

PETER WARLOCK SOCIETY

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Peter Warlock Society

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No. 25

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CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Readers of our chairman's Peter Warlock Handbooks will know that the cryptic initials IC stand for both Ian Copley and his book, which finally appeared last November. It has since gained widespread acclaim in the press; reproductions of three of the articles concerned are enclosed.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

Plans are now well in hand for the Purcell Room concert on December 17th. Among the more unusual items will be Sorrow's Lullaby, Corpus Christi for soprano, baritone and string quartet, a selection from the Elizabethan transcriptions for voice and string quartet, performances of the whole of Lilligay and both sets of Peterisms, readings illustrative of PH's wide range of interests and audience participation to finish both halves of the concert, carols at the end of the first half and drinking songs to send everyone home happy. The performers will be Jennifer Tatam (soprano), Antony Ransome (baritone), Anthony Ingle (piano), Peter Gray (speaker) and the Hanson String Quartet, with a piano duet partner to be announced.

PUBLICATIONS

The pictorial biography is well in hand; publication should happen early in the New Year.

The remaining two items of the subscription scheme have been unavoidably held up; no more can be done at this stage than to offer the most sincere apologies to subscribers and to say that all possible efforts are being made to bring the items out as soon as possible.

OUP RECORD

Ian and Jennifer Partridge's two-record set of English songs published by OUP is due for release imminently (Cat. No. OUP I55/6). The Warlock side consists of the following songs:-

Passing By; Pretty Ring Time; Sweet and Twenty; Rest Sweet Nymphs; Sleep; Away to Twiver; The Frostbound Wood; Yarmouth

Fair; Balulalow; Jillian of Berry; After Two Years; My Own Country.

'A LITTLE MUSIC OUT OF DOORS' (Keats)

Fairoak Festival, 26th July 1980

The Curlew; Chopcherry; My lady is a pretty one; Sleep; The Fairest May.

Ian Partridge, David Butt, Christine Pendrill, the Arriaga String Quartet.

A capacious, tent-like but open-ended awning provided a surprisingly good acoustic environment for the second of Ian Partridge's Fairoak performances. (The previous night, the same programme had been given genuinely in the open air, but torrential rain earlier on the Saturday had suggested that discretion was the better part of valour).

The Curlew is an elusive work, and some of its finer points eluded the Arriaga Quartet, chiefly because the basic tempi chosen were mostly a little too fast. This is quite understandable, given the peppering of 'Very slow' and 'A little slower' throughout the score and the performer's natural desire to avoid stasis, but it did have the effect of making some sections oddly lightweight.

Ian Partridge's performance was the polished one we have come to expect, and it was ably matched by David Butt, who played the flute part with limpid tone and an admirably free but forward-moving rubato, and Christine Pendrill, a young oboist who made the most of the cor anglais's trenchant utterances. The same could not, unfortunately, be said of the quartet. Penelope Howard led with great vigour and produced ensemble entries of exemplary precision, and the deputy second violin, Peter Morrish, did an excellent job. On the other hand, intonation was suspect, and several times there were disagreements about tempi. In general, as noted above, these were on the fast side - in parts, notably 'I know of the leafy paths the witches take', to excellent effect, the whirling close of that section being really exciting; the legato approach to the second song was also surprisingly convincing. Overall, though, the tempi chosen prevented the piece from making the shattering effect of which it is capable.

After the interval, we were regaled with 'Four folk-songs arranged for tenor and string quartet' - and I quote from the programme;

'The amiable, diffident part of Warlock's character is seen in his assiduous folk-song collecting and arranging'.

Is there something we don't know?

Anyway, the songs were 'Chopcherry', taken rather too slowly; 'My lady is a pretty one', very difficult to bring off and, in the event, the best in ensemble though without trace of the necessary staccato from the quartet; 'Sleep', taken very fast and begun in G major, with some very serious lapses in ensemble; and 'The Fairest May', a little heavy-footed but well interpreted in the spirit of the dance which informed the 6/8 rewriting. Ian's singing was a pleasure throughout.

THE CURLEW IN LUTON

The Curlew will be performed in a concert at the Library Theatre, St. George's Square, Luton at 7:30 p.m. on Monday 13th October, given by Ian Honeyman (tenor), Ben Pateman (flute), Elizabeth Davison (cor anglais) and the Guadagnini String Quartet, repeating their success of last February in Westminster Cathedral Hall. The programme will also include Vaughan Williams's Merciless Beauty and two instrumental pieces.

SHROPSHIRE LAD RECORDS

John Bishop writes:-

'The poems of A Shropshire Lad have become more than a part of English literature; they have become part of England's twentieth century heritage, for they have found a sympathetic vibration deep in England's soul. It's not simply that they speak of youth in a century whose wars have left a deeper awareness of the preciousness of youth; there is also the quality of nostalgia for a gentleness which has passed from our country as a whole. Even more, there is a truthfulness about these poems that they can express unconscious emotion without embarrassment'.

Well, that last sentence could be debated, but most of us would go along with the main point producer John Michael East makes in introducing a two-disc release of 39 settings of Housman by nine British composers: Somervell, Butterworth, Moeran, Peel, C.W. Orr, Armstrong Gibbs, Bax, Ireland and Gurney.

With the record industry in its present doldrums it is encouraging that such a release appears at all. Before anything else we must be thankful to Meridian for getting such a well packaged and presented volume on the market for such a price (the rrp is £6.90 but I got my copy at one of the London discount shops for £5.50. The number is E77031/2).

The crucial matter is, of course, the singer bold enough to take on the task, calling for beauty of voice, mature interpretative powers and - not least - stamina. One expects it would have to be John Shirley-Quirk, Ben Luxon or Robert Tear. Instead it is someone almost unknown except in the close world of London's professional church and session singers - the baritone Graham Trew, regular with the Chapel Royal choir. He is an avowed enthusiast for English song, and his dedication is plain to see. The voice itself is warm, full and, for the most part, well focused. One would say the exacting programme is 'very decently sung' if that wasn't damning with faint praise. What one misses, I feel, is that final quality of vivid imagining, of putting the song right in your brain and senses, that is the mark of the great art-song singers. But Mr. Trew gives considerable pleasure and at only 31 has time on his side. At the piano, Roger Vignoles provides the resourceful and sympathetic support we have come to expect, and the Coull String Quartet appear to advantage on side 4.

Most substantial items in the programme are the ten songs making up Somervell's A Shropshire Lad cycle, the Butterworth set known to most of us, and - a great rarity, this - the Ivor Gurney Western Playland cycle. C.W. Orr, who apparently made more Housman settings than any other composer, is represented by three songs.

Altogether, an enterprising venture, economically priced and worth investigation by anyone concerned that interest in 20th-century English song is kept alive.

WARLOCK IN BELGIUM

We hear that James Griffett, whose recording of The Curlew many members will know, recorded a recital of PW songs for Belgian Radio, and that it was broadcast earlier this year.

CAPRIOL IN MANY GUISES

P.C. Edwards of Peterborough has drawn our attention to a performance of the Pavane from Capriol on handbells, given by a group of ringers from Rowlands Castle, Hants., during a Schools Prom in November 1979 and broadcast on 1st January this year.

Eagle-eared TV viewers may also have heard Pieds-en-l'Air, synthesised and much too fast, in use as an ITV Christmas jingle. Comments on a postcard, please, to the Director of the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

The dispute over the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields's recording and live performances of Capriol with harpsichord continuo has fizzled to an inconclusive end as it has not so far proved possible to raise a reply from anyone responsible. Not only is the recording disfigured by the already reported harpsichording; in Pieds-en-l'Air, double-basses are used to reinforce the 'cello line. An issue not recommended to members.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

A revised list of the expanded photographic archive is in preparation at the moment, and will be circulated with the next newsletter. Meanwhile, members are still asked to contact John Bishop at 14, Barlby Road, London W10 6AR.

THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND MYSELF

A member who wishes to remain anonymous has noted the following reference to PH and friends in the late Michael Davidson's autobiography published under the above title (what price Aleister Crowley?):-

That period, and our Plough group, were remarkable for the number of brilliant, and doomed, composers they contained; Philip Heseltine ('Peter Warlock'), who, one night in 1930, put his head in the gas-oven after carefully putting out the cat; Constant Lambert, then boyish and gay and still fresh from his successes with the Diaghilev Ballet, and Cecil Gray, long-faced and morose beneath his great black sombrero - both drank themselves to death; Jack Moeran, never sober but always pungent and good-humoured, who, drunk, fell into the sea near Dublin and was drowned; Bernard Van Dieren (sic) and John Goss - these two perhaps survived the stresses of those days. (? Ed.)

We all drank too much; though not many of us were drunks. I suppose we did so because it was the fashion; as blue shirts and wide-brimmed hats were at that time fashionable bohemianisms; and perhaps it had something to do with what's called 'post-

war'. But mostly we drank beer in pubs and wine in houses; only the rich, like Cecil Gray, burnt up their livers with whisky. I've seen Cecil, late at night, unable to stand - unable, even, to sit; yet able, flat on the floor, to write his piece of musical criticism. "

This slightly lugubrious list seems interesting principally in throwing light on Gray and his personality as relating to his recollections of PH.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

During discussion of the Treasurer's Report at this year's AGM the observation was made that subscriptions at their present level (63 paid-up members at 21st June 1980, paying £2 each) are insufficient even to cover the day-to-day running costs of the Society - such matters as printing and postage on the Newsletter (the largest item of expenditure) - leaving nothing to spare for promotional activities - concerts, recordings, books, etc. - which are an important element of the Society's raison d'être. Accordingly, it was suggested that we need (a) more members, or (b) a higher subscription rate, or (c) both. In the event the AGM opted for both; as from January 1st 1981 the annual subscription will be £5 (certainly a large increase, but comparable with the subscription levels of other composer societies) and life membership £60. At the same time there will be a membership drive; a new edition of the Society leaflet will be published, and advertising will be undertaken. Long-standing life members (pace Rab Noolas) and members who pay by banker's order will receive enclosures with this Newsletter setting out the position.

THE EDITOR WRITES

My first reaction to a 150% increase in the annual subscription was one of fear that many members, especially those living at some distance from London, would feel that the camel's back had been broken, and that to continue would simply not be worth while. However, a little thought convinced me otherwise. We are, of course, caught in the teeth of inflation, and they are particularly sharp in relation to a Society like ours with a small, widely-scattered membership; but this is also a challenge, especially with the emergence of PW's works from copyright due at the end of this year, when a body of informed and enthusiastic opinion may well have an important part to play. We are also seeking to widen the scope of the Society's activities, and as the subscription increase will simply put us back where we should have been all the time, we need new members. Apart from the 63 who had renewed their subscriptions by 21st June, there are ten vice-presidents, 40 life members, one sympathiser and 30 members who have not paid this year. This is not really enough to support a full programme of activities and, while a committee-generated membership campaign will take place, word-of-mouth is often the best way of making things happen; if each member was able to introduce one more from among his or her acquaintance, we should be in a very strong position indeed.

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Almost all the opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the editor and, whether you like them or not, that should not be the case. Only two items have come from the membership in general, the rest being research of my own or of my colleagues'

on the committee. I don't believe, for instance, that nobody has sung any Warlock in music clubs since December, and such things, as well as your opinions, theories, suggestions, anecdotes and what have you, are just what we're looking for. Please take Fred's request in the last Newsletter seriously and get in touch!

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Apologies are due for the lateness of appearance of this Newsletter, which is due principally to delays at the typing stage. A short and, as it were, supplementary one will appear towards the end of November, to be followed (we hope) by one approximately every six months.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS by Ernest Bradbury

IAN COPLEY'S long-awaited book on Peter Warlock is at last available, and gathers into one volume all that seems to be known about the composer.*

Since Warlock's death in 1930, manuscripts, letters and other papers have come to light, a Society has been founded to keep his work alive, and there have been many articles, of reminiscences or of critical study, on which Dr. Copley has drawn very freely.

Thus the biographical sketch of the first 30 pages is a brisk summary of Warlock's life and working methods, with 58 footnotes showing the sources of the material: mainly, of course, Cecil Gray's biography of 1934, but also the writings of the late Gerald Cockshott, of Constant Lambert, Hubert Foss and others.

But while it may be true that the ardent Warlock scholar will find nothing new in this book, it should have the advantage (at a time when recording companies are showing a livelier interest in the composer) of introducing much superb music, and especially the songs, to a new generation. Whether it will have the fascination for them that it had for us some 30 years ago is a moot point: the world of music has changed radically since Warlock's day.

A few weeks ago, on a journey home from Wales, I stopped for a snack at Abermule, in Montgomeryshire, where Warlock lived, in his family home, during some of his best and most fruitful years in the early 1920's. The autumn countryside was as beautiful as ever, as he once described it to Delius:

"The weather has been perfect and I have never seen so glorious a riot of autumnal colours as we have in our woods and on the hillsides this year." (Oct. 31, 1921).

I had not been to Abermule for some 35 years, when I made a solitary pilgrimage on a hot June day in wartime Britain. Now, there seemed not to be the same magic. I did not feel impelled to return home and play Warlock songs.

The letter-writer from Abermule was of course Philip Heseltine. The hoary Warlock legend had not then been invented, nor the non-de-plume discovered. Dr. Copley deals with this and other matters, but the most welcome part of his book is the generous survey of the songs, with a splendid allowance of musical texts. (The three middle chapters, on the Vocal Chamber Music, the Choral Music and the Instrumental Music

Lost magic of Warlock



Peter Warlock: territory to be explored by a new generation

are based on earlier studies already published by Copley).

At least we can now see the songs as a whole, as Hubert Foss hoped we would more than 30 years ago. "Hugo Wolf was ill-heard in his day, but he was a native of a country that commanded musical attention. There is a complete corpus of Wolf songs. No one publisher in English has been so enlightened, thus far, even by collaboration, to produce a complete Warlock in handy volumes. I commend the idea as a worthy piece of English propaganda."

Maybe Dr. Copley's book is as near to this project as we shall get. Not, though, that he has got everything right.

Thus he speaks of the "square-cut melody" in the 1928 setting of "Passing By", and its occasional banalities, but seems to be under the impression that this was a Warlock tune. Its actual inventor was the dedicatee, Hal Collins, Warlock's friend and general household

factotum. Other such songs were "Forget not yet" (published as a Collins song) and "Ton Tyler", "based almost entirely on an improvisation of Collins". Warlock said of him "He had a great talent but it was quite undeveloped".

Dr. Copley also finds fault with "Love for Love", which he regards as "curiously unsatisfactory . . . the main tune does not convince — partly because of the strong perfect cadence at the half-way point, and partly because of the approach to the supertonic ending". But those points are exactly what count! "It is true" writes Copley, "that there are variants in the third and fourth verses . . ." The variant is, in fact, a perfect retrograde version of the "main tune" printed at the top of page 75, which appears to have escaped Dr. Copley's attention. If he sings the tune backwards he will see what the "variant" actually is.

In putting out his suggestion for a critical study of Peter Warlock's songs, Hubert Foss said it would be a task for a sensitive musician. "He must beware of the Nasmyth hammer of a good prose style: he must display, not pin down upon a board, the delicate hues of the butterflies' wings . . ." Dr. Copley does not come too badly out of that test, though there are infelicities.

He regularly writes "no less than . . ." when he means "no fewer than", and he doubtless would not claim comparison with his subject in this respect, as quoted in Robert Nichols's assessment of Warlock's prose on page 277. Yet what mainly matters is the appearance of the book itself; a work that started as Ph.D. thesis and has grown into a sturdy and worthwhile volume that will be welcomed by Warlock admirers everywhere. And if it leads to more performances of the music, and to some curiosity on the part of singers and choirmasters, so much the better.

* **The Music of Peter Warlock: A Critical Survey** by I. A. Copley (Dennis Dobson: £9.95)

HUGO COLE
working in 'The Guardian'
since the 1980.
Festival of English
music at
South Hill Park,
Berks. ↓

The late evening offered a choice between Facade (with Jane Manning and Richard Rodney Bennett as speakers), a short Arne opera, and a Warlock recital given by Norman Bailey and John Constable, to which I went. Mr Bailey kept off the more freakish of the Warlock songs, but spanned the full emotional range from sorrowful lover's yearning to boisterous jollity with mastery, and with the perfect control of breath and tone needed to project the long melodic lines of such songs as Sleep and Passing By in all their subtle variety. John Constable did not exactly make light of the heavier, many-noted piano parts, but found the right degree of emphasis. Something of Warlock's own split personality emerges in the contrast between run-of-the-mill tunes and harmonies wrenched off-centre, which also induce a split reaction in some listeners — those who find Warlock almost repellent in his exuberant moods but are still fascinated by the music processes in which those moods are expressed.

15.2.80.

Malcolm Rudland, Esq.,
Peter Warlock Society,
12 Pembroke Road,
LONDON W8 6NT, ENGLAND.

Dear Mr. Rudland,

An old friend of mine, Miss Irene Heseltine, died in Johannesburg on 19 January 1980. She would have turned 88 a few days later, on the 22nd January. She had lived for most of her life in South Africa.

On page 94 of his book, Dr. Copley refers to her as Warlock's cousin by marriage. Actually she and Philip, as she always spoke of him, were first cousins, Irene being one of the two children of Leigh Heseltine, Warlock's uncle.

She inscribed my copy of the cycle Lilygay which Philip had dedicated to her, as she sat in the very chair of my study from which I now write to you. I took a fine photograph of her at the time which she also autographed.

Leigh Heseltine's grave is in the churchyard at Great Warley, where Edward Heseltine erected the famous Art Nouveau church to the memory of his brother Arnold. Irene's only brother lived in Cape Town where he died last year. I never met him, nor his son Brian Heseltine who I believe lives in Bath, and has doubtless become the heir to various family pieces which his father and aunt possessed. Kinloch Anderson, whom you may know, knew this part of the family well.

I found it most enlightening to know Miss Heseltine and to visit the haunts of her childhood in Essex. To view the splendour, enterprise and refinement of their surroundings and to sense the uncompromising and quiet self-assurance in Warlock's favourite cousin told me more than the music of Warlock alone could do.

Irene Heseltine was a great and remarkable lady. In her last illness she exhibited a courage and stoicism which is extremely rare. She was totally unafraid and anxious to be as little bother as possible to anybody. Her faculties were clear and sound till the end.

There have ofcourse been other Warlock associations with Africa. I think of Philip's son, Nigel, whom Irene occasionally saw, and of course the late Colin Taylor, on whom I once paid a call in Stellenbosch - and who spoke of "Heseltine" much as if he were still the Eton schoolboy.

If somebody were interested in filling in the Heseltine family background, I feel sure from what Irene told me that it would add an unexplored dimension to the mentality of Warlock. Has it been pointed out, incidentally, how close Warlock is to the name Warley where the family lived?

I realise that these few remarks are not perhaps of great general account, but it would be a pity to my mind if the Warlock Society remained unaware of this cousin of Warlock's, who was a truly noble person, worthy of being the favourite of a genius.

Yours sincerely,


PROF. G.H. FINDLAY. M.D., D.Sc.
Life Member, Warlock Society.

The end of an era

DAILY
TELEGRAPH

THE SPRING and early summer of 1934 must have seemed at the time like the chilling end of an exceptionally fruitful chapter in the English musical Renaissance.

Elgar had died in February, Holst in May, and while musicians were still recovering from this double blow, the news came through in June of the death of Delius at his home in the French village of Grez-sur-Loing. With the deaths of Delius, Holst and Elgar, Ernest Newman wrote in his SUNDAY TIMES obituary of June 17, there has died "a world the corresponding loveliness of which it will be a long time before humanity can create for itself again."

Others have suggested that the end of this particular era in English music had in fact been anticipated several years before, and more precisely on the night of Dec. 17, 1930, when the 36-year-old Peter Warlock died of presumably self-inflicted gas poisoning. Just as he exaggerated Warlock's importance as a composer, so his friend and biographer Cecil Gray was clearly exaggerating when he identified almost exclusively with Warlock's influence what he describes as the peculiar glamour and enchantment of roughly the two preceding decades. It is as if, he goes on, "he created this halcyon quality of perfect spring and early summer skies—as if it emanated from him, so to speak, and had no independent existence apart from him."

For what Gray indelibly associated in his own mind with Warlock was obviously no more than part of a much more general and widespread spirit of confidence, a feeling of renewal and apparently unlimited potential summed up by Arnold Bax when, looking back to his own youth at the turn of the century, he noted that "the urgency of the triplets running through Walther's trial-song was the habitual rhythm of my mood in those lost years. Absolutely anything was possible of life, nothing too good to be true! Round the corner of the street one might find a Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon."

Yet there was a sense, amply supported by contemporary memoirs, in which Warlock seemed to epitomise the very

spirit of the age, his presence leaving an ineradicable imprint on every aspect of music in London during his brief life span. In the company of Elgar, Delius and Holst he was a composer of marginal significance, his life too short, his output too small and limited in scope. But as Peter J. Pirie puts it in his stimulating, racily chronological survey of English music between 1890 and 1978 "The English Musical Renaissance" (Gollancz £8.50), a book that is an enjoyable to read for its provocatively unconventional judgments as it is for its unqualified faith in the richness and variety of our music, the whole period of his activity—roughly from about 1910 to his death in 1930—is permeated with his personality; he affected not only the small but rowdy group that surrounded him and Cecil Gray, but a wider field which included Epstein, Augustus John, Robert Nicholls, Lawrence, Huxley, Bartok, Delius, Moeran, Lambert and many other figures of the time."

He may have aroused violent antagonism, irreconcilable differences of opinion, but no one could ignore him. In some he inspired an intense love and devotion, in others mixed feelings of suspicion and irritation. For Beecham he was a callow and opinionated young puppy, while Lady Ottoline Monrell, to whose famous salon at Garsington he had been introduced by D. H. Lawrence (he is "a bit backboneless and needs stiffening up, but I like him very much" Lawrence wrote to Lady Ottoline) found him "tall and blond, soft and so degenerate that he seems to corrupt." Warlock and his friend the fashionable novelist Michael Arlen, she confided to her diary "seem to pollute the atmosphere, and stifle me, and I have to escape from their presence—also I get very tired of the continual boasting of what they are going to do."

Opinions are just as sharply divided about the true extent of the rift between the more reckless part of his nature associated with the pseudonymous Warlock, and the gentler, the more reserved and private side identified with his real name Philip Heseltine, the fissure, according to Gray, steadily widening and splitting until a deadly conflict came to be waged on every psychological front.

In an elaborate metaphor,

quoted by I. A. Copley in his detailed, properly enthusiastic but realistic study "The Music of Peter Warlock" (Dobson, £9.95), the critic Hubert Foss once likened Warlock's mind to a wide mouthed funnel with four projecting outlets each representing a different facet of his creative activity, as the composer on the one hand of gravely introspective music; and on the other of music of an uninhibited vivacity and optimism, as editor and critic, but all characterised by the same "almost desperate sense of precision."

As a scrupulous transcriber of Elizabethan and Jacobean composers, an interest that grew out of his deep love for 16th and 17th century literature, his formidable contribution to the revival of interest in early music has probably never been sufficiently acknowledged. His vast output of articles, ranging from "Berlioz's 'Mass for the Dead'" and "The Artistic Significance of the Brass Band" published in THE DAILY TELEGRAPH only a month or so before his death, to sensitive appreciations of Bartok, Berg and Schoenberg, his books on Delius, Gesualdo and the English Ayre, contain some of the most enduringly perceptive writing on music in English, as trenchant and stimulating as the essays of Sorabji or his now rather mysterious mentor Bernard van Dieren.

As for his fastidiously composed songs and choral works on which his reputation ultimately depends, one reason for their general neglect, except for a tiny handful of pieces, and for the disappointing impression that even these sometimes make when they are included in recitals, Mr Copley suggests, is that they are in fact much more difficult to perform than it may seem at a superficial glance. And as he convincingly demonstrates, the seeming conflict between these various activities, as indeed Warlock and Heseltine, is more apparent than real.

For a short time, it has been neatly said elsewhere, his erratic career lit up London musical life with flashes here and there, but "the songs continue to burn with a steady illumination, because they belong to the great tradition in which through four centuries English lyric poetry has found a true mate in English melody."

Warlock surveyed

The Music of Peter Warlock: a Critical Survey by I. A. Copley
Dobson (London, 1979); 334pp.; £9.95

In *A Peter Warlock Handbook*, volume ii (Triad, 1977), Fred Tomlinson, referring to Dr Copley's study, states that 'a book could be written on the prevarications and procrastinations which have led to the eight year delay in the publication of this work' (p.93). The eight-year delay lengthened to 11 years – all to Dobson's disgrace – but here, eventually – all to his credit – we have in print an excellently produced reference work in which every one of Warlock's musical compositions is discussed. This in itself may seem small matter for jubilation, until we consider that no such study has yet been published or even written on so many other English composers of Warlock's period, including Parry, Stanford, Bridge, Ireland, Gurney, Butterworth, Moeran, Quilter, Bliss, Finzi, and many of less established importance.

Presentation is generally of a high standard, with very few misprints or inconsistencies. Chief annoyances are the placing of footnotes at the end of each chapter, where they contain far too much main-text material (including useful but clumsily detailed commentaries on textual variants), and the inadequate labelling of illustrations. The latter is symptomatic of a rather grudging approach to biographical considerations, one of the ways (there are others) in which the cool manner of a doctoral thesis is still discernible. It is frustrating to have to guess who is who in a motley assembly of personages in several of the photographs (poor Moeran is never precisely identified); and although Warlock's family home, Cefn Bryntalch, is photographed, we are not told of its architectural importance. (I was surprised to find it meriting an illustration and detailed description in the Powys volume of the *Penguin Buildings of Wales*: built by Bodley and Philip Webb in 1869, it is there described as 'the start of the Georgian Revival . . . the ancestor of so many garden city houses'.) Admittedly this has no direct relevance to Warlock as a composer (or does it?), but there are biographical factors that are understressed.

The economics of Warlock's brief life need careful consideration; most of it was spent either squandering family money or frantically working at critical, editorial or compositional projects in order to earn enough to stay alive; there was no equilibrium. Every now and then he would retire penniless to Cefn

Bryntalch and write songs; this might be a relief or an escape from a more commercial existence, but the songs had also to be a source of future income, and the development of his 'popular' style (whose points of contact with the popular music of the day and of the past, not to mention with Grainger, are not adequately treated by Copley) must be seen in this light. Not only, as with Elgar, was there a dichotomy in his songs between the need for self-expression and the need for popularity, there was also the question, at which Copley hints, of whether he lived primarily as a composer, critic or scholar. He was surely being quite serious and financially realistic rather than morbid when he wrote to Arnold Dowbiggin in March 1929 that, 'owing to the enormous decline in the music-publishing trade, I intend devoting myself to other activities than composition and shall probably write no more solo songs' (p.140), but, ironically, in adopting this course he was perhaps denying his own creative life-blood – all of which may suggest that Cecil Gray's schizophrenia thesis, against which Copley and other recent writers have wisely reacted, is hyperbolic but not necessarily entirely misleading if formulated from more practical premises.

Copley's critical discussion of the music, sharply analytical where appropriate, is well informed, particularly when he is comparing Warlock's settings of texts with those by other English composers or tracing the influences of Delius, van Dieren and others. His elaboration in the final chapter of connotative fingerprints is potentially as useful as Eric Sams found it in dealing with Wolf and Schumann, but I find the categorization partly unclear (nos. 1, 2, 5 and 6 surely all stem from one impulse) and partly too cautious in speculation (no. 3, the 'gigue' figure – or is it more often a siciliana? – seems a common symbol at this period, certainly in Delius, for a nostalgic interpretation of antiquity; and no. 4, the 'falling quaver' figure, also found in John Ireland, doubtless originates in the erotic passion motifs of Strauss (*Salome*) and Tchaikovsky).

As a whole, however, this is a study that should immediately establish itself as highly authoritative. The music examples are most generous, and appendices and indices make reference to the detail, discussion or chronology of particular works an easy matter. For a discography, exhaustive bibliography, full biographical details and reference tables of every conceivable sort one must consult Fred Tomlinson's two *Handbook* volumes (the third, detailed in Copley's own bibliography, has yet to be written); but account has nevertheless been taken of most of the facts, papers and manuscripts mentioned in these which have come to light since Copley initially undertook the study as a series of published articles in 1963–4 and subsequently presented it as a London PhD thesis in 1967. He has updated his text where necessary, thus making the delay in publication much less regrettable than it might have been.

STEPHEN BANFIELD

A great song-writer

Laurence Ager

Trained on an exclusive diet of German lieder and Italian opera, to-day's singers, like those of the 20's and 30's, in general remain sadly ignorant of the wealth of great English songs available to them. Ask the average recitalist to include something in English, and ten to one you'll get Stanford or Arne: and this with all Warlock's lovely songs waiting to be sung. *Sleep, As ever I saw, Balulalow* and dozens more can hold up their heads proudly in the company of Schubert, Brahms and Wolf. Constant Lambert considered Warlock to be one of the greatest song-writers that music has known. Like every composer from J.S.B. downwards, Warlock had his off moments, (as, for example, in *Fair and True*) – and who can wonder when, in order to live, he was driven to calling at publishers' offices and disposing of his songs for cash on the spot? I Copley has left no stone unturned in the production of this critical survey of a unique composer. He rightly draws attention to "that subtle sleight-of-hand which rescues a melodic line poised on the brink of banality," and he also cites the unaffected naturalness of Warlock's melodies and his sustained melodic invention. No-one can deny his impeccably-wrought word-setting, nor the inspired skill with which he got right inside the lovely poems he chose to set. One might on occasion question whether other composers such as Van Dieren, Delius, Moeran and Ireland really influenced Warlock's work to the extent which Dr Copley suggests. The excellent music extracts are of sufficient length to demonstrate what the author has in mind, but, getting down to the essentials, was not Warlock a better song-writer than any of these? No-one could wish for a better researched or more critically well-balanced book than this. Everything Warlock wrote comes in for mention; there is a chronological catalogue of extant works, a bibliography and an excellent index. Altogether Dr Copley's book is a splendid memorial to one of the most gifted song-writers of all time.

The Music of Peter Warlock

I. A. Copley

Dennis Dobson £9.95.

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