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individuality on that of the student, but should strive to awaken interest, stimulate activity, and point the way towards the path of self-development, or as Maria Montessori beautifully puts it, 'He should show a light and pass on his way.'

MODERN BRITISH COMPOSERS

By EDWIN EVANS

X.—RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (*contd.*)

It is impossible to pass in review the works of Vaughan Williams in the chronological order which furnishes so useful a plan with other composers. In the first place, whereas their development has been consistent in the sense that their various musical ideas have marched as it were abreast, Vaughan Williams's progress has been less ordered. In some aspects his work at a very early date shows an astonishing finality, whilst in others it still lacks to-day the finish that we expect to find in a composer at his stage of maturity. Moreover, his passion for revision leaves us constantly in doubt concerning the date of certain of his most characteristic works. Should they be assigned to the year in which they originated, or to that in which they reached their present form? Even when they have been standardised by publication, it does not always follow that their evolution is terminated. No order in which we could place them would present his compositions in such a sequence as would constitute in itself a biography of his musical life, and the variety of his musical experience defies systematic classification. It is one of those rare instances in which the apparently fortuitous selection of more or less cognate suggestions offers the prospect of a result at least as illuminating as any logical process.

In the preceding article we arrived at a group of his early songs, which furnishes as good a starting-point as any other. Generally speaking his songs reached print more rapidly than any of his other works, and this arrested the process of revision. But on examining them carefully, we realise that it is precisely his songs which furnished the least occasion for afterthought. Though not each one of them is perfect in itself, all of them convey a convincing impression that they are an adequate presentment of the musical thought as it came to him. This is an impression that we do not always derive even from his most deliberate work in other spheres, where we are constantly assailed by doubts whether he could not have given fuller expression to what was in his mind—doubts, by the way, which the composer himself constantly shares. Two other songs of early date deserve mention, 'Orpheus with his lute,' for its old-world charm, and 'Boy Johnny,' for its simple directness. Then followed the 'Songs of Travel,' of which the first book contains the most popular, which are 'The Vagabond,' 'Bright is the Ring of Words' and 'The Roadside Fire.' About the same time he arranged two old French songs, one of which has a melody which places its anonymous author among the

elect of musical history. It is the song 'L'Amour de Moy,' which is sometimes, but quite erroneously, described as a folk-tune. Its essentially aristocratic character should have sufficed to show that its origin could not be the popular Muse. But there is a general tendency to regard all the songs of old France, not excluding even those which can be traced to the Troubadours, as folk-songs, equally with those whose rustic character is obvious. No peasant, or other untutored man of the people, has ever sung such a song as 'L'Amour de Moy.'

Not long afterwards, Vaughan Williams harmonized two volumes belonging to the series 'Folk-Songs of England' issued by Messrs. Novello. Here I find myself on somewhat dangerous ground, for the mode of accompaniment is very different from that which appeals to my personal taste. But while frankly saying so, I am not blind to the sterling quality of the method which the composer has applied, viewing these songs from another angle. It is only the fanatics of the folk-song world who arrogate to themselves the right of declaring how these old melodies should be set, and the example they give of exclusiveness is one to be avoided. Vaughan Williams gives the songs a becoming sturdiness, and preserves their original character, some of which would have had to be sacrificed had he considered it necessary to accommodate them to the purposes of ordinary song. That he has been uncompromising with the songs themselves is a circumstance that I bow to, but I wish that he could have compromised more in favour of the instrument for which the accompaniments are written. They are good intrinsically, but few of them make an effective use of pianistic resource, such as for instance Moullé has employed in his 'Songs of Normandy,' which are a classic in the genre.

The next important work in song form was the cycle 'On Wenlock Edge,' to which I devoted an article in these columns in June, 1918. It consists of six poems selected from Housman's 'A Shropshire Lad,' and set for voice with string quartet and pianoforte. This remarkable composition dates from the composer's association with Ravel, of which there are subtle traces in most of the songs, and a more obvious one in 'Bredon Hill.' Yet this extraneous influence is so completely confined to what one may term the scenic accessories of the music that, even were it most apparent, it carries with it no feeling of intrusion. One of the mysteries of our English musical life of ten years ago was, however, that a composer might model himself upon certain approved German classics and not incur reproach for following what was then considered to be the right and proper course, but if he had the audacity to profit by experience of another source, it was considered a lapse from virtue. Happily we are forgetting those prejudices, and they are only worth mentioning as historical curiosities. For that matter, 'On Wenlock Edge,' like any other music, has its genealogy, with a collateral branch extending even into Germany, but in a more intimate sense it is almost as English

as the poems themselves. Had it been written ten years later, even that 'almost' might have been unjustified, but Vaughan Williams was a pioneer, and therefore subject to the criticism of those who have become wise after the event. The essential fact is that this song-cycle is a thing of great beauty, a beauty that is almost universally acknowledged, and a beauty that its trifling defects cannot mar if indeed they do not help to bring out its better features. The voice-part is so characteristic that we are prepared to condone one or two declamatory weaknesses, and even the obviousness of the antithesis in 'Is my team ploughing?' In short, this is one of the outstanding works in modern British music, in a form in which English music happened to have more leeway to catch up than in any other. Whilst our orchestral and chamber music was rapidly making up for lost time, the problem of writing English song made very slow progress towards a solution which even now is not yet attained to the satisfaction of the more fastidious critic. But when a point is reached whence we can look back with satisfaction over the stages of the journey, it will be surprising indeed if 'On Wenlock Edge' ceases to appear a prominent landmark. In comparison, the 'Five Mystical Songs' which followed may have a harder task to maintain themselves in the repertoire, partly because their ascetic treatment does not appeal to popular instincts, and partly because their setting with chorus and orchestra stands in the way of frequent performance. But though planned on the larger scale, corresponding to that of the Fantasia on Christmas Carols, their place is among the composer's songs rather than among his larger works.

The latest addition to this section of Vaughan Williams's works consists of four hymns for tenor solo and string orchestra, or alternatively with pianoforte and viola, which are not yet published, but from which the following, though taken from the instrumental background, may be given as a characteristic example:

No. 3, 'COME LOVE, COME LORD.'

(Part of Introduction).

EX. 1. *Lento.*
 VI. (*con sord.*)
pp
 Viola solo.
pp (*senza sord.*)
 Viole e celli.
pppp (*con sord.*)

Turning to Vaughan Williams's choral works, we have first of all to decide as to which category belong certain very important compositions. The 'Sea Symphony,' for instance, is essentially what its title indicates, a symphony of the sea. That it should employ voices, and be based upon a poem, in no way alters its symphonic character. Moreover, it is often in the purely orchestral passages that the music gives forth its most characteristic flavour. The greater part of the choral writing is by no means so distinctly personal. Although its idiom, and especially its disregard for certain rigid conventions of the past, give it an aspect of novelty, its innermost feeling does not differentiate itself from previous music to the same degree as the orchestral writing. In many respects 'Towards the Unknown Region,' which preceded the 'Sea Symphony,' has a stronger claim to be considered a representative choral work, although the latter is in all else a more notable achievement. The following examples, culled from two different sections of the 'Sea Symphony,' may be regarded as typical:

"THE EXPLORERS."

EX. 2.

'ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE.'

Ex. 3.
misterioso.

As might be expected, it is in unaccompanied part-writing that Vaughan Williams shows most plainly the harmonic austerity to which reference was made in the preceding article as being the only feature that could be singled out for technical discussion. The following two examples from a Latin Motet, though not selected for that particular purpose, afford an illustration of it:

Ex. 4A.
Andantino.
SOPRANO.

O vos om - nes . . . qui tran - sit - is per

ALTO.

Vi - - am at - ten - di - te et vi -

END OF SAME MOTET

Ex. 4B. SOPRANO

Je - ru - sa - lem, Je - ru - sa - lem, . . .

ALTO.

TENOR.

BASS.

Je - ru - sa - lem, . . .

con - ver - ter - e ad Dom - i - num De -

con - ver - ter - e ad Dom - i - num De -

They are Vaughan Williams in his most ascetic mood—that is to say, in a mood which, though not always so freely displayed, is at all times the background of his harmony. If we can imagine

a form of asceticism which involves no self-denial, and is congenial not only to the man who practises it but to those who enter into communion with him through his music, we shall not be far from a complete understanding of the essence of Vaughan Williams's compositions, and not least of those which have at various times been regarded as somewhat forbidding because of the absence of concession to the more florid amenities of music.

The composer's preoccupation with folk-song found its fullest expression in the 'Norfolk Rhapsodies.' These are three in number, and were originally planned to form a kind of folk-song symphony, but the composer has decided to discard the third and is doubtful about the second, which may be overtaken by the same fate unless its friends intervene. The first Rhapsody is based upon five tunes which Vaughan Williams collected whilst staying at King's Lynn in January, 1905. It was composed the same year, and performed for the first time during the Promenade Concert season of 1906. The five tunes are all of a type that is more or less common to our seafaring folk, regardless of county. Some of them could be matched from the West Country. The titles are: 'The Captain's Apprentice,' 'The Bold Young Sailor,' 'A Basket of Eggs,' 'On Board a Ninety-eight,' and 'Ward, the Pirate.' In the original plan this Rhapsody corresponded to the introduction and first movement of the symphony, the former being derived from the first two, and the *Allegro* from the last three of these songs. Though the form is fanciful enough to justify the designation 'Rhapsody,' it is logical and even concise, the material being ingeniously combined and developed. The second and third Rhapsodies were composed in 1906, and first performed at the Cardiff Festival of 1907. The second telescopes the slow movement and *Scherzo* of the projected symphony, the latter being treated as an episode of the former. The third, in the form of a quick march and *Trio*, was the *Finale*, but since it no longer has the composer's approval, the symphony must remain truncated. In these two later Rhapsodies the composer employs respectively three and four tunes from the same source.

Of somewhat similar character is the 'Fantasia on English Folk-Song' which bears the sub-title 'Studies for an English Ballad Opera,' though whether this refers to the work given in the list of Vaughan Williams's compositions as 'Hugh, the Drover,' has not been disclosed. The Fantasia is in three sections—a resolute *Allegro*, an extended slow movement, and a lively *Finale*, towards the end of which the earlier material reappears. Though not based upon folk-song, the fantasias on a theme by Tallis for string orchestra, and on Christmas carols for baritone solo, chorus and orchestra, belong to a related order of ideas in their treatment of given themes. The method naturally derives from variations, but instead of the more formal exploitation the composer constantly fuses his material into an organic whole. Except that his polyphony is radically different, and his invention

B

more spontaneous, his works of this class bear a faint resemblance to those which Russian composers have based upon their country's rich store of folk-tune. But though the impulse may have this resemblance, nothing could have induced Vaughan Williams to emulate the machine-made overtures and symphonies of that movement which time has already dated.

Among Vaughan Williams's other orchestral works are three Impressions which, though not indebted to folk-song, are so intimately associated with the English soil that this is the right place to mention them. The first two, 'Harnham Down' and 'Boldrewood,' date from 1904. They are overshadowed in importance by the symphonic Impression 'In the Fen Country,' composed in 1904, revised in 1905 and 1907, and first performed at a Beecham concert in 1909. Unfortunately the score of this characteristic work has been lost, perhaps irretrievably. It is a quietly poetic composition in the style of a landscape, without incident, whether musical or anecdotal, save such as is provided by a gradual succession, not of moods, but of shades of the same mood. The melodic lines are such as one associates with a pastoral scene, but Vaughan Williams has endowed them with a rare personal quality. 'In the Fen Country' is a treasured memory with those who had the good fortune to hear it. Its loss is one more reminder that much of the best English music remains unpublished, and therefore exposed to all the risk that can beset a single manuscript score on its many journeys.

(To be continued.)

Interludes

By 'FESTE'

Mr. Thomas Quinlan's article in a recent issue of the *Daily Telegraph* under the heading 'Wake up, England!' has apparently attracted less attention than it deserved. Mr. Quinlan expressed a fear that we shall be inundated by American artists and managers with 'more up-to-date methods than our own,' with more interesting programmes, and with 'keener and more intelligent commercial insight from the point of view of the artist's own advancement.'

'In America,' he said, 'it is impossible to find an artist who is not prepared to deluge a manager with newspaper blocks, press cuttings, photographs, and all the driving force of American advertising methods.'

No one can dispute our backwardness in these respects. Far too many of our artists seem to be under the impression that engagements will come without their moving heaven and earth—especially earth. They are encouraged in this attitude by our musical press, which seems curiously deficient in the 'driving force' which is so characteristic of American journals.

Perhaps the first thing that strikes us is our want of system. When I take up an American musical journal (which I do as often as my eyes light on