



 News

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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 Seventh Biennial Conference on Music In 19th-Century Britain

This, the seventh of these fascinating conferences, was hosted by the University of Bristol's Music Department, with the support of CHOMBEC, from 23–26 July 2009. After some words of welcome from Guido Heldt, the keynote lecture was delivered on the opening afternoon by Peter Holman (University of Leeds), 'The Shock of the Old: English Music and the Discovery of the Past'. Peter covered a wide range of issues, including the revivals of 'ancient music' in the 18th century to the work of enthusiasts such as Arnold Dolmetsch and Arthur Reynolds.

This was followed by a wine reception, generously sponsored by Ashgate Publishing, in the Recital Room. Ashgate had a stand in the foyer, along with a similar one from Boydell & Brewer. The plentiful supply of wine and nibbles made for a very jovial gathering.

As usual there was a mouth-watering choice of papers over the following three days. Panel sessions on the first full day covered a variety of topics, from 'American music in and around 19th-century Bristol' (Stephen Banfield), and musical networks in Bath (Andrew Clarke), and Scotland (Moirra Ann Harris and Jane Mallinson), to the growth of music as an academic subject (Rosemary Golding, Kiernan Crichton, and Luke Berryman), and a panel session discussing the lack of a national opera in Britain during

the late 19th century (Alison Mero, Paul Rodmell, and Steven Martin). After lunch, Janet Snowman explored the life and work of the artist and musician John Orlando Parry (1810–1879). Janet took as her focus Parry's *The Poster Man* (1835), which is a wonderfully colourful and detailed painting of a London wall, covered in posters, advertising all sorts of musical

events. Janet teased an intriguing and richly-researched story out of almost every inch of the work. The talk was interspersed with some songs composed by Parry and his contemporaries, performed with faultless aplomb by Thomas Barnard (bass) and pianist Christopher Gould, both of them former students at the Royal Academy. The photograph here shows Thomas, behatted, during his performance of the Hon. Caroline Sheridan Norton's hysterical 'Fanny Grey, A Ballad of Real Life' (ca1850). The event concluded with a sing-along, before we all



adjourned for a stiff cup of tea!

After tea, the last papers of the day were delivered, covering such varied topics from the finance and status of musicians (Peter Horton, Rachel Milestone, and Jana Sims) to operatic impulses in Stanford's settings of the Evening Canticles (Joseph Sargent), and Wagnerism in Holst's little-known opera *Sita* (Christopher Scheer). Friday ended with a superb piano recital by David Owen Norris. His programme

included two works: Karg-Elert's arrangement of Elgar's *Falstaff* and William Sterndale Bennett's Piano Sonata, *The Maid of Orleans*. Karg-Elert's colourful piano arrangement illustrated superbly the work's architectural splendour. Accompanied by excellent programme notes, the Sterndale Bennett was an equally pleasurable and revealing piece to listen to—the perfect way to end the day.

On Saturday, Benedict Naylor discussed Sullivan's *Ivanhoe* and Phyllis Weliver tackled Hubert Parry's *Prometheus Unbound* in relation to the English musical renaissance. Other sessions focussed upon 'Music and Women's Lives' (Judy Barger, Michelle Meinhardt); 'Professional Problems' (Leanne Langley, Jennifer O'Connor, Fiona M Palmer); 'Music Criticism' (Duncan Boutwood, Donna S Parsons, Paul Watt); 'Musical Periodicals' (Michael Kassler, Meirion Hughes); and 'Folk-Song Questions' (Damien Sagrillo, Bennett Zon). In the afternoon, in the session 'Festivals and Concerts', Christine Andrews threw light on Costa's monumental Handel performances of 1859 at the Crystal Palace. Christopher Redwood's presentation on William Hurlstone's Century Concerts was well received, and one of the many conference highlights was Rachel Cowgill's paper on Mary Wakefield and the Westmoreland Festival, which presented an invaluable insight into the evolution of local music societies. In a parallel session, 'Music, the Empire and the Military', Trevor Herbert examined the influence of the military band, and Simon Purtell discussed 'A Pitch for Empire', which dealt with the issue of performing pitch in late 19th-century Melbourne.

In the evening, the customary conference dinner took place at *Zero Degrees*, which is, among other things, one of several microbreweries in Bristol.

On Sunday morning Michael Allis put forward a persuasive case for Elgar's *In the South*, while Lewis Foreman read a revealing paper on the evolution of

the symphony in 19th-century England, allowing his audience to examine a fascinating collection of scores. Other papers that morning were 'Performance Issues' (Bonnie Smart); 'Seascapes and Soundscapes' (Alf C Carrington, Kristina Guiguet); and marking the composer's bi-centenary of his birth, 'Mendelssohn' (Sterling Lambert, Nicholas Phillips).



Between-Session Banter

Finally, congratulations to Guido Heldt on his smooth and unobtrusive organisation—no easy task. These Conferences are so engaging and informative that one wonders how to curb one's impatience for the next one. Two years? Goodness!

Christopher Redwood and Steven Martin

The Music in 19th-Century Britain conference programme remains available for consultation at: www.bristol.ac.uk/music/19thcbritainmusic2009

SPECIAL BOOK OFFER

We are delighted to be able to continue to offer increasingly rare copies of the biography of the extraordinary Bristol-born composer,

Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795–1856)

Written by the musicologist Edgar Hunt in 1977, the book is a formal study of Pearsall's life, tracing from his roots in Bristol and following his remarkable progress through Germany and on to Switzerland. There he set up home in a magnificent castle on the shores of the Bodensee, and yet through all of his travelling life, he studied, wrote, and composed. Hunt's work remains the only published biography of this remarkable man.

We offer them for sale at £7.50 each. Secure your order with a cheque payable to the University of Bristol, adding £2.50 for each copy that needs to be mailed. (Copies will be sent surface mail to territories beyond Europe.) Proceeds will offset CHOMBEC's general expenditure. Send your cheque and order to CHOMBEC, Department of Music, University of Bristol, Victoria Rooms, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1SA, UK.

Fourth CHOMBEC Conference Worlds to Conquer: the travelling virtuoso in the long 19th-century

Victoria Rooms, Bristol, UK, 5–7 July, 2010



An Italian troupe arrives in Macao from Chile in 1833 and mounts seven Rossini operas over the summer before moving on to Calcutta; a renowned French harpist, bigamist and forger, dies in Sydney in 1856 after a reunion with a musical fellow-criminal from his London days; a Canadian diva sings 'Home, sweet home' to British sailors in the middle of *The Barber of Seville* at her debut in Malta, while nearly a hundred years earlier another young singer loses her life, her daughter and her fabulous Indian fortune on the voyage home. Many other musicians, remembered or forgotten, move around the world, often unconcerned with national spheres of influence, amassing debts or fortunes and acquiring or abandoning spouses as careers and reputations are made, lost or reinvented.

Stories of such musical adventurers abound, especially from the 19th century in the era of steamships and gold rushes, and for every colourful rogue or genius such as Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt who conquered Europe there was another who travelled the world. The glamour and the tedium, journeys and repertoires, tribulations and triumphs, stamina and stardom pertaining to such characters can be savoured for their own sake or framed within the contexts of travel literature. Yet they can also be invoked to challenge the musical histories in which they have all too seldom appeared.

Why did they go? How did they or their agents manage their tours? Was their repertoire tailored to national communities; was it old or new? Were touring networks and remittances a crucial part of the international musical economy? How do we assess the standard of performance in peripheral contexts (and when were they peripheral)? What were the patronage networks and the national distinctions and tensions? What was the significance of the virtuoso group, the virtuoso family? How and why were institutional careers overseas sought, sustained, endured? Was the visiting examiner a new type of virtuoso?

The posing or—even better—the answering of these and related research questions in 30-minute slots is invited and encouraged. Emphasis is on the world beyond Europe, on translocality and transnationality, on musical provision and consumption, on case studies involving individuals, groups, genres, places, institutions and repertoires, and on the interrelationships between music and politics, geography, economics, technology and material culture in the 'long' 19th century, a portion of whose global musical history we may thereby begin writing. It is hoped that an edited book will be based on selected conference proceedings.

For details of bookings and the programme, which is to be announced, please visit the conference website:

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

CHOMBEC News and Events

The CHOMBEC Lectures

Last October saw the first of a new annual series of CHOMBEC lectures, where eminent scholars and leaders in music-related disciplines share their knowledge and experience in a one-hour session. We were delighted to welcome first Tom Sutcliffe, erstwhile editor of *Music and Musicians*, and sometime opera critic of *Vogue*, *The Guardian*, and the *Evening Standard*.

Can Opera become habit-forming in the English-speaking world?

Tom's lecture was a thought-provoking and erudite presentation on a subject that was obviously close to his heart. As well as providing historical insight of the state of opera in Britain, and in particular making comparison to the scene twenty years ago, he also made a comparison with opera-going audiences in other European countries. The conclusion he drew was a depressing one: that opera in Britain has seen a decline, not only in the number of people buying seats—a point he made was of the horrendous sums of money demanded by theatres for the privilege of a seat—but also of the demise in quality of the productions. Of course, such lack of support comes not just from a weakening economy, but equally from the withdrawal of government funding. Tom's particular description of one politician as 'a young snake', was example enough of the level of his opinion of the synthesis of politics and funding for the arts. His lament was for the contrast with Germany, where opera is considered a vital part of local culture, and attracts large subsidy as a matter of course.

Ending on a salutary note, his encouragement was for those of us in Bristol to try our hardest to support our local theatres, to use them and ensure that we do not lose them through simple neglect and avaricious cost cutting of economically-driven local and national government. It was a difficult lesson eloquently taught.

What did the Germans ever do for us?

Guido Heldt began with a joke: that academics have to invent problems in order to justify their existence in solving them! He chose to concentrate mostly on the relationship between music in England and Germany during the century before 1900—i.e. the 'Dark Ages' of our native composers. He gave several examples from German writers, citing the dearth of any worthwhile music emanating from our shores during the 19th century, including, of course, Oskar Schmidt's well-known damning indictment, penned in 1904, that England was '*das Land ohne Musik*'; so it was overall a pretty depressing picture, with little room for optimism.

By coincidence, last year was a bumper one for notable anniversaries of several German composers

who enjoyed great success in England: Handel (d1759); Haydn (d1809); Mendelssohn (b1809). The dominance of these three was even rubbed in by Charles Hazlewood's recent television programme on music in England—the only other composer featured in the series was Henry Purcell (d1659)—after which date our native music 'died for 250 years'. As an example of the German critics, Forkel said that 'the English do not have much taste.' Even Hubert Parry, writing in 1907, acknowledged the German preference for instrumental music, against the English preference for foreign music! This prejudice was not new then, and still continues today: John Cooper changed his name back in the 17th century to Giovanni Coprario, and more recently, in 1975, Stephen Bishop changed his surname to Kovacevich for similar reasons of fashion.

One shaft of light was Robert Schumann's praise of the music of William Sterndale Bennett, although he was a pupil of Mendelssohn, and wrote in a similar, Germanic style. In fact many native composers with ambition went to study in Germany, including Parry; and the English academic and critic, Wilfrid Mellers, declared that 'Handel polished off English national music'.

Guido then dealt with the more interesting topic of the reasons for the apparent musical drought, which included the British concentration on external matters, such as trading and building the Empire. He pointed out that at this same time, Germany did not exist as a nation, but as a conglomeration of many small principalities, duchies, and states, each with its own court and attendant musicians, enjoying very specific patronage and support. He went on to say that this same subsidy of the arts has persisted into modern Germany, which still boasts over a hundred professional opera companies. The contrast of the money available in England to that in Germany was perfectly illustrated by the example of Josef Haydn (who was treated as the great foreign celebrity of his day) being able to command 3000 guilden for one single concert in London—more than he could earn in a whole year in his native land.

Still, there was room for a counter-blast from Granville Bantock, who declared that the 'Strauss' (Richard, of course) was a 'German bird of pride and gluttony, who went in for kicking dust in the face of his audience'. Bantock, however, can hardly be claimed as an 'English Nationalist' composer in the way Vaughan Williams was, for example, since he studied with the prominent Wagnerian, Frederick Corder, and made much use of similar musical language. If only Guido had included more of the 20th century we could have had a more optimistic picture. Perhaps a follow-up might be arranged!

During questions, Stephen Banfield raised a valid point about bad luck, citing Balfe's opera, *Falstaff*, which he reckoned a good piece, full of wit and good tunes, which received but a handful of performances – now if only his name had been Balfasikov or Balfisini?...

Richard Carder and James Hobson

Music and Locality: 5

Music in the West Country: its social history from the late 17th century

Stephen Banfield

A first report on work in progress.

From 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2010 my post is that of University Research Fellow, devoted full-time to this project. Its outcome, though by no means within the fellowship period, will be a book on the subject, the first comprehensive history of music in an English region. (Roz Southey's work on the north-east and Trevor Fawcett's on Norwich and Norfolk are invaluable precursors, but both are limited to the 18th century.)

The west country was chosen for the obvious reason that CHOMBEC is situated in what has always been its leading city, Bristol, and was already developing its regional research brief through postgraduate students, a conference, concerts, and workshops. But it also presented the challenge of investigating the history of artistic culture in an area far less renowned for its musical achievements than, say, the midlands or north-west with their orchestras, choirs, bands, conservatoires, music hall and pop groups. The south-west has never sustained a conservatoire, and the history of its one ongoing professional orchestra casts considerable light on what ultimately I hope to demonstrate as two opposing problems: the economic draining of the English regions by London, which has been going on for centuries, and, in direct contradiction of this observation's premise, the tendency to measure musical value and achievement in institutionalised and economic terms.

How do we assess the contribution of a jobbing music teacher, seller and performer, say in Tiverton in the first half of the 19th century, who networked and earned his living regionally, against that of a star such as Charles Incedon who, born in the farthest reaches of Cornwall, used Bristol and Bath as a stepping stone to a metropolitan career (he was Haydn's first tenor in *The Creation*)? I take it the first thing to do is assemble sufficient representative data that patterns begin to emerge, and to that end I have been visiting public libraries throughout the region. Most have local studies collections, and most local studies collections contain amateur or professional chronicles, editions, directories and indices not accessible elsewhere—a three-volume typescript history of Crediton, a run of Frome's local studies journal, a card index to the *Exeter Flying Post*, a photocopy of Barnstaple's local carols. After Christmas come the county record offices, interspersed with the massive amount of work that can now be done online. Everything is thrown into one all-purpose spreadsheet, currently with 6,000 entries and likely to grow to 40,000, which can be sorted and filtered for various purposes. To return to the question, at least the two worlds, that of star and jobber, must have interacted. Thalberg played in Tiverton in 1839.

Who went to hear him? Richard England, organist of St Peter's? Mr Bartlett, organist of St George's? Who tuned his piano? One of the Salters, perhaps? And were they a single family of organists? (Daniel, appointed Tiverton 1785; W, active Exeter 1829–46; Mr, married in Wiveliscombe in 1837; John William, married and forming a new church choir in Torrington in 1848.)

One answer may be to aim for a new model of evaluation in terms of those rare persons who combined something of both roles. At the moment, the prime candidates for such reassessment would appear to be William Jackson and Percy Whitlock. Nearly 200 years apart, both, unlike Elgar in the west midlands, attained national and even a measure of international recognition while not just residing in the provinces but earning their living from them. (Jackson was organist of Exeter Cathedral, Whitlock of the borough of Bournemouth.) Both—and this is of most interest to me—also found themselves somewhat at loggerheads with metropolitan values. Jackson clashed with Burney over the merits of plain English melody against those of Italian opera; Whitlock fused light music with aspirational expression in his compositions and performances but trod the tightrope of potential rejection from both sides. Yet both conquered the metropolis while living elsewhere, Whitlock in his recitals and broadcasts, Jackson with commercial success in the London theatres. The question perhaps arises as to whether, had there been more Jacksons and Whitlocks committed to a career in this beautiful and desirable region, our very aesthetics might have become somehow environmentally tempered. There have been organised attempts to make this happen—Dartington College, the BBC West of England Service, festivals from St Endellion's one to Glastonbury's two—and musical by-products of other successful establishments, such as the west country's tradition of religious nonconformism on the one hand and its wealth of cathedral cities on the other. But most of these have so far proved unsustainable. To revert to the question of art-music composers, no region currently boasts the English equivalent of Dominick Argento in Minneapolis or the musical one of David Edgar in Birmingham, and Alan Ayckbourn in Scarborough. Might that change? Might a book about the regional musical past help people envision a regional musical future?

Civilising Calcutta: Opera as a tool of colonisation in 1830s Calcutta

Esmeralda Rocha

Of late, in the works of scholars such as Edward Said and Linda and Michael Hutcheon, there has been some exploration of the nexus between opera and colonialism, particularly with the recognition of the importance of opera to understanding 19th-century imperialism and the creation of the 'Orient'. These works, however, have been concerned only with representations of the Orient in music literature (for

example the Hutcheons' examination of India as the exotic 'Other' in 19th-century French opera). By contrast, my doctoral research is concerned with examining the connection between opera and imperialism from some different angles: how does opera function in colonial societies? How do these communities employ opera as a tool of colonisation? What is the nature of the interaction between European opera and the *real* Orient (as opposed to the 'Orient' of European creation and mythologising)?

My approach is based on three aspects of Orientalist theory. First, it recognises that Orientalism is an attitude and an approach that underpins colonialism. Second, it takes as its starting point Said's definition of Orientalism as a discourse, by which we may 'understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.' Third, my approach seeks to confirm a key premise of Orientalist theory: that the culture of colonial powers gained strength and identity by creating polarities between itself and the 'Orient'.



Calcutta Town Hall ca 1865 (courtesy of Piyal Kundu)

One of the key hypotheses is that far from being a decadent and otiose art form, opera occupied a variety of roles across the British Empire during the 19th century, and that these roles are reflected (and, in some cases, established) in performance practices, audience responses, and the attitudes and values towards opera by the communities at large. (I say communities because the population of any British colonial settlement was separated into so many individual yet interconnected sub-sections.) Taking Calcutta as an example, I argue that opera served multiple main sociological, political and ideological purposes that are best examined in a colonial context. On the one hand, one must consider opera's role *within* Calcutta's White Town: it was not only an entertainment, but also a means by which British and other European inhabitants were able to create and

express their social status and identity. Additionally, one must also consider the value that White Town attached to opera in its quest to establish a 'respectable' collective identity that could be broadcast to the rest of the Empire, and the world. On the other hand, however, it is vital to examine the significance of opera in the relationship between White Town and Black Town; that is, how opera was utilised as a tool of colonisation.

Opera was introduced to Calcutta by a small troupe of opera singers in 1833, the first year that the British government allowed free migration to British India. The troupe featured Italian, Spanish and South American musicians. While they would style themselves as the Italian Musical Society, a moniker that reflects the pretensions and insularity of White Town, this travelling opera troupe had appeared under the name of the Pisoni–Betaglia Company, or the Pizzoni–Bettali Italian Opera Company in other places.

The troupe comprised four principal singers, Teresa Schieroni (Mezzo-soprano), Margherita Caravaglia [sometimes appears as Garavaglia] (contralto), Domingo Pizzoni (baritone), and Giacomo/Joaquin Bettali (baritone). In addition there were two secondary singers, Guis Mayorga and Signor Garate (the latter of whom also functioned as chorus master), Uruguayan-born Louis Theophile Planel, who acted as violinist, pianist, conductor and composer, and an undetermined number of instrumentalists.

The late John Rosselli placed Schieroni at theatres in Piacenza, Modena and Reggio. Additionally, I have found traces of Teresa Schieroni at the Pavia Carnevale in 1818 appearing as the eponymous heroine of *La Cenerentola* (Rossini, 1817). Calcutta's newspapers also provide insight into Schieroni's earlier European experience. In 1836, The Englishman printed a translation of a review of Schieroni as Ninetta in *La Gazza Ladra* (Rossini, 1815) from the *Cadiz Gazette* 1827. The review is very complimentary of her voice and stage manner.

Examining European records also sheds light on Schieroni's family, which appears to have been quite musical. Two women, possibly her sisters, appear in the musical records of the time: Adelaide Schieroni is listed as a professional harpist, which would explain Teresa's mastery of that instrument, while Luigia Schieroni appears in performances in provincial Italian theatres. Such records also undermine Rosselli's claim that Caravaglia was without European experience. Margherita Caravaglia appeared on Italian stages at least as early as 1814, in the première of *Evelina* (Coccia, 1814) in Milan, and also is known to have performed in Verona in the production of Mayr's *La Bianca Rosa e la Rosa* three years later. CHOMBEC member, Ben Walton (Cambridge), is currently researching this troupe's work in Macau during 1833.

The idea to come to Calcutta, although facilitated and made more attractive by the new immigration laws, was likely to have been based upon the success that a virtuoso violinist, Massoni, had enjoyed recently in Calcutta. Massoni, who went on to international fame, was the brother-in-law of Planel, and it may be presumed that he sent Planel promising reports of Calcutta. Planel's connection to Massoni also evidently

smoothed the Company's introduction to Calcutta with the loyal citizens predisposed to helping the troupe with fairer than usual financial arrangements at the Chowringhee. Within months of the arrival of the troupe, many of the Europeans in Calcutta heralded their inchoate operatic culture as a means of civilizing the natives and encouraging anglicised education. Early in 1834, a letter to the editor of the premier newspaper of Calcutta, *The Englishman*, was published, appealing to the 'Native community' to support the Italian Opera Company; the author asserts that:

The native community has been so supine and indifferent about this matter that with the exception of a few individuals, of I believe one name and family [Tagore] ... not a single one of the class alluded to has enrolled his name in the Subscription List!!!¹

The author, using the nom de plume 'Common Sense', is disappointed by this lack of interest, not merely for its implications for the success of the art form, but, principally, because he sees all western arts, particularly Italian opera, as a civilizing force which is 'eminently calculated to generate and confirm a taste for such recreations'.²

He then takes it upon himself to ask the titled, the opulent and industrious classes of the native community on what ground they can pretend to exempt themselves from all participation in a project teeming with such beneficial promise, without subjecting themselves to the imputation of being indisposed to sympathize with objects of sentimental and moral pleasure.³

'Common Sense' also stresses that by rejecting any connection to the opera, the Indian community is snubbing 'the calls of humanity and justice towards those deserving Artists, [as well as] the favourable opportunity here presented of cultivating a more frequent and cordial intercourse with the leading and influential Members of Society.'

Such ideas were not the province of a vocal minority. The editor of *The Englishman* expanded upon the view raised by 'Common Sense':

We think Common Sense...has shewn [sic] that, in neglecting to support the Italian Opera, the natives of the upper classes are guilty of a species of disloyalty; and we are perfectly sure that they are depriving themselves of an important instrument of civilization.⁴

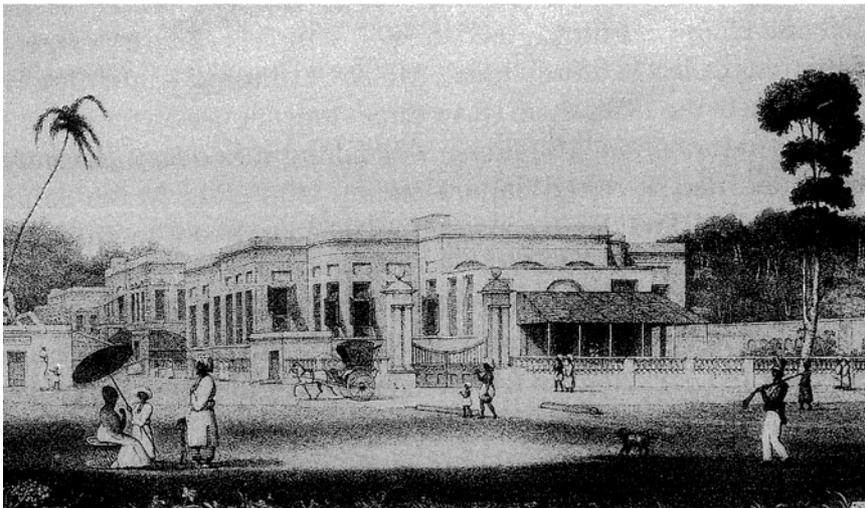
It is interesting to note that while admonishing the 'natives of the upper classes', the editor of *The Englishman* apparently deemed the natives of the lower classes to be beyond civilisation. Not only were the British exalting the usefulness of opera as a means of 'introducing civilisation', but they are also conveniently using opera to support their exploitation of the existing caste system to create a power hierarchy in Bengal society with themselves at the zenith.⁵

The issue becomes more bizarre when the editor later claims that opera's potential to civilise whole nations is evident from the role of opera in the artistic and educational development of the British themselves:

On reference to the history of the rise and progress of the Italian Opera in England, it will not be difficult to shew that it has had a very sensible effect on the surface of society, in introducing a degree of

refinement and love for the fine arts which did not exist before we were made acquainted with its charms...[T]here has scarcely existed in England a more potent agent in softening and humanizing the rough exterior of society than the music which has been given to it for the past 40 years by the accomplished natives of Italy.⁶

The opinions expressed by 'Common Sense', and supported by *The Englishman*, display not only the very worst of the condescending and narrow attitudes of British imperialism, but also grossly mistake the role and history of opera in England. Italian opera had thrived there for over 100 years, not forty, as is suggested by the editor. The 'civilisation' of England and her people, which took place over the course of



Chowringhee Theatre ca 1834 by William Wood (courtesy of UBSPD)

1 Signed under the pseudonym 'Common Sense', 'Italian Opera', *The Englishman*, 22 April 1834, p.3.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Editor, *The Englishman*, 22 April 1834, p.2.

5 Further discussion of the issue of class vs. caste and the British appropriation and exploitation of Indian caste divisions, is contained in Vinay Bahl, 'Terminology, History and Debate: "Caste" Formation or "Class" Formation', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 17/2 (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1994), pp.265-318.

6 Editor, *The Englishman*, 22 April 1834, p.2.

the 18th century, surely had more to do with early industrialisation and the enlightenment than opera. Moreover, the arrival of Italian opera cannot be seen, by any means, to herald the arrival of culture and the arts to England, which can trace a distinctive and rich tradition of music and the fine arts at least ten centuries.

After the conclusion of the 1833–4 season, and in a bid to encourage the support of his fellow Anglo-Indians for another season of Italian opera, another Englishman wrote to the newspaper lauding the civilising potential of opera. This time there was a different emphasis. This author argued that the promotion of European high-art entertainment amongst Indian people was a means of encouraging their acquisition of European language skills. The fact that Calcutta's opera claimed the patronage of many non-Italophone Europeans, a fact that undermines the argument, is ignored:

We have reason to believe that the study of the English and other European languages [by Natives] in Calcutta has been greatly stimulated by Dramatic representations and a taste for the Drama and Opera [at the Chowringhee Theatre]; which, however liable to abuse, like all human conceptions, has been found in every country, and in every age, a mighty engine of civilization and national improvement.⁷

The same article goes on to reinforce the paternalistic and prejudiced sentiments which embody the cultural imperialism of the British at this time, boldly claiming that the entertainments which the Chowringhee Theatre had offered that past season⁸ were superior in quality to the Native amusements that most Indian people at that time enjoyed. Such attitudes demonstrates how the opera (both as art form and institution) was fundamental to Anglo-Indians as they sought to place their tastes, and therefore themselves, at the top of a cultural hierarchy:

Finally we trust that the Proprietors and the public at large will not cease strenuously to support the Chowringhee Theatre, and to encourage its appropriation to those uses for which it was erected. We feel persuaded that the Drama may be cause of civilisation and fostering a *purser* taste amongst the Natives of this country, by assisting to *wean* them from those *childish* or more objectionable exhibitions, which can only debase the minds and corrupt the habits of a people.⁹ [All emphases added.]

The infantilization of the native person, and his/her cultural tastes, is a well-recognised process of occupation, one that attempts to establish and justify the role of the enlightened colonialist. It was not

7 'Chowringhee Theatre', *The Englishman and Military Chronicle*, Monday 14 July 1834, p.4.

8 Italian opera, French vaudeville, English drama and ballad opera.

9 'Chowringhee Theatre', *The Englishman and Military Chronicle*, Monday 14 July 1834, p.4.

enough to emphasise the superiority of opera, and the other high-arts with which the British wished to associate themselves. For an idea of superiority to be determined, the dichotomy must be complete; hence, Indian theatrical arts and the 'lower' species of popular western arts that were slowly making their way to Calcutta had to be discredited. The language used by the writer at *The Englishman* not only infantilizes native culture, but, by referring to the Chowringhee as being able to foster 'purer' tastes, the article makes it clear that native arts are in some way tainted.

These discussions of opera's role in its first season in Calcutta differ significantly from discussions during the art form's golden age in Calcutta (in both the 1860s and 70s), as they do from opera in Melbourne, or Bristol, or any other place across the British world during the 19th century. The thesis I am currently writing attempts not only to describe the diverse socio-political and cultural roles that opera played in these places, but also attempts to demonstrate the impact of these roles upon operatic performance practice. In doing so, I hope to promote further scholarship of the nexus between opera and colonialism, and make evident that opera, like any other art form, is a cultural phenomenon which cannot be divorced from its context, both local and global. Any exploration of opera and/or operatic performance practice necessitates an understanding of the links between opera and the social, political, economic and cultural elements that govern both its production and its reception.

Esmeralda Rocha

Ph.D. Candidate and Sessional Lecturer/Tutor
School of Music, The University of Western Australia
National Membership Secretary, Musicological Society
of Australia

Research Reports

1. Janet Snowman

Pardon Miss Westcott

Mainstream public television broadcasting began in Australia towards the end of 1956, spurred on by the Olympic Games held in Melbourne. The government provided a two-tier system, public (the ABC) and commercial, and Channel ATN-7 began operating in December of that year. Other than imports, mostly American, many programmes produced locally were live-to-air, and that included the first made-for-television Australian musical, *Pardon Miss Westcott*, first broadcast on 12 December 1959 and repeated on Christmas Day of that year.

Looking at a private and rare copy of the film on its 50th birthday, as the titles begin to roll, even the names of the cast bounce along on the choppy and grainy black and white waters approaching Port Jackson. A rolling screen sets the scene and informs the viewer that:

If you stole something more than five shillings you were hanged. If it was less you were deported—to America until 1776, to Australia after 1788. Sydney was founded as a penal settlement because of the American War of Independence and for many years received thousands of unwanted Britishers. Port Jackson, Botany Bay, Sydney—whatever they called it—was a name to threaten naughty children with. In 1809, in spite of a military rebellion against Governor Bligh of Bounty fame, they were still coming...



The first song was sung by the convicts from the bowels of the Eastern Star: 'The wind is in the sails, we're bound for New South Wales, where summer's cold and winter's hot, September's spring and March is not; Hey ho, who wants to go back?'. And lines like 'the bird they call the kangaroo, sits in a tree and laughs at you...'. They set the scene for both

the catchy melodic line and witty text that have stayed with me since I was thirteen. My father played the part of Snark, one of the three main convicts, dressed at times in convict stripes and then 18th-century livery.

The youthful team of composer Peter Stannard (b1931), lyricist Peter Benjamin (1930–2008), and writer Alan Burke (1927–2007), were fresh from their success in writing the popular musical *Lola Montez*, set in the Australian gold fields and produced by the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in 1958, following a successful earlier run in Melbourne. The popular song from the show, 'Be My Saturday Girl', made the hit-parade, and *Lola* was the first stereo LP recorded in Australia—and the first Australian musical to have its score recorded. All three met at Sydney, where they had taken part in the university dramatic revues.

Peter Stannard, whose own piano teacher was a pupil of Clara Schumann, recalls that the actual brief from ATN-7 was for a family show with a Christmas spirit, uplifting, and perhaps with a miracle or two at the end. He writes:

Alan, a devout Catholic, persuaded Peter [Benjamin] and me that the annual blessing of the fleet in the far south coast of New South Wales, at a township called Bergamui, was the perfect environs for such a concept. The storyline, clutch of song/lyric drafts, and supportive background etc, were submitted to the sponsors. We got the formula right—a religious celebration with immigrant Italian

heritage in a town where fishing was the principle industry—the unity of Australians new and old at Christmas-time, the miracle when a lone, storm-tossed fisherman is brought safely home through divine intervention. Of course all the music and lyrics had been matched to the draft script (where has that gone??), and we were on track. Alan had gone off to Europe to see the *Ring* cycle, assuming all was well. But, when Peter Benjamin and I presented our concept, it was met with polite silence by the co-sponsors, Shell Oil. Why? The Board was composed of Presbyterians and a musical based on a Catholic ceremony would not be appropriate. We then had the joyful job of a total re-write with about six weeks to the on-air date, less rehearsal time, a new score etc, to fill a 90-minute hole in an irrevocable TV contract. How Benjamin and Burke, in absentia, coped, I don't know, but they did, drip-feeding me the whole while with lyrics, suggestions and all that any three-way liaison team should have... Tommy Tycho and Julian Lee orchestrated the rushed score to my utter delight—both gifted beyond my ken. The TV musical starred several theatre and radio luminaries—Wendy Blacklock as Miss Westcott, the late Queenie Ashton, Michael Cole, Nigel Lovell and Nat Levison—and wonderful production team and dancers.

Tommy Tycho, who had studied at the Liszt Academy in Budapest as a pupil of Egon Petri, Zoltan Kodaly and Leo Wiener, recalls the brave undertaking by the management to stage a full new musical. 'I got all the songs in the right key and then started the backing orchestrations with the help of the assistant musical director, Julian Lee, orchestrating most of the material, rehearsing the actors and conducting the live telecast'. The director was David Cahill and producer Brett Porter.



The final story, now called *Pardon Miss Westcott*, was about a well-spoken and educated girl, transported to the colonies for killing the local vicar's prize pig and serving it up to the vicar and his guests at dinner. On board she is magically attracted to a kind and upstanding young British officer; and he to her—a sort of 'what's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?' Wendy Blacklock was brought back from England to play Elizabeth Westcott, with handsome Michael Cole as the hero Lieutenant Richard

Soames (a dreamy falsetto in 'Sometimes', and duo 'How Could I See'; it was Cole who had sung 'Saturday Girl' in *Lola Montez*). For the actors, it was for many their first appearance and experience of television production. My usually 'beautifully-spoken' father is a rare experience of cockney accent, with Michael Walshe, another convict, using a northern one; nearly everyone, be they playing convicts (ex-butler, the daughter of a clergyman, ship's officers, petty thieves) seem to echo an unsaid 'requirement' on early Australian television to speak with impeccable received pronunciation *à la* BBC, something which probably continued until the 1960s. The choreography is by Betty Pounder (1921–90), on loan to the production courtesy of the theatrical organization J C Williamson, and whose own experience of American musicals in Australia from the 1940s and visits to New York on behalf of JCW to look at musicals pre-production in Australia, stood her in perfect stead for this job. The seemingly postage-stamp-sized studio space makes the dance routines even more remarkable (especially the 'Grog Song').

Everything is polite, even the indiscretions. Soldiers getting drunk in Elizabeth Westcott's Inn are 'a disgrace to your uniforms'. The wonderful actress Queenie Ashton as Lydia, the wife of Colonel Patterson (Nigel Lovett), is jealous of her young and pretty housemaid, so the Colonel gives the latter a 'ticket of leave'; while she can't leave the colony she is otherwise free, so with a gift from him of £5, she starts her inn, the Silver Bottle. Ashton's marvellous song,



'Our Own Bare Hands', relates to the physical building of the colony, including the cricket pitch and rotunda for 'big brass bands'; surrounded by elegant company and finally the centre of attention, she sings 'This is an elegant affair, I'm having such a lot of fun, one would imagine we were back home in London', recounting that the colony was being built 'with our own bare hands'. As an aside she sings 'of course we had a little bit of help along the way', conveying that the convicts were responsible for their own misdeeds 'so work done by them just doesn't count'. And, running through the piece, are the colonel's rabbits 'I intend to breed them, I think they'll do well in this country...in order to solve the problem of fresh meat'. 'It's hanged, not hung', say the three cons from behind their gaol bars.

As Stephen Banfield says, a little of the music (especially 'We are a mob', by the convicts with a dance routine) is reminiscent of Lionel Bart's *Oliver!*, the latter though written a couple of years later. There are lots of long shots, though it isn't quite clear how many cameras were used, and the length was about an hour and eighteen minutes. What remains today is an LP of music, with a cast comprising famous Australian singers rather than the actors used in the production, though with Queenie Ashton remaining. As the album text notes:

The piece was written, produced and acted by Australians—here was a light-hearted story of Australia's beginning which the public could accept as its own. And it did.

It was Tycho, also conductor of the recording, who managed to extract the original film from a waste bin, passing it to Peter Benjamin and, through this avenue I managed to gain access to a copy through Peter Stannard, who is still composing—if anyone is interested in his chamber works or recent viola sonatino, please do contact me and I will forward any enquiries.

As for those rabbits—please, no more bunny jokes—while it has been suggested that they were introduced by the First Fleet in 1788, it seems that a different species released on the mainland in 1859, with no native predators to counteract their over-breeding, are now seen as an ecological problem for the country even today.

I think this is a marvellous operetta, however that may be defined nowadays. It also coincided with my own first appearance on stage, as a thirteen-year-old sailor in *HMS Pinafore*, so perhaps in my youthful mind 'The wind is in the sails' got a bit mixed up with 'We sail the ocean blue...'. Likewise, my love for G&S has remained!

Janet Snowman is Curator of Art and Iconography at the Royal Academy of Music. With her 'ten-pound Pom' family she lived in Australia from the age of two to twenty-five.

2. Steven Martin

British Opera on Television, 1936–1938

It is an oft-quoted fact that the first opera broadcast on television was Albert Coates's *Pickwick*, which was shown on Friday, 13 November 1936. The broadcast took place less than two weeks after the BBC had launched its regular television broadcasting service on 2 November. By this time, at least 400 sets were in circulation, picking up transmissions from within a 20 to 30-mile radius of Alexandra Palace.¹ There were two broadcasts each day, lasting an hour each, from 3–4pm and from 9–10pm (except Sundays, when the service was closed, although Sunday broadcasts had begun by 1938). As for viewing figures, it is difficult to say how many watched the broadcast of *Pickwick*. However, it is likely that at least 400 people saw the programme, considering the novelty value of the new service, and several people may have watched each set. We know, for instance, that at least eight of Coates's representatives viewed the performance (along with some BBC staff), from a single 'receiving set' in Broadcasting House.

The programme lasted around twenty-five minutes, beginning at 3.35pm. It was billed as the 'First public presentation of excerpts from *Mr Pickwick* by Albert Coates', and consisted of four scenes from the three-act opera. The first thing the viewers saw was the vocal score, mounted on a music stand. A bodiless hand turned pages as the orchestra played the overture, over which Mr Kenneth Ellis-Rochers announced the cast. Excerpts from Act I, Sc. 4 (the Inn Scene), Act II Sc. 1 (Pickwick's Rooms/Mrs Bardell's Room), and Act III, Sc. 1 (the Debtors' Prison, and the Seven-Bedded Room) followed. The set was fairly simple, based on designs by Aubrey Hammond, who designed the set for the Covent Garden production. (Hamish Wilson designed the costumes.) Interestingly, Hammond had also designed the set for the play of the book, produced a few years before at the Haymarket, in which Charles Laughton had taken the title role.

A photograph of the two main singers, William Parsons (Mr Pickwick) and Dennis Noble (Sam Weller) appeared in the 1937 BBC Annual, from which we can see that their make-up was exaggerated for television. Even clearer photographs showing an actress made-up for television as she would appear on and off screen, can be found in the second volume of Asa Briggs's *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, where the make-up could more accurately be described as war paint!

Albert Coates himself conducted the Television Orchestra, which had been augmented from (the usual) twenty-two players to about thirty; even so, the music had to be re-arranged for the smaller-than-usual orchestra, and saxophones were substituted for the

3rd and 4th horns, with the piano taking some of the other parts. The orchestra itself was placed at one end of the studio (which measured about 70 x 30 ft.), with the four cameras arranged in between, in front of the sets at the other far end. The studio was lit by large arc-lights which burned so hot that the ingredients featured in programmes such as Moira Meign's 1936 cookery series of 'meals that could be cooked in fifteen minutes', were often cooked-through before they reached the mixing bowl!



A 1937 Baird mirror-lid television, wireless, record-player and cellarette grand cabinet console

The broadcast of *Pickwick* pre-empted the Covent Garden production of the opera, which took place on 20 November. The British Music Drama Opera Company Ltd, a group formed by Albert Coates and Vladimir Rosing, performed the opera. The company relied entirely on British musicians, and aimed to 'provide the basic structure on which a real National Opera could be built'. The company included many singers who had previously worked with the British National Opera Company (BNOC) in the 1920s (e.g., Dennis Noble, Enid Cruickshank and, of course, Albert Coates). Like the directors of the BNOC, Coates turned to the BBC for financial help with his new opera company. However, before the BBC could consider the matter in detail, Coates informed them that he had found sufficient funds to mount their season without the BBC's help.

The company performed six operas (sung in English) during their Covent Garden season: *Pickwick*, *Boris Godunov*, *The Fair at Sorochinsk* (Mussorgsky's unfinished opera, completed by Tcherépnin), *Madama Butterfly*, *Pagliacci* and Roger Quilter's new opera *Julia*. Although conclusive evidence seems to be lacking, the inclusion of Quilter's opera causes me to wonder...did Quilter help fund the venture? It is interesting to note that *Julia* received seven performances—the most for any opera in the season, and three more than *Pickwick*. Part of *Julia* was also broadcast on the radio as was *Pickwick*. Despite a generally successful season and some notable support for the scheme, the British

¹ Lionel Salter, in his article 'The Birth of TV Opera' *Opera* (March 1977), p.236, relates that in June 1937 some excitement was caused when a viewer in Brighton reported that he had received a clear picture! See also Lionel Salter: 'The Infancy of TV Opera' *Opera* (April 1977), pp.340–344. I would like to thank Fletcher Dhew at *Opera* magazine for kindly supplying me with copies of these two articles.

Music Drama Opera Company did not last long, and the planned provincial tour did not take place.

Pickwick was the first of around forty operatic programmes broadcast between 1936 and 1939, when regular television broadcasting was abandoned until after the War. In those three years however, several British operas were adapted for television, including Frederic Austin's arrangements of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Arne's *Thomas and Sally*, alongside other period pieces associated with the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, including Alfred Reynolds's version of Dibdin's *Lionel and Clarissa*. Reynolds was for many years Musical Director at the Lyric—the link between the Lyric and BBC television was further strengthened when the BBC employed Stephen Thomas as a television producer. Thomas had previously worked for Sir Nigel Playfair as stage director at the theatre.

Occasionally, new operas by British composers were televised, including Herbert Ferrers's one-act opera *The Piper* (based on the Pied Piper of Hamelin). Ferrers was much appreciated as a conductor and composer at the BBC. *The Piper* had been twice broadcast on BBC radio prior to the 1938 television production, and the BBC had been keen to broadcast his other works, including the two-act opera, *Penelope* (broadcast in November 1927). The composer was clearly very talented: he wrote the libretto and music to his operas, and designed the appropriate set and costumes. After study at the RCM, he had worked extensively as an opera conductor for various companies, including the Moody-Manners and Carl Rosa. *The Piper* was singled out by BBC officials as 'one of the outstanding musical successes of the BBC'—praise indeed. The opera enjoyed a short but successful run at the Lyric, Hammersmith, in 1931, which prompted Ethel Snowden (who had been in the audience) to recommend it to the manager of Covent Garden, Col. Eustace Blois.

The total budget for the BBC television production of *The Piper* was £280, which included the purchase of fifty live rats and the services of Mr Gardner, a 'rat expert'. A short film sequence, featuring the creatures scuttling around, was prepared in advance of the broadcast. The internal BBC memo concerning the rats in question, stipulates that out of the fifty, six had to be 'very hungry'!

Alfred Reynolds was another composer clearly favoured by the BBC. Several of his ballad operas and operettas were televised, including *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Bookie's Opera*. Others were broadcast on radio, and his incidental music (originally composed for productions at the Old Vic and Lyric theatres) was often used in radio productions. Dallas Bower, who had adapted *Pickwick* for television, was instrumental in televising many operas, including those by Ferrers and others, such as Spike Hughes's one-act opera, *Cinderella*, televised in 1938. Hughes may have exaggerated when he claimed in later life that his was the first television opera to be commissioned by the BBC. He had already started to write it (at the suggestion of the BBC for radio, it seems) before Bower suggested it for television, after it was finished. However, considering Hughes and Bower were good

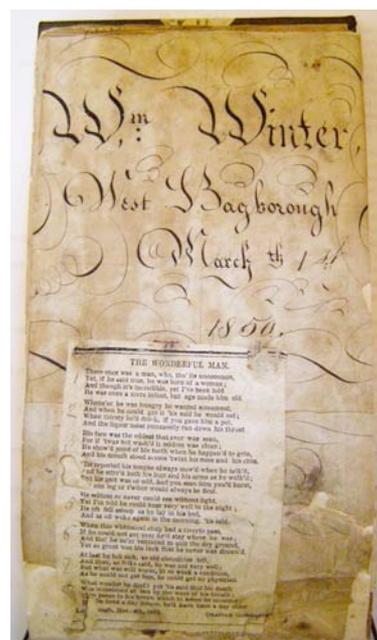
friends, it is possible Bower sowed the seed of the idea before Hughes had undertaken to write it.

Much more could, and should, be said about British opera on television during the 1930s, but space does not permit. I have often wondered, for instance, if *Pickwick* strictly was the first opera broadcast on television (quite apart from the fact that excerpts, not the complete opera, were broadcast). The BBC broadcast many hours of television in the years prior to the beginning of the first regular service, and as Janet Rowson Davis observed, several ballets were shown on television before 1936, which makes it quite likely that operatic excerpts were also part of programmes in those early years—see Janet Rowson Davis: 'Ballet on British Television, 1933–1939', *Dance Chronicle*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1982–1983). The task of undertaking further research to investigate this, however, remains on my ever-lengthier list of 'things to do'!

3. Geoff Woolfe

A Somerset Fiddle-Player's Manuscript

In 2004 I started transcribing several hundred tunes from a manuscript compiled by Somerset shoemaker and fiddler William Winter. The manuscript is kept at the Kennedy Grant Library at Halsway Manor National Centre for Traditional Music, Dance and Song at Crowcombe in Somerset. In 2007 most of the tunes were edited by me and published by Halsway Manor in *William Winter's Quantocks Tune Book*, together with information about Winter and his music, with a cd of a selection of the material performed by Rob Harbron, Nancy Kerr, Miranda Rutter and Tim van Eyken.



Title-page of Winter's Manuscript (photographs by Geoff Woolfe, reproduced by kind permission of Halsway Manor, National Centre for Traditional Folk Music)

The manuscript has over 100 pages of tunes, in 2 separate sections. It is dated 20 September 1848 at one end and later, March 1850. I believe that some of the music was written down earlier than that, and that Winter collated his music together in his retirement.

Winter was born in the village of Lydeard St Lawrence in 1774, and moved to West Bagborough in about 1822. He returned to Lydeard later where he died in 1861.

Church records for the parish of Lydeard St Lawrence show that a 'West Gallery' band performed there, and that Winter was one of its musicians in the first decade of the 19th century. The accounts show that the church funded the band from the 1780s up to 1839 when records ceased. Instruments were typical of church bands of the time, and as well as Winter's violin, the band included a bass viol, a bassoon and an oboe. The parish also paid for song books and maintenance of the gallery.

Winter's book contains more than 370 country dance tunes. It also has 26 marches, 2 hymn tunes and 42 songs. Only one song has a set of words. (*The Conscript's Departure*) There are 5 items from opera and art music, including the ubiquitous *Harmonious Blacksmith*, a nursery rhyme, and a folk tale, *Parson Brown's Sheep*, and a *cante fable* (a mixture of song and recitation) found in oral tradition in many versions.

The nature of this material suggests that Winter played for dancing, local processions and festivals as well as small social events in the area. As we know from Thomas Hardy's writing, village band musicians took part in church music as well as local dances and other entertainment. Winter may have played at the annual feast of St Lawrence. In July 1807, when Winter was a musician in his village, a band and choir from nearby Overstowey visited Lydeard church, suggesting a lively musical scene in this part of Somerset.¹

Many of the dance tunes can be sourced to 18th-century published collections, for example, Thompson's collections of country dances. Several examples of them may be found at the British Library and at www.efdss.org.uk. Winter clearly copied from these sources; some tunes appear in the same order in the manuscript as they do in an edition of Thompson's work. Apart from printed sources, he almost certainly transcribed many of them orally, in local versions. The dance tunes include many hornpipes and jigs (in both 6/8 and 9/8 time), over 30 waltzes and more than 100 dances in 2/4 or 4/4 time, but few polkas and quadrilles. Among several contemporary tunes is *The Zora Quadrille*, by Wellington Guernsey, published in the *Musical Bijou* in 1850.

The song tunes range from the sentimental to the comic; nearly all can be traced to published sources. Dr Henry Harington (1727–1816), a notable citizen of Bath, wrote 2 of them (Bath Reference Library holds two volumes of songs by Harington). Several song tunes set to texts by Bath writer Thomas Haynes Bayly are also to be found, and, as may be expected, the manuscript contains some tunes set to Burns's lyrics.

I have found that not only does the Winter manuscript show the wide extent of country-dance music from the preceding century, but also the influence of contemporary popular music and song in a rural community. It shows the rapid influence of light entertainment from the theatre and early black-faced minstrelsy from the 1830s. The advent of the railway, and the availability of advertising in local newspapers

clearly helped the spread of published music to the Quantock villages.

Although most of the song tunes went out of fashion, many dance tunes from this and similar manuscripts survived into oral tradition. There is a rich source of 'new' tunes here for today's dance musicians. Some have also taken a lead from 'period practice' players and use, for example, baroque-style violin bows. More information about old tune manuscripts can be found at www.village-music-project.org.uk



I am continuing my work on the Winter manuscript and will post more information on the Halsway Manor web site in due course.

The publication *William Winter's Quantock's Tune Book* is available from Halsway Manor Society at www.halswaymanor.org.uk (01984 618274). Bristol University Arts and Social Sciences library has a copy of the book and CD (shelf no M1740WIL), and I can be contacted at geoffwoolfe@btinternet.com.

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.

¹ Ayres, Jack, ed. *Paupers and Pig Killers: The Diary of William Holland, A Somerset Parson, 1799-1818* (Gloucester: Sutton Publishing, 1984), p. 151.

From Our Corresponding Members

Paul Watt

CFB: Conference on British Music,
Monash University,
17–19 September 2010

The School of Music–Conservatorium, Monash University, will host a conference on British Music from Friday 17 September to Sunday 19 September 2010 at Monash's Clayton Campus in Victoria, Australia.

The conference welcomes papers exploring any aspect of British music and musical life in any period. Papers are particularly encouraged which discuss forgotten or less-explored repertoire and composers. Without limiting the remit of the conference, areas of investigation may include British writings about music, reception of British music abroad, 'foreign' composers resident in Britain, music broadcasting and concert life in Britain, and intersections between music and literature, politics, modernism, postmodernism, nationalism, and colonialism.

Although it is expected to draw mainly on scholars from the fields of musicology, history and cultural studies, the conference hopes to bring together delegates from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.

As it is the only conference on British music to be held in the southern hemisphere, it also provides those who may be unable to attend a conference further north with an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas.

The programme will consist of two (or possibly three) parallel sessions on Friday 17, and Saturday 18 September in the Performing Arts Building on Monash's Clayton Campus, which houses the School of Music. On Sunday 19 September, the University will host its annual 'Music in the Round' Festival, which for 2010 will include at least four one-hour concerts of music by British composers.

Abstracts (300 words) for individual papers, panel sessions (comprising 3 speakers) or lecture-recitals (of 60 or 90 minutes) should be sent to Dr Paul Watt (details below). Abstracts should be submitted by 1 April and decisions as to acceptance will be made by 1 May 2010.

The conference website is now live:
<http://arts.monash.edu.au/music/british-conference.php>

For further information and enquiries, please contact:
Dr Paul Watt
School of Music–Conservatorium
Monash University
Australia
+ (613) 9905 3634
paul.watt@arts.monash.edu.au

Research Students: 7

The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge

Fabian Huss

The chamber music of Frank Bridge (1879–1941) has been singled out repeatedly as being particularly accomplished, with the greatest works 'considered among the finest works of 20th-century English chamber music' (Karen Little). Discussions of this music have been of variable depth and insight, however, as the principal published studies have been either relatively short (those by Payne and Pirie) or mainly concerned with biographical information (Trevor Bray's biography, published online). Several doctoral dissertations have been produced, but have generally lacked a wider perspective, focussing on very specific portions of Bridge's output. A wider perspective is, however, essential in arriving at a deeper understanding of Bridge's music—his early music, for instance, has been largely ignored, although it yields important insights into the foundations of his stylistic and technical preferences. The music of this period (mainly chamber music) and Bridge's enthusiastic participation in chamber ensembles during his time at the Royal College of Music give vital information on formative influences and the general musical climate of the time. Interestingly, the early orchestral works—*Symphonic Poem* (1903), *Isabella* (1906) and *Dance Rhapsody* (1908)—evinced different influences to his chamber and piano music, suggesting that he cultivated separate styles appropriate to the different genres. This sense of 'writing well' for different forces (instead of single-mindedly exploring a unique artistic vision from the very beginning of his career) has perhaps contributed to the charge of facility that has been levelled against his early music.

First maturity is achieved in the String Quartet no 1 in E minor (1906) and the Phantasy Piano Trio and Phantasy Piano Quartet (the Trio was the winning entry in Cobbett's second chamber music competition, the Quartet was commissioned by Cobbett), after which orchestral music becomes more prominent in Bridge's output. Four further major chamber works were produced before Bridge's gradual abandonment of tonality as a fundamental priority: the revision and completion of two older projects, the Piano Quintet and String Sextet (both 1912) and the masterly Second String Quartet (1915) and Cello Sonata (1917). In the same period he produced some of his most successful orchestral scores: the Suite for String Orchestra (1910), *The Sea* (1911), *Dance Poem* (1913), and *Summer* (1915). Beginning with *Dance Poem*, an expansion of Bridge's style can be observed, and the piano music of the period is also increasingly adventurous. It appears that the many short piano pieces Bridge produced from around 1914 onwards served as opportunities for harmonic experimentation on a modest scale. Distinct styles can thus be observed in his music for piano, orchestra and chamber ensembles, again suggesting that he considered

different styles to be appropriate to different genres, pointing to distinct influences.

Bridge's espousal of a post-tonal harmonic language, the first and most radical of its kind in England, was not as sudden and unexpected as it has often been made out to be. His interest in modern music, particularly Debussy and Ravel, is well documented, while expressionist influences can be felt from around 1913. *Dance Poem*, the first of the *Two Poems* for orchestra (1915) and much of the piano music, as well as the second movement of the Cello Sonata, point to the development of an increasingly modern style. The later works pursue this development to its logical conclusion.

The Piano Sonata of 1924, traditionally considered to be Bridge's first major modernist work, is thus not the beginning of a new development, but the conclusion of his experiments in the piano music of the previous decade. A series of orchestral and chamber masterpieces followed between 1927 and 1932, suggesting that he was now comfortable with his advanced music language: *There Is A Willow Grows Aslant A Brook*, *Enter Spring*, the Third String Quartet, the Rhapsody Trio for two violins and viola, the Piano

Trio, *Oration*, *Phantasm* and the Violin Sonata. The duality of styles found earlier in his career is continued here, and the most radical developments are found in the 'private' medium of chamber music. After this outpouring, only a few more works were completed—the Fourth String Quartet, *Divertimenti* for woodwind quartet and an overture, *Rebus*.

From an analytical point of view, Bridge's late harmonic language is extremely challenging, although many features relate directly to the earlier 'experimental' works. Many features of construction are similar to his earlier music, and the continued use of large-scale forms creates many direct parallels. Technical examinations of the 'difficult' late works and discussions of Bridge's stylistic evolution have often been somewhat unclear, lacking the necessary breadth of perspective; in examining the musical contexts and influences that contributed to Bridge's distinct aesthetic (leading him to eventually become an isolated and misunderstood figure), combined with a detailed analysis of his major chamber works, I hope to gain a better understanding of both Bridge's evolving style and the changing musical climate of the time.



Theatre Royal, Drury Lane

British Opera Study-Day (In Association With CHOMBEC)

Saturday 12 June 2010

The Victoria Rooms
Department of Music
University of Bristol

A number of eminent scholars of 19th and 20th-century British opera will examine and discuss issues in this area of rapidly-growing interest. Topics covered will vary from themes and images in British opera to the work of travelling opera companies.

Speakers to include: Lewis Foreman, Sophie Fuller, John Pickard and Valerie Langfield

Fee for the day is £10-00 for CHOMBEC Friends; non-Friends £15-00
(please note this does not include lunch)

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Further details will be available on CHOMBEC's web pages:
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or contact the study-day convenor, Steven Martin: stevenemartin@gmail.com

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Forthcoming Events Relating to Music in Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth

Events listed in boxes are organised by, or with, CHOMBEC

3 March 2010. Bristol University Singers. Lunchtime Concert. Auditorium, Victoria Rooms, Bristol. Programme to include music by Gibbons, Tallis, Howells and Walton. 1.15pm. Admission free.

17 March 2010 Paul Harper-Scott: *Post-war women in Britten's operas*. 3rd of the CHOMBEC Lectures. 5.15pm, Victoria's Room, Victoria Rooms, Bristol. Drinks reception for CHOMBEC Friends after each lecture.

14–16 April 2010 20th-century Music and Politics. RMA-sponsored event at the University of Bristol. www.rma.ac.uk/conferences

15–18 April 2010 Oxford Organ Conference 2010. The British Organ In the Twentieth Century and Beyond. www.bios.org.uk

17 April 2010 Women in Music in Ireland Conference. The Music Department, National University of Ireland, Maynooth. <http://music.nuim.ie/newsevents/womenandmusicinirelandconference>

24 April 2010 Musica Scotica's annual conference that brings together researchers working on any aspect of Scottish music. Venue to be confirmed. www.musicascotica.org.uk

27 April 2010 John Pickard (University of Bristol, Director of CHOMBEC) discusses his new orchestral work, *Tenebrae*, premiered in Sweden in March. Tuesday seminar series, Victoria Rooms, Bristol. 4.30pm.

11 May 2010 Stephen Banfield (University of Bristol): *Research into Music in the West Country*. Tuesday seminar series, Victoria Rooms, Bristol. 4.30pm.

11–12 June 2010 Benjamin Britten in Context. Liverpool Hope University. Programme to be announced. www.hope.ac.uk

12 June 2010 British Opera Study-Day. Speakers to be confirmed. Victoria Rooms, Bristol. A discount will be available to CHOMBEC Friends. See website for details. www.bris.ac.uk/music/CHOMBEC

12 June–29 October 2010 For Peter... Centenary exhibition for Sir Peter Pears. The Red House, Aldeburgh, Suffolk. www.brittenpears.org

1-3 July 2010 The Symphony Orchestra as Cultural Phenomenon. Institute of Musical Research, Senate House, University of London. www.music.sas.ac.uk

5–7 July 2010 Worlds to Conquer: the Travelling Virtuoso in the Long 19th Century. Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol, UK. www.bristol.ac.uk/music/CHOMBEC/virtuoso.html

8–11 July 2010 16th Biennial Conference on 19th-Century Music. University of Southampton. www.soton.ac.uk/music

12–15 July 2010 First International Conference on Irish Music and Musicians. University of Durham. www.dur.ac.uk/music/irishmusicconference

12–15 July 2010 20th-century Music and Politics. RMA-sponsored conference at the University of Bristol. www.rma.ac.uk

14–17 July 2010 Echoes of Empires: Musical Encounters after Hegemony. IMS Regional Conference held in conjunction with the South African Society for Research in Music (SASRIM) Department of Music, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. <http://associated.sun.ac.za/IMS-SASRIM/>

14–17 July 2010 Boundaries. Royal Musical Association Annual Conference. Institute of Musical Research, Senate House, University of London.

29 July–1 August 2010 Fourth Biennial Conference, the North American British Music Studies Association (NABMSA). Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, USA. www.nabmsa.org

17–19 September 2010 CFP: Conference on British Music. Monash University, Clayton Campus, Victoria, Australia. <http://arts.monash.edu.au/music/british-conference.php>