



Journal of the **RVW** Society

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FORTY YEARS HAVE PASSED.....

It seems incredible that forty years have passed since the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams on 26th of August, 1958. At the time, and despite his age of 85, he had seemed invincible. He was seen often in London, at the Royal Festival Hall and at the opera, always with Ursula Vaughan Williams at his side. He had married Ursula just five years earlier, and had enjoyed travelling abroad, including a memorable trip to America. He continued to be a major source of encouragement to younger musicians, to whom he was always *Uncle Ralph*. And, most importantly, he was composing music of quality and originality. His *Ninth Symphony* had only just received its world premiere: a work of unusual sonorities, and a glowing, luminous, occasionally elegiac tone which rewards more after each listening. The announcement of his death, therefore, came as a shock. Many close friends had been telephoned early in the morning by Ursula or others to soften the impact. In this edition of the Journal, we reproduce a number of the newspaper articles which followed VW's death forty years ago.

Unfinished works

Sadly, there was much left unfinished. He was working on a new opera - *Thomas the Rhymer* - which Michael Kennedy tells us was complete in piano and vocal score. There was also a cello concerto, begun in 1942-43 and written for Casals. This was in three movements. Listening to the slow movement of the *Tuba Concerto* arranged for cello, reminds us of what we are missing

as a result of VW's death before this work was completed.

Westminster Abbey

It was entirely fitting that a composer of Vaughan Williams's stature should have had a commemorative service in Westminster Abbey. We reproduce in this edition extracts from the Funeral Service, and we are deeply grateful to Michael Kennedy and Simona Pakenham for providing us with their memories of this occasion.

VW's reputation

Forty years on, Vaughan Williams's reputation continues to grow. His discography runs to over 75 pages. A new recording of *The Pilgrim's Progress* has been released on the Chandos label. The *Vision of Albion* opera festival reminded everyone of the glories of the operas. Yet we still have no recording of *The Poisoned Kiss*, there are not enough performances of his music and parts of Europe seem a no-go area for the composer. Hopefully, when we mark the fiftieth anniversary of his death, the lyricism, the vision, the rugged strength and integrity of the music will be even more widely appreciated.

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R V W's FUNERAL

By Simona Pakenham

On August Bank Holiday, 1958, my husband, Noel Iliff, and I bicycled across London to have tea at Hanover Terrace with Ralph and Ursula. It was a glorious day and Regent's Park was full of people sunbathing or boating on the lake. Our visit was not entirely a social event, we had gone to discuss the progress of the Nativity Play *The First Nowell* which I had talked Ralph into preparing with me for a charity matinee at Drury Lane. The vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields had persuaded the management to lend their stage for one afternoon in aid of the Ockendon Venture. We had got to the point when all the words (which I had chosen from mediæval plays) had been put together and Ralph was making the final selection of English carols to accompany them. There was little left to do but the orchestration. Noel was involved in his capacity of director.

We spent a profitable afternoon in discussion, followed by a pleasant interlude when Ursula came in bringing tea. When the time to leave had come I went over to Ralph's armchair for the embrace expected from an honorary niece and put a hand on each of his arms to deter him from getting up. 'You are looking at me, my dear,' he said, 'as if you were never going to see me again.'

I felt a shiver run through me but I pulled myself together and replied - 'I expect that's because I have to get on my bicycle and ride home through the Bank Holiday traffic.' That seemed to satisfy him and we had some conversation about the horrors of negotiating Hyde Park Corner.

In fact I did not see him again. We spoke on the phone and had some argument by letter on the vexed question of the orchestra

pit at Drury Lane. The management, who were currently running the smash hit *My Fair Lady*, had agreed to lend the theatre on condition that our orchestra was tailored to fit into the seating arrangement for that show. This seemed to me a reasonable request, for their musicians would be coming into their accustomed seats a very short time after ours packed up. Ralph was unaccountably bothered by the restriction. This surprised me, coming from someone

who had shown himself so adaptable to the limits involved in writing for films. Nevertheless, the more he worked on arranging the carols the more instruments he felt he needed. We both thought the other was being unreasonable. His last letter, with heavy underlinings, began 'Very much against my will -' and ended with a promise to try to conform, typed (by Ursula) in red.

I did not get this letter until the morning when Ursula rang us, considerably before breakfast, to tell us he had died in the night. She spent, I learnt afterwards, several hours

Roy Douglas, who knew the workings of RVW's musical mind almost as well as the composer did himself.

The gap between August 26th, when Ralph had died, and the funeral on 19th September seemed interminable. All his friends were shaken as well as full of grief. When he was alive I had thought of his as old - his snow white hair, which stood out in a crowd like a Persil advertisement, so you could tell at a glance whether he was in a concert audience, was enough to remind you of that fact. But one's immediate reaction to the news was - 'How could he have died so young?' There was almost a feeling of annoyance - he had no right to leave us so suddenly and when he seemed in such a creative mood. For me, life came to a standstill, for nothing could be done about *The First Nowell* until the funeral had taken place. London became intolerable so I took myself off to France for a week to clear my mind. I went to see my childhood music mistress and was surprised and delighted to find how well she knew RVW's music and how much she, and her musical friends shared our sense of shock.

Of the funeral itself I have subdued and misty recollections. The day was grey and drizzly, the interior of the Abbey sombre. Almost everybody had dressed in black which did not seem appropriate for Ralph. Before the service proper we had the Commemoration, a concert of music by RVW and his favourite composer, Bach. Who else but Sir Adrian Boult could possibly have conducted? After nearly three weeks we thought we had composed ourselves and would be calm and stoical. I do not know who had decided to open the proceedings with the *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus*. The opening bars of that lovely and so English tune were enough to undo all our resolutions of dignity and a good many of us, despite our resolutions, dissolved into tears. I have a persistent memory of the *Tallis Fantasia* following, but it is not included in the Order of Service. Can I have dreamt it?

My most vivid memory of the actual funeral is of Ursula's deportment. In a simple dress of charcoal grey, hatless and carrying only a small sprig of green leaves, she led the principal mourners, following the clergy procession into the Musician's Aisle to lay his ashes near to Purcell and his teacher, Stanford. The way she walked reminded me that she had been a drama student at the Old Vic, tall, holding her head proudly and, as actresses are taught, not

WESTMINSTER ABBEY



Commemoration

and

Funeral Service

of

Ralph Vaughan Williams,

O.M., M.A., D.Mus.

October 12th, 1872—August 26th, 1958

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH, 1958

AT 11.30 A.M.

*The front page of the Funeral Service booklet
(from the estate of Robin Ivison)*

on the telephone at dawn to break the news to as many of his friends as she had time to reach to save us the shock of hearing it on the early morning BBC bulletins - a valiant effort that must have cost much distress. Noel answered the phone and brought the message to me, with her added request that we should not let St. Martin's assume the play had to be cancelled. She felt the orchestration was near enough complete and that any deficiencies could be made good by

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

Then, all standing, the Sentences following shall be sung by the Choir to the music of William Croft (1678-1727):

I AM the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

St. John xi, 25, 26

I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

Job xix, 25, 26, 27

WE brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.

I Timothy vi, 7. Job i, 21

Then shall be sung the Psalm following:

Psalm 104, 1-24

PRAISE the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art clothed with majesty and honour.

Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment: and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.

He maketh his angels spirits: and his ministers a flaming fire.

He laid the foundations of the earth: that it never should move at any time.

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Thou coverdest it with the deep like as with a garment: the waters stand in the hills.

At thy rebuke they flee: at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.

They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath: even unto the place which thou hast appointed for them.

Thou hast set them their bounds which they shall not pass: neither turn again to cover the earth.

He sendeth the springs into the rivers: which run among the hills.

All beasts of the field drink thereof: and the wild asses quench their thirst.

Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation: and sing among the branches.

He watereth the hills from above: the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.

He bringeth forth grass for the cattle: and green herb for the service of men;

That he may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man: and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

The trees of the Lord also are full of sap: even the cedars of Libanus which he hath planted;

Wherein the birds make their nests: and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork.

The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats: and so are the stony rocks for the conies.

He appointed the moon for certain seasons: and the sun knoweth his going down.

Thou makest darkness that it may be night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do move.

The lions roaring after their prey: do seek their meat from God.

The sun ariseth, and they get them away together: and lay them down in their dens.

Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour: until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Lord Mornington (1735-1781)

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Extract from the Funeral Service booklet

once looking at the floor. The choir sang *O Taste And See* which RVW had written only five years earlier for the same Abbey but a very different occasion - the Coronation. Then, when the small procession had returned, we ended with the marvellously

uplifting arrangement of *The Old Hundredth* which he had persuaded the Archbishop to allow in that same ceremony in order that the congregation could get to their feet and add their voices to those of the choir. That was precisely what was needed to send us

out more happily into the grey afternoon.

*Simona Pakenham
Chipping Norton*

Spoken to a Bronze Head

by Ursula Vaughan Williams

Bronze, where my curious fingers run
matching each muscle and each metal feature
with life's austerer structure of the bone,
each living plane and contour so well known,
you will endure beyond the span of nature,
be as you are now when our lives are done.

On unborn generations you will stare
with the same hollow eyes I touch and see,
look on a world in which no memories share
the living likeness of the face you wear,
keep, in unchanged serenity
all that time gave him in your guardian care.

His name is yours to keep, so will his glory be,
who are his only, his inheriting son:
and when the hand that writes so ardently
the sound of unknown sound reaches finality,
the music captured, all the work well done,
stand in his place and bravely wear his immortality.

(Re-printed from
The Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams,
Albion Music Ltd., p. 88)



Ursula Vaughan Williams, July 1958

TRIBUTES TO VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

The following tributes to Ralph Vaughan Williams are reproduced, with permission, from *The Musical Times* of October, 1958.

DR. RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, O.M., died at his home in London on 26 August at the age of eighty-five. The world of music mourns his passing, yet one is glad and grateful that he was able to live so long and so full a life; one, moreover, that was so rich in achievement.

He was a Gloucestershire man, born at Down Ampney on 12 October 1872, and all his life he had the look and the manner of a countryman. His utterance was downright, his views were robust. In his music he expressed the essential spirit of England as perhaps no other composer has ever done before. He was never one to inhabit an ivory tower; he took an active part in music-making, and an active interest in all causes in which he believed. He went on writing music of an astonishing freshness and vitality to the day of his death; his *Ninth Symphony* was produced only last April. He was a great man as well as a great musician; revered and beloved wherever he was known.

His life and work are familiar to all who, in Purcell's phrase, 'carry musical souls about them'; he has been the subject of a number of books and articles in recent years. Instead, therefore, of giving an account of his career (which he himself sketched so delightfully in his 'Musical Autobiography' that first appeared in Hubert Foss's study of his music), we have invited musicians who were associated with him at different times in his life - including members of the younger generation who came to know him in his later years - to set down their impressions of him.

John Ireland

In the concluding years of the 'nineties Vaughan Williams was a student with Stanford during the period when I also had that privilege. Among our fellow-students were Holst and Dunhill, and a little group or coterie resulted, which included the pianist Evelyn Howard-Jones, also a student. We were much together, attending regularly Stanford's bi-weekly orchestral rehearsals with the R.C.M. Orchestra, led at that time by Sam Grimson of the distinguished Grimson family. In those days we could attend comparatively few orchestral concerts, and there were no gramophone records.

Our group were together frequently and discussed music voraciously. We showed each other our compositions with much mutual criticism. We used to frequent a teashop in High Street, Kensington, then known as Wilkins', where we could sit for hours in animated discussions. At that time, though Vaughan Williams was by some years the eldest of us, he had not developed his later love of paradox; he was, in fact, just 'one of us', as the saying goes. There was no question among us of which was the greatest. We were all humble-minded students eager to learn from Stanford and from each other. We formed a debating society with regular meetings when one or other of us would read a prepared discourse followed by mutual arguments. These were not confined to music. I recollect that Vaughan Williams delivered a discourse on Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, at that time considered rather a daring, if not shocking, work. On one of these occasions I animadverted on Schopenhauer, some of whose less extended works were known to us all.

When V.W. first married and went to Germany to study with Max Bruch, he was organist of the Church of St. Barnabas, South Lambeth. He persuaded me at the time to undertake his work there for the period of his six months' projected absence. Even in those early days his activities were prodigious, for, in addition to the normal work of a church organist and choirmaster, he ran a choral society and an orchestral society in connection with the church. He instructed me to prepare and produce performances of Mendelssohn's *Lauda Sion* and Stanford's *Revenge*. This was no easy task for a lad still in his 'teens and quite inexperienced.

On his return from Germany, V.W. bought or leased what he described as 'a small, cheap house' on Chelsea Embankment. The house, a beautiful one, was at the eastern corner of the fine terrace of houses, one of which, Queen's House, was at one time the residence of D. G. Rossetti, the great pre-Raphaelite painter and poet. The house, always painted white, still stands where it did, though the principal books I have read on Chelsea do not disclose the fact that it was once the residence of England's great and famous composer. For many years during Vaughan Williams's subsequent life in Chelsea, he and I remained friends, and continued our musical companionship and mutual advice and criticism.

In conclusion I have an anecdote which perhaps throws some light on the character of this great figure. In 1908, when I was writing my first Sonata for violin and piano, I showed him the slow movement, then in manuscript. When we reached the central theme in E flat minor (in Dorian mode dress) he stopped me and was silent for a minute or two. Then he said, 'Play that theme again'. After another pause he said, 'Well, that's odd. I have used practically the same theme in a song.' I was rather taken aback and asked him what we should do about this curious coincidence of a musical idea. After a moment's thought V.W. said, 'Well, we must both have cribbed it from something else, so we had better both leave it as it is - nobody will notice it.' And so far as I know, nobody ever has!

Sir Adrian Boult

We are often told that early memories are specially vivid, and I can certainly agree that my early memories of Ralph Vaughan Williams are as fresh as anything I can think of. Rather strictly brought up as I had been on a diet mainly of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, it was a great experience as a youngster to be thrown into a chorus, directed by Hugh Allen, singing *The Unknown Region* and, soon after, the *Sea Symphony*. The impact of Vaughan Williams, this magnificent-looking young man, and his fresh and vital music were unforgettable.

A few years later he came to my room in a distant outcrop of the War Office and sat among the samples of boots, which then occupied most of my time, and made some cuts in the score of the *London Symphony*, ready for its third performance in 1918. Many of us regretted the cuts at that time, but we now see that he was right. That score was partly in Edward Dent's writing, partly in George Butterworth's, for the original had been in Germany when the 1914 war broke out, and several friends lent a hand with its reconstruction from the parts, which were, mercifully, still in England.

Another early memory was concerned with the beginnings of the *Pastoral Symphony*. It was actually first heard at a rehearsal of the Royal College of Music's Students' Orchestra a week or two before the first performance in Queen's Hall. Vaughan Williams, like Brahms (who never allowed a score to go through the press until he had heard it at least once), always liked to make sure of his orchestration, and I think he made some slight amendments after that rehearsal, as well as a few more after the work was printed. The Royal College of Music performance took place after the Royal Philharmonic Concert, of course, but at the College a young clarinet scholar dealt with the soprano cadenzas (which are cued in, in case a singer is not available) so beautifully that the composer said he must play them at the concert, it was not worth while to look for a student soprano. The scholar's name was Frederick Thurston, whose work is still well remembered. The part was equally beautifully sung by Flora Mann at Queen's Hall.

The next Symphony, the *F minor*, came later, but it is specially to be remembered as it brought many of us straight up against the spectacle of war, and the ghastly possibility of it. A prophet, like other great men, he foresaw the whole thing (this was in 1935), and surely there is no more magnificent gesture of disgust in all music than that final open fifth when the composer seems to rid himself of the whole hideous idea, and, as we know, began soon after to think of the serene beauty of the *D major*, and what the post-war world could be if men could have more sense.

A great creator, who has done for the reputation of our country something that can be measured by the debt that we owe to William Shakespeare.

Sir John Barbirolli

Early on the morning of 26 August there passed from us one of the greatest and most beloved figures in British musical history. I have been privileged to have had his intimate musical and personal friendship for many years; years that were to become more and more precious as they passed. He was one of the most 'complete' (if I may use the word) men I have ever known. He loved life, he loved work, and his interest in all music was unquenchable and insatiable. Only a few weeks ago in Cheltenham at the Festival of British Contemporary Music, he was in his place at ten o'clock every morning to hear us rehearse the efforts of his youngest, sometimes even obscure, contemporaries, and we all marvelled at him.

It is given to few men to touch the hearts and minds of his fellows in such degree as he has done; and only to the anointed is given the genius that can span such opposites as the lovely little *Linden Lea* and the tremendous *Fourth Symphony*.

Dear Ralph: we shall always honour, admire and be grateful to you; but above all we shall always feel blessed that we walked the same earth with you.



THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: TAKEN BY MICHAEL KENNEDY
AT CHELTENHAM ON 17 JULY 1958

Herbert Howells

Are we, perhaps, in these individual tributes to him, covering the same ground, crowding the same paths?

In the immediate aftermath of a loss at once severe and serene, affection for the man will give us a common voice, and will inevitably direct us to a point at which we recall and see again the man as he was. And which of us would willingly lose sight of him?

Search for a man at the time of his departure is a craving we all share. In this Vaughan Williams moment we might well ask ourselves *why* we share it. Immediate critical assessment will not provide the answer; it could be as inopportune (again for a moment) as it would be useless. Nor can Posterity lend us its critical estimate. We who have grown up in English twentieth-century music to the sound and under the compulsion of two major forces in our midst cannot pretend to any overpowering desire to know what A.D. 2000 will think of the Man of Worcester born in 1857 or the Man of Gloucestershire registered in Somerset House in 1872.

Tribute here and now is paid, rather, within the frame of mind engendered by our having moved not merely on the outer fringes of the V.W. world but often near to the *heart* of it. But we could not trespass over the *whole* of it. Doubtless there were in that rare mind of his certain private, undeclared, unshared and deeply-felt mental and spiritual reserves that are an inevitable part of high genius. In the case of Vaughan Williams it was an early error in diagnosis that marked him down as an aesthete; a still grosser error that found in him an unregenerate technical clumsiness. So wrong, indeed, were these that, at the end of a career familiar as the rich products that marked it, a supreme and paradoxical claim is due. It is that he - the seer and visionary - became and remained the man who invaded and enriched English musical life at almost every point - almost as the textbook extrovert, and always as a man of high practical efficiency.

To this rare man the business of composing *was* a business: something to be mastered by sweat and toil, requiring practice and devotion at the level of a music-hall conjurer's. For him, composing was always a dedication, never a mere solitary self-communion. He explored his own private mind as the prime means of addressing a wide public. Composing was a way of life, but a life to be shared with the causes and with the rank and file of a profession in which he regarded himself as an ordinary member. In a word, his was a genius shared. In its exercise he took a surging joy. He piled up the fruits of it over the long years of an inveterate development.

We must hope (and surely we believe) that he was aware of the immense tide of respect and affection that flowed back to him.

If you will, call it 'Ralph's Flood'.

Sir Arthur Bliss

Vaughan Williams has been the great name in our music for many years. Thousands have sung or played his music, and millions, perhaps, know one side or other of his great and varied output. He has left his influence on every branch of music from grand opera to hymn tunes. He is now part of our inheritance.

There is a rock-like strength in his musical personality that is exceedingly uncommon in the history of music. His music is a real affirmation of life. When Epstein was moulding in clay the bust of Vaughan Williams he was reported as saying that looking at this head gave him strength. Many listeners to his music must have felt the same.

Vaughan Williams took great subjects for his music, and brought his personal vision to bear on them: the sea, London, the English countryside, the book of Job, Shakespeare, Bunyan. The opera and the symphony inspired by *The Pilgrim's Progress* could not have been written by anybody else. In both, a national outlook is combined with a very personal style.

Vaughan Williams was always a searcher, an explorer. It was so characteristic of him to start his career with a work called *Toward the Unknown Region* and to write in his old age a symphony commemorating 'Scott of the Antarctic'.

He was a man greatly revered, and with reason. Among his acts were countless kindnesses, known only to himself and the persons concerned. He gave continuous advice and encouragement to younger men. He had the dignified humility of a great man, and was utterly unself-seeking.

Our sorrow that he has gone is mingled with gratitude for all that he has left us.

Sir Stuart Wilson

I knew R.V.W. personally and continuously for close on fifty years - he did more than anyone else to encourage and to help me as a singer. I met his music and himself when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge, he offered me a room in his house, 13 Cheyne Walk, when the 1914-18 war was over, and now the fifty years have ended, I am competent only to say what the character and the devotion of the man meant to me, for I am not competent to assess his music as eternity will see it - 'private affection bereaves us of judgement'.

There was no day passed when he did not work at something - no sitting and waiting for inspiration, the mind must be kept agile with exercises. He told me it took him a whole morning to write four bars' viola counterpoint to fill up the *Agnus Dei* in the *B minor Mass*. Now that he and J.S.B. can talk things over, I will hazard a guess that the older musician will say, 'How did you know that I used to play it just like that?' Everything had to be done by himself and no duty was too menial or trivial. In the first war he was a private in the R.A.M.C. Before he could return to England to get his commission in the R.G.A. he spent months in a transit camp in Salonica, where his chief task was to separate solids from liquids in their primitive sewage arrangements: 'After that,' he said, 'I learned to call nothing common or unclean.' If he undertook to be President or Patron of any society or committee, he meant to work with them, and attendance at their functions was a first charge on his time. A small musical society in Chelsea had their annual meeting on the same Sunday afternoon that the first German orchestra played in London after 1918: he attended the meeting as President rather than hear his *Tallis Variations* at the Albert Hall.

The second war found him too old to fight, so he dug his garden at Dorking and collected salvage - he had to help in any way he could. He was as proud of a giant marrow as of a symphony prouder, perhaps, because it wasn't his job!

Other musicians could plead their tender consciences or the sacred needs of their art - he, like the Pilgrim in his own *Progress*, 'kept that light in his eye and went straight up thereto', and early on Tuesday, 26 August, the trumpets sounded for him. But I know not who will take up his sword where he had to lay it down (for no one enters armed into that Presence). In the quotation from Plato on the cover of *Sancta Civitas* V.W. spoke his own mind in the words of Socrates on the immortality of the soul: 'No one can know exactly, but it is good for us to utter these words as a sort of incantation'. He was one of the last of the Victorian ascetic, conscientious, agnostic Christians for whom the Abbey is a fitting resting-place.

(continued overleaf)

(continued from previous page)

Sir George Dyson

V.W.'s supreme rank in the creative music of our time needs no emphasis. I will write rather of his day-to-day generosity and friendliness. He was at one time a member of the Council of the Royal College of Music, but as our statutes debar members of the council from being members of the professorial staff, he at once resigned when Sir Hugh Allen asked him to take a few pupils in composition, and he taught for many years. Then, in 1939, when the war reduced our numbers by half, he immediately offered his class to colleagues whose work was most seriously depleted.

He was instantly ready to support from his own purse the many appeals, professional or otherwise, that came to him. Indeed it was sometimes difficult to persuade him that some causes were more deserving than others. His instinct was to help first and judge later, a trait of character occasionally too optimistic, but always endearing. He would go far to assist a promising talent or an enterprising programme.

His modesty could be embarrassing. I had great difficulty in persuading him to sit for Sir Gerald Kelly's magnificent portrait, now in the College council-room. He took the whimsical attitude that if you want a good portrait the subject of it is immaterial. If you want a good likeness, why not a photograph? Luckily we got both.

One last reminiscence. Not long ago he wrote to me describing a most vivid dream in which he heard some unknown music. He was told, in the dream, that I had written it, and he actually copied out a musical quotation from it! I could not recognize it, but I am more than content to have been given that fleeting moment in a unique imagination.

Frank Howes

Apart from his compositions - if indeed the man, his music and his social connections can be kept apart - Ralph Vaughan Williams contributed incalculable services to music and through music to our national life. One thinks first, naturally, of folk-song, a national heritage which he helped to preserve, but the mind goes back over the years and recalls his practical music-making with his village choirs at Leith Hill and with his more sophisticated London Bach Choir, his editorial work on the *English Hymnal* and the *Oxford Carol Book*, not to mention his volumes for the Purcell Society, his assiduous attendance at obscure concerts where new works by younger composers were having their first performance, his fierce letters to *The Times* whenever he scented an injustice done or about to be done, his forthright speeches from diverse platforms on musical occasions, at annual general meetings or even, though he was not fond of them, public dinners. Of his compositions this is not the place to speak, and in any case they belong to us all, nor of his importance for our musical history, which is surely great. What embraced all these things was the forceful personality of a great man - for force and probity of character combined with musical genius he can only be likened to Byrd and Bach. He was truly a great Englishman who for two generations has been increasingly an inspiration to all who came within the orbit of music.

Norman Demuth

Among Vaughan Williams's most loveable characteristics were his fund of human kindness and his humility. He had the knack of making even the most inexperienced young composer feel at ease, as if he were talking to an equal. He had a prodigious memory for small details. On the occasion of a party in honour of his eighty-fifth birthday, he said to me when I shook hands with him, 'I owe you and your wife a letter of thanks.' He must have received hundreds of congratulatory letters, and was in the course of answering them. It struck me as remarkable that he remembered that he had not yet reached ours.

I shall always remember being able to hear the first performance of his *Fifth Symphony* while I was in the Army. The experience overwhelmed me and I felt that I had to write and tell him about it. This I did with some diffidence and hoped that he would not think it condescending on my part. The answer, arriving almost by return of post, was characteristic: 'You should not waste time listening to my music when you have so little in which to write your own.' The postscript was even more typical: 'Don't think I am one of those who don't like praise. I love it.'

Even to look at Vaughan Williams was an inspiration. He had the face of a visionary - and how he would have hated it if anyone had told him so.

There is no doubt that when he crossed over 'the trumpets sounded for him on the other side'.

Alun Hoddinott

The music of Vaughan Williams has always had, for me, a particular appeal and significance, and the conviction has grown steadily in me that it has that extra indefinable quality that will ensure its survival.

One often forms a mental image of an artist through his work and is often disappointed on meeting him. The reverse was the case with Vaughan Williams. Here, obviously, was a wonderful man and personality. I was

fortunate enough to have the privilege of meeting him several times over the last few years - mostly at concerts where new works were being played.

The last time I saw Vaughan Williams was at this year's Cheltenham Festival, where he attended both the rehearsals of the new works and the evening concerts. I had the opportunity of speaking to him, and I confess I waited, with some trepidation, for his remarks about my *Harp Concerto*, which was performed for the first time. He was very kind, however, and ended by saying, 'I'm old-fashioned enough to like a tune.'

I was particularly glad to have been present at the performance of the *London Symphony* on the last night but one of the Festival. The performance and the spontaneous ovation which greeted Vaughan Williams at the end showed the depth of affection and esteem in which he was held; it will remain one of my most moving experiences and memories.

Michael Kennedy

Since early childhood I have passionately admired the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams: it came to me as naturally as the power of speech. During the war, while I was overseas, I was overcome by homesickness and the effects of going too long without music. On the spur of the moment I wrote to V.W. and told him what his music meant to me, never expecting an answer to such an impertinence. On returning to port weeks later I found a warm-hearted reply awaiting me which had been despatched by return post. Thereafter we corresponded regularly, and eventually we met and there began a close friendship which will ever remain the most moving experience of my life. It was impossible to realize that fifty years separated our ages: so young and vital a mind as his seemed to thrive in the company of his juniors. His sympathies and interests were as wide as the ground he covered in his music. His greatness stemmed from his unswerving honesty and genuine, most touching, humility. No one ever left his company without feeling that they had been strengthened and enriched. He enjoyed every aspect of life: how he loved parties and laughter! In our letters we discussed the books we were reading, his music and other music we had recently heard, poetry we liked, the events of the day, our gardens. I even have an account (which must be unique) of when he played cricket as a boy. To sit in his beautiful study at Hanover Terrace while he worked at the piano was to sense the serenity of his genius, and, at the same time, the mysticism and massive strength of the composer of the *Fourth Symphony*, *Job* and *Hodie*.

The last years of his full and complete life were gloriously happy. His energy was unabated to the last day. It was a great satisfaction to him that in recent years he heard splendid performances of some of his lesser-known and underrated works: *Sancta Civitas*, *Sir John in Love*, *The Poisoned Kiss* and *Pilgrim's Progress*, but I am sure his greatest pleasure was in his Bach *Passion* performances at Dorking. The contact of these two mighty minds was an unforgettable experience.

What a rich harvest this wonderful man has left us, a musical testament of beauty of a breadth unrivalled in English music. He is part of the fabric of our nation, with Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Hardy and Elgar. The other day he told me he had never lost his love of Whitman, and it is a line from Whitman, marvellously set to music in the *Sea Symphony*, which has haunted me since 26 August: 'Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death'.

NAVE

Westminster Abbey

COMMEMORATION AND FUNERAL SERVICE

OF

DR. RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, O.M.

Friday, 19th September, 1958, at 11.30 a.m.

Alan C. Don
Dean

Entrance:- Great West Door.

Ticket Holders must be seated by 11.15 a.m.

The Service will end at approximately 12.30 p.m.

*Ticket for VW's Funeral Service
(from the estate of Robin Ivison)*

Obituary by Sir Gilmour Jenkins of the English Dance and Song Society

- A Tribute To Ralph Vaughan Williams

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING *The Chairman's Tribute to Ralph Vaughan Williams*

We have had the great privilege to have among us, taking an active interest in our work, a man whose name and music will, I believe, live as long as music lives: a name that will rank with those of the great musicians of all time. Many of us have known him well, have enjoyed his gaiety as well as his profundity, have heard his lively comments on men and things as well as the magnificent outpourings of his genius, and have known the warmth of his heart as well as the greatness of his mind. To-day I propose to say a few words only on certain aspects of his thought which are of special interest to us here.

The first is that he regarded English folk dances and their tunes and English folk songs and carols, as being a priceless possession, worthy of any effort to collect and preserve, not because of their academic interest to the scholar or the historian but because of their own intrinsic merits as things of beauty, and of their capacity to form the roots from which could spring a great new tree of English music. He left to others the learned approach of the folklore enthusiast; his enthusiasm was for the beauty of the songs, delicate or robust, grave or gay, and for the loveliness of the dance tunes from which, for him, much of the beauty of the dances derived. He used the tunes sometimes in his operas and other works, and he arranged them with loving care for voices and instruments, always in some miraculous way letting them speak for themselves and never obscuring their own special beauty and individuality. But, far more important, he absorbed them into his very spirit, and found in them the soil in which his genius could grow and flower. Not that his works have any trace of the "folkiness" that young men think it clever to sneer at. *The Sixth Symphony* no more resembles a folk song than the oak resembles the acorn, but it had its roots there. The tunes of his own country handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation, released in him the mighty torrent of music which is, and will remain, one of the glories of our country.

The second point is one that has not, I think, been sufficiently brought out in what has been said and written about him. Many have paid tribute to his integrity, of which

this is one aspect, without mentioning it specifically. He profoundly believed that no man could produce anything worthwhile or of any real satisfaction to himself or of value to the world until he had learned his job. Divine inspiration, brilliant ideas, profound intuitions, could be properly used and turned into something of value only by someone who had learned to use them and could translate them into things of tangible beauty. This he applied to the interpretation as much as to the creation of works of art. As you know, he was not only a great composer, but also a profound interpreter who expected and exacted subtleties in singing and playing. But first of all he insisted that the notes should be right, and his not infrequent and rather terrifying explosions at rehearsals were more often caused by inaccuracies or slovenliness than by failures in the higher flights of interpretation. He believed that unless the foundation was right the structure would give little satisfaction to the builder or the occupier of a house. He had no use for the slipshod or the superficial; he knew that nothing worthwhile could be done without hard work in learning how to do it.

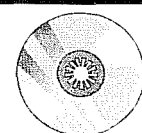
Lastly, part of his greatness lay in refusing to allow himself to be put on a pedestal. His genius was fertilised by being among people and by taking an active part in the musical life of his time. He wanted always to be talked to man-to-man, to discuss and chat and exchange jokes on equal terms; and he was accessible to all who wanted his help or advice. These are some of the qualities that made him universally beloved and that enabled him to go on growing until the end.

He was a truly great man in mind and in heart and he was also a merry one. We who have known him have very much to be thankful for.

Gilmour Jenkins

(Re-printed from English Dance and Song, vol. XXIII, No. 1, January 1959)

Record Reviews



Dona Nobis Pacem

Dona Nobis Pacem. Carmen Pelton (soprano), Nathan Gunn (baritone), Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Robert Shaw, on Telarc CD 80479. (Coupled with Barber *Prayers of Kierkegaard* and Bartok *Cantata Profana*). Full price, 71 minutes. Only available at this stage in the USA.

Dona Nobis Pacem has done well on record. Vaughan Williams conducts the 1936 broadcast recording, now on Pearl (GEMM CD 9342), a passionate, illuminating reading with Renée Flynn and Roy Henderson who both sang in the first performance on 2nd October, 1935. This is a recording of immense historical importance even if the sound is limited at times. Of more modern recordings, many of us will have learned this work from Abravanel's pioneering recording on Vanguard. The baritone soloist let things down in that issue. Our prayers were answered in 1973 when Sheila Armstrong, John Carol Case, the London Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult recorded it following a Royal Festival Hall concert on Sunday 8th of April, 1973. Versions by Bryden Thomson (Chandos 8590), Matthew Best (Hyperion CDA 66655) and Richard Hickox (EMI CDC 7 54788 2) followed between 1988 and 1993.

This latest American recording conducted by Robert Shaw has fine orchestral and choral contributions as one might expect from this source. However, the baritone Nathan Gunn, simply cannot compete with the likes of Bryn Terfel (on EMI) or Thomas Allen (on Hyperion). Comparing the newer versions in the tender *Reconciliation* confirms this point. Nathan Gunn is subdued, the diction muffled and he is curiously lacking in expressiveness. Bryn Terfel is at the other extreme: every word is underlined and the diction is superb. Thomas Allen and Bryan Raynor Cook (on Chandos), are also excellent. Bryan Raynor Cook in particular sings with beautiful tone and a fine sense of line. He faithfully observes VW's *p* and *dolce* markings.

It is a pity that the new Telarc recording has this limitation since there is much to admire elsewhere. The couplings are also unusual. Barber's work is striking, quite different in mood to *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* discussed elsewhere in the edition (see page 20).

Overall, stick to Hickox on EMI.

*Stephen Connock
Colchester*

Obituary

A composer in a great "English tradition"

ART OF DR VAUGHAN WILLIAMS.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (whose death is announced on page one) was born in 1872 at Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, where his father was rector. He was at Charterhouse School for three years and in 1890 entered the Royal College of Music. Two years later he went to Cambridge, where he took the degree of Mus.B. in 1894. He left the following year for some further training at the Royal College.

For three years he was the organist of a London church, and while still holding this appointment he found time for a brief course of study under Max Bruch in Berlin. Afterwards for a little time he came, more strangely under the influence of Ravel in Paris.

Though his musical education had been of a cosmopolitan order, he soon found that he could be no composer at all if he could not be a pure-bred English composer. It was native folksong that brought him this enlightenment. He joined the Folksong Society in 1904, and took an enthusiastic share in the labour of collecting the old tunes of the countryside. His own art was enriched by his discoveries, as it also was when he turned his attention to the Tudor musicians and to Purcell. Two choral and orchestral settings of Walt Whitman's lines "Towards the Unknown Region" and "A Sea Symphony" were produced at the Leeds Festivals of 1907 and 1910 respectively. In those works and still more clearly in the "Fantasia for Strings on a Theme by Tallis" and in "A London Symphony" he forged for himself a manner of execution that links him up with a great "English tradition" while giving him at the same time complete personal freedom. The folk element and what may be called the neo-Elizabethan technique are sometimes found side by side, as in his songs and in other impressionist pieces. The ballad opera "Hugh the Drover" with its prominent use of folksong material, was left unfinished in 1914, when, at the age of 42, he joined the Army as a private in the R.A.M.C. He went to Macedonia in 1916 and afterwards obtained a lieutenancy in the Artillery and served in France.

"Pastoral" Symphony

After the war came the beautiful "Pastoral" Symphony, inspired by the composer's love of country scenes and atmosphere. Then followed the mystical cantata "The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains" (a scene from Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress") and the Mass in G minor for unaccompanied choir. Here the archaic qualities completely justify themselves, for they result from the utmost conviction and are none the less appropriate because of the modern means that convey them. Even more deeply steeped in mysticism are the oratorio "Sancta Civitas" and the suite "Fios Campi" for solo viola, orchestra, and voices, both works being among other contrapuntal pieces written during the 1925-6 period.

Advancing age spurred Vaughan Williams on to a yet more vigorous and varied expression of his ideals. The most strenuous part of his musical life began as he approached his sixtieth year. His reflective powers had deepened; that was natural enough. His employment of counterpoint and of the medieval tonalities had always been instinctive. What was extraordinary was the increased zest shown in his treatment of emotional matter. Some portion of nearly every big work, sacred or secular, written by him during his latest years is notable for its extremely vehement utterance. Among the powerful, striking, original things whose contemplative movements are frequently and fiercely interrupted are the ballet entitled "Job: a Masque for Dancing," the cantata "Donna Nobis Pacem," the "Five Tudor Portraits," the

"Antactica," developed from material in the film score "Scott of the Antarctic," followed in 1953 by the Symphony in D minor (No. 8). In these and other works of the period he began to show a new keen interest in orchestral colour. The orchestration of both contains many unusual instruments, and in the same period he also wrote a Concerto for Tuba and Romance for Harmonica (i.e. mouth-organ) and Orchestra.

Recording of Ninth

He pursued the same trend in the Ninth Symphony, his last important work, first performed at a concert of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in April. He was yesterday to have been present at the first session of a recording of this work being made for an American company by Sir Adrian Boult and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

This impressive list gives only the sketchiest idea of Vaughan Williams' enormous output. He was continuously productive in almost every genre for well over half a century, and the catalogue of his works in Grove's Dictionary occupies nearly eight pages. Besides the eight symphonies it includes numerous other important orchestral works and concertos, two string quartets and other chamber music, six operas, four ballets, over thirty major choral works and many more minor ones, innumerable songs, and half a dozen film scores written during the forties. In addition Vaughan Williams also edited the English Hymnal (1906), was part-editor of



A portrait bust of Dr. Vaughan Williams by David McCall

several other collections, founded and directed the annual Leith Hill Festival from 1905, was always active in connection with folksong research and propagation, and did much work, both as a composer and in other ways, in connection with musical education at all levels.

As a man he was very modest, blunt, and unaffected, despising all nonsense, humbug, snobbery, and purism, musical or otherwise. He would accept no titles, but he did accept an honorary doctorate in music at Oxford in 1939, and received the Order of Merit in 1953. He was always ready to put his ability either as a composer or as a "power" at the service of a good cause, and was always friendly and helpful to younger musicians.

In his later years he had close ties with Manchester through the Halle

Orchestra, the cantata *Donna Nobis Pacem*, the "Five Tudor Portraits," the Piano Concerto, and the Symphony in F minor. True, meditative feeling prevails in the D major Symphony No. 5, but fierce dissonance prevails again in No. 6—though his dark and menacing symphony dies away at last in one of the most mysterious stretches of whispered notes that ever haunted a musician's imagination.

The next landmark was the opera "The Pilgrim's Progress," in which the early "Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains" was incorporated. This was completed in 1949 and produced in 1951 for the Festival of Britain. Vaughan Williams was now nearly 80 but still far from the end of his productive life. In 1952 came the "Sinfonia

in his later years he had close ties with Manchester, through the Halle Orchestra and Sir John Barbirolli. The honour of the first performance of the "Sinfonia Antartica" was given to the Halle Orchestra as an acknowledgment of its performance of the then existing six symphonies in the previous season; and No. 8, dedicated personally to Barbirolli, was also first played by the Halle Orchestra. Vaughan Williams also journeyed to Manchester at Barbirolli's request in 1956 to make an occasion of the first Halle performance for over half a century of Bach's "St. Matthew Passion"—a real mark of friendship from a man of 83. An occasion it was, like those of the two symphonies, and all three will be remembered among the landmarks of Halle's history.

HALLE TRIBUTE AT THE "PROMS"

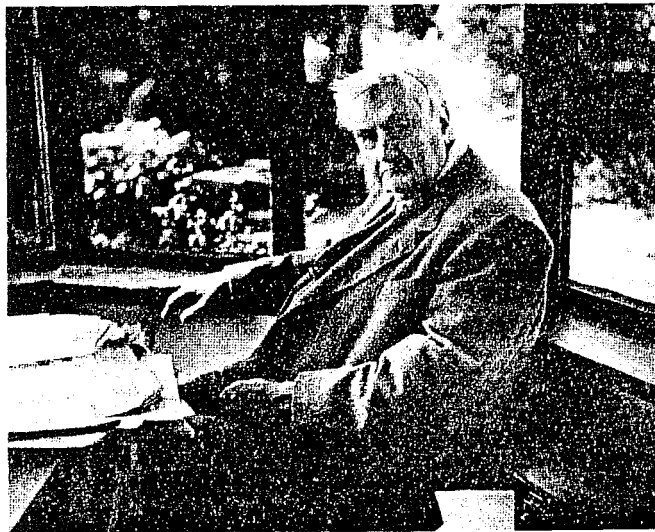
Barbirolli conducts the Tallis Fantasia

As a tribute last night to Vaughan Williams' memory Sir John Barbirolli chose to begin the Promenade concert at the Royal Albert Hall with the Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis. In reverence there was no applause before or after the performance, and Sir John, in a short spoken tribute, referred to Vaughan Williams as "the greatest British composer of our time and certainly the most beloved." Its production was specifically intended as an elegy few pieces have ever been written more intensely elegiac than the Tallis Fantasia. Sir John said when he introduced it that there is an essential nobility in it which will make it last as long as ever British music is played. But there is more than nobility. Its profundity lies hidden in lines which on first acquaintance may seem too unvaried, too long drawn out. The intensity of the Halle's playing under Sir John's direction showed how under the apparently slack framework one finds a serenity so compelling that it can only be compared with late Beethoven, unaccompanied Bach, or Tallis and the Elizabethans themselves. The string writing, decep-

tively simple, unfailingly produces the most resonant playing of which an orchestra is capable, and last night's performance made a fitting tribute from an orchestra and a conductor with whom Vaughan Williams had a particularly happy association.

The major work of the concert as planned was Brahms's double concerto—of all Brahms's orchestral works the most neglected if only because of the difficulty of finding two virtuoso soloists willing to work together in true partnership. Though co-ordination was not ideal, especially in the slow movement, last night's performance was lucky in its soloists, Endre Wolf and André Navarra. Navarra, in an age when we are particularly well blessed with cellists, stands out for his sense of repose and his ability to play with that "inner" quality so justly prized by the Germans. If Navarra's sense of repose last night led to some disagreement with Barbirolli's speeds, bringing gear changes before cello solos, that was a small price to pay for a warm and lyrical performance. Wolf, while hardly of Navarra's stature, also played with keen understanding.

F. G.



Dr. Vaughan Williams at his home

(A. G. Chapman)

from The Manchester Guardian
Wednesday August 27th 1958

continued on column 3

continued on column 4

His last day spent working

Dr Ralph Vaughan Williams died at his home in Hanover Terrace, London, yesterday, aged 85—the morning on which he was to have attended a recording of his Ninth Symphony with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

He had spent a full day working on Monday. A friend of the family said that he went out in the morning and worked after lunch. Later he had a young composer to see him. "He seemed absolutely normal, but a little tired."

Dr Vaughan Williams was talking on Monday about the recording he was to have attended with Mrs Vaughan Williams—which was being made during two days at a studio in Walthamstow and conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Sir Adrian's secretary said yesterday:

"Dr Vaughan Williams was very anxious that Sir Adrian, who has recently recorded all his other symphonies, should also record the Ninth. Sir Adrian had been through the symphony with him privately, but he was very anxious to have Dr Vaughan Williams's personal guidance and advice during the recording."

Sir Adrian believed it to be wisest to go ahead with the recording, but before it started he and the orchestra stood in silence.

Still at work

The Ninth Symphony, in E minor, was completed in November and dedicated to the Royal Philharmonic. Recently Dr Vaughan Williams had been working on a setting of carols to be performed at Christmas.

Dr Vaughan Williams's first wife, Adeline, died at the age of 80 in 1951. His second marriage was to his secretary, Mrs Ursula Wood, a war widow, in February, 1953.

Speaking in the B.B.C. television programme "To-night," Sir Adrian said that he had seen Mrs Vaughan Williams about an hour earlier. "She wants everybody to know that the great man died as he would have lived: with his Ninth Symphony com-

pleted and with no unfinished works lying about. It was a perfect end."

Other tributes were paid to Dr Vaughan Williams yesterday. Sir Arthur Bliss, Master of the Queen's Music, said our greatest composer was dead. "But he has left us imperishable works. We feel proud gratitude for all the great things he has done for the music of England."

Sir John Barbirolli said the loss was incalculable because Vaughan Williams was undoubtedly the greatest living composer of our time, especially since the death of Sibelius.

"As time passes, the loss will become greater and greater. He was the beloved genius of our music because it could only have been given to few men and only the greatest geniuses to touch the hearts and minds of our fellows at so many points as he did. When you think of a lovely simple little song like "Linden Lea" and then the tremendous Fourth Symphony, you realise that it was an absolutely staggering range that he covered."

The complete man

Sir John added that Dr Vaughan Williams had been one of the most complete men he had ever known. "He loved work, he loved food, he loved drink, he loved good company, and above all he loved his fellows."

His curiosity had been insatiable. He was always listening to the new works of young people and he had one of the youngest minds of any man Sir John had ever met.

Mr Leonard Behrens, chairman of the Hallé Concerts Society, said yesterday that the death of Vaughan Williams had a special significance for the society.

"The favour which he showed to the society and to Sir John Barbirolli was a privilege which he and the society will always treasure. Those of us who knew him will remember with gratitude not only his memorable contribution to English music but also his genial personality, his enduring youthfulness, and above all his remarkable modesty. He was a great man, however much he tried to conceal his greatness."

[Obituary, page 3]



Epstein's bronze of Vaughan Williams, now at the Leicester Galleries.

Vaughan Williams
By ERIC BLOM

MANY people who had perhaps no more than once shaken hands with Ralph Vaughan Williams must have felt the news of his very sudden death as a shock and his loss as almost a personal grief. One expresses regret for the passing of a great artist with a decent respect that is not insincere for being detached, but in his case one also felt keenly that the world has become the poorer by the passing of an entirely genuine and generous man.

Such qualities are by no means necessary to art; if they were, how miserably rare great music would be. But when they are present in a composer, one need not be afraid or ashamed to take a warm pleasure in them, even though one may sometimes suspect oneself of being just a little unfairly biased in his favour by emotional responses one tries to take for aesthetic perception. Can anyone who loves Verdi more than Wagner, for instance, be quite sure that he is judging them altogether by the quality of their music?

Inflexibly loyal, to the point of sometimes misjudging the interests of his art, he inspired such loyalty in many that they would see no wrong in anything he wrote. Not that he wanted this kind of admiration. He valued fearlessly honest criticism and would put anyone guilty of expressing gushing admiration quickly in his place. For he was perfectly well aware that not everything he had done was equally important. But I do not mean that he was unaware of where he stood in music, and I think this is the time for us all to make up our minds about that.

THE message was not always portentous. He could be grimly realistic, like an English Mussorgsky or Janacek, in "Riders to the Sea"—still unrecognised as his one great achievement in opera—or frighteningly prophetic, as in the desolate, post-atom-bomb moon landscape of the finale in the sixth Symphony; but he could also be strongly confident, as in the fifth Symphony or some of the shorter religious choral pieces, or set out to entertain and even to charm, unlike him though that may seem to those who knew the loose-clad, countrified, heavy-limbed man he was. Not the most refined French composer, Ravel or anybody, could have made a more delicious and delicately scored thing than he did of the bird procession attending the funeral of Jane Scroop's sparrow in "Five Tudor Portraits."

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS is, to my mind, one of the four supremely great English masters among composers. The other three are Byrd, Purcell and Elgar. The unevenness in the work of the two near our own time does not affect their stature. For one thing, our greater familiarity with the totality of their output due to that nearness must be taken into account. We may be aware that Byrd could be dull or Purcell trifling on occasion, but our distance from them diminishes their comparative failures for us to vanishing-point, whereas we have all lived with those of our more or less near contemporaries.

He was a man full of surprises, which he kept springing to the last, in his eighty-sixth year. And not only in composition. He would make amateurs sing madrigals at his house till all but he were ready to drop, and he had a way of unexpectedly helping what he thought deserving causes with a special fund he had started late in life. For official honours he had little use, and he kept the fact that he graded the Order of Merit as much as it graded him as dark as he could. Yet he was obviously the musician to deserve it and to wear it with dignity. Vaughan Williams, indeed, is the G.O.M. as well as the O.M. of music.

from The Observer, August 31st 1958

Obituary

DR. R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, O.M.

FAME AT 35 AFTER LEEDS FESTIVAL

Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, the composer, who has died aged 85, received the Order of Merit in 1935. Born the son of a clergyman, at Down Ampney, Glos, he was educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge. He later attended the Royal College of Music.

His development was anything but precocious, and among his generation—which was exceptionally brilliant—at the R.C.M. he was not at first expected to attain pre-eminence.

Not hard-pressed for money, he went abroad for experience. He was 35 before the world in general came to know him through the effect made at the Leeds Festival in 1907 by his noble "Toward the Unknown Region."

In the 1914-18 War Vaughan Williams served in the R.A.M.C. as a private, and later gained a commission in the Royal Artillery. Before he left the Army he was appointed a professor at the Royal College of Music.

His first wife, formerly Miss Adeline Fisher, died in 1951. Two years later he married Mrs. Ursula Wood, a widow, who survives him.

CONDUCTORS PAY TRIBUTE

"BELOVED GENIUS"

Among the many tributes paid to Dr. Vaughan Williams yesterday were:

SIR JOHN BARBIROLLI: I think the loss is incalculable because he was undoubtedly the greatest living composer of our time, especially since the passing of Sibelius. Up to then we had two greatest living composers. As time passes the loss will become greater and greater. He was the beloved genius of our music because it could only have been given to few men and only the greatest geniuses to touch the hearts and minds of our fellows at so many points as he did.

SIR MALCOLM SARGENT: Vaughan Williams was a very old personal friend and most lovable person. It comes as a personal loss but apart from that it is terrible that within a year, the two greatest figures living in music to-day, Sibelius and Vaughan Williams, should both have passed away. Music is very much the poorer for their going.

SIR ADRIAN BOULT: Vaughan Williams has been, in every sense, the leader of British music for many years. The wideness of scope of his output and its wonderful consistent quality have been a constant inspiration and have done everything to win the proud place which British music now holds in world opinion.

SIR ARTHUR BLISS, Master of the Queen's Music: Our greatest composer is dead. But he has left us imperishable works. We feel proud gratitude for all the great things he has done for the music of England.

THE EARL OF HANWOOD described Dr. Vaughan Williams as the composer who epitomised England to a great many Englishmen as well as to a number of foreigners; a composer who grew to mastery at an age when most creative artists were thinking of retirement.

THE LORD PRINCE OF ENGLAND, Mr. Ian A. Johnston-Gibert, said: "I am sure that all those now taking part in the Edinburgh Festival will deeply regret this great loss to British music."

MR. ANSON CORLEW, the American composer and conductor: It seems to me that he made a considerable contribution to the revival of world interest in English music. Many of his works were "greatly loved" in the United States.

Appreciation by Mr. In Cooper—P6

The genesis of 'The Explorers'

by Andrew Herbert

Vaughan Williams wrote *A Sea Symphony* over a period of seven years. The process of composition was laborious and involved the rejection of a substantial amount of material. This is recorded in a series of sketchbooks which, aside from a single privately owned book, are held in the British Library. There is, of course, no guarantee that others have not been lost or destroyed, but in those that survive, the final movement, 'The Explorers', is subject to the most substantial and far-reaching revision.

There are two serious problems to be overcome before the music itself can be effectively evaluated. Both are a consequence of Vaughan Williams's idiosyncratic working methods: his handwriting is frequently difficult to read and, more crucially, it is impossible to be certain of a chronology. In a similar study concerning the *Ninth Symphony*, Alain Frogley wrote:

It cannot always be assumed that all entries were written in a linear sequence from the front to the back of a book. Vaughan Williams almost certainly had a number of different notebooks on his desk at any one time, and at times used them haphazardly.¹

In the absence of any real external evidence, the present study is bound to concentrate on internal evidence gathered from the sketches themselves. This, however, is a risky business and relies on a number of assumptions, particularly regarding determinations of what constitutes logical development. For the most part, it is necessary to promulgate a sliding scale in which those sketches least like the final result were written furthest from it in time whilst those most like the final result were written nearest to it in time. However, such rigidity does not allow for second thoughts, retraced steps, or any other form of deviation from the predetermined evolutionary pattern.

Even so, without some kind of (potentially arbitrary) ordering, it is not possible to further this discussion. Taking these problems into account, Table 1 presents, with some trepidation, a chronological ordering of the preliminary material for 'The Explorers'.² Each of the three principal vocal score drafts is preceded by a less carefully notated preliminary draft as well as a number of shorter sketches. As might be expected, certain passages caused a disproportionate amount of trouble and were repeatedly revised, while others were conceived in a form which required very little alteration in the final version. Early sketches indicate that Vaughan Williams worked on the movement in two separate parts. It is difficult to ascertain when these were joined, even if it is assumed that they were always intended to be. There is no doubt that draft Y is a direct continuation of draft B and thus constitutes a complete version of the movement. It is also possible that draft X is similarly a continuation of draft A and preliminary draft Y is a continuation of preliminary draft B:

In the final result, part 1 (bars 1-239) consists of three main sections. The first two begin with the following text: 'O vast Rondure' (bar 1) and 'Down from the gardens of Asia' (bar 44). The third is less easily defined, partly because it includes no new thematic material and partly because it begins mid-way through a line of text. However, the most pronounced point of recapitulation occurs at bar 177 with the word 'poet': '(Finally shall come the) poet worthy that name'. As an overall concept, part 1 is constructed in an arch-form (A, B, A') with the following principal themes:

Ex. 1a

Ex. 1b

Ex. 1c

Ex. 1d

¹Frogley, A. *The Genesis of Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony: a Study of the Sketches, Drafts, and Autograph Scores*, Ph.D.diss. Oxford 1989 p.38

²The term 'preliminary material' refers to any music pre-dating the first proofs of the 1909 vocal score.

Section 1, even in its least mature form, is never very far from the final result. The first draft (preliminary draft A) is similar in thematic and structural terms. There are only two significant differences: it begins in D major and the final passage incorporates a phrase based on the principal theme of the first movement.

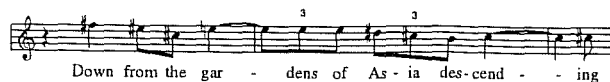
Ex. 2



In draft A the thematic cross-reference is removed and the whole section is transposed into E^b major. Both of these revisions weaken its relationship with the first movement. The section is then subject to only minor alteration in the subsequent drafts.

Section 2 was far more problematic and received comprehensive revision several times. Vaughan Williams initially conceived three themes, each associated with different textual material: 'Down from the gardens', 'Yet soul be sure' and 'Wherefore unsatisfied soul'.

Ex. 3a



Ex. 3b



Ex. 3c



It seems that the second theme was originally intended as a countersubject for the first theme. There are frequent further attempts in the sketches to combine these themes, but the third is always treated separately. Nevertheless, in draft A section 2 is dominated by a large fugue based on the material derived only from the first theme.

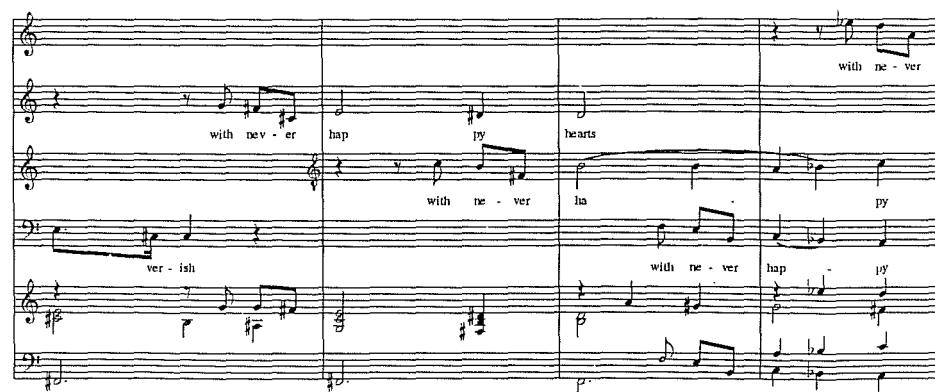
The fugue begins in modal F major, contributing towards an appropriate atmosphere for the text: 'Down from the gardens of Asia descending, Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny'.

Ex. 4a



However, as Whitman's poetry increases in urgency, describing humanity's 'wandering, yearning, with restless explorations', the harmonic tension is correspondingly increased and the music becomes increasingly chromatic. This is followed by a developmental passage which incorporates a series of middle entries based on an intervallically altered version of the theme.

Ex. 4b



The rather mechanically derived middle section is interrupted by an unprepared and suddenly dramatic orchestral outburst, overriding the carefully contrived fugal workings with an impulsive convulsion.

Ex. 4c



Although there is no attempt to incorporate the second theme within the fugue, the third theme, 'Wherefore unsatisfied soul', makes an appearance. It is stated a number of times in alternation with isolated statements of the first theme.

whi - ther O mock - ing life where - fore un -
 where - fore un - sat - is - fied soul where - fore un -
 Ah! who shall soothe these fev - er - ish child - ren

Gradually, the tension winds down and the fugue ends with a bar of silence. Then at last, the draft then continues with the second theme, 'Yet soul be sure' Here the fugue subject makes a further appearance, again but once again it is used in a non-contrapuntal context.

Ex. 4c

and shall be car - ried out

It seems that Vaughan Williams was somewhat constricted by the formal requirements of the fugue. He was clearly torn between giving vent to impulses and trying to interweave and superimpose the various thematic strands. The result was unsatisfactory and he began further experimentation mostly using fresh material.

The new theme for 'Down from the gardens of Asia' presents a pointed contrast with its predecessor. Having abandoned the previous fugal version Vaughan Williams turns to an unambiguously homophonic setting of an unambiguously diatonic theme.

Ex. 5a

Down from the gar - dens of A - sia de - scend - ing Ad - am and Eve ap - pear then their my - riad pro - ge - ny af - ter them

This style is retained even when the text is most suggestive of instability at 'with restless explorations'.

Ex. 5b

Tenor yearn - ing with rest - less ex - plor - a - tions
 Bass quest - ion - ings

The replacement theme for 'Wherefore unsatisfied soul' is subsequently incorporated without alteration in the final result. 'Yet soul be sure' was sketched twice, although only the second version was used in the draft. It is now just seven bars in length.

Ex. 5c

Yet soul be sure the first in - tent re - mains and shall be car - ried

This is overshadowed by a substantial sequential passage which prepares for the next section. Thus the proportions of section 2 are altered and the importance of 'Yet soul be sure' is diminished in draft B.

Draft C takes a slightly different form. It consists of unsatisfactory passages in draft B. These were bound together with the previous draft in Add. MS. 50363. Section 2 is now very similar to the final result. Both 'Down from the gardens of Asia' and 'Yet soul be sure' now share the same thematic material, as in the printed score. This symbolic connection does not seem particularly logical. The two passages of text represent different ideas: the first is concerned with the past wanderings of humanity, whilst the second invokes optimism as to its future. However, in purely musical terms the reiterated thematic material helps to give part 1 a more balanced arch-like structure. It seems that musical needs took precedence over textual needs.

Vaughan Williams commenced work on section 3 only after the previous two sections had reached an advanced stage. The seeds are contained in a sketch of 'Yet soul be sure' written after preliminary draft A in 50361D. This ends with a short passage, headed 'finally', which recapitulates the principal theme of section 1. It first appears modified to fit the 3/4 time signature, but the original version in 4/4 is subsequently used to herald a triplet passage, 'singing'.

Ex. 6a

A musical sketch for Ex. 6a, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom in bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time. It begins with a 'finally' marking and a dynamic of *ff*. The melody features a triplet of eighth notes. The lyrics 'sing - ing' are written below the notes. The passage concludes with a *meno mosso* marking.

A second sketch in 50363 (ff. 95r-95v) is heavily based on these ideas, but the triplet passage is omitted. Instead, the principal themes of both section 1 and section 2 are neatly superimposed to provide a majestic setting of 'shall come the poet worthy that name'.

Ex. 6b

A musical sketch for Ex. 6b, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom in bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time. The melody is a simple, majestic line. The lyrics 'shall come the poet wor - thy that name' are written below the notes.

The section is considerably enlarged in draft A. Theme 1a is transposed to E major and juxtaposed with the fuge theme in 3/4. Unlike the previous sketch, the triplet passage is included and extended.

Ex. 6c

A musical sketch for Ex. 6c, consisting of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time. The lyrics 'true son', 'sing', 'ing', and 'etc' are written below the notes.

Although the music bears little specific relation to the final result, the essential recapitulatory feeling is similar.

Draft B stands by the same principal of construction, but the result is rather different. The new 'Down from the gardens of Asia' theme is incorporated and combined with theme 1a in resolute G major.

Ex. 6d

A musical sketch for Ex. 6d, consisting of five staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle three in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time. The tempo marking is *largamente*. The lyrics 'come the poet wor - thy that name the true son of God shall' are written below the notes.

The music then moves into E^b major for a slightly shortened version of the triplet passage. As there is no sign of the orchestral passage which divides part 1 and part 2 in the final result, section 3 is followed directly by section 5, 'O we can wait no longer'.

In draft C, the thematic material and underlying structure of section 3 are now consistent with the final result. Nevertheless, it is still considerably shorter and less developed. For the first time section 4 is included, albeit again in a very compact version. Both sections were subsequently given more weight in order to function as the climactic passages of part 1.

Although there are fewer sketches for section 3 than section 2, in many ways they share similar problems. Vaughan Williams is clearly anxious to combine the various thematic ideas, and always keeps in mind a strong sense of their function within the larger structure. He lacked either the will or the confidence to trust in less controlled free-flowing thoughts. This would matter little if it were not for the occasional sense in the sketches that this self-restraint was not productive. At times the response to Whitman's poetry seems forced in order that the demands of predetermined musical structures or development techniques be given precedence.

Part 2, in its final version, seems to be a more unfettered response to the poetry. It is less formally contrived and encompasses a greater degree of melodic freedom. There are five main sections, dominated by the following themes:

section 5 (240-335) Ex. 7a

section 6 (336-401) Ex. 7b

section 7 (402-443) Ex. 7c

section 8 (444-521) based on ex. 7a

section 9 (522-570) based on ex. 7a

These received varying degrees of revision in the preliminary sketches. For example, the concluding passage in section 5, 'Bathe me O God in thee', is associated with no fewer than five different chunks of thematic material. On the other hand, section 9 is not greatly different to the final result, even in its earliest version.

The first sketches for part 2 set out two themes which constitute the basis of sections 5 and 6.

Ex. 8a and 8b

Most of the rest of the manuscript book is devoted to experimentation on section 6. There are three main versions, each combining the themes in different ways and each illustrating a move towards a more explicitly contrapuntal setting.

Ex. 9a

Ex. 9b

Ex. 9c

O thou

As far as section 5 is concerned there is little evidence of sketching prior to draft X (50362J ff. 2r-8v). Even then, most of the thematic material is already in place and, other than some large scale harmonic uncertainties, the section is similar to the version used in the final result. Only 'Bathe me O God in thee' caused real difficulty. This had already been sketched once previously.

Ex. 10a

Bathe me O God in Thee mount - ing to thee

Here in draft X the passage is revised twice; the second time is labelled, 'or this way'.

Ex. 10b

Bathe me O God in thee mount - ing to thee mount - ing to thee to
I and my soul to range

Ex. 10c

range in range of God in I and my soul to range in range of thee
in Bathe me O

or this way

Still not content, Vaughan Williams altered this once again in draft Y. The hymn-like atmosphere common to previous versions is eschewed in favour of a more dynamic coupling of the 'O we can wait no longer' theme and a theme taken from the first movement ('See, the steamers' b.17).

Ex. 10d

Piu lento solenne

Bathe me O God in thee bathe me O God in thee mount-ing to thee

In the final result this cyclic cross-reference is removed and the 'O we can wait no longer' theme is stated alone. A familiar landmark amongst an outpouring of thematic material, the reintroduction of this theme strengthens the overall structure of part 2. It is ironic that the process of moving away from controlled form illustrated in part 1 is reversed here with a solution that is both simple and accessible.

The genesis of section 6 is more complicated. The first substantial version is set out in draft X. It is closely related to the second of the sketches in 50361G (ff. 7r). Although the opening theme is not used in the final result, the theme which takes its place is stated after several bars.

Ex. 11a

thee O thou name - O thou trans - cend - ent

This is followed by a passage which is unfamiliar both musically and textually. In the final result, section 6 uses the following text:

O thou transcendent,
 Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
 Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them.

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
 At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
 But that I, turning, call to thee O Soul, thou actual me,
 And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
 Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
 And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
 Bounding O Soul thou journeyest forth;

Here in draft X the whole of the second and third verses are replaced by just two lines, although as the draft is incomplete, it is impossible to be certain how much more text might have been included.

O thou transcendent,
 Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
 Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them.

Thou pulse - thou motive of the stars, suns systems,
 That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious...

The music is based upon the principal theme of section 5, now treated in a more declamatory manner.

Ex. 11b

stars circ - ling move in car -
 Thou Thou mo - tive
 Thou motive of stars suns systems that circling
 motive of stars suns systems

In preliminary draft Y, section 6 is different yet again. The text used previously is replaced in its entirety by the following colourful lines.

Greater than stars or suns,
 Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth;
 Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far flights?
 O soul, voyagest thou indeed on voyages like those?
 Then have thy bent unleash'd.

Musically, the new version is based on an extension of the first passage in draft X. The theme is used sequentially and in imitative counterpoint without restraint.

Ex. 11c

thee Great - er than stars or suns
 thee

This is repeated almost exactly in draft Y. The version incorporated in the 1909 vocal score, which begins with a direct quotation from the principal theme of the first movement, is only reached in draft Z. Even then, Vaughan Williams was not fully happy with the passage. In the revised 1918 vocal score he included an optional cut of all but ten bars of the section. This was one of the most problematic areas of the symphony, although it is difficult to be certain why. It is true that the subject matter - transcendence - places a heavy weight on the composer. Vaughan Williams seems uncertain whether to concentrate on the lyrical 'O we can wait no longer' theme or the typically fugue subject-like 'O Thou transcendent' theme. Perhaps he sensed that the earth-bound harmonies employed in all the various versions were not ideal. The solution to a similar problem in a previous piece, *Toward the Unknown Region*, takes the form of an unequivocally diatonic Edwardian march.

Ex. 12

However, Vaughan Williams is unwilling to do likewise in 'The Explorers', but equally unable to find a satisfactory replacement. His musical palette, perhaps, was not yet varied enough.

The remaining three sections of the final result were not even sketched until after the completion of draft X. Among the incipient notes is a sketch entitled, 'part of reckless O soul', (i.e. section 8). Here, once again, the principal theme of the first movement is set out. It is treated sequentially and builds up to a phrase utilising a distant ancestor of the folk-like theme used in section 7 of the final result. These ideas are further elaborated in 50362H. Here, section 8 begins to look more familiar. A sketch entitled 'Sail Forth' sets out two versions, the second written directly on top of the first. Consequently it is difficult to disentangle them, but nevertheless it is apparent that the folk-like theme is no longer included. The second version is similar to the final result, but the first makes use of different thematic material.

Ex. 13

I with Reckless O for the plor - ing

The first real sketch of section 7 is seen in 50361H (ff. 8v-12v). Although the actual thematic material is different from the final result, its vigorous character is clearly established.

The image shows a musical score for Ex. 14. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are vocal parts, with the lyrics 'a - way' written below the second staff. The bottom three staves are instrumental parts, likely for piano or orchestra. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The score shows a complex arrangement of notes, rests, and dynamics across several measures.

These ideas are put together for the first time in preliminary draft Y (50362K). The previous version of section 7 (50361H ff. 8v-12v) is rewritten in vocal score and then followed by section 8. This is maintained in all subsequent drafts prior to the first proofs (50364). Only then is the thematic material of section 7 altered to include the theme used in the final result.

It seems, therefore, that Vaughan Williams initially intended to follow section 6 with material derived from the first movement. The decision to remove this is in line with a number of other revisions designed to exclude cyclical references. In the final result, the only such reference allowed to remain is the orchestral passage which divides part 1 and part 2 (section 4: bb. 213-239).

By now it should be clear that the vast amount of sketching entailed a Herculean effort on Vaughan Williams's part. The scope of this study is limited to an examination only of those passages which were subject to most radical revision. A more comprehensive examination of the preliminary material is impossible and inappropriate here. As previously noted, the difficulties inherent in this type of study make it imperative that any inferences be treated with hesitancy. Nevertheless it is possible to draw several general conclusions about Vaughan Williams's method of revision.

Initially he seems to have been thinking in terms of a cyclic symphony. The outer movements were both to begin in the same key (D major) and there was to be a substantial amount of shared thematic material. It may even be that he was thinking specifically of Tchaikovsky's *Fourth Symphony*, which begins similarly with a fanfare motif and makes some use of thematic cross-referencing between movements. However, as the sketching progressed Vaughan Williams backed away from this. The thematic cross-references are gradually exorcised and the music gradually moves away from conventional formal procedures.

In one sense he encountered opposite problems in each part of the movement. In the first part he struggled to fit the musical material into predetermined formal structures. Perhaps finding this increasingly limiting, he is more concerned in the second part with enlarging musical ideas to create more free-flowing musical thought. At the simplest level it seems that he considered two possible models. The academically respectable fugue and other tradition methods of thematic transformation demonstrated in many sketches would have been very familiar to contemporary English choral festival audiences. Conversely, there are clearly also attempts to develop music imbued with Wagnerian ideals of a more free structure dictated by constant melody. In a way, the final result ended up as both of these simultaneously, possibly one of the reasons for subsequent criticism.

Although great care is needed, it is also possible to hazard more personal conclusions about the composer himself. The work is an ambitious undertaking, the first completely choral symphony ever written, and over an hour in length to boot. In addition, the text is thought-provoking. Lines such as, 'Finally shall come the poet worthy that name, The true son of God shall come singing his songs' have particular resonance. Clearly Vaughan Williams was concerned to make a grand gesture. The sketches indicate that he was continually searching for ways of extending thematic material in order to support the huge structure and allow the scope of his ambition to be realised. They also seem to reflect the different demands he placed upon himself.

On the one hand *A Sea Symphony* seems to be a bid for recognition; it was designed to appeal to his tutors, particularly Stanford, and other elder members of the musical establishment. On the other, it is a bid for leadership which depended on a more tricky blend of originality and popular stylistic reference: thus, in part, the Wagnerian touches.³ The conflict between these elements is repeatedly glimpsed in the preliminary material: a fascinating struggle between genuine impulse, technical difficulty and political manoeuvring.

Table (A)

part 1		part 2	
50361C, 50361E	prelim. sketches		
50361F, 50363: 95r-95v	sketches		
50361D: 2r-15r	prelim. draft A	50361G: 2r-14r	sketches
		50361D: 14r, 15v-17v	sketches
		50363: 96r-98r	sketches
50362G: 9v-15r, 50362H: 2r-4r	draft A	50362J: 2r-8v	draft X
50362J: 11v-12v, 50361H: 13r-23v	sketches	50362J: 9r-17v, 50362H: 4v-9r	sketches
50362I: 1v-6r	prelim. draft B	50361H: 2r-12v	sketches for Y
50363: 100r-101v, 103r-v, 107r-v	draft B	50362I: 6v-7r, 50362K: 3r-20v	prelim. draft Y
		50363: 108v-112v	draft Y
54189: 213	sketches for C	50362H: 10v-13r	sketches for Z
50363: 102v, 104r, 105v-106r, 108v	draft C	50363: 113r-123r	draft Z
Kennedy	draft C revisions		

Andrew Herbert – University of Birmingham

³ Witness also 'A Song for all seas, all ships' where much of the fugue 'Token of all brave captains' is directly lifted from the communion scene towards the end of Act I of *Parsifal*.

THE DEATH OF VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

by Michael Kennedy

My newspaper work in Manchester in 1958 involved my working until the early hours of the morning. So I was asleep at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday 26 August when a friend telephoned to tell me, on Ursula's behalf, that Ralph Vaughan Williams was dead. I can still feel the shock and disbelief. He was, I had to remind myself, nearing 86 and had recently had a minor operation. But we had all been together at Cheltenham in July and had a wonderful late night dinner party at the Barbirollis' hotel in the hills outside the town when Ralph was in tremendous form. A marvellous performance by the Hallé of his *London Symphony* had given him immense pleasure. 'I wish I could score now like I scored then', he said to John. Early in August I went to Sadler's Wells with him to hear *Sir John in Love* and a few nights later he was at the Proms for his *Ninth Symphony*. At Sadler's Wells I told him how spellbound I had been a few weeks earlier by the floodlighting of Salisbury Cathedral spire. He and Ursula went touring Dorset and Wiltshire and he sent me a postcard of the Cerne Giant, plus rude comments. They, too, were transfixed by Salisbury at night. Everything was so normal. Death was not to be contemplated.

But it came, suddenly and peacefully. I went down to Hanover Terrace for his cremation and saw him for the last time. John Barbirolli had also called at the house and told me that Ralph in death looked like 'a great mediæval prelate.' I remember little of that occasion except that I drove to Golders Green with Elias Canetti. What I shall never forget is the glorious moonlit nights of those last days of August - 'time and space and death'.

The Westminster Abbey funeral on 19 September, a lovely late-summer day, will never be forgotten by those who were there. Ursula had planned it perfectly as both commemoration and celebration. The Abbey was full and felt almost like a village church. After the Dean and Chapter had taken their places, the music began, taking us by surprise. The opening of the *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* was the inspired perfect choice - the folk-song he had loved all his life uttered on the strings in his unmistakable musical voice and with his friend Adrian Boult conducting. Two other friends, Frederick Grinke and David Martin, were the soloists in Bach's *D minor concerto for two violins*. Then more VW, the *Pavane*, *Galliard* and *Epilogue* from *Job*. He had chosen the Croft Sentences from the Burial Service, Lord Mornington's chant for Psalm 104 and Maurice Greene's anthem *Lord, let me know mine end*. As the casket containing Ralph's ashes was carried to the North Aisle, we sang (or tried to)

Come down, O love divine to the tune he had given the name of his birthplace, Down Ampney. Of the six people who went to the graveside, only Ursula, Christopher Finzi and Robert Armstrong survive today. Again, the perfect choice for the music after the committal, the exquisite *O taste and see*. And this was followed by another work by Ralph which had been performed in the Coronation service in the Abbey five years earlier - the magnificent ceremonial arrangement of *The Old Hundredth*. If it was difficult on that morning to sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, we did our best and left the Abbey to the sound of the organ playing Bach's *St. Anne Fugue*. Outside, the bells were ringing a muffled peal, a final epilogue to Ralph's *London Symphony*. Was it really forty years ago?

Michael Kennedy
Cheshire

MUSIC FOR FUNERAL OF DR. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

HIS WISHES REMEMBERED

Details of the music to be played and sung at the funeral service for Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams in Westminster Abbey on September 19 were announced yesterday by the Chapter Office of the Abbey. Dr. Vaughan Williams has been cremated and his ashes are to lie in the north aisle of the Abbey.

The music has been planned in accordance with his known desires. He had often expressed the wish that at his funeral the anthem might be the setting of "Lord, let me know mine end" by Maurice Greene (1695-1755, organist of the Chapels Royal and of St. Paul's Cathedral), that Psalm 104 should be sung to the chant by Lord Mornington, and that the organ voluntary might be the Bach Fugue in E flat.

These works will all be included with three of Dr. Vaughan Williams's own compositions—the hymn "Come down, O love divine," from the English Hymnal (of which he was musical editor), sung to the tune "Down Ampney"; the short anthem "O taste and see," composed for the Coronation service in 1953; and the Coronation version of the "Old Hundredth." The Abbey choir, directed by Sir William McKie, will sing the choral parts.

Before the service there will be a "commemoration in music." Bach's concerto for two violins (soloists, Frederick Grinke and David Martin) and "The Pavane of the Sons of the Morning," from *Job* will be played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

At the end of the service the orchestra will also play the "Old Hundredth," in which they will be joined by trumpeters from the Royal Military School of Music, Twickenham, under their director of music, Lieutenant-Colonel David McBain.

The following telegram has been received by the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. from officers of the Union of Soviet Composers: "We are deeply grieved to hear of the death of the outstanding representative of modern music and great English composer, Vaughan Williams, and we extend our sympathy to his family." It is signed by Khrennikov (chairman), Shostakovich, Khachatryan, Kabalevsky, Novikov, Shaporin, and Aksyuk.

(An article from early September, 1958)

Concert Reviews

A SEA SYMPHONY AT THE RFH, 14 MARCH 1998

This was very much a concert of two halves, with an excellent performance of the *Sea Symphony* preceded by less than impressive accounts of *Tintagel* and Stanford's rarely heard *Songs of the Fleet*.

Stephen Roberts sang impressively throughout the Symphony, but seemed ill at ease in the Stanford; especially the faster tempo of *The Song of the Sou'wester* and *The Little Admiral* exposed his uncertain control of words. One redeeming feature of the Songs was the full, expressive tone of the chorus, in which the City of London Choir joined the Guildford Choral Society. We need a good modern recording of the Songs, so if you're reading this, Mr Hickox, please

Bax's *Tintagel* is not an easy work to play or to conduct. The Philharmonia Orchestra was rather under strength in the strings, so that the big tune did not emerge from its brass accompaniment as clearly as it should. Hilary Davan Whetton's conducting, whilst always vigorous, lacked the flexibility which this dense, expressive music demands.

It all came together in the second half, however. The Philharmonia were on top form, from the opening brass fanfares to the closing diminuendo on the strings. Stephen Roberts seemed far happier with, no doubt, more familiar music and Yvonne Kenny was radiant in the first movement and intensely moving in the last. The chorus sang as if they loved every note, (who wouldn't?), and Whetton held together his vast forces with excellent control. The powerful climaxes, both choral and orchestral, in the last movement were beautifully handled, especially the great surge of melody after "some hidden prophetic intention".

One was left with conflicting thoughts. VW was a great composer, even so early in his career, but how much had he learnt from his "great teacher" Stanford? Not his God-given gift of melody, but certainly his control of choral forces recalled the *Requiem* and the *Stabat Mater*. Oh, to have been at that concert in Leeds on 12 October 1910, (VW's birthday) to hear the first performances of the *Songs of the Fleet* and *A Sea Symphony*, with Rachmaninov playing his *C Minor Concerto* as a make-weight! I wonder if the audience that night applauded every movement separately, as did this packed Festival Hall audience -

(continued overleaf)

(continued from previous page)
irritating, especially after *On the Beach at Night Alone*, but indicative of huge enjoyment and appreciation. Appropriately the proceeds went to the RNLI.

Simon Coombs
Swindon

MASS IN G MINOR

On Saturday 31st January the South West Chamber Choir gave a concert at St. Germans Church Cornwall. The two principal works of the concert were VW's *Mass in G Minor* and Rutter's *Requiem*.

The church at St. Germans is situated on a hillside leading down to the broad estuary of the River Lynher (a tributary of the Tamar). This proved to be yet another example of 'The Cornish' selecting an atmospheric location at which to play VW (last year's example being *The Pilgrim's Progress* at St. Endellion).

The Church itself is situated on the site of Cornwall's first cathedral which was established here in Saxon times and considerably pre-dates Truro cathedral which wasn't built until the 1870's.

The concert began with a series of short opening pieces by Glinka, Arensky, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Rachmaninov followed by an organ work by Karg-Elert.

The choir - which numbers only 32 - launched into the VW with considerable gusto. With vigorous directing from Michael Johnson they gave a crisp and energetic account of the *Mass* which was enhanced by the church's clear and precise acoustic. The *Gloria* in particular made a considerable impression as the choir attacked the more boisterous passages with considerable aplomb. The quieter sections too made an impression and from time to time as the soloists reached for the skies - as it were - I could feel, a double sensation; the back of my neck began to tingle as did my feet.

Now, I have to admit that the Rutter *Requiem* was given a particularly sympathetic performance and during this the tingle in my feet increased considerably. However, I must report that this was not so much due to the music as the lack of heating in the church on a chill January night. Indeed by the end of the concert the rousing applause might be attributed not only to the music but to the audience making a desperate attempt to bring the circulation back to their freezing fingers.

In conclusion - any hypothermia apart - the South West Chamber Choir made a fine impression particularly in the realms of clarity and accuracy. I'll look forward to

seeing them again in May when they are due - amongst other pieces - to play *Three Shakespeare Songs* at the Wharf in Tavistock, which boasts the added luxury of a heating system.

Rob Furneaux
Yelverton, Devon

A Recital of English Song "A Little Set of Gems"

A Recital of English Song presented by Nora Sirbaugh, mezzo-soprano and Roger Buckley, piano, was a true delight. The concert hall in the Music building of The College of New Jersey provided an ideal setting for the recital, 21 February 1998.

Nora Sirbaugh and Roger Buckley worked very well together with an excellent sense of balance and ensemble that made for a solid and completely satisfying performance. Ms Sirbaugh's beautiful voice is well suited to this music and her comments preceding the works were both enlightening and entertaining. Mr Buckley played effortlessly through a varied range of accompaniment styles, and was always solid and appropriately strong where the music required.

The music was all very beautiful, and arranged into a programme that was engaging. Works by Butterworth, Delius, Quilter and RVW were featured. The Delius works *Four Posthumous Songs* and *Shakuntala* were captivating and a surprise as they are not "obviously" Delian, as in the style of his more popular works.

Four Last Songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams on poems by Ursula Vaughan Williams is a wonderful collection of songs. They include: *Procris, Tired, Hands, Eyes, and Heart, and Menelaus*. These feature RVW's great melodic gifts and his ability to set words so naturally and effectively, making the English language really sing. He matches the beauty and lyricism of the words in a touching way, making these songs a little set of gems.

It was a real treat to hear such wonderful, yet uncommon, works of the repertoire performed so beautifully. It made one wonder why they are not heard more often and to hope that these works will be discovered and re-discovered. By the enthusiastic reaction of the audience I feel that Ms Sirbaugh and Mr Buckley have done their part, quite admirably, to make this come to pass.

Frank James Staneck
Collingswood, New Jersey, USA
24 April 1998

MUSIC YOU MIGHT LIKE

Knoxville: Summer of 1915 by Samuel Barber

Barber had already shown his lyrical qualities when composing *Dover Beach* (1931), the poignant *Adagio for strings* (1937) and the warmly romantic *Violin Concerto* (1939). In 1947 the American soprano, Eleanor Steber, asked the composer for a work for voice and orchestra. In response, Barber turned to a text by the writer and critic, James Agee (1909-55) called *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. This prose-poem describes Agee's childhood in Knoxville, Tennessee. "The text moved me very much" wrote Barber on 15 April, 1947:

"It expresses a child's feeling of loneliness, wonder, and lack of identity in that marginal world between twilight and sleep".

Barber described his work as a 'lyric rhapsody'. He composed it in a few days - his musical response to the poem was "immediate and intense", and Barber's obvious identification with the spirit and mood of the poem is clear.



Eleanor Steber

The work was first performed by Eleanor Steber, with Koussevitzky conducting, on 9th of April, 1948. It is in one movement. The work is dominated by a memorable, lilting melody heard at the opening to the words:

*It has become that time of evening
when people sit on their
porches, rocking gently and talking
gently.....*

It is a wonderfully tender opening, especially when the strings pick up the wistful refrain. A streetcar racing by provides Barber with an opportunity for a more agitated section before the gentle mood returns. The poem, and music, becomes more nostalgic as the child considers the people around him:

(continued next page last column)

Introduction to two new Trustees

Simon Coombs – our new Vice-Chairman



I first came to know VW's music, like many others, through the *Greensleeves Fantasia*. I was 11 in August 1958 when I heard the news of his death on the radio, but it was another six years before the radio brought me the first real revelation of his music, a performance of the *Sea Symphony* which I recorded on tape and replayed over and over again.

After that, there was no stopping me. All the symphonies were explored and then bought on LP. The magic of Boult and the LPO, especially in the *London* and *No. 6*, with VW's vote of thanks to the gentlemen of the orchestra (and the lady harpist) led on to *Job*, *Serenade to Music* and the *Lark*. The advent of CDs meant new versions of the symphonies, especially Previn and the LSO, and then new discoveries like the *Five Mystical Songs* and *Sancta Civitas*.

Thanks to the likes of Brian Couzens and Ted Perry, we now have access to more than a third of VW's output. Thanks to the efforts of Stephen Connock, the list of recorded works looks set to grow over the next few years. The enthusiastic audiences for the *Vision of Albion* series last year clearly showed that there is an appetite for far more VW than is as yet on offer, but Richard Hickox is only one of several champions who can be relied upon to push back the frontiers.

I earned a living for thirteen years with British Telecom and for fourteen as a Member of Parliament, and am now helping to establish the new Institute of Customer Service. Music has been interwoven with every aspect of my life (CD players in the car and most rooms of the house and as many concerts as the budget will allow) and acts as the necessary counter-poise to the storms and shot of politics. We are all of us fortunate to be living at a time when more music than ever is more readily available than ever before – here's to yet more!

John Francis – our new Treasurer



I have reached the age of 45, after years of practice. First musical impressions were made on me as a choirboy in Tonbridge Parish Church. I "did" RVW's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* for O-level, and sang the alto part in the school concert because my voice was resolutely refusing to break at 16. After reading physics at Durham, I realised that the Nobel prize was not for me, so pursued a financial career. While qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in Newcastle, I was organist and choirmaster at a little church in Durham. I am probably the only organist never to have got round to playing *Rhosymedre*. The vicar's wife preferred a guitar accompaniment, and the day job just went on getting better.

Returning South with my wife, Jane (a linguist), I carried on singing tenor until forced to start an accountancy practice of my own. The firm has expanded over the last ten years, and I am particularly proud of the professional association with City of London Sinfonia, a significant audit client. Entirely predictable obsessions with cheerful ties, pastiche hymns and daft limericks have not prevented the production of two beautiful daughters and a hamster who helps mum care for me in Lamberhurst.

(continued from previous page)

One is my mother who is good to me.
One is my father who is good
to me. By some chance, here they are,
all on this earth

The music is subtle and tender as the child is taken to bed and left to wonder at who he is.

Knoxville: Summer of 1915 can be compared in its mood of sustained wistfulness and nostalgia with *An Oxford Elegy* which by coincidence Vaughan Williams was composing in 1947 at exactly the same time as Barber was finishing *Knoxville*.

ETCETERA : ROBERTA ALEXANDER sings SAMUEL BARBER
Ido de Waart - The Netherlands Radio Philharmonic
ANDROMACHE • CLEOPATRA • VANESSA • KNOXVILLE • SONGS



My recommended recording of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* is by Roberta Alexander with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra on Etcetera KTC 1145. This CD also includes another radiant setting by Barber of a James Agee poem *Sure on this shining night*. It is quite beautiful. As the Americans might say: Enjoy.

**Stephen Connock
Colchester**

(for more information see B. Heymann, *Samuel Barber - The composer and his Music.*, OUP, 1992)

1998 AGM at Charterhouse

The RVW Society's next Annual General Meeting will be held at Charterhouse School, near Godalming, on Sunday, 11th October, 1998.

As a result of many requests from members, the AGM will be preceded by a conducted tour led by Graham Muncy of the Vaughan Williams heritage trail in and around Dorking. After the AGM itself, Robin Wells, Head of Music at Charterhouse, and a Trustee of the Society, will speak on VW and Charterhouse.

This promises to be a memorable occasion, and all members are urged to attend. The full programme is as follows:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 12.00 | Depart from Charterhouse School for the VW Heritage Trail |
| 15.00 | Tea at Charterhouse |
| 15.30 | Annual General Meeting |
| 16.15 | Vaughan Williams and Charterhouse. An illustrated talk by Robin Wells with musical examples |
| 17.15 | Conclusion and light refreshments |

There will be a charge of £12.50 for the Heritage Trail, which will include transport and lunch.

The 1997-98 Annual Report, together with the accounts, will be sent to members directly in early September.

YOUR LETTERS

We are always pleased to receive contributions for this page



Ideas for the Journal

I have recently joined the RVW Society, and I have read the latest issues of the Journal with interest. I would be particularly interested to see coverage in future of two matters:

1. RVW's early orchestral works, including *Harnham Down*, *Boldre Wood*, the *Norfolk Rhapsodies 2 & 3*, *The Solent* and the *Heroic Elegy* and *Triumphal Epilogue*. Are these works extant, what are they like and what are the chances of hearing them recorded?
2. The influence of Stanford on RVW. It seems to me that Stanford's importance both as a composer and as the teacher of most of the distinguished composers of the next generation is not fully appreciated even now.

I do hope you will be able to deal with these questions in future issues of the journal.

*Tony Hutt
London*

(these are good ideas, and will all be incorporated in future issues of the Journal – Editor)

Extraordinary

Is it not extraordinary that the programme for this year's Three Choirs Festival includes not a single work by Vaughan Williams?

Is it not equally extraordinary that the Delius, Elgar, Bantock, Finzi and Gurney Societies are all holding receptions at the Festival but the Vaughan Williams Society is not?

*Stephen Friar
Sherborne*

The Chairman replies:

I was saddened by your letter of 13th March.

As you know, the RVW Society has just completed the *Vision of Albion* Festival which included professional performances of all five of Vaughan Williams's operas, including the LSO in *The Poisoned Kiss* and in *A Cotswold Romance*, and the forces of the Royal Opera in *Pilgrim's Progress*. We planned the event, marketed it throughout the UK, wrote the programme notes and contacted individually over 100 newspapers. The Festival received some excellent press coverage. We also raised over £100,000 to enable the operas to be performed.

We have also concentrated on recordings of VW, and are proud of the Chandos recording of *The Pilgrim's Progress* due out in the Spring. We had to raise another £20,000 for this, which we did with only hours

to go before the recording deadline. We have also been behind recordings of *A Cotswold Romance*, *The Death of Tintagiles*, *Household Music*, works for violin and piano as well as the Hymns and Carols on Carlton.

Your implied criticism suggests this national activity is not enough for you. There are few of us, and we have jobs to do and lives to lead. Perhaps you will seek election as a Trustee and then be able to offer practical help. In any event, I will publish your letter and my reply in the next issue of the Journal and invite all members to comment on our past and future priorities.

*Stephen Connock
Colchester*

Composers and children

Like Stephen Banfield (RVWSJ 10) I have often wondered why RVW and Adeline never had children. It was once said of Haydn that, of all the great composers, he would have made the best father but sadly (in his case due to his unsatisfactory marriage) this did not occur. I should imagine that RVW would also have been a natural as a father, unlike many great composers.

It is odd that of the 7 major 20^c English composers (I would add Tippett to those – Elgar, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Walton and Britten – whom Michael Kennedy in his anniversary tribute placed in the "first team") none have surviving descendants – unless Tasmin Little's Florida quest for African-American Deliuses is confirmed! Two of the seven were gay; all the others married. Elgar and Holst had one daughter each, but no progeny from them.

*Tony Noakes
Stanmore*

Hymn of Jesus

I read with interest the two articles assessing the work of Gustav Holst in issue 11 of the Journal, but was surprised to find no mention at all of what I consider to be one of this composer's finest works, the *Hymn of Jesus*.

I discovered this piece by chance when I borrowed the LP from the local record library. I soon got my own copy and for some time it was seldom off the turntable.

It was *Hymn of Jesus* that had a dramatic effect on our cat Toby (sadly long deceased). He was snoozing peacefully in front of one of the speakers during the quiet plainsong at the start of the work. As you may be aware, this section ends with a loud orchestral *tutti*. At

the sound of this, poor Toby was startled out of his slumber, woke up, and shot out of the room!

On the slender pretext that RVW was also a cat lover, I can reveal that the selfsame moggy fell asleep in front of the TV during a western film, only to awake suddenly to find a herd of buffalo charging towards him. The effect was even more dramatic than that of the *Hymn of Jesus*!

*Michael Gainsford
Burbage, Leics.*

Lack of Patriotism

I am enclosing for your attention a copy of a letter that I recently sent to the editor of *BBC Music Magazine* relating to another correspondent who referred to the lack of patriotism displayed during the presentation concert for the European Broadcasting Union Celebrations on Radio 3 recently. While other countries offered their own music apparently the BBC offered Mahler!

As I am becoming totally fed up with those who prepare our concert schedules and particularly those who organise the Promenade Concerts these days and so I felt moved to reply in the attached terms. I feel pretty sure that you would agree with my sentiments.

I anticipate that the editor will not publish my outburst, but you never know!

Best wishes in all your efforts to further the performances of Vaughan Williams's works in the immediate future.

Incidentally you may be interested to know that I first saw RVW when he conducted the *Double Partita* at the Promenade Concert of 29th July 1948, and last saw him when my then fiancée and I saw *Sir John in Love* at Sadler's Wells on 29th July 1958. We were also at the RFH for the appalling first performance of the *Ninth Symphony*. Earlier I had been able to procure a ticket for the 80th birthday celebrations for RVW at the Festival Hall in 1952. Surely it was not surprising therefore that at a later date we both became parents for the first time on October 12th 1966!!

*John Tebbit
Slough*

Lack of British music

I am thankful that Martin Yates of Retford felt moved to write last month concerning the failure of many of our concert promoters to feature British music. During the twentieth century the composers of Britain have proved themselves at least the equal of others, and yet the attitudes generally adopted by those who organise concerts and international events display little in the way of patriotism. Take the case of the Symphonies of Vaughan Williams for instance. The current record catalogues offer two complete cycles by Sir Adrian Boult, and one each by Leonard Slatkin, André Previn, Vernon Handley and

Andrew Davis while Bernard Haitink, André Previn again and Kees Bakels are gradually adding further complete recordings. A new complete cycle from Richard Hickox is reported to be on its way and I believe that this will surprisingly put RVW ahead in the complete symphonic survey of Bruckner, Mahler, Sibelius, Dvorak, Shostakovich, Schubert and Nielsen in the field of recording.

Sadly this enthusiasm is not transformed into the concert hall where the music of Vaughan Williams makes only a fairly rare appearance in the programmes of our leading orchestras despite the fact that his works in general are best sellers in the record shops throughout Britain. Internationally too he has become highly regarded as the list of interpreters shown above would seem to confirm.

During recent times the Promenade Concert schedules have seen a reduction in the performances of great works by British composers with the possible exception perhaps those of Elgar and Britten. Only one symphony by Vaughan Williams, *No 6*, was performed in 1997, how different from those days when there would be at least two or three during the season before William Glock arrived on the scene!

In championing other British music the 'Proms' could, for instance, provide the ideal venue for a performance of Bax's *Second Symphony*, something that would make an admirable foil for Saint Saens's *Third* as both works require piano and organ. Sadly I have never heard the magnificent Bax 2 performed live in my lifetime. Another fine symphony that would suit the RAH organ is Stanford's *Fifth*. Similarly the chances of this being performed under the current regime must be considered remote.

During my youth when attending the 'Proms' we could expect performances of the Ireland *Piano Concerto*, Lord Berners *Triumph of Neptune*, Holst's *Hymn of Jesus*, the piano concertos of concertos of Alan Rawsthorne, Peter Racine Fricker's symphonies and Lambert's *Rio Grande* as well as many other works by British composers.

The BBC Promenade Concerts are considered the greatest of all music festivals by those who prepare the programmes and so surely it is time for the organisers to create greater sense of pride in native music by increasing the proportion of performances of works by home grown composers.

The ridiculous statement 'Das land ohne musik' related to Victorian times and not the twentieth century so now it's time for an urgent reassessment of the situation by those who organise our musical experiences in this country.

John Tebbit
Slough

Sir Gilmour Jenkins

Finding myself with occasion to write you on behalf of the *Essex Journal*, it occurred to me

that I might send you a short tale which may or may not be unknown to the Vaughan Williams Society. I heard it as fairly authoritative office gossip, but you might have received it from the 'horse's mouth'.

In the mid 1950's I was working in the Ministry of Transport, and the then Permanent Secretary was Sir Gilmour Jenkins, an informed enthusiast for folk songs and country dancing and, we understood, a close friend of RVW. A Christmas concert was arranged, and one event was to be a take-off of Jenkins, with someone dressed like him cavorting round with others to the music of Sullivan's *Ho, Jolly Jenkin*. Sir Gilmour heard of this and - though normally by no means a pompous or self-important man - saw fit to insist that it be deleted from the entertainment. But as a quid pro quo he obtained from Vaughan Williams a short piece of music, which was played by the Department's makeshift orchestra.

Michael Beale
Chelmsford

(see the obituary of RVW by Sir Gilmour Jenkins on page 7).

Spirits refreshed

The recent arrival of your excellent Journal has reminded me that I had meant to share the following experience with you, as I thought it might be of some small interest.

At the beginning of December last year my wife and I took a detour on our way home from a weekend in the Cotswolds to see Down Ampney, our long-awaited first visit to the birthplace of the great composer. It was dark and misty, even in the middle of the day, and pouring with rain. Consequently, the journey to this remote spot through the rather featureless, though attractive, countryside seemed endless, and it was welcoming to see the new road-sign (as pictured on the back of your last Journal).

However, we arrived eventually to find a scene of great peace and tranquillity, where the only sound was that of the falling rain. We let ourselves into the empty church and it was delightful to appreciate it in peace and quiet and at our leisure. By then the light was just adequate enough to make out the small collection of RVW memorabilia situated near the altar, which was most interesting to look at. I was also more than delighted to find from the church record book that that day, 1st December, which also happened to be my own 50th birthday, was the 125th anniversary of RVW's baptism in that church. That made me feel very close to him and as the light faded, with his music flooding our minds, we let ourselves out into the late autumn afternoon with spirits refreshed.

Richard Boyd
London

Special Pack

Six Watercolour Diaries
to
Celebrate the
125th Anniversary of
RVW's Birth
1872 - 12th October - 1997
Greetings cards by Bridget Duckenfield
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The White Gates, Dorking
Leith Hill Place, Dorking
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10 Hanover Terrace, Regent's Park



News and Notes

- The new Chandos recording of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is now available on Chandos 9625-2.
- *A Cotswold Romance* and the *Death of Tintagiles*, recorded for Chandos by Richard Hickox and the LSO, will be distributed in August 1998.
- Funding is urgently sought for a new recording of *Sir John in Love*, using the same forces as that heard at the Barbican in the recent *Vision of Albion* Festival. More details will be provided in the October edition of the Journal.
- The *Prelude and Fugue in C minor* will be one of the couplings to the new recording by the LSO/Hickox of the *Fifth Symphony*. This will be only the second recording of the orchestral version of this work.
- Richard Hickox has also recorded, at the request of the RVW Society, world premiere recordings of *The Twenty-third Psalm* and *The Pilgrim's Pavement*, coupled with *Valiant-for-Truth*.
- *Five Mystical Songs* will be performed at

Henleaze United Reformed Church on 11th July at 7.30 p.m. For details, contact 01454 776503.

Call for papers

The October 1998 edition of the RVWS Journal will be devoted to folk-song. Any member who wishes to contribute - on a particular folk-song or on the impact of folk music on VW's style for example - should submit an article by August 20th.

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New RVW Society rates agreed at 1997 AGM

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VW and Folk-song



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