British Music at Vienna

Author(s): Paul Bechert

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 63, No. 952 (Jun. 1, 1922), pp. 395-396

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/909439>

Accessed: 22-11-2015 06:53 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Marylebone Gardens, the chief rival to Vauxhall at about the middle of the 18th century, was in its earlier days (that is, near the end of the 17th century) an adjunct to a tavern—whose chief attraction was a bowling-green.

It was Daniel Gough, proprietor of this tavern (the 'Rose' Tavern), who saw the possibility of his grounds becoming a rival to Vauxhall, and in 1737 opened them as 'Marybone Gardens,' with an orchestra of instrumentalists, and, a couple of years later, an organ. There is not much record of the doings at Marylebone before the gardens were taken over by John Trusler, about 1756. There are, however, accounts that music of an instrumental kind was popular, and that in imitation of the Vauxhall introduction of singing, Miss Falkner, a vocalist of considerable repute, was engaged in 1737 as principal singer. From that period onwards, to the closing of the gardens in 1776, the songs sung at Marylebone were as famous as those at Vauxhall and Ranelagh. To John Trusler must be credited the fact that shortly after the middle of the 18th century Marylebone was as celebrated as Vauxhall. The gardens were situate near Marylebone High Street, and reached as far as Harley Street.

This was an advantage to those who did not care to take Thames wherry to cross to Vauxhall. Trusler was a pastrycook, whose daughter's reputation for tarts, cheese-cakes, and plum-cakes was well-known, and as people liked choice eating combined with fashionable amusement, Marylebone had its frequenters, among whom was the great Mr. Handel.

In 1755—shortly before Trusler came on the scene—John Beard, the singer, then at the height of his popularity, was either proprietor or manager of the gardens, and his sound musical knowledge and his own prestige must have helped to popularise the musical fame of Marylebone.

Leaving the account of Marylebone, it becomes necessary to speak of the other of the triad of gardens—Ranelagh. This was situate near Chelsea, on the banks of the stream that flowed from the Serpentine and some other of the brooks that ran down from the rising ground towards the Thames.

The situation enabled the proprietors to introduce special features not available in other resorts. For example, a wooden erection, in Chinese taste, was built in the centre of one of the streams where, no doubt, tea was served. But the chief feature of Ranelagh was its immense 'rotunda' where the musical entertainments were given.

Ranelagh commenced its career as a public pleasure-garden in 1742, taking its name from Richard Viscount Ranelagh, whose house and garden it had absorbed. (It may be mentioned in passing that the popular pronunciation was 'Runelow'.)

From the first holding itself aloof from the common herd that frequented Vauxhall and Marylebone, it was always esteemed to be an ultra-fashionable resort, even if rather dull. Its chief diversion, apart from music, was promenading the rotunda and the tree-shaded walks. As other more virile amusements came to the front, Ranelagh's day drew to a close and was finally ended in 1803.

Of the many minor gardens that followed the lead of the three greater ones, probably the most famous resort was 'Finch's Grotto Gardens,' that commenced in 1760, and was situate near St. George's Street, Southwark. The career of these gardens

ended about 1773-75. Here the same class of musical entertainment was carried forward. One of the chief singers was a Mr. Dearle, though Mrs. Baddeley, the actress, was also engaged, and the tenor Thomas Lowe.

Cuper's Gardens, also on the south side of the river, now the site of Waterloo Bridge Road, was flourishing musically in 1740 and 1750. Instrumental music of a refined and fashionable character was there performed, and popular singers were engaged. Lewis Granom was one of the chief composers.

A further consideration of the music-makings at the London gardens, which formed and fashioned the taste in English vocal music, must be reserved for the second part of this article, from material in my own possession.

(To be continued.)

BRITISH MUSIC AT VIENNA

BY PAUL BECHERT

(OUR VIENNA CORRESPONDENT)

The Chinese Wall which surrounded our physical and spiritual life for four long war years is gradually being demolished, and once more our eyes are free to roam. Like Rip van Winkle, we find that these last eight years have wrought a vast change and a surprising development in the surrounding world. Not the least surprising of our new experiences was the season of English music which has just come to a close here. Most important of all, these English concerts have vanquished the old prejudice, held here for decades past, of the English nation's lack of musical talent. There were, to be sure, many arguments in favour of this prejudice, for up to the time immediately preceding the world war, English music so far as we knew it was embodied in the work of but two composers—Sir Edward Elgar and Dame Ethel Smyth, whose conceptions, moreover, however fine, were not indicative of any 'national' school, being rather influenced by the German symphonic principles of the last century of which Brahms and Strauss were the representative figures. Beyond that, what little of English music was generally known here consisted of a few more or less popularly pleasing songs of the 'drawing-room' kind. Of the modern musical tendencies there seemed hardly any trace in contemporary English music, save perhaps in the compositions of Cyril Scott, whose affinity to the impressionist methods of Debussy was quite clearly discernible.

How radically conditions must have changed in England of late! Suddenly we began hearing the names of such composers as Arthur Bliss, Gustav Holst, Arnold Bax, John Ireland, and others whose existence had hitherto been known only to a limited number of professionals, and we were even more astonished to find their compositions for the most part excellent works, and worthy of the most serious consideration. Their psychological aspects, as a matter of course, are quite different from those of our young German composers. Germany, let us not forget, is the home of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, the land of intellectualism and the very birthplace of revolutionary movements. The intellectual element, and that philosophical attitude towards the world in general which are typical of the German mind, are more than ever predominant in the German music of our

generation. Moreover, the revolutionary tendencies of present-day Germany readily lend themselves to music, as to all other things of everyday life, and they react in a musical radicalism which borders on anarchy. The works of our young composers, based on the Wilsonian principle of self-determination and on an adherence to self-chosen laws which are as yet unwritten, therefore frequently defy analysis. They are the outcome of the *Sturm und Drang* period which our generation is going through, and the definite forms of this new musical art are as yet in a process of crystallisation.

Of such intellectual and philosophical strife the modern English composers seem to know little. They are bright, healthy, and talented young fellows who do not pretend to set philosophical problems to music, but who love to revel in sound, colour, and rhythm. The strongly rhythmical character of their work which is frequently—all too frequently, perhaps—derived from the popular dances of the day, is in fact the predominant feature of their compositions. But a certain melodic freshness, akin to a folk-song element, constitutes the appealing quality common to the majority of their works. Most surprising of all is their preference for humorous, even grotesquely parodistic effects, which Gustav Holst and Arthur Bliss command with particular mastery. In Holst's Suite *The Planets*, it is a genial flash of wit when Jupiter interrupts his weirdly frolicsome fox-trot-like dance to indulge in a short incidental flirtation with Semele, who is very cleverly characterised by a truly Handel-like theme. This Suite may, in fact, be ranked with the most interesting orchestral novelties of recent years. The same spirit of humorous satire, next to a commendable attempt at introducing new orchestral colours—such as the employment of the bass-flute, which has very rarely been used heretofore—is the chief characteristic of Arthur Bliss, who was present personally to conduct his chamber suite *Conversations*, as well as his Rhapsody, *Mélée Fantastique*, and the Storm Music for Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Some of these pieces, I think, go rather too far in their extravagances, especially the last-named composition, whose excessive use of percussion instruments rather exceeds the limitations imposed by the average concert-hall.

Arthur Bliss, it seems, occupies a position at the left wing of British music, sharing the distinction of such radicalism with Kaikhosru Sorabji, who kept Vienna guessing as to the meaning of his two Pianoforte Sonatas, which are probably the very acme of musical modernism. By way of contrast, I may allude to Arnold Bax, whose symphonic poem entitled *November Woods* is of a considerably more moderate kind. Bax's Violin Sonata No. 1, splendidly played here by Mr. Ernest Whitfield, is still less radical, and in its melodic and harmonic treatment approaches the style of an Anglicised Grieg. Bax's songs, like those of Bliss and John Ireland—they were excellently sung by Mrs. Dorothy Moulton and Miss Anne Thursfield—disclose a leaning towards the folk-song style which is frequently made attractive by an interesting harmonic twist. Ireland seems at his best in his Violin Sonata No. 2, which Mr. Whitfield presented on another occasion: there is true melodic inspiration in this graceful piece of music, and its last movement abounds with genuine national colour. Ireland was less fortunate with his symphonic poem *The Forgotten Rite*, which Mr. Maurice Besly

very ably conducted on the occasion of Miss Ursula Greville's concert. Miss Greville sang a number of modern English songs by Percival Garratt, Martin Shaw, Eric Fogg, and others, which, while pleasing the popular fancy, disappointed by the meagreness of their musical substance. The same may be said of some songs by Cyril Scott. This composer created a far deeper impression by his performance of his own Pianoforte Concerto—which is perhaps not so much a pianoforte concerto as an effective and well-constructed orchestral piece in which the pianoforte is allotted the rôle of an orchestral instrument, indulging chiefly in ornamental bywork or in passages played in unison with various orchestral groups.

To Mr. Whitfield we are indebted also for the first performance here of Frédéric Delius's Violin Concerto, which is melodious without ever losing itself in the cheap or hackneyed. Delius, it seems, belongs to the group of more conservative English composers such as Sir Edward Elgar or Dame Ethel Smyth. The latter's Prelude to her opera *The Wreckers* is an exceedingly well orchestrated piece, and had a fine success here. Elgar, whose second Symphony was conducted with authority by Dr. Adrian C. Boult at one of his orchestral concerts here, might well be termed the classic among the English musical modernists. This Symphony, like his Sonata Op. 82, which formed part of Mr. Whitfield's programme, is good and scholarly music of a serious if not always inspired sort. Sincerity and earnestness also are the chief assets of Josef Holbrooke, whose Pianoforte Concerto—played by himself—like his symphonic poems, is strongly influenced by such German masters as Schumann and Wagner.

It still remains to record the successful local appearance of Mr. Dawson Freer, who sang English folk-songs as well as classical songs, and of Miss Violet Clarence, who played a number of pleasing but rather light pianoforte compositions by Balfour Gardiner, and some by her husband C. à Becket Williams. Particular praise is due to that organization consisting of three ladies and three gentlemen who term themselves 'The English Singers.' The many gems selected from the wealth of old English Madrigals which they presented with an astounding perfection of *ensemble* and with remarkably airy *pianissimo* effects, provided a welcome diversion from the many modern works. On the whole, the season of English music which has just terminated here has been one of the most interesting musical events of the year. Vienna gladly welcomed this glimpse of a new musical world which is just now being built up on the other side of the Channel.

THE FANCY

BY JEFFREY PULVER

Whether as the supplanter of the Madrigal in the popular taste or as the first form of instrumental music in the true sense of the word, whether as the forerunner of the sonata or the vehicle that gave to so many of our great composers the opportunity for displaying their genius, the Fancy or Fantasia is alike interesting to the musical historian and to the student of musical form. That it was a transition form in a transition period there can be no doubt. As the mechanics of *lutherie* became developed and instruments of music were evolved that could, in the