

The thirty-eighth concert in the Enterprising series

Guildford
Philharmonic
Orchestra

Guildford Borough Council Concerts 1975-76

Songs of Farewell

Guildford Borough Council Concerts
1975/76

Civic Hall—Guildford

SATURDAY 8 NOVEMBER 1975
at 7.45 p.m.

38th concert in the enterprising series

Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra

Led by ROY GILLARD

Kenneth Lank

Conductor

Vernon Handley

Conductor

Roy Gillard

The Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra is led tonight by Roy Gillard, sub-leader of the London Symphony Orchestra. He has led the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra on several occasions, and took over for one of the concerts in the "enterprising" series in Guildford on the morning of the concert. In 1974 he appeared as soloist with the Orchestra in a performance of Stravinsky's Violin Concerto.

Kenneth Lank

Kenneth Lank was born in Guildford, and educated at the Royal Grammar School. He had his first music lessons at the age of seven, and studied more concentratedly from the age of fourteen. From the time he left school, and during his service in the Army he studied Radiography, and has made his career in this profession at St Luke's Hospital, Guildford, where he is Superintendent Radiographer in the Radiotherapy Centre. From 1948-1957, he was organist and choirmaster at the Methodist Church, Guildford, and since 1957 he has held a similar appointment at St Martin's, East Horsley.

For a number of years before Mr Crossley Clitheroe's death, Kenneth Lank acted as his assistant conductor, and has continued in this position for Vernon Handley since 1962. He has conducted the Philharmonic Choir in many concerts, including a performance of Parry's "Songs of Farewell" by a section of this choir at the Cathedral in 1965, and the Proteus Choir in Evensong at the Cathedral in 1966 and 1967. He shared the conducting of the Herbert Howells 75th birthday tribute at Charterhouse with William Llewellyn and Vernon Handley. In 1967, Kenneth Lank undertook the final preparation and performance of Bach's B Minor Mass. In 1968 he conducted the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra in performances of Schubert's Overture in E minor and Gordon Jacob's Trombone Concerto (with Christopher Devenport as soloist), and he conducted a performance of Parry's "Blest Pair of Sirens" given by the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonic Choir in 1970—the 25th season of the Choir.

This concert is promoted by Guildford Borough Council with financial support from the South East Arts Association

Vernon Handley

Vernon Handley has been Guildford's Musical Director since 1962. He is now one of the busiest British Conductors, broadcasting with all the BBC Regional Orchestras, about 30 concerts a year, and appearing regularly as guest Conductor with the London Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras. He made his debut in this season's Promenade Concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He will be appearing with the New Philharmonia in the Festival Hall next week.

Vernon Handley is particularly noted for his championship of British music and in 1974 was voted Conductor of the Year by the Composers' Guild of Great Britain.

He has recently returned from a highly successful visit to South Africa, where he conducted concerts with the Durban Symphony Orchestra, all of which received critical acclaim.

Philharmonic Choir

The Philharmonic Choir is the larger of the two choirs under the conductorship of the Musical Director, who acknowledges with thanks the help he has received in training the choir from Mr Kenneth Lank and Miss Mary Rivers, and also Linden Andrew, Jane Parry, Michele Hart and Prudence Smith for their help in sectional rehearsals of the choir.

PROGRAMME

Hammersmith—Prelude and Scherzo for Orchestra Holst 1874-1934

Hammersmith was composed in 1930, and was originally scored for military band, the composer orchestrating it himself later.

Holst always said that he never composed anything unless the "not composing of it" became a positive nuisance to him. "Hammersmith" dates from his full maturity and he had never written anything like it before. "Prelude and Scherzo" implies that whatever musical ideas he had, he wished to cast them in a certain form. In fact the music of the Prelude provides the first tune of the Scherzo, and when that section has spent itself, the Prelude turns itself into an epilogue. This is not simply a tone picture of Hammersmith as Holst knew it. It is much more a mystical projection of the place and its history, dominated always by the slowly moving river, but Holst's view of music included the vulgar as well as the mystic, and the direction to the principal trumpet to play his first flourish with "coarse tone" evokes Hammersmith Broadway on a Saturday night.

The Prelude begins with double basses and violas repeating climbing and falling phrases; their key signature is three sharps. Against them, two bassoons play a melancholy tune; their signature is one flat. The resultant clashes in harmony remain unresolved and are interrupted by a spiky phrase from the piccolo, which has, with typical Holst economy, the first four notes of the double basses' rising phrase as its opening. The mood is so different, however, that one would be forgiven for not noticing this. The trumpet imitates the piccolo but neither are able to disturb the onward flow of the earlier music. This comes to rest on an extension of the rising phrase, and the Scherzo begins. The rising phrase is taken over by flutes and is treated fugally, even when interrupted by a new phrase from the first horn in six-eight across the two-four of the rest of the orchestra. The two ideas are worked out with brilliance and, at times, fury, the second one of the two showing its kinship with the spiky phrase of the piccolo and trumpet. In the midst of the

Scherzo, the mood of the Prelude with the material of the Scherzo form a wierd interlude, with solo string players playing the spiky piccolo phrase in canon. It is a perfect musical comma. The truncated Scherzo returns, works up to a violent climax and abruptly finishes at the height of its noise to allow the music of the Prelude to draw the work to its close.

Songs of Farewell Parry 1848-1918

1. My soul, there is a country (a 4)
2. I know my soul hath power (a 4)
3. Never weather-beaten sail (a 5)
4. There is an old belief (a 6)
5. At the round earth's imagined corners (a 7)
6. Lord, let me know mine end (a 8)

By 1910 Parry had composed five sets of Part-songs, ranging in mood from the light-hearted gaiety of "*Come, pretty wag*" to the autumnal beauty of the six-part Meditation "*Sorrow and pain*". For his final set of pieces for unaccompanied choir he turned to the Motet, producing the culmination of all his compositions for this medium, the six "*Songs of Farewell*". The first five were performed at the Royal College of Music on 22 May 1916 by the Bach Choir under Dr Hugh Allen; and it is to this conductor and choir that the seven-part motet is dedicated. Allen also conducted the first performance of the eight-part motet, in the Chapel of New College, Oxford, on 17 June 1917; and this work is dedicated to him and the Oxford Bach Choir.

The first of the group, "*My soul, there is a country*", is a four-part setting of the poem entitled 'Peace' by the metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan. "*I know my soul hath power*" is a setting for four voices of two quatrains from the philosophical poem 'Nosce Teipsum'—'Know thyself'—by Sir John Davies. The subject is 'Man', whose high potential for good is illustrated by aspiring rising phrases, whilst the harsh reality of his contrary nature is represented by a striking use of the descending diminished fifth—'diabolus in musica'.

"*Never weather-beaten sail*" is a five-part setting of two stanzas by Thomas Campion expressing a longing for rest at the end of

the voyage of life. The beginning of the third line, "Than my wearied sprite now longs", introduces a figure which reappears, sublimely transformed, in the fifth motet, at the words "And you whose eyes shall behold God". The words of "*There is an old belief*" are taken from some lines written by John Gibson Lockhart, the biographer of Scott, in a letter to Carlyle. This motet is particularly remarkable for the way Parry sets "Beyond the sphere of grief dear friends shall meet once more", where the music goes from G major through C minor to E flat, and then, magically, to D major.

The seven- and eight-part motets are larger in every way, and Parry adopts a number of devices to achieve variety. "*At the round earth's imagined corners*", the seventh of Donne's 'Holy Sonnets', is set with much contrast of tempo. Some passages are allocated to the four women's or three men's voices only; polyphonic sections are contrasted with homophonic ones; and complex chromatic passages are offset by simple diatonic writing. This process is carried even further in "*Lord, let me know mine end*", a setting for double choir of verses from Psalm 39. Here there is much use of antiphonal writing, marked rhythmic variety, and many changes of tonality. But whether expressing the drama of "Take thy plague away from me" or the yearning of "O spare me a little", Parry sets the words with a sensitivity and mastery of large-scale design which place this work, together with its predecessor, alongside the finest motets of Bach and Brahms.

Michael Pope

MY SOUL, THERE IS A COUNTRY

My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry,
All skilful in the wars;
There, above noise and danger
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles
And One, born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.

He is thy gracious friend
And—O my soul, awake! —
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.

If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of Peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.

O leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure
But One who never changes
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

I KNOW MY SOUL HATH POWER TO
KNOW ALL THINGS

I know my soul hath power to know all things,
Yet she is blind and ignorant in all;
I know I'm one of Nature's little kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.
I know my life's a pain and but a span;
I know my sense is mock'd in everything:
And to conclude, I know myself a Man,
Which is a proud and yet a wretched thing.

NEVER, WEATHER-BEATEN SAIL

Never weather-beaten sail more willing bent to
shore,
Never tired pilgrim's limbs affected slumber
more,
Than my wearied sprite now longs to fly out
of my troubled breast:
O, come quickly, sweetest Lord, and take my
soul to rest.
Ever blooming are the joys of Heaven's high
Paradise
Cold age deafs not there our ears nor vapour
dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines; whose beams
the blessed only see:
O come quickly, glorious Lord, and raise my
sprite to Thee!

THERE IS AN OLD BELIEF

There is an old belief,
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief
Dear friends shall meet once more.
Beyond the sphere of Time
And Sin and Fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul.
That creed I fain would keep
That hope I'll ne'er forgo
E'ternal be the sleep
If not to waken so.

AT THE ROUND EARTH'S IMAGINED
CORNERS

At the round earth's imagined corners blow
Your trumpets angels and arise
From death you numberless infinities
Of souls arise and to your scatter'd bodies go!
All whom the flood did and fire shall overthrow
All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance hath slain; and you
whose eyes
Shall behold God and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleep Lord, and me mourn a
space.
For, if above all these my sins abound,
Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground
Teach me how to repent, for that's as good
As if Thou'dst sealed my pardon with Thy
blood.

LORD, LET ME KNOW MINE END

Lord, let me know mine end and the number
of my days
That I may be certified how long I have to live.
Thou hast made my days as it were a span long;
And mine age is as nothing in respect of Thee,
And verily ev'ry man living is altogether vanity
For man walketh in a vain shadow, and
disquieteth himself in vain;
He heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall
gather them.
And now Lord, what is my hope?
Truly my hope is even in Thee
Deliver me from all mine offences
And make me not a rebuke to the foolish
I became dumb and opened not my mouth
For it was Thy doing.
Take Thy plague away from me,
I am even consumed by means of Thy heavy
hand.
When Thou with rebukes dost chasten man for
sin,
Thou makest his beauty to consume away,
like as it were a moth, fretting a garment;
Every man therefore is but vanity.
Hear my pray'r, O Lord, and with Thine ears
consider my calling,
Hold not Thy peace at my tears!
For I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner
as all my fathers were.
O spare me a little, that I may recover my
strength
Before I go hence, and be no more seen.

Songs of Farewell
Delius 1862-1934

The Songs of Farewell were written in 1930 and were dedicated to Delius's wife. Walt Whitman was a source of inspiration to many composers from the turn of the century; Vaughan Williams, Holst and, later on, Hindemith turned to his individual verse when writing choral music. Delius had already written one of his masterpieces around a poem of Whitman, and "Sea Drift" was established before he wrote the "Songs of Farewell". They date from late in his life, when blind and paralysed, he dictated every note of the score for double choir and full orchestra to Eric Fenby. The Songs are five in number, the first and last sharing some of the musical material so as to give the cycle a feeling of unity, and the middle three aptly balanced against one another in mood. The first of the five songs looks back. Delius is concerned with "the meditation of old times resumed". The second is hardly a song of farewell, the poet and composer are looking out to sea, and are inspired by the waves and the wild unrest of the ocean. The third song is in praise of all nature,

and finishes with the passionate cry of an explorer to be away on his journey. The fourth song is so joyous that it is almost impossible to believe that it was written by a man in Delius's terrible physical condition: Joy, shipmate, joy! (Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,) finds all the strings and the double choir pouring out the tune with forte certainty. Delius's mind seems intent on joy, rather than the feeling of farewell. The last song, however, although still in a strange way looking forward to the soul's journey, is allowed to be a finale. The choir sing that although land and life are to be left, "much for thee is yet in store". It is with a great positive shout that the soul is urged to "depart upon thy endless cruise, old sailor". After this injunction, the orchestra takes us slowly into the distance until the choir repeat the word "depart" pianissimo at the end of the work.

SONGS OF FAREWELL

Walt Whitman
(Leaves of Grass)

I.

How sweet the silent backward tracings!
The wanderings as in dreams—the meditation
of old times resumed—their loves, joys,
persons, voyages.
Apple orchards, the trees all cover'd with
blossoms;
Wheat fields carpeted far and near in vital
emerald green;
The eternal, exhaustless freshness of each early
morning;
The yellow, golden, transparent haze of the
warm afternoon sun;
The aspiring lilac bushes with profuse purple
or white flowers.

II.

I stand as on some mighty eagle's beak,
Eastward the sea absorbing, viewing, (nothing
but sea and sky,)
The tossing waves, the foam, the ships in the
distance,
The wild unrest, the snowy, curling caps—that
inbound urge and urge of waves,
Seeking the shores forever.

III.

Passage to you!
O secret of the earth and sky!
Of you O waters of the sea! O winding creeks
and rivers!
Of you O woods and fields! Of you strong
mountains of my land!
Of you O prairies! Of you gray rocks!
O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows!
O day and night, passage to you!
O sun and moon and all you stars! Sirius and
Jupiter!
Passage to you!

Passage, immediate passage! The blood burns
in my veins!
Away O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!

IV.

Joy, shipmate, joy!
(Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,)
Our life is closed, our life begins,
The long, long anchorage we leave,
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore,
Joy, shipmate, joy.

V.

Now finalè to the shore,
Now land and life finalè and farewell,
Now Voyager depart, (much, much for thee
is yet in store.)
Often enough hast thou adventur'd o'er the
seas,
Cautiously cruising,—studying the charts,
Duly again to port and hawster's tie returning;
But now obey they cherish'd secret wish,
Embrace thy friends, leave all in order,
To port and hawser's tie no more returning,
Depart upon thy endless cruise old Sailor.

INTERVAL

During the interval refreshments will be
served in the Surrey Room by members of
the Concertgoers' Society.

Symphony No. 1 in A flat Elgar 1857-1934

Andante - Nobilmente e semplice - Allegro
Allegro molto
Adagio
Lento - Allegro

If a member of the audience at the Queen's
Hall in 1908 had been told that the
Symphony, whose first London performance
he was hearing, would win a hundred
performances in its first year of existence,
he would not have been surprised, for he
would have been one of an audience who
had called for the composer after the first
movement, after the third movement, and
then with frantic applause at the end of
the Symphony. But he would have been
surprised to be told that the work would
suffer an eclipse, and that for many years
its composer would be thought of as not
having been a good symphonist. Although

the Oratorios, Concerti, Enigma Variations and Introduction and Allegro have maintained Elgar's reputation over the years, it has not been until the last ten years that the two symphonies have started to come into their own again.

For two years before the production of his First Symphony, Elgar had produced no major work, and disturbed by his inability to achieve financial security, he had threatened early in 1907 to give up composing altogether, but he had been contemplating since 1898 the possibility of a symphony, and it started to take shape in October of 1907. He said that he composed it out of his experience of life, and with a *massive* hope in the future. The Symphony's extraordinary power is in its ability to appeal to any audience immediately without, however, making any popular gestures. It is strangely unified, and most of the principal themes can be found to have some relationship with the first noble tune. The tune starts straightaway at the beginning of the first movement, and unfolds its whole length in simple two-part harmony, with flutes, clarinets, bassoons and violas singing it quietly in octaves. When we have heard it once, the full orchestra takes it up; and having given us the main material of his work, Elgar gets the first large Allegro under way. It is during this Allegro that all the main developments of the first movement take place. Occasionally a quiet version of the first tune, played very tenderly by the first violins, or a few bars of the tune itself, intervene, but rarely hold up the progress of this colossal movement.

Immediately the second movement starts we realise that the weight of this huge orchestra has been dispersed, and even with characteristically angular material Elgar manages to keep his Scherzo light and swift. One extraordinary Mahlerian episode for solo violin and strings reminds us that the composer was capable of the great charm of the Wand of Youth Suites, and the Dorabella variation from the Enigma. The rather lumpy march tune which occurs frequently in this movement serves in quiet augmentation for the beautiful transition at the end of the movement which leads to the at first serene, but later passionate, third movement. The mood

of this movement is so entirely different from the bustle of the first two that it is surprising to find that every bar is characteristic of Elgar. His many-sided nature is nowhere better shown than in the wide emotional range which the inclusion of this movement in the Symphony confirms.

The join to the finale is made perfectly, for it opens quietly, slowly and with great mystery. Quotations from the first movement and a strange distant march tune, undoubtedly related to the first tune of the first movement, pass before us. Then, a violent Allegro, full of dotted rhythms, announces the Elgar of the brilliant musical argument and telling orchestration. Nothing stops the headlong flight of this movement until the reappearance of the first tune in the Symphony, and this gathers the orchestra around it, sharing the material of the movement it has interrupted, until together the separate ideas reach a coda of great triumph. Elgar's massive hope was never clearer than here.

FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER at 7.45 p.m.

**HOLY TRINITY CHURCH,
GUILDFORD**

PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

**Works by Mozart, Bruckner, Parry,
Vaughan Williams and Leighton**

**Conductors Kenneth Lank and
Vernon Handley**

BAROQUE CHAMBER GROUP

Works by Telemann and Gerhard Maasz

Admission by programme 60p
obtainable at Guildford Public Library
and at Holy Trinity Church on the
night

Proceeds in aid of local Breast Cancer
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