived late the night before) that I found myself vowing to dedicate the rest of my life to making up for lost time – to sift through those items of Wood family archival material I had already; and to amass more. It seemed all the more necessary for someone like me to press on with such research, since Haydn Wood and his wife, the soprano Dorothy Court, never had any children.

Since then I have spent days researching at the Manx National Library and Archives and at the Manx Heritage Foundation, staying with the gracious Dr Fenella Bazin, and at the Library of Light-Orchestral Music in Lancashire, staying with composer Ernest Tomlinson and his family in their home adjoining their astounding old barn with its thousands of packets of sheet music.

In 1992, I asked a second cousin of mine, Jack Wood in Yorkshire, "Do you know where any of our Uncle Haydn's stuff is?" Jack told me that there had been boxes of family memorabilia placed in the attic of his sweet shop, but the attic had leaked, the boxes had got damp, and he had thrown them away. My dismay was partially alleviated when Jack's wife remembered that some Wood family stuff was languishing in a large canvas box in an unheated garage at the home of her sister-in-law. They gladly gave it all to me. Susan Marshall shipped its contents to my house in Canada in four Bankers Boxes and even insisted on paying the huge postage bill. So, with this one big canvas box, the contents of which would have rotted away if it had remained one more year in that unheated garage (white mould already filled its top two inches of air space), I had the start of a real archive! Memorable is a letter written by Haydn at the age of six or seven, and a manuscript book of his earliest compositions (he appears, by his handwriting, to be about nine years old). There were no intimate love letters, or any of Haydn Wood's own diaries, but many cuttings books pasted up by his sisters, and two priceless journals by Haydn's brother Harry Wood, 'Manxland's King of Music.'

The Strad, March 1914

Violinist and composer Haydn Wood (1882–1959)

From all accounts of people who knew Haydn Wood, including Lady Barbirolli – *née* Evelyn Rothwell,

the oboist and wife of Sir John Barbirolli – Haydn was an optimistic, courteous, and good-natured gentleman who was mindful of the wishes and needs of everyone. When he was playing with his toddler nephew, a family letter describes the grown-up Haydn as a "big baby" playing with a "little baby." A great-niece, who told me that although as a shy young girl she was a bit overwhelmed by the demeanour of her own grandfather, Daniel Wood (Haydn's brother, principal flautist of the London Symphony Orchestra), she felt comfortable with the diminutive and personable Haydn.

In the early 1990s, I read in my local newspaper that conductor Charles Job, who also lives on Vancouver Island, was bringing his fully-professional Palm Court Orchestra to Nanaimo, the town I was living in at the time. I attended this concert, and afterwards introduced myself to him. He was delighted to know that not only was I related to Haydn Wood, but that I was starting to collect Haydn Wood's orchestral scores and parts. In 1998, we decided to present the first-ever performance in North America of Haydn Wood's *Concerto for Violin*, with Canadian violinist David Stewart. Since their first concert in 1987, Charles Job with his Palm Court Orchestra has performed 30 pieces of Haydn Wood's light orchestral music, including some of his songs with their orchestral accompaniments.

About a decade ago, I phoned the BBC Music Library to inquire about a work in the Haydn Wood catalogue. During the conversation, I asked the helpful librarian at the other end of the line what was his name. He said, "Peter Linnitt". I yelled into the phone, "That's my mother's maiden name!" About a year later, over dinner together, Mr Linnitt and I figured out our specific family ties, and the girl from Canada has a second cousin who is the Head of the BBC Music Library!

In 2002, another serendipitous meeting happened. A certain Gilles Gouset of Picardy, France, wrote to the Trustee of the Haydn Wood Estate in London asking for biographical information related to the creation of *Roses of Picardy*. He was writing an article for a Picardy Historical Society. The Trustee, who was not knowledgeable about the *musical* side of Haydn Wood's affairs, forwarded Gilles's letter to me, and since then, Gilles and I have joined as a research team. He even emigrated from France to live with me and my archival material! Gilles's supposedly short article turned into a book published in France in 2004: *Roses de Picardie*, *Histoire d'une chanson*, *Légendes et réalité*. Through his ongoing scholarly research over the past nine years, Gilles has inadvertently become the world's foremost specialist on the life and musical output of Haydn Wood. His forte is leafing through hundreds of newspapers in Public Libraries of the cities or countries to which the hunt takes him; and ferreting out information in the hallowed archives of various publishing houses. He then puts it into very accessible order in our Haydn Wood Music Library here in Parksville. Gilles and I have started collecting any and all items pertaining to Haydn Wood, both scholarly (all editions of his 300 compositions and all recordings of his music) and kitschy (dinnerware and tea sets, perfume bottles, cheese labels, jigsaw puzzles… all labelled *Roses of Picardy*.) We even sleep under two cosy hand-stitched *Roses of Picardy* quilts.

Gilles brought back from the BBC Written Archives digital photos of 712 letters, contracts and internal memos regarding our man. I was thus armed with more than enough material to write a three-part article on Haydn Wood and his relationship with the BBC: 'Reading Over the Shoulders of Haydn Wood and the BBC, The Composer and the Professionals in Broadcasting' (Robert Farnon Society: *Journal Into Melody*, March, June and September 2009.) After we gathered reviews of Haydn Wood's early years as a violin prodigy, and procured copies of his works for strings, including 18 solos with piano accompaniment, I published an article about this previously-undocumented side of his personality: 'Haydn Wood, Violinist' (*Light Music Society Newsletter*, Spring 2009.)

Over his five decades as a published composer, Haydn Wood had 18 publishers, some of them now defunct or having been acquired by conglomerates. Each of Gilles's and my encounters with these publishers has been ongoing and unique. At this point, I will only touch upon what transpired regarding the part-song *The Phynodderee*, which will be performed at this year's English Music Festival. Several years ago, when I was researching in the Manx National Library and Archives in Douglas, I found what turned out to be the world's only known copy of this piece, published in 1909 by Breitkopf & Härtel. In 2004, I contacted the publisher's office in Germany, asking to purchase an authorized-for-performance copy. They had no trace of the piece and had never heard of it! So it was arranged that I send them my photocopy of the piece which I had managed to purchase in Douglas, and in turn my contact at Breitkopf & Härtel promised to send me an authorized one-off print, and most importantly, to keep *The Phynodderee* in their archives. So, when Em Marshall specifically requested an a *cappella* part song by Haydn Wood for the English Music Festival, I told her and Ben Palmer that I knew of only one a cappella part song ever composed by Wood; and that, thankfully, yes: it was available for performance.

Haydn Wood arranged seven of his solo songs as part songs for quartets of mixed voices, but these all have piano accompaniment. Another four of his songs were similarly arranged by William Stickles, and six others by Clarence Lucas. The latter even arranged *This Quiet Night* for unaccompanied mixed voices; and this work, too, will be performed by the Syred Consort under Ben Palmer at the 2011 EMF.

The Phynodderee is one of five vocal works that Wood conceived for a quartet of mixed voices and which do not exist as solo songs. Two of them, with piano accompaniment, are from a set of seven songs titled *Playtime, a Cycle of Nursery Rhymes*, and are written with young voices in mind: *The Spider and the Fly; and The Owl and the Pussycat*. The other two are large-scale concert pieces for chorus and orchestra: *Lochinvar* (*Scene from Marmion*); and *Ode to Genius* (a grand work with text in praise of Mozart, Bach and Beethoven).

In Manx traditional fairy beliefs, a phynodderee is a large, shaggy creature, nocturnal, solitary and strong. The description given on the sheet music is "a benign Manx fairy goblin." Unfortunately, the whereabouts of any first-hand notes or correspondence as to how Haydn Wood came to write *The Phynodderee* are not known. However, certain facts paint its beginnings fairly clearly. Haydn loved the folklore and folk music of the Isle of Man, his boyhood home, and would have been delighted to be asked to write a part-song for the specific requirements of the competitive Manx Music Festival of 1910. It is not known if Wood himself chose the lyrics by Cushag – "cushag" being the Manx name for the ragwort, sometimes known as the national flower of the Isle of Man, and the *nom de plume* of Manx poetess Josephine Kermode (1852–1937). Haydn Wood dedicated *The Phynodderee* to "Mrs. Laughton of Peel" – Florence Holford Laughton, the energetic Secretary and Founding Treasurer of the Manx Music Festival.

You will be reading more about the music of *The Phynodderee*, the fairy goblin, the lyricist Cushag and the composer Haydn Wood in the concert programme of the English Music Festival of 2011. And we hope to see you there!

AUDITE – Top CD releases of 2010

EM MARSHALL

CHANDOS

Scott: Piano Trios 1 and 2; Clarinet Quintet; Clarinet Trio: Gould Piano Trio (CHAN 10575)

This disc consists almost entirely of première recordings, although it is difficult to fathom why these exquisite pieces have been left unrecorded for so long. The first Piano Trio, composed in 1920 and therefore an early but nevertheless substantial work, opens the disc. Scott has, by this time, already developed an individual, quirky voice, and the individual shades are brought out well by the Gould Piano Trio on this recording. The other four works are later, and in a slightly terser idiom. The Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano is nonetheless still a lyrical piece, with a wistful second movement and a more whimsical finale. It is followed by the Clarinet Quintet, a darker, assured piece, and the only one on this disc to have been previously recorded. The second Piano Trio is a chromatic work, with an air of lamentation; and the CD concludes with the *Cornish Boat Song* – a beautiful end to a fascinating disc. Performances throughout are of the very highest quality – sensitive and intelligent music-making.

Sullivan: Ivanhoe: BBC National Orchestra of Wales; David Lloyd-Jones (CHAN 10578(3))

Sullivan's only "grand" opera, a romantic and serious work based on Sir Walter Scott's novel, here at long last receives a performance that befits its importance. Chandos has pulled out all the stops, with David Lloyd-Jones conducting the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Adrian Partington Singers, and an impressive cast that includes Stephen Gadd, James Rutherford, Toby Spence, Andrew Staples, Janice Watson and Catherine Wyn-Rogers. The performance lives up to expectations. It is well-paced and exciting, Lloyd-Jones creating some wonderful moments of dramatic tension, and generally working magic with the orchestra and chorus; while the cast of soloists sparkle. Glorious music, and a recording to treasure.

CPO

Holbrooke: Symphonic Poems: Brandenburgisches Staastsorchester Frankfurt; Griffiths (CPO 777 442 2)

This is a hugely welcome release! For far too long, the music of Joseph Holbrooke has lain overlooked and neglected, and it is ironic and rather frustrating that it has taken a German label, rather than an English one, to resurrect these fantastic Symphonic Poems. The notes, as if sensitive to this irony, quote Holbrooke as saying "What is wanted is the death by starvation of 3 or 4 English composers. Scarcely anything short of this will awaken the public to recognition of the way they are being treated. You can't expect men to write music for nothing, nor can you expect publishers to publish it when they know there is little possibility of it being heard more than once – if, indeed, one performance can be guaranteed. Yet this is what English artists have to contend with. Their work is not wanted at home. They have to waste their money and time in travelling to Germany or France in the heart-breaking endeavour to get their music heard abroad, and then when, by good fortune, they have managed to get a hearing in some second rate German town, they have at last a chance of acceptance at home."

The disc, with Howard Griffiths conducting the Brandenburgisches Staastsorchester Frankfurt, opens with the dramatic overture *Amontillado* (based on the Edgar Allan Poe story *The Cask of Amontillado*), which is impressive enough – but then goes on to the staggering symphonic poem *The Viking*. Based on Longfellow's ballad *The Skeleton in Armour*, it tells the story of a Viking who puts aside his wild ways to marry the Princess he loves. He runs away with her and kills her father at sea as he follows in pursuit. The two reach foreign shores and settle happily, yet the Princess soon falls ill and dies, whereupon the Viking falls upon his own sword to join her in death. The music is suitably tempestuous and boisterous; fantastically pictorial and vivid; and is here given an exhilarating performance. The Symphonic Variations on an Old English Air – *Three Blind Mice* – follows: a fascinating and skillfully-composed work, almost other-worldly at times. The disc finishes with another Symphonic Poem, *Ulalume*, again based on a Poe story, of which Griffiths gives a ravishingly beautiful performance.

DIVINE ART

Peter Warlock: Collected 78rpm recordings (ddh27811)

This is an invaluable compilation of historic recordings of Peter Warlock's music, taken from a collection of records left to the Peter Warlock Society by my mentor, John Bishop, on his death in 2000. The first CD in the two-disc set includes several versions of the *Capriol suite*, such as a version conducted by Constant Lambert in 1937; the *Serenade for Strings*, conducted by both Barbirolli and Lambert; arrangements of some of Purcell's Fantazias; and ends with a chilling rendition of *The Curlew*, with Rene Soames, Leon Goossens and the Aeolian String Quartet. Haunting stuff.

The second disc features the songs, with such artists as John Goss, Peter Dawson, Gerald Moore, Peter Pears, Roy Henderson, Nancy Evans and Dennis Noble. The version of *The First Mercy* with boy soprano Billy Neeley is utterly magical.

Some might find it hard to get accustomed to the style of some of the performances, which date back to 1925, but there is much beauty and emotion here; and the recordings are, of course, incredibly important historical documents. An absolute must for anyone interested in this loveable rogue of a composer.

GRIFFIN

Vaughan Williams: Hymns and Christmas Carols (GCCD 4063 and 4072)

Vaughan Williams is known and loved for both his hymn tunes and Christmas carols – unsurprisingly so, given the years he spent editing the *English Hymnal* and Oxford Book of Carols. His love and knowledge of folksong was instrumental in providing new, and, he thought, eminently suitable, tunes for both hymns and carols, which, he, felt, restored them more to their roots. The 1995 Griffin Records disc of Vaughan Williams hymns – with Owain Arwel Hughes directing the Cardiff Festival Choir and Robert Court at the organ – has now been joined by a recent release of Vaughan Williams carols with the same conductor and choir. Both discs present a good selection of works in spirited performances.

HYPERION

Byrd: Hodie; Simon Petrus; Assumpta est Maria; Infelix Ego: The Cardinall's Musick; Carwood (CDA67653, CDA67675, CDA67779)

These are volumes 11, 12 and 13 in Hyperion's "The Cardinall's Musick Byrd Edition" (volume 13 being the final disc in the series), which thoroughly explores Byrd's Latin Church Music. The Catholic William Byrd lived – and, incredibly, prospered – through the reigns of five monarchs – Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth and James I, escaping persecution for his faith, which he expressed fervently through his music. The music on these three discs is drawn from the *Caniones Sacrae* of 1591 and the first and second books of *Gradualia* motets, dating from 1605 and 1607 respectively. It is not just devout music for worship, but innovative, exciting, energetic and adventurous music for the time. The Cardinall's Musick under Andrew Carwood are persuasive advocates, singing with passion and integrity, with a wonderful blended sound and excellent ensemble performances.

Bridge: Piano Quintet; Three Idylls; String Quartet no.4: Goldner String Quartet; Piers Lane (CDA67726)

There are many fine recordings of these glorious works by Frank Bridge, but few as full of passion and conviction as this. The Goldner String Quartet and Piers Lane perform the gorgeous Piano Quintet with radiant, effervescent playing – fluent and lyrical – and a good sense of sweep and drama; although I could have done with a little

more treble response in the piano for balance. *The Three Idylls* follow, with some excellent ensemble playing and pleasing layering of sound. The *Allegro poco lento* and *Allegro con moto* are given splendidly whimsical performances that capture both the idiom and quirkiness of these pieces perfectly. The opening of the first movement of the fourth String Quartet needs a little more incisiveness, but I particularly liked the gesture at the start of the second movement, which sets well its character. Excellent performances of some important works.

York Bowen: The Piano Sonatas: Danny Driver (CDA67751/2)

Bowen – one of the most impressive and yet, until recently, forgotten English composers of the early twentieth century – is receiving an over-due resurrection. Almost every disc that is brought out reveals further this composer's genius, and this release of his Piano Sonatas is no exception. A two-disc set, it comprises the piano sonatas nos. 1–6 and the *Short Sonata* in C-sharp minor as well. Under the assured and dexterous hands of Danny Driver, these pieces come to life in all their brilliance. It is heroic music and playing, as Bowen's often fiendishly difficult, scintillating music enables Driver to show off his virtuosity. Hugely important piano works of passion, intelligence and often great lyrical beauty, performed here with musicality and understanding.

MAPROOM

'Paradise on Earth': Oxford Liedertafel (MAPROOM MR 071)

EMF audiences will be familiar with Oxford Liedertafel, who have appeared at the Festival twice, as well as at one of our exclusive Friends' events at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in London's Pall Mall. The group have now produced a CD on the Maproom Recordings label, with countertenor James Bowman (another EMF regular), lutenist Dorothy Linell, and the creator of the much-loved *Inspector Morse* series, Colin Dexter, who narrates the concluding Housman poem. Works featured range from the 15th and 16th centuries (Cornysh, Campian and Morley) through to the 19th and 20th (Macfarren, Stanford, Vaughan Williams and Elgar). Frederick Bridge's amusing *Two Snails* is given a witty rendition, while works such as *Linden Lea* deeply move. Beautifully blended voices, in performances of verve and passion – highly recommended.

NAXOS

George Butterworth: Songs: Roderick Williams; Iain Burnside (8.572426)

This disc features the Six Songs from *"A Shropshire Lad", Bredon Hill and Other Songs from "A Shropshire Lad"*, and two sets of *Folk Songs from Sussex*. Roderick Williams has already made a name for himself as an exponent of English solo song and he does not disappoint here. His enunciation is beautiful, and he incorporates wonderful shades of light and dark into his powerful, rich voice, with its luscious dark timbre. He gets a good contrast in *Is my Team Ploughing*, and entertaining accents and characterisations in the *Folk Songs from Sussex* (particularly in *Seventeen Come Sunday*). He captures the emotion of each song perfectly – *The True Lover's Farewell* is particularly moving. The songs are taken at a good pace, and Iain Burnside is a sympathetic and sensitive accompanist as always. Superb.

Vaughan Williams: Sacred Choral Music: The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge; Timothy Brown (8.572465)

This outstanding disc of Vaughan Williams's sacred Choral Music includes a range of works, some much-loved (such as the *Mass in G Minor*), whilst others may be less familiar to listeners. The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, is skillfully directed by Timothy Brown. The voices are beautifully integrated, in almost visionary performances of tremendous clarity. Occasionally the soloists fail to excite, but the luminosity and conviction of the choir is impressive – particularly, for example, in the "Amen"s of the *Mass's Credo* – magical! There is also a gripping sense of drama in *A Vision of Aeroplanes*. ■

The EMF British Composer Scheme

Many of you may have received, over the last couple of years, the EMF British Composer e-bulletin; but a word of explanation for those of you who are unfamiliar with the scheme. It is a forum for British composers' Societies, Trusts and museums to facilitate collaboration between the various organisations and to enable them to communicate, not just with those of their members who sign up to the scheme, but also more widely. The Scheme gives these bodies the opportunity both to disseminate information about themselves, such as joining details and directly-related events; and to circulate other information that they believe will be of interest, whether it be major forthcoming concerts or important news about their own composer.

The Scheme was initially realised through the afore-mentioned e-bulletin as well as through the online calendar on the EMF website. The e-bulletin is now, however, merging with both *Spirited* and *The Spirit of England* to enable the organisations to reach a wider audience and also to allow English music enthusiasts who are not members of the various organisations to find out about events which may of interest.

The Arthur Bliss Society
www.arthurbliss.org

Founded in 2003, The Arthur Bliss Society has the aim of furthering the appreciation, understanding and knowledge of the music of Sir Arthur Bliss (1891–1975). The President of the Society is Ian Venables, with Peter Ainsworth and Terry Barfoot as Vice-Presidents.

Further details of the Society's activities and of forthcoming concerts of Bliss's music are to be found on www.arthurbliss.org. Details of membership are available on the website and through the Membership Secretary, Mrs Jill Smith, who may be contacted by email on jillsmithclady@aol.com or by phone on 01242 578 688.

Forthcoming events

Peel Park Campus, University of Salford
Tuesday 5 April 2011 at 1.00pm
The Barbirolli Quartet
Programme includes: String Quartet No. 2

Holywell Music Room, Oxford
Sunday 10 April 2011 at 3.00pm
The Berkeley Ensemble
Programme includes: Clarinet Quintet

Auckland Castle, County Durham
Friday 15 April 2011 at 7.30pm
The Barbirolli Quartet
Programme includes: String Quartet No. 2

Assembly Hall, Stoke Abbott Road, Worthing
Sunday 8 May 2011 at 7.30pm
Worthing Symphony Orchestra
Programme includes: Things To Come

St Andrew's Church Rooms, Churchdown, Gloucester
Saturday 14 May 2011 from 2.00pm (preceded by lunch at 12.30pm)
Joint Event with the Ivor Gurney Society

Talks on "Ivor Gurney's Gloucestershire" by Eleanor Rawling
"Composers of The Great War" by Peter Ainsworth

Recital of music for violin and piano by Ivor Gurney and Arthur Bliss, with Rupert Luck (violin) and Matthew Rickard (piano)

The Havergal Brian Society
www.havergalbrian.org

The Havergal Brian Society exists to promote knowledge about the composer and his music. Recently completed projects include publication of *Havergal Brian on Music Vol.2* by Toccata Press and the reissue of the Sir Adrian Boult's 1966 performance of *The Gothic Symphony* on Testament Records.

For membership details, please contact the HBS Membership Secretary, 37 Leylands, 2 Viewfield Road, London SW18 1NF; e-mail hbschairman@tesco.net; or visit www.havergalbrian.org.

Rare performance of "The Gothic" Symphony

The Australian première of Havergal Brian's Symphony No.1, "The Gothic", took place successfully in Brisbane on 22 December under John Curro. This was the culmination of 28 years of effort by the General Manager of local classical radio station 4MBS, Gary Thorpe. The performance will be broadcast on air and on their Internet feed on 4MBS later this year; to watch for the transmission date the 4MBS schedules can be found online (search for *4MBS Program Guide*). The mounting of this performance is the subject of a film "The Curse of the Gothic Symphony" that will première later this year at the Melbourne Film Festival and will eventually be available worldwide on DVD.

The Delius Society
www.delius.org.uk

The Delius Society was founded in 1962 and holds regular meetings in London and the Midlands. There is also a flourishing, autonomous, branch in Philadelphia. The Society's aims are to develop a greater knowledge of the life and works of Delius and, as appropriate, those of his contemporaries; to promote and encourage performances, broadcasts and recordings of his music; to encourage the study of Delius's life and works; and to organise musical functions for members of the Society and the general public. The Society is independent from, but works closely with, the Delius Trust. Members of the Trust are active in the Society and their wide knowledge is a great asset.

The Delius Prize, a very successful annual event, was inaugurated with the purpose of introducing young musicians to the music of Delius. Over the past seven years it has been held in conjunction with both the Royal Academy of Music and the Birmingham Conservatoire where it will be held this year on Friday 17 June.

Forthcoming highlights

The year 2012 will mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Delius in Bradford and plans are under way to make this a very special year both in the UK and abroad with many new recordings and performances of his music.

Membership benefits

Members receive two substantial Journals each year and two Newsletters. There are six meetings each year in London and a smaller number in the Midlands. These generally take the form of illustrated Presentations with occasional concerts. The AGM is generally incorporated into a weekend event based, where possible, around a performance of one of Delius's major works.

Membership enquiries should be directed to The Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary;
e-mail: membership@thedeliussociety.org.uk.
Further details will be found on the website.

Selected concerts and events

Friday 17th June 2011 at 11.00am
(details tbc)
Birmingham Conservatoire, Paradise Place, Birmingham B3 3HG
Delius Society AGM 2011 and Annual Lunch
(Further details will be circulated)

Friday 17th June 2011 at 2.00pm
(details tbc)
Birmingham Conservatoire, Paradise Place, Birmingham B3 3HG
The Delius Prize (eighth year)

The Elgar Society
www.elgar.org

President: Julian Lloyd Webber

The Elgar Society was formed in 1951 to encourage the study, performance and appreciation of the works of Sir Edward Elgar and to foster research into his life and legacy. Branches across the UK and overseas bring members together through meetings, lectures, recitals and visits.

Website: www.elgar.org
E-mail: info@elgar.org
Membership enquiries:
David Young, 29 Badgers Close, Horsham, East Sussex RH12 5RU
E-mail: membership@elgar.org; or telephone 01403 263119

Elgar Society Medal Presented to Vladimir Ashkenazy

The Elgar Society Medal has been conferred upon Vladimir Ashkenazy in recognition of his role in furthering the legacy of Sir Edward Elgar through performances of Elgar's works around the world. The medal was presented to the conductor by Julian Lloyd Webber, President of the Elgar Society, at a private ceremony in London.

Vladimir Ashkenazy has conducted Elgar's music all over the world, including performances of the Cello Concerto in Rome and Tokyo, *The Dream of Gerontius* in Berlin and the Elgar/Payne Symphony No.3 with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Prague. In 2006 he toured with the Cleveland Orchestra performing Symphony No.1 and gave four performances of *Variations on an Original Theme* with the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Japan and the USA. Ashkenazy also conducted a series of concerts for the Elgar Festival at the Sydney Opera House in November 2008 and has made a number of recordings of Elgar works with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Elgar Society Awards Certificate of Merit to Nikolaj Znaider

The first Elgar Society Certificate of Merit has been presented to Nikolaj Znaider in recognition of the violinist's championing of the Elgar Violin Concerto, particularly during 2010, the Concerto's centenary year.

Taking place on the 100th anniversary of the first performance of the Elgar Violin Concerto in B minor, Op.61, the presentation to Nikolaj Znaider was made by conductor Sir Colin Davis during a private ceremony at the Barbican between rehearsal and performance by Znaider and the London Symphony Orchestra on 10 November. In what *The Times* (11 Nov) likened to a séance, Znaider performed on the 1741 Guarneri del Gesù once owned by Fritz Kreisler, the same instrument on which the work was premièred on 10 November 1910 at the Queen's Hall, London, under the baton of the composer himself.

Nikolaj Znaider has performed the Elgar Violin Concerto on at least 16 occasions over the last year in major concert venues around the world.

The Armstrong Gibbs Society
www.armstronggibbs.com

President: Ann Rust (née Gibbs)
Secretary: Angela Aries; e-mail: angela.aries@btinternet.com

The Armstrong Gibbs Society aims to act as source of information on the composer, to promote performances of his music and generally raise awareness of Armstrong Gibbs's work nationally. The trustees meet three times each year. For details of forthcoming events, recordings available, a catalogue of works and membership of the society, please visit the website at: www.armstronggibbs.com or contact the secretary at the above address.

Interest in maintaining the heritage of Gibbs was stimulated in 2000, following a performance of his choral symphony *Odysseus* in Chelmsford Cathedral and the installation of a slate memorial plaque in Danbury Parish Church, Essex.

The Armstrong Gibbs Society was formally established in 2002. The society aims to act as source of information on the composer, to promote performances of his music and to raise awareness of Armstrong Gibbs's work nationally. Activities of the society include sponsoring CDs of Gibbs's music, supporting performances of his chamber music and symphonies, and running the Armstrong Gibbs Music Festival in Danbury, Essex.

Membership

Membership is open to all at a cost of £10.00 per annum. Members receive a newsletter twice a year.

Oboe Concerto

In 2009 the Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra was identified as a work worthy of attention. This was recorded by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra on 31 March 2010 with Jonathan Small as the soloist. The resulting CD is produced by Dutton Epoch: CDLX 7249.

The Concerto is conventional in that it has three movements but unconventional in the size of the orchestra. Composers of most Oboe Concertos would have a relatively small orchestra, and in some cases only strings; but Gibbs calls for a large orchestra with a full complement of brass. Completed in 1923 and dedicated to Léon Goossens, this Concerto is worthy of further performances and applications for the hire of the parts may be made to the Society.

Forthcoming events and performances

7 May 2011
Broughing Music Society
The London Piano Trio will perform Armstrong Gibbs's *Country Magic* op.47.

May 2011
St John's Church Hall, Danbury, Essex
The Armstrong Gibbs Society AGM

Holst Birthplace Museum
www.holstmuseum.org.uk

4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 2AY

Opening Times:

From 8 February, Tuesday to Saturday 10.00am to 4.00pm
Adults £4.50; concessions £4.00; Family Ticket £10

The Holst Birthplace Museum is the Regency terrace house where Gustav Holst, composer of *The Planets*, was born in 1874. The story of the man and his music is told alongside a fascinating display of personal belongings, including his piano. The museum is also a fine period house showing the upstairs-downstairs way of life in times past, including a working Victorian kitchen and laundry, an elegant Regency drawing room and a charming Edwardian nursery. This year, the Holst Birthplace Museum celebrates the 35th anniversary of its opening.

Forthcoming Events

Exhibition of New Aquisitions

Wednesday 13 April and **Wednesday 20 April**: *Children's Easter Holiday Activity Days*. 10.30am to 3.00pm in the Museum

Friday April 15: *An Evening of English Song* with music by Holst, Vaughan Williams, Finzi, Gurney and others.
Peter Wilman (tenor) and Philip Collin (piano)
7.30pm, Thirlstaine Gallery, Cheltenham College
Tickets: £12 on the door (to include interval drink) or £10 in advance from the Museum

Friday 20 May: Tony Palmer on Holst
In this special event for the Museum, the internationally-acclaimed film director will talk about the making of his new music documentary for BBC4 and the insights he gained into the composer's life and music. The talk will be followed by the first large-screen showing of this 2011 film.

7.00pm, Bacon Theatre, Dean Close School, Cheltenham GL51 6EP
Tickets (to include a pre-event drink in the foyer from 6.15pm): £10 at the door; or £9 in advance from the Museum. Unreserved seating.

The Herbert Howells Society
www.howellstrust.org.uk

President: Sir David Willcocks; Chairman: Dr Martin Neary
Secretary: Andrew Millinger
32 Barleycroft Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL8 6JU
Tel: 01707 335315; e-mail: andrew.millinger@virgin.net

The Herbert Howells Society was formed in 1987 at the instigation of Ursula Howells, the composer's daughter, and is based at Westminster Abbey, where the composer's ashes are buried. The aims of the Society are to promote the performance, publication and recording of Howells's works. Recently, the Society has been involved in arranging the publication and recording of *Sir Patrick Spens* (which had not been heard since its first performance in 1930) and the work's first London performance by the Bach Choir.

Benefits of Membership

The Society publishes an annual Newsletter, and attends an Evensong – with an emphasis on music by Howells – on the same day as our AGM, on the nearest Saturday to Howells's birthday, 17 October. The venue alternates between Westminster Abbey and Cathedrals or Colleges with which Howells was associated. This year, the Society returns to Gloucester Cathedral for Evensong and the AGM, which will be combined with a visit to Lydney, Howells's birthplace, to visit significant places in his early life.

Membership costs only £10.00 p.a. and the Membership Secretary is Ros Saunders, 7 Temple West Mews, West Square, London SE11 4TJ; tel: 020 7820 8376; e-mail: saunders@amews.freeserve.co.uk

Robin Milford Trust
www.robinmilfordtrust.org.uk.

David Pennant, *Trustee*

After several years languishing in a garage under an old tarpaulin without even a SORN to its name, the Robin Milford Trust has now been re-oiled, smartened up, has an MOT certificate and is back on the road! The number of discs of music has reached double figures, and the amount of available sheet music has doubled, to 60 out of 180 works. In short, our increasing speed has required us to change up to second gear.

We hope to give details of future concerts etc. soon so we thought the thing to do was to write a short entertaining paragraph to raise awareness and to encourage a few website hits. If you are interested in finding out more, why not visit our website for an engaging pit stop: www.robinmilfordtrust.org.uk.

The Stanford Society
www.thestanfordsociety.com

Chairman: John Covell (cvstanfordsociety@msn.com)

The Stanford Society was formed by a small international group of English music enthusiasts to promote greater interest in Stanford's life and music and to encourage and support increased performances and recordings of his compositions. The Society was officially launched at a Stanford Celebration Weekend held in Cambridge in March 2007.

The Society holds an annual Celebration Weekend in one of the cities with which Stanford was associated. The Weekend includes talks, concerts and services which include the music of Stanford, his pupils and contemporaries. The most recent Weekend was held in Dublin in October 2010. The 2011 Weekend will be a joint event with the Herbert Howells Society. This will be held in Cambridge from 14 until 16 October. The programme will include services in the Chapels of both King's and St. John's Colleges. Stephen Cleobury will give an organ recital in King's College Chapel.

The subscription for joining the society is £10 per annum (for pensioners), £12 per annum (for general membership) and £15 per annum (for overseas members). Cheques, payable to The Stanford Society, should be sent to Stephen Frost at 110, Beauval Road, London SE22 8UH.

For membership information please contact Chris Cope at chris.cope@copessolicitors.co.uk

A short biography

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) was one of the leading musicians of his generation and had a profound effect on the development and history of English music as a performer, conductor, composer, teacher and writer. He has been described as one of the major contributors to the renaissance of English music during the latter part of the 19th century.

Stanford was a prolific composer, completing seven symphonies, eight string quartets, nine operas, more than 300 songs, 30 large-scale choral works and a large body of other chamber music. He also composed a substantial number of works for the organ and many anthems and settings of the canticles for the Anglican Church. He wrote extensively on music including three volumes of memoirs and a popular text on composition.

The Society's website is currently being developed and further information will be available from this source.

The Sir Arthur Sullivan Society

The Sir Arthur Sullivan Society (Registered Charity no.274022) aims to advance the education of the public in, and promote the performance of, the music of Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842–1900) and other contemporaneous British composers by means of the presentation of publications, recordings, lectures, concerts and other activities. The Society was founded in 1977 and from small beginnings has grown to become a major force in the current revival of interest in the composer and his music.

As well as his celebrated operatic collaboration with W.S. Gilbert, Sullivan composed in practically every musical genre: oratorio, cantata, ceremonial works, symphony, concerto, overture, incidental music for the stage, piano and chamber works, songs, hymns and anthems. There are also 10 operas written with other librettists.

Membership is open to all in sympathy with our aims. Benefits include a fully-illustrated magazine three times a year and regular newsletters giving details of forthcoming performances and recordings. Adult annual membership is £20; there are concessionary rates and reductions for those paying by standing order. See www.sullivansociety.org.uk or contact the Membership Secretary: doreenh52@btinternet.com.

On 16 April we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first performance of Sullivan's incidental music to *The Tempest* (effectively the start of his career) with a concert in London's Bloomsbury Theatre. The London Gay Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Robin Gordon-Powell, with soloists Charlotte Page, Sally Silver and Elinor Jane Moran, will perform *The Tempest*, the Overtures to *Iolanthe* and *Marmion*, three *Day Dreams* and items from *The Light of the World* and *The Martyr of Antioch*. Tickets cost £15, with concessions priced at £10).

This year's residential weekend Festival, which will take place at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester from 16 to 18 September, includes a staged performance of *The Tempest* with Sullivan's incidental music, *The Window*, and many small-scale works; as well as talks by Ian Bradley, David Owen Norris, Scott Hayes and Martin Yates. The full package, with two nights' ensuite B&B and all meals, is £225. Further details are available from shturnbull@aol.com.

The Society has an extensive sales catalogue of CDs, booklets and libretti, many of which are unavailable elsewhere. The Society's library contains unique performing material, much of it available for hire.

Probably the most important area of our work is the promotion of high-quality complete recordings of Sullivan's major works. In recent years these have included *The Golden Legend*, *The Prodigal Son* and *The Contrabandista* on the Hyperion label; and, in 2010, Sullivan's romantic opera *Ivanhoe* on Chandos, conducted by David Lloyd-Jones. Our current project is to record Sullivan's 1898 opera *The Beauty Stone*, again for release by Chandos.

The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society
www.rvwsociety.com

Chairman: Em Marshall; President: Michael Kennedy

The Society representing England's foremost symphonic composer encourages and supports RVW-related concerts, recordings, festivals, and events as well as recordings of lesser-known works by the composer through our own recording label, Albion Records.

Benefits of Membership

Benefits of membership include a regular Journal which contains scholarly articles as well as interesting news, events and reviews of the latest concerts and CD releases, together with a select discography. There are opportunities to meet socially, with invitations to special events and advance information of future concerts, as well as concert ticket discounts, and discount purchasing of RVW-related materials. Upon joining you will be given a £5.00 voucher towards any Albion CD or publication.

How to join:

Please contact the Membership Secretary by
e-mail: davidbetts@tudorcottage.plus.com
or by post: Dr David Betts, Membership Secretary, The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, Tudor Cottage, 30 Tivoli Road, Brighton BN1 5BH, or refer to our Website: www.rvwsociety.com.

Forthcoming concerts and events

Experience a World Première Performances this year:
The Garden of Proserpine

30 May, English Music Festival, Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

We anticipate that the première recording on Albion Records will be on sale during the Festival.
Details at: www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk

Leith Hill Musical Festival 2011 season

Included in this year's main Festival programme is music by the LHMF's founding conductor, Ralph Vaughan Williams: in his arrangement of his set of songs *In Windsor Forest*, which will be performed alongside Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* and Beethoven's *Mass in C* on Thursday 7 April.

Box Office (private line): 01403 240093: e-mail: boxoffice@lhmf.co.uk or from Dorking Halls Box Office: 01306 881717 www.lhmf.co.uk

Three Choirs Festival, Worcester 6–13 August 2011

An Oxford Elegy will be performed on 12 August with the Philharmonia Orchestra and other works by Vaughan Williams will also be featured during the Festival.
www.3choirs.org/2011-worcester/worcester-2011.html

English Composers and the Great War: Tuesday 25 – Friday 28 October 2011

Hôtel Le Prieuré, Rancourt, Picardie

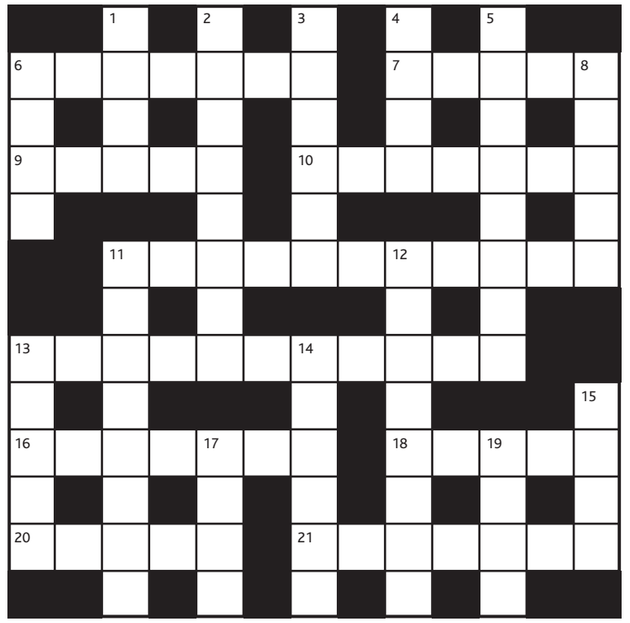
A trip taking in Vimy Ridge and other World War I sites associated with English composers. Amongst the music discussed will be *The Lark Ascending* and the *Pastoral Symphony*. More details can be found on the Arts in Residence website: www.artsinresidence.co.uk/weekend-breaks-future.html.

The Peter Warlock Society
www.peterwarlock.org

Our Society, founded in 1963, works steadily to increase knowledge of Peter Warlock's work and a Newsletter is published at least twice a year. Our project – for all Warlock's music and writings to be in print – is near completion, and Society events include an annual birthday concert at one of the music colleges (around 30th October), and jaunts to places with Warlockian legends. We are always pleased to help members gain access to Warlock material.

If you are interested in finding out more, please address enquiries to:John Mitchell Woodstock, Pett Bottom, Canterbury, Kent CT4 5PB Tel.: 01227 832871; or e-mail john.mitchell12@btinternet.com.

EMF Crossword No.2



Clues

Across:

6 Orlando —, composer (7)
7 Cecil —, folk song collector (5)
9 The Fringes of the — (Elgar) (5)
10 Billy Budd, say (7)
11 Brian —, English composer (11)
13 Composer Arthur or George (11)
16 Elgar's Windflower, perhaps (7)
18 Graven — for orchestra (Hesketh) (5)
20 — Regina, anthem (5)
21 Thomas —, English organist (7)

Down:

1 Wind instrument (4)
2 Genre piece pioneered by John Field (8)
3 Cupid and — (Lord Berners) (6)
4 Fairest — (Purcell) (4)
5 Musical by Sandy Wilson (8)
6 The Plumber's —, opera by David Blake (4)
8 — and the Child, Arnell ballet (5)
11 How Lennox would be to Michael (8)
12 — Birtwistle, composer (8)
13 Festal — with Blues (Tippett) (5)
14 Flowery feature of Britten's Russian Funeral? (6)
15 Judith —, composer (4)
17 The —, Hardy poem RVW set in Hodie (4)
19 Female voice (4)

EMF Crossword No.1: Solution

Text Solution

Across: 1 Echo 4 Hamilton 8 Venables 9 Bull 10 Tonic 11 Ireland 13 Mikado 15 Vision 18 Whistle 20 Saucy 23 Glee 24 Woodland 25 Triptych 26 Wood

Down: 2 Credo 3 Ocarina 4 Holy 5 Musgrave 6 Label 7 Orlando 10 Tam 12 Holloway 14 Inhaler 16 Swallow 17 Noy 19 Sleep 21 Canto 22 Moth

Winners: Rita Cross; Sue Parker; Philip Turner.

Guidelines for contributors

If submitted by e-mail, articles should be in .doc. or .docx format (compatible with Microsoft Word 97 or later versions). If submitted on paper, they should be typewritten and on one side only.

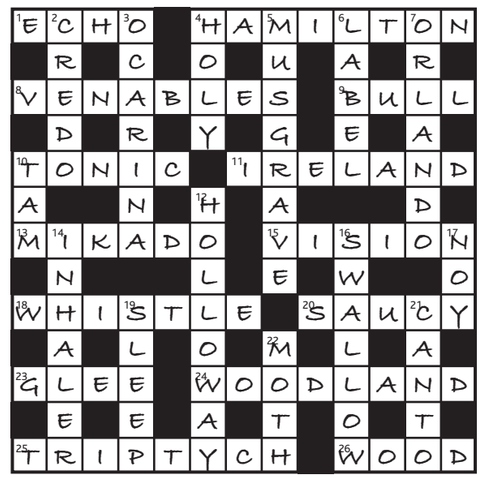
Whether submitted by e-mail or on paper, pages should be numbered sequentially and the text double-spaced; the first page of the article should include your preferred title and your name and contact details.

Footnotes should be used rather than endnotes. Footnotes should be double-spaced and numbered sequentially throughout the article with a superscript numeral in the body text corresponding to the footnote.

Permission will need to be obtained from the copyright holder for quotations in excess of 800 words which are taken from a text still in copyright.

Illustrations must be supplied by the author in the form of high-quality JPEG or TIFF files: the minimum acceptable resolution is 300dpi. All necessary permissions must be secured.

Music examples must be supplied by the author in the form of separate TIFF or GIF files. As these are treated as line drawings, the minimum acceptable resolution is 1200dpi. All necessary copyright permissions must be obtained.



Do you love English music?

If you share our passion for this wonderful music, please join the Friends of the English Music Festival and show your support for this important cause.

For too many years, much of our nation's rich musical heritage has been overlooked; but now, thanks to the EMF, this is changing. Works that were once neglected are being performed and broadcast for the first time in decades (and in some cases for the first time ever). Please help us to continue our mission to bring English music back into the cultural mainstream.

By joining the EMF Friends you will be playing an important part in this vital project. There are several options open to you if you would like to join, with different levels of subscription, so you can choose whichever works best for you. All Friends are kept informed on what's happening in the world of English music through our newsletter *The Spirit of England* and receive discounts on, or free, tickets and passes to EMF events. In addition, all EMF Friends are invited to exclusive Friends' events, including our annual 'VIP' party at the Festival where you will meet our star musicians and leading supporters of the EMF.

There is also the chance to get more involved, for example by working alongside EMF staff and Trustees to organise and participate in regional events.

Most of all, by joining the Friends you will know that you are doing something tangible for the EMF - helping to sustain the charity in these difficult financial times, when every penny counts, and enabling the Festival to go from strength to strength in future years.

Please join us – and stand with us in defence of our nation's glorious musical heritage!

Scenes from the party for EMF Friends and VIPs at the 2010 Festival