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Autumn 1972

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BRIO

Vol. 9 No. 2

Autumn 1972

In Memoriam: John Howard Davies

A. HYATT KING

By the death of John Davies on 31 August 1972 not only the United Kingdom branch of I.A.M.L. but the entire Association and general profession of music librarianship have sustained a grievous loss. For besides being president both of the branch and the association, he had exercised wide influence for a quarter of a century, notably of course as music librarian of the B.B.C. His varied career, which extended over forty-six years and culminated in this important post, deserves to be recalled in some detail because it is wholly characteristic of his energy and versatility.

John Davies was born on 7 February 1909 in Moxley, Staffordshire. On leaving Wolverhampton Grammar School in 1926, he became an assistant in Birmingham Reference Library and took his F.L.A. in 1931. Two public library posts followed—at Paddington as deputy librarian from 1933 to 1937 and at Chelmsford as chief librarian from 1937 to 1939. His war service lasted from 1941 to 1946, first in the R.A.S.C., later as a captain in the Intelligence Corps. On the cessation of hostilities, he was called in by Army Education to divide between home and overseas commands some 10,000 gramophone records inherited from E.N.S.A. He then went to Vienna as librarian and interpreter with the Sadler's Wells Ballet. In July 1946 he was appointed librarian and curator of the Hove Public Library and Museum but in the following January joined the B.B.C.

His responsibility covered an extensive range of broadcast music—light music, television and the regions, as well as the Central Library. His early years coincided with the great days of the Third Programme (now, as Radio 3, a ghost of its former self). Then, as now, few listeners probably ever realised the strenuous work needed to supply the parts and scores needed for performances, and the problems of tracing unfamiliar—sometimes even familiar—music at short notice. Broadcast music owes an immense debt to John Davies and his devoted staff for expanding the library and supplying the needs of conductors, choirs and soloists. The published catalogue of the Corporation's Central Music Library, which appeared in nine substantial volumes from 1965 onwards, owed much of its impetus to his drive and vision. His valuable service and notable capacity as an organiser were recognised in 1968 when he was created M.B.E. His job taught him how to use reference books to provide information quickly and he put his knowledge into print in his book *Musicalia* (1966). It is enlivened by the same quirky humour that marks his reviews and articles in BRIO.

But John Davies's interests were far from being confined to radio libraries, and as a traveller in search of wider knowledge few, if any, music librarians from any country can rival him. In 1966 he began a series of visits which took him all over the world. In April and May, as a guest of the State Department, he went to a score of cities in various parts of the United States. A little later (in company with Hermann Baron), partly at the invitation of the British Council, he visited a numerous variety of libraries in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary and Poland (where his visit coincided with the I.A.M.L. assembly). The next year, Davies made a much longer journey, which took him to the Far East, Australia and New Zealand (being seconded in both countries to their Broadcasting Corporations), and back

via Persia, Israel, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. In Israel and Turkey, his visits to music libraries were sponsored by the British Council. In 1968, in connection with the joint I.A.M.L.—I.M.S. congress in New York, he went to some libraries in the Middle West, as part of an International Visitors' Program. (He wrote some entertaining accounts of his travels in *The Library World*.) One of the aims of these truly ambassadorial journeyings was to collect information for a projected book on music libraries of the world, which one must hope may still be published.

From 1950 onwards John Davies regularly attended the meetings of I.A.M.L. and became president of its Radio Libraries Committee in that year. His reports in *Fontes* were an all too modest record of its achievement and reflected his patient work in securing successful international co-operation in making scarce performing materials more easily available. He was elected a vice-president of the Association in 1962, and, to the great pleasure of his friends (a pleasure, alas, all too brief), president at St Gallen in 1971. He was the second radio librarian to hold this office, the first having been his close friend Dr Folke Lindberg, head of the Swedish Radio Library who served from 1959 to 1963.

When the United Kingdom branch of the Association was founded in 1953, John Davies was elected chairman and became its president fifteen years later. The expansion of the branch in its early years and the success of the congress it organised at Cambridge in 1959 owed a lot to his unobtrusive work. In national affairs, much of the success of branch meetings and weekend conferences was due to his suggestions for speakers and venues. In 1970 Davies succeeded C. B. Oldman as chairman of the Central Music Library. Indeed, as a chairman in general, Davies was admirable—incisive, quick to take points, unselfconsciously witty and always able to handle difficult issues skilfully. He served as an examiner for the Library Association's music paper from 1968 to the summer of 1970 and was a supervisor and assessor of F.L.A. theses. He brought to all his work as a music librarian the skill of a practical musician. He had at one time studied with Granville Bantock and was a very useful player first on the oboe and then on the bassoon. At Hove, he founded a flourishing society for chamber music, which was also much played in his home at Muswell Hill. With his wife Phyllis, a viola player, he lent welcome strength to the Highgate School Orchestra for many years. John Davies was a rare human being, kindly and generous, a man who valued his friends and was much valued by them, and did much good in the specialised profession which he adorned for so long.

Forgotten Music

HANS GÁL

Music is perishable. This statement is not refuted by the amount of music that has survived for centuries and, for all we know, will continue to survive. Music which we regard as immortal is an infinitesimal part of what has been submitted by composers in the last 500 years. The bulk has disappeared, and the bulk will continue to disappear, in view of the erratic rarity of genius and the vast supply of inferior produce. What I propose to discuss is not the fact itself, the reasons for which are obvious, but the enigmatic mechanism whereby music, that has once been famous and appreciated, may disappear, temporarily or completely, and music which has for one reason or another remained unrecognised may be revived.

At a time when publication was rare, musicians had a realistic attitude to the problem: they wrote their music for an actual demand or occasion and nobody thought about its durability. It may even have contributed to the artist's integrity that he was undisturbed by ambition, that he had no other thought on his mind than to fulfil honestly a task of the moment. This was Bach's attitude and this was Haydn's when the one had to write a church cantata for the following Sunday, or the other a symphony for his princely employer's next dinner party. They did their best as honest craftsmen.

Well, contemporaries did not always recognise the great musician amongst a crowd of inferiors, and his situation was particularly problematic when his music had only the scantiest chance of becoming known. When Bach, in 1723, took charge of church music in Leipzig, Germany was still suffering from the ravages of the Thirty Years War and a musician's activity was restricted within the narrowest limits. The tiny fraction of his works that Bach was able to publish, at his own expense, hardly gave him any publicity. When he died in 1750, none but a handful of friends and disciples bothered about his music. Nevertheless, it survived at St Thomas's Cathedral, where Mozart heard a motet of his when he passed through Leipzig in 1789. Several years before he had had a chance to lay hands on a handwritten copy of the 'Forty-Eight', and the impression it made on him was decisive for the later development of his style. Thus Mozart became the first posthumous disciple of Bach. Beethoven, a pupil of Neefe, who had been a pupil of Bach's son Carl Philip Emanuel, already grew up with the 'Forty-Eight' and he studied them all his life.

I mention this in order to emphasise how problematic the chance of survival of great music still was in the eighteenth century. Handel, Bach's close contemporary, was fortunate; he lived in a wealthy country and enjoyed the patronage of a rich aristocracy. Handel's and Bach's positions in the world were as different as a palace and a hovel. This is why Bach's work offers the most spectacular example of buried treasure and its exhumation. Mendelssohn's performance of the St Matthew Passion in Berlin in 1829, a century after the first performance in Leipzig, paved the way for further progress in the recovery of Bach's music. But only in 1850, at the centenary of Bach's death, was a complete edition of his works started, the last volume of which did not appear until the end of the century. Bach's posthumous influence was enormous and there was no musician of the nineteenth century who escaped it, perhaps with the sole exception of Berlioz. For Brahms the annual volume of the Bach Complete Edition to which he had subscribed meant more than any contemporary score that ever came into his hands.

Nor was Bach the only great composer of his time who had to be discovered by posterity. Another close contemporary of his, Domenico Scarlatti, who lived at the Spanish court in Madrid, was almost equally secluded from publicity. His 555 sonatas for harpsichord, one of the most magnificent contributions to keyboard music of all times, had to wait until our century to become accessible in a complete edition.

Dictionaries are a good source of information on the musical opinion of a period. George Grove was a sound and well-trained musician but he nonetheless shared the prejudices of his time. It is strange that his original article on Cimarosa, written for the first edition of his dictionary of music, published in 1879, is still to be found in my copy of the Grove Dictionary, that of 1940. Domenico Cimarosa, a celebrated contemporary of Mozart, is mainly remembered for his most famous opera, *Il matrimonio segreto*. Grove writes: 'Cimarosa was the culminating point of genuine Italian opera. His invention is simple but always natural; and in spite of his Italian love of melody he is never monotonous, but both in form and melody is always in keeping with the situation. In this respect *Italian opera has manifestly retrograded since his time*.'

So we are told that the decline of Italian opera, starting with Rossini, had continued with Donizetti, Bellini and Verdi—odd to read! But we remember that all through the nineteenth century, both in Germany and in this country, running down Italian opera was a favourite

topic with serious judges of music, and the more audiences flocked to this frivolous pastime, the more its questionable quality had to be pointed out. Grove's most respected German colleague, Hugo Riemann, who in 1882 also published a dictionary of music, puts Verdi rather below Meyerbeer, for whom he has not much admiration either.

All the same, the fact that only a fraction of the output of those great Italian composers was maintained in the operatic repertory was hardly the result of such highbrow criticism but rather of a natural selection from an enormous supply. Here we are confronted with the phenomenon of total or temporary disfavour into which works can fall which, once upon a time, were favourites. And the occasional rediscovery of such forgotten works—we have witnessed a great many of Rossini's, Donizetti's, Bellini's and Verdi's operas revived after many years—is equally puzzling. Apart from a change of fashion which may cause a temporary or definite eclipse, and intrinsic qualities which are certainly the most decisive justification of a rediscovery, our century has developed an inexhaustible curiosity for the creative output of previous periods and centuries, and the results are sometimes questionable. The great cemetery of forgotten music, opened to the diggers, has been turned over and over at an ever increasing speed since the complete editions of the works of the great classics inaugurated a period of unlimited historical interest.

It is a tricky specialist's job to arrive at an authentic, reliable text from sometimes contradictory manuscript sources, and it may happen that the enthusiasm of a discovery may prevail over a critical appreciation of the object's artistic value. I have before me the score of an opera by Gluck, *L'Innocenza giustificata*, published in the Austrian Denkmäler series many years ago, to which I had to contribute a continuo. Written a few years before Gluck's first master opera, *Orfeo*, it is an almost uninterrupted string of arias, much like so many operas by Handel but without the blessing of Handel's wide range of invention and art of writing, and it is introduced by an overture whose inane emptiness defies comparison. One may find better ones by any third rate contemporary of Gluck's, say by Galuppi or Wagenseil. There is a tremendous gap between Gluck at his best and Gluck at his worst, and however sublime he can be in his great dramatic moments, he can be unspeakably insipid when his deeper feeling is not aroused. His earlier Italian operas are hardly suitable for a complete edition.

Poor music, in point of fact, was abundant in Gluck's early time, the mid-eighteenth century, which was a period of questionable workmanship, strikingly in contrast to the preceding generation, represented by such composers as Bach and Handel, Couperin and Rameau, Scarlatti and Pergolesi. You see, there can be ample reasons for music to be forgotten, and in such cases an attempt to revive it is futile.

Owing to the ever increasing publicity in which musical events have taken place since the nineteenth century, the process of selection and elimination seems to have been much more reliable, and it is not easy to find forgotten music of this period that has not deserved its eclipse. Contributions of any importance could not easily remain totally disregarded. It always takes a considerable time for real values to emerge, but in the end the assessment is probably just. The amazing thing is how erratic a contemporary view can be and how even the most competent judge is exposed to errors. Robert Schumann, who enthusiastically hailed the first work of Chopin's that came into his hands, who was the first to introduce Berlioz, to introduce Brahms to his readers, wrote almost as enthusiastically about Sterndale Bennett and Niels Gade and was able to put Norbert Burgmüller—some of his little pieces have survived in piano albums—beside Schubert. We learn of another forgotten master when we read a reference to Beethoven in *Musical World*, an English music magazine of the 1830s; I quote: 'In the obstinate manner in which he [Beethoven] drives one passage through and through and against another, he has no equal except Sebastian Bach and our own illustrious Samuel Wesley.'

Nothing is as difficult as an objective evaluation of an individual artist if one does not see him from the distance necessary for a proper perspective. Looking through old programmes of the Reid Concerts in Edinburgh, I found one from 1859 in which a footnote indicates one item as: 'In memory of the greatest composer of our time who died on the 22nd of October.' Guess who this was: *Spohr*—at a time when Rossini was still alive, when Berlioz and Verdi were famous, when Brahms was already known, when Wagner was in the limelight of publicity! Having mentioned Rossini, I remember a precious passage in a preface the French poet Lamartine wrote for the memoirs of Lorenzo da Ponte when they were published in Paris in 1850. He duly informs his readers that Da Ponte was the librettist of Mozart, *ce Rossini de son siècle*—'that Rossini of his century'. So much for the perspective of a contemporary!

All the same, Louis Spohr's music, famous during his lifetime but soon forgotten and buried for nearly a century, is very much worth considering. His operas, his oratorios, his symphonies have faded and are probably beyond recovery. But much of his chamber music deserves attention, music of a master craftsman with an attractive style of his own. The danger of total loss in spite of high artistic qualities is most acute in opera, with its elusive problems of combining music and drama. Therefore the mortality rate of opera has always been enormous and mitigating circumstances, which allow a reprieve, are rare. An arguable case is Peter Cornelius's *Der Barbier von Bagdad*. It failed dismally at its first performance in Weimar in 1858 because it coincided with a noisy demonstration against Liszt who conducted it and the composer never heard it again. It occasionally returns to the stage but it has never taken its place where it really belongs, among the finest masterpieces of comic opera. Still more neglected is another work of the same species, *Der Corregidor* by Hugo Wolf, a fount of precious music, written, it is true, by a composer who had no experience of the theatre and paid the penalty for it.

Regarding contemporary judgment and its fallibility, our century is certainly no exception, and the distance necessary for an assessment has not diminished either. If one looks back over a long period of time, as I do, one will remember the oddest evaluations. When I was young, Scriabin was regarded by serious critics as the greatest of all Russian composers, greater than Tchaikovsky or Mussorgsky. In Germany between the wars Franz Schreker loomed almost larger than Richard Strauss as a representative of contemporary opera, and Respighi was one of the greatest modern composers. And still in the later thirties one could read statements such as 'Bach, Mozart and Elgar', and Sibelius was regarded by many as the greatest symphonic composer since Beethoven. I guess a great many corrections with respect to present day evaluations will have to be made in the next fifty years. And if perhaps not much will re-emerge that is being forgotten today, much will be forgotten which today is at the centre of the public view.

Considering the importance of the printed word in leading or influencing public opinion, it is no wonder that there was never a lack of efforts of the kind we call propaganda in politics. Public opinion is a result of a democratic process and this holds for music as for art or poetry or any kind of human activity. All of us who are interested in a matter do vote pro or con and our votes are recorded without our being aware of it. This is the legitimate process of forming opinion. But there are methods of bending it in one direction or another, as politicians have discovered long ago. Gluck was probably the first great composer to realise the enormous potentialities of propaganda in promoting success and the first to organise and cultivate his press relations, providing material for his supporters, formulating his artistic aims, ridiculing his opponents and being aware of every tactical advantage to secure his position in Paris in the 1770s. His most successful follower in this line was Meyerbeer in the 1830s. Meyerbeer was fabulously rich and could afford any expense connected with such efforts. Heinrich Heine, the German poet who lived in Paris at that time, poked fun at the great

composer, suggesting that he would bequeath in his last will a sizeable capital to each of his beloved operas in order to maintain them comfortably and well equipped on the stage. Well, his operas did maintain themselves in the repertory for half a century after his death in 1864, but at the time of the First World War they had already faded so much that operatic audiences had become tired of them and they are hard to resuscitate nowadays. Wagner devoted colossal efforts, in books and pamphlets, to the promotion of his ideas, fighting heroically against the abomination of traditional opera. He succeeded magnificently in establishing himself but not in destroying opera. Bernard Shaw, one of Wagner's most devoted partisans, could be disarmingly unconcerned in twisting facts in order to plead such a holy cause. This he did when, in reviewing a performance of *Il Trovatore* in 1888, he tried to discredit Wagner's most successful operatic contemporary, Verdi, on his own most legitimate ground, namely as a vocal composer. He writes: 'Verdi, Gounod, Sullivan and the rest wrote so abominably for the human voice that the tenors all had the goat-bleat and were proud of it, the baritones had a shattering vibrato and could not, to save their lives, produce a note of any definite pitch and the sopranos had the tone of a locomotive whistle without its steadiness; all of this being the result of singing parts written for the extreme upper fifth of voices of exceptional range, because high notes are pretty. But today our singers, trained on Wagner, who share with Handel the glory of being great among the greatest writers for the voices, can play with Verdi, provided they have not to do with it too often.' Had he asked any singer, he would have been told that the contrary was true.

On the opposite side Nietzsche, the most prominent philosopher of that period, who, after having been a close friend and partisan of Wagner became his most stubborn critic, put against Wagner not only Bizet's *Carmen*, a work of genius, but an obscure German composer, Peter Gast, to whom he happened to be personally attached. Well, Wagner's greatness, like Verdi's, could stand all pros and cons, and Peter Gast, like innumerable others, has long been forgotten. But public controversy on such a level is rather an obstruction to fair play in the formation of public opinion.

It remains to be seen how good or bad the present day influence of the mass media will turn out to be. We must learn to face the fact that a statement is not necessarily true because it has been printed or broadcast. Optimists may hope that there is a saturation point in swallowing the critical opinions thrown at us incessantly. And this, in the end, may even offset the spurious results achieved by controlled public opinion as it is practised under totalitarian regimes. Experience shows that enthusiastic music lovers have a mind of their own; and a secret of the ballot that goes on permanently is that their vote counts threefold because it is maintained with conviction. Now you would like me to tell you which of the composers celebrated today will be forgotten in half a century: I am no soothsayer. Make your own guess, it is as good as mine.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUSIC LIBRARIES

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Mr M. K. Jones, 4 Willis Close, Epsom, Surrey.

Miss Jean Sewry, 15-08 Victoria Centre, Nottingham.

The Vaughan Williams exhibition in the British Museum will terminate, not on 29 December, but on 15 December 1972.

Preparing a Commissioned Television Opera

WILL ROSSER

My library serves the musical needs of B.B.C. TV programmes made in eleven production studios and in dubbing and sound recording studios scattered around West London. It houses all kinds of music from popular to classical. The main catalogue is a card title index of about a quarter of a million entries and a classical composer index. The staff are ten in number: four clerks, four orchestral librarians, my assistant and myself. The orchestral librarians service mainly drama and light entertainment productions, my assistant deals mainly with serious music and I like to keep my hand in by looking after the commissioned works. In an average week we give some musical assistance to between thirty and forty programmes, including nine or ten which have orchestras in the studio. It is against this steady stream of work that I should like you to imagine the following (rather more rare) preparation for a commissioned television opera. Although I have found it undesirable to take an actual opera as my example, nevertheless, the alarms and excursions I shall relate are real enough: only the names have been changed.

Let us suppose that B.B.C. TV commissioned an opera from poet Wilhelm Sanger and composer Joseph Green. The work was to last an hour and in addition to the five main characters required, there could be a chorus of thirty and a maximum of fifty in the orchestra, the numbers being decided as a compromise between cost and artistic desirability. As the author and composer did not have a regular publisher, it fell to me to prepare the performing material.

The score was to be delivered the following New Year's Day, rehearsals would start in May and studios were booked for recording during the first four days of June. Since the bulk of the work would be contracted out, I warned a suitable photographic firm, a freelance copyist and two musicians capable of making a neat piano reduction, that there would be work for them from January onwards and they agreed to keep some time free. So while the composer works away at his music, let us take a look at the story of the opera, which is called, simply, *George*.

SCENE 1: George is having a nightmare. He dreams that his Uncle Sebastian murdered his father. The dream is so vivid that George determines to avenge his father. We call this the nightmare scene.

SCENE 2: We see George the following day preoccupied with the idea of revenge. His fiancée, Kristabel, (Bel for short, and easier to sing), arrives with her brother who soon leaves. George at first ignores Bel, then they quarrel and break off the engagement. Bel leaves in a distressed state. The quarrel scene.

SCENE 3: George gives a party at his flat. His mother and uncle are among the guests. George arranges a charade to include a murder like his dream and watches the effect on Uncle Sebastian. There is no effect. (Several times in this scene we cut to shots of Kristabel walking distractedly in the busy evening streets.)

SCENE 4: The bedroom scene. After the party, late at night, George goes to his mother's house. She is in bed. They talk for some time and she begins to suspect Uncle Sebastian herself. Hearing a disturbance in the street below George looks out and sees that Bel has been run over by a passing car.

SCENE 5: Bel's brother is furious at her death and fights with George. George is fatally injured. His mother and Sebastian come in and Uncle Sebastian comforts her as George and the opera come to an end.

Almost punctually, on the fifth of January, the score was delivered and after being formally accepted by the Head of Opera it was passed on to me. It consisted of 400 loose pages, all numbered on the right-hand side, and is written in pencil, some of which will have to be thickened before it can be photographed. I look through it to the end. On the final page, as the last convulsions of the music ebb away, I see that the composer, perhaps moved beyond himself, has written in large letters: GEORGE IS DEAD.

The music is scored for twenty-six strings (8, 6, 5, 4, 3), double woodwind, three horns, three trumpets, three trombones, timpani, two percussion and harp. There are also two guitars in vision for the party scene. A total of forty-nine.

We have forty working days to produce the vocal scores—more, of course, for the orchestral parts. I thicken the full score pencil in places and number the even pages on the left-hand side. Then I send it to the photographers to have three copies made: one for the conductor, one for making the piano reduction—this copy will later be used by one of the sound balancers, and one for myself. In five days the negatives are made and returned to me for checking. Some minims need opening up with a razor blade and a few faint places need a little indian ink. It takes about twenty hours, then the 400 negatives go back to the photographers for printing. The original score is now ready for the copyist. I decide to have each scene copied in separate booklets, for we do not yet know in which order the work will be recorded.

On the tenth day the first copy of the full score is ready. It is comb-bound in two volumes. I send a book each to the men who are to make the piano reduction. I have been lucky in getting two who write neatly enough for their work to be duplicated without recopying, thus saving time and money. Occasionally one of them will ring up with a query: how, for example, to convey a drum passage on the piano? Can we ask the rehearsal pianist to beat it out on the piano lid? Remembering the unsmiling player booked for the job, I say, 'Yes, of course'. On the nineteenth and twenty-first days the completed reductions are delivered. One is in pencil, one in ink. The pencil one is neater but both are fit to photograph. I spend two days checking them, make some minor alterations, and add the appropriate page numbers to the second half of the work, making a total of 198. This too goes off to the photographers. As before, negatives are made and checked, improved and returned for printing.

Meanwhile the copying of the orchestral parts is progressing. Problems do arise. The copyist phones up to draw my attention, with great glee, to page ninety-seven. The two flutes are tied over at the end of the page, but have nothing on the next, where the clarinets have some untransposed music, sudden and unexpected. We agree that this must be the missing flute music. Again, by omitting a treble clef, the composer has taken the violas clean off their instruments. This is harder to solve but in the end after examining all the evidence we agree where the clef should be. It would of course be better to get the composer's confirmation on this point but he is sunning himself somewhere in the Mediterranean. The copyist snorts, threatens to copy exactly what is written, relents, and reminds me of the saying addressed to composers: 'Be kind to your copyist: in him may lie your genius'.

On the twenty-ninth day the first copies of the vocal score come in. The very first I send to 'George' whose role is by far the biggest. The second to the director, who has a lot of planning to do. Rumour has it that he already has a tape of the composer playing from the full score and singing all the characters in his best falsetto. Vocal scores are sent to the conductor, assistant conductor, répétiteur, soloists, chorus master, rehearsal pianist, tape editor, producer and his staff, choreographer and designer—he can't read music but thinks he'd like to have one—so I lend him one that will be used later by one of the sound balancers. Not everyone needs a complete score. George's mother, for example, appears only in the last three scenes. The chorus sing only in the party scene (though they play the crowd at the end of the bedroom scene). With vocal scores costing upwards of £10 each, this makes a worthwhile saving.

So. Everything is going according to plan. All vocal scores needed before the studio days have been sent out. The copying of the orchestral parts progresses. Should the copyist be taken ill, I have my (as yet unspoken) plan for dividing up the score and giving it to two or three other copyists to finish. Although preparation time has been short, the splendid bursts of energy on the part of the photographers and the vocal score makers, and the steady

work of the copyist have ensured that the work will be completed in plenty of time. It would have been just another routine preparation, if fate had not suddenly given us more time . . .

Three weeks before the first rehearsal, the singer playing George was taken ill and ordered four months of complete rest. After a frantic and abortive attempt to find a suitable replacement, the opera was postponed until October. I phoned the photographers and copyist to say, 'Keep working, but give it low priority'.

Later I had a memo from the producer telling me that the opera was to be extended by ten minutes. The author and composer wanted an extra scene between the quarrel and the party scenes and permission had been given. The new scene was to be a long solo for Uncle Sebastian which confirms his innocence. Then George enters unseen, intent on murder, changes his mind and decides on the charade instead.

The composer phones to explain. 'It will have a much greater impact if we are not unsure that Sebastian is innocent.'

'Yes, of course.'

We christen the new scene 'Uncle Sebastian's Cavatina', although his solo runs for nearly six minutes. When the new scene is delivered, as before, it is photographed, reduced for piano and checked and reproduced for everyone, and parts have to be copied for the orchestra. I retrieve as many vocal scores as I can and amend them. I have the covers changed from yellow to blue to denote *June Edition*. Thus when rehearsals begin I shall be able to see at a glance which copies have been altered and pounce on those that have so far escaped.

Ominously, in August, there was a change somewhere high-up. By the end of the month all projects had been examined and judgment was sent down. The opera must not be longer than one hour. We must go back to the original version.

This the composer would not do! Some of 'Uncle Sebastian's Cavatina' must be saved. He went away to consult with the author how this might be done. I warn the copyist of the coming changes. It is September and time is getting short.

One day the composer discloses his plan. He will insert the remnants of the Cavatina in two places: during the charade when George looks for a reaction from Uncle Sebastian, and when George's mother begins to suspect the uncle herself in Scene four. In both places we shall have to delete some existing music. 'In spite of everything,' the composer tells me, 'I think the new version will have no less impact.'

'Yes, of course.'

About the same time as the rehearsals begin the full score of the new music arrives. Time is short and I make the piano reduction myself and have the photographs made in the library, for only 200 sheets of music are involved. I go to the first rehearsal and stick the sheets into vocal scores of those who need them. I put a thick black line down the blue covers to denote *June version with August alterations making September Edition*. The rehearsal pianist comes up to me. 'Who made the piano reduction? He's got me banging on the piano lid!' I express surprise, but have a quiet word with the assistant conductor who is taking the rehearsal that day. When they come to the passage in the first run through, the conductor stops the music. 'Not enough drum there,' he says, 'better bang with both hands!'

Sitting at home the copyist is still grumbling away cheerfully, though he's now covering up what he had previously written so beautifully. Every part presents a different spacing or turnover problem. He asks me if I know of a quiet job in a music library.

Meanwhile I am pressing the composer for the alterations to Scene Four. He sends me a piano version to keep me quiet. We copy and reproduce it in the library, and at the next rehearsal, fix it into the books. I add a second black line—*June version, August and September alterations making October Edition*. I decide not to call it *Final Edition*. The last bit of the full score has still not arrived and the first orchestral rehearsal is near. I assure the copyist that it will arrive in good time for him to complete the alterations. I promise it won't arrive the

day before the first orchestral rehearsal . . . I promise he won't have to stay up all night to finish it. But it does, and he does, so I promise him a good lunch if he gets it out on time.

I myself spend the early hours of the morning altering a passage in the orchestral parts to Scene Five. At the piano rehearsal that day the conductor had decided to change bars of $\frac{11}{8}$ $\frac{11}{8}$ $\frac{11}{8}$ into four bars of common time, 'as it will be easier for the singers'. Incidentally it's easier to conduct, too. (There is a saying: No conductor is a hero to his librarian.)

At nine o'clock the same morning the copyist meets me in the rehearsal studio. He looks bleary-eyed and wan. But he brings Scene Four alterations complete, and the original score, which I haven't seen for months. Now librarians are strangely sentimental, perhaps, over original manuscripts and in spite of myself I thumb through it. On the last page, where, you may remember, the composer had written GEORGE IS DEAD, I see the copyist has added: *I don't feel so good myself.*

The orchestra assembles. The conductor arrives. The music starts. The director and the composer arrive. The conductor has not worked with this orchestra before. They 'try him out'. The oboist tries a wrong note. The trombones alter the rhythm of a soft passage. The conductor stops the orchestra. 'The parts are badly copied,' says the principal trombone. This is too much! 'Rubbish!' I shout, 'One of the finest copyists in the country!' The player turns and gives me a big wink. (They have a saying: When you're in trouble, blame the parts.)

The rehearsal soon settles down, though not all the players are enjoying the music. The two bassoons for instance. High notes, low notes, fast and all over the place. The principal bassoon mutters, 'Must have written it with a flit-gun!' Then the piccolo points out with great glee that he has a D flat which is 'off the bottom of me instrument'. The conductor, the copyist and I glare at one another, furious with ourselves for not spotting it. Only the composer is unruffled. 'Leave it out' he says, with a wave of the hand.

In the afternoon the singers go through some of their music and the following morning there is a first run through of the whole work. The composer, having now heard his music, comes armed with a list of alterations: there are changes of dynamic, some altered notes and here and there a passage has been put on an additional instrument. I mark them on my score in red pencil and make a list of the page numbers. From this I put the changes into the conductor's score after the rehearsal, and on the following day when the orchestra is not with us I alter the sound balancer's copy and the orchestral parts. I finish at 2.30 in the morning.

The telerecording itself occupies two studios. In the first is the orchestra and conductor, with the orchestral sound balancer in his gallery above them. The sound and a shot of the conductor are relayed to the second studio, where the singer and sets are, with the overall sound balancer, the director and his staff and the lighting engineer in their galleries. On the studio floor the assistant conductor, vocal score balanced on one arm, one eye on a convenient monitor, dodges between cameras and microphone stands relaying the beat to the singers.

The first two days the party scene and the bedroom scene are rehearsed and recorded. The chorus have then finished their part in the opera, while Bel's brother has not started his. The third and fourth days Scenes One, Two and Five are rehearsed with cameras and recorded. When the final note is played we collect up the scores and parts and prise from the singers as many vocal scores as possible. In a few days the material will be catalogued and housed in the library, while the tape editor, director and sound balancer complete their work by fitting the whole thing together in the proper sequence.

If at a future date the production is entered for some international competition, I shall have to mark up several vocal scores for the judges, with all the camera cuts: there are 265 of them. But for the moment I leave the opera awaiting its transmission and critics. I leave the library staff to carry on servicing all the other programmes and myself—I go off to lunch with the copyist.

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GUSTAV HOLST

MADAM,

It is possible that some of your readers might be able to help me with information for the *Thematic Catalogue* of Holst's music which I am compiling for the centenary of his birth in 1974. Many manuscripts of his published works are missing and I am particularly anxious to find the autograph full score of *The Cloud Messenger* (Stainer & Bell); *Hecuba's Lament* (Stainer & Bell); *Hammersmith* in the military band version (Boosey & Hawkes), and the 1933 *Scherzo* (Boosey & Hawkes).

Among the missing unpublished works, I am still searching for the incidental music to Masefield's *Philip the King*, produced at Covent Garden on 5 November 1914, and I am hoping to find more of the 'Stepney Children's Pageant' produced at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in May 1909; the only items I possess from this pageant are *The Song of London* and *O England my Country*, which were printed separately.

It is only recently that I have learnt of the collection of Holst letters in the library of the University of Glasgow and I think there may be material in other libraries which I have not yet heard about. I should be very grateful for any information.

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IMOGEN HOLST

The Bristol Conference: April 1972

MICHAEL SHORT

In spite of uncertain rail transport conditions, the joint conference held by the United Kingdom branch of I.A.M.L. and the Sound Recordings Group of the Library Association took place successfully in Bristol from 14 to 16 April 1972.

After coping with the eccentricities of Bristol's bus services, most delegates arrived at Churchill Hall in time for dinner, followed by an enjoyable concert of wind music given by the Taffanel Quintet, which included a work by the composer after whom the group is named: for most of us our first encounter with the work of that master.

The next day the real business of the conference commenced, and working sessions were devoted to provision of performing materials for choral and orchestral works and to the newly-formed Greater London Audio Specialisation Scheme (otherwise known as GLASS, or, 'we can see right through your little schemes'). A great deal of interest in these topics was shown by the delegates, even extending to the formation of impromptu discussion groups in the free periods between each session: such is the capacity of music librarians for talking shop at the slightest opportunity. In the afternoon we were treated to a tour of Bristol's Central Library which has been modernised and extended in recent years, and heard stories of the curious behaviour of both readers and librarians in times past (mainly eighteenth-century, I hasten to add). As a convinced opponent of stock-taking, I was amused to hear that when the chained library was checked at the end of the seventeenth century it was discovered that not a single book was missing: on the other hand, a large number of chains had been stolen!

Saturday evening was devoted to an interesting talk by Dr Karol Musiol in which he described the methods used by countries in eastern Europe to encourage appreciation of music among the general public. Dr Musiol had travelled from Poland especially for this occasion and showed an admirable command of the English language. His talk was illustrated by means of slides and recordings and although he was unable to bring the appropriate films out of Poland, an alternative was rushed to Bristol from the depths of some British archive, and provided a great deal of amusement, apparently being an early uncut version of an unknown Ken Russell masterpiece.

The next day saw a further round of intense discussion, this time on multi-media resources and proposals for a national discography. After the annual general meeting of the United Kingdom branch of I.A.M.L., Will Rosser gave an account of his experiences as a television music librarian, and as a grand finale to the conference John Davies gave an illustrated talk about his tour of music libraries throughout the world.

The enthusiasm and interest shown by all the participants in the conference proved that there is a real need for such events to be held on a regular basis so that music librarians can discuss common problems in an informal atmosphere, and we hope that it will be possible to hold similar joint conferences annually after the international committee meetings of 1973.

Thanks are due to all who made the conference possible, especially George Saddington, Harry Currall and Roger Crudge, and to all those who spoke at the various meetings. It is to be hoped that the next conference will be held in surroundings as congenial as those to be found in Bristol: an inebriated view of the Avon Gorge from the Clifton Suspension Bridge at two o'clock in the morning is a psychedelic experience which will be difficult to equal.

CORRESPONDENCE

WILLIAM C. SMITH

MADAM,

I would like to draw your attention to a mistake in the unsigned article on William C. Smith, nonagenarian, on page twenty-one of the spring number of BRIO. In line four it states: 'It was as long ago as 1900 that he entered the British Museum and in the following year he succeeded W. Barclay Squire in charge of the Music Room.' Actually he was transferred to the Music Room in 1901 and succeeded Barclay Squire in 1920.

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CHARLES HUMPHRIES

REVIEWS

HANDEL. A biography, with a survey of books, editions and recordings. [The Concert-goer's Companions.] By Charles Cudworth. Published by Bingley, London, 1972. £1.75p.

This is one of a series of short handbooks, under the general editorship of A. Hyatt King, aimed particularly at the 'concert-goer without expert knowledge who wishes to learn more about the background to music which he or she enjoys hearing'. It follows the pattern of previous volumes, in concentrating on the biographical and bibliographical approaches to the composer's work. Some thirty-six pages are given to Handel's life and relationships with his contemporaries, thirteen pages to 'Books in English about Handel', thirty-two pages to 'Editions of Handel's music' and eleven pages to 'Selected recordings' (this last section being compiled by Brian Redfern).

The scope of the series does not include detailed analysis or criticism of the music itself. The 'Companions' are clearly intended as appetisers; but they have a useful place as reference guides to a wide range of more substantial fare. The biographical section of *Handel* is lively and reliable, and written with affection—drawing a careful line between fact and legend, in a tradition which contains a good deal of the latter. The main outlines of the composer's active, sometimes tempest-tossed career are clearly drawn; and, in the course of the narrative, Mr Cudworth touches succinctly upon related topics of importance—the convention of the *opera seria* in which Handel worked, his relations with his royal and noble patrons, the impression made by his work and personality upon the men of his day. Quotations from contemporary sources, and from Handel himself, enliven the picture of the music's eighteenth-century background.

The bibliographical section, though brief, should be of help to the reader who wishes to follow up these themes in greater depth. The priorities are dependable—Deutsch, Streatfeild, Lang, Winton Dean taking due place. However, some of the items which Mr Cudworth lists point to less frequented paths; and, for the more serious student, he usefully draws attention also to Konrad Sasse's *Handel-Bibliographie*, with its 1967 supplement.

As with the Handel literature, Mr Cudworth is helpfully informative about the many printed versions of the music, from the early publications and Arnold's Complete Edition to the present day. His book should be of real value to the 'concert-goer without expert knowledge'—and to the rather more advanced enquirer, when there is a good library within reach.

MICHAEL ANDERSON

A Bibliography of Periodical Literature in Musicology and Allied Fields. Numbers 1 and 2. October 1938-September 1940. With a record of graduate theses accepted, October 1938-September 1939. By D. H. Daugherty, Leonard Ellinwood and Richard S. Hill. Da Capo Press: New York, 1972.

Over thirty years ago these two volumes were welcomed not only for themselves but also as a notable effort in large scale co-ordination. It was a great pity that the impact of the war prevented their continuance. Number 1 (135 pages) was the work of forty-six abstractors, who covered 155 periodicals: in Number 2, the scope increased to fifty-seven abstractors and 245 periodicals. The periodicals were of a very varied range, drawn from all over the world, and including ethnography, physics, psychology, science, literature, history and so on, besides those of strictly musical interest. In fact, this is the sort of coverage which Professor Barry Brook's RILM aims at but has not yet achieved, though it may be expected to do so once the national committees have been able to organise and maintain scrutiny of a full range of non-musical journals. Ultimately, of course, when RILM is made completely retrospective it will include the years of the bibliography under review. But this probably lies far ahead and meanwhile librarians and musicologists will welcome this reprint.

Number 1 was issued in typescript, which is slightly smudgy, though perfectly legible, in reproduction. Number 2, printed by letterpress, is much sharper, and has the benefit of the index, which Number 1 lacked. The latter, however, included theses, which Number 2 did not. It is interesting, in historical perspective, to find that both in the theses and in the articles, there are not a few names of writers who were then little known, but have since become scholars of great reputation. Inevitably, some misprints have been carried over into the reprint. Thus we find Tenschler (for Tenschert), Tovey (for Tovey) and Tippet (for Tippet). On a point of strict application of rules, it is interesting to see that Vaughan Williams was entered under 'Williams', as he still is in the catalogues of the Library of Congress and the British Museum.

A. HYATT KING

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

A. HYATT KING is superintendent of the Music Room of the British Museum.

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