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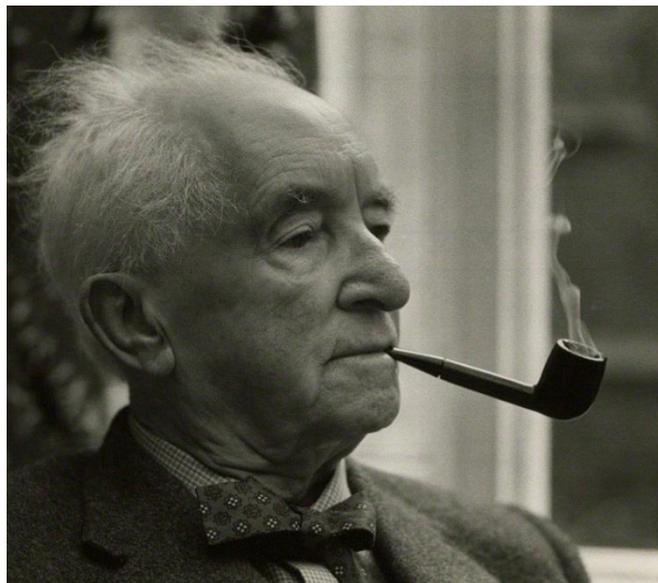
Centre for the History of Music in Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth

CHOMBEC is based at the Department of Music, University of Bristol

The Havergal Brian Archive comes to Bristol

We are delighted to announce the acquisition by CHOMBEC, on behalf of Bristol University, of the Havergal Brian Archive. Created in 1997 by the Havergal Brian Society and held until earlier this year at the University of Keele, the archive was developed through the tireless efforts of David Jenkins, librarian at the British Library lending division and enthusiastic admirer of the composer. With retirement beckoning, David decided the time was also right to step back from overseeing the archive, so a new home was sought.

My own involvement with Brian's music goes back to my teenage years when several of his works were broadcast during the centenary celebrations in 1976. The strangeness, originality and power of the music gripped me then, and that feeling has never left me. Of course, those celebrations occurred barely four years after his death – he died following a fall in November 1972, shortly before his 97th birthday – and many of the 1976 broadcasts were world premieres. The last 21 of Brian's 32 Symphonies were composed after the age of 80; the last 7 after he had reached the age of 90. It is an astonishing feat, surpassed only recently by the late Elliott Carter, who was actively composing almost to the age of 104.



Unlike Carter, though, Brian worked for most of his career in obscurity and neglect, producing work after work in the face of a public indifference that only started to change when he was in his 80s. Undoubtedly the major catalyst for that change was the composer and BBC producer Robert Simpson, who took up Brian's cause in 1954, after seeing a score of the 8th Symphony. The Archive contains all the known letters from Brian to Simpson, charting those early performances, through to the

triumphant first professional performance of the mighty *Gothic* Symphony in 1966 at the Royal Albert Hall under Sir Adrian Boult, an event masterminded by Simpson. One of Brian's very last letters to Simpson, from 1 July 1972, gives his touching response to the news that Simpson had elicited a promise from the BBC that it would perform and broadcast all Brian's symphonies over the coming years (a project eventually completed in 1979):

This is the most wonderful news I have ever received. Bless you. I thought I had reached sublimity when you pulled off that Albert Hall performance of the *Gothic* – again a realised dream and now the Symphonies. Unique in my life and yours . . . I hope I am making things

clear . . . for I have not yet got over the news in your letter this morning. What a lad you are[;] what a sterling friend . . .

A collection of many hundreds of Brian's letters forms the heart of the Archive. In addition to the Simpson correspondence and the letters to the composer and writer Harold Truscott (all of them originals), the Archive holds copies of the letters to his closest friend, Sir Granville Bantock and to the writer and critic Ernest Newman. The latter correspondence has been somewhat overlooked by scholars but covers the years either side of the Great War – a crucial period in Brian's development as a composer – and casts a fascinating light on the composition of two of his most ambitious works, the *Gothic* Symphony and the 'burlesque opera' *The Tigers*. Originals of the Bantock and Newman correspondence were originally purchased by McMaster University in Canada and copies were kindly made available to the Brian Archive. Letters to the composer are few in number. Brian seems to have retained very little of the correspondence he received, but a few special items are preserved, including letters from Vaughan Williams, Sir Henry Wood and Richard Strauss (to whom the *Gothic* was dedicated).

There are also letters from the likes of Bernstein, Previn and Stokowski. These are mainly just very short handwritten notes to individuals attempting to interest these world-famous conductors in performing Brian's music. The 91 year-old Stokowski did in fact take up a Brian symphony, the 28th (which had been written when Brian was also 91). The result was rather strange; having instructed the huge percussion section to play fortissimo, even in the quietest passages, Stokowski succeeded in turning an already rather eccentric work into complete musical gibberish. To this day, the symphony is one of the very few still awaiting an adequate rendition. There is also a particularly fascinating piece of memorabilia in the form of Brian's address book, which seems to date from the 20s and 30s when he worked for *Musical Opinion*. It forms a veritable Who's Who of musical life between the wars, from John McCormack to Bartók and Schoenberg, as well as Lord Alfred Douglas (Oscar Wilde's 'Bosie') whose poem 'Wine of Summer' Brian set as his Fifth Symphony in 1937.

The rest of the ever-burgeoning collection includes books, newspaper and journal articles, photographs, scores, recordings and the archive of the Havergal Brian Society itself. For a 'neglected' composer, the Brian literature is extraordinarily rich: nine monographs, two edited volumes and three volumes containing substantial chapters on the composer, not to mention hundreds of articles and reviews. Most of these are held in the Archive and the collection is continually growing. It should be remembered that Brian himself was also a prolific writer on music, since this was his

principal source of income for some two decades. The Brian scholar Malcolm MacDonald has so far edited two very full volumes of Brian's writings on British Music and European and American Music (*Havergal Brian on Music*, Toccata Press, 1986 and 2010) and a further four volumes are projected.

On disc too, Brian is increasingly well represented: 29 separate CDs of his work (including three different performances of the *Gothic*) are currently in the catalogue and most of these are held in the Archive along with most of the half-dozen or so deleted LPs. Three more discs are planned for 2013, including at long last a commercial release of the wonderful 1983 BBC recording of his astonishing comic opera *The Tigers* (in my view, his greatest single work). An important further addition will be the inclusion of all the extant non-commercial recordings of his works. These we plan to hold as sound files on hard disc.

The Archive holds a sizeable collection of copies of Brian scores: pretty much everything that has been published and quite a bit that has not (including a copy of the MS of Part One of the *Gothic*; Part Two having been missing for many years). The symphonies are all available on microfiche, but we hope to acquire paper copies in due course. The original MSS are nearly all held in the Royal College of Music library, though a few items are at the British Library. One important item not to be found in any of these locations is the full score of his vast setting of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1937-44). Like Part Two of the *Gothic*, it is lost; unlike the *Gothic*, it was never published, so all that we have of this immense – probably four-hour – work is the vocal score. And that is how things will probably remain . . . unless you know different . . .

Until recently, a major obstacle to furthering awareness of this important archive was that its catalogue took the form of hand-lists only. All that is about to change, thanks to the generosity of the



Havergal Brian Society and the Bristol Institute for Research in the Arts and Humanities (BIRTHA), who have jointly funded the digitisation of the entire catalogue. This massive process is currently being undertaken by CHOMBEC's own Fabian Huss and is proceeding well. In the next few months we should be able to advise readers of the completion of a searchable online catalogue that will be publicly available through the University Library.

For many decades Havergal Brian was characterised as a 'lone warrior', the forgotten man of British music. With an upsurge of recent interest in his work, including the Australian premiere of the *Gothic* at the end of 2010 and the international release of a highly successful documentary film concerning the event, this image is starting to crumble. The acquisition by CHOMBEC of the Brian Archive and the international availability of an online catalogue should help to consolidate his position as a unique and important voice in 20th century music (and not just in Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth).

John Pickard

News and Events

Another minor research archive for Bristol University Library

Stephen Banfield

Retirement is by far the most complicated project I have ever undertaken, and nearly a year will have elapsed from the time I began to think about clearing out my personal library, most of it in a spacious office in the Vic Rooms, to it settling down in its new homes. I say homes, because I have had to dispose of about a third of the 120 metres of books, music and research notes, as well as instruments, and this has entailed consultation and negotiations with five dealers, IAML, a couple of trusts, and one or two colleagues and students.

It was with a heavy heart that I looked out the correspondence files for my researches into English music, initiated in 1972 when I began my PhD on the English art song. There are four boxes, arranged alphabetically and within that sequence chronologically, of carbon copies of my letters of enquiry and my correspondents' replies, plus a fifth 'post-computer' chronological box of replies only, rapidly dwindling towards the present in the age of email. (I acquired my first computer around 1988.) At first I thought I would

retain only the letters from well-known people and throw the rest away, but sifting through the files re-engaged me and I judged that others might find matters of interest too. I am happy to say that Michael Richardson and Hannah Lowery showed their customary willingness to accession a small archive in its entirety and their customary speed in saying so, and it is now part of Special Collections in the Arts and Social Sciences Library, University of Bristol, where *bona fide* researchers can view it. I would guess that it comprises about a thousand leaves.

The archive includes letters from Arthur and Trudy Bliss, Adrian Boulton, Peter Pears, Edmund Rubbra, Herbert Howells, Elisabeth Lutyens and many other well-known personages including scholars, and a fascinating set of aerogrammes from CW Orr to me in the USA, typed not long before he died in 1976. I'm afraid there's nothing from Walton, Tippett or Britten, however, and I don't recall anything from Berkeley. Some correspondents were close family members of composers, significant for that fact rather than as artists; they include Armstrong Gibbs's daughter and Butterworth's great-step-nephew.

Two things strike me. First, everybody was very kind, meticulously answering the queries of a scholar of unknown quality and as often as not inviting me to lunch at some idyllic country cottage to see manuscripts or hear more about a composer and his milieu. (Almost no hers, but that was my fault.) In the early days this put my 1959 Morris Minor to some severe tests. The second thing is how we have lost the art of succinct correspondence in plain English. I recall Richard Hoggart saying this on the radio a decade or two back, citing a letter from a joiner he had commissioned: 'Sir—Your desk is ready. Yours sincerely, ---' Here, to prove the point, is the first letter from Roger Quilter's close friend, the baritone Mark Raphael: 'Dear Mr Banfield, In reply to your letter regarding Quilter and English solo song, I am at your service. Just ring up and we'll meet here. Yours sincerely, Mark Raphael.' This was in sharp contrast to my wordy typewritten screeds even then. Elisabeth Lutyens was equally brief but far less polite, pointing out that I had spelt her name wrong.

Research generates many scholarly and social pleasures beyond the immediate matter of concern, and among the files can be found Malcolm Riley's hazard at the five secret deathbed words of Elgar and the aural recollection of one of his own correspondents of the melody of Percy Whitlock's 'Song of Bournemouth' (the original later turned up—it was very close, and the whole thing is a gem). Many another observation will catch the eye of the scrutineer, and some comments may raise an eyebrow—which reminds me to point out that permission will need to be sought from the copyright holder (normally the writer or their estate) before anything can be quoted.

CHOMBEC Conference on Frank Bridge, 23 March 2013

CHOMBEC is pleased to announce a one-day conference on Frank Bridge (1879-1941). There has been a significant increase in performances and recordings of Bridge's music in the last few decades, as well as a notable amount of academic activity. This conference seeks to focus the growing interest in Bridge, his music and his socio-cultural context.

The programme will include:

Mark Amos: 'Frank Bridge and Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge'

Stephen Banfield: 'Bridge's Largest Work'

Jessica Chan: 'Interpreting Phantasm – Bridge's ill-fated Rhapsody for piano and orchestra'

Ben Earle: 'Pitch-Class Set Genera, Reification and Modernism in Late Bridge'

Lewis Foreman: 'Frank Bridge and the BBC'

Fabian Huss: 'Genre, Style and Expression in the Music of Frank Bridge'

Fiona Richards: 'Bridge, Britten and Boyd Neel'

There will also be a roundtable with Paul Hindmarsh and Anthony Payne

Registration is now open; please contact Fabian Huss for more information: mufgh@bristol.ac.uk

The conference fee is £10 (£5 for students and CHOMBEC members); make cheques payable to 'University of Bristol', and send to CHOMBEC, Victoria Rooms, Queen's Rd, Bristol, BS8 1SA, with a note specifying 'Frank Bridge conference registration' and your name and contact details.

Conference website:

<http://bristol.ac.uk/music/CHOMBEC/bridgestudyday2013.html>

Conference Report: International Musicological Society Conference 2012

Makiko Hayasaka

The 19th conference of the International Musicological Society was held at the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, on 1-7 July 2012. This year's congress, entitled 'Musics, Cultures, Identities', focused particularly on the role and function of music in constructing or understanding different cultural identities.

The session featuring music in Ireland, Britain and Commonwealth covered a wide range of topics, including papers by Jennifer Sheppard (King's College

London) on 'Sound of body: Music and sports in Victorian Britain', and Helen Barlow (Open University) on 'The British military band images of George Scharf'. Andrew Greenwood's (University of Chicago) paper was particularly notable, examining the intersection of folk and art music in 18th-century Scotland. Providing characteristic examples of Scottish folksongs used in art music, and of Scottish and Italian musicians who were deeply involved in local music activities, Greenwood argued that the identity of Scottish music should be treated in a broader cultural context, rather than emphasising its links with folk music traditions as has traditionally been done.

There were also a number of other papers related to British music, from my own 'Searching for the identity for the organ: The conditions surrounding cinema organists in early 20th-century Britain' in a session on organology, Bennett Zon's 'Blinded by the light: Science and Victorian representations of musical Asia' in a session on colonialism, Wendy Hiller's 'Furioso cantabile – Orlando Ariosto, and the staging of heroic identities in 18th-century London' in a session on 17th- and 18th-century Italian opera, and Travis A Jackson's 'The highest British attention to ... detail: Post-punk sound and vision and the meaning of Englishness' in a session on popular music. In the study session 'The trumpet and the culture of power' (sponsored by the Historic Brass Society), Trevor Herbert's 'The trumpeter as power negotiator in England in the 16th century' stood out. Presenting extensive primary sources including images and documentations, the paper revealed the unique diplomatic functions and social status of trumpet players in relation to the instrument's traditional symbolism.

Participants from all over the world enjoyed heated discussions over a week under the scorching sun. The 20th IMS conference is scheduled for March 2017 in Tokyo.

Research Reports

Further research on Robert Saxton

Wyndham Thomas

In a recent edition of this Newsletter I outlined some of the objectives of the Ashgate series, *Landmarks in Music since 1950*, and introduced a few of the titles most likely to be of interest to CHOMBEC's members. Newest among these volumes was my own monograph (recently published in September, 2012) on Robert



Robert Saxton

Saxton's first opera, *Caritas*, which *inter alia* discusses a broad cross-section of the composer's other works in order to establish a context for the more detailed analysis that constitutes the core of the book. As I wrote, I was aware of the necessarily selective nature of such a survey which resulted in significant genres being merely sampled and others virtually ignored – and that, in common with all studies of living creative artists, the book would immediately be rendered incomplete once fresh works were produced. There was scope (I concluded) for several books, essays, or dissertations on this composer.

When I was invited to contribute a short article on further Saxton research to *CHOMBEC News*, I agreed to introduce some of the fertile areas that I had identified during the gestation period of my study of *Caritas*. Chief amongst these was Saxton's second opera, *The Wandering Jew*, which was first performed on 7 July 2010 on BBC Radio 3, shortly before I completed the initial draft of my book. Happily, Ricordi and the BBC provided me with score and recording, respectively, and Ashgate agreed to a short extension so that I could incorporate some preliminary observations on the new work into the planned chapter on 'Works after *Caritas*'. The resulting five pages of commentary on the radio-opera contain a mixture of concentrated analysis and some general comparisons between *The Wandering Jew*, *Caritas*, and a number of choral works written during the two decades that separate the operas (c1990-2010). In particular, this latter group of choral compositions reveals a fresh approach to tonality and a growing reconciliation of the composer's inherited and adopted faiths – a subject that would merit a study in its own right. As far as Saxton's use of tonality is concerned, one can do no better than to quote from the

composer's essay that accompanies the commercial recording of *The Wandering Jew* (NMC D170):

I used commissions along the way to create satellite pieces, testing what I was trying to achieve on a larger scale [in *The Wandering Jew*]. My music of the past decade – all of it related to the opera – is not only modal, but increasingly tonal in functional terms; technically, it is serial in the sense that interval cycles and pitch groupings are heard in specific, but slowly changing orders. The music is based on a 7-note expanding and contracting set which, symbolically, represents wandering and return, as well as offering the possibility of creating long-range structural unity ...

To paraphrase my own commentary at this point, it is possible to make connections between the techniques and libretto of the radio-opera (incidentally, written by Saxton himself – albeit based on Stefan Heym's politico-satirical version of the ancient legend) and the techniques and dramatic themes found in works such as *Five Motets*, *Canticum Luminis* and *O Living Love*. Recurrent themes include those of Journeying, as in Genesis 12: 1-3 (in the first of *Five Motets*), Light (as in the texts by Lucretius and Sir Isaac Newton, set in *Canticum Luminis*), and Dance as a form of devotion, (as celebrated in the singing and dancing of Miriam in Exodus 15: 19-20 – the central movement of *Five Motets*). Precedents for the eternal wandering of the Jew in this visionary motet-cycle need not be laboured, but there are other factors, too, that justify and illustrate the composer's use of the term 'satellite' to describe pieces produced during this period. Like *Caritas*, the *Five Motets* explore the interface between early and modern musics as well as sharing a clear tonal structure with both operas – even to the extent of introducing key-signatures into *The Wandering Jew* as though to acknowledge the importance of tonal orientation in his works. However, the composer's disarmingly simple description of the tonal plan of his second opera ('moving through a cycle of fifths') tends to ignore many subsidiary modulations and significant key associations, leaving the would-be analyst ample scope for research – as I have tried to demonstrate in the more detailed commentary on *Caritas*.

Comparison between Saxton's two operas clearly offers scope for further research and interpretation. On the one hand, we have a work steeped in medieval theological and political ideology; on the other, a composition based on an anti-Semitic legend that confronts the received myth within a provocative succession of fictional scenes. In the first case (*Caritas*), the heroine's disillusionment leads to total despair – to spiritual crucifixion; in the second, the time-travelling cobbler effects a sort of reconciliation

with Christ whom he meets disguised as a beggar in the penultimate scene before journeying into the desert on the next/last stage of his travels. In one sense, *The Wandering Jew* could be viewed as an oratorio or Passion rather than an opera since elements of (spoken) narrative and vocal dialogue are punctuated by choruses of Prisoners, Roman Soldiers, Revellers or Spirits, which help characterise the musical (as well as historical) time-travelling that takes the action from a Nazi death camp to Jerusalem in 70 AD, to eleventh-century Cordoba, sixteenth-century Leipzig, to the wild terrain of Odin's rebirth, and to eighteenth-century Venice at Carnival time before returning to the World War II death camp. In the final scene, set in the desert in bright daylight, the Jew sings (in English) the Hebrew *Shema Yisrael* ('Hear O Israel'), a final reference to the shared traditions of liturgical items (chants, hymns, psalms and ritual prayers) that are included in both operas as profoundly emotive focal points, comparable with Bach's use of chorales or Tippett's use of spirituals in *A Child of our Time*.

However, the above paragraph's concentration on the research potential in Saxton's second opera should not detract from similar possibilities in other genres – or, indeed, other aspects of his operas where numerical/proportional considerations are as significant as in *A Yardstick to the Stars* (for Piano and String Quartet) or *Canticum Luminis* (scored for full orchestra, solo soprano and chorus). Indeed, the composer's three string quartets themselves provide a fascinating and varied contribution to the genre that could be the subject of a short article or a section in a larger piece on Saxton's chamber music. Another collection of works that are relatively untouched by scholarly commentary are his three solo concertos (for violin, viola, and cello), composed, respectively, for Tasmin Little, Paul Silverthorne and Mstislav Rostropovich). Together with his *Concerto for Orchestra* (1983/4), the string concertos (c1986-1993) form a coherent group of works that surround *Caritas* (1991) in terms of chronology, and illustrate the composer's fascination with the process of moving from darkness into light and, also, the strong pictorial/textual sources that constitute part of his inspiration – as, for example, the concept of the violin soloist as a Chagall-like figure floating above the crowds and rooftops. The more one investigates Saxton's large and high-quality output, the more one can see opportunities for creative interpretation of discrete groupings – his orchestral works, his keyboard compositions, his songs, the liturgical as well as secular choral works (to add to those already cited above). But, perhaps more interestingly, a greater understanding of his individual works enables us to investigate over-riding themes and obsessions that link generic groups, pointing towards the composer himself as a complex fusion of cultural diversities whose overall aim seems to be to make

connections between literature, mathematics, religions, history, art, and music – and, through that, to create links with his audiences.

At the end of my particular journey through the traumas and agonising beauty of *Caritas* I was able to persuade Robert Saxton's publishers that the collection of scores, so generously put at my disposal, should be donated to the University of Bristol's Library as a resource for further research. Although I would like to think that my retirement might extend long enough to publish in more detail about *The Wandering Jew*, the next stage in my writing travels will take me back to the Loire valley in the twelfth-century. I sincerely hope that present and future music students will feel drawn to use this newly acquired collection of scores. I can guarantee that they will find such research rewarding.

Re-evaluating Sir George Dyson

Paul Spicer

Sir George Dyson (1883-1964) was a force of nature. A man who touched almost every aspect of musical life in the UK during his long career and who overcame the disadvantages of his working-class Yorkshire background to ascend to the very highest musical offices in the land and to become, for a time at least, a highly respected and much-performed composer. All that faded very quickly, however, and plaudits turned to brickbats partly through his no-nonsense approach to everything, his single-mindedness, his impatience with lesser minds, his seeming to be always right and a hard-headedness where it came to reforming institutions like the ISM and the RCM.

Dyson was born in Halifax. His father was a foreman blacksmith in one of the great forges making precision ironwork mainly for the gas industry. He was also choirmaster at the local Baptist church and the family had a piano at home. Dyson learned the classical repertory by playing it on the piano. Orchestral concerts were almost unheard of locally. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists at the age of sixteen and won a Foundation Scholarship to the RCM the following year. He was initially an organist but went on to be the first RCM student to win a second scholarship as a composer. Inevitably he studied with Stanford.

After winning a Mendelssohn Scholarship, which took him to Italy and Germany for three years, he settled down into a teaching career starting, at Parry's suggestion, at the Royal Naval School, Osborne, where the timetable for a musician was not onerous, enabling him to undertake both BMus and DMus degrees at Oxford. Marlborough followed in 1911 (where he was later voted by ex-colleagues as the most brilliant man

on the staff in recent memory), but was short-lived owing to a potential romantic scandal and he moved quickly to Rugby. The 1914-18 War saw him sign up at once, after only six months at the school. By a quirk of fate he was commissioned Grenadier Officer in his regiment and, as no-one knew anything about hand grenades, he taught himself and produced a manual of instruction which was the standard text on the subject throughout the war and formed the basis of all subsequent training manuals. Perhaps fortunately, he was invalided out from France in 1916, a bomb having exploded under his horse, leaving him remarkably uninjured but suffering from shell shock.

He became the second Organising Director of Music for the RAF following Walford Davies and in his brief tenure laid plans for the musical structure of the post-war RAF. He also completed the *RAF March Past*, which Walford Davies had begun. Dyson resumed his teaching career at Wellington and moved to Winchester in 1924. It was here that he was happiest and the city, its College and Cathedral became his spiritual home. He also began to compose in earnest (perhaps an acknowledgement of his contentment) and achieved great success with works like *In Honour of the City* (1927) and the work that he regarded as his greatest achievement, *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (1931).

Soon after this Dyson came to the attention of the Three Choirs Festival and was commissioned to write a number of works in the coming years, including *St Paul's Voyage to Melita* (Hereford 1933), setting the dramatic story from chapter twenty-seven of the Acts of the Apostles, describing Paul's extraordinary journey to Rome and his shipwreck on the island of Malta, and *Nebuchadnezzar* (Worcester 1935), setting the dramatic story of the burning fiery furnace. The Leeds Festival commissioned *The Blacksmiths* in 1934, and Dyson made the most of the opportunity presented by a remarkable Middle English alliterative poem to create a score which emulated elements of brutalist works by Mossolov, Antheil and Honneger. It was also his personal tribute to his father.

At around the same time (1934/35) Dyson was the first President of the newly formed National Federation of Music Societies, underlining his passion for the encouragement of amateur music making, and he also began his long involvement with the Carnegie UK Trust, one of the most important charitable organisations in Britain's history. He was its Music Advisor for many years and was later its Chairman. This led, via his involvement with CEMA, to his controversial role in the setting up of the Arts Council of Great Britain after the second World War.

Dyson was appointed Director of the Royal College of Music in 1937. His time there was remarkable and controversial. His first actions were to renovate the lavatories and improve the food as well as to gradually eradicate the chocolate-coloured paint decorating the



Sir George Dyson

corridors. He was entirely relaxed about these non-musical improvements saying: 'I have had and heard many amusing arguments about this queer new Director you have got, who seems to be so inartistically concerned with wash basins and food. I am quite unrepentant. If a girl can't wash her hands or get her lunch, how is she to play Beethoven Sonatas?' But Dyson's happy early days were soon overtaken by the shadow of war. He determined that the RCM should remain open, and the other major institutions had to follow suit. This caused many problems, but also showed his indomitable spirit in the face of apparently insuperable odds. Even greater challenges faced him at the end of the war, when hundreds of demobilised troops wanted to resume their interrupted education, and many difficult choices had to be faced.

Despite the pressures of running a major institution in these times, Dyson still managed to compose major works including a Symphony, an outstanding Violin Concerto and a large-scale and highly personal choral work in two parts, *Quo Vadis?*, of which the first performance of Part One had to be delayed because of the outbreak of war, and the whole work was not premiered until 1949 at Hereford. Dyson's style was conservative, although he was entirely familiar with all the new music of his time and he could (and did) quote from almost any work mentioned to him by illustration at the piano from memory. His book *The New Music* (OUP 1924) was a landmark publication in its day and was widely praised as a remarkable survey and typically personal dissection of all the new trends and experiments from around Europe of his day. But Dyson was a 'classic structures' man even if he might bend classic forms to his own needs. He was also a Parry disciple rather than an Elgar man, and his choral writing shows how much he had digested Parry's inimitable vocal contrapuntal style.

Dyson was one of the towering figures of early twentieth century British music. Stephen Banfield said of him: '... we have remembered the hand grenades and the lavatories and forgotten his music. That is a

shame, for it is not the music of a civil servant, or a manager or a stiff General, or a mechanic. It is glorious stuff. Not at the highest level of imagination but full of vitality and directness and a certain amount of sophistication and, perhaps surprisingly, colour. *The Canterbury Pilgrims* is one of those works that makes one feel glowingly and genially that at last one knows what Englishness in music is.' (BBC Radio 3, 'Figures in the Margin', 17 January 1994.)

I hope that Dyson's time is now coming again and that my biography, when it is published, will rekindle an interest in someone who has been overlooked for far too long.

Paul Spicer's forthcoming biography of Dyson is due to be published by Boydell in 2013.

A history of the BBC's collaboration with competitive music festivals in Northern Ireland, 1924-39

Ruth Stanley

The competitive festival movement is responsible for much socialism, although of a very different kind from that conventionally associated with the word. A festival brings into pleasant contact people of all classes who, in the ordinary course of events, would probably not be on speaking terms.¹

The growth in competitive music festivals in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries originated in the 'music for the people' movement whose endeavours led to the increased democratisation of music in nineteenth-century society. Dating from 1909, the opening quotation illustrates the principle that music could function as a 'social healer' or, to quote Dave Russell, 'a social cement, a bridgehead between antagonistic social classes.'² This article explores the extent to which the competitive festival movement served to transcend religious, political and social boundaries in the divided society of Northern Ireland. It further examines the degree to which BBC Northern Ireland (BBC NI) used festivals as programme material during the period from 1924 to 1939. In particular, the exclusion of certain festivals in its radio broadcasts points to the BBC's efforts to steer a neutral path. Such an apolitical stance ultimately led to the

¹ *School Music Review*, November 1909, quoted in Dave Russell, *Popular music in England, 1840-1914: A social history*, 2nd edn (Manchester University Press, 1997), 26.

² Russell, *ibid*, 25.

BBC's construction of a complex image of identity in Northern Ireland.

From its modest beginnings in 1885, the competitive music festival rapidly grew in popularity and size, spreading across England, Ireland, Scotland, and further afield to the wider British Empire, including Canada, South Africa, India and Australasia. By 1924 some 250,000 competitors had taken part in festivals in the previous year alone. In 1926 there were 193 festivals affiliated to the British Federation of Musical Competition Festivals (BFMCF). Incorporated in 1921, the organisation provided a centre from which festivals, especially those in the early stages of development, could obtain guidance, information, and practical help on matters such as the choice of test-pieces and supply of adjudicators. In a letter to the *Musical Times* in May of that year, the Board emphasised the importance of competitive festivals in Britain, asserting that they were 'one of the most potent factors in the musical life of the country.'

Collaboration between the BBC and the BFMCF dated from the early years of radio in Britain. From 1927 until 1939 BBC NI annually relayed concerts of selected prize-winners from festivals in Belfast and elsewhere in Northern Ireland, including Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Derry (two festivals: the Londonderry Festival and *Feis Doire Colmcille*), Dungannon, Larne, Newry, and Portadown. In May 1929 the *Radio Times* stated that:

Musical Competitions and Festivals are a form of entertainment which is amazingly popular in the North of Ireland. Practically every town of any size in the Six Counties has its annual festival or competition which draws a host of competitors and a correspondingly large number of enthusiastic supporters. The entries of the Belfast Festivals last year [1928] number 1,400 which made a total of 4,700 competitors, some of whom came from as far afield as Dublin or Wexford, and the houses during the ten days numbered well over 20,000 people.

Usually held in March, April or May, competitions typically featured a variety of choral, instrumental and vocal competitions for juniors and adults as well as classes in verse-speaking and elocution. Certificates, medals and trophies were typically awarded to prize-winners and each entrant was given an adjudicator's report. Adjudicators included prominent English and Irish musical figures.

In July 1924 a commentator in the *Musical Times* remarked that competitive festivals in Northern Ireland were much alike in their aims and differed only in size and scope. He suggested that they might, in the future, specialise in some individual direction. In fact, a number of Northern Irish festivals were already forging



Logo of the Feis Doire Colmille

new paths, notably the aforementioned Derry Feis (*Feis Doire Colmille*), the Glens Feis in Antrim (*Feis na nGleann*), and the Down Feis (*Feis an Dúin*), the aims of which were to revive Gaelic music, song, story, and dancing. From here on, I refer to these festivals as 'Gaelic feiseanna' in order to distinguish them from festivals affiliated to the BFMCF. At the risk of generalisation, Gaelic feiseanna were typically a product of Irish cultural nationalism and often linked to the Gaelic League (founded in 1893), a driving force behind the revival of Gaelic culture at that time. While the Gaelic League initially attracted cross-community support, in the early decades of the twentieth century it became increasingly politicised and, consequently, Anglophobic and anti-Protestant in outlook. In parallel with the growing politicisation of the Gaelic League and an increasing equation between Catholic and Gaelic culture, it is likely that there was a considerable fall-off in Protestant support at Gaelic feiseanna during the early decades of broadcasting in Northern Ireland.

It is notable that Derry's *Feis Doire Colmille* was the only Gaelic feis broadcast on BBC NI during this period, and that it was the only one affiliated to the BFMCF, since BBC NI only broadcast festivals with such membership. Intent on avoiding overt cultural manifestations of either unionism or nationalism in its broadcasts, BBC NI may well have used the expediency of BFMCF membership to circumvent the issue of relaying feiseanna connected to the Gaelic League. This paralleled its policy in relation to broadcasts of bands (military, pipe, flute, and accordion), which BBC NI selected strictly on the basis of their prize-winning history at the North of Ireland Bands Association. Aside from maintaining the highest possible standards in performance, such a policy prevented against politically sensitive broadcasts in the case of certain loyalist bands.

Broadcasting within a deeply divided community presented a continuous and arduous challenge for BBC NI. While it sought to reflect the 'national' character of the region, this identity was firmly located within the context of the wider British network. In February 1933

the *Radio Times* reported that 'broadcasting has abolished horizons and has prevailed against the Northern seas, bringing the Six Counties into ever closer bonds of empire.' Such rhetoric stemmed from the BBC's overall aim to promote the notion of a national culture or, to use Reith's term, '[to make] the nation as one man'.³ The difficulty for the BBC lay in its quest to present unity, on the one hand, and cultural diversity, on the other. As Paddy Scannell observes, the 'implacable disunity [of Northern Ireland] fitted ill with the overall consensus sought by the BBC.'⁴ Similarly, Gillian McIntosh writes that BBC NI sought to represent as homogenous what was, in fact, a diverse and multi-layered society.⁵ Nationalists understandably felt isolated from a broadcasting station which emphasised the imperial link with Great Britain. Paradoxically, however, Unionists also felt hostility towards the 'Britishness' of the BBC. In fact, the BBC's relays of locally produced music in Northern Ireland highlighted the diversity and complexity of the region's culture. The range of music programmes revealed multifaceted and overlapping boundaries of cultural identity. The BBC avoided cultural essentialism, presenting classical, popular, and traditional genres, reflecting British, Irish, and Northern Irish, as well as sub-national and transnational, identities.

In relation to competitive music festivals broadcast by BBC NI, it is evident from contemporary newspaper reports that these assumed an important role in Protestant and Catholic communities alike. On 3 May 1927, the *Irish News*, reported on the social and musical benefits of these festivals:

This enthusiasm for music augurs well. It bespeaks a new, more sympathetic, more versatile and more appreciative generation of men and women. The youths who have been educated to win at Feiseanna will not believe that musical education begins with "Dolly's Brae" and ends with "Derry's Walls," or that "The Boys of Wexford" is the only song worth singing.

The reference to *Dolly's Brae*, *Derry's Walls* and *The Boys of Wexford* is striking since these are traditional tribal songs commemorating conflicts in Nationalist and Unionist history. In effect, the newspaper article suggests that the essentially cosmopolitan outlook of the music festivals provided a means of social cohesion in Northern Irish society. For the BBC, relays of such

³ Quoted in Gillian McIntosh, *The Force of Culture: Unionist Identities in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Cork University Press, 1999), 69.

⁴ Scannell, 'The Origins of BBC Regional Policy', in Sylvia Harvey and Kevin Robins (eds.), *The Regions, the Nations and the BBC* (London: British Film Institute, 1993), 35-36.

⁵ McIntosh, *The Force of Unionist Culture*, 70.

festivals were in line with its policy to broadcast music from the community. Moreover, the festivals' links to the BFMCF reflected a broader British context, not dissimilar to the relationship between the regional stations and the wider BBC. In Northern Ireland, however, there was the further advantage of promoting a form of music-making that was both socially and religiously inclusive.

Ruth Stanley completed her PhD at Queen's University Belfast in 2011. The subject of the above article originates from her doctoral thesis, 'A formative force: the BBC's role in the development of music and its audiences in Northern Ireland, 1924-39', which she is currently preparing for publication.

Scottish Songs – and Fiddle Tunes

Karen McAulay

What motivated people to publish collections of Scottish songs during the Scottish Enlightenment and on into the Victorian era? What cultural influences determined the nature of the finished collections, and what editorial decisions had been taken during their compilation? And most particularly, what precisely did 'Scottish' mean to these individuals?

These were some of the questions I had at the forefront of my mind during my doctoral research into Scottish song collecting from 1760 to 1888. The seemingly arbitrary dates were in fact deliberately chosen: 1760 marked the departure to East India of one particular collector, Joseph Macdonald, and the start of James Macpherson's Ossian song-collecting mission; whilst 1888 marked the death of English song and ballad collector William Chappell.

I examined Highland and Lowland song collecting during the Enlightenment, contemplating the paratextual material that placed the different collections in context. During this era, authenticity was paramount, after the stushie (to use a suitably Scottish term) about Macpherson's allegedly forged Ossianic narrative. However, whilst those with a more antiquarian bent were content with the barest of accompaniments, if any at all (compare James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, 1787-1793, with Joseph Ritson's *Scottish Song*, 1794); other such as George Thomson went to extreme lengths to compile art-song collections in classically arranged settings by leading European composers. Still others, like the enthusiastic Perthshire Highlander Alexander Campbell, tried to strike a balance between the two, but ended up with a collection of beautiful Gaelic and Borders tunes in quite mediocre settings, having devoted an entire

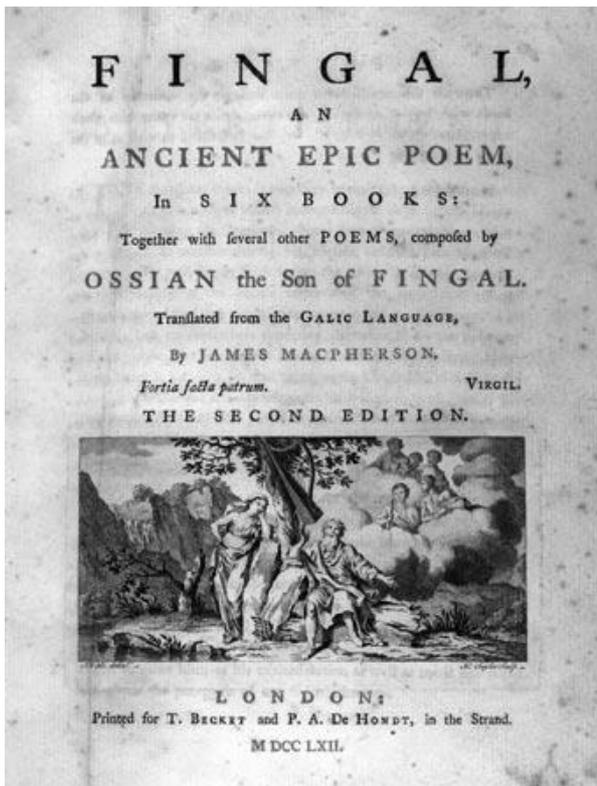
summer to wandering the Highlands and Hebrides in search of choice specimens.

The contextual notes to these collections are as illuminating as the settings themselves, and I devoted some space to an examination of William Stenhouse's *Illustrations* (written to accompany the *Scots Musical Museum*, but published by David Laing some years later), as well as James Hogg's *Jacobite Relics* and other collections.

Fakery and forgery was a common phenomenon in Gothic literature; we can detect similar activity in poetry and music as late as the 1820s, in poet Allan Cunningham's *The Songs of Scotland, Ancient and Modern*, and in Robert Archibald Smith's song collection, *The Scottish Minstrel*. I continued to develop my interest in Gothic writing after the completion of my PhD, when I explored the literary genre of 'minstrel' tales, evoking the romance of distant times. I began to realise that minstrelsy's influence can be traced in several contemporary song collections, where the paratextual material was richly laced with metaphors about lost treasure and precious jewels of song. When I began working my thesis into a book, this further research ultimately gave rise to an additional chapter on paratextual imagery and metaphors in romantic song collections, and I took the opportunity to look at a few Welsh and Irish collections in order to give the chapter a broader context.

The latter chapters of my thesis explored Victorian song collections from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, revealing an urge to create collections that were both pragmatic and educational. Thus, we find songbooks clearly aimed at middle-class domestic use, in terms of arrangements to suit a competent amateur pianist, informative commentary, performance hints in the prefatory material, and a concern that the language would be unimpeachable so as not to perturb female sensitivities. The piano accompaniments were conventional, and little different from other song collections of their day, but differed from earlier national collections in being set by better-educated musicians who had a broader understanding of the context in which their repertoire was situated. Finlay Dun and John Thomson, George Farquhar Graham and John Muir Wood produced some of the most popular Scottish song collections of their era, with the Graham/Wood *Songs of Scotland* still very easy to come by in antiquarian bookshops today.

The cultural context in which these collections were compiled was as interesting as the collections themselves. In my final chapters, I examined attitudes towards Scottish, versus English, song origins, looking at some of the nationalistic debates, both between comparatively little-known Scottish musicians, and between Scottish and English ones. William Chappell, in his *Popular Music of the Olden Times*, really set the cat among the pigeons with his allegations that some



James Macpherson - Fingal (1762)

'Scottish' songs were not really Scottish. Concluding that his accusers were what he described as 'overnational' in their sensitivities, he eventually retreated, hurt, abandoning Scottish music to the Scots. If Chappell used the word 'Scotified' to describe the adoption of an English song as Scottish, then it seems ironically appropriate that his successors reissued the book in a de-Scotified format. However, having seen Chappell's Scottish endeavours to their natural conclusion, I was obliged to leave the later 'English' publication for further exploration at a possible later date.

I am Music and Academic Services Librarian at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (formerly RSAMD), and I imagined that there was little possibility of expanding that into a research role – although research support pretty much goes with the subject librarian territory. However, reason for optimism arose when I was invited to be part of a bid for AHRC funding into bass culture in Scottish musical traditions – a project to be shared between the Universities of Glasgow and Cambridge. The Principal Investigator, David McGuinness of the University of Glasgow, asked if it might be possible for me to be seconded, part-time, as postdoctoral research assistant; and I am delighted to be able to announce that not only was the bid successful, but cover has been arranged for me to be able to spend two days a week on this project over the next three years.

From Scottish songs, my attentions now move onto Scottish fiddle tune collections, as we examine the nature and patterns of bass accompaniments as they

moved from a bare bass-line to a more pianistic accompaniment in the early years of the nineteenth century. Parallel research by doctoral student Barnaby Brown in Cambridge will examine harmonic structures in bagpipe music. As I write, research has only been under way for a few weeks, but our research blog has been launched: 'Bass Culture in Scottish Musical Traditions' (<http://bassculture.info>) – and there will be both written and performed outputs in due course, so – watch this space!

Our Ancient National Airs: Scottish Song Collecting from the Enlightenment to the Romantic Era *is due for publication by Ashgate in 2013.*

From our Corresponding Members

'Twa Hours at Hame': Taking the Songs of Scotland around the world – Marjory Kennedy-Fraser: *A Life of Song* – Wagner's Dutchman: A flying Hebridean in disguise?

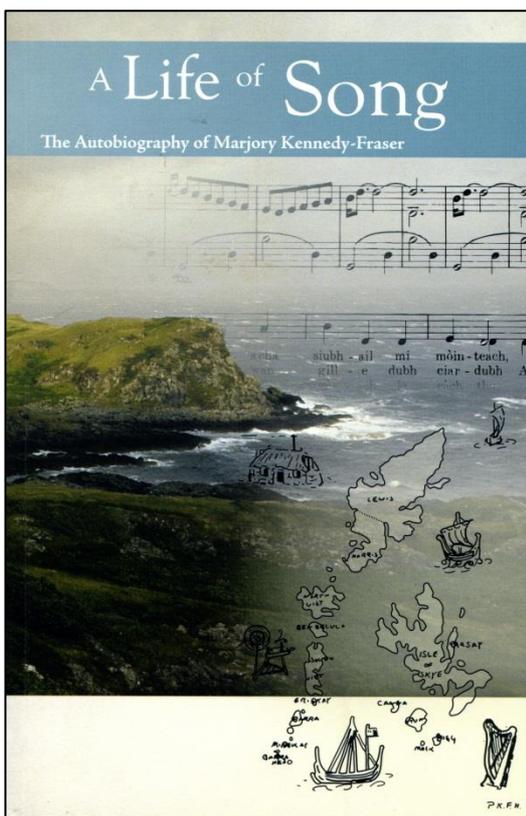
Per Ahlander, Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh

Over the last few years, my research has focused on themes related to the subject of my PhD, 'Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930) and Her Time: A Contextual Study' (Edinburgh, 2009). Three of several different projects are now completed; one is already published and two are due to come out in 2013.

David Kennedy (1825–1886), Mrs Kennedy-Fraser's father, was a well-known Scottish tenor, specialising in Lowland Scots songs, and he was passionate about bringing the songs and stories of home to all those who had had to leave Scotland. Together with his family, he toured widely, performing his 'Songs of Scotland' entertainment throughout the British Empire and beyond. Marjory, who made her debut as her father's accompanist at the tender age of thirteen, participated in most of the tours, including a four-and-a-half-year world tour. However, when members of the family undertook a strenuous but fascinating concert tour through India, she chose to pursue her studies in Italy. For the paper I presented at

the CHOMBEC conference 'Worlds to Conquer: the travelling virtuoso in the long 19th century' in 2010, I made a survey of all the Kennedy family's tours – in the British Isles as well as overseas – between 1866 and 1886. By that time it was still to some extent work in progress, and I have since then researched the Kennedys' two decades of travelling and performing further. Despite paucity of information, two smaller surviving collections of programmes and advertisements have made an analysis of their vast concert repertoire possible, showing how the programming developed over the years, from including a variety of popular pieces at the beginning to focusing almost entirely on Scottish music towards the end of the period. 'Taking "Twa Hours at Hame" to the New World: the overseas tours of David Kennedy's family music troupe in 1866-86', an essay in which I present the results of my research, including an extensive listing of the Kennedys' concert repertoire, will be published in *ROSC – Review of Scottish Culture*, volume 25, in 2013.

A Life of Song, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's autobiography, was published by Oxford University Press in 1929, soon after the University of Edinburgh had awarded her an honorary doctorate in Music. Although well received when it came out, after the author's death in 1930, interest slowly began to dwindle; when the stock of copies had been sold out by the publisher in the 1940s, the book was not reissued. Two years ago, while holding a Research Fellowship at The Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh, I had the pleasure of being



commissioned to write a comprehensive scholarly Introduction to a new edition of *A Life of Song*. Although Marjory Kennedy-Fraser is mostly known for her several *Songs of the Hebrides* volumes, that was but one part of her long professional life, which encompassed a wide and varied range of activities and interests. While writing extensively herself about her work as pianist, music teacher, lecturer and music critic, both her deep involvement in the women's suffrage movement and long engagement in local politics were curiously airbrushed out of her autobiography. In my Introduction, I try to provide an overview of her entire life and place her in context, stressing how much in line she was with the *Zeitgeist* of her era – the heyday of the Celtic Revival in Scotland. This new edition of *A Life of Song* came out in October 2011, published by The Islands Book Trust, Isle of Lewis, and is available from the publisher at: <http://www.theislandsbooktrust.com/store/books/a-life-of-song>

Several scholars have already drawn attention to the many Scottish references in Richard Wagner's initial sketches of *Der fliegende Holländer* and to the close links between the opera and the composer's own disastrous Nordic Sea journey some years earlier. Discussions tend to centre on the opera's libretto, however, and what appear to be musical reminiscences of Hebridean songs in the opera's core thematic material have not been alluded to since Marjory Kennedy-Fraser pointed them out at the beginning of the twentieth century. Her interest in Wagner's music seems to have begun already in the early 1880s, and over the years she studied his works carefully and introduced them to Scottish audiences in lectures, articles and recitals. In 1899, she travelled to Bayreuth for a performance of *Parsifal*. Some years later, while working with musical material she had recorded in the Outer Hebrides, she came across tunes and themes that she immediately associated with the German composer. Among her extant field recordings, now held at Edinburgh University Library, there are indeed some snippets of songs that bear a close resemblance to both leitmotifs and airs from Wagner's *œuvre*, in particular to Senta's ballad in *Der fliegende Holländer*. Drawing on a paper Kennedy-Fraser read to the Musical Association in London in 1918 as well as on various scattered references, both in her many music publications and among her working material, I began to make my own comparative analysis, an outline of which I presented at a Musica Scotica conference in Glasgow a few years ago. Aptly coinciding with the Wagner bicentenary in 2013, my completed study of the subject matter – an essay I have called, somewhat provocatively, 'Richard Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* – A flying Hebridean in disguise?' – will be published in *Scottish Studies*, volume 36.

CHOMBEC's current corresponding members are:

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If you would like to enhance CHOMBEC's representation by becoming a corresponding member for your base in Britain or overseas, please contact the editor. The duties are pleasant: to report from time to time on yourself, your background and work, your environment, your colleagues, and events in your part of the world in relation to their 'British world' history or identity.

News from France

Amanda Haste

'*C'est so British*' is a phrase one hears a lot in France, and it seems that this year the French are obsessed with all things British (except possibly the food...). For a republican country, there seems to have been a positively unhealthy interest in last year's Royal Wedding and now the Queen's Jubilee, with wall-to-wall TV coverage. I'm writing this in September 2012, surrounded by entire magazine issues devoted to Great Britain, with articles such as 'Solides comme le rock!' (*Version Femina*, Juin 2012) profiling 'the four most important British groups of the moment'. (They are, apparently, Arctic Monkeys, Metronomy, The Kooles, and The Vaccines).

On the classical side of the coin, the anglophilia is in evidence here in the south: recently I popped down

to a local concert venue to hear Purcell's *Funérailles de la Reine Mary*, composed for the composer's defunct patroness but also sung at Purcell's own funeral only a few months later. Also included on the programme were 'Entrée de la Nuit' and 'If Love is a Sweet Passion' from *The Fairy Queen*, and the Witches' Duo from *Dido and Aeneas*. There are several good choirs here and I have heard an inspiring performance of John Rutter's *Magnificat* in the *cathédrale* (i.e. big church) in Forcalquier. The 2011-12 Marseille Opera House season has also featured British compositions such as Elgar's Cello Concerto (soloist Anne Gastinel, musical direction by Jonathan Webb), and Peter Martin's *Paso doble - Trio miniature no. 2*.

One of the downsides of life in France is the endless bureaucracy: I recently interviewed successfully for a post at the University of Aix-Marseille, but the day before I was due to take up the post the department realised that I'd fallen foul of the very restrictive (even protectionist) education policy which required me to have taught for 300 hours per year for each of the preceding three years. My 30 years' teaching experience notwithstanding, in 2009 I was busy writing up my thesis and moving country, so I am effectively *pas employable*. Ah well, the only thing to do in the circumstances (once I'd run out of swear words) was to say '*Bof!*' with a suitably Gallic shrug of the shoulders, and carry on as an independent researcher in tandem with my work as a French-English translator specialising in academic texts.

My doctoral research, an ethnographic study of the role of music in contemporary monasticism, proved to be multidisciplinary, involving not only musicology but also areas such as identity studies, gender identity and authenticity, which I have subsequently developed. Following a conference paper given in Paris last year I have been asked to edit a forthcoming volume of articles on 'Contemporary Identities', and my paper 'Le Troisième Sexe? : L'expression de l'identité sexuelle chez les religieux chastes par leurs paroles et leur musique' ['A Third Gender?: Expression of Gender Identity in Celibate Monasticism through Words and Music'] has been accepted for publication by *Ars Identitatis* in collaboration with the Université Paris-Sorbonne.

Also in the pipeline is a paper 'Buying into the Monastic Experience: Are Chant Recordings the Real Thing?' which forms a chapter of a proposed Canadian book on authenticity currently under review, and with an anticipated publication date in early 2013. Commercial chant recordings by monastic communities are heavily marketed as 'authentic' monastic music sung by 'real' monks and nuns, yet my own research has revealed that the music currently being played, sung and composed by monastics is not confined to the chant genre, but actually extends into the folk idiom and even into soft pop. This poses the question of

whether, through chant recordings, we really are being sold the genuine article, or simply our received ideas of how monastic music should sound. In this paper I discuss the reality of manipulation of personnel, performing space and musical programming involved in the production of a high-quality commercial recording, going on to explore the criteria for authenticity, whether a perception of authenticity deepens the musical experience, and whether the authenticity of the product really matters, as long as the receiver benefits from the desired effect.

As well as chant, an important element in monastic life is *hesychia* (prayerful silence), and I wanted to know how creative monastics respond to this. Many of today's monks and nuns are active composers, with some entering their communities as highly-trained musicians, while others find themselves drawn to musical expression after profession (taking their vows). So how do they respond if, for instance, the words being pondered on during the hours of private prayer take on a musical life of their own, assuming a melodic or harmonic form? And what happens if musical thoughts arrive during contemplative 'still' prayer, during which any thoughts are considered a distraction? If the recipient considers the creative response to be divinely inspired, should they stop praying to attend to the musical creation, or take the conscious decision to banish it and concentrate on the job in hand? I wanted to compare the monastic response with secular experiences of a prayerful silence, so I conducted a comparative ethnographic study of responses from secular Christian composers (Anglican, Catholic, nonconformist) and from composers in the Quaker tradition to whom silence is, as for monastics, an integral component of worship. I then explored issues in methodological constructs for discursive prayer and meditation, and in conceptual notions of silence. On submitting this work to a journal one reviewer wanted a considerable reworking of my discussion of prayer methodology which, as a confirmed agnostic, was all new territory to me; however, the extra reading proved very interesting and productive and, the revisions having been accepted, the resulting paper "Prayerful Silence and Creative Response in Twenty-First-Century Monasticism" is to be published in *Culture and Religion* in 2013.

In August I completed another tranche of transcription and translation of some fascinating archival material from the French Revolution for Professor Carmen Mangion (Birkbeck), namely interviews by the *commissaires* of the National Assembly with nuns from displaced British convents. Following the sixteenth-century dissolution of the monasteries many British convents re-established themselves in Europe, mainly in France and Belgium. In France, come the Revolution, religious life was outlawed and these communities found themselves

once again on the point of expulsion; their property was seized as *biens nationaux* [property of the state], although the sisters were allowed to stay in their convents for life if they wished. The interviews show that virtually all of them chose to do so, the *verbatim* reports clearly demonstrating the intelligence and political acuity with which the sisters, and especially the superiors, balanced the needs of their community with the demands of French life.

So, even without an academic post, my research – and my translation work – continues apace, focusing on the English abroad. *So British!*

Research Students

A Singaporean Composer in London

Jun Zubillaga-Pow, King's College London

In April 2011, one of Singapore's most influential composers and music educators, Leong Yoon Pin passed away. He was a few months shy of becoming an octogenarian, but for more than sixty years Mr Leong or 梁老师 (Teacher Leong), as he is affectionately known within the local music scene, has nurtured countless musicians and music-lovers. Many members of the small group of composers active in Singapore today have also benefited from his guidance in their own personal and musical development. As part of a longer biography, the following short excerpt recounts the life experiences of the young composer in London and Singapore during the onset of the Cold War.

Having learnt a few ditties at school, Yoon Pin was to be acquainted with more English and Scottish music when he was awarded a scholarship from the Ministry of Education to study music in London from 1955 to 1958. He further improved his musical skills in singing, playing the piano and composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Travelling daily to John Carpenter Street in London, Yoon Pin would have to reserve for himself one of the practice rooms available in the Victorian building.

Inaugurated in 1886, the school was remarkably well equipped by the 1950s, being described as

a square building of three floors and a basement... [including] a Common Room for the 'professors' and 45 studios, each separated by a foot of solid concrete to deaden the sound, with double doors to

cut out the noise from the passage... Each room contained a grand piano and an upright piano.⁶

A flight of stairs at the entrance of the building led to the gigantic waiting room. As many past students have described, an array of black and brown settees would line the perimeter of the room around a huge table in the centre. This is the place where everyone gathered and where students waited for their professors and acquaintances alike. In order to meet his tutors, Yoon Pin would have to climb an additional flight of broad, brown steps. There he would wait for his piano professor, George Rogers. According to one former student,

George Rogers belied his name and turned out to be French; he had been a pupil of both [Alfred] Cortot and Nadia Boulanger. He was at times dynamic and inspiring, and would make me learn music off the beaten track, such as Petrassi's *Toccata* and works by Albeniz.⁷

With such a 'dynamic' piano teacher, Yoon Pin's knowledge of the piano repertoire expanded, most likely towards the Mediterranean style of the French, Italian and Spanish (perhaps this encouraged him to study with Nadia Boulanger later on). On the other hand, his composition professor, Barclay Wilson, was considered to be more reserved and conservative. It seems likely that most of Yoon Pin's piano pieces at the Guildhall were written as generic exercises (Capriccio, Romance, Fugue), whereas his five vocal pieces at least managed to include some reflections of his life experiences.

Living away from home had inspired Yoon Pin to write songs based on his memory of the Second World War, and the peace and the camaraderie that came after. Two choral pieces bore the titles of *Grievance* (诉) and *The Fear of War* (可怕的战争), while two other solo songs were more forward-looking in portraying a *Sunny Sky* (艳阳天) and *Peace and Friendship* (为了和平和友谊). His first orchestral piece entitled *Bridge Suite* was more likely to be a compositional exercise during his second year of study. He would spend his leisure time with friends and fellow musicians from what was then Malaya. These include the tenor Choo Hwee Lim and pianist Yu Chun Yee, both of whom, like Yoon Pin, had studied under the Singapore-based South African pianist Noreen Stokes.

When his studies came to an end, Yoon Pin returned to Singapore. While he was delighted to see his friends and family again, he was disappointed that the earlier political unrests and the anti-communist



Leong Yoon Pin

agenda of the colonial government had resulted in the liquidation of the Rediffusion Youth Choir, which he had founded eight years ago. He was not aware that the then Chief Minister of Singapore had been in London annually to negotiate self-governance with the colonial office. Yoon Pin suspected that his movement had been monitored for possible communist associations, which was then sporadic in Vietnam and Malaya. This intuition was confirmed when, upon his return to the country, Yoon Pin was summoned by the Internal Security Council for questioning. This coincided with the endeavour to weed out communism, before self-governance could be granted by the British colonial authorities in 1959.

As a requirement of the scholarship given by the Department of Education, Yoon Pin took up the position of lecturer at the Teachers' Training College. His first end-of-year assignment was to conduct the college orchestra in *The Gondoliers*, an operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan, at the now-demolished Cultural Centre on Canning Rise. The operettas of this famous British partnership have always had great appeal to Singaporean audiences, whether musically trained or not (musical training being a measure of class and racial superiority). The Teachers' Training College had already staged both *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *The Mikado* in 1953 and it is very likely that Yoon Pin, having been a student at the college himself, was involved in these earlier productions. The young snare drum player, Bernard Tan, who was sixteen at the time and is now a composer in his own right, described Yoon Pin's conducting as 'straightforward and clear, without any stylistic air'. He also thought that it was rather bold of Yoon Pin to take on such a major role in the production when he was only 28 years of age. During his time at the Guildhall, Yoon Pin might have studied conducting in his own time or by observing the master-classes of Norman Del Mar, who was then the professor of conducting.

⁶ Hugh Barty-King, *GSMD: A Hundred Years' Performance*, London: Stainer & Bell, 1980, 38.

⁷ John Dalby, www.gsmd.ac.uk, accessed 13 February 2008.

In addition, Yoon Pin gained useful working knowledge from the annual opera productions organised and conducted by the principal of the Guildhall, Edric Cundell, who was such a persistent advocate of Mozart that one critic called the school the Guildhall School of Mozart and Drama. Furthermore, the many concerts and opera productions Yoon Pin attended in London would have contributed to his

creative development, one of many formative experiences that shaped his influence on the future directions of the music scene in Singapore.

Jun Zubillaga-Pow is a PhD candidate at King's College London. His research interest is in the art music of twentieth-century Vienna, Buenos Aires and Singapore.

Forthcoming events relating to music in Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth

30 January 2013, 5.15 pm
CHOMBEC talk: Martyn Brabbins in conversation with John Pickard, Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol

9 February 2013, 7.30 pm Concert:
Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* & Arthur Butterworth *Symphony No. 4*, University Symphony Orchestra, cond. John Pickard, Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol

19 February 2013, 4.30 pm
Research seminar: Judith Weir, CBE, Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol

8 March 2013, 1.15 pm Recital:
Britten songs, John Mark Ainsley & William Whitehead, Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol

8-9 March 2013 Britten Centenary Conference, University of East Anglia
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/music/music-events/britten-centenary>

13 March 2013, 1.15pm Concert:
Howells, Bednall, Browne & Tallis choral music, Bristol University Singers, Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol

23 March 2013 CHOMBEC conference on Frank Bridge, Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol
 Speakers to include Mark Amos, Stephen Banfield, Jessica Chan, Ben Earle, Lewis Foreman, Fabian Huss, Paul Hindmarsh, Fiona Richards, and Anthony Payne

25 March 2013 The small economies of the 'new' music industry, Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol
 Conference focussing on the small-scale commercial practices developing in the 'new' music industry, paying particular attention to local economies and 'direct' interactions between musicians and fans

27 April 2013 Musica Scotica – Eighth Annual Conference, The Open University, Edinburgh, Scotland

17 May 2013 'The universal language of mankind': Music and the Myth of Intelligibility, Wadham College, Oxford

24-27 June 2013 Ninth Biennial International Conference on Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, University of Cardiff
http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/music/new_sandevents/events/conferences/13_MNCB/index.html

5-7 July 2013 Benjamin Britten on Stage and Screen, University of Nottingham
<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/music/events/benjamin-britten-on-stage-and-screen.aspx>

12-13 September 2013 Georgian Pleasures, Holburne Museum, Bath
 An interdisciplinary two-day conference taking the diversity of the experience of Georgian Pleasures as its theme.

24-27 October 2013 Benjamin Britten at 100: An American Centenary Symposium, Illinois State University