

OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Cond: Nigel P. Wilkinson

East Lancs Sinfonia

“BEHOLD THE SEA!”

British music depicting the sea, ships and sailors

“The Sea Symphony”

by Ralph Vaughan Williams

Soloists: Linda Richardson and Dean Robinson

“Sea Pictures” by Edward Elgar

Soloist: Kathleen Wilkinson

and Sir Henry Wood’s

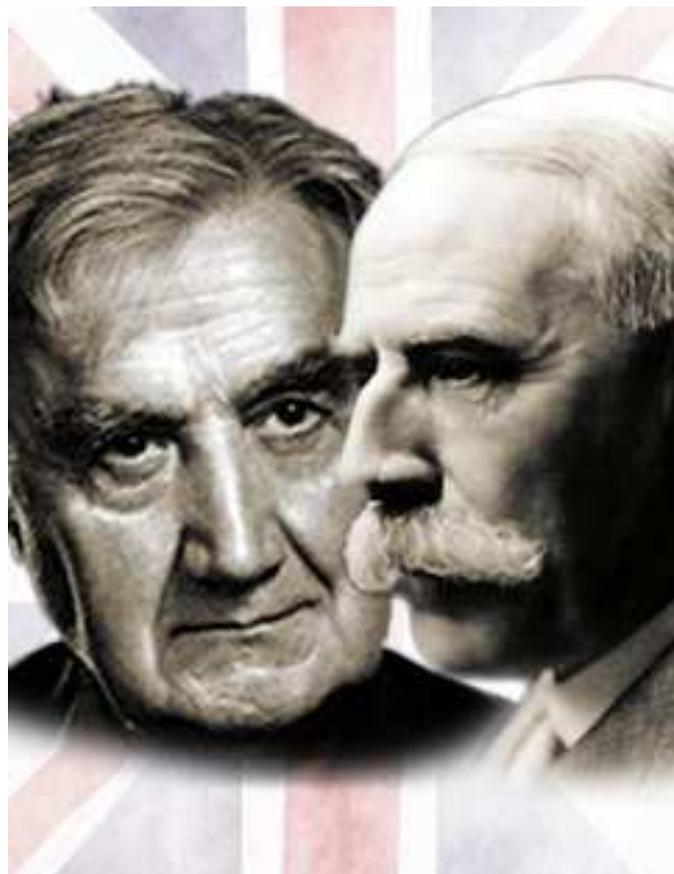
“Fantasia on British Sea Songs

Sunday March 29th

2015

@ 7.30pm

*In the
Concert Hall
of the
Royal Northern
College of Music*



OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

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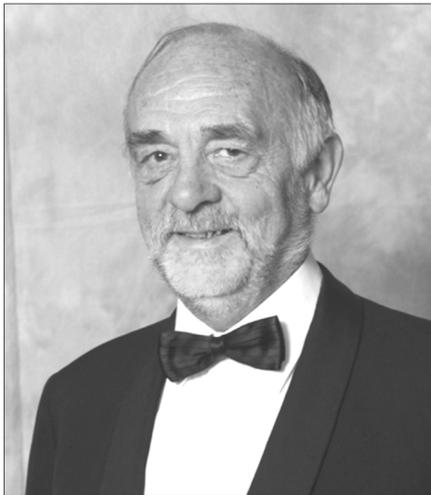
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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome once again to the Royal Northern College of Music for tonight's concert.

Whether it's a day on the beach or a luxury cruise on the Britannia, we British have always had a strong affinity with the sea in all its moods. Tonight's concert celebrates this with a varied programme of music by Vaughan Williams, Elgar and Sir Henry Wood. The East Lancs Sinfonia and our wonderful soloists will help to make this an evening to remember, so – 'Kwells' at the ready - sit back and enjoy!.

Our next concert will be at the Middleton Arena with

another fabulous Gilbert & Sullivan programme - "The Gondoliers" and "Ruddigore", on Sunday May 31st, with the inimitable Donald Maxwell leading proceedings as usual. If you've never attended our summer G & S festival then let me assure you that you are missing out on an evening of great energy and fun - and the singing and orchestra are brilliant too! Tickets will be on sale shortly, so don't miss out.

We have recently announced our programme for the next couple of seasons. It can be found towards the rear of this programme. (There's even more detail on our website).

We hope that there is something there for everyone, and we hope for your continued support. Please make a note of the dates.

Finally we now have our own facebook page, so you can visit us there too! How things have changed since this choir was formed back in 1884, but the choir sails forth into the future.
Fred Jones (Chairman)

BEHOLD THE SEA!

Please ensure that all mobile devices are in silent mode

Fantasia on British Sea Songs (Abridged)

(Sir Henry Wood arr. Zalva)

The Saucy Arethusa (Euphonium solo)

Tom Bowling (Thomas Dibdin) (Cello solo)

Hornpipe: Jack the Lad (Violin and flute duet)

Home Sweet Home (Henry Bishop)

See the conquering hero comes (G.F. Handel)

Rule Britannia (Thomas Arne)

Elgar: Sea Pictures (Sir Edward Elgar)

Soloist: Kathleen Wilkinson

- 1. Sea Slumber Song*
- 2. In Haven (Capri)*
- 3. Sabbath Morning at Sea*
- 4. Where Corals Lie*
- 5. The Swimmer*

INTERVAL

The Sea Symphony (Ralph Vaughan Williams)

Text: Walt Whitman

Soloists: Linda Richardson & Dean Robinson

- 1. A Song of All Seas and Ships*
- 2. On the Beach at Night Alone*
- 3. (Scherzo) The Waves*
- 4. The Explorers*

Fantasia on British Sea Songs (Sir Henry Wood)



Sir Henry Joseph Wood CH was an English conductor best known for his association with London's annual series of promenade concerts, known as the Proms. He conducted them for nearly half a century, introducing hundreds of new works to British audiences. After his death the concerts were officially renamed in his honour as the "*Henry Wood Promenade Concerts*", although nowadays they are generally referred to as the BBC Proms.

He was born on March 3rd 1869 in modest circumstances to parents who encouraged his musical talent and started his career as an organist. During his studies at the Royal Academy of Music he came under the influence of the famous voice teacher Manuel Garcia and became his accompanist. After similar work for Richard D'Oyly Carte's opera companies on the works of Arthur Sullivan and others, Wood became the conductor of a small operatic touring company. He was soon engaged by the larger Carl Rosa Opera Company. One notable event in his career was conducting the British premiere in 1892 of Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin*.

From the mid-1890s until his death, Wood focused on concert conducting. He was engaged by the impresario Robert Newman to conduct a series of promenade concerts at the Queen's Hall, offering a

mixture of classical and popular music at low prices. The series was successful, and Wood conducted annual promenade series until his death on August 19th 1944. By the 1920s, Wood had steered the repertoire entirely towards classical music. When the Queen's Hall was destroyed by bombing in 1941, the Proms moved to the Royal Albert Hall.

During his lifetime Sir Henry Wood declined the chief conductorships of the New York Philharmonic and Boston Symphony Orchestras, believing it to be his duty to serve music in the United Kingdom. He was remarkably successful in this and had an enormous influence on the musical life of Britain, greatly improving access to classical music, raising the standard of orchestral playing and nurturing the taste of the public, presenting a vast repertoire of music spanning four centuries.

He composed the *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*, (the work for which he is most celebrated), in 1905 for a concert celebrating the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. It caught the public imagination immediately, with its mixture of sea-shanties, together with Handel's "*See the Conquering Hero Comes*" and Arne's "*Rule, Britannia!*". He personally conducted it at the Proms more than 40 times, and it eventually became a fixture at the "*Last Night of the Proms*". A highlight of the *Fantasia* is the hornpipe "*Jack's the Lad*". Wood said of it:

“They stamp their feet in time to the hornpipe – that is until I whip up the orchestra to a fierce accelerando which leaves behind all those whose stamping technique is not of the very finest quality. I like to win by two bars, if possible; but sometimes have to be content with a bar and a half. It is good fun, and I enjoy it as much as they.”



Elgar: Sea Pictures

Sir Edward Elgar is acknowledged as one of Britain's greatest composers, and his 1st Symphony, which was composed contemporaneously with the Sea Symphony is generally considered to be the first great British Symphony. Elgar was of an older generation than Vaughan Williams, having been born on June 2nd 1857, at Broadheath, just outside the city of Worcester, but it took him a lot longer to establish his reputation as a serious composer. This was partly due to his background, for unlike most of his near contemporaries, he was not academically trained at one of the great conservatoires. As a self-taught composer, and a Roman Catholic, he felt himself to be an outsider both musically and socially in class conscious Victorian England, since the London musical establishment was predominantly academic and Protestant.

Although he had composed many light works, several now rarely performed cantatas, the *Serenade for Strings* and an overture, *Froissart*, Elgar did not really reach the national consciousness until 1899, the year

in which both *Sea Pictures* and his great orchestral masterpiece the *Enigma Variations* were both premiered.

Elgar composed the piece on his 1844 Broadwood Square piano while residing at Birchwood Lodge, Great Storridge in Herefordshire. The songs were originally written in high keys for a soprano voice, but transposed to lower keys for the orchestral version, largely at the request of the contralto Clara Butt. The songs were composed in July 1899, apart from *"In Haven (Capri)"*, which was a reworking of his 1897 *"Love alone will stay"*, the words of which were written by his wife Alice.

The premiere was on October 5th 1899 at the Norfolk and Norwich Festival with Elgar himself conducting and Clara Butt singing, dressed as a mermaid!

On October 7th, Clara Butt, (pictured right), gave the first London performance at St. James's Hall, with Elgar at the piano. Just two weeks later, on October 20th, she performed it for Queen Victoria at Balmoral.

Up until August 1900, Elgar's songs had been published by Novello, but Elgar had a disagreement with them, and from then his songs, including the *"Sea Pictures"*, were



published by Boosey & Hawkes, who bought the copyright for £50, with a small royalty going to Elgar per copy of the songs published separately.

SEA PICTURES

"Sea Slumber Song"

Poem by Roden Noel

Sea-birds are asleep,
The world forgets to weep,
Sea murmurs her soft slumber-song
On the shadowy sand
Of this elfin land;
"I, the Mother mild,
Hush thee, O my child,
Forget the voices wild!
Hush thee, O my child,
Hush thee".

Isles in elfin light
Dream, the rocks and caves,
Lull'd by whispering waves,
Veil their marbles
Veil their marbles bright,
Foam glimmers faintly white
Upon the shelly sand
Of this elfin land;

Sea-sound, like violins,
To slumber woos and wins,
I murmur my soft slumber-song,
Leave woes, and wails, and sins,

Ocean's shadowy might
Breathes good-night,
Good-night...
Leave woes, and wails, and sins,
Good-night... Good-night... etc.

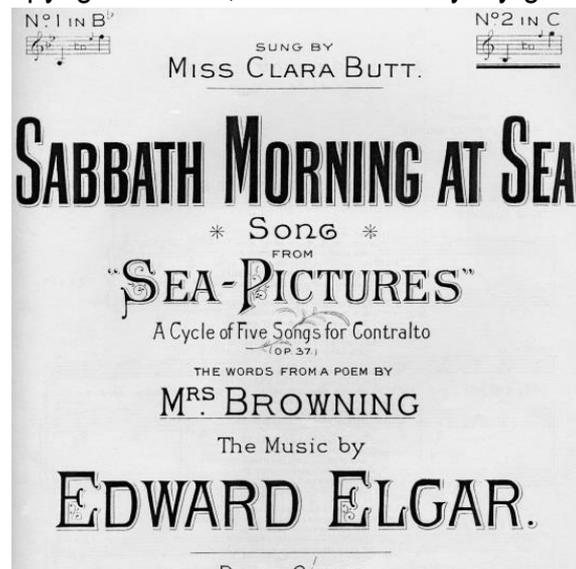
"In Haven (Capri)"

Poem by Alice Elgar

Closely let me hold thy hand,
Storms are sweeping sea and land;
Love alone will stand.

Closely cling, for waves beat fast,
Foam-flakes cloud the hurrying blast;
Love alone will last.

Kiss my lips, and softly say:



"Sabbath Morning at Sea"

Poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The ship went on with solemn face;
To meet the darkness on the deep,
The solemn ship went onward.
I bowed down weary in the place;
For parting tears and present sleep
Had weighed mine eyelids downward.

The new sight, the new wondrous sight!
The waters around me, turbulent,
The skies, impassive o'er me,
Calm in a moonless, sunless light,
As glorified by even the intent
Of holding the day glory!

Love me, sweet friends, this Sabbath day.
The sea sings round me while ye roll
Afar the hymn, unaltered,
And kneel, where once I knelt to pray,
And bless me deeper in your soul
Because your voice has faltered.

And though this sabbath comes to me
Without the stolèd minister,
And chanting congregation,
God's Spirit shall give comfort. He
Who brooded soft on waters drear,
Creator on creation.

He shall assist me to look higher,
Where keep the saints, with harp and song,
An endless sabbath morning,
And, on that sea commixed with fire,
Oft drop their eyelids raised too long
To the full Godhead's burning.



**Pencil sketch of the composer
in 1919 by Rothenstein**

“Toward the unknown region” The journey towards the first performance of the Sea Symphony

After the death of Purcell in 1695, English music went into a long period of decline that lasted until the late 19th century. Eventually the tireless efforts of Charles Villiers Stanford, Hubert Parry and others brought about the long-awaited English musical renaissance, which reached its full flowering with the emergence of Edward Elgar. He was followed by a whole new generation of talented composers, the leading figure of which was Ralph Vaughan Williams, who for half a century remained one of the most influential figures in English music. Like Elgar, he too was a late developer, reaching his mid-thirties before attracting serious attention as a composer.

As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, the work of the American poet Walt Whitman seemed to many to capture the essence of the new age, portraying an optimistic vision of a world inspired by human and scientific endeavour and the spirit of adventure. As well as Vaughan Williams, several other British composers - notably Holst and Delius - turned to Whitman's groundbreaking collection, *Leaves of Grass*, for inspiration. The radical, humanistic philosophy of Whitman's verse held a particular appeal for Vaughan Williams. He had already

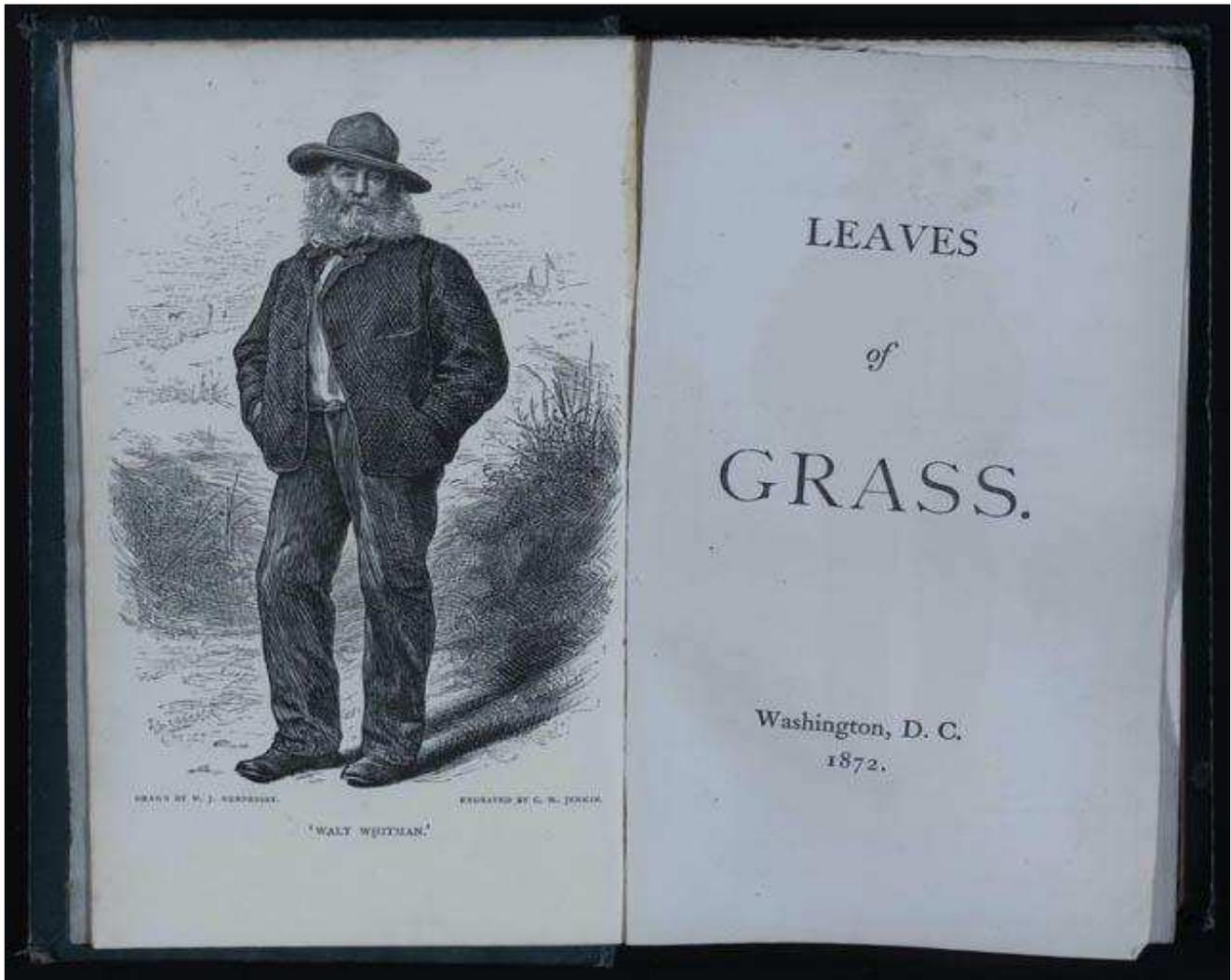
produced some songs to Whitman texts when in 1903 he began to think about writing something on an altogether larger scale. First came *Toward the Unknown Region* (1907), also a setting of Whitman. Then in 1909, after a gestation of nearly six years, he completed *A Sea Symphony*, the great choral and orchestral work which, more than any other, put Vaughan Williams firmly on the musical map. It was first performed in October 1910 (only a few weeks after his *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*), at the Leeds Festival.

The *Sea Symphony* is a remarkable achievement. Vaughan Williams was not blessed with the natural talent of a Holst or a Britten; his success was due in large part to his single-minded determination. Though in his thirties, he was still a relatively inexperienced composer and had so far made only a modest impression on the musical world, yet for his first symphony he chose to write a choral symphony. This was a hugely ambitious project and one with almost no precedent. True, Beethoven and Mendelssohn had both produced choral symphonies, but these are essentially orchestral works with the addition of soloists and chorus in the last movement. An earlier model was Berlioz's "*Romeo and Juliet*" Symphony, but this is a narrative and rather closer to a cantata than a symphony.

The closest parallel is Mahler's monumental 8th symphony, *The Symphony of a Thousand*, but again much of it is narrative, being based on the "*Faust*" legend, and in any case it was premiered only a month before the *Sea Symphony*, so Vaughan Williams must have been unaware of it for most if not all of the time that he was composing his own work.

Vaughan Williams proved more than equal to the challenging task he had set himself. British choral music had enjoyed a long and distinguished tradition, from Purcell and Handel through to Stanford, Parry and Elgar, but the striking originality of the *Sea Symphony*, the masterly handling of the orchestral and choral forces, its boldness, energy and vivid orchestration, set it apart as a wholly new and important addition to the choral repertoire. Even more significantly, it hailed the triumphant arrival of a new and powerful voice in English music. Vaughan Williams had succeeded in creating a definitive musical style drawn from genuinely English roots, rather than continuing, as his immediate predecessors had chosen to do, in the Austro-German tradition that had dominated European music since Beethoven's time.

The Text



The composer selected verses from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman uses images of brave sailors exploring the vast oceans as a colourful metaphor for the voyage of the human soul through life, - a universal message that must have held considerable personal significance for Vaughan Williams, who at the time was striving for recognition.

Leaves of Grass is the title Whitman gave to an anthology of poems which he continually edited, revised and added to throughout his life. Vaughan Williams must have had the 6th and final edition [1882], since the poems he sets are not in the earlier editions. The "leaves" simply refer to pages and "grass" the poems themselves, but Whitman's poetry does often reflect nature and man's relationship to it.

Though Whitman's poems were little known in England at the time, Vaughan Williams was attracted to them by their ability to transcend both metaphysical and humanist perspectives. Whitman's use of free verse was also beginning to make waves in the compositional world, where fluidity of structure was starting to be more attractive than traditional, metrical settings of text.

Vaughan Williams sets sections from 3 poems in his *Sea Symphony* – "A Song of the Exposition", "Sea Drift" and "A Passage to India". He repeats and omits lines both to fit his musical structure and also his message, e.g. in the final movement all references to India are expunged since the implicit message is that of the human soul journeying 'toward unknown regions'.

I "A Song for all Seas, all Ships"

Book XIII: Song of the Exposition [from verse 8]

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.

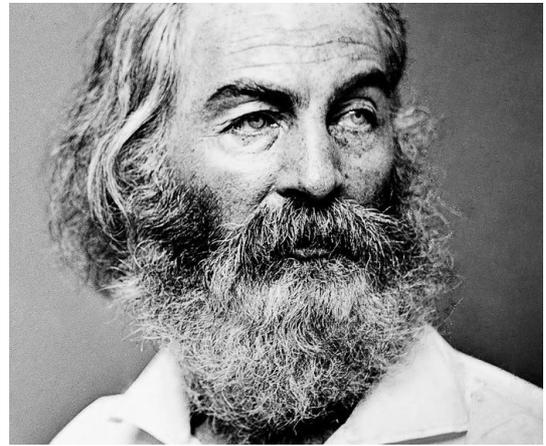
(Baritone) Today a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas,
 each with its special flag or ship-signal,
Of unnamed heroes in the ships –
of waves spreading and spreading far as the eye can reach,
Of dashing spray,
 and the winds piping and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations.
Fitful, like a surge.
Of sea-captains young or 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 the nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

II. On the Beach at Night, Alone

Book XIX: Sea-Drift: On the Beach at Night Alone

(Baritone / Chorus)

On the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing
 her husky song,
As I watch 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 space 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 interlude spans them,
 and always has spanned,
And shall forever span them and shall compactly
 hold and enclose them.



(Soprano) Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of nations!

Flaunt out visible as ever the various flags
 and 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 of all intrepid
 sailors and mates,

And of all that went down doing their duty,
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid
 captains young or old,

(Baritone) A pennant universal,
subtly waving all the time, o'er all brave sailors,
 All seas, all ships.

III. (Scherzo) The Waves

Book XIX: Sea-Drift: After the Sea-Ship

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 yearningly 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

Book XXVI: Passage to India: [from verse 5]

(Baritone / Soprano / Chorus)

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
Covered all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming
 spiritual darkness,
Unspeakable 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,
 with questionings, baffled, formless, feverish,
 with never-happy hearts, with that sad
 incessant refrain, -
"Wherefore unsatisfied soul?
Whither O mocking life?"
Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of the impassive earth?

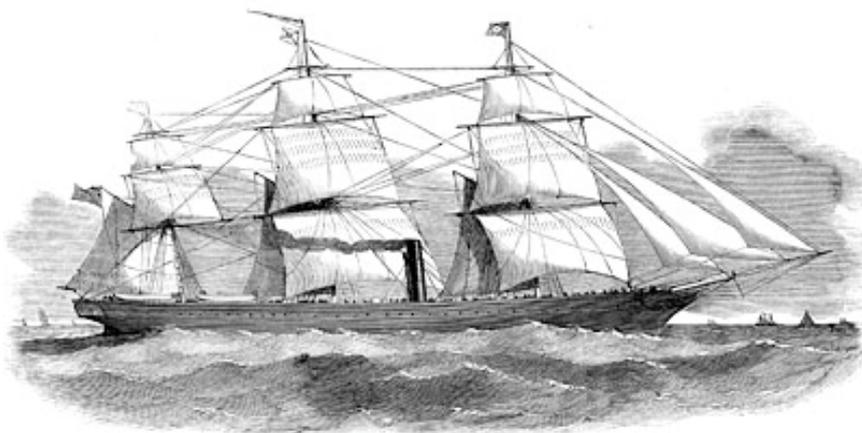
O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes,
 thou centre of them.
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space
 and Death,

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;

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 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.
(Duet) 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 walking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space
 and Death, like water flowing,
Bear me indeed as though 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.

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 darling joy, but safe!
Are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!



THE MUSIC

I “A Song for all Seas, all Ships”

The first movement opens with a brief but dramatic brass fanfare in B flat minor, immediately reiterated by the choir to the stirring words, *‘Behold, the sea itself’*, and arrestingly transposed to the tonic key of D major at the word ‘sea’. These two devices - the fanfare itself and the harmonic juxtaposition of major and minor tonalities a third apart - recur throughout the work as unifying features. This opening section of the symphony vividly



evokes the immensity and primal force of the sea. A change of mood is introduced with the appearance of a shanty-like theme depicting the *‘dashing spray’* and *‘winds piping and blowing’*. The fanfare returns for the soprano soloist’s dramatic appearance, when the focus of attention shifts to the *‘soul of man’*. A moving lament for those that have lost their lives at sea then leads to the final section, an extended passage beginning with the words *‘Emblem of man elate above death’*, culminating in a powerful climax, after which the waves subside and calm is restored.

II “On the beach at night alone”

The slow movement is an atmospheric nocturne introduced by the orchestra, whose alternating tonalities of C minor and E major evoke the lapping of waves on the shore. The baritone soloist ponders humankind’s place in the *‘vast similitude’* that encompasses and unites all time and space. He is joined by the full chorus, and the music gradually increases in intensity. The reflective mood then returns, the soloist’s meditations soon dissolving into a tranquil orchestral epilogue.

III “The Waves”

The third movement is purely pictorial, and is a virtuosic scherzo for choir and orchestra. Beginning with a modified version of the fanfare motif, Vaughan Williams brilliantly depicts the sea in all its fearsome power, with an exhilarating portrayal of wind and waves and the great vessel ploughing its way through the ocean.

IV. “The Explorers”

The finale opens with the majestic phrase, *‘O vast Rondure, swimming in space’*, set to a melody which the composer later acknowledged was strongly influenced by Elgar’s *Dream of Gerontius*. This expansive introduction prepares the way for further development of the metaphysical concepts explored in the first two movements. The climax of the movement, and of the symphony, is reached at *‘Finally shall come the poet worthy that name, the true son of God shall come singing his songs’*. There follows a sublime duet for the soprano and baritone soloists, after which an urgent cry of *‘Away, O soul, hoist instantly the anchor’* is heard to a shanty rhythm, and the ship is made ready. The concluding section of the work is serenely radiant, as the anchor is weighed and both ship and soul set sail on their quest, eventually disappearing from view as they voyage into the great unknown.

John Bawden.

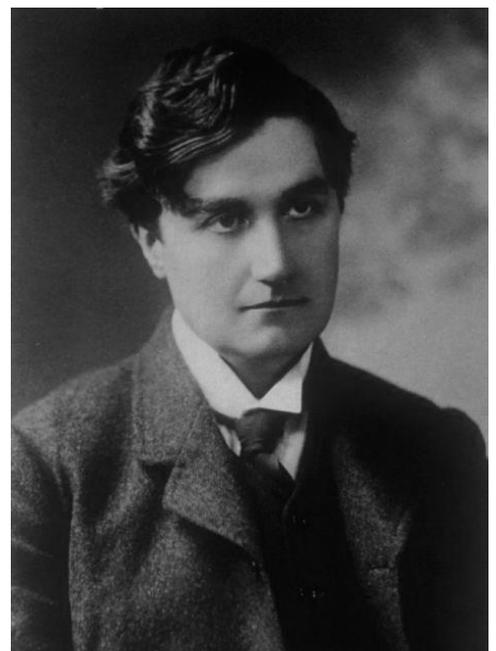


Photo of the young Vaughan Williams – not the image of the grey haired old man that we are so familiar with.

KATHLEEN WILKINSON

Mezzo – Soprano

Kathleen has sung principal roles with most of Britain's major companies, and in Europe. She has a long association with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden where roles have included *Filipyevna Eugene Onegin*, *Brigitte Die Tote Stadt*, *Mother Goose The Rake's Progress*, *3rd Maid Elektra* and the *She-Ancient A Midsummer Marriage*. For Glyndebourne she has sung *Mistress Quickly Falstaff*, *Mrs Herring Albert Herring*, *Genevieve Pelleas et Melisande*, *Pastuchyna Jenufa* and *Filipyevna*. She has also sung regularly for English National Opera and Scottish Opera.

Roles have included: *Mama Lucia Cavalleria Rusticana*, the cleaning lady *The Macropulous Case*, *Burya Jenufa*, the nurse / old woman *Ines di Castro* (James MacMillan), *Filipyevna* and *Pastuchyna*.

Amongst many highlights at Scottish Opera were the critically acclaimed *Ring Cycle* (*Schwertleite* and *Erda*) and creating roles in world premieres of *Friend of the People* and *Monster*.

For WNO she sang *Filipyevna* in *Onegin*.

In Europe she has been a frequent guest artist with Opera Lyon, where roles have included: *Pastuchyna*, *La Ciesca* in *Gianni Schicchi*, *Mistress of the Novices Suor Angelica*, *la damma Macbeth* and *Auntie Peter Grimes*. Other work has included *Marcellina Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Mistress Quickly* for Opera Rennes, *Mistress Quickly* for Nantes / Angers and Rennes, the nurse / old woman at Porto, and *Erda Das Rheingold* at the Sopot International Wagner Festival (Poland).

She has recorded for the Chandos Opera in English series, and the Mezzo Channel in Europe. She is on the Opus Arte DVD of *Eugene Onegin* from the Royal Opera House, a performance that was also shown at cinemas worldwide and on Channel 4, and has been involved in over a dozen radio broadcasts for the BBC and Radio France.

She also has an extensive concert and oratorio repertoire, and has sung the *Verdi Requiem* on almost 20 occasions. Notably she was the guest soloist at the Last Night of the Hallé proms at the old Free Trade Hall, and sang in a concert filmed by Channel 4 at Puccini's house in Torre del Lago.

Recent work includes: *Onegin* and *The Carmelites* (Poulenc) at Grange Park Opera, and *Ursule* in concert performances of *Beatrice et Benedict* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the Usher Hall and in Glasgow. Most recently she sang *Anna Kennedy* with Joyce Di Donato and *Carmen Giannattasio* in a new production of *Maria Stuarda* at the Royal Opera House and *Nurse / Old woman* in a revised version of *Ines di Castro* for Scottish Opera conducted by the composer. Future and current engagements include: *Marcellina Figaro* in Antwerp and Gent, *Filipyevna Onegin* at Garsington, and *Mother Goose The Rake's Progress* in Caen, Rouen, Limoges, Reims and Luxembourg.





LINDA RICHARDSON

Soprano

Linda Richardson was born in Cheshire and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she was a Peter Moores Foundation Scholar and winner of the Frederic Cox Award, and then at the National Opera Studio.

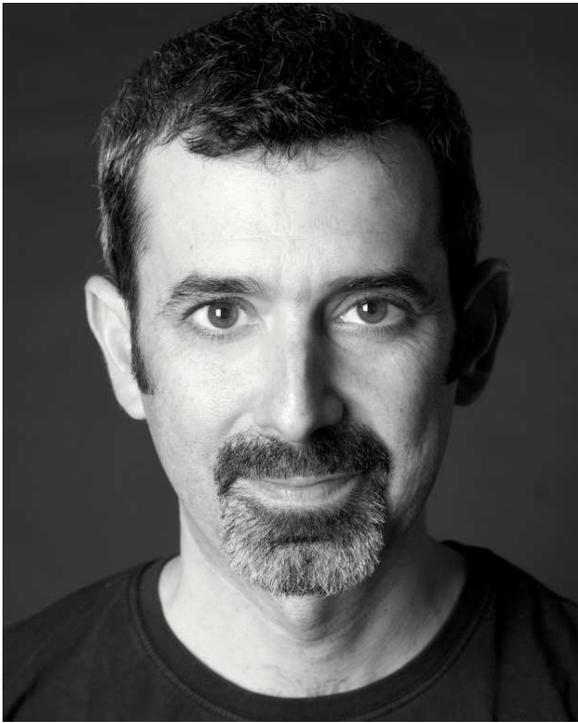
An English National Opera Company Principal between 1997 and 2005, her roles there have included Virtue *The Coronation of Poppea*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Laretta *Gianni Schicchi*, Micaela *Carmen*, Gretel *Hansel and Gretel*, Gilda *Rigoletto*, Zerlina *Don Giovanni*, Sophie *Der Rosenkavalier*, Mimi *La Bohème*, title roles *The Fairy Queen* and *Alcina*, Violetta *La Traviata*, Woglinde *Rhinegold*, Helena *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Donna Anna *Don Giovanni*.

Elsewhere she has sung Karolka *Jenufa*, Mimi, Nanetta *Falstaff*, Pamina *Die Zauberflöte*, Violetta and Gilda with Opera North, Lisetta *La Vera Constanza* at Garsington, Norina *Don Pasquale* for

Clonter Opera, Fairy Queen in Barcelona, First Niece *Peter Grimes* at Netherlands Opera and Amina in Opera Holland Park's *La Sonnambula*.

She performs extensively on the oratorio and concert platform, and is a frequent recitalist, having sung at the Newbury, Three Choirs and Arundel Festivals. She was a regular soloist with the English Haydn Festival where she sang in world and British premieres of Haydn's unknown works. Other concert work includes the *Missa Solemnis*, Brahms *Requiem* with the Northern Sinfonia, *Messiah* with the English Chamber Orchestra in Spain and Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra. Recent concerts include an Italian Gala with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Carl Davis, *Carmina Burana* at the Royal Festival Hall and she has appeared as a guest soloist on *Friday Night is Music Night* on BBC Radio 2. Linda appeared as Annie in Jonathan Dove's TV opera *When She Died* on Channel 4. Recordings include *Hearts and Flowers*, a collection of Victorian Parlour Songs, and Oscar *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Chandos.

Most recent and current plans include the Countess throughout the UK and France with Diva Opera, *Katya Kabanova* with ETO, *Alice Falstaff* and *Cio-Cio San Madame Butterfly* Longborough Festival Opera, Mrs Coyle *Owen Wingrave* Nuremburg International Music Chamber Festival, *Alice Falstaff* with Holland Park Opera, *Violetta* Scottish Opera, and for Welsh National Opera the title role *Anna Bolena*, Violetta and *Almaltea Moses in Egitto*. In 2015 she will sing Elvira in *I Puritani* for WNO.



DEAN ROBINSON – Bass

Dean Robinson was born and educated in Australia and came to live in Great Britain in 1987. After several years of private study, he entered the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester where he went on to win several major Scholarships from the Peter Moores Foundation and took major roles in college opera productions. Since graduation Dean has worked as a principal guest artist for The Royal Opera House Covent Garden, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera North, De Nederlands Oper, Opera de Rouen, The Early Opera Company and English Touring Opera. His many festival appearances include Garsington Festival, Rossini Opera Festival (Pesaro), Mid Wales Opera, Iford Arts, Pinchgut Opera (Sydney). His extensive repertoire includes Pluto/Caronte (*Orfeo*), Saul (*David et Jonathas*),

Il Re (*Ariodante*), Claudio (*Agrippina*), Zoroastro (*Orlando*); Polyphemus (*Acis and Galatea*); Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*); title role *Don Giovanni*; title role *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Magnifico (*La Cenerentola*), Don Profondo (*Il Viaggio a Reims*) Le Gouverneur (*Le Comte Ory*), Douglas (*La Donna del Lago*), Fabrizio (*The Thieving Magpie*), Angelotti (*Tosca*), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), Comte de Grioux (*Manon*), Colline (*La Boheme*), Coppélius/Dr Miracle/Dapertutto (*The Tales of Hoffman*) and Zaccariah (*Nabucco*).

He is a highly experienced concert artist having performed with the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Halle Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Northern Sinfonia, English Baroque Soloists, Ulster Orchestra among others. Distinguished conductors he has performed under include Sir Colin Davis (*Beatrice et Benedict*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*), Sir Simon Rattle (*Serenade to Music*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*), Sir David Willcocks (*Verdi's Requiem*, *Messiah*), Sir John Eliot Gardiner (*Messiah*), Kent Nagano (*L'Enfance du Christ*). Prominent concert repertoire includes Bach's *Passions*, *Christmas Oratorio*; Handel's *Messiah*, *Samson* and *Jephtha*; Haydn *Creation*; Verdi's *Requiem*; Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

A keen exponent of contemporary music, Dean has taken part in World Premiere performances of several notable new works including Passauf in Gavin Bryar's *Dr Ox's Experiment*, Darwin in Karen Wilmhurst's *Darwin's Barnacle*, and Douglas in Stuart MacCrae's *Remembrance Day* (Scottish Opera). He sings regularly with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Psappha with whom he has performed Ligeti's *Aventures/Nouvelles Aventures*, and Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolle*.

His recordings include Duca d'Argile in Donizetti's *Il prigioniero d'Edimburgo*, and Timagene in Pacini's *Alessandro nell'Indie* for Opera Rara; Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), and High Priest (*Nabucco*) for Chandos Records; Don Pedro (*Beatrice et Benedict*) with the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO Live); Saul (*David et Jonathas*) for ABC Classics. On film he sings the role of First Officer in an adaptation of John Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and Goffredo in Judith Wier's *Armida*, both in collaboration with Channel 4 television.

A full-time member of the Opera North chorus since 2010, Dean continues to take principal roles in their productions including Curio (*Giulio Cesare*) and Bonze (*Madama Butterfly*). Appearances during Opera North's recent Britten Centenary season include Swallow (*Peter Grimes*) and Theseus (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Last season he appeared as Jose Castro in *La Fanciulla del West* and Medico in *Macbeth*, and in the winter season of 2015 he sings Bartolo in a new production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

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§ = 30 years service

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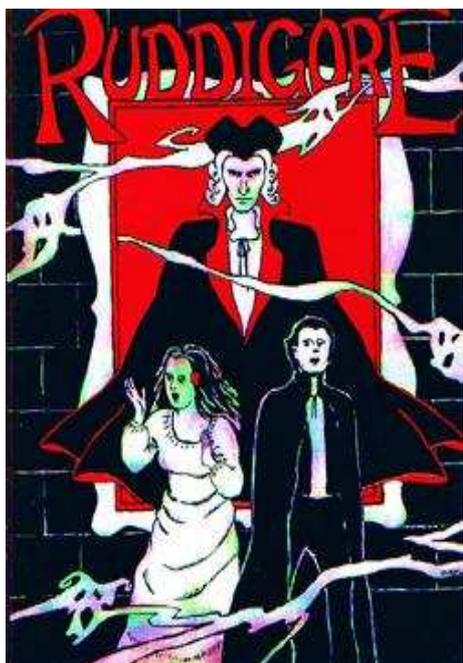
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Sunday May 1st 2016 at the RNCM
The Brahms Requiem (*in English*)

Sunday November 6th at the RNCM
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JS Bach: The St John Passion

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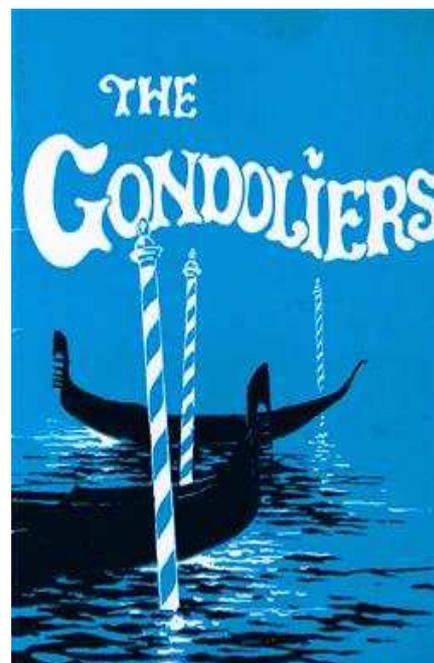
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