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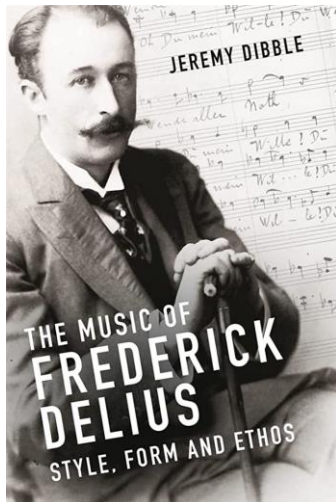
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Thornton Miller, Editor

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Jeremy Dibble. *The Music of Frederick Delius: Style, Form and Ethos*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2021. 564 pages. ISBN 9781783275779 (hardcover), ISBN 9781787449862 (Ebook – EPUB), ISBN 9781787447998 (Ebook – EPDF).



The last few years have been good ones for Frederick Delius. After the 18-disc box set of the 150th anniversary edition released in 2012 by Warner Classics, Martin Lee-Browne's and Paul Guinery's *Delius and his Music* (2014), the second edition of Mary Christison Huismann's *Frederick Delius: Research and Information Guide* (Routledge, 2015), Andrew J. Boyle's *Delius and Norway* (Boydell & Brewer, 2017), and Daniel M. Grimley's *Delius and the Sound of Place* (Cambridge, 2018), here is a new occasion to renew and extend our pleasure with a book that allows us to follow the composer's musical development step by step. Of the three terms proposed as subtitles, it is undoubtedly the name "ethos" that is the most intriguing. Cecil Gray's exergue gives a good indication of what the term covers: "In the eyes of Delius the primary necessity for an artist was to develop his personality at all costs, to follow the dictates of one's nature in spite of all oppositions and all possible

consequences, to realize one's peculiar angle of vision." It is this Nietzschean ethic of the superman, in a vital and pantheistic impulse, that the author has sought to bring into resonance with the style and form of Delius's music through three parts: "The Seeds of Cosmopolitanism," "The Voice of Individuality," and "Fame and Decline." The author, Jeremy Dibble, will certainly not be criticised for his chronological plan, since the events that punctuated Delius's life shed light on the evolution of his work. The introduction clearly positions his book in the field of musical analysis, which is based on the meticulous study of his manuscripts: "To a large extent, the study is an analytical one in which I argue that we can only do true justice to Delius's music by understanding how his music coheres, and that the question of form in his music is just as vital as those more established ones of lyricism, poetry and orchestration" (p. xxi). The author also dwells frequently on the composer's tendency to recycle old pieces, in a fashion that is quite fascinating to follow. For example, Dibble notes that "The music of Talum Hadjo's warning [from *The Magic Fountain*] bears a strong resemblance to the conclusion of the lyrical episode

in *Légendes*. *Florida* would also be an important source for several ideas” (p. 93). Each of the analyses is recontextualized in the larger context of the artist's life, which makes it possible to measure the difficulties the composer faced in getting his music performed in an extremely competitive context, which in turn sometimes required making concessions to the needs of his time. These concessions included borrowings from English folklore for *Brigg Fair*, the partsongs for choral societies, and the two works for reduced orchestra: *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and *To Be Sung on a Summer Night on the River*.

In the first part, the author describes in detail Delius's formative process. From his studies with Thomas Ward in Florida and Salomon Jadassohn in Leipzig to his intimate knowledge of the scores of Edvard Grieg and Richard Wagner, which he copied and for which he had great admiration. The exceptional fruitfulness of this period is astonishing when one considers that most of the scores from this period were not played in concert. The analysis of the early works shows how the composer's style gradually took shape: modulation in thirds; a predisposition for ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords; pentatonicism; a descending chromatic bass; a richness of orchestration; and the topos of the dance. As early as his first operas, *Imelin* and *The Magic Fountain*, Delius proposed an operatic conception of instrumental essence wherein the action on the stage—structurally and narratively basic—appears secondary to the orchestral developments. For Dibble, the years from 1895 to 1897 constituted a “stylistic fulcrum” in the evolution of the composer who, in contact with Parisian life, rubbed shoulders with artistic modernity, of which the two songs on Verlaine's poems “Il pleure dans mon cœur” and “Le Ciel est, par-dessus le toit” fully testify. At this point a comparison with some other French contemporaries would have been appreciated in order to characterize more precisely a possible influence of French music on Delius's work. This first part concludes with the years 1898–1901, in which Delius affirms his fascination for the philosophy and the poetical style of Nietzsche (*Nietzsche Songs* of which the song “Noc hein Mal” was later developed into a cantata for baritone, choir, and orchestra: *Mitternachtslied Zarathustras*). The concert at Saint James's Hall (London) on May 30, 1899 was the high point of this period as it was the first time that Delius's work was substantially revealed to a big audience. Dibble does not hesitate to assert that this date “ought to be celebrated as one of the most noteworthy days in British musical history” (p. 162), while acknowledging that critics were probably not prepared to “countenance an amalgam of Wagnerian chromaticism and Straussian élan together with an accretion of Griegian harmonic invention” (p. 161). It is in *La Ronde et se déroule* that the growing influence of Richard Strauss is most clearly discernible, an influence that becomes even more apparent in *Paris*. With the latter work, Delius reveals his talents as a symphonist by using a huge orchestra and choosing an expressive, rather than structural, approach to tonality.

The second section of the book is devoted to the composer's masterpieces at the height of his popularity and mastery. With his fifth opera, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, he takes his instrumental conception of the opera (described as an “operatic tone poem”) further to show his mastery of thematic transformation supported by a great harmonic fluency. Here Dibble analyses the many meanings constructed by the manipulation of leitmotifs and the tonalities. The author then groups together *Appalachia* and *Sea-Drift* (based on Walt Whitman's poem) under a common chapter entitled “American Apogee;” both works testifying to the still vivid memory of the American years. Delius's obsession with Nietzsche led him to create one of the most gigantic works of the early twentieth century, *A Mass of Life*, which Dibble places in the lineage of German modernism alongside Mahler's Symphony No. 8 and Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* though he acknowledges that it is probably not Delius's most characteristic work. After the flowering of the symphonic poems *Brigg Fair* and *In a Summer Garden* and the first *Dance Rhapsody*, Dibble agrees with Sir Thomas Beecham that Delius turned towards a form of austerity, which traces back to two of Verlaine's other songs, “La lune blanche” and “Chanson



d'autmone," and even more to "The Nightingale" that was based on a text by Henley. This austerity is affirmed in his last opera, *Fennimore and Gerda*, which emancipates itself a little more from operatic conventions to develop a "musical vision of the opera" (p. 336), relying in particular on a symbolism of tonalities: "Indeed it would be no exaggeration to describe the broader canvas as being about C, a tonal thread which underpins the central idea of the opera as a complex love story" (p. 338).

The third part, titled "Fame and Decline," is structured in two chronological periods around the year 1923, which marks the worsening of Delius's health and an almost complete absence of new works until the providential arrival of the young Eric Fenby in 1928. The years from 1914 to 1923 saw a new and final flowering of symphonic poems which asserted the composer's personal conception of the symphonic poem and relied on "his untrammelled perception of form, lyricism, rhapsody and orchestral elegance" (p. 373), far from the excessively detailed programmes of Richard Strauss (only *Eventyr*, a work inspired by Norwegian folklore, contains a more descriptive section). Considered as a counterpart to *A Mass of Life*, the *Requiem* was misunderstood by audiences expecting hope at the end of the war; Dibble nevertheless calls for a reappraisal of this work, whose last movement in particular is strikingly modern. These years also saw the composer return to soloist music, a genre he had briefly exemplified with his Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra, reworked as the Piano Concerto. For Dibble, "Delius evidently believed that the possibilities of rhapsodic lyricism and thematic variation, seminal to his style and modus operandi, might be a productive source of new forms, and, given his zeal to explore new structural ideas in his symphonic poems, the traditional sonata and concerto seemed a ripe field for his attention and one to which he evidently felt he could make a novel and creative contribution" (p. 410). While the author acknowledges the lack of understanding of the quartet idiom in Delius's quartet (the composer's conception here is a more symphonic one), he is able to grasp the singularity of each of the sonatas and concertos, both in their thematic and tonal conceptions and in the balances between soloist and accompaniment. When Eric Fenby joined Delius, the composer asked him to work on *A Poem of Life and Love*, a work he had begun in 1917, but whose composition Delius had interrupted while working on his incidental music for *Hassan*. For Dibble, it was no coincidence that the composer had postponed the completion of this composition, the problem being the "highly variable quality of its thematic material" (p. 397). The work will finally be shortened to become *A Song of Summer*. Compositions and new versions of earlier scores—for example, *Margot la Rouge* became *Idyll*—are the subject of the last pages before the epilogue, the author relying on Beecham's view that these pieces add nothing new to the composer's work.

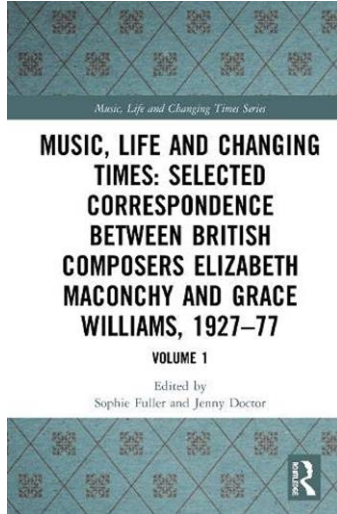
The epilogue discusses the composer's supposed dilettantism, attributing it to a fashion of the time when anti-intellectualism was fashionable. However, Dibble contends that Delius was very familiar with traditional forms. The author also argues that while Delius favored the variation form, it was to reveal its creative and formal potential by mixing it with the sonata principles "which, notwithstanding the accusations of formlessness from his detractors, he never abandoned" (p. 480). Dibble's careful study of the manuscripts also shows us that Delius was capable of being critical toward his own music.

The Music of Frederick Delius is an immensely rich and precise immersion into the heart of Frederick Delius's creative workshop, compositional strategies, and stylistic evolution. I can only strongly recommend this book for anyone seeking to deepen their knowledge of Delius's work.

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Sophie Fuller and Jenny Doctor, eds. *Music, Life, and Changing Times: Selected Correspondence Between British Composers Elizabeth Maconchy and Grace Williams, 1927–1977*. 2 vols. London and New York: Routledge, 2020. 600 pages. ISBN 9780367244712 (hardcover), ISBN 9781032087825 (paperback), ISBN 9780429352720 (Ebook).



Sophie Fuller’s and Jenny Doctor’s *Music, Life, and Changing Times* makes some important interventions into the historiography of the lives of these two composers and to the larger understanding of women’s work in British music. By assembling a near-comprehensive account of their correspondence over a long friendship, the editors reveal the larger dimensions of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual labor these women undertook to live as artists in a world that did not welcome them as such on the basis of their sex. The editors have rightly labored to present both women’s correspondence on their own terms, and their editorial interventions worked to make these women legible to a twenty-first-century audience. As Jenny Doctor notes, these women grew and maintained their relationship via extensive letter-writing—a style of correspondence that is likely foreign to scholars in the digital age outside of archival materials.

Elizabeth Maconchy and Grace Williams had a friendship that was *at least* as deep and artistically fruitful as that of Holst and Vaughan Williams, and yet it is remarkably less famous. Both women were, as Nichola LeFanu describes, the heirs to Virginia Woolf’s directive that women need money and rooms of their own: “They did have ‘a room of one’s own’, but they never had enough time of their own” (p. xxii). Their long and involved correspondence—even with its lacunae from papers that were lost, or else destroyed during the Second World War—offers an abundance of insight into both composers’ thinking and creative processes through their entire professional lives. To scholars’ immense good fortune, both women had a sense of history about these letters. Fuller writes that “when she knew she was dying, Williams sent Maconchy’s letters back to her, saying ‘they are valuable because you’ve written so much about works in progress & I doubt if you’ve written to anyone else in such detail’” (p. xiii; letter 353).

In creating a resource that scholars will use, Fuller and Doctor have been generous stewards of their readers’ time and energy. They have divided the 353 letters between two volumes, which cover the years 1927–1965 and 1966–1977, respectively, as well as included comprehensive Works Lists for both composers. All sections divide further into groups that indicate related content and more personal milestones, from changes in their living situations to the progress of specific pieces, which are detailed in the editorial notes. The editors have included: lists of figures and musical examples, a preface, Fuller’s “Introductory Notes,” Doctor’s “Afterthoughts,” and Nichola LeFanu’s “A Friendship of Fifty Years.” It is the editorial stewardship that makes *Music, Life, and Changing Times* a superlative edition of letters. As one example, I happened to read Part I (1927 to Summer 1939) while also reading David Wright’s *The Royal College of Music and Its Contexts* (Cambridge, 2022), and recommend such a parallel reading whenever possible. I rarely see two books of such different types and goals speak to each other so well. Fuller’s and Doctor’s extensive notes make using an outside reference unnecessary, but their focus on two individuals next to Wright’s total-institution approach made a much more comprehensive picture of Williams’s and Maconchy’s experiences at the RCM possible. Part of why this was so successful was the editors’ tireless documentation of relevant names, places, and events on each page, with little need for flipping back and forth between index and references. These women become windows to the institution, offering perspectives that would



be hard to find in a conventional large-scale institutional history. These annotations have also rendered the collection fabulously readable—a rare feature in much academic prose.

The brilliance of *Music, Life, and Changing Times* goes beyond its wide scope and excellent organization. It contains everything I love to see in volumes commemorating women in music: women supporting women (on many levels); women treated as primary subjects in their own lives; acknowledgement of their activities outside of their musical practice or work rooms; their platonic relationships with other people, including men; and nuanced exploration of how they variously welcomed, accepted, subverted, or rejected social expectations about being both women and composers, some of which contradict each other. Doctor and Fuller acknowledge the depth of their own scholarly partnership as they highlight the moments where Williams and Maconchy were similarly supportive, and they don't limit their coverage. They regularly include the networks of colleagues, acquaintances, and friends—from the RCM and after—who connected the pieces of Williams's and Maconchy's musical lives and reveal how invested these women were in those relationships. Familiar names abound, particularly in their recollections of music listened to. Both women made a point of supporting their colleagues not only by attending concerts but by listening via radio and sharing their opinions of what they heard.

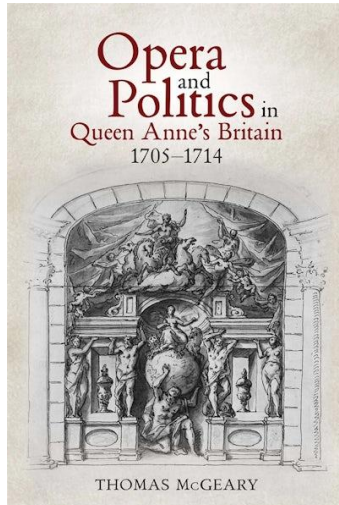
That Maconchy and Williams are women is never sidelined, excused, or apologized for, but always treated as simple fact. Comparisons to men, to their male colleagues' work, and frustration at difficulties they themselves experienced are unavoidable, but they always come from Williams's and Maconchy's own words. In any case, such challenges are not the focus of the book. Both women had male colleagues, friends, and mentors in music who supported their work, and they regularly acknowledge them. If this project has a "feminist agenda," then it is a straightforward one: its subjects get to be women and composers without a zero-sum game played between those roles. They have been treated with the same interest that male British composers have previously enjoyed, and with no indication that anyone would question such interest. I expected no less in the hands of two such champions of women's work in music as Doctor and Fuller; in the greater scheme of published materials on "Women in Music" finding such equitable treatment is still refreshing.

Even the end matter of these volumes deserves praise, given the project's purpose as a reference work. Having a user-friendly index is not remarkable, but here it is an understatement. The editors have gone to obvious lengths to make these letters as searchable as possible in their paper form, striking a clear balance between usefulness and comprehensiveness that reflects their backgrounds in archival work. In digital versions, searching is even easier. Their index includes names, musical works, performing ensembles, organizations, places, and venues found in the letters, editorial section and letter introductions, and footnotes. They have specifically chosen not to include references for Maconchy and Williams (since they would be unwieldy), and instead offer specific compositions mentioned in the text in a separate "Works List" with reference markers. Between the references and the index, a scholar can use this text to find the connections that they need without pre-existing knowledge that they exist—a boon for non-British music specialists or anyone in the early stages of research. In short, Doctor and Fuller have done so much more than make archival letters available for scholars. They have adapted a twentieth-century archive for twenty-first-century research while preserving the characteristic intimacy of the original documents.

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Thomas McGeary. *Opera and Politics in Queen Anne's Britain, 1705–1714*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2022. 423 pages. ISBN 9781783277155 (hardcover), ISBN 9781800105942 (Ebook – EPDF), 9781800105959 (Ebook – EPUB).



The opening lines of Thomas McGeary's *The Politics of Opera in Handel's Britain* (Cambridge, 2013) observe that "even before Italian opera was first produced in London in 1705, Italian music and singers had been politicized. In the early years of Queen Anne's reign, issues of national identity, religion, gender, and Tory-Whig politics were implicated in the controversy about Italian and English music" (p. 1). These matters form the substance of McGeary's most recent volume, the second in a projected trilogy concerning opera and politics in early eighteenth-century Britain. Focusing on the years 1705–1714, this study charts the emergence of all-sung, Italian-style opera against a backdrop of fractious domestic politics overshadowed by the War of the Spanish Succession. The reputation of the last Stuart monarch has undergone a major reappraisal in recent years, with James Anderson Winn's magisterial *Queen Anne: Patroness of Arts* (Oxford, 2014) focusing on works produced by musicians, poets and painters at a time when the products of courtly culture were becoming available to a wider public. Whereas Winn's biographical format places Anne center-stage, however, McGeary focuses more precisely on the cultural implications of the "rage of party" that dominated her reign. Through nine chapters and an informative introduction, he teases out how the reception of Italian opera evolved in relation to partisan political allegiances, while making the central point that, with only a few exceptions, the works themselves were neither intended nor received as alluding to contemporary political events. The broad sweep of the structure is roughly chronological, but events are not presented in a straightforwardly linear way; rather, similar subjects are considered at various points in the text and from different perspectives. Although this approach contributes to the book's effectiveness as a work of reference, it occasionally obscures the direction of its narrative, not helped by some inevitable repetition and the many sub-sections into which chapters are broken down.

The first two chapters survey London's musical and theatrical scene from the Restoration through to the introduction of Italian-style opera in 1705. This will provide relevant context for readers unfamiliar with the subject, but the material would perhaps have benefitted from greater concision, especially as much of it is readily available elsewhere (see, for instance, Katherine Lowerre, *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695–1705* [Ashgate, 2016] and Andrew R. Walking, *English Dramatic Opera, 1661–1706* [Routledge, 2019]). Chapter 2 explores how cosmopolitan musical culture prepared the ground for Italian-style opera in England, and probes the complex cultural concerns that Italian singers, in particular, evinced. Differences between Italian and English singing were used to articulate ideas about British nationalism and identity, and chapter 3 shows how this was later appropriated for partisan political use, detailing how the Italian soprano Margarita de l'Epine and the English soprano Catherine Tofts became associated with Tories and Whigs, respectively. Drawing on literary works by Daniel Defoe and others, McGeary demonstrates how l'Epine's involvement with the infatuated Tory Earl of Nottingham was politicized by Whig polemicists in order to denigrate the Tories' naval campaigns.

Underlying chapters 4 and 5 is the thesis that the introduction of all-sung, Italianate opera in 1705 was a facet of the Whig cultural programme for England, as acknowledged by Paul Monod ("The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas, 1711–1718," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*



36/3 [2006]: pp. 445–72). The Whig playwright and architect John Vanbrugh was a prime mover in this objective; his new theatre in the Haymarket was financed largely by Whig supporters, who included members of the influential Kit-Cat Club (see pp. 129–34 for a list of subscribers and their political affiliations). McGeary rightly cautions against viewing the Haymarket (Queen’s) Theatre as a Kit-Cat project, however, suggesting that contemporary opprobrium attached to their association was more to do with religious prejudice and anti-Whig bias. A season-by-season account of operatic works produced at the Haymarket and Drury Lane Theatres from 1705 to 1709 demonstrates their varied and essentially experimental nature, there being as yet “no consensus about the form opera would take” (p. 137). Particularly enlightening is the account of *Arsinoe*, the first Italian-style work commissioned for the new theater. Thomas Clayton’s music was criticised for not matching up to the latest Italian operatic writing; the libretto, however, was in English and McGeary defends the composer on the grounds that his approach to English text-setting reflected the expectations for opera described in chapter 1. Clayton’s second opera, *Rosamund* (1707), ran against the general rule that most operas produced in England at this time were not allusive or allegorical of contemporary events. Joseph Addison’s patriotic libretto directly alluded to the Whig Duke of Marlborough, whose victory against the French at the Battle of Blenheim (1704) protected the Protestant succession for the time being and established Britain as a major player in continental politics. (For a comparison of Clayton’s aesthetic vision as realised in *Arsinoe* and *Rosamond*, see Alison C. Desimone, *The Power of Pastiche* [Clemson, 2021], pp. 192–208).

1710 was a watershed moment for both opera and politics, and chapter 6 surveys key events in both arenas. *Almahide*, the first new opera of the season, “set the norm that serious opera on the London stage would be sung all in Italian for the remainder of the century and beyond” (p. 219). Anne’s Whig government was replaced by Tories, many of whom were keen to broker a separate peace with France. Fears that this portended a possible Jacobite restoration fuelled tensions between Anne’s new ministry and her Protestant Hanoverian heirs; Handel’s visit to England as a representative of Hanover may have played a role in mollifying strained relations. Indeed, McGeary suggests that *Rinaldo* was “a projection of the Hanoverian court in London” (p. 228), as testified by descriptions in the printed word and song books. Meanwhile, Martin Powell’s puppet shows were appropriated by some Whig supporters to ridicule both Tory ministers and Italian operas, including *Rinaldo*.

Chapters 7 and 8 engage with the literary culture of the period by unpacking critical responses to Italian opera. Addison, John Dennis, and Richard Steele are known as strong critics of the genre; all were Whig aesthetes whose views are often conflated and attributed to simple xenophobia. McGeary’s more nuanced perspective emphasises their distinctiveness while aligning their concerns with those of the Whig cultural programme more broadly. Dennis and Steele, for example, draw on the tenets of classical republicanism to articulate ideas about how opera, luxury, and effeminacy undermined British liberty. McGeary draws a parallel between this line of thinking and that of the Whig philosopher Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury. Although more favourably inclined towards Italian culture, Shaftesbury cautioned that the excessive spectacle of its opera was symptomatic “of the decline in taste and a sign of the loss of liberty in the state at large” (p. 276). Whig aristocrats such as Shaftesbury were self-fashioned arbiters of “polite” taste, a socio-cultural ideal that was actively promoted by Addison in *The Spectator*. McGeary offers a convincing corrective of Addison’s stance; he did not oppose Italian opera, but rather proposed reforming its more risible aspects to accord with the polite aesthetic central to Whig culture, thereby avoiding the potential threat to British liberty that so exercised Dennis and Steele. The latter’s ongoing campaign to revive dramatic music in English was realised in the opera *Calypso and Telemachus* (1712). Chapter 9 explores this work in the context of partisan cultural politics, suggesting that the Tory Duke of Shrewsbury



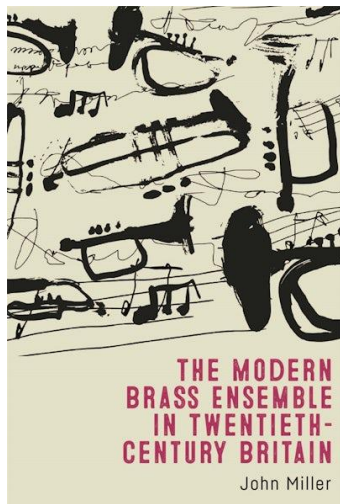
used his office as Lord Chamberlain to support an Italian cabal against it. The chapter then returns to Handel, who was commissioned to write the music for a public service of thanksgiving (July 1713) to mark the Peace of Utrecht, a treaty which again tore opinion along partisan lines.

Overall, this is a meticulously researched book which navigates a large and varied body of archival and scholarly material. It would have benefitted from a tighter, more cohesive structure and less repetition, and readers who are primarily interested in music may find the presentation of historical narrative rather dense at times. The bibliography is excellent, and the copious notes make one thankful to Boydell for adopting footnotes rather than endnotes. There are a number of typographical slips and editorial glitches; for instance, the premiere of *Camilla* is given as 30 March 1707, *recte* 1706 (p. 155). Rather more confusing are the opening sentences of “Note to the Reader”; the Continent used the Gregorian (New Style) calendar, not the Georgian, and it was the Old-Style calendar that began on 25 March, not the New (p. xv). A few errors have crept into the otherwise serviceable index, such as the reference to Wriothesley Russell on page 194 taking the reader to Edward, a different Russell entirely. Gottfried Finger (whose contribution to theatrical music is arguably underplayed in the early chapters) is mentioned in the text but excluded from the index, as is his dramatick opera *The Virgin Prophetess* (1701). These are, though, minor quibbles amidst a wealth of detail and many fascinating insights. The book provides a thought-provoking investigation of how Italian-style opera emerged and took root in Britain, viewed through the lens of its problematic involvement with the Whig-Tory conflict that continued to shape national culture throughout the eighteenth century.

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John Miller. *The Modern Brass Ensemble in Twentieth-Century Britain*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2022. 220 pages. ISBN 9781783277346 (hardcover), ISBN 9781800106536 (Ebook – EPDF), ISBN 9781800106543 (Ebook – EPUB).



John Miller is an inspirational brass educationalist and researcher from Britain. A creative approach to teaching and coaching ensures that he is in high demand as an educator, giving masterclasses and presentations across the globe. In his work as a professional trumpet player, Miller was part of the Philharmonia Orchestra (1977–94), the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble (1972–80), and a founding member of the Wallace Collection (1986). He currently teaches at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), where he previously held the posts of Head of Brass (1999–2013) and Head of the School of Wind & Percussion (2013–17). John Miller has also written a number of study books for brass players (Faber Music) that have been included in repertoire lists for graded examinations, such as those for the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music.

With an author of such remarkable pedigree, we can expect a wealth of information to be included within these pages. In addition, Miller acknowledges a number of experts for their support in producing this book. These include veteran brass historians Trevor Herbert and Arnold Myers; conductors, composers, and professional trumpet players Elgar Howarth, John Wallace CBE and Howard Snell; former RNCM Director of Research Barbara Kelly and RNCM Emeritus Professor of Music Martin Harlow for their academic skill, and historical performance practice specialist Anneke Scott (Prince Regent’s



Band). Before we even delve too far into the book, it is clear how much care and attention to detail has been taken with the author's research.

The Modern Brass Ensemble in Twentieth-Century Britain is the first book of its kind. The author states: "The narrative and notes are aimed to be complementary to existing works: Anthony Baines, *Brass Instruments: Their History and Development* (Dover, 1976); Trevor Herbert and John Wallace, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments* (Cambridge, 1997); Trevor Herbert, Edward Myers, and John Wallace, eds., *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Brass Instruments* (Cambridge, 2019); and the journals of the Historic Brass Society" (p. xiii). Although these books each offer a huge amount of detail, Miller's work encompasses a holistic approach into the history, growth, repertoire and people that facilitated the development of the brass ensemble. By referencing this existing literature throughout the book, it allows the reader insights into and possible further research, connecting an enormous amount of previously distinct work. There also exists a comparatively large amount of literature in relation to the development of the British brass band that was simultaneously emerging along a different branch of the evolutionary brass tree. Miller successfully presents a disambiguation between *brass band* and *brass ensemble*, which are two very different collections of instruments and not interchangeable terms.

Miller begins by offering detailed historic and social context. This is incredibly important in order to appreciate how the ensemble developed and it is regularly referenced in later chapters. The historic context broadens out to include ensembles across Europe and the US, before focusing on the core of Miller's work in illustrating the development of the brass ensemble in Britain. Miller also describes how music education in the world of brass evolved, through maturing performance practice techniques, with musicians trained by professionals in conservatoires to perform as soloists. The effects of globalisation were profound, with the sharing of ideas and resources and regular overseas tours being the catalyst for new music and new connections.

The book also offers a wealth of example music, including milestone works such as Carl Ruggles's *Angels* (1920–21), Gunther Schuller's *Symphony* (1950) and *Music for Brass Quintet* (1961), Malcolm Arnold's *Brass Quintet No. 1* (1961), and Howarth's iconic arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1977). Understandably, a considerable amount of the monograph examines the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble (PJBE) and its importance in establishing a brass ensemble repertory. However, many other groups are also discussed, including London Brass, Fine Arts Brass, LSO Brass, The Wallace Collection, Tubalaté (tuba quartet), and the Harlem Hellfighters. The outcome is a colourful and descriptive tapestry with the PJBE at the center, connected to other ensembles through different strands.

Although there are a great many significant works by esteemed composers highlighted throughout the book (including details of specific recordings), there are very few examples of works by female musicians. Unfortunately, this is an all-too-familiar situation, indicative of the social and professional norms of the time. It is worth noting, however, that despite brass bands being historically criticized for their lack of inclusion, there are important, significant works written for the ensemble by female composers that predate the more widely recognised works of Judith Bingham in the 1990s and 2000s. Composers such as Imogen Holst, Helen Perkin, and Thea Musgrave all contributed to the repertoire. Although the "symphonic brass" equivalent situation is briefly addressed in the book, this is perhaps the subject matter of an altogether very different book, with the potential for much expansion. However, with this in mind, the author has once again thoughtfully acknowledged key works (Joan Tower's *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* (1991) and Roxanna Panufnic's *Spirit Moves* [2001]), ensembles (Bones Apart Trombone Quartet [RNCM, 2002]), and performers such as trombonist Maisie Ringham (Hallé



Orchestra, 1944) and Anne McAneney (trumpet/flugelhorn in the London Brass, 1986), and offered signposts and starting points for those who wish to research the subject further. Miller also references the work of Joanna Ross Hersey (Historic Brass Society), who has completed extensive research into the history of women in brass, particularly in the United States.

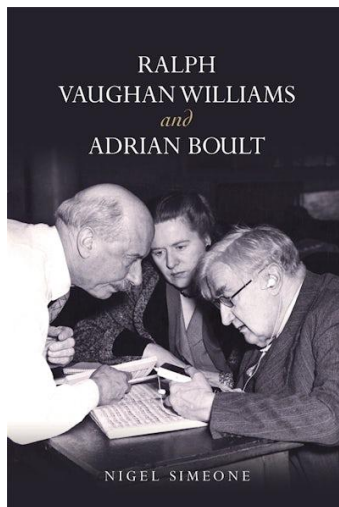
Miller's book operates on several different levels. First and foremost, it will understandably appeal to brass players and scholars by giving insight and detail for the enthusiastic brass historian, yet we are still guided through expertly (an appealing quality for newcomers to the idiom or brass history students). By including so many detailed references, Miller offers readers the chance to explore areas in greater depth. Not only will this book be an excellent starting point for any further research into this area, but it will be hugely beneficial for brass students wanting to discover more about the history of their instruments or to broaden their repertoire.

Miller's writing style is clear and informative, bringing an inclusive, contemporary view to a previously overlooked subject in musical history. He speaks from valuable personal experience in addition to his extensive research, which offers an enthusiastic and assuredly confident tone. This is a hugely important contribution to musical research and literature. Not only is it relevant in the world of brass, but this work also has significant insight into the social and cultural history in Britain in the 19th and 20th centuries. Miller manages to touch on a vast array of influential elements and tangential branches of musical and social history, whilst retaining a strong, informed focus on the main subject.

Miller concludes his envoi with a positive reflection on the "wide-ranging development, eclectic repertoire and seemingly boundless enthusiasm in music-making." He suggests that the world of brass ensembles is still evolving and has a lot more to offer: "one simply celebrates the achievements and wonders what will come next." After reading, I am inclined to believe the same and look forward to what the future of the Brass Ensemble may bring!

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Simeone, Nigel. *Ralph Vaughan Williams and Adrian Boult*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2022. 330 pages. ISBN 9781783277292 (hardcover), ISBN 9781800106376 (Ebook – EPDF), 9781800106383 (Ebook – EPUB).



Though long recognized as one of Ralph Vaughan Williams's foremost interpreters, Sir Adrian Boult often suffers relegation to fleeting mentions in program notes and album liners. Re-elevating the conductor's relationship with Vaughan Williams, Nigel Simeone's *Ralph Vaughan Williams and Adrian Boult* fastidiously examines a long partnership and traces its musico-cultural products. The volume features a laudable interaction of granular detail and broad cultural examinations, providing comprehensive understandings of Vaughan Williams and Boult in changing twentieth-century contexts. Throughout the study, score markings, correspondence, performance timings, and other minutiae articulate specific facets of the figures' broader relationship, itself examined in terms of contemporary cultural trends. Readers may occasionally find themselves hampered by extended analytical passages, but the titular partnership remains central and clearly enhanced by local



detail throughout. This interaction between local and global interest coexists with a useful generic interplay. The tension between monograph and handbook—between chronological and topical organizations—highlights the text’s immediate utility and illuminates avenues for future exploration.

The volume’s chapters follow a replicable layout that enhances their immediacy. Each opens with a narrative examination of the musicians’ careers and their interactions surrounding a work or works. A variety of metanarrative inclusions enrich the prose, appearing frequently but rarely obscuring the content of this initial exploration. Musical excerpts, handwritten notes, concert programs, photos, and rhythmic reductions all appear to great effect. Mutually reinforcing Boult’s and Vaughan Williams’s experiences and mutual growth, prose and examples are both contextualized by wider musico-cultural currents. A discussion of major recordings follows. Unusually comprehensive for their modest length, these sections explore the circumstances surrounding given recordings, their musical peculiarities, and the relative timings of their movements. Typical of the depth to which Simeone investigates his topic, these sections provide an exhaustive resource on Boult’s Vaughan Williams recordings. A full, dated list of performances follows. For any musician exploring the reception history of a given work, these lists will prove especially invaluable.

Given their involvement and episodic presentation, each chapter could stand alone and remain valuable, similar to a handbook. However, they also participate in a longer structural chronology founded on Vaughan Williams’s symphonies. Beginning with *A Sea Symphony* (1910) and concluding 48 years later with the premiere of the Ninth, the cycle provides a reasonable means of organization. (*Job*, of which Boult was the dedicatee, rightly receives its own chapter between the *Pastoral* and Symphony No. 4.) Moreover, this length sets the abstract elements of the musicians’ relationship into clearer relief. Readers will understand how Vaughan Williams’s and Boult’s working methods evolve, appreciate shifting interactions in their respective careers, and ascertain which immutable musical values ground their relationship.

Beyond the symphonies, the text adopts a topical organization, necessary to examine Boult’s interaction with Vaughan Williams’s substantial output. After acclimating to a chronological examination, this topical presentation foregrounds the chapter material and the sheer extent of Boult’s engagement with Vaughan Williams’s works. These topical chapters tend to be shorter, and their brevity invites future studies of Boult’s interpretations, Vaughan Williams’s process, and more. These final three chapters examine the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910) and miscellaneous orchestral works, choral and vocal compositions, and *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1951), respectively. Between them, the likes of *Sancta Civitas* (1925), *The Lark Ascending* (1914, rev. 1920), and *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* (1939) receive only brief summaries detailing Boult’s engagement and a list of his performances.

Of special note, the chapter “Wartime Tensions” interrogates two lesser-appreciated works in terms of the BBC’s bureaucratic shortcomings. The wartime commissions *England, My England* (1941) and *Thanksgiving for Victory* (1943) are frequently reduced to passing curios, but given Boult’s longstanding employment by the BBC, their tortured geneses are given welcome attention. Whether examining their genesis or the BBC’s “administrative bungling” of their development and eventual premiere (p. 4), the works form the basis for a thoughtful examination of the BBC’s wartime operation and frequent dysfunction. Marrying topical and chronological approaches, “Wartime Tensions” would find itself more at home among the final chapters, but provides a welcome departure from the forward march of the symphonies. Similarly, the chapter examining the *Pastoral Symphony* includes remarks on Boult’s approach



to conducting, with special attention to the contents of the *Midland Musician*, a journal that Boult founded during his post in Birmingham.

Despite a refreshing depth of investigation throughout, some of the volume's most salient contributions appear in its three appendices. The first contains a painstaking account of Boult's annotations on Vaughan Williams's symphonic scores, the Tallis Fantasia, *Flos Campi* (1925), and *Job* (1931). Interrogating a previously underexplored topic through lists and score images, this appendix will immediately enrich any study of Vaughan Williams's symphonies. Boult famously thought score markings "unnecessary if the score had been learned thoroughly by the conductor" (p. 215). And, as many of the markings codify feedback from Vaughan Williams—also famously tight-lipped—they also offer a rare window into the composer's intent, especially as it evolved with subsequent performances, and the shared values of the conductor and composer. While this information would have been welcomed in earlier chapters, the sheer density of examples would likely prohibit its full appreciation. Still, the appendix provides a useful summary of the figures' approaches to a given work(s) and musical expression writ large. The second and third appendices include a chronology of Boult's Vaughan Williams performances and recordings, respectively. Valuable resources for those interested in the works' reception histories or the aural products of the figures' musical evolutions, these inclusions alone would make the volume a worthwhile investment. Considered holistically, however, the volume merits a place on the shelves of enthusiasts and career musicologists alike.

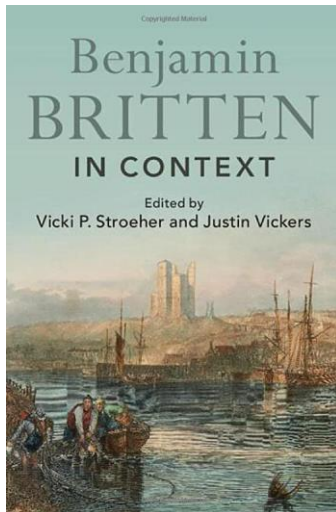
Someone offers a remarkably thorough stocktaking of Boult's and Vaughan Williams's relationship. While their partnership has always transcended simple advocacy, this fact has now been illustrated with uncommon alacrity. Always grounded in music, the interwoven components of their partnership and approaches to interpretation emerge through prose and metanarrative alike. In relaying this information to readers, the volume establishes a fruitful tension between topical and chronological presentations. An accessible chronology based on the symphonies combines with replicable chapter outlines and thoughtful appendices to provide immediate utility to readers. Given this digestible format and depth of exploration, readers will see opportunities for continued research on any number of topics. As in the music itself, then, *Ralph Vaughan Williams and Adrian Boult* features mutually beneficial form and content, resulting in a product of depth and consideration with immediate impact for British music studies.

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Vicki P. Stroehler and Justin Vickers, eds. *Benjamin Britten in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 400 pages. ISBN 9781108496698 (hardcover), ISBN 9781108634878 (Ebook).

In the decade since the Britten centenary, scholars have published more than a dozen texts related to the composer and his musical output. From in-depth stylistic analyses to wide-ranging essay collections, these texts make it a great time to be a Britten scholar as new ideas and analytical frameworks emerge. Yet this glut might lead one to ask: does the field need another text dedicated to Britten? Vicki P. Stroehler and Justin Vickers's new edited collection, *Benjamin Britten in Context*, demonstrates new ground in Britten studies remains for exploration.





Benjamin Britten in Context is part of Cambridge University Press's new "Composers in Context" series, which aims at "offering lively, accessible, and concise essays by leading scholars on the many contexts—professional, political, intellectual, social and cultural—that have a bearing on [a composer's] work" (p. ii). For *Benjamin Britten in Context*, Stroehler and Vickers brought together dozens of leading scholars of Britten and twentieth-century British music culture, compiling over forty essays about Britten, his collaborators, and other topics relevant to Britten studies. Of note are the authors drawn from beyond music: historians, literary scholars, theologians, and archivists are represented in this volume, and their contributions add new dimension to the field. The essays are short (less than ten pages long), and thus are far from comprehensive. Stroehler and Vickers acknowledge this limitation in their Prologue, but instead see it as a strength, commenting "the ensuing chapters are flint, of sorts, to spark the reader's own exploration of each of the varied

contexts surrounding Britten presented herein" (p. 8). I generally agree the chapters work this way, providing enough information to whet the reader's appetite and get one asking questions. With this limited space, however, most authors could not offer much of an argument, instead presenting facts about Britten and his contexts. Those who attempted an argumentative approach did not have space to flesh out their logic. This limitation is not the fault of individual authors nor the editors, but instead a constraint of the series. With so many brief essays, it is impossible to give a detailed account of each one, so this review will instead focus on relevant high and low points, plus the collection's importance for Britten studies moving forward.

Stroehler and Vickers divide the collection into five sections, as well as a Prologue and Epilogue. In the Prologue, "Positioning Britten," Stroehler and Vickers describe the history, sources, and major trends of Britten studies, plus Britten's importance well into the twenty-first century. Part I, "The Britten Circle(s)," contains six essays on Britten's closest confidants, including Peter Pears, The Bridges, Britten's amanuenses, and his publishers. Christopher M. Scheer's essay on amanuenses and their undervalued role in music history was particularly engaging; Scheer outlined the vital function played by Britten's assistants Imogen Holst, Rosamund Strode, and Colin Matthews in preparing his scores and musical materials. Less engaging were the separate chapters for Peter Pears and the "open secret" of his relationship with Britten. Each chapter contains interesting material and analysis, but considering the vast overlap, perhaps it would have made more sense to consolidate the information.

The book's second part, "British Musical Life," zooms out, covering many themes related to music making in the United Kingdom. In all essays, the authors, to varying degrees, connect their broader theme to Britten and his musical output. For example, in "Educating the Nation: Britten's Music for Young People," Kate Guthrie outlines the social and cultural forces driving changes to music education in mid-century Britain, before turning to Britten's music for child audiences and performers. In other essays, Britten remains a minor character, illustrating specific points. This was the case in Eric Saylor's "Composing in England," a succinct yet stimulating overview of what being a composer meant in twentieth-century England, suitable for anyone with a burgeoning interest in the topic.

Part III returns to Britten's relationships, focusing on "Britten and Other Composers." Here, authors discuss Britten's professional and personal relationships with contemporaries, plus lines of musical influence between Britten and his forebearers. The pair of essays by Michael Burden and Alain Frogley on Britten's connections with the nation's musical past stands out as the



section's highpoint. Burden's exploration of the Britten/Purcell connection, along with how Britten's contemporaries drew on Purcellian influences, exemplifies the best of what an "in context" essay can be; he uses several disparate threads to weave a many-layered analysis of what "the past" meant in Britain. Similarly, Frogley draws out the complexities of Britten's relationships with the leading composers of the English musical renaissance. Scholars frequently simplify this dynamic to generational antagonism, but Frogley indicates how Britten's feelings toward Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughn Williams, and Gustav Holst changed during his lifetime. The section also contains delightful essays by Cameron Pyke and Phillip Rupprecht which serve as *amuse-bouches* for their book-length explorations of Britten/Soviet connections and the Manchester School, respectively.

Part IV, "Wordsmiths, Designers, and Performers," features essays on those artists most directly involved with realizing Britten's music to life. Scholars remember Britten for his close working relationships, and these ten essays provide a brief introduction to the major collaborative figures in Britten's life. The section features all his librettists and primary literary partners, most with an entire chapter dedicated to their work and relationship. Frances Spalding's standout essay on Myfanwy Piper lucidly explains how the librettist adapted complex narratives into some of the most engaging and poetic libretti of the twentieth century. Spalding pinpoints Piper's adaptation skill, an essential talent for bringing the supernatural and the psychological to stage in *The Turn of the Screw* and *Death in Venice*. Lucy Walker and Kevin Salfen's chapter "Designing and Dancing Britten" also deserves mention. Britten famously desired creative collaboration for his stage works (even if he rarely achieved this ideal), and Walker and Salfen's chapter explores how John Piper and John Cranko championed the visual domains of set design and choreography, respectively, for the composer. Walker and Salfen highlight how Britten's conservatism and desire for notation led, at times, to tension with his designers, seen most clearly in their three-way collaboration on *The Prince of the Pagodas*.

The final section, "British Sociocultural, Religious, and Political Life," is a grab-bag collection covering the larger issues facing everyday artistic life in mid-century Britain. Due to the section's broad theme, many other essays in the collection touch these topics as well. In some cases, like Irene Morra's "English and British National Identity in the Arts," the essays feel like a capstone to the book, sounding refrains relevant to nearly all elements of Britten's life and oeuvre. In others, such as J. P. E. Harper-Scott's "The Politics of the Closet," one wonders how the content differs from that found in other essays on Britten's sexuality and relationship with Peter Pears within the collection. This is not to say that Harper-Scott's essay is uninteresting or poorly written; on the contrary, his class-based approach to understanding mid-century homosexuality in Britain is greatly appreciated and undoubtedly relevant. Nevertheless, one must question the benefit of having multiple essays on similar topics, especially when authors do not have space to flesh out their argument's nuance. The collection ends with an epilogue by Arnold Whittall on "Britten's Legacy." Here, Whittall asks us to consider Britten's aftermath not in terms of stylistic or generic innovation, but instead through community engagement: "Within the traditional sphere of composition by an individual, evidence of indebtedness to Britten is most likely to emerge in a constructive way when the restraints—even inhibitions—of that composer's modern classicism are refreshed with a spirit that can be thought of as truly postmodern" (p. 365). So, while no one currently writes like Britten, that today's young British and Commonwealth composers write to reflect their experiences and communities is, in some ways, testament to Britten's lasting influence.

Stroeher and Vickers's *Benjamin Britten in Context* is a text with many strengths. I envision these chapters as vital teaching resources those working with advanced undergraduate or masters' students. The book's few flaws, namely some essays lacking nuance and the



collection's sometimes-repetitive nature, come from the series' restraints rather than choices by any author or editor. This text will likely become essential to anyone new to Britten studies or to those introducing students to the complex world of mid-century British artistic life. As such, Stroeher and Vickers accomplished their goal of crafting a collection which sparks curiosity among readers, hopefully for generations to come.

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