

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

(1904 - 1973)

ASSEMBLY HALL, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Sunday, 11th November, 1973

at 3 p.m.

MAN OF KENT

(DUCKWORTH)

THE SPIRIT OF ENGLAND

(ELGAR)

A SEA SYMPHONY

(VAUGHAN WILLIAMS)

VALERIE HEATH-DAVIES

(Soprano)

WILLIAM ELVIN

(Baritone)

FULL ORCHESTRA

Leader: RICHARD ENGLAND

Conductor:

MYER FREDMAN

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The National Federation of Music Societies, to which this Society is affiliated, gives support to this concert with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain. It is also supported by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Corporation.

ASSEMBLY HALL

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SUNDAY, 2nd DECEMBER, 1973

Overture, Karelia *Sibelius*
Piano Concerto in A *Mozart*
Symphony No. 5 in E minor *Tchaikovsky*

VALERIE TRYON

Conductor: MICHAEL LANKESTER

TONBRIDGE MUSIC CLUB

SUNDAY, 24th NOVEMBER, 1973

IAN PARTRIDGE (TENOR)
JENNIFER PARTRIDGE (ACCOMPANIST)

GREEN ROOM CLUB

SUNDAY, 20th JANUARY, 1974

THE LONDON GABRIELI
BRASS ENSEMBLE

MAN OF KENT (ARTHUR DUCKWORTH). This fine March, broadcast several times in its original orchestral form, was adapted by the composer for the Diamond Jubilee Concert of Royal Tunbridge Wells Corporation, and dedicated to the Choral Society, in 1969, with libretto by Myrtle Streeten. Arthur Duckworth died a few weeks ago and the work is performed today in his memory. A man of many talents, he will be greatly missed.

C.W.

THE SPIRIT OF ENGLAND (ELGAR). After two world wars and all that has happened since, and now, it is time to listen again to Elgar's feeling on the subject. Like Wilfred Owen writing at the same time, "My subject is War and the pity of War." The Spirit of England begins with the first flush of nationalistic fervour encompasses suffering, pain and death and culminises in a setting of "For the Fallen." The text may be not to our tastes perhaps in places, but the compassion of the music answers the question that the text poses . . . ? Why!

M.F.

THE SEA SYMPHONY (VAUGHAN WILLIAMS). The Sea Symphony like a great deal of English music composed in the early years of this century was inspired by the marvellous democratic humanism of Walt Whitman. Through Whitman the adventure of the new American Society was sublimated into new frontiers for the spirit of man. This was not only an emotional novelty, but it helped English composers to break away from the dominating musical influence of Brahms and Wagner. This Symphony not only "describes" the geographical and physical sea, but also the vast sea of the mind and its unfettered universe wherein as always lives the future of mankind.

M.F.

MAN OF KENT (Duckworth)

See! they come from all around us
Tramping down the wooded hill
Men with swords and men with plough-shares
We can hear their voices still.
They who trod these lanes before us
Lead us on with hopes and dreams
Calling us across the ages
To fulfil their highest aims.

Blossom'd boughs in Kentish orchards,
Trailing hops and growing corn
Hills and valleys, streams and woodlands
Are the joys to which we're born.
Children's laughter, strong men's labour,

Village spire and hooded oast
Point the way and guide the footsteps
Of our gaily marching host.

Now they come from all around us
Tramping down the wooded hill,
Men with swords and men with plough-shares,
We can hear their voices still.
See! they gather in their thousands
Rank on rank, a mighty choir;
Past and future link together
All our hearts with pride inspire.

MYRTLE STREETEN.

THE SPIRIT OF ENGLAND (Edward Elgar)

THE FOURTH OF AUGUST

Now in thy splendour go before us,
Spirit of England, ardent-eyed,
Enkindle this dear earth that bore us,
In the hour of peril purified.

The cares we hugged drop out of vision,
Our hearts with deeper thoughts dilate.
We step from days of sour division
Into the grandeur of our fate.

For us the glorious dead have striven,
They battled that we might be free.
We to their living cause are given;
We arm for men that are to be.

Among the nations noblest chartered,
England recalls her heritage.
In her is that which is not bartered,
Which force can neither quell nor cage.

For her immortal stars are burning,
With her the hope that's never done,
The seed that's in the Spring's returning,
The very flower that seeks the sun.

She fights the fraud that feeds desire on
Lies, in a lust to enslave or kill,
The barren creed of blood and iron,
Vampire of Europe's wasted will . . .

Endure, O Earth! and thou, awaken,
Purged by this dreadful winning-fan,
O wringed, untameable, unshaken
Soul of divinely suffering man.

TO WOMEN

Your hearts are lifted up, your hearts
That have foreknown the utter price.
Your hearts burn upward like a flame
Of splendour and of sacrifice.

For you, you too, to battle go,
Not with the marching drums and cheers
But in the watch of solitude
And through the boundless night of fears.

Swift, swifter than those hawks of war,
Those threatening wings that pulse the air,
Far as the vanward ranks are set,
You are gone before them, you are there!

And not a shot comes blind with death
And not a stab of steel is pressed
Home, but invisibly it tore
And entered first a woman's breast.

Amid the thunder of the guns,
The lightnings of the lance and sword,
Your hope, your dread, your throbbing pride,
Your infinite passion is outpoured.

From hearts that are as one high heart,
Withholding naught from doom and bale
Burningly offered up,—to bleed,
To bear, to break, but not to fail!

FOR THE FALLEN

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her
children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were
young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds
uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They fought, they were terrible, naught could
tame them,
Hunger, nor legions, nor shattering cannonade.
They laughed, they sang their melodies of
England,
They fell open-eyed and unafraid.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left
grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades
again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;

They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they
are known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our
darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

LAURENCE BINYON.

INTERVAL (10 MINUTES)

A SEA SYMPHONY (Vaughan Williams)

1. A SONG FOR ALL SEAS, ALL SHIPS

Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships;
See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and blue,
See, the steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port,
See, dusky and undulating, the long pennants of smoke.
Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships.

To-day a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,

Of unnamed heroes in the ships—of waves spreading and spreading far as the eye can reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations,
Fitful like a surge.
Of sea-captains young and old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay,
Picked sparingly, without noise by thee, old ocean, chosen by thee,
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of nations!
Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man one flag above all the rest,
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,
Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and mates,
And all that went down doing their duty,
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young and old,
A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

II. ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE

On the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song,
As I watched the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the clef of the universes and of the future.
A vast similitude interlocks all,
All distances of place however wide,
All distances of time,
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different,
All nations, all identities that have existed or may exist,
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spanned,
And shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose them.

III. (SCHERZO) THE WAVES

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearnfully flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and frolicsome under the sun,
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

IV. THE EXPLORERS

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
Covered all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming spiritual darkness,
Unspeaking high processions of sun and moon and countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention,
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, with restless explorations,
questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts
that sad incessant refrain,—*"Wherfore unsatisfied soul?
Whither O mocking life?"*

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive earth?

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be carried out,
Perhaps even now the time has arrived.
After the seas are all crossed,
After the great captains and engineers have accomplished their work,
After the noble inventors,
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

O we can wait no longer,
We too take ship O Soul,
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O Soul).
Caroling free, singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

O Soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
Bathe me, O God, in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them.
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O Soul, thou actual me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O Soul thou journeyest forth;

Away O Soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail!
Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only,
Reckless O Soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.
O my brave Soul!
O farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!

WALT WHITMAN.

Future Concerts . . .

ASSEMBLY HALL
ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

SUNDAY, 16th DECEMBER, 1973 at 3 p.m.

Carols for Choir and Audience

THE MAYFIELD BAND

CROWBOROUGH BEACON JUNIOR CHOIR

ANTHONY SMITH-MASTERS (piano)

Conductor: DEREK WATMOUGH

SUNDAY, 7th APRIL, 1974 at 3 p.m.

ST. JOHN PASSION

(BACH)

ANTHONY SMITH-MASTERS (harpsichord)

FULL ORCHESTRA

BRIAN WRIGHT, PETER KNAPP

DIANA BUCKLAND, RUTH GURNER,

DARRELL MOULTON, CHARLES KERRY

Conductor: DEREK WATMOUGH