

Peter Warlock Society

NEWSLETTER

No 16 February 1975

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PURCELL ROOM MERRY-GO-DOWN

Our Merry-Go-Down at the Purcell Room last October attracted a large audience and there is little doubt that they went home well pleased with the more than 2½ hours entertainment provided by Ian and Jennifer Partridge, Antony Hopkins and the Fred Tomlinson Singers. Fred, who devised the programme, began with a master-stroke: a special arrangement in Warlockian style of 'Happy Birthday'. We think many members will like to have a souvenir of the occasion and so the arrangement is included in this issue.

A feature of the evening was the performance of Warlock's unfinished song The Everlasting Voices. Anyone interested in providing a suitable ending was invited to apply for a copy of the M/S and several people did. So far two people have put in an entry; anyone else thinking of doing so should see that it reaches the editor by the end of February.

It's very difficult to get press coverage of Purcell Room events. The one critic who did come was John Bridcut of The Spectator; we reprint his notice.

Those members who weren't able to be present (and some travelled considerable distances to be there) will be pleased to know that subsequently the BBC recorded a shortened version of the programme, for transmission we know not when.

Finally, thanks to composer and writer on music Trevor Hold, who sent us a telegram on the night saying: 'Congratulations on your 80th birthday and thank you for those incomparable songs'.

DEATH OF FORMER SECRETARY

We regret to record the death in December, aged 63, of Bernard J van Dieren, a member of the society since its inception and for some years our secretary. The Warlock copyrights passed to him on the death of his father in 1936, and now pass to his widow.

Bernard had been in poor health for some time, and the musical material relating to his father and to Warlock was left in some confusion at his death. Accordingly, and with the agreement of the solicitor handling the estate and Mrs van Dieren, a small committee has been formed to see that the musical material is properly sifted and no important material destroyed. The committee, which consists of Fred Tomlinson, John Bishop, Denis ApIvor, Lewis Foreman and Alistair Chisholm, will report shortly on its findings and on plans for setting up a trust fund for Mrs van Dieren.

AGM AND CONCERT

This year's AGM, on Saturday April 19, will be a more ambitious affair than usual. After a committee meeting at 4pm will be the AGM itself, at 5 pm. This latter, which usually only lasts about 15 minutes, will be followed by a short informal concert of lesser-known Warlock items, some performed live and some on the gramophone. Full details will reach you in about a month's time but meanwhile please reserve the date.

continued

FOLK-SONG PRELUDES ON RECORD

A delightful surprise in December was the release by Decca of a record called 'Pastorale' (SDD 444), on which pianist John McCabe plays a refreshing selection of items by Ireland, Bax, Moeran, Holst, Vaughan Williams and Warlock. The Warlock item is his only published solo piano work, the Five Folk-Song Preludes, which have been out of print for some years and have not hitherto been recorded.

McCabe's notes on the sleeve are knowledgeable and to the point, and his love of Warlock self-evident. We wrote congratulating him on his choice and performance and had a lively letter back from Mrs McCabe (McCabe himself being abroad at the time).

'HOMMAGES' : YOUR LAST CHANCE - MAYBE !

In the last issue we announced publication, in a strictly limited edition, of Hommages. This consists of a 32-bar harmonisation by FW of The First Nowell, entitled Christmas Hommage to B V-D (written out in FW's own hand), and The Long Barrow, the song written by van Dieren and Bruce Blunt for the second memorial concert for Warlock. Fred Tomlinson contributes a special introduction to the pieces.

The limited supply is now nearly exhausted, and we suggest you order now if you want to be sure of a copy. The price is 60p (plus 10p post and packing); orders, with cash please, to Thames Publishing, 14 Barby Road, London W10 6AR.

The special edition of Candlelight, Warlock's cycle of nursery jingles, published by Thames three years ago is now almost sold out and is unlikely to be reprinted. It costs 90p (plus 10p post and packing).

VISIT FROM NIGEL HESELTINE

Warlock's son, Nigel Heseltine, paid a very brief visit to London recently - so brief in fact that there was only time for one of the committee, Dr Copley, to see him. They had a congenial meeting in a London hotel. Subsequently we sent a copy of Fred Tomlinson's Handbook to Mr Heseltine, also - at his request - a specially prepared cassette recording containing a selection of Warlock's music.

Mr Heseltine, who is resident commissioner in Rodrigues and a writer with several travel and other books to his credit, sent a large packing-case of Warlockiana to the British Library recently (see previous newsletters).

'LADY'S BIRTHDAY' AND 'ONE MORE RIVER'

We have often been asked for copies of Warlock's two sociable songs, My Lady's Birthday and One More River. A limited supply has recently become available and copies can be ordered from the editor - first come, first served. No need to send money with order; you will be invoiced. The former costs 15p, the latter 10p.

WE MEET BARBARA PEACHE

January 23 saw the chairman and your editor standing on a windy corner at Notting Hill Gate, where we had somewhat incongruously arranged to meet Barbara Peache - referred to as 'Mrs Warlock' at the inquest on Warlock's death. We had long wanted to meet her and it was only after a considerable effort that we tracked her down to Malta, where she has recently taken a flat; however, she still comes often to England.

Miss Peache, who lived with Warlock through the Eynsford period and until his death, first met him at a party in Chelsea in the early 1920s. An alert but rather shy woman, she has clear recollections of the personalities of FW's circle, although she herself was not much involved with the literary and musical side of his activities. She destroyed many years ago all the letters she had from FW.

We had a pleasant evening with her and finished up by taking her out to dinner. We intend keeping in touch.

NEW LEAFLET

Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of the new leaflet we have issued; we send it to all those who enquire after membership. This is rising steadily but we are always keen to increase it; if you would like to have a copy of the leaflet sent to any friend or acquaintance, please let us have the name and address.

ERNEST BRADBURY ON 'THE CURLEW'

Last month, the Yorkshire Post's music critic, Ernest Bradbury, wrote in the paper a feature article on Warlock's The Curlew. The article was inspired by a performance of the work given recently at Leeds University by James Griffett, who has, of course, recorded the work (on the Pearl label). Mr Bradbury, a knowledgeable Warlockian, gave the work's history in some detail and also mentioned the other, recent recording (for HMV), by Ian Partridge.

PW PROGRAMME IN DERBY

An ambitious live all-Warlock programme was arranged for the Derby Music Club last November by PW Society member Clive Bemrose. It consisted of the Folk-Song Preludes, movements from the Capriol Suite, some of the Purcell Fantasias in Warlock's arrangements, 15 of the songs (some with piano accompaniment, some with strings) and Two Codpieces. Performers included Mr Bemrose, to whom our congratulations go on a rare show of enterprise in what fellow society member Dick Kitching describes as the 'cultural deserts of the Midlands'. Dick adds: 'All the items were well received, particularly Clive's songs and the piano duets. The audience joined in Peter Warlock's Fancy with gusto'.

HANDBOOK SOLD OUT

Triad Press report that Fred Tomlinson's A Peter Warlock Handbook: Vol I is now sold out and will not be reprinted. However, if you haven't got a copy yet and want one we think you might be able to get one by writing to Blackwell's Music Shop in Oxford, who certainly had several copies until recently.

Volume 2, devoted to the transcriptions and arrangements, is in active preparation but publication is not expected until autumn this year, or possibly later.

WARLOCK IN ARIZONA !

An enthusiastic letter from one of our USA members, tenor Warren Hoffer, brings news of an enterprising concert he organised recently in the Department of Music at Arizona State University. Starting with Rossini and Dowland, he took in Bach, Schubert, Schumann, Liszt, Brahms and Verdi before coming to The Curlew. Warren says it was well received and that the instrumental ensemble 'got to like it very much'.

ANOTHER RECORDING ?

We have good hopes that another all-Warlock recording is on the way. Considerable interest is being shown by one of EMI's leading producers, Christopher Bishop (no relation), who has specialised in English music. The programme that has been suggested to him is a particularly interesting one. We hope to give more details in the next newsletter.

'MERRY-GO-DOWN' STILL IN PRINT

The verse and prose anthology Merry-go-down - the 'gallery of gorgeous drunkards' - compiled by Warlock under the name Rab Noctas, is still in print in the reprint edition published several years ago by Educational Productions. Their address is Bradford Road, East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorks, WF3 2JN, and the price is £3.

Another reprint of a Warlock book (written in collaboration with Cecil Gray) is the edition of Gesualdo now available in the UK at £5.40. Write for this Greenwood Press edition to Westport Publishers at 3 Henrietta Street, London WC 2E 8LT.

BUMPKIN'S BOOM

One of our recent committee meetings was enlivened by an impromptu performance of Bumpkin's Boom - an 'exercise in bucolic joviality', with words by 'Jonathan Oxo 1589-1698') and music by Patrick Beynon. This is obviously a parody - and for the most part a very good one - on the heartier kind of Warlock song. It would seem to be a product of the late 1920s - no copyright date is given; but Mr Beynon had some songs published by Chesters in the late 1920s. The publisher's name is given as 'J T Rogers' and there are a number of jokes of this kind.

If enough members are interested we will arrange a special printing.

DEATH OF KENNETH WRIGHT

We record with regret the death of Kenneth Wright, one of the earliest members of the society. He was a well-known writer on music and in recent years had been assistant editor of the magazine Music, published by the Pergamon Press. He had known Moeran and Warlock well and, as he put it, had 'revelled in their "new music"'.

PETER WARLOCK NOTELETS

Readers will recall the sample notelets sent out with the last newsletter. Supplies are still available at 70p for a packet of 10, including envelopes (and postage). Orders please to Malcolm Rudland at 48 Goleherne Court, The Little Boltons, London SW5 0DN (make cheques out to him).

RMA LECTURE ?

Negotiations are in hand for our chairman to present a paper on Warlock to the Royal Musical Association. Warlock himself addressed the RMA on May 13, 1919, when his subject was 'The Modern Spirit in Music'.

WELL TO THE FORE....

Last October the Daily Telegraph ran a feature article, written by Sam Heppner, about societies in England devoted to a composer. We were well to the fore....

Music

Warlock celebration

John Bridcut

A composer's eightieth anniversary may not seem a momentous musical occasion, especially if he is dead, but the Peter Warlock Society just couldn't bear to delay the celebrations until the centenary. Thus, on October 30, Warlock's birthday, the Purcell Room was well-filled to hear an ingenious programme of his songs and verse.

The enigmatic and complex per-

sonality of Philip Heseltine (his real name) is still much of a mystery; it is misleadingly simple to view him as a Jekyll-and-Hyde schizophrenic, his shy, serious nature alternating with an extrovert, brash persona that he called Peter Warlock. But certainly he was a man of wildly changing moods, and this is reflected in his music. The birthday evening was somewhat unbalanced in this respect: while the programme itself mixed the lusty with the contemplative and the earnest, the emphasis throughout, especially in the commentary, was upon frivolity. I suspect that those who arrived knowing little about Warlock left with the impression of a musical drunkard who had keen senses of tune and humour. This is but one facet, and it alone will not commend him to history; he was of course a distinguished scholar and the effect of this upon the construction of his songs (not least the beer songs) deserved more attention.

All the most memorable of Warlock was there, except alas 'The Curlew' (for practical reasons, no doubt), but two and three-quarter hours is enough to make even the enthusiast wilt with fatigue. Antony Hopkins provided a running commentary, engagingly written, by Fred Tomlinson, Chairman of the Peter Warlock Society, with the composer's lewd limericks, naughty nicknames and all. He had little time for the work of the Reverend Edmund Horoscope Phallus, whom he reckoned to have 'doctored the lutenists', and, in his slick 'Animal Poems', the vitriolic 'Puma' is really a poison pen letter, since this was his wife's nickname (although it was not remarked upon).

But Mr Hopkins has a perhaps uncontrollable habit of interpolating personal reminiscences into his script, which serve only to distend and distract. For instance, the anecdote of his visit to Michael Tippett in Wormwood Scrubs may have brought a salty tear to the eye, but in no way was it relevant to the occasion. Elsewhere, the attractive idea of making the audience sing rounds, transcribed by Warlock, became a clumsy circus-act, largely because of Mr Hopkins's chromatic harmonies on the piano, which were scarcely compatible with those of the round itself, and his apparent unfamiliarity with the whole procedure.

Ian Partridge, accompanied by his sister Jennifer, sang with great sensitivity, and his tone was as rounded as ever, although the words were hard to catch. One

hesitates to criticise so ardent a Warlock advocate, but he was prone to neglect the crucial words: in the wonderful setting of Belloc's 'My Own Country' (taken too slow) the last word in "In the month of May in my own country/All the woods are new" needs a bright springlike flavour in the vowel to match the piano modulation, but this it did not get. Highlights of his performance were 'The Contented Lover', richly sensuous, and, of course, 'Sleep', that masterpiece whose vocal line might be written by Dowland, so great is Warlock's empathy with the Elizabethans. But there it was, tucked away in the middle of a group, when it really wants five minutes' silence both before and after!

Four other singers and Miss Partridge sang most competently in the ensemble items, and several first performances added interest: the Dance of the Princess from *A Chinese Ballet* will not often be played, I think, but it was revealing to hear 'Yarmouth Fair' to the proper words ('The Magpie', whose publication was impossible for copyright reasons) — much apter. 'The Fox,' one of his last songs, once again proved that Warlock cruelly misjudged himself when he considered that by 1930 he had returned to "van Dieren and water."

'The Curlew' has recently been released on disc (EMI: HQS 1325), with Vaughan Williams's *Four Hymns* and *Merciless Beauty*. Ian Partridge and the Music Group of London give a most moving performance, and I recommend it unreservedly. Cecil Gray, to whom Warlock dedicated the work (a continuous setting of four Yeats poems), wrote that he could not bear to listen to it at all and probably would never be able to again, so intense was the desolation. It suggests a bleak and bare landscape, and Warlock's appetite for Celtic languages and scenery is immediately apprehensible.

It is a pity that Michael Kennedy, in his sleeve note, perpetuates the Cecil Gray version of the dual-personality conflict, and it really is overdoing things to accuse Warlock of 'destroying' Constant Lambert. But perhaps matters will be put to rights when Ian Copley's long-delayed biography appears.

The concert showed Warlock's gift for parody in his 'Codpiece IV' (based on a Symphony in D minor by Julius Caesar). A few yards away in the Festival Hall, the original was being played, doubtless with more solemnity. Peter Warlock would have relished the coincidence

GREETINGS

To PH from FT

Moderato

Handwritten musical notation for the piano introduction of the first system. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The music begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics "Greet -" are written below the first staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the vocal introduction of the first system. It features two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "Greet -" are written below the first staff. A soprano part is indicated by "(SOP)" above the treble staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the piano introduction of the second system. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The tempo is marked "Meno mosso". The lyrics "Happy birth - day - to" are written below the first staff. A section marker "A" is present in the bass staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the vocal introduction of the second system. It features two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "Happy birth - day - to" are written below the first staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the piano introduction of the third system. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "you - Happy birth - day - to you - Happy" are written below the first staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the vocal introduction of the third system. It features two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "birth - day - dear - Peter" are written below the first staff. The name "Peter Warlock, Philip" is written below the second staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the piano introduction of the fourth system. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "birth - day - dear - Peter" are written below the first staff. The tempo is marked "molto rall" and "Più mosso". A section marker "B" is present in the first staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the vocal introduction of the fourth system. It features two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "Heseltine Bulgy Gogo Peter Wood Rab Noolas Mortimer Cattley Cam -" are written below the first staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the piano introduction of the fifth system. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "Heseltine Bulgy Gogo Peter Wood Rab Noolas Mortimer Cattley Cam -" are written below the first staff.

- brentis Q. Yew. **FRED**
 Not forgetting Prosdocius de Beldamandis Junior
 Ad lib.

(Colla voce)

BOB Huanebango Z. Palimpsest **MIKE** Roger A. Ramsbottom **MARK** Apparatus Criticus Barbaratus

And others too numerous to mention

TIM Sebastian Bugrinoffsky

And others too numerous to mention
 A tempo

Meno mosso
 Hap - py birth - day to you
 Hap - py birth - day to you

Hap - py birth - day to you

Con Ped

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 30 Oct 1974 Fred Tomlinson



Although Peter Warlock died over 40 years ago, his magnetism is as potent as ever. Indeed, interest in him increases as more becomes known about his colourful life and very considerable output of writings, both literary and musical.

The Peter Warlock Society was founded in 1963 and since then has worked steadily to increase knowledge of his work. The society has for its president Sir William Walton, with Malcolm Arnold, Richard Rodney Bennett, Sir Lennox Berkeley, Lord Harewood and Peter Pears as vice-presidents.

Membership costs £1.50 a year (life membership £10). A newsletter is issued three times a year, giving news, special articles, and other material. The society acts as a centre for enquiries about all aspects of Warlock's works, and occasionally promotes concerts.

Four LPs wholly devoted to Warlock have been issued in recent years and others are planned; a number of hitherto unpublished songs and piano pieces have also been issued. In 1974, Fred Tomlinson's *A Peter Warlock Handbook* (Volume 1) was published by Triad Press; Volume 2 will follow in 1975.

Applications to join the Society should be sent to the secretary at 14 Barlby Road, London W10 6AR.

WARLOCK'S LIFE AND WORKS

Philip Heseltine/Peter Warlock [1894–1930] was a man of many interconnected talents. His education was almost entirely classical: at Stone House, Broadstairs [1904–1908], Eton [1908–1911], Christ Church, Oxford [1913–1914] and University College, London [Michaelmas 1914 – one term only].

He received very little formal musical training and was mainly influenced by other composers – Delius, van Dieren, Quilter, Colin Taylor and, of course, the Elizabethans. He had deep poetic insight, with particular affinity for Yeats, his friend Robert Nichols, later in his life Bruce Blunt and, again, the Elizabethans. He was also strongly influenced by the Celtic culture and studied Cornish, Welsh, Irish, Manx and Breton.

His musical activities fall fairly tidily into three periods. His earliest mature works were written in Ireland c. 1917 – 1918. There was then a lull in compositions while he concentrated on journalistic activities. *The Sackbut* appeared under his editorship in 1920–1921.

The next three years were the most settled and prolific of his life. He returned to his family home in Wales and produced some of his finest songs, hundreds of transcriptions and the Delius biography.

Again there was a lull while he negotiated with various publishers until he moved to Eynsford in 1925. The following three years were the last really fruitful ones. After leaving Eynsford he was again involved mainly in journalistic activities, editing *Milo* and organising the Delius Festival with Beecham. The few compositions of his last years were mostly due to his friendship with Bruce Blunt.

Altogether, within the space of two decades, he wrote about 150 songs, two dozen part-songs, a dozen items of vocal chamber music, and half a dozen instrumental works. His transcriptions number well over 600, some of them vast undertakings. His journalistic writings – books, articles, prefaces, reviews, programme notes and so on – amount to around 300,000 words.

WARLOCK ON RECORDS

22 SONGS AND 'CANDLELIGHT'. David Johnston/tenor and Daphne Ibbott/piano. Galliard GAL 4012 (obtainable only from Stainer and Bell, 82 High Road, East Finchley, N2 9PW).

A PETER WARLOCK MERRY-GO-DOWN – songs, catches and poems, sociable, amorous and bibulous. Ian Partridge/tenor, Neilson Taylor/baritone, Jennifer Partridge/piano, Fred Tomlinson Singers. Unicorn 'Herald' series, UNS 249.

'THE CURLEW' AND 12 SONGS FOR SOLO VOICE AND INSTRUMENTS. James Griffett/tenor, Haffner String Quartet. Pearl SHE 510.

'THE CURLEW'. Ian Partridge/tenor, Music Group of London. The record also includes two works by Vaughan Williams. EMI, HQS 1325.

CHORAL MUSIC AND SONGS. Morys Davies/baritone, Heather Kay/soprano, the Elizabethan Singers, conducted by Herrick Bunney. Pearl SHE 504.

Other Warlock songs are available on recital records by Peter Pears, Janet Baker, John Shirley-Quirk and Benjamin Luxon. Warlock carols are on collections by The Scholars, and the Brecon and Hereford Cathedral Choirs. The *Capriol Suite* is currently available in three versions, the *Serenade to Frederick Delius* in two versions. The *Five Folksong Preludes* are on a recital of English piano music played by John McCabe (Decca Ace of Diamonds SDD 444).

WARLOCK IN PRINT

The principal publishers of Warlock's music are: OUP (including two volumes of songs), Boosey and Hawkes (including one volume of songs), Stainer and Bell (one volume of songs and *The Curlew*), Chester (three sets of songs), and Thames (one volume of songs, *Candlelight*, *Hommages*, *Two Cod-pieces*, and two carols). Full details can be obtained through the Peter Warlock Society.

Merry-go-down

Warlock's only book still in print is the anthology of verse and prose about drinking, compiled by 'Rab Noolas'. It is available from the EP Group, East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorkshire.