



**PETER  
WARLOCK**  
Choral music  
and songs

THE ELIZABETHAN SINGERS  
CONDUCTED BY HERRICK BUNNEY

MORYS DAVIES/ BARITONE  
HEATHER KAY/ SOPRANO  
JENNIFER PARTRIDGE/ PIANO  
MALCOLM RUDLAND/ ORGAN

**PETER WARLOCK: CHORAL MUSIC AND SONGS**

Benedicamus Domino - The first mercy - The frostbound  
wood - As dew in Apryle - Bethlehem Down - The night -  
Lullaby - Corpus Christi - All the flowers of the spring -  
Sleep - Mourn no moe - The shrouding of the Duchess of  
Malfi - Rest, sweet nymphs - The spring of the year -  
Balalalow - The sycamore tree

HEATHER KAY, soprano  
MORYS DAVIES, baritone  
THE ELIZABETHAN SINGERS  
HERRICK BUNNEY, conductor

12" stereophonic LP SHE 504

Pearl STEREO

PETER WARLOCK SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue No 9 March 1971

Editor John Bishop 14 Barlby Road W10 6AR (London)

AGM ON APRIL 7

The AGM will be held on Friday, April 7 at 8 p.m. It will be preceded by a committee meeting at 7 p.m. The venue for both events will be 9 Bedford Gardens, London W.8 (a turning off Kensington Church Street, about 5 minutes from Notting Hill Gate station).

CHORAL RECORD NOW AVAILABLE

Attached is a leaflet giving details of the record of Warlock choral and vocal music just issued by Pearl Records. Copies are available to Society members at the special price of £1.90. Orders please to 14 Barlby Road, London W10 6AR - cheques to be made out to John Bishop.

BOOK OF UNPUBLISHED SONGS

There was a good response to the announcement in the last newsletter about the possible publication of a book of hitherto unpublished Warlock songs. This volume is now in active preparation, and Thames Publishing expect to issue it early in May. All members will be advised in due course.

'MERRY-GO-DOWN' RECORD

Many members ordered copies of the 'Peter Warlock Merry-go-down' record (UNS 249) recently issued by Unicorn Records. Copies are still available at the special price of £1.20. The artists giving this 37-item programme are Ian Partridge/tenor, Neilson Taylor/baritone, Fred Tomlinson and Jennifer Partridge/pianos, Peter Gray/reader, and a male-voice group.

The record has been reviewed favourably and at length by both The Gramophone and Records and Recording.

WARLOCK TALK BY PETER PEARS

There was a full house at the British Institute of Recorded Sound, London, on February 9 when Peter Pears (one of the Society's Vice-Presidents) gave a talk on Warlock. He read many of the letters included in Gray's biography and played recordings of Warlock songs by Kathleen Ferrier, Nancy Evans, Janet Baker, Ian Wallace, John Shirley-Quirk, and, of course, himself. He also included an item from the new Merry-go-down disc and the record of choral music just released by Pearl.

LETTER FROM COLIN TAYLOR

Readers of Gray's biography of Warlock will recall the encouragement given by Colin Taylor in Warlock's days at Eton. We were thrilled to receive this letter recently from Mr. Taylor:

'The two Merry-go-downs have arrived - splendid! I have no gram so must wait impatiently to hear the contents, but the jacket, Index and Tomlinson's talkie are in themselves well worth the money. If I can raise the needful I will write for more copies. Now on the eve of 91, alas, I can do very little propaganda. I'll go to one or two record shops in Cape Town when next I motor in (only 35 miles from here). Meantime one of my copies goes to the College of Music Library, University of Cape Town, which will help to get the record known. Best wishes to all concerned. NILOC ROLYAT.'

#### WARLOCK IN CONCERTS

Recent performances of Warlock's music in public concerts include:-

October, Rhodesia. Four performances of Candlelight, during concert tour by David Johnston.

October 30 - Newcastle on Tyne. Complete programme of Warlock songs, and Capriol Suite arranged for recorders. Singers Sandra Wright and Jack Stobbs.

November 23 - Godalming Parish Church. An extensive programme of choral, vocal and instrumental music, given by the Tuesday Singers with Morys Davies/baritone, Jennifer Partridge/soprano and Fred Tomlinson/piano.

November 25 - Wigmore Hall, London. Group of 5 songs, sung by Norma Burrowes.

February 24 - Purcell Room, South Bank. The Curlew sung by James Griffett, with the Haffber Quartet and other instrumentalists.

March 4 - Crockenhill, Kent. Beethoven's Binge from Codpieces, played by Carey Blyton and Laurence Gerrish.

#### SOCIETY'S BROCHURE

The Society's brochure, which has been in preparation for some time now, is in the final stages of printing and copies should be available at the beginning of April; all members will, of course, be sent a copy. The brochure will be widely distributed among singers and others likely to be interested in joining the Society.

#### WARLOCK DOWN UNDER

We were a little surprised to find, on a record made by the Australian Boys Choir and issued here on Classics for Pleasure just before Christmas (CFP 178), that Warlock's I saw a fair maiden and Where riches is everlastingly were included. The performances are less than ideal, but it is nice to feel the music has travelled so far.

#### ANYONE WANT RG26?

Anyone wanting to buy a mint copy of Argo RG26, on which Alexander Young sang The Curlew and 12 Warlock songs, should contact Dr. James Hunsley, 24 Fernald Drive, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, USA.

Letter to the Editor

Y.M.C.A.,  
Stockwell Road,  
London, S.W.9

Dear Sir,

There are two ways of regarding the act of suicide. The first, and traditional, way is to regard it with moral condemnation as the act of a coward, as a way, perhaps, of taking the easy way out. As a view, it is as full of contempt as it is empty of pity. Another way of regarding suicide is to regard it as the outcome of an insupportable nervous tension and for a personal misery which could not be resolved in any other way. This view does not lend itself to moral judgements of any kind, except perhaps a critical glance at our highly-prized civilization which may drive people to self-destructive extremities. Of these two attitudes, the first was the way it was looked at by many in 1930, the second the way it is looked at by most in 1972. The first is emotional, the second clinical.

Mr. van Dieren's own attitude to suicide appears, on the face of it, to come within the first category described, and indeed reflects the view of society at the time of Warlock's death. It is as if I had accused Warlock of some unmentionable misdemeanour. If we are to discuss Warlock's death, it must be done in a calm rational spirit of enquiry. Mr. van Dieren's brand of Buchmanesque absolute affirmatives is, in this context, naive, adolescent and totally embarrassing.

There is, moreover, no mention in his letter of the summary of the court proceedings given in The Times, perhaps because it fails to preserve his 'fervour' in an altogether rational light. Given the climate of the time, and the absence of a suicide note, an open verdict was hardly surprising. But to say that a valid historical supposition cannot be made about anything anywhere unless it has sufficient evidence to pass muster in a court of law is surely

open to the strongest doubt. I am not insisting that Warlock killed himself but I continue to suppose that he did. The absence of police interest seems to rule out foul play. If it was an accident, one would have expected his cats to have died with him. Mr. van Dieren is silent on this point, as well he might be. All he can tell us, as hard facts, is that the only drink in the house Warlock could offer Mr. van Dieren's parents was tea (not the most cheering beverage in the world, on Warlock's own admission), that he continued to plan ahead and, to put not too fine a point upon it, that Warlock was simply not capable of committing "an act so contrary to his nature". Mr. van Dieren obviously has a clear picture in his mind as to what kind of nature suicides have. One presumes they snivel, avoid looking at one straight in the face and other undesirable characteristics. As Warlock wasn't like that, then he couldn't have done it. Pretty simple when you look at it like that.

But we cannot base our speculations on these quicksands of emotional prejudice against suicides. Neither can we say, as Mr. van Dieren does, that Warlock's death "was certainly not as the result of his own hand". Alas, we are not dealing in certainties, and all the fervour in the world cannot become, what either of us may suppose to be, the living texture of a certainty.

Yours sincerely

C.P. Mills

## Letters to the Editor

### ACCIDENT OR SUICIDE?

#### David Cox writes:-

We don't know. But to adhere to the suicide theory is not as absurd as Mr. Bernard van Dieren would have us believe.

He seems to have forgotten his father's own statement at the Coroner's inquest. (I have the report of it in front of me, from The Times.) When asked his views on the possibility of suicide, van Dieren senior is reported to have said: 'The only thing I can possibly think of is that he must have awakened suddenly, felt miserable for some reason or other, and did something which he could not really have contemplated'. So van Dieren seems clearly to have felt that an impetuous action of this sort was not, in fact, outside Warlock's nature.

Besides this, Mrs. Benn, who lived above the flat occupied by Warlock, heard what sounded like windows being shut and bolted at 6.40 that morning (and they were indeed found to be bolted when the police arrived). Warlock had put the kitten outside. The woman he had been living with stated that he had threatened to take his life - the last time being three days before his death.

These things are all well known. If Mr. Bernard van Dieren wishes to believe, nevertheless, that it was all an accident, he's entitled to hold this opinion for whatever reasons he may choose. But he might avoid the Cecil Gray practice of projecting his personal views as though they were ultimate truth.

### NO SUICIDE

#### Ian Parrott writes:-

The fact that I was abroad in 1971 is no excuse for my not having carefully read our founder's article (Newsletter 7, June '71). Mr. van Dieren is concerned (Newsletter 8, November '71) that no one stepped forward to refute the widely-held but unfounded assumption that Peter Warlock committed suicide.

I am only too willing to step forward at this belated hour to say that I have for nearly 40 years been a firm opponent of the 'Suicides'. When a student at Oxford I was fortunate to meet one of the senior members of the choir of Christchurch, George Thewlis. It was Mr. Thewlis who first persuaded me that the suicide theory, so comfortably put forward by Cecil Gray, would not fit the facts. The composer at the time was full of plans and projects both literary and musical; and, in particular, he had plenty of research work in Christchurch library still to do.

In spite of considerable opposition, I have stuck to this view, and readers will be pleased to know that I have had the opportunity of trying to put the record straight in at least two places: one a publication of the utmost importance in the civilized world, the German encyclopaedia, Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, and the other a book of no doubt parochial interest, since it deals mainly with the tiny principality of Wales. As Peter Warlock's life in Wales has not been properly recorded, this is, I hope, an interim mention until we can read Dr. Ian Copley's much needed new volume.

In MGG (Bärenreiter, 1957) my article on the composer includes the following:

'- Als man ihn in Chelsea in einem gasgefüllten Zimmer tot aufand, kam das Gericht zu dem Schluß, daß der Tod durch eine Kohlenoxydgasvergiftung eingetreten sei. Die Frage, ob es sich um einen Unfall oder um Selbstmord gehandelt hat, konnte nicht mit Sicherheit beantwortet werden.'

In 'The Spiritual Pilgrims' (Christopher Davies, Llandybie, 1969) I wrote the following (pp. 108-110):

'Also in this year, Mr. E. Buckley Jones, J.P., of Cefn Bryntalch, joined the Music Committee. In December that year his wife (nee Edith Coventon from Knighton) had the melancholy task of going to London to identify the body of her son by a previous marriage, Philip Heseltine, better-known as Peter Warlock, the composer. The jury told the Coroner that there was insufficient evidence to say whether death was due to accident or whether it meant suicide. Although Cecil Gray considered it to be the latter, there are grounds for supposing that the composer, who had much transcription work at Christchurch library and other schemes on hand, caught his foot in the gas tap and, although subject to melancholy, did not intend to take his own life.' ...

An Elizabethan out of his time (as Lytton Strachey described Beddoes), it is not generally known that Warlock was a student of Irish, Gaelic, Breton, Manx and Cornish as well as of Welsh. The curlews, with their haunting call, still fly across the valley of the young Severn, and it is as impossible to guess what might have followed as it would be with that other song-writer, Schubert, who died at the even earlier age of 31'.

Whatever the full facts may be about the state of Warlock's mind on his last evening, I am prepared to continue to endorse the affirmation of Mr. van Dieren. It is, in any case, high time that Cecil Gray's literary flights of fancy on this matter were shot down.

## WARLOCK AND HIS BOOKS

by Fred Tomlinson

For many people, knowledge of Warlock's literary works may be limited to the information in Cecil Gray's book. Members may like to know a little more about the contents and availability of the books.

### FREDERICK DELIUS \*

This is comparatively well known, having been reissued since the war, revised by Hubert Foss. The Delius transcriptions, this book and the Gesualdo book are the only works published under the name Philip Heseltine. ✓

### SONGS OF THE GARDENS \*

A collector's edition limited to 875 copies, with woodcuts and other decorative devices, this anthology was suggested by Philip Wilson, Warlock's collaborator in so many transcriptions. There is a long preface surveying English music in the 17th and 18th centuries, with some fascinating glimpses of Vauxhall, Ranelagh and Sadler's Wells. The music itself is designed more for the armchair than the concert hall. It is uncharacteristic of Warlock to produce impractical editions, but these two dozen songs are for the most part just melodies and bass parts - not always figured. Composers include both Arnes (Thomas and Michael), Hook, Smart, Boyce, etc.

### ARBEAU'S ORCHESOGRAPHY \*\*

The fascination of this volume is the connection with Capriol. Again there is a very useful preface, showing how deeply Warlock was prepared to delve into a subject - in this case 16th-century dance and its music. This is not his only contribution, though: throughout the book the musical examples are in his unmistakable handwriting.

Like many books of that period, the text is in the form of a dialogue between master and pupil. The master is Thoineau Arbeau (an anagram of the author's real name) and the pupil is Capriol. After several pages of drum rhythms, the musical examples become more interesting. It is intriguing to see the material that later became the Capriol Suite. Apart from the Pavane, which is a complete 4-part setting of a poem in Old French, there are merely snippets of melody. One imagines all these tunes churning around in Warlock's mind till they were organised into the form we know. Bransles uses four separate melodies; in Pieds-en-l'air, two bars were enough to start Warlock on one of his most beautiful inventions.

### THE ENGLISH AYRE \*

This, too, is fairly well known and available in many libraries. Although written nearly 50 years ago it has still not been superceded and ought to be reprinted.



CARLO GESUALDO \*

We have hopes of a reprint of this volume. Cecil Gray contributed the biographical section and 'a critical disquisition concerning the merits and faults of Don Carlo's achievement as a murderer'. Heseltine wrote Part III - Gesualdo the Musician - and a couple of the very few limericks which are printable. Once again, the musical examples are in Warlock's hand.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF AJAX

I have not yet seen a copy of this book, dealing with Elizabethan privies. (AJAX = a jakes!). A limited edition of an old-spelling text was one of Warlock's collaborations with Jack Lindsay for his Fanfrolico Press. A modern writer comments: 'It does include some explanatory notes which are to be commented on only for the extent and variety of their errors'.

THOMAS WHYTHORNE \*

A pamphlet of a dozen pages published by O.U.P. to accompany the 12 part-songs of Whythorne that Warlock edited. Pamphlet and part-songs have long been out of print. Whythorne was shabbily treated by history. He was a practising musician who wrote his own poetry. He was the first composer we know of who wrote in all the accidentals he required, leading Warlock to note that many editors had perhaps interpolated rather too liberally in their treatment of 'musica ficta'. When Warlock was writing, very little was known of Whythorne's life. He would have been delighted at the recent discovery of an autobiography written around 1576, including all the poems. This was published by O.U.P. in two versions, a modern-spelling edition and in 'a new orthography' Whythorne invented in an attempt to rationalize spelling. This is well worth study, as it enables us to see how words were pronounced in Elizabethan England. It remains a mystery how the author of the first autobiography and the composer of the first book of secular songs in the English language came to be ignored by his immediate successors and positively vilified by later historians.

MERRY-GO-DOWN

Having recently been reprinted, this was described in a recent PW Society newsletter.

ENGLISH AYRES; A DISCOURSE \*

Another small pamphlet, compiled after Warlock's death from various writings, including an index to the vocal transcriptions published by O.U.P. There are a few errors in the index, and the text can be found elsewhere in The English Ayre, the Whythorne pamphlet and various prefaces.

GILES EARLE, HIS BOOK \*\*

This beautifully produced volume was one of the last of Warlock's efforts, but by no means the least. Giles Earle collected these

lyrics between 1615 and 1626. Most of the accompanying music was incomplete and in some cases corrupt, containing little of any value not available in the song-books of Dowland, Campion, Jones, etc.

However, 'its literary interest is considerable, for it provides within a small compass a very fair conspectus of the whole field of Elizabethan and Jacobean song-book poetry'. Warlock showed characteristic insight in editing a somewhat disjointed manuscript, and one has only to look through the notes to see how deeply he was involved in his subject.

Warlock corrected the first proofs of this book, but the final preparations for printing were done by Bernard van Dieren after Warlock's death.

#### LOVING MAD TOM

Not listed in Gray, this was another Fanfrolico production, in which Jack Lindsay and Warlock were joined by Robert Graves. This also has been recently reprinted and is described in an issue of the PW Society's newsletter.

Three other books I have recently perused in the British Museum, although not by Warlock, are interesting as sources of poems he set to music.

LILLYGAY and LARKSPUR were two somewhat similar anthologies published in the early twenties by the Vine Press, Steyning, Sussex. Both were limited editions on hand-made paper with hand-coloured woodcuts.

The poems in Lillygay are all anonymous, mostly old Scottish, and besides the fine songs Warlock used for the cycle there is a version of 'Elore Lo'.

In Larkspur the authorship of 'The Milk-Maids' is given as Dr. James Smith, followed by a question-mark, and there are four additional verses rather more bucolic in character.

NURSE LOVECHILD'S LEGACY, BEING A MIGHTY FINE COLLECTION OF THE MOST NOBLE, MEMORABLE AND VERACIOUS NURSERY RHYMES.

Tracing this tiny volume involved a little detective work. This is in fact the collection from which the verses were chosen for Candlelight. The illustrations in the book were by Claude Lovat Fraser (famous for the scenery and costumes for the Frederick Austin Beggar's Opera, amongst other things); there is some possibility that Galliard may use a selection of them in a long overdue reprint of Candlelight. The title given to Arthur o'Bower might amuse anyone who has struggled with Warlock's 'Tumultuosissimamente' accompaniment:- 'SONG TO BE SUNG ON A HIGH WIND'.

All the asterisked titles are available at the Westminster Central Music Library. Those with double asterisks are downstairs at the same branch (Buckingham Palace Road).

Since writing this article I learn from Dr. Copley that the editor of Lillygay and Larkspur, unnamed in either book, is in fact Victor Newberg. He also wrote the poem Rantum Tantum. FT