



NABMSA

NORTH AMERICAN BRITISH MUSIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Spring 2012

NABMSA Newsletter

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A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

By Charles Edward McGuire

Behind the scenes, your Board has been hard at work since the beginning of the year. We've restarted the newsletter, thanks to the generous help Eric Saylor (acting as interim editor), and the able assistance of Jennifer Oates. We hope to appoint a new editor by autumn. We continue to grow into new media: our new website (on a WordPress platform) is faster, more flexible, and easier to maintain. Our webmaster, Chris Borgmeyer, has done a fantastic job, and the new design will help create more interactive spaces for the *Newsletter* and blogging in the coming issues. Kendra Preston Leonard has reinvigorated our other Internet presence: NABMSA's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/337324596286061/>). There have been a number of announcements and interesting discussions there.

NABMSA has two conference events in the coming months: first, we will be co-sponsoring a session of the American Musicological Society's Greater New York chapter meeting on Saturday, April 28 at Hunter College (more details below under "Upcoming Conferences of Interest"). If you are from the area, I urge you to attend. This will be a wonderful prelude to our summer conference, to be held from July 26-28 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We had over 100 paper and lecture/recital submissions, and the hard-working Program Committee has put together what looks to be an excellent conference. You will see many of your friends and colleagues on the preliminary schedule, as well as a number of new faces – a good sign that we continue to grow as an organization. I would like to thank the 2012 Program Committee (Kendra Preston Leonard, chair; Alain Frogley, Stacey Jocoy, Brooks Kuykendall, Vicki Stroehrer, and Bill Weber) and the Local Arrangements Committee (Christina Bashford and Nicholas Temperley) for their dedicated and efficient work. I know we are all looking forward to this conference, and it looks like we will be building well on our past successes!

Our work as a Board continues: in the months before the conference, we will be searching for our 2014 conference location. After the conference is complete, it will be time for the next round of elections; if you are interested in running for a position,

please let me or one of the other Board members know. As always, we are striving for ways to increase our membership numbers, particularly from our colleagues who study topics from before 1800. We will discuss these items and a number of other issues at the 2012 Business Meeting, to be held at the AMS/SEM/SMT conference in New Orleans this November – more details will be announced at the beginning of autumn. As always, our goals as a Board are to be as responsive to the NABMSA Community as possible, so if you have an idea, a criticism, or a complement, please feel free to share it.

I hope to see you all in Illinois this summer!

NABMSA'S 5TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE: INFORMATION AND EVENTS

By Christina Bashford

The University of Illinois School of Music and Musicology Division is delighted to host the NABMSA 5th Biennial Conference, 26–28 July 2012. The conference will be held on campus at the Levis Faculty Center, with supporting events in the School of Music and some of our flagship facilities, all of which are situated nearby.

The program includes a lecture-recital and more than 50 papers, several of which exploit relationships between music and musical culture in Britain and the United States, in keeping with our special “Anglo-American Musical Connections” theme. Several additional events complementing the theme include:

- The keynote address (“John Philip Sousa, British Copyright, and the Making of Popular Taste”), to be given by Patrick Warfield (University of Maryland) at the Krannert Art Museum (Friday)
- Special exhibitions at the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, the Music and Performing Arts Library, and the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts (open all days)
- The annual conference banquet (Friday evening)
- A tasting of English ales and American wines, with music, as a *Krannert Uncorked* event (Thursday) in the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts
- “Anglo-American Connections,” a concert of choral and orchestral music by S. S. Wesley, Stanford, Sterndale Bennett, Vaughan Williams, Irving Fine, Charles Ives, and others, in the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts; to be followed by a celebratory wine reception to end the conference (Saturday)

The concert has been generously sponsored by the University of Illinois in conjunction with NABMSA in order to honor Nicholas Temperley’s distinguished career here in Urbana, his seminal contribution to British music research, performance, and scholarship, and the impact he has had on our field of study in the United States.

For more information, including registration, accommodation, banquet, and travel, go to www.nabmsa.org and follow the links.

CFPS OF INTEREST

The Art of Death and Dying, University of Houston, October 25-27, 2012

The University of Houston Libraries, in partnership with the Blaffer Art Museum, the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, the Department for Hispanic Studies, the Honors College and School of Art, will host a three day symposium titled "The Art of Death and Dying" on October 25-27, 2012.

We welcome scholars in all disciplines to submit paper proposals on literary, visual, and performing arts topics related to death and dying. Topics of the symposium include, but are not limited to:

- Depictions or interpretations of death and dying in performing and visual arts
- Depictions or interpretations of death and dying in literature
- Depictions of death and dying in film, radio, and television
- Commemoration of the dead in art, architecture and performance
- Artifacts of death and dying as represented in archival or museum collections
- Artistic depictions of the after life
- Cultural death rituals
- Cultural expressions of mourning
- Death and dying in Latin American arts and culture
- Readings of original creative material on the subject
- Performances of original material on the subject
- Presentation of original visual material on the subject
- Memorial architecture
- Cemetery design
- Analysis of an artist's, architect's, performer's, filmmaker's or writer's work related to the subject

Proposals related to death in Latin American arts and visual culture are encouraged. The organizers will accept presentations in both Spanish and English. Papers will be selected based upon the quality of the proposal (including merit of the topic, clarity of expression, and relevance to the conference theme), the proposal's ability to provoke critical exchange and debate, and opportunities for interaction between participants that will enable attendees to engage in a truly interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and viewpoints. Presenters will be afforded the opportunity for their paper/presentation to be published in the Texas Digital Library (<http://www.tdl.org/#feature1>).

Papers will be twenty minutes in length and will be followed by ten minutes of discussion. Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be submitted on the symposium website: <http://artofdeathanddying.blogspot.com/p/abstract-submission-form.html>. The deadline for submissions is May 1, 2012.

American Handel Festival

The 2013 American Handel Festival will take place at Princeton University on February 21–24. The American Handel Society invites submission of abstracts for papers to be given in the academic sessions. Any topic connected with Handel's life and music is welcome, including seventeenth-century antecedents, Handel's contemporaries in Germany, Italy or England, and the reception of Handel's music. Abstracts of no more than 500 words may be sent by September 1, 2012 to Robert Ketterer, AHS Program Chair. Decisions by the program committee will be communicated by mid-October.

In addition to the academic panels and lectures, festival events will include a performance of Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Alessandro Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* by the Princeton University Chamber Choir, conducted by Gabriel Crouch, and a concert by Henry Bicket and the English Concert. There will be an option on Sunday, February 24th to hear Bicket conduct a performance of Handel's *Radamisto* at Carnegie Hall.

Electronic submissions are preferred, and may be sent to robert-ketterer@uiowa.edu. Surface mail may be sent to Prof. Robert Ketterer, Department of Classics, 210 Jefferson Building, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52245.

Benjamin Britten on Stage and Screen University of Nottingham, 5–7 July 2013

To celebrate Britten's centenary year, this international conference will focus on the composer's work in a variety of genres for stage and screen. His many and varied operas will naturally feature prominently, in the shape of new and recent research devoted to his contributions to the large-scale medium on which his enduring reputation largely rests. In addition, his less familiar work for film and radio in the 1930s, and such relatively neglected scores as the three-act ballet *The Prince of the Pagodas* and the vaudeville *The Golden Vanity*, will be explored as part of a wider picture that sees him responding to a variety of different musico-dramatic challenges with characteristic virtuosity and flexibility. Contributions to the conference will not only include scholarly papers, but also talks and workshop demonstrations from leading performers who have interpreted Britten's stage roles, and conducted or edited his incidental scores for recordings and publication. The event will additionally celebrate the publication by The Boydell Press/Britten–Pears Foundation of the sixth and final volume of the Britten letters edition, of which Nottingham staff member Prof. Mervyn Cooke is co-editor. The conference will be enhanced by an on-site exhibition of archival materials organized by the Britten–Pears Foundation, Aldeburgh.

More information and a call for papers will follow in due course. Additional information will be at <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/music/events/benjamin-britten-on-stage-and-screen.aspx>.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES OF INTEREST

The Greater New York Chapter of the AMS will be holding a meeting sponsored jointly by NABMSA on Saturday, April 28, at Hunter College in Manhattan. Questions may be directed to chapter president **Jeff Dailey** (DrJSDailey@aol.com). Further information will be made available on the chapter website, <http://AMS-GNY.blogspot.com/>.

Musica Scotica will hold their seventh annual conference on April 28 at the University of Glasgow. Further information at <http://www.musicascotica.org.uk/news.htm>.

New Music in Britain will be hosted by the Department of Music and Performing Arts at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), from Thursday 10 to Saturday 12 May 2012. This conference, held in association with Sounds New, the Institute of Musical Research (IMR), and supported by the Society of Music Analysis (SMA), will coincide with and augment the long-established Sounds New Contemporary Music Festival. The 2012 festival (4-13 May), titled 'Theme GB', will focus on the extraordinary work of British composers and performers, particularly after 1950. The London Sinfonietta, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the BBC Big Band, the Grimethorpe Colliery Band, the Tenebrae choir, the Arditti Quartet and the Julian Joseph Trio, are only a few of the many ensembles participating in the festival. Sir John Tavener will be one of the many guest composers who will be in residence during the period of the conference. The conference itself will provide an overview of the latest scholarly work on contemporary music composition, music-making and musicology in the British Isles. The conference keynote speakers are: Professor Philip Rupprecht (Duke University, USA), and Professor Jonathan Cross (Christ Church, University of Oxford, UK). For more information, see <http://www.cccubritishmusic.org.uk/>.

Love to Death: Transforming Opera (incorporating the RMA 2012 annual conference) will be held 31 May–3 June at the Wales Millenium Centre, Cardiff. This conference, in a world-class setting, presents an outstanding opportunity to bring together scholars, musicians and the general public to reflect upon the impact academic research may have in a wider performance and reception context. The event will include Welsh National Opera's performances of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and Puccini's *La bohème*, and the works of both composers will provide major themes for debate. More at <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/music/newsandevents/events/conferences/12TransformingOpera/index.html>.

The Seventeenth Biennial International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music will take place at the University of Edinburgh from 27–30 June 2012. The keynote lecture will be delivered by Jann Pasler (UC–San Diego), and the conference will also include a plenary session on "Nineteenth-Century British Music and the Musicological Mainstream" with a panel keynote by Nicholas Temperley (University of Illinois). More information at <http://sites.ace.ed.ac.uk/c19music/>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to all recently elected officers and board members! Results were announced at the 2011 business meeting held at the AMS national conference:

- President: **Charles McGuire**
- Secretary: **Nat Lew**
- Board members: **Jennifer Oates** and **Derek Scott**

Many thanks to **Linda Austern** and **Chris Scheer** for their service on the board, and particularly to outgoing president **Ruth Solie**. Your time and efforts on behalf of NABMSA are greatly appreciated, and make this group stronger because of it.

Kendra Preston Leonard (Music Word Media Group) has kindly drawn attention to a recent expansion of JSTOR access for non-affiliated scholars, of whom NABMSA claims several as members. For more information, please visit <http://about.jstor.org/rr>.

Philip Olleson (University of Nottingham) writes to announce the imminent publication by Ashgate of his *The Journals and Letters of Susan Burney: Music and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century England*. Susan Burney (1755–1800) was the third daughter of the music historian Charles Burney and the younger sister of the novelist Frances (Fanny) Burney. She grew up in London, where she was able to observe at close quarters the musical life of the capital and to meet the many musicians, men of letters and artists who visited the family home. During the 1779-1780 season she wrote a lengthy and detailed journal chronicling her musical activities, and in particular her experiences of Italian opera at the King's Theatre. Her extensive journals and letters provide a striking portrait of social, domestic and cultural life in London, the Home Counties and in Ireland in the late eighteenth-century. They are of the greatest importance and interest to music and theatre historians, and also contain much that will be of significance and interest for Burney scholars, social historians of England and Ireland, women's historians and historians of the family.

BOOK REVIEWS

***Beyond and Before: Progressive Rock Since the 1960s*, by Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell. London: Continuum, 2011. 328 pp. ISBN 978-0-826423-32-0.**

By the spring of 1967, a significant sea change in British popular music was taking place. Prior to the release of the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper*, British popular musicians had already commenced a journey into the relative unknown. The studio had become not only a site for new sounds and hit records, but a compositional tool as new recording techniques broke down musical barriers and furthered the role of the producer as composer. Many musicians and producers emerged from a British R&B and pop background, as the emphasis on taking oneself seriously replaced the "get up and dance" aesthetics of only (in some cases) months previously. As the emphasis turned increasingly to "works", LPs came to cater for the demands of an eager, mostly white,

“underground” audience in the UK. Record companies such as Decca, EMI, and Philips created “heavy” and “progressive” labels (Deram and Threshold, Harvest and Vertigo, respectively) to compete with the independent Island and Transatlantic record labels. An underground press and a university and college concert circuit were also integral to this burgeoning development.

Beyond and Before attempts to record that original era of the “high sixties”, but for the popular music student, its greater significance probably lies in the writers’ attempts to codify an identifiable genre-based legacy arising from prog’s early development: one that can apparently be discovered in a variety of (what the authors view as) prog rock subsets and/or hybrids. Because of this basic assumption, *Beyond and Before* is dogged by at least two problems: first, the predispositions of the writers towards the subject matter, and whether their writing has a valid point to make about hidden or partially-hidden histories. Second, whether the writing is able, via adequate research, to convey that continuity across musical contexts and authorships has created a litany of musical affirmation (rather than merely a way of writing about the same).

Following an excellent introduction concerning the authors’ perception of progressive rock as a genre since the 1960s, and how it emerged from aesthetics surrounding the LP, the work divides into two sections that pay homage to the many hallmarks of prog. The first (“Before and During”) considers the album as form, the roots of progressive rock, its presence in the late 1960s, and its links to the British folk revival. We are also awarded considerations of the concept album, modernity, fusion and performance—all extremely useful stuff and, despite this reader’s own misgivings about some important omissions, this serves the popular music researcher reasonably well.

The second section then considers how the social and musical critique of punk came to re-evaluate progressive rock, and how subsequent responses—from Marillion to Mastodon and from folk to metal—have come to further reclaim the “progressive aesthetic” as authentic. The ingredients are all there: an extended (albeit rather vague) definition of prog in terms of its antecedents, musical and lyrical characteristics, cultural geography, artwork, performance (perhaps the most interesting and persuasive examination of all), and legacies. Yet it must be re-stated that for this reader, not only is the jury still out concerning the cultural value of the music to which the writers evidently cleave, but also the manner in which it is described, then valued, and then of course, categorized.

For example, how can any substantive discussion on UK progressive rock music almost totally avoid at least a chapter on the British music industry? Labels such as Harvest Records, Deram, Vertigo, Island, Threshold, Dawn, Nova, Transatlantic, and Chrysalis were all integral to the British music industry’s understandings of this growing development. Furthermore, all producers appear to be discussed only cursorily. What of Guy Stevens, who moved from deejaying at the Flamingo club in the West End of London to producing Mott the Hoople at Island Records? What also of Jimmy Miller,

who worked with not only the Rolling Stones but also Traffic, and produced some very exciting musical materials? In such an era as the late 1960s and early 1970s, it seems neglectful to not take account of progressive rock as at least a partial history of the studio and those associated with it.

The overall meta-thesis presents a further problem. The authors suggest that progressive rock effectively equals either the intelligent combination of different musical genres (such as blues, jazz, folk and classical) into ambitious concept epics, experimental instrumentation, or pushing technological boundaries. But while all music is most certainly contextual and intertextual, legacies are far more difficult to pin down. One such example is unwittingly illustrative. By focusing upon the problems of the English class system in the chapter “Social Critique,” we are given a very important piece of contextual information concerning how a rather upper class foundation informs an aspect of UK progressive rock. Further discussions of the anti-war and environmentalist focus of Yes in general opposition to the “hedonistic utopianism and anti-authoritarian posturing” of Hawkwind, or the role Marxism and communism played in the collective improvisation of England's Henry Cow, smacks of a class of musicians unable to move very far beyond their social milieu. It is hardly surprising that 1970s Soul Boys, Suede Heads, Northern Soul fans and devotees of Bowie, Roxy, and Bolan (not to mention the Velvet Underground) eschewed bourgeois ramblings about a Utopian nether-world for the youth club disco, Wigan Casino and a pair of baggies.

So, although no stone appears to be left unturned, the writers appear to be rather indifferent to the authenticity—or lack thereof—of certain types of “progressiveness” within British society. Consider the chapter “Return Of Folk,” which addresses a curious little subgenre of groups emerged in the early '80s post-punk era adopting traditional folk instrumentation, such as Current 93. The writers arbitrarily dub this 1980s genre “neo-folk” without fully explaining why, perhaps because its characteristics included an interest in shamanic practice, occultism and Christian mysticism and eschatology—but what, in the 1980s, was folkie about that? Surely the Pogues, who were at the time selling millions of albums worldwide, were able to keep folk's particular flag flying more successfully as folk clubs closed and new festival cultures began to emerge. The authors also describe this 1980s phenomenon as trapping “elements of folk to make something else of them,” but one also wonders exactly how such genre-bending “progresses” towards a level of popularity—if in fact it did.

Attempts elsewhere to write about a jazz/rock fusion are also problematic. Surely one of the most important British fusion attempts involved the jazz saxophonists Dave Quincy and Dick Morrissey and their group If. Quincy and Morrissey banded together an interesting assortment of jazzers in the late 1960s to explore territories blazed in small jazz clubs up and down the country, but there is no mention of this important activity. Equally, no discussion of Jack Bruce's work with the Tony Williams Lifetime ensues, there is nothing on Nucleus, and no mention at all of Manfred Mann's numerous crossover attempts. No discussion, either, from a jazzers' perspective that might

question the writers' fundamental presupposition that it was all "rock" rather than "jazz" fusion. This is very disappointing, particularly when the acid jazz scene makes it clear that this is music that could actually indicate some kind of legacy. Furthermore, there is absolutely no discussion on what might be described as 1960s and 1970s progressive pop, an idea that best describes the Beatles. Perhaps progressive pop was never a genre as such, but during the 1970s, artists such as Leo Sayer, Clifford T. Ward, Howard Werth, and groups such as 10cc, Pilot, Badfinger, Liverpool Express, and Marmalade were conspicuously attempting to create "intelligent" pop music. *Beyond And Before* is therefore rather too sketchy in codifying these margins of prog. It only flirts with jazz and folk in a disorganised and perhaps even hopeful manner, occasionally buckling under the weight of its linear narrative.

While Hegarty and Halliwell appear to have "rescued" progressive rock history, they have only done so by repeating a litany of affirmation via their own genre projections. The work is definitely smart and sympathetic, but by sweeping up diverse transnational musics under the label of progressive rock, it creates almost as many generic and historiographical problems as it attempts to ease. There is plenty to admire in this ambitious and compelling account, but by offering an expanded definition of prog rock in terms of its roots, musical and lyrical characteristics, geographic sources, artwork, performance practices, and legacies, *Beyond and Before* creates severe problems for itself by presenting yet another linear narrative of popular music.

MIKE BROCKEN
LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

Comrades in Art: The Correspondence of Ronald Stevenson and Percy Grainger 1957-61, with Interviews, Essays and other Writings on Grainger by Ronald Stevenson, edited by Teresa R. Balough. London: Toccata Press, 2010. 279 pp. ISBN 978-0-907689-67-6.

Toccata Press has as its mandate "to fill the gaps in the music literature", and *Comrades in Art* lives up to this promise in unusual ways. Amid an avalanche of books on Grainger in the last few years, this book, with its unusual combination of interviews, correspondence and lecture transcripts, sheds light not just on the older composer but also on pianist and composer Ronald Stevenson. Better known in Scotland than outside it, Stevenson comes across in this book as a gifted and witty raconteur, writer and all-round musician. Indeed, he would appreciate being termed 'Graingeresque', as this book reveals.

His correspondence with Grainger began in 1957, when Stevenson, then a 29-year old composer based near Edinburgh, wrote to Grainger asking for his help in a project on Busoni on which he was working. Grainger's reply was typically blunt: "I have a lot to

remember of Busoni, but I am not sure it is the kind of thing anyone who admires Busoni would want. His behaviour to me ranged from great generosity to sharp spitefulness. The fact was that I didn't admire his compositions in the least..." Undeterred but always respectful, Stevenson wrote back: "Hurrah—that is just what I want; for the last thing I intend to do is to write hagiography."

The two had much in common, both being virtuoso pianists and composers who shared, as Balough puts it in her introduction, "a love of folk music and demotic, working-class art." Both loved Scotland's music: according to Stevenson, "Grainger gave me the confidence to pursue Scottish music...he said that...Scottish folk music was his emancipation." Rudyard Kipling and especially Walt Whitman were favorite writers. The correspondence is particularly poignant as it reveals an ailing though still feisty Grainger sparring with the younger composer, both of whom maintained a lively writing style rich in humor and erudition. The two never met, and the letters initially adopt an old-world courtesy, later relaxing into a warm, first-name familiarity. The photographs of selected handwritten letters show the contrast between Stevenson's careful italic and Grainger's crabbed, barely legible hand, often topped off with carefully written musical examples. There are also photographs showing Grainger (always easy on the eye) and Stevenson at various stages of their lives, often with professional and personal companions.

Grainger was always provocative, and amid comments on his failing health and current projects, his letters bristle with controversial musical opinions. His breadth of knowledge is all the more striking when one realizes that he had almost no formal education. He believed that he and Cyril Scott had been the true innovators in twentieth-century music, ahead of Stravinsky and Schoenberg, and that England had a track record of musical innovation: "Almost everything that European man does had an English-speaking origin: 5 o'clock tea, train, tram, steamer, flirt, bus, strike, lock-out, club, sandwich, lunch....etc. So why should it be otherwise in music? Is it not a fact that most musical innovations are English-speaking (according to the musicologists): Foweles in the Frith, Worcester Medieval harmony, Dunstable, William Lawes, Jazz?" (Yes, jazz...) Behind all this bluster, though, there is a melancholy suggestive of an old man's feeling underappreciated, and feeling some nostalgia for his birthplace: "I do not expect my 'serious' music to be liked or respected. But I *do* think that I am a natural innovationist & I would like to see some day an acknowledgement of the changes that have come over music thru me. I think it is only fair to Australia." Reading Grainger is always a pleasure, and Balough has sensibly retained his idiosyncratic spelling and expressions (for example, Grainger called Stevenson "a magnificent worder").

By 1960 the two men had developed a close enough relationship that Stevenson felt able to write an imaginary interview between himself and Grainger (one is reminded of Glenn Gould interviewing himself) about Bach and Wagner. Here Stevenson captures Grainger's voice and polemic exactly in an engaging piece which, though approved by Grainger, was not published until almost 20 years after his death.

Stevenson and Grainger shared a love for arrangement, and many parts of this book make a robust defense for this undervalued activity. Paradoxically for a composer and virtuoso pianist, Grainger reveals to Stevenson how much he detested the piano, revealing that “I regret deeply that I yielded in 1911 to my publisher’s request for piano versions of pieces such as Shepherd’s Hey, Molly on the Shore, Mock Morris, Irish Tune from Co. Derry etc”. (One is grateful that he did yield, and has only to watch the only available video of Grainger playing his arrangement of ‘Maguire’s Kick’ on YouTube to show his affinity for the instrument and the genre.) Stevenson appears not to share this dislike of the piano, and much of the book is devoted to his lecture recitals and writings on Grainger’s music. Here the material becomes more rambling, and there is necessarily some repetition as details of Grainger’s biography and musical characteristics are repeated for different audiences. Stevenson’s voice is best heard in the interviews with Balough which begin and end the book, and in the accompanying CD, a recording of a substantial lecture recital (“An Evening with Percy Grainger,” 23 tracks) given by Stevenson on the occasion of his donating the Grainger correspondence to the public library near Grainger’s White Plains home in 1987. This recording, though somewhat imperfect technologically, not only draws some neglected repertoire to our attention, but also demonstrates Stevenson’s flamboyant pianism, and his admiration and love for Grainger and his music, as revealed in his last letter to the composer: “From my childhood your vital, joyous music has been like a second sun in my life.”

The first interview with Balough was given in 1998 and the second seven years later. Stevenson is an ideal interviewee, and both sessions are chatty but insightful, with interjections from Stevenson’s wife Marjorie and good questions and careful annotations by Balough. Given decades after the correspondence between the two composers, and with a lifetime’s perspective on music, the interviews are as illuminating about Stevenson as they are about Grainger: an appendix reveals the extent of Grainger’s influence on the younger composer.

The letters alone would not have been enough to sustain this publication, and although the lectures complement the rest of the material, they are perhaps the weakest part of the book, partly because they were meant to be listened to, not read, and some material is inevitably duplicated. This is no doubt the reason for including the CD, which is a fascinating document in itself. In contrast, the letters were and are definitely for reading, and these form the strongest part of the book. Those wearying of academic volumes will like this book: it is captivating, unruly, provocative—truly Graingeresque.

DOROTHY DE VAL
YORK UNIVERSITY

***Composing in Words: William Alwyn on His Art*, ed. Andrew Palmer. Musicians on Music, no. 9. London: Toccata Press, 2010. 300 pp. ISBN 978-0-907689-71-3.**

This volume is an often stimulating if somewhat indulgent anthology of writings by composer William Alwyn (1905-1985). Approximately two thirds of the volume consists of autobiographical texts: *Winged Chariot*, a sketch drafted in 1978 and 1982 covering the composer's entire life; excerpts from *Early Closing* from 1963, which recounts Alwyn's childhood; and *Ariel to Miranda*, a lengthy diary from 1955-1956. Eight miscellaneous essays and lectures on musical topics comprise the remaining third of the book.

It is debatable whether Alwyn stands in the company of Britten, Tippett, and Walton, a claim that the volume's first sentence, a quotation from critic Malcolm Hayes, appears to endorse. Nevertheless, it is beyond dispute that Alwyn was a remarkably talented and prolific composer, and that much of his unjustly neglected *oeuvre* is of considerable interest both historically and in concert. Still, the present volume offers only limited guidance in understanding and locating Alwyn and his music in the history of his generation. Ironically, despite the repeated urge displayed here to make sense of his own life through writing, Alwyn himself doubted the usefulness of such narratives, cautioning that "the artist's sole justification for his existence resides in his works" (p. 15).

There is a certain vagueness about the purposes of this book: appreciation of the man himself, of his literary gifts, or of his musical works? The volume's editor, Andrew Palmer, claims that Alwyn's writings deserve attention for their insight into his musical mind, while urging us to appreciate them chiefly for their literary merit. The volume's title, *Composing in Words*, encourages us to approach the contents as art works in their own right. Alwyn certainly took writing seriously: he wrote a novel, three long philosophical poetical works, and several substantial translations of French poetry. (A man of many parts, he also cultivated painting and sketching and was a devoted art collector.) But, while the present volume clearly demonstrates Alwyn's craftsmanship, with the exception of *Ariel to Miranda* the biographical sketches and occasional pieces on music collected here are not his "literary" works. If they disappoint, it is because of the limited light they shed on either his compositional output or his talents as a writer.

The thirty-three-page biographical sketch *Winged Chariot* provides a handy introduction to the composer's life and works. Although viewed from the composer's point of view, there is little in *Winged Chariot* that would not equally be found in a competent biographical article or volume, nor does Alwyn express himself in a particularly artistic fashion. Still, the essay is engaging and well paced. Following *Winged Chariot*, the ten pages of childhood memories recounted in *Early Closing* feel inconsequential: a charming but unexceptional picture of provincial boyhood. Palmer has heavily edited *Early Closing*, including parts of only six out of the fourteen or more chapters in the

manuscript. A longer selection would risk cloying, but still, without any knowledge of the principle of selection, one wonders what Palmer has omitted.

More problematic than these autobiographical texts, however, are the eight essays presenting Alwyn's views on a variety of musical topics, from his creative dogmas to film music, Elgar, Bax, Puccini, and Janáček. In these brief accounts, often larded with further anecdotes from his life, Alwyn usually just declares his opinions without the support of detailed examples. Even the essay on film music by this acknowledged master of the genre is curiously reticent. Unfortunately, certain opinions crop up more than once in these essays, while incidents from the two autobiographical texts recur as well. So, for instance, we read about Elgar's conducting of *The Dream of Gerontius* at the 1927 Three Choirs Festival several times. Similarly, Alwyn's oft-stated convictions that music is purely emotional and cannot express literary or philosophical ideas (with an accompanying joke about performing *Jardins sous la pluie* under the title *From Nine to Six on Wimbledon Common*), that film music should not be pictorial, and that text-setting must be entirely syllabic in opera (this from a man who admired at least some of Britten's vocal music!) become wearying without any further elaboration. Alwyn's failure to address contrary opinions strains our patience for his repeated avowals of admiration for Puccini and disdain for Beethoven and musical formalism. Of course, Alwyn was not writing sustained critical assessments, but as the volume nears its end the author begins to resemble a favorite uncle who tells the same stories again and again. As critical writings on music *per se*, these are hardly original or timely.

This leaves *Ariel to Miranda*, unquestionably the chief and best text here. The ten-month period of the diary corresponds to Alwyn's work on his remarkable third symphony, and unlike most of the rest of *Composing with Words*, *Ariel to Miranda* actually sheds light on Alwyn's compositional activity, but his creative process is not the chief subject of the journal. Indeed, the occasional work reports ("I wonder if the effect of rapidly repeated notes on the glockenspiel against staccato horn chords will sound as exciting as I think it will") feel generic. Without the benefit of actual sketches or detailed notes, these comments provide little real insight into Alwyn's methods. They are only what one would expect of any conscientious professional craftsman.

Far more importantly, the diary offers a clear and detailed picture of the musical life of London in the 1950s. Alwyn reports that his motivation in writing the journal is to record his private thoughts, and he apologizes several times for its degeneration into a mere recital of events. But for a politically and socially minded historian, the events he recounts have more weight than his admittedly well-crafted set pieces about boats on the Solent and rustic churches or even his exposition of the composer's art. At a remove of fifty-five years, the value of *Ariel to Miranda* lies chiefly in its placement of Alwyn's work as a composer, bureaucrat, and private critic in a broader social and economic context than we usually envision. We see the composer, so often theorized as a solitary individual (and self-described as such in these pages) attending business meetings, informal professional gatherings, and concerts, writing to the newspapers, petitioning

the government, and drinking with professional colleagues and friends, all essential and often ignored aspects of musical history. The diary is equally noteworthy for Alwyn's critical commentary on the London concert scene. His evaluations of other composers' works, including many by close friends, are striking for their acuity and honesty, and can't have been easy reading for the composers in question.

Ariel to Miranda rounds out our picture of Alwyn the individual far more than any of the other texts in *Composing in Words*. This effect is deeply ironic given the fact that the diary suppresses the most significant element of his personal life at the time: his ongoing affair with Doreen Carwithen. Alwyn's need to conceal this relationship from his wife, two sons aged eighteen and twenty-three, and some (though not all) of his close associates – not to mention his elaborate strategies for living a double life – undoubtedly motivated him to start the diary. By giving himself an outlet to “reveal himself completely” he could better manage the stress of deception. And indeed, despite the lacunae and indirection (Palmer studiously footnotes instances where Alwyn omits mention of Carwithen's presence or refers to her obliquely), the diary is profoundly revealing, and the self-portrait it paints is full and convincing. Reading *Ariel to Miranda*, one feels one has met the man.

Ariel to Miranda is therefore of tremendous value both for its historical content and as a literary work in its own right. The diary occupies almost half of *Composing with Words*, and one wonders whether the rest of the material in the volume was included largely to fill out a full-length volume. However that may be, the republication of Alwyn's extraordinary diary in full and with Palmer's excellent annotations alone makes *Composing in Words* a worthwhile contribution to our picture of the mid-twentieth-century English musical world.

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***The Provincial Music Festival in England, 1784-1914*, by Pippa Drummond. Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press, 2011. 314 pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-0087-5 (hardcover) and 978-4094-3281-4 (ebook).**

Pippa Drummond deserves a great deal of praise for taking on one of the most difficult lacunae in the history of nineteenth-century British music: the ever-changing history of the musical festival. Drummond's book is a survey of the festival that conveniently brings together many disparate sources into a single narrative history. While not without problems of design and execution, the survey is accessible and pitched at a level where those not familiar with the terrain of British music studies will find it a valuable introduction to the subject of the festival.

Studies of individual elements of musical festivals have been increasing in recent years, as evidenced by the work of Philip Olleson and Barbara Mohn, as well as the narrative histories of individual festivals (such as Anthony Boden's volume on the Three Choirs, or Geoffrey Hodgkins's book on Morcambe); yet Drummond's work is the first since Brian Pritchard's 1968 Ph.D. Birmingham University thesis ("The Musical Festival and the Choral Society in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social History") to consider the idea of the festival as a whole. Unfortunately, the subject is so sprawling that her treatment throughout is at best cursory. This means that significant differences are conflated so that those delving into Drummond's book without looking further afield will have a poor idea of the complexity of the festival in the Long Nineteenth Century.

The root of the problem is Drummond's unwillingness to identify any intricacy at all: the term "festival" is never defined in her book, and she therefore subsumes any and every wildly variant idea as to what a festival was under this rubric. Thus university convocations, festivals designed by individual speculators for profit, charity festivals at cathedrals aimed at the middle classes, civic festivals in town halls and concert halls, festivals organized by a single musical philanthropist, and competition festivals are treated in the same way throughout, and frequently confused. This is the case with her discussion of the Leith Hill Festival (p. 262). Drummond speaks only of Ralph Vaughan Williams in association with this festival, and identifies his championing of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach there, stating erroneously that Vaughan Williams "founded" the festival (it was founded by a committee of philanthropic individuals including Vaughan Williams's sister, Margaret Vaughan Williams; Ralph Vaughan Williams became the festival's first conductor, but left most of the decisions in the hands of the committee). Drummond also implies that the festival was equivalent to a middle-class charity or civic festival, where the massed performance of choral and orchestral works was the main focus. In fact, Leith Hill was first and foremost a competition festival, aimed at rural performers from the working and lower-middle classes, which primarily included contests between smaller choirs and individual musicians. The massed performances of the music of Bach Drummond cites as one of the festival's main attractions did not begin until the middle of the 1920s, long after the festival was well established as a competitive one. These elements are clearly outlined in the short history of Leith Hill Drummond cites in her footnote to this section, *The Leith Hill Musical Festival, 1905-1955: A Record of Fifty Years of Music Making in Surrey* (Epsom, 1955) and certainly made clear in the more recent *Music Won the Cause: 100 Years of the Leith Hill Musical Festival, 1905-2005* (Trowbridge, Wiltshire, 2005; this latter source is not cited in Drummond's footnotes or bibliography).

Such mistakes are unfortunate but likely in a study that is rudimentary and entirely surface-oriented. This is reflected partially in the design of the book: it is divided into two parts: the first provides a quick chronology of festivals between 1784 and 1914, and the second presents a series of short discussions (usually no more than a paragraph or two) on subjects intersecting with festivals, from performers to performance practice and the press. Drummond relies throughout on secondary sources with the occasional

foray into contemporary periodicals. As Olleson aptly demonstrated in his article “Crotch, Moore, and the 1808 Birmingham Festival” (*Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, 29 (1996): 143-60 – though listed in Drummond’s bibliography as coming from 2006 (p. 283)), there are plenty of archival sources on festivals available to give nuance to periodical-driven discussions. Drummond lists only three major archival sources for festivals in her bibliography (p. 273): one from the British Library, one from Chester and one from the Gloucester meetings of the Three Choirs Festival. She lists no archival sources from any of the other major or minor festivals (including Birmingham, Leeds, Norwich, among many others – and these do exist, in greater or lesser states of completion). And even when Drummond lists archives in her bibliography, it appears that she has not used them much. Drummond’s description of the Chester festivals from the end of the eighteenth century through the first few decades of the nineteenth (p. 16-17), do not refer to the copious press clippings, committee letters, and ephemera about the festival extant at the Cheshire Archives and Local Studies office, but instead relies entirely on Joseph Bridge’s slight pamphlet, *A Short Sketch of the Chester Musical Festivals, 1772 to 1829* (Chester, [1891]), for her discussion.

For the individual looking for a quick, easy-reading and thoroughly enjoyable introduction to musical festivals, Drummond’s book is a good place to start. Since there is no musical analysis within the book, it will likely be used by non-musical scholars as a reference, particularly for social-historical discussions of the Long Nineteenth Century. But as a work of scholarship, it will be useful only if the reader knows that the discussion portrayed here – even for the limited period of the festival’s history Drummond explicates – is not by any means complete, nor is it particularly rigorous.

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***A Provincial Organ Builder in Victorian England: William Sweetland of Bath*, by Gordon D. W. Curtis. Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. 328 pp. ISBN 978-1-409417-52-1 (hardback), 978-1-409417-53-8 (ebook).**

This study meets the growing interest in Victorian provincial musical culture. William Sweetland (1822–1910), we learn, made a living almost exclusively by providing organs for churches, chapels, and other customers in the West Country. Although there are a few early examples in other parts of England, he did not build a single organ for a London church or chapel. Even in Bath, where his headquarters were, he was never employed by the more important churches, such as the Abbey or St. Mary's, Bathwick. So it is unsurprising that, even among organ connoisseurs, Sweetland is not a big name, while he is almost completely unknown to musicologists in general, or to me at any rate.

For whatever reason, Gordon Curtis has expended what must be the better part of a lifetime of research on this subject. Every aspect of Sweetland's life and family, friends,

employees, and rivals, his business methods, other Bath organ builders, and the designs and specifications of his instruments is treated in almost obsessive detail, reporting on exhaustive research in archival and other sources. There are many recondite technical discussions explaining, and sometimes defending, particular aspects Sweetland's work. The second part of the book is a gazetteer, geographically arranged, of every organ he is known to have built, whether surviving or not, with full details, where available, of payments and specifications. Sources are meticulously recorded. There are excellent photographs of surviving organ cases. There are tables of the compasses and stops of organs Sweetland designed, and another table, derived from censuses, of the number of organ builders and technicians per head in each English county. All this admirably presented and documented material will be of great value to scholars and adventurers in the rather isolated world of organ history. So will the final chapter summarizing "Sweetland's place in English organ building", which includes an interesting comparison with one of the best-known Victorian builders, William Hill.

Sweetland was responsible for a few minor inventions and improvements, but played little part in the two distinct trends in English organ design that took place in the 19th century. First came the change from the "insular" English organ, with meantone tuning, a G or F compass, and manuals only, to the German design with C compass, pedals, and equal temperament, thus accommodating the school of Bach. Curtis rightly attributes the acceleration of this change to the influence of Mendelssohn. Sweetland merely catered to the varying needs of his customers. Later came the influence of French builders towards a design that made the organ into a miniature orchestra, with stops and combinations imitating specific instruments. Here Sweetland was evidently on the conservative side of the development, but again, this probably reflects the fact that his patronage was provincial and far from fashionable. He himself seems to have held some strong views on the technical side of organ building, but not on the artistic side.

Of wider interest is a chapter on "Repertoire," where Curtis discusses the programs of typical organ recitals, both in churches and in civic buildings, with detailed lists of composers and works. This has been done before. The majority of pieces chosen for recitals were not written for organ, but were arrangements of pieces for other media, from the Overture to *Samson* (Handel) to "Reminiscences of *Oberon*" (Weber), not to mention obscure items like "The Storm" (E. M. Lott), "Cantilène et grand choeur" (T.C. Salomé), or "Savoyard chant" (H.M. Wareing). In the realm of genuine organ works it is surprising to learn that although Bach was played more often than any other composer (at least in the selected samples), he was closely rivalled by Alexandre Guilmant. These two were followed by a host of largely unfamiliar names, many of them French, especially in the later Victorian period.

The Introduction attempts to place all this in the context of Victorian musical history. Here it must be admitted that Curtis's relative lack of broader musical knowledge is a grave weakness. He makes little use of the vast extension of research on Victorian music that has taken place over the last few decades. Instead, he puts together bits and pieces

of information he has come across in primary sources, and while these do provide some unfamiliar and often suggestive anecdotes that throw light on musical life, they fail to establish the larger trends and changes underlying the era. Curtis sums up with the following statement: "So during the nineteenth century, with the increase in population and the provision of music for entertainment, came the separation of organs and organists from the general run of musicians and the isolation of the organist, both physically and culturally, in the organ loft or chancel" (p. 19). But nowhere, either in the introduction or elsewhere, does he try to explain how or why this might have come about.

As usual, Ashgate is to be commended for persisting in its willingness to publish books for our highly specialized market, and to offer them in an elegant and even lavish form.

NICHOLAS TEMPERLEY
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